

The Witness

Is Stela 5 Lehi's Vision in Stone?

By Dennis Moe

Every time I walk into my library at home, I am reminded of one of the most fascinating archeological discoveries ever found in relationship to The Book of Mormon. On my wall is a picture of Stela 5, a huge stone carving uncovered in southern Mexico in the late 1930s. I still wonder in amazement at how few people know about this discovery and the importance of it to Book of Mormon believers. To me, it is the most significant archaeological discovery in relationship to The Book of Mormon.

Stela 5 pleasantly shocked me when I first came in contact with it, and I wonder if it shocks many anti-Book of Mormon believers who look at it and wonder, if only for a fleeting moment, is The Book of Mormon really true? So let me take you on a journey back into time to stand before this slab of rock and watch as the ancient Mesoamerican artists of Izapa attempt to portray an actual event that had been passed down to them, either by writings on plates or from father to son verbally. Remembering that they had no erasers, can you imagine how difficult it would have been to carve it right the first time? I truly believe these ancient Mesoamerican artists were inspired by the Holy Spirit when they set Lehi's dream in stone. So here is my interpretation of Stela 5 based upon my research.

First, let me describe Stela 5. A "stela" is a large stone with pictures called motifs engraved onto it. Motifs are distinctive figures in a design, while a "glyph" is a picture or figure by which a word is implied. Stela 5 is eight feet high, five feet wide, two feet thick and weighs fifteen tons. Now that is one big slab of stone!

Second, a key item to remember is that ancient Mesoamerican artists

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Mysteries of the Book of Ether: Part Three

Jaredite Names Among the Nephites

by Verneil Simmons

There are no personal names beginning with the letters F, Q, W, X or Y in the Old Testament of the Bible. Neither are any found in the Book of Mormon. That should be a strong testimony that the record, abridged by Mormon, was written by scribes with a Hebraic background. How did Joseph Smith know that the translation could not include any name for a person or a place with a letter that was not available in the Hebrew alphabet?

We would expect to find names common with the Old Testament and we do. Studies have been made showing that connection, even including some names found in ancient Egypt. Here we are exploring Jaredite personal names as they are found in the Nephite record.

Mosiah II translated the Jaredite story from the twenty-four gold plates found by Limhi's search party. Mormon writes that the people sorrowed for the destruction of so many people, but they rejoiced at the information they had received. It must have been the main topic of conversation for many days. (Mosiah 12:16-26). In the reign of the Judges, which followed Mosiah's death, Jaredite personal names begin

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Stela 5

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almost always used dualism themes.◇ This means that what they depicted would have more than one meaning, and this is very evident on Stela 5. Also, to help in this interpretation, we must remember that there are four responses to the sower parable found in Mark 4 (IV). These responses are also found in The Book of Mormon (Alma 16:152-173 RLDS, Alma 32:28-32:43 LDS). There are four responses to Lehi's dream (1Nephi 2:41-85 RLDS, 1Nephi 8:2-8:35 LDS). There are also four kingdoms mentioned in The Doctrine and Covenants (section 85:5b RLDS, section 88: 22-24 LDS). Keeping this in mind, let's start with the most dominant and central feature of Stela 5, the tree.

The tree and the family

Figures 1, 10, 11 and 12 make up the tree seen in the center of the stela. These represent the four kingdoms that are attainable by the children of God.

Figure 1 represents the celestial kingdom. Notice how smooth it appears and how white it appears in the drawing. Also, notice that the branches extend upward into the sky panel above which represents Heaven. The other dominant feature of Figure 1 is that it is the only part of the tree that bears fruit.

Figure 10 represents the terrestrial kingdom. It is also portrayed smooth and white, but it is the smallest of the four parts of the tree.

Figure 11 would then represent the testial kingdom. It is the second largest and differs from the first two in its appearance. It is rough and scarred and very well-worn. This is not due to weather, but was made this way to show us the rough and hard journey that takes place on this level.

Figure 12 represents hell. It is the lowest kingdom attainable by the children of God. Its shape is twisted, and it also is scarred and rough. This is also an example of the dualism that is so common on Izapa stelae. The ancient American artists show both temporal and spiritual meanings on Stela 5.

Even though I feel Figure 12 represents hell, I think it also spiritually represents the 12 apostles and the 12 disciples (roots). Temporally or historically, it also represents the 12 tribes.≈

Figure 26 is a hunchbacked older man with a beard who is one of two persons sitting on a cushion, which would signify his age.△ He has a three-part belt and a pointed turban-like hat that is indicative of ancient rulership in ancient Mesoamerica.⁴ His arm is raised to Figure 30 in a manner of teaching or instruction. This undoubtedly is a man of wisdom, but not necessarily the leader.

Figure 16 (above Figure 26) is a glyph of a jawbone (note the teeth). Instead of writing out a person's name, the artists would use a name glyph.⁵ We then would assume that Figure 26 has a name that is connected to a jawbone. The answer is found in Judges 15:14-17 (IV, KJV). Samson slew the 1,000 Philistines with a jawbone in the Valley of Lehi! Therefore, Figure 26 is Lehi.

Figure 27 is also a hunched figure sitting on a cushion. This figure is a woman who is wearing a horned feathered headdress which represents royalty.⁶ In her left hand, she holds a knife and, in her right hand, she holds a fish which has been decapitated. I believe when a large complete scroll is placed between two persons, it denotes that both persons are speaking or instructing. Note such a scroll between Figures 26 and 27. They both are instructing Figure 30. Because a fish represents birth, death or resurrection in ancient Mesoamerica,⁷ Figure 27 might be telling Figure 30 that if he doesn't change his ways, then his fate will be death without a possible chance of resurrection. Figure 27 is Sariah, which means princess in Hebrew.⁸

Figure 28 is the largest person⁹ sitting on the ground panel. His hand is also raised in a teaching or instructing manner. In his left hand is a stylus or a chisel, and in front of him is a set of plates.¹⁰ The stylus denotes that he is the writer of the plates and that he is teaching or instructing from them. A fringed parasol above his head is a Mayan and Old World symbol of roy-

alty. His headdress is what was worn by Mayan high priests.◇◇ The skull protruding from it with a piece of fruit in its mouth suggests that this person has already laid claim to eternal life. The half scroll in front of Figure 28's mouth means that he is talking.◇≈ Note that the scroll is touching the angel, Figure 24. This denotes that he is talking for God. He seems to be telling Figure 31, "If you don't change your ways...." Figure 28 is Nephi.

Figure 29 at first seems to appear as an attendant or servant, but as we look closer, we note his large stature and his seated position which would rule out a servant or attendant. Because of the parasol being over both Figure 28 and Figure 29, it suggests a more supportive role to Figure 28.¹³ This figure is Sam. Remember that Sam was blessed jointly with Nephi by their father,¹⁴ and Sam followed Nephi into the wilderness.¹⁵

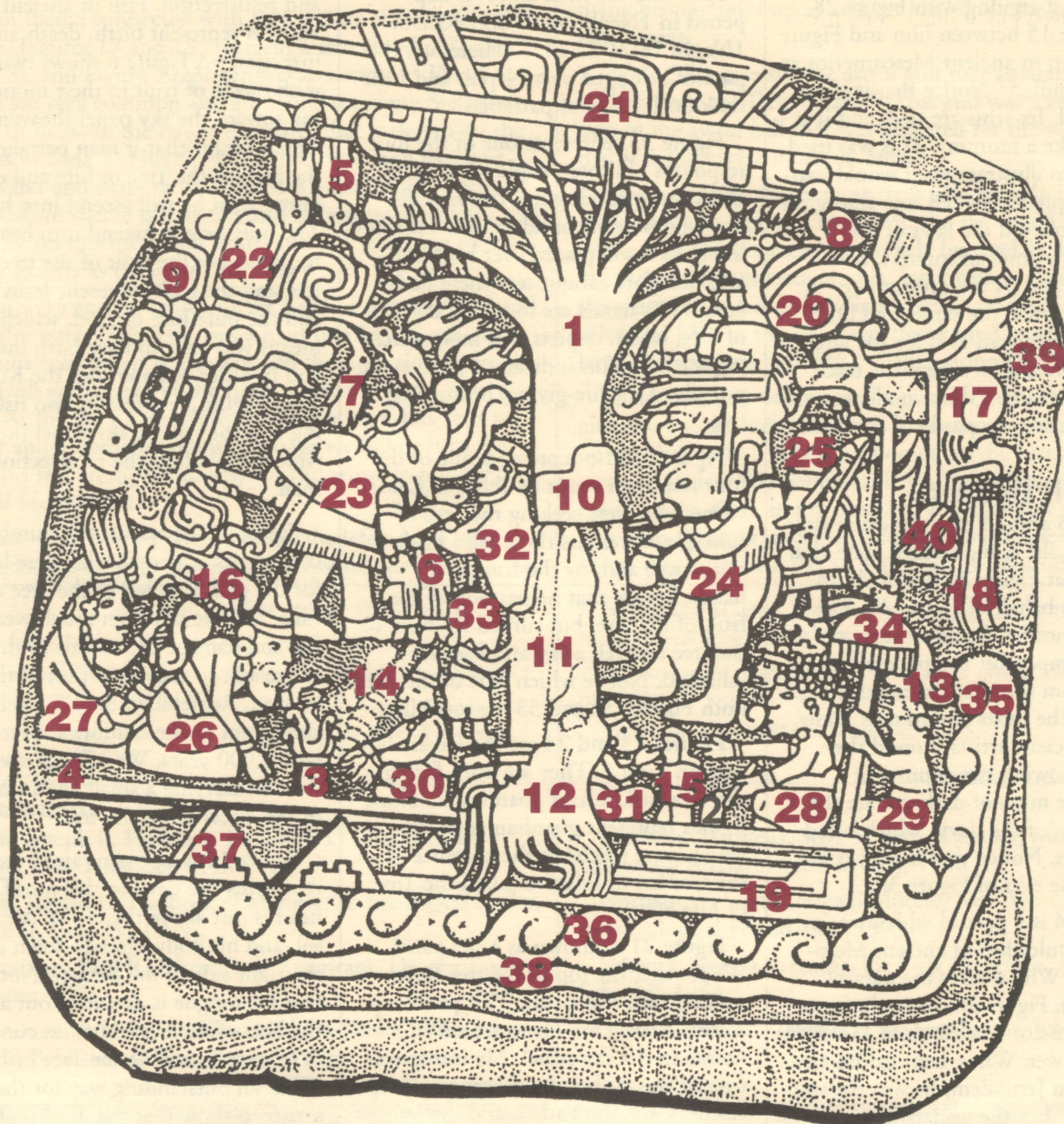
Figure 30 is also wearing a pointed turban similar to Figure 26, which denotes a ruler. This puzzled me for a long time until one day the Lord revealed to me that Laman always considered himself the rightful heir to the rulership of the family of Lehi, even though God had told him differently.¹⁶ Therefore Laman, Figure 30, is wearing the turban in defiance. Laman and Figure 31 are the smallest figures on the ground panel. This would be expected from the ancient Mesoamerican artists as they portrayed two people who would inflict so much pain and suffering upon their people. The most significant aspect of Laman is that he has his back to the Tree of Life. This shows that he has rejected it just as The Book of Mormon tells us he did.

Wow! Do you think these ancient Mesoamerican artists were inspired when placing this on that slab of stone? What do you think Lehi was telling Laman?

Figure 31 is Lemuel. He is portrayed smaller than his older brother Laman because he followed him in all he did. He is also wearing a turban hat, but it is not pointed so it would not denote rulership. He also has his back turned to the Tree of Life and has his hands

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Stela 5



Drawing by Cliff Duntston, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, by Joseph L. Allen 1989. Used by permission.

1. Norman, V. Garth, *Izapa Sculpture*, New World Archaeological Foundation, 1973, p. 13
 2. Allen, Joseph L. *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 125
 3. 1Nephi 5:201 RLDS, 1Nephi 18:17 LDS
 4. Norman, V. Garth, *Izapa Sculpture*, New World Archaeological Foundation, 1973, p. 220
 5. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 32-33
 6. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological

Society, 1958, p. 36
 7. Allen, Joseph L. *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 127
 8. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 37
 9. 1Nephi 1:47 & 1Nephi 1:135 RLDS, 1Nephi 2:16 & 1Nephi 4:31 LDS
 10. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 26
 11. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa,*

Chiapas, Mexico, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 26
 12. Allen, Joseph L., *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 121
 13. Allen, Joseph L., *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 121
 14. 2Nephi 3:18-21 RLDS, 2Nephi 4:11 LDS
 15. 2Nephi 4:8-10 RLDS, 2Nephi 5:6-7 LDS
 16. 1Nephi 1:93-94 RLDS, 1Nephi 3:29 LDS

Stela 5

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raised as if arguing with Figure 28. The Figure 15 between him and Figure 28 is known in ancient Mesoamerica as a death bundle.¹⁷ Notice that it is facing Lemuel. Its arms are tied, and it is wrapped like a mummy. This was used by priests to illustrate what would happen to people if they fell into transgression or disobeyed the laws of the church. As a point of interest, both Figures 30 and 31 are dressed the same, positioned the same, and both are being instructed as if for the last time! By refusing to accept the teachings of their father, the two older brothers were in jeopardy of spiritual death.

Symbolic figures

Figures 3 and 14 are an incense altar and the smoke rising from it. The altar signifies that Figure 26 has made an offering on behalf of Figure 30. The smoke is another dualism theme on Stela 5. Temporally, it represents smoke coming from the altar. Spiritually, it represents the mists of darkness. How well the ancient artists showed the mists by showing two plumes of smoke! The mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes. Notice that the mists are blinding the eyes of Figure 30.

Figure 34 is a parasol which was a symbol of rulership in ancient Mesoamerica.¹⁸ Why then is the parasol over Nephi, Figure 28, instead of over Lehi, Figure 26? The Book of Mormon has the answer. When Lehi led his family out from Jerusalem, he was the spiritual leader, but the leadership began to change after an incident in the wilderness. After Nephi's bow broke, everyone, except Nephi, began to murmur. It says in 1Nephi 5:25 RLDS, 1Nephi 16:20 LDS, "And also my father (Lehi) began to murmur against the Lord his

God." This was the start of the spiritual leadership changing from Lehi to Nephi, and the final takeover happened in 1Nephi 5:209-211 RLDS, 1Nephi 18:21-22 LDS. Therefore, the parasol belonged over Nephi, and Lehi took on the role of patriarch.

Figure 33 represents one of the four responses of those people who began the journey seeking the Tree of Life, but who become blind or lost. This figure has a hood placed over his head and therefore cannot see where he is going. His hands are touching the Tree of Life, which depicts that he is searching for it.¹⁹ This indicates a journey in pursuit of the life-giving, but unseen tree.

Figure 32 also represents one of the four responses made by those in Lehi's vision who were seeking the Tree of Life. He represents those who made it to the tree and, by the fruit in his hands, we see that he partook of the fruit of the tree, but turned his back to the tree and fell away and became ashamed. Notice which part of the tree both Figures 32 and 33 are touching.

Figures 23 and 24 are the largest figures on Stela 5. They are both facing the Tree of Life as if guarding it. These figures represent guardian angels²⁰ which were placed at the entrance of the Garden of Eden to guard the Tree of Life.≈◇

Figure 21 is known as a sky panel. We see that the top of the tree flows upward into this panel. This panel represents heaven.≈≈ There are three motifs in the sky panel. My interpretation of this is that the center motif represents God, the Father, and the one on the left would be His son, Jesus Christ, and the one on the right would be the Holy Ghost.

Figure 8 is a representation of eating of the Tree of Life and shows that by doing so, you are able to enter into the

sky panel (heaven).

Figures 5 and 6 represent ascension and resurrection. Fish in ancient Mesoamerica represent birth, death and resurrection.≈Δ Figure 6 shows two fish with pieces of fruit in their mouths rising toward the sky panel (heaven) which means that if man partakes of the fruit of the Tree of Life and endures, then he will ascend into heaven. The only way to ascend into heaven is to partake of the fruit of the tree. The tree and the fruit represent Jesus Christ and the pure love of God, which means you have to have both inside of you in order to enter into the Kingdom. Figure 5 represents two fish coming back out of the sky panel (heaven), which symbolizes the resurrection of man.

Figure 25 represents the numberless concourses of people who were looking for the path that led to the Tree of Life.²⁴ There has been much weathering and damage by vandals to this side of Stela 5, so only a portion of this can be seen. Remember, Stela 5 has been sitting out in the rainforest for a little over 2,000 years. We still can see a woman carrying a small child traveling in the direction of the tree.

Figure 13 is a serpent and I feel it represents the devil in this motif. His head is just above the top of the parasol, and his body extends down and to the right side of the parasol. Notice that his tongue is extended out and at the heel of those numberless concourses of people seeking the Tree of Life. What an outstanding way for the artists to show that the devil is always trying to trip us up and make us fall! He has been doing this from the beginning of time. How does he get us to trip or make other people fall down? By our tongues! By what comes out of our mouths!

17. Allen, Joseph L., *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 123

18. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 26

19. Norman, V. Garth, *Izapa Sculpture*, New World Archaeological Foundation, 1973, p. 214

20. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 48-49

21. Genesis 3:31 Inspired Version, Genesis 3:24 KJV

22. Allen, Joseph L., *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 127

23. Allen, Joseph L., *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 127

24. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 62

The cycle of life

Figures 17 and 18, found on the right side, are another dualism theme connected with Figure 9 on the left side of Stela 5. Figures 17 and 18 represent a rain cloud (17) and rain (18), and Figure 9 represents evaporation.²⁵ These glyphs are very common and are found on many Stelas in Izapa. In between the two is the water that is shown on the bottom of Stela 5. This shows the life cycle man needs of rain, water and evaporation, which is a continuous cycle. The dualism theme is that this also represents our birth, existence on this earth, our death and our returning to our creator exactly as the cycle of water.²⁶

Figures 35 and 36 represent the head of the river (35) and the filthy water (36). This was a hard one for the ancient Mesoamerican artists to portray. On the right side under the rain glyph is the head of the river, where the water is very clean. As the river flows along, we notice that dots start to appear and become more numerous as we follow it to the left. This was an ingenious way for the artists to portray the river of filthy water.

Figure 4 is a bold, straight line on the left side of Stela 5 that extends along the ground panel toward the Tree of Life.

25. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 230

26. Norman, V. Garth, *Izapa Sculpture*, New World Archaeological Foundation, 1973, p. 170-172

27. Allen, Joseph L., *Exploring The Lands Of The Book Of Mormon*, S.A. Publishers, p. 124

This is a representation of the rod of iron.²⁷

Figure 19 is a representation of the crooked path that many people travel upon and get lost.²⁸ Notice that it looks like a maze.

Figure 38 represents the awful gulf that separates the wicked from the Tree of Life.²⁹ This gulf was a representation of the awful hell that was prepared for the wicked. Note that it is the lowest motif on Stela 5.

Figure 39 is on the extreme right side directly in the middle between the ground motif and the sky motif. This side of the stela was damaged extensively by vandals, thus rendering this portion unrecognizable, but I believe this is where the great and spacious building would have been located. It is located high in the air, above the ground panel, as was the large and spacious building in Lehi's vision.³⁰

There are many other motifs on Stela 5, but this should give you enough information to come to an understanding on whether Stela 5 is Lehi's vision or maybe just a market scene in ancient Mesoamerica. If you believe this is actually Lehi's vision, then, in my opinion, you have just experienced one of the greatest, most significant archaeological discoveries on this earth with ties to The Book of Mormon! †

28. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 64-65

29. Jakeman, M. Wells, *Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico*, The University Archaeological Society, 1958, p. 56-57

30. 1Nephi 2:71-72 RLDS, 1Nephi 8:26 LDS

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Schenck, Joseph, *Itzamna, the Dew of Heaven*, Joseph Schenck, 1968

Schenck, Joseph, *Temples in the Sky*, Joseph Schenck, 1966

Book of Mormon Retreat

Date: January 16-18, 2004
Cost: \$30
Place: Odessa Hills Campground
Directors: Val and Anita Brotherton
For: Ages 17-24

Contact Val Brotherton at 816-694-6031 or Dennis Moe at 816-461-3722 for registration forms.

Fall 2003 Wish List

PA system	\$1,000
Flatbed scanner	\$200
Color printer	\$300
Student tables (6)	\$100 ea.
Locking cabinet for PA	\$300

Jaredite Names

Continued from page 1

to show up in Mormon's abridgment. Perhaps one of the most surprising is to find the sons of Alma, the chief judge and high priest, bearing the names of Jaredite kings!

With few exceptions, Jaredite names are unrelated to the bible. Note the change of "um" endings to "on" endings in the Nephite tongue.

- SHIBLON — Jaredite king, ancestor of the prophet Ether
- SHIBLON — Alma's second son, accompanied him on a missionary trip.
- CORIANTUM — Righteous Jaredite king who lived 142 years.
- CORIANTON — Alma's third son, with his father among the Zoramites.
- MORIANTUM — Jaredite king with many wives who did not serve the Lord.
- MONIANTON — A land, city, and rebel leader among the Nephites.
- GADIANTON — Not found in the Jaredite record but so like Coriantum and Morianton. Head of the Gadianton Robbers.

Alma had ordered his son to retain all the oaths and covenants of the secret combinations described in the Jaredite record. (Alma 17:59-64) Gadianton's band was involved in the murder of judges and were bound by oaths and covenants like those found in the Jaredite story. But Helaman was not responsible for their knowledge of these things.

Now behold, those secret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the records which were delivered unto Helaman; . . .

The knowledge of these things was given to Gadianton by "he who is the author of all sin." (He 1. 2:150-156).

Gadianton and his murderous band worked with Kishkumen. The name Kish is very old.

- KISH — In the Sumerian King List, Kish is listed as the seat of the first Sumerian dynasty after the flood.

From the Board

Dear Friends,
Over time, change always occurs within an active and dynamic organization such as The Book of Mormon Foundation. As a board, we need to communicate these changes to all our supporters as they occur. Therefore, we report to you the following officer changes.

At our July 1, 2003, board meeting, we received the resignation of Dale Godfrey as our president effective upon the election of a new president. Dale has served in various capacities since 1985, including several years as president. He has assumed the new responsibility of presiding elder this next year at the Colbern Road Restoration Branch and feels his focused efforts will be needed for this ministry. He will continue to serve on our board and will be an active participant in our activities. We offer our deepest love and appreciation to Dale, along with his wife Rita, for their dedicated service. We also look forward to our future fellowship with them in the many programs of the Foundation.

Marlin Guin has been elected as

our new president effective July 1, 2003. Marlin has served on the board for six years and as vice president for much of that time.

Barb Capps has been elected as our new vice president effective July 1, 2003. Barb has served on the board for three years and has been active in various programs, especially those associated with the youth.

Jason Anderson was elected as our new secretary.

Gary Lair continues to serve as our treasurer.

Dennis Moe continues to serve as our office manager.

The current list of officers and board members can be reviewed on the back cover of this newsletter.

We believe this leadership transition will be seamless, and these kinds of changes will occur from time to time. The Lord's work moves forward, and we thank each of you for your continued support in time, talent and resources. May the Lord bless each of you is our prayer and we hope that we are also in your prayers. †

- KISH — Personal name of a Benjamite, father of Saul.
- KISH — In the Jaredite king line, father of famous Lib.
- KISHKUMEN — a Nephite assassin with Gadianton's band of robbers.
- KISHKUMEN — A wicked city burned by fire at Christ's crucifixion.
- KUMEN — One of the twelve disciples chosen by Christ.

And then we have AKISH, the Jaredite who won his wife by agreeing to behead the king, her grandfather; then killed his father-in-law and starved his own son to death, all for the crown.

- CORIHOR — Grandson of the Jaredite leader.
- KORIHOR — Nephite who

denied the existence of God.

The name Noah should be found in the record the Jaredites brought with them.

- NOAH — Rebellious Jaredite against the royal line.
 - NOAH — Evil king who killed Abinadi in Zeniff's colony.
 - NEHOR — Jaredite city and land ruled by the rebel Corihor.
 - NEHOR — False teacher who founded the Order of Nehors among the Nephites.
- Perhaps the strangest of all is the story of a man who shared the name of the last king of the Jaredites. A Mulekite in the days of the Judges, he was a descendant of Zarahemla, who claimed Mulek as his ancestor. This would give Coriantumr a heritage from

the line of David. Perhaps this lineage accounts for his actions. He must have been the last of the king-men who had given Captain Moroni so much trouble. They were wealthy leaders among the Mulekites who wished to restore the monarchy. Coriantumr defected and convinced the Lamanite king he could lead their armies to victory against the Nephites. He did take the city of Zarahemla but lost his life when he attempted to seize the city of Bountiful. One wonders if his parents named him for the Jaredite king or if he took it when he dreamed of being king in Zarahemla. (Hel. 1:15-34)

There are other Jaredite words found among the Nephites. When Moroni abridged the record, he included the names of unknown animals. Curelom and Cumon are Jaredite names for animals unknown to us, and to Moroni.

The terms for their money appear to be Jaredite words. We do not find them in the bible. Mormon tells us that the manner of their reckoning changed with every generation until Mosiah set a standard for the reign of the Judges. Mormon records their names and value for their pieces of gold and silver.

Gold — senine, seon, shum, limah

Silver — senum, amor, ezrom, onti

A senum of silver was equal to a senine of gold; either equaled a measure of barley or any kind of grain. (Alma 8:53-63) The names for pieces of lesser value were very similar — shi-

blon, shiblum, leah and antion.

These “pieces” of metal would not have been coins, and would have carried some mark defining their weight. They could have taken any form. A biblical example is found in Gen. 24:21-30. It is possible that Mosiah took information from the Jaredite record to regulate the Nephite monetary system, including the names. Shiblun is definitely a Jaredite name and those with “m” endings must be Jaredite.

The Nephites also kept the Jaredite name for the hill Shim. Two other words come from the Jaredite tongue — Urim and Thummim. Section 15:1 of the Doctrine and Covenants confirms the names of the two stones given to the Brother of Jared in the mount. Biblical scholars admit they do not know the meaning nor the origin of these two words. In the Nephite record, they were called Interpreters.

If the Jaredite colony continued to speak the original tongue of their city when the Lord caused their language to be confused, was it Sumerian? Sumerian was replaced by the Semitic Akkadian tongue and the city known today as UR became the capital. In Akkadian it was called URI and in Sumerian it was known as URIM.

Moroni left us the promise that eventually all of the information contained on the twenty-four plates of Ether's account shall be made known to the world (Ether 1:1-5). May it be soon. †

Restoration Apologetics Class

Teacher: Robert Bobbitt

Two Week Program: Mondays,
January 12 and 19, 2004. 6:00
p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Preregistration is required for this class. Attendance is limited to 20 students.

How well do you know your faith? Can you defend what you believe if called upon to do so? Do you have a personal testimony of Jesus Christ? Do Latter Day Saints believe in salvation by grace alone, or by works? If you would like to have answers to these questions and others, then this is the class for you. For four years, this class has been a part of the training for the Youth Missionary Corp and The Book of Mormon Foundation Internship program, and now it is available to the general church. This is a class unlike any you have ever attended. If you want to learn how to express to others “a reason for the hope that is in you” (I Peter 3:15), then come prepared for six hours of intensive study.

Robert Bobbitt has been involved in the field of restoration apologetics for over ten years and has published several materials on various subjects regarding Restoration teachings. Early in his ministry, Robert served as a tour guide at Nauvoo, Illinois. This experience enabled him to talk with many people of various faiths and, coupled with witnessing opportunities over the years, has given him a desire to help others learn to share the Restoration faith.

Southeast Regional Book of Mormon Retreat

The Book of Mormon Foundation will participate in a Book of Mormon Retreat sponsored by Southeast Area Association of Restoration Branches (SEARB) on March 12-14, 2004. The theme of the retreat will be “Journey of Discovery.”

Location: Central Florida Restoration Branch, Apopka, Florida

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2003 Book of Mormon Internship

Be still, and know that I am God... Psalms 46:10

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things both in heaven and in earth; Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend. And again; Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you: And now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them.

What powerful words for such a time as this. From a world that often does not acknowledge God, there are many voices calling to our young people. It is important for them to hear the one true voice through study, prayer, fasting, worship, fellowship, service and witnessing.

Such an opportunity for spiritual growth is The Book of Mormon Foundation Internship. This six-week summer program challenges young adults 18-24 years old to study, pray and fast; to hear the voice of the Lord and to develop a personal relationship with Him. The interns are also given the opportunity to share what they have learned not only in word, but in deed.

As the interns submit to the Lord during the program and willingly step out of their comfort zone in faith, they grow in fellowship with one another and learn that God is completely trustworthy. Each year, the program's annual trip seems to have its own unique challenges, and this year was no exception. As the interns and staff faced a difficult and potentially serious dilemma at the US-Canadian border, they prayed for God's help and He blessed them. The trip has

become a yearly FAITH journey: a fabulous adventure in trusting Him.

The 2003 interns were particularly humble and concerned with each other's needs as well as those of everyone else they came in contact with during the six weeks. This team consisted of nine interns and two staff members from three states and three countries: Eli Castillo, Mexico City, Mexico; Claire Glandon, Independence, Mo.; Johnna Marsh, Oak Grove, Mo.; Benjamin Pedersen, Independence; Monica Reed, Fort Scott, Kan.; Hannah Sherer, Independence; Brett Smith, Higginsville, Mo.; Jasmine (Yi-Wen) Tsai, Keelung, Taiwan; Jessica Winslow, Independence; and staff, David and Kathy Gilmore, Gainesville, Fla. Both the interns and staff have made friends that will last a lifetime and they have learned they can count on one another for support as they each try to serve the Lord.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in receiving information about next summer's internship, please contact Dennis Moe at The Book of Mormon Foundation or e-mail Bonnie Anderson at Eldon55@comcast.net. †



2003 Intern Testimonies

Monica Reed

At The Book of Mormon Retreat in January, I heard a lot about The Book of Mormon internship program from staff and former interns and became very interested in the program. One of the staff members came up to me on the last morning and said I should apply for the internship. He did not know that I had prayed the night before asking God if I should apply. So I went home, filled out the application and was accepted.

I am so glad that I have had the opportunity to be a part of the internship program this summer. God has blessed me many times during the six weeks and has strengthened my faith. I'm thankful that I did not miss out on this awesome opportunity to come closer to God and make new friendships in the Lord. I know God will provide a way to resolve all the concerns I have about my education.

Jasmine Tsai

I was born and raised in Taiwan. I did not really understand my purpose in life. I was a wild child, spending time with my friends and working. I knew nothing about the Bible, so I didn't care what I did with my friends. I did not think about whether it was right or wrong.

Then, several years ago, a lady here in Independence started corresponding with me by e-mail. She told me many things about the Bible and encouraged me to come to the United States to study at a local college. I didn't know why I totally trusted her, but I decided to move to Independence and live with her. I took a big jump in my life by leaving my family and moving half-way around the world to live with strangers.

However, I understand now. By living with the Rhoads family and going to church every Sunday and Wednesday, I realize the reason I was so brave. I was baptized last August, but I believed in Jesus Christ long before I was baptized. God brought me to America and gave me another family that is playing a significant role in my life. I am so thankful because I now have two very loving and caring families.

Eli Castillo

When I decided to come to the United States from

Mexico and be in the BMF internship program, I was worried about spending my entire summer in the United States because I would not be able to earn any money for my school expenses next semester. But I knew this trip would help me grow spiritually and learn more about the things that are most important in my life. So I started to prepare, trusting God, and He provided all the money I needed to come. This trip has been full of blessings — spiritual blessings as well as “life” blessings. Even if I had worked all summer at home, I would not have been able to afford all the things that I am taking back home. God gave me more than what I thought I needed.

Claire Glandon

I attended The Book of Mormon Retreat in January, and it was a wonderful experience for me. It also led to my applying for The Book of Mormon Foundation internship program. As I sat through the classes that weekend, I wanted to learn more about The Book of Mormon. When I listened to the interns from previous years talk about their experiences, I wanted to be a part of that kind of group and participate in such a wonderful program. I know I would not have gone to the BMF retreat if I had not had God's assurance that He would be with me and I would not be alone. I would have missed out on so much. I am grateful for God's guidance even when I cannot see where He wants me to end up.

Hannah Sherer

I really enjoyed the time I spent reading The Book of Mormon in preparation for The Book of Mormon Foundation internship program, but I also noticed some little changes in my life. I would wake up earlier, refreshed and ready to start my day. I woke up in a great mood, which made it easier to have a positive attitude throughout the day. I was also constantly recalling passages that would help me get through struggles that I faced.

This experience is a reminder to me that we should never be too busy to spend time with the Lord and feast on his word. When we take the time to study, He will bless us and our time will be wisely spent. †

From the Mouths of Two Witnesses

by Carrie Givens

The 2003 Book of Mormon Day for children was a great opportunity for the children to learn about the purpose of the Book of Mormon. This year, the focus was on the relationship between the Bible and the Book of Mormon. The children learned about Jesus Christ and His promises to all nations, kindred, tongues and peo-

ple. They had fun learning while they played games, listened to stories and studied. They even got to see a terrific play written and directed by our very own David Howlett and performed by a very talented group of sixth graders. Special thanks go to all the staff who helped to make the day a success. †

Book of Mormon Week 2003

God is So Good

by Dave and Debbie Newman

After leaving the Book of Mormon Week camp, sponsored by The Book of Mormon Foundation, we began immediately sharing our experience with church family and others who showed an interest. As a part of the staff, our view of the week may be different from that of the campers as we had different roles and responsibilities. Like many of the campers, however, we were a little unsure of what the week would be like. While the staff had planned a general outline, daily themes and daily schedule, the real operation and success of the camp depended entirely upon the campers. They were going to need to volunteer, to be creative, stretch themselves, get out of comfort zones and become leaders. The challenge for the staff was to facilitate, support, encourage, give guidance and not get in the way. The campers and staff were encouraged to read a number of scriptures and prayerfully prepare for camp. As staff, our expectations of the campers were high, and we were not disappointed.

Debbie and I have attended many youth camps, and some have been outstanding. This was an outstanding camp. We began the week on a high spiritual level and went up from there. When asked to participate in some way, the young people readily agreed. Volunteerism and spontaneous activities were the norm. Stage fright and stomach butterflies had to be overcome, as all participated in presentations of interpretations of Book of Mormon scriptures on

stage. No one was left out. All were made to feel a vital part of this faith-building experience. The Book of Mormon Foundation interns, who had already spent several weeks together building a special bond, did a tremendous job of blending in with the rest of the youth and making sure that all were accepted.

We were blessed with a multi-cultural assembly. When some of Eli's family came from Mexico City to visit her, all rejoiced with her, and wonderful ministry was brought. When one of the young ladies from Taiwan became homesick, the whole camp prayed and supported her. Many sacrificed much to be at camp. Nobody complained. All gave and all received abundantly. Having grown in the grace of God, none will ever be the same again. Surely God is good, and we tasted a little of Zion at the Book of Mormon Week. To God be the glory. †

Book of Mormon Story Hour 2003

by Barb Capps

As the children gathered for the first Book of Mormon Story Hour on June 6, they were greeted by King Benjamin, who shared many things he had spoken to the Nephites in his final days as king. He encouraged the children to keep the commandments (Mosiah 1:55) and "be diligent ... win the prize" (Mosiah 2:45) of eternal life. Other Book of Mormon Story Hour themes then focused on King Benjamin's teachings. We learned the importance of giving thanks and praise (Mosiah 1:52) with Suzanne Bendorf through flannel graph telling of Nephi's broken bow and how, after obtaining food, he and his family gave thanks and praise to the Lord. Betsy Trahern reminded us of the importance of prayer (Mosiah 2:21) as seen in the lives of Enos and Daniel. When focusing on repentance and forsaking our sins (Mosiah 2:16), Marilyn Ballantyne shared through a diorama the experience of Alma and the four sons of Mosiah, and how our sins can become white as

snow. Through the stories of the brother of Jared and Enoch, Marsha Bird shared about having faith and joy (Mosiah 3:5), and how, by having faith the size of a mustard seed, we can have great faith which will lead to the building of the Kingdom where we will experience much joy. At our final Story Hour, we watched a puppet play by Pam Lair that taught us that when we covenant with God to do his will and be obedient to his commandments, we will be called the children of Christ (Mosiah 3:6,8). The children

also watched a video related to each weekly theme and were given a special gift to remind them of those themes, with a Book of Mormon being given at our last Story Hour. By focusing on those things taught by King Benjamin (obedience, keeping the commandments of God, and remaining faithful to the end), we have the great promise of dwelling with Him in a state of never-ending happiness. This truly is a great promise given to each of us. †



Purpose Statements in The Book of Mormon

by Bob Giertz

Two previous issues of THE WITNESS included parts one and two of a three-part series on how to more effectively use The Book of Mormon as a missionary tool. Part one covered the plan of salvation that is found in The Book of Mormon and part two addressed how the plan of salvation was preserved in The Book of Mormon. In part three, we examine some of the more important “purpose statements” that are contained in The Book of Mormon, which provides valuable insights into the necessity of sharing this message with all the world.

Self-adhering labels containing the topical references for this entire series are available for your scriptures through The Book of Mormon Foundation.

“And your minds ... have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received ... and this condemnation ... shall remain ... until they (the church) repent and remember ... the Book of Mormon ...” D & C 83:8a,b

The Book of Mormon, when combined with the purity of the Holy Scriptures, gives us these five major purposes:

2 Nephi 2:19-23

19 Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write;

20 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,

21 Unto the (#1) confounding of false doctrines, and (#2) laying down of contentions, and (#3) establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins,

22 And bringing them to the (#4) knowledge of their fathers in the latter days;

23 And also to the (#5) knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.

Two purposes are identified on the title page of The Book of Mormon:

- That the remnant of the house of Israel may know the covenants of the Lord; and
- Convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.

The Book of Mormon not only testifies of the covenant and the promise of the restoration of the House of Israel, but it extends truth and knowledge about every aspect of our lives. It contains many insights we need to believe, implement, and teach to others. It helps us cease to take lightly the things we have received. The following are topical examples we can use in our personal evangelism to bear witness of the purpose and

divinity of The Book of Mormon. Highlight or underline each of these verses in a missionary version of The Book of Mormon. Write the purpose statement in the margin next to the verse, along with the reference for other verses of the purpose statement. Be sure to mark your own Book of Mormon as well.

The purpose of Jesus Christ

3 Nephi 12:26-28

The purpose of life

Alma 9:41
Alma 19:84

The purpose of man

2 Nephi 1:115
Jacob 2:28

The purpose of Satan (to fight against Zion)

2 Nephi 1:101-103, 121
1 Nephi 3:221-223
2 Nephi 12:24-29
2 Nephi 7:23-24
2 Nephi 11:106 (Seeks not for welfare of Zion)

The purpose of the atonement

2 Nephi 6:54
Jacob 5:21
2 Nephi 7:43
Mosiah 2:10
Jacob 3:16
Alma 19:97, 105

The purpose of the spiritual rebirth

Mosiah 11:186-188
Alma 13:49

The purpose of charity

Moroni 7:50-52
Ether 5:32-36
Alma 5:41

The purpose of revelation

Jacob 3:11-14
Alma 9:47-52

The purpose of the Law of Moses

Mosiah 8:6-7
Jacob 3:6
Jarom 1:24-25
Alma 14:75-77

The purpose of the resurrection

2 Nephi 1:75
Alma 9:14
Mosiah 9:29
Helaman 5:70

The purpose of paradise

2 Nephi 6:31
Alma 19:44

The purpose of seers and the Interpreters

Mosiah 5:72-83
Mosiah 12:15-21
Omni 1:35
Mosiah 9:169-170
Ether 1:87-89, 93

God of the Old Testament

Alma 15:63-64
1 Nephi 4:18-20
3 Nephi 7:1-6 (See Matthew 9:18-19 I.V.)
1 Nephi 5:233-242
3 Nephi 5:14

Only the Jews would crucify Jesus Christ

2 Nephi 7:5-9 †

The Witness

Number 109 • Fall 2003

Published quarterly by
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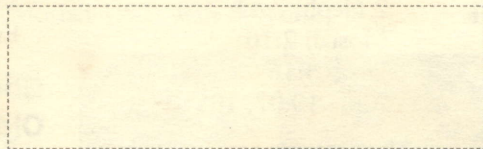
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One of the constant challenges in the mailing of a publication is the expansion and accuracy of the mailing list. We believe THE WITNESS is a valuable resource to every family. We also know there are many families who are not currently receiving it and would benefit from its content.

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We feel effective communication is key in the time in which we live. We also believe THE WITNESS contains information that will help us make the journey of faith together. Please call or write us if you have questions or comments.
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