



The Witness

Newsletter Of The Foundation For Research On Ancient America

JULY, 1987

NEWSLETTER NO. 58

AND IT CAME TO PASS: UPDATE

by Brenda and Linda Trimble

Brenda and Linda Trimble, members of the Research Committee of FRAA, attended the 1987 Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop held in March at the University of Texas at Austin. Linda Schele, internationally recognized as an authority on Mayan glyphs, supervised the annual activities. The following report is submitted as an update for Book of Mormon believers who are interested in this area of archaeology.

The Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop of 1985 brought forth an important piece of information with regard to the Book of Mormon. One of the Mayan glyphs had been deciphered as "it came to pass" - one of the most frequently used phrases in the Book of Mormon (1908 edition). Although viewed as a supportive testimony for the Book of Mormon, this new information did not shed any light into the meaning or significance of the phrase.

For years, Book of Mormon scholars have wrestled with this problem. According to one Hebrew scholar, "it came to pass" means "...little more ... when translated than 'now it happened'." Others have suggested that it means that the record had been abridged. New insights gained at the Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop of 1987, however, have helped in filling in the gaps in our understanding of this matter.

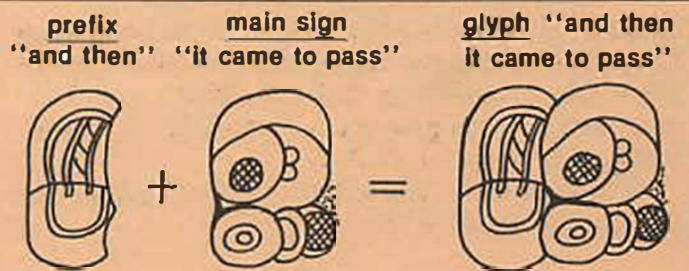
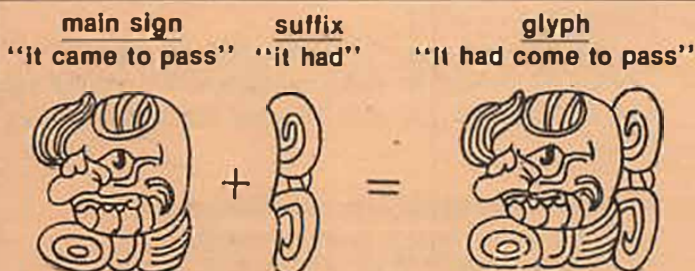
For a brief background in ancient Maya writing, Mayan hieroglyphs are made up of main signs which would be the equivalent to a root word in the English language. To these, other signs would be added which would serve as prefixes and suffixes, thus slightly altering the meaning or tense of the word. An important development in the deciphering of the glyphs was a discovery that the glyphs were phonetic. Much advancement has been made in decipherment of glyphs by comparing sounds derived from the glyphs with similar sounds found in various Mayan dialects in use today.

As for the "it came to pass" glyph, it was learned that with the main sign, "...the first sound... might be U followed by phonetic ti, to give the term ut or uti. Looking for this term... in dictionaries and colonial documents proved to be productive for ut means 'to happen or to come to pass'."

Attached to the main sign of the "it came to pass" glyph would be a prefix or Posterior Date/Event Indicator, or a suffix or Anterior Date/Event Indicator. The prefix has the phonetic sound of iw'al meaning "And then." The suffix has the phonetic sound of ix or ih meaning "had." Thus, "it came to pass" could be changed to "and then it came to pass" or "it had come to pass."

Perhaps the most important aspect of this information which aids in our understanding of the

(continued on page 14)



Mayans used variant forms in their symbols for the main sign of a phrase without changing the reading of that phrase. For this reason, the style of the glyph "it came to pass" may differ without changing the reading of the phrase.

TANTALIZING GLIMPSES - FAINT WHISPERS THE GREAT BREAKTHROUGH - PART THREE*

by Roy Weldon



THE TOLTEC-NAHUA RENAISSANCE

Nigel Davies, in *The Toltecs, Until the Fall of Tula*, writes:

One is thus in effect confronted with three distinct layers of Toltecs. First, there are the legendary Toltecs, the inventors of all science and wisdom...

Davies calls attention to Mexican archaeologist Ignaci Bernal and fifteen samples of carbon dating from Teotihuacan "giving figures from A.D. 50 to 370." The approximate date for Christ's visitation and the Nephite golden age is from A.D. 34 to the Battle of Cumorah A.D. 384.

In a letter to his son Moroni before the Battle of Cumorah Mormon wrote:

... we know that many of our brethren have dissented over unto the Lamanites, and many more will also dissent over unto them.

*Continued from *The Witness*, No. 57.

Following a dark age period, archaeologists refer to a post-classic culture era to approximately A.D. 800. I pass this by to get to the golden age period of the Toltecs, the A.D. 950-1250 era.

A perusal of Nigel Davies' above-mentioned book indicates the apex of the Toltec time to be A.D. 1000-1100.

The latest archaeological research accounts stagger the imagination. There is a suggestion of a prophetic reformation "which burst forth with such remarkable force on Mesoamerica." Davies continues, "Descriptions abound of the Toltecs as the most fabulous of artists and craftsmen... and a city resplendent in art and luxury."

Michael D. Coe in *America's First Civilization* comments,

The Aztecs admit that there had been a glorious empire before their own... by a people called Toltec... which by traditional accounts... is described in such enthusiastic terms by the Aztec that one begins to think of some 'big rock candy mountain'.

L. Taylor Hansen in *He Walked the Americas*, uses five pages for legendary wonders told of the fabulous capital of the Toltecs. Archaeologists and historians equate middle American civilization with ancient Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome. We come now to the countdown:

GLIMPSE NUMBER ONE

The Mid-East civilizations each had in their midst Hebraic prophets and sacred scripture—Moses in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, Paul in Greece (Corinthians) and Paul in Rome (Romans).

GLIMPSE NUMBER TWO

Abraham says, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

The ups and downs between Moroni and Columbus should be expected to revolve on the same axle as between Lehi and Moroni and motivated as in Job.

Oh that my words were now written!
Oh that they were printed in a book!
That they were graven with an iron
pen and lead in the rock forever!

For I know that my Redeemer liveth,
and that he shall stand at the latter
day upon the earth.

GLIMPSE NUMBER THREE— THE THREE GLORIES

In *Mythology of the Americas*, the authors Burland, Nicholson, and Osborne comment that there were "three different heavens to which the Nahua dead were supposed to go."¹⁰ They continue:

So we have a series of three paradises, each more perfect than the one below and to be attained only by ever more intense spiritualization and sacrifice of the gross physical world.¹¹

The word paradise is mentioned five times in the Book of Mormon, but there are no three glories mentioned as in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 76 and I Corinthians 15:40,41 I.V. Where then did the Nahua-Nephites get their three glory theology somewhere between Moroni and Columbus?

GLIMPSE NUMBER FOUR— PUNISHMENT FOR ADULTERY

Frederick Peterson, in *Ancient Mexico* says:

Adulterers were sentenced to be stoned . . . they were taken to the town square, where many people united in throwing stones like rain upon them. . . .¹²

This was the law in Aztec courts when Cortez arrived. This and other Mosaic practices not mentioned in our Book of Mormon are evidently on the brass plates along with the total Nephite records deposited in the Hill Cumorah and still there. By what means did Mosaic rites reach the Aztecs over one thousand years later if there were no prophets and even some Nahua Nephite scripture yet to come forth?

The records of Jesuit chronicles speak of the Aztec libraries containing "an encyclopedic gamut of information . . . their sciences . . . secrets of religion."¹³

Conquistador Bernal Diaz says he saw Montezuma's library. "And he had a great house full of books."¹⁴ All were burned by orders of the high Catholic Prelate Zumaraga.

GLIMPSE NUMBER FIVE—THE POPOL VUH

The Popol Vuh was written by a Maya Quiché wise man. It was discovered in a monastery in Guatemala in 1854 and translated into English in 1954. It contains numerous affinities with the Book of Mormon account as well as the Bible. This 260 page book is available from the Herald House.

GLIMPSE NUMBER SIX—TEO MOXTLI

Lewis Spence, noted British archaeologist, in *The Myths of Mexico and Peru* writes:

A piece of Nahua literature, the disappearance of which is surrounded by circumstances of the deepest mystery, is the Teoamoxtli (Divine Book), which is alleged by certain chroniclers to have been the work of the ancient Toltecs. Ixtlilxochitl, a native Mexican

author, states that it was written by a Tezucan wise man, one Heumatzin, about the end of the seventh century and that it described the pilgrimage of the Nahua from Asia, their laws, manners, and customs and their religious tenets, science and arts.¹⁵

Two writers, Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, have written a 450 page book, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Deseret Press, 1950). It is devoted to a comparison in depth between Ixtlilxochitl's account of the Teoamoxtli and the Nephite record. The similarities are both numerous and convincing.

IN CONCLUSION

This series does not pretend to be either scholarly or dogmatic; neither am I suggesting how many glimpses, whispers, clues or implications equal a fact. This work is an exploration of one of the options for the great biblical breakthrough in the last days as already noted by Isaiah 2 and 29, Daniel 2 as well as other scriptures in the Bible.

Other options for an organized one world government of peace, justice and the common good for all such as the United Nations, the New Age Movement, the World Council of Churches, and less known movements such as World Association of World Federalists, American Movement for World Government, etc. appear to be entitled to an objective assessment by the reader.

I close with a statement from *The Life of the Master*, by John D. Watson:

Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian tomb, six inches square, containing fifty words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century.¹⁶

The above quote and the contents of this chapter I leave with the reader to ponder.
(To be continued in the next issue.)

1. Nigel Davies, *The Toltecs, Until the Fall of Tula* (Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), p. 55.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
3. Moroni 9:25
4. Davies, p. 73.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
6. Michael D. Coe, *America's First Civilization* (Princeton, New Jersey: American Heritage, 1968), p. 13.
7. Taylor Hansen, *He Walked the Americas* (Amherst, Wisconsin: Amherst Press), pp. 113-117.
8. Genesis 22:22 Inspired Version.
9. Job 19:23-25 Inspired Version.
10. Burland, Nicholson, Osborne, *Mythology of the Americas*, p. 153.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
12. Frederick Peterson, *Ancient Mexico*, 1962, p. 122.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
15. Lew Spence, *The Myths of Mexico and Peru* (Nickerson and Co., 1874), p. 45.
16. John D. Watson, *The Life of the Master*, p. 7.



A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE*

by Lyle Smith



Archaeological studies have only scratched the surface of the ruins in Mesoamerica.

The following excerpts from an article by Abraham Rabinovich are presented for two reasons. First, the people of Lehi and Mulek came directly from Jerusalem close to the time of the destruction of Solomon's Temple. Second, these new finds point out a major premise in current archaeology, which is that current archaeological studies have only scratched the surface of the known ruins. This is especially true in Mesoamerica (southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador) history.

"The TEMPLE Mount reconstructed by Herod was twice the size of the walled esplanade built 1,000 years earlier by Solomon on the hilltop threshing-floor that his father, David, had purchased in order to provide a permanent home for the Holy Ark. That temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. . . .

"Herod doubled the size of the Mount by extending it Southward and Westward in an operation entailing awesome logistics. The historian Josephus relates that Herod's men spent eight years assiduously gathering supplies—quarring stones, dressing them and transporting them to the building-site with a fleet of 1,000 wagons.

"The stones were of enormous size, some of them weighing close to 50 tons. Masons carved them with distinctive margins and planed them down so that they could be fitted tightly together without the need for mortar. Only when all was assembled did construction begin.

"Ten thousand skilled workmen were employed plus 1,000 specially trained priests—it was only priests who could carry out work in the Temple itself. The actual construction of the main structures was remarkably speedy—only three years. . . .

"The retaining walls of the artificial mount rose 30 metres above the streets at its foot, while in some places the foundations extended 20 metres below the street to bedrock, making a structure equivalent in height to a 17-story building. The esplanade, which rested on a series of arches, was 485 metres long."

Many feel that Mesoamerica is the basic area of Book of Mormon history. Therefore new finds such as the above can be expected on a regular basis.

*Excerpts from "A Place of Pilgrimage", *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, January 3, 1987, pp. 12-13.



JEWISH THOUGHT IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

by Carol Turner

I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true.

1 Nephi 1:1,2

An appropriate question for us is "How important is the Book of Mormon?" It should be most prominent in our study and teaching. It should rise to the top of our testimony. This place of prominence is designated by God himself. God presented to mankind the Book of Mormon even before he restored His church in the latter days, His church which he said is the "only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth"—D&C 1:5e.

The purpose of His church is to establish Zion. All those who will have any part in Zion must believe in the Book of Mormon. For can one participate in the Zionic enterprise which includes the restoration of the House of Israel, and not believe in Israel's scriptures?

Of course we have been promised even more records/scriptures which will come forth to be added to the records of the House of Israel already in our possession: Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants.

The "learning of the Jews" is the first chiasm which appears in the Book of Mormon. Therefore understanding the learning of the Jews is imperative if we are to appreciate fully the scriptures, since they are a product of the House of Israel.

Another reason for the prominence of the Book of Mormon is that the Lord has said that "this condemnation. . . shall remain. . . until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon"—D&C 83:8b. So this is not to be just a book of moral stories. Rather it is the only tangible evidence that a restoration ever occurred. Therefore we cannot, we must not relegate it to some inferior position since it holds such a primary position in God's purposes.

Belief in the Book of Mormon will be required of us as believers in the Restoration and by ALL who will be a part of celestial living.

I mentioned the "true and living church" because it is inevitable that a "true and living God" is familiar to the religion of Israel. It was a common way of describing Israel's God, because the prophets struggled continually against gods that were not gods. Therefore we would expect to find

this same description in the Book of Mormon about the "true and living God." Indeed Nephi (1 N 5:112), Alma (Al 3:25; 5:12), Amulek (Al 8:77-80), Mormon (3 N 14:1) and Moroni (Mn 4:94) continue as did the Old Testament prophets to describe God as the true and living God.

SHAVUAH: OATH

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Oaths

Oaths are another ingredient which runs consistently through the scriptures of Israel. The word oath in Hebrew is *Shavuah*. This word comes from the same root and is related to the word for the number seven, which is the most sacred number. To Israel, indeed to many mid-eastern peoples, oaths are frequent. It is a vow or testament between two parties with God called as witness: "As the Lord liveth." Oaths were used in the Old Testament to swear curses and also to ratify covenants.

"Among both Arabs and Jews, an oath without God's name is no oath."

"As the Lord liveth" appears many times in the Book of Mormon. These can be identified in the *Book of Mormon Concordance*. In 3 N 5:81 Jesus speaks about swearing by the Lord. Interestingly "as the Lord liveth" also appears in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 8:1a, 15:2d), an added testimony to the "heavenly language" that comes through the Lord's prophets and appears in the Lord's scriptures.

Noachide Laws'

Noachide Laws are outlined in the Book of Mormon. The Noachide laws are seven laws considered as minimal moral duties on all men:

1. Abstinence from idolatry
God fearers—"The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death"—Prov. 14:27.

1. I. R. Rosenblatt, *Relations Between Jewish and Muslim Laws*, 1936, p. 231.
2. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, S.V. "Noachide laws," Vol. 12, 1972, p. 1189.

2. Abstinence from murder
3. Abstinence from theft
4. Abstinence from blasphemy
5. Abstinence from sexual perversion
6. Abstinence from eating flesh/blood of a living animal
7. Duty of promoting justice/injunction to establish a legal system.

The House of Israel is obligated to observe the whole law, while Gentiles as “sons of the covenant of Noah” are obliged to keep the Noachide laws. Examples of consideration to these laws are found in Mosiah 1:44; Alma 1:27; Alma 14:6; Alma 19:1-12.

Priest Supports Himself

Also to be found in the Book of Mormon is the concept of the religion of Israel that the priest should support himself.

An example is found in the Old Testament 1 Samuel 12:1-5 with a parallel example found in Mosiah 1:46 as King Benjamin explains his position to his people. Samuel, the Old Testament prophet, was considered incorruptible, refusing compensation and laboring with his own hands. This theme is repeated by Alma in Mosiah 9:57 and Mosiah 11:155. Alma, the son of Alma, takes up the theme in Alma 1:38 and 16:41.

Genealogy

The religion of Israel places great importance on genealogy and lineage. Ancestry was very important as priesthood went from father to son. In Alma 8:1-3 and Alma 25:25 we find examples of establishing one’s identity through genealogy.

In Numbers 15:24-29, provision is made in the Mosaic law (remember the Book of Mormon peoples observed the law) for those who ignorantly sin, as well as those who willfully rebel. This is mentioned by prophets of the Book of Mormon. King Benjamin in his sermon refers to this in Mosiah 1:107. Some other examples are found in Mosiah 8:62; Alma 19:109-111; 3 Nephi 3:20.

Perhaps a most compelling incident of an example of the religion of Israel at work occurs in the episode of King Benjamin. The “new year” which was on the first day of the seventh month, was a time for inauguration of new governments. David anointed Solomon during this festival. We find King Benjamin desirous to gather the people together to proclaim his successor, to inaugurate their new king, and to even give them a name, “the children of Christ”—Mosiah 3:8. They gathered at the temple, the logical place to celebrate this feast. They offered sacrifice and gave thanks to the Lord God, their king. They gathered as families to give thanks for a new year. This occurs in the fall season when crops had been harvested and time permits such a gathering.

And what does King Benjamin rehearse before them? The law and the prophets. He begins in verse 38 of the first chapter of Mosiah to explain what he has tried to do for his people. The Noachide laws are mentioned in verse 44. He reminds them that he has labored with his own hands for his own support. In verse 47 he says he does this to have a clear conscience. The days between the new year and the day of atonement (tenth day of the seventh month) are days of repentance, contrition, days of awe, and the time to set things aright with their fellowmen and with God. King Benjamin is trying to do this, even as we are instructed in latter days to make things right before partaking of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, at which time we remember the infinite atonement. King Benjamin rehearses carefully the commandments. We find a parallel in 1 Kings 2:1-9 when David is preparing to anoint Solomon.

In Mosiah 1:64, again King Benjamin seems to be preparing for the day of atonement when he mentions ridding his garments of their blood. He reminds his people of the old world and new world prophets who have kept records and whose records they have and must obey. Numbers 15:30-31 finds echoes in verse 79 of Mosiah 1.

Then King Benjamin gives us the testimony of the definition of a prophet: one who is sent by and speaks for the Christ (Mosiah 1:109). Indeed, can one be a prophet without a testimony of the Christ?

In Mosiah 2:29 King Benjamin rehearses the teaching of Proverbs 14:31. When he finishes speaking, he finds the people on their faces, worshipping the Lord, even as the priests found the people at the dedication of Solomon’s temple which can be reviewed in 1 Kings 8:10-63.

“Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one.” This is central to the religion of Israel and is referred to as the *Shema*. Review Deut. 6:1-4.

Now hear the New World *Shema*:

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth;

Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth;

Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend.

And again: Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you:

And now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them.

—Mosiah 2:13-17

Then a pledge is made by the people that what King Benjamin has taught and what they have heard is true. And they will be obedient! (Mosiah 3) Even as Moses extracted a similar oath of obedience in Exodus 24:3,7; so King Benjamin secures a

pledge. It ends with a sealing of the people to a covenant with their God, even as the House of Israel vows with their God on the day of atonement.

At the end of this festival on the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the feast of Succoth -Tabernacles - Ingathering. The 1986 Book of Mormon Conference on October 18 coincided with Succoth in the religion of Israel. It is one of the pilgrim festivals and reminds the people of their days of dwelling in booth/tabernacles in the wilderness. In Jewish tradition the first feast celebrated in Solomon's temple was Succoth.

This feast still has a part to play, for the Christ has yet to celebrate this feast. He will yet comply with the law, as giver of this law.

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

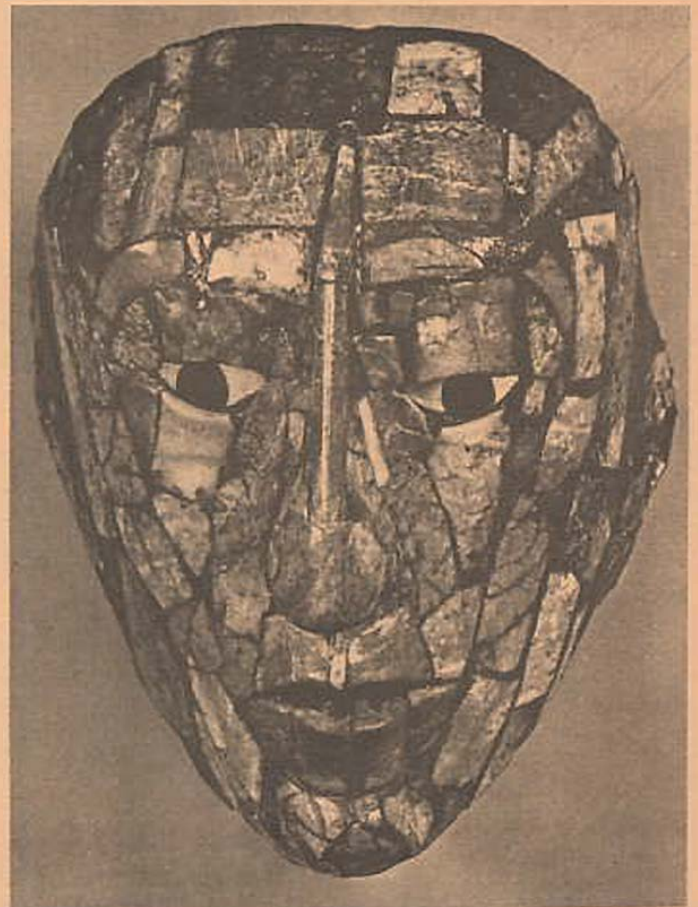
And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

---Zechariah 14:16-19



IMPRESSIVE TOMB AT PALENQUE



The above pictures are shown as added interest to the July calendar picture. (See page 13.) A stairway leads down sixty feet under the pyramid to a large vaulted room with decorated stucco walls. In the middle is a huge stone sarcophagus, the lid of which is shown above. It weighs some five tons and is decorated with superb bas-relief.

The jade mask pictured above had been placed on the man entombed at Palenque. There were also other jade pieces (see page 13). The priceless mask was on display at Mexico City in the National Museum of Anthropology and History. It was stolen in a recent burglary and will probably never be recovered.

THE LINEAGE OF TIME

by Frank A. Einhellg

God manifest Himself in the beginning of time
And in His own image He created.
He set before man a world of beauty and riches
And for a time His creation walked in that garden with Him.
But Oh, how short the time.

Then in that garden man took his own way
And he set before himself his own desires and pleasures.
So God provided time—time to perfect His creation,
But time was not enough.
For man's time was not used for good.

In the spectrum of man's rebellion, God reached out to save a remnant
And at His word Noah built a ship.
It sailed not for distant lands, nor for conquest or for pleasure,
But it weathered the storm according to God's plan.
But Oh, how short the season of remembrance.

Then as love waxed cold and law became bold,
The savior Christ was born.
And in that day a few rejoiced for the beauty of His plan,
So Christ touched the hearts of those who took time for Him.
But Oh, how few took that time.

Soon men spread their dominion far and wide
But as they conquered the Earth, they lost their way.
So again God acted to provide for the saving of His own
And He set His hand one more time to restore and refine,
For it was the hastening time.

And now as the time draws nigh, when men must choose or die
He calls to His presence all who would work.
For as ever, we are accountable one and all
The chances are slim and choices are few,
For Time runs near its end.

To each man a space for perfection is given
And God asks that care be taken.
For in our space as on Earth we dwell
There is no greater calling than the gospel we must spread.
And Oh, how short the time.

Frank Einhellg earned his Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Botany. For the past eighteen years he has been a Professor of Biology at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. He is an elder in the Sioux City, Iowa branch.





The Junior Witness

JULY, 1987

ISSUE 3

Obtaining the Brass Plates

by Alicia Sindt

About 600 years before Christ was born, there were many prophets in Jerusalem telling the people that they must repent or their beautiful city would be destroyed. One of these prophets was named Lehi. The people did not like being told of their evil, so they tried to kill the prophets.

One night, Lehi was warned in a dream to leave Jerusalem or he would be killed. So he and his family packed tents and fled into the wilderness. The Lord promised Lehi that he would give him land to inherit if they kept his commandments.

One of the commandments that the Lord gave Lehi was to send his sons back to Jerusalem to get the records of the Jews. This record was on brass plates and was kept by a man named Laban. It contained the five books of Moses, the prophecies of the holy prophets, and the genealogy of the tribe of Joseph.

When Lehi told his sons that they must go to Jerusalem to obtain the plates, his two oldest sons, Laman and Lemuel, complained. They said that their father was asking them to do something hard. Lehi explained to Nephi, his youngest son, that the Lord had commanded it.

Nephi said, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded. I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

Laman, Lemuel, Nephi and Sam traveled to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they drew lots as to who would ask Laban for the plates. The lot fell to Laman.

Laman went to Laban and asked for the plates. Laban became angry and threw Laman out calling him a robber and saying he would kill him.

Laman escaped and told his brothers what had happened. The brothers were ready to return to their father empty-handed. But Nephi had an idea. He told his brothers, "As the Lord liveth and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness, until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us. Let us go down to the land of our father's inheritance, for behold he left gold and silver and all manner of riches."

The brothers were persuaded. They followed Nephi's plan and took all their riches to Laban to trade for the plates. But Laban was a greedy man. He desired their riches and the plates, too. He sent his servants to kill them, and he kept their riches.

Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi had to flee for their lives. They hid in the cavity of a rock. Laman and Lemuel were very angry with Nephi and Sam. They began to smite them with a rod. As they were hitting them, an angel of the Lord appeared to them saying, "Why do ye smite your younger brother with a rod? Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him to be a ruler over you, and this because of your iniquities? Behold ye shall go up to Jerusalem again, and the Lord will deliver Laban into your hands."

Even though they had seen an angel, Laman and Lemuel doubted that the Lord could deliver Laban. Nephi convinced them to go with him at least to the walls of Jerusalem.

Nephi went alone to the house of Laban. When he got near Laban's house, he found a drunk man lying on the ground. He turned him over to discover it was Laban.

The Spirit of the Lord constrained Nephi to stay with Laban. But Nephi said in his heart, "Never at any time have I shed the blood of man. He did not wish to slay Laban."

The Spirit said unto him, "Stay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands. Behold the Lord stayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief."

Nephi pondered over these words. He remembered the promise of the Lord that if his seed obeyed the Lord's commandments that they would prosper in the land of promise. They could not keep the commandments unless Nephi obtained the plates on which the law was engraved.

Nephi obeyed the voice of the Spirit. He took Laban's sword and smote off his head. Then he took Laban's clothes and put them on. He went to the treasury of Laban. On the way, he saw the servant of Laban with the keys to the treasury. He commanded the servant who was named Zorabab, in a voice like Laban's to go with him.

(continued on page 2)

Obtaining The Brass Plates (continued from page 1)

to the treasury. Zoram thought Nephi was Laban. As an obedient servant he helped Nephi carry the plates to the older brothers who were waiting outside the walls.

Laman was frightened when he saw Nephi wearing Laban's clothing. He, Lemuel and Sam thought Laban had killed Nephi and would kill them also, so they began to

flee. Nephi called after them in his own voice and they returned. But Zoram began to tremble. Nephi grabbed him before he could flee and convinced him to join with his family in the wilderness.

Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi and Zoram all returned to the wilderness where their father waited. They had accomplished the r hard task because the Lord had helped them.



Color this picture of an angel of the Lord appearing to Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi.

SCRAMBLED SCRIPTURE

See if you can unscramble these words of Nephi. If you need help look in your Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 1:65.

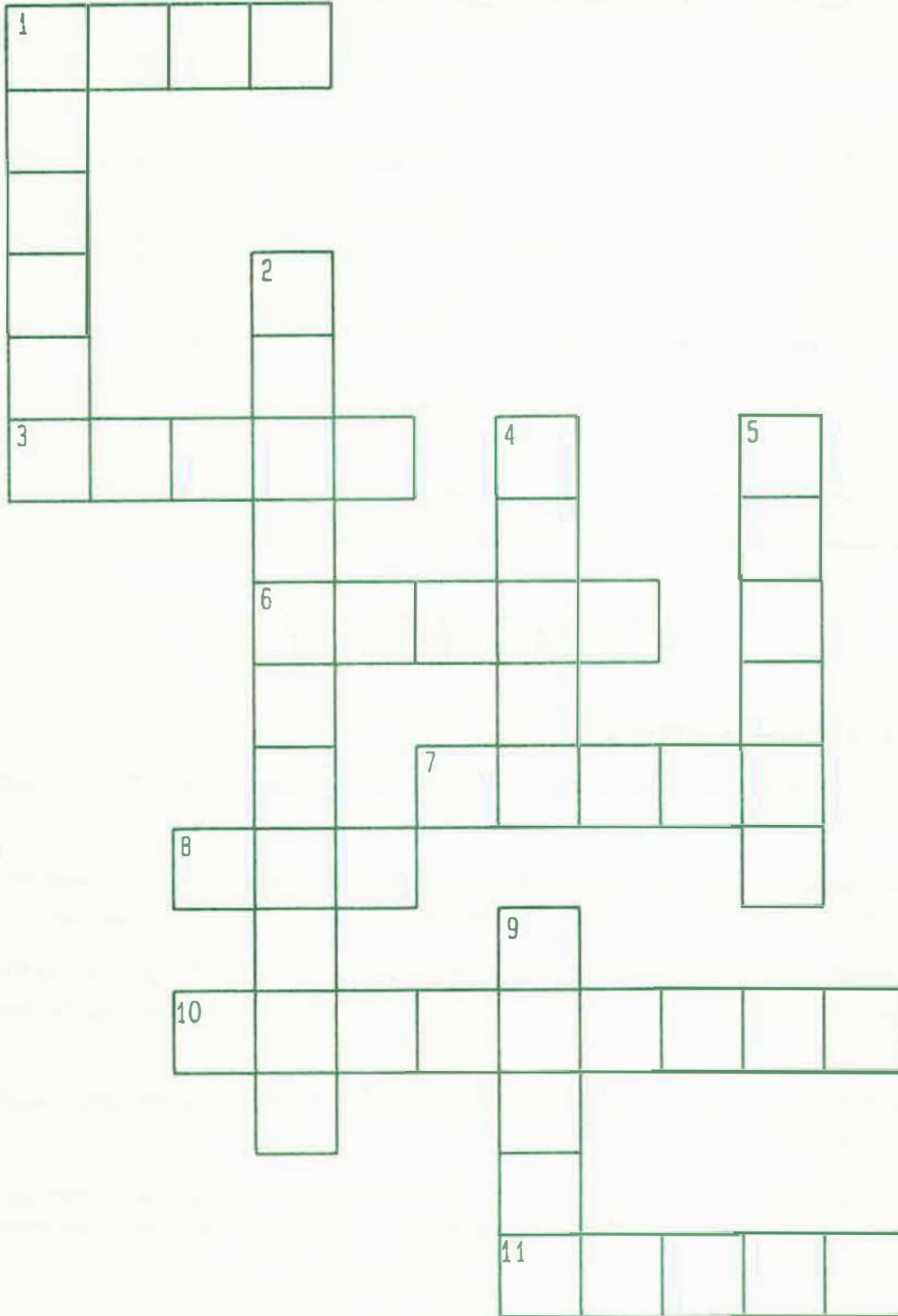
I WKON ATTH ETH LORD VIGHTE ON TNEMSCADONMM TNUO HTE NERDLICHC
OF EMN, SEAV EH AHLSL ERAPERP A YAW ROF MTHE ATTH HTYE YAM
MPLOICSHA HET GTNHI WHHCI EH HTEDNAMMOC MEHT.

WHO AM I?

Identify the following people:

1. I was a prophet of God and a descendant of Joseph. I left Jerusalem in 600 B.C. with my wife Sariah and my four sons. Who am I? _____
2. I was the official keeper of the records. I was a descendant of Joseph and a relative of Lehi. One of my servants was named Zoram. I was killed by my own sword. Who am I? _____
3. I was a leader in my family and became a leader of many people. I was the youngest of four sons. I followed God's commandments. I wore a disguise and obtained the brass plates. Who am I? _____
4. I was not only Laban's servant, but a slave. I gave Nephi the records. I became a free man and went with Lehi's group. Who am I? _____
5. My father and mother were Lehi and Sariah. I was the oldest of four sons. I persecuted my youngest brother. Laban became angry with me and called me a robber when I tried to get the brass plates? Who am I? _____
6. My father and mother were Lehi and Sariah. I was the second oldest son. I always agreed with my older brother and with him persecuted our youngest brother. An angel of the Lord appeared to us when we were smiting our brother with a rod. Who am I? _____

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



DOWN

1. Son of Lehi
2. Sons went to Jerusalem to get these
4. Servant of Laban
5. Laban called Laman one of these
9. Man who possessed the brass plates

ACROSS

1. Father of Nephi
3. Son of Lehi
6. Nephi killed Laban with this
7. To strike (Biblical)
8. Son of Lehi
10. List of forefathers
11. Son who was successful in obtaining the brass plates

“GATHERING IN ONE ALL THINGS” THE SCRIPTURES

Study
Along
With . . .

Thelona
Stevens



The gathering of God's people to a place of his choosing was planned before the world was formed. This was just one phase of the multigathering plan which God has for the world. That there would be a gathering was referred to when the Restoration Church was only about four months old, wherein God declared that “the fullness of times” he would “gather together in one all things” (D&C 26:3c).^{*} The Apostle Paul was inspired to express the same thing in almost identical words (Ephesians 1:10).^{*}

A consideration of “all things” suggests the gathering of:

- The Scriptures
- The Israelites
- The righteous
- All nations
- The wicked
- The land
- The waters
- Zion, the elect, the Church of the Firstborn

The “gathering in one” began in 1830.

Each of these categories constitutes a study in itself. We shall start with the first-named, the Scriptures.

^{*}Scriptural references are to:

- Inspired Version (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1944).
- Book of Mormon (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1908).
- Doctrine and Covenants (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1952).

GATHERING IN ONE THE SCRIPTURES

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon (March 1830) was the first step in the gathering together “in one” the Word of God, the Scriptures.

God's second step toward the ingathering of his Word was to repeat to Joseph Smith, Jr. instruction which had been given earlier to Enoch's people. This instruction constituted five revelations given to Enoch, which appear in the Doctrine and Covenants as Sections 77, 81, 89, 93, and 101.¹ This instruction was necessary that the church organized in 1830 might have essential knowledge for developing after the manner of Enoch's city.

The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in the 1950s supplied translations of practically all of the Old Testament into Aramaic and Hebrew and the New Testament into Greek. The first Greek translation of the Old Testament, it is claimed, was the Septuagint. Many sacred writings were lost through human error; others were purposely burned and destroyed. Some of the early translators, using the Septuagint version, freely admitted making “additions, corrections and subtractions.” (See quotations from Dupin's *Complete History of the Canon and Writings of the Books of the Old Testament*, quoted in the Preface to the Inspired Version.)

Because of the obvious errors and inconsistencies in the various translations and versions, there is a constant effort to produce better versions of the Bible. Since the originals of the Scriptures have never been found, it is impossible to compare existing works with the originals. Also, it is impossible for man to replace that which was lost. Only God could do that.

The Inspired Version is believed to supply by divine inspiration texts that had been omitted from the Bible manuscripts and versions. . . . It is evident that only divine inspiration could now supply those portions of the inspired book which have been omitted from the text by copyists, or which contain mistakes in the manuscripts themselves. That such mistakes exist is not denied by any biblical scholar who has examined the manuscripts, which contain various differences of great importance as well as some of a less serious nature. In restoring by inspiration texts that had been thus omitted, and in producing a version which removes much ambiguity and some evident lack of textual harmony, the renderings of the Inspired Version are therefore remarkably illuminating. This version also makes important corrections of the Authorized Version in doctrine and morals, but does not assume to be a word for word translation of every verse in the Bible.²

Work on the Inspired Version was begun in 1830 and finished in 1833 by Joseph Smith the Prophet.

¹ There will be discussion of these revelations in the next issue of *The Witness*.

² A. B. Phillips, *Helps to Bible Study* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1924), p. 70.

With the printing of the Inspired Version in 1867, the second book of sacred writing was "gathered in." There are yet many more sacred writings to come forth.

MISSING BIBLE SCRIPTURES

In the Bible alone there are at least twenty-one missing books:

Book of the Wars of the Lord	Numbers 21:14
Book of Jasher	Josh. 10:13; II Sam. 1:18
Book of the Manner of the Kingdom	I Sam. 10:25
Solomon's Three Thousand Proverbs	I Kings 4:32,33
Book of Gad, the Seer	I Chron. 29:29
Book of the Acts of Solomon	I Kings 11:41
Book of Nathan, the Prophet	I Chron. 29:29; II Chron. 9:29
Prophecy of Ahijah	II Chron. 9:29
Visions and Story of Iddo, the Seer	II Chron. 9:29; 13:22
Book of Shemaiah, the Prophet	II Chron. 12:15
Genealogies of Iddo, the Seer	II Chron. 12:15
Book of Jehu	II Chron. 20:34
Book of the Kings of Israel	II Chron. 20:34
Isaiah's History of Uzziah	II Chron. 26:22
Book of the Sayings of the Seers	II Chron. 33:19
Book written by Jeremiah	Jer. 36:2, 32
Daniel's Sealed Book	Dan. 12:4, 9
Book of Ephraim	Hosea 8:11, 12
Prophecy of Enoch	Jude 14
A previous Epistle to the Corinthians	I Cor. 5:9
Epistle to the Laodiceans	Col. 4:16

Joseph Smith said (June 25, 1833) concerning these writings:

We have not found the Book of Jasher, nor any of the lost books mentioned in the Bible as yet; nor will we obtain them at present.³

Some scholars believe that still other Bible writings refer to additional books.⁴

MISSING BOOK OF MORMON SCRIPTURES

The Book of Mormon states positively that God's words are to be "gathered in one." God said that he would speak to the Jews, the Nephites, the "other tribes of the house of Israel" which he had led away, and "unto all nations of the earth" (II Nephi 12:67-70). All would write his words, and each is to have the words of the others, "And it shall come to pass that my people which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered in one" (II Nephi 12:73).

This makes it necessary that some seldom referred to prophetic writings mentioned in the Book of Mormon be gathered in: Ezaias (Helaman 3:54); Neum (I Nephi 5:241); Zenock (Alma 16:188, 205); Zenos (Alma 16:177). They are mentioned elsewhere also.

OTHER ANTICIPATED SACRED WRITINGS

There are other sacred writings named in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants which we still do not have, but they are to be brought forth eventually, according to God's promises, when we qualify to receive them.

The Book of Remembrance

This was a genealogical record of Adam and his righteous descendants (Genesis 6:5,6,9,47). There are but few facts about this book but undoubtedly it was preserved as a most precious record down through the days of Enoch and his people and beyond.

Again, there is mention of "a book of remembrance" in Malachi:

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened . . . and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord.

—Malachi 3:16,17

Jesus gave the Nephites the words of Malachi, so III Nephi 11:19 gives the same wording as the above Malachi quotation.

The emphasis is that the names of the righteous were recorded in the book of remembrance begun in the days of Adam, and again the names of the righteous were recorded in the book of remembrance about which Malachi wrote.

John the revelator wrote of his vision of seeing

the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

—Revelation 20:12,15

One can only wonder if there may be a correlation between the book of remembrance and the book of life.

³ *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1896), 1:298,299.

⁴ *Compendium of the Scriptures*, (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1956), p. 122.

The Record of the Brother of Jared

Because of his great faith, never were greater things shown unto man "than that which was made manifest unto the Brother of Jared" (Ether 1:98).

The things which the Brother of Jared wrote were given to the Nephites after Christ's ministry to them, but when their downfall occurred, Moroni was commanded by God to seal up the writings and their interpretation (Ether 1:99). They are to be granted to us when we "become clean before the Lord" (Ether 100, 101).

The Twenty-four Gold Plates

Moroni abridged part of the twenty-four gold plates; that part which had to do with the Jaredites. Moroni said,

I take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi.

—Ether 1:2

(An account of the discovery of these plates and the bones of the fallen Jaredites by Limhi's scouts is to be found in Mosiah 5:64; 9:169.)

Ether was the last Jaredite to make entry upon the twenty-four gold plates. In making his abridgment, Moroni stated concerning Ether, "He finished his record; (and the hundredth part I have not written;)" (Ether 6:108).

Moroni explained that he had not written concerning all that he had found upon the plates as he was confident that the first part of the record was "had among the Jews" (which would be the Bible). He also said that the first part of this record "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" (Ether 1:3). Although he did not write these things, he said, "but they are had upon the plates; and whoso findeth them, the same will have power that he may get the full account" (Ether 1:4). Some day we shall have the full account.

The Brass Plates

God has promised that the brass plates will "never perish, neither should they be dimmed" by time (I Nephi 1:170; "they will retain their brightness; yea, and also shall all the plates which do contain that which is holy writ" (Alma 17:34).

God has revealed that the brass plates must come forth, for they are to go to all who are of the seed of Lehi in whatsoever part of the world they be (I Nephi 1:169). Also, the brass plates are to go "unto every nation, kindred, tongue and people (Alma 17:33).

The Fullness of the Record of John

The Lord revealed great things to Nephi. At one point He told him,

The things which thou shalt see hereafter, thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them. . . . And they are sealed up to come forth in their purity according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord. . . . And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel.

—I Nephi 3:248-251

So far we have not received these "sealed up" writings.

The Fullness of the Record on the Mount of Transfiguration

Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, to the mount of transfiguration. We do not know the full story of what happened on that occasion although Matthew (17:1-8), Mark (9:1-7), and Luke (9:28-36) all wrote about it. The Doctrine and Covenants reveals that there is more to come forth concerning that event:

He that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth, when the day of transfiguration shall come; when the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fullness ye have not yet received.

—D&C 63:6b

The "rich treasures" of the People in the North Country³

FOR WHAT PURPOSES ARE GOD'S WORDS TO BE GATHERED IN ONE?

The gathering together of God's Word "in one" may have purposes beyond man's comprehension, but at least one definite purpose for the Scriptures is named in III Nephi:

For behold, out of the books which have been written, and which shall be written, shall this people be judged, for by them shall their works be known unto men. And behold, all things are written by the Father; therefore out of the books which shall be written, shall the world be judged.

—III Nephi 13:2,3

What a wealth of wisdom and instruction the Lord has already put into our hands, with the promise of more when we obey his commandments, and seek more truth and light.

What a privilege it is to become "lost" to the woes of the world by concentrating prayerfully upon the marvelous words of our God which are so easily available to us!

³ To be discussed in the future.



An Unexpected Discovery in Hokkaido

by Wana McDole Taylor

In the summer of 1960 we lived in Japan with a family on the outskirts of Yokahama. We shared the household expenses with them and had the rich experience of living in a native Japanese neighborhood. We visited all of the many shrines and temples in southern Kyushu and read and studied much about the customs and history of the country. Toward the middle of the summer, we decided to visit the north island of Hokkaido. It was quite sparsely settled and so after landing at Sappora, we rented a taxi and began to tour north into the more remote areas. The taxi would leave us at a certain location and then pick us up later each day. On one of those days, we left the taxi without the usual umbrellas. We were caught in a torrent of heavy rain and so we ran for the closest shelter which was a monastery surrounded by a large stone wall. The gates were open and we went up the steps to the doorway of the monastery. After standing for some time watching people scurry here and there, getting animals into shelter, we began to examine the monastery itself.

It was rather a large building with heavy carved doors which were banded with wide strips of iron. We began to take notes and speculate how old the enclosure might be. After some time a robed monk came out of the door. We were unable to talk with him, for we knew only a few words of Japanese. We did a great deal of smiling and gesturing. My husband noticed that the monk wore a heavy iron chain around his neck and at the end of the chain was an iron cross eight or ten inches long. I pointed to the cross and said, "Christian?" The monk made no indication that he understood, so I asked again, "Is it the cross of Jesus?" He seemed puzzled, so I went closer to him for I wanted to touch the cross and felt that perhaps he would then understand. As I reached forward, he backed away suddenly and turned abruptly and walked back into the monastery, shutting the door.

My husband said, "I think we have offended him. that is too bad!"

Fifteen or twenty minutes later, the door opened and the old monk came out again. This time he was carrying a large book, about 24 x 18 inches and approximately eight inches thick. The covers were well worn, and the pages were heavy sheepskin with strange writing. I knew that I must not try to touch it, but I motioned him to turn some of the pages. He

turned one after another. The writing was not across but up and down with space in between the lines. There were drawings here and there interspersed with the writing. I asked, "Bible?" He did not reply but shook his head to let me know that he did not know what the book was himself.

I put my hands behind my back. The children and my husband did the same. We then asked again, "God? Jesus? Son of God? Story of creation?" At the word "creation" he seemed to understand somewhat, shook his head again, and started to close the book. I pointed to the cross on the iron chain and then to the book. My husband touched his own eyes and then pointed to the book, asking, "Can you read the book?"

The old monk shook his head negatively and closed the book. He then went back into the monastery and did not come out again. We stood on the porch and it seemed like we had all experienced a holy moment in time which we would never forget. We talked often of this experience that summer and in the months following.

Before my husband died the following spring we were talking again about our summer in Japan and especially of our experience at the monastery. As we talked, my husband closed his eyes and said, "Sometime we shall know about those records."

And now we are beginning to know something about those people who lived and moved over halfway round the world, at the Lord's direction and in His care. What an exciting time to be living when the history of the world is beginning to unravel and the pieces are falling into place.

God has been leading His people throughout all ages, and it should not seem at all strange that all of these discoveries are being made. I hope I shall be privileged to live long enough to recognize all of the elements working together to let us know that God truly does love each of us and is only anxious that we love Him in return. He is extending His arms to us now and we have only to lift ourselves to Him in love and acceptance.

Note:

Mrs. Taylor has filled teaching assignments in the church with a special interest in the Book of Mormon. She currently lives in Aurora, Colorado where she teaches in a community college and does Christian counseling.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Several have expressed interest in the book reviewed in the April issue of *The Witness*. *The Changing Wind*, by

Karena Shields was published by the Thomas Y. Crowell Company of New York in 1959. We are sorry to find that it is now out of print.

July Picture: Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico

The Temple of the Inscriptions is one of the prominent structures of the impressive ancient Mayan city of Palenque. The temple is the crown of a pyramid. In 1948 Dr. Albert Ruz Lhuiller discovered a huge stone slab (twelve feet by six feet, one foot thick and weighing five tons) which covered a sarcophagus. This lid is carved with the image of a man in a reclining position looking up at the cross which has a quetzal bird perched on top. The carving seems to symbolize life's triumph over death. There is a border of Maya hieroglyphs with dates A.D. 603-633. In the sarcophagus were the decayed bones of a man evidently of royalty or a High Priest. A jade mosaic mask covered his face. He wore a jade crown, earrings, bracelets, rings, and had a piece of jade in his mouth and in both hands. Two small jade figures were by his side. The reader is referred to the pictures in this issue of *The Witness* on page 7.

August Picture: The Temple of the Warriors, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico

The Toltecs amalgamated with the Maya population in Yucatan producing a combination of cultures brilliantly displayed in the Temple of the Warriors at Chichen Itza (Jacques Soustelle, *Mexico*, New York, World Publishing Co., 1967, p. 151). One finds the Feathered Serpent as well as the rain god Chac. The temple was built around A.D. 1000-1200. It has a spectacular 1000 columns. The area is 465 feet by 510 feet.

September Picture: The Great Palace, Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico

The area of the Great Palace at Palenque here pictured is 225 feet by 175 feet. There are four inner courtyards and massive carvings of human beings. The tower is four stories high. This complex is of the classic Maya period. Palenque flourished in the fifth to the tenth centuries A.D. reaching its zenith in about A.D. 700. It is located ninety miles southeast of Villahermosa in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. Palenque is an area of about twenty square miles. Many ruins are hidden because of the dense jungle growth.

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And It Came To Pass: Update (continued from page 1)

purpose for the phrase is as follows:

1. Iwal - "and then" - "... is used to mark that the action is ongoing at the time indicated by the narration..."⁶
2. Is - "had" - "... is used with verbs, adverbs, and time periods to mark that they are completed with the sense of being ended before another action begins."⁷

Simply stated, "and then it came to pass" denotes continuing action or events, while "and it had come to pass" denotes the ending of one event before the beginning of another.

As we consider the previous information, let us look to the Book of Mormon to compare the usage of "it came to pass" in the Mayan with the usage of the phrase in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon uses many variations of "it came to pass", but can be easily grouped into three categories:

1. It had come to pass (completed action).
2. And then it came to pass (ongoing action).
3. It shall come to pass (not yet dealt with by Mayan hieroglyphs).

The following examples from the Book of Mormon follow the criteria established from the Mayan glyphs:

1. A Posterior Date Indicator (ongoing time)

And thus ended the tenth year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi. And it came to pass in the eleventh year of the reign of the Judges...

—Alma 10:111-11:1

2. A Posterior Event Indicator (an ongoing event)

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, returned from speaking with the Lord, to the tent of my father. And it came to pass that he spake unto me...

—1 Nephi 1:59-60

3. An Anterior Date Indicator (completed time)

Now it came to pass that the ninety and first year had passed away; and it was six hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem...

—III Nephi 1:1

4. An Anterior Event Indicator (completed event)

And it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets.

—III Nephi 1:23

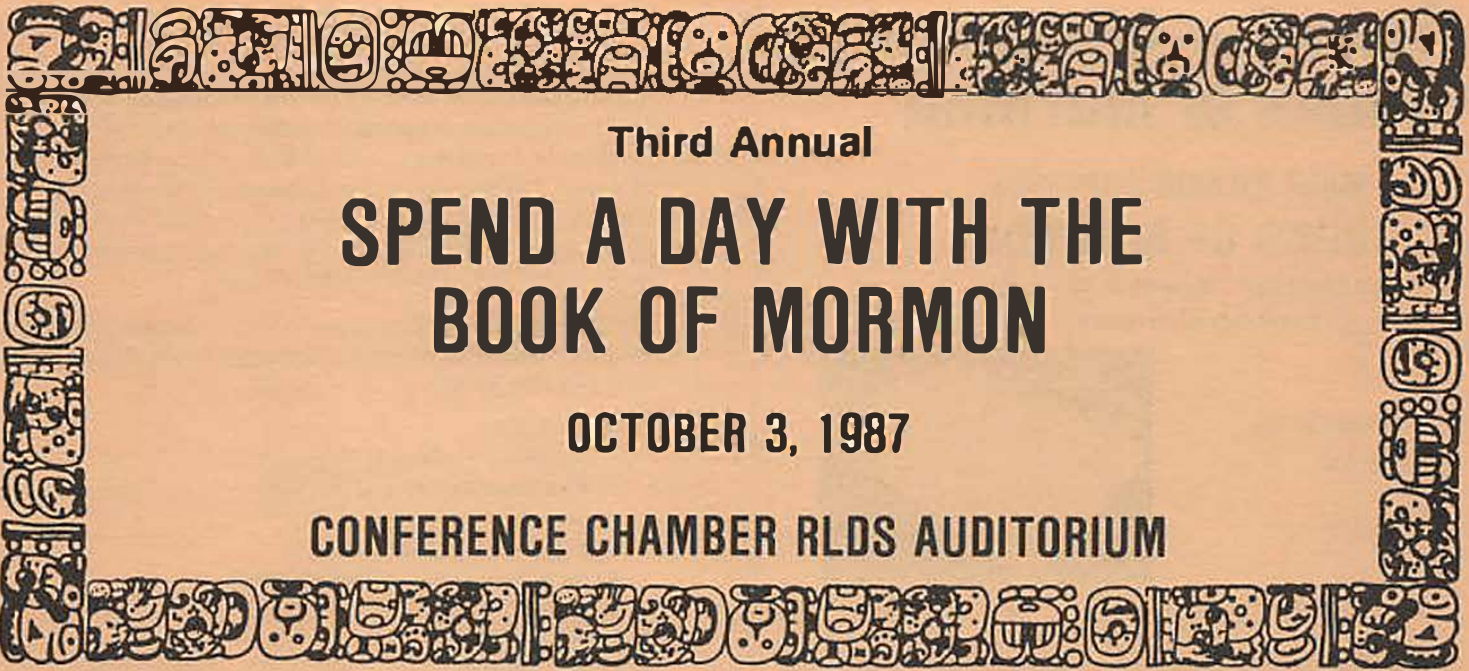
No longer need we look at the Book of Mormon as being filled with repetitious phrases that have no real meaning or function. Indeed, each and every word was placed there for a reason, and does have a function. As new knowledge such as the meaning of "it came to pass" comes to us, our understanding and appreciation of the Book of Mormon is increased.

Footnotes:

1. Angela Crowell, "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon", *The Zarahemla Record*, Summer and Fall 1982, p. 2.
2. Linda Schele, *Notebook for the Mayan Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop at Texas*, March 14-15, 1987, p. 26.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 26.



Sandra and Ralph Stowe, authors of the newly published *Book of Mormon Concordance*.



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