

GLYPH

Notes

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Graceland Winter Term PSI Tour

By Various members of the tour

In January 5, 2008, sixteen people embarked on what many said, "was the adventure of a lifetime." Ron Smith, professor at Graceland, organized this winter-term class for Graceland University, and Lyle Smith with PSI Tours, LLC, led the educational tour.

Ages of the students ranged from 20 to 80, yet all blended beautifully into a great homogenous group. They visited 10 sites in Mexico, particularly in the Yucatán peninsula and state of Chiapas. Institute.

In addition to visiting the sites they participated in formal classes including "Arad: How Archaeological Evidence from Israel Supports

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Above: The Kukulkan pyramid hides another pyramid underneath that visitors used to be able to see. At the bottom of the outside stairway, near the entrance to the inside pyramid sits a stone box with a lid that fits the description of the box that held the metal plates of The Book of Mormon found by Joseph Smith in the state of New York.

Below: Back Row, Left to Right: Ron Smith; Ralph Williston; Jonah Bates; Joel Loving; Thoric Smith; Lyle Smith; Sherrie Wages; Rich Rupe. Front Row, Left to Right: Barbra Jordison; Micah Bates; Winnie Negaard; Nancy Williston; Brandy Anderson; Ethel Steinkirchner; Eleanor Wages; Lauren Smith.



I liked the photo of Chichen Itza because the sky was beautiful behind the structure and it was just a magnificent picture.
— Thoric Smith



Graceland Winter Term PSI Tour (cont.)

Book of Mormon Cultural History; “Maya Timeline and The Book of Mormon;” “He Walked the Americas: God GI;” “He Walked the Americas: The Creation Story;” and “Why Visit Palenque?”

Class members submitted favorite shots for this photo essay and some provided ac-

companying comments.

Brandy Anderson expresses the thought felt by all: “The whole group at the Chichen Itza parking lot. I love the pictures of all of us together; the memories are not only from the actual sites, but the people you experienced them with.”

*Our fearless leader avoids the sun at Chichen Itza.
— Ron Smith*
*Preparing for the weather...so funny Lyle!
— Brandy Anderson*



Rich Rupe

Above: Ron Smith helps Lyle Smith protect his head from the fierce sun.



Below left: Structure IX at Becan, a site known for its enormous moat surrounding the former city with seven entry points. A rich tomb with 20 elaborate objects in ceramics, wood, shell, and obsidian was discovered inside. Evidence of human occupation at Becan begins around 600 BC.

Below: Winnie Neegard and Ethel Steinkirchner enjoy respite from the sun at Dzibanche.

Rich Rupe



Just loved the picture of the climbing group on the top of the pyramid at Dzibanche. – Brandy Anderson

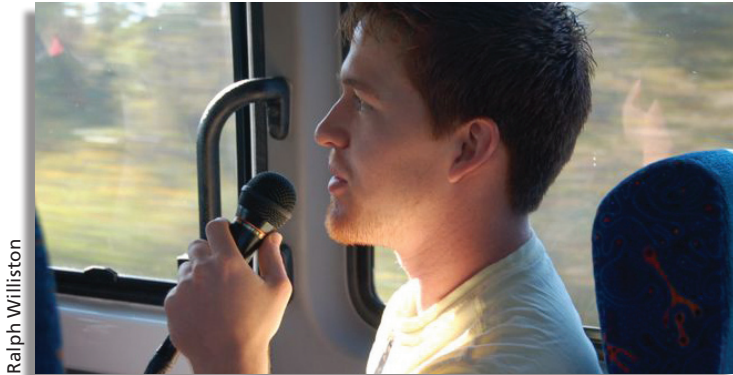
The picture at Dzibanche has several of our group in it and it was in a beautiful place. – Micah Bates



Ron Smith

Above: One of the pyramids at Dzibanche climbed by the more adventurous of the group. Dzibanché, means “writing on wood” in Mayan and comes from this building which is designated as Temple #6 that had a wooden lintel with glyphs from 618 AD. The site dates from about 200 BC to AD 900. Several remarked that this photo of the group who climbed to the top of this Dzibanche pyramid was one of their favorites. (Left to right) Rich Rupe, Joel Loving, Barbra Jordison, Thoric Smith, Brandy Anderson, Micah Bates, Lauren Smith, and Jonah Bates. Ron Smith was the photographer.

Below right: Today over 600,000 Maya live in the Yucatan peninsula and that many more in Guatemala and southern Mexico. They are believed to be direct descendants of people talked about in The Book of Mormon. Ralph Williston listens to a young Maya girl. He comments, “We were most impressed by the cohesiveness of the group and the stamina of Ethel. The sites were outstanding. We were dismayed by how deteriorated the ruins have become since they were first discovered and also by the obvious work of the many who have attempted to restore many of the ruins back to their original grandeur.”



Ralph Williston



Rich Rupe

Top: Micah Bates bears a testimony during one of our times of sharing.

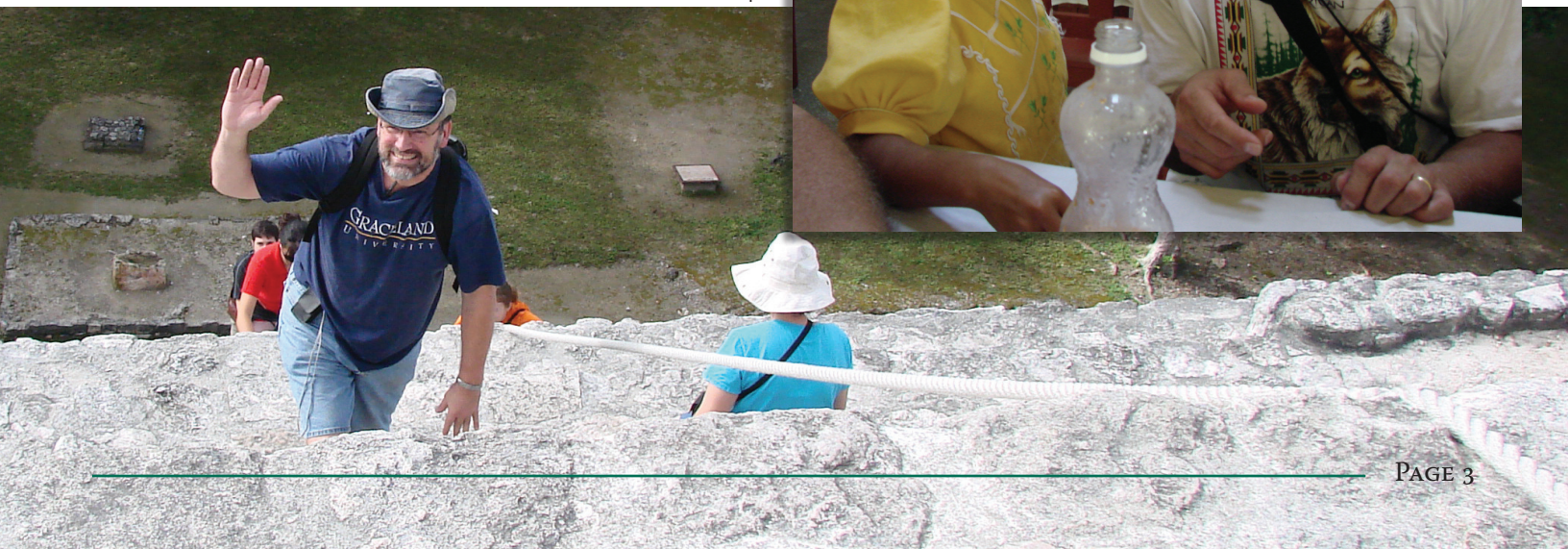
Middle: Ralph Williston and an iguana look each other over.

Bottom: Ron Smith climbs the largest Becan pyramid, identified as Structure IX.

Rich Rupe



Rich Rupe



Graceland Winter Term PSI Tour (cont.)

*The picture of the spider monkey at Yaxchilan is just amazing
- Micah Bates*

Lyle Smith



Left: The Wages, Sherrie and Eleanor, search for new species of birds at the ruins of Dzibanche. They said they saw eight or ten new birds on the trip they had never seen before.



Micah Bates



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Micah Bates

*This was a mountain top experience for all of us.
- Ron Smith*



Thoric Smith: "I like the one with Jonah next to the face because I thought having Jonah next to the mask let you see how huge it is. (Jonah's not too bad looking either.)"

Thoric Smith



*Palenque Beauty – Brandy Anderson:
The beautiful river through Palenque
is matched only by the beauty of the
people on the trip. – Ron Smith*



Ron Smith

Top right: Brandy Anderson poses by the waterfall at Palenque.

Above: The Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque was completed about AD 690 and is the tomb of the famous Palenque king K'inich Janaab' Pakal I. The name given this structure derives from the three large wall panels completely covered in hieroglyphics at the back of the building on the top. It was discovered in the 1950s. A replica of the magnificently carved sarcophagus lid depicting the king's rebirth or resurrection from the underworld and the accompanying rich burial have been recreated at the Palenque museum. Visitors can no longer descend into the depths of the pyramid to the tomb chamber, nor can they climb to the top.




Wildlife seen included monkeys (above left) and crocodiles (left).

Right: And some long days.....Lauren Smith, Thoric Smith, and Micah Bates catch some shut eye. Ron Smith summed it up for all, "We are all zonked at the end of a long day."

Lyle Smith

On the last evening together, Rich Rupe shared with our group in the final class. His conclusions about The Book of Mormon agree with those presented in the class sessions. He said it this way:

"After making The Book of Mormon a matter of study and prayer these past three years, I've come to the conclusion that it is entirely reasonable to believe in the historicity of this book. While there are legitimate questions and mysteries surrounding The Book of Mormon, there are also profound evidences that not even the most ardent critic can explain. The Book of Mormon contains a powerful witness of our Savior and will one day be used of God in a miraculous way to accomplish His Eternal Plan." 



Ron Smith

GLYPH *Quotes*

By Aaron Smith

For behold, are we not all beggars? —Mosiah 2:32

Many of us have pulled onto an off-ramp and seen someone holding a sign that reads “Need Help” or “Homeless Vet.” Sometimes we question whether they are legitimate. Others have traveled overseas and dealt with dirty little faces and hands on out-stretched arms of “street” children. Generally there is no question of need here—it seems obvious. It tugs at our hearts and moves us with compassion.


But, have we thought of ourselves in a similar situation? Have we pictured our own face in the face of the man on the street corner or on the desperate look of the child in Africa? Before God, our clothes are stained and soiled, our hands dirty, our hair unkempt, and I’m sure, to him, we look quite disheveled.

King Benjamin wanted his people to think this way—being a beggar as their lot in life, with all the hopelessness and despair that comes with it. The King had lived through many wars and much bloodshed. It was on the occasion of his last proclamation to all his people however, that he asked the rhetorical question, “For behold, are we not all beggars?” He wasn’t interested in creating a society of hopelessness and despair—he had seen those things in war. Instead, he saw the benefits of encouraging

this type of mental exercise. He knew it would ultimately lead to peace.

In our world we often think a person’s status makes them better than another: money, circumstances, or a variety of other physical considerations. But we are all equal in the sight of God. By constantly remembering that we “all” are beggars, we are reminded that we are not “better” than anyone else. This assists in keeping us humble. If humility is present, pride is absent. The King knew what false pride could do to a people – it would destroy them.

By keeping this thought in mind, we develop a sense of gratitude. Our praises to God for his bountiful blessings and mercy in our lives should cause us to daily rejoice and praise his holy name. Without him, the source of riches and blessings, we would still be dirty, poor, and unclean. With him, however, the riches of eternity that Paul speaks about are ours to enjoy. What a wonderful God.

May we truly remember that we are “all” beggars before the God of creation. There is no bond or free, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, male or female. Being humble and grateful allows us to be exactly where he wants us. Imagine the peace that can come into our lives by following this simple, yet profound principle. 

JOY *Line*

By Bob Giertz, Blue Springs, Missouri

And now, the rest of the story...

Just a few weeks ago, as I was studying about Melchizedek, I received another great testimony of the powerful insights that come from The Book of Mormon. Melchizedek is an interesting case study for many reasons. The description of the people at the time of his ministry and their response to the gospel of Jesus Christ which was preached in great power by Melchizedek is significant. However, there is more to this story as you read the corollary found in The Book of Mormon. The book of Alma addresses an important aspect of the spiritual condition of the people of Melchizedek that is not contained in the Genesis account.

“Now Melchizedek was a man of faith, who wrought righteousness; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor

mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God; And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name.

“For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world. And men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven.


“And now, Melchizedek was a priest of this order; therefore he obtained peace in Salem, and was called the Prince of peace. And his people wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch which God had before taken, separat-

ing it from the earth, having reserved it unto the latter days, or the end of the world (Genesis 14:26-34 I.V, emphasis added).

This is the description of a people that, like the people of Enoch, “wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven.” What were those people like before they sought for and obtained heaven? The answer is clearly found in Chapter 6 of Alma and is another marvelous testimony about the divinity of the message preserved in The Book of Mormon. This “Second Witness of Jesus Christ” provides important lessons for each of us.

“And now, my brethren, I would that ye should humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest; Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek, and his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abominations; yea, they had all gone astray: they were full of all manner of wickedness; But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days” (Alma 10:6-7, 11-13, emphasis added).

The inclusion of this short account of Melchizedek’s people gives valuable insight into the process of spiritual transformation and the role of faith and repentance in the plan of salvation. What better example for the world is there than the testimony of a people who had all gone astray and were full of iniquity but who humbled themselves, repented, and came unto Christ? This conversion of “sinner to saint” can not be a better illustration to those people who desire for the kingdom of Heaven upon the earth today.

The Book of Mormon once again gives us the opportunity to hear, as commentator Paul Harvey continues to say on his weekly radio show, “and now, the rest of the story.” Repent and come unto Me! 

Bob Giertz gathered to the Independence area in 1991 from Wichita, Kansas. He worked as a registered medical technologist (ASCP) and later supervised and directed several clinical pathology laboratories until medical disability (Meniere’s disease) caused him to retire. He and his wife Barbara have one son living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with his wife and three grandchildren. Brother Giertz has a passion for presenting classes on stewardship.




Today over 600,000 Maya live in the Yucatan peninsula and that many more in Guatemala and southern Mexico. They are believed to be direct descendants of people talked about in The Book of Mormons.

GLYPH *Clips*

Ancient America Foundation, www.ancientamerica.org Web Site about The Book of Mormon

This foundation formerly was Society for Early Historic Archaeology (SEHA). “The objective of AAF is to draw on past research of Book of Mormon studies and to digest and disseminate information derived from both Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint scholars of ancient Mesoamerica in an attempt to understand the geography and culture surrounding the ancient text of the Book of Mormon.”

Archaeologist Garth Norman has developed, after 40 years of research, a more detailed map of Book of Mormon lands. His new map “indicates some 76 detailed items, complete with Book of Mormon textual references for each. It comes with an optional explanatory booklet entitled “Book of Mormon - Mesoamerican Historic Geography,” and is available for purchase online.

Shirley Heater, with Pre-columbian Studies Institute, is preparing an article about this new map. Look for it in upcoming issues. 

www.ancientamerica.org — This website contains Book of Mormon archeological information including an updated map from archaeologist Garth Norman.

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A detailed map for the Book of Mormon has been produced by archaeologist Garth Norman which may solve a long-standing puzzle.

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GLYPH *Clips* (cont.)

Maya Meetings at the University of Texas-Austin, February 25-March 2, 2008 “Copan Archaeology and History: New Finds and New Research”

June 2007 was the 55th anniversary of the discovery in 1952 of the spectacular tomb of K'inich Janaab Pakal in the Temple of Inscriptions at the site of Palenque.

Many of our readers who have traveled with us will remember descending the inside stairway to view the tomb. In 2004 public access to the tomb was closed because the massive amount of visitors to the subterranean tomb over the years led to a considerable rise of temperature and humidity, causing the stuccos to soften and lose coloring, and the stairs to the funerary chamber exhibit signs of wear and tear. The tomb is now only accessible for scientific investigations.

Because this tomb is one of the main attractions of the site of Palenque, authorities have created an exact replica of the tomb at the new annex of the Palenque museum. In contrast to the original tomb that could only be viewed through a metal-lattice door, the replica allows visitors to see all its parts. The walls of the duplicate tomb chamber are made of transparent materials that allow one to peer into its interior. Visitors can walk around all four sides and see the relief-carvings of the lid and sides of the sarcophagus. The lid's “low-relief carving shows the resurrection of Pakal.”  Reported in *Mexicon* 29 (August 2007): 97.




Original tomb in the Temple of Inscriptions at Palenque

“Whether or Not Archaeology Can Help Us Understand the Bible Depends on the Question”

This editorial by Herschel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (January/February 2008), presents a good view of how archaeology can support stories in the Bible and what information it can not provide. The theory behind this is equally applicable to the relationship of archaeology with *The Book of Mormon*. You have to ask the right questions.

The example used was of the story about Samson in *Judges*. Are the stories true? Although “archaeology can provide no assistance in settling the differences between the person of faith and the scholars who say the stories are literary creation,” it “can provide some background to the stories—whether true or not. “If we ask the right question, we can get an archaeological answer” (p. 6).

A former article from *BAR* (May/June 1985): 78) states it this way: “archaeological discoveries like these [the finding and translation of the clay tablets] cannot, of course, prove that the narratives in Daniel [in the Bible] report events that actually occurred in the 6th century B.C., but they, and other finds like them, do indicate that those narratives preserve correct information about Babylon at the time they were supposed to have occurred.” 

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