

The PLATES *within* the PLATES

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Church Magazines

DID YOU KNOW THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS ACTUALLY TAKEN FROM MULTIPLE SETS OF PLATES?

You probably know that the Book of Mormon is a record of the Nephites, Lamanites, and Jaredites. For hundreds of years, ancient prophets, historians, and leaders diligently wrote down their history.

teachings, and testimonies on thin metal plates. So the Book of Mormon was put together from several different sources. Here are some explanations about them.

WHERE DO THE BOOKS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON COME FROM?

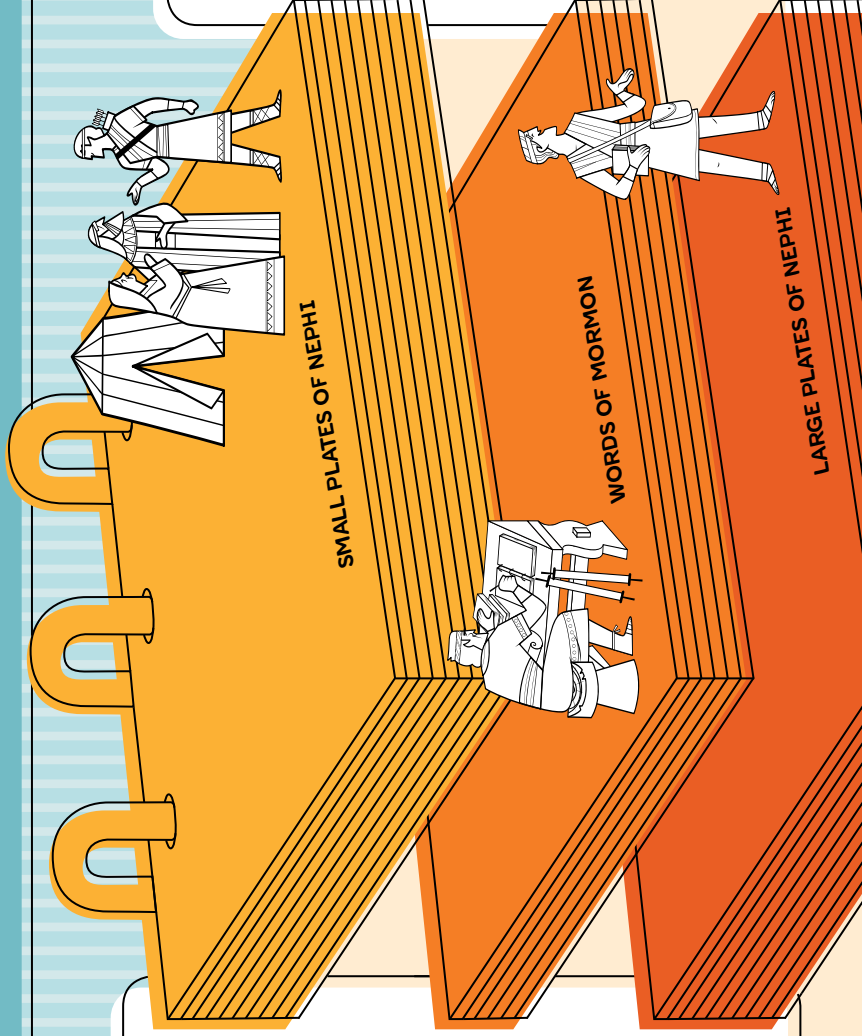
SMALL PLATES OF NEPHI

The small plates of Nephi were actually the second plates Nephi created at the command of the Lord, about 30 years after leaving Jerusalem (see 2 Nephi 5:28–33). They were kept by Nephite prophets and record keepers and were devoted to spiritual matters and the prophets' ministry and teachings. Amaleki was the last person to write on the small plates of Nephi. He then passed them on to King Benjamin (see Omni 1:25), who put them with the large plates (see Words of Mormon 1:10). The first part of today's Book of Mormon (1 Nephi–Omni) is an unabridged translation of the small plates.

Here Mormon added a note connecting the small plates of Nephi with Mormon's abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. He explained his decision to add the small plates and explained the historical gap between the small plates and the abridged large plates.

WORDS OF MORMON

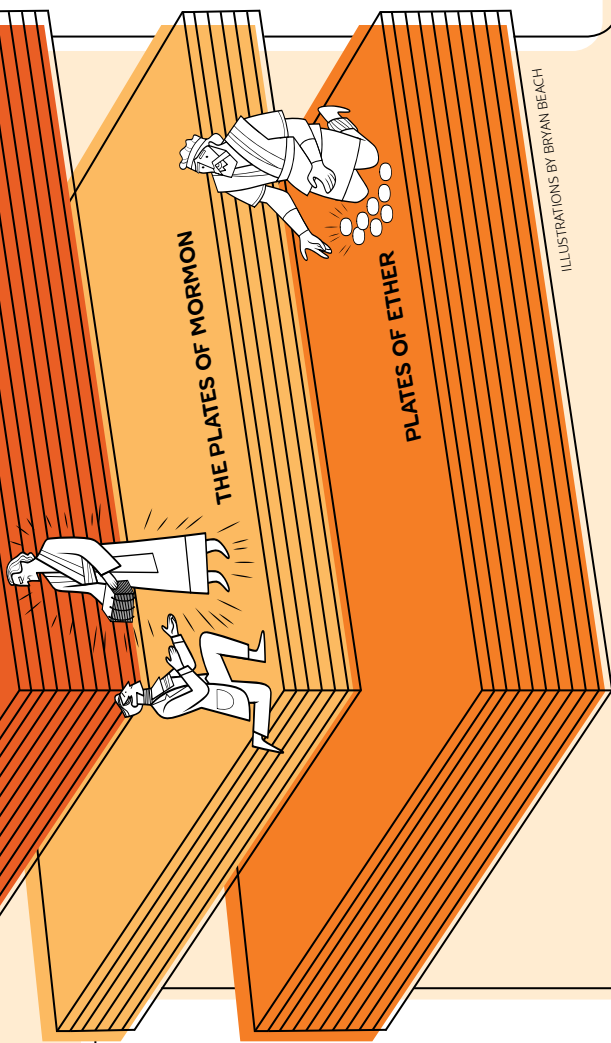
LARGE PLATES OF NEPHI



THE PLATES OF MORMON

Mormon received the Nephite records from Amaron, the last person before Mormon to write on the large plates of Nephi. Mormon then wrote his own record and testimony on the large plates of Nephi. He abridged the large plates of Nephi, which included his own writings. He then passed the record to his son, Moroni, to finish the work (see Mormon 8:1). Like his father, Mormon, Moroni continued writing the history of his people, abridged the Jaredite record known as the book of Ether, and ended with his testimony. Finally, Moroni sealed the record and hid it up into the Lord for a little over 1,400 years. Then, in the latter days, this same Moroni, then a resurrected being, visited the Prophet Joseph Smith and delivered the plates to him.

Nephi started writing on the large plates soon after his family left Jerusalem. These plates included mostly secular history and were kept and passed down by the kings (see Jarom 1:14), from Nephi to Mosiah II, and then were kept by prophets, from Alma the Younger to Mormon. Beginning with Mosiah, the large plates also included items of major spiritual importance. Mosiah through Mormon 7 were taken from the large plates of Nephi and abridged by Mormon.



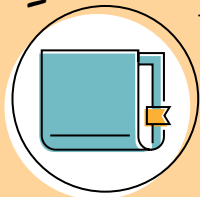
ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRYAN BEACH

PLATES OF ETHER

The plates of Ether were written by the Jaredite prophet Ether on 24 plates and contain the history of the Jaredites. These plates were found by the people of Limhi in the days of King Mosiah. Moroni abridged these plates and added them to his father's record.

WHY DO WE CALL IT "THE BOOK OF MORMON"?

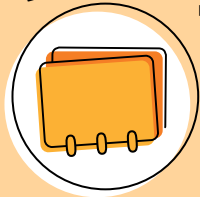
The prophet Mormon gathered writings from both the large and small plates of Nephi into a single record. He couldn't use everything everyone had written, so "according to the will of God," Mormon abridged (or summarized) the writings on the large plates of Nephi. You can think of him as the main editor of the Nephite record in ancient times.



WHAT IS THE "SEALED PORTION"?

When Moroni finished the Book of Mormon record, the Lord commanded him to seal up some of the plates. This sealed portion contains the full account of the vision of the brother of Jared (see Ether 4:4–5). In the vision, the brother of Jared saw the history and future of mankind, "all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof" (see 2 Nephi 27:10).

This portion of the Book of Mormon was sealed when Joseph Smith received the plates and therefore was not translated by him. But the Lord has promised to reveal them in His own due time (see Ether 3:27). (See *To the Point, New Era*, Oct 2011, 31.)



WHAT ABOUT THE BRASS PLATES?

The Book of Mormon mentions the brass plates, which contain writings in the Old Testament (plus some writings from prophets not found there). While scriptures from these plates are quoted in the Book of Mormon, the plates themselves are not actually part of the plates handed down from Mormon to Moroni to Joseph Smith. **NE**