

glyph

notes

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Decades of Discovery

By Don Beebe

As a child, I frequently heard the comment, “The Book of Mormon can stand the acid test.” An acid test is a severe, conclusive test to establish genuineness or worth. This meant, then, that all aspects of the book could be proven true.

When I grew up and became a science teacher who understood “acid tests” and evidences, I marveled about the discoveries made when I was a boy. Had scholars such as Charles Hield and Roy Weldon not done research and made such information available, we would never have had the opportunity to know. But now, even more, in the past few decades, the pace of discovery has quickened to such an extent that even many more confirming evidences of the truth of The Book of Mormon have come forth. Therefore, we want to strengthen your faith by sharing this good news.

Wheels

Critics, however, unaware of new discoveries, continue to perpetrate no longer valid criticisms. One of these is the use of the wheel. Well-studied scholars once believed the peoples of Mexico and Central America far too primitive in culture, knowledge, or technology to employ the concept of the wheel. After all, the wheel was a major occurrence in the development of man from the Stone Age into the Machine Age. Although scientific opinion did not agree, The Book of Mormon remained committed. Increasingly, however, Mesoamerican museums now display examples of wheeled toys. But many in the scientific world still say the principle was not employed by adults!

While visiting Coba in the Yucatan, we were told that a large, long stone, which resembled a rolling pin, had been discovered there. It was postulated that it was used to roll roads, much as we use a steam roller to flatten and smooth roads today. Since Coba has an extensive network of roadways connecting the site core with a series of outlying areas, this seems a plausible explanation. [See “glyph clips” on page 6 for new information about roads.]



Examples of wheeled “toys” exhibited at the Xalapa Museum of Anthropology.

Don Beebe

*As new
knowledge
comes forth
to answer
previously
unanswered
questions,
our faith
becomes
knowledge.*

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Decades *(Cont. from Page 1)*

Metal Plates

Patience is an often-misunderstood factor in the evidence puzzle. It sometimes takes time for technology, discoveries, and new knowledge to come forth to answer previously unanswered questions. For example, several Book of Mormon authors claim they wrote the record on metal plates. When The Book of Mormon was published in 1830, no evidence existed that scribes used metal for writing. We had faith, though, that the record was true, “the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11: 1).

Not until a hundred years after its publication did faith become knowledge. Scores of metal plates containing writing were discovered by archaeologists, many crafted during The Book of Mormon era. And now, I am told a skilled craftsman can pound out from one ounce of gold a thin sheet, five-feet square.

See Glenn Scott’s chart of metal plates with writing in the Middle East before and after the time of Lehi.

Metallurgy

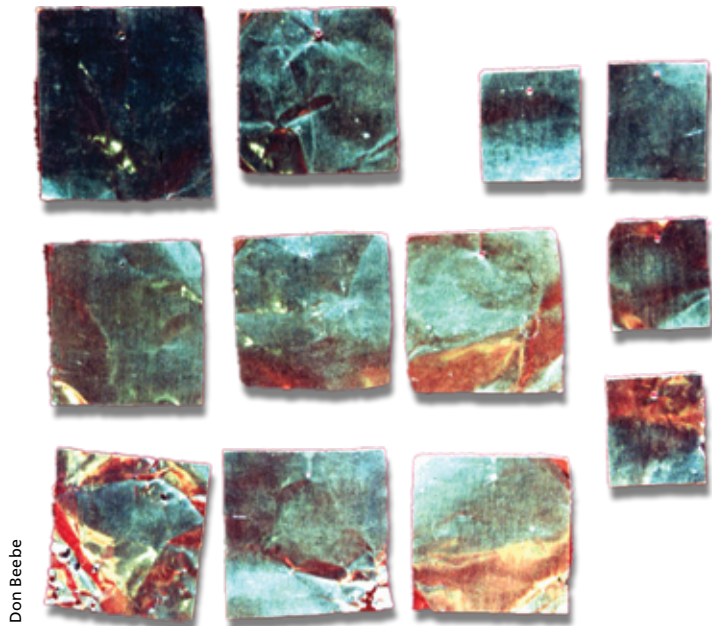
While the claim of writing on metal plates has been vindicated, others made in The Book of Mormon still require faith. One of these is the question of finely crafted metals in Mesoamerica during Book of Mormon times. The ancient authors

tell of working with iron, copper, brass, steel, gold, silver, and “precious ores” (2 Nephi 4:21 [LDS 5:15]), “making all manner of tools of every kind” (Jarom 1:19 [LDS 1:8]). See also Mosiah 5:65; 7:6, 11, 13 [LDS 8:10; 11:3, 8, 10]; and Ether 4:71 [LDS 10:23].

While evidence of advanced metallurgy during Book of Mormon times does exist in the Americas—two good examples being the General Electric site in Indiana and the Mock tombs in Peru where superbly crafted artifacts of gold, silver, and copper were discovered—the area of Mesoamerica, where it is believed The Book of Mormon took place, lacks enough evidence to convince archaeologists that these cultures practiced advanced metallurgy. Most archaeologists take the position that few metal artifacts dating to Book of Mormon times have been found. Those that have been found are labeled “intrusive,” placed there by later civilizations.

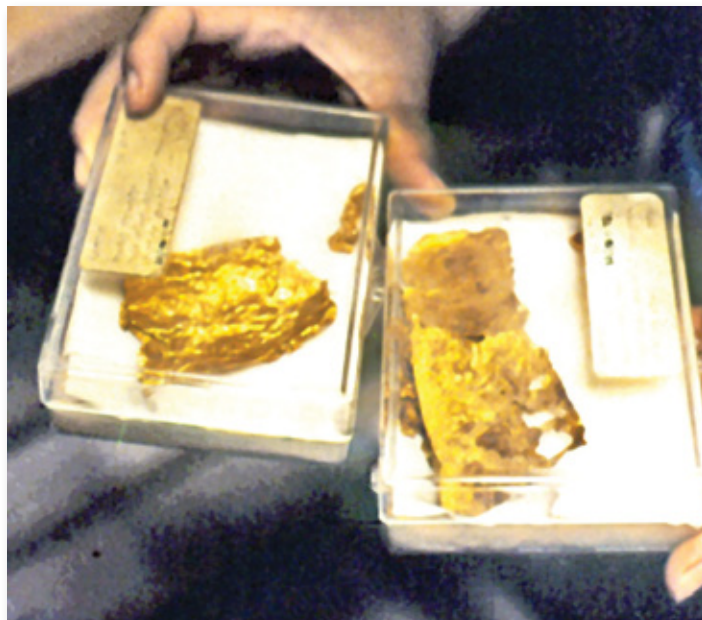
Recently, in the Maya ruin of Caracol in Belize, a spectacular find of 664.7 grams of mercury was discovered in a temple tomb. The wooden lintel dates the temple to 2,000 years ago. This is just one of numerous examples of mercury found in the Maya area. And continuing excavations reveal a growing body of metal residues in Maya sites dating to Book of Mormon times. Iron ores, hematite, mercury, and pyrite have been unearthed in many Late Preclassic Maya sites (300 B.C.-A.D. 300)

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Don Beebe

At the site of Monte Alban in southwest Mexico, Tomb 7, excavated in 1931-32, revealed a rich cache of gold, turquoise, coral, pearls, shells, and other artifacts. These finely hammered gold sheets were among the treasure.



Linda Trimble

While metals, such as this gold leaf discovered at the site of Lamanai in Belize and gold-copper alloy beads from Altun Ha, also in Belize, continue to be found, they are generally ignored by archaeologists or said to be “intrusive.”

Time Period	Location Discovered	Material	Notes	Depositor, if known
3000-2900 BC	Tell Brak, Iraq	copper plates	alabaster or white limestone box in the foundation of the temple of Dagon	
c. 2800 BC	Indus River valley of ancient India (now Pakistan)	copper plates	in an unknown language; stone box	
c. 2450 BC	Iraq	gold plates	inscribed in Akkadian; fired-brick foundation box	King Djohha Umma
1843-1823 BC	Larsa, Iraq	copper and steatite (soapstone) tablets	inscribed in Amorite; fired-brick foundation box	King Warrad Sin
1822-1763 BC	Ur, Iraq	steatite tablet and a copper figurine	discovered by Sir Leonard Wooley	
1813-1781 BC	Larsa, Iraq	various metals	fired-brick foundation box	King Shamshi Adad
1792-1760 BC	Larsa, Iraq	copper and limestone tablets	fired-brick foundation box	Queen Simat Inanna, wife of King Warrad Sin
1345-1324 BC	Ur, Iraq	two copper and eight steatite tablets	inscribed in Kassite	King Kiri Galzu
1274-1245 BC	Assur, Iraq	gold, silver, copper, iron, and tin plates	fired-brick foundation box	King Shalmeneser
1244-1208 BC	Larsa, Iraq	seven lead, thirteen gold/silver, one copper, and seven alabaster		King Tikulte-Ninurte
883-859 BC	Kutha, Apqu, and Imgur Bel, Iraq	gold, silver, and marble tablets	inscribed in cuneiform; stone boxes in the foundations of three palaces	King Assurnasirpal
854-824 BC	Assur and Ecbatan, Iraq	one of gold with a ring, and others of silver, copper, iron, and tin tablets	inscribed in Assyrian cuneiform; stone boxes	King Shalmeneser III
721-705 BC	Khorsabad, Iraq	gold, silver, bronze, lead, and alabaster tablets	inscribed in Assyrian cuneiform; marble box	King Sargon I
699-680 BC	Samarra, Iraq	bronze tablet	inscribed in Elamite	King Esarhaddon
600 BC	Struma River valley of Bulgaria	six pages of gold plates held together by metal rings	inscribed in Etruscan	
600 BC	antiquities market	bronze tablet	inscribed in the Sabaean language (that of the Queen of Sheba) in the alphabet of South Arabia	
518-515 BC	Persepolis, Susa, and Ecbatan, Iraq	sets of one gold and one silver tablets	each set carried the same message inscribed in Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian in the cornerstones of his three palaces	King Darius I of Persia
500 BC	Pyrgi, Italy	three gold plates	two inscribed in Etruscan and one in Phoenician (Punic) commemorating a dedication event around 500 BC	
246-222 BC	three temples at Alexandria, Egypt	three plates of gold, one silver, one bronze, and five glass	all inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs and Greek	King Ptolemy III
200 BC	Dead Sea at Qumran, Israel	copper scrolls	clay jars in caves bordering the Dead Sea	Essenes circa AD 70
first century AD	cave in eastern Jordan	70 codices (ancient books) made of lead plates held together by wire rings		

Glenn Scott Chart may be photocopied for educational purposes.

Decades *(Cont. from Page 2)*

by the same archaeologists who, contrary to the evidence, continue to say the Maya were “a stone age people, without metal of any kind until several centuries before the Conquest” (Schele and Freidel, 1990:60). For more on metals, see “Metals in the Maya Area,” by Lyle Smith in *The Witness* (Summer 1993, #81):4-5.

Language and Writing

The Book of Mormon claims to be a Hebrew book written in reformed Egyptian. Critics use this point to degrade the book. Why, they say, would Hebrew scribes use Egyptian to record their history? Recent findings, though, from an archaeological dig in southern Israel prove that Israelites were writing history using the Egyptian script at the time of Lehi. (Rainey 1987:37)

Most people familiar with The Book of Mormon recognize that the phrase “it came to pass” is used profusely. Mark Twain, trying to point out fallacies of The Book of Mormon, wrote, “It is chloroform in print.... ‘And it came to pass’ was his pet. If he had left that out, his Bible would have been only a pamphlet” (Twain 1872:94-95). Now, however, we know from ancient Jewish documents that this phrase pervaded their literature. In addition, a well-known Maya scholar, David Stuart, translated one of the hieroglyphs as “it came to pass.” And, what’s more, it is used frequently. The Palenque Tablet of 96 Glyphs with five occurrences is a good example.

Another phrase, “and now,” found on hundreds of ancient pottery fragments in Israel, has been recognized by modern linguists/archaeologists as a “standard opening” of ancient Hebraic writing. These two words also open numerous chapters in The Book of Mormon, witnessing its Hebraic origin. Check First and Second Nephi to see how many chapters open with “and now.”

Chiasmus, an ancient Middle Eastern literary writing style, was first discovered in relation to The Book of Mormon by Mormon scholar John Welch in the 1970s. Authors use this literary device to deliberately arrange words or phrases in a certain order and then immediately repeat them in

reverse order (mirror image). The Book of Mormon is full of chiasms. A few simple examples are 1 Nephi 7:3-4 [LDS 22:2]; Jacob 3:12 [LDS 4:9]; and 2 Nephi 12:71-72 [LDS 29:13].

Conclusion

As new knowledge comes forth to answer previously unanswered questions—like the “stone . . . cut out without hands” that “became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:34-35), our faith becomes knowledge. I am an evidence-oriented person. The more I learn, the more I am convinced that The Book of Mormon is standing the acid test



Sherrie Kline Smith

These two examples of the glyphs that read “and it came to pass” are from the large Palace Tablet at Palenque. Although these fall side by side in the large inscription, they are not read together because the Maya inscriptions are read in columns of two and top to bottom. A photo of the tablet is available at mesoweb.com/palenque/monuments/PT/PT-Jorge2.html and a drawing at mesoweb.com/palenque/monuments/PT/30.html.

Book of Mormon Examples of Chiasmus

1 Nephi 7:3-4

- A** Behold, they were made manifest unto the **prophet**,
- B** by the voice of the **Spirit**:
- B** For by the **Spirit**
- A** are all things made known unto the **prophets**....

Mosiah 1:118-120 based on Welch (1999:203)

- A** Except they **humble** themselves,
- B** and become as little **children**,
- C** and believe that salvation comes through the **atonement blood of Christ**;
- 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 **Holy Spirit**
- D** and putteth off the **natural man**,
- C** and becometh a saint, through the **atonement of Christ**,
- B** and becometh as a **child**,
- A** submissive, meek, **humble**, patient, full of love....

and will shine forth for the whole world to see.

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Editor's Note: *This article, originally published in a series from September 1995-February 1996 glyph notes, included information worth repeating. Slight editorial changes were made to help them flow together and references were added.* 

THE BLESSING OF SHARING

Join with us in these new projects!

The Adventures of Beezrom: Book of Mormon Stories for Children

Originally a feature page in *glyph notes* for the last five years, Beezrom's adventures are **now available** as a stand-alone book and is a wonderful gift for children ages 5 through 10. Take note **grandmothers!** This professionally done book is a super gift for grandchildren. Introduce them to the prophet Nephi, the great king Mosiah, church leader Alma, missionary Ammon, and others. Each chapter can be read as a stand-alone story or as the next installment in the larger story of Book of Mormon history.

Best of all, the book is spiral bound for easy reproduction and each chapter has an activity to enhance the lesson, making it ideal for use in Sunday schools or home schools, camps, or other outreach purposes.

Already available at the Restoration Bookstore and The Book of Mormon Foundation.

glyph notes Online

One of our goals is to put all past issues of *glyph notes* online. The years of valued information and positive testimony found in *glyph notes* will be easy to access, and puzzling questions can be answered in a timely and meaningful way. We now mail around 2500 issues of *glyph notes*; online we can reach more readers, especially the younger generations so used to receiving information in this format.

Devotional Book

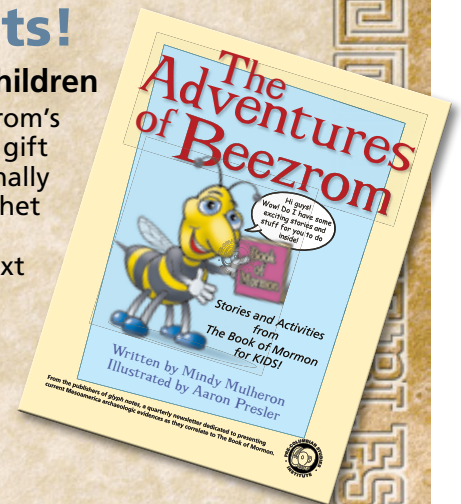
Another immediate goal is to publish articles from the *glyph notes'* column "glyph quotes" as a collection to provide strength and practical help in our daily walk with God. Like "Doubt not, but be believing," "Opposition in all things," "Suffer none of these things to enter into your heart," "This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God," and "Be steadfast and immovable."

Authors include Kevin Anderson, Eric English, Joy Muir, Clyde Noren, Sherrie Kline Smith, and others.

Compilation of Many Articles from glyph notes into a Book

One other goal for PSI is publishing a compilation of selected articles from *glyph notes* that explore archaeological, epigraphic, and scientific evidences about The Book of Mormon. Many of the articles provide a look at the amazing parallels between The Book of Mormon account and current archaeological evidence for the Maya and Olmec in Mesoamerica, supplying ample evidence of the truth of The Book of Mormon and its testimony of Christ. These articles will be quite useful for Sunday school classes, personal study, and sermon preparation and can help turn faith into knowledge.

Please share with us in these exciting avenues of outreach with your prayers and financial support. Your contributions make this possible.



THE BLESSING OF SHARING

glyphclips

By Sherrie Kline Smith

Highways and Roads

Seeker.com tinyurl.com/gu9gbgl

"Ancient Mayan Superhighways Found in the Guatemala Jungle"

By Rosselia Lorenzi, January 27, 2017

It's long been known that the Maya built roads, but with recent high-tech scanning, an ancient network of roads over 150 miles has been discovered in the Mirador Basin in Guatemala. According to archaeologists—before the city of El Mirador was abandoned, circa A.D. 150 or so—"it was the largest city-state in the world, both in size—833 square miles—and population with at least one million people.

Although the presence of the roads has been known since 1967, the new laser-based remote sensing that was used to map the area provided new insights into the massive system of superhighways. Richard Hansen, lead archaeologist in the Mirador Basin Project, noted that the "causeways are 130 feet wide, up to 20 feet high, and in some cases they extend as far as 25 miles."

The first roads built—between El Mirador and Tindall and El Mirador and Nakbe—date to ca. 600 to 400 B.C. Other causeways date from 300 B.C. to A.D. 100. Hansen also commented, "The causeways allowed transport of food, materials, tribute, rulers, armies and all the trappings of political, economic

and social complexity."



FARES

A LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) tool was capable of penetrating thick jungle vegetation in the northern area of Guatemala where the roads were detected.

One other item discovered using the new technology was a sophisticated system of corrals or animal pens suggesting meat production in the Mirador Basin existed at an industrial level, with transportation relying on the superhighways.

How does this information support The Book of Mormon account?

Alma wrote that around 90 B.C. they had "an abundance of flocks, and herds, and fatlings of every kind, and also abundance of grain, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things; and abundance of silk and fine twined linen, and all manner of good homely cloth" (Alma 1:44 [LDS 1:29]).

In addition, it is recorded at 23 B.C. that the tower and garden of Nephi "was by the highway which led to the chief market" (Helaman 3:10 [LDS 7:10]). Further, after the birth of Christ around A.D. 25, "there were many highways cast up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, and from land to land, and from place to place" (3 Nephi 3:8 [LDS 6:8]).

For more about El Mirador, see "Lost City of the Maya" in *Smithsonian* magazine, May 2011, Vol.

42, #2, pp. 36-49; "Saving the Mirador Basin" in *American Archaeology*, Fall 2007; and the Mirador Basin webpages at miradorbasin.com/.

Many roads were detected by LiDAR in the Mirador Basin, a densely populated Maya area, as shown by Hansen's mapping.

Lyle Smith & Aaron Presler Map may be photocopied for educational purposes.



Richard Hansen, lead archaeologist in the Mirador Basin Project, has excavated, mapped and explored 51 ancient cities (of which 31 are depicted).

Kukulcan Pyramid at Chichen Itza

The Guardian, tinyurl.com/juc4v2p

“Mexican Pyramid Has Two More Inside, Scientists Discover” November 16, 2016

(See also *The Daily Mail*, tinyurl.com/gpyrwtl)

Since many of the readers of *glyph notes* have been to Chichen Itza or may go, this new discovery there might be of interest.

The famous pyramid called *El Castillo* or the Kukulcan Pyramid (at right) was built over two former pyramids. The second one has been known since the 1930s, and until about 15 years ago, visitors could climb the inside stairway to the top of the inside pyramid. Now, a third pyramid under the second one was recently confirmed using a process called tri-dimensional electric resistivity tomography or ERT-3D. This new structure is thought to have been built between A.D. 500 and A.D. 800; the one above it, around 800-1000, and the last one—the building visitors see today—was built between 1050 and 1300.

The pyramid is “like a Russian nesting doll. Under the large one we get another and another,” commented René Chávez Seguro, project chief and geophysics expert. The Maya are known for this type of construction. Instead of tearing down a building, they would simply build over it. That is why at so many sites the buildings visible were built after the events reported in *The Book of Mormon*.

The site of Chichen Itza overflows with visitors on the spring and autumn equinoxes to watch as the setting sun creates a shadow on the stairs of the Kukulcan Pyramid that looks like a serpent’s body sliding towards the earth. Kukulcan means “plumed serpent” or “feathered serpent” in Yucatec Mayan. It is the same as Qukumatz of the Quiché Maya and Quetzalcoatl in the Aztec’s Nahuatl language. The literal translation of all three of these is “quetzal serpent,” quetzal being the name of a most beautiful bird in the rainforests of southern Mexico and Central America. It is Guatemala’s national bird and the name of their currency. ☞



Sherrie Kline Smith

This view of the Kukulcan pyramid shows the western and southern sides. The main stairway faces north toward the original Maya road that leads to the sacred cenote.



Aaron Presler

Just behind the large serpent head, on one side of the main stairway, is a large stone box. The now closed door in the corner opened to the inside stairway of the second pyramid.

glyph quotes See that ye do not judge wrongfully—Moroni 7:17 [LDS 7:18]*

By Sherrie Kline Smith

Recently a friend told me disheartening news. A mutual friend was close to renouncing his belief in *The Book of Mormon*. For several years he has listened to a friend who strongly opposes his belief. She has read much of the literature written against this scriptural record, and she has consistently shared negative aspects about it with him, almost convincing him the book is a fraud.

What has happened here? Judgment resulted from feeding mind and heart with doubt and negative thinking generated by destructive criticisms. This is not the way to righteous judgment. Righteous judgment comes by looking to Christ and recognizing our own inadequacies, not by casting stones. The Lord warned us to be careful how we judge because we will be judged the same way (3 Nephi 6:14 [LDS 14:2] and Matthew 7:2-3). Therefore, if we judge *The Book of Mormon* by second-hand accounts and adverse

*This is a slightly revised and edited version of the original, which was published in the Sept./Oct. 1996 issue of *glyph notes*.

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criticisms propounded by its enemies, then we will be judged by second-hand accounts and adverse criticisms by our enemies.

Perhaps one protests and contends that the criticisms of The Book of Mormon may be truth, and shouldn't we search for truth? Yes, of course, we want truth, but the Scriptures plainly tell that truth comes through the Holy Ghost.


Mormon writes his son Moroni excellent advice on how to judge. See all of chapter seven in Moroni, but especially verses 5-18 [LDS 7:6-19]. "Everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ. Wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God" (Moroni 7:14-15 [LDS 7:16]).

This seems like a sound measuring stick. Therefore, the way to judge The Book of Mormon (and Joseph Smith who is intrinsically connected with the book) is to ask does

it draw people to Christ. Does it help people grow in the knowledge of the Lord? Does it encourage them to develop Christ-like attributes like kindness, long-suffering, and charity? If the answer is yes, then "ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God."

Verses from a well-known hymn reinforce these Scriptures. "Look for the beautiful, look for the true; Sunshine and shadow are all around you. Looking at evil you grope in the night; Looking at Jesus you walk in the light..... Talk of the beautiful, talk of the

true; Tongues full of poison are whispering to you. Answer them not with a tale-bearing word; Only in blessing the voice should be heard. Talk of the beautiful, talk of thy Lord" (Franklin E. Belden).

Counsel from the Scriptures and this hymn applies to *all* we do and say. Perhaps now is a good time to reevaluate how we judge what comes before us, keenly remembering that "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (3 Nephi 6:24 [LDS 14:12]). 



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