



QUETZAL CODEX

The Bible: History or Myth?

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QuetzalArchaeology.org
a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation

QUETZAL CODEX PUBLICATION

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The trend in Biblical studies has progressed (digressed?) from questioning that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), to most recently suggesting there was no “ancient” or “biblical” Israel, “no Judaism until the second century AD” and that the Bible is “pious fiction,” not historical fact. The intent of these “revisionists” who dismiss the traditional view of history and faith is “not to merely rewrite the history of ancient or Biblical Israel; they propose rather to abolish it altogether.”¹ Their influence that the Bible has “no history” extends throughout religious and academic circles in spite of increasing archaeological and written evidences to the contrary (for example, inscriptions, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls). Biblical texts and archaeological evidences can interact as legitimate sources for history writing. For instance, the existence of at least fifty real people in the Old Testament have been confirmed in archaeology.

Two contradictory releases were listed in a recent issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (Nov/Dec 2012:79). One book, published by American Atheist Press, replies to an attempt to prove the historicity of Jesus in *Bart Ehrman and the Quest of the Historical Jesus of Nazareth* (Frank R Zindler and Robert M Price, editors). The second, a DVD, *Fact, Fiction and Fable in Ancient Israel* (Cline, Hendel, Millard and Richter), discusses such subjects as the Exodus, Ten Lost Tribes, and Bible stories and says they are exaggerated folk tales vs. historical reality.

Similar to these extreme views of the Bible, criticisms of The Book of Mormon have perported it to be nineteenth Century fiction, also with no archaeological evidences. Others deny its historicity while giving “lip service” to its value in moral tales. In spite of these attacks, the accumulating support of the validity of The Book of Mormon record includes external evidences as well as internal (its Hebrew nature and message). These internal witnesses bring a new perspective of The Book of Mormon as an extra-Biblical text (outside the Bible) which supports the authenticity of the Bible—and it is becoming essential and seems more important than ever before!

As with many subjects in the Bible, especially conflicting interpretations, I’ve found that understanding any subject is incomplete without considering what The Book of Mormon has to say about the subject. Together, these two books continue to confound false doctrines (2 Nephi 1:19-23 [1:9-10]). In this case, together they also counter the “no Biblical history” and “folk tales.”

The key article in this issue, “Biblical origins of The Book of Mormon,” relates to the subject of historical connections and evidences—a term William Dever calls “convergences.” This article serves to provide a supporting second witness to the historical events and people in the Bible, as well as its spiritual message, and illustrates, in fact, that the two are integrally connected.

Resources are provided from sound scholarship and evidences, which serve to undergird the historical validity of both the Bible and Book of Mormon. We hope you will find this article inspiring!—SRH 

¹ Selected quotes from *What Did The Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It*, William G Dever, 2001:4-7, 9, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.

All Book of Mormon references throughout are from the Restored Covenant Edition (RCE © 1999 Zarahemla Research Foundation) unless otherwise noted [LDS in brackets].

*“Go ye into
all the world
and preach the
gospel to every
creature.”*

Mark 16:15

BIBLICAL ORIGINS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

There are three areas that demonstrate the undeniable relationship between the Bible and Book of Mormon, namely, shared records, historical details and spiritual topics. By using this perspective you will have a powerful witnessing tool.

The basis for this study is the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible which is translated from the Masoretic Text (MT dating from c. 1000 AD), as is the Hebrew Bible. Most of the MT is in agreement with the Dead Sea Scrolls dated c. 200-100 BC. The KJV is accepted as the scriptural standard of the early 1800s when The Book of Mormon was translated (and still continues as the standard today, even with the continual propagation of numerous “modern” versions and/or translations). In this study we will see that neither book is complete without the other, and together they have one voice, one message, one God!

*A*s we know, modern criticisms of both the Bible and Book of Mormon have called into question their legitimacy. Bible critics consider the Bible to be oral fiction, saying that there was no divine Creation, no Fall, no Worldwide Flood, no ancient Israel, Exodus or Moses, that a Savior was not born of a virgin, nor is one needed, and thus no Resurrection. Book of Mormon critics judge it to be nineteenth century fiction and assert that parts of The Book of Mormon were merely plagiarized from the Bible, or the reverse—that it is contradictory to and conflicts with the Bible. Others purport to accept teaching points from either book, while rejecting both as authentic history.

A basic assertion supporting the rejection of The Book of Mormon is that it is a violation of Biblical warnings not to add to the word of God:

Ye shall **not add** unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it. (Deuteronomy 4:2)

Every word of God is pure... **Add thou not** unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:5-6)

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book,
If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:
And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy,
God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city,
and from the things which are written in this book.
(Revelation 22:18-19)

The significance of these warnings is that man is forbidden from tampering with God’s word. This doesn’t mean that God can’t give additional scripture to the Bible. Our premise is that The Book of Mormon is God-inspired—it is the word of God, as is the Bible, but it does not replace the Bible. Throughout The Book of Mormon, its writers reveal that God controlled what was written and what was not to be written (see Treat 1992:172-178).

Consider also the account of Peter and the apostles in the New Testament. They had been miraculously

freed after having been imprisoned for conducting signs, wonders and healings, and had again begun teaching the people in the temple. Gamaliel, a Pharisee and doctor of the Law, responded by warning the council and high priests (Sadducees):

Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.... Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; be careful, therefore, lest ye be found even to fight against God.
(Acts 5:35, 38-39)

The true test that sets the standard and provides the key as to whether or not something is of God is found in 1 John 4:2: “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.” Table 1 sets forth references in The Book of Mormon that “confess(eth) that Jesus is come in the flesh” and are compared with Bible references. Thus we can state unequivocally that:

THE BOOK OF MORMON TRULY “CONFESSETH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH”

THEREFORE, WE KNOW THE SPIRIT OF THE BOOK OF MORMON “IS OF GOD” (as per 1 JOHN 4:2)

AND “THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED [AS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF MORMON] IS NOT AFTER MAN” (Gal 1:11)

We see that The Book of Mormon meets this standard as it magnifies the name of Jesus, as God in the flesh, and outlines the plan of redemption alongside the Bible. Add to this admonition that “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now it is already in the world” (1 John 4:3). The Book of Mormon also records accounts of three antichrists, in harmony with this Biblical criteria.

Some have questioned why The Book of Mormon is written with an early English vocabulary and uses words and expressions with the “flavor” of the KJV. I believe Nephi’s words give insight to this question:

For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding, for He speaketh unto men according to their language unto their understanding. (2 Nephi 13:5 [31:3 LDS])

Scholarship by Royal Skousen concludes that “the original vocabulary of the Book of Mormon appears to derive from the 1500s and 1600s [which is just prior to and contemporary with the 1611 KJV], not from the 1800s. ... [and that] the original [Book of Mormon] text contained a number of expressions and words with meanings that were lost from the English language by 1700” (Skousen 2005:2). In addi-

Table 1: “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1 John 4:2)

JESUS IN THE FLESH (20 references)
He shall minister in the flesh. <i>2N 1:64 [2:4]</i>
layeth down His life, according to the flesh. <i>2N 1:74 [2:8]</i>
manifest in the flesh. <i>2N 5:24 [6:9]; 11:21 [25:12]; 14:7, 8 [32:6]; Jac 3:17 [4:11]; En 1:11 [1:8]</i>
according to the flesh He humbleth Himself before the Father. <i>2N 13:9 [31:7]</i>
God should come down among the children of men and take upon Him flesh and blood. <i>Mos 5:45 [7:27]</i>
And because He dwelleth in flesh, He shall be called the Son of God. <i>Mos 8:29 [15:2]</i>
And having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because He was conceived by the power of God, and the Son, because of the flesh, thus becoming the Father and Son. <i>Mos 8:30 [15:2]</i>
And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation and yieldeth not to the temptation, But suffereth Himself to be mocked and scourged and cast out and disowned by His people. <i>Mos 8:32 [15:5]</i>
Yea, even so He shall be led, crucified and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, The will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father. <i>Mos 8:34 [15:7]</i>
And He will take upon Him their infirmities, that His bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, That He may know, according to the flesh, how to succor His people according to their infirmities. <i>A 5:22 [7:12]</i>
the Son of God suffereth, according to the flesh, <i>A 5:23 [7:13]</i>
Behold, I come unto My own to fulfill all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, And to do the will both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of Me, and of the Son because of My flesh. <i>3N 1:14 [1:14]</i>
I shall take upon Me flesh and blood; <i>Eth 1:72 [3:9]</i>
even as I appear unto thee to be in the Spirit, will I appear unto My people in the flesh. <i>Eth 1:81 [3:16]</i>
TABERNACLE OF CLAY (2 references)
the Lord Shall come down from heaven among the children of men, And shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay. <i>Mos 1:97 [3:5]</i>
at the time of His dwelling in His mortal tabernacle, <i>A 5:15 [7:8]</i>
GOD HIMSELF (5 references)
the atonement which God Himself. <i>Mos 8:5 [13:28]</i>
Have they not said that God Himself should come down among the children of men and take upon Him the form of man and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth? <i>Mos 8:13 [13:34]</i>
God Himself shall come down among the children of men and shall redeem His people. <i>Mos 8:28 [15:1]</i>
God Himself should come down among the children of men. <i>Mos 9:11 [17:8]</i>
God Himself atoneth for the sins of the world <i>A 19:97 [42:15]</i>

tion, both books share the Hebrew writing patterns, such as chiasmus, various similar sentence structures and other parallelisms and writing devices.

Records

The Bible. First, let's begin with the Biblical doctrine of "inerrancy," formulated in the 1970s, which states that the original manuscripts are totally free of error. *Vorlage* is a term used to refer to those original texts of the Bible which no longer exist and have been lost to history. Thus, it is asserted, the manuscripts which do exist *cannot be* considered inerrant. By comparison, the "infallibility" of the Bible is the belief in its absolute trustworthiness relating to matters of salvation and faith in that there *can be* no errors. These two terms are viewed as either equal or different—a distinction which often leads to debate.

What actually constitutes the Bible today? Canonization occurred in the fourth century AD in response to disagreement over which writings were inspired and which were heretical. The final "closed" canon consists of sixty-six books—thirty-nine Old Testament and twenty-seven New Testament. (Closed means no books can be added or removed.) Those books accepted are deemed inspired by God while the others are not (such books as the Lost Books, Apocrypha, Jubilees, Enoch, Thomas, etc.). The closed canon unfortunately promotes the idea that God's revelations have ceased, whereas a study of the Bible reveals that within the Bible are mentioned at least twenty-six books that are missing from the canon, many written after the Jews were taken into captivity in Babylonia (Heater 2012:2-4). What happened to those records?

Perhaps one of the most corrosive current ideas is that early Biblical "texts" were oral, simply stories passed down because Moses could not write. Accordingly, the first five books of the Bible would have been written down later by others. This theory is based on a complex analysis referred to as the "Documentary Hypothesis," (also called the Wellhausen hypothesis) developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This thesis states that four main sources were cobbled together by various "redactors" or editors in the tenth century BC or later—an idea that has since been shown to be in error, although many still hold to this view today.

However, a particularly intriguing concept among some Bible scholars, which has implications for The Book of Mormon, is that the early part of Genesis is older than Moses' time, that it was written down and that Moses had access to these records. The identification of a literary structure in the first part of Genesis unlocks the original source of Moses' writings and renders a defense of its antiquity, suggesting the possibility that Adam and Eve could read and write. The structural formula is the repeated phrase: "These are the generations of..." which occurs eleven times in the first thirty-seven chapters of Genesis. It is from this phrase (in Hebrew it means

"begettings or genealogical histories") that the book is named. So we have "Beginnings" in the Hebrew Bible, and in the KJV "Genesis," the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word translated "generations" (Wiseman 1985:59-60; see also Morris 2006:6). It has been determined that these phrases actually end, rather than begin, a section and that they are closer to the original accounts which were written as history, most likely by, rather than about, the person named. This structure is therefore a fingerprint of an earlier record prior to the time of Moses.

The Book of Mormon. The insight that records existed before Moses' time is relevant to The Book of Mormon, which consists of fifteen books, containing the accounts of three groups led by God to a new Promised Land. The earliest group, the Jaredites, were spared the confusion of their language by God at the time of the Great Tower.¹ They brought a record with them from the Old World ("across the great deep") which contained the account from Creation and the days of Adam, down to the time of the dispersion from the tower (Ether 1:3-4; 3:80 [1:3-4]; RCE:1028). This record *predates* Moses' writings of Genesis 1-11 and supports the parallel evidence above of early sources for Genesis prior to the time of Moses.

A second group led by Lehi departed from Jerusalem in 600 BC, just before the destruction of the first Israelite temple and the subsequent Babylonian captivity of the Jews. Lehi also brought an original Old World record written prior to 600 BC on plates of brass. This record was begun by Moses about a millennium *after* the Jaredites left the Old World taking the earlier record with them, which would have been replaced by Moses in Genesis 1-11.

The plates of brass contain the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) which include an account of Creation and Adam and Eve, and also a record of the Jews down to King Zedekiah, prophecies of the holy prophets down to Jeremiah and the genealogy of Lehi's forefathers (1 Nephi 1:159-162 [5:11-13]; RCE:1028). The brass plates also contain additional records not in the current Old Testament (1 Nephi 3:163, 171-174 [13:23, 28-29]). Prophets not in the Old Testament but on the plates of brass include Zenos, Zenoch, Esais and Neum, as well as a prophecy of Joseph of Egypt and Isaiah's missing lines (Heater 2012:2-4). Record keepers throughout The Book of Mormon frequently quote from or allude to the plates of brass. The most often-quoted Old Testament prophet is Isaiah (as is also the case in the Bible).

A third group, the Mulekites, was also led to the New World before the destruction of Jerusalem, but they did not bring any records with them. We learn of their history when they merge with the Nephites.

¹ The Great Tower is referred to in the Bible as the tower of Babel (cf. Genesis 11:1-9). Traditionally, this event (by legend) was "linked with the city of Babylon, with the result that the Hebrew word Babel is associated with the confusion of tongues. Actually it is a Babylonian word and means "gate of God. ... The tower story was known, and recorded in Sumerian records, much too early to be identified with Babylon..." (Simmons 1986:24-25).

Shared History. In summary, there are three parallel witnesses to the accounts of Creation, Adam and Eve, down to the Great Tower, and many related details in between.

The first witness is in the earliest writings, which were the original “generations of...” brought to the New World by the Jaredites:

Early Writings Brought by the Jaredites

An original record from Creation, Adam and Eve, Fall, down to dispersion at the Tower (*predates Moses*)

A second witness is Moses’ record in the Bible, which replaced the earlier records from Creation to the tower, Genesis 1-11, with fingerprints possibly from earlier records. He is credited with a total of five books (Genesis through Deuteronomy), followed by other writers through Jeremiah, the time when Lehi left Jerusalem:

Moses Replaced Earlier Records

An original record from Creation, Adam and Eve, Fall, down to dispersion at the Tower (*predates Moses*)

The third witness is from the plates of brass as quoted in The Book of Mormon, brought by Lehi to the New World. This record is considered an original account of Genesis through Jeremiah, just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. It contained the “five books of Moses, ... a record of the Jews ... down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, .. prophecies of the holy prophets from the beginning, ... and also many prophecies ... spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah” (1 Nephi 1:159-163 [5:11-13]):

Brass Plates Brought by Lehi

Genesis through Jeremiah: five books of Moses, plus record of the Jews and prophecies through Jeremiah

These parallel accounts not only corroborate each other, but together contribute to a greater understanding of subjects from the beginning.

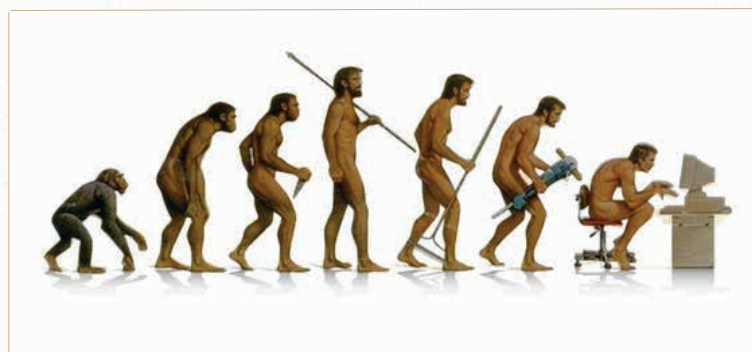
Historical Connections

In addition to the records connecting the Bible and The Book of Mormon, there is also a direct relationship between people and events. The Book of Mormon bears a second witness to numerous events portrayed in the Bible,

events which are now being challenged as mere myth. The capacity for comparison is so great that we will touch on only a few to demonstrate the potential.

Creation. Is the story of Creation merely symbolic? Did mankind evolve from the ape to human? Or is Adam a real, historical person? A living soul? Various creation theories are influenced by the concept of evolution as they attempt to explain God’s means of creating over a long period of time. However, we have two books of Scripture—two witnesses—that record the account of the literal Creation. Together they substantiate the oft-disputed manner—God “spoke” the world into existence (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29/Jacob 3:12-13 [4:9]), and the duration—that is, six days (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31/Mosiah 7:118 [13:19]) in which creation occurred.

If mankind were “created” by an evolutionary process, the question that arises is at what point did God endow man with a “living soul”?



One writer postulates a possible scenario somewhere in time during evolutionary history—

Couldn’t God just as easily hand out souls to the entire hominid population? Can’t Adam & Eve just be symbolic representations of that population? Frankly, this seems far more reasonable to me than the idea of giving souls to just two lucky people. Can you imagine being their neighbors? “Hey Urzug, have you noticed Adam and Eve in the cave down the block? They think they’re soooo cool with their new souls.” ... [And] how do souls spread throughout the population? Did souliness spread through the population like a gene? (Keller 2011)

Both the Bible and Book of Mormon bear witness that Adam was an historical person, a living soul. The Bible describes the creation of Adam “of the dust of the ground, and [God] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). The uniqueness of the soul is reiterated in 1 Corinthians 15:45: “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening spirit.” The Book of Mormon corroborates that it is God who gave the breath of life (2 Nephi 6:32, 55 [9:13, 26]), that the soul can never die (Alma 19:90 [42:9]), and that it is eternal (Alma 19:98 [42:16]) and immortal (Helaman 2:26 [3:30]).

As a special creation, “Adam was not already a sinner when he was created, but fell from a state of innocence and from the

fellowship he once had enjoyed with God” (Turpin 2013:196; refer to Genesis 2:25; 3:7-10). The Book of Mormon concurs that Adam and Eve were created in a state of innocence (2 Nephi 1:113 [2:23]). Sin entered as they yielded to the temptation of that “old serpent,” which caused which caused them to be cast out of the Garden of Eden with the resulting fall of all mankind, so clearly described in The Book of Mormon as “a lost and fallen state,” but nevertheless a distinct existence (see 1 Nephi 3:6 [10:6]). Thus, the need for a Redeemer, “the last Adam,” to restore mankind back into the presence of God (numerous references!!!!). The Book of Mormon refers to Adam and Eve as our “first parents.” The depth of understanding in The Book of Mormon of these events—Creation, the Fall and Redemption—opens up rich treasures for study, alongside the Bible.

Noah’s Flood. God’s judgment of the wickedness on the earth was destruction by a worldwide flood. Was the flood worldwide or simply a local occurrence? Details in the Bible portray a catastrophic event with waters covering hills and mountains above fifteen cubits (22.5 feet) over the whole earth! Note that the reference from Ether in The Book of Mormon specifically refers to the waters covering the land in the New World (see also Alma 8:31-33 [10:22-23]; 3 Nephi 10:17 [22:9]):

... after the waters had receded from off the face of this land, it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord. (Ether 6:2 [13:2])

Confounding of Language and Scattering. The more than 500 myths or legends of the worldwide flood were most likely spread around the world when people were scattered after the confounding of language. We saw above that there are two accounts of the confusion of language. The Book of Mormon contains the only known first-hand account of a people led by God to the New World after the time of the confounding of language. These people were called Jaredites, after their leader. This scattering also relates to the spread of civilization and development of distinct languages. Anthropologists tell us that civilization arose in six major areas of the world: Sumer/Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, the Indus Valley, Mesoamerica and Peru. Today it is estimated that there are over 7,000 living languages, as well as numerous dead or extinct languages.

Israel’s Exodus from Egypt. Israel’s 400-year sojourn in Egypt and its subsequent Exodus rank as another significant historical event that is confirmed in both the Bible and Book of Mormon. The Exodus event is also under attack as being mythical in nature. In reality, however, Israel was formed as a nation in Egypt. During the Exodus, the Law of Moses was given in response to Israel’s transgression (see Heater 2012:3-4).

Children of Abraham. In addition to the first-hand account of the Jaredites, directly tied to the Biblical “tower of Babel,” there are other Book of Mormon connections with the Bible. One such account, which begins prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple, relates that Lehi was a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah. After being led by the Lord out of Jerusalem, Lehi learned his genealogy from the plates of brass and discovered that he was of the lineage of Joseph and through his son Manasseh. Therefore, as part of the house of Israel, he and his descendants (in The Book of Mormon) are direct descendants of Abraham, with all the cultural patterns, tribal, religious and law-of-Moses performances and ordinances historically attributed to the Israelites. (The Book of Mormon reveals that it was the intent of the law of Moses to point us to Christ who was rejected by Israel. It reveals that they knew of Christ before His incarnation.) As children of Abraham and knowing their covenant with God, they would have worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. A good exercise is to trace the genealogical history of Abraham’s family from both the Bible and Book of Mormon.

Topical/Prophecies

Pick a subject, any subject: principles of the gospel, spiritual topics, parables or prophecies. Within these are topics that richly complement each other and bear witness to the same message found in the Bible and Book of Mormon. The two books together serve to deepen the testimony of the same Jesus Christ who came in the flesh as the infinite and eternal sacrifice to restore mankind to God’s presence. A study of any topic unites the witness against false doctrines, contentions and lack of knowledge. It also leads as well to the fulfilling of the Lord’s covenants and promises and the restoration of the house of Israel in these last days (2 Nephi 2:19-24 [13:12-13]). A scan of any concordance reveals endless possibilities for this type of study. For instance, the most frequent studies have to do with faith and repentance. Two other examples follow:

born again. “Have ye been born again?” This question is asked by concerned Christians/Protestants/Evangelicals as an introduction to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The question stems from John 3:1-7 in which Jesus tells Nicodemus that “Ye must be born again.” Response to the question leads to the “sinner’s prayer,” a term that describes the words spoken by persons who recognize their sin and their need for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Having been raised in the Restoration (RLDS) tradition, perhaps because of the emphasis placed on this “formula” by Protestant Christians, the term seems to have been avoided. The result is little emphasis on, or understanding of, what “born again” means. What will be surprising to many about this is that The Book of Mormon has much to say about being “born again”! When what the New Testament says is compared side-by-side with the Book of Mormon, it is plain to see that they

complement each other. Jesus in The New Testament issues the call that “ye must be born again.” We also learn that the “born again” person will see the kingdom of God, is a new creature, and is born of incorruptible seed.

The Book of Mormon also focuses on this experience. It describes a mighty change in people’s hearts (there are seven instances). In Alma chapter 3, in the midst of a series of 54 rhetorical questions, Alma asks, “Have ye spiritually been born of God?” (v. 27 [5:14]). His continuing questions cause the hearer/reader to personally examine the profound nature of being born again. The entire chapter contrasts the before and after: changes, conditions and promises. Here are only three of those questions:

Have ye received His image in your own countenances?
(v. 28 [5:14])

Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?
(v. 29 [5:14])

Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of Him who created you?
(v.30 [5:15])

Our further understanding of this “mighty change” is enlarged through the covenant invitation to repent and “come unto Christ” and be baptized (“born of the water”) as a witness of that covenant (Mosiah 9:41, 179 [18:10; 21:35]; 3 Nephi 3:69 [7:35]), which is followed by the infilling of the Holy Spirit (“born of the Spirit”; see also Alma 16:117 [31:36]; Helaman 2:111 [5:45]). Rather than ignoring this important principle, we should embrace what both The Book of Mormon and the Bible have to say for a richer understanding what Christ has done for us! Can you truly say you have been born again?

parable of the sower/seed. Two parables, one in the Bible (parable of the sower, also called parable of the soils) and one in The Book of Mormon (Alma’s parable of the seed), are closely related. In fact, Alma’s parable is sometimes referred to as The Book of Mormon version of the sower. The parable of the sower is found in three New Testament books: Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; and Luke 8:5-8, 11-15. Alma’s parable of the seed is related in Alma 16: 152-173 [32:28-43].

The emphasis of the parable of the sower is on four grounds or soils (representing the heart) in which the seed is planted. Each ground brings forth a different result. Alma’s parable emphasizes the seed. He clarifies that the seed may be a good or true seed—the word of God—or, in contrast, not a good seed. Again, the soil in which the seed is planted is the heart. For personal study, in relation to both parables, and among a variety of related topics, explore the subject more in-depth by reviewing references in both books to the stony or hard heart, softened heart, broken heart and contrite spirit, and the circumcised and uncircumcised heart. Studying these two parables together not only gives greater insight into the ground/heart, but also explains how to achieve the ultimate goal of sweet, delicious fruit by nourishing the word of God with diligence, patience, faith and longsuffering!

Conclusion

How can we bridge the gap between the two books? First of all, understanding the perspective of Bible believers helps us become more effective in our witness of The Book of Mormon. Secondly, recognizing the intimate connection between the two books is also a valuable and productive tool for witnessing. A good analogy of studying the two books together is 3D glasses: The results of two lenses in two images with a slightly different angle combine to provide a depth perception for a greater and clearer picture. This can be compared to the study of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) in the New Testament, which means that the Bible and Book of Mormon together produce a stronger witness of their historicity and a valid source of harmonious and enriching subjects and insights. This approach is significant as both the Bible and Book of Mormon continue to undergo extreme scrutiny and criticisms. We will see that it is the two together that stand against the latter day apostasy in the world and stand together with Jesus Christ, our hope in glory! 🙏

“In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”

(2 Corinthians 13:1; 2 Nephi 11:133, 135 [27:12]; Ether 2:3 [5:4])

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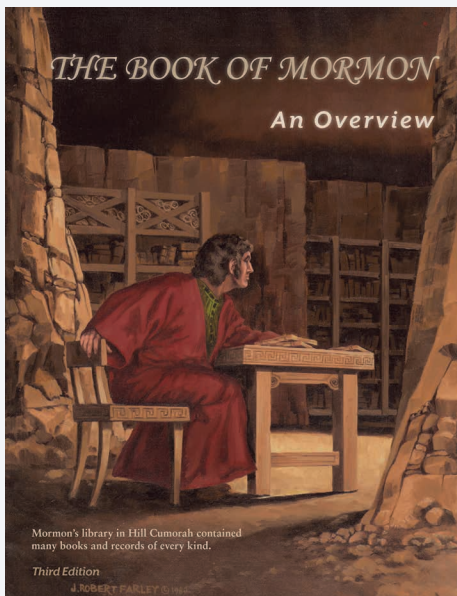
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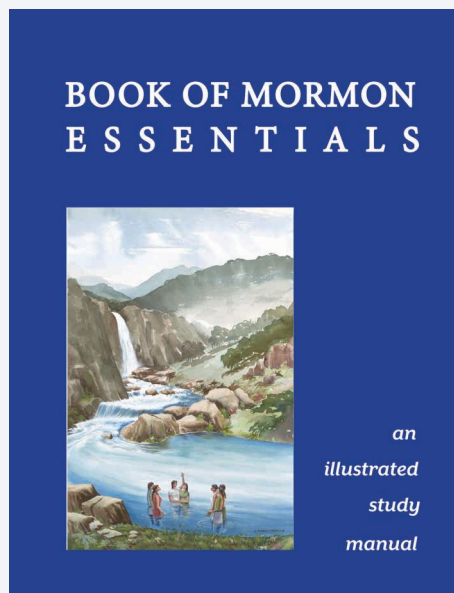
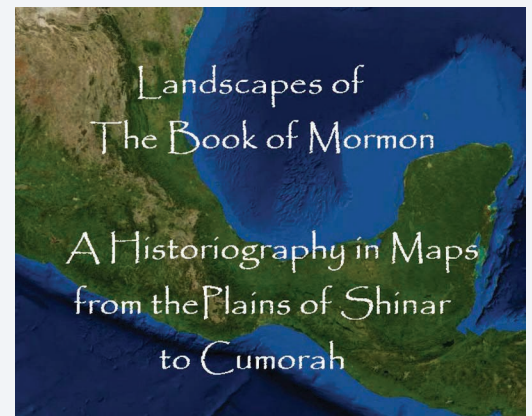
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