



# Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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## New Book Features Scholarship on Tree of Life

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*John L. Sorenson, professor emeritus of anthropology at BYU, will present the Laura F. Willes Book of Mormon Lecture on September 8, 2011, at 7 PM in the Hinckley Center Assembly Hall. His lecture is entitled "Mormon's Sources." Since his retirement in 1986, he has researched and published extensively on Mesoamerican anthropology. The public is invited to attend this free special event.*

## New Book Features Scholarship on Tree of Life

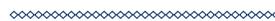
The tree of life, an ancient and richly evocative symbol found in sacred art, architecture, and literature throughout the world, is the intriguing subject of a new book published by the Maxwell Institute and Deseret Book: *The Tree of Life: From Eden to Eternity*, edited by BYU professors John W. Welch and Donald W. Parry.

In surveying the religious, cultural, scriptural, and artistic aspects of the tree of life, the book explores the development of this ubiquitous symbol in the Old Testament and Jewish thought, the New Testament and Christian tradition, the Book of Mormon, Maya theology, the Catholic religious imagination, the Qur'an, Asian art and temple traditions, and Mormon art.

It is difficult to conceive of a more vibrant, enduring, multifaceted, and universally meaningful religious symbol. Latter-day Saints have a great affinity for the tree of life, encountering it in the Bible, the Pearl of Great Price, and most vividly in the visions of Lehi and Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

The book contains eleven essays by leading scholars such as Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, Andrew C. Skinner, John W. Welch, and Margaret Barker. Originally given at BYU's Tree of Life Symposium in the fall of 2006, these studies have been updated and enhanced with illustrations (including sixteen color plates).

The book's accessibility and utility as a resource tool are enhanced by a bibliography of LDS and non-LDS sources as well as citation and subject indexes. *The Tree of Life* is available at [www.byubookstore.com](http://www.byubookstore.com). ♦



## New JST Electronic Library Offers Added Features

*Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: Electronic Library* brings together a wealth of information and recent scholarship on Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible. The electronic library, produced by the Religious Studies Center and the Maxwell Institute, also includes high-resolution images of every page of the original manuscripts, images and transcriptions of the earliest copies made from those manuscripts, and a collection of recently published studies based on the manuscripts. A short introductory essay precedes each manuscript. This collection also includes the entire 851-page book *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts*,

edited by Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews.

A powerful electronic tool—WordCruncher, developed at BYU by the Maxwell Institute's Research Technology Group—enables users of the electronic library to view the transcriptions, images, and printed texts either individually or side by side in any order, with full capacity to search each text.

"The electronic library further enables Latter-day Saints to get to know Joseph Smith's Bible translation," noted Jackson. "With the WordCruncher program, users can research the original documents as never before."

The library can be viewed on Windows 2000, XP, or higher and is available for purchase at [www.byubookstore.com](http://www.byubookstore.com). ♦