

November 11-17, 2024

## Ether 1–5

“REND THAT VEIL OF UNBELIEF”

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### Summary:

The record of the Jaredites, taken from the twenty-four plates found by the people of Limhi in the days of King Mosiah.

*Ether 1. Moroni abridges the writings of Ether—Ether’s genealogy is set forth—The language of the Jaredites is not confounded at the Tower of Babel—The Lord promises to lead them to a choice land and make them a great nation.*

*Ether 2. The Jaredites prepare for their journey to a promised land—It is a choice land whereon men must serve Christ or be swept off—The Lord talks to the brother of Jared for three hours—The Jaredites build barges—The Lord asks the brother of Jared to propose how the barges will be lighted.*

*Ether 3. The brother of Jared sees the finger of the Lord as He touches sixteen stones—Christ shows His spirit body to the brother of Jared—Those who have a perfect knowledge cannot be kept from within the veil—Interpreters are provided to bring the Jaredite record to light.*

*Ether 4. Moroni is commanded to seal up the writings of the brother of Jared—They will not be revealed until men have faith even as the brother of Jared—Christ commands men to believe His words and those of His disciples—Men are commanded to repent, believe the gospel, and be saved.*

*Ether 5. Three witnesses and the work itself will stand as a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### Who am I and how do I speak?

In giving us the account of the Jaredites, Moroni

once again points out the importance of identity and language. The genealogy of Jared is important as well as the fact that in coming from the Tower of Babel area, Jared’s humility resulted in his language not being confounded. “According to some modern commentators, the building of the tower was an example of man’s extreme pride in his own ability. The building became such an obsession that, according to the *Midrash* (Hebrew scripture commentary), when a builder fell off the tower to his death, the other builders paid no attention, but when a brick fell, they would cry: ‘When shall another come in its place?’ According to this interpretation, every generation has its own Tower of Babel, when it begins to

idolize its technology. The moral of the story is thus as applicable today as it was thousands of years ago.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

#### How did languages develop?

Despite the confounding of languages, some patterns of familiarity remain in related languages such as Hebrew, the language of the scriptures. “Hebrew belongs to the family of Semitic languages. Other members of this family are Arabic and Aramaic, and it is assumed that they all evolved from one language which is known as ‘proto-Semitic.’ Among other connected languages were *Ugaritic* and *Akkadian* which are extinct. The name ‘Semitic’ was given to the group in 1781 by the scholar A.L. Schloezer because all the languages in it are spoken by peoples included among the sons of Shem listed in [Genesis 10:21--29](#). ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

## How important is Hebrew in developing and understanding of God's words?

Hebrew, the Bible language and Jewish prayer has become an early 20th century modern language spoken in Israel and once again in many Jewish families.

There are seven main points about Hebrew. **1) The Alphabet** (called the Aleph-Bet) has 22 letters. The first two are *aleph* and *bet*). It includes five final letters, *khaf mem, nun, pey,* and *tzade* and when they appear last, they are written or drawn differently. **2) Related to Arabic and Aramaic** and originally had no vowels like most ancient Semitic languages. Between the middle to end of the first millennium, rabbis instituted a system of dots and dashes to indicate pronunciation. **3) Reads from right to left.** The letters used in *Torah* scrolls was originally referred to as *ktav ashuri,* or *Assyrian* script. It is contrasted with *ktav Ivri,* Hebrew, as well as a script named after the medieval commentator *Rashi* (1040-1105), which was used in Bible and texts. Hebrew was a written and spoken language until the 587 BCE First Temple destruction. Then it was used primarily as a literary and liturgical language. **4) Not All Major Jewish Texts are in Hebrew.** The Bible (except for parts of Ezra and Daniel) is written in Hebrew, as is the *Mishnah,* the corpus of Jewish law. The *Gemara,* rabbinic legal discussions interpreting the *Mishnah,* oral traditions is largely written in Aramaic with some Hebrew. **5) Often Thought to be the Language of Angels and God.** Hebrew is often considered sacred, referred to as *Lashon ha-Kodesh,* the holy language. Rabbinic tradition says Hebrew was spoken humankind prior to the tower of Babel account in Genesis and the tool God used to create the world. **6) Secular Hebrew emerged in the 18th Century.** The *Haskalah,* Jewish enlightenment, sparked a renewed interest in Hebrew, particularly biblical Hebrew, yet, Journals, newspapers, and literature written in Hebrew, presented

many problems. Being such a small language, words may have multiple as well as related meanings. Conversing in Hebrew requires a thought process to sense the meaning and sometimes the multiple intentions. Prophets using God's language pleaded that readers would use the Holy Spirit to discern the appropriate meanings for themselves. Other languages are learned word-for-word, Hebrew is learned "thought-by-thought" or "considering-the-concept." **7) Unused for two Millennia,** Hebrew was dramatically revived, mostly by Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858-1922). He developed Modern Hebrew with a vocabulary incorporating words from ancient and medieval Hebrew, in addition to creating new words. In 1922, Hebrew became one of the official languages of British Mandate Palestine, and today it is a modern language spoken by the citizens of Israel and Jews around the world. Much of this is inferred by Moroni, "And as I suppose that the first part of this record, which speaks concerning the creation of the world, and also of Adam, and an account from that time even to the great tower, and whatsoever things transpired among the children of men until that time, is had among the Jews." (**Ether 1:3**)

## What do I know of Biblical people?

One characteristic of *Semitic* people is their family ties. The brother of Jared listened to the Lord as he was told to gather seeds of every kind, gather animals and gather his family. As mentioned in several lessons previously, gathering is a strong metaphor of returning to Heavenly Father's presence. I noticed that the gathering of this Jaredite family was to the "north" at *Nimrod*. I immediately thought of the north of Israel, close to the Syrian border, where an old Crusader fortress still stands. It is called *Nimrod's* castle. The name of Nimrod is known locally as a Syrian warlord and hunter. The name is used in the Bible. "He was a mighty hunter before the LORD:

wherefore it is said, Even as *Nimrod* the mighty hunter before the LORD.” (**Genesis 10:9**)

### **What do I learn from storms?**

There are some distinctive sea, ship and tempest stories in the Holy Scriptures. In the accounts of Noah, Jared, Nephi, Jesus and Paul, each has a lesson of salvation. Noah was led by the Lord to save righteous life on a barge or sea craft as the earth experienced a great tempest and flooding. The earth was cleansed or in effect, “baptized.” A new life began. “And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him: Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark. And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.” (**Genesis 8:18-20**) Jared’s family experienced a tempest and was delivered and saved. “And it came to pass that 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. And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters.” (**Ether 6:6-7**) “And they did land upon the shore of the promised land. And when they had set their feet upon the shores of the promised land they bowed themselves down upon the face of the land, and did humble themselves before the Lord, and did shed tears of joy before the Lord, because of the multitude of his tender mercies over them.” (**Ether 6:12**)

### **How does Jonah’s chiasmas teach Jesus’ atonement**

Jonah went down into the sea, only to come

up, saved. Even those who cast him overboard were saved! The Lord used the experience of Jonah as a sign of the atonement. “Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.” (**Jonah 1:11-16**)

### **How can I turn-the-tide?**

Nephi’s family also experienced a terrible tempest brought on by their unbelief. Through repentance God also “turned the tide” and saved them. “And there was nothing save it were the power of God, which threatened them with destruction, could soften their hearts; wherefore, when they saw that they were about to be swallowed up in the depths of the sea they repented of the thing which they had done, insomuch that they loosed me. And it came to pass after they had loosed me, behold, I took the compass, and it did work whither I desired it. And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord; and after I had prayed the winds did cease, and the storm did cease, and there was a great calm.” (**1 Nephi 18:20-21**) Jesus saved the Disciples in a tempest. Jesus constantly taught salvation and told us to be of good cheer. “And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and

awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.” **(Matthew 8:23-25)** An Apostle of God, Paul saved the crew of his ship after a violent tempest. “And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.” **(Acts 27:18-22)**

### **How can I see?**

The unusual experience of the brother of Jared in preparing “stones” for the Lord to touch for light during their ship journey also has some Biblical precedence. Glass was made in the Middle East and the Jews often had a role in its development. “The use of glass for ornaments and practical vessels goes back to the third millennium B.C.E., when the first glass beads were produced in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Since that time, and particularly after the revolutionary invention of glassblowing in the first century B.C., the manufacture of glass and glassware has been an important industry, in which Jews have often played a major role.” “The only mention of glass in the Bible occurs in **Job 28:17**, where it is equated with gold. This demonstrates the great value of glass in the biblical period. Archaeological excavations have revealed glass objects in *Erez* (land of) Israel from as early as the 14th century B.C.E., and the Mishnah includes regulations concerning the trade of glass making.” **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

### **What’s in a name?**

The question is a line from William

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Many think that names are just a convention without inherent meaning or worth. In the play, Juliet says, “What’s in a name? “That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet”. She tells Romeo that she loves the person, not the name or the family it comes from. **(‘What’s In a Name?’ Spoken by Juliet, Act 2 Scene 2)** The brother of Jared had a name which has come to us by revelation. “While residing at 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, who was standing near 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.” **(The Juvenile Instructor 27/8 [15April 1892]: 282)** “Mahonri Moriancumer is the name of the brother of Jared, that mighty prophet who led the Jaredites from the Tower of Babel to their North American promised land. Our present knowledge of the life and ministry of this man, one of the greatest prophets ever to live on earth, is so comparatively slight that we do not even find his name recorded in Moroni's abridgment of the Book of Ether. It was, however, made known by the spirit of inspiration to the Prophet.” **(Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.463)** “The prophet of the Jaredite colony, Mahonri Moriancumer, commonly referred to as the brother of Jared, spoke of this land as a choice land . . . above all other lands. He indicated that those people who live here should worship the God of this land if they were to enjoy the blessings of freedom and liberty and be free from bondage. Otherwise, if they failed, they were to be

swept off. And he proclaimed that this is the everlasting decree of God.” (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.575)

**What can I learn from Mahonri?”**

In reviewing the brother of Jared’s faith and works, I discovered a formula emerging that we can benefit from. It is called the “Mahonri Formula.” **1).** Identify the problem. **2).** Consider possible solutions. **3).** Make yourself worthy. **4).** Develop humility. **5).** Make a specific request. Despite backsliding, the Lord recognized the repentance of the Jaredite family and turned

toward them. In fact, due to the humble faith of the brother of Jared, the Lord manifested himself to him. Repentance works! Then, as Moses was shown the “ends of the earth” and was able to see the creation, the beginning to the end, so did the brother of Jared. Moroni was also privileged to see this account. As Jared and his brother turned from their backsliding and reflected humility, they were blessed. So shall the Gentiles be blessed as they return from their backsliding and once again reflect humility.