

Mormon 6: 1-6*Cumorah*

1 It is known that the *Hill Cumorah* where the Nephites were destroyed is the hill where the Jaredites were also destroyed. This hill was known to the Jaredites as *Ramah*. It was approximately near to the waters of Ripliancum, which the Book of Ether says, “by interpretation, is large, or to exceed all.” [Ether 15:8-11.] Mormon adds: “And it came to pass that we did march forth to the land of Cumorah, and we did pitch our tents round about the hill Cumorah; and it was in a land of many waters, rivers, and fountains; and here we had hope to gain advantage over the Lamanites.” [Mormon 6:4]

It must be conceded that this description fits perfectly the land of Cumorah in New York, as it has been known since the visitation of Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, for the hill is in the proximity of the Great Lakes and also in the land of many rivers and fountains. Moreover, the Prophet Joseph Smith himself is on record, definitely declaring the present hill called Cumorah to be the exact hill spoken of in the Book of Mormon.

Further, the fact that all of his associates from the beginning down have spoken of it as the identical hill where Mormon and Moroni hid the records, must carry some weight. It is difficult for a reasonable person to believe that such men as Oliver Cowdery, Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, David Whitmer, and many others, could speak frequently of the Spot where the Prophet Joseph Smith obtained the plates as the Hill Cumorah, and not be corrected by the Prophet, if that were not the fact. That they did speak of this hill in the days of the Prophet in this definite manner is an established record of history.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols, edited by Bruce R. McConkie, 3: p.233-234.

2 The original records, from which the abridgment was made, were hid up by Mormon in a hill called Cumorah, in the interior of what is now called the State of New York, but the abridgment was still in possession of the prophet Moroni. About this time, or a little before this time, there had been a fifty-year war between the inhabitants of North and South America; and finally the Lamanites of South America drove the Nephites from the Isthmus, and continued to burn their towns, cities and villages, and they destroyed hundreds and thousands of the Nephites; and ultimately they were driven into what we now call the State of New York. Three hundred and eighty years after the birth of Christ they entered into terms of peace, or, in other words, an armistice, for the space of four years, during which time the two nations gathered together all their forces into one vicinity, near the hill Cumorah. And when the four years of peace, or armistice had expired, they came together in battle, in which the Nephites were overpowered, and hundreds of thousands of them killed, including women and children. Moroni, who was among the few Nephites who were spared, and in whose possession was the abridgment which had been made by his father, Mormon, was commanded to hide up that abridgment in the hill Cumorah, near the town of Manchester, Ontario County, State of New York. The Lord commanded him not only to hide up the record, but also to deposit with it the Urim and Thummin, an instrument used by the ancient seers who dwelt on this continent. The Lord promised Moroni that in the latter days, he would bring forth that book out of the ground, that it

should whisper out of the dust; that it should speak unto the living as if it were from the dead, and when he should bring it forth this Urim and Thummin, deposited with it, should enable the finder to translate it into the language of the people who should then inherit the land.

I have now given you a brief statement of these things, in substance, as they were taught by the angel of God who administered to Joseph Smith in September 1823. [Journal of Discourses, 17:281; italics added]

Author's Note: The writer is not trying to convince the reader of Book of Mormon geography, but in fairness to many theories of geography, the chapters discussed above certainly give the possibility of the Nephites being driven great distances. Therefore, it is only fair to include what Elder Pratt said was taught by the angel to Joseph Smith. Moroni did teach Joseph for four years before he gave him the plates to translate (see D&C 20:5-8). In regards to Joseph's preparation, his mother stated in the winter of 1823-24, before Joseph had ever received the plates: "He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them."

Monte S. Nyman, Lucy Mack Smith, *History of the Joseph Smith* ed. Preston Nibley (1958), 83,

Mormon 6: 6

I Mormon began to be old

3 If you think it an inspiration that a 16-year-old boy could win the leadership of a great national army, what would you think of a man between the ages of 65 and 74 who was still the best man among his entire people for this top position of leadership, and in those days the general marched at the head and not in the rear of his troops (Mormon 6:11). It is one thing to shoot a guided missile at an enemy a thousand miles away, but it is quite another thing to meet the enemy face to face, and with a sword or a battle axe, take on all comers, old and young, on any basis they might choose to elect; and still be in there fighting at age 74. No weakling or coward survives a test like that. His leadership and great skill in battle must have been an inspiration to those fortunate companions in arms who were privileged to fight at his side. Sterling W. Sill, *The Upward Reach* (1962), 252-53.

4 Before the last great battle ensued between the Nephite and Lamanite armies at Cumorah in the year 385 AD, Mormon entrusted the plates containing his abridgment of the plates of Nephi to his son, Moroni (Mormon 6:6). Nevertheless, after the battle—in which he was wounded—Mormon again obtained the plates and added some final words found in chapters six and seven respectively of the book called after his own name. All of the other records of his people he had previously hid up in the Hill Cumorah (Mormon 6:6).

It seems almost incredible, but the apparent fact remains that Moroni wandered alone over the face of this land for *sixteen years* (Mormon 8:6) before adding anything to the abridged record as commanded by his father.

Sidney B. Sperry, *A Book of Mormon Treasury* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1959], 122.

Mormon 6: 7-8

5 In the last scene the Nephites are allowed the melancholy and terrifying privilege of enjoying one last tremendous spectacle—the full-dress approach of their executioners.

Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, 7:333

6 When the forces of the Nephites, plus their women and children, saw the Lamanites approaching, they were filled with terror, a sort of intense or violent dread, that filled their hearts. The wicked fear and tremble when brought face to face with death. The awful fear of which Mormon writes, is the opposite of the fear of God, which means that reverence for Him that leads to obedience because of one’s realization of His power, as well as of His love toward man. The Psalmist wrote of evil men and their works; his words may apply not only to the Lamanites, but also to the Nephites: “... They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one...” (Psalm 14:1-5). A better description of both peoples cannot be had than this.

Reynolds and Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon, 7:279-80*

Mormon 6:6

How many people died in the final battles of the Book of Mormon?

7 The number of Nephite soldiers killed adds up to 230,000. This number does not include the women and children, the Lamanites, or those killed in battles immediately leading up to the final battles. There could have easily been between 500,00 and one million killed, and probably more. Compare those numbers with the following numbers of Americans killed in war:

Year	War	United States Casualties
1776	Revolutionary War	4,435
1812	War of 1812	2,260
1848	Mexican War	1,733
1865	Civil War	140,414*
1898	Spanish American War	385
1918	World War I	53,402
1945	World War II	293,986
1953	Korean War	33,629

(Statistics come from Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 303. “Many other sources suggest this figure close to 350,000

That considered, there were many more people killed in the battle described at the end of the Book of Mormon than Americans killed in all the wars of her history.

Brian D. Garner, *Search These Things Diligently*, p. 301.

Mormon 6: 16-22*Lamentation*

8 The tragedy of the Book of Mormon is not what became of the Nephites but what the Nephites became.

Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*

9 A story is told about the great Lincoln in the dark days of the Civil War. As the President paced the floor wondering who would be the victor, North or South, his secretary said, “Mr. Lincoln, I hope the Lord is on our side.” To this, the President answered, “I hope we are on the Lord’s side.” What a difference in point of view. When the whole world is in turmoil, we can all ask are we on the Lord’s side?”

Gilbert Charles Orme, *The Four Estates of Man*, p. 121

10 If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time or die by suicide.

Abraham Lincoln, 1838, as quoted in the preface of *Civil War*, Ward

11 Great nations do not fall because of external aggression; they first erode and decay inwardly, so that like rotten fruit, they fall of themselves. The strength of a country is the sum total of the moral strength of the individuals in that country.

Ezra Taft Benson, *This Nation Shall Endure*, p. 95

12 The gospel is the only answer to the problems of the world. We may cry peace. We may hold peace conferences. And I have nothing but commendation for those who work for peace. But it is my conviction that peace must come from within. It cannot be imposed by state mandate. It can come only by following the teachings and the example of the Prince of Peace.

Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p. 705

13 Let me tell you of a letter which we received a few years ago. A man wrote, saying in substance: “I am in a federal reformatory in Ohio. I recently came across a copy of the Book of Mormon in the prison library. I have read it, and when I read Mormon’s lamentation, over his fallen people—‘O ye fair ones, how could you have departed from the ways of the Lord!... how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen...’ [Mormon 6:17-18.]—when I read this I felt that Mormon was talking to me. Can I get a copy of that book?”

We sent him a copy. He walked in the office some months later, a changed man. I am happy to report that a boy who had stolen gasoline, and then stolen automobiles, and then done other things until finally he was placed in a federal reformatory, was touched by the spirit of this book, and the report today is that he is now a successful man, rehabilitated, earning a living honestly for himself and family in a west coast city.

Such has been the power of this great book in the lives of those who have read it prayerfully. In conference Report, 11 Oct. 1959. 119-1209; as quoted in Gordon B. Hinckley, *Outstanding Stories by General Authorities*, comp. by Leon R. Hartshorn [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974], 139

Mormon 6: 22

Repentance

14 We long for the ultimate blessing of the Atonement—to become one with Him, to be in His divine presence, to be called individually by name as He warmly welcomes us home with a radiant smile, beckoning us with open arms to be enfolded in His boundless love. How gloriously sublime this experience will be if we can feel worthy enough to be in His presence! The free gift of His great atoning sacrifice for each of us is the only way we can be exalted enough to stand before Him and see Him face-to-face. The overwhelming message of the Atonement is the perfect love the Savior has for each and all of us. It is a love which is full of mercy, patience, grace, equity, long-suffering, and above all, forgiving.

The evil influence of Satan would destroy any hope we have in overcoming our mistakes. He would have us feel that we are lost and that there is no hope. In contrast, Jesus reaches down to us to lift us up. Through our repentance and the gift of the Atonement we can prepare to be worthy to stand in His presence.

James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 22; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 20.