

glyph *notes*

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How Well Do You Know The Book of Mormon?

P By Sherrie Kline Smith
reparing this issue of glyph notes has been a challenge.

The articles in the prior issue are a hard act to follow!

Contemplating the magnitude of the discoveries reported in that last issue led me to reconsider a timeline, prepared some years ago, of events in The Book of Mormon.

This timeline was created as a tool for correlating The Book of Mormon with the changing Mesoamerican archaeological understandings and discoveries. A portion of the timeline was printed first in 1996 along with a short article that remains very important and pertinent to how we judge any types of evidences that we believe validate The Book of Mormon. The following is an edited and updated version of that article, followed by the timeline, which is still a work in progress as I continue my study of The Book of Mormon.

Most of you feel passionately about The Book of Mormon. You find the Holy Spirit speaks deeply to your heart within its pages. Your spirit swells, your soul enlarges, and you staunchly advocate it is a true record written hundreds of years ago by ancient Hebraic men of God.

Many go further. You nurture, prune, and nourish this belief, turning your faith into knowledge. You delight in proving intellectually the record's truth. Through scientific and linguistic evidences, the Lord provides this knowledge for you. But to recognize what is legitimate proof depends a great deal on how well you know the book's contents.

For instance, the general consensus among the scientific fields has what is referred to as Classic Maya civilization—a composite (we believe) of Nephites/Lamanites/Mulekites descendants—collapsing AD 800-900. On the surface, this does not fit the impression (or easy assumption as Glenn Scott so ably teaches) we get from The Book of Mormon. In the record, the Nephite nation is defeated in AD 385, and the book closes at AD 420. This leads many to believe that, because the Nephites are defeated and the book ends, evidence from the Maya area should show civilization collapsing at the same time.

But does the record truly say this? *Sixteen years* following the last battle, Moroni writes that the “whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war” (Mormon 4:10; LDS 8:8). To amplify this, Nephi saw in a vision that, after his people were destroyed, the seed of his brethren “went forth in multitudes upon the face of the land,” and “in wars and rumors of wars, [he] saw many generations pass away” (1Nephi 3:130-132;

Cont. on Page 2

In light of recent discoveries, reprinting the timeline may be helpful. A concrete knowledge of the contents of The Book of Mormon aids us in identifying archaeological parallels.

The Book of Mormon (Cont. from Page 1)

LDS 12:20-21). Nephi says *many generations* will live after the defeat of the Nephites.

Therefore, a careful reading of the record reveals that, instead of placing the truth of the book in jeopardy, the collapse of Classic Maya civilization 400 years after the close of The Book of Mormon *validates* Nephi’s vision.

Recognizing evidences confirming statements found in The Book of Mormon compels us to know what the account really says. I’ve heard my husband ask many times when teaching Book of Mormon classes and confronted with what appears to be a perplexing question, “What does The Book of Mormon itself say?” He constantly stresses the need to go to the record and read what’s recorded.

Here’s another example. *The Kansas City Star* printed an article (June 23, 1996) telling about the discovery of a new royal Maya tomb at the site La Milpa in Belize. The entombed king ruled about AD 450, give or take 40 years. It related that “kings first began ruling La Milpa about AD 300.”

For many years, before starting a more-in-depth scrutiny of the book, I believed what we commonly call the Golden Age (which term, by the way, is not in the book itself; it’s referred to as the age of the children of Christ) lasted 400 years, from Christ’s visit until near the end of the book. If so, evidence for kings at AD 300 in the area where we believe The Book of Mormon occurred would not match the record. A closer study, however, reveals that by AD 200 people in The Book of Mormon no longer have goods common and by 231 a great division takes place. When this occurred, surely men vied

for rulership, and during this time of tremendous upheaval, kings very likely again came into power, although kings are not specifically mentioned until AD 330 (Mormon 1:31; LDS 2:9).

In fact, this is a case where the archaeological record provides cultural information *not* in The Book of Mormon. Many of the major sites, like Tikal (mentioned in our last issue), Copan, Palenque, etc., have king lists constructed by epigraphers from the inscriptions, and almost all these dynasties begin somewhere between two to four hundred years after Christ. Archaeology fills in the record and informs us, that during the years around AD 250-350 in The Book of Mormon, when the abridger does not give a full account of all the country’s proceedings, the people politically organize with kings.

Without knowing what is contained within the pages of The Book of Mormon we cannot responsibly recognize the proofs. To help in the process of correlating The Book of Mormon with the changing Mesoamerican archaeological understandings and discoveries, I created a timeline of mostly temporal—not spiritual—events in The Book of Mormon. This allowed me to quickly check to see what was happening in The Book of Mormon during the same timeframe to see how it fit—or didn’t—with what archaeologists were saying.

The first version of the timeline was published in *glyph notes* (Sept/Oct 1996) as “Synopsis of the Last Years of The Book of Mormon,” and only covered the years after Christ. Ten years later, I had expanded and updated it to begin about 91 BC and republished in Jan/Feb. 2006. That was 12 years ago.

Cont. on Page 7



Don Beebe

This portion of a set of three rooms of murals at Bonampak, Mexico, graphically depicts a Maya battle ca. AD 790. More of the mural shows torture and human sacrifice. This commemorative painting gives credence to Nephi’s prophetic vision almost 1200 years earlier. The battle mural is in Structure 1, Room 2. Bonampak is located in the heart of the Maya area. The entry for the Bonampak murals in Wikipedia gives a complete description of the murals.

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Timeline of Events in The Book of Mormon For the Nephites/Lamanites/Mulekites

Note: The dates below from The Book of Mormon are *not based on any calendar*, including ours. This is most fortuitous because the birth of Christ is much debated and likely was sometime between 6 and 2 BC. Therefore the truth of the record would have been seriously compromised. Keep in mind that the dates below will not match *exactly* our Gregorian dates, but they will be close. (See Gordon Heady's excellent series of three articles, "Time and the Calendar in The Book of Mormon," published in *The Witness*, 1990-1991).

The record keepers used events to track time, i.e. 600 years before Christ's birth; 30 years since they left Jerusalem; second year of the Reign of Judges; nine years since the time of the sign given for Christ's birth; they did not make references to any of the three Jewish calendars, which operated simultaneously—or any other calendars, such as the Egyptian.

General Overall Timeline

ca. 580-91 BC

- Kings (in land southward, both in lowlands and highlands)

ca. 200 BC

- King Mosiah leads Nephites from land of Nephi to land of Zarahemla (home of the Mulekites in the lowlands) bringing **scriptures** and knowledge of **writing** with them; Mosiah becomes king over both Nephites and Mulekites

91 BC-AD 34 (approximately 125 years)

- Reign of Judges in Nephite lands in the lowlands

AD 34-194

- Children of Christ Era

AD 330

- Kings mentioned again for the first time, but may have begun earlier

Alma 20-29; LDS 43-62

73-72 BC (18-19th years Reign of Judges)

- Moroni appointed chief captain of the Nephite armies; rents his coat to make a Title of Liberty; causes it to be hoisted upon every **tower**; continues to fortify cities with walls and moats

60-55 BC

- War ends; Moroni and Helaman return to their homelands; Moroni gives command of the army to his son Moronihah
- Prosperity returns

Alma 30; LDS 63

54-53 BC (37-38th year Reign of Judges)

- Hagoth builds ship; **mass migrations northward**

52 BC

- Shiblon dies; records go to Helaman, son of Helaman
- All **engravings are written** and **sent forth** among the people throughout the land
- Nephite/Mulekite dissenters go over to the Lamanites and stir them up to war

Helaman 1; LDS 1-2

51 BC

- Chief Judge and Governor Pahoran dies; contention among sons who should be chief judge; Pahoran II is appointed by voice of the people
- Kishkumen, member of a **secret society**, murders Pahoran; Pahoran's brother, Pacumeni, elected chief judge

50 BC

- Beginning of the year, Lamanite King Tubaloth incites his people to anger against the Nephites and appoints **Coriantumr**, a descendant of King Zarahemla (**a Mulekite**), to invade the center of the land, take the city of Zarahemla, and kill Pacumeni
- End of the year, Nephites gain back cities and land, including the city of Zarahemla

49 BC

- Peace established; Helaman (son of Helaman) appointed to be chief judge by voice of the people; **Gadianton robbers** are active; try to kill Helaman; robbers flee into wilderness

Helaman 2; LDS 3-6

45 BC

- Much contention; **more migration** northward
- Much **shipping of timber** to land northward; people in land northward become **expert in cement**
- Many **merchants; extensive trade**
- Many of the **people of Ammon** (converted Lamanites) leave and **go northward**
- Many **books and records** kept, mainly by the Nephites
- **Large population**; so numerous covers face of "whole earth, from sea south to sea north, from sea west to sea east"

45-39 BC

- Prosperity; **church gains many members**; peace until 41-39 BC when pride enters into the church

38-37 BC

- Helaman dies (11 years as judge); his son Nephi becomes chief judge

- Much **dissension in the church**; some go over to the Lamanites

34 BC

- War; Lamanites come down to battle and **take all the lands, including Zarahemla** and unto the land which was near land Bountiful

30 BC

- Nephites succeed in regaining only half their lands; Moronihah (son of Moroni) still leader of the army

29-26 BC

- Nephites cannot get back any more of their lands
- Nephi gives up the chief judge position to Cezoram and devotes himself, along with his brother Lehi, to preaching, beginning at city Bountiful
- Land of Zarahemla still under Lamanite control; Nephi goes to land of Zarahemla to preach among the Lamanites and Nephites; many Nephite dissenters living there are converted and return to the Nephites to repair any wrongs which they had done
- Nephi and Lehi go to land of Nephi to preach; put in prison; encircled with fire; angels come down; 300 hear and are converted; told to go forth and **doubt not**

- **Many Lamanites converted**; yield the lands of their possession to the Nephites and become more righteous than the Nephites
- Nephi, Lehi, and many Lamanites go to land northward to preach; gone six years—no success
- **Peace**; Nephites and Lamanites go freely into each other's lands; **much trade and commerce**; land south called Lehi; land north called Mulek
- 63rd and 64th Reign of Judges peace continues; **prosperity** with much gold, silver, precious ore of every kind worked by skilled craftsmen; **abundance** of grain and many flocks and herds and fatlings; women toiled and spun cloth of fine twined linen and cloth of every kind

25–23 BC

- Chief Judge Cezoram murdered; his son appointed chief judge, but he is also murdered
- Gadianton bands stir up people to wickedness—**Secret Society**
- Many Nephites join Gadianton robbers and they **gain control over the Nephite government**
- Nephites **begin worshipping idols of gold and silver**

Helaman 3-4; LDS 7-12

22–17 BC

- Nephi returns from land northward (22 BC); incident with Nephi praying on his tower; reveals murder of the chief judge by his brother Seantum who confesses; God gives Nephi power over the Nephites
- Contentions; wars; Nephi calls for **famine; it lasts three years**

15 BC

- Nephites repent and Nephi petitions the Lord to end the famine; the rains come again
- Nephites prosper, cover land northward and southward from the sea west to the sea east
- Peace; more part of the people, **both** Nephites and Lamanites, belong to the church

12-6 BC (79-85th years Reign of Judges)

- Much strife again; **Gadianton robbers grow numerous** and cause much destruction among both Nephites and Lamanites
- Nephites try to destroy Gadianton robbers, but they defy Nephite armies
- Nephites strong in iniquity, but **Lamanites keep commandments** of God and Law of Moses

Helaman 5; LDS 13-16

5-1 BC

- **Samuel, the Lamanite**, prophesies; many baptized
- Great signs given; **angels appear**, but **Satan has great hold** on the hearts of the people

3 Nephi 1-3; LDS 1-7

AD 1-5 (600 hundred years after Lehi left Jerusalem; 91 years since Reign of Judges began)

- Nephi gives his eldest son, Nephi, all the records and departs the land; no one knows where he goes
- Sun goes down, but **no darkness** as prophesied by Samuel; **new star** appears; other signs given during birth of Christ, beginning of 92nd year Reign of Judges
- Nephites begin to “reckon their time from this period when the sign was given or from the coming of Christ” (3 Nephi 1:45; LDS 2:8)
- People begin to forget the signs and wonders and **begin to disbelieve**

AD 13-25 (21-9 years before Christ comes)

- **Wars and contentions throughout all the land** because Gadianton robbers had become so numerous; Lamanites and Nephites both fight against the robbers
- Lachoneus, governor and chief judge of the land, sends a proclamation to people asking everyone to gather into a **place of security** to defend themselves against the robbers
- Nephites gather in land of Zarahemla and the land between the land of Zarahemla and the land Bountiful, “to the line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation”
- Robbers defeated
- **Last mention of horses**

AD 26-28 (8-6 years before Christ comes)

- People return to their own lands and begin to prosper; build new cities, repair old cities, and build

many highways leading from city to city and from land to land

- Many **merchants, lawyers, and officers** in the land; rich can afford good education

AD 30

- Great inequality, people “**in a state of awful wickedness**”; church broken up except among a few Lamanites converted to the true faith
- Many men inspired from heaven preach and testify of Christ; some are put to death secretly by the judges
- Chief judge of the land is murdered; people divide and **separate into tribes**, every man according to his family; each tribe had its own set of laws
- **Government of the land destroyed** because of secret combinations

AD 31-33

- **Nephi visited by angels** and voice of the Lord; goes forth with power and great authority to preach repentance and remission of sins through faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; converts and baptizes many; Nephi casts out devils and unclean spirits and **raises his brother Timothy from the dead**

3 Nephi 4-13; LDS 8-39

AD 34

- 1st month, 4th day, 34 years after sign given for birth, **terrible storms, upheaval, and destruction** throughout the land
- **End of 34th year Jesus appears** in the land Bountiful teaching and healing; great missionary work begins after his ascent back into heaven

4 Nephi

AD 36-201

- **All converted** unto the Lord; time of the **Children of Christ**; much prosperity, no contention, and all things common

Ca. AD 194

- Small part of the **people revolt** from the church and take upon them the name Lamanites

AD 200

- People multiply; “**spread upon all the face of the land**” and become exceeding rich

AD 201

- **Children of Christ era ends** (lasted less than 170 years); they no longer have goods and substance common; they divide into classes; build up churches to get gain; and begin to **deny the true church** of Christ

AD 210

- Many churches established in the land

AD 231

- A **great division takes place**—true believers

called Nephites (consisting of Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites); those who reject the gospel called Lamanites (consisting of Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites) [**alliances** of different groups of peoples; Mulekites not mentioned. What happened to them?]

AD 260

- Begin again to build up the **secret oaths** and combinations of **Gadianton**
- The people called Nephites begin to be proud and vain because of their **riches**

AD 300

- **Both** Nephites and Lamanites become exceeding wicked
- **Gold and silver in abundance; much trade** in numerous commodities

Mormon 1; LDS 1-3

AD 310

- Mormon born

AD 320

- Because of wickedness, Ammoron hides up all the **sacred records in Hill Shim**
- Mormon is 10 years old; Ammoron tells him about the records and asks him to go to Hill Shim when he is 24 and take the plates of Nephi; he is to leave the remaining records “in the place where they are.” On the plates of Nephi, he is to engrave all he observes about the people

AD 321 (First war recorded 300 years since Christ’s visit)

- Mormon (11 years old) and father move (?) southward to the land of Zarahemla
- Whole face of the land **covered with buildings**; the **people as numerous as sands of the sea**
- **War begins** between the Nephites (four tribes) and Lamanites (three tribes) in the “borders of Zarahemla by the waters of Sidon”

AD 321-324

- **Due to wickedness**, the Lord takes away his beloved disciples; the work of miracles and of healing cease; no gifts from the Lord

AD 325-326

- **Land becomes cursed** because of hardness of the people’s hearts
- People hide treasures in the earth, but due to the curse on the land are unable to keep or find them
- Gadianton robbers, among the Lamanites, infest the land
- **Sorceries, witchcrafts, and magic and power of evil**
- War begins again after four years of peace; Mormon (16 years old) becomes leader of the Nephite armies

AD 327-330 (First mention of a king since Reign of Judges began in 91 BC)

- Land filled with robbers and Lamanites who have much success over Nephites
- Mormon **fortifies** city of Angola, but Lamanites drive them out despite their fortifications
- **Complete revolution** throughout all the face of the land
- **Lamanite King called Aaron**; has an army of 44,000
- “No man could keep that which was his own, for the thieves, and the robbers, and the murders, and the **magic art, and the witchcraft** which was in the land”
- Mormon sorrows for his people because the day of grace had passed for them

AD 344

- Mormon records that he had gone as directed by Ammoron and had “taken the plates of Nephi, and did make a record according to the words of Ammoron”

AD 346-7

- Nephites regain their land of inheritance

AD 350

- Mormon **makes a treaty** with the Lamanites and Gadianton robbers; they **divide the lands** of inheritance—Nephites receive all the “land northward to the narrow passage which led into the land southward” and the Lamanites have all the land southward
- **Ten years of peace** before Lamanites again come to battle against them

AD 360

- King of the Lamanites [name not given; could still be Aaron] sends a letter to Mormon telling him they are preparing to come to battle

AD 362

- Mormon refuses to continue as leader because the Nephites have become so wicked

Mormon 2-3; LDS 4-7

AD 366

- Lamanites take many prisoners, both women and children, and “offer them up as sacrifices unto their **idol gods**” (first mention of **human sacrifice**); Nephites become angry and drive them out of the land; no more battles until 375 (9 years)

AD 375

- Lamanites **come down** to battle against the Nephites
- Mormon records that when the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, he **removed all the records from Hill Shim**; he does not tell us at that time what he did with them
- Mormon (65 years old) repents of “the oath” which he had made 13 years previously and again becomes

commander of their armies; but he “was without hopes”

AD 379-383

- Lamanites burn Nephite cities by fire and destroy inhabitants not gathered in with Mormon’s army; they come boldly against the Nephites, many are “swept down and destroyed”

AD 384

- Mormon writes to the Lamanite king and requests that he allow Mormon to gather his people together at the “**land of Cumorah, by a hill which was called Cumorah,**” and there give them battle; Lamanite king agrees (no name given for this king)
- Mormon gathers all his people in the land of Cumorah, “a land of many waters, rivers, and fountains”

AD 385 (Last battle; 64 years of wars from AD 321 interspersed with a few periods of peace)

- About the beginning of this year, the **last battle** is fought
- Mormon, now 74 years old, is wounded; Moroni later records that the Lamanites killed his father in battle
- **Some Nephites desert or escape**; Mormon’s son Moroni remains
- At some point, Mormon hides in the hill Cumorah **all** the records **except** “these few plates which [he] gave to [his] son Moroni,” who is instructed to finish the record

Mormon 4; LDS 8-9

AD 400

- Fifteen years after the last battle, Moroni makes an entry in the record saying: no one knows the true God; the Lamanites **war one with another**; the “whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war”
- [Where has Moroni been these past 15 years?]

Moroni 10

AD 420 (36 years after the last battle)

- Sometime during the years between the last battle at 385 and 420, Moroni makes an abridgment of the record of Ether which he includes with the rest of the plates entrusted to his care; this collection of plates become The Book of Mormon as published in 1830
- Moroni tells the reader that he is sealing up the record [which he placed in a stone box on a hill in what became New York State where, in September 1827, Joseph Smith, directed by an angel, removed them]
- Moroni’s final plea is: *Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him.*



Don Beebe


Many items were traded by merchants throughout Mesoamerica, including the quetzal feathers, cacao (chocolate) pods, and shells, which were some of the most highly prized commodities. The mural painting, a reproduction of the original at the site of Cacaxtla in central Mexico, depicts a merchant. His back rack stands behind him with its load of esteemed quetzal feathers, which are only found in the cool, humid forests in mountainous regions of Central America, especially Guatemala.



Lyle Smith

The Book of Mormon (Cont. from Page 2)

In light of recent discoveries and in anticipation of many others yet to come, I thought reprinting the timeline would be once more helpful. A concrete knowledge of the contents of The Book of Mormon aids us in identifying archaeological parallels. It is not only useful when searching out scientific and linguistic evidences, but also a great tool for church school classes. Feel free to pull out the four center pages or copy as needed for educational purposes. The timeline could open your eyes to the human drama happening in the book and perhaps also help you look at the events with new understanding. It may even expand your grasp of the gospel truths within the record.

And remember—search The Book of Mormon for what it truly says. 

Good News!! Isaiah's Seal on Display

The Isaiah and King Hezekiah seals (bullae), reported in the last issue of *glyph notes*, can be seen this summer through August 19, 2018, at the Armstrong Auditorium on the campus of Herbert W. Armstrong College in Edmond, Oklahoma. Isaiah is such an important prophet! To come face to face with something of his would be truly an epiphany.



Summer at Last

By Patricia Beebe


Summer is traditionally equated with hot or warm weather, either rainy or dry—sometimes turbulent.

However, weather is not a deterrent for me to the many other attributes of summer. Summer is filled with “breaks” from the mundane aspects of a long, task-oriented winter. Summer often extends into the fall season commonly referred to as Indian summer and is bursting with exciting intermissions: Independence Day, Labor Day, family get-togethers, and vacation.

Lyrics from the song “Summertime” (George Gershwin) keep flooding my mind—“Summertime, and the livin’ is easy.” The words roll off the tongue with little effort, producing vivid, cherished memories and evoking strong emotions. But, living is not always easy for many, even in summer.

Experiences from living in our world today vary substantially. Grief, illness, hopelessness, hunger, and affliction don’t take a break even in summer.

Thoughts of those who carry burdens EVERY. SINGLE. DAY place things into perspective and redirect my mind to seek for ways to help bring the feelings of summer to those who need a break from the routine. PSI exists to help others grow their faith in The Book of Mormon and to encourage them to share the Gospel embedded within its pages with those who have yet to hear its message. It can be one way to arouse that summer feeling even during struggles.

If you have not already done so, won’t you please take a moment to update your subscription to the newsletter now? A self-addressed envelope is provided in this issue for your convenience. Again, we thank each one of you who have been faithful supporters of Book of Mormon research over the years. May this summer bring joy and happiness into your life. 

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By Eric English

They did willfully rebel against God. —3 Nephi 3:20

How often these days do we hear the phrase “mistakes were made?” Frequently, it has been in the context of politics. In recent months, it has rocked the entertainment industry as well. It seems that every week there is a new scandal involving someone in the public eye who has been caught making immoral choices. It may be that they've been caught cheating on their spouse, attempting to evade taxes, lying under oath, leaking top secret national security information, abusing their power or authority for personal gain, and the list goes on and on. In each instance, it seems as if they have a belief that 'the rules' don't apply to them, and that they're somehow above the requirement to adhere to the morality of right and wrong.

Invariably, in each of these incidents, the one who was caught uses language like "I made a mistake" or something similar. The problem with that is, whether knowingly or unknowingly, they are evading true responsibility for their actions. It shows a lack of understanding or a refusal to acknowledge what they really did.

At the heart of this issue is the fundamental difference between a mistake and a sin. A mistake implies an unintentional error in judgment. If I accidentally turned down the wrong way on a one way street, that would be a mistake. But a sin is a willful choice to break a law, to violate a moral code, or to elect to do something that I know in advance is wrong. The context for the scripture referenced above in 3 Nephi describes how the Nephites didn't sin ignorantly, because they knew God's will, but they willfully rebelled against him. In our own walk as Christians, we should be careful that we aren't guilty of the same approach as our politicians and celebrities. How often do we attempt to skirt responsibility for our moral failings by telling ourselves or others that it was a mistake; rather than accepting full culpability for our willful choices to disobey God's law? When we fully acknowledge our willful guilt for sinful choices, the miracle of repentance, grace, and forgiveness can become all the more powerful in our lives. 