



# THE ZARACHEMLA RECORD

Issue No. 11

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"And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word . . ." Alma 9:18

## Another "wise purpose" for the small plates

By Mary Lee Treat

**W**hen Mormon was abridging from the large plates of Nephi he came across another set of records he describes thus:

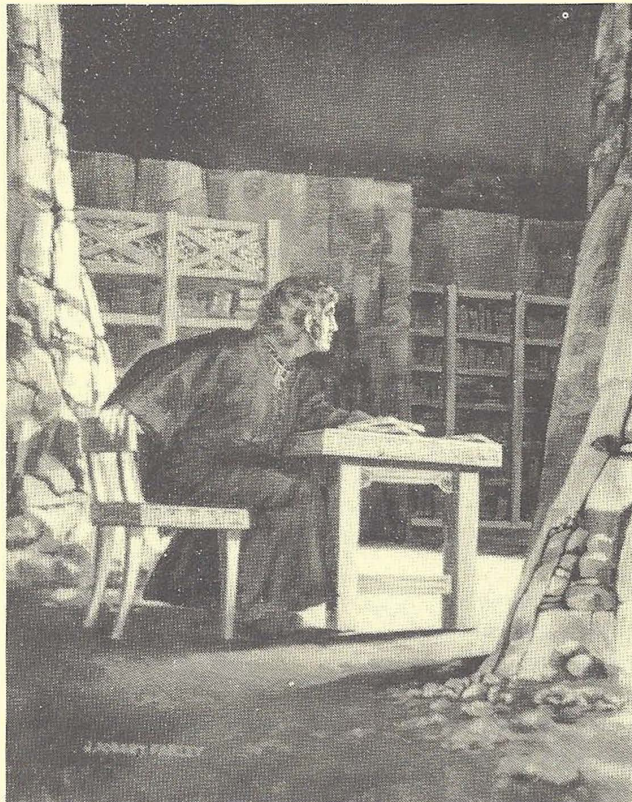
"I searched among the records which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates, which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this King Benjamin; and also many of the words of Nephi." Words of Mormon 1:5

He tells us the account was "choice" to him and he knew it would be to "his brethren" someday also. Then he indicates that the Spirit whispered to him to include this small unabridged account with his abridged book made from the large plates of Nephi. Remember, Mormon had already abridged from the large plates of Nephi the story covering the same period of time (600 B.C. - 130 B.C.), but the large plates from which he abridged were mostly concerned with the civil history of the people. This small record he found dealt mainly with the prophets from the same time period. So Mormon included the actual small plates of Nephi in their original form with his abridged history.

"But behold, I shall take these plates [small plates] which contain these prophesyings and revelations, and put them with the remainder of my record, for they are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren.

And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me." Words of Mormon 1:9, 10

Years later, Martin Harris begged for the 116 pages of manuscript which Joseph had translated from the large



plates of Nephi to show his relatives. After Martin lost them, Joseph was directed not to re-translate the same plates but to translate instead the small plates which covered the same period of time. This was to circumvent the attempt of those who had the 116 pages who would attempt to discredit Joseph and the record. Looking back we can see the fulfillment of that "wise purpose" that the Spirit whispered to Mormon back in the fourth century A.D.

However, when we look closely at Nephi's account of making the two sets of records we find an added dimension:

"And after I had made these plates (small plates) by way of commandment, I, Nephi, received a com-

mandment that the ministry, and the prophecies, the more plain and precious parts of them should be written upon these plates;

And that the things which were written, should be kept for the instruction of my people, who should possess the land, and also **for other wise purposes** (emphasis added), which purposes are known unto the Lord;" 1 Nephi 5:223, 224

Note Nephi said the small plates were made for other wise purposes. We have seen one major purpose—replacement of the lost 116 pages. What other purposes could the Lord have in mind?

Within the past few months our eyes have been opened to yet another "wise purpose" for the original small plates making up the first six books of our Book of Mormon. To understand this additional "wise purpose" let us analyze the contents of the small plates. The small plates of Nephi include the books of First Book of Nephi, Second Book of Nephi, Enos, Jarom, Jacob and Omni. Nephi is the chief

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"WISE PURPOSE"—from page 1

author, having written almost 166 pages. His brother Jacob adds 27 pages, Enos 3 pages plus, Jarom 2½ pages, Omni (and 4 other record keepers) 4 pages. This graphically illustrates that Nephi, an Israelite from the land of Jerusalem, and his brother Jacob wrote almost the entire small plates.

Why is this significant? Consider Nephi's words in II Nephi 11:8, 9:

"Yea, and my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah, for I came out from Jerusalem, and mine eyes hath beheld the things of the Jews, and I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and **there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews, like unto them**, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.

But behold, I, Nephi, have **not** taught my children after the manner of the Jews; but behold, I, of myself, have dwelt at Jerusalem . . ." (Emphasis added)

This verse would lead us to conclude that Nephi and possibly Jacob were taught in the manner of the Jews, Nephi having personally lived in the land of Jerusalem. However, from their generation forward, the things of the Jews were not taught to the successive generations in the New World. We know the Nephites kept their Hebrew language patterns and the written language they called reformed Egyptian. We also know they kept the law of Moses and taught the Old World prophets as contained on the Brass Plates. But Jewish culture and tradition was not carried on in the New World.

While all the writings in the Book of Mormon have a distinctive Old World House-of-Israel style, the words of Nephi from the unabridged small plates should give a more "Jewish" flavor than the rest of the book. Nephi had been a participant in Jewish culture and tradition.

For this very reason, the inclusion of the small plates are essential to witness to Jews steeped in the traditions of their own culture. Nephi speaks from the record "Jew to Jew" in a manner not understood by we adopted Israelites. The small plates are a direct, literal translation in the style of Jewish writers of the 600-500 B.C. time period speaking in a style appropriate to that time period. They speak of places in the Old World, heritage and customs known and understood only by Jewish people.

Nephi said it best when he said (paraphrasing), "No one understands the things of the Jews as well as the Jews themselves." Therefore, the Lord looking down to our day knew the small plates would give a more effective, authentic witness to the people of Jewish heritage and culture in a manner more distinctly "Jewish" than that written nearly 1000 years later by Mormon who was not taught Jewish culture or traditions. Thus it appears the unabridged small plates of Nephi were included to be a special witness to the Jews today.

The overall significance of the Book of Mormon, including the small plates, presently going to the rabbis and people in Israel is many faceted.

—It is the beginning of the fulfillment of one of the purposes of the Book of Mormon as given to us by Mormon in the Preface:

" . . . and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

Nephi bears a strong and direct testimony in his two books that the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah, is Jesus.

—It is a step in the process of all the holy records being shared and gathered into one as described by Nephi in II Nephi 12:71, 72:

"And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews:

And the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews."

—Perhaps most significant of all, the Jews receiving the small plates of Nephi and the rest of Mormon's abridgment is part of the Lord's process of the "restitution of all things", the great restoration of all the house of Israel.

"And it shall come to pass that my people which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered in one." II Nephi 12:73

Now we understand another "wise purpose" for the small plates—to speak especially to the Jews to witness to them that Jesus is the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel.

Are there other "wise purposes" yet for the small plates? Only time will tell. We do know, however, that the culmination of the "great and marvelous work" of the Lord is under way. ■

### BOOK OF MORMON WORKSHOP

The Zarahemla Research Foundation will present a Book of Mormon Workshop on May 2, 1981 at Partridge Hall, Floor A in the Stone Church. The Workshop will begin at 9:00 a.m.

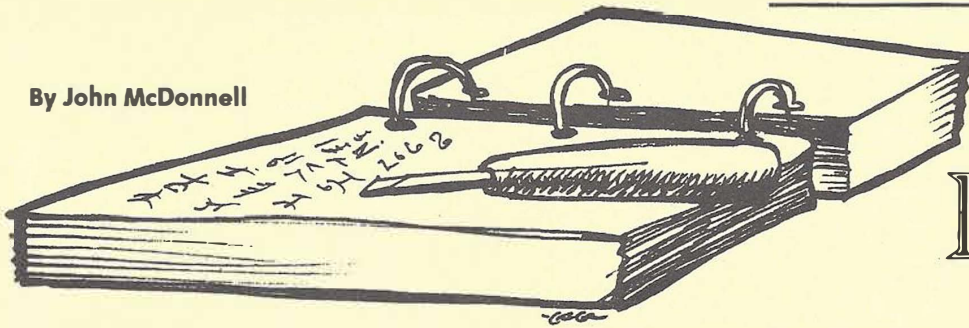
There will be a full day of Book of Mormon teaching. Verneil Simmons, author of **Peoples, Places and Prophecies** will give several lectures.

Raymond Treat, president of ZRF, will give lectures dealing with the archaeology of the Book of Mormon.

Exact topics and times will be published later. The lectures will be recorded for those unable to attend who may wish to purchase them.

Mark the day on your calendar and plan to attend!

By John McDonnell



# Readers' Research<sup>9</sup>

## LEHI'S VISION AND THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

In the summer of 1977 I found myself desiring to understand Lehi's Vision (1 Nephi 2:41-85). After careful study, along with prayer, I began to see something I had never noticed before. There are four different responses given to the rod of iron (the word of God). This understanding immediately reminded me of the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-7, 17-21 I.V.; Mark 4:3-7, 13-17; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15) which also tells of four different

responses to the word (the seed).

Although this was a spiritually enlightening discovery for me, I still had doubts. I wanted to make sure that these parallels were not accidental. I soon found what I was looking for. Alma's Parable of the Seed (Alma 16:152-173) combines the imagery of Lehi's Vision with the imagery of the Parable of the Sower in a way that allows each to throw light on the meaning of the other.

### RESPONSE NO. 1 Unbelief, resistance

#### LEHI'S VISION:

"And it came to pass that I was desirous that Laman and Lemuel should come and partake of the fruit also;

Wherefore, I cast mine eyes towards the head of the river, that perhaps I might see them.

And it came to pass that I saw them, but they would not come unto me, and partake of the fruit." 1 Nephi 2:59-61

#### PARABLE OF THE SOWER:

"And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart; this is he who received seed by the wayside." Matthew 13:4, 18

Our understanding of this response is greatly increased by combining sources. Matthew tells us simply that these people do not understand the word. Lehi adds to this by saying these people will not come, or in other words,

follow after that which they have heard. Alma gives us further insight as to why these people do not understand. It is because they resist the Spirit of the Lord and cast out the word by their unbelief (Alma 16:153).

### RESPONSE NO. 2 Partial belief, no effort

#### LEHI'S VISION:

"And I beheld a rod of iron; and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood.

And I also beheld a straight and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood;

And it also led by the head of the fountain unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been a world;

And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood.

And it came to pass that they did come forth and commence in the path which led to the tree.

And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost." 1 Nephi 2:62-67

#### PARABLE OF THE SOWER:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up; and when the sun was up, they were scorched, because they had no deepness of earth; and because they had no root, they withered away.

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word and readily with joy receiveth it, yet he hath not root in himself, and endureth but for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Matthew 13:5,19

The people of this response go a step further than the first category. They receive the word and start on the path. However, their soil is shallow and they have no root. When a mist of darkness, the scorching sun, tribulation,

persecution or temptation (Luke 8:13) come they are offended, fall away, lose their way, wander off and are lost. Again it is Alma who provides further insight. He tells us why the soil is shallow and there is no root:

(continued on page 6)

This article was removed because it covered information on documents that have since been judged as forged.

For more information on the forged documents see:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark\\_Hofmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Hofmann)

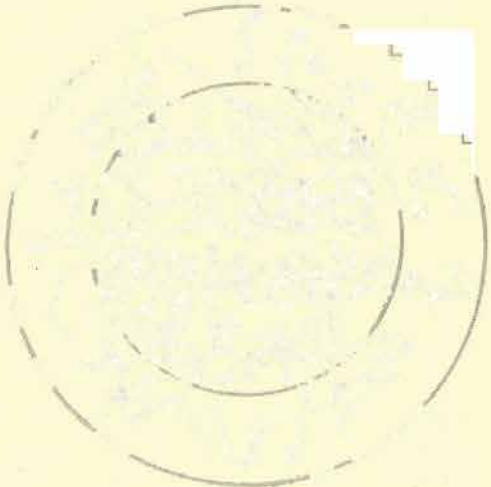


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"But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold, it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root, it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

Now this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable.

But it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree; therefore ye can not have the fruit thereof.

And thus it is if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life." Alma 16:166-169

There is no root because of neglect. These people readily accept but are unwilling to put forth the effort to continue in the path. Their desires are elsewhere. They do not want to search for themselves. They rely on what others tell them. Therefore their foundation is too shallow and they are swept away when the storm comes.

**RESPONSE NO. 3 More belief, some effort**

**LEHI'S VISION:**

"And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron;

And they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.

And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed.

And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld on the other side of the river of water a great and spacious building;

And it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth;

And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female;

And their manner of dress was exceeding fine;

And they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at, and were partaking of the fruit.

And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost." 1 Nephi 2:68-76

**PARABLE OF THE SOWER:**

"And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them.

He also who received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Matthew 13:6,20

These people also hear the word and actually reach the tree and partake of its fruit but they still love the carnal more than the spiritual. They do not desire to be cleansed

of carnal desires. They are concerned with this world with its riches, its lusts (Mark 4:16) and its pleasures (Luke 8:14). They are ashamed to be part of the minority.

**RESPONSE NO. 4 Belief leads to faith with assurance**

**LEHI'S VISION:**

"And now I, Nephi, do not speak all the words of my father.

But, to be short in writing, behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree.

And he also saw other multitudes feeling their way towards that great and spacious building.

And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain;

And many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads.

And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building.

And after they did enter into that building they did point the finger of scorn at me, and those that were partaking of the fruit also; but we heeded them not.

These are the words of my father: For as many as heeded them, had fallen away." 1 Nephi 2:77-84

**PARABLE OF THE SOWER:**

"But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit; some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word and understandeth and endureth; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, and some thirty." Matthew 13: 7,21

## BOOK REVIEW

### PEOPLES, PLACES AND PROPHECIES—BY VERNEIL SIMMONS

**Peoples, Places and Prophecies** represents forty years of research and study into the geography, cultures and spiritual insights into the Book of Mormon. It is a book for the general public—for anyone who wants to study the Book of Mormon. It is also a book for scholars, with extensive documentation and bibliography.

The book contains ten main sections which include the chronological developments of the three migrations, one section devoted to the geography of the Book of Mormon, one section on the archaeology of the record, and one section on the records of the Book of Mormon and those records related to it. Additional notes for the chapters are included at the end of the book. These notes discuss related topics, give additional evidences and references. The note section is an invaluable asset to the book.

Verneil Simmons became a student of the Book of Mormon while yet a teenager. She was intrigued with the question of geography and where the Book of Mormon lands were located. Although many Book of Mormon readers had come to the conclusion that these lands included all of North, Central and South America, she became convinced that the internal clues found within the book pointed to a more specific location. While researching the geography of the Book of Mormon, Sister Simmons began to pose many other questions. And so, her sphere of interest and corresponding research began to grow.

The author and her family were exposed to many of the archaeological remains in South America while living there through the 1940's. In 1950 the author's husband, Wayne Simmons, went under church appointment as the first appointee to Latin America. In later years, the family moved to Mexico City where Verneil began intensive research into the archaeology of Mesoamerica. She took courses at the National University and attended many hours of lectures at the Instituto Nacional de Arqueologia e Historia.

She began teaching Book of Mormon classes throughout the church and was finally challenged by her friends to compile her information into a book. She finished over five years of writing in 1977. The book was first published in 1978 by Independence Press, Herald House, and was sold out in less than two years. Seeing the great need for a book of this caliber to be available to Book of Mormon believers, Zarahemla Research Foundation is happy to present the second printing of **Peoples, Places and Prophecies** in a new hardbound edition.

Since it has been available, many people have used it as a study text for classes. It is a must for any serious student of the Book of Mormon for reference. For an expanded understanding and view of the Book of Mormon from many viewpoints—archaeological, geographic, doctrinal, prophetic—we highly recommend **Peoples, Places and Prophecies** by Verneil Simmons. ●

### PEOPLES, PLACES AND PROPHECIES

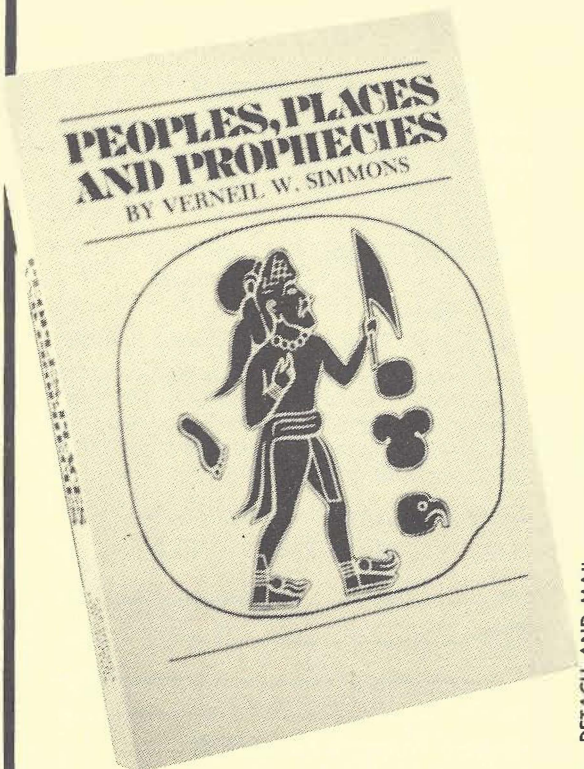
By Verneil Simmons

**ENRICH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE PEOPLES, PLACES AND PROPHECIES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.**

The author has spent many years analyzing and researching the Book of Mormon's peoples, their lands and cultures; this book is the result of her discoveries.

While the author never intended this book to serve as an interpretation of doctrine, she has linked many prophetic statements giving Book of Mormon students a better grasp of the continuity between prophets such as Nephi and Alma or Mormon or Moroni.

**An excellent text for class or individual study of the Book of Mormon.**



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**MICMAC**—from page 5

languages can have as many as six percent similar words by chance. However, the higher the percentage of similar words, the stronger the case that the languages are related historically. The percentage of similarity between the Anthon characters and a small sample of the Micmac characters is 29%. If the samples in question are representative of the two languages, then this is well above the six percent level and implies the two languages were related historically. It would seem to be a reasonable assumption that the samples are representative, thus warranting a continued interest in Micmac. Therefore, the discovery of the original Anthon transcript in 1980, with its carefully copied symbols, has indeed opened a new door for research, and if the comparisons are valid, we may have a prime candidate for a translation key. A thorough study of Micmac is needed.

It should be noted that Book of Mormon critics have already suggested that Joseph Smith Jr. used the Micmac symbols to make up the Anthon transcript. However, the reverse is probably true—that is, Micmac owes its origin to the Book of Mormon. We know Moroni had enough time to hand carry the records from Hill Cumorah in southern Mexico to New York state, assuming he lived a normal life span. Could Moroni have lived among the ancestors of the Micmac Indians and taught them how to write after the manner used in engraving the Book of Mormon plates? This is one plausible theory.

The apparent relationship between the Anthon characters and Micmac is a very interesting development as we look at the impact that the Dead Sea Scrolls and now the Ebla tablets have had on the religious world. Is it possible the Lord is preparing the world for yet another discovery of ancient records—Mormon's library?

We know the records in Mormon's library are promised to come forth. The discovery of the Anthon characters may be a step towards the fulfillment of that promise.

**References Cited**

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**READERS' RESEARCH**—from page 6

These are the ones who receive the word in an honest and good heart (Luke 8:15) and exhibit the fruits of the spirit—patience, long suffering, diligence and faith. They understand because they nourish the word (Alma 16:170). They keep what they hear (Luke 8:15). This means they are constantly growing spiritually and receiving more enlightenment. Their vision is sufficient to overcome the derision of the world (the people in the spacious building). They are looking forward to the fruit of everlasting life.



**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Zarahemla Research Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation chartered under the laws of the state of Missouri. This is a non-church sponsored association. A major aim of the Foundation is to provide information and materials to assist in Book of Mormon ministries. ZRF is open to all who desire to improve their understanding and use of the Book of Mormon.

A major goal of this newsletter is to provide a bridge of understanding between the scientific-oriented field of archaeology and Book of Mormon studies. Keeping abreast of archaeological information is a full-time job, hence few people are in a position to devote the time needed to this subject. Yet, there is a wealth of information and enlightenment there that remains to be tapped. This newsletter hopes to draw on the finds of those who are in a position to give time to these areas of research and make this information available to interested church members.



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