

LESSON 14
“For A Wise Purpose”
Enos, Jarom, Omni, Words of Mormon

OVERVIEW:

Enos prays for himself, the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Nephites prosper through continual repentance. Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki keep the records. Mormon adds the small plates of Nephi to his abridgement of the large plates. These four books were written by eight men. If all the thousand year history of Lehi’s posterity were written so succinctly [as these one chapter books], the Book of Mormon would be a 20-page pamphlet, instead of a 531 page book. Victor Ludlow, *Studies in the Scriptures*, 7:196

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF ENOS
CHAPTER 1

Enos prays mightily and gains a remission of his sins—The voice of the Lord comes into his mind promising salvation for the Lamanites in a future day—Nephites sought to reclaim the Lamanites in their day—Enos rejoices in his Redeemer. [Between 544 and 420 B.C.] (The posterity of Jacob maintained these records for over four centuries from 544 BC to almost 130 BC, when they were turned over to King Benjamin.)

1 BEHOLD, it came to pass that I, ^aEnos, (The name Enos is a poetic Hebrew word meaning “man.” It first appears in the Bible as the name of Seth’s son. As a grandson of Adam, through Seth, Enos was privileged to be part of the ancient patriarchal line of the priesthood. That Jacob named his son, Enos, should not be surprising because the Nephites often gave their children names from the scriptures.) knowing my father that ^bhe was a just man (This is the equivalent of saying, “My father was faithful in keeping the law of the gospel.” It is common for us to think of a just man as one who is impartial and fair. As used in the scriptures, it has a far deeper meaning. A just man is one that has kept his covenants with exactness and honor. Just is a legal term derived from the Latin *jus*, meaning “right” or “law.” An action that is justified in the eyes of the law is one which, upon examination, can be found to be right and lawful. Thus we read that Joseph the husband of Mary was “a just man”, that Simeon, who blessed the Christ child in the temple, was “just and devout,” and that the angels appear to “just and holy men.” The doctrine of justification embraces the idea that one who has been obedient to the laws and ordinances of the gospel has the rightful expectation of obtaining an exaltation. DCBM, 2:96)—for he ^ctaught me in his language (Enos was taught well enough to be able to write in the reformed Egyptian so he could write on the plates.), and also in the ^dnurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it—

2 And I will tell you of the ^awrestle (Hugh Nibley: “[Enos] was a very thoughtful young man, and he really had a conscience. The uselessness of his life was worrying him sick....When you wrestle before God, that means you try to...What does a wrestler do when he starts to compete? He tries to strike position. They have to take up a position or a stance-you decide your approach, etc. [Suppose] you have been living in the world of daily life and been completely preoccupied with trivial things (‘for to be carnally minded is death’ comes strongly to me all the time; carnally minded is concerned with anything related to this world). If you think about that and then you are going to approach God, you can't do it just cold like that. You can't just say, ‘Hey God, listen to me; I have something to say.’ You are facing the Most High here, and you can't put anything over on him. He can see right through you, so you had better be careful what you say. It is going to be to your great advantage to see through yourself and everything else because he is going to see through you. So you wrestle with it; you have a struggle to tear yourself

loose from your preoccupations and thoughts and your petty ideas. And to keep concentrated during prayer takes some effort...With Enos it's a wrestle.” (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 25, p. 412)) which I had before God. (Everyone must gain their own testimony. Even the prophet’s son is not exempt from gaining his own testimony. Brigham Young said we all must have this wrestle to gain our personal salvation.) before I received a ^bremission of my sins.

3 Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the ^ajoy of the saints, ^bsunk deep into my heart. (Boyd K. Packer: “We emphasize that the greatest work you will do will be within the walls of your home....It is not uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children, for a time, to influences over which they have no control. They agonize over rebellious sons or daughters. They are puzzled over why they are so helpless when they have tried so hard to do what they should. It is my conviction that those wicked influences one day will be overruled. ‘The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught a more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father’s heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.’ (Orson F. Whitney, *Conference Report*, April 1929, p. 110)...When parents keep the covenants they have made at the altar of the temple, their children will be forever bound to them. President Brigham Young said [*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 208]: ‘Let the father and mother, who are members of this Church and Kingdom, take a righteous course, and strive with all their might never to do a wrong, but to do good all their lives; if they have one child or one hundred children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power of earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity; they will return again to the fountain from whence they sprang.’” (*Ensign*, May 1992, p. 68 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 189) This doctrine is true, but consider the following quotation from Joseph Fielding Smith: The idea that the faithfulness of the parents will save their children is comforting, but it is, after all, in tension with principles of agency and individual responsibility. We are taught that we will not be punished for our parents’ sins, nor will we be saved by our parents’ righteousness. Alma the Elder’s prayers brought an angel to comfort his son, but it was still for young Alma to change his life. In *Doctrines of Salvation*, Joseph Fielding Smith reconciled the two concepts of children's being sealed to their parents and their being "saved": "All children born under the covenant belong to their parents in eternity, but that does not mean that they, because of that birthright, will inherit celestial glory. The faith and faithfulness of fathers and mothers will not save disobedient children. "Salvation is an individual matter. . . . But children born under the covenant, who drift away, are still the children of their parents; and the parents have a claim upon them; and if the children have not sinned away all their rights, the parents may be able to bring them through repentance, into the celestial kingdom, but not to receive the exaltation. Of course, if children sin too grievously, they will have to enter the telestial kingdom, or they may even become sons of perdition." Nonetheless, parents may derive comfort from the idea that consistent faithfulness in their own lives will benefit their children, both as an example and through the long-term power of the sealing ordinance. It may be, then, that parents can contribute most to the welfare of their children by perfecting their own lives, including their capacity to love as Christ loved. Thereby they put in motion a current that can affect other lives. It is not for us to judge—we are to leave that to God, who has greater understanding of all of us and our motives. *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:91)

4 And my soul ^ahungered; and I ^bkneeled down before my Maker, and I ^ccried unto him in mighty

^dprayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. (This describes the “wrestle.” “It is doubtful that this and like texts were intended to convey the idea that such persons involved themselves in formal and uninterrupted prayer for such extended times. Paul wrote that we ought to pray without ceasing. In so writing he did not intend that we never get off our knees, but rather that we retain the spirit of prayer at all times, that we have, as it were, a prayer in our hearts. Enos would have spent his day interspersing formal prayer with soul searching, lamenting, imploring God for forgiveness, and pondering the promises of the scriptures. ‘To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven’ (Ecclesiastes 3:1). There is a time to pray, a time to cease from prayer. There is a time to walk alone, a time to walk together. For Enos this was a time for perseverance in prayer, a time to wrestle with the Spirit until an answer came...It would be unfortunate if one were to suppose that the experience recorded herein- as to both the tenacity of his spiritual quest and the response of heaven-is common to or typical of daily prayer. ‘Never at any time have’ our prophets and Apostles ‘taught or endorsed the inordinate and intemperate zeal that encourages endless, sometimes day-long prayers.’ (Bruce R. McConkie, "Our Relationship with the Lord," p. 103.) Times of pentecost and other spiritual outpourings are the more treasured because they are not a part of every day.” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, p. 97))

5 And there came a ^avoice (This was not an audible voice but rather the whispering of the Lord to the heart and soul of Enos. DCBM, 2:97 Verse 10 says the voice came again into his mind. If again, then this is not the first.) unto me, (Boyd K. Packer said: “We do not have the words (even the scriptures do not have words) which perfectly describe the Spirit...The scriptures usually use the word voice, which does not exactly fit. These delicate, refined spiritual communications are not seen with our eyes nor heard with our ears.... It is a voice that one feels more than one hears....I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound...Ponder and pray quietly and persistently.... The answer may not come as a lightning bolt. It may come as a little inspiration here and a little there, 'line upon line, precept upon precept' (D&C 98:12). Some answers will come from reading the scriptures, some from hearing speakers. And, occasionally, when it is important, some will come by very direct and powerful inspiration. The promptings will be clear and unmistakable.” (Boyd K. Packer: *Watchman on the Tower*, by Lucile C. Tate, p. 279)) saying: Enos, thy sins are ^bforgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. (Peace came after the wrestle.)

6 And I, Enos, knew that God ^acould not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

7 And I said: Lord, how is it done? (Enos did not doubt that he had received a forgiveness of his sins, but he wanted to know how it was done.)

8 And he said unto me: ^aBecause of thy ^bfaith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee ^cwhole.

9 Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words I began to feel a ^adesire for the ^bwelfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did ^cpour out my whole soul unto God for them. (Once Enos receives that anchor that comes from forgiveness, then he seeks the welfare of his family, then his enemies.)

10 And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my ^amind again (Describing a way in which revelation comes, the Lord told Joseph Smith: I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. D&C 8:2), saying: I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments. I have ^bgiven unto them this land, and it is a holy land (The prophets of the Book of Mormon frequently referred to the Americas as a promised land. Enos’s record now gives it a higher designation – a holy land. A land which is holy is a land consecrated, dedicated, and set apart, a land blessed by the hand of the Lord for his service and his purposes. This land is the place of Eden, the place of Adam-on-di-Ahman, the place of the New Jerusalem, the birthplace of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration. It

has been designated by God as a sanctuary for truth and righteousness. It is from the American continent that in this dispensation the seeds of salvation have been and will be carried to all other lands. DCBM, 2:99); and I ^ccurse it not save it be for the cause of iniquity; wherefore, I will visit thy brethren according as I have said; and their ^dtransgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads.

11 And after I, Enos, had heard these words, my ^afaith began to be ^bunshaken in the Lord; and I ^cprayed unto him with many long ^dstrugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites.

12 And it came to pass that after I had ^aprayed and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me: I will grant unto thee according to thy ^bdesires, because of thy faith.

13 And now behold, this was the desire which I desired of him—that if it should so be, that my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means be ^adestroyed, (Enos had read the scriptures and knew that this prophecy would be fulfilled.) and the Lamanites should not be ^bdestroyed, that the Lord God would ^cpreserve a record of my people, the Nephites; even if it so be by the power of his holy arm, that it might be ^dbrought forth at some future day unto the Lamanites, that, perhaps, they might be ^ebrought unto salvation— (This would happen in the final dispensation.)

14 For at the present our strugglings were ^avain in restoring them to the true faith. And they swore in their wrath that, if it were possible, they would ^bdestroy our records and us, and also all the traditions of our fathers.

15 Wherefore, I knowing that the Lord God was able to ^apreserve our records, I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it.

16 And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would ^apreserve the ^brecords; and he covenanted with me that he would ^cbring ^dthem forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time.

17 And I, Enos, ^aknew it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore my soul did rest.

18 And the Lord said unto me: Thy fathers have also required of me this thing; and it shall be done unto them according to their faith; for their faith was like unto thine.

19 And now it came to pass that I, Enos, went about among the people of Nephi, prophesying of things to come, and testifying of the things which I had heard and seen.

20 And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to ^arestore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God. But our ^blabors were vain; their ^chatred was fixed, and they were led by their evil nature that they became wild, and ferocious, and a ^dblood-thirsty people, full of ^eidolatry and ^ffilthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in ^gtents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the ^hbow, and in the cimeter, and the ax. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat; and they were continually seeking to destroy us. (In our day, the Palestinians, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, etc. Their hatred is fixed.)

21 And it came to pass that the people of Nephi did till the land, and ^araise all manner of grain, and of fruit, and ^bflocks of herds, and flocks of all manner of cattle of every kind, and goats, and wild goats, and also many horses.

22 And there were exceedingly many ^aprophets among us. And the people were a ^bstiffnecked people, hard to understand.

23 And there was nothing save it was exceeding ^aharshness, ^bpreaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually ^creminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God, and all these things—stirring them up ^dcontinually to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was nothing short of these things, and exceedingly great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction. And after this manner do I write concerning them.

24 And I saw ^awars between the Nephites and Lamanites in the course of my days.

25 And it came to pass that I began to be old, *and an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away from the time that our father Lehi ^aleft Jerusalem.

26 And I saw that I ^amust soon go down to my grave, having been wrought upon by the power of God that I must preach and prophesy unto this people, and declare the word according to the truth which is in Christ. And I have declared it in all my days, and have rejoiced in it above that of the world.

27 And I soon go to the place of my ^arest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall ^brest. And I rejoice in the day when my ^cmortal shall put on ^dimmortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the ^emansions of my Father. (Calling and election made sure.) Amen.

* Verse 25 [420 B.C.].

THE BOOK OF JAROM CHAPTER 1

*The Nephites keep the law of Moses, look forward to the coming of Christ, and prosper in the land—
Many prophets labor to keep them in the way of truth. [Between 420 and 361 B.C.]*

1 NOW behold, I, Jarom (The English equivalent of Jarom is Richard. Jarom means to be prosperous, to be happy.), write a few words according to the commandment of my father, Enos, that our ^agenealogy may be kept.

2 And as ^athese plates are ^bsmall, (There is little remaining room on the plates.) and as these things are ^cwritten for the intent of the benefit of our brethren the ^dLamanites, wherefore, it must needs be that I write a little; but I shall not write the things of my prophesying, nor of my revelations. For what could I write more than my fathers have written? (Jarom does not write down on the plates his revelations and prophecies, because they have already been written by other prophets before him. The living prophets use the scriptures, they don't supplant them. Even the Savior, when he visited America after his resurrection had the scriptures brought to him. He added the scriptures they didn't have, but he didn't supplant the ones they had. TBM, 1:423. Dallin H. Oaks: "There is something deficient about any service that is conscious of self. A few months after my calling to the Council of the Twelve, I expressed my feelings of inadequacy to one of the senior members of my quorum. He responded with this mild reproof and challenging insight: 'I suppose your feelings are understandable. But you should work for a condition where you will not be preoccupied with yourself and your own feelings and can give your entire concern to others, to the work of the Lord in all the world.' Whenever we focus on ourselves, even in our service to others, we fall short of the example of our Savior, who gave himself as a total and unqualified sacrifice for all mankind. Those who seek to follow his example must lose themselves in their service to others." (Pure in Heart, pp. 45-6)) For have not they revealed the plan of salvation? (The Bible does not have a reference to a divine plan of salvation, but the Book of Mormon has several references to the "merciful plan of the great Creator," "the plan of our God," "the great and eternal plan of deliverance," "the plan of redemption," the "plan of happiness," and "the plan of mercy." DCBM, 2:106) I say unto you, Yea; and this sufficeth me.

3 Behold, it is expedient that much should be done among this people, because of the hardness of their hearts, and the deafness of their ears, and the blindness of their minds, and the ^astiffness of their necks; nevertheless, God is exceedingly merciful unto them, and has not as yet ^bswept them off from the face of the land.

4 And there are many among us who have many ^arevelations, for they are not all ^bstiffnecked. And as many as are not stiffnecked and have faith, have ^ccommunion with the Holy Spirit, which maketh manifest unto the children of men, according to their faith. (This is a remarkable text. The announcement is not that the faithful are entitled to receive revelation but rather that the faithful will not be without revelation! The spirit of revelation is not intended to be a privilege sparingly granted among the household of faith; rather, it is obligatory upon all who are or can be called Saints. Without the spirit of revelation we can neither preach nor teach the gospel, nor know of its certainty. Without revelation

there is nor can be no true religion. DCBM, 2:107)

5 And now, behold, *two hundred years had passed away, and the people of Nephi had waxed strong in the land. They observed to ^akeep the law of Moses and the ^bsabbath day holy unto the Lord. And they ^cprofaned not; (Literally, the “profane” is that which is “out of the temple,” meaning that which does not center in God and a sacred or covenant relationship with him. To take the Lord’s name in vain is to profane the name of the Holy One; to violate the Sabbath day is to profane the holy day; and the breaking of any commandment constitutes the profaning of that commandment. To be profane is to be in a state of irreverence or impiety. It is to have contempt for the things of God. To profane is to pollute or to desecrate the sacred. For Jarom to testify that his people profaned not is for him to attest that they were a religious people who earnestly sought to live in accordance with the covenants they had made with their God. DCBM, 2:108) neither did they ^dblaspheme. And the ^elaws of the land were exceedingly strict.

6 And they were scattered upon ^amuch of the face of the land, and the Lamanites also. And they were exceedingly more ^bnumerous than were they of the Nephites; and they loved ^cmurder and would drink the ^dblood of beasts.

7 And it came to pass that they came many times against us, the Nephites, to battle. (All Nephite/Lamanite battles are fought in Nephite territory, except the battles at the very end. Hugh Nibley.) But our ^akings and our ^bleaders were mighty men in the faith of the Lord; and they taught the people the ways of the Lord; wherefore, we withstood the Lamanites and swept them away out of ^cour lands, and began to fortify our cities, or whatsoever place of our inheritance. (As long as the Nephites were righteous, they would defeat the Lamanites. The Lamanites were there to stir up the Nephites to be righteous. What the Nephites had to fear was their own unrighteousness.)

8 And we multiplied exceedingly, and spread upon the face of the land, and became exceedingly rich in ^agold, and in silver, and in precious things, and in fine ^bworkmanship of wood, in buildings, and in ^cmachinery, and also in iron and copper, and brass and steel, making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, and ^dweapons of war—yea, the sharp pointed arrow, and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin, and all preparations for war. (Build up defenses to protect your freedom and liberty. Don’t use it aggressively against your enemies, but only in defense. America has used its resources to defend itself. But this will only work if the people are righteous. Alma 43: 45 Nevertheless, the Nephites were inspired by a ^abetter cause, for they were not ^bfighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their ^cliberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church. 46 And they were doing that which they felt was the ^aduty which they owed to their God; for the Lord had said unto them, and also unto their fathers, that: ^bInasmuch as ye are not guilty of the ^cfirst offense, neither the second, ye shall not suffer yourselves to be slain by the hands of your enemies. 47 And again, the Lord has said that: Ye shall ^adefend your families even unto ^bbloodshed. Therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with the Lamanites, to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion. Alma 48:14 Now the Nephites were taught to defend themselves against their enemies, even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary; yea, and they were also taught ^anever to give an offense, yea, and never to raise the sword except it were against an enemy, except it were to preserve their lives. D&C 98:23 Now, I speak unto you concerning your families—if men will ^asmite you, or your families, once, and ye ^bbear it patiently and ^crevile not against them, neither seek ^drevenge, ye shall be ^erewarded; 24 But if ye bear it not patiently, it shall be accounted unto you as being ^ameted out as a just measure unto you. 25 And again, if your enemy shall smite you the second time, and you revile not against your enemy, and bear it patiently, your reward shall be an ^ahundredfold. 26 And again, if he shall smite you the third time, and ye bear it ^apatiently, your reward shall be doubled unto you four-fold; 27 And these three ^atestimonies shall stand against your enemy if he repent not, and shall not be blotted out. 28 And now, verily I say unto you, if that enemy shall escape my vengeance, that he be not brought into judgment before me, then ye shall see to it that ye ^awarn him in my name, that he come no more upon you, neither upon your

family, even your children's children unto the third and fourth generation. 29 And then, if he shall come upon you or your children, or your children's children unto the third and fourth generation, I have delivered thine ^aenemy into thine hands; 30 And then if thou wilt spare him, thou shalt be rewarded for thy ^arighteousness; and also thy children and thy children's children unto the third and fourth generation. 31 Nevertheless, thine enemy is in thine hands; and if thou rewardest him according to his works thou art justified; if he has sought thy life, and thy life is endangered by him, thine enemy is in thine hands and thou art justified. 32 Behold, this is the law I gave unto my servant Nephi, and thy ^afathers, Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, and all mine ancient prophets and apostles. 33 And again, this is the ^alaw that I gave unto mine ancients, that they should not go out unto battle against any nation, kindred, tongue, or people, save I, the Lord, commanded them. 34 And if any nation, tongue, or people should proclaim war against them, they should first lift a standard of ^apeace unto that people, nation, or tongue; 35 And if that people did not accept the offering of peace, neither the second nor the third time, they should bring these testimonies before the Lord; 36 Then I, the Lord, would give unto them a commandment, and justify them in going out to battle against that nation, tongue, or people. 37 And I, the Lord, would ^afight their battles, and their children's battles, and their children's children's, until they had avenged themselves on all their enemies, to the third and fourth generation. 38 Behold, this is an ^aensample unto all people, saith the Lord your God, for justification before me.)

9 And thus being prepared to meet the Lamanites, they did not prosper against us. But the word of the Lord was verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: ^aInasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall ^bprosper in the land.

10 And it came to pass that the prophets of the Lord did threaten the people of Nephi, according to the word of God, that if they did not keep the commandments, but should fall into transgression, they should be ^adestroyed from off the face of the land. (Even the best defenses will not help you if you are not righteous.)

11 Wherefore, the prophets, and the priests, and the ^ateachers, (Melchizedek priesthood positions.) did labor diligently, exhorting with all long-suffering the people to ^bdiligence; teaching the ^claw of Moses, and the intent for which it was given; persuading them to ^dlook forward unto the Messiah, and ^ebelieve in him to come ^eas though he already was. And after this manner did they teach them.

12 And it came to pass that by so doing they kept them from being ^adestroyed upon the face of the land; for they did ^bprick their hearts with the word, ^ccontinually stirring them up unto repentance.

13 And it came to pass that *two hundred and thirty and eight years had passed away—after the manner of wars, and ^acontentions, and dissensions, for the space of ^bmuch of the time.

14 And I, Jarom, do not write more, for the plates are ^asmall. But behold, my brethren, ye can go to the ^bother plates (large plates) of Nephi; for behold, upon them the records of our wars are engraven, according to the writings of the ^ckings, or those which they caused to be written.

15 And I deliver these plates into the hands of my son Omni, that they may be kept according to the ^acommandments of my fathers.

* Verse 5 [399 B.C.]; Verse 13 [361 B.C.].

THE BOOK OF OMNI CHAPTER 1

Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki, each in turn, keep the records—Mosiah discovers the people of Zarahemla who came from Jerusalem in the days of Zedekiah—He is made king over them—The Mulekites had discovered Coriantumr, the last of the Jaredites—King Benjamin succeeds Mosiah—Men should offer their souls as an offering to Christ. [Between 361 and 130 B.C.]

1 BEHOLD, it came to pass that I, Omni, being commanded by my father, Jarom, that I should write somewhat upon ^athese plates, to preserve our genealogy—

2 Wherefore, in my days, I would that ye should know that I fought much with the sword (The king probably used the sword of Laban. Omni does not mention that he had it. But by the time we get to King Benjamin, he had the sword of Laban. Words of Mormon 1:13. So it most likely was kept by the kings.) to preserve my people, the Nephites, from falling into the hands of their enemies, the Lamanites. But behold, I of myself ^aam a wicked man, and I have not kept the statutes and the commandments of the Lord as I ought to have done. (It need not be supposed from such an admission that he was guilty of any gross immorality, but rather that he was not zealous in honoring the law of Moses and in keeping other religious obligations. Not having lived according to the Spirit, he was not prepared to teach or write after the manner of the Spirit, and therefore found it necessary to pass the plates to his son Amaron without making any spiritual addition to them. DCBM, 2:113)

3 And it came to pass that ^{*}two hundred and seventy and six years had passed away, and we had many seasons of peace; and we had many ^aseasons of serious war and bloodshed. Yea, and in fine, ^{*}two hundred and eighty and two years had passed away, and I had kept these plates according to the ^bcommandments of my ^cfathers; and I ^dconferred them upon my son Amaron. And I make an end.

4 And now I, Amaron, write the things whatsoever I write, which are few, in the book of my father.

5 Behold, it came to pass that ^{*}three hundred and twenty years had passed away, and the more wicked part of the Nephites were ^adestroyed.

6 For the Lord would not suffer, after he had led them out of the land of Jerusalem and kept and preserved them from falling into the hands of their enemies, yea, he would not suffer that the words should not be verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: ^aInasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall not ^bprosper in the land.

7 Wherefore, the Lord did visit them in great judgment; nevertheless, he did spare the righteous that they should not perish, but did deliver them out of the hands of their enemies.

8 And it came to pass that I did deliver the plates unto my brother Chemish (This word means fifth. He may have been the fifth since Nephi or the fifth son in his family.).

9 Now I, Chemish, (Chemish has the distinction of writing only one verse. He contributes less to the Book of Mormon than any other author.) write what few things I write, in the same book with my brother; for behold, I saw the last which he wrote, that he wrote it with his own hand; and he wrote it in the day that he delivered them unto me. And after this manner we keep the ^arecords, for it is according to the commandments of our fathers (Joseph Fielding Smith said: “The importance of keeping individual records should be impressed upon each member of the Church. Let each member of the Church ask himself, or herself, the following questions. Do I know the date of my birth? Do I know the date of my baptism? Confirmation? By whom were these ordinances performed? Do the brethren know when they were ordained to offices in the Aaronic Priesthood, and by whom? Do they know who conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood, and when? All of these things are important, and no member should rely solely on the record of the Church for this information. Records may be burned, or get lost. This has frequently happened. Members of the Church are writing constantly to bishops, presidents of stakes and to the Historian's Office, seeking this kind of information which cannot be obtained in many instances. All important dates and events should be recorded in your family history. If any member of the Church desires to keep a full and complete journal of his life, it is well and good; but each member should have a record of the vital events in his life in some permanent manner.” (*Church History & Modern Revelation*, p. 100)). And I make an end.

10 Behold, I, Abinadom, am the son of Chemish. Behold, it came to pass that I saw much war and contention between my people, the Nephites, and the Lamanites; and I, with my own sword, (again, the spiritual leader did not have the sword of Laban, it was kept by the kings.) have taken the lives of many of the Lamanites in the defence of my brethren.

11 And behold, the ^arecord of this people is engraven upon plates which is had by the ^bkings, (The kings

kept the large plates, while the small plates were kept in Lehi's family.) according to the generations; and I know of no revelation save that which has been written, neither prophecy; wherefore, that which is sufficient is written. And I make an end.

12 Behold, I am Amaleki, (Amaleki wrote most of the book of Omni.) the son of Abinadom. Behold, I will speak unto you somewhat concerning ^aMosiah, who was made king over the ^bland of Zarahemla; for behold, he being ^cwarned of the Lord that he should ^dflee out of the ^eland of ^fNephi, (Commanded to flee like Lehi was commanded to flee from Jerusalem. Sometimes the righteous can no longer remain in a wicked area. Their good influence does no good and they are in danger of losing their lives. Then the Lord commands them to depart from the wicked. In the future, the members of the Church will need to flee the wickedness of the world by going to Zion, Jackson County Missouri.) and as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord should also ^gdepart out of the land with him, into the wilderness— (President Anthony V. Ivins: “There is a great deal of talk about the geography of the Book of Mormon. Where was the land of Zarahemla? Where was the City of Zarahemla? and other geographic matters. It does not make any difference to us. There has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles that question. So the Church says we are just waiting until we discover the truth. All kinds of theories have been advanced. I have talked with at least half a dozen men that have found the very place where the City of Zarahemla stood, and notwithstanding the fact that they profess to be Book of Mormon students, they vary a thousand miles apart in the places they have located. We do not offer any definite solution. As you study the Book of Mormon keep these things in mind and do not make definite statements concerning things that have not been proven in advance to be true.” (*Conference Reports*, Apr. 1929, p. 16) Harold B. Lee said: “Don't be concerned over Book of Mormon geography. Some say the Hill Cumorah was in southern Mexico (and someone pushed it down still farther) and not in western New York. Well, if the Lord wanted us to know where it was or where Zarahemla was, He'd have given us latitude and longitude, don't you think? And why bother our heads trying to discover with archaeological certainty the geographical locations of the cities of the Book of Mormon like Zarahemla? (66-07) “The witness of the Book of Mormon is not found in the ruins of Central and South America. They may be outward evidences of a people long since disappeared. The real witness is that which is found in the Book of Mormon itself.” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 156))

13 And it came to pass that he did according as the Lord had commanded him. And they departed out of the land into the wilderness, as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord; and they were led by many preachings and prophesyings. And they were admonished continually by the word of God; and they were led by the power of his ^aarm, through the wilderness until they came down (Not south, but to a less elevated area.) into the land which is called the ^bland of Zarahemla.

14 And they discovered a ^apeople, who were called the people of Zarahemla. (Mulekites, from the tribe of Judah. Mulek and his people arrived in the north, while the Lehites arrived in the south.) Now, there was great rejoicing among the people of Zarahemla; and also Zarahemla did rejoice exceedingly, because the Lord had sent the people of Mosiah with the ^bplates of brass which contained the record of the Jews.

15 Behold, it came to pass that Mosiah discovered that the people of ^aZarahemla came out from Jerusalem at the time that ^bZedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon. (Hugh Nibley said: “Nowhere are we told that Mulek was the leader of the company, and indeed at his age that would be unthinkable-his father Zedekiah was only about thirty-one when he was taken prisoner and blinded. But as the sole survivor of the royal family and heir presumptive to the throne, he was certainly the most important person in the company, a source of legitimate pride to the group. The name tells everything-‘Mulek’ is not found anywhere in the Bible, but any student of Semitic languages will instantly recognize it as the best-known form of diminutive or caritative, a term of affection and endearment meaning ‘little king.’ What could they call the uncrowned child, last of his line, but their little king? And what could they call themselves but Mulekiyah or Mulekites?” (*Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, p. 118) James E. Talmage said: “The Prophet Joseph Smith

informed us...that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters...Thus these descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim grew together upon this American continent, with a sprinkling from the house of Judah, from Mulek descended, who left Jerusalem eleven years after Lehi, and founded the colony afterwards known as Zarahemla found by Mosiah -- thus making a combination, an intermixture of Ephraim and Manasseh with the remnants of Judah, and for aught we know, the remnants of some other tribes that might have accompanied Mulek. And such have grown up upon the American continent.' -- From "Discourse by Apostle Erastus Snow," at Logan, Utah, May 6, 1882, see Journal of Discourses, vol. 23, pp. 184, 185." (James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith*, p.504-5))

16 And they ^ajourneyed in the wilderness, and were brought by the hand of the Lord across the great waters, into the land (northern area) where Mosiah discovered them; and they had dwelt there from that time forth.

17 And at the time that Mosiah discovered them, they had become exceedingly numerous. Nevertheless, they had had many wars and serious contentions, and had fallen by the sword from time to time; and their ^alanguage had become corrupted; and they had brought no ^brecords with them; and they denied the being of their Creator; and Mosiah, nor the people of Mosiah, could understand them.

18 But it came to pass that Mosiah caused that they should be taught in his ^alanguage. And it came to pass that after they were taught in the language of Mosiah, Zarahemla gave a genealogy of his fathers, according to his memory; and they are written, but ^bnot in these plates.

19 And it came to pass that the people of Zarahemla, and of Mosiah, did ^aunite together; and ^bMosiah was appointed to be their king.

20 And it came to pass in the days of Mosiah, there was a large ^astone brought unto him with engravings on it; and he did ^binterpret the engravings by the gift and power of God.

21 And they gave an account of one ^aCoriantumr, and the slain of his people. (Jaredites) And Coriantumr was discovered by the people of Zarahemla; and he dwelt with them for the space of nine moons. (The Coriantumr who lived the people of Zarahemla for a short period was the last military leader of the Jaredite nation. The Book of Mormon does not specifically state when Coriantumr lived with the people of Zarahemla, but it would have to be sometime after 589 BC (when the colony of Mulek first left Jerusalem) and before about 200 BC (when Mosiah and his group first came into the land of Zarahemla). The twentieth verse of Omni tells of a large stone that was brought to Mosiah and which contained an account of Coriantumr. However, this does not necessarily indicate that Coriantumr was still alive in the days of Mosiah; his stay of "nine moons" among the people of Zarahemla could have occurred decades or even centuries before the time of Mosiah. Unlocking the Book of Mormon, Ludlow, 142)

22 It also spake a few words concerning his fathers. And his first parents came out from the ^atower, at the time the Lord ^bconfounded the language of the people; and the severity of the Lord fell upon them according to his judgments, which are just; and their ^cbones lay scattered in the land northward.

23 Behold, I, Amaleki, was born in the days of Mosiah; and I have lived to see his death; and ^aBenjamin, ^bhis son, reigneth in his stead.

24 And behold, I have seen, in the days of king Benjamin, a serious war and much bloodshed between the Nephites and the Lamanites. But behold, the Nephites did obtain much advantage over them; yea, insomuch that king Benjamin did drive them out of the land of Zarahemla.

25 And it came to pass that I began to be old; and, having no seed (Amaleki had no children, so he passed the records to Benjamin.), and knowing king ^aBenjamin to be a just man before the Lord, wherefore, I shall ^bdeliver up ^cthese (small plates of Nephi) plates unto him, exhorting all men to come unto God, the Holy One of Israel, and believe in prophesying, and in revelations, and in the ministering of angels, and in the gift of speaking with tongues, and in the gift of interpreting languages, and in all things which are ^dgood; for there is nothing which is good save it comes from the Lord; and that which is evil cometh from the devil. (Article of Faith 7: We believe in the ^agift of ^btongues, ^cprophecy,

^drevelation, ^cvisions, ^fhealing, ^ginterpretation of tongues, and so forth. Article of Faith 13: ^aWe believe in being ^bhonest, true, ^cchaste, ^dbenevolent, virtuous, and in doing ^egood to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we ^fhope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to ^gendure all things. If there is anything ^hvirtuous, ⁱlovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.)

26 And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should ^acome unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and ^boffer your whole souls as an ^coffering unto him, (Neal A. Maxwell said: “Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed! (Ensign, May 1995, p. 68.)... “The submission of one’s will is placing on God’s altar the only uniquely personal thing one has to place there. The many other things we ‘give’ are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. (If Thou Endure It Well, p. 54.)” (Cory H. Maxwell, *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, p. 293)) and continue in ^dfasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved.

27 And now I would speak somewhat concerning a certain ^anumber who went up (Up in elevation but back to the South.) into the wilderness to ^breturn to the ^cland of Nephi; for there was a large number who were desirous to possess the land of their inheritance. (These were led by a strong and mighty man named Zeniff. The story being referred to is found in Mosiah 9:1-4. Zeniff takes a group of people from their new home of Zarahemla back to the land of Nephi. Apparently, his memory was that the grass was considerably greener in the land of Nephi. After a violent contention along the way, the party turned back with only fifty surviving. On a second attempt, Zeniff and his followers were successful in settling in the land of Nephi. They become the people of king Noah and king Limhi who are eventually forced into slavery to the Lamanites. The entire story is contained in Mosiah 9-22.)

28 Wherefore, they went up into the wilderness. And their leader being a strong and mighty man, and a stiffnecked man, wherefore he caused a contention among them; and they were ^aall slain, save fifty, in the wilderness, and they returned again to the land of Zarahemla.

29 And it came to pass that they also took others to a considerable number, and took their journey again into the wilderness.

30 And I, Amaleki, had a brother, who also went with them; and I have not since known concerning them. And I am about to lie down in my grave; and ^athese plates (small plates of Nephi) are full. And I make an end of my speaking. (That part of the Book of Mormon that comes from the small plates of Nephi ends at this point. Following the Words of Mormon, the Book of Mormon is an abridgement from the large plates of Nephi with occasional excerpts from those plates and with interpolations and writings from Mormon and Moroni. DCBM, 2:117)

* Verse 3 [323 B.C., 317 B.C.]; Verse 5 [279 B.C.].

THE WORDS OF MORMON CHAPTER 1

Mormon abridges their history onto the plates of Mormon—He inserts the plates of Nephi into the abridgement—King Benjamin establishes peace in the land. [About A.D. 385] (The Words of Mormon were apparently written near the end of Mormon’s life for the purpose of connecting two major records. It was made known to Mormon that the small plates of Nephi (which ended when Benjamin was a relatively young man) might be used to replace his abridgement of the book of Lehi [the first book on the large plates of Nephi] (which ended when Benjamin was an old man about ready to die). So that a gap would not occur in the history of the Nephites, Mormon included the major events of the lifetime of King Benjamin in the Words of Mormon, thus connecting the account on the small plates of Nephi with Mormon’s abridgement of the book of Mosiah. Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 171. After Nephi’s death, the large plates remained with the kings down to the time of Mormon, while the small plates went to Jacob and his posterity until the time of Amaleki, who gave

them to King Benjamin. Thus the two sets of plates were back into the possession of one person. Victor Ludlow, *Studies in the Scriptures*, 7:203.)

1 AND now I, Mormon, being about to deliver up the ^arecord which I have been making into the hands of my son Moroni, behold I have witnessed almost all the destruction of my people, the Nephites.

2 And it is ^amany hundred years after the coming of Christ *that I deliver these records into the hands of my son; and it supposeth me that he will witness the entire ^bdestruction of my people. But may God grant that he may survive them, that he may write somewhat concerning them, and somewhat concerning Christ, that perhaps some day it may ^cprofit them. (Writing unto the Lamanites.)

3 And now, I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written; for after I had made an ^aabridgment from the ^bplates of Nephi (the large plates), down to the reign of this king Benjamin, of whom Amaleki spake, I searched among the ^crecords which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates (the small plates), which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this king ^dBenjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi. (Of his work of abridgement Mormon wrote:

3 Nephi 5: 8 And there had many things transpired which, in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a ^ahundredth part of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years; 9 But behold there are ^arecords which do contain ^ball the proceedings of this people; and a ^cshorter but true account was given by Nephi. 10 Therefore I have made my ^arecord of these things according to the record of Nephi, which was engraven on the plates which were called the ^bplates of Nephi. 11 And behold, I do make the record on plates which I have made with mine own hands. 16 Therefore I do make my record from the accounts which have been given by those who were before me, until the commencement of my day; 17 And then I do make a ^arecord of the things which I have seen with mine own eyes. Mormon 5: 9 And also that a knowledge of these things must ^acome unto the remnant of these people, and also unto the Gentiles, who the Lord hath said should ^bscatter this people, and this people should be counted as naught among them—therefore ^cI write a ^dsmall abridgment, daring not to give a full account of the things which I have seen, because of the commandment which I have received, and also that ye might not have too great sorrow because of the wickedness of this people.)

4 And the things which are upon these plates ^apleasing me, because of the prophecies of the coming of Christ; and my fathers knowing that many of them have been fulfilled; yea, and I also know that as many things as have been ^bprophesied concerning us down to this day have been fulfilled, and as many as go beyond this day must surely come to pass—

5 Wherefore, I chose ^athese things (the small plates), to finish my ^brecord upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the ^cplates of Nephi (the large plates); and I cannot write the ^dhundredth part of the things of my people.

6 But behold, I shall take these plates, (small plates) which contain these prophesyings and revelations, and put them with the remainder of my record, for they are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren. (Mormon included the unabridged small plates with the remainder of his collection for a “wise purpose” in the Lord. God knows all things, even the end from the beginning. He instructed Nephi to begin the small plates and Mormon to include the small plates, this because he knew full well that through the machinations of the ungodly the 116 pages of the manuscript (translated from the book of Lehi) would be lost to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Rather than retranslate Mormon’s abridgement of the first 475 years of Nephite history – and have the work falsely attacked and discredited by those who had maliciously altered the original manuscript – the Lord gave instructions for Joseph Smith to translate the small plates, a record which, providentially, covered approximately the same time period. It is generally believed that Joseph Smith continued his translation of the large plates of Nephi and the works of Moroni (that is, to the end of the Book of Mormon) before he translated the small plates. DCBM, 2:121-122. Since the small plates contained a more spiritual account of the same time period, the teachings of greatest value were not lost for the readers of the Book of Mormon. Victor

Ludlow, *Studies in the Scriptures*, 7:203. Again, this statement indicates that Mormon has not yet abridged the record from Mosiah to Mormon. He has only accomplished the work to the reign of Benjamin.)

7 And I do this for a ^awise ^bpurpose; (Jeffrey R. Holland said: “At least six times in the Book of Mormon the phrase ‘for a wise purpose’ is used in reference to the making, writing, and preserving of the small plates of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 9:5; Words of Mormon 1:7; Alma 37:2,12,14,18). We know one such wise purpose—the most obvious one—was to compensate for the lost 116 pages of manuscript. But it strikes me that there is a ‘wiser purpose’ than that....The key to such a suggestion is in verse 45 of Section 10....He says, ‘Behold, there are many things engraven upon the [small] plates of Nephi which do throw *greater views* upon my gospel.’ So clearly...it was not tit for tat, this for that—you give me 116 pages of manuscript and I’ll give you 142 pages of printed text. Not so. We got back more than we lost. And it was known from the beginning that it would be so. We do not know exactly what we missed in the 116 pages, but we do know that what we received on the small plates was the personal declarations of three great witnesses, [Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah],...testifying that Jesus is the Christ....I think you could make a pretty obvious case that the *sole* purpose of the small plates was to give a platform for these three witnesses.” (*CES Symposium*, BYU, Aug. 9, 1994 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 198)) for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord ^cknoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he ^dworketh in me to do according to his ^ewill.

8 And my ^aprayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a ^bdelightful people.

9 And now I, Mormon, *proceed to finish out my record, which I take from the (large) plates of Nephi; and I make it according to the knowledge and the ^aunderstanding which God has given me.

10 Wherefore, it came to pass that after Amaleki had ^adelivered up these plates (small plates) into the hands of king Benjamin, he took them and put them with the ^bother plates, (large plates) which contained records which had been handed down by the ^ckings, from generation to generation until the days of king Benjamin.

11 And they were handed down from king Benjamin, from generation to generation until they have fallen into ^amy hands. And I, Mormon, pray to God that they may be preserved from this time henceforth. And I know that they will be preserved; for there are great things written upon them, out of which ^bmy people and their brethren shall be ^cjudged at the great and last day, according to the word of God which is written.

12 And now, concerning this king Benjamin—he had somewhat of contentions among his own people.

13 And it came to pass also that the armies of the Lamanites came down out of the ^aland of Nephi, to battle against his people. But behold, king Benjamin gathered together his armies, and he did stand against them; and he did fight with the strength of his own arm, with the ^bsword of Laban. (The sword of Laban had been kept by the kings since Nephi.)

14 And in the ^astrength of the Lord they did contend against their enemies, until they had slain many thousands of the Lamanites. And it came to pass that they did contend against the Lamanites until they had driven them out of all the lands of their ^binheritance.

15 And it came to pass that after there had been false ^aChrists, (A false Christ is not a person. It is a false system of worship, a false church, a false cult that says: Lo here is salvation; here is the doctrine of Christ. Come and believe thus and so, and ye shall be saved. It is any concept or philosophy that says that redemption, salvation, sanctification, justification, and all of the promised rewards can be gained in any way except that set forth by the apostles and prophets. *Millennial Messiah*, p. 47-48) and their mouths had been shut, and they punished according to their crimes;

16 And after there had been ^afalse prophets, and false preachers and teachers among the people, and all these having been punished according to their crimes; and after there having been much contention and

many dissensions away ^bunto the Lamanites, behold, it came to pass that king Benjamin, with the assistance of the holy ^cprophets who were among his people—

17 For behold, king Benjamin was a ^aholy man, and he did reign over his people in righteousness; and there were many holy men in the land, and they did speak the word of God with ^bpower and with authority; and they did use much ^csharpness because of the stiffneckedness of the people—

18 Wherefore, with the help of these, king ^aBenjamin, by laboring with all the might of his ^bbody and the ^bfaculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land.

* Verse 2 [About A.D. 385]; Verse 9 [About A.D. 385].