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The Book of Mormon Originally Written in Hieroglyphics - III

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Abstract: Offers some evidence from worldwide sources to corroborate Mormon's statement in the Book of Mormon that the text was written in reformed Egyptian characters.

The Book of Mormon Originally Written in Hieroglyphics.

BY THOMAS W. BROOKBANK.

III.

There are Jewish memorials among the ancient ruins in America.

The ancient American system of writing having been referred by the founder of "Mormonism" and others to an Egyptian origin, but which they assert was used in this land by Jews, the question naturally arises as to what evidence can be produced to support the claim that this land was anciently peopled by the Jews. This matter is so intimately connected with the other relating to the American hieroglyphical system of writing, that it shall receive some attention at the present time.

It is an undisputed fact that when a people leave the land of their birth and education, and settle in another country, they take with themselves, to a greater or less degree, the sciences, the arts and the customs of their fathers, and applying them in their new homes, raise up tokens or monuments by which their racial affinity is revealed. It follows, therefore, that since the Book of Mormon and the "Mormon" people claim a Jewish parentage for some of the ancient Americans, there should be something somewhere developed among the relics of olden times in this land to show the alleged connection. It is evidence of just this kind with which the following remarks shall be occupied, and the basis for them is mathematical.

Let us, in the first place, refresh our minds with some facts concerning the Jewish cubit. Dr. Adam Clarke, in his *Commentaries*,

gives the length of that measure as twenty-one and eight hundred eighty-eight thousandths inches. Dr. Angus, in his *Bible Hand Book* says it was 1.824 feet, which reduce to the same figures in inches as those of Dr. Clarke. The American Tract Society in its *Bible Atlas and Gazetteer* gives 1 foot and 9.888 inches, or 21.888 inches as in both the other cases cited. This length is therefore the standard for the Jewish cubit, as accepted by learned authorities. Its length was ascertained and fixed by careful, scientific investigations and measurements. Now, what "chance" is there that such a measure—running into the uncommonly used thousandth part of an inch—will measure English feet and inches in any unprepared example without the least fractional part over or under? Doubtful of finding any examples close at hand, let us go down to the ruined palace at Palenque, and, as Mr. Stephens did, (Vol. II, page 310) measure the front of the grand palace in that ancient city. It is 228 feet long, *or exactly 125 Jewish cubits*. ($228 \times 12 = 2,736$; $2,736 \div 21.888 = 125$). Notice how these cubits have been run off to the easily reckoned number of 125. In that same ruined city there is another building which is 76 feet long (Vol II, page 339) and these equal, *without any variation, forty-one and two-thirds Jewish cubits*. ($76 \times 12 = 912$; $912 \div 21.888 = 41\frac{2}{3}$). Neither of these lengths is a common one in the dimensions of buildings; and no one can charge that Joseph Smith or Sidney Rigdon, or any other "Mormon" fixed the standard of the Jewish cubit, or built those walls in Palenque, or measured their face. It will doubtless be objected that the application of a measure forty-one and two thirds times, as in the last example, is not convincing that the cubit was used when that 76-foot wall was laid—not so much so as if the number of cubits was 42, 45 or 50, for instance. In reply, it shall be shown later how these cubits running into thirds could have been measured off by a scientific method which wholly obviates this objection.

Other measurements which are not very common in walls or masonry in general, are 62 and 31 feet respectively (Vol. II, page 344, and *Ancient America*, page 142). 62 feet equal 34 cubits, with a variation of 192 of an inch, or about one-fifth. 31 feet are 17 cubits, and the variation is only .096 of an inch, or practically one-tenth. With a standard of one-half cubit, 21 feet

(A. A. page 122) equal 23 half cubits, with a variation of .288 of an inch. Another example is four feet, seven inches, (Vol. II, page 351) which are five half cubits within .280 of an inch. Taking the third part of a cubit into the account we have, among others, the following comparative measurements:

149 feet equals	$81\frac{2}{3}$	cubits	Variation	.480	of an inch
17 " "	$9\frac{1}{3}$	" "	" "	.288	" "
28 " "	$15\frac{1}{3}$	" "	" "	.384	" "
2 ft. 5 in. "	$1\frac{1}{3}$	" "	" "	.184	" "

Out of all the different definite measurements, except those taken of the "slopes" of pyramids, etc., and two others (two inches in one case, and a fractional number in tenths in the other) which we have been able to find in the two volumes of Stephens' works already mentioned, and in Baldwin's *Ancient America*, (excluding those given by the latter of the remains of the Mound-builders) making in all one hundred and twenty-five, there are fifty-two that will measure in whole cubits, halves or thirds, with a variation ranging from nothing to less than an inch, or with an average of .543 of an inch—a little more than one-half—and for the one hundred and twenty-five measurements the average variations as found when applying a standard no shorter than a third of a cubit—that being a fraction over seven inches—is about an inch and a half. The use of a seven-inch "rule" allows room for a variation of several inches in each case. A sixth of a cubit, or less, was not used in a single one of the tested examples of comparative measurements.

A very noticeable peculiarity connected with the dimensions specified in the volumes already named, is that more than one-third of them occur in numbers that are multiples of five or ten, as, 15, 20, 25, 30, etc.; and the question naturally arises as to how a Nephite measure of length could be constructed scientifically on the basis of the Jewish cubit so as to give exactly or approximately such multiple dimensions, and at the same time make these and other measurements occur among the Nephites, not in exceptional or uncommon, but in easily reckoned numbers, or according to a corresponding five or ten multiple principle, which apparently was used as the cited and other numerous multiple numbers indicate.

It does not seem possible on its face that such a measure could be devised, and hence when it is made manifest how one of that kind was almost certainly constructed and used, the evidence becomes all the stronger that the Jewish cubit was the basis of measurement when the ruined palaces, etc., of ancient America were originally built.

Our "squares" of two feet are marked off into twenty-four small sections, each called an inch. An identical division of the cubit into twenty-four parts obtained among the Jews (see *The Bible Hand Book*, page 285; and the Am. T. Society's *Bible Atlas and Gazetteer*, page 31). These small cubital divisions are called digits, and each was .912 of an inch in length, or about nine-tenths of our inch. Now, we do not restrict ourselves to the use of a "square" in all cases when measuring distance; but often employ other standards based on the English foot, as, for examples, a chain of sixty-six feet, and a tape-line of seventy-five feet—the latter being equal to nine hundred inches.

The people who lived in America anciently were far advanced in science and art, and it is absurd to suppose that, in all their measurements of length or distance, they confined themselves to the use of a "square" 21.888 inches long. On the contrary, it appears that they improved on our "tape-line" of nine hundred inches, and made one that was an even one thousand digits long.

This is the longer hypothetical measure used by the Nephites, and it is established as the actual one just in proportion as it will fulfil the several requirements of the case heretofore noticed.

Stephens, as we remember, gives 76 feet as the front of one of the buildings at Palenque. *76 feet is the exact length of the Nephite Jewish "tape-line"—1,000 digits long; and referring to a statement already made, those $41\frac{2}{3}$ cubits could have been measured by simply taking the length of the line once. The same author gives 228 feet as the face of the grand palace in that ruined city. That building is precisely three, Nephite "tape-lines" long—1,000 digits each. The front of another building (Vol. II, page 359) is 38 feet. These are without any variation one half of the line. Baldwin (*Ancient America*, page 135) gives 19 feet as one of the dimensions of a certain wall. 19 feet are just one-fourth of the line.*

These are all the known dimensions which can be measured by the use of the "line" without *any* variation; but when we remember that walls are not often built within a small fraction of their intended length, it is remarkable to find a single one which will pass the test in the manner just illustrated. There are others which vary but little, and among them are the following examples:

	feet	equal	790	digits	Variation	.480	of an	inch
60	feet		790	digits		.480	of an	inch
3	"	"	40	"	"	.480	"	"
1	" 6 in	"	20	"	"	.240	"	"
250	"	"	3,290	"	"	.480	"	"
16	"	"	210	"	"	.480	"	"
10	" 8 in	"	140	"	"	.320	"	"
8	" 5 in	"	110	"	"	.680	"	"
22	"	"	290	"	"	.480	"	"
8	"	"	105	"	"	.240	"	"
122	"	"	1,605	"	"	.240	"	"
30	"	"	395	"	"	.240	"	"
68	"	"	895	"	"	.240	"	"
11	"	"	145	"	"	.240	"	"
160	"	"	2,105	"	"	.240	"	"
70	"	"	920	"	"	.960	"	"
5	" 8 in	"	75	"	"	.400	"	"
1	" 11 in	"	25	"	"	.200	"	"
27	"	"	355	"	"	.240	"	"
2	" 8 in	"	35	"	"	.080	"	"
4	" 7 in	"	60	"	"	.280	"	"
147	"	"	1,935	"	"	.720	"	"

Forty-seven examples out of the whole number (125) give an average variation when tested in the same way of only .414 of an inch—a little more than two-fifths; and the average for all of them does not greatly exceed an inch.

It may appear to some readers who superficially scan the foregoing table, that the standard of a single digit, or only .912 of an inch was used in making these tests, but no greater mistake can be made. Let it be observed that in one of these examples the variation is more than a digit, and that every one of the numbers standing for the digits is a multiple of five or ten, and from this fact it is manifest to all that practically *the standard used was not a single digit, but blocks of five or ten of them taken together.*

This circumstance puts a very different phase on the matter, and that hypothetical "tape-line" of 1,000 digits appears to be fairly well established as an actuality.

A people who were sufficiently advanced in practical science to construct a line, or chain, 1,000 digits long, could not fail to see the advantage of marking it off into sections containing 500, 250, 100, 50, 10 and 5 digits respectively, and it would then apply in practice as follows: For four feet seven inches they would take six of the ten-digit sections. For seventy feet, nine of the hundred-digit, and two of the ten-digit divisions, would equal them. For eight feet five inches, one of the hundred and one of the ten-digit sections would measure it. For 250 feet, they could run off three full chains and two of the hundred and nine of the ten-digit divisions; and do the work with little mental exertion, not only in these, but in all the examples (125) tested; and, if one is so disposed, fractions can be eliminated from the reckoning by taking a block of five digits as a unit.

[THE END.]

SNOWFLAKE, ARIZONA.

Thomas R. Jones, Columbia, South Carolina, May 23, says that the elders of that place have been having very good success in distributing from one hundred to one hundred and fifty tracts and holding from four to eight well-attended meetings every week. "We have many friends and a few enemies, and are well treated." The elders in the picture, from left to right, are, back, George W. Graff, Cannonville, Utah. Bottom row: Thomas E. Jones, Malad City, Idaho; David Harmon, Calder's Station, Utah; Arnold B. Call, Chesterfield, Idaho.

