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# S.E.H.A.

Number 164

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164.1 BOOK REVIEW. *Reader's Digest Atlas of the Bible: An Illustrated Guide to the Holy Land*. (Editor, Joseph L. Gardner; principal advisor and editorial consultant, Harry Thomas Frank). The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.: Pleasantville, New York, 1981. 256 pages, illustrations, maps, gazetteer, index. \$24.95 hardbound).

This is a beautiful book from the Reader's Digest publishers. "It is a book based on the best contemporary scholarship. . . . Yet the constant goal of the editors has been to make the volume as clear and precise as it is accurate and up-to-date. ATLAS OF THE BIBLE serves to explain, elucidate, and expand on what is already in the Bible but may not always be immediately comprehensible. It is designed to be read from cover to cover or to be consulted on specific points, as a companion to the Bible."

As is typical of practically all books giving background information on the Bible, this one also neglects the first eleven chapters of Genesis. There is a mention of the Mesopotamian epic of *Enuma elish* and some of its parallels with the creation account of Genesis and the Babylonian *Gilgamesh* epic, which describes a great flood that has many parallels with the Biblical flood story. The Reader's Digest atlas does suggest in regard to the flood that "Geological surveys of Mesopotamia indicate that, sometime in the distant past, waters of the Persian Gulf submerged sizable coastal areas. If this sudden rise of the sea level was caused by underwater volcanic activity, it could also have been accompanied by torrential rains—a combination of natural disasters that would have been commemorated in the history and legend of various peoples of the Near East, including the Hebrews."

The editors do not mention the Sumerian clay tablets that give a list of pre-flood rulers from southern Mesopotamia and similar tablets that give a list of Semitic rulers immediately after the flood who ruled at the city of Kish in southern Mesopotamia. Kish is also a name that occurs in the Book of Ether of the Book of Mormon. It is worth noting that the out-

landish length of reigns for the pre-flood rulers is now believable, since it was discovered that every king's reign is divisible by the number 360. What this means is that the reigns of the pre-flood kings were given in day counts that could be grouped into 360-day years. Hence, the unbelievable becomes believable.

The introductory material to the book gives valuable information on and illustrations of peoples, animals, plants, currency, weights, and measures as used in the Bible.

The main portion of the book comes under the heading of HISTORICAL ATLAS OF BIBLICAL TIMES (pages 49–208). The World of the Patriarchs thru the spread of Christianity represents the historical range of topics. There is a brief discussion of the very important tablet finds at Ebla in northern Syria. Over 16,000 tablets have been found so far. They all date between ca. 2500–2250 B.C. This represents a time before Abraham's day. The tablets are proving to be a gold mine of personal names and place names (over 500 so far). Preliminary reports suggest that there will be a creation story, a flood account, and support for the location of Abraham's Ur in northern Mesopotamia and not the Ur located in southern Mesopotamia.

The ATLAS has a fascinating discussion of the Exodus period. Four different routes of travel are illustrated and discussed. The traditional route locates Mount Sinai in the southern end of the Sinai peninsula. However, this traditional route is being seriously questioned by some Israeli scholars. Perhaps new data they have collected while they militarily controlled the Sinai will help resolve the issue of the correct Exodus route.

There is a nice, two-page reconstruction of the Biblical fortress-city of Hazor. Recent research at this site has confirmed the Old Testament account of Joshua's conquest and total destruction of this important Canaanite city.

Most of the material from the Period of the Judges down thru the New Testament Period provides a very well illustrated and sound analysis of the Biblical events and their proper geographical and historical setting.

In summary, this ATLAS has "more than 300 specially commissioned maps and illustrations, color photographs, reproductions of works of art and artifacts of ancient civilizations, full-spread reconstructions of biblical cities and buildings plus a 32-page gazetteer of 900 place-names found in the Bible."

#### 164.2 NEPHI'S JERUSALEM: THE SWORD OF LABAN. By William J. Adams Jr.

When Nephi returned to obtain the plates of Laban, he found the man unconscious in the streets of Jerusalem. One of Laban's personal possessions which greatly intrigued Nephi was a sword. So intrigued was he that he described the weapon in great detail. The blade was made of the most expensive steel and the hilt or handle of well-worked gold.

Unfortunately, archaeological excavations in Israel have turned up few swords. This is principally because, being made of iron, swords quickly rust away.

A few years ago, however, a sword was found during archaeological excavations at Vered Jericho, south of the modern city of Jericho. Three feet in length and made of iron, it had a bronze haft and a wooden grip. Even the tip had remained intact.

According to Avraham Eitan, Director of Israel's Department of Antiquities, the sword was found in a stratum dating to the 7th century B.C. (See his article in *Biblical Archaeological Review*, Vol. XII (1986), No. 4, p. 35.)

A comparison between this find and Nephi's description of the sword of Laban is revealing:

*Laban's sword*—

Blade: expensive steel, no length given.

Handle: gold, well-worked.

*Sword from Vered Jericho*—

Blade: iron, 3 feet long.

Handle: bronze with wooden grip.

We have the impression that Laban's sword was a very expensive weapon, while the sword from Vered Jericho was rather cheap, perhaps even a product of mass production. Eitan notes that Vered Jericho was a fortress. This implies that the sword may have been government issue to a soldier stationed there. Laban, on the other hand, was a wealthy man (1 Ne. 4:20) and would hence have owned a more expensive weapon.

#### 164.3 TRANSOCEANIC CULTURE CONTACTS BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW WORLDS IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIMES.

Earlier this year the F.A.R.M.S. organization made available a working version of a 900-page bibliography on Old World and New World transoceanic culture contact prior to 1492 A.D. The work is the product of John L. Sorenson and Martin Raish, with the help of a few advanced students at BYU.

This preliminary version has nearly 6000 citations. Nearly one-third of the citations are annotated, and it is expected that later all the citations will be annotated.

In the present format the bibliography is listed alphabetically by authors. It is not very useable in its present arrangement, but one presumes that the later definitive version will have divisions separating Pacific contacts from Atlantic contacts as well as grouping the many possible topics according to the major chronological periods and geographical regions of ancient America.

Later this year the bibliography is to be issued on computer disc. This will make the bibliography a valuable tool for all interested researchers.

#### 164.4 FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION BY DR. M. WELLS JAKEMAN.

The title of this projected two-volume work is *From A More Ancient Land?: Unidentified Peoples of Surprisingly Advanced Culture in the Earlier Periods of Mesoamerica and Ancient Peru*.

Quoting from Dr. Jakeman: "This work (with a second volume to follow) brings together in English translation, for the first time, virtually all the passages in the Maya and Spanish chronicles that tell of the earlier ancient peoples of Mesoamerica, those before the fifth century A.D. Surprising agreements will be seen with the historical part of the Book of Mormon—so many, in fact, that students of ancient history will be forced to take seriously the long-ignored Book of Mormon account of ancient Near Easterners in the New World. Many readers might also recognize certain Maya chronicles as actually Nephite records not found in the Book of Mormon. And some might discover in these passages important clues to puzzling parts of the geography of the Book of Mormon.

"In the second volume will be an up-to-date analysis of the remarkable 'tree of life' carving found on an ancient monument in southern Mexico known as Izapa Stela 5, which strikingly resembles the Near Eastern tree of life. This is the central feature of a complex narrative relief that depicts some ancient event involving the sacred tree, with genie-like figures attending it, six persons gathered around apparently discussing it, a river of water coming nearby, and other symbolic and narrative elements; also sev-

eral hieroglyphs, two of which are above two of the six persons, quite surely giving their names—the principal one an old bearded man who wears a pointed tiara like that of an ancient Israelite priest, and the other a large young man who is evidently recording on a tablet what the old bearded man is saying about the symbolic tree. A possible decipherment of all these hieroglyphs is offered, with special attention to the two named-glyphs.”

Anyone who would like to help with the publication costs of Dr. Jakeman’s work is invited to do so according to information on the last page of this newsletter.

#### 164.41 TWO SEHA BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED AS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES OF THE ANCIENT AMERICAN FOUNDATION.

V. Garth Norman and Bruce W. Warren were elected to be research associates for the Ancient American Foundation on May 21, 1988. The AAF was organized in 1983 to pursue archaeological research on worldwide interests but with a special focus on Mesoamerica. AAF’s research concerns will be for both the academic world and the Latter-day Saint community.

#### 164.5 SEHA BOARD MEETING OF JUNE 3, 1988.

Apart from the routine matters dealing with membership and finances, the board considered the forthcoming annual symposium of the scriptures and the publication of the S.E.H.A. newsletters and other more technical papers. The theme of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Symposium of the Scriptures will center on the Angel Moroni and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Dr. M. Wells Jakeman reported on his forthcoming two-volume publication (see above).

#### 164.6 QUESTION AND ANSWER:

**QUESTION:** Have some Maya scholars recently discovered some hieroglyphs that mean “and it came to pass”?

**ANSWER:** Many readers of the Book of Mormon have been bothered by the frequent appearance of phrases like “and it came to pass,” “and then it came to pass,” “and it shall come to pass,” “and thus did pass away,” “and it had come to pass,” and “had passed away since.” They find these phrases to be boring reading, occurring much too frequently. Some readers would like to see future printings of the Book of Mormon leave these cumbersome phrases out of the text. Table I summarizes the frequency of these past, present, and future tense phrases.

What we find is that all 15 books of the Book of Mormon have these phrases, and out of the 6,596 verses in the Book of Mormon, nearly 1527 verses have one or more of these phrases. In short, nearly 23% of the verses in the current edition of the Book of Mormon have a version of the “and it came to pass” phrase. This frequency is much higher than the 1–2% of similar phrases in the Bible (Robert F. Smith, *“It Came to Pass” in the Bible and the Book of Mormon*. Tables 1a & 1b. F.A.R.M.S., SMI–80, 1984).

The use of the “and it came to pass” phrase in the Book of Mormon represents a fairly complex situation. For instance in the past tense usage of the phrase one finds 11 examples of just a past event, such as 3 Ne. 1:20: “and it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets.” Twenty examples refer to a past date, as in 3 Ne. 2:4: “And thus did pass away the ninety and sixth year. . . .” The combination of referring to a past event and date occurs 34 times as in 3 Ne. 1:20: “And six hundred and nine years had passed away since Lehi left Jerusalem.”

TABLE I: “AND IT CAME TO PASS”

Books	Chs.	Vss.	Words	event	Past date	e&v	event	Present date	e&v	Future event
I Nephi	22	618	22,655	2			202			2
II Nephi	33	771	27,318	1		1	19			33
Jacob	7	203	8,384				47			1
Enos	1	27	989				5			
Jarom	1	15	659				4			
Omni	1	30	1,272				12			
W. of Mor.	1	18	824				5			
Mosiah	29	785	28,613				151			18
Alma	63	1,975	77,315				414	1	15	12
Helaman	16	497	18,652	1			86	28	6	11
III Nephi	30	785	26,706	5	13	11	106	6	16	15
IV Nephi	1	49	1,790	1	7	12	7		8	
Mormon	9	227	8,666			8	43		16	5
Ether	15	433	14,837	1			166		1	
Moroni	10	163	5,676			2				1
15	239	6,596	244,355	11	20	34	1,267	35	62	98
					Past Total:	65	Present Total:	1,364	Future Total:	98

(The first 3 columns of numbers are from R. F. Smith, 1984:2.)

**Grand Total: 1,527**

In the present tense or current sequence of events, 1267 examples (83% of all examples) refer to events only, such as 3 Ne. 1:7: “And it came to pass that they did make a great uproar throughout the land. . . .” Contrast this number with the 35 examples of a current date, as in 3 Ne. 2:1: “And it came to pass that thus passed away the ninety and fifth year also. . . .” Sixty-two examples of a combined current date and event are found in the Book of Mormon, e.g., 3 Ne. 2:11: “And it came to pass in the thirteenth year there began to be wars and contentions throughout the land. . . .”

The future tense examples of our basic “and it came to pass” phrase deal with prophetic events. For instance, 2 Ne. 14:1 reads, “And it shall come to pass, that if the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed, unto the taking away of their stumbling blocks.” Almost half of the future tense or prophetic examples of the phrase are from Nephi’s quoting from the Book of Isaiah in 2 Nephi.

In Table II the parallel usages of the phrase “and it came to pass” in the Bible are found to be the same as in the Book of Mormon. The main difference between the Biblical and Book of Mormon usage lies in the frequency of use. As noted above the Book of Mormon uses these phrases in a ratio of 10/1 compared to the Bible. It is possible that Biblical scribes and scholars have deleted some examples from the Biblical text for easier reading.

TABLE II: USES OF THE  
HEBREW *waw* “and”

Narrative *waw*: consecutive, past tense (chronological).

Coordinate *waw*: consecutive indicates temporal sequence as well as logical cause, result, and contrast, in history, parable, legend, myth, and other literary narrative types. It is characterized by a constant return to *waw* consecutive verbs.

Prophetic *waw*: correlative, future tense (logical/eschatological, “and it shall be,” etc.).

R. F. Smith, “*It Came to Pass*” in *the Bible and the Book of Mormon*, page 2.

The phrase “and it came to pass” has a fascinating parallel in Mayan hieroglyphs. J. Eric Thompson, probably the leading Maya scholar until his death in the early 1970s, discussed three glyphs usually associated with chronological dates and distance numbers. He identified the main glyph as T1 (Thompson’s classification system) or *Xoc* a mythical fish with the

verbal meaning of “to count.” Thompson noticed that the glyph T126 was used as a suffix following the main glyph and marked an earlier or past date or event. He likewise pointed out that glyph T679 was used as a prefix to the main glyph and marked current dates or events in a narrative text. For Thompson the *Xoc* main glyph, combined with the T126 suffix, was an anterior happening meaning “to count back to.” He then considered the main glyph and concluded that the main glyph followed or combined with the T679 prefix as a posterior happening meaning “to count forward to” (see Figure 1). When he wrote this in 1950, he did not know of any equivalent phrases in contemporary Yucatec or any other Mayan dialect (1950:162–64).

Proto-Cholan is now considered to be the main Mayan dialect used in the Classic period hieroglyphs (ca. A.D. 250–900). In 1984 David Stuart discovered that the *Xoc* main glyph had several substitutes that had the same function and meaning as the *Xoc* main glyph. He noted that *u* a third person pronoun and *ti* were two such glyphic substitutes for the main glyph. In 1985 Stuart published a paper that gave a Proto-Cholan reading of *uht* and a modern Chontal Maya word *ut* or *uti* as “to finish, to happen, or to come to pass.” Linda Schele, a professor of anthropology at the University of Texas, considered one of the leading scholars of ancient Maya hieroglyphs, also translated this Maya hieroglyph as “then it came to pass” (Schele 1982: 21–25). A couple of hieroglyphic examples of this usage can be found on the Palace Tablet at Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico (*ibid.*, 68–69). Stuart made two important breakthroughs relating to our subject. He discovered that the main glyph *Xoc* had functional substitutes and that some of those substitutes had ties to colonial Acalan Maya written texts and modern Chontal Maya, as noted above.

The next important clue to our riddle came in 1983 when the Maya linguists John Justeson and William Norman demonstrated that the glyphic prefix T679 was equivalent to the colonial Acalan Chontal Maya word *iwal*, meaning “and then.” Thus the prefix T679 when combined with the main glyph T1 should read “and then it came to pass.”

In 1985 another important clue was supplied by the Maya linguists Kathryn Josserand and Nicolas Hopkins. They found that the Maya suffix T1126 was equivalent to the modern Chol Maya suffix of *ix* or *ih*, which means “it had.” This suffix is used with verbs, adverbs, and time periods to mark that they are completed. Thus the main glyph T1 combined with the suffix T126 can be read as “it had come to pass.” Josserand and Hopkins conclude that this Mayan suffix has “the function as a pluperfect tense.” (See TABLE III.) The pluperfect designates the tense that represents an event or action as completed before a given past time.

TABLE III: TENSES AND THEIR CORRELATES  
IN THE BIBLE AND MAYA GLYPHS

<i>Tenses</i>	<i>Biblical form</i>	<i>Maya Hieroglyphic form</i>
Past	Narrative <i>waw</i> "and"	ADI/AEI, <i>utix</i> "it had come to pass"
Present	Coordinate <i>waw</i> "and"	PDI/PEI, <i>iwal ut</i> "and then it came to pass"
Future	Prophetic <i>waw</i> "and"	FDI/FEI, <i>utom</i> "it will happen"

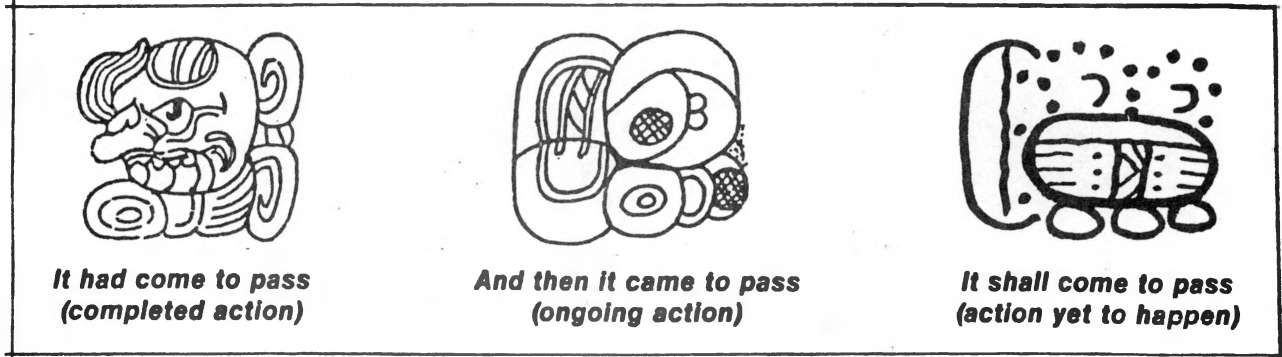


Fig. 1. Examples of Maya glyphs illustrating the past, present and future tenses of the phrase "and it came to pass". (From *The Witness*, July 1988, page 15)

Brenda and Linda Trimble report that in the 1988 Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop held in Austin, Texas, a final piece in our "and it came to pass" puzzle was presented. A Maya glyph that phonetically reads *ut-om* in the Chol dialect was discussed. The meaning of this word is "it will happen." (See Figure 1.)

In 1982, Schele illustrated with Maya glyphs and verbal descriptions four types of directional count indicators: posterior date indicators, posterior event indicators, anterior date indicators, and anterior event indicators (*Maya Glyphs: the Verbs*, p. 22). As illustrated above, it is clear that all four of these types are found many times over in the Book of Mormon. However, at that time the future or prophetic form was not known. Just this year the future or prophetic form was discovered and the picture is more or less

complete. Mesoamerican linguists should be encouraged to search for similar phrases in other Mayan dialects as well as other Mesoamerican Indian languages. It might lead to some startling discoveries. So far as I know no one has searched the Mayan and other Mesoamerican literature for the past, present, and future tense forms of "and it came to pass."

As Latter-day Saints we should be grateful for the many instances of the "and it came to pass" phrase in the Book of Mormon. This phrase and its variations are one of the strong evidences of the Book of Mormon as an authentic ancient text.

I believe we can confidently answer the question posed above in the affirmative. Yes, the rumors are correct. Maya glyphs have been found that parallel the Book of Mormon phrase "and it came to pass" in all its tenses.

**THE SOCIETY FOR EARLY HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY** depends heavily on donations from those who are interested in the archaeology of the Scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. Tax-exempt donations may be sent to the LDS Foundation, A-285 Smoot Building, BYU, Provo, Utah 84602.

The donor should ask the Foundation to restrict it to the use of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology (SEHA). The Foundation thereafter sends him or her a receipt for income tax purposes. At the same time the donor may wish to write the SEHA office about how he or she wants the gift spent.

Some uses of the gift could be (1) to sponsor an issue of the *Newsletter and Proceedings* by paying the printing cost, about \$600; (2) to sponsor an Annual Symposium of the Archaeology of the Scriptures, usually held in September, \$300 to \$600; (3) to add to the Society's Research Fund to help pay for important projects in the archaeology of the Scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, including excavations in Mesoamerica; or (4) to contribute to the publication of Dr. M. Wells Jakeman's book.

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