



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

THELONA D. STEVENS, President 202 SOUTH PENOLETON AVE. / INDEPENDENCE, MO. 64060

NEWSLETTER NO. 31

April 13, 1979

Dear Members and Friends,

The Foundation for Research on Ancient America proudly announces Ray Treat as the speaker for our next meeting, which will be held on May 6, at 3:00 P.M., at the Stone Church, Partridge Hall, Floor A. The lecture, accompanied by slides, will be on "A Comparison of the Book of Mormon Outline and Mesoamerican Archaeology."

The new Board of Directors chosen to serve you is:

Officers: President, Thelona Stevens; Vice-president, Dr. Richard A. DeLong
Secretary, Shirley Eakin; Treasurer, Frederick O. Weddle

Directors: James A. Christenson, Charles R. Hield, George Knotts, Leta
Moriarty, Kenneth Raveill, Audrey Stubbart, T. Evan Thomas,
Ray Treat, Dr. James Van Biber, Jr., Roy E. Weldon

It is with pleasure that the FRAA announces the placing of three scholarship grants within the past year--one to Dr. DeLong in the amount of \$480, which assisted him in attending the Tercera Mesa Redonda de Palenque conference last June. Dr. DeLong reported on this conference in FRAA Newsletter No. 30, and presented a slide lecture on the same material, which was acclaimed by those in attendance as an outstanding presentation of the Palenque conference as it related to the entire Mesoamerican area.

The second grant was for \$500, made to Stanley Freer, who is working on his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Toronto.

The third grant was made to Dr. DeLong last month in the amount of \$250 for specific research on the famed murals at Cacaxtla, near Puebla, Mexico, and for the purpose of researching at Tuxtepec. Frederick Weddle accompanied Dr. DeLong, going on his own as photographer. Through Thoric Cederstrom's influence and position as instructor in the University of the Americas in Puebla, very special permission was secured from the Director of Antiquity of the Museum of Puebla to photograph these murals. This privilege is not yet open to the public. It is anticipated that most interesting and informative illustrated lecture presentations will be arranged for in the future, showing these well preserved murals. The accomplishment of this trip, made possible by this latest grant, is a significant addition to the reservoir of basic research, possibly linking the whole of Mesoamerica to the historicity of the Book of Mormon.

Nearly 500 members and friends responded to the invitation to hear Dr. Joseph Ginat, professor of anthropology at the University of Haifa, February 19, 1979. This unexpected treat was arranged for us by the courtesy of Mr. Naftali Alkalai, District Sales Manager of El Al Israel Airlines, St. Louis. The meeting was held in Partridge Hall, Floor A. Frederick Weddle made a recording, and Dr. Ginat's lecture was transcribed

by Juanita Price, under the direction of Audrey Stubbart, manuscript chairman. Our special thanks goes to Mrs. Paul (Rina) DeBarthe and Mrs. Tom (Jo) Watson for the typing which makes it possible to present Dr. Ginat's lecture in full, which we have decided to do in two installments, rather than to edit it for presentation in one newsletter. Part One is in this issue. The next newsletter will carry Part Two.

After the lecture, Lynn and Lorene Smith took Dr. Ginat and Mr. Alkalai to dinner, and opened the occasion to others who desired to join them. A number of us did so, and enjoyed a marked degree of fellowship. Dr. Ginat proved himself a very humble man and reiterated that he does believe in the Book of Mormon. He said humbly that should he have a testimony, he would accept it.

--T.D.S.

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NEW BOARD HAS NEW IDEAS

The main goals of the FRAA are to promote Book of Mormon research and use. Up to now the emphasis has been primarily on research. The Board of Directors now feel that an equal emphasis should be placed on promoting use of the Book of Mormon. The best way to do this is to make use of the research by putting it into a variety of formats to meet various needs.

At the present time, the directors are in the process of drawing up suggestions on how best to present available information. It can readily be seen that this is a very exciting and creative challenge, to generate ideas that will motivate and assist people to better understand and use the Book of Mormon. The directors are meeting this challenge and a number of good ideas have been proposed. If you see a need in a particular area and have an idea for meeting that need, please submit your ideas to the Foundation.

--Ray Treat

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F I L M L E C T U R E

By

D R . J O S E P H G I N A T

PART ONE

There are many subjects one could speak and analyze and discuss about ancient Israel and the new Israel. I have chosen two sections--actually one subject--which we think might be interesting to you. But before that, I want to say one thing. In the introductory part of the discussion, I have mentioned that I visited the Temple in Kirtland. I read the Book of Mormon. I read other publications. And I've learned that on April 3, 1836, there was a special event in the Kirtland Temple and I don't have to take your time to discuss it because you know about it more than I know, but according to the information that I read, among the Lord and Jesus and Moses, also Elijah appeared.

This day was a Jewish holy day and let me tell you that Jewish holy days are according to the lunar year, not the solar year. In other words, they change every year and ten days. If we have the head of the year we have the holy day of tabernacle or Passover or any other holy days; every year they change in ten days, because ten days is the difference between the lunar year and the solar, so we solved the problem in Judaism that every fourth year we have a leap month, which is the month before Passover--before Easter--so that we won't have one year the holy day in winter and then several years later in summer time. But actually, every year there is a difference and there is no overlapping to the civil calendar.

Now why do I tell you these things? Because Passover is one of the most important holy days in Judaism. It was the day that Moses and the children of Israel left Egypt on their way to the promised land, to the holy land. There is a very special event every Passover night--the eve of Passover, there is a special ceremony in which every Jewish family sits together and reads the history of what happened in Egypt and how the children of Israel crossed what you call the Red Sea and should be called the Reed Sea, R-e-e-d, not the Red Sea.

Now according to Jewish tradition, for many, many years this is the night that Elijah is to appear, when the Jewish people are waiting for Elijah to come. There is a special chair in every Jewish home, and a cup of wine is a part of the ceremony. No one touches this cup of wine, and the head of the family in the middle of the ceremony opens the door for Elijah to enter. Now in 1836, the day of Passover, April 3, this was the night that all the Jewish people all over the world waited for Elijah to come. *

Regarding the main subject which I would like to discuss with you, there is a certain place in Israel which was discovered in 1964 in the course of paving a road along a Jordanian-Israeli border. A bulldozer which paved the road hit a cave in a place which was about twenty miles down from Jerusalem, southwest of Jerusalem. When the bulldozer hit the cave it was from the north side. He didn't see it was a cave because it was on the side of a mountain. They discovered in the cave ancient scriptures in the ancient Hebrew script which was deciphered and dated exactly 600 B.C. Besides the inscriptions which are specified, there were figures of three persons--one of them was standing [he stretched out his arms, palms outward in a posture of blessing]--it was engraved on the wall of the cave and you can see it in the Israeli museum, because the cave was destroyed by the bulldozer.

However, fortunately, the bulldozer didn't take the ancient scriptures and the drawings which were engraved on the wall of the cave. One of the figures was a man standing in this form, which every Jew knows is the way which the descendants of Aaron stand who have the priesthood--they bless the congregation every day in the synagogue in the name of God. The inscription reads as follows: "I am Jehovah, thy Lord. I shall accept the cities of Judah and I shall redeem Jerusalem." The other inscription reads: "Absolve us, O merciful God; absolve us, O Jehovah."

The first archaeologist to analyze the material was Dr. Joseph Naveh (Israel Exploration Journal, 13, 1963), and he thought that this was a burial cave, but he said that something pushed him to analyze it by saying that this was a very important place of Levi, those who are the descendants of the tribe of Levi. And I forgot to mention that besides the inscription of these figures, there were engraved two sailing vessels--two ships--on the wall of that cave.

Dr. Naveh published it and he gives also the pictures of the figures and the sailing vessels, but he didn't understand--he didn't have any explanation for the sailing vessels. He explained only the inscription.

Later on, in 1970 a prominent American archaeologist who dealt with the Dead Sea Scrolls by the name of Drank Moore Cross, Jr., reanalyzed the findings of that cave, and he came to the conclusion that this wasn't a burial cave but the place where a prophet took shelter running away from Jerusalem in this cave, located down from Jerusalem about twenty miles south, southwest of Jerusalem. The name of the place in Arabic is Khirbet Beit Le'i, pronounced in Hebrew as Le-khee, and in English as Lee-high. The first time this name appears in the Bible is in Judges, Chapter 15. If you will turn to Judges 15, you will find out that there was the name of a place called in

* See Malachi 4:5, 6 and RLDS Church History, Vol. 2, p. 47.

Hebrew Lekhee, and if you don't have the khet in English, it should have been Lekhee, but you, I understand, pronounce it Leehigh. [Diacritical marks in Bibles which use them gives a long "e" and "i."] However, many people are not Mormons and they come from other countries. In countries where they speak English, I asked them to read L-e-h-i. They said Lekhee--and these people were from England, from Australia, from South Africa, and also when I asked in Mexico--when I was in the ruins of Mexico and I asked people to read it, they also read it "Lekhee." It could be that Lehi was the later version of the name which is in Hebrew Lekhee. Now the name in Judges 15 is the name of a place where Sampson was almost betrayed by the Philistines. I won't take your time; you can read it there, but we know that famous places were named after famous people and vice versa. Throughout the Bible there were many places which were named after famous people and then other people received the name of the place. If you will take for example the house of Joseph and Manasseh--Manasseh's son's name was Machir in Hebrew. His grandson's name was Gilead. Later on, there was a city named Gilead and after an entire region by the name of Gilead which is in Transjordan now--in the east side of Jordan, and the entire area is called Gilead.

We mentioned before the prophet Elijah. Elijah is called Elijah, the Gileadite. Why? He was born in Gilead. So there was a man by the name of Gilead, a great-grandson of Joseph. After a place was given the name of Gilead; later on, a prophet by the name of Elijah was named after the place that he came from, and there are hundreds of examples showing that famous places were named after famous people and vice versa.

Regarding the cave, according to Frank M. Cross, who published his article in 1970 ("The Cave Inscription from Khirbet Beit Le'i," in James Sanders, ed., Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century), the prophet took shelter there, running away from Jerusalem. Regarding the inscription: "I am Jehovah, thy Lord. I shall accept the cities of Judah and I shall redeem Jerusalem," now we have to think about it. Who came there to write "I am thy Lord"--the name of God in the first person, "I am thy Lord"? It wouldn't be just somebody who lived in that area. Who is there to write, "I am thy Lord"? Usually the prophets. They could write it, and Cross believes that the inscription is the citation of a lost prophecy.

Secondly, in that time, in 600 B.C., there is no doubt that the inscriptions are from 600 B.C. because the ancient Hebrew letters were evolved every thirty to forty years, with changes in the form of the letters, so there is no controversy among the archaeologists--which is a riddle in itself. Usually one archaeologist will say "A" and another will say "B"--you know this is always the controversy between the scientists. But there is no controversial debate about the dating of the visitors who visited the cave and wrote that inscription and engraved the drawings on the walls of the cave. It was 600 B.C.

At that time not many people, and this would be an understatement, knew how to read and to write. Most of the people didn't know how to read and write, and especially the shepherds that were in that area. But there is also a third reason to suggest or to speculate that this was a prophet. This was 600 B.C., when the entire area was destroyed. Only Jerusalem remained as an enclave. The Syrians destroyed the entire area. In that time of despair, in that time everyone looked for shelter. Who could see his vision, the redemption of Jerusalem? In time of catastrophe, everyone sees only the great things. He wants to take care of himself and his family.

On an airplane coming from Israel Friday to the United States, there were several families from Iran who came on that plane to the United States, some Jewish refugees, and I spoke to them. It was difficult to talk to them. They said the nightmare--what they saw there, what they felt there--they could not think about any other things.

It was difficult to communicate with them. Now just imagine, here is that Syrian army conquering the land of Israel and Judah, and someone writes, "I shall accept the cities of Judah and I shall redeem Jerusalem." This would be someone with vision to write such a statement.

When I went the first time--after I read the article and after I read the first time the Book of Mormon, I was interested to see what were the remains in this place. When I came to this place there were Arab shepherds in the area, and, as I told you, the cave was destroyed by the bulldozer and the inscriptions and the drawings were taken to the museum in Jerusalem. The Arab shepherd asked me, "What are you looking for here? There is nothing for you to see here." Well, I made an excuse. I said something. I just wanted to tell him thank you for your comments, but he continued and he told me, "You know, there is nothing here, but if you climb the hill--up the hill there is something very important." I said, "What is important there?" and he said, "There is an ancient oak tree and we, the Arabs, the Bedouins, believe that under this oak tree there was an ancient Israelite prophet by the name of Lekhee who used to judge his people." He took me up there and I saw there is an ancient fence around the place. There is a tradition--a secular tradition, nothing to do with the findings of the cave. Well, for many, many years the Arabs have a tradition--they don't let goats and sheep approach this place. We know from the Bible that the elders used to judge the people at the gates of the city and the place was destroyed, and the oak tree is exactly at the entrance of the ancient city--the city of Lekhee (Lehi). The place became very sacred to all generations. This was 600 B.C.

The first Christians were persecuted and prosecuted by the Romans. They ran away from Jerusalem and they took shelter on that hill. There is a cave where, according to a publication in the Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly, statement form 900-01--there is an article telling about one of the first chapels where the first Christians used to hide and to pray when they ran away from the Romans. So according to Hebrew tradition, the name of the place is Lekhee (Lehi). According to the Arab tradition, the oak tree is a sacred tree, and according to ancient Christian tradition, it was a sacred place where the first Christians took shelter and could worship. Unfortunately, in the English translation of the Bible, and I hope that no one will argue with me that the Bible was written originally not in English, so according to the Hebrew, which is the original language of the Bible, the oak tree is in many cases related to sacred places and to places where people worshipped God and built altars.

When Abram came to Canaan, he came to Sichem and built an altar there; then he went to Hebron and he also built an altar there. In Hebrew it is written that he built an altar under an oak tree. However, in the King James translation of the Bible into English, in every place where it said "oak tree," it is translated "plain," "valley." If you will turn to Genesis 12 and 13, you will see what I mentioned about Abraham. It says "plain," and not "oak tree." And I understand you people accept the English translation of the Bible if it is translated correctly, so here is a place to change it if you disagree with me.

Before I show the slides, I want to mention another important thing to you people, the relationship between Moses' father-in-law Jethro and the people of Israel. According to our Jewish tradition, Jethro was Moses' father-in-law. Period. Jethro was important because he was the father-in-law of Moses. We read in Exodus that Jethro came and brought with him his daughter, Moses' wife and his sons to the desert, and Moses was very busy--he didn't have a good time from the Israelites, so Jethro gave him some suggestions--how to deal with these people. But no one in our nation sees any authority in the relationship between Jethro and Moses. We know from the Bible that Jethro was a high priest of Midian. Jethro was a descendant of Abraham through his third wife, Keturah, but was a descendant of Abraham.

There is something common actually between Joseph and Moses--both of them married daughters of high priests. However, Moses' father-in-law was a descendant of Abraham where Joseph's father-in-law was a high priest of On in Egypt, so he was an Egyptian, not a descendant of Abraham--so this is the parallel and the difference between both of them regarding the ancestry of their wives. When you read the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants [section 83, RLDS edition] and you read about the priesthood, for you people there is a connection between Jethro and Moses regarding the priesthood.

(To be continued.)
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Frederick Weddle's recording of this program is available as follows:

Two-cassette package (60 minutes each), \$4.50, plus 50¢ mailing.

Includes:

Remarks Charles Hield
Introduction: Thelona Stevens
Invocation Lynn Smith
Solo Shirley Mason
Lecture Dr. Joseph Ginat
Ques., Ans. Dr. Ginat
Benediction ; Howard Sheehy, Jr.

One 90-minute cassette, \$2.25, plus 50¢ mailing.

Includes:

Introduction: Thelona Stevens
Invocation Lynn Smith
Lecture Dr. Ginat
Ques.,Ans. Dr. Ginat
Benediction Howard Sheehy, Jr.

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