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Title The Book of Mormon at the Bar of DNA “Evidence”

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Abstract Editor’s introduction to a four-part series on the relationship of DNA studies to Book of Mormon origins.
THE QUESTION whether DNA studies can illuminate Book of Mormon origins has become a storm center in recent years and months. On one side we hear a growing chorus of voices claiming that DNA studies of Native American peoples prove conclusively that there is no evidence of a Middle Eastern strand within the Native American gene pool. On the other side, for the first time, we hear the reasoned voices of respected, believing scientists and anthropologists who raise scientifically based questions about the approach of critics and about the nature of the biological and cultural evidences that have so far come under review. In the four-part series that follows, the first article, by John Sorenson and Matthew Roper, sets out the social, cultural, and geographical backdrop against which the scientists' studies can be understood. The next three articles explore from different angles the possibilities and impossibilities of applying DNA science to the wider issue of Book of Mormon origins. —Ed.