

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 3, Lecture 61

Alma 46

## Evidence of the Authenticity of the Book of Mormon

The prodigality of Alma 46 leaves my poor old noggin bemused. I don't know how to handle it. I made a list last night of sixteen points of evidence it brings out, any one of which would be enough to write a book about. Just now before the class a question occurred to me, and it is very important for us to answer it here. Is our main interest here proving the Book of Mormon? Brother Monte Jensen, do you think so? Is your main interest in the Book of Mormon proving that it is true, that it is a real history?

"No, I don't think so."

Then what is your main interest in the Book of Mormon?

"Learning more about its message."

That's the point. People say that same thing about the Bible. "Whether it's true or not, whether it's a myth or not, it has great lessons for us." They say that. Well, the Book of Mormon certainly has great lessons, but it has always been the main issue whether it's true. A famous critic of the 20s and 30s, Bernard DeVoto, was born in Utah. He edited the *Atlantic Monthly*, I think it was, for years. He characterized the Book of Mormon as "a yeasty fermentation of nonsense, unspeakably absurd." Well, is it that? It's obvious that he hadn't read it. Later on he apologized. He read a chapter and it changed his mind. I'm not fooling. But it can't be proven.

The religious editor of the *Los Angeles Times* came down and interviewed some people here. He asked me, "What eminent archaeologist has ever been forced to believe the Book of Mormon by the evidence?" You're not going to twist anybody's arm. After all, angels are not scientific. Anyone who pretends to be a scientist in his profession is not going to accept angels, unless he is forced to. You'd have to have evidence so powerful that it would force an archaeologist or anthropologist to believe it. You're never going to find that, are you? But the answer to that question is what on earth does anybody know today about what was happening in the New World 2,000 years ago? You can find remnants from which you might reconstruct this, that, or the other, but we have no written record, no names. We know nothing that was going on in Book of Mormon days. You dig and then you compare what you have found here with what you have dug up somewhere else. Then you argue about how to account for the resemblances, etc. You never get anywhere. Archaeology is not a science at all. You just dig and you guess. They haven't got very far. We aren't going to get very far with evidence here, are we?

Let's ask somebody else now. If it's true, it could still be a great book, couldn't it? We've seen that. Is Sister Matthews here? What does religion teach us? What are the religious teachings of the Bible and the Book of Mormon? [Her answer is not audible.] She really comes to the point. Why we are here, what purpose, etc.? Unless the Bible is true and those stories are true, what is it doing? Philosophy teaches those things. That's what you

think about in philosophy, though you came nearer the point. Most people today, including most ministers, say that the Bible teaches us morals, ethics, aesthetics, principles, spiritual things, and beautiful stories. It teaches love, affection, family—all those things. But you don't have to go to the Bible [for them]. You don't have to have angels come to tell you that. "It needs no ghost come from the dead, my lord, to tell us that," as Horatio says. We have thousands of books on that subject. The whole fourth floor is taken up with books that will tell you about humanity, love, morals, human nature, and all that sort of thing. No, the only purpose of religion is to answer one question, and Sister Matthews came very near to it. It's called the terrible question that nobody could answer. I used to talk a lot about that. The question is: Is this all there is? If this is the whole show, then your whole way of life is going to be arranged differently, isn't it? Remember what Korihor teaches in the Book of Mormon? When a man dies that is the end thereof. Therefore, they lifted up their heads and rejoiced. They could sin all they wanted to; there would be no reckoning or anything like that. They were glad of that teaching that when the man dies that is the end thereof. Well, that question will pretty well determine your behavior, won't it? Is this all there is?

Pure fantasy can teach us wisdom, morals, kindness, courage, forgiveness, and other moral things. We tell stories in Sunday School from Van Dyke. It was very popular in the 1920s to invent sentimental religious stories—"The Little Engine That Could" and things like that. We give those as Sunday School lessons. They're morals which are fine. You give them in Primary and the like, but we are talking about the real thing now. Take the great fantasies like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *The Tempest*. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ends with a blessing on the house. It's a beautiful thing, a blessing on the house and peace. "I am sent, with broom, before, to sweep the dust behind the door." It is pronounced by Puck, a mythical sprite. There's nothing there. Then there's that other play of great fantasy and power. His last play teaches all sorts of moral lessons, the main one being the lesson of forgiveness. How does it end?

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act IV, Scene 1

There is nothing before, and after this it will all just vanish. Life is just a play, just a presentation. It won't leave even a rack behind. A rack is the torn clouds that remain after a storm. It won't even leave that behind. It's all going away and leave nothing. Most people believe that's how it is. That makes a difference, so this business is very important. Claudio sums it up in another speech from Shakespeare and gives the final word on the subject of death. Claudio sums it up in the prison. He doesn't want to die for his sister.

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;

To lie in cold obstruction and to rot [nice prospect];  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice.

These are the various prospects of the hereafter that religion held forth in Shakespeare's day. The center of hell in Dante is not fire; it's ice. Everything freezes. It's the heat death. Everything is absolutely cold. It reaches zero, and that's where it all ends. Of course, that's the second law; everything is running down. The first law is that heat can't go from a cooler to a hotter body. It always runs downhill, and that's the way it is in Dante.

To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
[Then he brings up the new doctrine of purgatory, which was the worst of all.]  
Of those that lawless and uncertain thought  
Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!  
The weariest and most loathed worldly life  
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature, is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.

Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act III, Scene 1

The doctrine of purgatory is not an old one. It's not an ancient one. It was introduced in modern times, in Shakespeare's day as a matter of fact. That he thinks is the worst of all, the most horrible. Remember, in *Hamlet* he says:

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand on end,  
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine.

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene 5

This is the issue after all then, isn't it? It's the whole thing. How do you explain the plates and the angel? Well, they were a hallucination. That's what the great Eduard Meyer said, and he had more respect for Joseph Smith than any of them. But the trouble is the Book of Mormon is not a hallucination. It makes all the difference also where he got that book if he really saw the angel. Angels' visits always mean rejoicing. It's a breakthrough, you see. There is more. You never dreamed about it, but this is just the beginning. It's a great show, and you have been shortchanging yourself. You have been living "cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in to saucy doubts and fears." Have you been living like that? No, that's no good. But now an angel comes, a real angel. This makes all the difference if he really saw it. That means we are living under wholly different circumstances from the "lives of quiet desperation" that we normally live, and nobody can escape it. The mere reality of the Book of Mormon puts everything in a different light. You can accept it as a moral doctrine and teaching, but that isn't it. They are a dime a dozen. In the editorials in the

paper everyday somebody moralizes, points us the way of righteousness, and condemns sin, folly, human misbehavior, and the human comedy. This [the gospel] means we don't need drugs to escape from the dawn of nothing. That's the trouble. There are lots of verses in the *Rubaiyat* about this. We used to learn this when I was in high school. It's the most negative thing in the world.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste, [That's all we have.]  
One moment, of the Well of Life to taste—  
The Stars are setting, and the Caravan  
Starts for the dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste!  
Oh, make haste.

Hurry while you are here because you don't have much time. That's all there is. It's the dawn of nothing after this.

Let's turn to this list. We were talking about the list of sixteen [evidences], and I'm not including the remarkable resemblance to our own time and the remarkable relevance to our own situation with which this chapter begins. Remember the post-war boom, the arrogance of the people that divided them, and this cultural difference here. The main issue in the Book of Mormon is not between the Nephites and the Lamanites at all. That's not the fight, and this is an important thing. This is our first point in this cultural thing. It's between totally different ways of life that began already in Jerusalem. You notice that Alma is like Lehi, Nephi Ammon, Abinadi and the rest. We talked about the Rechabites who want to live the old law in its purity. In this wicked and sophisticated civilization you can't do it, so there is always this conflict. Alma is over strict. He is a prude really. He gets on your nerves. No wonder he caused his son Alma to revolt. But these people have to be. Remember, it tells us in the short books like Enos, unless our laws were extremely strict and severe that's the only way we could keep things under control at all. Like the Puritan settlements in New England, they had to be extra severe. It's the conflict between them and the more permissive way of life that the Nehors immediately introduced. That became the state religion. The righteous, the people of the Church, were always a small minority, except for two hundred years, throughout the Book of Mormon. They were the minority, and they were in constant conflict with these others like Korihor, Nehor, Zeezrom, etc. Leaders were always able to get a big following if they protested against this overly strict religious society in which they were living. They lived the old strict law of the prophets. It was austere living. It was a life of the mind. And every time there was a break, they would take to the wilderness. It happens very often here.

We mentioned the confusion of the Dead Sea Scrolls people last time. They did the same thing. They left Jerusalem because Jerusalem was corrupt. The scrolls are full of this. They were waiting there for the prophets. They were waiting for God. As it tells us in Isaiah, we have gone into the desert to prepare the way for the Lord to come, and we can only do that by preparing ourselves that we might have visitations by angels. They were looking forth to that sort of thing. [We discussed] the confusion of the people of Qumran and all up and down the Dead Sea. It wasn't just Qumran. This was the standard religion of Lehi's day, and it was lost. That's why it's not popular today. That's why they have suppressed the scrolls actually. It's very natural to confuse them with the Essenes because the Essenes were another such body of people that were [escaping] from the world. But, after all, St. Anthony was a rich Christian fellow living in Christian Alexandria. He saw it was a terrible way [to live]. He retreated to the desert and founded a monastic movement. We have to go out to the wilderness and purify things, and there's confusion. There were

many such groups. This is the whole Hermetic tradition. They formed these conventicles, these groups. That would include Pythagoras, the Platonic schools of teaching, and everyone who wanted to live a pure life. They wanted to get away from the corruption of the world which always follows the same routine, the four things that Nephi talks about: money, power, popularity, and the lusts of the flesh. Those are the things we all want to enjoy. This is repeated a number of times in the Book of Mormon, and Nephi makes it very clear [1 Nephi 22:23]. As I said, there were many groups. They were always doing this breaking off. And they keep breaking off from the Church and going out to Baker and places like that. There have been many, many splinter groups from the Church. Russell Rich devoted many years to studying those groups, and there were over a hundred of them. So we have this theme that runs through the Book of Mormon which is very solidly backed up now by the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Then in contrast to this, the other culture is that of Amalickiah. Now that's a giveaway. Now we are getting to a possible piece of evidence. A second point here is the name Amalickiah. He is the leader. He sets himself up, and they all follow. His name Amalickiah is "my king is Jehovah." Amalickiah was a Mulekite. We forget that Zarahemla wasn't a Nephite city at all; it was a Mulekite city. The Mulekites were a mixed band, much larger than Lehi's group, that came over when Jerusalem fell. We know now from the Lachish Letters that the youngest member of the royal family did escape. He would be Mulek, the "little king." Possibly, they call themselves the Mulekites because he led their particular group. He [Amalickiah] represents the Mulekite reaction against the strict teachings of Lehi and Nephi's descendants. The Mulekites were never that way. They not only built the big city of Zarahemla, but they [included] almost all the dissenters, just as some of the greatest men. Ammon was a Mulekite, a pure descendant of Zeniff. This was a mixed batch. They had no objections to accepting the foreign Mosiah as king. He was a Nephite and became their king. Then Mosiah and Alma take over and they practically rule the state. They lay down the law, and they are very strict, both of them. But you notice the second Mosiah keeps the law of Benjamin, which was the liberal [part] of the old law of Moses—namely, as it tells us in Alma 30, absolute freedom of speech and of religion. Alma's own son deliberately started making all sorts of trouble, but they didn't lock him up, though [Alma] was head of the Church. Mosiah's four sons joined him, and they made as much trouble as they could. They represented this easy-going, more popular religion. You'd think, well why don't these two men crack down and put them in jail. It says because there was a law against [persecuting a man for his belief]. I'll read it to you because it is a very important law. They were free to do this, so you are going to have these two societies, two cultures, two ideals side by side here.

Let me read you Alma 30:7 and 9. "Now there was no law against a man's belief; for it was strictly contrary to the commands of God that there should be a law which should bring men on to unequal grounds." With pressure groups you'd come under pressure if you believed with a minority or something. "Now if a man desired to serve God, it was his privilege; or rather, if he believed in God it was his privilege to serve him; but if he did not believe in him there was no law to punish him." It was not a crime not to believe in God. Atheism had as much right as anything else. Otherwise it would have been unequal, it says. "For there was a law that men should be judged according to their crimes [that's an overt action]. Nevertheless, there was no law against a man's belief; therefore, a man was punished only for the crimes which he had done; therefore all men were on equal grounds." No pressures could be brought in that case.

This Korihor had been raising hell, as you know. But they didn't imprison him. He was

killed by the intolerant Zoramites. A Zoramite mob killed him, but among the Nephites he was free to circulate. He went about and you know what he preached. The law could have no hold on him. He “began to preach unto the people that there should be no Christ.” He said it is a foolish and vain hope to yoke yourselves with such foolish things. He said, this is not intellectual; this is foolishness. It’s not intellectually sound. Notice, these were the intellectuals, the rationalists, the positivists, etc. These foolish old traditions, these old myths, have kept you down. Alma 30:27: “And thus ye lead away this people after the foolish traditions of your fathers, and according to your own desires; and ye keep them down, even as it were in bondage, that ye may glut yourselves with the labors of their hands, that they durst not look up with boldness, and that they durst not enjoy their rights and privileges. [He was allowed to preach all this?] Yea, they durst not make use of that which is their own.”

They had to pay taxes and things like that. It was a sacral state. This [preaching] was allowed. You see these two cultures side by side, and this conflict is the one that hits you all the way through the Book of Mormon. We are so naive and so simplistic in the Church. We say, “Well, there were the good guys; naturally, they were the Nephites who were white. Then there were the dark people who were the Lamanites.” It isn’t that way at all. This is the real issue all throughout the book, and it’s the issue in our world. Our war is not with the Lamanites today. And along with this, you notice, they are bound to resent Nephi, Lehi, and Alma and Mosiah’s complete rule. Why should they be in charge? It was all right to make Mosiah king because he was a great man. But when he joined Alma and gave Alma plenary power in the Church, people started objecting. Then there was this rebellion that became very popular. The Church from then on is a small minority; they don’t hold their own at all.

Along with this there are frequent indications we will see in the Book of Mormon of ancient and exotic peoples in the background. For example, when Alma went to visit the Zoramites on a mission. They dissented, as you know, and went out. They had only been away from the central culture for a short period. He says they [Alma and his group] were utterly dumbfounded. They were so amazed they didn’t know what to think of it. It absolutely stunned them. They [the Zoramites] had a totally different religion of very exotic things in which they built high towers and stairways and all this sort of thing to have prayers. They loaded themselves with all sorts of costly and lavish apparel, and the priests were parading around. Well, immediately we come into a world with which we are familiar from the murals, vases, and the reliefs of Central and South America—this lavish, strange religion which was there before. The Zoramites took it up obviously. Almost overnight they had this whole different culture. [Alma and his brethren] were completely amazed by what they found, how they had changed everything. They kept some of the old religion and adopted this, that, and the other. But who would give them this idea? You don’t just invent a religion whole cloth that way. They came out and picked this up.

Then there is the Sebus game [Alma 17:26], for example. This is a worldwide thing. Well, we won’t go into these things, but that’s another of these exotic things. We find constant hints. For example, they talk about the whole central country which was barren of trees because of the inhabitants. Well, [some say] you can’t make a desert that way, but you can. We know now that’s what started the Sahara going. People do create deserts. They do deforest countries entirely. In fact, Plato talked about that. He said that half the Peloponnesians are now just desert because people have cut down the trees. Well, this happened in the Book of Mormon here. Who were these people? It’s not talking about the roving Jaredites in the north country. We’re talking about something else here. Anyway

this is an important thing. These contacts are mentioned only when necessary, and this is why. The Book of Mormon is very carefully edited to focus attention intentionally on the small minority of believers who remain true and faithful. It's a history of the Church. It is handed down genealogically from father to son. It deals with the affairs of the Church. So throughout the Book of Mormon we find intense hostility between these two ways of life. One is strict and upright, and the other is glorying in displays of wealth, fine apparel (notice the language; it uses lavish terms) and proud nobility. We saw that last time. It's the very sort of thing we find so strikingly illustrated in the murals, vase paintings—the tasteless profusion of the jewelry and feathers, the parading of priests, and the pride of these things. The buildings and exceedingly high towers play an important part in the Book of Mormon—how they are built and who builds them under enforced labor. This is a striking point, and it comes out in this chapter very clearly.

In this chapter Moroni appeals to the folk memory of the ancient Hebrew customs and traditions. Here's something that is really quite solid here. This refers us to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Remember, he talks about the banner that Moroni raised to rally the people to assert their religion and their freedom. We saw that Kawe did this too. Again, that's the story of another society of these special people who went out to live the pure life, the Magi. It was not the Persian nation; that was under Dahhak, the lord of the lie. He was the one that had to be overcome. Kawe put his leather work apron on his pole, held it high, put an inscription on it, and rallied all the people to him for their freedom. They founded the freedom and the nation of the Magi, which was a separate, chosen group. Remember, they figure in the Bible too. The Jews were very close to these particular people. [Kawe's banner] was also for their religion, their freedom, and their national existence. And on the banner of Moroni was the inscription, "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children . . ." (We should be following along here, shouldn't we? We have two books to follow.)

This is the picture, but now we come to the Dead Sea Scrolls where we get it very concretely. This is the ideal war. It says when the people shall return from the wilderness to Jerusalem, then there will be a time of troubles and then there will be wars. This is the way it will be fought. These are the rules of the sacred warfare prescribed for Judah at all times. There is an argument whether this has to deal just with the last war at the last time, or this is the rule by which they were always supposed to govern their warfare. We learned from the *Battle Scroll*, the IQM, about when Israel went to war. It's quite a coincidence that this was edited by Yigael Yadin. He was in Provo several times, and we had some nice long talks with him about this. He was not only the editor, but he was the general, the commander and chief, in the war in 1948. He says this was discovered in 1948 just on the eve of the war and it fired the nation to great deeds. They did these tremendous things. We mentioned last time how two old Skoda guns from World War I were able to turn the tide of invasion. The strange things that happen!

The banner is the important thing here. When they go out to war, the high priest raises the banner. I think the best thing to do is to read the general account that Alma gives. Then I've noticed some things in the scrolls here. We have the text here, and this is the one we will follow: "When the sons of Levi, the sons of Judah, and the sons of Benjamin [those three tribes] return from their captivity in the wilderness . . ." They regard themselves as living in the wilderness as long as they are in a state of captivity in the wicked world. "On the return from the captivity of the *bnei* (sons) of light . . ." The title of the book is *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*. That's the way the world is divided, and this is a theme that's very notable in the Book of

Mormon too, especially Alma talks about this when he talks about his redemption from the darkness to the light, etc.

There are some places I have marked here: “On the trumpets they shall inscribe ‘Those Called of God, the Princes of God, and the Church of God [it means the order, the organization of God]’” This shall be on one. Fortunately, Brother Yadin has supplied us with a translation here. That helps, you know. But we agree very well on these things, needless to say. It’s talking about “the peace of God in the encampments of his Saints.” They call themselves the “Saints.” They are coming back and organizing themselves. [Much like] Alma 46:13 here it says, “Ye shall write ‘the peace of God in the encampment of his Saints’ upon their trumpets, and they shall write ‘God’s mighty deeds to scatter the enemy and put to flight all the opponents of justice.’”

Now this doctrine of desolation is very important. When Israel went to war, the people were rallied by such inscriptions on the banners. The banner was called the *nēṣ*, which the lexicon will tell you means “a pole, a flag, a standard, a signal, an assignment.” *Title* is the best translation you could give that. It also says it gave them title to the land; the emphasis on the land is very important all the way through here.

We asked Yadin, “What is your religion? What do you believe in?” Remember, he was an enlightened modern Jew. He said, “My religion is the land; I believe in the land.” That was his religion, the Holy Land. It’s an obsession with the land. It’s repeated again and again way back here. They still are. It’s the same thing here: “Blessings upon the land.” Alma talks about “the promised land” and “to give us a title upon the land.” They talk about this closeness to the land and the idea of the promised land.

Verse 17: “And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, he named all the land which was south of the land Desolation, yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and on the south [all the rest of the land, including some of the south lands]—A chosen land, and the land of liberty.”

“Chosen land” should have been capitalized because that’s exactly what the priest does here. Before the battle the high priest goes out between the ranks of the army who are lined up. It describes how they should be lined in proper array in straight lines, holding their weapons. There’s lots of description. It goes on for fifty pages describing exactly what their deployment of the troops should be. When they are deployed and ready for battle, the high priest goes out in front of the army. He walks back and forth and pronounces a curse on the enemy land. That is the *shemaʿ* or *shʿmāmāh*, or it can be *ḥoreb*, or *ḥormāh*, “land Desolation.” *Ḥoreb* is the Semitic word for war. Or desolation is *ḥormāh*. But in the Dead Sea Scrolls it says, “It shall be called *shʿmāmāh*,” which means “nothingness or wiping out.” That’s what’s going to happen. In the story of David after a certain king’s land was cursed it was called *shʿmāmāh*. But here is where they have this ritual thing. The other side is the land *beʿrākhāh*. It’s the land that is chosen. Here’s a very interesting thing. In Hebrew *bārakh* is “to bless” and *bāḥar* is “to choose.” The one means “the blessed land.” The other means “the chosen land.” *Bārūkh* is the blessed one, and *berukh* means the chosen one. Here he calls it the “chosen land.” This is referred to in other places too in both cases. This is a remarkable custom, but it’s not in the Bible. You don’t find this. Before the war the high priest dedicates the land of the enemy and calls it

“desolation.” This is a doctrine of the chosen land, and it’s very ancient.

Yadin makes a lot of the close resemblances between the Roman rules of war and the Hebrew ones. That’s not accidental because, as you know, armies do imitate each other. They have to. You have to compete. If they have a superior uniform for camouflage, you adopt the gray or the green. If they have helmet that gives better protection, the other side adopts the helmet. After a war has been going on for a while, two armies begin to look awfully much alike. You can’t allow another person to have an advantage indefinitely, so you do what he does if it’s working better than yours. So the armies look alike. Yadin, who was a tactician and a general, went into this. He said the Romans followed the same principle. They divided the world when they went out to war. They had the right of the *fetiales*. The priests would go out and throw a lance across the border with a curse. They do it seven times here, and they did it three times in Rome. They invited the enemy to submit. This is *ager hosticus*. It has not been conquered. This is the outside world. They would call it “the world of darkness, the *eland*, the empty land, the desert land.” They would cast a spear across it three times inviting them to submit. If they didn’t submit then, of course, they were in a state of rebellion. They were the dark outer world, and to Rome they represented a threat. That’s why Rome had to expand and have the world’s great empire. They couldn’t leave it the way it was.

There are some marvelous stories about Alexander on this. When he was in India the wise men, the Brahmans, asked him, “Why do you conquer the world?”

He said, “I’m not conquering the world; I’m just liberating it. I’m spreading light and truth. I’m moving into the darkness.”

This obsession was the same with the Romans. “Oh, we’ve got to win. As long as those people are unconquered out there, they present a threat to us because they are ambitious too and we have stuff they might want.” That’s called *ager hosticus* and we [the Romans] are *ager pacatus*, the two parts of the field or the land. This is the people that have accepted Rome and, therefore, are pacified. The *ager hosticus* is those that haven’t. They are hostile. *Hostile* is the same word as *ghost*. It’s the outer world—ghost, host, guest, a person who comes from afar, a stranger. Of course, this is the same theory in Islam. *Pacatus* in Islam means “having submitted, at peace, having accepted.” This is the *Dar al-Islam*. *Dar* means “settled territory.” This is the land that has submitted, that is under God, that has accepted Islam. If you don’t accept Islam, there’s always trouble. That’s *Dar al-Harb*. That’s your *Horeb* in the Bible. This is the land desolation. This philosophy endures throughout the Book of Mormon, feeling threatened, etc. Moroni is under constant pressure for that reason. We see that later on though. All these customs are clearly picked up in the Book of Mormon. You’re not going to get this from the Bible or even from the Apocrypha, except for the new things like the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In verse 18 we get the contrast. The cultural contrast is nowhere more clear than in this characterization by Moroni of his own people as “we who are despised.” Well, the Battle Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls starts out by saying this, “The sons of Levi and the sons of Judah are exiles in the wilderness.” It isn’t just captivity, but they are exiles. They are outcasts in the wilderness. That’s the *gālûth*. “They fight against them with all their troops when the exiles of the Son of Light return from the wilderness to encamp in the wilderness of Jerusalem.” They are still in the wilderness all the time, but they are exiles. They are driven out; they are homeless. It becomes more explicit later on. Describing their

condition, it always refers to them in these terms. They are the *Evyonim*/Ebionites, the outcasts, the poor of God.

Ah, here is this, “The high priest shall go forth from the middle in the interval [the space between the lines]. The priests, the sons of Aaron, clad in garments of white, shall curse the land desolation and bless the land bountiful.” The other land is the land bountiful, the blessed land and the chosen land.

“When war cometh to your land against the enemy that oppresseth you [notice, they are being oppressed by the enemy all the way along here] . . . and you shall be saved from your enemies . . . Thou hast chosen for thyself from all the nations a people holy through the covenant, taught the statutes, enlightened in understanding, hearing the glorious voices.”

This is not the language that the Jews accept today at all. They say, this is apocalyptic. “This is eschatological language, and we don’t go for that. We are strictly historical.” As Yadin said, “My religion is the land.” And then his saying, “We don’t believe in miracles, but we count on them.” When you get a passage like this, you realize that they don’t like this. Yadin doesn’t like this at all.

“. . . hearing the glorious voices, seeing holy angels, open of ear, understanding deep things, even the mysteries.” Then it goes into cosmology which the Jews are supposed to leave alone. The Talmud says it’s better that a man was not born than to bring up subjects like this. Then he goes into this sort of thing: “. . . the expanse of the skies, the hosts of the luminaries [the stars], the domain of the spirits and the dominion of the holy ones, the treasures of glory . . . He hath created the earth and its boundaries of her divisions into the wilderness and the plain land . . .” This goes into your cosmological, cabalistic doctrine that was rejected by the rabbis after the fall of the temple. The Book of Mormon is full of it. Then talk about being redeemed. “. . . by the hand of the poor ones that are to be redeemed by Thee . . .” They describe themselves as the “poor ones,” the *Evyonim*/Ebionites. That’s what he’s talking about when [Moroni] says, “Surely God shall not suffer that we, who are despised because we take upon us the name of Christ . . .” They think of themselves as the despised ones, and it’s the same thing here. Notice, he is saying this while he is waving the banner. This is on the banners that he is talking about. “. . . by the hand of the poor ones that are to be redeemed by Thee with power and retribution, for wondrous might the heart shall be a door of hope.”

The next section begins, “For into the hand of the poor ones [again he calls them that] wilt thou deliver the enemies from all lands into the hands of them that are prostrate in the dust.” He describes them as the “poor ones” and “as prostrate in the dust.” That’s an expression, remember, that King Benjamin used. Again, you won’t find that in the Bible. But the king said, “You are less than the dust.” When he asked the people to submit and accept the law, he said, “Prostrate yourself, even in the dust.” Here it describes Israel that way. When he is waving his banner around, he says, “For into the hands of the poor ones thou wilt deliver the enemies from all lands into the hands of them that are prostrate in the dust so as to bring low all mighty men of the nations, to render the recompense to the wicked upon the head of thine enemies and thy truth upon all the sons of men.” Needless to say, the Messiah passages are the ones the Jews don’t like. As I said, the Dead Sea Scrolls are in bad repute both with Christians and Jews because there is too much Christianity in them. The Jews say, “They are anticipating Christianity; we don’t like that.” The Christians say, “This robs us of our originality by having those things there when they

shouldn't have them.”

“The Levites [the elders] shall bless people from where they stand, the God of Israel and all his true deeds, and they shall curse all the spirits of Belial in his place and solemnly declare . . .” Notice, they shall bless the people where they stand and shall curse the people of Belial where they stand. As it says, [Moroni] pronounced all the land to the south Desolation, and he pronounced a blessing on all the other land.

“They shall solemnly declare this and bless the God of Israel for his holy plan.” Again they are always referring to the plan. Do you know the word plan isn't found in the King James Bible? It's an amazing thing. We think in terms of plan all the time. That has been picked up by most churches today. They use plan a great deal. They didn't before. They thought that was one of the follies of Mormonism.

Here's another one: “. . . through the poor in spirit there shall be a gnawing of the hard heart and the hard hearted.” Again, a favorite theme with Alma is the hardness of their hearts. “And through them that are upright the way of all the wicked shall come to an end, and thy mercies upon the remnants of Israel.” And remnant is a theme in the Book of Mormon again. They think of themselves as the remnant. “Thy name shall exalt thy mighty acts forever at the turning points of epochs and the appointed times of ordaining things for eternity, as well as the coming of daytime and the coming of nighttime.” These are dispensations it is talking about. There's the Magnificat.

Then he says here, “All their assembled multitude is as chaff that passes away.” That's from the first Psalm, chaff that the wind blows away (Psalms 1:4). This is what will happen to the wicked congregation. “And it shall become a desolation and shall not be found.”

“They shall whisper from the dust,” the Book of Mormon says. “Their mighty ones are no more.” They have changed places there, and all the rest is vanished away like smoke. “All their assembled multitude is as chaff, and it shall become a desolation and shall not be found.” That's the wicked congregations of darkness.

It says here, “The priest destined for the appointed time of all his brethren shall walk along and strengthen their hands for battle, and he shall solemnly declare to be strong and courageous.” This is exactly what Moroni does. It's a priestly office to do this. Here we get another one: “The chief priest shall come forward and stand in front of the formation and shall strengthen their heart through the might of God and their hands for his battle.” So this is the same procedure we find in the *Battle Scroll* (IQM), as we mentioned before—Cave 1, Qumran, *Milhamah* (meaning the *Battle Scroll*). This brings all these things to life all of a sudden. Nobody had any idea that this was part of the Jewish tradition. He's just beginning here. I see the time is up, but now he goes and tells them a wonderful story. We'll mention this next time. (This is point number seven.) And the next thing he does is very important too. You may be as flustered and confused as I am here because of the richness of this evidence. It's so compact. There is so much here that we have never looked at before, but it is all there and it all has significance. There are tracers all the way through this, and this is the thing you are supposed to look for that can't be faked. Think of what Joseph has given us here.