

The Book of Mormon

Thoughts shared with Ben Bennett

29 March 2013

This pdf file is from a planned response to the Ensign from a request in the October 2010 Ensign for a note about “a particular verse, insight, or story from the Book of Mormon which has influenced readers, specifying experiences and understandings gained as a result of the particular scripture, as a means of sharing personal experience and testimony of a Book of Mormon scripture.” The following pages are more than they asked for, and yet much less than a proper response to the request calls for. Based on feedback from those who proofed this, I did not submit it. I divided my response into 16 “responselets,” which in my mind The Ensign was welcome to select from, to use as a serial response, to otherwise publish as they wanted to, or to ignore.

Those I showed these notes to each told me this writing does not fit the profile of an Ensign article. The written comment I received said: “I think you would have a difficult time getting it published by the church because it’s kind of out there and the church just doesn’t do that. I think you’ve got some very interesting ideas, but they might be too progressive for a church publication.” As a seismic interpreter, I always strive to go where the data leads. My thought is that the church does not give credence to any theories of Book of Mormon geography. What better way to demonstrate this neutrality than publishing examples of one person’s study of the Book of Mormon? What better way to encourage others to study and find out new things about this jewel we know as The Book of Mormon, than by giving an example of someone who has? I’m a geophysicist, not a Book of Mormon scholar. Although well known in my profession, I prefer to stay in the background. I do not have a lot invested in this note, have no need to have my name on the article, and it just felt right to send in some of the things I have found reading The Book of Mormon when I read the October Ensign request. Did not feel the same after the comments from reviewers.

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In the early 1990's the Young Men's President in our ward (Ron Burger, who is now serving a senior mission with his wife Linda in Russia) started an annual challenge for our youth to read The Book of Mormon over the summer. Working with the youth, it seemed important to me to join the challenge in order to be an example. This reading challenge has been repeated many summers since. I had a testimony of the value and truthfulness of The Book of Mormon before these summer readings. However, each reading has resulted in new insights, positively impacting my life again and again and again. The following 15 specific examples are selected because, since discovering them for myself, I have neither seen nor heard them discussed nor presented as either a proof nor a witness of the truthfulness of The Book of Mormon. In my mind and heart each of these 15 examples provide insights and testimony, much like chiasmus¹ do for me and for some others interested in logic and independent evidence. Of course, the only sure and lasting testimony comes through The Holy Ghost.

1. Family. Joseph Smith identified simple concepts, far beyond his age and experience, in his translation of The Book of Mormon. For instance in 2 Nephi 1:28 the verse includes, "and also **my sons** who are the sons of Ishmael." We have four son-in-law. As I watch them take care of my daughters and step-daughters and their children, there is no question I feel these men who have come into my life are now my sons. I'm 63 years old, and I am just now realizing the truth of this simple phrase in the Book of Mormon. This phrase was translated when Joseph Smith was newly married, 24, and had a relatively new brother-in-law (Sophronia married Calvin Stoddard on 2 December 1828²). Jewels like this phrase bear witness to me of the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's claims of being God's messenger.
2. Snow. As a oil exploration geophysicist, I tend to accept physical descriptions in The Book of Mormon as facts. For instance, the only place in the Book of Mormon referring to snow is in I Nephi 11:8, which comes before Lehi's family's 8 years of travel in the wilderness and while Lehi still lived in a tent in the valley of Laman. The verse includes "... the Spirit said unto me: Look! And I looked and beheld a tree; and it was like unto the tree which my father had seen; and the beauty thereof was far beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty; and the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow." I grew up on a farm north of Cedar City, Utah where it snows every winter. Joseph Smith grew up in Vermont and New York where it snows each winter. We take the snow for granted. Although Joseph asked Emma if Jerusalem had walls,³ there is no known record he asked if it snows in Jerusalem. How many today know

¹Research and Perspectives: Hebrew Literary Patterns in the Book of Mormon, Donald W. Parry, Ensign, October 1989 (<http://lds.org>)

²What were Joseph Smith's sisters like, and what happened to them after the martyrdom?, Richard Lloyd Anderson, "I Have a Question," Ensign, Mar. 1979, 42-45 (<http://lds.org>).

³A Treasured Testament, Elder Russell M. Nelson, Ensign, July 1993 (<http://lds.org>)

the elevation of Jerusalem, and that it snows in Jerusalem sometimes? I see this as a simple example Joseph Smith did not author The Book of Mormon. Why is snow not mentioned elsewhere in The Book of Mormon?

3. Topography. There are 12 references to going “up” to Jerusalem and 12 references to going “down” to the land or their inheritance or to the tent of Lehi between I Nephi 2:5 and I Nephi 7:22. This type of consistent geographic detail is repeated through out The Book of Mormon. For instance, there is no question the Land of Nephi is “up” from the Land of Zarahemla (which is “down” from the Land of Nephi). In my studying of The Book of Mormon, I have felt an influence outside of myself “say” to me “this demonstrates truth. This is interesting to me, and demonstrates an internal consistency, which I find common in true scripture. Yet again, followed by another question: “Is up related to topography or to geography or both?”

4. Old Testament Geography. Quoting from a book I have about the Bible: “Archaeologists have uncovered many ancient maps of the Bible lands. ... Based on these finds, as well as from references in the Bible, it is clear that ancient people oriented their directions differently from the way we do. When we (and also Joseph Smith, *my insertion*) look at a map, unless stated otherwise, we assume north is at the top. For Ancient Near Eastern cartographers, the top of the map was east. So when we are told in Genesis 4:23, ‘So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt,’ this reflects an ancient orientation where the western trek across the Sinai Peninsula from Israel would have looked like going down on a map. Likewise, when Joseph’s brothers return in Genesis 45:25, it is said that ‘they went up out of Egypt,’ reflecting the same orientation.”⁴

Joseph Smith could not have known of this ancient geographic orientation when translating how Nephi and his brethren went “up to Jerusalem” and “down to the tent of Lehi.” It is reasonable to assume Joseph Smith had little concept of the elevation changes between the Red Sea and Jerusalem or Bethlehem. For instance, the traditional 17th Century Hymn “I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In,” talks about three ships sailing into Bethlehem,⁵ which is landlocked at about 775 meters (2,543 ft) above sea level. There are interesting implications if Joseph Smith translated maps rotated counterclockwise 90 degrees as not being rotated. When Lehi and his family travelled south-southeast from their camp by the River Laman for four days⁶, and then twice “for many days”⁷ they would have been been traveling west-southwest. Then when they travelled “eastward from

⁴Biblica - The Bible Atlas, Global Book Publishing, 575 pages, 2006, Ancient Maps insert, page 36

⁵http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/i_saw_three_ships.htm

⁶I Nephi 16:13

⁷I Nephi 16:15 and 33

that time forth”⁸ for 8 years⁹ they would have been traveling south. This interpretation places the seashore at Irreantum¹⁰ in South Africa, where there is plenty of ore to make tools¹¹ and gold plates. It also gives them access to ocean currents which would take a ship to where Columbus found the seed of Nephi’s brethern.¹², as shown in Figure 1.

There are examples in the Old Testament which show east is east and west is west. For instance, east is tied to the rising sun,¹³ and west is referenced as the border of the great sea.¹⁴ However, there is a difference between translating from a map or heiroglyphics of a map and translating from geographical descriptions.

5. Twins. Nephi refers to “my elder brothers, who were Laman, Lemuel, and Sam,”¹⁵ and a few verses later focuses this definition referring to “Laman and Lemuel being the eldest.”¹⁶ Later Nephi spoke to Laman and Lemuel saying “Behold **ye are mine elder brethern**.”¹⁷ Both Laman’s and Lemuel’s children were given exactly the same blessing by Lehi, after he referred to Laman as his first-born¹⁸ and Lemuel as his second son.¹⁹ Then Laman and Lemuel state they will not have Nephi be their ruler, “for it belongs unto **us, who are the elder brethern** to rule over this people.”²⁰ Remember, Sam is also an elder brother. Is it possible the difference from elder brother Sam and the reason for Laman and Lemuel having a consistent belief in their right to joint rule is because they were twins and shared the patriarchal right?

If so, could there be a relationship to the aboriginal American myths of hero twins? “The Heroes of Maya myth were twins. In the seventeenth-century Popol Vuh myth, they were called Hanahpu and Xbalanque. The names most securely associated with them in the Classic period are Hun-Ahau and Yax-Balam. In the version of the myth preserved in the Popol Vuh, these twins were the offspring of an older set of twins who had been called to Xibalba for making too much noise playing the ballgame. Named Hun-Hunahpu and Vucub-Hunahpu, these older twins were tricked by the Lords of Death, defeated, and sacrificed.”²¹ The Book of Hopi describes

⁸I Nephi 17:1

⁹I Nephi 17:4

¹⁰I Nephi 17:5

¹¹I Nephi 17:9

¹²I Nephi 13:1

¹³Numbers 2:3 and Joshua 12:1

¹⁴Numbers 34:6 and Joshua 15:12

¹⁵I Nephi 2:5

¹⁶I Nephi 2:12

¹⁷I Nephi 7:8

¹⁸II Nephi 4:3

¹⁹II Nephi 4:9

²⁰II Nephi 5:3

²¹A Forest of Kings - The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya, Linda Schele and David Feidel, 542 pages, William Morrow and Company, New York, NY, 1990, page 74.

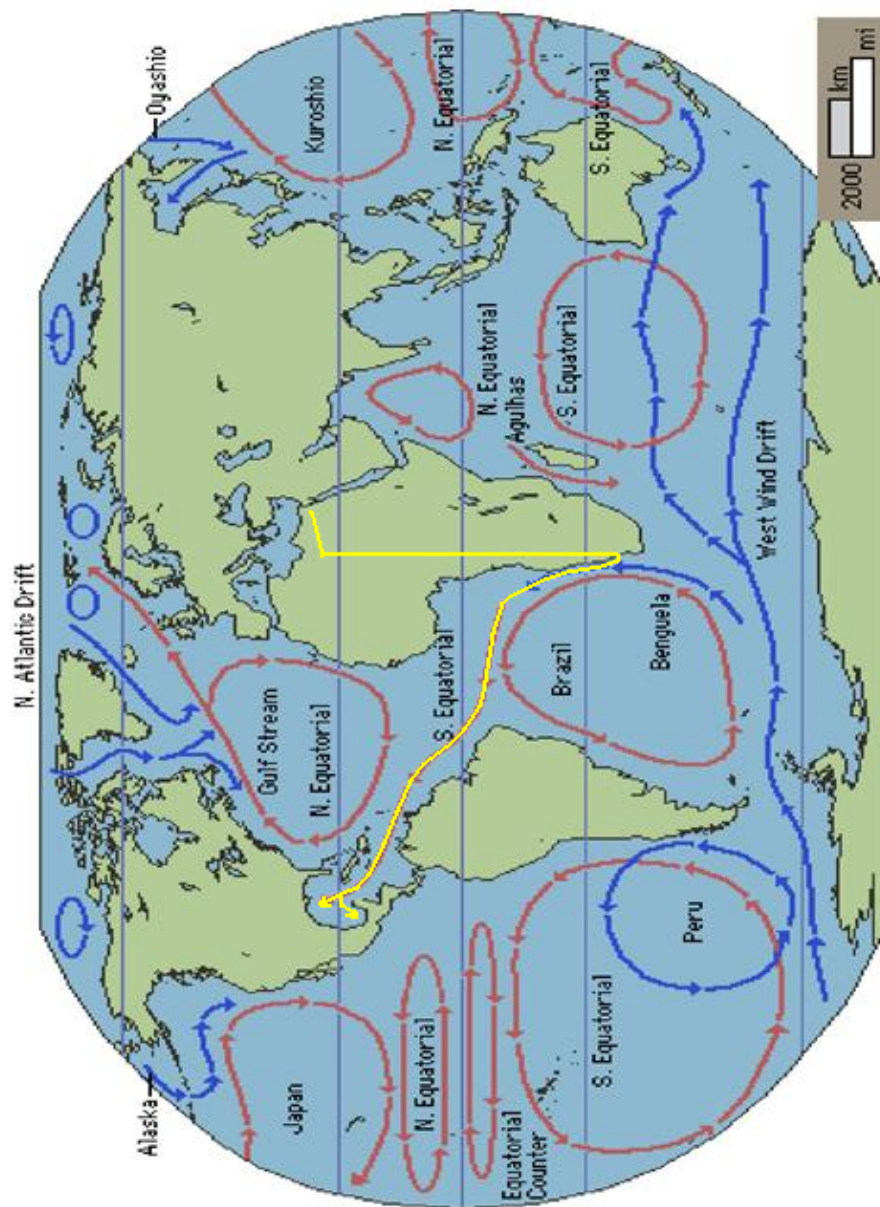


Figure 1: Ocean Currents on map rotated so East is Up

the Hopi Hero Twins.²² Diné bahane' - The Navajo Creation Story describes the birth of two sets of twins involved in the beginning of the Navajo nation.²³ The companion myth crossing most ancient American cultures is called the tree of life. The tree of life is fully discussed in I Nephi 8, 10, and 11. Myths often are rooted in fact, and I find it inspirational The Book of Mormon can easily be interpreted to explain the roots of key myths in ancient America, which myths were not widely known until well after the 1830 publication.

6. Decapitation. In the book "A Forest of Kings" we learn "From the myth of the Hero Twins came three great axioms that appear repeatedly in the imagery of Classic Maya religion and politics. First, the Hero of the Maya vision did not overpower his enemies: He outwitted them. In the myth, the Twins tricked the Lords of Death into submitting to sacrifice. Secondly, resurrection and rebirth came through sacrifice - especially death by decapitation. The Hero Twins were conceived when the severed head of their father spit into the hand of their mother. They defeated death by submitting to decapitation and sacrifice. Finally, the place of confrontation and communication was the ballcourt."²⁴ The ballcourt and the ball, which represents a decapitated head, are the common theme across the Mayan culture and is the basis of the archaeologically everpresent ball courts. The description of Nephi's decapitation of Laban²⁵ provides another unique relationship between Mesoamerican mythology and The Book of Mormon.
7. Book of Mormon Geography. The book "A Forest of Kings" also includes "for the Maya, the principal axis of the Middleworld was the path of the sun as it moved from east to west on its daily journey. Each direction of the compass had a special tree, a bird, a color, gods associated with its domain, and rituals associated with those gods. East was red and the most important direction since it was where the sun was born. North, sometimes called the 'side of heaven,' was white and the direction from which the cooling rains of winter came. It was also the direction of the north star around which the sky pivots. West, the leaving or dying place of the sun, was black. South was yellow and was considered to be the right-hand of the great side of the sun. In the Maya conception east, not north, should always be at the top of maps."²⁶ Correlating this characteristic of Mesoamerican maps with Old Testament Maps provides a new view of one possible Book of Mormon geography, as shown in Figure 2. I

²²The Book of Hopi, Frank Waters, 345 pages, Penguin Books, New York, NY, 1972, pages 72-86.

²³Diné bahane' - The Navajo Creation Story, Paul G. Zolbrod, 431 pages, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 1984, Part 1, Chapter 7.

²⁴A Forest of Kings - The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya, Linda Schele and David Feidel, 542 pages, William Morrow and Company, New York, NY, 1990, page 76.

²⁵I Nephi 4:6-19

²⁶A Forest of Kings - The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya, Linda Schele and David Feidel, 542 pages, William Morrow and Company, New York, NY, 1990, page 66.

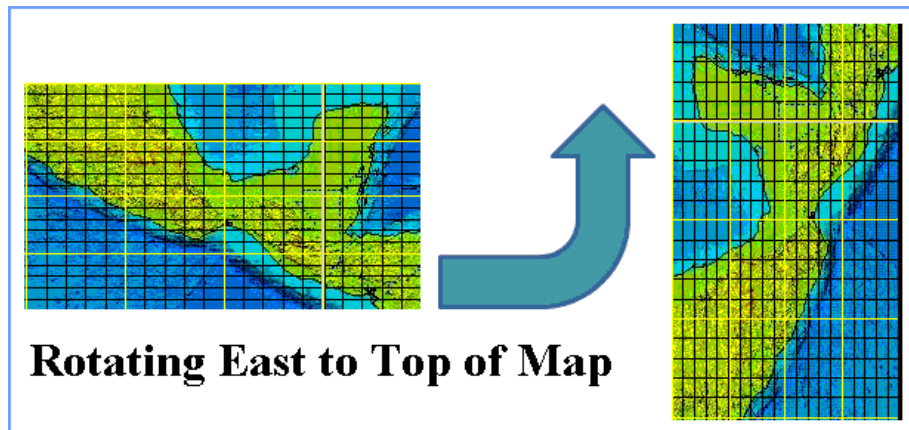


Figure 2: Rotating Mesoamerica so East is Up

personally find the correlation of this rotated Mesoamerican geography with the rotated geography of the Old Testament testimony building.

8. East Wind (south wind, if a ancient map rotation was not taken into account in translation). King Limhi was proably quoting Abinadi when he referred to the east wind and said "... If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the east wind, which bringeth immediate destruction."²⁷ A few chapters after King Limhi's quote and about 27 years earlier, when Abinadi testified against Limhi father, King Noah and his Priests, Abinadi said: "And it shall come to pass that I will send forth hail among them, and it shall smite them; and they shall also be smitten with the east wind, and insects shall pester their land also, and devour their grain."²⁸ Abinadi was either quoting an Old Testament references to the east wind,²⁹ or referring to a natural phenomena that occurred "up" in the land of Lehi-Nephi if this is where they lived.³⁰ We have no scientific reason to think Hurricanes in the Americas were different in Book of Mormon times than they are now. Figure 3 shows five years of hurricanes posted on a rotated map of the Gulf of Mexico. Of the 37 hurricanes mapped, 9 reached higher elevation regions like the land of Lehi-Nephi most likely was (because The Book of Mormon always refers to going up to this land). It seems logical that mapping and plotting all historical hurricanes and integrating the resulting patterns with other subtle geographic data in the text will give additional insights. This is especially so if The Book of Mormon is the inspired ancient record I and millions of others claim it to be.

9. Volcanoes. Some of us conclude the great storm before Jesus came to

²⁷ Mosiah 7:32

²⁸ Mosiah 12:6

²⁹ Genesis 41:6, 41:23, 41:27; Exodus 10:13, 14:21; Job 15:2, 27:21, 38:24; Psalms 48:7, 78:26; Isaiah 28:8; Jeremiah 18:17; Ezekial 17:10, 19:12, 27:26; Hosea 12:1, 13:15; Johan 4:8;

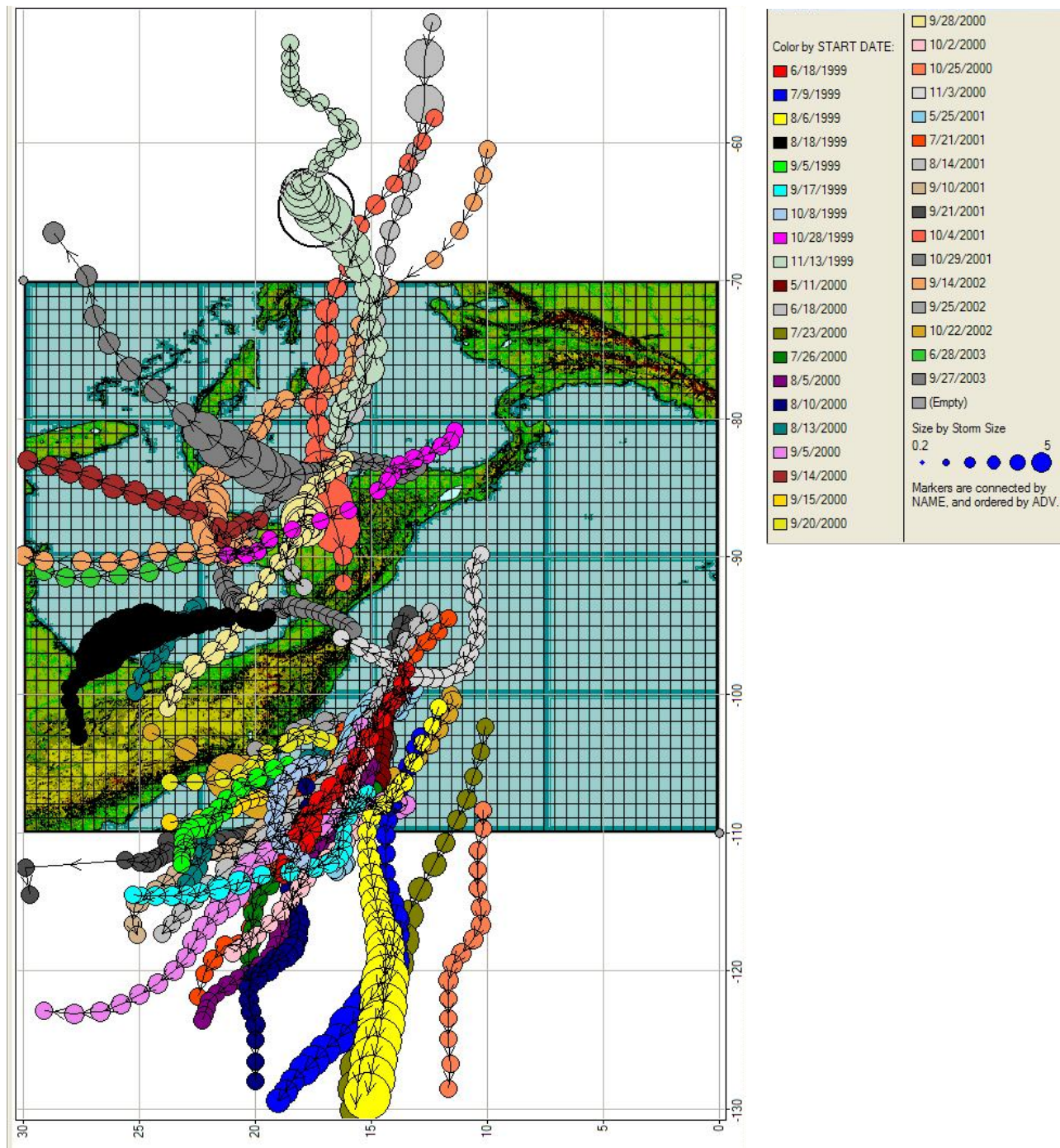


Figure 3: Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico 18 Jun 1999 to 27 Sep 2003

Bountiful³¹ was due to pyroclastic volcanic flow.³² There is evidence for large eruptions, within the margin of error, for the period of AD 30 to 40 based on sulphur in ice cores from Greenland and Antarctica.³³ Ice cores do not give any estimate of geographic location. However, over the last 150 years geologists have located known quaternary volcanoes worldwide.³⁴ Mapping these volcanoes provides a framework for where the events in III Nephi most likely occurred. Figure 4 shows the location of known recent volcanic activity within cells 1° longitude and 0.5° latitude. This map implies the events in III Nephi were more likely to have occurred in Mesoamerica than in the north central portion of the United States if the vapors of smoke associated with Christ's visit were of volcanic origin.

10. Famine. When Nephi, the son of Helaman, calls for a famine to replace war between 19 and 17 B.C., The Book of Mormon refers to it as a great famine among all the people of Nephi where thousands perish among the Lamanites and among the Nephites.³⁵ Famines which have this type of impact are recorded in tree rings and lake sediments. Realizing this during one summer reading of The Book of Mormon, I did an Internet search and came up with an article which described climate conditions during the last 3,000 years as measured by sediment core chemistry.³⁶ These measurements were from Lake Chichancanab on the northeastern Yucatán peninsula, and I expect there are similar dendrochronology (tree ring studies) at other possible geographic locations of Book of Mormon events. Figure 5 shows a significant drought about the time of Christ, which correlates with Nephi's famine and with the subsequent recorded probable volcanic activity. When I saw this chart, the spirit bore witness to my heart there is much more we can and will learn about and from The Book of Mormon over the coming decades because it is a true book.
11. Geology. There is an absolutely fascinating phrase in the middle of II Nephi 1:10 where the scripture referring to modern times says "... **after** they have received so great a blessing from the hand of the Lord - **having a**

or Habakkuk 1:9.

³⁰Mosiah 7:1

³¹III Nephi 8:10

³²Bart J. Kowallis, "In the Thirty and Fourth Year: A Geologist's View of the Great Destruction in 3 Nephi," *BYU Studies* 37/3 (1997-98): 183-84.

³³Volcanic Destruction in the Book of Mormon: Possible Evidence from Ice Cores Benjamin R. Jordan *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: Volume - 12, Issue - 1, Pages: 78-87 Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 2003.

³⁴Volcanoes of the World - A regional directory, gazetteer, and chronology of volcanism during the last 10,000 years, Tom Simkin, Lee Siebert, Lindsay McClelland, David Bridge, Christopher Newhall, and John H. Latter, Hutchinson Ross Publishing Company, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, 1981.

³⁵Helaman 11:4-6

³⁶Population, Development, and Environment on the Yucatán Peninsula: From Ancient Maya to 2030, Wolfgang Lutz, Leonel Prieto, and Warren Sanderson, RR-00-14, July 2000, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria, page 16 <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Admin/PUB/Documents/RR-00-014.pdf>

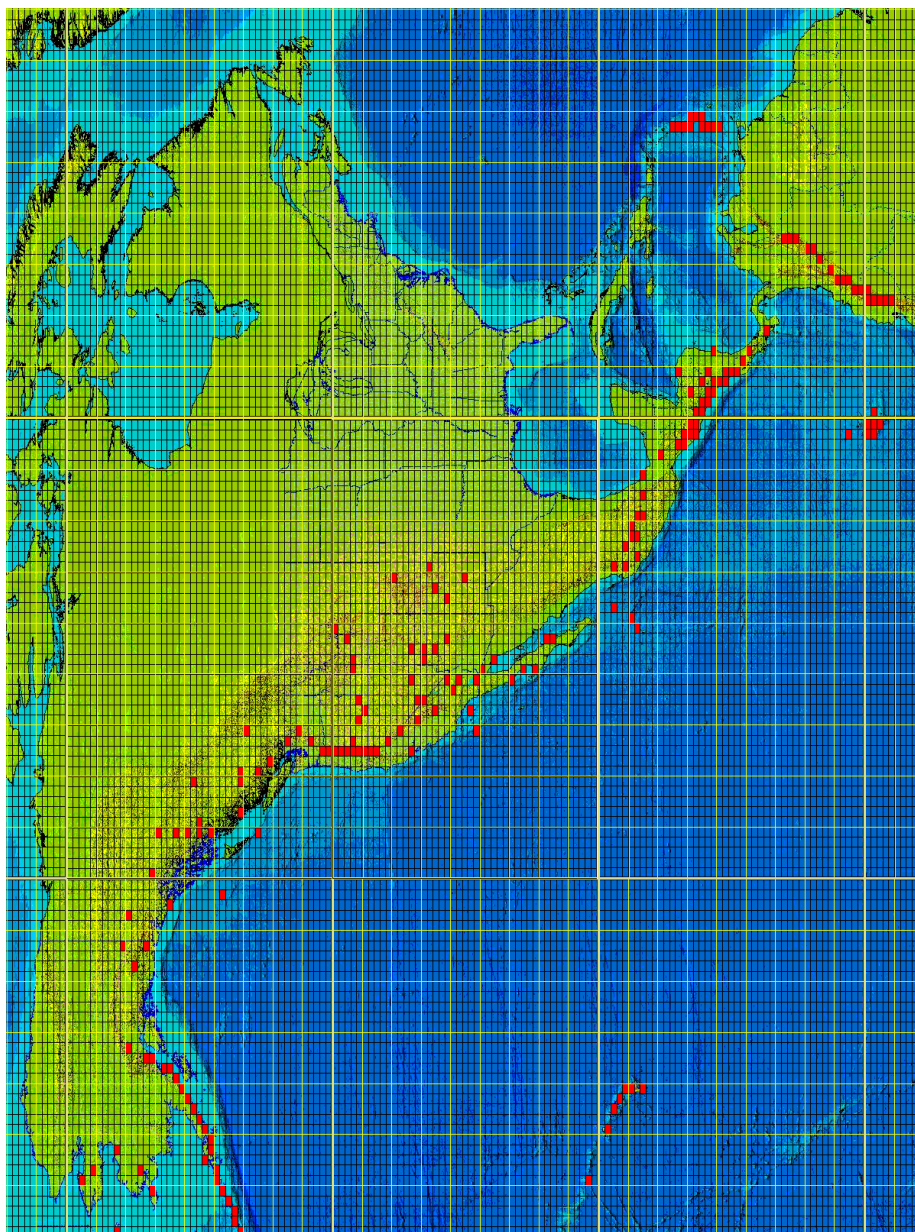


Figure 4: North America rotated so East is Up

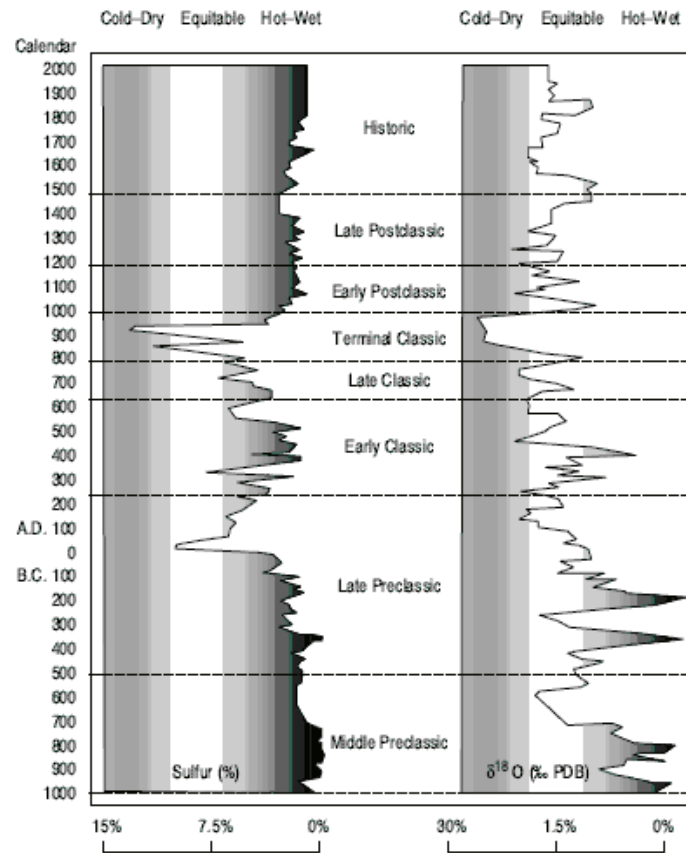


Figure 1.5. Climate conditions during the last 3,000 years as measured by sediment core chemistry from Lake Chichancanab, northeastern Yucatán peninsula. High sulfur (left) and ostracod oxygen 18 isotope (right) during the Terminal Classic and other periods indicate extreme evaporation or drought. Maya civilization appears to have flourished during equitable (center of each profile) episodes, and periodically retracted during periods of extreme drought (left of each profile) or moisture (right of each profile). Source: Gunn *et al.*, 1994, 1995; Chichancanab chemistry adapted from Hodell *et al.*, 1995:393.

Figure 5: Significant Drought About Time of Christ's Birth from Lake Sediment Chemistry

knowledge of the creation of the earth, ... William Smith published his famous map of the geology of England and the first of a four-part work titled “Strata Identified by Organized Fossils” in 1816, initiating modern geologic studies.³⁷ As a geologist, I find it truly inspirational the Book of Mormon was published with this fascinating phrase less than 14 years after William Smith’s work was published a world away and well before the importance of this information could have been available in rural western New York. In my career I have had the opportunity to watch impact of the discovery and acceptance of plate tectonics. I have worked closely with Dr. Peter Vail and several of the Exxon Production Research geologists who discovered how ice ages pile ocean water on the poles as ice caps, causing a sea level fall, and when the glaciers melt sea level rise of over 300 feet. As sea level falls, gas hydrates melt, putting methane in the atmosphere, which heats up the atmosphere and melts the ice caps. As sea levels fall and rise, river and beach sands form patterns which are now mathematically modeled and which we find throughout the geologic record in outcrop and on seismic sections. **We truly do now have a knowledge of the creation of the earth.** And as the beginning and end of the same verse says, today is also the time when people dwindle in unbelief, rejecting the Holy One of Israel.³⁸ This simple example provides an indisputable testimony of the divine source of The Book of Mormon in my mind and heart.

12. Interpretation. In geophysics, finding correlation does not mean causality. As an armature historian and archaeologist, I am not saying the above patterns and examples define Book of Mormon geography. While members of the church recognize the only proof of the truthfulness of The Book of Mormon is a spiritual witness, publication of The Joseph Smith Papers and modern scientific discoveries are going to create entirely new conversations about Joseph Smith’s work and The Book of Mormon. Seeing the current debate on The Book of Mormon geography from Texas, a long way away from Salt Lake City and Provo, it sometimes seems the controversy is generated to sell tours, seminar participation, books, and videos. Given data and patterns, correlations will emerge, Some of these correlations will define causality, and some theories will travel down dead end paths. Recognize the richness of the modern conversations confirm the divine origins of The Book of Mormon, and will eventually help us actually unravel the geographic context of The Book of Mormon. In the meantime, we need to insure our opinions and conversations do not distract those tender in the faith from seeking a spiritual confirmation of the work. In the meantime we can collect the data and look for patterns and correlations and especially spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of this book of scripture. As God taught through Nephi, “... for my work is not yet finished; neither

³⁷The Map That Changed the World - William Smith and the Birth of Modern Geology, Simon Winchester, Perennial, 2001, New York, NY, page 250

³⁸II Nephi 1:10

shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible (or a Book of Mormon geography opinion) ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written.”³⁹ I believe these words are written in the tree rings and lake sediments and volcanic flows of actual Book of Mormon geography, and I have a spiritual certainty this will be indisputably demonstrated over the coming decades.

13. Godhead. By my count there are 2,591 references to God, 4,932 references to Christ, 303 references to The Holy Ghost, 223 references to angels, and 259 references to Satan or other gods in the Book of Mormon (Figure 6). These numbers can be compared to 903 reference to God, 5,030 references to Christ, 227 references to The Holy Ghost, 269 references to angels, and 142 references to Satan or other gods in The Doctrine & Covenants (Figure 7); or 476 reference to God, 825 references to Christ, 145 references to The Holy Ghost, 135 references to angels, and 141 references to Satan and other gods in The Pearl of Great Price and The Articles of faith (Figure 8); or 2,180 references to God, 6,964 references to Christ, 297 references to The Holy Ghost, 386 references to angels, and 492 references to Satan and other gods in The New Testament (Figure 9); or 4,138 references to God, 16,369 references to Christ (the Lord), 145 references to The Holy Ghost, 567 references to angels, and 947 references to Satan or other gods in The Old Testament (Figure 10). These references clearly define the gender of God and Christ and angels and Satan (he, him, himself, and his)⁴⁰, as well as their physical characteristics. Just referring to references in First and Second Nephi, we learn they have a head to remember with⁴¹, ears⁴², eyes⁴³, a mouth⁴⁴, lips⁴⁵, a face⁴⁶, a backside for sitting⁴⁷, an arm⁴⁸, a hand⁴⁹, palms⁵⁰, a finger⁵¹, loins⁵², gender⁵³, legs for standing⁵⁴, feet⁵⁵, all of which define the presence of the Lord⁵⁶. In otherwords, the simple concepts our Primary Children recognize as truth when we teach them

³⁹II Nephi 29:3-10

⁴⁰about 190 references in I Nephi alone, e.g. 3:7, 7:12, 10:11, 1:9

⁴¹I Nephi 9:15

⁴²II Nephi 15:9

⁴³I Nephi 21:5

⁴⁴I Nephi 13:41

⁴⁵II Nephi 21:4

⁴⁶II Nephi 9:38

⁴⁷I Nephi 1:8

⁴⁸I Nephi 20:15

⁴⁹I Nephi 5:14

⁵⁰I Nephi 31:16

⁵¹II Nephi 3:17

⁵²II Nephi 21:5

⁵³I Nephi 1:8

⁵⁴I Nephi 1:11

⁵⁵I Nephi 11:24

⁵⁶I Nephi 2:21

The First Article of Faith⁵⁷ or that God and the resurrected Christ have a body just as we do.⁵⁸

14. Temple Pattern. I was once told the temple ordinances can not be true because they are not mentioned in The Book of Mormon, and vice-versa. One summer I read the Book of Mormon noting places where I saw the same pattern we learn in the endowment about 20 times. The next summer I generalized my search, and I found 78 recognizable segments from the endowment. During the summer of 1994 I generalized again and read a facsimile of the first printing of The Book of Mormon looking for consecutive concepts. I found 553 consecutive subsets of the following 18 word pattern⁵⁹(Figure 1):

- (a) the creation;
- (b) Adam and Eve;
- (c) scriptures;
- (d) faith;
- (e) repentance;
- (f) baptism;
- (g) The Holy Ghost;
- (h) authority;
- (i) the alter;
- (j) the temple;
- (k) Satan;
- (l) pride;
- (m) chastity;
- (n) commandments;
- (o) redemption;
- (p) Christ's atonement;
- (q) God's rest; and
- (r) prayer.

15. Spatial Language. The language of The Book of Mormon consists of a lot of run on sentences. As a seismic interpreter I am much more comfortable working with pictures of subsurface geology, than lists of words. One summer I was introduced to a book that describes how the complexity

⁵⁷We believe in God, the eternal Father, and in his son, Jesus Christ, and in The Holy Ghost

⁵⁸Doctrine & Covenants 130:22

⁵⁹I started to document this at http://www.walden3d.com/bom/word_pattern/ and http://www.walden3d.com/bom/word_pattern/statistics.html, but let myself get distracted and have not got back to this project

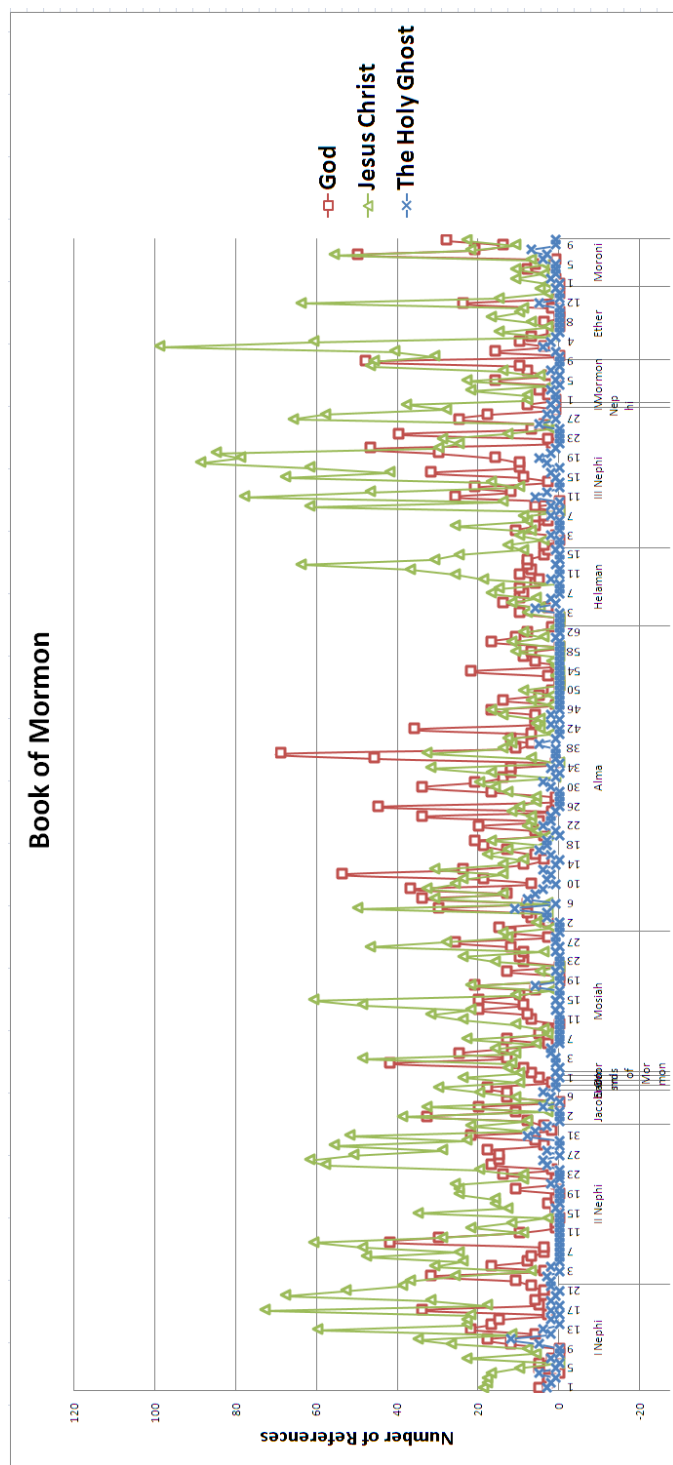


Figure 6: Book of Mormon references to God, Christ, and The Holy Ghost

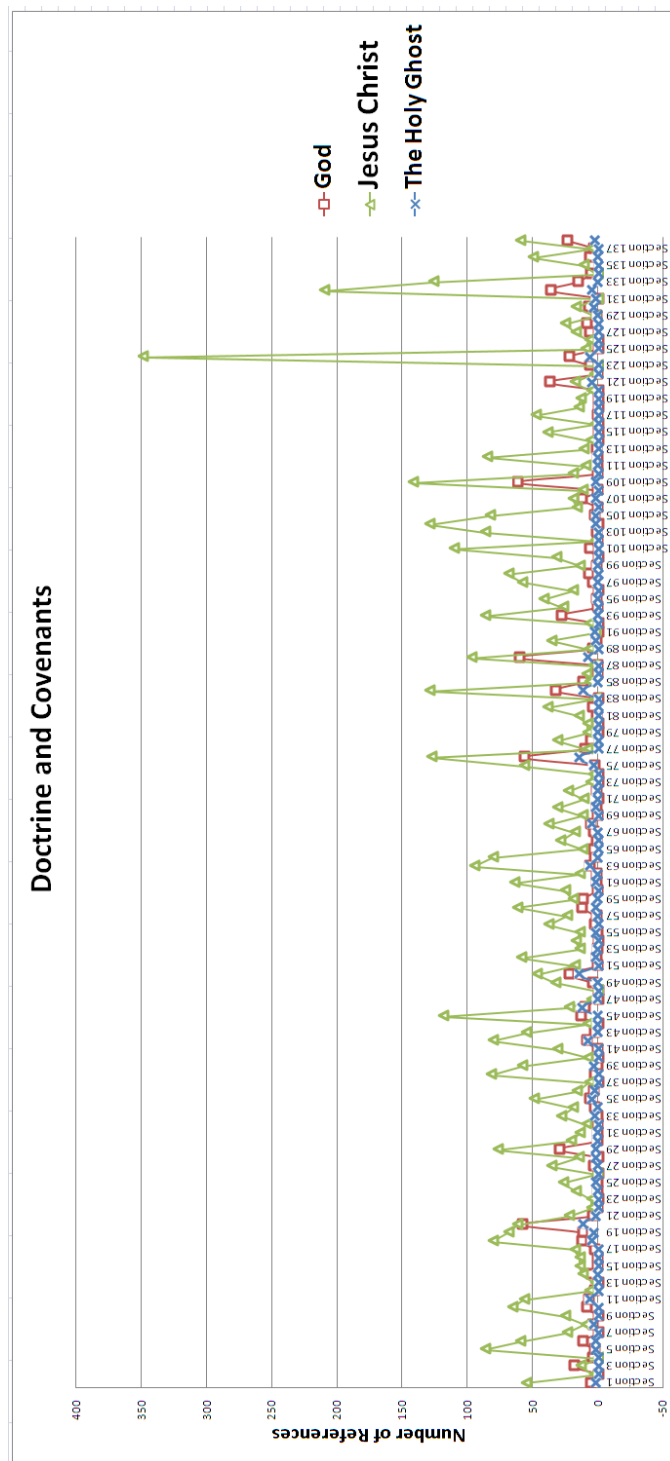


Figure 7: D&C references to God, Christ, and The Holy Ghost

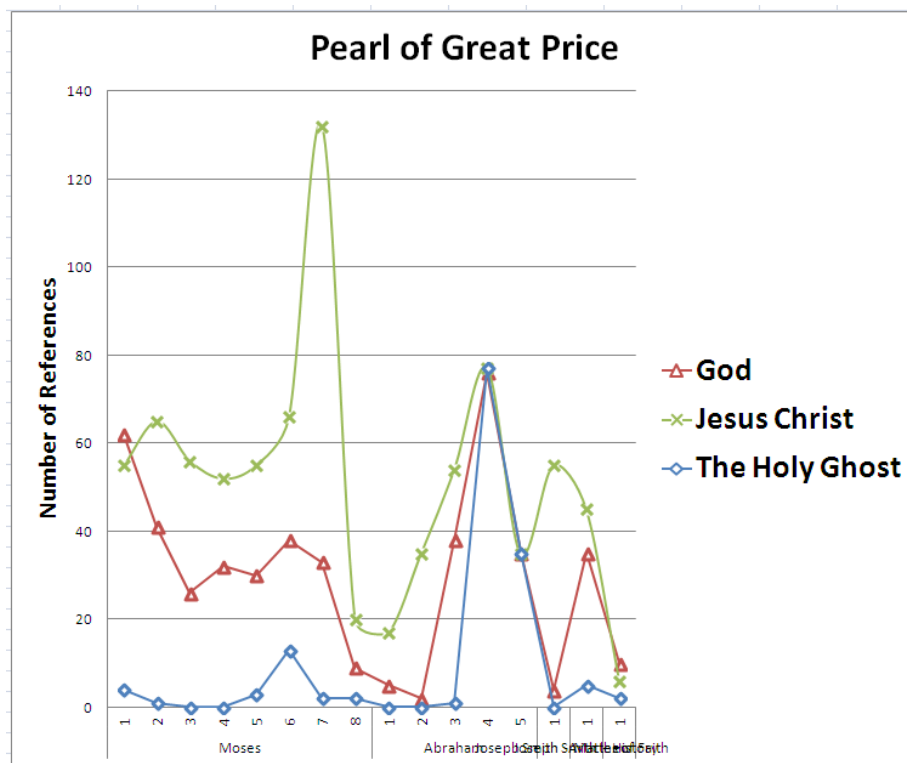


Figure 8: Pearl of Great Price & Articles of Faith references to God, Christ, and The Holy Ghost

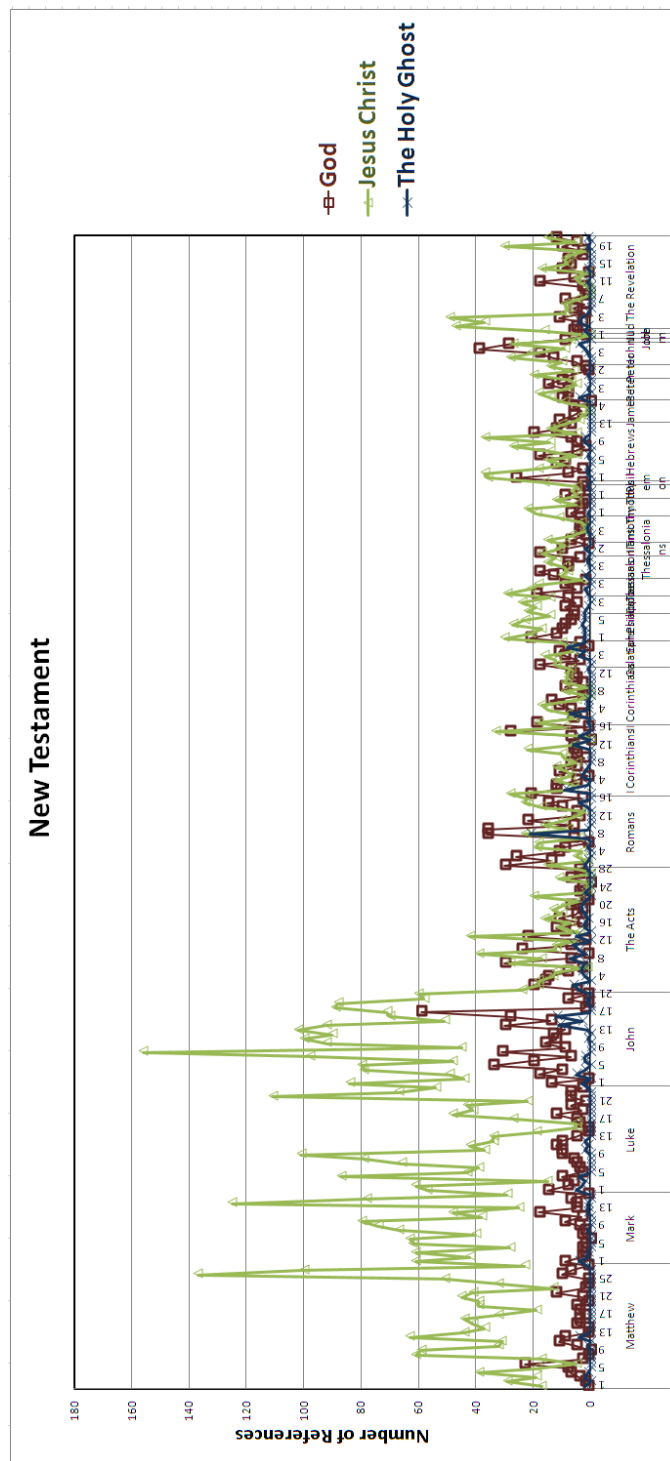


Figure 9: New Testament references to God, Christ, and The Holy Ghost

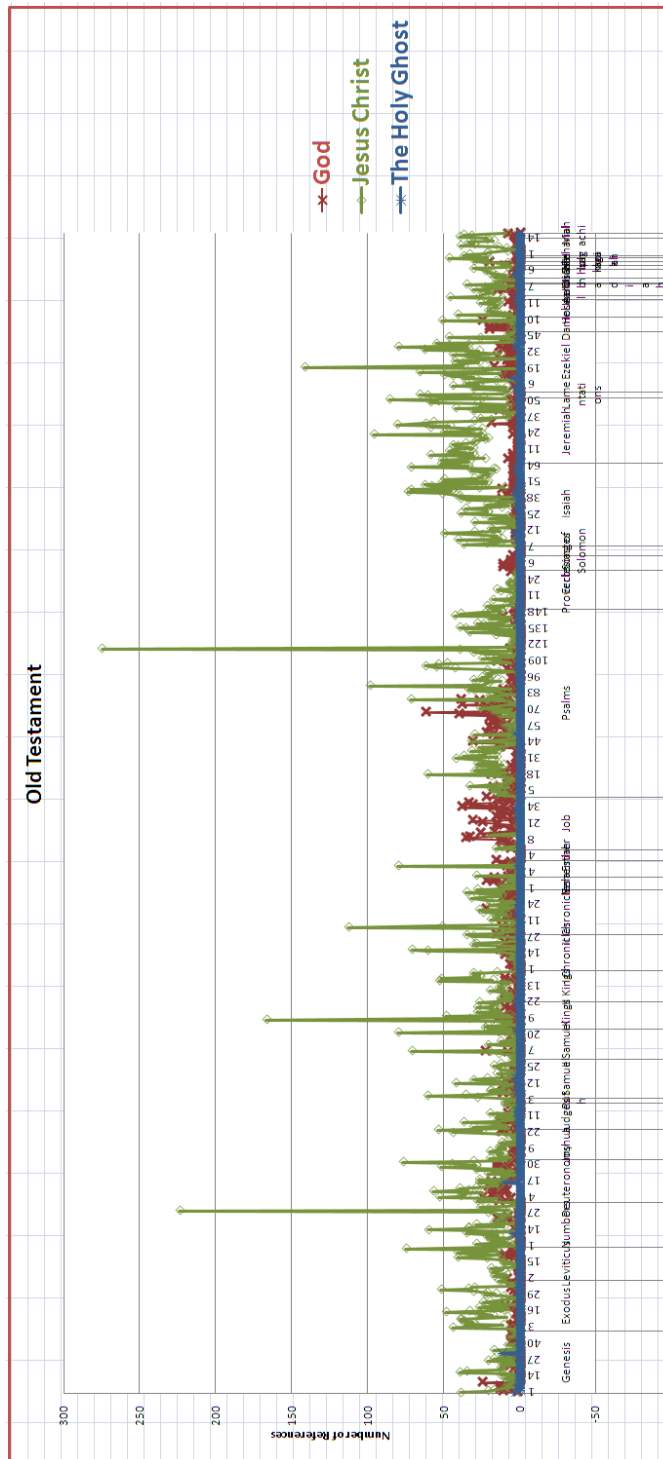
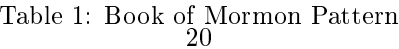


Figure 10: Old Testament references to God, Christ, and The Holy Ghost



of an individuals language describes their capability.⁶⁰ As I studied The Book of Mormon lists, I started to see a completely different pattern. I accept as a fact The Book of Mormon was written in the language of the Egyptians,⁶¹ and this has been referred to as a form of hieroglyphics. One March my wife and I visited the ruins at Palenque, Edzna, and Calakmul in Southern Mexico. I was struck with how the hieroglyphics take up space, and each hieroglyphic has a similar size. As I was reading The Book of Mormon that summer, I started to look for patterns that could relate to 2 columns and 4 rows of concepts, or 3 columns and 3 rows of concepts. The idea was each concept could be a separate hieroglyphic. Patterns of 9 related concepts seemed to come up over and over again. In fact, it appears most of The Book of Mormon can be packaged as sets of nine concepts. This is what I refer to as a spatial language. I only give eight examples here, and I encourage you to find some of the hundreds of other examples in the text, that your testimony may be strengthened as mine has been.

I Nephi 1:1

I, Nephi	having been born of goodly parents,	therefore I was taught somewhat in the learning of my father;
and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days,	nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days;	yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness
and the mysteries of God,	therefore, I make a record of my proceedings	in my days.

I Nephi 1:2-3

Yea, I make a record	in the language of my father,	which consists of the learning of the Jews
and the language of the Egyptians.	And I know that the record which I make is true;	and I make it
with mine own hand;	and I make it	according to my knowledge.

I Nephi 1:4

⁶⁰Human Capability, A Study of Individual Potential and Its Application, Jaques & Cason, Cason Hall & Company Publishers, Falls Church, VA, 1994, 164 pages.

⁶¹I Nephi 1:2

For it came to pass i the commencement of the first year	of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah,	(my father, Lehi,
having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days);	and in that same year	there came many prophets
prophesying unto the people	that they must repent,	or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed.

Mosian 3:19 top

For the natural man	is an enemy to God,	and has been from the fall of Adam,
and will be forever and ever,	unless he yields to the enticings	of the Holy Spirit
and putteth off the natural man	and becometh a saint	through the atonement of Christ, the Lord,

Mosiah 3:19 bottom

and becometh as a child	submissive,	meek,
humble,	patient,	full of love,
willing to submit to all things	which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him,	even as a child doth submit to his father.

Alma 4:8

For they saw and beheld with great sorrow	that the people of the church	began to be lifted up in the pride of their eyes,
and to set their hearts upon riches	and upon the vain things of the world,	that they began to be scornful,
one towards another,	and they began to persecute those that did not believe	according to their own will and pleasure.

Alma 4:9

And thus in the eighth year of the reign of the judges,	there began to be great contentions among the people of the church;	yea, there were envyings,
and strife,	and malice,	and persecutions,
and pride,	even to exceed the pride	of those who did not belong to the church of God.

Alma 37:23

And the Lord said:	I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem,	a stone
which shall shine forth in darkness unto light,	that I may discover unto my people who serve me,	that I may discover unto them the works of their brethern,
yea, their secret works,	their works of darkness,	and their wickedness and abominations.

16. Comfort. The 2010 summer's reading of The Book of Mormon was a study in space and time. I started building a neat model of Book of Mormon spatial relationships based on the internal consistency of the text using Sketch-Up, a free urban planning and architectural modeling program from Google. As interesting as this project is, the relevance from this summer's reading has been much more personal. In April a long-term consulting contract unexpectedly ended, and I have been unable to replace the anticipated consulting income over the last six months. When I read Alma 57:11, it was as if the Savior were speaking to me personally, saying "Yea, and it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him." When I wrote these words, we had not solved our financial problems, and both my wife and I remain optimistic in our deliverance. Of more relevance to this note, I know with every fiber of my being, as well as I know the difference between sedimentary and volcanic rocks, The Book of Mormon is truly divine scripture. And I bear this solemn testimony the name of Jesus Christ.