

FIRST VOICES

“ . . . in the land of their first inheritance . . . ”

“I speak unto you as the voice of one crying from the dust . . .”

-prophetic words from the past-



WHY WE BELIEVE WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU

In the pages of the First Voices Journal we often refer to a spiritual/historical record we affectionately call the *Translated Ancient American Indian Record*. Its more common names are *Nephite Record* and *Book of Mormon*. Please do not stop reading! Give us a moment of your time to provide an explanation as to **how important this book is for you.**

It is similar to the Bible in that it is a holy, spiritual, and civil record of the ancient Israelite people. Although the time period it covers is shorter, it is focused on a people God brought to ancient America from the land of Jerusalem and how he dealt with them and how they dealt with each other. It is about their prophets and their rulers,

their blessings and their struggles.

This book contains many beautiful teachings, prophecies, and accounts of holy men of God who were the forefathers of modern day Native Americans.

So in reality, the *Book of Mormon* is a book that belongs to the Native American – it is your book.

It just so happened that God used a non-Native to translate the book from its ancient language to English and He asked a non-Indian people (us) to carry it back to Native Americans for them to see what great things God did for their forefathers and to complete His plan for all of Israel.

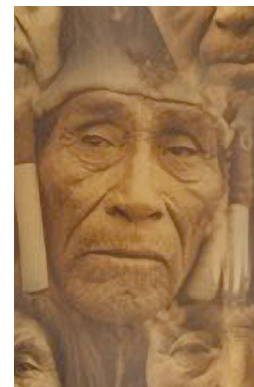
You may ask what you should do with the book. First, notice that the book establishes God's selection of Israel as his covenant people (including Native Americans) and that He will gather them together one day soon. It also testifies that Jesus Christ is the only

begotten Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. And it prophesies that a spiritual renewal and awakening will occur in the Americas led by the Native American. In many respects, it is the true culture of the Native American.

So you may now ask, why are we explaining all of this to you? Because we want to do our part in carrying out the will of God, i.e. returning your ancient and holy record back to you as we were told to do by God. You see, we are only messengers of God, carrying out His plans that he foretold, in the Bible, thousands of years ago. We are similar to John the Baptist, who fulfilled the prophecy of the coming of Jesus in Isaiah (40:3).

There is an old saying, “The truth may be hard to bear, but it stands on its own.” We want to show you how beautiful and inspiring this ancient record is, so here are a few quotes from it. See if

*It is about
their prophets
and their
rulers, their
blessings
and their
struggles.*



*So in reality,
the Book of
Mormon is
a book that
belongs to
the Native
American —
it is your book.*



they do not touch your heart
and inspire your mind.

*I will go and do the things
which the Lord hath
commanded, for I know
that the Lord gives no
commandments unto the
children of men, save he shall
prepare a way for them that
they may accomplish the
thing which he commands
them. (1 Nephi 3:7)*

*Wherefore, how great the
importance to make these
things known unto the
inhabitants of the earth, that
they may know that there
is no flesh that can dwell in
the presence of God, save it
be through the merits, and
mercy, and grace of the Holy
Messiah, who lays down his
life according to the flesh, and
takes it again by the power of
the Spirit, that he may bring
to pass the resurrection of
the dead, being the first that
should rise. (2 Nephi 2:8)*

*But behold, all things have
been done in the wisdom of
him who knows all things. (2
Nephi 2:24)*

*O, remember, my son, and
learn wisdom in thy youth;
yea, learn in thy youth to
keep the commandments of
God. Yea, and cry unto God
for all thy support; yea, let all
thy doings be unto the Lord,
and whithersoever you go
let it be in the Lord; yea, let*

*all thy thoughts be directed
unto the Lord; yea, let the
affections of thy heart be
placed upon the Lord forever.
Counsel with the Lord in all
thy doings, and he will direct
thee for good; yea, when you
lie down at night lie down
unto the Lord, that he may
watch over you in your sleep;
and when you rise in the
morning let thy heart be full
of thanks unto God; and if
ye do these things, ye shall
be lifted up at the last day.
(Alma 37:35-37)*

*And behold, I tell you these
things that ye may learn
wisdom; that ye may learn
that when ye are in the
service of your fellow beings
ye are only in the service of
your God. (Mosiah 2:17)*

*But behold, I say unto you
that ye must pray always,
and not faint; that ye must
not perform anything unto
the Lord save in the first
place ye shall pray unto the
Father in the name of Christ,
that he will consecrate thy
performance unto thee, that
thy performance may be for
the welfare of thy soul. (2
Nephi 32:9)*

*Yea, Joseph [of Egypt, son
of Jacob] truly said: Thus
saith the Lord unto me: A
choice seer will I raise up
out of the fruit of thy loins
[descendants]; and he shall
be esteemed highly among*

*the fruit of thy loins [Native
Americans]. And unto him
will I give commandment
that he shall do a work for
the fruit of thy loins, his
brethren, which shall be of
great worth unto them, even
to the bringing of them to the
knowledge of the covenants
which I have made with thy
fathers. (2 Nephi 3:7)*

*Are ye willing to mourn with
those that mourn; yea, and
comfort those that stand in
need of comfort, and to stand
as witnesses of God at all
times and in all things, and
in all places that ye may be
in, even until death, that ye
may be redeemed of God,
and numbered with those
of the first resurrection, that
ye may have eternal life...
(Mosiah 18:9)*

*And if men come unto me
I will show unto them their
weakness. I give unto men
weakness that they may be
humble; and my grace is
sufficient for all men that
humble themselves before
me; for if they humble
themselves before me, and
have faith in me, then will
I make weak things become
strong unto them. Behold, I
will show unto the Gentiles
their weakness, and I will
show unto them that faith,
hope and charity brings
unto me—the fountain of all
righteousness.
(Ether 12: 27:28)*

*And now, I, Moroni, would
speak somewhat concerning
these things; I would show
unto the world that faith is
things which are hoped for
and not seen; wherefore,
dispute not because ye see
not, for ye receive no witness
until after the trial of your
faith. (Ether 12:6)*

*For the fullness of mine
intent is that I may persuade
men to come unto the God
of Abraham, and the God of
Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
and be saved. (1 Nephi 6:4)*

*And now, my beloved son...
let us labor diligently; for
if we should cease to labor,
we should be brought under
condemnation; for we have
a labor to perform whilst in
this tabernacle of clay, that
we may conquer the enemy of
all righteousness, and rest our
souls in the kingdom of God.
(Moroni 9:6)*

*And now, my sons,
remember, 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, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. (Helaman 5:12)

THE LEGEND CONTINUES – THREE NATIVE TEACHERS

There are various stories and legends among many of the tribes throughout North, Central and South America of three men who at one time or another made an appearance in their village or among their people. They came as teachers, instructors, or ministers; but they generally delivered a spiritual message of some kind. We are going to examine two of these visits in this article.

The first was back in the late 1790's when Handsome Lake, a member of the Haudenosaunee people in New York, had a vision where three men appeared to him. Handsome Lake was thought to be dead by his family, but his half-brother Cornplanter, decided to wait to bury him.

Handsome Lake came out of his coma and told his family of the vision he had of three men who came to him from the Creator of the Earth. They had a special message for him

to share with his people. He was told that they had picked up many bad habits from the white man such as drinking, gambling, sexual promiscuity and beating their wives. The three messengers gave him many instructions and those teachings are part of what is called the Gaiwiiō (the "Good Word"). It later became more formally known as The Code of Handsome Lake.

Jumping ahead to the 1970's and heading south to the jungles of Peru, we learned of Christian missionaries teaching Biblical truths to some Native tribes along the Amazon. While the missionaries were on furlough, some local people tried to continue holding meetings, but most of the villagers did not show much interest. The day before Christmas three Indian looking men wandered into their village and asked if they could hold an outdoor church service. When the service commenced only a few people came. The three men spoke with no Bible in hand but recited from memory long passages of Scripture. At the same time, a great storm started to roll in and people began to be fearful. The leader of the three men told the people to have no fear and in a

loud voice he said, "Clouds go away – in the name of Jesus." Suddenly the skies cleared.

The next day the three men held another meeting and many more people came to hear them preach. Suddenly, one man fell to the ground and they carried him away. It appeared that he had fainted. Someone tried to revive him but they could not and after a while they realized he was dead. His skin was cold and he began to get stiff. The three visiting strangers came over to the man and put their hands on him and began to pray. Just as suddenly as the man died, he was alive again. He exclaimed, "I am not of this world any longer – I was with Jesus."

These three men worked many more miracles before the jungle took them back as mysteriously as it brought them forth.

Finally, from the ancient record known as the Book of Mormon we have the foundational source of the prior two accounts. When Jesus Christ was here in America after his Resurrection (John 10:16), he picked twelve disciples (3 Nephi 12). After ministering to the people for several days, he privately

spoke to his disciples, asking them, "What is it that ye desire of me, after I am gone to the Father?"

And they all spake, save it were three, saying, "We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom."

Nine of the disciples desired to serve the Lord until they reached the age of seventy-two years old and then pass from this life into the next and be with the Lord. But there were three who did not speak.

He turned himself unto the three, and said unto them, "What will ye that I should do unto you, when I am gone unto the Father?" And they sorrowed in their hearts, for they durst not speak unto him the things which they desired. And he said unto them, "Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me. Therefore, more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death; but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of

men, even until all things shall be fulfilled according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory with the powers of heaven."

The three who were silent at first had the desire to remain until the Lord would come again and continue to work for him in whatever manner they were commanded. So it is of no surprise to learn that whenever there is an appearance of three men that there is the possibility that they could be those three disciples that chose not to end their earthly ministry but to continue on until the Lord returns.

We might consider for a moment the impact of these incidents and if they can still happen today. We would most certainly say that that they can and do. It would behoove us to be watchful and prayerful because we never know when and where the Lord might have them appear again.





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*...in preparing the
way for the fulfilling
of his covenants,
which he hath made
to his people who are
of the house of Israel.*