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## Book of Mormon Facts II

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# Book of Mormon Facts

By J. M. Sjodahl

## II.

Since I returned home from my mission to Great Britain, I have had an opportunity of reading the Book of Mormon with more attention to its details than at any previous time, and I can say that the more closely that book is scanned and scrutinized, the more wonderful its beauties and riches appear.

Let me call attention to only a very few of the many precious things we find among its contents in addition to the great doctrines concerning faith, repentance, baptism, resurrection, etc., with which we all are familiar.

In I Nephi, 13: 16, 17 we read the time would come when war would be poured out among the nations of the world and particularly those connected with what is called "the mother of abominations," and that when this day of wrath should come, then "the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people, who are of the house of Israel."

Has not this prophecy been literally fulfilled before our eyes, as if it were only yesterday? The world war here predicted has raged as a gigantic conflagration. The flames burst forth in the very center of the political world structure of the Roman Catholic church, and suddenly, three great world powers, one Roman Catholic, one Greek Catholic, and one partly Catholic and partly Protestant, caved in and became smouldering ruins. But note that in that day the Father, according to the prophecy, was to begin the work of preparation for the gathering of dispersed Judah. And note also that this has come literally true, for on Dec. 10, 1917, the British field marshal, Viscount Allenby, entered

Jerusalem. Shortly afterwards, the Turks were driven from Palestine, and now the Jews all over the world are celebrating the new day of liberty for the land of their fathers. It has all happened as foretold in the Book of Mormon.

In Mormon 2: 10, we have a remarkable classification of sins. The prophet tells us that the Nephites began to repent, and he enumerates some of their shortcomings, among which dishonesty was prominent. The people had fallen so low that "no man could keep that which was his own, for the thieves, and the robbers, and the murderers, and the magic art, and the witchcraft which was in the land." According to this, magic art and witchcraft flourish together with theft, robbery, and murder. This is indeed something that should cause us to sit up and take notice. For in our own enlightened day and generation, people have become, as it were, possessed by spiritist magic. They think they can call up the dead, and converse with them through "ouija" boards and other contrivances of "wood and stone." And behind this spiritism are spirits concealed that prompt men to commit all kinds of crime, with the result that the land, now as formerly, is filled with violence and dishonesty. The daily news consists largely of stories of law-breaking and deception, and in the picture-temples, which, like the demons, are legion, "because we are many," is held out before us, in the most alluring manner, a pagan morality which necessarily must be detrimental to the national life of the people. Betterment societies and moralists can no more stem the flood of corruption, than could the well-meaning old lady sweep back the tide of the ocean beach with her

little broom. The only effective reform is that which was used by John the Baptist, and he put the axe to the root of the tree.

In I. Nephi, 12: 16, we find another great truth which is especially applicable to our time. Lehi had a vision. He saw a river in which many were drowned. This was explained to his son Nephi, who, also in a vision, saw his descendants and the descendants of his brethren at war with each other. The angel who showed him this gruesome picture of carnage, said to him, "Behold the fountain of filthy water which thy father saw; yea, even the river of which he spoke; and the depths thereof are the depths of hell." This makes it clear to us whence strife and war come. "They are the depths of hell." As far as we know, it was Lucifer who invented war. He was thrust out of heaven on account of the stand he took, but he, nevertheless, succeeded in inducing the Lamanites to adopt his policy of militarism, and the consequences to them were unbelief, national decadence, and final overthrow. And this, as history shows, is always the end of a policy of blood and iron.

There are, it must be admitted, in international politics, many gordian knots that must be untied. The nations of the Old World have engaged in murder and robbery across once established boundary lines so frequently that they have almost obliterated those lines and forgotten the difference between mine and thine. Many questions of property rights must, therefore, be decided before permanent peace can be hoped for. But *how* are they to be decided? They must either be left to the arbitration of the sword—and that is the counsel of Lucifer—or we must have a tribunal in which representatives of the nations can sit and judge in accordance with laws accepted by all, and established principles of right. That

is to say, in other words, we must have either a brotherhood of nations, a league of civilized peoples, that can put the house in order and sweep out the old rubbish, so that we may without embarrassment invite our great Prince of Peace to come and take charge of his kingdom; or, we must continue to let Lucifer and his evil spirits dominate this glorious world of our Lord.

"Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the children of God."

Many are under the impression that the Book of Mormon is a work of ignorance which cannot stand the test in the fiery furnace of scientific criticism. This is a mistake. It is a book that will come unscathed from any fair test. Let me give only a few suggestions along this line.

In I Nephi, 1: 2, we read, "I make a record in the language of my father." Why does Nephi use this expression, "the language of my father," instead of "Hebrew"? The reason is that, in his day, the name "Hebrew" was not yet applied to the language of the descendants of Israel. In the prophet Isaiah it is called "the language of the Jews," (Isa. 26: 13). The first who applied the name "Hebrew" to the spoken language of the Jews was the Son of Sirach, 150 B. C., and Josephus seems to have been the first to have applied it to their old written language, in the Old World, while the Prophet Mormon about 400 A. D., seems to have been the first to whom it occurred to use it on this side of the globe. (Mor. 9: 33.) Nephi used a name current in his day, and here we have a remarkable corroboration of the truth and accuracy of the Book of Mormon.

A similar illustration of accuracy is furnished by II Nephi 3: 6, where Joseph, the patriarch, is quoted as having prophesied: "A seer shall the

Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins." Why did not the word "prophet" appear here instead of "seer?" In I Sam. 9: 9, we read that a man who in the days of Samuel, about 1100 B. C., was called a "prophet" was formerly called a "seer." Nephi quoted a patriarch who lived centuries before Samuel. The very quotation furnishes, in the terms used, a proof of its genuineness. A forger would here, almost certainly, have been guilty of an anachronism.

In several places in the Book of Mormon we read of iron and steel implements. Archaeologists generally, I believe, are of the opinion that the inhabitants of ancient America did not know of the use of such implements.

That question is, possibly, not yet settled. Further investigation may cause even scientists to change their views in this respect.

In the meantime it should be remembered that the soil of Peru and other portions of America always was well impregnated with iron; and the people had implements and tools in which this metal was a constituent, and which may have been known as "iron" just as we call a certain object a "gold" ring, although it is but nine karats gold or less. All are, furthermore, agreed that some of the Americans of old used copper mixed with a little tin. Prescott (*Conquest of Peru* Vol. 1, P. 126) says: "This composition gave a hardness to the metal which seems to have been little inferior to that of steel." If this is a fact, why may we not call this hardened metal "steel"? In our day we make guns of a metal consisting of 92 per cent copper and 8 per cent tin, and we call the mixture "steel bronze;" why, then, should not the name "steel" be applied to a similar composition used anciently, even if tempered *iron* was not then known?

In Ether 3: 4, we are told that the Lord caused certain stones to give light to the vessels of Jared. Some have ridiculed that story. But only recently, June 20, 1920, a cable from London brought the report that a scientist, Dr. J. Coke Squance, of Sunderland, had discovered that certain stones had become very luminous when subjected to the influence of radium. The report closed as follows:

"The most remarkable feature of the treatment, according to the doctor, is the brilliancy which the stones acquire, when shut up with the rays. He showed an enormous ruby mounted in a ring, which glowed and sparkled brilliantly."

It looks to me as if the author of the book of Ether had full knowledge of a fact which a scientist of today is just beginning to look into. At all events we may say without fear of contradiction that none need to ridicule the story of the luminous stones. Surely the Almighty can perform just as great a miracle as Dr. Squance of Sunderland.

Only one more word, and that concerns the glorious name, "America," which has been heard throughout the world as a joyful blast from the silver trumpets of ancient Israel at the beginning of the year of jubilee. What are the origin and meaning of that word?

The generally accepted view is that it was given to the continents of our hemisphere in honor of the Florentine broker and adventurer, Amerigo Vespucci. This view has been accepted, it seems, on the sole authority of an Alsatian school teacher, Waldseemüller.

I doubt the accuracy of this view and suggest another, according to which the name is derived from a word well known to the Book of Mormon readers, namely the word *Mulek*. This was the name of a son of King Zedekiah who founded a colony here and whose name was given to that colony. There was also a city

named after that prince and finally, all "the land north was called Mulek . . . for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north" (Hel. 6: 10.) My view is that the word America is but a modern form of *Mulek* and that therefore our country still retains the very same name which was given it by Book of Mormon settlers.

In making this statement, I do not claim that I reveal a scientifically established fact, but nevertheless, I am convinced that I am stating a truth. I am, on this question, in a position somewhat similar to that of astronomers who first announced the existence of the planet Neptune, as the logical conclusion of purely theoretical calculations, and afterwards found that orb where they expected it to be.

But what connection can there be between the two words *Mulek* and *America*?

We all know that words vary in form when they pass from mouth to mouth and from country to country, for many generations. The vowel sounds are generally modified, and sometimes even the consonants are softened or hardened, as the case may be.

If we attempt to trace the word *Mulek* to its origin, we find it in the Bible in various forms, such as *Melech*, *Malchiah*, *Milcom*, *Moloch*, or *Molech*. It stands for a person of eminence, a "ruler," a "king." In the Book of Mormon it appears in the name *Amulek*, where an *a* has been prefixed. What the precise meaning of this particle is, I can not say with certainty, but I surmise that it is an abbreviation of the Hebrew definite article.\* "Amulek" would then mean "the king." We next find it in *Amalickiah*, where an ending, *iah*, has been

\* Rafinesque, in the *American Nations*, speaking about the Haytian dialect, says the "a" prefixed means "of," "as," "like." This confirms me in the opinion that it has the same origin as the Hebrew article.

added. The meaning of this syllable is "Jehovah" and the meaning of the name is "The King of Jehovah."

Amalickiah, as we all remember, had the ambition of establishing himself as a king over an extensive territory, and it was natural for him to assume such a high-sounding title for his evil purposes. *Amaleki* is an abbreviated form of the same name.

If we place the accent on the third syllable from the end of this form of the word, we have, with a very slight modification of the vowels, *Amelika*.

But it is a fact that both in older and newer languages *l* frequently has to give place to *r*. As nations decline in civilization and become warriors they seem to need harder consonants to express their ideas. The Indians now known as *Cherokces*, formerly called themselves *Tsalagis*. The *l* has become *r*.

A great many illustrations of such change could be quoted. The old Mexican word *tlalli*, or *tellalli*, means *carth*, *ground*, the same as the old Latin *tellus*, which finally became *terra*. In the same way I believe the word *Amaleki* gradually became *America* the meaning of which, as has been stated, is "the king of Jehovah." And this applied to a place instead of person would be, "the place, or country of the king of Jehovah"—or, as we understand it, "The Land of Zion."

For the information of the advanced student of the Book of Mormon, I quote the following from Denison's *The Primitive Aryans of America*, P. 45:

*R* and *l* are peculiar letters in the linguistic scheme of the world; besides being interchangeable they allow vowels to play hide and seek around them in a puzzling way. In Sanscrit there exists a vocalic *r* and *l* which play the part of vowels."

The following, on the same subject is quoted from Mr. Franz Boas' *Handbook of American Languages*, Part 1, pp. 17 and 18:

"The Pawnee language contains a sound which may be heard more or less distinctly sometimes as an *l*, sometimes an *r*, sometimes an *n* and again as *d*, which, however, without any doubt, is throughout the same sound, although modified to a certain extent by its position in the word and by surrounding sounds. It is an exceedingly weak *r*, made by thrilling with the tip of the tongue at a point a little behind the roots of the incisors. . . . As soon as the thrill is heard more strongly, we receive the impression of an *r*. When the lateral movement prevails and the tip of the tongue does not seem to leave the palate, the impression of an *l* is strongest."

From this it will be seen that the evolution of the word *Mulek* into *America* would be natural, following well-known lines of development.

The opinion here expressed is strengthened by the fact that the word *America*, in some form or another, is found in many parts of the continents as an original Indian name. We have it according to Prof. Marcou<sup>1</sup> in *Americ*, which is the name in Nicaragua for the high land between Juigalpa and Libertad, in the province of Chontales. It is found, in my opinion, in such names as, *Cundinamarca*, *Caxamarca*<sup>2</sup> and *Tantamamarca*, in the northern countries of South America. The last mentioned name, according to Nadailac means "Precipices of desolation."

<sup>1</sup> *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1875.

<sup>2</sup> Nadailac, *Prehistoric America*, Dall's edition, London, 1885 p. 139 spells this name *Caxalmalca*, which, unless it should happen to contain a typographical error, would clearly indicate its derivation from some such name as *Amaleki*.

Garcillasso informs us that *Cuntur Marca* was the name of a place conquered by Inca Tupac and that a tower, built for the royalty, was called *Paucar Marca*. Rafinesque says the Chileans in olden times called themselves "Seke" in opposition to the *Maruke* which were those who had come by sea. "Maruke" would in some Indian dialects be "Maluke" the same as *Mulek*.

The Book of Mormon is a wonderful work. It will stand the severest scientific tests. Yet the only way to get a testimony of its truth is that pointed out by Brigham Young when he said:

"I say to all, both Saint and sinner, that there is not an individual who has heard the sound of the gospel of salvation, the report of the work of these last days, of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and of the mission of Joseph Smith, but the Spirit of the Lord in a greater or less degree accompanied that report with power and with the testimony of its truth. If he has heard it in its simplicity and purity, the weight of testimony which it bears along with it, carries conviction to his mind that it may be true, although, through the influence of the world, of evil associations in life, or the instigations of the enemy of all righteousness, those convictions and impressions may be swept away, which if exercised at the time in sincerity, with full purpose of heart to know the truth, would have substantiated the matter to his entire satisfaction. A weight of testimony always accompanies the promulgation of the Gospel of salvation."—Brigham Young, sermon, June 13, 1852; *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, Page 88.

## Blind

"Show me your God!" the doubter cries.  
I point him out the smiling skys;  
I show him all the woodland greens;  
I show him peaceful sylvan scenes,  
I show him winter snows and frost;  
I show him waters, tempest-tossed;  
I show him hills rock-ribbed and  
strong;  
I bid him hear the thrush's song;  
I show him flowers in the close—  
The lily, the violet and rose;

I show him rivers, babbling streams;  
I show him youthful hopes and dreams.  
I show him maids with eager hearts;  
I show him toilers in the marts;  
I show him stars, the moon, the sun;  
I show him deeds of kindness done;  
I show him joy, I show him care,  
And still he holds his doubting air,  
And faithless goes his way, for he  
Is blind of soul and can not see!

—John Kendrick Bangs.