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and Idrimi
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The Zoramites and
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Journal OF THE Book of Mormon

AND OTHER RESTORATION SCRIPTURE



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ANNIE HENRIE • 2013

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Journal OF THE Book of Mormon

AND OTHER RESTORATION SCRIPTURE

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LETTERS

Journal Cover and Contents

My very first impression of the *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* [21/2] was “WOW!!!”

What initially caught my eye on the cover was the word in Arabic; then I saw *logos* [in Greek], and I immediately realized the intent of the whole cover: you were going to give us some words about the word *word*! When I turned to page 2, my eye was drawn to the Paleo-Hebrew word there, and I guessed it was someone's name: of course, it was Benjamin.

I immediately went to my historical notes on ancient linguistics, and sure enough, I found Paleo-Hebrew. Moses wrote in Paleo-Hebrew, but I believe that King Benjamin wrote in reformed Egyptian. Had King Benjamin been writing in 130 BC Jerusalem, he might have known Paleo-Hebrew, but the Aramaic script, brought over by the Jews of the Babylonian exile, was becoming popular by then. But it was interesting nonetheless.

JOHN NICHOLSON

Thank you for your enthusiastic welcome of the Journal. I appreciate feedback. I also admit taking artistic license with our illustrations: We have no clue what a Nephite script based on Paleo-Hebrew would have looked like after more than 350 years in the New World. But it would not have looked like the Aramaic block script adopted at least a decade or seven after Lehi left Jerusalem.

More Feedback

Today I was delighted to receive the *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* [21/2]. I always enjoy reading the wide variety of articles in the Journal. I wish to mention two issues.

1. I was intrigued by the cover. My immediate reaction was to search for use of the Deseret Alphabet, and you did not disappoint me.

2. A personal point: I am repeatedly disheartened to see illustrations of King Benjamin's sermon that show in the background a beautiful pyramid in Maya style but then in the foreground a tall, rickety platform of timber on which King Benjamin is perched.

I have read that it was customary in that part of the world for succeeding kings to construct a new pyramid at the start of their reign, often on top of previous pyramids. The pyramids provide excellent speaking platforms, often with excellent acoustics. I do not read anything in Mosiah that suggests either that his tower was built at the last moment or that it was constructed out of logs. I wish, some day, to see an illustration of King Benjamin speaking in a more probable location, near the top of a towering pyramid.

KEITH SUMMERS

We try hard to find generic illustrations that do not presuppose a geographic location for Book of Mormon lands. But all too often we are forced to choose more familiar pictures. The text, however, does say that a tower was erected especially for the occasion (Mosiah 2:7) without naming the building material.

Illustrations

Thank you for the latest issue of the *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* [21/2]. I feel that the *Journal* is doing a good job of providing serious scholarship for its readers.

I hope you encourage feedback from readers. I feel that some of the illustrations in your publication betray the quality of the scholarship and writing in your pages. For example, on pages 36 and 37 we see the kinds of illustrations expected for a popular, less sophisticated audience. In the same issue, though, is a Minerva Teichert painting (p. 24), and a more impressionistic illustration (pp. 30–31), that do not make the reader feel he or she is reading a book made for readers who need straight, representational art—almost cartoon style, in some cases. The tone of your publication is diminished by the lesser images, I feel.

Nevertheless, thank you for the work you do.

JACK HARRELL

We love feedback, especially suggestions on how to improve. My personal feeling is

that we as a people have only just begun the process of illustrating the Latter-day Saint scriptures.

Wordplay and Covenant

Thanks to the excellent articles by Matthew L. Bowen [“Becoming Sons and Daughters at God’s Right Hand: King Benjamin’s Rhetorical Wordplay on His Own Name”] and Steven L. Olsen [“The Covenant of the Chosen People: The Spiritual Foundations of Ethnic Identity in the Book of Mormon”] in the current *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* [21/2], I have an answer—one that is satisfactory to me, at least—to a question I was recently asked. That question was, why would Jesus’s Nephite disciples have had to ask about “the name whereby we shall call this church” (3 Nephi 27:3)?

The answer comes in part from Bowen’s insights about King Benjamin invoking the covenant language of Deuteronomy to let the accountable “children of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 14:1) before him recognize they had become Christ’s “sons and his daughters” (Mosiah 5:7). It also comes from Olsen’s focus on “the covenant of the chosen people” in the Book of Mormon: those members of the “true church and fold of God” (2 Nephi 9:2) who were bound by moral law. Both authors focus on the people and the covenants they had made to “come to be identified simply as ‘the children of Christ’ because they have fulfilled the terms of the covenant and have become his spiritual heirs” (Olsen, p. 23). The pre-advent emphasis, then, had been on the people, designated variously as “the people of God,” “true believers in Christ,” or “the children of Christ,” etc. (cf. Mosiah 25:24; Alma 46:14; and Mosiah 5:7).

When “the church of God” is referred to, it easily denotes the churches of God—that is, congregations of those who “took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ” (Alma 46:15). Even when the church, singular, is mentioned, it often is followed by “churches.” Whether “church” or “churches,” the reference is to the congregants. Alma, for instance,

“blessed the church, yea, all those who should stand fast in the faith from that time henceforth” (Alma 45:17). And when it was declared that “a regulation should be made throughout the church, . . . Helaman and his brethren went forth to establish the church again in all the land, [and] they did appoint priests and teachers throughout all the land, over all the churches” (Alma 45:21–22).

When the resurrected Savior fulfilled the law of Moses and rituals associated with it, he established his church anew, this time with emphasis both on the people who took upon them his name and on the overall organization that properly was to be known by his name. The “disputations among the people” (3 Nephi 27:3) about the name of the church probably came because they were holding on to the concept that it was only the people “who were baptized in the name of Jesus [who] were called the church of Christ” (3 Nephi 26:21). In response, Jesus taught that the overall organization in which they had membership properly was called the church of Christ: “Ye shall call the church in my name” (Nephi 27:7). Consequently, several subsequent references to “the church of Christ” refer to a single organization rather than to the people: “They were converted unto the Lord, and were united unto the church of Christ” (3 Nephi 28:23). “The disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ” (4 Nephi 1:1). Apostate groups “began to deny the true church of Christ” (4 Nephi 1:26). “After they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ” (Moroni 6:4).

RICHARD DILWORTH RUST

Thanks again for another astute observation about the Book of Mormon.

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