



# THE ZARAHEMLA RECORD

Issues No. 27 and 28

WINTER/SPRING 1985

---

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

---

## IS THE BOOK OF MORMON WRITTEN IN AN ANCIENT HEBRAIC POETIC STYLE?

by Edward Faunce

The Book of Mormon is written in verse! Tell that to persons who are acquainted with the book and the reactions are "preposterous", "absurd", "incredible", and "you're kidding, how do you know?" I know from having typed all seven hundred and seventy seven pages. I know from having struggled with trying to find some format which would allow the beauty of the words and ideas of the Book of Mormon to be as visually pleasing to the eye of the reader as the message is to the readers' soul. I know from having shared with my class at the Burbank, California church, for many months chapter after chapter of First and Second Nephi written in verse form and seen how those even with a lifelong acquaintance with the book have expressed surprise and elation with the beauty of the words when written in verse form.

During 1981 I began typing the Book of Mormon on my computer in order to create a research tool for persons with personal computers. While typing the text I was impressed with the wide variety of styles and materials present including various editors' narrations, texts of letters, sermons, quotations from the Old Testament (principally Isaiah), dialogues, lamentations, psalms, and blessings. However, the rich variety of material is not readily apparent because of the absence of the usual visual clues to call the readers' attention to a change in material.

My original purpose was to create a data base of the entire text which could be searched for a word or phrase and then a printout made of every reference to that word or phrase by book, chapter and verse. Although that project was completed, I became fascinated with the idea of preparing a readers' edition of the Book of Mormon which would make use of visual clues to help readers discover the remarkable diversity of materials and styles present in the book.

I decided to use the 1908 edition of the Book of Mormon, changing only punctuation and using paragraphs, indented quotes, boldface type, italics,

and interlineated headings to aid the reader. I immediately found the task very difficult. I could not even put First Nephi, Chapter 1, verse 1 into proper sentences. It just did not fit the standard English sentence structure.

The difficulty of the task is easily illustrated using First Nephi 1:1 which reads as follows in the original:

"I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days—nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days; yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians."

Such a long sentence with so many different clauses seems more appropriate to the Internal Revenue Code. However, I "waded in" and separated the verse into several shorter sentences as follows:

"I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore, I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father. And having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days. Yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God. Therefore, I make a record of my proceedings in my days. Yea, I make a record in the language of my father which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians."

Although this was the best I could do without eliminating some of the "ands" or "yeas", it still "felt" wrong. Breaking the verse into shorter sentences made the text read "jerky" and even seemed to violate the intended meaning of the original. I continued trying to put First Nephi into simpler sentences and paragraphs all the while being troubled by my ability to make the material read as

(Continued on page 2)



powerfully as I thought it should.

One evening while discussing the problem with my wife, I commented that there was a poetic structure to First Nephi which "shined" through the English translation. She challenged me to demonstrate what I meant. I used the word processor to show her how First Nephi 1:1 seemed to have an underlying structure:

I, Nephi, having been born  
of goodly parents,  
therefore,  
I was taught somewhat  
in all the learning  
of my father;  
and,  
[I] having seen many afflictions  
in the course  
of my days,  
nevertheless,  
[I] having been highly favored  
of the Lord  
in all my days;  
yea,  
[I] having had a great knowledge  
of the goodness  
and  
[of] the mysteries  
of God,  
therefore,  
I make a record  
of my proceedings  
in my days;  
yea,  
I make a record  
in the language  
of my father  
which consists  
of the learning  
of the Jews  
and  
[of] the language  
of the Egyptians.

When displayed in this way, the parallel construction and the repetitious use of the prepositional phrases was apparent. I continued through most of the first chapter until I became convinced that there was some type of poetic structure being utilized. However, at that time I had no idea what the structure might be.

I continued doing my best to separate the text into simpler sentences and paragraphs. Eventually I came to that part of the sixth chapter of First Nephi where Nephi quotes Isaiah chapters forty-eight and forty-nine from the Brass Plates. As my intent was to give the reader visual clues to show that what was intended was an exact quote, I decided to indent the entire Isaiah quotation and to put it into appropriate paragraphs.

Fortuitously, I had recently purchased a copy of the New King James Version of the Bible by the Nelson Publishing Company in which most of the Book of Isaiah had been written in a format that emphasized the poetic structure of the book. I followed their lead and wrote the quote from First Nephi 6 in the stanza form which had been utilized by the biblical scholars. For example First Nephi 6:8-9, in stanza form, reads as follows:

Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob,  
Who are called by the name of Israel,  
And are come forth out of the waters  
of Judah;  
Who swear by the name of the Lord  
And make mention of the God of Israel,  
Yet they swear not in truth  
Nor in righteousness;  
Nevertheless, they call themselves  
of the Holy City,  
But they do not stay themselves  
upon the God of Israel;  
Who is the Lord of Hosts,  
Yea, the Lord of Hosts is his name.

After writing the entire quote from Isaiah in this stanza form, I began searching for some explanation of the poetic form which was used. I found that biblical scholars have made a detailed study of the literary compositions of Isaiah. They have defined the structural unit of the poems of Isaiah, which correspond roughly to a paragraph, as a "strophe" (pronounced stroh' fee). It is sometimes referred to as a stanza. Strophes are begun using a variety of expressions such as "Thus says the Lord", "Behold", "Hearken", "Hear", "Who", and many other imperatives and addresses. Strophes usually end in a variety of ways using variously judgments, parallel climatic series of statements, quotations, and questions.

It became apparent to me that the Books of First and Second Nephi were written in stanzas which could best be seen by using the same structural techniques used by the biblical scholars to show the poetic form of Isaiah. Thus, applying the strophe structure to the above quoted verse from First Nephi gives the following result:

I, Nephi, having been born  
of goodly parents,  
Therefore, I was taught somewhat  
in all the learning of my father;  
And having seen many afflictions  
in the course of my days  
Nevertheless, having been highly favored  
of the Lord in all my days;  
Yea, having had a great knowledge  
of the goodness and the mysteries  
of God,  
Therefore, I make a record  
Of my proceedings

in my days;  
 Yea, I make a record  
 in the language of my father,  
 which consists  
 Of the learning of the Jews  
 And the language of the Egyptians.

This structure fits the flow of the ideas and the words much better than just separating the text into simpler sentences and paragraphs. I found that each chapter of First and Second Nephi was a learning experience in the attempt to phrase the words into the "strophic" form. However, it seems clear that at least the Small Plates of Nephi are written after a form of the poetic style found in the Old Testament.

It is really necessary to read some longer passages from the Book of Mormon in strophic form in order to appreciate how much easier it is to follow the thought and the flow of the original. As an example, read the lamentation and psalm of Nephi as found in Second Nephi 3:24-66 as compared to the following in strophic form:

- 24 And it came to pass that not many days  
 after his death,  
 Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael,  
 Were angry with me because of the  
 admonitions of the Lord.
- 25 For I, Nephi, was constrained to speak  
 unto them according to His word.
- 26 For I had spake many things unto them,  
 and also my father before his death,
- 27 Many of which sayings are written  
 upon mine other plates,  
 For a more history part are written  
 upon mine other plates.
- 28 And upon these, I write the things  
 of my soul,  
 And many of the scriptures  
 Which are engraven  
 Upon the plates of brass.
- 29 For my soul delighteth in the  
 scriptures,  
 And my heart pondereth them,  
 And writeth them for the learning,  
 And the profit of my children.
- 30 Behold, my soul delighteth  
 in the things of the Lord;  
 And my heart pondereth continually  
 upon the things  
 Which I have seen and heard.
- 31 Nevertheless, the great goodness of  
 the Lord,  
 In showing me his great and marvelous  
 works,  
 My heart exclaimeth:  
 O wretched man that I am;  
 Yea, my heart sorroweth because of  
 my flesh.
- 32 My soul grieveth because of

- mine iniquities.
- 33 I am encompassed about because of  
 the temptations and the sins  
 Which doth so easily beset me.
- 34 And, when I desire to rejoice,  
 My heart groaneth because of  
 my sins; nevertheless,  
 I know in whom I have trusted.
- 35 My God hath been my support;  
 He hath led me through mine afflictions  
 in the wilderness;  
 And He hath preserved me upon the waters  
 of the great deep.
- 36 He hath filled me with his love  
 Even unto the consuming of my flesh.
- 37 He hath confounded mine enemies,  
 Unto the causing of them to quake  
 before me.
- 38 Behold, He hath heard my cry  
 by day,  
 And He hath given me knowledge  
 by visions in the night time.
- 39 And by day have I waxed bold  
 in mighty prayer before Him;  
 Yea, my voice have I sent up on high;  
 And angels came down and ministered  
 unto me.
- 40 And upon the wings of His Spirit  
 Hath my body been carried away  
 upon exceeding high mountains.
- 41 And mine eyes have beheld great things;  
 Yea, even too great for man;  
 Therefore, I was bidden that  
 I should not write them.
- 42 O then, if I have seen so great things;  
 If the Lord in His condescension  
 unto the children of men,  
 Hath visited me in so much mercy,  
 Why should my heart weep,  
 And my soul linger in the valley  
 of sorrow,  
 And my flesh waste away,  
 And my strength slacken,  
 Because of mine afflictions?
- 43 And, why should I yield to sin,  
 because of my flesh?
- 44 Yea, why should I give way  
 to temptations  
 That the evil one have place  
 in my heart,  
 To destroy my peace and afflict  
 my soul?
- 45 Why am I angry because  
 of mine enemy?
- 46 Awake, my soul!  
 No longer droop in sin.
- 47 Rejoice, O my heart,  
 And give place no more  
 For the enemy of my soul.



- 48 Do not anger again,  
because of mine enemies.
- 49 Do not slacken my strength,  
because of mine afflictions.
- 50 Rejoice, O my heart, and cry  
unto the Lord and say:  
"O Lord, I will praise thee for ever;  
Yea, my soul will rejoice in thee,  
My God, and the rock of my salvation.
- 51 O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul?
- 52 Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands  
of mine enemies?
- 53 Wilt thou make me that I may shake  
at the appearance of sin?
- 54 May the gates of hell be shut continually  
before me  
Because that my heart is broken  
And my spirit is contrite?
- 55 O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates  
of thy righteousness before me  
That I may walk in the path of the  
low valley,  
That I may be strict in the  
plain road?
- 56 O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around  
in the robe of thy righteousness?
- 57 O Lord, wilt thou make a way  
for mine escape before mine enemies?
- 58 Wilt thou make my path straight  
before me?
- 59 Wilt thou not place a stumbling block  
in my way?
- 60 But that thou wouldst clear my way  
before me,  
And hedge not up my way,  
But the ways of mine enemy.
- 61 O Lord, I have trusted in thee,  
And I will trust in thee for ever.
- 62 I will not put my trust in the arm  
of flesh;  
For I know that cursed is he  
That putteth his trust in the arm  
of flesh.
- 63 Yea, cursed is he that putteth  
his trust in man,  
Or maketh flesh his arm.
- 64 Yea, I know that God  
Will give liberally to him  
that asketh.
- 65 Yea, my God will give me  
if I ask not amiss;  
Therefore, I will lift up my voice  
unto Thee.  
Yea, I will cry unto Thee, my God,  
The rock of my righteousness.
- 66 Behold, my voice shall for ever  
Ascend up unto Thee, my rock,  
And mine everlasting God. Amen.

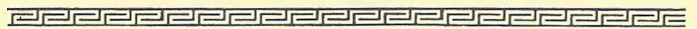
*Editor's note:* It appears that large parts of the Book

of Mormon were originally written in poetic form. This is an important discovery which increases our appreciation and testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon. This discovery also promises to be a valuable tool to assist us in obtaining more spiritual light from the Book of Mormon.

Anyone wishing to learn more about ancient Hebrew poetry can consult any number of Bible reference works. The following quote from the Ryrie Study Bible, King James Version Page 796 (Introduction to the Book of Psalms) provides some information on strophes:

**Nature of Hebrew Poetry.** Unlike much Western poetry, Hebrew is not based on rhyme or meter, but on rhythm and parallelism. The rhythm is not achieved by balanced numbers of accented and unaccented syllables, but by tonal stress or accent on important words.

In parallelism, the poet states an idea in the first line, then reinforces it by various means in the succeeding line or lines. The most common type is synonymous parallelism, in which the second line essentially repeats the idea of the first (Psalm 3:1). In antithetic parallelism, the second line contains an idea opposite to that in the first (Psalm 1:6). In synthetic parallelism, the second or succeeding lines add to or develop the idea of the first (Psalm 1:1-2). In emblematic parallelism, the second line elevates the thought of the first, often by using a simile (Psalm 42:1). Parallelism is not restricted to two lines, but may extend to **strophes** (smaller units of a few lines) and stanzas (larger units). (emphasis on strophes added) [E]



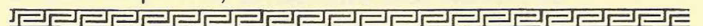
## MAYA ART EXHIBIT

A major art exhibit of Mayan artifacts began a two year tour in April. The itinerary is as follows:

New York City	April 26-July 28	American Museum of Natural History
Los Angeles	August 27-Nov. 3	Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History
Dallas	Dec. 15-February 16	Dallas Museum of Art
Toronto	March 22-June 15	Royal Ontario Museum
Kansas City	July 19-September 7	Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The exhibit, "Maya - Treasures of an Ancient Civilization," was organized by the Albuquerque Museum of Art, History, and Science. The exhibition features objects on loan from the governments of Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize as well as from museums in the United States and Canada. Included in the exhibit are artifacts recovered from Maya tombs, massive carved stone stelae, jade and shell jewelry, golden figurines, and painted ceramics.

If you live near any of the above locations, don't miss this opportunity to view first-hand artifacts from Book of Mormon heritage peoples. The term Maya includes Nephites, Lamanites and Mulekites.





# REPORT ON BOOK OF MORMON RESEARCH

by Shirley R. Heater

**“Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture” by John L. Sorenson, in *The Ensign*, September 1984, pages 26-37, and October 1984, pages 12-23.**

“Digging Into the Book of Mormon” is a two-part article by John L. Sorenson who is a professor of anthropology at Brigham Young University. He brings together up-to-date information in the areas of American archaeology, geography, culture and language which supports and in some cases clarifies the Book of Mormon. Sorenson’s purpose is to update the facts in order to reduce our faulty assumptions in comparing the Book of Mormon with ancient history. We find agreement in many areas and will refer to those subjects which have already been presented in *The Zarahemla Record* and bring to your attention additional points of information presented by Sorenson.

We have seen on the pages of *The Zarahemla Record* evidence that archaeology has been converging with the Book of Mormon, validating its historicity. John Sorenson’s contribution presents some of the changes that have occurred in scholarship and science, and also helps us understand our responsibility of being aware of the significance of these changes relative to our view of the Book of Mormon.

His plea, however, is also to the unaware and less informed believer to become more knowledgeable of current findings, as well as to be able to separate confusing traditional interpretations of the Book of Mormon. One such example is the frequently heard assumption that the Book of Mormon is “the history of the American Indians.” Sorenson declares:

This statement contains a number of unexamined assumptions—that the scripture is a history in the common sense—a systematic, chronological account of the main events in the past of a nation or territory; that “the” American Indians are a unitary population; and that the approximately one hundred pages of text containing historical and cultural material in the scripture could conceivably tell the entire history of a hemisphere. When unexamined assumptions like these are made, critics respond in kind, criticizing **not** the ancient text itself, but the assumptions we have made about it. The result has been a body of information about the Book of Mormon troubled by irrelevant “evidence,” undependable logic, and conflicting conclusions.

Sorenson makes an excellent point here that has not been well understood by our people. The idea that the Book of Mormon is not a history of **all** of the American Indians is something that we have always known, but continue to slip into. The importance of understanding this point spills over into other topics such as identifying the location of the lands where the Book of Mormon took place and those descendants who are the remnant

people.

The first article reviews the topics of geography, the Book of Mormon as a selective history, limitations of scientific interpretations, warfare, population, and metal use. Part two covers ancient writing from several angles, and miscellaneous topics, culminating with advice for Book of Mormon students. The two articles present a wealth of information and counsel. Only a summary of these topics can be presented here. Sorenson’s use of extensive footnotes and references to resources for further study are a valuable supplement for the more serious reader.

## THE NEPHITE AND JAREDITE LANDS

Geography is becoming one of the most exciting and promising topics of study. “Mormon’s Hidden Message” (*Recent Book of Mormon Developments: 75-76*) established once and for all that geography is a valid topic. All people who are seriously studying Book of Mormon geography and the abundance of internal information agree with Sorenson’s conclusions.

- (1) the events reported by Nephite and Jaredite scribes . . . covered only a **limited territory** in the New World “land of promise,” and
- (2) there is presently only one known location in the Western Hemisphere that seems to qualify in all respects—Mesoamerica (that portion of central and southern Mexico and northern Central America where the highest level of ancient cultural development in this hemisphere occurred.)

By limiting the geographical area, a new perspective is given to such questions as language, culture, etc. It is from studies of the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica that Sorenson’s data is focused.

## THE NATURE OF THE RECORD

Just as we have erroneously labeled all the American Indians as descendants of Book of Mormon peoples, our concept of the Book of Mormon as the complete “history” of their ancestors, has also been applied. Sorenson brings an interesting new view of the Book of Mormon as a “lineage history” rather than an historical narrative as we think of history today. This means the selected information is “primarily a family chronicle written by prophets under the Lord’s inspiration.” This type of record frequently presents information pertinent to their goal, only mentioning other people or groups in passing to provide the necessary framework. For example, in the Book of Ether during times of captivity, the names of the rulers aren’t even mentioned. Understanding the Book of Mormon as a lineage history helps us to realize that many historical events are not told—it is

(Continued on page 6)



not a comprehensive narrative of **all** that happened, but is a selected record similar to the patriarchal age in the Old Testament. Therefore we should not expect to stretch its information beyond its limits.

### THE LIMITS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

To expect the Book of Mormon record to cover more of history than it does and to expect the body of physical evidence to tell us more than it can, takes us beyond reasonable expectations. A great deal of ancient civilization is unknown and uncertain. Only a small percentage of recoverable evidence has been excavated, and new discoveries continue to cause a re-evaluation of previous interpretations. Because science is viewed, then, as "tentative forever," Sorenson advises us that it is not unreasonable to arrive at a **plausibility** in the link between the Book of Mormon record and the body of physical evidence. The following topics are examples of this plausible correlation between science and the Book of Mormon record.

### WAR

One area in archaeology in which we have seen a dramatic shift in perspective concerns the topic of warfare. Only recently has the long standing view of peaceful Mesoamerican societies prior to A.D. 1000 been replaced by an extensive picture of conflict on a large scale. The most dramatic evidence comes from the ditch and ridge earthwork encircling the site of Becan (A.D. 150-450) (ibid, 25-26). Sorenson informs us that the acceptance of the plausibility of militarism has led to the discovery of more than one hundred such fortified sites, plus murals depicting battles and warrior figurines. The longstanding, unchanging record in the Book of Mormon of warfare, fortification and weapons utilized is now supported by the increasing archaeological discoveries.

One recent incident relating to outdated views was recounted by Sorenson: "One of my former students wrote to me with some concern because his professor at an eastern university had assured him that the bow and arrow, mentioned in several places in the Book of Mormon, was not present in Mesoamerica until A.D. 900. But I could assure him that a potsherd from central Mexico has scratched on it a sketch of a man with such a weapon. The fragment is dated approximately eight hundred years prior to the "recognized" date cited by the professor."

### POPULATION

For a long time statements in the Book of Mormon associated with population figures could not be reconciled with early population estimates. Also, most estimates were focused on the period at the time of arrival of Europeans. We are informed by Sorenson of two such evaluations, one by Father Bartolome de Las Casas in 1560 (he estimated forty million native Americans perished in the Conquest era) and anthropologist A. L. Kroeber in the 1930s (his

estimate was 8.4 million for the total inhabitants at the time of arrival), which illustrate the extreme in assessing numbers relating to pre-historic habitation. While Kroeber's low estimate may "have been affected by the pessimism of the Great Depression," population studies today are based on various factors. Demographers, specialists who carefully analyze historical and archaeological sources in order to reconstruct population figures, present a more accurate range not inconsistent with the Book of Mormon account. Estimates now spread from 27 million for Mexico and Central America to 57 million for the entire Western hemisphere at the time of contact. "Speculations on Book of Mormon Populations" by Elefson (ibid, 30-33) applies accepted population growth models to the Book of Mormon record. His conclusions, based on the scant information available in the record, are consistent with the theory for reconstructing population growth curves. Statements in the Book of Mormon relating to population (lands occupied, ecology, settlement sizes and war casualties) demonstrate acceptable numbers in reported fluctuations, and are within the range of calculations consistent in Mesoamerican research.

Population size is an extremely important topic, since it is an influencing factor in many other areas. Because many of the sites in Mesoamerica are no longer viewed as "vacant ceremonial centers" but large, densely populated cities, archaeologists are being forced to take a closer look at how they provided food, as well as division of labor. (Refer to "El Mirador: Massive Guatemala Site Shows Great Promise," ibid, 27-29.)

### METAL USE

Sorenson points out that only meager evidence in the ancient American archaeological record supports metallurgy as part of the Book of Mormon technology by both the Nephite and Jaredites. Most metal objects date from A.D. 900 to the time of European Conquest. The lack of earlier artifacts may be due to scarcity of metal supplies, resulting in reuse or melting down to recast, leaving only rare specimens to be discovered. Approximately a dozen or more metal pieces dating from 100 B.C. to A.D. 900 attest to the knowledge of metalworking.

Are there lines of evidence other than the rare finds in these early times? Historical linguistics is one area which Sorenson presents that seems to provide that additional support. He states that studies of early parent- or proto-languages reveal words relating to metals as well as the use of metals extending back as early as 2000 B.C. In Oaxaca, Mexico and adjacent territory, the use of a word in Proto-Mixtecan for metal bell dates to around 1000 B.C. Studies in the Mayan area link a word for metal in use about A.D. 500 to the same root word in Huastec, a branch believed to have diverged from the main group about 2000 B.C. Additional work on Proto-Mixe-Zoquean (confirmed to be the language of the Olmec) shows a word for metal



originating no later than 1500 B.C.

In the Book of Mormon several metals are mentioned including iron, copper, brass, steel, gold, silver, and ziff. The identification of ziff still remains unknown. The ancient existence of brass had long been denied by archaeologists. However, the new view demonstrates that the brass alloy of copper and zinc was in use in the Mediterranean area as early as Lehi's day, again lending plausibility that the 'brass plates' were actually made of brass. Ongoing studies by metallurgists and archaeologists—chemical analyses of specimens on hand, as well as future discoveries—should continue to move closer to the Book of Mormon.

### WRITING

Recent breakthroughs in the field of Mayan hieroglyphic writing are "revolutionizing" our knowledge of ancient recordkeeping. The article, "Maya Hieroglyphs Point to the Book of Mormon" (ibid, 41-45) presented new information that the glyphs were at least partly phonetic, in addition to being pictographic. The Mayan glyph carvings date from about A.D. 300 to 900—briefly overlapping the end of the Book of Mormon period. Sorenson states: "Nowhere else in the Western Hemisphere have we good reason to believe that writing existed prior to European discovery."

Sorenson also makes an interesting point that certain literary styles evident in the hieroglyphs resemble similar complex features in the Book of Mormon. Rhythm and parallelism in Mayan writing echo recently discovered chiasmic forms (an inverted type of parallelism) in the Book of Mormon. It is suggested that chiasms may also be contained in the Chilam Balam texts (sixteenth century Maya-Yucatec writings), as well as the *Popol Vuh*, a late Classic Quiche Mayan book from Guatemala.

Evidence of a close relationship between recordkeeping and religion is also apparent. In fact, at the time of the Conquest in Yucatan, the priests, sons of priests, some of "the principle lords," and "the younger sons of the lords" possessed the knowledge of hieroglyphic writing. This is consistent with the common mode of recordkeeping throughout the Book of Mormon account. For example, Mormon, recordkeeper and chief editor, was also a prophet to his people.

One final point: The Book of Mormon mentions perishable records (Jacob 3:2, Alma 10:45-46) as well as an abundance of records (Helaman 2:14, III Nephi 2:93). Although only three Mesoamerican codices

(folded bark paper or deer-skin books) are known today, they represent examples of the existence of "perishable" records in existence at the time of contact. Most "books" were collected and burned by Bishop de Landa during that initial period in an effort to wipe out heathenism.

### A SIGNIFICANT MISCELLANY

The final section of information presents several other subjects in which new developments shed light favorably on the ancient American/Book of Mormon relationship, such as roads, cement and plants.

Sorenson relates that early known evidence of roads or sacbes (causeways) post-dated the Book of Mormon era. However, more recent discoveries extend the knowledge of road-building back as early as 300 B.C. Several findings of roads of various lengths, one about one hundred kilometers, verifies the widespread use during the Book of Mormon period.

While it has long been acknowledged that cement was in use, even before the time of Christ and over a widespread area, evidence is growing of the sophistication of techniques employed. One example given is from the site of El Tajin (dating shortly after the Book of Mormon period ends), located near the Gulf Coast, north of the narrow neck and east of Mexico City. Concrete roofs, composed of ground seashells, crushed pumice or pottery fragments, spanned rooms up to seventy-five meters square. Methods included building of wooden forms and sometimes even filling a room with rubble, smoothing the top, pouring the concrete, then after set and dried, removing the interior fill.

The recent discovery of "domesticated barley, the first ever found in the New World," is particularly exciting (ibid, 15-18). Sorenson points out its significance to Book of Mormon peoples, not only for food, but in connection with money standards. Its discovery confirms the Nephite record and changes long-held archaeological opinion asserting no Old World cultivated plants are to be found in the Western Hemisphere. Their exasperation at discovering what is "not supposed to be there" led one archaeologist to say, "If we can only find what is already known, we can avoid the bother of excavating.

"And on it goes."

### REPRISE

This summary of Sorenson's articles emphasizes our need to be kept up to date. The growing body of comparative evidence between Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon ought to be of interest to "truth-loving people." Out-of-date, uninformed believers do a disservice to this historical record. Archaeologists' biases are being shaken, opening up a new quest for truth.

And so, to conclude the message of an on-going summons to serious attentiveness to both the Nephite record and Mesoamerican archaeology, let

(Continued on page 16)



# THE BOOK OF MORMON IS OUR KEY TO THE FUTURE

by Raymond C. Treat

It is not enough for us to say that we believe in the Book of Mormon. We must be actively engaged in using it. In like manner it is not enough for us just to say we believe in Jesus Christ. According to Helaman 5:67 we must also repent of all our sins:

And if ye believe on his name, ye will repent of all your sins, that thereby ye may have a remission of them through his merits.

One of the sins that we as Book of Mormon believers are all guilty of is not making adequate use of this book. It is not inappropriate at this time to point out that the Lord pinpointed this sin as long ago as 1832:

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 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. (emphasis added) D&C 83:8ab

I have never heard any evidence that the Lord has lifted this condemnation. On the contrary, my own experience is that we are still treating the Book of Mormon lightly. Whenever I have the opportunity to give a Book of Mormon lecture I ask the audience one or two very simple questions about the Book of Mormon. The average number of persons who are able to answer these simple questions is about 5%. Please note that this is 5% of those people interested enough in the Book of Mormon to make the effort to attend a lecture, therefore, the actual average of all church members is probably less than 5%.

The most obvious reason for this situation seems to be a lack of understanding of how important the Book of Mormon is, or in other words, a lack of vision:

Where there is no vision the people perish. Proverbs 29:18

On the other hand, where there is vision, the people will flourish and prosper. The Book of Mormon tells us over and over that if we keep the commandments of God we shall prosper in the land. Therefore, if we keep the commandment to remember the Book of Mormon the Lord will certainly bless us more abundantly.

The question then comes to mind, "How do we obtain vision?" A good way to obtain vision concerning the Book of Mormon is to think or ponder about it. One of the best ways to study a scripture is to ponder

it. To ponder a scripture is not to read it and think about it for five minutes and then go on to something else. To ponder a scripture is to carry it on your heart for an extended period of time until you receive some additional enlightenment about it. Nephi had an experience while he was pondering:

As I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceeding high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot. 1 Nephi 3:38

If we ponder about the Book of Mormon we might obtain a better vantage point just as Nephi did and although we may not have an actual vision (although we might) we will probably obtain a better vision or understanding of the Book of Mormon which in turn will give us the motivation we need to make adequate use of it. In the left hand column of the chart "THE BOOK OF MORMON IS OUR KEY TO THE FUTURE" are five statements about the Book of Mormon that should become apparent to anyone after some pondering. Let us discuss briefly these five statements in an effort to expand our Book of Mormon vision.

## OUR KEY TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL

The gospel of Jesus Christ is of utmost importance to every soul. It is the plan of salvation. A major part of Satan's plan of destruction is to prevent the gospel of Jesus Christ from being introduced and spread. One way in which he did this was to have parts of the Bible removed during the Dark Ages. The Book of Mormon gives the only prophetic account of this part of world history currently available (see 1 Nephi 3:157-186). These verses tell us:

1. That in the beginning, the Bible "contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God". 1 Nephi 3:165

2. The Bible went "forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God". 1 Nephi 3:166

3. Then the Gentiles took "away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord". 1 Nephi 3:168-169

4. "And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord; that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men." 1 Nephi 3:170

(Continued on page 10)



# THE BOOK OF MORMON IS OUR KEY TO THE FUTURE

BECAUSE IT IS THE KEY TO	WHY	REFERENCE
<b>THE GOSPEL</b>	It restores parts of the gospel removed from the Bible during the Dark Ages	1 Nephi 3:165-185 eg Moroni 8:5-29
<b>ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE</b>	The Book of Mormon people had access to much scripture that we do not have yet such as:	
	The Book of Remembrance	Ether 3:80 Genesis 6:5, 47 Recent Book of Mormon Developments: 49-50
	The Plates of Brass	1 Nephi 1:158-168
	Sealed Portion	Ether 1:84-101
<b>ZION</b>	The Book of Mormon talks about a New Jerusalem	Ether 6:3-8
	It is the introduction to and the validation of the Restoration which restored the plan of Zion	As recorded in the Inspired Version (especially Genesis) and the Doctrine and Covenants
<b>THE RESTORATION OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL</b>	The Restoration of the House of Israel (God's plan for setting all things in order) is a major theme of the Book of Mormon which has information on this subject not found elsewhere.	for example the parable of Zenos Jacob 3:30-153
<b>MORE OF JESUS CHRIST</b>	The appearance and ministry of Jesus Christ was more powerful and enlightening to the Book of Mormon people than to the Jews	3 Nephi 5 through 3 Nephi 13 (especially 3 Nephi 8:17-26)
	The words of Christ as recorded on the large plates of Nephi are greater in quantity and more importantly higher in quality than those recorded in the Bible	3 Nephi 12:1-5



5. And "because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them". 1 Nephi 3:175

6. However, the Lord God will not "suffer that the Gentiles shall for ever remain in that awful state of blindness, which thou beholdest they are in because of the plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen". 1 Nephi 3:179

7. Because "after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which has been kept back, by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb, I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb". 1 Nephi 3:183

8. Nephi continues: "For behold, saith the Lamb, I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren; behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles by the gift and power of the Lamb". 1 Nephi 3:184-185

To summarize: the Bible was originally pure, plain and intact. Working through the Gentiles, Satan had many plain parts of the gospel removed in order to deceive but God did not allow this condition to continue indefinitely. He restored many of these parts through the Book of Mormon. For this reason those who say they believe in the Book of Mormon should know the gospel of Jesus Christ better than anyone else. However, this does not seem to be the case. On the contrary, there are probably very few Book of Mormon believers who know what parts of the gospel were restored in the Book of Mormon. This would be a very fruitful study for everyone to make. Chart the gospel from the Book of Mormon and compare it with the gospel from the King James Version. This would help identify those parts which were restored in the Book of Mormon. One area of the gospel which has been clarified in the Book of Mormon is baptism. The non-Restoration Christian world is divided on the need for baptism even though the New Testament has an account of the baptism of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon is very emphatic about the need for baptism:

And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water to fulfill all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water.

2 Nephi 13:7

In addition, the Book of Mormon tells us little children do not need baptism (Moroni 8:4-28) and that baptism should be by immersion (3 Nephi 5:23-28). This study would improve our understanding of and response to the gospel and would also be a very good missionary tool. The more we respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the more we will receive (see for example Alma 9:15-18). It should be no surprise then that the Book of Mormon is our key to the gospel.

### OUR KEY TO ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Of prime interest to most people is to know the will of God in their lives. Of course, an important part of God's will for us is that we grow in a knowledge of Him. It is for this reason that He has given us a portion of His word. Those who make full use of the Bible will be led to the Book of Mormon and those who make full use of the Book of Mormon will be led to even more of the word of God until they know the mysteries of God in full (Alma 9:18). Therefore, those who believe in and make use of the Book of Mormon know that it is the will of God that they receive more scripture. The realization that the Book of Mormon is our key to a massive amount of additional scripture is awe inspiring. This subject helps us to see that we have only begun to understand the importance of the Book of Mormon and the part it will play in the future of the world. There is not enough space in an article of this type to say all that could be said about this subject so the following discussion of examples of additional scripture should be viewed only as an introduction.

### The Book of Remembrance

The Book of Remembrance will be very important in God's plan to bring His creation back into His presence. It was 1) begun by commandment of God in the days of Adam (Genesis 6:47 IV); 2) was no doubt the first record to be kept and 3) contained the word of God (Genesis 6:5 IV). It has long been believed that the Jaredites took the Book of Remembrance with them to the New World because of the comment in Ether 3:80 about a record being brought across the ocean (the great deep). The publication of the book *Discovery of Genesis* in 1979 has now provided us with very strong evidence that the Jaredites did indeed take the Book of Remembrance to the New World (see *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*: 49-50). The need for the Lord to reveal the story of creation to Moses (Genesis 1:1 IV) when it was probably already recorded in the Book of Remembrance is additional evidence that the Book of Remembrance was no longer in the Old World. Also, the Book of Remembrance was written in the language of Adam (Genesis 6:5) and the Jaredites were the only people left after the confusion of tongues at the great tower who were able to read it (Ether 1:10-11). There is evidence to indicate that the Book of Remembrance is part of Mormon's library located in Hill Cumorah in southern Mexico. For more on the Book of Remem-



brance see *Peoples, Places and Prophecies*: 51-52, 222-224.

### The Plates of Brass

Not only is the Book of Mormon our key to the first Old World record, the Book of Remembrance, it is also our key to most of the Old Testament from Genesis to the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah at the time that Lehi left Jerusalem to begin his journey to the New World (1 Nephi 1:158-168). The evidence is not conclusive but we believe the plates of brass constitute the original Old Testament begun by Moses. This record will certainly play a major role in ministry to the House of Israel when it comes forth. There is evidently much information contained on the plates of brass which is not available from any Old Testament at the present time (1 Nephi 3:163). The Book of Mormon does have some of this information including the parable of Zenos which will be discussed below. Other examples are two Old Testament prophets who testified of Jesus Christ, Zenock and Neum (1 Nephi 5:240-241) as well as Zenos (1 Nephi 5:242). Everyone should be aware of the information in the Book of Mormon which comes from the plates of brass but is not in the Old Testament because it can be an excellent missionary tool. We have already seen that the Book of Mormon is our key to the gospel of Jesus Christ (the New Testament) and now we see that it is also our key to the Old Testament. We can therefore say that the Book of Mormon is our key to the entire Bible. (See *Peoples, Places and Prophecies*: 228-237 for more on the plates of brass.)

### The Sealed Portion

Even with the above keys, there is still more. The Book of Mormon is also our key to the most powerful example of the word of God that we are aware of—the Sealed Portion. Not only does the Sealed Portion contain a revelation of the world from the beginning to the end (Ether 1:90) but also the things which the brother of Jared wrote in it are mighty even as Jesus Christ is mighty “unto the overpowering of man to read them” (Ether 5:25).

### Other Records

The scriptures already mentioned should be enough to help us all gain an increased awareness of the importance of the Book of Mormon to the future of the world. There are, of course, many other scriptures that will be available through the Book of Mormon. Not the least of these are the large plates of Nephi which contain at least 100 times more information in them than we presently have in the Book of Mormon (Helaman 2:13; see the article “What is in the Book of Mormon is there for a Purpose” in *The Zarahemla Record* 24, 25, 26 for more on this point). The Book of Mormon also mentions the many scriptures resulting from the visits of Jesus Christ to the other tribes of

the House of Israel (2 Nephi 12:64-70). The Book of Mormon is the first of these “lost tribes scriptures” to become available to the world. Those who do not accept the Book of Mormon can not be expected to accept these other scriptures when they come forth. We are told that the world shall be judged by its scriptures (2 Nephi 12:66; 3 Nephi 13:2-3). If the Book of Mormon is our key to a vast amount of the word of God then it follows that it is also a means of judging us, both now and in the future.

### OUR KEY TO ZION

The Book of Mormon is recognized as the main evidence of the coming forth of the Restoration Movement. As such it is the introduction to the Restoration Movement. The main message of the Restoration is that there is more to come and the message of the Book of Mormon fits in well with this theme as we have just seen. The Restoration Movement itself is the introduction to Zion. Therefore we can say that the Book of Mormon is our introduction to Zion especially since the Book of Mormon tells us that a New Jerusalem will be established in the land of promise (Ether 6:6). Another way of seeing this truth is to realize that the goal of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to establish the kingdom of God (Zion) on earth. If the Book of Mormon is our key to the gospel, it must also be our key to Zion.

### OUR KEY TO THE RESTORATION OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

The topic of the Restoration of the House of Israel is not well understood. It is an all encompassing topic which includes the plan of Zion in both the New World and the Old World. It could be said that the Restoration of the House of Israel is a way of describing God’s total plan. When the term House of Israel is used in relationship to God’s total plan, some people think only of the Jews and others think only of those who are members of one of the twelve tribes by blood. Both are incorrect. Even Nephi made this mistake:

And I did rehearse unto them the words of Isaiah, who spake concerning the restoration of the Jews, or the house of Israel. 1 Nephi 4:32

Nephi first said Jews and then realized he had made a mistake. Because he had engraved the mistake in metal it was difficult if not impossible to erase so he inserted the word ‘or’ and corrected his mistake. This is called a “no eraser”. (See *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*: 54 for more on “no erasers”). The term Restoration of the House of Israel means the restoration of all those who believe in Jesus Christ regardless of whether they were born into one of the twelve tribes or not. If they were born into one of the twelve tribes they will lose their membership if they do not accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

The Book of Mormon contains a lot of information on the Restoration of the House of Israel, some of which is not found elsewhere. A good example is the

(Continued on page 12)



parable of Zenos already mentioned. This parable is found in Jacob 3:30-153. The subject of the parable is the Restoration of the House of Israel which is compared to an olive tree. This parable is probably the source for the olive tree as a symbol for the House of Israel. When the New Testament (e.g. Romans 11:16-24) refers to the olive tree as a symbol it is thought to be a reference to the parable of Zenos which was no doubt originally part of the Old Testament and was known in New Testament times but was apparently removed from the Old Testament later. The Book of Mormon is presently the only source for this important parable.

Another example showing that the Restoration of the House of Israel is of major importance in the Book of Mormon is the emphasis on the words of Isaiah which is a prime source of information about the Restoration of the House of Israel. Nephi tells us:

... in the days that the prophecies of Isaiah shall be fulfilled, men shall know of a surety, at the times when they shall come to pass; wherefore they are of worth unto the children of men. . . . 2 Nephi 11:12-13

Then Jesus tells us:

And now behold I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you, that ye **search these things diligently**; for great are the words of Isaiah. For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles. And all things that he spake, hath been, and shall be, even according to the words which he spake. Therefore give heed to my words. . . . (emphasis added) 3 Nephi 10:26-30

These words from Jesus Christ himself are plain enough and need no further comment. Our general lack of knowledge of the message of Isaiah and the Restoration of the House of Israel is an indication that we have not given full heed to the words of the Savior. As we all know, the Book of Mormon contains extensive quotes from Isaiah. There is definitely a reason for this because what is in the Book of Mormon is there for a purpose. The reader is encouraged to study Norma Anne Holik's new book, *Isaiah's Prophecies in the Book of Mormon*.

### OUR KEY TO MORE OF JESUS CHRIST

The Book of Mormon gives us information about Jesus Christ which is additional to that found in the Bible. First of all, it replaces some of the teachings of Jesus, such as about baptism, that were taken out of the Bible. Secondly, the Book of Mormon people were more receptive to Jesus than were the Jews. Instead of appearing as a carpenter's son, Jesus appeared to the Book of Mormon people gathered at the temple in the land Bountiful as the king of glory descending out of heaven. The manifestation of spiritual power and enlightenment that Jesus was able to share was

greater than in the Old World. If the Book of Mormon is our key to more of Jesus Christ, acceptance and use of the Book of Mormon must be a prerequisite for anyone who wishes to experience and participate in any real spiritual breakthroughs in the future.

One of the best bits of evidence that the Book of Mormon is our key to more of Jesus Christ comes from 3 Nephi 12:1-5:

1. And now there can not be written in this book, even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach the people; but behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people;
2. And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.
3. And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.
4. And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.
5. Behold I was about to write them all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbid it, saying, I will try the faith of my people; therefore I, Mormon, do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord.

These are some of the most important verses in the Book of Mormon. Mormon is in the process of abridging the Book of Mormon from the large plates of Nephi. He tells us in verse 1 that he can not include in the Book of Mormon even 1% of the things which Jesus taught the people and that the more part of these things are recorded on the plates of Nephi, referring to the large plates of Nephi. Mormon says in verse 2 that the Book of Mormon contains the lesser part of the things which Jesus taught the people. The important point to remember is that he is talking about the lesser part in regard to quality as well as quantity. This becomes clear in verse 3. Mormon says that if the Book of Mormon descendants believe the words of Jesus in the Book of Mormon "then shall the **greater** things be made manifest unto them" (emphasis added). Notice that Mormon does not say "then shall the **additional** things be made manifest unto them". The words of Jesus in the Book of Mormon do not represent a random sample of all the things which Jesus taught the people. Instead they represent the bottom 1% in regard to spiritual quality. This means the Book of Mormon people received 99% more of the words of Jesus than we have in the Book of Mormon (or in the New Testament) and all 99% of these words were spiritually above and beyond that which we have. These verses portray as well as any the idea that the Book of Mormon is a stepping stone or gateway or key to further spiritual growth. Verse 4 strengthens this idea. Mormon says that if the



# THE NEED TO STUDY

## A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

by Rae Simmons

The best reason I can put forth for the importance of study is in Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

The feeling that I had a responsibility to study began when I reread my patriarchal blessing last summer, under the urging of the Spirit - when I finally allowed myself to hold it up as a guide for my spiritual growth. I might insert here that my blessing is not ordinary. It uses some very powerful language as to how the Lord would like to use me for His work if I allow him to. And there are some very specific guidelines to follow to this end. I mention this because the first and foremost instruction is to study.

Like many of us, I had no real idea how to begin to do this. I asked my pastor and a couple of other friends for suggestions and I made a sincere effort to begin.

Recently, I read some words by Thelona Stevens that struck a very personal chord. In an article about her efforts to learn to study she refers to "the dreaded hour" she'd set aside for study. She said it was such a chore at first, she really didn't learn a lot because her comprehension was very limited. Then she realized she hadn't ever asked her Heavenly Father for help. She'd been struggling because, as she said, she had no one to study with, she had no one to help her, and she had no teacher. It was a long time before she realized she had a wonderful teacher - her Heavenly Father.

This is what I've found in my own life. The Lord has guided me thru every step of my efforts. Looking back I can see that He has used my friends and family to direct my course. I've been sent tapes, reading material, had books referred, and the depth of my material has grown as I have grown and my knowledge has increased.

In an article on study by Ray Treat, he says there are three levels of interest: 1) castor oil, 2) dry cereal,

and 3) peaches and cream. Castor oil people study only when forced to; they may dust off a book to look up a scripture for the early morning worship. Dry cereal people study occasionally and they realize it's not that bad, but it's not a priority either. But peaches and cream people have experienced a break-through. They can't get enough! A couple of months ago I tried to evaluate, honestly, my level of study. I felt it was more than dry cereal, but I knew it wasn't peaches and cream either. I settled on a compromise of dry cereal with a little fruit on it! Then about the middle of April I made a break-through. Study is no longer a responsibility, or even a pleasant pastime, but it's now a joy I can indulge in for hours!

Thelona Stevens said she had prayed for years that the Lord would use her in His work. One day as she was speaking to a large group of people and urging on them the importance of studying and becoming familiar with the words of their Heavenly Father, the Spirit spoke to her mind and said "Remember all those years you prayed that I would use you? I was unable to answer those prayers until you had studied and learned what you must know so I could use you where I chose to."

The Lord **wants** to use us. He has something planned for each of us to do. But He can only use us to the extent we will let Him. We tie His hands until **we prepare ourselves**. He cannot bring to our minds, in time of need, those things we should know, unless we've first put them into our subconscious through study.

The Book of Mormon tells us there is much more scripture the Lord has to bring forth, but this is only for those who use efficiently that which they have. If we don't use what we now have, even that will be taken from us. Now that doesn't mean someone will come to your door and confiscate your Three Standard Books. But what happens to something you set aside for a period of time? It gets misplaced...you lose it (Matthew 13:10).

But this doesn't mean that we must begin with a long, involved course of study. Just choose some-

(Continued on page 16)

### BOOK OF MORMON IS OUR KEY—from page 12

descendents do not believe the words of Jesus in the Book of Mormon "then shall the **greater** things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation" (emphasis added). Verse 5 tells us that we are given just this much in order to try our faith. If we will respond we will receive more. The Book of Mormon is therefore either a stepping stone or a stumbling block depending upon our response. The Book of Mormon truly is our key to more of Jesus Christ.

### THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE

It should be clear by now that the Book of Mormon is the key to our future. Our response to it will not only have a bearing on our immediate activities but will also determine our future for the next one thousand

years. Sometime in the not too distant future we will pass through the judgment of Christ at the time of the first resurrection. At this time we will be assigned to one of two places. Either we will receive our resurrected bodies and be allowed to live on the earth for a thousand years with Jesus Christ or we will not receive our resurrected bodies and be consigned to the prison house for a thousand years. Both places will be a learning experience—one for the obedient and one for the disobedient. The rejection of or lack of use of the Book of Mormon is an act of disobedience for those who claim to believe in it. Studying and making use of the Book of Mormon is an act of obedience which will lead to ever increasing spiritual light and a closer walk with Jesus Christ which will give us a place in the first resurrection. ☐



# “IN THE LEARNING OF THE JEWS”

## A TESTIMONY

by Alice Lundgren

“... Now their dead were not numbered, because of the greatness of their numbers, neither were the dead of the Nephites numbered; but it came to pass after they had buried their dead, and also after the days of **fasting**, and **mourning**, and **prayer**, (and it was in the sixteenth year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi,) there began to be continual peace throughout all the land, yea, and the people did observe to keep the commandments of the Lord; and they were strict in observing the ordinances of God, according to the Law of Moses; for they were taught to keep the Law of Moses, until it should be fulfilled.” Alma 16:2-4 (emphasis added).

In the quoted scripture, once again the almighty intelligent nature of our Lord is displayed in power and yet in a most subtle way. Many people today lightly pass over the words, “... after the days of fasting, and mourning, and prayer...” and never realize that once again proof has been given to the “Hebrew” nature of the Book of Mormon.

In a previous article of *The Zarahemla Record* the topic of “Chiasms” was dealt with. A chiasm was defined as a statement containing two or more parts followed by a restatement in reverse order (ABC C’B’A’). Contained in the very first two verses of the Book of Mormon is a chiasm of great importance to us today. “... yea, having had a great **knowledge**, of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a **record** of my proceedings in my days; yea, I make a record in the **language** of my father, which consists of the **learning of the Jews** and the **language** of my father, which consists of the **learning of the Jews** and the **language** of the Egyptians. And I know that the **record** which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my **knowledge**.”

Charting out this chiasm we are confronted with the following:

- A Knowledge
- B Record
- C Language
- D Learning of the Jews
- C’ Language
- B’ Record
- A’ Knowledge

By definition, the center point of a chiasm is the most important thought being communicated. In the case of I Nephi 1:1-2, the first point the Book of Mormon and Nephi are communicating to us is that we must be familiar with the learning of the Jews. To validate that statement let me quote from II Nephi 11:8, “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**” (emphasis added).

We are presented an important key from Nephi to unlock the testimony contained within the Book of Mormon. We should all be familiar with the phrase, “every word that is in the Book of Mormon is there for a purpose”. And in the case of the scripture from Alma, “... days of fasting, and mourning, and prayer” we shall find that not only do the words have purpose, but even the very order or pattern in which they are given is testimony of the divinity of this book.

As I was studying the book, *To Be A Jew*, by Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donning, in the attempt to become acquainted with the “learning of the Jews”, I found a unique practice of mourning among the Jewish people today. This practice drew my attention back to the verses of fasting, and mourning, and prayer found in Alma.

Jewish law provides for three successive periods of mourning following the burial of a loved one with each period to be observed with less intensity. The requirement for loved ones to comfort mourners does not begin until after burial. Until the burial, the bereaved are allowed to give fullest expression to their grief, and no formal condolences are extended during this time. It is not a Jewish custom to have condolence visits to the mourning family prior to burial whether at their residence or at a funeral home.

Following the burial, the mourner’s very first meal is not to consist of food they have prepared themselves. They must **fast** from their own cooking. Food is prepared at this time by neighbors, friends, or other relatives and is called the “Meal of Comfort”. This practice is based on a passage from Ezekiel 24:17 which speaks negatively of the then prevailing mourning practices and says, “... and eat not the bread of men”. This meal customarily contains hard boiled eggs, a food that has become a symbol for mourning and condolences. The egg’s roundness symbolizes the continuous nature of life and also suggests that from despair there may follow renewal and joy. There are no special restrictions concerning the contents of the meal but it is not to be eaten in a party like atmosphere. This meal is not intended for visitors. It is also not served if the mourner returns from a funeral in the late afternoon preceding a Sabbath or festival day. Remember the words from Alma, “... days of fasting...”.

The first period of mourning is given the name



“Shiva” and lasts for seven days following burial and the Meal of Comfort, with the day of burial being counted as the first day.

The second period of mourning is known as “Shloshim” and refers to the period from the end of Shiva through the morning of the thirtieth day after burial. Shiva and Shloshim then together constitute a thirty day period of mourning with continued fasting from worldly pleasures.

Demonstrated thus far has been that after death, Jewish mourners have a period of mourning in which fasting from certain aspects of life are maintained. But what of the third part of the pattern found in Alma, that of prayer?

The third period observed in Jewish mourning is called the “Avelut Mourning”. This period extends from the end of Shloshim through the first anniversary of the day of death. During this period, joyous events, theaters, and concerts are avoided and “Kaddish” is said during this eleven month period.

Kaddish today is a special prayer that is recited daily during the eleven month period of Avelut Mourning. The recitation of the Kaddish requires a Minyan, a quorum of ten Jewish male adults, and is not said

when praying alone. Originally the Kaddish was recited only at the conclusion of a session of Torah study. Sometime during the early middle ages, during the post Talmudic period, it became identified with mourners. Therefore, it has not always been the Kaddish that was recited as the daily prayer of mourners, but there has always been a period of daily prayer for mourning in the Law of Moses. Today that daily prayer is the Kaddish.

Although this is but a brief outline of Jewish custom that is practiced today, one can clearly see there is a pattern. And that pattern is:

1. Fasting (worldly pleasures)
2. Mourning (a 7 and 23 day period)
3. Prayer (offered daily for 11 months)

The pattern that is given in Alma is another testimony to me of the Hebrew nature of the Book of Mormon as well as identification of the ancient custom of mourning. Surely our God has prepared every needful thing and to the Jew this will be further evidence of His hand in the record translated by Joseph Smith. A record brought forth to the convincing of both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ and the very God whom we worship.☐

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES FOR BOOK OF MORMON INFORMATION

by Raymond C. Treat

If all of the positive literature written about the Bible was gathered into one place it would constitute a very large pile. If all of the positive Book of Mormon literature was gathered into one place it would constitute a very small pile. Once we realize the Book of Mormon has a potential for producing as much if not more literature than the Bible it is easy to see that there is still a lot we have to look forward to. While the Book of Mormon does not cover as long a period of history as the Bible, it does cover about 2800 years of history. In addition, it deals with the history of a much larger part of the world than does the Bible, including the New World, the Far East and the Pacific islands as well as the Middle East. Furthermore, the Book of Mormon contains many spiritual insights not found in the Bible. There is an increasing amount of Book of Mormon information of a physical and spiritual nature coming forth and it behooves every Book of Mormon believer to be aware of this information. Besides the Zarahemla Research Foundation, there are three other organizations that are recommended for those who want to keep up-to-date with the latest Book of Mormon research.

### FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA (FRAA)

FRAA, headed by Thelona Stevens, publishes a newsletter containing original research on Book of Mormon topics and sponsors Book of Mormon lectures. In addition they have produced additional Book of Mormon literature. Write to 202 S. Pendleton, Independence, Missouri 64050 for further information.

### SOCIETY FOR EARLY HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY (SEHA)

SEHA publishes a newsletter and sponsors an annual symposium on the archaeology of the scriptures. Scriptures other than the Book of Mormon are also covered. Their address is Box 7488, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602.

### FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH AND MORMON STUDIES (F.A.R.M.S.)

F.A.R.M.S. publishes a newsletter and has a catalogue of available reprints from a variety of sources as well as new research. Their focus is on the Book of Mormon but information on other scriptures is provided. Write to P.O. Box 7113, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602 for descriptive literature.



STUDY—from page 13

thing that interests you and begin there. I began with the New Testament in order to become more familiar at first hand with the teachings of Christ. Then I began to feel drawn toward the Book of Mormon. So I re-read it with much related study material and recently I've been led to the prophecies and how they relate to our day. I could not have dreamed, when I began ten months ago, the direction my studies would take. But we are promised that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth if we will do our part. I can promise you that if you make the initial effort, with a sincere desire to learn what the Lord would have you know, He'll guide your learning. And what could be more exciting than knowing that your Heavenly Father is your teacher! That He is choosing your study material, guiding you, enlightening your mind to the things He wants you to know.

As Nephi tells us in the 14th chapter of II Nephi, "Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ shall tell you all things what ye should do" [ ]

dency to substitute comfortable "folk understanding" for facts on certain subjects, particularly having to do with archaeology. We must expect new facts and... new truths both in the Book of Mormon itself and about it. [ ]

### ZRF MEMBERSHIP

The two categories of members in the foundation are Regular and Associate Members. The board has voted to increase the requirement for the Regular Member category from a \$25 donation annually to \$100 annually. Associate Members are all those who make any donation less than \$100 annually.

The Zarahemla Research Foundation board of directors has voted to increase its board from 3 to 5 members.

Regular members are accorded voting rights and ballots will be mailed to all who qualify to vote on the 2 vacancies on the board.

### DONATION RECEIPTS

Because of the ever increasing cost of postage and stationary your cancelled check will serve as your receipt for tax purposes unless you specifically request a receipt.

For those who make several or monthly donations a receipt will be sent at the end of the year.

Each donation is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

## WHEN YOU MOVE PLEASE NOTIFY US!

It costs 25¢ just to get your new address plus first class postage to send you another newsletter.

## PLEASE REMEMBER TO NOTIFY US!

### REPORT ON BOOK OF MORMON RESEARCH—from page 7

us consider Sorenson's closing comments:

Carefully compared with facts from external sources, the Book of Mormon is impressive, in my view, though most of the task remains to be done. Yet the book itself stands above and independent of whatever academic studies of it may show. Neither critics nor apologists change history... Yet we need not feel self-righteous when scholars are taken to task for their narrowness. Our people have exhibited a decided ten-

### THE ZARAHEMLA RECORD

is published by the Zarahemla Research Foundation

EDITOR: Mary Lee Treat

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Wayne E. Simmons

Raymond C. Treat

LAYOUT: J. Robert Farley

Have you made your 1985 contribution to the Zarahemla Research Foundation? Your tax-deductible contribution will be used to publish The Zarahemla Record and other Book of Mormon related materials.

Check the approximate box below:

\$25  \$10  \$100  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

No portion of this newsletter may be reproduced without written permission.

Non-Profit Org.  
Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Independence,  
Missouri  
Permit No. 219



MOVING? PLEASE SEND US YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS!