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## The Book of Mormon in Brief

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**Abstract:** A brief overview of the story of the Book of Mormon.

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## THE BOOK OF MORMON IN BRIEF

By Leland H. Monson

THE *Book of Mormon* unfolds the history of God's dealings with three separate groups of people who came from the East to North and South America, the promised land, built their civilization of polish and grandeur, declined because of unrighteous living, and crumbled into the dust.

The first colony landed in Central America, south of the Gulf of California, after a long journey from the Tower of Babel, located at the eastern end of what has been aptly called the Fertile Crescent. Under the leadership of Jared and his brother, Moriancumer, and with divine guidance, they left the Tower of Babel for the land of promise about 2247 B.C. and flourished there for a period of approximately 1600 years. Their decline and fall resulted from a failure to heed the counsel of their prophetic leadership, not to sacrifice their freedom for a kingly form of government, and from the building up of wicked secret combinations to get power and gain.

Disappointed with their failure to adhere to principles of righteousness by which this country was to

be a land of promise to them, the Lord, according to covenant, brought forth another people, this second time from Jerusalem, to replace the Jaredites.

These Nephites and Lamanites, as they were later called, were led from Jerusalem by Lehi, the great patriarch of the *Book of Mormon*. Almost from the time of their disembarkation in northern South America, two factions appeared in this colony, which was composed of members of the tribes of Ephraim and Manassah. Recalcitrant and disobedient, Laman and Lemuel, the two oldest sons of Lehi sought the life of their younger brother, Nephi, who separated from them. Taking with him the righteous members of the colony, he built a great material and spiritual civilization. Subsequently, under Lamanite coercion, these followers of Nephi made a second great hejira northward. There they found the city of Zarahemla which had been built by the Mulekites, a colony that left Jerusalem about 590 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar overran Jerusalem. The Nephites, under the kingship of Mosiah, united with the Mulekites; henceforth, these two civilizations

were merged. From this date, approximately 200 B.C., until the extermination of the Nephites about 400 A.D., the *Book of Mormon* historians chronicle their history of the peoples on this hemisphere according to two major divisions, the Nephites and the Lamanites, the Nephites being those people who lived more or less righteously, and the Lamanites, those who followed sinful ways.

The Nephites looked forward to the coming of the Son of Man; their prophets emphasized this theme. In the meridian of time, immediately after his crucifixion in Jerusalem, Jesus visited the Nephites and gave to them the fulness of the Gospel as He had in Jerusalem. He ordained twelve disciples and gave them authority over his newly-organized church.

A long period of righteousness ensued, followed by the ultimate degeneration and extinction of the Nephites.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest purposes served by the *Book of Mormon* is to reaffirm and re-establish in the hearts of men the concept that Jesus is more than a great moral teacher, that he is divine.

PEACE is the one possible state for wholesome living. War is death. It is death for all the beautiful things, the lovely ways, the pleasant places to which man's spirit cleaves.

War wrecks man's work, and work is the breath of his nostrils. It wrecks his home, and his home is his heart's blood. It wrecks the youth of a nation, strewing the battlefields with a people's hope, its future, its life-blood.

War robs a people of the best they have, the flower of their manhood, the fruit of all their thought and labor, giving in return sickness, disease that blights all life, poverty that curses every effort, death at its worst.

War never settles anything that a conference between intelligent men of good will would not have settled better. Force cannot settle man's differences. What the sword imposes thought disposes.

Men must be persuaded to righteousness, and persuasion cannot function in the face of anger and hate and guns. It thrives in the atmosphere of sympathy, understanding, unselfishness. Peace is an ideal, and men will achieve it only through the realization of their ideals.

Let us praise peace!

—Angelo Patri in *Youth Today*.