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Jaredite Barges

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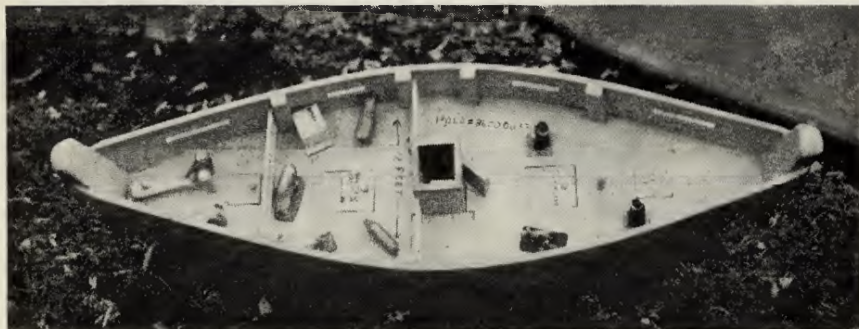
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Abstract: In this article, passages relating to the Jaredites are used as a basis for examining different aspects of the Jaredite journey including the design of the barges, a possible route of their journey, and their qualifications as ship builders.

JAREDITE BARGES

By A. L. ZOBELL, SR.



OPEN VIEW OF ZOBELL
MODEL OF JAREDITE BARGE

THE Jaredite method of ocean transport described in the Book of Mormon has been variously referred to as a submarine, a hollowed-out tree, and as a conical craft with a cylinder that revolved as the boat rolled on its journey to America. However, if we accept the account recorded in Ether 2:16, 17, and Moroni's subsequent notations (Ch. 6) wherein these vessels are described as barges, we must agree that their mode of transportation was in flat-bottomed surface craft.

The text concerning these barges reads in substance: The Brother of Jared built barges after a manner they had built before; that is, vessels they had used to transport them over "many waters" en route to the "great sea." They were built according to the instructions of the Lord, and were invulnerable against both air and water. Being tight "like a dish" and peaked at both ends, they held water both in and out and were light, compared to the "lightness of a fowl upon the water"; their length was that of a tree and the door of entry, when closed, made an absolutely tight vessel.

When Moroni was given, through the interpreters, a view of the barges, he beheld eight light craft buoyantly upon the waves of the sea. Joseph Smith must have had the same prospect, for he used the same interpreters.

If we were "to go to work and build a barge" after the above description, it would look much like a barge of today, except being "peaked at both ends" and absolute-

ly tight. We have no need to accept the "one tree idea" for the builders of these barges undoubtedly understood shipbuilding, being contemporary with their grandfather, Noah. They had seen his ark and had lived on the seashore many years where much shipping was done. They knew about boat construction long before they received the final command. Many tree lengths, fashioned into planks, fastened to the top, sides, and bottom of the hull, were used for their construction. After the building of these small, air-tight barges, deficiencies were noted by the builder, who went to the Lord and complained:

O Lord, I have made the barges according as thou hast directed me; . . . in them there is no light . . . and also we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them. (Ether 2:18-19.)

The Chief Architect then commanded:

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. (Ether 2:20.)



ZOBELL MODEL OF JAREDITE
BARGE WITH TOP COVERING

Dear Editors:

I AM enclosing a brief statement on the Jaredite Barges. I am, however, fearful that my views may cause some controversy, for they are, judging from past experience, at variance with the views of some who have speculated on this subject.

To demonstrate my views, I have built a working model, according to my understanding of the Book of Mormon description of them. I cannot agree for one moment that the barges were in any way related to a submarine, for if we allow that their submerging was anything but a passing burial in a huge wave, then we must be prepared to answer other questions: "Where did they get their power to drive them through the depths of the sea to the promised land, and where did they get their power to submerge and emerge?"

My model barge is easily carried under my arm. It is thirty inches long, twelve inches deep, and twelve inches wide. It has been demonstrated some forty times in various organizations of the Church and has been very well received.

Your brother,

A. L. Zobell,
Salt Lake City, Utah.

THE barges were of necessity tight, for they were to be buried "in the depths of the sea," and so a device was provided whereby air could enter to supply the inmates. The top hole supplied the answer to this emergency. The Lord's command: "And also in the bottom." What? A hole in the bottom of a boat! "For what purpose?" ridicules the Rev. Alexander Campbell as he queries: "To admit water?"

This was seemingly rather a peculiar order. Let us discuss the question in this manner: After the hole is made it is seen that water will come into the boat. A tube is built from the bottom to the top of the barge, housing in both holes completely. Now we have a funnel right through the boat. Water can come into the tube as high as the water line of the vessel.

The model of the barge we have built has a stop hole both in front

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BIOCHEMISTRY AND ALCOHOLIC RECREATION

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Finally, the antagonism of alcohol to morality has long been recognized. The chemistry of alcoholism emphasizes this incompatibility and its inherent danger to society. Among the thought patterns in the brain which are blotted out by the action of alcohol are those associated with appetites. Nature has made the sex impulse among the strongest of the natural appetites. As the concentration of alcohol increases in the nervous system, the wall of intelligent and spiritually stabilized restraint must inevitably crumble and disappear. It is no longer a matter of training, of pride, or of refinement; it is reduced to simple chemistry. Wherever the use of alcohol becomes widespread, loose sexual relations must follow with all the misery of shattered lives, broken homes, disease, and degradation. Even without the records of social agencies to testify, the statement could hardly be contested, since only two facts are concerned, both established experimentally:

first, under the influence of alcohol natural appetites remain active; second, alcohol destroys the acquired power of restraint.

The study of the biochemical action of alcohol in the nervous system, then, supports the conclusions that:

1. Alcohol tends to eliminate intellect from recreation in an amount proportional to the alcohol consumed.

2. A fraction of the population cannot tolerate alcohol or control its use, but soon becomes subject to addiction and drunkenness.

3. Nervous strain or shock tends to unbalance the nervous system in such a way that a moderate user of alcohol may easily lose control of drinking and become an alcoholic.

4. The acquired restraints which are a mark of refinement and culture are obliterated by the action of alcohol on the brain, leaving uncontrolled appetite to tear down the standards of morality and thus threaten the very foundation of Christian civilization.

JAREDITE BARGES

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and in back of the tube, just at the top of the second deck, the living quarters of man and animals. The hold, or bottom, is the place where food, water, and "seed of every kind" are stored. These stop holes can easily be opened or closed as needed.

The purpose of the bottom hole is at least two-fold: First, it acted as a stabilizer to keep the barge at an even keel; second, it could be used to get rid of refuse. As a third function, it may also have aided in inducing the circulation of air when the barges were "tossed upon the waves" whereby air would be sucked in and forced out again through the tube.

When the barges were ready for debarkation, all varieties of provisions were taken into them. They also had a cargo of all kinds of animals, fowls, seeds, and the "deseret." They also took fresh water. The record reports that they were "tight like a dish." In the center of the barges were provided several vats for the storage of water, which also acted as ballast, for the barges had to keep their equilibrium. When a vat was emptied for drinking purposes, it could be refilled with sea water.

After they had "set forth into the sea" furious winds blew them toward the "land of promise" and they "were many times buried in the depths of the sea and were encompassed about by many waters" but were immediately "brought forth again upon the top of the water" through the cry of their faith and the "lightness" of their craft.

It is easy to believe that boats of this size would be buried many times in the sea, for they were small, probably not more than a hundred feet long, with a cargo of between seventy and ninety tons, negotiating the Pacific Ocean with waves, at times, over fifty feet high.

Their mode of travel from the shores of Asia was in barges "upon the waters," and their motivated power was furnished by "furious winds." Quite probably their route was in the Japan Current, which travels from east to west at a rate of between twelve and twenty-one miles per day, and if the Pacific is about seven thousand miles across, the "three hundred and forty and four days" that they were upon the water would be pretty well consumed. They disembarked near the land called Desolation by the Nephites, "it being the place of their first landing."