



Type: Magazine Article

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## Characters and Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Lesson 3—The Migration

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Source: *Relief Society Magazine*, Vol. 38, No. 9 (September 1951), pp. 626–629

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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## *Theology*—Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon

### Lesson 3—The Migration

Elder Leland H. Monson

(Text: The Book of Mormon: Ether, chapters 1-7.)

For Tuesday, December 4, 1951

Objective: To strive to understand and comprehend the kind of faith exemplified by the brother of Jared, and cultivate it in our own lives.

**I**N the analysis of the structure of The Book of Mormon, given in the first lesson, it was pointed out that Moroni gave us an abridged history of the Jaredite nation, which probably flourished upon this continent from about 2240 B.C. until after the arrival of the Nephites under the leadership of Lehi. A brief account of Coriantumr (of whom it says, speaking of the Jaredite nation “and every soul should be destroyed save it were Coriantumr,” Ether 13:21) is given in The Book of Omni by the prophet Amaleki.

And it came to pass in the days of Mosiah, there was a large stone brought unto him with engravings on it; and he did interpret the engravings by the gift and power of God. And they gave an account of one Coriantumr, and the slain of his people. And Coriantumr was discovered by the people of Zarahemla; and he dwelt with them for the space of nine moons. It also spake a few words concerning his fathers. And his first parents came out from the tower, at the time the

Lord confounded the language of the people; and the severity of the Lord fell upon them according to his judgments, which are just; and their bones lay scattered in the land northward (Omni 1:20-22).

Let us now turn our attention to the rise, the decline, and the fall of this mighty nation. A study of Moroni’s account of this period of history on the North American Continent, as contained in The Book of Ether, should be a fruitful source of inspiration and knowledge, for Moroni devoted much of his space to an interpretation of the history he records.

Moroni began his history at the time of the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel, though the twenty-four gold plates contained an account of events back to the creation. The beginning of his narrative is closely articulated with the Biblical narrative of the scattering of the people who were building the tower of Babel.

Concerning this event, Moses wrote, as recorded in the Old Testament:

And this whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men had builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth (Genesis 11:1-9; see also JOSEPHUS: *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, chapter 5).

Moroni, in *The Book of Ether*, gives a historical narrative of one group of these people whom the Lord scattered abroad. The history of their civilization in America, covering a period of at least sixteen hundred years, is incomplete. To recount in detail the history of a nation over such an extended period of time in the restricted space used by Moroni is impossible. Interesting details were necessarily eliminated. Only the highlights were given. Moroni says that he

did not write a hundredth part of what was on the twenty-four gold plates.

Cognizant that we shall have many unanswered questions because of the brevity of the history, let us go forward with Moroni's account. The colony which left the tower of Babel in the Euphrates Valley under the leadership of Jared and his brother, Moriancumer, was small. A census, taken soon after they arrived in the land of promise, gives us our clue to the number of persons involved. Before their death the two brothers, leaders of the colony, called together all the people whom they had brought to the land of promise. They did this for the purpose of taking a census and of learning the desires of the people. The brother of Jared had twenty-two sons and daughters, thus making a family of twenty-four. Jared had four sons and eight daughters, a family total of fourteen. "And the friends of Jared and his brother were in number about twenty and two souls; and they also begat sons and daughters before they came to the promised land; and therefore they began to be many" (Ether 6:16).

These figures indicate that it was not a large group that migrated from the tower of Babel to the promised land. This little colony, however, grew to great numbers.

Perhaps the most prominent member of this small group was Mahonri Moriancumer, known in the record as the brother of Jared. He is described as "a large and mighty man, and a man highly favored of the Lord" (Ether 1:34). That he was a prominent leader is evident from the fact that their

first period of encampment for an extended period of time was named after him. Moreover, it was his son Pagag, who was the first choice of the people for their king after their arrival in the land of promise. There can be no question about the brother of Jared's ability as a great leader.

How highly he was favored of the Lord is indicated by the fact that Jared relied upon him for instructions from the Lord. He was the spiritual adviser to the colony. Again and again in the record, Jared sent his brother to commune with the Lord, in order that they might make wise decisions. "Cry unto the Lord"; "Go and inquire of the Lord"—these are appeals made by Jared to his brother.

The strength of the brother of Jared's position before the Lord is explicitly set forth by Moroni. His faith was strong enough to bring him the glorious privilege of seeing the Lord (Ether 3:6-16). No man ever exercised greater faith in God than did the brother of Jared. Moroni explains that on one occasion he "said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove—and it was removed" (Ether 12:30).

When the brother of Jared presented a problem to the Lord, he knew in his heart that an answer would be forthcoming. There was no doubt. There was no fear concerning the result. He knew as we know that fear and faith cannot walk together. Fear kills faith; faith kills fear.

At a later period of time James gave us a classic exposition of the attitude necessary for effective communion with God. Wrote James:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord (James 1:5-7).

Faith, the brother of Jared's basic characteristic, is exemplified in all the leading activities of his life. He asked the Lord not to confound the tongues of his group and the petition was granted. He requested the Lord's help in directing their journey, and the Lord told him he would meet him in the valley of Nimrod, which was northward, and would guide the little colony "into a land which is choice above all other lands of the earth" (Ether 1:42). And the Lord said:

And there will I bless thee and thy seed, and raise up unto me of thy seed, and of the seed of thy brother, and they who shall go with thee, a great nation. And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth (Ether 1:43).

The brother of Jared was among those choice souls who were chosen in their pre-existent state to accomplish a great mission in this life. Abraham, commenting on the fact that certain men were chosen to head great movements before they were born, wrote:

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these were many of the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, . . . and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born (Abraham 3:22, 23).

The brother of Jared was one of those great souls who do not find it difficult to exercise implicit faith in the divine Being who upholds and maintains the universe.

We are also told by Moroni of the brother of Jared's greatness in writing when he [Moroni] said to the Lord:

Behold, thou hast not made us mighty in writing like unto the brother of Jared, for thou madest him that the things which he wrote were mighty even as thou art, unto the overpowering of man to read them (Ether 12:24).

To strive to understand and comprehend the kind of faith exemplified by the brother of Jared, to project oneself into his life's activities by reading *The Book of Ether* "with a sincere heart, with real in-

tent, having faith in Christ" will increase our faith and our desire to cultivate within ourselves the qualities that made this man so great.

### *Suggested Readings*

The Book of Genesis from the beginning to chapter 11, verse 9. These chapters relate the history of the world up to the time that the Jaredites left Babel to journey to the promised land.

### *Questions for Discussion*

1. From what two original sources do we learn about the Jaredites?
2. What is the basic characteristic of the brother of Jared? Illustrate.
3. Were the Jaredites the only colony scattered from the tower of Babel?
4. What is one of the requirements of establishing communion with God? Illustrate in the life of the brother of Jared.

## *Visiting Teacher Messages*

### Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 3—"Feast Upon the Words of Christ; for Behold, the Words of Christ Will Tell You All Things What Ye Should Do" (II Nephi 32:3).

Leone O. Jacobs

For Tuesday, December 4, 1951

Objective: To emphasize that in the words of our Savior we have the perfect pattern of life.

**T**HE world is indeed sick! We all sadly acknowledge this fact, but do we realize that a cure is within reach of all? Truly, the instructions of our Savior, if followed, would heal all the woes of the world.

Sometimes we see the cure take effect in individual lives. Our missionaries see it many times, and it is marvelous and inspiring to behold. When the import of Christ's

words penetrates deeply into the hearts of men and women, they remold their lives to conform, in a measure, to this pattern.

We are not left alone, in this mortal state, to search blindly for the right. There is no lack of instruction, for we have been given ample guidance by our Savior. The words of Christ are a perfect guide to the abundant life. And so it is