

The Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah Clue

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One of the best clues provided for identifying the land where the Book of Mormon stories took place is through the king list for the Nephite civilization. Because the Book of Mormon claims to be a spiritual record and not a historical one, it only provides incidental geography with very little detail. Many cultural wars and social movements are recorded in the Book of Mormon in detail, but unfortunately the somewhat elusive geography makes it all the more difficult to trace these movements. By contrast, Mesoamerican Archaeology has volumes of information set in geographical locations with scant information on the social events that led to the rise and fall of these incredible people; many of the present-day rationals provided for these movements are nothing more than educated guesses. However, it seems that there may be a way to resolve this information gap by combining these forms of information if one could find a point of agreement between those that accept the historical validity of the Book of Mormon and the archaeological professionals from the School of Mesoamerican Archaeology. One possible commonality is the king lists provided

from both the Book of Mormon and studies performed by Mesoamerican epigraphers. If the accepted king lists from both schools of thought can be researched, compared and found compatible, then a resolution may begin to develop. Such a resolution could create a foundation for expanding a comparable paradigm throughout both schools of thought.

To create the foundation for this comparison one must carefully establish the requirements that need to be fulfilled. That is to say, first one must carefully examine the Book of Mormon Nephite king list as the foundation upon which all the known Maya king lists are to be compared. The Book of Mormon states that two groups migrated to the Americas at around 600 BC. Those two groups were called the Nephites and the Mulekites. We are also told that the Nephite group had writing while the Mulekite group did not. Eventually the two groups united under the Nephite king named Mosiah. We are told that he was *appointed* to reign as king over both groups. Because Mosiah and the Nephites were newcomers to the land of Zarahemla, this appointment to the status of

The Elusive “Magical” Gold Plates

By Tim Brown

The story of the restoration of the gospel has always been viewed with suspicion by the world. If you can convince someone that divine messengers exist and actually interact with mortals, you’ve done a good job. The Bible mentions angels many times as they are an integral part of Biblical history. There were angels with flaming swords guarding the Garden of Eden. Abraham had angels visit him. Jacob wrestled with an angel. Angels announced the birth of Christ. Angels were present when Mary visited Jesus’ tomb. When Jesus ascended into heaven, angels told the disciples He would return in like manner. The existence of angels isn’t as difficult to sell as you might think.

But, when you begin to tell the story of Joseph Smith Jr. “finding” the gold plates and translating them, the question inevitably comes, “So what did he do with them? Where are they now?” Rats; even the most seasoned missionary has trouble fielding that question. “Ah, he gave them back to

the messenger.” Your story of the angel and ancient records has just become too much for the average person to accept. The plates that were buried for 1400 years now become magical and disappear with the angel—how convenient. So, did Joseph Smith just give them back? What finally became of the plates?

Let’s take a look inside the Book of Mormon and try to retrace the trail of God’s records and how He protected them through the eons of time. In the first chapter of the

Inside this issue:

The Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah Clue <i>Cont.</i>	2 - 6
Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc Now 501 (c) 3	6
The Elusive “magical” Gold Plates <i>Cont.</i>	7, 8
Contemplations on King Benjamin	8
Adventures in Archaeology	9 & 10
King Benjamin Made a Difference	11 & 12

The Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah Clue *continued*

king must have been performed by the reigning Mulekite king whom we are told was King Zarahemla. We are also told that King Mosiah had a son named Benjamin who succeeded Mosiah as king, and that King Benjamin was then succeeded by his son named Mosiah. We are then told that the first Mosiah made a list of the Mulekite kings that preceded him, which were recorded elsewhere—meaning not on the plates that were to become the Book of Mormon. This last Mosiah then changed his kingdom to a type of democracy or republic that was ruled by judges. Thus we are provided a king list with an unknown number of Mulekite kings followed by three Nephite kings that were then followed by judges.

The Book of Mormon records that both the Mulekites and Nephites were in the Americas for at least 300 years before their unification took place. Because the list of unnamed Mulekite kings must cover this range of time we will then speculate that each king could reasonably reign approximately 30 years each resulting in a rough estimate of 10 Mulekite kings reigning prior to the Nephite/Mulekite unification. The first in this Mulekite king list is Mulek and the last is Zarahemla.

With all of this said, we may construct a short list as follows:

- Mulek
- Unnumbered succession of Mulekite kings ending with Zarahemla.
- Mosiah
- Benjamin
- Mosiah
- Judges

Now, there are a few additional clues provided from the Book of Mormon. Contemporary with the kingship period of Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah were other larger-than-life characters that may prove to be important to the story. The Book of Mormon tells of two people who were a father and son, and both of them were named Alma. These two both provided spiritual leadership for the people and served as High Priests; first the father Alma who started the church followed by his son Alma II who was instrumental in spreading the church throughout the entire region. Also, our list should include another larger-than-life person known as

Captain Moroni who worked closely with Alma II to protect the nation from outside invasion and from insurrection. Therefore, our foundational list will look something like this chart.

High Priests	Kings	Captains
	300 years of kings (approximately 10)	
	King Zarahemla	
	King Mosiah the Elder & daughter of Zarahemla	
Alma I		
	King Benjamin & wife	
Alma II	King Mosiah the younger	
		Captain Moroni
	Judges	

And, for the sake of brevity, we will reduce those names to basic letters such as seen here:

↓ 10 Kings
 Z
 ↓
 M
 A I ↓
 B
 A II ↓ Capt. M
 M
 ↓
 Judges

With this chart established, one then needs to compare it with all known Maya king lists for a comparison. We believe that this exercise should be performed without the consideration of any other factors such as geographical location and assigned dating. Most Book of Mormon scholars argue that because approximate dates for the Book of Mormon kings can be reasonably deduced that one should be able to overlay that chronology upon any Maya king list. We beg to differ with this view. In the Book of Mormon the reign of kings last from around 600 BC down to around 100 BC when judges take over. In the Maya civilization, present accepted theories state that the known Maya king lists run from around 400 AD to 900 AD.¹ While the time length is approximately the same (500 years) there is an obvious discrepancy of close to a millennium. That discrepancy has been addressed elsewhere,² but for now suffice it to say that there may be issues with calendar correlations and that researching possible correlations between king lists by using a potentially faulted dating cor-

relation will not be to anyone's benefit. We need to deal with the facts and sort through the apparent discrepancies after basic truths have been established. However, most present-day scholars do agree that Mesoamerica is the geographical area in which the Book of Mormon occurred, so for the duration of this article assigned dating systems will be ignored. However, only specific, detailed geography will be ignored for the king list comparisons must be done in the area of the Maya civilization. That area is depicted in the following illustration:



There are eleven Maya sites with recorded king lists. Our Book of Mormon king list must be compared with each of the Maya king lists to see if any of the Maya king lists match. Those eleven Maya sites will be taken in alphabetical order:

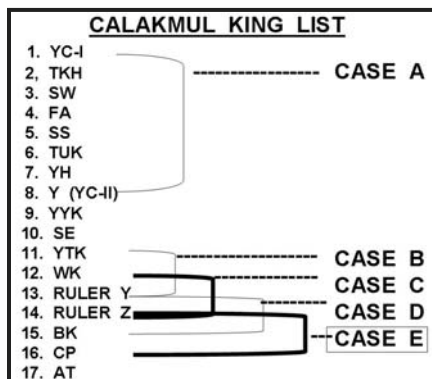
Calakmul, Caracol, Copan, Dos Pilas, Naranjo, Palenque, Piedras Negras, Quirigua, Tikal, Tonina, and Yaxchilan.

We also propose the supposition that the person names on our Book of Mormon list will not be the actual name on the Maya list. This is because the names from the Book of Mormon are translated into English, while the names from the Maya king lists are translated from Maya hieroglyphs. Most epigraphers agree that they cannot actually read the names, but only the pictures of the represented dignitary.³ Since many of those Maya names are unpronounceable to most of us we will only be using the initials of those names in our charts. First, a cursory sort must be made and then a final review. In each case we will first look for a common name between a grandfather and a grandson (the Mosiah connection), then a further investigation will take place.

The Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah Clue *continued*

Calakmul

The first case is from the site known as Calakmul whose king list contains five possible cases of same names. In Case A one can see that the name YC appears twice, but this case must be discounted since the two YCs have six generations between them, but other possibilities exist.



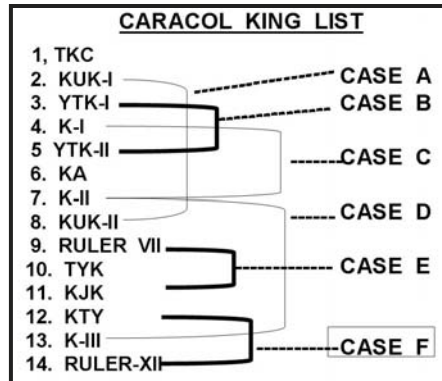
Calakmul also presents two rulers, Y and Z, of which no record of their names are visible on their monuments due to erosion. Therefore, both rulers must be considered and represent different cases.

In Case B YTK has one generation before Ruler Y. So it must be considered possible that the name for Ruler Y was YTK. If so, then WK might be the Benjamin position. Cases C, D and E follow the same reasoning. This is precisely why these cases are presented.

Calakmul presents a great similarity to the Book of Mormon king list in the Case E. The names of ruler Z and CP might be the same. Moreover, CP is the next to the last king which might fit the Book of Mormon story as we know it. Thus, the Calakmul king list will be kept as a contender, especially since there are thirteen kings before that set of names which could be the 300 years of Mulekite kings at about an average of 23 years each.

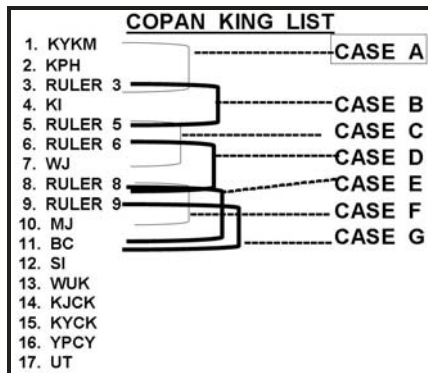
Caracol

In the case of Caracol there are six cases of name patterns that might fit the Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah name pattern. Cases A, C and D are unlikely since they have more than one generation between them. The best case would be Case F with rulers KTY and X II. The eleven kings before them might be the Mulekite rules. Thus Caracol also remains a contender with Case F being in the spotlight.



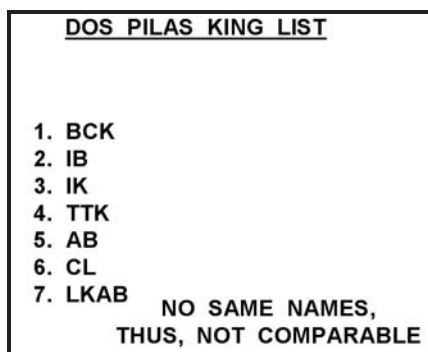
Copan

The Copan king list has seven cases in which the name patterns might fit. Just as in the cases of Calakmul and Caracol, many of the cases exist because of so many rulers having unknown names that might be applicable. It is feasible that Case G might be our Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah clue with the previous kings being eight generations Mulekite kings, while the last six are actually judges. Therefore, the Copan list is also a tentative contender.



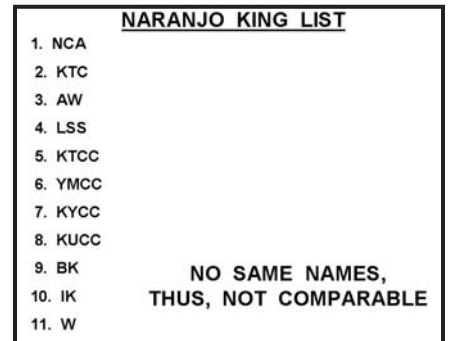
Dos Pilas

This list is not only too short, but it has no comparable pattern. Therefore, it is eliminated.



Naranjo

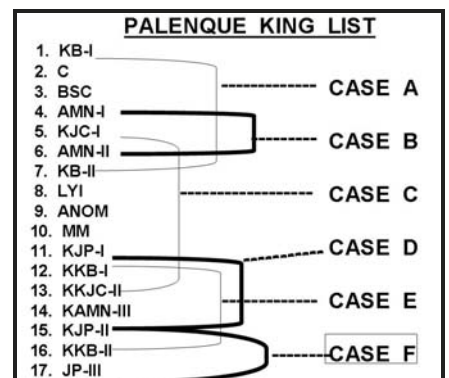
Here the case is repetitive of the Dos Pilas case. The list seems to be too short, but more importantly there are no pattern matches.



Palenque

Once again the Palenque list contributes six cases of same names. Cases A, C, D and E are improbable because of multiple generations between the same names. But, Case F seems to be a likely contender.

Case B appears to be too early, but Case F falls at the end of the king list where our Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah name pattern should fall. This would put fourteen generations of Mulekite kings before the Nephite kings which has the appearance of being too many, but that in and of itself, does not discount it. Therefore, Palenque remains a contender.

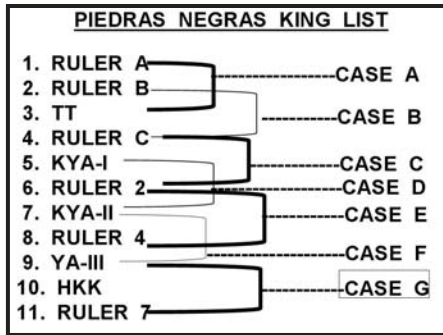


Piedras Negras

The Piedras Negras king list has seven possible name patterns. Moreover, each pattern is separated by a single generation. But, there is no rule that such name patterns cannot be found in the Mulekite king list. With only eight generations before the last three kings of YA III – HKK and Ruler 7, the Mulekite king list seems a bit short. Therefore, Cases A thru F may be eliminated as probabilities,

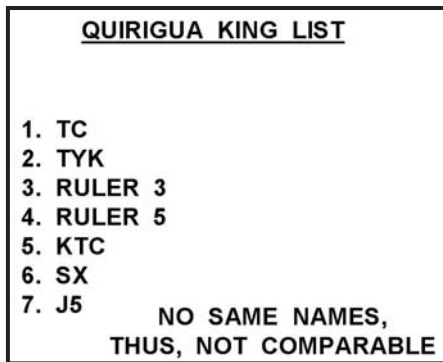
The Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah Clue *continued*

but Case G is feasible. So the Piedras Negras king list is a contender.



Quirigua

This king list has possible name patterns, but the overall list is too short and the last names do not fit the pattern, thus this long list may be eliminated.



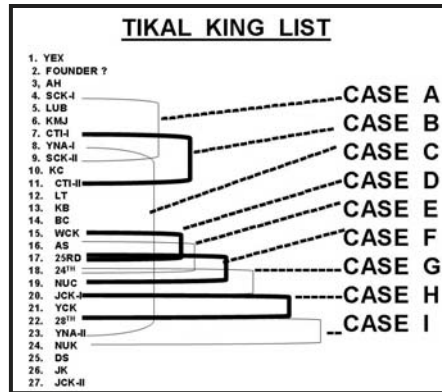
Tikal

This king list is by far the longest of all the Maya king lists. It gives the appearance, therefore, of not only being the oldest but of also being the youngest; that is, extending into more recent times than the others.

There are nine cases of repetitive name patterns, of which cases A, B and C are not contenders because of the generations between the same names. Case I would be the most likely candidate for consideration, but again there are too many names behind that case unless these are the names of judges. However, even if those last names were considered to be judges, they do not follow the correct pattern.

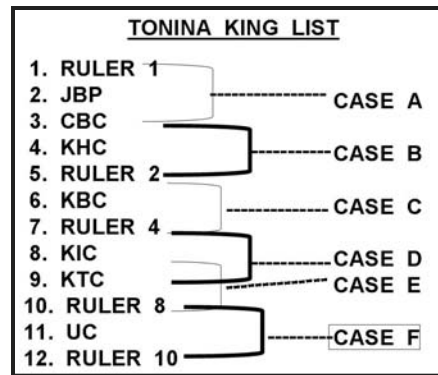
Most of the earlier names are considered to be apocryphal in that there are no contemporary inscriptions to support their existence.⁴ Much of this king list is based on a single pottery artifact which bears the list. Therefore, for a variety of reasons the Tikal king list is not considered

to be a contender and is dropped from the possible list.



Tonina

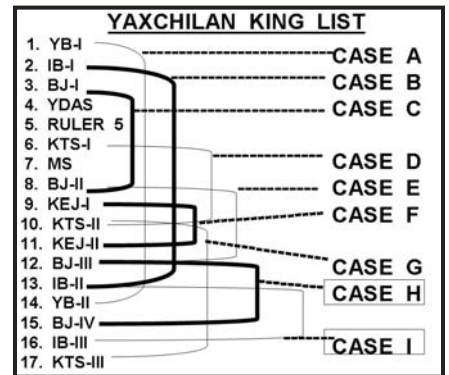
The Tonina king list is missing about half of its names. It is a relatively short list, but since so many names are missing there are possibly six cases to be made for possible same names. Moreover, all six cases have only one generation between the same names. However, only Case F would match our scenario leaving nine generations of Mulekite kings before them. Therefore, the Tonina king list continues to be a contender.



Yaxchilan

The Yaxchilan king list is another interesting list in that it has a lot of same names. There are nine cases to be made with this list. On the surface of it only Case F would seem to stand up to scrutiny. But, there is something to be said concerning Cases H and I. Notice that BJ II is followed by IB II and BJ IV is also followed by IB III. If either the BJs or the IBs are extracted, then the same name pattern separated by a single generation is again found. It might be that either the BJs or IBs are Alma I and Alma II as they are contemporaneous with the Mosiahs. So, for the moment the Yaxchilan king

list stays as a contender.



Final Sort

We began with eleven king lists and through our cursory scan we can immediately discard four leaving seven contenders; Calakmul, Caracol, Copan, Palenque, Piedras Negras, Tonina and Yaxchilan. But, before we begin our final sort we should consider a multi-faceted problem that is often overlooked. It involves both the lack of Mulekite king names in the Book of Mormon and the names assigned to the Maya king lists by Mesoamerican epigraphers.

First, it is unknown if any of the Mulekite kings did or did not have names that were the same as Nephite kings. That is to say, it is possible that there was a Mulekite king named Mosiah, Alma, or even Benjamin. That possibility must be considered. This might even be a reason why the Mulekite king list names were not included in the Book of Mormon. Even now, in present-day, one can ask a Book of Mormon believer if the Book of Alma in the Book of Mormon was written by Alma I or Alma II and most of the time you will receive a blank stare; it is confusing. The case of Mosiah is even worse. The Book of Mormon does not distinguish between the Mosiahs by referring to the son of King Benjamin as Mosiah II because that Mosiah was the grandson of the previous Mosiah, not the son. In fact, the Book of Mormon gives to understand that the two Mosiahs never met each other. I prefer to make the distinction by referring to the Mosiahs as Mosiah the elder and Mosiah the younger.

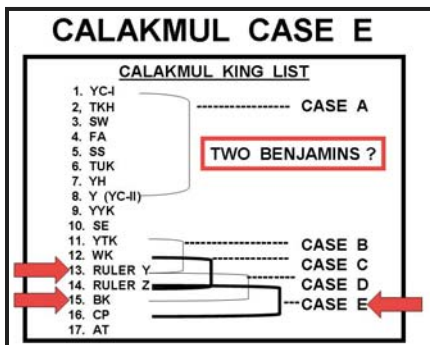
The second facet of the name problem arises from the preconception that the Mulekites did not use the same names as the Nephites. That aspect is usually not a misconception; it is simply never consid-

The Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah Clue *continued*

ered. But, consider the problems that would occur for the Book of Mormon believer if there were any of those three names used among the Mulekites. As it is, most people find themselves easily confused using only the names given that are necessary to relate the stories provided. But, the archaeologists have resolved this problem by giving numeric designations to all kings who carry same names. Therefore, if the Mulekites did have a king named Mosiah, archaeologists would call him Mosiah I while the Mosiahs from the Nephite line would be named Mosiah II and III. And the same is true of any same name king in any king list. So, with that in mind, we now return to our Maya king lists to make our final sort. Again, we take the king lists in the same alphabetical order of the archaeological site's names.

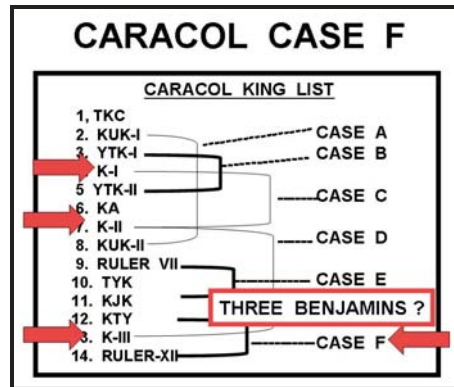
Calakmul

The problem that occurs with the Calakmul king list is between BK and Ruler Y. If CP and Ruler Z are the Mosiahs, then BK is Benjamin. And if BK is Benjamin then Ruler Y cannot be a same name because the ruler before Mosiah the elder was King Zarahemla. This by itself does not exclude Calakmul, but there are no records at this site concerning two individuals named Alma or a Captain Moroni. Therefore, Calakmul must lose its contender status.



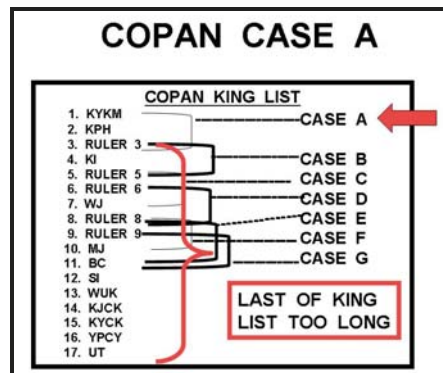
Caracol

A similar problem happens with the Caracol king list. Actually in this case, there would be three Benjamins since K III is referenced to YTK I and II. This multiplicity is not the problem, as the real problem with this site as a whole is that there is no mention of anyone resembling the Almas or a Captain Moroni. Therefore, Caracol also becomes a non-contender.



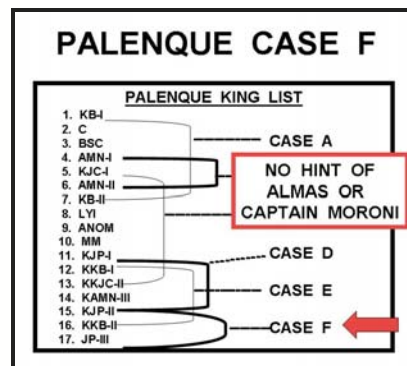
Copan

Copan's king list problem is easier to handle than the previous two. Simply put, its king list is too long. Even if Case G is used, there are six more kings after King Mosiah the younger. Therefore, Copan also becomes a non-contender.



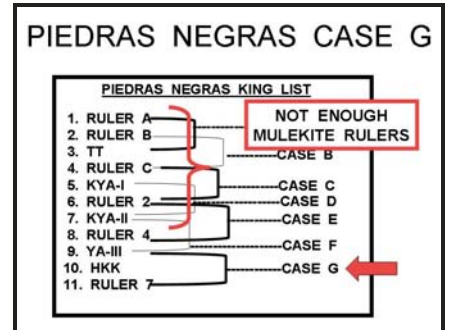
Palenque

Though the observation may be made that Palenque has too many kings for the Mulekites, one cannot know if there were usurpers or even diseases or wars that eliminate some of the Mulekite kings and thus create more openings. No, the real problem with Palenque is the same as those before it; no Almas nor Captain Moroni.



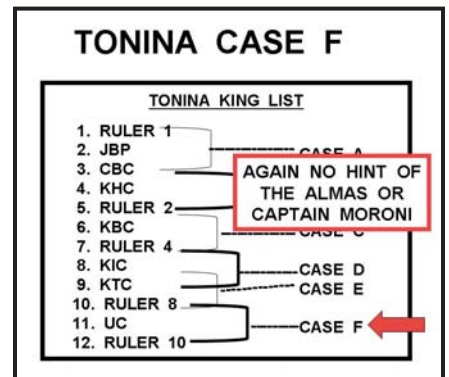
Piedras Negras

Though the Mulekite king list seems short, the real reason for eliminating Piedras Negras is no Almas or Captain Moroni.



Tonina

Same as Piedras Negras



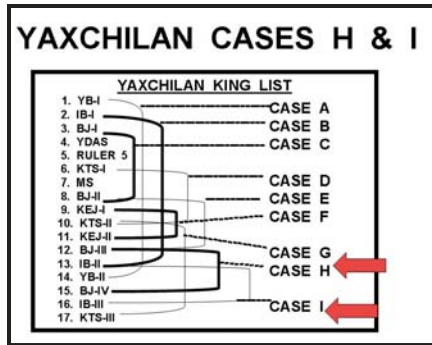
Yaxchilan

The Yaxchilan site affords many of the requirements needed to be in place for it to be considered as the Book of Mormon list. The presence of the BJs would imply the Almas. Interestingly, the BJs carry a different king title than any of the other Yaxchilan kings. We believe this is because the BJs were the High Priests as opposed to being kings, so while they held spiritual leadership responsibilities within the culture it was outside of the civic realm as associated with a full kingship. Moreover, all of the other kings of all of the other sites have different titles except Piedras Negras and Calakmul. We believe this is done because they are governors as opposed to being kings. Calakmul and Piedras Negras do carry the complete king hieroglyph titles. But, these might well be two places which were strongholds for the Book of Mormon political group known as *kings men*.

Yet another aspect of Yaxchilan is that the BJs have a numeric difference.

The Mosiah-Benjamin-Mosiah Clue *continued*

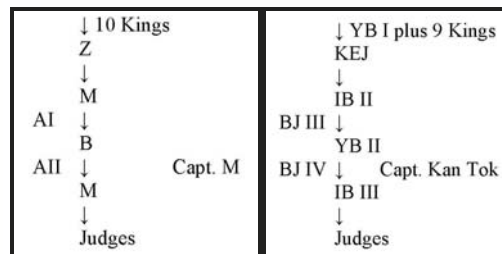
That is to say, though there are four BJs in the Yaxchilan king list, the last two are father and son. The Book of Mormon numbers the son as Alma II just as in the Maya hieroglyphs. Archaeologists refer to our considerations as BJ III and IV because that same name appearing two times earlier in the Mulekite king list.



Another interesting aspect is that all of the kings before IB II are listed on a hieroglyph stairway which leads to a temple that honors the rise of IB II to king. According to Maya hieroglyphs at Yaxchilan Temple 23, his appointment came about because of his marriage to a princess (king's daughter). That previous king was Knot-Eye Jaguar II (KEJ II) who would fit the slot of King Zarahemla in the Book of Mormon. Therefore, if IB II is Mosiah, then his son King Benjamin must be YB II whose son was then IB III. An interesting note is that King Benjamin as YB II would have been half Nephite and half Mulekite and the first offspring of the blended lines. It appears that the choice of his name may well have been an effort to calm the fears from many of the Mulekites who may have felt that the kingship was being usurped through this marriage. His name is the same as the first name in the list meaning that King

Benjamin was named after the founder of the Mulekite kings. That founder is known as Mulek in the Book of Mormon where it states that he was a son of the Jerusalem Jewish king named Zedekiah, and through reverse logic, If YB II is King Benjamin, then YB I, or Mulek, was also named Benjamin. The desire to name the firstborn of this union after the founder of the lowland Maya royalty may well have been an effort to reinforce the purpose for which they came to America in the first place; to preserve the royalty until Shiloh (Messiah) comes.

There is one final piece of evidence at Yaxchilan; the presence of a captain. The captain referenced in Maya hieroglyphs is called Captain Kan Tok by archaeologists. This Captain Kan Tok is very closely associated with one of the BJs (Almas) as opposed to one of the IBs (Mosiahs) in the same way it is implied in the Book of Mormon.



Therefore, after comparing all of the Maya King lists it appears that the Yaxchilan king list matches the Book of Mormon account closer than any. Even aspects such as IB II (Mosiah the elder) having come from the highlands among other evidences of battles fought and the intrigue of usurpers and insurrections works well at the Yaxchilan site. Yaxchilan may well be the hinge pin that finally connects archaeology with what is known

about Book of Mormon geography and other historical missing pieces. Certainly, there are other aspects that must now be investigated such as geographic relationships to other cities, the locations of battles, the persons of renown associated with those events and so on. What if we were to plug the socio-political events inferred in the Book of Mormon into the known archaeological aspects of Mesoamerica? Would this help flesh-out the unknown aspects missing from the archaeological world? Likewise, what if we took the known historical aspects of archaeology and overlaid them on the Book of Mormon stories? How would that fill in unknown aspects such as the possible marriage between Mosiah and the daughter of Zarahemla? This is never mentioned in the Book of Mormon, but it is certainly a historical fact if indeed Yaxchilan is Zarahemla. Why were these facts left out of the Book of Mormon and only now being brought to light through scientific implication? Is our God telling us that science and sacred history are supposed to work in conjunction with each other? That these two disciplines are not diametrically opposed to one another? If so, it seems as though the Book of Mormon is gaining witnesses for its truth.

References

1. Martin & Grube; The Chronicles of Maya Kings and Queens, 2000.
2. Steede, Neil; Book of Mormon Archaeology: Artifact-by-Artifact, Independence, MO, 2008.
3. Stuart, David; The Inscriptions of Temple XIX in Palenque, 2005.
4. By contemporary inscriptions we mean inscriptions which were made during the lifetime of the ruler being referenced.

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The Elusive “Magical” Gold Plates *continued*

Book of Mormon, the opening scene finds Nephi telling the story of his family’s journey into the wilderness to escape persecution. Shortly after leaving Hazor (Jer. 49:30) they are instructed to return to Jerusalem to secure the Plates of Brass from a man named Laban who was the keeper of the Temple treasury. As the story goes, on two separate occasions they tried to get the records but failed. Nephi’s older brothers Laman and Lemuel had enough and began to beat Nephi. An angel appeared and saved Nephi. A third time they tried to obtain the records and this time they succeeded. Now, if God wanted them to have the Plates of Brass so bad, why didn’t he just send an angel to get them and give it to Nephi and his brothers? If God can make things appear and disappear, why make these poor guys risk their lives unnecessarily? That’s not the way He works as we will discover. They had to move out in faith and put their lives on the line to win the prize. God could not give it to them. The records were physical and they had to be obtained in the physical dimension.

The Nephite story in the Book of Mormon spans 1000 years. From war to war and place to place, no matter where they moved or where they were driven, they always had to keep their records safe from their enemies. Why didn’t they just let the angels protect them? Why were they always trying to protect them instead of letting the angels do it? Many times they were warned to flee, but it was their responsibility to secure their precious records.

In the final days of the Nephite nation, Mormon writes “*And now I, Mormon, seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, therefore I did go to the hill Shim, and did take up all the records which Ammoron had hid up unto the Lord.*” (Mormon 2:25) He had to gather all the records to protect them because the Lamanites were about to capture the land. Why? Later he states “*And it came to pass that when we had gathered in all our people in one to the land of Cumorah, behold I, Mormon, began to be old; and knowing it to be the last struggle of my people, and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not suffer that the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were sacred, to fall into the hands of the Lamanites, (for the Lamanites would destroy*

them,) Therefore I made this record out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah, all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni.” (Mormon 3:7, 8) He had to hide them to keep them from being destroyed. Why? God please, just send a legion of angels to move them.

In 420 AD Moroni sealed up his precious record and buried it on a hillside in what would become upstate New York. It was there, 1400 years later a young man named Joseph Smith Jr. was led by a messenger from God to take them from their hiding place and begin the translation into what we know as the Book of Mormon. Joseph was given charge of them and strict direction to protect them. He was to use all his “endeavors” to keep them safe. Why? It is because if they were in danger the messenger could not take them himself to protect them.

The story we tell of Joseph returning the records to the angel comes from a testimony he wrote in 1838 and was published in the [Times and Seasons](#) in 1842. In part of the article Joseph states, “...*but by the wisdom of God they remained safe in my hands until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand, when according to arrangements the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him, and he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty eight.*” Three witnesses provide a written testimony that they saw the plates in a vision and were told by a voice from heaven that the record was true. Theirs was a spiritual manifestation of the records. They never physically handled them because Joseph still had them in his possession. Remember, they were still in the process of translating the record when they went to the woods to pray for the testimony. Shortly after the experience of the three, Joseph was allowed to physically show the plates to eight others. They held the plates and turned the pages. The records never left Joseph’s possession until he was finished.

Now if you were Joseph and wanted to protect the plates, how would you do it? If you read his testimony from 1838, it implies he just handed the records over to the messenger. We are left with the un-

derstanding that the plates must have magically disappeared with the angel. But that’s not what it says. He met the messenger at an appointed time and delivered them into his CHARGE. Why make those arrangements if the messenger could take them anytime he chose?

I could accept that to be the end of the story; I wouldn’t like it, but I could accept it except for three things. First; God has NEVER, NEVER, NEVER in the history of all the records, had his servants physically hand them over to an angel for safe keeping. It just doesn’t fit. Why now? Second; The Book of Mormon itself tells what Joseph is supposed to do with the records. *2 Nephi 11:144 Wherefore, when thou hast read the words which I have commanded thee, and obtained the witnesses which I have promised thee, then shalt thou seal up the book again, and hide it up unto me, that I may preserve the words which thou hast not read, until I see fit in mine own wisdom, to reveal all things unto the children of men.* Words have meaning. After Moroni finishes the record he writes his final statements in what we know as the title page. In the title page of the Book of Mormon we find the definition of “hid up unto the Lord”. “*Written, and sealed up, and hid unto the Lord.....sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord*”. Eleven different places beside the one just mentioned, the writers claim to “hide up” or the records were “hid up.” We know by the context they either buried them or hid them in a cave for safe keeping. Third; In RLDS History, vol. 1 pg. 51, 52 Martin Harris is being interviewed about his belief and testimony of the Book of Mormon. In that interview, Martin states “*I know of a surety that the work is true; for did I not at one time hold the plates on my knee an hour and a half, while in conversation with Joseph, when we went to bury them in the woods, that the enemy might not obtain them? Yes, I did. And as many of the plates as Joseph Smith translated, I handled with my hands, plate after plate.*” Now, if Joseph was still translating the records and he said they remained safe in his hands until he was done, then why would he drive (a horse and buggy) for an hour and a half and bury them in the woods just to dig them up again to continue translating? He had been able to keep them safe so far, why the need to bury them to protect them? It’s obvious to

The Elusive “Magical” Gold Plates Continued

me he didn't. When Joseph finished the work entrusted to him he did the same thing Ammoron did when he hid them in hill Shim; as did Mormon when he hid all the records in hill Cumorah; as did Moroni when he buried them on a hillside in upstate New York in 420 AD—they buried them to protect them. Joseph's testi-

mony was a cleverly worded diversion to protect the plates. He took Martin with him when he went to rebury the plates and return the safe keeping of them over to the messenger who had been charged with that responsibility over 1400 years ago. To the best of my knowledge, the angel has them in his charge to this day.

Remember, there was a part of the record that was sealed and is yet to be “discovered” and translated at God's choosing. Joseph did what he was asked to do: he translated the record into English by the gift and power of God and secured the record for a future generation like the prophets before him.

Contemplations on King Benjamin By David B. Brown

When contemplating the life of the man who delivered the address of King Benjamin recorded in the Book of Mormon, it would be impossible to know the dynamics of all the experiences and feelings that eventually developed into such a beautiful expression of platitudes for living. There is so much about King Benjamin that we don't know. The Book of Mormon records very little about him, but with the recent identification of Yaxchilan as the Book of Mormon city of Zarahemla, the archaeology of Yaxchilan does allow us to fill in some missing history not recorded in the Book of Mormon. This history provides a more complete picture of the character development that eventually became an icon for Restoration leadership.

King Benjamin's father was Mosiah the elder who was warned to leave the land of Nephi and venture in the wilderness until they happened upon the City of Zarahemla. From the archaeological perspective, this means that Mosiah and the Nephite people who followed him traveled from the highland city of Chinkultic through the Lacantun wilderness until they arrived at Yaxchilan. Mosiah is known by archaeologists as Shield Jaguar II. In the inscriptions found at Yaxchilan, Shield Jaguar II came from the highlands and appears to have married the daughter of Knot-Eye Jaguar II. She came from a royal lineage at Calakmul and her name was Lady Xoc. This marriage then made Shield Jaguar II (Mosiah) a king.

In the Book of Mormon record we are not told how Mosiah became king. We only know that once he arrived in Zarahemla (Yaxchilan) they discovered that the people there came from a Jewish royal lineage through King Zedekiah. The royal descendant of Zedekiah was named Mulek, and consequently most of us refer to his people as Mulekites. The interesting link here is that the typical vowelless spelling

of Mulek is M-L-K, which in Hebrew means “king.” Therefore, Mulekites would imply that these were the “people of the king.” They were royalty. So, if Mosiah marries a royal daughter or princess, then by virtue of the marriage he becomes a king. Therefore, he does not have a rightful claim to the throne by lineage, but by virtue of his marriage he is in essence “appointed” king as the Book of Mormon expresses it.

The Book of Mormon tells us the people of Mulek had no language, but it was Mosiah who brought with him the Brass Plates and therefore a written language. The Mulekite people were ecstatic to finally have written validation of their heritage after more than 300 years of oral traditions. So, when Lady Xoc from the Jewish royal line of Zarah married Mosiah (Shield Jaguar II) the prophetic fulfillment of reuniting Joseph's birthright and Judah's scepter was now complete. And, the first offspring of that union was Yoatt B'alam II, or King Benjamin as we know him from the Book of Mormon.

The first king listed in the Yaxchilan king list is Yoatt B'alam and one of the lentil inscriptions at Yaxchilan illustrates Lady Xoc's ancestor coming to her in a dream/vision and consecrating the union of Lady Xoc to Shield Jaguar II. Did Mosiah's wife have a spiritual experience confirming the prophetic event about to take place with her union? Did Mosiah and his wife honor the first king by naming their son after him? Was this an effort to demonstrate to the Mulekite people that while a Nephite sat upon the throne as king, he did so in honor of the royal line that the Mulekites had kept in tact for over 300 years? Was this an effort to reaffirm the larger, sacred purpose that Benjamin represented; that of the combined throne upon which the risen Mes-

siah would one day sit? All of these questions begin to develop a series of speculations that allows us to see the development of a special era among the lowland Maya; the validation for their ventures and a sense of fulfillment and higher purpose as a culture. It seems as though these people were reaching a pinnacle of cultural self-actualization.

But, all was not well in Yaxchilan. Apparently there were still those of the royal line who could not comprehend giving the rulership of the Mulekite people to the Nephites. While there is nothing mentioned to that effect in the Book of Mormon, we do have political movements that begin to manifest later in Nephite history where the *king-men* attempt to re-capture the throne. And, there are inscriptions in Yaxchilan that tell of those in Lady Xoc's royal family who were opposed to the rule of Shield Jaguar II (Mosiah). Hence, Mosiah's son Benjamin is raised in an environment of tension. There is great cultural development with written language and a sense of cultural validation, but at the same time there is political tension from the clash of the ruling classes within these blending cultures. Out of this cultural tension develops the heart and soul of a king who wants nothing more than for his people, all his people, to share in the joy of God's blessing to them. I can imagine his sorrow for those of his mother's people who are too fixed on who is right and who is abandoning the movement they traveled across the sea to preserve. In his farewell sermon given at the temple tower, King Benjamin poured out the deepest desires of his spirit, shared the gospel message, gave specific direction for expressing compassion, invested his people with a name that would not be blotted out, and provided a pastoral ministry that has set the example for Zionic living both then and for us today.

Adventures In Scriptures

Issue 9

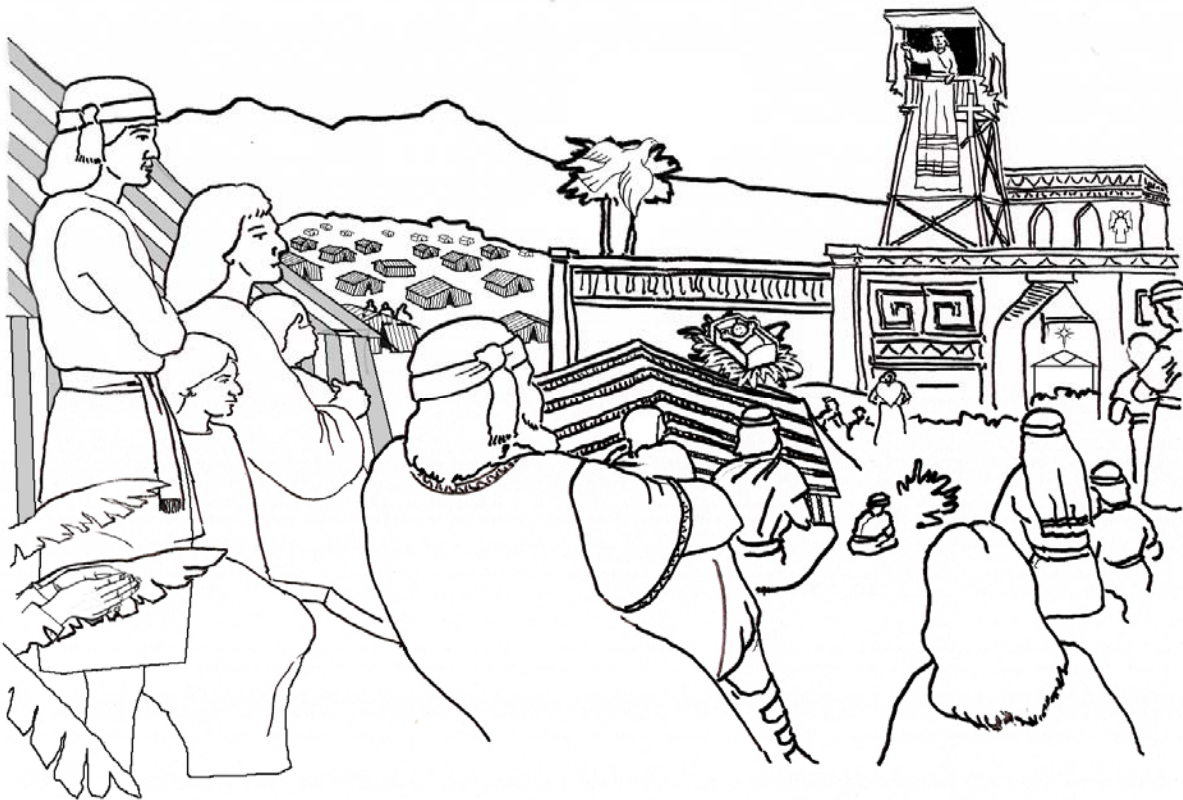
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KING BENJAMIN'S TOWER



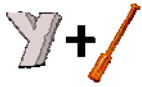
King Benjamin was a good ruler over his people. He was old and it was time for him to appoint his son Mosiah as the new leader. He called together all his people. They came from all over and pitched their tents facing the temple. King Benjamin had a tall tower built so all could hear him speak. He prophesied of the coming of God's son, Jesus Christ. Jesus would suffer and die on the cross for the sins of all people. He would also heal people, perform many miracles, and bless their children. King Benjamin taught them many things. He told them to be sorry when they sinned and repent and have faith in Jesus to be saved. He also told them the best way to serve God was to serve one another. The people heard and believed King Benjamin and fell to their knees and repented of their sins. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and knew that God loved them and had forgiven them.

Story based on Mosiah chapters 1 through 4



Find a Manger, a Barn, A Dove, A Cross, a Heart, an Angel and Praying Hands. Also how many tents are there in the picture? **Now color the picture to bring it to life.**

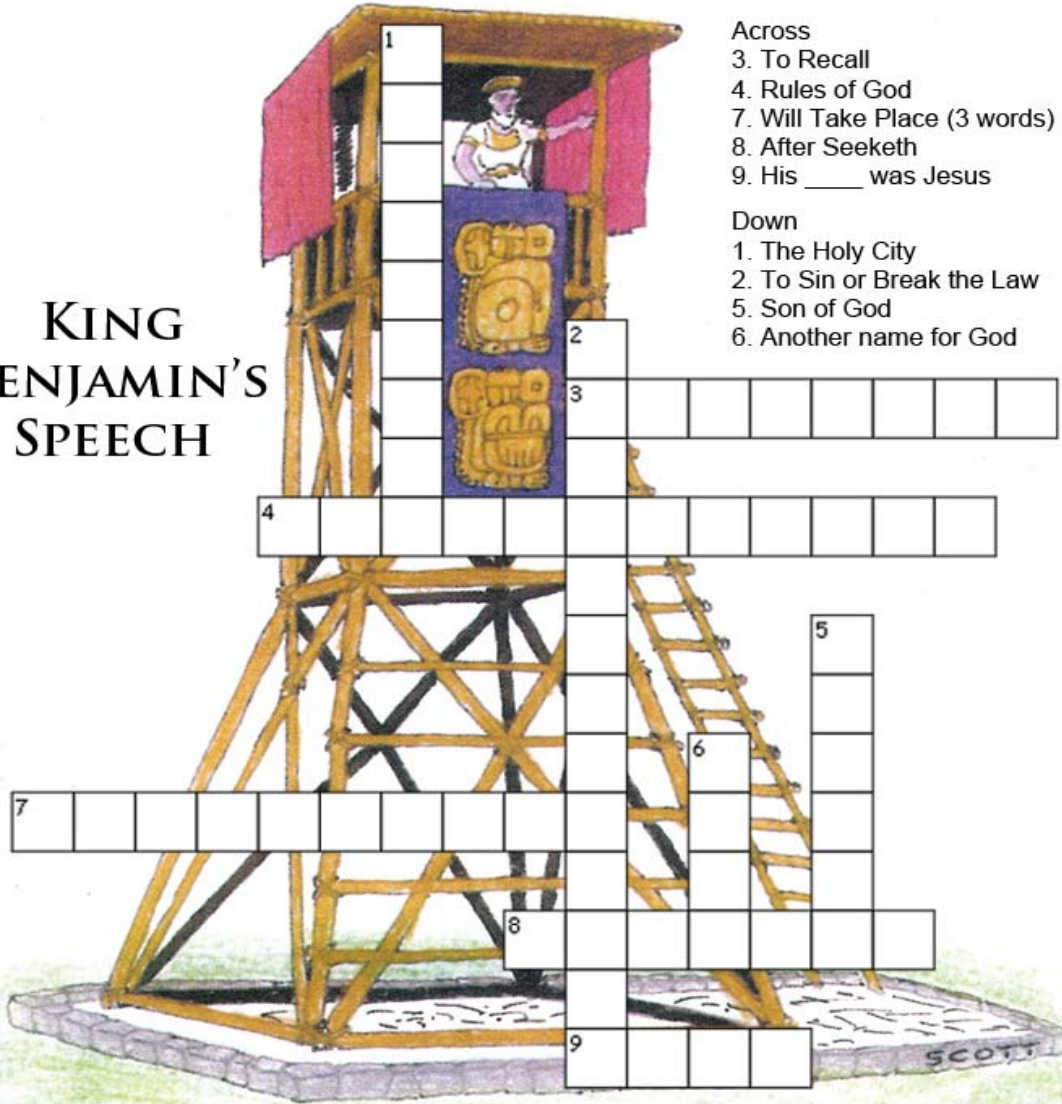
Solve the puzzle to find the scripture



THAT



KING BENJAMIN'S SPEECH



- Across
- 3. To Recall
 - 4. Rules of God
 - 7. Will Take Place (3 words)
 - 8. After Seeketh
 - 9. His ____ was Jesus
- Down
- 1. The Holy City
 - 2. To Sin or Break the Law
 - 5. Son of God
 - 6. Another name for God

Mosiah 1:17 And moreover, I shall give this people a name, that thereby they may be distinguished above all the people which the Lord God hath brought out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I do, because they have been a diligent people in keeping the commandments of the Lord. 1:18 And I give unto them a name, that never shall be blotted out, except it be through transgression.

Mosiah 3:13 And now, it shall come to pass that whosoever shall not take upon them the name of Christ, must be called by some other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the left hand of God. 3:14 And I would that ye should remember also, that this is the name that I said I should give unto you, that never should be blotted out, except it be through transgression; (All words in the Crossword Puzzle are found in the above scriptures)

King Benjamin Made a Difference

By Chris Scott

King Benjamin made a difference because he had the foresight to have his story written down. The story has been a model and blueprint for settings in which the love of God can be shared in community. While preparing the scripture pages for the last two Cumorah messengers, I noticed many parallels between the King Benjamin story in chapters 1 thru 4 of the Book of Mosiah and my own experience in the church. The church most likely modeled their reunions after the gathering of families in the King Benjamin story or at least the early church was influenced by it. I believe that King Benjamin made a difference in the lives of many including myself, and I'm grateful to him.

Mosiah 1:33-35 "And it came to pass that when they came up to the temple, they pitched their tents round about, every man according to his family, consisting of his wife, and his sons, and his daughters, and their sons, and their daughters, from the eldest down to the youngest, every family being separate, one from another; And they pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple, that thereby they might remain in their tents, and hear the words which King Benjamin should speak unto them; For the multitude being so great, that King Benjamin could not teach them all within the walls of the temple; therefore he caused a tower to be erected; that thereby his people might hear the words which he should speak unto them."

The King Benjamin story of the people gathering in tents by families, reminds me so much of my reunion experiences. During the late 1960's and early 1970's my family attended reunion camps at Cedar Valley Grove. These camps were very well attended. We would draw away from the world and camp in tents. We met in a very large and impressive tent for our worship services. I know some of the children my age found this kind of boring, but I was awed by the testimonies and prayers of the people sharing their love for God and his church. It taught me at a young age the importance of having quiet time with God. Although there was a certain amount of sternness about how to behave we still had a good time and felt comfortable among this group of people. We felt the Holy Spirit in abundance in our worship and it shaped and motivated us to

want to follow God's commandments.

Mosiah 2:13-17 "Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and earth. Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth. Believe that man does not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend. And again; Believe that you must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you. Now if you believe all these things, see that you do them."

By drawing apart from the world to be with those of like faith, I got a sense of what Zion would be like. We worshiped, worked, fellowshiped, and had recreation together. It cemented within me a desire to serve God at a young age and to keep myself within the fellowship of the faithful. The fun that we had at campfires and other activities showed me that wholesome fun was much more desirable than the temptations that the world had to offer.

Mosiah 2:25-27 "And you will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will you suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which has been spoken of by our fathers, he being an enemy to all righteousness; but you will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; you will teach them to love one another and to serve one another."

Another parallel that I see in the story of King Benjamin is in the naming of our church. *Mosiah 1:17* "Moreover, I shall give this people a name that thereby they may be distinguished above all the people which the Lord God has brought out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I do because they have been a diligent people in keeping the commandments of the Lord." And *Mosiah 3:11* "...therefore, I would that you should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that you would be obedient to the end of your lives."

When I remember to have the name of Christ written on my heart, my heart becomes tender towards those around me. Likewise, I learn love and compassion from those who also have the name of Christ written in their hearts.

Mosiah 2:28-36 "And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; And ye will not suffer that the begger putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. Perhaps thou shalt say, The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance, that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just. But I say unto you, O man, who-soever doeth this, the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done, he perisheth for ever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God. For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same being, even God, for all the substance which we have; for both food, and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind? And behold, even at this time, ye have been calling on his name, and begging for a remission of your sins. And has he suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay; he has poured out his Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped, that ye could not find utterance, so exceeding great was your joy. And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives, and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how had ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have, one to another?"

Another parallel that I appreciate in the King Benjamin story is his demonstration of stewardship. He worked alongside the people and lived a life of servant ministry. It teaches me to be a servant and share of my abundance with others.

Mosiah 1:48-51 "Behold, I say unto you, that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God. Behold, ye have called me your king; and if I, whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then had not ye ought to labor to serve one another? And behold, also, if

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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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King Benjamin Made a Difference Continued

I, whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service, and yet has been in the service of God, doth merit any thanks from you, O how had you ought to thank your heavenly King!"

The King Benjamin story is the one I can relate to the most in the Book of Mormon. Nephi was called to build a boat and undertake a great journey. Abinadi died a fiery death to defend his faith. Moroni was a great warrior. But King Benjamin taught us of Christ and community and demonstrated that it is possible to live in a peaceful Zion community. He was humble and full of love for God and his people. King Benjamin made a difference.

My experience in the church has not been one of having to defend my faith by acts of great heroics, but living a life of stewardship and sharing in community with those around me. I appreciate the examples set for me and the stories told of the tender mercies of God.

Mosiah 2:18-24 "And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, Or if ye have known of his goodness, and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceeding great joy in your souls, Even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in

For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same being, even God, for all the substance which we have; for both food, and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind? And behold, even at this time, ye have been calling on his name, and begging for a remission of your sins. And has he suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay; he has poured out his Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped, that ye could not find utterance, so exceeding great was your joy.

remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long suffering towards you unworthy creatures, And humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel; And behold, I say unto you, that if ye do this, ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; And ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true. And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due.

King Benjamin has made a difference in my life along with many others who testify of God's love. What is your story? When have you experienced the tender mercies of God's love in your life?