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THE

# WITNESS

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The Book of Mormon Foundation



*And we are made alive in Christ because of our faith*

THE  
**WITNESS**

ISSUE 183/2023

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Cover Photo Alamy  
(2 Nephi 11:46)

*THE Book OF Mormon*  
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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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# COVENANTS

## Everlasting Covenant

And this is mine *everlasting covenant*, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine *everlasting covenant*, which I made with thy father Enoch. (Genesis 9:22-23)

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bare thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my *covenant* with him also, for an *everlasting covenant* with his seed after him. (Genesis 17:25)

## Book of Mormon Begins with Covenant

Written to the Lamanites which are a remnant of the house of Israel, And also to Jew and Gentile.... Which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers, And that they may know the *covenants* of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever. And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting Himself unto all nations.  
Moroni (Title Page)

## Book of Mormon Ends with Covenant

And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ and deny not His power, Then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God through the shedding of the blood of Christ, Which is in the *covenant* of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy without spot.  
(Moroni 10:30)

# The Book of Mormon and the Everlasting Covenant

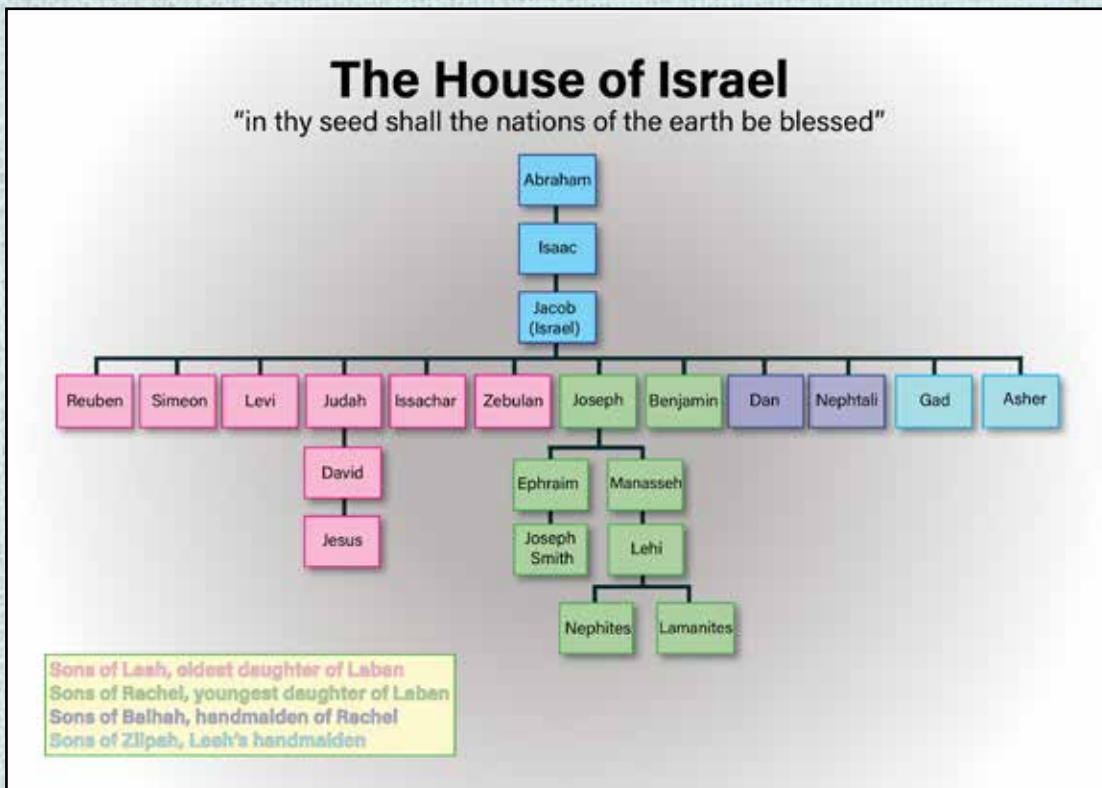
by Eric Odida (Kisumu, Kenya)

We need to ask ourselves why the Lord gave the Book of Mormon to the church, and to the world through the church. Why was it necessary for the church to have this book? Could God have sent the angel Moroni to Joseph with the message of restoration without revealing the Book of Mormon? The answer is NO! Restoration could not have taken place without the Book of Mormon. The prophecies concerning the house of Abraham, Isaac, Israel and Joseph, and the recovery of the house of Israel, and the land of Zion would not have been fulfilled. The life stories of these legends would not be a type and shadow.

this thing, and this is a new and everlasting covenant; even that which was from the beginning. (D&C 20:1a; D&C 66:1b)

This is what the Angel Moroni revealed to Joseph Smith Jr. to be contained in the Book of Mormon.

It remains for the church to assess her appreciation of the Book of Mormon and the covenant message, which is the fullness of the gospel therein. In the past, the Lord was not pleased with our fathers on the question of diligence placed on the lessons of the book. To this, He spoke thus to the church:



And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the

The revelation given through Joseph Smith Jr. before the organization of the church declares that restoration work would be accomplished through the instruments of the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the Doctrine and Covenants, we understand this to be the same thing as the fullness of the everlasting gospel and also the new and everlasting covenant.

Behold, I say unto you, that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in

new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom, otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; (D&C 83:8a-c)

The message of the covenants is one of the most attractive features of the Book of Mormon. In 2018, I started studying the book with particular interest in the covenants content of its message. The Book of Mormon in the title page spells out Christ the Savior and the covenants as the core of its message.

It is important to note that this information is found in the title page of the Book of Mormon. The title page always abbreviates the message of a book. The Book of Mormon title page clearly states the Savior and the covenant as the reason for the book's coming forth. The text states thus:

**• To show unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers.** Of course, the Lord had done great things in the lives of their fathers, including marvelous miracles, but nothing could be greater than the covenants and promises the Heavenly Father made unto their fathers. Every lesson taught, every sacrifice commanded of them, every miracle performed, every law given and every prophecy given was about God's Son and the everlasting covenant He brings to them.

**• And that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.** This spells out the purpose of the book as that of bringing the knowledge of the covenants and promises of the Lord to the house of Israel.

**• And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.** This last reason places Christ at the heart of the covenants of the Heavenly Father with the house of Israel and the entire humanity. This is because He is the Lamb of God, the only one through whom men become members of the household of God, His sons and daughters. The everlasting covenant is the only means designed of God by which the blood of the Lamb of God has power to convert and transform the children of men into His sons and daughters. This is the theme and summary of the message of the Book of Mormon.

This title page information is key to the reader and the user of the book. You cannot ignore it and expect to arrive at its purpose for existence. If you

do so, it may serve your lesser purposes, but not the intended higher purpose of the everlasting Father from and by whom it was inspired, preserved and revealed.

And for this very purpose are these plates preserved which contain these records, that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. Amen.  
(D&C 2:6c-e)

Nephi speaks of the day of a marvelous work. This is the day the Lord shall move with power to accomplish the work of restoration of the everlasting gospel and the church. The restoration work shall go forth with the intent of the recovery of the house of Israel. The means of achieving this task shall be the covenant. He will remember the covenants and promises He made to their fathers concerning their children and also concerning the seed of Abraham. Nephi's prophecy is clear that the Book of Mormon is the testament the Lord referred to, the words that shall hiss unto the ends of the world. (2 Nephi 12:44) The book is critical in the work of the recovery of the house of Israel and also the achievement of the promises made to their fathers, including the grand promise of bringing forth of the city of Zion.

But behold, there shall be many at that day, when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are the house of Israel;  
(2 Nephi 12:42)

The Book of Mormon reports Christ's words directing the gentiles to come into His church by the covenant, so they may be numbered among the remnant of Jacob. Those who thus respond are the

only ones who shall assist His people of the house of Jacob to build the city New Jerusalem. The building of the city of Zion and the gathering of the saints are both a result of the covenant-making and living. Those who desire this must of necessity return to the study and use of the Book of Mormon with much prayer and dedicated application of the lessons.

***Those who desire this must of necessity return to the study and use of the Book of Mormon with much prayer and dedicated application of the lessons.***

But if they will repent, and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant, and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance, and they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob; And also, as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem; And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. (3 Nephi 10:1-3)

records will make known the plain and precious things which had been taken away from the gospel of the Lamb of God. The purpose of the Book of Mormon, then, is to restore to the gospel of the Lamb of God, the many covenants and other plain and precious parts lost to the scattered remnant of Israel and to the nations of the world.

Nephi shares with the readers the following:

And shall make known to all kindreds, tongues and people, that the Lamb of God is the son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him or they cannot be saved. (1 Nephi 3:193)

Christ is the Lamb of God and the Savior of the world, bringing all mankind to the Eternal Father. The only way the Savior will bring men to the Father is by the everlasting covenant. Any time you hear about Christ, think about him as the Lamb of God. Anytime you think about the Lamb of God, think of Him as the Savior of the world, which is only achievable by the everlasting covenant. This is the message of the Book of Mormon.

Nephi further saw in the vision how the plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb of God were going to be taken out of the record of the Jews, resulting in the loss of the many covenants of the Lord. Nephi's prophecy says that the Book of Mormon referred to in the prophecy as the last

And he said unto me, The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord which he hath made unto the house of Israel; (1 Nephi 3:161)

The Book of Mormon was purposed for our day and time, for the latter days not only to deal with false doctrines through which the devil has blinded the world, but also to bring the house of Israel to the knowledge of the covenants the Lord made with their fathers.

And that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, Unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, And bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; And also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord. (2 Nephi 2:20-23)

Yea, and surely shall he again bring a remnant of the seed of Joseph to the knowledge of the Lord their God; And as he hath covenanted with all the house of Jacob, even so shall the covenant wherewith he hath covenanted with the house of Jacob, be fulfilled in his own due

time, unto the restoring all the house of Jacob unto the knowledge of the covenant that he hath covenanted with them; (3 Nephi 2:106,108)

The Book of Mormon has the print and the Spirit of the covenant purposed by God to restore the house of Israel to the knowledge of the covenants of their fathers. This has been the missing link for the house of Israel to take their rightful place in the ministry of the gospel of salvation. The Book of Mormon believers need to appreciate this important message that finally brings to sons of men the powerful understanding that has been the theme throughout the ages.

## **Salvation and the Covenant**

From the ancient testimonies of God revealing Himself to mankind, we find that, in all the cases, the theme in the messages through the ages is that of His Son Jesus Christ and the everlasting covenant that brings men to unity with God. Christians generally pick the message of Christ, but ignore the part of the covenants. But how can one benefit from the message and the person of Christ the Lamb of God without full appreciation of the mystery of the covenants? Whether it was Adam and his wife, Eve, at the Garden of Eden, or their sons Cain and Abel, or Enoch, or Noah, or Abraham and his wife Sarah, or Isaac or Israel, the message was the same. You only need to look at the lessons from the testimonies in the books of Genesis, Exodus and the prophets, the painstaking details in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy to view the indisputable necessity laid on the knowledge of covenants in the plan of salvation. In them, you will see the unmistakable theme of the covenant in the sacrificial offerings, the oracles, the vestments and the vessels, the laid down laws and procedures, including the timing, among others. Every one of them spells out the theme of Christ the Lamb of God and the everlasting covenant.

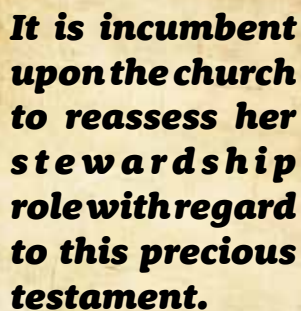
The good news of Christ the Savior is anchored on the knowledge of the covenants, and the workings

of the mystery of salvation are dependent upon that knowledge. That is the reason the Lord taught the house of Israel in details, its architect using priestly functions, sacrificial offerings, attitudes, rituals, times and seasons, amongst others. This knowledge was passed on from parents to children, from generation to generation until it became a tradition to their families and nation.


It is by the everlasting covenant that the Lamb of God converts the children of men to the children of the Heavenly Father; thus born again, born of the Spirit of God. No man cometh unto the Father, but by Him, and the only means designed by God is by the covenant. This has been and is God's message to mankind throughout the ages. This was the lesson in the testimonies from the Garden of Eden, and Abraham's sojourning in the Promised Land, and the exodus from Egypt to Canaan, to the law and the prophets and the kings and kingdoms of Israel.

It is important to note that by His Spirit, God taught some form of covenants to all peoples of the world. This He taught them in their primitive existence. Even before knowing God as He is, He made available the understanding of this concept to them. Those with this knowledge would easily understand the place of His begotten Son as the Lamb of God using the template of the covenants. The Book of Mormon, together with the Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants, brings this understanding to the church and the world.

The Book of Mormon is necessary for the accomplishment of the task placed upon the shoulders of the church. The work of restoration, the building of Zion and the gathering would not be achieved without the proper and full use of the fullness of the gospel of Christ Jesus. Without the fullness of the gospel, we have no power to live sacrificial lives for the kingdom and to love as we are called to love. Failure to be fully cleaved to this testament will continue to result in the failure of the church, the priesthood, our marriages, our families and bring the people of the Lord to His judgment. It is incumbent upon the church to reassess her stewardship role with regard to this precious testament.



***It is incumbent upon the church to reassess her stewardship role with regard to this precious testament.***

An illustration of Orson Hyde standing in a field in Jerusalem, looking towards the city. He is wearing a red coat and light-colored trousers. A stone altar with a sword and a hat is in the foreground. The city of Jerusalem is visible in the background under a blue sky with clouds.

# Orson Hyde's Prayer of Dedication

The Book of Mormon speaks clearly about the restoration of the House of Israel in the latter days. It describes how the Lord brought it forth from the dust to help fulfill that purpose. It's given as a standard unto His people and will be used by those who believe the words which are written, to fulfill God's covenants.

But behold, there shall be many at that day, when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are the house of Israel; And also, that I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed; and that the words of your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed. And my words shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth, for a standard unto my people, which are of the house of Israel. (2 Nephi 12:42-44)

Which is to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off for ever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. (Title Page 6-7)

Orson Hyde had a vision in 1840 where the Lord told him to go to Jerusalem and dedicate the Holy Land for the return of the Jews. It was a long and difficult trip, but was accomplished by the power of God. The dedication prayer is truly inspired and reflects the purpose of the Book of Mormon. The generations following this prayer, even unto today, have seen the Jews returning to their land, the liberation of Jerusalem and Israel being established as a nation. Even greater things are happening now, with many more yet to come. God is fulfilling His word to the house of Israel. The historical context of this experience and the dedication prayer can be found beginning in *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints*, Vol 2, Chpt 24, Page 553.

*On Sunday morning, October 24 (1841), a good while before day, I arose from sleep, and went out of the city as soon as the gates were opened, crossed the brook Kedron, and went upon the Mount of Olives, and there, in solemn silence, with pen, ink, and paper, just as I saw in the vision, offered up the following prayer to Him who lives forever and ever—*

*“O Thou! who art from everlasting to everlasting, eternally and unchangeably the same, even the God who rules in the heavens above, and controls the destinies of men on the earth, wilt Thou not condescend, through thine infinite goodness and royal favor, to listen to the prayer of Thy servant which he this day offers up unto Thee in the name of Thy holy child Jesus, upon this land, where the Son of Righteousness set in blood, and thine Anointed One expired.*

*“Be pleased, O Lord, to forgive all the follies, weaknesses, vanities, and sins of Thy servant, and strengthen him to resist all future temptations. Give him prudence and discernment that he may avoid the evil, and a heart to choose the good; give him fortitude to bear up under trying and adverse circumstances, and grace to endure all things for Thy name’s sake, until the end shall come, when all the Saints shall rest in peace.*

*“Now, O Lord! Thy servant has been obedient to the heavenly vision which Thou gavest him in his native land; and under the shadow of Thine outstretched arm, he has safely arrived in this place to dedicate and consecrate this land unto Thee, for the gathering together of Judah’s scattered remnants, according to the predictions of the holy Prophets—for the building up of Jerusalem again after it has been trodden down by the Gentiles so long, and for rearing a Temple in honor of Thy name. Everlasting thanks be ascribed unto Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast preserved Thy servant from the dangers of the seas, and from the plague and pestilence which have caused the land to mourn. The violence of man has also been restrained, and Thy providential care by night and by day has been exercised over Thine unworthy servant. Accept, therefore, O Lord, the tribute of a grateful heart for all past favors, and be pleased to continue Thy kindness and mercy towards a needy worm of the dust.*

*“O Thou, Who didst covenant with Abraham, Thy friend, and who didst renew that covenant with Isaac, and confirm the same with Jacob with an oath, that Thou wouldst not only give them this land for an everlasting inheritance, but that Thou wouldst also remember their seed forever. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have long since closed their eyes in death, and made the grave their mansion. Their children are scattered and dispersed abroad among the nations of the Gentiles like sheep that have no shepherd, and are still looking forward for the fulfillment of those promises which Thou didst make concerning them; and even this land, which once poured forth nature’s richest bounty, and flowed, as it were, with milk and honey, has, to a certain extent, been smitten with barrenness and sterility since it drank from murderous hands the blood of Him who never sinned.*

*“Grant, therefore, O Lord, in the name of Thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to remove the barrenness and sterility of this land, and let springs of living water break forth to water its thirsty soil. Let the vine and olive produce in their strength, and the fig-tree bloom and flourish. Let the land become abundantly fruitful when possessed by its rightful heirs; let it again flow with plenty to feed the returning prodigals who come home with a spirit of grace and supplication; upon it let the clouds distil virtue and richness, and let the fields smile with plenty. Let the flocks and the herds greatly increase and multiply upon the mountains and the hills; and let Thy great kindness*



conquer and subdue the unbelief of Thy people. Do Thou take from them their stony heart, and give them a heart of flesh; and may the Sun of Thy favor dispel the cold mists of darkness which have beclouded their atmosphere. Incline them to gather in upon this land according to Thy word. Let them come like clouds and like doves to their windows. Let the large ships of the nations bring them from the distant isles; and let kings become their nursing fathers, and queens with motherly fondness wipe the tear of sorrow from their eye.

"Thou, O Lord, did once move upon the heart of Cyrus to show favor unto Jerusalem and her children. Do Thou now also be pleased to inspire the hearts of kings and the powers of the earth to look with a friendly eye towards this place, and with a desire to see Thy righteous purposes executed in relation thereto. Let them know that it is Thy good pleasure to restore the kingdom unto Israel—raise up Jerusalem as its capital, and constitute her people a distinct nation and government, with David Thy servant, even a descendant from the loins of ancient David to be their king.

"Let that nation or that people who shall take an active part in behalf of Abraham's children, and in the raising up of Jerusalem, find favor in Thy sight. Let not their enemies prevail against them, neither let pestilence or famine overcome them, but let the glory of Israel overshadow them, and the power of the Highest protect them; while that nation or kingdom that will not serve Thee in this glorious work must perish, according to Thy word—Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted....

"O my Father in heaven! I now ask Thee in the name of Jesus to remember Zion, with all her Stakes, and with all her assemblies. She has been grievously afflicted and smitten; she has mourned; she has wept; her enemies have triumphed, and have said, Ah, where is thy God? Her Priests and Prophets have groaned in chains and fetters within the gloomy walls of prisons, while many were slain, and now sleep in the arms of death. How long, O Lord, shall iniquity triumph, and sin go unpunished?


"Do Thou arise in the majesty of Thy strength, and make bare Thine arm in behalf of Thy people. Redress their wrongs, and turn their sorrow into joy. Pour the spirit of light and knowledge, grace and wisdom, into the hearts of her Prophets, and clothe her Priests with salvation. Let light and knowledge march forth through the empire of darkness, and may the honest in heart flow to their standard, and join in the march to go forth to meet the Bridegroom....

"And all the glory and honor will we ascribe unto God and the Lamb forever and ever. Amen."

On the top of Mount Olives I erected a pile of stones as a witness according to ancient custom. On what was anciently called Mount Zion, [Moriah?] where the Temple stood, I erected another, and used the rod according to the prediction upon my head. I have found many Jews who listened with intense interest....

I have not time to write particulars now, but suffice it to say that my mission has been quite as prosperous as I could expect.... May grace, mercy and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, rest upon you all from this time, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

Your brother in Christ, ORSON HYDE



One of the principal and very successful activities sponsored by the Book of Mormon Foundation is the summer internship program, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last year. The Book of Mormon Internship program (the Internship) was first announced in 1992: “This summer, FRAA hopes to employ students to work on special projects related to The Book of Mormon. These will include activities such as research, preservation of library materials, and interaction in the activities and conferences of FRAA. Students between the ages of 16 and 23 will be expected to work on Book of Mormon projects for 20 hours a week for six weeks.” (The Witness, Summer 1992, p. 3)

In 2000, the Foundation for Research on Ancient America (FRAA) was renamed The Book of Mormon Foundation (BMF). In that year, the Internship program was described as follows: “This program is designed to enhance the spiritual growth and development of each intern, and to prepare them to become spiritual leaders in their homes, congregations and communities. Each one has the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding from a variety of individuals who have insights on a particular topic. Beyond gaining knowledge, each has an opportunity to testify to others, become service-focused, develop leadership skills, and build confidence in speaking before groups of people. Ten students have been selected for the Summer 2000 Book of Mormon Internship Program.” (The Witness, July 2000, p. 2)

Over the last 30 years, 274 young adults have participated in the Internship, as the program grew from primarily a research-focused activity to a broader emphasis on spiritual growth, service and testimony, and helped the participants deepen their

# INTER CELEB THIRTY

love for Jesus Christ, the Book of Mormon, and the restored gospel. Many of them remain active in church ministry today, and several second-generation interns have since gone through the program.

This summer, we were privileged to host a one-day Internship reunion, to which former interns and program directors from all previous years were invited to attend and reconnect with one another. The reunion was hosted at the Waldo Avenue Restoration Branch on Saturday, July 15. It was a marvelous day of fellowship for the 119 attendees, including 52 interns, their families, BMF staff and those assisting with logistics.

The day opened with a short worship, led by Lynn Baumgart, and a class on the power of prayer, taught by Pat Chadwick. Lynn and Sugar Baumgart were the directors of the Internship from 2011 through 2022. Pat Chadwick has participated as a teacher since the mid-1990s. During a time of testimony and sharing, many of the interns expressed how



# INTERNSHIP RATES YEARS

by Jon Tandy

former interns have testified that the Internship strengthened their testimony of the gospel and their confidence in sharing it with nonmembers.

In the afternoon, the interns had free time to break into groups by Internship year, so they could reconnect with each other and catch up on their life experiences since their time in the program. The reunion activities were closed with a short worship, led by Eldon Anderson. Eldon and Bonnie Anderson served as Internship directors from 1999 through 2010. Throughout the day, activities for the children were provided by Deana Van Eaton and several volunteers, assisted by some of the older children.

We would encourage young adults between the ages of 19-24 to apply for the Internship (application deadline is TBA, but will be in early February). The Book of Mormon Internship has been a successful program, as it has focused attention and respect for the scriptural treasures we have been given in the Book of Mormon. The words of Nephi speak for all those who have labored and sacrificed to bring forth and promote this book in the latter days:

For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God... 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 11:43, 48)

their experience in the Internship was foundational in shaping their lives and their spiritual walk with Christ. The morning's activities were closed with prayer by Michael Gatrost. Michael and Julie Gatrost were involved in leadership of the program from 1993 through 1998.

A wonderful lunch was provided by Reggie and Suzanne Bendorf and several assistants. Between the organized activities and during lunch, there was a constant buzz of conversation, as the attendees spent time in fellowship with one another. After lunch, Bob Bobbitt presented a class on witnessing and apologetics. Apologetics is a branch of theology that is concerned with giving "a reason for the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:15) Bob Bobbitt has been teaching apologetics classes to the interns since the program began in 1992. The Book of Mormon Foundation and the Internship program have always focused considerable effort on giving reasonable answers in support of the Book of Mormon and the latter-day gospel. Many of the



“It was a wonderful program. It got me out of my comfort zone and made me realize I’m capable of being a positive witness for Christ. The classes, the prayer time and the special bonds formed still impact me today.”



“I can honestly say those 12 weeks [six as an intern, and six as a staff member] were some of the best of my life!”



“The Internship experience was an impactful experience and blessing in my life, and one in which I carry memories and testimonies that I will cherish for the remainder of my life.”



# WERE THERE HORSES IN THE AMERICAS PRE-SPANIARDS?

by Jason Anderson

**UPON ARRIVAL IN THE PROMISED LAND,  
NEPHI MENTIONS SOME OF THE ANIMALS THEY FOUND.**

**AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT WE DID FIND UPON THE LAND OF PROMISE, AS WE JOURNEYED IN THE WILDERNESS, THAT THERE WERE BEASTS IN THE FORESTS OF EVERY KIND, BOTH THE COW, AND THE OX, AND THE ASS, AND THE HORSE, AND THE GOAT, AND THE WILD GOAT, AND ALL MANNER OF WILD ANIMALS, WHICH WERE FOR THE USE OF MEN. (1 NEPHI 5:216)**

Nephi's mention of horses has been seen by critics as an anachronism (something found in a time to which it does not belong—i.e., a story mentioning airplanes during the Dark Ages). This is because horses are widely believed to have gone extinct in the Americas around the time of the last Ice Age (10,000 BC) not to reappear until the Spaniards brought them, well past the time period the Book of Mormon covers. This and other supposed anachronisms found in the Book of Mormon have provided many people throughout the years with “proof” that the Book of Mormon is a fraud, a made-up story by Joseph Smith. However, a recent study published in the Texas Journal of Science (“Post-Pleistocene Horses (Equus) From Mexico”) reports that perhaps horses were in the Americas during Book of Mormon times after all. An article published by LDS site Book of Mormon Central summarizes this study (see KnowWhy #649 October 17, 2022). The full article may be found here: <https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowwhy/when-lehis-party-arrived-in-the-land-did-they-find-horses-there>.

An international team of scholars—including experts in geology, biology, paleontology, and archaeozoology—recovered horse bones near materials dated to Book of Mormon times from a dig site at Rancho Carabanchel, near Cedral, San Luis Potosi, Mexico. The horse bones which were found were all either *Equus mexicanus* or *Equus conversidens*. Both of these are now extinct North American horse species, which rules out the possibility that these were actually Spanish horse bones that somehow had contaminated an older layer of the dig site. The authors of the study concluded: “The remains of *Equus* that we recovered from RC (Rancho Carabanchel) from multiple stratigraphic layers, all with associated radiocarbon dates, all in a fair stratigraphic continuum, and showing no mixing between geological units imply that horses may have persisted in this region of Mexico well after the classical late Pleistocene extinction time.” For those of you who, like me, have no idea what Pleistocene means, it is more commonly known as the time period of the Ice Age.

The Book of Mormon authors mention the existence of horses on five separate occasions. Horse remains were found next to material that has been carbon dated to time frames that support the existence of horses in each period they are mentioned. Horses are mentioned in Jaredite times in Ether 4:21. One of the specimens recovered at RC dates to about 1660-1508 BC. Another specimen dates to 1544-1424 BC. Upon arrival in the promised land, Nephi mentions seeing horses (1 Nephi 5:216). Shortly after Nephi's time, Enos mentions there are “many horses” among the Nephites (Enos 1:34). There is a specimen from this site that dates to 548-400BC. The latest mention of horses in the Book of Mormon occurs when the Nephites gathered in one place with all their flocks and herds and grain to defend themselves from the Gadiantons (3 Nephi 2:30, 44; 3 Nephi 3:1). Two radiocarbon dates are chronologically close enough to support the presence of horses during this time as well. One dates to 73-226 AD, and the other to 86-242 AD. The only mention of horses in the Book of Mormon that does not have any specimens found

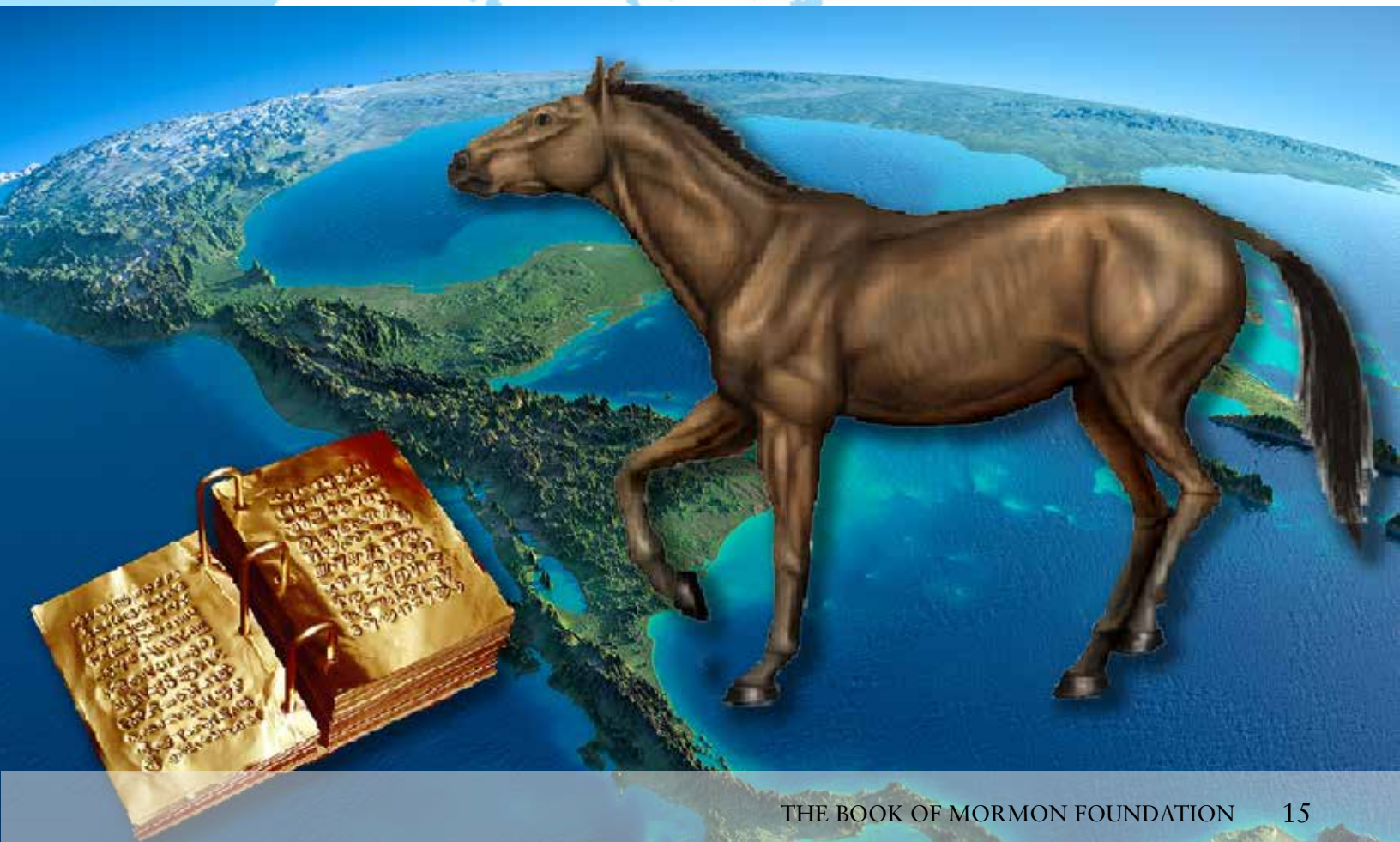
at this site with a close radiocarbon date is from the story of Ammon and King Lamoni. Immediately after battling the king's enemies, Ammon is said to be tending to his horses. Later, King Lamoni readies his horses for a journey. (Alma 12:76, 77, 79, 82, 188). This is believed to have occurred about 90 BC, which is still supported by specimens found dating a few hundred years before and after this time frame.

The scientists who published the study are careful to note that these initial findings should be treated “as a developing hypothesis, which is testable rather than just avoided.” We are not to understand that the issue is definitively settled at this time. It is an interesting development, which adds to a long list of so-called anachronisms in the Book of Mormon that, since 1830, have been settled in favor of the Book of Mormon, or that are currently trending in favor of the Book of Mormon.

In 2019, an LDS scholar, Matt Roper, made a presentation at the FAIR (Faithful Answers, Informed Response) Conference entitled “Time Vindicates the Prophet.” In this presentation, he discusses the various criticisms leveled against the Book of Mormon through the years, specifically, criticisms of supposed anachronisms, and how well the Book of Mormon has held up against these criticisms over time. The entire text of the presentation is here: <https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference/august-2019/time-vindicates-the-prophet>,

Mr. Roper reviewed about 1,000 anti-Mormon publications written between 1830 and 2019 dealing with arguments against the Book of Mormon. He broke these criticisms into three time periods, 1830-1844; 1845-1965; and 1966-2019. He then documented any new discoveries during each time period and tallied the number of information or discoveries that confirm the Book of Mormon account versus the number of criticisms that continue to be unconfirmed in favor of the Book of Mormon. A third category – “trending” was added for those criticisms not yet confirmed, but the issue has moved to a more favorable perspective than before.

Excluded from Mr. Roper's list of criticisms are “ridiculous” accusations leveled against the book that are simply false such as accusations made that the book uses the word “gunpowder” or “steamboat.” Also excluded are criticisms based on inappropriate assumptions, such as the Book of Mormon lands covered both North and South America.



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Mr. Roper's findings are quite interesting. By 1844, the year Joseph Smith was killed, critics had claimed to find 89 anachronisms in the Book of Mormon. Only five at that time were confirmed in favor of the Book of Mormon, while 84 were still unconfirmed and appeared to be a problem for the book. Between 1846-1965, there were 61 new anachronisms found against the Book of Mormon, bringing the total criticisms leveled against the book to 150. By 1965, there were still only 22 confirmed in favor of the book and five trending favorably, leaving 123 unconfirmed. Between 1966 and 2019, there were 55 new criticisms leveled against the Book of Mormon, for a total anachronism list of 205 since 1830. But, as of 2019, we have seen a huge acceleration of confirmations, which now total 141 (+119 since 1965 after only 22 between 1830-1965!). Also, 26 were trending toward confirmation as of 2019, leaving only 38 unconfirmed! As of 2019, 81% of criticisms of anachronisms have been confirmed or trending in favor of the Book of Mormon, while only 19% are still unconfirmed.

The writers of the KnoWhy article on horses concluded with this thought:

“As scientists and scholars continue to explore and debate this issue, students of the Book of Mormon should remain open to various explanations for references to horses and other Old World animals mentioned in Jaredite and Nephite records. These recent findings once again illustrate why it is important to remain patient and open-minded as archaeology continues to unfold the past rather than jump to hasty conclusions based on a mere lack of evidence. The potential discovery of pre-Columbian horses during Book of Mormon times is but a single data point in a much larger trend toward confirming things once thought to be anachronous in the Book of Mormon. ‘In scholarship as in science,’ Hugh Nibley once observed, ‘every paradox and anomaly is really a broad hint that new knowledge is awaiting us if we will only go after it.’ Those who have had the patience to approach the Book of Mormon’s reference to horses as just such a broad hint are now enjoying new knowledge that may be on the verge of rewriting the history of the Americas.”

**FURTHER READING:**

Wade Miller et al., “Post-Pleistocene Horses (*Equus*) from México,” *Texas Journal of Science* 74, no. 1 (2022): article 5.  
Wade E. Miller and Matthew Roper, “Animals in the Book of Mormon: Challenges and Perspectives,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (2017): 159–165.  
Daniel Johnson, “‘Hard’ Evidence of Ancient American Horses,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54 (2015): 149–179.