

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Ether 7–14

Struggle for Power

[The first few minutes of this lecture were not recorded.]

Everybody was moving around. Before the children of Lot took it over, the Emims dwelt there [in Palestine], and they were a people as tall as the Anakims (Deuteronomy 2:10). Now what does Homer call the leaders of the hosts? The *anax*, leader of the men. *Anax* is the prince. They were tall, long haired and blond, like the Vikings of the North, the Anakim. Here they are Anakim because it is the Hebrew ending, you see.

And the Phoenicians settled there. I talked about those people of the sea coming along with their wagons and all the rest. They settled in Palestine. That's why they're called the Philistines, the people of Philistia. There were people among them who came from all the islands in all the western Mediterranean. They dwelt there and were also accounted giants, as the Anakims, but the Moabites called them Emims. Notice, people were moving around receiving different names and designations.

“The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them [pushed them out], when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them” (Deuteronomy 2:12). Everybody was grabbing what they could, looking for the promised land. That's the expression they all used, “looking for the promised land—something better than we have now.”

“And get you over the brook Zered. . . . And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years.” Now notice what happens. Interesting things happen. They couldn't go into Palestine until this sort of nonsense had stopped, namely, until all the warlords had been exterminated. We find them mentioned here. They waited thirty-eight years “until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord sware unto them. For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed. So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, that the Lord spake unto me, saying, Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day” (Deuteronomy 2:14–17). But they had to get rid of all the warlords first, and they exterminated each other. That's the way they got rid of each other. This is the theme of epic literature, as you know.

There's this great mixing we have in the next chapter. Og, the king of Bashan, came out to battle against them. He was the last of them hanging onto it. “So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. . . . And we utterly destroyed them [this happens in the book of Ether, too, you'll notice], as we did unto Sihon, king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. [This is the same thing you have in Mormon. Well, you say, where are the women and children after Cumorah? They were in it, too.] But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves” (Deuteronomy 3:3–7). You notice what the Chadwicks and Kramer say about the Heroic Age. It was a cattle culture. They drove cattle, because you can move them along with

you. You can still be mobile and raise cattle, so all their wealth was in the form of cattle. It keeps repeating that.

Then here's a typical example. Then they came to Mount Hermon, "which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion." Sidon, the most common city name in the Book of Mormon, was on the coast. *Sidon* simply means "fishing rock." It was an old fishing rock that was settled by Canaanites. You find these people up there in the Ras Shamra fragments. Ras Shamra is up there. They've left us a big library of what they were doing up there. "The Sidonians call it Sirion; and the Ammorites call it Shenir;" and we call it *Hermon*. See, everybody was moving around and gave their own names to these places, pushing each other out.

Then the Lord distributes them all. He gave the west desert to the half tribe of Manasseh, and they're the Book of Mormon ones. Remember, Lehi's people come from east of the Jordan, from beyond Jordan. This is the way things go here. They practice the usual *Schrecklichkeit* to terrify them. Remember in the Book of Mormon the people are terrified of Shiz—he sweepeth the earth before him. They develop this because it's very effective, of course. They have their designs and they wear masks. That's why they wear the horns and the wings and all that nonsense. It makes them very impressive, you see, and they sweep the earth before them. We'll see that in a minute. I notice here in Deuteronomy 2:25 that it says, "This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee."

The terror of *Schrecklichkeit* was a deliberate policy of the German general staff. We must inspire terror and paralyze the enemy before we even hit him with our overwhelming terror and might [they claimed]. That's a thing that always begets heavy opposition and unity among the opponents. Then again he says here, "And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city, we left none to remain: Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took" (Deuteronomy 2:34–35). That's the system we find here already. Israel was born in that system. This is the pressure cooker in which Israel came into existence.

So we have Jaredite society, and this is what it is. Just to save us some trouble here, we'll read some passages. You read your book of Ether and you'll find the whole history is a tale of fierce and unrelenting struggle for power. It's dark with intrigue and violence, particularly of the Asiatic brand. When the rival for the kingdom is bested, he goes off by himself in the wilderness, bides his time, and gathers an army of outcasts. This is done by drawing off men to himself, by bestowing lavish gifts and bribes. There's a nice summary of the whole thing here.¹ I might read it to show you what utter nonsense is going on and how completely authentic it is. You may say you can't believe this, but just wait a minute. This is the normal course of history, I assure you. It's absolutely outlandish, but it's the thing we're coming into today. We're the only people who are in for it, but we're determined to do it. We get into this rat race.

A grand cycle running from unity of the nation to division, and conflict, and hence to paralysis or extinction is repeated at least a dozen times. The sorry round begins when one Corihor, the great-grandson of the original Jared, rebelled against his father the king, moved out of the land, and "drew away many people after him" (Ether 7:4), until he had an army that was able to beat the king and take him captive. The king was a captive, and this army of Corihor took over. Corihor was now what he wanted to be—Number One—until his brother Shule beat him and restored the kingdom to the father, again Number One. Then Corihor does a surprising thing—he repents—and Shule gives him a share of the kingdoms; that is the first time around. Each cycle ends with repentance.

Later Corihor's sons rebelled "and drew away Cohor his brother, and also his brethren and many of the people" (Ether 7:15), whereupon he captured Shule and became Number One again until the sons of Shule conspired and murdered him, and Shule became Number One for the third time. (At least we've got rid of Corihor now. How many times has he been back and forth?) Under Shule's rule there came prophets telling the people to repent or be destroyed. The people did repent—and prospered.

Years later one Jared "did flatter many people . . . until he had gained half of the kingdom" (Ether 8:2) from his father Omer, whose other sons beat Jared, though, and reinstated Omer as Number One. To get back the kingdom, though, Jared formed secret combinations bound by oaths. The oaths . . . were given by them of old who also sought power to gain power. See, this is the archaic system. When the Jaredites came over here, they already represented an ancient civilization. (Don't try to fool around with chronology here.) The oaths were given by them of old who also sought power . . . to help such as sought power to gain power" (Ether 8:15–16). Notice that is the thing everybody's after here. I like this power business.

Then Jared was killed by his son-in-law Akish; then Akish, wary of his own son, starved him to death, whereupon another son left the country and joined the deposed king Omer and his followers. Akish was a hard man to beat because he had "won the hearts of the people" by knowing just what they wanted. "The people of Akish were desirous for gain, even Akish was desirous for power" (Ether 9:11), a fair exchange. But his sons could also play the game, and with money "they drew away the more part of the people after them" (Ether 9:11). The war that ensued encompassed "the destruction of nearly all the people of the kingdom (Ether 9:12). When it was fairly well restored, then we come to Heth who "began to embrace again the secret plans of old, to destroy his father" (Ether 9:26). "He slew him with his own sword, and he did reign in his stead" (Ether 9:27). And the prophets enter again and say the "people should be destroyed if they didn't repent" (Ether 9:28). There was a terrible drought and famine that brought repentance until one "Morianton . . . gathered together an army of outcasts" (Ether 10:9). This is the thing to notice, this is the standard Asiatic procedure. After the long war "he did gain power over all the land, and did establish himself king over all the land" (Ether 10:9).

Morianton was a very good king, surprisingly; his son and successor Kim was captured by his brother, who became Number One, but Kim's son Levi made war against him and thus became Number One. Levi was also a good king—surprise, surprise. Then Com, whose father had lost the kingdom and had been imprisoned for twenty-four years, "drew away half the kingdom, and after forty years challenged the king of the other half, Amgid, to a duel. Following a long war, Com "obtained power over the remainder of the kingdom" (Ether 10:32). His son Shiblom (which means young lion) slew the prophets, who had again stated the preposition that the people must repent or be utterly destroyed (Ether 11:5). So there you are.

Well, this is not through yet. We're in Ether 11:13 now. From that time on, it was all downhill. A mighty man led a revolt against the king and kept half the kingdom for many years until the king overcame him and became Number One again. Then another mighty man took *him* captive. Again many prophets came and said they would be destroyed. Then the thing became a free-for-all, with "many who rose up, who were mighty men" (Ether 13:15), all zeroing in on King Coriantumr. But he was a great survivor—he knew how to handle things like that. "And the war ceased not" (Ether 13:22). Shared put Coriantumr in captivity. Coriantumr is the king, but he's now in captivity, clever as he is. Shared becomes Number One until Coriantumr's son freed and restored Coriantumr to that glorious position. By then there was a complete breakdown of all government, with "every man with his band fighting for that which he desired" (Ether 13:25).

Coriantumr and Shared became obsessed with the necessity of ridding the world of each other. When Shared defeated one of Coriantumr's armies, he raced to the capital and put himself on the man's throne. But the process of polarization then began in earnest. Coriantumr gathered "great

strength to his army” (Ether 14:7) for the space of two years, while Gilead, the brother and successor of Shared, was doing the same, assisted by secret combinations. The were dangerous associates, however, for they soon murdered Gilead and then liquidated his murderer, while a giant by the name of Lib (you still have the giants there) became king. He was killed fighting Coriantumr, but his brother continued the feud—he was the famous Shiz. So it’s now Shiz versus Coriantumr. The ‘people began to flock together in armies throughout all the face of the land. And they were divided; and a part of them fled to the army of Shiz, and a part of them fled to the army of Coriantumr” (Ether 14:18–20). Always this steady, progressive process of polarization goes on.

Then, suggesting the formal set battles of epic literature and the Middle Ages, like a chess game, Shiz retreated. He swept off the inhabitants before him, all them who would not join him. That’s the way you do it. Meanwhile, “Coriantumr did gather his armies together upon the hill Comner, and did sound a trumpet unto the armies of Shiz to invite them forth to battle” (Ether 14:28). All this is formal, all this is exactly the way things had been done for thousands of years. After losing millions of people in battles, Coriantumr “began to repent” and wrote to Shiz, “desiring him that he would spare the people” (Ether 15:3). Shiz agreed, if Coriantumr “would give himself up, that he might slay him with his own sword” (Ether 15:5). Pharaoh does that—we have the earliest pharaohs cutting off the head of the rival prince. Well, you get the beautiful picture here.

Let’s look at the Asiatic society. I put a lot of references here to save us some trouble. The whole history, as you see, is a fierce, unrelenting struggle for power. I’d forgotten I had out in the garage a very valuable work. It’s Arab Shah’s *Life of Tamerlane* in Arabic. He was a contemporary and secretary of Tamerlane. He can really tell you about that guy. “The biography of a typical Asiatic conqueror with its dark allusions to supernatural and especially to the works of the devil, a strange and savage picture of nightmare politics.” But Timur conquered the world, as you know. That was Tamerlane.

Now we have some good sources here, but I don’t know whether I should read them. In the earliest records of the race we find the supreme god, founder of the state and cult “winning his way to the throne by battle, often by violence against family predecessors [that’s the only thing we’ve been finding—the son or brother], which generally involves horrific and obscene incidents.” That’s from Arab Shah. The abominations of the ancients, about which Ether has a good deal to say, are thus seen to have respectable antiquity.

Empires must have been formed and destroyed then as they were later on. “Such empires [we’re quoting from McGovern here] were not the result of gradual expansion or development, but rapidly became enormous empires under the leadership of a single great man [always number one—that’s the big thing] and under the reign of his successors slowly but surely declined, though in many cases they disintegrate immediately after the death of their founders.” So you find ghost towns all over central Asia settled by these people. “The fugitive who gathers forces in the wilderness by drawing off people [this is the way they do it in the book of Ether] from his rivals is a strictly conventional figure on the steppes.” That’s the way every great conqueror begins.

I suppose that we should write these down, but I have some better ones later on. Liu Fang wrote, “The leader of a small military band, half soldiers and half bandits, nearly won the whole Hunnish and Chinese empires for himself 2,000 years ago. He would have done so had not some of his own ambitious officers deserted him just as he had deserted others.”

Now, we all know this one. It was after cheating his brother of the throne that Attila “sought to subdue the foremost nations of the world, and after his death two of his descendants went out into the wilderness where they gathered about them armies of outcasts, each hoping to win back the world empire for himself.” The same process is going on, you’ll notice. You will remember that Genghis Khan lived for years as an outcast and a bandit as he gathered around him forces to

conquer all his rivals. Those forces were actually drawn off from the armies of the rivals themselves. Under the nomad system, quoting somebody else now. “Leaders of the various tribes strove to become independent by attracting subjects and followers of their own.” They have a name for that; it’s *jadaba*. The Arabs use that name [meaning] “to draw away people to yourself and build up a following.” That’s what you do in politics, too.

The great rulers of Asia have regularly passed from the risky station of bandit chief to hardly less risky one of world monarch and back again. Here’s another one I had out in the garage, a history of the Seljuk Turks. This is what he says: “. . . where every man is filled with the desire to become an independent prince, and every prince to become the lord of all.” This is ambition and power that we’re talking about here.

“The boldest of adventurers flocked eagerly to the banner of the new and successful chieftain of every race. In the beginning as in our old day, when all the youth of central Asia . . .” Now this happened in the 1920s, believe it or not, when all the youth of central Asia rallied to the standard of fifteen-year-old Manchu Ying as he calmly worked out a plan for the conquest of the whole world and nearly succeeded in conquering a large part. Remember, Mormon was 15 years old when they chose him to be leader. The bandit Palnatoki conquered all the Baltic states, the eastern plains. The terror of the North was twelve years old. What goes on here? These people are real prodigies. Well, they’ve been raised in that, of course.

Not only is the Jaredite practice to draw on one’s side the followers of a rival while building up an army in the wilderness in the best Asiatic tradition, the method of doing it is likewise accepted tradition. Thus Akish bound his followers. Now this thing about Akish is very much worth noticing. You know the story of Akish. This is the way it goes. He bound his followers around the nucleus of his family by lavish gifts, for “the people of Akish were desirous for gain, even as Akish was desirous for power; wherefore the sons of Akish did offer them money by which means he drew away the more part of the people after them” (Ether 9:11).

It was the sons of Genghis Khan who did most of his campaigning for him, the same way as Akish, and from the very beginning the secret of his power was the huge heaps of precious things that always stood near his throne and from which, after a memorial custom of the steppes, he rewarded all who joined him. In the sixth century Menander, a Roman ambassador to the court of the Grand Khan (that was 600 years before Genghis Khan), beheld 500 wagons full of gold, silver, and silken garments that accompanied the monarch on his wanderings—for the ancient law of the Khans, he said, was that none enters the presence of the ruler empty handed nor departs unrewarded. That was good *kyning*, as Beowulf said. The good king is the one who gives, but he also receives. And the pharaohs applied the same thing—you never enter the presence of his majesty without a gift, and you never depart without a gift either.

The pattern of steppe imperialism according to Vernadsky, who wrote the standard work on the primitive Russian empire, begins with accumulated wealth in the hands of some able chieftain, which enables him to expand his popularity among neighboring clans. And they all talk about the dedicated zeal with which the men of the steppes devoted themselves to two objects: power and gain. You may have heard that formula before in the Book of Mormon. They’re inseparable, of course. That quality is peculiar to Jaredite society, it appears, from the fact that the twin motives of power and gain receive far more attention in the book of Ether than anywhere else in the Book of Mormon.

Ether 8:13: “And it came to pass that Akish gathered in unto the house of Jared all his kinsfolk, and said unto them: Will ye swear unto me that ye will be faithful unto me in the thing which I shall desire of you?” All the authorities note this, too. How can you bind a person to you who’s riding a horse and is free to gallop off in any direction he wants, in the night or any other time?

You have to bind him by something, and it can't be by putting guards over him. You can't watch people. What you do is you swear them by oaths, these terrible oaths. That's why from central Asia came these most awful and frightful oaths, because that's the only way you can bind a person to you. So it says here: "Will ye swear unto me that ye will be faithful unto me in the thing which I shall desire of you? [How can he count on them?] And it came to pass that they all swore unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens [Genghis Khan calls himself 'the god of the blue heaven' and swears his oaths by the blue heaven, by the god of heaven], and also by the earth, and by their heads, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired should lose his head. . . . And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain." This is the normal course of history. Alas to say that.

Quoting Fritz Hommel: "The very oldest texts in the language of the world were incantations, having the stereotyped conclusion, 'let it be sworn by the name of heaven; let it be sworn by the name of earth.' The flood of documents that came forth in recent years teaches us the ways that men in the dawn of history bound people by oaths."

The *Enuma Elish* text is from the old Babylonian kings. It's very old, and it goes back to the founding of the world. That's the idea—it's their New Year celebration of the founding of the world. There Tiamat, aiming at the rule of the universe, draws off the gods to her side so that they conspire unceasingly day and night against the rightful ruler, and gather themselves together in a host to make battle. When he heard the news, the true king sat upon his throne grim and silent without saying a word. He smote his thigh. He bit his lip. He controlled his voice and finally gave orders to assemble his host, by which formal acclamation they all took the oath of allegiance to his leader Marduk. This story goes back to the very beginning of things, actually. It comes from the first Babylonian dynasty, but its background is Sumerian.

Well, we have the terrible oaths that are taken and broken. Here, for example, the king of the Commagenes caused the emperor of Constantinople and their people to be blooded. Each drank alternately of each other's blood. This is the kind of oaths they would make, you see. Study of the oldest annals of Asia conducts us, as does the study of the oldest language, into a world of oaths and covenants. Well, we see why this should be so.

"And Mithra rules," says the *Avesta*, "by virtue of his 10,000 spies [the *Avesta* is Iranian], which make him alone of all kings undeceivable." It's this institution of the king's eyes and the king's ears perfected by the Persians and inherited by the monarchs of many lands. The success of any conspiracy against watchful loyalty is great secrecy and surprise before all else, so the unfailing adjunct of the nemesis of the Asiatic king is the secret society and surprise. That's what Napoleon said, secrecy and surprise. Well, that's what strategy is—to spring a surprise. Don't let the enemy know what you're doing. You can win by surprise. You must always surprise them.

Huart and Delaporte have written a great deal on this subject. In their very large work they wrote, The normal constitution of the Asiatic empire is "despotism tempered by dethronement and assassination," in which the clergy play a leading role. Well, that's the way things go. I notice I have some examples. This system of drawing off we were talking about—there's an Arabic word for it, *jadaba*. "From whom shall I take away the lawful sovereignty," asked Mithra in the *Avesta*. The exchange of personal letters is important. Here's a good one: "Let Shinu come to the south and either meet the emperor in open battle or else become a subject and pay reverence to the imperial throne." That's a typical example.

In the march of the 10,000, way back in the fourth century B.C., Xenophon marched right to the center of Asia, as you know. He said, "Jealousy and ambition are the essence of Asiatic kingship," which is an intensely personal thing. He describes how Croesus and Cyrus fought it out. "In the

midst of the battle my own hand captured Kashtiliash, the Kassite king, at the point of the spear. Unto the setting of the sun I waged battle.” Of course, that vividly recalls the Book of Mormon [battle with] Shiz and Coriantumr hacking away at each other until nightfall. They’d sleep on their weapons, and then they’d go fighting away the next morning. This is the Kassites taking over Babylonia at a very early time. So we have the same thing—the personal combat between kings. He says if you’ll let me cut your head off I’ll spare your people, because they become his people.

Then there’s the challenge to each other. The king of the Scythians sent his challenge to the king of the Massagetae and also to the great Darius, whose father exchanged challenges with an earlier queen of the Massagetae, the famous queen Tomyris. The king of the Visigoths challenged the Emperor Honorius to single combat, as did Lazarus, the king of Serbia, challenge Amurath the Turk, and so on. The great Khans, when their rivals were captured in battle, would personally behead them (that was part of the ritual), as Chinese generals still do to other Chinese generals. They did when this was written. So this is all right out of the book of Ether, you see—drinking out of the skulls, etc. And the wars of extermination—I used to think that was an exaggeration, but don’t fool yourself. Remember, we’re told they “swept off the inhabitants before them, all them that would not join them” (Ether 14:27).

I think this is what Arab Shaw writes. “If the neighboring province to that which they invade will not aid them, says an eyewitness of the Tartar technique, they waste it and with the inhabitants whom they take with them they proceed to fight against other provinces.” That’s the way they sweep them and build up their armies. They place their captives in the front of the battle, and if they fight not courageously, put them to the sword. In such a way the Asiatic warlords from the beginning swept the earth before them, like Shiz. The hordes of our own day did that, forcing all that lay in their path to become part of them. “I counted them among my people,” says the Assyrian conqueror of one nation after another. This ancient formula goes back to our old friend Nimrod. We are told that Genghis Khan, like Nimrod, became a mighty hunter. He learned to steal men and to take them for prey. He ranged into other countries, taking as many captives as he could and joining them to himself to build his army. He bound them, as Nimrod had done, by awful oaths, this system of sweeping the earth, and the *Schrecklichkeit* we mentioned.

Ether 14:17–18: Coriantumr “did slay both women and children, and he did burn the cities. And there went a fear of Shiz throughout all the land; yea, a cry went forth throughout the land—Who can stand before the army of Shiz? Behold, he sweepeth the earth before him!” That’s the policy of *Schrecklichkeit*, which the Germans cultivated very deliberately. When Coriantumr gained the victory, it was his turn to be the terror of the earth, and the people began to be frightened and began to flee before the army of Coriantumr.

Then the influence of the robber bands. Remember, Mormon said, finally there is no one left in the land except Lamanites and robbers. Well, what happens? All who won’t join the great armies are put to death. But what of those who escape? You’re not going to stay and wait for that. They’re naturally outlaws and have no allegiance to any king, hence no rights or claims to protection. To survive they band themselves together, since all are deserters whose heads are forfeit. Their behavior becomes very dangerous. Asia has at all times swarmed with robber bands, exactly as did this continent under the Jaredites. From time to time these robber bands have formed coalitions strong enough to ruin states and overturn thrones. After the wars between the Mongols and the Mamluks had exhausted all their resources and brought ruin to many lands, the soldiers from both sides banded together in robber armies, gathered up the outcasts from the deserts and mountains, and came near to conquering all of western Asia. Bar Hebraeus, a merchant who made some great studies back there in the early days, wrote in Syriac. The pages of Bar Hebraeus swarm with these robber bands and a good description of how they operate. Whenever central governments became weakened by wars and corruption, bands of robbers would appear as if out of the earth, as when early in the ninth century the robber Omar became

the terror of the Near East and, joining forces with the robber of Nasir in the north, “began to destroy the world,” he said.

Just as robber bands often formed the nucleus of world-conquering armies (some Chinese emperors had whole armies composed of what they called “bad young men.”), so those world armies, once beaten, promptly broke up into robber bands again, while their leader, lately a world ruler, would find himself nothing but a bandit chief. The years during which Justinian and Chosroes were locked in deadly rivalry for the rule of the world (that was in the sixth century—565) saw the rise in western Asia of a motley array of robber gangs numbering 12,000 men, who brought complete ruin upon a large part of the civilized world. In this time of panic and insecurity “great schism fell upon the Arabs (i.e., the inhabitants) and in every quarter a man rose up who did not agree with his companion.”

Notice, there was wonderful contention. Remember, Mormon says, there were wonderful contentions. The whole face of the land was one complete revolution, everywhere. The same condition [prevailed] with the Nephites. The only thing is that the Ether story goes back earlier and covers more. It’s neat packaging; it shows the system at work in one package. The Nephites and Lamanites were more civilized, remember. They didn’t like war too much, we’re told. They were very reluctant on both sides during the long war.

This is what happened [with the Jaredites]. This typical and recurrent state of things vividly recalls the awful days of the Jaredite robbers, when every man slept on his sword to guard his property from every other man—and still had it stolen (Ether 14:1–2). See, these things are all there. In *Taras Bulba*, Gogol’s great novel, he describes the Cossack hordes—Taras Bulba was a Cossack—as going quite insane in battle, as Ether puts it. Well, there were the pathological aspects—the hideous disguises, the bloody oaths, the insane yells. “They were drunken with anger, even as a man who is drunken with wine,” says Ether 15:22. One thing is the custom of collecting scalps, which came from there. The Indians didn’t originate it. Well it was Hamilton the hair-buyer who financed it in the French and Indian Wars here, but it came from Asia. As a custom you find it everywhere.

The insane wars led to complete annihilation on both sides, with the kings the last to go. We’ve mentioned that before. The same thing had happened earlier in the days of Akish when the population was reduced to thirty people (Ether 9:12). This all seems improbable to us, but two circumstances peculiar to Asiatic warfare explain the phenomenon which is parallel everywhere. First, every war is strictly a personal contest between kings. It must continue until one of the kings has fallen or is taken. Second, things are so arranged that the king must be the very last to fall, so in that case, there’s going to be extermination. The whole army exists for the sole purpose of defending his person—the shield wall that you read about in the *Eddas*. This is clearly seen in the game of chess, as we mentioned before. All the pieces are expendable except the king who can never be taken. Moghadam, a Hindu expert on chess, says, “The shah in chess is not killed and does not die. The game is terminated when the shah is pressed into a position from which he cannot escape [*Shāh māt* means ‘the chief is dead’]. This is in line with all good traditions of chess playing, and back of it the tradition of capturing the king in war rather than slaying him whenever this could be accomplished.”

You’ll recall the many instances in the book of Ether in which kings were kept in prison for many years but not killed. This is the code of medieval chivalry. Even so, Shiz was willing to spare all of Coriantumr’s subjects if he could only behead Coriantumr. That was chess. That was typical. In Ether 15:26, Ether says “they were large and mighty men as the strength of men” that fought around their kings to the last man. Right down to the battle of Flodden Field in 1525, Scott describes the same sort of thing happening with those highland Scots that never get civilized—fighting around the wall “ ‘round their king, a fierce but fading fire,” he says. They

represent that same institution, the sacred “shieldwall,” which our own Norse ancestors took over from Asia, and which meets us again and again in the wars of the tribes. The king actually was the last to perish.

To cite a few examples here: When Genghis Khan overcame the great Merkit nation, which was his great rival through all of central Asia, he left only one man alive—the brother of his favorite wife. The Assyrian kings, like the Romans, flooded the sites of cities they destroyed to convert them into uninhabitable wastelands. In cities of a million inhabitants, the Mongols left not a dog or a cat alive, and they converted vast provinces to complete deserts. The great island of Cyprus was uninhabited waste for seven years after the Turkomans took it. The Goths in a single battle entirely exterminated the great tribe of the Sciri, as the Huns did the Scythians and Alans, and as the Mongols did the Tartars. Then it was the Mongols’ turn next. Remember what Mormon says, after the Gentiles have taken care of the Indians, it will be their turn next. The Mongols themselves met retribution in 1732 when their own kinsmen, the Manchus, wiped out nine-tenths of the Oret Mongols in a Chinese-inspired project aimed at completely obliterating both sides. The Chinese are very clever, you see. They were threatened by the two tribes, the Manchus and the Mongols, who were cousins, so they just put them to fighting against each other. That took the pressure off China, but it was extermination. Such mutual suicides of the nations were not uncommon. The Kin and the Hsia Hsia were two Hunnish tribes and the two greatest empires of their day, as closely related in blood as were the people of Shiz and Coriantumr. They engaged in 15 years of warfare which wiped out 18 million people—a figure that makes Ether’s 2 million people (Ether 15:2) seem rather paltry. Two million were killed in the last extermination.

Incidentally, the wars of Genghis Khan cost China alone 40 million lives. These people don’t fool around. When they wipe them out, they do it in vast numbers. The Hunnish Jao Dynasty of the North and the Dsin Empire of the South almost achieved mutual quietus during a civil war in which “neither side was willing to make peace until the other was completely crushed.” In the first century B.C. the Huns divided to follow two brothers, in the good old Jaredite fashion, Jiji and Huhansie. Twenty years of war followed, and the deadlock was only broken in 43 B.C. when Jiji’s people in despair finally fled to the west in the best Jaredite manner after leaving “vast stretches of land bare and deserted” behind them.

Now about these bones littering the land. What the Jaredites left behind them was a land littered with bones, for “so swift and speedy was the war, that the whole face of the land was covered with the bodies of the dead” (Ether 14:21). And a generation later, their bones lay scattered in the land northward, we read in Omni back in the Book of Mormon earlier. A medieval traveler passing Kiev years after the great wars between the Mongols and the Russian hordes reports “When we were traveling through this country, we found an innumerable multitude of dead men’s skulls and bones lying about upon the earth.” Far away, in Commania and Cangle, the same traveler says, “we found many skulls and bones lying upon the ground like cattle dung.” All the living inhabitants, he notes, were reduced to slavery. Where burial was at all possible after the great battles, the only practical procedure was to heap up the bodies in great piles and cover them with earth (as the book of Ether says, like dung), “erecting great tumuli over them.” The entire Naiman nation, a great nation, was thus buried after its destruction. Joinville accompanied St. Louis in the seventh crusade—the catastrophic one into Egypt. He traveled the whole year [he was a secretary to Baldwin] traveled the whole year through Asia to reach the court of the cham of Tartary. He saw along the road of the Tartar conquest “large mounds of bones.” A careful comparison of the prehistoric mounds of ancient America is in order.

So this is the pretty picture we have here. Oh, I wanted to mention the daughter of Jared, the succession here. We should mention this here, too—this Salome episode, the story of Jared’s daughter. This was a later Jared who rebelled against his father and “did flatter many people, because of his cunning words, until he had gained half the kingdom, . . . and he did carry away his father into captivity [after defeating him in battle] and did make him serve in captivity” (Ether

8:2–3). This happens again and again in the book of Ether. In captivity the king raised other sons who finally turned the tables on their faithless brother and beat his forces in a night skirmish. It was a palace coup. There's a marvelous description of that in Egyptian. They spared his life with his promise to give up the kingdom, but they failed to count on Jared's daughter, an ambitious girl who had read, or at least asked her father if he had "not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep?" All this was consciously carrying on the traditions of the Old World. She said have you read in the books we have brought with us of our fathers "across the great deep," a very instructive account of those devices by which men of old got "kingdoms and great glory."

See, this was the process. "Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? [Ether 8:9. This is the law of succession they followed] And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife."

Historically, the whole point of this story is that it's highly unoriginal. It's supposed to be. The damsel asks her father if he has read "the record" and refers to how they of old did this thing. It dealt with a pattern, and this is basic. What she tells him to do and what Akish carries out is the very essence of what they called "patternism" in Cambridge in the 1930s (that's when I grew up). This is the pattern in which the princess dances. Well, there have been some good novels written about it—Mary Renault's *The King Must Die*, for example. There are some wonderful things about it. *Patternism* is the pattern of royal succession that was followed, weird as it seems. It dealt with a pattern of action in which a princess dances before a romantic stranger, wins his heart, and induces him to behead the ruling king, marry her, and mount the throne. The sinister daughter of Jared works the plan for all it is worth. Having got her grandfather beheaded and her father on the throne, she proceeds to marry the murderer Akish. She wants him to be king now, so she gets her father murdered next. Akish, who presently having "sworn by the oath of the ancients [the old system again] . . . obtained the head of his father-in-law as he sat upon the throne" (Ether 9:5). And who put him up to the new crime? "It was the daughter of Jared who put it into his heart to search up these things of old, and Jared put it into the heart of Akish" (Ether 8:17). At first she influenced Akish through her father Jared, but after Akish became her husband, he would of course act directly under her influence to dispatch her next rival according to the ancient pattern. Ether insists this all goes back to "the ancients."

Now, what comes next? Akish, as soon as his successor became apparent, would be marked as the next victim, and he was. Surely enough, we find him so suspicious of his son that he locks him up in prison and starves him to death. But there were other sons, and so "there began to be a war." This is the Mother Goddess who is permanent there, you see. As I said, it has been written up best by Mary Renault in some of her novels. She's done a good job of it. "There began to be a war between the sons of Akish and Akish," ending in the complete ruin of the kingdom (Ether 9:12). Many years later the old evil was revived by Heth who "began to embrace the secret plans again of old to destroy his father. . . . He did dethrone his father, for he slew him with his own sword, and did reign in his stead" (Ether 9:26–27).

See, this is a great subject. I'm going to give you the subject to write on for the final now. You write an essay on this. I'm sure you'll enjoy it. It's broad enough to take care of things. This is about as broad as you can get, but this is good. The title is "Lessons for the Present in the Decline and Fall [not of Rome, but] of the Nephites and Jaredites." You can brood about that, you see—something to make you really sad. This is the best decline and fall story we have. You notice how the book of Ether starts out, ". . . an account of those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed upon the face of this north country."

Nephi starts his story with the destruction of Jerusalem. Moroni ends his, of course, with destruction. It's pretty sad. It has lessons for us here. I don't think the Book of Mormon is fooling around.

1. Cf. Hugh W. Nibley, "The Prophetic Book of Mormon," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, vol. 8 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 439–43.