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The Book of Mormon Confirmed

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Abstract: This five-part series gives various external evidences of the Book of Mormon, including the archaeological findings that “point to successive periods of occupation” in ancient America, evidence of Hebrew origin/descent for the American Indians, and the idea that there was an advanced civilization in ancient America. It also discusses metal plates and provides geological proof of the great destruction recorded in 3 Nephi 8. The second part discusses the Hebrew origin of the Native Americans.

January 20
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THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—JOHN 17: 3.

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THE BOOK OF MORMON CONFIRMED.

[Continued from page 28.]

THE Book of Mormon states that about 600 years before the birth of Christ a small colony of the Hebrew race left Jerusalem and was led by the Lord to the shores of America. This colony was composed, on the commencement of its journey, of two heads of families, Lehi and Ishmael, their wives and children, and a man named Zoram. They observed the law of Moses, and took with them a record of their forefathers, containing the five books of Moses, giving an account of the creation of the world, of Adam and Eve, and also of the Jews from the beginning down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah. This record was engraved on plates of brass. The youngest of the four sons of Lehi, Nephi by name, was the leading spirit in the company. He also commenced a record of their doings, which he engraved upon plates of metal in the language of the Egyptians, and in what their descendants called reformed Egyptian characters. (See I Nephi, also Mosiah 1: 4, and Mormon 9: 32-33).

ORIGIN BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

That the origin of the American Indians dates back to some period before the Christian era is testified to by a number of archaeologists. Professor Waterman, of Boston, Massachusetts, in a lecture delivered in the Fine Arts Academy, Bristol, in 1849, speaking of the time the forefathers of the Indians went to America, says:

"When and whence, then, did they come? Albert Galatin, one of the profoundest philologists of the age, concluded that, so far as language afforded any clue, the time of their arrival could not have been long after the dispersion of the human family. Dr. Morton, after a series of investigations of many of the human crania found in the sepulchral mounds,

concluded that they must have dated back *at least 2000 or 3000 years*. It would not seem that all the family to which they belonged came with them, as they were but representatives of a people still in existence in the Old World, or who had become extinct since they emigrated. This people could not have been created in Africa, for its inhabitants were widely dissimilar to those of America; nor in Europe, which was without a native people agreeing at all with American races: then to Asia alone could they look for the origin of the American."

Not only does the above quotation express the opinion of scholars that the race referred to originated before the Christian era, but that it originated in Asia, which agrees with the statements in the Book of Mormon.

From a work by a gentleman named Wilson, entitled "Mexico and its Religion," published in London, 1856, is extracted the following:

"We have removed to a greater antiquity, but have not got rid of the question of the origin of Mexican civilization. The year 600, named by Humboldt, may be considered as the time of their appearance on the table-land; but many of the ruins in the hot country might claim a thousand years earlier antiquity. These massive remains must have stood, abandoned as they now are, in the midst of the forest, for a long time before the Conquest, as their very existence was unknown to the Spaniards until near the close of the last century."

Here is another testimony of the antiquity of the race:

"There are many other similar mounds in the valleys of the Ohio and its tributaries, but no tradition concerning their origin. One of these near Marietta, in which human bones were dug up, must be more than eight centuries old, for Dr. Hildreth counted 800 rings of annual growth in a tree which grew upon it. . . . As no difference could be detected in the mixture of trees upon and near the mounds from the state of the surrounding forest, General Harrison [in his Essay on the Aborigines of the Ohio Valley,—see Trans. of Hist. and Phil. Soc. of Ohio. vol. i., 1839,] concludes that several generations of trees had succeeded each other before the present trees began to grow, and that the mounds were probably as ancient at least as the Christian era."—Lyell's "*Travels in North America*," published in London, in 1845.

The following is taken from the Abbé Don Lorenzo Hervas' Letter to the Abbé Clavigero upon the Mexican Calendar, translated by Cullen and published in England in 1787.

"This Calendar has not been the discovery of the Mexicans, but a communication from some more enlightened people; and as the last are not to be found in America, we must seek for them elsewhere, in Asia or in Egypt. This supposition is confirmed by your affirmation, that the Mexicans had their Calendar from the Toltecas (originating from Asia), whose year, according to Boturini, was exactly adjusted by the course of the sun, *more than a hundred years before the Christian era*."

The Rev. Etham Smith (pastor of a church in Poultney, Vermont), in his work entitled "A View of the Hebrews," says:

"Joseph Merrick, Esq., a highly respectable character in Pittsfield, Mass., gave the following account: That, in 1815, he was leveling some ground under and near an old wood shed standing on a place of his situated on Indian Hill. He plowed and conveyed away old chips and earth to some depth. After the work was done, walking over the place, he discovered, near where the earth had been dug the deepest, a black strap, as it appeared, about six inches in length, and one-and-a-half in breadth, and

about the thickness of a leather trace to a harness. He perceived it had at each end, a loop of some hard substance, probably for the purpose of carrying it. He conveyed it to his house and threw it into an old tool box. After some time he thought he would examine it, but in attempting to cut it, found it as hard as bone. He succeeded, however, in getting it open, and found it was formed of two pieces of thick rawhide, sewed and made water tight with the sinews of some animal and gummed over, and in the fold was contained four folded pieces of parchment. They were of a dark yellow hue, and contained some kind of writing. The neighbors coming in to see the strange discovery, tore one of the pieces to atoms, in the true Hun and Vandal style. The other three pieces Mr. Merrick saved and sent them to Cambridge, where they were examined and discovered to have been written with a pen, in Hebrew, plain and legible. The writing on the three remaining pieces of parchment was quotations from the Old Testament. See Deut. chap. vi, from 4th to 9th verses inclusive; also chap. xi, verses 13th to 21st inclusive; and Exodus chap. xiii, 11th to 16th verses inclusive; to which the reader can refer if he has the curiosity to read this most interesting discovery."

Another discovery of the same kind, in a different part of the country is thus recorded in *The National Intelligencer*:

"By the politeness of Colonel Lee, Commissioner of Indian affairs, we have been shown a relic of great rarity and interest, left for a few days at the Bureau. It was brought from the Pottawatamie Reservation, on the Kansas River, by Dr. Lykins, who has been residing there nearly twenty years out of thirty he has spent on the frontier. It consists of four small rolls or strips of parchment, closely packed in the small compartments of a little box or locket of about an inch cubical content. On these parchments are written, in a style of unsurpassed excellence, and far more beautiful than print, portions of the Pentateuch, to be worn as frontlets and intended as stimulants to the memory and moral sense. Dr. Lykins obtained it from Pategwe, a Pottawatamie, who got it from his grandmother, a very old woman. It has been in this particular family about fifty years."

"In these Hebrew discoveries are several wonderfully strong points in favor of the truth of the Book of Mormon. All of them are written in the Hebrew used at the time that that record tells us Lehi left Jerusalem. In later times the Hebrew alphabet was changed. Vowel points were introduced and final letters were added; but these changes and alterations were made after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. The Hebrew that is found sculptured on the stone and other mementos, to which attention has been drawn, is always the more ancient kind. Lehi left Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ, a few years before the Jews were carried into captivity by the Babylonians, or before these vowel points and final letters were introduced; and in all the engravings that have been found on this land, there are neither vowels nor final letters, showing that the people who used them were divided from the Jews, as the Book of Mormon states they were, before these latter had been introduced—before the time of the return from the Babylonish captivity. It is also another remarkable fact, as a testimony in favor of the Book of Mormon, that none of the inscriptions that have been found, contain any of the scriptures of a later date than those which it says the Nephites brought with them. Lehi and his party carried a copy of the scriptures, from the commencement of Genesis to the days of Jeremiah and extracts from none later than these are found anywhere on these inscriptions.

"Another testimony is that there is a marked difference in the shape of the Hebrew letters on the different stones. Not the difference that

developed on the eastern continent, but one peculiar to this land, demonstrating the truth of the statement of Moroni, that the Nephites had changed the Hebrew as well as the Egyptian."—GEORGE REYNOLDS, in the *Contributor*, Vol. 17, page 235.

Dr. Wendell Mees, of Ithaca, New York, in an article published in a Scandinavian paper, *Verdens Gang*, sets forth his views in regard to the origin of the Aztecs, or ancient inhabitants of Mexico. He is of the belief that they went over to America "as early as the fourth century before Christ."

OF HEBREW ORIGIN.

The evidences that the American Indians are of Hebrew origin are quite numerous and most conclusive.

The following is from Adair's "*History of the American Indians*," published in London, in 1775.

"All the various nations of Indians seem to be of one descent. They call a buffalo, in their various dialects, by one and the same name, 'Yanasa.' And there is a strong similarity of religious rites and of civil and martial customs among all the various American nations of Indians we have any knowledge of on the extensive continent, as will soon be shown. Their language is copious and very expressive, for their narrow orbit of ideas, and full of rhetorical tropes and figures, like the orientalists. . . . From the most exact observations I could make in the long time I traded among the Indian Americans, I was forced to believe them lineally descended from the Israelites, either while they were a maritime power or soon after the general captivity: the latter, however, is the most probable. This descent I shall endeavor to prove from their religious rites, civil and martial customs, their marriages, funeral ceremonies, manners, language, traditions, and a variety of particulars. . . . As the Israelites were divided into tribes, and had chiefs over them, so the Indians divide themselves. Each tribe forms a little community within the nation; and as the nation hath its particular symbol, so hath each tribe the badge from which it is denominated. The sachem of each tribe is a necessary party in conveyances and treaties, to which he affixes the mark of his tribe, as a corporation with us doth their public seal. If we go from nation to nation among them, we shall not find one who doth not lineally distinguish himself by his respective family. . . . Every town has a state-house, or synedrion, as the Jewish sanhedrim, where, almost every night, the head men convene about public business. . . . These Indian Americans pay their religious devoir to *Loak-Ishtohoollo-Aba*, 'the great, beneficent, supreme, holy spirit of fire,' who resides (as they think) above the clouds, and on earth also with unpolluted people. He is with them the sole author of warmth, light, and of all animal and vegetable life. They do not pay the least perceivable adoration to any images, or to dead persons, neither to the celestial luminaries, nor evil spirits, nor any created being whatsoever. . . . Agreeable to the theocracy or Divine government of Israel, the Indians think the Deity to be the immediate Head of their state. . . . They flatter themselves with the name *hottuh oretoopah*, 'the beloved people,' because their supposed ancestors, as they affirm, were under the immediate government of the Deity, who was present with them in a very particular manner, and directed them by prophets, while the rest of the world were aliens and outlaws to the covenant. . . . When any of their relations die . . . [they believe in their] return at some certain time to re-possess their beloved tract of land and enjoy their terrestrial paradise. As they believe in God, so they believe that there is a class of higher beings than men, and a future state and existence. . . . The Indian language and dialects appear to have the very

idiom and genius of the Hebrew. Their words and sentences are expressive, concise, emphatical, sonorous, and bold, and often, both in letters and signification, synonymous with the Hebrew language. . . . The Indian nouns have neither cases nor declensions: they are invariably the same through both numbers, after the Hebrew manner. In their verbs, they likewise sometimes use the preter-perfect instead of the present tense of the indicative mood. . . . Like the Hebrews, they have no comparative or superlative degree: they express a preference by the opposite extremes. . . . There is not, perhaps, any one language or speech, except the Hebrew and Indian American, which has not a great many prepositions. The Indians, like the Hebrews, have none in separate and express words. . . . The Indians, for want of a sufficient number of radical words, are forced to apply the same noun and verb to signify many things of a various nature. . . . The Jewish rabbins tell us that the Hebrew language contains only a few more than a thousand primitive words, of which their whole language is formed; so that the same word very often denotes various, though not contrary things; but there is one radical meaning, which will agree to every sense that word is used in. . . . The Hebrew nouns are either derived from verbs, or both of them are one and the same. . . . The Indian method of expression exactly agrees with that Hebrew mode of speech. . . . According to the usage of the Hebrews, they always place the accusative case also before the verb. . . . The Hebrew and Indian words which express delineating, writing, deciphering, marking, and painting convey the same literal meaning in both languages. . . . The Indians, according to the usage of the Hebrews, always prefix the substantive to the adjective. . . . They use many plain religious emblems of the Divine names, YOHEWAH, YAH, and ALE; and these are the roots of a prodigious number of words through their various dialects. . . . In conformity to, or after the manner of the Jews, the Indian Americans have their prophets, high priests, and others of a religious order. As the Jews had a *sanctum sanctorum*, or most holy place, so have all the Indian nations. . . . The Indian tradition says that their forefathers were possessed of an extraordinary divine spirit, by which they foretold things future, and controlled the common course of nature; and this they transmitted to their offspring, provided they obeyed the sacred laws annexed to it. . . . As the prophets of the Hebrews had oracular answers, so the Indian magi (who are to invoke Yo HE WAH and mediate with the supreme holy fire, that he may give seasonable rains,) have a transparent stone of supposed great power in assisting to bring down the rain. . . . The Hebrews offered *daily sacrifice*. . . . The Indians have a similar religious service. . . . The Indians have among them the resemblance of the Jewish *sin-offering* and *trespass-offering*. . . . The Indians observe another religious custom of the Hebrews in making a *peace-offering*. . . . They always celebrate the annual expiation of sins in their religious temples. The red Hebrews imagine their temples to have such a typical holiness, more than any other place, that if they offered up the Annual Sacrifice elsewhere, it would not atone for the people. . . . The Hebrews had various *ablutions* and *anointings*, according to the Mosaic ritual, and all the Indian nations constantly observe similar customs from religious motives. . . . In the coldest weather, and when the ground is covered with snow, against their bodily ease and pleasure, men and children turn out of their warm houses or stoves, reeking with sweat, singing their usual sacred notes, Yo, Yo, &c., at the dawn of day, adoring Yo HE WAH, at the gladsome sight of the morn; and thus they skip along, echoing praises, till they get to the river, when they instantaneously plunge into it. . . . This law of purity (bathing in water) was essential to the Jews, and the Indians to this day would exclude the men from religious communion who neglected to observe it. . . . 'Tis well known that oil was applied by the Jews to the most

sacred as well as common uses: their kings, prophets, and priests, at their inauguration and consecration, were *anointed with oil*. . . . The Indian priests and prophets are initiated by unction. . . . The Indians have customs consonant to the Mosaic laws of *uncleanness*. They oblige their women, in their *lunar retreats*, to build small huts at as considerable a distance from their dwelling houses as they imagine may be out of the enemies' reach, where, during the space of that period, they are obliged to stay at the risk of their lives. . . . The non-observance of this separation, a breach of the marriage-law, and murder, they esteem the most capital crimes. When the time of the women's separation is ended, they always purify themselves in deep running water, return home, dress, and anoint themselves. . . . Correspondent to the Mosaic law of women's purification after *travail*, the Indian women absent themselves from their husbands and all public company for a considerable time. . . . At the stated period, the Indian women's impurity is finished by ablution, and they are again admitted to social and holy privileges. By the Levitical law, the people who had *running issues* or *sores* were deemed unclean, and strictly ordered apart from the rest, for fear of polluting them; for everything they touched became unclean. The Indians, in as strict a manner, observe the very same law. . . . The Israelites became unclean only by *touching their dead*, for the space of seven days; and the high priest was prohibited to come near the dead. 'Tis much the same with the Indians to this day. . . . Like the Jews, the greatest part of the Southern Indians *abstain* from the most things that are in themselves, or in general apprehension of mankind, loathsome, or *unclean*. . . . They reckon all birds of prey and birds of night to be unclean and unlawful to be eaten. . . . None of them will eat of any animal whatsoever, if they either know or suspect that it died of itself. . . . They reckon all those animals to be unclean that are either carnivorous or live on nasty food, as hogs, wolves, panthers, foxes, cats, mice, rats. . . . The Indians, through a strong principle of religion, abstain in the strictest manner from eating the *blood* of any animal. . . . The Indian *marriages*, *divorces*, and *punishments of adultery* still retain a strong likeness to the Jewish laws and customs in these points. The Hebrews had *sponsalia de presenti* and *sponsalia de futuro*: a considerable time generally intervened between their contract and marriage; and their nuptial ceremonies were celebrated in the night. The Indians observe the same customs to this day. . . . Many other of the Indian *punishments* resemble those of the Jews. . . . The Indians strictly adhere more than the rest of mankind to that positive, unrepealed law of Moses, 'He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' . . . There never was any set of people who pursued the Mosaic law of *retaliation* with such a fixed eagerness as these Americans. . . . They forgive all crimes at the Annual Atonement of sins, except murder, which is always punished with death. . . . The Indian Americans are more eager to revenge blood than any other people on the whole face of the earth. . . . The Israelites had *cities of refuge*, or places of safety, for those who killed a person unawares and without design. . . . According to the same particular divine law of mercy, each of these Indian nations have either a house or town of refuge, which is a sure asylum to protect a manslayer, or the unfortunate captive, if they can once enter into it. . . . Before the Indians go to war, they have many preparatory ceremonies of *purification* and *fasting*, like what is recorded of the Israelites. . . . The Indian *ark* is deemed so sacred and dangerous to be touched, either by their own sanctified warriors or the spoiling enemy, that they durst not touch it upon any account. . . . The warriors consider themselves as devoted to God, apart from the rest of the people, while they are at war accompanying the sacred ark with the supposed holy things it contains. . . . When they return home victorious over the enemy, they sing the triumphal song to Yo HE WAH, ascribing the victory to him, according to a religious

custom of the Israelites, who were commanded always to attribute their success in war to Jehovah, and not to their swords and arrows."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE.

THE Liverpool Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was held at the Public Hall, King Street, Wigan, Sunday, January 16, 1898. There were present, Rulon S. Wells, Joseph W. McMurrin and Edwin F. Parry, presidency of the European Mission; H. L. James, James Blake and C. E. Rose, of the Liverpool Office; Joseph S. Broadbent, John H. Moss, J. H. Davies, E. R. Owen, J. D. Bowers, Winslow Farr, Thomas Blake and B. R. Birchall of the Manchester Conference; Jed Stringham of the Leeds Conference; and J. W. Grace president of, and all the Traveling Elders in the Liverpool Conference.

At the morning meeting the general authorities of the Church and the presidency of the European Mission were presented and sustained. Elder H. L. James was sustained in the business department of the MILLENNIAL STAR office, and Elder James Blake was sustained as his assistant, Elder Jed Stringham was sustained as president of the Liverpool Conference, to succeed Elder J. W. Grace, released to return home, and the following Elders were sustained to labor in the districts assigned: Robert Winn, Wm. M. Gerrard, W. J. Holt, Jacob R. Hunter, C. E. Rose, Liverpool; John H. Hammond, Clarence Eldredge, Preston; W. D. Turner, Thomas Bennett, Accrington; Thomas Leishman, W. H. Toone, W. P. Ostler, Nephi Bailey, Wigan. W. D. Turner was sustained as president of the Blackburn Branch. Thomas Leishman was sustained as president of the Wigan Branch. H. M. Gorman as president, with Edwin Owen as counselor, were sustained to preside over the Liverpool Branch.

The statistical report for the past seven months was read as follows: Number of branches, 4; missionaries, High Priests, 2; Seventies, 17. Local Priesthood, Elders, 5; Priests, 5; Deacons, 3; members, 95; total officers and members, exclusive of missionaries, 108; children under eight years of age, 27; total number of souls, 135. Baptized, 3; emigrated, over eight years, 17; under eight years, 3; died, 2; received, 1. Strangers' houses visited in tracting, 11,018; by invitation, 200; Gospel conversations, 1076; tracts distributed, 51,923; books distributed, 236; meetings held, in-door, 226; out-door, 130; Sunday School sessions, 130; Mutual Improvement meetings, 12.

The speakers in the morning meeting were: Elders J. W. Grace, Jed Stringham, H. L. James, Nephi Bailey and James Blake; in the afternoon the speakers were: Elders Joseph W. McMurrin and B. R. Birchall; in the evening the speakers were: Elders Rulon S. Wells and Edwin F. Parry.

The meetings were all well attended by the Saints and strangers, and a good spirit prevailed during the Conference.

After the evening session a general Priesthood meeting was held at the Saints' Chapel, 18 Hallgate Street, where all the missionaries expressed their feelings concerning their labors, and some good instructions were given by the presidency of the mission.

W. D. TURNER, Clerk of Conference.