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Introduction

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Abstract: "While the Book of Mormon does not rely on science to verify its authenticity, it is good to know that rather than disparaging the Book, science actually supports it. Many evidences for this are provided in the chapters that follow. Keep in mind, too, that just because a given evidence has not yet been found, does not mean it never will. Paleontologists and archaeologists have a saying, 'absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.'"

Introduction

Certainly the prophets who wrote their records that are included in the Book of Mormon, never intended that the purpose be one of providing scientific information. This Book is meant to be a witness of Christ, as well as one that teaches His doctrines. Its extended title emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the central figure – “The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” As former Latter-day Saint Church president, Ezra Taft Benson declared, “It is the keystone of our religion.” (Ensign, January, 1992, p. 2)

Although it was not intended to be a record of scientific information, the Book of Mormon does include a number of statements that bear on this subject. In both First and Third Nephi it's related that earthquakes would (did) occur with portions of the earth being broken up, of mountains tumbling down, and of severe storms wreaking havoc on the land. (1 Nephi 12:4; 3 Nephi 8:6-18) When it's written in the Old Testament that the sun stood still (Joshua 10:13), the Book of Mormon prophet Helaman related that, “... according to his [God's] word the earth goeth back, and it appeareth unto man that the sun standeth still.” (Helaman 12:15) These are only a couple of events mentioned that come under the purview of science. Numerous others can be found within the Book of Mormon, many of which are included in the present book.

It should be mentioned here that many able scholars have written about the Book of Mormon from a variety of perspectives, including scientific ones. I will be referring to some of these works. My own scientific background in paleontology and geology gives me some different insights that are elaborated upon in this book.

Both the Jaredites and Nephites recorded implements and materials that they used, crops they grew, and animals with which they were familiar. All this has scientific bearing. However, a number of people have taken many of these items and tried to use them to “prove” that the Book of Mormon could not be true. Statements these people have used to refute the Book of Mormon go something like this: “Peoples of the Book of Mormon could not have known about steel; they would not have had linen and silk or some of the grains mentioned; elephants were not present; there were no horses in America before the time of Columbus when Spaniards introduced them,” and so forth. This book demonstrates that these and other objections are no longer scientifically valid. Scientific evidences that substantiate the Book of Mormon were clearly not known to Joseph Smith at the time he translated the golden plates.

While the Book of Mormon does not rely on science to verify its authenticity, it is good to know that rather than disparaging the Book, science actually supports it. Many evidences for this are provided in the chapters that follow. Keep in mind, too, that just because a given evidence has not yet been found, does not mean it never will. Paleontologists and archaeologists have a saying, “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.”