

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 1, Lecture 9
1 Nephi 1–3, 15
In the Wilderness

I hope you brought your Books of Mormon because that's the handbook; that's everything. It's all in there, far more than you think—far more than I ever guessed, as I'll show today, right now at the beginning. It's something I've never seen there before, and it's extremely important.

When I rudely interrupted myself last time, we were talking about President Joseph F. Smith. I was talking with him in his office, and we talked about crossing the Rub^c al-Khāli. The Rub^c al-Khāli means the “empty quarter” because it is empty. It's the worst desert in the world. The worst parts of the Sahara have Tuaregs and an occasional tree and some water in them. Not long ago they were quite wet. But not the “empty quarter.” There is nothing in it, and yet they [Lehi's family] crossed that. And they had a journey of eight years in the desert. Did they carry all those tents and things on their backs? Of course they didn't. I explained that to Brother Smith, and he immediately changed his mind. He said, “I was completely wrong. Obviously, that's the only way they could do it.” So don't get the idea that Joseph F. Smith was an old curmudgeon; he was not. He was very open minded and very liberal. All you had to do was point out the situation. Everything is very clearly set forth in the Book of Mormon.

But let's consider now just the second chapter. In the first chapter they go down very rapidly. We are not going to linger in the desert now. Eight years is too long for the course, so we will have to get through fast. But there are some things to notice here. He took all his stuff and went down to the borders. It mentions “the borders” twice in the fifth verse. That should be capitalized because that's what that area has been called, the Jabal, which means “the Borders.” Joseph Smith didn't know that. Neither did Oliver Cowdery, so they left it uncapitalized. But that area in which they went was the Jabal. Jabal is the range of mountains that separates one country from another. This had that name, Jabal. So they went down into the Borders. Notice they found here, after three days, a valley beside a river of water. Why a “river of water”? Because usually it's a “river of sand,” *nahr raml*. But this is a river of water. Well, how would they find a river of water in the desert at that time? (We might as well unfold the map here.)

Here is the trip they took. Here's where they came. They left Jerusalem and went down here, a three day's journey. On camel the normal rate is thirty miles a day, but you can make thirty to sixty miles a day. Under pressure, you could make a hundred miles a day. Camels move right along. (It would be down here.) They call this the Jawf, and this is called the Araba—this long depression. These are rifts. The Vatenaha valley is a main African rift, and they were a complete mystery until the 1930s when Professor Wegener introduced the continental drift theory. Now we realize that the earth's crust is moving, and these are breaks. This long one goes all down the Jordan Valley and continues right on down here. You see this long rift here, and it is a deep depression all the way down here

with high cliffs, just like Rock Canyon, on either side. Down this side of the Dead Sea, it is immense. We'll see some pictures of that later.

Then they went on down here and continued here. These valleys and gullies empty down here in the river in the winter time. Once in a while they run with water, but most of the time they are dry. When you find a *wadi* that has water in it, that's a "river of water" and is considered something very unusual. It tells us in 1 Nephi 1:4 that it was at the commencement of year. So this was the winter time when there was water running. The sight of it sent Lehi into fits of ecstasy, as we will see. (That's what an Arab does whenever he sees water.) This is the way they came down.

It says down here [on a map], to my surprise, that it was prepared by me. No it wasn't, because I would never call this Irreantum. This is Irreantum. There's an Egyptian writing that tells us it's the fountain of the Red Sea and even uses the word *Irreantum*. Somebody put that down there and said I was responsible. Why do we know that they went this way? They turned this way. This is the Rub' al-Khāli, the empty quarter. And it is empty. It hadn't been crossed by anybody supposedly in 1930. Then there were two men who claimed to have crossed it. It's a milk run now. This is the world we live in. Joseph Smith said it was on the nineteenth parallel that they turned south by east, and this is the way they went (east and a little south). That would have them come out at the Qara Mountains which are rich in timber and very unexpected. They caught Captain Bertram Thomas by complete surprise. He discovered these mountains, and they weren't discovered until the 1930s. Imagine that! They didn't even know that there was such a nice fertile place there. We will refer to this later, but you get the idea. They came down the coast there.

We are not lingering on geography. It's points of doctrine we are interested in now. We have to mention the *qaṣīda* though. "And it came to pass that he called the name of the river, Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea; and the valley was in the borders near the mouth thereof" (1 Nephi 2:8). There's the Borders for the third time—this area called "the Jabal." It's a mountain range. So it emptied into the Red Sea. We know where they were, and he renamed them. That's what the Arabs do when they go down here. After all, if you are going in strange territory, you give names to things as you go. The pioneers did that. Certain things like Chimney Rock have been named various things. Timpanogos has quite a number of names. They have renamed Mount McKinley now. It's back to Denali, its old Indian name. Different people give things different names, so he named it that.

Then he recited a *qaṣīda*, the oldest form of poetry in Arabic. *Qaṣīda* means when you are wandering and looking for something and finally come to some beautiful aspect of nature, a valley or an oasis, or something particularly lovely. Then you say, "*Qifā sadīqāni*—stop, my two friends, and let me tell you about this." He compares these beauties of nature to the eternal goodness of God and to human characteristics, etc. and makes it a moral lesson for the beholder because it moves him very deeply. That's a *qaṣīda*. It means to make a journey looking for something. They are always looking for something or they wouldn't make a journey. The point is if you are Bedouin Arabs, you are not going anywhere at all. Yet you're constantly on a *qaṣīda*—the eternal quest, knowing you are not going to find anything. The place you are in is no more interesting than the place you are going to. Lehi recites a *qaṣīda* to his two sons (Arabs recite it to two

friends). Well, I cited some examples of this in that book called *Lehi in the Desert*. We won't linger on it, but notice the ecstasies he goes into: "And when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea." That expression, "fountain of the Red Sea," is the one that is used. Remember, the ancients believed that the sea was the fresh fountain and it fed all the rivers of the land; it was the other way around. This one up here is called "the fountain of the Red Sea." There's a writing called "The Victory over Seth" that was read in all the temples of Egypt every day, in which this expression occurs. As I said, we won't linger over these things.

"[Then] he spake unto Laman [his oldest son], saying: O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness!" (1 Nephi 2:9). The sea was never stagnant for the ancients. If any water runs for more than half an hour, it is considered continual (practically perennial) by the people of that area. But it is seasonal. Notice, it says this was at the commencement of the year when the waters would be running. Then he spoke to his other son, Lemuel (who has a good, pure Arabic name, incidentally), and said, "O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!" Again, why would a valley be "firm and steadfast"? We say mountains are firm and steadfast. Well, where does the Arab find life, security, and safety? It's in the valleys where there is water and vegetation. Anywhere else you are a dead man. Nobody wants to go up on a mountain there. You wouldn't want to go up on Cascade Mountain here if you wanted to survive. You would stay down in the canyon.

Laman and Lemuel didn't want it. They were against their father. We mentioned his being a *piqqeah*, a visionary man. They didn't want to leave the land of Jerusalem and their inheritance. That's very interesting. Notice, it says, ". . . led them out of the land of Jerusalem, to leave the land of their inheritance [we will come to "inheritance" presently], and their gold, and their silver, and their precious things, to perish in the wilderness. And this, they said he had done because of the foolish imaginations of his heart. And thus, Laman and Lemuel . . . did murmur against their father . . . because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them. Neither did they believe that Jerusalem, that great city [from the first they were disillusioned], could be destroyed according to the words of the prophets." (1 Nephi 2:11-13).

Notice it didn't say *taken* but *destroyed*. Jerusalem had already been taken in 950, 720, 605, and 597 B.C. but it was spared every time. Sometimes it was taken by the Babylonians, sometimes by the Assyrians, and sometimes by the Egyptians. Nobody wanted to ruin Jerusalem; they wanted to take it so they could have it as a base, etc. Remember, Nebuchadnezzar had been very forbearing. He had spared the people. He had been kind to Necho and sent him back to Egypt to be Pharaoh there and serve his interests. When Necho turned against him, he got very angry. It was the same thing with Josiah. He was willing to cooperate with the Jews, but they played "footsy" with the Egyptians. When he took it in 597, he spared the city and went back. But when he came back this time, he was really mad and destroyed it completely. They [Laman and Lemuel] said the city couldn't be destroyed because nobody ever wanted to destroy it. They didn't say it couldn't be *taken*, but it couldn't be *destroyed*. They felt secure all the time. They had the wealth and all that sort of thing. They had all these things in common with others. As I said, it was a world civilization; they shared these things. So they didn't believe that.

But now we come to a surprising thing! After all these years, this is a thing I have never noticed myself. (You have to bring the Book of Mormon; anybody who doesn't bring it doesn't get a gold star next time.) "And it came to pass that my father did speak unto them . . . and he did confound them" (1 Nephi 2:14). They couldn't complain anymore, but they still didn't change their minds. "I, Nephi, being exceedingly young [listen to his condition there], nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father . . ." But he had to have a special revelation himself. He didn't like the idea at all. Then he had to work hard on his brother Sam to convince him. Nobody liked the idea of leaving Jerusalem. Nephi liked it just as little as the others. After he prayed and cried unto the Lord, the Lord visited him and softened his heart so he would go along with his father. He wasn't "gung ho" to go out and have some fun in the desert. He didn't want it, and his brother Sam didn't want it. Then he talked to Sam, "making known unto him the things which the Lord had manifested unto me by his Holy Spirit [he conveyed his special revelation to Sam]. And it came to pass that he believed in my words" (1 Nephi 2:17). But he had to be convinced too. So everybody had to be sold on this trip in the first place, including Nephi and Sam. I hadn't noticed, but it is plain that nobody wanted to go out into that desert. That would be something.

Then we come to the theme of the Book of Mormon in 1 Nephi 2:20–24. You might say, "Why do we linger so much on this part? We are not going very fast." We mustn't go fast because it is here, and right here we have the whole Book of Mormon. This theme is repeated throughout the book in different ways and different situations. It's a sad story, this story from the dust, as we will see presently. It's for us. Alas, alas, I wish it wasn't, but this is it—the rule for the promised land: "And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands." We dwell on that.

Remember the migrations at this time. They were all looking for promised lands. Tyrtæus was looking for a promised land, and he told his people about it. Hesiod, the great Greek poet and contemporary of Homer, was looking for a promised land. He told how they looked and found nothing but bad places wherever they went, and they just had to keep on the move. And, of course, at the beginning of the [*Aeneid*], Vergil says, "Through many disasters and trials, many close calls, we are making our way toward Latium where there awaits us a seat in a promised land." They were going from Troy clear over to Italy to find a promised land. So at the time of Lehi, most people were looking for promised lands. Everybody was shaken up because of world revolution. So this was it. They [Lehi's family] would find their promised land. But if "thy brethren [Laman and Lemuel or anybody else] shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren. For behold, in that day that they shall rebel against me, I will curse them even with a sore curse, and they shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also" (1 Nephi 2:21–24). The Lamanites are never the problem in the Book of Mormon. When the Nephites rebel also, the Lord wants the Lamanites to be there in place to stir them up. "And if it so be that they rebel against me, they shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance." In other words the Lord is saying, I want them breathing down your neck all the time. You will not solve your problem by getting rid of the Lamanites. They tried to do that and failed, and it was their own undoing, as we know. So who is the enemy? There is no conflict or battle in the

Book of Mormon between the righteous and the wicked. We will see that. It is always when people are equally wicked that they collide. So this is the promise, and this is the theme of the Book of Mormon.

Then we come to the third chapter of 1 Nephi. Notice he “returned from speaking with the Lord, to the tent of my father” (1 Nephi 3:1). He returned to the tent. They are living in the *bayt al-sha‘r*. Then his father said, “Behold I have dreamed a dream, in the which the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brethren shall return to Jerusalem” (1 Nephi 3:2). Then they have to go back to Laban and fetch the plates. Well, we talked about Laban and the character of Jaush in the Lachish Letters. He was the military governor, and he kept the records. We are going to have a new case turn up today where the very same thing happens again, years later, and the records are kept in the guardhouse. As we rush along through chapter three, let’s go back here and turn to a source even more important than the Lachish Letters, that tells an awful lot of things. Although this chapter is vitally important, we are going to have to flee. “It must needs be that we flee out of the land.” They must flee out of the land; sometimes you can’t stay. Lehi said, I don’t have the vaguest idea why we have to obtain the records, except it may be to preserve the language of our fathers [paraphrased]. It turned out that wasn’t the main reason. They contained “the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets . . . since the world began [the holy prophets before them—quite a record]” (1 Nephi 3:20).

As I said, I want to get off the first book, so we are going to move right on. I’m going to go right over to the Bar Kokhba Letters and the Dead Sea Scrolls which are enormously important for the Book of Mormon. But notice this in the fourth chapter: “Let us go up again unto Jerusalem, . . . for behold he [the Lord] is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?” (the garrison of fifty and the troops of ten thousand). The regular division in the army is ten thousand, as it was at the Hill Cumorah and in the *Battle Scroll*, too. One wants to linger on all these things, but I want to talk about these scrolls because we don’t know anything about them. Remember when he builds the altar? You have the altar here.

So on the big map, you see the cliffs and the caves along here. These cliffs are full of caves. But this the Bar Kokhba. This was in 1961, and these are other scrolls from farther down along the rift. (We have some good maps here.) As you go along this rift, the cliffs are very high, as I told you. Here is where they found the scrolls in these caves along here. It’s a very perilous situation. I have some good pictures here to show what the situation is (it’s this sort of thing). Here’s the valley where they found them, the Naḥal Hēver. It’s the sort of stuff you find down in southern Utah. It’s very precipitous, very steep, and very dangerous where they found these particular ones here. Across the valley on the other side, this is the Roman camp. The Romans were camped here, and they could watch and see everything that was going on over there. So the people had to sneak out by night to get groceries, etc. As a matter of fact, they were never able to escape, and they perished in these caves. There are many of them, and these are the caves of documents. They are rich in documents which are very important. Here, for example, you can see how very precipitous that is. Here are the caves.

When the Israelis were tipped off about this and went up to start looking for them, the place was crawling with Arabs. There were little Arab boys crawling all over the place because they knew they could get one pound for a square centimeter of scroll if it had writing on it. They got in there and collected them. The Israelis concluded, “Why fight it?

If they are willing to risk their necks, let them bring in the scrolls.” So they would provide the boys with cigar boxes with cotton in them and say, “Now, put them in here and then we will pay you for them. And the bigger the piece the more you will get paid for it.” So they became diligent looking for these, and they knew all about these caves. But fortunately, the people who hid in the caves didn’t just drop their materials and leave them. They buried them in the earth on purpose, so they were still there. We got these priceless documents from these caves along the Dead Sea.

This wasn’t in 1947 when they got the other ones, but this was in 1961. Here they are from the inside of the caves. There are many caves. (Here’s a map showing where they are. It’s a good big map, so you can see it even from there.) Here, for example, is the Cave of Letters. It’s a big cave that goes in. Here’s where they found some marvelous metal vessels. Here they found a cache of letters, and here they found doctum of the Psalms. So they [the people who hid in the caves] had the scriptures with them. Here they found a bunch of keys to houses in Jerusalem and En-gedi. People brought their keys with them and wanted to go home again. They locked up when they left home. Here they found the Babata archives. A very rich woman had always been in litigation and had made herself a lot of money in real estate. She kept all her documents, and they were there. Then we find out about “lands of inheritance” and this sort of thing that they talk about [in the Book of Mormon]. Remember when the boys wanted to get their treasure, and it was exceedingly great. They brought it back and showed it to Laban to bribe him for the plates. All he did, of course, was grab the money and keep the plates too. But we know what these “lands of inheritance” were. The lands weren’t in Jerusalem. They said, We will go down to the lands of our inheritance, and then we will fetch back all this gold and silver and precious things [paraphrased]. We know where the lands of inheritance were because all the rich people and the middle class fled south and east. The poor people stayed behind because they couldn’t afford to go. Nebuchadnezzar spared them and reorganized them under Jeremiah and people like that. But the rich people did exactly what Lehi’s people were doing. They skipped off in this direction.

We have the archive of this widow Babata (and she is some dame) and then we have this marvelous glass work here. And here’s a net with all sorts of sewing. Some people brought their knitting to repair clothes, etc. Here are a lot of skulls in a basket. There were lots of baskets and things. Here at the back of the cave are the letters of Bar Kokhba himself. Jerusalem, as the Book of Mormon tells us, has been destroyed from time to time. This was one time. The letters from farther up north are from the time it fell in the year A.D. 70 to the Emperor Titus. These are from when it fell again (finally) in Hadrian’s time in A.D. 132. Bar Kokhba had made himself president of Israel and organized an army to fight back. These are the documents that have to do with that and tell us a lot about it. This was later, but it had gone on before. But the surprising thing is people had been going to these caves and doing this for hundreds and hundreds of years. Here, for example, we have these bronze mace heads and these strange temple vessels, beautifully made bronze things. They are over 5,000 years old—2,500 hundred years before Lehi. But 3,000 years before these people, the Jews [he means people living in the area of Jerusalem] were still hiding. At that time they were hiding from a Pharaoh of the First Dynasty of Egypt who came up and chased them out of Jerusalem. Way back then, imagine that! Of course, they weren’t Jews at that time; they were another people. But that’s what these caves are for. When you get invaded you go hide in the caves. So these things had been hidden 3,000 years before Bar Kokhba; it’s amazing and extremely curious. It says, “Among the 240 different shaped objects of copper, about 20 chisels, axes of various shapes and sizes, 82 black objects bearing this.” Here’s a sort of crown. Now this is 3,000 years before Bar Kokhba went

there in A.D. 132. So this was the “milk run” so to speak. Anytime somebody rang the bell, everybody took off to the caves. This is a practice in some parts of the world. After all, if you had been in London during the Blitz, you would know as soon as you heard the siren that you should run down to the subway. So we have the same sort of thing going on here, but it’s what is in the documents that interests us.

Question: Did Lehi’s family hide in caves? Answer: Yes, they hid. Remember, these caves are a long way from Jerusalem. (I’ll show you the map here; this doesn’t show anything.) Here’s the Dead Sea. Here’s the Lisān that comes up like this, and here’s the Jordan. Here is Qumran. You go twenty miles beyond Qumran and you get to En-gedi. That’s where a lot of these people had their farms, etc. This was a very popular place for the rich. The lands of inheritance were somewhere down here in Azar. Below En-gedi is the Naḥal Ḥever. They call it that now, the “Brook Hever.” The Arabs give it a special name. These canyons go all along here. Qumran itself is very impressive; it looks just like the side of Rock Canyon—from Qumran and right along here. This is the lowest spot on earth; you remember that. This is way down there. These are very impressive cliffs, and this is where these people were hiding out in these side cliffs here. The Naḥal Ḥever is this low one just below En-gedi where they go out and bathe today. The oil seeps up and makes this tar. People rub it on, and they say it cures them of rheumatism. You see these fat ladies from Jerusalem completely covered with this black tar, basking in the warm waters of the Dead Sea—which are somewhat salt, as you know.

It’s an interesting situation here. Let’s see some more things here that might, as long as we’re on the book, intrigue us. Here’s a basket that looks like the kind you buy in Mexico, and it’s in perfect condition. There’s just one break in it, and it was full of household goods. We talked about the bronze vessels, beautifully made vessels. Here’s a basket full of household ware, valuable dishes, and things like that. They were very well made; you notice that these things are. These are ritual dishes. Notice the ash pans for the sacrifice at the temple, the burning of incense in the temple. So they brought their sacred vessels and their household effects. They also brought their business records, and that’s the important thing about it. There’s a marvelous section here on the business records. See these vessels—nice things and fancy stuff. Then, as I said, the most important things are the written records.

There’s a woman’s mirror. They have quite a lot of cosmetics and stuff. That basket had cosmetics in it. Now here’s a bundle of papyri, very carefully folded, all very neatly labeled with wooden labels so they are properly filed and fed into the computer. That’s Professor Yadin himself. He has visited Provo a number of times. We’ve had some wonderful talks with him. He has told us some marvelous stories. We’d get together down at Kent Brown’s house. He’s a marvelous man, and he’s dead now. He just died a couple of years ago. He was the head of Israel Antiquities and also the leader of the army in the 1948 war. He could tell some very exciting stories about that totally unexpected victory. It’s an interesting thing: the very week the war broke out, they discovered the Battle Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which described how ancient Israel went to war. They had to be clothed with righteousness. It was that which fired them more than anything else, he said, to go ahead and win a war in which the odds were fifty to one against them. They won it, and I could a tale unfold where that’s concerned.

Anyway, one document is particularly interesting. (Here they are digging in the caves.) Oh, here are instruments. Here's a pair of sandals and household knives—things like that. This is another basket in very good condition. (There's Yadin at work.) Here's a bundle of documents. "The big Archive of Papyri is found!" Notice the meticulous wrapping and packing. This is another archive of papyri very carefully wrapped up. See, these people kept their records. Notice how record conscious they were when they fled. The thing Lehi wants to get (because the Lord told him to get it) is the family records. They have to go back and get the family records, their genealogy, and the books of Moses (the bronze plates).

Here they are working in the caves. I wasn't in these caves, but I've certainly climbed all over Qumran. Here is a prize as far as I'm concerned. As you go in the Scroll Room at Jerusalem, you turn to the left, and the first document you see is this document which has a light behind it. It's a contract to the ownership of a farm down there. One of the owners of the farm was this man here Alma ben Yehudah, which Professor Yadin rendered "Alma [without any apology], son of Judah." People have laughed for years about that name *Alma*, because it is a Latin word and a woman's name. It means *soul*, *alma mater* and that sort of thing. They tried to figure out some Hebrew name that means a "coat of mail" or another word meaning a "young man." But this is just A-L-M-A, like that, so Yadin properly made it "Alma, son of Judah." You know he was a man, and you know he was a Jew if he is Alma, son of Judah. But I'll write his name on the board. Some of you may have seen it before [laughter]. That's the name. It's very striking to walk into the Scroll Room, and the first name that hits you in the face is "Alma, the son of Judah." So there was an Alma, after all. It's a perfectly good Jewish name. But if people are run out of town, how can they expect others to know about them? So we have here a most remarkable find. Here are some of the door keys. I don't think they are too subtle (wooden handles, etc.), but they worked. Question: (not audible) Answer: It's on the scroll in Jerusalem now. It [the Shrine of the Book] has that dome that spreads out. You go in and the scrolls are [displayed] all around. When you go in, the first scroll you see has the name "Alma." It has a light behind it and is pretty writing.

Well, we have to get on to the serious stuff. This is very important: The Lord prophesied these very destructions, the one in A.D. 70 and the one in A.D. 132, in Matthew 24. Joseph Smith has chosen that particular chapter to give us a correct version (and it is a correct version). He put everything in right and put it in the Pearl of Great Price in the Joseph Smith section. This points out what the situation is. The Lord made it clear to the apostles what was going to happen to Jerusalem when it was destroyed. This is Matthew 24, and it's verse 15 in the King James Bible, and verse 12 in Joseph Smith—Matthew. Joseph Smith rearranged the verses. They don't make sense the way they stand now [in the King James Bible]. As a matter of fact, they are never used as sermons in Christian churches. As a rule they avoid this because there is a good deal of confusion here. The verses were rearranged to suit a particular prejudice—the prejudice being namely that the Lord would only come once, that he wouldn't come again (they couldn't have more than one destruction). But that's the point of the whole thing. He deals with one thing happening after another. He talks about the destruction of Jerusalem, then into the restoration, then the Restoration of the Gospel, and then the destruction in the last days. He ends on the final note in our Joseph Smith version. "And thus cometh the end of the wicked, according to the prophecy of Moses, saying: They shall be cut off from among the people; but the end of the earth is not yet, but by and by" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:55). That's not the destruction of the earth at all; that's not yet. It's the end of the world. He repeats it three times, "This is the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked." But

this is not the end of the earth; that's by and by. You don't talk about that. We don't know when that will be; that's another story.

He describes exactly what's happening here when he says (and nobody notices it either), at this time there will be a destruction. "Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:13). That's what they have always done. They would go to these steep wadis, the mountains and the caves, which are right next to Jerusalem. There are thousands of them. They have discovered 518 documents from the Dead Sea Scrolls in over a hundred caves. So the caves are all over the place way down here. This had nothing to do with the Qumran caves, but they are still Dead Sea Scrolls. So they flee to the mountains; that's what you do. "Let him who is on the housetop flee, and not return to take anything out of his house." These people returned to take things out of the house. One person returned too late and lost her life. This Babata was rich and thought she could get a way out, but she lost her life. She couldn't get away with it. It was a very serious situation. Don't go back to Jerusalem for anything this time. This is the big time, he says. "Neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes." Then he says, if you have new babies, get out of town ahead of time [paraphrased]. Notice, this is a warning ahead of time. It's not just telling them how terrible it's going to be when he says, "Pray ye the Lord that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." You must arrange things so you can get out ahead of that. If you have any women who are pregnant, he says, don't stay in town. Get out of town in good time, and pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath (you need to arrange it).

"For then, in those days, shall be great tribulation on the Jews, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, such as was not before sent upon Israel, of God, since the beginning of their kingdom until this time; no nor ever shall be sent again upon Israel" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:18). What happened with this fall? That's when the Jews were driven out for the last time. As I said, the town had been taken again and again. As the Book of Mormon says, it had been destroyed and people returned. This time he said they are not coming back—not for two thousand years. This was going to be by far the worst of all, and it was. The Jews never came back. Remember, they became nonpersons; they had no identity whatever. Then came the great persecutions of two thousand years. Macaulay in his famous essay on the political disabilities of the Jews pointed out that as late as the 1850s the Jews were not allowed to vote or hold property or anything like that in most countries, including England. That was what Macaulay was protesting about. The duke could decide to take over everything they had. They [the Jews] were advisors and assistants all over because they were brilliant men, but at any time they could be executed, or anything they had could be confiscated. They had no rights whatever, as you read in Shakespeare and elsewhere. So this was the worst they would ever have.

"All things which have befallen them are only the beginning of the sorrows which shall come upon them [for this two thousand years]" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:19). But then they went back after. Remember, until very recently (in the 1840s and 1850s) all the Christian churches absolutely insisted that the Jews would never return to Jerusalem because the veil of the temple was rent, and the Lord said the temple was destroyed and the Jews would never go back to Jerusalem. It was like that all the time up until 1948 when Harry Truman sent an ambassador. He visited the pope on the way, and the pope said, "Absolutely nothing doing; the Jews must never go back to Jerusalem. It would frustrate all prophecy." They thought the Jews would never go back. I have an article on that in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. I had to look up a lot of this stuff, and, believe me, the Christian world was against it. The only people that ever believed the Jews would go back

to Jerusalem, of course, were the Mormons. We always preached that they would go back to Jerusalem, just as we would have Zion over here. “And except those days should be shortened, there should none of their flesh be saved [and, of course, they would have been wiped out completely time and again]; but for the elect’s sake, according to the covenant, those days shall be shortened” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:20). So this is the sort of thing that happened. They should not go back and they should flee to the mountains (that’s what they always did before), and they should be careful not to flee in the winter time, when they were expecting children, or on the Sabbath (on which they couldn’t move). This was the one [destruction] that the Lord prophesied. And here we actually have hundreds of documents recording that particular event—that double event, the one in A.D. 70 and the one in A.D. 130–32.

The rich and the middle class hurried south and east to the lands of their inheritance. This is what happened here. We’ll put Babata on the board because we have all her possessions, etc. She was a rich and very unpleasant sort of woman. She had all this property and had married various husbands to get the property. Her first property she inherited from her father. That became the land of her inheritance, and it was a rich farm in dates, etc. They say, “It had a good address.” These people were very conscious of the lands of their inheritance down here (we’ll look up some examples in the book; we’ll put it on reserve and you may have a chance to look at it). This long section goes on with all these documents—the whole stash of her documents and legal affairs, and what she was up to. “The largest cache of documents in the Cave of Letters was the archive of Babata, the daughter of Shimeon, son of Menahem. Thanks to this woman who managed to survive two husbands and must have spent most of her life in litigation, either suing the guardians of her fatherless son or being sued by various members of her deceased husband’s family, we have come by a priceless source for the records of legal and historical data.” Her father had a shrewd lawyer which enabled him to get away with anything. She married into the family of Khthusion which formerly came from En-gedi. She married Yehudah Khthusion. Notice that they don’t hesitate to mix Greek, Nabataean, Hebrew, and Arabic names. They are all mixed up all the time, just as they are in the Book of Mormon. Her husband had a residence in Mahoza. Where he settled became his inheritance through her.

Toward the end of the first century, a couple of decades after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, Babata’s father, Shimeon (who was originally from Jerusalem) went down and settled in Mahoza, way down at the southern tip of the Dead Sea, which was in Nabataean country. He was under the king of the Nabataeans. That was a very rich land, and he settled there and had a farm. Then Babata inherited it from him. Then she married a couple of guys and claimed their property too. There were very important fights about water rights. “The document is extremely rich in legal terms identical with those found in fifth century B.C. Aramaic documents from Egypt, as well as Jewish.” From the time of Lehi there are the same documents in Aramaic and Egyptian. “The deed must have been drafted by a clever lawyer. Shimeon managed by this document to get away with just about everything.” The lawyer had it fixed. Remember, you get a lot of crooked lawyers in the Book of Mormon too. Babata had a friend who was a Roman lady, Julia Crispina.

Here’s an interesting remark that casts light on the situation of going down to their inheritance, etc. “This illustrates some of the traits of assimilation among the wealthy Jewish families of the time, not only in the fact that it was drawn up in Greek [one of the documents among all these Hebrew documents is a Greek one], but specifically it says that it’s written according to Hellenic law. In this document Yehudah, the son of Eleazar Khthusion, gave to marriage his own daughter, etc.” The point is they were doing all the

legal tricks, but notice the assimilation of the wealthy Jewish families that intermarried with each other. Remember, they found out that Laban was related to Lehi when he started looking at the genealogy they brought back (they were all upper class people).

Notice this: “The list of palm groves is not the same as the one she declared in the census, which were hers through her father. And the document states quite plainly the basis of Babata’s ownership of her husband’s grove ‘which you hold,’ says the buyer of the crops, ‘as you say you do of your bride money and due. Now, the purpose of the IOU which you mentioned comes clear.’ From now on Babata was burdened with an additional property and begins a long engagement in litigation with certain members of her deceased husband’s family.” They fight for the property now. So this went on, and we have these sordid stories.

“This document explains, however, how Babata eventually [Now, the family headquarters, where she came from now, was not in Jerusalem but in En-gedi. It is a very important settlement right near where these two great gorges open. The one to the south is the Naḥal Ḥever, the Hebrew gully, with palm groves way down at Petra] found her way to En-gedi, not solely because of her property there, but because of her numerous relatives in that place. Because of her second husband’s other wife, Miriam, the daughter of Be‘ayan, she found herself remotely connected to the commander-in-chief of En-gedi in Bar Kokhba’s administration.” So you get the military in the picture.

Oh, this woman, Julia Crispina, was her friend in 132. In the next year, 133, Julia Crispina turned up in Egypt where she owned a rich farm in the delta. So you see how these people had their investments everywhere. Julia Crispina was a friend of Babata. Babata never escaped; she died in the caves there. The Romans had them trapped. She couldn’t get out, but her friend, Julia Crispina, carried on. We find her happily ensconced on her farm in Egypt a little later. They were all trying to get out to Egypt; this was the idea. The picture is rather a vivid one here.

Oh, there’s one picture I want to show you here; it’s an interesting one. Remember, we are told that Lehi saw a dream and then Nephi saw the dream. The water he saw was filthy water, and it swept the wicked away to destruction when it came. That was what the Arabs call a *sayl*. Remember, those gullies that go down. When it rains in the mountains behind, which are quite high, all of a sudden a wall of water will come down the valley and sweep everything away. For years they will be dry. That’s where most of the water and shrubbery is, so the Bedouins will come along and camp in at the mouth of *sayls*. There is a lot said in the poems, etc., about what happens when you are suddenly caught in the stream of filthy water and swept away. I cited some more passages on that in the book called *Lehi in the Desert*. But we have one right here. You can’t see it from there, but somebody can. Here they are in the cave in all the dust. This is the Cave of Letters; it’s a big place. They [the Jews] were going to hide out indefinitely there. Everything is “out of the dust;” we’ll mention that.

Here he says, “Watching a rare waterfall in Naḥal Ḥever, west of the Cave of Letters.” It’s quite a waterfall, but it isn’t a white waterfall. It’s mud, filthy water, when it comes down. I’ve seen it around St. George and places like that. You’ll see these gully washes come out; they’re very dangerous. Well, you mustn’t ever hike up the Zion Narrows. If you do, you can get caught up there. A group of five Boy Scouts from my ward (the old Manavu Ward) were drowned up there. They got caught in the Narrows when the water came

down. The rainstorm was way up there by Loa and Bicknell. You never expect it and down she comes. This is a good, lively waterfall, but it's filthy. It's a stream of filthy water. That's exactly the nightmare that Nephi had. His father saw the wicked camped there, and a stream of filthy water came along and swept them all away to destruction. It sweeps them out to the sea; this river opens to the sea.

This is another one of these cultural notes. This is 1 Nephi 15:27 (we have to jump around so here). "And I said unto them that the water which my father saw was filthiness; and so much was his mind swallowed up in other things that he beheld not the filthiness of the water. And I said unto them that it was an awful gulf, which separated the wicked from the tree of life." Remember that enormous gulf. You walk along in the desert and you come to one of those huge gulfs. You see them in Canyonlands, etc. I spend a lot of time down there. You noticed that Roman camp. There was a 2,000-foot drop between it and the caves on the other side. They were right together, but you couldn't get from the one to the other. He said that's exactly what happens to the wicked. There's an awful gulf between them, and down that gulf comes this filthy water and sweeps them away. "An awful gulf, which separated the wicked from the tree of life, and also from the saints of God. And I said unto them that it was a representation of that awful hell which the angel said unto me was prepared for the wicked . . . the justice of God did also divide the wicked from the righteous" (1 Nephi 15:28–30). So he compares it to this very thing. "And they said unto me: What meaneth the river of water which our father saw?" (1 Nephi 15:26). He said the water was filthy water and it ran down the gully and swept away the wicked.

There's another scroll that's very important here. This is the only picture I have of the *Copper Scroll*. This *Copper Scroll* found in Cave Three in 1949 is very important. John Allegro wrote a book on them called *The Treasure of the Cooper Scroll*. There's a recent article about them here by Norman Golb from 1987. They weren't on rolled copper; they were on sheets, regular size sheets like this. Then there were holes along here, but they riveted them together so they could roll them up. The reason they put it on copper was so they wouldn't perish because (as Golb tells us) they were extra valuable. They had to be preserved, so they put them on bronze or copper (almost pure copper; it's a slight alloy). Of course, it was oxidized. They weren't able to unroll it; they had to split it at Manchester with a fine diamond saw. Now they can lay it out in sections and read it. It tells where all the other stuff is buried—all these other treasures—and where the written documents are buried. This is why it's so valuable. So when it became extremely important to keep a record, they kept it on bronze. You'd say, "the brass plates." Remember, "brass" is a new word. It is only used in English since the end of the nineteenth century. "Bronze" is the French word. We always said "brass." You won't find the word "bronze" in the Bible at all, though the Old Testament is a Bronze Age document. But we always called it "brass." When he says "brass plates" it's perfectly safe to think of those as "bronze plates" because brass is a mixture of copper and nickel, whereas bronze is copper and tin, and much more common and easy to make. As I said, throughout the Old Testament the word "bronze" never occurs because it is always "brass." A copper alloy is always "brass" in English, and that was seventeenth century English. It makes no difference; the main thing is that it's copper based.

This *Copper Scroll* is that, and it tells about where the most valuable treasures are buried and where the records are to be found. They are hidden all over the place. Will we ever be able to run them down? This is a very interesting confirmation of the idea of bronze scrolls and the constant concern with burying and keeping records, which is an obsession in the Book of Mormon, as you know. And also a confirmation of the gold plates.

Now we get to the most important thing—what this is all about. All this cultural stuff is just to back up other things. Captain Bertram Thomas discovered the Qara Mountains in 1930. Here's a picture of them. They are very lush, beautiful mountains which are unexpected. They are right on the edge of the Rub' al-Khāli, the most absolute desert in the world. They come as a total and complete surprise, and there they were. But what interests us most is the doctrine. What do these scrolls tell us? This is extremely important. This article was in the May/June issue of *The Sciences* by Norman Golb at Chicago. I'll have to get that article from *The Atlantic* in 1960 by John Allegro. He was one of the first students of the scrolls, and he lost his job at Oxford because in 1960 he wrote an article pointing out that everybody hated the scrolls. The Jews wanted nothing to do with them. The Christians wanted nothing to do with them. The first discoveries were made in 1947, and that's another story. You'd be surprised how the Church is involved in this. In 1964 I was sent back there by the Church, and I did an awful lot of snooping, etc. It was "touch and go." There was nobody there at Qumran. A big fight was going on all the time. It was really a risky business, but there were some remarkable things about the scrolls. For example, the scrolls were discovered by a shepherd boy called Mohammed Dhib who was up looking for sheep. A sheep went into a cave, and he threw a rock after it. When it made a clink, he heard the clink and went in and discovered the scrolls. He gives an account of that story here. I stayed a week at American University in Beirut, and it was all trouble there—shooting in the streets and the airport was closed. I stayed at a house there, and it was a very profitable time. I spent a lot of time talking with the butler, majordomo, of a man who was in charge. He was very much interested in the Gospel. He especially went for the Pearl of Great Price. The interesting thing is that he was the uncle of that Mohammed Dhib who discovered the scrolls. These things all tie up. Then I got into another situation and strange things happened.

We are going to talk about the doctrinal teachings of the scrolls and why they didn't like them. Six or seven years ago the foremost Catholic scholar of the scrolls, Father Joseph Fitzmeyer, taught here in summer school. He gave a course in Aramaic with only three or four people in it. He was the Catholic authority on the scrolls, and Father de Vaux. Father Milik was the one who was editing the Enoch Scroll etc. He said that not five percent of the scrolls at that time (just a few years ago) had ever been translated and published. They just want to leave them alone. The trouble is that the Jews say, "They are much too Christian." The Christians say, "This robs us of our originality with the Jews having their sacraments and Twelve Apostles before the time of Christ. What's going on here?" They don't want them either. Neither the Christians nor the Jews want them, so by a sort of pact of mutual consent they soft pedal them. They don't like to talk about them. Norman Golb had the nerve [to publish his article]. You notice the article wasn't in a Jewish publication or anything like that. In fact, Solomon Zeitlin, the editor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* (they ran a long article in two issues), is the grand old man of Hebrew. He always thought that the Dead Sea Scrolls were nothing but a medieval forgery. "They're a fake. Somebody faked them in the fourteenth or fifteenth century," he said. He wouldn't be shaken from that with all the evidence in the world.

I remember talking to Professor Albright back at Johns Hopkins. Joseph Saad said, "Professor Albright really discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls. He recognized what they were."