

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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Edited by  
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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure  
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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Dan. 7:10; 12:1; Isa. 4:3; 65:6; see also Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 21:27). Names of faithful Saints may be recorded in the book of life conditionally while they are in mortality (Luke 10:20) or “from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 17:8), but may be “blotted out” because of unrepented transgression (Rev. 3:5; 22:19; Alma 5:57; D&C 85:5, 11). Ultimately, only the names of those who qualify for eternal life remain written or “sealed” (*TPJS*, p. 9) in the Lamb’s book of life.

Latter-day Saints believe that essential items written in the “books yet to be opened” are linked to proper Church records, including those of essential gospel ordinances performed by priesthood authority for individuals and attested by authorized witnesses. In ancient covenant ceremonies, the names of the righteous were solemnly recorded, thus numbering them among “the living” (e.g., Num. 1:1–46; Mosiah 6:1–2). What is properly recorded on earth is recorded in heaven (D&C 128:7–8). Final sealing in the Lamb’s book requires, further, the approval of the Holy Spirit of Promise (D&C 132:19).

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## BOOK OF MORMON

[*This entry introduces the Book of Mormon, with the Overview describing its basic nature, contents, and purposes; a brief article follows on the Title Page from the Book of Mormon; and the remaining articles are devoted to a brief explanation of each book in the Book of Mormon.*]

### Overview

Title Page from Book of Mormon

First Book of Nephi

Second Book of Nephi

Book of Jacob

Book of Enos

Book of Jarom

Book of Omni

The Words of Mormon

Book of Mosiah

Book of Alma

Book of Helaman

Third Nephi

Fourth Nephi

Book of Mormon

Book of Ether

Book of Moroni

*The teachings of the Book of Mormon are discussed in doctrinal articles throughout the Encyclopedia; see Doctrine; Gospel of Jesus Christ. See also Book of Mormon Religious Teachings and Practices; Jesus Christ in the Scriptures: the Book of Mormon; Prophecy: Prophecy in the Book of Mormon.*

*Concerning its essential relationship with the Bible and other scripture, see Bible; Book of Mormon, Biblical Prophecies about; Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture; Isaiah; Scripture; Standard Works.*

*On the writing and composition of the Book of Mormon, see Book of Mormon Authorship; Book of Mormon Language; Book of Mormon Literature; Book of Mormon Plates and Records.*

*For information about its origin and publication, see Book of Mormon Editions; Book of Mormon Manuscripts; Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith; Book of Mormon Translations; Book of Mormon Witnesses; Manuscript, Lost 116 Pages; Moroni, Visitations of. See, generally, Book of Mormon Studies.*

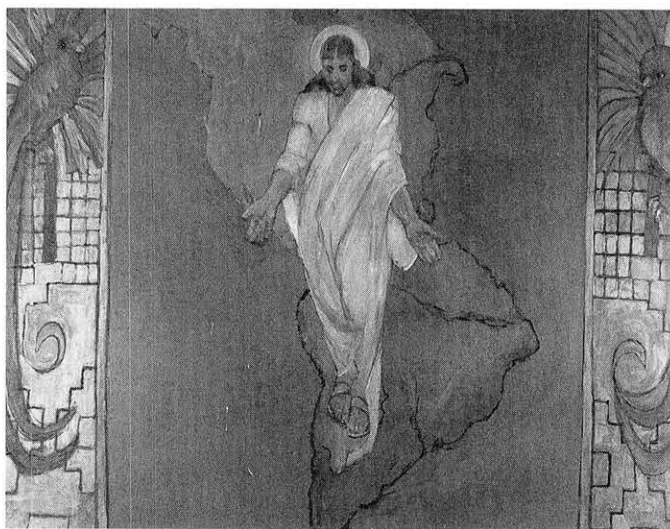
*Separate articles can be found on Book of Mormon Peoples; Jaredites; Lamanites; Nephites; Women in the Book of Mormon; articles on the main individuals in this scripture are listed under Book of Mormon Personalities.*

*Internal aspects of Book of Mormon culture and civilization are discussed in such entries as Book of Mormon Chronology; Book of Mormon Economy and Technology; Book of Mormon Geography; Book of Mormon, Government and Legal History in; Book of Mormon, History of Warfare in; Jesus Christ: Forty-Day Ministry and Other Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Christ; Liahona; Secret Combinations; Sword of Laban; Three Nephites; Tree of Life.]*

## OVERVIEW

The Prophet Joseph SMITH called the Book of Mormon “the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion” and said that a person “would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*TPJS*, p. 194), for it contains the fulness of the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST (D&C 20:8–9). To members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon forms the doctrinal foundation of the Church and speaks the word of God to all the world.

The Book of Mormon both confirms and supplements the Bible: “Behold, this [the Book of Mormon] is written for the intent that ye may believe that [the Bible]; and if ye believe [the Bible] ye will believe [the Book of Mormon] also” (Morm.



*Jesus Christ Is the God of That Land*, by Minerva K. Teichert (1949, oil on board, 36" × 48"). Superimposed on the western hemisphere and flanked by Quetzal birds, native American symbols of liberty and freedom, this painting conveys the central message of the Book of Mormon "that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations." Courtesy Springville Museum of Art.

7:9). The Bible is primarily a record of God's dealings with the forebears and descendants of Jacob or Israel in the ancient Near East. Latter-day Saints believe the Book of Mormon to be a record of God's dealings principally with another group of Israelites he brought to the Western Hemisphere from Jerusalem about 600 B.C. (see LEHI). They anticipated the birth and coming of Jesus Christ and believed in his ATONEMENT and gospel. Their complex, lengthy records were abridged by a prophet named MORMON, inscribed on plates of gold, and buried by his son, MORONI<sub>2</sub>, after internecine wars destroyed all of the believers in Christ in the New World except Moroni (A.D. 385).

**JOSEPH SMITH AND THE BOOK OF MORMON.** In his short lifetime, Joseph Smith brought forth many scriptures (see DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS; PEARL OF GREAT PRICE). His first prophetic calling was to bring forth the Book of Mormon. In 1823, at age seventeen, he was shown the hidden record by Moroni, then a resurrected angelic messenger from God (JS—H 1:27–54). After several visitations during the next four years, Joseph was allowed to remove the sacred record from its resting place in the hill CUMORAH, near Palmyra, New York. Despite many interruptions and persistent persecutions (JS—H 1:57–60), Joseph Smith trans-

lated the lengthy record in about sixty working days. Latter-day Saints bear testimony that he did this "through the mercy of God, by the power of God" (D&C 1:29), "by the inspiration of heaven" (*Messenger and Advocate* [Oct. 1834]:14–16; JS—H 1:71, n.). He had the assistance of several scribes, chiefly Oliver COWDERY, who wrote what Joseph Smith dictated. The book was published in Palmyra in 1830. At least eleven witnesses, in addition to Joseph Smith, saw and/or hefted the Book of Mormon plates before he returned them to Moroni (see BOOK OF MORMON WITNESSES).

**PURPOSES AND CONTENTS.** The Book of Mormon, as its modern subtitle states, stands with the Bible as "Another Testament of Jesus Christ." Its main purposes are summarized on its title page: to show the remnants of the Book of Mormon people what great things God did for their forefathers, to make known the covenants of the Lord, and to convince "Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations." The central event in the Book of Mormon is the appearance of the resurrected Christ to righteous inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere after his ascension into heaven at Jerusalem. During his visit, Christ delivered a sermon that is similar to the SERMON ON THE MOUNT recorded in the New Testament, but with certain vital clarifications and additions. He declared his doctrine, the fulness of his gospel necessary to enter the kingdom of God; and he established his Church with its essential ordinances, and ordained disciples to preside over the Church. At this time, Christ also explained the promises of God to Israel; healed the sick and disabled; blessed the children and their parents; and expressed his great love, allowing each individual to come forward and touch the wounds he had received during his crucifixion (see 3 Ne. 11–26). The record of Jesus' visit and many other passages in the Book of Mormon verify the divine sonship, ministry, atonement, resurrection, and eternal status of the Lord Jesus Christ and show that the fulness of his gospel is the same for all people, whenever and wherever they have lived.

The ancestors of these people to whom Jesus appeared had been in the Western Hemisphere for about 600 years. The Book of Mormon opens with the family of Lehi in Jerusalem at the time of the biblical prophet Jeremiah. Lehi was warned by God about 600 B.C. to take his family and flee Jerusalem before it was destroyed by Babylon (1 Ne. 1:1–2). The account, written by Lehi's son NEPHI<sub>1</sub>,



In this wooden box, Joseph Smith kept the Book of Mormon plates. The inside of the box measures 14" × 16". The depth is 6 1/4" sloping to 4". The lid and bottom are walnut, and the sides are made from boxwood. The box was also used as a lap desk. In the possession of emeritus Church Patriarch Eldred G. Smith.

first tells of his family's departure from Jerusalem and of his dangerous return to the city with his brothers to obtain sacred records that contained their lineage, the five books of Moses, and a history of the Jews and writings of prophets down to Jeremiah's time (1 Ne. 3–5).

The group traveled in the wilderness until they reached a pleasant land by the sea where Nephi, with God's instruction, built a ship that took them to the New World (1 Ne. 17–18). Nephi's older brothers, LAMAN and Lemuel, expressed resentment at Nephi's closeness to the Lord and did not want him to rule over them (1 Ne. 16:37–39; 18:10). When the family reached the New World, this antagonism led to a schism between the NEPHITES and LAMANITES that pervades the Book of Mormon.

As the Nephite sermons, prophecies, and historical records were compiled and handed down, the writers emphasized that those who keep God's commandments prosper. Unfortunately, many who prospered became proud and persecuted others, with war as the eventual result. The desolation of war humbled the people, who began again to call upon God.

Ancient American prophets, like biblical prophets such as Moses, Isaiah, and Daniel, were shown visions of the future of various nations. For example, Nephi foresaw Christopher COLUMBUS' discovery of America, the influx of Gentiles into the New World, and the American Revolution

(1 Ne. 13:12–15, 18–19), as well as the birth and earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Christ's birth, ministry, and death were prophesied by Lehi, Nephi, BENJAMIN, SAMUEL THE LAMANITE, and other prophets. When MOSIAH<sub>1</sub> discovered a people who had left Jerusalem with MULEK, a son of Zedekiah (see Jer. 52:10; Omni 1:12–15; Hel. 8:21), and King Limhi's messengers found a record of the extinct JAREDITES, the Nephites learned that they were not the only people God had brought to the Western Hemisphere.

After the appearance of Jesus Christ, the Nephites and Lamanites enjoyed peace for more than 160 years (4 Ne. 1:18–24). Then, many who had been righteous broke their covenants with God, and the Church and their civilization began to collapse. At last, in A.D. 385, the few remaining Nephites were hunted and killed by Lamanites. The book ends with Moroni, the last Nephite, writing to the people of modern times, admonishing them to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moro. 10:32).

**MODERN APPLICATIONS.** Latter-day Saints embrace the Book of Mormon as a record for all people. In addition to instructing their contemporaries and descendants, the prophets who wrote these ancient records foresaw modern conditions and selected lessons needed to meet the challenges of this world (Morm. 8:34–35). Their book is a record of a fallen people, urging all people to live righteously and prevent a similar fall today.

The Book of Mormon has had a profound effect on the Church and its members. It is so fundamental that Joseph Smith said, "Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations and where is our religion? We have none" (*TPJS*, p. 71).

The Book of Mormon teaches that the living God has spoken to several peoples throughout the earth who have written sacred records as he has commanded (2 Ne. 29:11–12). The Book of Mormon is one such record.

It also stands as evidence to Latter-day Saints that God restored his true and living Church through Joseph Smith. The importance of this belief for Latter-day Saints cannot be overestimated, for they are confident that God watches over the people of the earth and loves them, and that he continues to speak to them through contemporary prophets who apply unchanging gospel principles to today's challenges.

The Book of Mormon also is important to Latter-day Saints as an aid in understanding the

Bible and the will of God. Nephi prophesied that many “plain and precious” truths and covenants would be taken from the gospel and the Bible after the deaths of the apostles (1 Ne. 13:26–27). Many questions that have arisen from the Bible are answered for Latter-day Saints by the Book of Mormon, such as the mode of and reasons for baptism (2 Ne. 31; 3 Ne. 11:23–26); the proper way to administer the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper (Moro. 4–5); the nature of the Resurrection (Alma 40); the effects of the FALL OF ADAM, and the reasons for evil and suffering in the world (2 Ne. 2). The Book of Mormon reinforces the LDS doctrine that the gospel of Jesus Christ existed before the Creation and has been revealed to prophets and believers throughout time.

Also sacred to Latter-day Saints is the Book of Mormon as a tutor in discerning the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Many Latter-day Saints, including those born into LDS families, trace their conversion to Jesus Christ and their commitment toward the Church to prayerful study of the Book of Mormon, and through it they learn to recognize the Holy Spirit. Thus, the book becomes a continuing symbol of personal revelation and of God’s love for and attention to the needs of each person. It also declares that all mankind will be judged by its precepts and commandments (Mosiah 3:24; Moro. 10:27; *see* JUDGMENT). It is evidence that God remembers every creature he has created (Mosiah 27:30) and every covenant he has made (1 Ne. 19:15; 3 Ne. 16:11). The Book of Mormon is the base from which millions have begun a personal journey of spiritual growth and of service to others.

For LDS children, the Book of Mormon is a source of stories and heroes to equal those of the Bible—Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in the lions’ den, the faithful Ruth, and brave Queen Esther. They tell and sing with enthusiasm about the army of faithful young men led by HELAMAN<sub>1</sub> (Alma 56:41–50); of the prophet ABINADI’s courage before wicked King Noah (Mosiah 11–17); of Nephi and his unwavering faithfulness (1 Ne. 3–18); of Abish, a Lamanite woman who for many years appears to be the lone believer in Christ in King Lamoni’s court until the missionary Ammon taught the gospel to the king and queen (Alma 19); and of Jesus’ appearances to the Nephites (3 Ne. 11–28). There are many favorites. The book is used to teach children doctrines, provide examples of the Christlike life, and remind them of God’s great love and hope for all his children.

The book is central to missionary work. It is the Church’s most important missionary tool and is destined to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Rev. 14:6–7). All LDS missionaries encourage those they contact to read and pray about the book as a means of receiving their own testimony from God about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, a witness of Jesus Christ.

Latter-day Saints are regularly admonished to make fuller use of the Book of Mormon. In 1832, two and one-half years after the book was published, the word of the Lord warned the Saints that they had treated the revelations too lightly and had neglected to “remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon” (D&C 84:57). Church leaders repeatedly encourage members to make the Book of Mormon a greater part of their lives. President Ezra Taft BENSON has counseled Latter-day Saints to read the book daily and to share it and the gospel message with all the world.

**READING THE BOOK OF MORMON.** This sacred record asks the reader to approach its words with faith and prayer. One of its teachings is that readers will “receive no witness until after the trial of [their] faith” (Ether 12:6). Therefore, although aspects of the book may seem unusual or improbable at first, it invites its readers to entertain them as possibilities until the whole picture becomes clear and other feelings are experienced and thoughts considered. Moreover, the final inscription of Moroni<sub>2</sub> on the title page asks readers to look beyond human weaknesses in the book: “If there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God.” He closed his own book within the Book of Mormon by exhorting all who receive these things to ask God, with a sincere heart and with real intent, having faith in Christ, if they are not true, and promises that God will manifest the truth of it (Moro. 10:4).

Latter-day Saints of all ages and interests find rewards in reading the Book of Mormon. At first, people tend to focus attention on its main messages and story lines. With further reading and pondering, they discover numerous themes, meaningful nuances, interesting details, and profound spiritual expressions.

The first-time reader may find the Book of Mormon difficult at times. Its style, as translated into English, is somewhat similar to that of the King James Version of the Bible, and the reader who is not familiar with the Bible will encounter some unfamiliar word usages. The 1981 edition of

the Book of Mormon is annotated with many Bible references and aids to facilitate a more detailed comparison.

Book of Mormon prophets Nephi, JACOB, and Abinadi quote extensively from Isaiah (see, e.g., 2 Ne. 6–8 [Isa. 49–51]; 2 Ne. 12–24 [Isa. 2–14]; Mosiah 14 [Isa. 53]), an Old Testament prophet whose poetic style and allusions have challenged readers of the Bible and also have proved difficult to many who study the Book of Mormon. Initially, some Church leaders encourage first-time readers to move through these chapters, understanding what is accessible and saving the rest for later study. In Isaiah’s writings, Latter-day Saints find an important testimony of Christ and of the fulfillment of God’s covenants with the house of Israel. Christ admonished his followers to “search these things diligently, for great are the words of Isaiah” (3 Ne. 23:11).

Another possible hurdle for readers is the book’s nonchronological insertions. Nephi and Jacob and Jacob’s descendants wrote first-person accounts from about 590 B.C. until about 150 B.C., and then Mormon (about A.D. 385) inserted a shorter chapter to explain his role as abridger of another record. Then the reader is returned via Mormon’s abridgment to the history of Nephi’s successors and of the descendants of ALMA<sup>1</sup>. As groups of people break away from and return to the main body, parts of their records are incorporated into the book, causing the reader to jump back to earlier events. Likewise, Moroni’s abridgment of the very ancient book of Ether appears out of chronological order near the end. In addition, the Book of Mormon, like the Old Testament, describes events from widely separated intervals. As an abridgment, it contains only a small part of the proceedings of these ancient peoples.

**APPROACHING THE TEXT.** The arrangement of the Book of Mormon lends itself to many approaches. Three mutually supportive avenues are most often followed. First, the book serves as a source of guidance and doctrine, yielding lessons and wisdom applicable to contemporary life. This approach is recommended in the writings of Nephi, who wrote that he “did liken the scriptures unto [his people], that it might be for [their] profit and learning” (1 Ne. 19:23). Latter-day Saints find its pages rich with ennobling narratives, clear doctrines, eternal truths, memorable sayings, and principles. Knowing the conditions of the latter days, the ancient prophets periodically address the

individual reader directly. Latter-day Saints emphasize the need to read the Book of Mormon prayerfully, with faith in God, to benefit personally from its teachings and to come unto Christ.

A second approach to the Book of Mormon, adding historical dimension to the first approach, is to study the book as an ancient text. The reader who accepts the Book of Mormon as an ancient Hebrew lineage history written by prophets in the New World will find the book consistent with that description and setting. The book is a repository of ancient cultures that are as far removed from modern readers as are those of the Old and New Testaments. Continuing research has found Hebrew poetic forms, rhetorical patterns, and idioms, together with many Mesoamerican symbols, traditions, and artifacts, to be implicit in the book or consistent with it.

Finally, one may enjoy the Book of Mormon as a work of literature. Although the style may seem tedious or repetitive at times, there are order, purpose, and clarity in its language. Its words are often as beautiful and as memorable as passages in the Psalms, the Gospel of John, and other notable religious works of prose and poetry.

Most faithful readers of the Book of Mormon, however, do not define or limit themselves to any single approach or methodology, for these approaches are all transcended by the overriding implications of the book’s divine origins and eternal purposes. Study and faith, reflection and application, all help a person know and comprehend the messages of the Book of Mormon. But for millions of Latter-day Saints, their most important experience with the Book of Mormon has been the spiritual knowledge that they have received of its truth. It has changed and enriched their lives and has brought Jesus Christ and his teachings closer to them.

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MONTE S. NYMAN  
LISA BOLIN HAWKINS

## TITLE PAGE FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON

Joseph SMITH once wrote, “I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated; . . . and that said title-page is not . . . a modern composition, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation” (*HC* 1:71.).

The title page is therefore the translation of an ancient document, at least partially written by MORONI<sub>2</sub>, son of Mormon, in the fifth century A.D. It describes the volume as an “abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites” and “an abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared” (see BOOK OF MORMON PLATES AND RECORDS).

According to the title page, the Book of Mormon is addressed to LAMANITES, Jews, and

GENTILES and is designed to inform Lamanites of promises made to their forebears and to convince “Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.”

The title page was used as the description of the Book of Mormon on the federal copyright application filed June 11, 1829, with R. R. Lansing, Clerk of the District Court of the United States for the Northern District of New York, at Albany.

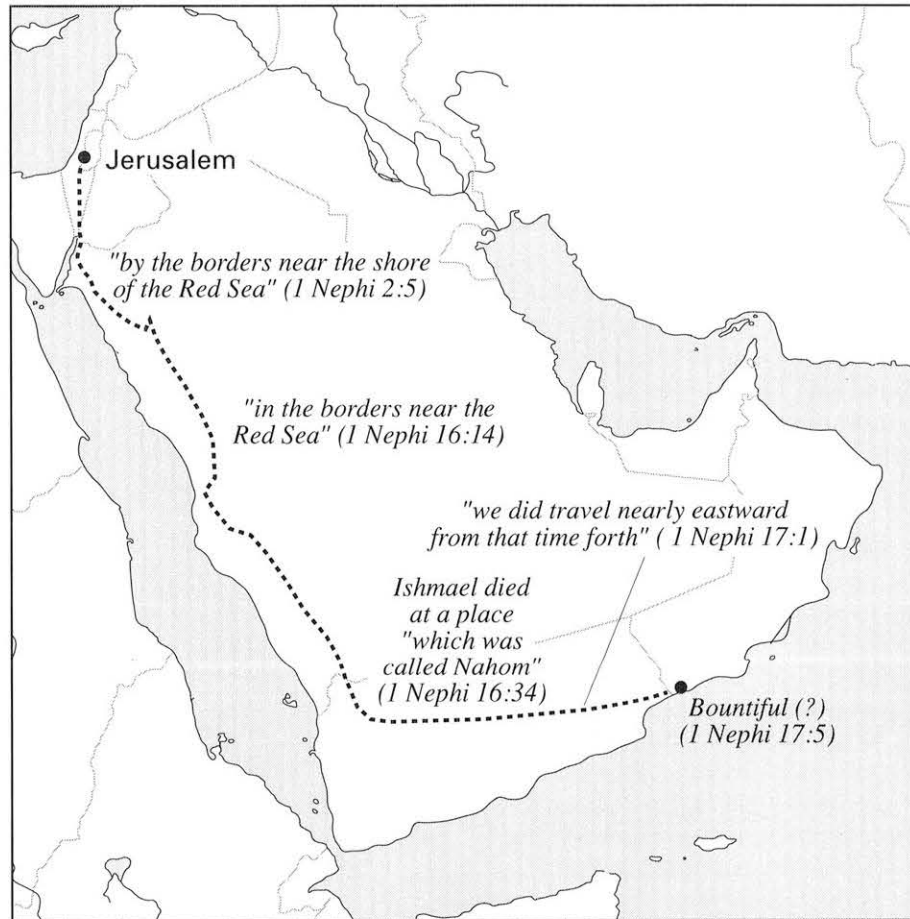
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ELDIN RICKS

## FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI

Written by NEPHI<sub>1</sub>, an ancient prophet who fled Jerusalem with his father, LEHI, and Lehi’s family shortly after 600 B.C., this book tells of their travels



BYU Geography Department

Possible route of Lehi in the Old World, from Jerusalem to the ocean, c. 600–587 B.C.

under divine guidance to the Western Hemisphere. With its detailed testimony of the mission of Jesus Christ and its panoramic view of sacred history, 1 Nephi is the doctrinal and historical foundation for all of the Book of Mormon. Its stated intent is to testify that the God of Israel can save all who repent and exercise faith in him (1 Ne. 1:20; 6:4).

Composed several years after Nephi arrived in the “promised land,” the record, of which the First Book of Nephi was a part, contained prophesying and sacred preaching “for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of [his] people” (Jacob 1:4). Its fundamental message is that the God of Israel is merciful and has the power to save those who obey him (1 Ne. 1:20; 6:4; 22:30–31). Nephi supports this thesis with historical and prophetic evidence. He cites Israel’s exodus from Egypt twice as evidence of God’s redeeming power, and saw the same power at work in his family’s exodus from a doomed Jerusalem. A seer of remarkable spiritual stature, Nephi testified that greater acts of redemption lay in the future: God himself would come to earth to ransom man from death and sin (1 Ne. 11:33; 19:10), and before the end of the world, Israel would be redeemed.

The narrative of 1 Nephi is vivid and dramatic; acts of divine intervention dominate this account. It begins in the first year of the Judean King Zedekiah (1 Ne. 1:4; cf. 2 Kgs. 24:8–18; dated by Babylonian documents at 597 B.C.). Jerusalem had just capitulated after a brief Babylonian siege, and King Jehoiachin, together with many of Judah’s prominent citizens, had been deported. When Jerusalem persisted in its arrogance, a host of prophets, including Jeremiah and Lehi, warned of destruction. As people conspired to kill Lehi, he was warned by the Lord and escaped south into the desert. Twice his four sons returned to the region, once to obtain a copy of the scriptures written on plates of brass and again to convince Ishmael and his family to flee with them (chaps. 3–7). Guided by a miraculous brass compass (*see* LIAHONA), Lehi’s group then completed a grueling odyssey that covered eight years in the wilderness, arriving at a verdant spot on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. There, Nephi was summoned by the Lord to a mountain where he was instructed to build a ship to carry the group to a land of promise. Through God’s frequent inspiration and protection, the ship was finished and the treacherous voyage completed (chaps. 16–18).

Through all these events, Lehi and Nephi were opposed by the oldest sons in the family,



Wadi Sayq, near the border between Yemen and Oman on the Gulf of Aden (1989). Areas with vegetation such as this along the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula match the description of the place where Lehi and his group built their ship (1 Nephi 17:5), but they were unknown to Westerners until after the Book of Mormon was published. Courtesy Warren Aston.

LAMAN and Lemuel, who were not only skeptical but sometimes violent in their opposition. The record vindicates Nephi in many ways. An angel once intervened to protect Nephi from his brothers; twice he escaped from them, being filled with the power of God. Several times, by his faith, he succeeded where they failed.

Records of powerful visions are interspersed throughout the narrative. Lehi received his prophetic commission in a vision as he prayed on Jerusalem’s behalf: He saw a pillar of fire dwelling upon a rock and God seated upon his throne and was given a book to read that decreed judgment upon the city (chap. 1). Soon after, Nephi heard the voice of the Lord, saying that Nephi would teach and rule over his elder brothers (chap. 2); and Lehi had a dream that centered around a magnificent tree, a river, an iron rod, and a great and spacious building (chap. 8; *see also* TREE OF LIFE). The family’s escape from a proud and materialistic Jerusalem and their subsequent quest for salvation in



the wilderness are vividly reflected in the imagery of this dream. Lehi also prophesied about the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, their eventual return to Palestine, and the coming of a Messiah who would redeem mankind from its lost and fallen state (chap. 10).

Inspired by Lehi's spiritual experiences and wanting to know the meaning of his father's dream, Nephi sought and received the same vision, together with its interpretation. This revelation puts the experiences of Lehi and his posterity into the context of God's redemptive plan and provides much of the historical and doctrinal framework for subsequent Book of Mormon prophecy: (1) Nephi saw the birth, ministry, and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, and the rejection of his apostles by Israel; (2) he witnessed the division of Lehi's family, followed by the rise, decline, and destruction of his own posterity by the descendants of his brothers, and saw that the Lamb of God would visit various branches of Israel, including Nephi's posterity; (3) he saw a GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH among the Gentiles, as well as a dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles and their crucial role in gathering Israel and a remnant of Nephi's seed; and (4) he was shown the final victory of God over the powers of evil at the end of the world (chaps. 11–14).

Citing other corroborating prophecies, 1 Nephi 19–22 reinforces those four themes, the mainstays of the Nephite outlook on world history. Nephi first gives a detailed testimony of the atoning sacrifice of the God of Israel, his rejection, and the scattering of God's covenant people, quoting ZENOS, ZENOCK, and NEUM (chap. 19); he then quoted ISAIAH to show that God will defer his anger and will eventually gather his people through the assistance of gentile kings and queens (chaps. 20–21); and, finally, he exhorts all to obey God's commandments and be saved, for in the last days the wicked shall burn and the Holy One of Israel shall reign (chap. 22).

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#### SECOND BOOK OF NEPHI

The Second Book of Nephi (2 Nephi) is a work written about 550 B.C. by the same author who wrote 1 Nephi and included it on his small PLATES. The second book contains four prophetic discourses and treatises from three Book of Mormon prophets, LEHI, JACOB, and Nephi<sub>1</sub>, as well as substantial excerpts of the prophecies of Isaiah from the brass plates. Additionally, 2 Nephi briefly records the difficult transition from the founding generation of Lehi's colony to the succeeding generation in their new homeland.

The first segment of the book consists of Lehi's admonitions and testament to his posterity before his death (1:1–4:11). He directed his opening words to his older sons, Laman, Lemuel, and Sam, as well as to the sons of Ishmael. He reminded them of God's mercy in leading them to a promised land, taught them concerning the COVENANT of righteousness that belongs to the land, warned of the loss of liberty and prosperity that will follow disobedience to God, and urged them to become reconciled to their brother Nephi as their leader (1:1–27).

Following this admonition, Lehi pronounced specific blessings on all of his descendants, either as individuals or as family groups. His blessings contain prophecies and promises concerning the future of each individual or group in the covenant land and are followed by counsel "according to the workings of the Spirit" (1:6). His instructions to his youngest sons, Jacob and Joseph, are doctrinally significant. He spoke to Jacob concerning God's plan of salvation for his children, teaching principles that are fundamental to understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ, including the doctrine of redemption through the Messiah, the necessity of opposition and agency, the role of Satan, and the importance of the fall of Adam and Eve (2:1–30). Lehi taught his son Joseph concerning the prophecies of his ancestor Joseph of Egypt, who foretold the latter-day mission of another Joseph (the Prophet Joseph SMITH) and of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (3:1–25).

Nephi<sub>1</sub>, son of Lehi, is author of the next section, the only historical segment in the record (4:12–5:34). After recounting the death of Lehi and the subsequent rebellion of Laman, Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael (4:12–13), Nephi noted that he was keeping two records: the large plates on which he wrote his people's secular history and the small plates on which he recorded "that which is pleas-

ing unto God,” including many excerpts from the plates of brass (4:14–15; 5:29–33).

As Nephi wrote of his delight in pondering the scriptures and “the things of the Lord,” he was moved to compose a beautiful psalm (4:16–35). In these verses, much like the biblical psalmist, Nephi used inspiring imagery and poetic parallelism to praise God for his goodness, to lament his own weaknesses, and to declare his devotion to the Lord.

Nephi closed this segment by telling of the partitioning of Lehi’s posterity into two distinct peoples, the NEPHITES (the believers) and the LAMANITES (the unbelievers). He described the theological, cultural, and geographical divisions that developed between the brother nations, lamenting that within forty years of separating they were at war one with another (5:1–34).

A sermon by Jacob constitutes the third entry in 2 Nephi (chaps. 6–10), followed by the fourth and final part, a long written discourse from Nephi (chaps. 11–33). Quoting substantial portions of Isaiah, both Nephi and Jacob emphasized two major themes: the history and future of God’s covenant people, and the mission of the Messiah. For his discourse on these topics, Nephi first quoted the text of Isaiah 2–14 in 2 Nephi 12–24 and then commented on them in chapters 25–30, incorporating portions of Isaiah 29 in his discussion. Jacob quoted Isaiah 50:1–52:2 in chapters 7–8. Apparently, Joseph Smith put these quotations from Isaiah in King James English, but with many variant readings reflecting the Nephite source.

Citing and reflecting on Isaiah, Jacob, and Nephi focused on such events as the Babylonian captivity and return (6:8–9; 25:10–11); the apostasy, scattering, and oppression of the house of Israel; and the latter-day gathering of their descendants, their restoration by conversion to the gospel of Christ, and the establishment of Zion—themes that concerned them because of their own Israelite ancestry (6:6–18; 8:1–25; 10:1–25; 25:14–17; 26:14–30:18). They further prophesied the destruction of the wicked before the second coming of the Savior followed by the subsequent era of peace (12:1–22; 21:1–24:3).

In their discourses, Jacob and Nephi taught of the Messiah’s earthly ministry, rejection, and crucifixion (6:9; 7:1–11; 9:1–54; 10:3–5; 17–19) and his gospel fundamentals of faith, repentance, baptism, and obedience (9:23–24; 31:1–21; *see* GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST); they then prophesied

his baptism, atoning sacrifice, and resurrection, followed by his ministry among the Nephites, his ultimate second coming, and the final judgment (9:5–27; 26:1–9; 31:4–12).

In chapter 29, Nephi made special mention of the Lord’s desire that the Book of Mormon be used as “a standard” by his people, along with the Bible (29:2), noting that other books will come forth. In closing the record, Nephi testified that the words therein are the words of Christ, the words by which readers shall be judged (33:10–15).

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TERRY B. BALL

#### BOOK OF JACOB

Written by JACOB, fifth son of LEHI, sometime after 545 B.C., the work follows the pattern outlined by NEPHI<sub>1</sub> for making entries on the small PLATES by including sacred sermons, significant revelations, prophecies, and some historical information. Jacob, a Nephite prophet, wrote to persuade all men to “come unto Christ” (Jacob 1:7).

The book appears to have been written in three stages. The first constitutes an important discourse by Jacob at the temple, in which he called his people to repent from immorality, materialism, and pride (chaps. 2–3). He counseled men and women to be generous with their possessions, promising that, if they sought the KINGDOM OF GOD before seeking riches, they would be blessed with sufficient wealth to assist others (2:17–19). Jacob strongly warned his people against sins of immorality because many had transgressed the law of CHASTITY, including practicing polygamy not authorized by the Lord (2:30). He reminded his hearers that the Lord “delight[s] in the chastity of women” and that the sins of the men had broken the hearts of their wives and children (2:22–35).

The second part contains prophecies concerning the ATONEMENT of Christ, the rejection of Jesus of Nazareth by many Jews, and the scattering and gathering of ISRAEL (chaps. 4–6). Jacob de-

sired that later generations would “know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming” (4:4). The major component of this section is Jacob’s quoting of the allegory of the tame and wild olive trees (chap. 5). Written by ZENOS, an Israelite prophet whose writings were preserved on the brass plates, this allegory outlines in symbolic narrative the prophetic story of the scattering and gathering of Israel, including Lehi’s descendants, from the establishment of Israel to the end of the earth.

The third segment recounts Jacob’s experience with an ANTI-CHRIST named Sherem, who with skill and power of language endeavored to flatter and deceive people away from belief in Christ (7:1–4). Sherem had accused Jacob of blasphemy and false prophecy and had tried to convince people that there would be no Christ. In the end, Sherem was confounded by Jacob and, after seeking for a sign, was smitten by God and died shortly thereafter (7:7–8, 13–20). Recovering from Sherem’s divisive teachings through searching the scriptures, Jacob’s people were able to experience anew the peace and love of God (7:23).

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CLYDE J. WILLIAMS

#### BOOK OF ENOS

Following the pattern set by his father and predecessors (Jacob 1:2–4; cf. Enos 1:13–16), Enos, son of JACOB, personally recorded the TESTIMONY and prophetic promises granted to him. Enos (c. 515–417 B.C.) is a figure who touches the heart. He typifies conversion, compassion, and confidence before the Lord. While he was hunting beasts, the words of his father “concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into [his] heart,” and his “soul hungered” (1:3–4). All day and into the night he “wrestle[d] . . . before God” in “mighty prayer” until he received a remission of his sins. He successively prayed for his own welfare, for the welfare of his brethren the NEPHITES, who strayed too easily from righteousness, and then for his brethren the LAMANITES, who had become increasingly ferocious and wild. Enos received a COVENANT declaration from the Lord that the Nephite records would be brought forth to the

Lamanites. He knew with a surety that he would see his Redeemer’s face with pleasure and would receive a place in the mansions of the Father (1:27).

MARILYN ARNOLD

#### BOOK OF JAROM

Jarom, son of ENOS, recorded a brief summary of the fortunes of the NEPHITES during his lifetime (c. 440–355 B.C.). Twice he justified the brevity of his account, pleading limited space and little new doctrine to add to the words of his predecessors. Reflecting an era of strict conservatism in the flourishing colony, Jarom recounted great Nephite efforts to observe the LAW OF MOSES and to anticipate the coming MESSIAH. Despite their larger numbers, the LAMANITES were unsuccessful in their frequent attacks on the prospering Nephites, and Jarom attributed the Nephite successes to the prophets, priests, and teachers who stirred them continually to repentance.

MARILYN ARNOLD

#### BOOK OF OMNI

This book concluded and filled the small PLATES of Nephi. It contains brief statements by a succession of record keepers who were descendants of JACOB but apparently not spiritual leaders: Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki (fourth–second centuries B.C.). Amaleki, whose account is the longest of the five, described the important transition that occurred in Book of Mormon history when MOSIAH<sub>1</sub> led the escape of a band of faithful NEPHITES from the land of Nephi to Zarahemla (c. 200 B.C.). Here they discovered descendants of a group that had left Jerusalem with MULEK but had lost their religion and language. Amaleki connected the corruption of their language with the absence of written records, establishing the importance of record preservation. Mosiah brought with him the plates of brass containing “the record of the Jews” (Omni 1:14), including the laws that kings were required to have under the LAW OF MOSES (see Deut. 17:18–19). He was accepted as king over both these peoples and ruled for a generation. Amaleki survived Mosiah but had no heirs, so he transmitted his records to Mosiah’s son, King BENJAMIN.

MARILYN ARNOLD

### THE WORDS OF MORMON

MORMON was at work on his abridgment of the large PLATES of NEPHI<sub>1</sub> when he discovered the small plates of Nephi, a prophetic record from early NEPHITE history (W of M 1:3). Because he was deeply impressed with the messianic PROPHECIES that he read on the small plates, and in response to “the workings of the Spirit,” Mormon included that set of plates with his digest (W of M 1:4–7). But because that record ended a few years before the book of Mosiah began (c. A.D. 130), Mormon assumed the prerogative of an editor and appended this historical postscript to the small plates to bring its conclusion into correlation with the opening of the book of Mosiah. This appendage, called the Words of Mormon, was composed about A.D. 385.

ELDIN RICKS

### BOOK OF MOSIAH

The book of Mosiah is religiously rich, symbolically meaningful, chronologically complex, and politically significant. Although its disparate events range from 200 to 91 B.C., they are unified particularly by the theme of deliverance and by the reign of the Nephite king MOSIAH<sub>2</sub>.

Several groups figure prominently in this history: (1) the main body of Nephites under King BENJAMIN and his son Mosiah<sub>2</sub>, together with the people of Zarahemla (Mulekites), who outnumbered their Nephite rulers and neighbors; (2) the people of Zeniff, who failed in their attempt to reoccupy the Nephites’ homeland, the land of Nephi; and (3) the people of ALMA<sub>1</sub>, who broke away from the people of Zeniff and became the people of Alma, followers of the martyred prophet ABINADI. The last two groups returned to Zarahemla shortly after Mosiah became king.

The book of Mosiah is drawn from several underlying textual sources: Benjamin’s speech (124 B.C.); the record of Zeniff (c. 200–120 B.C.), including Alma’s record of Abinadi’s trial (c. 150 B.C.) and of his people (c. 150–118 B.C.); and the annals of Mosiah (124–91 B.C.).

**BENJAMIN’S SPEECH** (CHAPS. 1–6). The coronation of Mosiah occurred in a setting similar to the traditional Israelite assembly at the temple, together with sacrifices, covenant renewal, confessions, pronouncements regarding Christ’s atoning

blood, and admonitions to serve God and help the poor. Benjamin died, and Mosiah reigned. He sponsored Ammon’s expedition to find the people of Zeniff (7:1–8:21).

**RECORD OF ZENIFF** (CHAPS. 9–22). About seventy-five years earlier, Zeniff had established his colony; he fought two wars, and his wicked son Noah succeeded him. Twice, the prophet Abinadi delivered a condemnation of Noah; Abinadi rehearsed the Ten Commandments, quoted Isaiah 53, and discoursed on the atonement of Jesus Christ and the resurrection. As he was suffering death by fire, Abinadi prophesied that his death would prefigure Noah’s. One of Noah’s priests, Alma<sub>1</sub>, believed Abinadi’s preaching, fled into the wilderness, and assembled a group of converts who escaped together from Noah’s soldiers. Meanwhile, a military officer named Gideon opposed Noah, the Lamanites attacked, and Noah fled and was subsequently executed by his own people in the manner that Abinadi had predicted. Noah’s son, Limhi, was left to reign for many years as a vassal king in servitude to the Lamanites. At length, Limhi and his people were delivered and escaped to Zarahemla.

**ALMA’S RECORD** (CHAPS. 23–24). The followers of Alma<sub>1</sub> practiced baptism and placed strong emphasis on unity, loving one another, and avoiding contention. In a speech that presaged Mosiah’s final words establishing the reign of the judges, Alma<sub>1</sub> refused to become a king, wanting his people to be in bondage to no person. Nevertheless, they came under cruel bondage to the Lamanites, now led by some of Alma’s former associates, the evil priests of Noah. Several years later, the people of Alma were miraculously delivered.

**THE ANNALS OF MOSIAH** (CHAPS. 25–29). The Nephites, the people of Zarahemla (Mulekites), the people of Limhi, and the people of Alma<sub>1</sub> were unified under Mosiah as king, with Alma as high priest. Alma was given authority to organize and regulate churches, but many members apostasized and persecuted the righteous. Among the wicked were his son ALMA<sub>2</sub> and the four sons of Mosiah. When they were confronted by an angel of the Lord, they repented and were converted. Mosiah translated the Jaredite record, passed the Nephite records and sacred artifacts to Alma<sub>2</sub>, and installed Alma<sub>2</sub> as the first chief judge according to the voice of the people.

The narratives in the book of Mosiah emphasize the theme of deliverance from bondage, whether physical or spiritual. In his address, Benjamin speaks of spiritual deliverance through the atoning blood of Christ, emphasizing mankind's dependence on God and its responsibility to the poor (both themes or typologies are similarly shaped in the Bible by the Exodus tradition). The account of the conversion of Alma<sub>2</sub> is a notable case of deliverance from spiritual bondage by calling upon the name of Jesus Christ (Mosiah 27; Alma 36). Two groups are delivered from physical bondage and oppression: Limhi's people and the converts of Alma after their enslavement by the Lamanites. As in the Exodus pattern, they "cried" to the Lord, who heard and delivered them from bondage. An emissary named Ammon expressly compared the deliverance of the people of Zeniff to the exodus of Israel from Egypt and of Lehi from Jerusalem (Mosiah 7:19–22, 33).

The book of Mosiah establishes several pairs of comparisons in a manner similar to a literary technique often used in the Bible: Alma<sub>1</sub> and Amulon are examples of good and bad priests; Benjamin and Noah are contrasting exemplars of noble and corrupt kingship. The extreme contrast between these kings is cited by Mosiah at the end of his reign to explain the wisdom in shifting the government of the Nephites from kingship to a reign of judges (Mosiah 29).

The Jaredite record is mentioned three times (Mosiah 8:9; 21:27; 28:11–19). In an attempt to get help from Mosiah's settlement, Limhi dispatched a search party; it did not find Mosiah, but found human remains, weapons of war, and twenty-four gold plates. The party returned this record to Limhi, who gave it to Mosiah, who translated it using two stones called "interpreters" (see URIM AND THUMMIM). The record told of the rise and fall of the Jaredites (see BOOK OF MORMON: BOOK OF ETHER).

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ALAN GOFF

#### BOOK OF ALMA

The book of Alma is the longest book in the Book of Mormon. It was abridged by MORMON, principally from the records of three men, ALMA<sub>2</sub> (chaps. 1–16, 27–44), Ammon (chaps. 17–26), and Alma's son HELAMAN<sub>1</sub> (chaps. 45–62), and concludes with remarks by Mormon (chap. 63). Its broad theme is that the preaching of the word of God in pure testimony is mightier than politics or the sword in establishing peace, justice, equality, and goodness (Alma 4:19; 31:5). The book demonstrates this theme through repeated examples of individuals who were converted to faith in the anticipated Savior, Jesus Christ, and examples of people who were given victory by God over their wicked and ambitious enemies.

The book of Alma covers thirty-nine years (91–52 B.C.). The first fourteen years are covered by two concurrent accounts—one encompassing the teachings and activities of Alma<sub>2</sub>, who resigned his judgeship in order to engage in missionary work in the land of Zarahemla (chaps. 1–16), and the other containing the words and deeds of the sons of King MOSIAH<sub>2</sub> and their companions as they made considerable personal sacrifice in their efforts to preach the gospel among the LAMANITES (chaps. 17–26).

The first section begins with the trial of Nehor before the chief judge Alma; Nehor was convicted and executed for the crime of enforcing PRIESTCRAFT with the sword (chap. 1). Alma then fought a civil war against Nehor's followers and prevailed (chaps. 2–4), but he soon relinquished the judgeship to devote full time to the ministry. He preached powerful sermons at the cities of Zarahemla (chaps. 5–6), Gideon (chap. 7), and Melek (chap. 8), and went to the wicked city of Ammonihah, where he was cast out, but ordered by an angel to return. In Ammonihah the second time, he met and was assisted by Amulek, who was instructed by an angel to find Alma (chap. 8). Although they were opposed by a skilled lawyer named Zeezrom, eventually they converted many, including Zeezrom. However, their male converts were expelled from the city, and Alma and Amulek were imprisoned and forced to watch the wives and children of their converts being burned to death. Eventually, Alma and Amulek were delivered when an earthquake destroyed the prison and killed their captors (chaps. 9–14). Shortly thereafter, this apostate city was annihilated by invading Lamanites (chap. 16).

During the same fourteen years, the sons of Mosiah and their companions were in the land southward. Ammon went to the land of Ishmael, and through his service to, and love of, King Lamoni, he converted the king and many of his people (chaps. 17–19), whom he taught to live the LAW OF MOSES in anticipation of the coming of Christ (Alma 25:15). Ammon and Lamoni then went to the land of Middoni to free his fellow missionaries from prison. En route they were confronted by Lamoni's father, the king of all the Lamanites, who took to the sword. Ammon withstood his blows, gained control over the king, and made him promise freedom for his brothers and autonomy for Lamoni and his people (chap. 20). Once Ammon's brother, Aaron, and his companions were free, they went to Lamoni's father, and taught and converted him, his household, and many of his people. These converted Lamanites, concerned about the return of prior blood guilt, made an oath never to shed blood again (chap. 23). Other Lamanites and dissident Nephites attacked these converts and killed 1,005, who would not defend themselves because of that oath. Many of the attacking Lamanites (but not the Nephite dissenters) felt remorse for their actions and laid down their arms and also became converted (chaps. 24–25). Eventually, Ammon led these converts, called Anti-Nephi-Lehies, to Nephite territory, where they settled in the land of Jershon (chap. 27). The Lamanites who were left behind become angry at the Nephites and then attacked and destroyed Ammonihah (Alma 25:1–2; described more fully in Alma 16:1–11).

After these developments, Korihor, an ANTI-CHRIST and advocate of blasphemous doctrines, confronted Alma as high priest in the court of the chief judge, where he asked for a sign from God, was struck dumb, and died shortly thereafter (chap. 30). Next, Alma led a delegation to preach to the Zoramites, a group that had defected from the Nephites. Many poverty-stricken Zoramites were reconverted and cast out by the other Zoramites. The unconverted promptly allied with the Lamanites, attacked the Nephites, and were defeated (chaps. 31–35, 43–44).

The chapters focusing on Alma also contain his blessings and instructions to his three sons (chaps. 36–42) and an account of his disappearance (being taken to heaven; chap. 45). The book of Alma ends with the detailed accounts by HELAMAN<sub>1</sub> of further wars between the Nephites and Lamanites (chaps.

43–62; *see* BOOK OF MORMON, HISTORY OF WARFARE IN). The final chapter (chap. 63) notes the deaths of Pahoran, Moroni, Helaman, and his brother Shiblon, marking the end of this era of righteous Nephite control of Zarahemla. It also tells of Hagoth, a shipbuilder who transported people to the north, but he was never heard from again after a second departure.

The book of Alma covers a critical period in Nephite history, the opening years of the Nephite judgeship (*see* BOOK OF MORMON, GOVERNMENT AND LEGAL HISTORY IN). The survival of this popularly based form of government was threatened several times in the course of the book, starting when Nehor's follower Amlici sought to become king. It was threatened again when the Zoramites (described above) defected. Further trouble arose when Amlickiah, a Zoramite, persuaded many of the lower judges to support him as king. A general named Moroni rallied the Nephite troops by raising a banner that he called the Title of Liberty; it proclaimed the need to remember and defend their God, their religion, their freedom, their peace, their wives, and their children. Amalickiah and a few of his men fled to the Lamanites, where he, through treachery and murder, established himself as king and led the Lamanites in a prolonged war against the Nephites. Amalickiah was killed after seven years of war, but the wars continued under his brother Ammoron for six more years. Those years became particularly perilous for the Nephites when "kingmen" arose in Zarahemla and expelled the Nephite government from the capital (discussed in CWHN 8:328–79). Moroni was forced to leave the battlefield to regain control of the capital before he could turn his full attention to defeating the Lamanites. In each case, the Nephites ultimately prevailed and gave thanks and praise to God.

In the book of Alma, the delineation of the Nephite and Lamanite nations along ancestral lines becomes blurred. Several groups of Nephites—Amlicites (chaps. 2–3), Zoramites (chaps. 31–35, 43), Amalickiahites (chaps. 46–62), and kingmen (chaps. 51, 61)—rejected Nephite religious principles and joined the Lamanites in an attempt to overthrow the Nephite government. Several groups of Lamanites—Anti-Nephi-Lehies (chaps. 17–27), converts from the army that marched against the Anti-Nephi-Lehies (chap. 25), and some Lamanite soldiers captured by Moroni (chap. 62)—embraced the gospel and Nephite way of life

and went to live among the Nephites. By the end of the book, these populations are distinguished more by ideology than by lineage. Those who desired government by the “voice of the people” and embraced the teachings of the gospel are numbered among the Nephites, while those who opposed them are called Lamanites.

Many important religious teachings are found in the book of Alma. Alma 5 is a speech given by Alma calling the people of the city of Zarahemla to repent and teaching all followers of Christ to judge the state of their former spiritual rebirth and present well-being. Alma 7, delivered to the righteous city of Gideon, teaches believers to make the ATONEMENT of Christ a reality in their lives. Chapters 12 and 13 elucidate the mysteries of redemption, RESURRECTION, and the PRIESTHOOD after the order of the Son of God. Alma 32 and 33 are a sermon given by Alma to the Zoramite poor, explaining the correct manner of prayer, the relationship between humility and faith in Jesus Christ, and the process of increasing faith. Alma 34 is Amulek’s talk on the need for the “infinite and eternal sacrifice” made by the Son of God. In it Amulek also teaches the people how to pray and tells them how to live so that their prayers will not be vain.

Alma teaches his sons trust in God by telling of his personal CONVERSION (chap. 36). He also gives instructions about the keeping of sacred records and explains how God’s purposes are accomplished through small means (chap. 37). He teaches the evil of sexual sin (chap. 39), the nature of resurrection and restoration (chaps. 40–41), the purpose and consequences of the FALL OF ADAM, including spiritual and temporal death), and the relationship between JUSTICE AND MERCY (see chap. 42).

The war chapters include instances of, and statements about, justifiable reasons for war (chap. 48), along with the example of the protective power of faith exercised by the young warriors who fought under Helaman, none of whom died in battle, for they believed their mothers’ teachings that “God would deliver them” (Alma 56:47–48).

Overall, the book of Alma teaches through vivid, detailed narratives how personal ambition can lead to APOSTASY and war, and shows how the Lord gathers his people through the preaching of the gospel of Christ and delivers them in righteousness against aggression.

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For essays on Alma the Younger, Ammon, King Lamoni, Ammonihah, Korihor’s sophistry, Amlici, several dissenters, Captain Moroni, the Nephite chief judges, and other figures in the book of Alma, see Jeffrey R. Holland, *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family*, pp. 79–170. Salt Lake City, 1983.

CHERYL BROWN

#### BOOK OF HELAMAN

The book of Helaman chronicles one of the most tumultuous periods in the history of the NEPHITES and LAMANITES (52–1 B.C.). The narrative focuses on the unexpected difficulties (e.g., the Lamanites’ invasion and unprecedented occupation of the land of Zarahemla narrated in chaps. 4 and 5) and unexpected resolutions that came from God (e.g., the withdrawal of the Lamanite occupation forces as the direct result of the missionary work of two sons of Helaman, NEPHI<sub>2</sub> and Lehi, in 5:49–52).

This book takes its name from its first author, HELAMAN<sub>2</sub>, son of HELAMAN<sub>1</sub>. Other contributors to the record were Nephi and Lehi, sons of Helaman<sub>2</sub> (16:25), and MORMON, the principal editor of the Book of Mormon, who added political and religious commentary.

The account opens after Helaman had received custody of the Nephite records from his uncle Shiblon (Alma 63:11) in the fortieth year of the reign of the judges (c. 52 B.C.; Hel. 1:1). The narrative falls into six major segments: the record of Helaman (chaps. 1–3); the record of Nephi (chaps. 4–6); the prophecy of Nephi (chaps. 7–11); Mormon’s editorial observations on God’s power (chap. 12); the prophecy of SAMUEL THE LAMANITE (chaps. 13–15); and a brief statement about the five-year period before Jesus’ birth (chap. 16). Several religious discourses are woven into the narrative, including Helaman’s admonition to his sons (5:6–12), Nephi’s psalm (7:7–9), Nephi’s sermon from the tower in his garden (7:13–29; 8:11–28), Nephi’s prayer (11:10–16), and Samuel’s long speech atop the walls of Zarahemla (13:5–39; 14:2–15:17).

Perhaps the most prominent person mentioned in the book is Nephi<sub>2</sub>. After Nephi resigned from the office of chief judge, he and his brother Lehi devoted themselves fully to preaching the message of the gospel (5:1–4). His defense of God’s providence affirmed the power of prophecy (8:11–

28) and, on a practical level, led to the conviction of the murderer of the chief judge (9:21–38). The Lord entrusted him with the power to seal the heavens so that no rain would fall (10:4–11), a power that Nephi used to bring about the cessation of civil strife and wickedness (11:1–18).

The rise of the GADIANTON ROBBERS (1:9–12; 2:3–11), a hostile and secret society within the Nephite and Lamanite polities, was perhaps the most disheartening and ominous occurrence during those fifty-one years. Mormon informs readers of both the organization's character (6:17–30) and its debilitating impact on society (2:13–14; 6:38–39; 11:24–34).

In contrast to these despairing observations is one of the book's central themes: the surprising ascendancy of the Lamanites in spiritual matters. After the Nephites were overrun by a Lamanite army led by Nephite dissidents in 35 B.C. and failed to regain lost territories (4:5–10), Nephi and Lehi went among the Lamanites to preach the gospel (5:16–20). Their remarkable success in converting listeners to Christ led to their imprisonment (5:21). But in an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit of God, all in the prison were converted, an event that led to a spiritual reversal among the Lamanites and the eventual withdrawal of Lamanite military forces from Nephite lands (5:22–52). Thereafter, Lamanites carried out the work of the Church, preaching to both their own people and the Nephites (6:1–8, 34–36).

Almost thirty years later (c. 6 B.C.), a Lamanite prophet named Samuel prophesied at Zarahemla. He condemned the decadence of Nephite society, warning of destruction of both individuals and society (13:5–39, esp. 38; 14:20–15:3). He also prophesied that signs to be seen in the Western Hemisphere would accompany both the birth and death of Jesus (14:2–25). He declared the power of the Atonement in redeeming mankind from the fall of Adam and in bringing about the Resurrection. Finally, he spoke of the Lamanites' righteousness and the promises of God to them in the latter days (15:4–16).

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PAUL R. CHEESMAN

#### THIRD NEPHI

The book of 3 Nephi is the dramatic and spiritual climax of the Book of Mormon. It focuses on three advents of Jesus: first, as the child born in Bethlehem; second, as the resurrected Lord visiting the Nephites; and third, at his SECOND COMING as the final judge at the end of the world. Within a year of the devastating destructions at the time of his crucifixion, the resurrected Jesus descended among a group of righteous people in the Nephite city of Bountiful. He revealed himself unmistakably as the Lord and Savior of the world, expounded his gospel, and established his Church.

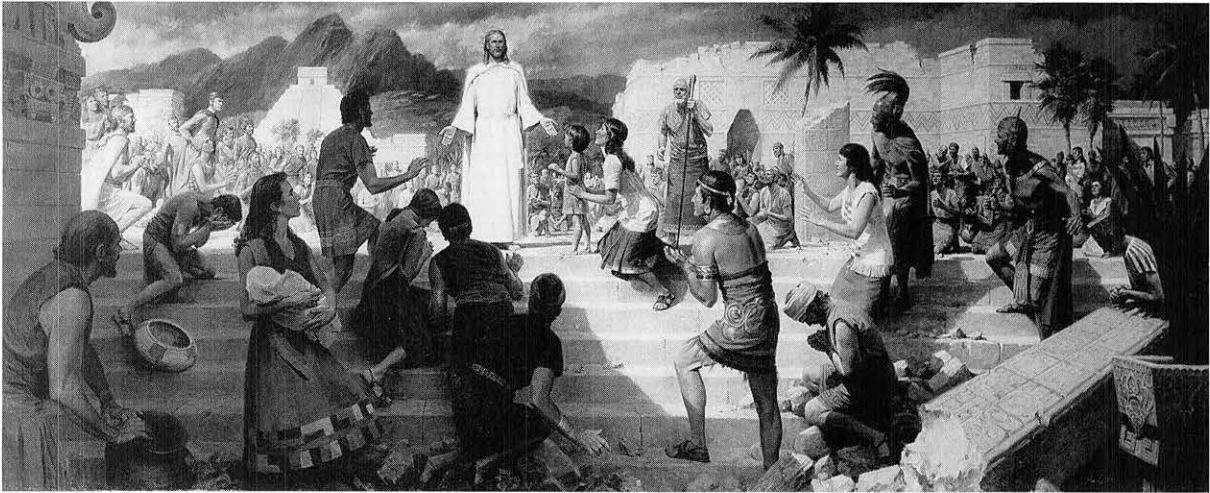
The book's author, NEPHI<sub>3</sub>, was the religious leader of an ethnically mixed group of Nephites and Lamanites at the time of Christ's birth. His book covers events from that time to A.D. 34. It appears Mormon copied much of Nephi's text verbatim into his abridgment.

Nephi's record begins at the time when the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies of SAMUEL THE LAMANITE miraculously saved believers from a threatened antimessianic persecution. The signs of Jesus' birth appeared—a night of daylight and a new star—vindicating the faith of those who believed the prophecies that Jesus would be born into the world (chap. 1).

After these signs, many were converted to the Church led by Nephi. On the other hand, greed, pleasure-seeking, and pride increased drastically, and the government was soon infiltrated with organized corruption that caused complete anarchy and a breakdown of the people into family tribes and robber bands. Prolonged attacks by these bands plagued the Nephites, who finally abandoned their own properties and formed a single body with enough provisions to subsist for seven years. The Nephites eventually prevailed, but these disruptions and wickedness brought on the collapse of the central government. Although most rejected Nephi<sub>3</sub>'s warnings and miracles, he baptized and ordained those who would believe and follow (chaps. 2–7).

The believers began looking for the calamitous signs of Christ's death, also prophesied by Samuel. A violent storm arose and massive earthquakes occurred demolishing many cities, killing thousands of the wicked, and leaving the more righteous survivors in a thick vapor of darkness for three days of mourning. After the tumult settled, the voice of Jesus Christ spoke out of the darkness,





*Jesus Christ Visits the Americas*, by John Scott (1969, oil on canvas, 47" × 121"). The resurrected Jesus Christ appeared to 2,500 men, women, and children who had gathered at their temple in Bountiful. He instructed them for three days (see 3 Ne. 11–28).

expressing his sadness over the unrepentant dead and his hope that those who were spared would receive him and his redemption. He announced that his sacrifice had ended the need for blood sacrifice as practiced under the law of Moses (chaps. 8–10).

Later, in radiant white, the resurrected Christ descended to show his wounds, to heal, to teach, and to ordain leaders for his Church. On the first day of several such visits, Jesus appeared to a group of 2,500 men, women, and children assembled at the temple in Bountiful. He ordained twelve disciples and gave them the power to baptize and bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost; he instructed the people in the principles, ordinances, and commandments of his gospel (see *SERMON ON THE MOUNT*); he explained that he had fulfilled the law of Moses; he healed the sick and blessed their families. He announced his plan to show himself to still other people not then known by the Jews or the Nephites. Finally, he entered into a covenant with them. The people promised to keep the commandments he had given them, and he administered to them the sacrament of bread and wine, in remembrance of his resurrected body that he had shown to them and of the blood through which he had wrought the Atonement (chaps. 11–18).

On the morning of the second day, the disciples baptized the faithful and gave them the gift of the Holy Ghost, and they were encircled by angels and fire from heaven. Jesus appeared again and

offered three marvelous prayers, explained God's covenant with Israel and its promised fulfillment, reviewed and corrected some items in the Nephite scriptures, and foretold events of the future world, quoting prophecies from Isaiah, Micah, and Malachi. He inspired even babes to reveal "marvelous things" (3 Ne. 26:16). Then he explained the past and future history of the world, emphasizing that salvation will extend to all who follow him (chaps. 19–26).

A third time, Jesus appeared to the twelve Nephite disciples alone. He named his Church and explained the principles of the final judgment. Three of the disciples were transfigured and beheld heavenly visions. Jesus granted these three disciples their wish to remain on earth as special servants until the end of the world (chaps. 27–28; see also *THREE NEPHITES*; *TRANSLATED BEINGS*).

Christ revisited the Nephites over an extended period, and told them that he would also visit the lost tribes of Israel.

His Church grew having all things common, with neither rich nor poor. This peaceful condition lasted nearly 180 years, and "surely there could not be a happier people" (4 Ne. 1:16).

Mormon wrote his abridgment of 3 Nephi more than three hundred years after the actual events. By then, the descendants of the Nephites who had been so blessed had degenerated into terminal warfare. Mormon's final, sober testimony to his future readers speaks of the Lord's coming in

the last days, which, like his coming to the land Bountiful, would be disastrous for the ungodly but glorious for the righteous (chaps. 29–30).

The text of 3 Nephi fits several categories. First, it is a Christian testament, a Christian gospel. It contains many direct quotations from Jesus and establishes his new covenant. Recorded in a touching personal tone by a participating eyewitness of awesomely tragic and beautiful events, the account convincingly invites the reader to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and to feel the love he has for all people.

The text also has been compared to the pseudepigraphic forty-day literature that describes Christ's ministry to the faithful in the Holy Land after his resurrection (*see* JESUS CHRIST: FORTY-DAY MINISTRY AND OTHER POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS CHRIST; *CWHN* 8:407–34). Others have seen in chapters 11–18 a covenant ritual that profoundly expands the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew (Welch, pp. 34–83). The account also resembles the apocalyptic message of the books of Enoch: From the type and purpose of the initial cataclysm, to the sublimity of its revelations to the faithful, to the creation of a righteous society, 3 Nephi is a story of theodicy, theophany, and theocracy.

The text yields practical instructions for sainthood. It is not a wishful utopian piece but a practical handbook of commandments to be accepted in covenantal ordinances and obeyed strictly, with devotion and pure dedication to God. This is not the genre of wisdom literature, not merely a book of moral suggestions for the good life. It explains Christ's gospel plainly, and makes the lofty ideals of the Sermon on the Mount livable by all who receive the Holy Ghost. Empowered by true Christian ordinances and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Nephites established a paradise surpassed in righteousness only by Enoch's Zion.

This Zion welcomes everyone, from every place and every time. It promises blessings to "all the pure in heart" who come unto Christ (3 Ne. 12:3–9, emphasis added). Thus, 3 Nephi urges all to accept and live Christ's gospel to perfect earthly society, and to join with the Zion of all the former and future righteous peoples so that, as Malachi states, the earth will not be "utterly wasted" at Christ's second coming (JS—H 1:39). This was Enoch's ancient achievement and Joseph SMITH's modern hope. The text does not discuss God's mil-

lennial kingdom; nor does Christ here pray, "Thy kingdom come." For among those happy Nephites, it had come already.

[*See also* Jesus Christ in the Scriptures: the Book of Mormon.]

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#### FOURTH NEPHI

Abridged by MORMON, this brief work contains the writings of four Nephite prophets (A.D. 34–320): NEPHI<sub>4</sub>, son of NEPHI<sub>3</sub>, who was a disciple of the risen Jesus; Amos, son of Nephi<sub>4</sub>; and Amos and Ammaron, two sons of Amos. The first section of 4 Nephi briefly summarizes four generations of peace, righteousness, and equality that resulted from the conversion of the people to the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST after the visit of the resurrected Savior. In contrast, the last section foreshadows the later destruction of the Nephite nation that followed a gradual and conscious rejection of the gospel message.

Fourth Nephi narrates an unparalleled epoch in human society when all the people followed the teachings of Christ for nearly two centuries. The book is best known for its account of the social and religious power of the love of God that overcame contention and other social and political ills (4 Ne. 1:15–16). The people experienced urban renewal, stable family life, unity in the Church, and social and economic equality, as well as divine miracles (1:3–13, 15–17). "Surely there could not [have been] a happier people . . . created by the hand of God" (1:16).

The book also previews the ensuing APOSTASY of most of the population from the teachings of Christ, introducing a state of wickedness and chaos that eventually led to total destruction. According to the account the individual and collective decline

was gradual and sequential, with the loss of social and religious order manifested in contention, PRIDE in prosperity, class distinctions with widening social divisions, rejection of Christ and his gospel, and persecution of the Church (1:24–46).

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#### BOOK OF MORMON

The short book of Mormon (A.D. 320–400/421), within the Book of Mormon, documents the extraordinary collapse of Nephite civilization, as had been foretold (1 Ne. 12:19–20; Alma 45:10–14). It consists of MORMON's abridgment of his larger and more complete history (Morm. 1–6), his final admonition both to future LAMANITES and to other remnants of the house of ISRAEL (chap. 7), and the prophetic warnings of Mormon's son MORONI<sub>2</sub> to future readers of the record (chaps. 8–9). Because Nephites of Mormon's day had rejected JESUS CHRIST and his gospel, superstition and magic replaced divine REVELATION (Morm. 1:13–19). A border skirmish (1:10) escalated into a major war, driving the Nephites from their traditional lands (2:3–7, 16, 20–21). Following a ten-year negotiated peace, they repulsed a Lamanite attack, which Mormon, former commander of the Nephite army, refused to lead. As conditions worsened, Mormon reluctantly agreed to command the Nephite army at CUMORAH, where they were destroyed (chaps. 3–6). With poignant anguish, Mormon lamented over his slain people: "O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you!" (6:17–22).

Mormon concluded his record by inviting Lamanites and other remnants of the house of Israel to learn of their forefathers, to lay down their weapons of war, and to repent of their SINS and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. His final words are, "If it so be that ye believe in Christ, and are baptized, first with water, then with fire and with the Holy Ghost, . . . it shall be well with you in the day of judgment. Amen" (7:10).

After the final battle (A.D. 385), Moroni<sub>2</sub>—alone and unsure of his own survival—noted his father's death and concluded his father's record

(8:1–5). Fifteen years later (A.D. 400), Moroni recorded that survivors of his people had been hunted from place to place until they were no more except for himself. He also observed that the Lamanites were at war with one another and that the whole country witnessed continual bloodshed. For a second time he closed the work, promising that those who would receive this record in the future and not condemn it would learn of greater spiritual matters (8:6–13).

Moroni apparently returned to the record a third time (between A.D. 400 and 421). Having seen a vision of the future (8:35), he testified that the PLATES of the Book of Mormon would come forth by the power of God in a day when people would not believe in miracles. SECRET COMBINATIONS would abound, churches be defiled, and wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, and pollutions be upon the earth. Moroni also spoke warnings to those in the latter days who do not believe in Christ and who deny the revelations of God, thus standing against the works of the Lord (8:14–9:27). He mentioned the difficulty of keeping records, written as they were in "reformed Egyptian" (9:31–33; cf. Ether 12:23–25). Moroni closed his father's volume with a testimony of the truth of his words (9:35–37).

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#### BOOK OF ETHER

The book of Ether is MORONI<sub>2</sub>'s abbreviated account of the history of the JAREDITES, who came to the Western Hemisphere at the time of the "great tower" of Babel and lived in the area later known as the Nephite "land northward," much earlier than Lehi's colony. Moroni retold their account, recorded on twenty-four plates of gold found by the people of Limhi and translated by MOSIAH<sub>2</sub> (Mosiah 28:11–19). Ether, the last prophet of the Jaredites and a survivor of their annihilation, inscribed those plates soon after the final destruction of his people. It is not known whether Moroni relied on Mosiah's translation or retranslated the Jaredite record in whole or in part. Moroni humbly claims not to have written "the hundredth part" of the record by Ether (Ether 15:33).

The structure of the book of Ether is much like the rest of the Book of Mormon. It tells of the emigration of people by land and sea from the Near East, the Lord's prophetic guidance of these people, and their rise, prosperity, and fall, all in direct relation to their obedience to the Lord's commandments in their promised land. Moroni included the book of Ether because his father MORMON had planned to do so (Mosiah 28:19) but for some reason did not complete the project. Both knew the value of this record and could see that the Jaredite history closely paralleled certain Nephite events.

Moroni appended this history to the Nephite account as a second witness against the evils and SECRET COMBINATIONS that led to the annihilation of both the Jaredites and the Nephites. Several of its themes reinforce the messages in the Nephite section of the Book of Mormon: the necessity to follow the prophets away from persistent and pernicious wickedness, the power of faith in the Lord demonstrated by Jared and the BROTHER OF JARED, the testimony that Jesus Christ is the eternal saving God, and the collapse of a nation when its people determinedly choose wickedness. Nevertheless, there are notable cultural differences between the Jaredite and the Nephite civilizations; for example, the Jaredites were ruled solely by kings, and they lacked Israelite law and customs, since they were pre-Mosaic.

Although condensed, the book reflects an epic style (see *CWHN* 5:153–449; 6:329–58). It begins with the emigration of the Jaredites from “the great tower” (Ether 1:33, cf. Gen. 11:9) and the valley of “Nimrod” (Ether 2:1; cf. Gen. 10:8) to a new land of promise in the Western Hemisphere. It then abridges a history of the Jaredite kings and wars, and concludes with the destruction of the Jaredite civilization. A brief outline of the book follows: Ether's royal lineage is given (chap. 1); the premortal Jesus appears to the brother of Jared in response to his prayers and touches sixteen small stones, causing them to shine to provide light as the Jaredite barges cross the sea (chaps. 2–6); the generations of Jaredite kings live, hunt, quarrel, enter into secret combinations, and Jaredite prophets warn of impending destruction (chaps. 7–11); Moroni attests that Ether was a prophet of great faith and knowledge (chaps. 12–13); Ether witnesses and records the annihilation of the Jaredite armies (chaps. 14–15).

The main figures and doctrinal statements appear mostly at the beginning and end of the book

of Ether. Moroni's editing is of key importance, for he infuses the story with major insights, admonitions, and comparisons. Jared is mentioned at the outset as the founder of the Jaredite people. The revelations and faith of the brother of Jared are given special significance at the beginning and end of the book. Shiz and Coriantumr are crucial historical and symbolic figures because they become the instruments of annihilation. Ether, the author of the underlying text, was an eyewitness to the final battles, and Moroni esteemed his prophecies as “great and marvelous” (Ether 13:13). The middle of the book recounts the more mundane events associated with the reigns of the Jaredite kings.

Several doctrines taught within the book of Ether are greatly valued among Latter-day Saints, namely, that prosperity in the promised land (the Americas) is conditioned on serving “the God of the land who is Jesus Christ” (Ether 2:12), that the premortal Christ had a SPIRIT BODY “like unto flesh and blood” (3:6), that God is a God of power and truth (3:4, 12), that three witnesses would verify the truth of the Book of Mormon (5:3), that the corruption and downfall of society can come because of secret combinations (8:22), that the Lord will show mankind its weakness so that through humility weak things may become strengths (12:27), and that a NEW JERUSALEM will eventually be built in the Western Hemisphere (13:3–12).

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#### BOOK OF MORONI

Between A.D. 400 and 421, MORONI<sub>2</sub>, the last custodian of the GOLD PLATES, compiled the final book in the Book of Mormon record. He wrote: “I had supposed not to have written any more; but I write a few more things, that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren” (Moro. 1:4). He then brought together loosely related but important items, including ORDINANCES performed both in the church of his day and in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today (chaps. 2–6), one of his father's sermons (chap. 7), and two of his

father's letters (chap. 9). He concluded with his own testimony and<sup>1</sup> exhortations to readers (chap. 10).

**ORDINANCES (CHAPS. 2–6).** Chapter 2 contains instructions given by the resurrected Jesus Christ to his twelve disciples in the Western Hemisphere at the time when he bestowed upon them the **GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST**. This gift is conferred in the name of Jesus Christ and by the **LAYING ON OF HANDS** from one who has received authority. Chapter 3 explains that priests and teachers were ordained in the name of Jesus Christ by the laying-on of hands by one holding proper authority. The main function of priests and teachers was to teach repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Chapters 4 and 5 contain the set prayers for blessing the **SACRAMENT** of the Lord's Supper, prayers currently used in the Church. Chapter 6 outlines the requirements for **BAPTISM**, which include a "broken heart," contrite spirit, and true repentance. Moroni then detailed how Church members recorded the names of all members, taught one another, met together in fasting and prayer, and partook of the sacrament often.

**MORMON'S SERMON AND LETTERS (CHAPS. 7–9).** Mormon's sermon (chap. 7) deals with faith, hope, and charity and includes teachings on how to distinguish between good and evil, the necessity of spiritual gifts, the nature of miracles, and instruction on how to obtain charity, "the pure love of Christ" (7:47).

The first letter (chap. 8) condemns **INFANT BAPTISM**. Mormon taught that children are made pure through the atonement of Christ and do not need the cleansing power of baptism until they are old enough to be accountable for their actions and can repent of their sins.

The second letter (chap. 9) recites the level of depravity to which the Nephites and **LAMANITES** had fallen (before A.D. 385), offering reasons for their prophesied destruction ("they are without principle, and past feeling"—verse 20), along with Mormon's charge to his son to remain faithful to Christ in spite of their society's wickedness.

**EXHORTATION AND FAREWELL (CHAP. 10).** Moroni exhorts all who read the Book of Mormon to ponder and pray for a divine witness of its truthfulness (verses 3–5) and urges his readers not to deny the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which he enumerates (verses 8–19). He bears his personal

**TESTIMONY** of Jesus Christ and urges all to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness" (verse 32). He bids his readers farewell until he meets them on the final **JUDGMENT DAY** at "the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah" (verse 34).

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## BOOK OF MORMON, BIBLICAL PROPHECIES ABOUT

Latter-day Saints believe that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as an instrument in God's hand for bringing his latter-day work to fruition was revealed to biblical prophets such as **ISAIAH** and **EZEKIEL** (cf. 1 Ne. 19:21; see **FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD**). Their prophecies about these matters, like those about the coming of Jesus Christ, are better understood when some of the historical events that surround them are known.

**JOSEPH'S PROPHECY.** Allusions are made to a branch that would be broken off in Jacob's blessing to Joseph, promising that he would become a fruitful bough whose "branches" would run "over the wall" and that his posterity would be heir to divine blessings (Gen. 49:22–26; 1 Ne. 19:24; cf. Deut. 33:13–17). A further prophecy in the Book of Mormon aids in interpreting Genesis 49.

According to a prophecy of Joseph in Egypt, preserved in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 3:4–21), two sets of records would be kept by two tribes of Israel—one (the Bible) written by the tribe of Judah and the other (Book of Mormon) kept by the tribe of Joseph (2 Ne. 3:12; cf. Ezek. 37:15–19). Those kept by the tribe of Joseph were written on **PLATES** of brass and largely parallel the biblical records (1 Ne. 5:10–16; 13:23). They were carried to a promised land in the Western Hemisphere by **LEHI**, a prophet and descendant of Joseph, who fled Jerusalem about 600 B.C. Lehi exclaimed, "Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off" (2 Ne. 3:5).