

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 111

Ether 2–8

The Boats of the Jaredites

Last night at 5:00 my daughter breezed in from California and brought her little son with her. This morning my little grandson was watching cartoons, and naturally it was monsters and Superman—good guys against the bad guys. The good guys are 100 percent good, and the bad guys are 100 percent bad. The bad guys are bad because they're fighting the good guys, and the good guys are good because they're fighting the bad guys. That's the only reason that's ever given. Well, that's the story of the Jaredites, isn't it—the good guys and the bad guys fighting with no in-betweens. We'll see more of that here.

We saw that they went from sea to sea. Bear in mind that these people aren't of Israel. This is long before there was any Israel or anything else. This is blank humanity, races all mixed up. They came from the Tower where everything was mixed up. There's no race or religion here, and yet this is the most deeply religious book of the Book of Mormon. You get somebody like the brother of Jared. What's the difference between them here? There were two religions in antiquity; always wherever you go you'll always find the two attitudes. The Orphic mysteries explain them. You have your two fountains, the two springs. On the left hand you have the spring of Lethe, the spring of forgetfulness. Things pass away, and that's that. The other is Demosthenes' or *anamnesis*, as Plato calls it. It's the difference between remembering and forgetting. The one religion says the best thing you can have is forgetting—die and get it all over with; it [would be] best that we were not born, etc. This is typical of the Romans—where death is, we are not; where we are, death is not. “The sun goes down, the sun comes up again. But one time our sun has gone down, and there's nothing but one black night of nothing.” So that's what we have to look forward to. The conclusion is, therefore, let's get as much sex as we can while we can. That's about it, you see. Well, you find this everywhere, in Egypt and everywhere else.

On the other hand, there is the doctrine of Demosthenes, that memory is the greatest thing, and it's always there. You'll never be able to get rid of it. In the anthropic system, without me the universe is defective. I'm dependent on it, but it is also dependent on me—there's something definitely missing. In our civilization we are taking the position that there's too much life. Remember, the only solution to the Lamanite problem was to get rid of the Lamanites, you'll remember. We'll go up against them and cut them off from the face of the earth. That's our solution. It's the same way all through the Book of Mormon—like the citizens of Antioch [claiming] there were too many people in the world. If everybody in Antioch was killed in an earthquake, I'd be the richest man in the city. That's what he wants to happen. We “kill a gook for God,” we say. We have to get rid of as many enemies as possible. That's the god of wars, and that's what we're devoted to more or less today—keep the population down. The funny thing is, the population is not a problem at all from a certain point of view. But Christ came to say, “I came to bring them life, that they might have it more abundantly. I am the resurrection and the life,” not just the life, but the resurrection. Keep it going forever, and the idea that once it's there, it's there forever. This idea of Demosthenes is you'll never be able to forget, and you'll never be able to stop. The Book of Mormon teaches us this.

Here we're dealing with these rough, tough people, the Jaredites. They crossed the great sea, which shows they were going east over the great central plains of Asia, which were flooded at the end of the last Ice Age. Everybody agrees on that. And they dwelt in tents. Then there's the promised

land. The promised land is not a doctrine peculiar to Israel at all. When the great Yadin was here, a little group of us met one night. We asked him, “What is your religion?”

He said, “We don’t believe in miracles, but we count on them.”

We said, “Well, what do you believe in?”

“I believe in the land,” he said. “The promised land—that’s my religion.” But all these people that were driven out talk about the promised land. That’s the theme of the Greek lyric poets. As they begin the period, the wandering poets are always looking for the promised land, whether it’s in Egypt or anywhere else. They’re always looking for—not utopia—but the land that was lost, the lost Eden, the paradise, the Golden Age. Every one of them is obsessed with that idea—a golden land, and they’re going to look for it again.

The Lord gives to the brother of Jared what he calls his thoughts on this subject of the promised land, and of course the thoughts are the same as those that you find in the Book of Mormon with Israel and with the Nephites. We have it here in Ether, and it’s the usual thing. This is the land of promise, “and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity” (Ether 2:9). You’ll notice it’s when the cup is full. He uses both expressions here, fulness and ripeness. He says the same thing in verse 8, and then again in verse 10, it “shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off.”

See, in the preceding verse he called it *ripeness*. When the fruit is ripe there’s no point to letting it get riper—it will just rot. In verse 10 when the cup is full, you can’t dilute it anymore; you’ve just got to throw it out. “And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children”—so he’s going to hold out until the very end. Well, how far have we got to go? “And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles.” This is being addressed to the Gentiles. See, the story of Ether is the story of people who never heard of the gospel [apparently], but they did after all. They had it down from Noah. “O ye Gentiles . . . that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities” as you have been doing in the past.

Then it talks about freedom. Then they crossed the great sea and they dwelt in their tents. And he said [verse 15]: “My Spirit will not always strive with man. . . . These are my thoughts upon the land which I shall give you for your inheritance.”

Then comes this thing about the boats and the lighting of the boats, etc. This has caused more merriment and mockery than any other aspect of the Book of Mormon, so we’ll refer to it quickly here. According to the famous Dr. J. C. Bennett, who was once mayor of Nauvoo, and Joseph chose him for a counselor, “The story of the Jaredites was the climax of all Joseph Smith’s indiscretions in which he used his utmost endeavors to see how far he could impose upon the gullibility of mankind. It would be useless to make any further comment to prove the absurdities of this extraordinary book.” That’s the story of the Jaredites.

Then Tadler in 1857 said, “This story is nothing less than a libel on the wisdom of God.”

Another investigator said, “It seems impossible for sensible men to credit such trash. My soul is filled with disgust at this monstrous absurdity.” He’s talking about the Jaredite ships, you see.

This is the Reverend C. Fenwick Ward as he perused the pages of Ether, “I dare not trust myself to comment on it.”

“Of the incredible things in this incredible book,” says H. C. Sheldon, “there’s no item perhaps more fantastic than that which recounts the voyage of the Jaredites to America in very peculiarly constructed barges. Anyone who can believe this story ought to feel obliged to challenge the historicity of any marvelous tales of *Alice in Wonderland*.”

In 1956, as late as that, Mr. [William E.] Biederwolf finds “the fantastic story of the passage of the Jaredites to America one of the tales with which Baron Munchhausen and Alice in Wonderland are certainly put to the shade.”

Well, an important clue to the ships is that the Lord tells us in Ether 6:7 that they were built on the same pattern as Noah’s ark. To get Noah’s ark from the Bible—you never get a picture of what it was like. I gave the publishers here a beautiful old sixteenth-century engraving I had of Noah’s ark—it’s utterly fantastic. But we have the Babylonian account in the first kingdom, and then you have the Sumerian account discovered by Hilprecht. It goes way back. We have two very old accounts of the flood story, and they describe the ark. It’s a very good description, and it matches the ships that Jared made very closely. We won’t spend much time on it, but it’s an interesting thing. They were built on the same pattern. Well, that’s the clue. See, they built them like Noah’s ark. What was Noah’s ark like? Why don’t the critics laugh their heads off at the ark? We now know what it looked like. Can these nonbiblical documents really tell us? Of course they can.

In 1856 in the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh, Laird unearthed what was then the oldest library in the world. It was a seventh and eighth century B.C. library from King Assurbanipal. It had the story of the flood in it, so everybody immediately said, well here’s the original of the Bible flood story. This is where the Jews got it from. See, that shows that the Bible is just a collection of old legends. Then the University of Pennsylvania, just before World War I, was going to spend a mint to go over and find an earlier version in the Sumerian ruins. The war broke out and they couldn’t go, so they had to search what they already had in the library. There it was, right on top of the pile. The thing they were going to spend a million bucks to find they’d had in the library all the time. See, once these things are found, the archaeologists lose interest in them. They’ve got to go and dig up something else. That’s the adventure. But there it was, and it goes back to 2100 B.C. It’s a nice story of the flood, and it gives a very good description of the ark. And again you can compare the primal version of the story with the Jaredite ships.

Well, it was called a *magur* boat. Here are the qualifications that Ether 2:16 gives. They were built “after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built.” Except for some particulars, these boats were not newly designed, but they were built according to a familiar pattern that the people understood and knew something about. There really were such boats. And they were built according to the instructions of the Lord. And “they were exceedingly tight, even that they would hold water like unto a dish; and the bottom thereof was tight like unto a dish; and the sides thereof were tight like unto a dish [a submarine, because the waves are going dash over them many times]; and the ends thereof were peaked.” That’s a very important thing for the *magur* boat. You see the reason for that in the oldest boats. We have predynastic pictures of these from the delta of Egypt, and for very obvious reasons they are peaked. The ones that invaded Egypt from Mesopotamia were like this [refers to drawing on the blackboard]. It means they couldn’t turn turtle. These were floats here. It could go over on its side for a moment, and it would always right itself. It was as good as having a keel here.

Ether 2:17: “The top thereof was tight like unto a dish [a tight deck, in other words]; and the length thereof was the length of a tree.” There wouldn’t be too many seams in it, and there were some pretty tall trees in those days. Verse 16: “And they were small, and they were light upon the water, even like unto the lightness of a fowl upon the water.” They bounced around. Boy, this was something to get seasick in. We’re told they did get terribly seasick.

Verse 17: “The door thereof, when it was shut, was tight like unto a dish.” So, they had the hatches; when you cut them down, the water couldn’t get into the boat. But how could you breathe when you were inside? Well, this was the problem. And believe it or not, the editors—especially Brother Talmage—very officiously changed the reading of Joseph Smith’s first edition. It gives a different picture of how this thing worked. We’ll mention that a little later. Verse 24: “For behold, ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you.”

Then their flocks and their herds. Oh boy, this would make it something, wouldn’t it? Ether 6:4: “. . . their flocks and herds, and whatsoever beast or animal or fowl that they should carry with them . . . got aboard of their vessels or barges. . . . And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind, . . . and thus they were tossed upon the waves of the sea before the wind [the wind did never cease to blow for 344 days]. And it came to pass that they were many times buried in the depths of the sea. . . . When they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah. [Verse 10:] And thus they were driven forth: and no monster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar them.” And you can be sure that the north Pacific was quite full of whales in those days. That was quite a thing.

Now let’s match each of these twelve points with the *magur* boat that Ut-napishtim [according to the Babylonian account] built to survive the flood. Not trusting our own interpretation, we’ll quote Hilprecht throughout. “This class of boats, according to the Nippur version [the oldest version, were] in use before the Deluge.” So they were familiar. In historic times the archaic craft was preserved only in ritual, the gods “in their boats . . . visiting each other in their temples during certain festivals.”¹

Two: “In all three versions of the Deluge Story Ut-napishtim receives special instructions concerning the construction of a roof or a deck on the boat.” That’s why it’s called an ark or *tebet*. See, an ark is a closed box, and the Hebrew word *tēbāh* is the Egyptian word *db,t*, which means boat or deck, covered with a deck—it means a box or ark. See, the ark is described as a box. Why do they use the same word for the ark as for the ark of the covenant? Because they were both boxes. So that’s why they have such a hard time describing the ark, because it was a box. Can you imagine floating around in a box? That means it had a covered top; it was closed tight. In all three versions he received special instructions concerning the construction of the boat, and he received these instructions by speaking with the Lord through the veil. “By the wall a word will I speak to thee. . . . My pure one, my wise one, by our hand a deluge” shall be caused. The seed of mankind shall be destroyed. He [the Lord] gave him instructions through the *kikkisu*, which was a woven screen in the temple.

Three: There was “of course a solid part, strong enough to carry heavy freight and to resist the force of the waves and the storm.”

Four: “Jensen explains the MA-TU as a ‘deluge boat,’ [it couldn’t capsize] . . . adding, that when seen from the side it probably resembled the crescent moon. . . . Moreover, the representations of sea-going vessels of the Tyrians and Sidonians . . . show that a certain class of boats really had such a shape.”

The next point [five] is “The principal distinguishing feature of a *magur* boat (was) . . . the roof or deck of the boat. . . . We notice in the Biblical as in the Babylonian version great stress is laid on the preparation of a proper ‘roof’ or ‘cover.’ . . . ‘Cover it with a strong deck,’ the Nippur version says. ‘With a deck as strong as the earth,’ or ‘let its deck be strong like the vault of heaven above,’ the Second Nineveh Version says. This emphasis on the tightness and strength was very important.

Six: The lines containing “a brief statement concerning the measures of the ark” have been effaced in the Nippur version (we don’t know how big they were). The First Nineveh text says simply: “Its measures be in proportion, its width and length shall correspond.” But they only built one ark, you see.

Seven: “Furthermore in the First Nineveh Version the boat . . . has a door to be shut during the storm flood.” The various names for the boat “designate ‘a boat which can be closed by a door,’ i.e., practically a *houseboat*, expressed in the Hebrew story by an Egyptian word *Tevah*, *ark* originally meaning “box, chest, coffin,” [something that’s closed], an essential part of which is its *cover* or *lid*.”

Eight: “The boat has . . . a door to be shut during the storm flood and at least one *air-hole* or *window*.” *Nōfāshāh* means *air hole*. *NPS̄ is a verbal root meaning “to breathe.” *Nefesh* is spirit, breath, life, or soul. So it had an air-hole. The word *nappashu* means “a breather or ventilator.” It doesn’t apply to window at all. That’s the word we use in the book of Ether, too.

Nine: “The vessel built by Ut-napishtim being such a ‘house boat’ or *magur*, this word could subsequently be rendered ideographically by MA-TU, a ‘deluge boat.’ . . . A *magur* boat, then is a ‘house boat,’ in which gods, men, and beasts live comfortably, fully protected against the waves washing overboard, the driving rain from above and against the inclemencies of wind and weather.”

The fact that the *magur* boat was built to be completely submerged gives strong support for this. [Number ten was left out.]

Eleven: In a *magur* boat “men and beasts live comfortably.” Nineveh 2: Ut-napishtim is to take “domestic animals of the field, with wild beasts of the field, as many as eat grass.” Of course, that’s the whole story of Noah and the ark. He got all the animals in. He got a lot more animals than the Jaredites got. The Nippur version mentions “the beasts of the field, the birds of heaven.”

C. S. Coon, writing of the earliest water transportation says, “Dogs howled, pigs grunted, cocks crowed on these seagoing barnyards.” The idea that the oldest sailing vessels may have been built for a specific purpose of transporting men and animals together, often for vast distances seems strange to us, but the Asiatic river boats mentioned in point one keep the whole household afloat for months with their animals and poultry—just like the idea of riding of buffalos seems utterly strange to us.

Twelve: “The storm-winds with exceeding terror, all of them together raced along with the deluge. The mighty tempest raged with them, . . . and the mighty ship over the great waters the storm-wind had tossed [thus the Sumerian version]. Jensen explains MA-TU as a ‘deluge boat.’ ” It’s driven by the wind; it’s not a sailing vessel. There are no sails ever mentioned. There don’t need to be. Though driven by the storm, it had “nothing in common with a boat in full sail (and) nowhere . . . is a sail mentioned, nor would it have been of much use in such a hurricane as described.”

It would have been rent to shreds in a minute, driven before the wind all the way, these fierce winds. Notice, they both say exactly what the book of Ether says. We don’t need to question this thing as the most absurd thing ever written anymore. Hilprecht wrote, “Besides, we observed that the pictures of the Tyrian boats referred to have no sails.” A *magur* boat was driven by the wind, but not with sails.

Thirteen: “It shall be a house-boat carrying what is saved of life,” says the Nippur version, its purpose being to preserve life and offer full protection “against the waves washing overboard.”

That thing about the air hole has been changed by some. Jensen explains here “a ‘deluge boat,’ not because it was a sailing boat driven by the wind or rather the hurricane boat, but because it possessed certain qualities which rendered its use especially effective during the deluge, when its exclusive purpose was to carry the remains of life and to protect men and beasts against the waters.”

That’s not the one I was looking for. Oh, here we are. Ether 2:20: “And the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: Behold, thou shalt make a hole in the top [thereof], and also in the bottom [thereof]; and when thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole [it doesn’t say open the window] and receive air.” That’s a very different thing from opening windows. It talks about opening windows, and this is something else. There’s a hole in the top. What is this, an air compressor? “Thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air. And if it be so that the water come in upon thee, behold, ye shall stop the hole, that ye may not perish in the flood.”

Notice “the hole thereof”; there’s the hole of the air and the hole of the water, “that ye may not perish in the flood.” An exacting editor, by removing the very significant *thereofs* [has changed the meaning]. When you suffer for air, you unstop the hole thereof and receive air. That means *air hole*, you see. But he removed the [word] *thereof*, and he said, “When thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air.” He doesn’t mention *thereof*, meaning *air hole*. He made it to appear that when Jared wanted air, he had to open the top window of the boat to admit fresh air. That’s the very time he had to keep it closed. When they didn’t have air inside, they had to keep it closed because the waves are dashing outside. That was not what the original of the Book of Mormon said. For one thing, the ships had no windows communicating with the outside. “Ye cannot have windows,” it said. Each ship had an air-tight door, we’re told, and that was all. Air was received not by opening and closing doors and windows. Only when they were quiet and riding on the surface could they open the window and replenish the air. But he says by unplugging air holes “thou shalt unstop the hole [thereof] and receive air,” this being done only when the ship was not on the surface. “When thou shalt suffer for air”—that is, when the ships were not able to open the hatches and replenish their air. Well, this can only refer to a reserve supply of air, and indeed the brother of Jared recognizes that the people cannot possibly survive on the air contained within the ship at normal pressure. Ether 2:19: “We shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them; therefore we shall perish.”

So the Lord recommended a device for compressing air with a hole in the top thereof and also in the bottom thereof—not referring to the ship but to the air chamber with the peculiar language “unstop an air hole.” When the crew found it impossible to remain on the surface, [verse 20], “And if it be so that the water come in upon thee,” they were to plug up the air chamber. “Ye shall stop the hole [thereof], that ye may not perish in the flood”—to keep the air after you’ve replenished it.

Anyway, much more important than that is the conversation the Lord has with the brother of Jared on the subject of light when he’s told how to build [the ships]. He says in Ether 2:18: “O Lord, I have performed the work which thou hast commanded me, and I have made the barges according as thou hast directed me [but there’s something wrong]. And behold, O Lord, in them there is no light; whither shall we steer? And also we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them [they know that, you see]; therefore we shall perish.” Then the Lord gives the instructions here, which have been changed in our book, to unstop the hole, etc. They have a compressor.

Verse 23: “Ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you.” The Lord tells them they can’t have windows for light, and they can’t take fire. That’s

interesting. It would use up all the oxygen. That's out of the question, you see, "for ye shall not go by the light of fire. For behold, ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea." So what will you do? Verse 25: "For ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, the winds which have gone forth, and the floods which shall come. Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you?"

The brother of Jared says what will we do for [light], and the Lord always answers him this way, "What ideas do you have on the subject?" He must contribute—that's the whole idea. After all, the whole company could have been taken through the air across the Pacific just like that. That wasn't the idea. We all have to go through this, so he asks the brother of Jared, well, what ideas have you got on the subject? Verse 23: "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels," when you're swallowed up in the depths of the sea? Well, he had an idea.

Ether 3:1: "The brother of Jared (now the number of the vessels which had been prepared was eight) went forth unto the mount which they called the mount Shelem." *Shelem* means *high, safe, secure*. The word *shalom* is derived from that. Remember, *shalom* means you're safe. *Shalom* is a "ladder, a high place." If you're going to a high place, it is a safe place, a secure place, a *shelem*. He went to the highest mountain around. Moses did the same thing. Lehi and Nephi did the same thing. So again this is a pattern. And he melted out sixteen stones. Well, how did he know that he'd have to do that? Because the ark of Noah was lit by shining stones that the Lord had blessed. That's how he knew about it. It says it was constructed after the manner of Noah's ark, so when the Lord asked what do you want me to do—he thought, Ah, I'll get some shining stones. "And they were white and clear, even as transparent glass," but alas, they wouldn't shine. That was the trouble—they didn't shine in the dark. There was another problem, so what did he do?

This is very symbolic, too. He climbed the highest mountain around, "and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount." He stood on the top of the mountain and said, Lord, this is where I get off. This is as far as I go. He held them up and said, you've got to do something now. I've done everything in my power. Then he suggested what the Lord could do—touch these and make them shine, and then everything will be all right. But the way he puts it, he's not laying commands to the Lord or anything. He is reduced to the depths of humility now. Of all the humble requests we have in all of scripture, this is the most profound. Talk about a man in humility. The need is urgent now.

So the Jaredites discover their limitations. He says [verse 2] "Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires. [Anything you want you ask the Lord for, and you have a right to do that. You've been commanded to do it.] Behold, O Lord, thou has smitten us because of our iniquity, and hast driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness [how eloquent the man is]; nevertheless, thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of the rock." These little pretty things. They don't mean a thing. He calls them "these things" rather contemptuously.

Verse 4: "And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones . . . that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared." So the Lord stretches forth his hand and touches the stones with his finger. Verse 6: "And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord," and was knocked flat, "and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood [the Lord does not have flesh and blood, you know;

flesh is of this earth, and blood is the corruptible part of our nature]; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.”

The Lord said why have you fallen? Verse 8: “I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.” Now this is a crux. Just within the last week something’s come out. I don’t know where—I think it was in the *Student Review*. Somebody said there’s a flat contradiction in the Book of Mormon where he tells him no man has seen me before. He said, “Never have I shown myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed as thou has believed.” But he had already showed himself to Adam [the student said]. No he hadn’t. He hadn’t showed himself to Adam in the flesh. He showed himself to Adam before the Fall. After that he didn’t show himself to Adam. Adam before the Fall was not a body of flesh and blood. He was not perishable; he was immortal.

Verse 9: “I shall take upon me flesh and blood.” Well, the Lord did, so he could suffer, be crucified, and die. As we know, the blood is the life, the earthly life, the corruptible element, and flesh is itself of the substance of the earth. Flesh is *bāśār*, the perishable and corruptible. So he said “I shall take upon me flesh and blood,” which he was to do. And he said “Sawest thou more than this? And he answered: Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me. . . . And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth.” And then the Lord showed himself unto him as he was and said, “Ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence.” There’s the preexistence again, you see.

Verse 14: “Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son.” Notice in the same verse he says, “They who shall believe on my name . . . shall become my sons and my daughters.” Well, if he has sons and daughters, of course he’s the Father. And he is the Son also. Verse 15: “And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created.” See, Adam in the Garden was eternal; he was not a mortal. The first time he showed his immortal body to a mortal man—that’s what this was. Yes?

“In the book of Moses it seems to indicate that Eve was shown Christ as well.”

[Brother Nibley thought he said Enoch.] No, he was carried in away in a vision. He was carried away to heaven. Remember when the lights go down and then he finds himself lying upon the earth in the dark. He hadn’t been talking to the Lord here. He’d been in the other world. He’d been in his presence up in the celestial kingdom, just as Lehi had. Remember at the beginning, Lehi said he thought he saw God sitting on his throne surrounded by a numerous concourse of angels, and then they all went on a conference. See, it’s the time element here. That was the great council in heaven he was seeing, when the decision was made. So he had to go there to see him. Yes, you won’t see God in the flesh and live; we’re told that very clearly in the Pearl of Great Price in the book of Moses—no man can stand in his presence and live. But this was a special case given to the brother of [Jared]. Notice, “. . . in the likeness of the same body, even as he showed himself unto the Nephites.” He showed himself to the Nephites how? After the resurrection when he was no longer flesh and blood. But there’s all the fuss about this.

The time is limited, but I wanted to talk about this polarization. We’ve been talking about that all along, but nevertheless there are some things here. Well, it mentions elephants. You notice elephants are never mentioned in connection with the Nephites, just with the Jaredites. Just in the very early days you find them on the continent, and they were used. They’re easily tamed, as you know, in India.

How did they cross the waters in the sixth chapter? How would they endure those terrible situations? Well, it says they had sing-ins. We just sang all day long and enjoyed it. I was thirty days crossing the Atlantic on one occasion, and the only way we could possibly endure was to

sing all day. Notice, “And it came to pass that the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind. And they did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord, and he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord” (Ether 6:8–9). That’s how they lived through it; they had these super sing-ins. It can be quite invigorating, you know, to keep on [singing].

We have Moroni’s commentary here. Then the works done in prison—that’s a very interesting thing because that’s so characteristic of the Asiatic society. We were talking about this Asiatic society, this knock down and drag out—the very sort of Ninja Turtles that my little grandson was looking at this morning. It’s always good guys against bad guys. You’ll always have them, and you’ll always have equals against each other and never solve that terrible thing. I’ll give an example of how this works. In the fourth century St. Basil was writing about it. “In the confused political situation everybody wants to give orders, and nobody wants to take them. Men are willing to cooperate on anything only as the most effective means of crippling a common enemy, after which they turn against each other.”

This was in Antioch, too, remember, the city where [men wanted] everybody to be wiped out so they’d be the richest man left. The final survivor and undisputed Number One was Constantine the Great. He interrupted and made them stop fighting. But, to quote our own study on the subject, no sooner had Constantine removed his last civil and *military* opponents than the issue between the Christians and pagan subjects became acute.² He had to settle that, so he settled that. He put the pagans in their place, and then the churchmen started accusing each other of heresy in wild abandon. Then it had to be Arias against Athanasius. The whole Christian world was then split again. Then the emperor took sides, came down with one side, and removed the last heretic, and received the undying thanks from the church. The true believers were at each others’ throats as never before. So this is the way it goes.

Nowhere is this process more sharply brought into focus than with Moroni’s inserts in his father’s book on the supreme results of polarizing. This is a very important principle—that the two poles conceive an ever greater antipathy to each other the more they come to be alike. Everyone knows that like poles repel each other, and only opposite poles attract each other. Now we’re talking about right from the beginning. As soon as Trajan and Hadrian took over and took half of Asia, then the trouble began with the two worlds fighting each other. It’s very old, of course. It goes back much further than that. It goes back to the battle of Thermopylae and much older than that; it’s always been going on. The emperors of East and West were fighting each other, in this case the emperors of Rome and Asia. I had particularly Justinian and Chosroes in mind, both very powerful emperors of a revived empire. The emperors of Rome and Asia describe themselves in absolutely identical terms, while each accuses his rival of being nothing but a base forgery and depraved imitation of himself. This is not a real clash of ideologies at all, but only a rivalry of parties that are [motivated] by identical principles and have the same objectives. What they’re both after is the Book of Mormon formula, power and gain. The secret of commanding loyalty on both sides was, of course, to play up the wickedness of the other. The empire of the fourth century, when Rome collapsed, was at its very strongest with the biggest army and everything else. The empire of the fourth century was the world of displaced persons, inevitably drawn toward the big city. (Just in the last two months Cairo has gone up another million—there are now 15 million people living in Cairo.) To take the place of the old lost loyalty to hearth and homeland—the *prisca fides*, the primitive belief in fate—strong measures had to be taken. New super loyalty was needed to guarantee the permanence of the social order. Men were taught to declare allegiance to a super thing—a noble abstraction loosely designated as *Romanitas*, the binding cement which was carefully cultivated in hostility to barbarians. “We’re the Romans; they’re the barbarians.” Well, it was the same with the Babylonians and the Moslems. It was *ager pacatus* and *ager hosticus* with the Romans; *Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Ḥarb* with the Moslems.

You see that's being very strongly emphasized. You're never going to come to an agreement with the Iranians or the Iraqis as long as they say *Dār al-Ḥarb*. *Islam* means "to submit"; it means *peace* also. All those who have submitted are the real people. All outside are the *Dār al-Ḥarb*, and they threaten us. They were always being threatened, and that's why the emperor expanded [the empire]. They couldn't stand anyone beyond their borders threatening them. Remember the last line of the great fourth eclogue that got Vergil made a saint: "The emperor must inevitably rule over a pacified earth. All the earth must be pacified under his rule according to the virtues of our virtuous ancestors." We're the virtuous people, and we must rule the earth because we're the good guys.

Barbaria is the threatening world of the steppes of Asia. It's no more a fiction of government propaganda. There was really such a contrast. "It was the age-long struggle [this is quoting J. B. Bury] to repel, check, or annihilate a perennial enemy. The eternal question [was] the strife between Europe and Asia, between East and West, between Aryan and non-Aryan. All around the civilized periphery of Asia, the hordes of the heartland had for centuries been dealt with in the same way." I talked about geopolitics, the basic driving mechanism of history. Then remember that the weather is always the thing that gets things moving, and of course it is in the book of Ether, too—the terrible winds that destroy. These terrible winds, the *burans*, never cease to blow.

"The hordes of the heartland had for centuries been dealt with in the same way by subtle and disruptive diplomacy, by long and costly limes [those are lines or walls], by punitive deterrent expeditions, [and] when all else failed by the reluctant absorption of their barbarian conquerors." Well, this is interesting. We might as well conclude it, too. "To command loyalty became part of the public education policy. To the lessons of the schools, carefully supervised by the government, was added a more aggressive policy of deliberately widening the gulf between the two worlds [planned polarization]. For centuries barbarian and Roman east and west had been mingling on terms of the greatest intimacy, producing a borderline culture in which it was quite impossible to draw the line between one culture and the other. Priscus, who was sent back in the sixth century, remembers quite casually the presence of people from the West visiting relatives in the camps of the Asiatics. He notes the busy coming and going of merchants between the two worlds. He describes the kind hospitality shown him, a complete stranger, in the home of the Easterners. But with this he gives us the other side of the picture, the official side—the ubiquitous activity of spies and agents in Roman pay, the infusion into the very court of Attila of large sums of Roman money to corrupt and divide. The insane mounting conviction of the rulers of the two halves of the world, both barbarians, each that his was the divine calling to liberate the human race from the intolerable ambition of the other." It still is going on today.

I'm quoting from two books here. You may recognize one. "It seems melodramatic," writes the first author, a very important man, "to treat the two poles of human experience represented by the United States and the Soviet Union [this talk was given ten years ago] as the equivalent of good and evil, light and darkness, God and the devil. Yet if we allow ourselves to think of them that way, even hypothetically, it can help clarify our perspective of the world struggle." It hardly clarifies the picture. It certainly simplifies it, as he continues. "The United States represents hope, freedom, security, and peace. The Soviet Union stands for fear, tyranny, aggression, and war. If these are not poles, good and evil in human affairs, then the concepts of good and evil have no meaning. Those who cannot see the distinction have little claim to lecture on conscience."

So there you have it. There are just two poles. And strange thing—we have to do exactly what they do. We have to react every time. We don't act—we react. That's what Satan does. He has to react. All his power is to destroy. He can lie, but after a statement has been made. He does the four things that Joseph Smith said we must never do under any circumstances. We accuse. See, Satan is Diabolus; devil means *accuser*. He's the accuser of his brethren. Never accuse. You must

never aspire. Joseph said Satan aspired, and that was his undoing. He aspired to greatness. You must never contend. The first rule to the Nephites was there shall be no more contentions among you as there have been in the past, for all contention is of the devil. And you must never coerce. You must never force. That's the way the devil works. That's always reacting to something someone else has done; you never initiate your own doing, you see.

There are just two poles. We are all at one pole, and they're all at the other, like the two things in the film this morning. The good guys are good because they're fighting the bad guys. The bad guys are [bad] just because they're fighting the good guys. That would make them bad, and that's as far as you need to go.

“Strange to say, we do everything they do because they force us to. Soviet strategy is not defensive. It's designed to secure victory. The only answer for us [to] a strategy of victory on the Soviet side is a strategy of victory for the West. If they play dirty, we too can fight the twilight war in the hazardous mufti of the CIA. While we have been giving our lectures on human rights [no more of that], we now do everything they do. We must fight them because they do all those bad things. And to fight them we must do all the same bad things,” he says. “Thus, just like them, we must give up desirable social goals to attain military aims. We have no choice but to counterpoise our military strength to that of the Soviet Union's [which of course leaves them no choice but to counter ours]. This is the way to avoid defeat,” he tells us. “Finding ourselves constantly threatened, we should be as much a threat to them as they are to us, declare ourselves as free to forage on the Soviet side as they have been to forage on ours. The Soviet leaders can be utterly ruthless if they use power. We must do the same. Only if the West develops a sense of purpose equal to theirs, though different from theirs [how different is it?]. . . . And equal is, by their definition, a rival—no reconciliation, no coexistence, no avoidance of wars to be thought of, because they will not allow it.”

The thesis of Mr. Nixon's book, if not his life, is that we are constantly being threatened and that there's only one way to meet the threat, coming as it does from the source of irredeemable evil, “and that is power. To meet the challenge of our survival we must drastically increase our military power, shore up our economic power, reinvigorate our will power, strengthen the power of our presidents, and develop a strategy aimed not just at avoiding defeat but at attaining victory. Victory requires knowing when to use power.”

He quotes James and Burns then. “Presidents must have a will to power. They must constantly search for power—build it, if necessary, out of every scrap of formal authority or personal influence they can locate. They must be constantly guarding against whatever power they have achieved. They must horde power so that it will be available in the future. One man alone has the specific responsibility to ensure power [and that, of course, is the president], the effective use of power that only experience can teach.”

At this point we recall what Moses 6:15 says, “And in those days Satan had great dominion among men, and raged in their hearts; and from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed . . . because of secret works seeking for power. He says here, “The sine qua non of the conduct and exercise of power is secrecy.”

Then Moroni's statement in Ether 8:15–16: “. . . oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power. . . . And they were kept up by the power of the devil to administer these oaths unto the people, to keep them in darkness [there's the secrecy, you see], to help such as sought power to gain power.” There's the same formula, the secrecy and the power. Granted that such power-seeking is bad on their side, what else can it be for those who imitate them? Well, and so it goes on.

Now, remember what the subject is we're writing on. It's not just war you're talking about. There are various facets. We must talk about that the next time.

He says here, finally, "Napoleon is wrong when he says it's spirit that always wins. In the short run that may be so, but we're not living in that kind of a world. In the final analysis the victory goes to the side with the power. Power is the ability to make things happen, to set the course of history." Nothing could be more insane. The first law of Clausewitz, in his classic work *On War* is uncertainty. You never can tell when a war begins what's going to happen. And he [Nixon] says we have the power, so we can set the course of history. Well, you know who that is speaking.

The other one is taught by Solzhenitsyn, and he says the same thing. Nixon says the danger is that we're so different. No, he says the danger isn't that at all. The danger is that we're so much alike. I must read this to you—these two great principles of action that dominate. We're both materialistic, and we both say the economy is everything. He insists on describing the West, he has also described the East. "At first glance there seems an ugly parallel, common traits in the thinking of a way of life today—East and West, but such is the logic of materialistic development. This is the real crisis," he says. "In the East it is destroyed by dealings and machinations of the ruling party. In the West commercial interests tend to suffocate it. This is the real crisis. The split world is less terrible than the fact that the same disease is plaguing the two main sections." And that's the case. The great empires always fight the great emperors. The great democracies always fight the great democracies, etc. It's always kings against kings, princes against princes, equals fighting equals. That's the very essence of the thing. Even in the last World War it was two great commercial empires. Buckminster Fuller said that World War I was just a fight of the sea pirates against the land pirates. The British Empire were the sea pirates; they went out and grabbed anything they wanted. And the Germans were doing the same thing by land. It was a fight between the sea pirates and the land pirates, but they were as alike as peas in a pod. As you know, they were cousins. The royal families were very close, very intimate, loving families of the kaiser and Queen Victoria.

Well, what is the real crisis then? Our book of Ether is not a waste of paper, believe me. It's nothing to be laughed at, and it's becoming very serious. I guess we'll have to talk about the final the next time, won't we.

1. He is quoting from Hermann Hilprecht, *The Earliest Version of the Babylonian Deluge Story and the Temple Library of Nippur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1910), 52–55.
2. Cf. Hugh 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), 438.