

glyph *notes*

PRE-COLUMBIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE • OCT / NOV / DEC 2018 • VOLUME 25 NUMBER 4
glyph notes is published quarterly by the Pre-Columbian Studies Institute (PSI), a 501(c)3 nonprofit research and education organization

Is the Historical Background of Scripture Important?

R By Sherrie Kline Smith
Recently I was compiling some study questions about The Book of Mormon that would be a supplement to "Timeline of Events in The Book of Mormon for the Nephites/Lamanites/Mulekites."

As I kept rereading and proofing my changes, I was surprised at the strength of a really good spirit that was present. It seemed to confirm the importance of studying, not just the spiritual aspects of the book, but also the people and conditions that prompted those writings, i.e. their historical background.

At the same time, the Lord brought to my attention a passage from Arthur Oakman, former apostle for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1938-1964. Oakman's words brought a quiet assurance of the spirit I was experiencing and crystalized a purpose for the study questions!

Our Church stands at the crossroads today, because so many of us have taken for granted the phrases that are recorded in the Three Standard Books. We have memorized them and not understood them. We have failed to appreciate that the **locus of divine revelation is always history and that every utterance of the Divine has an historical background; and it cannot be understood apart from the historical background which brought it forth.** (Oakman 2011:17-18; emphasis added).

The Timeline of Events (see references on p. 3) and the series of questions (published in this issue on pp. 5-6) address, in a temporal way, the historical background of events in The Book of Mormon. The records that compile the contents of The Book of Mormon weren't written in a vacuum. They were written by real people, living in a society with a special heritage in a particular environment: governments, economy, education, culture, vocations, troubles and trials.

Here's an example: while I have read through the entire Old Testament several times and "know" some of the events that happened, I don't always know the historical background of those scriptures. When I went to Edmond, Oklahoma, to view the exhibit of Isaiah's and King Hezekiah's seals, the circumstances for the scriptures found in 2 Kings 16-20; 2 Chronicles 28-30; and Isaiah 36-39 became alive! I understood with a greater comprehension those particular scriptures. The blending of archaeological artifacts, history, and the scriptures provided a more complete picture of those crucial years in the life of the House of Israel. It also

Cont. on Page 2

*How well
do you know
The Book of
Mormon?
Hosea 4:6
wrote, "My
people are
destroyed
for lack of
knowledge...."*



Historical Background *(Cont. from Page 1)*

enlightened my understanding of the covenant and promises the Lord made with the House of Israel and the scriptures about the latter days. (For more about the exhibit see p 8.)

By blending archaeological discoveries in Mesoamerica with the history of events in The Book of Mormon, along with the words in The Book of Mormon, we gain insights about our own lives and the events of the latter days in which we live. More importantly, we gain a richer understanding of the precepts, doctrine, and wisdom and knowledge found in The Book of Mormon; we also come to an in-depth understanding of our savior, Jesus Christ, and how God has been working in the world since its creation to establish his kingdom on earth.

So---how well do you know *The Book of Mormon*? Hosea 4:6 wrote, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge....”

Ever since the inception of Pre-Columbian Studies Institute 24 years ago, our mission has been to assist our readers to “turn faith into knowledge.” Those familiar with The Book of Mormon will recognize this concept from the well-known passage in Alma 16:138-173 (LDS 32:16-43) which gives guidelines on how to gain knowledge. “Faith, is not to have a perfect knowledge of things...” (Alma 16:143 [LDS 32:21]), but after experimenting and planting a seed, if the seed “swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow” this shows the seed is good. Then “your knowledge is perfect in that thing, and your faith is dormant” (Alma 16:159-160 [LDS 32:33-34]).

Ether expands our understanding of this concept with his comment about the Brother of Jared: “And he had *faith* no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting; wherefore, having this perfect *knowledge* of God, he could not be kept from within the vail...” (Ether 1:85 [LDS 3:19-20]).

The Scriptures clearly indicate we *need* knowledge and need to seek it out. Latter-day revelation recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants counsels, especially those who provide ministry, to “obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms of laws of God and man” (90:12) and “study and learn and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people” (87:5b). Also see the list in section 85:21 as well as pages 331,

322-323, 313 in *A New Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*.

As I mentioned before, I felt a quiet assurance and strong spirit while compiling the questions. With that came further insight. We need to turn our faith into knowledge; but knowledge in and of itself is only profitable if action follows. I think perhaps, in going forward, PSI’s mission might change to “turning faith into knowledge and then action.”

So---how well do you know *The Book of Mormon*?

I think I know the book fairly well, but I cannot answer all the questions I prepared without referring back to the book itself. During the preparation of these questions, I thought the questions reminded me of a final exam for a master’s or even a PhD. If only we could answer these questions without referring to the book—how knowledgeable we would become about The Book of Mormon! I decided I was going to work on these questions like I was preparing for that final exam.

Won’t you join me? I encourage you to reread the article “How Well Do You Know The Book of Mormon?” (see references below). Then use the questions on pages 5 and 6 in conjunction with

Quetzalcoatl, featured in this beautiful stained-glass window, is the most revered “god” in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. Numerous similarities exist between Quetzalcoatl and Jesus Christ. Both are associated with the east, the morning star, and shepherd’s staff; both are associated with water. (Quetzalcoatl’s association with water usually takes the form of a conch shell, which is on the shield in his image in the photo.)

Many more correlations exist. Quetzalcoatl is described as a bearded white man. His many titles include Wind God, Creator God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, and God of Life.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning. The Book of Mormon’s key purpose is to convince “Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ . . . manifesting himself unto all nations” (Title Page of The Book of Mormon).

This window was formerly in the Palace of Cortez in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Unfortunately, it is no longer there. In fact, an in-depth Internet search revealed absolutely no mention of this window whatsoever. I know it was there, for I have seen it.



Roy Weldon

the Timeline to gain insights about the daily lives of The Book of Mormon people—their society: governments, economy, education, culture, vocations, troubles and trials. This in turn should expand our understanding of the truths, wisdom, and teachings found in the book. Most importantly it enforces the book’s testimony of Jesus Christ. This knowledge will be crucial in the coming days.

References

Edwards, F. Henry

1977 *A New Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*. Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri.

Oakman, Arthur A.

2011 *The Endowment Series: Consisting of Six Lectures to Members of the Melchisedec Priesthood, Given at the Stone Church, Independence, Missouri, October 3-13, 1966*, edited by Diane Anderson Ludy and Paul V. Ludy. Paul V. Ludy & Associates, Bates City, Missouri.

Smith, Sherrie Kline

2018 How Well Do You Know The Book of Mormon? *glyph notes* 25(2):1-2 (Apr/May/June).

2018 Timeline of Events in The Book of Mormon for the Nephites/Lamanites/Mulekites. *glyph notes* 25(2):3-6 (Apr/May/June). 

glyph quotes — *And the multitude did see and hear, and bear record.*

By Eric English


The topic of records comes up quite frequently in The Book of Mormon. Lehi and his family, who were directed by the Lord to travel to a new land of promise, needed a written record for learning and maintaining their language and for teaching their children and grandchildren. Of even more importance was that they needed to have a record to be able to remember what the Lord had done for their forefathers. In fact, it was so important to have a written record that the Lord directed Lehi’s sons to return back to Jerusalem so they could obtain the brass plates. God provided supernatural intervention to ensure their success.

Upon reaching the land of promise, the Lord commanded Nephi to make “plates of ore” in order to record their testimonies and their history, and to ensure that the prophecies that the Lord gave them were retained for their descendants. Nephi sheds light on his approach to record keeping in 1 Nephi 5:219 (LDS 19:1): “And upon the plates which I made, I did engrave the record of my father, and also our journeyings in the wilderness, and the prophecies of my father; and also many of mine own prophecies have I engraven upon them.”

The word record is used

also in a slightly different way in scripture as the figure of speech “bearing record.” Several instances in 3 Nephi describes the Son bearing record of the Father or the Father bearing record of the Son. We tend to use that same figure of speech in referring to men and women who “bear record” when they offer a verbal testimony about something; “She bore record of God when she shared her testimony on Wednesday night.”

What do these two different approaches to records—written and verbal—mean for us today? It may be common for us to share a verbal testimony at prayer meeting or when conversing with others and thereby “bear record” of God and his goodness, but how often do we consider the importance of our responsibility to record the Lord’s blessings in

the written word? Do we take the opportunity to write down our own testimonies for our posterity and to share with others? How many authors in the Restoration faith are authoring books and articles about the gospel? How many blog writers do we have leveraging that newer form of media to spread the truth? Has the Lord pricked your heart and prompted your mind to begin writing to share his good news? Are you bearing record via a written record of him working in your life? If not, why? 

—3 Nephi 8:26 [LDS 17:25]



glyph notes
is published quarterly by Pre-Columbian Studies Institute (PSI), a 501(c)3 nonprofit research and education organization.

E-mail Address: precolumbiansi@gmail.com
Membership & Annual Subscription to newsletter is \$25.
Send to: Pre-Columbian Studies Institute
P.O. Box 477, Independence, MO 64051

Editorial Committee: Sherrie Kline Smith, Editor; Patricia J. Beebe and Ellen Winston
Board Officers: Lyle L. Smith, President; Sallie Presler, Vice President; Connie Spivey, Secretary; and Ted Combs, Treasurer
Design: Aaron Presler, Signature Marketing Group, LC

Articles and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the view of the Editorial Committee. All materials submitted may be edited for clarity and space. © 2018 Pre-Columbian Studies Institute

The Ultimate Gift

W By Patricia Beebe

inter has arrived in the Midwest; and Christmas is right around the corner for the many who celebrate the holiday in December. This year, several within my church family decided that the holiday season is not nearly long enough, so we commemorated Christmas in July. It was great fun without the pressure of “getting that perfect gift for a loved one,” or having to contend with the hustle and bustle that often engulfs the season. Most of the wonderful festive parts of Christmas were included: decorations, lights, songs, food, and family and friends. But, most important, full focus on the reason for the season, the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ was central. I really enjoy Christmas whether it is in December, July, Spring or any other time of the year. The inner child surfaces—filled with excitement, anticipation, innocence,

eagerness, and goodness. We sing of peace on earth and goodwill to all men.

Is one short season called Christmas enough for you? It is not for me. I long for a continuous CHRISTmas season—yes, filling every single day—bursting with joy, anticipation, and celebration. The captivating, wonderful part of Christmas cannot be felt without family and friends. Gifting becomes a natural part of sharing your life with another just as our Lord shared his Son with us.

Pre-Columbian Studies Institute extends best wishes of peace, joy, and love for you and your family this Christmas season. Thank you for your past gift of support. We invite you to take a moment to update your subscription to the newsletter. A self-addressed envelope is provided in this issue for your convenience. May we find that the promises in The Book of Mormon to a future generation come to fruition in the year 2019, and that each day will be filled with peace on earth and goodwill to men. 📧



2020!!!!!! Plan Now for a Tour to Mesoamerica!!!

Led by Lyle and Sherrie Smith on behalf of Pre-Columbian Studies Institute

Please join us as we experience a life-changing 11 days touring ancient places once inhabited by people found between the covers of The Book of Mormon.

The time frame is January/February of 2020. This will allow plenty of time to make plans. At the moment, the itinerary has not been decided but we are leaning toward Guatemala. After the news of the amazing results of the LiDAR survey in Guatemala, we believe it would be a good time to revisit that beautiful country. The site of Tikal was one of the major sites surveyed, and if we go to Guatemala, we will visit Tikal. We always spend two days exploring Tikal because there is so much to see and so much to relate to what is happening in The Book of Mormon, especially its closing hours and days.

No matter where we go, however, you can be very sure that the experience will change your perspective of The Book of Mormon. We encourage you to consider joining us on an adventure, not only one of enjoying the camaraderie with other believers in The Book of Mormon, but also a spiritual experience—if you make necessary preparations.

The approximate cost for each individual would be \$3500, depending on the size of the group. This includes air fare from Kansas City and return, ground transportation, hotel accommodations based on two to a room, most meals, entrance fees, service charges, and tips.

If you are thinking about going with us, would you please let us know? This is not a commitment; it is simply an expression of interest. You can email us at precolumbiansi@gmail.com or call us at **816.838.5192**.

We hope you will join us in 2020!

Lyle and Sherrie Smith 📧



Lyle Smith

Study Supplement to “Timeline of Events in The Book of Mormon for the Nephites/Lamanites/Mulekites”


T By Sherrie Kline Smith

The “Timeline of Events” was created originally for identifying archaeological parallels with The Book of Mormon; however, the timeline also can serve as a profitable tool for individual study and in church-school classes. Use the questions below in conjunction with the Timeline to gain insights about the daily lives of The Book of Mormon people—their society: governments, education, culture, vocations, troubles and trials. What do we have in common with these people?

1. Give an overview of the types of government the people have from the time they arrive in the land of promise ca. 600 BC to AD 420. How long do each of these different types last?
2. How and when do the Nephites join with the Mulekites? After they join together, both tribes are referred to simply as the Nephites.
3. When does Chief Captain Moroni begin fortifying the Nephite cities with walls and moats?
4. When are all the “engravings written and sent forth” among the people throughout the land? What does this imply?
5. During a ten-year period, between 54-45 BC many people migrate “northward.” Why do you think they leave their “homeland”? Do you think the people in the land northward and the land southward maintain contact? Think of ways this could be done.
6. What event caused the beginning of a secret society among the Nephites? What year did it occur?
7. How large is the population at 45 BC?
8. What happens with the church ca. 45-39 BC?
9. Samuel the Lamanite prophesies that a sign will be given when Jesus is born. What is the sign? When the sign is given, does everyone embrace the belief of Christ’s birth?
10. Describe the major events that occur during the 34 years up to when the sign is given that heralds the birth of Jesus.
11. When are horses mentioned for the last time?
12. Examine the events that happen during the 34 years *after* the sign for Christ’s birth and before the appearance of Jesus Christ in the land of promise. Do you think there are types and shadows in these events that apply to us as we look for the reappearance of Christ in the latter days?
13. Around AD 30 it is recorded that the government of the land is destroyed because of secret combinations. Do you think this could happen today?
14. During the three years of AD 31-33, just **prior** to the appearance of Christ, some miraculous things take place. What are these?
15. What happens in the first month, on the fourth day, and 34 years after the sign of Christ’s birth is given? What happens at the **end** of this year?
16. Where are the people of Nephi gathered when Christ appears? What are they doing? How many people are present when Christ appears?
17. When Christ appears, he first identifies who he is and then asks each one gathered there to come and feel the prints of the nails in his hands and feet and thrust their hands in his side where the sword had pierced him. What does he do after this?
18. Summarize Christ’s doctrine as he told it to the Nephites when he first appears to them. How many times does he tell them that they “must repent and be baptized”?
19. How long does it take to convert “all the people” unto the Lord? The record says the people “spread upon all the face of the land.” What does this imply about the land northward and the land southward?

Cont. on Page 6

Study Supplement *(Cont. from Page 5)*

20. When does a small part of the people revolt from the church and take upon themselves the name Lamanites?
21. What does it mean when it says that in AD 201 the people no longer have goods and substance in common? What does it suggest in terms of changes in their society?
22. In AD 231 a great division takes place when the people once more divide into tribes, indicating alliances between different groups, i.e. those who comprise the Nephites and those of the Lamanites. What types of political organizations might occur?
23. In what year do the Gadianton robbers reappear and the Nephites begin to be proud of their riches and become vain?
24. How old is Mormon when the current record keeper, Ammoron, comes to him and tells him about the records that he has hid in Hill Shim? What does Ammoron tell Mormon to do with the records?
25. Mormon records that in AD 321 he and his father “move” to the land southward, implying he has been living in the land northward. It seems probable that Ammoron has also been living in the land northward. Does this suggest that during the age of the Children of Christ (Golden Era) that all the people of Mesoamerica are joined together religiously and politically, not just the people in the Maya area (the former homelands of the Nephites, Lamanites, and Mulekites)?
26. From AD 321 until their defeat in AD 385 (64 years), the Nephites war with the Lamanites. From this time onward, “the whole face of the land is one continual round of war and bloodshed.” Does the following quote from *A Forest of Kings* describe this situation: “There is positive epigraphic and iconographic evidence to identify the advent of conquest warfare among these people [the Maya] at the close of the fourth century AD” (Schele and Freidel 1990:442)?
27. What happens to the land because of the people’s “hardness of hearts”? How does the altered condition of the land affect the “treasures” the people hide in the earth? Could this be the reason that only a little amount of gold, silver, and other ores is found in the Maya area for this time period?
28. By AD 325 the Gadianton robbers “infest the land,” and the people indulge in “sorceries, witchcrafts, and magic?” Does archaeological evidence in Mesoamerica support their “wickedness and abominations”?
29. What year, since the appearance of Christ, is a king first mentioned? Many of the Maya inscriptions indicate that ruling dynasties begin ca. AD 300-400. Does this fit The Book of Mormon account?
30. When does Mormon remove the records from Hill Shim? The year is not given when he hides them in Hill Cumorah, but, possibly it may have been about the same time he removes them from Hill Shim. Ten years later, what record does Mormon give to his son Moroni?
31. What year is a treaty made between Moroni and the Lamanites and Gadianton robbers? The treaty divides the lands. What lands do the Nephites receive? The Lamanites and Gadianton robbers?
32. Both the Nephites and Lamanites, during the final battles, around AD 366-385, offer women and children captives as sacrifices to their gods. Does archaeological evidence support this? Is there evidence of other gods? Of human sacrifices? Of cannibalism?
33. When is the final battle between the Nephites and Lamanites?
34. When does Mormon die? How old is he? How many years has he led the Nephite armies?
35. How many years after the last battle does Moroni write that the Lamanites were at war one with another? Where has Moroni been all those years?
36. What is recorded in The Book of Mormon about the Lamanites continuing to war with one another after the Nephites were destroyed? (See Mormon 4:2 [LDS 8:2]; 1 Nephi 3:130-134 [LDS 12:20-23]).
37. How many years pass between the final battle between Nephites and Lamanites and when Moroni makes his last entries in the record?
38. Sum up in one word the reason for the downfall of the people in The Book of Mormon. 

glyph *Clips*

By Sherrie Kline Smith

Maya Population at Teotihuacan Confirmed

Mexiconewsdaily.com reported September 24, 2018, that a “team of archaeologists has uncovered evidence indicating that Mayan elites lived in the pre-Hispanic city of Teotihuacan, located northeast of Mexico City more than 1,000 kilometers from the center of their civilization.”

While the presence of the Maya at Teotihuacan had been long ago established, their presence previously was thought to be solely that of trade merchants. The discovery of “the remains of a Mayan-style mural and offering as well as fragments of Mayan ceramics and bones of thousands of sacrificed people . . . confirm[s] the existence of a relationship between the Maya and Teotihuacan civilizations, which were geographically separated by 1,300 kilometers.” The new excavations were in the Plaza of the Columns located across the Avenue of Dead from the Pyramid of the Sun.

Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) has more details on their webpages about the excavations that began four years ago. The archaeologists determined that the structures in the Plaza “were used for administrative, ceremonial activities and probably as the residence of the elite, not only Teotihuacanos, but also Maya, at least until AD 350” (translated from the Spanish webpage).



Aaron Presler and Lyle Smith

Ten levels of modifications and expansions in the Plaza range from AD 200 to AD 550, but the Maya presence at Teotihuacan seems to have ended somewhere around AD 350.

The ties between the Maya and people of Teotihuacan were established in the Maya area some years ago. While the presence of Teotihuacanos in the Maya area is well documented, it wasn’t until these new excavations that a more permanent Maya presence at Teotihuacan was confirmed.

Websites:

Mexico News Daily: tinyurl.com/ybzmqc3f
 INAH: tinyurl.com/yaf9n8v (When the site comes up, sometimes a box appears in the upper right that asks if you want to translate. If the box doesn’t show, right click on the article to get a box that includes an option for translation.)

More LiDAR Discoveries

LiveScience.com reported that the ancient ruins of Izapa are surrounded by more than 40 satellite sites. Beginning in the 1940s, excavations at Izapa have revealed pyramids, plazas, ball courts and hundreds of elaborately carved monuments. Robert Rosenswig, an archaeologist at SUNY Albany, discovered the nearby sites by conducting surveys on the ground by using LiDAR.

For archaeoastronomy enthusiasts, Izapa provides a mecca of wonders! Located in the Soconusco state in southern Mexico, not far inland from the Pacific and close to the Guatemala border, Izapa has numerous stelae and monuments aligned with heavenly bodies. Some archaeologists believe Izapa was the place of the origin of the Mayan 260-day calendar.

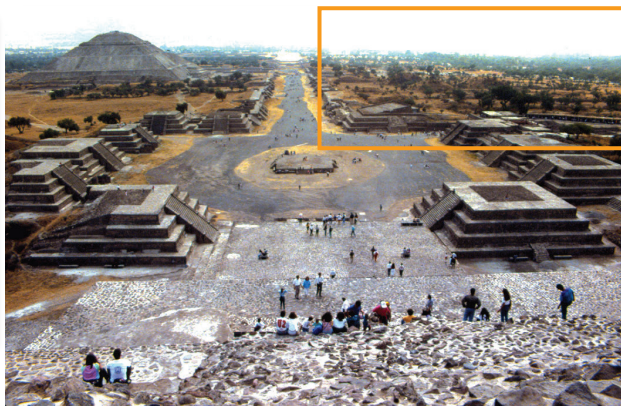
According to archaeologists, Izapa,

Cont. on Page 8



Don Beebe

The Plaza of the Columns, the unexcavated grassy area with the three mounds, sits along the Avenue of the Dead, which tourists use to travel between the pyramids and other structures at Teotihuacan. This photo was taken in 1993 before the work that began four years ago in 2014. The photo was taken from the top of the Pyramid of the Sun.



Don Beebe

This view of Teotihuacan looks the opposite direction from the photo at left. The Pyramid of Sun is on the left and the newly excavated area with its high mounds is in the upper right of the photo. This photo was taken from on top of the Pyramid of the Moon.

PRE-COLUMBIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE
P.O. Box 477
Independence, MO 64051

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage

PAID
KANSAS CITY, MO
PERMIT NO 1016

Pre-columbian Studies Institute
email address:
precolumbiansi@gmail.com

*Is the Historical Background
of Scripture Important?*

glyph quotes

The Ultimate Gift

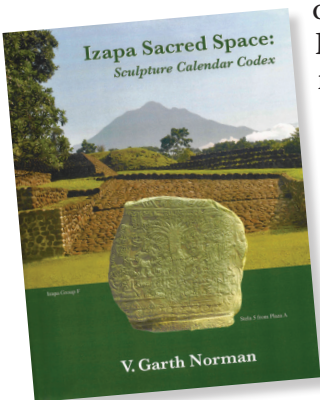
2020 Tour of Mesoamerica

*Study Supplement to
"Timeline of Events in
The Book of Mormon for
the Nephites/Lamanites/
Mulekites"*

glyph clips

glyphnotes PRE-COLUMBIAN STUDIES INSTITUTE • OCT / NOV / DEC 2018 • VOLUME 25 NUMBER 4

glyph clips (Cont. from Page 7)



occupied from approximately 850 BC to AD 1200, reached the pinnacle of its civilization between 300-50 BC. Beginning with its rise around 600 BC, the Guatemalan site of Kaminaljuyu clearly had ties with Izapa. V. Garth Norman, who has studied the site, its astronomy, geometry, and sculpture, believes Izapa served as a key conduit—particularly of the calendar—spreading its influence across Mesoamerica and beyond. (See Norman's book *Izapa Sacred Space: Sculpture Calendar Codex*, Sunhew Press, 2012.)

Seals of Isaiah and King Hezekiah Discovered Exhibit

More good news! *Biblical Archaeology Review* (BAR) announced in their November/December 2018 issue that the exhibit of the seals of Isaiah and King Hezekiah has been **extended through January 27, 2019**.

You can see the exhibit at the Armstrong Auditorium at the Herbert W. Armstrong College in Edmond, Oklahoma (phone number 405.285.1010; website: armstrongauditorium.org).

Science and the Bible dramatically converge to reveal ancient Jerusalem's most famous king-prophet pairing. In this interactive, multimedia exhibit visitors discover the illuminating history of how Jerusalem, under the leadership of King Hezekiah and Isaiah, escaped annihilation at the hands of the Assyrians in the eighth century B.C. These sensational artifacts grabbed international headlines when first discovered and now make their world premiere in the Grand Lobby of Armstrong Auditorium. Come see this remarkable exhibit and discover the inspiring, desperate—yet hope-filled—story of King Hezekiah and Isaiah! (armstrongauditorium.org/performance/exhibit-grand-opening)

The extremely well-done exhibit is worth the effort and time to see it. The comments below are from the Nov/Dec 2018 BAR issue about the exhibit.

"This was a wonderful detailed exhibit! I loved the video of the archaeologist who discovered the artifacts. Her enthusiasm was contagious!"

"The exhibit of the seals was awesome! Totally free and there was a tour guide to give you the history. All I can say is well worth the trip! You shouldn't miss it!"

"This exhibit is very impressive!"
Please consider going! 