

CHAPTER 51

Ether 6–10

Introduction

In Ether 6–10, Moroni told of the Jaredites' journey across the ocean to the promised land. He then summarized the reigns of several generations of kings, contrasting periods of righteousness with periods of wickedness and conflict. Moroni observed many similarities between the Jaredites and his own people, the Nephites. He described the cycle of pride, prosperity, wickedness, and repentance that he had seen in the two nations. He outlined the grave danger we put ourselves in when we allow pride and secret combinations to get control in our society. Both the Nephite and the Jaredite civilizations illustrate the truth that what we sow, we shall reap. Following the Lord brings happiness, while straying from His commandments brings strife and misery.

Commentary

Ether 6:3. “Give Light unto Men, Women, and Children”

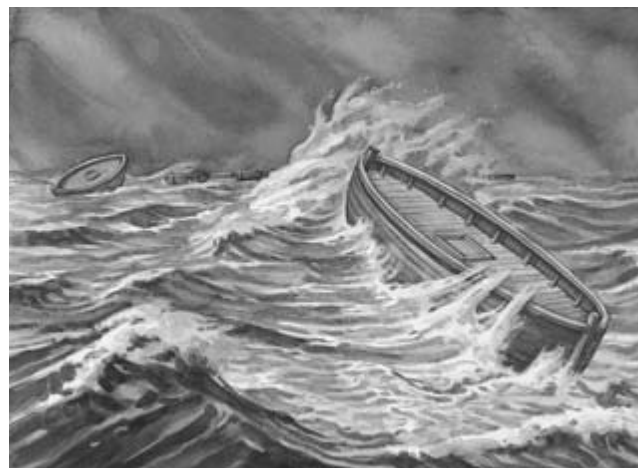
• The Lord Jesus Christ is the source of light for our world and for our lives (see D&C 88:5–13). The Lord touched the stones the brother of Jared presented to Him “to give light unto men, women, and children” (Ether 6:3) as they crossed the ocean. The Lord also provides light to guide us through the darkness of mortality and toward the brightness of the celestial kingdom—our promised land. Our way is lit by the light of apostles and prophets, the standard works, and inspired leaders and teachers. We too can be a light—we can light the way for others when we hearken to the Lord’s counsel and keep ourselves worthy of His Spirit.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, former Young Women general president, counseled: “You have the light within. You can shine in darkness. You can light up the world. You can help dispel the darkness. You can make a difference” (*The Joy of the Journey* [1992], 69).



Ether 6:4–9. The Jaredites Commended Themselves to the Lord

• In the context of Ether 6:4–9 the word *commend* means to entrust their care to. In other words, the Jaredites entrusted their care to God. By commending themselves to the Lord, they demonstrated their faith




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that He could and would deliver them. “The wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters” (Ether 6:8). Contrast this attitude with the attitude of Nephi’s brothers as they crossed the sea with their family. When Laman and Lemuel bound Nephi, the family’s compass, the Liahona, ceased to work and their boat was “driven back upon the waters for the space of four days” (1 Nephi 18:15). Both the Jaredites and Lehi’s family sought to commend themselves to the Lord’s care; however, some members of Lehi’s family were disobedient. The contrast between these two accounts shows that we must exercise faith and keep the commandments to receive all the blessings the Lord would give us through His care.

ETHER 6:8–12

What exemplary behavior did the Jaredites show during their voyage and after their arrival that inspires your behavior?

Ether 6:9. “Sing Praises unto the Lord”

• What are the blessings of listening to and singing songs of praise? In modern revelation the Lord stated that He will bless those who delight in righteous music (see D&C 25:12 ). The First Presidency described the power of inspirational music:

“Hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord.



“. . . Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end. . . .

“. . . Hymns can lift our spirits, give us courage, and move us to righteous action. They can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace” (*Hymns*, ix–x).

Ether 6:12. Tender Mercies

• For additional information on the tender mercies of God, see commentary for 1 Nephi 1:20 (p. 13) and for Moroni 10:3 (p. 401).

Ether 6:17. “They Were Taught to Walk Humbly before the Lord”

• We learn that the Jaredites were taught the importance of humility. Modern revelation also teaches us the importance of humility: “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that “humility is the recognition and attitude that one must rely on the Lord’s assistance to make it through this life” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2004, 110; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 104).

• Bishop Richard C. Edgley of the Presiding Bishopric named humility as one of the basic characteristics of a faithful Church member:

“As I have pondered these faithful members, I am struck by two qualities they all seem to have. First, regardless of social or economic status or position, their humility leads to submissiveness to the Lord’s will. And second, in spite of the difficulties and trials of life, they are able to maintain a sense of gratitude for God’s blessings and life’s goodness. Humility and gratitude are truly the twin characteristics of happiness. . . .

“. . . In the kingdom of God, greatness begins with humility and submissiveness. These companion virtues are the first critical steps to opening the doors to the blessings of God and the power of the priesthood. It matters not who we are or how lofty our credentials appear. Humility and submissiveness to the Lord, coupled with a grateful heart, are our strength and our hope” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2003, 103–4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 98).

ETHER 6:17
What is the relationship between humility and receiving instruction and counsel from the Lord?

Ether 6:17. “Taught from on High”

• To be “taught from on high” one must keep the commandments and be worthy of the companionship and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the blessings of being taught by the Spirit: “When all the challenges pour down on you, you will have a quiet inner feeling of support. You will be prompted to know what to do. You can live in a world of turmoil and great challenge and be at peace. You will be inspired to *know* what to do and to have the power or capacity to do it. Remember this promise of the Lord . . . : ‘Ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves [that is, keep my commandments] and ye shall be endowed with power’ (D&C 43:16)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 44; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 35).

Ether 7. Strife Entered the Kingdom

- The brother of Jared warned his people that having a king would lead them into captivity (see Ether 6:22–23), and it did. The Jaredite king Kib and later his son Shule were both taken captive by rivals. Notice how quickly the brother of Jared’s prophecy was fulfilled.

A great deal of the Jaredites’ history is covered in chapter 7 of the book of Ether. Moroni recorded only highlights of this history in his abridgement. He emphasized the parallels with his own people and the lessons that would be most valuable for our day.

Ether 7:6. Geographical Insight from Moroni

- Moroni gave very little information regarding the geographic relationship between the Jaredite and Nephite lands. “However, he does indicate that the ‘land of Moron’ of the Jaredites ‘was near the land which is called Desolation by the Nephites.’ (Ether 7:6.) Inasmuch as the land of Moron was the capital land of the Jaredites and the Nephite land of Desolation was north of the narrow neck of land, it is assumed that the major portion of the Jaredite civilization lived north of the narrow neck of land” (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [1976], 321–22).

Ether 7:23–27. King Shule’s People Heeded the Prophets’ Warnings

- In His kindness and mercy, the Lord sent prophets to warn the people of Shule’s kingdom. At first they reviled and mocked the prophets; however, the prophets were protected by the righteous king’s proclamation. Shule’s people then heeded the prophets’ warnings and repented, thus avoiding the destruction that would have come as a result of their rejection of the prophets’ message.

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency explained why the Lord warns His children of their wickedness: “Because the Lord is kind, He calls servants to warn people of danger. That call to warn is made harder and more important by the fact that the warnings of most worth are about dangers that people don’t yet think are real” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 32).

Ether 7:23–27; 9:28–31. Prophets and Their Messages Are Frequently Rejected

- Why do prophets often get mocked and reviled? Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

“Prophets must often warn of the consequences of violating God’s laws. They do not preach that which is popular with the world. . . .



“Why do prophets proclaim unpopular commandments and call society to repentance for rejecting, modifying, and even ignoring the commandments? The reason is very simple. Upon receiving revelation, prophets have no choice

but to proclaim and reaffirm that which God has given them to tell the world” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 52; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 37).

- Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Presidency of the Seventy explained another reason people often reject the prophet’s counsel. He explained that people erroneously believe that prophetic warnings interfere with their agency: “Some complain that when the prophets speak with clarity and firmness, they are taking our agency away. We are still free to choose. But we must accept the consequences of those decisions. The prophets do not take away our agency. They simply warn us of what the consequences of our choices will be. How foolish it is to fault the prophets for their warnings” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 82; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 66).

Ether 8:1–12. Secret Combinations among the Jaredites

- Moroni paused in his rapid summary of Jaredite history to recount in great detail the instituting of secret combinations among these people. Moroni did so because these organizations caused the entire downfall of both the Jaredite and the Nephite societies (see Ether 8:21); unless we repent, secret

combinations will cause the downfall of society in our own time (see vv. 23–25).

Ether 8:9 indicates that the Jaredites learned about secret combinations from records that their fathers had brought with them from the old world. It is possible that these records contained an account of the earliest secret combinations (see Moses 5:29–33, 47–55). We know that the Jaredites had records of the “creation of the world, and also of Adam, and an account from that time even to the great tower” (Ether 1:3).

The plan by which Jared’s daughter proposed to help secure the kingdom for her father indicates how evil persons can take advantage of human weakness. Jared’s daughter was well aware of her personal beauty, as well as Akish’s desire for her. In her anxiety to help her father get power and gain, she was willing to participate in an evil plot.

Ether 8:18–25. Characteristics of Secret Combinations

- See commentary for Helaman 6:18–40 (p. 271).

ETHER 8:22–26

What warning did Moroni issue to the people of our day, and what are the consequences of heeding or ignoring that warning?

Ether 8:25. Satan Deceives and Is “the Father of All Lies”

- Whereas the Lord is “a God of truth, and canst not lie” (Ether 3:12), Satan “was a liar from the beginning” (D&C 93:25). The Lord revealed to Moses that “Satan, yea, even the devil, [is] the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice” (Moses 4:4).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that Satan “and the spirits who follow him are still deceiving the world. . . . Satan’s methods of deception are enticing: music, movies and other media, and the glitter of a good time.

When Satan’s lies succeed in deceiving us, we become vulnerable to his power” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2004, 46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 43).

Ether 8:26. Satan’s Power Can Be Thwarted by Righteousness

- In speaking of the Millennium, Nephi explained that “because of the righteousness of [God’s] people, Satan has no power; . . . for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth” (1 Nephi 22:26). Moroni stated that one purpose of revealing Satan’s tactics is to do away with evil while looking forward to the time to come when “Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but that they may be persuaded to do good continually” (Ether 8:26).



The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) declared: “The devil has no power over us only as we permit him; the moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 214).

Ether 9. Cycles of Great Prosperity and Tragic Wickedness

- Notice in Ether 9:5–12 that the rise of secret combinations again led to the destruction of many people. Verses 15–35 show a pattern that is repeated many times throughout the Book of Mormon:
 1. The people prospered exceedingly during the righteous reigns of Emer and Coriantum (see vv. 15–25).
 2. The people began to join together in secret combinations and turn to wickedness under the reign of Heth (see vv. 26–27).
 3. The Lord sent prophets to warn the people of their great wickedness (see v. 28).
 4. The people of Heth rejected the prophets (see v. 29).
 5. The judgments of God fell upon the people (see vv. 30–33).

6. The people humbled themselves and repented, and the Lord again blessed them (see vv. 34–35).

In the midst of these cycles of prosperity and wickedness, the Jaredites demonstrated that a people can be wealthy and remain righteous. It seems that the Jaredites were able to remain in a condition of righteousness and prosperity for over 100 years (see vv. 15–25). King Emer was even righteous enough to see the Lord (see v. 22). For a diagram depicting the pride cycle, refer to “The Cycle of Righteousness and Wickedness” in the appendix (p. 414).

Ether 9:19. Jaredite Animals

- One scholar wrote about the mention of elephants among the Jaredites and the absence of any later mention of elephants among the Nephites:

“I think it quite significant that the Book of Mormon associates elephants only with the Jaredites, since there is no apparent reason why they should not have been as common in the fifth as in the fifteenth century B.C. All we know is that they became extinct in large parts of Asia somewhere between those dates, as they did likewise in the New World, to follow the Book of Mormon, leaving only the written records of men to testify of their existence.”

In this same discussion on elephants, he illustrated a point taken from Marco Polo’s description of his travels. In this description Marco Polo wrote about named elements unfamiliar to his native country. Hugh Nibley then applied the general principles of Polo’s experience to Book of Mormon animals named in the Book of Mormon but unknown to our culture: “‘They have plenty of iron, *accarum*, and *andanicum*,’ says Marco Polo of the people of Kobian. ‘Here they make mirrors of highly polished steel, of large size and very handsome.’ The thing to note here is not primarily the advanced state of steelworking in Central Asia, though that as we have seen is significant, but the fact that no one knows for sure what *accarum* and *andanicum* are. Marco knew, of course, but since the things didn’t exist in Europe there was no western word for them and so all he could do was to call them by their only names. It is just so with the *cureloms* and *cumoms* of Ether 9:19. These animals were unknown to the Nephites, and so Moroni leaves the words untranslated,

or else though known to the Nephites, they are out of our experience so that *our* language has no name to call them by. They were simply breeds of those ‘many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man’” (Hugh W. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* [1952], 217–18).

Ether 10:5–8. Wickedness and Oppression of King Riplakish

- Ether 10:5–7 describes the reign of King Riplakish. His wicked reign and his fall were very similar to the reign and the fall of the wicked King Noah (see Mosiah 11). Note the following characteristics of both kings:

Riplakish (Ether 10)	Characteristics	Noah (Mosiah 11)
Verse 5	Very immoral	Verse 2
Verse 5	Taxed the people heavily	Verse 3
Verse 6	Built spacious and elaborate buildings	Verse 8
Verse 7	Glutted himself on the work of others	Verse 6
Verse 8	Was killed by his own people	Mosiah 19:20

Isaiah warned, “For the leaders of this people cause them to err” (Isaiah 9:16; 2 Nephi 19:16). The righteous King Mosiah later commanded his people not to have kings because “the sins of many people have been caused by the iniquities of their kings” (Mosiah 29:31).

Ether 10:9–34. A High Level of Civilization

- Although the record is limited, Ether 10 provides insights about the high level of civilization enjoyed by the Jaredites under King Lib. Moroni told us the following about their level of prosperity:
 1. “They were exceedingly industrious, and they did buy and sell and traffic one with another, that they might get gain” (v. 22).
 2. “They did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals. . . . And they did work all manner of fine work” (v. 23).

3. They had “silks, and fine-twined linen; and they did work all manner of cloth” (v. 24).
4. “They did make all manner of tools to till the earth, both to plow and to sow, to reap and to hoe, and also to thrash” (v. 25).



5. “They did make all manner of tools with which they did work their beasts” (v. 26).
6. “They did make all manner of weapons of war. And they did work all manner of work of exceedingly curious workmanship” (v. 27).

Moroni concluded by telling us, “And never could be a people more blessed than were they” (v. 28).

Points to Ponder

- What does it mean to commend your life to the Lord as the Jaredites did on their journey to the promised land?
- What tender mercies of the Lord can you identify in your life? (see Ether 6:12).
- What safeguards are available to help you avoid being deceived by Satan?

Suggested Assignments

- Compare the journey described in Ether 6:2–12 to our journey through mortality.
- Find verses in Ether 8:13–26 that describe the dangers of secret combinations, and summarize those dangers. Then summarize the counsel Moroni gave us in those same verses.