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FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH AND MORMON STUDIES

Hugh W. Nibley

# The Book of Mormon and the Ruins: The Main Issues

## Summary:

Hugh Nibley addresses issues that cause people to question the historicity of the Book of Mormon. He gives evidence to support the claim that people inhabited the American continent for centuries before the arrival of the Nephites, that the Hill Cumorah was not too far away for Moroni to reach, and that the "fulness of iniquity" described in the Book of Mormon has much evidence in extant art from that time.

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THE BOOK OF MORMON AND THE RUINS--THE MAIN ISSUES

7. THE RUINS - Who can account for them? Answer: Nobody! The elementary questions remain unanswered. At every step students confess their helplessness before a complete MYSTERY:

A. A. Anguiano, Mexico antes de los Aztecas (Mex. 1967). p.16. "The discussions concerning the settlement of America are very far from over." 18. "...countless theories ...are circulating about the origin of the Olmecs." 20. The physical appearance of the Olmecs is unknown...26. The great carved heads remain a mystery..."La Venta is disconcerting...by the mystery of the mental processes of these strange monuments." 28. The great monument called the King's Stela: "Who was it? What is it trying to say? The necessary information is missing for venturing even the most minimal speculation!" p.32. "No one knows what became of the Olmecs." p.34. From the 14,000 years of Preclassical occupation "not a single item of clothing has been found." Why were wheels never used for transporting people and merchandise in a very active trade and commerce? "There is no explanation" for these things (pp.55, 83). p.60. "It is a MYSTERY how they were able to perforate (hard stone) using the stone tools of the time." p.66. "How and to whom did the idea occur of erecting these prodigious structures [the pyramids of Tetotihuacan]? Nobody has the least idea." Nor has anyone an idea what the stone and mosaic faces were for. p.67. "How they were able to erect an idol so huge that the Europeans were unable to tear it down... is a mystery." p.71. "Neither the Aztecs of the 16th Century nor their predecessors, the Toltecs, knew anything at all about the people of Tetotihuacan. They knew only the ruins of a fabulous city." p.72. As to the expensive practice of building one structure over another, "the reason for this practice is unknown." p.90. The ubiquitous geometrical designs - "nobody knows for what purpose they were worked out." p.94. The "yoke" and ax stones: "the purpose of these objects is not known." p.103. "Up to the present time the cause for the abandoning of Monte Alban [and many other places] has not been determined...So far the Zapotec writing has not been deciphered." p.132. Regarding Mayan origins, "there are theories for every taste." p.134. The three Mayan codices "are still a long way from being completely deciphered."

T. P. Culbert (Ed.) The Classic Maya Collapse (U. of New Mex., 1973). p.218f. "...we will probably never really and fully identify the relative significance of the various historical forces, their causes and consequences, to everyone's satisfaction... Since we are in fact frequently unable to resolve these questions with respect to literate civilizations of the recent past, archaeology cannot expect to succeed in endeavors fraught with even greater problems. Succeeding fashion will necessarily favor other causes and (p.219) types of explanation, the chief result will be to provide endless occupation for intellectuals so concerned." p.258. As to the great southern collapse, "no solution acceptable to the majority of students has yet appeared."

L. Sejourne, El Universo de Quetzalcoatl (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura economica, 1962), p.16. "...every changing attempt to know the home of the progenitor of Nahuatl culture (Quetzalcoatl) is irredeemably doomed to failure."

Michael D. Coe, The Maya Scribe and His World (N.Y.: Grolier Club, 1973). p.83. "Unhappily, our knowledge of mesoamerican ethnoastronomy is abysmal. For this... the major fault lies with ethnologists and social anthropologists more involved with lightweight "problems" such as acculturation while major segments of mesoamerican mental life perish under their very noses."



II. Arguments about origins get nowhere.

W. Krickeberg, Altmexikanische Kulturen (Berlin: Safari-Verlag, 1966), p.566. "Present evidence is totally inadequate to explain how these advanced cultures arose." p.567. "Apparently without roots, without any preparation, the earliest American civilizations appear ready on the scene: in Mesoamerica the Olmec, in the Andean lands the Chavin. These remarkable phenomena can perhaps only be explained satisfactorily by assuming one or more drives influencing ancient America from the outside. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how primitive conditions which varied little during 15,000 to 20,000 years of persistence could suddenly experience a violent surge of progress, passing through the whole scale of advancing culture to a full blown civilization. Such a thing is utterly out of the question in the case of the two oldest American civilizations: All of a sudden they are simply there." p.552ff. "...until the present time the Archaic and the Olmec antiquities are the oldest remains of the former inhabitants of central and southern Mexico. Excavations in Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico reveal two higher cultures: the Anasazi and the Hohokam on the Gila and Salt rivers. They were basketmakers without the bow or the tomahawk or pottery. Predecessors of the Pueblos, they also occupied Northern Mexico from 100-500 A.D. But "it is of course completely unthinkable that (these civilizations) suddenly emerge to speak out of nothing, which is what it amounts to if one takes the primitive culture forms of the Cochise and the Basket-maker levels as the "nothing" in question. p.556. There are "Paleolithic" findings in Oaxaca, Yucatan and Guetamala but they are "very late and belong to a time when the great Classical and Post-classical cultures of Mesoamerica had long since passed away." p.567. Not only are we completely ignorant of where the Olmecs got their highly developed technique of working jade, their astonishing skill as sculptors handling enormous stone blocks, and their high art of portraiture... but the greater riddle still remains to be answered: where does their sophisticated system of writing and calendar-reckoning come from...The oldest known in Meso-america..?

A. A. Anguiano, p.71. "The Aztecs and Toltecs knew nothing about the people who had occupied the land before them."

III. People before the Nephites. Many Latter-day Saints are disturbed when they read of remains that must be much older than Book of Mormon times. In their simplistic reading of the book they assume that the only people permitted in the hemisphere before Columbus were either descendants of Lehi or of Jared and his brother. The Book of Mormon corrects this myopia quite handily. One example will suffice.

Hel.3:4-12. Please read! Here we learn how the Nephites pushing up from the south "an exceeding great distance" [it is more than 1200 air miles from Guatamala to Mexico City] in a major infiltration settled a clearly defined territory. a) Sea to the north and south as well as east and west can only be found in one region in the Western Hemisphere - Mesoamerica and Central Mexico. The expressions referring to the seas where ancient, e.g., in the Codex Ramirez (Mexico 1944) we are told how the first Montezuma conquered "almost from sea to sea" p.79, and ruled to the "sea southward, and in another direction to the limits of the great sea," 300 leagues to the south. b) The Central Highland of Mexico is described in all early records as a land of many waters. Indeed, Edward Seler, Ges. Abh. IV, 3 maintains that the name usually translated as "Highlands", Anauac, really meant land of many waters. c) The complete deforestation of the land does not suit the vast forests of the north but was a very serious problem in ancient Mesoamerica. Compare Hel.3:5,6,7,8, 9,10 with the condition in the Valley of Oaxaca in the 5C to 9C when over-population "created a growing shortage of timber for construction and firewood for cooking, apparently reaching such an alarming extent that the hills were completely stripped of forests...." According to W. T. Sanders, (in Culbert, p.363) Among the major causes contributing to the rapid decline and collapse both in the Highlands of Mexico and in the Mayan country was the necessity of bringing more land under cultivation with "a corresponding decline in forest products."

G. R. Willey & D. B. Shimkin (in Culbert, p.486) "In addition, the expansion of land clearance...might have reduced the availability of forest resources... accelerated in high population areas where potential fodder was gathered for fuel... as the expansion of Maya agriculture in the Late Classic became more costly and less reliable..."

Instead of reporting spectacular ruins the new settlers find only depleted resources, the timber all used up for housing and fuel. Since such forests never return, the damage could have been exceedingly ancient. The inhabitants had disappeared though the entire land had once been occupied by a vast population. For the Nephites they were simply "the former inhabitants of the land" (Hel.3:5,6). The non-committal term and the failure to mention Jaredites even by way of speculation make it clear that the new pioneers had no idea who the people were, only that they had been there a long time before and that they had filled the land. They were not Lamanites for the Lamanites were contemporary savages, not a lost civilization.

The moral: this removes the commonest stumbling-block to the LDS toward accepting both the Book of Mormon account and the archaeological evidence that people were inhabiting the lands many centuries, even millennia, before any Book of Mormon people moved in.

- IV. The racial issue is confusing because through the years one simplistic explanation has been confronted by another. On the one hand it was assumed that since the Jaredites became extinct there remained only Nephites and Lamanites in the land to account for every legend or artifact ever turned up. On the other hand is the equally naive doctrine that everything that ever came to the Western Hemisphere entered by way of the Bering Strait and therefore has to be of Mongolian extraction. This theory is by no means a discovery of modern science - a glance at the map suffices as it did for Josiah Priest, American Antiquities (Albany, N.Y.: Hoffman and White, 1835), in Joseph Smith's day.

A. A. Anguiano, p.16. "There are among the Indians...mongoloides...negroids... Southern European types...giants (Patagonian)...pigmies (Venezuela and Brazil). Many anthropologists consider it impossible that all these types should be traced to a single Bering route from Asia. South American skulls and dialects both have strong Oceanian resemblances and indicate a Pacific crossing."

Seler, IV, 3. The two main native traditions have the ancestors coming from the East by Sea and from the West by Sea...:8. All agree that their ancestors came in boats.

Those favoring single-shot explanations of everything have been significantly silent on the subject of blood types. According to G. A. Matson, a leading authority in the field, the dominant blood type among the American Indians is type "O", though some tribes e.g., the Blackfeet are almost 100% type "A" as are the Hawaiians. Mongolians on the other hand are almost exclusively type "B" which is exceedingly rare among the Indians. This should pretty well settle the race question but the issue has been carefully avoided.

- V. Related to the question of race is that of migration, a subject on which the experts have recently taken to bold speculation, which has hitherto been crippled by the fallacy that the first comers to the land must be the only comers. Thus Anguiano writes (p.15): "The Ten Tribes theory is demonstrably false, because at the time those tribes were lost America was already populated." Would that keep others from arriving? Must the first inhabitants be forever after the only inhabitants? Anguiano's argument of silence is also unsatisfying, e.g., against Egyptian or Phoenician origins he puts the lack of metals; against Viking landings, no trace

of surviving racial types. In each case, how can we be sure?

Many have noted that the great ceremonial centers of Mesoamerica were highly "reminiscent of Angkor and the Khmer civilization of Southeast Asia" (M. D. Coe) p.7. Robert Heine-Geldern in particular calls attention to the often stunning resemblances between the exotic remains of Cambodia, India, Mexico and Guatemala; the impressive number of Chinese elements in Olmec: the tiger-cult, the bronzes, the jade carving, etc. Contacts must have been by sea, not directly across the Pacific however but using the Kuroshyo-Drift to follow the great circle by the Northern route - as we have suggested for the Jaredites, (Krickeberg, pp.571f, 574f).

But there is something seriously wrong here for the whole Southeast Asia complex does not arise until the 9C and 10C, A.D., so they could not have inspired the American cult centers built a thousand years earlier (ib.572). The only explanation is to look for a common source which is found in the Near East at a much earlier time - it is there, according to Heine-Geldern, that we find the originals of both the American and East Asiatic forms. And that happens to be Book of Mormon people came from.

But if the people came from Asia there is a puzzling lack of cultivated plants and domestic animals of the Old World in the New World as well as the absence in the latter of the plow, potter's wheel, bellows, glass, iron, stringed instruments and the true arch (ib. 569). This is more than out-balanced by more important cultural items such as political patterns, cosmology, art, religion, symbolism, ceremonial, architecture, etc., which are far too much alike in the two hemispheres to be explained by the recent and far-fetched theory of "convergence." How to explain a super abundance of one type of cultural equipment along with a complete deficiency of another kind of stuff? The solution is in the type of migration indicated. The people who crossed the sea were not artisans or technicians but cultivated folk of a religious and intellectual--priestly--persuasion. What is indicated according to Heine-Geldern is "carefully planned and prepared undertakings primarily with missionary goals." Then why no trace of SE Asiatic religious teachings in America? Why no Hinduism and Buddhism. The answer again is to look to the Near East where Spanish Priests and Puritan divines instantly detected an abundance of parallels between the rites and teachings of the Old World and the New.

- VI. Uniformity amidst variety is the trend in comparative studies of American cultures. "There was a single, unified body of thought in Meso-America--Mexico and Central America--which we would call a Mesoamerican religion" (Coe, p. 8) The same forms extend however far beyond Mesoamerica in all directions. It is in fact a hemispherical culture when a Peruvian figure from 800 B.C. cannot be distinguished from a Hopi cachina doll or dancer. "What we have in America," writes L. Sejourne (p. 4), "is a monolithic past, devoid of perspective, as if emerging out of nothing." This applies not only to middle America but to the whole hemisphere. "One has the impression of a series of separate dramatic events; as one act comes to an end the scene changes and another play begins with a new throng of actors. Often a number of different plays are going on at the same time in different languages." (S. Linne, in Krickeberg, p. 567). But the actors, the costumes, the plots and the idioms are all strangely alike - is it many plays or one play of many acts? The Jaredites and the Nephites, cultural poles apart, teach us the same lesson in the same way.

Some examples: Holmes collected extensive parallels from the Mississippi Valley to Mexico and Mesoamerica; he showed that at the time of the Conquistadores there was a massive movement of tribes from the north to the Southeastern United States (e.g., the Cherokee from Lake Erie) in the manner of the Nephite movement toward the Northeast in the 5C (Seler V, 44ff). The platform mounds of the Mississippi Valley are right out of Mexico; the eagle, the Sun-cult, Copper and mussel-shell inlay of the Etowah culture likewise. The Huaztek and Aztec styles and customs are found in the Southeastern United States, and Huaztek pottery closely resembles that of the Pueblo. These resemblances are easily enough explained since the Gulf



Coast is an open passage as the early Spanish reports made clear and life on the Continent was characterised by great mobility, as it still is among the Indians. An example is the spread of the Mesoamerican cult of the dead throughout all the Mississippi Valley between 1500 and 1550 (Krikeberg, p.559). This leads us to our next point:

- VII. Cumorah a Hill Too Far? What were the people of Zarahemla doing in New York State? Some have made this a major stumbling-block to the accepting the Book of Mormon. The Peruvian archaeologist F. Kauffmann-Diög shows us that this is a premature and naive way of thinking. The following is from his Manual de Arqueología Peruana (Lima: Peisa, 1973) p. 174: "The Fallacy of Distance: A Variety of things has contributed to hindering the progress of thinking about the intercommunications between

### LA FALACIA DE LA LEJANIA

Son varios los aspectos que han contribuido a cerrar el paso al pensamiento acerca de intercomunicaciones remotas entre las culturas americanas. Un concepto flojo de las distancias—en los medios no estrictamente especializados—subrayado por la falsa percepción que motivan las fronteras actuales de los países americanos, constituye uno de esos aspectos, tal vez el más popular, para no decir vulgar, que obstaculiza admitir contactos y derivados culturales.

Recordemos que las distancias mundiales no fueron impedimento para que el hombre llegara a la América. Y ese hombre que llegó a América, asimismo, no encontró barrera que no venciera para desplazarse por todo el Continente.

Así también los fundamentos de la alta cultura, debieron propagarse y echar raíz en ambientes propicios. La disciplina arqueológica comparada, muestra que, en el área mexicana, el Formativo, o sea la fase en que se implanta la alta cultura, es más antiguo que en el Perú. Entre otras razones que pueden ser esgrimidas, está la que la investigación arqueológica no ha desenterrado en territorio peruano los antecedentes de nuestra cultura Chavin, que es la Formativa de la alta cultura peruana. El hombre copia con extrema facilidad elementos nuevos, pero parece ser reacio a la invención, sin que esto signifique una posición difusionista extrema. Y si aquí recordamos lo dicho sobre el Formativo mexicano (Mesoamérica) y sobre la percepción distorsionada acerca de las distancias geográficas americanas en círculos no especializados, nos será más fácil admitir la posibilidad del origen alóctono de Chavin. Las gentes que moraban con anterioridad a Chavin, son distintas en jerarquía y contenido cultural a Chavin, y no representan sus antecesores culturales.

El mapa adjunto podrá parecer elemental, pero veremos que puede ofrecer interesantes enseñanzas. Está destinado a corregir la perspectiva geográfica habitual. Muestra, en primer lugar, que los límites del Imperio incaico, entre Ancasmayo y Maule o el río Bio Bio, comprenden una distancia aérea semejante a la que hay entre los confines septentrionales del Incario (Ancasmayo) y New York. Este hecho, aunque pueril, por lo que nadie lo ha utilizado, lleva a meditaciones saludables sobre "lo chico que es el mundo". Evidentemente que estamos acostumbrados a pensar que Maule, en Chile, está más cercano a nosotros que New York; precisamente por la falacia a que nos inducen

las fronteras nacionales y las diferencias culturales ostensibles entre los países. Pero esto no es todo. Sabemos que los ejércitos de los últimos Incas se movilizaban del Cusco y del Collao hasta Quito y Ancasmayo. Estas distancias equivalen aproximadamente, a las que existen entre Ancasmayo de los Incas y la ciudad de México. La cultura maya y la zona de su influencia en dirección sur no discutida, queda naturalmente mucho más próxima.

remotely separated American cultures. A superficial concept of distances...reinforced by a false perception of present-day boundaries of the Americas is one of those things, perhaps the most popular, not to say vulgar position, which absolutely refuses to admit cultural contacts and derivations. But let us bear in mind that global distances were no impediment to the arrival of man in America, and that upon arrival there no barriers prevented him from occupying every part of the continent. The same fundamental...comparative archaeology shows that in the Mexican area the Formative Period...is older than in Peru. The adjoining map may appear elemental but we see that it offers interesting information. It is designed to correct the usual geographical perspective. It shows in the first place that the boundaries of the Incan Empire, between Ancasmayo and Maule or the Bio Bio River embrace a distance equivalent to that between the northern boundary of Inca land (Ancasmayo) and New York. That fact, elementary as it seems, though none has made use of it, raises salutary reflections on how small a world it is." From the northern limit

of the Incan Empire to Mexico City is almost as far as from Mexico City to Cumorah in New York State. Incan armies which marched from end to end of the Empire through the Andes covered more distance and a far more difficult terrain than the stretch between Mexico and New York State covered in the great military withdrawal occupying many years.

- VIII. Voices from the dead. Critics within the church and outside have often asked where are the great heaps of evidence that should confirm the Book of Mormon? The answer is that they are there for anyone who will take the trouble to look for them or at them. But an air of mystery has nonetheless always surrounded the Redman, even in the writings of the earliest priests and frontiersmen.

William A. Bullard, Jr. (Culbert p. 240): "The old Classic culture with its social controls was completely sundered and swept away. The Postclassic is a new chapter, if not, indeed, a new book." p. 263. "...the fabulous cities of the Puuc area were totally and finally abandoned..." L. Sejourne, p. 179. "Not only the Maya country, but the Atlantic Coast, Oaxaca, and the Central Highlands of Mexico were all deserted at once!

Eth.2:8 "...whoso should possess this land...should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off..." (also verse 9, 10:)  
"And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land that they are swept off."

- IX. What was "the fulness of iniquity" in question? This takes us to the dark side of early American civilization. A 16th Century description of "Rites and Ceremonies...employed by the Indians of This New Spain, discovered in 1856, we first read about sacred gatherings for a sacrament that recall in detail the events of the Savior's visit in 3 Nephi. And then proceeds to tell how those same practices became corrupted to a nightmare of cruelty and bloodshed. The Quetzalcoatl religion has two opposite sides according to Seler III, 330. The one was the religion of Quetzalcoatl the great prophet and savior who departed with the promise to return; the other was the cult traced to the time of King Uemac, "at which time the people turned to war and human sacrifice." The Book of Mormon tells us a good deal about both religions. The wickedness of the Nephites was the perversion of what had been good: Moroni 9:19. "And they have become strong in their perversion and they are alike brutal, sparing none." What Mormon describes in his letter to his son in the 9th Chapter of Moroni is clearly the bloody warrior cult of later times.

The evil has two aspects in the Book of Mormon. A. General corruption and licentiousness, with frequent mention of that "delight in the shedding of blood" which is "the favorite theme of the Warrior Age after the 10C." (Sejourne 164), and B. The domination of secret societies with their oaths, signs insignia, etc. These lasts are very much in evidence in all the Postclassical Art. Seler II, 75f. maintains that the word Nauatl from naual means disguised, masked, secret; also (II, 616) that the purpose of the vast display of overwhelming symbolism, especially of the lion or jaguar, eagle and snake motifs was to make the society members objects of terror to all the world. In the Book of Mormon the ubiquitous eagle, lion and snake motifs are only hinted at, but in the correct context. When Nephi tells us how "upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceeding high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them" (2 Nephi 4:25), he comes as near as possible to describing the experience of an initiate in the Quetzalcoatl mysteries and some of our own Plains Indians (Sejourne 13ff)

The serpent figures in the Book of Mormon as a rival for the possession of the land (Ether 10:19). The story told in Ether 9:31-34 closely parallels the Hopi



prologue to their famous Snake Ceremonies, and in both cases the event concludes when "the Lord did send rain upon the face of the earth." (Ether 9:35).

great Felides, lion, jaguar and puma figure everywhere in the Postclassical as representing the valor of the societies of youthful warriors, the cutting edge of Aztec conquest. So in the Book of Mormon as in Malichi we read of the young lion that reaks havoc among the aliens (3 Nephi 12:16; 21:12; Mormon 5:24). In a rare Maya battle scene four soldiers have red hair having marked their heads with red (Coe p. 62). Cf the Lamanites putting the same mark on themselves (Al, 3:4, & 14-16).

But whereas this dark side of the picture quite overwhelms us in some areas in Mesoamerica it is deliberately played down in the Book of Mormon which tells us that such things existed but refuses to go into detail lest the reader be harrowed up or corrupted (Hel. 6:22-32) "Now behold it is these secret oaths and covenants which Alma commanded his son should not go forth unto the world, lest they should be a means of bringing down the people unto destruction." (Hel. 6:25).

At the center of Ancient American studies today lies the sovereign question, Why did everything collapse so suddenly, so completely, and so mysteriously? To this question "no solution acceptable to the majority of students has yet appeared." (Culbert 263). J. Eric Thompson's theory is that people "in an increasingly complex society had largely lost the ability to act for themselves." But the valuable collection of studies edited by T. P. Culbert, The Classic Maya Collapse (U. of New Mex, 1973) reaches an overall consensus which is worth setting forth in the words of the various contributors. It may help to put the Book of Mormon statement in a roughly parallel column.

Culbert, p.91. "Oversuccessful, overstrained, probably overbearing, Tikal would have been at the mercy of...ecological, social and political catastrophes..."

E.W.Andrews, p.263 "As civilization becomes more complex, it becomes more vulnerable--as we are discovering to our increasing horror in recent years...the problems of maintenance and unity increase geometrically."

W.T.Sanders, p.359 "...rise of population density, decline of per capita income, increasing local specialization in crops, heavier reliance upon...the periphery for basic materials and more highly organized trade...closely correlated with militarism (and)...a shift from egalitarian to ranked and stratified society." 363. "Recent studies favor political and economic causes... military incursions...disrupted the trade network...farmland gobbled up the forests... 364 "...an increasing distance between peasant and noble, an economic deterioration in the average peasant's lifestyle, and an increase of nutritionally based diseases." "The only reasonably explanation (for sudden catastrophic population decline) for the loss (of population) is migration, stimulated by peasant dissatisfaction and permitted by the breakdown of the political system."

Jac.2:13-21...you have obtained many riches... ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts... God...condemneth you, and if ye persist...his judgments must speedily come upon you.

3 Ne.6:5...many merchants...and also many lawyers, and many officers. 10-12..and people began to be distinguished by ranks...And thus there began to be great inequality...insomuch that the church began to be broken up.

Mor.1:7. The whole face of the land had become covered with buildings, & the people were as numerous almost...as the sand of the sea...8 And...there began to be a war between the Nephites...& the Lamanites & the Lemuelites & the Ishmaelites (until)...12...the Lamanites withdrew their design (conquest). Al.28:10-13...the destruction of many thousand lives...an awful scene of bloodshed...And thus we see how great the inequality of man is because of sin and transgression.

Al.5:54...will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another...in the persecution of your brethren who humble themselves...?

Al.46:23f...we who are despised...shall not be trodden down...let us preserve our liberty... 27f I shall stir up insurrection...I do not fear you power nor your authority.

M.C.Webb, p.402f "...rivalry over trade was a major cause of war...Probably in many cases allegiance was simply transferred to the intruders." 403. "...the proximate cause (of the great collapse) was the spread of the Post-classic pattern of secular trade and commercial war into the Maya area."

General Summary (G.R.Willey & D.B.Shimkin) p.458. "...Late Classic society was more sharply differentiated into elite and commoner strata than...Early Classic times. As this process of an elite consolidation went on (there was)...a related development of a class of burocrats and craft specialists ...461. in the 7th and 8th Centuries "Maya civilization...was integrated at the elite level in a more impressive fashion than ever before," as "signs of regionalism" appear. 470. "Intensified fighting among cities, intercity fighting, crop loss and destruction, malnutrition, and disease...reduced the population" (e.g. 90% at Tikal--Culbert)

p.484. "The most vital aspects" of the collapse are, "1) the role of the elite class, 2) the widening social gulf between the elite and the commoners, 3) the competition between centers, 4) agricultural problems, 5) demographic pressures and disease burdens, and 6) the changing effects on...external trade." 484. "The expansion of the hereditary elite population was clearly a major force in the geographic expansion of the Late Classical...485...the role of the elite must have become increasingly exploitative as resource margins declined...widening social distance (was) an inevitable accompaniment of the evolution of ranked, and probably kin-based, society into a class structured one...In some areas...the numbers of commoners were being maintained only by recruitment and capture from other centers. Yet the upper class continued to grow, to expand its demands for luxury...and to strive to compete with rival centers and aristocracies...The priestly leaders of these great centers, in their efforts to outdo each other, to draw more wealth and prestige to themselves...must have diverted all possible labor and capital to their aggrandizement. 486. Add to this the competition for trade...and we can see the situation brought to a fighting pitch." All leading to a "rapid down-spiraling to extinction."

Hel.6:5ff. 8...whether it were among the Lamanites or...the Nephites...they did have free intercourse one with another, to buy and sell to get gain, according to their desire...and they became exceeding rich. 17 (Within a few years)...to get gain...they began to commit secret murders, & to rob and to plunder...(leading to a series of wars, v.20ff).

3 Ne.6:12. And the people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning, yea, some were ignorant because of their poverty, & others did receive great learning because of their riches.

Hel.13:22...ye do always remember your riches...unto great swelling, envyings, strifes, malice, persecutions & murders...31...the time cometh that he curseth your riches, that they become slippery, that ye cannot hold them...

Hel.11:1...contentions did increase...that there were wars throughout all the land among all the people of Nephi.

Al.45:21...many little dissensions and distrubance among the people...24...they grew proud...because of their exceeding riches.

Al.51:8...those of high birth...were supported those who sought power and authority over the people

Al.32:4...upon the hill Onidah (Zoramite expansion 5...they are despised because of their poverty, yea, and more especially by our priests; for they have cast us out of our synagogues which we have labored abundantly to build with out own hands; and they have cast us out because of our exceeding poverty; and we have no place to worship...what shall we do?

3 Ne.6:27...those judges had many friends and kindreds; and...almost all the lawyers and the high priests, did gather...together, and unite with the kin dreds of those judges...28. And they did enter into a covenant one with another...

3 Ne.30:2 Turn...from...your idolatries, & your murders, and your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes...

Hel.6:31...the Nephites...turned out of the way of righteousness...did build up unto themselves idols of their gold and silver.

3 Ne.6:15...Satan had great power...stirring up of the people...themping them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of world...17. And thus...they were in a state of awful wickedness.

187. "Population growth increased demand on resources, 2) growing manpower allows economic expansion, 3) differential growth and longevity divided social classes (the poor were short-lived), 4) efforts to compensate for manpower shortage...were increasingly important causes of war." The economy forced everything in the direction of war. 490. "...the Maya elite...shared like training...prestige, beliefs, interregional cooperation...which acted to control warfare and promote geographical expansion," while it "increasingly separated them from the commoners."

191. The elite "made no technological or social adaptive innovations which might have mitigated these difficulties. In fact, the Maya managerial elite persisted in traditional directions up to the point of collapse." With Religion and Law on their side, the Elite needed to make no concessions.

Sejourné, p.183. "The spiritual anemia was followed by a state of permanent struggles for power...the whole country (Cent.Mex.) broke up into little communities, each claiming its own history and origin." The battle scenes show the fulfillment of the message of the time an Prophet..."Mesoamerican fell little by little into a ruinous materialism...It is as if the message of Quetzalcoatl, the American Prophet, had been consumed by the organic inertia which it was his mission to denounce."

Al.26:25...Let us take up arms against them, that we may destroy them...out of the land, lest they overrun and destroy us.

Hel.11:1...there were wars throughout all the land among all the people of Nephi. 2. And it was this secret and of robbers who did carry on this work of destruction.

3 Ne.2:17 (It was economic warfare) between the robbers and the people of Nephi...18....the Gadiar ton robbers did gain many advantages over them 19...insomuch that they were about to be smitten down, and this because of their iniquity.

Hel.6:38...the Nephites (instead of reform) did build up and support them (the robber societies).. ...they had come down to believe in their works and partake of their spoils...

AL.10:27...the foundation of the destruction of this people is beginning to be laid by...your lawyers and your judges.

3 Ne.7:2 The people...did separate one from another into tribes, every man according to his family and his kindred and his friends; and thus they did destroy the government of the land. 3. And every tribe did appoint a chief ...6. And the regulation of the government were destroyed (by the king-men) 7...the more righteous part of the people had nearly all become wicked...11...the tribes of the people...were united (only) in the hatred of those who had entered into a covenant to destroy the government.



