

BM#14 "For A Wise Purpose" - Enos, Jarom, Omni, and Words of Mormon

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I. Introduction

Sometimes valuable gifts come in small packages. This is truly the case for these four small books in the Book of Mormon. By themselves their writings are condensed, however, the lessons they contain can have great value for us. Chart 1, clarifies their place in the Book of Mormon.

Chart 1. Records Abridged and Compiled by Mormon and Moroni

Original Source	Contents	Current Form
Large Plates Of Nephi	<u>Book of Lehi</u> Mosiah Alma Helaman 3 Nephi 4 Nephi	<u>Lost 116 pages</u> Abridged by Mormon And included in the Book of Mormon
Small Plates Of Nephi	1 Nephi 2 Nephi Jacob Enos Jarom Omni	Included by Mormon in the Book of Mormon
Plates of Ether	Book of Ether	Abridged by Moroni and included in the Book of Mormon

Reference: *Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 61.

As noted in Chart 1, the books of Enos, Jarom, and Omni, along with 1 and 2 Nephi and Jacob, made up the Small plates of Nephi. Each were included as written, rather than

abridged, by Mormon as found in our current Book of Mormon. The Large Plates of Nephi, excluding the Book of Lehi whose 116 pages were lost, included the books of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, 3 and 4 Nephi. Each were abridged by Mormon and included in the Book of Mormon. The plates of Ether, known as the Book of Ether, were abridged by Moroni and were included by Moroni in the current Book of Mormon. Not included in the chart, but part of the current Book of Mormon are the Words of Mormon, a historical bridge between the Small and Large plates of Nephi, also the book of Mormon written by both Mormon and Moroni and the book of Moroni that includes two letters written by his father, Mormon and as well as Moroni's own writings.

Victor L. Ludlow states,

"Eight individuals served as scribes in these books, and yet their total writing comprises only seven pages of printed text as now organized in three books. The books of Enos, Jarom, and Omni bridge over three hundred and fifty years of Nephite history. In other words, if all the thousand-year history of Lehi's posterity were written so succinctly, the Book of Mormon would be a 20-page pamphlet instead of a 531-page book. The records of Enos begin with the death of his father, Jacob, about 500 B.C. and the last scribe, Amaleki, turn the small plates of Nephi over to King Benjamin around 145 B.C. These records remained with the large plates of Nephi and were found centuries later by Mormon, who added a few last comments. These small books, along with the Words of Mormon, barely highlight the Nephites and Lamanites history for this long period.." (<http://deseretbook.com/mormon-life/gospeldoctrine-bm14>).

As we examine each of these small books, including the Words of Mormon, I believe we will be rewarded for our efforts.

II. Enos

At the conclusion of the book of Jacob, Jacob records, "I said unto my son, Enos: Take these plates. And I told him the things which my brother Nephi had commanded me, and he promised obedience unto the commands" (Jacob 7:27).

Enos 1:1

1 Behold, it came to pass that I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man---for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord---and blessed be the name of my God for it---

Not only was Jacob a great prophet and teacher, but he was also a nurturing and caring father. He taught his son, Enos, the necessary skills he needed in order to be successful in his life, especially tutoring him regarding his relationship with the Lord and the important teachings of the spirit.

Spencer W. Kimball states [*scripture verses included],

"To those of us who would pay pennies toward our unfathomable debt, there is no better example than Enos. Like many sons of good families he strayed; his sins weighed heavily upon him. He wrote:

And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I receive a remission of my sins.
(Enos 1:2.)

"He speaks graphically. He speaks not of a trite prayer but of an intense striving, a vigorous wrestling and almost interminable struggling.

Before, I went to hunt beasts in the forests;

"But no animal did he shoot or capture. He was traveling a path he had never walked before. He was reaching, knocking, asking, pleading; he was being born again. He was seeing the pleasant valleys across the barren wastes. He was searching his soul. He might have lived all his life in a weed patch, but now he envisioned a watered garden. He continues:

and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. (Enos 1:3.)

"Memory was both cruel and kind. The pictures his father had painted in sermons and admonitions now stirred his soul. He was warmed and inspired. He hungered for the good.

Then memory opened the doors to his ugly past. His soul revolted at the reliving of the baser things but yearned now for the better. A rebirth was in process. It was painful but rewarding.

And my soul hungered;

"The spirit of repentance was taking hold. He was self-convicted. He was remorseful for his transgression, eager to bury the old man of sin, to resurrect the new man of faith, of godliness.

and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul;

"This was no silent, unexpected wish or hope, but a heart-wrenching, imploring, begging, and pleading. It was a vocal and powerful prayer.

"He had now come to realize that no one can be saved in his sins, that no unclean thing can enter into the kingdom of God, that there must be a cleansing, that stains must be eliminated, new flesh over wounds. He came to realize that there must be a purging, a new heart in a new man. He knew it was not a small thing to change hearts and minds. He writes:

and all the day long did I cry unto him;

"Here is no casual prayer; no worn phrases; no momentary appeal by silent lips. All the day long, with seconds turning into minutes, and minutes into hours and hours. But when the sun had set, relief had still not come, for repentance is not a single act nor forgiveness an unearned gift. So precious to him was communication with and approval of his Redeemer that his determined soul pressed on without ceasing.

yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. (Enos 1:4.)

"Could the Redeemer resist such determined imploring? How many have thus persisted? How many, with or without serious transgressions, have ever prayed all day and into the night? Have many ever wept and prayed for ten hours? for five hours? for one? for thirty minutes? for ten? Our

praying is usually measured in seconds and yet with a heavy debt to pay we still expect forgiveness of our sins. We offer pennies to pay the debt of thousands of dollars.

"How much do you pray, my friends? How often? How earnestly? If you have errors in your life, have you really wrestled before the Lord? Have you yet found your deep forest of solitude? How much has your soul hungered? How deeply have your needs impressed your heart? When did you kneel before your Maker in total quiet? For what did you pray---your own soul? How long did you thus plead for recognition---all day long? And when the shadows fell, did you still raise your voice in mighty prayer, or did you satisfy yourself with some hackneyed word and phrase?

"If you have not, I sincerely hope that the time will soon come when, as others before you have, you will struggle in the spirit and cry mightily and covenant sincerely, so that the voice of the Lord God will come into your mind, as it did to Enos, saying:

...thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

Because of thy faith in Christ...I will grant unto thee according to thy desires... (Enos 1:5,8,12.)

"For this is the ultimate object of all prayer, to bring men closer to God, to give them a new birth, to make them heirs of his kingdom." ("Raise Your Voice to the Heavens," in *Faith Precedes the Miracle*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972, [Fifth Printing, 1975], 209-212); The speech was originally given at a Brigham Young University devotional as "Prayer," October 11, 1961).

If the brief writings of Enos had ended with him only sharing this experience regarding prayer, we would have been richly blessed. It does not end here.

Enos 1:6

6 And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

Bryan Richards states,

"Indeed, we should remember the words of Enos, that God could not lie (v.6). When the Lord promises to give us whatever we want, as long as we ask in faith believing in his name, he means what he says. We have no reason to doubt, no reason to waver else we become like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed (James 1:6)."
(www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Enos-1).

Enos 1:7-8

7 And I said: Lord, how is it done?

8 And he said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith had made thee whole.

Jesus Christ, as the result of his atonement, has the power to forgive sins. It is necessary that we exercise the prerequisite faith in his atonement, willingly accept his commandments and manifest sincere regret for our transgressions. This is also accompanied by our sincere and heartfelt desire to be clean, that we, by his grace, may then obtain forgiveness. This blessing is available to all, who upon meeting the necessary requisites, kneel before his throne in humble prayer.

Enos 1:9

9 Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them.

Enos had received forgiveness for his own transgressions, however, he does not leave the forest yet. Enos is aware of the efforts of his father and uncle, and grandfather before him, in crying repentance to his brethren, the Nephites. He cannot leave the forest without seeking the Lord's blessing upon his people. He kneels again on the forest ground and now petitions the Lord on their behalf.

Enos 1:10

10 And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind again, saying: I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments. I have given unto them this land and it is holy land; and I curse it not save it be for the cause of iniquity; wherefore, I will visit thy brethren according as I have said; and their transgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads.

Enos knew of the wickedness of the Nephites and the efforts of the priests and teachers to bring them to repentance, just as his father and Uncle Joseph had done before them. As the Lord promised to continue to bless the land and his people, if they would repent from their transgressions and humble themselves before him. He knew that there were others, like him, who would repent.

Enos 1:11-12

11 And after I, Enos, had heard these words, my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; and I prayed unto him with many long struggling for my brethren, the Lamanites.

12 And it came to pass that after I had prayed and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me: I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith.

Enos, having received confirmation that his brethren would be given the opportunity to be forgiven if they would repent, now turned his thoughts to his brethren, the Lamanites. The Lamanites had continued to rejected any efforts they made to teach them.

Enos 1:13, 16-18

13 And now behold, this was the desire which I desired of him---that if it should so be, that my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means be destroyed, and the Lamanities should not be destroyed, that the Lord God would preserve a record of my people, the Nephites; even it if so be by the power of his holy arm, that it might be brought forth

at some future day unto the Lamanites, that, perhaps, they might be brought unto salvation--

16 And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would preserve the records; and he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time.

17 And I, Enos, knew it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore my soul did rest.

18 And the Lord said unto me: Thy fathers have also required of me this thing; and it shall be done unto them according to their faith; for their faith was like unto thine.

Monte S. Nyman states,

"Note that many others besides Enos had requested that the records be preserved. Enos was told that his fathers, "also required of me this thing;" (Enos 1:18). His fathers would be Jacob, and Lehi (and probably also Nephi) of which requirement the record is silent...[It is important to note that] the records have come forth and the time has come for the Lamanites to individually accept or reject them according to their agency. They must also be diligent in keeping the Lord's commandments to receive the promised blessings." (*Book of Mormon Commentary: These Records are True, Vol.2.* Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution, L.L.C., 2004, 128-129).

Enos 1:15

15 Wherefore, I knowing that that Lord God was able to preserve our records, I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believe that ye shall receive in the name of Christ ye shall receive it.

This is another priceless nugget in Enos' condensed record. It formed the basis of his faith and it can also strengthen ours. Enos truly believed Christ, as opposed to believing in Christ. When we truly believe in Christ's words and in His promises to us, it will make a difference in our own lives. No longer when the wind of doubt blows, will it also shake our faith. We will not waver. We will remain firm to the witness we have received from the Holy Ghost. We will trust in what we do know, be it small or great. We are not

shaken because we do not have an answer for every question others may ask. We can try to find an answer to their question. Until then, we can also share with them our testimony of what we do know to be true.

Enos 1:19-20

19 And now it came to pass that I, Enos, went about among the people of Nephi, prophesying of things to come, and testifying of the things which I had heard and seen.

20 And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God. But our labors were vain; their hatred was fixed, and they were led by their evil nature that they became wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people full of idolatry and filthiness;...

It appears that Enos had not only been given the responsibility to be the keeper of the Nephi records, but also had been given the blessing of seership which enabled him to be able to prophesize of "things to come,...[and] of the things which I had heard and seen" (Enos 1:19).

Enos 1:22-23

22 And there were exceedingly many prophets among us. And the people were a stiffnecked people, hard to understand.

23 And there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness, preaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God, and all these things---stirring them up continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was nothing short of these things and exceedingly great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction. And after this manner do I write concerning them.

Enos shares the constant efforts it took on the part of the prophets to bring the Nephites to repentance. His concern was not only for the welfare of the Nephites, but also for his brethren, the wild and ferocious Lamanities, and their indifference to their efforts to restore them to the faith.

Enos 1:26

26 And I saw that I must go down to my grave, having been wrought upon by the power of God that I must preach and prophecy unto this people, and declare the word according to the truth which is in Christ. And I have declared it in all my days, and have rejoiced in it above that of the world.

Enos, like his Father, Uncle, and Grandfather before him, had spent his life in the service of his fellowmen. His prayer of humility as he sought forgiveness from his transgressions, stands as an example for each of us. His concern was not only forgiveness for his own sins, but also the welfare of his brethren, the Nephites. He knew of their tendency toward wickedness despite the choice blessings they had received from the Lord. It also included his love of the Lamanites, and his desire that the records of the Nephites would be preserved until the time came when they also may be brought to salvation. The translation of the Book of Mormon and its availability to all is a direct fulfillment of the Lord's promise to Enos and others on behalf of the Lamanites.

Enos 1:27

27 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. Amen.

Stephen L. Richards states,

"For many centuries the world was without an explanation of the 'many mansions' in our Father's house. [See John 14:2-3.] In February 1832, the Prophet Joseph wrote: 'From sundry revelations which have been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body, the term Heaven, as intended for the

Saints' eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one.' (See introduction to D&C 76.)

"It was in answer to this query in the mind of the Prophet that the revelation which is sometimes characterized as 'The Vision' came to him. It is the explanation of the words of the Savior in that it defines the mansions, kingdoms, and glories which prevail in heaven, 'my Father's house.' These kingdoms are designated as the celestial, the terrestrial, and the telestial." (*Conference Reports*, October, 1956, 43).

Enos had fulfilled his responsibility to the Lord. He would now receive his celestial reward.

III. Jarom

Jarom is the son of Enos. Upon his father's death, Jarom now receives the plates from his father.

Jarom 1:1-2

1 Now behold, I, Jarom, write a few words according to the commandment of my father, Enos, that our genealogy may be kept.

2 And as these plates are small, and as these things are written for the intent of the benefit of our brethren the Lamanites, wherefore, it must needs be that I write a little; but I shall not write the things of my prophesying, nor of my revelations. For what could I write more than my fathers have written? For have they not revealed the plan of salvation? I say unto you, Yea; and this sufficeth me.

Jarom is favored of the Lord for he, like his father, also receives revelations and gives prophecies to the people. Unfortunately, he does not feel inclined to record them for the benefit they may provide for others, feeling that what others have written is sufficient. In this regard, he underestimates the value of his words from the Lord. Jarom is like those who compare themselves to others, and then feel their contributions would have little meaning. His example reminds each of us not to underestimate the contribution our efforts may have in furthering the work of the Lord if we would just forget ourselves and focus instead on those individuals we have been called to serve.

Jarom 1:3-4

3 Behold, it is expedient that much should be done among this people, because of the hardness of their hearts, and the deafness of their ears, and the blindness of their minds, and the stiffness of their necks; nevertheless, God is exceedingly merciful unto them, and has not as yet swept them off from the face of the land.

4 And there are many among us who have many revelations, for they are not all stiffnecked. And as many as are not stiffnecked and have faith, have communion with the Holy Spirit, which maketh manifest unto the children of men, according to their faith.

Jarom reminds us that even those who were chosen to receive the covenant blessings of the Gospel may also be overcome by the temptations of the devil. The qualities of the members that Jarom notes that made them susceptible to the temptations of the devil included hardness of heart, blindness of their mind, and, stiffness of their necks. These were qualities the children of Israel also exhibited. (See 1 Samuel 6:6; Deuteronomy 28:28-29; Deuteronomy 31:27). These qualities are in contrast to those that invite the spirit of the Lord to abide with us. They include humility, recognition of the spirit, and a willingness to comply with the will of the Lord.

Jarom 1:5

5 And now, behold, two hundred years had passed away, and the people of Nephi had waxed strong in the land. They observed to keep the law of Moses, and the sabbath day holy unto the Lord. And they profaned not; neither did they blaspheme. And the laws of the land were exceedingly strict.

Jarom provides yet additional qualities that enabled those who were righteous to have the spirit of the Lord to be with them. These included keeping the law of Moses, and the Sabbath day holy. The law of Moses was designed to keep them in remembrance of the great and final sacrifice that was going to be made by the Savior in the future. Keeping the Sabbath day holy, was also designed to keep the people remembering their God. Obeying these two laws led to their

not profaning the name of God whom they loved, nor speak evil of Him or be irreverent.

Jarom 1:7

7 And it came to pass that they [Lamanites] came many times against us, the Nephites, to battle. But our kings and our leaders were mighty men in the faith of the Lord; and they taught the people the ways of the Lord; wherefore, we withstood the Lamanites and swept them away out of our lands, and began to fortify our cities or whatsoever place of our inheritance.

The monarchical system of kings that had begun following the separation of the people of Nephi from the Lamanites had continued. At this time the kings and military leaders were righteous men who were strong in their faith of the Lord.

Jarom 1:9-10

9 And thus being prepared to meet the Lamanites, they did not prosper against us. But the word of the Lord was verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: Inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land.

10 And it came to pass that the prophets of the Lord did threaten the people of Nephi, according to the word of God, that if they did not keep the commandments, but should fall into transgression, they should be destroyed from off the face of the land.

The key to having peace as in the nation is not greater weapons, but obedience to the commandments the Lord has given. When we as individuals, families, or a nation become disobedient and no longer keep the commandments of the Lord, we are in danger of being destroyed. Prosperity or destruction depends on our obedience to the Lord.

Jarom 1:11

11 Wherefore, the prophets, and the priests, and the teachers, did labor diligently, exhorting with all long-suffering the people to diligence; teaching the law of Moses, and the intent for which it was given; persuading them to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was. And after this manner did they teach them.

12 And it came to pass that by so doing they kept them from being destroyed upon the face of the land; for they did prick their hearts with the word, continually stirring them up unto repentance.

How easy it is for us to forget unless we are brought to remember our dependence upon the Lord. Without the words of our Prophets and inspired leaders to guide and admonish us, we can become complacent in our worship and take for granted the blessings the Lord has given us. It is during these occasions when we are most susceptible to the temptations of the devil and his servants. "You do not need to pray," they whisper, "Nor go to Church." "It is not necessary to reading the scriptures every day." "Be good to yourself, take a break from the commandments. It's Ok." With these subtle words, we begin to let down our guard. As we do so, we become ever more vulnerable to their suggestions. Before long, we find ourselves removed from the spirit and a spirit of unhappiness begins to envelop our lives. It is important that we stop, reverse our direction, and return to those things in our lives that invite the spirit to be with us, rather than continuing to distant ourselves from it. It is never too early or too late to repent.

Jarom 1:15

15 And I deliver these plates into the hands of my son Omni, that they may be kept according to the commandments of my fathers.

With these words, Jarom gives the plates to his son, Omni.

George Reynolds states,

"**Jarom.** A Nephite prophet who lived in the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ. He was the son of Enos, the son of Jacob, the brother of Nephi and was entrusted with the care of the plates of Nephi, which he appears to have retained 59 years, or from the 180th to the 239th year of the Nephite annals." (*A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*. Together with Janne M. Sjodahl. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1891, [1954], 118).

IV. Omni

No less than five individuals contributed to the book of Omni. Chemish contributed only one verse and his brother, Amaron, wrote his last verses the very day he gave the plates to Chemish. Amaleki, the last writer, contributed the greater number of verses with nineteen. Omni, for whom the book is named, wrote three verses.

Omni 1:1-2

**1 Behold, it came to pass that I, Omni, being
commanded by my father, Jarom, that I should write
somewhat upon these plates, to preserve our genealogy-
2 Wherefore, in my days, I would that ye should know
that I fought much with the sword to preserve my
people, the Nephites, from falling into the hands of
their enemies, the Lamanites. But behold, I of myself
am a wicked man, and I have not kept the statutes and
the commandments of the Lord as I ought to have done.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"He [Omni] refers to himself as 'a wicked man' because he had not kept the statutes and commandments of the Lord. It need not be supposed from such an admission that he was guilty of any gross immorality, but rather that he was not zealous in honoring the law of Moses, and in keeping other religious obligations. Not having lived according to the Spirit, he was not prepared to teach or write after the manner of the Spirit, and therefore found it necessary to pass the plates to his son Amaron without making any spiritual addition to them." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992), 113).

Omni 1:5-7

**5 Behold, it came to pass that three hundred and
twenty years had passed away, and the more wicked part
of the Nephites were destroyed.
6 For the Lord would not suffer after he had led them
out of the land of Jerusalem and kept and preserved
them from falling into the hands of their enemies,
yea, he would not suffer that the words should not be
verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying**

that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall not prosper in the land.

7 Wherefore, the Lord did visit them in great judgment; nevertheless, he did spare the righteous that they should not perish, but did deliver them out of the hands of their enemies.

These words of Amaron are a powerful witness to the fact that the Lord keeps his promises. The disobedient and wicked did perish at the hands of their enemies, while the righteous were saved. The people had been warned by the holy prophets of their pending destruction if they did not repent and those who ignored their warning, perished. Those who were righteous were saved. The Lord gives the people sufficient time in order to complete their repentance process before the destruction comes, but it will come to those who continue in their unrighteousness.

Omni 1:9

9 Now I, Chemish, write what few things I write, in the same book with my brother; for behold, I saw the last which he wrote, that he wrote it with his own hand; and he wrote it in the day that he delivered them unto me. And after this manner we keep the records, for it is according to the commandments of our fathers. And I make an end.

As I read the single verse that Chemish wrote, I reflect on his words, "And after this manner we keep the records." (Omni 1:9). I am mindful of the difference between serving and magnifying your call to serve. Yes, Chemish, and all others who chose to just serve, you did do as you were commanded, but not more. Had you, and others, chosen to magnify your call to serve, your record would not have been so sparse. You would have shared the prophecies, revelations or other sacred teachings of the prophets, that were received during the years you were responsible for the records. You would have made the extra effort to not just serve, but to magnify your calling to serve as a writer of sacred records. Your example does, however, serve to remind each of us when we receive a calling from the Lord, it is important that we magnify our calling and do all that we can to further the work of the Lord. The Lord wants us to do our best, and that involves doing more than just the minimum.

Omni 1:10-11

**10 Behold, I, Abinadom, am the son of Chemish...
11 And behold, the record of this people is engraven upon plates which is had by the kings, according to the generations; and I know of no revelation save that which has been written, neither prophecy; wherefore, that which is sufficient is written. And I make an end.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Abinadom announced that that which others have written was sufficient and passes the plates on to his son Amaleki. It is difficult to ascertain whether Abinadom is saying that he and his people had received no revelations, or whether he intends to say that there are no great revelations and teachings which might be mentioned beyond that which is already recorded on the plates. It ought be observed that if what had been written was in fact sufficient, there would have been no need to pass he records from generation to generation with the command that they be cared for and added to under the tutelage of the Spirit." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt LaKe City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992), 113).

Omni 1:12

12 Behold, I am Amaleki, the son of Abinadom. Behold, I will speak unto you somewhat concerning Mosiah, who was made king over the land of Zarahemla; for behold, he being warned of the Lord that he should flee out of the land of Nephi, and as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord should depart out the land with him, into the wilderness--

Bryan Richards states,

"The Nephites [originally] landed in an unnamed area and remained there until the conflict between Nephi and his brothers became so intense that Nephi had to take as many as would follow him to another area. They were taken to [a land they called] 'the land of Nephi.' the journey was described as taking many days (2 Nephi 5:7). The Nephites remained here for several centuries.

"...Apparently Mosiah now [having been warned of the Lord] takes as many as would follow him and travels out of the land of Nephi. Presumably, each Nephi move sent them further north. (This is not explicitly recorded but make sense given the fact that the Lamanites were later described as inhabiting the lands to the south and the Nephites were described as inhabiting the lands to the north.) So Mosiah takes his people from the land of Nephi to the land of Zarahemla. Elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, the record indicates that this distance could be traveled in a 21 day journey (see Mosiah 23:3; 24:20-25). There is nothing in the record which suggests that great, long journeys over thousands of miles took place among the Nephites." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Omni-1).

Omni 1:13-14

13 ...And they were admonished continually by the word of God; and they were led by the power of his arm, through the wilderness until they came down into the land which is called the land of Zarahemla.

14 And they discovered a people, who were called the people of Zarahemla. Now, there was great rejoicing among the people of Zarahemla; and also Zarahemla did rejoice exceedingly, because the Lord had sent the people of Mosiah with the plates of brass which contained the record of the Jews.

Under the direction of the Lord, Mosiah and all those who would accompany him departed from the land of Nephi and traveled North. They arrived at a valley inhabited by the people of Zarahemla being ruled by King Zarahemla. They were pleased when they learned that Mosiah had with him the plates of brass which contained a record of the Jews.

Omni 1:15-16

15 Behold, it came to pass that Mosiah discovered that the people of Zarahemla came out from Jerusalem at the time that Zedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon.

16 And they journeyed in the wilderness, and were brought by the hand of the Lord across the great waters, into the land where Mosiah discovered them; and they had dwelt there from that time forth.

The people of Zarahemla are also referred to as the Mulekites. Mulek was the youngest son of King Zedekiah. King Zedekiah was the king of Judah at the time of the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem [587 B.C.; 2 Chronicles 36:11]. Mulek and others had been protected from the Babylonians and were led by the Lord to the land of promise where Lehi and his party had been previously. (See Helaman 8:21.) While Lehi and his party had become established in the South, Mulek and his company had settled in the North. (See Helaman 6:10.) King Zarahemla was a descendent of Mulek.

Omni 1:17

17 And at the time that Mosiah discovered them, they had become exceedingly numerous. Nevertheless, they had had many wars and serious contentions, and had fallen by the sword from time to time; and their language had become corrupted; and they had brought no records with them; and they denied the being of their Creator; and Mosiah, nor the people of Mosiah could understand them.

We learn that as the result of the Mulekites not having brought any records or scriptures with them, their language had become corrupted and they had also lost their fundamental belief in a Creator. It now becomes clearer to us as to why Lehi was commanded of the Lord to have his sons return to Jerusalem to retrieve the records. (See 1 Nephi 3:4.) It was the Spirit who had confirmed to Nephi that it was necessary for him to kill Laban, for, as he had then said, "It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief" (1 Nephi 4:13).

Omni 1:18-19

18 But it came to pass that Mosiah caused that they should be taught in his language. And it came to pass that after they were taught in the language of Mosiah, Zarahemla gave a genealogy of his fathers, according to his memory; and they were written, but not in these plates.

19 And it came to pass that the people of Zarahemla, and of Mosiah, did unite together; and Mosiah was appointed to be their king.

The Mulekites or the people of Zarahemla and the people of Mosiah are united into one people. They are presided over by Mosiah, who became their king.

Omni 1:20-22

20 And it came to pass in the days of Mosiah, there was a large stone brought unto him with engravings on it; and he did interpret the engravings by the gift and power of God.

21 And they gave an account of one Cortantumr, and the slain of his people. And Coriantumr was discovered by the people of Zarahemla; and he dwelt with them for the space of nine moons.

22 It also spake a few words concerning his fathers. And his first parents came out from the tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people; and the severity of the Lord fell upon them according to his judgments, which are just; and their bones lay scattered in the land northward.

We will learn as we read the book of Ether that was translated by Moroni, that Coriantumr was the last remaining member of the Jaredites. (They had come to the promised land at the time the Lord had confounded the language of those in the city of Babel who built the Tower in approximately 2300 B.C.) The Jaredites were led by the hand of the Lord to the promised land. Here they built a civilization until their wickedness in approximately 590 B.C. brought destruction to their nation. The lone survivor, Coriantumr, was discovered by the people of Zarahemla.

It is in the book of Omni, from the writings of Amaleki, we learn of three civilizations who inhabited ancient America and whose record is found in the Book of Mormon. These are: the Nephites, the Mulekites/People of Zarahemla, and the Jaredites.

Omni 1:23

23 Behold, I, Amaleki, was born in the day of Mosiah; and I have lived to see his death; and Benjamin, his son, reigneth in his stead.

It is important to understand that king Mosiah who led the people of Nephi, under the direction of the Lord, to join

with the people of Zarahemla is referenced as Mosiah I. We will during the next lesson [BM#15] learn about King Benjamin who is his son. Upon his death, King Benjamin will confer his kingdom to his son, who is referenced as King Mosiah II.

Omni 1:25-26

25 And it came to pass that I began to be old; and having no seed, and knowing king Benjamin to be a just man before the Lord, wherefore, I shall deliver up these plates unto him, exhorting all men to come unto God, the Holy One of Israel, and believe in prophesying, and in revelations, and in the ministering of angels, and in the gift of interpreting languages, and in all things which are good save it comes from the Lord: and that which is evil cometh from the devil.

26 and now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Amaleki's imagery is well-chosen. His allusion is to the burnt offering, it being the only sacrificial offering which was entirely consumed. This ordinance, which was had from the days of Adam, was 'a type connoting the necessity of complete submission to the will of God, with attendant idea of total dedication to his service. When we covenant to live the law of sacrifice we are announcing that our sacrifice will in like manner be one of complete submission and total dedication.' (Joseph Fielding McConkie. *Gospel Symbolism*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985, 87). Partial commitment neither calls forth the blessings of heaven nor seals gospel covenants." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992), 116).

Omni 1:27-30

27 And now I would speak somewhat concerning a certain number who went up into the wilderness to return to

the land of Nephi; for there was a large number who were desirous to possess the land of their inheritance.

28 Wherefore, they went up into the wilderness. And their leader being a strong and mighty man, and a stiffnecked man, wherefore he caused a contention among them; and they were all slain, save fifty, in the wilderness, and they returned again to the land of Zarahemla.

29 And it came to pass that they also took others to a considerable number, and took their journey again into the wilderness.

30 And I, Amaleki, had a brother, who also went with them; and I have not since known concerning them. And I am about to lie down in my grave; and these plates are full. And I make an end of my speaking.

We shall learn more about the second group led by Zeniff who settle in the land of Nephi. The record of their experiences and lessons learned are found in the book of Mosiah, Chapters 9-22.

Amaleki refers to Zeniff as "a stiffnecked man." I wonder if this is also in reference to his persistent determination to return to the land of Nephi, possibly against counsel from his spiritual leaders. While we each have our agency to choose, when we are obstinate and stubborn in our actions, our choices are almost always contrary to the will of the Lord. If we obstinately persist, we often come to regret our actions.

Bryan Richards states,

"These plates are full. This is the end of the small plates of Nephi. This was the Lord's great backup plan--preserve the small plates in case someone named Martin Harris should lose the 116 pages translated from the large plates. This story is one of the greatest examples of the foreknowledge of God and his great wisdom in preparing for the foibles of man." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Omni-1).

You will recall that when Joseph Smith was in the process of translating the plates given to him by the angel Moroni, Martin Harris requested that he be allowed to show the 116 pages, then translated, to his wife. He made the request three times, after having been told "No" by the Lord. On the third occasion, his request was granted under strict

conditions. Martin violated these conditions and as a result, the 116 pages were lost. It was the plan of the critics of Joseph Smith to use these pages to expose Joseph Smith as a fraud. Rather than retranslate the pages from the plates of Lehi, Joseph was told by the Lord to translate the small plates, which Mormon had included, as they covered the similar period of time but contained more spiritual teachings than the same period from the large plates of Lehi. As a result we have the translation of the small plates of Nephi. However, the record on the Large plates of Nephi, prior to the book of Mosiah that included 116 pages of manuscript text was lost to the world.

With these final remarks by Amaleki, we close the book of Omni having benefited from its teachings.

V. The Words of Mormon

Words of Mormon 1:1

1 And now I, Mormon, being about to deliver up the record which I have been making into the hands of my son Moroni, behold I have witnessed almost all the destruction of my people, the Nephites.

According to the record, the year is approximately A.D. 385. It is during the time of war between the Lamanites and the Nephites. The last battle has not yet taken place and Mormon still has further work to do on the translation. In fact, he has only abridged the Large plates of Lehi. He has not yet abridged the other five books on the Large plates of Nephi that include Mosiah through 4 Nephi.

Words of Mormon 1:3

3 And now, I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written; for after I had made an abridgment from the plates of Nephi down to the reign of this king Benjamin, of whom Amaleki spake, I searched among the records which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates, which contained this small account of prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this king Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi.

The plates which Mormon refers to are known as the Small plates of Nephi. They are now included as written in the

Book of Mormon. Mormon did not abridged the words of these prophets.

Mormon will now return to abridging the records found on the Large plates of Nephi. Before he does so, he will add a historical bridge between the Small plates of Nephi and the Large plates of Nephi.

Eldin Ricks states,

"There can be but one explanation for his [Mormon] adding this historical appendage to the ancient *Small Plates of Nephi*. It was necessary as a bridge between the point in the early lifetime of King Benjamin when the *Small Plates of Nephi* end and the point in the later lifetime of Benjamin where the Book of Mosiah begins. It was necessary, that is, if the *Small Plates of Nephi* were to serve as a possible substitute for, or complete historical supplement to, the secular Book of Lehi. Perhaps from Mormon's point of view his actions then and there, make the Book of Lehi the supplement and the *Small Plates of Nephi* the real history of the early period, for by integrating the *Small Plates of Nephi* with the Book of Mosiah he now had a continuous record of the religious writings of his people from the days of the Prophet Nephi down to his own day." (*Story of the Formation of the Book of Mormon Plates*. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1971, 8).

Words of Mormon 1:6-7

6 But behold, I shall take these plates, which contain these prophesying and revelations, and put them with the remainder of my record, for they are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren.
7 And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh in me to do according to his will.

Note the words of the Lord to Joseph Smith following the loss of the 116 pages by Martin Harris.

43 I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.

44 Behold, they have only got a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi.

45 Behold, there are many things engraven upon the [Small] plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work.

46 And, behold, all the remainder of this work does contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers should come forth unto this people.

This is the inspired word of the Lord to Joseph Smith regarding the replacement he had provided, through Mormon, to foil the efforts of the distracters to the Lord's work.

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"At least six times in the Book of Mormon the phrase 'for a wise purpose' is used in reference to the making, writing, and preserving of the small plates of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 9:5; Words of Mormon 1:7; Alma 37:2, 12, 14, 18). We know of one such wise purpose--the most obvious one--was to compensate for the lost 116 pages of manuscript. But it strikes me that there is a 'wiser purpose' than that...the key to such a suggestion is in verse 45 of Section 10.. He says, 'Behold, there are many things engraven upon the [small] plates of Nephi, which do throw *greater views* upon my gospel.' So clearly...it was not tit for tat, this for that--you give me 116 pages of manuscript and I'll give you 142 pages of printed text. Not so. We got back more than we lost. And it was known from the beginning that it would be so. We do not know exactly what was missed in the 116 pages, but we do know that what we received on the small plates was the personal declaration of three great witnesses, [Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah] three of the great doctrinal voices of the Book of Mormon, testifying that Jesus is the Christ...I think you could make a pretty obvious case that the *sole* purpose of the small plates was to give a platform for these three witnesses." ("A Standard Unto My People," in *CES Symposium on the Book of Mormon*, 9 August 1994, Brigham Young University, 7-9).

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"It is generally believed that Joseph Smith continued his translation of the large plates of Nephi and the works of Moroni (that is, to the end of the Book of Mormon) before he translated the small plates." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 122).

Words of Mormon 1:8

8 And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a delightsome people.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Mormon had perfect confidence in the power of the Book of Mormon to turn men to Christ; to touch the hearts of sincere readers; to make of all men---particularly the descendents of Lehi---'a delightsome people.' Through receiving the ordinances of salvation and living in harmony with the commandments of God, men and women become happy and delightsome people." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 122).

Words of Mormon 1:11

11 And they [records] were handed down from king Benjamin, from generation to generation until they have fallen into my hands. And I, Mormon, pray to God that they may be preserved from this time henceforth. And I know they will be preserved; for there are great things written upon them, out of which my people and their brethren shall be judged at the great and last day, according to the word of God which is written.

These records did not just fall into Mormon's hands.

Bryan Richards states,

"The small plates were kept with the large plates from the time of King Benjamin until the days of Mormon. Ammaron was the custodian of the plates in Mormon's day. He saw that

Mormon was a sober child and decided to give him custody of the plates, but instructed him not to obtain them until the age of 24 (Mormon 1:2-3). Presumably at age 24, Mormon goes to the specified location, the hill Shim, and takes the Large Plates."

(www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/WrdsMormon1).

Mormon 1:4

4 And behold, [Ammaron instructs Mormon], ye shall take the plates of Nephi unto yourself, and the remainder shall ye leave in the place where they are; and ye shall engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that ye have observed concerning this people.

This record comprises Mormon 1-7. His son, Moroni, will complete the remaining two chapters. Mormon will return to the hill [age 64?] and retrieve all the records, "seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow all the land" (Mormon 4:23). In A.D. 385, according to the record, he will return the records to the hill Cumorah. (See Mormon 6:6.)

Joseph Fielding Smith and Robert L. Millet state,

"Men are judged according to the light and knowledge they have received---the scriptural records in their possession and also the commandments and divine directives delivered by the legal administrators in their own day. Members of the Church in the dispensation of the fullness of times will be judged by the doctrines and standards set forth in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the words of the living oracles (see D&C 20:12-15; 2 Nephi 33:11; Ether 5:4, 6; Moroni 10:127)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987, [11th Printing, 1999], 290).

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"Do eternal consequences rest upon our response to this book? Yes, either to our blessing or our condemnation. Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit. Otherwise he is placing his soul in jeopardy and neglecting that which could give spiritual and intellectual unity to his whole life. There is a difference between a convert who is built on the rock of Christ

through the Book of Mormon and stays hold of that iron rod, and one who is not." (*A Witness and a Warning*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988, 7-8).

Words of Mormon 1:12-14

12 And now, concerning this king Benjamin---he had somewhat of contentions among his own people.

13 And it came to pass also that the armies of the Lamanites came down out of the land of Nephi, to battle against his people. But behold, king Benjamin gathered together his armies, and he did stand against them; and he did fight with the strength of his own arm, with the sword of Laban.

14 And in the strength of the Lord they did contend against their enemies, until they had slain many thousands of the Lamanites. And it came to pass that they did contend against the Lamanites until they had driven them out of all the lands of their inheritance.

As we are introduced to King Benjamin by Mormon, we learn some important facts about him. His reign was not easy for him. He not only had to deal with contentions among his own people, he also had to deal with Lamanites who had come to battle against his people. In the battles, He is a participant with his army as they stand against the attacks by the Lamanites "in the strength of the Lord." Because they were not the aggressors, but instead were defending their land, they were victorious in driving the Lamanites "out of all the lands of their inheritance" (Words of Mormon 1:14). But these were not all of his attributes.

Words of Mormon 1:17-18

17 For behold, king Benjamin was a holy man, and he did reign over his people in righteousness; and there were many holy men in the land, and they did speak the word of God with power and with authority; and they did use much sharpness because of the stiffneckedness of the people---

18 Wherefore, with the help of these [holy men], king Benjamin, by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land.

Of all the attributes of King Benjamin, the most important and the one we each should strive to obtain, is that he was

a holy man and, as a result, he reigned over his people in righteousness. Because of the close relationship which he had established with the Lord, his actions were based upon righteousness, rather than pride, force or desire for power. He understood and appreciated the effect proclaiming of the word by the holy prophets could have upon his people and he supported their efforts. It was through their combined efforts that once more peace was established among his people. As we will learn during our next lesson [BM#15], marvelous things can occur to a people and nation when they are governed by a holy man.

VI. Conclusions

As promised, there are many truths found in these few pages of scripture. Let us review some of the highlights.

The book of Enos begins with him seeking forgiveness from his sins. Through his experience with heartfelt prayer, he was able to obtain forgiveness from his sins. He was also able to cast off his sins and to undergo a change from within, that gave him new spiritual birth. This rebirth is as essential to Enos as it is for each of us. It is not just a declaration of belief, as important as this first step is, but a sincere desire to be clean that takes additional effort to accomplish. In fact, it is not just accomplished in a day or week or month, but must continue over our lifetime. Enos taught us the initial steps. Note that once he received forgiveness from his sins, his thoughts turned first to his people, the Nephites, and then to his brethren, the Lamanites. As our rebirth continues, we become less focused on self and more concerned about the welfare of others, whether it be in word or deed.

Enos reminds us that after establishing a belief in Christ, it is then important for us to believe Christ's promises to us. (See Enos 1:15.) He will not forsake us, but will guide us through the storm, carrying us, if necessary.

The words, the Savior spoke to his apostles, prior to his departure was "In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2), were also referenced by Enos. We learn that his mansions are the kingdoms, also reference by Paul, like unto the sun, the moon, and the stars. (See 1 Corinthians 15:40-42). These, Paul notes, are the celestial and terrestrial kingdoms and the Joseph Smith Translation adds the name of the third,

the telestial. (See JST, 1 Corinthians 15:40). In reality, we are making our choices as to which kingdom we desire during our journey on earth. For a further discussion of the qualifications for each kingdom, see Doctrine and Covenants, Section 76.

In the book of Jarom, we learned three important lessons. The first is not to let our self-doubt detour us from fulfilling calls of service that are extended to us. Second, he reminds us of those qualities that make us susceptible to apostasy. (See Jarom 1:3-4.) None of us are immune from the temptations of the devil and his minions, and, therefore, we must not let our guard down. Third, our adherence to the words of the Prophets and our spiritual leaders, as well as our obedience to the commandments are essential if we are to be able to endure to the end in righteousness.

The book of Omni written by five different writers also offer nuggets of truth that can bless our lives. Omni declaration that he is a "wicked man" need not lead us to suppose that he was truly unworthy to write in the records. However, if we believe that we are wicked, it is important that we then take the necessary steps to make sure we are able to have the spirit to bless our lives.

Amaron, the second writer, shares his witness that God keeps his promises in that the unrighteous were punished and the righteous were blessed. All were warned by the Lord's prophet's, but not all heeded the warning.

Chemish, the third writer, left us only one verse. His actions remind us that it is one thing to receive a call to serve, and another for us to magnify our call. When we fail to fulfill our calling to the best of our ability, others may also be affected by our lack of effort.

Abinadom, fourth writer, the son of Chemish, follows his father's example, and in his two verses, reminds us that this pattern may also be reflected in the actions of those closest to us. It would not surprise many if you learned a Father, in most instances, who did not value the reading of the scriptures, neither did his son. While each of us are ultimately responsible for our own choices, a positive example can bear good fruit, just as a poor example often does not.

Amaleki, the fifth writer, teaches us much about three specific groups of people who came to ancient America under the Lord's guidance. These include Father Lehi and his company; the Mulekites who came from Jerusalem after Lehi had left Jerusalem, and the Jaradites who came in approximately 2300 B.C. and the last survivor of that nation, Coriantumr, who was found by the people of Zaramela or the Mulekites. Mosiah and his people, who had left the land of Nephi, in response to the Lord's promptings, joined with the people of Zaramela, and taught them both their language and shared with them the scriptures. When the Mulekites left Jerusalem, they did not bring any scriptures with them.

In conclusion, Amaleki, shares using the symbolism found in the offering of sacrifices, the importance of our being completely submissive to the will of the Father. It is when we do so that our devotion to the Father and his Son, will be complete.

Lastly, we turn to the Word of Mormon, which serve as a historical bridge from the Small plates of Nephi to the Large plates of Nephi. We came also to understand the plan the Lord had for the loss of the 116 pages that occurred during the translation of the Book of Mormon plates. Also, we learn the importance of the Book of Mormon in our lives and the part it will play in the final judgment.

In conclusion, we learn from Mormon's words, the effect that a righteous king can have upon a people. We learn also the effect the word of the Lord, taught by the prophets, can have upon a nation.