

Foundation for Research

on
Ancient
America



NEWSLETTER NO. 43

August 12, 1983

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

Dear Members and Friends,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Foundation for Research on Ancient America at 2:30 P.M. August 28, at the Stone Church in the sanctuary. The speaker will be Neil Steede, employed by the Mexican Government, Department of Agriculture, SARH. He has chosen to speak on "The Book of Mormon and the Changing Face of Mexico." His many years in Mexico fit him admirably to discuss this subject. This is a meeting which we know you will not want to miss.

Your expressions of appreciation of Newsletters No. 37 and 40 attest to your interest in the method used in translating the Book of Mormon. Both of these newsletters contained material having to do with the chiasmus and wordprints in the Book of Mormon, presented by Dr. Richard A. DeLong. We are now pleased to recommend for your reading and study Book of Mormon Authorship--New Light on Ancient Origins, edited by Noel B. Reynolds, Brigham Young University, 1982. Those interested in proof of Book of Mormon authorship will find special helps in Chapter 2, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," by John W. Welch, and Chapter 7, "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon? An Analysis of Wordprints," by Wayne A. Larsen and Alvin C. Rencher. Roy E. Weldon especially recommends this book.

A primary objective of FRAA is to stimulate Book of Mormon study and research, having to do with both internal and external evidences of its divinity. We have beamed our invitation to participate in this study and research to all ages. We stress, however, the value of early response by our youth, for we recognize what earnest, prayerful study can do for the young people themselves. Further, we recognize that knowledge thus gained can be the means of starting them early in life to offer service to the Master and his Church. We can think of no better tool in the hands of our youth than the Book of Mormon to aid them in self-development and service to others. Personal experience has proved to many of us that such study can be highly stimulating and challenging. More, it can be really fun. This has been proved again by Craig and Connie Warner, Zion's League leaders of Kansas City Stake. At our request, Craig has furnished us with some of the facts, methods, and outcome of a contest conducted last April. His account follows.

--T.D.S.

Craig and Connie Warner, assisted by Julie Gatrost, arranged a Book of Mormon contest, involving the youth of Kansas City and Lamoni Stakes, held at Far West Stake campgrounds, Stewartsville, in April, this year. The purpose of the contest was to promote reading of the Book of Mormon.

The young people were divided into six teams, competing for prizes. Certificates were given to all, with copies of the Book of Mormon signed by President Wallace B. Smith as the "big" prize. A trophy was awarded to the winning team.

The contest material covered 290 pages--the first part of the Book of Mormon up to the division into Nephites and Lamanites; King Benjamin's speech; the Book of Ether, the Book of Mormon; and Mosoni's last chapters. Four hundred and

fifty questions used in the contest were in three categories--easy questions (one-word answers), prepared by Louise Gregson; and questions requiring three- to five-word answers, and more difficult questions requiring essay type answers, prepared by Thelona Stevens.

The six captians for the teams read the entire assigned pages. One captain was a girl who became so interested that she kept right on reading "because it was so much fun," and read the entire book. She said she read it because she had a reason to read it. Having a goal set for them, the younsters had a specific reason for reading, and some followed through to the end of the assigned reading. Generally, however, they found it hard to maintain a reading habit. We had a "Plan B," in case they did not read the material. Many did not. Because of this, we gave a copy of all the questions and answers to each team and they had six hours in which to read and memorize the material. The plan seemed to work well.

The actual contest was set up in round-robin fashion, followed by single elimination finals for the teams. The eight individuals who answered the greatest number of questions competed as "All Stars" for the four prize books. Thus, all participants were recognized. There were certificates for all - the teams for cooperation; individuals for personal scholarship.

The apparatus used was a central light and buzzer panel that lit and sounded when a contestant pushed his button first. The air of excitement that surrounded the competition, with the lights and bells and the nervous contestants in action, was really fun. They liked to go head-to-head in contest. I believe we could really promote this kind of thing if a supportive study session on small parts of the Scripture's could be handled.

Joseph Smith III, in a sermon at Lamoni, Iowa, May 7, 1894, said:

I may confess before you without any hesitancy that I have a clearer testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon than I have of the Bible, because I have heard a voice from on high stating distinctly as one man would speak unto another, "The Book of Mormon is of divine origin."

--Supplement to The Saints' Herald, Vol. 2, No. 24

Robert Patton, author of "Ooparts," in Omni magazine, September, 1982, wrote:

The oldest societies with a written record--Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus Valley--seem to have emerged without any cultural antecedents, between 3400 and 3100 B.C. Seemingly out of nowhere there suddenly appeared a uniform code of laws, the wheel, knowledge of astronomy and agriculture, and elaborate temples inscribed with cuneiform hieroglypic script. It is mere coincidence that three centers of enlightenment should emerge simultaneously at widely separated locations?

Thus writes one lacking the great fund of additional information supplied by God, beginning in 1830 with the Book of Mormon, supplemented by the Inspired Version and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Turning first to the Inspired Version, we are able to prove that the earliest people on earth to keep written records were Adam and his people, when those desiring knowledge,

began to call upon the name of the Lord, and the Lord blessed them; and a book of remembrance was kept...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 that was pure and undefiled....And a genealogy was kept of the children of God....for a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God; and it is given in our own language.

--Gen. 6:5,6,9,47.

According to the Book of Mormon (Ether 3:80, 81), this record was brought to ancient America by the Jaredites, who fled from the Eastern Hemisphere to avoid the "scattering" and "confounding of their language" at the time of the "great tower." It is believed that they occupied the great plain called the land of Shinar in Genesis 11:1, and that it was from Shinar (or Sumer) that the Jaredites migrated.

When Ashurbanipal's fabulous cuniform library, discovered at Nineveh, could finally be read, there was marvelous revelation as to the Sumerians. It was they who supplied Mesopotamia the foundation for their arts, crafts, cultures, and religions.

The Bible furnishes the knowledge that the inhabitants of Sumer were a highly developed people. Genesis 6:15 states that Enos (son of Seth) "and the residue of the people of God, came out from the land of Shulon [evidently a place of wickedness, unacceptable to the people of God] and dwelt in a land of promise." It was the descendants of these people of Enos who built Enoch's Zion, who for 365 years "walked with God," whom "God received up into his own bosom" (Gen. 7:76-78). Evidences now show that these people whom God loved so much were employing many of the so-called modern inventions.

Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 75, names a number of Old World Pre-Flood cities and states concerning the Antediluvian civilization:

In their ruins archaeologists have gotten very close to the beginnings.... Among the relics of Pre-Flood peoples...are such things as painted pottery, flint implements, tools, turquoise vases, copper axes, copper mirrors, hoes, sickles, implements of stone, flint, quartz, fish hooks, models of boats, an underground kiln, beautiful vitrified pottery, cosmetics which pre-historic women used,...brick ruins of temples painted red or covered with plaster, pottery artistically painted in intricate geometric patterns and figures of birds, even a chariot, and architectural accomplishments that indicate an "astonishingly advanced civilization."

Some historians think that there was:

the fanning out of a culture from a central starting point. The unprecedented explosion of knowledge 5,000 years ago. they believe, may have been foreshadowed by an earlier society whose cultural remnants have long since vanished. The evidence for such a remote civilization, predating even the Sumerians is tentative at least...." - Omni, p. 54.

Enoch's people confirms this supposition. It is our belief that mankind reached its highest level of development in all aspects--mentally as well as spiritually--at the time of Enoch's Zion. Just how long this was before the Sumerians, and the Jaredites, we cannot say, but we can be sure it was several hundreds of years.

There must have been much beauty in Enoch's city. The creation story tells that in the Garden of Eden God created "much gold, and the gold in that land was good, and there was bdellium, and the onyx stone" (Gen. 2:13,14). The Bible mentions many other precious metals and stones. One of the great objects of God's creation was the Urim and Thummim, which was "given to the Brother of Jared upon the mount, when he talked with the Lord face to face" (D & C 15:1b). Ether 1:87 mentions this event and records that God revealed such great things to the Brother of

Jared that we still are not accounted worthy to receive them (Ether 1:87-90, 99-101). The Urim and Thummim consisted of two transparent stones (Lucy Smith, mother of the prophet, called them diamonds), set in silver bows, which were connected much as "old fashioned spectacles" (History of the Church, Vol. 1; p. 13; Joseph Smith and His Progenitors, 1880 ed., p. 107). Genesis 6:38-40 mentions Enoch as a seer.

When the Jaredites understood that they were to be led to a new location, the Lord promised them a land choice above all other lands, where He said they would become a great nation, "And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of they seed, upon all the face of the earth" (Ether 1:20).

Many, myself included, have interpreted this to mean that there would be no greater nation than the Jaredites at the period in their history when they flourished as a nation. They were indeed the greatest nation in the world at the time of their zenith, for the cultures in the Old World were at a low ebb. Egypt was on the wane; Mesopotamia had not at that time become powerful; and the Israelites were just becoming a nation. Thus, when the Jaredites rose to their peak, God's promise was fulfilled. They were indeed the greatest nation at that time, but the question arises, did that promise apply to all time? What of their greatness as compared with the nations since that time?

Scientists are now coming forth with startling facts which stimulate our imagination regarding those earliest people--scientists cannot identify them, but we know they were Jaredites. More than once it has been suggested that they may have had knowledge of aeronautics. In 1891 excavators at Saqqara, Egypt, found a small bird-like, wooden object. Never having seen an airplane, those archaologists called it the "Saqqara Bird" in order to identify it in the museum. In the Seventies, when NASA was working on a new type aircraft, a team of aviation experts observed its similarity to the Saqqara Bird. A model was made to the specifications of the wooden relic, and it "soared through the air with the grace and ease of a modern-day glider," says Robert Patton, Omni, p. 53, who then questions, "Is it possible that the great scientific technological achievements of the past 500 years were already known to ancient civilization?"

It has long been known that those ancients were experts in astronomy. Beyond question is the knowledge that many of the pyramids in Mesoamerica erected by the Incas and Mayas were used as observatories. Roy E. Weldon offers many facts and references on ancient knowledge of astronomy in his book Book of Mormon Claims and Evidences, 1979, ch. 5.

The media has called a plain discovered high in the Andes "the landing strips of the gods." It is an intricate maze of open-air chalk drawings of a number of kinds of animals, plus "razor-straight lines that intersect to form triangles, trapezoids, and rectangles," which can be identified only from the air. Some of the lines continue for distances up to five miles, ending at the base of a mountain, and then continuing on the other side of the mountain, in perfect alignment. Commercial airlines which began operating in the Andes in the 1930's began making these discoveries. One of these drawings has been identified as a Ricinuleus spider and another drawing is of a monkey with very thin legs, both of which are indigenous to the Amazon Jungle, some 1,000 miles away. A piece of pottery with the unmistakable likeness of a penguin, a native of Antarctica, some 4,500 miles distant, has been found.

Robert Patton's article cites (and follows up with proof) some amazing additional discoveries:

--One discovery had differential gears, which permits a machine to perform two functions simultaneously. This unusual mechanism was discovered in 1900

In a Greek merchantship sunk off the coast of Greece in 78 B.C. It was not until 1971 that this salvaged relic through radiographs was identified as a 30-gear model of a planetarium, which the Omni article declares to be the oldest existing relic of scientific technology, being credited to Archimedes, the inventor and discoverer of the principle of gravity in 300 B.C.

--Electric batteries have been found in Iraq, proving that electricity was known thousands of years before the "discovery" by Benjamin Franklin.

--A map drawn in 1513 correctly depicts Antarctica's coastline before it was covered by ice--more than 6,000 years ago. Its accuracy could not be verified until 1949 when electronic probes made it possible.

Halley's Bible Handbook states that

the Pyramid craze reached its zenith in the 4th dynasty....The amazing thing about the Pyramids is that they were built at the dawn of history. Sir Flinders Petrie calls the Pyramid of Cheops "the greatest and most accurate structure the world has ever seen." The Encyclopedia Britannica says, "The brain power to which it testifies is as great as that of any modern man." - p. 95.

It will be interesting to see what great revelation of knowledge may yet be given us of the accomplishments of Enoch's Zion of old. As we in the latter days grow into the Zionism we seek, undoubtedly vast stores of knowledge will be opened to our minds--which will cause "men and rulers" to "hear and know that which they have never considered" (D&C 98:12d).

One wonders if there will be anything new given to the latter-day Zion which was not known to Zion of old, for Zion means perfection.

--Thelona Stevens

Recommended: Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA, Number 153, June 1983, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602. Book of Mormon students will appreciate the article "EVIDENCE THAT OLMECS ARE JAREDITES AND THAT SAN LORENZO IS THE CITY OF LIB."

Vivian Cummins, of Crescent City, California, drew to our attention an article published in the San Francisco Chronicle, March 23, 1983, "Ocean Links of Ancient Races," in which information is reported of an interview with Thor Heyerdahl, of Kon Tiki fame. In this interview Heyerdahl discussed an expedition which he and his party made to the Indian Ocean islands about 400 miles southwest of India last November. In the remote Maldivé Islands he says they found proof that ancient civilizations were "connected" by the oceans. There they excavated ruins of a temple resembling a Mesopotamian ziggurat, a tower in the form of a terraced pyramid, the stone of which were carved with "classical motifs indicating a high level of culture."

Excavations in the surrounding area brought up new temple ruins and a broken tablet with hieroglyphic inscriptions similar to the undeciphered Indus Valley script which disappeared nearly 2000 years before Jesus Christ.

Based on his research into primitive astronomical navigation, Hyerdahl calculated that any islands on the equator could have been visited and settled by pre-historic navigators. Using the North Star as a guide, he said this led him to the Maldives, where only 202 of the 1483 islands are inhabited. His first discovery in the region was a limestone temple, covered by thick jungle, which is approached by four astronomically oriented ramps. He said, "Had these ruins been found in Mexico, no one would have been surprised."

The following was submitted by Pearl Kinnaman, of St. Joseph, Missouri:

The Book of Mormon records that:

In the three hundred and fiftieth year, we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided. And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward; yea, even to the narrow passage which led into the land southward....And it came to pass that the Lamanites did not come to battle again until ten more years had passed away.

--Mormon 1:60-63

The descendants of these people still have knowledge of the treaty and tell of a ten-year truce, according to L.E. Hills, in his New Light On American Archaeology, 1924:

In a little mountain called Cerro de Istaltapca, three miles northeast from San Geranimo, on the side of the mountain a treaty stone still stands covered with hieroglyphics. The natives are so superstitious that they will not go near it. It has been preserved to the present time and is still standing (p. 68).

Native Races by Bancroft, Vol. 5, p. 279, says:

Veytin and Ixtlilxochitl speak vaguely of a truce...to the effect that the Toltecs should not be molested for ten years, an old military usage requiring ten years should always intervene between the declaration of war and the commencement of hostilities.

Foundation for Research
On Ancient America

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