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The Foundation for
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INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1993, No. 4

"...by study and also by faith." D & C 88:118

July

Reviews Examine 19 Books Published in 1992 on the Book of Mormon

One of the best resources for students of the Book of Mormon is the annual *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*—now available in five volumes. Volume 5 continues the tradition of giving clear, succinct, and sometimes humorous help to readers in selecting from among the multitude of books published each year about the Book of Mormon.

Reviews in volume 5 cover a wide range of topics, such as the meaning of the word *Lamanites* and the presence or absence in the Book of Mormon of refutations of evolution. Several of the reviews examine works critical of the Book of Mormon. One of the most engaging of these reviews is a spirited look by Tom Nibley at the *Tanners' Covering up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*.

Gary Novak gives a detailed critique of Ed Ashment's essay on Mormon historiography, published in *Faithful History*. Novak concludes that "Ashment's reading of the Book of Mormon text is crude at best." Ashment's understanding of historical methodology is also sharply criticized.

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Mormonism, by John Ankerberg and John Weldon, is characterized by Dan Peterson as "worthless—nay, worse than worthless—as a guide to the teaching and ethos of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." And Lou Midgley finds that *Meeting the Book of Mormon Challenge in Chile*, a master's thesis by Dean M. Helland, is a weak regurgitation of standard anti-Mormon arguments.

Other reviews steer readers to books that are more worthwhile. Reviewers of *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*; *David Whitmer Interviews* by Lyndon Cook; *Doctrines of the Book of Mormon: The 1991 Sperry Symposium*; *The Book of Mormon: Alma, the Testimony of the Word*; and some F.A.R.M.S. publications praise the most useful and enlightening parts of these books, while offering suggestions for improvement and some guides for the readers to additional references on the same subjects.

Use the order form in this issue of *Insights* to get your copy of volume 5—you won't want to miss it.

Brown Bag Seminar Presents Book of Mormon Research

Some of the most interesting current research on the Book of Mormon was reported on during the sessions of the F.A.R.M.S. brown bag seminar through the 1992–1993 school year. Fourteen Latter-day Saint scholars from Brigham Young University and elsewhere gave participants a glimpse of their most recent findings on a wide variety of topics.

Two of the presentations dealt with economics in the Book of Mormon. Allen Christenson of Provo discussed trade and its effects on Nephite society. He sees a pattern, especially prominent in Helaman and 3 Nephi, in which the desire for riches leads to trade for elite goods. Such trade is used to establish new upper classes, and that class system and the trade on which it is dependent lead to the establishment of kingship, with disastrous results for the Nephites. Christenson detailed how this pattern is clear among the Maya and the Aztecs, neighboring groups contemporary

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F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

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Connections between the Visions of Lehi and Nephi

ALTHOUGH a simple book in several respects, the Book of Mormon is also marvelously complex, as in the interconnections between several of its texts. No example of this phenomenon is more instructive than the case of Lehi's and Nephi's visions.

As reported in 1 Nephi 8, Lehi saw the tree of life, an iron rod, a great and spacious building, and various people reaching the tree or falling away. In 1 Nephi 11-14, Nephi beheld the condescension of God, the twelve apostles of the Lamb, wars between his posterity and the seed of his brothers, a great and abominable coalition of evil, and the eventual victory of God's people.

The two visions are very different in character. Lehi's dream is intimate, symbolic, and salvific; Nephi's vision is collective, historic, and eschatological. Yet both visions embrace the same prophetic elements, only from different angles. Consider the following:

Lehi's dream began in a dark and dreary wilderness (8:4) and Nephi's on a remote high mountain (11:1), and they both saw first a man who guided them into their visions. Lehi saw a man dressed in a white robe (8:5), and Nephi saw a Spirit who asked him introductory questions (11:2).

Next the man in white left Lehi alone (8:7, Original Manuscript), and the Spirit likewise departed from Nephi's awareness (11:12).

Lehi next beheld a dark and dreary waste, causing him personally to pray for mercy (8:8). Nephi was historically more explicit: it was Jerusalem that he beheld (11:13), in need of mercy.

Lehi's vision quickly opened onto a large and spacious field (8:9), and then onto the symbolically rich tree of life (8:10). Nephi too focused next on the tree, giving its meaning in terms of Jesus Christ (11:7, 13-18, 20-25). Lehi saw that its fruit was desirable to make one happy (8:10), sweet and white above all (8:11); and Nephi similarly recognized the tree and its fruit as the love of God, most desirable (11:22), most beautiful and fair (11:15).

As Lehi's soul filled with joy (8:12) and Nephi was carried away in the spirit (11:19), Lehi's attention was drawn to the head of a river near the tree (8:14), while Nephi spoke of a fountain of living waters (11:25).

Lehi's intimate attention was on his family, to whom he called with loud voice (8:15). At the same place in the sequence, Nephi's focus was on the broader human family and the preaching of Jesus Christ, John, and the apostles (11:24-31). While Lehi saw that some came and partook of the fruit, Laman and Lemuel did not (8:17-18), just as Nephi saw that people would reject the Christ (11:32-33).

Soon, Lehi saw multitudes going to the great and spacious building (8:31), and Nephi charted the rise of the great and abominable

church (13:4-9). This all suggests that the great and spacious building was the same as the great and abominable church.

And so it goes throughout the two visions—they match element for element, yet with different perspectives and purposes.

If this comparison is sound, it leads to several intriguing conclusions. Obviously, Nephi meant what he said when he testified that he had seen the same things his father saw (14:29), and thus Nephi spoke from personal experience when he subsequently interpreted the meanings of the tree, the iron rod, and the river of water (15:21-29).

Although the casual reader might not see any connection between these two texts at first, the correlation between them is extensive and precise. It is unlikely that this occurred accidentally.

At the same time, Nephi's vision is not a mere rerun of Lehi's. The second clearly develops each element of the first. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine that Joseph Smith or others at first were aware of the extent of this development, because the styles of the two texts are so different.

Further analysis will shed additional light on these texts, but for now it is evident that the interrelatedness of 1 Nephi 8 and 1 Nephi 11-14 is very meaningful, subtle, and true as life.

Based on research by John W. Welch.

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Brown Bag Seminar Presents Book of Mormon Research

with the Nephites.

Lindon Robison from Michigan State University also dealt with economic issues in Nephite society. He began from a different starting point yet reached similar conclusions: that Nephite society as a whole prospered spiritually and economically when sharing was the basis for economic decisions but suffered when self-interested acquisition drove the economy.

Geography and archaeology also received considerable attention during the past year in the seminar. William Hamblin, a member of the F.A.R.M.S. board and the BYU History Department, critiqued errors in the methodology of anti-Mormon critics of Book of Mormon geography and archaeology (see the F.A.R.M.S. paper by him on this subject offered in previous issues of *Insights*).

John Hilton of BYU proposed the southern end of the Grijalva river basin located across the southern part of the Mexico-Guatemala border as a candidate for the ancient Nephite homeland (see the essay by John and Jan Hilton in the Spring issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*). Ray Matheny, John Robertson, and Scott Woodward, all of BYU, gave a progress report on their research into aspects of the archaeology, linguistics, and genetics of the Andean area.

In addition to Robertson's linguistic analysis that was part of the presentation on the Andean area, two members of the BYU En-

glish Department considered linguistic topics. Cynthia Hallen discussed the Indo-European roots of Book of Mormon words, focusing on *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* as examples. Her detailed analysis shed new light and fostered new questions about the meanings of these and other important terms in the Book of Mormon.

Dallin D. Oaks showed that linguists who are critical of scriptural accounts of the Tower of Babel have wrongly attacked those accounts for things they do not in fact claim: (1) that Hebrew was the original language; (2) that the focus of the accounts is the confounding of language, when in fact the focus is the scattering; and (3) that the confusion of language was immediate, while the scriptures indicate it may have been a process rather than an event, and that the scattering may have caused the confusion, rather than vice versa.

John Welch of BYU read and discussed his paper on "Legal Perspectives on the Slaying of Laban," which was subsequently published in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. It argues that Exodus 21:13-14 provides the legal background to conclude that this killing was a legally permissible manslaughter.

John Tvedtnes of Salt Lake City discussed his research on recently released documents from the Dead Sea Scrolls that talk about the Messiah. The contents are unexpected from the point of view of Old Testament and Jewish beliefs, yet in line with the New

Testament and the Book of Mormon. They indicate that prior to the Christian era the Jews were expecting a divine, Savior-type of Messiah, which indicates that the Book of Mormon was not incorrect about Jewish beliefs before the birth of Christ.

Seminar participants also received updates on some ongoing projects from three BYU faculty members. Royal Skousen reported on developments in his critical text project. In particular he discussed making color photographs of the printer's manuscript and what new insights those photographs were making possible.

Donald Parry discussed the status of his work on a Book of Mormon bibliography, including how it can show what topics have been neglected, minimize the duplication of research effort, and show what topics have been emphasized in certain time periods and the direction in which scholarship is now headed. And Stephen Ricks gave a preview of the Spring issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* prior to its publication.

The brown bag seminar will resume in September for the 1993-1994 academic year. It is held on the BYU campus every other Wednesday at noon. All who attend are welcome to bring a lunch. Individuals interested in making a presentation or in receiving notices of the specific topics to be presented during the course of the year may contact Noel Reynolds through the F.A.R.M.S. office.

Ancient Studies Featured in a Recent Issue of *BYU Studies*

Readers interested in ancient research and Mormon studies will welcome several articles in the latest issue of *BYU Studies*. A short study by Donald Parry discusses a new insight into Psalm 24:6, widely recognized as a temple psalm. Parry suggests that the Hebrew *dôr* ("generation") might be read as *dûr* ("circle"), possibly alluding to a prayer circle of those who seek the Lord. Psalm 24 may reflect ancient pre-Mosaic temple practices, or it may prophetically look forward to the post-Mosaic temple era, when higher ordinances are known to mankind.

Two items deal with the trial of

Jesus. Bernard Jackson's 1992 speech at BYU on the trials of Jesus and Jeremiah summarizes historical problems in the trial of Jesus and proposes a literary solution that explains Jesus in the prophetic tradition. John W. Welch adds a recent bibliographical note on books and articles about the trials and death of Jesus.

Two other entries deal with Columbus's newly edited diaries; and a brilliantly illustrated article presents an international bouquet of artistic representations of Lehi's vision in 1 Nephi 8.

Copies of this issue may be ordered, but supplies are limited.

Tours to Israel: Are You Interested?

F.A.R.M.S. has been approached by a nonprofit educational company offering to arrange tours of Israel and surrounding areas for F.A.R.M.S. subscribers. The accommodations and the itineraries look very good and the cost would be very competitive—a recent example was a ten-day tour for about \$1700. Interested F.A.R.M.S. subscribers could join a tour at almost

any time, and a special F.A.R.M.S. tour may be arranged in February if there is enough interest. In addition, travellers who recruit five additional tour members can travel free.

If you might be interested in going on such a tour, check the box on the order form and we will send you further information.

More Published on New Testament Word Studies

The April 1993 *Ensign* magazine contained an article discussing three New Testament words, *restoration*, *endow*, and *perfect*. Those studies were drawn from a longer paper by John W. Welch published by F.A.R.M.S. That pa-

per similarly discussed a total of twelve biblical Greek words. If you missed that paper when it was first offered in 1991, you may want to read it now. For your convenience, it is relisted on the current order form.

From the Boardroom

The Foundation is pleased to welcome Michael D. Rhodes as a new member of its board of directors. Brother Rhodes is a part-time member of the BYU faculty in the Department of Ancient Scripture. He recently retired from the Air Force, where his last assignment was assistant professor of physics at the Air Force Academy.

He is pursuing a Ph.D. at BYU. His primary interests are Egyptology and the book of Abraham. He is currently editing Hugh Nibley's new book on the hypocephalus and other Egyptian matters, and he is working on a translation and commentary on the Book of the Dead papyri.

Brother Rhodes has pursued several years of graduate work at Johns Hopkins University and the Free University of Berlin in Egyptology and Hebrew, and at the University of Utah in Middle Eastern archaeology, and he has participated in archaeological digs in Giza and Petra.

He is married and is the father of five children. He and his family now live in Orem. We look forward to association with him on F.A.R.M.S. projects.



Two other board members have just returned from Jerusalem. Noel Reynolds, President of the Foundation, has completed a year as Scholar in Residence at the BYU Jerusalem Center. Dan Peterson has completed a semester leading a group of students in an intensive Arabic experience. We are glad to have both of them back.