

Chapter Five

MORONI'S SIX COMMENTARIES IN THE BOOK OF ETHER

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INTRODUCTION

Following the prophet Mormon's conclusion of his own book at the end of his abridgment of the Nephite records, his son Moroni informed readers, "Behold I, Moroni, do finish the record of my father, Mormon. Behold, I have but a few things to write" (Mormon 8:1). One of the few but important things that Moroni added was an abridgment of the twenty-four gold plates "found by the people of Limhi, which is called the Book of Ether" (Ether 1:2). This abridgment, according to Book of Mormon scholar Grant Hardy, contains "much less literary shaping" than Mormon's abridgment of the Nephite records.¹ Within his abridgment of the Jaredite record, however, Moroni inserted six sections of his own commentary.²

Resources for the study of the book of Ether are relatively few in number, especially when compared with resources for the study of the rest of the Book of Mormon. There are a handful of Book of Mormon

commentaries that broadly discuss the background and contents of the book of Ether,³ and a few other collections focus more narrowly on other aspects of the book of Ether.⁴ More recently, Hardy's study of the Book of Mormon included an in-depth look at Moroni as an author.⁵ There remains, however, a need for further examination specifically of Moroni's commentaries within the book of Ether.

This study takes a first step in this direction through a preliminary discussion of these six sections of commentary. Hardy concluded that these "relatively lengthy editorial interruptions [were] designed to highlight similarities between the two cultures" of the Nephites and the Jaredites and to "reinforce lessons that could be drawn from the experience of [Moroni's] own people, the Nephites."⁶ While this is true, there is more to Moroni's commentaries than Hardy notes. The following analysis will summarize each of Moroni's six commentaries and contextualize them with passages from elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. It will also outline how these sections reveal many insights, including important principles, promises, and warnings illustrated in the stories in his abridgment; Moroni's personal wrestle with his divine assignment; and his fervent testimony of the providence, grace, and love of Jesus Christ. Each of these sections, in its own way, provides readers with insights into Moroni's personal discipleship, his love for his own people, and his concern for those living in the latter days.

FIRST COMMENTARY: ETHER 1:1-5

Moroni's first section of commentary briefly introduces the narrative and explains the source of his abridgment. Many books in the Book of Mormon contain a headnote or preface under the main title,⁷ and except for the book of Ether, each one was part of the original text. In the current printed edition of the Book of Mormon, the headnote for the book of Ether reads, "The record of the Jaredites, taken from the twenty-four plates found by the people of Limhi in the days of King Mosiah." First added to the text in the 1920 edition,⁸ it echoes Moroni's explanation in Ether 1:2: "And I take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi."⁹

Some context is required in order to better appreciate Moroni's identification in verse 2 of the source of this account. In the Book of Mormon

there are two accounts of the discovery of these plates.¹⁰ Because of the afflictions his people had suffered on account of the Lamanites, King Limhi organized an expedition of forty-three men to find the land of Zarahemla and plead for help from the Nephites. But the group became “lost in the wilderness for the space of many days” and discovered a land covered with “bones of men, and of beasts” and also with “ruins of buildings of every kind” (Mosiah 8:8). The members of the expedition, Mormon informs us, thought they had found the land of Zarahemla in ruins (see 21:26). As proof of their story, they brought back large breastplates and swords, as well as twenty-four plates of “pure gold” that were “filled with engravings” (see 8:9–11).¹¹ Later, when Ammon arrived in the land of Nephi, he informed Limhi that he had come from the land of Zarahemla to find out concerning them;¹² the king rejoiced to learn that his brethren in the land of Zarahemla were yet alive (see 7:13–14). After Ammon helped the people of Limhi successfully escape to Zarahemla, these twenty-four gold plates were safeguarded and later translated by King Mosiah (see 28:10–11).¹³

Moroni's first commentary further states, “He that wrote this record was Ether” (Ether 1:6). When Ether finished this record, “he hid [the plates] in a manner that the people of Limhi did find them” (15:33). When Mosiah the seer received the twenty-four gold plates from King Limhi, he translated the record by means of the interpreters, which were specifically “prepared . . . for the purpose of interpreting languages” (Mosiah 28:14).¹⁴

Although this first commentary states the fact that he is including an abridgment of these plates in the Book of Mormon record (see Ether 1:2), Moroni does not explicitly tell the reader here why he is doing so. An awareness of his possible motivation, however, helps one appreciate his inclusion of the account. One factor in answering this question is determining where Moroni initially intended the record we call the Book of Mormon to conclude. Mormon's authorship seems to have been cut short prematurely by the turmoil of warfare, leaving Moroni to carry on the work. Following his father's concluding testimony, Moroni declared, “Behold I, Moroni, do finish the record of my father, Mormon. Behold, I have but a few things to write” (Mormon 8:1). It should be noted that some of the earlier authors, such as Nephi and Enos, concluded their books with a testimony and an “Amen” (see 1 Nephi 22:31; 2 Nephi 33:15; Enos 1:27).¹⁵

In light of this it is possible that Mormon and Moroni were following this precedent, because they both concluded their own portions of the record before the book of Ether with a final testimony and “Amen” (see Mormon 7:10; 9:37).¹⁶ Perhaps Moroni’s initial intent was to end the record at this point after writing only “a few things” (8:1).¹⁷

Importantly, however, after declaring that he would finish the record of his father, Moroni clarified, “I have but a few things to write, *which things I have been commanded by my father*” (Mormon 8:1). It seems evident that Mormon gave some specific indication to his son concerning what he was to include in the record. In his own editorial comment with respect to the small plates of Nephi, Mormon said the following concerning Moroni and the final destruction of their people: “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 profit them” (Words of Mormon 1:2). Thus, Mormon specifically desired Moroni to write concerning the end of the Nephites and also to bear witness of Jesus Christ.

It is possible that Mormon explicitly instructed Moroni to include an abridgment of the Jaredite record. After Mormon narrated the account of King Mosiah translating the Jaredite plates, he concluded that this record gave the Nephites “much knowledge, in the which they did rejoice.” Mormon then included this important declaration: “And this account shall be written hereafter; for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account” (see Mosiah 28:17–19). Thus, it is clear that Mormon *intended* for the Jaredite record to be included in the Book of Mormon. And although there is not a specific account of it in the Book of Mormon, it seems reasonable that Mormon communicated this intention to Moroni and that this is ultimately why Moroni added the book of Ether.¹⁸

According to Moroni, the “first part” of these plates contained details concerning “the creation of the world, and also of Adam, and an account from that time even to the great tower” (Ether 1:3), meaning the Tower of Babel.¹⁹ This would be generally equivalent to the biblical account from Genesis 1–11. But because Moroni assumed that the Jews already possessed these stories in their own records, he did not include them in his

abridgment. Moroni's assumption was likely based on his knowledge that the brass plates contained "an account of the creation of the world, and also of Adam and Eve," as well as "a record of the Jews from the beginning" (1 Nephi 5:11–12). In addition, Moroni would have known that "the record of the Jews" (similar to our current Old Testament) was "like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass" (13:23). So instead of including those things in his abridgment, Moroni abridged the information on the plates "from the tower down until they [the Jaredites] were destroyed" (Ether 1:5).²⁰

Moroni identified the general subjects of this record as "those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed by the hand of the Lord upon the face of this north country" (Ether 1:1). It should be noted that Moroni does not refer to these people as Jaredites in his abridgment of the twenty-four plates—Mormon is the only one in the Book of Mormon itself to use the term *Jaredites*, which he does in a letter to his son (see Moroni 9:23). In addition, Moroni's reference to this destruction taking place in the "north country" corresponds with his father's earlier references in his abridgment of the Nephite records to the remnants of the Jaredite devastation being located in the land "northward."²¹ Finally, Moroni's initial commentary also concluded that the Jaredites were destroyed "by the hand of the Lord" (Ether 1:1),²² a conclusion he expanded upon in his subsequent commentary, to which we now turn.

SECOND COMMENTARY: ETHER 2:9–12

Moroni's second commentary emphasizes "the decrees of God concerning this land" (Ether 2:9). This section seems to be, at least in part, a reflection and amplification of the principles illustrated in the opening narrative. The story of the Jaredites began at the Tower of Babel, where Jared and his brother witnessed the power of God in enforcing such decrees, for the Lord had "confounded the language of the people" at Babel and also declared that "they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth" (1:33). At the behest of Jared, his brother pleaded with the Lord that he would not confound them and that he would lead them from their current location to a choice land for their inheritance.²³ While narrating an arduous journey in which the Jaredites were led through the wilderness "where there never

had man been,” Moroni informed readers that the Lord had not only preserved this choice land “for a righteous people” but also solemnly sworn “that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them” (2:5, 7, 8).

Moroni’s continued analysis emphasizes this warning three more times: that the land of promise was a choice land and that whoever would inhabit it should serve God or be swept off by the fulness of his wrath (see Ether 2:9–10, 12).²⁴ The idea that the land the Jaredites received was “choice above all the lands of the earth” (1:42)²⁵ does not necessarily mean that it is quantifiably or geographically superior to all other locations, such as in production of crops or availability of water.²⁶ To be sure, the promised land contained “precious ores, which were in great abundance” (2 Nephi 5:15), but there seems to be an important spiritual dimension of this choiceness. For example, Nephi’s brother Jacob similarly concluded that the Nephites had been “led to a better land” (10:20). Importantly, however, it was a choice land specifically because, as God declared, he would “consecrate this land unto thy seed, and them who shall be numbered among thy seed” in order to accomplish his sacred purpose, which is that “all men that dwell thereon . . . shall worship me, saith God” (v. 19). This is just as the Lord originally taught Nephi—namely, that this land was “choice above all other lands” because he had “prepared it” for Nephi and his seed so they might “keep [his] commandments” (1 Nephi 2:20). If the inhabitants of the land did not obey the decrees of God, the land would no longer retain its status as a “choice” land.²⁷ Thus, as Moroni stated, the promised land of the Jaredites was “preserved for a righteous people” (Ether 2:7).

Moroni also clarified that destruction would come by means of “the fulness of [God’s] wrath” when the “fulness of iniquity among the children of the land” would demonstrate that “they are ripened in iniquity” (Ether 2:9–11). What does it mean to be ripe in iniquity? Compare Nephi’s description of the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan on the eve of the Israelite conquest: “This people had rejected every word of God, and they were ripe in iniquity; and the fulness of the wrath of God was upon them” (1 Nephi 17:35). Similarly, Mosiah declared that “if the time should come that the voice of this people should choose iniquity, that is, if the time

should come that this people should fall into transgression, they would be ripe for destruction” (Alma 10:19).²⁸ Thus, repeated and blatant disregard for God’s words and willful embrace of sinful behavior are primary causes of such a decrepit state.

Later in his abridgment, Moroni would connect the destruction of the Jaredites to the loss of the Spirit: “The Spirit of the Lord had ceased striving with them, and Satan had full power over the hearts of the people; for they were given up unto the hardness of their hearts, and the blindness of their minds that they might be destroyed” (Ether 15:19). It is ironic that, according to Nephi, this is the same cause of destruction of those from whom he had escaped in Jerusalem: “For behold, the Spirit of the Lord ceaseth soon to strive with them; for behold, they have rejected the prophets” (1 Nephi 7:14). In addition, Mormon had also identified this as a cause of the Nephite destruction: “Behold, I fear lest the Spirit has ceased striving with them; and in this part of the land they are also seeking to put down all power and authority which cometh from God” (Moroni 8:28). Thus, gross iniquity, especially rejecting the counsel of prophets, leads to the loss of the Spirit, which in turn leads to destruction. In the words of Nephi, “For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction” (2 Nephi 26:11).²⁹

This second commentary section also includes an explicit declaration from Moroni to latter-day readers concerning the ultimate purpose of his abridgment: “And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done” (Ether 2:11). Moroni understood perfectly well the general state of many people in the latter days, as seen in this earlier statement: “Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts” (Mormon 8:35–36). Moroni’s desire seems to have been that latter-day readers would learn the lessons of the past, specifically because these lessons were so vividly illustrated in the tragic history of the Jaredites, and repent so they might avoid the terrible consequences experienced by those people.³⁰

THIRD COMMENTARY: ETHER 3:17–20

In his third section of commentary, Moroni reflected on the account of the premortal Jesus Christ appearing to the brother of Jared. Emerging from repentance and invited to partner with the Lord in preparing the vessels, the brother of Jared demonstrated such great faith that he was permitted to initially see the finger and then the entire being of the Lord (see Ether 3:6, 13). In addition, the Lord also revealed his true identity to the brother of Jared, declaring, “I am Jesus Christ” (v. 14). Moroni’s commentary develops both of these important concepts: the nature of the Lord Jehovah’s body and his true identity as Jesus Christ. As one who had seen and spoken with the resurrected Jesus Christ and was shown concerning people in the latter days, Moroni was naturally eager that future readers understand these issues (see 12:39; Mormon 8:35).

When the brother of Jared saw the Lord’s finger, he assumed he was seeing a physical body and concluded, “I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood” (Ether 3:8). In response, the Lord clarified that he would “take upon [himself] flesh and blood” but that the brother of Jared had seen “the body of [his] spirit” (vv. 9, 16). To ensure there was no misunderstanding on the part of modern readers, Moroni’s commentary further clarified that “Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit” and that the Lord’s spirit body was “in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites” (v. 17). This interaction between the brother of Jared and the Lord demonstrated that spirits resemble physical bodies and that the Lord’s future form would be corporeal—that humans are truly made in the image of an anthropomorphic God.³¹

The true identity of Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, as Jesus Christ of the New Testament is an essential topic addressed in multiple places in the Book of Mormon, suggesting the importance of these ideas not only to Mormon but ultimately to the God who inspired Mormon to abridge the Nephite records.³² For example, when the resurrected Savior appeared to the Nephites, he first declared, “I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth” (3 Nephi 11:14), and then later explained: “The law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel” (15:4–5). In addition, the concept that the Lord Jehovah would come to earth in the form

of a human being is an important doctrine addressed several times in the Book of Mormon narrative. For instance, in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, when Nephi is shown in vision Mary, the mother of Jesus, she is identified as “the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh” (1 Nephi 11:18).³³ Additionally, the issue that led directly to the execution of the prophet Abinadi was his declaration that “God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people” (Mosiah 15:1).³⁴

It is interesting that the Lord revealed himself to the brother of Jared by the fuller and more formal identification “Jesus Christ,” whereas Moroni himself referred to the Savior of the world simply as “Jesus” (Ether 3:14, 17). Moroni’s terminology seems to reflect his very personal familiarity with the reality and identity of the Lord, for he later declared, “I have seen Jesus, and . . . he hath talked with me face to face, and . . . he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things” (12:39). This language calls to mind what the book of Exodus says concerning Moses and his close relationship with the Lord: “And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Exodus 33:11).

Moroni also made observations based on the brother of Jared’s experience with the Lord. During their encounter, the Lord drew an explicit correlation between the brother of Jared’s faith and his ability to see the Lord: “Never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger” (Ether 3:9).³⁵ In his commentary, Moroni further stated that the brother of Jared “had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting,” and because of this “perfect knowledge” the brother of Jared “could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus” (vv. 19–20).³⁶ Moroni also added that the Lord then “ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites” (v. 18).³⁷ In Joseph Smith’s day, the verb *to minister* meant “to attend and serve.”³⁸ Mormon’s abridgment of the resurrected Lord’s visit to the Nephites included several such references to his ministering to them during those three days.³⁹

These issues were particularly important to Moroni, who, as we have noted, was keenly aware of the future (see Mormon 8:35). Moroni addressed those in the latter days who did not have faith in Jesus Christ,

declaring, in essence, that if they would believe in the Lord, they would see or experience him as he ministered to them through his miracles (see 9:1, 18–21). Moroni would return to his reflections on faith as exhibited by many prophets, including the brother of Jared, in his fifth commentary.

FOURTH COMMENTARY: ETHER 4:1–5:6

Moroni's fourth commentary is much more extensive than the previous three, and it primarily addresses three different issues: the sealed portion of the gold plates (Ether 4:1–5), receiving revelation in the latter days (4:6–19), and the future testimony of three witnesses (5:1–6). According to Moroni's abridgment, the Lord "showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be" and then commanded him to "write these things and seal them up; and I will show them in mine own due time unto the children of men" (3:25, 27). This sacred vision was recorded on the twenty-four Jaredite gold plates, which were discovered by the people of Limhi and eventually given to King Mosiah.⁴⁰ Moroni informed readers concerning his abridgment of the Jaredite record onto the gold plates: "I have written upon these plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw" (4:4). Moroni also clarified that he did so as a result of divine instruction rather than his own initiative: "The Lord hath commanded me to write them" (v. 5).

But whereas the abridged Jaredite narrative was allowed to come forth in the latter-day translation and publication of the Book of Mormon, the vision of the brother of Jared was not, for the Lord commanded Moroni to seal them up," that is, "the very things which the brother of Jared saw" (Ether 4:4, 5).⁴¹ This is commonly referred to as the sealed portion of the gold plates.⁴² The brother of Jared was explicitly told by the Lord, "I will show them in mine own due time unto the children of men" (3:27). More specifically, Moroni explained that the contents of this vision "were forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that [Jesus Christ] should be lifted up upon the cross" (4:1).

The remaining commentary in Ether 4 contains divine communication written "according to [Moroni's] memory" (5:1).⁴³ The Lord identified himself as Jesus Christ and promised that the things revealed to the brother of Jared would not come forth to latter-day Gentiles "until the day

that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord." Specifically they must demonstrate the same kind of faith "as the brother of Jared did" (4:6–8). Consequently, the Lord pleaded for latter-day Gentiles and Israelites to "come unto me" (vv. 13–14) so these sacred things might be revealed to them. Thus the brother of Jared's faith is a pattern for latter-day believers to follow in their own lives.⁴⁴ Just as his faith was "so exceedingly strong" that he "could not be kept from within the veil" (12:19), so also those living in the latter days must show forth the same degree of faith in order to "rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause [them] to remain in [their] awful state of wickedness" so that sacred things "shall be made manifest" to them (4:15–16).⁴⁵

The final subsection of this fourth commentary contains a twofold message from Moroni directed at the modern translator of the Book of Mormon. First, Moroni may have understood that Joseph Smith would be curious about what information was contained in the sealed portion of the plates.⁴⁶ He therefore warned the Prophet, "I have told you the things which I have sealed up; therefore touch them not in order that ye may translate; for that thing is forbidden you" (Ether 5:1). The Lord included a similar warning to Joseph Smith amid Nephi's prophetic expansion of Isaiah 29: "Touch not the things which are sealed, for I will bring them forth in mine own due time" (2 Nephi 27:21).⁴⁷

Second, although Joseph Smith was not allowed to view the sealed part of the plates, Moroni promised him that he would be "privileged" to "show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work"—specifically, "unto three shall they be shown by the power of God; wherefore they shall know of a surety that these things are true" (Ether 5:2, 3).⁴⁸ Not being able to show the plates to anyone was a huge burden for the Prophet Joseph Smith. When he was finally allowed to do so, according to the recollections of his mother, Lucy Mack Smith, he returned home and exclaimed: "Father, mother, you do not know how happy I am; the Lord has now caused the plates to be shown to three more besides myself. They have seen an angel, who has testified to them, and they will have to bear witness to the truth of what I have said, for now they know for themselves, that I do not go about to deceive the people, and I feel as if I was relieved of a burden which was

almost too heavy for me to bear, and it rejoices my soul, that I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the world.”⁴⁹

Near the end of this section, Moroni evoked the Old Testament law of witnesses: “In the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established” (Ether 5:4).⁵⁰ According to Moroni, because the Nephite record fulfilled this law, it “shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day” (v. 4). Moroni concluded this fourth commentary with a testimony and a warning concerning his divine charge: “If I have no authority for these things, judge ye; for ye shall know that I have authority when ye shall see me, and we shall stand before God at the last day” (v. 6).⁵¹

FIFTH COMMENTARY: ETHER 8:20–26

Moroni’s fifth commentary is a brief discussion of secret combinations and an assessment of the story contained in the first part of chapter 8. In this story Jared, a son of the Jaredite king Omer, fought his father in battle, took control of the kingdom, and sent his father into exile, but Jared eventually lost the kingdom to those who reinstalled Omer on the throne.⁵² Because Jared was “exceedingly sorrowful,” his daughter came up with “a plan whereby she could redeem the kingdom unto her father.” Her plan was inspired by “the record which [their] fathers brought across the great deep” and involved “secret plans” in order to “obtain kingdoms and great glory” (Ether 8:7–9).

She danced before a friend of King Omer named Akish, who “desired her to wife.” Jared promised Akish, “I will give her unto you, if ye will bring unto me the head of my father, the king.” Agreeing to this evil scheme, Akish enlisted the help of “all his kinsfolk” and “friends” and “did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power,” which oaths “had been handed down even from Cain.”⁵³ Thus “they formed a secret combination, even as they of old; which combination is most abominable and wicked above all, in the sight of God” (Ether 8:11–18).⁵⁴

Moroni’s commentary made it clear that he was not going to “write the manner of their oaths and combinations” (Ether 8:20) in his abridgment of the Jaredite record. In this determination he followed the counsel that Alma had earlier given to his son Helaman to not disclose the Jaredites’

“oaths, and their covenants, and their agreements in their secret abominations,” including “all their signs and wonders” (Alma 37:27). Both Alma and Moroni were extremely wary about the public disclosure of these secret rites. Alma had declared that “destruction shall come upon all those workers of darkness” (v. 28). Mormon had earlier concluded that Gadianton’s involvement in secret combinations had contributed to “the overthrow, yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi” (Helaman 2:13), and by Mormon’s time the Gadianton robbers had “spread over all the face of the land” (4 Nephi 1:46). Now as Moroni abridged the Jaredite record, he understood that these same secret combinations “caused the destruction of this people” (Ether 8:21), meaning the Jaredites.⁵⁵

But neither Alma nor Moroni felt it was necessary to refrain from recounting the many misdeeds of those involved in these secret combinations. Alma had earlier explained this to his son Helaman: “Therefore ye shall keep these secret plans of their oaths and their covenants from this people, and only their wickedness and their murders and their abominations shall ye make known unto them” (Alma 37:29). This was Moroni’s approach as well, as evidenced by the fact that he included the details from the saga of Jared, his daughter, Akish, and their involvement with secret combinations but withheld the actual secret words and oaths. Moroni’s commentary emphasized the general assessment that “whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed” (Ether 8:22).

This commentary section concludes with Moroni’s counsel to latter-day readers. He declared that God intended those in the latter days to read these accounts in order that they might learn important lessons: “O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you . . . and the work, yea, even the work of destruction come upon you” (Ether 8:23). Moroni included a divine assurance that there will be secret combinations in the latter days and warned that “when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation” because secret combinations “[bring]to pass the destruction of all people” (vv. 24, 25). In conclusion, Moroni acknowledged that although the daughter of Jared discovered

these evil things in the records, secret combinations originated with “the devil, who is the father of all lies” (v. 25).⁵⁶

SIXTH COMMENTARY: ETHER 12:6–41

Moroni’s sixth and final commentary is a reflection on the faith of Ether, the last Jaredite prophet and the keeper of his people’s record, and on Moroni’s abilities as a writer; it ends with Moroni’s final plea to those living in the latter days. Chapter 12 begins by introducing Ether as a prophet who “could not be restrained because of the Spirit of the Lord which was in him” (Ether 12:2). Ether prophesied “great and marvelous things” that his people unfortunately “did not believe, because they saw them not” (v. 5). That precarious state of Jaredite affairs, though long ago in the past, prompted Moroni to temporarily set aside the narrative of war and degeneration in order to testify to “the world” (v. 6) concerning the power of faith in Jesus Christ.

For Moroni, the crux of the matter was that “faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6).⁵⁷ According to Moroni, this principle was demonstrated by the Nephites at the time of Christ’s visit among them, for the Savior “showed not himself unto them until after they had faith in him” (v. 7).⁵⁸ But the same principle holds true for all people, for “because of the faith of men he has shown himself unto the world,” and these righteous examples of the past have “prepared a way that thereby others might be partakers of the heavenly gift, that they might hope for those things which they have not seen” (v. 8).

The promise that Christ will show himself to the faithful is not limited to a physical appearance. For Moroni, such an experience seems to also include Christ showing forth his love, power, and guidance in a number of ways to those who exercise great faith in him. Thus Moroni declared that this kind of faith resulted in people being “called after the holy order of God,”⁵⁹ the law of Moses being given, Alma and Amulek escaping from prison, Nephite success in missionary work, and all sorts of miracles (see Ether 12:10–16, 30). Faithful people received sacred promises from the Lord, such as the Three Nephites being promised “they should not taste of death,” the brother of Jared receiving a vision of “all things,” and Moroni’s

“fathers” being promised that “these things should come unto their brethren through the Gentiles” (vv. 17, 21, 22).

In the next few verses, Moroni recounted a conversation with the Lord concerning the weighty responsibility of abridging the record for the benefit of future readers, for as he stated, “The Lord hath commanded me, yea, even Jesus Christ” (v. 22). Moroni confided to the Lord his fears that “the Gentiles will mock at these things, because of our weakness in writing” (v. 23).⁶⁰ Moroni attributed such weakness to “the awkwardness of our hands” and “the placing of our words” (vv. 24, 25). The issue of “the awkwardness of our hands” may be related to Jacob’s admission “I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates” (Jacob 4:1),⁶¹ but Moroni’s concern about “the placing of our words” may have more to do with the process of choosing finite words to express such “powerful and great” ideas (Ether 12:25).⁶²

Moroni lamented to the Lord that he was not more like the brother of Jared, who Moroni felt was “mighty” in his ability to persuade through writing (v. 24).⁶³ In response, the Lord did not deny Moroni’s human frailties, nor did he deny that there would be those in the latter days who would ridicule the Book of Mormon. Rather, the Lord lovingly assured Moroni to remain humble, stating: “My grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness” (v. 26). This principle, the Lord taught, was true of mortals in general: his divine “grace is sufficient” to compensate for human “weakness” in those who “humble themselves before [him]” (v. 27).⁶⁴ Rather than being required to live a life of perfection in order to achieve a relationship with Christ, imperfect children of a loving God are to exercise “faith, hope, and charity,” which “bringeth [them] unto [his Son]—the fountain of all righteousness” (v. 28).

This realization comforted Moroni (see Ether 12:29), who then responded to the Lord with his own understanding of the essential nature of faith, hope, and charity.⁶⁵ Just like righteous leaders in his abridgment, Moroni remembered the “great things the Lord had done” (6:30).⁶⁶ He recalled that faith must precede the miracle, citing a remarkable account of the brother of Jared moving “the mountain Zerin” (v. 30), a story not otherwise included in his abridgment.⁶⁷ He also recalled the great things the Lord had taught, such as his promise that he had prepared a place

of eternal reward for the righteous so they “might have a more excellent hope; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared” (v. 32). Moroni also referenced the love that the Lord showed toward the children of God, “even unto the laying down of [his] life for the world” (v. 33). Moroni reasoned that “this love which [the Lord] hast had for the children of men is charity” and further concluded that “except man shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which [the Lord] hast prepared” (v. 34).⁶⁸ Perfect love cast out Moroni’s fear and brought him comfort.⁶⁹

When Moroni prayed that the Lord would “give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity” (Ether 12:36), the Lord reminded him, “If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father” (v. 37). Thus Moroni testified of Christ, “[bade] farewell unto the Gentiles” as well as to his future readers, calling them his beloved “brethren,”⁷⁰ and promised that they would meet again at “the judgment-seat of Christ” (v. 38).⁷¹ Moroni’s final plea and testimony was for readers “to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written” (v. 41).

CONCLUSION

Moroni’s six commentaries in the book of Ether give readers key insights into the heart of the author. This great man was concerned about many things, such as his personal mission, his own people, and the future readers of the Book of Mormon. His commentary in Ether 12 reveals the most personal glimpse of Moroni’s own human frailty. This divinely called prophet was very concerned about his own “weakness” and perceived inability to effectively convey his message in a compelling way (see vv. 23–25). But the Lord essentially reassured him that if he remained humble, God’s grace would ensure that his weakness would not detract from his ability to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord (see vv. 26–28). Moroni’s self-conscious concern about his imperfections is one reason why he has been described as “a very reticent author.”⁷² This label, however justified it may be, should not define this important Book of Mormon author. Just as there

is more to the apostle Thomas than the story of the “doubting Thomas,”⁷³ there is more to Moroni than his very human fear of failure.

A closer look at Moroni's writings reveals his primary concern for the Nephites and for readers in the latter days. Moroni was absolutely grief-stricken that his own people had rejected the Savior and greatly desired “their restoration to the knowledge of Christ” (Mormon 9:36).⁷⁴ His commentaries expressed his heartbreak at the current condition of his people. As with the Jaredites, Jesus Christ had “ministered unto the Nephites” because “they had faith in him” (Ether 3:18; 12:7). But now both of these highly favored civilizations had “all dwindled in unbelief” (4:3; see 12:3, 5) and had brought “the fulness of the wrath of God” upon themselves (2:11). Ultimately they embraced secret combinations, which led to their utter destruction.⁷⁵ Moroni's fears of inadequacy stemmed from the magnitude of his task.

Moroni reserved the bulk of his comments, however, for expressing his sincere concern for those in the latter days. Specifically, he gave warning to the future translator to not touch the sealed portion of the plates, but also reassured him that he would be able to “show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work” (Ether 5:2). But Moroni's commentaries contain many more exhortations directed at those living in the latter days. Moroni knew that modern readers would already have access to “the full account” (1:5) of what happened from the Creation to the Tower of Babel, so he purposefully included other material for their benefit.⁷⁶ He repeatedly emphasized “the decrees of God concerning this land” (2:9) and pleaded with future generations to avoid “secret combinations” (8:22) so they might “not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon [them] as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done” (2:11). Moroni wrote with purpose, concluding with his heartfelt plea for all to “seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written” (12:41). In spite of his apparent reluctance owing to his self-assessed “weakness in writing” (v. 23), and although he wandered alone for years “for the safety of [his] own life” (Moroni 1:3), Moroni nonetheless received divine help to fulfill his father's directive to not only abridge the Jaredite records because “all people should know the things which are written in this account” (Mosiah 28:19), but to also “write somewhat concerning [the Nephites], and

somewhat concerning Christ, that perhaps some day it may profit them” (Words of Mormon 1:2).

NOTES

1. Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 223. But contrast Moroni’s own assessment that his abridgment included only “the hundredth part” (Ether 15:33).
2. See Ether 1:1–5; 2:9–12; 3:17–20; 4:1–5:6; 8:20–26; 12:6–41.
3. See Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 6:140–328; Paul Nolan Hyde, *A Comprehensive Commentary of the Book of Ether* (Orem, UT: Parrish, 2015); Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), 4:259–317; Monte S. Nyman, *I, Mormon, Make a Record: A Teaching Commentary on 4 Nephi through Moroni* (Orem, UT: Granite, 2004), 149–330; and D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 2:254–88.
4. See Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture, Volume 8: Alma 30 to Moroni* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988); Dennis L. Largey, ed., *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003); Hugh W. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, ed. John W. Welch, Darrell L. Matthews, and Stephen R. Callister (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988); Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995); and H. Donl Peterson, *Moroni: Ancient Prophet, Modern Messenger* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 34–57.
5. See Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 217–47.
6. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 229.
7. Note, for example, the headnotes at the beginning of 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Jacob, Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi, 4 Nephi, and Ether.
8. See Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Six: 3 Nephi 19–Moroni 10* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2009), 3715.
9. On the possibility that Moroni also used Mosiah’s translation of these plates, see Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:160.
10. See Mosiah 8:7–19; 21:25–27.

11. See also Mosiah 21:26–27.
12. This is Ammon the Mulekite (see Mosiah 7:3), not Ammon the son of Mosiah (see 27:34). See Val Larsen, “In His Footsteps: Ammon 1 and Ammon 2,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 3 (2013): 85–113.
13. See Clyde J. Williams, “Deliverance from Bondage,” in *The Book of Mormon: Mosiah, Salvation Only through Christ*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1991), 261–74.
14. For more on the interpreters, see Michael Hubbard MacKay and Nicholas J. Frederick, *Joseph Smith's Seer Stones* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2016), 89–110.
15. Compare Jacob's concluding “adieu” (Jacob 7:27). See also Mark D. Thomas, “Moroni: The Final Voice,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 88–99.
16. It is interesting to note that Moroni included a testimony and “Amen” at the end of his father's record (see Mormon 9:37), at the end of his abridgment of the Jaredite plates (see Ether 15:34), and at the end of his own record (see Moroni 10:34). The abridgment in the book of Ether also contains three sections ending in “Amen.” See Ether 4:19; 5:6; 12:41.
17. Note Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's assessment concerning Moroni's concluding remarks to his father's record in Mormon 8–9: “Moroni then wrote a moving ‘final’ testimony, one that he undoubtedly assumed would be his last. His father was dead, the record was (for all intents and purposes) complete, and Moroni's life was virtually over.” See Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 326.
18. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:158; and Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 226–27.
19. See also Mormon's description of the contents in Mosiah 28:17: “Now after Mosiah had finished translating these records, behold, it gave an account of the people who were destroyed, from the time that they were destroyed back to the building of the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people and they were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, yea, and even from that time back until the creation of Adam.” On the Tower of Babel story in historical sources, see Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:171–76.
20. Moroni stated that his abridgment did not include even “the hundredth part” (Ether 15:33).

21. See Omni 1:21–22; Alma 22:30–32; Helaman 3:3–6; Mormon 3:5. For a brief discussion of Jaredite geography, see John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1985), 14–16; and John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Map* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 21–29.
22. Compare Moroni's conclusion concerning the destruction of the Nephites: "Great and marvelous is the destruction of my people, the Nephites. And behold, it is the hand of the Lord which hath done it" (Mormon 8:7–8).
23. See Ether 1:34–39. On the story of Jared and his brother, see Thomas R. Valletta, "Jared and His Brother," in Nyman and Tate, *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni*, 303–22.
24. It is important to note that the "choice land" is not limited to the borders of one particular modern country, but rather includes the lands of North, Central, and South America. On this topic, see a number of statements by Church leaders in Ogden and Skinner, *Verse by Verse*, 258–61.
25. Similar designations include "choice above all the earth" (Ether 1:38) and "choice above all other lands" (2:7).
26. For example, this land was still subject to famine, drought, and pestilence at times, just as other lands were. See Ether 9:30–31.
27. On this, see the assessment of Gordon B. Hinckley: "If the Book of Mormon is true, then America is a choice land, but if it is to remain such the inhabitants of the land must worship the God of the land, the Lord Jesus Christ. The histories of two great nations, told with warning in this sacred volume, indicate that while we must have science, while we must have education, while we must have arms, we also must have righteousness if we are to merit the protection of God." Hinckley, "The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, June 1988, 6.
28. See also Nephi's prophecy in 2 Nephi 28:16: "Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth! For the day shall come that the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth; and in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity they shall perish."
29. Elder Neal A. Maxwell observed, "There appear to be certain demarcation points in decadence. Obviously, the Jaredites reached essentially the same behavioral benchmarks as were reached centuries later by the depraved Nephites during their wars of extinction." Maxwell, "Three Jaredites: Contrasting Contemporaries," *Ensign*, August 1978, 10.

30. See the assessment of Elder Mark E. Petersen, who said that Moroni “gave us the lesson of the annihilation of the Nephites as a case in point. He wrote similarly of the tragedy of the Jaredites. It was another case in point. Do we realize that this same kind of destruction can come upon us, and for the same reason?” Peterson, “The Last Words of Moroni,” *Ensign*, November 1978, 59.
31. See the 1909 First Presidency’s conclusion on the topic: “The brother of Jared . . . was even permitted to behold the spirit-body of the foreordained Savior, prior to His incarnation; and so like the body of a man was His spirit in form and appearance, that the prophet thought he was gazing upon a being of flesh and blood. He first saw the finger and then the entire body of the Lord—all in the spirit.” Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund, “The Origin of Man,” *Improvement Era*, November 1909, 78.
32. Mormon certainly understood that he was inspired to abridge the records (see Words of Mormon 1:6–7; Mormon 5:9). On the identity of Jehovah as Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon, see Jared T. Parker, “Abinadi on the Father and the Son: Interpretation and Application,” in *Living the Book of Mormon: Abiding by Its Precepts*, ed. Gaye Strathearn and Charles Swift (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007), 136–50; and Andrew C. Skinner, “Jehovah,” in Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, 438.
33. See Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part 1: 1 Nephi 1–2 Nephi 10* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2009), 23, which documents the textual change from “mother of God” in the 1830 edition to “the mother of the son of God” in the 1837 edition onward.
34. Note the conclusion of the priests of Noah: “For thou hast said that God himself should come down among the children of men; and now, for this cause thou shalt be put to death” (Mosiah 17:8). See also Parker, “Abinadi on the Father and the Son,” 136–50.
35. For possible explanations of the Lord’s declaration “never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created” (Ether 3:15), see Kent P. Jackson, “‘Never Have I Showed Myself unto Man’: A Suggestion for Understanding Ether 3:15a,” *BYU Studies* 30, no. 3 (1990): 71–76; and Jeffrey R. Holland, “In Ether 3:15 we read [. . .],” I Have a Question, *Ensign*, April 1974, 18.
36. On this experience, see Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “Rending the Veil of Unbelief,” in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2003), 47–66.

37. See also Ether 3:20.
38. See Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: S. Converse, 1828), s.v. “minister.”
39. For example, see 3 Nephi 10:19; 16:1; 17:24; 19:2, 7–8, 14–15; 26:14, 19. See also Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “One by One: The Fifth Gospel’s Model of Service,” in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University 2003), 378–88.
40. See Mosiah 28:11, 17.
41. Nephi was also shown this all-encompassing vision and was commanded to write a portion but not the remainder of it because “the Lord God hath ordained the apostle [John] . . . that he should write [it]” (see 1 Nephi 14:24–27). The apostle John also saw this same vision and was told to write it and send it forth to the world (see Revelation 1:11; 22:10). According to Joseph Fielding Smith, “similar visions were granted to the brother of Jared, to Nephi and to John the Beloved, each of whom wrote concerning the history of the inhabitants of the earth to the end of time.” Smith, *The Progress of Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 199–200.
42. See Alexander L. Baugh, “Sealed Portion of the Gold Plates,” in Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, 707; and Valentin Arts, “A Third Jaredite Record: The Sealed Portion of the Gold Plates,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 50–59, 110–11.
43. See Ether 4:6–19.
44. On this the necessity of strong faith, see Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 13–29. On the temple imagery in this account, see M. Catherine Thomas, “The Brother of Jared at the Veil,” in *Temples in the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994), 388–98.
45. Note that in Ether 4:16 the Lord associates the things revealed to the brother of Jared with the revelations that the apostle John would later write in the book of Revelation.
46. For various proposals concerning the actual nature of the “seal” on the plates, see Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:218–24.
47. See Robert A. Cloward, “Isaiah 29 and the Book of Mormon,” in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 191–247.

48. On the experience of the Book of Mormon witnesses, see Alexander L. Baugh, "The Testimony of the Book of Mormon Witnesses," in *A Reason for Faith: Navigating LDS Doctrine and Church History*, ed. Laura Harris Hales (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2016), 45–58; and Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981).
49. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 453.
50. See Deuteronomy 19:15: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." On the law of witnesses, see John W. Welch, "Witnesses, Law of," in Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, 786–87.
51. Compare Moroni's similar final testimony at the end of his own book when he "[bade] unto all, farewell" until he would one day "meet [us] before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah" (Moroni 10:34). On Moroni's various farewells, see Thomas, "Moroni: The Final Voice," 88–99.
52. See Ether 8:2–6. For a commentary on this story, see Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:246–51.
53. The secret combinations among the Gadianton robbers before the coming of Christ also originated with the story of Cain (see Helaman 6:27), but Mormon concluded that "those secret oaths and covenants did not come . . . from the records which were delivered unto Helaman," but rather "they were put into the heart of Gadianton by that same being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit" (v. 26). See Matthew L. Bowen, "Getting Cain and Gain," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 (2015): 115–41.
54. See Daniel C. Peterson, "Secret Combinations," in Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 709–10.
55. See Douglas A. Brinley, "The Jaredites: A Case Study in Following the Brethren," in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2003), 427–41.
56. Again, note Mormon's conclusion concerning the secret combinations among the Gadianton robbers: "Those secret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the records which were delivered unto Helaman; but behold, they were put into the heart of Gadianton by that same being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit" (Helaman 6:26).

57. Compare “Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21) and “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 1:11). Interestingly, Moroni’s discussion of faith has many similarities with the exposition on faith found in Hebrews 11. On these similarities, see Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 254–58.
58. See also Ether 12:31: “For thus did thou manifest thyself unto thy disciples; for after they had faith, and did speak in thy name, thou didst show thyself unto them in great power.”
59. Note Gardner’s interpretation of the phrase “the holy order of God” (Ether 12:10): “Moroni is not referring to the priesthood in specifying ‘the holy order of God,’ although certainly that is involved. Rather, ‘they of old’ are the great men of the scriptures—great because of their revelatory and prophetic relationship with God. Their faith qualified them to be called as prophets and leaders.” Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:289.
60. See also Ether 12:25: “I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words.”
61. See Cheryl Brown, “I Speak Somewhat Concerning That Which I Have Written,” in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990), 55–72.
62. See Royal Skousen, “Some Textual Changes for a Scholarly Study of the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2012): 99–117; and Stanford Carmack, “A Look at Some ‘Nonstandard’ Book of Mormon Grammar,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 11 (2014): 209–62.
63. Compare this assessment of the brother of Jared with what the Lord prophesied concerning Joseph Smith: “I will raise up a Moses; and I will give power unto him in a rod; and I will give judgment unto him in writing. Yet I will not loose his tongue, that he shall speak much, for I will not make him mighty in speaking” (2 Nephi 3:17).
64. On this principle, see Elder David A. Bednar, “Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 87–90; and Brad Wilcox, *Changed through His Grace* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017).
65. On these three principles in Moroni’s writings, see Larry E. Dahl, “Faith, Hope, and Charity,” in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2003), 457–70.

66. See also Ether 7:27 and 10:2.
67. Gardner suggests that the moving of Mt. Zerin may have been a divinely prophesied “volcanic event.” Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:296.
68. Note Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s assessment of these dual aspects of charity: “Charity, or ‘the pure love of Christ,’ . . . can be interpreted two ways. One of its meanings is the kind of merciful, forgiving love Christ’s disciples should have one for another. That is, all Christians should try to love as the Savior loved, showing pure, redeeming compassion for all. . . . The greater definition of ‘the pure love of Christ,’ however, is . . . what Christ totally succeeded in demonstrating toward us. True charity has been known only once. It is shown perfectly and purely in Christ’s unflinching, ultimate, and atoning love for us. It is Christ’s love for us.” See Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 336.
69. See Moroni 8:16: “Behold, I speak in boldness, having authority from God; and I fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear.” See also 1 John 4:18.
70. The term *brethren* in Ether 12:38 may be referring to future Lamanites. See Moroni 1:4: “my brethren, the Lamanites.”
71. Compare Moroni 10:34: “And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go . . . to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah.”
72. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 218.
73. See John 20:24–27. It should be noted that when Jesus decided to return to the dangerous environs of Jerusalem, it was Thomas who persuaded the other apostles, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16). According to Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “Jesus discerned deep down goodness. Rather than let the impending but temporary skepticism in Thomas control all else, He called Thomas. Did not that insightful and brave apostle say, ‘Let us also go, that we might die with him’? Jesus knows the sheep of His fold not only for what they now are but also for what they have the power to become. We are sometimes so quick to classify and to stereotype.” Maxwell, *Even As I Am* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 78.
74. See also Mormon’s own lament for this great tragedy: “And my soul was rent with anguish, because of the slain of my people, and I cried: O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I mourn your loss. O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye

husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen! But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return” (Mormon 6:16–20).

75. See Ether 8:20–21.

76. However, recall that Moroni concluded that his abridgment did not include even “the hundredth part” (Ether 15:33).