

# ZARAHEMLA RECORD



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## A New Edition of the Book of Mormon: *A Compared, Corrected Text in Poetry-Like Format*

by Shirley Heater & Mary Lee Treat

**D**id you know that in the 160 years since Joseph Smith Jr. first published the Book of Mormon, no subsequent edition ever printed by anyone was compared word for word with the Original and Printer's manuscripts? It seems impossible, and yet it's true.

We hope it will be as exciting to you as it is to us that Zarahemla Research Foundation has just completed the first word-for-word comparison of the Original and Printer's manuscripts of the Book of Mormon with the 1830, 1837, 1840, 1874, 1892 and 1908 editions.

While preparing the text for *First Nephi* of the Study Book of Mormon project in 1986, it became apparent that a word-for-word comparison of the manuscripts and editions would be necessary if we are to achieve the total accuracy for which we are striving. At that time we anticipated doing it book by book as we prepared the Study Book of Mormon for publication. However, in the process of making the textual comparison for *Second Nephi*, we determined that we would have to complete the comparison work for the entire Book of Mormon in order to make consistent evaluations.

At some point during this process it became obvious that we should print the entire corrected text in the poetry-like format as soon as pos-

sible and not wait until the Study Book of Mormon project was completed. Thus the concept for the new Corrected Edition was born.

The method we devised for the comparison of the text was this: A master text was prepared using the Original and the Printer's manuscripts. All variations (word changes, omissions or additions) were color-coded. This work was done twice to ensure accuracy.

Next, each of the editions was read twice against the master text and again all variations were charted. (The chart at the end of *First Nephi* of the Study Book of Mormon is the format used throughout.) To double check that the charting was done correctly, each entry was then verified in each edition and manuscript.

As in *First Nephi*, a word or phrase was restored into the text if:

- it restores a Hebraism or poetic device
- it restores an omission
- it restores a word or phrase incorrectly edited
- the Original and Printer agree and no other factors such as grammar override

The comparison work of the manuscripts and editions mentioned above was finished earlier this

month, but there's much more work to be done.

The next step is to make the final decisions on all the text. So far, preliminary text decisions have been made for the entire book and these have been entered in the text which was arranged in the poetry-like style by Ed Faunce.

The page size, column width, etc. are being determined at the present time and then we will begin "laying out" the text using computers and desktop publishing programs.

Book by book, the text will then have to be proofread again. Then the copy will be photographed to produce negatives for printing. This is slow and meticulous work which has taken the majority of our time for the past two to three years.

However, we feel it is important to have the most accurate Book of Mormon text possible. We know the poetry-style text will help tremendously to improve the reader's comprehension.

An insert in the last *Record* asked for your financial help for this project as well as for the reprinting of the *Overview* and for *Second Nephi*. Some of you responded. We need many more of you now to assist. This project is close to culmination. The next step is to prepare it for printing.

Won't you help?

ZRF

In 1 Nephi 1:1-2, we find a most significant chiasm which directs us to the importance of understanding the “learning of the Jews.”



## Behold, He is the Word of Truth

Nephi advises us that we must understand Hebrew customs, traditions, and also the Hebrew language if we are to fully understand and appreciate the Book of Mormon message. In 2 Nephi 8:9 we find another important concept; “all things” which have been created have been made to bear witness of Jesus Christ. This means that all of God’s creation and handiwork tells the story of God’s love and salvation for man through the atonement of the Messiah. Contained within the scope of “all things,” is, of course, the “learning of the Jews.” By putting these two concepts together, we find a great study tool for unlocking the scriptures. Exploring things of a Hebrew nature will point us to Jesus the Messiah and increase our understanding of the Lord.

In Alma 18:12, we find an interesting statement as Alma exhorts his middle son, Shiblon, “Behold, he (Jesus Christ) is the Word of Truth. . .” This is one of those simple verses which we frequently read over, never fully understanding exactly what has been said, and

never really taking enough interest to research the matter in an effort to find out. Yet this verse, like many other such verses, is a statement of notable worth and deserves closer examination. Though Jesus is referred to throughout the scriptures as the “truth,” it is only in this passage that we find him directly referred to as the “Word of Truth.” What does Alma really mean when he says that Jesus is the “Word of Truth?” Is this phraseology figurative, or is it possibly literal? Exploring the “learning of the Jews” sheds light on the matter.

By taking a close look at the Hebrew language we find that the word “truth,” in Hebrew, literally represents Jesus the Messiah.

The Hebrew word for “truth” is *’emeth*. How is this associated with Jesus the Messiah? The first letter in the Hebrew alphabet is *aleph* and means “the beginning.” The last letter in the Hebrew alphabet is *taw* and means “the end.” The middle letter, *mem*, is the first letter in the Hebrew word *Mashiah* which means “Messiah” or “Anointed One.”

<i>Aleph</i>	The Beginning
<i>Mem</i>	Messiah
<i>Taw</i>	The End

Genesis 1:2, Revelation 1:8, 1:11, 21:6, and 22:13 all bear witness to the fact that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the “beginning and the end.” (Note: *Alpha* and *Omega* are the Greek equivalents of the Hebrew *Aleph* and *Taw*.)

While we can say that Jesus is the “beginning and the end” of many things, he is in particular the beginning and the end of time itself. He was present at the beginning of time. He will be present when time, as we know it, comes to an end, and, according to Hebrews 9:26, he came to earth as the Messiah in the “meridian of time.”

Like our Lord, truth was not created; it existed before time was created. It will still be in existence after time ends, and it was personified by the Messiah in the meridian of time. Alma’s statement is profound; in Hebrew, Jesus is literally the “Word of Truth.”

# The Importance of Covenant

## *in the Restoration of the House of Israel*

In Romans 11 the house of Israel is compared to an olive tree from which some of the branches were broken off. The Book of Mormon is primarily an account of what happened to one of those branches after it was broken off. We are also told in the Bible that these branches will be grafted back into the tame olive tree. This grafting is called the restoration of the house of Israel.

The restoration of the house of Israel is probably the best scriptural term to describe God's plan for the last days. The primary purpose of the Book of Mormon is to assist in the restoration of the house of Israel. Its main contribution toward this end will be to restore a knowledge of the covenants to a remnant of the house of Israel.

The Book of Mormon teaches that the restoration of the house of Israel involves all the tribes of Israel and not just one or two. While the Book of Mormon is written primarily to a remnant of the tribe of Joseph of the house of Israel, it is also intended to be a convincing witness to everyone that Jesus is the Christ. All who repent and accept Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten Son of God become part of the covenant people of the Lord and are a part of the house of Israel through adoption. The literal descendants of the house of Israel must also accept Jesus Christ as their Savior or they will ultimately lose their inheritance as a part of the house of Israel.

The Book of Mormon was written in a language called Reformed Egyptian, but its authors were native Hebrews who merely transferred their Hebrew way of speaking into the Reformed Egyptian language. Many, if not all, of their Hebrew thought patterns, idioms, sentence structure, cultural content and

poetry were preserved in the English translation. It is significant, even prophetic, that the first two verses of the Book of Mormon contain a type of Hebrew poetry called chiasmus. In this type of poetry, the center point is always the most important. The center point of these two opening verses is "the learning of the Jews." The location of this phrase at the center of the chiasm tells us that one of the main keys to understanding the Book of Mormon is to understand all things pertaining to the Jews—meaning the ancient house of Israel.

The most important concept a modern-day Christian can learn from the ancient Hebrews is the concept of the covenant—a covenant being the most sacred agreement that can be made between two individuals, two tribes or between an individual or tribe and their God. The main thing we learn from this type of covenant is that it removes all doubt as to whether or not the other party to the covenant will fulfill his part of the agreement. This is indeed good news when the other covenant partner is God.

It is very significant that the Book of Mormon begins and ends with the concept of covenant. On the title page we are told that the Book of Mormon is:

Written to the Lamanites who are a remnant of the house of Israel...

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...

Just before his farewell in the final verse of the Book of Mormon,

Moroni, the last writer, tells us:

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...

The Lord has prepared a great endowment of spiritual power to be poured out in the near future. Those who understand and keep their covenant with the Lord—those from whom all doubt has been removed, those who have learned to live in faith and not fear—will be ready to receive this spiritual power to accomplish the perfect will of God.

The Lord has recently given us a new and powerful insight into the symbolic meaning of the word "Mormon." A group of Nephites who fled from persecution to the land of Mormon entered into covenant with the Lord and were baptized in the waters of Mormon. This was the first time in several generations that the covenant was established again among the Nephites. From that time forward, the name "Mormon" always reminded the people of the restoring of the covenant in the land of Mormon. Mormon, the chief editor of the Book of Mormon, was named after the land of Mormon. Today, we associate the name of the Book of Mormon as did the Nephites of old, with the restoring of the covenant among the people. The name of the book is a type for the purpose of the book: to restore a knowledge of the covenants to the remnant of the seed of Lehi. Therefore, the name, the Book of Mormon, symbolically

Cont'd on pg. 4

means the Book of the Restoration of the Covenants.

The purpose for the Book of Mormon is clearly stated in Second Nephi 2:19-23. To paraphrase, the seed of Judah shall write (the Bible) and the seed of Joseph shall write (the Book of Mormon); the two writings together will confound false doctrine, stop contention, establish peace, restore a knowledge of the fathers and a knowledge of the covenants of the Lord.

The restoration of the house of Israel is underway. Those who make full use of the Book of Mormon will be used by God to assist in this work.

ZRF

*Editor's Note: This article is taken from the new edition of the Overview. This article replaces the article "Spiritual Highlights From the Book of Mormon" printed in the 1980 edition of the Overview on page 5. The new edition of the Overview is now in preparation for printing and announcements will be made via the Record when it is available for sale.*

## Pre-Publication Offer

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