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Ancient Texts in Support of the Book of Mormon

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ANCIENT TEXTS IN SUPPORT OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

John A. Tvedtnes

In recent years it has become more and more clear that elements of the Book of Mormon account have ancient precedents. Some of these elements are attested in ancient texts that were unknown in Joseph Smith's day and could therefore not have been known to him. Typically, these texts are traditional tales passed down from one generation to another until they were written down or are based on now-lost earlier writings. Critics might argue that these are not historical records and therefore cannot be used in support of the Book of Mormon. But this fails to answer how the Book of Mormon came to include so many of the elements known in these texts.

This essay examines some of these elements, describing their sources and how they can help us appreciate the antiquity and historicity of the Book of Mormon account.

Hidden Texts



Joseph Smith said he found the plates from which he translated the Book of Mormon hidden in a stone box buried in the ground and covered by another large stone (see Joseph Smith—History 1:51–52). Though the claim seemed incredible to critics of the day, such discoveries are now considered almost commonplace. In 1945 several leather-bound volumes of gnostic Christian writings from the fifth century A.D. were found at Chenoboskion, Egypt, also known as Nag Hammadi. Their contents included books purportedly composed by some of the early apostles. Like the Book of Mormon, these books had been hidden away in the ground (though they were buried in a large pottery jar instead of a stone box).

Two years later a larger set of documents was found concealed in caves near the Dead Sea. Some of them had been placed inside fired clay pots. In all, fragments of approximately eight hundred separate scrolls were found. These Dead Sea Scrolls included multiple copies of all of the books of the Old Testament except Esther, along with many other ancient religious texts. The scrolls had been written two thousand years ago. The text of one scroll, inscribed on a long copper plate that had been rolled up, described where other books and various treasures had been hidden.

Over the last few years, I have found dozens of stories of ancient records hidden away for future discovery and have recently published a book on the subject.¹ H. Curtis Wright has noted that the burial of metallic records in stone boxes was common in ancient times, particularly in the ancient Near East, where Lehi lived.² In addition, hundreds of other metallic records have been found in

other circumstances.³ Moreover, a number of ancient texts speak about records kept on metallic plates. These sources include 1 *Maccabees* 8:22, the *Cologne Mani Codex*,⁴ the *Apocalypse of Enosh* (cited in the *Cologne Mani Codex*),⁵ and the accounts of the eleventh-century Arab historian al-Thaʿlabī⁶ and the thirteenth-century Arab historian Idrīsī.⁷ With hundreds of examples of ancient texts hidden away for future discovery and hundreds more written on metallic plates, many of them buried in stone boxes, it seems clear that the story of the Book of Mormon has abundant precedent in documents of its time and earlier.

Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Script

Moroni noted that, while his people still used the Hebrew language, Mormon’s abridgment of their records had been written in “reformed Egyptian” (see Mormon 9:32–33). Nephi, whose writings became the pattern for the records constituting the Book of Mormon, wrote: “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. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge” (1 Nephi 1:2–3).

It was not until the twentieth century that ancient Hebrew texts written in Egyptian script became known to scholars. We now have a number of Northwest Semitic texts (Hebrew or related to Hebrew) in Egyptian magical papyri. These are mostly incantations that, instead of being translated, were merely transcribed in hieratic, a cursive or reformed version of the hieroglyphic characters most people think of as Egyptian writing. The underlying language, however, is an early form of Hebrew/Canaanite.⁸ The texts



REFORMED
EGYPTIAN

are found on the London Magical Papyrus (fourteenth century B.C.),⁹ the Harris Magical Papyrus (thirteenth century B.C.),¹⁰ Papyrus Anastasi I (thirteenth century B.C.),¹¹ and Ostrakon 25759 recto (eleventh century B.C.).¹² The latter is interesting because the text on one side is purely Egyptian hieratic, while the text on the other is an early form of Hebrew written in hieratic characters. All of these documents were discovered and translated long after the Book of Mormon was published.

Of particular interest is Amherst Papyrus 63, a document of the fourth century B.C. written in a cursive (reformed) Egyptian script called demotic but whose underlying language is Aramaic, a sister language to Hebrew.¹³ Among the writings included in the religious text is a version of Psalm 20:2–6.¹⁴

An ostrakon uncovered at the ancient Judean site of Arad in 1967 and dating to the time of Lehi has a text that, although written in a combination of ten Egyptian hieratic and seven Hebrew characters, can be read entirely as Egyptian.¹⁵ Other texts of the same time period that commingle Hebrew and Egyptian scripts were discovered during archaeological excavations at Tel Ein-Qudeirah (biblical Kadesh-Barnea), in the Sinai Peninsula near the border of ancient Judah, during the latter half of the 1970s.¹⁶

To most of Joseph Smith's contemporaries, the term *reformed Egyptian* seemed to be so much nonsense. Alexander Campbell, who wrote the first book critical of the Book of Mormon, scoffed at the fact that it had been translated "from the reformed Egyptian!!!"¹⁷ Many critics still suggest, despite long-standing evidence to the contrary, that there is no such thing as "reformed Egyptian" and insist that no

ancient Israelite would have written sacred scripture using Egyptian. We now know the opposite to be true.

The Oldest Bible Texts Fit the Book of Mormon Pattern

It is interesting that the earliest extant manuscripts containing biblical text fit the same pattern as the Book of Mormon. One of these manuscripts was written on small metal scrolls, another was written in a reformed Egyptian script, and a set of biblical manuscripts was concealed for future recovery.¹⁸

The earliest known manuscripts containing biblical text were found in 1980 in a tomb in Jerusalem. Dating from the end of the seventh century B.C. (the time of Lehi), they consisted of two rolled-up silver leaves inscribed with the priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:24–26.¹⁹

The second oldest known manuscript citing a Bible text is the fourth-century B.C. Amherst Papyrus 63, discussed earlier, which includes a quote of Psalm 20:2–6. Though the language of the text is Aramaic (a close relative of Hebrew that the Jews had adopted after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.), it is not written in the Aramaic alphabet but in Egyptian demotic script, a type of cursive or reformed Egyptian.

Third in age among known Bible manuscripts are the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered between the years 1947 and 1956. The oldest of these, a copy of the book of Exodus (denominated 4Q17) discovered in 1948, was written in the middle of the third century B.C. Like the Book of Mormon, the Dead Sea Scrolls were concealed in the earth to come forth at a later time.

The fact that the three earliest known manuscripts with Bible text are, respectively, written on metallic plates,



written in a reformed Egyptian script reflecting an underlying Semitic language, and hidden away for future discovery demonstrates that the Book of Mormon fits an ancient pattern.

Joseph's Garment



In Alma 46 we read that the Nephite chief captain Moroni tore out a piece of his garment, wrote a motto on it, and mounted it as a standard to rally his troops. Soldiers dressed in their armor ran to him, “rending their garments . . . as a covenant” that if they should forsake God, “the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments” (Alma 46:21). They then “cast their [rent] garments at the feet of Moroni” as a sign that if they should “fall into transgression,” God might “cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot” (Alma 46:22).

Taking his cue from this act, Moroni then exhorted his people, referring to them as “a remnant of the seed of Joseph, *whose coat was rent by his brethren into many pieces*” and citing the words of Joseph’s father, Jacob, who, “before his death . . . saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed. And he said—Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself” (Alma 46:23, 24).

The biblical account in Genesis 37 indicates that Joseph’s brothers stripped him of his garment and later dipped it in goat’s blood to make it appear that he had been slain by a wild beast (see Genesis 37:23, 31). It does not say that they tore the garment, though Jacob, upon seeing it,

said that Joseph had been “rent in pieces” by some wild beast (Genesis 37:33).

Aside from Alma 46:23, the only document I know of that clearly indicates that the brothers tore Joseph’s garment is the thirteenth-century collection of earlier Jewish stories known as the *Book of Jasher*: “And they hastened and took Joseph’s coat and tore it, and they killed a kid of the goats and dipped the coat into the blood of the kid, and then trampled it in the dust, and they sent the coat to their father Jacob” (*Jasher* 43:13). One cannot fail to note the parallel with Moroni’s soldiers, who cast their garments down “to be trodden under foot” (Alma 46:22). Since the *Book of Jasher* did not come to Joseph Smith’s attention until it was published in English in 1840, it seems that this medieval Jewish document shares an ancient tradition also found in the Book of Mormon.

The preservation of Joseph’s garment is noted in the *Zênâhu La-Yosêf*, an Ethiopic manuscript from the Dabra Bizon monastery, in which Benjamin, eating with the Egyptian official he did not yet know to be his brother Joseph, told him of his lost brother and of his father Jacob’s mourning: “He looks at his [Joseph’s] garment stained in his blood. He puts it in front of him, and soaks it every day with the tears of his eyes.”²⁰ According to a Muslim tradition reported by al-Kisa’i, Jacob, before sending his sons to Egypt for the second time, gave “Joseph’s shirt to Benjamin to wear, the one that had been brought to him spattered with blood.”²¹

According to Alma 46:24, it was the preservation of a remnant of Joseph’s garment that led Jacob to exclaim, “. . . so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God.” A similar story is found in early

Jewish and Muslim traditions, which vary in that it was a second garment, brought to Joseph by the angel Gabriel, that gave Jacob to know that Joseph had been preserved.²² According to al-Kisa'i, after revealing his identity to his brethren, Joseph "took off the shirt that God had given him in the well and gave it to Judah, saying, 'Depart ye with this my inner garment, and throw it on my father's face; and he shall recover his sight.'"²³ When Judah was yet ten days' distance from his father's camp, Jacob declared, "I perceive the smell of Joseph" and knew that his son was yet alive.²⁴ 'Al -Ṭabari's account also includes the tale of Joseph's sending his garment to heal his father's blindness and of Jacob's smelling "the scent of Joseph" before Judah arrived.²⁵

With so many details of the story told in Alma 46 reflected in early Jewish and Muslim texts, the suggestion that the Book of Mormon account reflects an ancient tradition seems inescapable.

Joseph's Prophecy

According to 2 Nephi 3:5–15, the Old Testament patriarch Joseph foresaw that the Lord would raise up a man named Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. This great prophecy is also found in the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 50:24–38, which contains the words uttered by Joseph on his deathbed. This translation adds, in Genesis 50:35, that Joseph also prophesied of Aaron as Moses' companion, saying, "And I will make a spokesman for him, and his name shall be called Aaron."

The antiquity of the story is confirmed in Jewish tradition, notably in one of the second-century A.D. *targumim*, or translations of the Bible into Aramaic.²⁶ In a lengthy addition to Genesis 40:12, *Targum Neofiti* has Joseph



PROPHECY
BY JOSEPH
OF OLD

interpreting the three branches of the butler's dream as follows: "The three branches are the three fathers of the world: namely; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the sons of whose sons are to be enslaved in the slavery of the land of Egypt and are to be delivered by the hands of three faithful leaders: Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, who are to be likened to the clusters of grapes."²⁷ Similarly, the Talmud has Rabbi Eleazar explaining that "the 'vine' is the world, the 'three branches' are [the patriarchs] Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," with Rabbi Joshua correcting him by saying, "The 'vine' is the Torah, the 'three branches' are Moses, Aaron and Miriam" (TB *Hillun* 92a).

From the standard account in Genesis 50:24–25, it is clear that Joseph was aware that the Israelites would someday leave Egypt, though he says nothing about the bondage they would endure in the meanwhile. But *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* 48 (attributed to Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos, who lived in the latter half of the first century A.D. through the first decades of the second century), citing the Genesis passage, has Joseph prophesying the bondage of the Israelites and their deliverance by God. The second-century A.D. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Genesis 50:24 has Joseph telling his family, "Behold you will be enslaved in Egypt, but do not make plans to go up out of Egypt until the time that two deliverers come and say to you, 'The Lord surely remembers you.'"²⁸ This suggests that he knew about the coming of Moses and Aaron to liberate Israel and confirms the accuracy of Joseph Smith's addition to that verse and the one that follows.

In this case, we have confirmation from early Jewish texts not only for the Book of Mormon account of Joseph's

prophecy but also for the account of that prophecy found in Joseph Smith's revision of Genesis 50.

Abinadi's Interpretation of Isaiah 52–53



A century before Lehi left Jerusalem, the prophet Isaiah prophesied, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isaiah 52:7). The Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi explained that the passage referred to “all the holy prophets . . . who have published peace, who have brought good tidings of good, who have published salvation; and said unto Zion: Thy God reigneth! And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!” (Mosiah 15:13–15). He added, “O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people” (v. 18).

Abinadi saw in Isaiah's prophecy reference to both the Lord, who redeems his people, and the prophets he sends to preach salvation and peace. This interpretation is strikingly similar to the one found in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 11QMelchizedek (also known as 11Q13), which cites the Isaiah passage, then explains that “the mountains are the pro[phets] . . .] And the messenger is [the ano]inted of the spirit about whom Dan[iel] spoke [. . . and the messenger of] good who announces salv[ation is the one about whom it is written that] he will send him ‘to comfo[rt the afflicted, to watch over the afflicted ones of Zion’].”²⁹ The Hebrew term rendered “anointed” here is *mašiah*, Messiah. The interpretation of the Isaiah passage in the scroll

agrees with Abinadi's teachings in mentioning both the Messiah and the prophets. But while both documents compare the messenger to the Messiah, the Jewish text differs by associating the prophets with the mountains. Similarly, a number of other early Jewish texts compare the patriarchs and their wives to mountains.³⁰ One text, *Midrash Tanhuma*, suggests that the mountain mentioned in Zechariah 4:7 is the Messiah.

Abinadi further explained that the "generation" and "seed" of the Messiah mentioned in Isaiah 53:8, 10 consisted of the prophets who had foreseen the advent of Christ to the earth (see Mosiah 15:10–13). This interpretation is also found in a thirteenth-century Ethiopian Christian document unavailable in English until 1935, more than a century after the Book of Mormon was first published. Commenting on the placing of vegetation on the earth as described in Genesis 1:11–12, the *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth* says that "the trees are symbols of the Apostles, and must be so interpreted. And the green herbs are the symbols of the children of the Apostles, and the children of the Apostles are those who have believed through their hands. And the seed are those servants who have sown seed on the face of the earth. The words 'each kind of seed' refer to their various companies, and to their various preachings." The apostles, like the prophets before them, taught of Christ, and those who accepted their testimony are here called their "seed."³¹

That the first-century B.C. Nephite prophet Abinadi should interpret these Isaiah passages in the same way as early Jewish and Christian texts that were unknown when the Book of Mormon was published suggests that the story is authentic and draws on early traditions.

Foreknowledge of Christ's Advent



Book of Mormon prophets often spoke of Jesus Christ long before his birth and referred to him as “that which is to come.”³² Lehi and his sons Nephi and Jacob knew of Christ’s name and title, his baptism by John, his teachings, his selection of twelve apostles, his miraculous healings and casting out of devils, and his death on the cross (see 1 Nephi 10:7–10; 11:27–33; 2 Nephi 10:3; 25:19). Alma knew the name of Christ’s mother, Mary, and of Christ’s sufferings and death (see Alma 7:10–12). King Benjamin also knew the name of Christ’s mother, along with other details of the Savior’s life, such as the kinds of miracles he would perform, his temptation and suffering, his crucifixion, and his resurrection after three days (see Mosiah 3:5–10). Samuel the Lamanite spoke of the heavenly signs that would accompany the birth and death of the Savior (see Helaman 14:3–6, 20–27).

Equally significant is that the Book of Mormon suggests that various Old World prophets also knew details of Christ’s life long before he was born. Nephi noted that Zenock and Neum had written of the Messiah’s crucifixion, while Zenos wrote of his burial and the three days of darkness that would be a sign of his death (see 1 Nephi 19:10). A later Nephi, son of Helaman, declared that “many prophets” of old had testified of Christ, including Moses, Abraham, Zenock, Ezias, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and “all the holy prophets” between the time of Abraham and the time of Moses (see Helaman 8:13–20).

Critics of the Book of Mormon claim that such details of Christ’s life could not have been known before he was born. But early Christians readily accepted the idea. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (died A.D. 107), wrote to the Magnesians: “The divinest prophets lived according to Christ Jesus. On

this account also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to fully convince the unbelieving that there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son.”³³ The *Epistle of Barnabas*, which was widely read in Christian congregations of the second century A.D., indicates in its twelfth chapter that Moses knew that the Messiah would be called Jesus.

Chapter 32 of the *Book of the Bee*, a thirteenth-century text first published fifty-six years after the Book of Mormon, preserves a number of early Christian traditions about prophecies of Christ uttered by various Old Testament prophets. According to the account, the prophet Hosea “prophesied mystically about our Lord Jesus Christ who was to come; saying that when He should be born, the oak in Shiloh should be divided into twelve parts; and that He should take twelve disciples of Israel.”³⁴ The prophet Nahum “prophesied that when the Messiah should be slain, the vail of the temple should be rent in twain, and that the Holy Spirit should depart from it.”³⁵ The prophet Habakkuk “prophesied concerning the Messiah, that He should come, and abrogate the laws of the Jews.”³⁶ The prophet Zephaniah “prophesied concerning the Messiah, that He should suffer, and that the sun should become dark, and the moon be hidden.”³⁷ The prophecy in this document attributed to Nahum was attributed by the fourth-century Christian Father Epiphanius to Habakkuk. The fact that Epiphanius predated the writing of the *Book of the Bee* by nine centuries demonstrates the antiquity of the stories recounted in it.³⁸

Nephi, the son of Helaman, specifically noted that the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah had foretold the coming of Christ (see Helaman 8:20).³⁹ Two second-century

church fathers, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, writing of Christ's preaching to the dead while his body lay in the tomb, attributed to Jeremiah a prophecy (one not found in the biblical account) in which the prophet wrote that the Lord would descend to preach salvation to the dead. In *Dialogue with Trypho* 72, Justin Martyr wrote, "And again, from the sayings of the same Jeremiah these have been cut out [by the Jews]: 'The Lord God remembered His dead people of Israel who lay in the graves; and He descended to preach to them His own salvation.'"⁴⁰ Irenaeus cited the same passage in *Against Heresies* 4.22.⁴¹

The *Book of the Bee* also preserves an earlier tradition of another nonbiblical prophecy of Jeremiah, declaring that "this (prophet) during his life said to the Egyptians, 'a child shall be born—that is the Messiah—of a virgin, and He shall be laid in a crib, and He will shake and cast down the idols.' From that time and until Christ was born, the Egyptians used to set a virgin and a baby in a crib, and to worship him, because of what Jeremiah said to them, that He should be born in a crib."⁴² The story is drawn from *The Lives of the Prophets* 2:8–10, a text that a number of scholars have suggested was originally written in Hebrew by Egyptian Jews during the lifetime of Jesus himself.⁴³ The text was not published in any Western languages until nearly eighty years after the Book of Mormon first appeared.

Another Christian document known from medieval manuscripts in various languages is *4 Baruch*, which is subtitled "The Things Omitted from Jeremiah the Prophet." The Ethiopic version attributes the book to Jeremiah's scribe Baruch, but the Greek says it was written by Jeremiah. Chapter 9 has Jeremiah prophesying of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; of his selection of twelve apostles; of

his death and resurrection after three days; and of his return in glory to the Mount of Olives. According to the account, Jeremiah was stoned for this declaration.⁴⁴

The New Testament suggests in passing that Abraham knew of Christ's coming (see John 8:56; Galatians 3:8), though the Old Testament story of Abraham itself does not demonstrate this. The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob noted that Abraham's offering of Isaac was "a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son" (Jacob 4:5)—something that is confirmed in several early Christian sources, such as *Epistle of Barnabas* 7:3; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.4, 5; and Augustine, *City of God* 16.32.

But foreshadowing is not the same as outright prophecy or revelation. From the Book of Abraham that Joseph Smith restored, we learn that the ancient patriarch actually saw Christ in the premortal council (see Abraham 3:22–28). This kind of intimate knowledge of the Savior on the part of Abraham is suggested in a centuries-old Ethiopic text that derives from a Coptic text dated by the translator to the sixth century but not published until 1922. In *Kebrä Nagast* 14, we read: "And God held converse with Abram, and He said unto him, 'Fear thou not. From this day thou art My servant, and I will establish My Covenant with thee and with thy seed after thee . . . and afterwards I will send My Word for the salvation of Adam and his sons for ever.'" ⁴⁵ Chapter 104 of the same work says, "And thou dost not understand that they were justified by faith—Abraham, and David and all the Prophets, one after the other, who prophesied concerning the coming of the Son of God. And Abraham said, 'Wilt Thou in my days, O Lord, cast Thy word upon the ground?' And God said unto him, 'By no means. His time hath not yet come, but I will shew thee a

similitude of His coming.” God then has Abraham meet with Melchizedek, who “gave him the mystery of the bread and wine, that same which is celebrated in our Passover for our salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴⁶

From these early accounts, we see that the idea that details of the life of Christ were known by a number of prophets prior to his birth was common in early Christianity, as it is in the Book of Mormon.

The Jaredite Barges

Ether 6:7 says that the Jaredite barges “were tight like unto the ark of Noah.” This comparison with the vessel constructed by Noah enables us to draw several parallels between the two vessels, each of which had been constructed according to the Lord’s instructions. In order to provide light inside the vessels during the ocean crossing, the brother of Jared prepared sixteen crystalline stones that the Lord touched, making them glow (see Ether 3:1–6; 6:2–3).⁴⁷ Similar stories are told of the ark of Noah.⁴⁸

A number of early Jewish sources say that God had Noah suspend precious stones or pearls inside the ark to lighten it. The gems would glow during the night and dim during the day so Noah could tell the time of day and how many days had passed.⁴⁹ This was the explanation the rabbis gave for the *şôhar* that the Lord told Noah to construct in the ark. Though called a “window” in the King James version of Genesis 6:16, the *şôhar* is rendered “light” in some Bible translations.⁵⁰ In a medieval Arabic text we read that it was the pegs that Noah used to construct the ark that shone.⁵¹

The Book of Mormon speaks of “the mountain waves” and the “furious wind” that the Jaredites encountered



ANCIENT
VESSELS

during their ocean voyage to the New World, stressing that “the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters” (see Ether 6:5–8; see also 2:24–25), reminding us of the experience of Noah during the great flood.⁵²

An Ethiopic Christian text, *Conflict of Adam and Eve* III, 9:6–7, describes the flood of Noah in terms similar to those used to describe the great storm that blew the Jaredite barges to the New World, including the description of “waves . . . high like mountains,” as in Ether 2:24 and 6:6.⁵³ The Book of Mormon indicates that the high waves resulted from intense winds from the Lord. Early Jewish and Christian traditions indicate that God sent strong winds to destroy the Tower of Babel, from which the Jaredites fled (see Ether 1:33). The story is found in the *Chronography . . . of Bar Hebraeus* 1, *Jubilees* 10:26, and *Sibylline Oracles* 3:101–107. Other texts (*Conflict of Adam and Eve* III, 24:8; *Book of the Rolls*, folio 120a; *Book of the Cave of Treasures*, folios 23b.2–24a.1; and *Book of the Bee* 23) have the wind, sometimes called a “wind-flood,” destroying the idols erected by Nimrod, to whom both Jewish and Christian traditions attribute the building of the tower.

The existence of details such as the glowing stones and furious winds in both the Book of Mormon story of the Jaredites and other ancient traditions about Noah’s flood and the great “wind-storm” suggests more than coincidence.

The Translation of Moses and John

The Book of Mormon indicates that the prophet Moses and the apostle John were both translated. Again, there is ancient textual support for these declarations that are not mentioned in the Bible.



MOSES'
AND JOHN'S
TRANSLATION

Alma 45:18–19 says that after the disappearance of Alma, some Nephites came to believe that he might have been taken in the same way “the Lord took Moses unto himself.” That Moses was translated may be suggested in Doctrine and Covenants 84:25, where we read that the Lord “took Moses out of their midst.” Only one text known in Joseph Smith’s day suggested that Moses had not died. The first-century A.D. Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote that when Moses went atop a high mountain with “Eleazar and Joshua, and was still discoursing with them, a cloud stood over him on the sudden, and he disappeared in a certain valley, although he wrote in the holy books that he died, which was done out of fear, lest they should venture to say that, because of his extraordinary virtue, he went to God” (*Antiquities of the Jews* 4.8.48).⁵⁴ The story is confirmed in a fourth-century A.D. Samaritan document, *Tibat Marqa* (also called *Memar Marqa*) 269a, which says that “when he got to the top of the mountain, a cloud came down and lifted him up from the sight of all the congregation of Israel.”⁵⁵

A number of early Jewish texts unavailable to Joseph Smith confirm that Moses never died but was alive and serving God in heaven. Among these are the Talmud (TB *Sotah* 13b); *Midrash ha-Gadol*, *Zot habberakhah* 4:5; *Sifre* to Deuteronomy 357;⁵⁶ and *Midrash Leqah Tob*.⁵⁷ The medieval *Zohar* reflects the same tradition (*Zohar* Genesis 37b; Exodus 88b–89a, 174a; Leviticus 59a).

Some of the early Christian fathers also held that Moses had not died but had been taken by God. Among these are St. Ambrose (died A.D. 397) in his *On Cain and Abel* 1.2.8 and Cassiodorus (ca. A.D. 468–560) in his Latin translation of Clement of Alexandria, commenting on Jude 1:9.

We learn of the apostle John's translation in 3 Nephi 28:6–9, where Christ promises three of the Nephite disciples that they will not die and compares their situation to that of John. That John may have been spared death is merely hinted at in John 21:20–23, which cautions that while “this saying [went] abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” A revelation given to Joseph Smith in April 1829 confirmed that John had, indeed, been translated (Doctrine and Covenants 7).⁵⁸

A fourth-century Christian document, the *Discourse on Abbatôn*, first published in 1914, confirms that John had been translated. The preface speaks of “the Holy Apostle Saint John, theologian and virgin, who is not to taste death until the thrones are set in the Valley of Jehosaphat.”⁵⁹ The text itself has the resurrected Jesus saying, “And as for thee, O My beloved John, thou shalt not die until the thrones have been prepared on the Day of the Resurrection. . . . I will command Abbaton, the Angel of Death, to come unto thee on that day. . . . Thou shalt be dead for three and a half hours, lying upon thy throne, and all creation shall see thee. I will make thy soul to return to thy body, and thou shalt rise up and array thyself in apparel of glory.”⁶⁰

The Executions of Laban and Zemnarihah

John W. Welch and some of his students have discussed the executions of Laban and Zemnarihah in terms of Jewish law. In the case of Laban, they have noted the concepts of justifiable homicide and the slaying of one for the good of the many.⁶¹ Welch has briefly compared Nephi's killing of Laban (see 1 Nephi 4:10–23) with Moses'



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EXECUTIONS

slaying of the Egyptian who had stricken a Hebrew slave. The following adds to that discussion a few further points found in ancient Jewish texts.⁶²

Nephi wrote, “I was constrained by the Spirit that I should kill Laban” and then noted his hesitation and the insistence of the Spirit that he perform the deed (see 1 Nephi 4: 10–12). Interestingly, Moses is also said to have hesitated to kill the Egyptian overseer until he received a divine revelation on the matter. According to *ʿAbot de Rabbi Nathan* 20, thought to have been written in the second century A.D. but not available in English until the twentieth century, Moses summoned a court of ministering angels and asked them if he should kill the Egyptian, to which the angels responded, “Kill him.” The same story is told in *Midrash Rabbah Exodus* 1:29, which adds that, before calling on the angels for counsel, Moses perceived that no righteous persons would descend from the Egyptian man.⁶³ A similar story is found in an early Jewish text, *Tosephta-Targum* (V. 1) 2 on 1 Samuel 17:43, which says that just before he slew Goliath, David “lifted up his eyes to heaven and saw angels deliberating on Goliath the Philistine.”⁶⁴

Regarding the execution of Zemnarihah, leader of the band of Gadianton (see 3 Nephi 4:28–29), Welch has discussed the concept of hanging in early Judaism and the symbolism of felling the tree as a warning to other potential wrongdoers.⁶⁵ My attention has been particularly drawn to the reasons Zemnarihah was hanged rather than, say, stoned—the more usual method of execution under the law of Moses.⁶⁶

One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Temple Scroll* (also called 11Q19), calls for execution of a spy—one who defects to another nation and curses his own people, or one

who “betrays his people to a foreign nation or causes evil against his people”—by hanging.⁶⁷ The Israelites who joined themselves to their enemies, the Midianites, in the worship of the false god Baal-Peor and were hanged by Moses fit this description of a traitor (see Numbers 25:1–9).

The Gadianton band led by Zemnarihah consisted of dissenters who had turned against the Nephites (see Helaman 11:24–26; 3 Nephi 1:27–28). In Gadianton’s day they had fled the land to avoid being apprehended for their treasonous acts in killing the chief judge Pahoran and attempting to slay his successor, Helaman (see Helaman 2:11). Because of this flight, they fit the description found in the *Temple Scroll* of the man who “escapes amongst the nations.” Giddianhi, Zemnarihah’s predecessor as leader of the band, admitted that his people had dissented from the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 3:9–11). It is also of interest that Giddianhi swore “with an oath” to destroy the Nephites (3 Nephi 3:8), clearly plotting evil against the people as also mentioned in the *Temple Scroll*. His successor’s execution by hanging is entirely in line with early Jewish law.

From this information we can see that even the minutest details of the executions of Laban and Zemnarihah are in conformity with ancient Jewish traditions unavailable to Joseph Smith.

Conclusion

This is but a sampling of ancient texts that lend support to the Book of Mormon. I have discussed others elsewhere⁶⁸ and plan to publish many more in the near future. Such texts are, of course, only a small portion of the vast array of evidences for the antiquity and authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

NOTES

1. See John A. Tvedtnes, *The Book of Mormon and Other Hidden Books: "Out of Darkness unto Light"* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000); see also John A. Tvedtnes, "Hidden Records," in his *The Most Correct Book: Insights from a Book of Mormon Scholar* (Salt Lake City: Covenant, 1999), 25–28.

2. For an in-depth discussion, see H. Curtis Wright, "Ancient Burials of Metal Documents in Stone Boxes," in *By Study and Also by Faith*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 273–334.

3. See H. Curtis Wright, "Metallic Documents of Antiquity," *BYU Studies* 10/4 (1970): 457–75.

4. P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780, 50–52, in Ron Cameron and Arthur J. Dewey, *The Cologne Mani Codex* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979), 39–43.

5. John C. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 142.

6. Al-Thaʿlabī, *Qisas al-Anbiyaʿ* (Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa-Awladuhu, 1340 A.H.), 102, 202. Hugh Nibley was the first to bring this information to the attention of Latter-day Saints.

7. The story is reported in Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1966), 15 n. 5.

8. Hebrew is part of the Canaanite language family, usually called Northwest Semitic. This includes later forms of the Canaanite language, called Phoenician and Punic. Closely related is Ugaritic, known from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century B.C. inscriptions at the northwest Syrian city of Ugarit, and less closely related is Eblaite, known from second-millennium B.C. inscriptions from nearby Ebla.

9. See Richard C. Steiner, "Northwest Semitic Incantations in an Egyptian Medical Papyrus of the Fourteenth Century B.C.E.," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51/3 (1992): 196–97.

Steiner briefly mentions the other Northwest Semitic texts noted herein and also draws our attention to a later Arabic text written in Coptic characters; see J. Blau, "Some Observations on a Middle Arabic Egyptian Text in Coptic Characters," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1 (1979): 215–62.

10. See T. Schneider, "Mag.pHarris XII, 1–5; Eine kanaanäische Beschwörung für die Löwenjagd?" *Göttinger Miszellen* 112 (1989): 53–63.

11. See William Foxwell Albright, *The Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 33, 37, 42; W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. Und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, vol. 44 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 528–29; and H.-W. Fischer Elfert, *Die satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen, vol. 44 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986), 152.

12. This ostrakon is from the Cairo Museum. See Ariel Shisha-Halevy, "An Early North-West Semitic Text in the Egyptian Hieratic Script," *Orientalia* n.s. 47 (1978): 145–62. An ostrakon (plural ostraca) is a piece of pottery on which writing appears. In the ancient Near East, when a jar was broken, pieces suitable for writing were kept, much as we keep scratch paper.

13. For information on the text, see Raymond A. Bowman, "An Aramaic Religious Text in Demotic Script," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1944): 219–31; Charles F. Nims and Richard C. Steiner, "A Paganized Version of Psalm 20:2–6 from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (January–March 1983): 261–74; Richard C. Steiner and Charles F. Nims, "You Can't Offer Your Sacrifice and Eat It Too: A Polemical Poem from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43/2 (1984): 89–114; Richard C. Steiner and Charles F. Nims, "Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin: A Tale of Two Brothers from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *Revue Biblique* 92/1 (1985): 60–81; Richard C. Steiner, "The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script: The

Liturgy of a New Year's Festival Imported from Bethel to Syene by Exiles from Rash," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111/2 (1991): 362–63; and Richard C. Steiner, "Northwest Semitic Incantations in an Egyptian Medical Papyrus of the Fourteenth Century B.C.E.," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51/3 (1992): 191–200.

14. For discussions of the various Semitic texts written in Egyptian script, see John Gee, "La Trahison des Clercs: On the Language and Translation of the Book of Mormon," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 79–99, especially pp. 96–99 and n. 147; Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes, "Jewish and Other Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 156–63, reprinted as "Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 237–43; and John A. Tvedtnes, "Reformed Egyptian," in his *Most Correct Book*, 22–24.

15. Shlomo Yeivin, "An Ostrakon from Tel Arad Exhibiting a Combination of Two Scripts," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 55/2 (1969): 98–102. The importance of this find for the Book of Mormon was discussed by John A. Tvedtnes in "The Language of My Father," *New Era*, May 1971, 19, and "Linguistic Implications of the Tel Arad Ostraca," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, no. 127 (October 1971).

16. For photos of the ostraca and a brief discussion, see Rudolph Cohen, "Excavations at Kadesh-barnea, 1976–78," *Biblical Archaeologist* 44/2 (1981): 98–99; and Rudolph Cohen, "Did I Excavate Kadesh-Barnea?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7/3 (1981): 25–30.

17. Campbell published a series of articles critical of the Book of Mormon in his paper, the *Millennial Harbinger*, at Bethany, Virginia, beginning in February 1831. The articles were later collected into a book entitled *Delusions*, published by E. H. Green & Co. of Boston in 1832.

18. See the discussion by John Gee and John A. Tvedtnes in the FARMS Update published in the newsletter of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, “Ancient Manuscripts Fit Book of Mormon Pattern,” *Insights* (February 1999): 3–4.

19. The finds were reported by Gabriel Barkay in “The Divine Name Found in Jerusalem,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 9/2 (1983): 14–19, and in his “Priestly Blessings on Silver Plates” (in Hebrew), *Cathedra* 52 (1989): 46–59. See also the discussion in William J. Adams Jr., “Lehi’s Jerusalem and Writing on Metal Plates,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/1 (1994): 204–6, reprinted as “Lehi’s Jerusalem and Writing on Silver Plates,” in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. Welch and Thorne, 23–25; and in “More on the Silver Plates from Lehi’s Jerusalem,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 136–37; reprinted in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. Welch and Thorne, 27–28.

20. E. Isaac, “The Ethiopic History of Joseph: Translation with Introduction and Notes,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 6/1 (1990): 88.

21. W. M. Thackston Jr., trans., *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisaʿi* (Boston: Twayne, 1978), 2:182; see p. 183.

22. For the story of this second garment from paradise, see *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* 89:9; *Zohar* Genesis 194b; and Thackston Jr., trans., *Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisaʿi*, 2:170.

23. Thackston Jr., trans., *Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisaʿi*, 2:188.

24. See *ibid.*, 2:188–89.

25. See William M. Brinner, trans., *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2 of *Prophets and Patriarchs* (Albany: SUNY, 1987), 180–81.

26. The Hebrew word *targum* (plural *targumim*) means “translation” and refers to the Aramaic translations of the Bible made after the Jews had adopted Aramaic instead of Hebrew as their native tongue during the Babylonian captivity.

27. Martin McNamara, trans., *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis (The Aramaic Bible, vol. 1A)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press,

1992), 182. Compare *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 48 and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Genesis 50:25, which speak of Moses and Aaron as redeemers of Israel.

28. Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis (The Aramaic Bible, vol. 1B)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 166

29. Column II, lines 15–19, cited from Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 140. The scroll cites the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 61:2–3 and mistakenly attributes it to Daniel, who also prophesied of the Messiah (see Daniel 9:24–26). Jesus cited the Isaiah 61 passage in reference to his own calling in Luke 4:18–19. For a discussion of 11QMelchizedek in connection with Abinadi’s interpretation, see Dana M. Pike, “The Imagery of Isaiah 52:7–10,” in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), 261–65. See also John A. Tvedtnes, “How Beautiful upon the Mountains,” in his *Most Correct Book*, 172–75.

30. *Mekilta RI Exodus 17:9, Midrash Tanhuma A Be-Shallah 26, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Exodus 17:9, Targum Neofiti and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Numbers 23:9 and Deuteronomy 33:15, Pesikta Rabbati 33:4, and Zohar Exodus 58b.*

31. Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth and Other Works of Bakhayla Mîkâ’êl (Zôsîmâs)* (Oxford: n.p., 1935), 131. In 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 Paul also compares those converted to Christ to agricultural produce, though the connection is less clear than that of the former source.

32. See the discussion in John A. Tvedtnes, “That Which Is to Come,” in his *Most Correct Book*, 235–41. In an Ethiopic text describing the tabernacle of Moses, Christ is called “Him that is to come.” See Budge, *Book of the Mysteries*, 159.

33. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885; reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:62.

34. Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Book of the Bee*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1886), 69.

35. Ibid., 71.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., 71–72.

38. See *ibid.*, 71 n. 2.

39. See the discussion in John A. Tvedtnes, “Jeremiah’s Prophecies of Jesus Christ,” in his *Most Correct Book*, 99–103.

40. Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1:235. Many early Christian texts refer to Christ’s preaching in the spirit world, an event additionally recorded in 1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6 and Doctrine and Covenants 138.

41. Ibid., 1:493–94. In *ibid.*, 451, Irenaeus also cites the passage in *Against Heresies* 3.20.4, where he mistakenly attributes it to Isaiah.

42. Budge, trans., *Book of the Bee*, 72. Compare Isaiah 19:1.

43. For an English translation of the Jeremiah passage, see James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 2:387–88. Both *The Lives of the Prophets* and *The Book of the Bee* include prophecies of Christ attributed to other Old Testament prophets but not found in the Bible version of their books. We are reminded of Nephi’s declaration that “plain and precious things” would be removed from the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:25–35, 40; 14:23).

44. See *ibid.*, 1:424–25.

45. Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Queen of Sheba and her only Son Menyelek* (London: Medici Society, 1922), 10. *Kebra Nagast* means “glory of the kings” of Ethiopia and is one of the most highly praised traditional stories among Ethiopian Christians.

46. Ibid., 200.

47. For a discussion of scientific research into glowing stones, see Nicholas Read, Jae R. Ballif, John W. Welch, Bill Evenson, Kathleen Reynolds Gee, and Matthew Roper, “New Light on the Shining Stones of the Jaredites,” FARMS Update, *Insights* (July 1992): 2; reprinted in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*,

ed. Welch and Thorne, 253–55; and John A. Tvedtnes, “More on Glowing Stones,” FARMS Update, *Insights* (July 1999): 2.

48. See Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 359–79; *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 337–58; *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 209–10; *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 243–44; *Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 4* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1993), 268–70; and John A. Tvedtnes, “Glowing Stones in Ancient and Medieval Lore,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997): 99–123. A revised version of the latter work was published as an appendix in John A. Tvedtnes, *The Book of Mormon and Other Hidden Books: “Out of Darkness unto Light.”* In most of his discussion of this topic, Nibley also compares the Jaredite barges to the vessel described in the Mesopotamian versions of the flood story.

49. See TB *Sanhedrin* 108b, TY *Pesahim* 1.1, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Genesis 6:16, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* 31.11, *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* 23, and Rashi on Genesis 6:16. For a recap of the story, see Louis Ginzberg, ed., *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1937), 1:162–63. The first person to bring the Jewish tradition to the attention of Latter-day Saints was Janne M. Sjodahl, in his *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927), 248. The tradition was discussed at length by Hugh Nibley, “There Were Jaredites: The Shining Stones,” *Improvement Era*, September 1956, 630–32, 672–75.

50. The idea of a “window” came from the Latin Vulgate translation and is also found in the Greek translation by Aquila. The Aramaic *Targum Onkelos* renders it “light.”

51. See Thackston Jr., trans., *Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisa’i*, 2:98.

52. See the discussion in John A. Tvedtnes, “The Jaredite Ocean Voyage,” in his *Most Correct Book*, 285–90. Hugh Nibley

discusses the so-called wind-flood in his *The Ancient State* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 33–34, and in *Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 4*, 244–45.

53. S. C. Malan, trans., *The Book of Adam and Eve, also called The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), 155.

54. The translation used here was prepared by William Whiston in the seventeenth century and has been frequently reprinted since.

55. Translation by James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 887.

56. See Jacob Neusner, *Sifre to Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 2:457.

57. For a discussion of the Jewish sources, see Samuel E. Loewenstamm, “The Death of Moses,” in *Studies on the Testament of Abraham*, ed. George W. E. Nickelsberg Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1976).

58. See also chapter 5 of John Whitmer’s unpublished *History of the Church*, in which it is recorded that in the early part of June 1831 “the Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner, and he prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been led away by Shalmaneser king of Assyria to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion to again possess the land of their fathers.” That this is John’s role was subsequently confirmed in a revelation given in March 1832 (see D&C 77:9, 14).

59. Sir Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms* (London: British Museum, 1914), 475.

60. *Ibid.*, 492–93. I am grateful to Matthew Roper for bringing this passage to my attention.

61. See John W. Welch, “Legal Perspectives on the Slaying of Laban,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 119–41; John W. Welch and Heidi Harkness Parker, “Better That One Man Perish,” FARMS Update, *Insights* (June 1998): 2; reprinted

in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. Welch and Thorne, 17–19; and Fred Essig and Dan Fuller, “Nephi’s Slaying of Laban: A Legal Perspective” (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1981).

62. See John A. Tvedtnes, “The Slaying of Laban,” in his *Most Correct Book*, 110–12.

63. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Exodus 2:12 notes that Moses knew that no proselyte would come from the Egyptian’s posterity, something also mentioned in *Zohar* Exodus 12b.

64. Eveline van Staaldune-Sulman, “The Aramaic Song of the Lamb,” in *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor and Wilfred G. E. Watson (Netherlands: Verlag Butzon and Bercker Kevelaer, 1993), 272.

65. See John W. Welch, “The Execution of Zemnariyah,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 250–52.

66. See John A. Tvedtnes, “More on the Hanging of Zemnariyah,” FARMS Update, *Insights* (April 1997): 2; reprinted in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. Welch and Thorne, 208–10.

67. *Temple Scroll* (11Q19), col. LXIV, lines 6–13, in García Martínez, *Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 178.

68. See, for example, John A. Tvedtnes, “The Messiah, the Book of Mormon, and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in his *Most Correct Book*, 328–43.