



THE WITNESS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION

Number 152 • Winter 2015

*"Be determined in one mind,
and in one heart united in all things..."*



Three in One

It's official! Three Book of Mormon organizations have now merged into one. *Zarahemla Research Foundation* (ZRF) and *Quetzal Archaeology Center for Mesoamerican Research* (Quetzal) have merged with *The Book of Mormon Foundation* (BMF) effective January 1, 2015. The merger has brought together over 100 years of combined research, resources and service.

In the beginning, the task of merging three organizations seemed challenging, but we believed the Lord would provide a way to bring us together and knew it was the right thing to do. This journey of faith has brought forth good fruit and demonstrated how the power of God always provides a way to accomplish His will. Our testimony of the merger is also described in Nephi's proclamation concerning the goodness of God:

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father, I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them. (1 Nephi 1:65 RLDS) [1 Nephi 3:7 LDS]

We're excited to move into the future proclaiming the message of the Book of Mormon. We believe there are great things waiting in the journey ahead and invite all Book of Mormon believers to go forward with us.



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THE BOOK OF MORMON FOUNDATION

OFFICE MANAGER Sue Manning

The Book of Mormon Foundation

is a non-profit corporation composed of individuals who desire to promote The Book of Mormon and its witness of Jesus Christ.

Through research, publications, seminars and related projects, members of The Book of Mormon Foundation seek to assist in bringing forth the light contained in the Book of Mormon.

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The Book of Mormon Foundation

210 West White Oak
 Independence, MO 64050
 Tel: 816-461-3722
 Fax: 816-461-5850

Foundation email:
bmfoundation@live.com

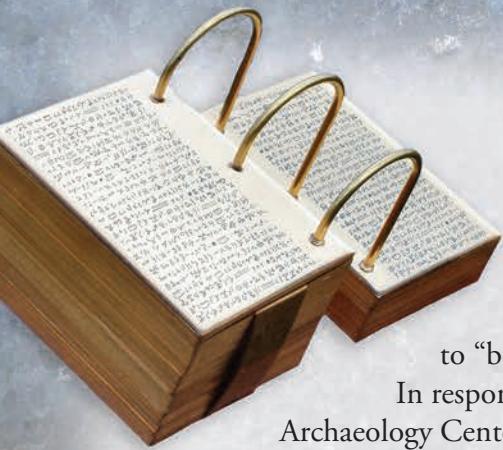
Interns email:
bmfinternship@gmail.com

Website: www.bomf.org

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Cover Photo Courtesy of Dale Godfrey
 (2 Nephi 1:36 RLDS) [2 Nephi 1:21 LDS]



Dear Book of Mormon Family,

We are challenged by the call of God to “...be determined in one mind, and in one heart united in all things...” (2 Nephi 1:36 RLDS) [2 Nephi 1:21 LDS] We believe the importance of the Book of Mormon today makes it critical that we unite together to “become one” and further His work.

In response to that call, we are excited to announce the Quetzal Archaeology Center for Mesoamerican Research (Quetzal) and The Book of Mormon Foundation (BMF) have merged into a single Book of Mormon organization, effective January 1, 2015. The merged organization continues to use the name, The Book of Mormon Foundation, and will also continue to publish The Witness magazine, with articles reflecting the focus of unique ministries found in both organizations. Publications, such as the Book of Mormon Overview, which were already in preparation for printing by Quetzal, will be completed and published. Our plan is for current events, activities and programs at BMF to also continue forward.

Historically, Quetzal merged with Zarahemla Research Foundation (ZRF) in 2012. Since then, Quetzal continued the programs of both organizations. Today, all Quetzal programs, resources, publications, research and archaeological expertise have been merged with BMF. As a merged organization, BMF will be better prepared to proclaim the message of the Book of Mormon.

The new board of directors consists of members from the Quetzal and BMF boards. In addition, we have organized an advisory board, consisting of Quetzal board members and other interested persons. The advisory board will assist in the merger transition, plus provide support and counsel in the various events, activities and programs sponsored by BMF.

The Book of Mormon Foundation Board 2015

Marlin Guin, President	Dale Godfrey
Shirley Heater, Vice President	Mike Ballantyne
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	Rich Rowland

We are working to move information from Quetzal’s website to the BMF website. The existing BMF website (www.bomf.org) will remain as the official website for The Book of Mormon Foundation. It will eventually contain all the combined resources from the merged organizations.

Financial supporters from both organizations can now send contributions directly to The Book of Mormon Foundation, 210 West White Oak, Independence, MO 64050. An envelope is provided in each issue of The Witness magazine, or you can go online to the BMF website (www.bomf.org) and use PayPal. We appreciate your generosity and encourage your continued financial support for these important programs. Combining our financial resources will improve and increase the overall outreach and ministry of BMF, so the Book of Mormon message may go forth in greater power in these latter days.

Please pray for us as we discern the will of God in the decisions before us.

Dale N. Godfrey, President
The Book of Mormon Foundation

Shirley R. Heater, President
Quetzal Archaeology Center for Mesoamerican Research



TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN...

By Sue Manning

And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul; the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; And I, the Lord God, planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there I put the man whom I had formed ... And I, the Lord God, planted the tree of life also, in the midst of the garden; and also the tree of knowledge of good and evil...And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it; For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:8-12, 19-22 IV) [Genesis 2:7-9, 16-17 KJV]

In the first recorded conversation between God and Adam, God states the law, allows Adam to choose to obey or not and defines the result of disobedience. We all know the story and the choice of Adam. Our lives were framed by that decision.

God established the laws, both spiritual and natural. He gave man agency to choose whether to obey or not. He also instituted justice, the administering of deserved punishment or reward, depending on what is chosen. The plan is quite simple. Once our decisions are factored in, however, the plan can get unpleasant and gloomy, at least until mercy is introduced.

Inertia is one of the natural laws God created. The law of inertia basically says an object in motion tends to stay in motion. If a truck driver, pulling a trailer with a large boulder, wants to get his load to his destination safely, he must consider this natural law. If he stops abruptly without the boulder securely fastened, the truck will stop, but the boulder will continue in motion and smash against the cab of the truck. To ignore or disobey God's natural laws can result in

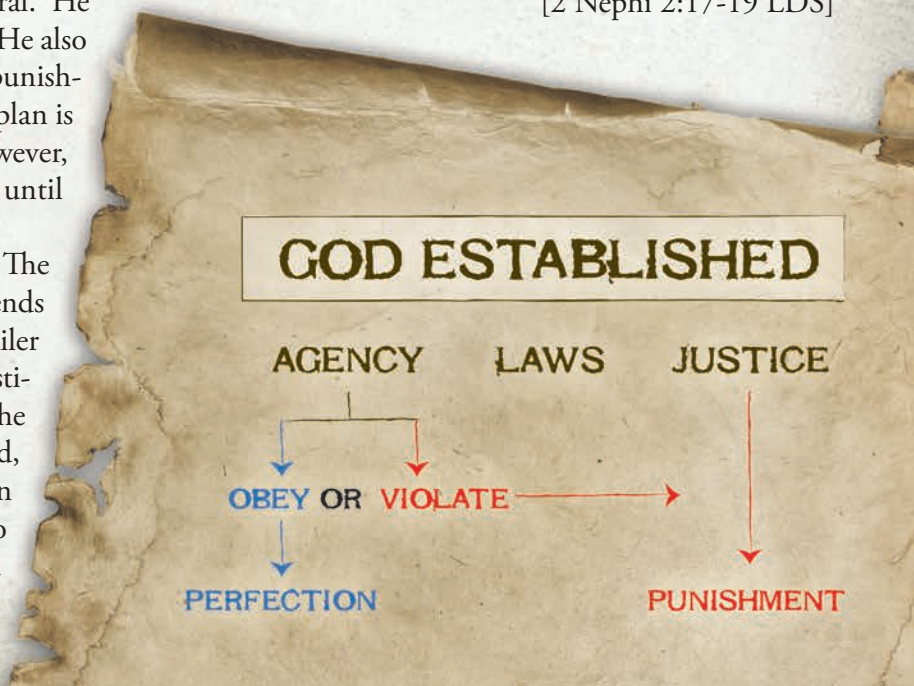
bad consequences. The consequences of disobeying God's spiritual laws are not always so quickly evident, but justice is there, and we will face it sooner or later.

Nephi says,

And I, Lehi, according to the things which I have read, must needs suppose that an angel of God, according to that which is written, had fallen from heaven; Wherefore he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God. And because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable for ever, he sought also the misery of all mankind. Wherefore, he said, unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of all lies; wherefore he said, Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die, but ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were driven out of the garden of Eden, to till the earth. And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen; but he would have remained in the garden of Eden.

(2 Nephi 1:101-105, 111 RLDS)

[2 Nephi 2:17-19 LDS]



Unfortunately, we all choose to disobey. It is our carnal nature. We are not perfect, so the path to perfection is not as easily traveled as the blue path in the flow chart. That would put us in the red path, which leads to punishment. Alma said, “Now we see that Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to the word of God; and thus we see, that by his fall, **all mankind became a lost and a fallen people.**” (Alma 9:38 RLDS) [Alma 12:22 LDS] and that we... “are hardened; yea, all are fallen, and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made” (Alma 16:209 RLDS) [Alma 34:9 LDS]. (emphasis added)

The law cannot save us from punishment. Mosiah said “that salvation doth not come by **the law alone**; and were it not for the atonement which **God himself shall make** for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish...” (Mosiah 8:5 RLDS) [Mosiah 13:28 LDS] (emphasis added)

But God is a God of mercy. Since He established the law and justice, only He can satisfy the demands of justice. No one or nothing can satisfy those demands but God, Himself. The same goes for any loving parent. If we tell our child he cannot have a cookie, no one else can allow him to have a cookie without noncompliance. Only the parent who made the rule can have mercy and allow the child a cookie without disobedience coming into play.

For it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice: but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice. Now there is not any man that can sacrifice his own blood, which will atone for the sins of another.

(Alma 16:210-211 RLDS) [Alma 34:10-11 LDS]

With mercy included, our flow chart looks differently. We are given an opportunity to repent, God has mercy, and we are forgiven.

However, the repentance process can seem a little mysterious, not easily understood and can be given little thought. In our prayers, it is so easy to mumble, “Forgive me of my sins” and be on with our list of “wants.” Is that really what repentance is? Asking for a blanket of forgiveness and not addressing each and every thing we have done in disobedience seems thoughtless, if not insincere. How can we list every iniquity we have committed, though? What does God expect of us in our repentance?

Christians often talk of being in the gray area—not perfect but not too wicked. The gray area makes us feel like we are not that bad and will just be “beaten with a few stripes.” It is a device of Satan to make us feel comfortable. We certainly don’t want to see ourselves in the black, darkness of sin, capable of abominations. All sin, no matter how insignificant we perceive it, removes us from the presence of God. Alma 21:18 (RLDS) [Alma 45:16 LDS] says “the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.”

Nephi puts it very clearly:

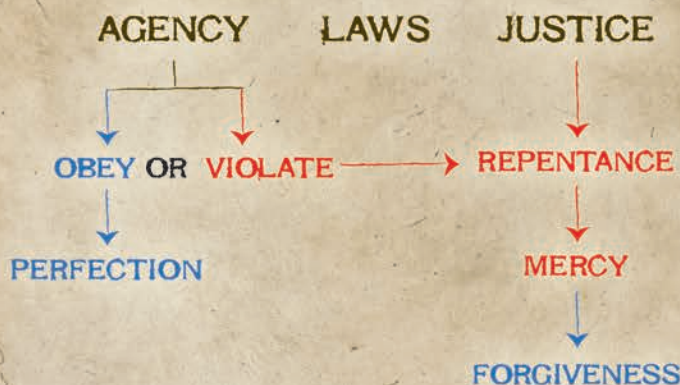
And there shall also be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God, he will justify in committing a little sin: yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this. And do all these things, for to-morrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God. Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, false, and vain, and foolish doctrines.

(2 Nephi 12:10-12 RLDS)

[2 Nephi 28:8-9 LDS]

Fooling ourselves into thinking we are not “that bad” and that living in the gray area is still a safe place to be, is Satan’s way of keeping us unprepared for Jesus’ coming; putting us in the group of the five foolish virgins. We cannot afford to dupe ourselves anymore and fall for vain and foolish doctrines. The world is changing quickly, and tribulation is upon our country; we must be prepared. All of the pork and beans Walmart can supply will be of no use to us if we are not prepared spiritually, and that includes repenting and being spotless before God.

GOD ESTABLISHED



TWO KINDS OF SINNERS

Saul of Tarsus, son of a Pharisee, was a devout Jew. He was raised and taught by those who knew the law. He was also feared by the early Christians. He condoned the stoning of Stephen by holding the coats of those who actively participated. He rounded up the believers, both men and women, and threw them in jail. Saul tells King Agrippa in Acts 26, that he did many things contrary to the name of Jesus; imprisoning the Saints and testifying against them when they were put to death.

His conversion experience is told in Acts 9 and 26. While Saul and his associates were on their way to Damascus with authority to punish the Christians, God showed him mercy. At midday, a light appeared and Saul heard Jesus ask him, "Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou Me?" (Acts 22:7 IV/KJV) They all fell to the earth in fear, but Saul was told to arise. When he stood and opened his eyes, he could not see. His colleagues, who saw the light but heard not the voice, took him to Damascus to the home of a friend.

After three days of blindness, Ananias, being led by the Lord, came and administered to Saul, and his sight was restored. Saul was immediately baptized and went to spread the Good News. Saul was a powerful instrument in the hands of God for the rest of his days.

A similar story is told in the Book of Mormon. The father of Alma the Younger was a high priest in the church of God. Alma the Younger was taught by his father and was raised a Christian. We know this because in Alma 17:10 (RLDS) [Alma 36:13 LDS], he tells his son Helaman, that he had rebelled against God and had not kept His commandments. He grew up to be a wicked man. He led many people away from the church and caused them to do iniquity. He instigated much dissension in the church.

His conversion story is told in Mosiah 11 (RLDS) [Mosiah 27 LDS] and Alma 17 (RLDS) [Alma 36 LDS]. As Alma and the sons of King Mosiah were rebelling against God, an angel appeared to them. They all fell to



the earth in fear. The angel said, "Alma, arise, and stand forth, for why persecuteth thou the church of God?" Alma was so astonished he could not speak nor move his limbs for three days. The sons of Mosiah had to carry him to his father's home. The priests fasted and prayed and Alma's strength and voice were restored. Alma was a powerful servant of the Lord the rest of his days.

The lives of these two men, Saul and Alma, appear to run parallel, but there is a major difference not recognized at first glance. Saul was taken to Damascus, healed through Ananias and then was baptized. Saul never mentions any anguish he suffered during his three days of blindness, but Alma tells his son in Alma 17:10, 11 (RLDS) [Alma 36:12-13 LDS], "I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree, and racked with all my sins. Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; Yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments..."

Both Saul and Alma had been taught the law as children, but Alma had also been taught of the greater light, Jesus. He had been given more insight and understood the mercy and grace through Jesus Christ. Therefore, Alma had sinned against the greater light. Saul was a sinner through ignorance of the greater law. Alma knew the greater law, but sinned out of rebellion toward God.

Justice demands a greater repentance process from those who are openly rebellious against God than from those who sin in ignorance. We often hear “to whom much is given, much is required,” referring to our service to the Lord, but Jesus is talking about the wise servant and what is required of him, and his severe punishment because he has sinned against the greater light.

And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not for his Lord's coming, **neither did according to his will**, shall be beaten with **many stripes**. But he that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. **For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required;**
(Luke 12:56-57 IV/KJV) (emphasis added)

Beware from henceforth and refrain from sin lest sore judgments fall upon your heads; **for unto whom much is given much is required;**

and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation.

(Section 81:1c RLDS) [Section 82:2 LDS]
(emphasis added)

It makes sense that Alma's conversion experience would include a period of repentance that would be much more intense than that of Saul. He didn't mumble, “forgive me of my sins,” and move on. He suffered more physically, both the loss of his limbs and his voice, but he especially suffered more spiritually, by remembering all of his sins and iniquities and rebellion. (Alma 17:10-11 RLDS) [Alma 36:12-13 LDS] He waded through much tribulation, repenting nigh unto death (Mosiah 11:190 RLDS) [Mosiah 27:28 LDS].

Have we repented nigh unto death? Have we realized all of the sins and iniquities we have committed against God?

The only way Alma could repent of all he had done was through God revealing it to him. We must come to the Lord and ask him to show us our sins so we may begin our repentance and be clean when it is time to meet the Bridegroom. Dependence on our own self-evaluation will leave us far short of the mark that God has laid before us. We must truly feel remorse and mourn over the iniquities in our life and spend time developing our repentance to the degree that we can be forgiven of sinning against the greater light.

PAUL

ALMA

Jew, son of Pharisee, was taught his religion as a child	Christian, son of high priest, was taught his religion as a child
Persecuted the church, participated in stoning of Stephen, jailed Christians	Persecuted the church, wicked and idolatrous, led people to iniquity
Light appeared to Paul, friends there to witness	Angel appeared to Alma, friends there to witness
Jesus asked, “Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou me?” Acts 9:4	Angel asked, “Alma, why persecuteth thou the church?” Mosiah 11:165
3 days blind	3 days dumb and paralyzed
Paul was taken to Damascus, healed by Ananias, baptized	Remembered all of his sins and was racked with eternal torment to greatest degree continuously for three days, the thought of standing before God brought him inexplicable horror
Became life-long servant of the Lord	Became life-long servant of the Lord

But just as Alma remembered his father prophesying of Jesus coming to atone for the sins of the world, we can say, “O Jesus, Thou Son of God, have mercy on me who art in the gall of bitterness and art encircled about by the everlasting chains of death!” (Alma 17:22 RLDS) [Alma 36:14 LDS]

Alma truly saw what justice required and, if he didn't meet those requirements, he knew what his punishment would be. But then, grace was granted by our savior, Jesus Christ, and Alma experienced the exquisite and sweet joy of forgiveness. Alma said he will praise Him forever, because he then saw what the cross meant and was so appreciative of God's mercy for him.

When justice demands payment, mercy can fulfill that demand. In Luke 7 (IV/KJV), Jesus tells a parable about a creditor forgiving the debts of two individuals, one who owed a little and one who owed much more. He asked who will love the one who forgave the debt more. The answer is, of course, the one who was forgiven of the greater debt. Repentance may not be an easy or enjoyable process, but it will be a journey that will help us love our Savior more, have a deeper understanding of the cross and fully appreciate what He has done for us. Repentance is not just the vehicle to receive forgiveness, but also a way to grow closer to our Lord.

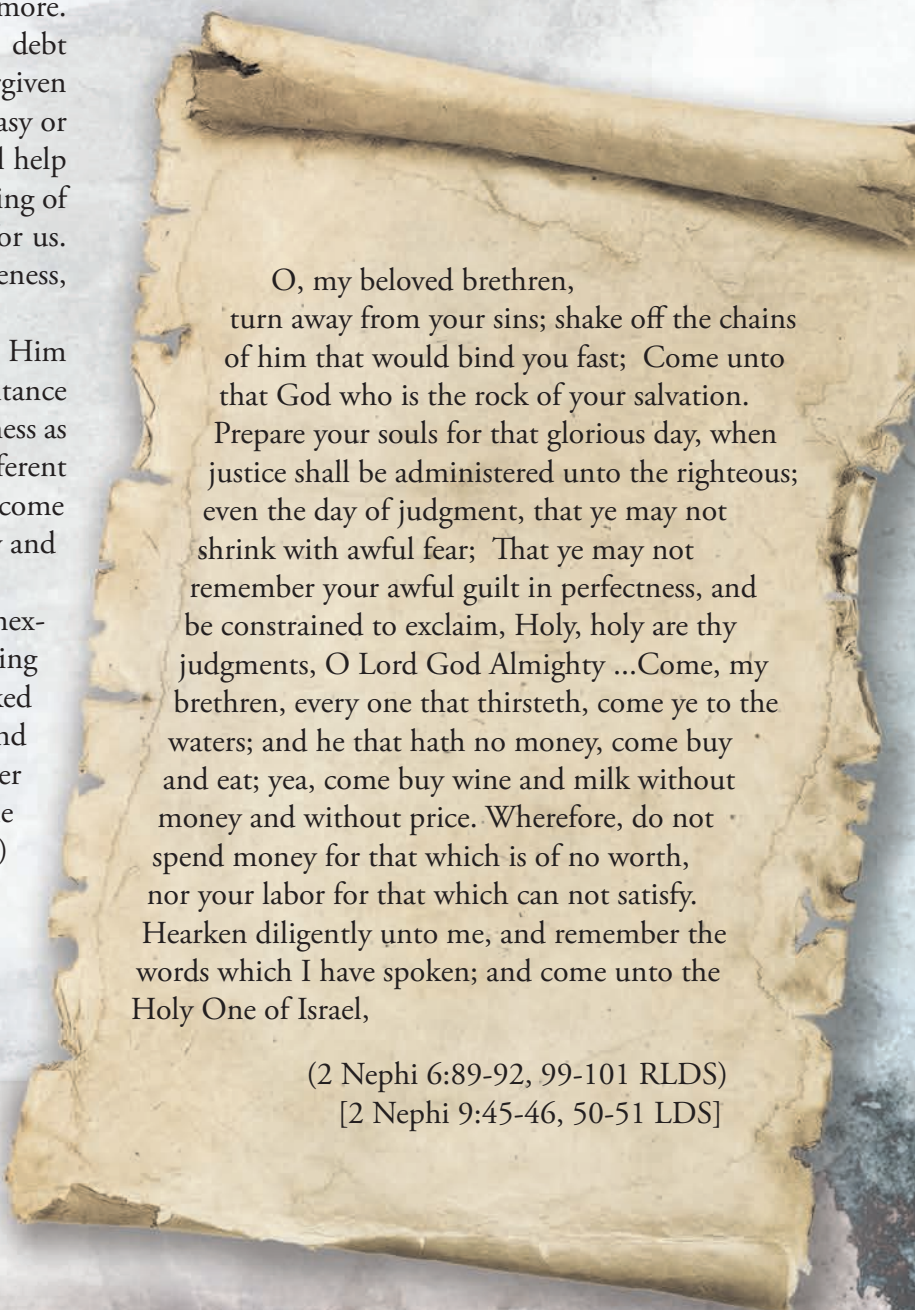
It is time for us to come to the Lord and ask Him to show us our sins, that we may begin our repentance journey. He will take us on this passage to forgiveness as He sees fit. Each redeemed sinner will have a different story, molded for him by our Savior. Each will also come out with greater understanding of grace and mercy and the preciousness of that gift.

At the end of Alma's three days of torment and “inexpressible horror,” he remembered his father teaching about the atonement of Jesus. In his heart, he asked Jesus to have mercy on him. He told Helaman, “And now behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains nor more; yea, I was harrowed by the memory of my sins no more.” (Alma 17:17 RLDS) [Alma 36:19 LDS]

Once Alma received forgiveness, he was not tormented by those memories anymore. He didn't completely forget them, but the torment and mourning was gone. He was able to draw on his past life to help teach others. God forgets those sins. Isaiah 43:25 (IV/KJV), Jeremiah 31:34 (IV/KJV) and Hebrews 8:12 (IV/KJV) say that once God forgives us, He remembers our iniquities no more. Once we are forgiven,

we will still remember, but we should not pick up the burden of that sin and allow shame to continue to pull us down. Not letting go and continuing to bear that burden is rejecting the forgiveness and reminding God of our iniquity. We are no better off than before. Part of our repenting process is to let go of the mourning and learn to delight in the forgiveness.

As Christians and, even more so, believers in the fullness of the gospel, we must prepare now for our Savior's return. Start the repentance process now by asking God to reveal those things in your life that separate you from Him. Pray for direction and understanding in your repentance journey. Once mercy is granted and justice is satisfied, praise God for what He has done for you and leave that burden behind. No one says it better than Nephi:



O, my beloved brethren,
turn away from your sins; shake off the chains of him that would bind you fast; Come unto that God who is the rock of your salvation. Prepare your souls for that glorious day, when justice shall be administered unto the righteous; even the day of judgment, that ye may not shrink with awful fear; That ye may not remember your awful guilt in perfectness, and be constrained to exclaim, Holy, holy are thy judgments, O Lord God Almighty ...Come, my brethren, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which can not satisfy. Hearken diligently unto me, and remember the words which I have spoken; and come unto the Holy One of Israel,

(2 Nephi 6:89-92, 99-101 RLDS)

[2 Nephi 9:45-46, 50-51 LDS]

Internship Program 2015



The Internship is a rigorous six-week program which includes Book of Mormon related classes, worship, prayer and fasting, service, travel, and witnessing to both young and old. Add to this commitment a dose of daily laughter and concern for one another, and what develops is a lifelong bond of friendship.

The intern program includes high school graduates between the ages of 19 and 24 who have been out of high school for at least one year. The internship requires acceptance through an application and interview process.

2015 INTERNSHIP

June 7 – July 18

APPLICATION DEADLINE

February 8, 2015, 11:59 pm

INTERVIEWS

February 14, 2015

Download application to your computer, fill out, and email to bmfindernship@gmail.com

OR mail your applications to:

The Book of Mormon Foundation
210 West White Oak
Independence, MO 64050

**If you live more than two hours from Independence we can arrange a Skype interview.
Please indicate the need for this type of interview when you send in your application.*

PROPHECY WATCH

This issue of Prophecy Watch hopes to encourage prayerful consideration of this question: Should the “signs of the times” be of any interest to the people? Sometimes the saints express personal views similar to the following thoughts: “If I live a righteous life, then prophecy will take care of itself, and I don’t need to be concerned with it,” or “It’s totally out of my hands anyway,” or “Prophecy will be fulfilled regardless of whether we know, believe or study the signs of the times.” These perspectives, and others like them, are best considered in light of scriptures which speak concerning the signs of the times and their important relationship to those who believe:

O hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky; but ye cannot tell the signs of the times.
(Matthew 16:3 IV/KJV)

Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe
(1 Corinthians 14:22 IV/KJV)

And also that ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven, and of earth, the Creator of all things, from the beginning; and that ye might know of the signs of his coming, to the intent that ye might believe on his name.
(Helaman 5:66 RLDS) [Helaman 14:12 LDS]

And again, it shall come to pass, that on as many as ye shall baptize with water, ye shall lay your hands, and they shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and shall be looking forth for the signs of my coming, and shall know me. Behold, I come quickly. Even so. Amen.
(D&C 39:6 RLDS) [D&C 39:23-24 LDS]

And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the Son of man;
(D&C 45:6a RLDS) [D&C 45:39 LDS]

And unto you it shall be given to know the signs of the times, and the signs of the coming of the Son of man; and of as many as the Father shall bear record, to you shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life. Amen.

(D&C 68:1h RLDS) [D&C 68:11-12 LDS]

The purpose of Prophecy Watch is to assist in looking for and knowing the signs of the times and the signs of the coming of the Son of man. The perspectives it contains are not presented as the “only, best or final answer” to their meaning, but rather “to the intent that ye might believe on his name” and more fully participate in their fulfillment. We hope Prophecy Watch will provide a brief glimpse into specific prophetic subjects that will encourage each person to diligently pray, study, fast and seek the will of God concerning them.

One example emphasizing the importance of knowing and understanding the prophecies is found in Matthew 16:3 (IV/KJV): “O hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky; but ye cannot tell the signs of the times.” Jesus Christ, the Messiah, stood in front of the Pharisees and Sadducees and told them they could predict the weather but could not tell the signs of the times. This is especially condemning of them as “leaders of the church” for that day. They knew about the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, but did not recognize Him standing directing in front of them.

We can easily sense the significance of this scriptural example while waiting for the coming of the Messiah in the last days. The connection between the two should be easy to identify. This same need for prophetic discernment carries forward to our day. Will we, especially the “leaders of the church,” be able to discern the signs of the times and know Him when that time comes? Will we be able to capture the vision of “a great and marvelous work,” which includes both personal and collective participation in prophetic fulfillment? Do we consider prophecy, which occupies about 30% of the scriptures, to be something that just happens or do we prepare to be used as instruments in the hands of God for their fulfillment? These are certainly worthy questions to consider as we prepare for the great things coming upon the earth! We hope you accept the call to do so.

Signs we all experience today are “running to and fro” and “increasing knowledge.” The prophet Daniel spoke of these signs that would be seen in the “time of the end.”

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Daniel 12:4 IV/KJV)

This prophecy presents the possibility of several credible applications. For instance, some writers share their perspective that people “running to and fro” are those seeking truth in the last days. They also see “knowledge increasing” as the knowledge of the gospel of Christ grows in the last days. Others apply this prophetic sign specifically to the House of Israel. They speak of “running to and fro” as the House of Israel being scattered “to and fro” into all nations of the earth. They also see “knowledge increasing” as the House of Israel comes to a knowledge of the covenants and the true Messiah. Both of these perspectives are in harmony with the scriptures and should be studied more closely by those seeking a more complete understanding of the prophecy. Perhaps you have considered other applications for this prophecy as well.

In this issue of Prophecy Watch, we offer an additional perspective that is also worthy of consideration as it becomes real in the lives of the saints today. We often hear ourselves express concern for our “busyness” and the challenge of “keeping up” with the escalating knowledge explosion in most every aspect of life. If we listen closely, we hear people share their personal moments of frustration and frenzy as this prophetic sign accurately describes their lives. We literally “run to and fro” to stay ahead of our intense schedule and honor all of our commitments. We desperately attempt to deal with the demands of knowing more and more new things in such areas as technology, transportation, medicine, science, etc. This prophetic sign touches our daily lives in a direct and personal way.

Even though we don’t often use the phrase “time of the end” mentioned by Daniel, it’s common for us to make reference to the “latter days,” “last days,” or the “dispensation of the fullness of times.” Consequently, we should be able to observe the progression of Daniel’s prophecy through this dispensation by using the scriptures, personal revelation from God, our own life experiences, the testimonies of others and even statistics. Let’s briefly review a few of the statistics.

History shows that in the early 1800s, we could travel 20-40 miles from sunrise to sunset by walking, horse or wagon. Today, we can travel hundreds of miles by automobile, thousands of miles by airplane and orbit the earth several times by spacecraft during the same time period. The U.S. Department of Transportation gives a statistical example of the annual average miles driven per person. It’s referenced in an article entitled: *How Many Miles Do Americans Drive Per Year?*¹

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the average American driver logs 13,476 miles each year. That’s more than four times the distance from New York City to Los Angeles, California.

Also statistically measured is the explosion of knowledge over time. Researchers tell us all knowledge in the world is doubling in progressively shorter periods of time. One article describes it this way:

Buckminster Fuller created the “Knowledge Doubling Curve;” he noticed that, until 1900, human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II, knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today, things are not as simple, as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. For example, nanotechnology knowledge is doubling every two years and clinical knowledge every 18 months. But, on average, human knowledge is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the “internet of things” will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours.”²

There is one thing we discern to be true for Daniel’s prophecy as we consider any of the three interpretations mentioned in this article. They are real today, and we can see them being fulfilled! We live in a time where many prophetic signs are observable and personally experienced by us. We are witnesses of them being fulfilled more fully before the coming of the Messiah, just like the type and shadow of His coming found in 3 Nephi 1 (RLDS) [3 Nephi 1 & 2 LDS]. The signs of the times are among us! Watch, therefore, and pray always!

¹ <http://cars.lovetoknow.com/about-cars/how-many-miles-do-americans-drive-per-year>

² <http://www.industrytap.com/knowledge-doubling-every-12-months-soon-to-be-every-12-hours/3950>

SANTACALIGON

BOOK OF MORMON BOOTH

2014



JEFF OHMER

This year as I helped manage the Book of Mormon tent at Santa-Cali-Gon, we had some blessings throughout the weekend. We had 17 volunteers come to help us, which were a huge blessing, and I want to thank them for their help. We had a different location than normal, but we gave out about 85 copies of the pocket Book of Mormon and 50 copies of the booklet, *Christ in America*. It was all a great success! We also provided ice cold water all of the days and did face painting for the kids.



TIFFANI OHMER

I've been excited for years to be able to share at the Book of Mormon Booth at Santa-Cali-Gon Days. This year, I had more opportunities to share with those who came to get water while I was standing by the information and books. My hope was that they could be refreshed physically and the words God allowed us to share would bless them spiritually as well.



In the past few years, I've been more nervous to share. I didn't want to say something wrong or mess up in some way. This year, I went into it confidently, not because I've become the greatest public speaker and sharer about the Book of Mormon, but instead because I felt more prepared. This summer gave me the opportunity of a lifetime. I was able to come back to the Internship to be a staff member and experience the in-country trip. That week provided the best hands-on experience I could ask for in terms of witnessing. From the classes I attended those six weeks, I had a better understanding of bringing up the subject of religion in a normal conversation. I also gained better background to help me explain the Book of Mormon.

I was able to meet countless people that Labor Day weekend. Some only wanted water, but others, I could tell, were curious. As I began to share, their curiosity was piqued and some took a Book of Mormon to read and discover their opinions for themselves.

I had one experience that stood out from the rest. A lady approached the booth to get water, which we gladly handed her. The heat had come quickly that day, and her health was wearing on her. We offered her a chair, and she sat in our tent for close to an hour. During that time, I was able to find out more about her. As we conversed, I found out she was a Christian. We were united in our common love for the Lord and amazement of how He has worked in our lives. She even shared a testimony with me about how God had saved her





life. She was curious about our booth. Time wasn't an issue; I was able to go through history of the Book of Mormon, general beliefs and clarify things for her. It was such an uplifting time for us both, and she ended up taking a Book of Mormon to read and pray about it for herself. I don't know what will happen. I'm simply grateful for the opportunity I received to be used to plant a seed. I'm grateful for her need to sit down. I think we both came away refreshed from the experience.

JENNA LUEDEMAN

At the end of July, I'd just finished an internship for a financial company. I'd decided to take the semester off. With few plans, and lots going on, I felt like God got left behind (at least in my life). About two weeks before Santa-Cali-Gon, I stopped into the Book of Mormon Foundation to pick up a Book of Mormon, and I was talking with Sue Manning. She told me they were in need of volunteers at their booth, and I told her I'd be available to help. About a week before Santa-Cali-Gon, I prayed for the booth and the volunteers who'd be there. I prayed for the people we'd be witnessing to and hoped they'd be blessed. I had a great time working with those who were there. Throughout the span of the weekend, we gave out lots of water, painted several faces and even gave away some copies of the Book of Mormon.

Looking back, I thought it was a great weekend. I had the opportunity to make new friendships, talk with old friends and help others. Although I may never know what sort of impact I made in the lives of others, I know that God does. Just as the Book of Mormon writers shared their history without knowing the impact they would make on our lives, God knew all along the fruit they would bear to us. There is one thing I know about that weekend—God made an impact on my life. He reminded me He was still near and listening.

STEPHEN HENSON

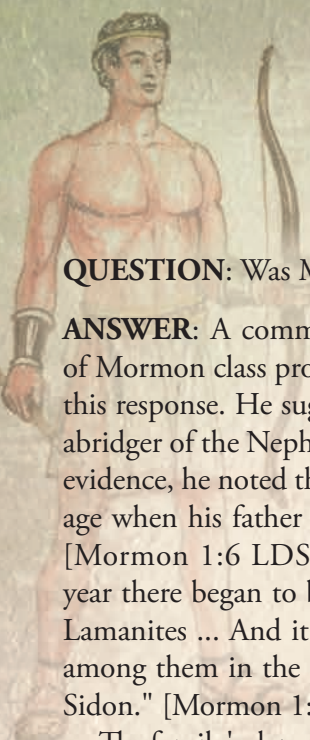
Just as in the past several years, we had another great year at the Book of Mormon booth. As usual, we had free water and face painting available, and each year we give out many coolers of water and do lots of face painting. Many gospel tracts and information were handed out as well. Most importantly we gave away a lot of copies of the Book of Mormon!

Each year, I look forward to trying to answer the questions of those who are searching. I enjoy the conversations. This year was no exception. We received many questions about the Book of Mormon, and had good conversations. Many people are interested in knowing about the book! The booth is a great way to be a witness for Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon.

I appreciate the opportunities to witness at the booth. We know from God's word that he wants us to witness for Him and show charity toward those in our daily lives.

I invite and encourage each of you to volunteer for the booth during Labor Day weekend of 2015. The Book of Mormon will go forth unto every nation. It is part of the word of God, which is our liahona. If we follow it, God will lead us in where to go and what to do. As we share this Book of Mormon with others, let's remember to feast upon the words of Christ. In 2 Nephi 14:4 (RLDS) [2 Nephi 32:3 LDS] we are told to feast upon the words of Christ, because they will tell us everything we should do. Again, it was a great weekend and opportunity at the Book of Mormon booth this past Labor Day weekend.





Was Mormon a Member of a Military Class?

by John A. Tvedtnes

QUESTION: Was Mormon a member of a military class?

ANSWER: A comment by one of my students in a Book of Mormon class prompted the investigation represented by this response. He suggested that Mormon, the father of the abridger of the Nephite record, was a professional soldier. As evidence, he noted the younger Mormon was eleven years of age when his father carried him into the "land southward" [Mormon 1:6 LDS] (Mormon 1:7 RLDS) and, "in this year there began to be a war between the Nephites and the Lamanites ... And it came to pass that the war began to be among them in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon." [Mormon 1:8, 10 LDS, RLDS]

The family's departure into the war zone hints at a military transfer. In light of this possibility, I suggest the historian/general/prophet Mormon was from a line of army leaders who belonged to a military class.

Typically, Mesoamerican peoples were divided into six basic classes or occupations: peasants, merchants, warriors, priests, judges and government officials. Among the Aztecs, all of these except the peasants were directly involved in war. For example, the merchants formed, when necessary, their own military units. Warriors and priests replenished the ranks of the judges and other government officials, and most priests began their service for a time in special military units. Aztec boys destined for a military career were dedicated for the task at birth by their parents and trained at an early age. This fact of Mesoamerican life is reflected in the youth of the Nephite chief captains. It would explain how Mormon came to command the Nephite armies at the tender age of 16 [Mormon 2:1-2 LDS] (Mormon 1:21-23 RLDS).

Moroni 1, who had commanded the Nephite armies some five centuries before Mormon, was also a relatively young man when he became chief captain at the age of 25 [Alma 43:17 LDS] (Alma 20:19 RLDS). Moroni gave up the command of the armies to his son Moronihah [Alma 62:43 LDS] (Alma 29:53 RLDS), which implies that the position was inherited. Moroni 1 became chief captain in the 18th year of the judges [Alma 43:3 LDS] (Alma 20:3 RLDS), and his son Moronihah in ca. the 31st year [Alma 62:39 LDS] (Alma 29:48 RLDS). If Moronihah was born when his father was 20 years of age, he would have been only 18 when he succeeded him. The prophet Mormon was so impressed with the faith, the military genius, and the character of the earlier Moroni that his praise of the man seems almost an exaggeration [Alma 48:11-13, 16-18 LDS] (Alma 21:132-134, 138-141 RLDS). Mormon also praised

another earlier Nephite warrior, Gideon [Mosiah 19; Alma 1:13 LDS] (Mosiah 9:74-107; Alma 1:9 RLDS). It seems quite likely that he named his own son Moroni 2 from the earlier general. Moroni 2 was also a military captain, leading 10,000 at the great battle at Cumorah under his father Mormon [Mormon 6:12 LDS] (Mormon 3:14 RLDS). And, like the other military leaders, he appears to have been quite young. If, for example, he was 60 years of age when he buried the plates in ca. the 410th year after Christ [Moroni 10:1 LDS/RLDS], he would have been 25 in the 375th year when he fought at Cumorah [Moroni 6:5 LDS] (Moroni 6:6 RLDS). I suggest Mormon's admiration for Moroni 1 derives not only from the man's character, but also from the fact he may have been one of Mormon's paternal ancestors. This reason alone would be sufficient to explain why he would call his own son by the same name. It might also imply that the Moronihah who, along with Moroni 2, commanded a group of 10,000 under Mormon, was a member of the same family [Mormon 6:14 LDS] (Mormon 3:15 RLDS).

If Mormon belonged to a military class, we have an explanation of why, after having refused to continue in his position, he was later readily accepted as chief captain once again [Mormon 5:1 LDS] (Mormon 2:26 RLDS). It was an inherited responsibility which he assumed in his youth. If these assumptions are correct, then we can more readily understand Mormon's approach to the writing of the Nephite history, which is, in large part, a war record. Mormon's first recorded words in the Book of Mormon tell of the destruction of his people in the last great war with the Lamanites [Words of Mormon 1 LDS/RLDS]. Much of the account in his own record (Mormon) discusses this war, while in another place [Alma 43-62 LDS] (Alma 20:1-29:63 RLDS) he devotes 20 chapters to the war in the time of the first Moroni. In the latter, he places great stress on military strategy, descriptions of fortifications, and the like [See especially, Alma 48:7-9; 49:4, 13, 18, 22; 50:1-5 LDS] (Alma 21:128-130; 21:152, 164-165, 170, 175-176; 22:1-5 RLDS). His listing of war casualty statistics in his own time [Mormon 6 LDS] (Mormon 3:1-23 RLDS) and during earlier periods [e.g., Mosiah 9:18-19; 29:19; Alma 3:26; 24:21-22, 24-27; 51:19 LDS] (e.g., Mosiah 6:22-25; 13:25; Alma 1:127-128; 14:49-50; 51:55; 23:23 RLDS) seems to be a waste of precious space on the plates. Not only does Mormon spend more time describing battles than any other topic, but he also dwells on such things as the physical stature and prowess of various Nephites and

Lamanites. If Mormon's military profession was the result of a long-standing family tradition, then we can better understand his "blood-and-guts" approach to the history of his people. Ammon's slaying of the Lamanite sheep raiders [Alma 17:25-39 LDS] (Alma 12:36-61 RLDS), the lengthy and detailed account of the war led by Moroni [Alma 43-62 LDS] (Alma 20:1-29:63 RLDS), and even Mormon's admiration for the "large and mighty" Lamanite leader Coriantumr [Helaman 1:15-16 LDS] (Helaman 1:15-17 RLDS), attest to Mormon's special interest in the subject of warfare and physical strength. When describing the battle scene, he is usually very careful to specify exactly what kinds of weapons were used by each of the armies [e.g., Alma 43:18-21 LDS] (e.g., Alma 20:20-24 RLDS) and the kinds of armor they wore. He places great stress on the "bones" of the dead Jaredites which lay strewn across the land, along with their weapons, and on the fact that the bodies of the Lamanites were often heaped up or thrown into the river to be washed to the sea. (For some of the gory details, see Alma 3:3; 43:37-38, 44; 44:12-14 [LDS] Alma 1:101; 20:39-41, 48-49; 20:81-85 (RLDS).)

Moroni 2 wrote from the same background as his father. His account of Jaredite history, aside from the religious comments which he inserts in the form of personal testimony of Jesus Christ, is a military history. Logic and textual evidence would dictate that the Jaredites did, in fact, enjoy many years in which battles were not waged. They could not have grown to number over two million people [Ether 15:2 LDS] (Ether 6:73 RLDS) had they not lived most of their time in peace and tranquility, growing crops and raising families. Yet, of the 1% of Ether's history which Moroni wrote [Ether 15:33 LDS] (Ether 6:107-108 RLDS), virtually all of it concerns the wars of the Jaredites.

Despite the emphasis on martial history in the Book of Mormon, both Mormon and Moroni 2 were great lovers of peace. To them, military might was to be used only for defending righteous principles. Negotiations and reliance on the Lord were preferable to fighting. As a prime example, we note that the main reason given for the mission of King Mosiah's sons to the Lamanites was to ensure peace between the Nephites and Lamanites by imparting the word of God [Mosiah 28: 1; Alma 23:16-18; 24:6,12-13, 15; 28:9 LDS] (Mosiah 12:1-2; Alma 14:17-20; 14:27-28, 34-36, 38-40; 15:45 RLDS). Mormon noted that converted Lamanites laid down their weapons of war and returned captured Nephite lands [Helaman 5:51-52 LDS] (Helaman 2:116-117 RLDS). Mormon ties the cycle of alternating evil and righteousness in with the cycle of alternating war and peace [e.g., Helaman 12 LDS] (e.g., Helaman 4:48-73 RLDS). From prosperity came wealth, and then



pride, which brought about decadence and war. When the Nephites and Lamanites lived in peace for a couple of centuries following the visit of Christ, it was because there was no pride resulting from wealth [4 Nephi 1:1-18 LDS] (4 Nephi 1:1-21 RLDS).

On moral grounds, the Book of Mormon sees defense as justifiable, and aggression as unacceptable [3 Nephi 3:20-21 LDS] (3 Nephi 2:25-28 RLDS). War, especially in the time of Moroni 1, was justified only when the Nephites fought for their homes, liberty, families, and religion [Alma 43:45-47; 48:10-14 LDS] (Alma 20:50-52; 21:131-136 RLDS). Moroni and his people, we read, did not delight in the shedding of blood [Alma 48:11-16, 23 LDS] (Alma 21:132-139, 146 RLDS). By contrast, the Nephites of Mormon's day were not fighting the Lamanites for a righteous cause. When they lost battles, they sorrowed, cursed God and died in rebellion against Him (Mormon 2:11-15 LDS) (Mormon 1:35-41 RLDS). When they won, they boasted in their own strength and swore revenge and destruction on the Lamanites [Mormon 3:9-16; 4:8, 15 LDS] (Mormon 1:74-81; 2:9-10, 17 RLDS). Unlike their ancestors, they delighted in the shedding of blood [Mormon 4:10-11 LDS] (Mormon 2:12-13 RLDS). Mormon urged them to stand and fight for their families and homes [Mormon 2:23-24 LDS] (Mormon 1:51-52 RLDS) but, because they remained unrepentant, at one point he resigned as their chief captain (Mormon 3:9-16 LDS) (Mormon 1:74-81 RLDS).

Mormon, then, was a righteous man who fought when necessary, and whose perspective of Nephite history was military in nature. It seems likely that he and his family were part of a military class. Further evidence for this comes from what is known of later inhabitants of Mesoamerica.

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