

Mosiah 7–11: Noah, Limhi, Abinadi

Monte F. Shelley

1. “Lucky Guesses” in Mosiah

In lesson #3 are several examples of Hebraisms which are good Hebrew but bad English. These are evidences that the Book of Mormon was a translation of an ancient book. For some these are just “lucky guesses” from the imagination of Joseph Smith.

- “and our *barley*, and ... (7:22; 9:9) Hebraism
Pre-Columbian barley was found in Arizona 1983
(*Reexploring*, 130)
Hebraism: “many ands”
- “Taxed with a tax” (7:15) Hebraism
- King Noah ornamented ‘spacious buildings’ with ‘precious ... iron’ (11:8)
Anciently iron was rare and precious. (*Reexploring*, 133)
“King Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood, and of all manner of *precious* things, of gold, ... silver, ... *iron*.” (11:8)

“Many scholars are now admitting that the [Book of Mormon] is an ancient book, but as one scholar of antiquities told [C. Wilford] Griggs, he had no problem with the gold plates and Smith’s story would be acceptable ‘if you’d get rid of that angel.’” (*Ancient*)

2. Flashbacks (Chart 29)

Year	Omni	Mos 1–6	7–22	23–24	25–29
300 BC	Omni Amaron				
250 BC	Chemish Abinadom				
200 BC	Mosiah ₁ Amaleki		Zeniff Noah Abinadi	Alma ₁	
150 BC	Benjamin 130	Benjamin	Limhi		
120 BC					Mosiah ₂
Land	Zarahemla		Nephi		

Nephites left the land of Zarahemla for the land of Nephi (Omni 1:27). About 80 years later, when Ammon finds their descendents in the land of Nephi, we have a flashback history from Zeniff to Limhi. Later we have a second flashback about Alma’s people after they left during the time of King Noah. How did Joseph dictate such complex flashbacks while the keeping facts straight? He translated the record as he says.

To go from the land of Zarahemla (northward) to the land Nephi (southward), one would have to travel about 180 miles and cross a narrow strip of wilderness. Two maps on the last page of this handout show suggested locations in Mesoamerica and Baja California. (See lesson #1 for more about geographical models.)

3. Limhi’s Temple Meeting (7:17–8:4)

Temples were in (Lehi-)Nephi, Zarahemla, Bountiful

- Proclamation:** all people gather at the temple. (7:17)
- Author:** God’s acts on their behalf (7:19–20, 27)
- Blessings:** God will deliver us from bondage (7:33)
- Curses:** not protect, bondage (50% tribute), death (7:22–24)
- Duties:** broke covenant (contention, sin, killed Abinadi); turn to the Lord, trust and serve him
- Other:** rehearsed king Benjamin’s words
- Witnesses** “this day” (7:21) [“this day” often refers to holy days]
- Formal Dismissal:** (8:4)

Like King Benjamin’s speech at the temple, Limhi’s words include the different parts of covenant renewal.

4. What is a Seer? (8:9, 12–18)

What was on the 24 plates of pure gold found by Limhi’s people (8:9)?

Book of Ether

Who can translate them?

King Mosiah “has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and ... the things are called interpreters [urim and thummim], and no man can look in them except he be commanded. ... And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called *seer*. ... a seer is a revelator and a prophet ... and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God. ... ¹⁷ But a seer can know of things which are past, and ... are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known.”

OED *seer* = one who sees.

Boyd K. Packer: (“The Father and the Family,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 19)

The scriptures speak of prophets as “watch[men] upon the tower” who see “the enemy while he [is] yet afar off” and who have “beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye ... [for] a seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.”

[Many] years ago the Brethren warned us of the disintegration of the family and told us to prepare. ... The weekly family home evening was introduced by the First Presidency. ... Parents are provided with excellent materials for teaching their children. ... While the doctrines and revealed organization remain unchanged, all agencies of the Church have been reshaped in their relationship to one another and to the home. ... The entire curriculum of the Church was overhauled—based on scriptures. ... And years were spent preparing new editions of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. ...

We can only imagine where we would be if we were just now reacting to [the] terrible redefinition of the family. But that is not the case. ... We know what to do and what to teach. ... The prophets and Apostles continue to receive revelation as the Church and its members stand in need of more.

5. Tradition of their Fathers (10:12–17)

The Lamanites “were a wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, believing in the tradition of their fathers” (10:12)

“The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one. ... And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers. But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth. ⁴¹ But ... Frederick G. Williams, ... You have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments; and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction.” (D&C 93:36–42)

In the scriptures we see how the traditions of fathers, men, elders that are usually not correct and lead people to sin. We also read of the correct traditions of the Nephites that led to righteousness.

6. Two Ways of Viewing and Doing (#5)

What is	
1. Find fault (rule)	1. Accept (not condone or desire)
2. Blame	2. Goal focus (end)
3. Punish (if possible)	3. Plan and do it! (means, learn)
4. Justify (grievance story)	4. Share (survivor, quest story)

7. What was the tradition of the Lamanite fathers?

¹⁴ [Laman and Lemuel] were wroth with [Nephi] ... ¹⁵ because ... he had taken the ruling of the people out of their hands ... ¹⁶ And ... because he ... took ... the plates of brass, for they said that he robbed them. ¹⁷ And thus they have taught their children that they should hate them, and ... murder them, and ... rob and plunder them, and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi.” (10: 14–18)

8. What was the basis of their tradition and hatred?

Birthright tradition; scripture

9. Contention, Anger, Hatred, Traditions

“Beware lest there shall arise contentions among you, and ye list to obey the evil spirit. ... ³³ For ... [he] who listeth to obey that spirit ... and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge.” (Mos 2:32–33)

¹³ 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.” (Mos 4:13)

There were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. (4 Ne 1:2)

Limhi: “If this people had not fallen into transgression the Lord would not have suffered that this great evil should come upon them. But ... they would not hearken unto his words; but there arose contentions among them, even so much that they did shed blood among themselves. And a prophet of the Lord have they slain” (Mos 7:25–26)

“King Laman began to stir up his people [to anger] that they should contend with my people; therefore there began to be wars and contentions in the land.” (Mos 9:13)

10. What other traditions led to contention and hatred?

Traditions of Pharisees → death of Jesus

Blacks vs Whites, Muslim vs Infidels, Arabs and Israelis

11. What traditions or rules stir us up to anger?

Years after an event, people still sharing grievance stories.

“**Piece of string**” grievance story

Gordon B. Hinckley: Happy is the man who can brush aside the offending remarks of another and go on his way. Grudges, if left to fester, can become serious maladies. Like a painful ailment they can absorb all of our time and attention. ...

[A man] ... on market day went to town. He was afflicted with rheumatism, and as he stumbled along he noticed a piece of string on the ground in front of him. He picked it up and carefully put it in his pocket. He was seen doing so by his enemy, the harness maker.

At the same time it was reported to the mayor that a pocketbook containing money had been lost. It was assumed that what [the man] had picked up was the pocketbook, and he was accused of taking it. He vehemently denied the charge. A search of his clothing disclosed only the piece of string, but the slander against him had so troubled him that he became

obsessed with it. Wherever he went he bothered to tell people about it. He became such a nuisance that they cried out against him. It sickened him.

“His mind kept growing weaker and about the end of December he took to his bed. He passed away early in January, and, in the ravings of [his] death agony, he protested his innocence, repeating: ‘A little [piece] of string—a little [piece] of string. See, here it is, [Mister Mayor.]’ ” (See “The Piece of String,” [http://www.online-literature.com/Maupassant/270/.](http://www.online-literature.com/Maupassant/270/)) (“Slow to Anger,” *Ensign*, Nov 2007, 62–63, 66)

12. Differences of opinion vs. Contention

Contention vs differences (Eyring and GAs)

OED **contention** [ad. L. *contendēre* ... f. *con-* + *tendēre* to stretch, strain, strive.] **2.** The action of contending or striving together in opposition; strife, dispute, verbal controversy.

Strife: **1. a.** The action of striving together or contending in opposition; a condition of antagonism, enmity, or discord; contention, dispute. (fight)

13. King Benjamin and King Noah

Contrast/opposition:

Joseph/Judah, Nephi/Laman,

a. Worked so people would not be laden with taxes. (2:14)

Noah: 20% tax (11:3–4, 6)

b. Established peace with help of holy prophets. (WofM 15–18)

Noah replaced priests; lying, flattering words (11:5, 7)

c. Did not “suffer” people to break the Law of Moses which protected man’s unalienable God given rights to life, liberty, and property. (2:13)

Noah caused people to commit sin by not enforcing the Law of Moses, or by changing or reinterpreting it. (11:2)

d. “Clear conscience before God” (2:15)

Noah had a clear conscience before his priests; but a guilty conscience before God and Abinadi

Benjamin (saint)		Noah (natural man)
Things of God; serve/love God & neighbor	Desire	Things of the flesh; Fame, gain, power, lusts of flesh (1 Ne 22:23) carnal
Holy Ghost + senses	Know	5 senses sensual
God’s will be done	Do	“my will be done” devilish
Kept commandments		Broke commandments

14. How did Noah suffer his people to commit sin?

a. did not punish crimes

b. not taught to keep commandments, but to follow own will

c. Noah set example

King Noah “did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and ... he did cause his people to commit sin.” He laid a 20% tax on the people to support his lifestyle and surrounded himself with priests who would make or interpret the law as he wished. He imprisoned or killed those like Abinadi who disagreed with his policies or practices. (Mosiah 11)

15. How did Benjamin “not suffer” people to sin?

- punished crimes
- taught to keep commandments
- Set example

King Benjamin enforced the Law of Moses which protected man’s unalienable God given rights to life, liberty, and property.

¹⁵ False Christs, ... false prophets, and false preachers ... [were] punished according to their crimes; and after ... much contention and many dissensions away unto the Lamanites, behold ... king Benjamin, with the assistance of the *holy prophets* ... did once more establish peace in the land. (WofM 1:15–18)

¹³ Neither have I *suffered* that ye should be confined in dungeons, nor that ye should make slaves one of another, nor that ye should murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery; nor even have I *suffered* that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord. (Mos 2:1–14)

¹⁰ If he murdered he was punished unto death; and if he robbed he was also punished; and if he stole he was also punished; and if he committed adultery he was also punished. ... ¹¹ There was no law against a man’s belief; therefore, a man was punished only for the crimes which he had done; therefore all men were on equal grounds. (Alma 30:10–11)

²⁸ Whosoever ... borroweth of his neighbor should return the thing ... according as he doth agree, or else thou shalt commit sin [stealing]; and perhaps thou shalt cause thy neighbor to commit sin also. ²⁹ And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin [crimes]; for there are ... so many [ways] that I cannot number them. ³⁰ If ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. (Mos 4:28–30)

² We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life. (D&C 134:2)

Blackstone: The absolute rights of every Englishman, (which ... are usually called their liberties,) ... [are] the right of *personal security*, the right of *personal liberty*, and the right of *private property*: because as there is no other known method of compulsion, or abridging man’s natural free will, but by an infringement or diminution of one or other of these important rights. ... The right of *personal security* consists in a person’s legal and uninterrupted enjoyment of his life, his limbs, his body, his health, and his reputation. ... *Personal liberty* consists in the power of locomotion, of changing situation, or moving one’s person to whatsoever place one’s own inclination may direct; without imprisonment or restraint, unless by due course of law. ... *Property* ... consists in the free use, enjoyment, and disposal of all his acquisitions, without any control or diminution, save only by the laws of the land. ... So great ... is the regard of the law for private property, that it will not authorize the least violation of it; no, not even for the general good of the whole community.” “[A] contract ... [is] a property in action. ... A contract, which usually conveys an interest merely in action, is thus defined: ‘an *agreement*, upon sufficient *consideration*, to do or not to do a particular *thing*.’ ... Our courts of equity, considering that in a commercial country almost all personal property must necessarily lie in

contract, will protect the assignment of a *chose* [property] in action, as much as the law will [protect] that of a *chose* in possession.” “Our law considers marriage ... a civil contract.” (Blackstone, Bk 1, ch. 1; Bk 2, ch 30; Bk 1, ch 15)

[Note: Blackstone was the most well respected English legal scholar in the 1700s. His *Commentaries on the Laws of England* was published 11 years before the Declaration of Independence. It was first published in America in 1771 and later editions included commentaries by American legal scholars familiar with American law. More copies were sold in the American colonies than in the rest of the British Empire. Blackstone’s *Commentaries* influenced the Founders, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, Supreme Court and lower court decisions, and legislative debates.]

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” (Declaration of Independence)

The Virginia Declaration of Rights (the basis of our Bill of Rights) was adopted unanimously by the state delegates on June 12, 1776. It was written by George Mason who with James Madison was called the “Father of the Bill of Rights.” It says:

All men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life,_liberty_and_the_pursuit_of_happiness))

16. Do “not suffer your children ... [to] transgress”

¹⁴ Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil ... ¹⁵ *But* ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another. (Mos 4:14–15)

My wife used to hate going to church on Mother’s Day. When speakers would say how wonderful mother’s are, she went on a major guilt trip because her children often fought and quarreled regardless of her efforts not to allow it.

King Benjamin did not “suffer” to transgress the laws of God (2:13). This did not mean that he prevented people from sinning. It meant that when they did, they experienced the consequences specified in the Law of Moses. Benjamin also taught his people to keep the commandments as parents are counseled to do with their children.

17. What sins did Noah commit?

Laziness, idolatry; wives, concubines, whoredoms, harlots; set heart on riches; riotous living, wine-bibber; pride, boast; delight in blood and shedding Lamanite blood;

riotous living → prodigal son

“Ye have set your hearts upon the riches and the vain things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and plunder, and steal, and bear false witness against your neighbor, and do all manner of iniquity.” (Hel 7:21)

“Hardened his heart against the word of the Lord” and “did not repent,” wroth with Abinadi, sought to slay him for stirring up people to anger and raising contentions; who is Abinadi to judge, who is the Lord to bring affliction on us.

² He did not keep the commandments of God, ^{devilish} but he did walk after the desires of his own heart ^{carнал}. And he had many wives and concubines ... ³ laid a tax of one fifth part ... ⁵ put down all the priests

Blasphemy included insolent or seditious speech against God, king, man, holy places or things, including the law (*Pressing*, 84–86). One who blasphemed was put to death (Ex 20:7; Lev 24:10–16). Blasphemy was probably the charge against Abinadi.

18. Abinadi (11:20–29)

Another “lucky” coincidence is that Abinadi’s prophecy is written as a chiasmus. Chiasmus is a form of Hebrew poetry with rhyming ideas instead of rhyming sounds. The lines starting with the same A to H letter have parallel or related ideas shown by the underlines. The center of the chiasmus is the central idea. This parallel repetition of ideas helped hearers remember key ideas.

²⁰ ... Abinadi ... began to prophesy, saying:

^A Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people,

^B thus saith the Lord—

^C Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms;

^D and except they repent I will visit them in mine anger.

^E ²¹ And except they repent and turn to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; yea, and they shall be brought into bondage; and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies.

^F ²² And it shall come to pass that they shall know that I am the Lord their God,

^G and am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people.

^H ²³ And it shall come to pass that except this people repent

^H and turn unto the Lord their God,

^G they shall be brought into bondage;

^F and none shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God.

^E ²⁴ Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall cry unto me I will be slow to hear their cries; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.

^D ²⁵ And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God,

^C I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions;

^B and thus saith the Lord,

^A and thus hath he commanded me.

How did Abinadi fulfill the role of a seer? (Mos 11)
(See item 4 on this handout)

Conclusion

Leave enough time for conclusion!

Opposition in all things: The Book of Mormon frequently gives us contrasts that help us observe the choices of others and their consequences. These contrasts help us choose who we want to be like. In this lesson we have several contrasts of people in similar situations who make different choices.

- Lamanite and Nephite traditions of fathers with their different ways of viewing and doing
- King Benjamin and King Noah
- Priests of King Noah and Abinadi

Traditions of fathers

- Have I accepted rules or traditions that lead me to find fault with others, blame them, seek to punish them, and then justify my anger, hatred, or contention?
- Do I keep watching reruns on my mental grievance or ‘he did me wrong’ channel? Or do I seek to know and do God’s will today so I can improve, forgive, love, and be more Christlike?

King Benjamin or King Noah?

- As a parent or leader, do or would I act more like King Benjamin or King Noah?
- Do I teach the commandments and set a good example?
- Do I have known rules that protect the life, liberty, and property of family members as long as they do not infringe on the equal rights of others?
- Do rules have known natural or logical consequences that are applied when rules are broken? Or do rules have either no consequences or unpredictable consequences depending on my mood?
- Do I teach or compel sharing?
- How do I treat those who suggest that I should change? (Abinadi)
- Do I command and compel people to obey me, or do I invite and entice others to obey God?

Priests of King Noah and Abinadi

- When I counsel others, do I tell people what they want to hear or do I tell them what God wants me to say?
- Do I help others justify unchristian attitudes and behaviors, or do I teach and practice correct principles?
- Do I interpret the scriptures in ways that suggest there is no sin and that we should eat, drink, and be merry?
- Do I teach the commandments by word and example like Alma so that people voluntarily follow me without compulsory means?

Quotes

NOTE: The yellow shading shows what is NOT on the handout that I use in class. The handout makes it possible to share information while only briefly referring to it in class. The handout and any other supplements for the lesson are at www.sviewp.com.

Sources:

- *Reexploring* = *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, edited by John W. Welch; see <http://mi.byu.edu>
- *Pressing* = John Welch, *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*,
- *Chart* = John W. Welch & J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon*.
- *Ancient* = Rodger L. Hardy, "Ancient Writings Support LDS Doctrine And Teachings," *Deseret News*, Apr. 28, 2008; see also www.sviewp.com
- BoM = My Book of Mormon lesson 9 (www.sviewp.com)
- Blackstone = Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 volumes, <http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/blackstone/bla-101.htm>;

GENERAL

- BMRC = Dennis L. Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*.
- TBM = Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols.
- OM = Original Manuscript
- PM = Printer's Manuscript
- *LDS View* = This computer program with the scriptures in 11 languages was previously sold in the Church Distribution Center as *Scriptures on CDM*. It can now be downloaded with the scriptures in up to 30 languages (<http://ldsview.byu.edu>). At <http://WordCruncher.com>, you can download WordCruncher and Webster's 1844 Dictionary (2nd Edition). If *LDS View* was downloaded first, WordCruncher will let you see the English scriptures and when you click on an English word, you can see Webster's 1844 definition.
- Other Bible Translations are at <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>

BAJA model

- Baja = www.achoiceland.com

MESOAMERICAN model

- Sorenson = John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*.
- *Reexploring* = John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Poulsen = bomgeography.poulsenll.org/bomdirections.html

Hebraisms

- Par-Heb = Donald W. Parry, "Hebraisms and Other Ancient Peculiarities," <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Tved-Heb = John Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon," chapter 8 in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*; <http://mi.byu.edu>

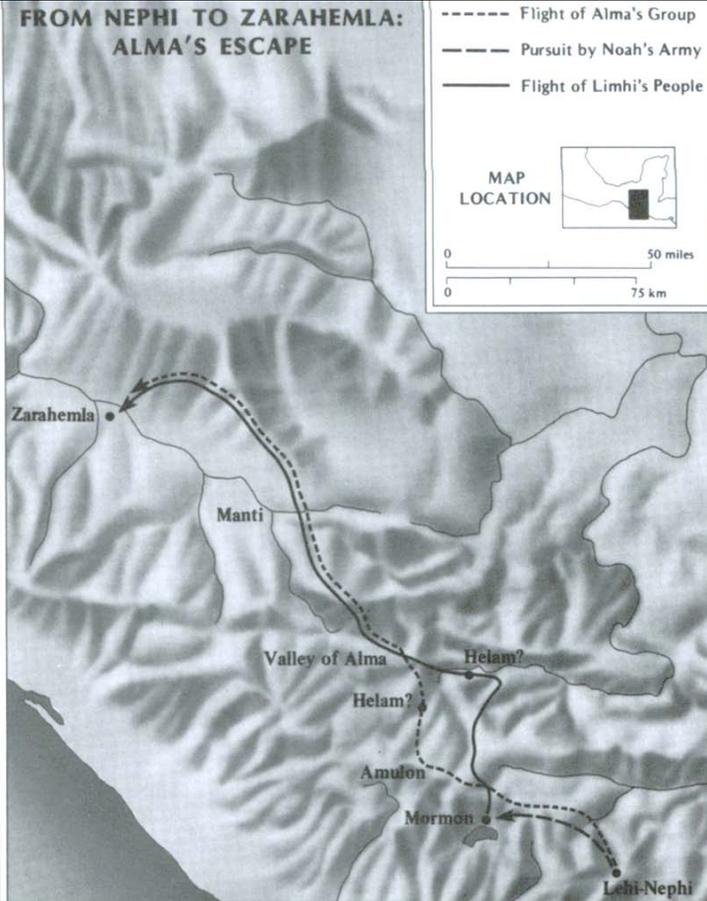
Other sources

- BD = *Bible Dictionary* (in English LDS Scriptures).
- GS = *Guide to the Scriptures* (in electronic LDS Scriptures)
- I-BofM = New Testament Institute manual, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & his Apostles*, institute.lds.org

- KJV King James Version of the Bible.
- NIV = New International Version of the Bible
- *TPJS* = *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
- *SOED* = Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
- *OED* = Oxford English Dictionary
- BDB = *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
- Bauer = Walter Bauer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*
- EJ = *Encyclopedia Judaica*
- Rona = Daniel Rona, www.israelrevealed.com/comp-sup-r.htm,
- MM = Meridian Magazine, Gospel Doctrine, www.ldsmag.com
- beardall2000.com/gospdoct.shtml;
- www.gospeldoctrine.com

Suggested locations if Book of Mormon events occurred in Mesoamerica (Guatemala and Mexico) (Chart 155)

See lesson #1 for more information.



Suggested locations if Book of Mormon events occurred in Baja California www.achoice.com

See lesson #1 for more information.

