



# The Witness

Newsletter Of The Foundation For Research On Ancient America

APRIL, 1988

NEWSLETTER NO. 61

## EVEN UNTO THE LAND OF PROMISE

By Lyle L. Smith

**A**s we examine the prevailing theories of the archaeology of Mesoamerica (southern Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador Belize), it appears that no topic has caused more interest or stirred more controversy than the investigations into the origins of native Americans, particularly the Maya of Mesoamerica. The predominant opinion has been, and continues to be, in the archaeological textbooks that the ancestors of the native Americans came "from Asia across the Bering land bridge during the last ice age, some 20,000 to 40,000 years ago."<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is in direct contradiction to Book of Mormon requirements that indicate ocean migrations of a much more recent time.

Not long ago, *Biblical Archaeology Review* (September/October, 1985) had an extensive article reviewing theories of origins.<sup>2</sup> The author, Howard W. Goodkind, devotes a lot of attention to Lord Kingsborough and his belief that the Indians of the New World are the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Reference is made to the extensive volumes published by Lord Kingsborough and how he spent his entire fortune trying, unsuccessfully, to prove his hypothesis. Goodkind also discusses Joseph Smith and the Mormon theory of origins. He misquotes the Book of Mormon and its requirements (which is all too common in books and articles currently being written against the book)<sup>3</sup> and goes so far as to say, "There is little similarity between the Book of Mormon's description of the New World between 2000 B.C. and A.D. 421 and what we know about the culture of the ancient Indians."<sup>4</sup> In this, he concurs with Coe (a well-respected archaeologist) that the origins of the American Indians including the Maya are indigenous and not related to Euro-Asian civilizations by any ocean or recent contacts.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps for our understanding it is time to restate once again what the Book of Mormon says about the

people in the Land of Promise (Mesoamerica). The history in the Book of Mormon relates that three groups of people were led by the Lord to the Promised Land: two groups - the people of Lehi and the Mulekites - from Jerusalem; and one group - the Jaredites - from the great tower, now understood from archaeological evidence to be in existence about 3000 B.C. to 2400 B.C. The people of Mulek and Lehi both arrived - unknown to each other - in the Promised Land around 600 B. C. and settled in lands separated by a narrow strip of wilderness. Their nations began to intermingle and mix about 200 years before the coming of Christ. Their combined lands were southward of, but bordering on, the lands where the Jaredites had settled.

The Book of Mormon indicates that the people of Lehi were descendants of Joseph who was sold into Egypt through the lineage Zedekiah, King of Judah, at the time of the Babylonian conquest. It states that the Jaredites were people from the great tower and therefore



The author, Lyle Smith, is shown on a recent trip to Mexico, climbing a late Mayan pyramid at Uxmal. The Temple of the Magician (or Dwarf) is unique in that it is the only one known which is elliptical in shape. The 150 steps to the top are even at a steeper angle than most.

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# AN ANCIENT LEGAL SETTING FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

By John Welch

*Editor's note: The following is the second part of a lecture given at the October "Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon." John Welch is an attorney and a professor of history at Brigham Young University. The first part in which the cases of Sherem and Nephi's killing of Laban were discussed was printed in the last issue of The Witness. The complete presentation is available on both audio and video tapes at School of Saints. An order blank and prices will be furnished on request to FRAA.*

Consider case number three, the execution of Zemnariyah (III Nephi 2:75-76). Zemnariyah was one of the leaders of the Gadianton robbers. He was captured, and taken, and put to death. The text says that they took him and hanged him on the top of a tree until he was dead. And when he was dead they all stood around and in quite an unusual procedure they chopped down the tree, and stood around and collectively chanted, "May the Lord preserve his people in righteousness and in holiness of heart, that they may cause to be felled to the earth all who shall seek to slay them because of power and secret combinations, even as this man hath been felled to the earth."

This is an unusual and very detailed ritual. It seems to me to be following very specifically the requirements of the Law of Moses. Once again when you turn to Deuteronomy 21:22-23 you will see there the requirement that when a person is being killed he is to be hanged from a tree and exposed so that the entire world can see the victim's body displayed on the tree.

We don't know from the Bible what happened after the body was hanged on the tree, but from the Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 6:6 and also from the *Expositions of Maimonides*, Tractate Sanhedrin 15, we learn the early practices of the Jews required that not only a person be hanged on the tree, but that they chop the tree down.

I am not aware of anywhere else except for the instructions here in the Talmud, which as far as I know were *not* translated into English before the twentieth century, and the Book of Mormon where we have such explicit description of this particular ancient practice.

Moreover, what they are doing in III Nephi 2:75-76 is equating the tree with the man whom they are getting rid of, and the Talmud explains to us why the ancient people thought that was so important.

In particular, they are trying to rid from the face of the earth all memory of this individual who is so wicked that they want to expunge his memory from the entire society. The Jews went so far as to say, "We must chop



John Welch shares material with Carol Turner, member of FRAA Board of Directors. She has a special interest in Hebrew language and culture.

the tree down so the people won't walk by that tree later on and say, "That's the tree that good old so-and-so was hanged on." They don't even want that much memory of this wicked individual left on the face of the earth.

Isn't *that* exactly what is going on with the execution of Zemnariyah? The Lord is causing to be felled to the earth these men who have been so wicked and such pests to the people of Zarahemla.

Case four—the trial of Abinadi. This is a section of the book of Mormon that I love. It is a beautiful passage—probably the longest trial transcript that we have anywhere from antiquity.

There are some important factors to realize about this record. First of all, we should note that we're dealing here with a trial transcript that was written by an eyewitness. Alma, the elder, who wrote this record was himself one of the members participating in the court trial as one of the judges of the court of Noah.

That gives us a second bit of information. Not only is it written by an eyewitness, but it is written by a person who would have understood the legal technicalities. Alma was a judge. He knew what was going on. It is not like a fisherman walking into the Supreme Court of the United States, seeing a proceeding, and then trying to explain what is happening. He would not understand the subtleties of the procedure. But Alma does—he is a judge! And not only that, he wrote the record down immediately. This is not some late recollection of what happened. The text in Mosiah 9:6-7 says that Alma fled before the king's servants and "hid himself, that they found him not. And he, being concealed for many days,



did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken."

When we turn to the record of this trial we find a number of details that once again conform with the Law of Moses and become more meaningful and understandable to us when we approach the text from that background. For example, Abinadi is apprehended by the *people* as he is preaching out in the middle of the town square. The accusation is formulated in a relatively informal procedure. There are no public prosecutors. There are no policemen involved. And that, of course, is how we would expect to find things under the Law of Moses in the ancient world. An interesting fact here is that the accusation brought by the people is viewed as almost conclusive. The *people* find Abinadi guilty. They take him then to King Noah and say, "Thou mayest do with him as seemeth thee good" (Mosiah 7:68). In other words, do whatever you want with him.

Why, we must ask ourselves, don't the people take Abinadi and stone him as they certainly would have had the power, we would think, to do. If they had done so, that would have been wrong. For, according to most scholars who look into the question, the king in the ancient Near East and in Israelite law had jurisdiction over special kinds of cases; in particular, those involving the military, the royal family, and affairs dealing with the capital city.

Abinadi had clearly spoken against the king, the royal family, and had condemned the people in the capital city. His case, therefore, would have had jurisdiction exclusively before the king.

We must further remember that under the ancient laws there was no such thing as total freedom of speech. In particular, Exodus 22:28 makes it against the law to "curse the ruler of thy people." What had Abinadi done? His words are a classic simile curse against Noah, prophesying that his life will be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace. Those words are injurious and actionable under ancient law.

Moreover, we learn from Jeremiah 26 in the Talmudic sources that if we are dealing with a case of a rebellious elder, the case needs to be tried by a body of elders. Typically, the number of elders involved in a small Sanhedrin, or in a trial of this nature, would be a court of twenty-three or twenty-four elders. The large Sanhedrin had seventy-two members and they sat in three rows. Each one of these rows consisted of twenty-three or twenty-four people. A small Sanhedrin, for which jurisdiction over one of these kinds of cases would lie, consisted of just one of those rows.

It appears therefore, that when Abinadi goes before the king *and* the court of Noah, they are not yet quite sure exactly what the cause of action ought to be. Indeed, that is the first order of business in the trial of Abinadi—to try to formulate what the cause of action should be. He is accused of false prophecy, he is accused

of blasphemy, and he is accused of lying against the king. They are sorting this out as they go.

I have mentioned the court of twenty-three or twenty-four. Have you ever wondered how many priests there might have been on the court of Noah? We do not know precisely. Alma did not give us *that* particular detail. But only a few words after the end of the trial of Abinadi we hear that the Lamanites have broken their treaty and invaded the city of Nephi. Limhi does not have any idea why the Lamanite have done this. They finally repulse the attack and capture the king. They ask, "What cause have you to come to war against my people?" (Mosiah 9:123).

Remember what the answer is? He says, "Thy people did carry away the daughters of my people" (Mosiah 9:125). Of course, Limhi said they did not know anything about this. And the answer was that of course, they did! There were twenty-four, and they were taken (Mosiah 9:112).

And what does Gideon do? He immediately associates the kidnapping of those daughters with the priests of Noah, whom he knows to be out in the wilderness. If there were twenty-four, or twenty-three and you have Noah plus one, minus Alma, that is very close to the number that we have in the text. That, therefore, would explain the immediate association of those people with the priests of Noah. It would also indicate, circumstantially, that we have here a body of elders of precisely the size that the Law of Moses and the Jewish tradition maintained was an appropriate court for this body.

We do not understand what is going on in the trial of Abinadi unless we also realize things like the fact that there is no such thing as a right against self-incrimination under the ancient laws. They had no fifth amendment. Abinadi cannot stand on the fifth and refuse to answer the questions that are put to him which are obviously leading questions. The very purpose for asking him those questions was that the priests would have something to accuse him with. That is not our system of justice by a long shot! But it *is theirs*! In fact, silence under the ancient legal systems, and under many legal systems still today, is a presumption of guilt. It is viewed as equivalent to a confession. We see the same thing happening in the trial of Alma and Amulek in the city of Ammonihah a few years later.

Abinadi must speak. He does. And after he does, notice that the trial is suspended for three days! They put Abinadi into prison and hold him for a three day period. Now that is an odd thing. Why would they do that? Does it take them that long to figure what to do with him? I do not think so. Here again, we are playing with some circumstantial information. But you should know that there was a rule in the ancient world that you could not hold a trial and you could not execute a person on a

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# THE BOOK OF MORMON ANSWERS BIBLE CRITICS

By Norman Page

*Editor's Note: The following has been transcribed from the lecture given by Seventy Norman Page at the Book of Mormon Conference in October of last year.*

I begin with the assumption that you all study scripture and that you believe it. You are aware that anytime God enters into the affairs of men it is for their benefit. You are also aware that Satan enters in, if he can, to be a spoiler.

After the Book of Mormon was published in 1830, Satan put it into the heart of a German philosopher to write a book designed to destroy man's belief in Jesus Christ. His name was David Friedrich Strauss, and his book, *Life of Jesus*, was published five years after the Book of Mormon.

Strauss concluded that Jesus was not divine: not the Son of God, not born of a virgin, did not rise from the tomb, performed no miracles, nor did his disciples perform any.

As you would expect Strauss' book never became a best-seller-but no matter, Satan didn't shoot all of his marbles in this attempt. He saved quite enough to involve others in various ways. His game was not played out in a vacuum. Like a multi-ring circus he had other acts going, all calculated to cause men to lose faith in their Savior.

A few of the other players of note included Charles Darwin who wrote *Origin of Species*. It was a denial of the scriptural account of creation. Sigmund Freud published ideas challenging the scriptural teachings of individual agency and responsibility. Perhaps the most vicious contribution was made by Karl Marx. His ideas continue to take a heavy toll in freedom and human rights. Educators, too numerous to mention, turned away from scripture, and with astonishing zeal, proceeded to replace the authority of scripture with a substitute authority which denies both man's fall and his consequent need for a savior. That substitute is sometimes referred to as secular humanism.

Strauss' book was not written for ordinary believers. Among such it attracted little or no attention. But many scholars and theologians queued up behind Strauss to research and to publish. Most of them reached similar conclusions. One man of note reacted quite differently. He disagreed with the critics and began researching a book he hoped would prove the critics wrong. That man was Albert Schweitzer. When his book, *Quest of the Historical Jesus* was published early in this century it was a disappointment to many believers. It was not a

ringing endorsement of the reliability of the New Testament. Instead, to their horror, they learned that his research had convinced him that it was he who was wrong and not the critics.



It was a stressful time for Schweitzer. In a word, this very fine and very religious man was cast adrift. He no longer had any religion to practice. Sadly he resolved the dilemma by creating a new religion. He called it Reverence for Life. Schweitzer's failure to stem the tide of doubt was soon felt in some seminaries. Those who went to such schools to qualify for the ministry were taught not to rely on their former understanding that Jesus was the literal son of God. This enlightened age must face the fact that Jesus had not performed miracles nor did his disciples. Also that Jesus was not a savior in the way they had formerly understood. It was now understood that man had no need for a savior to redeem him from the fall, because the fall of man never happened. It was a myth.

Many have supposed that since Schweitzer, with all of his intelligence and learning, could not answer the critics that the critics must be right. Not so. Fortunately an answer does exist, and it is in the Book of Mormon.

It might be helpful at this point to state the question: Is there any way to restore doubting twentieth century disciples to their former belief in Jesus as the divine Son of God, Savior, and Worker of Miracles?

Long before the Bible in its present form was passed along to us, the Heavenly Father, by his marvelous foreknowledge, showed Nephi, a sixth century B.C. New World prophet, the dilemma that scriptural authority faces today, and he explained how it would happen. Because the prophecy is lengthy and detailed I will quote only a few selected lines beginning with 1 Nephi 3:166-169 and ending with verse 175.

**Wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God:**

**And after they go forth by the hand of the**



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twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews to the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church...

For behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious;

And also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away;...

Because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them:

Just as was prophesied, Satan has gained a great advantage over many men because, at an earlier time, men did tamper with the Bible. They altered and deleted and thus created serious problems. Not that the basic account was in error, but enough error to allow the critics to do what they now have done.

The truth is still available to all who will humble themselves and look for it where it can be found. The Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel clearly stated and free from the precepts of men.

There are many evidences corroborating the Book of Mormon. In his book *Missionary Sermon Studies*, F. Henry Edwards identified five major lines of evidence. They are:

1. The testimony of the Holy Spirit. Many have claimed the promise of Moroni which is thusly stated, "If ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:5).

2. Internal evidences. Literary sleuthing has become a sophisticated science in our day. So much so that it is impossible to write a fictional account of history without the fiction being discovered. The Book of Mormon still withstands all efforts to prove it false.

3. The testimony of the Jewish Scriptures. The Bible is replete with prophecies about this record which has now come forth. The prophecies give an enormous amount of detail, all of which is fulfilled in the Book of Mormon.

4. Archaeology. Some believers have thought archaeology somewhat less important than other lines of evidence. In the last few decades, and particularly in this decade, archaeology has come into its own and must now be considered on a par with the other lines of evidence. It has become an exceedingly fruitful field of inquiry supporting beliefs about the book that formerly could be sustained by faith only.

For instance critics long had fun talking about the weight of pure gold plates, saying they would have given Joseph a hernia.

That was before technologists at M.I.T became

curious enough to take tumbaga gold (an alloy of gold, silver, and copper) into their labs and unravel the mystery which had formerly surrounded it.\* From the alloy the ancients made thin sheets (or plates) and used them for various purposes including the purpose of writing. Even the process by which the ancients made these sheets is now known, and it has been duplicated by scientists in the lab. The surface, including the edges, has the appearance of pure gold, because the surface part is pure gold. About eighty-five percent of the finished product is copper and about five percent is silver. About ten percent is gold. The Book of Mormon plates were probably made from gold, silver, and copper, because the process was well known to the Book of Mormon people. Such a record would match the description of the witnesses perfectly and would weigh only about thirty pounds—certainly making them quite portable.

Of particular interest is Nephi's statement upon first arriving in America. In I Nephi 5:217 and 218 are these words:

**And we did find all manner of ore, both of gold, and of silver, and of copper. And it came to pass that the Lord commanded me, wherefore I did make plates of ore, that I might engraven upon them the record of my people.**

5. The testimony of those engaged in making the Book of Mormon available in the English language.

There were eleven men in addition to the translator who saw the plates from which the book was translated. Seven of those eleven were members of my family. When preaching a missionary series about the Book of Mormon, I always include a sermon about the witnesses. The official testimonies, of both the three and the eight, fulfilled the exacting biblical requirements governing such matters. The significance of that fact demands our careful consideration of the witnesses' official testimonies.

All five lines of evidence have been extensively researched, and more is being learned all the time. All are invited to consider the available evidence and those who do will find that the preponderance of evidence is compelling. Their intellect demands their belief in the Book of Mormon. Acceptance of the book as true removes all doubt about the basic story told in the New Testament. Jesus is the divine Son of God, Savior, and Worker of Miracles.

\* In the next issue of *The Witness* Mildred Smith will present extensive research on the "Possible Weight of the Plates of the Book of Mormon."





# ABOUT OUR 1988 CALENDAR\*

**April Picture:** Temple of the Bearded White God, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico

**T**he Temple of the Bearded White God is at the north end of the ball court at Chichen Itza. The whole back surface is carved with stone figures. In the center is Kulkulcan—a name for the bearded white God. He is surrounded by twelve men.



**May Picture:** Principal Pyramid, Izamal, Yucatan, Mexico

**A**t Izamal, one of the Mayan holy cities, the Spaniards leveled the main temple and used the stone to build an immense monastery on the terrace where the temple had formerly stood. Another large artificial mound, which is pictured, has remained. The stairway and terraces have only been partially restored. In the complex are other structures in various states of ruin.

**June Picture:** From Temple to Quetzalcoatl at Teotihuacan, National Museum, Mexico City

**T**he Temple to Quetzalcoatl had six terraces with a temple on its summit. Four have been preserved. Carved heads of the plumed serpent, symbolic of Quetzalcoatl, are found at each level as are also masks of the God Tlaloc. The colorful stone three-dimensional wall shown as the June picture on the 1988 Book of Mormon calendar has been removed and placed in Mexico City's National Museum.



\*Information taken from notes given by Apostle Charles Field during a trip to Mexico in 1975.



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# LETTERS

I really appreciate reading *The Witness*. It certainly brings the message of God.

—Wisconsin

We were pleased to read Florence Glomstad's testimony in the last issue of *The Witness*. I am sending a check for you to use in your good work.

—Washington

What you are doing is really helping us who are in small congregations. Video tapes and other audio/visuals really help the priesthood. We have been blessed countless times by your materials. Please keep up the good work.

—Indiana

I am 88 years old and crippled with arthritis, so I cannot do a lot—but I do loan my copy of *The Witness* to others. My father and mother were the first saints baptized in the Star School area four miles south of Butler, Missouri.

—Missouri

Please continue to send us *The Witness* as we enjoy it very much. We study from it and get so much valuable information. God bless you in your work.

—Canada

We enjoy each issue of *The Witness* and want it sent to our daughter and son-in-law. Keep up the fine work.

—Georgia

I would like to express my gratitude to all those involved with *The Witness*. I enjoy everything about the magazine. May the Lord continue to bless you as you strive to serve him. My daughter and I attended the Book of Mormon Day in October. We enjoyed it very much. History came alive as we watched and listened to the day's activities. We hope to attend next year. We had a great time.

—Michigan

I have enjoyed reading the articles in *The Witness*. Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication. God bless you.

—Tennessee

Please find enclosed a check to be used in the wonderful work which you are going. It is the lifeline that is keeping us alive. I appreciate the cost that it entails in physical time and labor, but I also realize the wonderful blessings which it brings. The Lord has great need of you at this time. Each one of us must feel individual call to His work.

—Colorado



Raul Figueroa and Princess Little Pigeon enjoy a discussion between sessions of the "Spend a Day with the Book of Mormon." Raul is from Jacks Creek, Tennessee, and is one of the few, if not the only member of the priesthood, who is Cuban. He is a teacher.

## MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS GIVEN

In the past year, several have designated the Foundation for Research on Ancient America as the suggested charity to which contributions can be made as a memorial for a family member. This has been greatly appreciated.

FRAA informs the family of the deceased as to who has made such gifts. A note of appreciation is also sent to each contributor. Such funds can be general donations or specifically designated for the library, publications, purchase of Books of Mormons, audio/visual, etc. What an appropriate way to honor a Book of Mormon believer!



# TANTALIZING GLIMPSSES NOT SO FAINT WHISPERINGS

by Roy Weldon

## PROPHETS AND REVELATION

**T**his series has dealt with two great dimensions of the restoration movement—the Nephite Record and a Zionite New Jerusalem. We now come to the prophetic dimension which commences with the trumpet call of the boy prophet Joseph Smith. God speaks to men today—"Hear ye him."

The following is taken from Billy Graham's column, "My Answer" from the Kansas City Star (1982):

**Question:** I have a friend who is religious and says he believes the Bible is God's word. He also believes that a book written by a founder of his religion is also God's word and fills in the gaps of the Bible. Could this be true?

**Answer:** No. If God had given us only an incomplete revelation in the Bible, we might discover more about Him from a later book. God has given us everything we need to know and everything he wants us to know.

The above was the standard orthodox dogma of Christianity in 1830 despite the clear-cut prophecy in Acts 2:17-18:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

The standard orthodox answer to this declaration of Peter quoting from the prophet Joel is that the prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. However, the two verses that continue the Joel 2:28-29 prophecy which Peter quoted have an incomplete relationship to the day of Pentecost as per Joel 2: 30-32:

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.



Roy Weldon at the 1987 Book of Mormon Conference.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Hugh Nibley in *Since Cumorah*, p. 17, sums up the present situation:

There is much talk now in both Protestant and Catholic journals of revelation and inspiration—need we remind the reader that from the beginning its claim to continuing revelation was considered to be the most obnoxious and dangerous aspect of Mormonism.

## WONDEROUS PROMISES TO THE GENTILES

Nephi saw United States history through a mountain-top vision:

And I looked and beheld a man among

(Continued on page 14)

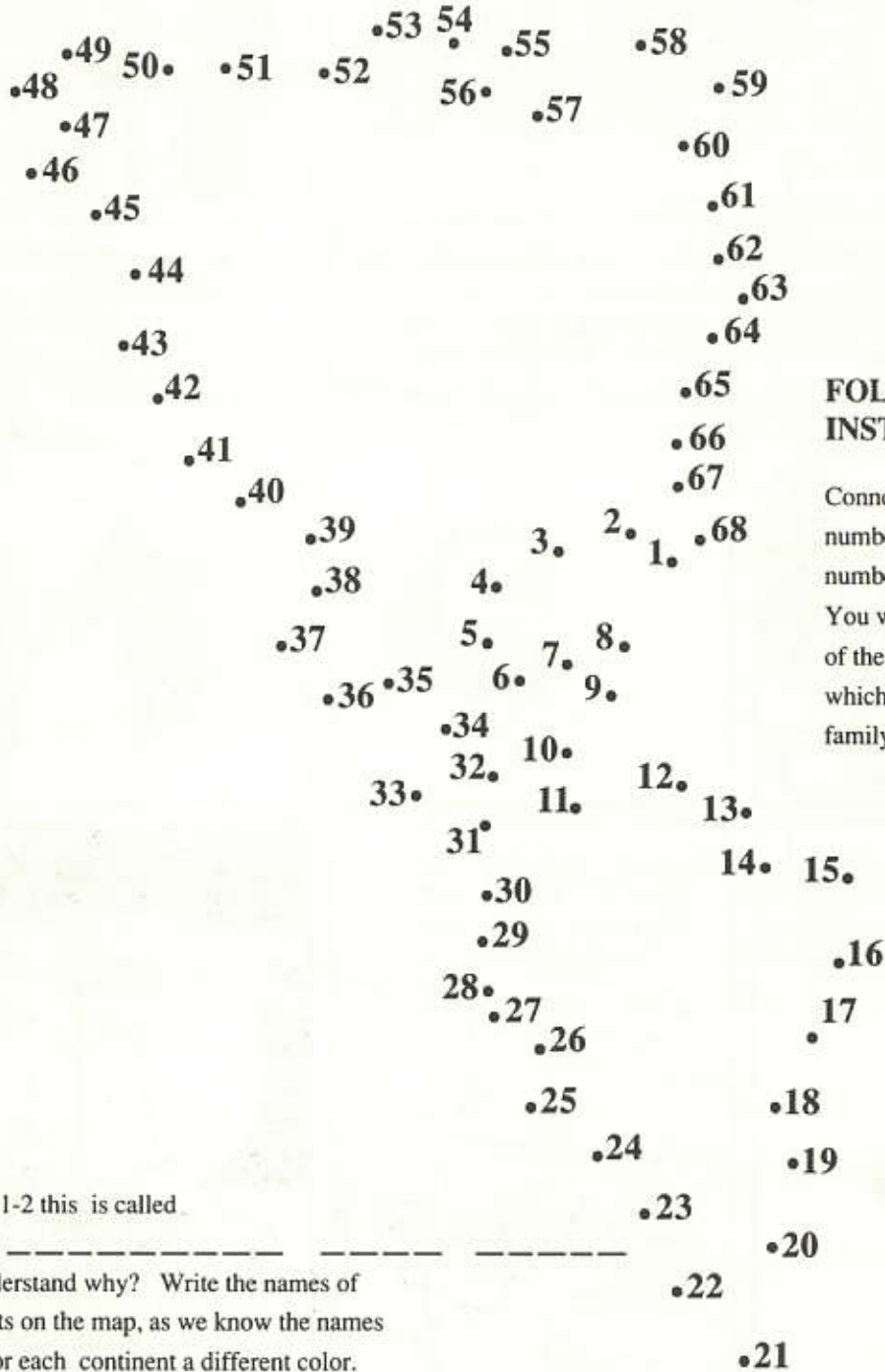




# The Junior Witness

APRIL, 1988 ISSUE 6

## THE LAND OF PROMISE



### FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS

Connect the dot beside the number 1 to the dot beside the number 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4, etc. You will find you have a map of the Land of Promise to which God led Lehi with his family and followers.

In Isaiah 18:1-2 this is called \_\_\_\_\_

THE LAND \_\_\_\_\_

Can you understand why? Write the names of the continents on the map, as we know the names today. Color each continent a different color.



Nephi, build a ship as I will direct you. It will carry your people across the ocean to the Promised Land.



NEPHI OBEYED THE LORD'S COMMANDS.....

OUR BROTHER IS A FOOL! HE THINKS HE CAN BUILD A SHIP!! AND HE PLANS TO CROSS THIS OCEAN!



WE HAVE SUFFERED MUCH BECAUSE OF YOU!

THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM WERE GOOD! THEY OBEY THE LAW OF MOSES. YOU HAVE LED US ASTRAY!!



WOULD OUR FOREFATHERS HAVE BEEN LED OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE EGYPTIANS IF THEY HAD NOT OBEYED GOD? I FEAR YOU WILL BRING GOD'S WRATH UPON YOU!



LET US THROW HIM INTO THE SEA!!



DO NOT TOUCH ME, FOR I AM FILLED WITH THE POWER OF GOD, AND HE WILL STRIKE YOU DOWN!



THE REBELLIOUS BROTHERS AGAIN REPENTED, AND ALL WORKED TOGETHER IN BUILDING THE SHIP.....



AT LAST ALL WAS READY. LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ENTERED THE SHIP..



AFTER MANY DAYS UPON THE OCEAN, THE WICKED BROTHERS BECAME REBELLIOUS...

WE DO NOT WANT NEPHI TO RULE OVER US!

LET US BIND HIM!



SONS OF ISHMAEL ALSO JOINED THE REBELLION.

AS SOON AS NEPHI WAS BOUND, THE COMPASS QUIT WORKING AND A STORM STRUCK!



WE WILL SINK IN THIS STORM!

TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED, THE WICKED BROTHERS UNTIED NEPHI.

THE COMPASS WORKS AGAIN!

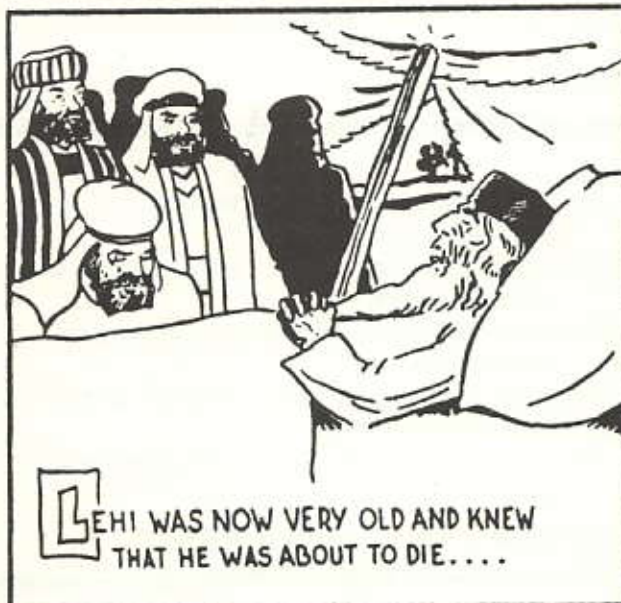


AFTER MANY DAYS.

LAND! LAND!

THE LAND OF PROMISE!

IN THE LAND OF PROMISE WE FOUND ALL KINDS OF ANIMALS: COWS, OXEN, HORSES, GOATS, AND MANY KINDS OF WILD ANIMALS. WE ALSO FOUND GOLD, SILVER, AND COPPER... FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI - 5: 216, 217



LEHI WAS NOW VERY OLD AND KNEW THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO DIE....

LEHI SPOKE TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD, ACCORDING TO THE FEELINGS OF HIS HEART AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD. AND HE DIED, AND WAS BURIED. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COLOR THESE PAGES?



THE FOLLOWING A,B,C, PUZZLE\* IS A REVIEW OF THE STORY OF LEHI FROM THE TIME HE AND HIS FAMILY LEFT JERUSALEM TO THE TIME THEY ARRIVED IN THE PROMISED LAND. IF YOU NEED HELP, REFER TO THE FOLLOWING: 1 Nephi 1:3,70,141; 2:10; 5:181-264.

- Lehi found many \_\_\_\_\_ in the promised land.
- The record on \_\_\_\_\_ was brought from Jerusalem.
- When Nephi was freed, the storm ceased and there was a great \_\_\_\_\_.
- The power of the \_\_\_\_\_ influenced Laman and Lemuel.
- Laman and Lemuel were quick to do \_\_\_\_\_.
- The brass ball worked according to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Nephi said, "What \_\_\_\_\_ commands, I can do."
- Jerusalem was the former \_\_\_\_\_ of Lehi's family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ also took his family into the wilderness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ were the two sons born in the wilderness.
- Zedekiah was \_\_\_\_\_ of Judah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was the keeper of the brass plates.
- The brass plates contained five books by \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was the righteous son of Lehi who became leader.
- God commanded that \_\_\_\_\_ be obtained from the mountain to make metal tools.
- Jeremiah and Lehi were both \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ represented the word of God in Lehi's vision.
- At one time Nephi's brothers could not touch him because he was so filled with the \_\_\_\_\_.
- When the followers of Lehi were in the wilderness, they lived in \_\_\_\_\_.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ pushed the ship toward the promised land.
- Nephi was the \_\_\_\_\_ of the four sons of Lehi who left Jerusalem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was Laban's servant who also went with Lehi.

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

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S \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_

W \_\_\_\_\_

Y \_\_\_\_\_

Z \_\_\_\_\_

\* Used by permission.

Adapted from Book of Mormon Studies for Youth by Donna Weddle Second Quarter Teacher's manual (Available at School of Saints)

### MEMORY VERSE

I will prepare the way before you,  
if it so be that ye shall keep my  
commandments. —1 Nephi 5:78

### POEM

In a stable nearby, there were two travelers,  
Mary and Joseph,  
And when they arrived they knew there was going to be  
a baby born there.  
Mary was told in a vision that the name of the baby  
would be Jesus,  
And when he grew up, he went to preach the gospel  
to everyone on earth.  
And he goes on living inside us, until he comes to us,  
again.

Nari Kwak - Age 7 - Madison, Wisconsin



## STUDY ALONG WITH...

Thelona  
Stevens



# “GATHERING IN ONE ALL THINGS” GOD’S ANCIENT COVENANT PEOPLE JUDAH

**G**od’s plan to “gather together in one all things” (D&C 26:3c; Eph. 1:10) is currently the subject of discussion in our lessons. (See *The Witness*, Nos. 58-60, July, September 1987 and January 1988 for suggested areas of ingatherings.) In the last issue, January 1988, the study lesson had to do with the gathering of God’s covenant people, the righteous heirs of Jacob-Israel to their inheritances. The two main branches of the descendants of Jacob-Israel are Joseph and Judah. Joseph’s inheritance is upon this land, the place of the New Jerusalem (Ether 6:6-8); Judah’s inheritance is the Old Jerusalem (III Nephi 9:71-73; D&C 108:6c). Today’s lesson is centered in the study of Judah.

### DIVISION OF ISRAELITES INTO ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Israel was composed of the twelve tribes of Israel (or Israelites) until the political division, when ten tribes withdrew to the north (Samarita), becoming the Northern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Israel; Judah, the only tribe which remained in Jerusalem (I Kings 11:29-36), later joined by Benjamin (II Chron. 11:1), became the Southern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Judah. The scriptures often refer to Judah as Israel, but it should be remembered that Judah was only part of the Israelites, and did not include the Kingdom of Israel (Northern Kingdom).

### THE ANCIENT COVENANT

When God made covenant with Abraham and his seed

<sup>1</sup>Scriptural references are to:  
Doctrine and Covenants (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1952).  
Inspired Version (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1944).  
Book of Mormon (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1908).

(Gen. 17:2), Judah, son of Jacob-Israel was included. Moses taught Judah, along with all the other Israelites who made their covenant with God and promised, “All the words which the Lord hath said will we do” (Ex. 24:3). This was sealed by the blood of the sacrificial lamb (verse 8), symbolic of the blood of Christ (Gen. 4:5-8). The Israelites broke their covenant and reverted to idolatry during the forty-day period that Moses was communing with God on Mt. Sinai. Thereafter they were denied God’s presence, being permitted only the law of carnal commandments (Ex. 34:1-2). God warned them again and again against idolatry, as in the ten commandments:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me... Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

—Ex. 20:3-5

He instructed them not to follow after their heathen neighbors. They were not to make covenant with them; they were not to intermarry with them,

For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

—Deut. 7:4

Their sad history is that they did “worse than the heathen” (II Chron. 33:9).

### THE SCATTERING

Idolatry with all its gross wickedness caused the downfall of both kingdoms. The Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians 722 B.C.; Judah fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. During their captivity in Babylon, Judah became known generally as the Jews. Cyrus ended their captivity by allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Back in their homeland, they suffered persecution and political hardships at the hands of the Persians, Greeks, Syrians, and Romans. The Romans were still in power when Christ was born. The Jews were looking for the coming of the Messiah as their great Deliverer from political bondage and they failed to recognize in Christ the fulfillment of the many prophecies regarding the exact manner of his coming. They rejected him, as had been prophesied hundreds of years earlier by Jacob, a Book of Mormon prophet.

It must needs be expedient that Christ . . . should come among the Jews . . . and they shall crucify him . . . and there is none other nation on earth that would crucify their God. For should the mighty miracles be wrought among other nations, they would repent, and know that he be their God; but because of priestcrafts and iniquities, they at Jerusalem will stiffen their necks against him . . . Wherefore, because of their iniquities, destructions, famines, pestilence and bloodsheds, shall come upon them; and they who

(Continued on next page)



shall not be destroyed, shall be scattered among all nations.

—II Nephi 7:5-11

Jeremiah prophesied,

And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

—Jer. 24:9

### THE JEWS KNEW AND UNDERSTOOD GOD'S LAWS

Nephi testified,

I came out from Jerusalem, and mine eyes hath beheld the things of the Jews, and I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews, like unto them, save it be that they were taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.

—II Nephi 11:8

God warned Judah,

If ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them . . . this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and . . . at this house . . . every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and . . . they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God.

—I Kings 9:6-9

### JUDAH'S REJECTION OF GOD

In spite of the many prophets which God sent to them, the Jews refused to repent. They were

a stiff-necked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall: for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they can not understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it, God hath done it, that they might stumble.

—Jacob 3:22-25

The Jews took their idol worship into the temple of God.

He built altars for all the host of heaven in two courts of the house of the Lord . . . He observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards.

—II Chron. 33:5-6

After Judah returned from the Babylonish captivity, Ezra, a priest and "ready scribe in the law of Moses," responded to the promptings of God (Ezra 7:6). He "brought the law before the congregation" (Neh. 8:2), and the ears of all the people were attentive" (Neh. 8:3). He reviewed their persistence in disobedience and rebellion (Neh. chap. 8-11). He accused the men of Judah and Benjamin of transgressing by "taking strange wives" (Ezra 10:9-10), and urged repentance. He acknowledged before the Lord how they had "wrought great provocations," and yet God had extended them mercies. The people made a "sure covenant," sealed by the princes, and Levites, and priests (Neh. 9:26, 38).

Even after that, Nehemiah saw them breaking the sabbath, for which he rebuked them (Neh. 13:15-18). Also Nehemiah said,

In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jew's language.

—Neh. 13:23-24

He said, "They have defiled . . . the covenant of the priesthood (verse 29).

When Nehemiah reprovved them, they defended themselves by saying that Solomon had done these things and there was not a greater king than he. "Shall we then hearken unto you?" (Neh. 13:26-27).

The Lord said, "The children of Judah have . . . set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it" (Jer. 7:30). Going yet further into their wickedness, the Jews set up places of idol worship for human sacrifice," to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire" (Jer. 7:31).

### WHY GOD RULED AGAINST IDOLATRY

God was seeking, and still seeks, to spare his people from the evils of idolatry.

Geikie recorded that in the worship of Baal, the "grossest sensuality was thus sanctioned and even demanded," which led many to "terrible revulsion from such excesses . . . wild fanaticism broke out into the most revolting self-inflictions and mutilations....What followed is unfit to be told."<sup>2</sup>

Alma observed,

Thus we can plainly discern, that after a people have been once enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have

<sup>2</sup>Cunningham Geikie, *Hours with the Bible. From Samson to Solomon*, (New York: John A. Alden, 1891), pp. 209-210.



had great knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then have fallen away into sin and transgression, they become more hardened, and thus their state becomes worse than though they had never known these things.

—Alma 14:58

God still sought to save the Jews from the horrors which awaited them if they would not repent.

And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to the people; but they would not hearken.

—II Chron. 33:10

Having spumed God and his Son Jesus Christ, there was nothing left for them but to suffer their sins.

### DESTRUCTION

In the days of Jesus' ministry, Jerusalem was a great and flourishing city. The temple built by King Herod (forty-six years in the building), was one of the wonders of the world. Jesus foretold that "There shall not be left here upon this temple, one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2). This was literally fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Titus and his Roman soldiers destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple. George T. B. Davis wrote:

It is said that the flames melted the gold in the great structure until it ran down into the crevices of the stones. The soldiers were so eager to get the molten metal that they pried the stones apart until not one was left upon another.<sup>1</sup>

Jerusalem fell to foreign powers numerous times; twice it was razed to the ground. The first time was in 586 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah's reign—I Nephi 1:3. Nebuchadnezzar "pillaged the temple and burnt the palace, and overthrew the city to the very foundations, and removed all the people, and took for prisoners" the high priests who guarded the temple and others of prominence, whom he beheaded. He took Zedekiah and many captives to Babylon.<sup>2</sup>

Léhi's sons Nephi and Jacob saw in vision the destruction of Jerusalem. Nephi said, "Had we remained, we should also have perished" (II Nephi 1:4,5).

The second time Jerusalem was laid waste was by the Romans, led by Titus, in A.D. 70. Josephus records that a great multitude had assembled in Jerusalem, some from remote areas of the nation, to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. He estimated the "pure and holy" in attendance at 2,700,200 which did not include those who had leprosy or other "unclean" diseases, or who were otherwise "polluted."<sup>3</sup> When the

invading army surrounded Jerusalem, this great number was caught, as if in a prison, and none could escape. The vast majority perished by starvation. Josephus estimated the number as 1,100,000.<sup>6</sup>

The Romans slew the aged and infirm. The stronger ones were driven into the temple, where they were sorted out: the "tallest and most beautiful" for the triumph, then to be slain; those over seventeen years of age were sent in bondage to Egyptian mines; many were sent to be destroyed in the theatres by sword and wild beasts; those under seventeen were sold as slaves; 97,000 were carried away captives;<sup>7</sup> 2,000 hid themselves in caverns underground, but the soldiers ferreted them out and slew all they found; 6,000 including women and children, had fled to the outer court of the temple. The soldiers set the place on fire; none escaped.<sup>8</sup>

The accounts of starvation are sickening to read. Famine "devoured the people by whole houses and families; many died while burying the dead . . . Many went to their coffins before that fatal hour was come."<sup>9</sup>

While the temple was burning, with "fire on every part of it," 10,000 children, old men, and priests were all slain, and "the blood of the slain was larger in quantity than the fire." The "ground did no where appear visible, for the dead bodies that lay on it."<sup>10</sup>

Robbers brake open . . . houses which were no more than graves of dead bodies . . . seditious at first gave orders that the dead should be buried out of the public treasury, as not enduring the stench of their dead bodies. But afterwards . . . they had them cast down from the walls into the valleys below . . . When Titus, in going his rounds along these valleys, saw them full of dead bodies, and the thick putrefaction running about them, he gave a groan; and spreading his hands to heaven, called God to witness that this was not his doing.<sup>11</sup>

Jeremiah had prophesied,

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called . . . The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter . . . And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

—Jer. 7:32-33

Matthew recorded that Jesus told his disciples of the woes which would befall the Jews (Matt. 24:1-21). He said there would be "tribulations on the Jews . . . such as was not before" (verse 18). Jesus declared,

All things which have befallen them, are only the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 832

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 831

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 832

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 824

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 803

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 823

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 804

<sup>8</sup> Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Translated by William Whiston, A.M., Standard Ed. (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, n.d.), p. 311.

<sup>9</sup> George T. B. Davis, *Rebuilding of Palestine According to Prophecy* (Philadelphia: The Million Testaments Campaigns, 1935), p. 12.

(Continued on next page)



beginning of the sorrows which shall come upon them; and except those days should be shortened, there should none of their flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake, according to the covenant, those days shall be shortened. Behold these things I have spoken unto you concerning the Jews.

—Matt. 24: 19-21

The Gentiles should take warning at what happened to the Jews.

Our next lesson will deal with God's promises to the Jews, "after their pain," when they accept Christ.



## Even Unto the Land of Promise

(continued from page 1)

had no relationship with the House of Israel. The Book of Mormon does not indicate or imply that the three groups are the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes.

Now back to the central point - Did the people of the New World, and particularly the people of Mesoamerica, develop in the last 5000 years on their own without contact or influence from the Old World, or, as the Book of Mormon claims, were they started by small groups of people who came from the Old World to the New World thereby creating and influencing the cultural history of the people here?

Let's investigate by reviewing the textbooks of one major Mesoamerican archaeologist, Michael D. Coe. His textbook *The Maya* was first published in 1966. By this time, he had standardized his response about the origin of the Maya.

There have been a number of contradictory theories to account for the rise of Maya civilization. One of the most persistent holds that the previously undistinguished Maya came under the influence of travellers from shores as distant as the China coast; as a matter of interest to the lay public, it should be categorically emphasized that *no* objects manufactured in any part of the Old World have been identified in any Maya site, and that ever since the days of Stephens and Catherwood theories involving trans-Pacific or trans-

Atlantic contact have never survived scientific scrutiny.<sup>6</sup>

In 1980 and again in 1984, Professor Coe published revised editions of his textbook using almost identical wording as the 1966 edition. His textbooks illustrate eighteen years of consistent archaeological opinion about Maya origins and the development of Maya civilization - opinion that has been diametrically opposed to the position stated in the Book of Mormon since 1829.

It was, therefore, with real interest that I read the 1987 fully revised edition. On page 45, in addition to the same words quoted above, Coe added considerable amplification. Due to the importance of his change in position, the quote is lengthy. I have underlined for clarification.

The possibility of some trans-Pacific influence on Mesoamerican cultures cannot, however, be so easily dismissed. Its most consistent proponent has been Professor David Kelley of the University of Calgary, who has long pointed out that within the twenty named days of the 260-day calendar so fundamental to Mesoamericans ... is a sequence of animals that can be matched in similar sequence within the lunar zodiacs of many East and Southeast-Asian civilizations. To Kelley, this resemblance is far too close to be merely coincidental ....

Even more extraordinary, as the historian of science Dr. Joseph Needham reminds us, Chinese astronomers of the Han Dynasty as well as the ancient Maya used exactly the same complex calculations to give warning about the likelihood of lunar and solar eclipses.... These data would suggest that there was direct contact across the Pacific.

Lest this be thought to be idle speculation along the lines of the lunatic fringe books so common in this field, let me point out one further piece of evidence. Dr. Paul Tolstoy of the University of Montreal has made a meticulous study of the occurrence of the techniques and tools utilized in the manufacture of bark paper around the Pacific basin. It is his well-founded conclusion that this technology, known in ancient China, Southeast Asia and Indonesia, as well as in Mesoamerica, was diffused from eastern Indonesia to Mesoamerica at a very early date....

(continued on page 13, column 1)



This by no means implies that the Maya - or any other Mesoamerican civilization - were merely derivative from Old World prototypes. What it does suggest is that at a few times in their early history, the Maya may have been receptive to some important ideas originating in the Eastern Hemisphere.<sup>1</sup>

Once again, archaeological understandings are converging with Book of Mormon history. We see Coe moving from a position of no trans-Pacific or trans-Atlantic contact to the probability of the Maya being receptive to important ideas originating in the Eastern Hemisphere via the Pacific. The importance of this change should not be underestimated. It will require many textbooks to be rewritten in the next few years. It would seem that a major corner in archaeological understanding has been turned which is more in line with Book of Mormon history. This of course complements other archaeological changes that have occurred in linguistics and timeline which have also converged with the Book of Mormon.

And the Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even unto the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people.

Ether 1:29

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<sup>1</sup>Sylvanus G. Morley and George W. Brainerd, revised by Robert J. Sharer, *The Ancient Maya* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1983), p.44.

<sup>2</sup>Howard W. Goodkind, "Lord Kingsborough Lost His Fortune Trying to Prove the Maya were Descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Vol. XI, No. 5, (1985), 54 ff.

<sup>3</sup>David Pursuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1985).

Thomas D. S. Key "A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, Vol. 37, No. 2, (June 1985), pp. 96-99.

<sup>4</sup>Goodkind, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup>Michael D. Coe, *The Maya*, 3rd ed. (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1984), p. 41.

<sup>6</sup>Michael D. Coe, *The Maya* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p. 52.

<sup>7</sup>Michael D. Coe, *The Maya*, 4th ed., fully revised (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp. 45-46.

An Ancient Legal Setting... (continued from page 3)

festival day or during a festival celebration. *Perhaps* the three day celebration of the Feast of Pentecost has something to do with the trial of Abinadi. There is good circumstantial evidence that it *does*.

Abinadi would have picked a day to come into the city of Nephi when he knew that the crowds would have been surrounding the area, gathered for a particular reason. There were three days on every Jewish calendar in the ancient world when they gathered at the temple. The Feast of Pentecost was one of those. We know that Abinadi is coming exactly two years after the time he had previously tried to deliver this same message. So, apparently, the day has some significance to him. On the Feast of Pentecost things were done such as the reading of Psalm 50, which is essentially a rebuke and an indictment against the priests who purport to teach and live the Law of Moses, but do not really believe it themselves. That is exactly Abinadi's message as he condemns the priests of Noah.

Moreover, the Feast of Pentecost was specifically a day on which they celebrated the giving of the ten commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. And they remembered the great spiritual manifestation when God's spirit shone and Moses' face radiated as he came down off the mountain. Perhaps it is therefore significant that Abinadi's face, as he withstood the accusations of the priests, shone even as Moses' face did on Mt. Sinai (Mosiah 7:106).

Look at the defense that Abinadi mounts. It is the strangest defense I have ever seen in a lawsuit! Instead of trying to explain himself, what does Abinadi do? He reads the ten commandments to the priests. That would have been a *powerful* indictment on the very day, or the very festival period, when they themselves were supposedly celebrating the giving of the ten commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. There are a number of other things there that help to enrich one's understanding of the reality of what's going on. At least if that is not the precise circumstance, it would seem to me to be something very close to what we have going on in the trial of Abinadi.

Alma, the elder, is the first one to vote on Abinadi and you know that he courageously stood up recognizing the truthfulness of the prophet Abinadi's words. The order of voting may be significant. Alma gives us the one little detail that he was a young man and was required to express his opinion first—on the outcome of this trial. You should know that in the Sanhedrin, and generally in the ancient world, the youngest member of the court was required to speak first, the Talmud explains, so he would not be influenced by the opinions of the older judges around.

There are many other details we could look at. For example, the execution of Abinadi when he is finally put

(Continued on next page)



to death by fire. Normally, as we have already mentioned, a blasphemer would probably be expected to be put to death by stoning. Why is Abinadi burned? I think the most likely explanation is that the talionic concept of justice that operated in the ancient world was that you tried to match the punishment as closely as you could to the actual nature of the offense that was being punished.

For example, if a person broke into a house, under the law of Hammurabi, you would *hang* that person over the very window or door that the person went through when he broke into the house. In Abinadi's case, he is put to death by fire because he is being punished for having prophesied falsely, particularly against the king. He is finally caught for that. And what had he said would happen to the king? He would be burned, that his life would be valued even as a garment in a furnace. And they take and do with him as he would have had happen to Noah.

Let me conclude by simply reiterating my belief that a clear understanding of the Book of Mormon presupposes and is improved by an understanding of details of this nature. It helps me to appreciate the complexity, the accuracy, and the technicalities of the Book of Mormon. This book is a subtle book. In many ways it is a master of understatement. It does not explain all of this to us, because it is assumed that we will understand it. Without that background we might even be led to misunderstand some things such as Nephi's action in killing Laban [*The Witness*, January 1988, Issue #60]. But *with* that background, the book takes on greater meaning, respect, substance and historical context. And to me, even though these things are just recently discovered and things that we are only beginning to understand, they already point me in a direction of heightened testimony and greater knowledge of the truthfulness of this book of which I bear testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



**TANTALIZING GLIMPSES** - Continued from page 8.

**the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.**

**And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters.**

**And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise;**

**And I beheld the wrath of God that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles, and**

were smitten.

**And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles; that they did prosper, and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain.**

**And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord, and the power of the Lord was with them;**

**And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them;**

**And I beheld that the power of God was with them; and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle.**

**And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations . . .**

**Nevertheless thou beholdest that the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity, and have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations...will not utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed.**

1 Nephi 3:147-155, 176-177

## **STRONG AFTER TWO CENTURIES**

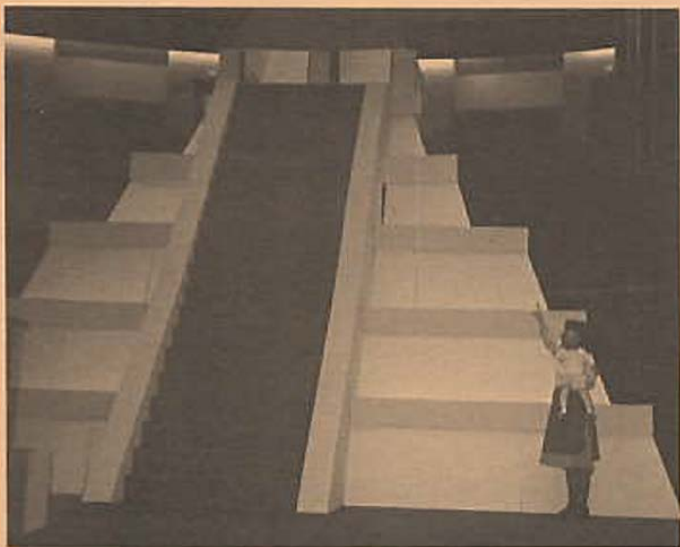
Gladstone called our constitution the "most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." The *Kansas City Times* (September 15, 1986) says, "The document, copied and respected around the world, was signed by the framers on September 17, 1787 and submitted to the thirteen states for ratification. Warren E. Burger, Chief Justice of the United States, asks the pertinent question, 'How is it that 55 men in a country of some three million could produce a legal framework that would govern themselves and still serve, nearly 200 years later, a pluralistic complex nation of about 250 million?' It is one of the political miracles and mysteries of modern man."



(To be continued in the next issue of *The Witness*.)



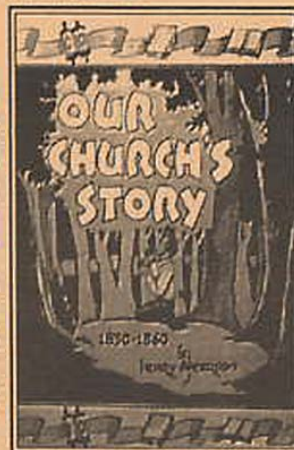
# BORN OF GOODLY PARENTS...



In the above picture, Lana Elliott from the state of Kansas is showing her little daughter the 30 foot pyramid used in the Book of Mormon Conference last October. Very appropriately, the child's name is Sariah. With this kind of parental concern one day Sariah may say with Nephi, "I was born of goodly parents."

# ANDERSON BOOKS TO BE REPRINTED

The Foundation for Research on Ancient America has been given permission to reprint the set of three Henry Anderson books on the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Our Church's Story (1830-1860). The format is unusual and will hopefully be as popular with the young church people of today as it was with those of the 1940s.



We are using two pages from the Book of Mormon account as our story for this issue of *The Junior Witness*. This is the best way to show you what these books contain. Will you please give special notice to pages two and three of *The Junior Witness*?

The texts are authentic, following the originals closely. The Doctrine and Covenants account covers revelations through 1948, the year of the original publication.

Of course, as with all our projects, we are waiting only on funds. We do not launch into anything unless money has already been donated for that endeavor. We really do need your help to get this material to our children.



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Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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State / Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For the third year, we are going to give away 1000 Books of Mormon at the October conference. Response to this missionary effort has been outstanding, and many have already sent in contributions for the 1988 project. If you would like to help, send your donations to:

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION...

### PURPOSE

The foundation for Research on Ancient America is a not-for-profit corporation comprised of individuals who desire to advance the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon. Through instructional materials, archaeological research, testimonies and related projects members of FRAA seek to assist in bringing forth the light that is contained in the ancient scriptures of the Book of Mormon.

The Foundation for Research on Ancient America is not an official organization of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

### OFFICERS:

President: Thelona D. Stevens  
1st Vice President: Roy E. Weldon  
2nd Vice President: Michael Gatrost  
Secretary: Bea Luther  
Treasurer: Donna Weddle

### PUBLICATION OF NEWSLETTER:

Quarterly

### DISTRIBUTION:

Fifty States  
Eleven foreign countries

### MEMBERSHIP IN THE FOUNDATION:

Open to all persons  
Supported by volunteer contributions

### PHOTOGRAPHY:

Frederick O. Weddle

### LINE DRAWINGS:

Scott Nixon

### MAILING ADDRESSES:

### CORRESPONDENCE:

**The Witness**

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