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## Itty Bitty Books with Big Lessons: Enos, Jarom, Omni

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Jasmin Gimenez Rappleye

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# ITTY BITTY BOOKS WITH BIG LESSONS: ENOS, JAROM, OMNI

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**Jasmin Gimenez Rappleye**

Review of Sharon J. Harris, *Enos, Jarom, Omni: A Brief Theological Introduction* (Provo, UT: The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2020). 144 pages. \$9.95 (paperback).

**Abstract:** *Sharon Harris, a professor of English at Brigham Young University, offers an analysis of the theology of the “small books” of Enos, Jarom, and Omni in this next installment of The Book of Mormon: Brief Theological Introductions by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship. Harris argues that the theology of these small books focuses on the covenant with the Nephites and Lamanites, the importance of genealogy, and the role kenosis plays in several of these Book of Mormon prophets. Harris presents both new and familiar readings of these compact books, providing a fair contribution to their study.*

Sharon J. Harris is an assistant professor of English at Brigham Young University and is the author of the volume on Enos through Omni, in the series *The Book of Mormon: Brief Theological Introductions* by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Harris earned her PhD in English from Fordham University in 2018 and also has degrees from the University of Chicago and Brigham Young University. She is a newcomer to Book of Mormon studies, specializing primarily in early modern English, but provides a fresh perspective and is an effective communicator.<sup>2</sup> Her prose cogently conveys innovative ideas to a general

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1. Sharon J. Harris, *Enos, Jarom, Omni: A Brief Theological Introduction* (Provo, UT: The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2020).

2. Harris’s contributions to Book of Mormon studies up to this point consist of a chapter in a volume of collected essays from the Mormon Theological Seminar in 2017. Harris has also researched the history of Latter-day Saint singles

audience. She balances introducing readers to the characters and story while also drawing out lessons, principles, themes, and theological underpinnings of each Book of Mormon author.

While many authors of this series may have wrestled with condensing a vast work into a short theological treatise, Harris faced the challenge of expanding upon very few words to tease out a theological framework for these small books. She faced an additional challenge of formulating a unified theological thrust when her section of the Book of Mormon contained more distinct authors and voices than all the other books combined. Harris surmounted these challenges fairly well, making this volume a welcome contribution to the small body of scholarship dedicated to Enos–Omni.<sup>3</sup>

Harris divides her book into a series of short chapters. In addition to an introductory chapter, she devotes one chapter each to Enos, Jarom,

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wards and has published on the intersection of the Restoration with sound. See Sharon J. Harris, “Reauthoring Our Covenant Obligation to Scripture and Family,” in *Christ and Anti-Christ: Reading Jacob 7*, Adam S. Miller and Joseph M. Spencer, eds. (Provo, UT: The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2017), 111–24; Sharon J. Harris and Peter McMurray, “Sounding Mormonism,” *Mormon Studies Review* 5, no. 1 (2018): 33–45, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr2/vol5/iss1/23/>; Sharon Harris, “LDS Singles and Their Wards,” presented at One Body: The State of Mormon Singledom (symposium, May 16, 2015), <https://soundcloud.com/mormonsingledom/sharon-harris-lds-singles-and>.

3. Only a few handfuls of articles and books are written on Enos–Omni, compared to the many dozens written on 1 Nephi, for example. Much more work is needed on these small books, and any addition to this corpus of work is welcome. Some of notable contributions to the study of these books include Claudia L. Bushman, “Big Lessons from Little Books,” in *Big Lessons from Little Books: 2 Nephi 4 — Words of Mormon*, Robert A. Rees and Eugene England, eds. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008), vii–xxii, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/big-lessons-little-books>; John S. Tanner, “Literary Reflections on Jacob and His Descendants,” in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob Through Words of Mormon, To Learn With Joy*, Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990) 251–69, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/literary-reflections-jacob-and-his-descendants>; Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, Enos–Mosiah (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007); “Why Do the Authors on the Small Plates Follow a Pattern?,” Book of Mormon Central (April 8, 2016), <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/why-do-the-authors-on-the-small-plates-follow-a-pattern>. To see a more extensive bibliography on Enos through Omni, see “Come Follow Me 2020: Enos — Words of Mormon,” Book of Mormon Central, <https://bookofmormoncentral.org/come-follow-me/book-of-mormon/come-follow-me-2020-enos-words-of-mormon>.

and Omni. I start my review of Harris’s contribution to this series by looking at the Introduction, and then at each successive chapter, in turn.

### Introduction

In her Introduction, Harris acknowledges challenges to studying and enjoying the small books, yet expresses optimism in the fruits of laboring in this section of the Book of Mormon. At the outset, she presents what she sees as the overarching theological themes of the small books: covenant and inheritance. She defines the macro Book of Mormon covenant as “God’s promise to gather the descendants of Lehi and Sariah’s family again. God will do so by making sure the surviving remnant of this line of the house of Israel receives the record of their ancestors, the Book of Mormon” (3–4).

As part of the terms of this covenant, Nephite prophets bear the responsibility of inheriting and perpetuating the records that must survive to the latter days. With the stewardship over the plates comes a consciousness and inheritance of generations as well. Nephite prophets hearken back to and reflect traits of their fathers and ancestors before them, who also bore the responsibility of transmitting the Nephite record in fulfillment of God’s covenant.

Harris asserts the importance of the small books at both the introduction and conclusion of this volume by drawing on the dictation order of the Book of Mormon. She argues that since the small books were the final words translated in the Book of Mormon, they serve as a deliberate and weighty conclusion to the Book of Mormon. Since Mormon designed the small books to be the final refrain of the Book of Mormon, readers should take them very seriously. Harris additionally seems to argue that the effect of this reconfiguration is that readers are first presented with a story of a prosperous and destroyed civilization before being presented with a prequel or origin story in the small plates.

While I certainly agree that readers should take the small books seriously on their own terms, Harris could have been more tempered in her conclusion that the small plates were Mormon’s intended conclusion to the Book of Mormon. Mormon explained that the Spirit prompted him to append this unabridged collection to his *magnum opus* for an unknown purpose (Words of Mormon 1:6–7).<sup>4</sup> At the very least,

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4. Mormon professed no foreknowledge that Martin Harris would lose the equivalent counterpart to this narrative in Mormon’s abridgement. Nephi, the creator of this record, also professes no foreknowledge of this 1828 event but indicates a prompting to create another record nonetheless (1 Nephi 9:5). See

Mormon seemed to intend for his readers to experience a complete narrative arc from Lehi's departure from Jerusalem to the destruction of the Nephites (Mormon's abridgement), before reaching an appendix of primary source documents (the small plates).

In addition, if the small plates were intended as the capstone message of the Book of Mormon, the concluding words the readers would encounter would not be those of Omni (or as Harris submits, Amaleki dramatically calling into the abyss for his lost brother, pp. 107–108), but rather those of Words of Mormon. Mormon's *subscriptio* at the end of the small plates is the final voice of this section and explains the redaction and provenance of the small plates.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of Mormon's intention and literary design, reading the small plates *after* Mormon's abridgement is sure to open new insights and avenues for inquiry.

### Enos

In her chapter on Enos, Harris focuses primarily on *kenosis*, or a spiritual self-emptying. She begins her chapter by first introducing the reader to the protagonist Enos, and presenting three immediate lessons a reader can learn from Enos's impassioned repentance (19):

1. Forgiveness can come early in a spiritual journey. Forgiveness is not necessarily the same thing as remission of sins (Enos 1:5, 8).

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also Don Bradley, *The Lost 116 Pages* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2019), 107–109.

5. William J. Hamblin, "Metal Plates and the Book of Mormon," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon: The FARMS Updates of the 1990s*, John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne, eds. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 20–22, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/node/238>; "Why is 'Words of Mormon' at the End of the Small Plates?," Book of Mormon Central (April 14, 2016), <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/why-is-words-of-mormon-at-the-end-of-the-small-plates>. It can be challenging for readers to feel a sense of conclusion with Words of Mormon, since the lost 116-page manuscript has made it ambiguous to know where exactly Words of Mormon ends. See Jack M. Lyon and Kent R. Minson, "When Pages Collide: Dissecting the Words of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2012): 120–36, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/when-pages-collide-dissecting-words-mormon>; Brant A. Gardner, "When Hypotheses Collide: Responding to Lyon and Minson's 'When Pages Collide,'" *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 105–19, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/when-hypotheses-collide-responding-to-lyon-and-minsons-when-pages-collide/>; "What if Martin Harris Didn't Lose all of the 116 Pages?," Book of Mormon Central (June 26, 2017), <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/what-if-martin-harris-didnt-lose-all-of-the-116-pages>; Bradley, *The Lost 116 Pages*, 276–78.

2. Being forgiven and entering into a covenant is followed by lots and lots of work. Enos did “go to” and preached to the Lamanites to try to restore them to the covenant (Enos 1:8, 19).
3. We can be forgiven and enter into beautiful covenants, but our temptations and blind-spots may not go away (Enos 1:20).

While the small books in general may be oft neglected by Latter-day Saints, the book of Enos is probably the best-known and beloved of the set. Harris cogently articulates what about the Enos story is so captivating to many readers:

Enos is a spiritual Everyman who experiences the miracle of being known, heard, and forgiven by the Savior of the world. And in his struggles to understand and draw near to God, his prayer becomes woven into God’s covenant, poised to reach countless people beyond Enos’s personal sphere of influence. (20)

This story is both intimate in meaning and corporate in scope. Enos’s personal forgiveness is what sparks his petition for the Lamanites, which becomes part of the reiterated covenant. It is a story of forgiveness of an individual soul, which catalyzes ultimate redemption for an entire civilization.

The greatest focus of this chapter comes in discussing Enos’s “self-emptying” for the welfare of the Lamanites. When Enos received forgiveness for his sins, he poured out his whole soul for the welfare of the Lamanites. Harris categorizes this selfless consecration as a form of *kenosis*, expanding on the traditional Christological definition. *Kenosis* comes from the Greek word κενώω, “to empty.” In New Testament theology, *kenosis* primarily refers to a facet of Christology, derived from Philippians 2:5–11, which describes Christ’s condescension into mortality. *Kenosis* conveys how Jesus Christ, a fully divine being, nonetheless “emptied” himself of certain divine qualities to become like man. This extreme condescension ultimately enabled Christ to become exalted above all.<sup>6</sup> This has led to vigorous debate in Christian history as to the exact nature and extent of this “emptying.” Because Philippians 2:5 invites readers to emulate Jesus Christ in this way, Harris seems to extend the concept of *kenosis* to any “emptying of power that increases power” (28).

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6. Colin Brown, “Empty,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Colin Brown, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 1:546–49; Albrecht Oepke, “κενός, κενώω, κενόδοξος, κενοδοξία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:661–62.



Harris points out a potential wordplay in English with the word “whole” (Enos 1:8–9). As part of the process of kenosis, Enos needed to empty out his *whole* soul for the welfare of others in order for his soul to become *whole* or well (29). While there are perhaps limitations with extending this English wordplay to the underlying ancient text on the plates,<sup>7</sup> readers can appreciate the devotional application of selfless giving as the key to our own welfare. It would have been helpful for Harris to defend her interpretation of this passage a little more robustly. The doublet of “whole” in Enos 1:8–9 likely has less to do with an underlying, ancient wordplay but is possibly a product of the Book of Mormon translator’s interaction with the King James Bible during the translation process, since the phrase “thy faith hath made thee whole” may be an intertextual allusion unique to the King James Bible.<sup>8</sup>

The result of Enos’s metaphorical “self-emptying” is noteworthy. Harris suggests that Enos’s faith became unshaken in connection with hearing of the future Nephite destruction and his newfound love for the Lamanites. As he emptied himself, he found new charity for others — the Lamanites, whom he then considered family in referring to them as “my brethren.” “Enos’s experience suggests that the same people we view as antithetical to our ideals could ultimately play a key role in our salvation” (37).<sup>9</sup> Yet even when Enos experienced transformative conversion and a newfound love for the Lamanites, he was derisive of the Lamanites’

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7. The word כּל *col* (“whole, all”) in Hebrew, does not contain the same double meaning of being “well,” “sound,” “uninjured.” The word תּמִים *tamim* can include meanings of “uninjured,” “free of blemish,” and “perfect,” but does not necessarily contain the double meaning of “all, entire.” See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, NLD: Brill, 1994), 473–75, 1748–50. I cannot comment on possible Egyptian parallels.

8. Depending on the translation model one subscribes to, the translator could be Joseph Smith or an unidentified, divine translator with Joseph Smith acting more as transmitter than translator. For occurrences of “thy faith hath made thee whole,” see Mark 5:34, Mark 10:52, Matthew 9:22, and Luke 17:19. The underlying Greek text for the adjective “whole” is the verb σώζω, meaning “to save, keep,” “to preserve,” and in this case “to heal.” Thus, the English construct of subject-verb-object-adverb in “thy faith hath made thee whole” is not present in the underlying Greek text, which more literally translates as subject-verb-object in “your faith has healed you.”

9. “Salvation” in this context is not being used to refer to Enos’s personal salvation of the soul but rather the salvation of the Nephite legacy. The preservation of the Nephite record, and subsequent conversion of future Lamanites, would be the means of saving the Nephites as a people.

savage behavior (Enos 1:20). In addition, Harris speculates that Enos may have fallen into notions of self-importance (46–47), drawing on Enos’s use of colophons.<sup>10</sup> Harris observes,

Maybe this is why Enos’s account is so compelling: in a soup of his own noble and selfish desires, God’s will and God’s compromises, and the consequences of others’ agency, he models the lifelong wrestle to understand and keep covenants. Why bring up Enos’s weaknesses? What does it help? At a minimum it shows at least two things: first, people are complicated, and second, God can handle it. (47)

While this exploration of Enos’s supposed weaknesses is speculative, Book of Mormon characters are indeed often more complex than a superficial reading indicates. Moreover, God can effect great miracles using complicated and imperfect people. I hope this lesson inspires readers to critically engage the book of Enos for more robust readings.

### Jarom

The chapter on Jarom contains Harris’s strongest and weakest theological material. Jarom is the shortest book in the Book of Mormon with only 733 words. Thus, responsibly teasing out any profound theological vision is challenging. I believe Harris succeeded in parsing out meaningful theological gems in Jarom, with the possible exception of her note on “filthiness.”

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10. Harris is misguided to use colophons as evidence for Enos’s emulating Nephi, as colophons are a well-attested, ancient literary standard and certainly not unique to Nephi. Harris writes, “If Enos felt a kinship with Nephi’s tendencies, it is no surprise that he adopted Nephi’s signature narrative address. Five times he writes, ‘I, Enos,’ echoing ‘I, Nephi’ (Enos 1:1, 6, 11, 17, 19)” (47). For literature on ancient colophons and their attestation in the Book of Mormon, see John A. Tvedtnes, “Colophons in the Book of Mormon,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research*, John W. Welch, ed. (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 13–17, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/node/150>; Thomas W. Mackay, “Mormon as Editor: A Study of Colophons, Headers, and Source Indicators,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 2 (1993): 90–109, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1048&context=jbms>; “Why Does Nephi Begin by Saying ‘I, Nephi ...?’” Book of Mormon Central (October 16, 2018), <https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowwhy/why-does-nephi-begin-by-saying-i-nephi>; “Why Did Book of Mormon Authors Use Colophons?” Book of Mormon Central (June 21, 2018), <https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowwhy/why-did-book-of-mormon-authors-use-colophons>.

## Filthiness

Harris argues that *filthiness* came to have racially derogatory connotations in the small plates, specifically toward the Lamanites (51–57). It is first used when describing the river in Nephi’s vision of the Tree of Life (1 Nephi 12:16), and she persuasively argues that the filthy river may allude to the fate of the Lamanites. From there, it is used in connection with Laman and Lemuel in 1 Nephi 15:27 when they debated the meaning of the vision. Jacob later condemned the Nephites for considering the Lamanites filthy when they were more righteous than the Nephites (Jacob 3:5). Enos also referred to the Lamanites as full of filthiness (Enos 1:20).

However, after establishing a possible lexical pattern with “filthiness,” she perhaps overreaches by underscoring its absence in the book of Jarom. She suggests that since Jarom did not use the word “filthy” in describing the Lamanites, Jarom may have transcended the racial prejudice of his forebears. It is true that Jarom is the first author not to use the “filthy” epithet, but considering the book of Jarom has only 733 words, its absence should be more cautiously interpreted rather than argued as evidence of Jarom’s progressive stance toward the Lamanites. Jarom, after all, still maintains the *status quo* by characterizing the Lamanites as the political and religious enemies of the Nephites (Jarom 1:6–7, 9).<sup>11</sup> Spending appreciable space expounding on 1 Nephi simply to argue for a datum of negative evidence in the book Jarom struck me as unfocused and tenuous.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Harris suggests that Jarom 1:6 is a dispassionate statement about the Lamanite religious practices, more than an aspersion against their character. She exegetically grounds her argument with a brief analysis of Mesoamerican and ancient Israelite religious and military practices, for which she should be commended. However, I don’t think loving “murder” can qualify as dispassionate since it describes an unequivocally malicious or unlawful practice. I find it unpersuasive to parse out an enlightened tolerance from Jarom based on so few words. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. “Murder,” <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/murder>.

12. Harris does not address the absence of the word “filthy” among the book of Omni’s many authors. Her line of reasoning would suggest that Omni, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki were also paragons of racial unity, yet that would seem an extreme assumption to make, given the paucity of data. While linking the ultimate fate of the Lamanites to the filthy fountain of water may have merit, proposing a generations-long lexical pattern based on a few data points and negative evidence is perhaps unwarranted.

## The Middle of Days

The rest of this chapter provides keen analysis and helpful application to modern readers. Harris juxtaposes Enos's prophecy of ultimate Nephite destruction with the perpetual tension of their experience with the Lamanites. She points out how the Nephites' possible knowledge of their destruction could potentially affect their attitudes toward the Lamanites in the present.<sup>13</sup> Righteousness is essential for Nephite survival, but it could also be easy for the Nephites to look for Lamanite wickedness at every opportunity.

She invites readers to compare Jarom's day with our own. Jarom was situated in the middle of the Nephite story, just as Latter-day Saints today may be in the middle of a dispensation. However, our possible location in the middle of this grand timeline is not an indication of its importance or sense of urgency. Jarom shows readers how to thrive and excel even in the middle of times. The key to Nephite success during this period was to "look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was" (Jarom 1:11). By treating the present as the future, the Nephites lived their lives in the light of Jesus Christ:

By now we've seen how the Nephites in Jarom's day take the prophecies of their ancestors seriously. These revelations are their guide to avoid destruction, so the leaders and teachers stay busy reminding the people that righteousness is essential. The Nephites also understand these small plates to be expressly for gathering the Lamanites in the latter days. They relate to Christ and his coming as though he has already come, placing themselves in an everlasting and ever-present state of redemption. We have also seen that if we, as members of the restored church in the twenty-first century, liken ourselves to the Nephites, we are likening to the group that was destroyed for its wickedness. Jarom's people exercised constant vigilance in keeping their covenants for fear of their own apocalyptic destruction. Like them, we, too, can look forward to the coming of the Savior, but we await his second coming and are alert to its signs including the signs of the end of times. (71)

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13. Harris assumes the Nephites as a people have a knowledge of the prophecies concerning the ultimate fate of the Nephite and Lamanite civilizations. However, the text explicitly identifies only prophets and leaders such as Nephi as possessing such knowledge. It is unclear how much access the people as a whole had to these prophecies of destruction and annihilation.

One area of inquiry that could have strengthened this chapter is an analysis of Nephite cycles of prosperity in Jarom, since the documentation of Nephite wealth and military innovation takes a large portion of his record. I would have loved to see Harris discuss how Nephite prosperity factored into broader themes of the Lord's covenant with Book of Mormon peoples in the small books. Jarom seemed somewhat conflicted about Nephite prosperity, since it correlated to their hard hearts (Jarom 1:3), yet their military might led them to victory in the Lord (Jarom 1:7–9). It would be instructive to explore the role this period of history might play in the overarching message the Book of Mormon sends about wealth and riches.<sup>14</sup>

Overall, I found Harris's treatment of Jarom provoking and uplifting. She contributes new insights to this often-overlooked book in the Nephite text and leaves the reader with opportunity for personal introspection and self-improvement.

### Omni

The book of Omni is simultaneously exciting and confusing because of its many authors and voices. Genealogy comes out prominently in this book, as the plates were passed down to sons and brothers in a long lineage. This chapter helpfully begins by introducing each author in the book of Omni with a short character profile. Harris then meanders to a note on how contention is used in Omni and other parts of the Book of Mormon. She observes that "contention" is rarely used to signify domestic malcontent but is rather used mostly in military or political contexts (84–88). In essence, contention "involves a severe breach between groups of people that includes lethal violence" (85). Yet Harris is careful to warn that the Book of Mormon still views individual and familial discord as a precursor to large-scale contention (Mosiah 4:14).

Harris points out that the fixation on genealogy in Omni seems at odds with Nephi's stated purpose for the small plates (1 Nephi 9:4). But she argues that the persistence of genealogical lines in Omni serves three purposes: 1) it connects families and scripture, 2) it keeps the prophetic tradition alive in the plates, and 3) it is emblematic of the importance of family and relationships in the small plates (90–91).

By commanding the record be kept by each generation, it ensures the plates' survival. By the time of King Benjamin, the mere presence of

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14. "Why Does the Book of Mormon Warn Against Seeking after Riches?" Book of Mormon Central (May 30, 2019), <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/why-does-the-book-of-mormon-warn-against-seeking-after-riches>.

the plates certified their truth and integrity. Each entry is just one piece to the story, but in its entirety, it creates a strong genealogical line of the plates' provenance and legacy. By continuing to write, each author continued the prophetic tradition and extended the record through time and space to touch millions of minds and hearts today.

In concluding her thoughts on the book of Omni and all the “itty bitty books,” she jumps to an insight in the book of Alma. The diligence of the authors of these small books to preserve and transfer the record is a lesson in keeping the plates bright (97–98). Alma 37:5 says that “if they are kept they must retain their brightness.” Harris provides both historical explanation of this verse and personal application of its value. Here, Harris draws on John L. Sorenson to explain how the brightness of the plates may be a reference to their meticulous polishing by trained, ancient metallurgists. It may be a tedious and unglamorous chore to polish the plates, but fastidiously preserving the record ensured their survival and brought to pass great things.

The meticulous maintenance and preservation of the plates encourages readers to similarly keep their own records as both a monument to faith and a connection to history. The small plates connected generations of disciples in both lineal and lateral transitions. When a son was not an option, a recordkeeper often pivoted to a brother. In Enos's day, the Lamanites threatened to destroy the plates, even though the message of the gospel was destined for their people, so the audience shifted to the Lamanites' future descendants. While the primary audience of the Book of Mormon is the Lamanites, all who read become part of the story and community. Because the Book of Mormon connects people both lineally and laterally, Harris compares the resulting community not just to a chain, but to a chain mail, encompassing all God's children in the love and light of the gospel (100–103).

This chapter provides solid reflection on complicated lines of transmission and provides readers with practicable ways to transform their discipleship.

### **Impressions on Brief Theological Introductions**

Harris's volume fits well with what has been published in this introductory series. I personally appreciate the consistency in length and scope and also that each volume thus far has been written in very accessible prose. I hope this series helps general Church readership open up new perspectives and insights on these scriptures from a theological lens.

The physical books themselves are well produced and aesthetically attractive. The orange monochrome woodcuts placed at the end of chapters give the books character and life. Bright manicules serve as asides or pseudo-footnotes to expound on tangential, interesting thoughts. One typographical error in this volume is on page 41, where there are two endnotes designated “9.” The Neal A. Maxwell quote should be listed as endnote 10.

It would be instructive for the Maxwell Institute to have laid out some methodological expectations for the series. While each volume contains a short preface to the series, it may have been beneficial to lay out, for example, why they discouraged more thorough footnoting and crediting the work of previous scholars to the extent possible. For example, on pages 23–24, Harris draws a parallel between Enos and the biblical patriarch Jacob. She compares Enos’s wrestle with Jacob’s wrestle with the angel at Bethel. In addition she notes that Enos called his father a “just man,” a possible reference to the Lord calling Noah a just man. These insights seem to be derivative from Matt Bowen’s onomastic work on Enos, yet there is no citation or reference to Bowen to be found.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that the series intends to keep the endnotes deliberately light, but they make themselves vulnerable to accusations of plagiarism by not including clear documentation when drawing upon work of other scholars. At the very least, such accusations could be mitigated by more explicitly setting reader expectations about what they consider worthy of citation.

In addition, I think it would be helpful to include references when Harris uses niche definitions. Her usage of both *kenosis* (26–41) and *messianic* (67–76) seem to diverge from the most common understandings of these terms in Christian theology. Thus, references to where readers could learn more would be most welcome.

## Conclusion

Readers of varied educational backgrounds and persuasions can find value and insight in this volume of *Brief Theological Introductions*. Harris balances the task of providing analysis while maintaining devotional

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15. Matthew L. Bowen, “‘And There Wrestled a Man with Him’ (Genesis 32:24): Enos’s Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 151–60, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/and-there-wrestled-a-man-with-him-genesis-3224-enoss-adaptations-of-the-onomastic-wordplay-of-genesis/>. To Harris’s credit, she includes this paper in the Further Reading appendix at the back of the book but simply does not include a direct endnote citation.

appeal. She sometimes veers into more creative speculation, but such is almost unavoidable in these “itty bitty books.”

Harris writes lucidly to a general audience, yet encourages probing analysis of the seemingly less-glamorous small books. Her devotion to the gospel of Jesus Christ comes through in this book, and I appreciated her willingness to contextualize at least some of her theological arguments within an ancient, historical setting (97–98), though more engagement with existing literature would have strengthened her work. I personally believe that any reading of the Book of Mormon is strongest when it is grounded in historical exegesis. I look forward to seeing Harris participate in Book of Mormon studies in the future, hopefully in a venue that allows her more thoroughly to engage with previous scholarship and exegetically contextualize her theological apologetic.

Sharon Harris attentively centers her reading of Enos–Omni on the Lord’s covenant with his people. Indeed, this is a central theme throughout the entire Book of Mormon, which invites all God’s children to partake in the gospel of Jesus Christ through reading these ancient records. On the last page of her treatise, Harris joins the Book of Mormon in inviting all readers to participate in the marvelous work of redemption:

This is the invitation of the itty bitty books and the whole Book of Mormon: you are your brother and sister’s keeper. Reading the book gives you access to the covenant. As God instructs Enos, go to — gather the rest of the world as well.  
(108)

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