

## The Meaning of the Robes

By David B. Brown © 2014

The Mayan artisans of Mesoamerica were astute communicators that utilized a keen eye and attention to detail. Position of hands, feet, elbows, headdresses, feathers on headdresses and any number of other “relationship” indicators were utilized extensively and consistently throughout their art. The subject matter of robes has been one that recently came to the forefront while I was doing some research on Native American customs. I was reading through American Indian material on the relationship between the physical and spiritual aspects of life when I came across a passage that read “Drop Your Robe (die).”<sup>1</sup> So, according to Native American tradition, to be robed is to be in the physical and to “drop the robe” is to leave the physical frame behind. To be “robed” is indicative of literal physical existence while being “unrobed” refers to abstract concepts of spiritual and eternal truths.

This concept is consistent with spiritual teachings throughout the world that express the spiritual being as complete in itself and that the physical body is merely

a shell or vehicle through which the spirit is able to find expression in this physical realm of existence. So, to remove the robe is to be free from the physical senses, to be released from the limitations of the five senses and to “know” things more perfectly. When I read the sentences concerning the robes I felt an impress of the Spirit and immediately I was led to a series of examinations concerning the meaning of being robed.

One of my favorite Mayan sites to use for reference is the city of Palenque (Bountiful) because it has so many artistic figures arranged in logical, chronological presentations. The first one to consider is the Tablet of the Cross. Here we have two priests, one is partially robed while the other sports an apron. This gives the impression that the partially robed priest probably deals more often with the physical or temporal aspects of life, while the apron priest has a stronger influence in the spiritual realm as he seems to have no vestige of a robe about him. These parallel very strongly with the concept of the Aaronic and

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## The Five Gifts to the Restoration

by Neil Steede © 2014

*The following is a quick review of the manuscript “The Five Gifts” that I will be releasing this fall.*

I believe that in the early formative Restoration movement, historical gifts were given to this new faith. With these gifts came a conditional promise that upon accepting these gifts more would come forth. Most people of the early Restoration movement believed that this promise exclusively covered the Book of Mormon, and that simple acceptance of the book would fulfill the requirement. It is my opinion that the statement concerning the expression of faith was greatly misunderstood and it did not simply imply the rational acceptance of these documents. That is to say, the simple statement, “I believe,” is not a fulfillment of

what God intended as an expression of acceptance. Rather, I believe that His desire is for us to take action by applying the spiritual truths of the book *and* by looking for the scientific evidences surrounding the historical manuscripts and statements given.

As demonstrated elsewhere<sup>1</sup> most early Restorationists considered belief in the Book of Mormon as the only historical gift required to meet this test of faith.

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## The Five Gifts to the Restoration continued

In my view there were five such historical gifts given to the early church. Each of the five gifts were larger and more important in content than the one that followed it. I believe the five gifts were:

1. The Book of Mormon
2. The story of Enoch
3. Adam-Ondi-Ahman
4. Zelph, the white Lamanite
5. The Kinderhook Plates

I will provide a short synopsis of each.

### **The Book of Mormon**

A myriad of documents have been written concerning the scientific evidence of this manuscript. My most recent publication<sup>2</sup> has provided many scientific proofs for the validity of the contents of that manuscript. In fact, so much archaeological evidence has been provided concerning the validity of this manuscript that there is little else to call into question at this time. However, as stated above, it was important for us to prove the sincerity of our profession by developing the archaeological evidence needed to convince the world of the historical veracity of this manuscript. Much of this has been accomplished by the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team.

### **Story of Enoch**

For many Restorationists the story of Enoch is found in the Inspired Version of the Bible by Joseph Smith Jr, while others of the Restoration movement can find the story in a book called The Pearl of Great Price. For the most part, most people do not totally comprehend the importance of Enoch's story.

It is amazing how many people do not know about the historical books of Enoch. Most of the books of Enoch were found in the Dead Sea Scrolls though some were found among the manuscripts of the Nag Hammadi library. After the Dead Sea Scrolls finding there were several attempts to equate the books of Enoch with the writings of Joseph Smith Jr concerning Enoch. These comparison attempts failed because the wrong expectations were applied.

Most people expected parallels to

occur between the Enoch manuscripts found in the Middle East and the Joseph Smith Jr writings concerning Enoch. What most people did not realize is that the writings of Joseph Smith Jr were spiritual in nature and contained Enoch's spiritual message, while the Middle Eastern manuscripts produced the history out of which the spiritual message was produced.

When all known manuscripts concerning Enoch are viewed within the context just given, they meld into one seamless story. All of this has already been demonstrated.<sup>3</sup> An abundance of evidence has been given to demonstrate the existence of the two cities that Enoch built.<sup>4</sup>

### **Adam-Ondi-Ahman**

Joseph Smith gave a single utterance concerning Adam-Ondi-Ahman in Gallatin, Missouri, at the dedication of the land for a temple to be built there. I have collected an abundance of evidence concerning this.

The importance of this site has been lost in the Restoration movement. Its importance is to demonstrate that man did not come about through evolution, but through creation. Of course, at this time, most of the world laughs at those who hold to the creation theory. The evidence for Creation is in the state of Kansas. Because Joseph Smith Jr uttered this prophecy much can now be demonstrated that this prophet was speaking with spiritual knowledge.

It can now be shown that man existed earlier in North America than he existed in Africa. Utilizing standard accepted paleontological dating, man is shown to exist at around 800,000 to 1,000,000 years ago in North America but only 200,000 to 300,000 years ago in Africa. There is a cacophony of evidence to support this statement. Of course, here the antiquity is expressed in scientifically accepted units of time as measured through C-14 dating.

A secondary facet of the historical gifts of Enoch and Adam-Ondi-Ahman is that the scientific evidence strongly indicates that the commonly held view of the dark-skin "curse" in the Book of Mormon should be re-evaluated. This

has also been discussed and is available in print.<sup>5</sup>

### **Zelph, The White Lamanite**

Members of the Community of Christ generally are not aware of the story of Zelph. We have a story extracted from several journals of people traveling with Joseph Smith Jr in an 1834 group called Zion's camp. As Zion's camp moved from Kirtland to Jackson County, they stopped beside Native American mounds in Illinois. That evening several people went up on a mound and opened a shallow grave. At that time the prophet was requested to investigate, which he did. Upon observing the grave, it is stated in six journals that Joseph Smith Jr went under the influence of the Spirit and began to prophesy concerning the skeleton. Joseph Smith Jr stated that the skeleton was Zelph, the white Lamanite. He was a general for Onendagus who was a prophet of the Lord that existed 1000 CE (1000 AD) and was known from the Rocky Mountains to the Eastern Seaboard.

It has now been demonstrated that these two men did exist (their names have been found in Native American petroglyphs) and in fact that they were part of the Mississippian mound builders at 1000 AD.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Kinderhook Plates**

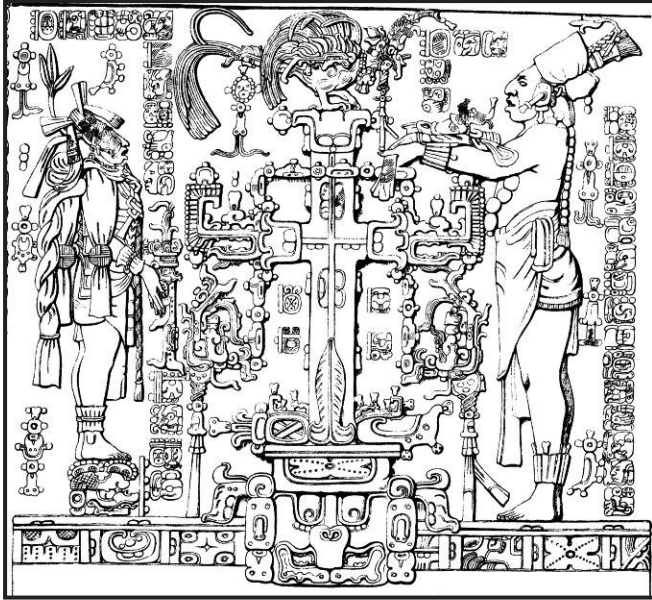
Several years before Joseph Smith Jr was assassinated a group of men presented Joseph with six plates known as the Kinderhook plates. Joseph said that he could read them and that they concerned the story of Abraham and his son Isaac. The day after these statements were uttered by the prophet the men who brought the plates made the public proclamation that "we fooled the prophet." After this time no one seemed interested in this story. This story has been conveniently forgotten, though these plates still exist and some can be found in the Chicago Field Museum.

Today if we look for information concerning the plates we can find a very informative article on how the plates are fake. This article states that the type of

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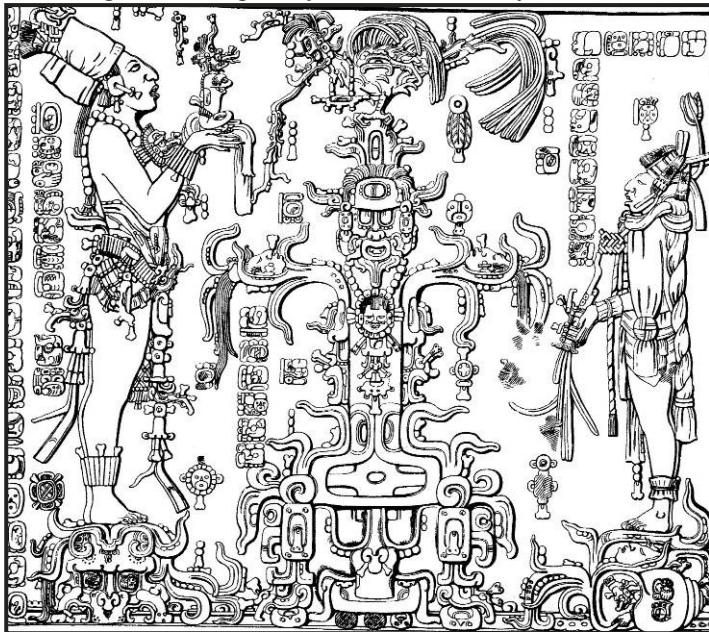


## The Meaning of the Robes *continued*



*Tablet of the Cross from Palenque*

Melchizedek priesthoods as defined in latter-day Restoration practices. In modern Restoration faiths, Aaronic priesthoods perform marriages, baptisms, collect and distribute tithes and such—they are tasked with more of the creature care. The modern Melchizedek priesthood perform the spiritual covenants of the gospel with the laying on of hands and invoking the intervention of the Holy Spirit. In the Book of Hebrews, Christ is referenced as being of the Melchizedek order, the sons of God—seemingly a higher priesthood in that it deals almost completely in the development of man’s spiritual being. Therefore, it appears as though this two-priest image is referring to the two priestly orders of sacred systems; the one



*Tablet of the Foliated Cross from Palenque*

on the left being the Aaronic priesthood because it is more robed than the one on the right; and, being more robed indicates that it deals more directly with fleshly needs.

The Tablet of the Foliated Cross demonstrates these two priests in nearly the same fashion except that they have switched positions. However, most of the clothing remains the same and therefore it is a consistent representation with some slight differentiation. Much of the change appears to have occurred with the larger priest who we have identified as representing a priest of the Melchizedek order. His apron has changed to something more ornate around the waist. This priest is interacting directly with the Celestial Bird (Christ) and apparently receiving direction, while the Aaronic priest on the right is seemingly blocked from view. But, as for the robes, they are unchanged.

Now we go to the Stone Panel of Temple XIX. Here we have the Corn God (Christ) surrounded by a huge crown with two priests kneeling beside Him. The one on the left only has a loin-cloth or apron about the waist, but the one on the right has more of a shawl draped over the upper portion of the body—he is more clothed. And, the hand of the Corn God is touching the right hand of the partially robed priest. Again, is

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*Stone Panel from Temple XIX at Palenque.*



## The Meaning of the Robes continued

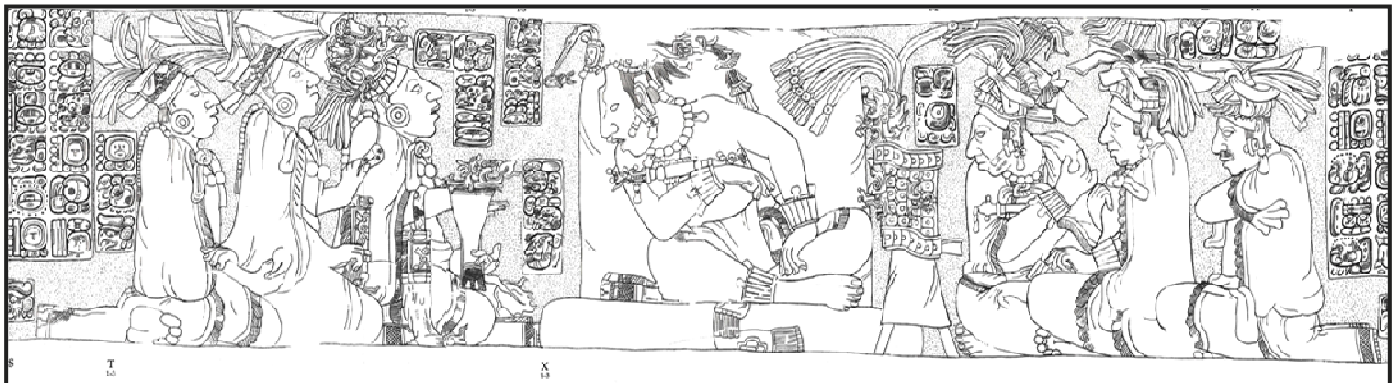
this referring to aspects of the two priesthoods? The one on the left is holding the element that surrounds the Christ and displays his glory. The lower portion of this crown is formed from a jawbone while the upper portion is ornamented with plumage and speech scrolls (incense). The lower aspects of the jawbone indicates two things; one, that the spiritual Word is spoken by the priesthood holding the jawbone, and two, that Christ is emerging from the jaws of death. Because He is emerging, He is in essence being born again as He emerges from the spiritual womb. Who then is represented by the jawbone and crown? Who is giving birth to a resurrected Christ and then working with Him to perform His resurrected work? The Sacred Feminine—the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Melchizedek priest is working intimately with the Holy Spirit to preach spiritual truths and bring forth resurrection. The two priesthoods work together to make His work complete; one to meet the needs of the physical creature and one to meet the needs of the eternal spirit.



*West Panel from Temple XIX Throne at Palenque.*

The West Panel of Temple XIX displays three figures. One each on the right and left of the central figure who is the Corn God, or Christ. There are no robes here, so this displays the spiritual aspects of life; specifically, the spiritual decisions that must be made while we journey in this realm. The only clothing here are hats, ropes, and copal bags.

Now we come to the South Panel of Temple XIX. Here is where it is very important to recognize the use of robes. Notice that we have here seven figures; three on the left, one in the middle and three on the right. Notice that both sets of three are fully robed. The shoulders are covered and they all wear leggings. All that is exposed is their head, their hands



*South Panel from Temple XIX Throne at Palenque.*

and their feet. These appendages symbolize their beliefs, the works they perform and the pathway they walk. These six figures are fully clothed! They are completely robed! Does this mean that what is being displayed here occurred while they were in the flesh?

We have identified the three on the left as the Three Magi who brought gifts to the baby Jesus. Gifts of gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, but also of kingship and priesthood. They equipped the baby Jesus with the throne of Israel and with rulership over the church. This was not just a mythical concept, but this panel is telling us that it happened while these Three Magi were in the flesh. Likewise, the three on the right we have identified as the Three Nephites who received a gift of life until Christ returns in glory. The “life over death” concept is displayed by the ninth feather of the crown touching the headdress of the first figure on the right. These three were “born again” while in the flesh as all three of them are fully robed. By “born again” I refer to the special gift of life that Christ pronounced upon them that they would not taste of death until after He returned in glory. This panel tells us an amazing fact. All six of these men interacted with the Christ while He was in their physical presence. The first three did so prior to his resurrection and the accomplishment of His crown being awarded. The last three interacted with Him after that glorious event.



*Temple XXI Throne Panel at Palenque.*

What about Temple XXI? Does this same concept continue? The center figure again is the Corn God (Christ). The two figures on the left and the two on the right are partially clothed, but not fully robed, therefore, it appears that this is referring to generic conditions. It is an illustration of when the people turn away from Christ once they have received a knowledge of Him. Their knowledge of Him is illustrated by the lotus flower on top of each fig-

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# Adventures In Scriptures

Issue 16  
2014

## Four Sons plus One

Mosiah, the King of Zarahemla, appointed Alma to be the High Priest over the whole church. The people of the land became very blessed, wealthy and numerous.

Some people called unbelievers persecuted the church. They wanted to destroy it and hurt the people that believed in God. Among those were a son of Alma (we will call Alma II) and the four sons of King Mosiah. They caused many people to doubt in the power of God by lying and deception. They also caused people to sin by leading them astray with excessive flattery and praise.

Alma poured out his heart in prayer because of his concern for the church and for his son and the four sons of Mosiah.

One day as the four sons of Mosiah and Alma II were going about trying to destroy the church and an angel visited them. He came in a cloud with a voice of thunder, causing the earth to shake where they stood. They fell to the earth in astonishment. The angel said; *“Alma, arise, and stand forth, why do you persecute the church of God? Because of the prayers of your father, I come to convince you of the power and authority of God, that his prayers might be answered according to his faith. Now I say unto you, go thy way, and seek to destroy the church no more.”*

Alma II was so overcome by the power of the angel that he could not speak or move. The people took him and laid him before his father. Alma assembled a multitude of people around him to witness what the Lord had done. He and the priests fasted and prayed for his son. After two days Alma II received his strength back and stood up and began to speaking to them. He testified that he had repented and was born again of the Spirit. Mosiah 11:97-187

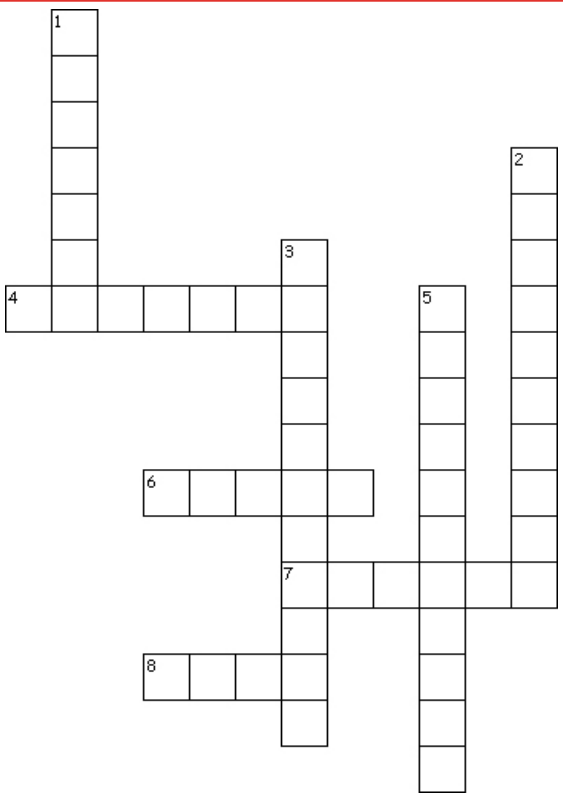
Read the letters across and fill in the blanks below to find the hidden scripture.

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# Repentance

Use the clues below to fill in the crossword



**Down**

- 1. being cleansed from sin
- 2. gift from God when someone repents
- 3. one who grants mercy or pardons
- 5. pardon or giving up anger toward someone that has hurt you

**Across**

- 4. feeling sorry for hurting someone
- 6. mercy to sinners
- 7. will to change from doing wrong to doing right
- 8. things that do not please God

Based on Acts 2:38

(if stumped, see bottom of page)

Use the pictures below to help fill in the letters to read the scripture. 2 Corinthians 5:17

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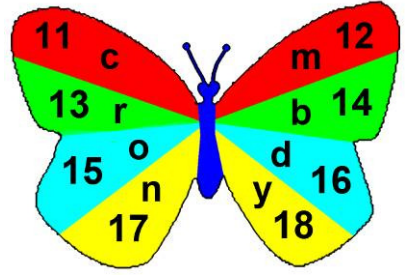
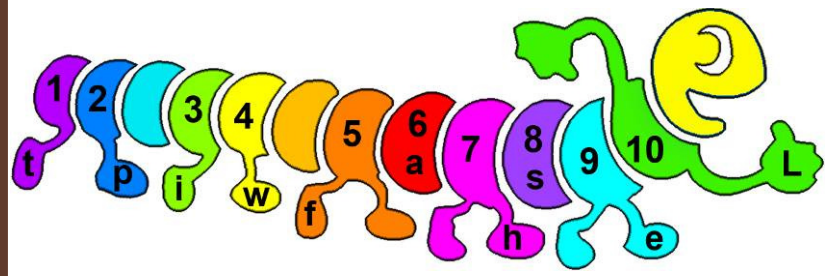
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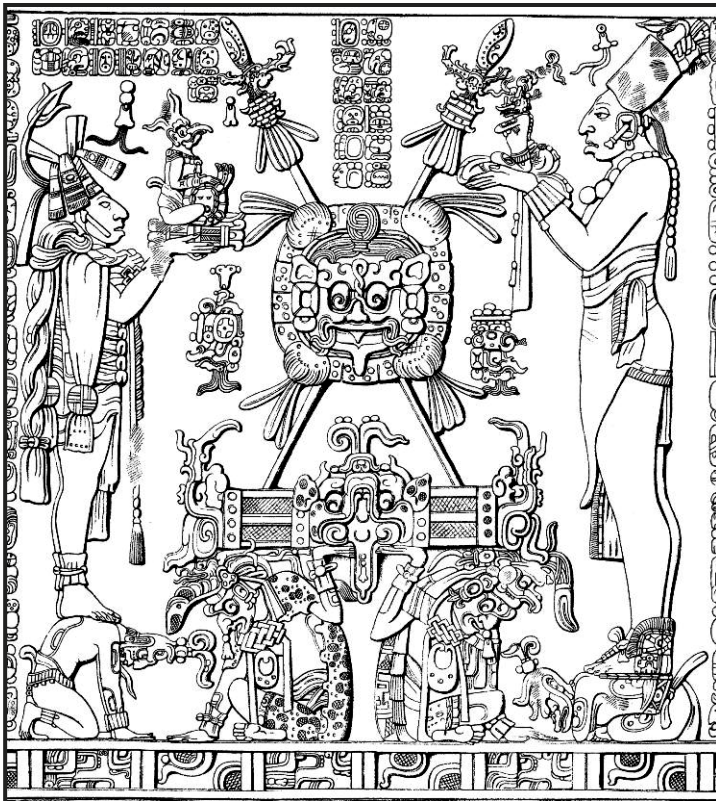
14 9 7 15 10 16    1 7 9    17 9 4    7 6 8    11 15 12 9



Sins    Repent    Grace    Forgiveness    Remorse    Jesus Christ    Holy Spirit    Baptize



## The Meaning of the Robes continued



*Tablet of the Sun from Palenque.*

ure to the right and to the left.

The last Palenque panel to consider is the Tablet of the Sun. Here we have the two priests again with the same clothing as we found in the Tablet of the Cross. The two priests have equal access to the centerpiece which is founded on two books bound together by a cross. The smaller priest on the left is more robed, but not fully. He is representing the Aaronic priesthood while the one on the right is the Melchizedek. These priests seem to be reconstituted or restored forms of the ancients upon whose backs they are now standing—these upright priests represent the Restoration. No one here is fully clothed and therefore, no one is represented in the flesh as we saw in the South Panel of Temple XIX. These are generic representations of spiritual conditions.

The question naturally follows, “Does this same concept work at other locations?” The San Bartolo Murals were painted on stucco walls somewhere around 150 to 100 BC. In the San Bartolo Murals we find that the figures are mostly generic as they tell the story of how man came to be through Creation, how the decisions we make will determine our eternal outcome and how we need to make commitment with the Corn God (Christ) if we truly want to find eternal rest. The only figure

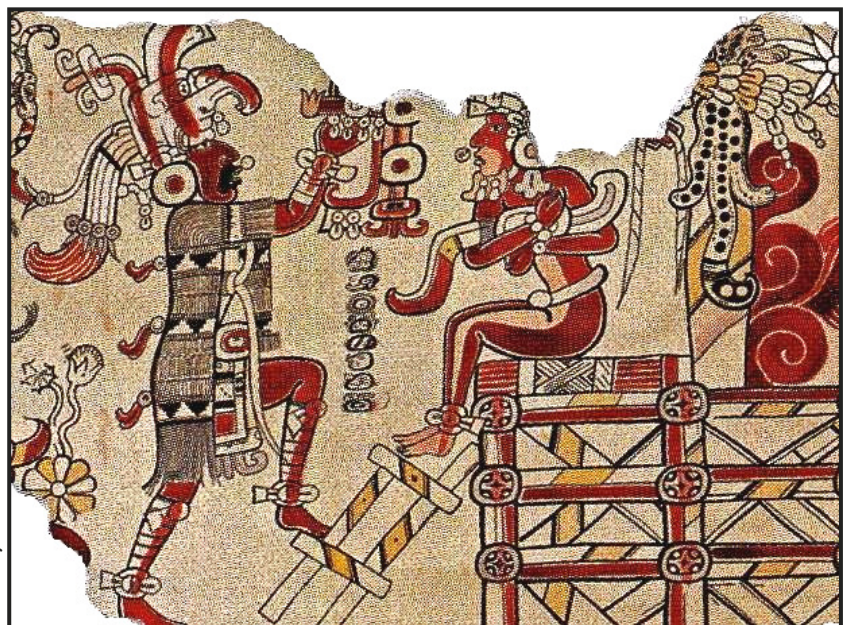
in the entire mural that is close to fully clothed is the Quetzal priest who presents the gospel to the King. Notice that he has a total of five feathers coming off the back of the bird head-dress, and that four of the feathers are bound together and the fifth is by itself. Does this refer to the four sons of Mosiah and Alma II who brought the gospel to the Kings of the Lamanites? Note that the priest’s robe has three ties on the back that touch special designs on the robe. Does this refer to the three kings who were converted to the gospel by the Nephite missionaries; Lamoni, his father who was the King of all the Lamanites and Lamoni’s brother Anti-Lehi-Nephi who succeeded his father? This mural is telling us that there were five, literal, in-the-flesh priests who brought the gospel to the kings. These kings threw off their old ways of focusing on the physical being as displayed by the jaguar robe that is behind the sitting king; they left the Jaguar religion behind them and changed to become spiritual beings who were now naked before God. Again, the priest’s robe helps us to understand that these events took place while the priests and kings were in the flesh, and that the kings symbolically discarded their robes to symbolize that the flesh was not important to them any longer—that they now focused on being naked before God and being clothed by God’s Spirit.

This important concept development on the use of robe imagery in Mayan art interpretation is only one of hundreds that need to be researched, collected and developed into a comprehensive understanding of the ancient Maya. Their concepts of life, death and the hereafter are engrained in their artwork and all we have to do is knock on the door of understanding if we want to gain entrance into their mysteries. Join us in discovering these incredible sacred works.

*Footnote:*

1. Sams, Jamie; *Sacred Path Cards*, Harper Press, San Francisco, 1990.

*King’s Mural Panel from San Bartolo*



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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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Children's Page by Terry and Chris Scott

## The Five Gifts to the Restoration continued

brass used to form these plates was not produced anciently and moreover, the inscriptions on the plates were created with acid etch, a method also considered to be unknown anciently. As far as I know, no one has ever bothered to check the actual text in recent times.

As recently as the 1980s a script was discovered that has been identified as "Iberian." It is interesting that specific characters from these plates match Iberian alphabet. Moreover, when we use the Iberian alphabet we find the names of both Abraham and Isaac. These facts imply that the prophet knew what he was talking about.

### **"Belief" versus "Proof"**

I do not know of anyone else making an attempt to "prove" all of these five gifts. There is quite a bit written about the Book of Mormon. However, most of those works ignore the system

of empirical proofs accepted by science; most of the manuscripts are opinions expressed by the authors.

Today, for the first time, scientific evidences exist for all five gifts that demonstrated historical accuracy. This state of affairs changes the spiritual/temporal arrangement for mankind. This change creates a "cause and effect" event coming into being.

### **The State of Affairs Today**

The Restoration movement was promised that even more light and truth would come forth from His Word when we passed the test of our faith and accepted what we were given. Most of these items have not only been ignored, but they have also been lost to the consciousness of the Restoration people. The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team is doing its best to make this information available to all, but due to a general lack

of interest within the faith, the work of spreading the news is going slow. Nevertheless, the "more light and truth to spread forth from His Word" is now beginning to emerge—it is amazing. We hope to share with all interested parties soon.

### *Footnotes:*

1. Steede, Neil; New Book of Mormon Archaeological Evidences, Vol. 1-3, 2014, ESRS, PO Box 4175, Independence, MO 64051.
2. Ibid.
3. Steede, Neil, The Great Pyramid, The Sphinx & Enoch, Vol. 1-6, 2009, ESRS, PO Box 4175, Independence, MO 64051.
4. Ibid.
5. Steede, Neil & others; The Curse Revisited, 2013, ESRS, PO Box 4175, Independence, MO 64051.
6. Steede, Neil; A Theory on Zelph, unpublished paper.