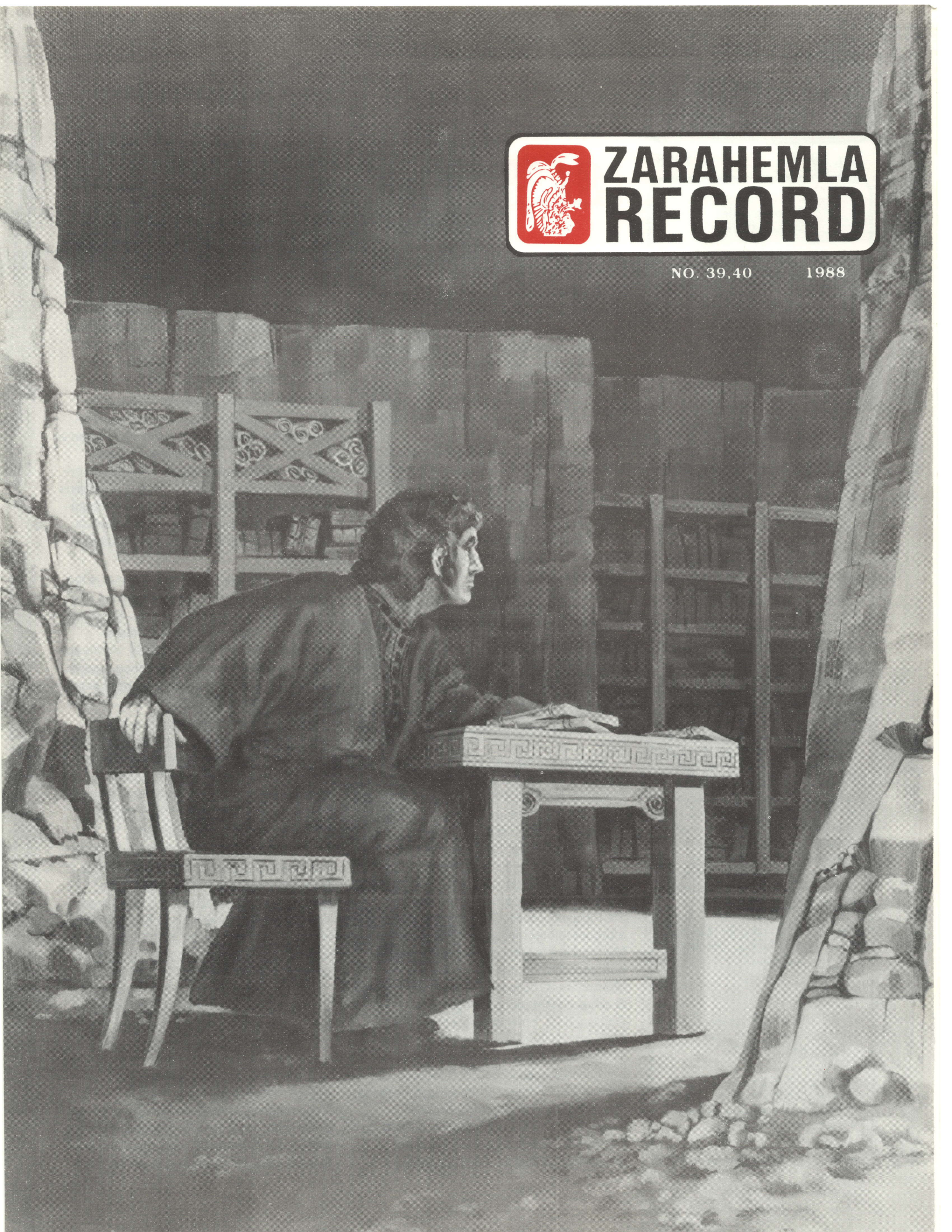




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Cover Mormon's Library in the Hill Cumorah from an original oil painting by J. Robert Farley.

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## Sealed Peruvian Tomb Unearthed

In the October 1988 issue of *National Geographic*, an article entitled "Discovering the New World's Richest Unlooted Tomb" reported on a rich burial uncovered at the site of El Sipán. El Sipán, located in the Lambayaque Valley in northern Peru, had been built and occupied from A.D. 100 to 700 by the pre-Incan people known as the Moche.

Archaeologists were cleaning up a different tomb which had been ransacked by looters, finding many fragments of artifacts. Suspecting that other tombs might be hidden nearby, they expanded their area of excavation and four months later found an unsealed tomb. The burial, dated about A.D. 290 ± 50, contained a body believed to be a warrior-priest surrounded by the bodies of two women, two men and a dog. In the layer above was the body of a man dubbed "the guardian." Perhaps the most exciting parts of the find were the extraordinary gold, silver and copper jewelry and other ornamental pieces, evidence of a high level of knowledge and skill of metalworking at this early date.

What is the significance of this find to Book of Mormon believers? Where did the Moche come from? Could they be related to the Book of Mormon people? There are at least two possibilities to consider. The Moche could either have been a group that migrated from the Book of Mormon lands in Mesoamerica or descendants of a separate group led by the Lord from the Old World to the Peruvian coast. There is general agreement that the lands of the Book of Mormon are in Mesoamerica, several hundred miles to the north. The Book of Mormon records groups of people migrating to other distant parts during the First Century B.C., both by water (e.g., Alma 30:6) and by land (e.g., Helaman 2:3-4). The parable of the olive tree (Zenos's parable in Jacob 3:30-153) mentions four "plantings." Three of them possibly refer to the Jaredites, the Nephites and the Mulekites. Could the Moche be related to the fourth? Jesus also spoke of other sheep that he had to visit in addition to

those at Jerusalem and the Nephites (3 N 7:24).

Following are a few comparisons between the Peruvian culture, Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon:

**•Pyramids/Burials.** The Moche built pyramids as did the people of Mesoamerica although the Moche's buildings were made of adobe bricks. The use of bricks in Mesoamerica was rare. Burials beneath structures have also been found in Mesoamerica. It is believed the platform excavated at El Sipán had been topped by a temple, also characteristic of the Book of Mormon and Mesoamerica. Burials are mentioned in the Book of Mormon, but without details relating to how or where.

**•Warfare/Priests.** Because of accouterments in his coffin, the main occupant of the Moche burial is believed to have been a "warrior-priest." The combined role of warrior-priest is also evident in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon (e.g., Captains Moroni and Mormon). The recent recognition of extensive warfare in Mesoamerica has long been testified to in the Book of Mormon.

**•Precious Metals.** The Moche burial is the greatest discovery thus far containing fine metalworking in the New World. The Book of Mormon mentions several metals, including gold, silver and copper. Archaeological metal finds in Mesoamerica date to about A.D. 900, although there are a small number as early 100 B.C.

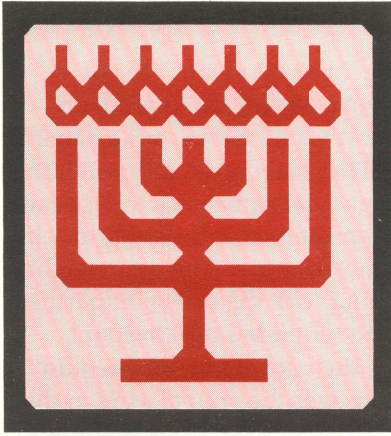
**•Writing.** The lack of a writing system using glyphs in the Peruvian civilization is perhaps the greatest difference between that area and Mesoamerica. Not all peoples have used writing as evidenced by the Mulekites who had no records but passed along their history orally.

**•Feline Motif.** Among the Moche artifacts retrieved from a looter's home were "the gilded copper faces of two jaguar-like felines baring shell fangs." The origin of the jaguar-like feline motif in Mesoamerica is commonly associated with the Olmec (Jaredites). It is also found in China (the probable route taken by the Jaredites).

Finding an intact tomb is encouraging. Even in areas outside Book of Mormon lands, a find such as this one in Peru contributes to the overall picture. Our expectation of future discoveries grows as we anticipate even more finds of this nature. This is especially true in Mesoamerica where less than ten percent of the sites have been excavated, and then only a small portion of each site. We look forward to more information coming forth.

S.R.H.





# Understanding our Covenant

## Part of "The Learning of the Jews"

*There is a hidden message in the first two verses of the Book of Mormon.*

There is a hidden message in the first two verses of the Book of Mormon. The message is to search out "the learning of the Jews." The key to finding this hidden message is to know that these two verses are a chiasm, which is one form of Hebrew poetry. A chiasm is an inverted parallelism, or in other words, you say something then repeat yourself in reverse order. One advantage of writing chiastically is that you can place special emphasis on the most important point by placing it in the center of the chiasm. Nephi deliberately constructed his chiasm so that "the learning of the Jews" was in the center: A) knowledge; B) record; C) language; D) **the learning of the Jews**; C') language; B') record; A') knowledge. Nephi is telling us that "the learning of the Jews" is an important key to understanding the Book of Mormon. This should come as no surprise because we already know that "the learning of the Jews" is a key to understanding the Bible. We have just used one area of "the learning of the Jews"--Hebrew poetry--to find a hidden message. Another area in which "the learning of the Jews" greatly enhances our understanding is that of covenant-making.

### COVENANTS NOT UNDERSTOOD

The concept of covenant-making in the ancient world is emerging as one of the most profound and far-reaching topics in all scripture. This is because the making of a covenant is at the heart of the gospel. God has made it possible for us to have a covenant with him through faith in Jesus Christ who was the sacrificial lamb slain for us. Nephi is correct when he states that only the Jews or those who study their ways understand the things of the Jews (2 Nephi 11:8). Until we knew about chiasms in the Book of Mormon, we could not fully understand the intent of Nephi's opening statement. In the same way, until we know what a covenant meant to an ancient Hebrew, the true understanding of our covenant will elude us. I have been greatly blessed as I continue to learn more about this subject. It also takes time to "soak in." I am looking forward to even greater blessings as I fully implement my covenant. Please consider this information very carefully and very prayerfully. If you do this I know you too will be greatly blessed as the word of God and the Holy Spirit reveal to you the real meaning of the covenant you have with God.

In the account of Nephi and Zoram, we see how seriously the ancient Hebrews took their covenants. After Nephi killed Laban in obtaining the brass plates, he made an oath to Zoram that Zoram could go with them into the wilderness (1 Nephi 1:136-144). Zoram accepted and made an oath to live with them. Both Zoram and Nephi had much at risk. Zoram had his life at risk; Nephi and his brothers had their lives and the success of their mission at risk.

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By Raymond C. Treat



Yet in verse 144, Nephi states in a matter-of-fact way “that when Zoram had made an oath unto us, our fears did cease concerning him.”

In the western world today we do not understand how, in a life-or-death situation such as this, just a few words could bring about complete trust. Obviously these oaths meant much more to those men than they would to us today. By swearing an oath to each other, Nephi and Zoram had entered into a covenant. What did a covenant mean to them?

## OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

In the Old Testament a covenant was a sacred and binding agreement between two people. God’s covenant with Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed is no doubt the best-known covenant in scripture. This covenant was initiated by God and was unconditional. One aspect of this covenant was the promise of inheriting a land:

And the Lord said unto him, I the Lord, brought thee out of Ur, of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And Abram said, Lord, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

Genesis 15:13-14

What did God do to assure Abraham? He made a blood covenant with him. The establishment of this covenant removed any doubt from Abraham’s mind. Let’s look at the way the ancient Hebrews made covenants.

### Steps in a Hebrew Covenant

In his book, *The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread*, Richard Booker outlines the steps ancient Hebrews typically followed in making a covenant. They exchanged robes and belts, cut the covenant, raised their right arms and mingled their blood, exchanged names, made a scar, stated the covenant terms, ate a memorial meal and planted a memorial tree. Let’s examine the significance of each of these steps.

#### ■ *Exchanged robes*

A man’s robe was symbolic of all his material possessions. Therefore, by giving his robe, he was pledging everything he had to his covenant brother.

#### ■ *Exchanged belts*

The symbolism of this act is lost to our modern culture because our belts serve a different purpose. The ancient belts were weapons belts. Therefore, the message of giving one’s belt was--“all the power I have I now give to you. If necessary, I will defend you to the death.”

#### ■ *Cut the covenant*

The Hebrew word for covenant means “to cut or make an incision.” The two covenant makers cut an animal down the middle and stood between the halves, their backs to each other. They then walked through the sacrifice, made a figure eight and came back to face each other. The dead animal represented self--dying to self and giving up rights to your own life. The figure eight represented a new beginning with the covenant partner until death. This ritual also reminded the covenant partners that if they broke their covenant, they would become food for vultures as was the animal used in this step.

#### ■ *Raised right arm and mixed blood*

The covenant partners then raised their right arms, cut their palms and intermingled their blood, while swearing allegiance to each other. Then, as now, blood represented life; the intermingling represented two lives becoming one life.

#### ■ *Exchanged names*

Each would take the other person’s last name and add it to his own. God and Abram exchanged names. God’s name in Hebrew is YHWH. So God took an “H” from his name and gave it to Abram, changing his name to Abraham. Abraham’s wife Sarai was also given an “H” which changed her name to Sarah. Abraham gave his name to God. That is why he is called the God of Abraham. The next time you see that name in scripture, it will remind you that God made a covenant with Abraham.

#### ■ *Made a scar*

The participants made sure there would be a scar as a remembrance of the covenant. One common practice to ensure scarring was to rub dirt into the cut. If anyone tried to harm a person under covenant, he would simply raise his right arm and show the scar. The enemy then knew that he would also have to fight the man’s covenant partner. The scars in the body of Jesus Christ are covenant scars.

#### ■ *Gave the covenant terms*

The participants recited the terms of the covenant in the presence of witnesses. Because we can, through faith, receive the benefits of the covenant between God and Abraham, we need to be very familiar with the terms of that covenant. Abraham was given a promised land. For the children of Abraham in the last days that promised land is called Zion. If we keep our covenant, our inheritance is Zion; if not then we inherit death, because that is always the punishment for breaking a covenant. This punishment extends for several generations if necessary. In like manner, the blessings of a covenant also extend to one’s seed.



## ■ *Ate a memorial meal*

The covenant partners then had a meal together to commemorate their covenant. This explains the symbolism of communion-- a remembrance of the covenant which we have made with Jesus Christ. Today, when a bride and groom feed the wedding cake to each other, they are acting out a custom which had its origin in the blood covenant.

## ■ *Planted a memorial tree*

The participants would plant a tree and sprinkle it with the blood of the sacrifice. If there were no witnesses to the covenant, they would pile up some stones and sprinkle some blood on them so that the stones became a witness that they had made a covenant. That is why Jesus said that if the people did not praise God on Palm Sunday, the stones themselves would have cried out in witness of what was occurring (Luke 19:39).

## Mephibosheth

Now that we have had an introduction to a Hebrew covenant let us see if this information will help us to better understand the word of God. Let's apply our new knowledge to the story of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. We will start the story in I Samuel 18:3-4:

Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

We now know that the reason Jonathan gave his robe and his weapons to David was because that was part of the way a covenant was made. If the words "made a covenant" had been left out, we would still know that Jonathan and David had made a covenant because of the rituals they followed.

It is important in the story of Mephibosheth that we notice that King Saul, Jonathan's father, became jealous of David and tried to kill him because he feared David would take the kingdom away from him. Next, we turn to 2 Samuel 4:4:

And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled; and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

Here we are told how Mephibosheth became lame. Why was the nurse fleeing? She had heard that Saul and Jonathan were dead, and it was clear to her that David

would be the king. Since King Saul had poisoned the minds of his household (except Jonathan) against David, the nurse naturally assumed that as soon as David took over, he would kill all of Saul's family; therefore, she fled with Mephibosheth. Apparently she did not know about the covenant between David and Jonathan. We now pick up the story in 2 Samuel 9:1:

And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

David wanted to bless Saul's family because of the covenant he had with Jonathan. The covenant was still in force even though Jonathan was dead. All this time the nurse had been hiding Mephibosheth because she feared for his life. We continue the story with 2 Samuel 9:7-8. Mephibosheth was found and brought before King David:

And David said unto him, Fear not; for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?

Even after David told Mephibosheth what he was going to do for him, Mephibosheth was incapable of understanding. He still thought he was going to be killed. He had been living a miserable existence in hiding without a knowledge of the covenant he had with the king. The message should not be lost on us. We are like poor Mephibosheth. We have a covenant with God but are not taking advantage of it because we do not know anything about it. We can clearly see from the story of Mephibosheth how an understanding of the ancient Hebrew covenant helps us to understand the word of God.

## ORIGIN OF THE BLOOD COVENANT

The blood covenant, however, did not begin with Abraham. We are told in Revelation 13:8 about the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." From this reference we learn that the blood covenant was in effect from the beginning. Adam was taught that the sacrifices he was told to make were "a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father . . ." (Genesis 4:7). Since the covenant we make with God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins is central to God's plan for the redemption of mankind, we can expect that Satan would try to defeat the covenant by perverting it. As we know, Satan deceived Cain. Also,



in Genesis 5:35-38 we are told that Lamech entered into a covenant with Satan, which resulted in him murdering Irad, who had also made a covenant with Satan. Irad had broken the evil covenant by revealing it to the sons of Adam. The penalty for breaking a blood covenant was (and still is) death, whether the covenant was an evil covenant or a holy covenant.

We must realize that the only way we will be able to survive in the final days is by having a covenant with God. Those who wish to follow Satan will already have made their covenant through which they will receive whatever power Satan has. Their primary goal will then be the destruction of the rest of mankind. Only those who have a covenant with God will be able to stand in such a day. These people will have all the power they need from God to withstand and overcome wickedness. We call this power the endowment.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR COVENANT

We all know that baptism means we have made a covenant with God. This is clearly stated in these two Book of Mormon verses:

Now I say unto you,  
If this be the desire of your hearts,  
What have you against being baptized  
in the name of the Lord,  
As a witness before him that ye have entered  
into a covenant with him  
That ye will serve him and keep his  
commandments,  
That he may pour out his Spirit more  
abundantly upon you?

Mosiah 9:41

Yea, come and go forth,  
And shew unto your God that ye are willing  
to repent of your sins,  
And enter into a covenant with him to keep  
his commandments  
And witness it unto him this day, by going into  
the waters of baptism.

Alma 5:27

Everyone who is baptized recognizes that he has made a covenant. In this respect we are unlike Mephibosheth, who did not know he had a covenant with the king. Yet, if we who are baptized do not understand the significance of our covenant, we are like Mephibosheth in that we are not able to enjoy the benefits of having a covenant with the king. I believe most of us fit this second category. We use the word "covenant" but do not yet fully understand the meaning of the word. It is as if we are groveling on the floor, satisfied with the

crumbs from the Master's table, when we should be seated as invited guests enjoying the feast. One scripture which points out that we do not understand our covenant and are therefore not making use of it in our daily lives is Malachi 2:10:

Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

According to some, backbiting is one of the most widespread sins among this people. Passing on rumors (most of which are false) seems to be one of our favorite pastimes. If we understood the type of relationship God wants each of us to have with each other as a result of our covenant with him, we would not participate in any activity that would harm a brother or sister in any way.

## The Covenant Dispels Doubt

If the Lord has blessed us as a people as much as he has in spite of our lack of understanding of our covenant, then how much more do we have to look forward to as we improve our response to that covenant!

One thing we can look forward to as we establish the covenant more firmly in our lives is that our doubts will begin to diminish until all doubt is removed about the word of God, including the promises made to the covenant people. Nephi reminds us that God always remembers his covenants:

Behold, he loved our fathers and he  
covenanted with them,  
Yea, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;  
And he remembered the covenants  
which he had made.

1 Nephi 5:132

Jacob agrees:

For the Lord God will fulfill his covenants  
which he has made unto his children;  
And for this cause the prophet has written  
these things.

2 Nephi 5:32

Doubt and faith are opposites. If all doubt is removed then we would be living a life of faith to its fullest extent. Fear would also disappear since fear and faith are also opposites. The hope of such a great blessing alone should inspire us to learn more about this covenant we say we have.

## The Covenant Brings Power

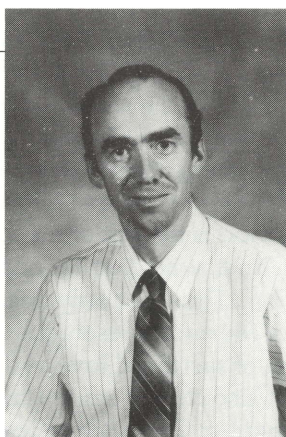
As we establish the covenant more firmly in our lives, we can look forward to greater spiritual power.

(Continued on page 14)



# The Principle of First Mention

by Frank E. Frye



I learned about the Principle of First Mention from a book by Dr. Henry M. Morris called *Many Infallible Proofs*. The principle was explained in a chapter dealing with the structure of scripture. Let me quote Dr. Morris to help define this principle:

One of the remarkable evidences of Biblical unity is its internal consistency. Nowhere is this more strikingly evident than in a phenomenon called the law of first mention. That is, the very first time an important word or concept of Scripture is mentioned in the Bible (usually, though not always, in the book of Genesis), its usage in that passage provides the foundation for its full development in later parts of the Bible, especially in the New Testament. (Morris 1974:201)

The next day after reading this I attended a class in which chiasmus, a form of Hebrew poetry, was presented as an evidence that the authors of the Book of Mormon were Hebrews and used Hebrew writing styles despite the fact that they wrote in reformed Egyptian. You may remember that a chiasm is "a statement containing two or more parts followed by a restatement in reverse order (ABC C'B'A')" (see *Recent Book of Mormon Developments* p.64). The main message is in the center point of the passage.

I had heard about chiasms before; however, this time something new began to crystallize in my mind. I realized that Nephi had utilized the Principle of First Mention.

Nephi begins his book, which is

also the first book of the Book of Mormon, with a chiasm. The center or main point of his chiasm is "the learning of the Jews."

...Yea, having had a great **knowledge(A)** of the goodness and the mysteries of God,

Therefore, I make a **record(B)** of my proceedings in my days;

Yea, I make a record in the **language(C)** of my father Which consists of the **learning of the Jews(D)** and the **language(C')** of the Egyptians.

And I know that the **record(B')** which I make to be true, And I make it with mine own hand, and I make it according to my **knowledge(A')**.

1 Nephi 1:1-2

Or, simplified:

A knowledge  
B record  
C language  
D **learning of the Jews**  
C' language  
B' record  
A' knowledge

This chiasm seems to testify by the Principle of First Mention that the reason for the use of chiasms in the Book of Mormon is to bring to light a knowledge of this record in the language of the ancient Hebrews and Egyptians, all the while being couched in the *learning of the Jews* of ancient times.

Later that afternoon as I opened my concordance, the Principle of First Mention became for me a new principle to be explored in the Book of Mormon.

In his book, Dr. Morris demonstrates the Principle of First Mention by analyzing the first use of several words in the Bible, such as "light," "love," "grace" and "word." These words are also important in the Book of Mormon.

## LIGHT

One of the most striking examples of the principle is the first word that Dr. Morris discusses, "light." His discussion points out that the word "light" first appears in Genesis 1:3 (1:6 IV) when God creates light. He states further that "... light is not dependent on the sun or moon or stars . . . , but rather comes through



the Word of God." When "Jesus, the Living Word, finally came into the world, it was said that 'light is come into the world'" (John 3:19). The last time the word occurs is in Revelation 22:5: "They need no . . . light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever" (Morris 1974:201).

In the Book of Mormon, the word "light" is first found in 1 Nephi 5:77: "And I will also be your light in the wilderness." This theme, paralleling the Bible theme, is further developed by Lehi who prophesies of the day when the Messiah will bring people "out of darkness unto light" through the bringing forth of his word (2 N 2:6-23). Jesus proclaimed to the Nephites during his visitation that "I am the light and the life of the world" (3 N 4:48; cf. Alma 18:12). Of course, the brother of Jared's experience concerning light for their barges culminated with the brother of Jared seeing Christ and then a vision of "all things." Following Christ's command, he wrote what he saw and sealed it up. Moroni, the last writer in the Book of Mormon, includes a prophecy of Christ concerning this "sealed vision" which concludes with these words: "I am the light and the life and the truth of the world. Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, . . . Come unto me, O ye house of Israel . . ." (Ether 1:108-110).

## LOVE

The second word discussed in the book is the word "love." Dr. Morris points out that the first time "love" is mentioned in the Bible in a sacrificial context is with Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac. Isaac is, of course, a type for Christ. How appropriate that in the Book of Mormon the word "love" is first found in the account of Nephi's vision and associated with the important symbol of the tree of life. After Nephi is shown in vision the same tree that his father Lehi saw, the angel asks him if he wants to know its meaning. The angel then shows him the birth of the Son of God and asks Nephi if he under-

stands the meaning of the tree:

And I answered him, saying,

"Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; Wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things."

1 Nephi 3:64

Next Nephi is shown Christ's baptism and ministry. Then he sees the crucifixion of the Lamb of God "for the sins of the world" (1 Nephi 3:87). The Book of Mormon's first mention of love clearly defines the real meaning of the love of God. The love of God is the gift of his son, Jesus Christ, who died for our eternal salvation. Thus, not only does the Book of Mormon present the same concept of sacrificial love as the Bible, it also clearly emphasizes the atonement of Christ as the love of God (John 3:16).

## GRACE

Morris quotes Genesis 6:8 as the first mention of "grace" in the Bible (KJV). "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." He notes that "It is only *after* Noah found grace that the Scripture says he was a 'just' and 'perfect' man" (Morris 1974:204). In other words, perfection comes as a result of our response to God's word and is a gift of God. In our Inspired Version, the first mention of "grace" is in Genesis 4:7. "And then the angel spake, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth."

The Book of Mormon's first mention of "grace" also links it with Christ and his atonement. Lehi is explaining the atonement to his sons:

Wherefore, redemption cometh  
in and through the holy  
Messiah,  
For he is full of grace and truth.

Behold, he offereth himself a  
sacrifice for sin  
To answer the ends of the law

unto all those who have a  
broken heart and a contrite  
spirit;  
And unto none else can the ends  
of the law be answered.

Wherefore, how great the  
importance  
To make these things known  
unto the inhabitants  
of the earth,  
That they may know that there  
is no flesh that can dwell in  
the presence of God,  
Save it be through the merits  
and mercy and grace  
of the holy Messiah  
2 Nephi 1:71-73

The Book of Mormon and the Bible clearly relate grace to the atonement, and it is only through the atonement that we can be perfected.

## WORD

According to Morris, "word" is first mentioned in the Bible as the "word of God" to Abraham (Gen 15:1 KJV). However, in the Inspired Version, Genesis 1:1, Moses is commanded to write the very words of the Lord which were to become the foundation of Christian scripture.

In the Book of Mormon the first mention of "word" is in 1 Nephi 1:27:

And it came to pass that he was  
obedient unto the word of  
the Lord;  
Wherefore, he did as the Lord  
commanded him.

The importance of obeying the word of God is stressed throughout the Book of Mormon. It is clearly set forth in Lehi's vision. The two great civilizations of the Book of Mormon were destroyed because of their disobedience to the word of the Lord. Also, the Book of Mormon ends on the same solemn note:

And behold, they shall proceed  
forth out of the mouth of  
the everlasting God;  
And his word shall hiss forth  
from generation to generation.  
And God will shew unto you that  
that which I have written is true.

(Continued on page 15)



# More "No Erasers" in the Book of Mormon

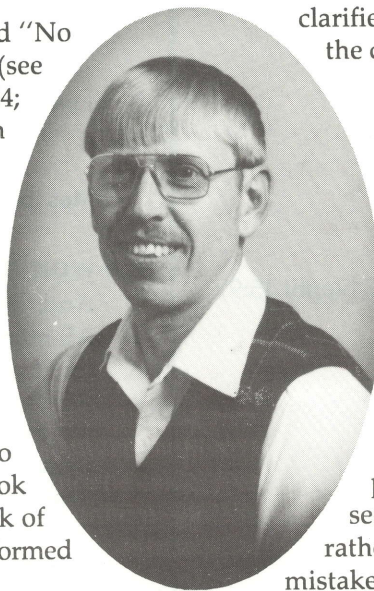
By Dennis Heater

In 1984 when I first read the article entitled "No Erasers" by Mary Lee Treat, I was intrigued (see *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, p. 54; the article was first published in 1981 in the *Zarahemla Record*, #13, 14). In brief review, Mary Lee pointed out the use of "or" and "or rather" by the Book of Mormon engravers to correct an incorrect statement or to clarify an unclear one. Two conclusions mentioned in the article became clear to me: 1) the use of "or" or "or rather" supports the writers' statements that they wrote on metal plates, which meant they could not erase, and 2) finding these "no erasers" in our English translation of the Book of Mormon suggests the idea that the Book of Mormon was translated literally from the reformed Egyptian.

As I studied, I came across additional "no erasers" using "or" and "or rather." I made a notation of these additional "no erasers" in the margin of my Book of Mormon and also added them to the list of references included in the above-mentioned article. In 1984 I was transferred to Independence from Columbia, Missouri. Because of the demands of my job, house-hunting, moving, etc., I laid the project aside.

In 1987 as I was reading the Book of Mormon, I was once again prompted to look for "no erasers." This time, I began to notice additional words and phrases that served as "no erasers" besides "or" and "or rather" that Mary Lee had mentioned. As I discovered each new example, I used a colored marker to highlight the words or phrases, and then in the margin I wrote "eraser" so that they were easy to find again. In some cases the clarification or correction was obvious. In other instances to decide whether the reference could be a valid "no eraser," I first read the sentence leaving out the clarified or corrected part which followed the "no eraser." Then I read it a second time leaving out the portion preceding the "no eraser" and including the

clarified or corrected part. This helped me to see the different shades of meaning.



## ADDITIONAL "NO ERASER" WORDS AND PHRASES

Now I had another challenge. I was no longer just looking for "or" and "or rather." To my amazement, I came up with sixteen additional words and phrases. These additional examples seemed to fit the same pattern as "or" and "or rather." Some were used to correct an actual mistake, and others were used for clarification--to bring a better understanding to the reader. Some were obvious, and some could go either way. Also, I wondered if some might simply reflect a writing style.

It was interesting to make comparisons. Including the "or" and "or rather" for a total of eighteen different words and phrases, I found 190 places which seem to contain clarifications or mistakes, and I'm sure there could be more. Seventy-five percent of them are the word "or." Table 1 shows all the occurrences and their frequencies.

I also found that in the unabridged portion (small plates), the error incidence is one-and-one-half errors in ten pages, and in the abridged portion, there are three errors in ten pages. This makes perfect sense. If you were condensing another person's writings, it would be difficult to clearly relate what the original writer intended. There is also the possibility that the original writer made mistakes which you did not catch and correct. These combined with any mistakes you might make on your own would result in a higher error ratio than if you were the only writer involved in the passage. Table 2 illustrates the total occurrence of all known "no



erasers" that I found in each book of the Book of Mormon.

## CLARIFICATIONS

Consider that you were writing someone a letter telling him how to get to your home, and you wrote, "Take the first street north of the post office, *or rather* Jackson Street; turn left and go four blocks." You would be making your house easier to find by mentioning Jackson Street. This is a clarification.

In the examples of clarifications which follow, the "no eraser" is placed in italics. Additional references with the same word or phrase, if any, are listed following that verse, although they may include both clarifications and mistakes.

### because I mean

I have charity for the Jew  
 I say Jew *because I mean* them  
 from whence I came.  
 I also have charity for the Gentiles.

(2 Nephi 15:9)

### for I mean

And now behold, my joy is great even  
 unto fullness  
 Because of you, and also this  
 generation;  
 Yea, and even the Father rejoiceth and  
 also all the holy angels  
 Because of you and this generation;  
 For none of them are lost.

Behold, I would that ye should  
 understand;  
*For I mean* them who are now alive of  
 this generation,  
 And none of them are lost;  
 And in them I have fullness of joy.

(3 Nephi 13:7-8)

### I mean

And also the atonement  
 Which has been prepared from the  
 foundation of the world,  
 That thereby salvation might come to  
 him that should put his trust in the  
 Lord  
 And should be diligent in keeping his  
 commandments,  
 And continue in the faith even unto the  
 end of his life;  
*I mean* the life of the mortal body;

(Mosiah 2:10)

Mos 2:40

Mos 8:46

Alma 4:3-4

### or I would say

And now my son,  
 All men that are in a state of nature,  
*Or I would say* in a carnal state,  
 Are in the gall of bitterness and in the  
 bond of iniquity;  
 They are without God in the world  
 And they have gone contrary to the  
 nature of God;  
 Therefore they are in a state contrary  
 to the nature of happiness.

(Alma 19:75)

**Table 1**  
 "No Eraser" Words and Phrases

Type	Frequency	Percentage
because I mean	1	.53%
for I mean	1	.53
I mean	4	2.09
or I would say	1	.53
but I would speak in other words	1	.53
or in other words	9	4.73
or rather, in other words	1	.53
that is	6	3.15
or that	1	.53
or in fine	2	1.05
but	1	.53
not	1	.53
not/but	5	2.63
but behold I mistake	1	.53
I do not mean/but I mean	1	.53
or	143	75.26
or I would say in other words	1	.53
or rather	10	5.26
<b>Totals</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 2**  
 "No Erasers" By Book

Book	Frequency	Percentage
1 Nephi	16	8.42%
2 Nephi	9	4.73
Jacob	4	2.09
Enos	0	0.00
Jarom	2	1.05
Omni	0	0.00
<b>Total Small Plates</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16.32</b>
Word of Mormon	0	0.00
Mosiah	36	18.95
Alma	99	52.11
Helaman	8	4.21
3 Nephi	10	5.26
4 Nephi	0	0.00
Mormon	2	1.05
Ether	2	1.05
Moroni	2	1.05
<b>Total Abridgment</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>83.68</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



**but I would speak in other words**

For the things which some men esteem to be of  
great worth,

Both to the body and soul,

Others set at nought and trample under  
their feet.

Yea, even the very God of Israel do men  
trample under their feet;

I say trample under their feet *but I would  
speak in other words;*

They set him at nought and hearken not  
to the voice of his counsels;

(1 Nephi 5:232-235)

**or in other words**

And this was their faith,

That by so doing, God would prosper  
them in the land;

*Or in other words,*

If they were faithful in keeping the  
commandments of God,

That he would prosper them in the land,

Yea, warn them to flee, or to prepare for  
war according to their danger;

(Alma 21:137)

1 Nephi 2:41      Alma 9:70-71      Alma 21:50-51

1 Nephi 3:4      Alma 16:137-138      3 Nephi 2:7-8

Mos 5:44-45      Alma 19:54      3 Nephi 3:23

**or rather, in other words**

Yea, he that truly humbleth himself and  
repenteth of his sins and endureth to  
the end

The same shall be blessed;

Yea, much more blessed than they who are  
compelled to be humble

Because of their exceeding poverty;

Therefore, blessed are they who humble  
themselves without being compelled  
to be humble;

*Or rather, in other words,*

Blessed is he that believeth in the word of  
God and is baptised without  
stubbornness of heart;

Yea, without being brought to know the  
word, or even compelled to know,

Before they will believe.

(Alma 16:137-138)

**that is**

Therefore, as the soul could never die,  
And the fall had brought upon all  
mankind a spiritual death as well as  
a temporal;

*That is,* they were cut off from the

presence of the Lord;

Therefore, it was expedient that mankind  
should be reclaimed from this  
spiritual death;

(Alma 19:90)

Mos 2:42

Alma 8:106

Alma 19:32

Alma 8:28

Alma 17:39

**or that**

And in the commencement of the twenty  
and eighth year,

Moroni and Teancum and many of the  
chief captains held a council of war  
what they should do

To cause the Lamanites to come out  
against them to battle;

*Or that* they might by some means  
flatter them out of their  
strongholds,

That they might gain advantage over  
them,

And take again the city of Mulek.

(Alma 24:22-23)

**or in fine**

And after the house of Israel should be  
scattered,

They should be gathered together again;  
*Or in fine,* after the Gentiles had received  
the fullness of the gospel,

The natural branches of the olive tree,  
Or the remnants of the house of Israel,  
should be grafted in,

Or come to the knowledge of the true  
Messiah,

Their Lord and their Redeemer.

(1 Nephi 3:18-19)

Alma 9:67-68

**but**

Therefore he took Ammon and Aaron  
and Omner;

And Himni he did leave in the church in  
Zarahemla;

*But* the former three he took with him,  
And also Amulek and Zeezrom who were  
at Melek;

And he also took two of his sons.

(Alma 16:83)

**not**

Yea, that great pit which hath been  
dugged for the destruction of men,  
Shall be filled by those who dugged it,  
Unto their utter destruction, saith the



Lamb of God;  
*Not* the destruction of the soul,  
 Save it be the casting of it into that hell  
 which hath no end;  
 For behold, this is according to the  
 captivity of the devil,  
 And also according to the justice of God  
 Upon all those who will work  
 wickedness and abomination before  
 him.  
 (1 Nephi 3:207-209)

**not/but**

And in the fifty and first year of the  
 reign of the Judges,  
 There was peace also,  
 Save it were the pride which began to  
 enter into the church;  
*Not* into the church of God,  
*But* into the hearts of the people who  
 professed to belong to the church of  
 God;  
 And they were lifted up in pride  
 Even to the persecution of many of their  
 brethren.  
 (Helaman 2:29)

2 Nephi 2:7-8      Alma 21:139      3 Nephi 2:8  
 Alma 14:112

**MISTAKES**

Remember the example of the letter giving directions to your home? If you wrote, "Take the first street south, *I mean* north, of the post office, turn left and go four blocks," it would be an example of a definite mistake. A wrong direction was given and then corrected.

Let's look at some verses that contain mistakes which were corrected by a qualifying phrase (again, in the other references listed which contain the key phrase, there may be both clarifications and mistakes):

**but behold I mistake**

Nevertheless, after all this,  
 I never have known much of the ways of  
 the Lord  
 And his mysteries and marvelous  
 power.  
 I said I never had known much of these  
 things,  
*But behold I mistake,*  
 For I have seen much of his mysteries  
 and his miraculous power;

Yea, even in the preservation of the  
 lives of this people;  
 (Alma 8:6-7)

**I do not mean/ but I mean**

And behold, in the end of this book ye  
 shall see  
 That this Gadianton did prove the  
 overthrow,  
 Yea, almost the entire destruction of the  
 people of Nephi.  
 Behold, *I do not mean* the end of the book  
 of Helaman,  
*But I mean* the end of the book of Nephi  
 From which I have taken all the account  
 which I have written.  
 (Helaman 1:51-52)

**OR** (see end of article for complete listing)

And now these are the cities which the  
 Lamanites have obtained possession  
 By the shedding of the blood of so many  
 of our valiant men:  
 The land of Manti, *or* the city of Manti,  
 And the city of Zeezrom and the city of  
 Cumeni and the city of Antiparah.  
 (Alma 26:15)

**or I would say in other words**

Behold I say unto you that there is no  
 resurrection;  
*Or I would say in other words* that this  
 mortal does not put on immortality,  
 This corruption does not put on  
 incorruption,  
 Until after the coming of Christ.  
 (Alma 19:29)

**or rather**

And they stood before the king, and were  
 permitted, *or rather* commanded,  
 That they should answer the questions  
 which he should ask them.  
 (Mos 5:11)

Mos 5:79      Alma 12:28      Alma 19:23  
 Alma 1:23      Alma 16:10      Alma 24:63  
 Alma 1:91-92      Alma 17:11      Alma 25:5

**MISTAKE AND CLARIFICATION  
 COMBINED**

Now we have a verse with a mistake and a clarification in it:



or

Now it was those men who sought to destroy them  
Who were lawyers who were hired, *or* appointed,  
by the people  
To administer the law at the times of trials,  
*Or* at the trials of the crimes of the people, before  
the Judges.

(Alma 8:21)

The first *or* corrects a mistake--research of the word  
"lawyers" shows that they were appointed, not hired.  
The second *or* is a clarification.

## CONCLUSION

There are more words and phrases which serve as  
"no erasers" in addition to the "or" and "or rather."  
Some of these words and phrases are for clarifying an  
unclear statement, and some are for correcting a mistake.  
All of these "no erasers" bear witness to the fact that the  
Book of Mormon writers did indeed write on metal  
plates. Also, the fact that these words and phrases are  
retained in our English translation suggests the idea of a  
literal instead of a conceptual translation of the Book of  
Mormon.

Bearing further witness to the truth of the Book of  
Mormon is the fact that the error ratio differs between  
the unabridged portion and the abridged portion.

This list of "no erasers" is probably not complete. I  
would urge you to look up the ones reported in this  
article and to ask the Lord to show you some of your  
own.

## "Or" References

Of the 439 times "or" occurs in the Book of  
Mormon, I have selected the following as "no erasers."  
Some of them are clarifications and some are mistakes.  
Those references used in preceding examples are marked  
with an asterisk (\*). Some verses contain more than one  
example. In those cases you will find the quantity in  
parentheses immediately after the reference.

1 Nephi 2:86	Mosiah 11:103	Alma 21:13
1 Nephi 3:5	Mosiah 11:149	Alma 21:39
1 Nephi 3:19 (2)*	Mosiah 13:6-7	Alma 21:45
1 Nephi 3:68	Mosiah 13:62	Alma 21:50
1 Nephi 3:245	Alma 1:64	Alma 21:63
1 Nephi 4:27	Alma 1:109	Alma 21:80
1 Nephi 4:32-33	Alma 2:26	Alma 21:129
1 Nephi 5:135	Alma 3:45	Alma 21:159
1 Nephi 5:225	Alma 3:59-60	Alma 21:164
1 Nephi 5:226	Alma 7:1	Alma 22:1
2 Nephi 1:68-69	Alma 8:21 (2)*	Alma 22:15
2 Nephi 3:61-63	Alma 8:23	Alma 22:33
2 Nephi 4:17	Alma 8:48	Alma 23:6

2 Nephi 5:2-3	Alma 8:109	Alma 24:54
2 Nephi 5:48	Alma 9:1	Alma 25:3
2 Nephi 11:100	Alma 9:51	Alma 25:6
2 Nephi 11:116	Alma 10:9	Alma 25:57
Jacob 1:14	Alma 10:45	Alma 26:15*
Jacob 3:2	Alma 10:51	Alma 26:19
Jacob 3:63	Alma 11:26	Alma 26:78
Jacob 5:9	Alma 12:23	Alma 26:130
Jarom 1:18	Alma 12:28	Alma 26:144
Jarom 1:31	Alma 12:33	Alma 27:3
Mosiah 1:15	Alma 12:43	Alma 28:9
Mosiah 1:24	Alma 12:145	Alma 30:19
Mosiah 1:72	Alma 12:156	Helaman 2:56
Mosiah 1:99	Alma 13:21	Helaman 3:130
Mosiah 1:115	Alma 13:24 (2)	Helaman 4:31
Mosiah 2:23	Alma 13:56	Helaman 5:70
Mosiah 2:26	Alma 14:10	Helaman 5:77
Mosiah 3:3	Alma 14:40	Helaman 5:86
Mosiah 5:1	Alma 14:47	3 Nephi 1:45
Mosiah 5:21	Alma 16:138*	3 Nephi 2:19
Mosiah 5:27	Alma 16:141	3 Nephi 3:38
Mosiah 5:33	Alma 16:153	3 Nephi 5:71
Mosiah 5:34	Alma 16:154	3 Nephi 7:28
Mosiah 5:69-71	Alma 16:174 (3)	3 Nephi 12:23
Mosiah 6:1	Alma 16:214	Mormon 1:22
Mosiah 7:25	Alma 16:258	Mormon 2:42
Mosiah 7:65	Alma 17:52	Ether 3:5
Mosiah 8:32	Alma 17:77	Ether 4:113
Mosiah 8:42-43	Alma 19:68	Moroni 8:26
Mosiah 8:56	Alma 20:18	Moroni 8:31
Mosiah 9:32	Alma 20:21	
Mosiah 9:49	Alma 20:41	
Mosiah 10:9	Alma 20:48	
Mosiah 11:7	Alma 20:98	
Mosiah 11:78		

### NEEDED: 1840 Edition of the Book of Mormon

We would like to borrow a copy of the 1840 (Nauvoo) edition of the Book of Mormon to photocopy. This is needed for research relating to the *Study Book of Mormon*. Although the 1840 edition is available on microfilm at the Auditorium Library, the convenience of having a photocopy in our office would greatly facilitate our work.

The title page of the 1840 edition may show either 1840, 1841 or 1842, although the text remains identical. If you possess a copy of the 1840 edition, or know someone who does, and would be willing to let us make a photocopy, we would be most grateful. You may write to us at P. O. Box 1727, Independence, MO 64055.



Nephi tells us:

And blessed are they who shall seek to bring  
forth my Zion at that day,  
For they shall have the gift and the power of  
the Holy Ghost

1 Nephi 3:187

The following scripture establishes that it is the people of the covenant who will receive the power mentioned in the above scripture. Sec. 83:17a tells us that Zion will be established because of the covenant made with the fathers:

The Lord hath brought again Zion:  
The Lord hath redeemed his people, Israel,  
according to the election of grace  
Which was brought to pass by the faith and  
covenant of their fathers.

The power of the Holy Ghost does not necessarily come at the same time as the gift. At the present time there are very few of us, if any, who have the kind of power to which Nephi refers. In addition to the examples of spiritual power in Nephi's life, we get a clue about Nephi's definition of power from his brother Jacob:

Wherefore, we search the prophets;  
And we have many revelations and the spirit  
of prophecy;  
And having all these witnesses we obtain a  
hope;  
And our faith becometh unshaken  
Insomuch that we truly can command in the  
name of Jesus,  
And the very trees obey us,  
Or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.

Jacob 3:7

Notice that Jacob says that "our faith becometh unshaken." This kind of faith does not leave any room for doubt. This is the kind of faith that Abraham demonstrated when he obeyed God's instructions to take Isaac up to the mountain to offer him as a sacrifice. In Gen. 22:6 he told his servants that he and Isaac would return. Abraham could say this because there was no doubt in his mind that he would return with Isaac. He knew because of his covenant that God would preserve Isaac, even to the extent of resurrecting him on the spot if necessary. Abraham would not have taken "the knife to slay his son" (Gen. 22:12) if there had been any doubt whatsoever in his mind. Abraham's faith was unshaken. As a result, he became the father of the house of Israel.

Zion will be established for the purpose of gathering the latter day house of Israel together according to the covenant. We are told that after the remnant are brought

to a knowledge of their Redeemer:

. . . then will I gather them in from the four  
quarters of the earth  
And then will I fulfill the covenant which the Father  
hath made  
Unto all the people of the house of Israel.  
3 Nephi 7:29

This gathering of the house of Israel is also called the restoration of the house of Israel. Only those who are part of the spiritual house of Israel through faith in Jesus Christ will be part of Zion as we can see from the following:

For behold, I say unto you,  
That as many of the Gentiles as will repent are  
the covenant people of the Lord;  
And as many of the Jews as will not repent  
shall be cast off;  
For the Lord covenanteth with none  
Save it be with them that repent and believe in his  
Son,  
Who is the Holy One of Israel.

2 Nephi 5:32

These are those who will have the spiritual power.

### Covenant Names

If we establish the covenant fully in our lives we will exchange names just as Abraham did and we will take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and be called the children of Christ:

And we are willing to enter into a covenant  
with our God,  
To do his will and to be obedient to his  
commandments in all things  
That he shall command us all the remainder of  
our days,  
That we may not bring upon ourselves a never  
ending torment, as has been spoken by the  
angel,  
That we may not drink out of the cup of the  
wrath of God.  
And now these are the words which King  
Benjamin desired of them;  
And therefore he said unto them,

"Ye have spoken the words that I desired;  
And the covenant which ye have made is a  
righteous covenant.  
And now, because of the covenant which ye  
have made,  
Ye shall be called the children of Christ,  
His sons, and his daughters."

Mosiah 3:6-8

Jesus also took our name upon him and became



known as the Son of Man. When we take his name we become "children of Christ." This is a very important title and carries with it all of the benefits of the covenant. I would recommend that we all make a list from the scriptures of the attributes of the children of Christ to assist us to better establish the covenant in our lives. (Those who have a copy of the *Zarahemla Record* 24-26 may use the list printed there to get a head start.) Studying this list should convince us all, if we have not been convinced thus far, that we have not yet fully established the covenant in our lives.

## Purpose of the Book of Mormon: Establish The Covenant

One of the main purposes of the Book of Mormon is the restoration of the house of Israel, or in other words, establishing the covenant in the hearts of the house of Israel. One way to demonstrate that establishing the covenant is a primary purpose of the Book of Mormon is to point out that it begins and ends with the covenant. In the preface we read:

... which is to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel  
What great things the Lord hath done for their fathers;  
And that they may know the covenants of the Lord,  
That they are not cast off for ever . . .

And then in the second to the last verse in the Book of Mormon, which is the last verse before Moroni's farewell, we again see the covenant:

And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ and deny not his power,  
Then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God,  
Through the shedding of the blood of Christ  
Which is in the covenant of the Father, unto the remission of your sins,  
That ye become holy without spot.

Moroni 10:30

If we make proper use of the concept of the covenant according to the "learning of the Jews" as taught in the Book of Mormon and the other scriptures, then we will not only receive greater blessings now but we will also be in a position to receive more scripture including additional information about the covenants. Lehi tells us:

... I am a descendant of Joseph, who was carried captive into Egypt.  
And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph;  
Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day.

2 Nephi 2:5-6

Lehi obtained this information from the plates of brass which we do not yet have. These plates along with all the other records, which are part of what we call Mormon's library, will be available to those who make proper use of the record we have now--the Book of Mormon (see 3 Nephi 12:1-5).

In view of all the benefits of establishing the covenant in our lives more fully let us like Nephi delight "in the covenants of the Lord" (2 Nephi 8:10). We are told in Psalms 1:2 that if we delight in something we will think about it constantly. Let's start thinking more about our covenant. Perhaps the Lord will grant us further enlightenment that we might better understand that all he has is ours if we will keep our part of the covenant by giving all that we have unto him ZRF

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### FIRST MENTION from page 8

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And again I would exhort you, that ye would come unto Christ and lay hold upon every good gift  
And touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.  
And awake and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem;  
Yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion  
And strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders for ever that thou mayest no more be confounded  
That the covenants of the eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.  
Yea, come unto Christ and be perfected in him. . . .

Moroni 10:25-29

These few words and ideas are just a beginning of my study of the Principle of First Mention in the Book of Mormon. The discoveries that will be made within the Book of Mormon by using this principle have just begun. This is an exciting time in which to live! The Lord is truly fulfilling the covenants which he has made with the house of Israel ZRF

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