



THE WITNESS

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And it came to pass
that I beheld that the rod of iron,
which my father had seen,
was **the word of God**, which led to
the fountain of living waters,
or to the tree of life;
which **waters are a representation of**
the love of God;

From the Board...



Our hearts are heavy as we announce that Kelli Pedersen has decided to leave the Book of Mormon Foundation board. Kelli joined us in the fall of 2007 and has been a faithful and diligent board member. Her contagious smile and sense of humor are special blessings that often helped us through some challenging decisions. Her love for the Lord and other people radiated through everything she accomplished. One of her most memorable contributions was serving as director of the annual Santa-Cali-Gon booth sponsored by The Book of Mormon Foundation. During her leadership of this program, 636 copies of the Book of Mormon were given away and countless testimonies of Jesus Christ shared with others. It's easy to see how Kelli guided this program to become an instrument of God which continues to touch the lives of many people. We extend our deepest appreciation to Kelli for many years of service and pray for her continued journey in service to God.

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THE WITNESS

Plates and Records in the Book of Mormon

Grant R. Hardy and Robert E. Parsons

The Book of Mormon is a complex text with a complicated history. It is primarily an abridgment of several earlier records by its chief editor and namesake, Mormon. All these records are referred to as "plates" because they were engraved on thin sheets of metal. Various source documents were used by Mormon in his compilation, leading to abrupt transitions and chronological disjunctions that can confuse readers. However, when one is aware of the history of the text, these are consistent and make good sense. The various plates and records referred to in the Book of Mormon and used in making it are (1) the plates of brass; (2) the record of Lehi; (3) the large plates of Nephi; (4) the small plates of Nephi; (5) the plates of Mormon; and (6) the twenty-four gold plates of Ether.

The Gold Plates

The gold plates that the Prophet Joseph Smith received and translated were the plates of Mormon on which Mormon and his son Moroni² made their abridgment. Mormon, a prophet and military leader who lived at the end of the Nephite era (c. A.D. 385), was the penultimate custodian of the records of earlier Nephite prophets and rulers. In particular, he had the large plates of Nephi, which were the official Nephite chronicle and which he was commanded to continue [Mormon 1:4 LDS] (Mormon 1:5 RLDS).

He later made his own plates of Mormon, on which he compiled an abridgment of the large plates of Nephi

[Words of Mormon 1:3-5; 3 Nephi 5:9-10 LDS] (Words of Mormon 1:4-8; 3 Nephi 2:93-94 RLDS), which covered 985 years of Nephite history, from Lehi's day to his. The large plates drew on still earlier records and the writings of various prophets and frequently included various source materials such as letters, blessings, discourses, and memoirs.

After Mormon had completed his abridgment through the reign of King Benjamin (c. 130 B.C.), he discovered the small plates of Nephi, a separate history of the same time period focusing on the spiritual events of those years and quoting extensively from the plates of brass. Inspired to add the small plates of Nephi to his own record, Mormon inserted a brief explanation for the double account of early Nephite history [Words of Mormon 1:2-9 LDS] (Words of Mormon 1:2-13 RLDS).

Mormon continued his abridgment, selecting from the large plates, paraphrasing, and often adding his own comments, extending the account down to his time. Anticipating death, he passed the plates to his son Moroni. Over the next few decades, Moroni wandered alone, making additions to his father's record, including two chapters now included in a book previously abridged by his father [Mormon 7-8 LDS] (Mormon 3:24-4:56 RLDS) and an account of the Jaredites that he had abridged from the twenty-four gold plates of Ether. He also copied an extensive vision of the last days that had been recorded by an early Jaredite prophet, the brother of Jared, and which Moroni was commanded to seal [Ether 4:4-5 LDS] (Ether 1:98-99 RLDS). He also added brief notes on church rituals [Moroni 1-6 LDS] (Moroni 1-6 RLDS), a sermon and two letters from his father [Moroni 7-9



This gold plate of Darius proclaims his majesty and the vast extent of his Persian empire. It was buried in a neatly made stone box in 516-515 B.C. at Persepolis. This gold plate and its duplicate silver tablet were discovered in 1933. Similarly, the Nephites of the sixth century B.C. kept two sets of records on gold plates, one of which was buried in a stone box in 421 A.D. Courtesy Paul R. Cheesman

LDS] (Moroni 7-9 RLDS), and an exhortation to future readers [Moroni 10 LDS] (Moroni 10 RLDS). Finally, Moroni took this somewhat heterogeneous collection of records—the plates of Mormon, the small plates of Nephi, his abridgment of the plates of Ether, and the sealed portion containing the vision of the Brother of Jared—and buried them in the earth. About 1,400 years later, in 1823, Moroni, now resurrected, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and revealed the location of these records. The plates of Mormon, which, except for the sealed portion, were subsequently translated by Joseph Smith, are known today as the gold plates.

The present English Book of Mormon, however, is not simply a translation of all those gold plates. Joseph Smith and Martin Harris began by translating the plates of Mormon, and when they had reached the reign of King Benjamin, they had 116 pages of translation. Harris borrowed these pages to show to his wife, then lost them, and they were never recovered (*see* Manuscript, Lost 116 Pages). Joseph was commanded not to retranslate this material [D&C 10:30-46 LDS] (D&C 3:6a-10c RLDS), but instead to substitute a translation of the parallel small plates of Nephi, which includes the books of 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, and Omni. Thus, the present Book of Mormon contains only the second account of early Nephite history.

The translation continues from the rest of the plates of Mormon, which were abridged from the large plates of Nephi, and includes the six books of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi, 4 Nephi, and Mormon (the last two chapters of which were written by Moroni). Next follow Moroni's abridgment of Jaredite history (the book of Ether) and his closing notes (the book of Moroni). Joseph Smith was commanded not to translate the sealed vision of the Brother of Jared, which apparently made up a substantial portion of the gold plates (Ludlow, p. 320). Although Joseph Smith translated only from the gold plates, he and

his associates saw many other records (*JD* 19:38; *Millennial Star* 40 [1878]: 771—72).

The Plates of Brass

It is now known that many ancients of the Mediterranean area wrote on metal plates. "Where the record was one of real importance, plates of copper, bronze, or even more precious metal were used instead of the usual wooden, lead, or clay tablets" (*CWHN* 5:119; see also H. C. Wright, in *Journal of Library History* 16 [1981]: 48—70). Such a metal record was in the possession of one Laban, a leader in Jerusalem in 600 B.C. How Laban obtained these plates and where they originally came from are not known. Several theories have been advanced, including the possibility that the plates of brass originated in the days of Joseph of Egypt (Ludlow, p. 56). The Book of Mormon indicates that Laban and his father had inherited and preserved the record because they were descendants of this Joseph [1 Nephi 5:16 LDS] (1 Nephi 1:167-168 RLDS).

The Book of Mormon does tell how the prophet Lehi came to possess the plates of brass. After fleeing Jerusalem, Lehi was commanded by God to send his sons back to the city to obtain the plates from Laban. When he received them, Lehi found that they contained the five books of Moses, a record of the Jews from the beginning down to the reign of Zedekiah, the prophecies of the holy prophets for that same time period (including some of Jeremiah's prophecies), and a genealogy of Lehi's fathers [1 Nephi 3-5 LDS] (1 Nephi 1:59-146 RLDS).

Nephi and succeeding spiritual leaders highly valued the plates of brass. They were passed down by major prophets from Nephi to Mormon, and since they were written in an adapted form of Egyptian, their keepers were taught to read that language [Mosiah 1:2-4 LDS] (Mosiah 1:2-6 RLDS). The plates of brass were the basic scriptures of the

Etruscan Gold Book. This is believed to be the oldest complete multiple page book found in the world. It is made of six plates of gold, each 5 x 4.5 cm, and bound with two rings. It dates to 600 BC. It was unearthed from a tomb some 60-70 years ago, along the Strouma River in southwestern Bulgaria. This discovery is especially interesting to Latter-day Saints because the date places it at the same time as when Lehi and his family left Jerusalem, indicating that this form of bookmaking and bookbinding was practiced in the Mediterranean region at the time. It is similar to the description that Joseph Smith gave of the gold plates of the Book of Mormon.



The Gold Plates were translated by Joseph Smith from the original reformed Egyptian texts, and then published into the scriptures we have today known as the Book of Mormon.



Nephite nation, and for centuries their prophets read them, quoted them in sermons, and excerpted material from them to enrich their own writings. For example, when the prophet Abinadi cited the Ten Commandments in a disputation with the priests of Noah, his knowledge of the Ten Commandments was due, at least indirectly, to the plates of brass [Mosiah 12-13 LDS] (Mosiah 7:45-8:14 RLDS). As Mosiah stated, "For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates" [Mosiah 1:4 LDS] (Mosiah 1:5-6 RLDS).

Book of Mormon records, particularly the small plates of Nephi, occasionally quote at length from the plates of brass, and these quotations include twenty-one complete chapters from Isaiah. Although the translation of these quotations generally follows the wording of the King James Version of the Bible, there are many significant differences, which may indicate the existence of older textual sources (Tvedtnes, pp. 165—77). It is also evident from the scriptural quotations in the Book of Mormon that the plates of brass contained a more extensive record of the writings of Hebrew prophets than does the present Old Testament. For example, the Book of Mormon includes prophecies of Joseph of Egypt that are not found in the Bible, as well as writings of Zenos, Zenock, Neum, and Ezias, prophets who are not specifically named in the Old Testament.

The Record of Lehi

Unfortunately, Mormon's abridgment of the record of Lehi was the material translated in the 116 manuscript pages that were lost, and consequently it is not available in the present Book of Mormon. Lehi wrote an account of his life and spiritual experiences that was included in the large plates of Nephi [1 Nephi 19:1 LDS] (1 Nephi 5:218-219 RLDS). Mormon abridged this record in his plates, and Joseph Smith translated it, but since it was lost by Martin Harris, very little is now known about it except what can be

inferred from references in other texts (Brown, pp. 25—32; see also the preface to the first edition [1830] of the Book of Mormon). When Nephi and Jacob cite the words of Lehi, they seem to be quoting from this now-lost text, and at least the first eight chapters of 1 Nephi [LDS] (1 Nephi 1:1-2:91 RLDS) part of the small plates) appear to be based on the record of Lehi. Other passages in the small plates may also have been derived from that record.

The Large Plates of Nephi

Nephi began the large plates soon after his arrival in the New World. They were the official continuous chronicle of the Nephites from the time they left Jerusalem (c. 600 B.C.) until they were destroyed (A.D. 385). Apparently the large plates were divided into books, each named for its primary author. These plates "contained a 'full account of the history of [Nephi's] people' [1 Nephi 9:2, 4; 2 Nephi 4:14; Jacob 1:2-3 LDS] (1 Nephi 2:93-95,97-98; 2 Nephi 3:25-27; Jacob 1:2-3 RLDS), the genealogy of Lehi [1 Nephi 19:2 LDS] (1 Nephi 5:220-222 RLDS) and the 'more part' of the teachings of the resurrected Jesus Christ to the Nephite nation [3 Nephi 26:7 LDS] (3 Nephi 12:1 RLDS)" (Ludlow, p. 57). Begun as basically a secular history, they later became a combined record, mingling a thousand years of Nephite history and religious experiences.

The large plates emphasize the covenants made with the house of Israel and quote messianic prophecies of Old World prophets not found in the Old Testament. This information was excerpted from the plates of brass that Lehi's colony brought with it from Jerusalem. They also record wars and contentions, correspondence between military leaders, and information on various missionary journeys. The interventions and miraculous power of God permeate this history. The recorded sermons of King Benjamin, Abinadi, and Alma² are indicative of these individuals' deep understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of their faith in his prophesied coming. These plates feature an account of the post-Resurrection ministry and teachings of Christ to the people of the western world [3 Nephi 11-28 LDS] (3 Nephi 5:1-13:53 RLDS).



The large plates of Nephi were passed down from king to king until they came into the possession of Mosiah. He added such records as those of Zeniff and Alma¹ to the large plates and then gave them to Alma². The plates subsequently passed through a line of prophets until Ammaron's day in the early fourth century A.D. Ammaron chose Mormon, then only a child, to continue the record when he was mature. Mormon recorded the events of his day on the large plates and then used them as the source for his abridgment, which was later buried in the hill cumorah. Joseph Smith did not receive the large plates, but the Book of Mormon suggests that they may yet be published to the world [3 Nephi 26:6-10 LDS] (3 Nephi 12:1-4 RLDS).

The Small Plates of Nephi

Approximately twenty years after beginning the large plates, Nephi was commanded to make another set of plates. This second set was to be reserved for an account of the ministry of his people [1 Nephi 9; 2 Nephi 5:28-33 LDS] (1 Nephi 2:92-102; 2 Nephi 4:44-50 RLDS). They were to contain the things considered most precious—"preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying" [Jacob 1:2-4 LDS] (Jacob 1:2-4 RLDS).

The small plates were kept for over four centuries, not quite half the time covered by the large plates, by nine writers: Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki. All of these authors were the sons or brothers of their predecessors. Though these plates include the writings of many over a long time period, 80 percent of the text was written by Nephi, the first writer, and an additional 12 percent by his brother Jacob.

Mormon included the small plates with his record when he delivered the plates of Mormon to his son Moroni because their witness of Christ pleased him and because he was impressed by the Spirit of the Lord to include them "for a wise purpose" [Words

of Mormon 1:3-7 LDS] (Words of Mormon 1:4-11 RLDS). However, since the small plates covered the historical period already recorded in his abridgment of the record of Lehi (namely, from Lehi down to the reign of King Benjamin) and since the book of Mosiah began with the end of King Benjamin's reign, Mormon found it necessary to write a brief explanation to show how the small plates of Nephi connect with the book of Mosiah. He entitled this explanation "Words of Mormon."

While the writers of the small plates recognized the need to provide a historical narrative, their main purpose was to talk of Christ, to preach of Christ, and to prophesy of Christ [2 Nephi 25:26 LDS] (2 Nephi 11:48 RLDS). Because Nephi was concerned with teaching his people the covenants and promises made to ancient Israel, he extracted these teachings from earlier prophets as recorded on the plates of brass. He quoted extensively from the prophet Isaiah [2 Nephi 12-24 LDS; cf. Isaiah 2-14 KJV] (2 Nephi 8:17-10:54 RLDS; Isaiah 2-15 IV) and then wrote a commentary on it, predicting the future of Jews, Lamanites, and Gentiles and prophesying much that would happen in the latter days [2 Nephi 25-30 LDS] (2 Nephi 11-12 RLDS).

Jacob continued his brother's approach by recording his own sermons and a long quotation from and explanation of a prophecy of Zenos. The writings of later authors in the small plates are much briefer and less concerned with spiritual matters.

Amaleki noted in his writings that the small plates were full and turned them over to King Benjamin [Omni 1:25, 30 LDS] (Omni 1:43-45, 52-54 RLDS), who then possessed both the large and the small plates of Nephi, as well as the plates of brass. All these sets of plates were handed down from generation to generation until they were entrusted to Mormon.

The Plates of Mormon

After Mormon received the plates, he made a new set on which he engraved his abridgment of the large plates of Nephi [3 Nephi 5:10-11 LDS] (3 Nephi 2:94-95 RLDS). It is this abridgment plus some additions by Mormon's son Moroni that constitute the gold plates given to Joseph Smith. He described them as follows:

These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold, each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long and

not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters and bound together in a volume, as the leaves of a book with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. (Jessee, p. 214)

The descriptions reported by other witnesses add details which suggest that the plates were composed of a gold alloy (possibly tumbaga) and that they weighed about fifty pounds (Putnam, pp. 788—89, 829—31). Each plate was as thick as parchment or thick paper.

Most of the time, Mormon relied on the large plates of Nephi for his information. Much of the historical narrative in the Book of Mormon appears to be his paraphrase of earlier records, but occasionally first-person documents are worked into the text. For example, in Mosiah 9 and 10 [LDS] (Mosiah 6 RLDS) the narrative suddenly includes a first-person account of Zeniff (apparently an earlier document that Mormon simply copied), and then in chapter 11 [LDS] (Mosiah 7 RLDS) Mormon's paraphrase resumes. In addition, many sermons, blessings, and letters appear to be reproduced intact.

Nevertheless, some passages can definitely be ascribed to Mormon: the abridgment of his contributions to the large plates [Mormon 1-7 LDS] (Mormon 1-3 RLDS), his sermon and letters recorded by Moroni [Moroni 7-9 LDS] (Moroni 7-9 RLDS), and the explanatory comments that he inserted into his narrative. In some of these interpolations he identifies himself [Words of Mormon; 3 Nephi 5:8-26; 26:6-12; 28:24; 4 Nephi 1:23 LDS] (Words of Mormon; 3 Nephi 2:91-109; 12:1-6; 13:37; 4 Nephi 1:26 RLDS), but it seems likely that the frequent "thus we see" comments are also Mormon attempting to stress matters of particular spiritual importance to his readers (e.g., [Alma 24:19, 27; 50:19-23; Helaman 3:27-30; 12:1-2 LDS] (Alma 14:46-47,55; 22:19-20; Helaman 2:25-26; 4:48-51 RLDS).

The Twenty-Four Gold Plates of Ether

These twenty-four gold plates were a record of ancient Jaredites, inhabitants of the Americas before the Nephites. This particular people left the Tower of Babel at the time of the confusion of tongues. Their

prophet-leaders were led to the ocean, where they constructed eight peculiar barges. These were driven by the wind across the waters to America, where the Jaredites became a large and powerful nation. After many centuries, wickedness and wars led to a final war of annihilation. During that final war, Ether, a prophet of God, wrote their history and spiritual experiences on twenty-four gold plates, perhaps relying on earlier Jaredite records (see J. Welch, "Preliminary Comments on the Sources behind the Book of Ether," in *FARMS Manuscript Collection*, pp. 3-7. Provo, Utah, 1986).

After witnessing the destruction of his people, Ether hid the twenty-four gold plates. Many years later (c. 121 B.C.) they were discovered by a small Nephite exploring party and given to Mosiah, a prophet-king, who translated them into the Nephite language through the use of seer stones [Mosiah 8:8-9; 28:11-16 LDS] (Mosiah 5:61-64 RLDS). Much later (c. A.D. 400) Moroni abridged this history of the Jaredites as his father Mormon had intended, concentrating on spiritual matters and adding inspired commentaries. Moroni included this abridgment, now known as the book of Ether, with what he and his father had already written. (The twenty-four gold plates of Ether were not among the plates received by Joseph Smith.)

Characteristics of Mormon's Editing

The Book of Mormon is quite complicated. The foregoing summary of the plates and other records from which the book was derived is drawn from a number of scattered but consistent comments included in the present text. The narrative itself is often complex. For instance, in Mosiah 1-25 [LDS] (Mosiah 1-11:104 RLDS), Mormon narrates the stories of three separate groups and subgroups of people—principally the people of Mosiah, of Limhi, and of Alma—with their respective histories and interactions with each other and with the Lamanites. The story might have been quite confusing, as it jumps from one people to another, and back and forth in time, but Mormon has kept it remarkably clear. Alma 17-26 [LDS] (Alma 12-14 RLDS) is a lengthy flashback recounting the histories of several missionaries on the occasion of their reunion with old friends, and Alma 43-63 (Alma 20-30 RLDS) narrates the history of a war with the

Lamanites, keeping straight the events that happened on two fronts.

Mormon's account might have been much more complex. He emphasizes that he is presenting less than one hundredth of the material available to him [e.g., Words of Mormon 1:5; 3 Nephi 26:6-7 LDS] (Words of Mormon 1:8; 3 Nephi 12:1 RLDS). Furthermore, his source materials give a lineage history of one family, Lehi and his descendants, and do not encompass all events in the ancient western world (Sorenson, 1985, pp. 50—56). Mormon further simplifies his record by continuing Jacob's practice of lumping diverse peoples into two major groups:

Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. But I, Jacob, shall not hereafter distinguish them by these names, but I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi, and those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi, according to the reigns of the kings. [Jacob 1:13-14; see also Mormon 1:8-9 LDS] (Jacob 1:13-14; Mormon 1:8-9 RLDS)

The vast editing project that produced the Book of Mormon would require clear guidelines for selecting materials for inclusion. Mormon is quite explicit about the purpose of his abridgment. Like Nephi, he is writing a history to lead people to Christ, and he is writing specifically for the people of later times [2 Nephi 25:23; Mormon 7 LDS] (2 Nephi 11:43-44; Mormon 3:24-33 RLDS). The plates of Mormon were created to come forth in the latter days. Mormon is interested in pointing out the principles that will be of most use to such people, and his careful editing and his "thus" and "thus we see" passages are all directed at making the moral lessons easier to identify and understand.

Finally, Mormon took his job as record keeper and abridger very seriously. He was commanded by God to make his record [title page to the Book of Mormon; 3 Nephi 26:12 LDS] (title page to the Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 12:5-6 RLDS). Also, Nephite society had a strong tradition of the importance of written records, and this was one of the criteria by which they distinguished themselves from the more numerous Mulekites [Omni 1:14-19 LDS] (Omni 1:24-34 RLDS). Furthermore, the various plates

seem to have been handed down from one prophet or king to another as sacred relics and symbols of authority [Mosiah 28:20; 3 Nephi 1:2 LDS] (Mosiah 13:1-2; 3 Nephi 1:2 RLDS). In addition, the Nephites had a ceremonial record exchange when different branches of the family were reunited [Mosiah 8:1-5; 22:14 LDS] (Mosiah 5:53-57; 10:17 RLDS). Most important, the Nephites knew that they would be held responsible for and would be judged by what was written in the records, just as all people will be [2 Nephi 25:21-22; 33:10-15; Mormon 8:12 LDS] (2 Nephi 11:40-42; 15:11-18 RLDS).

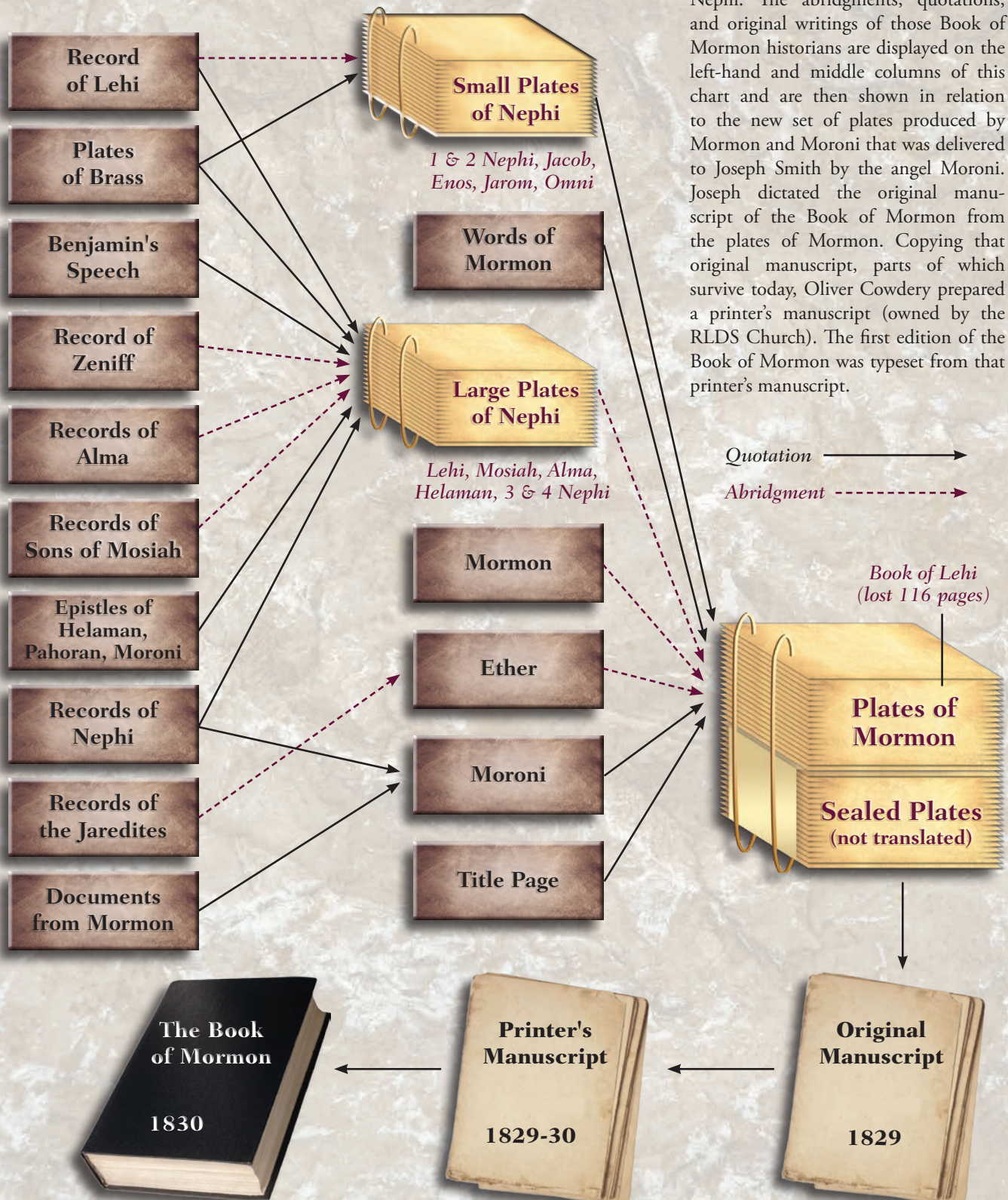
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Book of Mormon Plates and Records

Many ancient documents such as King Benjamin's speech or the plates of brass were quoted or abridged by the ancient authors who compiled the books found on the small and large plates of Nephi. The abridgments, quotations, and original writings of those Book of Mormon historians are displayed on the left-hand and middle columns of this chart and are then shown in relation to the new set of plates produced by Mormon and Moroni that was delivered to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni. Joseph dictated the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon from the plates of Mormon. Copying that original manuscript, parts of which survive today, Oliver Cowdery prepared a printer's manuscript (owned by the RLDS Church). The first edition of the Book of Mormon was typeset from that printer's manuscript.



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**JOURNEY TO THE
PROMISED LAND**

THE WATERS OF MORMON

JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF MORMON

Book of Mormon Day for Kids 2012

Saturday, November 17, 2012

8:30am - 2:30pm • Grades K-6

The Gathering Place

2820 S Hwy 291 • Independence, MO 64055

Register by Nov 2: \$10/child or \$20/family

Register after Nov 2: \$15/child or \$25/family

Lunch and snacks provided

Presented by

The Book of Mormon Foundation

THE BROTHER OF JARED

**JESUS TEACHING
IN THE AMERICAS**



Sunday, June 24

The Internship starts tomorrow! I'm both excited and apprehensive. What will the classes be like? What all will be involved in a day's work? One thing I'm not as worried about though, is meeting all the interns. We met earlier this afternoon in a more comfortable setting, which helped calm my nerves a lot. Everyone seems really nice. I can't wait to see what these next six weeks have to offer!

Thursday, June 28

Wow, what a day! We interns traveled to Tucker Institute today for team building. I was excited to get to know everyone better in this way. We started out working together well, but by the end of the day we learned a lot about each other! I feel so much more confident after having a day to work with everyone. Today, I realized we are a team, brought together to learn about and testify of Jesus Christ.



Amy Tompkins

As a part of the Book of Mormon Internship this year, we drove to New York and visited church sites and the Kirtland Temple. We toured the Kirtland Temple and had a private service inside the temple. Prior to starting our service, we had some time to meditate on the grounds outside of the temple and prepare ourselves for the service we would be having. I

chose a secluded area on a bench surrounded by some shrubbery and prayed for the upcoming service that the Lord's spirit would meet us there. As I prayed, I began to think of the condition of the temple, how it had begun to have large cracks on the outside of the building and how it is no longer used as often for worship by the Saints or for the service of God. As I sat in the shade of the trees, I wondered if the Kirtland Temple was actually a temple of God, or if it was just a nice monument to the work of previous devoted saints.

Once we had all gathered inside for the service and several of the interns had shared testimonies and prayers, I also stood to pray. I felt the spirit of God come over me in much more power than I have felt in a very long time. I was not spoken to in audible words, but I knew by the power of God's Holy Spirit, that I was standing and praying in God's temple that He had commanded to be built and that it was holy and sacred ground. Knowing that God hears my thoughts and knows even the smallest of my doubts and that He will confirm the truth helps me to know and trust in the Good Shepherd. Having had the opportunity to worship with my other brothers and sisters in God's temple has been such a blessing and a confirmation of Christ and His Gospel to me.



Bethany Buckles

During the first week of the Internship, Val Brotherton taught us a class and shared with us in a fasting service. He asked each of us to tell the group a prayer request on our heart, and the person next to us would pray for us. I shared about my fear. I'm getting ready to start nursing school this semester, and I'm getting married in December. I've had a lot on my plate the past few months, and I've been really concerned that I won't be able to handle everything.



Knowing that God hears my thoughts and knows even the smallest of my doubts and that He will confirm the truth helps me to know and trust in the Good Shepherd.



The Internship isn't what I thought it would be—it's much better! I really didn't know what to expect. I guess I thought we would study the Book of Mormon constantly every day, but we don't! Not only do we learn about the Book of Mormon, we also learn so much more about how to live for Christ and testify of Him. We also get to do a lot of praying, which helps us to see the impact of prayer in our lives! I feel like I've learned so much already, and it's only the second week!

Tuesday, July 17

Tomorrow we meet with the evangelicals who protest outside of the Book of Mormon pageant. I am so nervous. What if I freeze up and don't know what to say?! Thankfully, we had a great class earlier about how to talk to them, and we're going to study together tonight. Plus, I know God will be with us—we're not trying to convert anyone, just share the love of Christ and how He is truly in the Book of Mormon!

Wednesday, July 18

Wow, the trip is flying by so fast! We have connected so much—long van rides together seem to do that! Today, we spoke with the evangelicals, and it was both enlightening and frustrating. They don't want to let you talk! It was a great experience, though, and now we all feel like we can talk to almost anyone about the Book of Mormon and Jesus Christ!

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I've heard the first semester of nursing school is horrible, and I would have been able to lighten my load by taking a class this summer. I couldn't do that and be a part of the Internship. The last thing I wanted to do was disappoint my parents, my fiancé, myself and most importantly, God. I asked for them to pray that the Lord would take away all my fears and concerns. The prayer requests mentioned that day ended up on our daily prayer list for the Internship. For weeks, my fellow interns and I prayed concerning my fears. I realized before we went on the trip that I hadn't been nearly as worried as I was before. I never knew the Lord would answer our prayers like He did, though.

Our first stop on the trip was Byrneville, Indiana. We stayed with a church family there and did a service project to help a newly established congregation. On Sunday, we provided a service for the Saints. During the service, I shared my testimony of the Book of Mormon and, while I was speaking, I could see an older gentleman in the congregation had locked his eyes on me. I was surprised when I went back to stand with the group, and he was still staring at me. I didn't think too much about it until the end of the service, and then I decided I would introduce myself.

I shook his hand and told him my name, and his response was "I'm sure glad you came over. I was going to have to hunt you down." He then told me the Lord wanted me to know that He is pleased with me, and He was glad I answered the call and was a part of the program. He also said He would take care of all my needs in the days to come. The very last thing he said was "don't be afraid."

This meant a lot to me, for many different reasons. This was another assurance that this was what the Lord wanted of me—not only concerning the Internship, but also with my choice of career and companion. The only thing I could think about while this gentleman was speaking to me was how the Lord had not only heard, but answered all the prayers the group had prayed on my behalf. It's a neat testimony for not only me, but the Internship as a whole.



Cassy Glandon

During the first week of the Internship, we went to the Tucker institute to do some team-building activities. One of the activities involved us all being blindfolded except Bethany, and we held on to

a rope to help us stay together. Rebecca Cornish said the rope was like the rod of iron. As Bethany led us through a path with trees on either side (sometimes they were in the middle), I learned I had to listen carefully and hold on to the rope. I had to trust Bethany to tell us where to go, which was hard, because I couldn't see her. By following her instructions, we all made it safely to the end of the path. I learned that, just like when I had to depend on Bethany for direction, I need to trust God to lead me. Sometimes that's difficult, because I can't see Him, but that's where the trust factor comes in. Just because I couldn't see Bethany, didn't mean she was not there guiding us. I learned from this is even when we can't see God's hand in our lives, He is still there working, and we can trust Him.



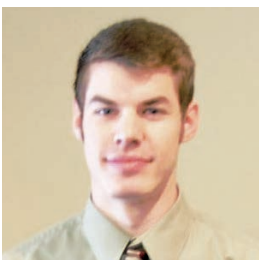
Eventually, I found that this began to draw too much attention to me when I would accidentally run into church acquaintances, so I began to attend church once more. I took action only to prevent prying questions.

I went to church, yet attended only in body, and not in mind or spirit. I prayed only when asked to in public, and even more rarely in private. I even taught a Sunday school class, yet I refused to acknowledge the principles that I taught. Outwardly, I was happy, yet inwardly I was restless and angry. I could not deny that there was a God, nor could I deny the truth of the Bible or Book of Mormon. The result was a heightened sense of misery and guilt.

Despite all of this, the Lord continued to work in my life as often as I turned to him for help, and my heart slowly began to soften. Finally, I was ready to completely turn back to God, but could not shake a small remnant of anger that still plagued me. I didn't know how to rid myself of this last bit of rebellion. I knew I needed help, but I felt there was no place I wanted to go to receive it.

As I applied for the Book of Mormon Foundation Internship, I wondered if I would be able to contribute in any useful way considering the condition I was in, or if I would only distract the other interns. Thankfully, neither possibility ended up being the case. Instead, the sincerity and love my newfound friends showed me reflected toward me the great love the Father has for all his creation, and I could no longer hold onto the final vestiges of my anger and rebellion. I knew that God loved me, and that knowledge made me free.

Because of this experience, I consider the choice to join the Foundation Internship one of the best decisions I have ever made throughout my life, and I thank God that I was able to be a participant.



Isaiah Johnson

Approximately two and a half years ago, personal events in my life culminated in such a way that I became angry with God. This anger resulted in a small-scale rebellion. For a short time, I stopped attending church and avoided my church friends.



Jane Eyerly

A few days into our trip to New York this year, our director, Lynn, shared an experience he had after devotions one morning. He had awakened in the middle of the night tossing and turning, and he couldn't seem to fall back asleep for several hours. During that time, it was impressed upon him over and over again that God was hearing our prayers and that further affirmation would be given. After Lynn shared this experience with us, I assumed he wasn't speaking to me. I wasn't necessarily praying for anything special, so I figured it was a message meant for someone else. Back at our rooms, as we were packing up and getting ready to leave the hotel that morning, one of the interns mentioned that she was glad to hear what Lynn had shared. She had been fasting that morning and praying heavily. She commented that although Lynn received that message last night, and she had been praying that morning, it just goes to show how God is timeless. I got to thinking, after she said that, how God truly can work through everything and in all ways. Still, I didn't feel as though this message spoke directly to me.

We all loaded into the car and, since it was early, many of the interns fell asleep or read quietly. I started writing in my notebook. I prayed that God would send me His spirit, that I could have a testimony of Him to share with others. I prayed that His spirit would be given to me so abundantly that it would fill me up and comfort me, and that I would know it was of God. I decided to write down Lynn's message and the other intern's comment, as well. After that, I put my notebook away and began to pray



silently. Then, my mind was suddenly impressed with these two words, quite simply: Get baptized. I sat thinking for a moment. Why would God be giving me this thought? Finally, I felt the message was strong enough that I needed to write it down. I got my notebook back out, wrote, "Get baptized," and underlined it three times. Then I looked back up at the words I had written just minutes earlier. I had been asking God to send me His spirit, Lynn had confirmed that God was hearing our prayers, and Jamie mentioned that God is timeless. Suddenly it all just seemed to make sense. God WAS listening to my prayers, and He was TRYING to send me His spirit. And, even though all these messages seemed to be out of order, that didn't take away from their validity, because God is timeless!

Only a couple days later, as we were driving in the car again, doubts had already set in regarding the necessity of my baptism and the strength of God's message to me. I was sitting up front, and everybody had their scriptures out, discussing certain topics of interest. Then I heard talk of baptism coming from the very back of the van. I turned around, and Jordan was reading from 2 Nephi 13, starting at verse 7 (RLDS) [2 Nephi 31:5 LDS]. The scripture points out that even Jesus, our Lord and Savior, needed to be baptized in this life. It also outlines how God uses baptism to provide us with His Spirit even more abundantly. He was reading the very words I needed to hear at the exact time I needed to hear them, once again solidifying the message Lynn gave us. God heard my prayers of wanting His Spirit with me, and baptism is one of those ways of receiving His Spirit more fully.



Today's service was amazing! What a blessing it is to be able to stand up and testify of what the Lord has done in the last few weeks, to sing praises with the interns, and then to enjoy potluck with fellow saints! I can't believe we only have one week left in the Internship. Time went by so quickly!

Thursday, August 2

Tomorrow's the official last day of the Internship. I'm sad to leave them and the environment we have. This is kind of what I imagine Zion will be like one day! These last six weeks have given each of us so much—friendships, experiences, and lots of information that I look forward to sharing and learning more about! Even though I'm sad to leave, seeing what God was able to do in the short six weeks we've been together has helped me to see that Zion really is possible, if we all have the same desire and drive to work for it. It has been such an amazing opportunity to be one of the witnesses for Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon Internship family!

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The morning before I was to share this testimony in church, I was sitting at our kitchen table going over my various testimonies. My mom sat down beside me and asked what I was doing. I shared this same testimony with her. After I was done, she started crying as she explained that the week I was gone on our trip, she was praying mightily that her children would be baptized and that the obstacles preventing us from doing so would be removed. This is just yet another reassurance that God was hearing our prayers, even my mother's. And all of this goes to show just how timeless and powerful God truly is.

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Jordan Brennan

For about the first half of last school year, I had been considering applying for the Book of Mormon Internship, but I just did not know if it was the right thing. I knew I wanted to do it, but I wanted to make sure that it was something God wanted for me. I was afraid that I wasn't hearing

God's will, but instead I was just hearing my own desires. So I prayed about it. I asked the Lord if this was what He wanted me to do, and I told Him I would apply if it was what He wanted.

I've been keeping a kind of journal for about a year now. I don't recall who gave me the idea, but every day I write one blessing that God has given me, or a way that I have seen His hand in my life. Every now and then, I go back to read over them all, and it's really neat to see all the things that He has blessed me with. Well, about the same time I started praying about the Internship, I felt I should read over this journal again. I didn't really know why, I just had a feeling that I should. I brushed it off several times—I don't have time for that right now, I'm too busy, besides, I'm trying to get an answer for this prayer first. Well, this thought didn't go away. Finally, I thought to myself, "okay fine, I'll read through it; I guess it won't take that long." On the third page of this journal, I wrote about a service I had gone to at Odessa Hills campground. The Book of Mormon interns had put this particular service together, and it really spoke to me. I wrote in my journal about how they had just resonated this spirit of service toward others, and how this service had given me an even stronger desire to apply for the Internship. "With the Lord's blessing," I had written, "I'll be able to go."

Well there it was. That was my answer I had been looking for, and it had only taken this long to receive it because I had been stubborn when God was trying to answer me. It was a small thing, but it meant a lot to me that God cared enough to answer that prayer of mine. I am confident that the Lord has led me to this stage of my life, and I am joyful for it. It is a comforting thing to know that you are living within God's plan for you. I would encourage everyone to seek out His guidance in every decision we make, and trust Him once he gives you your answer.

