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The Foundation for
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& Mormon Studies

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1995, No. 1

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

January

Journal Presents Another Interdisciplinary Look at the Book of Mormon

The fall issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, now available on the enclosed order form, features articles that examine the Book of Mormon in terms of theology, chronology, textual analysis, Jewish customs, and even engineering principles. Articles include:

- "The Possible Design of the Liahona and Purpose of the Second Spindle" by Robert L. Bunker
- "Hubris and Atē: A Latter-day Warning from the Book of Mormon" by Richard D. Draper
- "The Influence of Lehi's Admonitions on the Teachings of His Son Jacob" by John A. Tvedtnes
- "Lehi's Theology of the Fall in Its Preexilic/Exilic Context" by Bruce Pritchett
- "The Missing Scripture: Helaman 14:25" by D. Lynn Johnson
- "A Chronological Setting for the Epistles of Mormon to Moroni" by Alan C. Miner
- Notes and Communications:
 - * "Faith and Truth" by John A. Tvedtnes
 - * "The Jewish Lectionary and

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Dead Sea Scrolls Conference to be Held in Jerusalem

On April 30, members of the F.A.R.M.S.-BYU team that is developing the Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Database will formally introduce the first edition to a small group of Dead Sea Scroll scholars and Israeli government officials and museum curators at a private conference at the BYU Jerusalem Center. In addition to a first look at the database, the conference will feature papers presented by scholars working with the scrolls, including Emanuel Tov, Frank Moore Cross, Eugene Ulrich, and Florentino García Martínéz. A public conference on the database will be held in Provo in 1996.

There will also be a report at the conference in Israel by BYU's Scott Woodward on DNA studies he has been conducting at Hebrew University, sponsored jointly by F.A.R.M.S. and the Dead Scrolls Foundation; these studies will enable scholars to identify scroll fragments that are now unidentified, based on the unique DNA signature of each scroll. Since most of the scrolls are fragmentary and approximately 100,000 fragments have been found, an improved ability to identify fragments is very exciting to scholars working with the scrolls.

For the past two years, the joint team from

F.A.R.M.S. and BYU has been working to produce a comprehensive electronic database of all the scrolls plus related materials on CD-ROM. All the essential materials that scholars need for research on the Dead Sea Scrolls are being placed in the database. The database

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F.A.R.M.S. 1995 Annual Symposium Will Focus on Isaiah in the Book of Mormon; Elder Holland Will Give Keynote Address

See story on page 3.



F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

Number 98

January 1995

On the Right or Left: Benjamin and the Scapegoat

OVER THE YEARS, SCHOLARS have found in King Benjamin's speech much that is at home in the ancient Israelite autumn festivals surrounding the Day of Atonement.¹ An essential part of that day was the scapegoat ritual.

As prescribed in Leviticus 16, two goats were set before the high priest. From an urn, he drew two lots to determine which goat was to be declared "for the Lord" and which "for Azazel," a term which most likely referred to a desert-dwelling demon.² The high priest then placed the lots on the heads of the goats. According to rabbinic writings, if the lot "for the Lord" came up in the priest's left hand, he was permitted to place that lot on the goat on the right so that the Lord's goat would always be on the right hand while Azazel's would be on the left.³ The goat for the Lord was then sacrificed and its blood was used to purge the temple. The high priest transferred Israel's sins to the other goat, and it was then taken out into the desert.

Such factors have prompted further examination of Mosiah 5:7–12. In these verses, Benjamin speaks in terms of a dichotomy that is similar to the paradigm of the two goats. He gives his people a name (5:7–8), for they, like the goats, must either be "called by the name of Christ" (for the Lord) and "be found at the right hand of God" (5:9), or they "must be called by

some other name" and find themselves "on the left hand of God" (5:10, 12).

Verse 8 contains an unusual mention of a "head" that makes one free: "And there is no other head whereby ye can be made free." When Benjamin spoke the word "head," one might imagine that he looked to his right at the head of the sacrificial animal that symbolized Christ and whose blood would be used in purifying the people.

In the course of his speech Benjamin used the term "evil spirit(s)" four times (Mosiah 2:32, 37; 3:6; 4:14). Perhaps this "evil spirit" is to be connected with Azazel. Indeed, three of these references are associated with sins of rebellion and quarreling, the types of sins the scapegoat carried away to Azazel. In the fourth (Mosiah 3:6), Benjamin prophesied that evil spirits will be "cast out" by Jesus, perhaps an event that was foreshadowed by the scapegoat being cast out by the high priest.

Just as the goat carrying the sins of Israel was driven away, so any individual who might break the covenant was, in Benjamin's words, to be "consigned to an awful . . . state of misery and endless torment" (Mosiah 3:25), and lost in a "worthless and fallen state" of "nothingness" (Mosiah 4:5). Such a transgressor would ultimately be driven away and cast out (Mosiah 5:10–14). The dramatic banishment of the goat of Azazel into an empty wil-

derness must have vividly portrayed the fallen and miserable fate of such a transgressor.

Had Benjamin said that the sinner would be driven out like a goat instead of an ass, these connections with the Day of Atonement would appear even stronger. In fact, it was not critical among Israel's neighbors in the ancient Near East what animal was used in such rituals.⁴

Thus, elements in Benjamin's address seem to presuppose the scapegoat ritual. Through such a ceremony, Benjamin's people would have understood that anyone who received the name of the Lord was consecrated to be sacrificed to God, giving emphatic meaning to their own irrevocable covenant to serve God "with all [their] whole souls" (Mosiah 2:21) and to be diligent "even unto the end of [their] life" (Mosiah 4:6).

Notes

1. J. Tvedtnes, "The Nephite Feast of Tabernacles," in *By Study and Also by Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 2:197–221; J. Welch, "King Benjamin's Speech in the Context of Ancient Israelite Festivals" (Provo: F.A.R.M.S., 1985); Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," in *Temples of the Ancient World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 352–58.
2. J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1020–21; H. Tawil, "'Azazel, the Prince of the Steppe,'" *ZAW* 92 (1980): 43–59.
3. Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma* 40b.
4. D. Hillers, *Covenant* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1969), 40–41.

Based on research by Terrence L. Szink and John W. Welch

Symposium Will Focus on Isaiah

Mark your calendars now for the 1995 Annual F.A.R.M.S. Symposium on the Book of Mormon, to be held on the BYU campus May 20. Organized by Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, the symposium will feature papers on Isaiah in the Book of Mormon.

The keynote address will be given by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, the most recently ordained mem-

ber of the Quorum of the Twelve. Presenters will include Robert Cloward, Cynthia Hallen, Andrew Hedges, John Hilton, Victor Ludlow, Ann Madsen, Dana Pike, David Seely, Andrew Skinner, Royal Skousen, John Thompson, John Tvedtnes, Parry, and Welch.

Among the many questions these papers will address are how and why the Isaiah passages are

used by Nephite prophets, what commentary the Nephites give on Isaiah, how Isaiah influenced their worldview, and how this material has been used by the Latter-day Saints. Given the significance of Isaiah for Book of Mormon writers and the relative difficulty of understanding Isaiah, these presentations offer to open up to our understanding important parts of the book's message.

Watch future issues of *INSIGHTS* for details on time and place.

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DSS Conference in Jerusalem

will improve scholarly access to these materials in two ways.

First, it will give each scholar full access to materials now scattered in many locations and not fully available in any one place. Scholars who have so far published volumes on parts of the scrolls have had to work largely without access to other scrolls for comparative purposes. With this database, a scholar working on one particular scroll will have simultaneous access to all other scrolls.

Second, the database will make it possible for scholars to answer many questions about these texts almost instantly, and for the entire set of texts. The kinds of searches and comparisons of words and phrases that can take weeks or months when done without a computer can be performed in fractions of a second with the electronic database. All the text materials will be fully indexed, allowing user-defined searches for any combination of words or letters in selected ranges of texts or in the entire database.

Reaction from Dead Sea Scrolls and biblical scholars to initial glimpses of the database has

been enthusiastic. At the November 1994 meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature in Chicago, some scholars working with the scrolls indicated that the demonstration of the database was the most exciting thing at the meeting and asked how soon they could begin using it. Working copies of the first edition will be made available to these scholars later this year.

The central components of the database will be the transcriptions, translations, and photographs of all the scrolls, plus a complete scroll concordance based on dictionary forms. The transcriptions will appear on screen line by line, in the same format as the original scrolls. The concordance and translations will be linked to the transcriptions, in a line-by-line format, and each column of transcribed text will be linked to the photograph of that section of the scroll, reproduced as a high-quality image on the screen.

Thus transcription, concordance, translation, and photograph can all be displayed simultaneously in separate windows on the same screen, linked together

so that as the researcher moves from place to place in any one window, the display moves to the corresponding place in the others.

The photographs of the scrolls are being provided by the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center at Claremont. The transcriptions and the chief concordance are being provided by the Center for the Study of Early Christianity in Jerusalem. The translations are being provided by various scholars working with the scrolls.

In addition to these primary components, the database will contain Old Testament texts in Greek and Hebrew, the Greek New Testament, the Pseudepigrapha, the Apocrypha, and other related documents from the biblical period.

It will also contain reference works, including lexicons and other concordances. Important commentaries on some of the primary documents will also be included. For some of the primary documents, the database will contain alternate versions of transcriptions, translations, or photographs, to the extent these might be helpful to students and scholars. Translation aids can also be made available on screen.

Upcoming Events

- **March 13 & 14.** Royal Skousen will discuss "Fragments from the 'American Dead Sea': Reconstructing the Original Text of the Book of Mormon" in Claremont and in West Los Angeles. His lecture will be part of a lecture series entitled "Text Discoveries That Have Influenced How We View Religion," sponsored by the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center and the University of Judaism. Tickets and details can be obtained from the ABMC at (909) 621-6451.
- **April 30.** Dead Sea Scrolls conference at the BYU Jerusalem Center, featuring the F.A.R.M.S.-BYU scrolls database and the F.A.R.M.S.-Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation DNA project.
- **May 20.** 1995 F.A.R.M.S. Symposium on the Book of Mormon, featuring presentations on the nature and significance of the Isaiah material in the Book of Mormon. Organized by John W. Welch and Donald W. Parry. Keynote address by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland.

Journal *(cont. from p. 1)*

Book of Mormon Prophecy"
by John L. Fowles

- * "The Exodus of Lehi Revisited" by Mark J. Johnson

Friends will be glad to learn that the *Journal's* editor and chairman of the F.A.R.M.S. board of directors, Stephen Ricks, is recovering well at his home in Provo following surgery. He will continue to be involved in the *Journal* and other F.A.R.M.S. activities as his strength returns.

New F.A.R.M.S. Series Answers Book of Mormon Criticisms

Over the years, many F.A.R.M.S. readers have called or written to ask questions about the Book of Mormon. As we have prepared answers, we have found that many questions are asked over and over again, and that publications attacking the Book of Mormon repeat the same criticisms over and over.

Research on the Book of Mormon continues to turn up better and more thorough answers to such questions. Starting in this issue of *INSIGHTS*, we will periodically offer as F.A.R.M.S. papers brief treatments of these topics. In this issue we present two: "On Alma 7:10 and the Birthplace of Jesus Christ" refutes the false claim that the Book of Mormon says that Jesus was born in the city of Jerusalem rather than in Bethlehem, drawing on biblical and Near Eastern literary practices and conventions of geographical designations.

"Reformed Egyptian" examines the history of Egyptian scripts and instances of Semitic languages being written in modified Egyptian scripts to show that the Book of Mormon's use of the phrase "reformed Egyptian" is not far fetched. Both are available on the enclosed order form.

F.A.R.M.S. would appreciate your comments on the value of this series of papers and your suggestions about what questions need to be addressed. If the papers prove useful to readers, we may later gather the best of them and publish them in book form.

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

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The Purpose of F.A.R.M.S.

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, and other ancient scriptures.

F.A.R.M.S. is a nonprofit educational foundation, independent of all other organizations. Its main research interests include ancient history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to the scriptures. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of the scriptures, solid research and academic perspectives alone can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about the scriptures.

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed both in scholarly and popular formats.

It is hoped that this information will help all interested people to "come unto Christ" (Jacob 1:7) and to understand a take more seriously these ancient witnesses of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE
TO ACCOMPANY YOUR STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Allegory of the Olive Tree

The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5

Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, editors

The allegory of the olive tree in Jacob 5 is one of the most magnificent allegories in all of sacred literature. The essays in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree* examine this allegory and related topics from many perspectives, and in doing so they not only illuminate the meaning of this portion of the Book of Mormon, they also increase our understanding of much that is contained in the New Testament. The olive is a powerful image in the New Testament, and the efforts of these authors to understand that image and its use in the allegory shed light on New Testament teachings and images.

Olive imagery and the possible influence of Zenos's allegory are traced through the Gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul (especially Romans), and Revelation. New Testament topics are scattered throughout this volume, but the following chapters focus particularly on New Testament topics and connections:

- "The Olive Press: A Symbol of Christ" by Truman G. Madsen
- "Jacob's Allegory: The Mystery of Christ" by M. Catherine Thomas

- "Graft and Corruption: On Olives and Olive Culture in the Pre-Modern Mediterranean" by John Gee and Daniel C. Peterson
- "The Olive in Greco-Roman Religion" by John Franklin Hall
- "Ritual Anointing with Olive Oil in Ancient Israelite Religion" by Donald W. Parry
- "The Olive Tree and the Work of God: Jacob 5 and Romans 11" by James E. Faulconer
- "Romans 11:17-24: A Bibliography of Commentaries" by Gary P. Gillum
- "Borrowings from the Parable of Zenos" by John A. Tvedtnes
- "Olive Oil: Symbol of the Holy Ghost" by John A. Tvedtnes
- "Olive Culture in the Second Temple Era and Early Rabbinic Period" by Stephen D. Ricks
- "Vineyard or Olive Orchard?" by John A. Tvedtnes

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Temple Sermons Are Focus of Video Lecture

Clark Johnson, professor of Church History and Doctrine at BYU, discusses "Temple Sermons in the Book of Mormon" as the next offering in the F.A.R.M.S. Book of Mormon Video Lecture Series (to order, see the reverse of this form). He examines sermons given by Jacob, Benjamin, Limhi, and the Savior to Nephites gathered at a temple, analyzing each briefly to see how it teaches "the doctrine of the temple." He also discusses how each sermon relates to things that we experience and learn in our latter-day temples.

1994 Updates Available

What the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal about the "land of Jerusalem"; the use of metal plates for writing in the ancient world; evidence for tents in ancient Mesoamerica; the lack of a library in Harmony, New York; and evidence that helps to make sense of the "decapitation" of Shiz—these are the topics illuminated in the 6 F.A.R.M.S. Updates published during 1994 in *Insights*, the F.A.R.M.S. newsletter. The collection is a handy compilation for regular readers and a great way to introduce your friends to F.A.R.M.S. and to the latest in Book of Mormon research. See the reverse of this form for ordering information.

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CRI-1	William J. Hamblin, "Reformed Egyptian," 8 pp.		\$.75	
CRI-2	Daniel C. Peterson and William J. Hamblin, "On Alma 7:10 and the Birthplace of Jesus Christ," 22 pp.		\$1.50	
STF-94	The F.A.R.M.S. Updates for 1994, 6 pp.		\$.75	
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