

Book of Lehi

Chapter 8

An Abridgment made by Prophet Mormon

The Nephite kings keep the record of the people. The Nephites become corrupt, and wars with the Lamanites increase. Many prophets are sent to preach repentance to the people — they are rejected by the Nephites. The Lamanites begin to take the possessions and lands of the Nephites.

And it came to pass that the records of the people of Nephi and their history were entrusted into the hands of the kings of the Nephites who handed them down to the next king that was called to reign by the voice of the people. And there were many records which were written upon plates of ore. And I, Mormon, have been entrusted with these records, which have been given unto me by Ammaron.

2 And I have read them all and have taken my abridgment from them. Nevertheless, my abridgment is a very small part of all the records of the Nephites. And under the direction of the Spirit and through Its inspiration I know what things I should write upon these plates, which I have made with my own hands. And these plates are made of gold mixed with another ore that we are familiar with, and therefore these plates are of great worth. Nevertheless, I did not choose these ores because of their worth, but because of their lightness and the easiness of writing upon them, and also that they might last forever.

3 Behold, I am an old man and cannot transport all of the plates of Nephi wherever I should go to hide myself from the Lamanites who are continually pursuing me.

4 And I have hidden the plates in a large crevasse of a rock, and it is in this crevasse that I am writing this abridgment. And I have spent many days searching through all the plates of Nephi and other plates that have fallen into my hands that I might know what I should abridge and what I should not.

5 And I do not leave this rock except when I am hungry or thirsty and am in need of sustenance. Nevertheless, Moroni, my son, knoweth where I am hiding and he visiteth me from time to time bringing me food and news about the war with the Lamanites.

6 And now I will continue with the abridgment of the history of the people of Nephi: For behold, many years passed in peace and happiness among the Nephites. And all of their enemies were swept away from among them.

7 And it came to pass that the people began to spend their days in pursuit of gold and silver, and other precious ores that gave no sustenance to their lives, except to their pride and to their arrogance.

8 For behold, the people began to believe that their gold and their silver, and their precious things were gifts from God because of their righteousness. And the church of God was becoming like unto the church that was at Jerusalem when Lehi was commanded to leave.

9 And it came to pass that the people began to separate themselves into groups according to the amount of gold and silver and precious things that they had accumulated.

10 Now this would not have been such a gross sin in the eyes of the Lord had it been an accumulation that was made through their own industry and hard work. But their accumulation of wealth was from the sweat and work of others who were the less fortunate and had not the ability to accumulate wealth due to the scarcity of the gold, and the silver, and the precious ores; and also because they were the more ignorant part of the people. Nevertheless, these more ignorant ones were more righteous in keeping the commandments of God — their ignorance coming in worldly affairs only.

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11 And it came to pass that a small group of Nephites had accumulated most of the wealth among them, and the other Nephites were forced to labor continuously for this minority who owned the machinery and the tools and the businesses and the crafts on which they were all dependent for their survival.

12 And thus did the Nephites divide themselves into a rich class and a poor class, thus denying the commandments of God in which they were commanded to be equal in all things.

13 And the rich class refused to do manual labor, but hired out all manner of work that required sweat to those who were poor and in need of that which the rich provided for them.

14 And the rich controlled the guards that kept watch at the borders of the city. And the leaders of the people began to become rich, leading the people to believe that because they were leaders, they deserved more sustenance than others.

15 And it came to pass that the guards began to exercise authority over the Nephites under the direction of the rich. And any Nephite who complained against the rich was arrested by the guards and brought forth to be judged according to the Nephite system of justice, which was set up and controlled by the rich.

16 Nevertheless, the guards had no authority over the church, nor did they have any authority over the High Priests, who had also set themselves up as leaders of the people and convinced the people that they deserved more sustenance than the average Nephite, like unto the rich class. And in this way did the leaders of the church of God begin to separate themselves from the people.

17 And in this way did pride and envying enter into the hearts of the Nephites. And this pride began to threaten and destroy the very foundation of truth and righteousness, which foundation was set up in the beginning by Nephi and his brothers Jacob and Joseph, and which was based upon the commandments of God.

18 For behold, because the church was not accountable to the laws of justice established by the Nephites and enforced by the guards, the leaders of the church began to become the most wicked of all the leaders of the people. Yea, because these leaders were not accountable to the people, they were left to do whatever their hearts desired. And the church became more wicked than the church at Jerusalem at the time of Lehi and his ministry unto the Jews.

19 And it came to pass that the Lord sent prophets to the Nephite people to preach repentance unto them and turn the hearts of the people back to righteousness.

20 And the prophets were rejected and cast out from among the people. And those prophets that would not leave their preaching were arrested and brought before the judges of the land. And the judges found no just cause to hold the prophets, nevertheless, these judges held the prophets bound and commanded their guards to carry them forth to the High Priests of the church to see what the church would do with them.

21 And it came to pass that the prophets were mocked by the leaders of the church and were commanded by these leaders to repent of their sins — the High Priests believing that the prophets were sinning by preaching against the church, and that they were pretending to be prophets of God to stir up the people to anger. And the High Priests ridiculed the prophets for condemning the people for living in sin when the people were enjoying many years of peace and happiness.

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22 And it came to pass that the people rejected the prophets and would not listen to their words. And the Nephites hardened their hearts against the prophets because their leaders told them to pay no attention to anyone who was not ordained and sustained by the church.

23 And in this way did the devil gain control over the hearts and blind the minds of the Nephites to the truth; in other words, the people were led by the precepts of men, which denied the power of the priesthood of the Son of God that can only be controlled upon the principles of righteousness.

24 And they were all deceived, save a few only, who humbly followed the law of Moses and kept the commandments of God. Nevertheless, many of these humble ones were led that they did err because they did listen to the precepts of men and follow the dictates of the leaders of the church who had convinced them that they were righteous, instead of listening to the peaceful words that were given unto these humble ones by the Spirit of God.

25 And it came to pass that there was a man living among the Nephites and his name was Mosiah. And Mosiah was a direct descendent of Zoram, the servant of Laban who delivered the brass plates unto Nephi and his brethren.

26 And Mosiah listened to the voice of the prophets and recognized the wickedness of the pride and envying of his people because of their exceeding possessions, and their gold, and their silver and the classes in to which they had divided themselves.

27 And it came to pass that the Lord sent an angel unto the house of Mosiah to speak with him in a dream. And Mosiah became heavy of heart and his countenance fell because of the things that he both saw and heard in his dream.

28 For behold, Mosiah beheld the downfall of the Nephite nation and its captivity by the Lamanites who were living just outside the borders of the Nephite land and were readying their armies to come up with their numerous hosts to destroy the Nephites.

29 And the Nephites were unaware that the Lamanites were amassing forces just outside the borders of their land. For behold, their time was spent in continual pursuit of riches. Yea, even every day did the Nephites count their riches and spend the majority of their time devising ways and means that they might gain more riches. And thus were they engaged while their enemies were planning their destruction.

30 And it came to pass that Mosiah went forth among those of his own family in faith that he could convince them of their wickedness before the Lord. And his family rejected the words of Mosiah and mocked and chastised him saying:

31 Behold, thou art envious of our riches and the success that we have had because thy own riches have not come to thee as ours have. For behold, thy struggles and efforts are barely sufficient to bring food to thy family and to thy wife, who even at this time is desirous to find another husband who can support her with the fine things with which the Lord hath blessed us.

32 And is it not a blessing from the Lord that we have acquired these things? Is it not that we have paid our offerings and tithing to the church, that the Lord hath promised us these riches? And thou art poor of thy own will and choosing; for behold, thou spendest thy time in what thou perceivest are the problems of others, when thy own problems are not attended to. Is this not the reason that thy wife desireth to leave thee? Doth she not pay her tithes and offerings to the church in faith, believing that the Lord will bless her with the things that we have been blessed with?

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33 And it came to pass that Mosiah did not give heed unto the words of the people, for he knew that they were deceived by their own pride and also by their associations with the church and its leaders.

34 And it came to pass that Mosiah departed into the wilderness taking with him all those who were humble and contrite, yea, even all those who believed the words of the prophets and were convinced of the sins of the church and also of their own sins.

35 And it came to pass that Mosiah and his followers traveled deep into the wilderness not knowing where they should go, being led by the Spirit of God, which was a constant companion of Mosiah, he being a righteous man of God.

36 And another record of the people of Nephi was recorded upon plates of ore, and this record I have in my possession. And this particular record was made by the hand of Nephi and handed down from father to son according to the commandment that Nephi had received from the Lord. Nevertheless, the majority of the history of the Nephite people was written on other plates of ore and handed down through the lineage of Nephite kings that had received this commandment from Nephi.

37 And Abinadom, who was named after his father, and who was a direct descendant of Lehi, took his family and fled into the wilderness with Mosiah. And Abinadom had many of the records of the Nephites in his possession.

38 Behold, Abinadom was one of the captains of the guards and had great authority among the Nephites. Nevertheless, he was a humble man who gave much to the poor and needy of his people and he found no place among the rich class to which those in similar positions of authority belonged.

39 And it came to pass that the Nephite king had placed Abinadom in charge of the records of the Nephites that he might protect them. And Abinadom took these records also with him into the wilderness.

40 And it came to pass that Abinadom organized a small army of guards from among those who had fled with Mosiah to protect them in their journeys in the wilderness.

41 And it came to pass that the people of Mosiah, for that is what they called themselves in order to separate themselves from the Nephites who stayed in the land of Nephi, traveled many days in the wilderness.