

CHAPTER SEVEN

Again the Second Time

So far we have seen that the history in the first portion of the Book of Mormon (from First Nephi through Omni) parallels the first gathering of the children of Israel to the promised land. We next considered that segment of the Book of Mormon history covered from the book of Omni to the book of Helaman. We noted that it holds many significant comparisons to the events that have transpired during the second gathering of the House of Israel up to the present day.

Columbus was mirrored in Mosiah I, Joseph Smith in Alma the older, Karl Marx in Korihor, and Hitler in Amalickiah. The conflicts of the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and World Wars I and II resembled similar clashes that occurred in the books of Omni and Alma. The laws of Mosiah were based on the same fundamental principles as the Constitution of the United States of America. Also, the restoration of the Church and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon seem to have been foreshadowed in the Nephites' history.

Up to this point, by merely matching important individuals, events and circumstances of the past, we discovered astounding similarities. If we had attempted this task 160 years ago when the Book of Mormon was first published, we would not have had the benefit of historical hindsight on many of these events. They were yet forthcoming. How could we have compared Amalickiah and Hitler, for example, when Hitler was not born yet? Are we now faced with this dilemma as we see Book of Mormon history roll on through the books of Helaman, Third and Fourth Nephi, and Mormon, leaving us behind in the book of Helaman?

Drawing parallels is much like deciphering parables or metaphors. The reason Jesus spoke in parables was so that his disciples might "know the mystery of the kingdom of God" while the skeptic "may see, and not perceive...., may hear, and not understand...." (Mark 4:11,12.) An intended interpretation awaits to be unfolded, but if we stretch trifling points or overlook important facets, then they lose some or all of their potential impact. "Ye are the salt of the earth," does not mean, "You spoil the soil, making it sterile." We saw significant likenesses between Amalickiah and Hitler, but Hitler was not killed halfway through the War and succeeded by his brother, like Amalickiah was. Without history as a guide, how would we have known what the outcome would be?

So now, as we continue on in Book of Mormon history, past that segment which seems to match our day, how are we to know what ancient elements will find a parallel in our future and which will not? Should we even trouble ourselves with trying to figure this out? Why don't we just hold to established prophecies and maintain them as our guide?

Therein lies the key: other prophecies! We can use them as a standard of comparison, relating Book of Mormon history with prophecy rather than history.

Some prophecies are conditional. Their fulfillment depends on the righteousness or wickedness of the people. The majority of prophecies, however, describe future events the way they will actually happen. Nephi foretold that which he "knew...*must unavoidably come to pass* because of the great wickedness of the children of men." (1 Ne. 15:4.) Describing similar events, Jesus Christ declared, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, all these things *shall surely come....*" (3 Ne. 20:46.)

Notwithstanding their unconditional nature, many such prophecies still extend the invitation to repent. Doomed nations are made up of individuals who are free to choose whichever side they will take in the picture that the prophets have painted. They may align themselves with Babylon and fall with it, or they may join God's people and help bring about Zion. Babylon will fall and Zion will be redeemed; which course an individual will take is solely up to him.

We know we are not just puppets acting out a predestined role. Just because God knows what will befall us in the days to come does not mean that our agency is infringed even one iota. God sees what will happen because of what we will do: he doesn't force us to do what he saw.

Pondering the intense tribulations that lie ahead sometimes leads to a defeatist attitude: "What's the use? Why try to make a difference?" Yet if no one did anything, wouldn't the prophetic picture have been different? Would God or Satan have won in the end? Zion will triumph because a handful of righteous will do everything in their power to fight for the right and put down all evil, leaving the rest to a redeeming God, having deserved his intervention.

Mormon's counsel to Moroni seems most fitting here. He said,

"My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers [his Second Coming, as we apply this to us], and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever." (Moro. 9:25.)

While in some ways the future may look bleak, the great blessings that will be poured out as the Lord sets his hand again the second time to recover his people will more than compensate the Lord's people for their endurance.

The phrase "set his hand again the second time" is found six times in the scriptures. (Isa. 11:11 = 2 Ne. 21:11; 2 Ne. 6:14; 25:17; 29:1; Jacob 6:2.) The first gathering occurred anciently through Moses. The second gathering was inaugurated by Joseph Smith. Now that the Gentiles have essentially had their opportunity to accept the Gospel and have begun to reject it, the time is soon at hand when it will be taken from the Gentiles and given to the House of Israel. (3 Ne. 16:10,11.) Though the Gentiles generally have denied the Christ (2 Ne. 28:32), they have not completely apostatized, for there remain a righteous few among them (28:14). This period of transition is not

a "third" time, for the Church and the keys of the priesthood are still in tact and will not be lost from the earth. Nevertheless, this is such a momentous transition, the scriptures describe it as the Lord setting his hand "again" the second time. The Gentiles will be utterly destroyed, the righteous among them becoming numbered among the House of Israel. Those who have hearkened to the word of God have been numbered among the House of Israel. Inasmuch as we seem to have arrived at that prophesied time when the Gentiles are hardening their hearts against the Lamb of God (1 Ne. 14:6), might we expect that the Lord will soon make bare his arm in delivering his people who are of the house of Israel (1 Ne. 22:11)? This is not a third time, per se, because Christ's true church is still on the earth and the keys have already been bestowed. Perhaps, however, this turning point begins what the prophets spoke of when they said the Lord would set his hand "again" the second time. What a glorious time this is to live! Challenging, yes; but what an important destiny is ours to fulfill.

As we now consider the remaining Book of Mormon history for insights to guide us in our quest, our task is to try to match those events with what is prophesied to come in the days ahead. The parallel between the Savior's second coming and his ancient appearance to the Lehites is as plausible as any comparisons we have made between known circumstances of the past. The only difference is that the Second Coming has not yet happened, but it will--as certain as anything that has occurred in the past. We might say, like Mormon did, that "as many things as have been prophesied concerning us down to this day have been fulfilled, and as many as go beyond this day must surely come to pass." (W of M 1:4.)⁴⁹

Attempting this task in this day and age, we have a substantial advantage over the Saints of 160 years ago when the Book of Mormon was first published. The majority of the prophets' words seem to deal with the very day in which we live and those events that are shortly to come. We have a host of prophecies from which we can draw to try to determine what sort of parallels Book of Mormon history holds with our future.

Times of the Gentiles Fulfilled

The history in the book of Helaman contains extensive and sobering similarities with the present day and near future. The conditions of wickedness described seem prevalent in the world today, especially among the Gentile nations. Because of the Nephites' abominations during this period, several punishing destructions came upon them.

⁴⁹The placement of the book of the Words of Mormon, from which this reference is taken, is significant to note. It follows the small plates and introduces the plates of Mormon. But it also falls in the vicinity where the Jaredite records come forth (which event parallels the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in the latter days). Therefore the statement quoted here seems almost an introduction to the prophetic parallels between the Jaredite history and the Lehite history as well as between the Lehite history and latter-day events. Perhaps we could rephrase this statement to say, "The parallels thus far have been fulfilled, and those which follow hereafter will also be fulfilled."

In Helaman 1, the Lamanites launched a surprise attack on the city of Zarahemla, slaying many Nephites and taking many cities and strongholds before Moronihah drove them out. In chapters 4 and 5 the Lamanites again came against the Nephites. This time Zarahemla, along with half of the Nephites' other territories, remained under Lamanite control. Then, because of a miraculous conversion experience, the Lamanites gave the lands back to the Nephites. In chapter 11, contentions and wars broke out among the Nephites, and a widespread famine took the lives of many among the more wicked part of the land. Not until the people humbled themselves in sackcloth did the Lord rescue them.

Are these three major incidents going to find manifestations in our day? We know that the prophecies talk of wars, widespread captivity, civil conflict, and famine. They also promise deliverance for the righteous. However, are these events going to transpire in the same order they did in the Nephite record?

A search of the prophecies suggests that the answer is to the contrary. They seem to indicate that these things are closely interrelated and will not come as separate events. These three events in Book of Mormon history apparently overlap in their application to our day. Each event provides valuable perspective regarding both the causes and the effects of that which is to come.

First let us consider the causes. Pondering these, a most sobering realization settles upon us: the situations that brought these catastrophes upon the Nephites appear to be among us today.⁵⁰ This seems to be one of the primary themes that the ancient prophet-compilers wished to bring to our attention. The Book of Mormon's direct description of our degenerate condition matches, as if on purpose, its depiction of the depravity of its own people during this period of its history.⁵¹

Both the regressing Nephites and the modern declining Gentiles were charged with (1) denying the spirit of prophecy and revelation (Hel. 4:23 compare Morm. 9:7; 3 Ne. 29:6), (2) seeking the praises of the world more than the praise of God (Hel. 7:21; compare Morm. 8:38), (3) committing all manner of wickedness and abominations (Hel. 4:12; compare Morm. 8:36,40; 3 Ne. 16:10), (4) giving in to the enticing of the evil one who seeks only the misery of his victims (Hel. 7:16; compare Morm. 8:38), and (5) allowing Satan to rage in their hearts (Hel. 7:15; compare 2 Ne. 28:20).

The Book of Mormon prophets' lamentations concerning the ancient and the modern situation are even similar. "O repent ye, repent ye! Why will ye die? Turn ye, turn ye unto the Lord your God," they cried. (Hel. 7:17; compare Morm. 8:41; 9:6.) Included in their woeful lamentations was the warning, "...Except ye repent ye shall perish...." (Hel. 7:28; compare 2 Ne. 28:19.)

Pride was another condition about which the prophets seemed particularly concerned. They beheld that the Nephite civilization, like our society, had "set [their] hearts upon the riches and the vain things of this world..." and that they "began to seek to get gain that they might be lifted up

⁵⁰Elder Mark E. Petersen said, "The extinct civilizations of the past now speak to us out of the dust of the ages, giving warning against the same conditions which brought them down to oblivion. Listen to what they say!" (*Ensign*, June 1971, p. 48.)

⁵¹Nephi's rebuke of his people in Helaman 7:15-29 is a prime example.

above another...." (Hel. 7:21; 6:17; compare Morm. 8:37.) Nephi, son of Helaman, warned his people, "...Wo shall come unto you because of that pride which ye have suffered to enter your hearts, which has lifted you up *beyond that which is good...!*" (Hel. 7:26; 4:12.) Prophesying of our day, Jesus said that not only would we, the Gentiles, "be lifted up in the pride of [our] hearts," but that we would be lifted up "above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth...." (3 Ne. 16:10; Morm. 8:36.) No wonder President Benson recently addressed the topic of pride.⁵² He introduced his remarks with this statement: "...Lest we miss that momentous Book of Mormon message from that fallen people, the Lord warns us in the Doctrine and Covenants, 'Beware of pride, lest ye become *as the Nephites* of old.' (D&C 38:39.)"⁵³

The Nephite record holds no reservations in condemning even the members of the church. It states that this pride and its accompanying wickedness and abominations were also "among those also who professed to belong to the church of God." (Hel. 4:11.) Moroni saw that the members of God's church in the latter days would likewise be penetrated with pride. (Morm. 8:36-38.) In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord declared that if the time should come that the Saints (speaking collectively) cease being "a light unto the world and...the saviors of men," they will be "good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men." (D&C 103:9,10; 3 Ne. 16:15.)

Another characteristic attribute of this period of Nephite history is that "they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore they were ripening for destruction...." (Hel. 5:2,3.) Abundant indicators around us today sadly profess that we too have reached this point.⁵⁴ Our prophet recently testified that "wickedness is rapidly expanding in every segment of our society. It is more highly organized, more cleverly disguised, and more powerfully promoted than ever before."⁵⁵

Also in this era of Book of Mormon history, a dramatic transition took place. The Nephites, who had been such a highly favored people of the Lord, became increasingly entrenched in wickedness; they had "*sinned against that great knowledge* which [they had] received...." (Hel. 7:24.) On the other hand, the previously pagan Lamanites were converted as a nation to the gospel, and their righteousness eventually exceeded that of the Nephites. (Hel. 6:34:34-36.) "...The Lord will be merciful unto them," Nephi (son of Helaman) said, "yea, he will lengthen out their days and increase their seed...." (Hel. 7:24.) Prolonging life and multiplying posterity are key elements of the Abrahamic covenant. (Exo 20:12; Gen. 22:17.) Could this ancient occurrence betoken that time in the latter days when the Lord will fulfill the covenant he made with the House of Israel?

A closely analogous transition is prophesied to happen in the latter days. "...The Gentiles," said Christ, "shall *sin against my gospel*, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel...." (3 Ne. 16:10.)

⁵²President Benson's urgency in proclaiming this message on pride was manifest when he said, "I know the Lord wants this message delivered now." (*Ensign*, May 1989, p. 4.)

⁵³*Ensign*, May 1989, p. 4.

⁵⁴Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1989, p. 9. (Used by permission.)

⁵⁵Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 87.

As we discussed above, that seems to be what is taking place today. Christ continued, "And then will I *remember my covenant* which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them." (3 Ne. 16:11.)

The parallels between the Nephites and the latter-day Gentiles and between the Lamanites and the latter-day House of Israel seem to be highly significant.⁵⁶ In many places Mormon's choice of wording, when he describes the Nephites or Lamanites, creates a strong prophetic image for the destiny of the latter-day counterpart. This correlation is extremely valuable, for most prophecies speak in terms of the House of Israel and the Gentiles.

For example, in the following reference, if the word "Gentile" were to be used in place of "Nephite," and "House of Israel" in place of "Lamanite," it would become a perfect description of the latter-day transition just mentioned.

"And thus we see that the Nephites did begin to dwindle in unbelief, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; yea, they did begin to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him. And thus we see that the Spirit of the Lord began to withdraw from the Nephites, because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts. And thus we see that the Lord began to pour out his Spirit upon the Lamanites, because of their easiness and willingness to believe in his words." (Hel. 6:34-36.)

This correlation actually begins as early as the book of Mosiah. The church founded by Alma went first among the Nephites, just as the restored gospel was taken first among the Gentiles in the latter days. The Lamanites did not join the church in a major way until nearly a hundred years later. This reflects the belated acceptance of the gospel by the House of Israel in the latter days.

The condition of the Nephites during this ancient era matches that of the Gentiles from the time of the restoration up to the present day. After the establishment of the church, both the Nephites and the Gentiles experienced great blessings. (Alma 16:21; compare 3 Ne. 20:15,27; 1 Ne. 14:2.) The Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon them (Alma 16:16; compare 3 Ne. 20:27); "the word of God [was] preached in its purity in all the land..." (Alma 16:21; compare 1 Ne. 14:34); and they were "a highly favored people of the Lord...: above every other nation, kindred, tongue, or people..." (Alma 9:20; compare 1 Ne. 22:7; 3 Ne. 20:15,27).

Many similarities can also be drawn between the ancient Lamanites and the latter-day House of Israel during this same period of time. Both had remained cut off from the presence of the Lord as a result of their transgressions. (Alma 9:14; compare Isa. 59:2.) The curses of God were upon them. (Alma 17:15; compare Deut. 28:15.) And it was "because of the traditions of their fathers that [had] caused them to remain in their state of ignorance...." (Alma 9:16; also Alma 17:15; compare Matt. 14:3.) Nevertheless, notwithstanding their state of unbelief, "the promises of the Lord were extended unto them on the conditions of repentance." (Alma 17:15; compare 3 Ne. 24:7; Mal. 3:7.) Indeed, the prophets testified concerning both that "at some period of time [they would] be brought to believe in His word, and to know of the incorrectness of the traditions of their fathers; and many of

⁵⁶Appendix H briefly discusses the possible identity of the modern Gentile and House of Israel nations.

them [would] be saved, for the Lord will be *merciful* unto all who call on his name." (Alma 9:17; compare 3 Ne. 22:7,8.)

While the blessings of the Lord were extended to the Lamanites (symbolizing the House of Israel), the Nephites (symbolizing the Gentiles), on the other hand, because of the great blessings which they had received, were under a different status. To them the Lord anciently decreed that if they would "rebel against him," that they would "utterly be destroyed from off the face of the earth." (Alma 9:19-24; compare 1 Ne. 14:3.) Nephi (son of Lehi) reinforced this correlation between the Nephites and the Gentiles when he proclaimed, "...Wo unto him that *has the law given*, yea, that has all the commandments of God, *like unto us*, and that *transgresseth them*, and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state!" (2 Ne. 9:27.)

Therefore, inasmuch as we live during a time when the Gentile nations are seething in wickedness, while the House of Israel nations yearn for freedom and independence, we have reason to worry for the Gentiles and rejoice for the House of Israel. There is no doubt the Lord has been pouring out his Spirit upon those who are in captive nations as they cry out for freedom. Alma said, "...The Spirit of God...is also the spirit of freedom." (Alma 61:15.) It is likely that he is priming them for the great blessings that will soon issue forth to quench their longing hearts' desires. Their mass demonstrations against their heavily armed governments could be another fulfillment of Joseph Smith's "Civil War" prophecy. In it he foresaw a time when "slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war." (87:4.) Significantly, the very next verse in this prophecy speaks of that time when the remnant who will be left shall vex the Gentiles. Below we discuss this vexing in greater detail. According to the scriptures, the reason this will come upon the Gentiles will be because they will harden their hearts against the Lord and his gospel. Christ taught that in that generation when the Gentiles will no longer receive the gospel, "for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men..., the *times of the Gentiles* [will] be *fulfilled*." (D&C 45:29.)

Corruption of Government; Rise of Secret Combinations

Another characterizing condition described in the first half of the book of Helaman is the Nephites' adulteration of the laws of Mosiah and the penetration of Gadianton's secret combination into the Nephite government. Comparing their situation with ours today offers perhaps the most fitting treatise on our present political predicament found anywhere in the scriptures.

Hanging by a Thread

Previously we showed that fundamental principles which characterized the laws of Mosiah found concrete similarities with the Constitution of the United States.⁵⁷ Like the Constitution, the laws of Mosiah did not remain in their pristine state. In this period of Nephite history about which we are speaking, the record reports that the Nephites had "*altered...the laws of Mosiah..., and...their laws had become corrupted....*" (Hel. 4:22.) The same thing seems to have befallen our beloved Constitution and the laws of our land.⁵⁸ Amendments have been made to the constitution that are not in keeping with its original intent.⁵⁹ Many laws have been passed, agencies formed,⁶⁰ and executive orders created which disregard the principles that framed the Constitution. Our government has extended far beyond its shackled, limited role to becoming a burgeoning bureaucracy that stifles instead of protecting the inalienable rights of individuals.

Not only did the Nephites make changes in the laws of Mosiah, but they "trampled [them] under their feet...." (Hel. 4:22.) Many in our day as well hold the same disregard for the Constitution.⁶¹ The prophet Joseph Smith prophesied that the time would come when the Constitution would be "upon the brink of ruin."⁶² How close have we come to that period?⁶³ The following illustrates how precariously we stand at the time.

In the last few years there has been a call by the states of the Union to hold a constitutional convention. (Thirty-two of the thirty-four necessary have applied as of the time of this writing.)⁶⁴ The avowed purpose of holding such a convention is to draft a balanced budget amendment. However, there are no safeguards or proscriptions written into the Constitution that would prevent such a convention from straying from its declared course, becoming a runaway convention such as the one that gave birth to our Constitution--only this time under the hands of less-than-inspired

⁵⁷See "Establishment of a Free Land" section in chapter two.

⁵⁸Ezra Taft Benson declared, "Unfortunately, we as a nation have apostatized in various degrees from different Constitutional principles as proclaimed by the inspired founders." (*Ensign*, Nov. 1987, p. 6.)

⁵⁹For example, the Sixteenth Amendment introduced the Marxist graduated income tax. The Seventeenth Amendment eliminated the Senate's restraining influence on demagoguery. (Ezra Taft Benson, *The Constitution: A Heavenly Banner*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1986, p. 22.)

⁶⁰One of the most detrimental steps taken by our country was the debauching of its currency and placing it in the hands of a less-than-inspired, non-elected few, through the creation of the Federal Reserve. (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 638.)

⁶¹President David O. McKay said, "...There has been an alarming increase in the abandoning of the ideals that constitute the foundation of the Constitution of the United States...." (Ezra Taft Benson CR, Oct. 2, 1966, p. 120.)

⁶²Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, p. 6.

⁶³Ezra Taft Benson recently said that we are "fast approaching that moment prophesied by Joseph Smith...." (*Ensign*, Nov. 1987, p. 6.)

⁶⁴Representative Howard C. Nielsen, (R) Utah, "Keeping in Touch," Bulletin from the 101st Congress, June 1989.

men.⁶⁵ In fact, new constitutions have already been drafted: ready to be presented.⁶⁶ If such a convention is held and a new constitution produced, what sort of national debate might we see when this goes back to the various states to be ratified?

Whatever the cause, when the time comes that "this nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground," as Joseph Smith prophesied, we should be prepared to "be the staff upon which the nation shall lean...[to] bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction."⁶⁷

In Book of Mormon history as well, fundamental political issues created tremendous contentions which divided the Nephites.⁶⁸ Some fell for the deceptive lines of the corrupt government leaders, and others sided with Nephi. (Hel. 8:7; 9:39-41; 10:1.)

The Modern Secret Combination

Closely associated with the corruption of the Nephites' laws of government came a widespread penetration of the Gadianton robbers (a secret combination) into their society. One of the underlying themes of the Book of Mormon seems to be its warning to us about secret combinations. Truly, we are surrounded by many forms of organized crime and subversion: drug rings, terrorists, the various Mafias, and disease profiteers⁶⁹--to name a few. However, referring to our day, Moroni spoke of a "secret combination"--*singular*--"which shall be among you...." (Ether 8:24.) This suggests that he saw a combination of such magnificent proportions as to dwarf all others because of its broad penetration and its effectiveness in advancing evil.

The motivation of this destructive and murderous combination, he said, would be "to get power and gain." (Ether 8:23.) Their aim would be "to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries." (8:25.) Apparently, this warning has now become reality. President Benson

⁶⁵Professor James MacGregor Burns, a member of the board of directors of the Committee on the Constitutional System (who are pushing for this convention), said, "Let us face reality. The framers [of the Constitution] have simply been too shrewd for us. They have outwitted us. They designed separated institutions that cannot be unified by mechanical linkages, frail bridges, tinkering. If we are to `turn the founders upside down'--to put together what they put asunder--we must directly confront the constitutional structure they erected." (James MacGregor Burns, The Power to Lead, 1984.)

⁶⁶For example, in his recent book, Reforming American Government: The Bicentennial Papers of the Committee on the Constitutional System, (1985) James MacGregor Burns presents forty working papers and drafts seventeen proposed reforms of the Constitution that stand in opposition to the fundamental principles set forth by the Founders. (Gary Benoit, "Bicentennial Plot," *American Opinion*, Feb. 10, 1986, p. 22.)

⁶⁷Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, p. 6.

⁶⁸Ezra Taft Benson said, "It was the struggle over free agency that divided us before we came here [in the pre-earth life]; it may well be the struggle over the same principle which will deceive and divide us again." (CR, Oct. 1963, p. 16.)

⁶⁹Doctrine and Covenants 89:4 speaks of conspiring men who make profit at the expense of people's health.

recently declared, "A secret combination that seeks to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries is increasing in its evil influence and control over America and the entire world."⁷⁰

Anciently the Gadianton robbers eventually "overspread all the land of the Nephites." (Hel. 6:38) They too were driven by the desire to "get gain and glory of the world." (7:4.) To accomplish their aim they "usurped the power and authority of the land" by "filling the judgment seats"--the positions of governmental leadership. (7:4.) In the same context of nearly every discussion of secret combinations in the Book of Mormon can be found mentioned some principle of government. Government is obviously where the most power and gain can be achieved.⁷¹

Modern times are no exception. Means for gaining power exist that ancient tyrants could only dream of. Today, conquest of the whole world is a very real possibility for those cunning enough to pull it off. Communication networks for propaganda purposes are in place, advanced military equipment for enforcement are plentiful, computer capabilities for monitoring are more than ample, and apathy of people who are in a position to thwart such plans has been sufficient.

Modern prophets, especially Ezra Taft Benson and David O. McKay, have spoken out clearly, fervently, and frequently concerning this secret combination prophesied to come in our day.⁷² They identified it as the Communist/Socialist conspiracy. They remarked that the greatest threat came from within our very own country. They warned that this subversive movement was deceiving even the very elect. They declared that the conflict we faced against this conspiracy was nothing more than a physical continuation of the war that was waged in the pre-existence: the same issues being at stake. They spoke of the need for an apathetic populous to become alerted to the dangers that faced them so that they might be instrumental in reversing the dangerous trends that would bring enslavement and destruction. Often, during the sixties, when these warnings were most pronounced, Ezra Taft Benson would say, "We don't need a prophet--we have one--what we need is a listening ear." Unfortunately, it seems that most people did not listen.

The Book of Mormon, especially its history, clearly supports the position of these two great prophets of freedom. Perhaps this is one reason why President Benson now emphasizes the Book of Mormon as he does.

⁷⁰Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 87.

⁷¹A well documented, up-to-date treatise on this subject may be found in *The Shadows of Power* by James Perloff. (Western Islands, Appleton, Wisconsin, 1988.)

⁷²Ezra Taft Benson and David O. McKay's warnings were most pronounced during the 60's. During this time Elder Benson gave 15 General Conference addresses and President McKay, over a dozen on freedom, free enterprise, fiscal responsibility, the Constitution, and agency. They invariably tied these topics into showing the evils of socialism and communism. (Sheri Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography*, Deseret Book, 1987, pp. 366,367.)

Helaman 6:38-40 concisely describes the effect that the Gadianton robbers had on the Nephites. Like a polished mirror, this brief summary sharply reflects our latter-day situation.⁷³ It states:

"And it came to pass...that the Nephites did build them [the Gadianton robbers] up and support them, beginning at the more wicked part of them, until they had overspread all the land of the Nephites, and had seduced the more part of the righteous until they had come down to believe in their works and partake of their spoils, and to join with them in their secret murders and combinations. And thus they did obtain the sole management of the government, insomuch that they did trample under their feet and smite and rend and turn their backs upon the poor and the meek, and the humble followers of God. And thus we see that they were in an awful state, and ripening for an everlasting destruction."

Perhaps the most startling aspect of this statement is the seduction of "the more part of the righteous." How could that have happened?

What the Communist/Socialist movement claims as its goal is a peaceful, united world in which all the needy are taken care of and there is no inequality. Everything they do, they do in the name of achieving these ends. These aims, of course, are good. They lie at the root of the gospel. They tend to touch man's conscience and reach into the deepest desires of his heart. Is it, perhaps, the *means* of achieving this aim that can be evil?

In the pre-existence, Satan offered salvation to everyone, as did Christ. Satan promised that no one would be lost, for he would impose his plan with force; man would have no agency. Underpinning his plan was the desire to get unsurpassed power and glory. The eternal plan of the Father, which Christ represented, would make salvation possible for all, but would require man to choose the ways of righteousness of his own free will. (Moses 4:1-3.)

This pre-earth division culminated in what we call the war in heaven. Significantly, in the same context that John speaks of this "war in heaven," he also told of the war that would be waged in the latter days against the saints of God. (Rev. 12:7,17.)

Reflecting Satan's plan, the Communist/Socialist movement promises that everyone will be taken care of, and it requires force to bring that about. What the key promoters of this system are actually after, though, is power and gain. The principles upon which the Constitution was framed, on the other hand, call for and allow men to choose a better world of their own free will. Recognizing the fact that some will fall, it beckons free men to respond appropriately to the plight of their fellow men.

Those who promote the Communist/Socialist line, in effect propose an alternative to God's wisdom.⁷⁴ They pit carnal knowledge against eternal truths. Could such presumptuous

⁷³In a General Conference address Ezra Taft Benson discussed the striking similarities between the aims and tactics of the Communist/Socialist conspiracy and the secret combinations of the Book of Mormon such as the Gadianton robbers. (CR, Oct. 1961, pp. 71,72.)

⁷⁴Whittaker Chambers, one of the early strategists involved in subverting our country (who ended up abandoning this affiliation), called Communism "the great alternative faith of mankind." He said, "The Communist vision is the vision of Man without God." (Whittaker Chambers, Witness, p. 9.)

propagandists be among those who Christ labeled "false Christs." (JS-M 1:22; Matt. 24:24) They "*set themselves up* for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world, but they seek not the welfare of Zion." (2 Ne. 26:29; Moses 4:1.)⁷⁵ Truly, these individuals seem to have been successful in deceiving some of the very elect, who are elect according to the covenant. (JS-M 1:22.) Might this self-savior egotism be the blasphemy against God that John, Isaiah, and Christ referred to in their prophecies of the latter days? (Rev. 13:6; Isa. 52:5; D&C 112:26.) Christ said that because of blasphemy by members of his church, the chastening destructions to sweep the world would begin upon his house. (D&C 112:25,26; 1 Pet. 4:17.)

Helaman 6:38 states that the righteous Nephites who had been lured away partook of the spoils of the Gadianton band. This phenomenon reflects the true nature of socialism--a fundamental tool of the Communist/Socialist conspiracy. Forced redistribution of wealth is nothing more than legalized plunder.⁷⁶ In the past few decades we have seen a burgeoning of socialistic programs in our nation that once revered individual responsibility. Today, we see nearly everyone, including the righteous, reaching their hands into the collectivistic pot. An even sadder commentary is that now even faithful latter-day Saints are involved in legislating socialistic programs.

Apparently, because socialism does not seem all that bad anymore--its motives appear benevolent--the righteous have been turning more and more to the government to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, help the poor, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted. However, what our nation is doing in the name of taking care of the needy, is actually creating an increased number of people dependent upon the government. The forced philanthropy which governmental programs provide will never suffice for the true charity of voluntary assistance.⁷⁷ Ironically, can we not therefore say that our society, like the Nephites', actually "turn[s] their backs upon the poor..."? (Hel. 6:39.)

Not only did the Nephites participate in the Gadianton band's plunder, but they "did build them up and support them...." (Hel. 6:38.) The same has been true in our day. Ironically, while being a fortress for freedom,⁷⁸ our nation has helped the globalists' cause, both at home and abroad. At home, our citizens finance the burden of increased socialism, champion the leftist rhetoric, patronize the various socialistic governmental programs, and elect liberal leaders. Abroad, our nation has built up and supported Communism around the world. Ezra Taft Benson has said, "Rather than impede communism our policies in their total effect have apparently helped

⁷⁵Marion G. Rommey said, "Communism is Satan's counterfeit for the gospel plan, and...it is an avowed enemy of the God of the land. Communism is the greatest anti-Christ power in the world today and therefore the greatest menace not only to our peace but to our preservation as a free people." (Sept. 1979.)

⁷⁶Frederic Bastiat presents an in-depth treatise on the subject of legal plunder in The Law, Irving-on-Hudson, New York, 1987, pp. 20-28. See also Ezra Taft Benson, *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1968, p. 52.

⁷⁷Ezra Taft Benson, Teachings, p. 263.

⁷⁸Our Constitutional form of government and the citizens who revere what our nation represents stand directly in the path of these globalists' plans. Therefore, from the earliest stages, subversion of the United States has been a primary focus of their plans. (Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Sept. 1961, p. 73.)

promote it."⁷⁹ Our foreign policy has included such things as high-level diplomatic exchanges and granting favorable trading status to Communist regimes. It has also allowed the transfer of exorbitant amounts of equipment, technology, and credit⁸⁰ to oppressive governments.⁸¹ In some cases, such as China and Nicaragua in the past and South Africa today, our nation has actually played (and is playing) a significant role in pushing countries into Communism in the first place.

To date, as many as 150 million individuals have been killed by Communists. That slaughter continues up to the present day.⁸² Inasmuch as our nation has helped prop up these secret combinations "of murder and...darkness," how much responsibility do members of our country bear for this blood that has been spilt? (2 Ne. 26:22.) How much of this bloodshed will be found spotting the garments of negligent members of the Church who were supposed to be a light unto the world and the saviors of men? (D&C 103:9.)

The Nephite record states that anciently, even the more part of the righteous were seduced "to join with [the Gadianton robbers] in their secret *murders*...." (Hel. 6:38.) Considering what has taken place in our day, we can see better why the mirroring Nephites "were in an ^a*awful state*, and ripening for an everlasting ^b*destruction*." (Hel. 6:40.)

In Moroni's warning about a secret combination to come in our day, he exclaimed, "...Wo be unto it, because of the blood of *them who have been slain*; for they cry from the dust for vengeance upon it, and also upon those who *build it up*." (Ether 8:24.) Because of this combination, Moroni said that we too would be in an "^a*awful situation*" and that "the sword of the justice of the Eternal God [would] fall upon [us], to [our] overthrow and ^b*destruction* if [we would] suffer these things to be." (8:23,24.)

Scriptural Remedies for An Awful Situation

The Book of Mormon not only depicts our awful situation, but it presents the remedy as well. The solution could be considered two-fold: exposing secret works of darkness and repenting, the first being really a subset of the latter. This theme is probably most obvious in Alma's instructions

⁷⁹CR, Oct. 5, 1962, p. 15.

⁸⁰Congressman Toby Roth said, "Billions of dollars in loans at terms that American borrowers can only dream of are being provided to the Soviet government and, in turn, are being used to help finance Soviet aggression and adventurism around the world." ("Look Who's Funding Moscow," *The Constitution*, May/June, 1988, p. 6.)

⁸¹In 1982, explaining one reason why our nation was spending so much for our own military, Senator William Armstrong of Colorado said, "In the last ten years alone, the United States and other Western nations have sold to the Soviet Union and its satellites more than fifty billion dollars worth of technical equipment the communists could not produce themselves. In addition, the Soviets have been able to purchase entire factories, designed and built by Western engineers and financed in large part by American and European banks."

⁸²For example, recently the Marxist government in Kenya killed an estimated 50,000 civilians over a 19 month period. The apparent bias in our media was evidenced by the fact that this incredible casualty count was buried in an obscure article on page eleven of the *Denver Post*. ("Report: Somali Troops Killing Civilians," Jan. 18, 1990, p. 11-A.)

to his son, Helaman, regarding the 24 plates that contained a record of the bygone Jaredites. Eleven consecutive verses (37:21-32) except one (37:24) mention a phrase to the effect, "secret works," "secret abominations," "works of darkness" at least once. There are nineteen such phrases in just eleven verses. Likewise, there are ten occurrences of a phrase such as "bring to light" or "made manifest" that says something about making these hidden things known. From this conspicuous emphasis, we can conclude that an important antidote is turning on the light of truth to expose the secret works of darkness. A wealth of contemporary information is available, which unfolds plainly the evil workings of modern secret combinations. Appendix M list some of the most valuable sources, most of which have been endorsed by prophets, seers and revelators.

In the midst of speaking about unveiling secret abominations, Alma explicitly warned not to reveal the oaths, covenants, signs, wonders, and plans of these secret workers of darkness. (Alma 37:27,29,32.) "Only their wickedness and their murders and their abominations shall ye make known," he commanded. (37:29.) We are to teach people "to abhor" such things, proclaiming not the deep secrets of these workers of darkness but "that these people were destroyed on account of their wickedness and abominations and their murders." (37:29.) The focus is not on conspiracy but on iniquity. As Alma concludes this admonition he does not emphasize conspiracy per se, but he highlights the need to repent. "And now, my son, remember the words which I have spoken unto you: trust not these secret plans unto this people, but teach them an everlasting hatred against sin and iniquity." (37:32.) The remaining two verses of his conclusion admonish to preach repentance, faith in Christ, humility, resisting the temptations of the devil, and being diligent in good works. (37:33,34.) The "awful situation" in which we find ourselves today is not merely because a secret combination has gotten above us, but it has much more to do with the fact that our generation has been wicked enough to allow this to happen.

Perhaps this is why Nephi, son of Helaman, when he saw that a secret combination had obtained sole management of the Government of his people, sorrowed in his heart for the great wickedness of his people. (Hel. 7:6-9.) His reprimand to the wicked Nephites in Zarahemla, as recorded in sixteen verses in Helaman chapter seven (7:13-29), contains only one reference to secret combinations (7:25). Every other part of his message focused on their iniquity and their need to repent lest they be destroyed from off the land -- the same message that is now applicable today for the wicked Gentiles that inhabit the land of America.

Like the Nephites, we do not seem to have hearkened to the warning voices of civilizations past. A commentary on our history may very well read like what was said of the Nephite's during this period: "This great loss...and the great slaughter...would not have happened had it not been for their wickeness and their abominations which was among them; yea and it was among those also who professed to belong to the church of God." (Hel. 4:11.) The salt had lost its savor and was thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. (Matt. 5:13; Luke 14:34; 3 Ne. 16:5; D&C 101:39,40; 103:10.) No wonder Nephi lamented, "O ye fools, ye uncircumscised of heart, ye blind, and ye stiffnecked people, do ye know how long the Lord your God will suffer you that ye shall go on in this your way of sin? O ye ought to begin to hown and mourn, because of the great destruction which at this time doth await you, except ye shall repent." (Hel. 9:21,22.)

Hence, Moroni identified the need for us to awaken to our awful situation as a *commandment*. (Ether 8:24.)⁸³ Many have been lured into believing that "all is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth," but actually Satan through his disciples of deception has been "[cheating] their souls, and [leading] them away carefully down to hell." (2 Ne. 28:21.) Our Prophet once declared, "...Our stand for freedom is a most basic part of our religion; this stand helped get us to this earth, and our reaction to freedom in this life will have eternal consequences. Man has many duties, but he has no excuse that can compensate for his loss of liberty.... You cannot fully live the gospel without working to save freedom and the Constitution...."⁸⁴

Those who have become involved in this effort have found what a difficult task it is to alert an anesthetized people. They have found themselves ridiculed as right-wing extremists, pessimistic sensationalists, and paranoid anti-Communists (mocking labels that Moroni, no doubt, would have received had he lived in our day -- for President Benson has not been spared his share of derision). They have also been maligned with labels that do not even resemble their motives, such as "neo-Nazi" and "rascist."⁸⁵ These meek patriots are accused of departing from the mainstream of the Church; when in reality, those who make the accusation are the hypocritical ones who "hear [the words of the Prophet], but they do them not." (Ezek. 33:30-32.)

Anciently, this same sort of denigration took place. When Nephi "had spoken unto [the Nephites] concerning the corruptness of their law," the judges, "who also belonged to the secret band of Gadianton..., were angry with him because he spake plainly unto them concerning their secret works of darkness...." (Hel. 8:1,3,4.) They tried to taint Nephi by crying, "[He is reviling] against this people and against our law!" as if he had committed a "crime." (8:2,1.) The Nephite record acquits Nephi and convicts his accusers when it declares, "...Nothing did he speak which was contrary to the commandments of God." (8:3.)

Those who sorrow in the persecution heaped upon them when they speak forth the truth can be comforted, for persecution has followed, and will always attend the godly. (Matt 5:10-12 = 3 Ne. 12:10-12; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Ne. 26:8; D&C 98:13,14.) Suffering shame is an inseparable part of taking up the cross of Christ. (Jacob 1:8; 2 Ne. 9:18; Heb. 12:2.) The prize for enduring this burden is the kingdom of God. (Jacob 1:7; 2 Ne. 9:18; Heb. 12:2.)

Even though the modern combination will wreak great havoc, the Lord has reassured us that he will fulfill his covenant to his people who are of the House of Israel. (2 Ne. 29:14; 1 Ne. 14:13-17.) To do that, he "must needs destroy the secret works of darkness, and of murders, and of abominations." (2 Ne. 10:16.) Those Gentiles who do not repent will be severed from, while those who repent will be numbered among the redeemed House of Israel. (3 Ne. 16:13,15.) Whether or

⁸³J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I., said, "There is no place here in America for part-time patriots. This nation is face to face with the greatest danger ever to confront it, a sinister and deadly conspiracy which can be conquered only by an alert, informed citizenry.... Public indifference to this threat is tantamount to national suicide. Lethargy leads only to disaster...." (Quoted by Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Oct. 1962, p. 17.)

⁸⁴Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Oct. 2, 1966, p. 122.

⁸⁵Ezra Taft Benson, "Stand Up For Freedom," address given at the Assembly Hall in Feb. 11, 1966 to the Utah Forum for the American Idea.

not a person stands valiantly for freedom, resisting any encroachments, will be an important sifter in the day of the Lord's wrath. (D&C 101:80,95; 98:6,12.) The reason Moroni warned about a massive secret combination to come in our day that would seek to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations and countries was so "that evil may be done away." (Ether 8:26.) To resist the abundant admonitions of the word of God will result in a person's being cut off from among the Lord's people. (3 Ne. 21:11.)

A Great and Marvelous Work

During this portion of Nephite history, Nephi (son of Helaman) performs a central role. Looking to prophecy for a counterpart in the latter days, we discover that Christ's description in Third Nephi of a particular servant closely matches Nephi and the part he played. This prophecy of the Lord's servant paints a most fitting portrait of Joseph Smith. The context, however, suggests a time immediately preceding the destructions that will come upon the Gentiles. Therefore, this prophecy probably bears a dual fulfillment.

The comparison between Nephi and this servant yields many similarities, some of which are more characterizing than others. First, the words that this servant shall bring forth, shall be the words of Christ. (3 Ne. 21:9.) Nephi also declared "the word of the Lord" unto the Nephites, "...and nothing did he speak which was contrary to the commandments of God." (Hel. 10:14; 8:3.) Second, this servant will play an integral role in the "great and *marvelous work*" which will be wrought by the Father. (3 Ne. 21:9.) Similarly, "God...commanded [Nephi] to prophesy...*marvelous things*..." (Hel. 9:2.) Third, the servant will direct his words "unto the *Gentiles*..." (3 Ne. 21:11.) Nephi was commanded to declare his words to the *Nephites* (who parallel the Gentiles in significant ways)⁸⁶. (Hel. 10:11.) Fourth, the Father "shall give unto [the servant] *power*..." (3 Ne. 21:11.) Similarly, the Lord told Nephi, "Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels...that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus shall ye have *power* among this people." (Hel. 10:6.) Fifth, Christ said destruction would come upon the Gentiles if they would not believe in the words which the servant would bring forth. (3 Ne. 21:11-21.) Likewise, Nephi was commanded by the Lord to declare to his people, "Except ye repent, thus saith the Lord, ye shall be smitten even unto destruction." (Hel. 10:14.) And sixth, the Gentiles "shall not hurt" the servant. However, though he "*shall be marred* because of them," the Lord "will heal him"; for, as Christ said, "...The life of my servant shall be in my hand..." (3 Ne. 21:10.) Possibly foreshadowing this, after Nephi declared the word of God, the angry Nephites "did *revile* against [Nephi], and did *seek to lay their hands upon him* that they might cast him into prison..., but...they *could not take him* to cast him into prison, for he was taken by the Spirit and conveyed away out of the midst of them." (Hel. 10:15,16.)

⁸⁶See "Times of the Gentiles Fulfilled" section.

First Nephi chapter 14 tells us a fair amount about this great and marvelous work which shall be wrought. It associates the marvelous work with a polarization--among other things--that will take place. A statement made recently by President Benson epitomizes the message of this chapter. He said, "As the issues become clearer and more obvious, all mankind will eventually be required to align themselves either for the kingdom of God or for the kingdom of the devil."⁸⁷

The predicting picture painted by Book of Mormon history seems to vividly illustrate this situation to arise in the days ahead. There too, a serious division arose among the people as Nephi declared the word of God in plainness. (Hel. 10:18; 9:39-41; 10:1; 8:7.)

The Lord said that in the last days when he will "work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men" that the work "shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other...." (1 Ne. 14:7.) He then explained that people would either be convinced "unto peace and *life eternal*," or they would be delivered "to the *hardness of their hearts* and the blindness of their minds...." (1 Ne. 14:7.) The end result of the later would be to be "brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil...." (*Ibid.*)

The Book of Mormon account also presents these two opposing alternatives in conjunction with talking about Nephi and the polarization of his people. One alternative was to believe in the word of God, for, as Nephi said, "as many as should look upon the Son of God with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that *life which is eternal*." (Hel. 8:15.) On the other hand, there were many who, "when Nephi had declared unto them the word..., did still *harden their hearts* and would not hearken unto his words...." (Hel. 10:15.)⁸⁸

The issues that caused the division among the Nephites and the issues that will likely bring a polarization in the last days seem to center on two matters. A concise statement by Isaiah indicates what these are. He declared two fundamental reasons why destructions will come--apparently on our nation. First, he said, "they have cast away the *law* of the Lord of Hosts;" and second, "they have...despised the *word* of the Holy One of Israel." (2 Ne. 15:24 = Isa. 5:24.)⁸⁹ We know what the *word* of the Lord is: it is the gospel of Jesus Christ. President George Albert Smith identified the "*law* of the Lord" as the principles of the Constitution of the United States.⁹⁰ In Book

⁸⁷*Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 87.

⁸⁸Helaman 9:39-41 and Helaman 8:7 show that there were some who believed. This verse (10:15) in context suggests that the people as a whole (individuals aside) had rejected Nephi's words. This was why the destruction came upon them, for as a people, they did not repent--such as will probably be the case in the latter days as well.

⁸⁹This verse is preceded by one that ties in closely with our previous discussion about secret combinations. It speaks of those "who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him." (2 Ne. 15:23 = Isa. 5:23.) Compare this to a verse in Helaman that speaks of the ancient secret combination that reflects the one that has come in our day. It states that they were "condemning the righteous because of their righteousness; letting the guilty and the wicked go unpunished because of their money...." (7:5.)

⁹⁰In the dedicatory prayer of the Idaho Falls Temple, President George Albert Smith identified the "law of the Lord" as the principles contained in the Constitution. After quoting the statement, "...Out of Zion shall go forth the law..." (2 Ne. 12:3), he continued, praying "that kings and rulers and the people of all nations under heaven may be persuaded of the blessings enjoyed by the people of this land...and be constrained to adopt similar governmental systems..." (Harold B. Lee, *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1945, p. 564; *Ensign*, Nov. 1971, p. 15.)

of Mormon history, these same factors--casting away the laws of Mosiah and despising the word of God--seem to have laid at the root of the division that occurred among the Nephites. (Hel. 4:22; 8:25) No wonder President John Taylor declared, "Besides the preaching of the Gospel, we have another mission, namely, the perpetuation of the free agency of man and the maintenance of liberty, freedom, and the rights of man."⁹¹ Ezra Taft Benson once quoted this statement and then remarked, "It was the struggle over free agency that divided us before we came here [from the pre-mortal life]; it may well be the struggle over the same principle which will deceive and divide us again."⁹²

Another similarity between the ancient and latter-day situations is that due to the clarity of the issues, the people are left with no excuse. Nephi told his people: "[Because of] so many evidences which ye have received..., seeing that ye know these things, [ye] cannot deny them except ye shall lie...." (Hel. 8:24.) Likewise, the Gentiles will either be *convinced* to believe in Christ, or they will be delivered "to the hardness of their hearts" (1 Ne. 14:7), being "angry because of the truth of God" (2 Ne. 28:28). In Book of Mormon history as well, certain corrupt Nephites "were angry with [Nephi] because he spake plainly unto them..." (Hel. 8:4).

Considering these fundamental principles which identify God's people, we gain a greater appreciation for the Book of Mormon. It sets forth both directly and through parallels in its history the stand we should take concerning both the *word* and the *law* of the Lord.

This division among the Nephites grew to a point that "there began to be contentions..., and [they] began to slay one another with the sword," until eventually "there were wars throughout all the land among all the people of Nephi." (Hel. 10:18; 11:1.) "And it was this secret band of robbers who did carry on this work of destruction and wickedness." (Hel. 11:2.) This sounds very much like the "wars and the rumors of wars" that are prophesied to come "among all the nations and kindreds of the earth" (1 Ne. 14:15) in our day, as those who belong to "the mother of abominations" pit themselves against those who belong to "the church of the Lamb of God" (14:10). When the time comes "that the Lord God shall cause a *great division* among the people," we can be buoyed by the knowledge that eventually "the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire." (2 Ne. 30:10.)

Assyrian Assault

So far, we have considered the various reasons for the destructions that came upon the Nephites, and we have compared their degenerate situation with the wickedness we see among the Gentiles today. Now we are ready to look at the results of the Nephites' rebellion--

⁹¹Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Oct. 1963, p. 16.

⁹²Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Oct. 1963, p. 16.

the chastening destructions themselves--and correlate them with the prophecies of that which is to come in our day.

The Picture the Prophecies Paint

In the Savior's prophecy in Third Nephi 21, he said that when the Father shall "^awork a work, which shall be a great and ^bmarvelous work..., there shall be ^camong them [the Gentiles] those who ^dwill not believe it, ^ealthough a man shall declare it unto them." (3 Ne. 21:9.) Compare that wording with this latter-day prophecy in Habakkuk: "Behold ye ^camong the heathen [the Gentiles]..., and ^bwonder marvelously: for I will ^awork a work in your days, which ye ^dwill not believe, ^ethough it be told you." (Hab. 1:5.) Due to the evident similarity in these two references--which both talk about the latter days--could we presume that they point to the same thing? To what unbelievable thing might they refer?

The next verse in the Habakkuk prophecy continues, "For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs." (1:6.) In the remaining verses of this chapter, the Lord describes a dreadful invasion that apparently is yet to come.

He describes the aggressive nation as "terrible and dreadful..." (Hab. 1:7.) He says their "horses [a symbol of war, conquest, and military power]⁹³ are *swifter* than leopards and are more fierce than evening wolves...." (1:8.) These raiders, which "shall come from far..., shall fly as the eagle that *hasteth* to eat." (1:8.) This suggests the great speed of the attacking forces. "They shall come all for violence...; [and] they shall deride *every stronghold*." (1:9,10.) So apparently the targets will be largely military. Then using imagery that seems to depict a nuclear explosion, the Lord says, "...They shall *heap dust*..." (1:10.) At last, even though the "mighty God" (1:12)--who uses the wicked to punish the wicked (Morm. 4:5)--"hast ordained them for judgment" (Hab. 1:12), this aggressor shall "offend, imputing this his power unto his [own] god." (1:11.)

The outline painted here by the Lord fills in with greater detail as we compare it with other prophecies. Due to the gravity of this event, apparently many prophets have described it--at great length in many instances. Appendix I lists eighteen chapters, representing twelve different prophets, that seem to foretell this event. This appendix also illustrates the abundant and astounding correlations between these different chapters. Today, we have an advantage in discerning the meaning of these ancient prophecies. Nephi said, for example, that men will be able to understand Isaiah's prophecies "of a surety, *at the times when they shall come to pass*." (2 Ne. 25:7.) "Wherefore," he continued, "I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days...." (25:8.)

Isaiah 10 (also found in Second Nephi 20) apparently prophesies of this same event spoken of in Habakkuk 1 and Third Nephi 21. In it the Lord apparently uses "Assyrian" instead

⁹³Hastings, A Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "horse."

of "Chaldean"⁹⁴ as a metaphor for the modern nation that will do the treading. Resembling the prophecy in Habakkuk, the Lord identifies the Assyrian as "the rod of mine anger...." (Isa. 10:5.) He says the "desolation...shall come *from far*...." (10:3.) He also tells us that the leader of this nation shall boast, "By the strength of *my* hand I have done it...." (10:13.)

Adding new insight, Isaiah's prophecy names the target of this attack as "an hypocritical nation" (10:12), "mount Zion" (10:12), and "Zion" (10:24). The Lord labels this nation's inhabitants "the people of my wrath..." (10:6).

Plausible Modern Identity of Ancient Metaphors

Reflecting on the unprecedented blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon our nation, and realizing the extent to which she has turned her back on him, we recognize that probably no other nation on earth better fits the title "hypocritical nation." Also, in prophecy "Zion" often refers to America. (1 Ne. 14:2; 6:2; Deut. 33:15,16.) (It will eventually become Zion for the remnant of Joseph and as many as are numbered among them.)⁹⁵ Furthermore, this reference to a hypocritical nation being trodden down conforms to one of Christ's prophecies in Third Nephi about the latter days. He said that the Gentiles--particularly those in the United States of America (3 Ne. 16:7,8)--will be trodden down when they reject the Gospel and become "lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth..." (16:10,15; Micah 5:8). Therefore, apparently the United States of America will be the primary target of this terrible assault. President Benson once stated, "In connection with *attack on the United States*, the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith there would be an attempt to overthrow the country by destroying the Constitution."⁹⁶

At first, this possibility may seem inconceivable. Perhaps this is why Nephi warned us that Satan would pacify many, lulling "them away into *carnal security*, that they will say: *All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth*...." (2 Ne. 28:21.) Ezra Taft Benson once stated,

"Too often we bask in our comfortable complacency and rationalize that the ravages of war, economic disaster, famine, and earthquake **cannot happen here**. Those who believe this are either not acquainted with the revelations of the Lord, or they do not believe them. Those who smugly think these calamities will be set aside because of the righteousness of the Saints, are deceived and will rue the day they harbored such a delusion."⁹⁷

During this period of Book of Mormon history we have been discussing, the Nephites held the same smug attitude that seems prevalent today. Nephi (son of Helaman) had warned them, "...If ye will not repent, behold, this great city [Zarahemla], and also all those great cities

⁹⁴"The Chaldeans (using the word in its wider sense) belonged to the same race as the Assyrians and spoke the same language." (Bible Dictionary, LDS King James Version, 1979, p. 632. Used by permission.)

⁹⁵Joseph Smith said, "The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south...." TPJS, p. 362.

⁹⁶CR, Oct. 1961, p. 70.

⁹⁷CR, Oct. 1980 p.27.

which are round about...shall be taken away that ye shall have no place in them...." (Hel. 7:22.) (Recall the strong correlation we have seen between Zarahemla and the United States.) They replied aghast, "And now we know that *this is impossible*, for behold, *we are powerful*, and *our cities great*, therefore *our enemies can have no power over us*." (8:6.)

If the United States, then, is the probably primary target of this attack, who will the likely aggressor nation be?

In his prophecies in Third Nephi, Christ said that the remnant of Israel will do the treading. He also specified the modern-day Lamanite descendants (largely the Latin Americans) as at least one of the remnants of Israel. (3 Ne. 20:14,16.) Will there be others besides them?

We noted above that the biblical prophecies often mention the Assyrian (or Chaldean) as a metaphor for a modern counterpart who will tread down the Gentiles. Analyzing several references reveals that the Assyrians could also be included under the label "remnant of Israel." The book of Hosea reveals that when Israel was scattered, they were taken "up to Assyria...." (Hosea 8:8,9.) Other sources state that until the Lord delivers them, many of the remnant of Israel will be in bondage to "Assyria." (Isa. 52:4,5; 2 Ne. 24:3,25 = Isa. 14:3,25; 2 Ne. 20:20 = Isa. 10:20; Nahum 1:13; 1 Ne. 22:12.) Still other references declare that eventually many of the remnant of Israel will be gathered out of "Assyria." (2 Ne. 21:11 = Isa. 11:11; Zech. 10:10; 2 Kings 17:23.) Therefore, though Assyria may have been a Gentile nation, it appears that at this point a significant proportion of its people descend from Israelite lineage. (Hosea 8:8,9.) Therefore, when the Assyrians tread down the hypocritical nation, won't that essentially be the same thing as a remnant of Jacob treading down the Gentiles?

Reading other prophecies which appear to describe this dreadful event, we find more qualifying aspects that help identify the modern Assyrian nation. Not only will they come from far, but they "shall come...from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain," suggesting that the attack will be intercontinental. (Micah 7:12.) Furthermore, they will come from the north. (Jer. 4:6; 6:22; Joel 2:20.) They "shall come...from the fortified cities...." (Micah 7:12.) Also, they "shall come up as clouds, and [their] chariots shall be as a whirlwind: [their] horses are swifter than eagles," indicating both the aerial aspect and the speed of the assault. (Jer. 4:13; Hab. 1:8.) All these definitive factors, including the ones mentioned earlier--such as the fact that there are many of the House of Israel who are presently in bondage under them⁹⁸--appear to converge to identify the Soviet Union as the modern Assyrian nation.

This does not contradict Christ's prophecy of the Lamanite descendants' involvement in treading down the Gentiles. Cuba and Nicaragua, for example, have become powerful Soviet satellites, so they would most likely be involved.⁹⁹ Also, even though other Central and South

⁹⁸Presently under the iron grasp of Communism are more than 1.8 billion people, many of whom probably have the blood of Israel.

⁹⁹Cuba has a military 10 times the size of Canada's. They have carried out the largest land-based maneuvers in the history of the world. (John Hoyt Williams, "The Cuban Paradox: Part I," *National Defense*, Sept. 1987, pp. 36,37.) See also Drew Middleton, "Moscow is Behind Nicaragua's Defense Buildup," *Defense News*, Dec. 21, 1987, p. 19.

American nations are not presently labeled as Communist countries, many have Marxist leanings. How many more of them might be professed satellites by the time this probable invasion occurs?

We should note that the treading down prophesied to occur probably entails more than just an attack. We need only look to our Southern border to see another method whereby our nation could be trodden down. We are already seeing a massive influx of hopeful Central Americans into our country. Once our cities become desolated, as the prophecies indicate they will, might that trend swell as these people come to fill in the void? (3 Ne. 22:3 = Isa. 54:3.) The recent eruption of the drug war also presents ominous possibilities of terroristic trampling.

Contemporary Rerun of Ancient Scenario

In addition to the prophecies, many contemporary and concrete evidences suggest that the Soviet Union is in a position to launch a preemptive military strike on the United States. These indicators include analysis of Soviet literature, which reveals intention; Soviet military buildup, which bestows ability; and Soviet strategic force exercises,¹⁰⁰ which promote preparedness.¹⁰¹

Bearing all this in mind, we now turn to Book of Mormon history to tie in possible parallels. Helaman 1 tells about the time when the Lamanites launched a surprise attack on the Nephite's city of Zarahemla. Looking closely at this account, we observe many similarities to the scenario that the Soviets seem to have mapped out and to which the prophecies seem to point.

Right away we notice a possible clue from Mormon that the situation described in this chapter applies to us and will be repeated in our day. We have already seen several examples in which Zarahemla is comparable to the United States of America.¹⁰² In this single chapter, solidifying this correlation, Mormon gives us five synonyms for Zarahemla. Each is indicative of the United States of America in its relation to the world. He calls Zarahemla "the *strongest* hold in all the land" (1:22), the "*heart* of their lands" (1:18), "that *great* city" (1:19), "the *center* of the land" (1:24,26), and "the *capital* city" (1:27).

Like us, the Nephites, "had *supposed* that the *Lamanites durst not come into the center of the land*, but that they would attack the cities round about in the borders as they had hitherto

¹⁰⁰In the past three or four years the Soviets have begun and actually carried out, practice first-strikes against the United States, carrying live ammunition in their cargo. The use of these training and exercise maneuvers works to cover that time when the strike will be actual. (See Craig Covault, "NORAD, Space Command Request System for Surveillance of Soviet Weapons," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, Apr. 6, 1987, p. 73.)

¹⁰¹Weinberger, former U.S. Secretary of Defense, "Restoring the Nuclear Balance," *Soviet Military Power*, Apr. 1985.

¹⁰²A strong connection between the city or land of Zarahemla and the United States of America was evident in the parallels dealing with Columbus, the Revolutionary War, the birth of the Constitution, and World War II.

done." (Hel. 1:26.)¹⁰³ They were wrong in their supposition. As our nation presently basks in today's rhetoric about world peace, we are cautioned by the prophecy that says, "...When they shall say, *Peace and safety*; then sudden destruction cometh upon them..., and they shall not escape." (1 Thes. 5:3.) Now we can see, perhaps, another reason why Nephi (son of Lehi) said, "...Wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion!" (2 Ne. 28:24,25.)

The Lord indeed has declared, "I will fortify this land against all other nations," but our real enemy this time has come from within. (2 Ne. 10:12.) The Lord, who has sustained us in the past, proclaimed, "I will not show unto the wicked of my strength, to one more than the other, save it be unto those who repent of their sins, and hearken unto my words." (Hel. 7:23.) Interestingly, Nephi (son of Helaman) mentioned this just after warning the iniquitous Nephites, "...The Lord will not grant unto you strength, as he has hitherto done, to withstand against your enemies." (7:22.) Nikolai Lenin said, "The soundest strategy in war is to postpone operations until the moral disintegration of the enemy renders the mortal blow possible and easy."¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, "The decrees of God concerning this land," stated Moroni, "[are that] whatsoever nations shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fullness of his wrath shall come upon them." (Ether 2:9.)

Because the Nephites "had fallen into a state of unbelief and awful wickedness..., the Lord did cease to preserve them by his miraculous and matchless power..." (Hel. 4:25.) As a result, the Lamanite forces were able to come upon them, until the Nephites "had lost possession of almost all their lands." (Hel. 4:13.) Concerning the time in the latter days, when the Assyrian will tread down the hypocritical Gentiles, the Lord said, "*Without me*, they [the hypocritical nation] shall bow down under the prisoners..." (Isa. 10:4 = 2 Ne. 20:4.) ("Prisoners" would be an appropriate metaphor for the modern Assyrian armies, considering the oppressed state in which its members would still be at the time.)

The account in Helaman 1 also gives us added perspective regarding the pompous charisma of the latter-day "Assyrian" leader. The king of the Lamanites presumed that Coriantumr, the military general, would be able to "stand against the Nephites" because of "his ^a*strength* and also...his great ^b*wisdom*." (Hel. 1:15,16.) Similarly, Isaiah prophesied that the Assyrian leader, after making his conquest, would boast, "By the ^a*strength* of my hand I have done it, and by my ^b*wisdom*; for I am prudent." (2 Ne. 20:8,12,13; Isa. 10:8,12,13.)

Prophetic perspective cautions us as we see our nation, along with most others in the West, caught up in euphoria over the emergence of a leader in the Soviet Union with almost unprecedented charisma. Daniel saw a beast (representative of a latter-day kingdom) that would arise in the last days and "devour the whole earth and...tread it down..." (Dan. 7:23.) Listing some distinguishing features of this beast, Daniel said that its "*teeth were of iron*." (7:19.)

¹⁰³The actual verse said that it was their military leader, Moronihah, who did not think the Lamanites would attack the city of Zarahemla. We can presume, though, that if the military leader did not suspect this that the people didn't either.

¹⁰⁴Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Apr. 8, 1962, p. 105.

Therefore, we note with sobriety the fact that when Andrei Gromyko (a ranking Soviet leader) endorsed Mikhail S. Gorbachev's election as general secretary in 1985, he said, "Comrades, this man has a nice smile, but *he's got iron teeth.*"

Before attacking the Nephites, the Lamanites had not only "armed them with swords, and with cimeters and with bows, and with arrows," but they were also prepared with "all manner of *shields* of every kind." (Hel. 1:14.) Micah's prophecy of the Assyrian coming "from the *fortified cities*" (Micah 7:12) could very well refer to the Soviet's build-up of defense. First, they have hardened, with concrete and steel, their intercontinental ballistic missile silos, launch facilities, and key command and control centers to an unprecedented degree.¹⁰⁵ Second, they have "constructed a network of hundreds of underground shelters all over the Soviet Union, for nearly every level of Soviet national authorities, both military and civil," according to a House Armed Services Committee Report.¹⁰⁶ They have also deployed an Anti-Ballistic Missile system around Moscow¹⁰⁷ and are ready to deploy it elsewhere in the nation as well.¹⁰⁸ "The bottom line," according to the head of the George C. Marshall Institute, "is that the Soviet Union is developing a lethal combination of a *first-strike attack force* and a *defense against retaliation* by U.S. ballistic missiles. That combination removes the ability of the United States to protect its citizens from nuclear attack."¹⁰⁹ This has created a deadly window of vulnerability which is still dangerously wide, as of the time of this writing.¹¹⁰ Even as early as 1979 Ezra Taft Benson declared, "Never before has the land of Zion appeared so *vulnerable* to so powerful an enemy as the Americas do at present. There are some things we can and must do at once if we are to stave off a *holocaust of destruction.*"¹¹¹

With our nation as vulnerable as it is, we may wonder why we don't hear more about it. To the contrary, what we hear is, "The Cold War is finally over." Perhaps this is why Daniel said

¹⁰⁵Robert M. Gates, current Deputy National Security Adviser to President Bush, "The Soviets and SDI," Address given to the World Affairs Council of Northern California (Bay Area International Forum), Nov. 25, 1986.

¹⁰⁶U.S. House of Representatives, 99th Congress, 1st Session, Report 99-81, May 10, 1985.

¹⁰⁷Ralph Kinney Bennett, "Russia's Secret 'Red Shield'," *Readers Digest*, July 1986, pp. 149-153. See also House Armed Services Committee Report, 99th Congress, 1st Session, Report 99-81, May 10, 1985.

¹⁰⁸Robert M. Gates, current Deputy National Security Adviser to President Bush, "The Soviets and SDI," Address given to the World Affairs Council of Northern California (Bay Area International Forum), Nov. 25, 1986.

¹⁰⁹Dr. Robert Jastrow, "America Has Five Years Left," *National Review*, Feb. 13, 1987, p. 42.

¹¹⁰The Committee on the Present Danger recently summarized, "Whatever the United States has done, the Soviet Union has done more." (Sept. 5, 1989.) Defense Secretary Dick Cheney confirmed on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation" program, "There is still enormous nuclear capability targeted against the United States, and the Soviets have provided no evidence they are prepared to change that." ("USSR Remains a Threat, Cheney Tells Arms Critics," *Denver Post*, Feb. 5, 1990, p. 2A.)

¹¹¹CR, Oct. 1979, p.27.

that "by peace" shall a latter-day ultra tyrant "destroy many." (Dan. 8:25.)¹¹² Can we forget Demetri Manuilski's proclamation to the Lenin School of Political Warfare at Moscow in 1930?

"War to the hilt between communism and capitalism is inevitable. Today, of course, we are not strong enough to attack. Our time will come in 20 or 30 years. To win we shall need the element of surprise. The bourgeoisie will have to be put to sleep. So we shall begin by launching the **most spectacular peace movement on record**. There will be electrifying overtures and unheard-of concessions. The capitalistic countries, stupid and decadent, will rejoice to cooperate in their own destruction. They will leap at another chance to be friends. As soon as their guard is down we shall smash them with our clenched fist."¹¹³

The Nephite record states that they too had been vulnerable. They "had *not kept sufficient guards* in the land of Zarahemla." (Hel. 1:18.)

When the Lamanites came upon the city of Zarahemla, "their march was with such *exceedingly great speed* that there was *no time for the Nephites to gather together their armies*." (Hel. 1:19.) Similarly, Michael Moodie, with the Center for Strategic and International Affairs, said, "The Soviets have been preparing for a *short-warning* attack that would be under way *before Allied mobilization was complete*."¹¹⁴ Several prophecies confirm that the attack by the "hasty nation" will be very quick. (Hab. 1:6,8.) For example, Jeremiah said that when the "fruitful place" is left as a "wilderness," and the "cities...broken down," the lamentation will be heard, "...*Suddenly* are my tents spoiled, and my curtains *in a moment*." (Jer. 4:26,20.) Ezra Taft Benson has said, "Ours is the first generation to realize how literally these prophecies can be fulfilled now that God, through science, has unlocked the secret to thermonuclear reaction." He then said, "It is time for every man...to get himself prepared--physically, spiritually, and psychologically--for the task which may come at any time, *as suddenly as the whirlwind*."¹¹⁵

When the Lamanites attacked Zarahemla, they did not kill everyone, but they "did slay every one who did *oppose* them." (Hel. 1:20.) Similarly, the latter-day invasion will apparently target the military. "I will...throw down all thy *strongholds*," said Christ. (3 Ne. 21:15; Hab. 1:10.) The Soviet's purpose in attacking the United States would not be to annihilate the population,¹¹⁶ it would be to decimate its military might.¹¹⁷ Thus they would secure themselves as the only

¹¹²The Soviet Union spends \$3.5 billion each year for its propaganda machine of confusing Soviet Military power with peace. (Richard F. Starr, "The Merchant of Lies," *American Legion Magazine*, p. 22.)

¹¹³"Communist Reforms; Take Them With Salt," *The Daily Universe*, Provo, UT, May 25, 1989, p. 3. A more recent study reported, "The preponderant base of evidence in the Soviet literature designed for internal use calls for their striking first against the west with maximum surprise when the situation calls for war and when the factors are in the Soviet favor." (Joseph D. Douglass, Jr. and Amoretta M. Hoeber, Hoover Institute at Stanford, *Soviet Strategy for Nuclear War*, 1979, p. 106.)

¹¹⁴*Defense News*, Oct. 12, 1987.

¹¹⁵Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Oct. 1961, p. 70.

¹¹⁶By only destroying our military targets, they are then in the position to hold our cities hostage. Furthermore, because of their reliance on our economic resources, they probably would not want to detonate any more bombs than they absolutely had to.

¹¹⁷Desmond Ball and Jeffrey Richelson, Eds., *Strategic Nuclear Targeting*, Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 97.

major military power on earth.¹¹⁸ Perhaps this is why John said that in the day when a certain beast will "[make] *fire come down from heaven on the earth*," people will be constrained to say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:13,4.)

In this context, we might note that a common misconception is that a nuclear attack would bring massive nuclear fall-out, and virtually everyone would die.¹¹⁹ Actually, most nuclear weapons would be detonated several thousand feet above the ground, in which case virtually no fallout results; they are purely destructive. Everything directly in the wake of the blast would be irradiated at the moment of the explosion, but there would be essentially no residual radiation. Only a handful of targets require a ground burst. In this case considerable material is taken up in the fireball, becoming radioactive. Nuclear fallout from these blasts would be serious, and affected areas would be highly contaminated. Even in the latter case, however, due to the rapid decay of the vast majority of isotopes (radioactive elements) this condition would not last very long.

When Coriantumr attacked Zarahemla, before "[marching] forth with his whole army into the city," he first "*cut down the watch by the entrance of the city....*" (Hel. 1:20.) Similarly, the Soviet's strategy in a first strike would be to first obstruct the military command communication channels so as to delay response and greatly hinder the possibility of substantial retaliation.¹²⁰ The method of choice for doing this would be to create an electromagnetic pulse, which would destroy in an instant every unprotected integrated circuit in America. The electromagnetic pulse could be generated by detonating three or four strategically placed hydrogen bombs above the atmosphere over the United States.¹²¹ One of the side-effects of this would be that transportation and communication would be devastatingly crippled.¹²² Furthermore, as was reported to Congress, "Almost all electric power will be knocked out."¹²³

Certain prophecies also suggest that transportation will be drastically severed. Christ, in telling about when the House of Israel will tread down the Gentiles, said, "I will *cut off thy horses* out of the midst of thee, and I will *destroy thy chariots*." (3 Ne. 21:14 = Micah 5:10.)

¹¹⁸Desmond Ball and Jeffrey Richelson, Eds., Strategic Nuclear Targeting, Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 97.

¹¹⁹Dr. Kearny, Nuclear War Survival Skills.

¹²⁰Ashton B. Carter, "The Command and Control of Nuclear War," *Scientific American*, (Jan. 1985) 252(1):32.

¹²¹"The EMP [Electromagnetic Pulse] from a single hydrogen bomb exploded 300 kilometers over the heart of the United States could set up electrical fields 50 kV/m strong over nearly all of North America. Since the smaller the circuit, the more vulnerable to EMP, even at the current degree of microminiaturization, almost every unprotected chip in the country--whether in missiles, aircraft or communications centers--could be destroyed." (Eric J. Lerner, "Mushrooming Vulnerability to EMP," *Aerospace America*, Aug. 1984, p. 74.)

¹²²M. Anjali Sastry, Joseph J. Romm, and Kosta Tsipis, "Nuclear Crash: The U.S. Economy After Small Nuclear Attacks," Program in Science and Technology for International Security, Report # 17, M.I.T., Cambridge, MA, June 1987, p. 109.

¹²³This report to Congress was made in 1980 by then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David Jobs. Quoted in Eric J. Lerner, "Mushrooming Vulnerability to EMP," *Aerospace America*, Aug. 1984, pp. 75,76.

Famine

Considering our society's reliance on the transport of commodities from one place to another, we do not need a vivid imagination to understand how cutting off transportation would also bring famine. Cutting off the entire nation's transportation could create the most terrible famine the world has ever known.¹²⁴ Whatever the cause, knowing that catastrophes will come, we are grateful that our modern prophets have also admonished us to be prepared. For example, Ezra Taft Benson warned:

"We do know that the Lord has decreed global calamities for the future and has warned and forewarned us to be prepared. For this reason the Brethren have repeatedly stressed a 'back to basics' program for temporal and spiritual welfare. ... The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah."¹²⁵

The Lord used famine anciently to chastise the corrupt Nephites, and "they did perish by thousands in the more wicked parts of the land." (Hel. 11:6.)

A nuclear strike is not the only means that could cause a crippling famine. Certain economic factors, such as the unbridled national debt and other dangerous fiscal policies, predispose our country and the world to unparalleled economic catastrophe. President Benson has said, "We must reverse our present dangerous fiscal policies. If we fail so to do, we will set off an international monetary debacle that could easily make the experience of the 1930s sink into insignificance."¹²⁶ Considering contemporary conditions, we can see that such a fiasco is probably not too far away.

Temporary Bondage

Once Coriantumr "had obtained the possession of the strongest hold in all the land [Zarahemla], his heart took courage insomuch that he was about to *go forth against all the land*." (Hel. 1:22.) Isaiah likewise described the intentions of the latter-day king of Assyria: "...In his heart it is to *destroy and cut off nations not a few*." (2 Ne. 20:12 = Isa. 10:12.) Will this tyrant achieve his aspirations? How extensive will his domain reach? How long will he maintain his grip?

Reading further into this prophecy in Isaiah 10, we find possible answers to these first two questions. In verse 13, the triumphant king of Assyria boasts, "I have removed the bounds of the people...." The removal of borders likely implies that the sovereignty of individual nations will be dissolved. "I have gathered all the earth," he gloats in the next verse, suggesting that the long sought one-world government will then become a reality. Then in verse 24, the Lord tells us that not only will the Assyrian "smite [us] with a rod"--perhaps another way of concisely describing the attack--but he will also "lift up his staff against [us], after the manner of Egypt."

¹²⁴M. Anjali Sastry, Joseph J. Romm, and Kosta Tsipis, "Nuclear Crash: The U.S. Economy After Small Nuclear Attacks," Program in Science and Technology for International Security, Report # 17, M.I.T., Cambridge, MA, June 1987, pp. 110,111.

¹²⁵CR, Oct. 1980, p.27.

¹²⁶Ezra Taft Benson, "Federal Monetary Policies," Teachings, pp. 264,637,638.

We know that Egypt often symbolically denotes captivity. The mention that a staff will be lifted up by a tyrant "after the manner of Egypt" solidifies this image.

We might wonder what would happen to the Constitution during such a period. Brigham Young explained, "Will the Constitution be destroyed? No. It will be held inviolate by this people [the Latter-day Saints]...."¹²⁷

Many do not fathom the possibility of our nation falling under a tyrannical rule. According to Nephi (son of Lehi), "...This land...shall be a land of liberty unto [us]; wherefore [we] shall never be brought down into captivity...." (2 Ne. 1:7.) However, in the same breath Nephi added the condition: "...If so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land..." (*Ibid.*)

A prophecy in the book of Daniel and a corresponding one in the book of Revelation apparently provide us with more insight into the nature and duration of this bondage.¹²⁸ They use similar imagery to portray what will probably be a global government.¹²⁹

Daniel described a beast that "shall devour the *whole earth*, and shall *tread it down*, and break it in pieces." (Dan. 7:23.) Here we note the "treading down" phrase again, which occurs in half of the probable prophecies about this event. (See Appendix I.) This phrase is also found in Book of Mormon history. (See Hel. 4:20.)

Daniel symbolically described this beast, saying his "teeth were of ^a*iron*, and his ^b*nails of brass*; [and he] devoured, ^c*brake in pieces*, and stamped the residue with his feet." (Dan. 7:19.) (Note that Daniel said this beast shall tread down the earth "with his *feet*." John said that the feet of this beast "were as the feet of a *bear*." (Rev. 13:2.)¹³⁰) Compare Daniel's wording above with that of Christ's, when He addressed the latter-day House of Israel: "I will make thy *horn* ^a*iron*, and will make thy ^b*hoofs brass*. And thou shalt ^c*beat in pieces* many people...." (3 Ne. 20:19 = Micah 4:13.) Because Daniel's and Christ's wordings are so similar, might we surmise that they refer to the same thing? As a corollary, might Daniel's beast be essentially the same thing as Isaiah's Assyrian? Appendix I suggests that there is a definite correlation between these prophecies.

Isaiah's description of the "*stout* heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high *looks*" (Isa. 10:12) closely matches Daniel's depiction of the one of the horns of Daniel's beast,

¹²⁷Brigham Young, *Journal History*, July 4, 1854.

¹²⁸D&C 103:4-15 ties these prophecies in Daniel 7 and Revelations 13 with the prophecies Christ made in 3 Ne. 16, 20, and 21, from which we have been quoting.

¹²⁹In his book, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (Harper & Row, New York, 1988), in a chapter entitled "Restructuring in the USSR and the Socialist World" (pp. 147-156.), Mikhail Gorbachev clearly professed that "world socialism" is the aim. He said that "the initial phase of world socialism's rise and development is over," referring to the establishment of socialism in a "large group of nations." He then spoke of the need for these nations to now integrate their strength into a united socialist community.

¹³⁰Alluding to the present deceptive concessions of peace in the world, Rudyard Kipling said, "The bear [referring to the Soviet Union] is most dangerous when he hugs you."

"whose *look* was more *stout* than his fellows" and who "spake very great things." (Dan. 7:20.) (Recall also the presumptuous courage of Coriantumr, the Lamanite leader.)

According to Daniel, the ten horns on this beast represent "ten kings." (Dan. 7:24) The beast John described in Revelation 13 had ten horns too. He added to the picture, saying it also had seven heads, each having the name of blasphemy upon it. (Rev. 13:1.) Looking around in the world today, we see some compelling possibilities as to the identity of the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast as a whole is probably the same thing as the secret combination that the Book of Mormon repeatedly prophesied would come in our day. The various attributes of the beast apparently represent various physical manifestations of this conspiracy to set up a one-world socialistic government.

Today we can read in our newspapers about "the Group of Seven," as they like to call themselves.¹³¹ This group is a league-like diplomatic organization of the seven leading industrial super-powers in the world: the U.S., Japan, Canada, Great Britain, West Germany, France, and Italy. The rhetoric in their summit this past summer (July, 1989) portrays their underlying motive. They talked largely about wealthy nations needing to play a larger role in propping up poor nations--an important facet of world socialism.¹³² Again, their aims are altruistic, but what about their means?

The probable identity of the ten-horns on this beast is a little more hard to determine. A likely possibility is the European Economic Community, which is now settling into place. At present there are twelve nations headed for membership. Perhaps the final coalition will be ten nations or groups of nations. John said that upon the ten horns were ten crowns, possibly using this imagery of royalty to reflect the past and present association of kings with European nations. (Rev. 13:1.) One thing is certain, and that is that the formation of this union represents a major step in the globalists' plans toward setting up a one-world government.¹³³ Once formed, this community is touted to become the world's leading economic and possibly even political super-power.

John then continues, stating that one of the heads will be "as it were wounded to death," following which people will say, "who is able to make war with [the beast]?" (Rev. 13:3,4.) Recall that one of the seven heads--supposing this represents the Group of Seven--is the United States. Should the Soviet Union destroy the United States' military muscle in a preemptive nuclear strike, nothing would stand in the aggressor's way. They could then sweep the world into a global dictatorship.

¹³¹"One surprise from summit: Soviets want seat at table," *Deseret News*, Tues. P.M./Wed. A.M., July 18/19, 1989, p. A-10.

¹³²Reuter News Service, "Rich nations take up demands of the poor," *Deseret News*, Fri., July 14, 1989, p. 2-A. This article opens with the statement, "Leaders of the world's richest nations sat down for the start of their annual summit meeting Friday facing increased demands from both the communist and Third worlds for a bigger slice of the economic pie."

¹³³William F. Jasper, "United States of Europe: Will once great nations sacrifice their sovereignty?" *American Opinion*, April 10, 1989, pp. 21-29.

John explained that each of these seven heads would have the name of blasphemy written on it. (Rev. 13:1.) "Blasphemy" describes very well the false Christ aspect of this modern secret combination. What they scheme is diabolically opposed to God's plan of salvation. Even though the United States would be dealt a severe blow through a nuclear strike, apparently this would not stop our nation's conspirators from reuniting our nation into the beastly coalition. John saw that the head which was wounded to death "was healed," being restored into the fold of its fellow blasphemers. (13:3.)

After this beast did its treading, Daniel and John saw that another group would become a member. (Rev. 13:11; Dan. 7:20.) Daniel described it as another horn to arise on the head of the beast, and John described it as another beast. The timing of this latter element, as far as its coming up later, seems to do with actual alliances being made. At the conclusion of the recent (July, 1989) summit of the Group of Seven, Mikhail Gorbachev wired a letter to the leadership participants. In it he proposed that they let the Soviet Union join in with that alliance.¹³⁴ A newspaper report stated, "Most of the Group of Seven agree it is *premature* to offer the Soviets membership in their free-market club."¹³⁵ However, if the Soviet Union were to remove the obstacle of the U.S.'s military might, then they could join the so-called "free-market club" as they like. Though many would still have the will to resist, they would no longer have the means.

John said that this latter beast to arise will cause "fire come down from heaven on earth...." (Rev. 13:13.) This probably depicts the atomic holocaust that would rain upon us in the event of a Soviet attack. This beast will also be the one that will "[cause] the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast..."--of which it will then apparently become a recognized member. (13:12.)

Daniel and John said that this last member "shall speak great words against the most High," and it will become the dominating element of the dreadful kingdom. (Dan. 7:25,20; Rev. 12:12.) This kingdom will be established for a period of "forty and two months" or three and a half years. (Rev. 13:5; Dan. 7:25.)

Perhaps the most disheartening aspect of this prophecy is that once this beast is in place, not only will power be given it "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," but it will actually "make war with the saints." (Rev. 13:7; Dan. 7:21,25; 1 Ne. 14:13.)

This is reminiscent of a situation in Book of Mormon history. Once the Gadianton robbers had obtained "sole management of the government," the record states that "they did trample under their feet and smite and rend...the humble followers of God." (Hel. 6:39.)

We have discussed how a great division will polarize the people in the days ahead; some will align themselves with the kingdom of God, and others, with the kingdom of the devil.

¹³⁴Not only is Gorbachev pushing to become a member, but he is being encouraged by the West. A recent newspaper reported that after an economic summit of the Group of Seven (July 1989), "Bush said a letter sent to the economic summit by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, seeking closer coordination with the West, was evidence that Moscow was 'moving in our direction, coming our way.' He added, 'I want to see the Soviet Union chart a course that brings itself into the community of nations.'" ("Bush heads home from European trip," *Deseret News*, Tues. P.M./Wed. A.M., July 18/19, 1989, p. A-3.)

¹³⁵*Deseret News*, July 18/19, 1989, p. 10-A.

Apparently, this war against the saints will serve as a consummating catalyst. The choices will be vividly clear: light or darkness, freedom or captivity, Christ's plan or Satan's alternative.

Once this one-world dictatorship locks into place, John says the latter beast will cause "all...to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that [have] the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." (Rev. 13:16.) (See Appendix J.) The image of the beast will "cause that as many as [will] not worship the image of the beast should be killed." (13:15.) So deceptive, so influential, and so pervasive will this beast be that "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (13:8.)

Looking to Book of Mormon history, we find a likely parallel for this situation of taking the mark of the beast. During the era of Nephite wickedness described in the book of Helaman, "Satan did stir up the hearts of the *more part* of the Nephites, insomuch that they did unite with those bands of robbers...." (Hel. 6:21.) They "did enter into their covenants and their *oaths*...; and...they did have their *signs*..." (6:21,22.) "...And this that they might *distinguish* a brother who had *entered into the covenant* that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do he should *not be injured* by his brother, nor by those who did belong to his band, who had taken this covenant." (Hel. 6:22.) Their oaths also had to do with their commerce: one reason they took these pacts was "that they should not suffer for...their *plunderings*, and their *stealings*." (Hel. 6:21.)

Along with describing what would happen in the days ahead of us the prophets apparently admonished us about the stance we should take during this trying time. After talking about how "the king of Assyria and all his glory...shall fill the breadth of thy land..." (2 Ne. 18:7 = Isa. 8:7), Isaiah warned, "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces." (2 Ne. 18:9 = Isa. 8:9.) The Lord's strict instructions, as he told Isaiah, were: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." (2 Ne. 18:12 = Isa. 8:12.) Isaiah then concluded: "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." (2 Ne. 18:13 = Isa. 8:13.) Concerning those who will be killed because they will not take the mark when compelled, John consoled, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord...." (Rev. 14:13.)

Reflecting upon this trying period that is apparently about to unfold in our day, we understand better why Daniel's cogitations troubled him after seeing it. (Dan. 7:28.) Likewise, Nephi's "heart was swollen with sorrow" when in antiquity he saw "this great iniquity" which the Gadianton robbers had wrought among the Nephites. (Hel. 7:6.)

Sanctification of the Saints

A great irony behind all of this is the House of Israel's association with the beast. Adding to the irony, after Christ prophesied about the House of Israel treading down the Gentiles, he said: "...Behold, I am he who doeth it." (3 Ne. 20:19.) Why would the Lord, who "[holds] the destinies of all the armies of the nations of the earth" allow such a thing to happen? (D&C 117:6)

Indeed, in that day when the Lord "will bring evil from the north"--when "the destroyer of the Gentiles" shall "make [our] land desolate, and [our] cities...laid waste"--many might feel to exclaim: "Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people..., saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul." (Jer. 4:6,7,10.)

Turning to the Book of Mormon, we find some important insights regarding this paradox. It declares that whenever "the sins of [the] people [are] caused by the iniquities of their kings..., their iniquities are also answered upon the heads of their kings." (Mosiah 29:31.) The blasphemous element of the tyrant, according to Isaiah, refers to the leadership, not those oppressed. (Isa. 52:5.) The parallels to Lehite history further illuminate this matter. The Lamanites (who seem to correspond to the latter-day House of Israel) were not held nearly as accountable for their wickedness as the Nephites (symbolic of the Gentiles). "...It [was] because of the traditions of their [the Lamanites'] fathers that caused them to remain in their state of ignorance...." (Alma 9:16,17.) Furthermore, the Lord declared that if the Nephites would rebel against him, the antagonistic Lamanites would "be a scourge unto [them], to stir them up in the ways of remembrance." (1 Ne. 2:24.) This rings familiar with what Habakkuk said regarding the Chaldeans (a likely symbol for the Soviets) who will be sent upon the Gentiles. He said, "O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction." (Hab. 1:12.)

We know that the Lord "doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world...." (2 Ne. 26:24.) The great Lamanite prophet, Samuel, explained: "...The people of Nephi hath [the Lord] loved, and also hath he *chastened* them; yea, in the days of their iniquities hath he chastened them because he loveth them." (Hel. 15:3.) Might the coming catastrophes serve to chasten an iniquitous people, whom the Lord has loved? Significantly, above statement in 2 Nephi 26 comes just after Nephi spoke of secret combinations to come in our day and how Satan leads men by the neck with a flaxen cord until he binds them with his strong cords. (26:22.)

The Lord explained that before Zion can be established (D&C 101:9-16), the Saints "must needs be *chastened* and tried, *even as Abraham....*" (101:4.) Abraham's trial was not complete until he was lowering his knife to sacrifice his son. (Gen. 22:10-12.) The angel of the Lord did not intercede until the trial was complete and intervention was necessary to stay destruction. In the days to come, the saints "shall *hardly escape.*" (D&C 63:34.) At the same time, "although she is chastened for a little season..., Zion *shall* be redeemed" (D&C 100:13). Paul explained that the purpose of the chastening hand of the Lord is "that we might be partakers of his holiness." (Heb. 12:10.)

The book of Helaman tells of a time when the humble followers of Christ began to "suffer great persecutions...." (Hel. 3:34.) "Nevertheless," the record continues, "they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts...." (3:35.) During the great tribulations to come in our day, not only will their hearts be consoled, but the Lord's people will be "armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory." (1 Ne. 14:14.)

Notwithstanding the trying war that shall be waged against the saints of God, "the righteous shall not perish; for the time surely must come that all they who fight against Zion shall be cut off." (1 Ne. 22:19.) Moroni declared: "...The Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by [secret combinations], shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them and yet he avenge them not." (Ether 8:22; D&C 87:7.)

When the wars and famine had taken their toll among the Nephites, "the people...repented and did *humble* themselves in *sackcloth*...." (Hel. 11:9.) The wording here is noteworthy, for Jeremiah similarly admonished the inhabitants of latter-day Zion, saying: "gird you with *sackcloth*, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back...." (Jer. 4:8; Joel 1:6,14.) He said this in the context of talking about the "lion [coming] up from his thicket...: the destroyer of the Gentiles," whose "horses are swifter than eagles." (Jer. 4:7,13.)

Anciently, the Lord promised: "If this people [the Nephites] repent I will spare them...." (Hel. 11:14.) As a result of their wars and the great famine that came upon them, they did repent, and accordingly "the Lord did turn away his anger from the people...." (11:17.) Likewise has he promised us in the latter days that if we (the Gentiles) repent, we "shall be numbered among the house of Israel; and...shall be a blessed people upon the promised land forever; [and] shall be no more brought down into captivity...." (1 Ne. 14:2.)

The Breaking of the Yoke

Toward the end of his prophecy about the Assyrian attack and the resulting period of captivity, Isaiah concluded, "Therefore...O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian...." (Isa. 10:24 = 2 Ne. 20:24; D&C 45:35.) Considering the awful situation that lies ahead of us, we might wonder why he would expect us not to be afraid. He continued, "for yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease." (2 Ne. 20:25 = Isa. 10:25.) Daniel and John indicated that a "little while" will be three and a half years. (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:5.)¹³⁶ At the end of that time, Isaiah said the Assyrian will be destroyed. (2 Ne. 20:25 = Isa. 10:25.) The "burden" of the Assyrian "shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck...." (2 Ne. 20:27 = Isa. 10:27.)

Several prophecies state that when the House of Israel treads down the Gentiles, "none can deliver." (3 Ne. 21:12 = Micah 5:8; Ps. 50:22.) This suggests that overturning the global dictatorship that apparently will arise will require a miracle. The promises of the Lord are clear that he will bring his covenant people "again out of captivity," and "[bring] about his covenant and his gospel unto [them]." (1 Ne. 22:12,11.) At the same time, the prophecies declare that in

¹³⁶Below, the latter-day deliverance to come is compared to the children of Israel's deliverance from the Midianites in antiquity. They had been in captivity for seven years when they were delivered. This is significant, for scriptures seem to indicate that before Zion will be redeemed, she will be in captivity for three and a half years. They also indicate that Jerusalem will also be in captivity for three and a half years before her deliverance. This totals seven years.

order for this to happen, the Lord must "*make bare his arm* in the eyes of the nations." (22:11.) Indeed, "the redemption of Zion must needs come *by power*." (D&C 103:15.)

Lehite history presents an incredible parallel to this prophesied deliverance. In Helaman 4 the Lamanites had come upon the Nephites and gained a dangerous grip. The Nephites realized that "except they should cleave unto the Lord their God they must unavoidably perish." (Hel. 4:25.)

Chapter 5 gives an account of their deliverance. Three hundred Lamanites were converted in a prison because the Lord made his power manifest in a miraculous manner. (Hel. 5:49.) These converted Lamanites then became instrumental in persuading virtually the entire Lamanite nation of the truth. (5:50.) As a result, the Lamanites gave the Nephites their land back, and they become even more righteous than the Nephites. (6:1.) Therefore, not only were the Nephites released from the Lamanite's grip, but the Lamanite people were finally released from the bondage of their father's false traditions. (5:51,52.)

This prison experience seems to tie in--as if on purpose--to one of Isaiah's statements about the grand deliverance to come in our day. In explaining how the yoke of the Assyrian would be broken, Isaiah said that the Lord would "stir up a scourge for [the Assyrian] *according to the slaughter of Midian....*" (Isa. 10:26 = 2 Ne. 20:26.)

The "slaughter of Midian" is the story about Gideon taking a mere 300 men from the 32,000 available of the host of the children of Israel. After surrounding the Midianites at night, they showed their lanterns and blew their horns. This caused such great confusion among the multitudinous hosts of the Midianites that they began slaying one another.

The events leading up to the children of Israel's captivity under the Midianites resemble the events which will apparently lead up to the period of temporary bondage forthcoming in our day. In this biblical comparison (not to be confused with similar comparisons we have made with Lehite history), the children of Israel seem to match the latter-day Gentiles. They had done "evil in the sight of the Lord," so the Lord allowed the Midianites to "[encamp] against them...." (Judg. 6:1,4.) The Midianites "entered into the land to destroy it," and "the Lord delivered [the children of Israel] into the hand of Midian...." (6:5,1.) In conjunction with the period of bondage that followed, "Israel was greatly impoverished...." (6:6.) As a result of their humbling predicament, "the children of Israel cried unto the Lord" for assistance. (6:6.) It was then that the Lord called upon Gideon to deliver them.

Therefore, we have here three sources which enhance our understanding of what is to come in our day: (1) the Midianite experience, (2) the Lamanite prison experience, and (3) direct prophecy. Each source seems to supplement the other in a synergistic way.

They all speak of a servant of the Lord. In the prison experience, Nephi (and his brother Lehi) performed an important role. Nephi, like Gideon, was designated a "mighty man." (Hel. 10:5; compare Judg. 6:12.) In the latter days, because "the redemption of Zion must needs come by power," the Lord "will raise up...a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel." (D&C 103:15,16.)

Undeniable recognition of the Lord's involvement is another common thread. When the 300 Lamanite prisoners beheld miraculous things, Nephi and Lehi informed them, "...It is God

that has shown unto you this marvelous thing...." (Hel. 5:26.) With Gideon, the Lord told him to reduce his army to only 300 because he didn't want the Israelites to "vaunt themselves against [him], saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." (Judg. 7:2.) (That 300 were involved in both the Midianite experience and the Lamanite prison experience greatly strengthens the likelihood that this parallel is intentional.) In the latter days, the Lord will lead us "out of bondage by power and with a stretched-out arm." (D&C 103:17.)

What might the circumstances be in the latter days when the Lord bursts the bonds which will have been upon his people? Isaiah 10 teaches us that when the Lord punishes the king of Assyria, "the light of Israel shall be for a *fire*, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in *one day*." (Isa. 10:17 = 2 Ne. 20:17.) Destruction of the enemy in one day is truly incredible. The children of Israel overthrew the Midianites, commencing at night and "[returning] from battle before the sun was up." (Judg. 7:9; 8:13.) The Book of Mormon prison experience probably only lasted a few hours.

Isaiah's above statement mentions the involvement of fire in this latter-day deliverance. Nephi (son of Lehi) said the Lord "will preserve the righteous *by his power*, even if it so be that the fullness of his wrath must come, and the righteous be *preserved*, even unto the destruction of their enemies *by fire*." (1 Ne. 22:17; 2 Ne. 30:10.) Similarly, at one point in the Lamanites' prison experience "they were encircled about, yea every soul, by a pillar of *fire*." (Hel. 5:34.) In this regard the Midianite experience does not hold a parallel. Isaiah 9, however, makes this distinction. Verse 4 says the Lord will break the "rod of [the covenant people's] oppressor, as in the day of Midian." (9:4.) The next verse then clarifies: "...But this shall be with burning and fuel of *fire*."

The fire spoken of in the Lamanite prison experience was not literal. It was descriptive of the heavenly manifestation that took place which resulted in the conversion of the 300 Lamanites. Referring to this experience, Christ said that these Lamanites were "baptiz[ed] with fire and with the Holy Ghost." (3 Ne. 9:20.) Apparently a conversion experience such as the Lamanites' will be repeated in the latter days, making this deliverance not only temporal but spiritual as well. The Lord has said that in the latter days when the remnant of Jacob "seeth...*the work of mine hands*, in the midst of [them], *they shall sanctify my name*, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob...." (Isa. 29:23 = 2 Ne. 27:34.) Thus the statement that the righteous "shall be *saved*, even if it so be as *by fire*" probably means more than first meets the eye. (1 Ne. 22:17.)

Evidently, Christ will play an intimate role in this deliverance that will take place. He "shall be the *peace*, when the Assyrian shall come into our land...", said Micah. (Micah 5:5; Isa. 30:31.) Isaiah spoke of "The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The *Prince of Peace*" immediately after he said that the yoke of the oppressor will be broken "as in the day of Midian." (Isa. 9:6,4 = 2 Ne. 19:6,4.)

Anciently as well, divine peace was bestowed in conjunction with deliverance. When the Lord gave Gideon the charge to deliver the children of Israel, he comforted him saying: "*Peace be unto thee*...." (Judg. 6:16.) Also, after the Lamanites were encircled about by pillars of fire, a

voice was heard saying: "*Peace, peace be unto you*, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world." (Hel. 5:46,47.)

The wicked, on the other hand, do not fare as well. Regarding the latter-day deliverance, the Isaiah 9 prophecy states: "...Every battle of the warrior is with *confused noise*.... No man shall spare his brother." (Isa. 9:5,19 = 2 Ne. 29:5,19.) This resembles the ancient "slaughter of Midian" in which the confused Midianites slayed one another. (Judg. 7:22.) This seems to illuminate the prophecies that say the Lord "will feed [the oppressor] with their own flesh; and they shall be *drunken with their own blood* as with sweet wine...." (1 Ne. 21:26 = Isa. 49:26.) In Book of Mormon history as well, the time came when those who "would not hearken" to the word of God began to "slay one another with the sword." (Hel. 10:18.)

The outcomes of the Midianite ordeal, the Lamanite prison experience, and the deliverance prophesied for our day all seem be the same. They could be summarized by the proclamation, "...Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.... And all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." (1 Ne. 21:26,25 = Isa. 49:26,25.)

Conversion of the House of Israel

So in the midst of the Lord pouring out his wrath on the those who fight against Zion, we can find comfort in knowing that the Lord is also "preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants...." (1 Ne. 14:17.)

Once the House of Israel's yoke has been miraculously broken, they will no longer be subjected to the oppressive Assyrian, but they "shall *stay upon the Lord*, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." (2 Ne. 20:20 = Isa. 10:20; Isa. 14:24-27.) They "shall be [brought] to the *knowledge of the Lord their God*, who hath redeemed them." (3 Ne. 20:13.) This will fulfill an integral part of the Abrahamic covenant. (20:12.)

Likewise, after the experience of the 300 Lamanites in prison, "because of the greatness of the evidences which they had received..., the more part of the Lamanites were convinced" of the truth. (Hel. 5:50.) They "began to grow exceedingly in the *knowledge of their God*; yea, they did begin to keep [God's] statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him." (Hel. 6:34.)

During this period of great transformation, "the Lord began to *pour out his Spirit* upon the Lamanites...." (Hel. 6:36.) Likewise, concerning the latter days, the Lord said, "I [will not] hide my face any more from them: for I have *poured out my spirit* upon the house of Israel...." (Ezek. 39:29.)

The Nephite record also recounts, "...[The converted Lamanites] are striving with unwearied diligence that they may bring the remainder of their brethren to the knowledge of the truth; therefore there are many who do add to their numbers daily. Therefore, as many as have come to this [change of heart]...are *firm and steadfast* in the faith...." (Hel. 15:6,8.) It is likely that

this foreshadows a magnificent missionary effort to come in our day. We know that an army of 144,000 will eventually be mustered "to administer the everlasting gospel..., to bring as many as will come to the *church of the Firstborn*." (D&C 77:11.) These 144,000 will be "ordained...by *angels*" (77:11), reminiscent of how "*angels* came down out of heaven and ministered unto" the Lamanites in prison, bidding them to "go forth and marvel not" (Hel. 5:48,49).

What a marvel this unprecedented metamorphosis of the Lamanite nation must have been. For hundreds of years, the Lamanites, for the most part, had been blindly steeped in the traditions of their fathers. It is no wonder "the people of the church did have *great joy* because of the conversion of the Lamanites..., and they...did rejoice one with another...." (Hel. 6:3.) Perhaps now we can see better why we too will "break forth into *joy*" as the covenants of the Lord to the House of Israel begin to be fulfilled. (3 Ne. 16:20 = Isa. 52:10.)

Before the miraculous prison experience took place and virtually the entire Lamanite nation was converted, several thousand Lamanites joined the church. (Hel. 5:18,19.) Similarly, might we expect that before the Lord makes bare his arm in breaking their yoke, many of the House of Israel will be converted? Today we are seeing some incredible things as far as missionary work going to places where it was hitherto barred.

Another phenomenon took place in this era of Book of Mormon history that could be a foreshadowing of what we might expect to come in the days ahead. The converted Lamanites and the faithful Nephites "did fellowship one with another...." (Hel. 6:3.) Also, the barriers between the Nephites and Lamanites were broken down; and for the first time "the Lamanites did...go whithersoever they would, whether it were among the Lamanites or among the Nephites..., [and] the Nephites did go into whatsoever part of the land they would...." (6:7,8.)

New Jerusalem Construction Begins

After the Saints have been purified and the one-world government is destroyed is apparently when the New Jerusalem construction will begin.¹³⁷ According to President Heber C. Kimball, before the New Jerusalem construction begins, the land "will be swept so clean of its inhabitants that...when you return to that place, there will not be left so much as a yellow dog to wag his tail."¹³⁸ The land on and around Jackson County, Missouri, where construction of the New Jerusalem is to begin (D&C 84:3,4), happens to be a primary target for the Soviet Union. Whitman Air Force Base with its missile silos and launch control center is located there. Thus we do not have too much difficulty imagining how this prophecy might be fulfilled.¹³⁹

¹³⁷President Heber C. Kimball, *Deseret News*, May 23, 1931.

¹³⁸*Deseret News*, May 23, 1931. Used by permission.

¹³⁹The Lord has promised that there "shall be no curse" on the land when he comes. Thus we need not worry about residual radiation. (D&C 38:18.)

Many prophecies about gathering to and building up Zion talk about the House of Israel "build[ing] up the *waste places*." (D&C 101:18; 103:11; Isa. 61:4; Ezek. 36:10,33; Amos 9:14; 3 Ne. 22:3 = Isa. 54:3; 1 Ne. 21:8 = Isa. 49:8.)¹⁴⁰ Anciently as well, after massive destructions by sword and famine came upon the Nephites, "the people of Nephi began to prosper again in the land, and began to *build up their waste places*." (Hel. 11:20.)

This same verse in Helaman also states that the Nephites "began to multiply and *spread*, even until they did cover the whole face of the land, both *on the northward and on the southward, from the sea west to the sea east*." This statement matches many prophecies about Zion spreading herself in the latter days. For example, Christ said, "*Enlarge* the place of thy tent, and let them *stretch* forth the curtains of thy habitations...; thou shalt *break forth on the right hand and on the left*..." (3 Ne. 22:2,3 = Isa. 54:2,3; 52:1,2; 2 Ne. 8:24; 3 Ne. 20:36; Moro. 10:31.)

Continuing the above statement, Christ said the House of Israel "shall *inherit the Gentiles* and make the *desolate cities* to be inhabited." (3 Ne. 22:3.) In the event of a nuclear attack, the greatest mortality would probably not come from the bombs themselves but from the starvation that would result from supplies being cut off.¹⁴¹ Larger cities would be most susceptible to such desolation. This would leave many cities in relatively good condition for anyone the Lord might bring into the land.

Literal Gathering of the House of Israel

Leaving the book of Helaman, we next consider the history in the book of Third Nephi to see what parallels it may hold for the days ahead. Chapters 3 and 4 describe when the Nephites and Lamanites gathered themselves into one body to protect themselves from the ravages of the Gadianton robbers, who had reemerged. This bears likeness to the literal gathering of the House of Israel that will take place in the latter days.

Reemergence of the Beast

Earlier, we noted that fire will apparently be involved in the destruction of the global oppressors, as the swords of their own hands fall upon their own heads. Daniel beheld that "the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and *given to the burning flame*." (Dan. 7:11.) In Book of Mormon history as well, the chastened and humbled Nephites "swept away the band of Gadianton from amongst them insomuch that they [had] become extinct..." (Hel. 11:10.)

However, shortly after that, "an exceedingly great band of robbers" was built up again, and they "did make great havoc, yea, even great destruction among the people of Nephi, and

¹⁴⁰It appears that a similar reconstruction will take place after all nations have laid siege against Jerusalem. Thus these scriptures probably have dual application.

¹⁴¹See "Assyrian Assault" section.

also among the people of the Lamanites." (Hel. 11:26,27.) They "did slay...many of the people, and did lay waste...many cities, and did spread...much death and carnage throughout the land..." (3 Ne. 2:11.) Apparently a secret combination will also reemerge in the latter days after being destroyed. John described the beast as, "...The beast that was, and *is not*, and *yet is*." (Rev. 17:9.) Perhaps this latter beast will be a driving force to stir up all nations to fight against the Jews at Jerusalem. (17:14; Zech. 14:2.)

Gathering Into One Place

The reason the Nephites and Lamanites assembled themselves "unto one place" was to protect themselves from being destroyed by the restored band of Gadianton. (3 Ne. 3:13) In the latter days as well, a literal gathering "unto one place" will be called so that the elect might "be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked." (D&C 29:8.) The saints will no longer be commanded of the Lord to "build up [his] church in every region," but they will of necessity be commanded to "be gathered in one" to "the city of the New Jerusalem [which] shall be prepared...." (D&C 42:8,9.)¹⁴²

One reason the Nephites gathered together was to "fortify themselves against their enemies" by building fortifications and combining their strength. (3 Ne. 3:14,25.) Zion will also provide protection for her people. She shall be "a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; and the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it...." (D&C 45:66,67; 61:14-16; 3 Ne. 22:14 = Isa. 54:14; 4:5,6.) Christ himself "will be in the midst." (3 Ne. 21:25; 3 Ne. 20:22; Zech. 2:10,12.)

Describing the nature of those who will inhabitant the New Jerusalem in the latter days, Moroni said, "Blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb...." (Ether 13:10.) Possibly foreshadowing this, those who gathered anciently "did repent of all their sins...." (3 Ne. 3:25.)

Book of Mormon history also contains a plausible parallel for the location of the latter-day gathering place. (3 Ne. 21:24.) "The land which was appointed" for the Nephites' and Lamanites' gathering "was the land of Zarahemla...." (3 Ne. 3:23.) It also included the land of Bountiful. (*Ibid.*) The record continues, "...Yea, ^ato the line which was ^bbetween the land ^cBountiful and the land ^dDesolation." (3 Ne. 3:23.) The wording here is very similar to a statement in the Doctrine and Covenants about the lands that the Saints were to purchase in preparation for the latter-day gathering: "...Every tract lying westward, even ^aunto the line running directly ^bbetween the ^cJew and the ^dGentile." (D&C 57:4.)¹⁴³

¹⁴²Christ explained that those who will be gathered to the New Jerusalem will be (1) the Gentiles who repent, (2) the remnant of Jacob, and (3) "as many of the house of Israel as shall come." (3 Ne. 21:22,23.) Indeed, "there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven...." (D&C 45:69.)

¹⁴³The comparisons between "Jews" and "Bountiful" and between "Gentiles" and "Desolation" is metaphorical, dealing with the name representations.

Actually, the Book of Mormon gathering did not include "Lamanites," for "all the Lamanites who had become converted unto the Lord did unite with their brethren, the Nephites, [and] were numbered among the Nephites, and were called Nephites." (3 Ne. 2:12,16.) Those Lamanites who were not converted apparently joined with Gadianton's band, for all who gathered "were called Nephites...." (3 Ne. 3:24.) This ancient assimilation reflects Christ's statement about the latter days: "If the Gentiles will *repent and hearken unto my words*, they shall come in unto the covenant and be *numbered among* this the remnant of Jacob [the Lehite descendants], unto whom I have given this land [the American continent] for their inheritance." (3 Ne. 21:22; Ether 13:8; Gen. 49:22-26.)

Up to this point the Nephites have paralleled the modern Gentiles, and the Lamanites have been analogous to the latter-day House of Israel. These comparisons would have the Nephites be numbered among the Lamanites and be called Lamanites, rather than the other way around as it is stated above. However, anciently the Nephites were identified as "a chosen people of the Lord." (Hel. 15:3.) So the comparison here is that a heathen people become numbered among a chosen people.

The Lamanites Blossom as a Rose

We also learn from the Nephite account that at this point the "curse was taken from [the converted Lamanites who united with the Nephites], and their skin became white like unto the Nephites; and their young men and their daughters became *exceedingly fair*." (3 Ne. 2:15,16.) We recall that "the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark that was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren...." (Alma 3:6.) The Lord promised that this curse would not be permanent if, as he said, "they [would] repent of their wickedness and turn to me that I may have mercy upon them." (3:14.)

This promise was fulfilled anciently, so we might expect that it will be fulfilled again in the latter days. Nephi might have alluded to this when he prophesied that in the latter days, "...many generations shall not pass away among [the latter-day Lamanites], save they shall be a *pure and a delightsome people*." (2 Ne. 30:6.)

As the Nephites were delivered from destruction anciently, they "did ^a*break forth*, all as one, in ^b*singing*, and praising their God for the ^c*great thing which he had done* for them, in ^d*preserving* them from falling into the hands of their enemies." (3 Ne. 4:31.) This is amazingly similar to certain statements about the House of Israel's deliverance in the latter days. Take this verse from Isaiah, for example: "Sing, O ye heavens; for ^c*the Lord hath done it*. shout, ye lower parts of the earth: ^a*break forth* into ^b*singing*, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath ^d*redeemed* Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." (Isa. 44:23; D&C 45:71.)

A Highway Cast Up

As part of the latter-day restoration, Moses conferred the "keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north."

(D&C 110:11.) It seems appropriate that he was the one to bestow these keys, for numerous prophecies infer that "as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be." (D&C 103:18; Micah 7:15; Isa 52:4; 11:15; 10:26; Jer. 16:14,15; Zech. 10:10.)

The hallmark of the ancient deliverance was the children of Israel's being led through the waters of the Red Sea on dry ground. Several prophecies of the latter-days describe how once again, the Lord will make "the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over." (Isa. 51:10 = 2 Ne. 8:10.) They talk of how a highway be "cast up," over which the redeemed of the Lord will return. (Isa. 62:10; 35:8; 11:16 = 2 Ne. 21:16; Isa. 49:11 = 1 Ne. 21:11; Zech. 10:11; D&C 133:27.) Significantly, therefore, in the portion of Book of Mormon history we are now discussing, the record states that "there were many *highways cast up*...." (3 Ne. 6:7,8.)

This likely tie-in is solidified in the fact that the previous verse states that "there were many cities built anew, and there were many *old cities repaired*." (3 Ne. 6:7,8.) As we mentioned previously, many prophecies speak of how the House of Israel "shall *build the old wastes*, and they shall *repair the waste cities*...." (Isa. 61:4.) Joseph Smith declared that the reason the wicked will be swept off the face of the United States will be "to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country."¹⁴⁴

The Ten Tribes are going to gather first to America. (D&C 133:26,32; 110:11.) However, their final destination is apparently the land of Israel, along with the Jews, with Jerusalem as the capital. (Ether 13:11; 2 Ne. 25:11; 3 Ne. 20:29.) Analyzing Mormon's remarks in the Nephite record reveals a possible foreshadowing of this scenario.

In Third Nephi 5, Mormon breaks his narrative of the history to make various comments. He ends the chapter with the declaration that the House of Israel "shall...be ^a*gathered* in from the four quarters of the earth ^b*unto their own lands*, from whence they have been dispersed...." (5:26; Ezek. 17:21.) The Ten Tribes were scattered from the land of Israel, so that is apparently where they will ultimately return.

In the first verse of the very next chapter, Mormon makes the following statement (note the same wording): "And now it came to pass that the people of the Nephites did all ^a*return* ^b*to their own lands*...." (3 Ne. 6:1.) Thus the land of Zarahemla served only as a temporary gathering place, and once its purpose had been fulfilled (the threat of the reemerged Gadianton band removed), they were able to go to their own lands.

Tying together his statements about the Nephites with his declaration about the House of Israel, it seems possible that Mormon is suggesting that the Americas will be a temporary gathering place for the Ten Tribes. Once the Jerusalem of Old has been redeemed--her enemies having been destroyed--the Ten Tribes will be able to gather to that land which is their own.

¹⁴⁴TPJS, 1938 edition, p.17.

Laws According to Equity and Justice

We might make one more note regarding Zion. Above we discussed the destruction by fire of the conspiratorial dictatorship in the latter days. Inasmuch as that beast will apparently constitute the governing power on the earth before it is destroyed, we may wonder what will replace it. In Book of Mormon history, following the destruction of the Gadianton band,¹⁴⁵ the people "*formed their laws according to equity and justice.*" (3 Ne. 6:4.) This could foreshadow the Kingdom of God that will be set up in force in Zion once the beast is destroyed. (Dan. 2:44; 7:26.) Joseph Smith taught that the Kingdom of God will be a theocratic governing structure that will "protect all in their equal rights...and furnish freedom for all."¹⁴⁶ But what about the political condition elsewhere in the world following the dramatic destruction of the global oppressor? Will the world experience, at least temporarily, a taste of equity and justice before Satan stirs men's hearts up again--this time to combine against the Jews? Whatever the case may be, in the end we know that once Satan is bound and the millennium ushered in, the Kingdom of God will "[fill] the whole earth." (Dan. 7:35.)

Ripening in Iniquity

Further on in Book of Mormon history, the Nephites rapidly fell from their state of righteousness and order to a state of gross wickedness and anarchy. This was perhaps why massive cataclysmic destructions came upon them at the time preceding Christ's appearance. This era of their history seems to match the period that will precede Christ's second coming.

Before this drastic downfall, the Nephites reached a high point in their progression. "There was not a living soul among all the people of the Nephites who did doubt in the least the words of all the holy prophets who had spoken for they knew that it must needs be that they must be fulfilled." (3 Ne. 5:1,2.) Furthermore, at this point in Book of Mormon history, virtually everyone had a knowledge of the gospel. The Lamanites were either numbered among the Nephites or they were among the robbers, and the Nephites "did cause the word of God to be preached" to all the robbers who they had taken prisoner, for "none had escaped who were not slain...." (3 Ne. 6:3; 5:4.) Similarly, the scriptures proclaim that before Christ's second coming, the "gospel of the kingdom shall be *preached in all the world* for a witness unto all nations...." (Matt. 24:14.)

The Nephite record continues, "Now there was nothing in all the land to hinder the people from prospering continually, except they should fall into transgression." (3 Ne. 6:5.) Unfortunately, they did not maintain their righteousness; but they "began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning," and "Satan had great power, unto...the puffing them up with pride...." (6:12,15.)

¹⁴⁵This was the second time the Gadianton robbers were destroyed. (See Hel. 11:10.)

¹⁴⁶Joseph Smith, JD, XX, 204.

Nephi described a similar time in the latter days, saying, "...They have all *gone out of the way*; they have become corrupted"--a condition that seems to imply accountability. (2 Ne. 28:11.) "The learned and the rich that are puffed up in pride" were also included in Nephi's depiction of the last days. (28:15.)

This "great inequality" among the Nephites caused the church to be "broken up in all the land ^a*save it were among a few* of the Lamanites who were ^b*converted unto the true faith*...." (6:14.) In the latter days as well, as Nephi said, "because of pride...their churches are lifted up...; [and] they have all gone astray ^a*save it be a few*, who are the ^b*humble followers of Christ*...." (28:14.)

Lehite history also states that "Satan did lead away the hearts of the people to do all manner of iniquity...." (3 Ne. 6:16.) They "did not sin ignorantly, for they knew the will of God concerning them, for it had been taught unto them; therefore they did willfully rebel against God." (6:18.) As "men inspired from heaven [began]...preaching and testifying boldly of the sins and iniquities of the people...", they were "put to death...." (6:20,23.) The people were particularly angry with one prophet, "for it [was] not possible that they could disbelieve his words...." (3 Ne. 7:18.)

All of this sheds light on the conditions we might expect to see after the House of Israel is brought out of captivity and before Christ appears to the world in glory.

Also during this period of Book of Mormon history the people "began to look with great earnestness for the sign which had been given by Samuel, the Lamanite.... And there began to be *great doubtings and disputations* among the people, notwithstanding so *many signs* had been given." (3 Ne. 8:3,4.) Likewise, in the latter days the people "shall see *signs and wonders*, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath." (D&C 45:40.) Nevertheless, many "shall say that *Christ delayeth his coming* until the end of the earth." (45:26; Matt. 24:48.) Moroni's admonition to them is: "...The words of the Lord, which have been spoken by the holy prophets, shall all be fulfilled; and ye need not say that the Lord delays his coming unto the children of Israel." (3 Ne. 29:2; Morm. 9:26.)

As the Nephites deteriorated another secret combination emerged. It's members combined "against the people of the Lord, and did enter into a covenant to destroy them...." (3 Ne. 6:29.) Could this foreshadow that time in our day when all nations will combine against the Jews? Will yet another secret combination--the present one having been destroyed--be behind this?

Perhaps this is why Isaiah said, "Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice¹⁴⁷...." (2 Ne. 24:29 = Isa. 14:29.) John said, "...The beast that was, and is not..., shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." (Rev. 17:8.) This restored beast, like the first, will "make war with the Lamb," this time their aggression apparently converging on the Jews. (17:14.)

Zechariah said that "all nations" will be gathered "against Jerusalem to battle..., and half of the city shall go forth into captivity...." (Zech. 14:2.) Apparently this treading down will last "forty

¹⁴⁷A cockatrice is a venomous snake.

and two months," or three and a half years. (Rev. 11:2.) Then at a critical moment, the Lord shall "fight against those nations," and eventually "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" as the Lord then becomes "king over all the earth." (Zech. 14:3,11,9.)

Incidentally, this pattern resembles that which we discussed in conjunction with the redemption of the New Jerusalem--even though it will apparently occur several years before. If we have understood the prophecies correctly, in both instances an initial attack will be followed by temporary bondage. Then redemption will come as the Lord makes bare his arm at a crucial time. Following this deliverance, a purified people will inhabit the land, and the Lord will reign in their midst.

Redemption of the Jews

Because of the numerous similarities between the events accompanying the redemption of both the New Jerusalem (Zion) and the Jerusalem of old, a prophecy of one often seems to serve as a prophecy of the other.¹⁴⁸ In fact, many times both are mentioned in a single prophecy. Jeremiah revealed that "this people [referring to Zion] *and* Jerusalem" will think there will be peace "whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul." (Jer. 4:6,10,11.) Isaiah said that after the Lord has "[performed] his whole work upon mount Zion *and* on Jerusalem" is when he will punish the aggressor. (Isa. 10:12 = 2 Ne. 20:12.) Joel said that "in mount Zion *and* in Jerusalem shall be deliverance...." (Joel 2:32.) Isaiah added that the Lord's "fire is in Zion, *and* his furnace in Jerusalem." (Isa. 31:9.) Zechariah tells us that the Lord "will dwell in the midst of...Zion..., *and* shall choose Jerusalem again." (Zech. 2:10,12.)

It turns out that a certain Book of Mormon event also seems to parallel both of these future episodes. We have already looked at the Lamanite prison experience, comparing various elements of it to the way Zion will be redeemed. This same event apparently carries extensive parallels to the redemption of Jerusalem as well.

As Nephi and Lehi played a lead role in the prison experience, two prophets will "be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days...to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem...." (D&C 77:15.) The Lord said, "*I will give power* unto [these] two witnesses, and they shall *prophesy* a thousand two hundred and threescore days." (Rev. 11:3.) Similarly, Nephi was described "as a great *prophet*, and a man of God, having great *power and authority given unto him from God*." (Hel. 11:18,19.) "Lehi, his brother, was not a whit behind him as to things pertaining to righteousness." (11:19.)

The Lord told Nephi: "...All things shall be done unto thee ^a*according to thy word*... Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels, that ye shall have ^b*power* over

¹⁴⁸Perhaps a main reason for the apparent likeness in the redemptions of Zion and Jerusalem will have to do with the importance of the spiritual applications that are established in these patterns. Zion will need to be redeemed in the same manner as Jerusalem, both of which parallel the redemption of the individual, as is discussed in Chapter Five.

this people, and shall ^csmite the earth with ^dfamine, and with ^epestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people." (Hel. 10:5,6.) Likewise, the power given the two latter-day witnesses will be to "shut heaven, that it ^drain not in the days of their prophecy...." (Rev. 11:6.) They will also "have ^bpower over waters to turn them to blood, and to ^csmite the earth with all ^eplagues, as often ^aas they will." (*Ibid.*)

John beheld that "if any man will hurt [the two witnesses], *fire* proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies...." (Rev. 11:5.) When these two latter-day witnesses "shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and *kill them*." (Rev. 11:7.) Similarly, when the Lamanites went forth to slay Nephi and Lehi, who had been preaching among the Lamanites, the two "were encircled about as if by *fire*, even insomuch that [the Lamanites] durst not lay their hands upon them for fear lest they should be burned." (Hel. 5:23.)

John beheld that after the two prophets lay dead in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days, "they heard a great ^avoice ^bfrom heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ^cascended up to heaven ^din a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." (Rev. 11:8,9,12.) In the Lamanite prison as well, "there came a ^avoice as if it were ^babove the cloud of darkness." (Hel. 5:29.) All the prisoners then beheld that "the faces of Nephi and Lehi did shine exceedingly, even as the faces of angels. And they did ^clift their eyes to heaven; and they were in the attitude as if talking or lifting up their voices to some being whom they beheld." (Hel. 5:36.) Resembling the heavenly cloud into which the two latter-day witnesses ascended, "Nephi and Lehi...were as if ^din the midst of a flaming fire...." (Hel. 5:44.)¹⁴⁹

Another thing that occurred in the Lamanite prison was "the *earth shook exceedingly*...." (Hel. 5:27.) The Lamanite prisoners were then "overshadowed with a cloud of darkness, and an *awful solemn fear* came upon them." (Hel. 5:28.) Similarly, John beheld that in the same hour that the two witnesses were taken up to heaven, "there was a *great earthquake*..., and the remnant were *affrighted*...." (Rev. 11:13.)

John concludes, "...And the remnant...*gave glory* to the God of heaven." (*Ibid.*) Isolating this phrase, we glimpse what apparently will transpire in the hearts of the Jews as a result of these dramatic events. The Lamanites' experience presents a remarkable perspective. At one point, the frightened Lamanite prisoners asked, "What shall we do, that this cloud of darkness may be removed from overshadowing us?" (Hel. 5:40.) The reply came: "You must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ." They did this and "were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and *full of glory*." (Hel. 5:44.) Moroni commented that during this transcendent event, the Lamanites "were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost." (Ether 12:14; 3 Ne. 9:20.) Will the Jews undergo a similar transformation? Perhaps this is why the Lord said: "I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: *they shall call on*

¹⁴⁹"Clouds" and "fire" are both common adjectives used to describe heavenly manifestations. (See Exo. 16:10 and 3:2, respectively.)

my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. 13:9.)

There were actually four times that a voice was heard in the Lamanite prison. On the fourth time, a voice said: "Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world." (Hel. 5:47.) The voice heard was that of the Father's. The times recorded in scripture of the Father's voice being heard are rare.¹⁵⁰ Each occurrence is usually associated with the Father announcing his Son, Jesus Christ. Is this occurrence in the Lamanite prison an exception, or is it perhaps intended to foreshadow that time in the latter days when Jesus Christ will appear to the Jews?

The prophecies state that He will appear to the Jews as they are about to be destroyed by the nations of the earth that will have encompassed them. The Lord Himself shall "go forth, and fight against those nations...." (Zech. 14:3.) He "shall stand...upon the mount of Olives..., and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof..., and [the Jews] shall flee to the valley of the mountains...." (14:4.) "And then," Christ said, "shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet? Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God. And then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king." (D&C 45:51-53; Zech. 12:10; 13:6.)

Describing the destruction of the Jew's enemies, the Lord said, "In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a *torch of fire* in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left." (Zech. 12:6; 3 Ne. 22:16.) Perhaps this will become a dual fulfillment of the prophecy: "Wherefore, the righteous need not fear; for...they shall be saved, even if it so be as by fire." (1 Ne. 22:17.)

Due to the miraculous manifestation these few Lamanites witnessed in prison, virtually the entire Lamanite nation was converted in a very short period of time. In the same way, Isaiah foretold the incredible latter-day conversion of the Jews, saying, "...A nation [shall] be born at once...." (Isa. 66:8.)

The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

Following the time in Book of Mormon history that a secret combination united against the people of the Lord, a wide-spread cataclysm took place on the American continent. It destroyed all of the wicked inhabitants from off the land, leaving only the more righteous. After this, they heard a voice from heaven. Then later Jesus Christ himself descended from heaven

¹⁵⁰Five recorded instances in which the voice of the Father is heard are: (1) to John the Baptist immediately following Christ's baptism, (2) to Nephi in his vision of that event, (3) at the Mount of Transfiguration, (4) preceding Christ's Appearance to the Nephites, and (5) accompanying Joseph Smith's first vision.

and appeared to a large group of people assembled around a temple. All of this seems to correspond to what is prophesied to take place at the time of Christ's second coming.

Many times, the descriptions of the destructions are so similar that without context we would hardly be able to tell whether the account describes the latter-day or the ancient occurrence. For example compare the following two prophecies. First: "...The ^a*earth shall shake and tremble*; and...there shall be many ^b*mountains laid low*, like unto a valley, and there shall be many places which are now called ^c*valleys which shall become mountains*, whose height is great."¹⁵¹ And second: "The heavens shall be shaken, and the ^a*earth shall tremble* and reel to and fro as a drunken man, and the ^c*valleys shall be exalted*, and the ^b*mountains shall be made low*, and the rough places shall become smooth."¹⁵² The first is a prophecy made by Samuel the Lamanite about the ancient destruction. The second refers to the catastrophe yet to come in the latter days.

Here's another example. First: "For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and ^a*all the proud*, yea, and ^b*all that do wickedly*, ^c*shall be stubble*: and ^d*the day that cometh shall burn them up*, ^e*saith the Lord of hosts*..."¹⁵³ And second: "Wherefore, ^a*all those who are proud*, and ^b*that do wickedly*, ^d*the day that cometh shall burn them up*, ^e*saith the Lord of Hosts*, for they ^c*shall be as stubble*."¹⁵⁴ One of these statements is a fairly well-known prophecy that describes the latter-day situation. It turns out that the other--the second--is Nephi I's prophecy of the destruction which came anciently on the American continent.

One of the above two prophecies began with the statement: "Great and terrible shall that day be unto the wicked, for they shall perish; and they perish because they cast out the prophets, and the saints, and stone them, and slay them; wherefore the cry of the blood of the saints shall ascend up to God from the ground against them."¹⁵⁵ Again, without context we have difficulty telling which time is being referring to: the latter-day cataclysm or the ancient one. Let's read what follows the above statement to see if it helps us identify which time is being talked about. "And they that kill the prophets, and the saints," it continues, "the depths of the earth shall swallow them up, saith the Lord of Hosts; and mountains shall cover them, and whirlwinds shall carry them away, and buildings shall fall upon them and crush them to pieces and grind them to powder."¹⁵⁶ Still we cannot really tell which time is being spoken of, so let's keep reading: "And they shall be visited with thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquakes, and all manner of destructions, for the fire of the anger of the Lord shall be

¹⁵¹Hel. 14:21,23.

¹⁵²D&C 49:23.

¹⁵³3 Ne. 25:1 = Mal. 4:1.

¹⁵⁴2 Ne. 26:4. Compare this to 1 Ne. 22:15, which is Nephi's prophecy about the latter days.

¹⁵⁵2 Ne. 26:3; compare 2 Ne. 28:10, Rev. 16:6.

¹⁵⁶2 Ne. 26:5.

kindled against them, and they shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall consume them, saith the Lord of Hosts."¹⁵⁷ Not until we read the next verse do we identify the time being spoken about. "O the pain, and the anguish of my soul for the loss of *my people!* For I, Nephi, have seen it...." (2 Ne. 26:7.)

So this was Nephi again, telling about the destructions that would precede the appearance of Jesus Christ to his people on the ancient American continent. At the same time, this description fits perfectly the scene that will unfold in the latter days. Nephi was apparently keenly aware of this too, for in the very next chapter, he briefly described the latter-day destruction. He said, for example, "And when that day shall come they shall be visited of the Lord of Hosts, with thunder and with earthquake, and with a great noise, and with storm, and with tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire." (2 Ne 27:1,2.)

The similarities between the ancient and the future occurrence are not confined to the scene of destruction. Both are described as being followed by the sun and the moon becoming darkened. (3 Ne. 8:22; compare JS-M 1:33 = Matt. 24:29.) Each are also marked by great lamentations (3 Ne. 8:23-25; compare JS-M 1:36 = Matt. 24:30), a period of silence (3 Ne. 10:1,2; compare D&C 88:95), and voices from heaven (3 Ne. 9, 10:3-7; compare D&C 88:95). The resurrection of saints during this period is another parallel. (Hel. 14:25; compare D&C 88:96-98.)

Even some of the words spoken anciently by a Heavenly voice--"a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth..." (3 Ne. 9:1; compare D&C 45:49)--will be repeated in the latter days, such as: "How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings..., and ye would not." (3 Ne. 10:3,5; compare D&C 43:23,24.)

Considering the extensive similarities between the ancient and latter-day events, we might predict that other things spoken anciently may be repeated as well. Will the Savior again extend the invitation: "...Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?" (3 Ne. 9:13.) The Lord will not announce, "In me is the law of Moses fulfilled," for it was fulfilled with his first coming. (3 Ne. 9:17; 15:8.) But might he declare, "The covenant which I have made with my people is...fulfilled"? (3 Ne. 28:7.) He has said, "...All things shall be fulfilled...when I shall come in my glory...." (D&C 45:16.)

The Second Coming

Surely the most magnificent event in Book of Mormon history is the appearance and ministration of Jesus Christ to those ancient people. We look forward with earnestness to the time when this will be repeated on a grand scale in our day. Although the Savior will first appear to the Saints in the New Jerusalem and to the Jews in Jerusalem, his appearance to the whole world will be the apex.¹⁵⁸ Surely all previous parallels have only pointed to this

¹⁵⁷2 Ne. 26:6; compare 2 Ne. 27:1,2.

¹⁵⁸Ezra Taft Benson, "Prepare Yourselves for the Great Day of the Lord," 1981 Devotional Speeches of the Year, Provo, Utah: BYU, 1982, p. 67.

glorious event and what follows it. The gospel was restored to prepare a people for his reign; wars have been waged to defend against evil forces that thwart his purposes; and nations will be chastened and purged to produce a sanctified people, ready for his return.

When the Savior comes in the clouds of heaven, "every eye shall see him...." (Rev. 1:7) Similarly, when he appeared to the Nephites, "the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him..." (3 Ne. 11:8). While the Nephites beheld the Savior descending, they "wist not what it meant, for they *thought it was an angel* that had appeared unto them." (*Ibid.*) In the latter days as well, when "one grand sign of the Son of Man in heaven" is manifest, Joseph Smith remarked that people will say, "...It is a planet, a comet, etc. But the Son of man will come as the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, which will be as the light of the morning cometh out of the east."¹⁵⁹

The marveling Nephites were soon enlightened as the Savior announced, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world." (3 Ne. 11:10.) And "when Jesus had spoken these words the whole multitude *fell to the earth....*" (3 Ne. 11:12.) So also in the latter days, apparently after one of the trumps is sounded, "*every knee shall bow*, and every tongue confess..., saying: Fear God, and give glory to him who sitteth upon the throne forever and ever...." (D&C 88:104; Rev. 14:7.)

The Nephites fell to the earth, "for they *remembered that it had been prophesied* among them that Christ should show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven." (3 Ne. 11:12.) Apparently, a similar recollection will take place during the Second Coming. That recollection will be possible because the gospel will have been "*preached in all the world* for a witness unto all nations...." (JS-M 1:31 = Matt. 24:14). Moroni, who presented the gospel to Joseph Smith via the Book of Mormon, will likely blow the reminding trump that will bring men to bow the knee. (D&C 88:103; Rev. 14:6.)

When Jesus revealed his identity to the Nephites, he said, "...^a*I have drunk out of that bitter cup* which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in ^b*taking upon me the sins of the world*, in the which ^c*I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.*" (3 Ne. 11:11.) Compare that ancient declaration with this one that will be sounded by a latter-day trump: "^c*It is finished*; it is finished! The ^a*Lamb of God hath overcome and trodden the wine-press alone*, even ^b*the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.*" (D&C 88:106.)

Millennium

The remainder of Third Nephi and the first chapter of Fourth Nephi recounts the words which Jesus spoke to the assembled Nephites, the miracles he performed, the ordinances he carried out, and the sublime impact he left on the people. Reflecting upon these things, we

¹⁵⁹TPJS, p. 287.

discover an abundance of parallels to the blessed state of the millennial utopia, which will be ushered in with the climactic second coming of Jesus Christ.

Over many millennia, prophets have directed man's attention to the latter days when all the covenants of the Lord will be fulfilled which he made to the House of Israel. Indeed, when the Savior comes in his glory, "all things shall be fulfilled...." (D&C 45:16.) The Book of Mormon account seems to foreshadow the fulfilling of the covenant made to Abraham. The record states at one point, for example, "the Lord did bless them in all their doings...." (4 Ne. 1:18,11.) This was a fulfillment the ancient promise that the Lord "shall command the blessing...in all that thou settest thy hand unto...." (Deut. 28:8.) Also during this period of Lehite history, "the people were as numerous almost, as it were the *sand of the sea*" (Morm 1:7), which reflects the ancient covenant that Abraham's seed will be multiplied "as the *sand which is upon the sea shore*..." (Gen. 22:17).

The scriptures say that in the millennium "all things shall become new...." (D&C 101:24,25.) Will the Lord present higher teachings to us like he did to the Nephites? Explaining why he was replacing the law of Moses with a higher law, Jesus declared to the Nephites, "Old things are done away, and *all things have become new*." (3 Ne. 12:47.) At that time, the law of Moses had been fulfilled in him. (3 Ne. 15:8,9.) With his second coming, the Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled. Concerning that time, the Lord said, "I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah...." (Jer. 31:40,31,32.)

Speaking of the millennium, Isaiah said, "Since the beginning of the world *men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen*, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." (Isa. 64:3,4.)¹⁶⁰ A similar statement was made in the Nephite account. It says, "The *eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard*, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father." (3 Ne. 17:16.)

During the millennium, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord..., [and] all things shall be made known unto the children of men. There is nothing which is secret save it shall be revealed. All things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed." (2 Ne. 30:15-18; Isa. 11:9.) In antiquity as well, great and marvelous things were revealed to the Nephites after Christ's appearance. (3 Ne. 26:16,18.) What is now referred to as the "sealed portion" of the Book of Mormon, namely the writings of the brother of Jared, were "made manifest" at that time. (Ether 4:2-5; 5:1.) These records will come forth in our day too. The Lord promised that once we have become sanctified as a people, he will manifest to us "the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto [us] all [his] revelations...." (Ether 4:7,14,15.)¹⁶¹

Considering that the redemption of the New Jerusalem will usher in millennial-type conditions among those who dwell there, might we expect that great things will be brought forth

¹⁶⁰As we consider the great blessings in store for those who wait for the Lord, the statement, "...Watch therefore...be ye also ready..." (JS-M 1:46,48) becomes a gracious invitation: not just a dreadful warning.

at that time as well--before the world as a whole enters into the millennium? We know that only those "whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb..." will dwell in Zion (Ether 13:10); and sanctification is the prerequisite to receiving, for example, the brother of Jared's writings (4:7). No longer will the Lord need to conceal his precious truths in parable form. Isaiah confirms this timing saying that the Lord will speak in a veiled way only "*until* the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away...." (Isa. 6:11,12.)

Because the earth will be "full of the knowledge of the Lord," apparently missionary work will eventually become obsolete as we know it. (2 Ne. 30:15-18.) "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me..." said the Lord. (Jer. 31:34 = Heb. 8:11.) Yet at the time of his coming, not all of the righteous who survive will have already come into his fold. Joseph Fielding Smith said, "There will be millions of people, Catholics, Protestants, agnostic, Mohammedans, people of all classes, and of all beliefs, still permitted to remain upon the face of the earth, but they will be those who have lived clean lives, those who have been free from wickedness and corruption."¹⁶² Therefore, at least an initial proselyting effort will be instigated.¹⁶³ In Book of Mormon history, Jesus charged the Nephite disciples: "Therefore, go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth." (3 Ne. 11:41.) After only about three years, "the people were *all converted unto the Lord*, upon all the face of the land...." (4 Ne. 1:1,2.)

The Nephite record proclaims that not only did Christ "teach the people for the space of three days," but "he did *show himself unto them oft*." (3 Ne. 26:13.) This seems to foreshadow the fact that during the millennium, the Lord himself will reign personally upon the earth. (Rev. 20:4.)

The healing that will occur in the millennium will not just be spiritual. "The ^a*eyes of the blind shall be opened*, and the ^b*ears of the deaf shall be unstopped*. Then shall the ^c*lame man leap as an hart*, and the tongue of the dumb sing." (Isa. 35:5,6.) Similarly, when Christ ministered among the Nephites, he "healed all their sick, and their ^c*lame*, and ^a*opened the eyes of their blind* and ^b*unstopped the ears of the deaf*...." (3 Ne. 26:15.)

A hallmark of the millennium will be that "because of the righteousness of [God's] people, Satan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth." (1 Ne. 22:26.) This same type of condition was evidenced in the period of Nephite history following the Savior's appearance to them. "...There were [no] envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness [among them]...." (4 Ne. 1:16; compare D&C 45:58.) "They had all things common among them, every man dealing justly one with another." (3 Ne. 26:19.) Also, "there were no contentions in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people." (4 Ne. 1:15-18; compare 2 Ne. 30:15,18.) "There were no...Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one,

¹⁶²Doctrines of Salvation, 1954, 1:86-87.

¹⁶³Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 1954, 1:86-87.

the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God." (4 Ne. 1:17; compare Ezek. 37:22,27.) "...Surely there could not be a *happier* people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God," the Nephite record proclaims. (4 Ne. 1:16; compare 2 Ne. 8:11 = Isa. 51:11.)

Satan Loosed for a Short Season

Now we come to the end of the Nephite history. The record states that after a couple of hundred years of "prosperity in Christ," the people began to degenerate, dividing again into Nephites and Lamanites. Eventually, the Nephite nation, because of its open rebellion against God, was obliterated in a terrible battle with the Lamanites. (4 Ne. 1:23,38; Morm. 6:17; 8:9.)

This resembles what is prophesied to happen at the end of the millennial reign of Christ. Satan "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth..." (Rev. 20:8), and "men [will] again begin to deny their God..." (D&C 29:22). Then "Michael...shall gather together his armies, even the hosts of heaven. And the devil shall gather together his armies; even the hosts of hell, and shall come up to battle against Michael and his armies. And then cometh the battle of the great God; and the devil and his armies shall be cast away into their own place..." (D&C 88:112,114.)

We note, however, one important difference between the two eras. Anciently, the Lamanites who destroyed the Nephites were not righteous; whereas in the latter days, Michael's forces will consist of the saints of God. (88:114.) Not everyone will fall when Satan rallies his last campaign at the end of the millennium. To the contrary, those numbered among Michael's army will be classified as "the hosts of heaven." (88:113.) Notwithstanding this difference, Book of Mormon history provides us with some valuable insights as we ask ourselves how anyone could fall, having lived in such a blessed state.

Will the final downfall of many at the end of the world begin with pride as it did the Nephites? (4 Ne. 1:24-26.) Will Satan-inspired secret combinations again be at the root of the degradation? (4 Ne. 1:42.) Collective pride results in secret combinations,¹⁶⁴ and secret combinations "bringeth to pass the destruction of all people..." (8:22,25.)

Mormon's sorrow over his fallen people seems to apply to the situation that will unfold at the end of the millennium. He lamented, "They were once a delightsome people, and they had Christ for their shepherd, yea, they were led even by God the Father. But now, behold, they are led about by Satan, even as chaff is driven before the wind, or as a vessel is tossed about upon the waves, without sail or anchor, or without anything wherewith to steer her; and even as she is, so are they." (Morm. 5:17,18.)

¹⁶⁴Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May 1989, p. 6.

