

Captives in Sacred Bonds

By David B. Brown © 2017

In May of this year we visited several archaeological sites in the jungles of Guatemala and came upon a very important discovery. It appears that we have found illustrations of the story of Ammon making a plea for the Nephites to receive and protect the converted Lam-anites who had become prisoners in their land as a result of their sacred bond to bury their weapons and never kill again.

Dos Pilas is a Mayan site found in the Petexbatun region of central Guatemala. Based on several inscriptions at various sites, we understand that a king from Dos Pilas killed and dethroned a half-brother from Tikal. Mayan murals at Bonampak depict this event as a beheading. A depiction from a Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway illustrates the same story. Remains found at San Bartolo indicate a slaughtered royal family buried in a well with only the head of the king found in that well; the body is missing. Yet a headless body of a ruler is found buried at Tikal. Several stelae including Tikal Stela 31 and Bonampak Stela 1 indicate that a king was beheaded. Headless statues found at Tonina and Tenam Puente indicate royal decapitation. For all of these reasons, we felt it was important to visit the site of Dos Pilas to see what could be

found and if any of our present theories could be confirmed or moved forward. What we discovered truly surprised us because it was so clearly portrayed.

Dos Pilas is located in a basin just east of the confluence of the Pasion and Salinas Rivers that are considered the headwaters of the Usumacinta River. This strategic location held control over the riverways of the region which were the highways of commerce. In Book of Mormon terms we believe this area south of the Pasion River and east of the Salinas River to be the Land of Manti. It is then bordered on the south by a range of remarkable mountains that seem to jut straight up out of the plains. These rippled mountains appear to be what the Book of Mormon refers to as Her-mounts—a wilderness region that is so



Continues on Page 2

Signs of the Times

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In the Signs in the Heavens article from the last issue of the Cumorah Messenger we presented the topic of the celestial event coming this September that appears to fulfill the qualifications for being the Great Sign in Heaven found in the 12th Chapter of Revelations. There are several peripheral aspects that I would like to present which further affirms the context of this event.

First, this Great Sign in Heaven is preceded by a total eclipse that casts its shadow across the United States from Oregon to South Carolina at midday on August 21st of this year. There is so much to understand about this eclipse. The path of its shadow includes Independence and much of the surrounding area. Why does this occur, especially at this particular time? We believe that there are many aspects of this eclipse that can be deciphered.

August 21st is the last full day of the Zodiac sign of Leo which ends during the 22nd of August. Is this shadowing telling

us that the lights are now out for the age prior to the time of the Virgin and the birthing of Christ’s Kingdom? Is this “flicker” of the Sun’s light a gesture that we can now start counting? If so, what are we counting-down?

There is another total eclipse that crosses the United States in 2024, but this time it also includes portions of Mexico and Nova Scotia. The pathways of the two eclipses create an “X” over the United States with southern Illinois and Missouri being the “spot” marked by the “X”. This seven-year gap between the eclipses

Continues on Page 8

Inside this Issue:

Captives of Sacred Bonds <i>Cont.</i>	2, 3, 4 & 7
Signs of the Times <i>Cont.</i>	8
Adventures in Archaeology	5 & 6

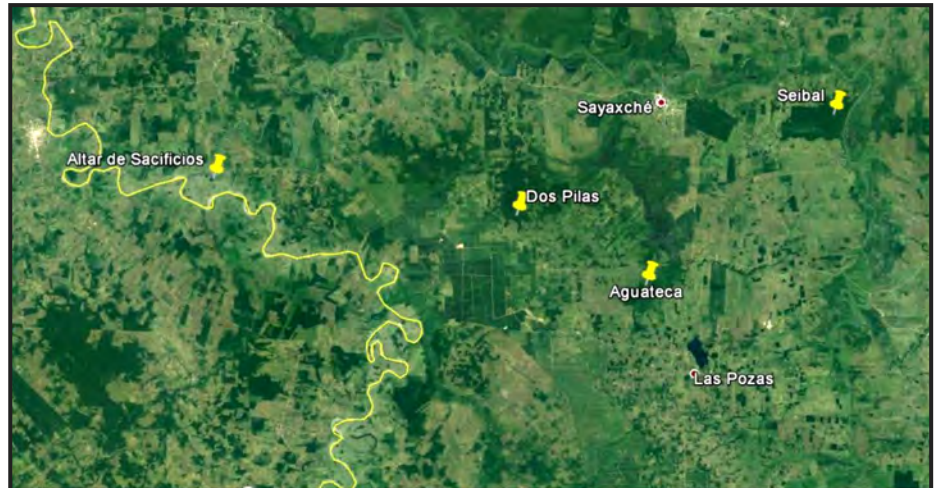
Captives in Sacred Bonds *continued*

rugged that even deforestation could not tame it for agriculture or commerce. It was in the borders of the Land of Manti that this story begins in the Book of Mormon.

Alma 12:1 “And now, it came to pass that as Alma was journeying from the land of Gideon southward, away to the land of Manti, behold, to his astonishment, he met the sons of Mosiah journeying towards the land of Zarahemla. [2] Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore, Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; [3] And what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; [4] For they were men of a sound understanding, and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. [5] But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer and fasting; therefore, they had the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation; and when they taught, they taught with power and authority, even as with the power and authority of God. [6] And they had been teaching the word of God for the space of fourteen years among the Lamanites, having had much success in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth;”

Alma was heading south from Zarahemla (Yaxchilan) through the land of Gideon (east of the Usumacinta and north of the Pasion River), then into the Land of Manti (south of the Pasion River). It was here that he met with the sons of Mosiah who were heading toward Zarahemla. The perspective of the Sons of Mosiah was recorded as thus:

Alma 15:14 “And they gathered together all their people, yea, all the people of the Lord, and did gather together all their flocks and herds, and departed out of the land, and came into the wilderness which divided the land of Nephi from the land of Zarahemla, and came over near the borders of the land. [15] And it came to pass that Ammon said unto them, Behold, I and my brethren will go forth into the land of Zarahemla, and ye shall remain here until we return; and we will try the hearts of our brethren, whether they will that ye shall come into their land. [16] And it came to pass that as Am-

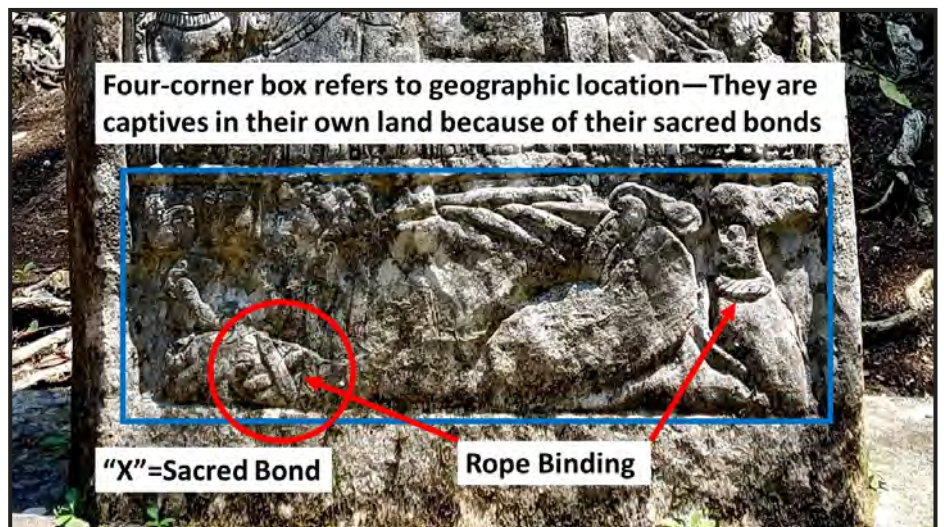


mon was going forth into the land, that he and his brethren met Alma, over in the place of which has been spoken; and behold, this was a joyful meeting.”

Somewhere between the southern borders of Manti and the borders of Manti and Gideon, these brethren met. It appears that this meeting took place close to the sites of Dos Pilas and Aguateca. The stelae at Dos Pilas and Aguateca both indicate that the actions being taken are founded on the premise that someone is being held captive or in bondage. Many of the stelae have a boxed area at the base of the image with a person who is bound. Some of the stelae illustrate the bindings as being sacred bonds because the bindings form an “X” which is a Mayan symbol for something that is sacred. This is exactly what happened to our Anti-Nephi-Lehi/Lamanite converts. They took a sacred vow to lay down their

weapons and never do harm again, even if it meant losing their own lives. Therefore, if someone intends to do them harm, they are not able to defend themselves. These people are “boxed in”; they are captive to their sacred vows and are not able to defend themselves against aggressors. This is a trap; do they allow themselves to be wiped out and their children destroyed by their vows to God?

As we walked onto the Principle Plaza at Dos Pilas, it was interesting what we encountered and the spirit that was present at the site. The first monuments we saw were in the center of the plaza and faced the hieroglyphic stairways located at the base of a large pyramid. The glyphs on the stairways relate the story of how this king led an attack on Tikal and how there were pools of blood and piles of heads. We believe this is the story of how the king from



Continues on Page 3

Captives in Sacred Bonds *continued*

Dos Pilas made the move to dethrone King Anti-Nephi-Lehi. No mention of this particular act is made in the Book of Mormon, only a single verse indicating that there were powers who desired that he would no longer be king. But, here in Dos Pilas we have a series of glyphs relating details regarding the effort to usurp the throne and return the industrialist mindset to the powers that ruled over the region.

The images on the monuments that face the stairways are standing on top of captives, and most are carrying spears and shields. It is as if these images are making the statement that they will fight to defend these captives. The spirit here was very strong that this was a place of power; both good and evil. It was a place where the powers of darkness were attempting to overcome the light, but these men were standing to righteously defend the people who were in the light.

We then ventured to other areas of the site, making our way to the natural spring that was part of the reason why this site is called Dos Pilas—this means “two wells.” Anciently, there were two springs here. Those had dried up, and about 40 years ago a new spring developed about 50 feet from where the old ones were located. This is now the water source for many of the locals.

From there we made our way over to the east where we came upon another structure with two stelae on the north side. Here is where our eyes were opened and we were absolutely amazed at what we saw. The stela on the west

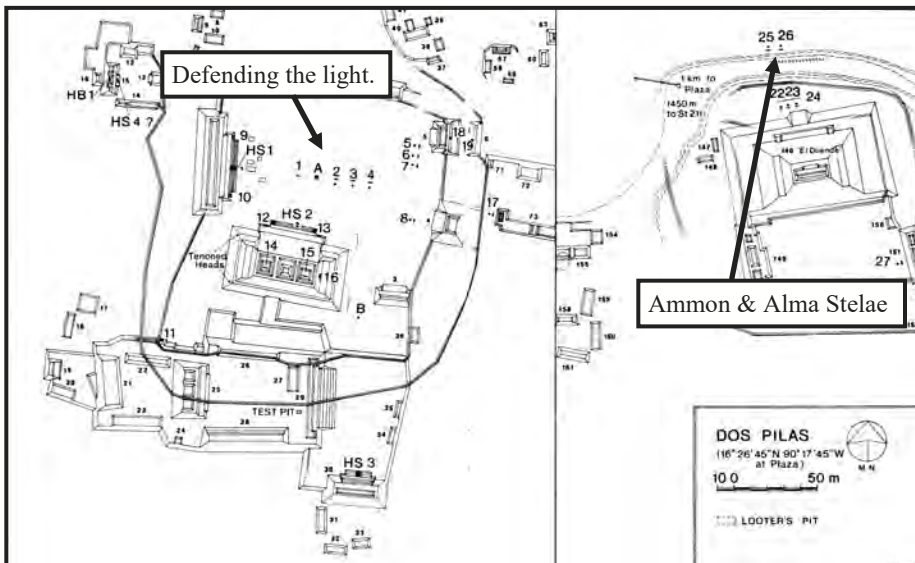


had the captive at the base that we illustrated earlier in this article. He is

bound at the wrists with rope in the shape of an “X”. This indicates his sacred bond that is affecting his actions symbolized by his hands. Standing on top of that captive in the box is a Quetzal priest who is holding a serpent scepter with the image of the Holy Spirit sitting on top of the scepter. He holds this in his right hand to indicate that he is faithful to the leadings of the spirit and his power comes by that same spirit. In his left hand he holds a shield, but it is open with his hand showing as if to welcome someone to be protected. Standing below the scepter is a small person in royal garb—perhaps an image of a converted Lamanite King who is now “under” the influence of the same Holy Spirit that guides the Quetzal Priest. And, below the open shield is a heron-like bird (cormorant) stretching upward toward the shield with a fish in its beak. The cormorant (fisher-of-men/Sons of Mosiah) is delivering its catch (converted Lamanites) to be protected (shield) by the Quetzal Priest (Nephites).

This stela was amazing. Here is the story of the converted Lamanites looking for protection from their aggressors and the Sons of Mosiah then bringing this proposal to the people of Zarahemla. The stela on the east is of another Quetzal Priest holding a serpent scepter in his right hand and an open shield in his left. There is a small man in royal garb below his scepter, but there is nothing distinguishable below the shield that he carries. And, this priest does not stand on a “boxed-in captive.” This priest stands on an extra-large glyph that is in a box which indicates that the glyph is perhaps the explanation of the region or geographic location that this person represents. At this point, we believe that this is Alma. All of this is recorded in the Book of Mormon like this:

Alma 15:20 “And now, it came to pass that Alma conducted his brethren back to the land of Zarahemla, even to his own house. [21] And they went and told the chief judge all the things that had happened unto them in the land of Nephi among their brethren, the Lamanites. [22] And it came to pass that the chief judge sent a proclamation throughout all the land, desiring the voice of the people concerning the ad-



Continues on Page 4

Captives in Sacred Bonds *continued*

mitting their brethren, who were the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi. [23] And it came to pass that the voice of the people came, saying, Behold, we will give up the land of Jershon, which is on the east by the sea, which joins the land Bountiful, which is on the south of the land Bountiful; and this land Jershon is the land which we will give unto our brethren for an inheritance. [24] And behold, we will set our armies between

the land Jershon and the land Nephi, that we may protect our brethren in the land Jershon; [25] And this we do for our brethren on account of their fear to take up arms against their brethren, lest they should commit sin; and this their great fear came because of their sore repentance which they had on account of their many murders and their awful wickedness. [26] And now, behold, this will we do unto our brethren, that they may inherit the land Jershon; and we will guard them from their enemies with our armies, on conditions they will give us a portion of their substance to assist us, that we may maintain our armies. [27] Now it came to pass that when Ammon had heard this, he returned to the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, and also Alma with him, into the wilderness where they had pitched their tents, and made known unto them all these things. [28] And Alma also related unto them his conversion with Ammon, and Aaron, and his brethren. And it came to pass that it did cause great joy among them. [29] And they went down into the land of Jershon and took possession of the land of Jershon; and they were called by the Nephites the people of Ammon; [30] Therefore, they were distinguished by that name ever after; and they were among the people of Nephi and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God.”

Both of these Quetzal Priests are facing the east—the direction of the rising Sun; of the coming of the light and the beginning of a new day; and, where the land of Jershon is located in relation to the position of these stelae. These were incredible finds. The position of these stelae, their message, their geography all affirm the theories we have been developing concerning the parallels of Book of Mormon history with Mesoamerican archaeology. This is one of the most incredible validations we have found, and it comes when we had developed a particular theory that we should be able to find something like this in this area. We were standing at the vertex of research and inspiration—both of these axis converged at Dos Pilas where apparently Alma just happened to come upon the Sons of Mosiah for one of the most wonderful reunions ever recorded. This is the general location of that reunion.

Once we finished here, we made our way back to the Principle Plaza and now the images on the stelae meant so much more. These demonstrated the decisions made by the Nephites to protect and defend the converted Lamanites from those who would take advantage of the vows these converts had made.

Just like the story of the Book of Mormon, it doesn't end here in Dos Pilas where the reunion of Alma and the Sons of Mosiah took place. The Ammonites (converted Lamanites) now moved to Jershon, which was on the east by the sea. Two days after our Dos Pilas visit, we made our way to the sister city of Aguateca. Here we found further evidences confirming the Book of Mormon account.

Aguateca is a site built on a bluff overlooking the Petexbatun Lagoon which is an excellent defensive location. It was clear that this site was quite different as compared to Dos Pilas. Aguateca is fashioned like the sites we find in Belize (Jershon). It has structures with rooms to house murals for teaching, much like what we found at Caracol and Xunantunich. These structures were also designed with a specific number of rooms, stairs and doorways that indicate specific values. One plaza has a building on the north side that has three rooms, one of which is higher than the other two. This alludes to the glories of heaven. Opposite this building across the plaza is what the archaeologists call the Reunion Structure. It has ten doorways, however, only the first seven are centered on the plaza opposite the “glories”. And, the center wall behind those seven doorways is built on a raised floor. The other three doorways do not face the “glory” building, and the center wall for the three doorways is not built on a raised floor. All of this implies that there is something that totals ten, and it has a division of seven and three. We know from Book of Mormon scripture that the Lamanite Kingdom was so divided once the Lamanites were converted.

Alma 14:13 “Now these are they who were converted unto the Lord: the people of the Lamanites who were in the land of Ishmael, and also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the land of Middoni, and also of the

Continues on Page 7



Adventures In Scriptures

Issue 21

2017

Alma Strengthens the Church

The Nephites had just been through a war. There was great suffering, sorrow, and destruction in the land. The people were humbled and looked to Alma and the church for comfort. Many people were baptized and joined the church. God accepts anyone willing to repent. Alma was both High Priest and Chief Judge of the land, but he felt he needed to spend his time bringing ministry to the church, so he appointed Nephihah to be the Chief Judge of the land.

Alma traveled around the land to strengthen the church. He started in Zarahemla and then on to Gideon and Melek. In each of those cities he preached, baptized, and ordained; teachers, priests, and elders; by laying-on-of-hands, to watch over the church.

Alma and his priests, teachers, and elders became concerned when some of the people began treasuring money, fancy clothes and jewelry more than they loved God. They noticed that the people that were rich were mistreating those who were poor. He encouraged all, both rich and poor, to show more love and respect for each other. He called on all the people that were mistreating others and forgetting God because of their love of riches to repent and change their ways.

When you run out of money, your clothes wear out and your jewelry breaks, gets lost or stolen, the only things you have left are the love of your friends, family and God. And when you are away from your family and friends, God is still with you.

C	I	N	R	N	B	M	T	O	F	N	V	S	I	N
C	O	L	M	S	U	H	C	E	Y	Q	Y	E	O	S
L	Y	R	S	O	R	B	L	D	A	Y	U	W	U	V
S	A	E	R	O	T	P	A	R	L	B	B	W	I	Q
J	Z	V	U	U	R	H	E	U	T	Q	W	U	S	X
W	K	G	Y	P	P	T	T	S	E	Q	S	E	W	O
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I	Y	F	A	E	T	R	E	R	G	L	Y	O	F	T
T	R	E	A	S	U	R	E	S	E	T	N	I	S	I
G	O	Z	S	Q	H	H	Z	S	L	H	S	C	T	Z
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X	B	X	X	J	R	U	R	P	V	E	G	F	T	Y
K	A	E	R	B	O	O	O	A	G	V	N	C	M	L
V	Q	O	F	Y	P	N	F	K	E	E	D	N	A	G
H	D	U	N	O	I	J	Q	C	P	S	D	Q	I	F

Word search

Find all the words in the scripture, even the duplicate words and circle them.

Lay not up
for yourselves
treasures upon
earth, where
moth and rust
doth corrupt, and
thieves break
through and steal

Nephi 3 5:110



Use the vowel key to fill in the missing letters to complete the scripture from **Alma 3:57**

- 1=A
- 2=E
- 3=I
- 4=O
- 5=U

B 2 h 4 ld, h 2 s 2 nd th 2 n 1 n 3 v 3 t t 1 n 3 nt 5 ll m 4 n;
 f 4 r th 2 rms f 4 m 2 rcy r 1 xt nd d 2 t w 4 rds th 1 m,
 nd 1 h 2 s 1 th, r 1 p 3 nt, nd 1 w 3 ll r 3 c 2 v 2 y 4 5;



Read across the mountains to find out what the Golden rule is.

D O U
 N T O O T H
 E R S A S Y
 O U W O U L
 D H A V E T
 H E M D O U
 N T O Y O U.

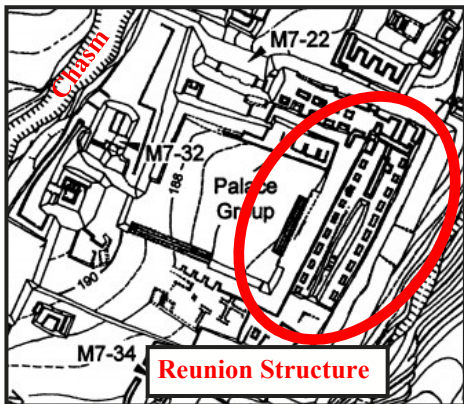
3 NEPHI 6:24

Captives in Sacred Bonds *continued*

people of the Lamanites who were in the city of Nephi, and also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the land of Shilom, and who were in the land of Shemlon, and in the city of Lemuel, and in the city of Shimmilon.”

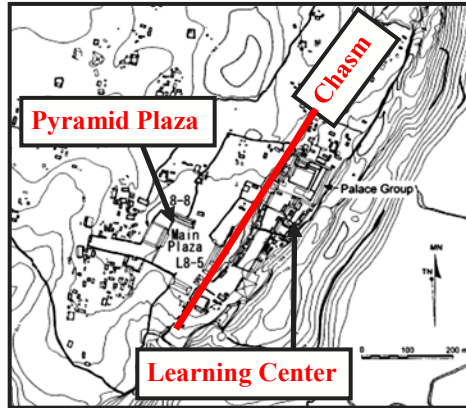
Alma 14:21 “And it came to pass that the Amalekites, and the Amulonites, and the Lamanites who were in the land of Amulon, and also in the land of Helam, and who were in the land of Jerusalem, and, in fine, in all the land round about, who had not been converted and had not taken upon them the name of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, were stirred up by the Amalekites and by the Amulonites to anger against their brethren; [22] And their hatred became exceeding sore against them, even insomuch that they began to rebel against their king, insomuch that they would not that he should be their king; therefore, they took up arms against the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi.”

From these passages we understand that seven cities (vassal states) converted and three did not. That is the exact division of the Reunion Building at Aguateca. The seven doorways representing the seven converted cities are centered on the plaza that faces the building of the “glories” of heaven. The other three do not. The break in the



wall behind the doorways accentuate the intended division and because the wall is built on a raised floor it indicates that these seven have elevated to a higher plane of existence. Such is the nature of those who accept the challenge of living by the laws of the kingdom of heaven—they are spiritually elevated and live on a higher plane.

To the west of this Palace Group is an extensive chasm that divides this part of the site from the portion that has



large pyramid structures. We believe this was purposeful construction to indicate that a portion of Dos Pilas/ Aguateca had converted to the new religion and this new understanding of the gospel had created a chasm between the newly converted and the once powerful ruling class of the region. On the plaza of the pyramid structures to the northwest are found more images of powerful men standing over “boxed-in captives.” Again, this is recording the struggles between the powers of light and darkness. Eventually, those who walked in the light had to separate themselves from their old world for their own safety.

There is a stela found at Naranjo that illustrates this departure from Dos Pilas/Aguateca. The glyphs at Dos Pilas say that the daughter of the ruler of Dos Pilas took exception to the actions of her father and moved with others of her region to revitalize the city of Naranjo located east of Tikal and very close to the modern-day border between Guatemala and Belize. This places it on the western edge of the Book of Mormon land of Jershon.

The stela depicts “Lady Six Sky” and she is also standing on top of a “boxed-in captive.” This indicates that all she does is founded on the fate of the captives. She wears royal clothing and all of her actions (hands and arms) are faithful to the offering bowl she holds.



We believe that Lady Six Sky was not the literal daughter of the ruler from Dos Pilas, but that this figure represents the church that was born out of the actions the Dos Pilas ruler took. Many of those who took part in the original effort to slay the people of God were eventually converted to the gospel.

Alma 14:73 “And it came to pass that when the Lamanites saw that they could not overpower the Nephites, they returned again to their own land; and many of them came over to dwell in the land of Ishmael and the land of Nephi and did join themselves to the people of God, who were the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi; [74] And they did also bury their weapons of war according as their brethren had, and they began to be a righteous people; and they did walk in the ways of the Lord and did observe to keep his commandments and his statutes; yea, and they did keep the law of Moses; for it was expedient that they should keep the law of Moses as yet, for it was not all fulfilled.”

The abhorrent actions of the Dos Pilas ruler gave birth to these gospel converts from Dos Pilas/Aguateca who then moved to Naranjo to revitalize an old city and find safety in the rugged hills in that region. Here they put distance and the Nephite Army between themselves and the Lamanite/

Amalekite/Amulonite powers that sought to break their will and destroy them.

This spring we found a wealth of information that brought the passages of Alma to life with images, architecture and messages that speak from the dust to confirm the story of a people who were totally transformed with the gospel message. It is a story of epic proportions that has been preserved through the ages for a time such as now, that it might again come to light to inspire a latter-day world. This message has now been restored for all humanity.

**We're on the web at
www.hceti.org**

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc is a Missouri not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, research and dissemination of information as it pertains to the Book of Mormon. Our primary focus is to research and assemble archaeological and other related information to help establish the historical feasibility of the Book of Mormon.

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Signs of the Times *Continued*

sounds vaguely familiar to the culmination of the two forty-two month periods outlined as the tribulation period of end-times calculation. Does the first crossing mark when the tribulation starts and the final "X" in 2024 complete the cycle? Do the pathways of the Moon's shadow indicate that this process begins with the United States only, but that it eventually expands to include all of North America?

The August 21st eclipse occurs nineteen days prior to Jupiter exiting the "womb" of Virgo on September 9, 2017. This "birthing" of Jupiter correlates to the September 9th date in 7 BCE which we determined seven years ago is the day that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. Nineteen is the last counting number used by the Maya before they transition to a new symbol. In other words, in their counting system you will see three bars with four dots to represent the number 19, but you will not see four bars to represent the number 20—this number is symbolized by a clam-shell which itself symbolizes transformation; a creature who quietly fashions a perfected sphere known as a

Total Solar Eclipses: 2001 - 2050



pearl. So, does the nineteen day period from the time of the eclipse to the "birthing" of the Jupiter-sphere represent a transformation period in preparation for perfection? Then, thirteen days later on the 23rd is the Great Sign. Thirteen is the total number of Israeli tribes as Joseph's inheritance was broken into two

recognized groups of Ephraim and Manasseh. Nineteen symbolizes perfection and thirteen alludes to the tribes who are to be gathered.

The parallels of numbers and symbols are remarkable. I purposely ask questions here and do not make blank statements because the unveiling of these situations are fluid and we cannot know these things with any certainty. The timing of God is His work and His glory.

However, from many scriptural passages, and especially Isaiah, we know we are called to be watchman upon the wall. If we had known in what hour the thief would come, then we would have prepared our homes, secured our families, warned our neighbors and proclaimed the impending entry. When the leaves of the fig tree begin to sprout we can know that summer is nigh. Well my friends, how many more signs do we need? What can we know for certain? That our Lord expects us to be watching for Him and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Blessed is he who is found doing these things at the time that He comes.