



The Witness

Newsletter Of The Foundation For Research On Ancient America

JULY, 1984

NEWSLETTER NO. 46

1500-YEAR-OLD TOMB DISCOVERED

DISCOVERY IN CENTRAL AMERICA MAY DATE TO BOOK OF MORMON PERIOD

In the remote jungle regions of northern Guatemala in Central America a major archaeological find has been located. An unspoiled Mayan burial chamber more than 1500 years old, has been dated from approximately A.D. 420 to A.D. 470, the Early Classic Period.

Over two decades have passed since archaeologists have discovered a Mayan burial tomb, and scientists were ecstatic that the find would shed light upon the elusive identity of the early Mayan civilization which flourished from about A.D. 200 to A.D. 900.

The May 15 discovery contained fifteen clay pots, well preserved wall paintings and a skelton of a male believed to be in his 30's. R.E. Adams expedition director, speculates the occupant of the tomb was probably an administrator in a ruling family. The three large wall paintings are punctuated with Mayan symbols of authority, and the hieroglyphics on some of the ceramics refer to "Great Son," a royal title.

"With some study", Adams says, "we should be able to get a better understanding of the whole Early Classic Maya world. There seems to have been a lot of wars at this time and competition among Maya states. And this family seems to have been involved in those wars."

The most valuable find in the tomb was a ceramic pot with a stirrup handle painted with spots to indicate jaguar markings. Struggling to open it, archeologists



Twist Lid Jug

learned that it had a highly sophisticated screw top, possibly the earliest twist-open container discovered in the Western Hemisphere. It is in this jar, that evidences the ancient americans understood the principle of the screw, says Joe Brandon, Brandon Engineering. Adding this knowledge to their already exhibited knowledge of the lever, wedge, wheel and axle, greatly enhanced their ability to build machinery of more complex design and with greater mechanical advantage. Engineers observing only that which is left of their civilization, find it inconceivable

that those ancients did not understand all simple machines and many of their more intricate combinations.

It is interesting to note that machinery is spoken of in the Book of Mormon as follows:

"We multiplied exceedingly . . . and became exceeding rich . . . in fine workmanship in wood, in buildings and in machinery, and also in iron, and copper, and brass, and steel, making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, and weapons of war."

Jarom 1:19

As further study is done on this remarkable discovery, it may shed light and insight to the validity of the Book of Mormon.



SATELLITES LOCATE LOST MAYAN CITIES

MAYAN CITY HIDDEN FOR CENTURIES

The Los Angeles Times reported June 18 that a team of American scientists with the aid of space age technology, has found a major Mayan city hidden for centuries by the jungles of southern Mexico, and possibly the "lost city" of Oxpemul.

The cities were discovered by using false-color satellite imagery taken by satellites and than verifying the sites by helicopter. The satellites also detected the existence of an extensive network of farmed fields that may reshape theories of how the Indian civilization fed its large population.

The first site, near the modern village of Conhuas, was previously unknown to the world. Its Mayan name is not known, but archaeologists believe it is a major Mayan city. The second, is believed to be Oxpemul, near the village of Dos Aguadas, which has been lost for almost half a century.

Oxpemul was first located in the 1930's by archaeologists from the Carnegie Institution of Washington, but heavy overgrowth in the jungles limited their ability to determine positional coordinates.



TESTIMONY OF NEIL STEEDE

Adapted from a 1973 Tape



Hill Cumorah?

Neil Steede (in 1984) is director of the Pre-Columbian Investigations Center, Cárdenas, Tabasco, Mexico. He is also a deacon in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

While Neil Steede was a student of archaeology in the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico, he developed keen interest in the Book of Mormon. He became especially interested in the hill Cumorah referred to in the Book of Mormon—not the place in New York where Joseph Smith found the plates.

Remembering the Book of Mormon-mentioned hill Cumorah and being interested in a certain hill in Mexico because of its location and also because of bits of conversation which he overheard, Neil determined to learn more about it.

He went to a village located at the foot of this hill. There the mayor of the village told him several legends concerning the area, some of which involved three men who were said to visit the hill annually. It was claimed that these three men came to check on their “national treasury,” but when the natives tried to follow them, they lost them immediately. Of course Neil thought of the Three Nephites. When Neil questioned those who had seen them, as to their appearance, he got the same

answer. They seemed to be thirty-five to forty years of age, whether described by those who had seen them recently or those who had seen them many years before. The legend claimed they came every year during the first week in April.

Neil visited this village in November of 1971. The following April, he went by bus to the hill, hoping to meet these three men. It was April 6, 1972, about 2:00 P.M. when he arrived with his Book of Mormon under his arm and his coat slung over his shoulder for nighttime warmth.

Neil surveyed the situation. The hill (many would call it a mountain) was 1500 feet high and about five miles long, surrounded by cliffs except at one point, which he aimed to make his destination.

Facing the dense jungle, Neil could see no path, so he started fighting his way through the heavy growth. After about one hour, he pushed through some vines and fell in to a hole about four feet deep. Striking the bottom, he lay in the coolness of the hole contemplating his reason for having come to this hill and what he hoped might result.

Then he heard noises, and found himself encircled by some thirty men (Indians), three of whom carried rifles; the remainder, machetes. Recognizing his danger,

Neil prayed fervently to God. He saw himself (with spiritual eyes) protected in a white glow. When the men threatened him, Neil, acting under the impulsion of God's Spirit, warned that they would not be able to kill him. In anger, one of the men struck him a powerful blow on the forehead with his machete, but it left not even a mark, and flew out of his hand to the ground. The Indians attributed this thwarting power to Satan. They lassoed Neil, tied his arms behind him, and forced him to walk ahead of them.

Curious people joined them. Passing a schoolhouse, Neil called to a man he saw within, who agreed to listen to Neil's story. Although unable to speak Spanish fluently at that time, with great ease he related the basic story of the Book of Mormon. He told his reason for wanting to visit this hill, which he believed to be the hill Cumorah where he hoped to meet three of those ancient Nephites.

The schoolteacher could find nothing wrong with Neil, saying he was a student who had just related their own history and that he should not be held captive. He was loosed and given directions to find the best path up the hill.

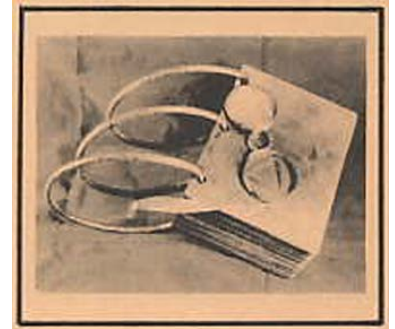
He had not gone far when he was stopped by the mayor, who offered him shelter for the night, or that he might return to the university. Because of Neil's determination, he was permitted to go on. Finally, he started up the hill. A fer'dé'lance (an extremely poisonous viper) slithered between his feet, and animals could be heard moving away from him. It was getting dark.

Neil came to a fork in the path, and while pondering which branch to take, he observed a pinpoint of light in the distance. He came to realize it was a man with a lantern. Somehow at the time he did not question this, to

his utter amazement when he contemplated the whole thing later. Having chosen which fork to take, he noticed that the light vanished. Again and again, each time it was necessary to decide which way to go, a man with a lantern appeared in the distance and then disappeared.

Suddenly Neil met the man with the lantern in his hand. He was dressed as the Indians dress—white pants, linen shirt, and sombrero. Neil noted his compassionate eyes. He spoke, saying, "I've been waiting for you." He gave him messages for each of his friends for whom Neil had special concern. He then mentioned Neil's personal problems, some of which Neil was unwilling to admit even to himself. One command was, "Always bear your testimony whenever opportunity permits. Never be afraid."

His concluding words were, "You are not allowed to go farther up, for the time is not right." Neil interpreted this to mean that the time was not right for the coming forth of the plates hidden there. Neil believes the man with the lantern was one of the Three Nephites.



Neil appealed to us who have access to the Book of Mormon to become fully familiar with its contents and thus prepare ourselves to bear testimony of its message to others. In order to bear such testimony, it is necessary to be convinced of its truthfulness, which is possible by reading it prayerfully, even as is promised in the Book of Mormon itself.



LETTERS

This is the first time I have seen **THE WITNESS**, and I am delighted with it. I did not know such a publication is available. Here is my subscription, as I wish to receive more copies when they are available.

—Maine

Please send me one copy each of **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MORMON** and **A SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON, BOOK BY BOOK** . . . My husband and I brought one of each home with us from Conference. I intended to take them to church to show the members there, but before I could do so a lady at work expressed an interest in one of them, and another in the other one. Each has since requested a copy of the Book of Mormon.

—Michigan

A friend has just returned from Conference and brought a book by Thelona D. Stevens, **A SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON, BOOK BY BOOK**. This is exactly what I have been looking for. Would you please send me one and also a catalogue of your materials?

—Alberta, Canada

I received **THE WITNESS** and thank you for it. Please change my address . . . I receive so many letters from "splinter" groups and was just ready to throw **THE WITNESS** into the fire when I noticed the name of Thelona D. Stevens. Looking again, I saw the familiar names of Roy Weldon, Henry Schaefer and Neil Steede . . . God speed your work. The Book of Mormon is a marvelous book.

—Oregon

TEOTIHUACÁN: CITY OF INTRIGUE

By Michael and Julie Gatrost



The Way of The Dead
Teotihuacán, Mexico

In the Mexican highlands, in a valley protected by an extinct volcano, lie the monumental remains of an ancient civilization. It was here in the year 1519 that the Spanish conqueror Hernan Cortes fled after a treacherous act of infamy in attacking the nobility of the Aztecs, an act which brought swift retribution from Montezuma, the Aztec emperor.

The shadows of two great pyramidal mounds went unnoticed, while less than two hundred men, the remnants of Cortes' forces, all of them wounded, faced an overwhelming number of enemy warriors. Tens of thousands of Indians crowded into the valley wearing shields, plumed helmets and carrying banners, convinced they had come to witness the death of every Spaniard. Only a daring charge into the center of the enemy forces which caused widespread panic among the Indians allowed Cortes to live another day. Decimated, bedraggled, and in fear of their lives, the Spaniards paid little attention to the amazing sight around them of a great sleeping city.

Cortes' was never to learn who had built the great ceremonial center, whence the builders had come, or where they had gone. Nor would succeeding generations unravel the mysteries of the city. It is only now that the riddle of their nature has begun to unfold.

CITY OF THE GODS

Named Teotihuacán or "City of the Gods" by the Indians because of the number of temples found in it, the ancient city continues to enchant all who visit it with the intrigue of its origins and its builders.

What is known, is that from approximately A.D. 1 through A.D. 150 the City experienced a major period of growth which involved many diverse groups. Interestingly during this period, an explosive transformation in the realm of social, economic, and religious life took place until it became both the greatest market place and the greatest religious center of its time.

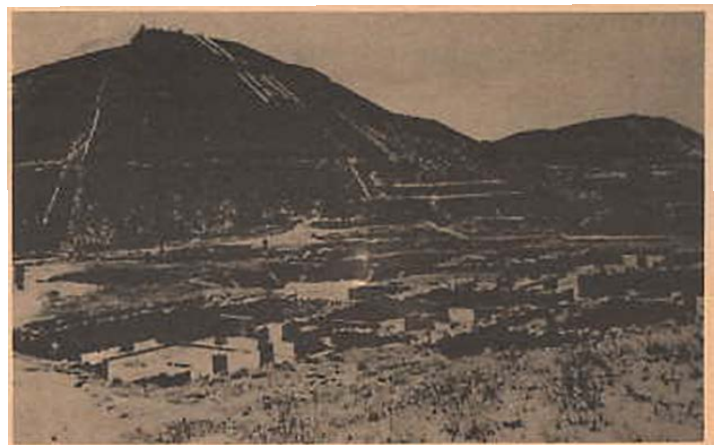
RELIGIOUS PLANNING

Having been called a "sacred metropolis", the city was striking in its religious emphasis. A basic cruciform (cross-shaped) plan of the city probably was established "around the time of Christ". A majestic avenue, named the "Street of the Dead", by natives who believed the mounds which flanked it were tombs, is the central focus of the planning. It is along this avenue, which extends over a distance of three miles, that the highest concentration of religious building took place. Over 100 religious structures are prominent with over 23 temple complexes built along both sides of the street.

Rising high over the avenue are the two great pyramids, the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon. Both have been built over several times, but each is built on an earlier pyramid that was almost as high, each of which date to the period of Christ. Early accounts by the Spaniards tell of 18 foot high religious statues, covered with gold, standing on top of both the Sun and the Moon pyramid. The very existence of the Sun and the Moon pyramids is unmistakable evidence of the vigor and power of the city as a sacred center. One early archaeologist, Leopoldo Batres, believed that the Sun Pyramid must have been dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, the mysterious bearded white God told of in legends by the Indians.

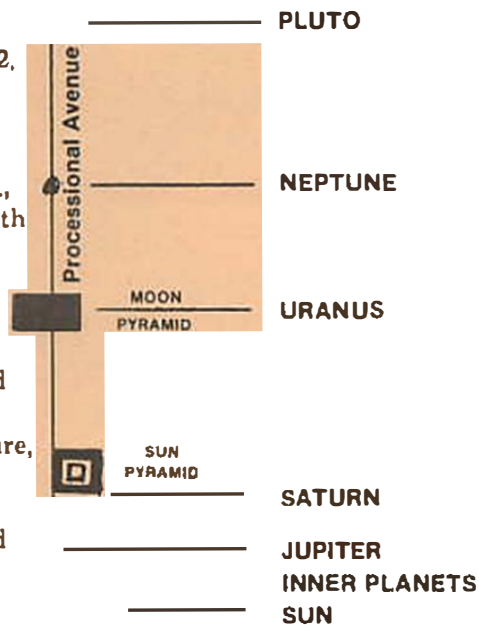
A CELESTIAL DESIGN?

But what was the significance of the temple complexes, many of which were in threes, and the other structures along the "Way of the Dead?" The idea that the smaller mounds could represent planets or other stars was put forth by Stanbury Hager. Hager believed the Way of the Dead which was also known as the Way of the Stars might represent the milky way. He pointed out that to Indians in the United States, the Milky Way was known as the Path of the Dead because spirits were believed to pass to and from it. To Hager, it appeared that Teotihuacán had been a sacred city, because it reproduced on earth a celestial plan of the Skyworld!



Pyramid of The Moon

It was not until 1972, that an American engineer and mathematician, Hugh Harleston, Jr., became obsessed with the beauty and challenge of Teotihuacán. Knowing that the Sun Pyramid served as a geodetic clock, and another structure, the Citadel, as a gigantic calendar, Harleston wondered whether the great avenue itself had a more complex function. Using field



measurements upon a theory that large percentage points coincided with definite markers, a deliberate pattern of relationships began to emerge. The result was startling. Harleston believed the builders of Teotihuacán had built the "Way of the Dead" as a scale model of the solar system! Starting with the center of the Quezalcoatl pyramid as a mark for the sun and measuring northward up the avenue, Harleston found that all the known planets fell on definite markers which were asymmetrically spaced.

THE TEOTICHUCÁN BUILDERS HAD KNOWN THE ORBITS OF THE PLANETS, 1500 YEARS BEFORE THEIR EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS HAD DISCOVERED THE PLANETS!

Sometime after A.D. 750 Teotihuacan was a ghost town, suddenly abandoned, leaving its mysteries as shrouded when Cortes first passed by until today. But is it any mystery that this city that dates during the time of the Book of Mormon records could combine diverse groups joined by a common bond? That an intensely religious people acquired a remarkable knowledge of the Universe? Could it be that the Sun and Moon pyramids along with the lesser structures reflected not only the solar system but celestial glories? Does not the mystery of these people unfold, when we consider the great impact that the appearance of Christ would have had upon them?

Only one record remains to tell the story.

And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and

every man did deal justly one with another.

And the Lord did prosper them exceedingly, in the land: Yea, insomuch that they did build cities again . . .

And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

IV Nephi 1:3,9,19

References.

- (1) Urbanization of Teotihuacán, Mexico — Renée Miller, University of Texas Press, 1973
- (2) Mysteries of the Mexican Pyramids — Peter Tompkins, Harper & Row, 1976.
- (3) The Book of Mormon



YOU ASKED US . . .

Q. Please explain the statement that all Jews are Israelites but not all Israelites are Jews.

A. God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen. 32:28). Israel fathered twelve sons. Logically, all of Israel's sons were Israelites. One of his sons was Judah, whose posterity later became known as Jews.

After their sojourn in Egypt, the Israelites, led by Moses, moved into the land of Canaan. For many generations the Israelites were recognized as a single nation, although they had no central form of government. After they established a monarchy woes developed. During the reign of Solomon taxes soared and the people suffered. When Solomon's son, Rehoboam, began his reign, dissatisfaction culminated in withdrawal of ten tribes, who established themselves in the northern part of Canaan with Jeroboam as king (I Kings 11:26-32; 12:1-17). They were identified as the Northern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Israel.

At the time of the secession, Judah alone remained loyal to Rehoboam (I Kings 12:17), and constituted the Southern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Judah. They were known as Jews, and being descendants of Israel, of course they were Israelites.

Hence, all Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites (those of the Northern Kingdom) are Jews.

—T.D.S.

Q. Which ones of the Lost tribes of Israel were the Book of Mormon people from?

A. The most ancient Book of Mormon colonists were the Jaredites. They came to Ancient America long before the establishment of the tribes of Israel.

The colony led from Jerusalem by Lehi, which later became the Nephites, were of the tribe of Manasseh (Alma 8:3).

The Mulekites, also called the people of Zarahemla, were of the tribe of Judah. Mulek, their leader, was a son of Zedekiah, king of Jerusalem (Omni 1:26; Helaman 3:56; Jeremiah Chapters 36-39).

—T.D.S.



Study Along

with

Thelona Stevens

*God has commanded,
"Seek learning even by study,
and also by faith."
Doctrine and Covenants 85:36*



**Thelona
Stevens**

We are planning in forthcoming issues of THE WITNESS for our readers to have the opportunity to study selected portions of the Book of Mormon, with supporting Bible, Inspired Version and Doctrine and Covenants references.

If you and your family have not had a definite program of regular prayerful study, read along with us.

A prime objective is to help those of you who have found it difficult to "settle down" and read the Book of Mormon with a purpose and with joy.

We believe this will assist you in —

1. Being obedient to the Divine commandment to study
2. To develop spiritually
3. To establish regular study habits—each study session, regardless of how brief, preceded by a prayer for understanding and enrichment.
4. To gain new insights and appreciation of God's Word

For this issue, CHRIST APPEARS TO THE NEPHITES

Special emphasis: BAPTISM
Read III Nephi 5: 1-46
And all references as set forth

BAPTISM

"Ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do, that shall ye also do."

III Nephi 12:34

"Follow me and do the things which ye have seen me do."

II Nephi 13:15

Jesus taught by precept and by example. In the matter of baptism, as in all things, Jesus showed the Nephites the way (II Nephi 13:9-16, 21).

Baptism actually consists of two parts:

1. Baptism of the physical being, by water
2. Baptism of the spirit within, by "fire and the Holy Ghost"

Baptism by water, a requirement:

After repentance (II Nephi 13:14; Moroni 8:28, 29).

By servants with Christ-given authority (III Nephi 5:21-46)

For all who reach the age of accountability (D. & C. 16:6d)

Not for little children (Mosiah 1:14; Moroni Chap. 8)

(Children are old enough at 8 years—Gen. 17:11; D. & C. 68:4)

Method—immersion (III Nephi 5:24-26)

Purpose:

Remission of sin (II Nephi 11:48; III Nephi 3:69)

Witness to the Father—

Determination to be obedient to his commandments (II Nephi 13:9)

Willingness to take the name of Christ (II Nephi 13:16) (Baptism is a witness that one has taken upon him the name of Jesus Christ.)

Desire to be eligible for eternal salvation (II Nephi 13:21)

Baptism was practiced prior to Jesus' coming, even from the days of Adam (Gen. 6:61-67), which was known to the Nephites (I Nephi 1: 158-162). The Nephites understood and practiced baptism, looking forward to the coming of Christ (Mosiah 9:44; III Nephi 3:62-70).

When Jesus appeared to the Nephites and commanded that they be baptized, it is noteworthy that he also commanded that they should not argue about it, saying "there shall be no disputations" among them (III Nephi 5:21-23). They doubtlessly would have argued that they had already been baptized (III Nephi 3:67-69). Baptism before the coming of Jesus, of course, had been under the old covenant. Read the wording of the baptismal covenant prior to Christ (Mosiah 9:44). Compare this with the wording required by Christ (III Nephi 5:25, D. & C. 17:21).

Those willing to accept Christ's offering on the cross had to be baptized under the new covenant. When the Church was set up in 1830, many who had been baptized

prior to the establishment of the Church argued that it was not necessary for them to be baptized again. Study Doctrine and Covenants 20 for their answer.

Those authorized by Christ began at once their baptizing and teaching (III Nephi 9:12-14). Not only the people at large, but also the "elders, priests, and teachers were baptized" (Moroni 6:2,3). All thus being brought under the covenant of Christ were a part of his Church under the fullness of the gospel law (III Nephi 12:13). By the end of the 36th year (A.D. 36), everyone in the land (Nephites and Lamanites) had been converted to Christ (IV Nephi 1:3).

Baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost:

Baptism by water comes by one's volition, but baptism by "fire and the Holy Ghost" can come only as a gift from God. When one has been baptized by water, followed by the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, there comes baptism by God of the spirit within, or the "inner man" (Gen. 6:67-69; Ephesians 3:16). Baptism, or the flooding of the inner being with the Spirit of God, is "baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost," as promised in the Scriptures:

II Nephi 13:16-18, 24-26

III Nephi 5:46-49

Mark 1:6; Acts 19:1-5

The Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, is called by various names in the Book of Mormon (as well as in the other Scriptures), such as:

The Holy Spirit of God — Alma 3:78

His Holy Spirit — I Nephi 1:49

His Spirit — I Nephi 6:23

The Spirit of Christ — Moroni 7:14

The Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent — Mosiah 3:3

The Holy Ghost — II Nephi 13:26; III Nephi 5:33, 37

Some functions of the Holy Ghost:

Testifies (witnesses) of Christ

—*Jacob 5:19,20*

—*III Nephi 5:33*

Makes "new creatures" of "reborn" men"

—*II Cor. 5:17*

—*John 3:3-5*

Can "speak the words of Christ" with "the tongue of angels"

—*II Nephi 13:17; 14:3*

—*Alma 16:145, 146*

Teaches all truth

Moroni 10:5

Gives the repentant knowledge of forgiveness

—*Enos 1:5-7*

—*Alma 17:16-22*

Teaches men to pray

—*II Nephi 14:11, 12*

—*Alma 16:219-224*

Persuades men to do good

—*Ether 1:106-107*

—*Moroni 7:11*

Brings men to see eye to eye

—*Mosiah 9:54*

Directs a people as to when to go to war

—*Alma 20:51, 52*

—*Alma 21: 135-138*

—*D & C. 95:5, 6*

Is the medium through which all the gifts of the gospel are bestowed

—*III Nephi 13:59*

—*Moroni 10:7-13*

Reveals God's will

—*Jacob 5:20*

Unfolds mysteries

—*I Nephi 3:30*

—*Alma 9:18*

Commissions (gives authority) to God's servants

—*I Nephi 3:36*

Gives precepts

—*II Nephi 12:39*

Softens the hearts of men

—*Alma 14:30*

—*II Nephi 7:28*

—*Mosiah 9:156*

Is the medium by which the Lord directs meetings in his church

—*III Nephi 13:59*

—*Moroni 6:9*

Is the means by which the Father bears record of the Son and the Son bears record of the Father

—*III Nephi 5:33, 37*

All good things come from God through his Spirit

—*Moroni 7:11*

—*Omni 1:45*

God works the same way by his Spirit always

—*I Nephi 3:27-32*

Sin against the Holy Ghost:

There is no forgiveness for denial of the Holy Ghost. After the Father has revealed by the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, to deny this is a sin for which there is no forgiveness in this world or in the world to come (D. & C. 76:4d,h):

II Nephi 13:18

Mosiah 1:83-85

Alma 19:8

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QUESTIONS

(These questions are to assist you in evaluating your grasp of the scriptural references which you have read.)

1. What place does repentance have in the ordinance of baptism?
2. Discuss the purposes of baptism by water.
3. Why was Jesus baptized, since he was without sin?
4. When did the Nephites first practice baptism?
5. Why did Jesus command the converts who had assembled at the temple after the great storm to be baptized again?
6. Give your explanation of the baptism of "fire and the Holy Ghost."
7. How many functions of the Holy Ghost can you name?
8. Discuss the necessity for being true and faithful to Christ after the Father has revealed him by the Holy Ghost.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Foundation for Research on Ancient America (FRAA) held meetings during the recent World Conference which were attended by overflow, enthusiastic crowds. We express deep appreciation to our speakers, Richard A. DeLong, T. Evan Thomas, and Ray Treat for their inspiring presentations on the Book of Mormon.

Our special thanks goes to Patty Lowman of the Indiana-Kentucky District and Betty Ray of the Central Indiana District for their talent and dedication in making two banners, displayed during the week of FRAA meetings. They depicted the symbol of Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, in brilliant colors

Our thanks also goes to Scott Nixon of Independence, Missouri, the artist who supplied a number of the scenes used in the Audio-Visual Slide Set, "The Jaredite Journey," without which this set could not have been introduced at these conference meetings. Scott also did the lettering for the many posters used in the Comalcalco display.

Finally, we thank all who contributed in various ways, some by many hours of work, to make our conference meetings successful.



ABOUT THE FOUNDATION.

HISTORY

THE FOUNDATION for Research on Ancient America (FRAA) was begun in 1952, as a research committee on the Book of Mormon, approved by the First Presidency of the RLDS Church. Roy Weldon, of Warrensburg, Missouri, was its first chairman.

Organized in 1966, as a not-for-profit corporation, the Foundation and its members continue to seek to serve the Church by advancing the use of the Book of Mormon through archaeological research, testimonies, articles, and related projects.

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Have you a question?

WRITE THE EDITORS. We cannot answer each question personally, but will print those which we think would be of most interest to THE WITNESS readers.

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