Many critics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that there cannot be any scripture added to the Bible, thus making the Book of Mormon blasphemous. However, many scriptures refer to other books of scriptures, including the Book of Mormon and other records that are not currently available to the world. Monte S. Nyman discusses here the plausibility of receiving modern revelation and scripture from God. He also suggests that by studying the Book of Mormon and other scriptures in conjunction with the Bible, Latter-day Saints can better prepare for the day when lost records are restored.
In the 171 years since the Book of Mormon was first published, much emphasis has been placed on why it should be read: it is another testament of Jesus Christ, it is a vital part of the restoration of the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ, and it has power to transform the lives of those who read and follow its teachings, to name a few key reasons.

However, there seems to have been little emphasis placed on how the Book of Mormon is preparing us for additional scriptural records of great worth that have been prophesied to come forth.\(^1\)
Some people object to the Book of Mormon on the grounds that the Bible is the one and only word of God and quote from the last chapter of the last book in the Bible to support their position:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18–19; emphasis added)

Although the book of Revelation was placed last in the Bible compilation, it was possibly not the last biblical book written. John’s epistles are believed to have been written later than his revelation, and Peter’s second epistle is also thought by many to have been written much later than the other books in the New Testament. A careful analysis of the quoted verses shows that John is referring only to his revelation and not to the whole Bible. Both verses 18 and 19 refer to “this book,” the Revelation of St. John itself, and to prophecy within it. The book of Revelation is introduced with a similar singular reference: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:3; emphasis added). Of course, the Bible as a book did not exist in John’s day.

As Moroni abridged the records of the Jaredites, the Lord told him that the revelations written by John would be understood when the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon plates comes forth (see Ether 4:16). Thus it is clear that the Lord intended to give more revelation than what he gave to John. A similar statement by Moses suggests the same thing. Rather than preclude further revelation, Moses indicated that nothing should be added to or taken away from his words: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2, emphasis added; see 29:20). Most Bible scholars would agree with the interpretation that both John and Moses were referring to their own work, although lay readers who have not stud-

ied the scriptures carefully enough might be misled by the broader argument.

In a revelation dated 6 April 1830, the day the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, the Lord revealed many things about the Book of Mormon: Joseph Smith Jr.’s preparation for the work of translation; how he translated the plates; the book’s contents, purposes, and eternal effect upon mankind; and what doctrines are learned from the book (see D&C 20:5–36). Near the conclusion of this part of the revelation, the Lord declared:

And we know that these things are true and according to the revelations of John, neither adding to, nor diminishing from the prophecy of his book, the holy scriptures, or the revelations of God which shall come hereafter by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, the voice of God, or the ministering of angels. (D&C 20:35)
Perhaps in anticipation of a typical objection to the acceptance of the Book of Mormon, the Lord inspired the elders of the church (see D&C 20:16) to declare in the above passage that the Book of Mormon does not add to or diminish from the Bible or other scriptures.

Other records given originally by revelation are destined to come forth, and the Book of Mormon will not add to or diminish from them or from revelation thereafter. The ninth article of faith declares:

>“We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

According to the Book of Mormon, the Lord’s “work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever” (2 Nephi 29:9). Nephi, son of Lehi, had been shown all things until the end of the world but was told not to write what he saw, because the apostle named John, undoubtedly referring to the author of the book of Revelation, was to write them (see 1 Nephi 14:18–27). Nephi was also told of others who had been shown all things and had written them: “And also others who have been, to them hath he [the Lord] shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel” (1 Nephi 14:26). These records were in addition to both Nephi’s own writings, which are included in the Book of Mormon, and the writings of the apostle named John.

In addition to mentioning the writings of those prophets who were shown the end of the world, the Book of Mormon refers to still other records that are preserved and will come forth. Evidence of their existence has also been given in these latter days.

In a discourse delivered in Farmington, Utah, on 17 June 1877, President Brigham Young told of an incident in the life of Oliver Cowdery that Oliver had not told publicly. President Young’s motive for telling it then was for his brethren and sisters, as well as the children, to grow in “an understanding of some things that seem to be entirely hidden from the human family.” The incident follows:

Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates. Joseph did not translate all of the plates; there was a portion of them sealed, which you can learn from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more plates than probably many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls. The first time they went there the sword of Laban hung upon the wall; but when they went again it had been taken down and laid upon the table across the gold plates; it was unsheathed, and on it was written these words:

>“This sword will never be sheathed again until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and his Christ.”

Some of the records that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw in the cave were undoubtedly among those that are mentioned in the Book of Mormon as records yet to come forth.
account. Two more records are also mentioned, but nothing is said about their future availability.

What is known of these records is analyzed below. The order in which they are discussed here reflects neither the sequence of their coming forth nor their relative importance to the church or to the world. Rather, they are discussed in the order of their mention in the Book of Mormon: (1) the plates of brass, (2) the plates of Nephi, (3) the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon plates, (4) the record of the lost ten tribes, (5) the 24 Jaredite gold plates, (6) the Lamanite records, and (7) other Jaredite records.

The Plates of Brass

After Lehi’s sons returned from Jerusalem with the plates of brass, Lehi studied their content and was filled with the Spirit, and began to prophesy concerning his seed—

That these plates of brass should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who were of his seed.

Wherefore, he said that these plates of brass should never perish; neither should they be dimmed any more by time. And he prophesied many things concerning his seed.

(1 Nephi 5:17–19)

Alma later verifies, to his son Helaman, the prophecy that the plates of brass would go to “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people,” and he notes that the plates had been of great worth and benefit to their people (see Alma 37:1–19). The testimony of Alma also verifies what Nephi said: “Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them with us, as we journeyed in the wilderness towards the land of promise” (1 Nephi 5:22). The plates of brass will certainly be of great worth to future generations as well, though in a different way. For example, while the Book of Mormon continues to serve as a second witness to the truth of the holy scriptures (see D&C 20:11), the plates of brass will serve as a third witness to the Bible and also will testify that the Book of Mormon is a witness to the Bible. They will make known many of the plain and precious parts that had been lost from the Bible up to the time of Jeremiah (see 1 Nephi 13:26–29). This knowledge will come in a different way than did the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and Joseph Smith Translation, for the actual ancient records of such prophets as Zenos, Zenoch, and Neum will be restored (see 1 Nephi 19:10; Alma 33:3–16; Helaman 8:19–20; 3 Nephi 10:16). Those records will also restore plain and precious parts of our biblical books that have been altered, as Joseph Smith said, by “ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests.”

Thus Latter-day Saints will have their belief in the Bible verified in many ways.

The Plates of Nephi

Nephi first mentions his larger plates as he completes the abridgment of his father’s record (see 1 Nephi 1:17). On the larger plates, he gives a full account of the history of his people (see 1 Nephi 9:1–2). Mormon abridged these plates into what now comprises the books of Mosiah through 4 Nephi (see Words of Mormon 1:1–3). As Mormon made this abridgment, he noted that he could not write even a hundredth part of the teachings of Jesus (see 3 Nephi 26:6). He acknowledged that he had made his abridgment from many records that were in his possession, and he wrote subheadings under the titles of the individual
books and within the various books of the Book of Mormon to credit those sources.  

Mormon further said that the (large) plates of Nephi contained “the more part” of what Jesus had taught and that what he himself had written—“a lesser part”—would come forth from the Gentiles (see 3 Nephi 26:7–8). The abridgment of Nephi’s record was to try the faith of the Lamanites and, more broadly, the Lord’s people in the latter days: “If it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. . . . The Lord [said]: I will try the faith of my people” (vv. 9, 11). This suggests that highly valuable contents of the larger plates of Nephi will come forth when a certain portion of the Lamanites, as they are known today, and other church members accept the fulness of the gospel as found in the Book of Mormon.

Having a fuller account concerning the Nephites will be beneficial from a doctrinal and historical point of view and will provide greater insight into the correct interpretation of some of the scriptures we already have. Jesus expounded on the scriptures written on the plates of brass, the equivalent of much of our Old Testament. He also quoted and expounded some of the writings of Malachi that were not on the plates of brass because they were written after Lehi and his group left Jerusalem. The Savior said “it was wisdom in him [the Father] that they [“these scriptures,” or Malachi 3–4] should be given unto future generations” (see 3 Nephi 26:1–2). Mormon recorded those two chapters of Malachi but did not record Jesus’ commentary on them, other than to write the following:

And he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory—yea, even all things which should come upon the face of the earth, even until the elements should melt with fervent heat, and the earth should be wrapt together as a scroll, and the heavens and the earth should pass away;

And even unto the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues shall stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. (3 Nephi 26:3–4)

We certainly look forward to receiving the full record of Jesus’ ministry among the Nephites. What greater commentary on Malachi and other Old Testament writings could there be than from him who was the revelator, the Jehovah, the God of those people? (1 Nephi 19:10; Mosiah 7:19–20; 1 Corinthians 4:10).

The Sealed Portion

The sealed portion of the plates was first mentioned by Nephi (see 2 Nephi 27:6–10). When the plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, he was told not to translate the sealed portion. Both Nephi and Moroni commented on the contents of the sealed part and gave similar testimonies that supplement each other. Nephi, quoting Isaiah, said it contained “a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof” (2 Nephi 27:7; see v. 10). Moroni described the sealed portion more specifically, saying it contained the vision shown unto the brother of Jared of “all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be . . . unto the ends of the earth.” The Lord commanded the brother of Jared to write the things he had seen and to seal them up until the Lord’s own time, “until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; . . . that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people” (Ether 3:25–27; 4:1). After the Lord’s people had all dwindled in unbelief and there were none left but Lamanites who had rejected the gospel, Moroni was to seal up the plates again (see Ether 4:3–5).

Moroni told us that the sealed part should not go forth unto the Gentiles until they had repented “of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.” He wrote further that when “they shall exercise faith in me [the Lord], saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even unto the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are” (Ether 4:6–7).

Nephi, through Isaiah, commented further on when the sealed plates will be revealed. “And the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ; and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be even unto the end of the earth” (2 Nephi 27:11). How these words will be read from the house-tops by the power of Christ is not specified, but with today’s miracles of radio, television, satellite, and the
Internet, it is easy to see how it might happen (compare D&C 88:5–13). Nephi, through Isaiah, further testified that these things would “not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people” (2 Nephi 27:8). He gave instructions to the translator (Joseph Smith) to “touch not the things which are sealed, for I [the Lord] will bring them forth in mine own due time” (2 Nephi 27:21).

Faith like that of the brother of Jared, the requirement to bring forth the sealed plates, might certainly be termed “a perfect faith” and calls to mind the words of Jacob: “And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God” (2 Nephi 9:23). Perfect faith cannot be exercised without accepting the fact that God (Jesus Christ) “knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:20), which is the context of Jacob’s above statement. The sealed portion will establish once and for all that God does know all things from the beginning and has revealed them periodically to his prophets so that the people will not give credit to idols or men for his great works on the earth (see 1 Nephi 19:23; 20:3–7; Isaiah 48:3–7). The challenge to people today is to accept by faith the foreknowledge of God and recognize his hand in all things (see D&C 59:21). Through faith we can place our hand in his and walk with him as he would have us walk. Our faith will be rewarded when the sealed record is brought forth.

The Record of the Ten Tribes

Nephi, son of Lehi, quotes the Lord in commanding all men to keep a scriptural record as a testimony for the time when the nations come together (see 2 Nephi 29:1–11). As examples of how these testimonies will come together, the Lord refers to the Jews, the Nephites, and the other tribes of the house of Israel:

For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.

And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the

The 24 Gold Plates

Moroni abridged the record of the Jaredites from 24 plates of gold found by the people of Limhi (see Mosiah 8:8–9; Ether 1:2). The events of more than 30 generations of the Jaredites (see Ether 1:6–32) are abridged into just 31 pages in our present book of Ether in the Book of Mormon, and about 8 of those 31 are editorial comments by Moroni (see Ether 1:1–5; 2:9–12; 3:17; 5:6; 8:20–26; 12:6–40; 14:25). The full account of these 24 plates will be available when they are obtained. Moroni states that “whoso findeth them, the same will have power that he may get the full account” (Ether 1:4). This full account should greatly add to our knowledge of the Jaredites.

Because Moroni recognized that the scriptural account covering events from the time of Adam to the great tower was had among the Jews, he did not include the first part of the Jaredite record in his abridgment of the 24 plates (see Ether 1:3–4; Mosiah 28:17; Alma 37:21). The first 10 chapters of Genesis, up to the time of the Tower of Babel, cover nearly 2,000 years in about 16 pages. Certainly there is much more to be revealed concerning the dealings of Christ with the people who lived during that time. The Pearl
While these treasures could refer to the records of the lost tribes, they could also include the genealogical records that will be brought to the temples of Ephraim and enable the lost tribes to receive their ordinances, the crowning ones being their endowments and sealings for themselves and their dead ancestors. Of Great Price gives us much additional information, particularly concerning Enoch and his people and Abraham; but there is still much more to be added. To have “power that he may get the full account” suggests that there is more information contained in the Jaredite record than was in the Jewish one. At least the accounts of Enoch and Abraham will be verified and perhaps further clarified. When the 24 gold plates are brought forth and translated, certainly much light will be shed on God’s work during the first 2,000 years of the earth’s habitation.

The full account should also reveal much more about the many mighty men of God who served the Lord among the Jaredites (see Ether 12:19). The brother of Jared could not be kept without the veil and became mighty in writing (see Ether 12:20–27). The 24 plates may contain his writings. The prophet Ether made great and mighty prophecies that were not recorded by Moroni (see Ether 13:13), many of which may have been recorded on the Jaredite record. There were, as stated above, others who attained similar greatness, but Moroni did not mention them.

Another purpose of the 24 plates was given by Alma when he explained to his son Helaman that the plates should be kept “that the mysteries and the works of darkness . . . may be made manifest unto this people” (Alma 37:21). Although it was revealed in the abridged plates of Nephi that the people’s destruction was caused by the works of darkness, the Lord, through Alma, said, “I will bring to light all their secrets and abominations, unto every nation that shall hereafter possess the land” (see vv. 23–25). The Book of Mormon has partially accomplished this; however, Alma was told to keep the Jaredites’ secret oaths, covenants, agreements, signs, and wonders from his people lest they fall into darkness and be destroyed (see v. 27). Moroni followed the same advice in the Jaredite abridgment (see Ether 8:18–20). A primary purpose of Moroni’s abridgment of the 24 plates was to warn the latter-day nations of secret combinations that caused the downfall of the Nephites and the Jaredites (see Ether 8:21–26). His abridgment is a second witness within the Book of Mormon that it “contains a record of a fallen people” (D&C 20:9).

“These things [see D&C 107:53–56] were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time” (v. 57). We do not have all the record of Enoch, but the 24 Jaredite plates may confirm what Joseph said about Adam, Enoch, and others.
As people become more righteous, Satan will be bound; thus his works may be made known more fully without the danger of destruction that was the case anciently. The knowledge of the abominations that bring curses on the land will serve as a deterrent to darkness rather than as a means for evil men to gain personal power.

Other Jaredite Records

The daughter of Jared referred to “the record which our fathers brought across the great deep[,] Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory?” (Ether 8:9). This record does not seem to be the same as the 24 plates of gold translated into what Moroni called the book of Ether (see Ether 1:2), although the first part of Ether does speak of the creation and the time from Adam to the great tower (Ether 1:3). There is no mention that this record would be preserved for the last days, but it was durable enough to be available in the fifth generation of the Jaredites. Since the Jaredites kept records on metallic plates, it is possible that the record that the daughter of Jared spoke of is still in existence and will come forth and be translated at some future day. It is even possible that Giddianhi, the leader of the Gadianton robbers, had in mind some version of that record when he said that his secret society had information “of ancient date” that had been “handed down unto us” (3 Nephi 3:9). The subject of this article would be incomplete if these records were not at least mentioned as a possibility.

Our Faith Must Be Tried

These first five records—and possibly more—are held in store for the Lord’s people. When will they come forth? Mormon said that he wrote a lesser part of the things that Jesus taught the people for “the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles.” He said further that it was expedient that they should have the lesser part first, to try their faith, and that if they would “be-
lieve these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.” To those who would not believe, “the greater things [would] be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.” Mormon was about to write all that was “engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people.” Consequently, Mormon wrote only the things that were commanded of the Lord (see 3 Nephi 26:8–12).

In concluding his father’s record, Moroni gave an additional promise of greater things to be revealed and also warned against condemning the record:

And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these. Behold, I am Moroni; and were it possible, I would make all things known unto you. (Mormon 8:12)

Although Moroni does not say that the greater things will be manifest through the coming forth of records, that may be implied. As he continues, Moroni describes in great detail the day when the records will be restored, and he warns those who would seek to destroy the work of the Lord.

Thus, the beginning point for the Latter-day Saints today is to accept and use the Book of Mormon and other records (the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Joseph Smith Translation) that the Lord has given us as companion volumes to the Bible. The Lord has promised that when we make full use of the records we now have, he will give us many more records that will greatly benefit us individually and collectively. These records will be consistent with the Book of Mormon in neither adding to nor diminishing from the doctrine and messages of the Revelation of John or of other scriptures.
nished a product similar in appearance (see Lechman, “Pre-Columbian Surfaces and Metallography”; John Worth, Shelly Holder and Gay Stresser-Pearsan, “The Haustat Region: A Second Focus for the Production of Bronze Alloys in Ancient Mesoamerica,” Science 257, 28 August 1992, 1215). Moreover, Nephi's original plates might have been of different composition than Mormon's plates.

The Book of Mormon Plates

Janne M. Sjodahl

Like the article itself, the following notes are as they appeared in the original article from the April 1925 Improvement Era, with the exception that publication data has been added in brackets.

1. This is quoted from (Gregg Thomas), The Prophet of Palmyra (New York: J. B. Alden, 1896) and may or may not be authentic.

2. An excellent little book by George Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883).

3. The American edition, published at Nauvoo, 1842, has 566 pages, 5½ by 3½ inches, including the margins. See History of the Prophet Joseph, by his mother, Lucy Smith, pp. 85 and 105. The account related must have been given by the Prophet himself to his mother. (The pages cited correspond to the 1902 edition of this book, revised by George A. Smith and Elias Smith and published by the Improvement Era.)


Epigraphic Considerations on Janne Sjodahl’s Experiment with Nephi’s Writing

Janne M. Sjodahl


2. “A New Weight from Hamath and Trade Relations with the South in the Ninth–Eighth Centuries bc,” in The World of the Aramaeans II, ed. P. M. Michele Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 133–35.

The Book of Mormon Art of Arnold Friberg, “Painter of Scripture” Vern Swanson


4. Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001), SMA Library.

5. Ted Schwarz, Arnold Friberg: The Passion of a Modern Master (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northland, 1985), 34. Schwarz has a background in general historical and religious study and magazine and book illustration.

6. Margaret J. Butler, Special Education Coordinator, Church Education System, Salt Lake Valley North Area, transcript of an interview with Friberg (3 June 1986). This and other quotes from the transcript were modified by Friberg upon reviewing this article in manuscript form in February 2001.

7. Ibid.


10. Ibid.


15. It was exhibited in December 2000 at Williams Fine Art in Salt Lake City on the occasion of a show of Friberg’s work.

The Journey of an 1830 Book of Mormon Gerald E. Jones

1. Journal of Samuel Smith, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

2. I have obtained three other 1830 books that closely match my 1830 Book of Mormon and Bible not only in the type of binding but also in the size and placement of the lines of type on the spines. I have not seen a study of book binding (process, materials, suppliers) in America in that era. That study still awaits the work of a serious student.

3. Journal of Orson Hyde, Historical Department, Archives of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

4. The only other notations in the book are by Melvin Wilbur. On the top of the first blank page is his very legible signature and beneath it, in two lines, the words “Providence, R.I.” The other notation is found at the top of page 574 (the title page for the book of Mormon), where he wrote, again in two lines, “Melvin Wilbur Book.”

5. This article was prepared using observations by Curt Bench (Benchmark Books), Madelyn Garrett (University of Utah Marriott Library Special Collections), Richard Horsey (Pioneer Books), Joan Ney (Sam Weller’s Bookshop), Ken Sanders (Ken Sanders Rare Books), Kent Walgrove (Scallywag’s Used and Rare Books), and others who choose to remain anonymous.

Other Ancient American Records Yet to Come Forth

Monte S. Nyman

1. In A Guide to Publications on the Book of Mormon: A Selected Annotated Bibliography (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1996), there is no mention of books or articles about future records to come forth as promised in the Book of Mormon: also time ago I published a book with a chapter on the subject (chapter 3 of Two Sticks One in Thine Hand [Salt Lake City: Gen-Dex Press, 1973], 139–50). Although this publication was included in the FARMS bibliography, the subject of the above chapter was not annotated. Perhaps this subject has been treated elsewhere, but not to my knowledge, although excepts from an unpublished manuscript that briefly outlined some of these records were printed in the RLDS publication The Witness (winter 1992).

2. See Henry J. Cadbury, “The New Testament and Early Christian Literature,” The Interpreter’s Bible, ed. George Arthur Buttrick et al. Although I do not agree with the conclusions of the article cited here, it represents the thinking of many Bible scholars regarding the dating of Peter and why scholars reject the authorship of Peter’s epistle. The claim that the epistles of John were written after his gospel is much more widely accepted and is probably correct. The dating of John’s epistles also confirmed in the article cited above.

3. The brother of Jared was one of those who had written his vision of the end of the world. The vision was recorded in the sealed portion of the plates given to Joseph Smith. These will be discussed later.

4. Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 19:38. The incident is quoted as evidence of the existence of plates and not as a discussion of Book of Mormon geography. Whether the cave was on New York or a vision given to Joseph and Oliver is irrelevant to the discussion here.

5. The preceding references are to quotations that were obviously taken from the plates of brass and included in the writings of Nephi or Mormon’s abridgment.


7. The subheadings of the Book of Mormon books were part of the text written by Mormon and translated by Joseph Smith, while the synopses of chapters were written by various modern-day apostles as new editions were printed. For examples of the subheadings written by Mormon, see the major subheading under the titles of Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi, and 4 Nephi; and for examples of subheadings within various books, see the italicized comments preceding Mosiah 9, 23, Alma 5, 9, 17, 21, 36, 38, 39, 45; Helaman 7, 13; and 3 Nephi 11.

8. Jesus also taught more in Jerusalem than is recorded in the New Testament. As John wrote his book, he declared, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen” (John 21:25).

9. Moskovitz told Joseph Smith that the fulness of the gospel was found in the Book of Mormon plates (Joseph Smith—History 1:34). The Doctrine and Covenants repeatedly states that the Book of Mormon contained the fulness of the gospel (see D&C 1:22–23; 14:10; 29:7, 35:12, 17, 39:41, 42:12; 45:28; 66:2). For a definition of the fulness of the gospel given within the Book of Mormon, see 3 Nephi 27:13–21.

10. Some consider 2 Nephi 27 to be partly from the text of Isaiah 29 with Nephi’s comments interspersed. Because Isaiah 29 in the Joseph Smith translation contains almost the exact wording of 2 Nephi 27, I accept the whole chapter of 2 Nephi 27 as the original text of Isaiah except for the introductory verse and a slight paraphrasing of verses 2 and 3. 2 Nephi 28 also implies that Nephi had concluded his quoting of Isaiah and was now adding his comments.

11. See Sidney B. Sperry, Doctrine and Covenants Compendium (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 47. Nephi was probably thinking of how “in that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, and for an inheritance of the people” (Isaiah 28:5). The context of that chapter is Ephraim, or northern Israel, in the day of its wickedness prior to being taken into captivity by Assyria in 721 A.C. Typical of Old Testament prophecy, a message of doom (captivity) is followed by a message of hope referring to the restoration of the latter days as “in that day.” The residue is probably the remnants of the tribes of the north that would someday return (see Isaiah 6:13, 7:3 (the name Shur-jahab means “a remnant shall return”).

The “crown of glory” suggests the temple endowment and sealings in other scriptural passages. Enoch was commanded to ascend Mount Sinai, where he was “clothed upon with glory” (see Moses 7:2–3). President Joseph Fielding Smith believed that Peter, James, and John received their endowments on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1–9) when they were given the keys of the kingdom (see his Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999], 2:165). The Lord has often used the mountain for his holy place when there were no temples available (as he did with Moses in Exodus 24:12–13:18 and with Elijah in 1 Kings 19). While we have no direct scriptural statement that the “rich treasure” mentioned in D&C 8:13 is genealogical records, the above scriptures suggest that such records would constitute at least a part of that treasure. One of the most significant purposes of the latter-day restoration is the
building of temples to reveal the ordinances of the temple for both the living and the dead (see Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 224, 307–8, 323).

12. To get the full account implies having the power of the Lord. Joseph Smith was given “power from on high” by the men which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon” (D&C 20:8; see D&C 113:3–4). Since the 24 plates are in an unknown language, the translator must have the power of God to get the full account. Another implication, although unstated, is that the translator will be led to find the plates. Moroni definitely defined Joseph Smith to “find” the Book of Mormon plates (Joseph Smith—History 1:48–54). Limhi’s people found the gold plates of the Jaredites (see Ether 1:2; Mosiah 21:27, 28:11) that Ether had hidden in a manner that they might be found (see Ether 15:33). Wasn’t the Lord involved in their finding those plates? We can expect that the Lord, in his own due time, will lead someone of his choosing to find the 24 plates.

13. While Joseph the Prophet was translating the Book of Mormon, many records have been kept and preserved. Many records have been kept and preserved throughout the world for the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things in Christ will be gathered together (see Ephesians 1:10–9). This article acknowledges these many accounts which have focused only on those mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

Lehi’s Altar and Sacrifice in the Wilderness
David Ralph Sewell

1. Unfortunately there is very little information about the Nephite temples in the Book of Mormon. The most complete study of the Nephite temples to date is John W. Welch, “The Temples of the Book of Mormon: The Temples at the Cities of Nephi, Zarahemla, and Bountiful,” in Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994).

2. For a brief discussion of some of the issues relating to the sacrifice of Lehi and the Nephites beyond the injunctions in the Book of Mormon, see D&C 8:1, 11; 9:2).


6. “As a prophet, Lehi held the Melchizedek Priesthood and by that authority offered sacrifice (Teachings, p. 181). The Book of Mormon reveals no attempt to elaborate upon the nature or types of their offerings. The Aaronic Priesthood was the province of the tribe of Levi, and thus was not taken by the Nephites to America. It would appear, therefore, that the sacrifices performed by the Lehite colony were carried out under the direction of the higher priesthood, which comprehends all the lesser” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987], 1:31).

7. McConkie and Millet further explain: “A covenant-centered religion required a covenant sanctuary. The fact that the Nephites constructed a temple suggested that all remnants of Israel, wherever they had been scattered, if they possessed the priesthood would have done likewise” (ibid., 1:223).


10. Minaeamin Haran, Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel (Oxford: Clar- endon, 1978), 459–64. This commen- tary is highly recommended as a model presentation of biblical scholarship to an educated lay audience.

11. Ibid., 20–42.

12. This is the prevailing view among modern scholars. In the classic docu- mentary hypothesis, the literary strand D—chiefly the book of Deuteronomy— is dated to the middle of the seventh century a.c. While most scholars who hold this view agree that there is older material in Deuteronomy, they believe that the book in its present form was edited in the seventh century a.c. The laws were first applied in entirety by King Josiah. For a balanced and reconstructive presentation of this see Tigay, Deuteronomy, xix–xxvi, and Moshe Weissfield, “Deuteronomy, Book of,” Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 218–83.


14. Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh (1 Chron. 7:10).

15. The priesthood that Alma held is described as “the high priesthood of the holy order of God” (Alma 4:20; compare 3:1–12, which describes the priesthood of the Nephites as the Melchizedek Priesthood). Responding to the question of whether the Melchizedek Priesthood was taken away when Moses died, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “All Priesthood is Melchizedek; but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion which brought Moses to speak with God face to face was taken away; but that which brought the ministry of angels remained. All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained to and himself” (“Translations of the Teachings of Joseph Smith, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 180). He also taught: “What was the power of Melchizedek? ‘Twas not the Priesthood of Aaron which administers in outward ordinances, and the offering of sacrifices. Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings. In fact, that Priesthood is a perfect law of theology, and stands as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam” (ibid., 322).


