

according to the Book of Mormon they must have been very numerous indeed. The history of the ancient inhabitants of this land was kept by their kings, and the records became very voluminous; and they were all deposited by the Prophet Mormon in that hill; but the abridgment from which the Book of Mormon was taken was given into the hands of his son Moroni, to finish out the record. The last date given on these records was 420 years after Christ.

You may inquire how the people on this land knew about the birth of Christ. I will say that they understood Christianity on this western hemisphere as well as on the eastern hemisphere. They were not left in darkness here concerning the Savior of the world and his atonement. They knew all about it. How? Jesus, who is the God of the whole earth, appeared to them after his crucifixion, and resurrection from the dead. He showed them the wounds in his hands, feet and side, and delivered to them his Gospel in its plainness and fullness, and they were commanded to write it on plates. They knew also, of his birth, in the land of their forefathers, by the signs which God gave to them on this land. They were told that at the time of the birth of Jesus there should be two days and one night without any darkness at all; they should see the sun go down at night and rise in the morning, and that during the whole of that time it should be light as day. They commenced the reckoning of their time from that period. Previous to that time they had reckoned their time from the date of their leaving Jerusalem, precisely six hundred years before the birth of Christ. Four hundred and twenty years after that great event the Prophet Moroni informs us that he also was commanded to hide up this abridgment

in the same hill, but in another part of it, in which his father Mormon hid up the sacred records. And the Lord made a promise to Moroni, also to Mormon, and to many other Prophets who dwelt on this land in previous generations, that these plates should never be destroyed, but that they should be preserved by his hand, and that they should be brought forth out of the earth in the latter days, for the purpose of bringing about the gathering of his people from the ends of the earth, and the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles and fulfilling their times, after which the translation of these records should go to all the remnants of the house of Israel, scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth; and that these records should be instrumental in the hands of God in gathering Israel from the four quarters of the earth.

These were the promises of God to the ancient Prophets of this continent, and the angel told Joseph Smith concerning these plates, and where they were deposited. At the same time, the vision of the Almighty was open to the mind of Joseph, and he saw the very spot. After the angel had conversed with him sometime on this subject, and had opened up to him the prophecies of the holy Prophets concerning the great work that was to be accomplished in the latter days, he withdrew, and Joseph continued praying. Some, perhaps, might think that this was a dream; but it was not, he was wide awake. As he continued praying, the angel came again the second time, and gave him still further information concerning the rise of the latter-day kingdom of God upon the earth, and the great work the Almighty intended to accomplish preparatory to the coming of his Son from the heavens with all