

## GLYPH

Notes

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## Tomb Treasures from the Time of Lehi *Engraved Biblical Texts on Silver*

By Sherrie Kline Smith and Lyle L. Smith

*Lehi was not only a prophet of God, but a rich man.*

*And he [Lehi] left his house, and the land of his inheritance and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things..." (1 Nephi 1:29, 38, 77, 85-88).*

When Nephi and his brothers tried to obtain the brass plates from Laban, on their second attempt they returned to the "land of their inheritance" and took their riches to entice Laban to give up the brass plates. These plates contained the five books of Moses, plus much more (1 Nephi 1:159-164). The account given by Nephi says, that "when Laban saw our property, that it was exceeding great, he did lust after it, insomuch that he thrust us out, and sent his servants to slay us, that he might obtain our property" (1 Nephi 1:88).

We remember Lehi for his visions and prophecies, not that he was a rich man. An archaeological discovery, though, gives us a glimpse of some of the kind of riches Lehi and Sariah had, expanding our knowledge of their lives. The discovery was a completely intact burial chamber of a wealthy Jewish family dating to the time of Lehi. It contained "gold, and silver and precious things" and the oldest Biblical texts found to date which predate the 200 B.C. Dead Sea Scrolls by 400 years, to the exact time of Lehi! And they were written on small thin sheets of silver—or metal plates.

The discovery of the burial chamber is not new—it occurred in the 1970s. One of the first reports about the find appeared in a 1983 *Biblical Archaeology Review* (BAR). We first learned about it in 1986, and Lyle would share about it in lectures and sermons. But in 2009, a summary of the excavation and subsequent studies of the burial chamber's contents was

*Cont. on Page 2*



Sherrie Kline Smith

Jerusalem, looking west. The tomb is located in the area marked. A portion of the wall around the Old City is to the right or north.

*The discovery of a burial chamber containing gold, silver and precious things gives us a glimpse of some of the kind of riches Lehi and Sariah had, expanding our knowledge of their lives.*

## Tomb Treasures (Cont. from page 1)

included in the 2009 *Biblical Archaeology Review*, the 200th issue of the magazine that recapped some of the most important finds in Israel during the past 34 years. “The Riches of Ketef Hinnom: Jerusalem Tomb Yields Biblical Text Four Centuries Older than Dead Sea Scrolls” was written by the archaeologist in charge of the excavation, Gabriel Barkay.

Ketef Hinnom is an area just southwest of the old city of Jerusalem near St. Andrew’s Church of Scotland and Hospice and “hidden behind the Menachem Begin Heritage Center, unmarked, unguarded and unprotected” (Shanks 2011:6). Barkay, who has lived in Jerusalem for over 60 years, explained why he chose to work there.

I came to Ketef Hinnom in the early 1970s looking for evidence of the ancients, such as quarries, farms, orchards, military encampments, burials, roads, forts—even cultic activity that took place outside the city (Barkay 2009:23).

What he found astounded him and the Christian world.

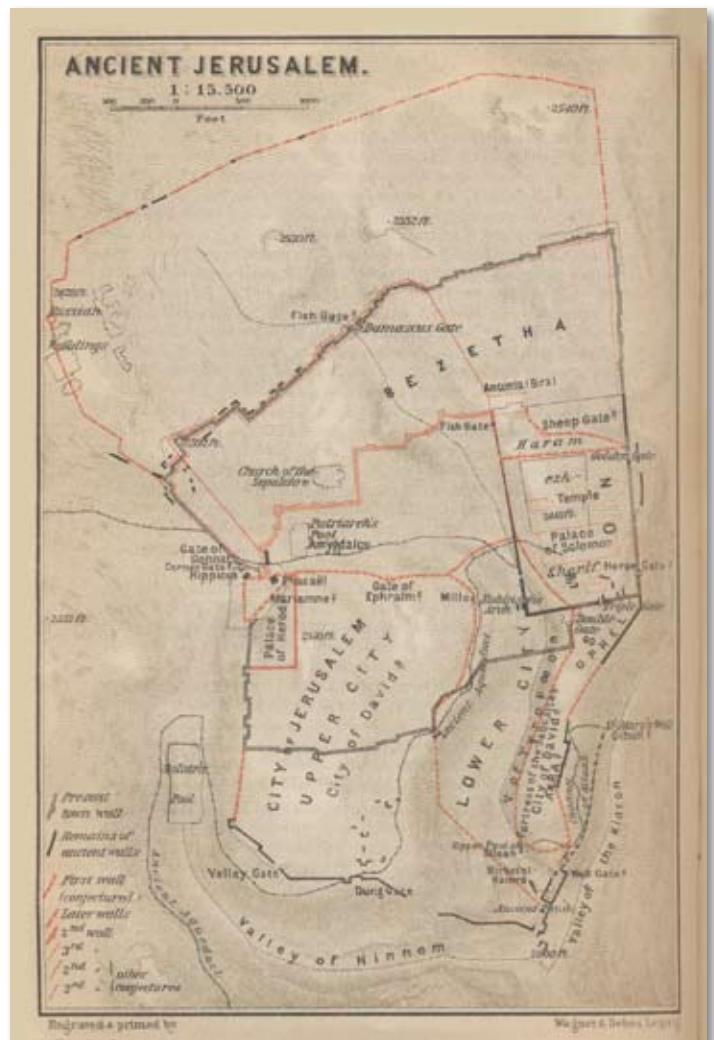
In 1975, we began a relatively small excavation that turned out to be extraordinary both in the quantity and the richness of the finds: an ancient church, cremation burials of the Tenth Roman Legion, burial caves from the time of the Judahite monarchy, jewelry, weapons and—the *pièces de résistance*—two inscribed silver amulets that contain the earliest texts ever discovered from the Hebrew Bible (Barkay 2009:23-24).

At Ketef Hinnom, the “most prominent archaeological feature . . . is the remains of seven rock-cut burial caves of the late First Temple period (seventh century B.C.E.)” (Barkay 2009:28). This is the time of Jeremiah and Lehi and Zedekiah. Most of the burial caves had been damaged or looted; only a lone bead was found, until one of the volunteers, a young teenage boy, was assigned the task of cleaning up the dust from a nook underneath one of the burial benches. “By chance he also had a hammer and after cleaning, he got bored and started banging on the floor of the nook. To his surprise the stone bottom broke revealing an entryway to another room full of treasure” (Browns 2011: Blog)

Barkay writes, “Then in Chamber 25 or Cave 24, we found what can only be described as an archaeologist’s dream—an untouched repository with all of its original contents intact!” (Barkay 2009:30). One of the reasons looters had not stolen from this burial was because a rock layer from the ceiling collapsed, effectively concealing its contents. Not only was there a wealth of items in the chamber, but it is the “only repository from First Temple period Jerusalem ever discovered with its contents intact” (Barkay 2009:31).

One of the items found was a seal (used to stamp property) inscribed in ancient Hebrew script with the name

“Palta” which dates to the seventh or early sixth century B.C. This is an abbreviation of the full Hebrew name of Pelatyah or Pelatyahu, that includes the theophoric element—the name of a deity, this being Yahweh, the Israelite God. Because seals like this usually also included the name of the person’s father and this one doesn’t, it’s believed that it is a family name, perhaps that of the family that owned the burial cave. Ezekiel 11:1 and 13 mention a high governmental official under King Zedekiah (the last king of Judah) named Pelatiah, and it’s possible this burial cave belonged to that family. Pelatiah lived at the same



### Ancient Jerusalem Map

The burial chamber where the silver scrolls and riches were found is located south of Sultan’s Pool approximately between the words Ancient Aqueducts. (Scanned from *Palestine and Syria. Handbook for Travellers by Karl Baedeker, 5th Edition, 1912.*) The map is online at [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/ancient\\_jerusalem.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/ancient_jerusalem.jpg).

A 1989 “Holy Land Map” online by National Geographic is more detailed and shows the location of St. Andrew’s Church of Scotland. Scroll down. It’s shown in the lower left corner. <http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/maps/print-collection/jerusalem-map-1989.html>

**The treasures and silver amulets from the tomb are in the Israel Museum. Come with us to see them and the place where they were found on our tour to the Holy Land in May 2013. See page 4.**

time as Lehi and could very well have been an acquaintance or friend of Lehi.

Among the “riches” in the tomb was the largest collection of ancient jewelry ever found in Jerusalem. The description of these many pieces of jewelry brings to mind Lehi’s wealth, and one begins to understand Lehi and his family’s sacrifice in leaving all to come to the Land of Promise and why Laman and Lemuel complained so much and wanted to return. If Lehi had remained in Judah, he most likely would have had a burial chamber much as this one.

Countless pieces of gold, silver and precious stones worn by Jerusalem’s wealthier residents from the Iron Age to the Roman period were recovered, including a remarkably well preserved pair of gold earrings in the shape of stylized animal heads from the Persian period.... In the Chamber 25 repository, more than a hundred silver and gold objects were also found, as well as myriad beads of agate, carnelian, glass and faience.... Many of the earrings are decorated with intricate patterns of applied silver granulation, a decorative technique also known from Phoenician and Etruscan jewelry.... Other deposits in the repository were silver rings, pendants and a signet ring engraved with the figure of a galloping griffin... (Barkay 2009:33).

But the best was yet to come. In 1979, a small “purplish object that looked like a cigarette butt lying in the soil” was found and later, when the dust of the collapsed ceiling was sifted with a fine mesh screen, a second, similar object was uncovered. They were two tiny silver amulets, rolled like a scroll with a hole down the middle through which a necklace or string could be threaded. Barkay suspected there was writing on them, but the

objects were so fragile that only experts could attempt to unroll them.

It took several years to find someone willing to attempt to unroll the silver scrolls. Barkay related in a 1983 article in *BAR* his excitement when the curator of numismatics at the Israel Museum, Yaakov Meshorer, called to report success in unrolling the first silver scroll. The larger silver scroll measures less than 4 inches long by 1 inch wide, and the second, found in the sifting, is 1.5 inches by a half inch wide. The script was faint and hard to discern by the naked eye, but still recognized as an early style of Hebrew script that “had all but ceased to be used after the destruction of Jerusalem” [circa 586 B.C. ] (Wilford 2004:1). Meshorer confirmed Barkay’s suspicion of writing on the metal and that he had been able to recognize the Divine Name—Yahweh.

Since the first tentative translations of the complete text, new technology and special photographic equipment has reconfirmed the initial readings with some small revisions (Barkay, et.al 2004). Both amulets contain slight variations of the blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26.

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,  
and give you peace.

“These are the words with which observant Jews still bless their children before the Sabbath meal on Friday nights and that are also used in prayers in synagogues”

*Cont. on Page 4*



*In Jerusalem this tomb is known as the Garden Tomb and dates to the time of Christ. Many Christians believe it could be the tomb where Jesus was buried. It is NOT the tomb referred to in this article, but gives a good visual of tombs being built in the sides of hills. The photo was taken on tour in Israel in 2009.*

Sherrie Kline Smith

## Tomb Treasures (Cont. from page 3)

(Barkay 2009:122)—and those words are still used in Latter Day Saints’ pulpits and a hymn more than 2600 years later! God’s word is eternal.

The significance of these two silver amulets is two-fold. One is the antiquity of these biblical verses from what would be the five books of Moses, or the plates of brass that Nephi and his brothers obtained from Laban. They are the oldest written texts from the Bible—400 years earlier than the Dead Sea Scrolls. For the Christian world, they provide confirmation that at least part of the first five books of Moses was written well before scholars had claimed they were, during the late fourth century B.C. “In this view [the late fourth century one], the early books of the Bible were [considered] largely fictional to give the new rulers a place in the country’s history and thus a claim to the land” (Wilford 2004:1).

And second they provide another witness of writing on metal at the time of Lehi, a claim for which Joseph Smith was widely ridiculed. (See Glenn Scott’s article “Metal Plates and Stone Boxes: Have Joseph Smith’s Claims Been Vindicated,” *glyph notes*, May/June 2011, for more about metal plates in the ancient world.)

The importance of these two silver amulets with inscriptions cannot be overstated. They prove that scripture was written on metal plates at the time of Lehi and that the early books of the Bible are not “largely fictional.” The discovery also makes us consider the great value of the wealth Lehi left behind to follow the direction of the Lord to the Land of Promise.

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The Internet has much to offer about the work at Ketef Hinnom and the silver amulets because this find is one of the “top ten” discoveries in Biblical archaeology.

If you can’t go to Israel, you can watch videos on the Internet about the tomb and silver amulets.

Danny the Digger – Tours in Israel <http://www.dannythedigger.com/uncategorized/video-on-ketef-hinnom-tombs>

Oldest Copy of The BIBLE PROOF – Ketef Hinnom Israel – 7th Century BC Archaeology <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMIDCN8iErQ>

See also “Top Ten Biblical Discoveries in Archaeology – #4 Ketef Hinnom Silver Amulet Scroll on the “Parchment & Pen Blog” <http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2010/08/top-ten-biblical-discoveries-in-archaeology-4-ketef-hinnom-silver-amulet-scroll/>



**Galilee** **Masada** **Jerusalem** **Qumran and more...**

# Holy Land Tour

*May 2013 for 11 days*

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**Led by Lyle and Sherrie Smith**

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**Call Lyle Smith, 816 838-5192 or email: [smith.lyle@usa.net](mailto:smith.lyle@usa.net)**

## “Quest for the Lost Maya” A National Geographic Television Special

By Terry Scott and  
Glenn A. Scott

*Most archaeologists believe the Maya culture began in Guatemala around 600 B.C. in the Mirador Basin. Recent discoveries in the Northern Yucatan may change this view.*

Up until now, it was thought that this area was sparsely settled. The discovery of the cities of Kiucic (Kee week) and Xocnaceh (shoke-nuh-kay) and many small towns in the area demonstrate the northern Yucatan to be anything but empty. Recent road construction around the modern city of Merida has uncovered over 190 towns. According to archaeologist Anthony Andrews, northern Yucatan may have been as densely populated as Los Angeles County.

George Bey, site archaeologist at the city of Kiucic, 60 miles south of Merida and 20 miles southeast from Uxmal, believes it was founded about 900 B.C. (Vergano 2010). While excavating one of the pyramids, he decided to sink a shaft to look for a tomb or burial chamber. Twenty-three feet down he found a cap stone, the top of another building. The pyramid's C-14 dating is around A.D. 800 but this lower building dates about A.D. 500, 300 years earlier. The current theory is that northern Yucatan was not occupied until A.D. 700 when mass migrations from the southern Maya area began due to many wars and great famines.



Sherrie Klime Smith

*About seven miles northwest of Kiucic is Labna. Ringle and Bey, both featured in the PBS special, have been working in this area for over 12 years, and one of their earlier studies was a settlement study between Labna and Kiucic. Both sites have been known since the times of Stephens and Catherwood (1840s), but only in these last few years has extensive work been done at Kiucic, which is now part of the Helen Moyers Biocultural Reserve ([http://www.kiucic.org/english\\_fl](http://www.kiucic.org/english_fl)). Labna has been on the tourist trail for many years, and among its many standing structures is this beautiful arch, which dates to the Late Classic, or around A.D. 800-1000.*

Kiucic was occupied long before these refugees arrived from the south.

Another stone found at Kiucic showed part of a human head wearing a mask. This was part of the façade of a royal palace. Further excavation revealed the palace consisted of a three-part structure. On the left was a temple, on the right the royal residence, and in the center was the throne room. Many sites have one temple or pyramid built on top of another by a later ruler or a conqueror. The difference in dates seems to bear this out.

A 200-foot stairway, leading to a nine or ten-room house on top of a hill overlooking the plantation below, was found within a mile of the Kiucic palace. Archaeologists have dubbed it the “stairway to heaven.” Such a large dwelling, not of the royal family, points to a prosperous city. About half of the population had houses of stone, a rarity in Mesoamerica. This seems to indicate a large wealthy middle class, another sign of prosperity.

North of Kiucic, archaeologist Tomás Gallareta Negrón of INAH has been exploring another site called Xocnaceh. This site, beginning about 500 B.C., was unknown until now because everything had been completely overgrown with jungle. Negrón has uncovered a huge stairway and elevated plaza 28 feet above the jungle floor, measuring 500 feet square (as large as four football fields). This plaza could hold thousands of people for ceremonies and other activities. Among artifacts found here were basalt

*Cont. on Page 6*



Glenn A. Scott and Terry Scott

**Quest** (*Cont. from page 5*)

tools from Belize, conch shells from Vera Cruz 500 miles away, and jade from the Guatemalan highlands. This site appears to have been the trading hub of a huge empire.

Seventeen miles from Kiuic is a large cave. The only access is through a small opening. The cave floor is 230 feet down and can only be reached by rope. Maya priests had to lower themselves into the cave by ropes made of vines. Descending into the cave and threading through narrow tunnels one finally comes to a manmade wall marking the entrance to a sacred area. The ancient Maya believed that caves were the home of underworld gods. The cave walls in this area are covered with a thick coat of soot from countless torches and ritual fires. The floor of the cave is littered with thousands of broken clay pots, each with one small piece missing. It is believed that those who conducted the sacrifice took that piece with them outside and buried it somewhere else. The walls contain some remarkable paintings of jaguars and parrots. The style is Maya but subtly different than any seen before.


Their age is estimated around 100 B.C., making them among the earliest paintings discovered in the Americas.

The civilization in northern Yucatan appears to have ended because of a major drought. There had once been a very small lake close to Kiuic. Core samples taken from the lake bed revealed several bands of white gypsum which formed when the lake dried up, indicating a very long dry spell. C-14 dates of the gypsum are consistent with other indicators of when northern Yucatan was abandoned.

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Quest for the Lost Maya. Produced by National Geographic Television for PBS ©2011.

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**GLYPH** *Quotes*

by Eric English

Now, my son, I would that ye should repent, and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of yours eyes, but cross yourself in all these things; for except ye do this, ye can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God. O remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things.


These two verses come from a section of the book of Alma that we are fortunate to have in our possession. You may recall that the book of Alma was part of the large plates of Nephi, which were more focused on the temporal history of the Nephites and Lamanites and not on the spiritual events. However, in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> chapters, we are allowed an intimate glance into the advice which Alma the Younger shared with his three sons, Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton.


These two verses in specific were directed to Corianton immediately after Alma “called him on the carpet” for several blatant instances of sin and rebellion. Corianton was presumably the youngest son, and he had been guilty of boasting in his own abilities, ignoring his father’s counsel and advice, and worst of all, he had forsaken his ministry to pursue his own lusts. Alma wanted his son to understand a very simple but powerful concept that we all need to understand, we cannot hide our sins from God.

*Cross yourself... —Alma 19:13-14*

Rather than allowing him to cover them up or avoid the consequences as some parents might, Alma advises his son to admit, repent, and abandon these sins. He then uses a very curious figure of speech that isn’t found in any other part of scripture. He counsels his son to “cross yourself” in these things.

When we hear this phrase, our minds may be first drawn to the Catholic believers’ ritual of making the sign or pattern of the cross in front of themselves at the end of prayers. For them, it is an act of reverence, but this isn’t what Alma intended to convey to his son. He wanted his son to visualize crossing over an imaginary line from what his natural man might be inclined towards and to follow after what the Spirit called him to do.

How many of us are guilty of the some of the same crimes as Corianton? How many of us have trusted or even boasted in our abilities rather than trusting in God? How many of us have ignored the godly counsel of important people in our lives? And worst of all, how many of us have lusted after the things of this world and set aside the ministry that God has given us to pursue those lusts? God is using the advice of Alma from many hundreds of years ago to call us to daily cross ourselves and to follow Him. Will we set aside our natural man to return into the presence of our Creator? 



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It's been a long time since I've talked with you and so much has happened! I've traveled all over with Alma and watched the Lord work through him in some crazy, awesome ways!



## Glyph Dwellers

Dwellers - to live and have a home in a particular place

### The Adventures of Beezrom

by Mindy Mulheron

Illustration by Aaron Presler

We've finally settled down a bit now and have been establishing our city and church. Alma got married and had a son that we call Alma the Younger. Alma the Younger was a really nice boy, but over the last few years he's become a little confused and he's started acting pretty badly. He's even making fun of all of us who believe in Jesus and being really mean.

Alma the Younger has caused a lot of trouble lately - especially when he hangs out with his friends, the king's sons. They have become so mean and nasty that Alma, and even the King, asked them to be nicer to everyone. Unfortunately they didn't really listen. But then something really cool happened!

One day, Alma the Younger and his friends were out causing trouble when an angel appeared before them in the road. (Can you believe that!? A real angel!?) The angel told them that they needed to act better and should stop bothering the church. The angel told Alma the Younger and his friends that many people had been praying for them, and that the Lord had sent him to convince them that God was real and wanted them to live better.

Well, Alma the Younger was speechless... (I would

be too!) And, after the angel finished talking to them, Alma the Younger passed out and fell to the ground. He stayed unconscious for two whole days, and, when he woke up, he told everyone he had been wrong and asked everyone to forgive him. His friends asked for forgiveness too, and they all promised to live better and be nicer. They knew that God was real and really meant what He said about being kind to everyone and believing in Him.

Now, Alma the Younger and his friends have decided to go all over the land and preach about Jesus to anyone who will listen. Isn't that awesome? I'm sure God will bless them and other people will learn about Jesus.

Isn't this neat? Sometimes, if we pray for people - even bad people, God can work a miracle and they can completely change. Even though Alma the Younger was doing some pretty terrible things, God never gave up on him. God never gives up on us either. Sometimes we'll make bad choices, but if we ask God for forgiveness and promise not to do it again, we can be forgiven. Pretty cool, huh? God is awesome!

Alma the Younger and his friends invited me to go with them, so I'll talk to you later... Can't wait to tell you what happens! In the meantime, make sure to pray for people who may seem sad or mean. You never know when God will work a miracle for the person you've been praying for! Take care!

*Scriptural reference: Mosiah 11:159-207*

### Beezrum's Word Scramble

Alma the Younger is speechless! Help him find his words by unscrambling the letters.

I ASW NI HET AEDKRST' ABSSY UBT ONW I EOBDHL

EHT AEOULMRSV IGHILT FO ODG

(Look at Mosiah 11:192 for help with this puzzle! 😊)

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INSIDE:

*Tomb Treasures from the Time  
of Lehi, Engraved Biblical Texts  
on Silver*

*"Quest for the Lost Maya"  
A National Geographic  
Television Special*

*GLYPH Quotes*

*The Adventures of Beezrum*

*An Ounce of Prevention*

GLYPH *Notes* PRE-COLUMBIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE JULY/AUGUST 2012 VOLUME 19 NUMBER 4

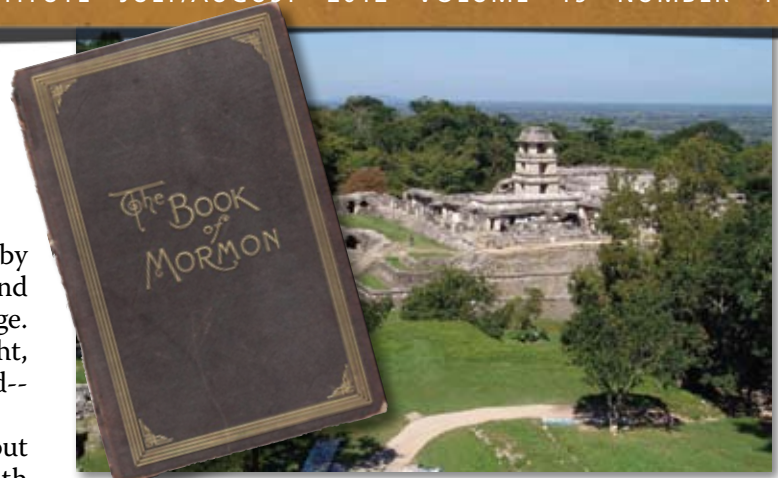
## An Ounce of Prevention

by Patricia J. Beebe,  
Editorial Committee

Although Benjamin Franklin did not always live by his own words, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," his advice is in line with the Gospel message. Even those who lived before Christ's ministry taught, "The abominations of the nations [were] to be avoided--Christ the Prophet is to be heard"(Deuteronomy 18).

PSI's newsletter *glyph notes* weighs mere ounces, but its content offers a "pound of cure" to those whose faith needs a boost. Daily bombardment through news media saturated with the ills of mankind as well as the world of entertainment in general work together to wear down and weaken the human spirit. PSI receives messages regularly such as, "I am always excited to get my *glyph notes*. I read it from cover to cover immediately. I wish it would come more often" (KD, Independence, MO).

We continue to ask for your support through prayers and contributions that the precious message of The Book of Mormon can be sent into even more homes, offices, and educational institutions. Your support has allowed PSI to research and search out those witnesses to nourish



Aaron Presler

your faith into knowledge and your knowledge into action that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten, who visited this continent and left his teachings and love for the multitude of people here.

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