

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 219)

### LESSON 45: ETHER 1-6

*“Never Has Man Believed in Me as Thou Hast”*

Hook	This lesson covers the large section of the Book of Mormon we *don't* have—the sealed portion! I remember being struck when I realized that Ether 3 describes the contents of the sealed plates.
Goal	Class members will appreciate the life lessons in these chapters about the balance of proactive problem solving and divine assistance , the uses of adversity, and other scriptural gems
Overview	<p>Ether 1:1-5 Moroni introduces the Jaredite record</p> <p>1:6-33 Jaredite genealogy</p> <p>1:34-2:8 Travels of Jared, his family and friends after the confusion of tongues</p> <p>2:9-11 Moroni speaks of the land of promise</p> <p>2:13-16: The brother of Jared gets a talking to for not “calling upon the name of the Lord”</p> <p>2:17-3:5 Barge building and problem solving</p> <p>3:6-27 The Brother of Jared sees the pre-mortal Jesus, receives a vision of all of human history, is told to seal it up</p> <p>4 Moroni discusses the sealed portion</p> <p>5 Letter from Moroni to Joseph</p> <p>6 Jaredite Journey to the promised land</p>
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Brother of Jared’s singular spiritual experience (Close reading of Ether 2-3; especially note the proactive elements, how Jesus asks him to solve his own problem while also assisting him; it is a balance)</li> <li>• The sealed portion of the plates (look closely at 3:20-4:19)</li> <li>• The Jaredite journey as allegory of our mortal journey (close reading of Ether 6; Carlfred Broderick quote)</li> <li>• 4:12 All that is good comes of God. One of my favorite quotes about Mormonism: “Mormonism is truth. . . . The first and fundamental principle of our holy religion is, that we believe that we have a right to embrace all, and every item of truth, without limitation or without being circumscribed or prohibited by the creeds or superstitious notions of men, or by the dominations of one another, when that truth is clearly demonstrated to our minds, and we have the highest degree of evidence of the same.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">“Have the Presbyterians any truth? Embrace that. Have the Baptists, Methodists, and so forth? Embrace that. Get all the good in the world, and you will come out a pure Mormon.</p>

	<p>“One of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.” <i>Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i>, p. 199</p>
Other Comments/ Discussion Starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are interested, the <b>background of the Jaredite records</b> can be found in Omni 1:14-22; Mosiah 8; 21:25-25, 28:10-19</li> <li>• What is the value of striving for these pinnacle spiritual experiences such as seeing God or Christ or angels? Certainly they capture our imagination. It is like wanting to be president or a sports or entertainment star as a child. And some are. And I believe people when they say they have these spiritual experiences.</li> <li>• What does it mean that the Lord has never appeared unto a person before the Brother of Jared? (3:15, Holland quote)</li> <li>• What theological insights come from the Brother of Jared’s experience with the Lord? (nature of God, our spiritual bodies, pre-existence)</li> <li>• Why is the Brother of Jared called that and why do the brothers have such an unusual dynamic?</li> <li>• Reflections on Moroni’s relationship with Joseph (personal letter in Ether 5!)</li> <li>• How does the condemnation of kings fit into the narrative?</li> <li>• Ether and presuppositions of biblical literalness (Tower of Babel, Confusion of languages, Flood, the events of the Book of Revelation)</li> </ul>
Concluding Points	

**Mahonri Moriancumer:**

Ether 2:13 suggests the Brother of Jared’s name since locations in the Book of Mormon are often named after leaders.

“While residing in Kirtland Elder Reynolds Cahoon had a son born to him. One day when President Joseph Smith was passing his door, he called the Prophet in and asked him to bless and name the baby. Joseph did so and gave the boy the name of Mahonri Moriancumer. When he had finished the blessing he laid the child on the bed, and turning to 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 ... 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, “The Jaredites,” *Juvenile Instructor*, 1 May 1892, 282).

[http://www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?hideNav=1&locale=0&sourceId=dd00cb7a29c20110VgnVCM100000176f620a\\_\\_&vgnnextoid=198bf4b13819d110VgnVCM1000003a94610aRCRD](http://www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?hideNav=1&locale=0&sourceId=dd00cb7a29c20110VgnVCM100000176f620a__&vgnnextoid=198bf4b13819d110VgnVCM1000003a94610aRCRD)

**Physical description of the gold plates** (there are others, but this one describes the sealed portion)

David Whitmer's description in a letter to the Chicago Times in 1881, in which it was reported that he described them as being "in the shape of a tablet, fastened with three rings, about one third of which appeared to be loose, in plates, the other solid, but with perceptible marks where the plates seemed to be sealed." (thanks to Laura for finding the quote)

What does Jesus mean by the intriguing words “never have I showed myself to man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast” Say what?

“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.’ 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”.

Elder Holland, Christ and the New Covenant, 23

One of my favorite stories about **the gospel and adversity**:

While I was serving as a stake president, the event occurred that I want to use as the keynote to my remarks. I was sitting on the stand at a combined meeting of the stake Primary board and stake Young Women's board where they were jointly inducting from the Primary into the Young Women's organization the eleven-year-old girls who that year had made the big step. They had a lovely program. It was one of those fantastic, beautiful presentations—based on the *Wizard of Oz*, or a take-off on the *Wizard of Oz*, where Dorothy, an eleven-year-old girl, was coming down the yellow brick road together with the tin woodman, the cowardly lion, and the scarecrow. They were singing altered lyrics about the gospel. And Oz, which was one wall of the cultural hall, looked very much like the Los Angeles Temple. They really took off down that road. There were no weeds on that road; there were no munchkins; there were no misplaced tiles; there was no wicked witch of the west. That was one antiseptic yellow brick road, and it was very, very clear that once they got to Oz, they had it made. It was all sewed up.

Following that beautiful presentation with all the snappy tunes and skipping and so on, came a sister who I swear was sent over from Hollywood central casting. (I do not believe she was in my stake; I never saw her before in my life.) She looked as if she had come right off the cover of a fashion magazine—every hair in place—with a photogenic returned missionary husband who looked like he came out of central casting and two or three, or heaven knows how many, photogenic children, all of whom came out of central casting or Kleenex ads or whatever. She enthused over her temple marriage and how wonderful life was with her charming husband and her perfect children and that the young women too could look like her and have a husband like him and children like them if they would stick to the yellow brick road and live in Oz. It was a lovely, sort of tear-jerking, event.

After the event was nearly over, the stake Primary president, who was conducting, made a grave strategic error. She turned to me and, pro forma, said, "President Broderick, is there anything you would like to add to this lovely evening?"

I said, "Yes, there is," and I don't think she has ever forgiven me. What I said was this, "Girls, this has been a beautiful program. I commend the gospel with all of its auxiliaries and the temple to you, but I do not want you to believe for one minute that if you keep all the commandments and live as close to the Lord as you can and do everything right and fight off the entire priests quorum one by one and wait chastely for your missionary to return and pay your tithing and attend your meetings, accept calls from the bishop, and have a temple marriage, I do not want you to believe that bad things will not happen to you. And when that happens, I do not want you to say that God was not true. Or, to say, 'They promised me in Primary, they promised me when I was a Mia Maid, they promised me from the pulpit that if I were very, very good, I would be blessed. But the boy I want doesn't know I exist, or the missionary I've waited for and kept chaste so we both could go to the temple turned out to be a flake,' or far worse things than any of the above. Sad things—children who are sick or developmentally handicapped, husbands who are not faithful, illnesses that can cripple, or violence, betrayals, hurts, deaths, losses—when those things happen, do not say God is not keeping his promises to me. **The gospel of Jesus Christ is not insurance against pain. It is resource in event of pain**, and when that pain comes (and it will come because we came here on earth to have pain among other things), when it comes, rejoice that you have resource to deal with your pain." From Carlfred Broderick, *My Parents Married on a Dare and Other Favorite Essays on Life* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996), 121-143.