

**BM#45 "Never Has Man Believed in Me As Thou Hast"
Ether 1-6**

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I. Introduction

The Jaredite civilization had its beginning in Babel, the capital of Babylonia. (see LDS Bible Dictionary, 416.) During the time of the building of the "Tower of Babel," Jared learned that the Lord was going to confuse the language of the people. (see Genesis 11:7-9.) Jared went to his brother, whose name we later learned, by revelation, is Mahonri Moriancumer. (see George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl. *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 6. Amplified and Arranged by Philip C. Reynolds. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, footnote. 3., 204). Throughout the record, Mahonri Moriancumer, is referred to as "the brother of Jared." This reference may have been because "he was the keeper of the records and out of modesty and humility did not use his name similar to the Apostle John when he wrote the gospel of John, or Moroni may have had difficulty in writing his name in the language of translation. (see Monte S. Nyman. *Book of Mormon Commentary, I, Mormon Make A Record*. (2004), 161-162.)

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"One of the greatest prophets in the Book of Mormon goes unnamed in the record that documents his remarkable life. He is identified only as 'the brother of Jared.' Yet revelation that unfolded before his eyes was so extraordinary that his life and legacy have become synonymous with bold, consummate, perfect faith." (*Christ and The New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997, 14).

Jared asked his brother to request the Lord not to confound the language of himself and brother, their friends, and their families. This request was granted by the Lord. (see

Ether 1:34-37.) This marked the beginning of the Jaredites which included Jared, his brother, friends and their families.

Monte S. Nyman states,

"The time of the Jaredites leaving the area of the building of the great tower (Genesis 11) is sometime after the time of the flood. The date of the flood was given as 2344 B.C. in the *Lectures of Faith* 2:41. While there may be some controversy over this date, it does give us the general time period. Obviously Moroni was not concerned with the dates of the Jaredites." (*Book of Mormon Commentary, I, Mormon Make A Record*. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution, LLC, 2004, 150-151).

William J. Hamblin states,

"Thus, the origin and migration of the Jaredites to the New World can be dated sometime between roughly 3100 and 1750 B.C. and their collapse sometime between approximately 586 and 130 B.C. ...This time frame broadly corresponds with the rise and fall of the Olmecs in Mesoamerica." (*Book of Mormon Reference Companion*. Dennis L. Largey, General Editor. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2003, 436).

George Reynolds states,

"Jaredites, The. The descendants of *Jared* and his associates, who were led by the power of God from the Tower of Babel to this continent. Here they became one of the mightiest of nations and flourished in a manner unsurpassed in the history of the post-diluvian races, until they fell into decay through corruption and iniquity and were ultimately destroyed in a desolating internecine war, at the end of which but one man, *Coriantumr*, remained as the representative of this once mighty people. The destruction of the Jaredites took place, as nearly as can be gleaned from the record, about the same time as the Nephites reached this land (say B.C. 590). (*A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1892, and Deseret Book Co., 1929, [Fourth Edition, 1954], 128).

Outline of Book of Ether:

"A. Ether 1: Moroni's discussion concerning the twenty-four plates. Genealogy of the prophet Ether.

Language of the Jaredites and friends not confounded at Babel. Brother of Jared told by the Lord to prepare his people for migration to a land choice about all others.

- "B. Ether 2: Jaredites go into valley of Nimrod. They gather flocks, fowls, bees, and seeds. They travel to the great sea. The Lord talks again with the brother of Jared and tells of his decree concerning promised land. The people build barges for their journey.
- "C. Ether 3: Brother of Jared prays on Mount Shelem. Because of his great faith the Lord manifests marvelous things to him, including his pre-existent body. He commands brother of Jared to write and seal up great things revealed to him. Two stones provided for their translation, which would be done in the Lord's own due time.
- "D. Ether 4: Moroni's commentary. He seals up writings of brother of Jared together with the holy 'interpreters.' These writings not to go forth to Gentiles until they repent of their iniquity. Exhortations to Gentiles and the house of Israel.
- "E. Ether 5: Translator of Book of Mormon forbidden to touch sealed portion of plates. Plates may be shown those who assist in bringing forth the Book of Mormon. Three witnesses to be shown plates by power of God. Moroni asserts his authority for what he says.
- "F. Ether 6: Jaredite vessels, lighted in miraculous manner, reach promised land. Leaders oppose kings as rulers but give way to demands of people. Death of Jared and his brother.
(Sidney B. Sperry. *Book of Mormon Compendium*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, 462-463).

II. Ether 1

This book is not named after the brother of Jared or even Jared himself. It is named after the individual who kept the records and was a prophet of God. His name was Ether.

He was the last great prophet of the Jaredites and lived to record the destruction of his nation just as Moroni did of his nation. It is, therefore his genealogical record that is found in Ether 1:6-32. Jared and his brother were distant relatives.

Ether 1:1-2

**1 And now I, Moroni, proceed to give an account of those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed by the hand of the Lord upon the face of this north country.
2 And I take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi, which is called the Book of Ether.**

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"We understand that they [the Jaredities] landed in Central America where their kingdom existed the greater part of their residence in America." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3. Edited by Bruce R. McConkie. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956, [18th Printing, 1978], 73).

Bryan Richards states,

"Moroni explains that the Jaredites lived and died in the north country. Some have speculated that this was much further north than the Nephite settlements. But we know that the Jaredites and Nephites were destroyed near the same hill, known as *Ramah* among the Jaredites and *Cumorah* among the Nephites (Ether 15:11; Mormon 6:6). Furthermore, we know that the Jaredites hunted in the land southward and built cities very close to the narrow neck of land (Ether 10:20-21). This places them north of the narrow neck but not by very far. The land of Desolation, so named because the Jaredites were destroyed there, was defined by Mormon as just north of the narrow neck, bordering the land of Bountiful to the south (Alma 22:29-32).

"The 24 gold plates...were found by Limhi's scouts who were sent north to find Zarahemla (Mosiah 8:7-10). What happened to the plates next? When the people of Limhi were finally freed from their Lamanite captors, they fled to Zarahemla and gave the records to king Mosiah (the grandson of the Mosiah who translated the [large stone]-Omni 1:20-22). Mosiah translated the record using the Urim and Thummim (Mosiah 28:11-14). It seems most probable that Moroni took

his abridgment from Mosiah's [previous] translation, otherwise he would have had to translate the records all over again." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Ether-1).

Ether 1:3-5

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

4 Therefore, I do not write those things which transpired from the days of Adam until that time;...

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

Moroni did not abridge the records that began with Adam to the building of the tower of Babel as they were to be found elsewhere. He began his record from the time of the tower to the destruction of the Jaredite nation.

The writings of Ether contained his genealogy, with some variation, beginning with himself and concluding with Jared and his brother. (see Ether 1:6-32.)

Ether 1:33

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

This is a second witness to the account found in Genesis 11:6-9. A third witness is Ixtlilxochitl, an Indian writer who stated,

"And [the Tulteca history tells] how afterwards men, multiplying made a very tall and strong Zaccualli, whih means *the very high tower*, in order to shelter themselves in it when the second world should be destroyed...When things were at their best, *their languages were changed*, and not understanding each

other, they went to different parts of the world." (Works of Ixtlilxochitl, cited in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*. Oakland, California: Kolob Book Company, 1950, 24).

Ether 1:35, 37

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

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

Neither the language of Jared, his brother, their families, or their friends and their families were confounded. In this manner they were able to remain intact following the Lord confusing the language of the people at the tower of Babel.

Jared made another request of his brother.

Ether 1:38

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

The brother of Jared does made the request of the Lord and was told by the Lord, to "gather together thy flocks, both male and female, of every kind;" and the families, go to the head of a valley northward and the Lord would meet them there. And He "will go before thee into a land which is choice about all the land of the earth" (Ether 1:42).

Ether 1:43

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

In this chapter, we are taught the importance of prayer and the importance of trusting that our prayers will be heard by the Lord. Our prayers will be heard, but we must take the first step, and ask in sincerity and faith.

Spencer W. Kimball states,

"Do you get answers to your prayers? If not, perhaps you did not pay the price. Do you offer a few trite words and worn-out phrases, or do you talk intimately to the Lord? Do you pray occasionally when you should be praying regularly, often, constantly? Do you offer pennies to pay heavy debts when you should give dollars to erase your obligation? When you pray do you just speak, or do you also listen? Your Savior said, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' (Revelation 3:20)...The Lord stands knocking. He never retreats. But he will never force himself upon us. If we ever move apart, it is we who move and not the Lord. And should we ever fail to get an answer to our prayers, we must look into our lives for a reason." ("Prayer," in *New Era*, March 1978, 17-18).

III. Ether 2

As previously directed by the Lord, Jared, his brother, and their group go to the valley, named Nimrod, and gather the flocks, trap fowls, "carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee," (Ether 2:3), seeds of every kind. (see Ether 2:1-3.)

Ether 2:4-5

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

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

Thomas R. Valletta states,

"The idea of the people of God escaping into the wilderness is a common pattern. Adam and Eve are driven into a world of thorns and thistles (Moses 4:24). The Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness. Even the Savior preceded his mission by going out into the wilderness to commune with God..[One] scholar of antiquity has suggested that...'The deseret is the world one passes through. It is nothing in itself, it is barren and inhospitable. It is not meant for people to remain in. One travels through the wilderness as one travels through time. Just like time, so does the deseret lead to a new world, to the promised land' (Weinreb, [*Roots of the Bible*, 125]." ("Jared and His Brother," in *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi Through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction*, Vol. 9. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995, 311).

Given the analogy of the deseret representing the "world one passes through" and [which often feels] "barren and inhospitable," is it not even more important we obtain direction during our journey from the Lord? Eventually, we will reach the promised land, but we will do so better if we seek and follow divine direction during our journey. Note the scriptures state regarding the Jaredites, "the Lord did go before them and did talk to them with as he stood in a cloud, and gave directions whither they should travel" (Ether 2:5).

During their travels, it was necessary that they "build barges, in which they did cross many waters, being directed continually by the hand of the Lord. And the Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even unto the land of promised, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people" (Ether 2:6-7).

It appears that after crossing the sea in the wilderness, the Jaredites were ready to stop. Maybe they felt that they were far enough removed from Babel, and besides the surroundings were pleasant, they would locate here! How often we, too, want to obtain the land that is choice above all, but we too tire of the arduousness journey and are willing to settle for less. It was the Lord who "would not suffer that they should stop" (Ether 2:7), for He had something even more special in store for them, and also for us if we would keep going forward. It was, however, not without conditions.

Ether 2:8

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

The promised land which the Lord had in store for them could only be obtained by their willingness to serve "the true and only God" (Ether 2:8), and to keep His commandments. If they were to fall into unrighteousness, they would be swept off the land.

Ether 2:12

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

Thomas S. Monson states,

"Are we today serving the God of the land, even the Lord Jesus Christ? Do our lives conform with His teachings? Are we entitled to His divine blessings?"

"Headlines from America's leading newspapers, depicting recent events, pass silently in review, that you and I may judge: 'Serious Crime Registers 10% Increase in Past Year,' 'Violence Rocks South,' 'Racial Strife Hits East.' Murder, rape, arson, burglary, assault, narcotics violations are

all on the increase in the America of today. These are the headlines of today's newspapers.

"The revered Abraham Lincoln accurately described our plight: 'We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.' (Proclamation of a National Fast Day, March 30, 1863).

"Can we extricate ourselves from this frightful condition? Is there a way out? If so, what is the way? We can solve this perplexing dilemma by adopting the counsel given by Jesus to the inquiring lawyer who asked: 'Master, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said unto him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' (Matthew 22:36-39)." (Be Your Best Self. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979, 95-96).

Ether 2:13-14

13 And now I proceed with my record; for behold, it came to pass that the Lord did bring Jared and his brother forth even to that great sea which divideth the lands. And as they came to the sea they pitched their tents; and they called the name of the place Moriancumer; and they dwelt in tents, and dwelt in tents upon the seashore for the space of four years.
14 And it came to pass at the end of four years that the Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him. And for the space of three hours did the Lord talk with the brother of Jared, and chastened him because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord.

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"It seems highly unlikely that a man of the spiritual stature of the brother of Jared--one who had received marvelous manifestations and had previously exercised great faith in the Lord--would cease praying to his Maker. It may be that what this verse is saying to us is that Mahonri Moriancumer was chastened by the Lord because he had not fully followed and implemented the counsels of the Lord previously received. It may be that in the relative comfort of the seashore he had allowed his prayers to be less fervent, more casual and routine. He may have been calling upon the Lord in word, but not in faith and deed. Verse 13 perhaps suggests this: they 'dwelt in tents upon the seashore for the space of four years.' The Lord had taught them and prepared them, but it appears that they had tarried too long, for which the brother of Jared was chastened. (Compare Alma 37:42)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 269-270).

The company had arrived at the seashore and there they rested for four years. Evidently, even the brother of Jared lost sight of his mission and even his relationship with the Lord. For three hours, the Lord "chastened him for he had remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord" (Ether 2:14). These "three hours" must have seemed like an eternity for the brother of Jared. He knew he had been negligent and the Lord knew it. He had no defense. He had failed to do what he must never do, lose sight of going to the promised land. Nothing less would suffice.

Ether 2:15-16

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

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

It appears that the brother of Jared was not alone in his transgression, but it did not matter, he knew better. What makes these verses special is that the Lord forgives him, and after a reminder to always be on guard regarding potential temptations, the Lord told the brother of Jared, and through him, his brethren, to go to work and fulfill all that they had been commanded to do. The lesson had been learned by his servant, and now the work went forward. They had paused long enough at the seashore. They had an ocean to cross.

Moroni described the barges they had previously built, under the Lord's direction (Ether 2:17), but likely they had left them after they had crossed the sea in the wilderness. They were to build the same barge, but it seemed that this time, there were problems that needed resolution.

Ether 2:18-19

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

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

It appears that the lack of light or air within the barges had previously not been critical. This may have been due to the shortness of their crossing or maybe that they were open so they could steer them. Now, the barges were going to be enclosed and "tight like a dish" (Ether 2:7). Their enclosure meant the lost of light as well as their inability to steer them. How could they cross the vast ocean in darkness and with no ability to maneuver them. Hence, the inquiry to the Lord.

The Lord in a rather matter of fact manner, yet humorously, offered a solution to the lack of air. He said, "make a hole in the top, and also in bottom; and when thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air. And if it so be so that the water come in upon thee, behold, ye shall stop the hole, that ye may not perish in the flood" (Ether 2:20). Meaning if the barge was submerged under the water, and the hole in the ceiling was opened, water would come pouring into the barge, not air. If they did not immediately stop up the hole, water would continue to come in and they would now have water to clean up. The Lord's answer, however, did not address the need for light inside the barges.

Ether 2:22-23

22 And he cried again unto the Lord saying: O Lord, behold I have done even as thou hast commanded me; and I have prepared the vessels for my people, and behold there is no light in them. Behold, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we cross this great water in darkness?
23 And the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?..

The Lord anticipating Jared's response adds, "ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed to pieces...For behold, ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you. Nevertheless, I will bring you up again out of the depths of the sea...for ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, and the winds which have gone forth, and the floods which shall come...neither shall ye take fire with you, for ye shall not go by the light of fire" (Ether 2:23-25). No windows for they would be "dashed to pieces" as they were submerged and the force of the waves and water beat upon their barge. Also, not to travel with fire to light their way. The Lord asked again the brother of Jared, "Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths of sea?" (Ether 2:25).

The initial questions to the brother of Jared was, "What do you want me to do? His second question is "What will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light..." The first says, I am willing to help. Tell me what you would like me to do. The second offers him guidance to assist him

in finding a solution, "What would like me to prepare for you."

While the Lord desired the brother of Jared to use his own initiative in order to solve the problem of light for their journey, he did not leave him without guidance. Nor does he with us.

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"Clearly the brother of Jared was being tested. God had done his part. Unique, resolutely seaworthy ships for crossing the ocean had been provided. The brilliant engineering had been done. The hard part of the construction project was over. Now the Lord wanted to know what the brother of Jared would do about incidentals." (*Christ And The New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997, 16).

Harold B. Lee adds,

"Then the Lord went away and left him alone. It was as though the Lord were saying to him, 'Look, I gave you a mind to think with, and I gave you agency to use it. Now you do all you can to help yourself with this problem; and then, after you've done all ye can, I'll step in to help you.

"This is the principle in action. If you want the blessing, don't just kneel down and pray about it...we may call upon the Lord...But it is [then] our duty to do what we can within our own power." (*Stand Ye in Holy Places*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, 243-245

IV. Ether 3

The brother of Jared having consulted with the Lord regarding the lack of light within the barges, and having obtained the Lord's willingness to assist him, had now come upon a potential solution.

Ether 3:1

1 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared (now the number of the vessels which had been prepared was eight) went forth unto the mount, which they called the mount Shelem, because of its exceeding height, and

did molten out of rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass; and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount, and cried again unto the Lord saying:

Hugh Nibley states,

"The only trouble is that the stones don't shine. What shall the man do next? He carries the stones up to the very top of 'an exceedingly high mountain'--and that is as far as he can go. Of course God could have appeared to him in the plain, but the idea of the whole thing is that man himself must meet God halfway. So the brother of Jared toils up the mountain he had toiled at the smelter until, as it were, he reaches the end of the line--he can go no further; he has done all that is in his power. From then on it is up to the Lord. Standing on the mountaintop, the brother of Jared holds up his pretty but worthless stones and asks the Lord to take over." (*An Approach To The Book Of Mormon*, Vol. 6. John W. Welch, General Editor. Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1964, [Third Edition, 1988], 351-352).

The brother of Jared approaches the Lord in humility. "Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee...we are unworthy before thee...thou hast smitten us because of our iniquity...O Lord, look upon me in pity, and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness...O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man;" (Ether 3:2-4). Having humbly presented himself before the Lord, he now makes a request of Deity,

Ether 3:4-5

4 ...therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we cross the sea.

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

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"For all the self-abasement, the faith of the brother of Jared was immediately apparent—in fact, we might better say transparent in light of the purpose for which the stones would be used. Obviously Jehovah found something striking in the childlike innocence and fervor of this man's faith. 'Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this.' In a sense there may be no more powerful expression of faith spoken in the scriptures. It is almost as if the brother of Jared was encouraging God, emboldening him, reassuring him. Not 'Behold, O Lord, I am sure thou canst do this.' Not 'Behold, O Lord, thou hast done many greater things than this.' However uncertain the prophet was about his own ability, he had no uncertainty about God's power. This was nothing but a single, assertive declaration with no hint of vacillation. It was encouragement to him who needs no encouragement but who surely must have been touched by it. 'Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this.' (*Christ And The New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997, 17).

In humility and with great faith, the brother of Jared makes a request of the Lord. "Will you please touch these sixteen stones so that they will glow and thereby provide light in the barges as we travel across the deep" (Ether 3:4). The brother of Jared had done all that he could do, and now the Lord honored his request and exercised his power on behalf of the brother of Jared and those in his company.

Ether 3:6

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

S. Dilworth Young states,

"I have already read of how this great personage lived as the firstborn of his Father in the spirit, and so I am not surprised, although I am deeply moved, to learn that he, as a premortal spirit, visited the brother of Jared (see Ether

3:6-13), and I can sense his fear when the brother of Jared saw the finger of the Lord and realized that it was like unto the finger of a man. It surprised this prophet, but it doesn't surprise me, for I have learned that the Lord was the firstborn Son of God, whose name is Man of Holiness. So when the Lord showed his complete self to that great prophet, I am not surprised, but I am awed. The more I study and read the scriptures, the more I know this is true." ("When I Read, I am There," in *Ensign*, 1973, 115).

The response of the brother of Jared in seeing the finger of the Lord was that he "fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear," and when "I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me;" (Ether 3:6, 8).

We learn some insight from Moses experience regarding viewing Deity as a mortal.

PGP, Moses 1:11

11 But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, for my natural eyes could not have beheld; for I should have withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me; and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.

From Moses' encounter with Deity, we learn that initially, in response to heavenly glory, the natural man had the fear he was going to wither and die in the Lord's presence. Once the individual has been transfigured, then their fear is gone. It would appear that the brother of Jared also experienced this initial fear. Upon being transfigured or changed, he acknowledged to the Lord he had seen His finger. The Lord's responded to the brother of Jared.

Ether 3:9

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

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

The Lord now asks him,

Ether 3:11-13

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

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

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

Bryan Richards states,

"By virtue of the Fall, all suffer spiritual death, which is defined as being cut off from the presence of the Lord. As the brother of Jared reenters the Lord's presence, he is of necessity redeemed from the Fall. The same could be said of any prophet who, while in mortality, stood in the presence of God.

"But more interesting is the Lord's statement about knowledge. It was because the brother of Jared knew certain things that he was brought back into the presence of the Lord. What did he know? He knew that God is a God of truth, and canst not lie (v.12). He knew that God is omnipotent, O Lord thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to show forth great power (v.5). He knew that if he would believe in him that he could show unto him all things (v.26)."

"When the brother of Jared saw God, it wasn't only because of faith. We have learned from his experience that it also required humility (see v.2) and knowledge. This knowledge is not secular knowledge but that kind of knowledge which is built upon the bedrock of faith. Hereby, we learn about the relationship between knowledge and faith."

(www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Ether-3).

Bruce R. McConkie adds,

"The brother of Jared stands out as a good illustration of how the knowledge of God is gained by faith, and also how that perfect knowledge, from a mortal perspective, replaces

faith. He received the most complete revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ that had been given down to his day." (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984, 211).

Ether 3:14

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

We understand that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the firstborn of the Father in the flesh. How is Jesus also the Father?

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"The Book of Mormon explains the significance of being called by the name of Jesus Christ. When the Savior showed his spirit body to the brother of Jared, he introduced himself as the Father and the Son, declaring that through his redeeming sacrifice all mankind who believe on his name should have life eternal through him, 'and they shall become my sons and daughter.' (Ether 3:14). Abinadi said of those who believed in the Lord and looked to him for a remission of their sins 'that these are his seed, and they are the heirs of the kingdom of God. For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?' (Mosiah 15:11-12).

"Speaking through the prophet Alma, the Lord explained the significance of this relationship: 'For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me they shall come forth, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand.' (Alma 26:24).

"In these great scriptures from the Book of Mormon, we learn that those who are qualified by faith and repentance and compliance with the laws and ordinances of the gospel will have their sins borne by the Lord Jesus Christ. In spiritual and figurative terms they will become the sons and daughters of Christ, heirs to his kingdom. These are they who will be called by his name in the last day."

("Taking Upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ," in *Ensign*, May 1985, 82).

Ether 3:15-16

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

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

Jesus Christs' statement to the brother of Jared that "never have I shown myself unto man whom I have created," has caused some concern among members. Christ, as Jehovah, as we know, had appeared to Adam (D&C 107:53), Enoch (PGP, Moses 7:4), and Noah (Gen 6:8-9). How was the experience with the brother of Jared different?

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"A final explanation--and in terms of the brother of Jared's faith the most persuasive one--is that Christ was saying to the brother of Jared, 'Never have I showed myself unto man *in this manner, without my volition, driven solely by the faith of the beholder.*' As a rule, prophets are invited into the presence of the Lord, are bidden to enter his presence by him and only with his sanction. The brother of Jared, on the other hand, seems to have thrust himself through the veil, not as an unwelcomed guest but perhaps technically as an uninvited one. Said Jehovah, 'Never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could have not seen my finger..Never has man believed in me as thou hast.' (v.9,15) Obviously the Lord himself was linking unprecedented faith with this unprecedented vision. If the vision itself was not unique, then it had to be the faith and how the vision was obtained that was so unparalleled. The only way that faith could be so remarkable was its ability to take the prophet, uninvited, where others had been able to go only with God's bidding.

"That appears to be Moroni's understanding of the circumstances when he later wrote, 'Because of the

knowledge [which came as a result of faith] of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil...Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus.' (v.19)" (*Christ And The New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997, 23).

Cecil O. Samuelson, Jr. adds,

"Nowhere in the scriptures is a clearer account given of the nature of the spirit body of the Lord Jesus Christ and, indeed, of the characteristics of our own spirits. The brother of Jared not only saw the finger of the antemortal Jesus Christ but indeed perceived His entire spirit body (see Ether 3:6,13). Understanding the premortal godhood of Jesus Christ together with our own spiritual identities prior to our births in the flesh is a great blessing and advantage. These insights breaching traditional boundaries were the direct result of the brother of Jared's non-boundaries faith." ("The Brother of Jared," in *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 185).

Ether 3:21-23

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

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

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

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"Joseph Smith received with the *breastplate* and the plates of the *Book of Mormon*, the Urim and Thummin, which were hid up by Moroni to come forth in the last days as a means by which the ancient record might be translated, ...These stones, the Urim and Thummim which were given to the

Brother of Jared, were preserved for this very purpose of translating the record, both of the Jaredites and the Nephites." (see D&C 10:1; 17:1; Ether 3:22-28.) (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3. Compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956, [18th Printing, 1978], 225-226).

Ether 3:25, 27

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

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

Bryan Richards states,

"The glorious vision of the brother of Jared was recorded by him and sealed up. It [became part of the] sealed portion of the Book of Mormon, destined to come forth only when the world is sufficiently righteous (this probably means after the start of the Millennium). (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Ether-3).

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"Now the Lord has placed us on probation as members of the Church. He has given us the Book of Mormon, which is the lesser part, to build up our faith through our obedience to the counsels which it contains, and when we ourselves, members of the Church, are willing to keep the commandments as they have been given to us and show our faith as the Nephites did for a short period of time, then the Lord is ready to bring forth the other record and give it to us, but we are not ready now to receive it. Why? Because we have not lived up to the requirements in this probationary state in the reading of the record which had been given to us and in following its counsels." (*Conference Report*, October, 1961, 20).

V. Ether 4

Ether 4:1-2

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

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

Bryan Richards states,

"King Mosiah [2] was the seer who used the Urim and Thummim to translate the record of the Jaredites as contained on the 24 plate of gold (Mosiah 28:11-13)."
(www.gosepeldoctrine.com/contents/Ether-4).

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"After the appearing of the Savior to the Nephites, the vision of the Brother of Jared was revealed to the Nephites. When Moroni made his abridgment of the record of Ether, he copied on his record the vision of the Brother of Jared.

"At the command of the Lord, however, Moroni also sealed up the greater things in this vision and also the *interpreters—which were the same 'two stones' had by the Brother of Jared*—so that this vision should not be made known even in our day among the Gentiles, in the day of their wickedness; it could not be revealed 'until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord' (Ether 4:6). So we today do not have the fullness of the account written and sealed up by the Brother of Jared and again sealed by Moroni. This part of the record the Prophet Joseph Smith was forbidden to translate. We have, then, received but the 'lesser part' (3 Nephi 26:8-11). (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 3. Compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956, [18th Printing, 1978], 224-225).

Ether 4:4-5

4 Behold, I [Moroni] have written upon these plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw; and there never were greater things made manifest than those which were manifest unto the brother of Jared. 5 Wherefore the Lord hath commanded me [Moroni] to write them; and I have written them. And he commanded me that I should seal them up; and he also hath commanded that I should seal up the interpretation thereof; wherefore I have sealed up the interpreters, according to the commandment of the Lord.

As noted the "things which the brother of Jared saw, and there were never greater things made manifest," were part of the sealed plates that Joseph Smith received. He was commanded not to translate them. Therefore, they remained sealed until the time when the Lord will again bring the records forth.

Ether 4:7

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

Bruce R. McConkie reminds us,

"From these revelations we learn that there are no limitations placed upon any of us. Revelations are not reserved for a limited few or for those called to positions of importance in the Church...it is not a call to a special office that opens the windows of revelation to a truth seeker. Rather it is personal righteousness; it is keeping the commandments; it is seeking the Lord while he may be found.

"God is no respecter of persons. He will give revelation to me and to you on the same terms and conditions."
(*Conference Report*, October 1969, 82).

Ether 4:8-10

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

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

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

The word, "accursed" is used twice in Verse 8. It is important that we understand its meaning.

Webster's New World Dictionary, Third Edition states,

"accursed. 2. deserving to be cursed; damnable; abominable. "*Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition.* New York: Prentice-Hall, 1988, [1994], 9).

It would appear that "accursed" is the deserved action an individual or group received from the Lord in consequence of their choice to contend or deny His actions on behalf of his children. The Lord will use the forces of nature which are in his power, including floods, droughts, earthquakes, including fire, to bring them to repentance from their disobedience to his commandments.

Ether 4:11-12

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

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

Bryan Richards states,

"This is a statement [Ether 4:11], and promise directly from the Lord. He is saying that if we believe in the Book of Mormon, we will be blessed with the manifestations of his Spirit and we will be given a testimony of the truth of the Book of Mormon. This verse has come true for millions who have studied the Book of Mormon and applied the promise contained in Moroni 10:3-5. The preceding verse speaks of the dramatic moment when the unbelieving at the last day will be shown the Book of Mormon is the word of God, "for ye shall know that it is I that speaketh, at the last day" (Ether 4:10). Hopefully, this realization will come to the reader much sooner than that."
(www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Ether-4).

In the latter part of Ether 4, verse 11, and 12, the Lord makes it clear that all that "persuadeth men to do good is of me;" Those that choose not to believe in the words of Christ, will also reject the words of His Father. To receive one is to receive the other, and to reject one is to reject the other. Some have suggested that God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are one in person and being, which is in error. While they are separate personages, they are one in thought and word. There is no disagreement in their words or actions. What one would say, think, and do, so would the other. They speak the truth in all things and their singular desire is for the good of mankind and their progression. Evil comes as a result of the rebellion of the devil. In other words, all that persuadeth men to do evil is of the devil.

Ether 4:14

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

Orson Pratt states,

"You are not to suppose that you are going to be dumped into the midst of revelations, and by one great and grand step are to burst the vail, and to rend it from your eyes, do you think that you are to step into the celestial kingdom and see it all at once? No, these blessings are far

too precious to be attained in such a way; they are to be attained by diligence and faith from day to day, and from night to night. Hence you are to become habituated to do good in your thoughts and conduct, in all that you do, until you become perfectly initiated into the great principles of righteousness, and continue to live uprightly until it becomes a kind of second nature to be honest, to be prudent, to govern all your passions, and bring all of the influences of the flesh, of the fallen nature, into the most perfect subjection to the law of God." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 3. Reported by G.D. Watt. London: Latter-Day Saints' Book Depot, 1956. [Eighth Reprint, 1974], 348).

Ether 4:15

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

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"The Book of Mormon is predicated on the willingness of men and women to 'rend that veil of unbelief' in order to behold the revelations--and the Revelation--of God. The brother of Jared may not have had great belief in himself, but his belief in God was unprecedented. In that there is hope for us all. His faith was without doubt or limit.

"[He stated] I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger.' (Ether 3:4). From the moment of that utterance, the brother of Jared and the reader of the Book of Mormon would never be the same. Once and for all it was declared that ordinary people with ordinary challenges could rend the veil of unbelief and enter the realms of eternity. And Christ, who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem his people, would stand in all his glory at the edge of that veil, ready to receive the believers and show them 'how great things the Father hath laid up' for them at the end

of faith's journey. (Ether 4:14).” (*Christ And The New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997, 29).

Ether 4:16

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

Hugh Nibley states,

“John enjoys a special place in the Book of Mormon, where he is the only future prophet mentioned by name. His special office, however, is not to serve as a prophet so much as a recorder. It is John, the man in the white robe whom Nephi sees in a vision, who is to write the fullest record of the Lord's ministry (1 Nephi 14:19-25) and the accurate setting forth of his words as they proceeded out of his mouth, ‘plan and pure, and most precious and easy to understand of all men’ (1 Nephi 14:23); but his record and those of others to whom the Lord ‘hath shown all things’ are to be ‘sealed up to come forth in their purity’ after the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon--hence Nephi was forbidden to write them (1 Nephi 14:25-26). When the Book of Mormon has been brought forth and introduced to the house of Israel, then shall they ‘know that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land’ (Ether 4:17), and when the people begin to believe, ‘then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people;...the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed’ (Ether 4:16).” (*Since Cumorah*, Vol. 7. John W. Welch, General Editor. Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co., and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1967, [Second Edition, 1988], 205-206).

Ether 4:17

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

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"One of the great signs of the Father's work in the last days--the work of the gathering of Israel--is the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. In this sense the Book of Mormon is itself one of the signs of the times. See 3 Nephi 21:1-7; 29:1-2." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 283).

Ether 4:18-19

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

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

The Lord reminds each of us that only as we come unto Christ and are received into his Church through repentance and baptism will we be saved in his kingdom. Those who reject his offer will find their eternal progression stopped and they will be limited in the glory they shall receive. Those who are faithful will receive the many blessings the Lord has to offer and will dwell in the kingdom of the Father forever.

VI. Ether 5

It appears that Ether, Chapter 5, was written specifically to Joseph Smith, the Latter-day Prophet, who shall be responsible for the translation of the records known as the Book of Mormon.

Ether 5:1

1 And now I, Moroni, have written the words which were commanded me, according to my memory; and I have told you the things which I have sealed up; therefore touch them not in order that ye may translate; for that

thing is forbidden you, except by and by it shall be wisdom in God.

This instruction from the ancient prophet Moroni to Joseph Smith is regarding the direction from the Lord regarding the sealed portion of the plates. These are not to be translated unless directed by the Lord.

The portion we have today, known as the Book of Mormon, does not include the sealed portion of the plates. The directive of the Lord, given through Moroni, was honored by Joseph Smith, the translator of the record.

Ether 5:2-3

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

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

These two verses have direct reference to the eight witnesses and three witnesses to the Book of Mormon whose testimonies stand at the front of each copy of the Book of Mormon.

Experience of Three Witnesses:

Joseph Smith states,

"In the course of the work of translation, we ascertained that three special witnesses were to be provided by the Lord, to whom He would grant that they should see the plates from which this work (the Book of Mormon) should be translated; and that these witnesses should bear record of the same, as will be found recorded, Book of Mormon, page 581 [Book of Ether, chapter 5 verses 2, 3, and 4, p. 487, edition 1920] also page 86 [2 Nephi, chapter 11, verse 3, p.73, edition 1920]. Almost immediately after we made this discovery, it occurred to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and the aforementioned Martin Harris (who had come to inquire after our progress in the work) that they would have me inquire of the Lord to know if they might not obtain of him the privilege to be the three special witnesses; and finally they became so solicitous, and urged me so much to inquire that at length I complied; and through the Urim and

Thummim, I obtained of the Lord for them the following: See Doctrine and Covenants 17:1-9." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969, [Second Edition Revised], 52-53).

Joseph Smith states,

"...we beheld a light above us in the air, of exceeding brightness; and behold, an angel stood before us. In his hands he held the plates which we have been praying for these to have a view of. He turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discern the engravings thereon distinctly. He then addressed himself to David Whitmer, and said, 'David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps His commandments;' when, immediately afterwards, we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, 'These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear. I now left David and Oliver [as Martin Harris had excused himself after the second failure..believing that his presence was the cause of our not obtaining what we wished for], and went in pursuit of Martin Harris, whom I found a considerable distance, fervently engaged in prayer...We [Joseph and Martin] accordingly joined in prayer, and ultimately obtained our desires, for before we had yet finished, the same vision was opened to our view, as least it was again opened to me, and I once more beheld and heard the same things; whilst at the same moment, Martin Harris cried out, apparently in an ecstasy of joy, 'Tis enough; 'tis enough; mine eyes have beheld; mine eyes have beheld;" (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969, [Second Edition Revised], 54-55).

This event occurred at the Whitmer Farm in Fayette, New York.

Experience of Eight Witnesses:

Joseph Smith and His family along with the Whitmer family travelled to the Smith home in Palmyra, New York. While there, Joseph took four members of the Whitmer family, along with Hyrum Page, who was a son-in-law;, his father, Joseph Smith, Sen., and his two brothers, Hyrum and Samuel to a grove on the Smith farm. Here Joseph showed them the plates and allowed them to inspect them and to view their

engravings. The witness of the three and the eight were initially included at the end of the book, but each addition following the witness is in the front of the Book of Mormon for all to read as they begin their reading of the record.

It is important to note that while some of the witnesses did not remain in full fellowship in the Church, none ever denied the truthfulness of the witness they bore regarding the Book of Mormon.

Ether 5:4-5

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

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

It was Jesus Christ himself who stated, "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matthew 18:16). The witness of the three and the eight provide eleven witnesses, plus Joseph Smith, which makes twelve. The greatest witness, however, of the Book of Mormon is the book itself. If one is sincere in their desire to know the truth of Book of Mormon, all they need to do is read it and ask God regarding its truthfulness.

VII. Ether 6

Ether 6:2-3

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

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

Given there were sixteen stones and two were placed in each vessel, the total vessels were eight. These stones continued to provide light throughout the journey of the Jaredites across the mighty deep which took "three hundred and forty and four days" (Ether 6:11).

Ether 6:4

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

It would seem to me that these barges were different from their previous barges. Not only were they enclosed, but in order to transport animals that previously could have herded and also with sufficient food for a year, they would have had to be larger.

The departure from land to water must have been an experience of mixed emotions. For me, it would have also required an increase in my faith. I was going to be enclosed, within a tightly covered dish, for almost a year, with only divine light to pierce the darkness. I was going to be limited in my ability to stretch my legs. I was without any way to steer the barge nor to view the ocean around me. My interaction was going to be limited to only those with me on the barge. Increased faith? Yes.

The Lord did his part. A furious wind blew upon the waters driving them toward the promised land. Many times they were buried in the water and no harm came to them as "their vessels were tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah" (Ether 6:5-7).

What did they do during their voyage? "when they were encompassed about with many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters...they did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord, and he did thank and praise the Lord, all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord" (Ether 6:7,9).

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"One of the traits that enables one to endure almost any hardship is unshaken faith in the Lord. Praising the Lord, whether it be by song or sermon or through prayers of gratitude, is an indicator of that trust and complete reliance upon the Lord. Singing such praises buoys the spirit and brings strength to weary souls and courage to fearful hearts. 'For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart,' the Lord declared in our day, 'yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads' (D&C 25:12)...Just as the Jaredites faced their uncertain and frightening journey with faith, prayers, and songs of praise, so too can we dispel the darkness of discouragement, be filled with courage to faithfully face uncertainty and opposition, and be spiritually strengthened to endure well whatever we are required to face on our sojourn in mortality." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 286-287).

Ether 6:12-13

12 And they did land upon the shore of the promised land. And when they set their feet upon the shores of the promised land they bowed themselves down upon the face of the land, and did humble themselves before the Lord, and did shed tears before the Lord, because of the multitude of his tender mercies over them.
13 And it came to pass that they went forth upon the face of the land, and began to till the earth.

We do not yet know precisely which ocean was crossed by the Jaredites, the Atlantic or the Pacific.

A.L. Zobell, Sr., states,

"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 a 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' [see Alma 22:30; Mosiah 8:8.].” (“Jaredite Barges,” in *A Book of Mormon Treasury*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1959, [2nd Printing, 1976], 169).

The Jaredites went forth upon the land, similar to the Nephites after them and began to till the earth.

Ether 6:19

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

Until this point, the group had been governed by Jared, with the brother of Jared, serving as the religious leader and prophet of the colony. As they were no longer, due to age, to govern the people, they sought the desire of the people.

Ether 6:22-24

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

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

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

Bryan Richards states,

“What may be the most impressive aspect of this statement by the brother of Jared is the quick perceptiveness that only comes through the Spirit. He did not need to think about the proposition, ruminate over the possibilities, and contemplate the implications before giving his opinion. His spiritual eyesight was 20-20 or better. He immediately knew that a monarchal form of government was a bad idea. He could see trouble ahead while his whole family was completely oblivious to the danger. This was the way of the prophets. Their ideas are not popular. Their counsel often seems illogical to the spiritually near-sighted who can't

see the end of the trail because they are so focused on the fork in the road.

"The problem with a Monarchy is the great potential for abuse. While the Book of Mormon records the history of several righteous kings: Nephi, Benjamin, Mosiah, and others, these men were exceptions to the rule. The general rule is that less righteous, or frankly wicked men eventually rise to power only to make the people suffer. As Mosiah says, 'because all men are not just it is not expedient that ye shall have a king or kings to rule over you (Mosiah 29:16). Therefore, the prophets were always leery of establishing a government of kings."
(www.gosepledoctrine.com/contents/Ether-6).

In Ether 2:8, we read, "And he [Lord] had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from this time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them." They were not to have a king upon the land, other than Jesus Christ. Had the Jaredites so quickly forgotten, or had Jared forgotten, the decree of the Lord? The decision of the people to have a king to govern them proved, as we will see, the beginning of their end as a nation.

Each of the sons of the brother of Jared declined to serve as the king, and all of the sons of Jared, except Orihah who agreed to serve. (see Ether 6:27).

Ether 6:28

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

Did the "Pride cycle" the Nephites experienced [BM#34] actually begin with the Jaredites? We will see.

Ether 6:30

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

If there is only one lesson we have learned from our reading of the scriptures, it is how difficult it is for the children of the Lord to continue to remember his goodness. If it were not for a concerted effort by the prophets and apostles to continue to remind us, only a few would remember. It was true then; it is unfortunately also true for many today.

VIII. Conclusions

These first six chapters have proved to be enlightening to us after having first learned of the Nephites and the events that lead to their destruction.

In Ether, Chapter 1, we are introduced to the Jaredites as abridged by Moroni from the 24 plates translated by King Mosiah. These plates had been found by the scouts of Lemhi as they were trying to find the city of Zarahemla. (see Mosiah 28:11-17.) This record serves as a witness to the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel as record in the Holy Bible. (see Genesis 11:4-9.) Jared, his brother, their friends and families make up a group who depart from the tower as directed by the Lord. The Lord will guide them to "a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth" (Ether 1:42).

Ether, Chapter 2, while at the valley of Nimrod, they are directed to gather flocks, trap fowls, and gather honey bees for their journey. They first build barges in order to cross the sea in the wilderness. Once across the sea, they are ready to stop, but the Lord directs them to continue onward. They are told that while the promised land is choice, they will be required to serve God or they will be destroyed. Finally, they reach the seashore, and their they remain for four years. At the end of this time, the brother of Jared is chastened by the Lord, possibly because the brother of Jared and his companions had lost sight of the ultimate destination. They repented and again built barges. There are two major problems. One was no light and the other is no air to breathe while inside these air-tight vessels. The Lord offered his assistance, but expected Jared to participate in the solution.

In Ether, Chapter 3, Jared came upon a potential solution to the lack of light. He molts out sixteen stones that are white and clear. He presented them to the Lord and humbly requested the Lord to touch them with his finger.

The brother of Jared is astonished and then fears for his life as he sees the finger of the Lord. Once assured by the Lord that he is not going to lose his life, he requested to see all the Lord. Jeffrey R. Holland states, "the only way that [the] faith [of the brother of Jared] was so remarkable was its ability to take the prophet, uninvited, where others had been able to go only with God's bidding." (*Christ and the New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997, 23).

Ether, Chapter 4, we learned that the brother of Jared saw things that could not be recorded. We are also warned that those who contend or deny the Lord's words will receive the Lord's condemnation. He will then seek, through his power, to bring them to repentance. We learned also that all good comes from God, where all evil comes as the result of the devil's rebellion. It is also possible for each of us, regardless of our church calling, to be able to "rend the veil of unbelief" (Ether 4:15), based upon our personal righteousness and obedience to His commandments. One sign of the commencement of the work of the Lord upon the earth will be the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Ether, Chapter 5, was written by Moroni to the latter day Prophet, Joseph Smith. First, he was directed not to translate the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon record. He is then directed to show them to three others. Others are also to view the records and share their witness. In each copy of the Book is found the Testimony of the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses. Though the experience of the three was different from the eight, each remained faithful to their witness throughout their lives. The greatest witness to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon is the book itself. If an individual will read it, with a sincere desire, they may know for themselves its truthfulness.

In Ether, Chapter 6, the brother of Jared returned from the mountain with the sixteen shining stones and placed two in each of the eight barges. Into these barges, the families load their supplies, including food for the animals. Next came the animals and then company. The barges are then secured so that they are "tight like unto a dish" (Ether 6:7), and the group sets forth for the promised land. Even though they are driven by the wind, traveling both below and upon the waters of the deep, the company will spend "344 days upon the water" (Ether 6:11). They are extremely

grateful for their safe journey and especially for their new home. They expand upon the land and survived by tilling the earth. As the time passed, both Jared and his brother drew to the end of their lives. They assembled all the people together and sought their input regarding the form of leadership they desired. To this point, Jared who had been their leader, served in conjunction with the prophetic direction of his brother. It is the desire of the people that a king be appointed from their sons. The brother of Jared warned the people that this was contrary to the will of the Lord, and told them, "surely this thing leadeth into captivity" (Ether 6:23). Jared ignores his brother's counsel and said, "Suffer them that they may have a king" (Ether 6:24). None of the sons of the brother of Jared are willing to serve, and all of Jared's sons decline, except Orihah. Orihah became the king of the Jaredite nation. As he began to reign, "the people began to prosper; and they became exceedingly rich" (Ether 6:28). Orihah reigns in righteousness and "did remember how great things the Lord had done for him...and their fathers" (Ether 6:30).

In our next lesson, [BM#46], we will continue with Part Two of the Jaredites as recorded in the Book of Ether. We will learn if the Jaredites remembered or did they forget the goodness of the Lord.