

THE

# WITNESS

*A Quarterly Publication of*

*The Book of Mormon Foundation*

**They Speak the  
Words of Christ**

THE  
**WITNESS**

ISSUE 181/2023

**3** Teancum Nephite Warrior  
and Our Battle with Sin

by Rich Rowland

**7** Beyond the Written Word

by Faye Shaw

**13** Extensive Roadway System  
Identified in the Mayan Lowlands

by Dale Godfrey

Cover Photo: iStock  
(2 Nephi 14:3)



**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.

The Book of Mormon Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions may be tax deductible. Financial statements are available upon request.

Articles and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the view of The Book of Mormon Foundation.

Unsigned articles are attributable to the Foundation.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**PRESIDENT** Marlin Guin

**VICE PRESIDENT** Dale Godfrey

**SECRETARY** Kathy Keller

**TREASURER** Eldon Anderson

Rebecca Cornish

Eric English

Dennis Heater

Richard Rowland

Zachary Willson

**OFFICE MANAGER**

Sue Manning

**WITNESS EDITOR**

Linda Guin

**Published quarterly by The Book of Mormon Foundation**

210 West White Oak • Independence, MO 64050

(816) 461-3722 • [www.bomf.org](http://www.bomf.org)

Foundation email: [bmfoundation@live.com](mailto:bmfoundation@live.com)

Interns email: [bminternship@gmail.com](mailto:bminternship@gmail.com)



We live in a dark world full of rejection, skepticism and unbelief concerning the existence of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Today, as we see our world ripening in iniquity, all the works of darkness aggressively seek to destroy any belief in our need for a Savior and disprove His resurrection.

The Book of Mormon provides one of the greatest testimonies of the resurrection of Christ. It grows together with the Bible, the Doctrine and Covenants and also with the other records yet to come forth, to declare with power that the resurrected Christ is the son of the living God and the Savior of the world. It proclaims how His resurrection seals the victory over the grave and the sting of death is swallowed up in Him.

After His resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared at Bountiful, where the Father said:

“Behold, my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name, hear ye him.” (3 Nephi 5:8) He descended as the resurrected Savior and told the people: “Behold I am Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets testified should come into the world.” (3 Nephi 5:11)

Think about the power of that experience when Jesus, after being resurrected only a short time, descended out of heaven to stand in front of the people. Think of their testimony from knowing He had come to the Americas from a distant place. After all, they had just recently experienced the signs of His crucifixion.

Every day, we should celebrate the significance of the resurrection and the gift of eternal life through Christ our Lord! This is the message of salvation proclaimed in the word of God. We are thankful for the gift of the Book of Mormon and its testimony of Christ’s resurrection. We also know that each of our own testimonies of Christ speak the same message. He is risen! Hear ye Him!



## TEANCUM: NEPHITE WARRIOR AND OUR BATTLE WITH SIN

by Rich Rowland

With the coming of each new year, my thoughts invariably turn to the Book of Mormon and a man named Teancum. For many Saints, the name Teancum might not sound familiar. That is understandable since he is only mentioned in a few chapters in the Book of Mormon. I assure you, the testimony of his courageous life is worth examining and remembering. I also suggest there are valuable life lessons we can draw from the examination of his history.

Teancum was a Nephite warrior. In fact, he was a chief captain in the Nephite army. We often think of Moroni as THE chief captain of the Nephites, since he is the one most often mentioned in scripture. However, Alma 24:22 indicates Moroni, Teancum and **many other chief captains held a council of war** to devise a strategy for dealing with the Lamanite army. Moroni might well have been the “chief of chiefs,” but it is interesting to note there were other contemporary leaders of the Nephite army with the title chief captain. Teancum was a chief captain and led a portion of the Nephite army. While the account of Teancum’s valiant service is featured in Alma 22, 23 and 24, we will be focusing on the events described in the 23rd chapter.

In the 25th year of the reign of Judges over the people of Nephi, there arose contention or, as the Book of Mormon says “a warm dispute” amongst the Nephites between the free-men and the king-men. Moroni, who had been on the frontier

preparing the outlying Nephite cities for war with the Lamanites, and his army returned to the capital city to deal with the rebellion and “encourage” the king-men to join the battle in defense of their nation. At the same time, the Lamanite king Amalickiah prepared his people for war with the Nephites.

But behold, this was a critical time for such contentions to be among the people of Nephi; for behold, Amalickiah had again stirred up the hearts of the people of the Lamanites, against the people of the Nephites, and he was gathering together soldiers, from all parts of his land, and arming them, and preparing for war, with all diligence, for he had sworn to drink the blood of Moroni. (Alma 23:10)

With the Nephite army split between the capital city and the southern border with the Lamanites, Amalickiah and his army began to attack the smaller cities on the frontier. Soon, the Nephite cities of Moroni, Nephiah, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid and Mulek had fallen to the Lamanite army. Emboldened by their impressive string of victories, Amalickiah and his men next set their sights on the land Bountiful and all the land northward. However, Teancum and his army awaited them.

But behold, he (Amalickiah) met with a disappointment, by being repulsed by Teancum and his men, for they were great warriors: for every man of Teancum did exceed the Lamanites in their strength, and in their skill of war, insomuch that they did gain advantage over the Lamanites. (Alma 23:37)

Ultimately, Teancum and his men drove the Lamanite army toward the seashore. Exhausted from the day of fighting, both armies made camp for the night, the Nephites in the borders of the land Bountiful and the Lamanites on the beach by the seashore. It is here that Teancum sought to slay the Lamanite king Amalickiah. I often wonder what inspired him in his actions that night. Was he inspired by God? Was he fearful that his army would not be able to hold the field if the battle began again in the morning? Was he just ready to end the immediate conflict as soon as possible? I don't know the answers to any of these questions, but one day I hope to speak to Teancum and hear his thoughts. I do know Teancum's bold and courageous action changed everything.

night, and went into the camp of Amalickiah; and behold, sleep had overpowered them, because of their much fatigue, which was caused by the labors and heat of the day. And it came to pass that Teancum stole privily into the tent of the king, and put a javelin to his heart; and he did cause the death of the king immediately, that he did not awake his servants. (Alma 23:40-41)

Alma 23 ends with a fitting description of the situation.

And thus ended the twenty and fifth year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi; and thus ended the days of Amalickiah. (Alma 23:44)

Teancum slayed the Laminated king Amalickiah on New Year's Eve and returned to his camp to awaken his men and prepare them for battle. Alma 24 begins on New Year's Day, when the Lamanites awaken to find their king is dead, and the Nephites are already aligned for battle. Alma describes it this way:



Teancum Slays Amalickiah-Illustration by Joseph Brickey

And now it came to pass in the twenty and sixth year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi, behold, when the Lamanites awoke on the first morning of the first month, behold, they found Amalickiah was dead in his own tent; and they also saw that Teancum was ready to give them battle on that day. And now when the Lamanites saw this, they were affrighted; and they abandoned their design in marching into the land northward, and retreated with all their

And it came to pass that when the night had come, Teancum and his servant stole forth and went out by

army into the city of Mulek, and sought protection in their fortifications. (Alma 24:1-2)

The death of Amalickiah did not end the war between the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Lamanites regrouped under Amalickiah's brother, Ammoron, and battles continued. However, Teancum's bold action did halt the advance of the Lamanites and rejuvenate the Nephite army. His heroic efforts allowed the Nephite army time to reassemble and likely saved the land Bountiful. Isn't it amazing how a single fearless act can change the course of history? For that act, Teancum is worth remembering.

## OUR BATTLE WITH SIN

A few years ago, while reading this account, it occurred to me that this battle between Teancum and Amalickiah could be viewed as a representation of our struggle with Satan and sin. The battle between the Nephites and Lamanites seemed to go on forever. Likewise, our struggle with sin can seem never-ending. I suspect it is part of the human experience and the eternal battle between good and evil. Fortunately, there are useful strategies we can learn from Teancum to deploy and combat sin on our spiritual battle front. Following are just a few suggestions.

Amalickiah had sworn to drink the blood of Moroni. In his passion to kill Moroni, he could have led his army straight to the Nephite capital and fought him there. This ill-conceived plan would, most likely, have led to a disastrous result for Amalickiah and his men. Instead, he began his campaign by attacking the outlying, and less fortified Nephite cities. In a similar way, Satan usually starts his work in the outlying areas of our lives. The places we sometimes fail to fortify with vigilant prayer are susceptible to the attack of the adversary. Perhaps the movies we watch or the music we listen to provide a vulnerable opening in our spiritual defenses. Most likely, it is something different in the life of each person, so I encourage you to spend thoughtful and prayerful time checking your spiritual perimeter. Remember, it was small victories that emboldened the Lamanite army to keep pressing forward. I believe Satan works in the same way.

Amalickiah launched his first attack at the perfect time. The Nephite forces were divided because Moroni had to pull his army away from the front to deal with the king-men rebellion. Doesn't it seem like civil infighting always seems to be an open invitation for national destruction? The same is true in our individual lives. Fighting in our families, our marriages and in the church provide an open invitation for Satan to destroy us and everything we hold dear. I'm sure we can all relate to one, if not all, of these. When our attention is distracted from the real enemy, Satan seems to advance in our lives. Perhaps this is one reason Jesus told His people, **Blessed are all the peacemakers; for they shall be**



**called the children of God.** Being at peace with our families, spouses and church family is essential in our spiritual war with Satan. The adversary always seems to know when our defenses are split and at their weakest, so love God and all men, keep your repentance fresh and your prayer life vibrant.

There are times when bold action is required in the battle. Teancum recognized this when he set out to slay Amalickiah. I cannot imagine the courage it

took for him to walk into the Lamanite camp, full of Lamanite warriors, and then walk into the tent of the Lamanite king with a single-minded desire to kill the king. Did Teancum think this would end the war, or was he just wanting to end the immediate battle? Either way, his courageous action turned the tide of the war. In the spiritual warfare of our lives, there also comes a time for courageous action. Most of us have reoccurring sins in our lives. You know what they are in your life—sins that we just can't seem to get over, so we wrestle with them regularly. There comes a time when we must end the battle with a particular sin once and for all. The imagery may seem gruesome; nonetheless, we must be willing to drive a javelin through the heart of our sin.

The death of Amalickiah did not end the war with the Lamanites. Ammoron, his brother, quickly assumed leadership of the Lamanite army, and the war waged on. His death brought about a shift in the momentum of the war. No longer were the Nephites on the defensive. Instead, they were able to fight from an offensive position and drive the Lamanites from their land. We need to recognize the battle with sin doesn't end with the destruction of a single sin, but taking the necessary steps to deal with one sin can empower you to go on the offensive and drive out the remaining sin in your life. Momentum has a powerful effect on our life, and we should try to use it to our advantage. Like the Lamanites, Satan always seems to regroup under a new name or try a new tactic to advance his cause. I find it encouraging to know we can confidently say "not today, Satan" and take action to drive him from our lives.

This discussion would be incomplete if I didn't remind you of the necessity of seeking out the guidance of God in your spiritual warfare. Trying to do battle with Satan on your own would, most certainly, be a losing proposition. The apostle Paul provides great counsel in Ephesians 6 when giving instruction to put on the whole armor of God.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against



powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:10-18)

The scriptures don't really indicate whether Teancum was a man of God or not. I like to think he was, but I am left wondering. Did he pray and earnestly seek counsel from his Heavenly Father before moving on Amalickiah? Was he as valiant a prayer warrior as he was a combat warrior? I hope he was. I hope you are as well.



# BEYOND THE WRITTEN WORD

by Faye Shaw

The words we use are extremely important. It is written, **Thou shalt not take [vocalize] the name of thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.** (Exodus 20:7) To this day, Jews feel they are forbidden to speak or even write His holy, sacred name. They will write G-d. They show respect for His treasured words:

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of the people ... and when he opened it, all the people **stood up**; (Nehemiah 8:5-6) (emphasis added)

It pains me when that reverence is not there, and I hear people toss out “Oh God” as the response to most anything. I think most are not even aware of what they are doing. A priesthood member shared his shock at the Lord’s statement after he reacted with “holy cow” about something. He heard, “Only I AM holy.”

He heard, “Only I AM holy.”

The idea for this article came from Angela Crowell’s, *Qumran Quest Bulletin*. In it she wrote, “One unique belief of the people of the Ancient Near East who brought us the Old Testament was that ‘tremendous power resided’ in the **spoken word**.” (p 3, July 1995) Later, I will show several of her examples. To emphasize the overwhelming power in the Word, I am highlighting and capitalizing key words.

## The Power of the Word

Mormon explained the power that went with Alma and the sons of Mosiah as they spoke about the gospel to the Lamanites:

The preaching of **the Word** had had a greater tendency to lead the people to do that which was just, it had had **more powerful** effect upon the minds of the people **than a sword** or anything else ... Therefore, Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the **virtue of the word of God**. (Alma 16:82)

Nephi’s older brothers complained to their father that he was harsh with them. Lehi’s response was:

And ye have murmured because he hath been plain unto you— Ye say that he hath used sharpness, Ye say that he hath been angry with you; But behold, his sharpness was the sharpness of the **power of the word of God** which was in him; And that which ye call anger was the truth according to that which is in God, which he could not restrain, manifesting boldly concerning your iniquities. (2 Nephi 1:46-49)

Moroni revealed to us what the three Nephites were capable of doing:

And by the **power of His word** did they cause prisons to tumble to the earth, Yea, even the fiery furnace could not harm them—neither wild beasts, nor poisonous serpents—because of the **power of His word**. (Mormon 4:30-31)

## Three Examples

Angela Crowell listed these occurrences of divine power with its attending authority-filled utterances. (pp 3-4) Indicated spoken words are in italic here.

### 1. Power to Win

And it came to pass that Alma fought with Amlici with the sword face to face, And they did contend mightily with one another. And it came to pass that Alma, he being a man of God, being exercised with much faith, And he cried, **saying**: “*O Lord, have mercy and spare my life, that I may be an instrument in Thy hands to save and protect this people!*” Now when Alma had **said** these words, He contended again with Amlici, And he was **strengthened** insomuch that he slew Amlici with the sword; (Alma 1:87-89)

### 2. Power to Be Set Free

The **power of God** was upon Alma and Amulek and they rose and stood upon their feet; And Alma cried, **saying**: “*How long shall we suffer these great afflictions, O Lord? O Lord, give us strength according to our faith which is in Christ, even unto deliverance.*” And they brake the cords with which they were bound; ... And the earth shook mightily and the walls of the prison were rent in twain so they fell to the earth; And the chief judge and the lawyers and priests and teachers which smote upon Alma and Amulek were slain by the fall thereof. (Alma 10:76-77, 79-80)

### 3. Power in a Prophetic Prayer

Then David **said** to the Philistine ... “*This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give you into our hands.*” (1 Samuel 17:45-47)

We know all David’s words were realized. Perhaps while a shepherd, he looked up at the night sky and sensed the powerful force that radiated from God’s presence as David affirmed, **By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.** (Psalms 33:6) He recognized that same energy backed up his prayer as he stood in front of Goliath. How could he possibly fail! No matter how large the giant we face today is—be assured all prophecy will be fulfilled!

## Requirements and Blessings of Power

We need to realize that we must be prepared and worthy to receive! The words of Christ specify what empowers us:

**Have faith** in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea: and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall **believe** that those things which he **saith** shall come to pass; he shall have **whatsoever he saith fulfilled.** (Mark 11:24-25)



And I, Moroni ... know that Thou workest unto the children of men according to their **faith**; For the brother of Jared **said** unto the mountain Zerin, “Remove!”— And it was removed, (Ether 5:30)

Without elaborating, Moroni gives two reasons why the three Nephites were bestowed with mighty power:

And He knoweth their **prayers**, that they were in behalf of their brethren; And He knoweth their **faith**— For in His name could they remove mountains, And in His name could they cause the earth to shake, (Mormon 4:29-30)

Mormon informs us that he could not write even one one-hundredth of what Christ did while ministering to the Nephites. Imagine what they must have experienced before He told them, **For the works which ye have seen Me do, that shall ye also do;** (3 Nephi 12:34) He also says that to us! We know that earlier, half a world away, his disciples witnessed that **he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.** (Mark 4:31) That was not so unusual for our writers of the Book of Mormon, for Jacob proclaimed earlier:

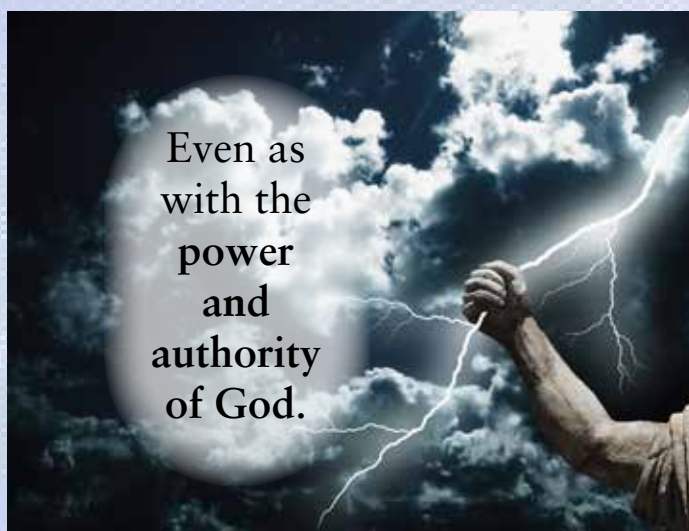
We truly can **command in the name of Jesus**, And the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea; (Jacob 3:7)

I was blessed to attend the first youth camp held at Temple Grove in Pennsylvania. Although it had rained the whole week, by Friday evening it was worse. A big storm approached before our prayer service. The staff had to drive us from our cabins to the smaller dining hall. As we sat on blankets, we could see the continuous lightning flashes through the large windows surrounding us. Singing as loud as we could, the insistent, powerful thunder and pounding rain were so forceful that we couldn't hear ourselves. Then Scott Liston stood and spoke a couple of words. Instantly the tempest was gone, and we could see the myriad of stars. After some campers were singled out, the whole group was **spoken** to by the Spirit through Scott. What a service we had!

Nephi, burdened down by the wickedness of his people, so wanted to minister to them. He was pondering on his way home when the Lord spoke and bestowed him with Power:

Blessed art thou, Nephi... I will make thee mighty in **word** and in deed, in faith and in works; Yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee **according to thy word**, For [because] thou shalt **not ask that which is contrary to My will.** (Helaman 3:115, 117)

In the following verses, notice again the efforts required of us so we may receive such capabilities. When the sons of Mosiah went to the Land of Manti to preach to the Lamanites:



They had given themselves to much **prayer** and **fasting**, Therefore, they had the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation, And when they taught, they **taught** with power and authority even as with the **power and authority of God.** (Alma 12:5)

How could there ever be more power than that? Earlier in the Book of Mormon, Nephi encourages us with his message that:

**After** that ye have **repented** of your sins, And witnessed unto the Father that ye are **willing to keep My commandments** by the **baptism** of water, And have **received** the baptism of fire and of the **Holy Ghost**, And can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the **tongue of angels**— (2 Nephi 13:18)

In the next chapter, he shared how committed people are blessed to speak that way:

And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost? Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, wherefore, **they speak the words of Christ.** (2 Nephi 14:3)

Lehi confirms all this as he explains the words Nephi had spoken to his brothers:

And it must needs be that the **power of God** must be with him, even unto **commanding** you, that ye **must obey**; But behold, it was **not him**, But it was the **Spirit of the Lord** which was in him which opened his mouth to utterance, (2 Nephi 1:50-51)



## Ye Must Obey

In times of need, words can be given us. Nephi expressed, "... ye will believe in these **words**, for they are the **words of Christ** And **He hath given them unto me;**" (2 Nephi 15:12)

At a Christian school PTA meeting, a faculty wife told me she was very tolerant, and then began shooting questions at me about the Book of Mormon. The way she spoke led me to believe she was not so broad-minded. As I was formulating answers, I felt a Power funneling into me from behind. My mouth felt like it had lumps of words. When I opened it, all that came out was something like, "The central focus of the whole Book of Mormon is Jesus the Christ." I guess that's all she needed to hear. She energetically swung her arm around and upward in front of her in approval and exclaimed, "Yes!"

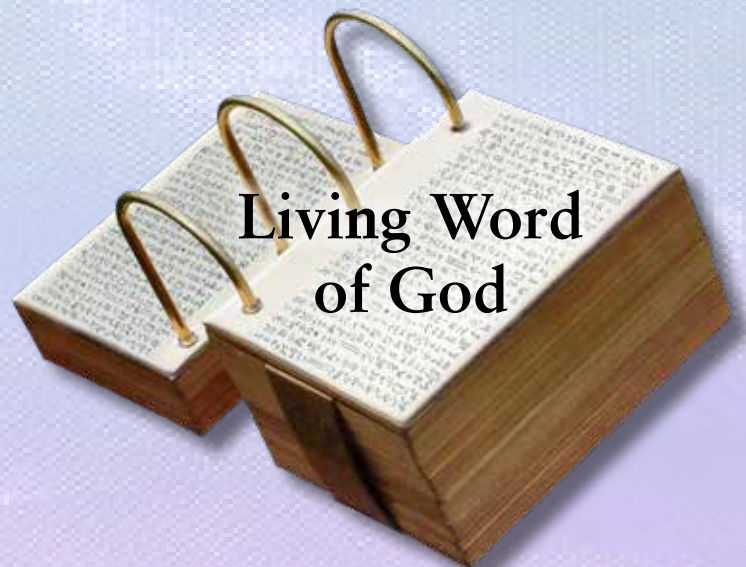
## Know the Word

While He was with the Nephites, Christ imparted these words:

Yea, a **commandment** I give unto you that ye search these things diligently, for great are the **words** of Isaiah, For surely he **spake** as touching all things concerning My people which are of the house of Israel; Therefore, it must needs be that he must **speak** also to the Gentiles; And **all things that he spake hath been and shall be, even according to the words which he spake.** (3 Nephi 10:27-29)

Should we, do we, know what shall be? Our Scriptures can be like our personal liahona which can direct our paths if we are spiritually ready to follow its directions.

And there was also written upon them [the liahona] a new writing which was plain to read, which did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord; And it was written and changed from time to time according to the **faith** and **diligence** which we gave unto it. (1 Nephi 5:35)



The fact that the Book of Mormon was written on plates of gold should be a clue to us as to the value of the **precious mighty words** etched on them. That powerful book—the **Living Word** of

God—was written to us! It can be like a personal *liahona* which can direct our paths if we follow its direction. **Feast upon the words of Christ, For behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.** (2 Nephi 14:4) What do we do when we feast? Think of being stuffed after a Thanksgiving meal.



In Hebrew, the word *hagah* is the growl a lion makes as it tears into a kill. It is **Like a young lion roaring on his prey**, (Isaiah 31:4) Now consider the effort and desire we should put into our scripture studies. *Meditate* comes from *hagah*: **and in His law doth he meditate day and night.** (Psalms 1:2) Do we hunger for and devour the wonderful words we read? Where are your scriptures? Are they on a dusty shelf? Do the words have less power because they are written down?

Later, after Moroni had translated the portion that the brother of Jared had sealed, he discussed the Power resident there:

For Thou hast made him [the brother of Jared] that the things which he wrote were mighty, even as Thou art, unto the **overpowering of man** to read them; (Ether 5:25)

Do you think that the vitality of the Word dies when it is put on a page? I think we so often overlook a profound resident power. But then at times when we read, we are struck with the awesome power of the **written words**. Even phrases we have read many times before can suddenly strongly impact us. The Scriptures are not simply ink on pages. They contain words included at our Lord's direction, and they contain the **actual Words of Christ, our Creator!**

## The Pages Can Fade Away

My husband, Gaylord, liked to randomly open his Scriptures and begin reading at the top of a page. One remarkable day, he began at a page on the right side in the 1908 edition. As his eyes glided over the words, beginning with Moroni 10:3, he could hear Moroni saying them—and he could understand them. Concluding the chapter, he turned back to the first two verses. He was overwhelmed when he read: **And I seal up these records after that I have spoken a few words by way of exhortation unto you.** (verse 2)

We can connect with those in the Book of Mormon. One of the many examples is when Moroni saw the future and directly addressed us:

Behold, I speak unto you as if you were present, And yet ye are not; But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me and I know your doing, And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; (Mormon 4:46-47)

Later, he spoke to the nonbelievers of our day. I have no doubt that he actually viewed us because he went on to appropriately tell us the things we need to change in our lives.

I talked to two people who saw the Lamanites rush in to slay the Anti-Nephi-Lehi men. Twice, over time, one of them could not believe what he was reading and tossed his Book of Mormon across the room. The third time, a personage took him there. He saw men laying down to perish because of their vow never to fight again. From their experiences, both men expressed the same heart-breaking graphic sights and sounds—and even odors, enough that I am convinced of the truth of their observations. I feel people having these types of experiences, whether forward or backward in time and whether in vision or not, are viewing real events.

Other Book of Mormon writers had us on their hearts and prayed the records would be preserved to come forth at our time. Enos testified:

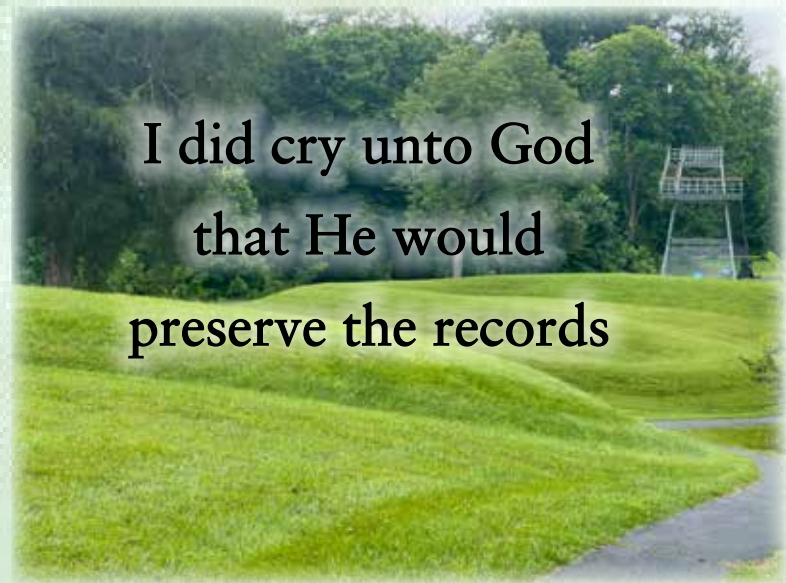


I did cry [mighty prayer] unto God that He would preserve the records; And the Lord said unto me: “Thy fathers have also required of Me this thing; And it shall be done unto them according to their faith, for their faith was like unto thine.” (Enos 1:25, 28)

Years ago, on the tower overlooking the Serpent Mound, I began my prayer for the Book of Mormon descendants by saying I wanted to join my supplication with the Ancient Ones that the Lord’s covenants would be fulfilled. Then, the Spirit began to powerfully guide my spoken words. What a glorious prayer I was given! As I was leaving, I heard someone approaching me on the noisy gravel. When I turned around, I saw no one, but I knew someone was there. The next time I read in Enos, that same powerful Spirit came over me, and I knew the Lord allowed him to be with me and hear the petition I received. I am certain it ministered to him as it did me. Later, I realized that, in seeing me, he would have probably prayed for me. How dare I let him down!

When in the Spirit, we are not limited by time. Another testimony illustrates God’s omnipresence, which again involves Gaylord. He had been reading about Moroni being all alone after the loss of his people and his trying to avoid the murderous Lamanites. He felt a tremendous sadness for him. At that point, the Spirit instructed, “Pray for him.” He thought that was impossible—Moroni was at an earlier period. Twice more, “Pray for him.” Finally, he got on his knees beside our sofa and poured out his heart for Moroni. I believe God accepted that plea and placed it where Moroni needed it the most.

We have little comprehension of power of the **Living Word** that dwells and is available within us.



**I did cry unto God  
that He would  
preserve the records**

Arthur Oakman was blessed to view God moving in great power at creation. He relates:

As He **uttered those words** [let there be light], the whole atmosphere changed, and the light and power of the Spirit of God streamed forth...**and it was so.** (p 24) **His words** had within them **the power to accomplish the things whereunto He had sent them...**His words carried within them the **intelligence** and the **power necessary to execute themselves**, as all the words of God do. (p 31) (He Who Is)

The **power** to accomplish His will is available, and the more we become like our Lord, the more attainable it is. It can live and breathe in our lives. It can touch our hearts, quicken us, and support us so we can go forth in that power to the fulfilling of the **endowed words** we have studied. It enables our outreach to others. The authority and forces of heaven can be with us, and we can be a part of the return of Zion!



**The Power to Accomplish His Will**

# Extensive Roadway System Identified in the Mayan Lowlands

by Dale Godfrey

And it came to pass that there were many cities built anew, and there were many old cities repaired, and there were many highways cast up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, and from land to land, and from place to place. (3 Nephi 3:8)

In June 1956, President Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 into law. It provided federal funding to aid in the construction of an interstate highway system with at least four lanes. The minimum lane width is 12 feet, which is comparable to most US and state highways. The minimum width of the left paved shoulder is four feet and the minimum width for the right paved shoulder is ten feet. For a two-lane interstate, that means the minimum paved width in each direction is 38 feet or a total of 76 feet for both directions combined. I remember, as an interstate was being built in our area, how exciting it was to be able to utilize this huge, new, safe, high-speed roadway. Little did we realize a roadway with significantly wider dimensions (nearly double) had already been built in the Americas over 2,000 years earlier.

Discoveries being made in Mesoamerica utilizing new scientific and archaeological advances, continue to produce results that leave archaeologists and other experts in awe. LiDAR (light detection and ranging) is one of the relatively new technological advances producing astounding results. LiDAR technology utilizes a specially equipped aircraft to fire light pulses into the forest, enabling researchers to trace ancient structures below by removing foliage from the images.

In December 2022, the results of one such regional LiDAR study of the Maya Lowlands were

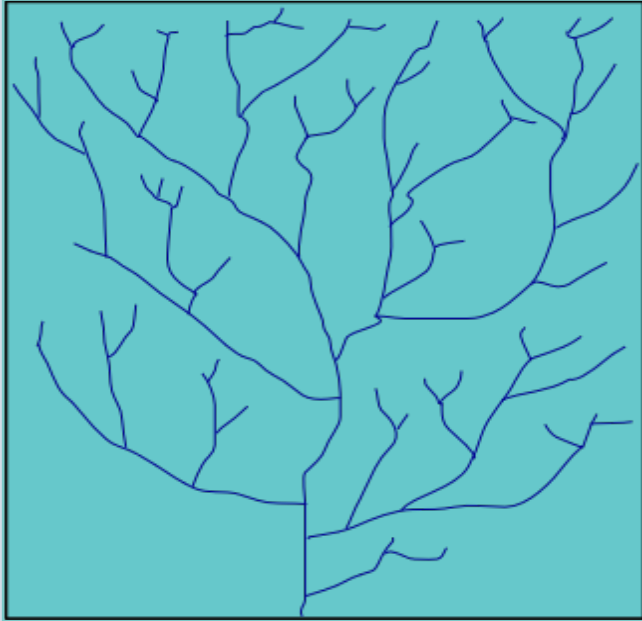
released in the journal, *Ancient Mesoamerica*. The LiDAR coverage spanned a large contiguous area within the Mirador-Calakmul Karst Basin (MCKB) of northern Guatemala and Campeche, Mexico. The area had been identified as having a concentration of Preclassic Maya sites (ca. 1000 BC–AD 150) connected by causeways.

The LiDAR study produced several exciting insights including:

- An extraordinary density and distribution of Maya sites in the area.
- A greater appreciation for the size and importance of the El Mirador site.
- Documentation of hundreds of previously unknown archaeological sites in the MCKB.
- Reevaluation of the magnitude of the labor force needed for the construction of massive platforms, palaces, dams, causeways, and pyramids.
- Challenges to the old notion of sparse early human occupation in the Maya Lowlands, particularly in the Preclassic period.
- New insights into the control of water including the construction of large reservoir systems for water collection and rainwater management.
- Discovery that one of the crowning achievements of the Middle and Late Preclassic Maya was the construction of a dendritic system of causeways throughout the entirety of the MCKB.

Unfortunately, due to the space limitations of this article, we will only discuss the dendritic system of causeways (raised roadways). If you would like to read the entire abstract go to the link at the end of this article. <sup>1</sup>

This is a diagram of a dendritic system, often used to describe watersheds. With regards to street networks, it's a convenient way to categorize a hierarchy of streets in a branching out pattern. Local roads feed Connectors which feed Arterials which then in turn feed highways, the central "trunks" of the system.



While causeways were known to have existed throughout the Maya area, the scope and scale of the features are now fully evident with the airborne LiDAR, supported by satellite imagery and GIS (Geographic Information System) software.

The LiDAR survey revealed an extraordinary density and distribution of Maya sites concentrated in the MCKB, many of them linked directly or indirectly by a vast causeway network. Many of these settlements demonstrate a political/social/geographical relationship with other nearby settlements, which has resulted in the consolidation into at least 417 ancient cities, towns, and villages with identifiable site boundaries.

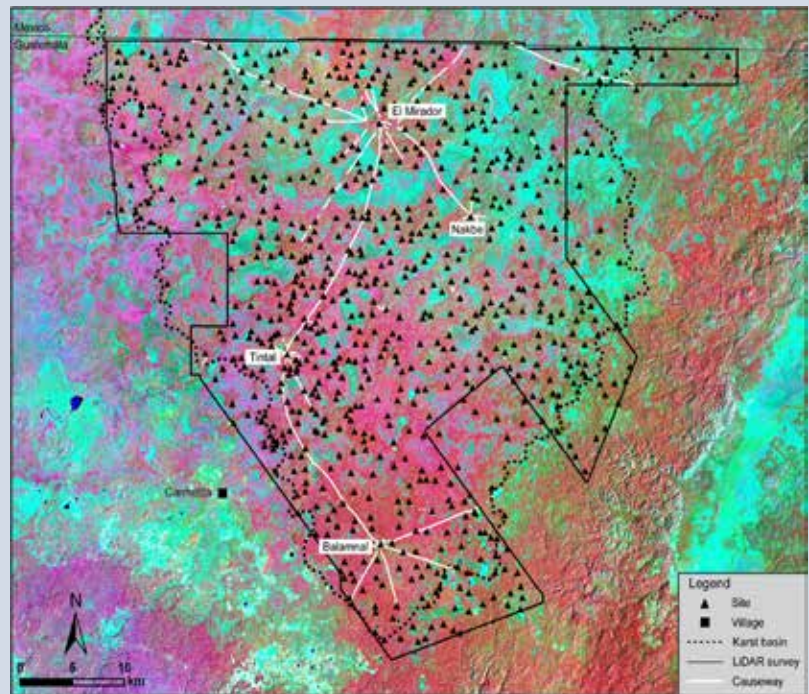
Looking at this map to the right reminds us of the words of Mormon.

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)

In addition to archaeological sites, LiDAR mapping has also revealed a network of at least 133.22 km (82.76 miles) of inter-site (between various sites) and 38.23 km (23.75 miles) of intra-site (within various sites) Preclassic causeways. (Shown as white lines on the image below) The intra-site causeways measure 9–40 m (29.5–131.2 ft.) wide, while the inter-site causeways range from 28 to 40 m (91.8–131.2 ft.) wide.

The area is dominated by low-lying seasonal swamps, known as bajos, where water collects from the surrounding karstic upland hills that form the natural borders, thus necessitating the raised roadbed construction. The elevation of the roadbed varies between 1 m (3.28 ft.) and 5 m (16.4 ft.). Calculations of the volume of fill on one causeway, based on excavations, determined that the Preclassic Maya used as much as 10,000 m<sup>3</sup>/km (10,000 cubic meters per kilometer) of lime plaster and lime-reinforced fill for elevated sections of the causeway.

For many years, archaeologists maintained the Maya had no knowledge of the wheel. Although, examples had actually been found much earlier, it wasn't until the 1940's, archaeologists acknowledged two wheeled figurines found during the excavations at Tres Zapotes. At that point, despite their skepticism, archaeologists had to acknowledge that the inhabitants of Mesoamerica had knowledge of the wheel. Today, over 100 figurines with wheels have been discovered in Mesoamerica.<sup>2</sup>



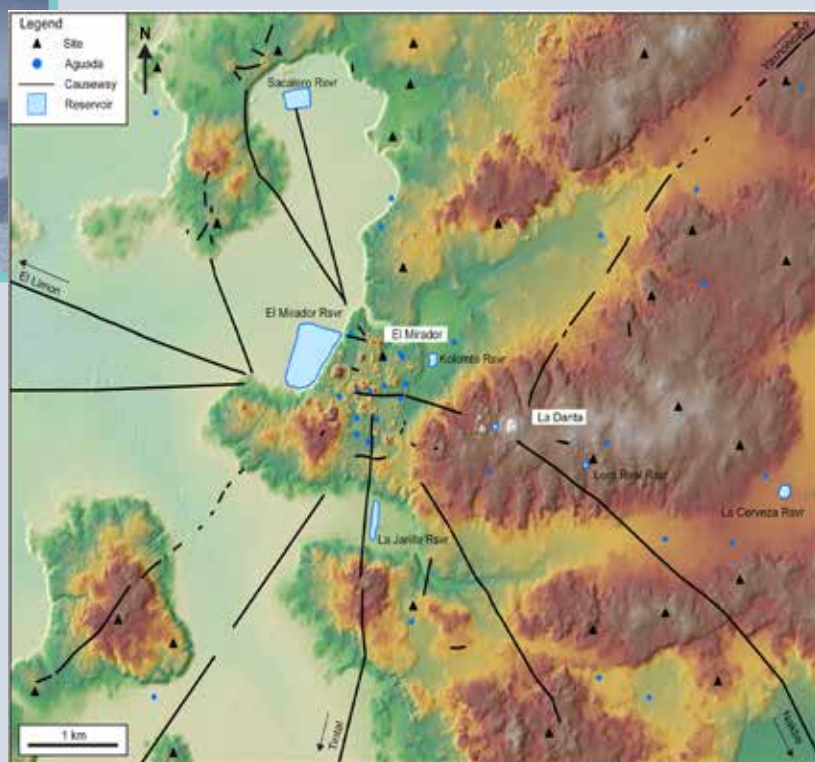


Among the many evidences of the apparent cohesive nature of the people in this geographic area during the Preclassic Maya era were the causeways, the similar architectural styles, and the joint public works projects.

It's observed in the abstract that "Monumental architecture, consistent architectural formats, specific site boundaries, water management and collection facilities, and more than 177 km of elevated Preclassic causeways suggest labor

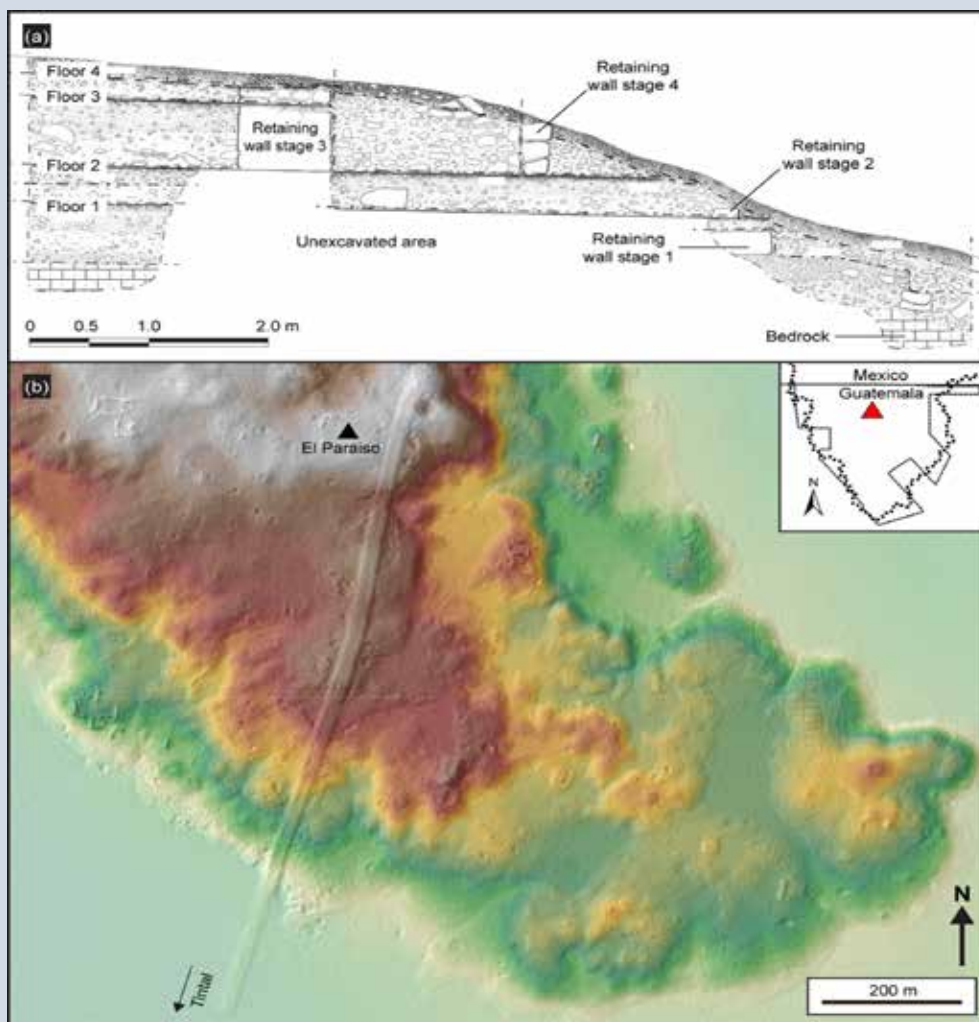
Archaeologists have not found evidence of the use of larger wheeled conveyances. They have also not provided a plausible explanation for why a society with knowledge of the wheel, would not have utilized wheeled conveyances to transport either objects or people. This is especially true, since they built highways twice the size of a modern four-lane interstate. Possible explanations have been offered, including a lack of draft animals, religious prohibitions, and impassable terrain. The lack of draft animals makes little sense to anyone who has ever seen a child pulling a friend in a wagon versus pulling them along unaided on the ground. If the use of the wheel was prohibited due to religious constraints it makes one wonder why they would have gone to the trouble of developing the wheel and putting it on figurines, if they were prohibited from using the wheel. And finally, impassible terrain may be an excellent explanation in some portions of Mesoamerica, but it certainly isn't when you have a causeway wider than an interstate highway available for use. The Book of Mormon clearly suggests the use of wheeled conveyances.

Now the king had commanded his servants previous to the time of the watering of their flocks, that they should prepare his horses and chariots, and conduct him forth to the land of Nephi. (Alma 12:77)



Digital elevation map of El Mirador with causeways and reservoirs. Major causeways from the civic center of El Mirador show the extent and nature of the vast intrasite and intersite networks. Primary causeways extend from Danta pyramid northeast into Campeche, Mexico (Yaxnohcah?), and southeast to Nakbe. Other intersite causeways extend from the Central Acropolis south to Tintal, and from the Las Cruces Group northwest to El Limón and Paxbán. Intrasite causeways connect the civic center to neighboring suburbs of Sacalero, Los Faisanes, Chacté, Los Pericos, La Muerta, Yaxché, Las Ardillas, and others. Background color represents terrain elevation with lowest elevations in light blue and gradually increasing to highest elevations in browns and white.

investments that defy organizational capabilities of lesser polities and portray the strategies of governance by uniting major sites in a network in the Middle and Late Preclassic periods.”



This brief overview of only one segment of the LiDAR study and the resultant abstract cannot do justice to even that segment of the study. You are encouraged to go to the website listed below to gain a broader understanding of the immensity and depth of this work and the new insights provided as we consider how archaeology and the Book of Mormon may relate to each other. Certainly, the findings of this abstract support the descriptions found in the Book of Mormon.

Detailed LIDAR image of the Mirador-Tintal causeway: (a) profile of Op. 500A, excavation of the Mirador-Tintal causeway, showing the stratigraphic sequences of the construction phases with four floors.

Endnotes

1 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ancient-mesoamerica/article/lidar-analyses-in-the-contiguous-miradorcalakmul-karst-basin-guatemala-an-introduction-to-new-perspectives-on-regional-early-maya-socioeconomic-and-political-organization/31075DFA8ADBAA5E7C7320CA6DB93E5E>

2 <https://uncoveredhistory.com/mesoamerica/wheeled-toys/>