

FIRST VOICES

“ . . . in the land of their first inheritance . . . ”

“I speak unto you as the voice of one crying from the dust . . . ”

-prophetic words from the past-



THE THREE FIRES

About 1,000 years ago, several Native American groups left their homes along the eastern coast of North America and moved westward. A few groups came to the Upper and Lower Peninsulas of Michigan. The largest of these groups were the Chippewa (Ojibwa), Potawatomi, and Ottawa.

They called themselves the “Three Fires” because they thought of themselves as a family. They all shared a common culture or way of life and spoke the same language, which was called Algonquin.

They believed in the Gitche Manitou, or Great Spirit, who they believed was a god of miracles and that he assigned a special task to each tribe to help insure their survival. Let’s take a look at how they lived and what they believed.

OTTAWA

The Ottawa were known as the “trader people”. They believed their god told them they were responsible for providing food and supplies. The word Ottawa means “to trade”. Each Ottawa family owned a trade route and only family members were allowed to travel the route. They traveled extensively in

the Great Lakes region by using their birch bark canoes. They traded with other tribes of the Three Fires, as well as the Menominee, Huron, and Miami tribes. The Ottawa settled primarily along the western coastline of present day Michigan.

POTAWATOMI

The Potawatomi were referred to as the “younger brother” of the Ottawa and had the special task of keeping the fires burning. They were known as the “keepers of the fire”. They lived mostly in the southern part of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and became very good vegetable farmers.

CHIPPEWA

The Chippewa, or Ojibwe/Ojibway were referred to as the “older brother” of the Three Fires. Ojibwe, a name describing their moccasins, settled in the Upper Peninsula and in the northeastern part of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. They were known as the “keepers of the faith”. Their task was to keep their religion alive, but which religion and which god?

GOD OF MIRACLES

An ancient Native American record (commonly called the Book of Mormon) includes a prophet’s discussion about a God of Miracles. He stated, “. . . behold, I will show unto

you a God of miracles . . . the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are” (Mormon 9:11). Not the Gitche Manitou, but the God of Israel.

The prophet, Moroni, continued his explanation, “And now, O all you that have imagined up unto yourselves a god who can do no miracles, I would ask of you, have all these things passed, of which I have spoken? Has the end come yet? Behold I say unto you, Nay; and God has not ceased to be a God of miracles” (Mormon 9:15).

Finally, he wisely noted that, “And who shall say that Jesus Christ did not do many mighty miracles? And there were many mighty miracles wrought by the hands of the apostles. And if there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being? And behold, I say unto you he changeth not; if so he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles” (Mormon 9:18-19).

Another ancient prophet, Nephi, heard the words,

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The Three Fires continued

“For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will show unto the world that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and I work not among the children of men save it be according to their faith” (2 Nephi 27:23).

Thus we can see that the beliefs of the Three Fires had a strong foundation. Let’s look into some of their other traits.

TRADERS

Researchers and scholars (professional and amateur) of the ancient record – the Book of Mormon – often considered the first prophet of the book, Lehi, a merchant or trader based on his knowledge of the Egyptian language (which he taught to his son, Nephi), his ownership of tents and provisions, his great wealth “at” Jerusalem (before he was brought to America by God), and his knowledge of the area around Jerusalem and the wilderness. His people, who were eventually called Nephites, were very industrious. The other main group of Lehi’s descendents was called Lamanites. They were named after Lehi’s first-born son Laman and were much less industrious than their Nephite brothers. Hunting, taxing, and extorting seemed to be their preferred career track; until a dissenter from the Nephites taught special writing skills to them. The record includes this statement, “And thus the Lamanites began to increase in riches, and began to **trade** one with another and wax great, and began to be a cunning and a wise people, as to the wisdom of the

world, yea, a very cunning people...” (Mosiah 24:7). An earlier ancient American record (called the Book of Ether, of which an abridgement is found in the Book of Mormon) may also have influenced both Nephites and Lamanites. This record speaks of a group of ancient Americans called Jaredites. One of their historians noted that, “And they were exceedingly industrious, and they did **buy and sell** and traffic one with another, that they might get gain” (Ether 10:22). Trade is not always good. The Book of Mormon states that they “...did **traffic** in all manner of **traffic**” (4 Nephi v. 46). Today we often use the word ‘traffic’ to indicate clandestine or illegal activity involving drugs or weapons.

FARMERS

The Prophet Lehi was either inspired or instructed to gather “together **all manner** of seeds of every kind, both of grain of every kind, and also of the seeds of fruit of every kind” to take with him on his journey to America. (1 Nephi 8:1) The tradition in ancient America was that the Nephites became accomplished farmers. A third generation prophet, Enos, noted, “And it came to pass that the people of Nephi did till the land, and raise **all manner of grain, and of fruit**, and flocks of herds, and flocks of **all manner** of cattle of every kind, and goats, and wild goats, and also many horses” (Enos v. 21).

Much later, there were some Lamanites converted to the Lord through the efforts of a missionary, Ammon,

together with his brothers. These Lamanites began “...to labor exceedingly, tilling the ground, raising all manner of grain, and flocks and herds of every kind...” (Alma 62:29).

Another prophet named Amulek taught that you should “Cry unto [God] over the **crops** of your fields, that ye may prosper in them” (Alma 34:24). Two of the most beautiful analogies in the Book of Mormon are the caring for the tame and wild olive trees (Israelites and Gentiles) and also the planting of a seed (word of God) in the heart.

KEEPERS OF THE FAITH

An oft quoted New Testament scripture relative to keeping the faith is, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude v. 3).

More importantly, Jesus said:

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods” (Matthew 24:45-47).

“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter

thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:21).

“He that is **faithful** in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10).

The Apostle Paul stated, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have **kept the faith**” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Moroni, an ancient general and prophet of the Lord said, “Now ye see that this is the true faith of God; yea, ye see that God will support, and keep, and **preserve** us, so long as we are faithful unto him, and unto our faith, and our religion; and never will the Lord suffer that we shall be destroyed except we should fall into transgression and deny our faith” (Alma 44:4).

Also found in the Book of Mormon were keepers of the records. One ancient historian, Chemish, noted that “...after this manner we keep the records...” (Omni v. 9). Another king-prophet, Mosiah, told his replacement, Alma, that “... he should **keep** and **preserve** them, and also keep a record of the people, handing them down from one generation to another...” (Mosiah 28:20).

Over 1300 years after the Book of Mormon was completed by the ancient prophets, an interesting article describing an encounter with the Potawatomes written by the editor-in-chief of *The Evening and Morning Star* (a frontier newspaper in Missouri) appeared in the June 1833 issue (volume 2, number 13).

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“In the forepart of the last month, about 360 Kickapoos and Potawatomies pitched their tents on the east side of this town and tarried one night. They were on their way to the land assigned them by the U. S. government... They have a prophet in whom they place great confidence, and he instructs them that the day is nigh when the great Father will send His Son on the earth, then the white man and red man will be one... They have two flat sticks about one foot long, tied together, on which there are several characters [written], of which they say the Great Father gave to their prophet, and mean as much to them as a large book. They say one of these sticks is for the old book the white man has [Bible] the other for the new book which the white man has written on paper [Book of Mormon], which the Great Father writes on the red man’s heart.”

CONCLUSION

An ancient warrior stated, “Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a remnant of Joseph [one of the 12 sons of Jacob]; yea, let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, he saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was **preserved** and had not decayed. And he said – Even as this remnant of garment of my son has been **preserved**, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be **preserved** by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment” (Alma 46:24).

Not only was a remnant of Joseph preserved in the Native Americans/First People, but a small remnant of the knowledge of God and their forefathers was preserved in the Three Fires.

THE MESSAGE *Letter of Introduction* – continued

The premier issue of *First Voices* contained an article titled “Letter of Introduction”. It was written to help explain the reason behind the printing and distribution of this journal which has a very special message for the Natives of the Americas. We consider it to be a Great Message – even a Divine Message.

One of the meanings of the word message is “*the inspired utterance of a prophet or sage.*” We are not implying that we are prophets or sages but our message is based on the utterances of many prophets and sages – wise and holy men throughout the ages of time.

We consider it a **Great Message** because of the life changing impact it has on our lives through self-examination of where we individually stand before God, the Great Spirit. This Great and Divine Message is for the First Nations People of the Americas. But it doesn’t stop there; we know that the Great Spirit is a God of Love. His love is so vast that it goes beyond the border of any village, city, state, or country. It is a great message to all people but a divine message to the indigenous peoples of the

Americas.

It is a **Divine Message** because the source of the message is God, the Great Spirit, and our Creator. The ideas and teachings you read about in this journal are nothing new. They originated in the Holy Scriptures of the Bible and were brought into focus by the Ancient American writings known as the *Book of Mormon* and relate to hundreds of years of spiritual teachings and prophecies.

Who is this God of the Americas? These ancient writings tell us that He is Jesus Christ (see Ether 2:12). Again, this idea is not new but has been reflected through the oral history and teachings of many of the First Nations People. From northern Canada to the tip of South America there are accounts of a white, bearded God appearing to the ancient people. Because of the records that were kept for hundreds of years and subsequently translated through the power and inspiration of the Great Spirit, we know this unusual personage to be none other than Jesus Christ, the resurrected son of the Eternal Father.

Such books as *Cry of the Ancients* and *He Walked the Americas* authenticate these legends. In the near future the Great Spirit will speak face to face with a special Native American leader who will unite all the peoples of the Americas under the banner of Jesus Christ. He will be like Moses of the Old Testament, who led

the ancient Israelites out of Egyptian enslavement over three thousand years ago. This special leader will be known as a **Choice Seer** because of his calling by God and will lead his people to establish a new community and a great holy city. These events were prophesied by his ancient ancestor, biblical Joseph of Egypt.

“... Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer [spiritual leader] will I raise up... And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for. . . his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers... And I will make him great in mine eyes; for he shall do my work. And he shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel” (2 Nephi 3:7-9).

This is a wonderful prophecy that will be fulfilled in the near future; only the Great Creator knows the exact time and place.

You can see why we are so excited about sharing this “divine message” with as many that will listen or read it. Please contact us if you have any thoughts to share or questions about the message.

*Who is this
God of the
Americas?
These ancient
writings tell us
that He is
Jesus Christ.*





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