

PRE-COLUMBIAN **S**TUDIES **I**NSTITUTE • JUL / AUG / SEP 2019 • VOLUME 26 NUMBER 3 *glyph notes* is published quarterly by the Pre-Columbian Studies Institute (PSI), a 501(c)3 nonprofit research and education organization

Jaredites: Where and When My Testimony

By Lyle L. Smith *aith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (Hebrews 11:1*).

Background

More than 50 years ago, I was a student at Graceland College, where I took a class in Spanish. Learning a foreign language was new for me because the high school I attended did not offer foreign language courses. I have always appreciated my Spanish instructor at Graceland, as she was willing to help us academically, as well as talk with us about The Book of Mormon, primarily out of the classroom.

In one of our discussions at that time, in the late 1950s, we discussed the people known in The Book of Mormon as the Jaredites. My instructor told me there was no archaeological evidence for any group of people in the Americas that matched the Jaredites. In other words, archaeology had not identified any civilization in the Americas as early as 2000 B.C. or before. The scholars knew about the Maya but primarily believed they were after the time of Christ. The Olmec had been identified, but many of the archaeologists dated them later than the Maya. Understandings about ancient civilizations began to change, however, with the advent of radiocarbon during the 1950s and '60s. Eventually, the use of radiocarbon would change all the dates of the civilizations in the Pre-Columbian Americas.

My instructor and I had more than just one conversation about this subject; maybe several times. These discussions left a lasting impression on me. They caused me to say to myself, "Be patient. I believe in The Book of Mormon. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. New scientific and linguistic analyses are blossoming and surely the evidence will come that will validate a group of people who can be identified with the Jaredites."

For the next 20 years or so, I almost forgot about our talks; but not quite. During the ensuing years, I visited archaeological ruins in other places like Machu Picchu in Peru; ancient Hindu temples; Buddhist stupas and temples in Indonesia; and the ruined city of Balkh in Afghanistan, a stop on the Silk Road. What actually brought me back to the original question about the Jaredites was the book *Peoples, Places and Prophecies* by Verneil Simmons, published in 1977. This book was a wonderful eye-opener that began my lifelong search to compare the history found in The Book of Mormon with archaeological and linguistic findings. Of equal *Cont. on Page 2*

*All bible references from the Inspired Version of The Holy Scriptures.

Wenow find strong archaeology that the account of the . Taredites is true: true in where it took place, both before and after their journey.

Jaredites (Cont. from Page 1)

importance was Glenn Scott's *Voices from the Dust*, published some years later.

The Jaredites—Where

Jaredite history begins on "a plain in the land of Shinar" (Genesis 11:1) among the people now called the Sumerians. This civilization, beginning around 4000 B.C., is the oldest *civilization* found by archaeologists. Today that area is in Iraq and Kuwait. The Sumerians were earlier than the civilizations in Egypt, the Indus Valley, China, or those in the Mediterranean Sea area and are credited with many "firsts": "invention of writing, development of schools and formal education, time-keeping, public works with monumental architecture" (Simmons 1986:20), and others. The "monumental architecture" included high pyramid towers called ziggurats.

The people, in this land of Shinar, "had the same language" (Genesis 11:1). They wanted to build a city and "a tower whose top will be high, nigh unto heaven." They wanted to make a name for themselves, "lest [they] be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:3). Moroni, who abridged the record of the Jaredites, writes, "I give not the full account, but a part of the account I give, from the tower down until they were destroyed" (Ether 1:5). From this we know that the people of Jared were living with the group of people that was in the process of building the "great tower."

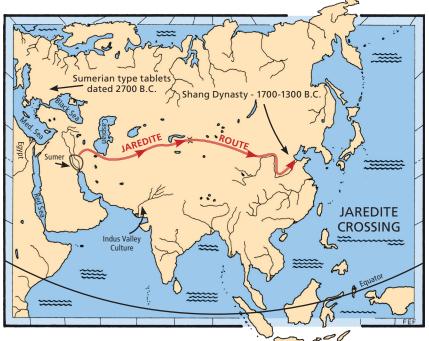


Figure 1. Map by Frank E. Frye from People, Places and Prophecies by Verneil Simmons, 1986 ed., page 29 (Color and updated font added by Aaron Presler 2019).

We do not know how much time passed after the flood before the people in the land of Shinar began working on the tower. After all, it probably took more than several centuries for the eight people that survived the flood to multiply enough to begin such a mammoth project. While Genesis 11:3 indicates the people building the tower wanted to make a name for themselves, it is also reasonable to think that, with their collective memory of the earth being covered with water in the not too distant past, building a tower high enough would provide a refuge from another flood.

But the Lord was not pleased with the building of this tower and the people's conspiring together. The Lord said he would "confound their language" and "scatter them abroad from thence, upon all the face of the land, and unto every quarter of the earth" (Genesis 11:5).

Most of us are acquainted with the account of how the Lord answered the prayers of the Brother of Jared who petitioned the Lord to not change the language of his and Jared's families and that of their friends, and with the hope of being directed to a "choice land" (Ether 1:13 [LDS 1:38]).

Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, from the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, and swear in his wrath that they should be scattered upon

all the face of the earth; and according to the word of the Lord the people were scattered (Ether 1:7 [LDS 1:33]).

Where was this "choice land"?

For many reasons, it is believed that the Lord led the Jaredites north and then east, traveling across Asia to the eastern coast of what is now known as China (Simmons 1986:29; Scott 1996:30-31). From there, they were "driven forth by the wind" (Ether 3:6-10 [LDS 6:5-8]) in eight barges, moving in what is known today as the Kuroshio Current (see p. 5). They most likely landed on the southwest coast of Mexico (Figure 2). Today, floating trash from the coast of Japan and China takes about a year to end up deposited on the west coast of California and Mexico. Don Montel's testimony in this issue on page 5 adds credence to the route taken by the Jaredites.

Although information about the Jaredite civilization in the Land of

Promise is somewhat limited—about 2800 years of history condensed into only 46 pages and many of these pages filled with spiritual but not historical information—yet there are enough key points to equate the Jaredites with the people known in Mesoamerica as the **Olmec** and **their predecessors**.

Why the Olmec *and* their predecessors? Archaeologists believe the Olmec culture came into being about 2000 years before Christ, but they call the people in Mesoamerica before the Olmecs their "predecessors." The predecessors progressed from being "hunter gatherers" to planting domestic plants used as food and also began making useful pottery. *Both developments are of high importance.*

Documented evidence of very early occupation (shell middens) on the Pacific Coast of the Mexican state of Guerrero begins around 2900 B.C. (Adams 2005:42). Domesticated food crops and pottery begin to show up in the archaeological record around 3000 B.C. or soon thereafter. In regard to the Olmec and their predecessors, a well-known archaeologist from Mesoamerica says it this way:

"After 3000 B.C., it is clear that lowland societies began to acquire domesticated plants..." (Adams 2005:42) and "some of the earliest, if not the earliest, pottery in Mesoamerica" had been found (Ibid.).

The Jaredites from the Old World knew about domesticated crops and how to make pottery. The premise that both domestication of plants and evidence of pottery occur about the same time as the arrival of the Jaredites provides a strong witness for correlating the two.

Jaredites—When

In the Maya area of Mesoamerica, there appears to be evidence found in some engraved inscriptions that relates to the arrival of the Jaredites. Why are we using Maya evidence to date the Olmecs? This is a valid question. The answer occurs in several bits and pieces of evidence. One of these is the Maya calendar.

"Different societies select different events as starting points for their calendars. Our Western chronology, the Gregorian calendar, begins with the traditional year of the birth of Christ.... The Jewish calendar begins with an equivalent date of 3761 BC" (Sharer and Traxler 2006:110).

Sharer goes on to say that the ancient Maya "reckoned their

chronology from" 3114 BC. Many Maya inscriptions, engraved after A.D. 420, include the date of 3114 B.C. Archaeologists refer to this date as "mythical," because the date does not refer to the actual beginning of the Maya civilization.

Documented archaeological evidence shows cities in the Maya area beginning between around 600-500 B.C. For instance, in relation to the northern part of the Maya area, Richard Diehl has written: "Earlier remains have been identified at various places in the northern Peten and Belize, but the entire area was very lightly settled until 600/500 BC" (Diehl 2004:150.)

Slow, uneven population growth occurred from 1000 to 500 B.C. (Middle Formative), resulting in the proliferation of small farming communities all over the peninsula. There are indications that this erratic population growth became an explosion after 550 B.C. The reasons for the apparent jump in numbers of people are obscure (Adams 2005:132).

David Freidel expressed this "jump in numbers" this way: "Maya civilization banged into existence in its own way and time.... But it is unsettling. It violates the tacit rules of diffusion and, even worse, the tacit rules of gradual evolution espoused by modern archaeology" (Freidel 1986:x).

The 3114 B.C. date is prevalent in many Maya inscriptions but doesn't refer to when their civilization began. But, surely it must be important.

The best archaeological evidence to support the

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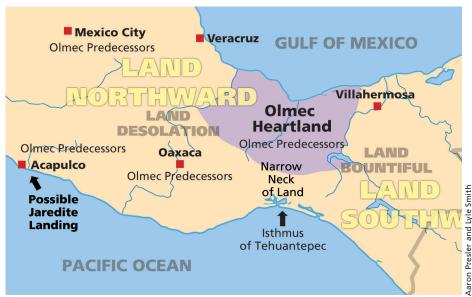


Figure 2. Map of Mesoamerica showing Jaredite (Olmec) areas found in a "choice land."

Jaredites (Cont. from Page 3)

3114 B.C. date is that pottery and the domestication of crops first appear in Mesoamerica around 2900 B.C. If pottery and domesticated crops first appear around 2900 B.C., the people had to have been here some years before.

Therefore, I believe the date 3114 B.C. represents the arrival of the Jaredites. Possibly they were the first people in Mesoamerica after the flood. We should not assume, however, that no other groups were led to the Americas besides the Jaredites. The Lord said he would scatter the people "upon all the face of the land, and *unto every quarter of the earth*" (Genesis 11:5). Others could possibly have been led to the Americas around the same time. The Book of Mormon is only a history of Jaredites, Mulekites, and the people of Lehi.

The accepted study of archaeology is based on the theory of evolution and does not include belief in God and his dealings with mankind. This means that most archaeologists will never see or agree with the information presented here, but remember, these scholars tell the same account as found in The Book of Mormon.

This article and others like it in *glyph notes* are

This example of the 3114 B.C. date, engraved on the east side of Stela C from the site of Quiriqua in Guatemala, shows only the last three glyphs of the full date; the remaining four glyphs, which are above those shown, are not in the photo. The glyph block above the feather pointer is 4 Ahau (four dots for the number 4; this is the day). To the left of the feather pointer is 8 Kumk'u (3 dots plus a bar which equals 5 for 8; this is the month). The complete "mythical" Maya date is August 11, 3114 B.C.



The two highlighted glyphs are another example of the 4 Ahau, 8 Kumk'u date. This engraved text is on the back panel of the inner room of the Temple of Inscriptions at Palenque, Mexico. These two date glyphs lack the other five for the complete date of 3114 B.C. Prevalent in the Maya inscriptions, the two glyphs are understood to stand for the complete date.

primarily for the **believer**, to help us accept that The Book of Mormon is intellectually true and that within its covers is the history of real people. When we understand the evidence, we *convert our minds* as well as our hearts by realizing that *current archaeology confirms the same history as found in The Book of Mormon*.

Conclusion

As I indicated earlier, more than 50 years have passed since I was at Graceland College. I now find strong support from archaeology that the account of the Jaredites is true: true in where it took place, both before and after their journey. Archaeology was not even a science in the 1830s, and yet The Book of Mormon told an intriguing account of a people—known as the Jaredites—in the Land of Promise. The amazing two volumes published in the 1840s by John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, were the first popular books that told of the wondrous ruins of a civilization now known as the Maya. No such book was written about the Olmecs until many years later.

For many years after the publication of The Book

of Mormon, the archaeological record did not match The Book of Mormon timeline. Only within the last decades have their timelines converged so that the histories of the Jaredites and the "Olmec and their predecessors" parallel each other. (This article is only about the Jaredites at the "great tower" and their journey to the "choice land" and does not include their approximately 2800 years of history. That is another story.)

We have to ask the question, "How did Joseph Smith have any way to know that the events in The Book of Mormon would eventually match the timeline of 'the predecessors of the Olmec' so accurately?" He could not have known! None of the archaeology we have today about the "Olmec and their predecessors" was known when he was alive.

Because the travels of the Jaredites and the technology they brought with them, i.e. the making of pottery and the domestication of crops, match the archaeology of the "Olmec predecessors," only one logical conclusion remains: the record of the

Jaredites as found in The Book of Mormon was translated by "the power and gift of God."

My patience and faith in the truth of The Book of Mormon eventually bore fruit.

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The Paths of the Sea*

By Don Montel

In February 1945, during World War II, I was in the Navy on the island of Tinian, one of the Mariana Islands in the Pacific. (The airplane headed for Hiroshima, carrying the atomic bomb, took off from this island on August 6, 1945.) We were engaged in the second Battle of the Philippine Sea. On February 17, we had word that a battleship had sailed from Japan carrying the largest guns of any ship in the world at that time. It was called *Ise*. Our assignment was to stop that ship from engaging any of our people. The events of that day are still very clear in my mind.

In the briefing to prepare us for the search and destroy mission, we learned all the particulars of the attack. Although we had no knowledge of the amount of antiaircraft their ship carried, our own battleships carried 156 barrels of antiaircraft guns. So we knew our chances of getting in and out with an attack on this ship were just about nil to none.

In the intelligence briefing, we were told the procedures to follow in case we were shot down. The intelligence officer went into great detail on how to escape capture and keep from being picked up by Japanese forces. As we prepared to leave the ready room, he tried to give us hope. He said, "A short while ago Eddie Rickenbacker survived 33 days in an open life raft. Maybe you can go one better. From where you will be, if you keep your head down and don't get captured, in about a year, the ocean currents will take you to North America."

We proceed to go on our flight but failed to find the battleship *Ise*.

*First published, along with Editor's Note, in *The Witness*, Fall 1993 and later, without the Editor's Note, in *Restoration Voice*, 2002.

Some years later, through several experiences, I came to realize that this Jesus Christ, of whom I had heard so much as a child, was a true and living being. These experiences prompted me to try to get to know him better.

While this was happening, my wife Marcella attended a church I had not heard of as a child. It was called the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. One of the books she studied and kept laying out in front of me at all times was The Book of Mormon. I picked it up a few times but concluded it wasn't for me. I became convinced this Joseph Smith could really spin a good story.

Further experiences caused me, however, to do some serious studying. Therefore, I tried again to read The Book of Mormon. I would start with First Nephi and sometimes get halfway through the chapter, but eventually would give up. I just couldn't see anything in it. I struggled with language—I could not understand it—and the words did not make an

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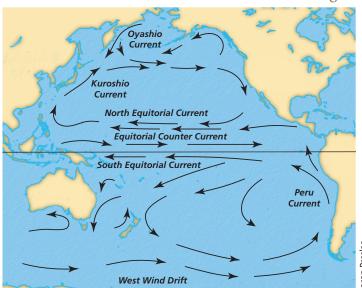


Figure 3. Map showing the Pacific currents.

The Paths of the Sea (Cont. from Page 5)

impression on me.

One evening my wife's sister called. Marcella told her, "Don's struggling. He's trying to read The Book of Mormon, but he just can't get anything out of it. He can't stay with it." Her sister said, "Oh—tell him to start with the book of Ether. Have him try that."

What did I have to lose? I looked to find the book of Ether and began to read. As I did, into my mind came these thoughts. "Man! This is a fantastic story! If only it were true!" I read the marvelous experience when the Brother of Jared saw the hand of the Lord, when the barges were built, when the stones were blessed, and so many other things.

I tried to reason it out in my mind. "Now, they would have to free float, and they left some place from Asia. The description of the storms sounds like the water close to the Aleutian Islands." I'd been in the Aleutian waters and knew what they were like. I wondered, "How did Joseph know of these things? No.... No..... It can't be. It can't be."

But yet, as I continued to read, I became fascinated with it. I still wasn't convinced, though, that it was a true and proper book until I came to the third chapter of Ether and the 13th verse. "And thus they were driven forth, three hundred and forty and four days upon the water; and they did land upon the shore of the promised land."

Three hundred and forty-four days! Immediately I was carried back to that day on Tinian and the briefing we were given on how to survive if shot down by the Japanese. We were told it would take a year for the currents to get us back home. A year is about 365 days, but with a trip that long, and with wind variations, how much difference is 20 days?

All at once this thing came together for me! It was like somebody turned on a light bulb flooding my mind with the words, "This is true!"

My first thought after that was to rationalize. If Joseph wanted to write this book, he could have gotten the information by studying the naval charts. But then I recalled that we had been told that the charts of ocean currents in the northern Pacific were not published until the 1850s. They had been charted by a young naval lieutenant [see Editor's Note below] who ac-

companied Admiral Matthew Perry when he opened Japan to trade in the 1850s. This lieutenant was with the Coast Survey (later called the Coast and Geodetic Survey and now the National Ocean Survey).

I turned to the front of The Book of Mormon and found its publication date of 1830. Twenty-five years before the knowledge about ocean currents and other relevant information had been published as fact. Joseph Smith hit it right square on the money!

Excited now, I was unable to put the book down that night. I read the rest of Ether. Then I went back and started with first Nephi. And it all came alive—all the way through.

With this simple testimony, I am firmly convinced that The Book of Mormon is a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I am firmly convinced that it is a true and proper book. Joseph Smith had no way of knowing of the currents or how long it would have taken to float with the currents from Asia to America. The knowledge was not readily available until the 1850s. I thank God that this testimony was given to me.

Don Montel remained actively engaged with the work of the kingdom until the end of his life, firmly believing in the truth of The Book of Mormon.

Editor's Note (Revised from first printing):

In September 1990, I gave a presentation in Michigan for a regional Book of Mormon day conference. It was titled "China and the Jaredites." During the presentation, I shared this testimony of Don's, adding that he didn't know the lieutenant's name who studied and published about the ocean currents in the Pacific, but my later research revealed that the lieutenant was Matthew Fontaine Maury.

From his study of old logbooks, Maury began in 1846 "preparing 'wind and current' charts of the three grand oceans, viz: the Atlantic, the Pacific and Indian" (Williams 1963:178). The first of the Wind and Current Charts were published in 1847. In 1855, Maury's The Physical Geography of the Sea became the first standard oceanography text.

During one of the breaks at the conference, a woman came to me and said her husband was a science teacher and taught about Maury.



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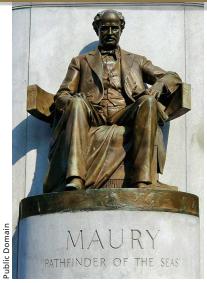
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She asked if I knew that Psalm 8 led Maury to look for the ocean currents. I replied, "No, I didn't." That this man used scripture to make this discovery fascinated me.

I returned home to do more research and discovered the following in a biography of Maury.

Maury was fully aware that his proposed type of chart and sailing directions represented a radical departure from the type then in use by mariners. In his years at sea he had found true the verses [23-24] of the 107th Psalm: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

As he weighed the proposal he would make, Maury later told his family, that verse came often to his mind but even more frequently the words of the 8th Psalm: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands... and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Those words convinced Maury that he was right in his belief that there were natural paths



Pathfinder of the Seas monument, Monument Avenue, Richmond, Virginia. Dedicated November 11, 1929.

through the sea, even as there were natural paths through mountain passes, if man would be persist until he discovered them. The need was great. The lack of adequate charts was causing unnecessary loss of life at sea (Williams 1963:151; emphasis added).

Maury received many honors and honorary degrees and gifts for his groundbreaking work. A bronze monument in Richmond, Virginia, has Maury seated with the legend below: "Maury, Pathfinder of the Seas." Such an appropriate title!

I became most grateful for the woman who told me about Maury's use of Scripture to find the ocean currents. Not only did Maury's work of charting the winds and currents

of the ocean save lives, but also—because it was published *16 years after* The Book of Mormon—provided the witness to Don Montel that the ancient record was true!

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We Would See Jesus

By Patricia J. Beebee

ow many of you would like to see Jesus? That's a big DUH question isn't it? Or is it? I found myself pondering over and over in my mind—how different am I from those who walked the Land of Promise? What will it take for Zion or even a Golden period of time like that recorded in The Book of Mormon to be a reality for me?

As a teacher and as a parent, I know that significant change cannot take place without first gaining the attention of the learner. Our Lord goes to no end to capture our attention. He is in all and through all. Even the most learned (man's intelligence) stand in awe. It is difficult to comprehend the magnitude of our universe, the earth, the moon and all that our Creator has provided. But, close your eyes and picture the beauty that surrounds us *every.single.day*. For those who have had opportunity to travel the world, recall

the beauty and splendor of the Eiffel Tower, the Gold Coast of Australia, the Alps, the Pyramids of Giza, the Northern Lights, the Coliseum of Rome, the Great Wall of China and on and on. God gives talents and blessings that inspire men, who in turn, leave "bread crumbs" all over our world reflecting the Great Creator.

We "see" many marvelous things—even sacred things, but are we "changed" by seeing? Think back a moment on things that you have seen that have literally changed your life. What was different about that experience? In which camp do you belong: I believe or have faith because I have seen as with Doubting Thomas who walked with Christ yet waited for temporal evidence of his resurrection OR I will see when I move out in faith as the Brother of Jared and saw what the temporal eye cannot? Both require faith, but one requires more. Faith is always the starting point for great things, for change. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The Book of

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We Would See Jesus (Cont. from Page 7)

Mormon has a perfect companion for this scripture.

And now as I said concerning faith: Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore, if ye have faith, ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true" (Alma 16:143 [LDS 32:21]).

It appears that the power word in these two scriptures is HOPE. For what do we hope? Do we hope for a golden period in our life? Hope, conscientious and unceasing through prayer, is the catalyst that brings about change.

PSI endeavors to include hope as the underlying message in each article of *glyph notes*. With your help, we can share with those who lack hope the hope expressed by Moroni in the closing pages of The Book of Mormon and encourage those with hope to continue to share with others that we might see Jesus in our lifetime.

When ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of

the Holy Ghost (Moroni 10:4-5 [LDS 10:4]).

We extend a special thank you to those who have increased their giving which makes it possible for PSI to send Book of Mormon faith-building information to those who desire to receive *glyph notes* even though they may feel unable to subscribe. Please use the self-addressed envelope included in this issue to add a friend or family member to the mailing list, to invite PSI into your group for classes, to submit comments or suggestions, or to update your subscription.

