

The Golden Plates

1 Nephi 1:1–3; 19:1–4; 2 Nephi 25:21–23; Enos 1:15–18; Words of Mormon 1:11; Ether 3:22–24

Behold, it has been prophesied by our fathers, that they should be kept and handed down from one generation to another, and be kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord until they should go forth unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, that they shall know of the mysteries contained thereon. Alma 37:4

The Book of Mormon, translated from golden plates, is the record of two groups of people who were directed by the Lord to migrate from biblical lands to the American continents. The first group, the Jaredites, left their homeland at the time the Lord confounded the languages at the Tower of Babel. The brother of Jared, who was the spiritual leader of the group, received many revelations from the Lord and saw Jesus Christ and talked with Him face to face. The brother of Jared was commanded to write about his experiences but not to share his writings with others. The Lord promised that in His own due time He would bring the record forth, and He gave the brother of Jared interpreters to seal up with the record so the writings could be translated. (See Ether 3:22–24.)

The second group to come to the Americas was led by the prophet Lehi. The Lord commanded Lehi and his family to leave Jerusalem in 600 BC, just a few years before the destruction of the city. The Lord directed Nephi, the son of Lehi, to keep a record of his people on plates of ore (see 1 Nephi 1:1–3; 19:1–4). The record Nephi started was kept by a succession of his

descendants for a thousand years. It contains the history of the children of Lehi, sacred teachings and prophecies they received, and the account of Jesus Christ's visit to the Americas following His Resurrection. The Lord promised those who recorded on the plates that He would preserve their writings. He promised He would bring them forth in the last days as a witness for Jesus Christ and as a tool for convincing people of the truth. (See 2 Nephi 25:21–23; Enos 1:15–18; Words of Mormon 1:11.)

Several hundred years after Christ's visit to the Americas, Mormon abridged the Nephite record on thin golden sheets. Moroni, the son of Mormon, was the last prophet-historian to keep the sacred record. He abridged the Jaredite record, sealed up the golden plates, and buried the records in his possession and the interpreters in the ground in about AD 427. In 1823 the resurrected Moroni visited Joseph Smith and later delivered the plates to him. Joseph Smith translated these writings as directed by God and brought forth to the world the Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ.

Summary

Ancient prophets who lived on the American continent wrote the records of their people on plates of ore. These writings contained the teachings of the prophets and the account of Jesus Christ's visit to the Americas after His Resurrection. A prophet named Mormon made

a shorter account of the writings on golden plates, and his son, Moroni, buried the plates in a hill. The resurrected Moroni gave the plates to Joseph Smith, who translated the writing on the plates with the help of Heavenly Father. The translation is called the Book of Mormon.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS