

Hel. 1–5: Helaman and Nephi

Monte F. Shelley

Quotes

- Having children is hereditary. If your parents didn't have any, then you probably won't either.
- The gospel is like a kiss ... You can think about it, dream about it, and imagine it. But the joy comes in sharing it.
- When God wants to send you a gift, he wraps it up in a problem. And the bigger the gift God wants to send you the bigger the problem he wraps it up in. (Norman Vincent Peale)
- All unhappiness arises from attempts to control events or other people over which one has no power.

1. Lucky “Guess” — Helaman 3:14

^A But behold, a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites and of the Nephites,

^B and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions,

^C and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping

^D and their building of ships,

^D and their building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries,

^C and their righteousness,

^B and their wickedness, and their murders, and their robberies, and their plundering, and all manner of abominations and whoredoms,

^A cannot be contained in this work.

This verse is only one sentence. A Hebrew scholar/translator used this verse as evidence of the Book of Mormon being good Hebrew.

2. Migrations by ship (37th and 38th year)

a. ⁴ In the [37th] year ... [5,400] men, with their [families], ... [went] into the land which was northward. (Alma 63:4)

b. ⁵ Hagoth ... built ... an exceedingly large ship, on the borders of the land Bountiful, by the land Desolation, and launched it forth into the west sea, by the narrow neck which led into the land northward. ... ⁷ In the [38th] year, this man built other ships. And the first ship did also return, and many more people ... set out again to the land northward. (Alma 63:5, 7)

Some think Hagoth took them to the Polynesian islands.

3. Contention (40th to 42nd year) (Hel 2)

About 40 years after Mosiah and the Nephites changed from kings to letting the people elect the chief judge (Mosiah 29), Pahoran, Paanchi, and Pacumeni contended for chief judgeship.

Pahoran was elected. Paanchi rebelled & condemned to die.

Kishkumen murdered Pahoran and ^{1:11} “went unto those that sent him, and they all entered into a covenant... swearing by their everlasting Maker, that they would tell no man”

Pacumeni elected, Lamanites under Coriantumr attacked Zarahemla and killed Pacumeni.

General Moronihah surrounds Lamanite army, retook Zarahemla “and caused that the Lamanites who had been taken prisoners should depart out of the land in peace.”

¹ In the [42nd] year ... there began to be a contention again among the people concerning who should fill the judgment-seat. ² And ... Helaman, ... the son of Helaman, was appointed to fill the judgment-seat, by the voice of the people. (2:1–2)

4. Gadianton (Hel 2)

⁴ Gadianton ... was exceedingly expert in many words, and also in his craft, to carry on the secret work of murder and of robbery; therefore he became the leader of the band of Kishkumen. ⁵ ... He did flatter them ... that if they would place him in the judgment-seat he would grant ... that they should be placed in power and authority among the people; therefore Kishkumen sought to destroy Helaman. (2:4–5)

Like Korihor, Gadianton flattered them with words that “were pleasing unto the carnal mind” (Alma 30:53).

What happened when Kishkumen tried to kill Helaman?

⁸ The object of all those who belonged to his band [was] to murder, and to rob, and to gain power, (and this was their secret plan, and their combination) (2:8)

Purpose: power, money, fame, lusts of flesh

¹³ In the end of this book [of Mormon] ye shall see that this Gadianton did prove the overthrow, yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi. (2:13)

²⁷ The pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction except they should repent. (Moro 8:27)

Ezra Taft Benson: Pride results in secret combinations which are built up to get power, gain, and glory of the world. (See Hel. 7:5; Ether 8:9, 16, 22–23; Moses 5:31.) This fruit of the sin of pride, namely secret combinations, brought down both the Jaredite and the Nephite civilizations and has been and will yet be the cause of the fall of many nations. (See Ether 8:18–25.) (“Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 4)

Relevance?

Ezra Taft Benson: I testify that wickedness is rapidly expanding in every segment of our society. (See D&C 1:14–16; 84:49–53.) It is more highly organized, more cleverly disguised, and more powerfully promoted than ever before. Secret combinations lusting for power, gain, and glory are flourishing. A secret combination that seeks to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries is increasing its evil influence and control over America and the entire world. (See Ether 8:18–25.) (“I Testify,” *Ensign*, Nov 1988, 86)

Ezra Taft Benson:” The situation in the world will continue to degenerate unless we read and heed the words of God and quit building up and upholding secret combinations, which the Book of Mormon tells us proved the downfall of ancient civilizations.” (“The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God,” *Ensign*, Jan 1988, 3)

5. Migrations to the land northward (46th year)

³ In the [46th year], there was much contention and many dissensions; in the which there were ... many who departed ... Zarahemla, and went forth unto the land northward. ... ¹² And ... there were many of the people of Ammon, who were Lamanites by birth, did also go forth into this land. (3:3–12)

Based on their traditions, some believe the Hopis may be descendants of these Ammonites. *Hopi* is short for *Hopituh Shinnu-mu* (“The Peaceful People” or “Peaceful Little Ones”).

Hopi and Aztecs: The Hopi people, living in the northeast corner of Arizona, claim their ancestors came from a “red city,” located “where the rocks and earth are red,” somewhere “in the far southwest” of their present home. The name Zarahemla means “red city” (Nibley). The landscape of our proposed land of Zarahemla [in Baja] is red earth and rocks. The Aztecs of Mexico and Central America claim their ancestors came from an area northwest of central Mexico, near the southwest United States, called Aztlán. Some claim that Aztlán means “place of the white heron [egret or white-faced ibis]” (see, *Wikipedia*, Aztlán). Baja California is a breeding ground of the white heron. These two relative directions—southwest of northern Arizona and northwest of Mexico City—triangulate to the area of southern California and northern Baja California, which is the expected location and travel direction of a people who would have left the Baja California peninsula as they were being “swept off” the land. (www.achoiceland.com/searching_for_ruins)

Hopi myth [oral history] ... recounts that the Hopis crossed the sea during their emergence to this present Fourth World, arriving somewhere on the western coast of Mexico or Central America. They then gradually worked northward to settle in their present homeland in the Four Corners region. The validity of this myth [oral history] is attested in many ways. (Frank Waters, “Foreword,” in David Muench (photos) and Donald G. Pike (text), *Anasazi : Ancient People of the Rock*, 13)

Parallels appear between the language of the **Mormon temple ceremony** and the Hopi myths of origin in Frank Water’s *Book of the Hopi*. Responding to someone ... about similarities between the Mormon temple endowment and the Masonic ceremony, Nibley wrote that the parallels between the Mormon endowment and the rites of the Hopi “come closest of all as far as I have been able to discover—and where did they get theirs?” (Boyd Jay Petersen. *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life*. 282)

The Visual Testament and the Israelite Indian (by Tom Cryer) “is a study of the art of the American Indians, with emphasis on the ceremonialism, particularly among the Hopi Indians. It shows how the ceremonies and katchinas of the Hopis, and the related rites and accounts of other tribes, convey messages comparable to the works and writings of Biblical people” (p. 13).

The true **Pahana** ... is the **Lost White Brother of the Hopi**. Most versions have it that the Pahana or Elder Brother left for the east at the time that the Hopi entered the Fourth World and began their migrations. However, the Hopi say that he will return again and at his coming the wicked will be destroyed and a new age of peace, the Fifth World, will be ushered into the world. ... He will come wearing red. Traditionally, Hopis are buried facing eastward in expectation of the Pahana who will come from that direction.

(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopi_mythology#Pahana)

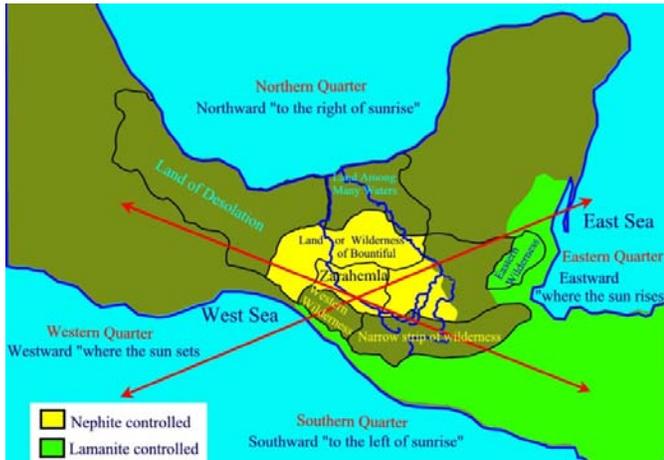
The Hopi people were converted to the Great Spirit **before the Great Star** appeared in the sky. After they were converted, they ... buried [their] weapons deep in the earth. After burying

their weapons, they faced their enemies, but would not take up weapons to fight against them. Rather than do this, they would gladly die, and many of them were killed. This made their enemies ashamed and some of the aggressors would join the peaceful Hopi. ... After many years, the Hopi people left ... to migrate to another land where they could be alone and live in peace. ... During their migration the Great Spirit spoke to them from the clouds and directed their course. ... One day He said, ‘When a Great Star appears in the sky ... stop and build houses from one to four stories high, like the homes your people lived in before they came to this country.’ ... When the Great Star appeared ..., the Hopi stopped and built their homes. ... They lived there until the babies had grown ... and were having children. Then they decided ... to search ... for their second village. They were on top of a mesa looking for the proper location when they saw ... a white man. ... He arose and walked toward them with outstretched arms and said, ‘I am your True White Brother that has come to lead you forward and to teach you of my ways.’ He stayed with them for several days. ... He ... blessed the babies, healed the sick and performed many miracles. ... The Hopi call the White Brother the Great Spirit because he had power to walk in the air, and could disappear from sight. (Zula C. Brinkerhoff, *God’s Chosen People of America*, 19–23, vii; From 1959 to 1971, Zula (LDS) worked with the Hopis and other tribes. She learned their traditions from them.)

6. Sea south, sea north, sea east, and sea west

⁴ And they did travel to an exceedingly great distance ... [and] they came to large bodies of water and many rivers. ... ⁸ And ... they did ... spread, ... from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east. ... (3:4, 8)

Mesoamerica: Some explain why “Nephite north” is northwest based on Hebrew and Egyptian language differences (see below). Another suggests that directions were similar to other pre-Columbian cultures that “considered east to be where the sun rises and west to be where the sun sets” during the year as shown below. (www.poulsenll.org/bom/bomdirections.html)



The Israelites of Palestine ... derived directions as though standing with backs to the sea, facing the desert. *Yam* (“sea”) then meant “west,” for the Mediterranean lay in that direction, while *qedem* (“fore”) stood for “east.” Then *yamin* (“right hand”) meant “south,” while *semol* (“left hand”) denoted “north.” ... In Palestine, this model coincided nicely with nature (the coast runs nearly north-south).” If Lehi’s family arrived in Central America and used these same words related to the sea coast, it would “shift their Hebrew direction terms by 45 degrees or more. (Sorenson, 38–39)

The Hebrews ... oriented themselves by facing east, toward the rising sun. Thus *east* in Hebrew was simply *front*, with *south* as *right*, *north* as left, and *west* as *rear* or “sea”. But the Nephites also knew the “language of the Egyptians”. The Egyptians oriented themselves by facing south, toward the source of the Nile. ... Thus the Hebrew orientation is shifted 90 degrees from the Egyptian. ... So when the Nephites wrote the Egyptian word for *north*, did they have the Hebrew meaning *west* in mind, or the Egyptian meaning *north*? (*Reexploring*, chap. 52)

A Great Lakes model: “Nephite north” is northeast. The four seas (east, west, north, south) are four of the Great Lakes. (See map in my lesson #1 handout.)

Baja: “Nephite north” is essentially north. It is easy to see a sea east, west and south. The sea north was probably a salt water sea. This map shows the approximate location and size of Lake Cahuilla before AD 1500. It was about twice as big as the Great Salt Lake. The present but smaller Salton Sea was created in 1905 when the Colorado River overflowed and filled the dry lake bed with water.



(www.achoiceiland.com/four_seas
www.achoiceiland.com/sea_baja_california)

7. Houses of cement

⁷ And there being but little timber upon ... the land [northward], ... the people ... became exceedingly expert in the working of cement; therefore they did build houses of cement. ... ⁹ And the people who were in the land northward did dwell in tents, and in houses of cement, and they did suffer whatsoever tree ... [to] grow up, that in time they might have timber to build their houses, ... cities, ... temples, ... synagogues, ... sanctuaries, and all manner of their buildings. ¹⁰ ... As timber was exceedingly scarce ..., they did send forth much by ... shipping. ¹¹ And thus they did enable the people in the land northward that they might build many cities, both of wood and of cement. (3:7–11)

In my lesson #1 handout are descriptions of three general proposed locations or models of Book of Mormon lands. The interpretation of this verse varies by model.

Cement referred to any paste like substance used to bind bricks, stones, etc.

Mesoamerica: “The Book of Mormon dates this ... [verse to] 46 B.C. ... Cement was ... used in Mesoamerica beginning largely at this time. ... Cement is ... [used] at many sites in ... Mexico and in the Maya regions of southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras.” (*Reexploring*, 213) These buildings were made of stone and cement and looked like pyramids.

Baja: Some houses were built of cement and timber, but there is no mention of stone. Cement was not mentioned with temples, synagogues, or other buildings. The Nephites desired [grown or shipped] timber for the construction of all their buildings, including their temples (Hel. 3:9, 14). There is no mention of stone construction. ... The record does indicate, however, that their temples were built of wood (timber) and metal of various types. Nephite temples, sanctuaries, and synagogues “were built after the manner of the Jews” (Alma 16:13). No temple is described as pyramidal in shape nor monumental in purpose or built to honor a leader or its builder. ... We suggest the Book of Mormon people ... utilized a “cemented” adobe-like material that is found in many southwest locations of the United States and Mexico, in Biblical lands and throughout the ancient and modern world. This type of material was often made into ... bricks that were “cemented” by moistening clay material and then drying them in the sun. Anciently it was the most ubiquitous of all “cemented” building materials. ... These adobe buildings utilize wood for the supportive roof structures that span the outer walls. Thatched materials, such as the leaves from fan palms, provide a water-resistant outer roof covering. These types of “cement” adobe buildings are found in many parts of Baja California today because of its Mediterranean climate and semi-arid environment and the ready availability of limestone (and gypsum), clay materials, timber and fan-palm thatching materials for roofs. (www.achoiceiland.com/searching_for_ruins)

8. Peace and Church Prospers (49th year)

²³ There was continual peace established in the land. ... ²⁵ And so great was the prosperity of the church, and so many the blessings which were poured out upon the people, that even the high priests and the teachers were themselves astonished beyond measure. ²⁶ And ... the work of the Lord did prosper unto the baptizing ... many souls, yea, even tens of thousands. ²⁷ Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will, in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name. ²⁸ Yea, ... the gate of heaven is open unto all. ... ²⁹ Yea, ... whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful. ... ³¹ And in this year there was continual rejoicing in the land. (Hel 3:23–31)

9. Pride in Church (51st year)

³³ There was peace..., save it were the pride which began to enter ... into the hearts of the people who professed to belong to the church of God—³⁴ And they were lifted up in pride, even to the persecution of many of their brethren. Now this was a great evil, which did cause the more humble part of the people to suffer great persecutions, and to wade through much affliction. ³⁵ Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger ... in their humility, and firmer ... in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which ... cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God. (3:33–35)

Sanctification: to make holy

Ezra Taft Benson: [Those] who turn their lives over to God will find out that he can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. (“Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations,” *New Era*, May 1975, 20)

10. Lamanites Conquer Nephite Lands (57th year)

Dissenters go to Lamanites and stir up to anger and war. Capture Zarahemla and all lands southward.

¹¹ Now this great loss of the Nephites, and the great slaughter ..., would not have happened had it not been for their wickedness ... and it was among those also who professed to belong to the church of God. ¹² And it was because of the pride of their hearts, because of their exceeding riches, ... their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery, rising up in great contentions, and deserting away into the land of ... the Lamanites—¹³ And because of this their great wickedness, and their boastings in their own strength, they were left in their own strength; therefore they did not prosper, but were afflicted and smitten, and driven before the Lamanites, until they had lost possession of almost all their lands. ¹⁴ ... Moronihah did preach many things unto the people. ... ¹⁶ When ... they did repent he did ... lead them forth ... until they had regained ... one-half of all their lands. (4:11–14)

11. Laws were corrupted (Hel 5)

² For as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted. ...

Mosiah: It is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; ... ²⁷ And if the time

comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction even as he has hitherto visited this land. (Mosiah 29:27–28)

⁴ Nephi ... yielded up the judgment-seat, and took it upon him to preach the word of God all the remainder of his days.

12. Helaman’s words to his sons Nephi and Lehi (Hel 5)

⁶ I have given unto you the names of our first parents ... that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and ... their works ... that they were good. ⁷ Therefore, ... I would that ye should do that which is good, that it may be said of you, ... even as it has been said and written of them. ...

In Hebrew, *remember* implied action, not just thoughts.

Hebrew names also were words with meanings.

¹² Remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, ... whereon if men build they cannot fall.

13. Nephi and Lehi preach word of God (62nd year)

¹⁷ They did preach with great power, insomuch that they did confound many of those dissenters ..., insomuch that they ... did confess their sins and were baptized unto repentance, and immediately returned to the Nephites to endeavor to repair ... the wrongs which they had done. ¹⁸ ... Nephi and Lehi did preach unto the Lamanites with such great power and authority ... and they also had what they should speak given unto them—¹⁹ Therefore they did speak unto the great astonishment of the Lamanites, to the convincing them, insomuch that ... [8,000] Lamanites ... [were] baptized ..., and were convinced of the wickedness of the traditions of their fathers. (5:17–19)

Richard G. Scott: Is yours a culture where the husband exerts a domineering, authoritarian role, making all of the important decisions for the family? That pattern needs to be tempered so that both husband and wife act as equal partners, making decisions in unity for themselves and their family. No family can long endure under fear or force; that leads to contention and rebellion. Love is the foundation of a happy family.

These are other traditions that should be set aside, any aspect of heritage:

- That would violate the Word of Wisdom.
- That is based on forcing others to comply by the power of station often determined by heredity.
- That encourages the establishment of caste systems.
- That breeds conflict with other cultures.

There is serious danger in placing cultural heritage in priority above membership in the Church of Jesus Christ. ... It is a violation of God’s commandments for one culture to persecute another, whatever the reason. Should you choose, even unknowingly, to follow tradition which is in conflict with the teachings of the Lord, you choose to violate the sacred covenants made at baptism. (“Removing Barriers to Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 85)

14. Nephi and Lehi in prison (Hel 5)

²² After they had been cast into prison many days without food, behold, they went forth into the prison to take them that they might slay them. ²³ And ... Nephi and Lehi were encircled about as if by fire, even insomuch that they durst not lay their hands upon them for fear lest they should be burned. ...

Like Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego who walked in a fiery furnace (Dan 3).

At the prison, the earth shook. They were overshadowed with a cloud of darkness and heard a voice from the cloud three times.

²⁷ And ... they that were in the prison were Lamanites and Nephites who were dissenters. ... ⁴¹ Aminadab said unto them: You must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ, who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom; and ... the cloud of darkness shall be removed ...

Zoramites were some of the dissenters who became Lamanites.

⁴² And ... they all did begin to cry unto the voice ... even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed. ... ⁴⁶ There came a voice ..., saying: ⁴⁷ Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved. ... ⁴⁸ And ... they saw the heavens open; and angels came down out of heaven and ministered unto them.

Alma also was in darkness 3 days until he cried unto Jesus.

Look and live (brass serpent).

⁴⁹ And there were about three hundred souls who saw and heard these things; and ... they did go forth, ... declaring ... all the things which they had heard and seen, insomuch that the more part of the Lamanites were convinced of them, because of the greatness of the evidences. ... ⁵¹ And as many as were convinced did lay down their weapons of war, and also their hatred and the tradition of their fathers. ⁵² And ... they did yield up unto the Nephites the lands of their possession.

15. Questions

- Could a 23 year old man have written the Book of Mormon?
- How do these things apply to me now in my circumstances?
- Are these things true? (read, remember, ponder, ask sincerely)
“When ye shall read these things, ... remember how merciful the Lord hath been ... and ponder it in your hearts. And ... ask God ... in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.” (Moro. 10:3–6)
- As I read these chapters, how do I feel?
- Do they invite and entice me to love God, believe in Christ, and do good?

Conclusion

Leave enough time for conclusion!

Review how contention, pride, Gadianton, and wicked traditions affected the Nephites and those who professed to belong to the Church.

Read or refer to one of more of the quotes below that apply this to us.

Bear testimony.

Quotes

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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:

GENERAL

- BMRC = Dennis Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*
- TBM = Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols.
- OM = Original Manuscript
- PM = Printer’s Manuscript
- CR = Conference Report
- *LDS View* = This computer program with the scriptures in 11 languages was 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.achoiceiland.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