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Other Ancient American Records Yet to Come Forth

Monte S. Nyman

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Many critics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that there cannot be any scripture added to the Bible, thus making the Book of Mormon blasphemous. However, many scriptures refer to other books of scriptures, including the Book of Mormon and other records that are not currently available to the world. Monte S. Nyman discusses here the plausibility of receiving modern revelation and scripture from God. He also suggests that by studying the Book of Mormon and other scriptures in conjunction with the Bible, Latter-day Saints can better prepare for the day when lost records are restored.
In the 171 years since the Book of Mormon was first published, much emphasis has been placed on why it should be read: it is another testament of Jesus Christ, it is a vital part of the restoration of the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ, and it has power to transform the lives of those who read and follow its teachings, to name a few key reasons. However, there seems to have been little emphasis placed on how the Book of Mormon is preparing us for additional scriptural records of great worth that have been prophesied to come forth.¹
Some people object to the Book of Mormon on the grounds that the Bible is the one and only word of God and quote from the last chapter of the last book in the Bible to support their position:

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; emphasis added)

Although the book of Revelation was placed last in the Bible compilation, it was possibly not the last biblical book written. John’s epistles are believed to have been written later than his revelation, and Peter’s second epistle is also thought by many to have been written much later than the other books in the New Testament. A careful analysis of the quoted verses shows that John is referring only to his revelation and not to the whole Bible. Both verses 18 and 19 refer to “this book,” the Revelation of St. John itself, and to prophecy within it. The book of Revelation is introduced with a similar singular reference: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:3; emphasis added). Of course, the Bible as a book did not exist in John’s day.

As Moroni abridged the records of the Jaredites, the Lord told him that the revelations written by John would be understood when the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon plates comes forth (see Ether 4:16). Thus it is clear that the Lord intended to give more revelation than what he gave to John. A similar statement by Moses suggests the same thing. Rather than preclude further revelation, Moses indicated that nothing should be added to or taken away from his words: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2, emphasis added; see 29:20). Most Bible scholars would agree with the interpretation that both John and Moses were referring to their own work, although lay readers who have not stud-
Perhaps in anticipation of a typical objection to the acceptance of the Book of Mormon, the Lord inspired the elders of the church (see D&C 20:16) to declare in the above passage that the Book of Mormon does not add to or diminish from the Bible or other scriptures.

Other records given originally by revelation are destined to come forth, and the Book of Mormon will not add to or diminish from them or from revelation thereafter. The ninth article of faith declares the Latter-day Saints’ belief in continual revelation: “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

According to the Book of Mormon, the Lord’s “work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever” (2 Nephi 29:9). Nephi, son of Lehi, had been shown all things until the end of the world but was told not to write what he saw, because the apostle named John, undoubtedly referring to the author of the book of Revelation, was to write them (see 1 Nephi 14:18–27). Nephi was also told of others who had been shown all things and had written them: “And also others who have been, to them hath he [the Lord] shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel” (1 Nephi 14:26). These records were in addition to both Nephi’s own writings, which are included in the Book of Mormon, and the writings of the apostle named John.

In addition to mentioning the writings of those prophets who were shown the end of the world, the Book of Mormon refers to still other records that are preserved and will come forth. Evidence of their existence has also been given in these latter days.

In a discourse delivered in Farmington, Utah, on 17 June 1877, President Brigham Young told of an incident in the life of Oliver Cowdery that Oliver had not told publicly. President Young’s motive for telling it then was for his brethren and sisters, as well as the children, to grow in “an understanding of some things that seem to be entirely hidden from the human family.” The incident follows:

Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates. Joseph did not translate all of the plates; there was a portion of them sealed, which you can learn from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more plates than probably many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls. The first time they went there the sword of Laban hung upon the wall; but when they went again it had been taken down and laid upon the table across the gold plates; it was unsheathed, and on it was written these words: “This sword will never be sheathed again until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and his Christ.”

Some of the records that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw in the cave were undoubtedly among those that are mentioned in the Book of Mormon as records yet to come forth.
account. Two more records are also mentioned, but nothing is said about their future availability. What is known of these records is analyzed below. The order in which they are discussed here reflects neither the sequence of their coming forth nor their relative importance to the church or to the world. Rather, they are discussed in the order of their mention in the Book of Mormon: (1) the plates of brass, (2) the plates of Nephi, (3) the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon plates, (4) the record of the lost ten tribes, (5) the 24 Jaredite gold plates, (6) the Lamanite records, and (7) other Jaredite records.

The Plates of Brass

After Lehi’s sons returned from Jerusalem with the plates of brass, Lehi studied their content and was filled with the Spirit, and began to prophesy concerning his seed—

That these plates of brass should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who were of his seed.

Wherefore, he said that these plates of brass should never perish; neither should they be dimmed any more by time. And he prophesied many things concerning his seed.

(1 Nephi 5:17–19)

Alma later verifies, to his son Helaman, the prophecy that the plates of brass would go to “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people,” and he notes that the plates had been of great worth and benefit to their people (see Alma 37:1–19). The testimony of Alma also verifies what Nephi said: “Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them with us, as we journeyed in the wilderness towards the land of promise” (1 Nephi 5:22). The plates of brass will certainly be of great worth to future generations as well, though in a different way. For example, while the Book of Mormon continues to serve as a second witness to the truth of the holy scriptures (see D&C 20:11), the plates of brass will serve as a third witness to the Bible and also will testify that the Book of Mormon is a witness to the Bible. They will make known many of the plain and precious parts that had been lost from the Bible up to the time of Jeremiah (see 1 Nephi 13:26–29). This knowledge will come in a different way than did the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and Joseph Smith Translation, for the actual ancient records of such prophets as Zenos, Zenoch, and Neum will be restored (see 1 Nephi 19:10; Alma 33:3–16; Helaman 8:19–20; 3 Nephi 10:16). Those records will also restore plain and precious parts of our biblical books that have been altered, as Joseph Smith said, by “ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests.”

Thus Latter-day Saints will have their belief in the Bible verified in many ways.

The Plates of Nephi

Nephi first mentions his larger plates as he completes the abridgment of his father’s record (see 1 Nephi 1:17). On the larger plates, he gives a full account of the history of his people (see 1 Nephi 9:1–2). Mormon abridged these plates into what now comprises the books of Mosiah through 4 Nephi (see Words of Mormon 1:1–3). As Mormon made this abridgment, he noted that he could not write even a hundredth part of the teachings of Jesus (see 3 Nephi 26:6). He acknowledged that he had made his abridgment from many records that were in his possession, and he wrote subheadings under the titles of the individual
books and within the various books of the Book of Mormon to credit those sources.¹⁷

Mormon further said that the (large) plates of Nephi contained “the more part” of what Jesus had taught and that what he himself had written—“a lesser part”—would come forth from the Gentiles (see 3 Nephi 26:7–8). The abridgment of Nephi’s record was to try the faith of the Lamanites and, more broadly, the Lord’s people in the latter days: “If it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. . . . The Lord [said]: I will try the faith of my people” (vv. 9, 11). This suggests that highly valuable contents of the larger plates of Nephi will come forth when a certain portion of the Lamanites, as they are known today, and other church members accept the fulness of the gospel as found in the Book of Mormon.⁹

Having a fuller account concerning the Nephites will be beneficial from a doctrinal and historical point of view and will provide greater insight into the correct interpretation of some of the scriptures we already have. Jesus expounded on the scriptures written on the plates of brass, the equivalent of much of our Old Testament. He also quoted and expounded some of the writings of Malachi that were not on the plates of brass because they were written after Lehi and his group left Jerusalem. The Savior said “it was wisdom in him [the Father] that they [“these scriptures,” or Malachi 3–4] should be given unto future generations” (see 3 Nephi 26:1–2). Mormon recorded those two chapters of Malachi but did not record Jesus’ commentary on them, other than to write the following:

And he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory—yea, even all things which should come upon the face of the earth, even until the elements should melt with fervent heat, and the earth should be wrapt together as a scroll, and the heavens and the earth should pass away;

And even unto the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues shall stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. (3 Nephi 26:3–4)

We certainly look forward to receiving the full record of Jesus’ ministry among the Nephites. What greater commentary on Malachi and other Old Testament writings could there be than from him who was the revelator, the Jehovah, the God of those people? (1 Nephi 19:10; Mosiah 7:19–20; 1 Corinthians 4:10).

The Sealed Portion

The sealed portion of the plates was first mentioned by Nephi (see 2 Nephi 27:6–10). When the plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, he was told not to translate the sealed portion. Both Nephi and Moroni commented on the contents of the sealed part and gave similar testimonies that supplement each other. Nephi, quoting Isaiah,¹⁰ said it contained “a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof” (2 Nephi 27:7; see v. 10). Moroni described the sealed portion more specifically, saying it contained the vision shown unto the brother of Jared of “all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be . . . unto the ends of the earth.” The Lord commanded the brother of Jared to write the things he had seen and to seal them up until the Lord’s own time, “until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; . . . that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people” (Ether 3:25–27; 4:1). After the Lord’s people had all dwindled in unbelief and there were none left but Lamanites who had rejected the gospel, Moroni was to seal up the plates again (see Ether 4:3–5).

Moroni told us that the sealed part should not go forth unto the Gentiles until they had repented “of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.” He wrote further that when “they shall exercise faith in me [the Lord], saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are” (Ether 4:6–7).

Nephi, through Isaiah, commented further on when the sealed plates will be revealed. “And the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ; and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be even unto the end of the earth” (2 Nephi 27:11). How these words will be read from the house-tops by the power of Christ is not specified, but with today’s miracles of radio, television, satellite, and the
Internet, it is easy to see how it might happen (compare D&C 88:5–13). Nephi, through Isaiah, further testified that these things would “not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people” (2 Nephi 27:8). He gave instructions to the translator (Joseph Smith) to “touch not the things which are sealed, for I [the Lord] will bring them forth in mine own due time” (2 Nephi 27:21).

Faith like that of the brother of Jared, the requirement to bring forth the sealed plates, might certainly be termed “a perfect faith” and calls to mind the words of Jacob: “And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God” (2 Nephi 9:23). Perfect faith cannot be exercised without accepting the fact that God (Jesus Christ) “knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:20), which is the context of Jacob’s above statement. The sealed portion will establish once and for all that God does know all things from the beginning and has revealed them periodically to his prophets so that the people will not give credit to idols or men for his great works on the earth (see 1 Nephi 19:23; 20:3–7; Isaiah 48:3–7). The challenge to people today is to accept by faith the foreknowledge of God and recognize his hand in all things (see D&C 59:21). Through faith we can place our hand in his and walk with him as he would have us walk. Our faith will be rewarded when the sealed record is brought forth.

The Record of the Ten Tribes

Nephi, son of Lehi, quotes the Lord in commanding all men to keep a scriptural record as a testimony for the time when the nations come together (see 2 Nephi 29:1–11). As examples of how these testimonies will come together, the Lord refers to the Jews, the Nephites, and the other tribes of the house of Israel:

For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.

And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nepophites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Jaredites.

During his visit to the Nephites, the Lord again referred to the lost tribes of Israel when he declared, “I shall go unto them [his ‘other sheep’], and . . . they shall hear my voice” (see 3 Nephi 16:1–3). When those records come forth, we will have a third witness to the divinity of Christ. The Lord revealed that another purpose of that record will be to combine with other records to show “unto them that fight against my word and against my people, who are of the house of Israel, that I am God, and that I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever” (2 Nephi 29:14; see Abraham 2:8). Doctrine and Covenants 133:30–32 teaches that the lost tribes will bring their “rich treasures” to Ephraim and will thus receive a crown of glory. While these treasures could refer to the records of the lost tribes, they could also include the genealogical records that will be brought to the temples of Ephraim and enable the lost tribes to receive their ordinances, the crowning ones being their endowments and sealings for themselves and their dead ancestors.11

The 24 Gold Plates

Moroni abridged the record of the Jaredites from 24 plates of gold found by the people of Limhi (see Mosiah 8:8–9; Ether 1:2). The events of more than 30 generations of the Jaredites (see Ether 1:6–32) are abridged into just 31 pages in our present book of Ether in the Book of Mormon, and about 8 of those 31 are editorial comments by Moroni (see Ether 1:1–5; 2:9–12; 3:17; 5:6; 8:20–26; 12:6–40; 14:25). The full account of these 24 plates will be available when they are obtained. Moroni states that “whoso findeth them, the same will have power that he may get the full account” (Ether 1:4).12 This full account should greatly add to our knowledge of the Jaredites.

Because Moroni recognized that the scriptural account covering events from the time of Adam to the great tower was had among the Jews, he did not include the first part of the Jaredite record in his abridgment of the 24 plates (see Ether 1:3–4; Mosiah 28:17; Alma 37:21). The first 10 chapters of Genesis, up to the time of the Tower of Babel, cover nearly 2,000 years in about 16 pages. Certainly there is much more to be revealed concerning the dealings of Christ with the people who lived during that time. The Pearl
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of Great Price gives us much additional information, particularly concerning Enoch and his people and Abraham; but there is still much more to be added. To have “power that he may get the full account” suggests that there is more information contained in the Jaredite record than was in the Jewish one. At least the accounts of Enoch and Abraham will be verified and perhaps further clarified. When the 24 gold plates are brought forth and translated, certainly much light will be shed on God’s work during the first 2,000 years of the earth’s habitation.

The full account should also reveal much more about the many mighty men of God who served the Lord among the Jaredites (see Ether 12:19). The brother of Jared could not be kept without the veil and became mighty in writing (see Ether 12:20–27). The 24 plates may contain his writings. The prophet Ether made great and mighty prophecies that were not recorded by Moroni (see Ether 13:13), many of which may have been recorded on the Jaredite record.13 There were, as stated above, others who attained similar greatness, but Moroni did not mention them.

Another purpose of the 24 plates was given by Alma when he explained to his son Helaman that the plates should be kept “that the mysteries and the works of darkness . . . may be made manifest unto this people” (Alma 37:21). Although it was revealed in the abridged plates of Nephi that the people’s destruction was caused by the works of darkness, the Lord, through Alma, said, “I will bring to light all their secrets and abominations, unto every nation that shall hereafter possess the land” (see vv. 23–25). The Book of Mormon has partially accomplished this; however, Alma was told to keep the Jaredites’ secret oaths, covenants, agreements, signs, and wonders from his people lest they fall into darkness and be destroyed (see v. 27). Moroni followed the same advice in the Jaredite abridgment (see Ether 8:18–20). A primary purpose of Moroni’s abridgment of the 24 plates was to warn the latter-day nations of secret combinations that caused the downfall of the Nephites and the Jaredites (see Ether 8:21–26). His abridgment is a second witness within the Book of Mormon that it “contains a record of a fallen people” (D&C 20:9).

“These things [see D&C 107:53–56] were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time” (v. 57).14 We do not have all the record of Enoch, but the 24 Jaredite plates may confirm what Joseph said about Adam, Enoch, and others
and add what was promised to come “in due time.” As people become more righteous, Satan will be bound; thus his works may be made known more fully without the danger of destruction that was the case anciently (see 1 Nephi 22:26). The knowledge of the abominations that bring curses on the land will serve as a deterrent to darkness rather than as a means for evil men to gain personal power.

Lamanite Records

In commenting upon his recording only a hundredth part of what he had available to him, Mormon wrote that there were many other particular and very large records of every kind that had been kept chiefly by the Nephites (see Helaman 3:13–15). The word chiefly indicates that the Lamanites also kept some records and implies that they were known to Mormon at the time he abridged the Nephite records. It is not stated how he knew of them or whether they were in his possession and had “been handed down from one generation to another by the Nephites” (Helaman 3:16). The context of Mormon’s comments does not rule out that possibility. His description of those records is certainly compatible with what the Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery saw: “more plates than probably many wagon loads,” referred to earlier. There is no promise that these records will come forth, but if Mormon knew of them or had them and they were written on plates, that would be a possibility. The future possession of these records and their translation would give us another view of Lamanite history and perhaps help us understand why the Lamanites were the victims of the traditions of their fathers (see Alma 9:16–17).

Other Jaredite Records

The daughter of Jared referred to “the record which our fathers brought across the great deep[.] Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory?” (Ether 8:9). This record does not seem to be the same as the 24 plates of gold translated into what Moroni called the book of Ether (see Ether 1:2), although the first part of Ether does speak of the creation and the time from Adam to the great tower (Ether 1:3). There is no mention that this record would be preserved for the last days, but it was durable enough to be available in the fifth generation of the Jaredites. Since the Jaredites kept records on metallic plates, it is possible that the record that the daughter of Jared spoke of is still in existence and will come forth and be translated at some future day. It is even possible that Giddianhi, the leader of the Gadianton robbers, had in mind some version of that record when he said that his secret society had information “of ancient date” that had been “handed down unto us” (3 Nephi 3:9). The subject of this article would be incomplete if these records were not at least mentioned as a possibility.

As people become more righteous, Satan will be bound; thus his works may be made known more fully without the danger of destruction that was the case anciently. The knowledge of the abominations that bring curses on the land will serve as a deterrent to darkness rather than as a means for evil men to gain personal power.

Our Faith Must Be Tried

These first five records—and possibly more—are held in store for the Lord’s people.15 When will they come forth? Mormon said that he wrote a lesser part of the things that Jesus taught the people for “the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles.” He said further that it was expedient that they should have the lesser part first, to try their faith, and that if they would “be-
lieve these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.” To those who would not believe, “the greater things [would] be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.” Mormon was about to write all that was “engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people.” Consequently, Mormon wrote only the things that were commanded of the Lord (see 3 Nephi 26:8–12).

In concluding his father’s record, Moroni gave an additional promise of greater things to be revealed and also warned against condemning the record:

And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these. Behold, I am Moroni; and were it possible, I would make all things known unto you. (Mormon 8:12)

Although Moroni does not say that the greater things will be manifest through the coming forth of records, that may be implied. As he continues, Moroni describes in great detail the day when the records will be restored, and he warns those who would seek to destroy the work of the Lord.

Thus, the beginning point for the Latter-day Saints today is to accept and use the Book of Mormon and other records (the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Joseph Smith Translation) that the Lord has given us as companion volumes to the Bible. The Lord has promised that when we make full use of the records we now have, he will give us many more records that will greatly benefit us individually and collectively. These records will be consistent with the Book of Mormon in neither adding to nor diminishing from the doctrine and messages of the Revelation of John or of other scriptures. 

**Promised records and their time periods**
nished a product similar in appearance (see Lichman, “Pre-Columbian Surfaces,” Metallography);[3] Moroni also was possibly the prophet and Guy Strasser-Prent, “The Haustate Region: A Second Locus for the Production of Bronze Alloys in Ancient Mesoamerica,” Science 257, 28 August 1992, 1215). Moreover, Nephi’s original plates might have been of different composition than Mormon’s plates.

The Book of Mormon Plates

Jennie M. Sjodahl

Like the article itself, the following notes are as they appeared in the original article from the April 1925 Improvement Era, with the exception that publication data has been added in brackets.

1. This is quoted from Gregg Thomas, ed., The Prophet of Palmyra (New York: J. B. Alden, 1896) and may or may not be authentic.

2. An excellent little book by George Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883).

3. The American edition, published at Nauvoo, 1842, has 566 pages, 5½ by 3¼ inches, including the margins.


5. Two generations later, the information Friberg received from the author (21 May 1999), in the author’s possession. Two generations later, the information Friberg received from the author (21 May 1999), in the author’s possession. Two generations later, the information Friberg received from the author (21 May 1999), in the author’s possession.

6. Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001), SMA Library.

7. Ibid.


10. Ibid.


12. Quoted to Grady Johnson, “Moses and the Mormon Artist,” Instructor, September 1954. The final nine words in the quotation were added by Friberg in an interview with the author in February 2001.

13. Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001), SMA Library.

14. All the comments are from Butler’s 1986 interview, modified by Friberg in February 2001.

15. Friberg statement to Vern Swanson, December 2000.


18. This and other quotes from the transcript were modified by Friberg in an interview, modified by Friberg in an interview, modified by Friberg in an interview (3 June 1986), which is available (as he did with Moses in the Transfiguration) for a crown of glory, and a forerunner of beauty, the "crown of his people" (Isaiah 8:25). The context of that chapter is Epiphany, or northern Israel, in the day of its wickedness prior to being taken into captivity by Assyria in 721 B.C. Typical of Old Testament prophecy, a message of doom (crown of glory) is followed by a message of hope referring to the restorations of the latter days as "in that day." The residue is probably the remnant of the tribes of the north that would someday return (see Isaiah 6:13; 7:3; the name Shear-jashub means "a remnant shall return").

19. The "crown of glory" suggests the temple endowment and sealings in other scriptural passages. Enos was commanded to ascend Mount Seimon, where he was "clad upon with glory" (see Moses 7:2–3). President Joseph Fielding Smith believed that Peter, James, and John received their endowments on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1–9) when they were given the keys of the kingdom (see his Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960], 2:215). The Lord has often used the mountain for his holy place when there were no temples available (as he did with Moses in Exodus 24:12–13:18 and with Elijah in 1 Kings 19). While we have no direct scriptural statement that the "rich treasure" mentioned in D&C 13:13 is genealogical records, the above scriptures suggest that such records would constitute at least a part of that treasure. One of the most significant purposes of the latter-day restoration is the...
building of temples to reveal the ordina-

tances of the temple for both the liv-
ing and the dead (see Teachings of the

Prophet Joseph Smith, 224, 307–8, 323).

12. The word “power” in this statement is a

false interpretation of the word. The term

“power” does not imply having the power of the Lord. Joseph Smith was given “power from

on high” by the means which were before

prepared, to translate the Book of Mor-

mon” (D&C 20:8; see D&C 113:3–4). Since the 24 plates are in an unknown language, the translator must have the

power of God to get the full account.

13. While Joseph the Prophet was translat-

ing the Book of Mormon, the information on

Enoch was revealed to him (November–De-

cember 1830). Several years later he received more information about Adam’s blessing his posterity three years before his death (see Teach-
ings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 36–40). In

March of 1835 Joseph included this information in the Doctrine and Covenants revelation now known as section 107.

14. How all of these things can be included upon just 24 plates is a question that is not answered in the Book of Mormon. While many theories have been ad-

vanced, they are all speculative, and so the question will remain unanswered in this paper, other than to note that there may be other Jaredite records among the “wagon loads” seen by

Joseph and Oliver.

15. The Lord revealed to Oliver Cowdery that there were “engravings of old records which are ancient” that he could translate (see D&C 8:1, 11:92). While the Book of

Abraham was received as a part of those ancient records, the revelations given to

Oliver refer to more than one rec-

ord. Furthermore, the Book of Abra-

ham was only partially translated. Oliver said concerning this record:

“When the translation of these valu-

able documents will be completed, I

am unable to say, neither can I give you a

probable idea how large volumes they will make; but judging from their size, and the comprehensiveness of the lan-

guage, one might reasonably expect to see a sufficient [sic] to make much upon the mighty acts of the ancient

ruler of God” (Jenner and Advocate, Dec. 1835, 236). The Lord may have also been referring to the ancient records of the Nephites and Jaredites in his promise to

Oliver. Many records have been kept and pre-

served throughout the world for the dispensation of the fullness of times, when all things in Christ will be gath-

ered together (see Ephesians 1:9–10). This article acknowledges these many other records that have focused only on those mentioned in the Book of

Mormon.

Liah’s Altar and Sacrifice in the Wilderness

David R. Seeley

1. Unfortunately there is very little infor-

mation about the Nephite temples in the Book of Mormon. The most com-


2. For a brief discussion of some of the issues related to the sacrifice of Lehi and the Nephites beyond the inquir-

ing in the Book of Mormon, see also The Temple (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 245–46.


6. “A prophet, Lehi held the Melchizedek Priesthood and by that authority offered sacrifice” (Teachings, p. 181). The Book of Mormon writers did not attempt to elaborate upon the nature or types of their offerings. The Aaronic Priesthood was the province of the people of Lehi, and thus was not taken over by the Nephites to America. It would appear, therefore, that the sacrifices performed by the Lehite colony were carried out under the direction of the higher priesthood, which comprehends all the ordinances and blessings of the lesser” (Joseph Fielding McKconkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commen-
tary on the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 1:31).

7. McConkie and Millet further explain: “A covenant-centered religion required a covenant sanctuary. The fact that the Nephites constructed a temple sug-

gests that all remnants of Israel, wherever they had been scattered, if they possessed the priesthood would have done likewise” (ibid., 1:223).

8. For a recent review of biblical scholar-

ship on Deuteronomy 12, see Bernard M. Leff (ed.), Deuteronomy 12, “in Deuteronomy, 1–11: A New Translation with Intro-


10. As a prophet, Lehi held the Melchizedek Priesthood and by that authority offered sacrifice (Teachings, p. 181). . . .

11. Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh (1 Chron. 7:17).

12. The priesthood that Alma held is de-
scribed as “the high priesthood of the holy order of God” (Alma 4:20; com-

parative study of Deuteronomy 12). But there are different portions or de-

grees of it. That portion which brought Mose’s speech to face was taken away, but that which brought the ministry of angels remained. All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained to them and himself” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1937), 1:78–79).

13. For more information on the Melchizedek Priesthood, see Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 1:378–79. See the FARMS newsletter, for ob-

servations about the limits of radiocar-

bon dating even at its best.

Out of the Dust


2. See Harry E. D. Pollack and Clayton E. Ray, “Notes on Vertebrate Animal Re-

mains from Maysan,” Current Research 41 (August 1957): 638; this publication is from the Department of Archaeology at the Carnegie Institution of Washing-

ton. See also Clayton E. Ray, “Pre-

Columbian Horses from Yucatan,” Journal of Mammalogy 38 (1957): 278.


4. Robert T. Harr, “Faunal and Archaeo-

logical Researches in Yucatan Caves,” Carbondale Institute of Science, Bulle-

tin 33, 55. See Peter J. Schmid, “La entrada del hombre a la peninsula de Yucatan,” in Origines del hombre Ameri-
