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Book of Mormon Studies

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Abstract: This is a series of articles intended for Relief Society course study. It discusses the importance of the Book of Mormon, its coming forth (i.e., the translation, the witnesses, the publication, Joseph Smith), brief overview of its contents, and explains the text from 1 Nephi 1 through Alma 58. Each article features several questions that are helpful in synthesizing and applying the Book of Mormon to daily life.

with atoms and molecules. Electrons make atoms; atoms make molecules; combinations of molecules make worlds and forms of life. The Lord first made all things spiritually. Just how long this took has not been made known, but the direct statement is made that He did make all things spiritually first.

Death is a disintegration, or a going back to the original elements. The spirit and body of man form a living soul. The spirit leaves, and the body is dead. But it is only dead as an organized form.

All things mortal live and die, but will live again, becoming immortal in the resurrection, to live eternally in that state, each progressing in its own sphere. The spirit of man cannot be destroyed. Man, the highest form of life, will progress eternally in the kingdom or world to which he belongs.

BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES*

The Panorama: Through the inspired writings of the modern Prophet comes knowledge of the peoples and tribes that once inhabited the Western Continent prior to the landing of Columbus in A. D. 1492. It is known that at least three distinct civilizations grew and flourished on the Western Hemisphere from the time of the confusion of tongues after the building of the Tower of Babel to the beginning of modern history in the fifteenth century. The remnants of one of those civilizations were the savages and semi-civilized peoples who inhabited the land and greeted Columbus on his famous voyage in quest of a short route to India. The Book of Mormon is a record of the doings of these three peoples during a period of about 2,700 years.

The first of the peoples who migrated from the seat of ancient civilization in the heart of the Eastern Continent and found their way to the Western Continent were the Jaredites. The second to migrate and land on the shores of what is now known as America were the Nephites. The third were the people of Mulek, called, after their leader, Mulekites. The Book of Mormon tells the story of the conditions and lives of these peoples.

Each member should read carefully during the next two weeks the Book of Ether, found in the latter part of the Book of Mormon, the fifteen chapters of which tell a most interesting story of the strength of the peoples in those far away times.

The Jaredites: "According to the Book of Mormon, a colony, now known as Jaredites, some time shortly after the attempt to build

*Lesson 6 of the Relief Society Course of Study—for use on the second lesson night in March.

the famous Tower of Babel, came to America from the region occupied by the tower builders.

“Very little is known about these colonists and their descendants, but we may suppose that their migration was part of a general move in all directions, which took place at that time, from the land of Shinar, afterwards called Chaldea.

“*A General Migration from Babylon*: That such a general migratory movement actually took place can hardly be doubted. Josephus, who drew information from both Hebrew and Greek sources, says :

After this they were dispersed abroad, on account of their languages, and went out by colonies everywhere, and each colony took possession of that land which they lit upon and unto which God led them ; so that the whole continent was filled with them, both the inland and the maritime countries. There were some, also, who passed over the sea in ships and inhabited the islands.

“In a much more recent work we read :

All history demonstrates that from that central focus (Babylon) nations were propelled over the globe with an extraordinary degree of energy and geographical enterprise.”*

Read Mosiah 8: 7 to 12.

The Story of the Jaredites in Brief: “The Book of Mormon gives an account of the Jaredites from their leaving the Tower of Babel, 2,247 B.C., to their destruction as the result of civil war about 590 B. C. It tells how they left Babel, traveled across Asia east to the Pacific Ocean ; how, after four years of preparation, they crossed that ocean in eight barges—a voyage of three hundred forty-four days—how they landed on the western coast of North America at some point south of the Gulf of California, how they spread over a good portion of North America, particularly in the region of the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes, how they grew to be a great people, numbering, according to the estimate of Orson Pratt, from ten to fifteen millions, and finally, how they fell to strife and civil war to their ultimate extinction at about the time the colony of Lehi reached America.

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“The Mulekites left Jerusalem at the time of its fall before Babylon, 588 B.C., and reached America some twelve years later than the Nephites.”†

The Prophet Ether: Ether was the last great prophet of the Jaredites, to whom we are indebted for the history of that race—for it is an abridgment of Ether’s writings, made by Moroni, that we have in the Book of Mormon under the title of the Book of Ether. Ether was of the royal race, his father being Coriantor,

**An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, Sjodahl, p. 68.

†*Young Woman’s Journal*, 1920, pp. 519, 520.

one of those unfortunate monarchs who lived in captivity all his days. In the reign of Coriantumr, the last king of the Jaredites, Ether came forth and proclaimed the near destruction of the entire people—a prophecy which many of his predecessors had also uttered; but he also promised that the king should survive all his subjects, and live to see another race occupy the land. Great and marvelous were the prophecies of Ether. He saw the days of Christ and the great work of the last dispensation, even to the coming of the New Jerusalem. Indeed, he appears to have had revealed to him a complete history of the dealings of the Lord with the inhabitants of this earth, from his own day to the end of time. But the people heeded not his words, and ultimately grew weary of his threatenings, and drove him from their midst. He hid himself in a cavity of a rock, coming forth in the night time to view the course of events, and occasionally appearing and repeating his warnings. While thus hidden, he wrote the history of contemporaneous events, and year by year watched the fulfilment of the word of the Lord, as the people gradually destroyed each other in unrelenting warfare. He lived to record the utter destruction of his people at Ramah (Cumorah) with the sole exception of Coriantumr, who survived as a witness to the unfailing word of God. We are not told whether Ether died or was translated. We incline from his own words to the latter opinion. When he had finished his record, he hid the twenty-four golden plates, on which it was engraven, in the place in which they were afterwards found by the people of King Limhi, B.C. 123.”*

QUESTIONS

1. How did the Jaredites receive their name? Where did the people come from and how did they find their way to the Western Continent? Tell some of their experiences while at sea.
2. Tell some of the experiences of the “Brother of Jared.”
3. Who was Ether? Tell all you can concerning him.
4. Enumerate the interesting events told of Ether in Chapter 7.
5. What admonition is given in Chapter 8 that should be heeded by all people to-day?
6. What was the fate of the Jaredite Nation, and why do you think that it was so?

*Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets, October 1898.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

Release and Appointment: The honourable release of Elder Kendall D. Garff, President of the Ulster District, and the appointment to that office of Elder Evan H. Jenkins, were announced at a Sacrament meeting of the Belfast Branch, Sunday evening,