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HILL CUMORAH EXPEDITION TEAM, INC

Cumorah Messenger

Written in Stone

By Mike Brown © 2020

In the December 15, 2019 Winter Edition of our newsletter, I submitted an article describing what evidences the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team has found that demonstrate Mexico and Central America is in fact the area where the stories of the Book of Mormon took place. That article drew some attention because I had identified "stonework" as a building method used by the Nephites. Some believe that because the Book of Mormon does not specifically mention stone as the material used for building, then only the listed materials of wood, earth and cement were the materials used. Our position is just the opposite. The reason wood, earth and cement were mentioned is because "everyone knew" that stone was the material used to build a structure in Book of Mormon lands—it was common knowledge and not something to waste time mentioning. So when stone wasn't used, it was purposefully documented by the author to indicate the differences in construction materials required. Often this hinted to areas where stone was not an available resource for construction and therefore, the available resources were mentioned.

Beginning with our 2001 investigation, while we have struggled at times, we always work very hard to carefully filter out what we "want to believe" and only present what we know to be viable "knowledge" based on facts and truths. There is no question that we see everything through the lens of our awareness and knowledge of the stories, characters, cities and situations that we have read in the Book of Mormon. I want to thank our brothers and sisters of all of the Restoration for the kind questions and comments. I ab-

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Butterfly Testimony

by Chris Scott © 2020

Approximately 13 years ago I was at a Mayan Archeological site named Calakmul with a small group of friends from the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team. Calakmul was a very large and awesome city in the middle of the jungle near the border of Mexico and Guatemala. David Brown and I were walking down a street in the middle of two rows of low pyramids. I had all kinds of questions about the site and how it was built and what they used all the pyramids for etc. We were getting ready to turn a corner into a different area and saw several iridescent butterflies. I didn't know that iridescent butterflies really existed. God surprises us with blessings of his creation sometimes at the most unexpected times.

A favorite Sunday school lesson oftentimes is teaching the children about spiritual transformation through the example of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. It is an example of becoming a new creature in Christ and how the power of the Holy Spirit can transform our lives to be free of sin. But there is another spiritual metaphor that can be applied to the butterfly.

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Inside this issue:

solutely love the interchange of ideas and information.

From the beginning, we have used the Neil Steede's decades of investigations and research as the foundation of our research upon which to build. We embraced the belief that if there were as many cities and people as are described in the Book of Mormon, and if these societies described therein had complex social structures including kings sitting on thrones and religious orders with priests and teachers practicing at temples, then we should be able to find it somewhere. We believe that you cannot have the numbers of cities as identified in the Book of Mormon and the numbers of people and wars without having highways, defensive walls, and complex buildings as described in the Book of Mormon. If they exist, if the story is true, then they must be found somewhere. This was at least 1000 years of a complex culture with wars, treaties, with interregional agreements and trade as would be identified by the money exchange system.

When Joseph Smith first received the two volume publication that described and illustrated the Stephens and Catherwood expedition in Central America and Mexico, he immediately included articles on that subject in the Times and Seasons publication over which he was the editor. He also included or approved inclusion of portions of Stephens writings in the newspaper. In 1841 there were no extensive investigations of the incredible volume of cities and writings that existed. Stephens and Catherwood had written of some remarkable sites that had been partially excavated and Catherwood's illustrations were beautiful representations of buildings and artwork found there. Joseph Smith wrote, or was at the very least the principal editor for, five articles about this culture that existed under the layers of jungle. He remarked that Stephens and Catherwood's publication was important evidence of the validity of the Book of Mormon stories that spoke of early travelers and inhabitants of the New World.

Earthen construction at Kaminaljuyu.

As we have traveled the various regions in southern Mexico and Central America, we have found distinct differences in construction that you would expect to see since the cultures described in the Book of Mormon were divided into different peoples or groups. We would expect to find differences between Lamanite buildings and Nephite buildings since they separated shortly after arrival to the New World. We would also expect differences in construction between the Jaredites, the Mulekites, the Ammonites/ Anti-Nephi-Lehi, the Zoramites, etc. We actually find these differences in construction types and because the locations are described in detail in the Book of Mormon, we find that they are geographically situated where we expect to find them.

Here is where I may have overstated a point in my last article about the Nephites basically being stone builders or builders using primarily stones as their construction material as opposed to the Lamanites that were largely mound-builders. The Lamanites were primarily mound-builders like we find at Kaminaljuyu, current day Guatemala City, where we believe King Lamoni's father reigned as king over all of the Lamanites. Here we find many sites that are primarily constructed using dirt and clay as the primary building material. Going out of the Highlands down into the lowlands, we find Calakmul which we have identified as the Mulekite capital City of Judea. Here we find stone structures with rounded corners—a prominent

Rounded corners at Calakmul.

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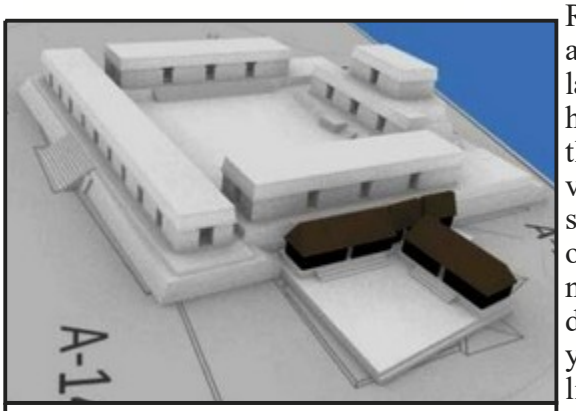
Mulekite building feature. Between these two cities, just to the west in the Highlands, we find Chinkultic, a site we have identified as the City of Nephi.

The Book of Mormon tells us of many stories taking place in the City of Nephi such as Mosiah, Zeniff, Abinadi and King Noah, Alma, and later King Limhi. Then just prior to the birth of Christ is the Lamanite conversion story with the two missionary brothers, Nephi and Lehi. We find stories of these events written in stone at Chinkultic. But for the point of this article, we find a construction type that we identify as Nephite construction with sharp cornered buildings.

Sharp square corners at Chinkultic.

Traveling east from all of these sites toward the Caribbean coast, we find a different construction design for the main structure in each site. This structural peculiarity is a large temple with a series of rooms that we believe are classrooms. These buildings are situated in what we believe to be the land of Jershon. Because King Lamoni, his father who was king over all the Lamanites, and his successor King Anti-Nephi-Lehi were so committed to teaching their people the gospel, they designed a mu-

ral classroom building in every city they built. It is amazing as you travel from Guatemala to Belize how all of these cities have that same teaching design. It is also amazing that these buildings lie right where they should; up against the land by the sea and east of where we find the city of Zarahemla (Yaxchilan) in an oxbow on the River Sidon (Usumacinta River).



Teaching rooms at Xunanatunich.

Another city with a slightly different type of structure we do not see anywhere else in the Maya/Olmec region is the city of Rio Bec. This city lies east and a little north of Yaxchilan (Zarahemla). Rio Bec has a unique structure where there is a stairway that is very small, very tight with steep steps that go up to an opening in the building with nothing on the outside. It does not empty into a courtyard or more rooms. We believe this to be the city where the Zoramites walked up a very narrow stairway and said their ritual prayer, thanking God that they were better than everybody else. The unique feature of these structures are facades that appear to have tall steep steps to the top, but were only decorative designs to provide an appearance of intensive work to reach the top, much like the rituals of their spiritual practices; it was all done for appearance.

Narrow steps for praying at Rio Bec.

These are the types of buildings and types of construction that we have witnessed firsthand as we have traveled through this area. I would add that even though we are aware of the Book of Mormon stories and peoples and events, we have diligently tested our assumptions again and again using the scientific method and critical thinking. If there is a failure to our hypothesis, which has happened, we erase the erroneous assumption and determine what changes need to happen in our overall picture of that area as being the region where the Book of Mormon took place.

I want to include one additional construction type that is important and I believe that it speaks to the "writers" just after

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Bountiful Historical Society angled stones on the corners at Chinkultic.

Christ visited the "no more ites" people of Bountiful. At 50 to 100 AD, just after Christ's visit to Bountiful, a group of craftsmen from Palenque (Bountiful) departed to various areas of the Maya region where the major "religious" stories took place. Archeologists called these artisans "The Palenque Stelae Cult" because these message-writers originated from Palenque. Neil Steede refers to these Golden Age artisans as the Bountiful historical Society. These architects and stone cutters commemorated the most important events of the major cities. I am certain that we have not found all of them, or maybe even have seen some messages but didn't recognize them, but these craftsmen left their stories at most, if not all, major sites. These craftsmen were intentional in letting future generations know that the messages are written after the actual stories took place. They did not want us to think that contemporaries had written the message because in many cases, it would have been impossible and if that was the case, we would not understand it. They wanted us to know the critical stories that occurred in these locations, so they wrote the message and used unique design features so that we could understand that it was not only documented in stone at a later time, but also that we could discern the sub-cultural differences. When visiting Chinkultic (City of Nephi), there are several small structures with cornerstones set at intentional 45-degree angles from the horizontal stonework of the structure wall. It is consistent so after viewing several of the structures, a clear pattern begins to emerge that is "different" and designed in such a way that we would know it was constructed later.

Joseph Smith was captivated by the stories and pictures from Guatemala and Mexico. It was important to him that the saints in America and England knew of this new information; that such a place was found that supported the stories within the pages of the Book of Mormon. So important, that he saw to it that several articles concerning Stephens and Catherwood in Central America were printed in the *Times and Seasons* while he was chief editor of the publication. We do not doubt that the remains of Zelph and Onondagas and the bones in Illinois burial grounds were descendants of mostly Lamanites and Nephites that had migrated northward to escape the wars and persecutions. We believe that huge numbers migrated up river systems to populate areas from the Rockies to the Atlantic and from Arizona up to New England. But with this given, we firmly believe that the original Hill Cumorah will be found somewhere in Mexico, containing the library, intact, just as God had intended.

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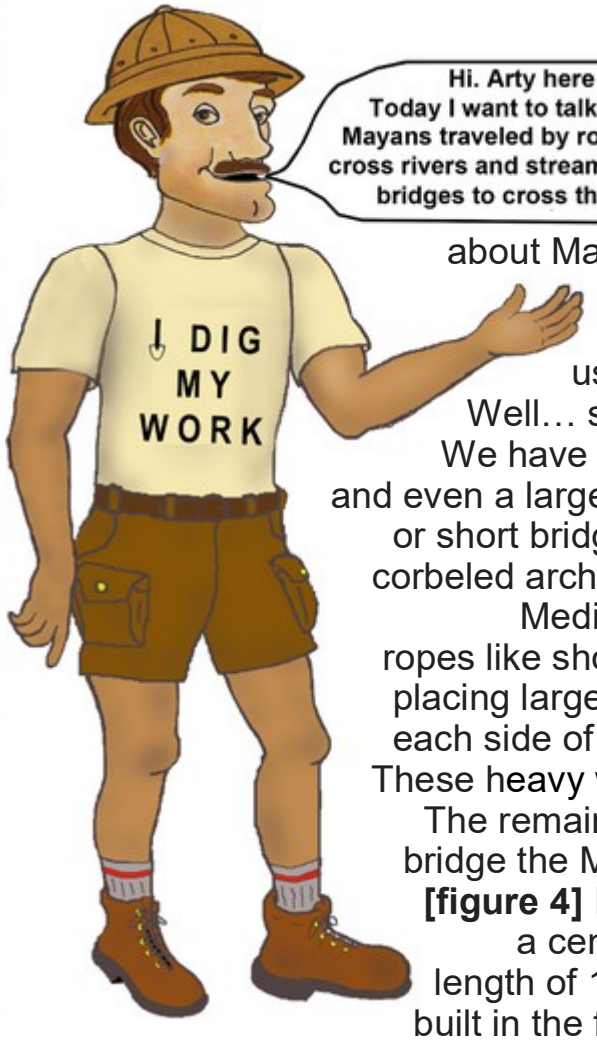

Mayan Bridges

Last issue we talked about Mayan roads. How did the Mayans cross their rivers and streams and how did they travel on their roads? Today we use bridges to cross rivers and streams. Well… so did the Mayans.

We have discovered evidence of small, medium and even a large bridge spanning over 200 feet. Small or short bridges were constructed using the Mayan corbeled arch like the one found at Becan.[**figure 1**] Medium bridges were built out of plant fiber ropes like shown in this 1875 photo **[figure 2]** or by placing large wood logs on stone supports, built on each side of a river like the Pusilha river. **[figure 3]** These heavy wood timbers could span up to 50 feet

The remains of what is believed to be the largest bridge the Mayans built can be found at Yaxchilan. **[figure 4]** It's total length was over 500 feet, with a center span of over 200 feet, or about the length of 13 cars or 6 school buses. This bridge, built in the first millennia AD, was the longest bridge in the world for over 800 years![1]

[1]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_longest_suspension_bridge_spans

Figure 1 - Corbel arch bridge at Becan

Figure 2 - Photo of Maya hemp rope Suspension Bridge (1875)

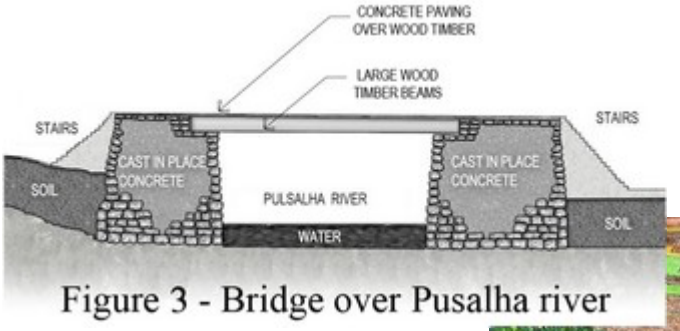

Figure 3 - Bridge over Pusalha river

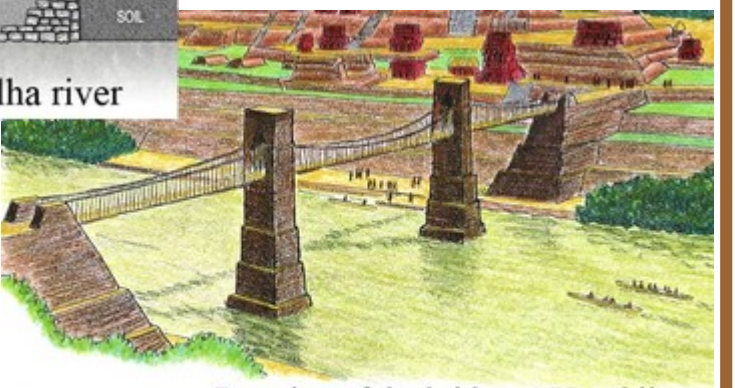

Figure 4 Drawing of the bridge at Yaxchilan.
concept by James O'Kon, drawing by Glenn Scott

WORD SEARCH

Find and circle the words from the story:

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

Becan
Bridge
Corbel
Long
Mayan
Medium
Pusilha
Rope
Short
Span
Stone
River
Suspension
Timber
Wood
Yaxchilan

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OTHER SITES OF INTEREST

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Butterfly Testimony *continued*

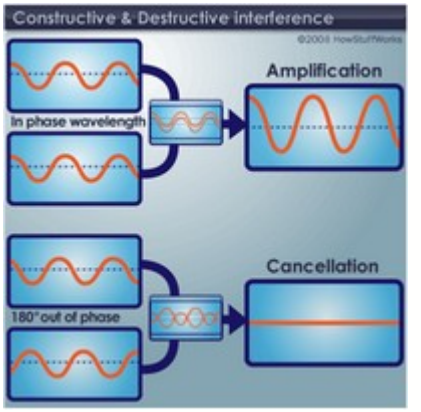
I was recently listening to a science program about how the wings of a butterfly get their color. It reminded me of seeing the iridescent butterflies at Calakmul.

Butterflies actually get their colors from two different sources: ordinary (or pigmented) color and structural color. The ordinary color comes from normal chemical pigments that absorb certain wavelengths of light and reflect others. For example, the pigment chlorophyll colors plants green. The chlorophyll soaks up the blue and red colors of the spectrum, but not the green, which you see when it bounces back to your eye. Most butterflies get their different shades of brown and yellow from melanin, the same pigment that makes you tan in summer and gives some people freckles.

The structural color of butterflies is where things get interesting. This type of color stems from the specific structure of the butterflies' wings and explains why some of a butterfly's colors seem to shift and appear so intense. This quality of changing colors as you, the observer, moves is known as iridescence, and it occurs more in nature than you might think. Mother of pearl seashells, fish and peacocks are just a few examples of animals with this quality, but it is most pronounced in the butterfly family. It happens when light passes through a transparent, multilayered surface and is reflected more than once. The multiple reflections compound one another and intensify colors.

When talking about iridescence, it helps to remember that light is a wave and can be described as a wavelength: the distance between identical points on the wave. Waves can also be described by their phase: the position of their crests (high points) and troughs (low points). When two waves have the same phase, their crests and troughs would align if placed on top of one another.

Whether you know it or not, you have likely been familiar with iridescence since you were a kid. You probably marveled at it while blowing bubbles with a wand or playing with bubbles in the bathtub. With a soap bubble, light first passes through the top layer of the bubble, where some of it is reflected, while some light continues through to the bottom layer, where again



some of it is reflected. Depending on the time it takes the second reflection to join the first and several other factors, the two waves may or may not line up, or have the same phase. If the phase of the two waves is different by some multiple of one full wavelength, the two waves are said to have constructive interference. If the two waves differ by half a wavelength or an odd multiple of that, they have destructive interference.

Constructive interference is what happens in iridescence. It causes the two waves to complement each other and strengthen the reflection. The effects of iridescence create much more intense colors than ordinary pigments ever could. Destructive interference causes the two waves to cancel each other out and weaken the reflection, or destroy it altogether. Basically, when the crests and troughs of more than one wave of light match up, their powers are magnified. When they do not match up, they are mostly destroyed.

OK, you're saying, but butterfly wings look nothing like soap bubbles. So how do they do it?

When light hits the different layers of a butterfly wing, it is reflected numerous times. The combination of all these reflections causes the intense colors of many species.

The same principle behind soap bubbles applies to butterfly wings. Their wings, however, amplify the effects of iridescence because they have many more layers for the light to pass through and thus many more opportunities for the light waves to reflect and magnify one another.

As small as they are, butterfly wings are covered by thousands of microscopic scales, split into two to three layers—thus their Greek order name, Lepidoptera, meaning scaled wings. In turn, each scale has multiple layers separated by air. Rather than having just the constructive interference from the top and bottom layer that you have in a bubble, the many, equally spaced layers of butterfly wings create multiple instances of constructive interference.

When light hits the different layers of the butterfly wing, it is reflected numerous times, and the combination of all these reflections causes the very intense colors that you see in many species. Some butterfly displays even extend into the ultraviolet spectrum, which is visible to butterflies but not to humans. This ability to detect ultraviolet light guides monarch butterflies on

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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Butterfly Testimony *Continued*

their annual migration from North America to Mexico.

The combination of a butterfly's structural and pigmented color can create interesting effects. For example, if you saw a butterfly with yellow pigment underneath a structure that creates a blue iridescent color, you might see a green shade, made by the merging of the two colors. Or depending on your viewpoint, you might see blue, yellow, green or a combination of the three. Your view would change as the butterfly moves its wings and the light enters at different angles.

Whether they serve as camouflage or communication, the brilliant, complex wings of painted ladies, red-spotted purples and the thousands of other butterfly species owe their beauty to iridescence and structural color.

Genesis 6:66 And, behold, all things have their likeness; and all things are created and made to ***bear record*** *of me; both things which are*

temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath, all things ***bear record*** *of me.*

We are reflections of God's light. When we are on the right wavelengths with God, we can reflect his love to those around us and vice versa those around us reflect his light to us. His love is magnified when we are in unity with one another. When many of us work together, all of our different skills, personalities, and gifts can help reflect and magnify many different aspects of God. This gives us a chance to attract others to God in a variety of ways.

When I saw the iridescent butterflies in Mexico it was a testimony to me that God was pleased with the efforts of the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team in trying to testify of the Book of Mormon.