



Book of Mormon Archaeology & Faith: New Perspective - Part 2

By Shirley R. Heater

In Part 1 of this article I defined Book of Mormon archaeology as using The Book of Mormon to interpret Mesoamerican archaeology. We saw that Mesoamerican archaeology is the temporal or physical revelation of The Book of Mormon. Viewing secular archaeologists as those who provide the data, I concluded that it is then up to archaeologists who believe The Book of Mormon as a true and historical account to provide proper interpretation of that data. Without this perspective, interpretations fall far afield, demonstrated by early views 180° from what The Book of Mormon account should be found. It has only been during the last fifty years as more data accumulated that interpretations have gradually changed, coming ever closer to Book of Mormon requirements. My final point in Part 1 was that most

Book of Mormon evidences are still hidden! So the critical question is how do hidden evidences become seen? This brings us to the second element in the title: Faith
Hidden Evidences

There are three kinds of evidence: circumstantial (in court); direct (observation); and faith (not seen). Our focus is on the third kind of evidence. How does the unseen become seen? In other words, how does it become direct (observational) evidence?

According to Hebrews 11:1 and Ether 5:6, **faith** is the assurance or substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Definitions of the words “faith” and “hope” clarify our understanding:

faith = confident, secure belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing. Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence. Unshakeable, steadfast, firm.
hope = to expect, to wait, fixed, to look forward to with confidence or expectation, confident expectation of its fulfillment, to have confidence; trust. (Note: we erroneously use the word “hope” to mean “wishful.”)

Faith is the blueprint for our hope or expectations. In this case The Book of Mormon becomes our ‘faith blueprint.’ Faith is the mechanism—held up by hope—that produces evidences from the unseen to the seen. I suggest to you that it is our faith that is rewarded when hidden evidences are revealed. We’ll come back to this in a practical way later. But first, logic leads to the next question that many of you may wonder about—how do science and faith mix? My answer comes from my own life experience—go back with me a few years.

Discovering science — my testimony

When I was twelve years old, I remember

that the news media of the day was filled with announcements of a new astronomical discovery. It caught my attention because I had been reading the story of creation in Genesis. I thought about the significance of what I had heard in the news and wondered; how did science and God mix? As I thought about this, I realized that this discovery in the heavens was revealing something new to mankind. However, God was the Creator and it certainly wasn’t new to Him! In my simple understanding, scientists were merely discovering the way things are.

In retrospect over the last couple of years, I recalled this event when I was twelve but not the exact astronomical discovery. Thanks to the Internet, my search was confirmed and I remembered! Here are the details: In the fall of 1955 Astronomer George Herbig announced the first evidence of the birth of a star—a stellar nursery—in the dust of Orion. I realize now that this specific discovery isn’t what’s so important—many even more profound discoveries have been made since then. What is important is the impact it had on my understanding of God and the Universe. The insight that science discovers what God has created shaped my views of all science throughout the next decades and continues to undergird my interest in all fields of science.

When I returned to college working toward my degree in anthropology (archaeology is a sub-discipline), I took a class in the history and philosophy of science. I learned that science operates by paradigms—a group of theories are focused on, filling in the gaps. Those things that do not fit are set aside until one day someone looks at all the anomalies and comes up with a better paradigm. The transition from one paradigm to another is actually a revolution, a “conversion” experience (Kuhn 1970; 1977:8; Treat 1984:3).

Thus science is ever-changing, hopefully moving forward as knowledge is gained, and errors recognized and rejected. We

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have seen this very thing in the field of Mesoamerican studies. Our interest has been riveted to amazing discoveries over recent decades, discoveries which are the opposite of views long-held by archaeologists that proved to be erroneous. Our interest is how these discoveries relate to The Book of Mormon.

Archaeology As A Witness

The Scriptures tell us in several places that in the mouth of two or three witness all these things shall be established. This principle of two or three witnesses can be applied in many circumstances. Note that the verse from Second Nephi 11 below¹ is speaking specifically about The Book of Mormon:

Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to bring forth the words of the book; And in the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth Him good, will He establish His word; And wo be unto him that rejecteth the word of God!

2 Nephi 11:135

And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established;

Ether 2:3

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Matthew 18:16

These verses (among others) remind us of the evidences and witnesses accepted in a

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court of law. And in this case it is our faith that is on trial. But we are also told that we will not receive a witness until after the trial of our faith:

Wherefore, dispute not because ye see not,

For ye receive no witness—not until after the trial of your faith.

Ether 5:7

However, an important question needs to be asked—why are archaeological evidences important? Some might even ask, *are* archaeological evidences important? Yes, we all love to hear about new discoveries, and it is exciting to see the correlation with The Book of Mormon account.

However, we may think we have to prove to secular archaeologists and to the world—the critics and scoffers—that this book is true. If only there were some piece of incontrovertible evidence that would just convince them!

But all the evidences in the world can still be rejected! An account in Helaman seems to fit this situation. Nephi chastened his people for their wickedness after all the evidences and witnesses they had received (5:44-60). He observed that they still rejected them in spite of all these evidences which could not be denied:

“And now, seeing ye know these things and cannot deny them except ye shall lie,

Therefore, in this ye have sinned, for ye have rejected all these things notwithstanding so many evidences which ye have received;

Yea, even ye have received all things—both things in heaven and all things which are in the earth—as a witness that they are true.”

Helaman 5:61-62

Yes, archaeological evidences serve as witnesses to the world that the book is true, just as evidence in a court situation serves as a witness and is testimony of fact. I believe that is the case with The Book of Mormon. While such evidences do offer people an opportunity to accept or reject

The Book of Mormon, let me suggest that proof is not the goal, but that there is an even greater purpose.

God Has A Plan for Book of Mormon Archaeology

In the mid-1980s, FRAA² sponsored a series of presentations at the Auditorium. The subject of my presentation was “God Has A Plan for Archaeology.” At that time I shared about the accumulating evidences, both external (archaeology) and internal (Hebrew language patterns) and the significance of timing. I had dropped my tray of slides crossing the street to the Auditorium, spilling the slides out. When I put them back in, one of them, the chart of the timeline showing the mirror image of The Book of Mormon and archaeology was upside down. My instant response to that was to say, “God

is turning archaeology upside down”! I didn’t realize it at the time, but I believe that was a small glimpse of greater

things yet to come. Now more than 20 years later, I am more firmly convinced than ever. I am truly humbled to be here at this point in time, and realize that we are on the threshold of many discoveries and the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning The Book of Mormon and its message.

The potential for future Book of Mormon archaeology, considering recent discoveries at San Bartolo, the translation of hieroglyphs, and the use of satellite imaging as examples, is phenomenal. And I can see where the 2% Factor is going to have to be revised! There are at least five areas relating to Book of Mormon archaeology where we can expect new discoveries, new interpretations:

- Satellite Imaging
- Pre-Classic Hieroglyphs
- Pre-Classic Sites & Settlement Patterns
- More Old World Connections
- Book of Mormon Contributions

The last point, Book of Mormon contributions, means there must be a clearer

¹ The RCE is used for all quotations.

² Foundation for Research on Ancient America, now known as The Book of Mormon Foundation.

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Book of Mormon presence. Let me give you an example of how The Book of Mormon may play such a role—Dr. Richard DeLong (1986), after learning of chiasmus and poetry in The Book of Mormon, presented a paper to professionals about finding chiastic structure in Maya

came forth the temporal evidences were **TOTALLY UNKNOWN**. In fact, had they been known at that time, and known to Joseph Smith, critics would have accused him of using them as a source for writing The Book of Mormon. Traditional views of the ancient civilizations which developed

Yes, archaeological evidences serve as witnesses to the world that the book is true, just as evidence in a court situation serves as a witness and is testimony of fact.

hieroglyphic writing. Two Maya specialists went on to find poetry in the inscriptions, illustrating the presence of couplets and chiasmus in the hieroglyphic inscriptions, as well as in present-day Maya storytelling and prayers (Hopkins and Josserand 1995). While there may be others, this is the only case I know of where something from The Book of Mormon contributed to a discovery in Mesoamerican archaeology by others than Book of Mormon believers. This illustrates that breakthroughs in truly understanding the archaeology can come from knowledge of The Book of Mormon.

In a previous article, I related that at the first symposium on the San Bartolo murals, I was present when the Vice President of Guatemala and other members of the audience—part of a large contingent from Guatemala—spoke of the rebirth of interest in their original cultures by the Maya people and expressed gratitude for restoring a knowledge of their ancestors. A yearning was expressed to know of their heritage and their ancestors, because they do not have a continuous written history like some parts of the world. This filled our hearts with joy! Unbeknownst to them, they were expressing the very desires that the intent of The Book of Mormon states over and over again.

If they are excited at this juncture about learning their history through archaeology, we can only imagine their great joy when they embrace the knowledge that their fathers and their first parents knew of Christ and were visited by Him, and that they are part of the latter-day remnant of the House of Israel whom The Book of Mormon call the people of the first covenant! This is the most exciting thing of all! What a glorious day that will be!

Your Response

Let's take a moment to review. So far we have seen that when The Book of Mormon

over nearly a century were in complete to Book of Mormon details. As physical evidences began to come forth in favor of new views which more closely parallel The Book of Mormon account, we have seen that many of those traditional views have been overturned.

I suggest to you that it is our faith that is rewarded when hidden evidences are revealed. The evidences—which faith and hope expect to come forth—are an actual product of that faith and hope! The potential is profound for future discoveries, since most Book of Mormon evidences are still hidden.

Now comes the practical application of our earlier discussion of faith as a blueprint. I leave this final challenge with you, dear reader. Remember that it matters not whether you have archaeological training, academic “letters” or great success in the business world—you are challenged to be an integral part of what God has in store for these last days. In this day of eroding faith, two great “faith chapters”—Ether 5 in The Book of Mormon and Hebrews 11 in the New Testament—remind us that it is “by faith” that all things are fulfilled.

As caretakers of this wonderful book, this miracle book, our prayers of faith are not only for more evidences, but for the people to whom the book was written. One reference from The Book of Mormon (and there are many) tells us God's plan for his people. Mormon is speaking of the record and the welfare of his people:

And no one can have power to bring it to light, save it be given him of God; For God will that it shall be done with an eye single to His glory, or the welfare of the ancient and long dispersed covenant people of the Lord.

Mormon 4:19

I hope I've given you some food for thought, that you will consider your assignment, a challenge if you will, to exercise your faith, and make this mission a specific matter of prayer, that we will see more of those hidden evidences come forth as a witness to the “long dispersed covenant people of the Lord.” EXPECT IT!

Sources

DeLong, Richard A.

1986 “Chiasmus in Mesoamerican Writing.” Paper presented at the Sexta Redonda Palenque, Chiapas.

Hopkins, Nicholas A. and J. Katherine Josserand 1995 “Poetry of the Inscriptions.” Handout at 13th Annual Maya Weekend, University of Pennsylvania Museum. April 1995.

glyph clips

◆ Coe's Autobiography

Pre-eminent archaeologist Michael D. Coe shares about his remarkably diverse life in his latest book, *Final Report: An Archaeologist Excavates His Past*. Written in Coe's readable style, the book is three in one, “a moving autobiography, an exciting account of the rediscovery of a vanished civilizations, and unforgettable portraits of the argumentative archaeologists who made those rediscoveries” (author Jared Diamond). It can be purchased at most book stores or Amazon.com.

◆ In Memoriam

J. Kathryn Josserand, pioneer with husband Nicholas Hopkins in identifying chiasmus and other poetic styles in the Mayan languages and hieroglyphs, passed away suddenly in Palenque of a cerebral hemorrhage on July 18, 2006. Dr. Josserand played a leading role in the understanding of Maya inscriptions and contemporary Mesoamerican languages. Without knowing it, Josserand provided excellent witnesses that the Maya hieroglyphs and language incorporate many poetic forms found in the language and writing style employed by the writers of The Book of Mormon. We truly mourn her passing. You can read more here <http://www.mesoweb.com/reports/Kathryn.html>.

the Joy *line* as shared with Joy Muir

Testimony of Bonnie and Jim Noland

My husband, Jim, announced one day in the summer of 1993, "I want to go to Israel and Egypt this year, do you want to go?" "Yes! With which tour group should we make reservations?" I asked. "Well, there is only one requirement I have, and that is NO TOUR GROUP." He answered. This development was surprising and frightening to me. We were not seasoned Middle Eastern travelers. The thought occurred to me that this could be a dangerous outing, but it may be my only chance to go to the Holy Land, and I didn't want to pass it up! Jim was adamant that he did not want to be a part of a travel tour group. Therefore, this would require me to really trust in the Lord to take care of us. I set my mind to read all about travel to Israel and become at least "book smart" about it. My sister was a travel agent, and she could help us plan this unconventional trip.

Somehow the word got out that we were planning a trip to Israel and Egypt in October. Sue Hairabedian, a member of the committee to oversee the translation of The Book of Mormon into Hebrew, contacted us and asked if we would be willing to take 10 Hebrew translations of The Book of Mormon with us and give them out in Israel. We said "yes" not knowing how this was going to be done. During this time, I was in prayer most of the day about the trip. The Lord gave me peace in my heart, and I felt an urging to trust Him completely.

Our plan worked quite well as we flew to Tel Aviv. The flight was on time, and we had carefully packed the 10 Hebrew Books of Mormon in our suitcases. But, I was a bit uneasy thinking about the fact that we were carrying in scriptures, when Israel looked unkindly on Christian missionaries and Christian scriptures.

We landed in Tel Aviv and were promptly separated from one another after the customs officials realized we were not with a tour group. They asked us questions separately, so we could not hear each other's answers. "Why are you coming to Israel? Do you know someone here? Are you contacting anyone here? What is your itinerary? Why didn't you come with a tour group? When are you planning on leaving?"

Our suitcases were the next target. A very thorough examination was conducted.

Agents rifled through each item of clothing and all the miscellaneous packed items, but failed to notice the obvious Books of Mormon. I thought this was curious even though I was praying the whole time that they wouldn't find them or say anything about them.

After that ordeal, we went to a pre-arranged hotel to rest from the jet lag that was overcoming us. We had a few hours and then were to proceed to the airport again to take an evening flight to Cairo, Egypt. Once in Cairo, we again were noticed as unusual because we were by ourselves. The customs officials, although not questioning us as in Israel, rifled through the suitcases not noticing the Books of Mormon! We had gotten through two customs checkpoints! There were great adventures in Egypt, but to continue with our testimony, we had to go through customs upon leaving Egypt. A piece of Egyptian sculpture of King Tut we had purchased was very much scrutinized, but our Books of Mormon were ignored! Third time through customs! Then we reentered Israel at the point of entry from the Sinai to the Gaza strip area. There, the Israeli agents with machine guns on their backs had us place our suitcases on the ground and back away from them. They then questioned us separately and went through each item in our luggage again overlooking the obvious Books of Mormon! This was the fourth time we went through a difficult checkpoint! God had made these Books invisible to all the customs officials in both countries—four times!

We traveled from the Red Sea at Elat to the northern most part of Israel, the Golan Heights. Along the way we gave out the books. We left some in our hotel rooms, gave one directly to a chamber maid and one to a man in an art gallery. This man was surprised and very pleased to receive a free book! In Galilee at Tiberias, we stuffed the books into our shirts and went to hotels looking for good places to deposit the precious scriptures. Several were left on tables in sitting areas. In one hotel we sat down on a couch in a corner lounge area and then noticed, under the stairway across from us, a lady sitting and watching us. I looked at her, and she did not divert her eyes. "How am I going to put this down without her seeing?" I wondered. Finally we decided to leave it on the coffee table anyway and just

walk away. Suddenly, she turned her head, distracted for a moment, and I hastily put down a book. However, she caught the end of this procedure and eyed me suspiciously. Then Jim and I got up and walked up the stairs. As I looked down through the open stairs, I saw her curiously pick up the book and examine it. As we left she opened it and began to read it.

Jim and I have two daughters, fifteen grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. We are members of Devon Park Branch where Jim serves in the office of Elder. He is Sunday school director and chairman of the Evangelism committee for the Joint Conference of Branches. I teach the primary children's class, am editor of the branch newsletter, and am also assistant to the women's leader.

Will YOU be there?

To all who contribute to PSI, we give thanks. Your financial support makes ongoing Book of Mormon research possible. Your efforts have provided the means for sharing the exciting evidence and testimonies found in this issue and more than 10 years of *glyph notes*.

Those of you who have not given financial support, we encourage you to do so now. One of the great dramas of the ages is unfolding before our very eyes—the Lord showing with great power and great glory that His words are true.

Walk with PSI through the pages of this divine drama as events open and close. Feel the wonder of being an active participant in these great events of the latter days. A little from each one goes a long way with the Lord's blessing. Thanks again to those who are giving. YOU make it happen!

* * * *

If you can't have faith in what is held up to you for faith, you must find things to believe in yourself, for a life without faith in something is too narrow a space to live.

—George E. Woodberry

North of the Narrow Neck: Land of the Feathered Serpent

22nd Annual Book of Mormon Archaeological Tour
Feb. 8 - 18, 2007

Sponsored By

Pre-Columbian Studies Institute

Tour Leaders: Lyle and Sherrie Smith and Don and Pat Beebe of PSI Tours, LLC

Proposed Itinerary (Subject to Change)

Day 1 - Thurs., Feb. 8 — Travel

Leave Kansas City early morning via Houston for Mexico City. Transfer to our hotel, but on the way stop and see the round pyramid at Cuicuilco, an Olmec site before the time of Christ. Mexico City will be our base for the next three days. D

Day 2 - Fri., Feb. 9 — National Palace, National Cathedral and Aztec Ruins, and shopping.

Begin with a visit to the National Palace where we see the famous murals painted by Diego Rivera depicting the history of Mexico. On the same plaza is the National Cathedral which is connected with five additional cathedrals. Note the etched glass doors and the effigy of the Black Christ. Next to the cathedrals are Aztec ruins and museum. Shopping is a must in the area. B&D

Day 3 - Sat., Feb. 10 - Bazar Sábado (Saturday Market) and the National Museum of Anthropology

Leave after breakfast for a visit to the Saturday Market. Yes, wonderful shopping. Late morning we will go to the National Museum with its splendid collection of artifacts from many of the Mexican ruins including the places we will visit. The Museum is "world class," a real treasure. The Museum has a good restaurant where you may choose to buy lunch. B&D

Day 4 - Sun., Feb. 11 — Teotihuacan

Today explore the magnificent ruins of Teotihuacan, including the pyramids of the Sun, Moon, and Quetzalcoatl. Teotihuacan was a city from around 100 B.C. to A.D. 700. All three entrances to this site have many shops selling crafts. We will be here most of the day and it has several places to buy lunch. B&D

Day 5 - Mon., Feb. 12 — Cuernavaca and Xochicalco

For an exciting adventure, today we drive south to Cuernavaca to visit the Palace of Cortez which houses the stained glass window of Quetzalcoatl. Then we go further south to explore the ruins of Xochicalco. It shows both hieroglyphic writing and symbols that relate to the Oaxaca and Maya cultures. Spend the night at Puebla. B&D

Day 6 — Tue., Feb. 13 — Cacaxtla and Cholula

Sitting high on a mountain, Cacaxtla is famous for its brilliant murals; one scene a battle between the Jaguar and Serpent people. Also next to Puebla is the largest pyramid in the world, Cholula. The conquistadores built a cathedral on top of the pyramid as it was a sacred place to the Indians. We will explore the tunnels showing seven construction phases. B&D

Day 7 - Wed., Feb. 14 — Travel to Oaxaca

Leaving the high plateau area of Mexico City and Puebla we travel through large valleys and mountains to the State of Oaxaca where we will spend the next four nights. B&D

Day 8 - Thurs., Feb. 15 — Mitla, Dainzu, Yagul, Lambityeco

Drive to Mitla, stopping first to see the Tula tree, a cypress judged to be 2000 years old. Mitla is justly famous for its precisely carved stones. Shopping is good for textiles like tablecloths and clothing. At Dainzu, see clay pipe once used for the city water system. B&D

Day 9 - Fri., Feb. 16 — Monte Alban

Spend all day at the ruins of Monte Alban which sits on an artificially flattened mountain about 1200 feet above the city of Oaxaca. History began here at about 900 B.C. and shows occupation until A.D. 1521. The ruins include a small museum and cafeteria where you may choose to eat lunch. B&D

6 glyph notes

Day 10-Sat., Feb. 17— Regional Museum and San José Mogote

San José Mogote is an early site in Mexico correlating with Jaredite times. Visit the site museum. Then come back into the city to visit the regional museum. A highlight is seeing the display of gold from tomb 7 at Monte Alban. B, D

Day 11 — Sun., Feb. 18 — Worship, Reflection, and Travel

After a morning of worship and remembering, we leave Oaxaca for a direct flight to Houston and on to Kansas City. B

This tour has been arranged to be slightly less busy than those in the past. We will see at least ten magnificent ruins, experience new flora, fauna, and wildlife, take time for classes and worship so that we understand what we are experiencing, and have some moments to smell the roses.

Join us for an adventure you won't forget and let The Book of Mormon come alive for you! BUT, remember! We travel where the unpredictable happens. It's part of the adventure!

Costs

Tour cost per person \$2,395

Single Supplement (extra) \$400

Includes: All airfare from Kansas City; all ground transportation; hotel accommodations based on two persons in a double room; meals as indicated on itinerary: B - breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner. Entrance fees, service charges, and tips.

Not Included: Country departure taxes; personal items such as a-la-carte orders, room service, laundry, and meals and other items not specifically mentioned as included.

Liquor or Tobacco: Please refrain from using either when our group is together.

Payment Schedule: \$400 deposit due NOW. Make check out to PSI Tours, LLC. Deposits refundable until December 1, 2006, when final payment due.

*****Passports Required*****

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Deposit of \$400 (each) is enclosed. Deposit total is \$ _____

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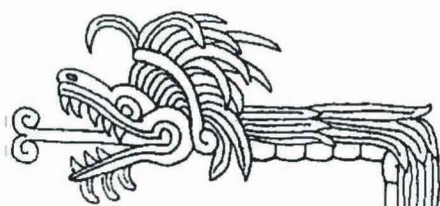
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Memories from Mesoamerica



By Barent Eliason Sandusky, Michigan

When I am giving away Books of Mormon, I try to let the Lord lead me. At San Ignacio I was praying as to whom I should present one and walking around observing the workmen—nothing seemed to stand out. So, I had started back to our room when I met a maid sweeping the floor. I started to chit-chat with her when I was led to talk about The Book of Mormon. I asked her if she would like one and she said, “Yes, I’ve always wanted one.” After receiving one of the *Overview of The Book of Mormon* booklets, she left, telling me over her shoulder, “I’ll read it.” A couple of minutes later, a knock came at the door. She wanted three more for her friends. She told me she had seen The Book of Mormon in our room.

By Stephanie and Gerry Bird Bates City, Missouri

Our trip with PSI was a dream come true for Gerry and me. For several years neither money nor time seemed to get coordinated. Something always got in the way.

This year (2005) we became empty-nesters and downsized after selling our home of 28 years. The Lord opened the door with both time and money. The opportunity had arrived. The whole week before the trip was filled with anticipation. The task of packing was at hand. Checking the list and checking it twice became compulsive. Shopping for what we would think of as necessities was exciting. Finally the day arrived, Saturday, January 21, 2006. We were off to Belize and ten days of traveling with new found like-

minded brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

Each day opened a new page of history and learning. Every day new insights were gleaned from the class presentations and historical sightseeing. Our mornings were opened with prayer, and we had fun things to do on the bus and good conversation with friends.

Friday was special to us both. At Dzibanché we sat on the steps to one of the temples and sang hymns into one of the plazas. Our voices and the spirit of that moment were recorded in heaven. We sang praises to our Lord and He blessed us with His spirit.

A bit of excitement occurred at Cobá as Gerry and I were walking hand in hand around one of the temple ruins. There camouflaged among the leaves, we startled a six-foot long snake. He was afraid of us and kept on moving across our path. Our adrenaline pumping, we kept a watchful eye for critters.

I have been keeping a daily diary of our travels. On our last traveling day to Cancun, my heart was saddened because it meant back to the real world too soon, back to our daily routines of making a living. I believe with all my heart that Gerry and I came on this trip to reconnect with each other and get a stronger knowledge of The Book of Mormon.

Pat Hall Independence, Missouri

As we entered the sites you could feel God’s spirit—the spirit of peace and tranquility, the breeze and wind in the tall trees (palms). I prayed to God and thanked Him for the privilege of being here.

The songs of hymns we sang have had such harmony, especially “The Old, Old Path”. I was over-powered by the spirit of God. These are the paths in which to follow. If we do what God has asked, He is bound to bless us and direct our lives. He is a very loving and forgiving God. He has given us much, His son, Jesus the Christ!

What can we give back to him?

Fred Rawlins Independence, Missouri

When Beverly and I first started talking about going on this adventure, I was not sure if I was ready to make it or not. Beverly really wanted to go and so did I, if I could endure. We finally decided to go, and we had a wonderful time.

From the very first day, even before getting on the plane, I had guardian angels helping me with my luggage and anything else that had to be done. I don’t think I could have made it all 11 days without all of my guardian angels to help me every time I got into trouble. I would name names, but I might leave someone out and that might make someone unhappy, and I would never want that to happen. I had help carrying my luggage to helping me from one place to another. There was always someone close by to help.

Out on the sites, I was helped down a very slippery slope by two strong men; otherwise I might not have made it. Another time, I was helped up by someone else as I was sitting on a rock which was on a downhill slope. I was also helped up and held so that I would not fall down the hill. When I fell sick, a wonderful nurse gave me the right things to get me well. Then there were so many of you that were continually cheering me up and making my day with kisses and hugs. To put it all in a nutshell, I had 35 guardian angels watching over me all the time, and I will be forever grateful. Thank you for such a beautiful trip which I’ll never forget.



glyph quotes

“Be ye encouraged” — D&C 129:4c



By Clyde W. Noren

Being obedient to God’s word and living a life of commitment requires perseverance and endurance on a Christian’s part. In addition, a committed believer needs encouragement and support from other sources.

This principle of obedience is illustrated throughout the scriptures in the lives of the prophets, and in the lives of the common men and women. The story of Gideon exemplifies this principle in power and authority when the Lord tells the Israelites, “Ye have not obeyed my voice” (Judges 6:10). The Lord said He wanted Gideon to save (deliver) Israel from the hands of the Midianites. The Israelites were oppressed by the Midianites (originally the Amorites) and were forced to live in the hills in seclusion under impoverished conditions. This was the origin of the Israelites’ call for help to the Lord; the result of which was Gideon’s call to lead an army to reclaim the land. Gideon protested to the Lord that he was the youngest in the family, and asked how he could perform such a task? The Lord gave Gideon encouragement with these words, “Surely I will be with thee and

thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man” (Judges 6:16). Of the 22,000 Israelite volunteers, the Lord chose only 300 to go before the Midianites and drive them off and take possession of the land. Thus, encouragement and obedience brought about the accomplishment of the Lord’s will.

Obedience demands commitment! The greatest commitment was exemplified by the life of Jesus. The ultimate sacrifice of His physical self for mankind’s sins surpasses any sacrifice by ministers and church members of the past, the present, and those committed witnesses in future years. Jesus had support and encouragement from Mary, His mother, sisters Mary and Martha, and the Apostles, especially John the beloved. Jesus showed incomparable perseverance in His ministry—even in a touching moment on the cross when he was concerned about the care of His mother, as written in John 19:26-27.

The Book of Mormon tells of Lehi’s obedience to the word of the Lord and his commitment to leave the land of Jerusalem as stated in I Nephi 1:27. Lehi had the support of his sons, Nephi and Sam, and was

committed to doing the Lord’s will. The book is replete with accounts of many persons who were faithful and steadfast in their ministry. The lives of Lehi, Nephi, Abinadi, Alma, Samuel, Mormon and Moroni are some prime examples of being obedient to the Lord’s word.

Our latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith Jr. persevered in his ministry to the very end of his life and had the prayerful support of his father, Joseph Smith Sr., of his brother Hyrum and his wife, Lucy. Joseph led the church for 14 years during which time the membership grew to some 200,000 members. His ministry is still respected and revered by members today.

Joseph Smith III gave his prophetic counsel for all obedient Saints, “So be ye encouraged and press on to the consummation designed of God for His people—unity, honor, sanctification and glory, Amen” (D&C 129:4c).

The “Gospel Message Today” still calls for continued obedience in keeping ALL of the Lord’s commandments.

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