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## *Learning to Love the Book of Mormon - The Book of Ether*

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**Abstract:** This work consists of a rather comprehensive commentary on the verses of the Book of Mormon. I believe it may be read and enjoyed by the casual student of the Book of Mormon who might, for example, find use for it as a reference source. The book's intended purpose, however, is to assist the serious student who would like to begin a thorough, intensive, and searching tour through the book.

# Learning to Love the Book of Mormon

Updated August 2013 to February 2014

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## Introduction

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In the Church, our study and understanding of the Book of Mormon has undergone a most interesting evolution since the book's translation in 1829. As late as the early twentieth century our understanding of the book was not far advanced. Almost no serious studies of the book and its contents had been published, and the book was not heavily used in worship service discourse or in gospel instruction. There was even some skepticism about the literal divine origins of the Book within the LDS community, particularly among the more educated. By the mid 1900s, beginning with an acknowledged assumption of the book's divine origins, Sidney B. Sperry, Hugh W. Nibley, John L. Sorenson, and a few others had launched serious scholarly inquiries into the book. In the mid-1970s the rate of publications on Book of Mormon topics began to increase.

The rate of publications on the Book of Mormon particularly soared after President Ezra Taft Benson, soon after his ordination as president and prophet, called the Church to repentance in November of 1985 and at the April General Conference of the Church in 1986. The Church worked the Book of Mormon into the regular cycle of the new correlated curriculum for adults, and church leaders began using the Book of Mormon more frequently and systematically in speeches and instructional situations. Since then, the book's authenticity as an ancient scriptural record has become more firmly and generally established. Those who remain vocal doubters of the book's literal divine origins are no longer identified with the committed LDS community.

In the October General Conference in 1986, President Benson said:

We must make the Book of Mormon a center focus of our study [because] it was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. . . . Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, [Mormon] abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us. . . .

If they [the Book of Mormon writers] saw our day then chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, "Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?" (*Conference Report*, October 1986, 3-7).

President Benson would later write:

It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You

will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called the “words of life” (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance (“The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, November, 1986, 16:7).

Further:

I would like to speak about one of the most significant gifts given to the world in modern times. The gift I am thinking of is more important than any of the inventions that have come out of the industrial and technological revolutions. This is a gift of greater value to mankind than even the many wonderful advances we have seen in modern medicine. It is of greater worth to mankind than the development of flight or space travel. I speak of the gift of the Book of Mormon (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft] 1988, 51).

President Benson often reiterated the prophet Joseph Smith’s statement when Joseph referred to the Book of Mormon as “the keystone of our religion” (*TPJS*, 194). A keystone, sometimes called the headstone, is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if it is removed, the arch crumbles.

Your author has developed the habit, as I read the Book of Mormon, of reading slowly and actually looking for words or phrases or concepts whose meanings are unclear. I search for ideas that are not completely compatible with the framework of knowledge I already possess. I have been surprised to learn that I seldom have to read more than two or three verses before coming upon some puzzlement, large or small. On each occasion, I am left with an unsettled perplexity, a sort of uncomfortable disequilibrium. “Why are there so many verses in this basic scriptural work,” I have wondered, “that cause me to struggle so?” Disquieting as these feelings are, I have come to recognize them as a first step in learning some valuable new insight.

Once I come upon a phrase or verse I don’t understand, I begin my search for the answer by reading and re-reading the “offending” passage, by checking cross references, by reading supplemental explanatory materials, by sometimes asking help of my learned friends, and often praying about the verse. Mercifully, I have found that my efforts are most always fruitful. I am able to re-establish my equilibrium with the verse, and, at the same time, find myself possessing a greater insight on some particular point. With some satisfaction, I then continue on in my reading, only to find the process beginning again a verse or two later. I heartily recommend this same approach to my readers, and I have attempted in this commentary to spare you some of the pain of finding your answers. I hope I have anticipated many of your perplexities as you study the Book of Mormon, yet I suspect that each of us will encounter and be obliged to overcome our own unique set of questions. There is certainly a magic in enduring in this process, for certainly as we do so, we are “treasur[ing] up . . . the words of life” (D&C 84:85).

Your author prefers to think of this work as an “enrichment commentary.” I believe it may be read and enjoyed by the casual student of the Book of Mormon who might, for example, find use for it as a reference source. The book’s intended purpose, however, is to assist the serious student who would like to begin a thorough, intensive, and searching tour through the book. Though it may be useful to the student who wishes to skip from one verse here to another verse there, it is intended to be read sequentially. Some concepts discussed in earlier verses in the book or even earlier verses in a particular chapter may receive more casual attention when encountered later in the text.

This work consists of a rather comprehensive commentary on the verses of the Book of Mormon. Some may have reservations about the basic concept of this book. I am aware of Peter’s warning: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men: but Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21). I have endeavored in this project not to add or detract from the scripture, but only clarify. Some will say that such a comprehensive commentary is not possible without placing a “private interpretation” on some verses. I have earnestly attempted to avoid assigning any purely individual or private interpretations to the scriptural verses. Your author is a student of the Book of Mormon and in no wise an expert. To create this volume I have prayerfully studied and utilized the thoughts and explanations of many authors and scholars whose explanations of the Book of Mormon verses might be generally considered to be “authoritative” and “scholarly.” I have collected materials from general authorities and from individuals with undeniable scholarly credentials who openly profess a spiritual witness of the book. When I have borrowed their ideas only, and have rephrased them for my purposes, no reference will be cited. When I have quoted another author’s wording, acknowledgment is provided. Indeed, I have begun and completed this project as a student who is simply trying to make it possible for myself and for others to understand the book’s sometimes difficult verses. I acknowledge the fact, however, that my private biases have not been completely eliminated.

I am also sensitive to the need to avoid proof-texting in a work such as this. That is, I have tried very hard to let the scriptures speak for themselves. An author guilty of proof-texting presupposes the doctrine and then seeks support from the scriptures. I have attempted to consider each verse in its historical and sequential context.

I have tried to include timely and necessary background information to make the book’s words, phrases, and verses really come alive. I have tried to avoid rhetoric and concentrate on the meat. It is not my purpose to preach about the principles contained in the book, rather my goal is to improve understanding. This work presupposes, in its reader, an “average” understanding of the Book of Mormon. I have tried to eliminate those commentary materials which would likely be redundant and unnecessary for my

so-called average reader. It is my intent to explain, clarify, and enrich your study and understanding of the book.

The work includes a variety of “supplemental articles” to which reference is made appropriately in the text. Among these supplemental articles is a purely historical telling of the Book of Mormon story entitled, *A Narrative Summary of the Book of Mormon*. From this “historical” summary, doctrinal materials have been omitted, but all characters, events, and places are included. It is hope that this historical account may be useful to the student who wishes to quickly “brush up” on the historical narrative.

A few “housekeeping” notes about this work are pertinent. The text of the Book of Mormon is included in bold with a blue color to clearly distinguish it from the commentary. All commentary is colored black. The paragraphs of commentary material are often preceded by a quoted phrase, also of blue color, without any punctuation except for quotation marks. These are phrases taken directly from the verse of text immediately above the commentary paragraph. The commentary then follows these quoted phrases. Sometimes the verse commentary for a group of verses will precede, rather than follow, the actual text rendering of the verses. This is done if it felt that a word of explanation before reading a passage would be helpful. Most block quotes appear in red print and are not double-indented. Finally, in this current updated version of this commentary (2014) page numbers have been eliminated, as they are considered unnecessary.

In reading the Book of Mormon, often we tend to regard some of the materials contained therein as non-essential. We wonder, “Why was the report of this battle or that incident included in the book?” As we study the book, we will assume that there is no “filler” material in the Book of Mormon. Every item in the book was placed there for a reason and purpose. In making his abridgment of the sacred records of the Book of Mormon people, Mormon wrote, “I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people” (Words of Mormon 1:5). Hence, we must assume that all items in the book have been included following thoughtful and inspired consideration.

There is a miracle in the scriptures. If a person reads the scriptures regularly, he or she will invariably have his or her life touched by them eventually. “Whosoever believeth on my words,” the Lord said in reference to the Book of Mormon, “them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit” (D&C 5:16). Isaiah prophesied that the Book of Mormon would bring a spiritually blind generation to an understanding of the doctrine of Christ (2 Nephi 27:35; Isaiah 29:24). It has been suggested by those experienced in gospel study that no individual who studies the scriptures daily will be remiss in keeping the commandments.

Our scriptures advise us of several other books of scripture yet to come forth. One day, “all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been . . . and which ever will be” (2 Nephi 27:11). Perhaps, though, we will never be privileged to receive additional scriptures until we learn to appreciate fully those we already have.



Consider the following testimony of The Book of Mormon by President Ezra Taft Benson:

We invite all men everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ.

The Bible sits on the pulpit of hundreds of different religious sects. The Book of Mormon, the record of Joseph, verifies and clarifies the Bible. It removes stumbling blocks, it restores many plain and precious things. We testify that when used together, the Bible and the Book of Mormon confound false doctrines, lay down contentions, and establish peace (see 2 Nephi 3:12).

We do not have to prove that the Book of Mormon is true. The Book is its own proof. All we need to do is read it and declare it! The Book of Mormon is not on trial—the people of the world, including the members of the Church, are on trial as to what they will do with this second witness for Christ” (*Conference Report*, October 1984, 7; *Ensign* November 1984, 8).

I am deeply committed to the book as an authentic ancient scripture. The Spirit has born witness to my soul on numerous occasions as I have studied and pondered its verses. I know with all my heart that the book was written by ancient prophets who intended for their writings to come forth to the world and be translated in our day by Joseph Smith, Jr., through the “gift and power of God.”

Michael J. Preece

## The Book of Ether

### The record of the Jaredites, taken from the twenty-four plates found by the people of Limhi in the days of king Mosiah.

As Moroni recorded the book of Ether onto the plates of Mormon, he either used King Mosiah's translation of the twenty-four plates of Ether and produced an abridgment of that record, or he re-translated the Jaredite plates themselves, making both a translation and an abridgment. The text is not clear on this point. In making his record, Moroni did not give a full account of the Jaredites (see Ether 1:5), rather he selected only certain specific materials. Later on, he will comment that he included only a "hundredth part" of the prophet Ether's record on the plates of Mormon (Ether 15:33). The record covers about fifteen hundred years of Jaredite history from the time of the tower of Babel to the destruction of the Jaredite nation.

In including the Jaredite record onto the plates of Mormon, it is likely that Moroni was following his father Mormon's instructions. Mormon had previously written, while giving an account of the discovery and translation of the twenty-four gold plates of Ether, "And this account shall be written hereafter; for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account" (Mosiah 28:19).

The Jaredite record is the saga of a people who may have existed for as long as two thousand years—from the time of the Tower of Babel in approximately 2200 BC (for further speculation about this date, see below) to the time the last surviving Jaredite king, Coriantumr, is found by the Mulekites, somewhere between 600 BC and 200 BC. Moroni chronicles at least thirty generations of people. The Bible gives an account of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11), but a precise date for the tower is not known.

In the opening scenes of the book of Ether, the reader is presented with a people being driven out of a land, but promised that their language, perhaps the Adamic language, would not be taken from them. God will also make promises to them, or covenants with them, that contain the essential elements of the covenant later made with Father Abraham. These elements include priesthood, posterity, and a land of inheritance. Modern revelation makes it clear that these covenants, often referred to as the Abrahamic covenant, were previously and subsequently made with Adam and the other patriarchs (see Moses 6:65-68; 7:51; 8:2, also see *Old Testament Student Manual* 70-72). This covenant is also the "new" and everlasting covenant that God established in this dispensation (see D&C 49:9; 66:2; 132:2-7). According to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "The covenant made with the fathers was that their seed after them should receive the same gospel, the same priesthood, the same promise of salvation, that blessed the lives of those with whom the covenant was first made" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 524).

## Chapter Outline of Ether

A brief outline of the book of Ether, worth committing to memory, is as follows:

**Ether 3** The brother of Jared sees the finger and the body of the Lord; his great vision of the earth the account of which is sealed up by Moroni.

**Ether 8** Moroni warns of secret combinations.

**Ether 12** The Prophet Moroni on Faith, Hope, and Charity

**Ether 15** The Great and Final Battle of the Jaredites—Coriantumr kills Shiz.

## Ether Chapter 1

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**1 And now I, Moroni, proceed to give an account of those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed by the hand of the Lord upon the face of this north country.**

**verse 1** “This north country” is the land Desolation, north of the narrow neck of land. Moroni was familiar with this land and was probably writing from that area.

**2 And I take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi, which is called the Book of Ether.**

**verse 2** Again, as has been mentioned above, it is unclear whether Moroni made an independent translation of the twenty-four plates, or whether he simply abridged king Mosiah’s translation of those plates.

**3 And as I suppose that the first part of this record, which speaks concerning the creation of the world, and also of Adam, and an account from that time even to the great tower, and whatsoever things transpired among the children of men until that time, is had among the Jews—**

**verse 3 “the first part of this record”** In using the term “this record,” Moroni is referring to either the twenty-four plates of Ether themselves or king Mosiah’s translation of them. He avers that the Jewish scriptures contain other accounts of the creation of the world, of Adam, and of other event down to the time of the building of the great tower (Genesis 1-11). We will learn in the next verses that he has decided not to include this account in the book of Ether.

**“the great tower”** See the discussion on “the tower” in the commentary for Omni 1:22.

**4 Therefore I do not write those things which transpired from the days of Adam until that time; but they are had upon the plates; and whoso findeth them, the same will have power that he may get the full account.**

**verse 4** “they are had upon the plates” A careful reading of this verse, and particularly this phrase, suggests that Moroni may have the plates of Ether in his possession, and may have made his own translation.

He suggests that whosoever finds the twenty-four plates of Ether in the latter days would have power to translate them. Also, he indicates that the early record—from Adam to the tower of Babel—is, indeed, contained on this record. Oh, that someone could indeed find them!

**5 But behold, I give not the full account, but a part of the account I give, from the tower down until they were destroyed.**

**verse 5** It would seem that Moroni did not feel it necessary to include from the plates of Ether the account of the creation of the world from the story of Adam through to the days of the tower of Babel. As mentioned, he knew that this account was available to his readers elsewhere.

**verses 6-33** In these verses Moroni provides us with a genealogy of Ether, the last of the Jaredite prophets. It is likely that it is not a complete genealogy. Note that he sometimes writes “son of” and at other times he writes “a descendant of.”

**6 And on this wise do I give the account. He that wrote this record was Ether, and he was a descendant of Coriantor.**

**7 Coriantor was the son of Moron.**

**8 And Moron was the son of Ethem.**

**9 And Ethem was the son of Ahah.**

**10 And Ahah was the son of Seth.**

**11 And Seth was the son of Shiblon.**

**12 And Shiblon was the son of Com.**

**verses 11-12** “Shiblon” here is probably an error. His name is really “Shiblom” (see Ether 11:4, 5, 7, 9).

**13 And Com was the son of Coriantum.**

**14 And Coriantum was the son of Amnigaddah.**

**15 And Amnigaddah was the son of Aaron.**

**16 And Aaron was a descendant of Heth, who was the son of Hearthom.**

**17 And Hearthom was the son of Lib.**

**18 And Lib was the son of Kish.**

**19 And Kish was the son of Corom.**

**20 And Corom was the son of Levi.**

**21 And Levi was the son of Kim.**

**22 And Kim was the son of Morianton.**

**23 And Morianton was a descendant of Riplakish.**

**24 And Riplakish was the son of Shez.**

**25 And Shez was the son of Heth.**

**26 And Heth was the son of Com.**

**27 And Com was the son of Coriantum.**

**28 And Coriantum was the son of Emer.**

**29 And Emer was the son of Omer.**

**30 And Omer was the son of Shule.**

**31 And Shule was the son of Kib.**

**verses 30-31** The name Shule invites some interesting speculation as one compares it with the Mayan word “Xul” (pronounced exactly the same as “Shule”). The “X” is pronounced “SH.” “Xul” is the name of one of the Mayan months. The “SH” sound is very commonly used in Jaredite names in the Book of Mormon such as Shiz, Shem, Shim, and Shiblom.

**32 And Kib was the son of Orihah, who was the son of Jared;**

**verse 32** We thus learn that Ether is a direct descendant of Jared.

The prophet Ether has just recounted his genealogy from himself back to the brother of Jared. He has mentioned thirty individuals, in order, counting himself and Jared. It is quite remarkable that in the remainder of the book of Ether, he gives an account of each one of these thirty characters in exactly the reverse order. This is especially remarkable in view of the fact that Joseph “translated” the record of the Jaredites without referring to any book or list (see “The Process of Translating the Book of Mormon” in Appendix A in volume 2 of *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*). How did Joseph keep them all straight if he was not able to refer to a list? The answer is: He didn’t need a list! He didn’t need to worry about keeping them straight! He didn’t have the names written down anywhere. He was just reading as the Lord revealed the book of Ether to him. It was the prophet Ether who did the writing, editing, and organizing.

**33 Which Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, from the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, and swore in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth; and according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered.**

**verse 33** The Jaredites probably came from Mesopotamia where tradition places the tower of Babel. It seems likely if their journey began there, they probably crossed the Pacific Ocean to the Pacific coast of Mesoamerica.

The date of the tower incident is uncertain. Fundamentalist Christians and some Latter-day Saints have accepted a date of around 2200 BC, but there is no adequate basis in the Bible for such a date. Joseph L. Allen, after studying the writings of the

sixteenth century Mesoamerican scholar Ixtlilxochitl (pronounced ixt-leel-so-cheé-tl), provided an alternate view of the date of the Jaredites' journey to the New World. He has concluded they landed in the Americas approximately 2698 BC. Thus, he surmises, "the tower of Babel can be dated at approximately 2700 BC" (*Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 256). John L. Sorenson has suggested a date of about 3100 BC or a bit later ("The Years of the Jaredites," a FARMS reprint). Dr. Sorenson notes that architectural form of the ziggurat or temple-tower, whose remains still dot the plain of southern Iraq, first appears in the concluding centuries of the fourth millennium BC. He also writes: "The flood/tower combination of Genesis is undoubtedly derived from the same source as the flood/tower record of secular Mesopotamian history. The latter is most comfortably dated in the second half of the fourth millennium BC. On this basis a date for the beginning of the Jaredite story can be estimated. About 3100 BC is acceptable; possibly it could be a little later" (*Ibid.*).

The tower of Babel, described further in Genesis 11, is considered by many scholars to have been a Babylonian temple ("Babel," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 2:334). This apostate temple was an attempt by an ambitious and wicked people to imitate true temple worship (Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert/The World of the Jaredites*, 154-68). In Babylonian or Akkadian the meaning of Babel was "gate of God." The focus of these apostate temple builders was to "reach unto heaven . . . and make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). But what kind of a name might an apostate covet, hoping to avoid being scattered abroad? Apparently they were trying to establish a name by which they might be saved, but not the name of Jesus Christ. By building a great monument, they were trying to establish for this name a reputation and fame among men, and thus render it valid. The king/prophet Benjamin would later declare "that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:17). Speaking of the Lord's placing his name in the true temples, Elder Dallin Oaks concluded:

All of these references to ancient and modern temples as houses for "the name" of the Lord obviously involve something far more significant than a mere inscription of his sacred name on the structure. The scriptures speak of the Lord's putting his name in a temple because he gives authority for his name to be used in the sacred ordinances of that house. That is the meaning of the prophet's reference [Joseph Smith's reference in the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland temple] to the Lord's putting his name upon his people in that holy house ("Taking Upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ," *Ensign* [May 1985], 15:80-83).

The term "tower of Babel" is not actually used in the Book of Mormon record.

This rebellion at the tower of Babel was interrupted when the Lord scattered the people abroad because of their apostasy (Genesis 11:9). In the case of the group that

were scattered with Jared and his brother, the Lord was scattering a righteous seed for the purpose of preserving that remnant.

Jared, in Hebrew, means “to go down.” The brother of Jared, like Moses and other prophets, has been noted to be a type of the Savior.

**34 And the brother of Jared being a large and mighty man, and a man highly favored of the Lord, Jared, his brother, said unto him: Cry unto the Lord, that he will not confound us that we may not understand our words.**

**verse 34** Moroni never gives us the name of Jared’s brother, rather he consistently refers to him as “the brother of Jared.” He is obviously the spiritual leader of Jared’s people. Why is his name never mentioned? Daniel H. Ludlow has suggested three possible reasons: (1) the brother of Jared himself may, out of modesty, have purposely omitted his name from the record in similar manner as did John in recording his gospel; (2) the prophet Ether was a descendant of Jared and not the brother of Jared. Perhaps Ether simply wanted to emphasize the name of his progenitor. (3) Moroni may have found the name too difficult to translate adequately into the reformed Egyptian (see *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, 310).

The name of the brother of Jared was revealed to the prophet Joseph Smith. Elder George Reynolds recounted: “While residing in Kirtland Elder Reynolds Cahoon had a son born to him. One day when President Joseph Smith was passing his door he called the Prophet in and asked him to bless and name the baby. Joseph did so and gave the boy the name of Mahonri Moriancumer. When he had finished the blessing he laid the child on the bed, and turning to Elder Cahoon, he said, the name I have given your son is the name of the brother of Jared; the Lord has just shown it to me. Elder William F. Cahoon, who was standing near, heard the Prophet make this statement to his father; and this was the first time the name of the brother of Jared was known in the Church in this dispensation” (“Jaredites,” *Juvenile Instructor*, 27:282).

**35 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon Jared; therefore he did not confound the language of Jared; and Jared and his brother were not confounded.**

**verse 35** Obviously Jared and his brother were granted an exception from the confusion of tongues.

**36 Then Jared said unto his brother: Cry again unto the Lord, and it may be that he will turn away his anger from them who are our friends, that he confound not their language.**



**37 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon their friends and their families also, that they were not confounded.**

**verses 34-37 “therefore he did not confound the language of Jared; and Jared and his brother were not confounded”** The text never makes it perfectly clear what is meant by the confounding of language. The word *confound* means something like “throw into confusion.” This confounding could have resulted in the rather abrupt onset of the people’s being unable to understand one another. We would presume that, as a result of the prayerful pleading of the brother of Jared, that Jared and his family, the brother of Jared and his family, and their friends and their families were all left speaking the same language and therefore able to communicate with one another. What language did they speak? This, of course, is unknown. Perhaps it was the language of Adam, the so-called “Adamic language.”

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “They carried with them the speech of their fathers, the Adamic language, which was powerful even in its written form, so that the things Mahonri [Moriancumer] wrote ‘were mighty even unto the overpowering of man to read them.’ That was the kind of language Adam had, and this was the language with which Enoch was able to accomplish his mighty work” (*The Way to Perfection*, 60). There is likely more to the account of the retaining of the original or Adamic language than what initially meets the eye. The book of Moses describes the language of Adam as “pure and undefiled” (Moses 6:5-6). The book of Moses describes Enoch’s faith as causing him to be feared among men because “so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him” (Moses 7:13).

**38 And it came to pass that Jared spake again unto his brother, saying: Go and inquire of the Lord whether he will drive us out of the land, and if he will drive us out of the land, cry unto him whither we shall go. And who knoweth but the Lord will carry us forth into a land which is choice above all the earth? And if it so be, let us be faithful unto the Lord, that we may receive it for our inheritance.**

**39 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord according to that which had been spoken by the mouth of Jared.**

**40 And it came to pass that the Lord did hear the brother of Jared, and had compassion upon him, and said unto him:**

**41 Go to and gather together thy flocks, both male and female, of every kind; and also of the seed of the earth of every kind; and thy families; and also Jared thy brother and his family; and also thy friends and their families, and the friends of Jared and their families.**

**42 And when thou hast done this thou shalt go at the head of them down into the valley which is northward. And there will I meet thee, and I will go before thee into a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth.**



**verse 42 “the valley which is northward”** This phrase refers to a valley in the Eastern hemisphere in which the group was to gather as they began their journey to the Western hemisphere (see Ether 2:1).

**“a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth”** This phrase refers to an area in the New World, the Western Hemisphere. Again, we learn that the Lord regards at least some parts of the Americas to be choice above all the lands of the earth.

**43 And there will I bless thee and thy seed, and raise up unto me of thy seed, and of the seed of thy brother, and they who shall go with thee, a great nation. And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth. And thus I will do unto thee because this long time ye have cried unto me.**

**verse 43 “I will do unto thee because this long time ye have cried unto me”** Like the prophet Enos, the brother of Jared received an answer to his prayers because of his diligent persistence in prayer and likely his careful listening following his prayer. Obviously, this verse should serve as a reminder to all of us of the necessity of our being diligent and persistent in our prayers—even “wrestling” with the Lord (Alma 8:10, cf. Enos 1:4).

## Ether Chapter 2

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**1 And it came to pass that Jared and his brother, and their families, and also the friends of Jared and his brother and their families, went down into the valley which was northward, (and the name of the valley was Nimrod, being called after the mighty hunter) with their flocks which they had gathered together, male and female, of every kind.**

**verse 1 “the name of the valley was Nimrod”** The name “Nimrod” evoked strong feelings among the ancients and was usually associated with rebellion. Nimrod, who “founded the kingdom of Babel,” had “established false priesthood and false kingship in the earth in imitation of God’s rule” and “made all men to sin” (Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 165). He typified Satan. The name of this valley may have been a stark reminder to the Jaredites that they, like all of God’s children entering mortality, were strangers and sojourners in a dark and dreary world. Their trek through this valley of Nimrod might well have been a time of testing for them.

**2 And they did also lay snares and catch fowls of the air; and they did also prepare a vessel, in which they did carry with them the fish of the waters.**

**3 And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees, and all manner of that which was upon the face of the land, seeds of every kind.**

**verse 3** Brother Hugh Nibley has added insight to this verse:

By all odds the most interesting and attractive passenger in Jared’s company is deseret, the honeybee. We cannot pass this creature by without a glance at its name and possible significance, for our text betrays an interest in deseret that goes far beyond respect for the feat of transporting insects, remarkable though that is. The word deseret, we are told (Ether 2:3), “by interpretation is a honeybee,” the word plainly coming from the Jaredite language, since Ether (or Moroni) must interpret it. Now it is a remarkable coincidence that the word deseret, or something very close to it, enjoyed a position of ritual prominence among the founders of the classical Egyptian civilization, who associated it very closely with the symbol of the bee (*Lehi in the Desert*, 189).

**4 And it came to pass that when they had come down into the valley of Nimrod the Lord came down and talked with the brother of Jared; and he was in a cloud, and the brother of Jared saw him not.**

**verse 4** The Lord would travel before them and direct them from his cloud of glory just as he did for Moses and the people of Israel—a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night” (see Exodus 13:21; Numbers 11:25; 12:5; see also D&C 34:7).

**5 And it came to pass that the Lord commanded them that they should go forth into the wilderness, yea, into that quarter where there never had man been. And it came to pass that the Lord did go before them, and did talk with them as he stood in a cloud, and gave directions whither they should travel.**

**verse 5** The phrase “into that quarter” refers to a particular region of the land. This verse refers to the land in which the Jaredites lived and traveled after they left the great tower and the valley of Nimrod and where they spent four years before setting out across the sea (see Ether 2:13).

**6 And it came to pass that they did travel in the wilderness, and did build barges, in which they did cross many waters, being directed continually by the hand of the Lord.**

**verse 6** Apparently, as the group traveled on their way to the ocean, they were required to build barges and cross other waters. These barges, they simply left behind (see Ether 2:16).

**verses 7-12** It is clear from modern-day scripture that at least a part of the Americas is a “promised land” and is “choice above all other lands.” If those whom the Lord brings to this land will covenant to accept and serve Jesus Christ as their God, and if they will strive continually to repent of their sins, then great promises will be theirs including prosperity, both physical and spiritual, and national security—no one will ever be allowed to displace them from their land. However, if they fail to keep their covenants, reject the Savior, fail to keep his commandments, and become “ripened in iniquity” then they shall be swept off the land and destroyed. This covenant is the so-called “promise/curse covenant” and is reiterated again and again in the Book of Mormon text.

Which part or parts of the Americas qualify to be considered the “promised land”? North America? Central America? South America? There is solid scriptural evidence that the North American continent including Central America fits into this category. It is difficult to be certain about the South American continent.

In the history of the world, four groups of covenant peoples have settled this promised land: (1) the antediluvians, from Adam to Noah (D&C 116; 107:53); (2) the Jaredites; (3) the Lehtes; and (4) the latter-day “Gentiles.”

We have learned that the first three of these groups have, indeed, ripened in iniquity and have been destroyed. The single exception is a subgroup of the Lehtes, the Lamanites, whom the Lord is preserving, though chastening repeatedly. The complete story of the Gentiles is not yet recorded, though scripture suggests that there will be a great final destruction and purging before the Lord’s second coming wherein the righteous among them will be preserved but the wicked will be cleansed from the earth.

Douglas Brinley (“The Promised Land and Its Covenant Peoples” in *The Book of Mormon: Helaman Through 3 Nephi 8, According to thy Word*) has suggested ten stages of evolution from righteousness to abject wickedness through which each of these covenant peoples have progressed on their road to destruction. These stages are (1) The Lord leads the people to the promised land. (2) He makes a covenant with them. (3) He assists them by inspiration to establish a constitution or set of laws based on sound principles. (4) The judgments of God begin when the majority vote of the people chooses to ignore or change the good laws. (5) The Lord dispatches prophets to warn the people to repent or be destroyed. (6) The people choose to accept or reject the prophets’ warnings. (7) If they reject them, then natural calamities (wars, plagues, famine, drought) begin to destroy the people. (8) The Spirit of God withdraws from the people. (9) The people increase in wickedness until they are “fully ripe in iniquity” and have cast out or persecuted the righteous. (10) The wicked are destroyed by forces of nature, civil war, or conquering hosts; the righteous among them having been led elsewhere (39-63).

These stages of deterioration and eventual destruction may also be seen in subgroups, or even in individuals, among these four major groups of covenant peoples. Consider, for example, the people of Ammonihah (Alma 16:1-3) and the apostate Nephites, Nehor (Alma 16:1-3) and Korihor (Alma 30:6-60).

**7 And the Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even unto the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people.**

**verse 7** The Lord did not want them to stop in the wilderness, which was, from Moroni’s perspective, “beyond the sea.” Rather, the Lord wanted them to continue on and cross the sea to their promised land.

**verses 8-12** These verses contain a discussion of the Americas as a “land of promise” and they remain deeply relevant to modern-day inhabitants of the New World, even today.

**8 And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them.**

**9 And now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity.**

**10 For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off.**

**verse 10** For a discussion of the concept of “fulness of iniquity” see “Pride” in *The “Natural Self” and the “Spiritual Self,”* in *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 1, chapter 5.

**11 And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done.**

**verse 11** Here is Moroni’s warning to us and to the rest of the inhabitants of this great Gentile nation in these last days that the Lord’s conditional “promised-land covenant” reiterated in verses 9-10 applies to us as well as to the ancient Jaredites. Apparently our fate is sealed. We are doomed to destruction. The weight of prophecy has condemned us and apparently sealed our fate. This great nation, along with all other nations of the world will be destroyed. It seems likely that the presence of the Lord’s Church and the work of this final gathering of Israel are all that are preventing the Lord’s destruction (Matthew 13:24-30).

**12 Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.**

**verses 11-12** Moroni pauses in his narrative and turns his attention to the latter-day Gentiles. He reminds us of the promise/curse which still applies to this “promised” land, even today.

**13 And now I proceed with my record; for behold, it came to pass that the Lord did bring Jared and his brethren forth even to that great sea which divideth the lands. And as they came to the sea they pitched their tents; and they called the name of the place Moriancumer; and they dwelt in tents, and dwelt in tents upon the seashore for the space of four years.**

**verse 13** We actually have no direct information on the locality of Moriancumer. Some believe that the Jaredites traveled eastward through Central Asia and, hence, feel that Moriancumer was near the mouth of one of the great rivers that flow through the Chinese empire into the Pacific Ocean (see the *Juvenile Instructor* [May 1892], 284, note).

**14 And it came to pass at the end of four years that the Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him. And for the space of three hours did the Lord talk with the brother of Jared, and chastened him because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord.**

**verse 14** It seems unlikely that this great prophet had stopped praying altogether. In the relative comfort of the seashore, and with the foreboding sea lying before them, perhaps his prayers had become less fervent. He had become too comfortable. President Spencer Kimball taught: “We have paused on some plateaus long enough. Let us resume our journey forward and upward. Let us quietly put an end to our reluctance to reach out to others—whether in our own families, wards, or neighborhoods. We have been diverted, at times, from fundamentals on which we must now focus in order to move forward as a person or as a people” (*CR*, April 1979, 114).

Whatever the reasons for the Lord’s chastening Jared’s brother, it is important to remember that other great prophets were also rebuked by the Lord. Moses was reproofed for not explicitly following God’s instructions in the wilderness of Zin (Numbers 20:7-11; 27:12-14; Deuteronomy 32:51-52). The apostle Peter received a sharp rebuke for letting his love of the Lord get in his way of comprehending the need for the atonement (Matthew 16:21-23). The prophet Joseph Smith was reprimanded for having “feared man more than God” (D&C 3:7). There is nothing demeaning in being corrected by the Lord. The Lord has declared, “as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19; cf. D&C 95:1). It is likely that as the families dwelt on the sea shore for four years, the brother of Jared was too casual and not sufficient diligent in importuning the Lord for guidance.

**15 And the brother of Jared repented of the evil which he had done, and did call upon the name of the Lord for his brethren who were with him. And the Lord said unto him: I will forgive thee and thy brethren of their sins; but thou shalt not sin any more, for ye shall remember that my Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore, if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And these are my thoughts upon the land which I shall give you for your inheritance; for it shall be a land choice above all other lands.**

**verse 15 “my Spirit will not always strive with man”** This phrase simply reminds us that maintaining the influence of the Spirit is an ongoing dynamic process. When we stop striving, the Spirit withdraws.

**“if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord”** The complete withdrawal of the Lord’s Spirit is the death-knell of any civilized society, because the absence of the Spirit inevitably means the presence of the spirit of the devil. It would seem that there is no such thing as a “spiritual vacuum.” We do understand that evil must have its agency here in mortality since there must be opposition in all things. However, if a man or society sin until they are “fully ripe,” they

may be cut off from the Spirit completely leaving them in a wholly carnal state. They are then “without God in the world” and, therefore, “in a state contrary to the nature of happiness” (Alma 41:11).

**16 And the Lord said: Go to work and build, after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built. And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did go to work, and also his brethren, and built barges after the manner which they had built, according to the instructions of the Lord. And they were small, and they were light upon the water, even like unto the lightness of a fowl upon the water.**

**verse 16 “barges which ye have hitherto built”** See Ether 2:6 and its commentary.

**17 And they were built after a manner that they were exceedingly tight, even that they would hold water like unto a dish; and the bottom thereof was tight like unto a dish; and the sides thereof were tight like unto a dish; and the ends thereof were peaked; and the top thereof was tight like unto a dish; and the length thereof was the length of a tree; and the door thereof, when it was shut, was tight like unto a dish.**

**verse 17 “tight like a dish”** This expression means water tight. The redundancy in this verse is interesting. Why did Moroni use this expression, or variations of it, so many times in this verse? Perhaps he simply wanted to emphasize this expression as meaning ready for any type of adversity.

**18 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared cried unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, I have performed the work which thou hast commanded me, and I have made the barges according as thou hast directed me.**

**19 And behold, O Lord, in them there is no light; whither shall we steer? And also we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them; therefore we shall perish.**

**20 And the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: Behold, thou shalt make a hole in the top, and also in the bottom; and when thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air. And if it be so that the water come in upon thee, behold, ye shall stop the hole, that ye may not perish in the flood.**

**21 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did so, according as the Lord had commanded.**

**22 And he cried again unto the Lord saying: O Lord, behold I have done even as thou hast commanded me; and I have prepared the vessels for my people, and behold there is no light in them. Behold, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?**

**23 And the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels? For behold, ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you, for ye shall not go by the light of fire.**

**verse 23** “What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?” Here is a reminder that the Lord expects us to do our homework, to exercise our own ingenuity, before he gives answers to our prayers. We should not expect the answer to our prayers to appear written on the wall. The scriptural principle was given by the Lord to Oliver Cowdery in April 1829: “Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right” (D&C 9:7-8; see also D&C 58:26-29).

**24 For behold, ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you. Nevertheless, I will bring you up again out of the depths of the sea; for the winds have gone forth out of my mouth, and also the rains and the floods have I sent forth.**

**verse 24** One definition of the word *dash* in *Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* is, “To strike suddenly or violently.”

**25 And behold, I prepare you against these things; for ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, and the winds which have gone forth, and the floods which shall come. Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths of the sea?**

**verse 25** “I prepare you against these things” The Lord is not going to spare them any of the problems which they are sure to encounter on their voyage to the promised land. Rather, he is simply helping them to prepare for those problems. Is this not his approach with us during our sojourn here in mortality?



## Ether Chapter 3

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### Scripture Mastery

**Ether 3** The brother of Jared sees the finger and the body of the Lord; his great vision of the earth the account of which is sealed up by Moroni

**1 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared, (now the number of the vessels which had been prepared was eight) went forth unto the mount, which they called the mount Shelem, because of its exceeding height, and did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass; and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount, and cried again unto the Lord, saying:**

**verse 1** High mountain peaks have always been the places where the Lord has communed with his prophets. Other examples have been Mount Sinai with Moses (Exodus 19-20); the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John (Matthew 17); mount Simeon with Enoch (Moses 7:2-4); and Nephi's "high mountain (1 Nephi 11:1; 18:3). A dedicated temple is the usual house of the Lord—often called the mountain of the Lord's house. Mountain peaks have been used when no temple is available.

**"did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones"** Regarding this incident, Brother Hugh Nibley asked a question. He then teaches that there was, for the brother of Jared a precedent for using stones to light a sailing vessel that is not found in the Bible:

But who gave the brother of Jared the idea about stones in the first place? It was not the Lord, who left him entirely on his own; and yet the man went right to work as if he knew exactly what he was doing. Who put him on to it? The answer is indicated in the fact that he was following the pattern of Noah's ark, for in the oldest records of the human race the ark seems to have been illuminated by just such shining stones. We have said that if the story of the luminous stones was lifted from any ancient source, that source was not the Talmud (with which the Book of Mormon account has only a distant relationship) but a much older and fuller tradition, with which the Ether story displays much closer affinities. The only trouble here is that these older and fuller traditions were entirely unknown to the world in the time of Joseph Smith, having been brought to light only in the last generation (*Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 352; see also 336-30; see also Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 366-69).

For other similarities between the Jaredite barges and the ark of Noah, see the commentary for Ether 6:7.

**2 O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness**

**before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires.**

**verse 2 “encompassed about”** It is interesting to note that the expression “encompassed about” is found only three times in all four standard works, and all three are in the Book of Mormon (see also 2 Nephi 4:18; Ether 6:7). “Encompassed” means encircled or surrounded, but in these three verses of scripture the expression “encompassed about” implies something further. It suggests being surrounded by something that is threatening or dangerous and nearly overwhelming.

**“because of the fall our natures have become evil continually”** The Book of Mormon does not teach the doctrine of human depravity, but it does teach that man has a “fallen” nature, that within each individual there exists a propensity for the “natural man.” Hence, each person is inclined to disobedience and worldliness (see the discussion for Mosiah 3:19). Because of this fallen nature and every man’s propensity to commit sin, man cannot return to God’s presence without an atonement’s being made. The word “nevertheless” in this verse is critical. To teach the fall without holding out the hope of redemption through Christ is to approximate the concept of human depravity.

It would be a mistake to think that man’s “natural” inclination to sin originated with the fall and was caused by the fall. While it is true that the mortal body has added significantly to the natural pulls—the biological drives—that every man experiences, man has always found it more comfortable, more pleasurable, more convenient, and simply easier to disobey commandments than to obey them. Obedience has always required resisting and overcoming one’s natural urges. During man’s existence as intelligences or premortal spirits, and during his existence in the world of spirits, it has never, nor will it be ever, natural and easy to obey. Man must always “deny himself,” “cross himself,” or “resist his natural self” in order to obey. Were it not so, all would have progressed equally and fully during our premortal phase. We did not so progress. Some were more obedient than others and progressed further. Prior to our spirit birth, there was one who out progressed us all, and he became the Firstborn.

**“thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee”** The Lord is approachable through prayer.

**“that from thee we may receive according to our desires”** This phrase contains a joy and a caution. We may well indeed receive what we truly want. The eternal reward of each of us will be meted out according to what is truly in our heart—here referred to as “our desires”—according to our heart.

**3 Behold, O Lord, thou hast smitten us because of our iniquity, and hast driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness; nevertheless,**

**thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity, and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of the rock.**

**verse 3 “and for these many years we have been in the wilderness”** The visit of the Lord to the brother of Jared occurs at least four years after the tower’s destruction (see Ether 2:13), and before the group embarks on the ocean voyage to the Western Hemisphere.

**4 And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we shall cross the sea.**

**verse 4 “touch these stones”** Brother Hugh Nibley has discussed fascinating rabbinic legends to the effect that Noah enjoyed light in the ark because he carried with him divinely given shining stones (see the commentary for verse 1). If such stories are true, then the brother of Jared was acting in harmony with the deeds of a prophet who preceded him by less than a century and a half (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, chapter 25).

The glowing stones that provided light for the eight Jaredite vessels has long been a source of ridicule. Comments such as the following are typical: “The story of Ether’s stone candles overtakes marvelousness . . . and these sixteen stone-candles gave light for eight vessels while crossing the ocean to America. Who is eager to believe this story? Shall we believe it simply because we cannot disprove it? They say there is a “man on the moon,” and that “the moon is made of green cheese,” and we cannot disprove it—shall we therefore believe it?” (William Sheldon, *Mormonism Examined*, 139-40).

More recently Weldon Langfield expressed his opinion of the shining stones: “The words ‘patently ridiculous’ seem too kind” (*The Truth About Mormonism*, 45).

Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico have recently developed radioluminescent lights that invite some interesting comparisons with the Jaredite stones. These lights are intended to “serve needs for lighting where no electricity is readily available.” Their life expectancy is about twenty years; they are described as being “bright” and very “intense”; and they are physically harmless (Sandia National Laboratories, News Release, Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 27, 1990, 1) (FARMS Update in *Insights* [July 1992], 2).

**5 Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to show forth great power, which looks small unto the understanding of men.**

**verse 5** “**which looks small unto the understanding of men**” The natural man, who is unresponsive to the Spirit of God, cannot understand the workings of God in their proper perspective. The natural man is likely to look upon the magnificent manifestations of God’s power and regard it as unimportant or unremarkable. The brother of Jared, hardly a natural man, understood clearly the remarkable miracle it would be if the Lord would only accede to his request.

**verses 6-20** These verses record one of the great theophanies in all scripture. The brother of Jared was privileged to see the Lord Jehovah—to receive the Second Comforter.

**6** And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger. And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.

**7** And the Lord saw that the brother of Jared had fallen to the earth; and the Lord said unto him: Arise, why hast thou fallen?

**8** And he saith unto the Lord: I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me; for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.

**9** And the Lord said unto him: Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood; and never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger. Sawest thou more than this?

**verse 9** “**never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast**” Surely the great and irresistible faith the brother of Jared possessed was the product of a lifetime of diligent obedience to the Lord’s commands with the consequent receiving of many consequent gifts of the Spirit (see verse 26). We are not simply witnessing a spiritually immature individual gritting his teeth and deliberately forcing himself to submit his will to the Lord’s will—to “experiment upon [his] words” (Alma 32:27-29). The brother of Jared was a man of great revealed faith (see *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 1, chapters 9 and 10: *Revealed Faith* and *Deliberate Faith and Revealed Faith*). He was a man of great spiritual accomplishment and growth earned through his nearly unparalleled obedience to the law or commands of the gospel. Personal power results from this cumulative spiritual accomplishment. We may refer to this personal power as “faith as power” (see “Faith as Power—the Third Type of Faith” in *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 1, chapter 11, *Other Notes on Faith*). It was this personal power that made it impossible for the Lord to prevent him from seeing his finger, and eventually his entire body. There is scriptural evidence of the lifelong pattern

of righteousness and diligent obedience manifest by the brother of Jared. When the people were scattered and their language was confounded in Ether 1, who did Jared ask to go to the Lord and plead for special blessings? It was the brother of Jared (Ether 1:34). Does this not attest to the type of person he was? We have learned that each time the brother of Jared prayed or “cried unto the Lord,” the Lord “had compassion” on him (Ether 1:35, 37, 40). The Lord could hardly refuse him. Note also the Lord’s words to him in Ether 1:43: “This long time ye have cried unto me.”

When the brother of Jared saw the finger of the Lord, was he actually viewing part of the spirit body of Jehovah? It certainly seems likely that the brother of Jared was, in fact, viewing the spirit body of Jehovah (see verses 16-17). Spirit is real substance, real matter, and to a person with eyes to see would be expected to have the appearance of flesh and blood.

**“Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood”** An alternate view was suggested by President Harold B. Lee who suggested that the experience of the brother of Jared was unique, and that its uniqueness lay in the fact that he saw the Lord Jesus as he would be, that is, he saw a vision of Christ as his body would be during his mortal ministry in some two thousand years: “He saw the finger of the Lord as he touched each of those sixteen stones, and they were luminous. And then he was amazed because he said he saw not only the finger of a spiritual being, but his faith was so great that he saw the kind of a body that he would have when he came down to the earth. It was of flesh and blood—flesh, blood, and bones. And the Master said, ‘No man has had this kind of faith.’” (Address to University of Utah Institute faculty, October 12, 1973).

**10 And he answered: Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me.**

**11 And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?**

**verse 11** The Lord asks a question as a sort of divine pre-assessment of whether or not the brother of Jared is ready for the experience he’s about to have. The Lord asks for and receives a covenant.

**12 And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie.**

**13 And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you.**

**verse 13** The brother of Jared is redeemed not only from the fall of Adam but from his own fall. He is sealed up to eternal life. He has experienced the Second Comforter. See “Is Having One’s Calling and Election Made Sure the Same as

Receiving the Second Comforter?" in *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 2, chapter 16, *Calling and Election Make Sure*.

**14 Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.**

**verse 14 "I am the Father and the Son"** By now the reader is likely thoroughly familiar with the reasons why Jesus Christ, the Lord Jehovah, may refer to himself as the Father:

1. Jesus is the Father by virtue of his role as creator of the earth.
2. In his role as Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, he became known as the God or Father of heaven.
3. Also those on earth who are "born again" and changed from a fallen state to a state of righteousness, are received into a new family relationship; they become the sons and daughters of Christ (Mosiah 5:7). Thus, Christ becomes their Father.
4. Finally, Christ is the Father by the divine investiture of authority. Speaking of the divine investiture of authority, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, "The Father Elohim has placed his name upon the Son, has given him his own power and authority, and has authorized him to speak in the first person as though he were the original or primal Father" (*Promised Messiah*, 63).

**"In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally"** It is interesting to note that in all editions of the Book of Mormon from 1830, verse 14 read: "In me shall all mankind have "light" and that eternally." This does make for a marvelous metaphor since the topic of light started this whole episode, and having illuminated the stones, the Lord says that he is also the source of light to mankind. Since the 1981 edition the word "light" has been replaced with the word "life." The change of wording from "light" to "life" was brought about in the following manner. During the preparation of the 1981 edition, it was brought to the attention of the brethren that even though all printed editions of the Book of Mormon to this time had read "light," the printer's manuscript, from which the type was set for the first edition of the Book of Mormon, clearly said "life." The Scripture Publications Committee, consisting of three members of the Twelve, unanimously agreed that "life" was a stronger word than "light," and the correction was made.

**"they shall become my sons and my daughters"** They shall become heirs of the celestial kingdom and have "life"—eternal life or exaltation in the presence of God.

**15 And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image.**



**verse 15 “And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created”**

This expression is difficult to square with what we know about the Lord’s dealings with the ancient prophets. We know that he appeared to and conversed with Adam and Eve while in the Garden of Eden (Moses 4:14-27). Adam and many others saw him in a great meeting not long before Adam’s death (D&C 107:53-54). Enoch “saw the Lord” and spoke with him “even as a man talketh one with another, face to face” (Moses 7:4). Noah and his sons “walked with God” (Moses 8:27). So, how do we explain this verse? The following explanations have been proffered:

1. First, it could be that the Lord was referring to the uniqueness of this particular theophany in that the brother of Jared was allowed to see the Lord in his flesh and blood body, as he would appear 2,000 years hence. See the commentary for verse 9 above.

2. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “I have always considered Ether 3:15 to mean that the Savior stood before the brother of Jared plainly, distinctly, and showed him his whole body and explained to him that he was a spirit. In his appearance to Adam and Enoch, he had not made himself manifest in such a familiar way. His appearance to earlier prophets had not been with that same fulness. . . . For the brother of Jared he removed the veil completely” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:37).

3. Perhaps the Lord’s expression “unto man whom I have created” refers to “unbelieving man.” Never had the Lord shown himself to those who did not believe on his name, whereas to the faithful—presumably including individuals like Adam and Enoch—he had indeed shown himself as he did to Mahonri Moriancumer.

4. Brother Daniel H. Ludlow suggested that perhaps the Lord was implying that he had never been compelled to show himself by the strength of the man’s faith—that the brother of Jared’s faith was sufficiently strong that the Lord could not have withheld showing himself (see also verses 9, 20, 26).

5. Perhaps this appearance was unique in that it was the first time that Jehovah had identified himself as the Son rather than assuming the role of the Father by the divine investiture of authority. The Father had honored Christ by placing his name upon him, so that Christ could minister in and through that name as though he were the Father. Hence, so far as power and authority are concerned, Christ’s words and acts are those of the Father. When the Lord appeared in ancient times, he did so as the Father, and when he gave revelation to prophets, he spoke of the mortal mission of Jesus Christ in the third person, with the words of and from the perspective of God the Father, as though Jesus Christ were someone else. This explains Jehovah’s words concerning Jesus in difficult passages such as Moses 1 and Isaiah 53. To the brother of Jared he said, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ.” Perhaps the unprecedented nature of this appearance is a reason why the Lord commanded that the account not be made available to the world until after his mortal ministry (see Ether 3:21).

6. Finally, might the Lord have been simply saying that in your dispensation, the dispensation of the Jaredites, this is the first time I have shown myself to man.

**“man whom I have created”** Jehovah is the creator of all things, except that he did not create the essence of man. Man’s intelligence was not created nor can it be destroyed. It is coexistent with God. Man’s spirit body was born to heavenly parents—the heavenly Father and heavenly Mother—in a divine procreative process. One verse of scripture does suggest that somehow Jesus had a role in that embodiment (D&C 93:10). Man’s mortal body, of course is born to mortal parents. The Lord did create the mortal materials out of which this mortal body is made. In this verse he may simply be speaking by divine investiture of authority for the Father. The Father’s role in our creation, of course, is that he is the Father of our spirits. He is likely also literally the Father of the first mortals—Adam and Eve.

**“never has man believed in me as thou hast”** What does it mean to “believe in” the Lord? Clearly it means to have faith in him. And what precisely does this mean? See the discussion for the phrase “never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast” in verse 9 of this chapter.

**16 Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.**

**verse 16 “This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit”** The phrase “body of my spirit” here is ambiguous. It may refer to the body composed of spirit matter that embodies the Lord’s (and every other spirit’s) essence or intelligence (D&C 131:7-8). This was his body in his premortal existence. This is the body which was born of his heavenly parents. Or, it may refer to the mortal body of flesh and bone that will embody the Lord’s spirit during the Lord’s mortal ministry.

The doctrine that the premortal Christ could make such an appearance to man on earth would not square with the Godhead doctrine of most all secular Christian churches. It is notable that one of the very early Christian historians, Eusebius (born AD 260 and later became Bishop of Caesarea) wrote the following remarkable passage, speaking specifically of Christ: “He appeared to Abraham, instructed Isaac, spoke to Israel, and conversed freely with Moses and the prophets who came later, as I have already shown” (G. A. Williamson [translator], Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965], 47-48). While this concept of Christ is clear to us in the Church, others may find it puzzling. One translator of Eusebius, an Anglican, summarized current secular ignorance: “Eusebius’s view that the Old Testament theophanies were appearances of Christ in human form though not yet born a man seems impossible to us. But have we yet solved the problem of reconciling the stories of encounters between men and the Deity with St. John’s assertion that no man has ever seen God?” (*Ibid.*, 48n.).



**“man have I created after the body of my spirit”** See the commentary for the previous verse.

**17 And now, as I, Moroni, said I could not make a full account of these things which are written therefore it sufficeth me to say that Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites.**

**18 And he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God, because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him.**

**19 And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting.**

**verse 19 “because of the knowledge of this man”** Moroni refers to the faith of the brother of Jared, at a time previous to his seeing the Lord, as “knowledge. His faith is indeed spiritual knowledge, received incrementally in the form of gifts of the Spirit.

**“he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting”** After the brother of Jared had seen the Lord with his physical eyes, then he no longer had to rely exclusively on spiritual knowledge or revealed faith (Alma 32:33-34). His secular knowledge was then sure.

**20 Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus; and he did minister unto him.**

**verse 20** Once the brother of Jared had “perfect knowledge” of God, since he had beheld the Lord with his eyes, apparently this entitled him to further ministrations from “within the veil”—from heaven’s side of the veil.

**“he did minister unto him”** Jesus ministered unto the brother of Jared, and what a session that must have been. The vision that then unfolded unto the brother of Jared remains sealed up to this day.

**21 And it came to pass that the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: Behold, thou shalt not suffer these things which ye have seen and heard to go forth unto the world, until the time cometh that I shall glorify my name in the flesh; wherefore, ye shall treasure up the things which ye have seen and heard, and show it to no man.**

**verse 21** The things the brother of Jared has seen and will yet see will be written down by him. They will not be revealed to the world until the Lord shall “glorify [his] name in the flesh”—until after his crucifixion and resurrection. The brother of Jared’s

account of his magnificent vision, indeed the entire Jared record written by the prophet Ether, will come into the hands of Mosiah, the son of Benjamin, who will translate it, but apparently Mosiah did not make the translation available to the Nephite people of his day. Mosiah's translation was made available after his death and resurrection. Whether or not the Nephite people following Christ's ministrations among them had access to the account of the great vision of the brother of Jared is not known. Moroni abridged or translated the Jaredite record including the record of the vision of the Brother of Jared. But then Moroni sealed it up so that it could not be translated by the Prophet Joseph.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said of this sealed portion of the plates of Mormon:

When, during the Millennium, the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon is translated, it will give an account of life in preexistence; of the creation of all things; of the fall and the atonement and the second coming; of temple ordinances in their fulness; of the ministry and mission of translated beings; of life in the spirit world, in both paradise and hell; of the kingdoms of glory to be inhabited by resurrected beings, and many such things (*Doctrines of the Restoration*, 277).

**22 And behold, when ye shall come unto me, ye shall write them and shall seal them up, that no one can interpret them; for ye shall write them in a language that they cannot be read.**

**verse 22 “for ye shall write them in a language that they cannot be read”**

The Lord says to the brother of Jared, “When you have this great vision which I will show you (“when ye shall come unto me”), you will write an account of it (“ye shall write them”) but your account will be in an obscure language that no one will be allowed to translate (“ye . . . shall seal them up, that no one can interpret them; for ye shall write them in a language that they cannot be read”).

This phrase has resulted in some confusion. On its face, it suggests that the brother of Jared recorded his great vision in an undecipherable language. But did not the prophet Ether record the account of this great vision onto the plates of Ether in a language that would be translated by Mosiah and later by Moroni? We are led to believe that Moroni did record his translated account of the brother of Jared's vision onto the plates of Mormon in “reformed Egyptian.” The inaccessibility of this account is not due to its being written in a strange language. Rather, its inaccessibility results only from the fact that the appropriate portion of the plates of Mormon was sealed and therefore not accessible to Joseph Smith.

**23 And behold, these two stones will I give unto thee, and ye shall seal them up also with the things which ye shall write.**

**verse 23** These are the interpreters or the Urim and Thummim. For a discussion and description of these stones, see *The Process of Translating the Book of*

*Mormon* in *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 2, Appendix A. See also the commentary for Mosiah 8:13.

**24 For behold, the language which ye shall write I have confounded; wherefore I will cause in my own due time that these stones shall magnify to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write.**

**verse 24** Presumably Mosiah and Moroni used these same interpreters for their translation of at least the brother of Jared's contribution to the Jaredite record and probably for their translation of the entire record on the plates of Ether.

**25 And when the Lord had said these words, he showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth.**

**verse 25** This single verse provides us with the account of the spectacular panoramic vision of the brother of Jared. It is the same type of vision that has been shown or will be shown to other prophet leaders of dispensations such as Adam, Enoch, Noah, Nephi, Abraham, Moses, John the Revelator, and Joseph Smith (D&C 76).

**26 For he had said unto him in times before, that if he would believe in him that he could show unto him all things—it should be shown unto him; therefore the Lord could not withhold anything from him, for he knew that the Lord could show him all things.**

**verse 26** “he had said unto him in times before” In showing the brother of Jared this vision, the Lord was fulfilling a promise he had made previously.

**27 And the Lord said unto him: Write these things and seal them up; and I will show them in mine own due time unto the children of men.**

**verse 27** “seal them up” This sealing up of the brother of Jared's panoramic vision apparently would eventually be accomplished by Moroni who physically sealed the appropriate portions of the plates of Mormon.

“I will show them in mine own due time” It seems likely we will have access to the sealed portion of the plates of Mormon during the Millennium (2 Nephi 27:11, 21).

**28 And it came to pass that the Lord commanded him that he should seal up the two stones which he had received, and show them not, until the Lord should show them unto the children of men.**

**verse 28** These are probably the same interpreters that will be used by Moroni and Joseph Smith. Whether or not they are the same as those used by Mosiah in translating the Jaredite record is not clear from the text (see Mosiah 28:13; 8:13).

## Ether Chapter 4

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**1 And the Lord commanded the brother of Jared to go down out of the mount from the presence of the Lord, and write the things which he had seen; and they were forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them, that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people.**

**verse 1** King Mosiah kept the record of the brother of Jared contained on the Jaredite record, the plates of Ether. We know that Mosiah translated the Jaredite plates. We don't really know whether Mosiah translated the brother of Jared's account of his great vision or not. In either case, Mosiah kept it to himself. Moroni was allowed to translate that account along with the rest of the Jaredite record. Alternatively, Moroni was allowed access to that account as he abridged Mosiah's translation of the plates of Ether. The timing of Moroni's translation (or abridgement), obviously, was after Christ was "lifted up upon the cross." Nevertheless, Moroni's account of the brother of Jared's vision was sealed and unavailable to the Prophet Joseph.

**2 And after Christ truly had showed himself unto his people he commanded that they should be made manifest.**

**verse 2** What specifically does "they" refer to here. If it refers to the translation of the entire Jaredite record, then we are not surprised to learn that the Nephites had access to the "book of Ether" just as we do today. This access was in the form of their having access to king Mosiah's translation of the plates of Ether. This verse, and the following verse, have raised the question of whether or not the Nephites even had access to the account of the great vision of the brother of Jared. Perhaps this account was even part of the scriptures expounded upon by the resurrected Lord himself when he appeared to the righteous Nephites (see 3 Nephi 26:1-4).

**3 And now, after that, they have all dwindled in unbelief; and there is none save it be the Lamanites, and they have rejected the gospel of Christ; therefore I am commanded that I should hide them up again in the earth.**

**verses 3** Moroni was commanded to render the Jaredite record inaccessible to the unrighteous people remaining in his world. We would presume the Jaredite record was available to those Nephites who lived during the "mini-Millennium." Again, if they were available, presumably it was king Mosiah's translation to which they had access.

**4 Behold, I have written upon these plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw; and there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared.**

**verse 4** “These plates,” of course, are the plates of Mormon. This suggests that the timing of Moroni’s recording of the book of Ether was after the death of his father Mormon and after the destruction of virtually all of the Nephite people. Remember that Moroni entered chapters 8 and 9 of the book of Mormon following the death of his father. The next thing he entered onto the plates of Mormon was his translation or abridgment of the book of Ether.

**5 Wherefore the Lord hath commanded me to write them; and I have written them. And he commanded me that I should seal them up; and he also hath commanded that I should seal up the interpretation thereof; wherefore I have sealed up the interpreters, according to the commandment of the Lord.**

**verse 5** Moroni is commanded to “seal up” two things—the account of the vision of the brother of Jared *and* the interpreters. For a discussion of the interpreters, see the commentaries for Mosiah 8:13, Mosiah 28:13, and *The Process of Translating the Book of Mormon* in *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 2, Appendix A.

The process by which the interpreters were sealed up by Moroni is unknown. Presumably the purpose of this sealing up of the interpreters was simply to protect them until they could be delivered, with the plates of Mormon and the small plates of Nephi, to the Joseph Smith. Moroni makes no mention of the breastplate to which the interpreters were attached when they were found by the Prophet Joseph.

**verses 6-19** In these verses, Moroni records a lengthy quotation of the Lord.

**6 For the Lord said unto me: They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.**

**verse 6** “They” refers, at least in part, to the account of the vision of the brother of Jared (“those [things] which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared” in verse 4). This account will be made available during the Millennium. By the time of the onset of the Millennium, the Gentiles shall have promulgated the restored gospel, and then a major apostasy shall have occurred among them. Some of these rebellious Gentiles will have been cleansed from off the earth.

**7 And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.**

**8 And he that will contend against the word of the Lord, let him be accursed; and he that shall deny these things, let him be accursed; for unto them will I show no greater things, saith Jesus Christ; for I am he who speaketh.**

**verse 8** This verse implies that even after the onset of the Millennium, after the vision of the brother of Jared shall be made available to the people, there will be those who reject its message.

An alternative interpretation would be that “these things” represent all of the writings in the Book of Mormon, and the Lord has reference not to a time after the onset of the Millennium, but rather to the period of judging and purging just *prior* to the Millennium as is suggested by the following verse.

**9 And at my command the heavens are opened and are shut; and at my word the earth shall shake; and at my command the inhabitants thereof shall pass away, even so as by fire.**

**verse 9** This is apparently a reference to the pre-millennial purging of the earth.

**10 And he that believeth not my words believeth not my disciples; and if it so be that I do not speak, judge ye; for ye shall know that it is I that speaketh, at the last day.**

**verse 10** The Lord now seems to be speaking of the Book of Mormon—“my words.” The “last day” is the final day of judgment. Those who receive the Book of Mormon during their mortal sojourn will have to judge whether or not they will believe it to be a true record. At the “last day” they will know for certain that it is.

**11 But he that believeth these things which I have spoken, him will I visit with the manifestations of my Spirit, and he shall know and bear record. For because of my Spirit he shall know that these things are true; for it persuadeth men to do good.**

**verse 11** He that accepts the Book of Mormon will be blessed.

I must mention that it seems almost unfair that those of us in the Church have been given so powerful a witness of eternal truth as is contained in the Book of Mormon. I say *unfair* because in light of the many scholarly corroborations available to church members today, the Book of Mormon stands as virtually proven to be true. The whole world does not have access to this irrefutable witness. And if the Book of Mormon is true, what does that imply? It implies that Moroni did appear to Joseph Smith and assist him in his preparation for the translation of the book. It implies that Joseph Smith did literally have access to the “gift and power of God” to assist him in the translation. And if he did indeed translate the book by the gift and power of God, then Joseph did indeed see the Father and the Son in the sacred grove. And all of this is indeed the Lord’s restored gospel! How blessed we are indeed!!

**12 And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good; he that will not believe my words will not believe me—that I am; and he that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me. For behold, I am the Father, I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world.**

**verse 12 “whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me”** This phrase actually provides us with a definition of the word *good*, meaning *good* in its eternal sense.

**“I am the Father”** We know that Elohim is called Father because he is the father of the spirits of all men including that of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Son because he was sired, both in the preexistence and here on earth by the Father. It is Jesus Christ who is speaking here. See the commentary for Ether 3:14 for a summary of the reasons the Savior refers to himself as “the Father.”

**“I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world”** This statement has profound significance. The light of Christ is broadcast to the immensity of space for all to perceive as they are able. This light gives life to all things and contains all truth. See the important discussion of spiritual light in *The Concept of Light in Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 1, chapter 15.

**13 Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief.**

**14 Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief.**

**verses 13-14** The Lord promises the Gentiles and the house of Israel—indeed, all men that if they will come unto him and accept the Book of Mormon, they will receive even greater knowledge. This knowledge will include, as is made clear from the next verse, “all things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world.”

**15 Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.**

**verse 15 “when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind”** See the discussion of hard-heartedness in the commentary for Alma 10:6.



**16 And then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people. Remember, when ye see these things, ye shall know that the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed.**

**verse 16** As has been mentioned previously (see the commentary for Ether 3:25), the vision of John the Revelator is expected to be similar to that panoramic vision with which the brother of Jared was favored. When we come to have complete knowledge of these visions, we will realize that the events of which they prophesy have, in fact, occurred, are occurring, or will occur.

**17 Therefore, when ye shall receive this record ye may know that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land.**

**verse 17** “This record” is the Book of Mormon. “The work of the Father” is the work of gathering (see also 3 Nephi 21:7 and its commentary).

**18 Therefore, repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and believe in my gospel, and be baptized in my name; for he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned; and signs shall follow them that believe in my name.**

**verse 18** “**he that believeth not shall be damned**” For a brief discussion of what it means to be damned, see the commentary for 2 Nephi 9:24.

“**signs shall follow them that believe in my name**” Miracles will occur among the believers.

**19 And blessed is he that is found faithful unto my name at the last day, for he shall be lifted up to dwell in the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world. And behold it is I that hath spoken it. Amen.**



## Ether Chapter 5

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### Scripture Mastery

**Ether 5:2-4** Moroni's prophecy of the three Book of Mormon witnesses

**1 And now I, Moroni, have written the words which were commanded me, according to my memory; and I have told you the things which I have sealed up; therefore touch them not in order that ye may translate; for that thing is forbidden you, except by and by it shall be wisdom in God.**

**verse 1 “according to my memory”** President Wilford Woodruff taught that prophets have had divine assistance in recalling the words of the Lord's revelations which they are called upon to write (see Mosiah 17:4; John 14:26). President Woodruff wrote: “Whenever I heard Joseph Smith preach, teach, or prophesy, I always felt it my duty to write it; I felt uneasy and could not eat, drink, or sleep until I did write; and my mind has been so exercised upon this subject that when I heard Joseph Smith teach and had no pencil or paper, I would go home and sit down and write the whole sermon, almost word for word and sentence by sentence as it was delivered, and when I had written it, it was taken from me, I remembered it no more. This was the gift of God to me” (Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors*, 476-77).

**“therefore touch them not . . .”** Moroni gives instruction directly to the prophet Joseph Smith. Joseph is not to try to unseal that sealed portion of the plates of Mormon.

**2 And behold, ye may be privileged that ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work;**

**3 And unto three shall they be shown by the power of God; wherefore they shall know of a surety that these things are true.**

**4 And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established; and the testimony of three, and this work, in the which shall be shown forth the power of God and also his word, of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day.**

**verses 2-4** It was probably in translating these verses that Joseph Smith learned that there would be three witness to the Book of Mormon plates which would be shown the plates “by the power of God” (see also 2 Nephi 11:3; 27:12). These verses were also probably the “trigger” for Joseph's receiving section 17 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

**“all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day”** The Book of Mormon is more than just another religious book. By the book shall the world be judged.

**5 And if it so be that they repent and come unto the Father in the name of Jesus, they shall be received into the kingdom of God.**

**verse 5** It would seem that the antecedent for the pronoun “they” in this verse is “the world” in the previous verse.

**6 And now, if I have no authority for these things, judge ye; for ye shall know that I have authority when ye shall see me, and we shall stand before God at the last day. Amen.**

**verse 6** In this poignant verse, Moroni says, in effect, “Each of you reading the Book of Mormon may decide whether what I have said is true. Go ahead decide now, because when you are brought before the judgment bar of God, you will learn that they are true.

## Ether Chapter 6

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**1** And now I, Moroni, proceed to give the record of Jared and his brother.

**2** For it came to pass after the Lord had prepared the stones which the brother of Jared had carried up into the mount, the brother of Jared came down out of the mount, and he did put forth the stones into the vessels which were prepared, one in each end thereof; and behold, they did give light unto the vessels.

**verse 2** “one in each end thereof” There were sixteen stones, and two were placed in each vessel or barge.

**3** And thus the Lord caused stones to shine in darkness, to give light unto men, women, and children, that they might not cross the great waters in darkness.

**4** And it came to pass that when they had prepared all manner of food, that thereby they might subsist upon the water, and also food for their flocks and herds, and whatsoever beast or animal or fowl that they should carry with them—and it came to pass that when they had done all these things they got aboard of their vessels or barges, and set forth into the sea, commending themselves unto the Lord their God.

**5** And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters, towards the promised land; and thus they were tossed upon the waves of the sea before the wind.

**6** And it came to pass that they were many times buried in the depths of the sea, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them, and also the great and terrible tempests which were caused by the fierceness of the wind.

**verse 6** “they were many times buried in the depths of the sea, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them” Don’t fail to notice the exciting imagery in this verse.

**7** And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters.

**verse 7** “buried in the deep” In the scriptures, to cross the waters or seas, is, figuratively, to leave the old decadent world behind to receive the new pristine and promised land. The same symbolism applies in the ordinance of baptism of water.

“encompassed about” See a discussion of this interesting expression in the commentary for Ether 3:2. In this instance the Jaredites are frightened and threatened by the waters in which they are engulfed.

**“they were tight like unto the ark of Noah”** It is interesting to note the similarities between the Jaredite barges and the ark of Noah. According to the prophet Joseph Smith, “the construction of the first vessel was given to Noah, by revelation. The design of the ark was given by God, ‘a pattern of heavenly things’” (*TPJS*, 251). Hugh Nibley has reported a description of Noah’s boat in an ancient Babylonian account of the Flood. In that account Noah’s boat is called the magur boat, peaked at the ends, completely covered but for a door, without sails, and completely covered by the waters from time to time, as men and animals rode safe within. This closely resembles the account of the Jaredite barges given in the book of Ether (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988, 343-48).

The King James Version of the Old Testament reports that Noah’s ark was to have a “window” for a light: “A window shalt thou make to the ark” (Genesis 6:16). However, some modern Jewish translators of the Hebrew text render this passage: “A light shalt thou make to the ark.” The word in question, *tsohar*, means “noon” or “midday.” Ancient Jewish legend relates that it was not just a light in the ark but was actually “a precious stone which illuminated the whole interior of the ark” (Hertz, *Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 26-27). Actually, a number of early Jewish sources say that God had Noah suspend precious stones or pearls inside the ark to lighten it. The gems would glow during the night and dim during the day so Noah could tell the time of day and how many days had passed (see TB Sanhedrin 108b, TY Pesachim 1.1, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis 6:16*, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* 31.11, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 23, and *Rashi on Genesis 6:16*. For a recap of the story, see Louis Ginzberg, ed., *The Legends of the Jews* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1937], 1:162-63). The first person to bring this Jewish tradition to the attention of Latter-day Saints was Janne M. Sjodahl, in his *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927], 248. The tradition is discussed at length in Hugh Nibley’s “There Were Jaredites: The Shining Stones,” *Improvement Era*, September 1956, 630-32, 672-75). In a medieval Arabic text we read that it was the pegs that Noah used to construct the ark that shone.

Another interesting correlation between the Jaredite barges and Noah’s ark is the fact that similar terms are used in describing the Flood of Noah and the Jaredite experience. An Ethiopic Christian text, *Conflict of Adam and Eve III*, 9:6-7, describes the Flood of Noah in terms such as “waves . . . high like mountains,” as in Ether 2:24 and 6:6. The Book of Mormon account indicates that the high waves resulted from intense winds from the Lord. Early Jewish and Christian traditions indicate that God sent strong winds to destroy the Tower of Babel, from which the Jaredites fled (Ether 1:33). Several early texts have the wind, sometimes called a “wind-flood,” destroying the idols erected by Nimrod, to whom both Jewish and Christian traditions attribute the building of the tower.

**8 And it came to pass that the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind.**

**9 And they did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord, and he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord.**

**10 And thus they were driven forth; and no monster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar them; and they did have light continually, whether it was above the water or under the water.**

**verse 10 “neither whale that could mar them”** *Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* defines *mar* as, “to injure; to hurt; to deform; to disfigure.”

**11 And thus they were driven forth, three hundred and forty and four days upon the water.**

**verse 11** Some have been critical of the 344 days they were on the water, claiming it is too long. Actually this is a reasonable length of time for trans-Pacific voyages drifting without sails. In fact 344 days is exactly the length of time it takes the Pacific current to go from Asia to Mexico (John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985], 111, 368 note 16).

**12 And they did land upon the shore of the promised land. And when they had set their feet upon the shores of the promised land they bowed themselves down upon the face of the land, and did humble themselves before the Lord, and did shed tears of joy before the Lord, because of the multitude of his tender mercies over them.**

**verse 12** Here, the “promised land,” as promised lands always are, is symbolic of the celestial kingdom.

If we do not feel gratitude to the Lord every day, then it would seem we simply don’t fully understand our relationship to him (D&C 59:21).

**13 And it came to pass that they went forth upon the face of the land, and began to till the earth.**

**14 And Jared had four sons; and they were called Jacom, and Gilgah, and Mahah, and Orihah.**

**verse 14 “Jared had four sons”** Their names seem to indicate kinship to the Semitic Language.

*Jacom* may be related to the Hebrew *Jakim* (1 Chronicles 8:19; 24:12), signifying one who is raised up by the Lord; it evidently comes from the verb, *kum*, to stand up. It

may also be related to *khamamu*, which is said to mean to hold, to fix, to grasp, and in Babylonian to fix the laws, to lead, to govern (H. F. Lutz, “Kingship in Babylonia, Syria, and Egypt,” *American Anthropologist*, October and December, 1924).

*Gilgah* may be a variant of *Gilgal*, which means a wheel, or a circle. It was the place where the Israelites made their first camp in Palestine, after having crossed the Jordan and occupied Jericho. It was there that Joshua set up twelve stones, possibly in a circle, forming a stonehenge in memory of that great event in Israelitish history—the Lord had led Israel into the Promised Land across the Jordan on dry land (Joshua 4:19-20; 9:16; 10:6-7).

*Mahah* may be the *mahan* of the Pearl of Great Price (Moses 5:31).

*Orihah* is, undoubtedly, the same as *Urijah* (2 Kings 16:10-12), meaning the light of the Lord.

**15 And the brother of Jared also begat sons and daughters.**

**16 And the friends of Jared and his brother were in number about twenty and two souls; and they also begat sons and daughters before they came to the promised land; and therefore they began to be many.**

**17 And they were taught to walk humbly before the Lord; and they were also taught from on high.**

**verse 17 “they were also taught from on high”** It would seem that the ideal formula for acquiring spiritual intelligence or light and truth is the combination of mental exertion and prayerful pleading and pondering. In this way we qualify for the Spirit’s endowments.

**18 And it came to pass that they began to spread upon the face of the land, and to multiply and to till the earth; and they did wax strong in the land.**

**19 And the brother of Jared began to be old, and saw that he must soon go down to the grave; wherefore he said unto Jared: Let us gather together our people that we may number them, that we may know of them what they will desire of us before we go down to our graves.**

**20 And accordingly the people were gathered together. Now the number of the sons and the daughters of the brother of Jared were twenty and two souls; and the number of sons and daughters of Jared were twelve, he having four sons.**

**verse 20** It has been speculated that the brother of Jared, who had twenty-two sons and daughters, was a polygamist. Whether or not he had more than one wife is not known, but we do know that polygamy was practiced among the Jaredites. We will later learn that Riplakish, an early Jaredite king, had “many wives and concubines . . . [and] did afflict the people with his whoredoms and abominations” (Ether 10:5-7). Jaredite polygamy was not restricted to royalty. Moroni will later record that in the final

battle of the Jaredites every man kept his sword in hand “in the defence of his property and his own life and of his wives and children” (Ether 14:2).

**21 And it came to pass that they did number their people; and after that they had numbered them, they did desire of them the things which they would that they should do before they went down to their graves.**

**22 And it came to pass that the people desired of them that they should anoint one of their sons to be a king over them.**

**verse 22 “anoint”** To *anoint* is to place oil, usually olive oil, on the head or other prominent part of a person or building. The Hebrew term *mashiach* (Messiah) and Greek term *christos* (Christ) derive from the verb “to anoint” in their respective languages. They both mean “the anointed one.”

Among both Nephites and Jaredites, anointing was practiced when enthroning kings (e.g., Jacob 1:19; Ether 6:22).

In biblical accounts, anointing was a part of the ceremony of divine investiture for prophets (e.g., 1 Kings 19:16), priests (e.g., Exodus 28:41), kings (e.g., 1 Samuel 15:1), and sanctuaries (Exodus 30:22-29). In addition, it was an element in certain blessings (Psalm 23:5; James 5:14).

Anciently, the olive tree was the source of oil for anointing and other dietary and medicinal purposes in the Mediterranean area (Judges 9:8-9; Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14). The source of oil among Book of Mormon peoples for such functions, if oil was used, remains unknown.

**23 And now behold, this was grievous unto them. And the brother of Jared said unto them: Surely this thing leadeth into captivity.**

**verses 22-23 “Surely this thing leadeth into captivity.”** The Jaredite opposition to kingship may reflect the negative experience they had under the Mesopotamian king under whose reign the entire society collapsed.

The concerns of the brother of Jared will be fully realized as subsequent kings will turn from the ways of righteousness and lead their people into abominable practices of idolatry and other forms of wickedness that will contribute to their spiritual decline and ultimate destruction as a civilization.

**24 But Jared said unto his brother: Suffer them that they may have a king. And therefore he said unto them: Choose ye out from among our sons a king, even whom ye will.**

**25 And it came to pass that they chose even the firstborn of the brother of Jared; and his name was Pagag. And it came to pass that he refused and would not be their king. And the people would that his father should constrain him, but his**

father would not; and he commanded them that they should constrain no man to be their king.

**verse 25** To *constrain* in this context means to urge to action or to compel.

26 And it came to pass that they chose all the brothers of Pagag, and they would not.

27 And it came to pass that neither would the sons of Jared, even all save it were one; and Orihah was anointed to be king over the people.

28 And he began to reign, and the people began to prosper; and they became exceedingly rich.

29 And it came to pass that Jared died, and his brother also.

30 And it came to pass that Orihah did walk humbly before the Lord, and did remember how great things the Lord had done for his father, and also taught his people how great things the Lord had done for their fathers.

**verse 30** In our tour through the book of Ether, we will encounter four kings who were righteous and presided over Zion-like societies. These include Orihah (introduced in this verse), Shule (chapter 7), Emer (chapter 9), and Lib (chapter 10).



## Ether Chapter 7

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In Ether chapters 7-11 there will be little verse commentary, as it does not seem to be needed. Beginning with chapter 7 we are introduced to the cycle of wickedness and perversion into which the people find themselves repeatedly drawn. Rather than studying a lot of verse commentary, then, it is suggested that the reader look for the following general themes and lessons in these chapters:

1. The hazards of the reigns of wicked kings.
2. The fate of a people who uphold secret combinations (Ether 8:16, 20-22).
3. Parts of the New World comprise a choice land above all other lands and will remain a promised land only to people who are righteous (Ether 9:20; 13:2).
4. The power of faith and righteous living. Pay particular attention to two righteous kings, Emer and Coriantum (Ether 9:21-22).
5. The importance of prophets and the fate of those who reject their words (Ether 7:23-24; 9:28-31; 11:1-5, 12-13, 20-22).
6. The sending of natural disasters in order to humble a people (Ether 9:28-35; 11:5-7).
7. The reality, power, and mercy of Jesus Christ.

**1 And it came to pass that Orihah did execute judgment upon the land in righteousness all his days, whose days were exceedingly many.**

**2 And he begat sons and daughters; yea, he begat thirty and one, among whom were twenty and three sons.**

**verse 2** Again, evidence that polygamy was practiced.

**3 And it came to pass that he also begat Kib in his old age. And it came to pass that Kib reigned in his stead; and Kib begat Corihor.**

**4 And when Corihor was thirty and two years old he rebelled against his father, and went over and dwelt in the land of Nehor; and he begat sons and daughters, and they became exceedingly fair; wherefore Corihor drew away many people after him.**

**verse 4** Little is known about the geographic features of the land of the Jaredites. It would seem that the land may be divided into two parts, a highland western portion and a low-land eastern area. The former contains the Jaredites earliest settlement, the “land of their first inheritance,” the land of Moron. No city of Moron is ever mentioned. In the low-land eastern area, probably close to the eastern coast was a hilly area. One major hill is the hill Ramah—later to be called Cumorah by the Nephites. The hill Comnor and two valleys and probably the hill Shim were located in the same region. North of this hilly eastern coastal area is a “land of many waters,

rivers, and fountains” (Mormon 6:4). The southern portion of the Jaredites’ land, not far from the land of Moron is the land later to be called Desolation by the Nephites. It is in this land, near the hill Ramah/Cumorah where the great final battles of the Jaredites and Nephite/Lamanites were fought (please see the illustration *Hypothetical Map of Book of Mormon Lands*).

The location of the land and city of Nehor is unknown.

5 And when he had gathered together an army he came up unto the land of Moron where the king dwelt, and took him captive, which brought to pass the saying of the brother of Jared that they would be brought into captivity.

6 Now the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called Desolation by the Nephites.

7 And it came to pass that Kib dwelt in captivity, and his people under Corihor his son, until he became exceedingly old; nevertheless Kib begat Shule in his old age, while he was yet in captivity.

8 And it came to pass that Shule was angry with his brother; and Shule waxed strong, and became mighty as to the strength of a man; and he was also mighty in judgment.

9 Wherefore, he came to the hill Ephraim, and he did molten out of the hill, and made swords out of steel for those whom he had drawn away with him; and after he had armed them with swords he returned to the city Nehor and gave battle unto his brother Corihor, by which means he obtained the kingdom and restored it unto his father Kib.

10 And now because of the thing which Shule had done, his father bestowed upon him the kingdom; therefore he began to reign in the stead of his father.

11 And it came to pass that he did execute judgment in righteousness; and he did spread his kingdom upon all the face of the land, for the people had become exceedingly numerous.

12 And it came to pass that Shule also begat many sons and daughters.

13 And Corihor repented of the many evils which he had done; wherefore Shule gave him power in his kingdom.

14 And it came to pass that Corihor had many sons and daughters. And among the sons of Corihor there was one whose name was Noah.

15 And it came to pass that Noah rebelled against Shule, the king, and also his father Corihor, and drew away Cohor his brother, and also all his brethren and many of the people.

16 And he gave battle unto Shule the king, in which he did obtain the land of their first inheritance; and he became a king over that part of the land.

17 And it came to pass that he gave battle again unto Shule, the king; and he took Shule, the king, and carried him away captive into Moron.

18 And it came to pass as he was about to put him to death, the sons of Shule crept into the house of Noah by night and slew him, and broke down the door of the prison and brought out their father, and placed him upon his throne in his own kingdom.

19 Wherefore, the son of Noah did build up his kingdom in his stead; nevertheless they did not gain power any more over Shule the king, and the people who were under the reign of Shule the king did prosper exceedingly and wax great.

20 And the country was divided; and there were two kingdoms, the kingdom of Shule, and the kingdom of Cohor, the son of Noah.

21 And Cohor, the son of Noah, caused that his people should give battle unto Shule, in which Shule did beat them and did slay Cohor.

22 And now Cohor had a son who was called Nimrod; and Nimrod gave up the kingdom of Cohor unto Shule, and he did gain favor in the eyes of Shule; wherefore Shule did bestow great favors upon him, and he did do in the kingdom of Shule according to his desires.

23 And also in the reign of Shule there came prophets among the people, who were sent from the Lord, prophesying that the wickedness and idolatry of the people was bringing a curse upon the land, and they should be destroyed if they did not repent.

**verse 23 “there came prophets among the people”** This is the first of six different times in the Jaredite record when the Lord will send prophets among the people to warn them (see also Ether 9:28; 11:1-8, 12, 20; 12:3). These prophets are unnamed. The Lord’s pattern is always the same. When the destruction of a people is imminent, the Lord sends prophets to warn the people that they will be destroyed lest they repent. This time the outcome is favorable.

**“the wickedness and idolatry of the people was bringing a curse upon the land”** See the discussion of idolatry in the commentary for Omni 1:20.

24 And it came to pass that the people did revile against the prophets, and did mock them. And it came to pass that king Shule did execute judgment against all those who did revile against the prophets.

25 And he did execute a law throughout all the land, which gave power unto the prophets that they should go whithersoever they would; and by this cause the people were brought unto repentance.

26 And because the people did repent of their iniquities and idolatries the Lord did spare them, and they began to prosper again in the land. And it came to pass that Shule begat sons and daughters in his old age.

27 And there were no more wars in the days of Shule; and he remembered the great things that the Lord had done for his fathers in bringing them across the

great deep into the promised land; wherefore he did execute judgment in righteousness all his days.

## Ether Chapter 8

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### Scripture Mastery

**Ether 8** Moroni warns of Secret Combinations.

1 And it came to pass that he begat Omer, and Omer reigned in his stead. And Omer begat Jared; and Jared begat sons and daughters.

2 And Jared rebelled against his father, and came and dwelt in the land of Heth. And it came to pass that he did flatter many people, because of his cunning words, until he had gained the half of the kingdom.

**verse 2** “he did flatter many people, because of his cunning words” For a discussion of the various forms of the word *flatter*, see the commentary for 2 Nephi 28:22.

3 And when he had gained the half of the kingdom he gave battle unto his father, and he did carry away his father into captivity, and did make him serve in captivity;

4 And now, in the days of the reigns of Omer he was in captivity the half of his days. And it came to pass that he begat sons and daughters among whom were Esrom and Coriantumr;

5 And they were exceedingly angry because of the doings of Jared their brother, insomuch that they did raise an army and gave battle unto Jared. And it came to pass that they did give battle unto him by night.

6 And it came to pass that when they had slain the army of Jared they were about to slay him also; and he plead with them that they would not slay him, and he would give up the kingdom unto his father. And it came to pass that they did grant unto him his life.

7 And now Jared became exceedingly sorrowful because of the loss of the kingdom, for he had set his heart upon the kingdom and upon the glory of the world.

8 Now the daughter of Jared being exceedingly expert, and seeing the sorrows of her father, thought to devise a plan whereby she could redeem the kingdom unto her father.

9 Now the daughter of Jared was exceedingly fair. And it came to pass that she did talk with her father, and said unto him: Whereby hath my father so much sorrow? Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory?

10 And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife, then shall ye say: I will give her if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king.

**verse 10** Akish will turn out to be one of the truly wicked men in the Book of Mormon. He will eventually kill both his father and his father-in-law in order to become king, and he will imprison a son because of jealousy and starve him to death (Ether 9:7).

11 And now Omer was a friend to Akish; wherefore, when Jared had sent for Akish, the daughter of Jared danced before him that she pleased him, insomuch that he desired her to wife. And it came to pass that he said unto Jared: Give her unto me to wife.

**verse 11** “Give her unto me to wife” In English we would be more likely to say, “Give her unto me for a wife.” There is a Hebrew preposition that means both *to* and *for* (John A. Tvedtnes, “The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon” in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, 91).

12 And Jared said unto him: I will give her unto you, if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king.

13 And it came to pass that Akish gathered in unto the house of Jared all his kinsfolk, and said unto them: Will ye swear unto me that ye will be faithful unto me in the thing which I shall desire of you?

14 And it came to pass that they all sware unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens, and also by the earth, and by their heads, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired should lose his head; and whoso should divulge whatsoever thing Akish made known unto them, the same should lose his life.

15 And it came to pass that thus they did agree with Akish. And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain, who was a murderer from the beginning.

**verses 14-15** We see the appearance of secret combinations the oaths and covenants of which are attributed to Cain.

The record of Moses provides a graphic and frightening account of the origin of these secret oaths: “And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands. And Satan sware

unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret” (Moses 5:29-30).

16 And they were kept up by the power of the devil to administer these oaths unto the people, to keep them in darkness, to help such as sought power to gain power, and to murder, and to plunder, and to lie, and to commit all manner of wickedness and whoredoms.

17 And it was the daughter of Jared who put it into his heart to search up these things of old; and Jared put it into the heart of Akish; wherefore, Akish administered it unto his kindred and friends, leading them away by fair promises to do whatsoever thing he desired.

18 And it came to pass that they formed a secret combination, even as they of old; which combination is most abominable and wicked above all, in the sight of God;

19 For the Lord worketh not in secret combinations, neither doth he will that man should shed blood, but in all things hath forbidden it, from the beginning of man.

20 And now I, Moroni, do not write the manner of their oaths and combinations, for it hath been made known unto me that they are had among all people, and they are had among the Lamanites.

**verse 20** The oaths and covenants of the Jaredite secret combinations were passed along to the descendants of Lehi and Ishmael.

21 And they have caused the destruction of this people of whom I am now speaking, and also the destruction of the people of Nephi.

22 And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed; for the Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by them, shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them and yet he avenge them not.

23 Wherefore, O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you, which are built up to get power and gain—and the work, yea, even the work of destruction come upon you, yea, even the sword of the justice of the Eternal God shall fall upon you, to your overthrow and destruction if ye shall suffer these things to be.

**verse 23** Moroni urges the latter-day apostate Gentiles to study the negative example of the Jaredites, hoping that history will not repeat itself.

24 Wherefore, the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation, because of this

secret combination which shall be among you; or 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 built it up.

**verse 24** “It” in this and the subsequent verse refers to the secret combination.

**25** For it cometh to pass that whoso buildeth it up seeketh to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries; and it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people, for it is built up by the devil, who is the father of all lies; even that same liar who beguiled our first parents, yea, even that same liar who hath caused man to commit murder from the beginning; who hath hardened the hearts of men that they have murdered the prophets, and stoned them, and cast them out from the beginning.

**verse 25** Some have seen in this verse Moroni’s prophecy of a specific wicked combination in the last days that will attempt to overthrow the freedom of all lands.

**26** Wherefore, I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things that evil may be done away, and that the time may come that Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but that they may be persuaded to do good continually, that they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved.

**verse 25** The “fountain of all righteousness” is, of course, Jesus Christ (see Ether 12:28).



## Ether Chapter 9

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Brother Hugh Nibley has added insight to the sordid story of the daughter of Jared and Akish:

There is one tale of intrigue in the book of Ether that presents very ancient and widespread (though but recently discovered) parallels. That is the story of Jared's daughter. . . . This is indeed a strange and terrible tradition of throne succession, yet there is no better attested tradition in the early world than the ritual of the dancing princess (represented by the *salme* priestess of the Babylonians, hence the name Salome) who wins the heart of a stranger and induces him to marry her, behead the old king, and mount the throne. I once collected a huge dossier on this awful woman and even read a paper on her at an annual meeting of the American Historical Association. You find out all about the sordid triangle of the old king, the challenger, and the dancing beauty from Frazer, Jane Harrison, Altheim, B. Schweitzer, Farnell, and any number of folklorists. The thing to note especially is that there actually seems to have been a succession rite of great antiquity that followed this pattern. . . . It is not without actual historical parallels, as when in AD 998 the sister of the Khalif obtained as a gift the head of the ruler of Syria, the episode of the dancing princess is at all times essentially a ritual [albeit a sensual one], and the name of Salome is perhaps no accident, for her story is anything but unique. Certainly the book of Ether is on the soundest possible ground in attributing the behavior of the daughter of Jared to the inspiration of ritual texts—secret directories on the art of deposing an aging king. The Jaredite version, incidentally, is quite different from the Salome story of the Bible, but is identical with many earlier accounts that have come down to us in the oldest records of civilization (*Lehi in the Desert*, 210-13; also Nibley's *Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 248).

**1 And now I, Moroni, proceed with my record. Therefore, behold, it came to pass that because of the secret combinations of Akish and his friends, behold, they did overthrow the kingdom of Omer.**

**2 Nevertheless, the Lord was merciful unto Omer, and also to his sons and to his daughters who did not seek his destruction.**

**3 And the Lord warned Omer in a dream that he should depart out of the land; wherefore Omer departed out of the land with his family, and traveled many days, and came over and passed by the hill of Shim, and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed, and from thence eastward, and came to a place which was called Ablom, by the seashore, and there he pitched his tent, and also his sons and his daughters, and all his household, save it were Jared and his family.**

4 And it came to pass that Jared was anointed king over the people, by the hand of wickedness; and he gave unto Akish his daughter to wife.

5 And it came to pass that Akish sought the life of his father-in-law; and he applied unto those whom he had sworn by the oath of the ancients, and they obtained the head of his father-in-law, as he sat upon his throne, giving audience to his people.

6 For so great had been the spreading of this wicked and secret society that it had corrupted the hearts of all the people; therefore Jared was murdered upon his throne, and Akish reigned in his stead.

7 And it came to pass that Akish began to be jealous of his son, therefore he shut him up in prison, and kept him upon little or no food until he had suffered death.

8 And now the brother of him that suffered death, (and his name was Nimrah) was angry with his father because of that which his father had done unto his brother.

9 And it came to pass that Nimrah gathered together a small number of men, and fled out of the land, and came over and dwelt with Omer.

10 And it came to pass that Akish begat other sons, and they won the hearts of the people, notwithstanding they had sworn unto him to do all manner of iniquity according to that which he desired.

11 Now the people of Akish were desirous for gain, even as Akish was desirous for power; wherefore, the sons of Akish did offer them money, by which means they drew away the more part of the people after them.

12 And there began to be a war between the sons of Akish and Akish, which lasted for the space of many years, yea, unto the destruction of nearly all the people of the kingdom, yea, even all, save it were thirty souls, and they who fled with the house of Omer.

13 Wherefore, Omer was restored again to the land of his inheritance.

14 And it came to pass that Omer began to be old; nevertheless, in his old age he begat Emer; and he anointed Emer to be king to reign in his stead.

**verses 15-25** These verses describe an atypical period of over 225 years of peace among the Jaredites.

15 And after that he had anointed Emer to be king he saw peace in the land for the space of two years, and he died, having seen exceedingly many days, which were full of sorrow. And it came to pass that Emer did reign in his stead, and did fill the steps of his father.

16 And the Lord began again to take the curse from off the land, and the house of Emer did prosper exceedingly under the reign of Emer; and in the space of sixty and two years they had become exceedingly strong, insomuch that they became exceedingly rich—

**17 Having all manner of fruit, and of grain, and of silks, and of fine linen, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things;**

**18 And also all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man.**

**19 And they also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms; all of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants and cureloms and cumoms.**

**verses 18-19** For a general discussion of animals in the Book of Mormon, see the commentary for 1 Nephi 18:25.

What about the elephant? Verse 19 is the only place in the Book of Mormon where the elephant is mentioned. Did elephants actually live in the Americas? Both mastodons and mammoths once lived throughout North America and parts of South America. The only controversy surrounding the elephant in the Book of Mormon is how late these early elephants survived. It has been generally assumed among zoologists that they mostly died out before Jaredite times, before 2500 BC. However, it is also agreed by the experts that they could have survived, particularly in some favorable locations, much later than the time normally assigned for their extinction. It seems possible that the mammoth or mastodon survived in Mesoamerica at least as late as 2500 BC. It has been suggested that the Jaredite mention of the elephant a single time—very early in their history—suggests that the creature became extinct in that area soon thereafter (*An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, John L. Sorenson, 298).

Did the Jaredites bring all these animals including the elephant with them over on the barges? Some five generations have passed since the Jaredite disembarkation, and elephants have not been mentioned until now. It seems more likely they found the elephants in the land after they arrived (Ludwell Johnson, “Man and Elephants in America,” a FARMS reprint).

**“cureloms and cumoms”** What might these animals be? We are told that, like the elephant, they were especially useful to man. John L. Sorenson has suggested: “The failure of Moroni, the Nephite translator of the Book of Ether, to translate these names from the original tongue of the Jaredites indicates that the animals were probably extinct by his day” (*An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, John L. Sorenson, 298). Possibilities for these creatures include the giant sloth, the bison, or the tapir.

**20 And thus the Lord did pour out his blessings upon this land, which was choice above all other lands; and he commanded that whoso should possess the land should possess it unto the Lord, or they should be destroyed when they were**

ripened in iniquity; for upon such, saith the Lord: I will pour out the fulness of my wrath.

21 And Emer did execute judgment in righteousness all his days, and he begat many sons and daughters; and he begat Coriantum, and he anointed Coriantum to reign in his stead.

22 And after he had anointed Coriantum to reign in his stead he lived four years, and he saw peace in the land; yea, and he even saw the Son of Righteousness, and did rejoice and glory in his day; and he died in peace.

**verse 22 “he even saw the Son of Righteousness”** Emer was a righteous leader and was favored with the Second Comforter, a visit from the Lord Jehovah himself. For a discussion on the peculiar phrase “Son of Righteousness,” see the commentary for 3 Nephi 25:2.

23 And it came to pass that Coriantum did walk in the steps of his father, and did build many mighty cities, and did administer that which was good unto his people in all his days. And it came to pass that he had no children even until he was exceedingly old.

24 And it came to pass that his wife died, being an hundred and two years old. And it came to pass that Coriantum took to wife, in his old age, a young maid, and begat sons and daughters; wherefore he lived until he was an hundred and forty and two years old.

25 And it came to pass that he begat Com, and Com reigned in his stead; and he reigned forty and nine years, and he begat Heth; and he also begat other sons and daughters.

26 And the people had spread again over all the face of the land, and there began again to be an exceedingly great wickedness upon the face of the land, and Heth began to embrace the secret plans again of old, to destroy his father.

27 And it came to pass that he did dethrone his father, for he slew him with his own sword; and he did reign in his stead.

28 And there came prophets in the land again, crying repentance unto them—that they must prepare the way of the Lord or there should come a curse upon the face of the land; yea, even there should be a great famine, in which they should be destroyed if they did not repent.

29 But the people believed not the words of the prophets, but they cast them out; and some of them they cast into pits and left them to perish. And it came to pass that they did all these things according to the commandment of the king, Heth.

30 And it came to pass that there began to be a great dearth upon the land, and the inhabitants began to be destroyed exceedingly fast because of the dearth, for there was no rain upon the face of the earth.

**verse 30** “there began to be a great dearth upon the land” *Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* defines *dearth* as, “scarcity, want, need, famine, barrenness.”

**31 And there came forth poisonous serpents also upon the face of the land, and did poison many people. And it came to pass that their flocks began to flee before the poisonous serpents, towards the land southward, which was called by the Nephites Zarahemla.**

**verses 30-31 “And there came forth poisonous serpents”** These serpents were likely venomous snakes. John A. Tvedtnes observed that in the Bible, incidents of poisonous serpents’ threatening the people have often been associated with conditions of drought and famine (Numbers 21:5-9; Deuteronomy 8:15; 32:24; Jeremiah 8:13-17; 2 Nephi 25:20). From a personal observation he made on an abandoned farm in Israel, he suggested a natural reason why this might be so. In times of serious drought, rodents who normally feed in flourishing grain fields, are forced to move close to or even into populated areas looking for food. The rodents’ natural predators are venomous snakes who follow the rodents wherever they migrate. This, of course, brings the poisonous serpents into close contact with people in populated areas (“Drought and Serpents,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 6/1 [1997], 70-72).

**32 And it came to pass that there were many of them which did perish by the way; nevertheless, there were some which fled into the land southward.**

**33 And it came to pass that the Lord did cause the serpents that they should pursue them no more, but that they should hedge up the way that the people could not pass, that whoso should attempt to pass might fall by the poisonous serpents.**

**verse 33 “but that they should hedge up the way that the people could not pass”** A *hedge* is planted to protect that which the hedge surrounds by blocking the intrusion of outsiders. To “hedge up the way” of someone is to block their path. In this case the poisonous serpents blocked the way of the people who were following their only food source, their cattle, into the land southward.

**34 And it came to pass that the people did follow the course of the beasts, and did devour the carcasses of them which fell by the way, until they had devoured them all. Now when the people saw that they must perish they began to repent of their iniquities and cry unto the Lord.**

**verse 34** The poisonous serpents notwithstanding, the people were able to follow their fleeing cattle and feed on them until they were all devoured.

35 And it came to pass that when they had humbled themselves sufficiently before the Lord he did send rain upon the face of the earth; and the people began to revive again, and there began to be fruit in the north countries, and in all the countries round about. And the Lord did show forth his power unto them in preserving them from famine.

## Ether Chapter 10

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1 And it came to pass that Shez, who was a descendant of Heth—for Heth had perished by the famine, and all his household save it were Shez—wherefore, Shez began to build up again a broken people.

2 And it came to pass that Shez did remember the destruction of his fathers, and he did build up a righteous kingdom; for he remembered what the Lord had done in bringing Jared and his brother across the deep; and he did walk in the ways of the Lord; and he begat sons and daughters.

3 And his eldest son, whose name was Shez, did rebel against him; nevertheless, Shez was smitten by the hand of a robber, because of his exceeding riches, which brought peace again unto his father.

4 And it came to pass that his father did build up many cities upon the face of the land, and the people began again to spread over all the face of the land. And Shez did live to an exceedingly old age; and he begat Riplakish. And he died, and Riplakish reigned in his stead.

5 And it came to pass that Riplakish did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord, for he did have many wives and concubines, and did lay that upon men's shoulders which was grievous to be borne; yea, he did tax them with heavy taxes; and with the taxes he did build many spacious buildings.

6 And he did erect him an exceedingly beautiful throne; and he did build many prisons, and whoso would not be subject unto taxes he did cast into prison; and whoso was not able to pay taxes he did cast into prison; and he did cause that they should labor continually for their support; and whoso refused to labor he did cause to be put to death.

7 Wherefore he did obtain all his fine work, yea, even his fine gold he did cause to be refined in prison, and all manner of fine workmanship he did cause to be wrought in prison. And it came to pass that he did afflict the people with his whoredoms and abominations.

**verse 7** The word *wrought* means worked or formed by work, as in wrought iron.

8 And when he had reigned for the space of forty and two years the people did rise up in rebellion against him; and there began to be war again in the land, insomuch that Riplakish was killed, and his descendants were driven out of the land.

9 And it came to pass after the space of many years, Morianton, (he being a descendant of Riplakish) gathered together an army of outcasts, and went forth and gave battle unto the people; and he gained power over many cities; and the

war became exceedingly sore, and did last for the space of many years; and he did gain power over all the land, and did establish himself king over all the land.

10 And after that he had established himself king he did ease the burden of the people, by which he did gain favor in the eyes of the people, and they did anoint him to be their king.

11 And he did do justice unto the people, but not unto himself because of his many whoredoms; wherefore he was cut off from the presence of the Lord.

**verses 10-11** Morianton presents us with an unusual irony. In spite of his iniquitous personal behavior, resulting in his being “cut off from the presence of the Lord,” he apparently was a conscientious king. Morianton’s ability to compartmentalize his wicked behavior is highly unusual, especially in an autocracy, and should probably be regarded as an exception rather than the rule.

12 And it came to pass that Morianton built up many cities, and the people became exceedingly rich under his reign, both in buildings, and in gold and silver, and in raising grain, and in flocks, and herds, and such things which had been restored unto them.

13 And Morianton did live to an exceedingly great age, and then he begat Kim; and Kim did reign in the stead of his father; and he did reign eight years, and his father died. And it came to pass that Kim did not reign in righteousness, wherefore he was not favored of the Lord.

14 And his brother did rise up in rebellion against him, by which he did bring him into captivity; and he did remain in captivity all his days; and he begat sons and daughters in captivity, and in his old age he begat Levi; and he died.

15 And it came to pass that Levi did serve in captivity after the death of his father, for the space of forty and two years. And he did make war against the king of the land, by which he did obtain unto himself the kingdom.

16 And after he had obtained unto himself the kingdom he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; and the people did prosper in the land; and he did live to a good old age, and begat sons and daughters; and he also begat Corom, whom he anointed king in his stead.

17 And it came to pass that Corom did that which was good in the sight of the Lord all his days; and he begat many sons and daughters; and after he had seen many days he did pass away, even like unto the rest of the earth; and Kish reigned in his stead.

18 And it came to pass that Kish passed away also, and Lib reigned in his stead.

19 And it came to pass that Lib also did that which was good in the sight of the Lord. And in the days of Lib the poisonous serpents were destroyed. Wherefore they did go into the land southward, to hunt food for the people of the land, for



the land was covered with animals of the forest. And Lib also himself became a great hunter.

20 And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land.

21 And they did preserve the land southward for a wilderness, to get game. And the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants.

**verse 21** “they did preserve the land southward for a wilderness, to get game” The Jaredites set aside the land southward as a game preserve. If we can assume that the land southward is the area of Mesoamerica south of the isthmus of Tehuantepec, then the game that they hunted consisted of deer, wild boar, and species of the jaguar family. This land will be called the greater Land of Zarahemla by the Nephites.

22 And they were exceedingly industrious, and they did buy and sell and traffic one with another, that they might get gain.

23 And they did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals; and they did dig it out of the earth; wherefore they did cast up mighty heaps of earth to get ore, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of copper. And they did work all manner of fine work.

24 And they did have silks, and fine-twined linen; and they did work all manner of cloth, that they might clothe themselves from their nakedness.

**verse 24** “silks” “fine-twined linen” For commentary on these words and phrases, see the commentary for Alma 4:6.

25 And they did make all manner of tools to till the earth, both to plow and to sow, to reap and to hoe, and also to thrash.

26 And they did make all manner of tools with which they did work their beasts.

27 And they did make all manner of weapons of war. And they did work all manner of work of exceedingly curious workmanship.

28 And never could be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord. And they were in a land that was choice above all lands, for the Lord had spoken it.

29 And it came to pass that Lib did live many years, and begat sons and daughters; and he also begat Hearthom.

30 And it came to pass that Hearthom reigned in the stead of his father. And when Hearthom had reigned twenty and four years, behold, the kingdom was taken away from him. And he served many years in captivity, yea, even all the remainder of his days.

31 And he begat Heth, and Heth lived in captivity all his days. And Heth begat Aaron, and Aaron dwelt in captivity all his days; and he begat Amnigaddah, and

Amnigaddah also dwelt in captivity all his days; and he begat Coriantum, and Coriantum dwelt in captivity all his days; and he begat Com.

32 And it came to pass that Com drew away the half of the kingdom. And he reigned over the half of the kingdom forty and two years; and he went to battle against the king, Amgid, and they fought for the space of many years, during which time Com gained power over Amgid, and obtained power over the remainder of the kingdom.

33 And in the days of Com there began to be robbers in the land; and they adopted the old plans, and administered oaths after the manner of the ancients, and sought again to destroy the kingdom.

**verse 33** Again, the secret combinations begin to appear.

34 Now Com did fight against them much; nevertheless, he did not prevail against them.

## Ether Chapter 11

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1 And there came also in the days of Com many prophets, and prophesied of the destruction of that great people except they should repent, and turn unto the Lord, and forsake their murders and wickedness.

2 And it came to pass that the prophets were rejected by the people, and they fled unto Com for protection, for the people sought to destroy them.

3 And they prophesied unto Com many things; and he was blessed in all the remainder of his days.

4 And he lived to a good old age, and begat Shiblom; and Shiblom reigned in his stead. And the brother of Shiblom rebelled against him, and there began to be an exceedingly great war in all the land.

5 And it came to pass that the brother of Shiblom caused that all the prophets who prophesied of the destruction of the people should be put to death;

6 And there was great calamity in all the land, for they had testified that a great curse should come upon the land, and also upon the people, and that there should be a great destruction among them, such an one as never had been upon the face of the earth, and their bones should become as heaps of earth upon the face of the land except they should repent of their wickedness.

7 And they hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord, because of their wicked combinations; wherefore, there began to be wars and contentions in all the land, and also many famines and pestilences, insomuch that there was a great destruction, such an one as never had been known upon the face of the earth; and all this came to pass in the days of Shiblom.

**verse 7** “a great destruction, such an one as never had been known upon the face of the earth . . . in the days of Shiblom” It has been speculated by at least one investigator (Joseph L. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 64) that this great destruction might have been a particularly destructive hurricane in 1399 BC written of by the 17th-century historian Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl.

8 And the people began to repent of their iniquity; and inasmuch as they did the Lord did have mercy on them.

9 And it came to pass that Shiblom was slain, and Seth was brought into captivity, and did dwell in captivity all his days.

10 And it came to pass that Ahah, his son, did obtain the kingdom; and he did reign over the people all his days. And he did do all manner of iniquity in his days, by which he did cause the shedding of much blood; and few were his days.

11 And Ethem, being a descendant of Ahah, did obtain the kingdom; and he also did do that which was wicked in his days.

12 And it came to pass that in the days of Ethem there came many prophets, and prophesied again unto the people; yea, they did prophesy that the Lord would utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth except they repented of their iniquities.

13 And it came to pass that the people hardened their hearts, and would not hearken unto their words; and the prophets mourned and withdrew from among the people.

14 And it came to pass that Ethem did execute judgment in wickedness all his days; and he begat Moron. And it came to pass that Moron did reign in his stead; and Moron did that which was wicked before the Lord.

15 And it came to pass that there arose a rebellion among the people, because of that secret combination which was built up to get power and gain; and there arose a mighty man among them in iniquity, and gave battle unto Moron, in which he did overthrow the half of the kingdom; and he did maintain the half of the kingdom for many years.

16 And it came to pass that Moron did overthrow him, and did obtain the kingdom again.

17 And it came to pass that there arose another mighty man; and he was a descendant of the brother of Jared.

18 And it came to pass that he did overthrow Moron and obtain the kingdom; wherefore, Moron dwelt in captivity all the remainder of his days; and he begat Coriantor.

19 And it came to pass that Coriantor dwelt in captivity all his days.

20 And in the days of Coriantor there also came many prophets, and prophesied of great and marvelous things, and cried repentance unto the people, and except they should repent the Lord God would execute judgment against them to their utter destruction;

21 And that the Lord God would send or bring forth another people to possess the land, by his power, after the manner by which he brought their fathers.

**verses 20-21** These verses imply that the peoples of Zarahemla and of Lehi had not yet reached the promised land in America at this time which is just before Ether, the last Jaredite prophet, was born. Dr. John L. Sorenson has found these verses helpful in attempting to date the great final battle of the Jaredites which he places at about 580 BC ("The Years of the Jaredites," *BYU Today*, September 1968, 18-24).

22 And they did reject all the words of the prophets, because of their secret society and wicked abominations.

23 And it came to pass that Coriantor begat Ether, and he died, having dwelt in captivity all his days.

**verse 23** We are introduced to the prophet Ether, the author of the twenty-four Jaredite plates from which the book of Ether was translated. He was a descendant of Jared and the grandson of a deposed king. His grandfather had been unrighteous, but we know nothing of the righteousness or unrighteousness of his father. He may have lived part of his life with his father in captivity.

## Ether Chapter 12

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### Scripture Mastery

**Ether 12** The prophet Moroni on Faith, Hope, and Charity

**Ether 12:6** The prophet Moroni taught that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.

**Ether 12:12** The prophet Moroni taught, If there be no faith among the children of men, God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith.

**Ether 12:27** I give unto men weakness that they may be humble. Then will make weak things become strong unto them.

**Ether 12:34** I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity.

**Ether 12:41** Moroni exhorts: I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever .

**1 And it came to pass that the days of Ether were in the days of Coriantumr; and Coriantumr was king over all the land.**

**2 And Ether was a prophet of the Lord; wherefore Ether came forth in the days of Coriantumr, and began to prophesy unto the people, for he could not be restrained because of the Spirit of the Lord which was in him.**

**3 For he did cry from the morning, even until the going down of the sun, exhorting the people to believe in God unto repentance lest they should be destroyed, saying unto them that by faith all things are fulfilled—**

**verse 3 “by faith all things are fulfilled”** The motivating force for an individual to repent is initially an inclination to believe in God and in a hereafter—in the Lord Jesus Christ and in his atoning sacrifice. We may refer to this inclination as “faith unto repentance.” Thus motivated to repent, the individual begins to obey the commandments—deliberately and with determination. This is the initial form of faith—deliberate faith. See *Deliberate Faith and Revealed Faith* in volume 1 chapter 10 of *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*. See particularly the section titled “Belief or Hope.” The exercise of deliberate faith leads to revealed faith—spiritual growth—a process that tends to perpetuate itself. The individual thus sets in motion the lifelong process of more repentance, good works, justification, and sanctification which leads eventually to exaltation. For him “all things are fulfilled.”

**4 Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.**

**verse 4 “which hope cometh of faith”** Hope is not simply wishful thinking, but rather a gift of the Spirit received by an individual who has persisted in obedience. This gift is the growing assurance that your efforts to live the gospel are acceptable in the sight of God. See further discussion of this important gift in “Two Little-Appreciated Gifts of the Spirit” in *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 1, chapter 10, *Deliberate Faith and Revealed Faith* and in “The Fruits of Faith” in volume 1, chapter 11, *Other Notes on Faith*. Still further discussion of this topic is found in “The Rest of the Lord—the Gift of Hope” in volume 1, chapter 17, *Justification and Sanctification*. Hope brings an inner peace, a confidence, and a secure expectation in one’s eternal future. “Hope for a better world” is hope of eternal life. This spiritual gift, this revealed assurance becomes an anchor for the soul during the trials of mortal probation.

**“being led to glorify God”** We are reminded that the spiritual progress and exaltation of man somehow adds to the light or glory of God (see *The Concept of Light* in volume 1, chapter 15 of *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*). The Savior glorified the name of the Father, that is, added to the Father’s light and glory by his atoning sacrifice and by allowing all men the possibility of exaltation (see verse 8).

**5 And it came to pass that Ether did prophesy great and marvelous things unto the people, which they did not believe, because they saw them not.**

**verse 5 “they saw them not”** The implication of this phrase is that the faithless Jaredites would not believe in anything they could not perceive with their physical senses.

**6 And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.**

**verse 6 “ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith”** Moroni teaches that a person receives no “witness” or confirmation of his faith until after a trial of that faith. The trial comes in the “experimenting upon [the] words” of God—the deliberate acting upon his words hoping to obtain the gifts of faith. The trial of the faith is in the “experimenting,” especially when that experimenting at first seems to be unproductive. When the Spirit judges that sufficient effort—including diligently working, pondering, praying, and persisting—then the gifts of faith will be granted. Thus, Moroni’s counsel, “dispute not because ye see not.” In other words, “Don’t dispute or doubt the Lord’s word when your initial efforts at obedience do not seem to bear fruit.”

A person might say, “Before I pay my tithing, I must know for sure that it is a true principle.” The Lord’s way is just the opposite. His way is to first act in deliberate faith and pay your tithing. Then eventually—on the Lord’s timetable not yours—your revealed faith in the law of tithing will be granted as a spiritual gift.

Elder Harold B. Lee reportedly said to Elder Boyd K. Packer when the latter was worried over committing himself to a mortgage loan, even after being advised to do so by Elder Lee: “My boy, you must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and perhaps a few steps into the darkness, and you will find that the light will appear and move ahead of you” (*The Holy Temple*, 183-85).

**verses 7-22** Moroni’s message in these verses is that faith precedes miracles—that miracles are shown to men as a reward for their faith. He will provide several examples of faith and miracles from the lives of prophets that predated him. The greatest miracle is the expectation or hope of exaltation.

**7 For it was by faith that Christ showed himself unto our fathers, after he had risen from the dead; and he showed not himself unto them until after they had faith in him; wherefore, it must needs be that some had faith in him, for he showed himself not unto the world.**

**verse 7** Moroni explains just how it was that the fortunate Nephites present at the temple in Bountiful during the Savior’s personal visit qualified themselves to be blessed with that experience. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that they “were qualified by personal righteousness to see the face of their God” (*Promised Messiah*, 609).

**8 But because of the faith of men he has shown himself unto the world, and glorified the name of the Father, and prepared a way that thereby others might be partakers of the heavenly gift, that they might hope for those things which they have not seen.**

**verse 8** The “heavenly gift” is the expectation, indeed the “hope,” of exaltation, made possible through the Savior’s mercy and atoning sacrifice.

**9 Wherefore, ye may also have hope, and be partakers of the gift, if ye will but have faith.**

**10 Behold it was by faith that they of old were called after the holy order of God.**

**verse 10** The prophets of old had been called to their positions because of their uncommon faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**11 Wherefore, by faith was the law of Moses given. But in the gift of his Son hath God prepared a more excellent way; and it is by faith that it hath been fulfilled.**



**verse 11** The gospel of Jesus Christ is “a more excellent way,” a higher law, than the law of Moses. The principle here is that a completely faithless people would not merit or tolerate the gospel in any form to be among them. Even the law of Moses required something of faith among the mostly recalcitrant Israelites.

**12 For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith.**

**13 Behold, it was the faith of Alma and Amulek that caused the prison to tumble to the earth.**

**verse 13** See Alma 14:29.

**14 Behold, it was the faith of Nephi and Lehi that wrought the change upon the Lamanites, that they were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost.**

**verse 14** See Helaman 5.

**15 Behold, it was the faith of Ammon and his brethren which wrought so great a miracle among the Lamanites.**

**verse 15** See Alma 17-26.

**16 Yea, and even all they who wrought miracles wrought them by faith, even those who were before Christ and also those who were after.**

**17 And it was by faith that the three disciples obtained a promise that they should not taste of death; and they obtained not the promise until after their faith.**

**verse 17** See 3 Nephi 28. The great blessing of becoming a translated being is likely extended to those who have been unusually faithful. It seems probable that those selected for this exciting calling are the very elect who have earned their stripes in mortality. It is probable that these are those who have been sealed up to eternal life or had their calling and election made sure. For a discussion of the concept of having one's calling and election made sure, see the commentary for Helaman 10:4-7 and also *Calling and Election Made Sure* in *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 2, chapter 16.

**18 And neither at any time hath any wrought miracles until after their faith; wherefore they first believed in the Son of God.**

**19 And there were many whose faith was so exceedingly strong, even before Christ came, who could not be kept from within the veil, but truly saw with their eyes the things which they had beheld with an eye of faith, and they were glad.**

**verse 19** Here is a profound principle. The end result of the persistent exercise of faith is eventually having the opportunity to see with your eyes the object of your faith.

**verses 12-19** You might have expected Moroni here to use examples of faith from among the Jaredite peoples since he is in the midst of translating their record. The

sorry fact is that, except for the brother of Jared, there are no outstanding examples of faith among the Jaredites.

**20 And behold, we have seen in this record that one of these was the brother of Jared; for so great was his faith in God, that when God put forth his finger he could not hide it from the sight of the brother of Jared, because of his word which he had spoken unto him, which word he had obtained by faith.**

**21 And after the brother of Jared had beheld the finger of the Lord, because of the promise which the brother of Jared had obtained by faith, the Lord could not withhold anything from his sight; wherefore he showed him all things, for he could no longer be kept without the veil.**

**22 And it is by faith that my fathers have obtained the promise that these things should come unto their brethren through the Gentiles; therefore the Lord hath commanded me, yea, even Jesus Christ.**

**verse 22** The faith of the Book of Mormon prophets is the root cause of the Lord's being willing to promise that the remnant of the Book of Mormon peoples should one day receive the Book of Mormon "through the Gentiles."

**"the Lord hath commanded me"** The Lord has commanded Moroni to contribute to the writings on the plates of Mormon.

**23 And I said unto him: Lord, the Gentiles will mock at these things, because of our weakness in writing; for Lord thou hast made us mighty in word by faith, but thou hast not made us mighty in writing; for thou hast made all this people that they could speak much, because of the Holy Ghost which thou hast given them;**

**verse 23** It is fascinating to learn that Moroni felt that his writing, and that of the other Book of Mormon prophets, was awkward and lacking and not up to the level of sophistication of the latter-day Gentiles—"this people"—who "could speak much, because of the Holy Ghost which thou hast given them." Moroni was afraid that the Gentiles would ridicule his writing ability and that of his prophet-predecessors.

**24 And thou hast made us that we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands. Behold, thou hast not made us mighty in writing like unto the brother of Jared, for thou madest him that the things which he wrote were mighty even as thou art, unto the overpowering of man to read them.**

**verse 24** Can you even imagine anything more exciting than having the opportunity to read the brother of Jared's account of his great vision?

**25 Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore, when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words.**

**verses 24-25** Moroni possessed no misgivings about his ability to preach the word of God, but felt that his writing was weak. He attributes this not only to he perceived lack of writing talent, but also to the difficulty of having to engrave his message onto the plates using the glyphic form of writing.

We sense here a bit of frustration from Moroni. He seems to be feeling slightly discouraged over his writing ability, and he expresses his fear that his writings will not be sufficient to accomplish the Lord's purposes—"I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words." We all can identify with this common human failing. We even note his human tendency to blame someone else for his perceived weakness—"thou hast made us that we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands." He blames the Lord!

**26 And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;**

**verse 26** Those who mock will regret it, and the truly humble and receptive will not ridicule the writings of the Book of Mormon, rather will gratefully receive them.

**27 And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.**

**verse 27 "I will show unto them their weakness"** This simple statement is the Lord's promise to reveal to us the gift of divine indebtedness discussed in the introductory commentary for Mosiah 2:19. Please review that commentary if you have not done so recently. This is the gift of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Our responsibility, as we attempt to earn this important gift of the Spirit, is to seek out the ways in which we differ from the Savior (our "weakness") and earnestly strive to change them—to repent. We are rooting out the natural-man tendencies in us. The Lord may assist us in acquiring this gift by allowing us to encounter, or occasionally even by orchestrating that encounter, the trials and problems that are inevitable here on earth. The proper response to trials is to turn to the Lord in prayer and to make a conscious effort to submit our will to his. As we do so, we are "experimenting upon [the] words" of Christ and taking the necessary steps toward earning the gift of divine indebtedness. It is only through the acquisition of this gift do we become truly humble.

A man who is willing to change and repent because of the Savior's example is, by definition, humble. C. S. Lewis insightfully observed:

**When a man turns to Christ and seems to be getting on pretty well (in the sense that some of his bad habits are not corrected), he often feels that it would now be natural if things went fairly smoothly. When troubles come along—illnesses, money**

troubles, new kinds of temptation—he is disappointed. These things, he feels, might have been necessary to rouse him and make him repent in his bad old days; but why now? Because God is forcing him on, or up, to a higher level: putting him into situations where he will have to be very much braver, or more patient, or more loving, than he ever dreamed of before. It seems to us all unnecessary: but that is because we have not yet had the slightest notion of the tremendous thing he means to make of us (*Mere Christianity*, 174).

**“my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me”** This touching verse is most profound in its meaning. Don’t try to understand without reviewing the concepts of “the law of justice,” “the law of mercy,” “the atonement,” and “the grace of God” in the introductory commentary for Alma 5. Again, his grace is that incomprehensible love he has for us. Particularly it is that aspect of his love that inclines him to extend to us blessings we do not really deserve. The most significant such blessing is that of his atonement.

**28 Behold, I will show unto the Gentiles their weakness and I will show unto them that faith, hope and charity bringeth unto me—the fountain of all righteousness.**

**verse 28 “the fountain of all righteousness”** This phrase is parenthetical to the word *me*. The light of Christ, of which we have the opportunity to partake, contains all of his characteristics. It is the source and the dispenser of all his spiritual gifts. As we partake of this light and acquire his gifts, including faith, hope, and charity, we are drawn to him.

**29 And I, Moroni, having heard these words, was comforted, and said: O Lord, thy righteous will be done, for I know that thou workest unto the children of men according to their faith;**

**verse 29 “I, Moroni . . . was comforted”** It is touching to sense Moroni’s real concern, not only for his latter-day descendants, but also for the latter-day “Gentiles.”

**“thy righteous will be done”** Thy *righteousness* or *thy righteous desires and commands* be done.

**“thou workest unto the children of men according to their faith”** Here is succinctly stated the absolute essential role of faith. Unless mankind is willing to obey, God’s purposes for them come to naught. Well did Paul state, “Without faith it is impossible to please him” (Hebrews 11:6).

**30 For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove—and it was removed. And if he had not had faith it would not have moved; wherefore thou workest after men have faith.**

**verse 30** This is the first we have heard of what sounds like a remarkable miracle performed by the brother of Jared. Oh, that the Lord would hasten the day when we might have available more of the brother of Jared's writings!

**31 For thus didst thou manifest thyself unto thy disciples; for after they had faith, and did speak in thy name, thou didst show thyself unto them in great power.**

**verse 31** Moroni refers to Christ's twelve Nephite disciples.

**32 And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have a more excellent hope; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared.**

**verse 32** "I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father" Perhaps Moroni recalls reading the closing statement of the prophet Enos: "And I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father" (Enos 1:27).

**"wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared"** Here is a profound principle. No one will be exalted without first receiving the gift of hope. Indeed, the Lord has said in our dispensation that no man will be exalted without first receiving that quiet assurance that he is sealed up to eternal life—"It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:5-6).

**33 And again, I remember that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world, that thou mightest take it again to prepare a place for the children of men.**

**34 And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father.**

**verses 32-34** The natural progression of things is for a man to pass through an obligatory sequence of gifts including faith, hope, and charity on his way to his exaltation. There is no other route to eternal life.

**"except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father"** The ultimate spiritual acquisition man can and must achieve is charity. It is the supreme gift of the Spirit without which all other gifts pale. For a discussion of this fascinating gospel concept, see *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine* volume 2, chapters 6 and 7: *Charity as Empathy* and *Charity as a Revealed Sense of Others*.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland wrote: “The greater definition of ‘the pure love of Christ’ . . . is not what we as Christians try but largely fail to demonstrate toward others but rather what Christ totally succeeded in demonstrating toward us. True charity has been known only once. It is shown perfectly and purely in Christ’s unfailing, ultimate, and atoning love for us” (*Christ and the New Covenant*. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 336).

**35 Wherefore, I know by this thing which thou hast said, that if the Gentiles have not charity, because of our weakness, that thou wilt prove them, and take away their talent, yea, even that which they have received, and give unto them who shall have more abundantly.**

**verse 35** Moroni seems troubled by the idea that the Gentiles will not develop the spiritual gifts they need for their exaltation, particularly the gift of charity, because of the Book of Mormon prophets’ “weakness in writing” (verse 23). Moroni seems to be comforted by the idea that if the Gentiles don’t learn what they need to learn from the writings of the Book of Mormon prophets, that the Lord himself will prove them and fairly and mercifully judge them.

**36 And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity.**

**verse 36** Moroni’s concern for and his praying for the spiritual welfare of the Gentiles is obvious evidence of his own charity.

**37 And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.**

**verse 37** Moroni is reassured by the Lord that his efforts in writing his record (and by extension, the efforts of all of the Book of Mormon prophets) are sufficient. Moroni is also apparently sealed up to eternal life. His calling and election is made sure.

**verses 38** In the following verse, Moroni bids farewell to the Gentiles and to his brethren for the fourth time (see also Mormon 9:5, 13, 37). He will yet bid farewell a final time in Moroni 10:34. All these farewells certainly attest to his insecurity over how long he would survive, given the hostility of the Lamanites who would surely have killed him had they found him (see Moroni 1:1-3).

**38 And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood.**

**verse 38** Moroni knows that his “garments are not spotted” with the blood of the Gentiles or his descendants, because the Lord has reassured him that he has adequately warned them as he has been commanded of the Lord (see Jacob 1:19). We all have an obligation as believers to warn the world and to invite all to come unto Christ (see D&C 63:58; 88:81).

**39 And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;**

**verse 39** Like his father before him (Mormon 1:15), Moroni was privileged to receive the Second Comforter. He likely recounts this visit from the Lord, not to boast of his own righteousness, but rather give authority to his words.

The phrase “plain humility” is interesting. This is the only use of the phrase in the entire Book of Mormon. Moroni seems to be suggesting that the Lord spoke to him in the simplicity and coarseness of Moroni’s own language.

**40 And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing.**

**verse 40 “only a few have I written”** This phrase refers to “these things” in the previous verse. “These things” consist of the tellings of the Lord to Moroni.

**41 And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen.**

**verse 41 “of whom the prophets and apostles have written”** It is natural to think of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles at this point, but Moroni knew nothing of the New Testament biblical apostles and was referring to Old World and New World prophets and Book of Mormon apostles (“disciples”).



## Ether Chapter 13

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**1 And now I, Moroni, proceed to finish my record concerning the destruction of the people of whom I have been writing.**

**2 For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof;**

**verse 2 “he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man”** Ether likely told his people of God’s dealings with man from the time of Adam to Noah.

“This land,” of course, refers to the Americas, or at least a part of the Americas.

**3 And that it was the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of heaven, and the holy sanctuary of the Lord.**

**verse 3 “the New Jerusalem”** Here is a prophecy of the latter-day New Jerusalem or Zion that will be established in the New World. As we encounter references to the latter-day Zion, each of us has a tendency to consider “Zion” as a location, a specific city. Even those of us who are “enlightened” relative to the concept of Zion look forward to the eventual founding and building up of the center place or center pole of the tent of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri. In the context of this verse, it is probably more appropriate to think of Zion as a state of mind (D&C 97:21) or a lifestyle or social structure (4 Nephi; Moses 7:18; D&C 105:5). A Zion people are “pure in heart” (D&C 97:2). They are “of one heart and one mind, and [dwell] in righteousness; and there [are] no poor among them (Moses 7:18). They are “in one the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God” (4 Nephi 1:15-17). This definition of Zion continues to be applicable today. Zion, the New Jerusalem, is also a place but it will turn out to be wherever the saints are gathered (particularly those descending from the “lost” ten tribes, especially the tribe of Joseph). In this latter-day dispensation it is located all over the world.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that there are three specific locations or cities of Zion. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught:

In the day of regeneration, when all things are made new, there will be three great cities that will be holy. One will be the Jerusalem of old which shall be rebuilt according to the prophecy of Ezekiel. One will be the city of Zion, or of Enoch, which was taken from the earth when Enoch was translated and which will be restored [Moses 7:63-64] ; and the city Zion, or New Jerusalem, which is to be built by the seed of Joseph on this the American continent (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2:105).



**“which should come down out of heaven”** Elder Bruce R. McConkie suggested that this phrase might have a specific meaning. He pointed out that Enoch’s city—the city of Holiness that was taken up into heaven (see Moses 7:13-21) will come down from heaven and be united with the earthly New Jerusalem (see *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:581). The New Jerusalem and Enoch’s Zion will become one city, also called Zion, and serve as the home of the Lord during the Millennium. The union of these two holy cities may give insight into the verse: “The Lord hath brought down Zion from above. The Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath” (D&C 84:100). By uniting these two cities, the Lord will fulfill his sworn oath that in Enoch’s city “the heavens and the earth should come together” (JST, Genesis 14:35).

#### **4 Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land.**

**verse 4 “days of Christ”** Elder Bruce R. McConkie suggested that the “days of Christ” refer to “the days of his glorious second coming” (*Millennial Messiah*, 304).

It has been suggested that the “New Jerusalem” referred to in this verse is distinct from that referred to in the previous verse. Perhaps verse 3 refers to Enoch’s city of Zion which is to “come down out of heaven,” and the New Jerusalem in this verse is that city of Zion to built upon this land.

Joseph Smith taught that “Christ and the resurrected saints will reign over the earth during the thousand years. They will not probably dwell upon the earth, but will visit it when they please, or when it is necessary to govern it” (*HC*, 5:212).

In addition to the return of Zion before the Millennium, certain scriptural passages suggest a city of God descending from heaven to a celestialized earth after the Millennium (Revelation 21:10-27; *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:582). If the holy city of Zion is to descend “a second time,” it is reasonable to surmise that it must have been taken back to heaven in the interim. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

After the close of the millennial reign we are informed that Satan, who was bound during the millennium, shall be loosed and go forth to deceive the nations. Then will come the end. The earth will die and be purified and receive its resurrection. During this cleansing period the city Zion, or New Jerusalem [the combination of Enoch’s Zion and the New Jerusalem], will be taken from the earth; and when the earth is prepared for the celestial glory, the city will come down according to the prediction in the Book of Revelation (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 2:106).

**5 And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come—after it should be destroyed it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a new Jerusalem for it had been in a time of old; but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel.**

**verse 5** For the temporal orientation of the reader, perhaps it would be helpful to point out that Bible scholars have suggested that patriarch Abraham was probably born some time around 2167 BC. It may have been also about this time (or even centuries earlier) when Jared, the brother of Jared, and their families and friends went out from Babylon or Babel. Therefore the prophet Ether had no direct historical knowledge of the house of Israel, rather all he knew of the Jacob and his descendants was revealed to him. The same is true of Ether's knowledge of the destructions of Jerusalem in about 586 BC and AD 70.

**“And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come”** Ether points out that the restoration of the old city of Jerusalem is not the “New Jerusalem” spoken of in the previous verse and in the following verse—note the word *also* in this scriptural phrase.

**6 And that a New Jerusalem should be built upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type.**

**verse 6 “for which things there has been a type”** The type or symbol of the building of the New Jerusalem for the preservation and gathering of the tribe of Joseph is explained in the following two verses.

**7 For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore, the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph that he should perish not.**

**verse 7** Here is the “type” referred to in the previous verse. Just as ancient Joseph brought his father and siblings down into the land of Egypt to keep them from dying from the famine in Palestine, the Lord also brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out from Jerusalem (Lehi and Ishmael and their families) to keep them from perishing in the Babylonian siege.

**8 Wherefore, the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come when the earth shall pass away.**

**verse 8** Here the doctrine is clearly spelled out. The land of the Americas is specifically the promised land of the descendants of Joseph. They will build up Zion or the New Jerusalem and remain here until the cleansing of the earth just prior to the Lord's second coming.

An archaic meaning of the word “confounded” is defeated or overthrown.

**9 And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old save the old have passed away, and all things have become new.**

**verse 9** This verse refers to the renewing and cleansing of the earth in preparation for the millennial thousand years. At this time the earth will be transformed from its present telestial state to a terrestrial-like state. In this new state, the earth is similar to what it was like in its paradisiacal state when Adam and Eve were placed in the garden—"like unto the old." At the end of the Millennium there will again be a new heaven and a new earth as the earth is transformed into its eternal celestial state (*Mormon Doctrine*, 531).

**10 And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel.**

**verse 10** These residents of the New Jerusalem are Latter-day Saints. This verse implies that, though the New Jerusalem will begin prior to the millennial thousand years, it will continue to exist as the dwelling place for the saints after the onset of the millennium.

**11 And then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they, for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries, and are partakers of the fulfilling of the covenant which God made with their father, Abraham.**

**verse 11** Here Moroni describes the prophet Ether's prophecy of the gathering of the Jews back to Old Jerusalem and back to the gospel of Christ. This will occur later than ("And then also cometh") the gathering to the New Jerusalem. We now know that this will likely occur near the beginning of the Millennium. Ether also taught of Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant which teaching he could only have learned by revelation from heaven.

**12 And when these things come, bringeth to pass the scripture which saith, there are they who were first, who shall be last; and there are they who were last, who shall be first.**

**verse 12** "there are they who were first, who shall be last . . ." It is difficult to know whether Moroni or Ether is recalling this scripture. If it was Moroni, then he might have read it in the writings of Nephi (1 Nephi 13:42). If it was Ether, then the origin of the scripture is unknown.

As a reminder to the reader: There is a timetable established for the dissemination of the gospel. At the time of Christ's mortal ministry, the gospel was

preached to the house of Israel, or to “the Jews” (Matthew 15:24). Some years later the apostles took the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11). This sequence is, in a way, reversed in this final dispensation. In 1830 the Church was first established among people of a “great Gentile nation.” As has been often stressed, most of those designated as Gentiles in the Book of Mormon are actually members of the house of Israel by lineal descent. They are “Gentiles” largely in the sense that they are not Jews and they are citizens of the great Gentile nation. From its establishment among these “Gentiles,” the gospel will then be taken to the house of Israel, including the Jews. Thus “the last [the Gentiles] shall be first [to receive the gospel in this final dispensation], and the first [those of the house of Israel] shall be last [to hear the gospel in this final dispensation].” See also the commentary for 1 Nephi 13:42.

**13 And I was about to write more, but I am forbidden; but great and marvelous were the prophecies of Ether; but they esteemed him as naught, and cast him out; and he hid himself in the cavity of a rock by day, and by night he went forth viewing the things which should come upon the people.**

**verse 13** The prophet Ether wrote marvelous things that had been revealed to him. So marvelous that Moroni was forbidden to write some of them. Tragically, for them, the Jaredite people rejected his preachings and writings.

The final Jaredite wars all took place in a land northward within a territory small enough that the prophet Ether could observe most of the action while moving only short distances from his cave base.

**14 And as he dwelt in the cavity of a rock he made the remainder of his record, viewing the destructions which came upon the people, by night.**

**15 And it came to pass that in that same year in which he was cast out from among the people there began to be a great war among the people, for there were many who rose up, who were mighty men, and sought to destroy Coriantumr by their secret plans of wickedness, of which hath been spoken.**

**verse 15 “the secret plans of wickedness”** The secret combinations came against Coriantumr in order that they might obtain his kingdom. Coriantumr himself was not a righteous man.

**16 And now Coriantumr, having studied, himself, in all the arts of war and all the cunning of the world, wherefore he gave battle unto them who sought to destroy him.**

**verse 16** It is evident that the last Jaredite king, Coriantumr, is more a warrior than a diplomat. He reigned during a time of intense crime, secret combinations, political upheaval, and constant civil war.

17 But he repented not, neither his fair sons nor daughters; neither the fair sons and daughters of Cohor; neither the fair sons and daughters of Corihor; and in fine, there were none of the fair sons and daughters upon the face of the whole earth who repented of their sins.

18 Wherefore, it came to pass that in the first year that Ether dwelt in the cavity of a rock, there were many people who were slain by the sword of those secret combinations, fighting against Coriantumr that they might obtain the kingdom.

19 And it came to pass that the sons of Coriantumr fought much and bled much.

20 And in the second year the word of the Lord came to Ether, that he should go and prophesy unto Coriantumr that, if he would repent, and all his household, the Lord would give unto him his kingdom and spare the people—

21 Otherwise they should be destroyed, and all his household save it were himself. And he should only live to see the fulfilling of the prophecies which had been spoken concerning another people receiving the land for their inheritance; and Coriantumr should receive a burial by them; and every soul should be destroyed save it were Coriantumr.

**verse 21** Here is a significant prophecy by the prophet Ether. He prophesies that Coriantumr will survive even though all of his household and all of his people will be killed. He will be discovered by the people of Zarahemla, the Mulekites—“another people receiving the land for their inheritance”—among whom he will live for nine months before his death (see Omni 1:20-21).

22 And it came to pass that Coriantumr repented not, neither his household, neither the people; and the wars ceased not; and they sought to kill Ether, but he fled from before them and hid again in the cavity of the rock.

23 And it came to pass that there arose up Shared, and he also gave battle unto Coriantumr; and he did beat him, insomuch that in the third year he did bring him into captivity.

24 And the sons of Coriantumr, in the fourth year, did beat Shared, and did obtain the kingdom again unto their father.

25 Now there began to be a war upon all the face of the land, every man with his band fighting for that which he desired.

26 And there were robbers, and in fine, all manner of wickedness upon all the face of the land.

27 And it came to pass that Coriantumr was exceedingly angry with Shared, and he went against him with his armies to battle; and they did meet in great anger, and they did meet in the valley of Gilgal; and the battle became exceedingly sore.

28 And it came to pass that Shared fought against him for the space of three days. And it came to pass that Coriantumr beat him, and did pursue him until he came to the plains of Heshlon.

29 And it came to pass that Shared gave him battle again upon the plains; and behold, he did beat Coriantumr, and drove him back again to the valley of Gilgal.

30 And Coriantumr gave Shared battle again in the valley of Gilgal, in which he beat Shared and slew him.

31 And Shared wounded Coriantumr in his thigh, that he did not go to battle again for the space of two years, in which time all the people upon the face of the land were shedding blood, and there was none to restrain them.

## Ether Chapter 14

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1 And now there began to be a great curse upon all the land because of the iniquity of the people, in which, if a man should lay his tool or his sword upon his shelf, or upon the place whither he would keep it, behold, upon the morrow, he could not find it, so great was the curse upon the land.

**verse 1** Thievery was rampant (compare Helaman 13:17-23). Things again became “slippery” (see Mormon 1:18-19).

2 Wherefore every man did cleave unto that which was his own, with his hands, and would not borrow neither would he lend; and every man kept the hilt of his sword in his right hand, in the defence of his property and his own life and of his wives and children.

**verse 2** “his wives and children” Was polygamy practiced among the Jaredites? It likely was (see the commentary for Ether 6:20).

3 And now, after the space of two years, and after the death of Shared, behold, there arose the brother of Shared and he gave battle unto Coriantumr, in which Coriantumr did beat him and did pursue him to the wilderness of Akish.

4 And it came to pass that the brother of Shared did give battle unto him in the wilderness of Akish; and the battle became exceedingly sore, and many thousands fell by the sword.

5 And it came to pass that Coriantumr did lay siege to the wilderness; and the brother of Shared did march forth out of the wilderness by night, and slew a part of the army of Coriantumr, as they were drunken.

6 And he came forth to the land of Moron, and placed himself upon the throne of Coriantumr.

7 And it came to pass that Coriantumr dwelt with his army in the wilderness for the space of two years, in which he did receive great strength to his army.

8 Now the brother of Shared, whose name was Gilead, also received great strength to his army, because of secret combinations.

9 And it came to pass that his high priest murdered him as he sat upon his throne.

10 And it came to pass that one of the secret combinations murdered him in a secret pass, and obtained unto himself the kingdom; and his name was Lib; and Lib was a man of great stature, more than any other man among all the people.

**verse 10** The “him” in this verse refers to the high priest who murdered Gilead.

11 And it came to pass that in the first year of Lib, Coriantumr came up unto the land of Moron, and gave battle unto Lib.

12 And it came to pass that he fought with Lib, in which Lib did smite upon his arm that he was wounded; nevertheless, the army of Coriantumr did press forward upon Lib, that he fled to the borders upon the seashore.

13 And it came to pass that Coriantumr pursued him; and Lib gave battle unto him upon the seashore.

14 And it came to pass that Lib did smite the army of Coriantumr, that they fled again to the wilderness of Akish.

15 And it came to pass that Lib did pursue him until he came to the plains of Agosh. And Coriantumr had taken all the people with him as he fled before Lib in that quarter of the land whither he fled.

16 And when he had come to the plains of Agosh he gave battle unto Lib, and he smote upon him until he died; nevertheless, the brother of Lib did come against Coriantumr in the stead thereof, and the battle became exceedingly sore, in the which Coriantumr fled again before the army of the brother of Lib.

17 Now the name of the brother of Lib was called Shiz. And it came to pass that Shiz pursued after Coriantumr, and he did overthrow many cities, and he did slay both women and children, and he did burn the cities.

**verse 17** Shiz's scorched-earth policy produced great fear among the people as evidenced by the following verse.

18 And there went a fear of Shiz throughout all the land; yea, a cry went forth throughout the land—Who can stand before the army of Shiz? Behold, he sweepeth the earth before him!

**verse 18** Obviously Shiz became infamous for his barbarity and ruthlessness.

19 And it came to pass that the people began to flock together in armies, throughout all the face of the land.

20 And they were divided; and a part of them fled to the army of Shiz, and a part of them fled to the army of Coriantumr.

21 And so great and lasting had been the war, and so long had been the scene of bloodshed and carnage, that the whole face of the land was covered with the bodies of the dead.

22 And so swift and speedy was the war that there was none left to bury the dead, but they did march forth from the shedding of blood to the shedding of blood, leaving the bodies of both men, women, and children strewed upon the face of the land, to become a prey to the worms of the flesh.



**23 And the scent thereof went forth upon the face of the land, even upon all the face of the land; wherefore the people became troubled by day and by night, because of the scent thereof.**

**24 Nevertheless, Shiz did not cease to pursue Coriantumr; for he had sworn to avenge himself upon Coriantumr of the blood of his brother, who had been slain, and the word of the Lord which came to Ether that Coriantumr should not fall by the sword.**

**verse 24** “and the word of the Lord which came to Ether that Coriantumr should not fall by the sword” It would seem that Shiz’s anger against Coriantumr was inflamed not only by the fact that Coriantumr had killed Shiz’s brother Lib, but that Shiz had also heard rumors of the prophecy of the prophet Ether that Coriantumr would not die by the sword (Ether 13:21).

**25 And thus we see that the Lord did visit them in the fulness of his wrath, and their wickedness and abominations had prepared a way for their everlasting destruction.**

**verse 25** The Lord had previously spoken to the brother of Jared making it clear that this new land was a promised land and that whosoever lived here would be blessed if they served him but destroyed if they did not: “And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them” (Ether 2:8). Their present sorry state of affairs was clearly the result of their wickedness. The Jaredites were now obviously ripe in their iniquity and deserving of the Lord’s judgment.

**26 And it came to pass that Shiz did pursue Coriantumr eastward, even to the borders by the seashore, and there he gave battle unto Shiz for the space of three days.**

**27 And so terrible was the destruction among the armies of Shiz that the people began to be frightened, and began to flee before the armies of Coriantumr; and they fled to the land of Corihor, and swept off the inhabitants before them, all them that would not join them.**

**28 And they pitched their tents in the valley of Corihor; and Coriantumr pitched his tents in the valley of Shurr. Now the valley of Shurr was near the hill Comnor; wherefore, Coriantumr did gather his armies together upon the hill Comnor, and did sound a trumpet unto the armies of Shiz to invite them forth to battle.**

**29 And it came to pass that they came forth, but were driven again; and they came the second time, and they were driven again the second time. And it came to pass that they came again the third time, and the battle became exceedingly sore.**

30 And it came to pass that Shiz smote upon Coriantumr that he gave him many deep wounds; and Coriantumr, having lost his blood, fainted, and was carried away as though he were dead.

31 Now the loss of men, women and children on both sides was so great that Shiz commanded his people that they should not pursue the armies of Coriantumr; wherefore, they returned to their camp.

## Ether Chapter 15

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### Scripture Mastery

**Ether 15** The great and final battle of the Jaredites—Coriantumr kills Shiz.

**verse 1-3** Coriantumr comes to an awful realization.

**1 And it came to pass when Coriantumr had recovered of his wounds, he began to remember the words which Ether had spoken unto him.**

**2 He saw that there had been slain by the sword already nearly two millions of his people, and he began to sorrow in his heart; yea, there had been slain two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children.**

**verse 2 “two millions”** This is not necessarily a reliable statistic. It may be simply hyperbole and not representative of actual counts. If it is anywhere close to being accurate, then the carnage from the great Jaredite wars is impressive indeed. If there were two million men, then we might estimate the Jaredite population as being between six and eight million people. For a comparison, let us consider the number of Americans killed in war. If we start with the American Revolutionary War and then include the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and Viet Nam, the total war-related deaths is estimated at 1,178,066. This includes battle-field deaths (652,769) and other causes such as wound infections and other illnesses.

It has been stated previously that there is much information to suggest that the Jaredites parallel an ancient culture known to archaeologists as the Olmecs. It is interesting to note that the final destruction of the Olmecs, according to the archaeologist Michael Coe (*Mexico* [New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers], 1962.), was caused by internal strife and was violent. Also the 16th-century historian Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl commented, “They [the Olmecs] were destroyed, and their civilization came to an end as a result of great calamities and punishments from heaven for some grave sins that they had committed (*Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Joseph L. Allen, 66).

**3 He began to repent of the evil which he had done; he began to remember the words which had been spoken by the mouth of all the prophets, and he saw them that they were fulfilled thus far, every whit; and his soul mourned and refused to be comforted.**

**4 And it came to pass that he wrote an epistle unto Shiz, desiring him that he would spare the people, and he would give up the kingdom for the sake of the lives of the people.**

**verse 4** Coriantumr offers to surrender to Shiz if Shiz would spare the people.

5 And it came to pass that when Shiz had received his epistle he wrote an epistle unto Coriantumr, that if he would give himself up, that he might slay him with his own sword, that he would spare the lives of the people.

6 And it came to pass that the people repented not of their iniquity; and the people of Coriantumr were stirred up to anger against the people of Shiz; and the people of Shiz were stirred up to anger against the people of Coriantumr; wherefore, the people of Shiz did give battle unto the people of Coriantumr.

**verse 6** While Coriantumr may have been repentant and inclined to surrender for the good of his people, his people were not.

7 And when Coriantumr saw that he was about to fall he fled again before the people of Shiz.

8 And it came to pass that he came to the waters of Ripliancum, which, by interpretation, is large, or to exceed all; wherefore, when they came to these waters they pitched their tents; and Shiz also pitched his tents near unto them; and therefore on the morrow they did come to battle.

**verse 8** From the text, it is clear that the “waters of Ripliancum” were in the north of the Jaredite land near the eastern coast.

9 And it came to pass that they fought an exceedingly sore battle, in which Coriantumr was wounded again, and he fainted with the loss of blood.

10 And it came to pass that the armies of Coriantumr did press upon the armies of Shiz that they beat them, that they caused them to flee before them; and they did flee southward, and did pitch their tents in a place which was called Ogath.

11 And it came to pass that the army of Coriantumr did pitch their tents by the hill Ramah; and it was that same hill where my father Mormon did hide up the records unto the Lord, which were sacred.

**verse 11** The Jaredite hill Ramah is the same as the Nephite hill Cumorah.

12 And it came to pass that they did gather together all the people upon all the face of the land, who had not been slain, save it was Ether.

13 And it came to pass that Ether did behold all the doings of the people; and he beheld that the people who were for Coriantumr were gathered together to the army of Coriantumr; and the people who were for Shiz were gathered together to the army of Shiz.

**verse 13** The prophet Ether was an observer from his place of hiding and not a participant in the war.

14 Wherefore, they were for the space of four years gathering together the people, that they might get all who were upon the face of the land, and that they might receive all the strength which it was possible that they could receive.

15 And it came to pass that when they were all gathered together, every one to the army which he would, with their wives and their children—both men women and children being armed with weapons of war, having shields, and breastplates, and head-plates, and being clothed after the manner of war—they did march forth one against another to battle; and they fought all that day, and conquered not.

16 And it came to pass that when it was night they were weary, and retired to their camps; and after they had retired to their camps they took up a howling and a lamentation for the loss of the slain of their people; and so great were their cries, their howlings and lamentations, that they did rend the air exceedingly.

17 And it came to pass that on the morrow they did go again to battle, and great and terrible was that day; nevertheless, they conquered not, and when the night came again they did rend the air with their cries, and their howlings, and their mournings, for the loss of the slain of their people.

**verses 16-17** These “howlings” and “mournings” are all the more poignant considering that they were not just the anguished cries of the people for their young male soldiers. Rather they were bemoaning the inhumane destruction of entire families.

18 And it came to pass that Coriantumr wrote again an epistle unto Shiz, desiring that he would not come again to battle, but that he would take the kingdom, and spare the lives of the people.

**verse 18** Coriantumr reiterates his offer of surrender.

19 And behold, the Spirit of the Lord had ceased striving with them, and Satan had full power over the hearts of the people; for they were given up unto the hardness of their hearts, and the blindness of their minds that they might be destroyed; wherefore they went again to battle.

**verse 19** It would seem that the people of Shiz and the people of Coriantumr were dead to the workings of the Spirit. They were past feeling.

20 And it came to pass that they fought all that day, and when the night came they slept upon their swords.

21 And on the morrow they fought even until the night came.

22 And when the night came they were drunken with anger, even as a man who is drunken with wine; and they slept again upon their swords.

23 And on the morrow they fought again; and when the night came they had all fallen by the sword save it were fifty and two of the people of Coriantumr, and sixty and nine of the people of Shiz.

**verse 23** Modern warfare, of course, does not involve all levels of the population, and thus there could be no such thing as a war of extinction. However, Hugh Nibley, in his article “Warfare and the Book of Mormon” (*Warfare in the Book of Mormon*) mentions certain wars in Russia fought in a manner so as to exterminate an entire nation (142). As will be mentioned below, however, it is still unlikely that total annihilation and extinction of a people can result from war.

24 And it came to pass that they slept upon their swords that night, and on the morrow they fought again, and they contended in their might with their swords and with their shields, all that day.

25 And when the night came there were thirty and two of the people of Shiz, and twenty and seven of the people of Coriantumr.

26 And it came to pass that they ate and slept, and prepared for death on the morrow. And they were large and mighty men as to the strength of men.

27 And it came to pass that they fought for the space of three hours, and they fainted with the loss of blood.

28 And it came to pass that when the men of Coriantumr had received sufficient strength that they could walk, they were about to flee for their lives; but behold, Shiz arose, and also his men, and he swore in his wrath that he would slay Coriantumr or he would perish by the sword.

29 Wherefore, he did pursue them, and on the morrow he did overtake them; and they fought again with the sword. And it came to pass that when they had all fallen by the sword, save it were Coriantumr and Shiz, behold Shiz had fainted with the loss of blood.

30 And it came to pass that when Coriantumr had leaned upon his sword, that he rested a little, he smote off the head of Shiz.

31 And it came to pass that after he had smitten off the head of Shiz, that Shiz raised upon his hands and fell; and after that he had struggled for breath, he died.

**verse 31** This peculiar agonal posturing of Shiz after his decapitation might have been accounted for by a well-known medical phenomenon called “decerebrate posturing or rigidity.” It is characterized by forceful contraction of the extensor muscles of the upper and lower extremities. It is not a conscious or purposeful act, but simply due to nervous-system mediated muscle contractions due to separation of the upper brain (the cerebral hemispheres) from the mid brain near the base of the skull.

The agonal respiratory efforts are also not unexpected after decapitation.

32 And it came to pass that Coriantumr fell to the earth, and became as if he had no life.

**verse 32** We know, of course, that Coriantumr did not die but will later be found by the Mulekite people (Omni 1:21-22). The prophet Ether had predicted that Coriantumr's people would be killed but that his life would be spared (Ether 13:21).

At this point in the story of the Jaredites, one may be left with the impression that Coriantumr is the only surviving individual of the entire Jaredite civilization. It seems more likely, however, that others of the Jaredites did survive by staying home and not fighting in the war. The prophet Ether is just one example (John L. Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, volume 1, number 1, 1992, 6).

**33 And the Lord spake unto Ether, and said unto him: Go forth. And he went forth, and beheld that the words of the Lord had all been fulfilled; and he finished his record; (and the hundredth part I have not written) and he hid them in a manner that the people of Limhi did find them.**

**verse 33** "and the hundredth part I have not written" Moroni's meaning is that he was able to write less than a "hundredth part," one percent—a very small part indeed.

It would be interesting to know if there was any contact between Ether and Coriantumr following the final battle. We are, of course, not told.

**34 Now the last words which are written by Ether are these: Whether the Lord will that I be translated, or that I suffer the will of the Lord in the flesh, it mattereth not, if it so be that I am saved in the kingdom of God. Amen.**

**verse 34** It is interesting to note that the last words of Ether contemplate whether he would be translated or die as other men—the particular option not mattering to him as long as he would be "saved in the kingdom of God."