



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<http://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

The cosmic mountain represents the Garden of Eden

Author(s): LeGrand L. Baker

Source: *The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Israelite Temple: Nineteen Classic Temple Characteristics of the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2012

Page(s): 32–35

Archived by permission of author, LeGrand L. Baker.

<http://www.legrandlbaker.org/>

2. “The cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process. In Egypt, for example, all temples are seen as representing the primordial hillock”¹⁶

In ancient Israel and elsewhere in the ancient Near East, there is a creation story that says the Garden of Eden was a hill that arose from the chaotic waters.

Nephi apparently spent ten years composing the epic poem that is First Nephi and the beginning of Second Nephi.¹⁷ He tells us that it was not so much his intent to write a history, as it was to use events in his story to illustrate the message he wished to convey.

It is significant that, before they arrived in the new world, he details the families encounter with an horrendous storm. Nephi’s description of the storm shows the waters were truly chaotic. Through those waters Lehi’s party found their way through the chaotic waters to the new world. Another is that in Egyptian religion one’s Ka comes by ship to birth on the earth, then after death goes to the next world in a ship upon the cosmic sea to join the gods.¹⁸ In both the story that Nephi wrote, we discover the chaotic waters to be just where the ought to be. In both Nephi’s narrative and also in the larger cosmic outline of the Book of Mormon, the story of the water is immediately followed

¹⁶Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 2. For discussions of the hillock that was the Garden of Eden see Donald W. Parry, “Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 137-38, 126-151.

¹⁷In 2 Nephi 5:28 Nephi reports that “thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem.” He then tells about making and writing on the small plates, concluding in v. 34, “And it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away.”

¹⁸Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975), 8, 103, 188.

*The Book of Mormon as an
Ancient Israelite Temple*

by Lehi's telling the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.¹⁹

That same motif of newness from chaos appears again in Third Nephi when both the earth and waters erupt into darkened turmoil just before the Savior comes and introduces a millennial culture—a world of peace—to the Nephite people.

In the first instance a new world—in the second, a new world order—arose from the chaos, and in each, the intent was to institute a righteousness that would enable people to come into the presence of God.

That sequence is repeated again in the book of Ether. From the chaotic waters emerged a new society. However, this time, the story is not about the ascent to the top of the mountain. It is about a people who failed to keep their covenants and suffered the inevitable consequences.

The Lord's covenant with Abram, which he sealed by giving him the new name of Abraham, included the fulness of the gospel blessings of kingship and priesthood.²⁰ They are priesthood and all of the ordinances and covenants that are associated with it, family and the blessings of earthly posterity, land with promise of security that it brings, and invulnerability:²¹ "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee," giving absolute assurance that Abraham would be able to fulfill his eternal covenants.

¹⁹Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, 152.

Mowinckel wrote, "There Adam is definitely a divine being, who came into existence before creation, as a cosmogonic principle (macrocosm), as the Primordial Soul, as the original type of the godly, righteous fulfiller of the Law..." Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 426.

²⁰Abraham 2:8-11.

²¹For a discussion of the covenant of invulnerability see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 201-06.

*The Book of Mormon as an
Ancient Israelite Temple*

When those blessings are projected into the hereafter they remain the same: the new covenant name is a “son” (Psalm 2:7); the bond of charity is the sealing power that is also the promise of eternal posterity; the land is the celestial world for the righteous who “shall inherit the earth”; priesthood and invulnerability map to the everlasting blessings of covenantal success and peace in this world; and celestial glory hereafter.

The following chart shows how the sacred mountain can be understood as a temple, and how Moses’s Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple were built as a similitude of that mountain.

You should begin reading the chart from the bottom—the foot of the mountain and the entrance to the Israelite temple—and then ascend each step from there until you reach the summit.²²

²²This chart is from Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 263.

*The Book of Mormon as an
Ancient Israelite Temple*

<i>Sacred Mountain</i>	<i>Solomon's Temple</i>
<p>Top of the Mountain where one sees God (Exodus 24:17, Moses 1:1-2, Matthew 4:8, Mark 9:2, Revelation 21:10, 1 Nephi 11:1, Moses 1:1-2).</p>	<p>Holy of Holies where God's throne sits beneath the wings of the cherubim.</p>
<p>Cloud (<i>shechinah</i>—veil of light) through which one sees the finger of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 9:10; Exodus 24:12-17; Ether 3:4-14, 12:21; Mark 9:7).</p>	<p>Veil of Solomon's Temple “come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift.” (Moroni 10:30. See 3 Nephi 12:3, Moroni 7:19-21, Hebrews 6:13-20).</p>
<p>Midway up the Mountain where Moses was crowned by God in the presence of witnesses. After the coronation they shared the same temple feast as we find in 3 Nephi when the Savior also taught about prayer. (Exodus 24:9-11, 3 Nephi 18:1- 25).</p>	<p>Holy Place Central room of the Temple where the king was anointed. It contained the Shewbread Table (an invitation to share a meal with God) and the Menorah (representing the tree of Life and a prayer to enter God's presence.)</p>
<p>Camp of Israel at the foot of the mountain. Sacred space that separated the profane world from the more sacred space of the mountain's heights.</p>	<p>Vestibule Entrance place that separates the profane world from the temple interior.</p>

*Moses patterned the Tabernacle to represent the Holy Mountain.
Later, Solomon built his Temple after the plan of the Tabernacle.*