

“The Things Which I Saw While I Was Carried Away in the Spirit”

Lesson
4
Summary

1 Nephi 12–14

**Scripture
Summary:**

Nephi sees in vision: the land of promise; the righteousness, iniquity, and downfall of its inhabitants; the coming of the Lamb of God among them; how the twelve disciples and the twelve apostles shall judge Israel; the loathsome and filthy state of those who dwindle in unbelief.

Nephi sees in vision: the church of the devil set up among the Gentiles; the discovery and colonizing of America; the loss of many plain and precious parts of the Bible; the resultant state of Gentile apostasy; the restoration of the gospel, the coming forth of latter-day scripture, and the building up of Zion.

An angel tells Nephi of the blessings and cursings to fall upon the Gentiles—There are only two churches: the Church of the Lamb of God and the church of the devil—The saints of God in all nations are persecuted by the great and abominable church—The apostle John shall write concerning the end of the world. [Between 600 and 592 B.C.]

**Supplemental
Holy Land and
Jewish
insights:**

Now, More Than Ever – Emerging Information about Peoples in the Book of Mormon Lands:

The general time lines of the emerging cultures in the Book of Mormon Lands can now be compared to Biblical and Book of Mormon personalities. Many of their cultural and historical traditions coincide with the iniquities and downfalls predicted by Book of Mormon Prophets. Cultural histories include: Olmec, 2500B.C.–300B.C.; Mayan Pre Classic, 2000B.C.–300A.D.;

Zapotecs, 700B.C.–500B.C.; Mayan Classic, 300B.C.–900A.D.; Mayan Post Classic, 900A.D.–1500A.D.; Aztec 1300A.D.–1511A.D.

Prophets and Visions of the Future: Jewish commentary about visions of the future acknowledge that only a Prophet is able to understand divine things. “. . . dreams of the righteous contain visions, images and prophecies of a higher order . . . only a prophet, who rids himself of conscious base thoughts and desires is able to perceive divine things.” “The early prophets played a prominent role in communal affairs and were consulted for advice and often influenced the political destiny of Israel . . . at times they had to bear the consequences of their own dire predictions --- Jeremiah was put into stocks for his unpopular prophecies.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Mohammed, a Prophet? For many Moslems, Mohammed is called a Prophet although he apparently never claimed to be one. His writings did not particularly predict the future because he still held the Bible to be as accurate as he interpreted it. “From about 610 C.E. (A.D.) Muhammad claimed to have visions and to have been commanded, as messenger of God (Allah) to recite certain verses which came to his mind. In order to win over the Arabs to his new religion Muhammad realized that his appeal would have to be national and not aligned to either the Christianity of Byzantium or the Judaism of Babylonia. The holy book of Islam, the Koran, soon attracted a small community of devotees, and its message at this time concentrated on God's goodness and power, the return to God and final judgment, the necessity for man to be humble and grateful to God and to worship Him, and the obligation of generosity and respect for the rights of the poor and defenseless.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Geographies of Ancient and Modern Promised Lands: The prophecies of the “Colonization of America” in the Book of Mormon echo the blessings and prophecies given to Joseph, son of Jacob (Israel). The fascinating geographic connection in his blessing is the term, “everlasting hills.” Mountainous Israel is the “Crossroads of the East.” On the other hand, Utah (“Tops of the Mountains” in Navaho) is the “Crossroads of the West.” There are only two land masses on this planet that have a perpetual, unending range of mountains or “everlasting hills,” Israel and USA. The connection to God’s everlasting ways is also noted. “In the blessing given by Jacob to his son Joseph the inheritance of America is . . . predicted . . . : ‘Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall . . . The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.’ (Genesis 49:26)” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation Vol.3, Pg.68)

Restoration Includes Clarification of Ordinances: Although the word “baptism” is not found in the Old Testament, the Jewish immersions give us a clue of what ancient rituals were like. The Book of Mormon clearly explains these immersions and the picture seen by a Jewish reader seems similar to Biblical practices. Some religious Jews experience repeated immersions in a *Mikveh*, (monthly for women and regularly for men). They step into the immersion font from the east side, immerse themselves, and then exit to the west side. This could be a reminder of entering into the Promised

Land of Israel from what is now known as the east bank of the Jordan river. For the religious Jews, immersions are also favored below ground level in flowing water that emanates from bedrock - (the “Rock of Salvation.”) When animals were sacrificed, the cleaned carcass had to be immersed. Likewise, in modern times, to make meat “kosher,” it must be “immersed” in salt water.

Water and Sins Have a Connection in Jewish Traditions: “On the afternoon of the first day (of Rosh Hashana), it is customary to walk to the nearest body of running water and there symbolically ‘cast’ one's sins into the water. The ceremony may be based on a verse in the biblical book of Micah: ‘And Thou (referring to God) shall cast all their sins into the depths of the seas’ (Micah 7:19).” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Are Mormons Jews or Gentiles? In spite of the many similarities that Mormons and Jews have in their religious societies, it is inevitably essential for Latter-day Saints and Jews to have some dialogue on the definition of “Jew” and “Gentile.” Are Jews “Gentile” to the Mormons? Are Mormons “Gentile” to the Jews? “An undoubted factor in the survival of the Jews as a people with a common identity has been their shared experience of persecution at the hands of gentiles (non-Jews).” “In ancient Israel the acceptance of monotheism (the belief that there is only one God) became the chief factor distinguishing Jews from gentiles, who then worshiped many gods.” “. . . from the second century B.C.E. the prohibition against Jews marrying gentiles, limited originally to the seven Canaanite nations --- Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites . . . was extended to include all gentiles, who might lure Jews away from the true God. In order to prevent the possibility of intermarriage the rabbis enacted a series of laws intended to limit social contact between Jew and non-Jew.”

Righteous Gentiles: “. . . The concept of the righteous gentile (*hasidei ummot ha-olam* -- the pious ones of the nations of the world) is first found in the Midrash. The Tosefta teaches that they are as eligible to a place in the hereafter as any member of the House of Israel. Rabbi Isaac Arama states that ‘every true pious gentile is equal to a son of Israel.’ The Zohar states that all gentiles who do not hate Israel, and who deal justly with Jews, qualify as pious ones. According to Maimonides righteous gentiles were those who observed the Noachide laws and were motivated by belief in the divine origin and authenticity of Moses' prophecy . . .” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

I remember a humorous statement in an Israeli travel brochure outlining a tour of the USA. It included a stop in Salt Lake City . . . “the only place a Jew can walk down the street and be considered a Gentile!” Some day they will know, it's the same family!

Daniel Rona, born in Israel and living in Jerusalem has authored Old & New Testament and Book of Mormon Supplement Study Materials to be used in conjunction with the weekly LDS Gospel Doctrine Lesson study. NOTE: Three versions of the supplemental study materials are available *FREE* at www.HolyLandsRevealed.com. (Just click “LDS SUPPLEMENTS”)

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