

## A BOOK OF MORMON STUDY

Hebrew Characteristics of the Record—Why a Portion of the Prophecies of Isaiah Were Transcribed upon the Plates—The English Version Not Copied by the Prophet Joseph—Double Fulfillment of Prophecies.

(Continued from Saturday, Aug. 25.)

## II.

## WHY WAS ISAIAH COPIED?

We have next to consider why Nephi transcribed certain chapters of Isaiah into his book instead of taking others from those of Jeremiah or Hosea, for instance. In order to make this clear, a review of the chapters in question becomes necessary, for we must have a knowledge of their contents before we can appreciate their worth and applicability to the people of Nephi. While engaged in this work of review, we shall find that that portion of the Isaiah which was copied into the book of Nephi, made no special mention when he began his transcription with the forty-eighth chapter of the first or second, chapter of Isaiah. The Israelites who settled the western continent are given the name of Jacob, house of Jacob, remnant of Jacob, etc., and these names are applied to the American Israelites, or Nephites, almost exclusively. They are not so general in application as Israel, or Israelites. The Nephites are called by the name of Jacob because Lehi, from the house of Jacob, was a direct descendant of Joseph, who was the favorite son of Jacob, and so they take his name as a title of honor, and, again, because they occupied the inheritance given to Joseph by his father Jacob. They take his name by right. A distinguishing name is necessary also to distinguish between the eastern and the western Israelites.

The nine and a half tribes that revolted from Judah and set up a kingdom of their own in northern Palestine, are known as the kingdom of Israel, while the remaining tribes are known as the kingdom of Judah. The people of the northern kingdom were plainly apostates from the worship of the true God, and those truly pious of the tribe of Judah, who were left under their first king the apostates set up a national religion of their own wholly idolatrous, and not satisfied with this abomination, they imported

from their neighbors the worship of Baal. This latter system was once, or twice, suppressed, but the national idolatry was never eradicated. The kings of Israel, one after another, walked in the ways of their predecessors, except the last one, who tried to restore the worship of the true God; but it was then too late, and because of it, the nation went into captivity, from which, as a people, they never returned. The Jews also caught the infection of idolatry, but the Babylonian captivity completely cured them of it.

On the western continent the worship of idols was also instituted among a portion of the Israelites—the Lamanite branch—and so they became the apostates of the house of Jacob. But the historical parallel does not end here. Not only do we find the two great bodies of the Israelites, one in the east and the other in the west, split up into discordant factions, one apostate and one acknowledged, for a long time, as God's people, but the finality in each case was the same, namely, repudiation for all. Again, in each of the grand divisions the apostates as the aggressors made war on their brothers in blood who remained loyal to God. Here we have another remarkable reflex in Jewish family life that Joseph Smith, a young, unlearned man would, without any doubt, have overlooked, had he written the Book of Mormon. That book was written by, and narrates authentic history of, Jews. With these observations in mind, we are ready to take up the review of the alleged copied chapters, and to avoid confusion, shall begin with the first of Nephi's transcriptions:

## ISAIAH XLVIII.

The address of this section is made (1) especially to the descendants of Lehi, who are here called the house of Jacob, for reasons already pointed out. Israelites, indeed, but who had gone forth out of the waters of Judah, a figure that plainly points out the separation of Lehi and his people from the Jews.

(2) The natives of Judah are characterized as a people who claim to stay

themselves on (1) the Lord, but do not do so in truth or righteousness. The house of Jacob is then reminded of (2) great works that God had wrought among His children, both by prophecy and deed, to (3) some of which they themselves were eye-witnesses. Their works were of the most wonderful (4) character, for God knew His people were obstinate, and nothing less than the most extraordinary demonstrations would convince (5) them that He, and not their idols, had performed them. These things were not done in a corner, for they had heard of them, they (6) had seen some of them, and ought to declare, or confess, that His agency had brought them to pass, especially since many of them were like new creations, and could not be referred to the operations of those natural laws with which the people were familiar. But all this (8) was of no avail; they were transgressors from the beginning, their sin justly merited the most condign punishment, but because of God's own goodness, and mercy He would not inflict (9) upon them the penalty of destruction. The (11) covenant made with their fathers would be observed; and if His people could not be saved (10) by kindness, the rod of affliction should be tried. They should be refined in the furnace. Everything that could be done for their salvation would be done, that the charge of being a (11) covenant breaker could not justly be laid against the Almighty. From verse 12 to the close of the chapter, we find the announcement (20) of God's purpose to redeem finally the whole house of Israel, to gather them out from the countries of their dispersion and the lands of their oppressors, Babylon and the Chaldeans being used here as generic terms, and to bring them again to their heritages with songs of praise and rejoicing. In order to inspire confidence in the realization of this blessed promise, the people are reminded (13) that He who makes the announcement of this purpose is the Omnipotent Creator of the heavens and the earth, and He is, therefore, (14) certainly able to do all His pleasure on Babylon, or those who oppose His designs. Then by a (21) reference to the Exodus from Egypt, God invites His people to believe that the Deliverer who was at that time able and willing to deliver Israel, shall be found able and willing to do so a second time. (22) But this blessed condition cannot be attained by them so long as they remain obstinately wicked and refuse to obey God. No truce of peace and compact of alliance can be declared with the wicked. In this chapter, then, we are shown an obstinate,

intractable people from their earliest history. God's mighty works in their behalf—their rebellion and lapse into idolatry—their dispersion and oppression—their final redemption, etc. With this beginning, some of these things are outlined dimly, but this is a characteristic of the many of the great prophecies of the Bible. This chapter from Isaiah is a wonderful one, for in it there is an epitome of the history of God's people either actual or prophetic from the beginning down to the last grand winding up scene of their deliverance from oppression, accompanied with Exode demonstrations of awful power and majesty. There are few chapters, if any, in the whole Bible that are more comprehensive than this one.

## ISAIAH XLIX.

In the first portion of this chapter a form of speech called impersonation is used, and from verse 11 it is evident; that Zion, or the house of Jacob, is what is impersonated. The address is now directed to a people (1) who dwell far off in distant lands, and this circumstance points them out as the house of Jacob who inhabited the great valley of the western continent. (2) The Scripture which proceeds out of the mouth of this people makes a clear cut like a sharp sword, and was hid up in this land from the knowledge of the rest of the world for long centuries, and was for centuries also finally hid up in the hill Cumorah. An arrow hid, or laid up, in a quiver, is one fully prepared for the huntsman's use, and such was the gospel of the Nephites—a perfect shaft when laid up in the quiver, Cumorah, and perfect when the Almighty Huntsman took it thence for use. Dissimilar in these respects from the Bible that never was hid up, and which grew slowly into a perfected shaft. The references here are so faithful in their applicability to the history of the perfected gospel of the Nephites, that no reasonable doubt can be entertained as to their meaning. The words from the mouth of this people—that is, their gospel—is a polished shaft, for the accomplishment of some special and glorious purposes, and among them (3) we find it is destined to manifest (1) the glory of God, and to bring Jacob again to (4) the Lord. Zion laments the time that must be lost, and the labors that must be spent, apparently in vain, before she can fully realize this glorious destiny. She, however, submits the issue to God, who assures her (5) that even before the gathering of Israel is fully accomplished she shall become glorious in His sight. It could not be

otherwise for who is the agency long foreordained to bring (6) the remnant of Jacob to God, and to restore the scattered Israelites from all lands. She is also to become a light to the gentiles, and a means of salvation to the ends of the (9) earth. She shall strike the shackles from the prisoners (both living and dead), bring forth (9) light in the midst of spiritual darkness (10) and supply nourishing food for the fold of God. There is little wonder, therefore, that she is likened to a polished shaft and is glorious before God. She must, however, go down into the valley of humiliation and suffering as her Savior did, and be despised, abhorred, (7) and be made a servant of rulers, before being crowned with her full glory. The prospect of the cross is terrifying to her, but God comforts her (8) with the assurance of His help and of her preservation, and the full accomplishment of her mission. Though afflicted, there are troubles and vexations that beset others which shall not (10) be borne by the people of Zion, for God Himself shall lead them and the way of life and salvation shall (11) be made plain to their understanding. Her (12) people shall be gathered from the ends of the earth, (13) and songs of rejoicing are invoked for the glory (14) already appearing. But Zion can not forget the sufferings through which she must pass, and as the Savior cried on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" so Zion in her sufferings shall give voice to the same agonizing cry. But let Zion take comfort, God will not forsake her. His love for her is stronger than (15) the love of a mother for her child, but His people having refused to be refined as they should be by His love, must go through the furnace of affliction; (17) yet those who build the furnace, fire and (18) waste her, shall go forth from her and she shall mount up above them all. Her end condition (19) as a fugitive fleeing hither and thither shall not thwart God's purpose to set her in high places; for children and lands and habitations shall (20) be restored to her again in God's own time, till the measure shall run over. Some of these matters are no longer prophetic; they belong to the pages of history. Her sons and her daughters (22) shall be gathered from among the gentiles, and finally kings and queens (23) shall join with her people to honor and glorify her and her Maker and Builder who (24) is God. But Zion thinking so often of the cross that must be endured before the crown is won, and seeing her-

self a prey to the mighty spoiler, and a lawful captive in his hands because of her transgressions, comes at last with a trembling heart to the dread, and apparently hopeless question of how such a captive, even a lawful one, can be freed and saved. The answer God gives her is found in verses 25 and 26. Her Omnipotent Friend and Savior has the will to save her, and He will find a way even though she is a lawful captive in the hands of the mighty. He is not yet near enough to her to explain how. What He says now is the trumpet blast of the Rescuer on the march crying: "I am coming." The scene that the prophet is displaying here is very realistic. A brief summary of the main teachings of this chapter is: 1. Zion—the work begun by the Nephites on the western continent—is a specially ordained instrument in the hands of the Almighty for the accomplishment of many of His most glorious purposes. 2. Zion must endure the cross of suf-

fering, and then, 3. Be crowned with great glory.

(To Be Continued.)

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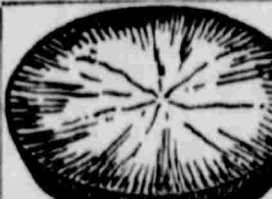
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