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## The Jaredite Lands

Author(s): J. M. Sjodahl

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**Abstract:** This article is an analysis of the geographical statements given in the Book of Ether and possible North American correlations.

# The JAREDITE LANDS

By J. M. SJODAHL  
*Of the Church Historian's Office*

*A summary and interpretation of the little-known record of a little-known people*



J. M. SJODAHL

THE Jaredites, led by divine power, landed on the shore of the Promised Land after a perilous voyage across the deep that had lasted for 344 days. Such is the information contained in the Book of Ether. But where they disembarked the historian does not say. (Ether 6:11, 12.)

## MULTIPLYING AND SPREADING

THE next fact told concerning the newcomers is that "they went forth upon the face of the land"—the Promised Land, the continent—"and began to till the land" (Ether 6:13). We read further (Ibid 18) 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."

These two statements read together can only mean that the various families of the Jaredites soon after their arrival separated and each occupied its own territory for cultivation under the administration of their great leaders. From the outset, they avoided the mistake of the tower builders. They did not centralize the population, but distributed it. Settlers went forth from the place of landing, as soon as naturally convenient, and established themselves in new localities. The process was continued during following generations, and the continent became gradually well populated.

The record, having stated that the country had a great population, breaks the historical chain of events and joins the disconnected links years afterwards, when the brother of Jared made it known that he felt old age and dissolution approaching (Ether 6:19). Many years, with their rapid developments, are thus passed by in silence, how many we do not know. But the two sons of Joktan, Jared and his brother, must have reached a very advanced age before they realized that their work was nearly finished. They were, perhaps, nearing the end of their second century. I venture this supposition on the strength of Genesis 11:11-26, where the age of each of the ancestors of Abraham is given. Peleg, the brother of Joktan, lived

239 years. Regu, the son of Peleg, was also 239 years at the time of his death. Serug, the son of Regu, was 230 years old when he passed away. Nahor, the son of Serug and grandfather of Abraham, reached the age of 148 years. It is a reasonable conclusion that the two sons of Joktan, Jared and his brother, reached at least the average age of the mentioned descendants of Peleg, the brother of Joktan, or about 214 years. During that time, important geographic changes must have occurred in the Jaredite settlements, as well as progress in other directions, since their dispensation was one of dispersion for the purpose of replenishing the earth (Genesis 9:1) and not one of gathering.

Another conclusion is also, in the writer's judgment, unavoidable. We must not expect to find the admin-

istration of the two great leaders of the people, a century, or a century and a half, after the landing, to be located at the coast. As settlers went forth in various directions and founded colonies, the centers of population changed, and, at a time when the means of communication were not what they are today, the convenience of the government must have demanded that its seat also be moved to the more populous and influential communities. Jared and his brother, at the end of their long career, must, therefore, have had their capital probably far from the coast. If, as some have held, the landing place was somewhere "south of the Gulf of California and north of the Isthmus of Panama," such moves, either north or south, would have been feasible.

The foregoing comments are founded on Ether 6:19 and 20, where we read that the brother of Jared proposed to take a census preparatory to submitting the question of the future form of government to a general vote. The necessity of a registration of the voters indicates that the Jaredites were numerous at this time.

## THE LAND OF NEHOR

THIS is the first American land, or country, which is mentioned by name in the book of Ether (7:4). Jared had passed away, also his brother. Orihah, the son of Jared, was no more, and Kib, the son of Orihah, was the reigning head of the government.

One of his sons was named Corihor. He forsook his father's house and homeland and established himself in the Land of Nehor. Here, after some years of preparation, he placed himself at the head of a rebellion. Kib, the king, was captured by the insurgents and made a prisoner of war, and Corihor usurped his place in the government.

The name of the country, supposing it to be a Semitic word, may give a clue, at least to the direction in which to look for it. "Nahar" is the Hebrew for river. As a verb it is used metaphorically (Jer. 31:12; 51:44; Micah 1:4) for the "flowing together" of nations into one place. "Nehor," the Jaredite form of the

word, almost certainly has the same meaning as the Hebrew "nahar," a river, or a place, a land, by a river; a country into which people are "flowing." "Nehor" is said to be Egyptian for the Nile. To the Hebrews and other Semites "nahar" was the Euphrates. The country between the Missouri and the Mississippi may well have reminded the Jaredites of Mesopotamia; the Mississippi may well have been the Nahar, or Nehor, of the Old Country to them.

Here it may be mentioned that the American press, a few years ago, announced that recognized archaeologists had come to the conclusion that a city-building people had inhabited Illinois, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, and Wisconsin as far back as 3,000 B. C. This would take us farther back than the beginning of the Jaredite era, according to the chronology of Ussher, and it is not necessary to go that far back. But the point is this, that the mighty Mississippi River is flowing through the very area mentioned by the archaeologists as the habitation of a city-building people. This raises the question whether the Nehor of the book of Ether is not the Mississippi, and the land of Nehor the Mississippi valley and an adjacent indefinite area, where today innumerable mounds prove the existence of a numerous population in remote antiquity.

#### THE LAND OF MORON

THE king dwelt there (Ether 7:5, 6, 17). It was the capital, the center of the Jaredite culture. To the generation of Orihah and Kib, following immediately after that of Jared and his brother, Moron was the "land of their first inheritance" (verses 16, 17), because it was a land which the two great leaders, before they passed away, undoubtedly bequeathed to their posterity. In time it became the center of Jaredite history as well as culture. (Eth. 14:11.)

The literal meaning of the word "Moron," supposing "marana," meaning "our Lord" (1 Corinthians 16:22) to be its Aramaean kindred, would also be "our Lord." Applied to a country it would mean "A Land of Our Lord." It had, undoubtedly, been dedicated to His service. Compare Ether 2:12, where it is expressly stated that nations living in this promised land are under obligation to serve "the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ," in return for the blessing of liberty.

Moron gives the information that Moron was near "the land which is called Desolation," by the Nephites. (See Alma 22:30-32; 46:17; 50:34; 63:5). If, as is probable, Moron was in a southwestern direction from Nehor, the Land by the River, and north of Desolation, it would include in its area what is now known as Missouri, and, consequently, Jackson County, where Independence is located. It would also embrace Adam-ondi-Ahman, about fifty miles north of Jackson county, an area made sacred during the time of Adam, and which is again to attain to extraordinary prominence in the kingdom of God, when the "Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel, the prophet." (Doctrine and Covenants 116.) Orson Pratt says Adam-ondi-Ahman means, "The Valley of God" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 16, p. 48), almost the same as Moron. (Read also Doctrine and Covenants 107:53-57.)

Independence has become an almost sacred place in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It will again, in due time, be the stage on which the glory of the Almighty will be manifest to all the world. The revelation says of Missouri: "This is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place." (Doctrine and Covenants 57:2, 3.) There the center stake of Zion will be built up.\* A magnificent temple will be erected there. (Doctrine and Covenants 57:3.) There the New Jerusalem will be built, beginning at the temple lot (Doctrine and Covenants 84:2-5; Com. vv. 98-101; 3 Nephi 20:22; 21:23-25; Ether 13:3-6).

Missouri, and especially Independence, Jackson county, is, accordingly, destined to become the attraction of the world, when the holy city rises there in splendor, with, figuratively speaking, streets of gold and gates of precious stones; when the most magnificent temple-palace ever built by man is reared in which the King of Kings, with His glorified attendants, will receive His holy Priesthood in audience, to confer with them and give instructions concerning the affairs of His kingdom.

Does anyone, half doubtful, ask

\*"Remarks have been made as to our staying here in the Rockies. I will tell you how long we shall stay here. If we live our religion, we shall stay here in these mountains for ever . . . and a portion of the Priesthood will go and redeem and build up the center stake of Zion." (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 16.)

why such signal honor should be bestowed upon the region of which we are speaking?

The answer is: Adam-ondi-Ahman was, undoubtedly, dedicated to the Lord by our great progenitor himself, during the Adamic dispensation, before the flood. Moron, in all probability the same land as that in which Adam-ondi-Ahman was situated, was similarly dedicated by the brother of Jared, during the dispensation of Noah, after the deluge. Such a dedication is a covenant between God and man, similar to the covenant of God with Abraham concerning Palestine. But, as far as God is concerned, a covenant stands forever. It is everlasting, even if it is temporarily set aside by the other part. That, I believe, is the reason for the selection by the Lord of Missouri as a land of promise, the place for the New Jerusalem, the place for the City of Zion.

#### EPHRAIM

THIS was the name of a hill, or, perhaps, a hilly region, near the city of Nehor, the capital of the land of Nehor. The meaning of the word is "fruitful," indicating a prosperous part of the country. It must have been known especially for its wealth of minerals, for when Shule decided to begin military operations against his brother, Corihor, on behalf of their father, Kib, he went to the hill Ephraim, and there he made "swords of steel" for his army. Thus equipped he attacked and deposed his wicked brother, liberated their father, and placed him again at the head of the government. (Ether 7:9.)

There seems to be no doubt that the ancient dwellers of the region through which the Mississippi flows were miners. Bancroft (*Native Races*, Vol. 4, p. 783) says that ancient miners have left numerous traces of their work in the region of Lake Superior. At one place a piece of pure copper weighing over five tons has been found fifteen feet below the surface. It bore marks of fire.

#### THE LAND OF THEIR FIRST INHERITANCE

THIS seems to have been Moron (Ether 7:17). Corihor had a son named Noah. He organized a rebellion against Shule, the king, and Corihor, his father. Having become the ruler over the land of their First Inheritance, he made

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## THE NATIVE BLOOD

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Cherokee, for Pane himself had made that announcement, not knowing what it would mean.

"Look'e here," pleaded the Badger, no patronizing slap on anybody's back. "It's true the old man bet a Navajo horse would win, and according to your story, a Navajo horse won. But I bet a Navajo horse would lose, and a Navajo horse lost."

"You agreed to run a white man and a white man's horse," the Colonel cut in, "but instead you run a Cherokee and a Navajo horse—where's yer argument?"

"If you can't satisfy these people of the reservation," protested the agent, impatiently, "you'll have to get out. They won't tolerate you any more, and they'll never let you take this man's sheep on any such flimsy claim."

"And if I back down like a whipped kid," the Badger lamented, "it'll amount to the same thing. I had no idea that boy was a Cherokee, and who could be blamed for happening to get the only Navajo

horse in the whole state of Texas? This race was forced on me in such a way that I had to take it—all that I have hangs on the way I meet the dare."

"This is the time to drop this fool business," broke in the agent. "It's too ridiculous to carry on."

But the store-man complained bitterly, "That would ruin my trade—to drop it at this stage of the game would be more disastrous to me than to run and lose both races. This is the climax of a long controversy forced on me by these customers of mine—they've got me this far into it, and I've got to carry it through, even if I make the old man a present of the sheep and the money when I win them."

"Nothing doing!" barked the agent flatly, "We'll cancel the whole arrangement and let things stand as they were."

The shepherdess, listening eagerly, told her father the whole thing was to be dropped, and the old man in an ecstasy, threw his arms around Peejo, calling him son, and begging pardon for the wrongs of the years.

But the resourceful Badger held a trump card to be played in this big game: "Now look'e here, Mr. Agent," he perked up with new accent of assurance, "you agreed to let us run this race, and you made us agree we would run it over if anything was discovered contrary to the stipulated terms. I'll keep my part of the agreement—I'll get another horse and another man, but I won't back down. That, according to the plain terms of the agreement, would lose me the stakes, and worse still, it would leave me no face to carry on my trade."

"What if the other side is willing to quit?" pursued the agent, compromisingly, for he knew it would delight them.

But the Badger, feeling that he had his feet on solid earth, scorned any compromise, "If they quit, they've lost the bet—that's what they agreed to." Turning defiantly on Peejo and his white father, "Now what do they want to do? What do you want to do? You stuck your noses into this business, now get them out." *(To be Continued)*

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Shule a prisoner of war and carried him captive into Moron. That identifies Moron as the Land of their First Inheritance.

THE LAND OF HETH  
(Ether 8:2)

WHERE this land, or district, was, we do not know. Heth, according to Genesis 15, was the second son of Canaan, a descendant of Ham, and the ancestor of the Hittites, who at one time were a powerful people, strong enough to wage war against Egypt and Assyria. They inhabited Canaan at the time of the exodus. The name means "terror." Perhaps there were descendants of Ham among the friends who followed Jared and his brother from the Tower. That would account for the name of this land.

ABLUM  
(Ether 9:3)

SEE the comments on this verse. The name means "green meadows." The country was situated possibly on the Atlantic. That was the opinion of Orson Pratt, as stated

in a footnote in earlier editions of the Book of Mormon.

The hill Shim, which Omer and his family passed on their flight to Ablom, was located in a country called Antum (Mormon 1:3). This name, as some other Book of Mormon words, is evidently the Kechua "anta," which Garcillasso de la Vega translates "copper." It is, no doubt, related to "antion," a piece of gold (Alma 11:19), and "onti," a piece of silver (Alma 11:6). It is suggestive of a mining region.

Nimrah, after his brother had been murdered by their father, fled to Ablom, to the colony of Omer (Ether 9:9).

## THE LAND SOUTHWARD

THIS, as the Prophet Moroni explains (Ether 9:31, 32), was known as Zarahemla by the Nephites. It was the Land Southward to the Jaredites, while Moron, Nehor, and "the countries round about" were the "north countries" (verse 35).

## THE VALLEY OF GILGAL

IN the fourth year of the war that ended in the disaster at Ramah,

Coriantumr, the last king of the Jaredites, met his bitter enemy, Shered, in this valley. The murderous combat lasted for three days. Shered was defeated and fled to the plains of Heshbon (Ether 13:27, 28). (See Ether 6:14.) The name Gilgal means "circle." It may have been given to the valley on account of its circular form, or because of mounds erected there for dwellings or for sepulchral purposes or fortifications. The mounds were of different forms. Some were in the shape of animals. One mound in Ohio is thought to represent a snake swallowing an egg. Other mounds are circular. Circleville, Ohio, derives its name from mounds of that form.

WILDERNESS OF AKISH  
(Ether 14:3, 4, 7)

THERE is a Semitic verb "akash," to be froward, false, etc., as in Psalm 101:4, "A froward heart shall depart from me." Akish, the name, may be a derivative from the same root as this word. Its meaning would describe accurately the character of Akish, the son of Kimnor, in Ether 8:10.

Two years after the death of

Shared, his brother Gilead attacked Coriantumr. The battle of the Wilderness of Akish ensued. Gilead succeeded in usurping the throne of Coriantumr in Moron, and the latter entrenched himself and his followers in the Wilderness of Akish. They remained there for two years. During that time Gilead was murdered by his chief ecclesiastical official, who in his turn was slain by an ambitious individual named Lib. Coriantumr now attacked Lib, but he was defeated and fled to a place called Agosh. Here another battle occurred. Lib fell, but his brother Shiz assumed the leadership.

The people at this time began to split into two parties. Many thousands had been slain on the battlefields during the years of war. Of the survivors, some joined Coriantumr, others Shiz. The next battle was fought "upon the seashore," possibly on the shore of some great inland lake (Ether 14:11-26).

#### THE LAND OF CORIHOR (Ether 14:27-31)

CORIANUMR continued his retreat eastward, closely pursued by Shiz. So terrible were the losses inflicted on the armies of Shiz by the rear guard of Coriantumr that the inhabitants in the settlements through which the armies passed, fled in panic to the land of Corihor. After a three days' battle at the seashore Shiz went into camp in the Valley of Corihor, and Coriantumr pitched his tents in the Valley of Shurr. A battle was fought at the Hill Comnor. Coriantumr was severely wounded and carried from the battlefield as dead.

#### THE HILL RAMAH (Ether 15:11)

THIS is the Jaredite name for Cumorah. When Coriantumr recovered from his wounds and realized that two million men, with wives and children, making perhaps a total of between three and four million souls, had been slain during the many years of war, he offered his antagonist the kingdom if he would end further bloodshed. Shiz rejected the offer. He demanded the life of Coriantumr. So the war was continued.

Coriantumr took his stand near the waters of Ripliancum, probably an inland lake. Shiz attacked, but he was defeated and fled southward to a place called Ogath. Corian-

tumr, who was again wounded, did not pursue, but went probably northward to the country and hill of Ramah. The two deadly enemies now each had his own gathering place—one at Ramah, the other at Ogath.

The next four years' preparations were made in both these countries for a final conflict. All things being ready, the massacre at Ramah took place, as described in Ether 15:15-34.

#### CONCLUSION

IN order to get a correct picture of the conflict at Ramah, its antecedents and consequences, certain facts should be remembered.

The disaster was brought about when the leaders of the people had apostatized from the Lord, rejected His government and persecuted His prophets. The Jaredites in this country had an experience similar to that of the Israelites and Jews in their Promised Land, ages afterwards, who, after the destruction of their city and sanctuary, were slain, or scattered all over the globe, where they became "lost" both to themselves and the world.

It should also be remembered that, during the reign of Lib, the son of Kish, a considerable exodus of Jaredites took place from the north countries to the south (Ether 10:19-28). This movement was primarily for the purpose of procuring food, clothing, and materials for implements, weapons and ornaments for the agriculturists in the north who had seen their stock perish and their farms burn up during years of drought. Many of these "hunters," as they are termed, did not return. They remained in the south. They built at least one "great city," by the "narrow neck of land on the place where the sea divides the land" (Ether 10:20), as a shipping point, it may be supposed, for their exports. How many more cities they founded we do not know. But they must have multiplied at least at the same rate as their kindred in the north (Ether 9:16; 10:4, 12, 22). If the Jaredites in the north were counted by the millions (Ether 15:22), there may have been other millions in the south.

We should be reminded, further, of the fact the conflict at Ramah was the final settlement of the chief issue between two political parties, or their leaders, Coriantumr and Shiz, respectively. Both were in the

field for power and royal honors. Shiz, in addition, was consumed by an unquenchable thirst for revenge. He wanted the life of his antagonist. Their campaign during the four years preceding Ramah (Ether 15:14) was a tireless effort to bring as many people as possible together in their two gathering places, but especially men for service on the battlefield, together with their resources. That they succeeded in ensnaring in the nets of militarism a majority of the populations of Moron and adjacent countries; that is, as many as were fit for service, is certain. It was these two political parties that were totally annihilated at Ramah. A few individuals may have escaped the sword and fled. But most of the followers of the apostate party leaders perished. Shiz was the last to be slain. Coriantumr found his weary way toward the South and died in Zarahemla (Omni 21).

The battle of Ramah was one of the world's epoch-making armed contests, comparable, in a way, to Carchemish, or Salamis, anciently, or to Waterloo, Appomatox, or the Argonne,\* in more recent times. The center of the Jaredite culture in Moron and adjacent countries in the north was totally destroyed by the insane acts of savage hatred that there inspired men, instead of the Divine Spirit. The people who had gone south no longer had the benefit of connection with a visible source of revelation for their guidance. They were scattered. But they carried with them many important principles of truth, which must have, to some extent, prepared the way for the Nephites, and which are recognizable in the legends, myths, and traditions of Nahuas, Aztecs, Mayas, Quiches, Ramas, Kechuas, Aymaras, Chibchas, and Incas in the south, as well as Iroquois, Lenapes, Mandans, Sioux, Abnakes, and others in the north.

\*Carchemish, the chief city of the Hittites on the western bank of the Euphrates. In the year 717 B. C. it was destroyed by the Assyrian, Sargon II, who took the king prisoner, and deported the people, thus making an end of Hittite predominance and aspirations to become a world power, and preparing the way for the golden-headed Babylonian empire of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:37, 38).

At Salamis, 480 B. C. adverse wind and waves no less than the military skill of Themistocles, the Athenian, and other Greeks, scattered the Persian fleet and drove the hordes of Xerxes back to the East. The intended invasion of Europe failed. The Macedonian-Grecian Alexander established his copper world-kingdom, as predicted in Daniel 2:45.

At Waterloo, June 18, 1815, the European allies ended the autocracy of Napoleon I.

At Appomatox, April 8, 1865, General Lee surrendered to General Grant.

At the Argonne, France, the engagement with which ended the World War with the armistice, November 11, 1918.