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INSIGHTS

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

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Anderson Speaks at Third Annual Neal A. Maxwell Lecture

With the intent of probing the lives of Christ and Joseph Smith, Richard Lloyd Anderson, emeritus professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University, gave the third annual Neal A. Maxwell Lecture, held March 20, 2009. Anderson discussed the reliability of the documentary process by which we know of events in the New Testament and in the early years of the Restoration.

Sister Colleen Maxwell, widow of Elder Neal A. Maxwell, members of their family, and BYU Academic Vice President John Tanner and his wife, Susan, were part of the large audience who assembled at BYU for the lecture.

Anderson noted that he was in attendance, as many in the audience were, at the first annual lecture given by President Samuelson. He said “many here feel close to Elder Maxwell personally from his effective communication skills in public and private.” Anderson noted that the lecture series is an “occasion of honoring Elder Maxwell and what he stood for,” and that Elder Maxwell “stood not only for great teachings but living those teachings.”

Anderson said that the word *probing* was used in the title of his address, “Probing the Lives of Christ and Joseph Smith,” because there’s so much material to examine on both. Anderson’s decades of academic study were always split between Christ and those who witnessed his ministry and the Three and the Eight Witnesses as well as other witnesses of Joseph Smith’s ministry. Anderson said that he had “never been able to get on either path,” and had taken both. He said that Brigham Young might say “any argument you make for the divinity of Christ and the truth of the original church, an argument for revelation, an argument for the integrity of that foundation, the same arguments can be made and are made for the restoration of the gospel.” He said it has been “such a wonderful thing to try to relate the early church to the restored church.”

Anderson said one of the main questions involved in historical documentation is what do you do to try to recreate the past if the past is so long

ago? Where are your archives? Anderson defended the letters of Paul as an archive of the early church, as well as the letters of Peter and John. He said many letters from the New Testament period exist. Anderson noted, “if you accept the letters of Pliny at the end of the first century, the letters of Cicero before the beginning of the first century, about the time of Christ, why wouldn’t you accept Christian letters of the equivalent period that are absolutely documented?” Anderson explained that Latter-day Saints are believers in the Bible text, “and we have the text that goes back to people that knew Jesus, kept records, and wrote their memories down. And if there are weaknesses in memories, use the main idea of the memory, because the main point has been kept and told for a reason, and that reason is the religious conviction of the people who were early Christians.” He then quoted 1 John 1:1–2, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness,” and remarked, “Isn’t that wonderful, that you actually just heard the words of one who felt the hands of Jesus at the resurrection.”

The Gospels, however, present difficulties because of the lack of eyewitness sources. But Anderson said that scripturally the connection is back to the men who walked with Jesus, then preached about him and his gospel. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:11, taught, “Whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.”

Anderson said critics of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints think the problem with the first vision is equal to that of the four Gospels. Some of the accounts conflict, as do the Gospels. But he does not see that the accounts conflict.

“The problem is that Joseph Smith didn’t spell out all the details. I’m a married man, and when I come home tired and my wife asks me a question sometimes I don’t spell out all the details. Then I get a second and a third question, because my wife is analytical enough that she would really like the story and not a piece of it. But in every

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account, whether it's my son giving me graduation reminiscences, today, or whether you think back to something significant that happened on your wedding day, when have you sat down and written the whole story? It's going to be a part of the story no matter what. And that's the intrinsic problem with the testimonies of Joseph and the first vision."

But Anderson said we should ask What's the point? "The point is that the Father introduced the Son, the Son gave the message, and that meshes with the other accounts. The First Vision is a beautiful and marvelous experience."

Missing the Mark

In teaching Book of Mormon at Brigham Young University over the past quarter century, I have rarely found a student, whether true freshman or returned missionary, who knows what the word *mark* means in Jacob 4:14.¹ Most of them know that the mark symbolizes Christ in this verse, but they do not know what a *mark* is. That is, if a *mark* symbolizes Christ, then *mark* must be something in real life other than Christ. In fact, most Book of Mormon readers justifiably feel satisfied and uplifted by relying on what they think *mark* means in this verse. While it is true that great lessons can be learned from this verse by relying simply on the symbolic meaning of *mark*, when the meaning of *mark* as it fell from the Prophet's lips while translating becomes clear, whole new, additional dimensions of understandings of Jacob's warning begin to unfold.

The reason most people today do not know what *mark* meant in Joseph Smith's day is that with time the meanings of many words shift. This is particularly true when reading older books, such as the Book of Mormon or the even much older King James Version of the Bible. In the 19th century the word *mark* was beginning to be replaced in the English language by a newer word. As the newer word rose to dominance, the older word, *mark*, gradually began to lose its original meaning. Such was the case with the meaning of *mark* vis-a-vis *target* at the time the Book of Mormon was first published in 1830.

When the King James Version of the Bible was translated, the word *mark* meant something to aim

The same touchstone could be applied to the many interviews of those who knew the Prophet. "See what are the core thoughts and the main issues that [Joseph is] talking about, you get the message."

Anderson concluded his remarks by saying that "the systems that I know of thinking in history and reconstruction of the past, they work as I apply them to Joseph Smith and the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. . . . I could say to you that I have given my life to constant study of ancient and modern religions and by every rule of evidence that I know, Christ and Joseph Smith are who and what they claim to be." ♦

at, what we today would call a target. On the other hand, the word *target* in King James English did not mean a target, but rather it meant a round shield.² Thus, the King James Bible states in 1 Samuel 17:6 that Goliath had "a target of brass between his shoulders." That is, Goliath was wearing a round piece of brass armor covering part of his upper body.³ He was not wearing a bull's-eye on his chest, as a casual reading today might suggest. That *mark* meant *target* in King James English can be seen from several passages in the King James Bible. For example, in 1 Samuel 20:20 Jonathan agreed to give David a secret signal by shooting arrows "as though [he] shot at a mark."⁴

With time, however, *target* came to mean something to aim at, possibly from using a round shield hung on a wall for "target practice."⁵ As *target* began to take on the meaning of something to shoot at, the older word for something to shoot at in practice, namely, *mark*, began to lose this meaning, but retained something of its previous life in frozen phrases such as "he is a marked man," "marksman," and "mark your target."

At the time the Book of Mormon was published in 1830, *mark* still meant something to aim at and would have been easily understood by 19th-century readers, though *target* was beginning to be used. Thus, throughout 19th-century Latter-day Saint writings *mark* is still used for target.⁶ For example, W. W. Phelps wrote the following, as published in the early Latter-day Saint periodical *Evening and Morning Star*, "Or like as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know

where it went through.”⁷ From a somewhat later LDS publication an unnamed editor, mentioning a gun rather than a bow and arrow, declaimed, “Our holy religion is the MARK upon which the gun was leveled.”⁸ There are numerous other examples of *mark* meaning *target* in Latter-day Saint literature.⁹

At this point, the question should be raised, why worry about what *mark* used to mean. “What does this have to do with my daily struggles to live the gospel?” In Jacob 4:14 Jacob said that the spiritual blindness of the Jews came by “looking beyond the mark.” When it is realized that *mark* means *target* in this verse, then the blindness of the Jews is explained: The Jews were not generally blind. They were looking beyond the target and therefore were blind only with respect to the target. If you are going to hit a target, you had better look at the target, and not beyond it. And what does the target symbolize in this verse? As most of my students can say, within the context of this chapter it is clear that the target the Jews should have been focusing on was Christ. Because they were not looking at Christ, they could not see Him and were thus blind to Him. Therefore they stumbled spiritually.

The implications of not focusing on Christ are numerous. The most obvious one is that if we focus on Christ we will not sin. Perhaps a less obvious implication, for example, is that if we focus on something good, such as paying a strict tithing, we will surely succeed. But will we see all the other good targets we should also be hitting? Will not some of them be out of focus because we are only looking at tithing? On the other hand, if we focus on Christ we will not only be strict but generous in paying our tithes, and we won’t leave all the other worthy things undone.¹⁰ There are lessons here for us, today’s readers of the Book of Mormon, if we understand what Jacob meant when he said that “blindness [comes] by looking beyond the mark,” who is Christ. ♦

By Paul Y. Hoskisson

Director, Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies and the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies

Notes

This is an abridged version of a much longer paper, for which see Paul Y. Hoskisson, “Looking Beyond the Mark,” in *A Witness for the Restoration: Essays in Honor of Robert J. Matthews*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Andrew C. Skinner (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2007), 149–64. For an electronic version see

<http://rsc.byu.edu/pubPHoskissonBeyondMark.php>.

1. I know of no Latter-day Saint commentary on the Book of Mormon that ever explains what a *mark* is.

2. See the *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “target,” with examples and the etymology from the French. See also the entry “target.”

3. Though the King James Bible clearly intended “target/shield,” not all translations agree that the Hebrew word here behind the English text means “shield.” See the Jewish Publication Society new translation’s use of “javelin” instead of “mark” (*The Jewish Study Bible*, Tanakh Translation [Oxford: Oxford, 2004]); and the *New English Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), “dagger.”

4. For the same usage see also Lamentations 3:12. The King James Bible was first published in 1611. Two previous English translations, the Matthew Bible and the Geneva Bible, also have “mark” in 1 Samuel 20:20. The Wycliffe translation translates “signe.”

5. See meaning 3a in the *OED*.

6. I would like to thank my friend and colleague Kent P. Jackson for calling my attention to the 19th century examples from Latter-day Saint literature.

7. *Evening and Morning Star* 1/8 (January 1833): 63.

8. *Times and Seasons* 2/5 (January 1, 1841): 266, emphasis in the original.

9. See for example the following quotes: “[Joseph Smith] had on a very old hat, and was engaged shooting at a mark” (*Journal of Discourses* 7:101, Wilford Woodruff speaking in 1858); “We will keep our eyes set upon the mark, and go forward to victory” (*Journal of Discourses* 1:146, Brigham Young speaking in 1852); “There are those in this Church who calculate to be saved by the righteousness of others. They will miss their mark” (*Journal of Discourses* 2:132, Brigham Young speaking in 1853).

10. As Christ said in Matthew 23:23, “These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

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New Nibley Volume Explores the Book of Abraham

An Approach to the Book of Abraham, volume 18 in the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, is now available. This volume contains Nibley's early work on the Book of Abraham and the Joseph Smith Papyri and is his closest look at Facsimile 1 of the Book of Abraham. In chapter 5, Nibley is at his best as he has Mr. Jones, the curator, conduct Dick and Jane through an imaginary museum in which the most important lion-couch scenes have all been gathered together in a single hall. Mr. Jones possesses a handbook that tells him all. In a conversational manner, he discusses the various figures of Facsimile 1, calling upon the best Egyptological knowledge of the time to explain their importance and setting.

Among the diverse essays in this volume are the remaining portions of his three-year series of lengthy articles from the *Improvement Era* (1968–70), “A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price.” Produced at a breathtaking pace and originally published in a wide variety of places, Nibley's work, though preliminary and provisional, still remains basic reading for anyone interested in the Book of Abraham. In the late sixties, when the surviving Joseph Smith Papyri became available to scholars and Church members, most Church-related periodicals were eager to include in their publications something about them by Nibley. Because these articles tended to be repetitive, they have not all been included. Some of the best of them, which appear here, were originally published in *BYU Studies*, *Sunstone*, and the *Ensign*.

John Gee, scholarly editor of the volume, discusses in his introduction the four decades of Nibley's work on the Joseph Smith Papyri and the Book of Abraham. Gee explores how Nibley, a historian trained in Classics, though not an obvious choice of someone to elucidate the meaning of a handful of Ptolemaic Egyptian papyri in hieratic, became the man for the job. After helping to vastly enhance the holdings of the library at Brigham Young University in Classics and in Egyptian, Nibley had a prompting one day in the stacks: he should go back to Berkeley and study Egyptian.

Nibley applied for a sabbatical and spent the 1959–60 academic year in Berkeley teaching classical rhetoric and studying Egyptian and Coptic from

Klaus Baer, “a very able and eager young professor.”¹ Gee quotes Nibley's description of the process of being “badgered and bullied six hours a week by a fellow twenty years my junior, who was trying to knock the simple *elements* of Egyptian and Coptic into my head. It was all very elementary: my teacher would say after he had given a particularly brilliant demonstration that any Egyptian child of ten would probably laugh himself sick at our solemn and laborious attempts to reconstruct the language. He knew the whole thing was not on an advanced but a childish level.”² Nibley continued his studies of Egyptian so that when the papyri scraps from the Metropolitan Museum of Art were turned over to the Church in 1967 he was prepared to enter the debate about their contents and write knowledgeably about them.

“The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers” originally appeared in *BYU Studies* in 1971; this article has been updated by Brian M. Hauglid, who checked the still-unpublished manuscripts among that set of papers, dating to the Kirtland and Nauvoo periods. Critics have claimed that these documents, composed of Egyptian and Book of Abraham manuscripts, contain incriminating evidence that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham from the Egyptian symbols that accompanied it. Nibley herein examines the assertions made for and against the authenticity of the Book of Abraham.

Nibley's typically richly footnoted writings are enhanced by the illustrations prepared by Michael P. Lyon. According to Nibley, “Until now, no one has done much more than play around with the bedizening treasury of the Pearl of Great Price. ‘They’ *would* not, *we could* not make of the Book of Abraham an object of serious study. The time has come to change all that.”³ ♦

Notes

1. Hugh Nibley, “Intellectual Autobiography,” in CWHN 17:17.
2. Hugh Nibley, “Nobody to Blame,” in CWHN 17:133–34, emphasis in original.
3. Hugh Nibley, “Conclusion: Taking Stock,” in CWHN 18:599, emphasis in original.

Work of the Maxwell Institute Highlighted in Presentations at Education Week

Brigham Young University Campus Education Week, slated for August 17–21, 2009, will feature a series of presentations that represent the range of the work done by the Maxwell Institute.

Beginning Wednesday, August 19, at 11:10 in the Assembly Hall of the Hinckley Center, Paul Y. Hoskisson, D. Morgan Davis Jr., and Kristian S. Heal will present on the topic “The Work of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute at BYU.”

Hoskisson’s presentation, “Breaking News on Book of Mormon Scholarship from the Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies,” will focus on the work that the Willes Center and FARMS has been involved in over the past 12 months, which includes the latest on word print studies, 19th-century media reports on the Book of Mormon, Oman excavations, the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, and the ancient nature of the Book of Mormon. Hoskisson is the director of the Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies and FARMS at the Maxwell Institute.

Davis will present on the topic “The Quest for Authenticity within Islam,” primarily speaking on the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative and its significant contribution to the work of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute. Davis is the managing editor of the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative at the Maxwell Institute.

Heal’s lecture, “Exploring the Manuscript Treasures of the Vatican Library,” will detail a brief history of the library, how the manuscript collec-

tions grew, viewing the manuscripts, and the BYU-Vatican manuscript project. Heal is director of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts at the Maxwell Institute.

Daniel C. Peterson will present two series of lectures on Tuesday through Friday in the Assembly Hall of the Hinckley Center. The first, starting at 8:30, is entitled “Mormonism and the Ancient World: Four Case Studies.” His second lecture will begin at 9:50 and is entitled “Apostasy and Restoration.” Peterson is the editor in chief of the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative.

Of significant importance to the Maxwell Institute and BYU is a presentation entitled, “Messiah: Behold the Lamb of God—A ‘Look Behind the Scenes’ of a Forthcoming BYU Maxwell Institute and BYU Broadcasting Documentary,” which will be held in the auditorium of the Joseph Smith Building at 4:30 from Tuesday through Friday. This important documentary series was conceived by S. Kent Brown, former director of the Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies and FARMS. The documentary is in the last stages of production and is scheduled to be released in December 2009. Details on its content, production, screening, and accompanying interactive Web site will be presented by S. Kent Brown, Richard D. Draper, Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Gaye Strathearn, and Sterling G. Van Wagenen.

All of these presentations are open to Education Week attendees. For more information about BYU Campus Education Week, see ce.byu.edu/edweek. ♦



From Elder Neal A. Maxwell

“The finished mosaic of the history of the Restoration will be larger and more varied as more pieces of tile emerge, adjusting a sequence here or enlarging there a sector of our understanding. The fundamental outline is in place now, however. But history deals with imperfect people in process of time, whose imperfec-

tions produce refractions as the pure light of the gospel plays upon them. There may even be a few pieces of tile which, for the moment, do not seem to fit. . . . The final mosaic of the Restoration will be resplendent, reflecting divine design and the same centerpiece—the Father’s plan of salvation and exaltation and the atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. (*Ensign*, November 1984, 11, as quoted in *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 285.)

New Appointment for Editor of Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library

Donald W. Parry, Brigham Young University professor of Biblical Hebrew and longtime contributor to the work of the Maxwell Institute, has been appointed as an editor for a new edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, the standard critical edition of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). He is one of about two dozen well-established Hebrew scholars from the worldwide community also serving as editors for this new edition, and one of three from the United States.

Parry will work with Professor Arie van der Kooij (Leiden, The Netherlands) on the updated translation of Isaiah, which will result in a 500-page volume on Isaiah, plus a significant portion of *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*.

The objective of this project is to create a new edition of Isaiah for *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, which is the fifth edition of *Biblia Hebraica*.

While previous editions have for over a century been considered the standard academic editions of the Hebrew Bible, significant limitations have long been recognized. The United Bible Societies (UBS), comprising 145 worldwide Bible societies, recognized the need for an updated critical edition of the Hebrew Bible, which prompted the establishment of *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, or *BHQ*, under the direction of the German Bible Society. The work of editing the books of the Hebrew Bible has been assigned to a team of well-established Hebrew scholars, and each book will be published independently as the editors submit their finished texts. Three fascicles (Deuteronomy, Ruth, and Proverbs) have so far been published, beginning in 2004. When all the books of the Old Testament have been finished, a final single volume will be produced, although the individual fascicles will remain available. *BHQ* will be translated into 140 different languages.

“This will benefit the entire world community of believers in the Old Testament, which includes Christians and Jews,” Parry said.

Parry, a member of the international team of Dead Sea Scrolls editors, working especially with the Isaiah scrolls, has published widely on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the book of Isaiah with a number of well-known presses, including E. J. Brill (Leiden) and Oxford University Press. He is editor

of the Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library (Biblical Scrolls module), which is currently being produced by the Maxwell Institute through the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART). Parry has also contributed to the work of the Maxwell Institute through authoring or coauthoring several volumes, including *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon*; *Harmonizing Isaiah: Combining Ancient Sources*; *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*; *LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls*; *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Questions and Answers for Latter-day Saints*; and *Visualizing Isaiah*. He has edited or coedited several volumes, such as *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon: Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*; *Temples of the Ancient World*; *The Temple in Time and Eternity*; *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*; and *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine*; and has contributed articles to both the *FARMS Review* and the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. ♦

INSIGHTS

Paul Y. Hoskisson, D. Morgan Davis, *General Editors*

Paula W. Hicken, Jacob D. Rawlins, *Editors*

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The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. The Maxwell Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at the Maxwell Institute include the history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to ancient scripture. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of scripture, solid research and academic perspectives can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about scripture.

The Maxwell Institute makes reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer-reviewed to ensure that scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these materials are used to support further research and publications.

