

City of Nephi Confusion

By David B. Brown © 2024

I was recently presented with a question concerning the location of the City of Nephi. The person inquiring indicated that there seems to be confusion because Neil Steede identified the Chiapas archaeological site of Chinkultic as the City of Nephi, but he also referred to the Guatemala highland site of Kaminaljuyu as the City of Nephi. The question was then posed, "So, which is it?" The short answer is that both are correct.

To set the context, it is important to understand the perspective of the Book of Mormon authors who are providing the narrative. The first several books from I Nephi to the Book of Omni provide the story behind the origin of the Lehi journey and a skeletal history as to how there came to be two groups known as the Nephites and the Lamanites,

along with their relative geographic positions to one another in this new land of inheritance. Because it is a record of their spiritual history, there needed to be enough information provided that the reader can clearly see the stark differences between the Nephite worldview and the Lamanite worldview.

It is in the Book of Omni that we are introduced to the subject of Mosiah leaving the Land of Nephi and venturing "down" to eventually discover the people of Mulek in the city of Zarahemla. Our research indicates that the lowland site of Yaxchilan is the Book of Mormon city of Zarahemla, and this was probably about 200-225 BC. Shortly after Mosiah arrives at Zarahemla, he teaches the people to speak and read the language of the Nephites and Mosiah is appointed king. While not

stated in the Book of Mormon, it is the archaeology at Yaxchilan (Zarahemla) which informs us that Mosiah's appointment to the throne is the result of him marrying the daughter of King Zarahemla. The archaeology further informs us that it is during a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 165 BC that King Benjamin ascends to the throne. The Book of Omni ends with Amaleki handing the sacred records over to King Benjamin for his keeping.

Between the Book of Omni and the Book of Mosiah is an insertion called the Words of Mormon. This is an editorial insert to help explain why there is a change in the narrative. Mormon states that he came across this history on the small plates of Nephi and he was impressed that this information would be needed in the abridgment.

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Comments on Maya Technology

By Eric Scott © 2024

A partial summary review of the Lost Secrets of Maya Technology by James A O'Kon PE.

In prior newsletters, Terry Scott provided overviews of O'Kon's discoveries regarding four-lane roads with traffic circles that lasted thousands of years, suspension bridges that were the longest in the world for centuries, and water-control. Eric Scott previously provided the explanation of why the wheel was not used for hauling or transportation.

The Maya have been an enigma since their discovery in the mid-19th century. Maya science developed an elegant mathematical system including the use of zero, an incredibly accurate astronomy, and one of the world's five original written languages. Their technology was more advanced than similar European technology by more than a thousand years. And yet the Maya civilization was gone by the time the Aztecs found their abandoned cities and before the arrival of the Spanish. God

told them if they did not follow Him He would wipe them off the land and He did.

James O'Kon, a professional engineer synergistically applied field exploration, research forensic engineering and a 3-D virtual reconstruction

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City of Nephi Confusion *continued*

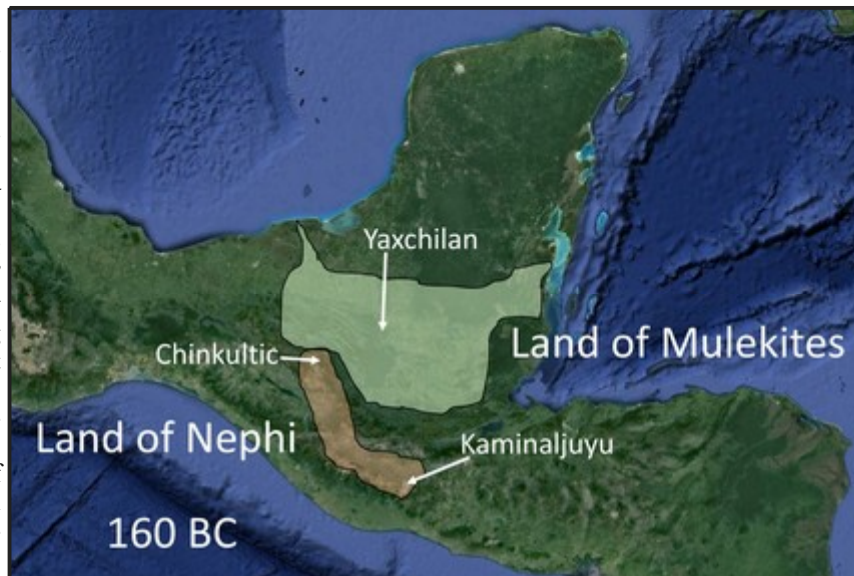
Mormon is now shifting into more detailed narratives of events that are necessary for fully comprehending the dynamics of the interaction that is going to take place between the Nephites and Lamanites, especially as it pertains to preparing the people for the visitation of a Risen Savior.

It is important to note here that the author of the Book of Mosiah and all other authors thru to the end of the Book of Mormon were no longer residents of the “land of their first inheritance.” The Nephites held a rich past with their Lehi connection, but they were no longer citizens of their original lands. They now reside in a land promised to their Mulekite Jerusalem counterparts and together they were experiencing the blessing of a joint heritage. They now identified as a people of the unified Davidic Throne. From King Benjamin forward, the Nephite cultural perspective is a people blending their heritage in fulfilled prophecy and they were especially preparing for a Christ whose coming was eminent. This passage is from King Benjamin’s final speech, Mosiah 1:97 *“For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent, who was and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay,”* King Benjamin knew that Jesus was coming soon, as this was part of the message delivered to him by an angel.

The first mention of the City of Nephi comes in the 5th Chapter of the Book of Mosiah. King Benjamin has passed the Zarahemla throne to his son Mosiah and there is a growing concern for the people who decades before returned to the Land of Lehi-Nephi or the City of Lehi-Nephi; what has become of them? The first six verses that make reference to this land and city call it Lehi-Nephi. I believe this is in direct reference to the formerly occupied land based on the fact that it was the land of

their fathers. Therefore, the text is listing the legality of the God-promise to Lehi and the lineage through Nephi. This is a generic reference to a large block of land located in the highlands of Guatemala and Mexico. While the initial reference to the Land and City of Nephi is specific to Chinkultic, as time progresses, that same Land of Nephi and City of Nephi becomes a generic reference to the highland regions that are occupied by the Lamanites and where a common history of the first occupation is found.

The Chiapas Mexico archaeological site of Chinkultic is the City of Nephi referred to in the Book of Mosiah as the specific one from which Mosiah led his people to find Zarahemla. It is the Nephite City of Nephi. Chinkultic has monuments that specifically tell of Mosiah, Abinadi, Limhi and many other Zeniff-Noah-Limhi related stories. This is also the city where the conversion of Lamanites occurred when the missionary brothers Nephi and Lehi went to preach and were imprisoned. All of these stories have monuments or architecture that confirm these events.



The next mention of the City of Nephi does not come until the 14th Chapter of Alma when we are informed of the conversion of seven Lamanite cities. This is taking place about 90 BC. The list of the converted cities includes three cities/lands that were mentioned in the original narrative in the Book of Mosiah; Nephi, Shilom and Shemlon. The initial impression is that Alma is referring to

lands in the northern part of the Land of Nephi that include Chinkultic and the lands round about. However, the next mention of the Land of Nephi and the City of Nephi comes during the Moroni wars at about 60 BC and it is clear at this point that Alma is not talking about the Chinkultic location for the City of Nephi. Let’s investigate what might have changed from the Nephite perspective.

When the City of Nephi is mentioned in the 14th Chapter of Alma, it is in reference to a huge cultural conversion happening among the Lamanites, and it is one of seven cities/lands that are converted. We have discovered that when the Book of Mormon provides lists, they are ordered lists; in other words, it is in order of smallest to largest, or as in this list of conversions, in order of conversion. The City of Ishmael is first and that is where Ammon converted King Lamoni. Then the second name on the list is Middoni. This is where Ammon and King Lamoni went to free Aaron and others from being held in prison. The third city listed is the City of Nephi. We believe that this is where Aaron

converted the King of all the Lamanites which would mean that the site of Kaminaljuyu (modern-day Guatemala City) is being called the City of Nephi for some unknown reason. It is not the Nephite City of Nephi that hosted the Zeniff-Noah-Limhi story at Chinkultic and there is scriptural reference for this which we will explore further in the article.

Alma seems to have a different view of the landscape in his narrative when compared to the story narrative we find out of Mosiah. Why

would it be different? What has occurred that would change their view?

First, the shift in Lamanite relations championed by the sons of Mosiah had a major impact on the events that followed. These princes of Zarahemla forsook their rightful claim to the throne and chose instead to take the gospel to their sworn enemies. That effort result-

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Comments on Maya Technology *continued*

tion of Maya projects to discover lost Maya technological achievements. These lost principles of technology enabled Maya engineers to construct grand cities that towered above the rain forests, water systems with underground reservoirs for water storage, miles of all-weather paved roads, tracking through the jungle and the longest bridge in the ancient world.

Maya engineers developed structural mechanics for multistory buildings that were not exceeded in height until the first “skyscraper” built in Chicago in 1885, and they invented the blast furnace 2,000 years before it was patented in England.

Maya technology employed engineering solutions that kept pace with the expanding needs of their population of 15,000,000 inhabitants. Their engineered water-management systems satisfied the yearly demand for water plus provide as a factor of safety in the event of shortfalls in the annual rainfall. Sufficient rainfall meant life and survival to the Maya civilization.

Maya cities were masterpieces of artistic and technological creativity that brought to realization by the invention of cast-in-place concrete, tall structures, efficient infrastructure, and city planning. The urban city-states were a tour de force of May intellectualism. The Maya transportation systems with all-weather roads and seagoing vessels brought wealth to the city-states by enabling successful trade throughout Mesoamerica and across the seas.

Definition of a civilization. The Maya prior to LiDAR were still considered to be a stone age culture due to the lack of evidence of the existence of iron. However when looking at the definition of a civilization by Ere Gordon Chile, the world's most renowned archaeological theorist (see the following) the Maya were certainly an advanced civilization.

To be a civilization a people must

have: large urban centers, monumental architecture, a ruling class that is exempt from manual labor, sophisticated styles of art, craft workers, merchants, officials and priests supported by surplus food produced by farmers, systems for recording information (writing), development of exact sciences, long-range trade with the importation of materials both as luxury goods and as raw materials, resident specialist craft workers politically and economically under the control of political officials, permanent and dominant state organizations, social solidarity of the community as represented by the preeminence of temples and primary producers paying surplus to a deity or a divine ruler (central authority). The Maya checked all these boxes.

While most of us are awe-struck by the magnificence and immensity of the Maya buildings and sculpture, we often skip over the basic questions as how they feed that immense population. Maya-engineered water-management systems developed reservoirs, chultunes, and canal systems that provided water for the survival of cities and the enhancement of agricultural yield. The technological advancement of agronomy and engineered agriculture systems for irrigation, included raised fields, soil replenishment, fertilization, cultivation of hillside terraces, canals, wetland agriculture and irrigation dams enhanced the ability of Maya farmers to produce food to keep pace with the growing population plus food surplus for trade. Maya farmers constituted 70 percent of the population and they were able to produce 200 percent of the food requirement for their families, creating sufficient food supply for the urban populations and a 40-percent surplus for trade.

Another basic question that needs addressing is if they had no steel how did they cut down the forest, and do all the intricate carving on

their buildings. Maya skill at sculptural art is unrivaled and yet we take it for granted. Talented sculptors were responsible for creating the complex architectural details that configured the structure of the buildings as well as the artful applications of regional style that adorned the facades of Maya structures. The intricate sophistication and detail of sculptural and carved stonework required hardened tools of varied size and geometry that met the high criteria for carving meticulous artwork. These tools, included chisels, drills, files and gouges and even axe-heads, were fabricated from a hard material shaped for specific carving, sawing and cutting tasks. It was called jadeite.

Maya sculptors used tools with functional shapes that varied with the level of sculptural detail and finesse of the carving to be accomplished. This would be impossible with neolithic tools. They used a hardened material known as Jadeite which was found in only two locations throughout the world: the Union of Myanmar and Guatemala. This is the generic term for two distinct materials: nephrite and Jadeite. Maya technicians recognized the physical properties of this mineral; long used as a gemstone which has proved to be harder than iron and difficult to fracture and it has the capability to be shaped into specialized tools for a variety of technical applications. Iron has a mineral hardness of 4.5 to 5, jadeite has a hardness of 6.5 to 7.0 and diamond has a hardness of 10.00. In addition to being harder than iron, it is tough and resistant to breakage and more resistant to fracture than quartz.

My next summary will include Maya writing, mathematics, astronomy, the invention and use of cement, structural inventions such as the Maya arch, multi storied buildings, naval architecture and design and the Maya collapse.

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ed in a huge conversion of the Lamanites to the gospel and forever changed the relationships between the two factions of the Lehi progeny. The conversion was so complete that the converts chose to die to remain faithful to their covenant and the Nephites were so impressed that they provided refuge for the masses of converted Lamanites who were being slaughtered. This conversion was so impactful that names were

changed because the Lamanites no longer wanted any part of their Lamanite heritage—they understood that they had been filled with lies about their history and wanted instead to identify with their common patriarch Lehi. Hence the converted Lamanites became known as Anti-Nephi-Lehi and the successor to the Lamanite throne was named King Anti-Nephi-Lehi. The question is this, “Did the Lamanites change the name of the chief city where the King of all the Lamanites resided? Alma’s description of this city and the events surrounding it place it in the Lamanite controlled terri-



of the king; this same king has been sliced open and bleeding out. Alma 21:106-109 “And it came to pass that when he had raised the first from the ground, behold, he stabbed the king to the heart; and he fell to the earth. Now the servants of the king fled; and the servants of Amalickiah raised a cry, saying, Behold, the servants of the king have stabbed him to the heart, and he has fallen, and they have fled! Behold, come and see! And it came to pass that Amalickiah commanded that his armies should march forth and see

what had happened to the king. And when they had come to the spot and found the king lying in his gore, Amalickiah pretended to be wroth and said, Whosoever loved the king, let him go forth and pursue his servants, that they may be slain.” The imagery on the vase matches the description of the deceit where the kneeling envoy bolted up and stabbed the king, leaving him to lie in his gore.

While there has long been confusion about the geography and location of the Land of Nephi and the City of Nephi, it is now time to put this apparent contradiction to rest. All Book of Mormon references to the City of Nephi and Land of Nephi come at a time when the Nephites no longer occupy the cities or lands of their first inheritance. The author in the Book of Mosiah is referring to a particular location in the mountains directly west of Zarahemla; it was their most recent historical connection to the land of the first inheritance. And, the author of the Book of Alma is making reference to a generic Land of Nephi as the highland region that is still occupied by the descendants of Lehi. His reference to the City of Nephi might be referencing an intentional name change to reflect the new identity the converted Lamanites made to connect them to the spiritual heritage of Nephi. Whatever the case, it is only our research of the archaeology that allows us to make these distinctions and affirm their truth.

tory and the center of all Lamanite control over commerce and surrounding kingdoms comes out of Kaminaljuyu. As the converted Lamanites were ridding themselves of any identity to their Lamanite heritage, did they also change the name of their capital to reflect the adoption of the spiritual heritage through Nephi? This is the place where Aaron went to convert the King of the Lamanites. Then later, after King Anti-Nephi-Lehi was killed and the Lamanite usurper king was sitting on this throne in Kaminaljuyu, Amalickiah brought the Lamanite Army from mount Antipas (located to the southeast) to the capital city of Kaminaljuyu. Alma provides a name clue in his narrative:

Alma 21:101 “And it came to pass that Amalickiah marched with his armies (for he had gained his desires) to the land of Nephi, to the city of Nephi, which was the chief city.”

This passage states specifically that this is the chief city of Lamanite operations. Archaeologically speaking, this is Kaminaljuyu. Amalickiah sent an envoy to greet this usurper king and that envoy killed the king. Amalickiah then married the widow of this king and took over the capital of the Lamanites. This act of killing the usurper was captured on a vase mural found at Kaminaljuyu (see left). The mural shows the head of King Anti-Nephi-Lehi displayed as a trophy on the belt



Adventures In Scriptures

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The Anti-Nephi-Lehis

The *Anti-Nephi-Lehis* were converted to the Lord by Nephite missionaries. Their lives were completely changed. They became a thankful, peaceful, hard-working, and godly people.

They made a promise to the Lord that they would not stain their swords with the blood of others. As a testimony, they buried the swords deep in the earth to show to God and others that they would not use them again.

Many of their Lamanite brethren had not been converted and came to war against them. The *Anti-Nephi-Lehis* refused to fight the Lamanites. They knelt before them, willing to Keep their promise to God and sacrifice their lives rather than kill again. They were praying to God when one thousand and five were killed at the hands of the Lamanites. As they died, their souls were blessed and they went to dwell with God.

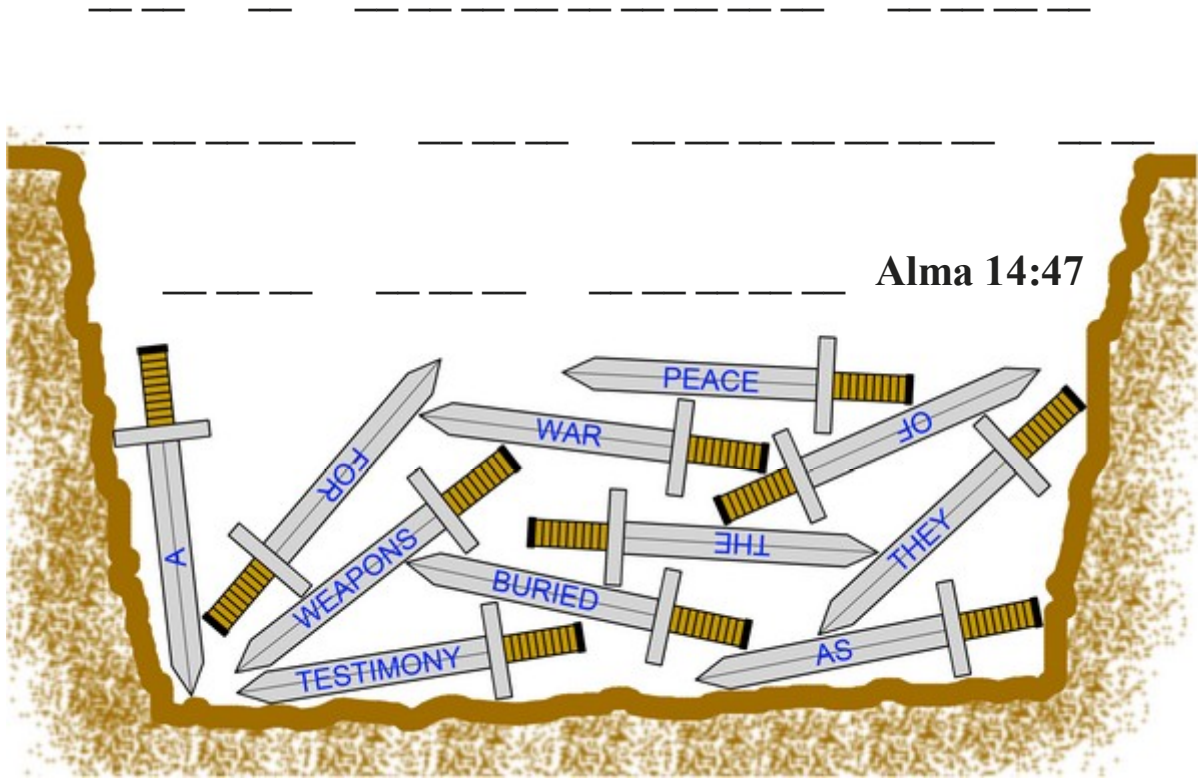
When the Lamanites saw that the *Anti-Nephi-Lehis* were willing to die rather than fight their brother Lamanites, they stopped killing them.

The Lamanites threw down their weapons of war and were sorry that they had killed the *Anti-Nephi-Lehis*. They repented and many were converted to the ways of the Lord. *“Thus we see that the Lord works in many ways for the salvation of his people.”* Alma 14:20-55

Read the letters across and fill in the blanks below to find the hidden scripture in 3 Nephi 5:56

	A		N		D		
	B	L		E	S		
	D	A		R	E	A	L
	L	T		H	E	P	E
	A	C		E	M	A	K
	E	R		S	F	O	R
	T	H		E	Y	S	H
A		L	L		B	E	C
A		L	L		E	D	C
H		I	L		D	R	E
N		O	F		G	O	D

Use the words on the swords to fill in the scripture message below.



Alma 14:47

WORD SEARCH

Find and circle the words about the story:

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

- Blessed
- Bury
- Convert
- Cooperation
- Earth
- Godly
- Hardworking
- Listening
- Lord
- Peace
- Promise
- Repent
- Sacrifice
- Swords
- Testimony
- Thankful

A Summary of Tula

By David B. Brown © 2024

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team conducted their annual Expedition this fall from October 19th thru the 29th. This year's efforts concentrated on the post-Olmec culture found in the central highlands around Mexico City. This was an effort to better trace the impact of the Jaredite culture (Olmec) and how it then blended with the Nephite culture (Maya) during the Golden Age and beyond.

Our first visit to the archaeological community was the Toltec site of Tula which is located 40 miles northwest of Teotihuacan. The structures built here were constructed about 900 AD. Because Teotihuacan had fallen during the 5th Century AD, this gave rise to El Tajin and then later to Tula, of which Tula became the city commanding regional influence, although it never reached the level of power that Teotihuacan had experienced. Then Tula fell to outside forces during the 12th Century AD. As a matter of fact, Tula fell at the same time that Chaco Canyon was mysteriously abandoned.

So, you might be asking, what does any of this have to do with the Book of Mormon, because this is all

happening almost 500 years after the Nephites fell to the Lamanites for the last time. We are talking about these locations because there is architectural and artistic evidence that they are teaching the same gospel principles that our Book of Mormon counterparts taught. It is embedded in their designs. This means that factions of the Jaredites and Nephites continued to teach the gospel long after the powers that defined their cultural identity had fallen. This further implies that like the converted Lamanites who left their highland birth place to seek refuge first among the Nephites and later in the land northward, there were large contingents of refugees from both the Jaredite final battles and the Nephite final battles. These factions continued to build sites that embedded their belief system and became resorts for reunions and teaching their spiritual concepts.

While Tula is located in the Olmec (Jaredite) region, the design of the site is consistent with sites such as Uxmal and others where the Maya concepts of the afterlife are clearly found in the structures they built. As a matter of fact, the pillar

complex found on the north side of the main plaza at Tula has almost the exact same design features as the Temple of the Warriors found in the Yucatan site of Chichen Itza.

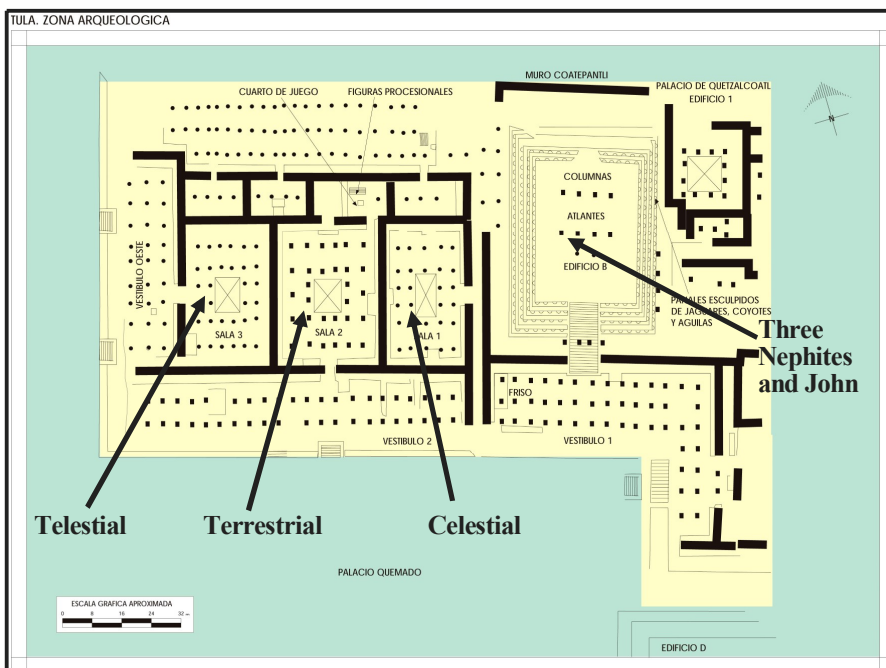
Why are Tula and Chichen Itza so similar and yet located over 700 miles apart? Archaeologists explain this by stating they are built by the same traveling artisan guild called the Toltecs. Our take on this is that there was still a substantial amount of unity among the remaining believers and they enjoyed shared esoteric concepts—especially when it came to gospel truths.

What we found at the north complex of Tula is amazing. The design of compartments, pillars, number of levels and the number of statues at the highest point of the pyramid all make sense when we overlay the Book of Mormon gospel teaching on it.

The design of the three large pillar-rooms on the west end of the main platform are a representation of the three glories of heaven; celestial, terrestrial and telestial. These compartments on the left of the pyramid represents the “many mansions” in the heavens. All of the pillars in the “mansions” are round with the exception of the center room which has square pillars that match with the pillars on the porch which is accessed from the main plaza of the site. The square pillars represent the plane of existence where we presently live—the terrestrial plane, and hence, the room that represents the terrestrial glory also has square pillars. The teaching of the mansions is important for the understanding of the believer who is about to climb the steps of the pyramid to the right.

The pyramid represents the “pathway” to the Father. The stairway from the porch to the top has forty-two steps. From the 1st Chapter of Matthew we are provided the generations from Abraham to Jesus. There are three sets of fourteen gen-

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A Summary of Tula *Continued*

erations for a total of forty-two. This stairway represents the body of knowledge found within the Hebrew heritage that “elevates” the believer to a higher plane; it is the pathway of the gospel.

Once at the top, the doorway into the temple has two pillars that are fashioned as Quetzalcoatl serpents descending from Heaven to Earth. The tails are at the highest point while their mouths are on the floor. This represents Jesus visiting the people of this land as a resurrected being whose home is in the heavens (tail against the ceiling) but came to teach the believers (mouth on the floor).

Inside the temple on top of the pyramid are four 16-foot tall statues that the archaeologists call “The Atlanteans”. However, when we review the symbolism carved on the statues, we note that these are four



priests of Quetzalcoatl with butterfly breastplates. The butterfly is a sacred symbol of the Maya, because they begin as earthbound creatures in the caterpillar, then they create a cocoon and when they emerge, they have transformed to an airborne creature. This represents the transformation of Christian believers at death. The body of the believer has completely changed and life continues, just in a different form and no longer bound to the earth. These are

four statues whose hearts now possess the nature of the airborne butterfly. Just as Ek Balam displayed the Three Nephites and John the Beloved as Winged Warriors, Tula is displaying these four as pillars in a heavenly temple. These statues provide support for the ceiling of the temple, so they were the supports between Heaven and Earth—much the same concept as the descending Quetzalcoatl pillars at the doorway. The difference is these four statues are not descending from Heaven to Earth, they are reaching from Earth to Heaven and providing support for the temple that glorifies God.

This is just a quick overview of the parallels we discovered at Tula that connect the Toltecs with the Book of Mormon Golden Age builders that left their testimony in stone. More to come soon.