

THE

WITNESS

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Unto whom I have given this
land for their **inheritance.**

ISSUE 166/ 2019

THE WITNESS

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Cover Photo Courtesy of Dale Godfrey
(3 Nephi 10:1 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:22 LDS]

THE Book OF Mormon FOUNDATION

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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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American Patriots

Billy Graham

July 4th commemorates the day in 1776 that our nation declared itself to be an independent nation, and no longer a colony of England. On that date, a number of our leading citizens signed what is known as the Declaration of Independence, stating our determination to become a free country.

Our independence did not come easily; only after several difficult years of war would it finally be won. Nor were our first years as a nation free from problems and controversies (as is still true). But our forefathers were determined to establish a free and democratic system of government, and the Declaration of Independence (together with our Constitution and the Bill of Rights) became the foundation for this. They have stood the test of time, and on July 4th we give thanks for the wisdom and faith and courage of those leaders.

Although it is not a religious holiday like Christmas or Easter, for many Americans July 4th is a time to reflect on God's goodness to us as a nation. Molded into the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia (which proclaimed our independence) are these words from the Bible: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10 IV/KJV). Our legal system reflects our Judeo-Christian roots. While we look with gratitude to the past on this July 4th, may we also look in faith to the future, and commit it and our lives to God and His will. The ancient words of the Psalmist are still true: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12 IV/KJV).

Benjamin Franklin

Here is my Creed. I believe in one God, the Creator of the Universe. That He governs it by His Providence. That He ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to Him is in doing good to His other Children. That the soul of Man is immortal, and will be treated with Justice in another Life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound Religion, and I regard them as you do in whatever Sect I meet with them. As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the System of Morals and his Religion, as he left them to us, is the best the World ever saw, or is likely to see.

May we celebrate our freedoms, purchased with great sacrifice, in praise to the Almighty God who has given them. God bless America!



The Choice Land

by Allene Gilmore

On the day I came into being, God said I was a choice land above all other lands, and I was created for a special purpose. To help fulfill that purpose, I would be a land of freedom as long as the people who lived here would remember God and serve Him. This freedom was to be extended to every person who reached my shores from afar and to every person who would be born in my land. The promise was made to me that I would not remain barren, but someday I would be a “mother” to millions of people.

Behold, this is a choice land; And whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage and from captivity and from all other nations under heaven, If they will but serve the God of the land which is Jesus Christ...
(Ether 1:35 RCE) [Ether 2:12 LDS]

The Creator blessed me with a diversity of beautiful and useful features, some given me at creation and others developed over time. Across my land there are rivers, lakes, deserts, mountains and valleys. Prairies, hills, forests, fertile ground and rocky soils abound. My margins to the east and the west are the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. I produce a plentiful supply of fruits, grains and vegetables. Shrubs, trees and flowers of every shape, color and variety adorn my surface. Interesting birds and animals, both wild and tame, are found throughout my land, while my waters teem with many varieties of fish and sea animals. Precious ores such as gold and silver, as well as other metals, are produced in my mountains. The sun provides my warmth and the rain slakes my thirst, while different seasons provide changes of beautiful scenery. I was created so I lack nothing that is needed to sustain life, or to provide beauty, pleasure or wealth. I am complete.

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, For purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain! (From *America the Beautiful* by Katherine Lee Bates, 1893)

Thousands of years ago, God promised me to Joseph through blessings given him by his father, Jacob, and by Moses. I liked thinking of myself as “Joseph’s land” and knowing that was one of the purposes for my creation. For eons of time, I waited for the descendants of Joseph to come to me. From time to time, over many years, small groups of people discovered me. I welcomed them and provided sustenance for them, but none remained for a long period of time. One group that God sent brought me joy. They arrived in vessels which they called barges. Being industrious, they immediately began erecting buildings and establishing cities. My joy came because they knew God, the Father, and worshipped Him. Thus, I extended my welcome and my freedom to them. However, as time went on, the people forgot God and served Satan until he had full power over them. They became filled with hatred toward one another, and almost all were destroyed in the battles which ensued. This brought sorrow to me, but I still remembered the promise that Joseph’s sons and daughters would inhabit my land someday.

Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountain, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the

goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush; let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.
(Deuteronomy 33:13-16 IV/KJV)

Finally, a vessel arrived at my shore from a faraway place. The ship only carried a few people, but they were the long-awaited children of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. I received them with thanksgiving and rejoicing in my heart and offered them the best—I had stones with which to build, animals to use for work, transportation and also for food, fertile soil, abundant fruit, rain and sunshine from the heavens above, mountains filled with treasure, and the freedom they sought. These people built and prospered and increased in number.

The Lord spake unto me, saying:
Blessed art thou, Nephi, because of thy faith,
...inasmuch as ye shall keep My commandments, ye shall prosper and shall be led to a Land of Promise, Yea, even a land which I have prepared for you, a land which is choice above all other lands;
(1 Nephi 1:53-54 RCE)
[1 Nephi 2:19-20 LDS]

As the years passed, these people spread over vast areas and became a mighty nation. Their Father God blessed them with knowledge of the heavens and the earth. He gave their spiritual leaders a sign that His Son, the Savior of all mankind, would come to the earth, born as a babe to a virgin in another land. The gospel, given to men at the beginning of creation, had become distorted and misinterpreted over the



years. This babe, who would be named Jesus, would grow into manhood and, through His preaching and teaching, would bring back the truths of the gospel to the people. He would be loved and revered by a few, but hated and despised by many. This hatred would result in His death, nailed to a cross. On this cross, as the sacrificial Lamb, He would take upon Himself the sins of the world; whereby every person could repent of their sins and be forgiven. The cruelty and pain that He would suffer would become mankind's greatest blessing, that of salvation of souls. The prophecy was given that Jesus would arise from His grave on the third day as a demonstration that the grave is not man's final destination, but that there will be a resurrection of the dead before the judgment.

All men are redeemed because the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, Which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep, From which sleep all men shall be awakened by the power of God, when the trump shall sound;
(Mormon 4:72 RCE)
[Mormon 9:13 LDS]



The day came when Jesus was crucified as had been foretold. The whole earth was shaken, and my land suffered greatly. There were tempests and whirlwinds and a great shaking of the earth. Some of my cities were destroyed—by burning, sinking into the sea and being buried beneath a mountain. The lives of many sinful people were taken. I mourned because of the terrible destruction on my land, which was the result of much wickedness among the descendants of Joseph.

And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land and upon this people because of their wickedness and their abominations. O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they!
(3 Nephi 4:40-41 RCE)
[3 Nephi 9:12-13 LDS]

Jesus had told His disciples in the land of His birth: **And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.** (John 10:16 IV/KJV) And so He came. My mourning turned into joy as I beheld Him, Jesus the Christ, God's Only Begotten Son, descending to bring ministry to the more righteous people who had been spared from the devastation. He comforted them, healed their sick and blessed their little children. The church was revived through His ministry of teaching and through the ordinances of baptism, ordinations and blessings. The people responded by becoming unified and diligently following His commandments. As a result, they prospered and were a happy people for two hundred years. Then, some of the people's hearts became hardened, and they rebelled against the true gospel and even against Christ Himself. The wickedness spread and increased over the next 100 years, until there were only a few righteous ones remaining. Eventually, wars claimed the lives of a great number of the people, and over time, those who remained became scattered over my land. They no longer worshipped the God who had once been so eagerly welcomed into their midst.

At that time, I did not feel much like a choice land, and I could no longer envision myself as Joseph's land. However, God had plans to bring other sons and daughters of Joseph to me. Until then, I had remained hidden from the world, only known to a few who had "stumbled" upon my shores or who had been divinely led to my safe haven of freedom. Now it was time to reveal me to the world, and so I was "discovered" by sailors from another land who had been divinely directed to me. My existence became known far and wide throughout the world. People in other lands were being persecuted because they served the true and

living God, and they, too, were directed to me. Slowly they came, a few at a time, seeking a place of peace and freedom of worship. Many of these people were descendants of Joseph's son, Ephraim, and so again I was thankful to be Joseph's land.

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me...
(From *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus –
Engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty)

People continued to come, from many lands and for many reasons, and I welcomed them all. I was known worldwide as the "land of freedom" and the "land of opportunity," and stood as a beacon of hope to the persecuted, the poor and the downtrodden. They came, seeking a better life for themselves and their children. My doors were open to all.

I had always hoped that this land might become a safe and agreeable asylum to the virtuous and persecuted part of mankind, to whatever nation they might belong.
(George Washington, 1788)



My landscape changed drastically as more and more arrived. Land was cleared, homes built, villages and towns sprang up, and schools and churches became a common sight. Railroads and highways crisscrossed the face of my land. A vast variety of merchandise was available in stores in every village. Farms were producing bountiful crops. My land was prospering. Governments were formed, and I was divided into countries, then the countries were divided into districts or states. Men were elected to direct the affairs of the nations and to enact laws by which the people were to be guided.

We have staked the whole future of our new nation, not upon the power of government; far from it. We have staked the future of all our political constitutions upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments of God.

(James Madison, 1778)

Things were going well and I was thriving, except for one dark blot. Men and women were being captured in other lands, brought to my land on ships and sold as slaves. Farmers, in particular, were using slave labor to boost the production of their crops. My land, proclaimed to be the land of freedom, was being desecrated by the buying, selling and mistreatment of human beings. This caused much friction between two areas of my land, and resulted in a terrible war. I wept as my bosom soaked up the blood of my sons who died fighting one another. However, the outcome of the war caused the abominable practice of slavery to be abolished.

No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck.

(Frederick Douglass, former slave)

My sons and daughters were engaged in fighting against other nations from time to time. Some nations tried to claim ownership of my land, and if we had not prevailed against them, I would have lost the precious freedom God had ordained and my people so enjoyed and appreciated. Even though it has come at a great price, I still have my freedom.

Posterity, you will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it.... (John Adams, Second President)

Over time, I have wept and mourned and suffered as some of my people forgot the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and, instead, served the adversary. However, I have laughed and rejoiced and celebrated as many others remained faithful to God and their Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Wonderful things have transpired within my borders. Churches dot my land and people freely worship God. Although holy scriptures have been had among many generations inhabiting my land, the time came many years ago when God brought forth more of His Word, which tells much of my history. It records the blessings that were received by those who were faithful to Him, and it also tells of the judgment the unrighteous suffered. There are promises in His word concerning my land and my people in this day and time. When these promises come to fruition, I will have fulfilled the greatest purpose of my creation that of God's kingdom being established on my land and the gathering of Israel to me. I await that with great anticipation and look forward to the day that Jesus returns and graces me with his presence. I know these things will become a reality, and there will be rejoicing throughout my land. **I am a Choice Land. I am the Land of Freedom. I am Joseph's Land.**

I am America!



Amber Waves of Grain

by Marlin Guin

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

America! America!
God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

I recently read an article about Maya food production in Mesoamerica and couldn't help but think of a hymn called, America the Beautiful. The phrase in the song that caught my attention was "amber waves of grain." The article reminded me how God has blessed this Land of Promise, in the larger sense, according to His covenants. Sometimes we are challenged to see the bigger picture in God's work and the Book of Mormon helps us know and remember the covenants He has made concerning this great land. For me, it speaks with more clarity and power, concerning this blessed land, than any other scripture. **For it is a choice land, saith God unto me, above all other lands.** (2 Nephi 7:31 RLDS) [2 Nephi 10:19 LDS]

For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land, it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; (Ether 6:2 RLDS) [Ether 13:2 LDS]

The Book of Mormon describes how the people had gone forth and populated the land. It was Joseph's land of inheritance, according to the blessings of God pronounced upon him and his seed. Lehi and his family, along with others, are recipients of this blessing because they are descendants of Joseph through the tribe of Manasseh. Their response to serve God, according to this covenant, is the reason they prospered in the land. The prophet Mormon describes it this way:

And it came to pass that I, being eleven years old, was carried by my father into the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla; the whole face of the land having become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea. (Mormon 1:7 RLDS) [Mormon 1:6 LDS]

A population of this size must have had a tremendous food system in place to maintain the needs of the people. The Book of Mormon also makes the claim that this food system existed with the quantity and expertise needed to sustain a large population of people. **And I did cause that the men should till the ground, and raise all manner of grain, and all manner of fruit, of every kind.** (Mosiah 6:31 RLDS) [Mosiah 10:4 LDS]

And it came to pass that they began to prosper by degrees in the land, and began to raise grain more abundantly, and flocks, and herds, that they did not suffer with hunger. (Mosiah 9:157 RLDS) [Mosiah 21:16 LDS]

And also many of their fields of grain were destroyed, for they were trodden down by the hosts of men. (Alma 1:100 RLDS) [Alma 3:2 LDS]

Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people; yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks, and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind, and art; (Helaman 4:49 RLDS) [Helaman 12:2 LDS]

Since 1830, the Book of Mormon's claims concerning population and food sources in the New World have long been a source of criticism by Book of Mormon critics. However, as more and more archaeological evidence emerges, especially with the recent use of modern technology, these criticisms take on less and less merit. One example, as it relates to the subject of the food supply for a large Maya population in Mesoamerica, is found in a recent article entitled: *Found: Massive, Ancient Maya Farms*.¹ The fields offer insights into historic trade routes by Noor Al-Samarrai, published April 3, 2019.

If you set Google Maps to satellite view and mosey over to the Laguna de Términos, a bay and biological gold mine along the Gulf Coast of Mexico, zoom in and head inland along the northeast of the lagoon. You'll start noticing a terrestrial patchwork quilt north of the city of Pital. The patterns make the land look like it's covered in agricultural fields, but those fields are now covered in mangrove forests and haven't been farmed in hundreds of years. Researchers at the University of Cincinnati have been unearthing evidence showing that this swath of land was once a massive Maya agricultural development.

Nicholas Dunning, a geographer and Mesoamericanist, began studying this area about seven years ago, when a Mexican forester alerted him that he had spotted features on the ground—a distinctive, dense network of canals with fields in between them—that suggested the land had once been blanketed by agricultural fields. Dunning examined the area from afar on Google Earth and was stunned. Additional comparison with LIDAR images obtained from the Mexican government confirmed that the contours of the land resembled other known Maya agricultural fields.

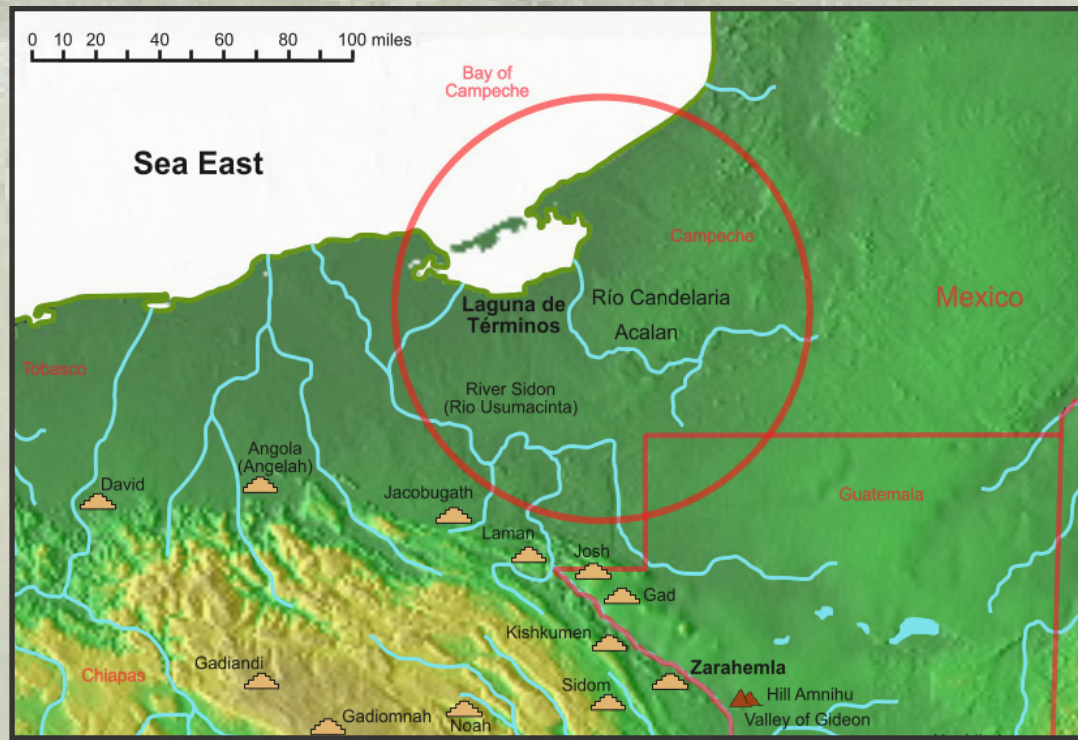
“What makes this particular area novel is the size”—it spans about 75 square miles, compared

to previous patches which tend to be no larger than a dozen square miles in size—“and the fact that it was undetected until the last seven years,” says Dunning. Based on the evidence, researchers believe that the field system grew incrementally over a long period of time, beginning as early as 800 BC through to the 1500s, when the conquistadors arrived.

Previously, archaeologists theorized that ancient Maya cities were subsistence-based, growing most agricultural products in close proximity to, and sometimes even within, city limits. But the canals cutting through the land north of Pital and the fact that several



large rivers, including the Río Candelaria, connect with the Laguna de Términos suggests that rather than moving goods by foot, those fortuitous enough to be located near rivers or on the coast could ship and receive goods by water. These ancient Maya fields were located in an area called Acalan, potentially derived from acalli, the Nahuatl word for canoe, so Acalan may have meant “place of the canoes,” according to a recent presentation Dunning and his University of Cincinnati colleagues gave at the Midwest Conference on Mesoamerican Archaeology and Ethnohistory.



The rivers on the map are their best-estimated positions during the time of the Book of Mormon. They have shifted quite a bit in the past 2000 years. Map courtesy of Aric Turner

Sixteenth-century accounts from Spanish conquistadors place settlements in the Acalan along rivers and other bodies of water, but “don’t make any mention of the fields ... initially they just lopped off the top of the social and economic hierarchy and placed themselves there. They demanded tribute, but weren’t initially interested in how that was being produced.” The fields were relatively distant from the densely populated coastal towns that initially interested the conquistadors, so although they were undetected by the Spanish at the time, those chunks of land were likely providing the fuel for the cities they conquered.

Modern technology, such as LIDAR, has brought our understanding of the ancient world forward by leaps and bounds. The Lord continues to bring forth His light and truth, even with the use of technology. Here a little and there a little. Line upon line and precept upon precept. We are truly living in an amazing time! And yet, even greater things are coming upon the earth.

We should cherish the inherent truth of a prophetic proclamation made many years ago by a devout Book of Mormon believer named Roy Weldon. He said: **The Book of Mormon has a date with destiny. It has potentials no other book has or even remotely approaches as it moves into the future.... The Book of Mormon is now rolling on, rolling on into the future with a momentum that no hand can deter; that no power can slow, as it rolls on into a grand opening, a grand burst into the full limelight of world recognition.... The grand finale of the Restoration Movement is now beckoning us on.**

WHAT A DAY TO BE ALIVE!³

1 https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/found-ancient-maya-agricultural-fields?utm_medium=atlas-page&utm_source=facebook.com&fbclid=IwAR38IMAQPm7OfDrCUBjJeAtpDSgfGXp9lFX3hLc_kNXRggD8-9yQYnxk2q00
 2 LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) uses laser technology to map the contours of surfaces. LiDAR basically involves shooting millions of laser beams at a surface (for example, the surface of the ground or the vertical face of an excavated wall) and calculating how long it takes for the laser beam to “bounce back.”
 Airborne LiDAR technology is used to map topography and detect cultural features concealed beneath vegetation, providing archaeologists with detailed aerial overviews of entire sites. Ground-based LiDAR can be used on a smaller scale to create very precise three-dimensional reconstructions of ancient structures.
<https://www.crowcanyon.org/index.php/lidar>
 3 The Witness Spring 1991

Why is The Book of Mormon so Focused on Jesus Christ?



*And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ,
and we write according to our prophecies,
that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.*
[2 Nephi 25:26 LDS] (2 Nephi 11:48 RLDS)

THE KNOW

Readers unfamiliar with the Book of Mormon are sometimes surprised to find how much, from the beginning to the end, the book is about Jesus Christ.¹ It is an ancient record whose stated purpose is to convince all people “that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations” (Title Page). Moreover, its prophetic writings were commissioned by Jesus Christ Himself to teach His true doctrine and to testify of His reality, divinity, and saving messianic mission.

Jesus commanded: **Write these sayings;** [3 Nephi 16:4 LDS] (3 Nephi 7:27 RLDS) **give heed to my words; write the things which I have told you;** [3 Nephi 23:4 LDS] (3 Nephi 10:30 RLDS) **Write the things which ye have seen and heard.** [3 Nephi 27:23 LDS] (3 Nephi 13:1 RLDS) The Book of Mormon is intently focused on Christ so that it can

fulfill these specific commandments and this stated underlying purpose. It accomplishes all of this on several different levels. Consider the following three:

History

The Book of Mormon is a collection of ancient records created, compiled, and abridged by holy prophets.² Rather than simply telling about the past experiences of their people, these inspired prophets always carefully selected and presented historical material in a way that would build faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For instance, concerning the general purpose of his record, the prophet Nephi explained: **I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be sacred.** [1 Nephi 19:6 LDS] (1 Nephi 5:229 RLDS) On another occasion, Nephi declared,

And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins. [2 Nephi 25:26 LDS]
(2 Nephi 11:48 RLDS)

Mormon, the book's primary editor and compiler, similarly chose certain records because they contained **the prophecies of the coming of Christ**. [Words of Mormon 1:4 LDS] (Words of Mormon 1:6 RLDS) Whether reporting on wars, famines, migrations, political turmoil, eras of peace, dissensions, religious conflicts, or any other topic, Mormon always helped readers to learn lessons from this information relevant to Christ's true gospel.³

Narratives

While the Book of Mormon is primarily a historical record, it is not just a collection of dry historical facts. Instead, along with its presentation of history, it tells stories about prophets and their ministries among the people. Much like the Bible, the events and details of these stories are filled with spiritual symbolism.⁴ For example, the story of Alma the Younger's conversion typifies the spiritual process of being born again through the power of Christ's Atonement.⁵

Other stories, such as the accounts of anti-Christ's like Nehor and Korihor, demonstrate the terrible consequences of rejecting Jesus Christ.⁶ By the end of the book, readers are able to clearly see the contrast between those who follow Christ's teachings and those who don't. Individuals, families, and societies who forsake Christ, distort His teachings, or outright rebel against God repeatedly reap the rewards of spiritual confusion, sorrow, and destruction. On the other hand, those who follow Christ find peace and happiness, even in the most difficult of circumstances.⁷

Sermons and Teachings

Doctrinal discourses from various prophets are frequently interspersed throughout the Book of Mormon's historical narratives. These teachings

also often center on Jesus Christ and His Atonement. In many cases, it is clear that the inspired selection of historical content was meant to add context and meaning to these Christ-centered sermons.⁸ These discourses provide the intricacies that explain who Jesus Christ really is and what it means to have authentic faith in Him. They also establish the nuances of Christ's true doctrine and clarify the nature and purpose of His commandments.

THE WHY

The Book of Mormon speaks volumes about Jesus Christ for many reasons. First and foremost, its early writers experienced dreams, visions, and revelations that taught them about the identity, character, and importance of Jesus Christ. They understood plain and precious things that were obscured or lost in the surviving biblical texts. These prophets knew the Lord by over seventy names and titles: Messiah, Redeemer, Holy One of Israel, Jehovah, Savior, Shepherd, Son, the Lord of Hosts, the Lord God Omnipotent, and many more.⁹ Behind all these names stands the one name and the only God through whom one can pray, worship,



Reflections by J Robert Farley

and come unto the Father—Jesus Christ.

Later Book of Mormon writers knew of the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies of the earlier generations of Nephite prophets. Knowing especially how the resurrected Lord appeared among the Nephites, Mormon and Moroni were able to select and shape the final text of the Book of Mormon to rightly emphasize Jesus as its principal figure. Better than any other book, the Book of Mormon shows how Jesus Christ's infinite Atonement plays a central role in God's plan of redemption. As the prophet Jacob declared, **for why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him, as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?** [Jacob 4:12 LDS] (Jacob 3:18 RLDS)

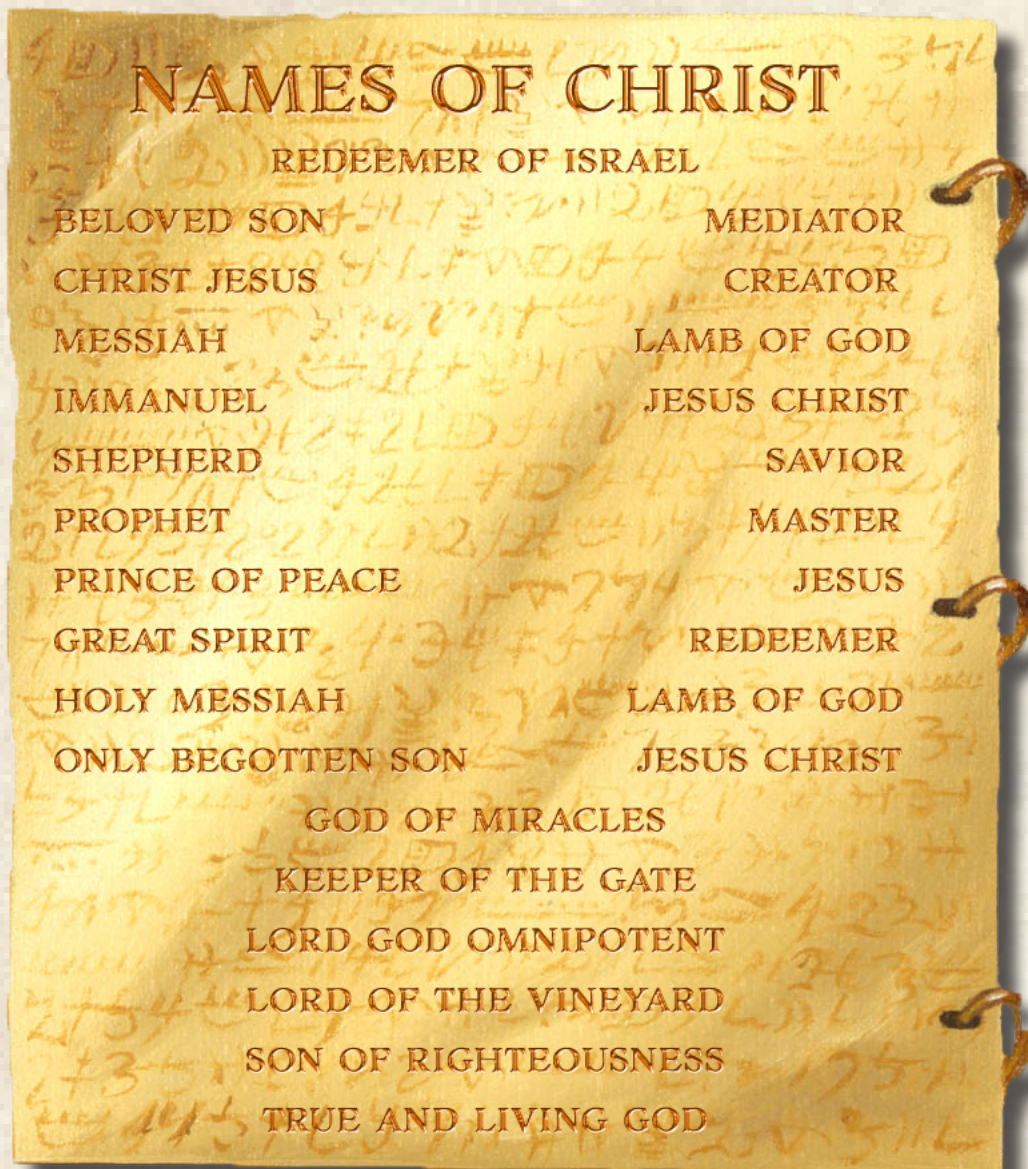
The Book of Mormon also helps us understand that it is not enough simply to learn *about* Jesus Christ. Instead we must also **come unto Christ, and be perfected in him.** [Moroni 10:32 LDS] (Moroni 10:29 RLDS)

In other words, we need to build a relationship with Him by keeping His commandments and striving to follow His example. The Book of Mormon's many faith-filled stories about real individuals and the historical details of their lives help us see how to set the gospel into practice.

In a way, the Book of Mormon's steady and consistent focus on Jesus Christ is the essence of its own distinctive message. The world is filled with endless distractions. We are constantly bombarded by information and messages that can lead us away from truth and happiness. Yet as we open the Book of Mormon, almost at any spot, its pages immediately reorient us towards Christ-centered thoughts and actions. It helps any willing soul keep the sacred covenant to **always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them.** [Moroni 5:2 LDS] (Moroni 5:3 RLDS)

As we allow the book's thematic message about Jesus to resonate within us, it becomes a conduit for personal revelation and spiritual power. "When I think of the Book of Mormon," taught President Russell M. Nelson, "I think of the word power. The truths of the Book of Mormon have the power to heal, comfort, restore, succor, strengthen, console, and cheer our souls."¹⁰ This power ultimately comes from Jesus Christ Himself, for Mormon taught that **every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ.** [Moroni 7:16 LDS] (Moroni 7:14 RLDS)

With all these considerations in mind, it is little wonder that the Book of Mormon is all about Christ. It is only through Christ that we can be saved and exalted. It is only through Christ that we can be resurrected. It is only through Christ that we can have true peace and happiness in this world



and in the world to come. His life and mission are central to God's purposes for each and every one of His children. As we "drink deeply and often" from the pages of the Book of Mormon, we will more fully recognize and appreciate Christ's central role in God's plan.¹¹ We will understand what we must do to follow Him. And we will find greater spiritual strength to do so.

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FURTHER READING

Russell M. Nelson, "A Testimony of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, November 1999, online at lds.org.

Robert J. Matthews, "What the Book of Mormon Tells Us about Jesus Christ" in *The Keystone Scripture*, Book of Mormon Symposium Series, Volume 1, ed. Paul R. Cheesman (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), 21–43.

Gilbert W. Scharffs, "Unique Insights on Christ from the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, 1988, 8–12, online at lds.org.

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, "A Testimony of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, November 1999, online at lds.org.

2. See John L. Sorenson, "Mormon's Sources," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 20, no. 2 (2011): 2–15.

3. Mormon did this by frequently inserting his own commentary, often beginning with "and thus we see," to help drive home the spiritual lesson he hoped readers would pick up from the reported history. See Alma 24:19; 28:13–14; 30:60 (Alma 14:46; 15:50–51; 16:77 RLDS). For additional analysis of Mormon's commentary, see Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 97. See also, Book of Mormon Central, "What Was Mormon's Purpose in Writing the Book of Mormon? [Mormon 5:14 LDS] (Mormon 2:41 RLDS)," KnowWhy 230 (November 14, 2016).

4. See Richard Dilworth Rust, "All Things Which Have Been Given of God . . . Are the Typifying of Him?: Typology in the Book of Mormon," in *Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience*, ed. Neal E. Lambert (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham

Young University, 1981), 233–244; Robert E. Clark, "The Type at the Border: An Inquiry into Book of Mormon Typology," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 2 (1993): 63–77; S. Kent Brown, "The Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," in *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla: Literary and Historical Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1998), 75–98; Noel B. Reynolds, "The Israelite Background of Moses Typology in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 5–23.

5. See Alma 36:6–24 (Alma 17:5–22 RLDS); Mosiah 27:8–31 (Mosiah 11:159–199 RLDS). See also Book of Mormon Central, "Why Was Alma Converted? [Alma 36:21 LDS] (Alma 17:19 RLDS)," KnowWhy 144 (July 15, 2016).

6. See John L. Clark, "Painting Out the Messiah: The Theologies of Dissidents," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 16–27, 107–108; John W. Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press and the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2008), 107–138, 211–236, 273–300; Gerald N. Lund, "An Anti-Christ in the Book of Mormon—The Face May Be Strange, but the Voice Is Familiar," in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, the Testimony of the Word*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 107–128.

7. See Book of Mormon Central, "What Does it Mean to 'Prosper in the Land'? [Alma 9:13 LDS] (Alma 7:15 RLDS)," KnowWhy 116 (June 7, 2016); Book of Mormon Central, "How Is Prosperity Defined in Nephi's Small Plates? [Words of Mormon 1:6LDS] (Words of Mormon 1:9 RLDS)," KnowWhy 383 (November 21, 2017); Book of Mormon Central, "How did the Nephites Become Weak in Such a Short Time? [Helaman 4:25 LDS] (Helaman 2:60 RLDS)," KnowWhy 175 (August 20, 2016); Book of Mormon Central, "How did the 'Pride Cycle' Destroy the Nephite Nation? [3 Nephi 6:10 LDS] (3 Nephi 3:10–11 RLDS)," KnowWhy 195 (September 26, 2016).

8. For instance, the information given about weights and measures in Alma 11 (Alma 8 RLDS) provides important context for Amulek and Zeezrom's debate about Jesus Christ. See Book of Mormon Central, "Why Would Zeezrom Attempt to Bribe Amulek? (Alma 11:22)," KnowWhy 118 (June 9, 2016).

9. John W. Welch and Gregory J. Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), charts 44–47.

10. Russell M. Nelson, "The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?" *Ensign*, November 2017, online at lds.org.

11. Henry B. Eyring, "A Witness," *Ensign*, November 2011, online at lds.org.

Fourth Grade

April 12th Rachel Miller a former Intern and teacher



we went to the BOM foundation, the lady that showed us the stuff was Really nice. She took our picture and put it in a magazine. Raina



Mrs Miller, Ava Larsen, Ammon Ho Raina Lassen, Chloe Evie Gamble, Neveda Alaniz,



I liked the Book of mormon foundation we got to see and touch obidions. I like it when we touched a 100 year old Book, Because I had never touched a 100 year old Book. I also liked the pictures. And the movie on build your house upon a rock.



Evie

Zander Mason



Raina

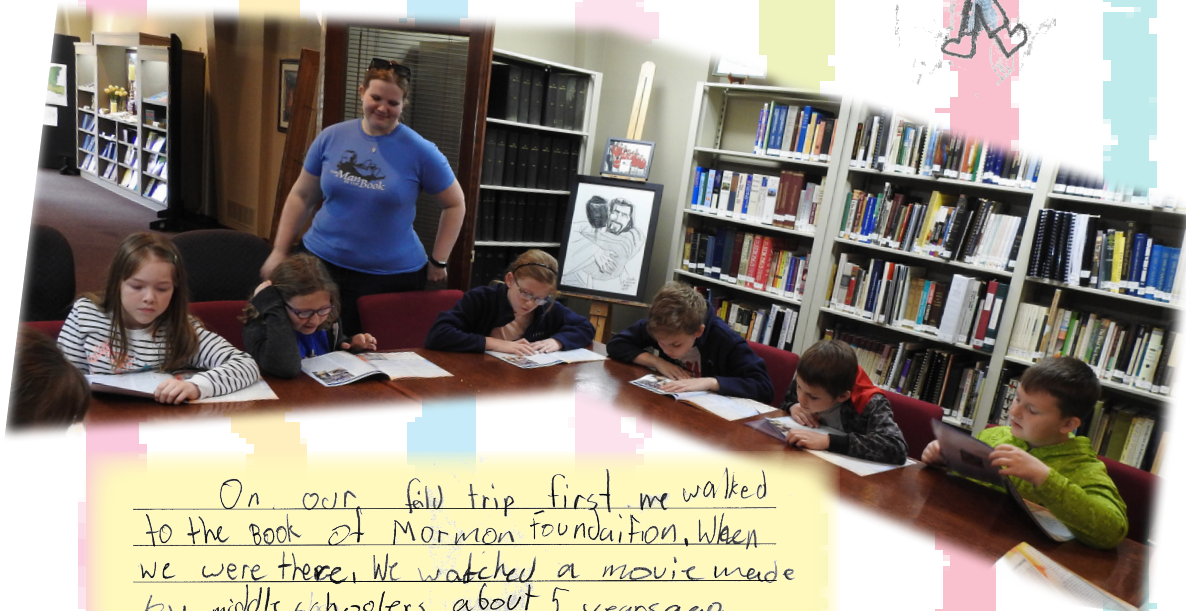


Ava

de Visitors

er at CPRS brought her class to the Foundation

Alyssa



On our field trip first we walked to the Book of Mormon Foundation. When we were there, we watched a movie made by middle schoolers about 5 years ago. We also ate popcorn and drank water. Then we saw molten rock and arrow and sphere heads. Then we saw the artifacts that were in central america! Then we saw the magazine that they print, finally we went to square pizza.

Ava Larsen

wen, Caysen Shrunk, Zander Mason

Pedersen, Layla Hilliard

Alyssa Gillam, Kylee Gonzales



Chloe



Nevada



The students searched the annual photos in the Intern room to find Mrs Miller! She shared the 2013 yearbook with them.



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

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Permit 2404



Layla



Zander

I liked our field trip alot because we got to hang out. What I liked most was the Book of Mormon foundation It was awesome. I liked the movie and the popcorn It was real nice of her, to give us a snack. The chocolate was really good at Clintons. Thank you Mrs. Miller for bringing us there to explore more God and Jesus stuff.

Layla Hilliard



Mrs Miller



Kylee