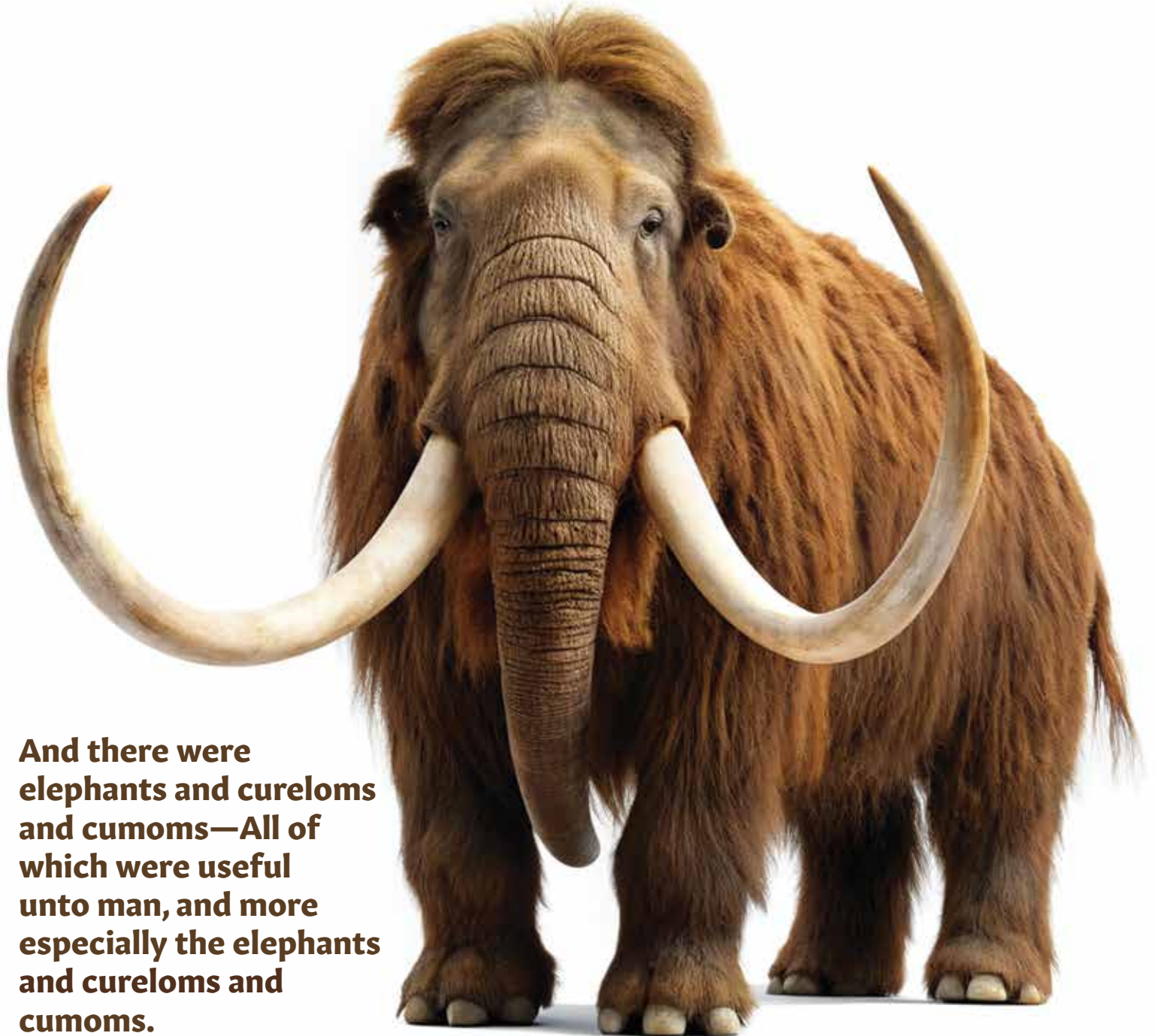

THE

WITNESS

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And there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms—All of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants and cureloms and cumoms.

THE
WITNESS

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Reflections on Repentance

by Dale Gilmore

In the 1840s, William Miller made several incorrect predictions concerning the second coming of Christ. His followers, known as the Millerites, were so convinced that his prediction of October 22, 1844 was correct that many of them sold their worldly goods and gathered in various groups to await the Lord. After the October 22 “Great Disappointment,” as it was known by his followers, Miller renounced making any more specific predictions concerning the Lord’s return and his followers disbanded into numerous smaller loose-knit groups.

Another failed prognosticator was Hal Lindsey. Lindsey was an American evangelist writer and television host. He wrote several books concerning the last days. His most famous book was *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, which was published in 1970. The New York Times proclaimed this book to be the best-selling, non-fiction book for the entire decade of the 1970s. It eventually sold about 30 million copies. In this book, Lindsey predicted the Lord would return in 1988. Lindsey grossed about \$60 million for his efforts with this particular book, even though his calculations were incorrect.

With these examples in mind, along with the failures of countless others, I have chosen not to share a specific date for the Second Coming. Actually, I don’t know the particular date of the Lord’s coming so I really don’t have the option of sharing it with you. However, I am convinced through the study of scripture and the prophetic writings of mid-twentieth century RLDS priesthood members such as Arthur Oakman, Earl Curry and Roy Weldon that “time is running out.” Many Saints remember that this was the title of a prophetic message given by Brother Weldon in 1968. Even in the past few years, I have heard numerous sermons, both in the Restoration and in the greater Christian community, reminding us that the last days are upon us.

In Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy, he lists examples of immorality that will exist in the last days. I believe that, though the epistle was written to Timothy, it was written for us. I don’t believe Timothy needed to know the specific conditions of the last days, but it is of great importance to those who will be alive in those (these) days. Paul even shares counsel with those who would be alive during those times. Paul said, **from such turn away** (2 Timothy 3:5). Timothy did not need the advice to turn away, but we do! Every example Paul gives can be observed in our society to some degree today. Paul said,

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent (in biblical terms, incontinent means lacking self-control, especially regarding passions, appetites or lust), fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; **from such turn away** (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Daily events bear witness of the chaos and immorality that are rampant in our world and nation today. Unfortunately, things seem to continue to become worse.

I shared this passage with my classes at CPRS recently and asked the students to consider how prevalent those nineteen examples are in our society today. Several students made comments that they could see these conditions in our world today. One

student said that he could also see some of these examples in the Church today. I was saddened to hear that comment, but I could not disagree. Kids sometimes pay more attention to what is around them than we give them credit.

Just over a year ago, as I was prayerfully considering the topic God wanted me to discuss in an upcoming sermon, I was led to share concerning the need for preparation as we approached the time of tribulation. No one knows exactly what trials lay ahead for mankind, but most everyone believes it is rapidly approaching. In Pensacola, Brother Joe Booker and I used to discuss our thoughts concerning the last days. We would jokingly, but sincerely, say that when everything had transpired, we would say that we never thought it would happen the way it did. We need to be spiritually prepared in order to successfully deal with those trials that come our way.

Many people are preparing in a physical way for difficult times that are ahead of us. In fact, several members of my family are “preppers.” According to AI, a prepper is a person who believes a catastrophic disaster or emergency is likely to occur in the future and makes active preparations for it, typically by stockpiling food, ammunition and other supplies. I would not argue against physical preparation, but in the end God will determine who will survive that which is to come. At the time of Christ’s crucifixion, there was great destruction and loss of life in the Book of Mormon lands. Third Nephi 4:41 tells us that Jesus said to those who had survived this catastrophe, **O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they!** It wasn’t the “lucky ones” or the most physically prepared who survived, but the more righteous. In a 1957 sermon, Brother Arthur Oakman said,

Now, with respect to the destruction which must come to the people of this land, which will come—it is inevitable, what can I say? Into the hands of man has been committed the power to destroy the physical universe...Ladies and gentlemen, the only safe place...is the secret place of the Most High... If God preserves you, you are

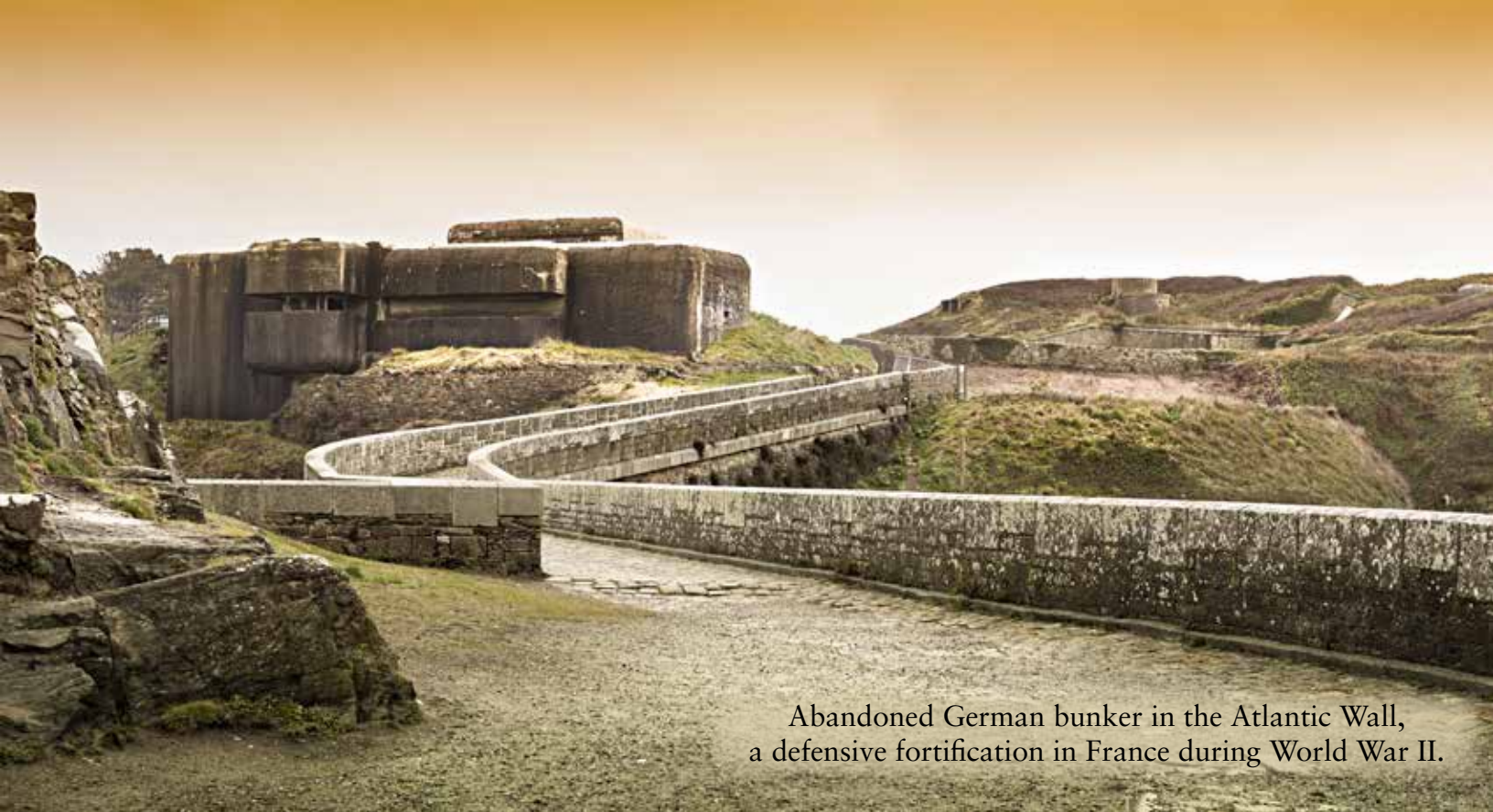
preserved, and if He does not, you are not preserved (<https://restorationbookstore.org/pages/my-people-will-i-preserve>).

It would be wise to prayerfully consider the lengths one should go to concerning physical preparation. God’s Will may not be the same for everyone. Spiritual preparation, on the other hand, is imperative if we are to successfully navigate the challenges ahead and be victorious in the end, whether in life or in death.

I am reminded of the parable of the ten virgins. In parables, women often represent the Church, both in its purity and in its state of apostasy. One example of this is 2 Nephi 12:22: **But behold, that great and abominable church, the whore of all the earth, must tumble to the earth and great must be the fall thereof.** There is debate concerning the actual identity of the ten virgins, but most Bible students believe the parable is set in the last days. The following words of Christ were given to Joseph Smith, Jr. in 1831.

And at that day when I shall come in My glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins; for they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived, verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day, and the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance (D&C 45:10b, c).





Abandoned German bunker in the Atlantic Wall, a defensive fortification in France during World War II.

Can we assume that the ten virgins represent good people, or various portions of the Church in a righteous state? However, only five of the ten virgins were prepared to enter into the wedding banquet. We **MUST** be spiritually prepared.

After preaching several sermons concerning preparation, I began asking the Lord what specific things we should be doing in order to enhance our preparation efforts. It was impressed upon me to tell the people that we need to repent. I hesitated to share this counsel for a time for two reasons. First, as a sinner myself, I'm uncomfortable telling others that they should repent. When I share this guidance behind the pulpit, I make it clear that **WE** need to repent, not that **YOU** need to repent. Second, I'm certain that we repent already. We all understand the need for repentance in our lives. So, why would I need to share something with the Saints that they already know and practice? We're good people (small g). God is Good (capital G). We are good in that we continue to attempt to do God's Will in spite of our sins and weaknesses.

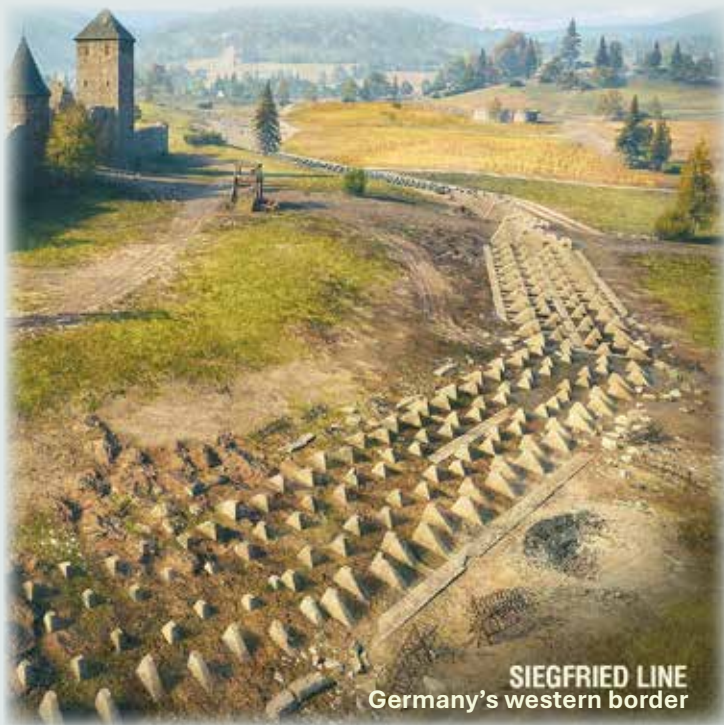
Two additional thoughts came to mind as I continued to ponder the idea of repentance. First, we need to repent of all our sins. Many of us have a few sins tucked away that we don't really want to release. It could be an activity that's not bad in itself,

but we allow it to interfere with our stewardship of time because we spend more time and energy on it than we should. Or, maybe it's ill feelings that we have against a fellow worker, a neighbor, or even a brother or sister in the church: *This person hurt me and so I am justified in hanging on to those bad feelings toward him or her.* Actually, those could well be the sins that we need to eliminate most in our lives. We try to control those sins by our own means rather than casting them on the Lord.

I am reminded of three major defensive fortifications that were built during World War II. First was the Maginot Line, second was the Atlantic Wall and third was the Siegfried Line. The Maginot Line was built by the French along the border between France and Germany. It was started before the war began in an effort to keep the Germans from invading France. The Atlantic Wall was built by the Germans along the coast of Europe extending about 3,000 miles along the Atlantic coast, the English Channel and the North Sea along the coast of Norway. Its purpose was to keep Allied forces from successfully invading mainland Europe. The most famous portion of the Atlantic Wall was along the beaches of Normandy where Allied forces landed on June 6, 1944, known as D-day. The final fortification was the Siegfried

Line built by the Germans on the German side of the Maginot Line and extending farther north than the French line extended. Its purpose was to keep the Allied forces from entering into Germany proper near the end of the war.

There are two similarities concerning these three lines of fortification. First, they were impressive feats of engineering costing a great deal of manpower and money. Second, they failed. German forces never attacked the Maginot Line directly—they simply went around it by going through the part of the Ardennes Forest that was located in neutral Belgium. The Atlantic Wall was overrun by Allied forces on that fateful day in June 1944. Allied material and manpower superiority, the actions of many brave Allied troops and—most importantly—the Grace of God allowed them to drive the Germans from the French coast causing them to abandon their imposing defensive structures. Finally, Allied forces were eventually able to drive through the Siegfried Line and into Germany in a last push that ended with the surrender of Germany.



Like those impressive defensive fortifications, we too build impressive defenses against the sins and weaknesses in our lives that we want to manage rather than eliminate. However, despite our best efforts, our defenses will fail just as those magnificent structures in World War II failed. We cannot defeat Satan. We can only be victorious over him with the

guidance and power of the Holy Spirit as we seek to totally rid ourselves of those sins and weaknesses that weigh us down. This can only have a complete victory over sin by having a constant walk with the Lord where we commune with Him in repentance and obedience. Repentance and obedience must be integrated into every phase of our lives.

Alma Chapter 12 provides us with an interesting concept about repentance. A Nephite named Ammon went to the Lamanite-controlled land of Ishmael where he was captured and brought before the king of the land. Eventually, Ammon was able to convert this king—whose name was Lamoni—to a belief in Christ. When Ammon later told King Lamoni he needed to go to the land of Middoni because his brother and other brethren were in prison there, King Lamoni offered to go with him. King Lamoni said he was a friend of the king in that region; therefore, he might be able to help Ammon free his brother and brethren. On the journey to Middoni, Ammon and King Lamoni happened to come upon King Lamoni's father, who was the king over all the land of the Lamanites. King Lamoni's father was annoyed with his son for two reasons. First, he asked Lamoni, **Why did ye not come to the feast on that great day when I made a feast unto my sons and unto my people?** (Alma 12:191). Second, he was displeased that his son was in the company of a Nephite. The father asked, **Whither art thou going with this Nephite which is one of the children of a liar?** (Alma 12:192). The father became angry when Lamoni explained to him that he was going with Ammon to help other Nephites get out of prison. **Now the father of Lamoni commanded him that he should slay Ammon with the sword** (Alma 12:197). However, Lamoni refused to kill Ammon and said he would continue to Middoni in an attempt to have the other Nephites released. **Now when his father heard these words, he was angry with him and he drew his sword, that he might smite him to the earth** (Alma 12:200). Ammon then spoke to the father of King Lamoni saying,

Behold, thou shalt not slay thy son; Nevertheless, it were better that he should fall than thee, For behold, he hath repented of his sins; But if thou shouldest fall at this time in thine anger, thy soul could not be saved (Alma 12:201, 202).

It is interesting that Ammon did not use the argument that the father had never accepted Christ but, rather, that his soul could not be saved because of his anger at that moment.

As I pondered what Ammon had said to the father, an interesting analogy unfolded in my mind. I began to think about atmospheric conditions! There are long-term atmospheric conditions called climate. Areas have warm climates, cold climates, arid climates and humid climates, to name a few. But there are also daily changes in atmospheric conditions called weather. A cold climate area may have a warm day or an arid climate area may have a rainstorm periodically. Each of us has both a spiritual climate about us and spiritual daily weather: a calm person may have an anger episode periodically or a prideful person may show an unusual amount of humility in a particular situation. We must constantly evaluate both our spiritual climate and our spiritual weather. I believe if we are mindful of our spiritual weather (our daily deeds), our spiritual climate (our longtime, spiritual condition) will evolve to the condition that it should be. We can only be successful in maintaining that proper spiritual climate and weather if we have a close daily (or should I say, moment-to-moment) spiritual walk with the Lord.

I remember a sermon once given by brother Joe Booker, whom I mentioned earlier. Joe began his sermon by asking the approximately fifteen people who were in attendance if we had the relationship with Jesus that we wanted. I was serving with Joe and Priest Eddie Culberson, and I could see a number of heads shake in the negative. The people were showing they did not have the relationship with Christ that they wanted. However, Joe said they really did have the relationship they wanted with the Lord. We may not have the relationship we know we need, but we do have the relationship we have chosen to have. He went on to tell us that Jesus will draw as near to us as we will allow Him to come. We—not Jesus—determine our relationship with Christ. May we consider where we are spiritually and, if we are not where we need to be, may we make those adjustments that will bring us closer in our walk with the Savior.

There is an enlightening story in the book of Enos about a spiritual experience that Enos had with the Lord. Enos said his father, Jacob, had

taught him **in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before that I received a remission of my sins** (Enos 1:1, 3). “Wrestle” is an interesting choice of words here. I am reminded of Jacob’s wrestle with the Lord in Genesis 32. Though the context of each story is different, both tell of a profound, intense encounter with the Lord after each man had been in mighty prayer to God. Enos continued,

And my soul hungered; And I kneeled down before my Maker and I cried unto Him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; And all the day long did I cry unto Him; Yea, and when the night came, I did still raise my voice high, that it reached the heavens (Enos 1:5-6).

Enos did not ask the Lord for forgiveness as an afterthought; his request was an impassioned plea of extreme quality and quantity. Enos showed he truly had a strong desire to have that spiritually intimate walk with his Savior. Enos’ efforts were rewarded when the Lord told him his sins had been forgiven and he was blessed (Enos 1:7). What a wonderful experience Enos had because he chose to call upon the Lord with all his heart. Enos chose to have that special relationship with the Lord and the Lord honored that choice with His blessings. We, too, can have a similar experience...if we so choose.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing more important than our relationship with the Lord. That relationship will determine our eternal destiny. A close walk with our Savior can bring joy to our earthly lives and, more importantly, provide us with eternal happiness. The quality of that walk depends on us. Jesus is always as close to us as we will allow Him to be. Our relationship with Him is enhanced when we constantly seek to be humble, obedient and repentant. A oneness with Christ will naturally provide us with a oneness with each other. May the Holy Spirit guide us daily in our efforts to be the people the Lord wants us to be. May we still become that people who will assist in the building of the Kingdom in these last days.

EXPLORING EVIDENCES FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

by Shane Robinson

The first criticism for the Book of Mormon was published in *The Reflector* in September 1829 a full five months before the Book of Mormon became available to the public in March 1830. The critical article was published by Abner Cole who operated under the pseudonym Obadiah Dogberry. *The Reflector* was printed at the E.B. Grandin print shop where the Book of Mormon was being printed. Abner Cole had evening and weekend access to the press and was reading freshly-printed excerpts of the Book of Mormon. He printed unauthorized excerpts from the Book of Mormon under the satirical title “Joe Smith’s Gold Bible.” Joseph Smith confronted Cole in January 1830, accusing him of copyright violation. Cole challenged him to a fist fight, but Joseph declined. Cole stopped printing excerpts from the Book of Mormon after the confrontation but continued to print analytical critiques. Here are some of the things he said about the book:

One of the most ridiculous impostures ever promulgated!¹

Let us send for Walter the Magician... peradventure he will inform us where the Nephites hid their treasure.²

I looked, and behold a little old man stood before me, clad, as I supposed, in Egyptian raiment, except his Indian blanket and moccasins—his beard of silver white, hung far below his knees. On his head was an old-fashioned military halfcocked hat, such as was worn in the days of the patriarch Moses—his speech was sweeter than molasses, and his words were the reformed Egyptian.³

The criticisms for the Book of Mormon never stopped. It has been accused of being a work of plagiarism, full of anachronisms, doctrinal inaccuracies, archaeological inconsistencies and historical impossibilities. Despite almost 200 years of criticism, however, the book has stood the test of time; modern archaeologists, linguists, historians and theologians are moving towards the Book of Mormon narrative as so many false notions have been debunked over time.

This article shares a few of the criticisms that were originally believed about the Book of Mormon in 1830 but have been proven false today.

BELIEF #1: ANCIENT CULTURES DID NOT WRITE ON METAL PLATES.

In the 1830s, the Book of Mormon was criticized for saying the people kept records on metal plates:

The ignorance of Smith is equaled only by the credulity of his followers. Who ever heard of sacred records kept on plates of gold?⁴

The absurdity of engraving a book of several hundred pages on plates of gold, and then hiding them in the earth is too glaring to require comment.⁵

These comments made sense because in the 1830s there were no known records kept on metal plates. Then archaeology began to catch up (See Table on page 9).

EVIDENCE OF ANCIENT WRITING ON METAL PLATES

DISCOVERY	YEAR DISCOVERED	DATE OF ARTIFACT	LOCATION DISCOVERED	DESCRIPTION
Anbil Copper Plates ^A	1905	AD 907–955	Tamil Nadu, India	Copper sheets bound with a ring; record of a land grant
Gold Plaque of Darius the Great ^B	1933	550–486 BC	Persepolis, Iran (Ancient Persia)	Two gold and silver plaques narrating the story of the Achaemenid Empire; buried in a stone box
Gold Plate of Queen Bara-irnun of Umma ^C	c. 1937	2550–2250 BC	Jokha, Iraq (Ancient Umma)	4 1/8" × 3 3/8" gold votive plate; dedication by a queen (wife of King Gishakidu of Umma); displayed at the Louvre Museum, France
Copper Scroll ^D	1952	c. AD 50	Caves of Qumran, Dead Sea Scrolls	Hammered copper sheets formed into a scroll; written in Hebrew; lists locations of vast treasures hidden during the Roman invasion
Etruscan Gold Book ^E	1955	c. 660 BC	Bulgaria	5 cm × 4.5 cm six-page book made of 23.82-karat gold; written in Etruscan; displayed at National Historical Museum, Sofia, Bulgaria
Pyrgi Gold Tablets ^F	1964	c. 500 BC	Pyrgi, Italy	Three gold plates written in Etruscan and Phoenician; record dedicating a sacred place; displayed at National Etruscan Museum, Rome
Ketef Hinnom Silver Scrolls ^G	1979	c. 600 BC	Israel (Jerusalem area)	Tiny silver plates rolled up; written in Paleo-Hebrew; oldest surviving texts from the Hebrew Bible
Laguna Copper Plate ^H	1987	AD 900	Philippines	Thin piece of copper sheet; 20 cm x 20 cm; written in early Kawi script
The Achaemenid Persian Golden Codex ^I	2005	c. 550–330 BC	Tehran, Iran (Old Persia)	Eight-page codex (ancient book) on golden sheets bound with gold rings; written in cuneiform

^A oneindiaonline.com/anbil-copper-plates.php

^B artarch.dalaticamping.net/gold-foundation-plaque

^C https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bara-irnun?utm_source=copilot.com

^D thearchaeologist.org/blog/the-mystery-of-the-copper-scroll-a-lost-treasure-map

^E thearchaeologist.org/blog/the-golden-etruscan-orphic-book-an-ancient-enigma

^F museoetru.it/masterpieces/lamine-doro-da-pyrgi

^G armstronginstitute.org/1123-the-ketef-hinnom-scrolls-earliest-biblical-text-ever-discovered

^H <https://www.ancient-origins.net/artifacts-ancient-writings/laguna-copper-plate-inscription-ancient-text-changed-perception-history-020630>

^I wikipedia.org/wiki/Laguna_Copperplate_Inscription

¹ cais-soas.com/News/2005/October2005/11-10.htm

All these metal plates can be viewed today and are living proof that ancient cultures did, in fact, write on metal plates.

BELIEF #2:
NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT LEHI'S JOURNEY THROUGH SAUDI ARABIA NOR THE OCEAN CROSSING.

When the Book of Mormon was published in 1830, maps of Saudi Arabia were not readily available and did not contain much detail. The details were certainly not available to Joseph Smith in rural New York. In the 1970s, German archaeologists discovered a region in Southwest Saudi Arabia that was called NHM.⁶ Since ancient Hebrew did not contain vowels, it would be

pronounced “Nahom”: **And it came to pass that Ishmael died and was buried in the place which was called Nahom** (1 Nephi 5:44). The wording is interesting here because, as Nephi describes their journey, Nahom was the only place that apparently already had a name. All other places like the Valley of Lemuel, River Laman, Shazer and Bountiful were all named by Lehi and his family.

Nahom was also the place where they stopped journeying in a southeast direction along the Red Sea and turned due east. If you look at a map and go straight east from the Nahom region, you will end up on the southern coast of Saudi Arabia in the Dhofar region. This small section of fertile coastline is the only likely place they could have found all the items listed to build the boat such as iron ore, large trees, fruits, etc. The rest of the Saudi Arabian southern coastline is arid and not likely to provide

what was needed for the journey. In addition, the route down the eastern side of Africa was already circumnavigated by Phoenician sailors in 600 BC as an alternate route to what is modern-day Spain. This trip was actually accomplished in 2009 using a replica of a Phoenician ship. Ironically, the ocean currents and prevailing winds pushed the boat within 400 miles of Florida and they were forced to make a major course correction to head back towards Europe.⁷ While we don't know the exact route taken by Lehi and his family, this trip proved that it could be done with boats crafted in 600 BC.

placed in their museum and displayed for many years under the assumption that it was written in the Cherokee language.

In 1964, a Chicago patent attorney named Henriette Mertz and a Hebrew linguist named Dr. Cyrus Gordon identified the writing as a form of ancient Paleo-Hebrew.⁹ The stone had been displayed upside down for almost 80 years! The inscription was translated to read "For the Judeans," which of course was a reference to ancient Israel. Robert Stieglitz, another Hebrew scholar [Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey], confirmed Gordon's translation.

When the Smithsonian learned the inscription was ancient Hebrew, they immediately declared it a fraud and took it out of the museum, even though it was their archeological dig that found it! The "Bat Creek Stone" was displayed until 2021 at the Museum of the Cherokee, but has been removed and placed in storage at the Smithsonian.

Other items have been found in the Americas including the Newark Keystone (June 1860),¹⁰ the Newark Decalogue Stone (November 1860)¹¹ and the Las Lunas Decalogue Stone (1880),¹² all of which have ancient Hebrew writing. Not all archaeologists agree that these items are authentic, but as time has gone forward, new evidence has challenged their beliefs. Studies have been ongoing and the findings have been very interesting.

For example in 2010, Scott Wolter, a forensic geologist and host of *America Unearthed* on the History Channel, conducted a microscopic investigation of the Bat Creek Stone. He performed an electron microscopy analysis at the McClung Museum where the stone was located at the time. His findings showed that marks made during excavation appeared very sharp and contained an "orange-colored silty-clay residue" while the ancient writing did not. In his findings he said, "The complete lack of the orange-colored silty-clay residue in any of the characters of the inscription is consistent with many hundreds of years of weathering in a wet earth mound comprised of soil and *hard red clay*."¹³

Another example of findings supporting the authenticity of these items is a 2014 study of the wooden platform under which the Newark Decalogue stone was found. Bradley Lepper of the Ohio History Connection found a fragment

BELIEF #3:

THERE IS NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE THAT THE NATIVE AMERICANS HAD ANY CONNECTION TO ANCIENT HEBREW CULTURES.

In 1889, the Smithsonian conducted the Mound Survey Project.⁸ They had been studying the mounds of North America and trying to learn about its ancient peoples. John W. Emmert was part of the Smithsonian's Bureau of Ethnology. While on a dig along the Little Tennessee River, near the mouth of Bat Creek, they opened an undisturbed Hopewell Indian Mound. The Hopewell Indians are believed to have lived between 100 BC and AD 500—right during the heart of the Nephite era. When they opened the mound, they found a stone that contained an inscription. The archaeologists assumed it was an ancient Paleo-Cherokee dialect, and the Smithsonian published an article about the inscription in their *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1890-1891, p. 392). The artifact was



BAT CREEK STONE DISPLAYS ANCIENT PALEO-HEBREW WRITING



**SKELETON OF MASTODON FOUND
NEAR KIMMSWICK, MISSOURI ON THE
BANKS OF ROCK CREEK IN 1839.
NOW ON DISPLAY IN THE NATURAL
HISTORY MUSEUM IN LONDON.**

of the wood that had been preserved at Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History. The wood carbon dated to between AD 85 and AD 135 with 95% probability.¹⁴ This means that the Decalogue Stone had to be at least that old since it was found underneath this burial platform. This date is consistent with the timeframe for the Hopewell culture to have built the mound, which was during the Golden Age of the Nephites following Christ's visit to America.

As time goes on, more findings will likely come to light despite modern archaeologists' resistance to changing their position on these ancient people and their origin. God will continue to reveal evidence as people honestly seek truth.

**BELIEF #4:
THE BOOK OF MORMON IS FULL OF
ANACHRONISMS.**

An "anachronism" is something that should not have existed during the Book of Mormon timeline or in the Americas. Many believe these anachronisms are solid proof that the Book of Mormon was a hoax by Joseph Smith and is not what it claims to be. Alexander Campell wrote in an article that "Nephi knew all about steamboats and the compass 2400 years ago."¹⁵ This statement is easily debunked by

a simple word search today. The Book of Mormon never mentions powered boats nor the compass, with the exception of the liahona which operated by the power of God—not magnetism.

There are other apparent anachronisms identified early on, and modern science had no answer for them until many years later. Early saints had to trust the book was true because of the Holy Ghost that accompanied its reading.

One of the common anachronisms was elephants. The book of Ether records:

And they also had horses and asses,
And there were elephants and cureloms
and cumoms—
All of which were useful unto man, and
more especially
the elephants and cureloms and cumoms
(Ether 4:21).

This seemed ridiculous to a settler in America—there were no such animals in 1830. It seemed crazy to even suggest it. Then archaeologists began to discover various types of elephants—including mammoths and mastodons—all over North America. In 1839, Albert C. Koch excavated mastodon bones along Rock Creek just southwest of St. Louis.¹⁶ A mastodon was also discovered by workers at Harmony Mills in Albany County, New York in 1866.¹⁷ In 1887, a Mastodon was found in Ohio.¹⁸

Then things got really interesting. In the 1930s, a mammoth was found with a Clovis point—a prehistoric spearhead made by native peoples of North America—embedded in the bone in New Mexico.¹⁹ This of course meant that man and mammoths co-existed. Then in 1977, a mastodon rib was found in Washington with a projectile in the bone.²⁰ Also in 1977, in the Bluefish Caves in Canada's Yukon territory, an excavation project began and lasted about a decade. Archaeologists discovered a small number of tools and 36,000 mammal bones, including mammoths and extinct horses—some of which had cut marks as evidence that man had interacted with them.²¹ In 1979, the Illinois State Museum excavated a Clovis projectile directly underneath a mastodon bone.²² Since that time more findings have been discovered, including a discovery as recent as February 13, 2026, when a man pulled a 92-pound mammoth femur from a Missouri lake.²³ The fact is, there were elephants in America before the white man arrived, but this would not begin to be discovered until nine years after the Book of Mormon was published!

Other anachronisms that have since been proven as true facts are horses,²⁴ barley,²⁵ copper tools²⁶ and weapons,²⁷ and scimitars (cimeters).²⁸ All of these items were once thought to have been brought over by the Europeans—never to have existed in the Americas—but the archaeological record now confirms they all existed before Columbus.

One item of particular interest is the use of steel. Nephi describes Laban's sword as:

And I beheld his sword,
And I drew it forth from the sheath thereof
and the hilt thereof was of pure gold,
And the workmanship thereof was
exceeding fine,
And I saw that the blade thereof was
of the most precious steel (1 Nephi 1:109).

The claim of the Book of Mormon that the ancient Jews were working in fine steel was preposterous in the 1800s. Here are some early quotes by the critics:

Laban's sword was steel, when it is a notorious fact that the Israelites knew nothing of steel for hundreds of years

afterwards. Who but as ignorant a person as Rigdon would have perpetrated all these blunders?²⁹

Laban is represented as killed by one Nephi, some six hundred years before Christ, with a sword *of the most precious steel*, hundreds of years before steel was known to man!³⁰

[The Book of Mormon] speaks of the most *precious steel*, before the commonest had been dreamt of.³¹

Nephi...wielded a sword *of the most precious steel*. But steel was not known to man in those days.³²

Laban had a steel sword long before steel came into use.³³

Every commentator on the Book of Mormon has pointed out the many cultural and historical anachronisms, such as the steel sword of Laban in 600 BC.³⁴

No one believes that steel was available to Laban or anyone else in 592 BC.³⁵

The notion that Laban had a sword made of fine steel was absolutely ridiculous until the 1970s. Then modern discoveries changed everything. Below are quotes from modern experts regarding steel in ancient Israel and the Middle East:

Archaeological evidence indicates that the advent of consistent, deliberate steeling of iron occurred by 1000 BCE, and that production of carburized iron objects increased rapidly after 900 BCE.³⁶

Evidence for the intentional quenching and tempering of carburized iron comes from 11th century BC sites such as Lapithos, Idalion, Amathus, and Kouklia-Skales on Cyprus. This is matched by a 12th/11th century BC pick from Mount Adir in Israel that is made of quenched and tempered steel.³⁷



THIS 7TH - 6TH CENTURY BC ISRAELITE SWORD WAS FOUND AT VERED JERICHO, ABOUT 15 MILES FROM JERUSALEM. THE BLADE IS MADE OF IRON HARDENED INTO STEEL. IT IS CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY AT THE ISRAEL MUSEUM ([HTTPS://SCRIPTURECENTRAL.ORG/BOOK-OF-MORMON-EVIDENCE-LABAN-S-STEEL-SWORD](https://scripturecentral.org/book-of-mormon-evidence-laban-s-steel-sword)).

Wrought iron heated in contact with charcoal (carbon) at high temperature produces carburized iron or steel, which is more malleable than cast iron. Steel can be hardened by quenching (practiced as early as the tenth century BCE), that is, cooling off the red-hot steel by sudden immersion into a vat of cold liquid.³⁸

There have been many non-Restoration publications which have confirmed that ancient Israelite smiths used carbon to make steel. It is no longer disputed by the experts. In fact, there is a steel sword in the Israel Museum that was found in the 1980s.³⁹ It was x-rayed and found that the hilt, ridge and blade were forged separately. Metallurgical analysis taken from the badly rusted blade found it was made of steel. Biblical archaeologists have dated the sword to the seventh century BC during the first temple period and the reign of King Josiah. This was before Lehi left Jerusalem— another proof that steel was used in Lehi’s time in Israel.

**BELIEF #5:
JOSEPH SMITH MADE UP NAMES
IN THE BOOK OF MORMON
THAT WERE NOT ANCIENT OR
HEBREW.**

One of the most common names mocked is “Sam.” Some might argue that Sam would be short for Samuel, but the Book of Mormon never gives the idea that it was a shortened form of a Hebrew name. In 1887, M.T. Lamb wrote in *The Golden Bible*:

The first word that will probably attract the attention of ordinary readers at the beginning of [the Book of Mormon] is the name of Lehi’s third son, Sam. Here is a boy six hundred years before Christ, who has the unmistakable Yankee nickname for Samuel. There is certainly nothing Hebraistic about the name, nor does it sound like any Egyptian name we ever heard.⁴⁰

Time has proven Mr. Lamb wrong. The name “Sam” was not short for Samuel. Hebrew professor John A. Tvedtnes said, “The name Sam is attested on a bronze ring-mounted seal dated to the seventh century BC. While others have read this name as Shem, in Paleo-Hebrew there is no distinction in writing between ś and š (the latter written ‘sh’ in English).”⁴¹ So not only was “Sam” an ancient Arabic form of “Shem,” it was also used during the seventh century BC.

Another name ridiculed in 1830 was “Alma” used as a man’s name. Walter Martin said, “Alma is a Latin feminine name. It is absurd to think that two ancient Semitic prophets would bear a name that means ‘nourishing mother.’ This is just one of many examples of Joseph Smith’s ignorance of ancient languages.”⁴²

Another quote says the author “found it uproariously funny and patently ridiculous that two supposedly ancient and more or less Semitic men bore what everybody knew to be a woman’s name with a Latin etymology.”⁴³

In 1975, Italian archaeologist Paolo Matthiae and others dug up the ancient site of Ebla in modern-day Syria. They found over 17,000 clay tablets and fragments at the site written in Sumerian and Eblaite, a barely known Semitic language connected

to Hebrew. One of the tablets was dated 2100 BC and had the name Alma in its inscriptions.⁴⁴

The name “Alma ben Yehudah” is found in the Bar Kokhba documents, a collection of ancient Jewish texts dating to AD 132. “Ben” means “son of.”⁴⁵

These examples clearly explain that, while Alma was exclusively used as a female name in 1830, it was a male name in Israel in ancient times.

CONCLUSION

The evidences shared in this article offer a glimpse into some of the archaeological discoveries made over the past two centuries that align with and support the Book of Mormon. It does not delve into the compelling evidence from Hebrew linguistics or DNA research—areas that merit exploration in their own right. As time progresses, more findings will undoubtedly emerge and scientific inquiry will continue to shed light on truths that resonate within the Book of Mormon’s narrative. Yet, while such evidences can strengthen our faith and deepen our understanding, they are no substitute for the witness of the Holy Ghost. May God bless you in your journey of faith and may you deepen your relationship with Him through study of the Book of Mormon.

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How Could Laban Have Possessed a Sword of “Most Precious Steel”?



Concerning his encounter with Laban, who was an important official in Jerusalem around 600 BC, Nephi stated, “I beheld his sword, and I drew it forth from the sheath thereof; and the hilt thereof was of pure gold, and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine, and I saw that the blade thereof was of the most precious steel” (1 Nephi 4:9 LDS; 1 Nephi 1:109 RLDS). Nephi’s description of this weapon was long considered anachronistic because it makes reference to steel long before it was thought to have existed in ancient times.

In recent decades, however, scholars have learned that ancient Near Eastern blacksmiths and metallurgists were “intentionally steeling iron” through a process of deliberate carburization hundreds of years before Nephi’s day. Early evidence that various tools, axes, and knife blades were made from iron hardened into steel has been found throughout the ancient Near East dating between the thirteenth to the tenth centuries BC.

Archaeologists have now recovered not only tools but also rare examples of steel swords from the ancient Near East. Such ancient swords were unknown at the time the Book of Mormon was published. Even more significant, perhaps, in relation to the sword of Laban, is the fact that archaeologists have discovered a carburized iron sword near Jericho, only about 12 miles east of Jerusalem. The sword, which had a bronze haft, was a meter long and dates to the time of King Josiah, a contemporary of Lehi. This particular find is noteworthy since it is apparently “the only complete sword of its size and type from this period yet discovered in Israel.” According to Avraham Eitan, “Metallurgical analysis of a sample taken from the blade proves ... that the iron was deliberately hardened into steel, attesting to the technical knowledge of the blacksmith.” Today the sword is displayed at Jerusalem’s Israel Museum.

Such discoveries lend a great sense of historicity and credibility to Nephi’s deliberate comment in the Book of Mormon.

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An Excursion to The Book of Mormon Foundation



Rachel Miller and her 7th grade class from Center Place Restoration School went on an excursion in March. They walked from the school in Independence to The Book of Mormon Foundation where they were welcomed by Sue Manning, Office Manager. Sue provided the students with a challenge: they played the Book of Mormon Breakout game using the *Book of Mormon Overview* to find answers to clues. Each clue gave them the solution to the next lock until they solved the final clue and “broke open the safe.” They were rewarded with a treasure trove of candy bars. The activity was followed by pizza before the group walked back to the school.