1-31-2007

Journal of Book of Mormon Studies Volume 16 Issue 1

Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms

56

4

26

18

Wadi Tayyib al-Ism →

64

CONTENTS

Feature Articles

Departments

CONTRIBUTORS

S. Kent Brown

David B. Cummings

S. Kent Brown is the current director of FARMS and a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University (since 1971). He was the director of the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies (1993–1996) and has published a number of studies on the book of First Nephi. He was a fellow of the American Research Center in Egypt and received a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to microfilm more than 1,500 early Christian manuscripts in Cairo and Jerusalem.

David Butler Cummings received an AB in physics and an MS in electrical engineering from the University of California, Berkeley. He worked in high voltage pulsed power technology development, mostly in controlled fusion research, and retired from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. He has served three m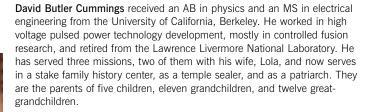issions, two of them with his wife, Lola, and now serves in a stake family history center, as a temple sealer, and as a patriarch. They are the parents of five children, eleven grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren.

Ryan W. Davis

Larry EchoHawk

Ryan W. Davis studies political philosophy at Princeton University. He also teaches Sunday School in the Princeton First Ward.

Larry EchoHawk has been a law professor at Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School for the past twelve years. Prior to joining the faculty, he served as the Attorney General of Idaho (1990–1994), in the Idaho House of Representatives (1982–1986), and as the Prosecuting Attorney for Bannock County, Idaho (1986–1990). In 1995 he was the first BYU graduate to receive the prestigious NCAA Silver Anniversary Award given to former college athletes who have made significant professional and civic contributions in the 25-year period following their graduation.

Paul Y. Hoskisson

Val Larsen

Paul Y. Hoskisson graduated from Brandeis University in ancient Near Easter studies. He currently holds a Richard L. Evans Professorship and is a professor in ancient scripture at BYU.

Val Larsen is associate professor of marketing at James Madison University. He holds a PhD in marketing from Virginia Tech, a PhD and MA in English from the University of Virginia, and a BA in philosophy and English from Brigham Young University. His published research includes articles on consumer psychology, Mormon material culture, and the fiction of Flannery O'Connor.

Larry E. Morris

Michael D. Rhodes

Larry E. Morris is a writer and editor with the Maxwell Institute. He is the coeditor (along with John W. Welch) of *Oliver Cowdery: Scribe, Elder, Witness*, published in 2006 by the Maxwell Institute, and has also published articles about Oliver Cowdery in *BYU Studies* and the *FARMS Review*. He received a master's degree in American literature from Brigham Young University.

Michael D. Rhodes earned a master's degree in physics from the University of New Mexico and did graduate work in Egyptology at Johns Hopkins University, the Freie Universität Berlin, and Oxford University and in archaeology at the University of Utah. He is an associate research professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

John S. Welch

John S. Welch is a retired attorney living in La Cañada, California. He earned his law degree from Harvard Law School and practiced his entire career in the Los Angeles–based firm of Latham & Watkins. He and his wife, Unita, served a two-year service mission as faculty members at BYU–Hawaii.

THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Early illuminating studies on the Book of Mormon attempted to reach inside its world and uncover some of its social and cultural dimensions. One thinks of Hugh Nibley's *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* that first appeared in 1957 as a guide for Melchizedek Priesthood instruction. Since then, of course, a bundle of publications have skillfully disclosed elements of this record. Two studies in this issue of the *Journal* push against the frontiers of what we can know about norms and customs among the people who composed the record, much as Richard Bushman's important study on aspects of political life in the Book of Mormon did ("The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution," *BYU Studies* 17 [1976]). Val Larsen's article suggestively links the killing of Laban to the first manifestation of a nation's power to deal with persons who have breached law in a severe way. In this case, of course, the Lord impelled Nephi toward executing Laban. In Larsen's view, this was effectively the first act of state. And the Nephite state would be established on divine principles and those principles would include capital punishment, largely in harmony with Old Testament practices (see Alma 1:15; 51:17–19). Ryan Davis's piece draws attention to the power of people in a democracy to influence whether their nation goes to war or not. Bringing forward modern studies on the subject, Davis argues that the Book of Mormon shows an uncanny connection between democracy and peace. This connection is meaningful for grasping an important outcome of the ancient Nephite experiment with a form of democracy.

Two other studies rest on a close reading of the text. John S. Welch leads readers back to an issue that both illustrates the Book of Mormon's rich textual legacy and invites a reexamination of previous conclusions. The appearance of the terms *strait* and *straight* has generated earlier studies. In his meticulous way, Welch tries his hand at solving the proper reading of these words in key passages, arguing that the current reading of those passages in the published Book of Mormon stands closest to the original, intended sense. For his part, David Cummings looks inside the pages of the New Testament gospels and finds an ambiguous picture about how long

Jesus' body lay in the tomb. He then examines notices within the Book of Mormon that tie to Jesus' entombment and concludes that these notices point to a crucifixion date of Thursday rather than Friday in light of Jesus' resurrection on a Sunday.

In his last contribution to the *Journal* before stepping aside as its editor, Kent Brown has tried to solve the question about the likely locale of the Valley of Lemuel. The question persists because interested investigators have come to differing conclusions about its location in northwest Arabia. Building on his long-held interest in the journey of Lehi and Sariah, he looks at both the external geographical evidence and the internal textual evidence and concludes that the narrow canyon, Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, which lies some 75 miles south of modern Aqaba and features a "continually running" stream, fits the evidence best.

In contrast to all, Larry Morris turns toward Oliver Cowdery's earliest connections to the family of Joseph Smith and to the rapidly unfolding events of the restoration, bringing attention to moments that involved Oliver and also influenced the translation of the Book of Mormon. Employing his usual deft touch, Morris uncovers the links that came to bind Oliver to the youthful prophet and his work, leading him to become the main scribe in writing the pages of the Book of Mormon as Joseph Smith dictated them.

THE
CONVERSION
OF
Oliver Cowdery

Larry E. Morris

During the monumental—and exact—year that began on April 7, 1829, when Joseph Smith began dictating the inspired text of the Book of Mormon, and ended on April 6, 1830, when the Church of Christ was organized, no one was more involved in the key events of the restoration than Oliver Cowdery. He was present for the translation of the Book of Mormon—accomplished in an amazing ten weeks through the gift and power of God; he was with Joseph when John the Baptist and later Peter, James, and John appeared as resurrected personages and restored the priesthood through the literal laying on of hands (with Oliver becoming the first person baptized in this dispensation); and he was one of three witnesses called to see the angel and the plates and to testify of the truth of the book. Not only that, but he also prepared the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon and assisted with the printing at a time when Joseph was generally not present. Clearly, it is no exaggeration to call Oliver the cofounder of Mormonism.

What makes Oliver's story even more fascinating is that he gained a testimony of the truthfulness of the work even before meeting Joseph Smith, while David Whitmer and Martin Harris were also being prepared to testify of the Book of Mormon. This occurred during a crucial time for the Joseph Smith Sr. family, when, in the midst of divine manifestations, they were also bombarded by earthly pressures that included the death of an infant grandchild, the loss of an invaluable document, serious illness, a lawsuit brought by a former friend, rumormongering among their neighbors, and eviction from their home because of financial hardship. Joseph Sr.'s and Lucy's faithfulness during these trials—and their respective testimonies of their son's prophetic calling—had a profound effect on Oliver, prompting him to pray and decide for himself what he thought about the story of the gold Bible. The powerful confirmation that resulted convinced him the restoration was genuine and that he should be a part of it. By the time he met Joseph Smith—about six months after meeting Joseph's parents—Oliver Cowdery was thus prepared to start immediately on the translation. And that is precisely what happened.

Oliver's Arrival from Vermont

Sometime in the mid-1820s, young Oliver Cowdery left his native state of Vermont and joined a constant stream of immigrants heading west to upstate New York. Lucy Cowdery Young, Oliver's half sister, said he made the move when he was twenty years old, which would mean in 1826 or 1827, since Oliver was born October 3, 1806. Western New York seemed like the natural place to go because Oliver's older brother Warren, as well as other brothers and sisters, had already relocated to the Empire State.[1]

Two contemporary records indicate that Oliver may have lived near Newark (also called Arcadia) or Lyons, about seven and thirteen miles east of Palmyra, respectively. The *Lyons Advertiser* newspaper offers the first-known New York record mentioning Oliver by name. "List of letters remaining in the Post Office at Newark, Oct. 1st, 1827," the notice read, and the list of fifty-nine names that followed included both Oliver and his father, William.[2] The list, which ran for four consecutive weekly issues, indicates that *someone* thought the Cowderys were in the area; still, the exact whereabouts of both Oliver and his father remain a mystery.[3] Oliver was definitely in the vicinity by the next summer, however, because he and his brother Lyman signed a twenty-two dollar note to a Lyons grocer by the name of David Adams on August 11, 1828.[4]

The Loss of the 116 Pages

The summer of 1828 had been a traumatic one for the Smith family. On June 15, Joseph and Emma, then living in Harmony, Pennsylvania, near Emma's parents, lost their firstborn child, a son named Alvin, who died shortly after his birth. For two weeks, Joseph nursed Emma, who seemed "for some time," wrote Lucy, "more like sinking with her infant into the mansion of the dead, than remaining with her husband among the living." With Emma slowly recovering, Joseph traveled to the Smith farm in Manchester, New York, only to discover that Martin Harris had lost the 116 transcribed pages of the Book of Mormon. The entire family was plunged into despair, and when Joseph departed for Harmony, Lucy wrote, "We parted with heavy hearts, for it now appeared that all which we had so fondly anticipated, and which had been the source

of so much secret gratification, had in a moment fled, and fled for ever."[5]

About two months later, apparently in late August or early September, Joseph Sr. and Lucy traveled to Harmony because they had heard nothing from Joseph and were worried about him. To their surprise, he met them "with a countenance blazing with delight."[6] Although the plates and the Urim and Thummim had been taken from Joseph, they had now been restored because of his penitence. He had also received a revelation (now section 3 of the Doctrine and Covenants) in which the Lord told Joseph that he was "still chosen" and "again called to the work" (v. 10). Furthermore, reported Joseph, "'the angel said that the Lord would send me a scribe, and I trust his promise will be verified.'"[7]
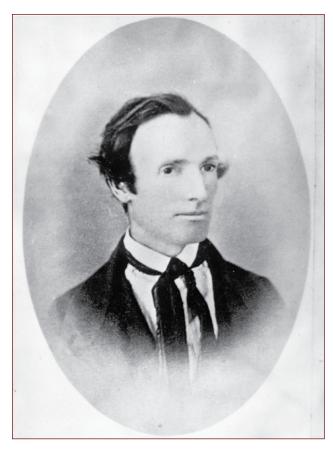
Oliver the Schoolteacher

Joseph Sr. and Lucy arrived back in Manchester and found their children Sophronia and Samuel "lying at the point of Death,"[8] so sick that Hyrum (now married) "had left his own house, and quitted business, in order to take care of them during our absence."[9] Palmyra physician Gain C. Robinson visited the Smiths on September 11 and charged Joseph Sr. for medicine given to "Boy Harrison" (Samuel).[10] Lucy added that Sophronia "lay very sick for 2 months in which time she was dreadfully salivated by the Dr. who attended her."[11]

About this same time, the elder Joseph and Lucy met Oliver Cowdery for the first time. His brother Lyman had applied to teach school in the Manchester district and had spoken first with twenty-eight-year-old Hyrum, a trustee of the district, who called a meeting of the other trustees. They agreed to employ Lyman and settled on the terms. But, as Lucy later recalled, "the next day [Lyman] brought his brother Oliver and requested them to receive him in the place of himself." Whether because of coincidence or providence, Lyman Cowdery was unable to fulfill his obligation; Lucy remembered that "business had arisen" that would oblige him to disappoint them.[12] Whatever this unnamed business was, it set Oliver Cowdery's life on a startling new course.

Lyman assured the trustees that Oliver, who had just turned twenty-two, could do the job. Presumably, the trustees interviewed Oliver, discover-

Oliver Cowdery. Photograph, c. 1848, C. W. Carter Collection.

Page 4: Oliver Cowdery. Daguerreotype Courtesy Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Page 5: *Joseph Smith Baptizes Oliver Cowdery,* by Del Parson. © 1996 IRI.

ing for themselves that he "had acquired a good common school education."[13] Perhaps the trustees were impressed by his serious manner; they likely found him rather articulate for a young man. Whatever the exact details, "all parties were satisfied," and Oliver was given the assignment.[14]

Like Oliver's home state of Vermont, New York had made excellent provisions for education. By 1820, New York's schools were said to be among the best in the nation.[15] Oliver labored in New York's Joint District 11, teaching in a small frame schoolhouse about a mile south of the Smith home on Stafford Road. During his five-month, six-day tenure—which began late in October—he taught a total of 107 "scholars" (although the attendance on any given day was probably a fraction of that). Sixty-one of them, including Katharine, Don Carlos, and Lucy Smith, were older than five years old and younger than sixteen. Oliver taught spelling, arith-

metic, reading, grammar, and geography, and he frequently asked his students to read from the New Testament.[16] His reputation was good: one student remembered him as "a man of good character";[17] another called him "a peaceable fellow."[18]

Oliver and David Whitmer Investigate the Gold Bible

Oliver had barely begun teaching when he started to hear rumors about Joseph Smith and the gold plates. Neighbors had known about the "gold Bible" for more than a year, and some of them had ransacked a Smith shed in search of the plates in September 1827, not long after Joseph obtained them. Oliver quite possibly heard a variety of tales about the plates from both his students and their parents. If later affidavits are any indication, hearsay and gossip were the order of the day. All kinds of people in the area claimed some kind of knowledge of the gold book, but very few of them had talked directly to young Joseph.[19]

About this same time—possibly in November 1828—twenty-three-year-old David Whitmer made a business trip from his home in Fayette Township to Palmyra (thirty miles away), a bustling borough of "very considerable business" according to a contemporary description. Strategically situated along the Erie Canal—which had been completed just three years earlier—Palmyra boasted an academy, two or three schools, thirteen dry good stores, three inns, three druggist shops, and two tanneries, "one of which is so extensive as to employ 40 hands." Well over one thousand people lived in Palmyra, taking advantage of a post office, a printing business, several "mechanical establishments," a number of mills, and Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches.[20]

David later recalled that while in Palmyra, he "stopped with one Oliver Cowdery." The details of how the two young men became acquainted are unknown, but they quickly struck up a friendship, taking a mutual interest in the stories being told about Joseph Smith. "A great many people in the neighborhood were talking about the finding of certain gold plates by one Joseph Smith, jr.," David recorded. "Cowdery and I, as well as others, talked about the [plates], but at the time I paid but little attention to it, supposing it to be only the idle gossip of the neighborhood." David's reminiscences of

more than five decades later indicate that he visited Palmyra more than once (or remained there for some time) and had multiple conversations with Oliver, who "said he was acquainted with the Smith family, and he believed there must be some truth in the story of the plates, and that he intended to investigate the matter."[21]

Neither David nor Oliver ever explained why they took a sincere interest in Joseph Smith while so many in the area viewed him cynically. (It is worth noting, however, that several of the neighbors, such as those who had ransacked the Smith shed, were convinced that Joseph had plates, but their interest was monetary, not religious.) From the start, David and Oliver seemed to have been taken with the religious implications of a gold Bible rather than thoughts of worldly treasure, a motivation that several neighbors freely acknowledged. However, the family backgrounds of both the Whitmers and the Cowderys likely influenced this course of events.

David's father, Peter Whitmer Sr., faithfully attended the German Reformed church in West Fayette, New York, where his sons Christian, Jacob, and John were all confirmed. Based on interviews with the David Whitmer family in 1885, a reporter characterized Peter as "a hard-working, God-fearing man, a strict Presbyterian [who] brought his children up with rigid sectarian discipline."[22] Even minister Diedrich Willers, who believed Joseph Smith eventually duped the Whitmers, depicted Peter as "a quiet, unpretending, and apparently honest, candid, and simple-minded man."[23] Oliver likewise grew up in a religious environment. His grandfather William Cowdery Sr., who was still alive when Oliver was a boy, served as a deacon in the Congregational Church, preaching sermons after the death of the minister.[24] And Oliver's stepmother, Keziah Pearce Austin Cowdery, was also a member of the Congregational Church who took her faith seriously.[25] Their upbringings may well have prepared both David and Oliver to focus on "Bible" rather than "gold" when they first heard of Joseph and the plates.

Although the exact sequence of events is not known, Oliver soon asked Joseph Smith Sr. to take him as a boarder "at least for a little while" until he became acquainted with other patrons in the district.[26] Joseph Sr. agreed, and Oliver took up residence with Joseph and Lucy and their children Samuel (known as "Sam" or "Harrison"—his
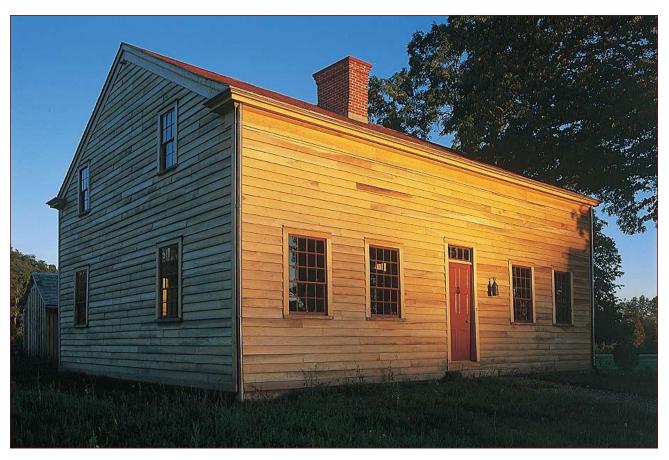
middle name), 20; William ("Bill"), 17; Katharine, 15; Don Carlos ("Carlos"), 12; and Lucy, 7. Sophronia, 25, and her husband, Calvin Stoddard, may have also been living with the family at this time. Samuel and Sophronia were most likely still recovering from their illnesses when Oliver moved in. The family lived in comfortable quarters in the two-story frame home begun by Alvin in 1823 and completed about two years after his death (he had died November 19, 1823).

Perhaps prompted by his discussions with David Whitmer, Oliver asked Joseph Sr. about the plates. Lucy recalled that Oliver asked several times, "but he did not succeed in eliciting any information from him."[27] Joseph Sr. was likely reluctant to discuss his son's experiences because of the hostility of several of the neighbors—and the frenzy shown by some of them to steal the plates. About this same time, David Whitmer was conducting his own investigation and may have even talked to some of the same neighbors. "I had conversations with several young men who said that Joseph Smith had certainly gold plates," David said, "and that before he attained them he had promised to share with them, but had not done so, and they were very much incensed with him."[28]

Whether on horseback or on foot, the inquisitive David Whitmer continued to travel through the area, interrogating one person after another until he learned that "one night during the year 1827, Joseph Smith, jr., had a vision, and an angel of God appeared to him and told him where certain plates were to be found and pointed out the spot to him, and that shortly afterward he went to that place and found the plates which were still in his possession." David was impressed because "these parties were so positive in their statements"—like Oliver, he began to feel there must be "some foundation for the stories." David pondered what he had heard "for a long time," then spoke again with Oliver, and the two of them agreed to stay in contact and share any information they obtained about the gold plates.[29]

Meanwhile, Oliver struggled to get by financially. A distinct disadvantage of teaching school was that schoolmasters had to wait until the end of the term to be paid, making it understandably difficult for them to pay debts in the interim. In January 1829 David Adams filed a complaint before a justice of the peace in Lyons for the debt that Lyman and Oliver owed him. After being served a summons,

Oliver Cowdery lived in this frame house on the Smith family farm in Manchester, New York, while he was boarding with the Smiths as a schoolteacher. Courtesy IRI.

Lyman sent a representative to admit owing money on the note. Justice of the Peace Hugh Jameson rendered judgment against Lyman and Oliver, finding them liable for the balance of $17.65 owed on the $22.00 note (plus court costs of $1.76, for a total of $19.41).[30] In the fragile economy of the New York frontier—where actual currency could be quite hard to come by—such a situation was not uncommon.

"The Field Is White Already to Harvest"

About the same time these legal proceedings were taking place, Joseph Sr. and Samuel made a trip to Harmony to visit Joseph and Emma. The details of the journey are not known, but they presumably traveled most of the 130 miles on foot, enduring harsh conditions during midwinter in upstate New York. "In January [Joseph Sr.] and Samuel [Smith] Came from Manchester to my house when I was Buisey a Drawing Lumber," wrote family friend Joseph Knight Sr., who lived in Colesville, about twenty-two miles from Harmony. "I told him they had traviled far enough I would go with my sley and take them Down [to Harmony] to morrow[.] I went Down and found them well and the[y] were glad to see us[.] we conversed about many things. in the morning I gave the old man a half a Dollar and Joseph a little money to Buoy paper to translate[,] I having But little with me. The old gentlman told me to Come and see him once in a while as I Could[.]"[31]

Samuel and his father must have relished riding in a sleigh after their exhausting trek from Manchester. Joseph Knight Sr.—who had been one of the first outside the Smith family to believe Joseph's account of the plates and who just a month or two earlier had given Joseph and Emma some provisions, a pair of shoes, and three dollars—had once again shown what a valuable friend he was.

Aerial view of Hale and Smith homesteads. Looking toward the west, one can see the Harmony Church history sites as they appear today. From left to right: (1) Susquehanna River winding past the homesteads; (2) area near where the Aaronic Priesthood was restored; (3) present-day railroad tracks separating the river from the Smith and Hale homesites; (4) Hale homesite; (5) site of the Smith home; (6) site of Aaronic Priesthood Restoration Monument; (7) State Highway 171 running between the Smith and Hale homesteads; (8) the McKune Cemetery and grave sites of Isaac Hale and some other family members. Courtesy IRI.

While Joseph Sr. and Samuel were staying in Harmony, the Prophet received a revelation directed to his father, one that is particularly beloved by missionaries—Doctrine and Covenants section 4. "Now behold," it begins, "a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men. Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day" (D&C 4:1–2).

Is it possible that this revelation motivated Joseph Sr. to finally tell Oliver Cowdery the details about the plates and the visits of Moroni? Although the participants never discussed this issue, the timing and wording of the revelation are both quite consistent with such a scenario. First, Joseph Sr. and Samuel's visit to Harmony apparently took place in late January and early February 1829. As noted above, Joseph Knight said the Smiths arrived at his home in January. Joseph Smith, on the other hand, wrote that "in the month of February Eighteen hundred and twenty nine my father came to visit us at which time I received the following revelation for him."[32] If Joseph Sr. confided in Oliver when he and Samuel returned to Manchester, perhaps in mid- or late February, that time frame would fit quite well with Lucy's observation that Oliver did not succeed in obtaining information from her husband "for a long time"[33] and that Oliver at last "gained my husband's confidence, so far as to obtain a sketch of the facts relative to the plates."[34]

As for the wording of the revelation, consider this passage: "Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work; For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in

store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul" (D&C 4:3–4). Although Joseph Sr. had previously told neighbor Willard Chase (in June 1827) of his son's experiences,[35] he appears to have done so in a rather matter-of-fact way, not as one "called to the work." This revelation given specifically to him, however, could certainly be interpreted as admonishing him to bear serious testimony of the "marvelous work," and who was a more likely recipient of that testimony than Oliver?

Oliver Seeks a Personal Witness

Lucy wrote that not long after obtaining this "sketch of facts,"[36] Oliver returned from school one day "in quite a lively mood."[37] As soon as he was able to talk to Joseph Sr., he said he had been in a "deep study all day and it had been put into his heart that he would have the [privilege] of writing for Joseph." The next day was memorable because of a tremendous thunderstorm. "The rain fell in torrents," Lucy said, making it "almost impossible to travel the road between the school house and our place."[38] The weather was so bad that Lucy assumed Oliver might stop with a neighbor who lived close to the school and spend the night there. But Oliver was determined to get back to the Smith home—he likely arrived at their door shivering from the chill and drenched with rain. He had barely entered when he made an announcement: "I have now resolved what I will do[,] for the thing which I told you seems working in my very bones insomuch that I cannot for a moment get rid of it."[39] He explained that as soon as the school term ended in March, he intended to travel to Pennsylvania to talk to Joseph Jr. He would go with Samuel, who was already planning another trip to Harmony. "'I have made it a subject of prayer," Oliver added, "and I firmly believe that it is the will of the Lord that I should go. If there is a work for me to do in this thing, I am determined to attend to it.'"[40]

Along with telling the Smith family of his decision, Oliver also informed his new friend David Whitmer, apparently when the two saw each other in Palmyra. "Cowdery told me he was going to Harmony, Pa.—whither Joseph Smith had gone with the plates on account of persecutions of his neighbors—and see him about the matter," David wrote.[41]

Joseph and Lucy had advised Oliver to continue to seek his own personal witness of the truth of Joseph Jr.'s work. Oliver did just that, and although he did not describe it himself, he clearly experienced a spiritual epiphany that powerfully convinced him of the rightness of his course. A revelation received in April 1829 specifically discussed this conversion experience: "Verily, verily, I say unto you [Oliver], if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God? And now, behold, you have received a witness; for if I have told you things which no man knoweth have you not received a witness?"[42]

The Prophet Joseph explained that "he [Oliver Cowdery] stated to me that after he had gone to my father's to board, and after the family communicated to him concerning my having got the plates, that one night after he had retired to bed, he called upon the Lord to know if these things were so, and that the Lord had manifested to him that they were true, but that he had kept the circumstance entirely secret, and had mentioned it to no being, so that after this revelation having been given, he knew that the work was true, because that no ~~mortal~~ being living knew of the thing alluded <to> in the revelation but God and himself."[43]

In his 1832 history, Joseph described Oliver's conversion in even more concrete terms, recording that the "Lord appeared unto a young man by the name of Oliver Cowdry and shewed unto him the plates in a vision and also the truth of the work and what the Lord was about to do through me his unworthy servant[;] therefore he was desirous to come and write for me to translate."[44] So it was not at all surprising that "from this time," as Lucy succinctly wrote, "Oliver was so entirely absorbed in the subject of the record that it seemed impossible for him to think or converse about anything else."[45]

Losing the Frame Home

Once again, however, the temporal world encroached on the spiritual. The Smith family found themselves about to be evicted from the frame home they had occupied for more than three years, the home Alvin had begun to construct with the hope of providing a "'nice pleasant room for father and mother to sit in,'"

with "'everything arranged for their comfort.'"[46] Although Joseph Sr. and Lucy had been unable to pay their rent late in 1825—and had been threatened with eviction—a Quaker named Lemuel Durfee had purchased the property and allowed the Smiths to stay in exchange for Samuel's labor. That arrangement ended early in 1829, however, when Durfee's daughter and her husband were scheduled to move into the house. Lucy wrote: "We now felt more keenly than ever the injustice of the measure which had placed a landlord over us on our own premises, and who was about to eject us from them."[47]

The family now faced the dreary prospect of returning to the cramped log cabin they had occupied before the frame home was completed. A Palmyra resident described the cabin as a "small, one-story, smoky log-house," explaining that it was "divided into two rooms, on the ground-floor, and had a low garret, in two apartments," and that a bedroom wing constructed of sawed logs was later added.[48] The cabin, barely capable of housing one family, was about to house two—Joseph and Lucy and their five children, as well as Hyrum and his wife, Jerusha, and their eighteen-month-old daughter, Lovina, with another child just months away. (Hyrum and Jerusha had lived in the cabin since their marriage in November of 1826.)

"In consequence of these things," Lucy explained to Oliver, who had spent much, if not all, of the school term with the Smiths, "we cannot make you comfortable any longer, and you will be under the necessity of taking boarding somewhere else."

"Mother," said the intent young man, apparently unaware he was speaking to a blood relative of his own mother, Rebecca Fuller, and showing how the Smiths' faithfulness had impacted him, "let me stay with you, for I can live in any log hut where you and father live, but I cannot leave you, so do not mention it." And so, on the brink of the key event of the restoration, ten Smiths and one surrogate Smith crowded into the humble log cabin, giving up convenience, as Lucy said, "for the sake of Christ and salvation."[49]

Shortly before Oliver left for Pennsylvania, the Smith family was forced to move back into the log home on their family farm. This replica of the log home stands on the site today. Courtesy IRI.

Lucy Harris's Lawsuit

Within weeks—or possibly even days—of the move, a former friend compounded the family's tribulation. According to Lucy, Martin Harris's wife (also named Lucy) "undertook to prove, that Joseph never had the Record which he professed to have, and that he pretended to have in his possession certain gold plates, for the express purpose of obtaining money." Although Martin's wife had originally offered to help finance the work of translation, she had quickly grown hostile to her husband's involvement. Now she stepped up her opposition after learning that Martin had made plans to visit Joseph and Emma in Harmony. Encouraged by Samuel's news of Joseph's success, Martin had a "great desire to go down to Pennsylvania to see how [Joseph and Emma] were prospering." (Samuel may have explained that Joseph Knight was helping Joseph and that Samuel and Emma had both acted as scribe for Joseph.) Determined to prevent Martin from going, Lucy Harris "mounted her horse, flew from house to house through the neighbourhood, like a dark spirit, . . . stirring up every malicious feeling which would tend to serve her wicked purpose."[50]

The upshot of all this was that Lucy Harris had a complaint filed against Joseph Jr. before a magistrate in Lyons.[51] A hearing was scheduled, and Oliver's brother Lyman, a lawyer who possibly held a position in the county, was called on to assist in Joseph's arrest if he were found guilty. Oliver would have been well aware of this sequence of events, but whether he attended the hearing—or whether he talked to Lyman about the case—is unknown. The historical record is also silent on whether Oliver met Martin Harris at this time.

On the day of the hearing, Lucy Smith learned that several neighbors had departed for Lyons to testify against Joseph. She was worrying about the outcome when Hyrum came into the room of the cabin where she was sitting. She asked him what could be done.

"Why, mother," he said, "we can do nothing, except to look to the Lord; in him is all help and strength; he can deliver from every trouble."[52]

Comforted by Hyrum's faith, Lucy found a secluded spot and poured out her "whole soul in entreaties to God." A powerful feeling of peace fell upon her, and she heard a voice say, "'not one hair of his head shall be harmed.'"[53] She returned to the cabin and tried to read but found herself overcome with emotion.

When Hyrum's wife, Jersuha, came into the room, she asked what was the matter. "I told her, that I had never felt so happy before in my life," wrote Lucy, "that my heart was so light, and my mind so completely at rest, that it did not appear possible to me that I should ever have any more trouble while I should exist."[54]

That evening the Smiths heard what had happened at the hearing. Three witnesses (not identified by Lucy) had testified: the first reported hearing Joseph say that the box that supposedly used to hold the plates had held nothing but sand; the second claimed Joseph had said the box contained lead; the third "declared, that he once inquired of Joseph Smith what he had in that box, and Joseph Smith told him that there was nothing at all in the box, saying, that he had made fools of the whole of them, and all he wanted was, to get Martin Harris's money away from him."[55]

Not surprisingly the next witness was Lucy Harris herself, who proclaimed her belief that Joseph was out to defraud her husband and had never possessed any gold plates. Before hearing any other witnesses, the magistrate then called Martin Harris to the stand. "I can swear," Martin reportedly said, "that Joseph Smith never has got one dollar from me by persuasion since God made me. I did once, of my own free will and accord, put fifty dollars into his hands, . . . and I can tell you, furthermore, that I have never seen, in Joseph Smith, a disposition to take any man's money without giving him a reasonable compensation for the same in return. And as to the plates which he professes to have, gentlemen, if you do not believe it, but continue to resist the truth, it will one day be the means of damning your souls."

According to the Smiths' informant, the magistrate then "told them they need not call any more witnesses, but ordered them to bring him what had been written of the testimony already given. This he tore in pieces before their eyes, and told them to go home about their business, and trouble him no more with such ridiculous folly."[56]

Nor did Lucy Harris succeed in keeping her husband away from Joseph Smith. Martin and a man by the name of Rogers promptly left for Harmony. Rogers had heard of the plates and wanted to

see if Joseph really had them. Only later did Martin discover that Rogers had pledged to give Lucy Harris $100 if he verified that the plates were real.[57]

News of the magistrate's reaction brought the peace Lucy Smith had confidently expected. Still, the family continued to battle illness, just as they had done most of the fall. On March 11 and again two weeks later on March 25, Dr. Robinson stopped at the log home to check on Jerusha—and possibly other sick family members—and leave medicine.[58]

Oliver and Samuel Depart for Harmony

A few days later, in what had turned out to be a momentous few months, the school term ended and Oliver received his pay of $65.50, possibly in a lump sum.[59] On Tuesday, March 31, Oliver and Samuel apparently traveled to Lyons, where Oliver made a thirteen dollar payment on the debt to David Adams. The next day, April 1, Oliver and Samuel departed for Harmony.[60]

Lucy remembered that "the weather, for some time previous, had been very wet and disagreeable—raining, freezing, and thawing alternately, which had rendered the roads almost impassable, particularly in the middle of the day."[61] Traveling on foot, Oliver and Samuel trudged through the mud, heading east. The most prominent road in the area was the Seneca Turnpike, a sixty-four-foot-wide thoroughfare paved with logs and gravel, running south of the Erie Canal but north of the Finger Lakes, accessing Canandaigua on the west and Utica on the east. Mile markers helped travelers chart their progress. Tolls were collected every ten miles—a man on horseback might be charged four cents; a teamster with four horses and a wagon, eighteen and a half cents. Cart, wagon, and stagecoach traffic was interspersed by the sound and smell of livestock—with droves of cattle, hogs, and even turkeys being driven to market.[62]

When they reached the town of Waterloo, Oliver and Samuel likely asked directions to the Peter Whitmer farm, which lay three miles south and one mile west, across the Seneca River and between two of the Finger Lakes—Seneca and Cayuga. Making their way through hills and vales, through fertile farmland spotted with clumps of forest, the two young men reached the one-hundred-acre Whitmer farm, possibly passing through a grove that would take on sacred significance three months in the future.

Oliver and Samuel must have been cold and tired and hungry by the time they arrived at the twenty-by-thirty-foot, one-and-a-half story log home where David, the fourth of eight children, lived with his parents, Peter and Mary Musselman Whitmer, both in their fifties. "[Oliver] did go [to Harmony]," David later wrote, "and on his way stopped at my father's house and told me that as soon as he found out anything either truth and untruth he would let me know."[63] The Whitmers were respected members of the Fayette Township, with Peter serving as a school trustee and oldest son Christian as a constable. Subsequent events indicate that Oliver and Samuel were welcomed into the home, where they may have told what they knew about the ancient record while savoring a warm meal. They were likely introduced to three or four of David's brothers and sisters, including his youngest sister, fourteen-year-old Elizabeth Ann, the young woman Oliver Cowdery would marry almost four years later.[64]

Continuing their journey despite the driving wind and rain, Oliver and Samuel trekked on, averaging an impressive twenty to twenty-five miles a day for five days, despite the mud and muck. A contemporary traveler recalled that progress during rainstorms "was neither pleasant nor fast; for the mud in some places reached nearly to [my horse's] knees, and the small streamlets, which I was obliged to cross, were swelled to the size of turbid, angry brooks."[65] The two possibly stopped at inns the second and third nights, boarding with a throng of fellow travelers—some arriving after midnight and others departing before dawn. A typical course would have taken them through the pleasant hills of Ithaca and past "two of the prettiest Falls imaginable,"[66] then east-southeast toward Chenango and Broome Counties. Lucy recalled that both of them "suffered much" from the miserable weather and from fatigue, which in Samuel's case was complicated by his lingering illness. Oliver also endured a frostbitten toe.[67]

It is possible that the two of them stopped at Joseph Knight Sr.'s farm in Colesville, just as Joseph Sr. and Samuel had done two months earlier. Knight, who had befriended Joseph Smith in 1826, owned a 142-acre farm with "'two dwelling
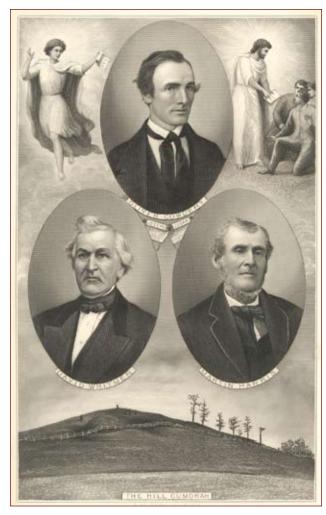
houses, a good barn, and a fine orchard,'"[68] and he also operated a gristmill. Joseph Knight had just made a visit to Harmony himself, going "the last of March." He may have given Oliver and Samuel the same report he later recorded in his own hand: "We [Knight and his wife, Polly] went Down and found [Joseph and Emma] well and ware glad to see us Joseph talked with us about his translating and some revelations he had Received."[69]

A Warning and a Promise to Martin Harris

One of the revelations mentioned by Joseph Knight concerned Martin Harris, who, like Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, was experiencing events that would prepare him to serve as a special witness of the Book of Mormon. Martin and his associate Rogers had visited Joseph shortly before the Knights did. Harris and Rogers asked to see the plates, and, as Martin later put it, Rogers "had Whet his [knife] to cut the covering of the Plates."[70] But they were not allowed to see the plates—nor did Rogers have opportunity to view them surreptitiously. Instead Martin, who eight months earlier had "set at naught the counsels of God" (D&C 3:13) and had lost the 116 pages, now asked Joseph to inquire of the Lord. The revelation that followed (now D&C 5) warned Martin to humble himself and then spoke of "the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things [the plates], and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you." In addition, Martin was promised that if he were humble, the Lord would "grant unto him a view of the things which he desires to see."[71]

Harris and Rogers then headed north by stage-coach. Apparently encouraged by the revelation, Martin told his fellow passengers that Joseph Smith "had found a gold bible & stone in which he looked & was thereby enabled to translate the very ancient chara[c]ters." Saying he had just visited Joseph, Martin explained that Joseph "was poor & was living in a house which had only one room" and that "Smith had a sheet put up in one corner & went behind it from observation when he was writing the bible." Martin added that Joseph "would not let him see the bible but let him feel of it when it was covered up."[72]

This frontispiece for the October 1883 *Contributor* shows the Three Witnesses over an engraving of the Hill Cumorah. This was the first LDS publication of Oliver's portrait. Courtesy Edward L. Hart.

Along with Martin and Rogers, the coach likely carried four or five others, along with a load of mail. Strong leather springs offered reasonable comfort, but passengers were still "kept in constant motion," as one traveler recalled, "jolting and bumping about in high style, all taking it in good humour, and enjoying our laugh in turn, as each came in contact with his neighbour's head."[73] In the midst of this constant jostling, at least one passenger listened attentively as Martin Harris—one of the first missionaries of the Book of Mormon—told of the gold Bible. "Smith read to him a good deal of the bible & he repeated to those in the Stage verse after verse of what Smith had read to him."[74]

The Translation Begins

As the driver maneuvered the team of horses up and down hills and around bends, the northbound stagecoach, winding its way from Bainbridge to Geneva, had possibly crossed paths with south-bound Oliver and Samuel. By Sunday, April 5, the two of them neared the end of their exhausting journey, finally crossing the border into Pennsylvania. Just as the sun was setting, they made their way through the wooded hills near the Susquehanna River and approached the home where Joseph and Emma lived.[75]

Lucy recalled that "Joseph called upon the Lord, three days prior to the arrival of Samuel and Oliver, to send him a scribe, according to the promise of the angel; and he was informed that the same should be forthcoming in a few days. Accordingly, when Mr. Cowdery told him the business that he had come upon, Joseph was not at all surprised."

After meeting each other, Joseph and Oliver "sat down and conversed together till late. During the evening, Joseph told Oliver his history, as far as was necessary for his present information, in the things which mostly concerned him."[76]
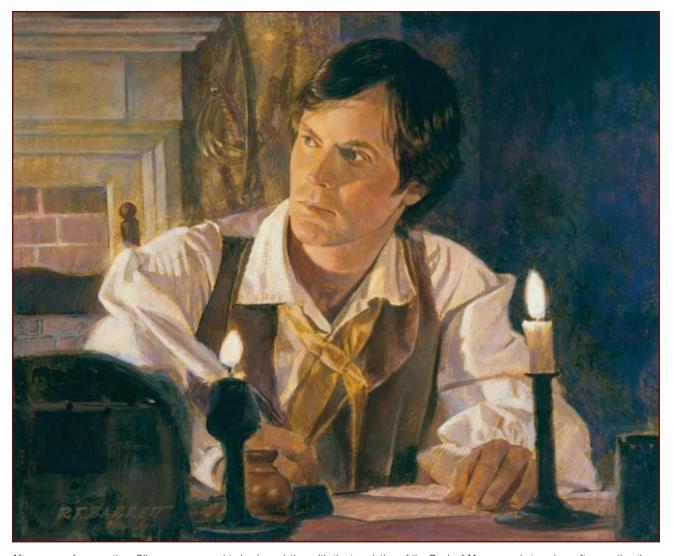
Oliver wrote that he and Joseph took care of temporal business on Monday, April 6. That business was an agreement between Joseph and his father-in-law, Isaac Hale, in which Hale agreed to sell Joseph a thirteen-acre parcel of land that included a house and a barn. The price was $200, and Joseph made a down payment of $64; Oliver and Samuel were witnesses.[77] (It is unknown if Oliver contributed all or part of what remained from his teaching salary to this down payment.)

In a brief six-month period, Oliver Cowdery had met the Smith family, come to know them well and shared in their hardships, investigated the story of the gold Bible and deliberated it, and sought and received his own witness of the truthfulness of

The Susquehanna River, near the home where Joseph and Emma lived while the plates were being translated. This river provided the location for several of the events in early Church history, including the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood to Joseph and Oliver on May 15, 1829. Courtesy IRI.
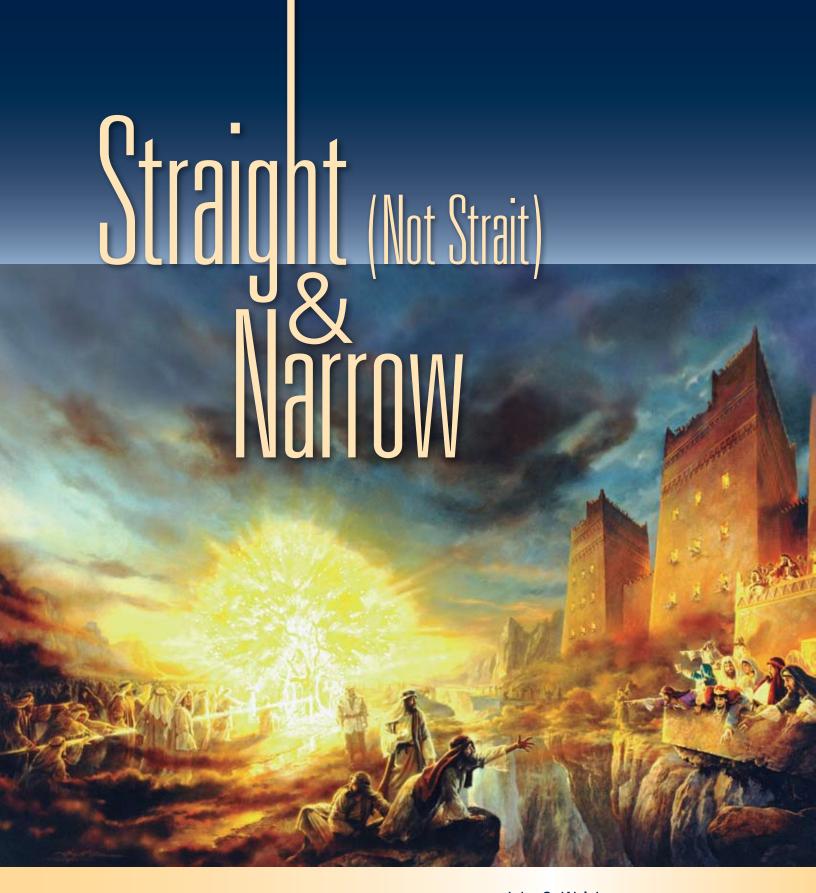
After a year of preparation, Oliver was prepared to begin assisting with the translation of the Book of Mormon only two days after meeting the Prophet Joseph Smith. *Oliver Writing with a Feather Pen.* © 1984 Robert Barrett.

the work. Less than two days after meeting Joseph Smith for the first time, he "commenced to write the book of Mormon." Considering what had led to this moment, it comes as no surprise that Oliver added: "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated, with the *Urim* and *Thummim*, or, as the Nephites [would] have said, 'Interpreters,' the history, or record, called 'The book of Mormon.'"[78]

Straight (Not Strait) & Narrow

John S. Welch

In all printed editions of the Book of Mormon between 1830 and 1981, four verses—1 Nephi 8:20; 2 Nephi 31:18–19 (twice); and Helaman 3:29—contained the phrase "straight and narrow path [or course]." This phrase does not appear in the King James version of the Bible. The Savior, in twice describing the "way, which leadeth unto life" (Matthew 7:14; 3 Nephi 14:14), only mentioned the way's width and not the shape of its length; but that was a part of a lovely poetic parallelism that paired the "strait gate" with the "narrow way," both of which "leadeth unto life."

Had the Lord said, "Strait is the gate, and straight and narrow is the way," it would have been more descriptive but less poetic. And had he said, "Strait is the gate, and strait and narrow is the way," it would have been no more descriptive and also less poetic. The Savior may have seen no need to spoil the poetry in that one instance with

the addition of another dimension of the way to life ("straight"), knowing that his hearers were well aware of the ancient commandments to "walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you" (Deuteronomy 5:33) and to "not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (v. 32)—that is, to go straight.[1]

In order to understand the rise and influence of the more descriptive expression "straight and narrow" among Western authors, it is important to sketch a brief history. In the early Christian church, the phrase "straight and narrow" came into use. Cyprian, a church father of the third century, in an apparent paraphrasing of Matthew 7:13–14, wrote, "How broad and spacious is the way which leadeth unto death, and many there are who go in thereby: how straight and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!"[2] He also wrote, "We must persevere in the straight and narrow road of praise and glory."[3]

Likewise, Origen, of that same era, seemingly paraphrased Jesus: "Now, those who believe in Him are those who walk in the straight and narrow way, which leads to life, and which is found by few."[4] The Oxford English Dictionary says that this derivation ("straight and narrow") from Matthew 7:14 is incorrect, apparently because of the presence in the verse of *strait*, an adjective describing *gate*, not *way* (OED Online, 2nd ed., s.v. "straight"). In my view, these early writers were probably not misreading the verse but verbalizing what seemed to them to be a natural implication in it of a more complete description of "the way which leadeth unto life."

The circulation of this phrase in the Christian world was greatly increased by the publication of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1678, which was eventually reissued in 100 other languages and is called the greatest of all Christian writings. In this classic, Goodwill tells Christian, the protagonist, "[T]he way thou must go . . . is as straight as a rule can make it." Christian then asks, "[A]re there no turnings or windings, by which a stranger may lose his way?" And Goodwill answers, "Yes, there are many ways butt down upon this, and they are crooked and wide. But thus thou mayest distinguish the right from the wrong, the right only being straight and narrow."[5]

Thomas B. Macaulay, in volume 2 of his *Critical and Historical Essays*, wrote in about 1831 regarding *The Pilgrim's Progress* that "[e]very reader knows the straight and narrow path as well as he knows a road in which he has gone backward and forward a hundred times."[6] Scores of literary and religious usages could be cited.[7]

It seems reasonably certain that by the time of the translation of the Book of Mormon (1829), the phrase "straight and narrow" was a common English idiom used in secular and religious writings and meaning essentially, according to many dictionaries, "the way of proper conduct and moral integrity." So it is not difficult to believe that the concept of a straight and narrow path leading to life eternal was a firm part of the young Joseph Smith's working vocabulary.

The spelling of English words in 1829 was less rule-bound than today—*straight* was sometimes spelled *strait*, and *strait* was sometimes spelled *straight*.[8] Oliver Cowdery's choice of spelling in the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon (and presumably in the original manuscript) for dictated

words that sounded like "strate" was uniformly *strait* whether the context indicated "straight" or "tight, narrow, or constricted." Conversely, the printer changed the spelling of all these words to *straight* (even to *straight gate*) in the first edition. Either approach was acceptable at a time when *straight* could also mean "strait" and *strait* could also mean "straight," depending on the context.

I see no reason to think that either Cowdery or the printer was trying to specify the translator's intent or doing anything else except to prefer a single spelling for both meanings. But this development left it up to the reader to determine the meanings and presented a need for emendations based on context and usage. Thus, when the rules of spelling changed, editors emended occurrences of *straight* in the Book of Mormon back to *strait* where the context indicated the need. This process began in 1906 and continued until 1920, so that the following verses then variously read:

> he did straiten them . . . straitened them (1 Nephi 17:41, twice)
>
> the place is too strait (1 Nephi 21:20)
>
> strait gate (Jacob 6:11; 3 Nephi 14:13–14 [twice]; 27:33 [twice])

Those changes (eight in all) were obviously needed. And of equal importance, the following seven occurrences of the word *straight* were left unchanged from 1830 to 1981.

> make his paths straight (1 Nephi 10:8)
>
> a straight stick (1 Nephi 16:23)
>
> make my path straight (2 Nephi 4:33)
>
> in a straight course (2 Nephi 9:41)
>
> his paths which are straight (Alma 7:9)[9]
>
> his paths are straight (Alma 37:12)
>
> straight course to eternal bliss (Alma 37:44; see also Alma 50:8; 56:37)

The four other usages in question here—1 Nephi 8:20, 2 Nephi 31:18–19, and Helaman 3:29, reading "*straight* and narrow path [*or* course]"—were also left unchanged until 1981, when in the new edition of the Book of Mormon the spelling of *straight* was changed in these four instances back to *strait*. All

subsequent printings of the Book of Mormon conform to that spelling. Some reprints of pre-1981 works by Latter-day Saint church leaders and writers also conform to that spelling, while some post-1981 writings by such authors have continued to use the phrase "straight and narrow." The reason for or significance of these 1981 spelling changes has never been officially explained. Perhaps as a consequence, and certainly from a language standpoint, these changes and their meaning have since been and still remain a subject of question, discussion, and some differences of opinion among Latter-day Saint scholars and others. The four instances and two others now read:

> strait and narrow path [*or* course] (1 Nephi 8:20; 2 Nephi 31:18, 19; Helaman 3:29)

> the straitness of the path . . . narrowness of the gate (2 Nephi 31:9)

> the narrow gate and . . . the strait path (2 Nephi 33:9)

The changes in 2 Nephi 31:9 and 33:9 (introduced into the 1981 edition) are reminiscent of Matthew 7:14 (although the adjectives in the former passages are reversed, with *strait* defining *path* and *narrow* defining *gate*) and seem to be good poetic parallelisms, and thus different from the four other cases in which two synonymous adjectives, *strait* and *narrow*, redundantly define only one subject, a path or course.

As noted above, the four 1981 changes in 1 Nephi 8:20, 2 Nephi 31:18–19, and Helaman 3:29 have resulted in questions, discussions, and different opinions. For example, in 1992, in a brief article in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel McKinlay suggested that the words *strait* and *straight* can be

In this painting, the artist shows the rod of iron running to the tree in a straight line, with the path next to it necessarily being in a straight line as well. *Lehi's Dream,* Jerry Thompson. © IRI.

interpreted in several permissible ways, even within a single appearance.[10] His observation left open the possibility that *strait* in the Book of Mormon may, in a given instance, mean either "straight" or "narrow." It seems a fair inference to me, however, that in leaving many of the spellings of *straight* in place while changing six of them to *strait*, the editors of the 1981 edition must have intended these two words to be understood as always mutually exclusive. Otherwise, the Book of Mormon would contain three sets of words, a set spelled *strait*, which clearly means only "narrow" or "confined"; a set spelled *straight*, clearly meaning only "not crooked" or "direct"; and a set spelled *strait*, which could mean either "straight" or "strait," depending on the reader's preference. It seems doubtful to me that there was any intent to create such ambiguities.

This *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article also suggested that the phrase "strait and narrow," when read to mean "narrow and narrow," might reflect a Hebrew literary parallelism in the original Nephite text. I address this possibility later in my discussion.

In 2001 a study by Noel B. Reynolds and Royal Skousen that appeared in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* expressed the modest opinion that, in the four passages listed above, the word *strait* is a "problematic" spelling.[11] In passing, it also gave the view that, when read as a redundancy, "strait and narrow," as compound modifiers of a single noun, cannot be read as a poetic parallel. I agree with this last assessment.

Another article published in this journal, in 2003 by Paul Y. Hoskisson, focused on the aforementioned four verses,[12] spelled in the 1981 Book of Mormon as "strait and narrow path [*or* course]." In reading that phrase to mean a "narrow and narro

path [*or* course]," the author of that study disagreed with the 2001 article, offering reasons not only to justify but also to favor this parallel but less informative redundancy. This conclusion was reached not by asking which reading is supported by the context or which is more enlightening or more descriptive of the metaphoric path or course leading to the tree of life (or to eternal life or to the kingdom of heaven, as the four contexts variously indicate), but by a comparison of two ancient Hebrew roots. I do not find this theory to be persuasive for reasons I will elaborate on below.

In 2004, in *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, Royal Skousen recommended, as a procedure of conjectural emendation, that the spelling of *strait* as it appears in the four verses under consideration be returned to its pre-1981 spelling, *straight*.[13]

Quite clearly, a consensus on *straight* versus *strait* is lacking. My attempts to help reach it follow.

First, I suggest that when a word like *strait* is used in a modern printing of an 1829 text, it should be understood to have the same meaning that it had in 1829, if that meaning can be ascertained. This brings us to the question of whether "strait and narrow" with the proposed meaning "narrow and narrow" might actually reflect a Hebrew literary parallelism in the original Nephite text.

I submit that it does not. This rendering would not appear to be a good example of parallelism even if it read, "The way for man is narrow and the way of man is strait," because it does not seem to conform to the poetic format—it adds no emphasis or color. Consider for comparison the scriptural verse "shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint" (Doctrine and Covenants 89:20). *Run* and *walk* are related but not synonymous. So are *be weary* and *faint*. But paired together, the two ideas create a more vivid image than either phrase does alone. In this connection, I see a striking difference between, on the one hand, a phrase in which the word *gate* appears with *path*, with each noun modified with one similar adjective, thus allowing a poetic comparison (as in 2 Nephi 33:9 and Jacob 6:11, "strait gate and narrow path") and, on the other hand, a phrase (such as in the four verses under discussion) in which the word *gate* is not present alongside reference to a path (or course) described as both "strait and narrow."

More pointedly, I cannot imagine any good reason why a poet would have used two synonymous adjectives to describe a path if the intent was to portray only the width dimension. I know of no scriptural passage other than the four verses being considered where the speaker or writer saw fit to describe either a gate or a path as both strait and narrow. And these four can hardly be used to establish their own claimed validity.

Wherever in the Book of Mormon there is an adjective other than the word *narrow* defining a path or course (except for the four verses under discussion), it seems always to be *straight*, never *crooked*. Nephi prayed for his path to be "straight" (2 Nephi 4:33). Jacob spoke of the way of man as being a "straight course" (2 Nephi 9:41). Alma the Younger spoke to his son Helaman of a "straight course to eternal bliss" (Alma 37:44), and he taught the people of Gideon that Christ "cannot walk in crooked paths" (Alma 7:20). Hence *straight* is an important Book of Mormon concept in connection with the terms *way*, *path*, and *course*. It is also biblical. In Luke 9:62 one finds the analogy of the farmer's ideal of plowing in a straight line, which one can do only by fixing his eye on the goal ahead. Going further back, we note that the children of Israel were commanded, as mentioned earlier, to walk a straight path (see Deuteronomy 5:32–33).

Any competent stenographer or scribe who hears a homophone with two or more meanings will write the word that the context of the dictation indicates. The speaker (again, presumably competent in spelling) will change the spelling on review if the wrong homophone was used.

Joseph Smith dictated his translations to Oliver Cowdery by spoken English words. It is reasonable to assume that Oliver knew both meanings for the spoken sound "strate" (i.e., "straight" and "narrow") and, under the lax spelling rules mentioned above, always spelled the word *strait* in the manuscript for both meanings, possibly because the word was two letters shorter than *straight*. It is reasonable to assume that the printer also knew both such meanings but thought the word in either case should be spelled *straight*, and so he corrected all the words accordingly.[14] It does not seem reasonable to assume that in such spelling choices Oliver meant for the reader to think that in every usage the correct meaning of *strait* was "narrow" or that the printer meant for the reader to think that in every usage

the correct meaning of *straight* was "in a straight line" or "direct." Perhaps they were not sure which meaning was intended by Nephi or Mormon and chose to leave that to the reader (or to later authoritative interpretation). We don't know. But in later editions of the Book of Mormon published when stricter rules of spelling were observed, editing that occurred up to 1920 to change *straight* to *strait* in proper cases was appropriate.[15]

What seems to have happened in the case of a homophone (except wherever the change was inspired) is that the editor selected the spelling that seemed to better present the meaning indicated by the context. In the 1920 edition the word *straight* in the four verses (as well as all other usages) was allowed to remain in place. As noted, in the 1981 edition the word *straight* in those four verses was changed to *strait*.

Let us now consider the possible factors that may influence one's choice of meanings. For one thing, a presumption should stand against a reading that creates a mere redundancy. Unless some strong reason for a redundancy existed, it seems unlikely that Nephi or Mormon would have used up a rare commodity like gold plate and taken the extra time to painstakingly inscribe the redundant word in four different places.[16]

Moreover, in selecting a meaning, one should consider all of the possible alternatives. *Straight* can mean more than "in a straight line." It can mean "direct." In fact, that is a good meaning as applied to define *course* or *path*. Nephi's poetic prayer for redemption in 2 Nephi 4:33 includes the plea "Wilt thou make my path straight." This is one of a number of scriptural images of the path (course) to salvation (eternal bliss, promised land, the way to the keeper of the gate) being a straight (direct) route (see also 2 Nephi 9:41; Alma 37:44). When a mother says, "After school, you come straight home," it means by either the shortest, quickest, safest, or easiest route, as the child has been given to understand. In the case of directions given by the Liahona (see Alma 37:44), a straight or direct course probably connoted "expeditious" or "best." Thus we should be open to more possibilities than one might ordinarily think of.

When a substantive change to a scriptural text is being considered, some weight should be afforded to the traditional understanding of the text. Leaders, writers, and composers of the restored Church have found the phrase "straight and narrow way [*or* path *or* course]" to be a useful tool, using it on at least 625 published occasions, with a significant number of these having occurred after 1981.[17]

For example, President J. Reuben Clark in *Behold the Lamb of God* (1962) and Elder Neal A. Maxwell in *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (1979) use this expression repeatedly. Nor is this phrase a recent construction. Eliza R. Snow used the term in her 1884 biography of Lorenzo Snow,[18] and in 1954 Elder Joseph Fielding Smith wrote in his *Doctrines of Salvation*, "While no doubt, that path which leads into the presence of God is straight, it is also strait, which means that those who enter into it will find it restricted; it is narrow."[19]

Turning now to the main issue, I submit that in searching for meaning in the four occurrences of *straight* versus *strait* in question, the correct questions to ask are, Which is more enlightening? Which presents the richer or more descriptive image? What image naturally comes to mind in these passages? Which meaning will help me more to order my life in my quest for eternal life?

To me, the metaphor that projects an image of a path or course that has not only width but also direction, especially a path or route that is straight (or most direct, shortest, or quickest), is more helpful than one that tells us twice what the width of the path is but is silent as to whether the path is straight or full of twists and turns.

Turning to the four passages under discussion, we note that 1 Nephi 8:19–20 describes a path that "came along by the rod of iron," which "extended along the bank of the river," even "to the tree." The precious image is of people holding to the rod of iron as they press forward to the tree. The rod of iron is not expressly described as straight, but it had to be straight. The rod of iron is, after all, a metaphor for the word of God, which is never visualized as twisted or bent or meandering. It is very hard to mentally picture the rod of iron weaving to the right or left in leading to the tree of life. A crooked rod would suggest a great waste of metaphoric iron and make the route to the tree longer for the eager seekers. Obviously, if the rod of iron was straight and if one could both hold to the rod and walk in the path, then the path also had to be straight—not bent, not crooked, and not even merely direct. And a very narrow path would suffice for one holding to the rod. So it would have been sufficient to merely

refer to the path without adjectives; but if adjectives were to be used, it would seem that they would need to define the path completely (i.e., straight and narrow) or not at all. Likewise, the gist of 2 Nephi 31:18–19 is to give advice on how to enter the celestial kingdom. This context certainly suggests moving onward and upward in a straight or unwavering path as well as in a narrow or restricted one.

Helaman 3:29 deals with getting across that "everlasting," "terrible," and "awful" metaphoric gulf, which clearly implies that the surest way to go is to stick to the shortest and most expeditious (i.e., straight) route (see 1 Nephi 12:18; 15:28). This verse refers not to a path or way, but to a "course." If the word *gulf* calls up a mental picture of a body of water, then there is no path or way to travel on. It is a course or route, and by definition the course is narrow—no wider than the body of the man of Christ's or his boat, as he wades, swims, or rows. It adds nothing to say once, let alone twice, that the course is narrow (i.e., strait and narrow). Properly instructed, he will get across the gulf as quickly as possible by spending no time meandering about. So it is important to say the course across the gulf is straight. Alternatively, if some Latter-day Saints see the gulf as a metaphor for mortal life in the lone and dreary world, then, again, the desire of the righteous is to go straight home to Father—not wandering, not falling away into "forbidden paths," and not getting lost.

To me, the contexts of these four occurrences all make it quite clear that the correct meaning is "straight and narrow," not "strait and narrow." That correct meaning gives us two complementary dimensions to the path or course. It fits within the textual context. Beyond that, I submit that it is plausible and edifying, whereas the phrase that means "narrow and narrow" is a mere redundancy, incomplete, and, within these metaphors, not sufficiently informative. In my view these points are persuasive criteria for deciding such an issue when there are no other criteria of comparable force.

Crucial to this discussion is the scripture in 2 Nephi 9:41 that reads:

Come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him.

The spelling of *straight* here has remained unchanged since the Book of Mormon's first publication in 1830. Such consistency should not be an amazing or disturbing fact. This reading is perfectly clear. It expresses a complete thought. But if *straight* were to be replaced with *strait*, the reading would no longer be clear, beautiful, or complete. On the contrary, it would be, I think, unclear, ungraceful, and incomplete, unless the reader is mentally able to substitute *straight* for *strait*.

In contrast, Hoskisson's 2003 article cited earlier, in which the current reading of these four verses is defended, asserts that 2 Nephi 9:41 is an anomaly and that the word *but* in this passage can be read to mean "moreover" or "in addition."[20] That article contends that this verse is anomalous because it stands alone in its pairing of the word *straight* with *narrow*. It stands alone, however, only if it is assumed that the word *strait* was correctly substituted in 1981 for *straight* in the other four verses under examination, which, of course, is begging the unresolved question.

In every printed edition of the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:41 has read, in part, "The way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a *straight* course before him." The phrasing is clear as it stands. Substituting the word *strait* for *straight* would seem to be wrong unless the word *but* is also actually wrong. But this *but* does not seem to be actually wrong. In what seems to be a last resort for justifying the replacement of *straight* with *strait* in these four verses, Hoskisson goes on to say that the word *but* in this supposedly anomalous verse really means "moreover," "in

This artist's conception of Lehi's dream shows the rod of iron and the path to the tree of life as straight lines. By Jerry Thompson. © IRI.

addition," or "and."[21] This shift is necessary in order to validate the change from *straight* to *strait*. But a simple experiment with these proposed substitutions shows that the proposal does not work. Which makes more sense: "the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him" (as 2 Nephi 9:41 now reads) or any of the following proposed emendations?

> the way for man is narrow, *and* it lieth in a strait course before him
>
> the way for man is narrow; *moreover*, it lieth in a strait course before him
>
> the way for man is narrow. *In addition*, it lieth in a strait course before him.

Once again, after any such recommended semantic substitutions, we would be left with a verse with two synonymous modifiers that tell us twice that the course is narrow but that its length is undefined, instead of two contrastive modifiers that tell us that the course is not only narrow but straight or direct. I believe that 2 Nephi 9:41 needs no emendation and should be left as it has stood since 1830. I also believe that if this reading is allowed to stand, the disharmony between this strong provision and the four instances of *strait* in 1 Nephi 8:20, 2 Nephi 31:18–19, and Helaman 3:29 will also need to be corrected by emending them back to how they stood from 1830 to 1981—that is, by restoring *straight*.

The Hoskisson article also needs to call 2 Nephi 9:41 an anomaly because it conflicts with the article's theory of the two ancient paired Hebrew roots. But I submit that the two-root theory can as easily be called anomalous because it conflicts with 2 Nephi 9:41. I think (and attempt to show below) that this is the stronger position, namely, that 2 Nephi 9:41 reflects consistent usage in the Book of Mormon text and is correct as written.

If I understand this theory, the Hebrew root for "narrow" is sometimes paired with the Hebrew root for "strait," and therefore this pairing might have been present in the Hebrew version of this verse. Possibly. But these Hebrew words are not always paired. In Job 36:16 the word *strait* (the Hebrew root for which, according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, is *tswr*, one of the cited roots) stands unpaired in an antithetical parallelism with *broad*.

This theory seems to be based on the following assumptions: For the two Hebrew roots, there were two different reformed Egyptian characters in the gold plates that seemed to Nephi and Mormon to form a redundancy sufficiently important in defining only the width of the metaphoric way or course to overcome the need for economy in inscribing on plates of gold. But they saw no need to say whether that narrow and narrow (*sic*) route lies in a straight line or meanders about. The entire theory of the paired ancient Hebrew roots rests on these assumptions, and they are merely assumptions.

In short, I do not find this two-root scenario persuasive. Nor do I think a compelling case can be made for replacing *straight* in 2 Nephi 9:41 with *strait* or for retaining that spelling in the 1981 versions of 1 Nephi 8:20, 2 Nephi 31:18–19 (twice), and Helaman 3:29. Even if that theory gives a proponent for change a 50 percent chance of being right, it would certainly not be enough to warrant emendation of the Book of Mormon text, since conjectural emendation adheres to a higher standard. In *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One*, we read, "The crucial restriction on conjectural emendation is that there must be something actually wrong with the earliest extant reading."[22]

After saying all of the above, I suspect that no more than a few people will see a pressing reason to have these issues resolved in an official way. Changes in the Book of Mormon text always seem to be used by enemies of the Church in their ongoing claims against its authenticity. And these four 1981 changes in the wording can hardly be said to have seriously confused the members in their scriptural imageries. Just ask a member to draw a sketch of the path alongside the rod of iron or the course across the everlasting gulf of misery and you will most likely get a straight path or course. As the accompanying illustrations for this article show, artists see it that way too. A straight line is still the shortest distance between two points. A direct route is better than one that meanders, no matter how strait it may be.
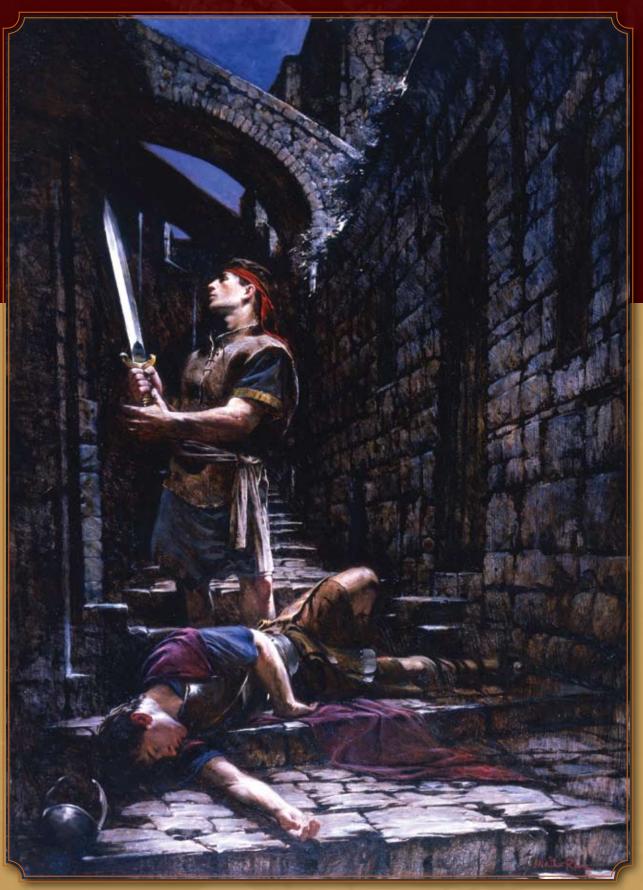
I conclude that readers of the Book of Mormon should continue to understand these "strait and narrow" phrases to mean "straight and narrow," just as they appeared for 150 years in all pre-1981 editions of the Book of Mormon, and should continue to picture that straightness in their minds as they ponder the images brought up by the applicable scriptures. ▨

KILLING LABAN

The Birth of Sovereignty in the Nephite Constitutional Order

Val Larsen

THE INTRACTABLE PROBLEM OF LABAN'S DEATH

WHEN THE BOOK OF MORMON is evaluated in terms of its narrative—as opposed to its relationship to other texts and historical or archaeological facts—Nephi's slaying of Laban may be the most problematic passage in the entire book. Occurring as it does so early in the text, it has for a long time been a stumbling block for both novice and experienced readers of the Book of Mormon.

To date, the most impressive effort to deal with this problem is John W. Welch's "Legal Perspectives on the Slaying of Laban."[1] With a very strong assist from his client who has taken care to say all the right things, Welch (a lawyer) marshals enough facts and enough law to acquit Nephi of murder on a series of technicalities. The attorney makes the case that, under the law of Moses, his client would be entitled to flee to a city of refuge or to go into exile since he is guilty not of murder but of justifiable homicide.

However, while it may be adequate legally, this defense is not morally or emotionally satisfying. As Welch concedes, "In the end, Laban was killed for one and only one reason, namely because the Spirit of the Lord commanded it and constrained Nephi to slay him."[2] Given this technical legal defense

nent threat and must act in self-defense. As Hobbes pointed out in *Leviathan*, the existence of the sovereign protects us from the war of all against all, of strike and counterstrike, violence and counterviolence, in which human life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."[3] In most conflicts, a sovereign may intervene as a third party whose only interest is to uphold law and custom. When retribution is necessary, it can be public rather than personal and thus present no obvious target for counterretribution. So however valid Welch's defense of Nephi may be at the microlevel of legal technicalities, at the macrolevel it would destroy the social order we all depend on if it were generalized to other similar homicides. It is a trial of faith to be asked to affirm as justified—because a prophet commits it—an act which is destructive of good social order.

A CLOSE READING OF THE TEXT MAKES IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THE KILLING OF LABAN WAS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ACT, BUT RATHER A SOVEREIGN ACT THAT HAD A CLEAR POLITICAL PURPOSE.

and ultimate rationale of divine intervention, we are bound to remain uneasy because few, if any of us, would want to live in a society where individual citizens are free to kill drunken fellow citizens— however guilty the drunk may be—because the citizen feels he has been constrained by God to do so. In the eternal scheme of things, it would make all the difference whether—as in this case—God had in fact instructed the perpetrator to commit the homicide. Nothing that God commands us to do can ultimately be wrong. But since, as a practical matter, we can never know for certain whether God has actually commanded someone else to commit murder, we must hold to the rule that individual citizens are never justified in killing passed-out drunks they stumble upon in the course of a nighttime ramble through a city. If Laban is guilty of capital crimes—as Welch convincingly argues—he should be executed by the state, not by an ordinary citizen who meets him in a chance encounter. So the stumbling block remains.

There are many good reasons why, in any well-regulated society, the sovereign holds a monopoly on the use of violence to redress crime, except in situations where the potential victim faces an immi-

Clearly, the requirement to kill Laban was also a trial of faith for Nephi since he shrunk from doing what God was commanding him to do, presumably in part, because he intuited the anarchic consequences of freelance justice (1 Nephi 4:10). Given Nephi's strong preference to abide by laws of God that would prohibit him from killing Laban, this episode might be framed in Kierkegaard's terms as an Abrahamic test in which Nephi must choose between his love of God's law and his love of God himself, as Abraham was forced to do when commanded to sacrifice Isaac.[4] But this explanation is also unsatisfying. The test of Abraham made a profound theological point: more than any other episode in scripture, it makes clear the cost God paid when he sacrificed his son in order to balance justice with mercy. And in the end, Isaac—and more profoundly, Abraham—was spared. Asking Nephi to kill Laban—violating his conscience, judgment, and God's law—does not have an equally clear theological purpose, and Nephi is not spared the trauma of actually carrying out the killing.

But while any explanation of this episode will be unsatisfactory if Nephi is held to be acting as an individual, a close reading of the text makes it

abundantly clear that the killing of Laban was not an individual act, but rather a sovereign act that had a clear political purpose. That Nephi acts as a sovereign is an overdetermined fact in the text. It is demonstrated by multiple layers of implication.

SETTING THE STAGE

The first symbolically sovereign act that marks Lehi's family as a separate people, no longer a part of the society or subject to the authorities in Jerusalem, is Lehi's offering of a sacrifice when the family first arrives at the river Laman in the Valley of Lemuel. In offering this sacrifice, Lehi violates the mandate that sacrifices be offered only at the temple in Jerusalem and only by the Levites.[5] He demonstrates symbolically that he has established a separate, self-governing branch of Israel that will live far from Jerusalem and that must carry out its own sacrifices if it is to continue to follow the rituals mandated in the law of Moses. This symbolic founding of a new, self-governing branch of Israel is confirmed when Sariah receives her own testimony—upon her sons'

functions of prophet and king by the time he was formally anointed (2 Nephi 5:18). As the discussion below will indicate, he became prophet leader and king when he killed Laban, acquired the sword of Laban and the brass plates, and emblematically led Zoram, proxy of the people, out of slavery and, subsequently, on through Arabia to freedom in the promised land.[7]

This account of Laban's death and the acquisition of the sword of Laban and the brass plates—like other parts of the small plates—is unabridged. The Nephites had exactly the same text that we have. We should recognize, therefore, that the primary audience Nephi would have had in mind when writing this account was his own people. However important we may have been, it is clear that his own descendants were more important to him.[8] Thus, we will better understand his intentions if we read this account with an awareness of the background knowledge that would have been taken for granted by the original, primary audience.

Among the most important background information would be the facts that, when the small

> NEPHI HAD LONG SERVED AS A BELOVED PROPHET AND KING WHO EXERCISED SOVEREIGN POWER AND—AS MANY COMMENTATORS HAVE NOTED—THE PRINCIPAL SYMBOLS OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY WERE THE SWORD OF LABAN AND THE BRASS PLATES.

return from Jerusalem with the brass plates—and joins Lehi at the altar to offer a sacrifice as patriarch and matriarch of Israel's new branch.[6] Thus Nephi meets Laban not as a fellow citizen of Jerusalem but as a Lehite, a member of a distinct people with its own interests and security requirements.

But important as Lehi and Sariah's symbolic acts of founding would have been to their descendants, they cannot be the source of the sovereign power those descendants came to rely upon once they had arrived in the promised land because the family split so quickly into two distinct groups. Insofar as sovereignty and group membership is concerned, the critical moment for the Nephites must be the moment when Nephi became the rightful king. That moment was not his formal coronation, since he had long since carried out all the

plates were written, Nephi had long served as a beloved prophet and king who exercised sovereign power (2 Nephi 5:28–31) and that—as many commentators have noted—the principal symbols of his sovereignty were the sword of Laban and the brass plates.[9] Thus, it would have been obvious to the original audience that Nephi's status or lack of status as a sovereign would be in play in the moment when he acquired the national symbols of sovereignty. This would be all the more true because, as Reynolds has amply demonstrated,[10] virtually all of Nephi's writings in the Book of Mormon are profoundly political, deeply redolent of regime legitimization. Being their first king, Nephi was rightly concerned to secure for his people the blessing of continued good government. In composing his memoir, he selected and recounted events that
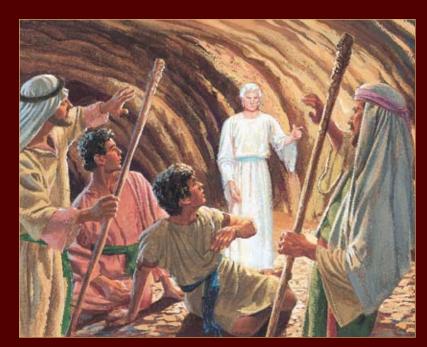
would legitimate the regime he was establishing to govern and protect his people.

Helpful as it is to read Nephi's account as his subjects and descendents would have read it, doing so is not necessary in order to see that, in killing Laban, Nephi acted not as an individual but as a sovereign. It is not necessary because the sovereignty of Nephi's act is overdetermined. Multiple indicators mark Nephi as being sovereign at the moment when he kills Laban.

The first indicator is the Lord's declaration to Nephi at the end of 1 Nephi chapter 2 that "inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a *ruler* and a teacher over thy brethren" (1 Nephi 2:22). Immediately following this declaration that Nephi will rule if he keeps God's commandments, chapter 3 opens with Lehi's request that Nephi return with his brothers to Jerusalem to get the brass plates. Having made his well-known declaration that he "will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7)—and, incidentally, thus qualified himself to rule as sovereign—Nephi returns willingly; Laman and Lemuel accompany him begrudgingly. When they get to Jerusalem, they cast lots to determine who should go to the house of Laban, and Laman is selected, presumably by the Lord as in Acts 1:24–26. Like Lehi, who first commissioned Laman to lead the mission to recover the plates (1 Nephi 3:5), the Lord apparently respects Laman's leadership birthright. But Laman fails. Laban falsely accuses Laman of being a robber and threatens to kill him, so Laman flees without getting the plates.

The older brothers are prepared to admit defeat and return to their father, but Nephi informs them with the strongest of oaths[11] that he will not return without the plates. He suggests that they collect all the wealth their father had abandoned and offer it in exchange for the plates. Though well conceived, this plan fails when Laban orders his servants to kill the visitors, who flee and barely escape with their lives. As Welch notes, in seeking to have the broth-

After the second failure to obtain the brass plates, Laman and Lemuel beat Nephi and Sam until they were stopped by an angel, who affirmed Nephi's role as a ruler over his brothers. By Jerry Thompson. © IRI.

ers killed by bearing false witness against them, Laban commits a capital crime (Deuteronomy 19:18–19).[12] And in pronouncing a death sentence on Lehi's sons, Laban also abuses the sovereign power given him by Zedekiah, much as Haman did later on a larger scale in the book of Esther. Like Haman, Laban may deserve death for this abuse.

This second failure to acquire the plates touches Laman and Lemuel where it hurts—with the final loss of the wealth they so prize. Angered, they take up a rod, a symbol of power (2 Nephi 3:17),[13] and begin to beat Nephi and Sam. It appears for a moment that the earlier promise of the Lord is false, that Laman and Lemuel rule. But in fact, they have forfeited their birthright between the opening and the close of chapter 3. The forfeiture is declared by an angel who now appears and reiterates: "Know ye not that *the Lord hath chosen [Nephi] to be a ruler over you*, and this because of your iniquities?" (1 Nephi 3:29). Nephi's nighttime adventure and the slaying of Laban immediately follow this second divine declaration that he has been chosen as a ruler, as one who has the power and responsibilities of a sovereign.

THE FIRST LAYER OF IMPLICATION: SUBSTITUTIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

In chapter 4, Nephi enters the city and stumbles upon the drunken Laban. He draws Laban's sword. The narrative then pauses to comment on the properties of the sword: "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 exceedingly fine, and I saw that the blade thereof was of the most precious steel" (1 Nephi 4:9). This pause marks Laban's sword, at its first appearance, in a way that is justified only by the political significance the sword subsequently has in the course of Nephite history. Taking this sword in hand is a symbolic act that resonates beyond its specific role in the death of Laban.

Nephi continues, "And after I had smitten off his head with his own sword, I took the garments of Laban and put them upon mine own body; yea, even every whit; and I did gird on his armor about my loins" (1 Nephi 4:19). By putting on Laban's clothing and armor, Nephi both symbolically and literally assumes the sovereign authority of Laban.[14] And the symbolic/literal transformation extends beyond clothing, as the following extended excerpt illustrates:

> And . . . I went forth unto the treasury of Laban. . . . And *I commanded* [the servant of Laban] *in the voice of Laban,* that he should go with me into the treasury. And *he supposed me to be his master, Laban,* for he beheld the garments and also the sword girded about my loins. And *he spake unto me concerning the elders of the Jews,* he knowing that *his master, Laban,* had been out by night among them. And *I spake unto him as if it had been Laban.* . . . And I also bade him that he should follow me. And *he, supposing . . . that I was truly that Laban* whom I had slain, wherefore *he did follow me.* And *he spake unto me many times concerning the elders of the Jews.* (1 Nephi 4:20–27)

In this passage, Nephi literally takes up the authority of the king's agent, Laban. He commands, and his command is obeyed by Zoram, Laban's servant, who now follows him. Nephi emphasizes that Zoram recognizes him as one of the elders of the Jews, as one of the governors of the state, by highlighting the fact that Zoram repeatedly spoke

to him about the local political leadership and, presumably, about affairs of state.[15] For Zoram, at least, Nephi is now fully invested with the powers of Laban, and as we shall see in the discussion of other layers of implication, Zoram's responses carry great symbolic weight.

In the subsequent verse, Laman and Lemuel see the approach of the exceedingly young boy of large stature (1 Nephi 2:16) whom they had been beating with a rod only hours before. Only now he is "a man large in stature" (1 Nephi 4:31) who terrifies them, and they flee from him.[16] In their flight, Laman and Lemuel symbolically acknowledge that Nephi is more powerful than they and, thus, begin to fulfill the promise of the angel that he will rule over them.[17] In this account of young Nephi issuing commands and scattering his enemies before him, his people would recognize the emergence of their king. Though like Laban, he is not yet fully sovereign (being subordinate to Lehi as Laban was subordinate to Zedekiah), he has become emblematically sovereign, a crown prince whose actions are not those of an ordinary private citizen but rather the governing and protecting acts of a king.

Critics of the Book of Mormon have often focused on the fact that Nephi does not mention that Laban's death was bloody and Laban's clothing bloody when Nephi put it on. Zoram's failure to notice blood on Nephi's clothing in the dark night of the ancient Middle East poses no credibility problem,[18] but it is likely that Nephi would have remembered and mentioned a detail so salient were this an ordinary factual narration. But clearly, this story is not merely factual. Because the narrative is emblematic of Nephi's emergence as king, each detail is suffused with meaning and had to be selected with attention to its symbolic implications. Since Nephi was not a violent, bloody king, describing him in the narrative as being covered in blood would have made the story untrue when the intended symbolic hermeneutic was applied.

THE SECOND LAYER OF IMPLICATION: THE ASSUMPTION OF MOSAIC AUTHORITY

Moses was probably the greatest exemplar of prophetic and sovereign power in Hebrew history. It is significant, therefore, that Nephi links himself to Moses in this episode, both through explicit comparison and through multiple narrative

parallels between the life of Moses and this episode in Nephi's life. When Laman and Lemuel stop beating Nephi, he does not immediately depart for the city. They first begin to *murmur*,[19] saying, "How is it possible that the Lord will deliver Laban into our hands? Behold, he is a mighty man, and he can command fifty, yea, even he can slay fifty; then why not us?" (1 Nephi 3:31). Nephi, in turn, urges his brothers to

> be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?
>
> Therefore let us go up; *let us be strong like unto Moses*; for *he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither*, and our fathers came through, out of captivity, on dry ground, and the armies of Pharaoh did follow and were drowned in the waters of the Red Sea.
>
> Now behold ye know that this is true . . . ; wherefore can ye doubt? Let us go up; the Lord is able to *deliver us, even as our fathers*, and to *destroy Laban, even as the Egyptians*. (1 Nephi 4:1–3)

By recounting how he used this episode recorded in the brass plates to inspire his brothers and himself to be faithful to God's command that they get the plates, Nephi gives us an artful reminder of why it is so important for Lehi's family to have the plates they are about to acquire.

Nephi also gives us a hermeneutical key we can use to unlock his scriptural treasury and carry forth the intended meaning of the nighttime encounter with Laban. For in these verses—immediately preceding his departure on the quest for the plates—Nephi explicitly equates himself with Moses, and Laban with the Egyptians. The narrative then echoes quite explicitly several major strands in the life of Moses.

One thing that is echoed is the way in which Moses began his career as the great prophet defender and sovereign leader of Israel. Moses began by killing an Egyptian overseer of the enslaved Hebrews, then fleeing out of Egypt and taking a wife at the camp of Jethro in Midian (Exodus 2:11–21), the land located on the Arabian side of the Red Sea, where Lehi awaits the return of his sons and where Nephi will shortly be married. In a nearly literal sense, Nephi likewise kills an Egyptian and flees from Egypt, for he has just equated Laban, rhetorically, with the Egyptians, and Jerusalem is about to be destroyed by the Babylonians precisely because it has become culturally and politically Egyptian.[20] Like Moses, Nephi, after fleeing his Egypt, takes a wife at the camp of his father in Midian, probably very close to the place where Moses was married.
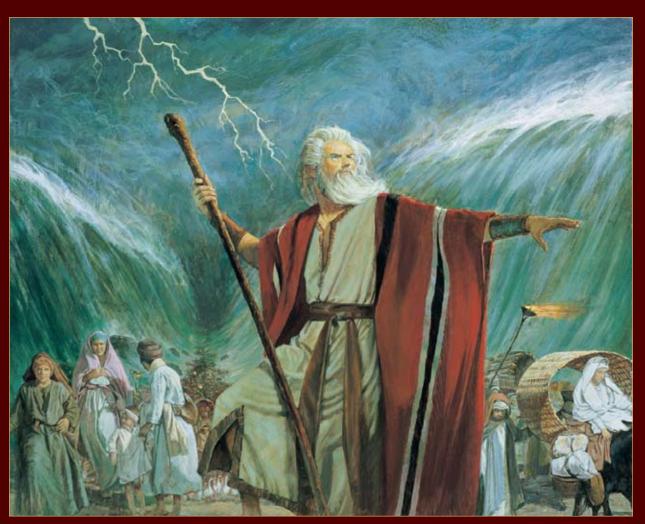
A more fully developed parallel exists with Moses's most noteworthy achievement, leading enslaved Israel in its exodus from Egypt. Moses's repeated visits to Pharaoh and his oft-iterated requests that Pharaoh let his people go are replicated in the petitions of Nephi and his brothers to Laban to let the brass plates go, plates in which are engraved the history of the children of Israel. Nephi and his father are determined to take the children of Israel with them, and when Nephi walks out of Laban's treasury with the brass plates, he is carrying inscribed Israel out of the new Egypt, into the Arabian desert, and, ultimately, on to the promised land.

Nephi leads Israel out of the Egypt that Jerusalem has become not only in the inscribed form of engravings in the brass plates but also in the form of flesh and blood. One of the puzzles in the Book of Mormon is how Laban came to record the words of Jeremiah in the brass plates (1 Nephi 5:13). Although Zedekiah's temporary protection of Jeremiah may have created space for the prophet's words to be recorded, Laban does not seem to be a person who would have recognized the worth of Jeremiah's words and who would have recorded them. Commentators have, therefore, plausibly suggested that Jeremiah's words were recorded by Zoram, Laban's slave,[21] who is clearly charged with keeping the plates and who appears to have been a pious man.[22] As Nephi leaves Jerusalem, he leads the enslaved Hebrew, Zoram, into freedom, into a new life in Arabia and, finally, on to the promised land. In this tableau, Zoram is the symbolic embodiment of a new branch of Israel. When he accepts Nephi, initially symbolically but ultimately literally, as his master and deliverer and governing ruler, he is a proxy for the entire people who ultimately call themselves Nephites.

In making this comparison between Moses and himself, Nephi uses bathos to powerful effect.

When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, he had already established himself as the sovereign ruler of the people in ways that parallel the story of Nephi and his brothers. *Moses Parting the Red Sea,* by Robert Barrett. © 1983 IRI.

Bathos is a rhetorical figure in which one suddenly descends from the sublime to the commonplace, often with comic effect, for example, if one were to say, "I solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Rules of Scrabble against all enemies, foreign and domestic." Nephi uses bathos to comment on the naiveté of his younger self and to teach a profound lesson on governance to his successors. As noted above, just before he enters the city, young Nephi reminds his brothers of what is probably the most sublime moment in Hebrew history: the moment when Moses raised his staff and spoke to the waters of the Red Sea which then divided to save Israel

and destroy the Egyptians. Nephi then says, with great faith, "the Lord is able to deliver us, even as our fathers, and to destroy Laban, even as the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 4:3).

Nephi's faith that the Lord would deliver them was well founded, but the way the Lord did it was not grand but gritty. While Moses was commanded to raise his staff and part the waters of the Red Sea, Nephi is constrained to raise his sword and part Laban's head from his body. While the Egyptian army of Pharaoh died grandly in the waters of the Red Sea, Nephi's Egyptian, Laban, dies grotesquely in the red sea of his own blood.

The irony of this bathetic contrast between what he anticipated and what he experienced does not escape Nephi's notice. When entering the city, Nephi naively thought Moses had but to speak and the people were saved. He saw only the majesty of Moses. Leaving the city, he knows better. He knows, or has begun to know, what old Nephi will fully understand, that the more relevant texts in Exodus are the accounts of Moses sorrowfully ordering the slaughter of 3,000 people who were worshiping the golden calf (Exodus 32:26–28) and judging the people from dawn 'til dusk until, worn out, he must be counseled by Jethro to share some of the burden with others (Exodus 18:13–26). In highlighting the grotesqueness of his exodus miracle by contrasting it with that of Moses, Nephi drives home to his successors what it means to bear the sword of Laban and the brass plates. Being a good king, a servant leader, is a burden one must bear in duty and love and weariness. Those who love and suffer and serve will become a Benjamin, as beloved and honored by his people as Nephi; those who egotistically seek to indulge themselves in an unearned glory will become a Noah and perhaps die a deservedly ignominious death like Laban.

Like Nephi, the biblical David became the leader of the people through slaying a mighty man (Goliath) with his own sword. *David Slaying Goliath,* by Pietro da Cortona. Courtesy Scala/Art Resource, NY.

If the parting of the Red Sea is Moses's most majestic act, his descent from Sinai with the law in hand is the most important. When Nephi goes down from Jerusalem into the Arabian desert bearing the same law, the parallel with Moses is unmistakable. So in this episode, Nephi becomes not just the kingly sovereign defender of his people but their sovereign prophet lawgiver as well: their modern Moses.

THE THIRD LAYER OF IMPLICATION: THE ASSUMPTION OF DAVIDIC AUTHORITY

After Moses, the greatest exemplar of sovereign power in ancient Israel was David. In recount-

ing the death of Laban, Nephi links himself to this second great sovereign and further marks his emergence as the king in his new branch of Israel. In what follows, I will expand on Ben McGuire's analysis of parallels between David and Nephi in the Goliath and Laban stories.[23] In most cases, not only are events similar but the similar events occur in the same sequence in the two narratives.

Each story begins with a statement of the problem. In David's case, the mighty man Goliath has taken possession of the field of battle and defied the army of Israel to send forth a champion to take it from him. In Nephi's case, a mighty man, Laban, has in his possession the brass plates, and the Lord has commanded Lehi to obtain them from him (1 Samuel 17:4–11; 1 Nephi 3:2–4). The two young heroes are now introduced along with their three faithless older brothers. (This is a little unfair to Sam, but the narrative doesn't differentiate between him and the murmuring Laman and Lemuel at this point.) In each case, the father of the hero comes to him and bids him to go up to the scene of the confrontation. In each case, the older brothers are given a chance to solve the problem before the hero gets his turn (1 Samuel 17:12–20; 1 Nephi 3:4–10).

When the hero gets to the place where the mighty man is, he sees one or more older brothers go up against the mighty man and then flee from him (1 Samuel 17:20–24; 1 Nephi 3:11–14). The scattered host of Israel is terrified of the mighty man in each story and does not want to confront him again, but the hero urges them on, noting in each case that they serve "the living God" or "the Lord [that] liveth" (1 Samuel 17:25–27; 1 Nephi 3:14–16). The oldest brother of each hero now becomes angry at him and verbally (and in Nephi's case, physically) abuses him (1 Samuel 17:28; 1 Nephi 3:28).

In each case a powerful figure, Saul or an angel, separates the hero from his domineering older brothers and sends him forth to meet the mighty man. But before he goes, the hero must address skeptics who doubt that he can overcome his powerful antagonist. To convince the skeptics that Israel will triumph over the mighty man, both heroes mention two miracles in which malevolent forces were defeated by God's agent. They suggest the mighty man will suffer the same fate as the forces previously defeated by God. David tells how he miraculously killed a lion and then a bear while guarding his flocks. He adds, "this uncircumcised

Philistine shall be as [the lion or bear]" (1 Samuel 17:33–36). Nephi briefly recounts Moses' parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army. Next, he recalls the miraculous appearance of the angel who had moments before terminated Laman and Lemuel's abuse of their righteous brothers. He then adds, "the Lord is able to . . . destroy Laban, even as the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 4:2–3).

Each hero next goes up against the fully armored mighty man essentially or completely unarmed but in the strength of the Lord, saying, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" or "I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do" (1 Samuel 17:45; 1 Nephi 4:6). Each hero confronts the mighty man and cites Exodus 21:13 two times as justification for killing him: David says, "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand. . . . The battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." The Spirit causes Nephi to think, "Behold the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands. . . . Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands" (1 Samuel 17:46–47; 1 Nephi 4:1–12). Finally, the hero decapitates the mighty man—who has, miraculously, been rendered unconscious—using the villain's own sword (1 Samuel 17:51; 1 Nephi 4:18).

Other parallels exist, but not in the same sequence in the narrative. In each case, the mighty man has threatened the hero and attempted to kill him (1 Samuel 17:44, 48; 1 Nephi 3:13, 25–27). Each mighty man has a servant who accompanies or at least thinks he is accompanying his master (1 Samuel 17:41; 1 Nephi 4:20–23). In each case, the hero takes the armor of the mighty man as his own (1 Samuel 17:54; 1 Nephi 4:19). And finally, the sword of each villain is made of iron or an iron compound, is unique, and becomes a symbol of royal power that is used to lead the nation in battle (1 Samuel 21:9; 1 Nephi 4:9).[24]

Holbrook has noted that although David had previously been anointed king by Samuel, the slaying of Goliath was the tangible sign to the people that he should be king. It captured the popular imagination, and the women sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 18:6–7).[25] So though he did not formally assume the throne for some years, David became king in the people's hearts when he chopped off Goliath's head.

I am suggesting that the same was true of Nephi. Deeply acquainted as they would have been with the story of David and Goliath, Nephi's people surely saw the parallel between young David and young Nephi. (Nephi has carefully composed his narrative in such a way that they would see it because of multiple structural and sequential similarities, notwithstanding the very different contexts and mix of characters that clearly differentiate the two stories.) Having recognized the allusion, Nephi's people would have understood that, in constraining Nephi to slay Laban as he did, the Lord

(1 Nephi 4:10). The critical point is this: if he had been acting as a private citizen according to his own will, Nephi would not have killed Laban.[26]

So why does he kill him? Nephi first reflects on the fact that Laban is not "innocent blood" (Deuteronomy 19:10). He is guilty of crimes that make him worthy of death under the law. He has robbed and sought to commit murder by bearing false witness and abusing his grant of sovereign power. And he is in rebellion against God. In sum, Laban has committed capital crimes and deserves to be executed by a competent authority.[27] Layer upon

> NEPHI'S PEOPLE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT, IN CONSTRAINING NEPHI TO SLAY LABAN AS HE DID, THE LORD MARKED NEPHI AS A LEGITIMATE SUCCESSOR TO DAVID IN THEIR NEW BRANCH OF ISRAEL.

marked Nephi as a legitimate successor to David in their new branch of Israel. Once again, Nephi is cast as a sovereign who acts not out of personal malice but to defend his people. And his successors, like those of David, would be legitimate rulers of God's chosen people.

THE FOURTH LAYER OF IMPLICATION: PRIVATE AND PUBLIC MOTIVES

Critically important to the argument advanced in this paper is the fact that Nephi slays Laban not for personal reasons but for reasons of state. In his legal defense of Nephi, Welch conclusively demonstrates that Nephi was not acting "presumptuously" (Exodus 21:14) when he killed Laban. As Welch notes, Nephi consciously lays down all the markers that preclude a charge of premeditated murder—sometimes in direct or nearly direct quotations from the relevant passages in the Torah. Nephi states that he "was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do" (1 Nephi 4:6). As noted above, he is told by the Spirit that "the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands" (1 Nephi 4:11; Exodus 21:13). Clearly, Nephi is not acting out of hatred or revenge (Exodus 35:20–21). He reports that when constrained by the Spirit to kill Laban, "I said in my heart: Never at any time have I shed the blood of man. And I shrunk and would that I might not slay him"

layer of implication suggests that Nephi is in a position of sovereign authority, empowered to be an agent of justice under the law. But while Laban is worthy of death and Nephi has the sovereign power to execute criminals, there is a question of jurisdiction. Laban has committed his crimes in Jerusalem where other authorities, however corrupt, exist and have a clearer right than Nephi to be the agents of justice. Whether for this reason or not, while Nephi is framed by this initial rationale as the executor of justice that he will be for his people, he does not act upon these considerations and execute Laban for his crimes.

So the Spirit again urges Nephi to slay Laban and gives him what, upon reflection, he takes to be an adequate reason to kill the drunken man: "Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief" (1 Nephi 4:13). Sacrificing one person to save many others is the ultimate reason of state. Every society must invest in the sovereign the power to sacrifice the few to save the many, if occasion requires. This is the power that sends police to face dangerous criminals and some soldiers to certain or near certain death in order to protect the people. It is the power that executes the criminal few to protect the law-abiding many from their depredations. It was a recognized power of the sovereign in Israel,[28] a power that Caiaphas—the closest thing Israel had

to a Jewish sovereign in Christ's day—invoked when he said, "it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:50). When the sovereign decides that someone must be sacrificed to save his nation, there is no question of jurisdiction. The sovereign is acting on a question of ultimate concern to the nation as a whole. He is empowered and obligated to take the steps necessary to preserve his people, even if he must act on foreign territory against the citizens of other nations.

Nephi's people face a specific danger to their existence: the danger that they will be left without the law of Moses. So far from being the lawless act of an individual citizen, Nephi's execution of Laban is the lawful act of a sovereign lawgiver who is seeking to maintain among his people a social order based on law. Thus Nephi thinks:

Other details—the use of his own sword—suggest, symbolically, that Laban is slain not by Nephi but by his own sins. Nephi having acted on the word of God, it is quite literally true in Laban's case that "the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (Hebrews 4:12).[29] Though some may cavil at the aesthetics of a decapitation, no state execution could ever be more merciful than this one carried out by Nephi. Laban suffered neither fear nor pain. In his mercy, God permitted Nephi to be a merciful executioner, to preserve the law for his people while inflicting the minimum possible suffering on the enemy.

Critics have sometimes suggested that the rationale Nephi acted on—"better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief"—is unsound because, if

> WHEN THE SOVEREIGN DECIDES THAT SOMEONE MUST BE SACRIFICED TO SAVE HIS NATION, THERE IS NO QUESTION OF JURISDICTION. THE SOVEREIGN IS ACTING ON A QUESTION OF ULTIMATE CONCERN TO THE NATION AS A WHOLE. HE IS EMPOWERED AND OBLIGATED TO TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE HIS PEOPLE.

> [My people] could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law. And I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass. And again, I knew that the Lord had delivered Laban into my hands for this cause—that I might obtain the records according to the commandments. Therefore I did obey the voice of the Spirit, and took Laban by the hair of the head, and I smote off his head with his own sword. (1 Nephi 4:15–18)

Nephi's reasoning here is doubtless informed by the recent discovery—in Lehi's lifetime—of the book of Deuteronomy during a renovation of the temple (2 Kings 22–23). In the wake of that discovery, King Josiah and his people came to understand that they had not fully kept the commandments of the Lord because they did not have them.

the Lord can deliver Laban unconscious at Nephi's feet, he can keep him unconscious until Nephi has escaped. It is true that God could keep Laban unconscious or slay him himself. But this criticism is, nonetheless, invalid. While God has the power to remedy any ill we may encounter, no thinking Christian or Jew believes that God will or should instantly solve all the problems the believer faces. It is trite but true that "we must pray as if everything depends upon the Lord, then work as if everything depends upon us."
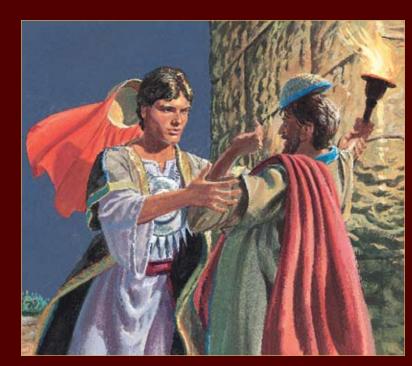
In this specific case, Laban will pose a serious danger if Nephi leaves him alive: the danger that he will wake and follow Nephi to his house or that he will pursue the brothers later to recover the plates. So the Lord delivers Laban into Nephi's hands, but he then requires that Nephi prove to himself and his people that he will do what is necessary to preserve and protect them. If Nephi could not kill a malicious stranger like Laban to save his people,

he could not be trusted to act as a dutiful sovereign, carrying out necessary executions of subjects who committed capital crimes or leading his people into battle against brothers and cousins and nephews as he would later be required to do (2 Nephi 5:14; Jacob 1:10). Nephi must prove that he is willing to abide by even this most difficult of commands, for it is only "inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, [that] thou shalt be made a ruler" (1 Nephi 2:22). Unlike Abraham who was spared the horror of sacrificing his son, Nephi cannot be spared, for in a fallen world, sovereign rulers cannot avoid the necessity of using measured violence to protect their people from violence without measure. For a righteous man, being king is hard duty, but through his willingness to do this distasteful deed, Nephi proves that he will be a dutiful king.

Nephi prevented Zoram from fleeing back into the walls of Jerusalem. The two then swore solemn oaths of loyalty and obedience. By Jerry Thompson. © IRI.

THE FIFTH LAYER OF IMPLICATION: THE NEPHITE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

If as has been argued, the Nephites looked to this episode as the moment in which Nephi became their king, they would naturally also see it as the moment in which they became subjects of the king, bound to him by a social contract. The terms of that contract—the Nephite constitutional order[30]—are spelled out emblematically in the relationship that is established between Nephi, the king, and Zoram, the people's proxy, as they emerge from Jerusalem and encounter Nephi's brothers.

When he sees the brothers, Zoram tries to flee and, thus, puts the entire family of Lehi in jeopardy of being pursued and destroyed by the Jews in Jerusalem (1 Nephi 4:30, 36). But "Nephi, being a man large in stature, and also having received much strength of the Lord . . . did seize upon the servant of Laban, and held him, that he should not flee" (1 Nephi 4:31). The large stature of Nephi signifies his kingly power. And since Nephi has been selected by God as the legitimate defender and protector of the people, the people can trust that his power will be—as it is in this instance—magnified by God.

As Nephi now stops Zoram from fleeing, so will he prevent his subjects from behaving in ways that endanger others. He will take care to stop outsiders from attacking and destroying his people as he here takes care to protect them from Jerusalem's Jews.

Having restrained Zoram, Nephi specifies the terms on which Zoram may live peaceably with the family of Lehi. Nephi swears with the most powerful of oaths that if Zoram "would hearken unto my words, as the Lord liveth, and as I live, even so . . . he should be a free man like unto us" (1 Nephi 4:32–33). And what words must Zoram hearken to as the condition on which he, the subject, will enjoy the same freedoms as Nephi, the king? Nephi asks him to keep God's commandments, for "surely the Lord hath commanded us to do this thing; and shall we not be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord?" (1 Nephi 4:34). The constitutional force of this episode follows from the seriousness of the oath Nephi swears, his indubitable honor, and the importance of this event in Nephite history. Having taken such an oath, we can be certain that Nephi took care throughout his life to preserve a freedom for Zoram equal to his own, so long as Zoram
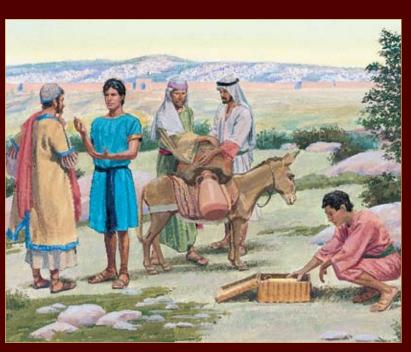
kept his covenant to follow God's commandments. And Nephi would have no reason to treat his other subjects differently than Zoram. When Lehi and Sariah's family finally splits, every adult in Nephi's group makes the same conscious decision to follow Nephi that Zoram makes in this emblematic episode (2 Nephi 5:6).

After Nephi swears his oath, Zoram, in turn, swears an oath that he will behave as God has required and align himself with his captor. "And he also made an oath unto us that he would tarry with us from that time forth. . . . And it came to pass that when Zoram had made an oath unto us, our fears did cease concerning him" (1 Nephi 4:35, 37). Each having sworn to meet obligations to the other, the bond that forms between Nephi and Zoram in this moment proves to be powerful, a good representation of the powerful bond that connects Nephi and his people. Though we don't have any details on what Zoram subsequently did to prove his loyalty—for example, during Laman and Lemuel's rave on the ship and its aftermath—we can be certain that Zoram and his family were true to their new sovereign, for Lehi, who observed all of Zoram's behav-

ior, later declared, recalling the initial encounter of sovereign and subject, "And now, Zoram, I speak unto you: Behold, thou art the servant of Laban; nevertheless, thou hast been brought out of the land of Jerusalem, and I know that thou art a true friend unto my son, Nephi, forever. Wherefore, because thou hast been faithful thy seed shall be blessed with his seed. . . . The Lord hath consecrated this land for the security of thy seed with the seed of my son" (2 Nephi 1:30–32).

We have reason to believe that Nephi achieved his rhetorical purpose in recounting Laban's death—to establish legitimate, good government among his people—for the constitutional order reflected in Nephi and Zoram's solemn covenants with each other persisted. Its essential terms are apparent 470 years later in the relationship between King Benjamin and his people and between the people and Benjamin's father, Mosiah, before him and his son, Mosiah, after him (Mosiah 2:31). These kings, men still very much in the mold of Nephi, are the last in the line of kings descended from Nephi.

Like Nephi, each of the three are prophets. Like Nephi, Benjamin wields the sword of Laban in his people's defense and holds them accountable to obey his words, which are the words of God (Words of Mormon 1:12–18). Though he exercises sovereign power like Nephi in punishing those who "murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery," Benjamin has taken care to preserve freedom and equality among his people. He has not permitted them to "make slaves one of another" and he himself has "labored with [his] own hands that [he] might serve [them], and that [they] should not be laden with taxes" (Mosiah 2:13–14). He plainly states that he sees himself as no better than his people: "My brethren . . . hearken unto me. . . . I have not commanded . . . that ye should fear me, or that ye should think that I of myself am more than a mortal man. But I am like as yourselves. . . ." (Mosiah 2:9–11). Thus, the relationship between these last three kings and the people is in every way

When Zoram and Nephi formed their covenant, Zoram became part of the party of Lehi. Zoram and his descendants remained true to the covenant for hundreds of years. By Jerry Thompson. © IRI.

consistent with the covenants Nephi and Zoram made to each other. As the Exodus established a firm legal order among the Hebrews of the Old World,³¹ so this episode appears to have established a durable governance pattern in the New.

THE SIXTH LAYER OF IMPLICATION: EXPLICIT DECLARATIONS OF NEPHI'S REIGN

The explicit declarations of Nephi's reign suggest that it began, as has been argued above, before Lehi's family left the Valley of Lemuel rather than many years later when Nephi was formally anointed king in 2 Nephi. That Nephi had begun to reign before 2 Nephi is evident in Mormon's subtitle for 1 Nephi: "His [Nephi's] Reign and Ministry." The only men-

of Israel, is a *fait accompli*: "Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him [Nephi] to be a ruler over you, and this because of your iniquities?" (1 Nephi 3:29). Having twice been declared a ruler, once by the voice of the Lord himself and once by his angel, Nephi now enters the city where he finds Laban and acts to protect his people in the role of the sovereign ruler God's angel has just declared him to be.

Early in 2 Nephi, just before the family finally splits, Nephi adds his own testimony to that of the Lord and his angel, declaring that he has been made, as the Lord promised, a *ruler* over his brothers: "And behold, the words of the Lord had been fulfilled unto my brethren, which he spake concerning them, that I should be their ruler and their teacher. Wherefore, *I had been their ruler* and their

tion Nephi makes of his personal *reign* occurs shortly after he acquired the plates while the family is still in the Valley of Lemuel: "And now I, Nephi, proceed to give an account upon these plates of my proceedings, and *my reign* and ministry" (1 Nephi 10:1, 16). This explicit statement would seem to cap his acquisition of sovereignty in the events that have just unfolded. The events that follow, this passage suggests, are part of Nephi's reign as sovereign.

As previously indicated, Nephi is twice told in 1 Nephi that he will be a ruler over his brothers. The first declaration is prospective and occurs just before the brothers depart for Jerusalem to get the plates: "inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren" (1 Nephi 4:21–22). What those verses anticipate then occurs: Laman and Lemuel rebel against and begin to beat Nephi because he insists on doing the Lord's will. An angel then appears and declares that Nephi's rule over his brothers, his sovereign position in this new branch

teacher, according to the commandments of the Lord, until the time they sought to take away my life" (2 Nephi 5:19). Most of this ruling and teaching occurred in 1 Nephi during and following the acquisition of the plates and the sword.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by discussing briefly what may have led Nephi to write such a densely allusive account of his assumption of sovereignty during the acquisition of the brass plates. First, it is important to keep in mind that, prior to the development of printing, written texts were difficult to produce and, thus, were expensive and comparatively rare possessions. High production costs had an affect on genre. When the cost of buying a given quantity of text was high, purchasers preferred to read dense genres that rewarded multiple readings, for example, poetry was relatively much more popular in comparison with prose than it is today. Incentives to include poetic features such as chiasm and intertextuality were high because such features were likely

to be discovered and savored when the text would be read repeatedly. When printing drove down production costs, less dense genres such as the novel became predominant in the production and consumption of literary texts and repeated reading of the same text became less common. Since Nephi wrote when production was still costly and repeated reading the norm, he probably wrote with a full expectation that his writing would get very close scrutiny, especially when what he was writing would be, for his people, analogous to Of Plymouth Plantation, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution rolled into one.

The high costs of both acquiring and transporting texts make it likely that the brass plates—the preexilic Old Testament—was the only text available to Lehi and his family.[32] It is, therefore, probable that they read it many times and were deeply familiar with its contents. Moreover, they were strongly inclined to read their own lives in terms of the narratives in their Old Testament, both because they viewed it as scripture and because it was the only textual model available to them (1 Nephi 19:23). Nephi's explicit framing of the attempt to acquire the plates as a recapitulation of the Mosaic exodus (1 Nephi 4:2–3) and his implicit recapitulation of the David and Goliath story in the structure of his narrative are examples of his tendency to link his life to scripture.

Finally, because his work was autobiographical, Nephi had an almost unlimited number of details that he could have included in his account—all the details of his life. Since his record had to be short, his charge was analogous to that of a historian of modern times who is awash in facts and whose principal task is to cultivate an "ignorance which simplifies and clarifies, which selects and omits" in order to tell an important story coherently.[33] Given his textual model, the Old Testament,[34] we can be confident that Nephi chose only those episodes and details that were most richly endowed with meaning and that served his rhetorical purposes. In his response to the Lord's mandate to kill Laban, Nephi seems to have found an experience that could be framed as a symbolic tableau of the relationship between sovereign and subject and that could be linked through intertextual allusion to Mosaic and Davidic biblical narratives of sovereignty assumed and exercised. By making these connections, Nephi created legitimacy for a political regime that was to endure and protect his people for more than five hundred years. ▤

FOR THE
Peace of the People

WAR & DEMOCRACY IN THE
Book of Mormon

*And now let us be wise and look
forward to these things, and do that which
will make for the peace of this people.*

(MOSIAH 29:10)

· ·

WHEN KING MOSIAH changes the form of Nephite government, he acts with certain purposes in mind. Among these is the establishment of peace. In his speech proposing a reign of judges instead of kings, he explains, "I myself have labored with all the power and faculties which I have possessed, to teach you the commandments of God, and to establish peace throughout the land, that there should be no wars nor contentions" (Mosiah 29:14; see also 29:40). How can altering the institutions of governance alone make a society more peaceful? Although Mosiah himself may not have known exactly how the institutional changes he implemented would affect the prospects for peace, modern study of political regimes illuminates how his decision was inspired.

Understanding the institutional structure of the Nephite society allows limited but definable predictions about what political outcomes we should expect and how they should transpire. In this paper I first explain the ways in which the regime established by Mosiah may be understood as democratic. Next I argue that the democratic features of Mosiah's state are sufficient to predict that it will be inclined toward peace but comparatively strong in war. However, democratic transitions also entail significant risks, and the initial problems encountered in the reign of the judges correspond to the contemporary understanding of the perils of democratization. In each of these aspects, modern research about political behavior helps give us a clearer glimpse into the politics of the Book of Mormon. But while the relationship between politics and war found in the Book of Mormon makes sense from the perspective of modern political science, it differs from the widespread political understanding of Joseph Smith's time. That does not mean the Book of Mormon's political institutions offer "evidence" in favor of its authenticity. Instead I hope to show that considering the nuances of the Nephite state can deepen our appreciation for the Book of Mormon's complex internal unity. I will consider the expected proclivity of the Nephite state for conflict, its expected success in conflict, and, finally, what internal events we might anticipate in early Nephite "democracy."[1] To begin, I seek to clarify the term *democracy*.

· ·

RYAN W. DAVIS

Understanding Book of Mormon Governance

The Book of Mormon reveals a significant amount of information about the types of political institutions governing both the Nephite and Lamanite populations. Much of what we observe in its politics has a familiar feel. Nevertheless, a common mistake is to map the transition from monarchy to the reign of the judges too easily onto familiar political structures. Mosiah's new regime is not a democracy as the term is understood in contemporary society. Unlike American democracy, there is no legislative branch. By modern standards, other nondemocratic elements include that the chief judge is not apparently limited in his term of office and that judges not only govern but also "reign," to point out a few examples (see Alma 1:2; 60:21). And although political dynasties do occur in democratic states, the anticipation of familial succession seems especially strong in Nephite governance.[2] Further, it is unclear whether the "voice of the people" implies democratic choice in creating the set of possible political options or only in choosing among a set arranged by leaders.[3]

Part of the problem in understanding Book of Mormon politics is that Nephite society is temporally and culturally removed from our experience, and part of the problem is in "the paucity of democracy as an analytic concept."[4] A state's level of democracy is best thought of as a continuum between poles of complete democracy and autocracy. The relevant question is whether the state is democratic in ways that will meaningfully influence the policy outcomes under consideration.

It is in this limited but important sense that the regime established by Mosiah should be considered a democracy. First,

although the "'voice of the people' entered only marginally into the appointment of an officer who essentially enjoyed life tenure and hereditary succession,"[5] interaction need not be expansive to have a substantial impact.[6] In Nephite politics, the withdrawal of authority through the voice of the people was a very real possibility (see Alma 2:3; Alma 51:7; Helaman 5:1–2), creating incentives for officials to avoid alienating large constituencies.

Second, the system of laws put into effect may be characterized as liberal in the sense of being, to a significant extent, value neutral. That is, people in Mosiah's system were free to select whatever personal projects they wanted to pursue. The reader is plainly told that people were afforded the liberty to teach doctrine contrary to the church's—provided they at least claimed to honestly believe it—because the law had no control over a person's belief (see Alma 1:15–18; 30:7). The institutions of a liberal democracy do not prescribe values to subjects, but rather aim to create a situation of fairness in which citizens may autonomously select values. The process is determined; the ends are not. Authority for choosing personal goals has been devolved from a king or sovereign to the collectively sovereign people. It is in this way, I think, that the "freedom" Mosiah grants his people comes in the form of greater responsibility (see Mosiah 29:31–32).

Third, although it is true that there are no interagency constitutional checks in the Nephite state,[7] there do appear to be intra-agency checks. In monarchy the problem is not in dividing power but in consolidating it. In democracy the problem is reversed. The government must be able to act, so it must have real power. All governments confront collective action problems, and they must have power to enforce their decisions collec-

> As Madison recognized, democracy is unstable unless it is carefully crafted to balance power within the government. In Mosiah's system this balance is achieved by allowing a group of lower judges to challenge the rule of a higher judge and higher judges to revise the decisions of lower judges.

tively to be efficacious. However, if any one actor seeks to gather powers already divided among others, the actor will face incentives to avoid relinquishing them. Consequently, the authority of government must not completely reside in any one location. As James Madison recognized, democracy is unstable unless it is carefully crafted to balance power within the government.[8] In Mosiah's system this balance is achieved by allowing a group of lower judges to challenge the rule of a higher judge and higher judges to revise the decisions of lower judges (see Mosiah 29:28–29). The arrow of power points both directions, providing for the kind of stability found within democratic regimes.

The democratic elements within Nephite governance are particularly clear when juxtaposed with the autocratic Lamanite counterpart. Much less is known about the Lamanite state, but we are told that Lamoni's father is recognized as "king over all the land" (Alma 20:8). As such, he had authority to "govern" or interfere in the decisions of lesser kings (Alma 20:26). The general recognition of his authority suggests the presence of a unitary political state, and his ability to intervene at his discretion indicates the extent of his personal power. Together these features characterize Lamanite politics as autocratic. The combination of a liberal, democratic Nephite state and an illiberal, nondemocratic Lamanite regime forms a specific type of international structure, about which predictions can be made.

Seeking for Peace

If the Book of Mormon presents two types of regimes existing alongside each other, what are the most basic expectations that can be articulated about their interaction? Immanuel Kant, the

> *Under democracy, leaders are constrained from fighting wars because their peoples are involved in making the choice to fight. Because the populace bears more of the costs of war than elites, they are more likely to oppose bellicose leaders, giving officials second thoughts about aggression.*

Prussian philosopher of note, was the first theorist to seriously consider the international implications of a democratic regime type. From his writings, a large literature has developed around the thesis that democratic states are more peaceful than nondemocracies, regardless of leaders or culture.[9] Though I cannot represent the many theoretical variants of this view, the fundamental idea is simple: under democracy, leaders are constrained from fighting wars because their peoples are involved in making the choice to fight. Because the populace bears more of the costs of war than elites, they are more likely to oppose bellicose leaders, giving officials second thoughts about aggression. Second, populations are more likely to be peaceful because democratic countries may be less likely to see foreign populations as necessarily antagonistic.[10] Although the basic point has not been accepted by everyone, the "democratic peace" has been described as the closest thing to an empirical law in international politics.[11]

One way the democratic peace has been empirically tested is through examining particular case studies closely. That way, the correspondence of the specific case to the theory may be checked at different points to see whether each theoretically anticipated element is present. This increases the number of observations without increasing the number of studies and is considered an appropriate way of investigating the democratic peace thesis.[12] Through this process we can assess causality by focusing on just a few instances of a social phenomenon. The question is not just *if* something happened as expected but *how* it happened. Below, I will apply this technique to the Book of Mormon. Clearly the democratic regime set up by Mosiah fought wars frequently (by modern standards), but his state's pacific nature may still be evaluated through

contrasting the desires of actors in different positions.

When the norms and institutions of Nephite democracy are considered, several indicators demonstrate a tendency to avert war insofar as it was possible. Prefacing the long series of chapters on war, Mormon describes at length how Captain Moroni and the Nephites did not desire to fight, engaging in bloodshed only with extreme compunction (see Alma 43:29, 54). Pahoran, the democratically elected leader of Moroni's day, is even more loath to participate in acts of war. Late in the conflict, Pahoran still worries "whether it should be just in us to go against our brethren," despite such internal war maneuvers being conducted by the Nephite government not long before (Alma 61:19). Apparently, this was in fact a "social norm" established within the Nephite state and, in times of conflict, externalized. Mormon editorializes:

> Now the Nephites were taught to defend themselves against their enemies, even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary; yea, and they were also taught never to give an offense, yea, and never to raise the sword except it were against an enemy, except it were to preserve their lives. (Alma 48:14)

What can be made of this analysis? To say that the Nephites had traditions against conflict does not prove these norms were necessarily connected to democratic governance. Any reader of the Book of Mormon knows, of course, that this disinclination to go to war was according to the instructions of God. The word of God is all-important; still, a few hints indicate that institutions do matter. Ammon recounts that, before the transition to democracy, the Nephites had believed any effort to convert their Lamanite brethren would ultimately be doomed to fail. Rather than use the word of God to convert them, the Nephites advocated the opposite:

> And moreover they did say: Let us take up arms against them, that we destroy them and their

Alma and Amulek are brought before the judges and lawyers of Ammonihah. Jerry Thompson. © IRI.

iniquity out of the land, lest they overrun us and destroy us. (Alma 26:25)

We contrast this with the Nephites' reception of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies. Nowhere can the Nephites' prior prejudice be found. When Ammon "tr[ies] the hearts" of the Nephites to see if they will allow the converted Lamanites to assume residence in Nephite territory, the Lamanite king is so concerned that he suggests he would prefer to perish (Alma 27:10, 15).[13] However, when the "voice of the people" is returned, it is in support of the peaceful integration of former adversaries. The change from advocating offense to reconciliation is substantial. This is particularly significant if, as John Sorenson has suggested, the practice of peaceful acceptance of other peoples was a consistent feature of the Nephite state.[14] The cultural explanation for the democratic peace offers one way of explaining why the Nephites did not consider other peoples a threat while the Lamanites did (see Alma 17:20).[15]

Contrasting several antidemocratic foils with Mosiah's system sheds further light on the problem. The Book of Mormon is replete with leaders who incite conflicts in which their constituents are made to suffer for their leaders' gain. A mere mention of the names Laman, Amalickiah, Ammoron, Gadianton, Zerahemnah (and, less conspicuously, Giddianhi, Tubaloth, and Amlici) is probably sufficient. Typically leaders have a profound and possibly deterministic effect on society's direction. The judges and lawyers of Ammonihah conspired to roll back the state's democratic institutions and were willing to resort to violence to achieve their goals (see Alma 8:17; 10:27). Likewise, the Zoramites' decision-making process was secretive, deciding policy not by public discussion (the voice of the people) but by private fact-finding (see Alma 35:5). Gadianton, the arch-villain, thrived through the preservation of internal and external mysteriousness (see Helaman 2:4). The secret combination must recoil against democracy. Exclusive, violent societies tend to be undemocratic. Excepting a few excep-

tional monarchs, nondemocratic decision making typically foments injustice and conflict.

By my count, there are only two instances in the Book of Mormon in which a populace goads a righteous leader into conflict. The first example is that of Limhi's people (see Mosiah 21:6), and the second is Mormon's decision to lead the Nephites despite their wickedness (see Mormon 5:1–2). In both cases, the government in place (one might argue there is not really much of a government at all in the latter case) is nondemocratic. Also, by my count, in the only other instance of a populace attempting to coerce a righteous leader into conflict, Gidgiddoni tells the Nephites that such an act of aggression would necessarily end in failure (see 3 Nephi 3:20–21). Part of the reason may be that the institutions Gidgiddoni faced were structurally more averse to aggression. This contrasts especially with occasions on which Lamanite kings attempt to compel their fearful subjects to prepare for war against the Nephites.[16] Indeed, Lamanites and dissenters even figured the Nephites' pacific disposition into their battle plans, perhaps using it as a reason to adopt the tactic of surprise (see Alma 2; 25:1–3; 49; Helaman 4). This as well is consistent with modern social science's finding that democracies are frequently targeted by aggressors.[17]

Of course, none of this proves that democracy made the difference. It is difficult to envision Moroni, for instance, doing or believing something because he was "institutionally constrained." But this may not tell the whole story. Leaders like Moroni and Pahoran do not gain power arbitrarily. Rather, they have *authority*; their ability to use power is invested to them by a larger set of people (see Alma 43:17; 46:34). When kings rule without electoral consent, they may make war for personal reasons or for the benefit of a boisterous or influential minority. When this selectorate is expanded to an electorate, the interests that government actors represent become more diverse, incorporating many who always prefer to avoid war. In either case, the leader may act to appease or satisfy those who give him power. Deciding who these people are has much to do with state-level policy preferences. Usually the more democratic the authorizing body, the more inclined toward peace its representatives will be. The Nephites did fight, particularly to regain lost territory (see Helaman 4), but their wars were undertaken from a broadly peaceful viewpoint.
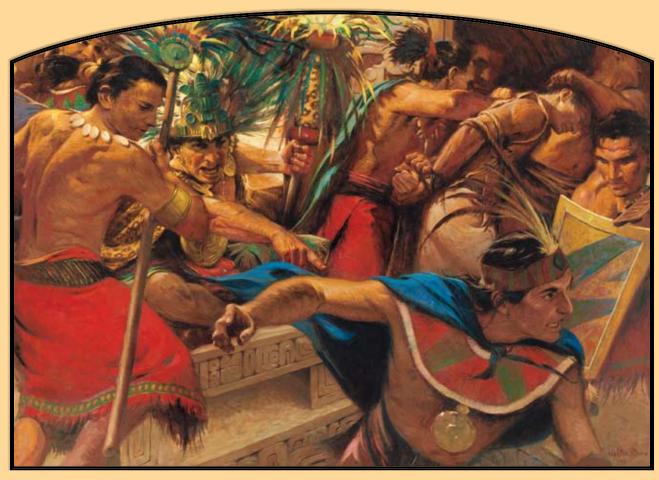
Winning in War

In the preceding section I have considered one of the major facets of democratic peace theory and illustrated how the Book of Mormon might be contemplated through its lens. I will now turn to the second major theoretical proposition, that democracies fight more effectively than nondemocracies. Two related explanations for this view can be provided. First, David Lake has used an economic rationale to explain why democracies are not only disinclined to conflict, but, perhaps paradoxically, are also more likely to win conflicts they do enter.[18]

All states provide protection to their citizens, but not all states provide protection equally.[19] In autocratic states, elites are secure in their control of the government as a result of barriers to political participation. Because they are unlikely to be removed from office, autocratic rulers can tax their peoples more heavily while providing fewer services in return—including the service of protection from foreign aggressors. In other words, the state is less secure because rulers can line their pockets with state

In a democracy leaders may be removed from office more readily, so they are less inclined to sacrifice collective protection for personal gain. The result is that society is typically not exploited by the state and the economy functions more efficiently, producing greater aggregate wealth.

King Noah and his soldiers react with anger when the prophet Abinadi condemns the king and his people for their wickedness. *Abinadi Had Testified,* by Walter Rane. Copyright By the Hand of Mormon Foundation.

revenues rather than devoting funds to protecting its people.

In a democracy leaders may be removed from office more readily, so they are less inclined to sacrifice collective protection for personal gain. The result is that society is typically not exploited by the state, and the economy functions more efficiently, producing greater aggregate wealth.[20] Because democracies have more wealth, they face incentives to pay for more protection (e.g., maintaining a larger army). Because they have more to lose in confrontation with autocratic states,[21] their citizens are more willing to dedicate the human and material resources necessary to prevail in conflict.[22] This forms the basis of the second explanation, which is that democratic soldiers fight better than autocratic soldiers. Democratic soldiers have more at stake in the state and expect worse treatment if captured.[23] This particularly equips democracies to prevail in protracted conflicts with nondemocratic rivals.[24] Because the Book of Mormon contains a remark-

able number of conflicts within a democratic/ nondemocratic dyad, we can check this theoretical prediction.

Before Mosiah's implementation of a democratic system, conflicts between the Nephites and the Lamanites show a decidedly mixed record. A decisive Nephite defeat is alluded to in the opening verses of the book of Omni (see 1:6–7), but King Benjamin thereafter wins a decisive victory (see Omni 1:24; Words of Mormon 1:13). Zeniff, a just Nephite king, wins a battle against the Lamanites (see Mosiah 10:20), but his grandson Limhi, also a just king, loses three consecutively (see Mosiah 21:3–12). In the postdemocratic wars tragically reported by Mormon, the record is similarly ambiguous.

The case of King Noah deserves particular mention. Among the first things we learn about Noah is that he lays a stiff tax on his people, extracting his society's wealth for personal gain (see Mosiah 11:3–4). Maintaining much panoply in glorifying

his people (see Mosiah 11:18–19), Noah's real invest-ment is in his own fortune, building "elegant and spacious buildings," ornamentations, and "a great tower" (11:8–14). Noah's priests speak "flattering words" to the people (a point emphasized repeat-edly). Apparently convinced, the people continue to "labor exceedingly" to support the elites and king (11:6). The story is typical of a despotic, autocratic regime: a demagogic leader exploits his people by fomenting partisan allegiance while using the state to pursue purely personal desires. Soon enough, in such cases, economic output begins to lag. In a prof-ligate display of idleness, he causes himself and his people to become "wine-bibber[s]" (11:15). Wealth is neither produced nor utilized efficiently. Inevitably, under such conditions, security suffers. Noah fails to supply "a sufficient number" of guards for his fields (11:17), and a conflict with the Lamanites ensues. Still, he is superficially triumphant as the enemy is "driven back"—ominously—"for a time" (11:18).

As the text suggests, victory will be short-lived. Despite his success, "the forces of the king were small, having been reduced" (Mosiah 19:2). The reader might even infer that Noah has exploited his people precisely to the possible limit—his collection of taxes is such that a "lesser part" of the people overcome the barriers to political participation, and they begin to "breathe out threatenings against the king" (Mosiah 19:3). Hence, he has maximized wealth by approaching the threshold where the political participation necessary to eliminate him is almost attained. By this time it is simply too late for the regime; King Noah realizes he cannot even hope to mount an effective defense against the Lamanites when conflict becomes inevitable (see Mosiah 19:11).

A very different picture emerges after the tran-sition to democracy in Mosiah 29. For Book of Mor-mon democracy to be compatible with the social scientific theory presented here, several different expectations need to be satisfied. The Nephite state would need to show a higher level of success in mil-itary conflict, and this success would need to cor-respond with greater wealth and a greater willing-ness of the populace to sustain military operations. An examination of the postdemocratization period reveals each of these features distinctly.

Although some variance in delineating is possi-ble (see table 1 on page 50 for my coding), there are roughly fourteen military conflicts between Mosiah 29 and 3 Nephi 7, at which point the period of democratic rule ends with the collapse of Mosiah's system. The outcomes of these conflicts are also variant, but overall, the Nephite state's success is remarkable. At least ten conflicts appear to be clear Nephite victories, with the remaining four offering ambivalent but noteworthy cases.

In its first crucible, Alma's regime displays sig-nificant strength and solidarity; even after incur-ring serious casualties in two early battles with the Amlicites (see Alma 2:17, 28), the Nephites have sufficient force (and, just as important, sufficient political will) to send "a numerous army" against an Amlicite and Lamanite wave (Alma 3:23). Next, after failing to heed Alma's prophetic warnings, the substantial Nephite city of Ammonihah suf-fers a categorical defeat at the hands of a Lamanite invasion (see Alma 16:2). The clearest example of a Nephite loss over the expanse of the reign of the judges, this battle at first appears to show that Mosiah's system is an inadequate assurance of pro-tection. However, on closer examination this begins to look more like the exception that proves the rule. The people of Ammonihah, though part of the Nephite system of governance, were not democratic participants as much as undemocratic subversives (see Alma 8:17).

The Nephites win further victories in the brief but severe battle in Alma 28, the conflict against Zarahemnah (Alma 43–44), the great war extend-ing roughly from Alma 46 through 62, the short but independent conflict in Alma 63, the war against Coriantumr (Helaman 1:14–34), and the battles against Giddianhi (3 Nephi 4:1–14) and Zemnarihah (3 Nephi 4:15–33). Overall, the extent of military success for the Nephite democracy is astonishing.

All battles are uncertain, but the only really close call in this group is in the war of Alma 46–62, a conflict which stands out so distinctly that it is commonly spoken of as "the war" between the Nephites and Lamanites. Although the Nephites finally rout the Lamanite aggressors, they come so close to defeat that even the great Moroni, who had before guaranteed victory in his polemical epistle to Ammoron (see Alma 54:5–14), begins to doubt the outcome (see Alma 59:11–12). The Book of Mormon leaves no room to speculate about why the Nephites brush up against destruction at this point in their history. It is not because their system of government goes bad but because it comes perilously close to being overthrown. Moroni makes clear:

Table 1: War in the Nephite World

Passage	Leaders/Groups	Regime Type	Time	Outcome
Omni 1:5–7	Amaron (records war)	Nondemocratic	279 BC	Defeat
Omni 1:24	King Benjamin	Nondemocratic	279–130 BC*	Victory
Mosiah 10:20	Zeniff	Nondemocratic	160 BC	Victory
Mosiah 11:18–19	Noah	Nondemocratic	150 BC	Victory
Mosiah 19	Noah	Nondemocratic	145 BC	Defeat
Mosiah 20:11	Limhi	Nondemocratic	145–122 BC*	Victory
Mosiah 21:6–8	Limhi	Nondemocratic	145–122 BC*	Defeat
Mosiah 21:11	Limhi	Nondemocratic	145–122 BC*	Defeat
Mosiah 21:12	Limhi	Nondemocratic	145–122 BC*	Defeat
Alma 2:17–38	Alma vs. Amlici	Democratic	RJ 5, 87 BC	Victory
Alma 3:20–24	Alma (Nephites) vs. Amlicites/ Lamanites	Democratic	RJ 5, 87 BC	Victory
Alma 16:2–3	Ammonihah/Nehors vs. Lamanites	Democratic	RJ 11, 81 BC	Defeat
Alma 16:5–8	Zoram	Democratic	RJ 11, 81 BC	Victory
Alma 28:1–3	Nephite vs. Lamanite	Democratic	RJ 15, 76 BC	Victory
Alma 43–44	Moroni vs. Zerahemnah	Democratic	RJ 18, 74 BC	Victory
Alma 46–62	Moroni vs. Amalickiah/Ammoron	Democratic	RJ 19–31, 73–60 BC	Victory
Alma 63:15	Moronihah	Democratic	RJ 39, 52 BC	Victory
Helaman 1:14–34	Moronihah vs. Coriantumr	Democratic	RJ 41, 51 BC	Victory
Helaman 4	Moronihah	Democratic	RJ 57–62, 35–30 BC	Undecided
Helaman 11	?	Democratic	RJ 80, 12 BC	Defeat
Helaman 11	?	Democratic	RJ 81, 11 BC	Undecided
3 Nephi 4:1–14	Gidgiddoni/Lachoneus vs. Giddianhi (robber)	Democratic	RJ 110, AD 18	Victory
3 Nephi 4:15–33	Gidgiddoni/Lachoneus vs. Zemnarihah	Democratic	RJ 113, AD 21	Victory
Mormon 2:4	Mormon vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 327–328*	Defeat
Mormon 2:9	Mormon vs. Aaron	Nondemocratic	AD 331	Victory
Mormon 2:16	Mormon vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 345	Defeat
Mormon 3:7	Mormon vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 361	Victory
Mormon 3:8	Mormon vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 362	Victory
Mormon 4:2	Nephites vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 363	Defeat
Mormon 4:7–8	Nephites vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 364	Victory
Mormon 4:13–14	Nephites vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 367	Defeat
Mormon 4:15	Nephites vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 367	Victory
Mormon 4:16–6:15	Mormon vs. Lamanites	Nondemocratic	AD 375–385	Defeat

"Outcome" and "Regime Type" columns reference the Nephite state (i.e., What is the outcome for the Nephite regime?). "Time" is given in years according to the reign of the judges (RJ), when appropriate, prior to the date. *Indicates "between" dates given.

Explanatory Note: Conflicts are delineated, as much as possible, according to textual breaks. When forces disengage and then return, with an observed outcome to the first engagement reported, two battles are counted. Typically, this breaks battles into the smallest components recognizable. The exception is the prolonged conflict from Alma 46 to Alma 62, which is coded as one. This is because there is no separation of forces, and because it is explicitly treated as one war (Alma 62:41).
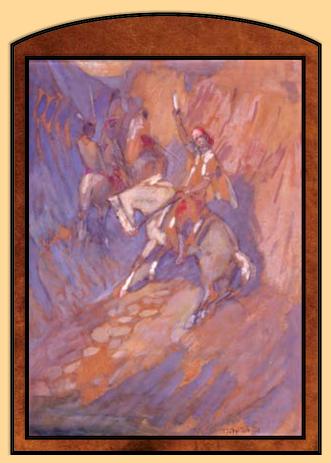
Summary: During the democratic period, the Nephites win 71 percent of military conflicts and lose 21 percent. During the nondemocratic period, the Nephites win 47 percent of conflicts and lose 53 percent.

We could have withstood our enemies that they could have gained no power over us . . . had it not been for the war which broke out amongst ourselves; yea, were it not for these king-men, who caused so much bloodshed among ourselves. (Alma 60:15–16)

Though not its central focus, the Book of Mormon repeatedly details the importance of institutions. From the early recognition that those in positions of institutional authority played a pivotal role in deciding the Nephites' survival (see Alma 10:27) to the series of conflicts revolving around who had the right to control such positions (see Alma 54:17; 3 Nephi 3:16), we see continued awareness of this fact. Another hint is Mormon's dark adumbration that the Gadiantons will "prove the overthrow, yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi" (Helaman 2:13). Accustomed to the pattern of institutions mattering, we see this prophecy already in the early stages of fulfillment once the robbers "obtain the sole management of the government" (Helaman 6:39). Within this pattern we can make sense of Moroni's focus on cleansing the "inward vessel" of government before looking to external foes (Alma 60:24).

The only battle excluded at this point is that in which the combined forces of the Nephite dissenters and Lamanites drive deep into Nephite lands fighting against Moronihah (see Helaman 4). For some time the battle stalls in what looks to be a protracted stalemate (see Helaman 4:18), and the Nephite state faces an exceptional circumstance in which its very existence is jeopardized (see 4:20).

The criminal Gadianton attempted to destroy the democratic government of the Nephites. *Gadianton Defies His Pursuers,* by Minerva Teichert. Courtesy of Brigham Young University Museum of Art.

However, this test reveals something about the state's capability when pushed to its limits. After the crushing Lamanite assault, Moronihah succeeds in the difficult task of rolling back the invasion in "many parts of the land" (Helaman 4:9). While Nephite commanders knew that holding ground is preferable to taking it (see Alma 59:9), this example represents a recurrent theme in Nephite warfare. After Coriantumr amazes even himself in his sacking of Zarahemla (see Helaman 1:19–22), Moronihah uses the latent strength of the Nephite state to surround and crush Coriantumr's forces (see 1:25–33). Earlier, Amalickiah sweeps through Nephite lands, but the Nephites commence retaking lands almost as soon as the pace of the war slows and forces become entrenched (see Alma 51).

The trend that emerges from this analysis is that short conflicts (such as those at Ammonihah or Coriantumr's blitzkrieg-style campaign) favor the Lamanite autocracy, but extended conflicts are ultimately won by the Nephite democracy. We recall that the theoretical reason democracies are expected to succeed in conflicts is that they can direct greater resources over an extended period of time. While democracies may lose in the short term, "in every *prolonged* conflict in modern history, such states have prevailed over their illiberal rivals."[25] The comparative wealth of the Nephite state as well as its potential for the quick acquisition of wealth (suggesting high productivity) are both noted in the Book of Mormon.[26] It is during the democratic period that the productive capacity of the Nephite state is most conspicuously channeled to military endeavors. Moroni undertakes an extensive project of city construction and fortification, with impressive military results (see Alma 49, especially 49:8).

Captain Moroni led the Nephites in their struggle to maintain their democratic government. *Moroni and the Title of Liberty,* by Minerva Teichert. Courtesy of Brigham Young University Museum of Art. All Rights Reserved.

According to the theoretical logic, democracies should prevail because they have both greater resources to draw upon and greater political will to do so, for a long time if necessary. The above analysis considers the efficacy and capacity of Nephite democracy, but the Book of Mormon makes additional claims about the Nephites' resilience. In contemporary theory the additional benefits granted by democracy create an incentive for democratic citizens to express a willingness to invest a great deal of blood and treasure into state preservation. Conversely, citizens of nondemocracies lack this incentive and may even prefer regime change since the possibility for improvement is greater in less desirable political states.

The wars of Captain Moroni ideally exhibit this phenomenon. Moroni knows that, in contrast to the Lamanite desire for conquest, the Nephites will fight to preserve their "lands, and their liberty, and their church" (Alma 43:30). It would be difficult to express the benefits of the archetypal procedural democracy more clearly than with the three ideals of democracy Moroni recognizes—individually owned property, political freedom, private rather than official religiosity. The reader need not doubt the pivotal role these benefits play in generating public support for the war, as they form the centerpiece of Moroni's appeal to hold the line against the king-men (see Alma 46). Later, upon recognizing Pahoran's government in exile to be on the brink of collapse, the people "flock" to his call to arms to defend the same set of rights (Alma 61:6). The Nephite people do seem to recognize, often at least, the worth of Mosiah's gift (or rather, the Lord's gift through Mosiah).

Although the Nephite's democratic government was designed to promote peace, the Nephites and Lamanites engaged in several serious wars through the course of the book of Alma. *Battle,* by Jorge Cocco Santangelo. May not be copied. For information see www.jorgecocco.com.

Tempering Optimism: Challenges in New Democracies

No political scientist has ever theorized Zion.[27] Instead, all institutional choices entail trade-offs, and Mosiah is well aware of the possible sacrifices his shift to democracy carries. It is because righteous kings cannot be guaranteed indefinitely, and also perhaps because of the position in which he finds himself, that Mosiah opts for democracy (see Mosiah 29:13). He harbors no illusions about democracy being a panacea, nor should the Book of Mormon history be read to inspire any.

Philippe Schmitter examines possible predicaments that frequently plague nascent democracies.[28] "All new democracies," according to Schmitter, "if they are to consolidate a viable set of political institutions, must make difficult choices."[29] Among the problems confronting democracies are "free-riding" and "policy-cycling."[30] In free riding, citizens achieve the benefits of collective goods without participating in producing them. Before institutional roles have solidified, new systems can be replete with opportunities for free gains. After all, it is not yet clear how wealth will be distributed, so critical choices can be made for profit. Korihor accuses Alma of free riding (see Alma 30:27). Nehor preaches the gospel of free riding (see Alma 1:3); what a great idea to be popular, to not have to labor with one's own hands! What more appealing political position could there be?

Such appeal is at the heart of the Nehor's program. It may be interesting that he appears as the first test of the new state, in the first year of the reign of the judges. On reflection, a powerful logic underscores Nehor's choice. Under the system of kings, the presentation of an opposing political platform would have little effect at all. If the king disagreed with a political manifesto, it would be ignored or suppressed. Candidacy means nothing in monarchy. All of this changes once the acquisition of power by others becomes a viable possibility. Nehor's purpose is to attain money and support (see Alma 1:5), the two critical elements of any successful political activity. When Alma accuses him of priestcraft and of its *enforcement*, he reveals that Nehor's dissidence has assumed a politicized tenor.[31] According to Alma, it is when priestcraft rises to this political level that it becomes especially pernicious (see Alma 1:12).

The second dilemma, policy cycling, occurs when new democracies—not having developed stable political positions—encounter "unstable majorities formed by shifting coalitions . . . alienating everyone."[32] Amlici's story, four years after Nehor and still early in Nephite democracy, is the quintessential tale of alienation. In a dramatic election with widely differing alternatives, exactly how the political majority will coalesce is uncertain, as manifest by the "alarming" nature of Amlici's challenge (Alma 2:3). When the majority does take Alma's side, Amlici defects rather than accept the outcome, a tactic familiar to unconsolidated democracies. There is no prior tradition of peaceful change in power, nor in peaceful ceding of power. Without such a tradition, politically ambitious men cannot know for certain the costs of conceding power. This creates an incentive to cling to the chance for power, just as Amlici does.

These problems are more likely in a new democratic state than in an old (and especially a righteous) monarchy.[33] Mosiah may have experienced these types of internal problems, but none are reported prior to democratization. Instead we know only that he "had established peace in the land" (Mosiah 29:40). Democracy would carry risks and responsibilities, as Mosiah understood and impressed on his people (see Mosiah 29:27, 30). Remarkably, the risks the young Nephite state encountered typify those generally experienced during the modern progression to democracy.

Conclusion: Therefore, what?

Ultimately my perspective is devotional rather than evidentiary. Lacking a systematic way of determining a criterion for evidence, I do not suggest

> *It is because righteous kings cannot be guaranteed indefinitely, and also perhaps because of the position in which he finds himself, that Mosiah opts for democracy. He harbors no illusions about democracy being a panacea, nor should the Book of Mormon history be read to inspire any.*

that the above arguments assist in compelling belief. They hopefully underscore the book's significance and complexity. Believers in the Book of Mormon can better understand the claims the book makes about itself as we gain knowledge about *why* and *how* prophetic pronouncements are fulfilled. Mosiah departed from centuries of political tradition because he believed doing so would allow his people to achieve peace as long as they acted wisely.[34] Although it might seem that the period following his rule was especially tumultuous, the historical record bears out the truth of Mosiah's departing counsel. Sadly, the blessing of Mosiah's system only becomes completely clear after it had been destroyed. It is then that the people "united in the hatred of those who had entered into a covenant to destroy the government" (3 Nephi 7:11).

I should also emphasize that this paper seeks to highlight an aspect of the Book of Mormon worthy of attention, not to obscure one of the book's central themes. The most basic lesson in the Book of Mormon's politics is simple: God makes all the difference. Our Father in Heaven is all-powerful—whether the adversary is Laban's fifty or his hypothetical tens of thousands doesn't matter (see 1 Nephi 4:1).

What, then, is the point? When God works miracles he works them according to his will. Often, we know, God works in unsensational ways. "I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass," Alma tells his son (Alma 37:6). Often this is understood to mean that great things are brought to pass by those who are neither powerful nor prominent by worldly standards. In this sense the "simple" are the humble followers of Christ. I presume something along these lines is correct, but another possible reading of the term

simple is natural, or organic. God uses natural processes—those explainable without use of an appeal to divine intercession—to accomplish his purposes. When God blesses his people with success, it is sometimes through this kind of "simple" means.
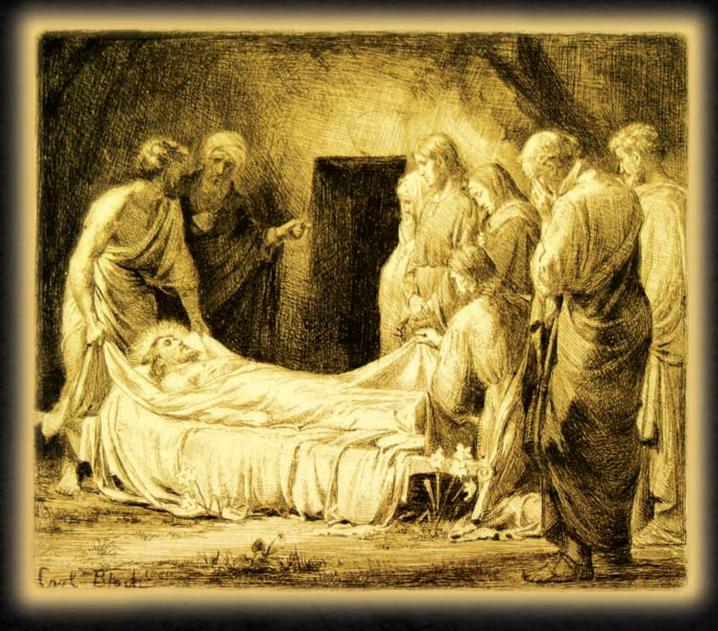
Mosiah changed the Nephites' political institutions because he understood that the kind of state a people live in could make a relevant temporal and spiritual difference in their lives (see Mosiah 29, especially 29:17, 23). All too often, actors will do precisely what institutions allow them to do—a conclusion of scripture as much as of scholarship (see D&C 121:39). The more insulated political leaders are in exercising their invested authority, the greater the barriers to political entry by others will be. In turn, this permits leaders to exploit their peoples. When personal wealth trumps collective protection, leaders govern at the expense of their citizens, their state, and—finally—themselves.

How plausible is it that Joseph Smith (or anyone close to him) could have observed the interplay of the institutions here considered and imagined such an authentic world as the one presented in the Book of Mormon? Until very recently, democracies have been viewed as government-light—softer and gen-tler than their nondemocratic peers, and concomitantly, weaker and less decisive. A major proponent of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville further believed democratic governments to be "decidedly inferior" in matters of international relations.[35] In Joseph's day, Jefferson and Madison worried about this point when trouble brewed with Britain. Fearing that Montesquieu was correct in arguing that democracies tended to be fragmentary, they feared western states might align against the federal government in the event of war. While the modern observer sees the emerging global dominance of democracy and easily acquiesces to the view that democracies could be strong rather than weak, this position has gained currency only as recently as the end of the Cold War. In presenting the Book of Mormon to the world, Joseph Smith turned political theory upside down for no apparent reason. Within the last couple of decades we have begun to find that his reversal actually puts the ideas right side up.

The blessings of democratic governance are easily concealed by more intuitive but misleading views about political strength. Indeed, as Mosiah noted, preparing society for peace is an act for which wisdom—political and spiritual—is a vital requirement.[36]

THREE DAYS
AND
THREE NIGHTS

REASSESSING JESUS'S ENTOMBMENT

DAVID B. CUMMINGS

JESUS'S BODY LAY IN THE TOMB, ACCORDING TO MOST COMMENTATORS, DURING A FULL DAY (SATURDAY) AND PARTS OF ANOTHER TWO DAYS (FRIDAY AFTERNOON AND SUNDAY MORNING). YET, ACCORDING TO ONE KEY PASSAGE IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, THE SAVIOR DREW ATTENTION BEFOREHAND TO THIS PERIOD IN THE TOMB BY SAYING THAT "THE SON OF MAN [WILL] BE THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH" (MATTHEW 12:40). THE OBVIOUS QUESTION IS, WHY THE APPARENT DISCREPANCY? IS THERE A WAY TO LOOK AT JESUS'S ENTOMBMENT THAT WOULD RECONCILE WHAT JESUS SAYS HERE WITH WHAT WE LEARN ELSEWHERE? A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF RELEVANT PASSAGES, PARTICULARLY FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON, WHICH BRINGS AN UNUSUAL SET OF EVIDENCES TO THE ISSUE, LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT JESUS'S EARTHLY REMAINS WERE BURIED THURSDAY AFTERNOON, NOT FRIDAY.

REVIEWING THE QUESTION

Nowhere in the Bible does it state explicitly which day the Savior was crucified. There are advocates for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Harold W. Hoehner,[1] Raymond E. Brown,[2] John P. Pratt,[3] and Jack Finegan[4] all analyze the arguments for each of these days. The following are some of the issues involved in this complex subject.

The argument for a Wednesday crucifixion is based on interpreting Matthew 12:40 as literally 72 hours in the tomb. Since, according to John's gospel, the crucifixion took place on the preparation day for the Passover, this view leads to a Passover Sabbath on Thursday and a weekly Sabbath on Saturday, with the body being embalmed on Friday. A Wednesday crucifixion also puts the resurrection near the end of the weekly Sabbath on Saturday, which conflicts with discovery of the empty tomb early Sunday morning, the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

Ancient Jews counted any portion of a day as a day.[5] There are many examples for both 12-hour *natural* days and nights and 24-hour *civic* days. We reflect the same pattern in modern speech. These observations serve as the basis for theorizing either a Thursday or Friday crucifixion.

Thursday proponents accept Matthew 12:40, counting part of Thursday afternoon as a whole

day and part of Sunday morning before dawn as a whole night. A Thursday reckoning also depends on a Passover Sabbath falling on Friday before the weekly Sabbath on Saturday—that is, the mention of "that sabbath day" being "an high day" (John 19:31) is believed to mark Friday as the Passover Sabbath rather than the weekly Sabbath on Saturday; whereas Friday advocates believe it identifies the two Sabbaths as the same day. See "The Sabbath Days" below.
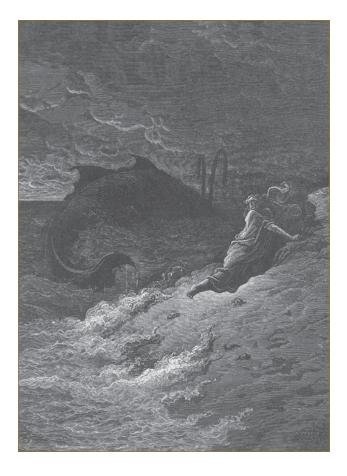
Friday advocates consider Matthew 12:40 to be an idiom,[6] with part of Friday afternoon counted as a whole day *plus a whole night* and the part of Sunday night before dawn as a whole night *plus a whole day*.[7] According to Pratt, "The arguments for Wednesday and Thursday are based almost entirely on one interpretation of an isolated verse (Matthew 12:40), rather than on the many statements that Jesus would rise the third day."[8] Brown downplays Matthew 12:40 as "secondary to prophecies of the Son of Man being raised on the third day (Mark 9:31; 10:34; etc.) which make resurrection by Sunday reconcilable with death and burial on Friday."[9]

Invoking Sabbath work rules, such authors see the "day of preparation" as preparation for the weekly Sabbath. As Hoehner says, "'the day of preparation for [of] the Passover' in John 19:14 seems to have reference to the Friday in the Passover week

rather than the day before the Passover."[10] However, there are no scriptural passages that call the day before the weekly Sabbath a preparation day. Hoehner also says there is no evidence that Nisan 15 in the Jewish calendar was a Sabbath day.[11] However, those work rules also applied to feast days such as Passover, which was a holy day of convocation on which they were to do no servile work (see Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:5–7; Numbers 28:16–18), and the following day was "the morrow after the sabbath" (Leviticus 23:11, 15).

THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAH

There are several biblical references to the sign of the prophet Jonah, including the following: "But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39–40).

In these verses the Savior equates the duration of his own prophesied burial with Jonah's burial. Passages in Matthew 16:4 and Luke 11:29 refer to the sign of the prophet Jonah but without giving its length. Mark 8:12 says, "There shall no sign be given unto this generation," to which the prophet Joseph Smith added "save the sign of the prophet Jonah; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so likewise shall the Son of Man be buried in the bowels of the earth" (Mark 8:12 JST). This seems to add significance to the Savior's prophetic pronouncement on his interment.

HOW WERE DAYS COUNTED?

The Friday proponents emphasize passages such as "The Son of Man . . . shall rise the third day" (Mark 9:31).[12] There are ten such verses in the synoptic Gospels. Many commentators hold that the Jews counted *inclusively,* with Friday as day one.[13] However, they also counted *exclusively.* For example, in a summary of Jesus's teachings on the subject, Mark writes that "the Son of man must . . . be killed, and *after* three days rise again" (Mark 8:31, emphasis added). The term *after* indicates exclusive counting, with Friday as day one. Similarly, on this view, Jesus's opponents quote him as saying, "*After* three days I will rise again" (Matthew 27:63, emphasis added). Luke records two disciples saying to Jesus, whom they do not yet recognize, "to day is the third day *since* these things were done" (Luke 24:21, emphasis added), also denoting exclusive counting.

How can we resolve these apparent contradictions? Proponents of Friday usually resolve them by ignoring terms such as *after.* "Third day" can indeed mean the second day after. However, "third day" can also mean three days *after* an event. Thus the differences above can also be harmonized by adding inferred words such as "and the third day [*after*] he shall rise again" (Mark 10:34).

Jonah Cast Forth by the Whale, by Paul Gustave Doré. Courtesy IRI.

Page 56: *Deposition from the Cross,* by Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn. Courtesy Scala/Art Resource, NY.

Page 57: *The Entombment,* by Carl Heinrich Bloch. Courtesy of Brigham Young University Museum of Art. All Rights Reserved.

THE SABBATH DAYS

The day of crucifixion revolves around a Sabbath day and its meaning. There were two kinds of Sabbaths noted in these passages, the *weekly Sabbath* and the *Passover Sabbath*. The Friday scenario requires that the Passover Sabbath and the weekly Sabbath be the same day.

Variations in chronology persist among the four gospels, and many issues remain unresolved.[14] However, they all address the same event, and each of the four gospels places the Savior's death on the day of preparation, whether for the weekly Sabbath or for the Passover Sabbath. Matthew simply refers to "the day of the preparation" (Matthew 27:62). Mark and Luke identify it as the day before the Sabbath (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54). John identifies it as "the Jews' preparation day" (John 19:42) and also the preparation of the Passover (John 19:14, 19:31). Then, after the weekly Sabbath, early in the morning on the first day of the week, his disciples found the tomb empty (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). Were these the same Sabbath?

In partial answer, John wrote, "for that sabbath day was *an high day*" (John 19:31; emphasis added). Tradition holds that the day was "high" because it was the Passover Sabbath and also a weekly Sabbath. The Greek word *megalē*, translated as "high," can also mean large or great or broad.[15] As an illustration, the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles was a Sabbath, a holy day of convocation and a solemn assembly (Leviticus 23:34–39). Referring to that Sabbath day John chose the same word: "In the last day, that *great day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37; emphasis added). The Sabbath days of the sacred feasts were inherently special, hence "great" or "high."

In addition, in John 19:31 the Greek phrase might also be translated as "*the* great day," giving it additional emphasis. Thus this passage can be interpreted as distinguishing the Passover Sabbath from the weekly Sabbath rather than merging them.

BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCES

Fortunately, the Book of Mormon adds valuable information. The following passages describe events in the New World with which we can synchronize Old World events. They are specific and detailed, especially the three days of darkness.

Samuel the Lamanite prophesied of both the birth and death of the Son of God. Concerning Jesus's birth, he spoke of a "day" and a "night" and a "day" of continuous light (Helaman 14:3–4). In recording the fulfillment of the prophecy, Nephi wrote "day" and "night" in the same explicit way (3 Nephi 1:13, 15, 19). These verses suggest the meaning as *natural* or 12-hour units.

Nephi also prophesied that Jesus was to rise *after* three days in the sepulchre: "Behold, they will crucify him; and *after he is laid in a sepulchre for the space of three days he shall rise from the dead*" (2 Nephi 25:13; emphasis added).

Samuel prophesied that three days of darkness would begin at the death of Jesus and continue to the time when he should rise again. Obviously the nights were also dark, but the times of importance are the *days* of darkness. The following passage gives the duration of darkness:

The prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite concerning the birth and death of Jesus Christ provides crucial clues to the timeline of the three days of darkness. *Samuel the Lamanite,* by Jorge Cocco Santangelo. May not be copied. For information see www.jorgecocco.com.

After the people in the New World suffered through destruction and three days of darkness, the resurrected Jesus Christ appeared and ministered to them. *First Contact,* by Jorge Cocco Santangelo. May not be copied. For information see www.jorgecocco.com.

Behold, in that day that he shall suffer death the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; and also the moon and the stars; and *there shall be no light upon the face of this land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead,* . . . and that *darkness should cover the face of the whole earth for the space of three days.* (Helaman 14:20, 27; emphasis added)

Long before, Zenos had foretold three days of darkness associated with Christ's burial in a sepulchre and as a sign of his death to the inhabitants of the "isles of the sea" and, more especially, to "the house of Israel" (1 Nephi 19:10). In addition, Samuel prophesied of many hours of storms, earthquakes, and upheavals at the Savior's death (Helaman 14:21–23). Incidentally, these cataclysmic conditions have all been ascribed to explosive volcanic eruptions.[16] In a way, the blanketing darkness had been foreshadowed by the three days of darkness invoked over Egypt by Moses (Exodus 10:21–23). That darkness, so thick it could be felt, became a type of the vapor of darkness felt by the Nephites (3 Nephi 8:20).

These signs of Jesus's death, which had been looked for (3 Nephi 8:3), were recorded by Nephi the son of Nephi when the three days of darkness followed three hours of destruction:

And it came to pass that when the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the storm, and the tempest, and the quakings of the earth did cease— for behold, they did last for about the space of three hours; . . . and *then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land.* . . .

And it came to pass that it did last *for the space of three days that there was no light seen.* . . .

And it came to pass that *thus did the three days pass away.* And it was in the morning, and the darkness dispersed from off the face of the land. (3 Nephi 8:19, 23; 10:9; emphasis added)

It seems likely that the ejection of volcanic ash abated during the night (following the third day of darkness), during which the Savior arose from the tomb, and by morning the clouds had dispersed from Nephi's location. Orson Pratt concludes: "The darkness lasted three days, and at the expiration of three days and three nights of darkness it cleared off, and it was in the morning."[17]

CHRONOLOGY IN THE TWO HEMISPHERES

If we can match the sequence of events, which should be simultaneous in the two hemispheres, we may be able to synchronize the biblical accounts with the Book of Mormon account, recognizing that not all biblical passages are uniform.

Nephi was among the multitude at the temple in the land Bountiful when the Savior appeared (3 Nephi 11:1, 8–11, 18). If we accept Bountiful as being in the area of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec,[18] this area lags behind Jerusalem by roughly eight and a half hours although the results should be valid throughout Mexico and Central America and any region north or south. For simplicity we have rounded this off to nine hours.

According to Samuel's prophecy, the darkness was to begin when the Savior suffered death and end when he arose from the dead (see Helaman 14:20). With Jesus's death about 3 PM Jerusalem time, the daytime darkness would have just begun in the New World about 6 AM. If we assume 38 to 40 hours of interment derived from a Friday crucifixion,[19] the "mists of darkness" would have dispersed by 8 PM (adopting 38 hours) the following evening. Hence, the sun would have been visible the third day. A Friday crucifixion therefore appears to yield only two days of darkness in the New World (see figure 1).

From Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:25, Luke 23:44, and John 19:14 we can infer that the crucifixion began sometime between the third hour (9 AM) and the sixth hour (noon). Darkness began in Jerusalem at the sixth hour, approximately 3 AM in the New World (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44–45), and ended with the Savior's death at about the ninth hour, or 3 PM (6 AM in the New World), when an earthquake hit Jerusalem and the temple veil was rent from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The cataclysms in the New World likewise lasted about three hours, and then there was darkness (3 Nephi 8:19). Since the New World darkness was to begin at the death of the Savior (6 AM in the New World), the three hours of

darkness in Jerusalem evidently coincided with the three hours of violence in the Western Hemisphere.

The three days of darkness in the New World began at the death of Jesus and ended in the morning after the mists of darkness dispersed (3 Nephi 10:9). Thus, the Savior would have been resurrected shortly before dawn in Jerusalem or at evening in the New World (Helaman 14:20). In early April the sun would have set at about 6 PM with darkness following shortly thereafter.

These passages lead to table 1 showing the sequence of events in the two hemispheres.

> **TABLE 1: Sequence of Events**
>
> 1. The Savior was crucified from possibly the third hour to the ninth hour (9 AM to 3 PM).
>
> 2. He was put in the tomb between the ninth hour and sunset (3 PM and 6 PM).
>
> 3. Darkness in the New World began at the Savior's death (6 AM) and lasted three days.
>
> 4. The resurrection was before dawn in Jerusalem and in the early evening in the New World after three days of darkness.
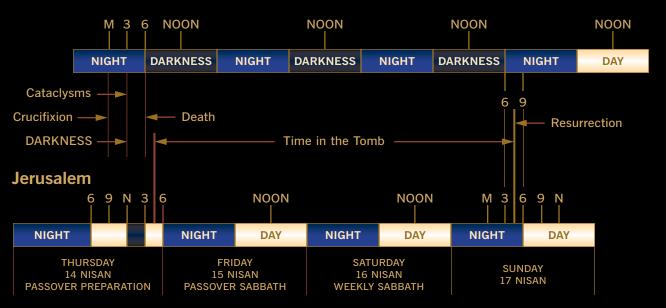
Table 2 details the period of time Christ was possibly in the tomb, allowing us to compare the Thursday and Friday scenarios. This table employs the Jewish custom in Jerusalem, with Friday beginning as Thursday ends at sunset (6 PM).

From these tables we can construct figure 2, which presents the chronology of the crucifixion and resurrection. These events occurred shortly after the beginning of spring (vernal equinox), so days and nights were close to 12 hours long.

FIGURE 1: TWO DAYS OF DARKNESS

Times are modern notation

New World (Time about 9 hours behind time in Jerusalem)

FIGURE 2: THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS*

Times are modern notation

New World (Time about 9 hours behind time in Jerusalem)

M 3 6	NOON		NOON		NOON		NOON
NIGHT	DARKNESS	NIGHT	DARKNESS	NIGHT	DARKNESS	NIGHT	DAY

Cataclysms →

Crucifixion →   ← Death

6 9

← Resurrection

DARKNESS → ← Time in the Tomb →

Jerusalem

6 9 N 3 6	NOON		NOON		M 3 6 9 N	
NIGHT		NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY

THURSDAY 14 NISAN PASSOVER PREPARATION	FRIDAY 15 NISAN PASSOVER SABBATH	SATURDAY 16 NISAN WEEKLY SABBATH	SUNDAY 17 NISAN

*From Matthew 12:40

TABLE 2: Period of Time in the Tomb

Thursday Crucifixion	Friday Crucifixion
Perhaps 1 hour Thursday afternoon	Perhaps 1 hour Friday afternoon
12 hours Friday night	12 hours Saturday night
12 hours Friday daytime	12 hours Saturday daytime
12 hours Saturday night	Perhaps 11 hours Sunday night
12 hours Saturday daytime	**Total: About 36 hours (2 days and 2 nights)**
Perhaps 11 hours Sunday night	
Total: About 60 hours (3 days and 3 nights)	
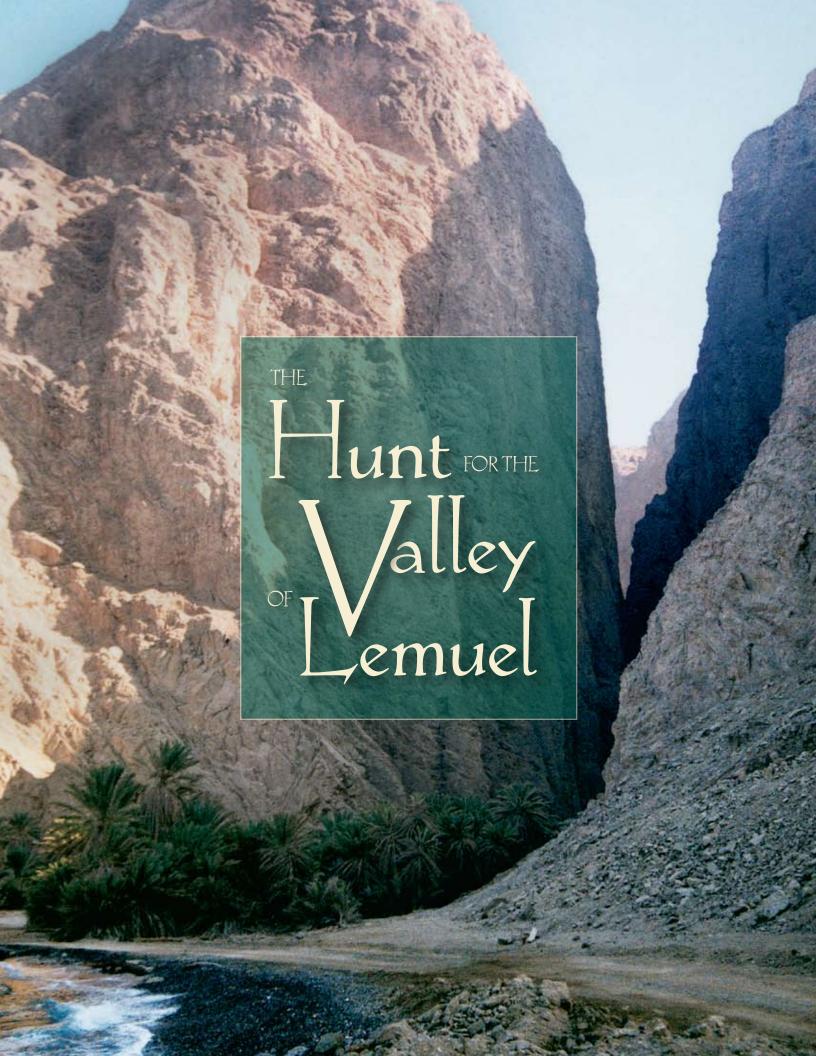
CONCLUSION

The Bible and history alone have not been able to determine which day of the week the Savior was crucified. The more explicit statements, both prophetic and historical, in the Book of Mormon shed additional light on this question.

The arguments against the accuracy of Matthew 12:40, of course, are open to closer examination. Interpretations of the word *day*, how days were counted, and the reckoning of the Passover and weekly Sabbath days, as we have seen, have reasonable alternatives. But, as shown in figure 1, a Friday crucifixion leads to only two days of darkness in the New World. However, a Thursday crucifixion matches the three days of darkness prophesied by Samuel the Lamanite, Zenos, and Nephi the son of Lehi and witnessed by the Nephi the son of Nephi, as shown in figure 2. These conclusions may not be readily accepted, but the alternative would seem to be two days of darkness in the New World rather than three.

THE Hunt FOR THE Valley OF Lemuel

T HE POSSIBLE LOCATION of the Valley of Lemuel has captured the attention of students of the Book of Mormon, particularly following the publication of an attractive site in northwestern Arabia whose characteristics include canyon walls that rise more than 2,000 feet above the valley floor and a stream that runs year around. The canyon, called Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, appears to fit snugly with Nephi's description of a "valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable" featuring a "river, continually running" (1 Nephi 2:9–10).[1] This find is set into profile all the more because surveys have concluded that "the Red Sea . . . is left without a single flowing river. In this respect the Red Sea is unique."[2] Only on the coast of Yemen does one find year-round streams such as Wadi Hagr that drain to the south, but not into the Red Sea: "Wadi Hagr . . . which, at the point where it reaches the sea, is that great rarity of Arabia, a perennial stream."[3] The rare water source in Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, therefore, had seemingly settled the question about the location of the Valley of Lemuel. But other competing views demand to be taken seriously. The question is whether these alternative suggestions carry the merits of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. Let us examine three other proposed sites, all in northwest Arabia and within a few dozen miles of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism.

S. KENT BROWN

The first and northern-most candidate is Wadi Nuwaybiᶜ, a streambed which lies a mere twelve or so miles south of Aqaba, close to the 1961 border between the modern states of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The streambed reaches the Red Sea within Jordanian territory, two miles north of the Saudi border town al-Durrah.[4] According to one report, Wadi Nuwaybiᶜ is a canyon wherein one can find a running stream in its "lower portion."[5] If this information is correct, the stream, apparently freshened by springs, is not seasonal, that is, it does not depend on winter or monsoonal rains.

The second candidate is one of the two wadis in the neighborhood of Biʾr Marshah, either Wadi al-Ḥulayb whose mouth lies two miles away or Wadi al-Ḥashā whose mouth is five miles distant.[6] Biʾr Marshah, an Arabic name, means "well of Marshah." The general region lies some forty-five miles south of the modern Jordanian city Aqaba, along the shoreline, just before one encounters the mountain massif that pushes itself to the water's edge of the Gulf of Aqaba and blocks any foot traffic moving southward.[7] Here, near the coast, a dug well is in place. The wadis near Biʾr Marshah are dry. During the winter, however, as is the case with other dry streambeds in the area, they will spring to life as a result of winter rains. The persistent question is, How long might a seasonal stream in this area flow? The answer is, It depends on the amount and consistency of the rains.

The third candidate was proposed as early as 1976 and lies some eighty plus miles south and east of Aqaba along an established trade route.[8] Its name is al-Badᶜ, an oasis that sits in a wide valley called Wadi Ifal, and shows similar characteristics to Biʾr Marshah in that any stream through the area depends on abundant rain. Though the valley is very wide where al-Badᶜ sits, the distant mountains offer a possible match to Nephi's description of a "valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable" (1 Nephi 2:10).[9] The main challenge for holding this site to be the area of Lehi's camp is its distance from Aqaba. It has been judged to be too far for persons to travel in three days' journey (see 1 Nephi 2:6), a feature that has diminished the appeal of al-Badᶜ.[10] But clear evidence of habitation exists at this site during the era when Lehi and Sariah were on the move, the late Iron Age, as seen in the pottery and the remains of structures.[11]

Water and Distance

Let me now turn to issues that impact all of the proposed sites, beginning with Lehi's description of a "continually running" stream, because this feature constitutes the most vivid and inviting detail from the record, despite a hypothesis that "continually running" refers not to the water in the stream, though it was plainly visible at Lehi's camp, but rather to the dry streambed itself (see 1 Nephi 2:6, 9).[12] I begin by observing that, outside of Nephi's report, no recorded year-around streams empty into the Red Sea along its east coast.[13] This observation applies to the reported spring in Wadi Nuwaybiʿ.[14] The entire west coast of Arabia is dry, except for seasonal streams. No visitors or surveyors have reported such a flow of water. Water brings people, even if only passersby, and such people leave behind remnants of their stay. Moreover, map work is not as precise as a person might think because maps are generally composed of "Miscellaneous Geologic [or Geographic] Investigations" from a variety of sources.[15] Further, the trade route that ran from ancient Ezion Gaber,[16] near where Aqaba now sits, to Wadi Ifal, where al-Badʿ is located, crosses the mouth of Wadi Nuwaybiʿ. If a stream were running out of that canyon, this spot would have been frequented by ancient travelers, even though they would have been less than a typical day's journey south of the last main town, Ezion Gaber, and those travelers would have left behind traces of their stays. An archaeological survey is needed, much like the one conducted in Jordan's mountainous region southeast of the Dead Sea,[17] or the survey in northwest Saudi Arabia.[18] Until someone undertakes such a survey and establishes the presence of human remains in that area, as well as evidence of a perennial stream, we must bracket the site of Wadi Nuwaybiʿ as a serious candidate. There is more.

Even if we cannot know "the precise point from which these three days travel begin,"[19] the fact that a person can reach Wadi Nuwaybiʿ within a day's walk from the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba, rather than three days' journey, diminishes the likelihood of this spot even more. Another observation may stand against Wadi Nuwaybiʿ. The archaeological survey conducted in northwest Arabia reports no irrigation system established in this region in ancient times. The presence of an ancient irrigation system, even in areas that are now completely dry, indicates a regular flow of water that people wanted to control. Such water-works appear in other places, including near al-Badʿ (less than a hundred miles away from Wadi Nuwaybiʿ), that enjoyed the presence of springs two or three thousand years ago.[20]

The mountain valleys near Biʾr Marshah carry some attraction because they are within a comfortable three days' journey of the tip of the Red Sea. If one reckons that the family was traveling about twenty miles per day, or perhaps fewer, then the distance of fifty or so miles fits nicely.[21] The challenge for those who want to champion this place lies in the seasonal character of any stream. To be sure, a dug well exists in this place. But it is unknown whether the well was sunk in ancient times. Even

Left: The Wadi al-Sharmah runs southward to the narrow Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. Right: The pass (right) allows access from the Red Sea up through Wadi al-Ḥulayb and into Wadi al-Sharmah. All photos in this article by George D. Potter, unless otherwise noted.

so, Lehi did not describe a spot with a well but with a "continually running" stream. And that is the rub.

If a person holds that the family of Lehi and Sariah resided at their first camp only during the winter months, that person is making two untested and untestable assumptions: first, one is assuming that the stream in the wadi bed was flowing more or less throughout the entire winter and, second, in the winter season—and only in the winter season—the family camped at this spot.[22] If one assumption is weak, the other weakens.

To address the first assumption, I note that the average rainfall in northwestern Arabia totals 100 millimeters or less per year, which is far from the amount needed for cultivation.[23] This total might support life for a short period of time along the edge of a seasonal stream, assuming that the stream is constant and potable. But the supposition that a constant stream was flowing during winter constitutes a major leap. In my experience, winter waters that run in the region's desert canyons normally come with a rush, following a rainstorm, and are infrequent and dirty, much like the water that Lehi and Nephi saw in their visions: "the water which my father [Lehi] saw was filthiness" (1 Nephi 15:27). As an example, during two winter excavating seasons at Masada, the ancient fortress that overlooks the Dead Sea and lies some 125 miles north of Aqaba and thus fits into the same basic weather pattern, archaeologists saw mainly sudden rain storms that filled the streambeds in the nearby wadis which drained toward the fortress; the water came with such force that it created spurting jets of water. But then the streams subsided, leaving only temporary pools of standing water.[24]

The other underlying issue has to do with the drainage area of the wadis that run to the Red Sea shore near Biʾr Marshah. None are large. The nearby canyons and their tributary valleys are rather lim-

The mountain massif south of Biʾr Marshah prevents foot traffic from continuing along the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba.

ited in their geographical extent, reaching only five to eight miles inland.[25] As a result, the amount of land surface that can collect rain water and funnel it into a stream is moderate at best and thus raises questions about the idea of a sustained stream in the base of one of these canyons, even in a wet winter.

The second assumption, that the family camped in the Valley of Lemuel only during the winter months, raises questions of circular reasoning. That is, first, if the family camped near a seasonal stream, the stream was running during the winter when the weather is wetter. Second, if the seasonal stream runs only during the winter, that was the season the family was camping. In effect, one piece of reasoning supports the other. But if, as I have indicated above, serious observations work against the assumption of a "continually running" winter stream in a canyon near Biʾr Marshah, then the case for a winter camp diminishes significantly. In sum, the strength of the view that the family made its camp near Biʾr Marshah rests almost solely on the reasonable accessibility of this area after three days' travel. The other elements of this view need to be labeled as very uncertain.

The upper valley of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism as it slopes toward the narrow, deep canyon.

The other two candidates, Wadi Tayyib al-Ism and the oasis of al-Badᶜ, suffer from the fact that they lie 75 or more miles south of the point where the family would have reached the northern rim of the Red Sea. The distance alone seems daunting and thus may disqualify them. But one observation, almost by itself, may overcome this obstacle—the ages of the family members. The travelers included Lehi, of course, whom we can estimate to be in his early forties, assuming that he married in his late teens. Sariah, typically, would have been two or three years his junior, possibly as old as forty. The other four persons were their sons. If we estimate the youngest, Nephi, to be in his mid-teens when the family departed Jerusalem, and presume that there were about two years or so between the older siblings, then the brothers ranged in age from, say, sixteen to twenty-two or twenty-three. If this sketch is reasonably accurate, then we are looking at a group of travelers who are young and vigorous enough to endure the rigors of travel, even in the demanding clime and terrain of the Ancient Near East. There is no reason to cut Sariah much slack in this view because, as we know, she gave birth to two sons after beginning the arduous trek from Jerusalem to their Bountiful. Obviously, she was a person of vigor and strength.[26]

On this view, is seventy-five miles too far for this group of six to travel in three days? Most likely not. They surely had loaded their baggage onto animals because the tents alone, if we can appeal to Bedouin tents as a proper model, weigh several hundred pounds.[27] And loaded camels, if camels were indeed the beasts of burden, cover "slightly less than 2 ½ miles an hour" in one experienced person's view, and "three m.p.h. (the proper pace)" in another person's experience.[28] If the family's baggage animals could keep up and if Sariah caught an occasional ride on a camel, I judge that the vitality and youth of the four sons would have pushed the group. To average twenty-five miles per day, therefore, is not unreasonable, even when traveling into the hills and mountains. Groom writes that a loaded camel "rarely exceed[s] 25 miles" per day, but can go that distance. As an example of youthful exuberance, Charles Doughty observed some young Arab men covering 130 miles on camel back in three days, although without baggage.[29] If the family of Lehi and Sariah followed the main trade route from Aqaba to the al-Badᶜ oasis, the path would have been worn, although relatively steep.[30] However, the path toward Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, partly through mountainous country, would likely pose sharper challenges to the travelers because, I assume, it was little traveled, although a person cannot know for certain. But I am willing to accept the word of those who have explored the route to Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, through the mountains from the Read Sea coast, that the way is passable for pack animals.[31] In sum, I find no definitive reason to doubt that the family of Lehi and Sariah could have reached a campsite some seventy-five miles from the northern tip of the Red Sea.
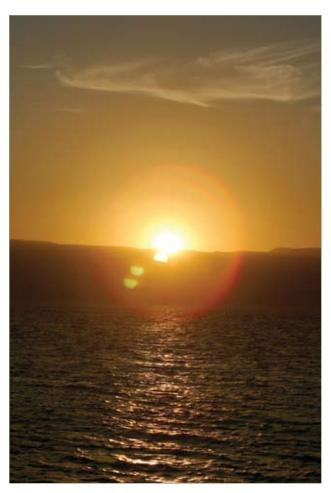
When I approach the question of a "continually running" source of water, the two distant sites, al-Badᶜ oasis and Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, differ mark-

edly from one another. The oasis at al-Bad‘ is graced by wells which have supported life for millennia, going back at least to the bronze age, as the regional archaeological survey has affirmed with the discovery of Midianite pottery.[32] But no running stream exists there. The Hiltons wrote of "springs of water" at al-Bad‘, and, according to Lynn Hilton, they waded in a stream after a rainstorm.[33] But for local needs, people currently depend on wells. Notably, "evidence of ancient irrigation in the Al-Bad‘ area . . . suggests that agricultural methods similar to those at Qurayya [south of al-Bad‘] may have been used at this time [Iron Age]."[34] Hence, in antiquity, people tried not to let any streams in the area run free. But Lehi "saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea" rather than being captured for agricultural purposes (1 Nephi 2:9). Moreover, to learn that the stream ran to the sea would have required him to travel distantly from a camp in al-Bad‘. Rather, as I noted, the ancient irrigation system at al-Bad‘ was to keep runoff waters at the oasis as much as possible, not to guide them to the Red Sea. And any running water at al-Bad‘ results from winter rains; they are not regular at the oasis and are limited largely to two months of the year, January and February. Such streams consist of desert *sayls* or uncontrolled rushing water rather than a constant flow.[35] That is why inhabitants of the oasis in the era of Lehi and Sariah built an irrigation system so that they could control the intermittent, seasonal waters.[36]

On the other hand, Wadi Tayyib al-Ism holds the only observed "continually running" source of water in the entire region. This feature alone recommends this canyon as the Valley of Lemuel. But other features join this one to point strongly to Wadi Tayyib al-Ism as the Valley of Lemuel, as I hope to show. And, in my view, there are no serious competitors. To prefer an unexamined site in place of one that has been examined flirts with unreliability. As I have tried to show, for a group of teenagers and twenty-year-olds, the site is certainly reachable within three days' travel from the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba.

A major strength of the case for Wadi Tayyib al-Ism stands on the fact that the stream has been observed to run year around.[37] And, in the experience of those who have visited this valley and its environs, no other nearby wadi features such a phenomenon. This set of observations is so strong that
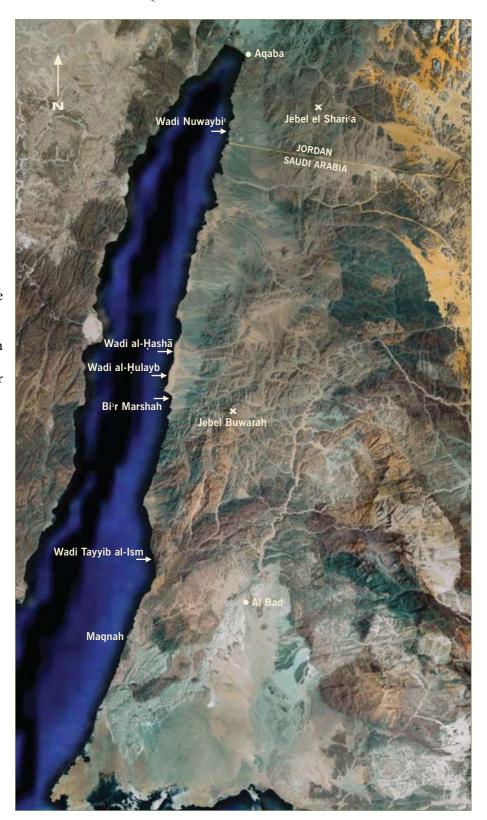
The sun gleams on the waters of the Gulf of Aqaba as it sets in the Sinai hills. Photo by David Lisonbee.

it almost makes the case by itself. There is no need to postulate, for example, that the family must have arrived at the beginning of a winter rainy season and that its members left the camp as the rains dissipated. There is no need to postulate that the family depended on a seasonal stream of any sort. Wadi Tayyib al-Ism offers a "continually running" source of water that lies within the three days of travel that Nephi notes in his narrative (see 1 Nephi 2:6, 9). I ask, Why look anywhere else? Let me continue.

The River and the Red Sea

Several issues lie before us when we examine the physical connection between the "river, continually running," and the Red Sea (1 Nephi 2:9). I turn first to a key passage that affirms a connection

between the two water sources. Nephi writes, "when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea . . ." (1 Nephi 2:9). In the order of Nephi's narrative, this evident discovery by his father followed the pitching of his tent next to the stream and the building of an altar (see 1 Nephi 2:7–8). It will not do to urge that Lehi had learned that his "river" ran into the Red Sea before these other activities of making a camp. The order of Nephi's narrative remains plain. And virtually all commentators agree that only later did Lehi come upon the connection between the stream and the Red Sea rather than seeing it immediately.[38] Of course, I do not want to over-read the text in the matter of Lehi discovering that the stream ran into the Red Sea. But neither do I want to under-read Nephi's words and reach a wrong conclusion. It is evident to me from Nephi's record that this connection between the stream and sea was manifestly not a feature that Lehi knew about before he pitched his tent. Now I must ask, What does this observation mean?

To hold that Lehi and Sariah made camp in a wadi such as Wadi Nuwaybiᶜ or in one of the canyons that stretch eastward near Biʔr Marshah, a person would have to negate the plain sense of Nephi's words about his father seeing the connection between stream and sea only after settling into his camp. Why? Because the approach

The major landforms and settlements in northwest Arabia. Map by Bjorn Pendleton.

The dry river bed carries water from seasonal rains down Wadi Ifal toward al-Badᶜ. Photo courtesy Richard Wellington.

into any of these open wadis would have been from the shoreline, or near it, where family members would have easily seen the stream flowing to the sea. The connection would have been obvious from the beginning. Of course, one could theorize that the family came upon the streambed a mile or so from the shore and only later discovered that the running water actually reached the sea, especially in the case of one of the valleys near Biʾr Marshah because the mountains from which Wadi Nuwaybiᶜ drains stand close to the beach and a person can enter the streambed only near the shore. But such a view of the Biʾr Marshah wadis would constitute special pleading because the shoreline is rather flat and, if a stream indeed was already flowing to the sea, family members, as observant natives from a desert area, would have seen the vegetation growing along its banks and naturally concluded that the stream was still running in the streambed far from the spot where they first encountered the streambed and its running water. Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, in contrast, presents a narrow, winding gorge whose mouth cannot be seen until a person is standing almost at its end. In sum, Nephi's notice of his father's evident discovery of the stream running into the sea significantly diminishes the possibility that the family camped in one of the wadis whose

waters run in the open across a slightly sloped shoreline before emptying into the Red Sea.

To return to this connection between the stream and the sea, this joining presents a potential problem in the case of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism.[39] In a word, the stream that runs through this canyon does not reach the Red Sea but dives beneath a gravel bed 600 or so yards from the shoreline.[40] Technically and scientifically, the fresh water from the canyon reaches the gulf water so that a geologist such as retired Professor Wes Gardner, who has visited the area, does not flinch at this description. However, the text says that the stream reached the Red Sea, and this notation seems problematic for this site. But Nephi's report may not present a problem.

Gardner reports that the shoreline of the Red Sea in this area has been rising.[41] The geology of the region confirms this observation, and is very graphic. The archaeologists who surveyed this general area report that "at elevations of six, ten, twenty and thirty meters above sea level, ancient coral reef terraces occur which are cut through by wadis. The alluvial terraces are probably former beaches which have been similarly uplifted and eroded."[42] Hence, clear geological evidence exists that the northwest coastline of Arabia has been rising. To be sure, "the history and nature of sea level fluctuations as well as crustal movements in this area is complex and as yet poorly understood."[43] In fact, the archaeological survey concluded that the shoreline between Aqaba and Biʾr Marshah has been gradually sinking.[44] Even so, all geological indicators point to the current mouth of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism lying under the waters of the Red Sea in antiquity. Thus, no firm reason exists to doubt the connection in Lehi's day between the stream and the sea. In this light, one of the main objections to Wadi Tayyib al-Ism falls to the side.

Drainage Areas of Wadis

As I noted above, the surface area that drains Wadi Nuwaybiᶜ and the wadis east of Biʾr Marshah are relatively small. In contrast, Wadi Ifal, wherein the oasis al-Badᶜ sits, "drains the largest area in the region."[45] The catch basin above al-Badᶜ is huge, opening the real possibility of strong seasonal run-offs. The problem is that the area forms a triangle of sorts, with narrow canyons at the north end and, on the south, a broadening valley that descends

The granite walls of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism tower above the vehicle shown in the lower right corner of the photograph. The height of the walls is double what is shown in the picture.

gradually almost two dozen miles to the sea. With this configuration, streams can wander in the broad valley, and are rarely concentrated into a single streambed.

For its part, Wadi Tayyib al-Ism is fed by a large system of valleys, though not as extensive as those that run into Wadi Ifal. The three main canyons are Wadi al-Sharmah and Wadi al-Jumah, which run from north to south and parallel one another, and Wadi Ḥiqal, which runs more or less east to west.[46] Not incidentally, as the initial proponent of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism has reported, a person who travels up one of the wadis to the east of Biʾr Marshah will eventually hit either Wadi al-Sharmah or Wadi al-Jumah and then be led downhill to the stunning rock entry of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism.[47] In the matter of water, as Gardner has explained, the water from the rains that fall onto this system of valleys generally sinks into the earth. The total drainage area for Wadi Tayyib al-Ism is about 105 square miles.[48] The accumulated water, when it sinks down to the underlying rock, seeps downward through the soil in the bottoms of the valleys, finally hitting a natural underground dam near the opening of the granite-walled Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. The collected water, when it seeps over the subterranean dam, flows into the wadi and emerges from the earth as a large spring because the underlying bedrock forces the water to the surface.[49]

Character of the Valley

Another possible characteristic of the Valley of Lemuel emerges from Lehi's poetic description: "this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable" (1 Nephi 2:10). Such words have enticed investigators to look for a valley in northwest Arabia that, in its qualities, matches what Lehi must have been looking at when he spoke these words. The earliest attempt centered on the mountains that line

Wadi Ifal near al-Badᶜ. There, as we read, the mountains formed a sturdy, impressive setting that would give travelers a sense of permanence and durability.[50] Even though archaeologists who visited the region called the mountains "landforms . . . low in relief," we can rest assured that they frame an impressive setting for a first-time visitor.[51]

When we turn to the sites just south of Aqaba, Wadi Nuwaybiᶜ and the area around Biʾr Marshah, the eastern mountains rise to substantial heights. Jebel el-Shariᶜa stands east of Wadi Nuwaybiᶜ and reaches 4,260 feet. Jebel Buwarah rises east of Biʾr Marshah and reaches 6,150 feet.[52] Though I have not visited the canyons that run toward these peaks, the mountains in the area are impressive to view from the Sinai Peninsula side of the gulf waters, towering in their stark majesty. The personality of the valleys over which these mountains loom would be thereby enhanced so that we could hear Lehi say, "this valley, firm and steadfast and immovable" (1 Nephi 2:10).

To this point, each of the valleys named above, lying in mountainous terrain, possesses inviting traits that would allow a person to imagine Lehi and his family sensing the permanence and solidity that such a region represents. But all pale in comparison with Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. Although the archaeological survey south of the wadi noted that "Between Manqna [*sic*] and Tayyib al-Ism most of the major wadis reach the gulf of Aqaba through narrow gorges such as the 'siq' at Tayyib al-Ism," the team found no human remains in any of these relatively short, dry valleys that empty into the sea because they are almost inaccessible.[53] Only Wadi Tayyib al-Ism brought on the following description that hints at amazement: "Here [at the mouth], a sheer granite cliff rises from a c. 200 m. wide beach. The Tayyib al-Ism gorge extends c. 4–5 km. and has vertical sides 400–800 m. high; the gorge itself is less than 50 m. wide."[54] In my view, this narrow "gorge," with its sheer rock walls of 2,000 feet, brings us closer to Lehi's words, "firm and steadfast, and immovable," than any other canyon in the region.

Spurs of the incense trail ran through Wadi Rum more than 100 kilometers east of Aqaba. Photo by David Lisonbee.

Conclusion

To date, the al-Badᶜ oasis and Wadi Tayyib al-Ism are the only candidates for the Valley of Lemuel that Latter-day Saints have explored. The others are unexamined. And for the reasons outlined above, the oasis at al-Badᶜ does not match the attractiveness of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. In my view, suggesting unexplored candidates carries crippling liability. Something palpable and real comes from a person walking across a site and examining it. According to my review, the only serious objection to Wadi Tayyib al-Ism is the apparent difficulty of reaching this site from the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba. Because we do not know how the family learned of the place of their first camp, or how they may have reached Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, if indeed they camped there, we have to hold onto this point as a negative stroke against this site. But all other features that we can tease from the text point to this canyon: its "continually running" stream, its evident connection to the waters of the Red Sea and the need to discover that connection, and its impressive gorge. When we factor in the ages of family members, even a seventy-five mile trek from the north rim of the Gulf of Aqaba does not seem out of the question. Hence, although I cannot solve all of the issues, this site remains in my mind the most secure candidate for the Valley of Lemuel. ▦

Ancient Semitic in Egyptian Pyramids?

Paul Y. Hoskisson and
Michael D. Rhodes

An announcement was made recently in Jerusalem claiming that parts of several spells from the text found in the pyramid of Wenis (last king of the 5th Dynasty, who reigned from 2375 to 2345 BC,[1] and the oldest pyramid in which texts are found) were not Egyptian as first assumed, but were rather ancient Semitic (the language group to which Arabic, Babylonian, and Hebrew belong). The claim was almost immediately challenged. Though it will take some time before the academic dust kicked up by scholarly jousting settles, Latter-day Saints may be interested in the implications, should the lines in question turn out to be ancient Semitic.

If the lines prove to be Semitic, they would be one of the oldest—if not the oldest—attestations of any Semitic language. East Semitic (represented by Old Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian) makes its first appearance (personal names aside) in the Old Akkadian period, i.e., about 2300 BC. Northwest Semitic (represented by Ugaritic, Aramaic, Hebrew, Phoenician, etc.) is not attested until 1400 BC at the earliest. Hebrew itself does not appear on the scene until about 950 BC. Southwest Semitic (represented by Arabic, Epigraphic South Arabic, Ethiopic, etc.) does not appear until the middle Iron Age, perhaps as early as 700 BC. If this pyramid text has ancient Semitic writing, that would push the earliest attestation of Semitic text back about 100 years. For this reason alone, the claim that a pyramid text contains Semitic language will generate substantial interest among scholars.

The implications for Latter-day Saints, however, go beyond any interest in ancient Semitic inscriptions. But first a minor digression will be helpful. It seems to be the nature of most scholars in most disciplines to believe that their field of study is unique and therefore not subject to outside influences. Thus, for years, Classicists rejected the notion outright that there could have been any influence on Greek thought, ideas, or culture from outside of Greece. It has only been in the last twenty years or so that Classicists with the stature of Walter Burkert have been able to convince other Classicists that the ancient Near East did exercise a great deal of influence on the development of Greece, from religion to literature to artifact.

Egyptologists have also tended to reject the possibility of any influence on Egypt from outside the Nile Valley. Egyptian documents speak rather disparagingly of non-Egyptians. Yet the Egyptian language is classified as belonging to the Hamito-Semitic language family, making it distantly related to Semitic languages. In addition, several of the dynasties of Egypt were admittedly of non-Egyptian origin. Nevertheless, most Egyptologists would never admit more than a passing influence on Egypt from non-Egyptians, at least before the end of the Bronze Age in 1200 BC. For them, like the die-hard Classicists, nearly all influence flowed out of Egypt, not into Egypt from other regions. The thought of finding ancient Semitic lines embedded in one of the oldest and most Egyptian of all things Egyptian would be

greeted with disdaining skepticism by many Egyptologists. Yet, objective Egyptologists will look at the assertion seriously enough to evaluate the claim and provide corroboration or well-reasoned refutation.

Naturally, the merits of the assertion will be discussed in academic circles for years, if not decades, to come. In the meantime, however, while the scholarly discussion rages on, there are several points of interest for Latter-day Saints that can be explored without waiting for the academic fallout to settle and the skies to clear.

It has long been the belief of Latter-day Saints who accept the Book of Abraham as authentic that non-Egyptians did have substantial influence on Egypt long before the beginning of the Iron Age, i.e., 1200 BC. After all, we believe that Abraham sat briefly on the throne of Egypt and that he tutored Egyptians on astronomy. Some Latter-day Saints would even go so far as to suggest that Abraham taught them much concerning the gospel and its ordinances. Such ideas would seem preposterous to most Egyptologists. Yet if the claim that ancient Semitic lines are found among the Pyramid texts proves true, then Latter-day Saint claims would no longer seem so far-fetched.

Although most Egyptologists believe that Egypt had considerable influence on the land of Canaan, in past years not many scholars of Northwest Semitic (Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic, etc.) would admit Egyptian influence except in the realm of politics. For example, a few years ago any suggestion that Hebrews might have adopted Egyptian script to write Hebrew, as the Book of Mormon suggests, would have been greeted with loud guffaws, and indeed was. All that has changed. Today few scholars of Semitic languages would deny that Egypt and the Egyptian language had considerable influence on Hebrew. Enough examples of Hebrew written with Egyptian script have been found so that no one would dismiss out of hand the claims of the Book of Mormon. If this claim of finding ancient Semitic written with the Egyptian script among the pyramid texts proves tenable, then the practice of writing a Semitic language using Egyptian script would be pushed back about 2000 years and would no longer be confined to the Iron Age and later.

But before Latter-day Saints allow their scholarly salivation to begin, we need to emphasize again that only an assertion has been made. And even though nothing has yet been published, already the dust has been kicked up and the fur is flying through hyperspace. It is one of those academic skirmishes that Latter-day Saints will watch with vested interest for some time to come. And when the storm has passed and the skies have somewhat cleared, a new report will appear in these pages.

An Unexpected Gift

Larry EchoHawk

"Echo Hawk"—that is the English translation of the name given to my great-grandfather, a Pawnee Indian who did not speak English. He was born in the mid-1800s in what is now Nebraska.

Among the Pawnee the hawk is a symbol of a warrior. My great-grandfather was known for his bravery, but he was also known as a quiet man who did not speak of his own deeds. As members of his tribe spoke of his good deeds it was like an "echo" from one side of the village to the other. Thus, he was named "Echo Hawk."

According to accounts of the first white men who encountered them, the Pawnee people were estimated to number about 20,000. Under the laws of the United States they had the right to occupy 23 million acres of land on the plains of Nebraska.

When my great-grandfather was 19 years of age, the Pawnee people were forced to give up their homeland along the Platte River to make way for white settlers. In the winter of 1874 the Pawnee people were marched several hundred miles to a small reservation located near the Cimarron River in the Oklahoma Indian Territory.

Like so many other tribes before them, the Pawnee had their own "Trail of Tears." Tears on that trail from the Platte to the Cimarron were shed for loss of a homeland, loss of the great buffalo herds (slaughtered for their tongues and hides), and loss of a way of life.

After arriving at that small Oklahoma reservation, the Pawnee people did not number 20,000. They did not number 5,000 or even 1,000. Less than 700 Pawnee people survived.

That is a painful history. But the pain was not limited to one generation. In his childhood, my father was taken from his parents by the federal government and sent to a boarding school far distant from his home. There he was physically beaten if he spoke the Pawnee language or in any way practiced his native culture or religion. In my generation, my oldest sister was sent home from a public school because her skin was the wrong color. I remember sitting in a public school class-room and hearing the teacher describe Indians as "savage, bloodthirsty, heathen renegades." And, as I look back through past years, perhaps the most painful thought is the realization that in my childhood my family had no *expectation* of achieving a higher education and becoming doctors, lawyers, or engineers. A college education seemed beyond our reach.

But out of that pain was born promise. Of the six children born to my parents, all six of us went to college (four of us graduated from Brigham Young University). Three of us became lawyers. We have received the best this country has to offer—the full promise of America.

The most vivid realization of that promise for me came in 1990. That year I ran for the office of attorney general of Idaho. I knew I faced a daunting task because there had not been a member of my political party elected as attorney general in 20 years. There had not been a person from my county elected to any statewide office in 38 years. And, in all the history of the United States, there had never been an American Indian elected

to any statewide, state constitutional office (like governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, or attorney general).

Furthermore, right after I filed my declaration of candidacy with the secretary of state, a political writer for the largest newspaper in the state wrote that I had no chance to win the race for attorney general. He said that I had started the election with three strikes against me because I was a Mormon, an Indian, and a Democrat. In response to this challenge, I just went out and worked as hard as I could on that campaign.

On election night I was at a hotel where voting results were being reported. Late that night I received a call from my opponent conceding the election. I remember hanging up the phone and thinking about what I should say to a large group of news reporters who were waiting for me to comment on that historic election. After a few moments of reflection, I walked out to meet the news media and made a statement. I did not have a written speech. I did not need one. I simply spoke from the heart and repeated words I had heard when I was 15 years old. They were spoken by a black civil rights leader on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

> I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream . . . that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." . . . I have a dream that my . . . children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.[1]

That night I felt the power of those words and the realization of that dream. I felt the full promise of America.

For me, life began to change at the age of 14, when two missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lee Pearson and Boyd Camphuysen, came into my home and presented the missionary lessons. Up until that time I knew very little about Christian religion and had seldom attended any church. When the time came for the missionaries to challenge our family to be baptized, they first asked my dad, and then my mother, and then the children, from the oldest to the youngest. I was the second youngest in the family, and by the time they got to me everyone else had said yes. When they asked me, I remember looking at my dad, who had a stern look on his face, and I knew what my answer should be.

I was baptized, but I did not have a testimony of the truthfulness of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I was, however, glad that my family had been baptized. Prior to joining the Church I had doubts about whether my family would stay together because of my father's drinking problem, a habit that had led to problems within our home. After we were baptized my father quit drinking and family life was much better. However, I continued to live much the same as I had before I was baptized.

Fortunately, my parents made me go to church every Sunday and I had the benefit of listening to Sunday School teachers, priesthood leaders, and sacrament meeting speakers. I paid attention, but church attendance was not influencing my life.

Things began to change between my junior and senior years of high school, when Richard Boren became my priests quorum advisor. I felt like he took a special interest in me. He was a successful lawyer, and I admired him very much. He told me repeatedly, "You can do anything you want. You can go to college, get a good education, and do wonderful things with your life." He pulled me aside and said, "If you really want to do well in sports, you have to work at it. You have to set goals and develop yourself."

At this point, I was not a particularly good football player. Although I was not a bad athlete, I was not anything special. With Brother Boren's encouragement and guidance, I set my goal to become a good football player. We set up a program of weight lifting, running, and skills development.

I was small in size. To become a good football player I had to gain weight. Weight lifting would help, but I had to do more. I began mixing up a special weight-gaining formula to drink. It consisted of raw eggs, powdered milk, peanut butter, and other fattening things. I always put a little vanilla in it to make it taste better. It still tasted awful, but in one year I gained 20 pounds. When I showed up for football practice at the beginning of my senior year of high school,

my football coaches could hardly believe their eyes.

I thought I was going to be a defensive back, but when practices started the coaches had me listed as a quarterback. This was disappointing because the captain of the football team was the starting quarterback. I feared that I would again be on the bench. But I was prepared to compete and I gave it everything I had on the practice field. After a few days of practice, I came into the locker room and saw my name listed as the first-team quarterback. I had beaten out the captain of the football team!

A life-changing moment occurred during two-a-day practices before the first game of the season. Between practice sessions, I was playing with my brother and two friends. Someone threw a ball. I turned around at the wrong time and the ball hit me squarely in the eye. It was a serious and painful injury. I was taken to the emergency room at the hospital. My eye was swollen shut. I could not see a thing out of that injured eye. The doctor told my parents and me that it was too early to tell, but I might lose the sight in that eye. He bandaged both eyes and sent me home.

I had to lie in bed for a week. You can imagine how devastating this injury was to me because I had worked so hard and the first game of the season was just a week away. I kept saying to myself, "How could this happen? Why me? How unfair."

But this was a turning point in my life because, as I lay there in bed, for the first time I started to seriously think about the other things Brother Boren had talked about. He had talked about the gospel of Jesus Christ, the teachings of the Book of Mormon, and the power of prayer.

I remember slipping out of bed to my knees. It was the first time in my life that I had ever prayed intently. There I was, with bandages on my eyes, alone in my bedroom, praying for help. I remember saying, "Heavenly Father, please, if you are there, listen to my prayer and help me not lose the sight in my eye." I said, "I promise, if I can just keep the vision in my eye, I will read the Book of Mormon as Brother Boren has challenged me to do."

When the bandages first came off, I could not see out of the injured eye. But gradually, day by day, my sight came back to near-perfect vision within a week.

My football team, from Farmington High School, had played their first game, and the season was underway. Soon the doctor cleared me to practice with the team. I was able to travel with the team to the next game in Grand Junction, Colorado, but I did not think I was going to play in the game.

That night our team fell behind by two touchdowns in the first half. Just before halftime my coach approached me and asked me if I wanted to play. I said yes. During halftime in the locker room the coach came to me and said my doctor and parents had cleared me to play. He said to be ready—I might get a chance to play in the second half of the game. We did not play well at the start of the second half. Finally, the coach came to me and said, "The next time we get the ball, you are going in to play quarterback." I remember being on the sideline and kneeling on one knee (like football players sometimes do to rest and watch the game). I just dropped my head and said a prayer. I whispered that prayer with "real intent" (Moroni 10:4) because I was about to face my biggest challenge on an athletic field. This would be my chance.

The coach called me over, told me the first play to run, and sent me into the game. The play was a bootleg, pass-run option. I was supposed to fake a handoff to the halfback, hide the football on my hip, and roll out around the end. If the field was clear, I was supposed to run with the ball. If the field was not clear, I was suppose to try to throw the football to a receiver. I took the snap, faked the handoff, and rolled out around the end. I could tell after just a few strides that I would not be able to run the ball for a gain. A defensive end was rapidly pursuing me and was about to tackle me for a loss. At the last second I saw one of my teammates downfield. I planted my foot, and—this is where the weight lifting paid off—I threw the football as far as I could. As soon as I turned the ball loose, I was clobbered. I was on my back when I heard a loud roar in the stadium. I remember thinking, "I don't know whether they are cheering for my side or the other side." I jumped up and looked downfield. I saw my teammate with the ball 68 yards down the field in the end zone. It was a touchdown! That was the greatest moment of my teenage life. To me, it was an answer to my prayer.

I played the rest of the game. I passed for another touchdown and ran for two more. That night my team, the Farmington Scor-

pions, came from behind and beat the Grand Junction Tigers. The next day my name was in the headlines of our local newspaper.

I had another eventful football game that year in Albuquerque. We played the state championship team harder than they had been played in any other game that year. After the game ended one of the football coaches from the University of New Mexico came into our dressing room. He introduced himself to me and said, "We like what we saw tonight." He shook my hand and told me that he would be watching me the rest of the year.

Having recovered my sight after the accident, I had immediately started reading the Book of Mormon. I had not been a good student through junior high and high school. I struggled because my mind was not focused on school. I loved sports but not academics. The Book of Mormon would be the first large book I had ever read from cover to cover.

As Brother Boren had suggested, I planned to read ten pages every night. I never missed a night. When I finished the entire book, I knelt down and prayed. At that moment, I had my first very strong spiritual experience. I knew then the Book of Mormon was true. I had received my most important answer to prayer. Up until that moment, I had not realized that Heavenly Father had been watching over me and giving me answers to all my prayers—for healing and for a witness of truth.

It seemed to me that the Book of Mormon was about my Pawnee Indian ancestors. The Book of Mormon talks about a people (the Lamanites) who would be scattered, smitten, and

nearly destroyed. But in the end they would be blessed if they followed the Savior. That is exactly what I saw in my own family history. When I read the Book of Mormon, it gave me very positive feelings about who I was, what Heavenly Father had for me to accomplish in life, and how I could be an instrument in his hands in serving the needs of other people.

Not long after I finished reading the Book of Mormon and after the football season, I was sitting in a class when a student messenger passed me a note. It said I was to go see the football coach. I went down to his office and knocked. When I opened the door and looked across the room, I saw the head football coach of the University of New Mexico. I remember that moment vividly because, as soon as I saw him, I knew I was going to college.

Brigham Young University also recruited me, but I was not sure whether BYU would offer me a scholarship. I remember the meeting with Tommy Hudspeth, the head football coach. He asked me whether I had any other scholarship offers. I said, "Yes, I have a full-ride scholarship to the University of New Mexico." I happened to have the scholarship offer from New Mexico in the notebook I was carrying. I handed him the letter and he read it. He folded it up, handed it back, and said, "You have a full scholarship at BYU if you want it." My hard work, encouraged by Brother Boren, had paid off, opening a door to a college education. But more importantly, a seemingly freak accident had opened a spiritual door through which celestial blessings have continued to pour upon my

family and me. Reading the Book of Mormon and receiving a testimony of it gave me an unexpected but welcomed gift in my life.

I came to Brigham Young University in August 1966 to earn a college education and to play football for the Cougars. Right from the beginning I was earmarked to play as a defensive back. It was a challenge since I weighed only 165 pounds. I was the starting defensive safety on the freshman team and thereafter played in every BYU football game in my sophomore, junior, and senior years. I was the starting free safety for the Cougars as a junior and senior and never missed a defensive play.

Being a student athlete at BYU for four years was a remarkable spiritual experience for me. I associated with many great men and women and learned important lessons in life under their tutelage. I became a product of the BYU experience. My testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ grew and I solidified my vision of what I should do with my life.

There was a companion spiritual influence in my youth. Spencer W. Kimball was one of my greatest mentors. At church in New Mexico people talked about this apostle who had a great love for Indian people; the name of Spencer W. Kimball was revered. Prior to coming to BYU I met him at an Indian youth conference in Kirtland, New Mexico, a largely LDS community about ten miles outside of Farmington. I remember standing out on a softball field with several other Indian youths, waiting for this apostle to come. There was a lot of anticipation. A car pulled up. Men in dark suits

got out and came walking across the field. All these young Indians were waiting for the apostle. As the men approached, I was standing there thinking, "Which one is he?" Finally, he stepped forward. He started talking to us in a raspy voice. My thought was, "Is this him?" The wonderful thing about him was that he befriended us all very quickly—this was a real feat because it is not easy to get close to Indian youths.

Later, when I was a student at BYU, I heard him speak several times. Like Brother Boren, he provided a blueprint for my life. When I was a BYU student he gave a speech entitled "This is My Vision."[2] In this talk, he related a dream: "I woke up and I had this dream about you—about the Lamanites. I wrote it down. It may be a dream. It may be a vision. But this is what I saw you doing." In one part of the speech, he said, "I saw you as lawyers. I saw you looking after your people. I saw you as heads of cities and of states and in elective office." To me it was like a patriarchal blessing and a challenge from a prophet of God: "Get an education. Be a lawyer. Use your education to help your people." That is what I wanted to do. I carried an excerpt from that talk in my scriptures. At a certain point in my life, I read the passage where he said we could become leaders of cities and states, and it was as if it were directed specifically to me. Even though I had never envisioned running for elective office, I knew that I could and should do it.

I loved President Kimball. The day he passed away, I cried. I was overcome because I had felt his love for me. I had seen so much of the good that he had accomplished for all people. But I was especially grateful for what he had done to lift Native Americans.

When I graduated from BYU I decided to become a lawyer for one reason: to help Indian people. After graduating from law school I spent nine years working as the attorney for Idaho's largest Indian tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock tribe, located at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. I saw a marvelous awakening under laws that now help native people to become self-sufficient and economically strong. I have always thought it no accident that Indians were able to survive as a separate, identifiable people. I do not know how the Lord is going to use such people in his ultimate plan. But I see many Native Americans who have been able to earn a college education and do the same kinds of things I have done. There has been a very definite positive cumulative impact.

During the Vietnam War, I volunteered for service in the United States Marine Corps. Soon after I arrived in Quantico, Virginia, for boot camp, I found myself standing at attention in front of my bunk in our barracks along with 54 other Marine Corps recruits. I met my drill instructor when he kicked open the door to the barracks and entered while yelling sentences laced with profanity. He was a tough, battle-hardened veteran who had been wounded in Vietnam. He started at one end of the barracks and confronted each recruit one by one. Without exception, the DI found something about each recruit to ridicule, with vulgar language. When it was my turn, the DI grabbed my duffle bag and dumped my personal belong-ings onto my bunk. I could not see what he was doing because I had my back to my bunk and we had been instructed to stand at attention with our eyes looking straight ahead. The DI looked through my things and grabbed my Book of Mormon. He then walked up to me and I braced myself for his attack. I expected that he would yell at me as he had done with all the other recruits. Instead, he stood close to me and whispered, saying, "Are you a Mormon?" As we had been instructed, I yelled, "Yes, Sergeant Instructor." Again, I expected he would then rip into me and my religion. He paused, and raised his hand that held my Book of Mormon, and then in a very quiet voice he said, "Do you believe in this book?" Again, I yelled out, "Yes, Sergeant Instructor." At this point I was sure he would yell out disparaging words about Mormons and the Book of Mormon. But he just stood there in silence. Finally, he walked back to where he had dumped my personal things and gently laid my Book of Mormon down. He then proceeded to walk right by me without stopping and went on to the next recruit and ridiculed and disparaged him with vile language, and thereafter he did the same with every other recruit.

I have often wondered why that tough Marine Corps drill instructor spared me that day. But I am glad I was able to say without hesitation that I am a Mormon and that I know the Book of Mormon is true. That testimony is a precious gift given to me with the help of two missionaries, a priests quorum leader, and a prophet of God. For this I am very grateful. ▨

ENDNOTES

1. Oliver was born in Wells, Vermont, to William and Rebecca Fuller Cowdery. He was the youngest of eight children. The others were Warren (b. 1788), Stephen (b. 1791), Dyer (b. 1793), Erastus (b. 1796), Sally (b. 1799), Lyman (b. 1802), and Olive (b. 1804). Oliver's mother died on September 3, 1809, and his father married Keziah Pearce Austin, a widow, on March 18, 1810. William and Keziah had three daughters: Rebecca Marie (b. 1810), Lucy Pearce (b. 1814), and Phoebe (b. 1817). Lucy Cowdery Young wrote that "Oliver was brought up in Poultney Rutland County Vermont and when he arrived at the age of twenty he went to the State of New York where his older brothers were married and Settled and in about two years my father moved there" (Lucy Cowdery Young to Brigham H. Young, March 7, 1887, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [hereafter Church Archives]). Lucy also claimed Oliver was born in 1805, however (the correct year is 1806), so Oliver's arriving in New York as early as 1825 would be partially consistent with her account. See Larry E. Morris, "Oliver Cowdery's Vermont Years and the Origins of Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 39/1 (2000): 106–29, for more information on Oliver's early history.

2. *Lyons Advertiser* (New York), October 17, October 24, October 31, and November 7, 1827. A lost-letter notice could mean any number of things. For example, it could simply mean that the writer of a letter falsely believed the intended recipient to be living in the area in question. It could also mean that the recipient had moved from the area—or had not yet moved to the area. Again, it could mean that the recipient did live in the area but had failed to pick up—and pay postage for—mail waiting at the post office. Interestingly, the name listed after William Cowdery's is that of Solomon Chamberlain, a Lyons cooper who became convinced of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon in 1829 and used proof sheets of the not-yet-published book to preach in Canada. He was baptized in April 1830, endured persecutions in Missouri, crossed the plains as part of the original 1847 pioneer company, and died in Utah in 1862 or 1863. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 809–10. Thanks to Dale Broadhurst for informing me of the *Lyons Advertiser* lost-letter list.

3. Oliver's whereabouts during the mid-1820s have become a matter of controversy. Some critics, such as Wayne L. Cowdrey, Howard A. Davis, and Arthur Vanick (*Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon? The Spalding Enigma* [St. Louis: Concordia, 2005], 1237–82) speculate that Oliver arrived in New York around 1822, became involved in the printing business, conspired with Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to produce the Book of Mormon, and even served as a scribe to William Morgan, a former Mason who threatened to reveal Masonic secrets and was apparently murdered as a result. There are no documents from the 1820s supporting such claims, however, only late reminiscences that are dubious at best. See Matthew Roper's detailed response in "The Mythical 'Manuscript Found,'" *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): 7–140. On the other hand, a critic like David Persuitte (*Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon* [Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1985]) argues that Oliver stayed in Poultney, Vermont, until 1825—long enough to become friends with Poultney minister Ethan Smith, obtain a copy of his book *View of the Hebrews* and a hypothetical, unpublished romance also written by Ethan Smith, and deliver both to Joseph Smith (who supposedly used them to produce the Book of Mormon). Again, none of this guesswork can be backed up by primary documents. See Morris, "Vermont Years," 118–21.

4. Manuscript, Lyons, New York, Hugh Jameson Docket Book (January 1, 1828–July 21, 1829), 309, Lyons, New York, town offices. Hugh Jameson was a justice of the peace in Lyons. Thanks to Richard L. Anderson and Scott Faulring, who located and transcribed this document, for generously sharing their research.

5. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool, England: Richards, 1853), 122 [hereafter *Biographical Sketches*].

6. Lucy Mack Smith, Preliminary Manuscript [1844–45], Church Archives (hereafter Preliminary Manuscript), in Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 424.

7. *Biographical Sketches*, 126. Reconstructing a precise chronology for this time period is problematic because of differences in Joseph Jr.'s and Lucy Mack Smith's accounts. Joseph said that "immediately" after his return to Harmony, in July 1828, the heavenly messenger returned the Urim and Thummim (which had been taken in consequence of Joseph "having wearied the Lord in asking for the privilege of letting Martin Harris take the writings"). Joseph then received the revelation now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 3 through the Urim and Thummim. "After I had obtained the above revelation," recorded Joseph, "both the plates, and the Urim and Thummin were taken from me again, but in a few days they were returned to me" (Joseph Smith, Manuscript History of the Church, Book A-1, Joseph Smith Papers, Church Archives [hereafter "Manuscript History"], in Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003], 1:72–73 [hereafter *EMD*]). Lucy, on the other hand, said in one portion of her reminiscences that the Urim and Thummim was returned on September 22, 1828, and that sometime after that, she and her husband visited Joseph (see *Biographical Sketches*, 126). Complicating the matter even further, she said in another part of her history that "nearly two months" had passed when she and Joseph Sr. decided to go to Harmony. Since Joseph apparently returned to Pennsylvania the first week of July, such reckoning places Joseph Sr. and Lucy's trip south around the beginning of September rather than at the end of the month. I believe Lucy was simply mistaken about the September 22 date and that the plates and Urim and Thummim were returned to Joseph in July and that his parents visited early in September, arriving back in Manchester on or before September 11, the date when Gain C. Robinson visited the Smith family and charged Joseph Sr. for medicine (see note 10). This is one of a number of instances where a third-party account confirms details of Lucy Mack Smith's history—rather impressive considering the fact that she dictated it in 1844–45.

8. Preliminary Manuscript, 431.

9. *Biographical Sketches*, 128.

10. Gain C. Robinson Day Book, 1827–1830, in *EMD*, 3:439.

11. Preliminary Manuscript, 431. As Anderson explains, "'Salivation' was a medical treatment that employed mercury to generate an abnormal flow of saliva" (*Lucy's Book*, 431 n. 194). Sophronia lived to the age of seventy-three and died in 1876.

12. Preliminary Manuscript, 431.

13. William Lang, *History of Seneca County: From the Close of the Revolutionary War to July, 1880; Embracing Many Personal Sketches of Pioneers, Anecdotes, and Faithful Descriptions of Events Pertaining to the Organization of the County and Its Progress* (Springfield, OH: Transcript Printing, 1880), 364. Lang

was a friend and associate of Oliver's in Ohio during the 1840s.

14. Preliminary Manuscript, 432.

15. See Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), 97, cited in Stanley R. Gunn, *Oliver Cowdery: Second Elder and Scribe* (Salt Lake City: Book-craft, 1962), 27.

16. Manuscript, Manchester Commissioners of Common Schools, report "To the Super-intendent of Common Schools of the State of New York," July 1, 1829, Manchester Town Office, Clifton Springs, New York, Public School Records, 1828–1915. Thanks again to Richard L. Anderson and Scott Faulring for sharing their research.

17. John Stafford interview, 1881, in *EMD*, 2:123.

18. Lorenzo Saunders interview, 1884, in *EMD*, 2:134. In an 1887 interview, Saunders claimed he saw Cowdery "writing, I suppose the 'Book of Mormon' with books and manuscripts laying on the table before him" (in *EMD*, 2:213). A much more rea-sonable explanation is that Cowdery was simply prepar-ing his school lessons—he had not yet met Joseph Smith, and there is no evidence that he contributed to the content of the Book of Mormon.

19. A close look at the Hurlbut, Kelley, Thorne, and Dem-ing collections, for example, reveals a multitude of state-ments about the plates, very few of them based on firsthand conversations with Joseph Smith. See *EMD*, 2:1–214.

20. Horatio Gates Spafford, *A Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Albany: Packard, 1824), 400–401, cited in Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Ori-gins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1971, published by the Joseph Fielding Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, 2000), 15.

21. David Whitmer interview with the *Kansas City Journal*, June 1, 1881, in Lyndon W.

Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* [hereafter *Whitmer Interviews*] (Orem, UT: Gran-din Book, 1991), 60. David Whitmer wrote a letter to the editor of the *Kansas City Jour-nal*, June 19, 1881, correcting several items in the published interview but making no cor-rections to the sections dis-cussing Oliver Cowdery (see *Whitmer Interviews*, 71–73).

22. "The Book of Mormon," *Chi-cago Tribune*, December 17, 1885, p. 3, cited in Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Whit-mers: A Family That Nour-ished the Church," *Ensign*, August 1979, 35.

23. Diedrich Willers to Ellen E. Dickinson, January 19, 1882, in *EMD*, 5:282.

24. Mary Bryant Alverson Mehling, *Cowdrey-Cowdery-Cowdray Genealogy: William Cowdery of Lynn, Massachu-setts, 1630, and His Descen-dants* (n.p.: Frank Allaben Genealogical, 1911), 79.

25. See Morris, "Vermont Years," 118–20.

26. Preliminary Manuscript, 432. Although Lucy indicates that Oliver immediately moved in with the Smiths, David Whit-mer recalled that Oliver ini-tially said he was acquainted with the Smiths, with no mention of his boarding with them at that time. Since David takes greater pains to draw distinctions, I tend to conclude that Oliver knew the Smiths for a period of time before moving in with them.

27. Preliminary Manuscript, 432.

28. *Whitmer Interviews*, 60. As noted, the exact sequence of events is uncertain, particu-larly so because Lucy did not mention Oliver's relationship with David Whitmer, and David did not mention Oliver moving in with the Smith family—and because neither of them provided specific dates for various events. My speculative timetable attempts to take the statements of both David and Lucy into account. As for claims that Joseph Jr. had promised to share the plates with others, it is perfectly possible, given the popularity of treasure seeking throughout New York and New England during this time, that Joseph and various neighbors had agreed to split

the profits of any treasure that any of them found. Although Joseph viewed the plates in religious terms, quite apart from the kind of treasure he had sought while working for Josiah Stowell, the neighbors made no such distinction.

29. *Whitmer Interviews*, 60, 61.

30. Hugh Jameson Docket Book.

31. Joseph Knight Sr. reminis-cence, "Manuscript of the His-tory of Joseph Smith," circa 1835–47, in *EMD*, 4:19.

32. Manuscript History of the Church, *EMD*, 1:73. Joseph Jr. did not mention that Samuel had accompanied his father to Harmony, while Lucy did not mention the trip at all. Sec-tion 4 was first published as chapter 3 of the Book of Com-mandments in 1833.

33. Preliminary Manuscript, 432.

34. *Biographical Sketches*, 128. There are three other fac-tors to consider when asking when Joseph Sr. first told Oliver about the plates. First, Lucy's phrase "a long time" is ambiguous, to be sure. How-ever, given the general tone of her explanation, I believe a late February time frame is more probable than early January, or earlier. Second, Lucy strongly implies that Joseph Sr. was continually on the scene after telling Oliver—not possible if Joseph Sr. had told him and then departed for the three or four weeks required to complete a trip to Harmony. Third, as dis-cussed below, Lucy mentions a tremendous rainstorm that occurred shortly after Joseph Sr. and Oliver had their dis-cussion. In upstate New York such a storm seems much more likely in late winter than in midwinter.

35. See the Willard Chase state-ment, in *EMD*, 2:64–74.

36. *Biographical Sketches*, 128.

37. Preliminary Manuscript, 432.

38. Preliminary Manuscript, 432.

39. Preliminary Manuscript, 432.

40. *Biographical Sketches*, 129.

41. *Whitmer Interviews*, 61 (see also James H. Hart's March 10, 1884 interview, *Whitmer Interviews*, 114). Since David Whitmer seems to distin-guish between conversations with and letters from Oliver, his words "Cowdery told me" indicate that he learned of Oliver's plans while on another visit to Palmyra.

42. Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–24. Section 6 was first published as chapter 5 in the Book of Commandments in 1833.

43. Manuscript History of the Church, *EMD*, 1:74.

44. Manuscript, Joseph Smith, "A History of the Life of Joseph Smith," in Dean C. Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith,* rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 14 (writ-ten in the hand of Frederick G. Williams; my punctuation added in brackets).

45. Preliminary Manuscript, 434.

46. *Biographical Sketches*, 87.

47. *Biographical Sketches*, 129. Since Samuel began working for Durfee in April (Lemuel Durfee account book, April 16, 1827, in *EMD*, 3:457), some historians have assumed that the Smiths' annual agree-ments with Durfee ran from April to April. Manchester land records, however, show that Durfee's purchase of the property was recorded in January 1826 (Deed Books, Ontario County Courthouse, Canandaigua, New York, in Porter, "Study of the Origins," 140); I therefore believe the yearly agreements more likely ran from January to January. Since Joseph Sr. and Samuel traveled to Harmony in Janu-ary 1829, Durfee may have delayed any action until they returned in February.

48. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: Appleton, 1867), 13.

49. *Biographical Sketches*, 130; Preliminary Manuscript, 437.

50. *Biographical Sketches*, 132; see *Lucy's Book*, 395, for Lucy Harris's offer to help Joseph. The date of this incident is not certain because Lucy Mack Smith says it took place in August of 1829. She links it with Samuel's return from Harmony, however, and it seems quite certain that Samuel did not remain in Harmony after Joseph and Oliver left in June. (Nor would it have made sense for Martin to go to Pennsylvania after Joseph had already returned to New York.) I believe the court hearing took place in March 1829 because Martin Harris himself gives the month as March, strongly implying the year was 1829 (Testimony of Martin Harris

dictated to Edward Stevenson, September 4, 1870, in *EMD*, 2:332). Martin and Lucy Harris, who were first cousins, separated when Martin followed Joseph Smith to Ohio in 1831. After Lucy's death in the summer of 1836, Martin married Caroline Young, Brigham Young's niece. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan, *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 469. (Vogel, however, dates Lucy's death to 1837 [*EMD*, 2:34].)

51. New York law at the time may not have allowed Lucy Harris to file the suit herself. (The legal scholars I consulted did not agree as to whether this was the case.) If not, her brother Peter may have filed on her behalf.

52. *Lucy's Book*, 442.

53. *Lucy's Book*, 442–43.

54. *Biographical Sketches*, 133. The fact that this incident took place in the cabin indicates that the Smiths had already moved from the frame home.

55. *Biographical Sketches*, 134. The first witness may have been Peter Ingersoll, who claimed in an 1833 statement that Joseph had confessed to filling his frock with sand and then telling his family that the frock contained the plates (see *EMD*, 2:43–44).

56. *Biographical Sketches*, 134. The magistrate tearing up the testimony is certainly a possible explanation of why no record of the hearing has been found (although several historians, including those involved in the Joseph Smith Papers project, have searched). Martin Harris confirmed that a hearing had been held when he said, "in March [1829] the People Rose up & united against the Work gathering testimoney against the Plates & Said they had testimony Enough & if I did not Put Joseph in Jail <& his father> for Deseption[,] they Would me" (Harris testimony, in *EMD*, 2:332).

57. Harris testimony, in *EMD*, 2:332–33. The excerpt in question reads as follows: "So I went from Waterloo 25 mls [miles] South East of Palmyra to Rogerses [in] [Suscotua?] [Seneca?] Co[unty] N.Y. &

to Harmoney Pensylvania 125 [miles] & found Joseph. Rogers unknown to me had agreed to give my wife 100 Dollars if it was not A Deseption & had Whet his Nife to cut the covering of the Plates as the Lord had forbid Joseph exhibiting them openley[.]"

58. Gain C. Robinson Day Book, in *EMD*, 3:439.

59. Manchester Commissioners of Common Schools, report.

60. Hugh Jameson Docket Book. The court record for March 31, 1829, simply reads "Recd $13.00," not explaining who made the payment. Since Oliver may have still been in the area to make this March 31 payment, and since he and Samuel are known to have arrived in Harmony on April 5, it is likely, but not certain, that they departed Lyons on April 1.

61. *Biographical Sketches*, 130.

62. Alexander C. Flick, ed., *History of the State of New York*, vol. 5, *Conquering the Wilderness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 263, 267–68, 278.

63. *Whitmer Interviews*, 61.

64. See Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 122–34, for background on the Whitmer family.

65. Roger Haydon, *Upstate Travels: British Views of Nineteenth-Century New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1982), 50.

66. Haydon, *Upstate Travels*, 247.

67. Preliminary Manuscript, 438.

68. *Broome County Republican*, May 5, 1831, as cited in William G. Hartley, *Stand By My Servant Joseph: The Story of the Joseph Knight Family and the Restoration* (Provo, UT: The Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and Deseret Book, 2003), 5.

69. Joseph Knight Sr. reminiscence, in *EMD*, 4:19.

70. Harris testimony, in *EMD*, 2:333.

71. Doctrine and Covenants 5:11, 24. Section 5 was originally published in 1833 as chapter 4 of the Book of Commandments.

72. William S. Sayre to James T. Cobb, August 31, 1878, in *EMD*, 4:145. As Vogel points out, Sayre calls Rogers "Richards" and reverses the

identities of Martin Harris and Rogers/Richards. In other respects, however, his memory seems surprisingly accurate. As for the order of events, Joseph Knight's mention of "revelations" (possibly referring to sections 4 and 5 in the Doctrine and Covenants) and his specifying that he went to Harmony "the last of March" indicate that the Knights arrived in Harmony shortly after Martin Harris and Rogers (Joseph Knight Sr. reminiscence, in *EMD*, 4:19). Martin Harris's statement that he went in March, accompanied by Sayre's recollection that he was traveling on the stagecoach in April, indicates that Harris and Rogers may have arrived the last week in March and left a day or two before the Knights arrived (Harris testimony, in *EMD*, 2:332; Sayre to Cobb, in *EMD*, 4:144). It could have been April by the time they boarded the same stage as Sayre—somewhere between Bainbridge and Geneva. As for Sayre's mention of a one-room house, the home occupied by Joseph and Emma originally had two rooms on the ground floor and one room upstairs (Porter, "Origins," 51). Martin may have been referring to the upper story, where Joseph worked on the translation.

73. Haydon, *Upstate Travels*, 19.

74. Sayre to Cobb, in *EMD*, 4:145.

75. Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, September 7, 1834 [Letter 1], *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 14. See *EMD*, 2:416–21.

76. *Biographical Sketches*, 131. Lucy, Joseph, and Oliver all make it clear that Joseph and Oliver met for the first time on April 5, 1829. Those who argue that they actually met before that time have provided undocumented speculation but no real evidence. See note 3.

77. See *EMD*, 4:424–31, for details on the land transaction.

78. Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, September 7, 1834, 14, emphasis in original. See *EMD*, 2:419, and Joseph Smith—History 1:71 note. Statements from David Whitmer, Emma Smith, and others indicate that Joseph used the seer stone to translate during

this time. Both Joseph and Oliver, however, apparently used *Urim and Thummim* generically, sometimes referring to the apparatus delivered by Moroni and sometimes referring to the seer stone (which was purportedly discovered by Alvin, Joseph Jr., and Willard Chase when the three of them were digging a well in 1822—see Chase statement, in *EMD*, 2:65).

Straight (Not Strait) and Narrow
John S. Welch

1. See Joshua 23:6; compare Alma 56:37, "They did not turn to the right nor to the left, but pursued their march in a straight course."

2. Cyprian *Treatise* 12.3.6 ("Three Books of Testimonies against the Jews," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 534).

3. *Epistles of Cyprian* 6.3 (in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 5:284).

4. Origen, *Commentary on John* 10.28 (in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 10, ed. Allan Menzies [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969], 408).

5. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Harvard Classics, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1910), 15:32.

6. Accessible at www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/hst/european/CriticalandHistoricalEssaysVolume2/chap29.html (accessed 31 August 2007).

7. For examples, see William Penn, *Advice of William Penn to His Children* (London: Assigns of F. Sowle, 1726), "the straight and narrow Way that leads to Life Eternal" (image no. 7 in the online version in the database "Eighteenth Century Collections Online," accessible at infotrac.galegroup.com with a subscription); Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise concerning Religious Affections* (Edinburgh: Laing and Matthews, 1789), 472, "the strait and narrow way which leads to life"; and Jane E. Leeson, "Prayer to the Good Shepherd," *Hymns and Scenes of Childhood* (London: 1842), 25 (hymn no. 17), "Loving Shepherd ever near, / teach thy lamb thy voice to

hear; / Suffer not my steps to stray / from the straight and narrow way."

8. See Edwards, *Treatise concerning Religious Affections*, 472; Francis Price, *The British Carpenter: or, a treatise on carpentry* (Dublin, 1753), 6, "With some good, dry and strait-grain'd English oak"; John Smith, *A compleat practice of Physick*, ed. J. Ridgley (1656), 163: "If the parts swell hard, it [the bandage] is too straight" (*OED Online*, s.v. "strait a., n., and adj., A [adj.] 1b"); Sir Walter Raleigh, *History of the World* (London, 1614), 2:632: "They returned home by . . . the straights of Gybraltar" (*OED Online*, s.v. "strait a., n., and adj., B [noun] 3a"). These double meanings of both words are confirmed in Webster's 1828 dictionary.

9. Punctuation has been omitted from this quotation and elsewhere for ease of comparison.

10. See Daniel B. McKinlay, "Strait and Narrow," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1419; see also John W. Welch, ed., "Getting Things Strai[gh]t," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 260–62.

11. Noel B. Reynolds and Royal Skousen, "Was the Path Nephi Saw 'Strait and Narrow' or 'Straight and Narrow'?" *JBMS* 10/2 (2001): 30–33. To the same effect, see Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One: 1 Nephi 1 – 2 Nephi 10* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 174–81.

12. See Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Straightening Things Out," *JBMS* 12/2 (2003): 58–71.

13. See Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants, Part One*, 174–81.

14. I think we have no evidence that Joseph Smith objected to these early spellings, but I have not searched any of his unedited written work to see how he may have spelled these words.

15. These were by no means the only cases in the early editions of the Book of Mormon where editing was needed, and quite a bit has been done to date, most of which postdates the death of Joseph Smith.

16. From my reading, I do not regard poetic Hebrew parallelisms as redundancies, especially when biblical writers such as Isaiah are being quoted by Book of Mormon authors.

17. Gospelink.com, searching "straight and narrow." Of course, all these writers had before them Book of Mormon editions that spelled the word in these four verses as *straight*.

18. Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1884), 473, 486.

19. *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954–56), 2:13.

20. See Hoskisson, "Straightening Things Out," 70–71.

21. See Hoskisson, "Straightening Things Out," 70–71.

22. Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants, Part One*, 7.

Killing Laban: The Birth of Sovereignty in the Nephite Constitutional Order
Val Larsen

1. John W. Welch, "Legal Perspectives on the Slaying of Laban," *JBMS* 1/1 (1992): 119–41.

2. Welch, "Slaying of Laban," 131.

3. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1994), 76.

4. Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling; and, The Sickness unto Death* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954).

5. David Rolph Seely, "Lehi's Altar and Sacrifice in the Wilderness," *JBMS* 10/1 (2001): 62–69.

6. Camille Fronk, "Desert Epiphany: Sariah and the Women in 1 Nephi," *JBMS* 9/2 (2000): 4–15.

7. Responding to this paper, Brian Walton highlighted facts which suggest Nephi becomes in the Laban episode the prophet of his people rather than their king. The episode is recounted in Nephi's small plates, rather than in the larger plates. And Nephi desires that his people "should have no king" (2 Nephi 5:18), though he ultimately agrees to be anointed as king and to anoint a successor. And while the national symbols Nephi acquires—the sword of Laban and the brass plates—quite clearly symbolize distinct civic and sacred aspects of Nephite society, it is surely true that his role as prophet looms larger than his role as king. But in the specific focus of this paper—the slaying of Laban—Nephi acts more in a civic than in a sacred capacity, more as king than as prophet.

8. Terryl Givens, "'Fit Audience Find Though Few': The Book of Mormon and Its Audiences" (plenary address, Mormon History Association, Tucson, AZ, 19 May 2002).

9. Brett L. Holbrook, "The Sword of Laban as a Symbol of Divine Authority and Kingship," *JBMS* 2/1 (1993): 39–73; Daniel N. Rolph, "Prophets, Kings, and Swords: The Sword of Laban and Its Possible Pre-Laban Origin," *JBMS* 2/1 (1993): 73–79.

10. Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," *BYU Studies* 27/4 (1987): 15–37.

11. Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 128–29.

12. Welch, "Slaying of Laban," 136–37.

13. John A. Tvedtnes, "*Rod* and *Sword* as the Word of God," *JBMS* 5/2 (1996): 148–55.

14. Nibley, *Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 120–27. Nibley gives considerable detail on Laban's likely position in the governing hierarchy. Cf. John A. Tvedtnes, *The Most Correct Book: Insights from a Book of Mormon Scholar* (Salt Lake City: Cornerstone, 1999), 59–75.

15. Nibley, *Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 112–13.

16. Robert A. Rees, "Irony in the Book of Mormon," *JBMS* 12/2 (2003): 24–25.

17. This is just the first manifestation of Nephi's kingly power and leadership. By chapter seven (1 Nephi 7:20), Laman and Lemuel are bowing down before Nephi and by chapter seventeen (1 Nephi 17:55), they are attempting to worship him as if he were divine.

18. Nibley, *Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 115–18.

19. As Szink has noted (pp. 64–65), the word *murmur* evokes the Mosaic exodus, framing Nephi as Moses and Laman and Lemuel as part of rebellious Israel. Its first appearances in the Bible are Exodus 15:24 "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" Exodus 16:2 "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness," Exodus 16:7–9, etc. Terrence L. Szink, "To a Land of Promise (1 Nephi 16–18)," in *Studies in Scripture: Volume Seven, 1 Nephi to Alma 29*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 60–72.

20. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 8–11; Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 62–63.

21. In the text, Zoram is called Laban's *servant*, but *servant* is probably a euphemism for *slave* as it is in the King James Bible where the Hebrew *ebed* and Greek *doulos* are both translated as *servant* but, in most cases, would be more correctly translated as *slave*.

22. Sidney B. Sperry, "Some Problems of Interest Relating to the Brass Plates," *JBMS* 4/1 (1995): 185–91.

23 Ben McGuire, "Nephi and Goliath: A Reappraisal of the Use of the Old Testament in First Nephi," http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2001McGB.html (accessed 21 March 2007).

24 Holbrook "Sword of Laban as a Symbol," 48–54, focuses intensively on various similarities between Goliath's sword and the sword of Laban.

25 Holbrook, "Sword of Laban as a Symbol," 53.

26. After reading a draft of this article, Newell Wright pointed out that the Book of Mormon sets up an ironic contrast between Nephi who has killed but is not a murderer and Laman and Lemuel who have not killed but are "murderers in [their] hearts" (1 Nephi 17:44). The nub of this contrast is the striking difference in the intentions and will of

Nephi and his brothers.

27. Welch, "Slaying of Laban," 136–37.

28. Welch, "Slaying of Laban," 134–36.

29. Tvedtnes, "*Rod* and *Sword* as the Word of God," 153–54.

30. *Constitutional order* is used here not in the American sense of a codified written constitution, but in the British sense of a governance tradition that recognizes rights and obligations established at key moments in a people's history. For the Nephites, this episode was probably the most important key moment.

31. David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 13–14.

32. The flight of Mulek was analogous to that of Lehi. That group took no records with them, which may be an index of the difficulty of acquiring and transporting them (Omni 1:17).

33. Lytton Strachey from the preface to *Eminent Victorians* as quoted in Edward Hallett Carr, *What Is History? The George Macaubry Trevelyan Lectures Delivered at the University of Cambridge January–March 1961* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 13. Carr lays out with great clarity the problem faced by Nephi or any other historian with an endless body of potentially historical facts.

34. As Goff demonstrates, the Old Testament is aggressively intertextual. Alan Goff, "Reduction and Enlargement: Harold Bloom's Mormons," *FARMS Review of Books* 5/1 (1993): 96–108.

For the Peace of the People: War and Democracy in the Book of Mormon
Ryan W. Davis

1. This paper seeks to build on a literature investigating warfare in the Book of Mormon. For an excellent guide to the perspectives available on this subject, see Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, eds., *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990).

2. Nephihah is succeeded by his son Pahoran (Alma 50:39), whose sons later are the only contenders for the judgment seat (see Helaman 1). Even when succession is not familial, Alma "select[s]" his successor personally (Alma 4:16). See also Noel B. Reynolds, "Book of Mormon, Government and Legal History in the," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:161.

3. Captain Moroni, for instance, acts with "the voice of the people," but this suggests prior approval to use his personal discretion in executing his responsibilities (Alma 46:34).

4. Keith Jaggers and Ted Robert Gurr, "Tracking Democracy's Third Wave with Polity III Data," *Journal of Peace Research* 32/4 (1995): 469.

5. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 132.

6. In fact, a common misconception is that prime ministers face greater discretion in making political decisions than presidents for just this type of reason (they lack defined terms and are frequently unopposed). Prime ministers have a more expansive ability to set the legislative agenda. However, this is deceptive because it obscures institutional constraints that make prime ministers even more cautious than their presidential counterparts. See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 85–88.

7. Bushman, *Beginnings,* 132.

8. James Madison, "Federalist No. 10," *The Federalist Papers* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1961).

9. The first modern rendering is Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12/3 (1983): 205–35. Democratic peace theory has touched off an expansive debate, not included here.

10. For a recent defense, see John Macmillan, "Beyond the Separate Democratic Peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 40/2 (2003): 233–43. See also, for instance, Harvey Starr, "Democracy and Integration: Why Democracies Don't Fight Each Other," *Journal of Peace Research* 34/2 (1997): 153–62.

11. This phrase is attributed to Jack Levy. On the extent of the current acceptance of this thesis, see, for instance, David Kinsella, "No Rest for the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 99/3 (2005): 453–57.

12. See Barbara Farnham, "The Theory of Democratic Peace and Threat Perception," *International Studies Quarterly* 47 (September 2003): 395–415.

13. On the Ammonites' peaceful disposition, see John A. Tvedtnes, "The Sons of Mosiah: Emissaries of Peace," in Ricks and Hamblin, *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, 118–23.

14. John Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" *JBMS* 1 (1992): 1–34. A reviewer helpfully points out that insofar as this held in periods of Nephite kingship as well as during the democratic period, it does not support my claim that regime type made a difference.

15. I thank S. Kent Brown for this point.

16. In Helaman 4, fearful Lamanites must be coerced and deceived into going to war. A similar situation occurs in Alma 47, in which a Lamanite army refuses to go to war with the Nephites.

17. See Christopher Gelpi and Joseph Grieco, "Attracting Trouble: Democracy, Leadership Tenure, and the Targeting of Militarized Challenges 1918–1992," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45/6 (2001): 794–817. Democracies tend to enter wars defensively. S. Kent Brown offered this insight.

18. David A. Lake, "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War," *American Political Science Review* 86/1 (1992): 24–37.

19. "Powerful Pacifists," 24–25.

20. "Powerful Pacifists," 30. See also Matthew A. Baum and David A. Lake, "The *Political* Economy of Growth: Democracy and Human Capital," *American Journal of Political Science* 47/2 (2003): 333–47.

21. See David A. Lake and Matthew A. Baum, "The Invisible Hand of Democracy: Political Control and the Provision of Public Services," *Comparative Political Studies* 34/6 (2001): 587–621.

22. Lake, "Powerful Pacifists," 30.

23. This is the dominant view, presented by Dan Reiter and Allan Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

24. Kenneth A. Schultz and Barry R. Weingast, "The Democratic Advantage: Institutional Foundations of Financial Power in International Competition," *International Organization* 57:1 (2003): 3, 4.

25. "The Democratic Advantage," 4 (emphasis added).

26. See, for instance, Helaman 6:8–9. In accordance with the principle of comparative advantage, it is during a period of free trade ("and thus they did have free intercourse one with another") that the Nephites gain "an exceeding plenty" of riches. This is noted also in Alma 1:29, suggesting the acquisition of riches is particularly pronounced in the era immediately following democratization.

27. A reviewer notes that it has been tried, such as in More's *Utopia*. My point is just that state institutions built by humans do not get the best of everything.

28. Philippe C. Schmitter, "Dangers and Dilemmas of Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5/2 (1994): 57–74.

29. "Dangers and Dilemmas," 61.

30. "Dangers and Dilemmas," 62–63.

31. I thank a reviewer for this point.

32. "Dangers and Dilemmas," 63.

33. See, for example, Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War," *International Organization* 56/2 (2002): 297–337. For the most recent treatment, see Mansfield and Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

34. My focus has been on external peace, although as a reviewer points out, Mosiah was certainly concerned about peace within the society as well.

35. Alexis de Tocqueville, quoted. in Schultz and Weingast, "Democratic Advantage," 3. I thank a reviewer for pointing out to me that this is only a caricature of Tocqueville's view. He also believed that in some circumstances, democracies fought better than

dictatorships, being more likely to win or lose decisively than other regimes. A thorough development of the perceived relationship between democracy and war in Joseph Smith's day would require a much more expansive treatment than I provide. My concluding discussion is intended only to be suggestive. See Alexis de Tocqueville in Harvey Mansield and Debra Winthrop, trans., *Democracy in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), especially chs. 22–26, pp. 617–35.

36. I would like to thank S. Kent Brown for his valuable comments and three anonymous reviewers for their uncommonly thorough and insightful suggestions. Errors remain my own.

Three Days and Three Nights: Reassessing Jesus's Entombment
David B. Cummings

1. Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 65–74.
2. Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah, From Gethsemane to the Grave* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:1350–73.
3. John P. Pratt, "The Restoration of Priesthood Keys on Easter 1836, Part 1: Dating the First Easter," *Ensign,* June 1985, 61–68.
4. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology: Principles of Time Reckoning in the Ancient World and Problems of Chronology in the Bible* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 285–301.
5. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ,* 66.
6. D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, *Verse by Verse, The Four Gospels* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 277.
7. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1947), 697 n. 1.
8. Pratt, "Restoration of Priesthood Keys," 61.
9. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1351.
10. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ,* 70.
11. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ ,* 69.
12. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1351.
13. Pratt, "The Restoration of Priesthood Keys on Easter 1836," 61.
14. Brown, *Death of the Messiah ,* 1356–73.
15. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 4th rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 498–99.
16. Bart J. Kowallis, "In the Thirty and Fourth Year: A Geologist's View of the Great Destruction in 3 Nephi," *BYU Studies* 7/3 (1997–98): 136–90.
17. George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon,* amplified and arranged by Philip C. Reynolds and David Sjodahl King (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 4:285.
18. John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985), 6, 12–14, 18–20, 26, 336.
19. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 119.

The Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel
S. Kent Brown

1. See George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," *JBMS* 8/1 (1999): 54–63; also consult Michael Lloyd Ingraham, Theodore D. Johnson, Baseem Rihani, and Ibrahim Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province (With a Note on a Brief Survey of the Northern Province)," *ATLAL: The Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology* 5 (AH 1401, AD 1981): 59–84, especially 64: "The Tayyib al-Ism gorge extends c. 4–5 km. and has vertical sides 400–800 m. high; the gorge itself is less than 50 m. wide."
2. Rushdi Said, *The River Nile: Geology, Hydrology and Utilization* (New York: Pergamon, 1993), 7; George Rentz also writes that "Arabia contains no large perennial rivers" ("Al-ʿArab, Djazīrat," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* [Leiden: Brill, 1960–], 1:537).
3. Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (London: Longman Group, 1981), 87–88.
4. For the coastline south of Aqaba, Jordan, consult the "Geographic Map of the Ḥaql Quadrangle, Sheet 29A, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Geoscience Map GM–80B, Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Deputy Ministry for Mineral Resources (Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, AH 1404, AD 1984); this map repeats the name of this wadi; also "Wadi as Sirḥan" map, Series K462, Edition 1-AMS, Stock no. K462XNH37W, Prepared by the Army Map Service (AM), Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. Copied from Miscellaneous Geologic Investigations (1963); also "Geologic Map of the Ḥaql Quadrangle, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Mineral Investigation Map MI–12, Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (1966); finally "Arabian Peninsula," Series 5211, Edition 2–GSGS, Director of Military Survey, Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom (1980).
5. Wadi Nuwaybiʿ is the choice of Paul Hedengren; see his *Land of Lehi: Further Evidence for the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Tepran, 1999), 19–23.
6. "Geologic Map of the al-Badʿ Quadrangle, Sheet 28A, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (AH 1407, AD 1987).
7. A wadi near Biʾr Marshah is favored by Jeffrey R. Chadwick; see his "The Wrong Place for Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): 214–15; "An Archaeologist's View," *JBMS* 15/2 (2006): 72–73. The distance was measured by Potter in his vehicle; see his "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 59. See also Daniel C. Peterson's brief response to Chadwick's first study in "Not So Easily Dismissed: Some Facts for Which Counterexplanations of the Book of Mormon Will Need To Account," *FARMS Review* 17/2 (2005): xxv–xxvi, xlviii.
8. In private correspondence, George Potter writes that his odometer measured 104 miles from Aqaba to al-Badʿ (dated June 9, 2007).
9. Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 63–64; Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 1996), 49–55.
10. Hedengren, *Land of Lehi*, 19; Chadwick, "Wrong Place for Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," 210. In recent private correspondence, dated June 8, 2007, Lynn Hilton has kept to his earlier position of favoring al-Badʿ.
11. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 71–75.
12. Chadwick, "Wrong Place for Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," 211; Chadwick, "An Archaeologist's View," 72; Nibley points out that the expression "river of water" (1 Nephi 2:6) means that the streambed contained flowing water (*Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988], 80).
13. Said, *The River Nile*, 7; Rentz, "Al-ʿArab, Djazīrat," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1:537.
14. Maps that I have consulted show no such stream in Wadi Nuwaybiʿ nor have my two brief visits to the area of the Jordan-Saudi Arabia border. See the "Geographic Map of the Ḥaql Quadrangle, Sheet 29A, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Geoscience Map GM–80B (1984); "Wadi as Sirḥan" Map, Army Map Service (AM), Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. Series K462, Edition 1–AMS, First Printing, Sheet NH 37–W, Stock no. K462XNH37W (1963), based on USGS, Map 1–200B, edition 1962; and "Geologic Map of the Ḥaql Quadrangle, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Mineral Investigation Map MI–12, Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (1966).
15. "Wadi as Sirḥan" Map, Army Map Service (AM), Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. Series K462, Edition 1–AMS, First Printing, Sheet NH 37–W, Stock no. K462XNH37W (1963), based on USGS, Map 1–200B, edi-

tion 1962.

16. This settlement is noted in Numbers 33:35–36; Deuteronomy 2:8; 1 Kings 9:26; etc.

17. Burton MacDonlad, "The Late Bronze and Iron Age Sites of the Wadi El Hasa Survey 1979," in *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia*, ed. John F. A. Sawyer and David J. A. Clines, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 24 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 18–28.

18. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 59–84.

19. Hedengren, *Land of Lehi*, 19.

20. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 72–76.

21. For an estimate of fifty miles, see Chadwick, "The Wrong Place for Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," 214; "An Archaeologist's View," 72. Potter measured the distance to be forty-four miles from Aqaba (see "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 59, and note 7 above).

22. Chadwick, "The Wrong Place for Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," 211, 214; "An Archaeologist's View," 72.

23. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 62.

24. Yigael Yadin, *Masada: Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 29–33.

25. For a clear view of the limited drainage for Wadi Nuwaybiʿ, see "Geologic Map of the Ḥaql Quadrangle, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Mineral Investigaion Map MI–12, Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (1966). For the wadis near Biʾr Marshah, see "Geologic Map of the Al Badʿ Quadrangle, Sheet 28A, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,"

Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (AH 1407, AD 1987).

26. The best study on the family of Lehi and Sariah remains that of John L. Sorenson. He and I see the ages about the same, though I see them a year or two younger because of the evident young age of Ishmael when his mother sought a bride for him (see Gen. 21:14–21) and the plain youthfulness of Dinah when she was sought as a bride (see Gen. 34:4). See Sorenson, "The Composition of Lehi's Family," in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley*, 2 vols., ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 2:174–96. For a discussion of the typical marriage age for men, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 1:29–30; for marriage ages in the ancient Near East, see Victor P. Hamilton, "Marriage," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:562.

27. The following conclude that Lehi left Jerusalem with camels: Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, 54–56; Hilton and Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 36–37; George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness: 81 New, Documented Evidences That the Book of Mormon Is a True History* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2003), 22–24; S. Kent Brown, "New Light from Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 99, n. 4; 100, n. 10; S. Kent Brown, *Voices from the Dust: Book of Mormon Insights* (American Fork, UT: Covenant, 2004), 3, 30–31. Hedengren argues that the family took no pack animals (*The Land of Lehi*, 16, 19). Almost no tent fabric has survived from antiquity. But representations appear in carved monuments. See the royal tent of Sennacherib, whose fabric is unknown, and the reed hut of the mother goddess in *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*, James B. Prit-

chard, ed., 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), plates 374, 503.

28. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 173; Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman* (New York: David McKay, 1966), 222.

29. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 173; Charles Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, 2 vols. in one (New York: Random House, 1936), 1:169.

30. The Hiltons make a point about the ease of this route in *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 67.

31. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 60; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 27–28.

32. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 71–79.

33. *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 64; personal correspondence, dated June 8, 2007.

34. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 75.

35. Hilton and Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 64–65. Nibley also believed that the stream was seasonal, though he did not attempt to identify which wadi carried it (*Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, 76, 78–81).

36. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 75.

37. Potter, "A New Candidate for the 'Valley of Lemuel'," 61–63; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 37–38.

38. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, 85; Hilton and Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 67–68; Hedengren, *Land of Lehi*, 19; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 32; Brown, *Voices from the Dust*, 6.

39. Chadwick, "Wrong Place for Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," 209, 212–14; "An Archaeologist's View," 72.

40. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 58, 61, 62; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 34, 39; compare "a c. 200 m. wide beach" in Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 64.

41. In Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 62; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 39.

42. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 63.

43. "Survey of the Northwestern Province."

44. "Survey of the Northwestern Province," 64.

45. "Survey of the Northwestern Province," 64.

46. Consult "Geologic Map of the al-Badʿ Quadrangle, Sheet 28A, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Geosciences Map GM–81C, Sheet 28A (AH 1407, AD 1987).

47. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 60; cautioning against easy access to Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, see Chadwick, "Wrong Place for Lehi's Trail and the Valley of Lemuel," 209, 210.

48. "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 61.

49. "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," 61.

50. Hilton and Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 67–68; Hilton and Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 55.

51. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 64.

52. The elevation for Jebel al-Shariʿa comes from "Google Earth"; that for Jebel Buwarah appears on the "Geologic Map of the al-Badʿ Quadrangle, Sheet 28A, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (AH 1407, AD 1987).

53. Ingraham, Johnson, Rihani, and Shatla, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary

Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province," 64; John A. Tvedtnes has pointed to rivers in the general region that are noted by classical historians such as Strabo and Agatharchides who evidently never saw any of these streams ("More on the River Laman," FARMS Update No. 176 in *Insights*, vol. 25 [2005]: 2–3).

54. "Survey of the Northwestern Province," 64.

[Out of the Dust]
Ancient Semitic in Egyptian Pyramids?
Paul Y. Hoskisson and
Michael D. Rhodes

1. These dates are taken from Ian Shaw, *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), and are generally accepted by most Egyptologists, although there is an uncertainty of as much as ± 100 years for dates at the beginning of the Old Kingdom (2613 BC according to Shaw). The chronology of the rest of the Ancient Near East is also uncertain with at least four competing versions, High, Middle, Low, and Ultra-low with a difference of 152 years between the highest and the lowest. For example, Hammurabi's reign in these 4 systems is: 1848–1806, 1792–1750, 1728–1686, and 1696–1654 BC.

[With Real Intent]
An Unexpected Gift
Larry EchoHawk

1. Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream" (speech, Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC, August 28, 1963).
2. Personal reminiscence of author. For a more detailed description of the 1946 dream, see Dell Van Orden, "Emotional Farewell in Mexico," *Church News,* February 19, 1977, 3.

The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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.

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

One More Arabian Candidate for Bountiful

In the Press: Early Newspaper Reports on the
Initial Publication of the Book of Mormon

A Tale of Three Communities:
Jerusalem, Elephantine, and (Lehi-)Nephi

Another Testament of Jesus Christ: Mormon's Poetics

Liahona: An Ancient Language Marker?