

Book of Ether

Chapter 3

Ether 3:1 They Called the Mount Shelem Because of Its Exceeding Height [EASTERN MIGRATION THEORY]:

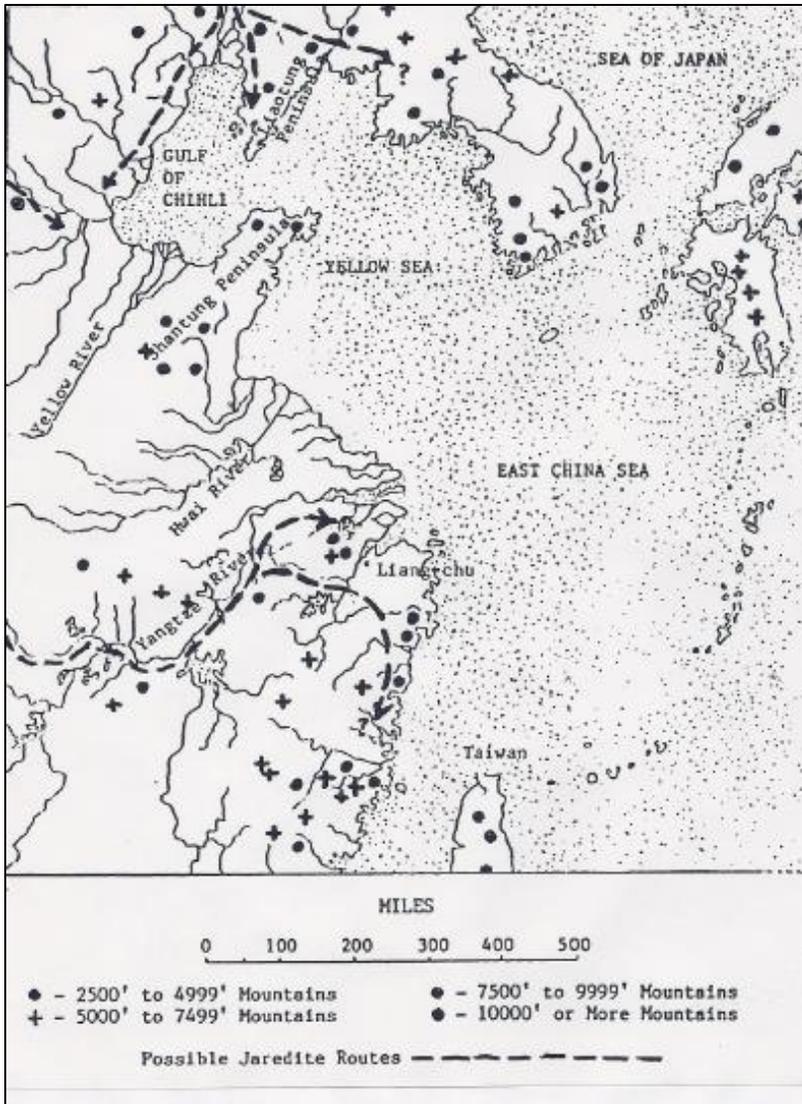
According to Hugh Nibley, one of the things that argues for an easterly course of travel is the mention of a mountain of "exceeding height" which stood near the point of Jaredite embarkation (Ether 3:1). There is no such mountain on the Atlantic seaboard of Europe, but many points of "exceeding height" can be found on the Asiatic shore. [Hugh Nibley, The World of the Jaredites, p. 182]

Ether 3:1 Shelem:

The brother of Jared went forth to a mountain "which they called the mount Shelem, because of its exceeding height" (Ether 3:1). According to Hugh Nibley, the word *Shelem* means "high, safe, secure." The word *shalom* is derived from that. Remember, *shalom* means you're safe. *Shalom* is a ladder, a high place." If you're going to a high place, it is a safe place, a secure place, a *shelem*. The brother of Jared went to the highest mountain around. Moses did the same thing. Lehi and Nephi did the same thing. So again this is a pattern. [Hugh W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 4, p. 271]

Ether 3:1 Shele(M):

According to Hugh Nibley, Jaredite proper names have a peculiar ring of their own. Their most characteristic feature is the ending in "m". This is called *mimation* and is actually found among the most ancient languages of the Near East, where it was followed by the later *nunation*, or ending in "n," the most characteristic feature of classical Arabic and also of Nephite proper names. The correct use and sequence of mimation and nunation in the Book of Mormon speaks strongly for the authenticity of the record, for the principle is a relatively recent discovery in philology. It may be illustrated by the only Jaredite common nouns known to us, *curelom* and *cumom*, and the only adjective, *shelem*, applied to a mountain "because of its exceeding height" (Ether 3:1). It is interesting that the original meaning of the best known of Semitic roots, SALAM, may be "a high place" (Arabic *sullam*, ladder, stairway, elevation) with the idea of safety, and hence peace, as a secondary derivation. [Hugh Nibley, The World of the Jaredites, p. 242]



Ether 3:1 The mount which they called . . . Shelem because of its exceeding height (Illustration) [EASTERN MIGRATION THEORY]: One of the major clues to the location of the Jaredites on the coast of East Asia is the reference to a mountain of "exceeding height." There appear to be many such peaks along the Chinese coastline, virtually all of which are located either around the Gulf of Chihli or south of the Yangtze River. Map VII identifies these peaks and shows their proximity to the proposed routes of the Jaredites into East Asia] [Randall P. Spackman, The Jaredite Journey to America, pp. 57-58, unpublished]

Ether 3:1 Shelem (Covenant Language):

According to Catherine Thomas, the word *shelem* has three main Hebrew consonants forming a root word that spans a wide spectrum of meanings: peace, tranquility, contentment, safety, completeness, being sound, finished, full, or perfect. *Shelem* (and *shalom*) signify peace with God, especially in the covenant relationship. It also connotes submission to God, which we see in the Arabic words *muslim* and *islam*. In particular, *shelem* has reference to the peace offering of the law of sacrifice, which corresponds to the seeking of fellowship with God,ⁱ and thereby has a relationship to the meanings of the at-one-ment; that is, *shelem*, fellowship, sealing, and at-one-ment have an obvious relationship. When the brother of

Jared carried the stones in his hands to the top of the mount, whether or not a temple peace offering is implied, he sought a closer fellowship or at-one-ment with the Lord. Therefore, the mount is called *shelem* because of its exceeding height (see Ether 3:1), not because *shelem* means great height, but rather that it suggests a place that is suitably high for temple activity. [M. Catherine Thomas, "The Brother of Jared at the Veil," in Temples of the Ancient World, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 390-391]

Ether 3:1 Shelem:

In Ether 3:1 it says that the brother of Jared . . . “went forth unto the mount which they called mount Shelem, because of its exceeding height . . . ” According to Allen Richardson, David Richardson, and Anthony Bentley, this concept of going to a mountain to commune with God is also biblical. For example, Abraham offered sacrifice and communed with the Lord on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22), Jacob on Mount Gilead (Genesis 31:54), Moses on Horeb (Exodus 3) and Sinai (Genesis 19-20; 24:9-11), Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-39), and Jesus Christ, together with Peter, James and John communed with God the Father and other angelic messengers on a “high mountain” (Matthew 17:1-18; Mark 9:2-8)

This practice has also been verified by modern research from Mesoamerica: See *Man Across the Sea Problems of Pre-Columbian Contacts*, edited by Carroll L. Riley (Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1971), p. 227; and “Landa’s *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan*, a Translation,” edited by A.M. Tozzer, Harvard University Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology Papers, vol. 18 (Cambridge: Peabody Museum, 1941), index under “Cenote.” From the Near East: Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1961), pp. 277-278, also cited in Sorenson, *The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex*, [The Society for Early Historic Archaeology, 1976], p. 7).

[Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson, and Anthony E. Bentley, 1000 Evidences for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two : Voice from the Dust, p. 212]

Ether 3:1 Shelem: (SOUTHERN MIGRATION THEORY)

George Potter and Richard Wellington write that they have not been able to identify any specific peak for [the brother of Jared’s account], but there are a number of possibilities. Closest on the west are the mountains of the Jabal Al Qara range, bounding Wadi Dharbat, approximately 3,000 feet high (1,000 meters). These are about five miles away.



Mt. Samban in the distance as viewed from Khor Rori looking eastward.

To the east of Khor Rori (Moriancumr) about twenty miles away is Jabal Samhan (Mt. Samhan). At nearly 6000 feet, it is the highest mountain in southern Oman and is mentioned by name in Genesis 10:30, where it is known as "Sephar, a mount of the east." [p. 130] [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, pp. 130-131]

Ether 3:1 Jared . . . Did Molten out of a Rock Sixteen Small Stones; and They Were White and Clear, Even as Transparent Glass:

Why did Joseph Smith use the word "*molten* out of rock" in Ether 3:1, when obviously the word should have been "quarry"? According to Roy Weldon, the brother of Jared made sixteen small stones out of one large rock. The fact that they lost their consistency and became clear like glass shows that they were melted and not quarried. The early Babylonians in Sumer and Akkad knew the art of smelting both ores and stones. [Roy E. Weldon, *Book of Mormon Deeps*, Vol. III, p. 303]

According to Randall Spackman, a common technique for refining glass in the latter half of the second millennium B.C. was to melt the raw materials in a crucible and let the crucible cool. When the glass had hardened, the crucible and all scum and sediment were then knocked off, and the refined glass was crushed and re-fused . . . The earliest glass was always opaque, like stone . . . however 2nd millennium B.C. glasswork reached a significant level of art . . . with the refinement of transparent glass and, on rare occasions, colorless glass. Thus the simple description in Ether 3:1, "Jared . . . did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones, and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass," could not be more in context. [Randall P. Spackman, *The Jaredite Journey to America*, p. 101, unpublished]

Ether 3:1 They Were White and Clear, Even As Transparent Glass:

Joseph Smith described the interpreters (which later generations have termed Urim and Thummim) as "two transparent stones set in the rim of a [silver] bow fastened to a breastplate."ⁱⁱ The

term "transparent" is used only two other times in the scriptures--in the descriptions of the glowing stones used by the Jaredites (see Ether 3:1) and of the streets of gold of the New Jerusalem that John saw descending from heaven (see Revelation 21:21). In both cases, the full description is "as . . . transparent glass." In this connection, it is interesting to note that the heavenly city has foundations made of twelve precious stones and also twelve gates of pearls (see Revelation 21:19-21). This reminds us of the twelve stones in the high priest's breastplate, and indeed, John noted that the names of the twelve tribes were inscribed on the twelve gates (see Revelation 21:12), just as the names of the tribes were inscribed on the two stones worn by the high priest (see Exodus 28:9-12). John further wrote that the heavenly Jerusalem had "the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11).ⁱⁱⁱ Because the heavenly Jerusalem will be lighted by the glory of God, it will have no night and will need neither sun nor moon (see Revelation 21:23-25). The heavenly city is very much like the residence of God and the future celestialized earth, as described in Doctrine and Covenants 130:6-9." A globe like a sea of glass and fire . . . a great Urim and Thummim . . . like unto crystal."

It is also interesting to note that in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Exodus 19:17, Mount Sinai, when the Lord's presence was upon it, is described as being "transparent like glass." [John Tvedtnes, The Book of Mormon and Other Hidden Books: Out of Darkness unto Light, pp. 203-204]

Ether 3:1 Transparent Glass:

Ether 3:1 states that the stones were white and clear, even as *transparent glass*." According to Randall Spackman, any given glass composition "can exist in different energy states dependent upon its structure." . . . Williams has noted that "one of the most striking features of luminescent emission [is] that it occurs for most substances in the spectral region where the crystal or glass is transparent." Whatever the physical properties of the sixteen small stones, through the faith and action of the brother of Jared and the intervention of the Lord, the stones shone in the dark with sufficient luminescence that the Jaredites were willing to enter the barges and set forth across the Pacific. [Randall P. Spackman, "The Jaredite Journey to America, p. 130, unpublished]

Ether 3:1 Glass:

Glass is mentioned in Ether 3:1: "And they were white and clear, even as transparent *glass*." Critics have claimed this to be too early (Tower of Babel) for the invention of glass. However according to Roy Weldon, modern discoveries make this objection easy to answer today, but a few years ago it would have been necessary to accept this statement on faith alone, for there was little actual evidence available to the scientist.

According to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, glass objects were manufactured as early as 3000 B.C. The University of Chicago has a pale green cylinder of glass dating from this period. [Roy E. Weldon, Book of Mormon Deeps, Vol. III, p. 302]

Ether 3:1 Glass:

In Ether 2:23 the Lord admonished the brother of Jared on the design of the barges: "Ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed to pieces." In modern-day thought, this verse implies the use of glass. However, this is not necessarily so as Brant Gardner has pointed out. (see commentary on 2:23). However, in Ether 3:1 in describing the "sixteen small stones" which were "molten out of a rock" by the brother of Jared, we read that "they were white and clear, even as transparent glass." Evidently the brother of Jared did have experience with clear glass.

Some critics of the Book of Mormon's authenticity have stated that the mention of glass in the Book of Ether was anachronistic. An article by Mark F. Cheney addresses this criticism. He writes that directly related to the time of Babel and the Jaredite group was an anecdotal story told in the book "Glass" by William S. Ellis (p. 14, Avon, 1988):

I went one day to Babylon, the Babylon, where I stood on flat, brown ground amid some stones of ruins, and listened as an Iraqi . . . told me, "This is the place, right here, where the Gardens of Babylon were." I asked him if glass had been found during the excavations, and he said, "Much glass. They have taken glass rods from this ground that were made more than twenty-five hundred years before Christ

In reviewing some of the early encyclopedic literature, Cheney says that it is likely that few if anyone in 1820s America, including Joseph Smith, knew that the ancients had any knowledge of glass-making at all. And windows of glazed glass were thought to appear for the first time in Imperial Rome.

Cheney notes that recently an interesting article on the origins of glassmaking appeared on the Internet. The following excerpt is taken from <http://www.cmog.org/article/origins-glassmaking?id=5634> .

As early as 3,300 years ago, ritual instructions for glassmaking in Mesopotamia were written on clay tablets in a cuneiform script. These instructions were copied and recopied over the centuries. One group of clay tablets detailing glassmaking is from the library of King Assurbanipal (668-627 B.C.) and is currently housed in the British Museum. Part of the translation of the tablets (from Glass and Glassmaking in Ancient Mesopotamia by Leo Oppenheim) follows:

"When you set up the foundation of kiln to make glass, you first search in a favorable month for a propitious day, and only then you set up the foundation of the kiln. As soon as you have completely finished in the building of the kiln, and you go and place Kubu images there, no outsider or stranger should enter the building thereafter; an unclean person must not even pass in front of the images. You regularly perform libation offerings before the Kubu-images. On the day when you plan to place the glass in the kiln, you make a sheep sacrifice before the Kubu-images, you place juniper incense on the censer, you pour out a libation of honey and liquid butter, and then only, you make a fire in the hearth of the kiln and place the glass in the kiln . . .

If you want to produce zagindurû-colored [greenish type of lapis lazuli] glass, you finely grind, separately, ten minas [about one pound] of immanakku-stone [sand], fifteen minas of naga-plant ashes, and 1 2/3 minas of 'white plant.' You mix these together. You

put them into a cold kiln which has four fire openings, and arrange the mixture between the four opening . . . You keep a good and smokeless fire burning until the glass glows golden yellow. You pour it on a kiln-fired brick and this is called zukû-glass. You place ten minas of "slow" copper-compound in a clean dabtu-pan. You put it into a hot chamber kiln . . . You crush and grind finely ten minas of zukû -glass. You open the door of the kiln and throw the ground glass upon the copper compound . . . When the glass assumes the color of ripe grapes, you keep it boiling for a time . . . After it has become yellow [hot], you observe some drops forming at the tip of the rake. If the glass is homogeneous, you pour it inside the kiln in a new dabtu-pan, and out of the cooled-off kiln emerges zagindurû-colored glass."

This ancient recipe describes much superstitious ritual, but it also includes the same basic ingredients that have been used in making glass for many centuries, if not millennia.

[Mark F. Cheney, "Glass in the Book of Mormon," Sept. 2014, [Book of Mormon Archaeological Forum](#)]

Ether 3:2 O Lord . . . Do Not Be Angry With Thy Servant Because of His Weakness:

The humility of the brother of Jared was a necessary prerequisite for him to see the Lord. It requires more than just faith to rend the veil; it also requires humility, as you . . . humble yourselves before me . . . the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am (DC 67:10)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 3:3 And for These Many Years We Have Been in the Wilderness [EASTERN MIGRATION THEORY]:

According to Hugh Nibley, one of the things that argues for an eastern course of travel for the Jaredites is the great length of the journey: "for this many years we have been in the wilderness" (Ether 3:3). Such a situation calls not only for vast expanses to wander in, but a terrain favorable to cattle-raising nomads and a region "in which there never had man been" (Ether 2:5), conditions to which the Asiatic rather than the European areas conform. [Hugh Nibley, [The World of the Jaredites](#), p. 181]

Ether 3:4-5 I Know That Thou Has All Power . . . We Have Prepared . . . They Shall Shine Forth (Covenant Language and Structure):

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the inverted parallel structure of parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

An "inverted parallelism takes the form A-B-C/C-B-A. (p. xxxii)

[In my view the chiastic structure can be the most forceful of parallels because all the lines of thought are focused on the center line, making that statement very significant.

A fine example of this Inverted Parallelism (Chiastic Structure) is found in **Ether 3:4**.

- 4 A And I KNOW [a covenant word] O Lord, that thou has all power.
 B and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man;
 C therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and **prepare them**
 that they may shine forth in darkness.
 C and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which **we have prepared**,
 that we may have light while we shall cross the sea.
- 5 B Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this.
 A We KNOW [by covenant obedience] that thou art able to show forth great power

[Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns, F.A.R.M.S., p. 457]

[Note* In Ether 3:4-5 the brother of Jared declares the power of making and keeping covenants with the Lord. In the above verses there is also a covenant symbolism to ourselves. We can look on our mortal bodies as “vessels” to carry us across the “sea” to the promised land. In doing so we need “light.” We can also look on our mortal bodies as “stones” in that through obedience, the Lord can touch those “stones” and give them light. Anciently stones were used to build altars where covenants to the Lord were made (1 Ne. 2:7). Stones were symbolic of covenants (see Deuteronomy 10:1; Joshua 24:27). In Matthew 3:9 (Luke 3:8) when Jesus is confronted with Jews who claim to be God’s people because of their lineage, Jesus responds with a saying that seems to be misunderstood, but in my view alludes to the covenant process and power. Jesus declares: “Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones [that is through covenant obedience] to raise up children unto Abraham.”

In Genesis 19, Jacob bestows a prophetic blessing on his sons, the primal twelve tribes of Israel. Beginning in verse 22 and extending to verse 26 is Jacob's blessing to Joseph. In the last part of verse 24 we find: "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." In Doctrine & Covenants 50:44, Jesus is speaking and says, "Wherefore, I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd, and the stone of Israel. He that buildeth on this rock shall never fall." Christ is the Stone. Christ is the Light. Christ is All Powerful. In a special prophetic manner, Moroni records the covenant testimony of the brother of Jared that all of Christ's light and power is ours and we can “know” it in the same way as he did (and Moroni did) through covenant obedience. Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

[Note* James L. Ferrell adds the following perspective to the title “Stone of Israel”:

In Genesis 49:24, the Savior is referred to as “the stone of Israel.” The Lord used the same expression to refer to himself in D&C 50:44. Neither scripture provides obvious context for the title, but an event in Genesis 28 may help to explain the initial use [in the Bible] of this title. In Genesis 28, Jacob (or “Israel”), as he lay sleeping in Bethel, saw a vision of the Lord. The vision has become known as “Jacob’s ladder,” for he saw “a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”(n20) Then Jacob saw the Lord, standing above it, and the Lord then renewed in Jacob the covenant he had made with Abraham and Isaac.(n21) Marion G. Romney taught that Jacob here received a temple experience.(n22)

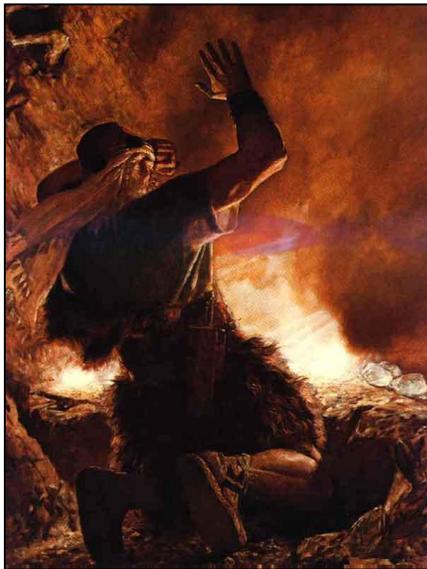
The next morning, Jacob “took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.”(n23) Jacob then “vowed a vow,” covenanting with the Lord over the

stone altar he constructed. At the close of this event, Jacob said, “And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house,”(n24) for “surely the Lord is in this place.”(n25) This stone altar that Israel called the house of God may well illuminate the original use [in the Bible] of the title “the stone of Israel.” If so, that term, as originally used [in the Bible] pointed Israel to the Savior, and to the covenants made in his house. [James Farrell, The Hidden Christ: Beneath the Surface of the Old Testament, p. 128

Ether 3:4 Touch These Stones . . . That They May Shine Forth in Darkness:

Edward Butterworth writes that many minerals are phosphorescent—such as barium sulphide, calcium sulphide, and strontium. The mineral calcite is the most stable form of calcium carbonate, another phosphorescent stone. This ingredient is found in such rocks as chalk, marble, limestone, Mexican onyx, and travertine, but more important it is also found in the stalactites and stalagmites of mountain caves. Since stalactites would be easy to obtain from their stone formation, and since they are particularly endowed with minerals and particles of luminescent quality, this may be another clue in the problem of locating Moriancumer. . . . Chemists have also shown that when a mixture of manganese or copper is added to any phosphorescent substance it will “give off a long-lasting light” (World Bok, article “Phosphorescence.”

Stokes’ law (1852) showed that the wavelength of the emitted light from these glowing stones is “always equal to, or longer than, that of the exciting light” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, article “Luminescence”). For instance, if the stones were exposed to daylight for ten hours they would glow at least that long or longer at night. The record of Ether indicates that the stones gave light to the colony for 344 days, but this should not be strange, for the exciting energy that entered these sixteen small stones came from the finger of the “Light of the World.” [Edward Butterworth, Pilgrims of the Pacific, pp. 72-73]



Ether 3:6 The Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger (Illustration): The Brother of Jared Sees the Finger of the Lord. [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Gospel Art, #318, lds-images.com]

Ether 3:9 I Shall Take upon Me Flesh and Blood:

The Lord said unto the brother of Jared, "Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood." (Ether 3:9) Matthew Brown writes:

When Adam and Eve fell, the spiritual substance that sustained them in an immortal condition was replaced by blood.(n.39) This new substance was symbolic of mortal life and therefore a fallen condition (see Leviticus 17:11). Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the Atonement of Jesus Christ was accomplished through the shedding of blood, to signify the shedding of the fallen condition of sin. (See JST Luke 22:44; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). [Matthew B. Brown, The Gate of Heaven, p. 30]

Ether 3:11 Believest Thou the Words Which I Speak?:

Boyd K. Packer comments:

"There was a test of faith involved, as the Lord asked: 'Believest thou the words which I shall speak?' (Ether 3:11. Italics added.) Interesting, isn't it, that he was not asked, 'Believest thou the words that I have spoken?' It didn't relate to the past. It related to the future. The brother of Jared was asked to commit himself on something that had not yet happened. He was to confirm his belief in that which the Lord had not yet spoken . . . Faith, to be faith, must center around something that is not known. Faith, to be faith, must go beyond that for which there is confirming evidence. Faith, to be faith, must go into the unknown. Faith, to be faith, must walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness. If everything has to be known, if everything has to be explained, if everything has to be certified, then there is no need for faith. Indeed, there is no room for it." (quoted in *We Talk of Christ*, by Neal A. Maxwell, p. 66)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 3:13 Behold, the Lord Showed Himself unto Him:

According to Morgan Tanner, the theophany of the brother of Jared, in which he sees the finger of the Lord, parallels the story of Moses. The brother of Jared goes up a mountain to pray (Ether 3:1; cf. Exodus 3:1-3); see the finger of the Lord (Ether 3:6; cf. Exodus 31:18); fears the Lord (also meaning "held in awe"; Ether 3:6; cf. Exodus 3:6); sees the whole spirit body of the Lord (Ether 3:13, 16-18; cf. Exodus 33:11); learns the name of the Lord (Ether 3:14; cf. Exodus 3:14); and, finally, receives a symbol of power and authority (Ether 3:23; cf. Exodus 4:1-5). The unique aspect of the story of the brother of Jared is his extended revelation concerning the nature of God, who appeared to him in a spirit body "like unto flesh and blood" (Ether 3:6). [Morgan W. Tanner, "Jaredites," in Daniel H. Ludlow, S. Kent Brown, and John W. Welch selection eds., To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, F.A.R.M.S., p. 131]

Ether 3:13 Because Thou knowest These Things Ye Are Redeemed from the Fall (Covenant Language):

In Ether 3:11-13 we find that the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: “Believest thou the words which I shall speak?” And the brother of Jared answered, “Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie.” Upon hearing that, the Lord showed himself unto the brother of Jared, and said: “Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall: therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people.”

In the scriptures, there is an association of the word “know” with the keeping of covenants. For example, after Nephi was visited by the Lord (2 Ne. 2:16) he was asked by his father Lehi, who had been commanded by the Lord, to return to Jerusalem and retrieve the brass plates (1 Ne. 3:2). This was an almost impossible task for multiple reasons (see the commentary on 1 Ne. 3), but Nephi responded: “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I KNOW that the Lord giveth no commandment unto the children of men save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.” (1 Nephi 3:9) These were words spoken from a covenant basis, not just simple faith. Nephi knew that if he obeyed the word of the Lord, the Lord was bound. (D&C 82:10). Sariah also had covenanted with the Lord, and because of those covenants she gave up her sons (her inheritance—they were her possessions) to Lehi’s wishes, who in turn had obeyed the Lord’s commandment. When Nephi and his brethren successfully returned to their mother Sariah, she said: “Now I KNOW of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband . . . ” (1 Ne. 5:8) This was a covenant based statement, not a simple attempt to correct her supposed doubts (as some readers have interpreted these verses). Notice that Sariah and Lehi immediately and symbolically renewed their covenants with the Lord (1 Ne. 5:9) [Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Many churches teach that the fall of Adam was a surprise to God—a terrible blunder that disrupted His plans and sent Him searching for a solution of redemption for all mankind. Some of these churches are critical of the LDS Church for its stand. It is ironic that Bible-believing Christians would believe notions which are contrary to the Bible. The Bible teaches that as the Fall was anticipated, likewise, the atonement of Christ was planned from the beginning. In Revelation 13:8, the apostle John speaks of the “Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.” This means that the Atonement was anticipated even before the world was created. Clearly, if the Atonement was anticipated, the reason for the Atonement or the Fall was also anticipated.

The early Christians looked upon the fall of Adam as a great blessing. If it was to be considered by some to be iniquity, they preferred to call it “blessed iniquity.” (See Borsch, *Son of Man*, p. 405, cited in Seach, *Ancient Texts and Mormonisms*, [1983], p. 41) [Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson, and Anthony E. Bentley, 1000 Evidences for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two : Voice from the Dust, p. 40]

In Ether 3:9 the Lord tells the brother of Jared, “Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall.” Some might read this phrase and wonder, How can someone like the brother of Jared be redeemed from the Fall when Christ hadn’t even been born yet? In my view the key is the word “knowest,” which as I said before, is used in the scriptures in regard to covenants and covenant obedience. Based on covenant obedience, the Lord could promise redemption from the Fall to the brother of Jared. Based on covenant obedience He was “the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.” [Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 3:13 Ye Are Redeemed from the Fall:

Grant Hardy writes:

The brother of Jared asks the Lord to reveal himself entirely, which the preexistent Christ does, saying, “Because thou **knowest** these things ye are **redeemed from the fall**; therefore **ye are brought back into my presence**; therefore **I show myself unto you.**” (Ether 3:13) [Note the covenant language]

It is a stunning culmination, and indeed, several key incidents and phrases of the fall of man, tracing major events from the Garden of Eden to the Tower of Babel backward . . . The following quotations are presented in Book of Mormon form and sequence, though **the biblical allusions are quite recognizable**:

<u>ALLUSIONS</u>	<u>REFERENCES</u>	<u>ETHER</u>	<u>GENESIS</u>
The Tower	The Lord “confounded the language of the people” and They were “scattered upon all the face of the earth”	1:33	11:9
Noah	The Lord commands the brother of Jared to “gather together thy flocks, both male and female, of every kind; and also thy families,” along with “fowls of the air” and “swarms of bees,” to put into a boat.	1:41 2:2-3	6:18-19 6:20
Antediluvian Wickedness	The Lord chastises the brother of Jared, warning him that “my spirit will not always strive with man.” Later the prophet confesses that “our natures have become evil continually.”	2:15 3:2	6:3 6:5
Expulsion (Eden)	The Jaredites like Adam and Eve, are “driven forth” into the wilderness because of their iniquity.	3:3	3:23-24
Catalytic Event	God touches the sixteen stones; Adam and Eve touch/eat the forbidden fruit. The eyes of Adam and Eve, as well as Jared, are opened and all are afraid. God then asks a series of four rhetorical questions.	3:6 3:6	3:3, 6 3:7, 10 3:7-15 3:9-13
Creation	The Lord asks the brother of Jared, “Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image.”	3:15	1:27

Step by step, Moroni’s account takes us back toward creation, reversing the effects of the fall and restoring the close communion between God and man that was present at the beginning.(n27) [Grant Hardy, Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide, pp. 241-242]

Ether 3:14 [The Lord Showed Himself] . . . Behold, I Am He Who Was Prepared from the Foundation of the World to Redeem My People (Jesus Christ is Jehovah):

According to Matthew Brown, a correct understanding of the nature of the Godhead includes correctly understanding the identity of Jehovah. Latter-day Saints teach that Jesus Christ was the “Jehovah” of the Old Testament.(n.23) The LDS viewpoint on this issue is unique among Christian denominations even though the doctrine is plainly spelled out in the New Testament. In John 12:37-41, for instance, we read that the prophet Isaiah was seeing Jesus Christ in the vision recorded in Isaiah 6:1-10. This was a vision of Jehovah.

Some of the early Church fathers also taught that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 115-202), bishop of Lyons, said in his work called *Against Heresies* (4.7.2, 4) that “all who have known God from the beginning and have foretold the advent of Christ, have received the revelation from the Son Himself. . . .[T]he Son . . . [is] that God who spake in human shape to Abraham, and again to Moses.”(n.24) According to Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 163), in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (113), “it was Jesus who appeared to and conversed with Moses, and Abraham, and all the other patriarchs without exception, ministering to the will of the Father.”(n.25) Eusebius, who served as the bishop of Caesarea around A.D. 339, wrote in his *History of the Church* that “it is obvious that [the patriarchs] knew God’s Christ Himself, since He appeared to Abraham, instructed Isaac, spoke to [Jacob], and conversed freely with Moses and the prophets who came later.”(n.26)

The following chart is designed to demonstrate, from Old and New Testament texts, that Jehovah and Jesus Christ are the same being.

<u>JEHOVAH</u> I am (Exodus 3:14)	<u>JESUS CHRIST</u> I am (John 8:56–59)
Every knee to bow before (Isaiah 45:23)	Every knee to bow before (Philippians 2:10–11)
Lord of Lords (Deuteronomy 10:17)	Lord of Lords (Revelation 17:14)
Judge (Psalms 96:13)	Judge (John 5:22)
Rock (Deuteronomy 32:3–4)	Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4)
Cornerstone (Psalms 118:22)	Cornerstone (Acts 4:10–12)
Creator (Isaiah 45:12)	Creator (Ephesians 3:9)
Almighty (Genesis 17:1)	Almighty (Revelation 1:8)
Savior (Isaiah 45:15)	Savior (1 John 4:14)
Redeemer (Isaiah 54:5)	Redeemer (Revelation 5:6–9)
<u>JEHOVAH</u> Pierced One (Zechariah 12:9–10)	<u>JESUS CHRIST</u> Pierced One (Revelation 1:7)
Holy One (Isaiah 43:3)	Holy One (Mark 1:24)
Light and Life (Psalms 36:9)	Light and Life (John 1:4, 9)
Bridegroom (Isaiah 62:5)	Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15)
Shepherd (Psalms 80:1)	Shepherd (John 10:14)
Living Water (Jeremiah 2:13)	Living Water (John 4:13–14)
The First and the Last (Isaiah 48:12)	The First and the Last (Revelation 22:13)

[Matthew B. Brown, All Things Restored: Confirming the Authenticity of LDS Beliefs, pp. 110-112] [See the commentary on Mosiah 4:6]

Ether 3:14 I Am He Who Was Prepared From the Foundation of the World to Redeem My People:

Interestingly, in the meeting between the brother of Jared and the Premortal Christ or Jehovah, Christ applies to himself the title “I Am”. With that in mind it is also interesting that we find in Exodus 3:14 that God said to Moses: “ I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” Here in Ether 3:14 we find a descriptive title of the Lord that appears for the first time: “I Am He Who Was Prepared from the Foundation of the World to Redeem My People.” I have found over 500 such descriptive titles for the Lord in the Book of Mormon text. They most often give perspective to what is being talked about in the story. When Alma the elder was establishing the Church in the land of Helam and performing the first baptism, he declared: “May [the Lord] grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.” In the context of Christ’s visit to the Nephites on this continent we find the following descriptive title in 3 Nephi 26:5 given by Jesus himself, declaring: “the mercy, and the justice, and the holiness which is in Christ, Who Was Before the World Began.” In a letter to his son Moroni about baptism, Mormon notes that the recently baptized members should rely “alone upon the merits of Christ, Who Was the Author and The Finisher of Their Faith.” Here in Ether with the Premortal Christ, we find a title that not only links Christ’s foreordained roll as Redeemer with the time before the foundations of the World, but through this title and his appearance to the brother of Jared, Christ declares he is also the God of Old Testament times—the same who in Exodus would declare himself to Moses as “That I AM.” [Alan Miner, [Personal Notes](#)] SEE the commentary on Ether 4:12 for a greater explanation of the title “I Am.”

Ether 3:14 (3:2) In Me Shall All Mankind Have Life, and That Eternally, Even They Who Shall Believe on My Name (Covenant Language):

In Ether 3:2 we find the brother of Jared lamenting to the Lord:

2. O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his **weakness** before thee; for we **know** that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are **unworthy** before thee; **because of the fall our natures have become evil continually**; nevertheless, O Lord, thou has given us a commandment that **we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive** according to our desires.
3. Behold, O Lord, thou hast smitten us because of our iniquity, nevertheless, **thou hast been merciful unto us**. . . . And I **KNOW**, O Lord, that **thou has all power**, and can do whatever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore **touch these stones**

In the middle of his lament, the brother of Jared states, “because of the fall our natures have become evil continually.” One might wonder what he meant by that statement.

According to comments made by members of the BYU Religion Department, it seems like the effects of the Fall can best be compared to a principle in our world and in our universe that is termed “Entropy.” In thermodynamics, entropy is a measure of the energy that is not available for work. That potential energy (heat) has a tendency to decline until in a closed system it reaches a minimum average level for everything in the system. Entropy can also be understood as a measure of the loss of information in a transmitted signal or message as a function of time and space—the longer the time and the farther the distance, the energy of the signal tends to degrade.

As it relates to the Universe, entropy can be defined as a hypothetical tendency for the universe to attain a state of maximum homogeneity in which all matter is at a uniform energy level (energy death).

In sociology entropy can be defined as a tendency toward continuing social decline and degeneration.

After the brother of Jared asked the Lord to touch the stones to give them light, the Lord touched them and in the process the brother of Jared saw his finger. The Lord then provided the answer to the brother of Jared's lament and also to the universal problem of "entropy." In Ether 3:11-14 we find:

Ether 3

11. And the Lord said unto him [the brother of Jared] believest thou the words which I shall speak?
12. And he answered: Yea, Lord, I **KNOW** that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie.
13. And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou **KNOWEST** these things **ye are redeemed from the Fall**: therefore **ye are brought back into my presence**; therefore I show myself unto you.
14. **Behold, I Am He Who Was Prepared from the Foundation of the World to Redeem My People. Behold, I Am Jesus Christ. I Am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have LIFE, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on My Name: and they shall become my [covenant] sons and my daughters.**

That is, as we stay in **touch** with the Lord by obedience to His covenants, he will continually give us LIFE—energy or spirit to accomplish those tasks that He has commanded us to do, and over time He will reveal himself unto us as we remain obedient. Thus He enables us to overcome the effects of the Fall. He is the only solution to the universal principle of entropy.

[Expanded from comments by Andrew Skinner, Keith Wilson, David Whitchurch, and Stanley Johnson, BYUtv "Discussions on the Book of Mormon, Ether 1-6"]

Ether 3:14 I Am the Father . . . They Who Shall Believe on My Name . . . Shall Become My Sons and My Daughters:

Dallin H. Oaks comments:

"The Book of Mormon explains the significance of being called by the name of Jesus Christ. When the Savior showed his spirit body to the brother of Jared, he introduced himself as the Father and the Son, declaring that through his redeeming sacrifice all mankind who believed on his name should have life eternal through him, 'and they shall become my sons and my daughters.' (Ether 3:14.) Abinadi said of those who believed in the Lord and looked to him for a remission of their sins 'that these are his seed, or they are heirs of the kingdom of God.' (Mosiah 15:11.) He continued this explanation as follows:

‘For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?’ (Mosiah 15:12.)

“Speaking through the prophet Alma, the Lord explained the significance of this relationship: ‘For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me they shall come forth, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand.’ (Mosiah 26:24.)

“In these great scriptures from the Book of Mormon, we learn that those who are qualified by faith and repentance and compliance with the laws and ordinances of the gospel will have their sins borne by the Lord Jesus Christ. In spiritual and figurative terms they will become the sons and daughters of Christ, heirs to his kingdom. These are they who will be called by his name in the last day.” (Conference Report, May 1985 *Ensign*, “Taking Upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ”)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 3:15 Never Have I Showed Myself unto Man:

In the account of the Lord revealing himself to the brother of Jared, we find the Lord saying, And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast" (Ether 3:15). The Book of Mormon student might be confused about such a statement in light of the biblical accounts of the patriarchs. However, Kent Jackson notes that when the Lord appeared in ancient times, he did so as the Father, and when he gave revelation to prophets, he spoke of the mortal mission of Jesus Christ in the third person, with the words of and from the perspective of God the Father, as though Jesus Christ were someone else . . . The appearance to the brother of Jared is the first recorded manifestation of Jehovah in which he appeared and identified himself as *the Son*.

The uniqueness of this situation lies in the fact that Jehovah appeared to Mahonri Moriancumer in his role as Jesus Christ – rather than as the Father. Never before, as far as we can tell from the scriptures, had *Jesus Christ* shown himself unto man. (and interestingly, nowhere else in the scriptures do we have a clear example of Jehovah appearing as Jesus until his coming in the flesh. As Moroni reported, "Having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; *therefore he saw Jesus*" (Ether 3:20. To the brother of Jared, Christ revealed his complete nature: God who would become Man—Jehovah, the Father, who would become Jesus, the Son.

Perhaps the unprecedented nature of this appearance is a reason why the Lord commanded that the account not be made known in the world until after his mortal ministry (Ether 3:21). [Kent P. Jackson, "Never Have I Showed Myself unto Man," F.A.R.M.S., 1991]

[Note* The term “knowledge” in the scriptures can refer to covenants or the covenant process. In my view what is being said here is that the brother of Jared was perfect in his compliance with the covenants that he had made with the Lord. Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Does Christ Have a Body?

Ear

2 Ne. 7:5; 8:4; 15:9; 21:3

Cheek

2 Ne. 7:6

Lips

2 Ne. 21:4; 30:9

Mouth

1 Ne. 13:41; 2 Ne. 3:21;
9:17; 29:2; 30:9; 33:14;
Mosiah 14:7; 15:6; 3 Ne.
14:1; Ether 2:24; Moro.
7:23, 25; 10:28

Hand

1 Ne. 5:14; 2 Ne. 1:5-6, 10;
3:15, 17; 5:12; 7:11; 8:16;
25:17; 28:6; 29:1; 30:6; Jacob
4:10; 6:2; Omni 1:16; Mosiah
1:2, 5, 16; 2:11; 5:9-10, 12;
14:10; 28:15; 29:25; Alma
2:28; 9:9, 22-23; 10:23;
28:12; 37:4; 45:19; 46:7,
24; Hel. 3:30; 3 Ne. 3:2;
12:1; 18:36; 29:4, 9;
4 Ne. 1:16; Morm. 6:6;
8:8; 8:26; Ether 2:6; 3:6;
12:4; Moro. 7:27; 9:14

Finger

Alma 10:2; 3 Ne. 28:12; Ether
3:4, 6, 8, 9, 19; 12:20, 21

Bowels

Mosiah 15:9; Alma 7:12;
26:37; 34:15; 3 Ne.
17:6-7

Loins

2 Ne. 21:5; 30:11

Feet

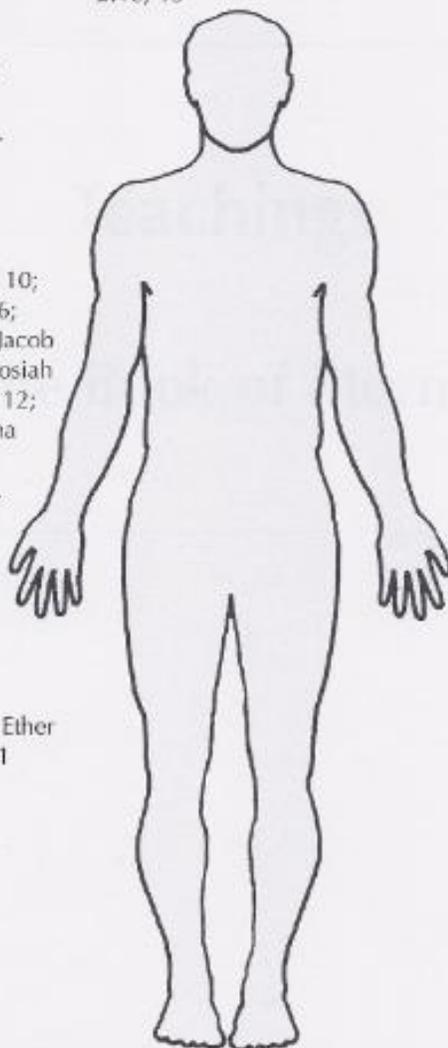
1 Ne. 11:24; 3 Ne. 11:15,
17, 19; 17:10

Face

2 Ne. 9:38; 18:17; 33:11;
3 Ne. 9:5, 11

Eye

1 Ne. 21:5; 2 Ne. 3:8;
9:44; 10:8; 13:8; Jacob
2:10, 15



Voice

1 Ne. 16:9, 25, 26, 39;
17:7, 45; 18:5; 19:7, 11;
22:2; 2 Ne. 16:8; 31:12,
14; Jacob 7:5; Enos 1:5, 10;
Omni 1:12-13; Mosiah
16:2; 24:13, 16; 26:14, 21,
28; 27:11, 15; Alma 5:16,
38, 41, 57, 60; 9:21; 13:22;
20:2; 38:7; Hel. 5:29-33,
41, 42, 46, 48; 7:18;
12:9-12, 23; 13:3; 3 Ne.
1:12; 7:15; 9:1; 10:3; 16:2,
3, 15; Morm. 3:14; Ether
11:7

Shoulder

2 Ne. 19:6

Arm

1 Ne. 20:14; 22:10, 11;
2 Ne. 1:15; 8:9; Jacob 6:5;
Enos 1:13; Omni 1:13;
Mosiah 1:14; 12:24; 14:1;
15:31; 16:12; Alma 5:33;
19:36; 29:10; 34:16; 3 Ne.
9:14; 16:20; 20:35; Morm.
5:11; 6:17

Back

2 Ne. 7:6

Side

3 Ne. 11:14, 15

Flesh

Mosiah 15:2, 3; Alma
7:12, 13; 3 Ne. 18:28-30;
Ether 3:8-9; Moroni 4:1

Blood

1 Ne. 12:10, 11; Mosiah
3:11, 15, 18; 4:2; Alma
5:21, 27; 13:11; 21:9;
3 Ne. 18:11, 28-30; 20:8;
27:19; Morm. 9:6; Ether
3:6, 8-9; 13:10; Moro.
4:1; 5:2; 10:33

Chart 52

Ether 3:15 Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? (Illustration): Chart: "Does Christ Have a Body?" Source: Susan Easton Black, Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 52-56. [John W. & J. Gregory Welch, Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching, F.A.R.M.S., Chart #52]

Ether 3:15 Never Have I Showed Myself unto Man:

According to Kent Jackson, we know from the scriptures that others had seen God, yet the Lord stated to the brother of Jared: "Never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast." Several explanations have been given for this passage,^{iv} but perhaps the following discussion will explain the Lord's statement.

The brother Jared was speaking with Jehovah, "the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, . . . the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning." (Mosiah 3:5,8; see also Alma 11:39) Having been endowed by Elohim with infinite power, glory, and authority, Jehovah is the Father. He is God who spoke and still speaks to the prophets, who designed and reveals laws for the blessing of his people, and who directs the affairs of mortals on earth. We know also that Jehovah is the same being who later came into the world as Jesus Christ. He became a being of dual nature.

The Father [that is, Elohim] has never dealt with man directly and personally since the Fall, and he has never appeared except to introduce and bear record of the Son.^v President Smith also taught: "The Father has honored Christ by placing his name upon him, so that he can minister in and through that name as though he were the Father; and thus, so far as power and authority were concerned, his words and acts become and are those of the Father."^{vi}

Since Jehovah is empowered with the fulness of Elohim and is commissioned to speak in his behalf, he stands in the place of the Father and speaks the Father's words. Thus when he appeared in ancient times he was the Father, filling in every way the role of God. When giving revelation to prophets, he spoke of the mortal mission of Jesus Christ in the third person-that is, with the words of and from the perspective of God the Father, as though Jesus Christ were someone else. This explains Jehovah's discussion of Christ in the book of Moses and in many other scriptures.^{vii}

It seems from the scriptures that with one exception, in all the recorded manifestations of Jehovah prior to his birth in the flesh, he appeared in his role as God the Father, speaking the words of the Father. The exception is this appearance to the brother of Jared in Ether 3. He said:

Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. (Ether 3:14-15.)

It appears that the uniqueness of this situation, brought about because of Mahonri Moriancumer's unparalleled faith, was the fact that Jehovah appeared to him in his role as Jesus-whereas to others he had shown himself as the Father. In fact, nowhere else in the scriptures do we have an example of Jehovah appearing in his role as Jesus until his coming in the flesh. As Moroni reported, "Having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore *he saw Jesus; and he did minister unto him.*" (Ether 3:20, emphasis added.) To the brother of Jared the Lord revealed his complete nature: God who would become Man. Perhaps that is a reason why he commanded that the account of the appearance not be known in the world until after his mortal ministry. (Ether 3:21) [Kent P. Jackson, "Christ and the Jaredites," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 2, pp. 252-254]

Ether 3:15 Never Have I Showed Myself unto Man Whom I Have Created, For Never Has Man Believed in Me As Thou Hast:

Jeffrey R. Holland comments:

“The potential for confusion here comes with the realization that many (and perhaps all) of the major prophets living prior to the brother of Jared had seen God. How, then, do we account for the Lord's declaration? . . . Before the time of the brother of Jared, the Lord did appear to Adam and ‘the residue of his posterity who were righteous’ in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman three years before Adam's death (DC 107:53). And we are left with Enoch, who said explicitly, ‘I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face.’ (Moses 7:4) We assume that other prophets between the Fall and the Tower of Babel saw God in a similar manner, including Noah, who ‘found grace in the eyes of the Lord’ and ‘walked with God,’ (Gen 6:8-9) the same scriptural phrase used to describe Enoch's relationship with the Lord. (Gen 5:24)

“This issue has been much discussed by Latter-day Saint writers, and there are several possible explanations, any one—or all—of which may cast light upon the larger truth of this passage. Nevertheless, without additional revelation or commentary on the matter, any conjecture is only that and as such is inadequate and incomplete.

“One possibility is . . . that the reference to ‘man’ is the key to this passage, suggesting that the Lord had never revealed himself to the unsanctified, to the nonbeliever, to temporal, earthy, natural man. The implication is that only those who have put off the natural man, only those who are untainted by the world—in short, the sanctified (such as Adam, Enoch, and now the brother of Jared)—are entitled to this privilege.

“Some believe that the Lord meant he had never before revealed himself to man in that degree or to that extent. This theory suggests that divine appearances to earlier prophets had not been with the same ‘fulness,’ that never before had the veil been lifted to give such a complete revelation of Christ's nature and being . . .

“A final explanation—and in terms of the brother of Jared's faith the most persuasive one—is that Christ was saying to the brother of Jared, ‘Never have I showed myself unto man in this manner, without my volition, driven solely by the faith of the beholder.’ As a rule, prophets are invited into the presence of the Lord, are bidden to enter his presence by him and only with his sanction. The brother of Jared, on the other hand, seems to have thrust himself through the veil, not as an unwelcome guest but perhaps technically as an uninvited one. Said Jehovah, ‘Never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger . . . Never has man believed in me as thou hast.’ (v. 9,15) Obviously the Lord himself was linking unprecedented faith with this unprecedented vision. If the vision itself was not unique, then it had to be the faith and how the vision was obtained that was so unparalleled. The only way that faith could be so remarkable was its ability to take the prophet, uninvited, where others had been able to go only with God's bidding.

“That appears to be Moroni's understanding of the circumstance when he later wrote, ‘Because of the knowledge [which came as a result of faith] of this man he could not be kept from

beholding within the veil . . . Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus.' (v. 19)" (*Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 21-23)

Joseph Fielding Smith writes:

"I have always considered Ether 3:15 to mean that the Savior stood before the Brother of Jared plainly, distinctly, and showed him his whole body and explained to him that he was a spirit. In his appearance to Adam and Enoch, he had not made himself manifest in such a familiar way. His appearances to earlier prophets had not been with that same fulness." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:37)

[[Christ and the New Covenant](#), 21–23]

[www.lds.org/manual/book-of-mormon-student-manual/chapter-50-Ether-1-5]

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 3:18 He Ministered unto Him Even As He Ministered unto the Nephites:

Valentin Arts writes:

Moroni informs us that the Lord ministered to the brother of Jared as he ministered to the Nephites (see Ether 3:18). The verb to minister means "to serve or to supply with" and seems to connote more than just conversing or preaching. Moroni does not spell out the exact manner in which the Lord ministered to the brother of Jared, but he does provide us with some clues. Moroni draws a parallel with the ministering of the Lord among the Nephites. We know from the book of 3 Nephi that Jesus taught the people, healed them, and administered ordinances to them such as the sacrament and ordination. Thus we may infer that the Lord also administered ordinances to the brother of Jared, some of which were sacred and not to be revealed. This suggestion can be supported by another clue from Moroni. After the ministering session, the Lord commanded the brother of Jared,

Behold, thou shalt not suffer these things which ye have seen and heard to go forth unto the world, until the time cometh that I shall glorify my name in the flesh; wherefore, ye shall treasure up the things which ye have seen and heard, and show it to no man. And behold, when ye shall come unto me, ye shall write them and shall seal them up, that no one can interpret them; for ye shall write them in a language that they cannot be read. (Ether 3:21–22)

From Ether 4:1–2 it is apparent that the sealed record was translated after Christ showed himself to the Nephites.

And the Lord commanded the brother of Jared to go down out of the mount from the presence of the Lord, and write the things which he had seen; and they were forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them, that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people.

And after Christ truly had showed himself unto his people he commanded that they should be made manifest.

In all probability it was the disciple Nephi, the presiding high priest, who translated this extensive record with the aid of the Urim and Thummim. Nephi already held the sealed record and the interpreters, but he could not start the translation until after Christ explicitly commanded him to do so. Nephi probably did not begin to translate the vision until after Jesus left the Nephites, because it would have taken quite some time to translate such a long record. In any event, during his ministry among the Nephites, the Lord revealed many things that were contained in the sealed record. For at one point

he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory—yea, even all things which should come upon the face of the earth, even until the elements should melt with fervent heat, and the earth should be wrapt together as a scroll, and the heavens and the earth should pass away; And even unto the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues shall stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. (3 Nephi 26:3–4)

These verses have much in common with the report of Jesus' ministry to the brother of Jared, who was also shown all things (see Ether 3:26; 12:21) "even unto the ends of the earth" (Ether 3:25; see 2 Nephi 27:10).

Such language clarifies in part Moroni's declaration that "he [Christ] ministered unto him [the brother of Jared] even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God" (Ether 3:18). Thus, the Lord not only administered ordinances to both the brother of Jared and the Nephites, but he also prophesied to both concerning the history of mankind to the end of the earth.

In this light, after Nephi had recorded the teachings of the resurrected Savior and had translated the sealed record, the Savior's teachings in their virtual entirety were in written form among the Nephites. Knowing this throws more light on the awful fate of the Nephites. In the decades leading up to their annihilation, it seems evident that many had sinned against the greater light that had come from the Lord.

Moroni records the following in Ether 3:3 about the Nephites: "And now, after that [or after being ministered unto by Jesus] they have all dwindled in unbelief ; and there is none save it be the Lamanites, and they have rejected the gospel of Christ"

[Note* Moroni will record the same fate for the Jaredites in his abridgment of the Book of Ether]

[Valentin Arts, "A Third Jaredite Record: The Sealed Portion of the Gold Plates," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies 11/1 (2002)]

Ether 3:17-20 That This Man Might KNOW That He Was God (Covenant Language):

In Ether 3:17-20 it reads:

Ether 3

- 17. And now, as I, Moroni, said I could not make a full account of these things which are written, therefore it sufficeth me to say that Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites.
- 18. And **he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites;** and all this, **that this man might KNOW that he was God,** because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him.
- 19. And because of the **KNOWLEDGE** of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he **KNEW** that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he **KNEW**, nothing doubting.
- 20. Wherefore, having this perfect **KNOWLEDGE** of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus; and **he did minister unto him.**

Once again I would call the reader’s attention to the forms of the word “know” in the above verses. In my view they are an indication that what is being spoken about is a covenant process. By absolute obedience to the covenants he had made with the Lord over time (a “perfect knowledge”), the brother of Jared was able to have the veil taken away and see the Lord. [Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 3:19-20 He Knew . . . Perfect Knowledge (Covenant Language and Structure):

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the inverted parallel structure of parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

An "inverted parallelism takes the form A-B-C-D/D-B-C-A. (p. xxxii)

[In my view the chiasmic structure can be the most forceful of parallels because all the lines of thought are focused on the center line, making that statement very significant.

A fine example of this Inverted Parallelism (Chiasmic Structure) is found in **Ether 3:19-20.**

- A a And because of the **knowledge** [covenant word] of this man
- b he could not be kept from beholding within the veil.
- B a and he saw the finger of Jesus, which,
- b when he saw, he fell with fear, for **he knew**
- B a that it was the finger of the Lord;
- b and he had faith no longer, for **he knew**, nothing doubting.
- A a Wherefore, having this **perfect knowledge** of God,
- b he could not be kept within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus

[Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns, F.A.R.M.S., p. 458]

[Note* Ether 3:19-20 uses chiasmic structure and repeated alternate parallelism to emphasize the covenant words “knowledge” and “knew.” The “finger of the Lord” is symbolic of the power of the Lord. Alan Miner, [Personal Notes](#)]

Ether 3:19 Because of the Knowledge of This Man He Could Not Be Kept from Beholding Within the Veil (Covenant Language):

Tim Hegg writes:

The Hebrew word “know” (yada'), which is a common root in the semitic languages, has a wide range of meanings depending upon the context in which the word is found. Like our word “know” in English, the Hebrew word can indicate mental knowledge, that is, that a person “understands” or “has knowledge” of something, as when we say “I know that 2 + 2 is 4”. But the concept of “knowing” something or someone takes on a special meaning in the semitic languages, and this specialized meaning has to do with relationship, and primarily a relationship that is based upon the making of a covenant. We know this not only from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament or Tanach) but also from literature outside of the Bible from the Ancient Near East.

In the Bible, we can see how the Hebrew word “know” (yada' – Strong's #3045) can have the meaning “enter into covenant together” in a verse like Gen 18:19. Many of the modern English translation (such as the NASB, NIV, ESV) use the word “chosen” to translate yada' in this verse, in which God is speaking of Abraham (I've underlined our word yada' in the following):

“For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.” (NASB)

For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” (NIV)

For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.” (ESV)

The old KJV, in this case, translates our verse more literally:

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. (KJV)

What does God mean when He says that “I have known him (speaking of Abraham)”? He means “I have entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham.”

[Note* The above perhaps gives added meaning to John 15:16 (KJV): "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." It also perhaps gives added meaning to the term "a chosen people." Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

It is clear from other literature of the Ancient Near East that the semitic root yada' (to know) was used in this covenant sense. For instance, in a Hittite treaty between the Great King Suppiluliumas (who refers to himself as the Sun") and a Vassal king, Hugganas, whom he is installing to serve him, we read:

And you, Hugganas, know only the Sun regarding lordship: also my son of whom I, the Sun, say, "This one everyone should know . . .", you, Hugganas, know him! Moreover, those who are my sons, his brothers, or my brothers . . . know as brother and associate. Moreover, another lord . . . do not know. The Sun alone know! Moreover, any other do not know! [See H. B. Huffman, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew יָדָע" BASOR 181 (1966), pp. 31–37 for further study on this Hittite treaty].

So what does the word "know" mean in this ancient Hittite Treaty or Covenant? It means to be loyal to the stipulations of the covenant that is being enacted between a Great King and his vassal. This informs what is meant in Gen 18:19 when God says that He has "known" Abraham. Obviously He is not saying that He "knows about Abraham" or simply that He "has knowledge about Abraham." Moses, in writing this text, is using the word "know" (yada') in a common way that the word was used in the Ancient Near East and at the time he lived.

But why would the word "know" (yada') be used to denote a covenant relationship between two people? It is because in the Ancient Near East, a covenant between two people or between a King and his people was considered to be a relationship that could not be broken and that if it were to be broken, there would result severe consequences (the curses of the covenant).

From the beginning of the Bible, we discover that God is the One Who established marriage between one man and one woman. Marriage does not just occur naturally in the created world. In cultures where the Bible has not been the foundation, we see all manner of male-female relationships. Thus, when Moses writes in Gen 4:1 that "Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived . . .", he is using the word "know" (yada') in its covenant sense: Adam was faithful to the covenant of marriage into which he and Eve had entered, a covenant which meant he would have a spiritual and physical oneness with her and she with him, and they would have no such relationship with anyone else. The physical relationship in marriage is an essential part of the "being one" which God intends in marriage. But the physical relationship does not exhaust the meaning of "know" in its covenant sense relating to marriage. To "know" one's spouse means to be faithful to one's spouse, not only in the physical relationship but also in all aspects of the marriage: support, comfort, friendship, service to each other, etc.

[Tim Hegg "The Hebrew Word יָדָע (yada') As a Covenant Term in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," torahresource.com]

Ether 3:20 He Did Minister unto Him (Covenant Language):

Moroni goes on to say that because of this covenant obedience (or “knowledge”) the brother of Jared saw Jesus, and Jesus did minister unto him. What follows in verses 3:20 – 3:26 should be taken in light of covenant knowledge. According to covenant obedience, we can know ALL things. Notice the bolded covenant words that help define these passages:

- 20 . . . and he [Jesus] did **minister** unto him [the brother of Jared]
- 21 And it came to pass that the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: Behold, thou shalt not suffer these things which ye have seen and heard to go forth unto the world until the time cometh that I shall glorify my name in the flesh; wherefore, ye shall **treasure up** the things which ye have seen and heard, and **show it to no man**.
- 22 And behold, when ye shall come unto me, ye shall write them and shall **seal** them up, that no one can interpret them; for ye shall write them in a **language** that they cannot be read.
- 23 And behold, these two **stones** will I give unto thee, and ye shall **seal** them up also with the things which ye shall write.
- 24 For behold, the **language** which ye shall write **I have confounded**; wherefore I will cause in my own due time that these **stones** shall magnify to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write.
- 25 And when the Lord had said these words, **he showed** unto the brother of Jared **ALL** the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also **ALL** that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth.
- 26 For he had said unto him in times before, that if he would believe in him that **he could show unto him ALL things**—it should be shown unto him; therefore the Lord could not withhold anything from him, for **he knew** that the Lord could show him **ALL** things.

[Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 3:21 Ye Shall . . . Show It to No Man:

According to John Welch, even though we find the account of the brother of Jared in chapter 3 of the book of Ether, it is unclear whether Ether ever read the account of the brother of Jared. First of all, the brother of Jared was commanded by the Lord to "show it to no man" (Ether 3:21). Second, the language the brother of Jared wrote it in was "confounded" (Ether 3:24). And third, the Lord provided "these (two) stones" as the only apparent means by which men would see the things which the brother of Jared wrote (Ether 3:23-24).

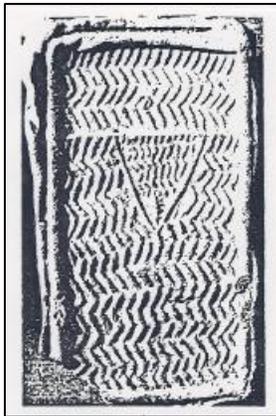
Since the Lord had forbidden the brother of Jared to allow his words to go forth unto the world until after He had come in the flesh (Ether 3:21, 4:1), there is reason why Ether may not have been privy to their content in detail.

Moroni, however, appears to have known from firsthand experience the impact these words had upon a reader because he said "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) [John W. Welch, "Preliminary Comments on the Sources behind the Book of Ether," F.A.R.M.S., 1986, p. 5]

Ether 3:22 Ye Shall Write Them and Shall Seal Them Up:

As a testament to the happenings that occurred between the Lord and the brother of Jared, the Lord commanded the brother of Jared to "write them and . . . seal them up." (Ether 3:22) According to Warren and Palmer, the custom of sealing important documents is ancient. Cylinder seals are small solid or hollow cylinders of stone or ceramic that are engraved with a design. They were no doubt used extensively by the scribes. They served as signatures. Rolling the seal over a wet clay tablet makes clear the nature of the design. Its use was a Mesopotamian trademark, even though its use spread to Anatolia, Egypt, Cyprus, and Greece. Figure 4-3 shows a cylinder seal impression from Mesopotamia (see illustration).

Use of the cylinder seal also spread to Mesoamerica, and many such cylinder seals have been found throughout Mexico. Figure 4-4 shows a cylinder seal that has been found at the Hill Vigia (the proposed hill Ramah/Cumorah) in the state of Veracruz, Mexico (see illustration). [Bruce W. Warren and David A. Palmer, The Jaredite Saga, ch. 4, unpublished]



Ether 3:22 Ye shall write them and shall seal them up (Illustration): Cylinder seals [Bruce W. Warren and David A. Palmer, The Jaredite Saga, ch. 4, unpublished]

Ether 3:23 These Two Stones Will I Give unto Thee:

The Lord told the brother of Jared to record "the things which ye have seen and heard" but not to let them go forth unto the world "until the time cometh that I shall glorify my name in the flesh" (Ether 3:21. In order to accomplish this, the Lord commanded:

ye shall write them and shall seal them up, that no one can interpret them; for ye shall write them in a language that they cannot be read. And behold *these two stones* will I give unto thee, and ye shall seal them up also with the things which ye shall write. . . . wherefore I will cause in my own due time that *these stones* shall magnify to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write. (Ether 3:22-24)

According to Reynolds and Sjodahl, these "two stones," which are also known as the *Interpreters* (Ether 4:5; Mosiah 28:20) and *Urim and Thummim* (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 2:52; Doctrine and Covenants 17:1) were, as we read here, entrusted into the care of Moriancumer, before he descended from the ever memorable scene of his vision and revelations. They were delivered to him with the sacred

records that were to be kept, and thus be hidden from the eyes of the world, until they, in the due time of the Lord, were to come forth. The purpose of the *Stones* is stated to be to *magnify*, that is to say, to make clear "the things which ye shall write."

According to the Doctrine and Covenants (17:1), the Sacred Instruments deposited in the Hill Cumorah and delivered to the Prophet Joseph, was the Urim and Thummim received by the Brother of Jared on the Mount. When the Prophet Joseph received the *Stones*, September 22, 1827, they were framed in silver bows and fastened to a *breastplate* (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 2:35). From the Doctrine and Covenants 130:8-9, where God is said to dwell on a globe which is a Urim and Thummim, and that the Earth is to be sanctified and made immortal--*made like unto a crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants thereon*--we conclude that that was the nature of the *Stones*. They were crystals. The Prophet Joseph Smith further adds to our information that the *white stone* mentioned in the Revelation 2:17, will become a Urim and Thummim to each who receives one, and that a *white stone* will be given to everyone who is privileged to come into the Celestial Kingdom. On the stone a new name is written. By this means *things pertaining to a higher order of kingdoms, even all kingdoms, will be made known*. [Reynolds and Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon VI:87] [See the commentary on Mosiah 8:13; Mosiah 28:20; see also Appendix B of this volume]

Ether 3:24 These Stones Shall Magnify to the Eyes of Men These Things Which Ye Shall Write:

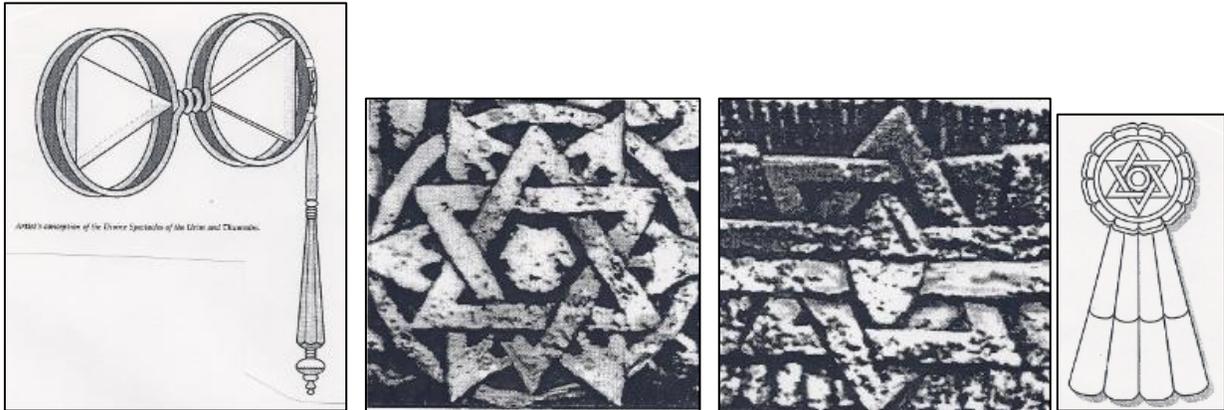
Ether 3:24 states that the stones (or Urim and Thummim) given by the Lord to the brother of Jared would "magnify to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write."

According to Randall Spackman, one of the most attractive, recent suggestions is that Urim is derived from the Assyrian *u'uru*, meaning "to send forth" and related to the noun *urtu*, meaning "a divine decision." Thummim may be related to the Assyrian noun *tamatu*, meaning "an oracle." Therefore the two terms might constitute a Hebrew hendiadys, a combination of "two formally co-ordinate terms--verbs, nouns, or adjectives--by 'and,'" which terms "express a single concept in which one of the components defines the other." The order of the terms is immaterial. Given the foregoing approach, the phrase "Urim and Thummim" could read as meaning "a divine decision in answer to a question" or "sacred answer," denoting the use to which the object was put. [Randall P. Spackman, The Jaredite Journey to America, p. 127]

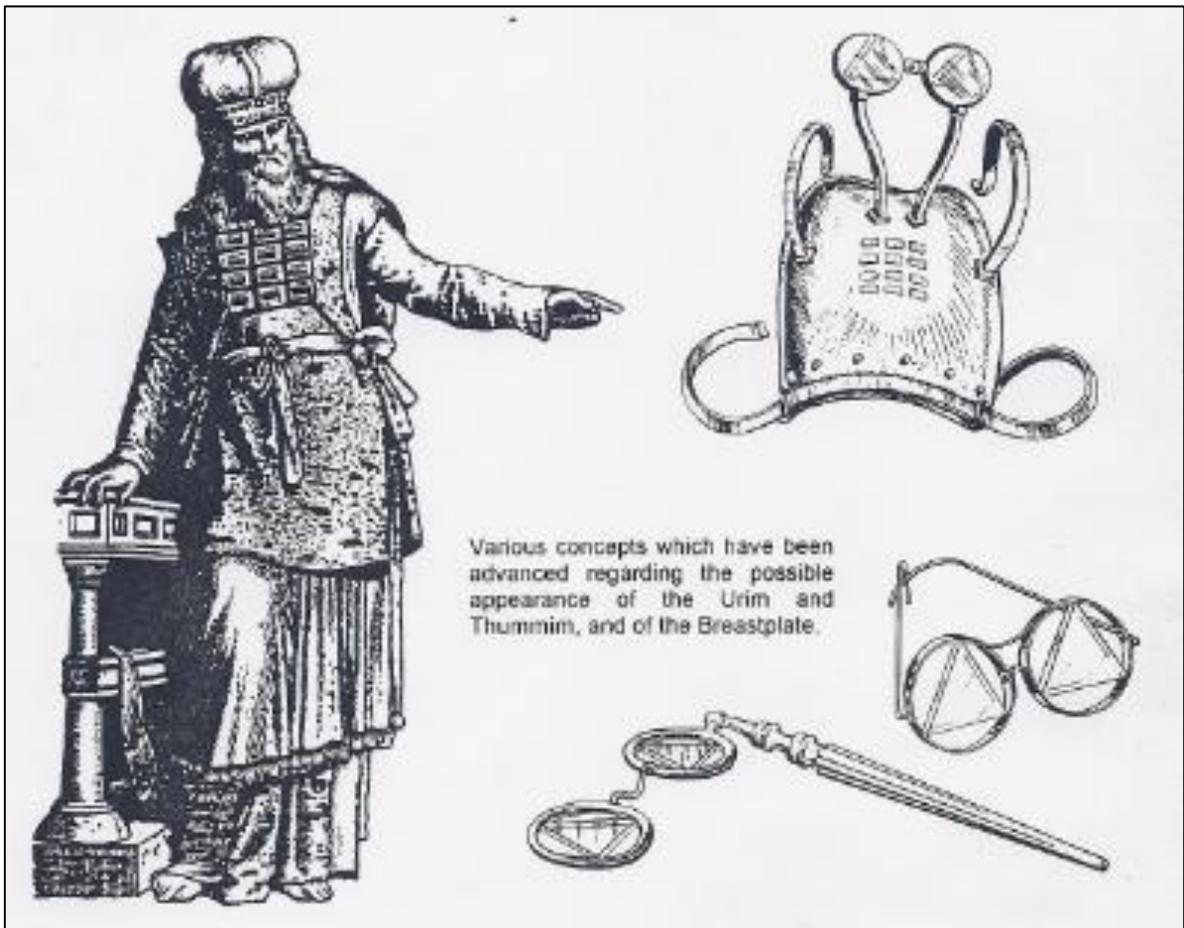
According to Tom Cryer, the joining of heaven (the spiritual) and earth (the material) is shown by a heaven based triangle pointing downwards, manifesting God's focus upon man, and merging with an earth based triangle pointing upwards manifesting man's focus upon God. This merge forms a hexagram or a six-pointed star. This shape is known as the *Magen David* "Shield of David" or Seal of Solomon. The uniting of the two directions symbolize the blending of the physical with the spiritual. The interlaced triangles as seen on the flag of Israel are a sign of the Messiah, or *Son of God*.

Some Jewish historians have suggested that the ancient sign of Judaism originated by interlocking two crystals each in the form of an equilateral triangle. These crystals were two special stones called seerstones or interpreters or the *Urim and Thummim*, which is Hebrew for "lights and perfections" (see illustration). The sixteenth century Chilam Balam book from Yucatan refers to "the three cornered precious stone of grace" as being born "when the earth was submerged, when there was neither heaven nor earth." (Makenson) A pair of overlapping triangles crown the central circle of the Aztec calendar. A scepter used by Xipe Totec, an Ancient Mexican Deity, was "a staff with two triangles and a circular section through

which he looks to see the futures." (Burdland:102) [Tom Cryer, Visual Sermons, pp. 68-69]



Ether 3:24 These (two) stones shall magnify to the eyes of men these things (Illustration): (L/R) Artist's conception of the Divine Spectacles of the Urim and Thummim; Star of David, Capernaum, Israel; Mayan Star of David, Copan, Honduras; Artist's rendering of the Maya feathered star of Uxmal, Yucatan. [Tom Cryer, Visual Sermons, pp. 68-69]



Ether 3:24 These (two) stones shall magnify to the eyes of men these things (Illustration): Various Concepts of the Urim and Thummim and the Breastplate. Various concepts which have been advanced regarding the possible appearance of the Urim and Thummim, and the Breastplate. [Glenn A. Scott, Voices from the Dust, p. 124]

Ether 3:25 [The Lord] Showed unto the Brother of Jared All the Inhabitants of the Earth Which Had Been, and Also All That Would Be:

The idea of a heavenly being showing a mortal "all the inhabitants of the earth" (Ether 3:25) is not without precedent. *Midrash Rabbah* Exodus 40:2 notes that as Moses was about to descend from the mountain, God "brought him the book of Adam and showed him all generations that would arise from Creation to Resurrection, each generation and its kings, its leaders, and prophets."^{viii}

Terrance Szink, of the Department of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University, suggests that Moses also received the Urim and Thummim with the records on Mount Sinai. The sacred oracle, first mentioned in Exodus 28:30 appears in such a way as to hint that it already existed before the high priestly clothing with which it became associated was made.

Szink also suggests that the tables of stone given to Moses on the mountain may not have been prepared by God at that time but may have been hidden there earlier, under the Lord's direction, by a prophet charged with protecting the ancient records.^{ix} The fact that the two tables had been "written with the finger of God" (see Exodus 31:18; 32:15-16; compare Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:22; 9:9-11) does not mean that he wrote them at the time that he spoke with Moses on the mount. After Moses broke the two tables (see Exodus 32:19; Deuteronomy 9:15-17), the Lord did not simply write up another set but had Moses prepare the new tables (see Exodus 34:1,4). Moses then spent forty days with the Lord, during which time the prophet, not the Lord, wrote on the tables (see Exodus 34:28-29). [John Tvedtnes, The Book of Mormon and Other Hidden Books: Out of Darkness unto Light, pp. 129-131] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 14:26; 2 Nephi 27:7]

Ether 3:25 The Lord . . . Showed unto the Brother of Jared All the Inhabitants of the Earth . . . Even unto the Ends of the Earth:

The brother of Jared saw a vision which transcends all divine communications. He was shown the history of the earth and every soul to be born thereon. But he was not the first nor the last to be shown such an incredible display. Moses had a similar experience, for he beheld the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the spirit of God. And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof, and there was not a soul which he beheld not; and he discerned them by the Spirit of God (Moses 1:27-28). Enoch witnessed the same great vision, Enoch beheld . . . all the nations of the earth . . . And there came generation upon generation . . . and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth . . . And the Lord showed Enoch all things, even unto the end of the world (Moses 7:23,24,45,67). Even the vision of Nephi is similar (1 Ne 11-14). He had seen much of the history of the earth, the coming of the Savior, and the latter-days. He saw the end of the world and the Second Coming in such detail that the Lord had to keep him from writing it—that was to be the privilege of John the Revelator. (*Meek and Lowly*, p. 46) [josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 3:25 He Showed unto the Brother of Jared All the Inhabitants of the Earth Which Had Been, and Also All That Would Be:

Monte Nyman notes that both Moroni and Nephi commented on the contents of the sealed part of the plates; they both gave similar testimonies that supplement each other. Nephi, quoting Isaiah, said that the sealed portion contained "a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof" (2 Nephi 27:7; see v. 10). Moroni described the sealed portion more specifically, saying it contained the vision shown unto the brother of Jared of "all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be . . . unto the ends of the earth" (Ether 3:25). Thus the sealed portion will establish once and for all that God does know all things from the beginning and has revealed them periodically to his prophets so that the people will not give credit to idols or men for his great works on the earth (see 1 Nephi 19:23; 20:3-7; Isaiah 48:3-7). [Monte S. Nyman, "Other Ancient American Records Yet to Come Forth," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, vol. 10, num. 1, 2001, pp. 57,58.]

Book of Ether

Chapter 4

Ether 4:1 For This Cause Did King Mosiah [Benjamin] Keep Them:

In our current edition of the Book of Mormon, Ether 4:1 reads:

“And the Lord commanded the brother of Jared to go down out of the mount from the presence of the Lord, and write the things which he had seen; and they were forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; and for this cause did King Mosiah keep them [*the written things which the brother of Jared saw*], that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people.

It is intriguing that in the Printers Manuscript and in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, the words that now make up Ether 4:1 read as follows:

. . . "and for this cause did king Benjamin keep them [that is, the written things which the brother of Jared saw] that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people."

Thus the name “Benjamin” has been replaced by the name “Mosiah.” This begs the question: “Was Benjamin a mistake in the translation process?”

It is hard to explain how Joseph Smith could make such a mistake. In my view it wasn't a mistake, especially if what king Benjamin possessed at this time amounted to the record of the brother of Jared and NOT the twenty four gold plates of Ether. Ether after all was a descendant of Jared (Ether 1:6-33), and *not* a descendant of the brother of Jared. It was the brother of Jared who was entrusted with making a record of his experiences (Ether 4:1).

In order to give perspective to what this change from Benjamin to Mosiah in Ether 4:1 has done to our comprehension of the Book of Mormon story, let us examine another such change within the text. There is another recorded passage in the Printers Manuscript and the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon where the name "Benjamin" is found instead of what now reads "Mosiah." In the book of Mosiah is found an account of the rescue of the people of Limhi by Ammon and his brethren. Upon the arrival of Ammon, king Limhi informed him of the discovery of the twenty four gold plates and asked him, "knowest thou of any one that can translate? for I am desirous that these records should be translated into our language" (Mosiah 8:12) Ammon replied,

"I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all the records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the things are called interpreters, and *no man can look in them except he be commanded*, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should *perish* . . . and behold, the king of the people who are in the land of Zarahemla is the man that is commanded to do these things." (Mosiah 8:13-14)

The Printer's Manuscript and 1830-edition text says that upon hearing this, "[king] Limhi was again filled with joy on learning from the mouth of Ammon that king Benjamin had a gift from God." (Mosiah 21:28).

According to the textual references in our current book of Mosiah, it says that "[king] Limhi was again filled with joy on learning from the mouth of Ammon that king Mosiah had a gift from God." (Mosiah 21:28).

Now one mistake from Joseph Smith is hard to believe, but TWO mistakes? From two separate records? Involving the same king Benjamin-Mosiah relationship? How could that be?

Let's review the chronological situation in the Book of Mosiah story.

(1) King Benjamin gives his son Mosiah "charge concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass; and also the plates of Nephi; and also, the sword of Laban, and the ball or director, which led our fathers through the wilderness." (Mos. 1:16)

(2) Then Mosiah "went and did as his father had commanded him, and proclaimed unto all the people who were in the land of Zarahemla that thereby they might gather themselves together to go up to the temple to hear the words which his father should speak unto them." How long this took we are not told, but there was apparently a space of time.

(3) King Benjamin delivered a tower speech within the walls of the temple (Chapters 2,3, 4, 5, 6) This speech had to do with Christ's foreordained mission regarding God's children here on earth.

(4) "Mosiah began to reign in his father's stead" but "king Benjamin lived three years and he died." (Mos. 6:4-5) "And there was no contention among all his people for the space of three years." (Mos. 6:7)

(5) Apparently some time previous, a group of people had departed Zarahemla and gone to the land of Lehi-Nephi and they hadn't heard anything about them.

(6) "And now, it came to pass that after king Mosiah had had continual peace for the space of three years, he was desirous to know concerning the people who went up to dwell in the Land of Lehi-Nephi" and so he "granted" that 16 men (among whom was Ammon) to go to the land of Lehi-Nephi to see what had happened (Mos. 7:2).

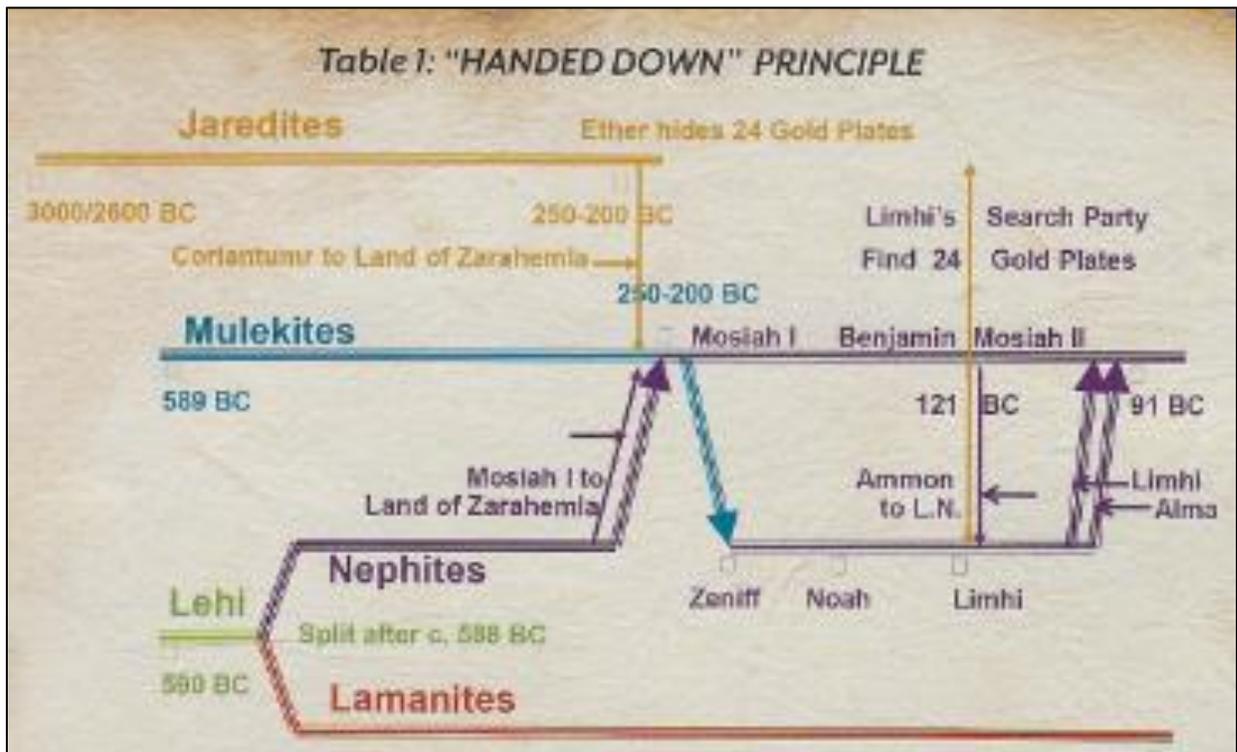
Notice that there are two chronological phrases that are exactly the same: "for the space of three years." How do we interpret those phrases? Do they both mean EXACTLY three years or could they be slightly different? If one period was 2 years 11 months and the other period was 2 years 10 months, it is possible that they would both be termed "three years."

But what about the chronological words, "And it came to pass"? Don't they imply successive events? In general this might be true, but in this sequence of events there is some confusion. For example, in Mosiah 6:5 it says that "king Benjamin lived three years and he died." In the very next verse it says, "And it came to pass that king Mosiah did walk in the ways of the Lord . . ." Does this imply that before king Benjamin died Mosiah was not walking in the ways of the Lord? Or does it imply that the chronology of what is being said is a little mixed up? I prefer to think that the chronology of king Benjamin's death and the party of 16 men being sent is so close that it can be interpreted in two ways: (1) King Benjamin died and then the party was sent; or (2) the party was sent and then king Benjamin died.

Thus, in my view, it is still possible to render a chronological interpretation such that Ammon and his brethren departed towards Lehi-Nephi just a little before Benjamin's death (perhaps even a day or two), and therefore Ammon could have assumed that "king" Benjamin was still living.

A second factor in my analysis involves the interpreters. We should note that king Limhi mentions *nothing* about any interpreters, which the Lord *commanded* to be sealed up with the record of the brother of Jared (Ether 3:28). Rather, it was Ammon who seemingly had to explain the existence of such interpreters to king Limhi (Mosiah 8:13-14). Furthermore, it should be noted that in Ether 3:28, as part of the commandment to seal up these stones possessed by the brother of Jared, there is also a promise that these words (and stones—interpreters) would NOT come forth to the children of men "until the Lord should show them." (Ether 3:28) It does not seem to me that the Lord showed either the stones or the record of the brother of Jared to king Limhi or any of his people. Otherwise it would have probably been noted by Mormon in his abridgment. However, Mormon did note that Ammon considered the possession of "interpreters" a "gift from God." He also said that "whosoever is commanded to look in them the same is called seer." (Mosiah 8:13)

Thus, in view of the evidence presented, I feel both interpretations (Benjamin and Mosiah) are justified). King Limhi had in his possession 24 gold plates but not the interpreters. The record of Ether that was recorded on the twenty four gold plates was primarily a record of his family and their right to kingship. In my view it *did not* contain the record of the descendants of the brother of Jared, nor did it have the detailed vision of the brother of Jared, nor were the "stones" sealed up with the 24 plates.



Ether 4:1 For this cause did king Mosiah keep them (Illustration): Table 1: "Handed Down" Principle [Shirley R. Heater, "The Extraordinary Interpreters of the Book of Mormon," in *The Witness*, Spring 2015 (No. 153), p. 6]

Ether 4:1 For This Cause Did King Mosiah [Benjamin] Keep Them:

According to Randall Spackman, whether the two stones (interpreters?) were kept with the brother of Jared's writings, as the Lord commanded (Ether 3:23) is not disclosed; the Book of Mormon

does not reflect that the stones were found by the Nephites with the record of Ether. A set of stones called "interpreters" are noted as being used by Mosiah₂ to translate the record of Ether into the language of the Nephites (Mosiah 28:11-13), but the link between these interpreters and the Jaredite stones is not mentioned in the Book of Mormon. However, Joseph Smith later described the interpreters accompanying the gold plates as the stones "which were given to the brother of Jared upon the mount" (D&C 17:1).

Spackman raises the following possibility:

Mosiah₁, the grandfather of Mosiah₂, is recorded as uniting his Nephite followers with "the people of Zarahemla" (Omni 1:19). The people of Zarahemla had discovered Coriantumr, the last Jaredite king, and Coriantumr had dwelt with the people of Zarahemla for the space of nine moons" (Omni 1:21). Mosiah₁ interpreted, "by the gift and power of God," Jaredite engravings found on a large stone, which gave an account of this Coriantumr (Omni 1:20). Thus, the interpreters may have been delivered by the last Jaredite king (Coriantumr) to the people of Zarahemla, who passed them on to Mosiah₁ when they united with the Nephites. Or perhaps the sacred stones or interpreters were found at the same time as the large engraved stone. [Randall P. Spackman, The Jaredite Journey To America, p. 123, unpublished]

[Note* It is hard to imagine such a sacred record being kept by an unrighteous king who "repented not," and so his whole household and all his people had been destroyed because of his failure to follow the words of the prophet Ether. (see Ether 12:2-5, 13:15-17; 15). Although Ether does say that after massive loss of life and destruction, "he [Coriantumr] began to repent of the evil which he had done." (Ether 15:3). Nevertheless, a "large engraved stone" is hardly the record of the brother of Jared which was sealed up with the interpreters. (Ether 3:28) Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 4:1 For This Cause Did King Mosiah [Benjamin] Keep Them:

Another possible explanation for the "Benjamin-Mosiah changes (Ether 4:1, Mos. 21:28) is given by John Welch. He writes that it is possible that Ammon made the statement recorded in Mosiah 21:28 at a time when he did not know for sure that the new king Mosiah₂ would exercise the same gift as had his father. This would explain why Ammon might have spoken to the people of Limhi only of the known powers which Benjamin had had.

Additionally, according to Welch, the earliest readings we have of Ether 4:1 make the statement (referring to the writings of the brother of Jared) that "for this cause did king Benjamin keep them, that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people." Welch interprets this phrase to mean that Benjamin held back certain matters about the pre-mortal Christ from the people (which is to say that the word "them" refers not to the record of the brother of Jared, but to an apparently similar experience had by Benjamin -- see Mosiah 3). [John W. Welch, "Preliminary Comments on the Sources behind the Book of Ether," F.A.R.M.S., p. 10]

According to John Welch, Jesus was personally known to many Book of Mormon prophets, for he appeared to several, including Lehi (1 Nephi 1:9), Nephi (2 Nephi 11:2), Jacob (2 Nephi 2:4; 11:3), Mormon (Mormon 1:15), the brother of Jared (Ether 3:14), and Moroni (Ether 12:39), as well as to the multitude in 3 Nephi. Others like Benjamin, Alma, Amulek, and Samuel the Lamanite saw "the angel of the Lord"

(Mosiah 4:1; 27:11; Alma 10:7; Helaman 13:7), which may be a euphemism for seeing the Lord himself (for example, it is difficult to distinguish between "the angel of the Lord" and Jehovah in Genesis 16:7-11; 22:11-15; Exodus 3:2; and Judges 2:1-4).^x Thus, their teachings and testimonies about Jesus are based on firsthand knowledge and acquaintance. [John W. Welch, "Ten Testimonies of Jesus Christ from the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S., 1994, p. 1]

But Welch's interpretation still begs the question, WHY did king Benjamin have an experience similar to the brother of Jared? Let's review once more.

In Mosiah 3:1, while speaking to his people in a temple-covenant setting, king Benjamin declares: "And again my brethren, I would call your attention, for I have somewhat more to speak unto you; for behold, I have things to tell you concerning *that which is to come*."

According to John Tvedtnes, the words "that which is to come" refer specifically to Christ and not to future events in general. This becomes clear as we read the rest of Mosiah 3, which is devoted to a message delivered to Benjamin by an angel. The entire message concerns the coming of Jesus Christ . . . Even more interesting is the fact that throughout the rest of the Book of Mormon, the phrase "that which is to come" and similar phrases overwhelmingly refer to the coming of Christ and not just the general future. (See for example, Mosiah 4:11, 5:3,18:2; Alma 5:48, 21:8, 58:40; Helaman 6:14,8:23) [John A. Tvedtnes, "That Which Is to Come," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, pp. 245-250]

Benjamin declared that:

"the things which I shall tell you are made known unto me by an angel from God. And he said unto me: Awake; and I awoke, and behold he stood before me. And he said unto me: Awake, and hear the words which I shall tell thee; for behold, I am come to declare unto you the glad tidings of great joy. (Mosiah 3:2-3)

Benjamin notes that in this vision an angel of the Lord delivered the following message:

For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men. (Mosiah 3:5)

More specifically, Benjamin was told by the angel that:

[Jesus would suffer] even more than a man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and abominations of his people. And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary. And lo, he cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name; and even after all this they shall consider him a man . . . and shall crucify him. And he shall rise the third day from the dead; and behold, he standeth to judge the world . . . For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned . . . For

behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just; and the infant perisheth not that dieth in his infancy; but men drink damnation to their own souls except they humble themselves and become as little children, and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent. (Mosiah 3:7-11,18)

What is most striking with this speech on Christ's mission to earth to atone for the sins of mankind is that right in the middle of delivering his message, the angel alludes to the types and shadows and symbolism behind the Mosaic rituals that, for hundreds of years before Jesus' actual birth, prefigured his workings among the children of Israel. That is, Benjamin was alluding to the fact that Jesus Christ was the Creator of all things from the beginning, and that He was the Father of heaven and earth." These were concepts that had been revealed to the brother of Jared. Again, WHO was the angel, and WHY did he come? That is, WHAT prompted the "angel" to visit king Benjamin? Perhaps we can find some answers in the content of Benjamin's speech.

In my view, from what I have discussed here, the angel might be connected to three things: (1) the knowledge of a premortal Christ; (2) the knowledge of the foreordination of certain people (at least Christ and Mary)--Benjamin noted that the Atonement had "been prepared from the foundation of the world." (Mos. 4:6); and (3) although Benjamin does not mention it (but Ammon apparently implies it) the delivery of some "interpreters."

But if the interpreters were delivered to king Benjamin, wouldn't they be accompanied by the record of the brother of Jared? I would think so, or at least a knowledge of where that record was because the interpreters had been sealed up with the record. There is a little confusion here because in Alma 37:1-23, when Alma turns over the records to his son Helaman, he mentions the 24 plates of Ether and the Interpreters, but no record of Ether, implying that the interpreters were alone. However, in Alma 63:11-12 it mentions that Shiblon gave the sacred things to his son Helaman, and:

All those engravings which were in the possession of Helaman were written and sent forth among the children of men throughout all the land, save it were those parts which had been commanded by Alma should not go forth.

The parts that were commanded to not go forth were the secret works. This commandment was said when Alma was turning over the records to his son Helaman (Alma 37:27) But Alma also said at that time that, "these interpreters were prepared that the word of God might be fulfilled, which he spake, saying: I will bring forth out of darkness unto light all their secret works and their abominations : and except they repent I will destroy them from off the face of the earth." (Alma 37:24)

A footnote here refers the reader back to Mosiah 21 and the Limhi party's discovery of a destroyed people (the Jaredites) and the 24 gold plates. But again, the interpreters were not found by the Limhi party. According to Ammon they were in the possession of king Benjamin.

Interestingly, while the tales of secret combinations are not found in Mormon's abridgement of the book of Ether, he does mention something pertinent. In Ether chapter 8 we told of a rebellious son of Jared (who was the son of **Omer** of the kingship line of Jared). He had a daughter who reminded him of "the record which our fathers brought across the great deep" and that in the record there was "an account

concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory.” (Ether 8:9)

Apparently Jared (of the lineage of Jared) had access to that record. But no mention is made of interpreters. But who eventually had access to that same record? And who eventually had access to the record of the brother of Jared? Perhaps a clue can be found in the prophecies of Ether to Coriantumr and his people. Moroni notes that Ether “truly told them of all things from the beginning of man” (Ether 13:2) After a few details, Moroni says, “I was about to write more, but I am forbidden; but great and marvelous were the prophecies of Ether.” (Ether 13:13)

This begs the question, WHERE did Ether get this information? Did he get it from the record of Jared and his descendants? Or did he get it from some other source? Perhaps Moroni gives us a clue. Immediately after writing about Ether coming forth to prophesy unto Coriantumr and his people, Moroni speaks on the lack of faith of the people who did not believe what Ether prophesied. He also speaks on those who had great faith: “And there were many whose faith was so exceedingly strong, even before Christ came, who could not be kept from within the veil, but truly saw with their eyes the things which they had beheld with an eye with an eye of faith, and they were glad.” “And behold, we have seen in this record that one of these was the brother of Jared.” (Ether 12:19-20) Moroni then bemoans the fact of the weakness of his writing compared with that of 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)

So how did Moroni know just how powerful the words of the brother of Jared were? He apparently had access to his records. And where were these records (or all of Moroni’s records)? In a cave in the hill Cumorah where Moroni’s father Mormon had placed them (Mormon 6:6). Interestingly the gold plates that Moroni delivered from that hill to Joseph Smith had a sealed portion, which contained the writings of the brother of Jared.*

So WHEN did Mormon or Moroni gain the knowledge of where these and possibly other Jaredite records were? Perhaps the answer comes from Ether. Where did Ether hide? In a cave (Ether 13:22). This cave was near the final battles of the Jaredites (Ether 15: 33). And where were both the Nephites and the Jaredites both destroyed? At the same Hill Cumorah/Ramah. (Ether 15:11) But prior to that final destruction, Mormon had been entrusted by Ammaron with all the records. He had been taken to a hill where those records were located – a hill “which shall be called Shim” (Mormon 6:1-3). This is the same hill that the Jaredite king **Omer** passed by before coming to the place where the Nephites were destroyed.” (Ether 9:3) This is the same hill that is mentioned in the movements of the Nephites to the hill Cumorah/Ramah. (Mormon 2:17-18, 6:6)



Ether 9:3 Omer came over and passed by the hill of Shim, and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed (Illustration): Travels of King Omer. [Joseph Lovell Allen & Blake Joseph Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Second Edition, 2008, p. 436]

In other words, in my view Ether wrote his record in a cave in the hill Shim where apparently all the other Jaredite records had been stored. And in the same manner as Moroni, Ether finished his record (an abridgment of all the Jaredite records?) and Moroni says “he hid them in a manner that the people of Limhi did find [or “discover”] them.” (Ether 15: 33). (What amount of spirituality, visions, or angelic visitations was involved with that “discovery” of the 24 plates of Ether is not told. Note that Ether was the covenant caretaker of his own record. In his final words, Ether hints that he had a further purpose in regard to the Jaredite records. He wrote, “Whether the Lord will that I be translated, or that I suffer the will of the Lord in the flesh, it mattereth not . . .” (Ether 15:34) Nobody was resurrected before Christ. In my view Ether (and the Lord) wouldn’t have allowed Ether’s record to be found by just anyone, or without by someone without a covenant-fulfilling purpose.) Such would have been the function of a translated being in the centuries before Christ’s atonement.

It is also my view that in the same manner that Moroni (the last covenant caretaker of the records and now a resurrected being) delivered the gold plates, which contained the sealed portion (the vision of the brother of Jared* along with the Interpreters to Joseph Smith, so also did Ether (now a translated “angel” and the last covenant caretaker of the Jaredite records) deliver to king Benjamin the knowledge of where the records of the Jaredites were, along with the Interpreters. Whether Christ personally appeared to king Benjamin, I do not know, but the vision of Christ’s mission was apparently given to king Benjamin in association with the angel’s visit in which the record of Jared, explaining things from the beginning to the

end of the world (Ether 3:25), and the interpreters were made available. And because of this, Moroni records: “And for this cause did king Benjamin (and Mosiah) keep them.” [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] (Note* SEE the commentary on Ether 4:4 & 4:16 by H. Donl Peterson)

Ether 4:1 For This Cause Did King Mosiah [Benjamin] Keep Them:

The following is a list of the editions of the Book of Mormon cited in FairMormon Answers:

1830 — First edition, 5000 copies, printed by E.B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York. Punctuation and paragraphing added by Grandin's employee, John H. Gilbert. The preface contains an explanation by Joseph Smith about the lost 116 pages. The testimonies of the three and eight witnesses are at the end of the book.

1837 — Printed in Kirtland. Preface written by Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson. Hundreds of grammatical changes made.

1840 — Printed by Shepard and Stearns in Cincinnati, Ohio for Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith. Joseph Smith edited this printing to restore some of the readings of the original manuscript.

1841 — Printed by J. Tompkins in Liverpool, England, for Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Parley P. Pratt. Printed with the permission of Joseph Smith. It is essentially a reprint of the 1837 edition with modifications for British spelling.

1849 — Printed in England; edited by Orson Pratt.

1852 — Printed in England; edited by Franklin D. Richard. Includes first attempt at versification of the text.

1879 — Edited by Orson Pratt. Long chapters from original text are divided. True versification added, along with footnotes.

1905 — Edited by James E. Talmage.

1911 — Edited by James E. Talmage.

1920 — Edited by James E. Talmage. Introductory material added, text composed in two columns, chapter summaries added, and new footnotes.

1981 — Edited by committee under direction of members of the Quorum of the Twelve. New introductory material was added, new chapter summaries and new footnotes.

From the first edition in 1830 until the edition in 1841, the name “Benjamin” appeared in Ether 4:1. After that edition, and thus after the death of the prophet Joseph Smith, the name “Mosiah” has appeared. Hugh Nibley remarks:

Sometimes the editors of later editions of the Book of Mormon have made “corrections” that were better left unmade . . . Was it necessary to change the name of Benjamin (in the first edition) to Mosiah in later editions of Ether 4:1? Probably not, for though it is certain that Mosiah kept the records in question, it is by no means certain that his father, Benjamin, did not also have a share in keeping them. It was Benjamin who displayed the zeal of a life-long book lover in the keeping and studying of records; and after he handed over the throne to his son Mosiah, he [Benjamin] lived on and may well have spent many days among his beloved records. And among these records could have been the Jaredite plates, which were brought to Zarahemla early in the reign of Mosiah when his father [Benjamin] could still have been living (Mosiah 8:9-15). [Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 7]

Ether 4:1 Mosiah /Benjamin:

Royal Skousen comments:

The fourth chestnut involves the replacement of the name *Benjamin* with *Mosiah* in two places (in Mosiah 21:28 and Ether 4:1). Joseph Smith was apparently the one who changed the first instance (in the 1837 edition); Orson Pratt made the second one (in the 1849 edition). The problem has to do with how the chronology is interpreted in the book of Mosiah. The two original readings with *Benjamin* are very likely correct. Although Benjamin is unexpected, it appears that King Benjamin lived long enough to be still alive when Ammon and his men returned to Zarahemla with the people of king Limhi (in Mosiah 22).

[Source: Royal Skousen, “Changes in The Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 161-176]

Ether 4:1 [Benjamin] Mosiah:

In view of what I have just discussed on the connection of the names of Benjamin and Mosiah in Ether 4:1, I would like to add some additional perspective as to why I feel those names are symbolically important. In my view Mosiah I (the father of Benjamin) carries his name (Mosiah—“Messiah”) because he led his covenant people (from the land of Nephi) through a wilderness to a more promised land (the land of Zarahemla) where they could enjoy and practice the principles of the covenant gospel. Thus is the name “Mosiah” symbolic?

In the land of Zarahemla they found the people of Zarahemla that “came out from Jerusalem at the time that Zedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon.” (Omni 1:15) Later we find that Zarahemla was a descendant of Mulek, the son of Zedekiah (Hel. 6:10; Mosiah 25:2)

[Note* The name “Mulek” is also symbolic. The root “mlk” means “king”]

The two peoples merged and Mosiah was made their king. In time Mosiah grew old and his son whose name was Benjamin began to reign in his stead. (Omni 1:23) Now if Mosiah’s name was symbolic, what about the name “Benjamin”? WHY would this son of Mosiah acquire such a name? In my view, in

order to perhaps better understand why, I must review what happened in their lives as recorded in the Book of Omni.

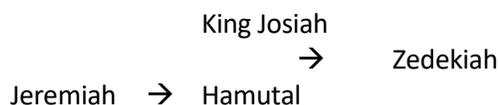
In speaking of the people of Zarahemla, the record states that “they denied the being of their Creator.” I would have to wonder, referring to the specific phrasing, if the people of Zarahemla, rather than being totally devoid of religion, were just specifically denying that Christ was the Creator. This idea was apparently one of the very teachings for which they persecuted the Old World prophets Lehi and Jeremiah (see Alma 13:16 personal notes).

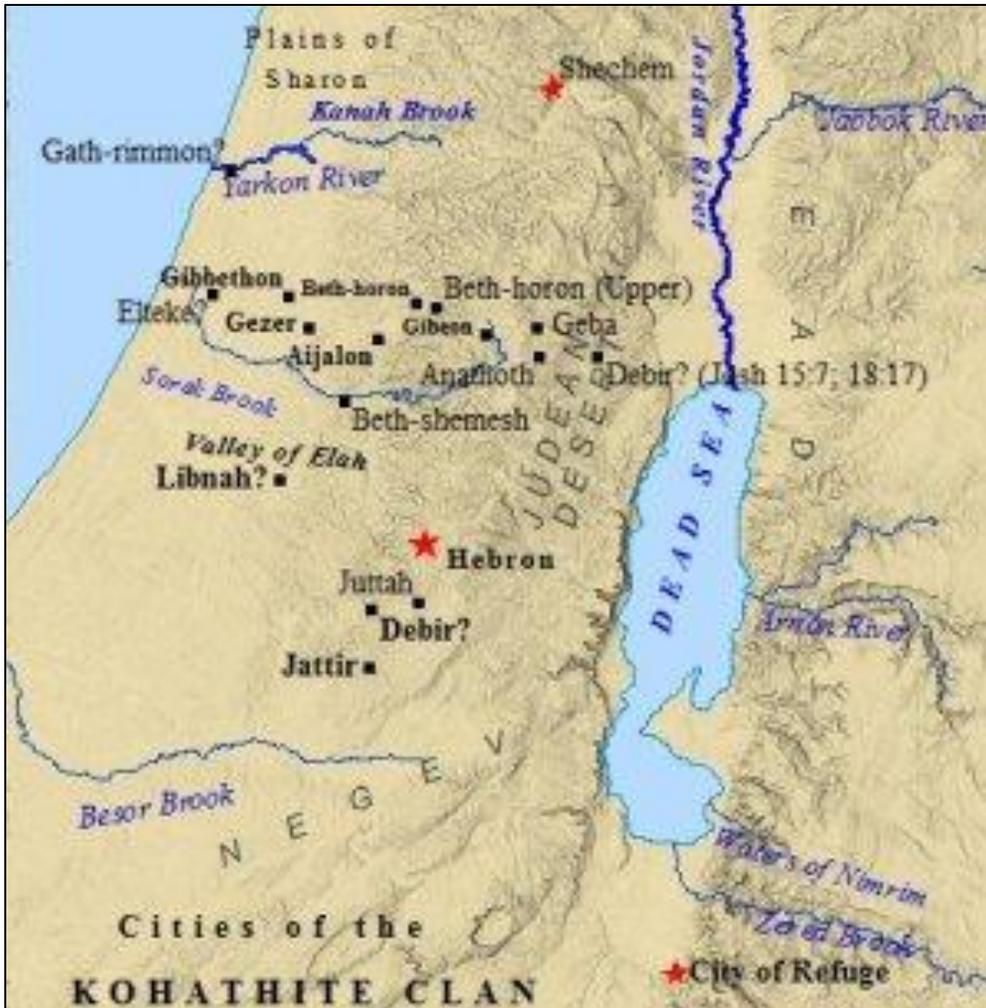
Amaleki records that "after they were taught in the language of Mosiah, Zarahemla gave a genealogy of his fathers, according to his memory; and they are written, but not in these plates" (Omni 1:18). First of all, WHY was it so important that Zarahemla give a genealogy of his fathers? And second, how detailed was this record? Was the genealogy of Zarahemla written on the large plates or was it a record in itself? If it was on the large plates, it might have been part of the lost 116 pages of manuscript. Whatever the case, this record of Zarahemla is not known to us. However, the fact that Mormon lists Zarahemla as a "descendant of Mulek who came out of Jerusalem" in Mosiah 25:2 and that Mulek was a "son of Zedekiah" in Helaman 6:10 seems to confirm its existence. Thus we find evidence of Zarahemla's genealogy from a source "not on these plates" just as Amaleki says. Moreover, we learn in the Book of Mormon that records were usually kept by royalty. In this regard it is also interesting that the Nephite record keeper Amaleki turned all his records over to king Benjamin. (Omni 1:25) Thus in King Benjamin, there was a uniting not just of two peoples, but of their records.

There seems to be something symbolically going on here, but what? Perhaps there is another point worth discussing here. Zarahemla had apparently remembered his genealogy perfectly, implying that his genealogy was of such importance that it had been handed down from one generation to another. Certainly it was important because it showed that Zarahemla descended from Zedekiah the king of Judah. There are, however, some biblical references that point to the possibility that Zarahemla could have also been an elite descendant of the Priests of Levi and Aaron.

When the lands of Israel were originally split up among the twelve tribes, special privilege was given to the tribe of Levi because of their priestly role. The House of Kohath (the son of Levi) was given the city of Libnah (along with 12 other cities and their suburbs--see Joshua 21:8-19). This geographical association of the city of Libnah to priesthood lineage might be implied in some verses of scripture which speak of Zedekiah's genealogy. In the historical book of 2 Kings we find that "Zedekiah [a son of king Josiah] was twenty and one years old when he began to reign . . . And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah *of Libnah*" (2 Kings 24:18).

Apparently Zedekiah's father-in-law was "Jeremiah of Libnah"--the title "of Libnah" indicating that his rights of inheritance were at the city of Libnah, and that most probably he was part of the priesthood elite and a direct descendant of Aaron through the loins of Levi. Thus Zarahemla would have descended not only from the royal family of the tribe of Judah through Zedekiah, but through a Levitical priesthood line through Hamutal, Zedekiah's mother.^{xi} With such dual descendancy would have come an inherent responsibility to pass on a recorded or memorized genealogy from one generation to another.^{xii}





The Location of the City of Libnah and the city of Anathoth

Additionally, and apparently not realized by anyone at the time, Zarahemla's genealogy possibly represented evidence of a literal fulfillment of revelatory words given by the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel and the prophet Jeremiah. Ezekiel was a prophet of the Diaspora, that is, he was taken to Babylonia just before the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians about 586 B.C. The Lord used Ezekiel to add his testimony to the fact that Jerusalem would indeed be destroyed. Among the many words Ezekiel recorded concerning the ramifications of this destruction are the following:

Thus saith the Lord God; *I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent.*

In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.

And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken and have done it. (Ezekiel 17:22-24; emphasis added)

The mention of "high cedar" associated with "the highest branch" is clearly symbolic. According to *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, the cedars of Lebanon were large spreading coniferous trees whose wood was highly valued for its durability.

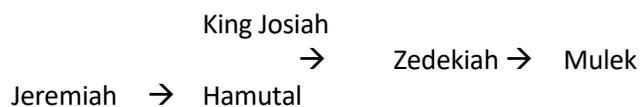


Cedar of Lebanon

This cedar wood was brought to Jerusalem, for example, for building David's house (2 Samuel 5:11, etc.), Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 5:6-10, etc.), and the new Temple built after the Babylonian Exile (Ezra 3:7).^{xiii} Thus the idea that someone would take from "the highest branch of the high cedar" might imply royal lineage related to the mention of the house of David, but it also might imply priesthood lineage related to the High Priests who ruled at the temple of Solomon.

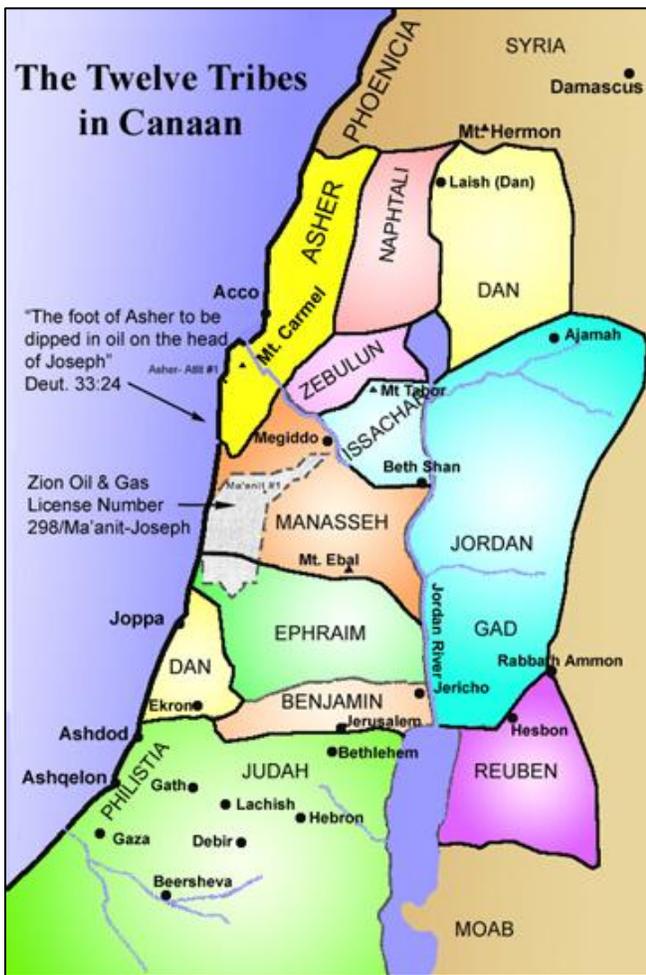
Ezekiel's prophecy could have, in part, been applicable to Mulek, an heir to both royalty and priesthood who was cut from the Old World and planted in the New World, and whose descendant, Zarahemla, was found by Mosiah.

The prophet Jeremiah was a contemporary of Ezekiel at the time of the Diaspora. However, while Ezekiel became part of the Diaspora and was taken away, Jeremiah remained near Jerusalem until its destruction. His mission was not only to warn the Jews of their impending destruction, but to personally witness that destruction and dispersion from Jerusalem itself. Interestingly, Jeremiah was told in his initial call that part of his prophetic mission would also be to "plant" (Jeremiah 1:10). Some have interpreted Ezekiel's prophecy in a way that the "planting" might have had at least a partial fulfillment in Mulek, the son of Zedekiah (and ultimately in Zarahemla a descendant of Mulek). I propose that because Mulek was of Jeremiah's literal "seed"—that "seed" was to fulfill Ezekiel's prophecy of a "planting." Mulek, the son of Zedekiah, would have been the actual great-grandson of Jeremiah.



Though the reasoning to this connection is **highly speculative**, I would like to at least leave the reader with a few of the more pertinent proposed connections in the hope that someday more substantive information might come to light.

The prophet Jeremiah was "the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. (Jeremiah 1:1-3) When the lands of Israel were split up among the twelve tribes, special privilege was given to the tribe of Levi because of their priestly role. The House of Kohath (the son of Levi) was given the cities of Libnah and Anathoth (along with 11 other cities and their suburbs--see Joshua 21:8-19). It is important to note that the scriptures here do not say that Jeremiah the prophet was born in Anathoth or that he lived there all his life. They simply state that either he or his father Hilkiah was "of the priests that were in Anathoth." As stated, the Levitical line had also been given the city of Libnah and other cities for their inheritance. Thus one might postulate that Jeremiah the prophet might have had some links to Libnah as well as Anathoth (and the other cities as well).



The Land of Benjamin

What we can say with certainty is that Jeremiah was "the son of Hilkiah the priest." Unfortunately there seems to be some confusion in the Bible about any more details concerning Hilkiah, because the name Hilkiah crops up in a number of places during this time period. For example there are

references to:

(1) *Hilkiah the son of Shallum of the priestly line of the tribe of Levi:* The priesthood descended from Levi to Shallum and his son Hilkiah, who lived at a time just before king Zedekiah, which would have probably been during the reign of Josiah (see 1 Chronicles 6:1-13; see also the charts below). Because of this descent, this Hilkiah would be considered the chief heir to the Levitical and Aaronic Priesthood.

(2) *Hilkiah the High Priest who discovered the book of the law in the temple and worked with king Josiah to bring about religious reform:* When God called Jeremiah as a prophet, king Josiah (638-608 B.C.) had been on the throne of Judah for 12 years and had already introduced religious reforms (2 Chronicles 34:4-17). But it was not until 621 B.C., the 18th year of his reign, that he initiated a systematic reformation in Judah's religion and morals (2 Kings 23). The impulse to reform was generated by the momentous discovery in the Temple of "the book of the law" by "Hilkiah the high priest" (2 Kings 22:8-9). Thus, this Hilkiah would have been a High Priest and been a little older than Jeremiah.

For the moment let's assume that (1)Hilkiah the father of Jeremiah, (2) Hilkiah the son of Shallum of the priestly line of the tribe of Levi, and (3)Hilkiah the High Priest who discovered the book of the law in the temple and worked with king Josiah to bring about religious reform were the same person. This means that Hilkiah (and Jeremiah) would have had lands of inheritance at Anathoth (and/or one of the other cities of the Levites), and that they would have associated closely with king Josiah. Now king Josiah happened to marry a woman named Hamutal, who was the daughter of one "Jeremiah of Libnah" (2 Kings 23:31 and 24:18). If "Jeremiah of Libnah" (Libnah being a priestly city) and Jeremiah the prophet ("son of Hilkiah of the priests that were in Anathoth") turn out to be the same person, then the son of Zedekiah (Mulek) would have been Jeremiah's great-grandson (or Jeremiah's seed). This is an exciting idea, but we need to examine things a bit closer.

When Babylon rose against Assyria it caused upheavals that led to the destruction of Judah. Egypt concerned about the new threat, moved northward to support Assyria. It set on the march in 608, moving via Judah. King Josiah, attempted to block the Egyptian forces, and fell mortally wounded in battle at Megiddo. Josiah's younger son Jehoahaz was chosen to succeed his father to the throne. Three months later the Egyptian pharaoh Necho, returning from the north, deposed Jehoahaz in favor of his older brother, Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz was taken back to Egypt as a captive.[2]

After the Egyptians were defeated by the Babylonians at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar II then besieged Jerusalem. Jehoiakim changed allegiances to avoid the destruction of Jerusalem. He paid tribute from the treasury, some temple artifacts, and some of the royal family and nobility as hostages. The subsequent failure of the Babylonian invasion into Egypt undermined Babylonian control of the area, and after three years, Jehoiakim switched allegiance back to the Egyptians and ceased paying the tribute to Babylon. In 599 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar II invaded Judah and again laid siege to Jerusalem. In 598 BCE, Jehoiakim died during the siege and was succeeded by his son Jeconiah (also known as Jehoiachin). Jerusalem fell within three months. Jeconiah was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar, who installed Zedekiah, Jehoiakim's brother, in his place.

According to the Hebrew Bible, Zedekiah was made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 BCE at the age of twenty-one. This is in agreement with a Babylonian chronicle, which states, "The seventh year: In the month Kislev the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Hattu. He encamped against the city of Judah and on the second day of the month Adar he captured the city (and) seized (its) king. A king of his own choice he appointed in the city (and) taking the vast tribute he brought it into Babylon."[3]

From a chronological point of view, Zedekiah was age 21 in 597 B.C. when he was placed on the throne by Nebuchadrezzar (2 Kings 24:18). This would mean that he was born in about the year 618 B.C. If we made a reasonable guess that his mother Hamutal was near 22 at the time, having married king Josiah around the age of 18 in 622 B.C., then this would place her birth in the year 640 B.C.

We will make a reasonable guess that Hamutal's father (Jeremiah of Libnah) was 34 at her birth, resulting in a birthdate for Jeremiah in the year 674 B.C. Jeremiah the prophet, "the son of Hilkiyah of the priests that were in Anathoth" received his call in the 13th year of king Josiah (626 B.C.) Had he been born in 674 B.C. he would have been 48 at the time, and his father Hilkiyah would have been possibly 78. This chronology would coincide very nicely.

Note* Before continuing this discussion let us first take a look at the genealogy of the High Priests in the Bible:

Each entry is supposed to be the son or daughter of the previous entries. Subentries are used for people with multiple wives.

Levi (b. 2195 after creation = 1565 B.C.E., d. 2332 after creation = 1428 B.C.E.) (ancestor of Levites [Leviim; sing: Levi]). (Genesis 46) Children: Jocheved, Kohath
Kohath. (Genesis 46)

Amram married his aunt Jocheved. (Exodus 6:18) Children: Moses, Miriam, Aaron

High Priest Aaron married Elisheba daughter of Amminadab from the tribe of Judah. Aaron was the first high priest, and was the ancestor of all the Hebrew Priests [Kohanim; sing. Kohen]).

(Exodus 6:20). Sons: Nadar, Abihu, Eleazar (below) and Ithamar (ancestor of 7th through 11th high priests: Eli, Ahibut I, Ahijah, Ahimelech, and Abiathar)

2nd High Priest Eleazar I. (Exodus 6:23)

3rd High Priest Phineas. (Exodus 6:25)

4th High Priest Abishua. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

5th High Priest Bukki, (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

6th High Priest Uzzi. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

Zerahiah (Zaraias). (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

Meraioth. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

Amariah (Arophaeus) (Amarias). (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

Ahitub. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

12th High Priest Zadok I. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

13th High Priest Ahimaaz (Achmimas). (I Chronicles 6:4-14) Last high priest to serve in the tabernacle (mishkan)

14th High Priest Azariah. (I Chronicles 6:4-14). First high priest to serve in Solomon's Temple. His three sons were co-high priests and were ancestors of the three great branches of the high-priests.

Joram (below)

15th Co-High Priest Johanan I. (I Chronicles 6:4-14). His son was 16th Co-High Priest Azariah II. (I Chronicles 6:4-14). Sons: 17th co-High Priest Amariah, 18th High Priest Jehoiada I (father of 20th co-High Priest Zechariah and Jehoshaba daughter of King Jehoram), 19th co-High Priest Ahitub II (ancestor of high priests Zadok, Shallum, and Jerusha wife of King Uzziah).

15th co-High Priest Joash father of 16th co-High Priest Jehoiarib (Joarib) father of 17th co-High Priest Jehoshaphat father of 20th co-High Priest Zedekiah.

15th co-High Priest Joram.

16th co-High Priest Jeshua I (Isus)

17th co-High Priest Axiomar (Axioramus)

19th co-High Priest Phideas (Pedaiah)

20th co-High Priest Sudeaus

21st co-High Priest Juelus

23rd co-High Priest Jotham

26th High Priest Neriah (Nerias)

27th High Priest Odeas (Hoshaiah)

28th High Priest Shallum II. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

29th High Priest Hilkiyah (Helcias) the prophet. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

30th High Priest Azariah (Azarias) V. (I Chronicles 6:4-14)

31st High Priest Seraiah (Sareaus). (I Chronicles 6:4-14). Last high priest in the first temple.

Sons: Josedech (below), Jachin (father of Idaiah ancestor of Maccabees), Eniachim Jehozadak (Josedech) (Jozadak). (I Chronicles 6:4-14). Did not actually serve as high priest in either Holy Temple. Priest in the first synagogue.

If we assume that Jeremiah the prophet's father was Hilkiyah the high priestly son of Shallum, then once Hilkiyah was dead, Jeremiah the prophet could have become rightful heir to the title of High Priest over the entire House of Kohath (tribe of Levi and Aaron), which entitled him to make intercession for buying land for family and extended family members. In Jeremiah 32:7-12, Jeremiah the prophet was petitioned by his cousin Hanameel to buy a field at Anathoth for him, because it was Jeremiah's right to redeem such land; that is, apparently Jeremiah possessed the rights of inheritance of land at Anathoth (This does not preclude him from having land at Libnah). Under the Israelitish system of land purchase and ownership, the inheritance fell to the eldest son in the family. In order for Jeremiah the prophet to possess that right, he had to be the eldest son. Jeremiah 32:6-8 speaks of Jeremiah the prophet's cousin (Hanameel) as "the son of Shallum" and that Shallum was Jeremiah's uncle. Now according to 1 Chronicles 6:13, the father of Hilkiyah was also named Shallum. Jehoahaz, the son of the union of king Josiah and Hamutal was also called Shallum by the prophet Jeremiah (see 1 Chronicles 3:15; Jeremiah 22:11-12). So if Jeremiah's father, who was named Hilkiyah, was the Hilkiyah who was the son of Shallum mentioned in 1 Chronicles 6:13, then we would have another correlation.

Now some might say that 1 Chronicles 6:13-15 does not mention Jeremiah in the line of succession to the high priesthood. But if Jeremiah was called as a prophet, then the assignment of chief priest at the temple in Jerusalem would have been given to another (Azariah). From Azariah the title of High Priest went

to Jehozadak, but 1 Chronicles 6:15 states that "Jehozadak went into captivity, when the Lord carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar." With the line of Azariah (Jehozadak) gone, Jeremiah the prophet, who stayed in Jerusalem, could have been the unquestionable birthright heir to the house of Kohath. If this was true, then what follows becomes quite interesting.

According to Verneil Simmons (*Peoples, Places and Prophecies*, pp. 94-95), although there were many at Jerusalem who sought after the life of Jeremiah the prophet, King Zedekiah (his grandson?) would not allow him to be put to death, and so he was shut up in prison, which helped appease certain members of the Sarim who wanted Jeremiah killed.

After Jerusalem was sacked by the Babylonians, Jeremiah was not only freed but given complete freedom to move about the country at will (Jeremiah 39:11-15; 40:1-6). This freedom involved access to the Temple. WHY? That access has motivated some to theorize that Jeremiah was connected in some way to the hiding of the Ark of the Covenant. Verneil Simmons notes that after the captives were led out of Jerusalem (these included the chief priest of the Temple, as well as the second priest and the three keepers of the door), the king's captain ordered the burning of the palace and the Temple--in fact, all of the city. Certainly all objects of value had been removed by the Babylonians before the torches were lit. So one might wonder why, in either the account of the stripping of the Temple, or in the record of what was restored many years later, there was no mention of the Ark of the Covenant or the Urim and Thummim. According to tradition, the Jews of Jerusalem in 175 B.C. believed that Jeremiah had been commanded of the Lord to preserve the Ark of the Covenant as a witness against Israel in times to come. So why would the Lord pick Jeremiah? Perhaps he was the legal heir to such a responsibility over the Temple because of his lineage.

The king of Babylon had ordered his captain, Nebuzaradan, to grant any request made by Jeremiah the prophet. If the prophet had wanted access to the Temple during the time that the city's wealth was being removed, was there anyone to oppose him? The priests of the Temple had been taken captive and killed and undoubtedly lesser attendants had fled for safety. So Jeremiah could very well have taken the Ark of the Covenant and the Urim & Thummim in order to hide them. More importantly, at least for this discussion, the implication is that Jeremiah had the proper authority (Babylonian, Levitical and Jewish) to do so.

Later we find Jeremiah living with a group of people that included the daughters of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 41:10). One might ask, WHY would Jeremiah be concerned about the daughters of Zedekiah? One answer might be that some of these daughters of Zedekiah were his great-granddaughters. So is it possible that part of the fulfillment of Jeremiah's call to "plant" occurred when Jeremiah preserved an infant son of Zedekiah (or "a tender young twig") carefully concealed among these great-granddaughters of king Zedekiah) and arranged for that infant son of Zedekiah to escape from the country? And was that infant --the great grandson of Jeremiah an heir to the priesthood? It certainly seems possible.

Is it fair to say that Jeremiah not only helped "plant" the "seed" of Ezekiel's prophecy, but that the "seed" was of Jeremiah, and an heir to be an Aaronic High Priest? And was the genealogy which Zarahemla recited a testimony to the fulfillment of this commandment--a royal branch from the kingship line of Judah and an elite branch from the High Priests of the tribe of Levi? From reasoning loaded with supposition, one might say, Yes!

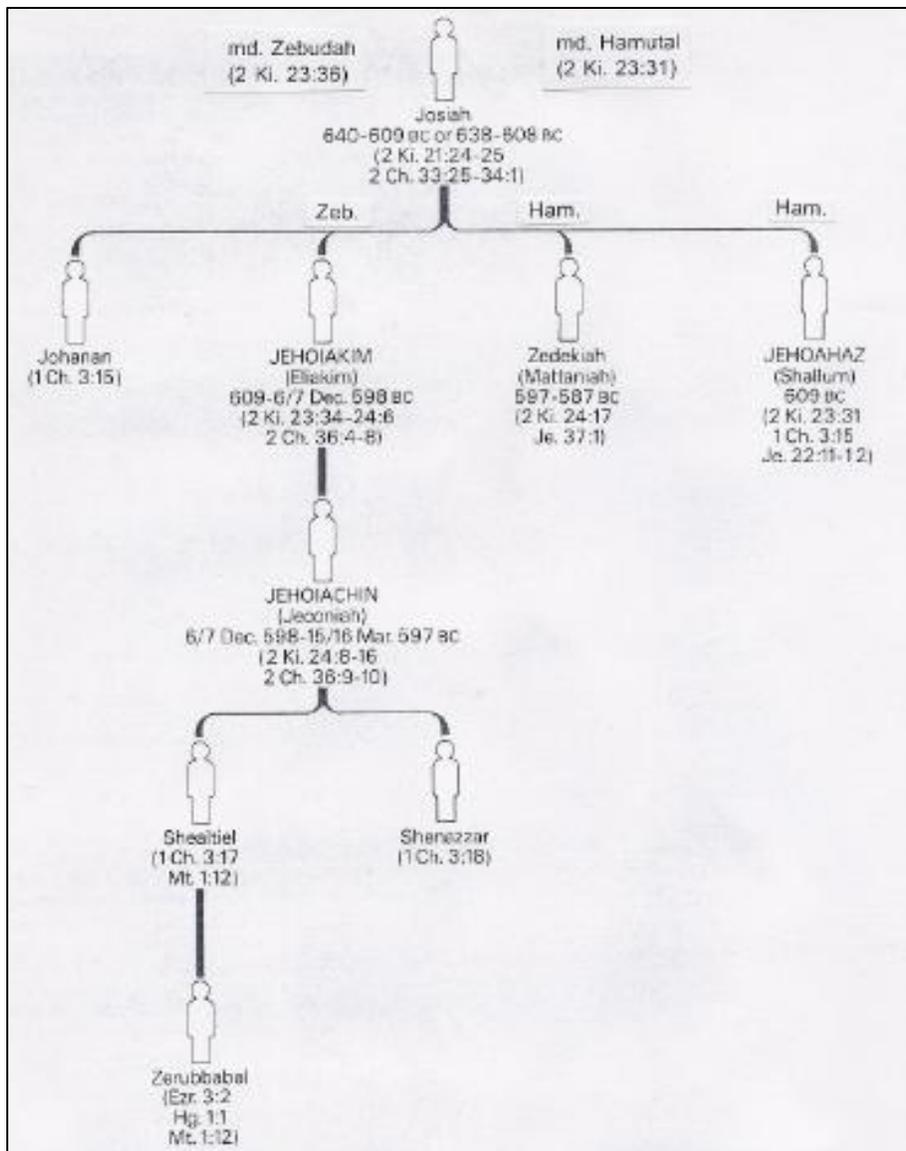
Oh, let me add just one more thing. It appears from a scriptural source that Jeremiah saw Israel dwelling in America, whether in vision or by prophetic knowledge. But these words of Jeremiah do not

appear in the King James Version of the Bible. The Alexandrian Codex supplies us with the missing underlined text: “Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell [in the country beyond the sea] safely” (Jeremiah 23:6)

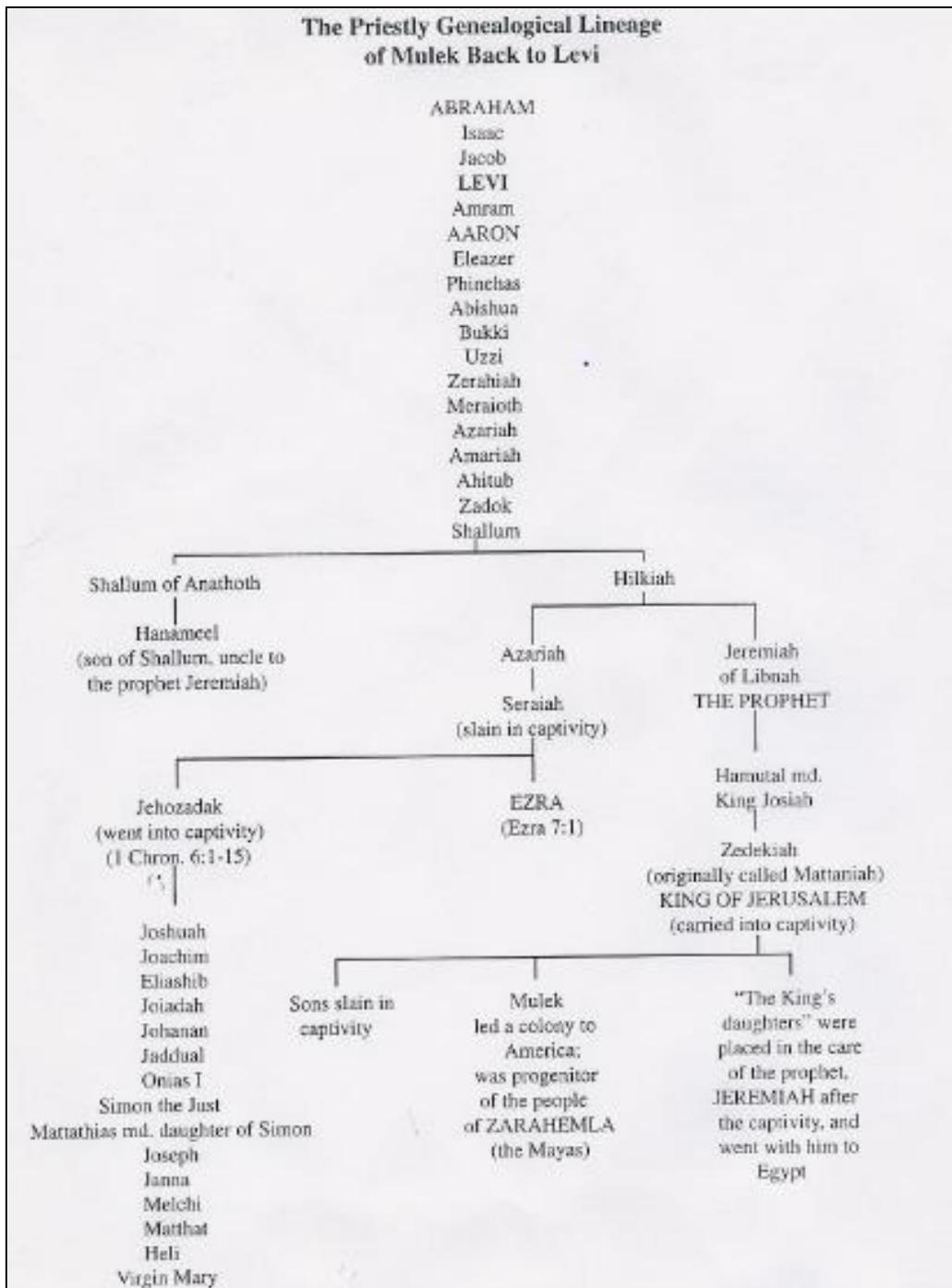
[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes based upon ideas and correspondence from Bruce Sutton and his book, *Lehi, Father of Polynesia: Polynesians Are Nephites* and also on Verneil Simmon's book *Peoples, Places and Prophecies*, pp. 94-95 . Sutton's material was based on material from *Seeking after Our Dead: Our Greatest Responsibility*. Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1928.]

Note* In view of the speculation above concerning priesthood lineage, and the fact that the city of Libnah was in the land of Benjamin, one might ask if these facts might be connected at all with the idea that the son of Mosiah₁ was named Benjamin? and whether the sons of Mosiah₂ (specifically Ammon and Aaron) were part of a marriage between Mosiah₂ and a granddaughter of Zarahemla or whether Benjamin had previously married into Zarahemla's family? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on Words of Mormon 1:3]

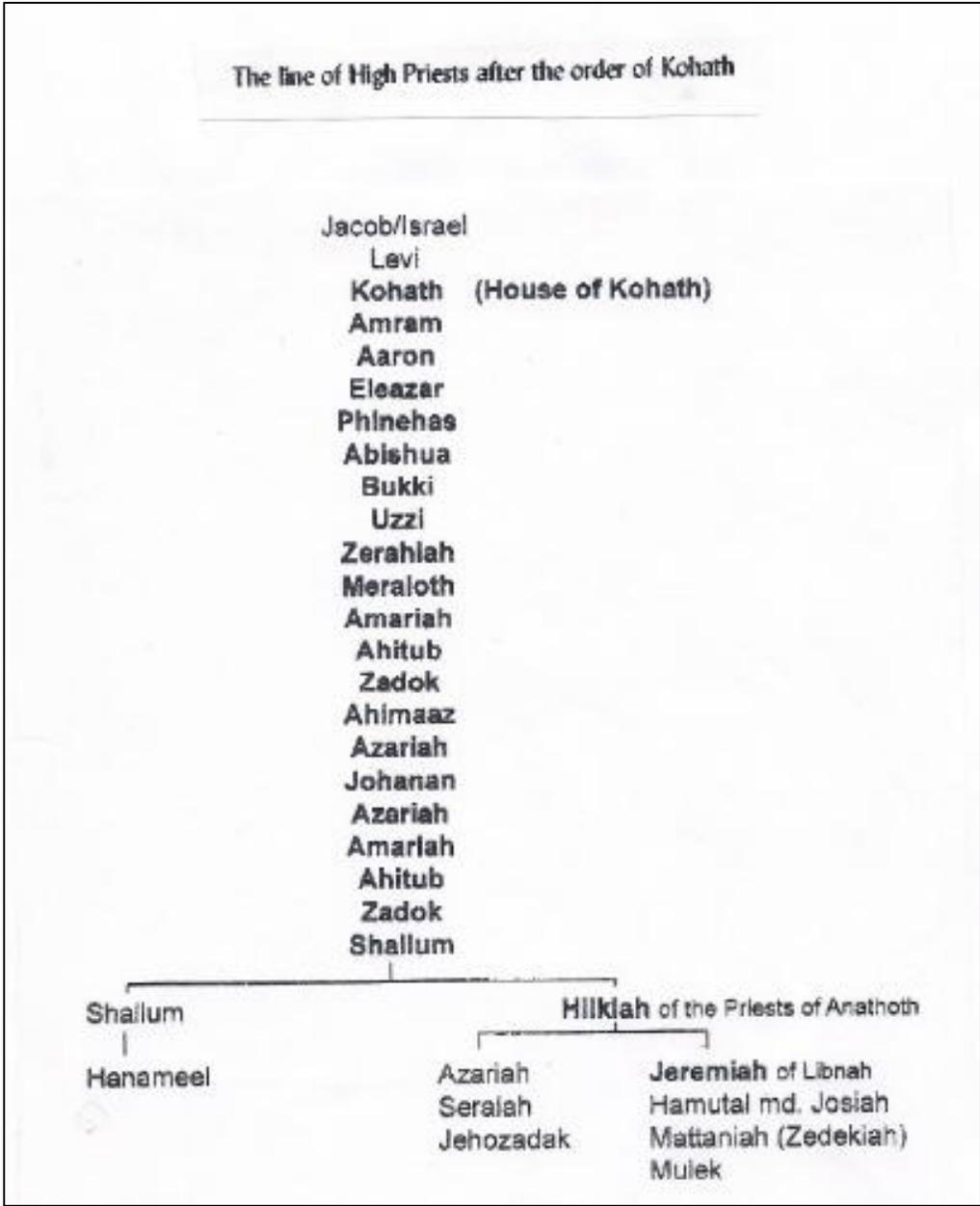
Note* As a prophet, Jeremiah also had the Melchizedek Priesthood, which encompasses the power and authority of the Aaronic Priesthood. The same could be said about King Mosiah and King Benjamin.



Zarahemla gave a genealogy (Illustration): Chart showing the royal genealogy of Zedekiah and the other sons of Josiah. [Adapted from Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 739]



Zarahemla gave a genealogy (Illustration): The Priestly Genealogical Lineage of Mulek Back to Levi. [Bruce S. Sutton, *Lehi, Father of Polynesia: Polynesians Are Nephites*, p. 45]



Zarahemla gave a genealogy (illustration): The Line of High Priests After the Order of Kohath. [Bruce Sutton, Personal Communication]

Note* For what it is worth, here is some more material on the line of Joseph and the Levites.

According to Richard D. Anthony, somewhere along the line, somebody, be it scribe, translator, or mischief maker, did not want the world to have the "key of knowledge" even a "fulness of the scriptures." (JST Luke 11:52) Much of Genesis Chapter 50 has been lost. These lost words are the prophecies of Joseph about his posterity. They are of great worth unto us in our day, as well as to the house of Israel of old.

Let us examine one marvelous prophecy in some detail. In **Genesis 50:24**, Joseph promised his "brethren: that they would be in "affliction and bondage" in Egypt. However, "the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my (Joseph's) loins: a prophet; and this prophet [Moses?] shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage." Joseph then quoted the Lord, who in speaking to Joseph said, "for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this manner shall he know that he is of thy [Joseph's?] house; for he shall be nursed of the King's daughter, and shall be called her son." (Genesis 50:29).

Joseph brought the children of Israel unto Egypt. Is it possible that through Joseph's posterity (Moses?) the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt and bondage? Many years later, a man named Joseph would bring the child Jesus into Egypt and also that same Joseph would bring Jesus out of Egypt. The firstborn is a type of the Savior. Joseph was a type of Christ. Moses was a type of Christ. Was Moses a descendant of Joseph?

Moses held the keys of the gathering of Israel and delivered them to Joseph Smith (D&C 110:11). These keys of gathering were with the tribe of Ephraim. Therefore, if Moses was a descendant of Joseph, was he through Ephraim? Yes! The Bible states that Moses was a Levite, a descendant of Levi. Of this fact there is no doubt. If there is one scripture attesting to that fact, there are 100. There is not any question about that. No question that Moses was a descendant of Levi through Kohath and Amram, but what about Moses' descent through women? Of which tribe were the later wives of Levi, or the wives of Kohath?

We are told that Moses' mother, Jochebed was a daughter of Levi. But was she an actual daughter or a descendant? Let us suppose that Kohath, son of Levi, married one of the daughters of Joseph that he had after Ephraim and Manasseh. If so, then the blood of Joseph would have been given to Kohath's son, Amram. Moreover, how many generations were there between Levi and Moses in 400 years? (Note* Anthony's personal opinion is that Moses came to be a descendant of Joseph through righteous women.)

Anthony gives us some other facts that may bear light on the matter. When the children of Israel arrived in the promised land, Joshua, who himself was an Ephraimite (Numbers 13:8, and Deuteronomy 34:9) assigned cities to the Children of Kohath, "by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the one-half tribe of Manasseh. The Levites (which the children of Kohath would be) were assigned portions of inheritance, or they were scattered through all Israel, to give priesthood blessings. It seems significant then that the children of Kohath "had their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim" (Joshua 21:20). Does this division have anything to do with the wife of Kohath? And why was the inheritance of the children of Kohath out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and not out of any of the other tribes?

Perhaps we may find precedence for this act in the episode of the daughters of Zelophehad, recorded in Numbers 27. These daughters, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah, came to Moses saying that their father, Zelophehad, died having no sons. Zelophehad was the son of Hefer the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. They asked for possession in the land the same as the brothers of their father. Moses brought the case before the Lord. The Lord said they should have an inheritance the same as the uncles, and that the inheritance of their father should pass to

them. This incident became the standard for inheritance for those with no sons. Daughters were given possession of the land. Thus, is it possible that the "Levites which remained of Kohath" received an inheritance because of their mother, Kohath's wife, who was a daughter of Ephraim or Manasseh?

Ordinarily in the church, we don't pay enough attention to the mothers of "great men." It is through the fathers that we follow the genealogy. But we must always keep foremost in our mind when we consider genealogy, that the lineage of Jesus, the blood line of Jesus, is traced through his mother, and not through any mortal man! Might not also the blood line of Moses be traced through a woman back to Joseph? [Richard D. Anthony, Isaiah & Joseph, pp. 51-55, unpublished]

Note* According to Daniel Rolph, Phineas (or Phinehas), the grandson of Aaron (Exodus 6:25), considered to be a descendant of Levi, is traditionally stated to have descended also through the lineage of Joseph.^{xiv} Moses reportedly bestowed upon him the leadership of the people while the Israelites were fighting the Midianites of the trans-Jordan region, along with the ark of the covenant, the Urim and Thummim, and the gold plate of the mitre that rested on the high priest's forehead. [Daniel N. Rolph, "Prophets, Kings, and Swords: The Sword of Laban and Its Possible Pre-Laban Origin," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Spring 1993, pp. 76-77] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 21:10]

Note* Walter Kaiser writes that it is important to realize that in viewing the genealogical language of the scriptures, there was a range of meanings for such terms as (1) "a generation" (which can equal forty, eighty, one hundred or more years), (2) "begat," (3) "son of," (4) "father of," and (5) "she bore [*yalad*] a son." This range of meaning not only exists in the Bible but in the ancient Near Eastern literature. To place our contemporary Western meanings over these ancient Near Eastern expressions often leads to improper conclusions. For example, one of the most instructive lessons in this whole area of genealogies and chronologies can be gleaned from following Levi's descent through the house of Kohath (Moses' ancestor) into Egypt (Genesis 46:6-11) 430 years before the Exodus (Exodus 12:40). Here is the point: If Moses was eighty years old at the time of the Exodus (see Exodus 7:7), and no gap in time is understood, then Moses' "grandfather" had, during Moses' lifetime, an impossible increase in the number of his descendants. It appears, according to Exodus 6:16-20, that Moses' "grandfather" had 8,600 male descendants, 2,750 of whom were between the ages of thirty and fifty (Numbers 3:19, 27-28; 4:34-36). If one takes the Bible narrative as a direct chronology of events, this amazing explosion of progeny would constitute an impossibility.

If we need further evidence of a different accounting for genealogies, Genesis 46:11 lists Kohath as among the descendants of Israel who traveled to Egypt. A literal reading of Exodus 6:18 would put his lifespan at 133 years; Exodus 6:20 puts his "son" Amram's lifespan at 137 years. Adding to these Amram's son Moses' eighty-year age at the time of the Exodus yields a maximum of 350 years from the descent to the Exodus. This is 80 years shy of the 430 years put forward in Exodus 12:40, even if these men fathered their sons while on their deathbeds. Again, we must seek a different method to reconcile genealogies with chronologies. [Walter C. Kaiser, The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant?, pp. 69-70]

Ether 4:1 Mosiah [Benjamin]:

According to Matthew Bowen, the name Benjamin is traditionally thought to mean “son of the right hand,” . . .

Whatever the precise scholarly etymology of the name Benjamin, the elements “son” and “right hand” (ambiguously understood as the “right hand” of power . . .) can be heard in this name. In other words, the homophony between Benjamin and the words *bēn* and *yāmîn* make these associations potentially meaningful for King Benjamin and his historical audience . . .

Scholars have already suggested the link between the right hand in Mosiah 5:9–12 and the meaning of Benjamin.⁶ . . .

Wordplay Involving Names in the Bible and the Book of Mormon

Many Latter-day Saints have at least slight familiarity with wordplay on names in biblical literature from etiological puns in well-known scriptures: the naming of Eve—“Adam called his wife’s name Eve [Ḥawwâ]; because she was the mother of all living [ḥāy]” (Genesis 3:20); the naming of Jesus—“thou shalt call his name Jesus [Iesoun (Iesous) = yēšûa‘]8: for he shall save [sōsei = *yôšîa‘]9 his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21); and the surnaming of Peter—“thou art Peter [petros], and upon this rock [petra] I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18).

In the Hebrew Bible, wordplay sometimes occurs at moments of high irony and in direct speech. There is wordplay in David’s poignant repeated question regarding the son who has rebelled against him: “Is the young man Absalom [lě’abšālôm] safe [(ha)šālôm]?” (literally, “Does the young man Absalom have peace?”; 2 Samuel 18:29, 32). The name Absalom means “father is peace” or “father of peace.”¹⁰ Other such examples could be cited . . .

I have previously proposed some additional possibilities, of which I will cite only a few here. The name Nephi, which John Gee has suggested derives from Egyptian *nfr*, was possibly pronounced *neh-fee*, *nay-fee*, or *nou-fee*,¹³ thus meaning “good, goodly.”¹⁴ If so, this would suggest conscious wordplay (or a play on meaning) involving the name in Nephi’s autobiographical introduction: “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father” (1 Nephi 1:1).¹⁵ Enos’s later autobiographical introduction imitates Nephi’s language: “I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language” (Enos 1:1).¹⁶ . . . The name Enos is identical to the Hebrew noun *’ēnôš* (“man”), a poetic synonym for the Hebrew words *’iš* and *’ādām*.

The Biblical Name Benjamin

As the name of a patriarch and as the name of the tribe from which Israel’s first earthly king came, Benjamin was a name of tremendous significance and is attested amply as a personal name.²⁵ Its first mention appears in the account of Rachel’s giving birth to her youngest son: “And it came to pass, as [Rachel’s] soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin” (Genesis 35:18). Ben-oni can be ambiguously understood as meaning “son of my vigor.”

Thus Ben-oni (“son of my vigor”) and Benjamin (“son of the right hand,” i.e., the “hand of power”) could be understood as being nearly synonymous,²⁹ . . .

The Rhetorical Effect of Benjamin’s Emphasis on Name

. . . Mormon mentions the name Benjamin fifteen times in Mosiah 1-6 . . .

In Mosiah 1–6, the word name is repeated as a key term in King Benjamin’s sermon. Jacob indicates that from the beginning of the Nephite monarchy, the anointing and coronation of a new king served also as the occasion of the giving of the name Nephi as a new name or a throne name (Jacob 1:9–11). Although this practice seemingly evolved with time,³⁷ the coronation of the Nephite king may still have involved the giving of a new name, thus providing the ritual background for King Benjamin’s rhetoric: Benjamin, true to his promise to Mosiah, his heir (1:11–12), gives all his people, including Mosiah, a new name.

The word name becomes an increasingly important term in Benjamin’s sermon. In the first part of the sermon (Mosiah 2), he does not use the term at all; in Mosiah 3–4 it occurs six times (Mosiah 3:9, 17 [2x], 21; 4:11, 20). In the climactic final portion of his speech (Mosiah 5), however, he uses name twelve times (Mosiah 5:7–12 [11x], 14). But would King Benjamin’s people be thinking of his name during his sermon to them and make any wordplay connections on his name? A likely effect of King Benjamin’s emphasis on the word name and his giving the people a name on the occasion of his son’s coronation and enthronement would be for the audience to think not only of the new name but of their own names and the names Benjamin and Mosiah.³⁸

Becoming Sons and Daughters at the Right Hand of God

The concept of sons and daughters at the right hand in an honorific sense—that is, at the right hand of power—features prominently in the climactic final portion (Mosiah 5:6–15) of King Benjamin’s sermon:

And now, these are the words which king Benjamin desired of them; and therefore he said unto them: Ye have spoken the words that I desired . . . And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children [Hebrew *bēnê*] of Christ, his sons [*bānāw*], and his daughters [*ûbēnôtāw*]; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; . . . therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons [*bānāw*] and his daughters [*ûbēnôtāw*]. And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand [*yāmîn*] of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for behold, he shall be called by the name of Christ (Mosiah 5:6–9).

When King Benjamin stated that his people would be “called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you” (Mosiah 5:7), he is evidently quoting³⁹

the royal rebirth formula (sometimes called an adoption formula) of Psalm 2:7: “Thou art my Son [bēnî ’attâ]; this day have I begotten thee.”⁴⁰ Some scholars have proposed that a legal formula stands behind the phrase bēnî ’attâ in Psalm 2:7,⁴¹ pointing to similar language in Mesopotamian legal contracts.⁴² While one should not discount the term begotten as a metaphoric allusion to adoption, it points to the image of birth or rebirth more than to adoption per se.⁴³

Earlier in Psalm 2:2, the royal addressee is called the Lord’s “anointed” (mēšîḥô, his “messiah” or “Christ”; LXX christos). The newly enthroned Judahite king took upon himself the name-title “anointed” (māšîaḥ). King Benjamin probably likened this psalm to his people so that they too might take upon themselves or “bear” this name (see Mosiah 26:18).

When Benjamin added, “And [ye] have become his sons and his daughters” (Mosiah 5:7), he was invoking the covenant language of Deuteronomy 14:1–2:

Ye are children [bānîm] of the Lord . . . Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be [lihëyôt, “become”] a peculiar⁴⁴ people unto himself [lô, “his”], above all the nations that are upon the earth. . . .

Benjamin’s use of the covenant rebirth language in his speech is most striking because it merges the royal (2 Samuel 7:14) and democratized (Deuteronomy 14:1–2) forms.⁵² In other words, he makes of his own son’s divine rebirth and coronation the occasion of the divine rebirth and coronation of the people. They are all sons and daughters who are ascending to the throne.

King Benjamin then adds another promise: “Whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God” (Mosiah 5:9). The phrase “at the right hand [of God]” in the Hebrew Bible occurs in Psalms 16:11 and 110:1 as a reference to the place of divine favor.⁵³ The coronation/enthronement context of King Benjamin’s speech suggests that he is specifically alluding to Psalm 110:1: “The Lord [Yahweh] said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand [lîmînî (*lë + yëmînî)], until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” The Israelite king sat (was enthroned) at Yahweh’s right hand. Divine birth (or rebirth) is also mentioned in Psalm 110:3, further suggesting that Benjamin has Psalm 110 in mind.

Benjamin joins Psalm 110:1 to his previous allusions to Psalm 2:7 and Deuteronomy 14:1–2 (cf. 2 Samuel 7:14) not on the basis of the first element, bēn (“son”), but instead on the second element in his name, yāmîn (“right hand”), in a clever wordplay: the royal covenant entailed not merely becoming a son or daughter, but also enthronement at the “right hand”—becoming a “Benjamin.”

Conceivably, the elements of King Benjamin’s name guided the selection and ordering of the particular texts that he cites. Although a covenant speech might be expected to contain covenant filiation language similar to Deuteronomy 14:1–2 and a coronation ceremony might be expected to allude to texts like Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, and even Psalm 110, it is the application of royal coronation/enthronement texts to the people themselves—making them all potentially kings and queens, sons and daughters at the right hand—that makes Benjamin’s speech so revolutionary. In Israelite thought, Benjamin was already a royal son who was already at the right hand of God, as Mosiah soon would be. Benjamin demurely deemphasizes this idea, teaching the people about the truly royal and divine Son and how this Son’s

atonement made it possible for all of them, through covenant obedience, to become his sons and daughters and to be enthroned with this Son at God's right hand. Benjamin's people did not likely miss the point of their king's jarring application of these royal texts to them or the unifying principle behind the texts' quotation: "son(s)" (and "daughters") and the allusion to God's "right hand" (Psalm 110:1)—the elements of their king's name. Reflecting on the themes of Mosiah 1–6, we as Mormon's implied literary audience can also appreciate them.

Again, the occasion for Benjamin's speech was his own son's enthronement as Benjamin himself makes clear when he states, "The Lord God . . . hath commanded me that I should declare unto you this day [cf. Psalm 2:7], that my son Mosiah is a king and a ruler over you" (Mosiah 2:30). However, from the outset, King Benjamin had made an unprecedented effort to put himself on equal grounds with his people (see Mosiah 2:26), as stipulated by Deuteronomy 17:20.⁵⁴ By democratizing the language of the royal covenant and enthronement texts on the occasion of his own son's adoption and enthronement, including the juxtaposition of texts whose most significant words (son, right hand) are the elements of his own name,⁵⁵ King Benjamin taught his people a powerful typological lesson on the necessity of their rebirth into Christ's family so that they might, as heirs with him, receive every blessing in the covenant of the Father.

[Not only do they receive Benjamin's name, but that of the true "Son of the right hand," Christ.]

[Matthew L. Bowen, "Becoming Sons and Daughters at God's Right Hand: King Benjamin's Rhetorical Wordplay on His Own Name," in Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture 21/2 (2012)]

Ether 4:4 I Have Written upon *These* Plates:

Jerry Ainsworth notes that in Ether 4:4, Moroni says "I have written upon *these* plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw" (emphasis added). In other words, he has written the brother of Jared's vision on the identical plates upon which he's continuing to write, not on later plates. [Jerry L. Ainsworth, The Lives and Travels of Mormon and Moroni, p. 217]

Ether 4:4 The Very Things Which the Brother of Jared Saw:

According to Jerry Ainsworth, it appears that the language (or the symbols) that the brother of Jared and the prophet Ether used for writing upon plates actually caused events to be "shown" to the reader. A person using the Urim and Thummim in order to obtain the information would therefore see the events inscribed on the plates. Perhaps that is why people who have the ability to access the events of ancient records are called "seers." Using an abbreviated form of writing—a set of codes—a seer writing upon plates would in that case not be required to write a description of each event. He would simply write the symbols that caused the Urim and Thummim to show their user the events themselves. That might explain why Moroni wrote what he did "according to my memory" (Ether 5:1), not according to a verbatim account. Moroni himself *saw* the events, both those in the past and in the future. In other words, Moroni

wrote down "the very things which the brother of Jared saw" (Ether 4:4), not necessarily the things the brother of Jared had written. Moroni *saw* what the brother of Jared had seen. [Jerry L. Ainsworth, The Lives and Travels of Mormon and Moroni, p. 215] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 27:7; Ether 1:4]

Ether 4:4 There Never Were Greater Things Made Manifest Than Those Which Were Made Manifest unto the Brother of Jared:

Moroni is not subtle about how impressed he was with the vision of the brother of Jared. This was the greatest vision ever revealed to man. That statement should be coupled with Moroni's statement about the power of his writings, 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). The great and glorious work of the Lord, when revealed through this vision, will be truly overpowering. The vision which Moses saw was similar and he greatly marveled and wondered (Moses 1:8). While we all have moments when we are overcome by the mercy of God, by his wisdom and love, these moments are but brief glimpses of his power and glory—as Paul said, For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face (1 Cor 13:13). The brother of Jared and Moses saw face to face and so will we if we follow the counsel contained in the Book of Mormon.

Neal A. Maxwell comments:

"The sealed portion yet to come forth will be very valuable. (3 Nephi 26:10-11.) In fact, this sweeping portion will contain 'a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof' (2 Nephi 27:7, 10-11). Such a cumulative record yet to be revealed is something to be awaited with 'anxious expectation' in that 'time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld,' as the Prophet Joseph was promised in the prison-temple (D&C 121:27-28)." (*But For a Small Moment*, p. 37)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 4:4 There Never Were Greater Things Made Manifest Than Those Which Were Made Manifest unto the Brother of Jared:

Moroni said of the writings of the brother of Jared that "there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared " (Ether 4:4). After receiving a similar vision, Nephi said of these manifestations, "They reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof" (2 Nephi 27:20). An angel told Nephi that "also others who have been, to them hath [the Lord] shown all things and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity" (1 Nephi 14:26). Thus, according to Donl Peterson, the vision revealed to the prophets appears to be one that encompasses the ends of the world from the beginning until the end. The following references are representative:

Adam: "Adam . . . being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation" (D&C 107:56).

Enoch: "And I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face; and he said unto me: Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations. . . . And the Lord showed Enoch all things, even unto the end of the world" (Moses 7:4, 67).

The Brother of Jared: "He showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth" (Ether 3:25)

Abraham: He saw the creation of the world (see Abraham 4:1); the spirit children of God in the pre-earth life (see Abraham 3:22-26).

Moses: "Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created; and Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof" (Moses 1:8).

Isaiah: "He spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel" (3 Nephi 23:2).

Nephi: Nephi saw the events from his day until the second coming of the Lord (see 1 Nephi 11-14).

Ezekiel: Ezekiel saw events that spanned from his day to the second coming of the Savior, including the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the resurrection, and so forth (see Ezekiel 37).

Jesus: "And he did expound [to the Nephites] all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory" (3 Nephi 26:3).

John the Revelator: "Behold, he shall see and write the remainder of these things; yea and also many things which have been. And he shall also write concerning the end of the world" (see 1 Nephi 14:20-27).

Additional unnamed prophets: "And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity . . . in the own due time of the Lord" (1 Nephi 14:26).

[H. Donl Peterson, Moroni: Ancient Prophet Modern Messenger, pp. 50-53] [See the commentary on Ether 4:12; 4:16]

Ether 4:5 He Commanded Me That I Should Seal Them Up:

Moroni wrote his account of the vision of the brother of Jared on the abridgment plates of Mormon, but he was commanded by the Lord to "seal up" this account (Ether 4:4-5). Joseph Smith was commanded not to translate this sealed portion. It is not absolutely clear what portion of the plates of Mormon was sealed. Joseph Smith simply said: "The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed" (History of the Church, Vol 4., p. 537). George Q. Cannon said that "about one-third" was sealed (Young Peoples' History of Joseph Smith, p. 25), whereas Orson Pratt maintained that the sealed portion comprised "about two-thirds" of the plates (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 3, p. 347). Neither of these two brethren indicate where they obtained their information.

Ether 4:7 Things Which the Brother of Jared Saw . . . Of the Heavens and Of the Earth and All Things That in Them Are:

Moroni notes that the Lord said unto him:

In that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the Heavens and of the Earth, and All Things That in Them Are (Ether 4:7)

It appears that the brother of Jared was able to see all of God's creations. Furthermore the brother of Jared was not alone in this for it appears that all the major patriarchs and prophets have been given a glimpse of God's creations and power. But they readily note that things are beyond their comprehension. For example, in Abraham 3:11-12 Abraham declares:

Thus I, Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face, as one man talketh with another; and he told me of the works which his hands had made; And he said unto me: My son, my son (and his hand was stretched out), behold I will show you all these. And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many; and they multiplied before mine eyes, and **I could not see the end thereof.**

Moses, seeing a similar vision recorded the following:

The words of God, which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain, And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence. And God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless? And behold, thou art my son; wherefore look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands; but not all, **for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease. . . .** And it came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man; and he said unto himself: **Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.** (Moses 1:1-5, 9-10)

What would cause Moses to remark: "Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing" ? And what would cause Abraham and the brother of Jared to be in awe?

In the book *Evidences that God Exists*, Kenneth Boa and Robert Bowman note the amazing vastness of the expanding universe.

1. Imagine, our own galaxy the **Milky Way**, has over a **hundred billion** stars in it,
2. There are **hundreds of billions** of **galaxies** in the universe.
3. The **nearest star** to us besides our own sun, **Proxima Centauri**, is about **24 trillion miles away.**
4. The **nearest galaxy** outside of our own, **Andromeda**, is some **18 million trillion miles away.**
5. It takes about **4 years** for light to reach us from **Proxima Centauri the nearest star.**
6. It takes about **3 million years** for light to reach us from **Andromeda the nearest galaxy.**
7. Remember again that there are hundreds of billions of galaxies.
8. To put all this into some limited perspective, imagine that our sun was the size of a ping-pong ball:
9. The Earth would then be the size of a speck of dust and would orbit the sun (or ping-pong

ball) some 10 feet away.

10. Pluto would be orbiting about 120 yards out.
11. Proxima Centauri (the nearest star) would be a ping-pong ball about **500 miles away**.
12. The Andromeda galaxy would be a collection of billions of ping-pong balls some **350 million miles away**.

Stephen Hawking (in his book *A Brief History of Time*) explores the vastness of the universe and the relativity of time. Without getting into details, he discusses open and closed strings and connecting worm holes which might allow travel from one galaxy to another in warp-time. I came across an amusing Limerick in this regard that goes something like this:

There was a young lady of Wight
Who travelled much faster than light
She departed one day
In a relative way
And arrived on the previous night.

Stephen Hawking then changes the direction of his focus from a macro universe to a micro universe and explores the incredible minuteness of matter. He first talks about what was known when I went to school (1960s). Our world of Quantum Mechanics back then diminished from:

molecules to
atoms, to
protons, neutrons and electrons.

But as Hawking explains, we now have gone past this microscopic world into a progressively tinier world of:

neutrinos, and
quarks, and
gluons, and
spin particles

Now the vision of this macro and micro universe justifiably impressed the brother of Jared (as well as the other Patriarchs and Prophets), but why was it important for him (or them) to experience it?

1. FAITH: It is essential, in order to have true faith, that our God must be true also. God must be all-powerful over matter and time. Otherwise one's faith in God would have limits in time and space. In order to have true faith, our God not only has to be The God, but The Father of the Heavens and of the Earth, and All Things That in Them Are (Ether 4:7)
2. HOPE: Now God's plan could be for us to be forever cast off and damned in useless servitude, but it isn't. God has a covenant plan called the Plan of Salvation. It is given to us for our acceptance as revealed to the brother of Jared, and all the major Patriarchs and Prophets at the same time they were shown the extent of God's creations. Moroni notes that the Lord showed unto the brother of Jared "all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be." (Ether 3: 25) The Lord revealed himself: "I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even

they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.” (Ether 3:14)
So in order for us to have any hope in our existence (of which Moses said we are nothing) we must align ourselves with the true God's order or covenant plan for us. In this we can have HOPE.

3. CHARITY: So we have faith, and we have hope, but why must we have “charity” or the true love of Christ?(See Ether 12). Why is this type of love (“charity”) the capstone of true faith and true hope? It is because without the charity of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, to provide the covenant way, to show us how to live in the covenant way, and to give all that they have to those who follow the covenant way, our faith and hope alone would not move us forward, (for as Moses said, “we are nothing”) And so it goes that in progressing in God's covenant plan to become like Him—that is in validating that covenant Plan, we must show charity also to those that we come in contact with as they strive to live the covenant way. “And this is life eternal, that they might KNOW thee [“know” is a covenant term] , the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)

[Alan Miner, [Personal Notes](#)]

Ether 4:7 In That Day That They Shall Exercise Faith in Me . . . Then Will I Manifest unto Them the Things Which the Brother of Jared Saw:

Bruce R. McConkie comments:

“From these revelations we learn that there are no limitations placed upon any of us. Revelations are not reserved for a limited few or for those called to positions of importance in the Church. It is not position in the Church that confers spiritual gifts. It is not being a bishop, a stake president, or an apostle that makes revelation and salvation available. These are high and holy callings which open the door to the privilege of great service among men. But it is not a call to a special office that opens the windows of revelation to a truth seeker. Rather it is personal righteousness; it is keeping the commandments; it is seeking the Lord while he may be found.

“God is no respecter of persons. He will give revelation to me and to you on the same terms and conditions. I can see what Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw in the vision of the degrees of glory -- and so can you. I can entertain angels and see God, I can receive an outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit -- and so can you.” (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1969, p. 82)

[[josephsmith.com . . . Ether](#)]

Ether 4:7 The Father of the Heavens and of the Earth, and All Things That in Them Are:

John S. Lewis writes on the Age of the Earth.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century authorities typically take the word “day” in Genesis to be literally one modern Earth day, even though such days did not exist until day four of the creation, and

the Hebrew word יָוֵם (*yōm*) was used both literally and figuratively, as in English. It is well known that such a constrained time scale is ruled out by every available method of dating astronomical and geological history.

The antiquity of Earth was a subject of active debate in the early nineteenth century. Some adherents of a conservative interpretation of scripture ignored or sought to explain away the overwhelming evidence from geology. The more liberal scientific interpretations of geological history suggested an age of 100,000 to millions of years for Earth. Almost alone, W. W. Phelps, Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham scribe, offered a vastly larger perspective. In the *Times and Seasons*, a letter from Phelps to the Prophet's brother William states:

That eternity, agreeable to the records found in the catacombs of Egypt, has been going on in this system (not the world)³ almost 2555 millions of years; and to know that deists, geologists and others are trying to prove that matter must have existed hundreds of thousands of years:— it almost tempts the flesh to fly to God, or muster faith like Enoch to be translated and see and know as we are seen and known!⁴

Elder Bruce R. McConkie has also commented that the days of creation are figurative, and not to be taken literally. In the June 1982 *Ensign* he wrote, "What is a day? It is a specified time period; it is an age, an eon, a division of eternity."⁵ We commend this statement to those Church members who believe that Elder McConkie advocated a one-week duration for the creation.

Considering that Doctrine and Covenants 77:6 refers to ". . . this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence," what led Phelps to speak of Earth as 2,555 million years old? The answer appears to be straightforward. Though 7000 Earth years is in conflict with all physical, chemical, genetic, archaeological, and linguistic evidence, 7000 years of God is not ruled out. The arithmetic is easy. One day of God is 1000 years of man, and therefore in Joseph Smith's reckoning, a day of God is 365×1000 days of man. The 2.555 billion years in question therefore corresponds to $2,555,000,000/365,000$ years of God, which is 7000 years of God for each day of Earth's existence. A more careful calculation, using the true average length of the year including leap years (365.257 days) gives 2,556,799,000 Earth years. Clearly Joseph Smith did not intend the "7000 years" of Earth's age to refer to Earth years.

The same number surfaces again in Elder McConkie's address, "The Seven Deadly Heresies," delivered at BYU in 1980. He refers to God as "an infinite and eternal being who has presided in our universe for almost 2,555,000,000 years,"⁶ but without any indication of the source or significance of that number.

In the Book of Abraham (5:13), after a discussion of the creation of Earth in which the stages are called "times" instead of days, we find "Now I, Abraham, saw that it was after the Lord's time... for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning." This may have been the scriptural basis for Phelps's calculation.

The creation of Earth is explicitly described in LDS scripture as a process of bringing order to chaotic matter, not as the creation of matter ex nihilo.

[Question: Can this be interpreted as covenant order? In other words, did Adam represent the beginnings of a covenant world?]

This is in perfect accord with the scientific evidence regarding the creation of Earth. It also places the origin of matter in the distant past, not as a part of the events surrounding Earth's formation, a conclusion also in accord with scientific studies of the origin of the elements starting 13.7 billion years ago.

LDS scripture, beginning with the Book of Moses, portrays creation as diachronic: spread out over time. Many worlds came into existence before Earth existed, and many no longer exist; creation continues to the present.⁷ In LDS doctrine, there are governing laws "irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundation of the world,"⁸ on the basis of which laws worlds come into being, age, and die. Life on earlier worlds is a natural consequence of this view . . .

Thus the origins of the Universe and of Earth were widely separated events. The origin of Earth and the rest of the Solar System 4.55 billion years ago occurred in the context of a collapsing interstellar cloud, just as we see today in the Orion Nebula and elsewhere, accompanied by the simultaneous formation of thousands to millions of other stars and planetary systems in a starburst . . .

Creation was going on for billions of years before the creation of Earth and continues today. Earth is indeed billions of years old, as Joseph Smith was one of the very first to say.

[John S. Lewis, "The Scale of Creation in Space and Time," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 8 (2014), pp. 71-80]

Ether 4:8-9 He That Will Contend Against the Word of the Lord, Let Him Be Accursed (Covenant Language and Structure):

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the repetition of alternating parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

A simple alternate takes the form A-B / A-B. (p. ix)

A repeated alternate type of parallelism takes the form A-B / A-B / A-B (p.xii)

A fine example of this repeated Alternate Parallelism is found in Ether 4:8-9.

- 8 a And he that will contend against the word of the Lord.
 b let him be accursed;
 a and he that shall deny these things,
 b let him be accursed;

For unto them will I show no greater things, saith Jesus Christ; for I am he who speaketh.

- 9 a And at my command
b the heavens are opened and are shut
a and at my word
b the earth shall shake;
a and at my command
b the inhabitants thereof shall pass away even so as by fire.

[Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns, F.A.R.M.S., p. 459]

[Note* Ether 4:8-9 emphasizes the destruction that will come from disobedience to covenants. Verse 10 continues the warning about covenant disobedience: “And he that believeth not my words believeth not my disciples; and if it so be that I do not speak, judge ye; for ye shall KNOW that it is I that speaketh at the last day.” Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 4:11-12, 13-14 I Am the Father, I Am the Light, and the Life, and the Truth of the World (Covenant Language and Structure):

In Ether 4:11-12, Christ lays out a pattern for covenant progression, and in so doing identifies himself with multiple titles:

- 11 But he that believeth these things which I have spoken, him will visit with the manifestations of my Spirit and he shall **know** and **bear record**.
For because of my Spirit he shall **know** that these things are true;
for it persuadeth men to do good
12 And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me;
for good cometh of none save it be of me.
I Am the Same That Leadeth Men to All Good
He that will not believe my words will not believe me—**That I Am [The Word** – John 1:1]
And he that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me.
For behold, **I Am the Father, I Am the Light, and the Life, and the Truth of the World.**

The next verses (13-14) are a fine example of extended alternate parallelism. According to Donald Parry, , **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the repetition of alternating parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.**

- 13 A Come unto me
B O ye Gentiles.
C and I will show unto you
D **the greater things, the knowledge** which is hid up
E because of unbelief.
14 A Come unto me,

- B O ye house of Israel.
 C and it shall be made manifest unto you
 D how **great things** the Father hath laid up for you
from the foundation of the world; and **it hath not come unto you**
 E because of unbelief.

[Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns, F.A.R.M.S., p.]

[Note* I have slightly changed the lines in the verses from what is written by Donald Parry. I have done this to emphasize the covenant nature of what the Lord is talking about., for as he said in verse 11, he is directing himself to those who believe (and apparently have started along the covenant pathway), whether they be termed “Gentiles” or “House of Israel” – that is whether they be adopted into the House of Israel by covenant or whether they are part of the House of Israel through the covenant of their Fathers.]

Ether 4:12 That I Am:

In my view it is significant that in Ether 4:12 the premortal Christ identifies himself by the title “That I Am.” He has previously linked that title with other titles: “ I Am He Who Was Prepared from the Foundation of the World to Redeem My People.” With that in mind it is worth noting that we find in Exodus 3:14 that God said to Moses: “ I AM THAT I AM: and . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” Thus by means of these self-declared titles and his appearance to the brother of Jared, Christ is proclaiming that he is also the God of Old Testament times—the same who in Exodus would declare himself to Moses as “That I AM.”

James Ferrell writes:

According to Joseph Smith, Moses received the endowment on a high mountain.(n13) Joseph Fielding Smith made a similar statement: “No man can get the fullness of the priesthood outside of the temple of the Lord. There was a time when that could be done, for the Lord could give these things on the mountain tops-no doubt that is where Moses got it.”(n14)

It seems likely that Moses received his full endowment of the priesthood on the mountain, at the hand of the Lord himself. And what would that have involved? Concerning temple ordinances, Brigham Young stated: “Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the **key words**, the **signs** and **tokens**, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.”(n15) On the mountain of God, Moses received precisely these elements—all of which point to the Savior.

The Lord called to Moses from the flame of fire: “Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”(n16)

(The Lord revealed a token)

Moses, an Egyptian by upbringing, a fugitive from justice, forty years removed from Egypt, and poorly received by the Israelites even when he had tried to help them,(n17) was being told to return to Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites. “Who am I,” he replied, “that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”(n18) In other words, “Why would Pharaoh or the Israelites hearken to me?” Moses wondered. “How could I ever have the power to do what you are requesting?”

“Because,” the Lord responded, “I will be with thee.”(n19) And then the Lord revealed a **token**: “certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a **token** unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.”(n20)

The token given to Moses, therefore, was the Lord himself. HE would be with Moses. Moses and the Israelites would successfully escape because of HIS presence and would therefore worship HIM as instructed. The token was their successful deliverance, and that deliverance would be possible because of HIM.

(The Lord revealed a name)

“I will be with thee” is a comforting response from Moses’ perspective, depending on who “I” is. Moses was raised in an Egyptian household, and likely was taught from an early age to trust in the Egyptians’ panoply of gods. For perhaps this and other reasons, Moses responded cautiously to the Lord’s token: “Behold, when I come unto the children Israel, and say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?”(n23)

To this, the Lord responded, famously: “I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”(n22)

The Hebrew term translated here as **“I am”** is the first-person-singular form of the “to be” verb, more accurately translated as “I will be” or “I will become.” **The third-person-singular form of the same word is “Yahweh”—the Hebrew spelling of the name “Jehovah.” So Jehovah—the name of the premortal Christ—means, literally, “He will be.”** Think about the significance of that as a reference to the Savior: Yahweh is who he is precisely because of who he will be in the meridian of time. Even the Lord’s very **NAME** points to his great and last sacrifice.

It is entirely reasonable that the Lord, when speaking of himself, would use the first-person form of “Yahweh,” which is the third-person term others use when speaking of him. Therefore, it is as if the Lord told Moses: “I am (or I will be) ‘He will be,’” or “I am the God known to Israel as Yahweh”— that is, “I am He who will come in the meridian of time to redeem mankind.”

With this understanding of the connection between the term “I am” and the name “Yahweh,” the next verse after the Lord’s declaration follows naturally from the I AM statement. Indeed, the next verse is a continuation of the same thought: “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of Your Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob [i.e., Yahweh], hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever.”(n23)

As with the token revealed earlier, the name revealed by the Lord points to the Savior's redeeming mission and saving power.

(The Lord revealed a sign)

Having been promised the Lord's presence, and knowing the identity of the Lord, Moses asked, in essence, What if the Israelites don't believe me? "But behold," he objected, "they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, [Yahweh] hath not appeared unto thee."(n24)

In response, the Lord gave Moses a **sign**: He commanded Moses to cast down his staff, which immediately turned into a serpent. He then instructed Moses to take the serpent by the tail. When Moses took hold of the tail as commanded, the serpent turned back into a staff.(n25) Next, the Lord commanded Moses to "put his hand into his bosom."(n26) (The New International Version of the Bible translates the Lord's instruction as: "Put your hand inside your cloak."(n27) When Moses took his hand back out of his cloak, it was "leprous as snow."(n28) The Lord then commanded Moses to put his hand back into his cloak. After he had done so, Moses' hand was healed completely.(n29) The Lord told Moses that he gave him these signs "that they [Israel] may believe that the Lord God of their Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee."(n30)

But what is it about these signs that would establish that *Yahweh*, and not some other god, had sent Moses? Let's consider the signs. Both of the signs have two parts to them: Moses' staff was turned into a serpent and then back into a staff, and Moses' hand was turned leprous and then healed. Why two parts? Wouldn't it have been enough to turn the staff into a serpent and to make a hand diseased? Wouldn't such signs of power have convinced the Israelites of Moses' divine calling? What is the significance of the second part to both of these signs? Consider this as a possibility: The Purpose for the signs was not to show mere power, but to demonstrate the power to **save**. The signs demonstrated that Moses had not only acquired power, he had acquired power from *Yahweh*—he who is and will be the Savior of mankind. The signs, therefore, were themselves signs of his redemption.

The Lord drove this point home with a third sign: "If [Israel] will not believe . . . these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, . . . thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land."(n31) This final sign points to the blood of the Lamb of God, which would be spilt for sins. Israel would recognize in the spilt blood the typifying of *Yahweh*, for sacrificial blood was made "a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten" among the fathers from the beginning.(n32)

The message of these signs to Moses and to Israel is clear: I am the Redeemer, the only God with the power of deliverance, the only name whereby man can be saved. Everything shown to Moses—the token, the name, and the sign—pointed to the Savior and prepared Moses to turn Israel toward His redeeming blood.

James Ferrell adds this note on Moses (which should give us a further appreciation for the brother of Jared):

Through Moses the world knows of the Creation and the Fall. From his hand we learn of our first parents, and how they were taught the gospel from on high. From Moses' account of their lives we first learn of the joy of the Lord's redemption—for having been "filled" with the spirit of the Holy Ghost upon learning of "the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father," they "blessed . . . the **name** of God" and

were glad.”(n1)

Moses [as well as the brother of Jared] witnessed the panorama of human history, and was set apart to share it with us.(n2) How else would we have known? He saw the fathers from Adam down through the generations. Through Moses we learn that the new and everlasting covenant was never “new,” only restored. And all “which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also,”(n2) “all things . . . confirmed . . . by an holy ordinance.”(n4) Who can imagine what it must have been like to witness the glory of Zion, the finality of the flood, the righteousness of Melchizedek, [the faith of the brother of Jared], and the faith of Abraham? Perhaps he stood at the side of the Only Begotten as he witnessed—in order to record for us—the sacrificial journey of Abraham and *his* “only begotten.” . . .

How much do we owe the humble prince of Egypt? . . . For his words remain instrumental in bringing the world to the truth. [James L. Ferrell, The Hidden Christ: Beneath the Surface of the Old Testament, pp. 85-89, 119-120]

Ether 4:12 For Behold, I Am the Father:

Bruce R. McConkie comments:

“In the usual manner of speaking, the Father and the Son are two separate personages who are united as one in purpose and plan and in character and attributes. Christ is the Firstborn spirit offspring of the Father in pre-existence, the Only Begotten in the flesh. But there are three specific scriptural senses in which Christ is spoken of and known as the Father:

(1) He is the Father in the sense of being the Creator and is thus referred to as ‘the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.’ (Ether 4:7.)

(2) He is the Father of those who abide in his gospel. Faithful saints who receive him have power given them to become his sons. (D. & C. 39:4.) Those who are ‘spiritually begotten... are born of him’; they become ‘the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters.’ (Mosiah 5:7.)

(3) He is the Father by divine investiture of authority. That is, the Father places his own name, power, authority, and Godship on the Son, and empowers him to act and speak in the first person as though he were the Father so that his words and acts become and are those of the Father. All things are truly delivered to him by his Father.”

(*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:468)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 4:12 I Am the Father, I Am the Light, and the Life, and the Truth of the World:

In the fourth chapter of the book of Ether, after recording on the plates "the very things which the brother of Jared saw" (Ether 4:4), Moroni writes the words that the Lord "commanded" him related to this vision. In the middle of Christ's words to Moroni, He makes a most interesting declaration: "For behold, I am the Father, I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world" (Ether 4:12).



The Creator, the Light, the Life, the Truth of the World [dancinginfaith.wordpress.com]

It is intriguing here that Christ applies to himself a title composed of four connected titles: the title "Father" (of the world) [or Creator of the World], the title "the Light . . . of the World," the title "the Life . . . of the World and the title "the Truth of the World." The association of these four titles here is unique in the Book of Mormon. One might ask, Why? One perspective might be found in the writings of Richard Ingebretsen, a noted researcher in Physics and Biophysics.

According to Ingebretsen, the actual nature of light and its interactions with the universe has challenged scientific geniuses through the centuries. One of the first of these was Isaac Newton. He pictured light as a virtually infinite multitude of small particles traveling through space. This was the accepted idea for many years following Newton. However, through the years, this concept of light hit many obstacles and was met with disfavor.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many experiments demonstrated that light also had the properties of waves. It was determined that light is one form of wave-like radiation called "electromagnetic radiation" because it is associated with changing electric and magnetic fields that travel through space and transfer energy from one place to another. But just as scientists began thinking of light in terms of waves, along came Albert Einstein in the early part of the 20th century, and showed that light actually is both. In other words, light has a dual character and is both particle and wave-like in its composition. This is the current scientific view. These light particles have been given the name "photons." So now, we think of light as little particles (called photons) traveling through space in waves.

Apart from providing the ability to see, it has long been known that light transfers energy as well. This amazing fact is evidenced by the warmth we feel when out in the sun and the ability of solar cells to

convert light energy into electric energy. Life on earth continues to be dependent on the energy in sun light for photosynthesis. In fact, all biologic activities are dependent on the energy-transfer capabilities of light. It was not until James Clerk Maxwell in the late 1800's and Albert Einstein in the early 1900's that we understood how light was able to transmit energy. It is the individual photon that is responsible for the energy transfer capabilities of light. These small particulate bundles are like a packet of energy, whose strength is directly proportional to its frequency. As we shall see, the ability of light to transfer energy was essential in the formation of the universe.

Initially, the universe was a flood of energetic light. The formation and release of photons was essential, for it provided the power and energy necessary for the formation of matter. The creation of matter from light happens in a special way that involves both matter and a curious type of substance called anti-matter, which is the exact opposite of matter. If you take antimatter and matter and bring them together they cancel each other out and their annihilation releases their energy as photons. In reverse, if two photons collide with enough energy they form matter and antimatter. This business of forming matter from energy was one of the startling conclusions of Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. This states that mass and energy are equivalent according to the famous equation $E = mc^2$. This equation states that matter and energy are the same, but exist in two different forms. Thus when matter is seen after photons collide, it represents nothing more than the transformation of energy into another form--matter.

So the production of matter from light plays a key role in the very young universe. When the universe was in a very hot state, photons indeed had enough energy in their collisions to form protons and antiprotons. As the newborn universe began to cool, other types of matter were formed such as electrons and a particle called a positron, which is the "anti-matter" particle to an electron. For reasons that are unclear, in time, most of the antimatter was annihilated, leaving only "matter" made up of protons, electrons and neutrons, which are the building blocks of atoms and matter.

By the time the universe was three minutes old, it had cooled to a point where protons and neutrons could form deuterium, which is the nucleus of "heavy" hydrogen. Then when the universe was about 30 minutes old, it had cooled sufficiently that the particle formation from photons stopped. At that time, about 25 percent of all matter that was formed was helium, and the remainder was the all-important hydrogen atom.

For the next million or so years, the universe was dominated by this particle radiation and gasses. These gasses and radiation continued to cool and began to form neutral atoms which scientists call "matter." With the universe cool enough, the long reaching force of gravity took over and matter collected into clouds of dust and eventually gave birth to galaxies, stars, and planets. Thus, the universe was believed to have come about first with the formation of light, then with energetic photons of light colliding, using their energy to form matter. Clearly, the role that light played in the formation of the universe cannot be understated.

Now the fact that light can manifest in different contexts is a well-known phenomenon. Of the whole electromagnetic spectrum, only a small part is perceptible to the human eye. The vast majority of the spectrum, including radio waves, ultraviolet light and infrared light, is perceived by other mechanisms. In this perspective, it is not difficult to imagine that a so-called spiritual side of light is also manifest every day in the modern world. This "light of Christ" brings men to the truth.

Science tells us that light was the power of the creation, that it fills the void of an expanding universe, and that it is necessary for life as we know it. Still, science has yet to explore the spiritual nature

of light. Thus, the absolute nature of light remains a mystery. But we have in front of us scriptures that allow us to further our knowledge of what is one of the most intriguing of all of God's creations. [Richard Ingebretsen, Joseph Smith and Modern Astronomy, pp. 18-19, 24-26, 33-34] [See the commentary (Ingebretsen) on 1 Nephi 1:3]

[Note* If Ingebretsen is right, then the insertion of these titles for Christ into the setting of the brother of Jared's vision might imply that the brother of Jared was allowed to see the creation of the earth among other things. In other words, he was able to witness what Abraham and Moses saw as recorded in the *Pearl of Great Price*. The fact that Moroni records that "there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared" (Ether 4:4) seems to bolster that proposition.

Furthermore, a case can be made that the title that Christ gives to himself is composed of 5 parts instead of 4. The additional title is "I AM.": I Am the Father, I Am the Light, and the Life, and the Truth of the World

[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on Ether 3:14, 4:4]

Ether 4:12 I Am the Light and the Life and the Truth of the World:

Richard Rust notes that light is a masterful symbol because it is the quality that the Master chooses so frequently to characterize himself; it is essential to our becoming like him; and the Master wants us to have a fullness of it. "I am," he said, "the true light that is in you" (D&C 88:50). Light characterizes the divinity of the Godhead and it embodies the celestial condition and life that the Father and the Son want us to have. As a pervasive and rich symbol, light connects us fully with Christ—at least as much as a symbol can do. We learn of Christ as we reflect on the symbolism of the more than thirty titles of Christ that are connected to light. These titles include:

- Star (Numbers 24:17)
- King of Glory (Psalm 24:10)
- Great Light (Isaiah 9:2)
- Crown of Glory and Beauty (Isaiah 28:5)
- Light of the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6)
- Dayspring from on High (Luke 1:78)
- Light of Men (John 1:4)
- True Light (John 1:9)
- Light (John 12:35-36)
- Bright and Morning Star (Revelation 22:16)
- Life and Light of the World (D&C 10:70).

[Richard Dilworth Rust, "Light A Masterful Symbol," in Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture 20:1 (2011)]

[Note* Rust did not cite any Book of Mormon references. The following are the first mention of titles of Christ found in the Book of Mormon that relate to light:

Your Light in the Wilderness (1 Nephi 17:13)
A Light unto Them Forever, That Hear My Words (2 Nephi 10:14)
A Great Light (2 Nephi 19:2)
The Light (2 Nephi 19:2)
The Light of Israel (2 Nephi 20:17)
A Fire (2 Nephi 20:17)
A Flame 2 Nephi 20:17)
A Light That is Endless, That Can Never Be Darkened (Mosiah 16:9)
My Life and My Light . . . and My Redemption from Everlasting Wo (Alma 26:36)
My Light (Alma 26:36)
The Life and the Light of the World (Alma 38:9)
I Am the Light and the Life of the World (3 Nephi 9:18)
I Am the Law, and the Light (3 Nephi 15:9)
I Am the Light (3 Nephi 18:16)
I Am the Light Which Ye Shall Hold Up (3 Nephi 18:24)
I Am the Light and the Life and the Truth of the World (Ether 4:12)

The Holy Ghost is referred to in the Book of Mormon as:

The Marvelous Light of God (Mosiah 27:29)
The Light of the Everlasting Word (Alma 5;7)
Light of Christ unto Life (Alma 28:14)
The Light of the Glory of God (Alma 19:6)
A Marvelous Light of Goodness (Alma 19:6)
The Light of Christ (Moroni 7:18)

[Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 4:13 Come unto Me, O Ye Gentiles, and I Will Show unto You the Greater Things:

Orson Pratt comments:

“You are not to suppose that you are going to be jumped into the midst of revelations, and by one great and grand step are to burst the vail, and to rend it from your eyes, do you think that you are to step into the celestial kingdom and see it all at once? No, these blessings are by far too precious to be attained in such a way; they are to be attained by diligence and faith from day to day, and from night to night. Hence you are to become habituated to do good in your thoughts and conduct, in all that you do, until you become perfectly initiated into the great principles of righteousness, and continue to live uprightly until it becomes a kind of second nature to be honest, to be prudent, to govern all your passions, and bring all of the influences of

the flesh, of the fallen nature, into the most perfect subjection to the law of God.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:348)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 4:15—5:1 Ye Shall Know That the Father Hath Remembered the Covenant Which He Made unto Your Fathers (Covenant Language and Structure):

In Ether 4:15-18, the Lord continues to declare the covenant way:

15 Behold, when ye shall rend the veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things, which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you;

Yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit
Then shall ye **know** that the Father hath **remembered** the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel

And then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people.

Remember, when ye see these things, ye shall **know** that the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed.

Therefore, when ye shall receive this record ye may **know** that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land.

Therefore, repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and believe in my gospel, and be **baptized in my name:**

- a for he that believeth and is **baptized** [representing the covenant way]
- b shall be saved
- a but he that believeth not
- b shall be damned.

In verse 19 the Lord finishes his covenant discourse:

And signs shall follow them that believe in **my name**.

And blessed is he that is found faithful unto **my name** at the last day

For he shall be lifted up to dwell in the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world.

And behold it is I That Hath Spoken It -- **Amen**

[Note* According to the ancient covenant process, one takes upon him the name of the other covenant person (in this case the Lord), and in turn for one’s complete and continued obedience to that covenant, the other covenant person (the Lord) promises him or her all that is his to give. John saw the same things that Nephi saw and heard, but it is John’s mission to reveal that knowledge—see 1 Nephi 14: 19-27. John declared: “In the beginning was The Word and The Word was with God, and The Word was God. (John 1:1) The covenant way has been established from the foundation of the world. “Amen” is a title of the Lord. Alan Miner, Personal Notes]



Christ being baptized – exemplifying the covenant way

Ether 4:16 And Then Shall My Revelations Which I Have Caused to Be Written By My Servant John Be Unfolded in the Eyes of All the People:

When the people of the last days humble themselves before God, then, according to Moroni, the Lord will unfold before the eyes of the people the revelations written by John (Ether 4:16). Donl Peterson notes a statement by Oliver Cowdery to the effect that the sealed portion of the plates given to Joseph Smith "contains the same revelation which was given to John upon the isle of Patmos, and when the people of the Lord are prepared, and found worthy, then it will be unfolded unto them" (*Messenger and Advocate*, February 1835, p. 80) [H. Donl Peterson, Moroni: Ancient Prophet Modern Messenger, p. 43]

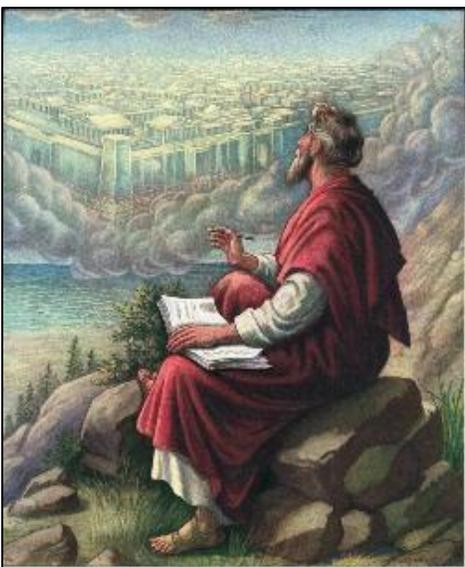


Illustration of the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos

[Note* Then Nephi's vision and Lehi's vision either approximated, or were the same as that of John. In 1 Nephi 14 the angel says to Nephi,

"But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them. And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel. And I, Nephi, heard, and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel. And behold, I, Nephi, am forbidden that I should write the remainder of the things which I saw and heard; wherefore the things which I have written sufficeth me; and *I have written but a small part of the things which I saw. And I bear record that I saw the things which my father saw,* and the angel of the Lord did make them known unto me. (1 Nephi 14:25-29; emphasis added)

Also interesting is the fact that at the beginning of his recorded temple speech in chapter 3 of the book of Mosiah, King Benjamin declares:

"And again my brethren, I would call your attention, for I have somewhat more to speak unto you; for behold, I have things to tell you concerning that which is to come." (Mos. 3:1)

According to John Tvedtnes, the words "that which is to come" refer specifically to Christ and not to future events in general. This becomes clear as we read the rest of Mosiah 3, which is devoted to a Message delivered to Benjamin by an angel. The entire message concerns the coming of Jesus Christ. . . . Even more interesting is the fact that throughout the rest of the Book of Mormon, the phrase "that which is to come" and similar phrases overwhelmingly refer to the coming of Christ and not just the general future. (See for example, Mosiah 4:11, 5:3,18:2; Alma 5:48, 21:8, 58:40; Helaman 6:14,8:23) [John A. Tvedtnes, "That Which Is to Come," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, pp. 245-250]

Thus the vision had by the Apostle John, was apparently similar to the vision had by Nephi and Lehi, and was apparently similar to the vision had by king Benjamin, and was apparently had by the brother of Jared. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on Ether 4:4]

Ether 4:16 My Revelations Which I Have Caused to Be Written By My Servant John:

The most obvious interpretation of this verse is that the house of Israel will someday know that the Lord has not forgotten the covenants made to their fathers (v. 15). These covenants are not completely fulfilled until Christ's Second Coming when Jerusalem and Zion are redeemed. Therefore, when the Lord says, then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people, he is referring to the Second Coming, when all the dramatic and glorious things spoken of in the book of Revelation will be brought to pass and made manifest in very deed.

However, we should not assume that John did not write more. The Lord specifically referred to his revelations (note the plural form). It seems likely that the Lord had reference to other unrevealed writings of John the Revelator when he spoke of great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world (v. 15). This too, like the vision of the brother of Jared, is yet to be revealed.

Neal A. Maxwell comments:

“Many more scriptural writings will yet come to us, including those of Enoch (see D&C 107:57), all of the writings of the Apostle John (see Ether 4:16), the records of the lost tribes of Israel (see 2 Nephi 29:13), and the approximately two-thirds of the Book of Mormon plates that were sealed: ‘And the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ; and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be even unto the end of the earth’ (2 Nephi 27:11). Today we carry convenient quadruple combinations of the scriptures, but one day, since more scriptures are coming, we may need to pull little red wagons brimful with books.” (*A Wonderful Flood of Light*, p. 18)

Hugh Nibley writes:

“John enjoys a special place in the Book of Mormon, where he is the only future prophet mentioned by name. His special office, however, is not to serve as a prophet so much as a recorder. It is John, the man in the white robe whom Nephi sees in a vision, who is to write the fullest record of the Lord's ministry (1 Nephi 14:19-25) and the accurate setting forth of his words as they proceeded out of his mouth, ‘plain and pure, and most precious and easy to understand of all men’ (1 Nephi 14:23); but his record and those of others to whom the Lord ‘hath shown all things’ are to be ‘sealed up to come forth in their purity’ after the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon--hence Nephi was forbidden to write them (1 Nephi 14:25-26). When the Book of Mormon has been brought forth and introduced to the house of Israel, then shall they ‘know that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land’ (Ether 4:17), and when the people begin to believe, ‘then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people; . . . the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed’ (Ether 4:16).” (*Since Cumorah*, p. 206)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 4:17 **When Ye Shall Receive *This Record* Ye May Know That the Work of the Father Has Commenced:**

By commandment of the Lord, Moroni quotes some prophetic words of the Lord about the process and content of the revelations contained in the account of the brother of Jared (Ether 4:4-19).

These words are intended to come forth in the latter days to the Gentiles and the remnant of the house of Israel. However, in Ether 4:17 the Lord says, "when ye shall receive *this record* ye may know that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land." The reader might wonder just exactly what "record" the Lord is referring to. In view of the fact that our present Book of Mormon only represents a part of those plates given to Joseph Smith (the part containing the full account of the brother of Jared being sealed), the Lord must have been referring, in general, to the whole set of plates. It is noteworthy that a full understanding of what is contained on just the part that was translated by Joseph Smith is still being sought in an ongoing process. Hopefully, our understanding will someday merit the revelation of what is contained on the sealed portion of the plates. The reader should note that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon was also prophetically given as a significant sign of the last days by Jesus Christ himself to the people on the American continent after the Lord's resurrection. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on 3 Nephi 21:1-7; and 29:1-2]

Ether 4:17 When Ye Shall Receive *This Record* Ye May Know That the Work of the Father Has Commenced upon all the Face of the Land:

In Ether 4:17, Moroni notes in speaking to future generations: "When ye shall receive this record ye may know that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land." The context here of the term "this record" clearly implicates the sealed portion of the plates. But does the term "this record" imply the unsealed portion also? We know that the "work of the Father" has commenced, but has it commenced upon all the face of the land"? Is this the same promise as found in 3 Nephi 21;1-11, 26-29? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on 3 Nephi 20:10- -23:1 (Jesus' Covenant People Discourse--Chiastic Outline)]

Ether 4:19 He That is Found Faithful unto MY NAME:

In Ether 4:19 the Lord is speaking. He says, "blessed is he that is found faithful unto **my name** at the last day, for he shall be lifted up to dwell in the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world. And behold it is I that hath spoke it. Amen."

How and why would someone be faithful to a name? The answer is covenant related.

Raymond Treat notes that Richard Booker has written a book , *The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread*, in which he outlines the steps ancient Hebrews typically followed in making a covenant, and what the significance of those steps were. They exchanged robes and put on the robe of the person that they were covenanting with. Anciently a man's robe was symbolic of all his material possessions. Thus in keeping the covenant, the participant was willing to give up all he possessed materially in order to keep the covenant. In turn, for keeping the covenant, he was entitled to share all the material blessings of the person he made the covenant with. Second, they exchanged belts. Anciently a belt secured the person's sword or knife. Therefore, in putting on another's belt, you were symbolically saying that you would defend him and the covenant you made with your life if necessary. In the same symbolic covenant manner, one would take upon him the name of the person he was covenanting with to be faithful to that name. [Raymond C. Treat, "Understanding Our Covenant," in *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, Vol. 2, pp. 34-35]

In the Book of Mormon there are over 500 different descriptive names for the Lord. Each describes a specific attribute. It is a very enriching exercise to list those different names in reading through

the text of the Book of Mormon. The names give added perspective to the verses where they are found.
[Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Book of Ether

Chapter 5

Ether 5:1 I, Moroni, Have Written the Words Which Were Commanded Me, according to My Memory:

In Ether 5:1 Moroni makes a statement that I feel needs to be clarified. He says, “, Moroni, have written he words which were commanded me, according to my memory.” In my view this statement is not meant to mean that Moroni wrote the whole of the book of Ether by memory. It is more probable that Moroni is saying that he has shaped the history of the Jaredites according to his memory of the covenant commandments he received from his father Mormon (see Mormon 8:1). Additionally he has been commanded by the Lord (see Ether 4:5). A word in the scriptures that is associated with covenants is “remember.” (“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” –Exodus 20:8) The phrase “according to my memory” is just another way of saying “I remembered the covenants which I made.”

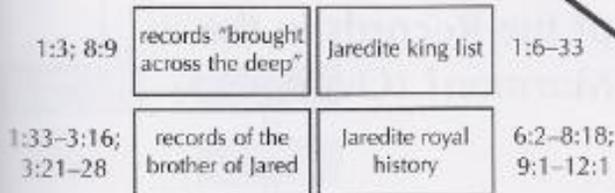
Besides the details of the 30 generations cited in Ether 1:6-3, and the correlation of those generations in the following chapters, there are the details cited within those chapters that seem to extend beyond one’s memory. These, and other details, appear to reveal that Moroni had access to multiple sources from which to compile the book of Ether. Some of those sources mentioned are:

- The twenty and four plates of Ether (Ether 1:2)
- The record of the Brother of Jared (Ether 3:22)
- The record compiled by Nephi III of the Savior's words about the brother of Jared. (Ether 4:2)
- The record which contained the account of the creation down to the tower. (Ether 1:3)
- The record which contained the "secret works" (Ether 8:9,15)
- Mosiah₂'s translation of the twenty and four plates of Ether (Mosiah 28:11-13)
- Moroni's own memory (Ether 5:1)
- The genealogical record of Ether to Jared (Ether 1:6-33)
- Mosiah₁'s translation of the stone brought to him by the people of Zarahemla which contained a record of Coriantumr, the last king and a descendant of the brother of Jared (Omni 1:20)
- The "great and marvelous prophecies" of Ether (Ether 12:5; 13:13)
- An oral history given to Mosiah₁ by Zarahemla which might have had some reflection on the Jaredite people. (Omni 1:18)
- All the other records that Moroni's father Mormon hid up in the hill Cumorah (Mormon 6:6)

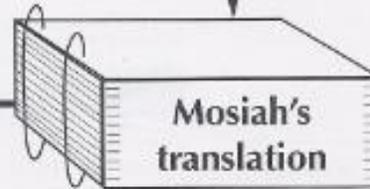
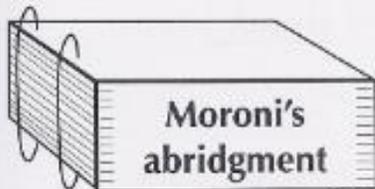
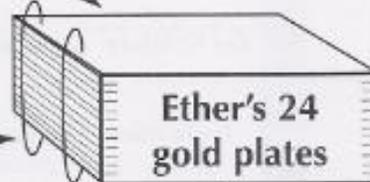
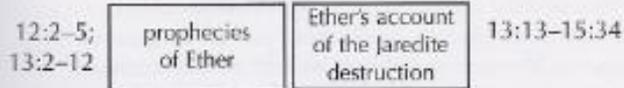
Mormon 6:6 says that Mormon hid up in the hill Cumorah “save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni. This might imply that Moroni left the hill Cumorah at that time and never returned. The writings of Moroni seem to contradict this idea. [SEE APPENDIX – “Chronology of Moroni’s Writing”] [Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Sources behind the Book of Ether

Early Jaredite Records



Ether's Writings



Moroni's Commentary

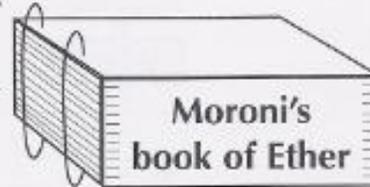
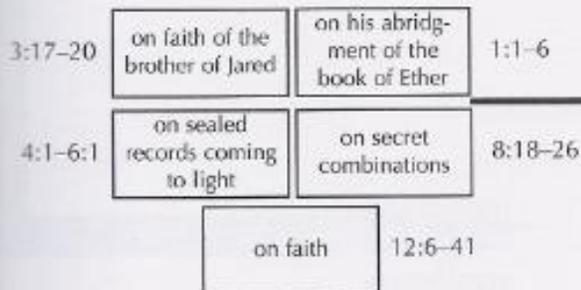


Chart 15

Ether 5:1 I, Moroni, have written the words which were commanded me, according to my memory (Sources): Sources Behind the Book of Ether [John W. Welch & J. Gregory Welch, in *Charting the Book of Mormon*, Chart 15]

Ether 5:1 I, Moroni, Have Written the Words Which Were Commanded Me, according to My Memory:

According to Raymond Treat, the principle, "What is in the Book of Mormon is There for a Purpose," is a very important principle to understand about the Book of Mormon. The dictionary tells us that a principle is a general truth on which other truths depend. The recognition of the "purpose principle" is the recognition of a general truth about the Book of Mormon which in turn will lead to other truths. If we ask the question, "Why has this particular information been included?" every time we study a portion of the Book of Mormon we should receive insights that otherwise might be missed.

How do we know that what is in the book of Mormon is there for a purpose? Because major writers of the Book of Mormon tell us they were directed by God as to what to put in the Book of Mormon and what to leave out. For example, in Ether 5:1, Moroni states, "And now I, Moroni, have written the words which were commanded me, according to my memory . . ."

The chart "The Contents of the Book of Mormon Were Divinely Controlled" (see illustration) is designed to illustrate this point. The chart gives us information about three major Book of Mormon writers--Nephi, Mormon and Moroni. In each case these writers were told both what to put in the Book of Mormon and what to leave out.

For all practical purposes two of these three writers, Mormon and Moroni, controlled the contents of the entire Book of Mormon. Mormon was directed to add the entire contents of the small plates of Nephi to the Book of Mormon. . . . Nephi was responsible for about 82 percent of the contents of the small plates of Nephi, which strengthens the case even further that the contents of the Book of Mormon were indeed divinely controlled. They also give validity to the principle that what is in the Book of Mormon is there for a purpose. [Raymond C. Treat, "What is in the Book of Mormon is There for a Purpose," in Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol. 2, pp. 172-173]

The Contents of the Book of Mormon Were Divinely Controlled			
Writer	Instruction	Subject	Reference
Nephi	leave out	"the remainder of the things which I saw"	1 Nephi 14:28
Nephi	put in	"the ministry, and the prophecies, the more plain and precious parts of them"	1 Nephi 19:3
Mormon	put in	the small plates of Nephi	Words of Mormon 1:6-7, 9
Mormon	put in	"the things which have been commanded me of the Lord"	3 Nephi 26:11-12
Mormon	leave out	the rest of the words of Jesus	3 Nephi 26:11-12
Moroni	put in	the sealed portion	Ether 4:4-5
Moroni	put in	"the words which were commanded me, according to my memory"	Ether 5:1
Moroni	put in	information about the secret combinations	Ether 8:9-26
Moroni	leave out	the rest of the prophecies of Ether	Ether 13:13

Ether 5:1 I, Moroni, have written the words which were commanded me, according to my memory (Illustration):
 Chart: "The Contents of the Book of Mormon Were Divinely Controlled." [Raymond C. Treat, "What is in the Book of Mormon is There for a Purpose," in Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol. 2, p. 172]

Ether 5:1 Touch Them Not in Order That Ye May Translate:

In reference to that which was sealed by Moroni, his charge to "touch them not in order that ye may translate" (Ether 5:1) appears to be a specific directive to Joseph Smith, the modern seer and translator, to not touch or translate the sealed portion of the plates. In speaking prophetically through Nephi¹, the Savior said, presumably to that same seer, "Touch not the things which are sealed, for I will bring them forth in mine own due time; for I will show unto the children of men that I am able to do mine own work: (2 Nephi 27:21). [Joseph F. McConkie, Robert L. Millet, Brent L. Top, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. IV, p. 284]

Note* Moroni possessed "the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim" (D&C 27:5). Addressing the prophet Joseph Smith nearly sixteen centuries in the future implies the power of those keys. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 5:1 The Things Which I Have Sealed Up . . . Touch Them Not in Order That Ye May Translate:

In Chapter 5 of the Book of Ether there seems to be a message directed specifically to Joseph Smith and the latter-day Gentiles. The translator is explicitly instructed of Moroni to leave the sealed portion alone. We have no indication that Joseph was ever disobedient to this command or that he was even curious about the content of the sealed portion.

Bruce R. McConkie comments:

"It was returned by Joseph Smith to Moroni, its divinely appointed custodian. Nor did even Joseph Smith either read or translate it. [The sealed portion of the plates.] We know of no one among mortals since Mormon and Moroni who have known its contents. It was known among the Nephites during the nearly two hundred years of their Golden Era. But for the present, the book is kept from us; only the portion upon which no seal was placed has been translated." (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p. 443 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 493)

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 5:2-3 Ye May Show the Plates unto Those Who Shall Assist:

Joseph Smith records:

"In the course of the work of translation, we ascertained that three special witnesses were to be provided by the Lord, to whom He would grant that they should see the plates from which this work (the Book of Mormon) should be translated; and that these witnesses should bear record of the same, as will be found recorded, Book of Mormon, page 581 [Book of Ether, chapter 5, verses 2, 3 and 4, p. 487, edition 1920], also page 86 [II Nephi, chapter 11, verse 3, p. 73, edition

1920]. Almost immediately after we had made this discovery, it occurred to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and the aforementioned Martin Harris (who had come to inquire after our progress in the work) that they would have me inquire of the Lord to know if they might not obtain of him the privilege to be these three special witnesses; and finally they became so very solicitous, and urged me so much to inquire that at length I complied; and through the Urim and Thummim, I obtained of the Lord for them the following:

‘Behold, I say unto you, that you must rely upon my word, which if you do with full purpose of heart, you shall have a view of the plates, and also the breastplate, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared upon the mount, when he talked with the Lord face to face, and the miraculous directors which were given to Lehi while in the wilderness, on the borders of the Red Sea.

And it is by your faith that you shall obtain a view of them, even by that faith which was had by the prophets of old.

And after that you have obtained faith, and have seen them with your eyes, you shall testify of them, by the power of God.’”

(History of the Church, 1:52-53, see also DC 17:1-3)

Joseph Smith records:

“...we beheld a light above us in the air, of exceeding brightness; and behold, an angel stood before us. In his hands he held the plates which we had been praying for these to have a view of. He turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discern the engravings thereon distinctly. He then addressed himself to David Whitmer, and said, ‘David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps His commandments;’ when, immediately afterwards, we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, ‘These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear.’”

(History of the Church, 1:54-55)

The Testimony of the Three Witnesses

“...we...have seen the plates...And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes...”

[josephsmith.com . . . Ether]

Ether 5:4 In the Mouths of Three Witnesses Shall These Things Be Established:

According to Lee Donaldson, the ancient covenantal pattern of having something done three times or three ways is fulfilled in multiple ways in the Book of Mormon. Moroni, in the middle of his abridgment of the Jaredite record, prophesies that,

"in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established; and the testimony of three, and this work, in the which shall be shown forth the power of God and also his word of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record--and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day." (Ether 5:4)

The "new covenant, even the Book of Mormon "(D&C 84:57) has been established like other covenants by having three witnesses. Traditionally, we think of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon as Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.

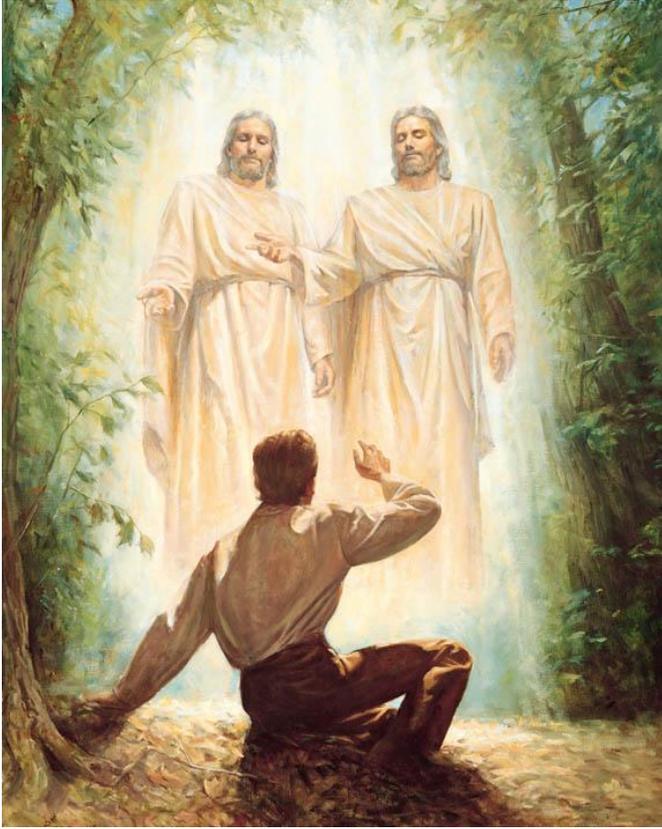


Oliver Cowdery

David Whitmer

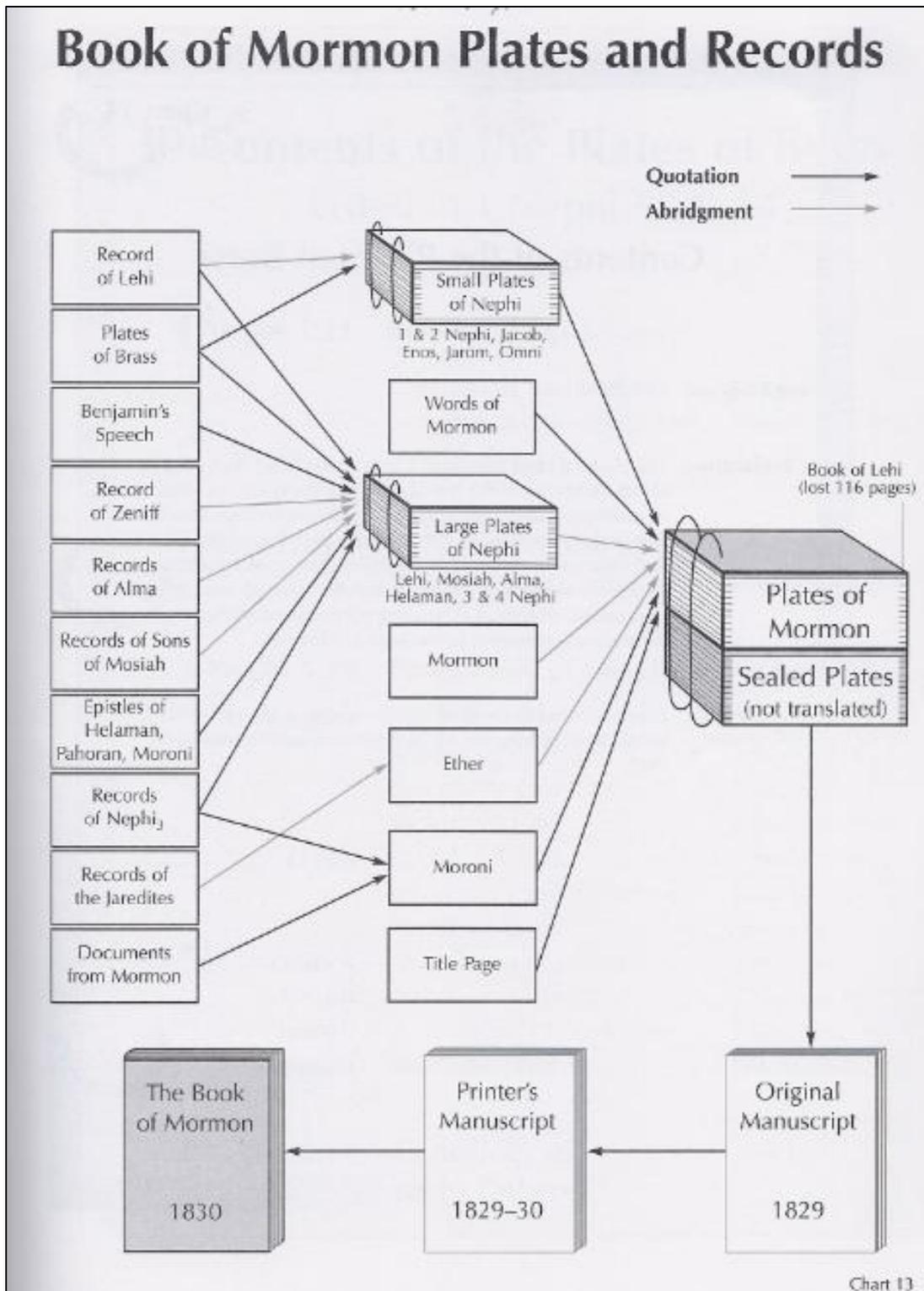
Martin Harris

Certainly, they do stand as latter-day witnesses to the divine origin of the Book of Mormon. However, there are additional sets of three witnesses to this sacred record. Moroni declared that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record" (Ether 5:4).



The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost bearing witness to Joseph Smith

Also, three branches of the House of Israel, the Jews, the Nephites, and the lost tribes, each kept a record, and each branch will eventually receive the other's records (2 Nephi 29:12-14). However, another set of three witnesses, the three sets of plates that make up the Book of Mormon, is in the forefront in establishing the Book of Mormon. The plates of Nephi, the plates of Mormon, and those of Ether stand as **vital components in establishing the Book of Mormon covenant**. Each of these plates contains each of the six elements of the ancient covenant and also serves to illustrate the ramifications of the covenant to a different nation. [Lee L. Donaldson, "The Plates of Ether and the Covenant of the Book of Mormon," in The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction, p. 74]



Ether 5:4 In the mouths of three witnesses shall these things be established (Illustration): Book of Mormon Plates and Records. [Source: Grant R. Hardy and Robert E. Parsons, "Book of Mormon Plates and Records," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 1:196, cited by John W. Welch & J. Gregory Welch, in *Charting the Book of Mormon*, Chart 13]

Ether 5:4 In the Mouths of Three Witnesses Shall These Things Be Established:

Brant Gardner writes that the number of witnesses mentioned here conforms to the instructions in Deuteronomy 17:6: “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witness, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.” This law is spelled out for capital cases—those involving adjudications of life and death. This law of witnesses is again invoked for the coming forth of God’s work. Even though two witnesses are the minimum, three is better, implying an even more solid establishment of truth.

The later calling of an additional eight witnesses shows the difference between the invocation of the scriptural law (three) and the reality, in which an additional number (eight) are called. The fact of the eight actually reinforces Moroni’s intention of providing a maximal number to be sufficient. It may not be a coincidence that, including Joseph Smith, **twelve men testified of the plates’ reality**. [Brant A. Gardner, Second Witness, Volume 6: Fourth Nephi-Moroni, p. 225]

[Note* The biblical number twelve is symbolic of what is completed. It represents the manifestation of the Trinity going to the four corners of the earth (3 X 4 = 12)



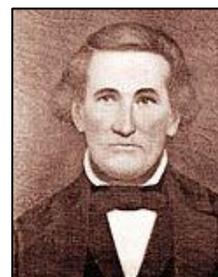
Hyrum Smith



Joseph Smith, Sr.



Samuel Smith



Jacob Whitmer



John Whitmer

(The Eight Witnesses. Those not shown are Hyrum Paige, Christian Whitmer, and Peter Whitmer, Jr.)

[Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 5:4 And This Work [Bears Witness of Itself]

Moroni notes in Ether 5:4 that “this work” or the Book of Mormon itself bears witness of the covenant record that it is.

Ether 5:4 The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost Bear Record:

Moroni notes that most importantly, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost bear covenant witness of the truth of the records related to the Book of Mormon: “of which the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day.” [Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

Ether 5:6 Ye Shall Know That I Have Authority (Covenant Language):

Moroni notes in verse 6 that he has the covenant authority to witness to the truthfulness of the records related to the Book of Mormon: “And now, if I have no [covenant] authority for these things, judge ye; for ye shall **know** that I have [covenant] authority when ye shall see me, and we shall stand before God at the last day.” [Alan Miner, Personal Notes]

NOTES

- i. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1907), 1022-24; also LDS Bible Dictionary, S.V. "Sacrifices," 767.
- ii. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 4:537.
- iii. On two other occasions, twelve nonprecious stones were used to represent the tribes of Israel. Elijah used twelve stones to reconstruct the Lord's altar atop Mount Carmel (see 1 Kings 18:31). Joshua had men from each of the tribes retrieve a stone from the Jordan River, and the stones were set up in a circle (see Joshua 4:2-9). This story is reminiscent of the tradition that Noah found the glowing stone in a river.
- iv. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1957-66), 2:124-25; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), pp. 47, 599-600; Sidney B. Sperry, *Answers to Book of Mormon Questions* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), pp. 47-51; Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), p. 318.
- v. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56), 1:27.
- vi. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- vii. It also helps clarify the identities in Isaiah 53 (see especially verse 10). For a detailed discussion of the role of Christ as Father, see Robert L. Millet, "The Ministry of the Father and the Son," in *The Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture*, ed. Paul R. Cheesman (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), pp. 44-72.
- viii. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah* (London: Soncino Press, 1961), 3:461. Originally published in 1939.
- ix. Szink's views, as expressed here, are from private communications. I am grateful for his permission to use his insights, which I suspect he will provide in greater detail at some future time.
- x. On "the angel of the Lord" as a manifestation of Jehovah himself, see Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:77-78.
- xi. One should keep in mind that Christ's genealogy is traced through his mother Mary.
- xii. One might understand the responsibility of Zarahemla's ancestors (Zedekiah's descendants) to keep alive their connection to royalty, however it is also worthy of note that according to the prophet Ezra, "a priest who could not trace his genealogy was not admitted to the ministry." (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Genealogy Department. *Seeking after our Dead: Our Greatest Responsibility*, Genealogical Society of Utah, 1928, p. 115.)

^{xiii.} The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Part 3, 1980, p. 1586.

^{xiv.} Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913-25), 3:409-11.)