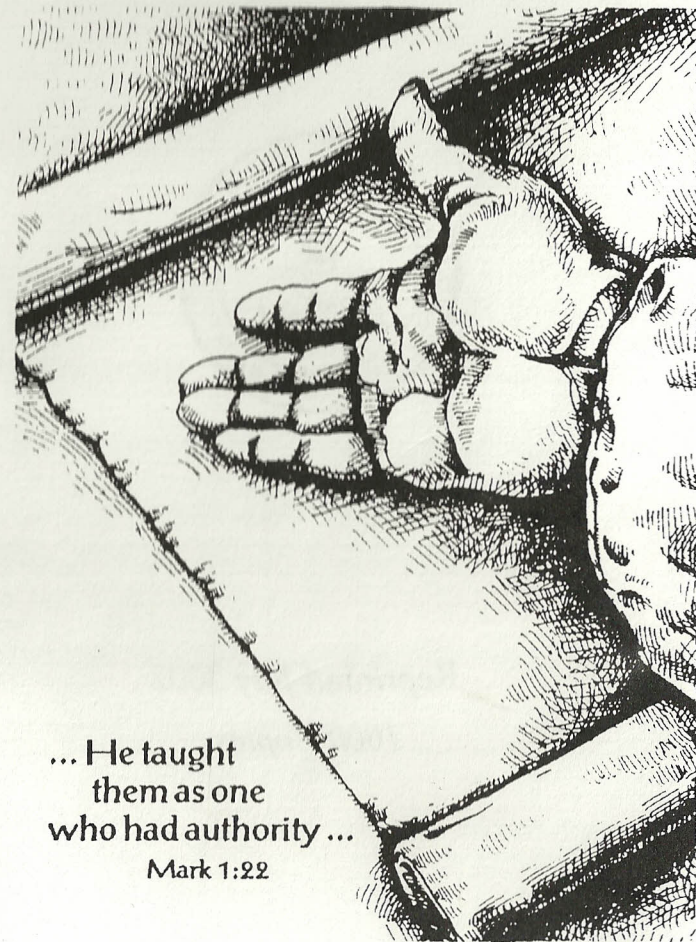


Evidences of the Book of Mormon

By Apostle Donald E. McIndoo



... He taught
them as one
who had authority ...

Mark 1:22

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Native American Origins

"We did put forth into the sea, and were driven forth before the wind, towards the promised land.... And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days, we did arrive to the promised land (1 Nephi 5:181 & 212)." This portion of the *Book of Mormon* (together with other passages) clearly shows that the ancestors of many Native Americans came to this land from the Middle East by crossing the sea in ships. If this record be true the traditions, legends and writings of the American Indian should witness to such a migration from across the sea.

In the introduction to their book, *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiche Maya*¹, the authors quote an early Maya author: "I ... first Ahzib Quiche,, write here on this paper of the coming of our fathers and grandfathers from the other side of the sea whence the sun rises."

Warren and Ferguson² quote the writing of an early Maya scholar: "The principal chiefs were four.... Together these tribes came from the other part of the sea, from the East, from Pa Tulan, Pa Civan. These, then, were the three nations of the Quiches, and they came from where the sun rises, descendents of Israel, of the same language and same customs."

Cohane³ speaks of the famous "Stone of the Twelve Angels" located in an ancient Incan wall in Peru, reasoning "Such expertly cut and fitted stones, with terraces, arches, and other details common to prehistoric architecture, lend physical support to Inca legends that

their earliest civilization was founded by white-skinned strangers who arrived across the sea from the east."

In conclusion, the explorer, Honore⁴, tells of carved stones he once discovered on a tributary of the Amazon River: "Other stones showed several boats and ships, boats with a keel, which were not known to the Indians of the Amazon."

We can easily see that a variety of witnesses, including literate Indians who survived the Conquest, testify that the Book of Mormon story of a great sea crossing from the East is supported by a great deal of evidence.

1. Goetz, Delia and Morley, Sylvanus, *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiche Maya*, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1950.
2. Warren, Bruce and Ferguson, Thomas, *The Messiah in Ancient America.*, Book of Mormon Research Foundation, Provo, Utah, 1987.
3. Cohane, John, *The Key*, Crown Publishers, Inc. New York, 1969.
4. Honore, Pierre, *In Quest of the White God*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1964.

"And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days, we did arrive to the promised land."

1 Nephi 5: 212



The Books of Moses in America

The *Book of Mormon* states clearly that the plates of brass, which were brought by the Nephites to America, contained the five books of Moses: "And he beheld that they did contain the five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world (1 Nephi 1:159)." If this is a true record we should be able to find within the traditions of Indian people evidences of a familiarity with many Biblical stories from the writings of Moses. What has been found about such parallel beliefs in the Old World and the New World?

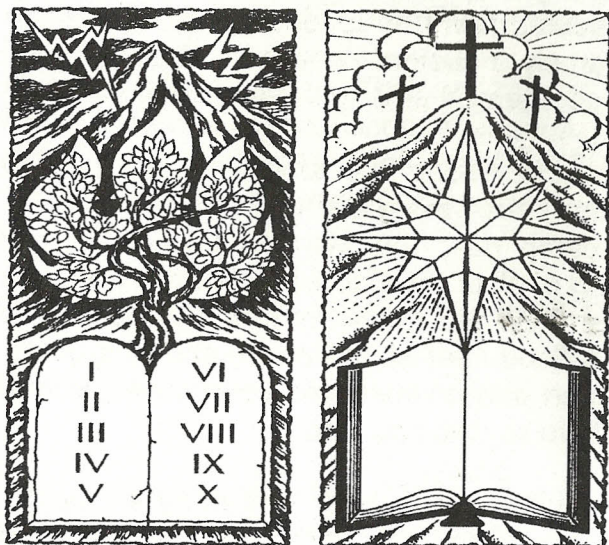
Donnelly¹ writes, "There is scarcely a prominent fact in the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis that cannot be duplicated from the legends of the American nations, and scarcely a custom known to the Jews that does not find its counterpart among the people of the New World."

Thom², in writing the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition through wilderness America, tells of their winter camp near the Mandan Indians in 1804: "Most intriguing of all to the Captains, though, were some myths of origin they had heard from the Mandan elders. They told of a flood over all the earth, and of a great canoe in which men and animals had been saved from drowning, and a dove sent to find land."

Murra³ refers to a letter written by an Indian in 1532, immediately after the conquest of Peru. He says, "Civilization, Pomo claims, is pre-Incan. Pomo sees a four stage scheme that puts the descendents of Adam and Eve in America 7,000 years ago."

These few references are indicative of the vast store of similarities found in the legends and traditions, as well as written records of Native Americans, which show beyond doubt the veracity of the Book of Mormon claim that early voyagers to America brought with them a record of the five books of Moses.

1. Donnelly, *Mexican Antiquities*, Vol. 8.
2. Thom, James, *From Sea to Shining Sea*, Ballentine Books, New York, 1984.
3. Murra, "Guaman Pomo de Ayala", *Natural History*, August-September, 1961.



"For the law was given by Moses;
grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
John 1:17

Born of a Virgin

The Holy Bible tells us that the Son of God, who came to earth to do His redemptive work among the children of men, was born of a virgin. Today many Bible scholars and theologians ridicule this assertion as nonsense. It is reassuring that believers in the Book of Mormon have an added witness to the divinity of the man, Jesus. In vision Nephi was shown "the virgin which thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh (1 Nephi 3:58)."

Since the ancestors of many Indian peoples were familiar with this record, we should be able to find a similar belief reflected in the traditions of the Indian people. Let us examine the research of people in the field.

Honore¹ describes the legends of the Indian people of Mesoamerica, in which they refer to "...the White God of the Indians said to be born of a virgin by immaculate conception."

Brinton² writes, "Many of the great gods of the race, as Quetzalcoatl, Viracocha, and Ioskeha (tribal names for the same white, bearded God - dem), were at times said to have been born of a virgin. Even among the Indian tribes of Paraguay the missionaries were startled to find this tradition of the maiden mother of God."

The anthropologist, L. Taylor Hansen³, tells the story of the traditions of the ancient Puant people of Oklahoma concerning the bearded white God who once came

among them: "He told them that He was born across the ocean, in a land where all men were bearded. In this land He was born of a virgin on a night when a bright star came out of the heavens and stood over His city. Here, too, the heavens opened and down came winged beings singing chants of exquisite beauty."

1. Honore, Pierre, *In Quest of the White God*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1964, p.34.
2. Brinton, D.G., *Myths of the New World*, Greenwood Press, 1969, p.161.
3. Hansen, L. Taylor, *He Walked the Americas*, Amherst Press, Amherst, Wisconsin, 1963, p.48.



"Behold, the virgin whom thou seest
is the mother of the Son of God..."

1 Nephi 3: 56

The God of Ancient America

Of the bearded, white God of ancient America, one respected author clearly states, "Quetzalcoatl is...the greatest figure in the history of the New World."¹ Historians and anthropologists have long been intrigued by this ethereal figure from Mesoamerica's remote past. We who believe in the Book of Mormon have no difficulty equating the white, bearded God of ancient America with Jesus Christ who, the scriptures tell us, visited His people in the New World after His resurrection.

Like our Lord, Jesus Christ, many volumes have been written about this epic hero of the Americas. One of the latest treatises to be published comes from Rudolfo Anaya², a professor of English at the University of New Mexico. This accomplished writer sets forth the legends and traditions which come down to us from his Native American ancestors. In this article I shall quote but ten of Anaya's descriptive excerpts from among the dozens presented about the life and ministry of Quetzalcoatl. Then, beneath each selection quoted there appears an analogous passage from the Scripture that helps us place this legendary figure of American antiquity in proper perspective.

1. "I was born in the year Ce Acatl ... the day the morning star appeared in the heavens." p. 49
"And behold there shall be a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you." - Helaman 5:59
2. "He does not believe in blood sacrifice." p. 28

"And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away" - 3 Nephi 4:49

3. "I have my work to do My work is to spread the light of my Father ..." pp. 52 & 54
"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." - John 4:34

4. "He knew he would be tempted many times while he lived in the body of a man. He knew the path he followed in the heavens, far away from the realm of man. He had come to Tollan to understand the flesh " p. 54
"And he shall go forth, suffering pains, and afflictions, and temptations of every kind ... that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities." - Alma 5:20 & 22

5. "I cannot serve two masters" - p. 54
"No man can serve two masters" - 3 Nephi 5:115

6. "The servants felt the quick, powerful wind and were afraid. Quetzalcoatl felt it too He raised his hand and the wind grew quiet." - p. 65
"And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." - Matthew 8:26

7. "He prayed ... for his own human desire to be subservient to his spirit." - p. 86
"... take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." - Mark 14:36

8. "... he had been called the Lord Redeemer - it was part of his destiny to take the transgressions of the Toltecs into his heart." - p. 126

"For these are they whose sins he hath borne; these are they for whom he hath died, to redeem them from their transgressions." - Mosiah 8:44

9. "The Toltecs knew that Quetzalcoatl had died for their sins, he had loved his people so dearly he had given up his own life for them." - p. 133
"... being filled with compassion toward the children of men ... having broken the bands of death, taking upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions; having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice." - Mosiah 8:36-37

10. "... but one day I will return to you." p. 142
"And he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory." 3 Nephi 11:30

Such a comparison of the mystical Quetzalcoatl of Indian tradition with the Jesus of history and prophecy, leaves no doubt in my mind that they were one and the same person. It confirms again the fact that the prophecies and history found in the Book of Mormon and Bible were known among the Native American people.

1. Sejourne, Laurette, *Burning Water; Thought and Religion of Ancient America*, Shambala, 1976.

2. Anaya, Rudolfo A., *Lord of the Dawn: The Legend of Quetzalcoatl*, Univ. of N.M. Press, Albuquerque, 1987.

The American Trinity

The Book of Mormon clearly states the nature of the Godhead which was taught to the peoples of pre-Columbian America: "... doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end (II Nephi 13:32)." Once again, we are interested to know what the ancient literature and tradition of the various tribes has to say about this subject common only to Christians.

Hansen¹ quotes the Aztec story of the bearded, white God, Quetzalcoatl, who walked among the Indian people of ancient America. The story was translated from the Aztec by Dr. Corwyn of Mexico University:

"All the glory of the Godhead
Had the Prophet, Quetzal-Coatl;"

Since we equate this ancient God of America with none other than Jesus Christ, whose visit to the New World is recorded in the Book of Mormon, is this description of Him possessing all the glory of the Godhead compatible with the scripture used by the Christian community? It certainly is! The Apostle Paul, speaking of Christ, writes, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9)."

Bartolome de Las Casas came to the New World in 1502 and was the first Spanish priest ordained in America. His experiences in the New World led him to become a defender of the Indian people. In 1528 he completed his monumental book, *History of the Indies*. His work is often referenced by historians. Alexander²

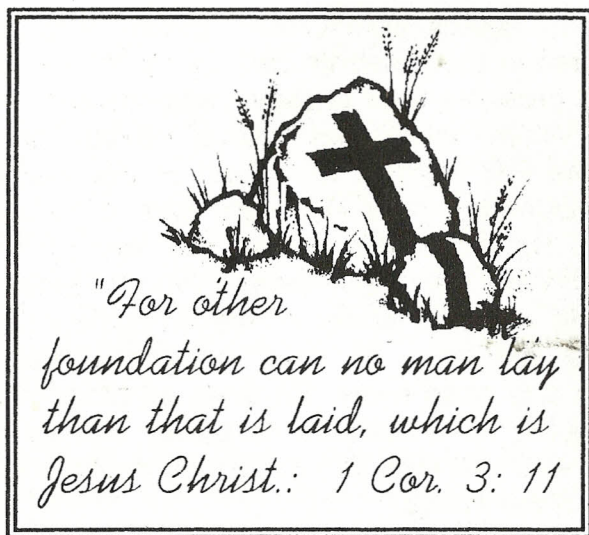
writes, "Las Casas, quoting a certain cleric, Padre Francisco Hernandez, tells of a Yucatec trinity: one of their old men, when asked as to their ancient religion, said that they recognized and believed in God who dwells in heaven, and that this God was Father and Son and Holy Spirit ...!"

Verrill³ writes about the belief of another major American tribe, the Inca: "Just as we believe in a supreme God and in Christ, His Son, who suffered and died and reappeared, so the Incas believed in a Creator and a divine humanized son. And just as we worship both God and Christ, so the Incans worshipped their Pacha-Kamak and their sun-god Inti who died and was resurrected."

Nicholson⁴ quotes from Chilam Balam of Chumayel, books written in the sixteenth century by literate Mayans desiring to preserve their ancient traditions and religious heritage: "Where there was neither heaven nor earth sounded the first word of God. And all the vastness of eternity shuddered. And His word was a measure of grace, and He broke and pierced the backbone of the mountains. Who was born there? Who? Father, Thou knowest: He who was tender in Heaven came into Being. "All moons, all years, all days, all winds, reach their completion and pass away. So does all blood reach its place of quiet, as it reaches its power and its throne. Measured was the time in which they could praise the splendour of the Trinity."



1. Hansen, L. Taylor, *He Walked the Americas*, Amherst Press, Amherst, Wisconsin, 1963, p.12.
2. Alexander, Hartley Burr, *The Mythology of All Races Latin American, Vol.XI*, Marshall Janes Company, Boston, 1920, p. 143.
3. Verrill, A. Hyatt, *Old Civilizations of the New World*, Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1938, p.217.
4. Nicholson, Irene, *Mexican and Central American Mythology*, Paul Hamlyn, New York, 1973, pp. 20-21.



The Crucifixion

Nephi told his followers in America of ancient prophecies concerning the crucifixion of the Messiah who would come: "Yea, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself ... as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up according to the words of Zenock, and to be crucified, according to the words of Neum, and to be buried in a sepulcher, according to the words of Zenos, which he spake concerning the three days of darkness, which should be a sign given of his death, unto those who should inhabit the isles of the sea (1 Nephi 5:240-243)." Do traditions and legends of the Indian people show they were aware of such prophecy? We shall see.

Alexander¹ quotes an early Spanish historian familiar with the traditions of the pre-Conquest Indians: "Las Casas, quoting a certain cleric, Padre Francisco Hernandez, tells of a Yucatec trinity. The Son, Bacab...being scourged and crowned with thorns...was tied upon a cross with extended arms, where he died, but after three days he arose and ascended into heaven to be with his father."

Warren and Ferguson² also quote an early Spanish historian, the Bishop of Chiapas, who arrived in Yucatan in 1545: "About the Son, they say that he was killed and lashed and a crown of thorns put on him, and that he was placed on a timber with his arms stretched out. They did not understand that he was nailed, but rather they thought that he had been tied, and there he died. And he was dead for three days, and on the third day he came to

life and went up to heaven, and that he is there with his father."

From the writings of these two early historians it is evident that the Maya Indians of Yucatan had traditions of the crucifixion of the Savior that paralleled in detail the prophecies narrated by Nephi. Zenos also referred to three days of darkness which would be the sign of His death. Many years later Samuel, the Lamanite prophet (see Helaman 5: 75-82), would repeat this prophecy and tell of great geologic changes which would affect the face of the land at the time of the Lord's crucifixion.

The Aztec historian, Ixtlilxochitl³, wrote as follows: "It was 166 years since they had adjusted their years and times with the equinox, and 270 since the ancient ones had been destroyed, when the sun and moon eclipsed, and the earth trembled, and the rocks broke, and many other things and signs took place.... This happened in the year of *ce Calli*, which, adjusting this count with ours, comes to be at the same time when Christ our Lord suffered"

1. Alexander, Hartley, *The Mythology of All Races Latin American, Vol. XI*, Marshall Janes Company, Boston, 1920, p. 143.
2. Warren, Bruce and Ferguson, Thomas, *The Messiah in Ancient America*, Book of Mormon research Foundation, Provo, Utah, 1987, p. 157.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 35.



The Resurrection

In the sixth century before Christ Jacob prophesied of the resurrection: "And the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored, one to the other; and it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel (2 Nephi 6:29-30)."

Many critics of the Book of Mormon point to such Old Testament passages as being anachronistic since, they claim, such concepts as immortality and the resurrection had no place in Jewish thought during Old Testament times. Is this really true? If so, it would prove to be a stumbling block for many in accepting the Book of Mormon. Yet we have every reason to believe that the concept of the resurrection existed in ancient times. Job, one of the oldest of sacred books, is authenticated by the prophet Ezekiel and by James, and Job's testimony is a powerful affirmation of an early belief in the resurrection: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ... (Job 19:25-26)."

The historian, Steinsaltz¹, speaking of the period of the Greek occupation of Israel which began in the fourth century B.C., tell us "The Sadducees also rejected several tenets of faith accepted by the Jewish people of the time--belief in the immortality of the soul, in heavenly reward, and in the resurrection of the dead." This authority confirms that the concept of the resurrection was common among the Israelites in the Old Testament era.

And in America we also find the ancient Indian people were familiar with such beliefs, just as we would expect. The historian of the Maya, Bishop de Landa², writes: "These people have always believed in the immortality of the soul...."

Warren and Ferguson³ write of an ancient Mixtec codex from Mexico. A codex is a book that folds like a folding screen, and this codex was sent to Spain by Cortes in 1519. They say, "Page 4 of the Codex Nuttall shows two deities in death bundles.... Their descent into the underworld and then their emergence from the underworld are also depicted. Scenes of the death and resurrection are not unknown in other Mesoamerican codices. But what makes this scene compelling is the identity of the god--Quetzalcoatl (the bearded white God of the Americans whom we equate with Christ - dem)--and the calendar date of the event - A.D. 30."

So we find the concepts of immortality and the resurrection in Old Testament times in both the Old World and the New as the Book of Mormon would teach us to expect. Also, as one would anticipate, the resurrection is identified in both the New World and the Old World with the Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ.

This redemptive work of Christ, as known to some of the tribes, is beautifully portrayed in the legends of Quetzalcoatl. Waters⁴ sums it up with these words: "...Quetzalcoatl obtained the bones and ashes of dead men from the god of the underworld and sprinkled them with his own blood, creating a new race of men; hence Caso* regards him as the father and creator of men. Thus he redeemed man from death, becoming, as Sejourm,** states, the Redeemer. The meaning of all versions is the

same, the redemption of man by sacrifice...."

* Caso, Alfonso, *The Aztecs: People of the Sun*.

** Sejourm,, Laurette, *Burning Water*.

1. Steinsaltz, Adin, *The Essential Talmud*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1976, p. 21.
2. Pagden, A.R., *Diego de Landa's Account of the Affairs of Yucatan - The Maya*, J. Phillip O' Hara, Inc., Chicago, 1975, p. 95.
3. Warren, Bruce, and Ferguson, Thomas, *The Messiah in Ancient America*, Book of Mormon Research Foundation, Provo, Utah, 1987, p. 64.
4. Waters, Frank, *Mexico Mystique: The Coming Sixth World of Consciousness*, Swallow Press, Inc., Chicago, 1975, p.135.



"Why seek ye the living
among the dead? He is not here,
but is risen." Luke 24: 5-6

His Promised Return

When Jesus walked among pre-Columbian Americans shortly after His resurrection, He taught them all the basic fundamentals of His gospel of salvation, rehearsed for them words of prophecy they needed but did not have and gave prophecies that would be applicable to them in the future. One such prophecy concerns His promise to return to this world in power and glory, a concept denied by many contemporary--and skeptical--Bible scholars.

The Book of Mormon simply states, "And he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory... (III Nephi 11:30)." Again we propose that all such major teachings found in the Book of Mormon should be represented in the literature and/or traditions of the Indian people. When they are found to exist, they present a strong evidence to the validity of the Book of Mormon. So what do the literature and traditions say about a promised return by the white, bearded God who walked among the ancient Americans? In this article we shall refer to the writing of just one anthropologist and the ramifications of his comment.

The renown author and anthropologist, Frank Waters¹, writes of the God known to the Aztec and Toltec peoples as Quetzalcoatl: "... a god who manifested himself as a white, bearded man, taught the people all the arts and sciences of civilization, and then disappeared with the promise to return someday in the year of his birth, *Ce Acatl*." One of the most interesting aspects of the ancient Indian calendar is that any particular date was repeated in cycles of 52 years, so the Fair God's promise to return on

the date of His birth actually suggests an anniversary of His birth.

Indian prophets from Peru to Mexico had been warning their leaders of the coming of another people to this land. In Mexico the Emperor Moctezuma was so warned: "I have discovered that in a very few years our cities will be ravaged and destroyed. We and our children will be killed. ...before many days have passed you will see signs in the sky...."² It was not long before the Emperor was to see one of the predicted omens--a marvelous comet cleaved the heavens above him.

Overcome with fear for his people and his kingdom, Moctezuma prayed and did penance to the Morning Star, the symbol of the returning God, Quetzalcoatl. Lest we forget, we read again the revelation of Christ: "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16)."

It is beyond the realm of coincidence that the prophesied coming of foreign invaders fell in the year 1519, one of the anniversaries of *Ce Acatl*, when the Aztecs would be awaiting the coming of their Fair God. News of the arrival of Cortes caused Emperor Moctezuma great anxiety and distress. To the newly arrived bearded, white men he sent his messengers. He told them: "According to the legends, they are to acquire all the wealth that we now possess. If it is really Quetzalcoatl, greet him on my behalf and give him these gifts.... I have always considered that my domain was only lent to me. Let him permit me to end my days here. Then let him return to enjoy what is his!"³

In this short article we find the words of both anthropologist and historian lending support to the narrative of the Book of Mormon, verifying that American Indians were, indeed, given a knowledge of the promised return of Jesus Christ to His people.

1. Waters Frank, *Mexico Mystique: The Coming Sixth World of Consciousness*, Swallow Press, Inc., Chicago, 1975, p. 5.
2. Stuart, Gene, "The Mighty Aztecs", *National Geographic Society*, Washington D.C., 1981, p. 148.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 153.



A Simple Grain of Barley

About 124 B.C. King Mosiah sent a party back to the land of Nephi-Lehi (probably the highlands of Guatemala where the Nephite people had first lived) to find a colony which had returned to this land many years before. Ammon, the leader of this search party, found the colony in a condition of virtual slavery to the Lamanite people. Limhi, the leader of the colony, told Ammon they were forced to pay a heavy tribute to the king of the Lamanites:

"And behold, we at this time do pay tribute to the king of the Lamanites, to the amount of one half of our corn, and our barley, and even all our grain of every kind, and one half of the increase of our flocks, and our herds; and even one half of all we have or possess... (Mosiah 5:35-36)."

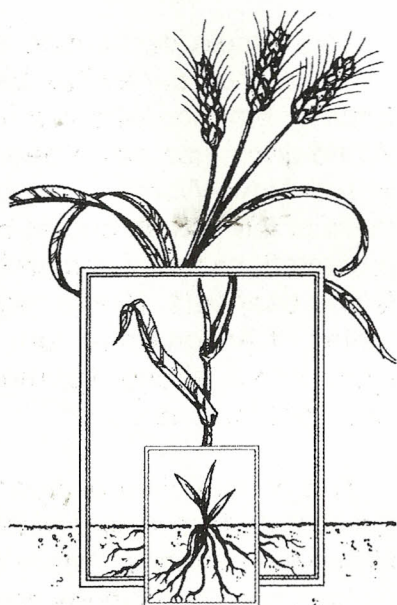
This simple declaration that the inhabitants of ancient America grew barley has been noted by opponents of the Book of Mormon who like to point out that barley, an Old World grain, has never been found in pre-Columbian sites in the New World. Of course, this seems evidence to them of the human origins of the Book of Mormon. All our protestations that it is merely a negative evidence at best, fell on deaf ears. Now a recent discovery in the Salt River Valley of Arizona may turn this simple statement of King Limhi into a strong testimony to the Divine origin of the Book of Mormon.

The construction of new freeways in the Phoenix area led to the discovery of many ancient dwelling sites of the Hohokam Indians who once inhabited the Valley. Government regulations now demand that archaeological

investigations be performed prior to further construction. Daniel Adams¹ writes of one such investigation and its startling findings: "Using winter runoff from the nearby mountains and summer rains, the Hohokam could raise two full crops each year. This double cropping, experts believe, enabled them to select improved plant varieties twice as fast as single cropping cultures. Perhaps the most startling evidence of Hohokam agricultural sophistication came last year when salvage archaeologists found preserved grains of what looks like domesticated barley, the first ever found in the New World. Wild barleys have a fibrous husk over each grain. Domestic barley lacks this. So does the Hohokam barley. Nearly half the samples from one site yielded barley."

Using Divine inspiration Joseph Smith translated--he did not write--the words of ancient American authors. In doing this he placed himself, and his work, directly on the firing line for criticism, for often what was written in this translation ran contrary to the accepted belief, or knowledge, of his day. We have every reason to praise God that, point by point, the narration of the Book of Mormon is being vindicated by new discoveries with each passing of each year.

1. Adams, Daniel B., "Last Ditch Archaeology", *Science* 83, Dec. 1983, p. 32.



Notes: