

Sermon Subject: THE BIBLE PROMISES OTHER SCRIPTURES

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 33:1, 13-17

This is the blessing wherewith Mosex, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits put forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the everlasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of the unicorns; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephriam, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. Isaiah 29:4

One of the well-known atheists of the past century used to taunt his opponents in debate with the charge that the God who wrote the Bible was ignorant of the American continent until Columbus discovered it for him. It is inconceivable that God was ignorant of two of the great continents he had created; and if it be true that "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets," there should be something in the Bible about the American continents. It is the purpose of this sermon to show that The God of the Bible was not ignorant of America, but that he plainly foretold through the Old Testament prophets that certain peoples should come to this land, and that there should be further scriptures written by the descendants of Joseph of Egypt who inhabited ancient America. It is the belief of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints that the Book of Mormon consists of at least a part of those scriptures which are promised and foretold in the Bible.

The Book of Mormon tells of three migrations or colonies from the old world to the American continent. It should therefore be expected that Bible prophecy would have something to say about all three. We shall try to show that it does.

The first migration, according to the Book of Mormon, was by the Jaredite colony, which came out from the Tower of Babel about 2200 B.C. (Genesis 11:8), speaking of the dispersion from the Tower says: "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth. . . ." "All the earth" would certainly include America. This colony fell into wickedness and civil war, and was destroyed after about 1600 years, leaving records and ruins which in due time were discovered by the second colony.

The second migration was a colony of people of Jewish descent, which came from the regions near Jerusalem about 600 B.C., just before the second capture and destruction of that city by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 or 587 B.C. This is known in the Book of Mormon as the Nephite colony, and consisted of descendants of Joseph of Egypt, through the line of Manasseh.

For the background of this colony, we need to study some of the prophetic promises made to Joseph of Egypt concerning his posterity. Let us examine first

the 49th chapter of Genesis, in which Jacob, father of the twelve sons who founded the twelve tribes of Israel, gives a prophetic blessing to his sons, telling them - according to verse one - "what shall befall you in the last days," or far in the future. Though Reuben was the firstborn, he had forfeited his birthright through transgression, according to I Chronicles 5:1,2 and Joseph, his father's favorite son, is given the birthright instead.

Jacob begins his blessing of Joseph by saying (vs. 22) "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches (margin, "daughters") run over the wall." Joseph was to have a multitude of descendants, who were to cross a barrier of water and dwell in a new land. Genesis 15:18 gives the limits of the lands promised to Abraham, and his seed through Isaac and Jacob, which were from the Nile river to the Euphrates; but in Joseph's blessing Jacob says: "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills...." Joseph's land was to be larger, more wealthy, more desirable than his progenitors', and was to lie at the "utmost bound of the everlasting hills." Look at any map or globe, and go around the earth in either direction to the place where you start back to Palestine again, and you will find yourself in America.

Israel is often represented in prophecy as a vine, just as Joseph is represented as a fruitful branch. Psalm 80:8 says, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt," and other verses in that chapter carry out the metaphor. Isaiah 16:8,9 calls Israel the "vine of Sibmah," and adds that "her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea." Jeremiah 2:21 calls Israel a "noble vine." Jeremiah 48:32, written about the time when the second or Nephite colony had left Jerusalem, reads; "O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer; thy plants are gone over the sea; they reach even to the sea of Jazer; the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage." One small branch or plant of the vine, Joseph's branch, had gone over the sea, but the vine which remained behind in Jerusalem was despoiled and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

Paralleling Jacob's blessing of his twelve sons in the 49th chapter of Genesis is Moses' blessing of the twelve tribes, found in the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy. The blessing on the tribe of Joseph is found in verses 13 through 17: "And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land (Joseph was to have a land which surpassed anything given to his progenitors, remember) for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph... " Joseph's land was to be blessed with spiritual and material resources far above any other land. The land promised to Joseph must have been quite extensive, for its wealth of produce could come only from a variety of climates in several zones. It was to be at the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. America, around the earth from Palestine, and rich beyond telling in natural resources and wealth of field and mine and forest, fits the description of Joseph's land.

Isaiah, too, knew something of Joseph's land, and of the people who were to dwell there. The 29th chapter of Isaiah prophesies that Ariel, the city where David dwelt -- or Jerusalem -- shall be distressed, besieged, and destroyed. Verse four repeats an idea four times for emphasis; "And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." The history of the Jews who dwelt in Jerusalem has always been an open book -- the Bible. But there was a colony of

Jerusalem's inhabitants who came to America, developed a great civilization, and later fell into destruction. This is the civilization pointed out in verse 2, which says "It (or other translations read "she") shall be unto me as Ariel." The record of these people, the Nephite colony from Jerusalem, is contained in the Book of Mormon, which for centuries was buried in the ground, and which now speaks low out of the dust, out of the ground.

When it came forth, this book that was hidden in the ground was to be a sealed book, which no learned man could read. The Book of Mormon plates were written in reformed Egyptian, and Egyptian was a dead, sealed, unknown language until the middle of the 19th century. Its translation was to be by one who was not learned (vs. 12) and was to be characterized as a marvelous work and a wonder. (vs. 14) It was to come forth "a little while" before Lebanon became a fruitful field (vs. 17) and not long before the gathering of Israel began, or when Jacob's face should no longer wax pale. (vs. 22) Its purpose was to open the ears and eyes of the spiritually deaf and blind (vs. 18) and to teach doctrine to those that erred in understanding. (vs. 24) The Book of Mormon fulfills this prophecy. It is the only book which has ever been proposed as a fulfillment of this prophecy; and since Lebanon has long since again become a fruitful field, it is now too late to propose another book as the book which was to speak out of the ground.

The prophecy of Isaiah 29 is strengthened and corroborated by Psalm 85:11: "Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven." At the same time when the Book of Mormon sprang forth from the earth, the angel of Revelation 14:6 flew through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on earth. Compare also Isaiah 45:8, "let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation...."

Another Bible prophecy which points to the Book of Mormon is the prophecy of Ezekiel 37, concerning the stick (or book) of Judah, and the stick of Ephraim. The stick of Judah is of course the Bible, with a record of part of the house of Israel. The stick of Ephraim, containing scriptural records from other parts of Israel, is to be joined together with the stick of Judah, and "they shall become one in thine hand," says verse 17. In the hands of our ministers, as they preach from both Bible and Book of Mormon, testifying of Christ from the pages of each book, this prophecy is literally fulfilled.

The 18th chapter of Isaiah salutes a land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. America, whose northern and southern continents appear on the map as two great outstretched wings, lies beyond, or west of the rivers of Ethiopia -- the Nile and its tributaries. In the days when Isaiah wrote, Ethiopian kings ruled Egypt, and the term Ethiopia was loosely used to designate Egypt and portions of Nubia and The Sudan to the west and south, as well as Abyssinia. Looking westward beyond the Nile and its tributaries -- the rivers of Ethiopia -- we see America, the land shadowing with wings.

From this land are to go messengers to a nation scattered and peeled, a nation meted out and trodden down. These messengers are to take the word that an ensign has been set up on this land, and to this ensign the scattered nation shall be gathered. The land is America; the ensign set up is the stick of Ephraim, the Book of Mormon, which tells the story of some of the lost peoples of Israel, and opens the way for the establishment of God's kingdom, the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles, and the gathering of all his scattered people.

Jeremiah 49, verses 30 and 31 warns: "Flee, get you far off; dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor..... Arise, get up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the Lord, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone.

And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil ..."
 The land of America at that time dwelt without gates or bars, alone and without care. The wealth of the first colony from the tower of Babel was abandoned -- unclaimed -- booty waiting for the first comer to make it his own.

We said near the beginning of this sermon, you may remember, that the Bible had something to say about all three Book of Mormon colonies. The Book of Mormon itself tells very little about the third colony, but its coming to America is foretold in the Bible in one of the most specific prophecies imaginable, which is found in the 17th chapter of Ezekiel. Verses 1 through ten are a parable of Israel, Babylon, and Egypt. Babylon is represented as a great eagle, which came to Israel, cropped off the top of the highest cedar of Lebanon, and carried it away. This is Nebuchadnezzar's conquest, and carrying away of the king and princes to Babylon. This eagle took also of the seed of the land, and planted it, and it became a spreading vine. These were the common folk -- the farmers and artisans who were left behind to work the land, and establish as a puppet nation, which was represented in the parable as the law vine. Then the vine turns toward another great eagle, which represents Pharaoh of Egypt, hoping to find deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, although this was God's punishment, the king Zedekiah had sworn allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. The parable promises destruction and death because of this rebellion and perfidy. But in the closing verses God says, "I (not an eagle, but I) will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent, In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar...." etc. This agrees with the Book of Mormon story that an infant son of King Zedekiah -- a tender twig from the topmost twig of the cedar -- and a few of his faithful subjects comprised the third colony to come to America, where they eventually merged with the second, or Nephite colony. Many chapters of Jeremiah have to do with this situation -- Israel as a puppet state, looking to Egypt for deliverance, though God had decreed her captivity as punishment. Jeremiah was imprisoned, and his life endangered by his repeated advice to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's yoke. Ezekiel, who wrote from captivity in Babylon, wrote of the same thing, and some of Isaiah's prophecies were intended to prepare the people for the same situation.

There is yet more to be said about the ways in which the Bible foretells the Book of Mormon. Jesus himself foretold his appearance to the people of the American continent. We shall examine that very interesting statement next Sunday morning, under the subject, "Jesus' Other Sheep."

Be assured in the meantime that the Book of Mormon is not unscriptural. Its historical movements, its peoples, its coming forth are all prominently included in Bible prophecy, in order that in the mouths of two or three witnesses God's care for the people of Israel, and his love that sent his Only Begotten Son into the world might be made manifest to the children of men.