

LAMANITES AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

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A Lamanite youth speaks in a Church meeting.

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YOU native Americans who are called Indians—who are you? Where did you come from? Do you know that your ancestors were once a mighty nation upon the American continent?

Evidences of the great nations of your ancestors have been found on this continent. Much has been learned about your people from studying these evidences. However, the best source of true information that tells who you are, where you came from, and what you can achieve is found in an important book—the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon: A History of Your Ancestors

THE Book of Mormon is a history of your people. It is your book. That is why members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints feel a responsibility to tell you about it.

The Book of Mormon is scripture. The gospel of Jesus Christ is written in both the Book of Mormon and the Bible. The Bible is scripture because it contains the word of God. The Bible prophet Ezekiel foresaw that in the latter days the writings of the Jews—the Bible—and the writings of your ancestors—the Book of Mormon—would be joined.

The Lord said to Ezekiel:

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another

stick, and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

*And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.
(Ezekiel 37:16,17.)*



Lehi and his people reach the promised land.

God loves your people on this continent, just as he loves all his children. The Book of Mormon tells how your forefathers came from Jerusalem about 600 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. A prophet named Lehi was warned by God to take his family and leave Jerusalem because the city was going to be destroyed. The Lord directed Lehi and his family to the seashore, where he told them how to build a ship. Then they sailed to what is now known as America.

After arriving in America, these people planted seeds and harvested crops. They found the earth rich with metals, which they molded into tools for building homes and cities. They built great temples and highways and made beautiful clothes. They had great faith in God, and he blessed them, but there were also times of wickedness that resulted in wars and destruction.

Two groups formed and fought each other. One group called themselves Nephites, and the other group was known as Lamanites. The Lamanites were marked by the Lord with a darker skin.

The Lamanites were wicked during some periods of history, while at other times they were obedient to God's commandments. An account



Helaman and the two thousand young warriors.

is given of some of your ancestors who built ships and sailed from the American continent with their families, never returning. These people journeyed to the islands of the sea and have lived there ever since.

Just before Jesus Christ was born, the Lamanites had become a righteous people. The Lamanite prophet Samuel visited the wicked Nephites to tell them that the Savior would soon be born in Palestine. When the Lord was born, God let your ancestors know by showing them a new star and other signs.

WHILE Jesus Christ was living in Palestine he organized his church and he taught the people many things. He told them that there was another people in the world that he was going to visit. He was speaking of your people in America.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. (John 10:16.)

When the Savior died on the cross, the earth shook and there was darkness in the land of Jerusalem for three hours. At this same time, a terrible destruction occurred in the Americas, and thick darkness covered the land for three days. Sometime following the three days of darkness a voice was heard by all the people on the American continent. It was the voice of Jesus Christ, who later appeared to the people as he descended out of heaven, clothed in a white robe,



Christ appears to Nephites.

he stood in the midst of them and said, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world." (3 Nephi 11:10.)

Your people remembered the prophecies concerning his coming, and they fell down and worshiped him.

Your People Saw Christ and Spoke with Him

AND it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them saying:

Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come.

And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him. (3 Nephi 11: 13-17.)

The Savior continued to teach your ancestors. He blessed the children, healed the sick, and taught the people to repent and to be baptized in his name. He chose leaders from among them and gave them authority to baptize and to carry on the affairs of his church. He taught them many other truths and commanded them that these things should be written.

After Jesus visited the people, they lived in love and peace for more than 200 years. Then they began to forget the Lord, and they separated into two groups again—the Nephites and the Lamanites. You are descendants of the Lamanites.

After the groups formed, war covered the land. Both the Nephites and the Lamanites had fallen away from the true church that the Savior established when he was here. The Lamanites eventually destroyed the Nephites.

Your History Was Preserved

MORONI, a righteous man whom the Lord allowed to witness the destruction of the Nephites, buried the record of your ancestors, written on gold plates, so it would not be destroyed. Your record lay buried in a hillside for more than 1,400 years. In the year 1823, Moroni, now resurrected, was sent by the Lord to a young man named Joseph Smith. Moroni told him where the history of your people was buried.



The Prophet Joseph Smith receives the gold plates, a record of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas, from the Angel Moroni in 1827.

Under the direction of the Lord, Joseph Smith translated the history into modern English, and this was published as the Book of Mormon in 1830. While it is the history of the ancient Americans, it also contains the gospel of Jesus Christ. God wanted to bring the gospel back to the earth because he had taken it away when the Lord's followers forgot him and became wicked.

The restoration of your record was an important part of bringing the gospel back to earth. The Lord has established his true church on the earth through his prophet Joseph Smith.

Members of the Church feel a responsibility to the Lamanite people, whose forefathers originally wrote the Book of Mormon. The Lord has given his restored church the responsibility of returning your book to you and of teaching you its message.

You Can Know That the Book of Mormon Is the Word of God

THE great prophet Moroni has given you a challenge concerning the message of the Book of Mormon:

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down unto the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Moroni 10:3,4.)

The Book of Mormon is your book. It is the word of God to your people. Test it and learn for yourself, and thereby enjoy the many blessings promised to you by the Lord when you accept the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mission Addresses

Mission offices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are located worldwide. Some are listed below. You can learn more about the Church and about the gospel of Jesus Christ by contacting the office nearest you.

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