

Book of Mormon 33  
A Sure Foundation  
(Helaman 1-5)  
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and **physical evidences supporting Book of Mormon account**)

I. In the midst of the struggles between Nephites and Lamanites we meet for the first time **a major source of the eventual downfall of the Nephites --- the Gadianton Robbers.**

A. "And behold, in the end of this book ye shall see that this Gadianton did prove the overthrow, yea almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi" (Helaman 2:13).

B. Actually we must understand it was the Gadianton Robbers **in conjunction with the pride and wickedness of the Nephites which led to their downfall.** Here is the fuller pattern.

II. Destruction began to threaten the Nephites **when those who chose evil became more numerous than those who chose good.**

A. "For as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted" (Helaman 5:2).

1. A major cause of choosing evil was pride, which for them came from having great riches (Helaman 3:36). However there are many causes of pride.

B. The proud **boasted in their own strength**, and relied not on the strength of Christ.

".. because of the pride of their hearts, because of their exceeding riches, yea, it was because of their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery,..." (Helaman 4:12).

III. It was also contentions. Contentions were so severe they caused migrations.

A. "...there was much contention and many dissensions; in the which there were an exceedingly great many ... departed... and they did travel to an exceedingly great distance,... and even they did spread forth into all parts of the land" (Helaman 3:3-5).

B. These migrating people moved into those lands left desolate by the Jaredites, who had become extinct due to the very same forms of unrighteousness (Helaman 3:6).

C. Note that the result of boasting of one's own strength is that the Lord withdraws His strength, and we are left **with only our own strength** (Helaman 4:13), which is weak.

IV. Their prophets did teach they must build their foundation on the sure rock of Jesus Christ.

A. Those Nephites who were strong showed us how to do this.

"Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the **filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts**, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God" (Helaman 3:35).

B. Those who built on this True Rock could endure the most difficult trials and tribulations.

1. Helaman promised his sons, "And now ...remember... that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ ... that ye must build your foundation: that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty

storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you... because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build **they cannot fall**" (Helaman 5:12).

C. Indeed, his sons Nephi and Lehi, did experience such storms. **But because they had built their foundation on Christ**, they were miraculously preserved, and **for that very reason**.

1. Nephi and Lehi while imprisoned experienced a miraculous deliverance. And "... there came a voice unto them..." [saying] "Peace ... be unto **you because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world**" (Helaman 5:46-7).

2. While there is only One Rock, there are many kinds of sand.

a. One form is forsaking one's faith in God and Christ altogether.

b. Another is thinking all roads of belief lead to Heaven, and Jesus **is not the only Way**.

c. Another is that one can sin and still get into Heaven without repentance, though Jesus taught Faith in Him and repentance are both necessary.

d. Another is that Jesus was only a good teacher, not divine, having no power to save.

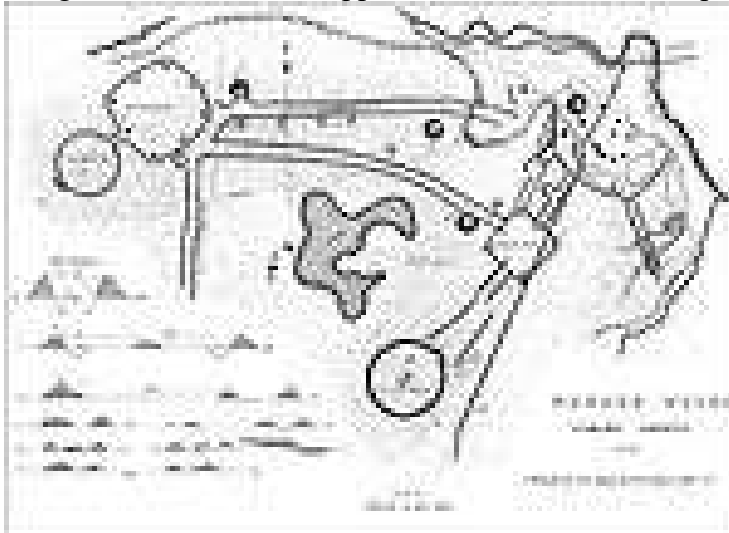
e. Another is that the Bible, which proclaims Jesus Christ, is only a collection of myths.

V. There is strong evidence the **Nephites built great structures to remind themselves of the strait and narrow way [through Jesus Christ] which alone leads to God and Eternal Life**.

A. For their prophets also repeatedly reminded them that the way to Eternal Life was a strait and narrow one (Helaman 3:29; See further references at "Strait" in Index, p. 352.).

B. When Jesus came among them, He personally verified this great truth (3 Nephi 14:13-14). So this principle was repeatedly taught to the Book of Mormon people.

C. Interestingly the North American Moundbuilders (suggested as possible Nephites by many, including Hugh Nibley), built many sites which contained very strait, narrow and walled pathways which led to circular structures which represented Eternal Life. Here is the most significant one, at Newark, Ohio. The main strait way is from the square near center right, to the octagon and circle in the upper left hand corner. It led past areas of danger, such as sandy soils.



D. **This and many other similar sites** were surveyed and diagramed by E. G. Squier and E. H. Davis, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, and published in *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley* in 1848. Examples of other strait and narrow ways and their destinations can be found in the following surveys in the book. (Most sites can also be found on Google). (See

Hopeton Works, Ohio p. 50; Dunlap Works, Ohio, p. 62; Newark Works, Ohio, p. 66; Portsmouth Works, Ohio, p. 77; Portsmouth Group, Kentucky, p. 79; Ancient Work, p. 95.)

VI. Furthermore, the spiritual significance of these sites is shown by the fact these “strait and narrow ways” always led to some combination of earthen squares (or in this case an octagon) which connected to a circle. **These combinations of connecting circles and squares or octagons are similar to the same patterns found in Latter-day Saint Temples. These temple patterns represent, "where Heaven meets Earth," or the movement from Earth [the square] into Eternity [the circle].** (It is to be noted that in the Moundbuilder sites there were never any exits out of the circles, and only one entrance into it, from the square or octagon).

A. The site at Newarks also had a **contrasting road which was enormously wide (200 feet)**. [This is not drawn on this map because Squier and David did not recognize it]. This is far too wide for any practical usage. It likely witnessed of that *great broad way which led away from Eternal Life, and thus to destruction*.

B. **This repeated pattern among the Moundbuilders of square and circle combinations, which as said, are used today in our own temples to signify entering into Eternal Life, is quite remarkable. And the repeated construction of a strait and narrow way which leads to such symbols of Eternal Life, is also most remarkable and should no longer be ignored by the LDS Community, whether one believes these were *the original* Book of Mormon sites or not.**

VII. Who are the equivalent of the Gadianton Robbers in our day?

1. Actually there are several groups which pose similar threats:

2. Crime and drug Lords and their minions **have become a great threat to the stability of many countries**. And their destructive power is growing in the United States. Few of us do not know someone who has been trapped by drug pushers existing even in our best communities.

3. The terrorists who are striking suddenly in many countries with death and destruction and seeking to disrupt international processes.

4. The pornography industry is also a grave threat, though far fewer people recognize just how great its threat is.

a. The view of one expert is that pornography's newly unleashed powers are like a "vortex, sucking in even the best and the brightest." (Charles D. Knutson, BYU professor, as referenced by M. Sue Bergin, "The Dangerous Digital Vortex," *BYU Magazine*, Winter 2011, pp. 26-27). Dr. Knutson is very concerned that not enough parents really comprehend the dangers.

b. There are organized groups which fight these modern day robbers --- robbers of far more than earthly treasures. They can rob our youths' minds and wills, as well as their morals.

c. One organization which is having some success in fighting pornography on a national level is The National Center on Sexual Exploitation, 1100 G Street NW # 1030, Washington, D. C., 20005. [They can also be found online].

**d. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has spoken several times to assembled groups of Christian leaders encouraging joint efforts to overcome society's ills. One on how we should become involved with other groups to strive to conquer serious ills is "Standing Together for the Cause of Christ" in the August 2012 *Ensign*, pp. 44-49.]**

If we do not do all we can to help stymie the growing power of such groups, we are like those who hid their heads from the dangers of the Gadianton Robbers. However, as we can see, the most important step is to “Build upon the Foundation of Jesus Christ.