

Ether 1-5

- I. Decisions Determine Destiny: Decide to Decide
Story: Thomas S. Monson, “Descisions Determine Destiny”

II. Ether 1:

Chapter 1830	Chapter - Present	Recognize
1	1-4	The availability of the Lord in response to our faith & faithfulness
2	5	The necessity of power of divine witnesses
3	6-8	The need to be good continually in the face of evil and opposition
4	9-11	The need for prophets and the consequences for following or not
5	12	How faith, hope, and charity enable us to “come unto Christ”
6	13-15	The Charge to Build Zion, the Lord honors his word as given to prophets

**** Note that all of the six “original” chapters begin with “And now, I Moroni...” with the exception of chapter 5 (or Ether 12 in our present edition) where the phrase is found in verse 6.**

President Marion G. Romney said that as families study the Book of Mormon, “the spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness” (“The Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 67). **Note how all of the theme’s in Ether are in this statement.**

- **The Purpose of Ether’s Writing: To Remember: Ether 6:30; 7:27; Title Page of Book of Mormon**
- Title page also emphasizes knowing covenants of the Lord.
- Compare and Contrast Ether 1:1 with Ether 10:28
- See Ether 1:2, footnote 2a XR Alma 37:21-31: Why is this Book so important?
- D&C 135:5,7,14: Flee from Babylon: Spiritual Babylon: Language of Spirit: Most important language.
- Moroni explains that the Jaredites lived and died in the north country. Some have speculated that this was much farther north than the Nephite settlements. But we know that the Jaredites and Nephites were destroyed near the same hill, known as *Ramah* among the Jaredites and *Cumorah* among the Nephites (Ether 15:11, Mormon 6:6) Furthermore, we know that the Jaredites hunted in the land southward and built cities very close to the narrow neck of land (Ether 10:20-21). This places them north of the narrow neck but not by very far. The land of Desolation, so named because the Jaredites were destroyed there, was defined by Mormon as just north of the narrow neck, bordering the land of Bountiful to the south (Alma 22:29-32).
- “We understand that they [the Jaredites] landed in Central America where their kingdom existed the greater part of their residence in America.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:73)

1-33 *The Genealogy of Ether*

“Of interest to the critical reader is the fact that the beginnings of the Jaredite nation are

attributed by Moroni to the Tower of Babel episode, mentioned also in the Book of Genesis (11:3). At the present time, most Bible scholars do not believe in this episode as an actual fact; they consider it a myth. If this belief were correct, we should have to assume that the whole of the Book of Ether is based on a misconception. It should be pointed out, however, that one of the great values of the Book of Mormon is the fact that it affirms the essential truth of the Bible. The Tower episode is a case in point. The Mormon people do believe in it. Despite the claims of critics to the contrary, we believe that in the due time of the Lord the Genesis account of the Tower of Babel will be found to be correct.” (Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Compendium*, p. 464).

“A few years ago an apostle said to me: ‘It would be a discovery of great significance if one were to find an Indian book which sustained the Book of Mormon.’

“Such a book exists; in fact, I shall present quotations from...such Indian books produced during the American colonial period that contain materials similar to those found in the Book of Mormon. The Indian writers add their witness to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Ixtlilxochitl, an Indian prince who lived in the valley of Mexico, wrote a book containing the history of his ancestors from the time of their arrival in America until the coming of the Spaniards...

“Ixtlilxochitl...claims that the first settlers to come to America following the flood came from ‘a very high tower’ or the Tower of Babel. Observe how similar the accounts are as I quote from them.

‘Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, from the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, and swore in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth; and according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered.’ (Eth. 1:33.)

“Ixtlilxochitl, the Indian writer, puts it this way:

‘And . . . men, multiplying made a . . . very high tower, in order to shelter themselves in it when the second world should be destroyed...When things were at their best, their language was changed and, not understanding each other, they went to different parts of the world.’ (Works of Ixtlilxochitl, cited in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and The Book of Mormon*, 1950, p. 24.)

“In order that we might make additional comparison of the Book of Mormon and the Works of Ixtlilxochitl, we quote the Jaredite record:

‘. . . the Lord had compassion upon Jared; therefore he did not confound the language of [Jared's people]. . .’ (Eth. 1:35, 37.)

“Then the Lord guided Jared's colonists over the land to the seashore and, in barges brought them to America, ‘into a land which [he declared] is choice above all the lands of the earth.’ (Eth. 1:42.)

“The comparable story in Ixtlilxochitl states:

‘. . . and the Tultecas, who were as many as seven companions and their wives, who understood their language among themselves, came to these parts, having first crossed lands and seas, living in caves and undergoing great hardships, until they came to this land, which they found good and fertile for their habitation.’ (Ixtlilxochitl, op. cit., pp. 24-25.)” (Milton R. Hunter, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1970, pp. 100-101)

“While residing in Kirtland, Elder Reynolds Cahoon had a son born to him. One day, while the Prophet Joseph Smith was passing by his door, he called the Prophet in and asked him to bless and name the baby. Joseph did so and gave the baby the name of Mahonri Moriancumer. When he had finished the blessing he laid the child upon the bed, and turning to the father, Elder Cahoon, he said, ‘The name I have given your son is the name of the Brother of Jared; the Lord

has just shown (or revealed) it to me.’ Elder William F. Cahoon, who was standing nearby, heard the prophet make this statement to his father; and this was the first time the name of the Brother of Jared was known in the Church in this dispensation” (George Reynolds, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 6:69)

“The people being of one language, gathered together to build a tower to reach, as they supposed the crystalized heavens. They thought that the City of Enoch was caught up a little ways from the earth, and that they city was within the first sphere above the earth; and that if they could get a tower high enough, they might get to heaven, where the city of Enoch and the inhabitants thereof were located” (Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:50).

“The people who built the Tower of Babel are said to have done so in order that its top might ‘reach unto heaven.’ It was to prevent them from accomplishing this purpose, that the Lord confounded their language. (Gen. 11:1-9). Tradition credits Joseph Smith with the statement that the ‘heaven’ they had in view was the translated city” (Cowley & Whitney on Doctrine, p. 307).

As a class, sing “Did You Think to Pray?” (Hymns, no. 140). Ask students to explain the phrase “Prayer will change the night to day.” Invite them to share times when prayer lifted their spirits.

The Jaradite Exodus: A Type of Plan of Salvation

Exodus of the Jaradites	Eternal Plan of Redemption
The Tower of Babel (Ether 1:33)	Rebellion, A fallen world, and scattering
Jared to Go Down	To go down to the lone and dreary world
The Brother of Jared	A deliverer is prepared
Seeking and receiving the blessings of God	A New and Everlasting Covenant
Valley of Nimrod and Wilderness (Ether 2: 1-5)	Continually Tested: Land of Rebellion
Directed by God in a Cloud (Ether 2:4-5, 14).	Gift of the Holy Ghost
Crossing the many waters (Ether 2:6)	Baptism and other ordinances
Brother of Jared chastened by the Lord (Ether 2:14)	The Lord chastens those he loves
Building of Barges (Ether 2:6, 16)	Building a House of God
Questions of Air and Light (Ether 2:19-23)	Revelation, agency, action
The Shining Stones (Ether 3:1-4; 6:2-3)	The Word and Light of Christ
Experience on Mt. Shelem (Ether 3)	Experience in the Temple
The Crossing (Ether 6:4-10)	Trials of Life: Putting off the natural man
The Promised Land	Eternal Land of Promise

The Brother of Jared as a Type of Christ

The Brother of Jared	Jesus Christ
Large and mighty man, highly favored of the Lord (Ether 1:34)	“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).”
Intermediary for his people (Ether 1:34-39).	One mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ (I Tim. 2:5).
Commanded to gather his people, flocks, and seeds (Ether 1:40-43).	How often would I have gathered they children together (Luke 13:34).
Commanded to lead his people in their trek (Ether 2:1-13).	All are commanded to follow Jesus Christ (Matt 4:19; 10:38).
Visited by the Lord in a cloud (Ether 2:4-5; 14).	Jesus visited by Father in a cloud (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34).
Procured small transparent stones for the Lord to touch for light in the barges (Ether 3:1-4).	Jesus Christ is the light to lead us through the darkness (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). He is also the stone or rock of Israel (Acts 4:11; I Cor. 10:4; Hel. 5:12).
Had a great vision of the Lord on top of an exceedingly high Mountain (Ether 3).	Jesus received divine messengers and was transfigured on a high mountain (Matt. 17:1-2).
Forbidden to write many of the things which he had seen (Ether 4:1).	Jesus charged his disciples after descending the mount to ‘tell the vision to no man’ (Matt. 17:9).

34-43 *The Lord promises to Lead the Brother of Jared and His Family to a Choice Land*

“It is stated in the Book of Ether that Jared and his brother made the request of the Lord that their language be not changed at the time of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. Their request was granted, and they carried with them the speech of their fathers, the Adamic language, which was powerful even in its written form, so that the things Mahonri wrote ‘were mighty even ... unto the overpowering of man to read them.’ That was the kind of language Adam had and this was the language with which Enoch was able to accomplish his mighty work” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, p. 69).

38 Ask God what we should do

39-43 The Answer: Do the Noah’s Ark Thing

43: Brother of Jared: Master Pray “er” XR 2:13-14 Great Pray to No Pray

“Prayer is such a privilege—not only to speak to our Father in Heaven, but also to receive love and inspiration from him. At the end of our prayers, we need to do some intense listening—even for several minutes. We have prayed for counsel and help. Now we must ‘be still, and know that [he is] God’ (Ps. 46:10.) . . . Learning the language of prayer is a joyous, lifetime experience. Sometimes ideas flood our mind as we listen after our prayers. Sometimes feelings press upon us. A spirit of calmness assures us that all will be well. But always, if we have been honest and earnest, we will experience a good feeling—a feeling of warmth for our Father in Heaven and a

sense of his love for us. It has sorrowed me that some of us have not learned the meaning of that calm, spiritual warmth, for it is a witness to us that our prayers have been heard” (Spencer W. Kimball, “Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 5).

“Do you get answers to your prayers? If not, perhaps you did not pay the price. Do you offer a few trite words and worn-out phrases, or do you talk intimately to the Lord? Do you pray occasionally when you should be praying regularly, often, constantly? Do you offer pennies to pay heavenly debts when you should give dollars to erase that obligation? When you pay, do you just speak, or do you also listen ...The Lord stands knocking. He never retreats. But he will never force himself upon us. If we ever move apart, it is we who move and not the Lord. And should we ever fail to get an answer to our prayers, we must look into our lives for a reason” (Spencer W. Kimball, *New Era*, March 1978, pp 16-17).

“Our prayers should be meaningful and pertinent. Do not use the same phrases at each prayer. Each of us would become disturbed if a friend said the same few words to us each day, treated the conversation as a chore, and could hardly wait to finish in order to turn on the TV and forget us” (Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country*, pp. 121-122).

“How great and continuing is our dependency upon the Lord, which is one of the first and fundamental facts of life, never to be forgotten, even when we are making genuine progress. No wonder Jesus prayed so to the Father. And oh, how He prayed, never forgetting to call upon the Father. In this, too, Jesus was unique. Even the very righteous brother of Jared, a truly remarkable man, once was chastised during a visitation from the Lord because he ‘remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord’ [Ether 2:14]. How vital prayer is, therefore, for all of us! How vital it is that even our ‘busyness’ in doing His work not crowd out our prayers to our Father” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Even As I Am* [1982], 67).

“The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 305).

“If I listen humbly, with the expectation that what matters most will be clear even to a little child, then I will be both meek enough to be quiet inside—and therefore able to hear the still, small voice—and humble enough to take correction easily” (Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God* [1997], 33).

“Do you get answers to your prayers? If not, perhaps you did not pay the price. Do you offer a few trite words and worn-out phrases, or do you talk intimately to the Lord? Do you pray occasionally when you should be praying regularly, often, constantly? Do you offer pennies to pay heavy debts when you should give dollars to erase that obligation? When you pray do you just speak, or do you also listen? Your Savior said, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’ (Revelation 3:20.)...The Lord stands knocking. He never retreats. But he will never force himself upon us. If we ever move apart, it is we who move and not the Lord. And should we ever fail to get an answer to our prayers, we must look into our lives for a reason.” (“Prayer,” *New Era*, March 1978, pp. 16-17 as taken from McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4, p. 265)

Ether 2:

1-13 *Jaredites prepare for their journey to the promised land*

“This Nimrod seems to be the original arch-type of the Mad Hunter. His name is for the Jews at all times the very symbol of rebellion against God and of usurped authority; he it was ‘who became a hunter of men,’ established false priesthood and false kingship in the earth in imitation of God’s rule and ‘made all men to sin.’... There is another common tradition that Nimrod’s crown was a fake, and that he ruled without right ‘in the earth over all the sons of Noah, and they were all under his power and counsel’; he ‘did not go in the ways of the Lord, and was more wicked than all the men that were before him.’

“...In the book of Ether the name of Nimrod is attached to ‘the valley which was northward,’ and which led ‘into that quarter where there never had man been’ (v. 2,5), which suits very well with the legendary character of Nimrod as the Mad Hunter of the Steppes” (Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*, p. 156-7)

1-3 Noah’s Ark Thing

Hugh Nibley explains that in ancient Asia Minor, there were many large bodies of water, “Now it is a fact that in ancient times the plains of Asia were covered with ‘many waters’, which have now disappeared but are recorded as existing well down into historic times; they were of course far more abundant in Jared’s time... The steady and continual drying up of the Asiatic ‘heartland’ since the end of the last ice age is one of the basic facts of history.” (*Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*, pp. 178) “It [is] our guess that the Caspian was ‘the sea in the wilderness’ that the Jaredites had to cross (Ether 2:7).” (*An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 330)

4-6 Lord talks to Mahonri

7-10 Land of Promise: Choice above all others!

God’s Promises to the People

- He will give them the land as a land of promise (see Ether 2:7, 9; see also 2 Nephi 1:5–7).
- They will be free from the bondage and captivity of all other nations (see Ether 2:12).

God’s Expectations for the People

- They must repent of their iniquity (see Ether 2:11).
- They must serve Jesus Christ, “the God of the land” (Ether 2:12; see vv.8–12).

“So far as I am concerned the flag of the United States is the flag of the Almighty God. Old Glory to me stands for everything that the Gospel of Christ stands for, because Old Glory was raised up because there was to be a restoration of the gospel. I cannot separate my flag and my religion. I would fight for my flag as I would fight for my religion” (Mark E. Peterson, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 20 February 1968, p. 10).

“Our government rests upon religion. It is from that source that we derive our reverence for truth and justice, for equality and liberality, and for the rights of mankind. Unless the people believe in these principles they cannot believe in our government. There are only two main theories of government in the world. One rests on righteousness and the other on force. One appeals to reason, and the other appeals to the sword. One is exemplified in the republic, the other is represented by despotism. The government of a country never gets ahead of the religion of a country. There is no way by which we can substitute the authority of law for the virtue of

man. Of course we endeavor to restrain the vicious, and furnish a fair degree of security and protection by legislation and police control, but the real reform which society in these days is seeking will come as a result of our religious convictions, or they will not come at all. Peace, justice, humility, charity— these cannot be legislated into being. They are the results of divine grace” (Calvin Coolidge, as cited in *Doctrines of Salvation*, Joseph Fielding Smith, 3:317-318).

“Are we today serving the God of the land, even the Lord Jesus Christ? Do our lives conform with His teachings? Are we entitled to His divine blessings?

“Headlines from America's leading newspapers, depicting recent events, pass silently in review, that you and I may judge: ‘Serious Crime Registers 10% Increase in Past Year,’ ‘Violence Rocks South,’ ‘Racial Strife Hits East.’ Murder, rape, arson, burglary, assault, narcotics violations are all on the increase in the America of today. These are the headlines of today’s newspapers.

“The revered Abraham Lincoln accurately described our plight: ‘We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.’ (Proclamation for a National Fast Day, March 30, 1863.)

“Can we extricate ourselves from this frightful condition? Is there a way out? If so, what is the way? We can solve this perplexing dilemma by adopting the counsel given by Jesus to the inquiring lawyer who asked: ‘Master, which is the great commandment in the law?’ Jesus said unto him, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ (Matthew 22:36-39.)” (Thomas S. Monson, *Be Your Best Self*, p. 96-97).

“These passages of scripture from the Book of Mormon are true; this nation is not exempt, and the people, if they continue to pursue the course of evil and ungodliness that they are now treading, shall eventually be punished. If they continue to disregard the warning voice of the Lord, deny their Redeemer, turn from his gospel unto fables and false theories, and rebel against all that he has through his servants in this day declared for the salvation of man; and if they increase in the practice of iniquity, I want to say to you, that if they do these things, the judgments of the Lord will come upon this land, and this nation will not be saved; we will not be spared from war, from famine, from pestilence and finally from destruction, as a nation.

““Therefore, I call upon the people, not only Latter-day Saints but to all throughout the whole land, to repent of their sins and to accept the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer and the God of this land. Turn from your evil ways, repent of your sins and receive the fulness of the gospel through the waters of baptism and obedience, that the judgments which shall be poured out upon the ungodly may pass you by.’ (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* 3:321-22.)

14-25 *The Lord chastens the Brother of Jared and instructs him on building barges*

“Just as Jehovah appeared to and conversed with Moses and led the children of Israel in the wilderness in a cloud by day and in a pillar of fire at night (see Exodus 13:21; Numbers 11:25; Numbers 12:5), so did he lead the Jaredites as they were in the wilderness. From this cloud of

glory the Lord directed them and gave them directions for their journey. The image of a cloud associated with the Lord's appearance is not unique to his dealings with ancient peoples. In this dispensation the Lord also spoke of a cloud of glory, one that will surround him when he again returns to earth and appears to man (see D&C 34:7)." (McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4, p. 267)

14-15 You forgot to pray

"The scriptures don't tell us why the people "remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord" (Ether 2:14) during those years, but our own experience may give us a clue. When we face an unknown wilderness or a strange sea, which may for us be a move to a new place or mortal sickness in a loved one, our hearts soften and we beg for blessings and weep when they're given. But when it's harder to see the needs or the blessings—when our tents are pitched—it's easy to forget the Master and think more of the part our own courage and exertions may have contributed. Sometimes those around us make that forgetfulness more likely by praising us and attributing the victory to us. Most of us spend a good part of our lives in perils so nearly invisible that self-reliance comes easily, and accepting counsel from brothers, or from God, comes hard

"No rebuke could have a happier ending than this one did for Moriancumer; nor can we hope for a much more helpful example. He repented.

"And the brother of Jared repented of the evil which he had done, and did call upon the name of the Lord for his brethren who were with him. And the Lord said unto him: I will forgive thee and thy brethren of their sins; but thou shalt not sin any more, for ye shall remember that my Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore, if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord." (Ether 2:15)" (Henry B. Eyring, "The Brother of Jared: An Expert at Learning," *Ensign*, July 1978, 64).

"Jesus was a principle-centered leader but also a people-centered leader. Jesus spoke 'the truth in love' (Ephesians 4:15), both correcting and commending. As noted, during the space of a three-hour visit with the Lord the admirable brother of Jared was reprov'd for not remembering to be sufficiently prayerful (see Ether 2:14). Yet later Jesus warmly commended this same prophet by saying, 'Never has man believed in me as thou hast' (Ether 3:15)." (Neal A. Maxwell, *A Wonderful Flood of Light*, p. 113).

"...my Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore, if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.' (Ether 2:15.)

"This means the withdrawing of that vital light which all could have enjoyed if they had kept the commandments.

"Now, may I take another example to impress how much further one may go. One day there came to my office a man who a few years before had been excommunicated from the Church because of a very serious transgression. After these years of sad, humiliating, tragic experiences, he is wondering how he can find his way back into the Church....This man who had been excommunicated had attended a stake conference shortly before he came to see me. One of the General Authorities was there and said, 'One of the most terrible things that you can experience is to lose the Spirit of the Lord.'...With these things on his mind, he went home and began to write, and he put in my hands the results of his thinking. This statement is one of the saddest things that I have read in a long time. This man had been a teacher, and he said: While I was enjoying the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, I could read the scriptures and the unfoldment of truths would come before me, and I was thrilled. That power is gone today. That day I heard that terrible word in the high council trial, 'You are hereby excommunicated,' it was as though a

pall of darkness fell, and now instead of light, there is doubt and wavering in my faith. I am wondering and I am struggling without that light. I used to be able to kneel down and get a tremendous lift from my prayer. Even while I was sinning, even up to the point of my excommunication, I got some comfort from it, but now it is as though a dome of steel is over my head, and I seem not to be able to pray. The spirit that leads to the presence of our Father has been lost.

“I used to enjoy performing the ordinances of the Church, especially in behalf of my own children—to bless them, to baptize them, to confirm them, to ordain them to the priesthood; and now to have to stand by while some other takes my place has been one of the saddest experiences that has come to me. And, of course, I have been refused the privilege of going to the temple. I no longer can go there and enjoy the sweet peace. I stand as though I had never been within those sacred walls. When I go to sacrament meeting, I can't partake of the sacrament. I have lost the respect of my family. My children, including a son now grown, tolerate me, but I know that deep in their hearts there is a shame because they bear the name of a father who hasn't lived worthily.” (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places*, p. 119-20).

16-17 Description of barges

18-19 The Light and Air dilemma

“We can endure all things when our hope is centered in one who will never fail us—our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world.

“How do we develop that hope—that hope that lights our way across life's stormy seas? There are times, as there were for our family, when darkness surrounds us and threatens to engulf us altogether. At such times we can take a lesson from the brother of Jared. You remember the Lord instructed the brother of Jared to make barges so his people could travel safely to the promised land. But because these boats were dark and without air, the brother of Jared took his concerns to the Lord in words that any of us might use to describe our own troubled times: ‘There is no light. ... we cannot breathe’ (Ether 2:19).

“How does a person venture out into the darkness without fear? How do any of us venture out day after day into a world where there are no guarantees of safety? The Lord gave a profound answer that again applies not just to the dark sea the brother of Jared faced, but to our own dark seas as well: ‘Ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea’ (Ether 2:25). ‘I will bring you up again out of the depths of the sea’ (Ether 2:24). The Lord was not going to spare the Jaredites from the experience, but he prepared them for it and gave them the sweet promise of bringing them up again out of the depths of the sea.

“...Like the Jaredites, we're afraid of traveling in the darkness, and we need light, which is hope. Sometimes, in the midst of our problems, we lose the vision of why we're here or where we're going. We wonder if we're equal to the tasks that are given us. It is then that we can ask the Lord to touch the unlighted stones of our lives with light. He can deliver peace and hope when all around us speak against it.

“‘Touch my life with light,’ we can ask the Lord. ‘Fill my heart with hope.’ The Lord will do this if we ask in faith and continue to live his commandments. Like the brother of Jared, it is only with the Lord's light that we can see all things clearly.” (Dwan J. Young, *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, “The Light of Hope”)

20 Air problem solved

22 Still no light

23 Lord asks, “What would you like me to do?”

“Preparatory faith is formed by experiences in the past – by the known, which provides a basis for belief. But redemptive faith must often be exercised toward experiences in the future– the unknown, which provides an opportunity for the miraculous. Exacting faith, mountain-moving faith, faith like that of the brother of Jared, precedes the miracles and the knowledge. He had to believe before God spoke. He had to act before the ability to complete that action was apparent. He had to commit to the complete experience in advance of even the first segment of its realization. Faith is to agree unconditionally– and in advance–to whatever conditions God may require in both the near and distant future” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, pp. 18-19).

“The Lord explained why it would be necessary to build such peculiar vessels: because he was about to loose winds of incredible violence that would make the crossing a frightful ordeal at best: any windows, he warns, will be dashed to pieces; fire will be out of the question; ‘ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you... This was no normal crossing and no brief passing storm: ‘The wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters’ (Ether 6:8)—‘the Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters; . . . they were *many times* buried in the depths of the sea, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them, and also the great and terrible tempests which were caused by the fierceness of the *wind*’ (Ether 6:5-6; italics added). It is perfectly clear from our account that the party was to spend a good deal of time below the surface of the sea!” (Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*, p. 178)

Problem (Ether 2:18–19)

Solution (Ether 2:20–25)

No light

The Lord asks the brother of Jared what he would like Him to do (see vv. 23, 25).

No steering

The Lord says He will guide the barges (see v.24).

No air

The Lord instructs him to make holes with removable plugs in the top and bottom of the barges (see v.20).

“Revelations don’t just follow questions, they follow proposals. They follow proactive behavior on the part of individuals who care enough to study, who care enough to trust, and who care enough to formulate proposals” (J Bonner Ritchie, *BYU Speeches*, 25 June 1991, p. 133).

“It is not, never has been, and never will be the design and purpose of the Lord - however much we seek him in prayer - to answer all our problems and concerns without struggle and effort on our part. This mortality is a probationary estate. In it we have our agency. We are being tested to see how we will respond in various situations; how we will decide issues; what course we will pursue while we are here walking, not by sight, but by faith. Hence, we are to solve our own problems and then to counsel with the Lord in prayer and receive a spiritual confirmation that our decisions are correct” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Ensign*, January 1976, p. 11).

Decision Making Walking in the Light

“We watch. We wait. We listen for that still, small voice. When it speaks, wise men and women obey. We do not postpone following promptings of the Spirit...*Never, never, never*

postpone following a prompting. As we pursue the journey of life, let us learn the language of the Spirit” (Thomas S. Monson, *CR*, April 1985, p. 86; emphasis added).

“Now, I tell you that you can make every decision in your life correctly if you can learn to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This you can do if you will discipline yourself to yield your own feelings to the promptings of the Spirit. Study your problems and prayerfully make a decision. Then take that decision and say to him, in a simple, honest supplication, ‘Father, I want to make the right decision. I want to do the right thing. This is what I think I should do: let me know if it is the right course.’ Doing this, you can get the burning in your bosom, if your decision is right. If you do not get the burning, then change your decision and submit a new one. *When you learn to walk by the Spirit, you never need to make a mistake*” (Marion G. Romney, *CR*, October 1961, pp. 60-61; emphasis added).

Story: Thomas S. Monson, “He Changed My Life” H.B. Lee, pp. 12-14

“This would make the invention of glass far older than anyone dreamed it was until the recent finding of such objects as Egyptian glass beads from the end of the third millennium B.C.We need not be surprised if the occurrences of glass objects before the sixteenth century B.C. are few and far between, for glass rots, like wood, and it is a wonder that any of it at all survives from remote antiquity. There is all the difference in the world, moreover, between few glass objects and none at all” (High Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, pp. 213-215).

“Clearly the brother of Jared was being tested. God had done his part. Unique, resolutely seaworthy ships for crossing the ocean had been provided. The brilliant engineering had been done. The hard part of the construction project was over. Now the Lord wanted to know what the brother of Jared would do about incidentals” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 16).

“Then the Lord went away and left him alone. It was as though the Lord were saying to him, ‘Look, I gave you a mind to think with, and I gave you agency to use it. Now you do all you can to help yourself with this problem; and then, after you’ve done all you can, I’ll step in to help you.’” (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places*, p. 243).

“This is the principle in action. If you want the blessing, don’t just kneel down and pray about it. Prepare yourselves in every conceivable way you can in order to make yourselves worthy to receive the blessing you seek.

“...When we are situated that we cannot get anything to help ourselves, then we may call upon the Lord and His servants who can do all. But it is our duty to do what we can within our own power.

“That is a tremendous principle. In order to teach young people how to approach the Lord and how to prepare to receive what the Lord has promised for those who are faithful, we must teach them these fundamental steps. After Moroni had read this great experience of the brother of Jared, he added: ‘. . . wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.’ (Ether 12:6.)” (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places*, p. 244-5)

Ether 3:

- 1-5 *The Brother of Jared acknowledges his weakness and calls upon the Lord*

“*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*. He 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 Nibley, *Teachings From the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 111, p. 271).

“The only trouble is that the stones don’t shine. What shall the man do next? He carries the stones up to the very top of ‘an exceedingly high mountain’—and that is as far as he can go. Of course God could have appeared to him in the plain, but the idea of the whole thing is that man himself must meet God halfway. So the brother of Jared toils up the mountain as he had toiled at the smelter until, as it were, he reaches the end of the line—he can go no further; he has done all that is in his power. From then on it is up to the Lord. Standing on the mountaintop, the brother of Jared holds up his pretty but worthless stones and asks the Lord to take over.” (Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 351).

“*Things*. The brother of Jared hardly knew what to call them. Rocks undoubtedly did not sound very inspiring. Here, standing next to the Lord’s magnificent handiwork, the impeccably designed and marvelously unique seagoing barges, the brother of Jared offered for his contribution rocks. As he eyed the sleek ships the Lord had provided, it was a moment of genuine humility.” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 17)

“For all of his self-abasement, the faith of the brother of Jared was immediately apparent—in fact, we might better say transparent in light of the purpose for which the stones would be used. Obviously Jehovah found something striking in the childlike innocence and fervor of this man’s faith. ‘Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this.’ In a sense there may be no more powerful expression of faith spoken in scripture. It is almost as if the brother of Jared was encouraging God, emboldening him, reassuring him. Not ‘Behold, O Lord, I am sure thou canst do this.’ Not ‘Behold, O Lord, thou hast done many greater things than this.’ However uncertain the prophet was about his own ability, he had no uncertainty about God’s power. This was nothing but a single, assertive declaration with no hint of vacillation. It was encouragement to him who needs no encouragement but who surely must have been touched by it. ‘Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this.’” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 17).

“There are fascinating rabbinic legends to the effect that Noah enjoyed light in the ark because he carried with him divinely given shining stones. If such stories are true, then the brother of Jared was acting in harmony with the deeds of a prophet who was less than a century and a half removed from him” (Millett and McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4, p. 273; See Also *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, chapter 25; XR Genesis 6:16).

“There is no question - personal or social or political or occupational - that need go unanswered. Therein [In the Scriptures] is contained the fullness of the everlasting gospel. Therein we find principles of truth that will resolve every confusion and every problem and every dilemma that will face the human family or any individual in it” (Boyd K. Packer).

“It is a basic premise of Latter-day Saint theology that God ‘knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it’ [2 Nephi 9:20; see also D&C 38:1–2]. The scriptures, both ancient and modern, are replete with this assertion of omniscience. Nevertheless, God has frequently asked questions of mortals, usually as a way to test their faith, measure their honesty, or develop their knowledge” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 19–20).

By way of review, after building the barges, the brother of Jared had three problems, 1)

there was no light, 2) there was no means to steer the vessels, and 3) there was insufficient ventilation (Ether 2:19). The Lord told him what to do about the last problem and took care of the second problem by guiding the winds in such a way that they would not need a steering mechanism. Of these three problems, the only one that the Lord wanted the brother of Jared to solve was the problem of light.

Notice how humble he gets after fulfilling his assignment. The brother of Jared really feels like his contribution is inadequate. He is worried that the Lord will be angry with him because his idea was so stupid. To compound his feelings of inadequacy, the brother of Jared has recently been severely chastised for forgetting to pray (Ether 2:14-15). He declares, we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually.

What is most interesting is the way in which the Lord fosters humility in the brother of Jared, for he often does the same thing with us. We know that the Lord gives unto men weakness that they may be humble (Ether 12:27). But the Lord also gives *assignments* unto men that they may be humble. The cynic is always on the sidelines because, as soon as he is given the responsibility to come up with a better idea, he ends up with a large piece of humble pie on his face. Humble pie is our diet whenever we compare our meager efforts to the holiness and perfection of God. We cannot help but share the emotions of the brother of Jared, declaring, O Lord...do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness. Fortunately, for the brother of Jared and for us, the Lord's grace is always sufficient to make weak things become strong (Ether 12:27).

"Imagine that! Here was one of the great prophets of all time, and he began his prayer with an apology for his weakness and his unworthiness. Certainly he was under no illusions about being perfect... It doesn't really matter in the long run that the brother of Jared is unworthy from the celestial point of view. In that respect he is no different from all other human beings. The point is that God has commanded us, unworthy though we may be, to call upon him anyway, because he has prepared a way for us to receive what we desire despite our imperfection." (Stephen R. Robinson, *Believing Christ*, p. 18-20)

Furthermore, 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).

6-20 *The brother of Jared penetrates the veil and communes with Christ*

"I have already read of how this great personage lived as the firstborn of his Father in the spirit, and so I am not surprised, although I am deeply moved, to learn that he, as a premortal spirit, visited the brother of Jared (see Ether 3:6-13), and I can sense his fear when the brother of Jared saw the finger of the Lord and realized that it was like unto the finger of a man. It surprised this prophet, but it does not surprise me, for I have learned that the Lord was the firstborn Son of God, whose name is Man of Holiness. So when the Lord showed his complete self to that great prophet, I am not surprised, but I am awed. The more I study and read the scriptures, the more I know this is true." (S. Dilworth Young, *Ensign*, July 1973, "When I Read, I am There").

Faith is power, it is the moving cause of all action!

[On the notion that "never have I shown myself unto man," we know that such an idea is false. Clearly, the Lord has appeared to all of the major prophets, i.e. Adam, Noah, Moses, Enoch]. "Surely the most persuasive— explanation for me is that Christ is 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 stands alone then (and we assume now) in having thrust himself through the veil, not as an unwelcome guest but perhaps technically an uninvited one.... (Ether 3:9, 15)... Indeed it would appear that this is Moroni’s own understanding of the circumstance, for he later writes, ‘Because of the knowledge [which has come as a result of faith] of this man *he could not be kept from beholding the veil*... Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, *he could not be kept from within the veil*; therefore he saw Jesus’ (Ether 3:19-20; emphasis added).... This may be an absolutely unprecedented case of a prophet’s will and faith and purity so closely approaching that of heaven’s that the man moves from understanding God to being actually like him, with his same thrust of will and faith, at least in this one instance” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Nurturing Faith Through the Book of Mormon; 24th Annual Sperry Symposium*, pp. 15-18).

“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” (Boyd K. Packer, quoted in *We Talk of Christ*, by Neal A. Maxwell, p. 66)

“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 appearance to earlier prophets had not been with that same fulness. The scriptural accounts of talking face to face and of walking with God should not be interpreted in the sense that the Savior stood before those prophets and revealed his whole person. That he may have done so at later periods in the cases of Abraham and Moses is possible, but he had not done so in that fulness in the antediluvian days. For the Brother of Jared he removed the veil completely. He had never shown himself to man before in the manner and way he did to that prophet” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:37).

“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)” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 21-23).

“Nowhere in the scriptures is a clearer account given of the nature of the spirit body of the Lord Jesus Christ and, indeed, of the characteristics of our own spirits. The brother of Jared not only saw the finger of the antemortal Jesus Christ but indeed perceived His entire spirit body (see Ether 3:6, 13). Understanding the premortal godhood of Jesus Christ together with our own spiritual identities prior to our births in the flesh is a great blessing and advantage. These insights breaching traditional boundaries were the direct result of the brother of Jared’s non-boundaried faith.” (Cecil O. Samuelson, *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*, p. 185).

“President Joseph Fielding Smith...said: ‘It should be remembered that the entire Christian world in 1820 had lost the true doctrine concerning God. The simple truth which was understood so clearly by the apostles and saints of old had been lost in the mysteries of an apostate world. All the ancient prophets, and the apostles of Jesus Christ had a clear understanding that the Father and the Son were separate personages, as our scriptures so clearly teach. Through apostasy this knowledge was lost, and in the year 325 A.D., a strange doctrine was introduced and soon spread throughout the Christian world. This doctrine confounded the persons of the Godhead, and distorted the true doctrine of God.’ (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 3, p. 117).

“There is no question that Jesus taught the very nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost—three personages of form and substance, individual and distinct. He taught that the true knowledge of the Godhead was essential to eternal life. He included in a prayer to his Father in heaven: ‘And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.’ (John 17:3.) Other references in the scriptures substantiate the individuality of the Holy Ghost. (See Matt. 3:15.)

“Yet in the light of this truth there was a ‘strange doctrine’ introduced of man-made creeds. Says one: ‘There is but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the supreme, incorporeal, uncreated being, who exists of himself and is infinite in all his attributes....’ Says another: ‘There is one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.’ Yet another says: ‘God is as he reveals himself. He is creative reality ... He is expressive act ... He is responsive power ... He is one God experienced in a trinitarian fashion.’ (Alvin R. Dyer, *The Meaning of Truth*, Deseret Book Co., 1961, p. 50.)

“These are but a few examples of the extent of the departure from the true teachings of the scriptures. Now the Book of Mormon gives us an extension and reaffirmation of the true corporeal nature of a member of the Godhead. Jesus speaks to the brother of Jared, saying:

‘...therefore I show myself unto you. ...

‘... Behold, I am Jesus Christ ...

‘And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? ...

‘Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; ...and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.’ (Ether 3:13-16.)” (John H. Vandenburg, *Conference Report*, May 1974 Ensign, “Touchstone of Truth”).

“To gain faith men must first have knowledge; then as their faith increases, they come to a state where it is supplanted by perfect knowledge; and in any field in which perfect knowledge has been gained, ‘faith is dormant.’ (Alma 32:21-34.)...The Brother of Jared is one who followed this course until he saw the Lord. As Moroni explained it, ‘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. 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.’ Indeed, ‘The Lord could not withhold anything from him, for he knew that the Lord could show him all things.’ (Ether 3:19-26.)

‘And there were many whose faith was so exceeding 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 of faith, and they were glad.’ (Ether 12:19.) Today as anciently the same effects flow from faith. ‘It is the privilege of every elder to speak of the things of God,’ the Prophet said, ‘and could we all come together with one heart and one mind in perfect faith the veil might as well be rent today as next week, or any other time.’ (*Teachings*, p. 9; D. & C. 93:1.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 267).

21-28 *Brother of Jared shown things to be included in sealed portion of Book of Mormon*

“When, during the Millennium, the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon is translated, it will give an account of the life in preexistence; of the creation of all things; of the Fall and the Atonement and the Second Coming; of temple ordinances in their fullness; of the ministry and mission of translated beings; of life in the spirit world, in both paradise and hell; of the kingdoms of glory to be inhabited by resurrected beings, and of many such things” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of the Restoration*, p. 277).

“Now the Lord has placed us on probation as members of the Church. He has given us the Book of Mormon, which is the lesser part, to build up our faith through our obedience to the counsels which it contains, and when we ourselves, members of the Church, are willing to keep the commandments as they have been given to us and show our faith as the Nephites did for a short period of time, then the Lord is ready to bring forth the other record and give it to us, but we are

not ready now to receive it. Why? Because we have not lived up to the requirements in this probationary state in the reading of the record which had been given to us and in the following its counsels.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1961, p. 20).

Ether 4:

1-5 *Moroni seals up the record of the brother of Jared*

“Even the true saints-the believing disciples, those who have accepted the gospel and received the gift of the Holy Ghost-are not prepared to receive all things. We have the fulness of the everlasting gospel, meaning we have every truth, power priesthood, and key needed to enable us to gain the fulness of salvation in our Father's kingdom. But we do not have, and are not yet prepared to receive, the fulness of gospel truth.

“This is perfectly illustrated by the fact that we do not have the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon. That treasure-house of Holy Writ contains an account of the creation of the world, of the dealings of God with men in all ages of the Second Coming of the Son of Man, and of the millennial era when the earth shall rest and Zion prosper to the full-all of which we are not prepared to receive. The doctrines revealed to the brother of Jared, and which are recorded in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon, were had among the Jaredites; they were known to the Nephites during their Golden Era; certainly they were known and taught in Enoch's Zion; but when the Lehite people ‘dwindled in unbelief,’ Moroni was commanded to ‘hide them up.’” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, Book 2, p. 237).

“Moroni wrote his account of the vision of the brother of Jared on the 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*, 4:537.) 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*, 3:347.) Neither of these two brethren indicate where they obtained their information.” (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion To Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 320)

6-19 *Sealed record to come forth in a day of Faith and righteousness*

“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.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1969, p. 82).

“This sealed portion of the record which came into the hands of Joseph Smith but was

not translated by him so far as we are aware, the abridgment made by Mormon, the record of Ether, and the other sacred records which were deposited in the Hill Cumorah, still lie in their repository, awaiting the time when the Lord shall see fit to bring them forth, that they may be published to the world.

“Whether they have been removed from the spot where Mormon deposited them we cannot tell, but this we know, that they are safe under the guardianship of the Lord, and that they will be brought forth at the proper time as the Lord has declared they should be, for the benefit and blessing of the people of the world, for his word never fails.” (Anthony W. Ivins, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1928, p. 15).

“Suppose Peter had not left his nets ‘straightway’? (See Mark 1:18). He might have become the respected president of the local Galilean fisherman’s association. But he would not have been on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, Moses, and Elias and heard the voice of God. (See Matthew 17:4.) (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1985, p. 72).

“Oh ye Twelve! And all Saints! Profit by this important *Key* - that in all your trials, troubles, temptations, afflictions, bonds, imprisonments and death, see to it, that you do not betray heaven; that you do not betray Jesus Christ; that you do not betray the brethren; that you do not betray the revelations of God, whether in the Bible, Book of Mormon, or Doctrine and Covenants, or any other that ever was or ever will be given and revealed unto man in this world or that which is to come. Yea, in all your kicking and flounderings, see to it that you do not this thing, lest innocent blood be found upon your skirts, and you go down to hell. All other sins are not to be compared to sinning against the Holy Ghost, and proving a traitor to the brethren” (Joseph Smith, *HC* 3:385).

“Of this much we are quite certain: When, during the Millennium, the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon is translated, it will give an account of life in preexistence; of the creation of all things; of the Fall and the Atonement and the Second Coming; of temple ordinances in their fulness; of the ministry and mission of translated beings; of life in the spirit world, in both paradise and hell; of the kingdoms of glory to be inhabited by resurrected beings, and many such things (see, e.g., Ether 1:3–5)” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, ed. Mark L. McConkie [1989], 277).

“The Lord has promised us greater knowledge, greater understanding than we find in the Book of Mormon, when we are prepared to receive it. . . Now the Lord has placed us on probation as members of the Church. He has given us the Book of Mormon, which is the lesser part, to build up our faith through our obedience to the counsels which it contains, and when we ourselves, members of the Church, are willing to keep the commandments as they have been given to us and show our faith as the Nephites did for a short period of time, then the Lord is ready to bring forth the other record and give it to us, but we are not ready now to receive it. Why? Because we have not lived up to the requirements in this probationary state in the reading of the record which had been given to us and in following its counsels” (President Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Conference Report*, Sept.–Oct. 1961, 19–20).

“We need to feast upon the words of Christ in the scriptures and as these words come to us from living prophets. Just nibbling occasionally will not do. (See 2 Nephi 31:20 and 32:3.) Feasting means partaking with relish and delight and savoring—not gorging episodically in heedless hunger, but partaking gratefully, dining with delight, at a sumptuous spread carefully and lovingly prepared by prophet-chefs over the centuries. These words plus the gift of the Holy Ghost will tell us all things we should do. The scriptures, ancient and continuing, are the key of knowledge. . . Appreciation for and the acceptance of the scriptures and the words of the living

prophets are much more important steps than many realize. The Lord has said, ‘. . . he that will not believe my words will not believe me—that I am.’ (Ether 4:12.) To turn aside His teachings is to turn away from Him, and disdain for His doctrines is disdain for Him.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 28).

“The Book of Mormon is predicated on the willingness of men and women to ‘rend that veil of unbelief’ in order to behold the revelations—and the Revelation—of God. The brother of Jared may not have had great belief in himself, but his belief in God was unprecedented. In that there is hope for us all. His faith was without doubt or limit.

“‘I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger.’ (Ether 3:4) From the moment of that utterance, the brother of Jared and the reader of the Book of Mormon would never again be the same. Once and for all it was declared that ordinary people with ordinary challenges could rend the veil of unbelief and enter the realms of eternity. And Christ, who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem his people, would stand in all his glory at the edge of that veil, ready to receive the believers and show them ‘how great things the Father had laid up’ for them at the end of faith’s journey. (Ether 4:14)” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 29).

Ether 5:

1-6 *Moroni delivers counsel to Joseph Smith*

“Did you know that a portion of the record from which the *Book of Mormon* is taken and sealed? The prophet was not permitted to break the seals, and we will not receive the sealed record until the time comes when the people will show by their faith their willingness to accept it” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, pp. 201-202).

“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.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p. 443).

“...the Lord confirmed the truth of the Book of Mormon unto many witnesses in such a way, and by such means, that it was impossible for them to have been deceived;...the testimony of these witnesses stands good until it can be refuted; [and] no man can be justified in rejecting this testimony until he can show that it is false...Now, no one has ever attempted to bring any direct negative testimony; this, indeed, would be impossible, unless the witnesses themselves should deny their former testimony, and this they have not done. And those who have attempted to condemn their testimony from the nature of the message itself, have only exhibited their own weakness and folly. Upwards of twenty years (now 170 yrs.) have passed away, and no man has, as yet, been found able to prove the Book of Mormon or the testimony of its witnesses false.” (Orson Pratt, Pamphlet: “Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon,” p. 65).

“Though men may reject the teachings of the apostles and prophets concerning Jesus Christ and his gospel, yet those very teachings shall rise to condemn the unbelievers in the day of judgment. That is, the words of the apostles and prophets shall stand as a testimony against unbelievers at the judgment bar of Christ. (2 Ne. 33:10-14; Moro. 10:27-29, 34.)” (Bruce R. McConkie,

Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:330)

III. Ether 4:18-19 “I will be Faithful” EFY Song, from “Serving with Strength”
Devan Durrant: Just Be My Son

After Devan Durrant and his Father George had a “hand-squeezing” contest, and Devan won, his father responded, “ So what? So you’ve got strong hands. Who cares? Strong hands have never proven anything.” Then looking at Devan with Soberness, his dad continued, “All I care about those hands of yours is that they break the bread at the sacrament table, that they never are used to bring any dishonor to yourself or to any young lady, that they hold the holy scriptures, that they fold together in prayer, that the knuckles become raw from knocking on doors while you serve as a missionary, and that they forever remain clean” (George Durrant, *New Era*, November 1980, p. 11).

“Knowing our religion to be true, we ought to be the most devoted people on the face of the earth to the cause we have been embraced. Knowing as we do that the gospel we have received promises all our hearts can wish or desire, if we are faithful, we ought to be very faithful, devoted, energetic, and ambitious in carrying out the designs and wishes of the Lord, as he reveals them from time to time through his servants. We ought not to be lukewarm, or negligent in attending to our duties, but with all our might, strength, and souls we should try to understand the spirit of our calling and nature of the work in which we are engaged” (Lorenzo Snow, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:146).

Stories of the Faithful: From our Class

Video: Whose Who Among Mormons: Perhaps the Dale Murphy Clip

April Conference 1998, Richard C. Edgley “I hope I will be a friend of Christ”

- How do we become friends with Christ?
- We are his friends, if we do whatsoever he commands us

Bruce R. McConkie, Getting Dressed and lying in bed every day - dying.

Henry Eyring “God Needs Brave Sons”

First, he traveled the full length of the path of his mortal life giving his all to the Lord, and thus he taught us what it means to truly endure to the end. Once he wrote, To gain the promised inheritance in the celestial world it is necessary to travel the length of the path, a course of travel which consists in obedience to the laws and principles of the gospel. This process is called enduring to the end, *meaning the end of mortal life*. [MD, p. 228]

Elder McConkie and Elder Haight were assigned to the twelve-stake conference in Santa Barbara, California. We met to plan the conference in Elder Haight's office. I was the junior member of the team. Elder McConkie's only request was that we do what would be most convenient for the people of the twelve stakes. So we planned two four-hour leadership meetings on Saturday, one in Chatsworth and one in Santa Barbara, one hundred miles away. Sunday would find us doing two two-hour meetings on the University of California, Santa Barbara, campus. We would return the one hundred miles to Los Angeles and arrive home about midnight. Elder Haight, ever solicitous of Elder McConkie, protested, but bowed to the senior apostle.

I saw him that week in the General Authority dining room. ‘John, let’s go preach the gospel,’ he said with obvious enthusiasm. He anticipated the chance to once more teach and exhort the Saints.

On the Friday night before the conference, Shirley and I met Bruce and Amelia McConkie and David Haight at the Burbank airport. Elder McConkie was completely

exhausted. He had just had his chemotherapy shot. (Incidentally, Sister McConkie says that his doctor, who was not a member of the Church, did not quite know how to take Bruce. She said he would walk in on Friday for his shot, roll up his sleeve, and say, ‘Seven more days of life, Doc!’)

After we met at the airport that night, Elder McConkie went straight to bed without dinner. Over dinner, Amelia shared with us his cooperative disdain for the illness which was obviously consuming him. I think it was she that bore the brunt of his pending date with the Savior. For him, this is the way he would describe it, ‘It makes not a particle of difference whether I preach the gospel here or in the world to come. I will preach the gospel.’

Many felt he was never more powerful than he was at that conference, nor was there a finer regional conference than that on Saturday and Sunday in Chatsworth and Santa Barbara. He was back where his father Oscar McConkie had presided in such power, which I remember well because I was one of the young people who was greatly influenced by his father. The stake president in Santa Barbara, Gerald Haws, was one he had installed, and Jerry’s father had been a district president in the same area serving with Oscar McConkie.

Experiencing some difficulty with the sound on Sunday, he grasped the microphone on the podium and pulled it close to his mouth. ‘I didn’t come all this way not to be heard,’ he announced. Everyone heard and everyone understood his message of salvation.

We drove back to Los Angeles and awaited the late arrival of our flight to Salt Lake City. In the airport many recognized him and Elder Haight and spoke to both of them. He could travel to no location in the world without being recognized. He and all of the rest of us were tired as we arrived in Salt Lake City at midnight.

On Tuesday following that exhausting weekend, I saw him at the office. ‘How are you feeling?’ I asked. He jumped instantly into the air, clicked his heels, and exclaimed, ‘Great!’

You saw and heard him at general conference. You saw a man as close to having one foot on the earth and another in paradise as you are likely to see. Once more he raised his voice to proclaim his testimony of and allegiance to Jesus the Christ. Soon he would join his Savior, but he must endure to the end. This he did with courage and power beyond anything I have witnessed. He never returned to his ministry after that talk.

A man who endures to the end is worthy of rest. Elder McConkie has earned a great respite from the battles of mortality. But he loved every minute of his term here. What lessons he taught us by both precept and example! (See John K. Carmack, “The Testament of Bruce R. McConkie, *BYU Speeches*, May 5, 1985).

See also, “The Bruce R. McConkie Story, 406-418.