



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

THELONA D. STEVENS, CHAIRMAN / 202 SOUTH PENDLETON AVE. / INDEPENDENCE, MO. 64050

NEWSLETTER NO. 34

March 15, 1980

Dear Members and Friends,

The following will serve the Foundation for Research on Ancient America during the coming year:

Officers: President, Thelona D. Stevens; Vice-President, Ray Treat;
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, Mary Lee Treat, Dr. James VanBiber, Jr., Roy E. Weldon

Other important business has to do with the source of income for FRAA. There will be no more dues for membership. All will be freewill contributions. This method seems more consistent with our tax deductible status. Please remember that our work, including our special Book of Mormon promotion projects, does require funds and we shall be depending entirely upon your generosity and your earnestness of desire to see our work advance. Obviously, our accomplishments will depend upon our available funds. Please send contributions to the treasurer, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050.

Beginning now, those who desire to receive the Newsletter should make whatever contributions you wish to make. There will be no other means of making this service possible. Also, please be sure you have given us your correct address.

During Conference, there will be a meeting of the FRAA immediately after the business session each day, Monday through Friday. These meetings will convene in Luff Auditorium, Stone Church (below the main sanctuary). There will be a different illustrated lecture each day. The week's program will be as follows:

Monday - Ray Treat, "Measoamerican Archaeology and the Book of Mormon: Outlines Compared"
Tuesday - Roy E. Weldon, "Ebla"
Wednesday - Charles R. Hield, "Jesus Christ in Ancient America"
Thursday - James A. Christenson, "Recent Developments in the Honduran Mission"
Friday - Clair E. Weldon, Kenneth Raveill, Two-screen, Book of Mormon-centered presentation

The third volume of BOOK OF MORMON CLAIMS AND EVIDENCES, by Roy E. Weldon and F. Edward Butterworth is due off the press March 15. Orders are now being accepted for all three volumes in this series (\$3.50 per volume). Order: "Buckeye," 2705 Windsor, Independence, MO 64052.

Harold and Judith Hawley, and son Max, of Bates City, Missouri, are living in a

kibbutz in Israel for approximately two years, seeking to be helpful by their lives and testimony. They have written: "Please continue your prayers for the work here. We must get books in Hebrew for these people. They need tracts as well as the Book of Mormon. Please tell your delegates to World Conference how very important this is. We could put many copies of the Book of Mormon in many hands if we had them in Hebrew." They would appreciate hearing from any and all who would like to write to them. Their address is: Kibbutz Mashebei-Sade, Doar-Na, Ramat Negev, Israel.

--T.D.S.

* * * * *

THE MOST ANCIENT SCRIPTURES

By

Thelona D. Stevens

One would expect that after God had made man in his own image and after his likeness, he would teach him the essentials for living. He did. The Inspired Version records that God taught Adam and his contemporaries many things, including the art of reading and writing:

For it was given unto as many as called upon God, to write by the Spirit of inspiration; and by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled. . . . And a genealogy was kept by the children of God. - Genesis 6:5,6,8.

Verse 5 mentions that "a book of remembrance" was kept "in the language of Adam." Apparently this record was continued from the days of Adam through the days of Enoch, for Enoch declared, "A book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God; and it is written in our own language" (verse 47).

This precious record understandably would have been treasured by the God-fearing people at the dispersion at the time of the great tower, and a later reference to it in Jaredite history makes it apparent that this record was brought from the Eastern Hemisphere to the Western Hemisphere when the Jaredites migrated to Ancient America. When the wicked Jared, whose activities are told in Ether 3:68ff, could see no means of regaining the throne which he had usurped and then lost, his conniving daughter reminded him,

Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? - Ether 3:80, 81.

She suggested a conspiracy inspired by Cain's secret pact with Satan (recorded in Genesis 5:14-16, 35-39. Also see Helaman 2:150-154; III Nephi 2:8, 11).

Thus, the history of events from the beginning, though recorded from the days of Adam until the departure of the Jaredites, was lost to the Eastern Hemisphere. Later, God used Moses to make the essentials of this history available to the Old World, although it was not as complete as the account written as the events occurred. The circumstances of the giving of this knowledge to Moses are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 22. This also appears in the Inspired Version following the Preface. This revelation provides the background for the great revelation which God was about to give to Moses (Genesis 1:1; D. & C. 22:24).

The Inspired Version's first verse gives important information lacking in other versions of the Bible. It is supposed by the Christian world that Moses wrote the first

five books of the Bible, but proof is given alone in the Inspired Version, wherein the Lord said, "Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven and this earth; write the words which I speak." It has been a stumbling block to many as to how Moses could have known all these things. The Lord gave Moses an account of the creation and the history of what had happened from the time of Adam up to Moses' time. This all-important record, called "the book of the law," was kept in the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31:25). It is not given to man to know the name of the mount where Moses received this great revelation (D. & C. 22:25).

The ark of the covenant, being a comparatively small chest carried by the Israelites in their travels, contained the two tables of stone on which were written the law which was received on Mount Sinai (Ex. 25:12; 34:1,2). Also, as has been shown, the ark of the covenant contained "the book of the law" - the revelation of everything from the beginning. Obviously, the small ark of the covenant could not have held that extensive revelation had it been written on stone. Therefore, some other permanent medium had to be employed. Evidences point to Moses' use of brass--such as reference to "the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, ... the law engraven upon the plates of brass" (I Nephi 1:117, 118).

Moses did not mention the language in which he recorded the great revelation, but there are clues in the Scriptures that he used the Egyptian language, not "reformed Egyptian," but the highest form of that language, learned in the palace of the pharaoh, which would have been the cultured, hieratic, or priestly Egyptian. It is logical to believe that this is the language which Moses used, perhaps at the commandment of God, for the same reason that the Nephites gave later for the use of the Egyptian language--that it took less space than did their native Hebrew (Mormon 4:99).

The Nephites used Egyptian for their sacred writing, the same language used upon the plates of brass which they brought with them when they fled from Jerusalem. The first verse in the Book of Mormon states,

I, Nephi, . . . was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father;
. . . yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.

Note that Nephi does not call this "reformed Egyptian." That came about through long centuries of writing in a language studied for the purpose of making special records, not in their spoken language. Mormon said that the Nephites had "altered" this language so that they termed it "reformed Egyptian." He said it had been written "according to our knowledge in the characters, . . . being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech." They apologized over the imperfect quality of their Egyptian, and mentioned that for this reason no one would be able to read their writing. He declared, however, that God had prepared the means of its interpretation (Mormon 4:99, 100).

It is this author's firm belief that the records which the Nephites obtained from Laban and brought with them to ancient America, the plates of brass, were written by Moses up to the time of his death, when other scribes evidently made entries upon the plates in the same language used by Moses. This is confirmed by Nephi's statement that he (being able to read the Egyptian language - I Nephi 1:1) had taught his brethren; he "read many things to them, which were engraven upon the plates of brass; . . . written in the book of Moses" (I Nephi 6:1-3).

A Hebraism worthy of note appears in this last reference, that of making a statement and then restating the same thought in different words. This is widely used in Hebrew poetry, and is called "parallelism." It is also commonly employed in prose.

A listing of the contents of the plates of brass further confirms that this record was written by Moses and subsequent scribes, for the biblical record of that period and the contents of the brass plates, according to the Book of Mormon, are identical. The brass plates contained:

The genealogy of the forefathers of Lehi, of the tribe of Joseph (I Nephi 1:61, 164-167).

"The five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world" (I Nephi 1:159).

"The law . . ." (I Nephi 1:118).

"A record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah" (I Nephi 1:161).

"The prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah" (I Nephi 1:162).

"Many prophecies . . . by . . . Jeremiah" (I Nephi 1:163).

"Many things . . . that they might know the doings of the Lord in the lands among people of old" (I Nephi 6:2).

"And these plates of brass . . . have the records of the holy scriptures on them, . . . even from the beginning" (Alma 17:32).

Logically, all of the Old Testament would have been included in this record (the brass plates) up to the time of the departure of Lehi and his people.

The brass plates were used as Scripture by the Nephites (Mosiah 1:3-8).

Close observation shows that all of these things are indeed the very things which the Bible shows the Lord revealed unto Moses. Moses added the history of his people and God's dealings with them until the time of his death, which records were kept in the ark of the covenant during the lifetime of Moses. At a later period, because of the wickedness of the Israelites at that time, the Lord allowed the loss of the ark of the covenant to the Philistines for a short period, but the "book of the law" evidently was not in the ark at that time. Sometime previous to this event it had become customary to keep this precious record in private treasuries of high ranking Israelites who served as recorders (II Sam. 8:16, 17; I Kings 4:3; II Kings 18:18, 37). This accounts for the fact that the records were in the treasury of Laban when the Lord directed the Nephites to obtain them. By searching through the brass plates--remember Lehi could read Egyptian (I Nephi 1:1; Mosiah 1:6)--Lehi discovered that he was a descendant of Joseph who was sold into Egypt (I Nephi 1:165), which gave him the right to possess the records. Verse 168 states that "Laban also was a descendant of Joseph, wherefore he and his fathers had kept the records."

To summarize: The first scriptural writings were made by our earliest forefathers and were brought to ancient America by the Jaredites, leaving the Eastern Hemisphere without those writings. Hence, the Lord revealed to Moses the story of creation and other vital facts from the beginning, which record was brought to ancient America by the Nephites. Thus, there were two originals of the Scriptures:

1. Recordings of everything from the beginning as the events occurred.
2. Essential knowledge of everything from the beginning revealed to Moses and recorded by him.

The first recordings (brought to this land by the Jaredites) constituted a much more complete account than the second recording (by Moses). When Moroni was making his abridgment, he explained that he took his account from the "twenty and four plates," "the book of Ether," which was the record left by the Jaredites, later found by the Nephites. Moroni made this explanation:

And as I suppose that the first part of this record, which speaks concerning the creation of the world, and also of Adam, and an account from that time even to the great tower, and whatsoever things transpired among the children of men until that time, is had among the Jews /the Bible/, therefore, I do not write those things which transpired from the days of Adam until that time; but they are had upon the plates; and whoso findeth them, the same will have power that he may get the full account. . . . I give not the full account, but a part of the account I give, from the tower down until they were destroyed. - Ether 1:3-5.

These facts explain why no one has ever been able to find the originals of the Scriptures in full. Many portions have been located from time to time, but these scrolls are translations from the Egyptian language into Hebrew, or the spoken language of the Israelites. Many copies have been found of some portions, such as Isaiah, but never the Scriptures in their entirety. This awaits the time of the Lord, for he has promised that they will all come forth in his own due time.

Moses was told,

In a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught, and take many of them from the book which you shall write, behold, I will raise up another like unto you, and they shall be had again among the children of men, among even as many as shall believe. - D. & C. 22:24.

Nephi was also shown that "many parts which are plain and most precious" would be taken from the book, because of which "an exceeding great many do stumble," but he was also shown that much would be restored (I Nephi 3:168-186).

Some of the translators of the Bible freely admit having omitted, added to, and changed many things. (See the Preface of the Inspired Version.) Much has been restored and offered to the world through the Inspired Version, which God's people have received with rejoicing, but we still look forward to that day when all of the Scriptures will be brought forth, including the revelations to the Brother of Jared, who was told:

They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord; and in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the Brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the Brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations. . . - Ether 1:100-101.

We can be assured that all of the records are being preserved by God for use in his own time and way, for the promise was that they would never "perish or be dimmed by time" (I Nephi 1:170; Alma 17:34).

Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.
- Romans 15:4.

* * * * *

According to THE STAR, March 1977, Dr. Jeffrey Goodman of Tucson, Arizona, archaeologist and author of Psychic Archaeology, believes that "There is absolutely no doubt that psychics today hold a very important key to unlocking many doors to the past." He told of tests made with amazing accuracy in finding buried objects.

One discovery he described, which involved Karen Getsla, parapsychologist. Dr. Goodman said that as their plane flew over a jungle in Central America, "Suddenly she waved her hands in front of her, using them like a radar scanner and shouted, 'Down there, it's down there.' And although the rest of the expedition party could see nothing more below than an enormous sea of jungle, she was right. When the plane landed, a group of sixteen explorers slowly hacked their way through the thick clinging vines to confirm Karen's 'vision,' the ruins of Ciudad Blanca, the lost 'white city' in the heart of 16,000 square miles of jungle near Honduras, Central America."

Roy Weldon, who submitted this clipping, commented: "As the time draws near for the coming forth of the golden library of Ancient America, we can expect Satan's prophets to get into the act. What lies ahead in the world of 'whispers out of the dust' could finalize the whisperings turning to thundering when the stone cut out of the mountain rolls into Daniel's image and rolls on to fill the whole earth. Satan, throughout the ages, has sought to confuse and overthrow the works of God, even by the working of miracles--as Pharaoh and Aaron and the magicians--and others."

Revelations 16:13, 14 mentions Satan's ability to work miracles, but God has given his servants "power over unclean spirits" (Matt. 10:1).

* * * * *

Tom and Sue Hairabedians are guiding a tour to Israel which will leave New York May 26. Guest lecturer will be Dr. Joseph Ginat, who will take the tour to points of interest covered in his illustrated lectures last year to FRAA. We are advised that there is still time to make reservations for this tour. Write to the Hairabedians, 1002 Anderson, Warrensburg, MO 64093, or phone: 816-747-9719.

* * * * *

Foundation for Research
On Ancient America

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage
Paid
Permit No. 138
Independence, MO 64050