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The World of the Jaredites, Conclusion

Author(s): Hugh W. Nibley

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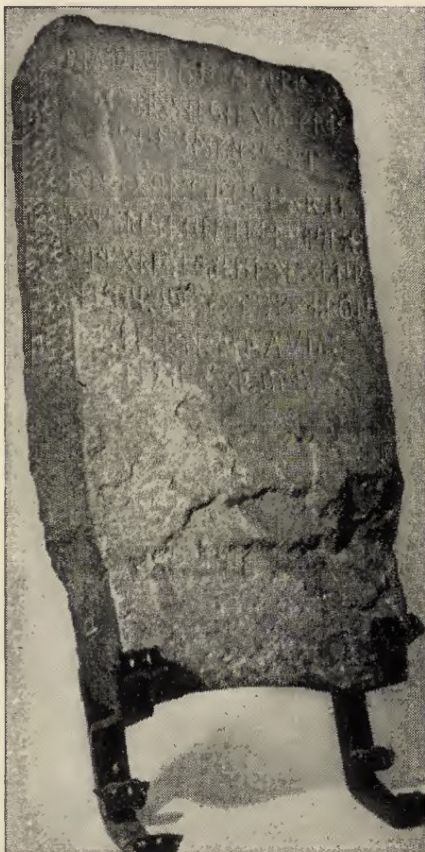
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Abstract: This series is a detailed reconstruction of the epic milieu and ancient historical setting in the third millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia and Asia relative to details about the Jaredites: their ships, shining stones, government, wars, society, and worldview. The eleventh and final part concludes the series.

My dear F.

MORONI assures us that it is the Lord who is running things, and that men miss the whole point and meaning of their lives by failing to recognize the fact: "... the winds have gone forth out of my mouth, and also the rains," (Ether 2:24) he tells the brother of Jared—but to men it does not seem that way, for the Lord is constantly showing forth "great power, which looks small to the understanding of men." (*Ibid.*, 3:5.) Men simply do not have faith and so deny themselves the blessings and the powers that might be theirs—boundless knowledge, "knowledge of all things" that is "hid up because of unbelief." (*Ibid.*, 4:13.) Given faith, God will not withhold from us a knowledge of all things. And ironically enough, men know that they *should* have faith even apart from the thought of any reward, "for it persuadeth [men] to do good." (II Nephi 33:4.) You begin with hoping—"man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance," (Ether 12:32) for "faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for



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The Kensington Runestone

The WORLD of the JAREDITES

CONCLUSION

by Hugh Nibley, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, HISTORY AND RELIGION,
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith." (*Id.*, 6.) "... If there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them," (*Id.*, 12) for he "worketh unto the children of men according to their faith." (See *Id.*, 29.)

Nothing is harder than to convince a man of a thing he has not experienced: "Ether did prophesy great and marvelous things unto the people, which they did not believe, because they saw them not." (*Id.*, 5.) Those without faith live in a world of their own which to them seems logical and final; they take the very unscientific stand that beyond the realm of their own very limited experience nothing whatever exists! God's works to them look small, and they will never be cured of their myopia until they are willing to face facts and pass a test that only the honest in heart can consider without a chill of aversion. The test is this: "... if men come unto me, I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; ... then will I make weak things become strong unto them." (*Id.*, 27.) What man of the world or posturing Ph.D. is ever going to *ask* for weakness? The men of the world seek for the things of the world, the realities they know—and the greatest of these are "power and gain." Through the ages, the book of Ether assures us, men have sought these things as their highest goal, and have invariably made the tragic discovery that the key to control over one's fellow men, i.e., the key to power and gain, lies in three things: secrecy, organization, and freedom from moral scruples, especially from squeamishness in the matter of shedding blood. Of these three things Moroni says: "the Lord worketh not in secret combinations, neither doth he will that man should shed blood, but in all things hath forbidden it,

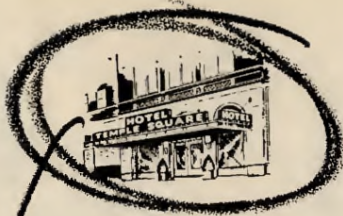
from the beginning of man." (*Ibid.*, 8:19.) These things, the prophet explains, have destroyed one civilization after another, and shall continue to destroy "whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations." (*Id.*, 22.)

We seem to be reading Thucydides, who comments on Greek history just as Moroni does on Jaredite: Men who live for this world only invariably become dangerous paranoiacs who destroy themselves and all connected with them. But the Greeks never showed us the other side of the picture. It is there that the book of Ether far surpasses all other commentaries on human history. The greatest of Greeks taught us, wrote Goethe, that "life on this earth is a hell." Farther than that they could not go. But the book of Ether teaches us that life *on this earth* can be heaven, that there actually have been *many* "before Christ came, who could not be kept from within the veil, but truly saw *with their eyes* the things which they had beheld with an eye of faith, and they were glad." (*Ibid.*, 12:19.) Here we are not dealing with the usual platitudes and truisms to the effect that if men would only behave themselves and help each other, they would have no troubles—men have always known that, only too well.

Ether shows us human society divided into two groups, not the good and the bad as such, but those who have faith and those who do not. They live in totally different worlds, the one group in real heaven, the other in a real hell. In no uncertain terms we are shown just what kind of world the faithless make for themselves to live in. This is Moroni's tract for our times. A generation ago the doings of the grim and bloody maniacs of the Asiatic steppe were as far removed from the thought and

(Concluded on page 550)

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THE WORLD OF THE JAREDITES

(Concluded from page 510)

experience of Western man as the
other side of the moon.

On the other side of the picture
we have the Lord himself speaking
“in all humility” (what a commen-
tary on humility!) to *any* man who
is ready to receive him. The Jared-
ites were not Israelites or even the
seed of Abraham: They were simply
human beings, apparently a nondes-
cript body of no particular racial
affinity. Time and place cease to
exist in this story, for many men of
whom we have no record spoke face
to face with the Lord long before
he came to fulfil his earthly mission.
This remarkable indifference to any
quality but faith is carried in Ether
even into the next world, where we
learn that the Lord has prepared
“among the mansions of [his]
Father” a house for man (see *Id.*,
32), “a place for the children of men”
where the faithful of this earth shall
be at home among the faithful of
other worlds. Thus the bonds of
time and place are completely dis-
solved in Moroni's theology, and the
same promises and warnings that
hung over the world of the Jaredites
are handed on to our own world.

In closing, let me point out that it
is in the Book of Mormon, specific-
ally in the book of Ether, that we
read about things beyond the veil,
of other worlds than this—many
mansions, among which the faithful
of this world inherit but *one*—and of
men who talk with Jesus Christ face
to face in visions. All this I find

published in 1830, when Joseph
Smith was but twenty-four years old
and the Church not yet organized.
Yet some of my intellectual friends
are even now knocking themselves
out to show that all such ideas were
the product of Joseph Smith's later
thinking, and that the idea of any-
thing like his First Vision was first
worked out by a committee in Nau-
voo in 1843.

There is nothing like the story of
the Jaredites to show us that the gos-
pel is as timeless as it is true.

If the historical part of the book
of Ether were to be put forth to the
world as the translation of some text
found, let us say, in the Cave of the
Thousand Buddhas, the experts on
early Asia might think it a work of
fiction but would find nothing in it,
barring the strange proper names, to
make them doubt that it reflected a
genuine ancient culture. If you want
to be very cautious, you might say
there is very *little* in it that would
annoy the expert. But bearing in
mind that Asiatic studies are still
in embryo, and considering the
conditions under which this work
was published and the fabulously
remote probability of the writer's
getting anything right at all, I think
no further credentials are necessary
to establish the authenticity of the
book. The book of Ether, claiming
to be reporting the ways of very early
Asiatics, rings the bell (like the book
of First Nephi) much too often to
represent the marksmanship of man
shooting at random in the dark.

(The End)

TOBACCO, AN EVIL INFLUENCE

(Continued from page 531)

harmony with the program and doc-
trine of the Church then they are
antagonistic towards it, and because
the influence from the Church is un-
questionably good, it is of course
wrong for the youth to remain away
from Church activity.

Section 89 of the Doctrine and
Covenants was given as a revelation
from God. In this section we are
told, “Behold, verily, thus saith the
Lord unto you: In consequence of
evils and designs which do and will
exist in the hearts of conspiring men
in the last days, I have warned you,
and forewarn you, by giving unto
you this word of wisdom by revela-

tion.” We believe, with no reserva-
tion, that the cigaret is a device of
the devil, and the insidious methods
applied by the advertising mediums
bear this out.

Are we narrow-minded? We think
not, and we say this in all sincerity
even though we are well aware that
some who smoke remain away from
church activity because they may feel
unwelcome. These members are not
denied the usual privileges, however,
and they are never singled out as
being unworthy. Any incentive
gained by them to remain away is
something entirely personal with
them. The consensus among our
members is that we should certainly