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<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
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Some people see great potential for research to turn up new ways of seeing and thinking about the world. Others tend to feel that everything important must already have been discovered. For the latter, “research” means finding authorities who offer a confident answer to each question that occurs to us to ask. For the former, the best part of any question is the *quest* part.

Brigham Young once observed, “A spirit and power of research is planted within [humans], yet they remain undeveloped.”¹ He also said, “If I do not learn what is in the world, from first to last, somebody will be wiser than I am. I intend to know the whole of it, both good and bad.”²

Book of Mormon studies is one special manifestation of that general curiosity that Brother Brigham recommended. Simply treading the same mental and spiritual ground year after year as we examine the scripture may not advance our understanding as much as it puts us to sleep. For us to read scripture doggedly time after time may yield little new insight or appreciation of what the text contains that might inspire. We might well gain more by pausing to ask, “Why did the Lord make this statement at this historical moment?” or, more specifically, “Why did Book of Mormon writers use the name Jehovah only twice in the entire text—and one of those in the last verse of the book?” Just as challenging is seeking new depth in a word we have read so many times that we no longer think about its meaning—for example, what does it mean to “harrow up” a person’s soul (2 Nephi 9:47; Mormon 5:8)?

All the authors whose work we publish offer us new views of expressions that may have become commonplace in our reading. That is what research is about—to crack open previously closed windows of our minds. This issue of the *Journal* offers a new tool to help us do so. Dr. Cynthia Hallen, a linguist at BYU, starts a new department entitled “What’s in a Word?” As she pursues her own quest for new understanding, she will share items of interest that will extend and enrich our grasp of scripture.

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¹ The *Latter-day Saints’ Herald* 11 (February 1853), 381.

² *Journals of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 468.
"What Meaneth the Words That Are Written?" Abinadi Interprets Isaiah

Orson Pratt, in

1. For an in-depth study of Hebrew law in Abinadi’s trial, see John W. Welch, "Judicial Process in the Trial of Abinadi" (FARMS, 1983).

2. The brass plates version of Isaiah prefaces records concerning the prophet Abinadi uses so effectively. Isaiah 52:7... How beautiful upon the mountainside are the feet of him who brings good tidings—literally, are the legs of the runner who brings good news and who causes us to hear that there is peace... Abinadi is announcing that from the other side of the mountain, from the other world, comes the good news. This is revelation. It’s the welcome messenger from the other world, the angel who brings us the gospel—who brings to the message of salvation, who brings us the message of peace, which you don’t find on this side of the mountain." (The Mountain of the Lord’s House," lecture 16 of Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price [series of videotaped lectures from a 1988 honors class at Brigham Young University on the Pearl of Great Price], transcript pp. 8–9.)

3. Hugh W. Nibley, in The Editor’s Notebook (Deseret Book, 1981), 360–61, wherein he reciting? He may have turned to read at that moment from a scroll, a plate, or book of some kind containing Exodus. The brass plates contained this material.


5. In Alma 32, Alma expounds the method whereby this change can occur.

6. Hugh W. Nibley offers an additional example of other precious material found in the brass plates concerning the "seed of Joseph." The plates contain a great Isaiah Scroll, dated about 120 B.C.E. and the entirety of Mosiah 13–16.


8. Until now was he reciting? He may have turned to read at that moment from a scroll, a plate, or book of some kind containing Exodus. The brass plates contained this material.


10. From this point on in the dialogue, I quote rather than paraphrase Abinadi’s powerful words.


13. Hugh W. Nibley offers an additional example of other precious material found in the brass plates concerning the "seed of Joseph." See Doctrine and Covenants 19:15-20.


ENDNOTES