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Type: Newsletter

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## Insights, Vol. 22, No. 10 (October 2002)

Editor(s): FARMS Staff

Published by: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies

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# Insights

A WINDOW ON THE ANCIENT WORLD VOLUME 22 | 2002

Number 10

<http://farms.byu.edu>

## New Volume Honors Truman G. Madsen

The distinguished career of Truman G. Madsen has earned him wide respect in and outside of LDS circles as an outstanding teacher, scholar, researcher, speaker, university administrator, church leader, and religious ambassador. With the publication of *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, the Institute pays tribute to this remarkable man whose many accomplishments include helping to advance Book of Mormon scholarship and related interests of the Institute.

Edited by Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (each of whom also authored chapters), the 800-plus-page volume contains contributions by 31 scholars, 10 of whom are not Latter-day Saints, reflecting the wide appeal of Madsen's academic work and influence. The non-LDS contributors include the noted biblical scholars David Noel Freedman, James H. Charlesworth, and Jacob Milgrom. The book is organized into five sections: "Philosophy and Theology," "LDS Scripture and

Theology," "Joseph Smith and LDS Church History," "Judaism," and "The Temple."

The question of whether the love of God must precede the love of people provides the basis for "The Spirituality of Love: Kierkegaard on Faith's Transforming Power," by C. Terry Warner, professor of philosophy at BYU. Warner examines this question using the writings of the 19th-century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Warner shows that, first of all, people must discover themselves through submitting to the will of God rather than to the will of the crowd. Only through submission to God can a person be free to discover love for God and for all people. According to Warner, "If we accept the invitation [to come to Christ], which means following and emulating him in our own daily walk, we obtain the freedom from self-absorption and develop the depth of soul that love requires."

Warner further notes that love for God, or faith, is equivalent to love for people. He writes: "When we choose Christ above all others, we simultaneously and by the same act choose to love. . . . Though love of God is sought first, it is not achieved first and

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## JBMS Welcomes New Editor

The Institute welcomes S. Kent Brown as the new editor of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. A professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University and former associate editor of the *Journal*, Brown is its third head editor.

The *Journal* was launched in the fall of 1992 through the pioneering efforts of Stephen D. Ricks, whose aim was to create "a journal dedicated solely to the serious and faithful study of the Book of Mormon in its historical, linguistic, cultural, and theological context." Ricks oversaw the *Journal* for

11 issues and was succeeded by John L. Sorenson in 1998. At the outset of Sorenson's four-year tenure, the *Journal* underwent a major redesign, with changes in size, color, and format. One of Brown's goals for the *Journal* is to "maintain the high standards both visually and in the written word that have been established by Stephen Ricks and John Sorenson."

Brown brings with him a new board of associate editors, each of whom "brings unique strengths and gifts that touch on different dimensions of the Book of Mormon," he says. All are BYU professors who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields: Cynthia L. Hallen, associate professor of linguistics;

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## Joseph's Coat and Moroni's Covenant of Liberty

In the biblical account, after Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery, they kill a goat, dip Joseph's coat in the blood of the animal, and send the coat to their father, Jacob, to make him think that Joseph has been killed by a wild beast (see Genesis 37:31–33). Later we read that Joseph refused the advances of Potiphar's wife in order to remain faithful to God but was nevertheless falsely accused and imprisoned (see Genesis 39).

It is interesting that, in the book of Alma, Moroni directly associates his covenant of liberty with certain key elements of the Joseph story. This is seen when Moroni warns that he and his fellow Nephites must “keep the commandments of God, or our garments shall be rent by our brethren, and we be *cast into prison*, or be *sold*, or be *slain*” (Alma 46:23).

The rent coat or garment was an essential part of Moroni's covenant of liberty. Moroni rent his coat and rallied the people; then the people rent their garments “in token, or as a covenant, that they would not forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ,


the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments” (Alma 46:21).

Moroni's rent garment is clearly symbolic of Joseph's coat, which was “rent by his brethren into many pieces” (Alma 46:23). In Genesis, when Jacob sees Joseph's bloodstained coat, he assumes that “an evil beast hath devoured him” and concludes, “Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces” (Genesis 37:33). Although the Genesis account, unlike the Alma account, does not explicitly state that the coat was rent or torn, a version of this episode preserved in the *Book of Jasher* (a 13th-century collection of Jewish stories from an earlier period) does specifically state that Joseph's brothers “took Joseph's coat and *tore* it.”<sup>1</sup>

The *Book of Jasher* also relates that after Joseph's brothers tore the coat and dipped it in blood, they “*trampled* it in the dust and sent it to their father.”<sup>2</sup> While this detail is not found in the Bible, it may reflect a tradition familiar to Moroni at the time he administered the Nephite covenant of liberty.

Moroni prayed that the faithful Nephites would not be “trodden down and destroyed” by their enemies (Alma 46:18). When the people accepted the covenant of liberty, “they cast

their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying: We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed . . . if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he [God] may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be *trodden under foot*, if we shall fall into transgression” (Alma 46:22). The significance of this covenant for the Nephite nation is likely reflected in the fact that Mormon later refers to the Nephites in their times of wickedness as being “trodden down” (Helaman 4:20; see Mormon 5:6).

It seems clear that Moroni knew about and utilized elements of the Joseph story that are no longer, or never were, in our Bible but were preserved either through Nephite oral tradition or on the plates of brass. Significantly, some of these nonbiblical traditions appear to have also been preserved in Jewish traditions found in the *Book of Jasher*, a source available in Hebrew but not published in English until 1840, 10 years after the first edition of the Book of Mormon. 

### Notes

1. *Jasher* 43:13, as it appears in *The Book of Jasher* (Salt Lake City: J. H. Parry, 1887), 125, emphasis added.
2. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

By Matthew Roper

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Donald W. Forsyth, professor of anthropology; Richard E. Bennett, professor of church history and doctrine; and Dana M. Pike, associate professor of ancient scripture.

Of the responsibilities of the *Journal's* editors and contributing authors, Brown says, "Those who have the opportunity to study and write about the Book of Mormon see richness, depth, and wonder in its pages. There is an obligation on our part to discover and communicate the extraordinary character of this book of scripture."

Although much has been written about the Book of Mormon in the past century, much work

remains to be done. The book is fertile ground for its devoted students to seek increased understanding and appreciation by examining it from any number of perspectives. The editors of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* hope that those whose interests and preparation qualify them to contribute to the expanding field of Book of Mormon studies will consider the *Journal* as a worthy venue for their research and writing.

Guidelines for preparing and submitting articles for publication in the *Journal* are available on the FARMS Web site ([farms.byu.edu](http://farms.byu.edu)), by e-mail request to [jbms@byu.edu](mailto:jbms@byu.edu), or by mail from the Institute. Authors should submit a detailed outline or abstract to the editors for approval before submitting a completed manuscript. 

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## Madsen continued from page 1

then followed by love of neighbor; we will look in vain for a process or discipline to carry us from faith to love. Love of God *is* love of neighbor."

In "The Refractory Abner Cole," Andrew H. Hedges, BYU associate professor of church history and doctrine, gives an account of "one of Mormonism's earliest, most vocal, and most caustic critics." Hedges covers Cole's sketchy background; his motives for criticizing Joseph Smith and the church in his weekly newspaper, the *Reflector*; and his aggressive confrontations with Hyrum, Oliver, and Joseph over his refusal to cease from printing purloined extracts from the Book of Mormon while it was at press.

Hedges writes that Cole's "lively interest" in Mormonism "manifested itself in a variety of editorial comments and articles in his paper, ranging from [in the words of Lucy Mack Smith] 'the lowest and most contemptible doggerel that ever was imposed upon any community' to well-reasoned arguments against the legitimacy of the Book of Mormon and the new religion. . . . Cole's withering remarks and satire on Joseph and the Book of Mormon were a regular feature in his paper." Hedges concludes with a brief overview of Cole's subsequent failed business ventures and rapid personal demise.

In "The Book of Job as a Biblical 'Guide of the Perplexed,'" Raphael Jospe, senior lecturer on Jewish philosophy at the Open University of Israel, examines the book of Job from the perspective of the great medieval rabbi Moses Maimonides, who wrote about Job in his monumental *Guide of the Perplexed*. According to Jospe, the purpose of that work was to explain terms in scripture that can cause a person familiar with religion and philosophy to be perplexed. Jospe argues that Maimonides viewed Job as an example of one thus perplexed. Because righteous Job is never described as wise or understanding, Maimonides reasoned, his errors were not moral but intellectual.


Jospe shows that Job and his three friends each represent a different school of thought about divine providence: Job believes in general providence but not that it can extend to individuals, Eliphaz believes that people have free will and thus are justly rewarded and punished for their actions, Bildad says that God will compensate people for their earthly sufferings in the world to come, and Zophar claims that everything that happens is God's will and that humans should not question that will. Jospe, explaining that Job is rewarded at the end of the narrative when he recognizes his lack of understanding, asserts that the book of Job is "a sort of biblical 'Guide of the Perplexed.'" He concludes that the aim of both books is "to resolve the perplexity of one who doubts religious teaching



on philosophical grounds by correcting the intellectual error of equating divine actions with human actions.”

In “Fundamentals of Temple Ideology from Eastern Traditions,” John M. Lundquist, chief librarian of the Asian and Middle Eastern Division at the New York Public Library, discusses the features shared by the great temple-building traditions of the ancient world, particularly those of Tibet, India, Japan, and Indonesia. He examines aspects of ancient temples and temple worship such as architecture, directional orientation, ritual initiation, authority/priesthood, sacred geometry, cave and labyrinth motifs, and the mysteries.

Lundquist explains, for example, that the great temples were all constructed with the idea to link heaven and earth by situating the structures at a ritually determined center point. “The center,” he says, “is fixed in its earthly place through its orientation to the four cardinal directions, through its central axis that connects the worlds (underworld, earth, and heaven), and through ongoing astronomical sightings, which keep the temple and its initiates in constant communication with that ultimate place, heaven.” Although Lundquist’s purpose is not to connect the fundamental features of ancient temples with those of LDS temples, astute readers will recognize some interesting links while gaining deeper appreciation for ancient Eastern temple traditions.

Additional contributors are Davis Bitton, M. Gerald Bradford, S. Kent Brown, Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Dan, James E. Faulconer, Guttorm Fløistad, Rebecca L. Frey, Gary P. Gillum, Ann N. Madsen, Daniel B. McKinlay, Louis Midgley, Blake T. Ostler, David L. Paulsen, David Rosen, David R. Seely, Andrew C. Skinner, John A. Tvedtnes, Seth Ward, David J. Whittaker, and R. J. Zvi Werblowsky. The book includes a complete bibliography of Madsen’s published works, including audiotapes. Copies of *Revelation, Reason, and Faith* can be ordered via the enclosed mail-order form or via the bookstore section of the FARMS Web site. 

#### INSTITUTE NEWS

### BYU Receives Books, Artifacts

The Institute recently benefited from a generous gift of books and Mesoamerican artifacts from Jay and Ursula Krenusz. The donation of books, initially made to BYU’s Harold B. Lee Library, was divided among the Lee Library, BYU—Idaho, and the Institute. The large collection of artifacts was donated to BYU’s Museum of Peoples and Cultures.

The 66-book donation included many important books about Mesoamerican people, culture, and archaeology. It also included a 1690 edition of the Bible that has been placed in the Special Collections section of the Lee Library.

# Insights

A Window on the Ancient World  
Volume 22 | Number 10 | 2002

A Publication of the  
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and Mormon Studies (FARMS)**

**Institute for the Study and  
Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts**  
Brigham Young University

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FARMS is part of Brigham Young University’s Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. As such, it encourages and supports research on the Book of Mormon, the Book of Abraham, the Bible, other ancient scripture, and related subjects. Under the FARMS imprint, the Institute publishes and distributes titles in these areas for the benefit of scholars and interested Latter-day Saint readers.

Primary research interests at FARMS include the history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to ancient scripture. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of scripture, solid research and academic perspectives can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about scripture.

FARMS makes interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer reviewed to ensure that scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these materials are used to support further research and publications. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed in both 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 and appreciate more fully the scriptural witnesses of the divine mission of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

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