

A Summary of Some of the Many Evidences Supporting the Truthfulness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

By Cameron Ford

**The following slides include links and references for further
study on the topics presented**

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Scholarly Evidences Supporting the Gospel

“Our testimonies aren’t dependent on evidence — we still need that spiritual confirmation in the heart of which we have spoken — **but not to seek for and not to acknowledge intellectual, documentable support for our belief when it is available is to needlessly limit an otherwise incomparably strong theological position** and deny us a unique, persuasive vocabulary in the latter-day arena of religious investigation and sectarian debate. **Thus armed with so much evidence ... we ought to be more assertive than we sometimes are in defending our testimony of truth.**”

—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

“The greatness of the evidence” (Talk given at the Chiasmus Jubilee, Joseph Smith Building, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 16 August 2017)

Hundreds of Bull's-Eyes

*“There are literally hundreds of correlations between the things that Joseph Smith brought to Mormonism and things we find in ancient history –things that were unknown in Joseph’s era and vicinity... Critics must deal with the growing number of bull’s-eyes. Generally critics argue that Joseph made lucky guesses, or that any parallels are simply coincidental. **But when we recognize the number of things that Joseph got right, the odds of so many lucky guesses and coincidences become staggering.**”* -Michael Ash, “Shaken Faith Syndrome”

Evidences of The Book of Mormon

A Book of Mormon Overview

[http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/My Writings/BofM Summary Scripture List.pdf](http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/My_Writings/BofM_Summary_Scripture_List.pdf)

- The Book of Mormon is a book of scripture comparable to the Holy Bible. It is held to be a collection of the writings of many ancient, non-biblical prophets that were later compiled and written on gold plates, using a language called Reformed Egyptian, by an ancient American prophet historian named Mormon in about 400AD. His son Moroni added to the compilation and then buried the plates in modern day up-state New York.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes that a young man by the name of Joseph Smith was led by an angel to those plates in the 1820's and translated the unknown language into English by the power of God.
- The book describes the history of two different peoples that immigrated from the old world to the Americas in ancient times who's civilizations grew to number into the millions.
- The first group is called the Jaredites, who's civilization extended from 2000BC to about 400BC.
- The second group were Israelite families, one being led by a man named Lehi, that left Jerusalem in about 600BC and eventually split into two groups called the Nephites and the Lamanites.
- The highlight of the Book describes the visit of the Savior to the ancient inhabitants of the American continent shortly after his resurrection.
- The Lamanites eventually destroyed the Nephites in about 400AD.

Another Testament of Jesus Christ

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/LDS_church_too_christian.pdf

- The stated purpose of the Book of Mormon is:

***“To the convincing of the Jew and Gentile
that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD,
manifesting himself unto all nations”***

- “While some Christians insist that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not Christian enough, one Christian professor says ‘Mormonism is obsessed with Christ.’

Writing in the First Things blog site, Stephen H. Webb [a Catholic], a professor of religion and philosophy at Wabash College, says that ‘what gives Christianity its identity is its commitment to the divinity of Jesus Christ. And on that ground Mormons are more Christian than many mainstream Christians who do not take seriously the astounding claim that Jesus is the Son of God.’

‘Mormonism is obsessed with Christ,’ Webb continues, ‘and everything that it teaches is meant to awaken, encourage and expand faith in him. It adds to the plural but coherent portrait of Jesus that emerges from the four gospels in a way, I am convinced, that does not significantly damage or deface that portrait.’


Webb, who has studied Mormonism extensively as part of his academic study of theology, says that he came to this conclusion after reading the Book of Mormon.

‘I was utterly surprised,’ Webb writes. ‘I was not moved, mind you. The Book of Mormon has to be one of the most lackluster of all the great works of literature to have inspired enduring religious movements. Yet it is dull precisely because it is all about Jesus.’”

Every Right to Ask for Proof of the Book of Mormon

“Joseph Smith's own story of the book's authorship certainly lies far "outside the usual and familiar," and **we have every right to ask for special proof of it. This he obligingly supplies when he puts the book in our hands and asks us how we explain it.** Books of Mormon do not occur at all "in the usual course of events." Therefore, we have every right to doubt the book's existence, except for one thing: We have the book. **The only alternative to Joseph Smith's explanation is to assume the existence of a forger who at one moment is so clever and adroit as to imitate the archaic poetry of the desert to perfection and supply us with genuine Egyptian names, and yet so incredibly stupid as to think that the best way to fool people and get money out of them is to write an exceedingly difficult historical epic of six hundred pages.** Endowed with the brains, perseverance, and superhuman cunning necessary to produce this monumental forgery, the incredibly sly genius did not have the wit to know, after years of experience in the arts of deception, that there are ten thousand safer and easier ways of fooling people than by undertaking a work of infinite toil and danger which, as he could see from the first, only made him immensely unpopular. This is the forger who never existed.” -Hugh Nibley, “New Approaches to Book of Mormon Study”

Literary Evidences of The Book of Mormon



Many of the evidences supporting the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon are based on the assumption that the Israelite group that left Jerusalem in 600BC would have brought many Hebrew and Near Eastern cultural and literary practices with them that would show up in a book written by them and their descendants.

Bedouins and the Desert Culture

- “The Bedouin are a grouping of nomadic Arab people who have historically inhabited the desert regions in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and the Levant.” (Wikipedia)
- The Bedouin culture is known to have a unique and distinct literary tradition.
- “...it has recently become generally recognized that the ancient Hebrew shared fully in the culture and traditions of the desert...”
An Approach to the Book of Mormon, Hugh Nibley, pg. 55



Perfect Arabian Desert Poetry (1 Ne. 2:9-10) (A Bedouin Qasida)

“And when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea, he spake unto Laman, saying:

O that thou mightiest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness!

And he also spake unto Lemuel:

O that thou mightiest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!”

The Original Qasid (Hugh Nibley Vol. 6, chapter 21)

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/lehi_the_poet.pdf, pg. 5

- “Let us briefly list the exacting conditions fulfilled by Nephi’s account of his father’s qasidas and demanded of the true and authentic desert poet of the earliest period:
 - (1) They are Brunnen- or Quellenlieder, as the the Germans call them, that is, songs inspired by the sight of water gushing from a spring or running down a valley.
 - (2) They are addressed to one or (usually) two travelling companions.
 - (3) They praise the beauty and the excellence of the scene, calling it to the attention of the hearer as an object lesson.
 - 4) The hearer is urged to be like the thing he beholds.
 - (5) The poems are recited extempore on the spot and with great feeling.
 - (6) They are very short, each couplet being a complete poem in itself. One verse must be followed by its “brother,” making a perfectly matched pair. “
- “Here we have beyond any doubt all the elements of a situation of which no westerner in 1830 had the remotest conception.”

The River Laman (Naming Geographic Features)

“And it came to pass that he called the name of the river, Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea;” 1Nephi 2:8

Renaming Geographic Features

Lehi in the Desert, by Hugh Nibley (1988), 75-76.

"By what right do these people rename streams and valleys to suit themselves? No westerner would tolerate such arrogance. But Lehi is not interested in western taste; he is following a good old Oriental custom. Among the laws "which no Bedouin would dream of transgressing," the first, according to Jennings-Bramley, is that "any water you may discover, either in your own territory or in the territory of another tribe, is named after you." So it happens that in Arabia a great wady (valley) will have different names at different points along its course, a respectable number of names being "all used for one and the same valley. . . . One and the same place may have several names, and the wadi running close to the same, or the mountain connected with it, will naturally be called differently by members of different clans," according to Canaan, who tells how the Arabs "often coin a new name for a locality for which they have never used a proper name, or whose name they do not know," the name given being usually that of some person. However, names thus bestowed by wandering tribesmen "are neither generally known or commonly used," so that we need not expect any of Lehi's place names to survive." —Hugh Nibley

Hundreds of Egyptian, Hebrew, Arabic, Hittite & Greek Names

Names unknown in Joseph Smith's Time Period

(Hugh Nibley Vol. 6, chapter 22)

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/ancient_names_in_BofM.pdf, pg. 1

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/BofM_Man_Made_or_God_Given.pdf

1. "There is in the Book of Mormon within one important family a group of names beginning with Pa-. They are peculiar names and can be matched exactly in Egyptian. Names beginning with Pa- are by far the most common type in late Egyptian history, but what ties Pahoran's family most closely to Egypt is not the names but the activities in which the bearers of those names are engaged; for they sponsor the same institutions and engineer the same intrigues as their Egyptian namesakes did centuries before – and in so doing they give us to understand they are quite aware of the resemblance!" [Pa- names: Pahoran, Pacumeni, Paanchi]
2. "There is a marked tendency for Egyptian and Hebrew names in the Book of Mormon to turn up in the Elephantine region of Upper Egypt. It is now believed that when Jerusalem fell in Lehi's day a large part of the refugees fled to that region."
3. "The most frequent "theophoric" element by far in the Book of Mormon names is Ammon. The same is true of late Egyptian names. The commonest formative element in the Book of Mormon names is the combination of Mor-, Mr-; in Egyptian the same holds true." [Mor-names: Moroni, Moronihah, Mormon]
4. "Egyptian names are usually compound and formed according to certain rules. Book of Mormon names are mostly compound and follow the **same** rules of formation."
5. "Mimation (ending with –m) predominated in Jaredite names, nunation (ending with –n) in Nephite and Lamanite names. This is strictly in keeping with the development of languages in the Old World, where mimation was everywhere succeeded by nunation around 2000 B.C., that is, well after the Jaredites had departed, but long before the Nephites."

Egyptian, Hebrew, Arabic, Hittite & Greek Names (Cont.)

(Hugh Nibley Vol. 6, chapter 22)

6. A large proportion of Book of Mormon names end in -iah and ihah. The same ending is peculiar to Palestinian names of Lehi's time but not of other times.
7. The names in the Book of Mormon that are neither Egyptian nor Hebrew are Arabic, Hittite (Hurrian) or Greek. This is strictly in keeping with the purported origin of the book.
8. Lehi is a real personal name, unknown in the time of Joseph Smith. It is always met with in the desert country, where a number of exemplars have been discovered in recent years.
9. Laman and Lemuel are not only "Arabic" names, but they also form a genuine "pair of pendant names," such as ancient Semites of the desert were wont to give their two eldest sons, according to recent discoveries.
10. The absence of "Baal-" names (that is names compounded with the theophoric Baal element), is entirely in keeping with recent discoveries regarding common names in the Palestine of Lehi's day.

Olive Cultivation Practices

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/evidence.pdf>, pg. 12

“...a group of horticulturists (specialists in tree culture) looked at the account of olive culture and olive production in the Book of Mormon in Jacob 5 and found that in virtually every detail, it matches what we actually know about how olive trees are treated, how they are grown, cultivated, and cared for.

Now, it has to be understood that olive trees do not grow in New York State. Joseph Smith probably didn't ever see any. He certainly wouldn't have known much about olive trees and olive cultivation, and olive cultivation is very, very different from the kinds of trees he would have known. So where did he get this information from? It seems to me that the most conservative notion, the best explanation, is that whoever wrote the parable of the olive tree in Jacob 5 knew olive cultivation at first hand. He knew how it was done.” – *Daniel C. Peterson*

Book of Mormon Writing Style Statistical Studies

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/bofmauth.pdf>, pg. 3

- “Extensive statistical studies, including stylometry (or wordprinting), have been conducted on the Book of Mormon.”
- “Blocks of writing were analyzed to identify the writers' near-subconscious tendencies to use noncontextual word patterns in peculiar ratios and combinations.”
- “Wordprinting has been used to ascertain the authorship of such works as twelve disputed Federalist Papers and a posthumously published novel by Jane Austen.”
- “When applied to the Book of Mormon, wordprinting reveals that the word patterns of the Book of Mormon differ significantly from the personal writings of Joseph Smith, Solomon Spaulding, Sidney Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery, who served as Joseph Smith's scribe.”
- “Furthermore, patterns of Nephi 1 are consistent among themselves but different from those of Alma 2. The results of objectively measuring these phenomena indicate an extremely low statistical probability that the Book of Mormon could have been written by one author.” – Diane E. Wirth

Earliest Text of The Book of Mormon Written in Early Modern English

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/early_modern_english_in_BofM.pdf, pg. 2-3

- Scholars assign Early Modern English (Elizabethan) to the period roughly between A.D. 1500 and 1700
 - The King James version of the Bible is written in a subset of Early Modern English.
- Using the earliest text of The Book of Mormon, scholar Stanford Carmack has generated a significant body of scholarly studies showing that the Book of Mormon was largely written in Early Modern English (vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure).
- “Carmack shows that much of what has been dismissed as incorrect in the language of [the original manuscript of the] Book of Mormon isn’t actually wrong. To the contrary (while considering dozens of such ‘obvious’ grammatical ‘howlers’ as ‘in them days,’ ‘I had smote’ versus ‘I had smitten’ and ‘they was yet wroth’), he maintains that the book’s language is “excellent and even sophisticated.” It simply isn’t the Modern English that we typically use today.” – Daniel Peterson

Note: these grammatical characteristics have been cleaned up in the modern Book of Mormon text we have today.
- “Carmack writes, ‘in view of the totality of the evidence adduced here, I would assert that it is no longer possible to argue that the earliest text of the Book of Mormon is defective and substandard in its grammar. ... It clearly draws on a wide array of ... language forms and syntax from the Early Modern English period, some of them obscure and inaccessible to virtually everyone 200 years ago. Only now are we beginning to appreciate the book’s surprising linguistic depth and breadth.’” – Daniel Peterson

Earliest Text of The Book of Mormon Written in Early Modern English (Cont.)

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/early_modern_english_in_BofM.pdf

- Since the King James Bible is only a subset of Early Modern English, it appears impossible that Joseph could have created all of the obscure Early Modern English Book of Mormon vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures simply by copying the style of the Bible.
- It isn't clear why the Lord chose to reveal the text of the Book of Mormon to the Prophet Joseph in this obscure, archaic Early Modern English, but what **IS** clear based on these extensive studies is that neither Joseph, nor anyone else from his era, could have produced these characteristics found in the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon.

Hebraisms

"Written characters were handed down and altered according to Nephite speech (Mormon 9:32). This observation suggests that at least later generations of Nephites used Egyptian characters to write their contemporary spoken language, an altered form of Hebrew."

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/language.pdf>, pg. 2

“Many typical Hebrew language patterns have been identified in the Book of Mormon”

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/language.pdf>, pg. 3

- “Hebrew employs prepositional phrases as adverbs more often than individual adverbs, a feature typical of Book of Mormon language: ‘in haste’ (3 Ne. 21:29) instead of ‘hastily’ and ‘with gladness’ (2 Ne. 28:28) instead of ‘gladly.’”
- “...a possible example of Hebrew agreement: ‘This people is a free people’ (Alma 30:24; emphasis added). In English, ‘people’ is usually considered grammatically plural, but in Hebrew it is often singular.”
- “Possession in English is shown in two constructs—‘the man's house’ and ‘the house of the man’—but only the latter construct is employed in Hebrew. The lack of apostrophe possession in the Book of Mormon is consistent with a translation from the Hebrew construct.”
- “[T]he ‘of’ construct is common for adjectival relationships in Hebrew. Correspondingly, the Book of Mormon consistently employs phrases such as “plates of brass” (1 Ne. 3:12) instead of ‘brass plates’ and ‘walls of stone’ (Alma 48:8) rather than ‘stone walls.’”

Hebrew Language Patterns (Cont.)

- “Sentence structures and clause-combining mechanisms in Hebrew differ from those in English. Long strings of subordinate clauses and verbal expressions, such as those in Helaman 1:16-17 and Mosiah 2:20-21 and 7:21-22, are acceptable in Hebrew, though unorthodox and discouraged in English: "Ye all are witnesses...that Zeniff, who was made king,...he being over-zealous,...therefore being deceived by...king Laman, who having entered into a treaty,...and having yielded up [various cities],...and the land round about—and all this he did, for the sole purpose of bringing this people...into bondage" (Mosiah 7:21-22).”
- “Frequent phrases such as ‘from before’ and ‘by the hand of’ represent rather literal translations from Hebrew. For example, ‘he fled from before them’ (Mosiah 17:4), instead of the more typically English ‘he fled from them,’ portrays the common Hebrew compound preposition.”

Hebraisms:

Sukkot (i.e. Festival of Tabernacles)

- “...studies have suggested that King Benjamin's people might have been celebrating the Israelite festival of Sukkoth [Mosiah 2-6] and doing things required by Jewish laws not translated into English until after the Book of Mormon was published”

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/bofmauth.pdf>, pg. 2

Hebrew Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon

John Welch, New Era 1972

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/chiasmus.pdf>, pg. 8-9

- “John [Welch] announced in an academic journal the remarkable discovery that an ancient and highly specialized Hebrew literary style could be found throughout the Book of Mormon. A world famous, non-Mormon scholar called it the ‘most stunning information I've learned concerning the Book of Mormon.’”
- “Taken as evidence of the Book of Mormon, chiasmus offers us a touchstone like we have rarely ever had before. Scholars are saying things today like ‘Where there is chiasmus, there is the influence of a Hebraic hand.’ And yet such a thing was totally unknown to Joseph Smith and universally unrecognized by the world until the present decade.”

Chiasmus: Symmetrical Repetitive Poetry with a Focal Turning Point

- Chiasmus: a rhetorical or literary figure in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order, in the same or a modified form. –Oxford Dictionary

Psalm 58

*a Do ye indeed, O gods speak righteousness?
Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?
b Nay in the heart ye work wickedness,
Ye weigh out the violence of your hands in
the earth.
c The wicked are estranged from the womb.
d Their poison is like the poison of a serpent.
e O god
break
their teeth in their mouth,
e the great teeth of the young lions
break out
O Jehovah.
d They shall melt away like waters, like a
snail will melt as it goes along . . .
c Abortions of a woman that have not beheld
the sun . . .
b The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the
vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood
of the wicked.
a And men shall say, there is a reward for righteousness.
Surely there is a God that judgeth the earth.*

Mosiah 3:18-19

*a they humble themselves
b and become as little children
c and believe that salvation . . . is . . . in and
through the atoning blood of Christ, the
Lord Omnipotent.
d For the natural man
e is an enemy to God,
f and has been from the fall of Adam,
f and will be, forever and ever,
e unless he yields to the enticings of the
Holy Spirit,
d And putteth off the natural man
c and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord,
b and becometh as a child,
a submissive, meek, humble . . . full of love . . .*

Many BofM Chiasms Focus on the Savior and His Atonement:

For example, all of Alma 36 is a Chiasm focused on the Atonement

- a My son, give ear to my words (verse 1)*
- b Keep the commandments [and] ye shall prosper in the land (1)*
- c Captivity of our fathers -- bondage (2)*
- d Surely God did deliver them (2)*
- e Trust in God (3)*
- f Support in trials, trouble, and afflictions (3)*
- g I know this not of myself but of God (4)*
- h Born of God (5)*
- i Seek no more to destroy the church of God (9)*
- j Gell to the earth (10)*
- k Limbs paralyzed (10)*
- l The agony of conversion . . .destroyed, torment, (11 - 16)*
harrowed up, racked, the pains of hell, inexpressible horror,
banished and extinct, the pains of a damned soul
- m I remember . . . the coming of one Jesus Christ,*
a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world
- m I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God,*
have mercy on me (17-18)
- l The joy of conversion no more pain, what joy,*
marvelous light, exquisite, nothing as sweet, singing |
and praising God, longing to be with God (19-22)
- k Limbs received their strength again (23)*
- j Stood upon my feet (23)*
- i Labored without ceasing to bring souls unto repentance (24)*
- h Many have been born of God (26)*
- g Knowledge is of God (26)*
- f Supported under trials and troubles, yea afflictions (27)*
- e Trust in him (27)*
- d He will still deliver me (27)*
- c Egypt -- captivity (28-29)*
- b Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (30)*
- a This according to his word (30)*

The Numerous Chiasms in the Book of Mormon are not there by Chance

- "...we can rule out the odd chance that Joseph Smith learned about chiasmus through scrutinously reading the Bible on the simple grounds that the King James translation, which he used, obscures almost every chiastic formation possible. Either in an attempt to avoid redundant repetitions or to prevent awkward word orders, the King James translators did a good job of leveling almost every chiasm in the Bible. Their 'good style' was anathema to 'good Hebrew.'" -John Welch <http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/chiasmus.pdf>, pg. 8
 - "Although all knowledge of this form lay dormant for centuries, it was rediscovered and reexplored in the nineteenth century when formal criticism began to emerge. But by the time the concept of chiasmus received currency or recognition, the Book of Mormon had long been in print." -John Welch <https://rsc.byu.edu/book-mormon-authorship/chiasmus-book-Mormon> (conclusion)
 - A Statistical Study was done of Repetitive Literary Structures showing up by chance or design in various books:
 - "We conclude that the likelihood is high that chiastic structure appeared by design in the Pentateuch and in the Book of Mormon"
- "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" Boyd F. Edward and Farrell W. Edwards
http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/chiasmus_in_BofM_by_chance.pdf, pg. 21











Semitic Languages and the Language of the Book of Mormon

Semitic Language Characteristic: No Punctuation

- Hebrew and Egyptian are part of the Semitic family of languages that consist of Hebrew, Egyptian, Arabic, Aramaic, Phoenician and Akkadian.
- Among some of the unusual characteristics of Semitic languages are:
 - It is read right to left (instead of our more familiar left to right).
 - The written language only consist of the consonants of the words. Vowels are not written (more on this later).
 - The written language uses no punctuation.
- Interestingly enough, the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon that Joseph Smith dictated has absolutely no punctuation. John H. Gilbert, the typesetter for the first printing of the Book of Mormon was the one that added all of the punctuation. He said: "We had a great deal of trouble with it. It was not punctuated at all."

Book of Mormon Language Summary

- Since the many languages involved in the Book of Mormon production and translation can be confusing, let's summarize what has been learned.
- The original language of the Book of Mormon is purported to be Hebrew.
- This Hebrew was transcribed into a written language script the Book of Mormon authors called "Reformed Egyptian".
- A candidate for "Reformed Egyptian" is ancient Demotic, which is a shorthand script used by ancient Egyptians to more easily represent the harder to create Hieroglyphic Egyptian language.
- Scholars have found ancient examples of non-Egyptian spoken languages being written using Demotic script.
- A modern equivalent of this would be writing the Japanese spoken language using the Greco-Roman alphabet. The original written language of Japanese would be Kanji characters, but it can also be written with Greco-Roman letters.
- In 1829 this Reformed Egyptian was translated by the power of God into the Early Modern English vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures found in the earliest manuscript of the Book of Mormon, and punctuation was later added during the printing process.
- Remnants of Hebrew literary styles, phrases, and word usage are found in the Book of Mormon because Hebrew was the base language.

Hieroglyph	Demotic
	→ 
	→ 
	→ 
	→ 



Near Eastern Parallels

Near Eastern Parallels: “Year Rite” Coronation

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/neareast.pdf>, pg. 2-3 (Nibley)

- “There is a detailed description of a coronation in the Book of Mormon that is paralleled only in ancient non-biblical sources, notably Nathan haBabilil's description of the coronation of the Prince of the Captivity.”
- “The Book of Mormon version in Mosiah 2-6 (c. 125 B.C.) is a classic account of the well-documented ancient “Year Rite”:
 - (a) The people gather at the temple,
 - (b) bringing first fruits and offerings (Mosiah 2:3-4);
 - (c) they camp by families, all tent doors facing the temple;
 - (d) a special tower is erected,
 - (e) from which the king addresses the people,
 - (f) unfolding unto them “the mysteries” (the real ruler is God, etc.);
 - (g) all accept the covenant in a great acclamation;
 - (h) it is the universal birthday, all are reborn;
 - (i) they receive a new name, are duly sealed, and registered in a nation census;
 - (j) there is stirring choral music (cf. Mosiah 2:28; 5:2-5),
 - (k) they feast by families (cf. Mosiah 2:5) and return to their homes (CWHN 6:205-310).
- This “patternism” has been recognized only since the 1930s.” – Hugh Nibley

Near Eastern Parallels: Rending Garments

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/neareast.pdf>, pg. 2 (Nibley)

- “Among lengthier connected accounts, Moroni 1 (c. 75 B.C.), leading an uprising against an oppressor, ‘went forth among the people waving the rent part of his garment’ to show the writing on it (Alma 46:19-20).”
- “The legendary Persian hero Kawe did the same thing with his garment.”
- “The men of Moroni ‘came running.... rending their garments...as a covenant [saying]...may [God] cast us at the feet of our enemies...to be trodden underfoot’ (Alma 46:21-22).”
- “Both the rending of and the treading on the garments were ancient practices.” - Hugh Nibley

Near Eastern Parallels: Banners and the Coat of Joseph

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/neareast.pdf>, pg. 2 (Nibley)

- “The inscription on the banner, ‘in memory of our God, our religion, and our peace, our wives, and our children’ (Alma 46:12), is similar to the banners and trumpets of the armies in the Dead Sea Battle Scroll.”
- “Before the battle Moroni goes before the army and dedicates the land southward as Desolation, and the rest he named ‘a chosen land, and the land of liberty’ (Alma 46:17).”
- “In the Battle Scroll ([1QM] vii.8ff.) the high priest similarly goes before the army and dedicates the land of the enemy to destruction and that of Israel to salvation.”
- “Moroni compares his torn garment-banner to the coat of Joseph, half of which was preserved and half decayed: ‘Let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death...as this remnant of [the coat] hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of [Joseph] be preserved.’ So Jacob had both ‘sorrow...[and] joy’ at the same time (Alma 46:24-25).”
- “An almost identical story is told by the tenth-century savant Tha'labi, the collector of traditions from Jewish refugees in Persia.” – Hugh Nibley



Witnesses as Evidence of The Book of Mormon

The Speed of the Book of Mormon Translation as Evidence

(Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, by John Welch pg. 80-81)

- “Joseph Smith testified that he translated the Book of Mormon miraculously, by the gift and power of God. Is that testimony credible? [A] set of over two hundred documents assembles data pertinent to that ultimate question.”
- “The historical records corroborating the translation of the Book of Mormon are indeed copious and quite detailed.”
- “The overwhelming accumulation of the consistent historical details provided by eyewitness participants and local observers leads to the solid conclusion that the Book of Mormon was translated in a very short period of time. Inside of three astonishingly compressed months, Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon. Its text simply emerged as it fell from his lips, line after line, recorded by his attentive scribe.”

Joseph Literary Abilities as Evidence

(Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, John Welch pg. 97)

- Question to Emma Smith: “Could [Joseph Smith] have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?”
- Emma’s Answer: “Joseph Smith could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, ...it is marvelous to me, “a marvel and a wonder,” as much so as to any one else.”

Eleven Witnesses (Three and Eight) as Evidence

Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses, Richard Lloyd Anderson

- Three Witnesses testified of seeing the Book of Mormon plates with an Angel and hearing the voice of God.
- Eight Witnesses testified of holding the Plates of the Book of Mormon in their hands and looking through the metal pages.
- All witnesses were reliable, hard working people respected in their communities.
- All three witnesses became antagonistic to Joseph at some point in their lives, but all the way to their death beds never denied their experience with the Book of Mormon and the Angel. If it was a fraud, it is hard to explain their behavior.
- None of the 8 witnesses ever denied their experience with the Book of Mormon plates.

Other Eye Witnesses as Evidence

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/Mary_Whitmer_12th_bofm_witness.pdf

Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, John Welch

- One “unofficial witnesses”, Mary Whitmer, indicated an old man had shown her the plates in her barn during the translation process.
- Emma Smith testified of moving the plates inside a cloth bag around on the kitchen table, and mentioned lifting the edge of the metal pages through the cloth like thumbing through the pages of a paper book.
- Joseph Smith’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith testified of feeling the interpreters and breastplate found with the plates of the Book of Mormon through linen cloth.

Joseph Smith's Family as Witnesses

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/Joseph_known_as_truthful.pdf

- Family members are often the severest critics of each other, so it is notable that all of the Smith family believed Joseph's claims.
- William Smith, who often argued with Joseph and had a knock down fist fight with Joseph in the Kirtland era of the church, never denied his belief in Joseph's claims.
- "Joseph Smith, at the age of seventeen years, with the moral training he had received from strictly pious and religious parents, could not have conceived the idea in his mind of palming off a fabulous story, such as seeing angels, etc. ... There was not a single member of the family of sufficient age to know right from wrong but what had implicit confidence in the statements made by my brother Joseph concerning his vision and the knowledge he thereby obtained concerning the plates. Father and mother believed him; why should not the children? I suppose if he had told crooked stories about other things, we might have doubted his word about the plates, but Joseph was a truthful boy. That father and mother believed his report and suffered persecution for that belief shows that he was truthful."
—William Smith

Howlers:

Book of Mormon features once seen as hilariously laughable, but now actually give strong supporting evidence



There are too many to go into the details of them all, so what follows is a sampling

For many more see:

http://etherscave.blogspot.com/p/blog-page_20.html



Definition: Anachronism

- The Howlers in the Book of Mormon generally have to do with Anachronisms.
- Anachronism: “a thing belonging or appropriate to a period other than that in which it exists.” i.e. if the Book of Mormon talks about iPods, that would be an obvious anachronism from our day since they didn’t exist in the time period claimed by the Book of Mormon.

Ancient Cultures have never been known to write on Metal Plates

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/neareast.pdf>, pg. 3

- “The authenticity of the Gold Plates on which the Book of Mormon was inscribed has often been questioned until the finding of the Darius Plates in 1938. Many other examples of sacred and historical writing on metal plates have been found since. The brass (bronze) plates recall the Copper Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the metal being used to preserve particularly valuable information, namely the hiding places of treasures—scrolls, money, sacred utensils—concealed from the enemy.” – Hugh Nibley

Quotes from the Old and New Testament

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/King_James_Literary_Style_in_BofM.pdf, pg. 3

- “[W]hat about the “Faith, Hope and Charity” passage in Moroni 7:45? Its resemblance to 1 Corinthians 13 is undeniable. This particular passage, recently singled out for attack in *Christianity Today*, is actually one of those things that turn out to be a striking vindication of the Book of Mormon. For the whole passage, which scholars have labeled “the Hymn to Charity,” was shown early this century by a number of first-rate investigators working independently (A. Harnack, J. Weiss, R. Reizenstein) to have originated not with Paul at all, but to go back to some older but unknown source: Paul is merely quoting from the record.”
- “Now it so happens that other Book of Mormon writers were also peculiarly fond of quoting from the record... So I find it not a refutation but a confirmation of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon when Paul and Moroni both quote from a once well-known but now lost Hebrew writing.” – Hugh Nibley

Barley in the New World

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/BofM_with_mature_historical_understanding.pdf, pg. 20-21

- “Since at least 1887, barley has been frequently included on lists of anachronistic plants mentioned in the Book of Mormon.”
- “In 1983, however, Daniel B. Adams reported that ‘salvage archaeologists found preserved grains of what looks like domesticated barley’ at a Hohokam site near Phoenix, AZ, dated to AD 900. The grain was an indigenous American species known as *little barley*... cultivated specimens of little barley have since been identified at several pre-Columbian sites, mostly in the Eastern United States, though ‘extensive archaeological evidence also points to the cultivation of little barley in the Southwest and parts of Mexico,’”
- “...today scholars generally agree that it was among the major cultivated crops in the Eastern United States by 200 BC. Some will protest that it is not ‘true’ (Old World) barley, but nothing in the Book of Mormon requires such a deliberately anachronistic reading.” – Neal Rappleye

New World Cement

<http://etherscave.blogspot.com/2013/07/exceedingly-expert-in-working-of-cement.html>

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/BofM_with_mature_historical_understanding.pdf, pg. 16-17

- “When I was a young married man,” recalled President Heber J. Grant in 1929, “another young man who had received a doctor’s degree ridiculed me for believing in the Book of Mormon. He said he could point out two lies in that book. One was that people had built their homes out of cement and that they were very skillful in the use of cement. He said there had never been found and never would be found, a house built of cement by the ancient inhabitants of this country, because the people in that early age knew nothing about cement. He said that should be enough to make one disbelieve the book. I ...said to him, **‘If my children [don’t] find cement houses, I expect that my grandchildren will.’**”
- “Mesoamerican use of limestone-based cement from very ancient times is well documented. Non-structural lime plasters and stuccos were used as early as 1100–600 BC, and ‘through the Late Pre-classic period [ca. 300 BC–AD 250] ... the thickness and quality of plasters increased,’ and Maya builders made ‘improvement[s] in mixing techniques.’ According to Michael Coe and Stephen Houston, during this time-period the lowland Maya ‘quickly realized the structural value of a concrete-like fill made from limestone rubble and marl,’ contributing to “an explosion of [building] activity around 100 BC” in the Northern Petén.” – Neal Rappleye

The Trend of Book of Mormon Anachronisms

<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2019/time-vindicates-the-prophet>

- How have Book of Mormon Anachronisms claimed by its critics fared since the publication of the Book of Mormon?
- How much have things improved or gotten worse in terms of what the Book of Mormon claims about possible candidates for Lamanite and Nephite peoples on the American Continent?

Time Vindicates the Prophets

<https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2019/time-vindicates-the-prophet>

- A scholar by the name of Matt Roper conducted a study “to review all anti-Mormon literature on the Book of Mormon from 1830-2019. [He went] through about 1,000 publications that deal with arguments against the Book of Mormon since Joseph Smith’s day.”
- He divided these criticisms into time periods, 1830-1844, 1845-1965, and 1966 to our present day, and then documented all the criticisms of the Book of Mormon for each time period
- He then documented confirmations, if any, that are based on new information and discoveries during that time period, and then tallied the number of non-confirmations or confirmations.

Status of Anachronisms

- **Unconfirmed** (Pre-Columbian Steel)
- **Trending**. Not yet confirmed, but the issue has moved to a more favorable perspective than before (Bow and Arrow)
- **Confirmed** (Pre-Columbian Cement 2000 Years ago)

Anachronisms Relating to Ancient Warfare, Metals, Animals, Lehi's Wilderness Journey, and Israelite Culture Status 1829-1844

Fortifications			Sheep	
Military Costumes		Rations		
Armor		Steel (OW)		
Swords		Steel (NW)		
			Land of Jerusalem	
Steel Swords (OW)			Bethlehem Part of Land of Jerusalem	
Steel Swords (NW)			3 Days Journey	
Scimitars				
Javelins			Not Much Fire	
Spears			Raw Meat	
Bow and Arrow		Forges	Bountiful Site in Arabia	
		Gold Money		
Bow of Fine Steel (OW)		Silver Money		
Slings				
		Horse Pre-Columbian		
Large Armies			600 Year Chronology	
Large Army Casualties		Ass	Killing Laban	
		Cow		
		Ox	Non Jerusalem Temples	
Post Decapitation Movement/Breathing			Jews Write in Egyptian	
		Goat	Scripture in Egyptian	
		Wild Goat	Direction in Wilderness	
Compass		Sacrifice not at Temple	Non Levite Priests	

Anachronism Status in 1844
Notice all the red "unconfirmed" items

Anachronisms Relating to Ancient Records, Writing, Names, 3 Nephi, and Ancient Culture Language Status 1829-1844

Metal Plates (OW)			Chariots	
Israelite Writing on Metal				
Metal Plates in NW				
Pre-Columbian Writing				
Reformed Egyptian (OW)		Day Night and Day		
		Sunken Cities		
		Great Tempest		
		Destruction By Fire		
		Whirlwind		
		Earthquake		
Hiding Up Records		Buildings Fall		
Inscribed Stone Monuments (NW)		Thick Darkness		
Sam		Darkness Felt		
Josh		Three Days of Darkness		
Gid		Inability to Light Fire		
Sheum		Earth Closing Up		
Neas		Earth Carried Up		
Ziff		Destruction at Time of Christ		
Money Names		Native Traditions		
Rameumptum		Civilization		
Com		Large Cities		
Kim				
Nephi			Plausible Geography (NW)	
			Navigation	
Moroni			Wild Beasts	
Mormon		Glass (OW)		
Gadianton		Arts		
		Astronomy		
		Archaeological Evidence		

Summary 1844

- 89 Anachronisms
- 84 Unconfirmed
- 5 Confirmed

Anachronisms Relating to Ancient Warfare, Metals, Lehi's Wilderness Journey, and Israelite Culture Status 1845-1965

Fortifications			Sheep	
No Warfare				
No Wars of Conquest				
Military Costumes		Rations		
Armor		Steel (OW)	Sacrifice not at Temple	
Swords		Steel (NW)		
Swords Early			Land of Jerusalem	
Steel Swords (OW)			Bethlehem Part of Land of Jerusalem	
Steel Swords (NW)		Brass (NW)	3 Days Journey	
Scimitars (OW)			River in a Valley	
Scimitars (NW)				
		Iron (NW)	River into Red Sea	
Axes		Iron Working (NW)		
Javelins		Iron Practical Use of (NW)	Not Much Fire	
Spears			Raw Meat	
Bow and Arrow		Forges	Bountiful in Arabia	
Bow and Arrow Early		Metal Money		
		Gold Money		
Bow of Fine Steel (OW)		Silver Money	Timber	
		Chains	Ore	
Slings		Metallurgy (Early)		
Shields			Lehi Ocean Route	
Arm Shields			Length Jaredite Voyage	
Head Plates			Pre-Columbian Sea Cross	
Breastplates		Horse Pre-Columbian	Feasts Customs Festivals	
Breastplates Copper Brass		Horse with Man	Non Levite Priests	
Large Armies		Horse Book of Mormon Times	600 Year Chronology	
Large Army Casualties		Ass	Killing Laban	
		Cow		
Wars of Extermination		Ox	Non Jerusalem Temples	
Post Decapitation Movement/Breathing		Cattle	Jews Write in Egyptian	
		Goat	Scripture in Egyptian	
Compass		Wild Goat	Direction in Wilderness	
Elephants Pre-Columbian		Elephants Contemporary with Man	Elephants Book of Mormon Times	
Pre-Columbian Christians		Synagogues	Jew Pre-exilic Term	

Anachronisms Relating to Ancient Records, Writing, Names, 3 Nephi, and Ancient Culture Language Status 1845-1965

Metal Plates (OW)			Chariots	
Israelite Writing on Metal				
Metal Plates (NW)		Hebrew Names		
Pre-Columbian Writing		Egyptian names		
Reformed Egyptian (OW)		Day Night and Day		
Egyptian Language NW		Sunken Cities		
Egyptian Inscriptions NW		Great Tempest		
Hebrew Language NW		Destruction By Fire		
Hebrew Inscriptions NW		Whirlwind		
NW Inscriptions/BM Names		Earthquake		
NW Inscriptions/BM Text		No Earthquakes in Central America		
Hiding Up Records		Buildings Fall		
Inscribed Stone Monuments (NW)		Thick Darkness	Machinery	
Sam		Darkness Felt		
Josh		Three Days of Darkness		
Gid		Inability to Light Fire		
Sheum		Earth Closing Up		
Neas		Earth Carried Up		
Ziff		Destruction at Time of Christ		
Money Names		Native Traditions		
Plausibility		Civilization		
Large Cities				
Cities identified				
Nephi			Plausible Geography (NW)	
Alma			Navigation	
Moroni			Wild Beasts	
Mormon		Glass (OW)	Omni	
Gadianton		Arts	Mosiah	
Deseret		Astronomy	Helaman	
Jarom		Cement	Ether	
Zeniff		Archaeological Evidence	Flocks	
Honey Bees		Snakes Hedge Way	Swine	

Anachronism Status in 1965
A few more greens

Summary 1965

- 150 Anachronisms (+61 since 1844)
- 22 Confirmed (+17 since 1844)
- 5 Trending
- 27 Confirmed of Trending toward confirmation
- 123 Unconfirmed

Anachronisms Relating to Ancient Warfare, Metals, Animals, Lehi's Wilderness Journey, and Israelite Culture Status 1966-2019

Fortifications	Cords	Sheep
No Warfare	Ladders	Lion-like Animals
No Wars of Conquest	Tents	Moths
Military Costumes	Rations	Dragon-like Animals
Armor	Steel (OW)	Chickens
Swords	Steel (NW)	Dogs
Swords Early	Bellows (OW)	Land of Jerusalem
Steel Swords (OW)	Brass Early (OW)	Bethlehem Part of Land of Jerusalem
Steel Swords (NW)	Brass (NW)	3 Days Journey
Scimitars (OW)	Brass Early (NW)	River in a Valley
Scimitars (NW)	Iron	River into Red Sea
Daggers	Iron Working (NW)	New Names to Locations
Axes	Iron Practical Use of (NW)	Not Much Fire
Javelins	Abundance of Metal Ores	Raw Meat
Spears	Forges	A Bountiful Site in Arabia
Bow and Arrow	Metal Money	Much Fruit
Bow and Arrow Early	Gold Money	Wild Honey
Quivers	Silver Money	Timber
Bow of Fine Steel (OW)	Chains	Ore
Fiery Darts	Early Metallurgy (NW)	Mountain at Bountiful
Slings	Gold Early	Lehi's Ocean Route
Shields	Silver Early	Length of Jaredite Voyage
Arm Shields	Copper Early	Pre-Columbian Seal Cross
Head Plates	Horse Pre-Columbian	Feasts Celebrated Festivals
Breastplates	Horse with Man	Animal Sacrifice
Breastplates Copper/Brass	Horse BM Times	600 Year Chronology
Large Armies	Ass	Killing Laban
Large Army Casualties	Cow	Seantum's Confession
Set Time for Battle	Ox	Non Jerusalem Temples
Wars of Extermination	Cattle	Jews Write in Egyptian
Post Decapitation Movement/Breathing	Goat	Scripture in Egyptian
BM Battle Remains	Wild Goat	Direction In Wilderness
Trumpets	Elephants and Man	Elephants BM Times
Elephants Pre-Columbian	Sacrifice not at Temple	Non Levite Priests
Compass	Pre-Columbian Christians	Synagogues
Jew Pre-exilic Term		

Anachronisms Relating to Ancient Records, Writing, Names, 3 Nephi, and Ancient Culture Language Status 1966-2019

Metal Plates (OW)	Jonas	Chariots
Israelite Writing on Metal	Timothy	Pearls
Writing on Metal Plates (NW)	Non-Biblical Hebrew Names	Silk
Pre-Columbian Writing	Egyptian Names	Linen
Reformed Egyptian (OW)	Day Night and Day	Wheat
Egyptian Language (NW)	Sunken Cities	Barley
Egyptian Inscriptions (NW)	Great Tempest	Corn
Hebrew Language (NW)	Destruction By Fire	Grapes
Hebrew Inscriptions (NW)	Whirlwind	Wine
Inscriptions with Book of Mormon Names (NW)	Earthquake	Salt
Inscriptions with Book of Mormon Texts (NW)	Earthquakes in Mesoamerica	Highways
Hiding Up Records	Buildings Fall	Leprosy
Inscribed Stone Monuments (NW)	Thick Darkness	Machinery
Sam	Darkness Felt	Tools to Spin
Josh	Three Days of Darkness	Till Soil
Gid	Inability to Light Fire	Hoe
Sheum	Earth Closing Up	Thrash
Neas	Earth Carried Up	Prune
Ziff	Destruction at Time of Christ	Plow
Money Names	Native Traditions	Sickle
Rameumptum	Civilization	Tools to Work Beasts
Coer	Large Cities	Kings
Kim	Cities Identified	Buildings
Nephi	Temples	Plausible Geography (NW)
Alma	Palaces	Navigation
Moroni	Barns	Wild Beasts
Mormon	Glass (OW)	Omni
Gadianon	Arts	Mosiah
Deseret	Astronomy	Helaman
Liahona	Cement	Ether
Shazer	Archaeological Evidence	Flocks and Herds
Honey Bees NW	Snakes Hedge Way	Swine
Jarom	Zeniff	Roads

Anachronism Status in 2019
A LOT more green

Summary 2019

- 141 Confirmed (+119 since 1965)
- 26 Trending (+21 since 1965)
- 167 confirmed or trending toward confirmation
- 140 since Matt Roper was born in 1966
- 38 Unconfirmed

Oh how things have changed in just 50 years!

Summary Book of Mormon Anachronisms 2019

- 70% Confirmed
- 81 % Confirmed or Trending
Toward Confirmation
- 19% Unconfirmed



Native American Language Connections of the Book of Mormon

1500+ Hebrew and Egyptian Word Cognates Found in Uto-Aztecan Language Family


[http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/egyptian hebrew language in ancient america.pdf](http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/egyptian%20hebrew%20language%20in%20ancient%20america.pdf)
[http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/exploring semitic egyptian uto-aztecan.pdf](http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/exploring%20semitic%20egyptian%20uto-aztecan.pdf), pg. 1

- Uto-Aztecan languages define a language family consisting of Shoshone, Goshute, Paiute and Ute.
- A “Cognate” is a relationship between different languages that show they have common roots, either with common ancestral languages, or as loan words from one language into another.
- Brian Stubbs is a linguistic scholar who has “...established himself as one of the leading Uto-Aztecan comparatists, owing to the many papers he has read at conferences and his many publications in journals the likes of *International Journal of American Linguistics* — but most especially to his massive 411-page book, *Uto-Aztecan: A Comparative Vocabulary*.”
—John S. Robertson
- In 2015 Brian Stubbs published a book called “*Exploring the Explanatory Power of Semitic and Egyptian in Uto-Aztecan*”. It finds 1500+ cognates between Hebrew, Egyptian, and Uto-Aztecan Languages.

1500+ Hebrew and Egyptian Word Cognates Found in Uto-Aztecan Language Family (Cont.)

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/strong_semitic_egyptian_elements_in_uto-aztecan.pdf, pg. 5, 8

- “The large quantity of cognates, coupled with the evidence of systematic sound changes one expects to find between related languages and even some evidence of grammatical influence (typically fossilized), creates a compelling case that exceeds the standards commonly used by linguists to establish connections between languages.”
- “In many New World languages, 100 to 200 pairs of cognates have been used to show a legitimate connection between languages.”
– Jeff Lindsay



Archeological and Geographic Evidences of The Book of Mormon



Arabian Peninsula Archeology and the Book of Mormon

Correct Book of Mormon Details and Locations on the Arabian Peninsula

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/evidence.pdf>, pg. 6

- “Eugene England some years ago in 1982 published an article in which he demonstrated that nobody knew anything really about Arabia in the days of Joseph Smith.”
- “Even if Joseph Smith had lived in an area with a fabulous public library or university library, he could not have learned very much from it about the geography of Arabia.”
- “What's more interesting is that the things he could have learned about it would have been for the most part wrong.”
- “1 Nephi gives a very accurate depiction, right down to the details of where the trail turns and so on, of a trip through ancient Arabia.” – Daniel C. Peterson

Nahem=Nahom

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/evidence.pdf>, pg. 6

- “A place has been found or located in the modern country of Yemen, right down in South Eastern Arabia, which is called Nahem.”
- “Nahem seems very like the ancient word Nahom, which appears in the Book of Mormon as the place where Ishmael was buried. The account in the Book of Mormon usually tells of Lehi naming a place, giving a certain name to a certain place. In this case, the name is already there. Ishmael was buried at the place which was called Nahom.”
- “Nahom and Nahem are virtually the same word. The consonants are the thing that is important in Arabic or Hebrew or ancient Semitic languages. The vowels can shift and change. So these names are virtually indistinguishable.”
- “What does the root *NHM* mean? It can mean things like to cry out in grief, to sigh, to mourn, to console; it's a perfect name for an ancient graveyard. And it turns out that in this place Nahem, which is in exactly the right location, there is an ancient graveyard.” – Daniel C. Peterson

Ancient Incense Trail and Nahom

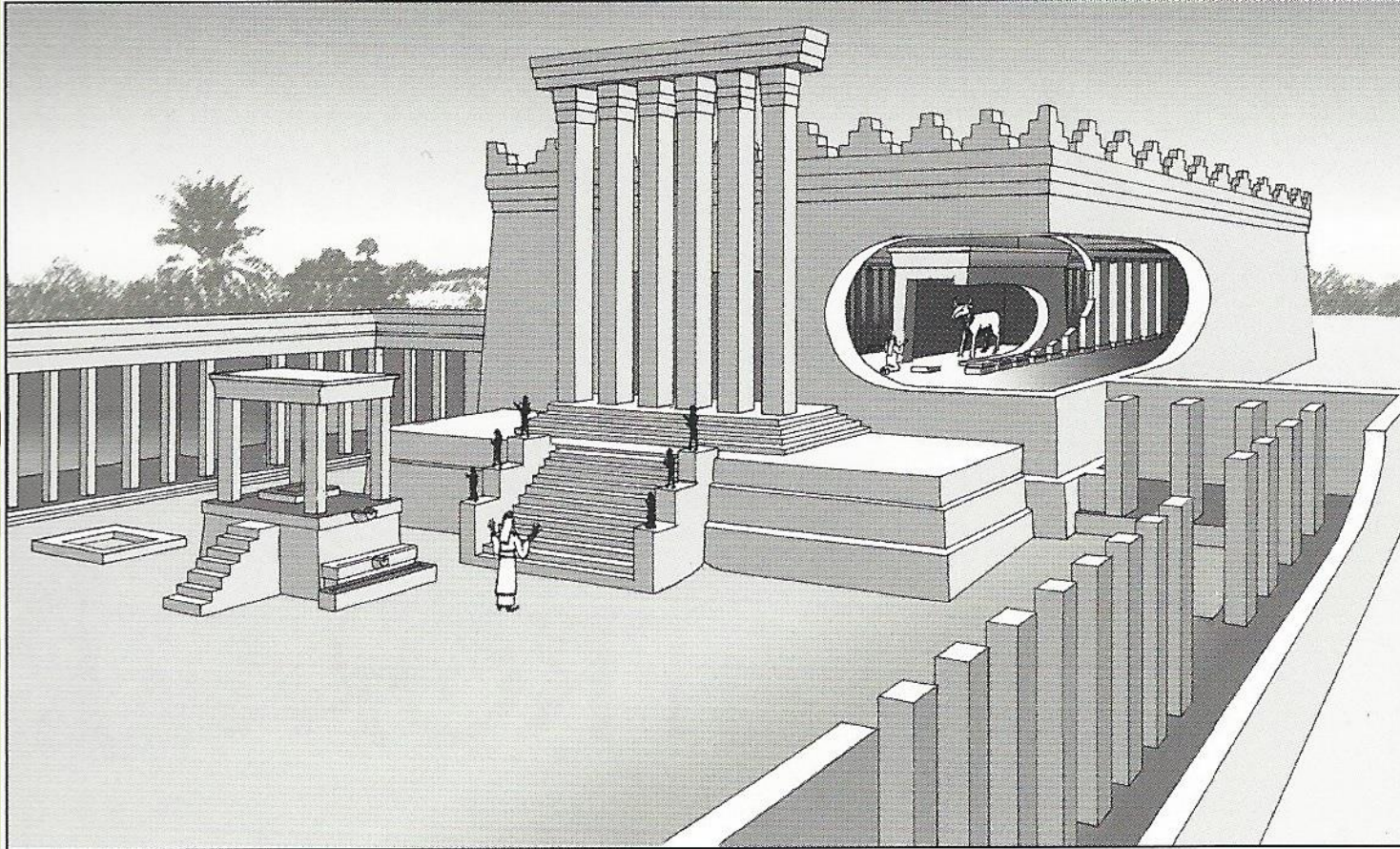
- 1 Nephi says Lehi's party went south from Jerusalem along the Red Sea until they came to a place called Nahom.
- The map at the right shows the ancient incense trail that travelers roughly followed.
- Right at the end is the Tribal area named NIHM.
- Ruins at that location of an ancient temple containing an altar with the tribal name NHM has been found.



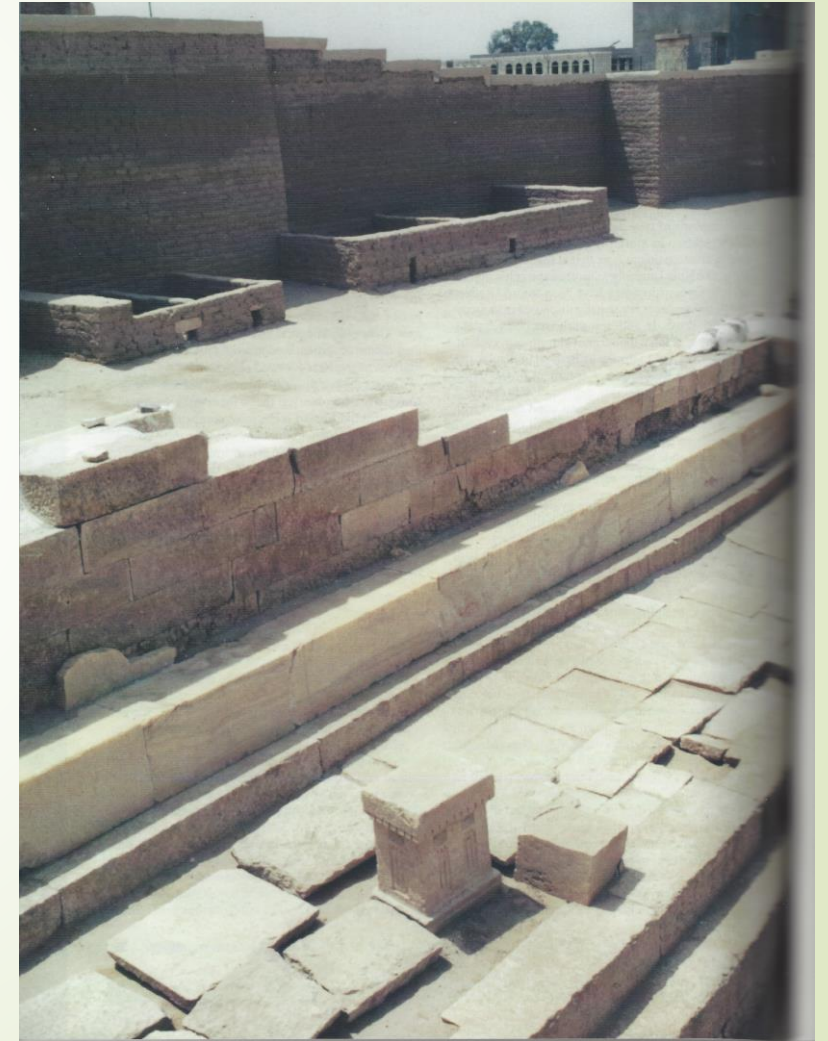
The distance from Jerusalem to the Nahom region and the nearby city of Marib is approximately 1,400 miles. Map by Andy D. Livingston.

Artists Depiction of the Ancient Temple at NIHM with a photo of the Altar

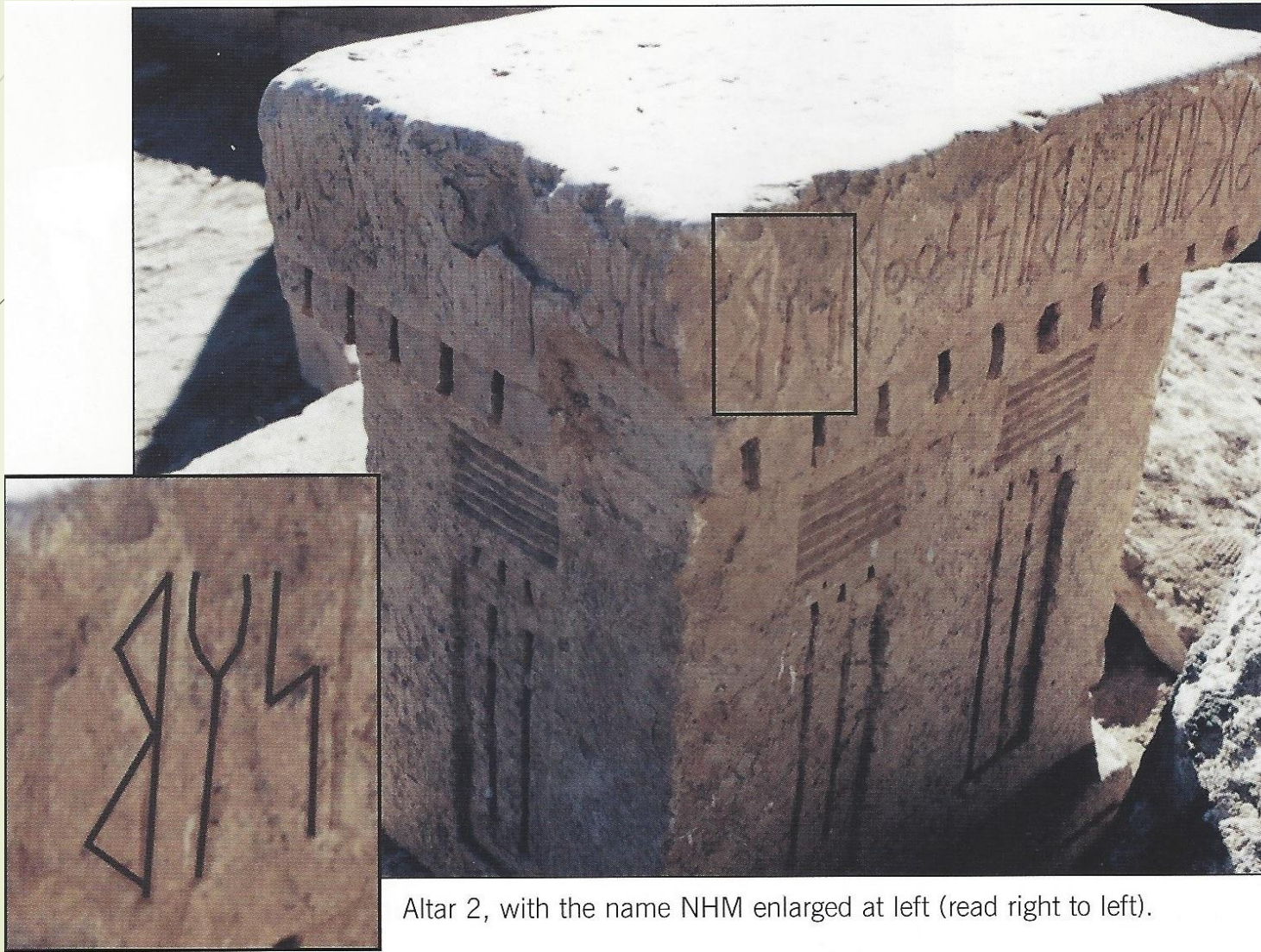
Journal of Book of Mormon Studies Volume 10, #2, 2001



The Baran temple included a large forecourt with a surrounding colonnade and a raised sanctuary to the east. Illustration by Michael Lyon and Andy D. Livingston.



Closeup of the Altar highlighting the Semitic word NHM



Altar 2, with the name NHM enlarged at left (read right to left).

The Land Bountiful

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/evidence.pdf>, pg. 7 (Peterson)

- “In the Book of Mormon account, Lehi and his party traveled due east from the place where they buried Ishmael and went over to the place that they called Bountiful, on the coast of Arabia.”
- “Critics for one hundred and sixty years have made fun of this, because everyone knows there is no place “Bountiful” in Arabia.”
- “There is no place that has that kind of timber, that kind of greenery. Arabia is a vast empty desert, a place that makes the Mojave Desert look like a tropical rain forest. And that's true, by and large.” – Daniel Peterson



Kharfot, due east of Nehem

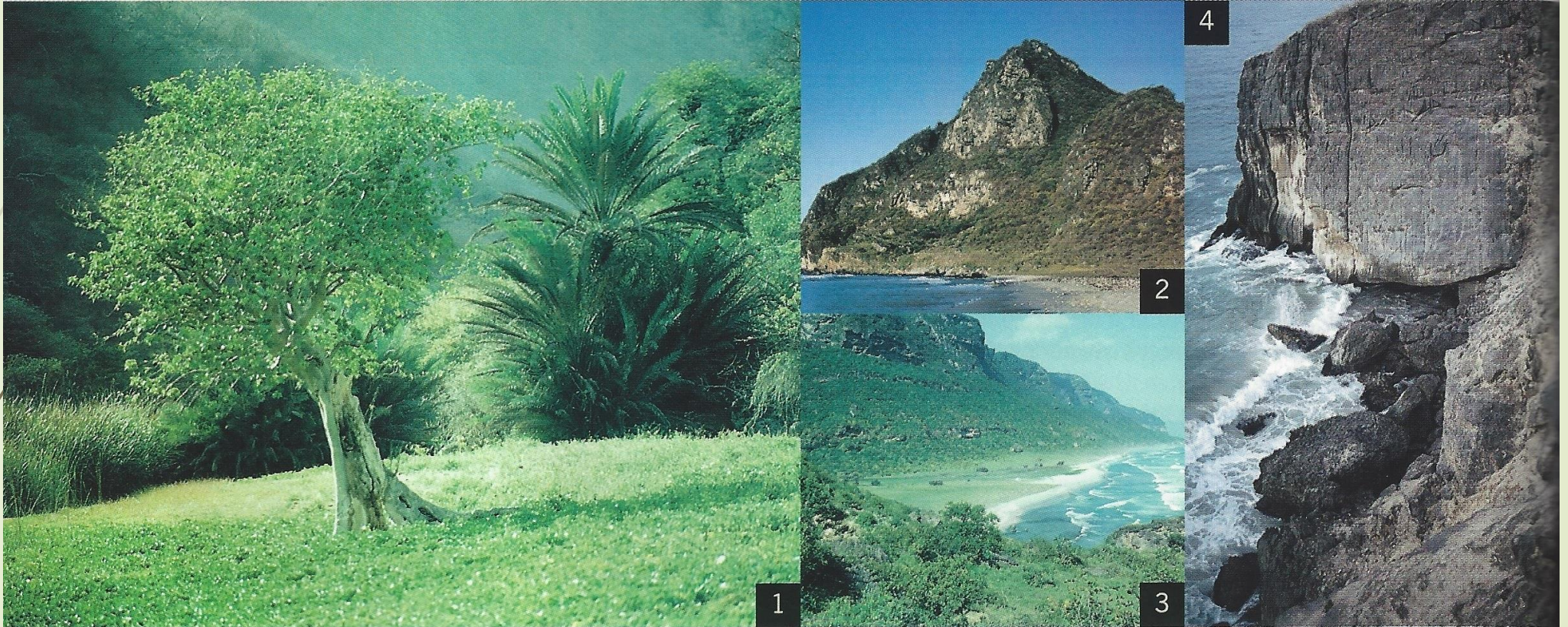
<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/evidence.pdf>, pg. 7 (Peterson)

- “If you go due east from Nehem, ...you find trees that are large enough to produce timber for a boat. You find a beach, you find greenery, you find fresh water.”
- “Places like this in Joseph Smith's day were thought not to exist. Everyone could have told Joseph if he had asked for advice while he was concocting some yarn about ancient Arabia and Ancient America, ‘Don't waste your time. There is no such place.’ And yet it is there.” – Daniel Peterson



Kharfot in Southern Oman -Directly east of Nahom

Journal of Book of Mormon Studies Volume 7, #1, 1998



[1] The sycamore fig, tamarind, and date palm are among the most common trees of southern Oman. [2] A prominent mountain rises out of the sea on the west side of the mouth of Wadi Sayq. [3] A view of the east across Wadi Sayq from the western plateau that overlooks the sandbar and the beach. [4] Cliffs fall precipitously from the south edge of the western mountain at Wadi Sayq.

Truly a Land Bountiful





Mesoamerican Archeology and the Book of Mormon

An Introduction to the Limited Book of Mormon Geography Model and Mesoamerica

- Early readers of the Book of Mormon almost immediately associated the geography described in the book with the North and South American continents, with the narrow neck of land described in the Book of Mormon being the isthmus of Panama.
- In the 1980's, Latter-day Saint scholars started paying closer attention to what the Book of Mormon actually says about its own geography and realized that the area described could have only covered a few hundred miles.
- In 1985, John L. Sorensen published a paradigm shifting book called "An Ancient Setting for the Book of Mormon" that proposed a limited geography model for the Book of Mormon that centered on the lands of Mesoamerica, with the narrow neck of land being the 75 mile wide isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico.
- Based on the large number of correlations, the majority of modern day, credentialed, Latter-day Saint scholars now consider Mesoamerica as the most likely candidate for Book of Mormon lands.
- Note: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no official position on the exact location in the Americas of the lands described in the Book of Mormon.

Mesoamerica as Book of Mormon Lands

Mormon's Codex, John L. Sorenson, pg. 63-103

- Mesoamerica is an area in Central America that extends through modern day central Mexico through Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica.
- Mesoamerican civilizations in the Book of Mormon timeframe are roughly organized by scholars into the Early Pre-classic (2000BC-600BC), Middle Pre-Classic (600BC-400BC), Late Pre-classic (400BC-200AD), and Early Classic (200AD-500AD).
- The first major civilization was the "Olmec" that existed in the Pre-classic and Middle Pre-Classic era in the area of the Isthmus and northward. LDS scholars map Jaredites onto the Olmec civilization.
- The second major civilization was the "Maya" that extended from the Middle Pre-classic into the Classic period. The Maya extended both north and south of the Isthmus. LDS scholars map the Nephites and Lamanites onto the Maya civilization.
- Only about 3% of the ruins in Mesoamerica have been excavated, so much more is to be learned.



- John L. Sorenson's book, Mormon's Codex, lists more than 400 points where the Book of Mormon text corresponds to characteristic Mesoamerican situations, statements, allusions, and history.

Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites as a Subset of Mesoamerica Cultures

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/Dismissing_Book_of_Mormon_geography_inaccuracies_1.pdf

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/Why_others_not_mentioned_in_bofm_2.pdf

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/Logical_arguments_for_bofm_others_3.pdf

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/What_about_statements_that_Lehites_came_alone_4.pdf

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/Who_were_Nephites_scattered_and_smitten_by_5.pdf

- The limited geography model has led Latter-day Saint scholars to hypothesize that migrant groups described in the Book of Mormon likely found other peoples that already lived in ancient America.
- Although the Book of Mormon text mostly describes things as if they were the only ones present in ancient America, many scholars have found clues within the text that indicates that others were likely already there.
- It is hypothesized that the group that broke off and later became known as Lamanites intermarried more heavily with the locals to the point that Nephites called anyone not a Nephite, a Lamanite. This theory points to the idea that the Nephites, Lamanites, and Jaredites were likely subset cultures within the larger Mesoamerican civilization, much like modern Latter-day Saints are a subset culture within the many nations of the world today.
- A Mayan text called the “Popol Vuh”, written by the Quiché Mayan people of the highlands of Guatemala, is a cultural narrative of the Quiché people that blends folklore, mythology, and historical accounts. It also acts as if the Quiché were the only people present in Mesoamerica. So in this regard the Book of Mormon is behaving as a typical Mesoamerican text.

Mesoamerican Features that Match Well with the Book of Mormon

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/new_world_correlations.pdf

- The time periods of the different Mesoamerican civilization roughly match the time periods of the Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites.
- The river Sidon described in the Book of Mormon flows from South to North. The Grijalva and Usumacinta rivers of Chiapas Mexico, south of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, run south to north, thereby making them both solid candidates for the river Sidon.
- The Mesoamerican civilization numbered in the millions, with large interconnected cities, heavy warfare, and agricultural production large enough to sustain such large numbers.
- Mesoamerican civilizations had the only written language yet discovered in the Americas.
- Population sizes and movements described in the Book of Mormon map well onto the population sizes and movements in different regions of Mesoamerica as currently understood by archeologists (see the referenced article above).
- The destruction described in 3 Nephi at the death of the Savior was likely caused by a large earthquake that set off volcanic eruptions. Mesoamerica is a very active earthquake and volcanic region that shows large amounts of activity at the time of the Savior (more on this on the next slide)

Mesoamerican Volcanic and Earthquake Activity at time of Christ

Since Cumorah, Hugh Nibley, pg. 231-238

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/destruction_in_3nephi_and_mesoamerican_geology.pdf

- The destruction in Book of Mormon lands at the Saviors death was described as “a great and terrible tempest”, “terrible thunder”, “exceedingly sharp lightnings”, “quakings that ... did last for about the space of three hours”, great fires, aftershocks, correctly described as tremblings and groanings, that lasted for three days, and “a thick darkness . . . The inhabitants . . . could feel the vapor of darkness; . . . neither could there be fire kindled, so great were the mists of darkness” (3 Ne 8). – Hugh Nibley
- Major earthquakes are so often accompanied by “heavy rains, thunder and hailstorms, violent tempests,” etc., that some specialists insist that “there is some evidence that certain weather conditions may ‘trigger’ an earthquake.” A major Guatemalan earthquake in 1541AD reported “the fury of the wind, the incessant, appalling lightning and dreadful thunder and flashes, balls of fire, and streamers” – Hugh Nibley
- “Major earthquakes often trigger volcanic eruptions, as in the Chilean 1960 quake, which triggered the activity of long dormant volcanoes in the area. Ash from major volcanic eruptions create a thick vapor of darkness over a large area that suffocate many as described in 3 Nephi 10:13, and make the kindling of fire impossible in other areas.” – Hugh Nibley
- Mesoamerica is one of the most active seismic and volcanic areas in the Americas. Geologists have found evidence that heavy activity occurred in the correct areas and time periods that coincide with the events described in the Book of Mormon (see the above reference written by Neal Rappleye).

Guatemalan Weights and Measures

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/weights_and_measures_in_BofM.pdf

- ▶ Alma 11 describes a peculiar money system that is based on the relative weights of different types of metal.
- ▶ “Native Mesoamericans traded with cocoa beans, quetzal feathers, and copper figures, and they used a weight-and-measure system that is still used today.” – Joseph L. Allen
- ▶ It consisted of small nesting cups of different sizes and weights.



(A) Now the reckoning is thus—a senine of gold, a seon of gold, a shum of gold, and a limnah of gold. (Alma 11:5)

The measurements of the “weights and measures” follow the same pattern as described in the Book of Mormon:

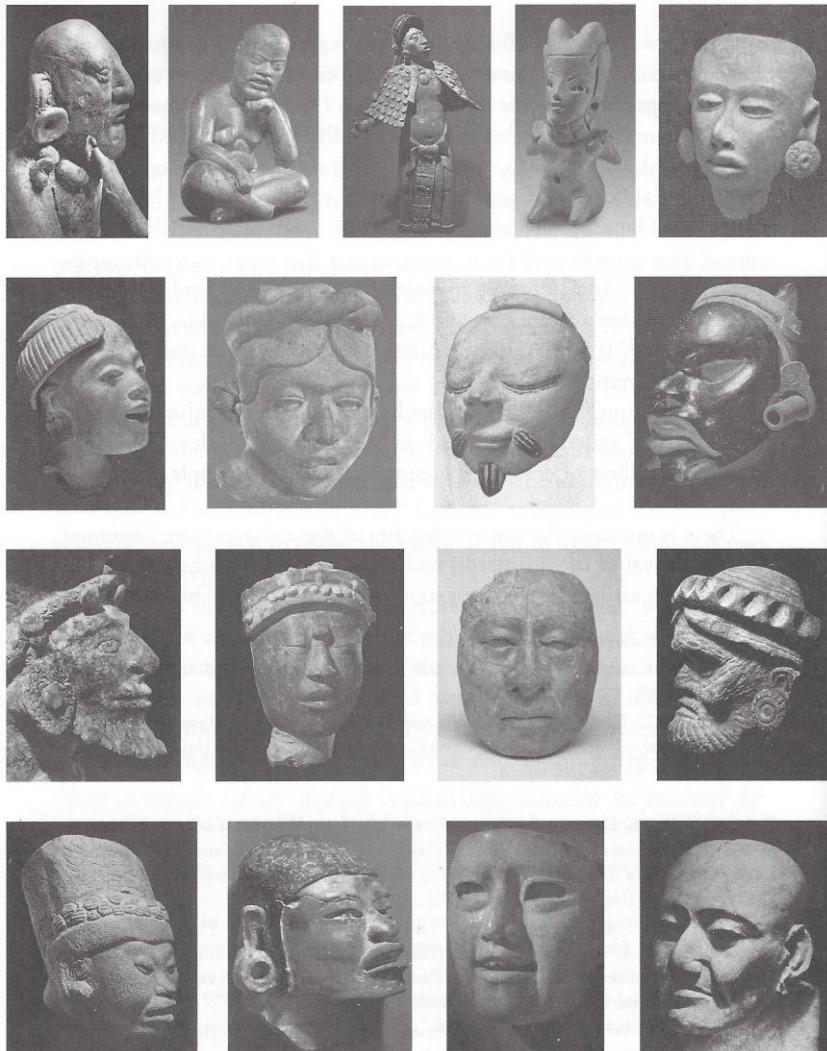
(B) Now the amount of a seon of gold was twice the value of a senine. (Alma 11:8)

(C) And a shum of gold was twice the value of a seon. (Alma 11:9)

(D) And a limnah of gold was the value of them all. (Alma 11:10)

Unexpected Mesoamerican Facial Diversity shown in Sculptures

Mormon's Codex, John L. Sorenson, pg. 238



European Features



Figure 12.1. Ethnic variety in ancient Mesoamerican human figurine faces

Light and Dark Skinned Mesoamericans

Mormon's Codex, John L. Sorenson, pg. 239-241

- The Book of Mormon describes a separation of peoples with lighter skin color (Nephites) and darker skin color (Lamanites).
- “A marked difference in skin pigmentation is shown in various participants in an 11th-century-AD mural at Chichén Itzá, Yucatan. Dark-skinned warriors are shown dominating or abusing people with white skin.”
- White skinned people were “apparently discernable as late as the Spanish conquest. Garibay and León Portilla tell of the startled reaction of Cortez upon seeing a bearded envoy from the Aztec ruler whose skin was very white. Cortez said, ‘No Spaniard was whiter than he was.’”
— John Sorenson

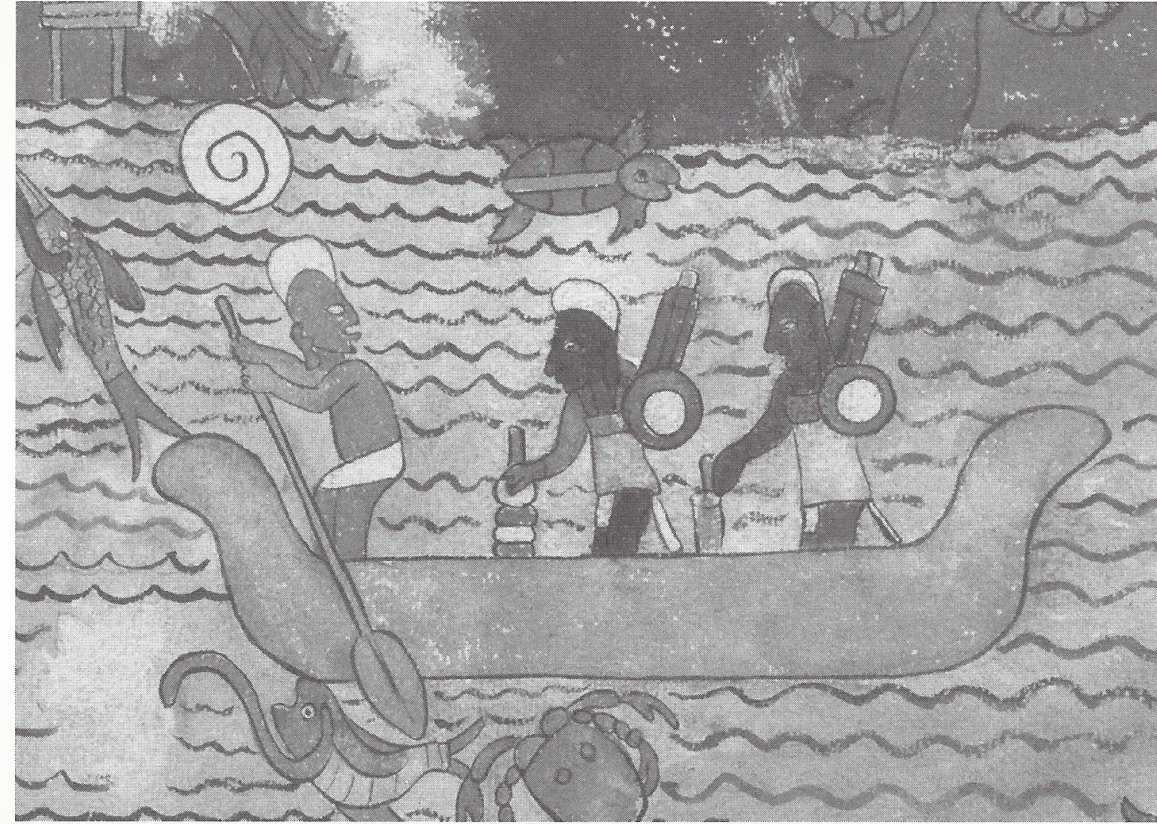



Figure 12.2. Light- and dark-skinned people in art at Chichen Itzá

Comparing the Book of Mormon with the Findings of the Scholarly Book “The Maya” or Joseph Smith: the World’s Greatest Guesser

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/the_worlds_greatest_guesser.pdf

- Dr. Michael Coe is a prominent Mesoamerican scholar and author of a synthesis and review of ancient Mesoamerican Indian cultures entitled *The Maya*.
- *Dr. Coe is also a prominent skeptic of the Book of Mormon.*
- *However, there is in his book strong evidence that favors the Book of Mormon, which Dr. Coe has not taken into account.*
- *The article referenced above, written by Bruce E. Dale and Brian M. Dale, analyzes that evidence, using Bayesian statistics.*
- *The article finds that there is overwhelming evidence that the Book of Mormon has physical, political, geographical, religious, military, technological, and cultural roots in ancient Mesoamerica.*



Ancient Evidences for Unique Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

A Restored Church

The Christ Who Heals, Fiona & Terryl Givens, pg. 14

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes that an apostasy happened in the original Christian church not long after the Apostles died and that as a result many true doctrines were lost.
- “This ‘falling away’ does not represent some minor corruptions of sacramental liturgy or ritual forms. It is not about wicked priests whom God punished by removing their priesthood. It is about a fundamental misapprehension of the background and purpose and extent of the covenant (premortal origins, mortal incarnation, and eventual theosis and sealing into the eternal family). It is the loss of the mode by which that covenant is executed (through temple covenants that create those chains of infinite belonging...).” –Terryl Givens
- The time period that represents much of the loss and rejection was the creation of the Nicene creed in about 325AD, and that was later amended in 381AD.
- Reports of the process of the creation of the Nicene Creed indicate it was more of a heated doctrinal negotiation by opposing factions, rather than a revelation of truths from heaven.
- As part of the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Lord restored those truths back to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith.
- Although these doctrines eventually became lost to traditional Christianity, a look at the documents, teachings, and beliefs of Christians from the first centuries (and even into the old testament period) indicate that these doctrines were known and believed before they were completely rejected and lost by later generations.



A Few of the Unique Doctrines and Practices Restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith that can be Found in Antiquity

- **Premortal Existence** (We lived premortally with God)
- **Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as Separate Beings**
- **A Mother in Heaven** (Taught privately by Joseph during his life, but publicly by all his successors)
- **Deification** (Man can become like God through Christ's atonement)
- **Salvation for the Dead** (Baptism in behalf of the dead)
- **Creation from unformed matter** (Universe not created out of nothing)
- **Temple Endowment** (Additional sacred ordinances beyond baptism)
- **Eternal Marriage** (Husbands and wives can be united forever)

Gnosticism Defined

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism>

- To understand early Christian beliefs, it is important to understand an early derivative of Christianity called Gnosticism. Much of the early history of the Christian church revolves around its relationship with, and its battle against, Gnosticism.
- Gnosticism was a movement among some 2nd century Christians that took elements of the original Christian church and created some doctrinal innovations.
- This movement was suppressed by the main Christian churches of the day and many of the gnostic documents were destroyed. Because of the loss of many genuine Christian doctrines and teachings in the first centuries, it is often hard for biblical scholars to determine what doctrines the Gnostics inherited from the earliest Christians and what doctrines they added.

Premortal Existence

The Christ Who Heals, Fiona & Terryl Givens, pg. 13-15

- “Origen, the first systematic theologian the primitive church produced, wrote in the early third century that we began in God’s presence as spiritual children, and that we are sent into a world ‘full of struggles and trials.’”
- “The early Christian text composed during the New Testament era, the *Song of the Pearl*” indicates a belief in a premortal existence. “This narrative describes Heavenly Parents who

*Sent me on a mission
From our home in the east . . .
They took off my bright robe of glory,
Which they had made for me out of love,
And took away my purple toga,
Which was woven to fit my stature.
They made a covenant with me
And wrote it in my heart so I would not forget.”*

- “Besides Origen, early Christian writers like pseudo-Clement, Clement of Alexandria, Evagrius, and even the young Augustine all affirmed and defended the teaching. However, this core doctrine was abandoned over time due to fear of impinging upon God’s presumed sovereignty, distrust of Gnostic teachings, Augustine’s change of heart, and the Church’s condemnation of Origen and his teachings. By the sixth century, the doctrine of human preexistence had been declared anathema and had virtually disappeared from Christian tradition.” –Terryl Givens

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as Separate Beings

The Christ Who Heals, Fiona & Terryl Givens, pg. 17-18, 74

- “Catholic and Protestant scholars alike note that with regard to the formulation of ‘one God in three Persons, . . . among Apostolic Fathers, there had been **nothing even remotely approaching . . . such a mentality or perspective**’ (emphasis ours). Another historian notes that the “doctrine of the trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be found in the New Testament.”
- “Some Church Fathers, like Justin Martyr, saw the divinity of Christ as clear evidence that there were two Gods worshipped by Christians. The God who appeared to Abraham and Moses, he wrote, was ‘another God and Lord.’ In this way, he and other Christians understood—in terms remarkably familiar to Latter-day Saints—that ‘the name ‘god’ need not be restricted to the supreme deity. Jesus . . . might be described as a god, but in such a way that one could speak of two gods.’”
- “This conception of two separate Gods was clearly the norm. In fact scholars recognize ‘how deeply the conception of a plurality of divine Persons was imprinted on the apostolic tradition and the popular faith.’ Origen stated the case simply: ‘We worship, then, the Father of truth, and the Son who is the truth. And they are two separate persons, but one in unity and concord of mind.’” –Terryl Givens

An Apostasy in the 7th Century BC

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/deuteronomistic_apostasy.pdf, pg. 44-45

- Christ's earthly ministry can be also be properly thought of as a restoration of doctrines that were lost due to an even earlier apostasy that occurred prior to the Babylonian captivity (the captivity started in approximately 597BC). Lehi's family left Jerusalem just prior to the captivity.
- "...before Lehi's time, the Hebrews in the Kingdom of Judah had a theology very different from the one that developed during and after Lehi's life. In its broad outlines, this point is not controversial among non-fundamentalist Bible scholars. There is considerable agreement that the earliest books of the Bible —Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers— were written by authors whose overarching theological outlook and conception of God differed from that of authors who wrote after Lehi's time. Of course books written earlier had to pass through later hands to get to us. And there is evidence that as they did, changes were made to conform those earlier texts to the later theology. Those changes increase the degree to which reconstruction of the early beliefs must be conjectural. But a measure of respect for the text seems to have constrained the zeal with which later scribes deleted or changed the ancient writings, so many traces of the older theology remain." –Val Larson
- This group of scribes that made these modifications in the time of Kings Hezekiah and Josiah are collectively called "Deuteronomists" by modern scholars because the book of Deuteronomy is widely believed to have been created by them.

The Council of Gods and a Mother in Heaven

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/deuteronomistic_apostasy.pdf, pg. 45-46

- “In the theology prevalent when the older Bible books were written, the high god, El, was understood to be an anthropomorphic being who lived in heaven. ...El was thought to govern his dominions through the ministrations of ... Elah [also known as Asherah or Shaddai], the wife of El ..., the sons and daughters of El, *noble and great* heavenly servants, e.g., the *malākim* or angels, and various representatives of the divine army, the host of heaven, El being the Lord of Hosts. These and other participants in the court were part of the “Sod”, the governing council, who shared to one degree or another the divinity of El and the governance of El’s kingdom. This reading is uncontroversial in its broad outlines. Few mainstream scholars doubt that the governing council was believed to exist before Lehi’s time.” –Val Larson
- El’s wife, “Elah/ Asherah [was symbolized] by a tree, often an almond tree cut to grow in the shape of a menorah... Elah Asherah was very much at home in Solomon’s temple. For most of its history, a statue representing her stood in the temple courtyard. The temple was decorated with tree images (1 Kings 6:29– 36; Psalms 52:8) and was lighted by the menorah, a symbolic almond tree and the specific symbol of Asherah(Exodus 25:31–33). Inside the ark of the covenant was another almond tree, Aaron’s staff.” –Val Larson
- The God of Israel, Jehovah (or Yahweh), was a son of El and Elah. The Deuteronomists later modified and interpreted all references to the high god and his wife to be just other names for Jehovah.

Deification

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/divinization.pdf, pg. 2

- “In the second century, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, who is arguably the most important Christian theologian of his time (about A.D. 130-200), said ... : ‘If the Word became a man, it was so men may become gods.’”
- “Irenaeus’ rough contemporary Clement of Alexandria (about A.D. 150-215) wrote, ‘Yea, I say, the Word of God became a man so that you might learn from a man how to become a god.’”
- “St. Justin Martyr (about A.D. 100-165) insisted that humans can be ‘deemed worthy of becoming gods and of having power to become sons of the highest.’”
- “Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (about A.D. 296-373), also stated his belief in deification... : ‘The Word was made flesh in order that we might be enabled to be made gods.’ On another occasion, Athanasius observed that “He became man that we might be made divine.’”
- “Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354- 430), perhaps the greatest of the early Christian Fathers, said: ‘But he himself that justifies also deifies, for by justifying he makes sons of God. ‘For he has given them power to become the sons of God’ (John 1:12). If then we have been made sons of god, we have also been made gods.’” –Daniel Peterson

A Note to Clarify the Doctrine of Deification

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Great_News_Articles/divinization.pdf, pg. 1

- “While Latter-day Saints don’t believe that human beings will be literally absorbed into God in the manner taught by some Christian and other mystics, they also don’t believe that humans will ever be independent of God, or that they’ll ever cease to be subordinate to God. They believe that to become as God is, means to overcome the world through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see 1 John 5:4-5; Revelation 2:7, 11). Thus, the faithful become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ and will inherit all things — just as Christ inherits all things (see Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; Revelation 21:7). They’re received into the “church of the firstborn,” meaning that they inherit as though they were the firstborn (see Hebrews 12:23). There are no limitations on these scriptural declarations; those who become as God inherit everything God has. In that glorified state, they’ll resemble our Savior; they’ll receive his glory and be one with him and the Father (see 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 17:21-23; Philippians 3:21).” –Daniel Peterson

Salvation for the Dead

<http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/baptdead.pdf>, pg. 1, 15

- "In 1895 there was found in Egypt a Coptic papyrus purporting to contain an account of the teaching of Christ to his apostles after the resurrection. The most learned church historian of modern times, Adolf von Harnack, was prompted to point out that this document was neither "a provincial production of the Egyptian Church" nor a brainchild of the Gnostics, but an authentic statement of certain important doctrines of salvation and resurrection common to the whole Christian church at a very early date. The subject of this epistle was salvation for the dead, a doctrine which,... was believed in the early church to have been the main theme of Christ's teaching after the resurrection."
- "At the beginning of the fifth century Epiphanius [of Salamis, 310-403AD] reports: 'From Asia and Gaul has reached us the account [tradition] of a certain practice, namely that when any die without baptism among them, they baptize others in their place and in their name, so that, rising in the resurrection, they will not have to pay the penalty of having failed to receive baptism, but rather will become subject to the authority of the Creator of the World. For this reason this tradition which has reached us is said to be the very thing to which the Apostle himself refers when he says, 'If the dead rise not at all, what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?'" –Hugh Nibley

(Note: to be fair, Epiphanius is trying to argue against the validity of this doctrine, but his quote clearly shows that early Christians were involved in this practice)

Creation from Unformed Matter

[http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/Mormonism in the Early Jewish Christian Milieu.pdf](http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/Mormonism%20in%20the%20Early%20Jewish%20Christian%20Milieu.pdf), pg. 14

- The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* – creation from nothing – is a doctrine of traditional Christianity that was apparently developed in the 2nd century AD.
- Joseph Smith taught that creation from nothing was a false doctrine and that in reality the universe was formed, or organized from unformed matter.
- “In his 1990 Presidential address to the British Association for Jewish Studies, Peter Hayman asserted the following: ‘Nearly all recent studies on the origin of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* have come to the conclusion that this doctrine is not native to Judaism, is nowhere attested in the Hebrew Bible, and probably arose in Christianity in the second century C.E. in the course of its fierce battle with Gnosticism. The one scholar who continues to maintain that the doctrine is native to Judaism, namely Jonathan Goldstein, thinks that it first appears at the end of the first century C.E., but has recently conceded the weakness of his position in the course of debate with David Winston.’”
- Barry Bickmore

Modern Temple Endowments

- In the early 1840's, the Prophet Joseph Smith introduced to the Latter-day Saints the Temple Endowment that had been revealed to him.
- Of the Temple Endowment, Joseph's successor President Brigham Young said:

“Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being able to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.” –*Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A. Widtsoe, pg. 416.
- “Associated with the endowment are washings and anointings—mostly symbolic in nature, but promising definite, immediate blessings as well as future blessings”

“Those who hold and share in the blessings of the priesthood should have their bodies covered as was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith when the endowment ceremony was given to him. Members who have received their temple ordinances thereafter wear the special garment or underclothing.”

–Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

An Ancient Christian Endowment

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/More_Bullseyes_for_Joseph_Smith.pdf, pg. 2

The Temple in Time and Eternity: Chapter 5 "Sacred Temples Ancient and Modern" by Richard O. Cowan, pages 107-108

- "In recent decades a large body of apocryphal literature dating from early Christian times has been discovered and published. Particularly significant was the uncovering of a library of books written by fifth-century Christians at Nag Hammadi, a settlement on the Nile River in central Egypt. Much of this material focuses on Christ's 'forty-day ministry,' especially in Galilee. According to these nonscriptural texts, the Lord performed sacred ordinances and gave his disciples teachings that Latter-day Saints associate with the temple endowment. In the middle of the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem described how the faithful had 'entered the Annex of the baptistry, ... [and] removed [their] street clothes,' which act represented 'putting off the old man and his works.' They were then washed in a 'tank of holy running water,' anointed, and received a new garment." –Richard O. Cowan

Ancient Christian Prayer Circles

http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/More_Bullseyes_for_Joseph_Smith.pdf, pg. 2

The Temple in Time and Eternity: Chapter 4 "Temple Prayer in Ancient Times" by John A. Tvedtnes, page 88

- "The prayer circle is also known from early Christian texts ... One of the most remarkable descriptions is in the fourth book of the Coptic Pistis Sophia, where we find Jesus standing at the altar praying, surrounded by his apostles and women disciples clad in linen garments (see Pistis Sophia 136). A short while later, Jesus sets out an offering of wine, water, and bread. He then stands before the offering, with the disciples behind him clad in linen garments and making signs with their hands as Christ prays (see Pistis Sophia 142). The account of this offering is also found in another Coptic document 2 Jeu 45-47. The scene is followed by Jesus' instructions on how the disciples can use the signs and names to pass beyond both gods and angels to enter the presence of the Father (see 2 Jeu 48-50). In 1 Jeu 41, Jesus has the twelve surround him while he prays and they repeat after him. In 2 Jeu 42-43, Jesus asks that the twelve and the women disciples surround him so he can teach them the mysteries of God. What then follows in the text is a discussion of signs, seals, and how to pass by the guardians at the veils to the presence of God." –John A. Tvedtnes

Ancient Christian Eternal Marriage

[http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/More Bullseyes for Joseph Smith.pdf](http://www.2understandlatterdaysaints.com/documents/Scholarly/More_Bullseyes_for_Joseph_Smith.pdf), pg. 2

The Temple in Time and Eternity: Chapter 5 "Sacred Temples Ancient and Modern" by Richard O. Cowan, pages 107-108

- "The writers of the Gospel of Philip, one of the apocryphal documents in the Nag Hammadi library, believed that the most sacred part of the temple was what he called the 'bridal chamber,' where a 'woman is united to her husband' and 'will no longer be separated.' If a person does not receive these blessings in this world, he asserted, they cannot be received elsewhere (compare D&C 132:15-28)." –Richard O. Cowan

Conclusion

- While these kinds of evidences can be fascinating and faith affirming, they can only take a person so far across the bridge that leads from unbelief to belief.
- They can cause a person to wonder, “Could it be that all of this stuff really **is** true?”, yet they do not have the power to bring about true spiritual conversion. Only the Spirit of the Lord can do that.
- Which is why, ultimately, the promise given in the last chapter of the Book of Mormon (Moroni 10:3-5) continues to be the only way to make it all the way across the bridge to complete conversion:

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.