

# Book of Mormon Study – Ether 1-5

Online zoom Sunday School, 15 Nov 2020

([goto.jayball.name/bofm](https://goto.jayball.name/bofm))

Back in Alma 37 we discussed how economical the writing must have been that was used on the 24 plates from which this record was taken. (See notes on Alma 37:21)

A Note about what archeology tells us about the Jaredite people. Leland and I watched a video by Wayne May a few months ago. The topic of the location of Book of Mormon lands is controversial, so I won't dwell on it here in this lesson, but as I've said before, I trust what the Book of Mormon says about itself ("this land") and things that Joseph Smith has said, so I'm led to believe there is much credibility to the North American model as the location for Book of Mormon peoples. Some things that stood out to me from his research is that these people appear to be direct descendants from Ham's Lineage and were very large people. He also gives some interesting perspective on their route to this land. You can watch the video here:

Jaradites in North America, Wayne May

<https://youtu.be/butFgqLu7TY>

Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 1:32

**Orihah:** Probably meaning "my light (אורי) is Yah" (the suffix "ihah" appears in many Yeredite names).

Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 1:33

**and according to the word...:** This agrees with Targum Jonathan on Gen. 11, which reads, "And the Word of YHWH was revealed against the city, and with Him seventy angels, having reference to seventy nations, each having its own language, and thence the writing of its own hand: and He dispersed them from thence upon the face of all the earth into seventy languages. And one knew not what his neighbor would say: but one slew the other; and they ceased from building the city" (Targum Jonathan on Gen. 11:8).

*Ether 1:34-40*

*Cry again unto the Lord, and it may be that he will turn away his anger from them who are our friends, that he confound not their language.*

There is a deference of reverential respect of God by Jared and his brother in these verses that is almost foreign to our modern Gentile way of thinking and understanding. There's a sense of "Oh God, please have mercy on us". Sometimes I wonder if I'm more inclined to approach God as a buddy or pal who I touch base with once in a while to ask special favors from.

*Ether 2:6*

They built barges. Ether 2:16 they build barges after the manner of the previous ones.

*Ether 2:9-12*

What must we (Gentiles) do to avoid being swept away?

*Ether 2:10*

*...this is a land which is choice above all other lands;*

Land choice above all other lands. Chapter 1:43, "*And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed upon all the face of the earth.*" Comparative language. More numerous greater in wealth, in blessing than all other people, lands etc.

We tend to look at these things in comparisons. Comparative nature of this is where our prideful focus tends to look at. Big, better, best. Bronze, Silver, Gold medals.

Printer's manuscript on Ether 2:15 has an added word, "*for it shall be a land [of] choice above all other lands.*"

*Ether 2:14 (also v 4-5)*

*Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him.*

I find this imagery of God speaking to the brother of Jared in a cloud interesting.

The Day of Atonement was the day in which there was a method provided to Aaron to enter into the Holy of Holies without being destroyed. The entirety of the ordinance reaches out to cleanse: first, Aaron or his successor High Priests; then to cleanse the Temple; then to cleanse all of Israel. In the context of the Day of Atonement, there is a prescribed use of incense. It symbolizes the cloud covering the presence of God, just as the cloud covered Sinai when Moses entered the Lord's presence. The full account of the rite is set out in Leviticus 16. The account reads in part:

*And the Lord spake unto Moses **after the death of the two sons of Aaron**, when they offered before the Lord, and died; And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that **he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat**, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for **I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat**. ...And he shall take a **censer full of burning coals of fre from of the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil**: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. (Leviticus 16:1–34)*

Here we have the elements from Sinai put into the Holy of Holies. The High Priest is to enter with coals from the altar of sacrifice. Onto the coals the incense is placed to produce the smoke and scent of this

holy cloud, which symbolizes the bright cloud associated with God's presence. Unlike the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies was a small cubical room which would fill with the smoke of incense rather quickly. The cloud was to envelope both the High Priest and the Mercy Seat. Inside that cloud, the High Priest would be in the symbolic presence of God. This is a clearly symbolic recreation of the elements we find when God associated with Moses on the Mount.

So the Messiah's life necessarily included ascension through a cloud, or veil, into the presence of God. He was touching on one of the required elements of His ministry in this event. Therefore, the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration satisfied one of the required elements of the Law of Moses which identifies the Lord's anointed.

### Ether 3

This account that we are reading in the record of Ether occurred before Christ came. Christ was a future expectancy, not an historical figure from the past. The faith exhibited by the brother of Jared in this account is faith in an unfilled future expectancy. If you think you have a thin basis for your faith in Christ because you didn't live in His day, think about how difficult it would be to have confidence in a Redeemer whose life was still future. The details of the date and time of His birth were unknown. The circumstances of Him coming into mortality, the ministry and the sermons that He delivered, the sacrifices and the healings He gave during mortality, the temptations He faced, the dilemmas He confronted, all were unknown and unaccomplished. We know a great deal concerning Him now. None of that was known at the time the book of Ether was composed.

We have greater evidence. We have a greater testimony in front of us concerning Christ than did this man. We have greater reason to believe in Christ than did this man. We have far more witnesses and justification for having confidence in the promises of Christ. We, unlike him, have the New Testament, we have the Book of Mormon including his record in front of us. We have Joseph Smith's revelations and Joseph Smith's testimony. We have the temple rites, with their ceremonial depiction of the return back into the presence of the Lord through the veil. We have restored again to us, partially, the book of Enoch in the Pearl of Great Price. We have restored to us a far more complete account of Abraham's testimony in the Pearl of Great Price. And we have a great deal more of the corrected account of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. Therefore, when we read this third chapter of the book of Ether, we should recognize we come to this challenge with a significantly greater collection of advantages, if we will receive them and use them, than the one who composed the record Moroni abridged here. Keep all of this in mind as we read this account.

### *Ether 3:1*

*[The brother of Jared] did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass; and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount...*

How big are "small stones" that "he did carry them in his hands"? Size of eggs? When was the last time you came from the refrigerator of your garage to the kitchen carrying 16 eggs in your two hands?

In an exchange with my bishop last year I wrote:

*Recall the story of the Brother of Jared who took 16 small stones to the top of the mountain and "cried again unto the Lord." (Ether 3:1) This is the 10th time in the record of the brother of Jared, in which, he "cries" unto the Lord. Throughout the record of the brother of Jared, never once does the word "pray" or "prayer" appear as part of the record. When the voice of Moroni enters into the narrative, the word "prayed" appears in Moroni's aside. But in the record of the brother of Jared, he does not ever use the word "pray" or "prayer," he "cried." Consider for a moment, the difference between being someone who prays unto God, and someone who cries unto God. Consider the position in which the petitioner has voluntarily placed himself, when instead of coming in prayer, he comes crying out unto the Lord. Keep that word in mind. Eleven times it is used in the Book of Ether to describe the brother of Jared. The only time the word "prayer" appears is in Moroni's interruption. That is the way you can know Moroni was abridging a record written by somebody else. Moroni does not use the same word as the person whose records he was abridging. He uses "prayer" — but only one time. This is what he cried out: "O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant..." Crying, asking Him not to be angry, reducing himself to be merely a servant, because of his "weakness before thee." What is this man's attitude? How is this man approaching the throne of God? How does he view himself? How does he regard God? Why does this man have such faith? Why does this man attract the attention of God? Why is God willing to speak to such a man, such a vessel as this? What is it about this attitude of this man that tells you his heart is right before God?*

*"...for we know that thou art holy. [This is the contrast, "my weakness," compared to "your holiness".] and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires." [He said he was doing what God asked him to do. God commanded him. He did not think himself qualified, but was obeying what God told him to do. This is the attitude of the man. This is what the heart of the man reflects. These words explain why he "cries" to God.]*

*"Behold, O Lord, thou hast smitten us because of our iniquity, and hast driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness; nevertheless, thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity, and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of the rock."*

*There is no pride here. There is no resentment at being chastened. There is acceptance of the chastening hand of God. There is no proclamation by the man that he was worthy. It is quite the opposite, he declares he is unworthy. He has no resentment for having been punished. It is the opposite, he recognizes every stumble*

*along the way is justified, is reasonable, is earned, and was appropriate. Because God, who cares for His children, upbraids and disciplines His children.*

*This text in Ether chapter 3 is probably the best single text in existence to study about gaining the knowledge of God, and the process by which it is gained. Most importantly, it exposes the attitude possessed by the person who comes back to be redeemed. It tells you, not directly, it tells you indirectly by telling you what the brother of Jared did.*

*Also consider Alma chapter 22 involving Lamoni's father, the King. Look at the father beginning in verse 17 of Alma chapter 22: "And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying:" [It was not the words of the prayer that provoked the attention of heaven. Although his prayer was in fact needed, relevant, and exactly what the Lord answered. It was what came before.] This was the King. The King who could have people killed if he chose to do so. This was the one who, like God among his people, exercised the power of life and death. This was the one who could exact taxes from them. This was the one who had absolutely no reason to do what he did here. Look what he did. He prostrated himself on the ground and he "cried out mightily." He didn't pray. He mirrored exactly what the brother of Jared did when he approached God. In the depths of humility and in the sincerity of his heart, he showed absolutely an appreciation for the difference between himself on the one hand, and God on the other.*

*To me these examples reflect the kind of faith that is able reach through the veil and connect us to heaven. (email to Bishop Gabrish, 23 Aug 2019)*

#### [Ether 3:4-5](#)

*And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we shall cross the sea. Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to show forth great power, which looks small unto the understanding of men.*

He was not asking for this to see a light show. He asked for this out of pity and concern, charity and intercession for others who would otherwise be left in the dark. He is trying to do something to bless and benefit others in a very practical way. He hopes to make the lives of others better. He was not doing this for himself. He was doing it on behalf of his people.

#### [Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 3:4](#)

According to the Midrash Rabbah on Gen. 6:16 (as well as Rashi on Gen. 6:16), Noah's Ark was lit by a precious stone called the tzohar which "glowed brightly."

*Ether 3:6-8*

*And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger.*

The only thing that the brother of Jared ever sees at this point, is His finger. The Lord may stretch forth His hand, but the only thing seen is His finger.

Let's assume for the moment I have eight in one hand and eight in the other, as the brother of Jared. Let's assume someone else touches it in my hand. It is impossible to touch the stone in a man's hand without the one holding the stone feeling it has been touched.

We read this record, but we fail to notice what was really happening. The stones were in his hands, eight and eight, and the Lord touched them one by one with His finger. Now, there is nothing in this record that suggests that after the last stone gets touched, or after the stone the Lord was touching at the moment that the finger is seen, there were any more stones remaining to be touched. They were touched. First one, then another, one by one. Sixteen times this was repeated. This record read fairly suggests to me that the brother of Jared stood there and witnessed 15 of the 16 stones, felt the touch on 15 of the 16 stones, before on the very last stone he saw the finger of the Lord. Think about that for a moment. Think about coming into contact, admittedly through a stone, but coming into contact with the Lord when He manifests Himself for the first time to man physically.

*And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood...*

That is the way the Lord chose to manifest Himself in this incident. He appeared "like flesh and blood" because He came physically into contact with 16 stones.

*...and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear. And the Lord saw that the brother of Jared had fallen to the earth; and the Lord said unto him: Arise, why hast thou fallen? And he saith unto the Lord: I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me; for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.*

It frightened him to realize that the God who controls all things had flesh and blood. This was a great secret that ought not get out, and now he knows it. Knowing it frightened him. He thought he was intruding into space he shouldn't, and he felt convicted that somehow that was something he ought not know.

*Ether 3:9-11*

*And the Lord said unto him: Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood; and never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger. Sawest thou more than this? And he answered: Nay.*

He didn't see the hand—he saw the finger, and he didn't see more than this.

The way I choose to read verse 9 is:

...and never has man [none of those now living have] come before me with such exceeding faith...

*Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me. And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?*

This is a necessary prerequisite because what the Lord is about to speak to him will be covenantal. When it comes to prophecy, covenants, commitments by God, what He's about to do requires the brother of Jared to have faith in God's true nature. He needed to have a correct understanding of God's attributes. This was required before God could show him all things.

#### *Ether 3:12-17*

*And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie. And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh. And now, as I, Moroni, said I could not make a full account of these things which are written, therefore it sufficeth me to say that Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites.*

What was the body Jesus showed Himself unto the Nephites in?

Recent email to Jesse Bardsley, 19 Sep 2020:

*Ron uses John 4:24 to support that God is spirit. Joseph Smith would also agree. "the Father being a personage of spirit, glory, and power" (Lectures on Faith 5:2). God having a body of flesh and bone comes from D&C 130, which can be traced to Joseph Smith only indirectly through 2nd and 3rd party sources. Section 130 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants first appeared as canon in the 1876 edition prepared by Orson Pratt under the direction of Brigham Young. For original sources see Joseph Smith Papers (JSP), Journals Vol. 2:323–326, (Dec. 1841 – April 1843), 2 April 1843. Willard Richards didn't accompany Joseph Smith on his four-day trip to Ramus, IL, and reconstructed the Joseph Smith Journal entry from the Journal of William Clayton. See JSP, Journals Vol. 2:403–405, Appendix 2, 1–4 April 1843. The Words of Joseph Smith (WJS), 169, 267n3. See note 14.*

*For me, I trust the direct source to Joseph Smith of Lectures on Faith over D&C 130. But then how do I reconcile the teaching that the Father has a body of flesh and bones?*

*In Ether 3:15-16, when the Lord showed himself to the Brother of Jared, we read Christ's words:*

*Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.*

*What was the body Jesus showed Himself unto the Nephites in? What is the difference between water as a solid, water as a liquid, and water as a gas? The difference between that, if you want to take a scriptural word, is "quicken." In one condition it is quickened, in another condition it is less quick. In science the difference between the two is "temperature" or heat.*

*God dwells in everlasting burnings. In order to be with or near Him, a man must be "quicken" to endure His presence. Does that mean that in a quickened state it is impossible for a quickened being to manifest itself in a solid form? Well, take a look at D&C 131:7*

*There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter.*

*D&C 77:2 includes the statement: "...that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual."*

*Rather than try to explain all this to Ron, my approach would be to just concede the point and accept that God is spirit because Joseph Smith said as much. You may have your own thoughts or ideas, but I thought it might be of interest to you in the event you might not be familiar with the history of D&C 130.*

[Ether 3:13](#)

cross ref Morm 9:13, D&C 76:118

[Ether 3:18](#)

*And he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God, because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him.*

This is how God is known: by His works. It is not the lightning show nor the shaking on the mountain, but it is the great works that proceed forth from Him.



See 3 Ne 11:9-17

*“he did minister unto him.”* Christ has a ministry. His ministry is not yet complete. His ministry includes coming and bearing His testimony, for that is the testimony of Jesus we should receive while in the flesh (D&C 76:74). That ministry continues.

## About Sacred Stones

Here is an excerpt from a talk in September of last year:

*Now, we've talked about this word Mashiach משיח . It means “Anointed.” Christ is the same word (but coming from a Greek root). What does it mean “to Anoint”? Why does it matter that there's an Anointing? I want to go back just a ways. We're gonna look to our father Jacob (Ya'akov), whose name was changed to Isra'el (“prevails with God”). You may recall that when he was fleeing for his life, he stopped for the night because it was dark, and he laid down, and he made a rock his pillow; and then he had a dream—a vision in the nighttime—when he saw a ladder (or a conduit/a pillar) into heaven and messengers ascending and descending, moving up and down the ladder. And at the top of the ladder, he saw God, who spoke with him and made him promises and made a covenant with him. And when Jacob rose up early in the morning, [he] took the stone that he had put for his [pillow], and [he] set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. He anointed the stone. Hmmm. And he called the name of that place Beth-el , the house of God, because he said, surely God is in this place. Now, was the place the house of God? Or was the man of the household of God because of the covenant that he just received from the Lord?*

*And what was the deal with this stone? He has this vision; he sees God; he receives promises; this vision involved a stone which connected him to the Divine, made him part of the house of God; and that word (when he renamed the place Bethel— Beth-el ), that word gave rise to another word: Baetylus , which means sacred stones that have been endowed with life by the anointing of God.*

*The “sacred stone” tradition is prevalent throughout the world, through many cultures, many religions, and much of history. For example, if you happen to look in the Old Testament and you happen to appreciate Hebrew, you'll find out that Noah was commanded to build an ark. And much of the English translation is poor about what that ark contained. One of the things it said it had was a window. “Window” was a translation of the Hebrew word tsohar (zohar) . Zohar was not a window; it was a stone—it was a sacred stone that glowed, that gave light to everybody in the ark. It came from the Hebrew word zahar, which means, “to press out oil.” He had a stone, an anointed stone. Window?? Are you kidding me? In fact, in the Book of Mormon (in the record of the brother of Jared), that was fixed; it explicitly says [paraphrasing], “No, no, you can't have windows in your arks.” And lest anyone should want to misinterpret, “...but you can have stones anointed by the touch of the finger of God.” Where do you think that idea came from? Where do you think the brother of Jared got the idea to light the arks with sacred stones touched by the*

*finger of God? He took 16 stones up that mountain, and he came down the mountain with 18 stones—because the Lord gave him two more [urim & thumim, Ether 3:23].*

*Well, this idea of sacred stones and anointing is far more prevalent than you may think. You'll, of course, immediately recognize the Coronation Throne used by the British monarchs, built in 1296—built specifically to house the stone that's sitting at the bottom of it, so that the British monarch could be seated upon the stone when they were anointed to be the king. This is the... Oh, the name of it slips my mind at the moment. I apologize. [Audience chatter.] Yeah, the Stone of Scone, it's called colloquially. It's also called the Coronation Stone, and the legend is that this is the very stone that Jacob had his head laying on—that it was spirited away; that it was brought to the British Isles; and that, you know, the Scots had it, and then the British captured it from the Scots and brought it back. And in 1950, on Christmas, some Scottish nationalists stole it from Westminster Abbey and took it back, and then it was formally returned to Scotland, with much pomp and circumstance, very recently. But to this day, that idea persists.*

*It's in the Book of Mormon:*

*And the Lord said, I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem a stone which shall shine forth in darkness unto light, that I may discover unto my people who serve me, that I may discover unto them the works of their brethren — yea, their secret works, their works of darkness, and their wickedness and abominations . (Alma 17:12 RE) (See also notes on Gazel Stone from Study lesson Alma 36-38)*

*The point is that these anointed stones all symbolize the Messiah—Jesus Christ, the Anointed One. And this brings us right back to the fundamental question: Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is to become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doings, and it is marvelous in our eyes? [This is Jesus quoting Psalms.] Therefore [I say] unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. For whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder . (Matthew 10:13 RE) If you fall on your knees before the stone that represents Christ, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, you can be redeemed. But you don't want to be one at the last day upon whom that stone falls. Now his disciples came to him, and Jesus said unto them, Do you marvel at the words of the parable which I spoke unto them? Truly I say unto you, I am the stone, and those wicked ones reject me. I am the head of the corner . (Matthew 10:15 RE, emphasis added) (Adrian Larsen, Look Unto the Rock, 21 Sep 2019, pg 14-16)*

See also:

Notes on *Gazel Stone* from study lesson on Alma 36-38.

Where did the Brother of Jared Get the Idea of Shining Stones?

<https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/where-did-the-brother-of-jared-get-the-idea-of-shining-stones>

*Ether 3:22*

*...when ye shall come unto me, ye shall write them...*

The "coming unto me" takes place in verse 25-26. In verse 27 "*the Lord said unto him: Write these things...*"

*Ether 3:25*

Cross ref 1 En 90:41 (we looked at this last week).

*Ether 4:1*

*...and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them...*

Printer's manuscript has king Benjamin.

*Ether 4:7*

*And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.*

This is the ministry of the Lord. This is the comfort He promises to bring us. This text in Ether chapter 3 is probably the best single text in existence to study about gaining the knowledge of God and the process by which it is gained. Most importantly, it exposes the attitude possessed by the person who comes back to be redeemed. It tells you, not directly, it tells you indirectly by telling you what the brother of Jared did. Go thou, and do likewise.

*Ether 5:1-3*

These are instructions to Joseph Smith.

See 2 Ne 27:22

*Wherefore, when thou hast read the words which I have commanded thee, and obtained the witnesses which I have promised unto thee, then shalt thou seal up the book again, and hide it up unto me, that I may preserve the words which thou hast not read, until I shall see fit in mine own wisdom to reveal all things unto the children of men.*

LDS tradition is that Joseph returned the plates back into the hands of the angel. But if he was true to these instructions, then Joseph would have sealed up and hid the plates back unto the Lord himself.