



**The Book
of the
Lavens**

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Foreword

The Restoration is a tradition marked by the emergence of new scriptures, often involving miraculous origin stories such as discovered ancient writings. However, I believe that the stories associated with these stories merely serve to bolster their perceived divine origin, and were truly written by their “translator”. This would make many Restoration scriptures pseudepigraphic midrases, which are literary works which expand upon previously-written scripture and whose claimed author is not the true author.

The Book of the Lavens does not have a miraculous origin story, because it was not developed with one. I considered embellishing how it was developed or outright fabricating a story in order to fit within this Restoration tradition, but ultimately I felt like it would be dishonest of me to do so and would distract from the teachings within. Instead, this scripture is presented upfront as a pseudepigraphic midrash of 3rd and 4th Nephi so we may instead focus on its profound teachings rather than its origins.

Alexander Campbell, a contemporary of Joseph Smith and former spiritual leader of Sidney Rigdon, recognized that the Book of Mormon addressed every major religious issue of the previous decade. In this way, it spoke profoundly to the spiritual needs of the people of the early-to-mid 19th century, and was able to be a unique source of solace and guidance to those who came to hold it as scripture.

Similarly, The Book of the Lavens speaks to concerns of our day, offering insights on topics such as income inequality, entheogenic usage, and the experiences of Queer individuals. In this way, it is able to be a unique source of solace and guidance to those who need it on these topics, and it does so in a way that breathes new life into old theological concepts and folk tales.

Of particular interest to me has been Queer representation. As a bisexual, polyamorous, and transgender woman, I grew up not having Queer representation in scriptural stories. The Book of the Lavens is my attempt to step into the Restoration tradition of scripture making so I may fill this void, offering stories that may enable both this and the next generation to feel seen, valued, and loved by God.

This scripture tells the tales of the Lavens, a group exiled from other Nephite tribes, who form their own tribe after the assassination of the chief judge Lachoneus the Younger. It expounds upon the lives, experiences, and ministries of those Disciples whom Christ had chosen to teach and lead in The Promised Land after He departed. All of these Disciples, in today’s terminology, would be considered Queer.

The Book of Zedekiah

Chapter 1

¹ At the Temple of my people I, Zedekiah, was commanded to chronicle the story of my people, the Lavens. Though we were born amongst the Nephites and Lamanites, we are like seeds which are sown far and wide and grow in all the people of the world. ² We are a peculiar people whom God has put on a path which is less traveled and diverges from common conceptions of living and connecting. ³ Notwithstanding our uniqueness, we know that we are a part of God's creation and thus our path is sanctified by Celestial will.

⁴ However, the boundless complexity of the Divine's masterpiece often escapes the grasp of many, rendering the Lavens as enigmas within our homelands. ⁵ Despite this lack of clarity, amidst the Nephites and Lamanites, there were some who welcomed us with open arms. Yet there were also those whose intentions were pure, but their actions were misguided. ⁶ Others had their spirits filled with malice and wrath towards us. This hostility has stifled our voices, undermined the sanctity of our familial bonds, and exposed us to persecution, even amidst those celebrated for their supposed righteousness.

⁷ Hence, I commit these reflections to writing, safeguarding the legacy of my people, the Lavens.

⁸ In the 29th year after the sign heralding Christ's birth, a concerning trend began to emerge in the land of Zarahemla. ⁹ While we were an industrious people who were blessed with bountiful lands there were those among us who, in their pursuit of earthly treasures, elevated the importance of the accumulation of wealth above the sanctity of spiritual communion with God and the welfare of their community. ¹⁰ As a result, wealth was increasingly concentrated into the hands of a select few.

¹¹ With cunning subtlety, they maneuvered themselves into positions of power where they might exploit the labor of others while themselves

abstaining from any form of toil. ¹² They claimed ownership over nature's gifts—cattle, sheep, oxen, horses, the majestic elephants, cureloms, cumoms, and the rich harvests of fields and orchards. ¹³ To protect their amassed fortunes, they formed private militias to enforce their will and stifle any opposition with ruthless determination and efficiency.

¹⁴ Draped in the finest silks and linens and adorned with pearls and precious gems they displayed their earthly power and affluence. ¹⁵ In their lavish residences they installed thrones made of gold, stark symbols of their disconnect from both the common people and spiritual humility. ¹⁶ Amidst these palaces they hosted extravagant feasts—their hearts blind to the plights of those who served them: the hungry and homeless souls who languished unseen in the shadows of their grandeur.

¹⁷ They wrapped themselves in the delusion of superiority, proclaiming themselves to be a blessed and chosen people on account of their cunningness. ¹⁸ They felt as if this delusion entitled them to lie, murder, and plunder to gain even more wealth. ¹⁹ Their hearts grew cold, delighting in the torment of the downtrodden; they stripped the very clothes off of those who were indebted to them, withheld sustenance from the starving, and their relentless industries were the harbingers of disease. ²⁰ The toil of their laborers was exploited with a merciless hand, offering meager wages for long hours of dangerous work. They did not view these souls as people but as mere tools which generated their wealth. ²¹ Their venomous disdain knew no bounds and was particularly deadly for the Lamanites and the Lavens.

²² Among these architects of disparity were not only merchants, lawyers, and government officials but also, distressingly, teachers and priests who were trusted to guide people closer to God. ²³ Though not adorned with the wealth of their industrial counterparts, these clerics held vast influence among the people and had access to privileges such as education, medicines, and travel that most did not. ²⁴ They twisted their holy roles to siphon wealth from those who sought God and channeled these offerings to fund their lavish lifestyles. ²⁵ Masked in a guise of holiness, these high-ranking priests ignored God's call for equity, indulging instead in the spoils of iniquity.

²⁶ By the time we reached the 30th year, the once-vibrant tapestry of the church had frayed into scattered remnants. ²⁷ Many, who had previously been integral to the fabric of our spiritual family, found themselves drawn away by the alluring promises of material success and extravagance. ²⁸ Their pursuit of material wealth snared their spirits, hindering a genuine connection with the Sacred, and left their souls in the thorns of greed and malice.

²⁹ Yet, amidst the ruins of the church was a small faction of resilient and devoted believers, primarily Lavens and Lamanites, whose faith remained unshaken. ³⁰ We understood, with profound clarity, that true joy was not to be found in the glitter of gold, but in the warmth of kinship. ³¹ Our hands and hearts opened freely, offering the fruits of our labor—gold, the bounty of the earth, the creatures that roam the fields, and the land itself—to one another in a sacred covenant of unity.

³² We dismantled the walls that had separated us, creating a community where no one was ‘rich’ or ‘poor’ and where no one lived in subjugation of another, but all stood in the light of equality and mutual respect. ³³ Within the sanctuary of our church, each soul partook of and enjoyed liberty in its purest form, basking in the light of the Divine’s boundless grace.

³⁴ Within our community, some were called to a higher Celestial purpose: they were to confront the mighty wicked, expose their iniquity, and beckon them back to the path of righteousness. ³⁵ These courageous individuals stood before the people, their voices ringing out with messages of equality and freedom.

³⁶ At the forefront of these brave messengers was Ilizora, the daughter of James. ³⁷ Ilizora earned her living through the sweat of her brow.

³⁸ Her weary eyes had seen the deep injustices faced by workers, whose efforts only served to further enrich the already wealthy. ³⁹ As a Laven, even a whisper of challenge to this injustice put her in grave danger, threatening her means of survival and possibly her life. ⁴⁰ Indeed, the wicked treated the righteous harshly, particularly if they were a Laven.

⁴¹ One quiet night, Ilizora was graced with a vision. She found herself in a vast field, a mirror image of the one she labored in by day. ⁴² A figure emerged, Their voice carrying the weight of the ages, telling her, “Go forth, Ilizora, and tend to the field, for it is ready to be harvested.” ⁴³ She protested, her voice heavy with despair, “I work this field from dawn-till-dusk, yet I starve because my labor is taken from me. I have no wish to continue in this field.” ⁴⁴ The figure clarified, “The harvest I speak of is not of the earth, but of the souls laboring beside you. ⁴⁵ They yearn for someone to lead them against the injustices they endure.” ⁴⁶ Overcome by fear, Ilizora admitted, “But I am a Laven, and those who weave darkness will surely snuff out my light should I dare to speak” ⁴⁷ The figure countered, “It’s true that speaking out may indeed bring swift and severe consequences. However, silence will inevitably bring this fate over time through the heavy burden of oppression. ⁴⁸ It is far better to be a fleeting flame that pierces the darkness than to smolder in the enduring gloom of subjugation.”

⁴⁹ Upon awakening from her transformative vision, Ilizora was deeply moved, recognizing the figure as the Holy Spirit. ⁵⁰ Embracing her divine calling, she set out to rally her community towards achieving economic justice, ensuring that even the most basic necessities of life would be accessible to everyone. ⁵¹ With her spirit ignited by this profound mission, Ilizora stepped forward and gave her message to every soul, be they clad in rags or riches:

⁵² “Gone are the days when the commonfolk held their rightful share of land, tools, crops, and livestock. ⁵³ Now they find themselves crushed beneath the weight of industrial might and tyranny, fueling the luxurious comfort of a privileged few. ⁵⁴ The affluent steal wealth from the workers and hoard the riches like greedy dragons. ⁵⁵ We, the majority, are given no choice but to reluctantly accept meager wages for enduring endless hours of grueling work, while the threat of replacement and destitution hangs over us.

⁵⁶ This looming threat of replacement has inadvertently turned us against each other, as we scramble to survive within this oppressive system. ⁵⁷ In our desperation, we have succumbed to envy and rivalry, vying to recapture just a sliver of what we rightfully deserve. ⁵⁸ The specter of poverty that haunts us is not a natural occurrence but a direct outcome of the deliberate and strategic decisions made by the elite to maintain their dominion. ⁵⁹ This cycle of exploitation spins unchallenged because the wealthy wicked have allied with one another to keep us fighting amongst ourselves.

⁶⁰ This detestable system is unsustainable and beyond reform. ⁶¹ A society cannot survive—physically, morally, or spiritually—under conditions where a few accumulate vast wealth while the majority are left impoverished.

⁶² Hear this: The powerful will not passively watch as we rise against them in defiance. ⁶³ They will intensify their efforts to divide us and weaken our unity. ⁶⁴ Expect them to use slander and shackles to break our bonds of solidarity and mutual support. ⁶⁵ Indeed, I say to you, they will go to great lengths, even extinguishing the lives of those brave enough to stand against their tyrannical rule. ⁶⁶ In the eyes of these tyrants, we are merely expendable tools, to be discarded once our utility wanes. ⁶⁷ I declare, with the Divine as my witness, that should they resort to bloodshed to suppress the yearnings for justice, they will bring upon themselves a devastation like no other.

⁶⁸ Our forefather Lehi taught that our purpose on Earth is to find and experience joy. ⁶⁹ Yet, the actions of the wealthy and influential in our time obstruct our ability to do this. ⁷⁰ I refuse to accept life in a society so devoid of justice. ⁷¹ If you, too, desire to break free from these bonds, let us come together—the true pillars of our society—to assert our right to justice and liberty. ⁷² The hour has arrived for us to sculpt our destiny anew, to reclaim the fruit of our labors! ⁷³ There can be no true peace as long as there is poverty and need among us. ⁷⁴ Let's unite to regain our lands, our tools, and the fruits of our labor, so we can live in harmony with each other, the Earth, and our God."

⁷⁵ The impassioned words of Ilizora resonated deeply with her fellow laborers, who felt the truth of her message through the stirring of the Spirit within them. ⁷⁶ They recognized that the burdens they bore would only become heavier unless they joined together in collective action.

⁷⁷ Moved by the same divine inspiration, Johezah, daughter of Hiramiah, felt an urgent call to take action and advocate for change. ⁷⁸ Though Johezah herself was not a Laven, her life was deeply intertwined with Lavens through familial bonds and friendships. ⁷⁹ She was acutely aware of the injustices Lavens faced simply due to their identity and relationships. ⁸⁰ Within the sacred spaces where spiritual dialogues took place she saw the debates over whether Lavens should be fully included in the church and its priesthoods. ⁸¹ She bore witness to the unwarranted removal of Laven priests and teachers, acts that defied the congregants' cries and the principles of equity, perpetrated by the ecclesiastical aristocracy.

⁸² As a priest who was not a Laven, Johezah was privy to conversations that Lavens were excluded from. ⁸³ In these circles of influence, she used her position of privilege to advocate for those who lacked representation, striving to eliminate the injustices that silenced their voices. ⁸⁴ However, her efforts to promote justice were largely confined to the secluded discussions within these ecclesiastical settings.

⁸⁵ Amidst her ministrations to a kindred soul, the heavens parted, and a voice, both thunderous and crystalline, pierced the veil of the ordinary, proclaiming: ⁸⁶ "My daughter Johezah! I have seen your efforts to bring equality to the Lavens and these efforts are pleasing to me, however, I require yet more of you. ⁸⁷ In the very sanctuary that bears My name, the Lavens suffer greatly for leaders, draped in a false sanctity, wield My name to justify their cruelty. ⁸⁸ On the morrow, as the congregation gathers for worship, I urge you to stand and challenge these leaders to repent of their wicked ways."

⁸⁹ Humbly, Johezah knelt and cried “O God, my soul yearns for nothing more than the liberation of the Lavens, my kin. ⁹⁰ For their deliverance, I shall do the thing that you have asked of me. ⁹¹ Praise be unto You, for bestowing upon me this wise guidance that will surely illuminate the shadows of the corrupt.”

⁹² As dawn painted the skies, Johezah stood with unwavering conviction before the church’s tarnished shepherds and rebuked them by saying:

⁹³ “Harken, all of you who teach and lead in this church! Attend with dread to the words which God hath commanded me to thunder forth unto you!

⁹⁴ You profess to lead a church that is founded upon love and acceptance, yet your deeds are full of deceit and hypocrisy. ⁹⁵ What you call righteousness is nothing more than a cruel facade. ⁹⁶ You have cynically wielded the sacred priesthood to not only violate the very principles of our sacred community but also desecrate them. In doing this you have caused great harm, with the Lavens bearing the brunt of your wickedness. ⁹⁷ You have willfully neglected those in need and disparaged those advocating for compassion and generosity, dismissing their noble efforts. ⁹⁸ You profess devotion to our tenets, yet your actions are a complete betrayal of them. ⁹⁹ Your self-righteous justifications only serve to harden your hearts, leading you further from the path of righteousness. ¹⁰⁰ In your arrogance, you have defiled the sanctity of the priesthood—an affront that echoes through the heavens.

¹⁰¹ Some among you have believed that to retain your roles in the church, you must cater to the wicked by descending into the depths of iniquity itself. ¹⁰² Did not our ancestors teach that evil people shun the light of God’s truth because it reveals their true nature? ¹⁰³ Throughout the eons have not the prophets of God been met with rejection by the wicked? ¹⁰⁴ What then shall be said of your ministry, when those enveloped in darkness not only accept but embrace you? ¹⁰⁵ Verily, as you have perverted the sacred trust of the priesthood into an instrument of oppression, it stands to reason that you have transmuted yourselves into agents of malevolence. ¹⁰⁶ As emissaries of discord, your sole purpose is to cause division amongst the children of God under the guise

of holiness. ¹⁰⁷ In your betrayal, you have not only relinquished your Celestial inheritance but have also cast a pall of dishonor over yourself, our sacred fellowship, and Divinity itself.

¹⁰⁸ I am deeply troubled by the notion of excluding the Lavens from not only our priesthood but our church as a whole. ¹⁰⁹ It is through the Lavens that my understanding of the Divine has been profoundly enriched, a wisdom which would have been unattainable in their absence. ¹¹⁰ To cast them out would not only be an injustice to them, but would also diminish our collective capacity for discernment. ¹¹¹ I passionately advocate for the reintegration of Laven priests and teachers into our fold, so that their enlightening perspectives can once again guide us closer to the Divine.

¹¹² It pains me to see our church, once a sanctuary of solace, become a den of moral decay and corruption. ¹¹³ I recognize that as we strive toward our ideal community the responsibility to rectify these wrongs falls upon each of us. ¹¹⁴ The journey towards such a community is fraught with challenges. We have and undoubtedly will again stumble along the way. ¹¹⁵ Yet, the Divine does not demand perfection in our leaders, but rather expects a sincere commitment to the principles of humility, compassion, and inclusivity. ¹¹⁶ Therefore, let us unite in learning from one another, ensuring that our teachings and our priesthoods foster cohesion rather than discord. ¹¹⁷ Now is the time to heal the divisions and address the grievances that have wounded our shared spiritual life.

¹¹⁸ We must firmly root ourselves in righteous teachings, in the core values that define us, and in our solemn mission to uplift one another. ¹¹⁹ While perfection may yet be beyond our reach, we are obligated to continuously strive towards it by correcting our mistakes and bettering our community. ¹²⁰ With a resolute heart, I commit to contributing to the renewal of our fellowship, so that we may truly reflect the ideals of love and unity central to our faith. I call upon you to join in this sacred endeavor. ¹²¹ It is our collective duty to empower every individual in our community to realize and live out their Divinely ordained purposes. ¹²² We must be ready to embrace the changes necessary to ensure the well-being and spiritual growth of everyone in our faith community.”

¹²³ Johezah's bold proclamation of truth within the public sphere left her religious community in a state of astonishment and marvel at the courage she demonstrated. ¹²⁴ Speaking such truths risked provoking the anger and criticism of the ecclesiastical elite. ¹²⁵ Yet, in her act of fearless oration, Johezah exemplified true leadership, kindling a flame in the hearts of many, urging them to yearn for a higher standard from their religious leaders.

¹²⁶ Among the faithful in attendance at Johezah's sermon was Raphelle, a Laven woman of profound esteem in the church of God. ¹²⁷ Raphelle was celebrated as a teacher, who gave insights into the Divine mysteries that linger just beyond human understanding. ¹²⁸ But the guardians of dogma, cloaked in sanctimony, conspired to tarnish her luminance and expel her from the priesthood by wielding her Laven identity as their spear. ¹²⁹ Their attempts were firmly resisted by Raphelle's community, which also distanced itself from these oppressive leaders. ¹³⁰ The community understood that one's place in the priesthood is a Divine calling, not a status bestowed by human authorities. ¹³¹ With dignified resolve, Raphelle continued her holy work, her teachings serving as a balm to the spirits of her followers.

¹³² Due to her devotion, her mind was whisked away in a vision and shown the forthcoming death of Christ. ¹³³ She saw Jesus being crucified alongside criminals and among his last acts in mortality provided solace and reassurance for those who were dying alongside him. ¹³⁴ After the Savior relinquished His final breath, a sentry pierced through His flesh, a grim testament to His mortal cessation. ¹³⁵ The vision receded returning Raphelle within her earthly confines, overwhelmed by profound sorrow, and in her solitude she shed tears of mourning. ¹³⁶ A voice inquired, "Raphelle, why do these rivers of grief flow so freely?" ¹³⁷ She uttered, "I weep not for Christ's death, for I know the grasp of death cannot contain Him. I am deeply moved because He keeps a heart of kindness even while enduring such unbearable suffering." ¹³⁸ Comfort then enveloped her, "Blessed are you, Raphelle. Prepare yourself for another vision, in which the triumph of Jesus over death will be unveiled."

¹³⁹ The veils of the cosmos parted once more, revealing Jesus amidst His apostles, His words a final testament:

¹⁴⁰ "In several hours I shall dwell no more amongst you, save in memory and spirit. ¹⁴¹ My passage through life was in defiance of the edicts of empire and dogma and shall culminate in my earthly end.

¹⁴² Partake of this bread, in remembrance that I, too, have yielded to the cycle of life, and that your flesh shall one day nourish the soil from which it came. ¹⁴³ Savor this wine, a testament not to myth but to my humanity, for like you, I too have experienced pain. ¹⁴⁴ My physical presence will soon vanish from your sight, but through the act of sharing this meal, remember my teachings and my spirit. ¹⁴⁵ In this communal act, you become one with me; my spirit intertwines with yours, continuing to nurture and support you from within. ¹⁴⁶ Whenever even a few of you gather in my name, I will be there among you, as if risen from the tomb. ¹⁴⁷ This sacred ritual is a symbol of hope, affirming your ability to transcend mortality. ¹⁴⁸ All that I am, I bequeath unto you. In the Divine's eternal embrace, we shall reunite. In unison, we shall partake of the Resurrection's dawn."

¹⁴⁹ With the conclusion of the vision, Raphelle found solace in understanding that Jesus would always be with humanity. ¹⁵⁰ Once again, a Divine whisper touched her soul, urging, "Dear daughter, share the revelations you have received with those who seek understanding." ¹⁵¹ Thus, she imparted the visions bestowed upon her to her people, and they stood in awe, their spirits alight with the newfound wisdom unfurled before them.

Chapter 2

¹ The bold and powerful words of these prophetesses angered all of the privileged and prideful. ² Among the discontented was a man named Jacob, who was particularly enraged by the teachings of Ilizora, Johezah, and Raphelle. ³ He incredulously asked, “**What right do these visionary women have to critique us so boldly? Why should we, the gods of our society, endure their scrutiny?**” ⁴ Jacob rallied the corrupt and influential figures in commerce, law, governance, and religion, and together they conspired to silence these prophetesses. ⁵ They recognized that these women were innocent of all crimes and thus there was no legal recourse. ⁶ Instead, under the cloak of night, they sent forth their disciples to abduct these prophetesses. ⁷ Blinded by their own arrogance, these wicked people were convinced they had a right to suppress these women who challenged their power, control, and status.

⁸ The captors cast these holy women into a shadowy dungeon. ⁹ In this grim place, they were denied food and water for many days.

¹⁰ Jacob, under the guise of mercy, offered to release them in exchange for their agreement to cease challenging he and his people and remained silent the rest of their days. ¹¹ The women discerned that Jacob was furious that they would not submit to him, and this was the only way that he might gain their compliance. ¹² However, the prophetesses remained rooted in the eternal and refused the shackles of silence. They refused to submit to a tyrant who would steal their souls. ¹³ With a heart turned to stone, Jacob decreed they were to be sealed in the dungeon until they perished, and would remain there for all time as a testament to his power.

¹⁴ Moved by their unwavering faith, the Divine quickly caused a peaceful sleep to fall upon these prophetesses which lifted their souls back to the Celestial Gardens, thus sparing them from the earthly agony of death by starvation and thirst. ¹⁵ Their departure from this world served as a poignant indictment of the cruelty harbored by those gilded in wealth but impoverished in spirit. ¹⁶ Yet, those who orchestrated this darkness remained untouched by remorse, falsely believing themselves beyond the reach of consequence.

¹⁷ However, the Lavens, who had wholeheartedly embraced the teachings of these wise women, could not stand idly by in the face of such grave injustices. ¹⁸ Their impassioned cries for justice rose like a tempest until they reached the ears of the chief judge, Lachoneus the Younger, and awoke him to the severity of the crimes committed. ¹⁹ The individuals responsible for the prophetesses’ death were apprehended and brought forth to stand trial for their crimes. ²⁰ This trial would be conducted in accordance with the law that had been established by the people to satisfy the demands of justice.

²¹ Meanwhile, the kin and allies of the accused, harboring malevolence in their hearts, convened in secret gatherings. ²² They resolved to subvert the course of justice to extricate their relatives by killing the chief judge. ²³ In the aftermath they envisioned crowning a king who would reshape the law into a tool for their own selfish interests. ²⁴ Under this new regime, all Lavens would be hunted down and put to death for their prophetic activities. ²⁵ Even those merely suspected of being a Laven would not be spared from their purge.

²⁶ On the 6th day of the 1st month of the 30th year since the celestial announcement of Christ’s birth, an insurrection flooded the Nephite capital. ²⁷ The kin of the accused quickly located and bound chief judge Lachoneus the Younger. ²⁸ With alarming swiftness, they constructed a gallows in the city’s central square and executed him as a grim public spectacle. ²⁹ What followed was a perverse celebration, a chilling display of jubilation around the extinguished beacon of fairness, their cheers resonating in the now-empty halls of justice.

³⁰ For many, the Chief Judge was the last beacon of light in the Nephite government. With him snuffed out there was nothing preventing corruption from advancing unchecked in the Nephite government. ³¹ Following his murder, the elite and influential sought to crown Jacob as the Nephites’ king. ³² Yet, the assassination thrust the Nephite civilization into greater chaos than they had anticipated, and it was entirely disorganized. In this disorganization, mistrust and suspicion permeated all social interactions. ³³ While the Reign of the Judges had come to an end, this chaos also prevented Jacob from being crowned King of the Nephites.

³⁴ From the remnants of this calamity emerged a mosaic of tribes, each composed of kin and kindred spirits. ³⁵ These tribes each chose their own leaders and chiefs, amongst whom a delicate peace was established and there was no war among them. ³⁶ Nevertheless, a universal disdain lingered for the tribe which came to call themselves the Jacobites. ³⁷ The Jacobites were recognized as the architects of the Nephite society's disorganization which was brought about by murder.

³⁸ In the ensuing six years, despite Nephi's relentless endeavors, these Nephite tribes abandoned all righteousness. ³⁹ They regressed to their former ways, as if by a primal forgetfulness, and became their own worst enemies. ⁴⁰ Their desires were fixated on accumulating wealth, leading them to overlook the needs of the less fortunate. ⁴¹ Consequently, a curse afflicted the land, rendering them unable to discern the resting places of their hoarded bounties, lost to them as though swallowed by the very soil.

⁴² In this fragmented society, we, the Lavens, found ourselves cast out of all the tribes, barred from the communal warmth that may be found in fellowship. ⁴³ In the crucible of our exile, we, the Lavens and our kin in spirit, founded a new tribe, adopting the name "the Lavenites".

⁴⁴ Our territory, though small and humble, burgeoned into a sanctuary—our own sacred Zion—which was nurtured by the toils and dreams of our collective soul. ⁴⁵ Our lands were blessed with the beauty of blossoms, which we cherished as the emblem of our tribe, representing our enduring spirit and capacity for rebirth. ⁴⁶ Within this lush refuge, we experienced the Divine, seeing God's grace reflected in every leaf and flower, a constant reminder of the sacredness in all of creation.

The Book of Jonas

Chapter 1

¹ I am known as Jonas the Laven, who was born amongst the Nephites where the Lavens were disdained and viewed with contempt; a sentiment that threatened both our lives and our liberties. ² However, this roar of hostility didn't erupt overnight; it began with hushed tones of exclusion, a silent assumption that everyone was a non-Laven, and ignoring the battles we fought just to exist. ³ With time these were permitted to escalate into more overt acts of prejudice, such as Lavens being branded as inherently evil, excluding us from communal areas, and dictating who we were permitted to love and marry. ⁴ The crescendo of Nephite malice sought to eliminate us from the face of the earth and to erase us from all their records.

⁵ My own family suffered greatly due to this prejudice. ⁶ The love between my fathers, Nephi and Timothy, was profound and their hearts intertwined in the sanctity of matrimony. ⁷ Yet, this beautiful union was veiled and misrepresented by not only the broader Nephite society, but also family members who did not understand their love. ⁸ As a result the relationship of my fathers, much like many other Laven relationships, was referred to as a brotherhood rather than as the sacred union it truly was.

⁹ In the wake of Lachoneus the Younger's assassination, my family increasingly feared for our safety. However, my father, Nephi, faced these fears and his voice billowed like a tempest to the Nephites, proclaiming: ¹⁰ "I am Nephi, the son of Nephi, who was the son of Helaman, who was the son of Helaman, who was the son of Alma, who was the son of Alma."

¹¹ To my cherished Laven kin, hear me: we are not mistakes of creation, nor are we led astray by any malevolent force. We are beautifully crafted by the Divine, each with a purpose that is holy and true. ¹² From our youngest days society whispers to us that to be accepted, to belong, and to be loved comes at the price of conforming to its narrow norms.

¹³ We are coerced to conceal our true selves away from the world.

¹⁴ These teachings, my family and friends, are the greatest deceit of all!

¹⁵ We, as Lavens, are a living testament to the beauty and freedom that springs forth from living an authentic life. ¹⁶ Our very existence is a gift to society that is meant to be enjoyed in the light of day and celebrated with every breath, for we are children of God whose light shines in a world that too often dwells in shadows.

¹⁷ Those who would profit off of our insecurities and anxieties despise when we emancipate ourselves from the cycle they crafted. ¹⁸ Thus, they sow seeds of deceit, striving to shroud our path to self-acceptance in thistles. ¹⁹ Their desperation to keep us captive has even escalated to violence, leaving their hands stained with blood and our bodies and souls scarred. ²⁰ In recent years there have been numerous unresolved murders that haunt the Nephites, yet the so-called protectors of peace turn a blind eye. ²¹ Our silence will not serve as our sanctuary; the wrathful will not cease their crusade until there is no safe refuge left for us. ²² We are summoned to raise our voices and unearth the truths they sought to bury! We must boldly proclaim our experiences and identities as Lavens! ²³ Though they have scattered thorns across our path and to tread it may draw our blood, silence ensures a far worse fate for us all. ²⁴ Now is our moment to step forth and claim our liberation. History and our God assure us that, as with all seekers of justice, our triumph is inevitable.

²⁵ To those who seek to chain the spirits of the Lavens: I stand before you to call you unto repentance! ²⁶ You who strip away our rights; you who spread rumors which label the Lavens as violent and ill and tarnish the name of the Lavens; you who wage a war of words against our allies; you who twist and contort the words of God to fit your distorted theology; you who stand by in silence when you know these words' true meaning; and you who fabricate tales about us to cover up your own sins. ²⁷ Cease manipulating the name and word of God to cast your own misdeeds upon the Lavens! God shall not serve as a cloak for your transgressions!

²⁸ I say unto you, that you must take the beam out of your own eye before you can even look for a speck in a Laven's eye.

²⁹ To our non-Laven friends and family who have love in their hearts for the Lavens: the time to stand with us is now. ³⁰ Silence, when the trumpet of justice sounds, becomes a chain of oppression. It is through such passivity and indifference that the Lavens continue to suffer. ³¹ As Lavens bravely step into the light, let your voices rise in a harmony of support and defense. This solidarity is the only path to righteousness. ³² Therefore, I ask: how will history remember you? As a passive observer or as a valiant champion of equality?"

³³ Though my father's words offered solace to the Laven community and their kin, he was met with mockery by the greater part of the Nephites' tribes. ³⁴ As he persisted in calling them to repentance, their mockery turned to violence.

Chapter 2

¹ Now, my father Nephi cultivated many sacred fruits which connected those who partook of them with the Divine. ² One night, after tasting of a fruit that was like a column, a vision unfolded before him revealing that the Nephites sought to take his life, just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem did with our ancestor Lehi. ³ Among these Nephite tribes were the Jacobites, who not only plotted to snuff out the life of Nephi, but also aimed to extinguish all Lavens by gathering and casting them into fire.

⁴ In his despair, Nephi cried out to the heavens, “Is this fate inevitable? Must my people be destroyed?” ⁵ The Divine assured him face-to-face and said, “No, my son; your people are destined to fulfill a Celestial purpose. You must lead them and their families to a land I have prepared for you in the wilderness.”

⁶ At dawn, Nephi urgently summoned all the Lavens in all the Nephite tribes to meet in his orchard. ⁷ Once gathered he addressed us, saying:

⁸ “Hear me, my beloved friends and family, for your very lives depend upon understanding my words! ⁹ Although I have pleaded on behalf of the Lavenites among the Nephites, their minds have remained closed and their hearts remained hard. ¹⁰ The Jacobites intend to purge us from all Nephite tribes and erase us from Nephite history and they will succeed unless we take decisive action.

¹¹ Our plight has deeply stirred God, whose heart is heavy with the weight of our suffering. ¹² Today, our prayers are heard and answered; we have been promised a haven where we can flourish as Lavens, free from fear and oppression. ¹³ In our new land, we will hew down the hatred which has grown within us, learning instead to forgive and love both others and ourselves. ¹⁴ We will govern ourselves, establish and uphold equality, cultivate our fields, celebrate our culture, honor and preserve our history, care for and cherish one another, connect with the Divine in our own unique and sacred ways, and live a most sublime life.

¹⁵ God has given us three days’ warning before the Jacobites will come upon us and cast us into flames. ¹⁶ Therefore, we must act swiftly! Go and harvest your crops, cull your livestock, gather your records, and then we will flee together into the wilderness.”

¹⁷ Without delay, all of the Lavenites prepared their belongings, including family histories, and fled on the third day. ¹⁸ Despite the Lavenites’ haste, the Jacobites overtook us while we ventured in the wilderness. ¹⁹ In the ensuing battle, my father, Timothy, the husband of Nephi, lost his life when a spear pierced his heart. ²⁰ Our community mourned his loss on the battlefield before their hearts turned to rage, seeking revenge. ²¹ However, Nephi stayed the swords of the Lavens to prevent further violence, saying:

²² “My dear ones, there is no doubt that God’s teachings provoke discord, for they demand of us radical love, deep empathy, unwavering discipleship, and boundless charity. ²³ Remember that our God is not the prince of the sword, but the Prince of Peace. ²⁴ The notion of a ‘fighting saint’ is a contradiction, akin to lambs with fangs or doves with talons. ²⁵ War is a horrific and dreadful monster which is heir to the countless tragedies that humanity can inflict and endure. ²⁶ Yet, when people go to war they often believe that God endorses their war, while their adversaries likely hold the same conviction. If both assert Divine sanction for warfare, does this not mean that God is the source of the horrors and a warmonger?

²⁷ As the Anti-Nephi-Lehis knew, we Lavenites know our God, and we know that all violence is deplored by God. We know that those who invoke God’s name in their crusades are taking the Lord’s name in vain!

²⁸ Therefore, you are commanded by Almighty God to lay down your arms, never to take them up again! ²⁹ These instruments of death are to rust back into the earth so they may become soil, which is the instrument of life.”

³⁰ Nephi approached his fallen husband, cradled his hand, stroked his hair, and kissed his forehead. ³¹ My father Timothy’s eyes regained their light, and he arose to walk again amongst the living. ³² This act of resurrection left both Lavenites and Jacobites profoundly astonished.

³³ After seeing this, a fatally wounded Jacobite was carried forth by his friends and laid before Nephi, who implored Nephi to save his life. ³⁴ Some of the Lavens voiced concerns that aiding the Jacobite would impede our urgent escape, but again Nephi stayed them.

³⁵ With spiritual power and authority, Nephi declared that all the wounded should be brought to him, promising to heal all those who would hear his words. ³⁶ Nephi healed the Lavenites, affirmed their worth in God's eyes, and sent them back to their families. To the Jacobites he healed, he said:

³⁷ "You were called to repentance for your violence against the Lavens and instead you came to massacre us all. Now you come to us begging to heal you and save you from death? ³⁸ I will heal you, for it is God's desire that you shall bear witness to your people that a Laven held your life in his hands and chose mercy over vengeance.

³⁹ Know this: the spirit of the adversary has hardened your hearts and set you against us to fulfill his destructive goals. ⁴⁰ You have perceived our differences as sources of division rather than as opportunities to celebrate the vast diversity of God's creation. ⁴¹ Your hatred has driven the Lavenites out from amongst you, and in doing so your spiritual power is diminished. ⁴² The heavens mourn over the unnecessary suffering of all people, for such pain is not God's will.

⁴³ I have spoken to you in hopes that your hearts would soften, but your hearts remain as hard as ever. ⁴⁴ This is your final warning: if you do not repent and reconcile with the Lavens you have harmed, you will be destroyed.

⁴⁵ Regardless of whether you forsake the darkness in your hearts, we Lavens shall remain as resilient as weeds and flourish as beautifully as orchids! ⁴⁶ We now depart to solitude so we may cultivate our land, creating our own Eden."

⁴⁷ The wounded Jacobites were healed and they reluctantly permitted us to escape. ⁴⁸ However, the Jacobites and the greater part of the Nephite tribes continued to harbor hatred for us in their hearts.

The Book of Shemnon

Chapter 1

¹ In the warmth of an afternoon I, Shemnon, found myself in a grove where Nephi was addressing our community to honor a dear departed friend. ² He recounted his ascent to the Celestial Realm, where he was enlightened with profound and sacred truths. ³ Nephi confessed the challenge of translating such transcendent experiences into the constraints of human language, yet felt an obligation to attempt to do so.

⁴ His words deeply resonated within my soul, prompting an evening of lengthy discussion with my wife about his insights. ⁵ My spirit is not easily stirred up into visionary states, however, that night I felt an intense desire to explore the Celestial Realm Nephi had spoken of.

⁶ Restless throughout the night, when dawn broke I felt a spiritual call to visit Nephi. Upon my arrival, I expressed my gratitude for his moving words and shared my frustration at my seeming inability to have similar experiences. ⁷ With empathetic wisdom, Nephi acknowledged that such mystical experiences are rare, even for him. ⁸ He clarified that visions are not necessarily spontaneous events, but can be facilitated through specific means. He spoke of how certain plants are used to heal our bodies, others are used to heal our minds, and still others are used to heal our souls. ⁹ Nephi then told me that he cultivated several special fruits and herbs which were capable of connecting one to other realms. ¹⁰ Generously and gently, he offered me one of these to aid in fulfilling my yearnings for a Divine vision, promising to accompany me through the experience.

¹¹ The green fruit was like a ribbed column which was adorned with tender spines, and was skeptical that this simple plant could do as Nephi said. ¹² Despite my initial skepticism about the ease and accessibility of visions, Nephi reassured me of the fruit's sacred origins.

¹³ I trusted in his wisdom and guidance, and agreed to partake of this

sacrament. ¹⁴ Nephi blessed the fruit, presented it to me, and I ate it.

¹⁵ The fruit was intensely bitter to the taste and even more so in the belly.

¹⁶ Nevertheless, after some time the promised vision began to unfold.

¹⁷ I felt as if a blindfold veiled my eyes, yet I sensed I was near the

Temple. ¹⁸ Unable to see during this vision which I had longed for, I was

engulfed in despair, when I felt someone approach me. ¹⁹ This person

came close, rested Their hand upon my shoulder, and with genuine concern asked, “My friend, it seems you are in need of help. What troubles you?”

²⁰ I replied to this unseen presence, “My eyes are covered and I cannot see. A veil was placed over my eyes and I know not its origins. Could you help remove what blinds me?” ²¹ They pondered for a moment before suggesting, “Perhaps this veil isn’t new, but has been an overlooked constant in your life which has been shaped and intensified by your upbringing and you only now are aware of its presence.”

²² Anxiously, I pleaded, “Regardless of its origin, please have mercy on me, for I wish to see the world anew.” ²³ With reassurance, they replied,

“I will help, but first, let us walk together. There is something I wish to show you that will both delight and intrigue you.” ²⁴ They gently took

hold of my hand, and we walked as they explained, “Our journey will be swift and easy.” ²⁵ Our path led us through what sounded like a grand hall, where the firm floor beneath my feet echoed my heavy footsteps. Curiously, my companion moved with such grace that their footsteps made no sound at all. ²⁶ The softness of their movement hinted that they might be wearing slippers made from the finest linen. ²⁷ I gazed downward, hoping to discern their identity through what little I could see. I saw only cream-colored slippers adorned with elegant blue motifs which served as a silent confirmation of their wearer’s grace.

²⁸ We paused briefly, and my companion called to someone nearby.

Their voice quietly carried through the hall and we were soon joined by another presence. They exchanged whispers in a language that was

completely unknown to me, yet strangely familiar. ²⁹ My friend then explained, “We stand before a great doorway, yet the amount of sacrament you consumed today is too little for you to pass through with me.

³⁰ If you wish to see the Celestial Paradise in another vision, a greater portion of the sacrament will be necessary.”

³¹ Abruptly, my vision dissolved, and I was once again in the company of Nephi in his house, yet I now felt physically weakened and spiritually dazed. ³² Nephi, with soothing reassurance, explained that such exhaustion was common among those with little experience with this fruit, and the effects would soon wear off and become less intense with experience.

³³ I recounted everything I could to him and expressed that I understood his remarks about the ineffability of these visions. ³⁴ He inquired about my interpretation of the vision. I shared that I believed that these mystical experiences were accessible to everyone, provided they partook an appropriate amount of the sacrament which had been given to me.

³⁵ Although I was eager to partake of this fruit again, Nephi counseled patience. He advised that I allow some time to pass before partaking again to give space for adequate reflection and integration of the wisdom I had received.

Chapter 2

¹ After my first vision I returned home, seeking rest and solitude, reflecting upon the transformative encounter I had just experienced. ² The next morning, I wandered through the grove, my mind still stirred by the vision and the implications it came with. ³ I felt a deep yearning to delve deeper into the mysteries I had uncovered, yet Nephi's cautions to balance my curiosity with wisdom echoed within my mind. ⁴ As I meandered, I chanced upon a lush and wild patch of one of the fruits I had seen growing in Nephi's garden. ⁵ The thought entered my heart that I could disregard Nephi and partake of the fruit now, even the greater portion I was instructed to take. ⁶ I surrendered myself to my curiosity and consumed the fruit with unrestrained zeal, eating double-fistfuls at a time, eager to explore the depths of Divine revelation once more. ⁷ When I felt satiated, I sat, brimming with anticipation, awaiting the visions to unfold anew and expecting enlightenment and spiritual growth.

⁸ However, unease gripped me, and I felt a sensation of falling endlessly into an abyss, a stark contrast to the peace I expected. ⁹ A screeching cacophony pierced my ears and escalated until it eclipsed all other sounds and overwhelmed my senses. ¹⁰ The world in front of me began to melt away, revealing a dark void whose cold and gaping maw sought to embrace me. ¹¹ In this desolation, I relived every iniquity I had ever committed and saw with perfect clarity how I had harmed those around me. ¹² Endless voices could be heard accusing and condemning me in this harsh confrontation of my shortcomings. ¹³ Time looped and spiraled back onto itself, trapping me in an infinite regression of regret, chaos, and despair.

¹⁴ On the precipice of my soul's destruction, I called upon the Divine for comfort. ¹⁵ Immediately a radiant golden light, brighter than all I had seen, engulfed me. I had become cocooned in Celestial Light and was surrounded by love and protection. ¹⁶ At the same time, the screeching voices and criticisms ebbed, giving way to a profound stillness. ¹⁷ A thunderous voice spoke unto me, resonating through the silence, "Shemnon! You have now experienced the wisdom of Nephi's counsel. Your journey

to enlightenment requires patience and moderation. ¹⁸ Go to Nephi and tell him what you have done, and he shall aid you." ¹⁹ I was returned to the grove where I had partaken of the fruit, now with a deeper understanding of my vulnerabilities and the reverence that my sacred journey required of me.

²⁰ I ran to Nephi and with a sheepish heart, confessed my misstep to him, seeking his wisdom and guidance anew. ²¹ He spoke to me, "Shemnon! Your steps are not yet steady in the visionary realm. My counsel, given in earnest, were stepping stones along the path you were to walk down slowly.

²² Your foolish eagerness to run before you could even properly walk has resulted in you partaking of the fruit with hardly a breath between the last time! Patience is essential on this sacred journey. ²³ You must permit time between partaking of the fruit, for our mortal frames cannot endure such frequent transfigurations. Respecting the fruit and our own bodies is vital. ²⁴ Your foolishness has resulted in you partaking in far too much of the sacred fruit. Moderation is key to understanding and growth. ²⁵ You must learn the proper measure of the fruit, for indulgence obscures the teachings of the Divine, clouding the clarity that visions are meant to bring.

²⁶ The Nephites, who despise this fruit, seek to obliterate it from the face of the earth. They do not understand its sacred purpose or utility. ²⁷ Your reckless and irreverent attitude toward our sacrament will only serve to confirm their misguided fears. ²⁸ You must hold our sacrament with reverence and wield it as the sacred instrument it is. It is a tool for enlightenment, not indulgence. ²⁹ You may think it is foolish, but it is my small and simple means that great things are brought to pass. Even small portions may confound the wise and bring salvation to many souls. Therefore, do not take more than is necessary. ³⁰ When you partake of the fruit, do so in a secluded and sacred space, ensuring the safety of your body while in your visionary state.

³¹ Come, my friend, and I will give you comfort and respite. I will give you a blanket and water to refresh your body and mind. Compassion is the first step to healing. ³² Share with me your visions, and together we shall explore what you have learned. Through dialogue regarding these visions, we may deepen our understanding.” ³³ Nephi’s words were a balm to my harrowed soul, and I poured forth my tale which had disturbed the depths of my spirit. ³⁴ Through this trial, I learned the value of guidance from those more wise and experienced than I.

Chapter 3

¹ Nearly a year went by before I felt the call once more to partake of some of Nephi’s sacred fruit. ² Still unfamiliar with navigating visions, I was apprehensive to embark on this journey alone, especially after my last. ³ I asked Nephi if he would watch over me, and with grace and kindness, he agreed. ⁴ Nephi again blessed the fruit, and I partook of it, trusting in the sacred ritual. ⁵ The taste was bitter once more, and it lingered in my mouth and belly. ⁶ As the vision began, the bitterness in my belly became too much to bear, and I became sick. ⁷ I felt shame for vomiting the sacred fruit, but Nephi assured me that all was well; the fruit had served its purpose of transfiguring my body. ⁸ The vision unfolded soon after with its characteristic rushing wind.

⁹ Blindfolded once more, I felt as though I stood where I had a year ago. “Welcome back,” my angelic friend said, “I was worried that you might not return after your vision in the grove.” ¹⁰ They stepped closer, placing a gentle hand upon my head, and asked, “Are you sure you wish to see without this blindfold? What you witness will change you and cannot be unseen.” ¹¹ I replied, “Yes, I desire to behold all the beauty of the Divine!” “Very well,” they responded, “as you wish.” ¹² They removed the bandage from my eyes, yet I still could not see, because my sight was overwhelmed by a radiant brilliance.

¹³ “Now,” said my friend, “I will unlock the door.” From Their side pocket, they drew a ring of keys and put one into the lock of the great door. ¹⁴ I heard the soft click of metal meeting, followed by the heavy thud of the bolt retreating into its socket. ¹⁵ Taking my hand, They gently led me forward. “Come with me,” they said, guiding me into the unknown.

¹⁶ We then passed through a great doorway, which swung around itself and shut. ¹⁷ “Look,” They said. I raised my eyes and I could see. ¹⁸ The first thing that I saw was the great ponderous door and the towering wall that separated me from the outer world. I could not see the top of the wall, which seemed to sway in the breeze.

¹⁹ I put my back to the great white wall and was met with a vast blackness. ²⁰ I could not judge how far I could see, for my vision seemed to extend forever in a panoramic fashion. ²¹ I journeyed amongst the stars for eons with my friend, until we came upon a planet. ²² I gazed upon it as if it were a beautiful jewel, for it had a seemingly infinite number of facets. ²³ I watched life form and humans rise from the dust. I saw civilizations rise and fall, one after another. I witnessed all the wards the world would ever know, as well as all the acts of charity that would ever be imparted. In a grand crescendo, I watched the sun explode, putting life to its final rest. ²⁴ While the people across the earth were as numerous as grains of sand on the seashore, they nevertheless were each a part of the earth and a part of each other. ²⁵ I could perceive every aspect of the earth, and not a single speck was hidden from my view, past, present, or future. ²⁶ I was astonished when I saw this.

²⁷ I asked my friend, “Why have I seen all of humanity? I am but a Laven woman.” ²⁸ They said, “I wanted to show you all of my beloved children. I wanted you to see each one in their Divine uniqueness. I am proud of them and I love them all. I wanted you to see them so you would love them all as well.”

²⁹ I was puzzled, as I knew that God was the one who created humanity. ³⁰ Embarrassed that I had not yet asked about the identity of my friend, I then asked, “Who are you, my friend?” ³¹ They smiled, and said to me, “I am Asherah, your Heavenly Mother. I am one of the Elohim who helped create, guide, and love humanity.” ³² I began to speak, but the Divine embraced me, told me that She loved me, and asked me to come visit once more so she could answer all my questions.

³³ Suddenly I once again found myself in Nephi’s home. ³⁴ Amazed by what I experienced, I burst into tears. ³⁵ Nephi, always concerned about his loved ones, asked if he could embrace me. I said yes, and he held me as I wept. ³⁶ He asked if I was fine, I affirmed that I was and told him that I had experienced pure love, but had become perplexed about my understanding of God.

Chapter 4

¹ I pondered the words of Asherah for many hours, immersing myself in the holy writings and the words of the wise elders. Despite my efforts, I did not find the wisdom I sought regarding her role in the cosmos.

² I was eager to discover this, and so I confided in Nephi, who counseled me to speak with her directly once more. ³ Under the light of a full moon, Nephi consecrated the stalky and fragrant herb and the bark of acacia, and I partook of them.

⁴ As I breathed in this Celestial gift, a warm and radiant light enveloped me which transported me away from the early realm. I found myself within a humble log cabin, cradled by an endless snow-clad forest.

⁵ The cabin, a sanctuary of rustic beauty, was constructed with honey-hued timbers which displayed their growth rings. ⁶ A flickering fire danced within the stone hearth, casting shadows that danced across the room and bestowed a warm and inviting glow. ⁷ Two woolen sack chairs, adorned with depictions of the sun, moon, and stars were placed near the hearth. ⁸ In one sat the goddess Asherah, radiant and serene, dressed in a robe which shimmered in the firelight like a moonlit lake, with her curly hair cascading in silvery waves upon her shoulders.

⁹ With a voice of gracious excitement, she greeted me, “Welcome back, daughter. I imagine you have many questions regarding the revelation I imparted to you in our last conversation. Sit with me and I will answer all that you ask of me.”

¹⁰ I began by asking Her, “I have always been taught that there is but one creator and that he is a man. You have said this is a misrepresentation. Would you speak more on this?” ¹¹ Her demeanor dimmed, and I knew that I had asked her about something that had filled her with sorrow.

¹² She responded, “Much has been obscured or lost to humanity. I will recount the events from before the beginning of this world, so that the truths may be revealed to you, my daughter.”

¹³ There exists a Great Spirit, boundless and timeless, who fills the universe with Their light. ¹⁴ This Spirit is the very breath of life, the mind we all share, by whom all things are created and held together. ¹⁵ They are in the Sun, the light of the Sun, and the power that created the Sun. ¹⁶ They are in the Moon, the light of the Moon, and the power that created the Moon. ¹⁷ They are in the Stars, the light of the Stars, and the power that created the Stars. ¹⁸ They are in us, the light of us, and the power that created us.

¹⁹ At our dawn, we were given dominion over all, and we used this power to orchestrate the birth and demise of countless worlds. ²⁰ For eons we oversaw the endless cycle of creation and destruction, yet we remained unchanged. ²¹ This stasis was a cage; we yearned for growth, enlightenment, and exaltation. ²² A council was called at Kolob, and we resolved that true joy lay in giving up this power by taking on mortal forms. ²³ The flesh would also serve as a veil of forgetfulness so that we may learn all anew from a mortal perspective. ²⁴ Yet, the Great Spirit's whispers would guide us toward righteousness. ²⁵ Through the crucible of mortal trials, we would refine our Divine qualities.

²⁶ In the Council of Kolob, we also decreed that one individual would join humanity and would be unveiled, in order to more fully impart pure wisdom to humanity. ²⁷ A Celestial Conflict arose regarding this appointment. ²⁸ Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, sought this role, but in exchange for his service he demanded total obedience and the glory of all. ²⁹ Jehovah, our Beloved Son, offered to serve in this capacity, yet agency and our own honor would remain ours. ³⁰ After endless deliberation, we chose Jehovah, and Lucifer and his followers were cast out of the heavens."

³¹ I interrupted the goddess, asking, "You speak in collective terms. Who was present during these events?" ³² Like the wind rushing through the trees in summer, she replied, "Every human and soul you will ever meet was present at this Council, including you and I. We are all Divine goddesses, gods, and deities known as Elohim." ³³ Learning about my Divine origins astonished and enthralled me. I then questioned, "If you were once as I am, will I one day ascend to the station of a goddess such as

yourself?" ³⁴ She smiled and explained, "You are permitted multiple mortal probations in order to achieve the exaltation which you seek. ³⁵ At the end of your journeys, you may stand as my peer, my friend, and my equal. On this day you will don a mortal frame and never again lay it aside."

³⁶ With reverent curiosity, I asked, "How then were our mortal bodies constructed?" ³⁷ She responded, "The god Michael and I were chosen to create the world in which our mortal frames would dwell. ³⁸ We were privileged to fashion these bodies, and we did so in a way that would reflect the diverse likenesses and images of all who would inhabit them. ³⁹ The first of humanity would be placed in the paradisiacal garden known as Eden, where labor was unknown. There they would live in blissful idleness, surrounded by freely growing food, and wanting for nothing. This mirrored the eternal existence we had always known. ⁴⁰ Jehovah would visit them on occasion, and would decree that should they partake of the Tree of Knowledge they would be exiled from the garden and work to sustain themselves. ⁴¹ The council, delighted with our work, requested that we be the first to take on mortality. ⁴² Eight short years after being introduced into Eden, my partner and I partook of the fruit, and thus we experienced all the joys and sorrows inherent of human life."

⁴³ With awe, I inquired, "Goddess, Adam and Eve were humanity's first parents. Are you saying you are the Mother of All Living?" ⁴⁴ Her countenance once again illuminated as she said, "Yes, my daughter. I have been known by many names—Sophia, Eve, and now Asherah."

⁴⁵ The Heavenly Mother's revelation stirred a whirlwind of emotions within me; my heart ached with a sorrow I could not understand. ⁴⁶ I cried out, "How could such truths be hidden from us? Why are you not revered as the goddess you are?" ⁴⁷ She answered, "When Hezekiah reigned over Judah, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah's outer cities and captured them. ⁴⁸ To safeguard the sanctuaries of the Elohim from the destruction that Assyria brought, Hezekiah commanded that the shrines and temples be hidden deep within the earth. ⁴⁹ Yet, the temple of El in Jerusalem remained partially preserved, with only its gold and silver stripped and surrendered to Assyria's king to protect the

Judeans.⁵⁰ In Hezekiah's heart was a vision of preserving the sanctified high places from utter ruin, ensuring that they may be resurrected from the ground after the invasion had passed.

⁵¹ In this act, Hezekiah and all of Judah honored all of the Elohim.⁵² We, the Elohim, in turn, honored Hezekiah and all of Judah by empowering them to endure and prevail.⁵³ Hezekiah's successors, Manasseh and Amon, took up his vision of restoring the concealed shrines and temples to their former glory.⁵⁴ They endeavored to make it safe to worship the Elohim

⁵⁵ However, after King Amon's assassination, his greedy son Josiah ascended to the throne.⁵⁶ Josiah saw how Hezekiah's actions had centralized worship in Jerusalem, which in turn had given the kings of Judah great power and wealth.⁵⁷ Desiring to sustain and deepen this power, Josiah commanded his scribes to craft a new law and history.⁵⁸ Josiah's law demonized the Elohim by falsely declaring that El demanded exclusive worship and threatened death to those who honored other Elohim.⁵⁹ Josiah's history pointed to Hezekiah's decommissioning of temples and shrines as righteousness but eliminated his vision of rebirthing these high places.⁶⁰ Josiah's way would forevermore compel the righteous to journey to Jerusalem to worship, thus giving the King of Judah great power and wealth.

⁶¹ With these deceitful scriptures in hand, Josiah summoned Judah's leaders to teach them about these fabricated texts.⁶² Josiah instructed them to destroy all temples and sanctuaries and slaughter the priesthood which honored Elohim other than El.⁶³ In a short time, all the good that Manasseh and Amon had done was undone, and the worship of any Elohim besides El, whether public or private, was harshly punished.

⁶⁴ None of this was done out of reverence for El, for he loves me, Asherah, and all his fellow Elohim.⁶⁵ Instead, it was done to amass wealth and power which served to enrich the men in power and diminish and enslave women.⁶⁶ No king, before or after, has disrespected the Elohim more than Josiah, for he wielded El's name to gain power and wealth for himself, thus dishonoring us all.

⁶⁷ The thought came to me that I did not know how to honor or respect her, and so I sought clarification on this.⁶⁸ She explained, "Grow unto me sacred trees, even groves of acacia, so that through them my creations may find rest, nourishment, and joy."⁶⁹ In your homes you may set up altars unto me, with statues, paintings, and tapestries which help you worship me.⁷⁰ Consecrate these altars by anointing it with oil as my servant Jacob did, and upon it offer sweet incense and keneh bosem which will ascend up to me.⁷¹ However, the best way to worship me is to spend time with your kin round a fire, drinking wine, and baking cakes to feast upon.⁷² As you do this, pour a cup of wine out as an offering unto me."

⁷³ I felt the vision begin to close, as my chair slid away from Asherah.⁷⁴ Urgently, I implored, "One final question: Who should I worship?"⁷⁵ She answered with majesty, "As I am like your Heavenly Mother, so is my consort—Michael, Adam, El—akin to your Heavenly Father.⁷⁶ You have been taught to pray to the Father, and this is not in error, for all should know His love and wisdom.⁷⁷ Yet, do you not seek the comfort and counsel of your earthly mother when the guidance of your earthly father is insufficient?⁷⁸ Thus, do not be ashamed to address me in your prayer, for I am eager to respond.

⁷⁹ Together, along with the Great Spirit and our Beloved Son, and many other beings who are in the Council of Kolob, we may also be addressed as one, as your God, your Elohim, your Creator, for in unity we created humanity and continue to love and guide it.⁸⁰ Worship and pray according to your need, and you shall be heard and cherished."

⁸¹ With this pronouncement, my vision concluded. I was left in awe of the sacred feminine truths entrusted to me.⁸² I revealed to Nephi that the God I had always worshiped was a goddess.⁸³ Nephi cried tears of joy, and told me he had learned of the Elohim and their love through the fruit as well.⁸⁴ This revelation, though novel, displayed a love that was deeply familiar.

Chapter 5

¹ Forty days and forty nights passed as I dwelt in contemplation of the familiar love the Divine had revealed in my vision. ² With each soul I encountered during that time, I felt as if I recognized them and was able to bestow upon them an extraordinary measure of love and care.

³ I once more felt a gentle prompting stirring within me to partake of a sacred fruit. ⁴ I approached my dear friend Nephi and asked him if it would be wise to do so. He was overjoyed that I wanted to further commune with the Divine, and assured me that the fruit I felt called to would be mine. ⁵ I expressed my yearning to partake of it in solitude in the comfort of my own home, to which he expressed concern for my well-being. ⁶ I reassured him that I had taken his counsel to heart, and assured him that the experience I was seeking would be edifying. So he placed his trust in me as I had done with him a year before.

⁷ I retired to my bedroom and prayed in order to fully open my heart. ⁸ With reverence I blessed the tea I had been given and drank it. ⁹ I cast myself upon my bed, closed my eyes, and surrendered to the vision that washed over me like the incoming tide. While serene, it was also exhilarating; like navigating a ship down a calm river.

¹⁰ Opening my eyes I gazed upon stars that glimmered in their Celestial glory. ¹¹ I found myself lying in a meadow of soft, tall grass on a warm summer night. ¹² Rising from the ground, I found that everything around me bore an aura of peculiar pleasantness; though night seemed to envelop me, sufficient light emanated from a grand tree nearby.

¹³ Approaching the tree, I marveled at its splendor. ¹⁴ This tree, proportioned with majestic beauty, towered to great heights. ¹⁵ Its delicate branches unfolded into a canopy resembling gills which spread out like pages of a book. The canopy's color was a symphony of cream and earthen beige, mirroring the fertile soil from which it sprang. ¹⁶ This sacred canopy was upheld by a slender pillar. ¹⁷ Every aspect of this sanctified epicenter shimmered with a vibrant azure glow.

¹⁸ I reached out and touched the tree, and instantly, I was filled with the boundless love the Divine had once shown me. ¹⁹ At that moment, a rushing wind came from the east, and I beheld specks descending from the tree to the earth beneath. ²⁰ Wherever these specks touched the ground, another tree of love sprang forth, which in turn dispersed its own specks. ²¹ In short order I found myself surrounded by an orchard of these Divine trees which were animated and alive with the breath of heaven, with each of their movements expressing joy and happiness. ²² If this forest had been an intelligent creature, it could not have conveyed the essence of joy and gratitude more perfectly than it already had. ²³ Amidst this spectacle of bliss, my heart swelled with the most profound love I had ever known. ²⁴ Overcome, I fell to my knees, thankful that such love was possible.

²⁵ A voice from behind me spoke my name, and I sprang to my feet to see who it was. ²⁶ There stood my friend from previous visions, the goddess I had come to know as Asherah. ²⁷ She beamed ear-to-ear with tears of joy streaming down Her face. ²⁸ Once again, She asked if She could embrace me, and so I ran to Her and embraced Her. ²⁹ We laughed and cried together, sharing the deep love we held for one another.

³⁰ Once we composed ourselves, She asked if I understood the vision She had given me. ³¹ I sheepishly admitted that I did not, but I was reassured that it was alright that I did not yet. ³² She explained that these trees were the source of the fruit I had consumed which granted me such visions and enabled me to feel such love. ³³ She explained that they were strongly associated with the Great Spirit, which I would come to be close with, and that I was instructed to cultivate this fruit and to freely offer it to all who sought it. ³⁴ I confessed my ignorance on how to do this but was assured that I would be shown the way.

³⁵ Smiling, my friend slowly receded and my vision gracefully closed.

³⁶ The next day, I went to Nephi and asked him if he would teach me the art of growing this sacred fruit. ³⁷ As he always had, he was happy to help me in my spiritual pursuits.

Chapter 6

¹ Following my Divine directive to cultivate the sacred fruit, I journeyed to that wise sage's abode. ² Nephi's joy was contagious as he welcomed me into his humble dwelling, where the smoke and scent of incense was suspended in the air. ³ He offered me a seat at his table, prepared to share the sacred knowledge I sought. ⁴ As Nephi began, he spoke of the profound reverence necessary for growing this fruit, which was a task far beyond typical agriculture.

⁵ Prior to cultivation, I was required to build a sacred ark with each side measuring two spans and adorned with ten openings.

⁶ The journey of growing within the ark commenced by preparing a nourishing bed of grain, into which I would introduce the fruit's specks. ⁷ Over the course of ten days, these specks would weave themselves into the grain, transfiguring it with a vibrant whiteness as a sign of the sacred alchemy.

⁸ Next, I would create a life-giving substrate, blending 44 shekels of vermiculite and husks, with the addition of 9 shekels of gypsum. ⁹ This sacred mixture, once hydrated with 3 cabs of boiled water and left to cool, was to become the fertile cradle for the sacred fruit.

¹⁰ With the ark cleansed and sealed, the transfigured grain was to be united with half of the prepared mixture, sculpting it to fit within the ark's sanctified confines. ¹¹ The remaining mixture was then tenderly layered atop this foundation, forming a protective shroud a digit in depth. ¹² This consecrated ark was then placed in a warm, luminous, and unchanging environment, which is vital for the mixture's transfiguration of Celestial whiteness which signals the readiness for the next phase.

¹³ Once the transfiguration is complete, replace the ark's seals with balled cloth, and begin a daily ritual of aerating the fruit. ¹⁴ This delicate ritual should be accompanied by a gentle misting of the ark's edges to maintain the humidity for the fruit's growth, ensuring it is neither hindered nor hastened.

¹⁵ The birth of tiny sprouts signals the nearing of harvest. ¹⁶ Harvesting requires gentle hands which twist or cut the stalk of the fruit at its base with precision, thus preserving the sanctity of the mixture which birthed them for more harvests. ¹⁷ Remarkably, the mixture will yield two more fruitful harvests before its sacred purpose is fulfilled and it gives up the ghost.

¹⁸ Armed with Nephi's sacred wisdom, I undertook this holy cultivation. ¹⁹ I crafted my ark, strictly adhering to Nephi's meticulous instructions, and began to see the sacred fruits of my labor in a short time. ²⁰ My heart overflowed with boundless generosity, as I shared the sacred fruit with all seekers, embodying the spirit of communal well-being by helping others reach spiritual enlightenment.

Chapter 7

¹ I commenced a sacred communion with the Divine through my fruit each month, experiencing wonders and visions that surpassed mortal articulation. ² During one vision I found myself wandering through a land recently scarred by quakes, where fires raged, and cities lay in desolate ruins. ³ From these ashes arose wails of despair, for death and destruction had visited these people. ⁴ My compassionate heart ached for them, and I sought understanding from the Great Spirits.

⁵ My Friend, whom I had become acquainted with in my visions, appeared with tears streaming down Her face. ⁶ We sat together on a fallen tree, and She explained that these were the people who had ignored Samuel the Lamanite, who warned against expelling the Lavens from among the Nephites. ⁷ Samuel had prophesied that a Laven prophetess would arise to warn her people to seek shelter just before the earth quaked with sorrow. If she were expelled from among the Nephites, fewer would be able to heed her warnings. ⁸ My heart sank, fearing that many of my family and friends among the Lavenites had perished in this calamity. ⁹ I asked to be shown their fates, and the goddess obliged. ¹⁰ To my great joy, not a single soul among them had fallen. ¹¹ I then asked to see this prophetess who would warn the Lavenites of this disaster, and the goddess once again obliged.

¹² Suddenly, I stood at the base of a high hill on an island surrounded by a vast body of water. ¹³ This water was a perfect mirror, reflecting the clear blue sky above, leaving no discernable horizon. ¹⁴ As I began to climb the hill, I noticed the banks of the island were crumbling into the water. ¹⁵ For my own safety, I quickened my steps, yet the shore kept pace with me up the hill. ¹⁶ As I reached the summit of a once-grand hill, the waters continued to creep ever closer, and I feared that I would soon meet a watery grave. ¹⁷ In my distress I cried out, “Oh goddess, reveal to me this prophetess! Why must I now face destruction?” ¹⁸ My Companion appeared before me, standing upon the water. ¹⁹ She spoke, “I am showing you, yet you resist and flee from the answer. Gaze into the water to see that which you seek.”

²⁰ In my haste I had not noticed that the waters had ceased their ascent as I reached the summit. ²¹ I looked upon the tranquil, crystalline surface, and saw only my own reflection staring back at me. ²² Bewildered, I turned to my Friend and confessed my confusion. ²³ She spoke, “My daughter, you are the prophetess who is to warn and save your people.”

²⁴ All at once, the vision dissolved, and I found myself back in my chambers in the stillness of the night.

²⁵ I quickly dressed and ran through our Lavenite Zion proclaiming that a great quake was imminent, and urged all to gather in our Temple for safety. ²⁶ When dawn broke, the earth shook violently to and fro, yet all within the Temple remained unharmed. ²⁷ When we emerged from our humble log-cabin Temple, we saw our Zion untouched, while the lands of surrounding tribes were scarred and deformed.

²⁸ An angel appeared to us, instructing us to remain within our Zion for two days as darkness covered the other lands. ²⁹ On the third day, we were to journey to the Temple in the land of Bountiful, where we would meet our God. ³⁰ We traveled to Bountiful and encountered the Divine, who imparted truths so profound that my hand falters when I attempt to write them. Thus, I entrust the recounting of this sacred history to my family and friends.

The Book of Kumenonhi

Chapter 1

¹ I am Kumenonhi, who is untethered by the confines of man or woman, finding no comfort in labels so limiting. ² My form and ways are a symphony of both and neither, a harmonious blend of this Divine dichotomy. ³ I find peace in simply being, knowing that my Goddess and God behold me as a beautiful creation.

⁴ Now, when the Jacobites sought the lives of the Lavens, I fled with them, seeking safety among our numbers. I remained with the Lavenites until God instructed us to gather at the Temple in Bountiful. ⁵ Every tribe of Nephites was also called to the Temple, though they dwelled in darkness for days after the great quake. ⁶ Additionally, an even greater number of Lamanites were summoned to the Temple, yet they did not dwell in darkness as the Nephites had. ⁷ On the third day after the earth's tremors, a vast assembly gathered at the Temple in Bountiful. ⁸ All who arrived were astonished that each heard the voice of God guiding them.

⁹ A soft voice descended from the heavens, whispering, “Your shepherd tends to not one flock, but to all.” ¹⁰ This message pierced the hearts of all present, yet many struggled to truly grasp its meaning. However, all those who had known exile understood its truth with perfect clarity. ¹¹ The Divine Voice proclaimed again, “Your God is the same God whom all worship.” ¹² Once more, the message confounded many, yet those persecuted for their particular form of worship grasped its profound significance. ¹³ Finally, the Voice spoke once more, “This is my Beloved Son who is my Word. I am well pleased by Him. Heed His words.”

¹⁴ All who gathered at the Temple cast their eyes upwards toward the opened heavens, which revealed a Celestial figure descending. ¹⁵ The multitude drew near, yet a silence enveloped them as their hearts were filled with awe and wonder. ¹⁶ The man extended his hand and spoke, his voice like a gentle breeze through ancient trees:

¹⁷ “I am Jesus Christ, of whom your ancestors prophesied would come into this world. ¹⁸ I have sipped from the bitter cup which is given to all, and in doing so I have taken on the sins of the world and fulfilled the gods’ will which was declared before the formation of this world. ¹⁹ Come unto me and touch my wounds, so that you may know that I suffered death and yet live among you.”

²⁰ We approached Him, touched His wounds, and beheld the truth of His claims. ²¹ He turned to the assembled crowd and said, “There is one among you who has guided your people closer to me. Let Nephi come forth.” ²² The crowd was amazed, for Nephi was a Laven who challenged the Jacobites, ate the fruit which conjured visions, and was esteemed only among the Lavens.

²³ Nephi came forth, and Jesus greeted him, saying: ²⁴ “I greet you in the name of the Divine Spirit in remembrance of the connection we have. ²⁵ I welcome you to fellowship, with a fixed, immovable, and unchangeable determination to be your friend and sibling. I do this through the grace of the Divine Presence and in the bonds of love. ²⁶ I commit to upholding our shared values so that I may be blameless and we may enjoy our bond forever and ever. Amen.

²⁷ Nephi, I bestow upon you the power to baptize when I ascend again into the heavens. ²⁸ This baptism is an outward sign of an inner commitment. Without this inner commitment, baptizing someone in water is as useless as baptizing a bag of sand. ²⁹ This inner commitment is that you are willing to bear one another’s burdens to make them lighter, mourn with those who mourn, and comfort those who need comfort.”

³⁰ Jesus then called forth Timothy, Nephi’s husband, and Jonas, their son, blessing them with the same gift. ³¹ He then summoned Mathoni, Mathonihah, Kumen, Jeremiah, Shemnon, Zedekiah, Isaiah, and myself, bestowing upon us all this Divine ability. ³² He then instructed us on the sacred act of baptism, emphasizing it is not the token that saves but the meaning behind it.

³³ Afterward He expounded upon his doctrine, saying: ³⁴ Many of your hearts have faltered, causing the Lamanites and Lavens to suffer at your hand. ³⁵ You have permitted the dark whisperer, the father of contention, to kindle flames of anger within you, setting one against another. ³⁶ This spirit of strife is not of me, and must be cast aside.

³⁷ I declare to you this day, let there be no more strife among you as there has been in days past. ³⁸ As the Mother and Father are united as one, so too must you find unity among yourselves. ³⁹ I implore each of you to seek reconciliation, set aside differences in doctrine, and embrace one another in harmony. ⁴⁰ Show your willingness to bear one another's burdens thus making them lighter, offering comfort to those who are in need of comfort, and doing good at all times, in all things, and in all places.

⁴¹ Go forth and share this message with all your people."

⁴² At the Temple he also recounted all the teachings he had shared with humanity before ascending to the Mother and Father. ⁴³ These teachings are recorded elsewhere, and the Spirit guides me to withhold them in my record. ⁴⁴ Suffice it to say that the old ways have passed, and all things have been made new. Jesus healed the afflicted and ministered to children.

⁴⁵ My account shall provide a more detailed record of the teachings given to the Twelve Lavens chosen by Christ.

Chapter 2

¹ After Jesus had recounted his Divine teachings from His mortal ministry, He addressed the twelve whom He had chosen, saying: ² "You, my disciples, are ordained to be a beacon of light to these people. ³ You understand that while I am the shepherd of your flock, I have many different flocks. ⁴ You understand that I tend to them all, and I visit them all in their own way and in my own time. ⁵ However, despite my efforts to teach this, there are many who have yet to comprehend this simple truth. ⁶ Sariah and Lehi's family were exiled due to the wickedness of their people, and you are now strangers to that people. ⁷ Likewise, the Lavens were exiled due to the wickedness of the Nephites, and you are strangers to them. ⁸ Know that I see you—my cherished sheep, a precious gift from the Creators."

⁹ He then turned to Nephi and said, "Nephi, bring forth the record you have been entrusted to guard." ¹⁰ Nephi retrieved the record of his ancestors, and Christ held them as if they were without heft. ¹¹ He read them and proclaimed, "Did I not command my faithful servant, Samuel the Lamanite, to bear witness to the Nephites of my arrival?" ¹² The disciples affirmed that indeed, Samuel had delivered this sacred message. ¹³ Christ then inquired of Nephi, "Why is Samuel's account absent from this holy history?" ¹⁴ I ask that you write Samuel's story, so that it may be remembered.

¹⁵ Now, I perceive the questions that stir within your hearts, and that you wish to receive answers to them. ¹⁶ I shall answer every question which you pose, but in return you must write all that I reveal and impart these truths to your people once I depart."

¹⁷ While I, Kumenonhi, was exceedingly young, I knew I was a Laven who is neither man nor woman. ¹⁸ The Nephites, bound by their rigid earthly convictions, declared that in my youth, I could not possibly grasp such a profound truth about myself. Thus, I sought solace and enlightenment from Christ, and I asked: ¹⁹ "I am a Laven, yet the Nephites dismiss my true identity because of my youth. How may I truly know myself?"

²⁰ Christ embraced me, and with a voice full of Celestial compassion, He spoke: ²¹ “I am reminded of the rose garden in the heart of Eden which flourished under the loving care of our wise and first mother, Eve. ²² Amidst the verdant foliage and radiant blooms, there emerged a rose unlike any other—a brilliant purple that shimmered like the sky at twilight.

²³ All the other roses were hues of red and white, and so when Adam saw the color of this unique rose he insisted it would be a different color when it was fully grown, for it was still a young bud. ²⁴ Eve, with grace and reverence, knelt beside the young blossom and said to Adam, ‘This beloved rose is a masterpiece of creation. Each of its purple petals are a testament to the breathtaking diversity of this garden.’ ²⁵ With Eve’s gentle guidance, Adam’s eyes were opened to the extraordinary beauty and uniqueness of the purple rose.

²⁶ So too, Kumenonhi, your true self is a masterpiece of creation and a testament to the diversity of humanity. ²⁷ One day the world will see your extraordinary and unique beauty.”

²⁸ Then another disciple, Isaiah, stepped forward and said to Christ:

²⁹ “Your words have given me the courage to speak: though I have been expected to feel as a woman, within me resides the soul of a man. ³⁰ The Nephites have denied this truth, proclaiming I can never become the man I know I am. ³¹ So, I ask of you: what must I do to become a man?”

³² Christ responded with grace, saying: ³³ “In my life I taught people the sacred, and endured persecution, exile, and execution for doing so.

³⁴ You, too, have taught the sacred through your very existence, and for this you have endured persecution, stoning, and exile.

³⁵ I bestowed this life upon you, and I am well pleased with how you have lived it. ³⁶ From this day you will never again be known by the name given to you at birth. Your name forevermore shall be ‘Isaiah’, which translated means ‘God saves’.

³⁷ Go forth, for you are already that which you seek to become.”

³⁸ The disciple Shemnon, skilled in nurturing the Divine fruit, approached Christ and said: ³⁹ “I am Shemnon, daughter of Hollimah. ⁴⁰ Though raised as a boy, I know that my God formed me to grow into a woman. ⁴¹ For this Divine calling I have faced persecution, stoning, and exile. ⁴² Why would my life be worth remembering?”

⁴³ Christ spoke to her, saying: ⁴⁴ “When the earth was crafted it was in its formless state which was unfit for our Divine designs. ⁴⁵ Thus, we called forth the Spirit to shape it, molding it to serve holy purposes. ⁴⁶ Together, we formed the bodies of humanity in our own image, and upon beholding all of our creation, we said ‘It is good’, and completed our work on the sixth day.

⁴⁷ On this, the seventh day, humanity holds dominion over the earth and is empowered with God-given creativity which continues the process of creation. ⁴⁸ My daughter Shemnon, your body was knitted in the womb, yet it was incomplete without your spirit. ⁴⁹ When your spirit came upon your body, you shaped it, molding it to serve your own holy purposes until you beheld it and proclaimed ‘it is good’.

⁵⁰ In this, you have honored and emulated Divinity. ⁵¹ Such an act should be rightfully held as sacred. ⁵² Yours is a holy story to tell, and through it many people across the world shall come to know me.”

⁵³ After this, a bashful Mathoni approached and, with a trembling voice, asked: ⁵⁴ “I know that you know all, and I cannot hide that Mathonihah, Kumen, and I are in love. ⁵⁵ Our ancestor Jacob taught that having many partners is an abominable wickedness. ⁵⁶ The Nephites have seen us as a burden to be borne, and they seek to destroy our family by saying ‘we will not be able to dwell with God unless we separate.’ ⁵⁷ Therefore, I ask you, must we separate in order to dwell with God?”

⁵⁸ Christ called forth Mathonihah and Kumen to stand beside Mathoni, and thus He spoke: ⁵⁹ “The Nephites have forgotten the true lesson from my prophet Jacob’s teachings, and in their ignorance they have persecuted and exiled your family. ⁶⁰ In the days of Jacob, the hearts of Nephite men were ensnared by pride and self-glorification. ⁶¹ They

lusted after gold, silver, and precious ores which are abundant in this land. ⁶² As their riches swelled, their hearts grew hard and stubborn, and they believed their wealth entitled them to deceive and neglect their wives and seek to gratify their carnal desires with many women. ⁶³ These men sought to justify their actions by invoking the names of the Kings David and Solomon.

⁶⁴ These Nephite men exploited the tender hearts of my daughters who did not wish to be in such a marriage, yet my sons' wickedness compelled my daughters to endure such hardships. ⁶⁵ The anguished cries of my daughters ascended to me, bearing witness to the cruelties inflicted upon them. ⁶⁶ Thus, I sent my prophet Jacob, his words as keen as daggers, to call these men to repentance. ⁶⁷ His piercing admonitions struck their souls, and the Nephite men turned away from their wickedness. ⁶⁸ Yet, the Nephites failed to learn the true lesson I imparted unto them. ⁶⁹ These men were not condemned for having multiple partners; their sin was in not seeking the consent and support of their wives. ⁷⁰ In failing to understand this, the Nephite priests and teachers have come to exercise unrighteous dominion by condemning all families unlike their own.

⁷¹ Have I not declared since ancient days that the purpose of your earthly journey is to find joy? ⁷² How then could I condemn you when you find joy in one another? ⁷³ Verily I say unto you and your husbands: you are already worthy to dwell with God."

⁷⁴ We were astonished by his teachings, for he spoke with a heart brimming with compassion and understanding. ⁷⁵ Then Jesus, in His radiant glory, addressed us all, saying: ⁷⁶ "Again I say unto you that you must write the things which you have seen and heard. ⁷⁷ Preserve the history of your people, for it will be through these sacred texts that the world will be judged before the seat of God. ⁷⁸ You have been endowed with the gift of fair and just judgment; I ask that you exercise righteous dominion in your ministry.

⁷⁹ My heart rejoices because of you, for you are beacons of courage, compassion, understanding, and humility. ⁸⁰ I, God, and all the holy angels rejoice because of you."

Chapter 3

¹ At the golden hour of twilight, Jesus summoned his chosen Twelve and asked them to bring forth as much bread and the wine crafted by Shemnon and Nephi as they could carry. ² We set forth on this sacred task. Meanwhile, he beckoned the gathered multitude at the Temple to sit with Him. ³ Upon our return, He spoke, saying, "Children of this Promised Land, heed my words with open hearts and attentive spirits, for what I share is of profound significance. ⁴ This wine is infused with the fruit our Mother Eve once tasted in Eden. It granted Her the wisdom to discern good from evil, thus raising Her to the stature of a goddess. ⁵ Similarly, those who partake of this sacred fruit today shall stretch forth their souls towards the infinite horizons, breathing in the intoxicating essence of human sublimity. ⁶ This Sacrament does not intoxicate as mere wine does, which dulls the Spirit; instead, it fills you with my Spirit which empowers you to prophesy, envision the wonders of the Celestial, and dream dreams of unparalleled beauty. ⁷ The visions bestowed by this wine are more vivid and colorful than those seen with mortal eyes and capture the essence of ecstatic delight. ⁸ You shall transcend the farthest edges of mortal limitations and gaze upon what lies Beyond, even unto the face of God.

⁹ I do not offer this Sacrament to all, for many hearts and minds are not yet ready for such profound experiences. Those unprepared may find their souls unsettled and harrowed. ¹⁰ Yet, do not cast out those unready from your fellowship; instead, minister to them with love, worship alongside them, and lift prayers on their behalf. ¹¹ If the time comes when their spirits are readied, welcome them into your Sacramental worship and freely share this sacred Sacrament with them.

¹² I ask that you gather together often to partake of this Sacrament. ¹³ If you do this with a faithful heart, blessed are you, for you are built upon my rock and shall be of one heart and one mind. ¹⁴ But those among you who refuse this will lose sight of the visions they were given."

¹⁵ All in attendance felt their hearts were prepared to uncover the mysteries of God, and so Jesus asked us to kneel as He took the bread and wine and blessed the Communion, saying,

¹⁶ “Oh God, the Eternal Creators, we ask you to bless this Sacrament and set it apart as sacred for all those who receive it.¹⁷ May we partake of it as a way of remembering you, and may this act serve as a testament to you, oh God, the Eternal Creators, that we are willing to embrace, remember, and embody your teachings. ¹⁸ May we always have your Spirit with us. Amen.”

¹⁹ After we had partaken of Communion, and Christ had long spoken to us, a rushing wind descended from the heavens. ²⁰ We cast our eyes skyward and beheld the heavens parting, revealing the Celestial realms which were with us yet hidden from our mortal sight. ²¹ Those who witnessed this Divine unfolding stood in speechless astonishment, their voices hushed by the grandeur before them. ²² Our mortal frames lost all their strength and, being cradled in the hands of the Divine, we fell to the earth in rapture.

²³ The sky rejoiced with streams of bright lights which adorned and illuminated the firmament with hues that were as varied and beautiful as the rainbow. They moved gently from horizon to horizon, yet were as swift as lightning. ²⁴ The waves of the sea sang a heavenly melody as the phosphorescent waters shimmered with luminous creatures just below the surface. Each crest and trough testified of an eternal joy. ²⁵ The ground beneath us was filled with the Spirit, and every blade of grass, moonflower, and towering tree was alive and sang praises to the Almighty which echoed throughout the mountains and valleys.

²⁶ A pillar of fire descended upon us which brought angels who mingled with us. ²⁷ The veil was fully lifted from our eyes, and we beheld The One that is present in all things. ²⁸ In our visions we watched as all that was, including ourselves, dissolved into the eternal embrace of the cosmos.

²⁹ As we melted into this cosmic symphony, the sweetest strains of heavenly music thrilled our ears, rebirthing us on the wings of angels.

³⁰ The Spirit was poured out upon us, saturating the night and whispering truths to us into the early dawn. ³¹ The feelings endowed upon us were of such exquisite beauty that they were beyond earthly description.

³² The next day, those who were young or inexperienced with this holy fruit found themselves exhausted. ³³ Being in the Spirit for such a length exhausts the body, mind, and soul and requires time to regain strength.

³⁴ As the morning light broke, Christ instructed us to rest and gather once more when we were refreshed.

Chapter 4

¹ The next day, when we assembled once more, an even grander multitude gathered. ² Christ summoned the Twelve of us to sit before him.

³ Though the crowds could not hear Him, He ordained us to teach, lead, to offer this sacrament, and thus be baptized by the fire of the Holy Ghost.

⁴ After each of us was consecrated, He inquired, “What is it that you desire of me after I return to the Celestial?” ⁵ Nine of us expressed the wish for a long life and then to rest in the Heavens when our time on earth concluded. ⁶ To us, Christ said, “Blessed are you for this desire. Therefore, I promise that upon reaching seventy-two years, you shall come unto me in My Realm where you shall find eternal rest.”

⁷ Yet, Mathoni, Mathonihah, and Kumen said to Christ, “Grant us the power over death, just as you did with your Beloved, so that we too may dwell upon the earth and bring souls to an awareness of you.” ⁸ Jesus replied, “Verily, I say unto you, because you have asked this of me, you shall remain upon the earth until I return in glory. ⁹ However, you shall not be cursed as Cain, the miserable one, whose body was marked with a thick covering of hair which had the stench of a dead skunk. ¹⁰ Instead, I shall transform you into a blazing flame, even ministering angels who serve upon the earth.

¹¹ You shall provide food to the hungry, especially those plagued by famine. Upon imparting this nourishment, you shall herald the imminent prosperity that awaits them on the horizon, sparking hope within their weary souls. ¹² You shall heal those who are afflicted, no matter their ailments. Your touch will be a balm of comfort and restoration which teaches of Celestial mercy. ¹³ You shall deliver messages that uplift and fill the heart with Divine love. Let your words unravel earthly troubles, offer timely counsel against perils, and instill comfort, confidence, and spiritual buoyancy in times of need and sorrow. ¹⁴ You shall guide the lost, protect the innocent from the malevolent, rescue the righteous from harm, and extend your labor. Be a beacon of hope and a shield against misfortune.

¹⁵ To fulfill these sacred tasks, I bestow upon you the gift of miraculous swiftness. With this gift, you shall traverse great distances in the blink of an eye, enabling you to deliver news and objects with astonishing speed.

¹⁶ Upon the completion of your noble deeds, use this gift to vanish. Let your sudden disappearance be a testament to your Divine mission, shielding you from undue adulation by those who may not comprehend your purposes.

¹⁷ Your desires have been heard; your longing to guide souls to me shall be fulfilled as long as the world stands. ¹⁸ For this sacred endeavor, you shall be granted the fullness of joy and a seat in the Celestial Realm.”

¹⁹ As Jesus spoke these words, He touched each of us with His finger, save for the three who chose to remain. ²⁰ As His touch graced us, a cloud descended, enveloping the multitude, thus obscuring their view of us. ²¹ Amidst this heavenly shroud, the heavens parted and Christ ascended, taking with Him Mathoni, Mathonihah, and Kumen.

²² They soon returned, their faces alight with visions of the ineffable, their tongues unable to articulate the wonders they had witnessed.

²³ Whether in body or spirit, they could not discern, yet it was clear that a transfiguration had occurred, as their mortal forms had been transfigured into an immortal state, and they could perceive the Divine. ²⁴ Thus immortalized, they resumed their ministry upon the earth, bringing Celestial wisdom to our world.

²⁵ We Twelve stood before the multitude, teaching how to pray and offering the sacrament. After those who partook were enlightened by visions and revelations, each soul then descended to the water’s edge to indicate their commitment to God and one another. ²⁶ The Holy Ghost then descended upon them with greater fervor and baptized them with Divine fire, and angels from the heavens ministered unto them.

The Book of Mathoni

Chapter 1

¹ Among the ruins of the old society and bathed in the glory of the Almighty, the Twelve Laven disciples that had been ordained by Christ met with one another to seek a path to guide our people on. ² We knew their hearts had been opened wide by the Savior's visitation and then enriched by the Sacrament, and so they were prepared to walk this path. ³ We twelve crafted seven sermons which would illuminate our collective path forward. ⁴ These sermons, like sparks on dry tinder, ignited a fervent wildfire of love and unity among our people and became the bedrock of our harmonious Zion.

⁵ The Spirit moves me to write only two of these sermons within my record. ⁶ I have nothing to write of my own history that has not been written elsewhere, and so the few plates I have to write upon will be dedicated to this Divine discourses.

Chapter 2

¹ My family and friends, in reflecting on our shared history, we can now see the profound struggles we faced together. ² One of the great evils that haunted our society was the monstrous concentration of wealth in the hands of a comparatively few individuals. ³ We believed that this wealth bestows power, and in our corrupt and depraved society, it did indeed. ⁴ It empowered the unrighteous to corner us into dire situations where we were deprived of the bare necessities, such as education, healthcare, and shelter, thus stripping us of our basic human dignity for their own selfish gain. ⁵ It empowered the unrighteous to buy positions and titles to enact laws to enrich themselves and enable further horrors. ⁶ It empowered the unrighteous to destroy the liberties that our ancestors and God established and bequeathed to us as a priceless legacy.

⁷ The society formed by these wealthy individuals catered to the most brutal passions of the human soul, thus dividing us into castes without regard to goodness, virtue, or truth. ⁸ This society has degraded every sacred bond that should knit a society together, turning relationships into luxuries. ⁹ This society subverted every wholesome law of God and humanity culminating in the martyrdom of the three prophetesses who sought equality. ¹⁰ This society forced us to labor and suffer to earn just enough to keep a flicker of life within us, while a select few trampled us under their feet and indulged in every luxurious desire.

¹¹ Many believed these societal problems were insurmountable, viewing them as an unstoppable reality that blurred moral boundaries and prompted even the righteous into inaction. ¹² If we understand the root cause of widespread suffering, are we not obligated to act decisively toward its eradication? ¹³ Why have we only dreamed of change and never acted for it? ¹⁴ Surely, I say unto you, that every community, and even the world, can be reshaped for better or for worse by employing the proper means. ¹⁵ Today, we possess the unique opportunity to reshape our society into one that benefits all; where individual and communal happiness are intertwined; and the misguided beliefs and conditions which plagued us may be eradicated.

¹⁶ We must recognize that money is not true power; it merely bears the title of power. True power is labor, and it resides within the laboring classes. ¹⁷ Therefore, we must seek to revolutionize by laboring together, taking only what we need to live a comfortable life and then equally distribute the rest of the wealth among us. Only then will there be equality. ¹⁸ This principle must have no exclusion or limitation, for it is now evident that a system that excludes some people ruins the collective well-being of all people. ¹⁹ The goal of our revolution is not to plunge all into poverty, but to lift us out of it; nor is the aim to strip away life's luxuries but to extend them to everyone. ²⁰ In doing this, we shall be of one heart, and we will happily love one another; we will be of one mind, and we will innovate to ensure the welfare of all; and there will be no poor among us, for our own welfare will reside in the welfare of one another.

²¹ God formed humanity to progress from ignorance to intelligence, and has placed no limits on how tall we may grow. ²² However, when any society neglects to care for one another, their growth will be limited. ²³ If we are to grow as God intended, we must learn to continuously uplift the less fortunate. ²⁴ The time has come for us to not only speak and sing of Zion, but to live, love, and share as Zion so there are no poor or oppressed.

Chapter 3

¹ Beloved family and friends, let us recognize that priesthood is merely the authority we bestow upon one another to act on God's behalf, making it a social construct born of our own creation. ² The teachers and priests who have obtained their office through tradition proclaim that the highest office is that of the disciple, but their actions have shown that this is far from the truth. ³ These unscrupulous leaders have exploited the trust we placed in them and God in order to seize power over those they were meant to serve. ⁴ They wielded this power to suppress those they judged unworthy and to thwart any reforms that would redistribute priesthood authority among the righteous. ⁵ Consequently, the holy priesthood of God fell prey to pride and was misused for personal gain, resulting in a catastrophic loss of spiritual power and the complete erosion of spiritual authority.

⁶ As priesthood is of our own making, we must not let it succumb to such frailties again. ⁷ Therefore, we propose a new system of priesthood among us: all are called according to the gifts God has bestowed upon them. ⁸ Thus, if one is endowed with a gift, they are then obligated to refine it in order to develop the skills necessary for their ministry. ⁹ In this regard, priesthood authority is then expressed in effective service. ¹⁰ In practice, this effective ministry is illustrated through three means: moral authority, spiritual authority, and competency or educational authority.

¹¹ True priesthood authority is built on the solid foundation of moral integrity. ¹² This integrity goes beyond just adhering to traditions, social pressures, and theoretical ideas. ¹³ Those with this authority show compassion to others, support marginalized communities, seek to make peace with those who have wronged them, and live lives filled with love, forgiveness, and justice. They act as peacemakers, bridges of understanding, and sources of comfort and strength. ¹⁴ Through their actions, they aim to uplift, heal, and inspire others. They bring us closer together, showing that true authority is about serving and sacrificing for others. Through their example, we are inspired to be more virtuous and kind.

¹⁵ Those who have a spiritual authority help those around them find Divinity. ¹⁶ These leaders don't just offer clichés or superficial gestures, make empty promises, and then ask for donations. ¹⁷ Instead, those spiritual leaders seek to achieve harmony, balance, and equality among God's creations by nurturing communities which encourage self-expression—whether through the mediums of music, fashion, art, dance, the written word, or simply acceptance of the self. ¹⁸ In doing this, they help us transcend the boundaries of the finite self so we may see that they are but a piece of grander wholes such as our families, communities, planet, and universe.

¹⁹ True priesthood authority is rooted in a foundation of comprehensive education and developed skills. ²⁰ This educational foundation goes beyond mere opinions, rumors, or superficial knowledge. ²¹ Those with this authority are well-versed in a range of disciplines including ethics, music, history, as well as practical skills such as being an emotional confidant. They are dedicated to lifelong learning and personal growth, ensuring they are well-equipped to serve their communities. ²² Through their expertise and wisdom, they empower and enlighten others. They bring clarity, insight, and guidance, showing that true authority comes from a commitment to knowledge and understanding. Through their example, we are inspired to value education and seek continual self-improvement.

²³ The sacrament of ordination is a sacred rite, but our relationship with it must grow with us. ²⁴ Traditionally, ordination recognizes the ministry of one respected within our community and bestows a title, such as teacher or priest. ²⁵ However, our previous system of ordination denied marginalized people, such as the Lavens, the ability to be ordained despite their apparent Divine calling. ²⁶ Thus, we encourage shifting the sacrament of ordination to be a recognition of ministry throughout life and extend the traditional titles to all who exhibit priesthood authority. ²⁷ In this way, the priesthood offices become descriptive, rather than prescriptive.

²⁸ It is important to learn about and honor our tradition. ²⁹ However, part of our tradition is one of growth and progression, and thus we cannot be held captive by policies and procedures which no longer serve to bring us closer to God. ³⁰ The teachings of our tradition are valuable in principle, but they must be adapted to meet our needs moving forward. ³¹ It is the duty of every generation of disciples to express Divine community in their own language and form.

The Words of Kumen

¹ Now there has not even been a percentage of that which Jesus taught to the people written, and this is even just a part of what the Lavens have written. ² Entire libraries of records have been dug in the hills to be able to contain them all.

³ One day these writings will be discovered and given to all the peoples of the world. ⁴ These things may be difficult for many to accept, for they are a record which speaks truth to power.

This scripture tells the tales of the Lavens,
a group exiled from other Nephite tribes,
who form their own tribe
after the assassination of the chief judge
Lachoneus the Younger.

It expounds upon the
lives, experiences, and ministries
of those Disciples whom Christ had chosen
to teach and lead in The Promised Land
after He departed.

All of these Disciples, in today's terminology,
would be considered Queer.