

**EVIDENCES
OF THE
BOOK
OF
MORMON**

Don McIndoo 1998

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EVIDENCES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Introduction. We must first determine what might constitute evidence that the Book of Mormon is what it purports to be.

1. It claims to be a divine history of God's dealings with a portion of the house of Israel.
2. It claims to be a historical and religious record of a people who traveled from western Asia to America in the 6th century B.C. and spans the time until their demise in the 4th century A.D.
3. It claims to have been revealed and translated by the power of God.

As to the first claim of its being a divine history of God's dealing with a portion of the house of Israel, let's yield to the literary authorities of the day. John Pritchard, in his book *A Literary Approach to the New Testament*, page 5, quotes August Boeckh, a literary scholar of the last century:

"If a sacred book is of human origin it must be understood according to human rules in the treatment usually applied to books. If it is of divine origin, it stands on a level above all human interpretation, and can be apprehended only through divine inspiration ..."

William Dever, in the *Biblical Archaeological Review*, wrote the following: *"Ultimately, the Bible is not history, but rather an account of God's miraculous intervention in human history ... the Bible's central claim is personal, not a scholarly matter. These are, in the end, matters of faith."*

Moroni, through inspiration, gave us identical counsel as did these perceptive literary authorities of modern time: *"...And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, and he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things."*

Concerning the second claim, there are several criteria that should be met before we could consider this book to be of ancient origin. They are as follows:

1. It must describe a condition of social organization which is harmonious with archaeological and known documentary evidence relative to this area and time.
2. It should present a description of the "cultural setting" which is harmonious with the known facts about the time and place of the setting.
3. There should be nothing unreasonable about the story itself.

We shall demonstrate that the story in the Book of Mormon is consistent with the true history of ancient Mesoamerica. In fact, we shall show that the Book of Mormon narrative accurately described the cultural setting and history of this region long before *anyone* was even aware of its existence.

This last fact is simple proof that no man, no group of scholars, could have written this book in 1830. This is, in itself, evidence for its claim that it was brought to light by the power of God.

In this study we shall analyze three types of supportive evidence which point to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon as an ancient record of God's dealing with the peoples of ancient Mesoamerica. These three types of evidence are as follows:

1. Archaeological evidence obtained from recent studies of sites in Central America.
2. Anthropological evidence from studies of the people and their traditions.
3. Internal evidence from the writings in the book itself.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE.

A. The arrival of the Nephite people in Mesoamerica.

1. In 1 Nephi 1:3 we read this: "For it came to pass, in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (my father Lehi having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days); and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed."
2. Historians place this date at 597 B.C., and so our story unfolds in the 6th century B.C.
3. This is the time sequence when I would expect the Mayan civilization to blossom in the New World.
4. Now the sudden appearance of the Maya has always been an enigma to scholars. The archaeologist and historian, Ivar Lissner, in his book, *The Silent Past*, writes, "Of all the peoples in the world, the Mayas probably evolved the most remarkable civilization, much of which seems baffling, contradictory and inexplicable, and almost all of which strikes one as alien." (p.315)
5. A. Hyatt Verrill, the noted Americanist, said their coming was "... an abrupt and entirely revolutionary order of things, exactly as though the laws, customs, arts, sciences, industries and social organization of the new regime had been brought, ready-made and fully developed, from another sphere or unknown land." **Of course, this is exactly what the Book of Mormon tells us!**
6. In the ancient Maya city of Chichén Itzá stands this old doorway. The lintel above it bears a date falling in the Late Classic period, 842 A.D. Like most of the well-known, excavated cities of the Maya, such dates are far later than the 6th century B.C. arrival of the Nephite people from Israel.
7. This seems to pose a contradiction to the narrative history set forth in the Book of Mormon. But if there is a contradiction, who has been wrong all these years?
8. As we look at a very typical Mayan motif, the Plumed Serpent, let us consider a recent discovery made in an ancient Mayan city of northern Guatemala.
9. Richard Hansen, of UCLA, began excavations in the ancient city of Nakbé in February of 1989. His findings created a stir among the scholars. I quote the results: "The discovery, described by scholars as surprising and exciting, puts the emergence of an elaborate Mayan civilization with large cities back to at least 600 B.C. It was previously thought that the Mayans ... did not rise above simple village life before 200 B.C." (*The Witness*, Fall 1993, p.5.)
10. Such findings caused one scholar, David Freidel, to write, "Maya civilization banged into existence in its own way and time It is unsettling. For it violates the tacit rules of diffusion, and, even worse, the tacit rules of gradual evolution espoused by modern archaeology." (*The Witness*, Fall 1993, p.5) **But not so unsettling to us, is it?**

B. The high degree of Mayan civilization.

1. The Book of Mormon narrative tells about the high degree of civilization of those who came to America: "And I did teach my people that they should build buildings, and that they should work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance (2 Nephi 4:21)." And again in 3 Nephi 3:8 we read, "And it came to pass that there were many cities built anew, and there were many old cities repaired, and there were many highways cast up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, and from land to land, and from place to place."
2. Now the pertinent question is this: "What did Americans, in 1829, know about the first indigenous inhabitants of the land that could have helped the unlettered Joseph Smith write such a description of a great civilization?"
3. The great and beautiful cities of the ancient Maya civilization were not rediscovered until 1839, nine years after the publication of the Book of Mormon. They were discovered by a New York lawyer who had become a world traveler. Three years later John L. Stephens published his book,

beautifully illustrated by artist, Frederick Catherwood who had accompanied him in his explorations.

Archaeologist, Victor Von Hagen, in his biography of Stephens, describes the attitude of Americans toward the Indian people and cultures at the time the Book of Mormon was published:

“No one dreamed that throughout the tablelands of Mexico, in the tangled scrub-jungles of Yucatan, there stood, covered by jungle verdure, ruins of temples, acropolises, and stone causeways of a civilization as great in extent as Egypt’s.

“The acceptance of an ‘Indian civilization’ demanded, to an American living in 1839, an entire reorientation, for to him an Indian was one of those barbaric half-naked tepee-dwellers against whom wars were constantly waged. Nor did one ever think of calling the other indigenous inhabitants of the continent ‘civilized’”.

4. Yet nine years before Stephen’s discovery of such ancient magnificence, the Book of Mormon revealed exactly the high state of civilization which would one day be discovered. An article in National Geographic compares the marvels of the Maya to their counterparts in the Old World: “Early travelers, dazzled by the culture of the Maya, compared them to the Greeks because of their science, to the Romans because of well-drained, paved roads and to the Egyptians because of their pyramids.”

5. For nine years Joseph Smith had been ridiculed for the Book of Mormon’s description of a high civilization in ancient America. Now more than 150 years has passed since that description was vindicated by Stephen’s publication of his discoveries, and every passing year brings new findings that demonstrate the accuracy of the culture and history portrayed by the Book of Mormon.

C. A deterioration into a state of perpetual warfare.

1. The last writer in the narrative of the Nephite and Lamanite history wrote of the great destruction of the Nephite people. Then he told of what followed: “And behold also, the Lamanites are at war one with another; and the whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war.”(Book of Mormon 4:10).”
2. Such a statement is completely at variance with the picture of social life developed by modern archaeologists. Since their findings are at odds with the Book of Mormon narrative, let’s pay particular attention to what they say.
3. Vanderbilt University anthropologist, Arthur Demarest, had to write in 1991, “Until recent years scholars tended to idealize the Mayas as a peaceful and industrious people. The only warfare was supposed to be limited, ritualized battles between rulers as part of dynastic struggles, but rarely involving common people.”
4. T.W.F. Gann, in his *History of the Maya*, wrote, “The Maya, judging by the scenes depicted upon the stelae, were one of the least warlike nations who ever existed.”
5. In *Ancient Life in Mexico and Central America* we read, “Among general characteristics to be noticed is the absence of war implements and signs of combat in the sculptures, indicating a people living at peace with their neighbors.”
6. It becomes obvious that there is a great disparity between the story told in the Book of Mormon and the picture of the ancient Maya painted by the archaeologist. But in an article entitled “Secrets of the Mayas” in 1993, Michael Lemonick wrote, “The latest discovery, announced just this week, underscores how quickly Maya archaeology is changing. Among the first myths about this population to be debunked is that they were a peaceful race.” To what new discoveries is he referring?

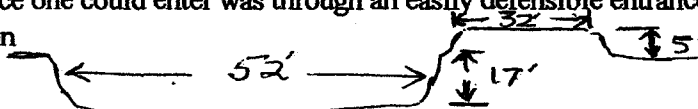
7. From Guatemala comes this report from Arthur Demarest: "The...kingdom collapsed into warfare far more destructive than we had ever imagined. The landscape and settlement patterns became almost medieval as many smaller states fought for survival."
8. Now this from Belize: "Uncontrolled warfare was probably one of the main causes for the Maya's eventual downfall. In the centuries after 250 A.D. ... the skirmishes that were common among competing city-states escalated into full-fledged, vicious wars that turned the proud cities into ghost towns."
9. We easily see how this new, more accurate description of ancient America coincides like hand-in-glove with the account found in the Book of Mormon, in both social organization and time frame. In this present decade the archaeologist is just now discovering what readers of the Book of Mormon have known for almost two centuries. I am reminded of the words of Dr. Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies. He said, "For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."

D. A new method of defense appears in America.

1. In 1969 an American archaeologist, D.L. Webster, began an excavation in the ancient Mayan city of Becan, in the state of Campeche, Mexico. What he found was a city so like the fortifications of the city of Noah, described in Alma 21 and 22, he could have copied his description directly from the pages of the Book of Mormon.

- a. A moat had been dug around the city. (Al. 21:170)
- b. The earth removed was made into a earthen bank behind the moat. (Al. 21:170)
- c. Set on top this ridge was a walkway of timbers used by the defenders. (Al. 22:2)
- d. This walkway was protected by a strong fence of timbers. (Al. 22:3)
- e. Defensive towers were placed along this walkway from place to place. (Al. 22:3)
- f. The only place one could enter was through an easily defensible entrance. (Al. 21:170)

2. Webster's description of the fortifications at Becan.



3. Of course, the pickets on the ridge behind the moat had long ago disappeared, but Webster stated, "I suspect that a palisade may well have existed but ... all traces of it have been obliterated."
4. As we look at the remnants of this moat at the city of Becan, listen to the words of Hernan Cortés, as he passed through this same area and neared a city fortified like the description found in the Book of Mormon: "...there is but one accessible entrance, and all is surrounded by a deep moat behind which there is a palisade, breast high; and beyond this palisade there is an enclosure of very thick planks, two fathoms high, with loopholes at all points from which to shoot arrows; its watchtowers rise seven to eight feet higher than the said wall which was also provided with towers, on top of which are many stones with which to fight from above." Remember this last phrase as we read from Alma 21:170 and 171:
5. We are looking at the entrance to the city of Becan as we read the Book of Mormon account, so identical to the account of Cortés and the discoveries of Webster: "Now behold, the Lamanites could not get into their forts of security, by any other way save by the entrance, because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the depth of the ditch which had been dug round about, save it were by the entrance. And thus were the Nephites prepared to destroy all such

as should attempt to climb up to enter the fort by any other way, by casting over stones and arrows at them.”

6. I would point out again that the narrative in the Book of Mormon is perfectly in harmony with the social organization and the cultural setting of that ancient time and place as recent discoveries are proving with each passing day.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Now let's give our attention briefly to some anthropological evidence which demonstrates that the narrative of the Book of Mormon accurately describes the culture and traditions of many ancient indigenous peoples of America. Many examples of such anthropological evidence will be covered later in a lesson called "Answering the Critics of the Book of Mormon".

A. Traditions as to the arrival of Native Americans.

1. The Book of Mormon records the oceanic migration of a people from Israel to America. "We did put forth into the sea, and were driven forth before the wind, towards the promised land; (1 Nephi 5:181)." "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)."
2. On the Pacific shores of Guatemala, El Salvador or Honduras arrived the people who would be known as the Maya. The Book of Mormon indicates that they were carried across the Pacific Ocean by the great Counter Equatorial Current. This is one part of the Book of Mormon narrative which definitely runs counter to traditional, scientific thought. The prevailing presupposition of scientists is described by the historian and archaeologist, Von Hagen:
3. "As man, the Maya developed out of the various peoples whose common ancestors were those Mesolithic wanderers that ... poured across the Bering 'land bridge' once connecting Outer Asia to Alaska." These peoples then slowly dispersed throughout the Americas, developing their cultures gradually as they traveled southward. These men of great and haughty knowledge choose to ignore the written testimony and traditions of the Native American, himself. But let us give attention to what Native Americans have said.
4. "I ... first Ahzib Quiché, write here on this paper of the coming of our fathers and grandfathers from the other side of the sea whence the sun rises." - Fuentes & Guzman
5. The principal chiefs were four... Together these tribes came from the other part of the sea, from Pa Tulan, Pa Civan. These, then, were the three nations of Quichés, and they came from where the sun rises, descendants of Israel, of the same language and same customs." - Recimos & Goetz
6. Written by 16 Maya nobles we read, "Now on the 28th of September of 1554 we sign this attestation in which we have written that which by tradition our ancestors told us, who came from the other part of the sea, from Civan-Tulan, bordering on Babylonia." - Carmack & Mondlach
7. Bishop Diego de Landa, noted historian of the early Maya, repeats a Maya tradition: "Some of the old men of Yucatan claim to have heard from their ancestors that this land was settled by people from the east whom God had liberated by cutting twelve paths for them through the sea.." Considering this tradition, de Landa now arrives at the following conclusion: "If this were true, it must be that all the inhabitants of the Indies are descended from the Jews"

How close to the truth, his ancient hypothesis!

8. It would appear to me that evangelical critics of the Book of Mormon who reject both its story of early migrations from the Middle East and the traditions of Native Americans which support the Book of Mormon narrative have placed themselves in a most peculiar position. Now they are left with the Bering Straits land-bridge hypothesis which has Asian wanderers populating the Americas 10,000 years before they believe man appeared upon the earth. They would like to have believers of the Book of Mormon bound by the positions of Smithsonian Institute philosophy, while they, themselves, remain free to reject that same philosophy when it radically opposes their own beliefs.

B. The Prevailing Legends of a Visit by a Bearded, White God.

1. The Book of Mormon plainly records the visit of Jesus Christ to ancient America after His resurrection. If Jesus really did visit America and teach the indigenous peoples found here, we would expect the traditions and legends of Native Americans to reflect that fact. This they certainly do, with the minor variations one would expect after hundreds of years and which serve to emphasize their validity. We shall limit this presentation to just a few of the multitudes of traditions which accurately mirror the Book of Mormon narrative of Jesus's ministry in the New World.
2. One anthropologist wrote these words concerning a deity common in the New World: "Just as our era began with Christ, that of the ancient Mexican people began with Quetzalcoatl. He is the central and most powerful figure in the mythology of Mesoamerica. As lawgiver, civilizer, religious teacher ... he exemplified a way of life superior to anything known before. He was tall, with a fair beard and large eyes" - Gene Savoy, *On the Trail of the Feathered Serpent*, p. 15
3. In the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City is this beautiful work by the renowned artist, Diego Rivera. His masterpiece is the composite of scores of ancient traditions, paintings and carvings. Quetzalcoatl is known by different names in the varying tribes and known by appellations such as the Healer, the Prophet, the Pale God. But by whatever name He is remembered, He is always pictured in a manner similar to Rivera's work.
4. Consider this parallel: The historian, K.S. Latourette, wrote, "Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet." In the same way, anthropologist Sejourne calls the Pale God of Native America "... the greatest figure in the history of the New World." What are some of the distinctive parallels between the two?
5. Here, in the city of Tulum, the motif of the "Descending God" is seen everywhere. To the Maya He was often known as Itzamná. Above Him is the figure of Hunab Ku, Father and Unknowable God.

In Alma 5:18-19 we read, "For behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth. And behold, he shall be born of Mary at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel ..."

Now listen to the tradition of the Karavis Maya, as told by anthropologist Karena Shields: "We are the Maya. We came from the east, we came out of the morning ... Hunab Ku, the All-God, was the only one who knew. He saw, and sent Itzamná his son to earth to teach man Itzamná was made into child and then man, with a hand that blessed, and in turn the earth blessed him."

6. In 3 Nephi 5 we read that Jesus taught the necessity of baptism and how it should be performed. Diego de Landa, the 16th century historian of the Maya, wrote in his book, *An Account of Things in Yucatan*, which is the bible of Maya students: "There is no baptism in any part of the Indies except Yucatan, where it is even known by a phrase that means 'to be born again' ... We have been unable to discover the origin, but it is a thing which has always existed among them and which and which they hold in such veneration that no one failed to receive it."
7. I am proud of de Landa's confirming note about baptism in America, but as a good Catholic bishop, his translation of the Mayan term was a little prejudicial. The Mayan term is *oc ha*, submersed in water, clearly what Jesus taught in the Book of Mormon.
8. In 3 Nephi 8 we read, "I see that your faith is sufficient, that I should heal you. And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth, with their sick, and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all they that were afflicted in any manner, and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him;"

9. In his book, *Ancient Cities of the New World*, Charney wrote that to Itzamná were brought "... the sick, the halt, and the dead, and he healed and restored them all to life by the touch of his hand"

10. A number of prophets whose writings appear in the Book of Mormon prophesied of the crucifixion of the Savior. Can such a story be found in the lore of Native Americans? Almost all the tribes of Mesoamerica have such a story in their traditions.

11. The Bishop of Chiapas, in the land of the ancient Maya, writes: "About the Son, they say 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."

12. Now some might focus in on the thought that he was tied to the cross, rather than nailed. We must remember that this is a Lamanite tradition, handed down by word of mouth for centuries before it was repeated to the Spanish priests. Had the story been letter perfect, we might suspect it had been learned from contact with the Spanish. But as it stands, it is viable evidence that indigenous peoples were acquainted with the Book of Mormon account of both the crucifixion and the resurrection.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Internal evidences come from the actual written pages of the book itself. They might include such things as the literary style employed, the grammatical techniques used, the use of proper names, idioms and syntax (or the way words are put together to form phrases or sentences). Within the pages of the Book of Mormon there are literally thousands of such internal proofs that the book is exactly what it claims to be, an ancient Semitic record written by a Semitic people. In this study we shall consider but four of these types of internal evidence.

1. The Book of Mormon opens with a description of the type and style of writing we shall find within its pages: "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father, and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days -- nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days; yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. (1 Nephi 1:1)"

2. If this be true, one should find many examples of Hebrew grammatical construction, idioms of speech and literary styles within the pages of the Book of Mormon. In reality, there is scarcely a page which does not exhibit dozens of them. We shall examine but one example of Hebrew grammatical construction, one Hebrew idiom and one ancient Hebrew literary style.

3. Let's consider an example of Hebrew grammar first. One prominent peculiarity of the ancient Hebrew grammar found in the Bible is the frequent use of the conjunction "and", both in beginning a sentence and in the listing of a series of words within the sentence. Theirs is like the simple speech of children and is not acceptable in English usage. Let's consider an example of Hebrew writing from the Bible and compare it with the grammatical style used by the authors of the Book of Mormon.

4. From Genesis 4:35 we read this: "And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, **and** herds, **and** silver, **and** gold, **and** menservants, **and** maidservants, **and** camels, and asses."

Now from the Book of Mormon, in Enos 1:34 we read, "**And** it came to pass that the people of Nephi did till the land, and raise all manner of grain, **and** of fruit, **and** flocks of herds,

and flocks of all manner of cattle, of every kind, and goats, and wild goats, and also many horses.”

Each of the underlined “ands” would have been omitted by an author tutored in the English language.

5. Now let’s consider a Hebrew idiom found often in the Bible. An idiom can be defined as “an accepted phrase, construction, or expression contrary to the usual patterns of the language...”

The idiom we shall look at is the Hebrew “*hinneh*”:

6. *Hinneh* is the Hebrew word for “lo”, “behold” or “see”. It is used in Hebrew for pointing out something - persons, things, places or actions. In English usage it is considered unnecessary and is rarely used.

In the minor prophets of the Old Testament, written by ten authors on 31 pages I found the *hinneh*, translated as “behold” or “lo”, used 51 times for an average usage of 1.6 times per page.

In the Book of Mormon the 31 pages from page 193 through page 224 were written by nine authors. Here the terms “lo” or “behold” were used 57 times for an average usage of 1.9 times per page. The almost identical usage of this Hebrew idiom point to writing by authors versed in the Hebrew language. Many other Hebrew idioms, such as the commonly used “and it came to pass”, now discovered to have been used in ancient Mayan writings as well, point to the validity of Nephi’s opening statement and the genuineness of the Book of Mormon as an ancient Semitic record.

7. Now let’s turn to a literary style used by the ancient Hebrews. Within the pages of the Bible this style is frequently seen, even after being translated into the English language, in both Old and New Testaments. The literary style, called chiasmus, consists of a statement, or a series of statements, which contain two or more parts; for example, a and b. This is followed by a restatement of these words, or thoughts, in reverse order - b and a. Let’s consider an example from the Old Testament first and then the New Testament:

so he shall **open**, and none shall **shut**;
and he shall **shut**, and none shall **open**.

- Isaiah 22:22

Often outlined in this manner: A many that are **first**

B shall be **last**

B’ and the **last**

A’ shall be **first**. - Matthew 19:30

8. Let us be reminded that this ancient literary style used by Hebrew writers has gone unrecognized for almost two millennia. When Jerusalem was overthrown by the Roman legions, turned into a Roman capital and Israel made off limits to Jewish people, this literary style was lost to the world until late in the 19th century, long after the Book of Mormon had been published. It has just been the last few decades that the style has achieved some world-wide recognition. In 1972 Samuel Bagster & Sons published *The Companion Bible*. This Bible is written in a way to show clearly the ancient Jewish literary styles of Parallelism, Poetic Patterns and Chiasmus (Show Joel’s Bible).

9. In their Introduction, the Bible’s authors refer to these ancient literary styles as “The Structures of the Books”. Then they make these statements: “They give, not a mere Analysis evolved from the Text by human ingenuity, but a Symmetrical Exhibition of the Word itself, which may be discerned by the humblest reader of the Sacred Text, and seen to be one of the most important evidences of the Divine Inspiration of its words.

“For these Structures constitute a remarkable phenomenon peculiar to Divine Revelation; and are not found outside it in any other form of known literature.” - page viii

10. I, for one, wish to thank the editors of *The Companion Bible* for their endorsement of the Book of Mormon as Divine Revelation for, you see, it is filled from cover to cover with this ancient literary style known only to ancient Hebrews until long after the publication of the Book of Mormon. We are looking at a simple chiasmus from the Book of Mormon:

A they were made manifest unto the **prophet**,

B by the voice of the **Spirit**:

B' For by the **Spirit**

A' are all things made known unto the **prophets**,

- (1 Nephi 7:3,4)

11. This chiasm is a very simple one. Many chiasms found in the Book of Mormon are far more complex, having many parts. There are many instances where an entire chapter, or section of the book, is presented in a chiasmic style, where the words, phrases or ideas which appear in the first half are repeated in a balanced way in the second half. The authors of the Book of Mormon were skilled artisans in the use of chiasmus. No one would dare to suggest that the unlettered youth, Joseph Smith, could have chanced upon such a unique literary style and developed it to this extent. This constitutes one more indisputable piece of evidence that the Book of Mormon is exactly what it has always claimed to be, a record of God's dealings with a branch of the house of Israel.

12. Following this chiasm from the Book of Mormon appears another:

A Oh **Heart of Heaven**,

B and once it had been **created**,

C the **earth**,

D the **mountains** and valleys,

E the paths of the waters were **divided**

F and they proceeded to twist along among the hills.

E' so the rivers then became more **divided**

D' as the great **mountains** were appearing.

C' And thus was the creation of the **earth**

B' when it was **created** by him

A' who is the **Heart of Heaven**.

This one is found in an ancient Mayan book called the *Popol Vuh* (**Show it: Read title**). Research by scholar, Allen Christenson, with 37 ancient Mayan writings has revealed that sixteen of them contained this ancient Hebrew literary style. That descendants of the Book of Mormon peoples still employed this ancient literary style at the time of the Conquest is an added evidence that their ancestors came from ancient Israel, as their traditions so clearly state.

SUMMARY:

1. We have shown that recent archaeological discoveries demonstrate that the Book of Mormon has long portrayed a more accurate description of the social organization of the ancient inhabitants of Mesoamerica than previous understandings and established archaeological positions. (More such evidence will be presented in the next lesson, entitled Criticisms of the Book of Mormon.) The Book of Mormon stands firm and on solid ground in its description of ancient Mesoamerica, while men of science must regularly adjust their position to conform to the new discoveries.

2. Native American traditions demonstrate that the Book of Mormon presents an accurate picture of ancient American culture, religion and thought. Internal evidences from the pages of the Book of Mormon, itself, firmly substantiate that it was an ancient record written by a people well-versed in ancient Hebraic styles of writing. This heritage was passed down to their descendants until the time of the Conquest by the Spanish, and their subsequent destruction of that culture.

3. Conforming, as it does, to scientific discoveries and Native American traditions, there can be nothing unreasonable about the narrative of the book.
4. These constitute the recognized criteria for determining if a book is really of ancient origin. The Book of Mormon passes on all counts.