

Marian Bodine, "Book of Mormon vs. the Bible (or common sense)"

(Review and Commentary by D. Charles Pyle)

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Now, Marian Bodine knows more about Mormonism than anybody I know on the planet earth. --Hank Hanegraaff, President of the Christian Research Institute, on the 20 January 1998 Bible Answerman broadcast (nearly halfway through the broadcast). (This was said while promoting the new video "The Mormon Puzzle," which is now being used by the Southern Baptist Convention. Ms. Bodine pronounced the video as most accurate!!!)

I am always curious about what others have to say about the Book of Mormon, so I requested an operator at the Christian Research Institute (CRI) to send me some information on Mormonism. I was appalled at what I received. Here was a hodgepodge collection of disjointed "documentation" on the falsehood of the Book of Mormon, so-called "false prophecies" of Joseph Smith, and a few of the other old (and oft-answered) anti-Mormon chestnuts. The more hilarious of the papers, however, was the one known as Statement DM-192.

Having some time on my hands, I thought that I might supply a review and commentary on this embarrassment of a research paper, that comes from an organization that should know better than to distribute this caliber of outdated refuse. After reading it, I decided that a more apt title for the paper would be *CRI and Ms. Bodine Versus the Book of Mormon, the Bible and Common Sense*.

I felt that as the CRI paper has fairly wide distribution (I received a copy of it only a few months previous to receiving the copy from CRI) and usage by a good number of the dupes of CRI and other decidedly anti-Mormon establishments (and as it would also give one more proof that few organizations are more undeserving of the inclusion of the word *research* in their title than CRI), I felt that I might venture.

Let's now look at the concerns that are incorporated into this paper. (This review might not be as easy to follow as it should be unless the reader is looking at the original document in question and following along. I have omitted the expression of most of the reasons Bodine gives due to potential copyright issues. Readers are encouraged to go to the web page found at the URL <http://www.equip.org/free/DM192.htm> for comparison purposes. Prefacing Ms. Bodine's arguments is a quotation from one of James E. Talmage's well-known books, which reads:

"...If we compare the historical, prophetic, and doctrinal parts of the Book of Mormon with the great truths of science and nature, we find no contradictions-no absurdities-nothing unreasonable." (The Articles of Faith, page 505 [page 453, 1983 edition and afterward])

Apparently the author felt that this quotation of a quotation from Orson Pratt's long outdated *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon* would lend to the doubt that the paper was intended to raise in the minds of sincere investigators and recent converts to the Church. The author then

proceeds to assault the reader's eyes, and intelligence, with the following forty-three reasons (reasons without reason, as the readers of this review will be able to see for themselves) to abandon faith in the Book of Mormon by setting up what she believes to be absurdities in the Book of Mormon:

Reply to Bodine's First (1st) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

It is interesting that the author would choose to compare the ancient Egyptians to Hitler. I am sure that any Jew who, during the Holocaust, was imprisoned in the Concentration Camps would disagree with this comparison. Hitler wanted to inspire hatred of the Jews because he needed a scapegoat upon which he could blame all of the economic troubles of the German nation. He then proceeded to exterminate them in mass numbers, encourage and practice scientific experiments upon them, as well as heap a host of other atrocities upon the Jews of Europe.

The Egyptians, on the other hand, were inspired by the fear that the Israelites would soon outnumber them and would side with the enemies of Egypt in the midst of a newly risen regime (Exodus 1:8-14). They attempted to practice infanticide (a common method to keep population down in ancient times) and set them to work because it was easier to keep watch upon the people when they were fatigued by the labors of the hot Egyptian day.

The events were the fulfillment of prophecy (Genesis 15:13-14) to show forth the glory and might of God and enrich the Israelites with the riches of Egypt. Did the Jews under Hitler become rich from Germany? Did God use Nazi Germany to show forth His glory with plagues and a mass exodus? For whatever reason, he did not.

There is a vast difference between the two groups of people and their practices! Did the Egyptians kill six millions of Jews as Hitler did? What Jew, under hardship, would want to go back to the Concentration Camps? What Jew ever said that conditions were better there than in their native land of Israel during the nearly constant state of war that they have been in since their partial return? What Holocaust victims ever remembered how well fed they were? Things could have not been that bad in Egypt for the Hebrews to want to return there during hardship (Exodus 14:12; 16:3, et al.)! The Lord cursed two nations because of their inhospitality to Israel (Deuteronomy 23:3-6), at the same time commanding the Israelites not to abhor an Egyptian (Deuteronomy 23:7-8). There is simply no comparison between these events!

What of Ms. Bodine's prohibition of God's use of the "corrupt" Egyptian language to write the Book of Mormon because the Egyptians were an idol worshipping people? Since when did that ever stop God from using the languages of other peoples to convey His word to the children of men? The Apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees (which a number of scholars regard as *the* primary source for the history of the period after Darius) speaks of the outrages of the Greek rulers after the death of Alexander the Great, which included stealing the gold and furnishings of the temple, encouraging disobedience to God's law, desecrating the temple, and killing many Jews, and their infants, because they continued to circumcise their children and had copies of the Law of God in their possession (1 Maccabees 1:7-64). Yet, God chose to use a street dialect of "a very corrupt language from idol worshipping people" to compose our current New Testament!

What of the Babylonians? The Babylonian people were also an idol worshipping people who

were very corrupt. They committed the same outrages that the Greeks later did, and placed the Israelites in captivity. The language that they spoke, the language of international interchange, was Aramaic (also known as Chaldean). Yet, it pleased God to have entire sections of two books (Daniel, chapters 2-7 and Ezra, chapters 4:8-6:18) of the Old Testament written in the "very corrupt language from idol worshipping people" such as the Babylonians were! What makes the "corruption" worse is the fact that these *Aramaic* sections were written using *Hebrew* letters-talk about mixed languages! Worse still, in what is the logical outcome of Ms. Bodine's opinion, Jesus himself would be looked down upon, because a dialect of the dreaded Aramaic was found on his lips, when he uttered, "Talitha Cumi" at the raising of the Ruler of the Synagogue's daughter (Mark 5:41) and when he said *Abba* in his prayer at Mark 14:36! Paul was no better, as he used the Aramaic words *anathema maranatha* in 1 Corinthians 16:22, and *Abba* in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6!

Nehemiah 13:23-27, in context, condemn the fact that the children of the Jews at that time could no longer speak the language of Judah. This was a problem that the writers of the Book of Mormon apparently did not have (Mormon 9:32-33)! Further of interest is the fact that at about 700 BC, most Egyptian writing was no longer of a hieroglyphic character. Many scholars also believe that there is good evidence that the letters of the old Hebrew alphabet (not the *Aramaic* square script found on the Dead Sea Scrolls and in printed Hebrew Bibles) were borrowed from the Phoenicians, who in turn actually derived their alphabet from the Egyptian Hieratic script!

Reply to Bodine's Second (2nd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

At least the record-keepers of the Book of Mormon were honest about the possibility that they may have made mistakes in their abridgment of the religious history of their people. They were very keenly aware of their own weaknesses. Notwithstanding this, the Book of Mormon certainly does not show that it was not inspired of God! The Nephite record-keepers were more keenly aware of the role that the inspiration and direction of God played in the abridgment and keeping of their records.

See 1 Nephi 6:1-6; 9:2-6; 14:25, 28; 19:2-3; 2 Nephi 5:30-31; Words of Mormon 1:3-9; Alma 37:1-25; 3 Nephi 26:6-12; 28:24-25; 30:1-2; Mormon 5:9; 8:13-16; Ether 4:1-6; 5:1-6; 8:26; 13:13; 15:33; Moroni 9:24; 10:2-5, not to mention the multitude of times that the Lord himself spoke to the people of Nephi!

Reply to Bodine's Third (3rd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Sam is hardly a *Yankee* name! It is the Arabic form of Shem, an ancient Semitic name. Note 1040 of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, speaks of *Sam* son of Noah. We might even carry the stupidity further, and make the claim that the Biblical name of *Dan* is really the *Yankee*, shortened form of the name Daniel. Hence, according to this reasoning, the Bible cannot be true! It is indeed a pity that Ms. Bodine does not believe in doing careful and accurate research!

Reply to Bodine's Fourth (4th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

So dogmatic is this comment without references. While it is true that there are not now rivers in Arabia, such may not have always been the case. Ptolemy placed a river between Yambu and

Mecca, according to Richard F. Burton, in his *Pilgrimage To Al-Medinah and Meccah* (London: Tylston & Edwards, 1893) 2:154. Hugh Nibley also points out (*Lehi In The Desert*, in *The Collected Works Of Hugh Nibley*, Vol. 5 (Deseret Book, 1988), pp. 79-83) that some scholars are convinced that there were "some quite respectable rivers even in historical times." After all is said and done, a picture is worth a thousand words!

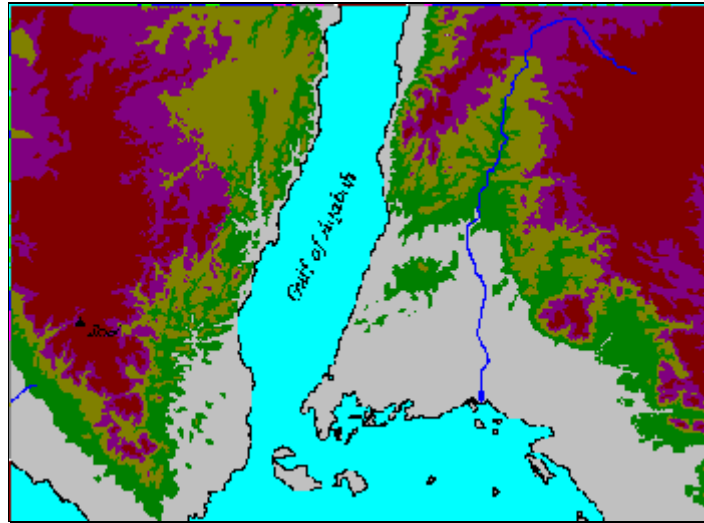


Figure 1: A copy of a map from Parsons Technology's PC Bible Atlas For Windows. Copyright © 1993, Parsons Technology. Note the conspicuous mapping of a fairly large Wadi in Arabia, known as the Wadi El Afal. It empties into the Red Sea. There is evidence that a large river once flowed here (perhaps fed by a natural spring that may have existed in ancient times), including a river delta (approximately 30 miles across starting at a community known as Al Bad, where exists today a date-palm oasis).

A good Bible atlas, such as *The Hammond Bible Atlas*, also will reveal quite a few Wadis that become torrential rivers during the spring season, in the very area that Lehi could have passed through, on his way to the place where Nephi would later build a ship. So much for Ms. Bodine's "Christian research"!

Reply to Bodine's Fifth (5th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

How many devout Jews today know, by heart, their genealogy, or what tribe that they are from? Sometimes, historical circumstances make it such that a genealogy may be forgotten, or the details of their tribal lineage not be remembered correctly. Such was the case with certain individuals who were of the priestly line, who required a tracing of the genealogies-only to find that they had been omitted from the genealogy of the priesthood (Nehemiah 7:63-64). According to the standard of Ms. Bodine, these individuals should have known their tribal lineage, and should also have known that their ancestors' intermarriage with another lineage would have placed them outside the genealogies of the priests. Perhaps we should reject the Bible also!

The statement of Nephi could easily lend itself to the interpretation that Lehi, upon actually

seeing his lineage, then knew, beyond oral tradition, of his line of descent. Lehi at least knew that his genealogy was on the Brass Plates (1 Nephi 3:3, 12)! Why waste valuable time memorizing a lengthy genealogy when you know that it is written and kept in a treasury or vault?

Reply to Bodine's Sixth (6th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Here again, Ms. Bodine betrays her ignorance. Her use of this point as supposed proof that the Book of Mormon cannot be true, is foolish in the extreme! The Book of Mormon is a *translation* of an ancient text. As a translation, it can employ any English word that is necessary to render the sense of the original. A translator's English vocabulary will determine the rendering of the text as well. The word *methought* is also more than just a poetic word and it is certainly not Elizabethan in any sense (except perhaps in the fact that the word was used during that time, as well as in the 1800s)! It is, in reality, an archaic word that means *it seemed to me*, and had usage as far back as A.D. 900, long *before* the Elizabethan Age. When all is said and done, the use of the word in a *translation* of an ancient text is hardly a valid reason to reject the Book of Mormon!

Reply to Bodine's Seventh (7th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Anyone, who actually *has* read both the Book of Mormon *and* the Bible, can see that 1 Nephi 10:8 is hardly an exact quote from John 1:27! The full context of 1 Nephi 10:8 is a prophecy of Lehi. In the prophecy, Lehi recites the words that he saw the future John the Baptist cry in the wilderness! What then is the problem with finding similar wording? This is hardly an example of plagiarism.

Reply to Bodine's Eighth (8th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

First of all, *Holy Ghost* is **not** a *King Jamesism*. The term has been in use since before A.D. 900, and was used regularly in religious discussions before the King James Bible was even a thought. To say that the term was not known in 600 B.C. is to belabor the obvious! In the King James Version, as in other earlier versions (such as the 1582 Rheims New Testament) of the Bible, the words *Ghost* and *Spirit* are used interchangeably to represent the single Greek word (or Latin *Spiritu*).

Even some modern translators still choose to use the word *ghost* to translate the Greek word in a few places (such as Luke 24:37-39), as did J. B. Phillips, as well as the translators of the *New English Bible*, *New International Version*, *Today's English Version*, *The Jerusalem Bible*, the *New Jerusalem Bible*, and the *Living Bible-Paraphrased*.

I would not scrap these valuable versions of the Bible because of their apparently inconsistent translations of a single Greek word. Why should we be expected to discard the Book of Mormon for doing the same thing?

The fact is, the Book of Mormon is a *translation* of an ancient text, that uses the phraseology of scripture in Joseph Smith's day. As such, it is expected that the words *Holy Ghost* and *Holy Spirit* are used interchangeably, as they were in the King James and other versions. To say that the Nephite scripture is false because of the same phenomenon in a *translation* of that ancient text, is asking too much of the reader's already insulted intelligence! One is left to wonder whether Ms. Bodine received her "training" and "education" at the same correspondence school as the late

"Dr." Walter Martin?

Reply to Bodine's Ninth (9th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

While it is true that the current text of the Old Testament that we possess does not contain the phrase *faith on the Son of God*, who is Ms. Bodine trying to kid? Does that *really* cause a problem for the Book of Mormon? In no wise.

It is said, by the Bible, that Abraham saw the day of the Son of God, and was glad (John 8:56), that Moses knew of the reproach of Christ (Hebrews 11:26) and that the gospel was preached to Abraham, Moses and the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt (Hebrews 4:2; Galatians 3:8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

It is hard to believe that such a phrase as *faith on the Son of God* was *never* found upon the lips of these individuals! Many people (apparently Ms. Bodine is one of them) have the naive idea that all that God or His prophets ever said and did is contained within the pages of the Bible. The common evangelical position is that the textual transmission of the Bible has been reliable after thousands of years, and that what we have today is essentially what the ancient prophets wrote with their own hands.

However, the fact that it can be demonstrated that this textual transmission *seems* to be fairly reliable proves nothing! Were we to track down the supposed original texts, we still would come to a screeching halt at the original *abridgments* of the writings of the Old Testament prophets.

As one example of several, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were not written by Samuel, and are abridgments of historical events as recorded in the original Book of Samuel, in the lost Book of Jasher (2 Samuel 1:18), as well in some other unnamed records. That Samuel did not write what we now possess is demonstrated in that he would neither have recorded his own death (1 Samuel 25:1), nor written of events that transpired thereafter! Certain it is that Samuel did not write the second book that bears his name.

In addition to this, the style of the texts and the vocabulary of the narrative portions of both of the books of Samuel (as well as the fact that the ancient Jews regarded them as one book) point to the likelihood of a single author for both texts. Thus, Samuel could not have written either of them. Who did? That may never be known. How do we *know* that Samuel did not mention *faith on the Son of God*? Until the critics of the Church come up with the original writings of Samuel, this will never be proven. What of the missing Books (1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29) of the Old Testament prophets Gad (2 Samuel 24:11) and Nathan (2 Samuel 7:2)? How do we know that these Old Testament prophets did not ever utter the phrase in question? There are many more examples of missing books and abridged prophetic writings, but this should suffice for any honest, objective, *thinking* person.

What of Ms. Bodine's apparent assumption (knowing what is commonly said about assuming anything) that the people of the pre-New Testament Era were expecting a Messiah that would be a King and Deliverer, but not as the Son of God? Not surprisingly to Latter-day Saints, this outdated, dark theory is now beginning to give way to the glorious light of recent discoveries!

The early Christian writer, Justin the Martyr (*Dialog with Trypho*, 72), accused the Jews of

removing passages from synagogue copies of the scriptures. One of the references, which he claimed was excised from the Book of Ezra, read:

This Passover is our Savior and our refuge. And if you have understood, and your heart has taken it in, that we shall humble him on a standard, and thereafter hope in him, then this place shall not be forsaken forever, says the God of hosts. But if you will not believe him, and listen to his declaration, you shall be a laughingstock to the nations.

Now, whether this statement of Justin concerning the deliberate removal of a scripture that clearly alludes to the Savior be true or not, or whether or not it happened to a number of other scriptural passages, is not of serious consequence to the point being made. The discovery of a *pre-Christian* fragment among the Dead Sea Scrolls has caused quite a stir. Found in Qumran cave 4 and known as fragment 4Q246, this fragment of a *pre-Christian* apocalypse reveals that an eschatological king:

shall be great upon the earth, [O King, all (people) shall] make [peace], and all shall serve [him. He shall be called the son of] the [G]reat [God], and by his name shall be hailed (as) the Son of God, and they shall call him Son of the Most High. (Translated by Mr. Hershel Shanks, the Editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*)

Contrary to Ms. Bodine's dogmatic declaration, this *pre-Christian* text is definitely valid evidence that at least some individuals of the *pre-New Testament* era *expected* a future King, who would also be titled *the Son of God!*

Reply to Bodine's Tenth (10th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Admittedly the phraseology of the two passages is similar, but can hardly be called a quotation. It can only be considered a "quotation" if the reader considers the Book of Mormon a fraud. The reality of it all is that Nephi could very easily have deduced the concepts, inherent in 1 Nephi 10:18, from a reading of scriptures such as Psalm 102:24-27 and Psalm 90:2. Insisting that this is no more than a quotation of Hebrews 13:8 is tantamount to denying that God can say the same or a similar thing twice, at different times! Let the reader compare Isaiah 2:2-4 with Micah 4:1-3. Is Isaiah plagiarizing from Micah? Micah from Isaiah? Now, compare Obadiah 1:1-9 with Jeremiah 49:14-16, 9-10, in that order. Note the similarity of the phraseology between the two prophets. Did Jeremiah plagiarize from Obadiah? Obadiah from Jeremiah? Or, did all of the prophets plagiarize or quote from a common earlier source?

While some scholars believe that such was the case, it is equally possible that the LORD simply said the same things in revelations to these different prophets. What is significant about these parallels, are the differences in other portions of their revelations. Let's look at some more comparisons. Confucius, in about 500 B.C., said:

Do unto another what you would have him do unto you, and do not to another what you would not have him do unto you. Thou needest this law alone. It is the foundation of all the rest.

Those familiar with the Bible will note the striking parallels with Matthew 7:12. Did Jesus plagiarize Confucius? Though there are some that might consider this so, such does not

necessarily have to be the case. How about John the apostle? He received the Book of Revelation by direct revelation from the Lord, by means of an angel. Yet, upon comparison with various passages in the Old Testament, we find that he could have drawn heavily upon the texts found there. Let the reader compare Ezekiel 47:12 with Revelation 22:2 and Isaiah 22:22 with Revelation 3:7. Concerning this phenomenon, *The Interpreter's Bible* 12:358 has this to say:

John was thoroughly acquainted with the Old Testament, and quoted or alludes to it throughout his book. It has been estimated that 278 verses out of a total of 404 contain references of one kind or another to the Old Testament....yet in no case does he specifically mention a book of the Jewish scripture, and seldom does he quote verbatim.

The Book of Revelation could also be compared favorably with the Pseudapigraphic Book, 1 Enoch (written c. 100 B.C.). In just one cursory examination of that book, I found at least ten parallels with the Book of Revelation! I was also reminded of the seven-headed Hydra of Greek mythology (compare Revelation 12:3). Did John plagiarize these earlier writings in order to compose his Book of Revelation, which was supposed to have been a direct revelatory vision to him, or did he draw upon his vocabulary (which would have been steeped in the language of scripture and of his surroundings) to describe what he saw? Could it also be that God simply chose to rephrase his previous words and repeat the same things?

What would be wrong with God revealing the same words to different sets of peoples at different times? What and if Joseph Smith did draw heavily upon biblical passages (as part of his vocabulary) to translate the text of the Book of Mormon to represent what God had revealed about the meaning of the text before him? Is it really a problem?

Reply to Bodine's Eleventh (11th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

As with the discussion of point 9 of this paper, until Ms. Bodine and the other critics produce the original writings of *all* of the prophets of the Old Testament age, and prove, beyond all doubt that such is the case, they cannot make this claim!

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that such was the case in the Old World. It would still not be a problem for the Book of Mormon. Why? Because, as anyone who actually *reads* the Book of Mormon can attest, the first time that the term *Lamb of God* occurs, it is in the context of a vision that Lehi saw (1 Nephi 10:7-10), in which he *hears* John the Baptist bear record that he had baptized the Lamb of God. (I think it significant that the Book of Mormon does not contain the name of John the Baptist). In the verse that Ms. Bodine scrutinizes, it is an angel of the Lord that commands Nephi to "Behold the Lamb of God." Considering the fact that the small plates of Nephi (the source of 1 Nephi) were made, and written upon, some years after the vision that he himself saw, it is likely that "Lamb of God" became part of his vocabulary at this time, and was incorporated into his later description of his father's vision.

Equally possible, is that Nephi could have drawn upon the imagery of the lamb brought to the slaughter to be made an offering for sin, as found at Isaiah 53:7, 10. At any rate, God can say the same thing twice, if he so chooses. Ms. Bodine's attempt to limit God in what she thinks he can or cannot say, shows much about what she must truly believe of His abilities.

Reply to Bodine's Twelfth (12th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This comment has to be one of the stupidest comments in this paper! What does she wish to say? If she is trying to trumpet to the world that this is another example of plagiarism, her elevator obviously does not go to the top floor. What Nephi saw, in vision, is what his father, Lehi, saw before. He saw the events that would transpire when the Savior would come on the scene. Is Ms. Bodine trying to say that a prophet could not see this much detail about future events? There goes the truthfulness of Biblical books such as those of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Revelation!

Reply to Bodine's Thirteenth (13th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

[13. 1 Nephi 12:23, "dark" people are associated with abominations.]

This point is bracketed and cited because it has been omitted in subsequent printings of the paper being reviewed (the copy that I received from CRI did not contain it, whereas the copy I had previous to this, did). Was it removed because it was deemed as too foolish to keep in the paper? It is probable that the omission was an unintentional printing error. This point was apparently made to infer that the Book of Mormon has racist overtones.

This is a description of the future condition of the group that would later be called Lamanites. The text nowhere says that dark-skinned people are associated with abominations. It simply says that the Lamanites "became...full of all manner of abominations," in addition to becoming "a dark people." Although most people interpret this passage to speak of skin color, it could have simply meant something else, here. One *Webster's College Dictionary* definition of *dark* is: "destitute of knowledge or culture; unenlightened." Could this have been what Nephi meant here? A similar situation occurs in the Hebrew vocabulary. Though the word *black* is a color, in Hebrew it is used to indicate an emotional state as well. Jeremiah 8:21 says:

For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am *black*; astonishment hath taken hold on me.

Though black supremacists would declare that this is proof positive that Jeremiah was of the Black race (something that makes no difference, anyway), the passage really indicates that he was in a state of gloominess, darkness, or sadness over the impending judgment that would befall his people.

The Amorite people, according to Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, I:84, were "depicted ... with fair skins, light (also black) hair, and blue eyes" on Egyptian monuments. Yet, the Sumerian people described them as "dark" savages (William F. Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 166). To be short, if the text does not specifically refer to skin color, we should not automatically assume it to refer to such!

Reply to Bodine's Fourteenth (14th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Why the stupid question? If Ms. Bodine had spent more time *reading* the Book of Mormon, instead of echoing the idiotic statements of her mentors at CRI, she would have known the reason that the explanation was given to Nephi! Nephi was in the course of seeing a vision. In this vision he sees individuals who had come to the Americas (1 Nephi 13:16). After describing battles between them and the people from whence they came, as well as their deliverance by the power of God (13:17-19), he notes their prosperity and noticed that they were carrying a book

among them (13:20).

Perhaps, noticing Nephi's wonder and curiosity as to what the book was that he saw (as *that* type of book would have been something new to Nephi), the angel asked him whether or not he knew what the book meant (13:21). In response to Nephi's frank statement that he did not understand the meaning of the book (13:22), the angel proceeds to tell him the contents of the book and what it represented (13:23). Just because he had the Brass Plates does not mean that he should have known the contents of the book that he saw in his vision.

Reply to Bodine's Fifteenth (15th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Swedish archaeologist Sigvald Linne would disagree with this outdated statement. He stated that a piece of iron found in Mitla, Oaxaca, was probably refined (*Zapotecan Antiquities, Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Publication 4*, n.s., p. 75). This same archaeologist also found a pottery vessel (dated A.D. 300) that contained the remains of a mixture of what appeared to be *smelted* copper and iron (*Mexican Highland Cultures, Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Publication 7*, n.s., p. 132). Anthropologist Dr. John Sorenson has pointed out that words for metals have also been found in the vocabulary of the Proto-Mixe-Zoquean tongue by about 1500 B.C. (*An Ancient American Setting for The Book of Mormon*, p. 279). All of the other parts of this sweeping declaration have been well answered in a number of publications (some of which CRI are aware).

However, the utter stupidity of the use of this quotation from a Smithsonian statement, to refute 1 Nephi 16:18, lies in the fact that the breaking of the steel bow took place in the *Old World* (where steel was definitely known and used centuries before), *not* the New! The quotation is completely irrelevant to this event and to this passage, as anyone who has *read* the Book of Mormon would know! What kind of researcher is it who has not read a work that he or she is supposed to have studied? I suppose this is another fine example of Christian "Research" Institute methodology!

Reply to Bodine's Sixteenth (16th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Accurately reflecting the meaning of the Hebrew text at 2 Chronicles 20:20, the *New International Version* of the Bible has this to say:

Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; **have faith in his prophets** and you will be successful. (emphasis mine)

This should have settled the matter, but I will take it a step further. It is unfortunate that Ms. Bodine forgot to check the rest of the Book of Mormon for further information about the "ball" or Liahona (that is, if she really *has* read the Book). I would think that we are to believe in anything that God tells us to believe in, for example, we believe in his word. We believe that his word will point us in the right direction. The ball that Nephi was discussing had the word of the LORD written upon it. From time to time, the writing would change, and would give the travelers greater understanding of the ways of the LORD, as long as they were faithful. Basically, to give faith, diligence and heed to something, in Old World thought, was to obey it. Because they knew that it was the LORD that was behind the operation of the ball, to obey *it* was to obey the LORD. Indeed, it was the LORD who told them to look upon the ball for guidance (1 Nephi

16:26).

Generations pass, and the story of the voyage to the promised land and the Liahona itself, were passed on from prophet to prophet. Alma, continuing this tradition, told his son, Helaman, about the ball and its operation. After relating the story of the travels of their fathers, he, concerning the operation of the ball, said that:

it did work for them **according to their faith in God**; therefore, if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles should point the way they should go, behold, it was done; therefore they had this miracle, and also many other miracles wrought by the power of God, day by day. (Alma 37:40, emphasis mine)

I think that this should settle the matter. It should be clear that the Liahona was not considered by Nephi to be a substitute for God, as the correct understanding of it was passed on to Alma, who then related the tradition to his son, Helaman.

Reply to Bodine's Seventeenth (17th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This is hardly an example of plagiarism, when Nephi says (1 Nephi 19:24; 22:1) that he is quoting from Isaiah, to his brothers! A careful reading of the version of Isaiah that is in the Book of Mormon reveals quite a few differences from that found in the King James Version! Of course, Ms. Bodine, who probably has never read more than a few pages (if even that many) of the Book of Mormon, must not have realized this! Worse still for her, the two chapters of 1 Nephi that she cites do not contain any of the text of Isaiah 50! Hundreds of Christians donate money for *this!*?

Reply to Bodine's Eighteenth (18th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Here we go again! Immediately, the critics upon seeing a text that has similar or identical wording to a Biblical passage, assume that because the English translation of the Book of Mormon came after the English translation of the Bible, Joseph Smith must have plagiarized the Bible, and Nephi could not have been a real historical figure. I have already covered (in my treatment of point #10) the reasonableness of Joseph's drawing upon familiar vocabulary and phraseology (part of which would have been, in frontier America, directly associated with the Bible) to translate the ancient text that lay before him. Just because two English translations have similar (or even the same) wording does not prove that the underlying ancient text of 2 Nephi could not have been authentic.

What is interesting is that the King James translators have chosen to incorrectly translate the words, as written by Paul, as if they were in the vocative case. In reality, the vocative case is not used in the Greek text of this passage. Conversely, Nephi could have used an Egyptian or Hebrew vocative expression in his exclamation. If this be true, notwithstanding the identical phrasing of both translations, the grammatical cases of the underlying texts (hence their "exact" meanings) would be different.

The Greek phrase in Romans 7:24 would be more accurately translated: "I am a miserable man!" or, "I am an unhappy man!" or even "I am an unfortunate man!" Marian Bodine would, of course, foolishly expect us to believe that there is not another man in all the history of the world, who

has ever said or written that he was miserable or unhappy. Is this really the case? No. Is there anyone else who used similar literary phraseology to express similar feelings? Yes. In one ancient document, Solomon is made to say concerning his departure from God to idolatry: "As a result I, **wretched man that I am**, carried out her advice and the glory of God completely departed from me; my spirit was darkened and I became a laughingstock to the idols and demons." (*Testament of Solomon* 26:7, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., 2 vols., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, [1983, Garden City: Doubleday], 1:987).

Now, it is true that the aforementioned document is believed by many scholars to have been written by an early Christian in the first to third century CE, notwithstanding many elements of the work can actually be traced to Babylon. For this reason, we need to look earlier. Using the Tufts University Perseus Project website, we find that Euripides is reported to have written: "**O** pain, o pain! **Wretched man that I am**, how mutilated I am by the unjust words of an unjust father!" (Euripides, *Hippolytus*, line 1345). In the same work he writes again: "Oh! Oh! And now the pain, the pain, comes over me. Let me go, **wretched man that I am**, and may **death** come to me as healer" (Euripides, *Hippolytus*, line 1370).

Cicero also wrote: "**Oh** that night which that day followed! happy was it for this city; but, **wretched man that I am**, I fear it may still prove disastrous to me myself" (M. Tullius Cicero, *Orations: Three orations on the Agrarian law, the four against Catiline, the orations for Rabirius, Murena, Sylla, Archias, Flaccus, Scaurus, etc.*, XLI.103). Cicero exclaims again: "For why should I speak of my consulship? whether as to the manner in which it was obtained, or in which it was conducted? **Wretched man that I am!** am I comparing myself to this disgrace and plague of the republic?" (M. Tullius Cicero, *Orations: for his house, Plancius, Sextius, Coelius, Milo, Ligarius, etc.* I.3) Using another source, we find that earlier still, Homer (c. 800 BCE), writes: "Yet when he hears of you being still alive, he is glad, and his days are full of hope that he shall see his dear son come home to him from Troy; but I, **wretched man that I am**, had the bravest in all Troy for my sons, and there is not one of them left" (Iliad XXIV.36, translated by Samuel Butler in *Library of the Future*, 4th Edition, [1996, Las Vegas: World Library]).

Looking at the English translations of the texts just examined, we can conclude that as well might we say that Paul plagiarized Cicero, Euripides and Homer as to try forcing the issue that Joseph Smith merely plagiarized Paul for the Book of Mormon by the coincidence of English textual reading. Besides, we do not deny that Joseph Smith may have made use of the phraseology with which he should be familiar, namely the Bible, to use in his translation of an ancient work, just as others both before and after Joseph Smith have done.

Reply to Bodine's Nineteenth (19th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

The scripture that Ms. Bodine cites does not say that the land of Canaan would be the only land that God would give to the seed of Abraham. Abraham had a total of eight children, all of whom were considered his seed. What of the lands that *they* would possess? Concerning the Nephites, Apostle Erastus Snow said:

The Prophet Joseph informed us that the record of Lehi, was contained on the 116 pages that were first translated and subsequently stolen, and of which an abridgment is given us in the first Book of Nephi, which is the record of Nephi individually, he himself being of

the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters... (Journal of Discourses 23:184).

Since a part of the Nephite lineage was that of Ephraim, the promise of Jacob (Genesis 48:19) that Ephraim would become many nations, could well apply to the Nephites. The Nephites considered themselves a branch broken off from the main stock of Israel (1 Nephi 19:24; 2 Nephi 10:22). It would be interesting to see what the prophets of Israel had said concerning the matter, that is, if we had the original writings of the prophets (see my treatment of point #9). One Old Testament-period prophet, named Zenos, did allegorically mention the Nephites and their land of promise in his prophecies, as did several others who had writings that were recorded upon the Brass Plates. These prophets are no longer found in our current text of the Old Testament.

At any rate, until Ms. Bodine can marshal Scriptural texts that actually say that there is only one land of promise for the Jews (much less the rest of the seed of Abraham), and that God would never allow himself to promise another land to another people, she really doesn't have a case.

Reply to Bodine's Twentieth (20th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This type of poetic hyperbole is common among the ancient peoples of the Near-East, and is not to be taken too seriously. Some good examples of similar hyperbolic statements occur in the Bible. For instance, Judges 16:16 states that Samson was vexed to the point of death because of Delilah's incessant prying into his personal business. Jonah 4:9 says that Jonah was angry to the point of death. Even Jesus did not hesitate to reveal that his soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38).

The type of hyperbole that is used in 2 Nephi 4:21, is more common in the Book of Psalms (and no wonder, as this verse is part of what is commonly known among LDS as the *Psalm of Nephi!*). A couple quotations will illustrate the point.

I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is *consumed* because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. (Psalms 6:6-7)

For the zeal of thine house *hath eaten me up*... (Psalms 69:9).

According to the Hebrew text, the same word that is here translated "hath eaten" is the same word used to describe a remnant that the fire "consumeth" (Job 22:20). Since when does zeal for the House of the Lord literally cause a person to be consumed as by fire? If we were to use Ms. Bodine's logic, we would be forced to reject the Psalms as well.

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-first (21st) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This comment is, in my opinion, tasteless. The Book of Mormon reference, here cited, has nothing whatever to do with the black race, and does not say this in these words.

What and if it should be found that there was some sort of prejudice, among the Nephites, against those with darker skins? What does that prove? What does it prove when we find something

similar in the Bible (Numbers 12:1)? See next point and its discussion for more information.

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-second (22nd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

All that this verse demonstrates, is that if one marries a darker-skinned Lamanite, his descendants will have a darker skin. What is the concern with this scientific fact? Did not the Lord himself, in Old Testament times, command his people not to marry those of other nationalities?! What then is the problem?

Besides, the issue was not interracial marriage, as the Nephites and Lamanites were, in the main, of the **same** race! The issue was inter*faith* marriages! The Lamanites were of a different faith. The Lord adopted this course of action in an effort to prevent marriages out of the faith (2 Nephi 5:21; Alma 3:8 [6-8]). This would be effective due to the fact that it also appears that many of the Nephites, at this point in history, were prejudiced by skin color (Jacob 3:9).

This verse can hardly be taken to apply to us today, in light of a purported revelation, given in 1831, that encouraged several of the brethren "to take unto you wives of **the Lamanites** and Nephites." (*The Mormon Experience*, Vintage Books (1980), p.195).

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-third (23rd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

There are quite a few differences between the text of Isaiah, in the Bible, and that found in the Book of Mormon. Besides, how can Jacob be plagiarizing Isaiah, when he himself states that he is *reading* from Isaiah (2 Nephi 6:4-6; 9:1)? Ms. Bodine cannot possibly have actually *read* the Book of Mormon!

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-fourth (24th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This is hardly a false prophecy! It is not completely fulfilled. According to the 1994 CIA World Factbook, Israel had an approximate total population of 5,050,850 people, 83% of which are of Jewish ethnic background. That makes a Jewish ethnic population of about 4,192,205 persons. Since there are more than 14 million Jews scattered throughout the globe (not counting descendants of the lost tribes), there are nearly 10 millions of Jews (not counting the children of the lost tribes), out of 14 million, that are *not* back in their own land! To make matters worse for Ms. Bodine's assessment of this prophecy, the population of Jews in the United States alone, was 5.728 million, in 1984, and some Jews *do* believe in Christ (see Arthur W. Kac, *The Messiahship of Jesus*)! Patience is a virtue and we can confidently await the future fulfillment of this prophecy!

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-fifth (25th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This is hardly plagiarism when Nephi says that he is *writing* some of the words of Isaiah (2 Nephi 11:8; 25:1)! If Ms. Bodine means that the King James Version is what is plagiarized, she must account for the fact that out of 433 verses quoted from Isaiah, more than 200 of them are different from the text of the King James Bible!

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-sixth (26th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Ms. Bodine is padding her objections! This is actually part of the previous point.

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-seventh (27th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Again, Ms. Bodine belabors the obvious. It is true that *Christ* was not Jesus' last name, but Ms. Bodine, as expected, has missed the point, and has misunderstood the use of the word *name* among people of Semitic cultural background. In Hebrew, one word denotes both *name* and *title*. At Isaiah 9:6, speaking of the Messiah, Isaiah says that, "His *name* shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." It should be obvious to the reader that this *name* is really a string of *titles*! Likewise, Exodus 34:14 says that God's *name* is *Jealous*, and Amos 5:27 says that the LORD's *name* is *The God of hosts*. Again, not proper names, but titles that denote attributes of God.

Since the Nephite people spoke Hebrew, it is likely that the angel said that the name of the coming One was Yeshua' haMashiach, or Jesus the Messiah. Since the anglicized-Greek word *Christ* was common to our English tongue, it was used in the translation of the Book of Mormon to make it more intelligible to us.

Ms. Bodine's belief that the name *Jesus* was not foretold in Old Testament times is an argument from current textual silence. We do not have the original writings of the prophets, and we certainly do not have texts from all of the prophets (see my treatment of point #9). Until all of the original texts are found, she really has no case!

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-eighth (28th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

First of all, the Book of Mormon is not a second witness to the Bible, it is a second witness of Christ. Even a cursory reading of the text, or even the Title Page would have revealed that!!! Secondly, the scripture that Ms. Bodine here cites says nothing that can be construed as an attack upon the Bible. Rather, it condemns those who say that the Bible is enough, and that God cannot speak to other nations.

Of course, had Ms. Bodine and the representatives of CRI actually *read* the Book of Mormon, this idiotic statement would never have been made! Think of the millions of dollars that have been donated to the Christian "Research" Institute to distribute this caliber of bird-cage liner! Think of all the hungry who could have been fed and the naked clothed. Yet will so-called Christians continue to contribute to them, to marshal a very sad and *ineffective* attack upon LDS beliefs! What a waste of lives, money and talents.

Reply to Bodine's Twenty-ninth (29th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Undaunted, Ms. Bodine manifests her inability to prove that she has actually *read* the Book of Mormon! Rather, this citation condemns "easy-believeism" and the doctrine of unconditional salvation of believers, as is taught in many evangelical churches.

Reply to Bodine's Thirtieth (30th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

All grammar errors aside, this comment shows that not only are Ms. Bodine and CRI unacquainted with the pages of the Book of Mormon, they are also Biblically illiterate! Poor duped followers of the Christian "Research" Institute! Those who live by CRI, shall die by CRI. How can anyone who claims to be an authority on the so-called falsehoods of Mormonism and

on the contrived "truthfulness" of the evangelical position, be so ignorant of the contents of the Bible?! How can Ms. Bodine so dogmatically declare that God only dealt with the children of Israel during the Old Testament period?

Was it not God who dealt with Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:26-29)? Were they Israelites? Noah was said to have been a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5)? Yet, Noah was hardly one of the children of a yet unborn Israel. He, according to Peter, certainly spoke for God! And what of Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-3) and Abraham, a prophet (Genesis 20:7) of the Lord? Were they both of the children of Israel? Israel had not even been born! What of Balaam (Numbers 22:5-24:25), who dwelt at Pethor in northern Mesopotamia? He was not of the children of Israel. Yet, not only did the Lord speak to him and deal with him, he was known by other nations to be a prophet with considerable power (Numbers 22:6)! The list could go on, but why? Any objective, *thinking* person can see my point!

The second part of the objection does not even make a bit of sense! In the verses cited by Ms. Bodine, it is very clear that they refer to the fact that Jesus Christ does speak to people of all nations and that when he speaks, they write *his* words, by which words he will judge us! This is in total agreement with John 12:47, 48! So, what is Ms. Bodine's point? Worse yet, how could she have missed the obvious meaning of the passage cited?

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-first (31st) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

There is no contradiction. The verses condemn the practice of plural marriage among the Nephites so that they would not have a chance to partake of the *excesses* of David and Solomon. These excesses, due entirely to lust, led to a case of adultery and the slaying of Bathsheba's husband (David's direct and indirect actions) and to Solomon's taking of 1,000 wives, most of whom were from nations that the LORD forbade Israel to marry (1 Kings 11:1-3).

At any rate, one verse (which the critics hope will either be misinterpreted, or not seen at all) is Jacob 2:30, which states that this command to remain monogamous applies to his people, unless the Lord commands them to participate in plural marriage.

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-second (32nd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This objection is as old as the hills, and has been adequately answered for over a hundred years. The Book of Mormon is a *translation* of an ancient text. Whatever vocabulary is necessary to render the sense of the original can, without impropriety, be used by a translator. If the French word, additionally an English borrowing, was part of Joseph Smith's vocabulary, and it best represented the meaning of the text before him, why not use it? The fact that it occurs in English letters, documents and at least two songs from the 1800s, demonstrates, with the Book of Mormon, that the French word was part of Joseph Smith's English vocabulary.

If we wanted to adopt the pseudo-scholarly methodology of Ms. Bodine and the other "researchers" at CRI, we could say that the King James Bible could only be false because it contains the Old French word *bruit* at Jeremiah 10:22 and Nahum 3:19. Virtually everyone knows that French did not exist during Old Testament times! We could also reject the Book of 1 Timothy because J. B. Phillips' modern English translation of 1 Timothy 6:15 uses the French word *dénouement*, when we know full well that this word is not found in the Koine Greek of the

New Testament! We could carry the foolishness further yet. We could also say that the writings of the Jewish Historian, Josephus, are not authentic because he used the word *adieu* in his *Life of Flavius Josephus*. He (after describing his genealogy) summarized that: "Thus have I set down the genealogy of my family as I have found described in the public records, and so bid *adieu* to those who calumniate me [as of a lower original]. (*The Life of Flavius Josephus*, in *Josephus Complete Works*, p. 1.)" As everyone knows, French did not yet exist when Josephus wrote his histories. Therefore, Josephus is a modern work! Where is the logic in all of this? Each of the before quoted texts are translations of genuine ancient texts. If this type of reasoning is not acceptable with a translation of an ancient text such as the Bible, why should it be legitimate when it involves the English *translation* of the Book of Mormon? Then again, whoever said that CRI and its adherents have here used *sound* principles of logic, anyway? Of course, now that I have mentioned the fact that a translation of Josephus' works contains the word *adieu*, I may have opened a can of worms. We can only wait to see the people at CRI (or even the Tanners!) foolishly take the position that Joseph Smith must have read Josephus and thereby plagiarized by using the word *adieu* in the Book of Mormon!

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-third (33rd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

When the Book of Mormon mentions that sacrifices and offerings were done according to the Law of Moses, it means that the sacrifices were those that were required by the Law. Ms. Bodine is at least correct that the Nephites and Lamanites were predominately of the tribe of Manasseh, although there were other tribal lineages among them. Some of them (Journal of Discourses 23:184) were predominately of Ephraim and others were a mixture of both half-tribes. The descendants of Mulek, descendent of Zedekiah, were of the tribe of Judah, and how many other individuals of other tribes there were cannot now be determined from the abridged text that we currently possess. Could it be possible that the refugees who came with Mulek's party took a priest with them who was of the lineage of Aaron?

Whether such was the case or not (likely, it is not), it really does not matter, since we also do not know for an absolute certainty what the content of the Law of Moses that the Nephites possessed was. Like the Books of Samuel (compare discussion of point #9), the five Books of Moses that we now possess, are heavily edited abridgments of the writings of Moses. Can the people at CRI be truly certain that the Law, as then existed, did not have some sort of stipulation that other tribal lineages could give attendance upon the altar?

If not, then how does one explain the fact that Solomon, a mixed descendent of *Judah* (compare Hebrews 7:13-14) and Moab (through Ruth), offers sacrifices and fat offerings to hallow (or, make holy) the court that was in front of the house of the LORD (2 Chronicles 7:7). What about the fact that Solomon also offered burnt offerings three times a year (2 Chronicles 8:12-13)? How about his offering of *incense before the LORD* (1 Kings 9:25), which only the priests (Numbers 16:40) were to do? I suppose that Ms. Bodine's methodology would have us to discard the Bible as well!

Additionally, the people of the Book of Mormon possessed the priesthood that was held by Melchizedek (Alma 13:1-10, 14-19). That this priesthood supersedes that of Aaron is undisputed by both LDS and Evangelicals. Since we know that at least that priesthood was among the Nephites, it really does not matter that there may not have been priests after the order of Aaron

among them, especially during the Old Testament period.

What is interesting, is that none of the verses of scripture that Ms. Bodine has here cited specifically say that a person from Manasseh cannot give attendance upon the altar!

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-fourth (34th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This is another point that has been answered for many years and yet, CRI still use it! Archaeologists have found very good evidence that, in ancient times, people considered Jerusalem to be both an administrative city, and the land that is under its control (which would have included Bethlehem). Since this issue has been discussed in detail (for those interested in more information, see Daniel C. Peterson, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 5 (1993), pp. 62-78) and well answered for many years (notwithstanding CRI have been aware of these answers), I will only summarily deal with the meaning of the *Land of Jerusalem* phrase, as used in the Book of Mormon. After all, we should at least look at how the Nephites understood this, should we not?

It hardly needs to be demonstrated that this point also betrays Ms. Bodine's ignorance of a text that she is supposed to have studied! I think it quite significant that Alma said that Jerusalem "is the *land* of our forefathers" and did not mention the city itself. Ms. Bodine's citation of 1 Nephi 1:3 as evidence against the LDS understanding of Alma 7:10 is a sad joke at best, as that verse does not even mention Jerusalem! It is actually verse 4 that speaks of the city of Jerusalem! Even still, does it cause us a problem? Not when other texts from 1 Nephi are considered. In 1 Nephi 1:4, Nephi casually mentions that Lehi "dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days." Yet, when they depart into the wilderness and Nephi and his brothers return to Jerusalem to get the Brass Plates, they, after one failed attempt, leave the *city* Jerusalem and go down to their inheritance (1 Nephi 3:22).

After the second failed attempt and their flight out of the city, they again go up to Jerusalem. Nephi instructs his brothers to wait outside the walls, and goes inside the city, where Laban's house was located (1 Nephi 4:4-8). From the foregoing, we know that Lehi was supposed to have lived *at* Jerusalem. Yet, his house was *outside* Jerusalem, and the sons of Lehi had to go *into* Jerusalem to get to Laban's house! (Many other examples could be cited, but this should be sufficient for any *thinking* person.)

Thus, the Book of Mormon reveals that the Nephites understood clearly the difference between a land and its cities. They knew the difference between the *land* of Jerusalem and the *city* of Jerusalem. Of course, had Ms. Bodine actually *read* the Book of Mormon, she would have realized this!

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-fifth (35th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

This argument is also fairly old, and has additionally been answered by dozens of LDS authors and researchers. Interestingly, CRI are aware of this research material, but still continue to disseminate this obsolescent criticism.

On March 15, 1961, this objection became forever devastated, when Jewish archaeologist, Professor Yigael Yadin, reached his hand into a crevice in the floor of a cave on the northern side of Nahal Hever (in Israel). One of the artifacts found was a strip of papyrus. Identified as a land

deed dated to the Bar-Kokhba period, it reads in part:

On the twenty-eighth of Marheshvan, the third year of Shimeon bar Kosiba, President of Israel; at En-gedi. Of their own free will, on this day, do Eleazar son of Eleazar son of Hitta and Eliezer son of Shmuel, both of En-gedi, and Tehina son of Shimeon and **Alma son** of Yehudah, both of Luhith in the coastal district of 'Agaltain, now residents of En-gedi, wish to divide up amongst themselves the places that they have leased from Yehonathan son of Mhnyim the administrator of Shimeon ben Kosiba, President of Israel, at En-gedi. ... (Yigael Yadin, *Bar-Kokhba*, (1971) Random House, New York, p. 176. Emphasis in bold and italics mine; translation and spelling reproduced without change.)

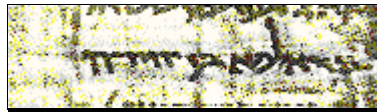


Figure 2: A photograph of the end of line #4 of the land deed. It is rendered by Professor Yigael Yadin as "Alma son of Yehudah."

I guess that the mother of "Alma son of Yehudah" was not familiar with Ms. Bodine's contrived Jewish naming convention, was she? Seriously, the spellings of the name found on the land deed and the Hebrew word referred to by Ms. Bodine, are different! The spelling of the Hebrew name (translated by Mr. Yadin as *Alma*) is aml a (which can be conjecturally vowel-pointed to read aml a). The Hebrew word that Ms. Bodine is referring to, is actually spelled hml.[:

Understanding that Hebrew is read from right to left, look at the first and last letters of the two words. A schoolchild can see the difference between these two words. Also, the Hebrew word that she is referring to, does not carry the sense of "a betrothed virgin." It rather refers to a young woman or maiden. The concept of virginity is better expressed by the word hlWb.

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-sixth (36th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

There is no contradiction, when one considers the facts. The events of the Book of Mormon occurred in the Americas at about 73 BC; the events of Acts somewhere between AD 40 and 50. Since Luke did not live in the Americas during the year 73 BC, it is obvious that he would not have been aware of these prior events, separated by more than 100 years and by the Atlantic Ocean. His not being aware of this historical event, would account for his use of the word first at Acts 11:26.

Further, the Book of Mormon is a translation of an ancient text. Since Joseph Smith used the vocabulary available to him, what other word could he have used to properly convey the sense of a text that spoke of followers of the Messiah? At any rate, this criticism amounts to no more than a waste of paper, ink and the monetary contributions of those who are faithful devotees of CRI!

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-seventh (37th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

The only thing incredible about this, is Ms. Bodine's propensity to read into the text things that the text does not actually say! But, had Ms. Bodine actually read the Book of Mormon, she would have realized that Zarahemnah, after his "scalping," withdrew and hid among his soldiers! Zarahemnah did not become angry until his scalp was displayed and many of his soldiers surrendered. He then stirred up his people to anger. It was the people who fought more powerfully. Nowhere does the text say that Zarahemnah fought immediately after his scalping, and nowhere does it say that he suffered nothing (I think it significant that, after this episode, Zarahemnah is never again mentioned in the Book of Mormon)! Even if it were true that he did fight and live, it would still prove nothing contrary to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. In historical warfare, both modern and ancient, people received flesh-wounds, varying in their seriousness, and yet continued to fight for a time!

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-eighth (38th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Again, there is no real contradiction when other considerations are examined. The purpose of the confounding of tongues at Babel, was to scatter the various peoples over the earth. The texts at Genesis 10:5, 10:20 and 10:31 seem to show that the linguistic lines followed family lineages and national groups. Also implied, is that there may have been, originally, three main language groups that later broke off into many branches within these linguistic families. The fact that there are three main language families (known as Indo-European, Semitic and Hamitic or African), from which all languages seem to derive, according to the Bible, gives support to the possibility that the confusion of tongues was only general.

Apparently, each family grouping had its particular language base. Jared, his brother and their families, being of the same family group, would have had the same language base. Further of interest, is that there are several ancient traditions that state that certain individuals did not have their language confounded.

However, all things considered, even if Jared, his brother, and their families and friends did not have a change occur in their language, it still makes no difference and produces no disparity between the two texts! If all other peoples had a change in their language, and one group still retained the original language with which they were familiar, all of the world would still be in a confounded state, for all others could no longer understand them, anyway!

Reply to Bodine's Thirty-ninth (39th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Again, Ms. Bodine's ignorance of the Book of Mormon is betrayed! Even worse, her apparent unacquaintedness with the pages of the Bible is revealed in her citation of Romans 2:2 as a reference to the Abrahamic covenant! This verse does not have a thing to do with that covenant! Also evident, is her incognizance of great promises, given of the LORD to men, that were later rescinded due to lack of obedience on the part of the person, to whom the promise was imparted. One example of such an occurrence is instructive. Eli, the High Priest, is reminded of the promise of the LORD that his house and the house of his father were to walk before the LORD forever (1 Samuel 2:30). Due, however, to his sons' wickedness and his lack of discipline, this promise was removed from him (1 Samuel 2:30-36).

A similar thing happened to the Jaredites. Though they, at the verse cited by Ms. Bodine, received the promise that they would become the greatest of nations, they were also aware of another promise of the Lord. If the people did not serve God, and should become ripened in iniquity, they would be destroyed as a people (Ether 2:7-8). Repeatedly, when the Jaredite people departed from the living God, prophets reminded them of this fact (Ether 7:23; 9:20; 11:1, 6, 12, 20-21; 12:2-3; 13:20-21).

Finally, by reason of their abundant iniquity, the Spirit of the Lord ceased to strive with the Jaredites, leaving Satan in full control of the people (Ether 15:19). Millions slain in battle, the population of the divided kingdoms dwindled to nothing—the demise of a nation once destined for greatness.

From ancient times, Genesis 49:10 (8-10) was regarded as a prophecy that Messiah would come through the line of Judah. Twice in Israel's history, the fulfillment of that earlier prophecy was placed in jeopardy, as a result of the stiffneckedness of the people of Israel (Exodus 32:7-14; Numbers 14:11-20). In the first of these accounts, the LORD desired to destroy all Israel and make of Moses a great nation (Exodus 32:10), because of the worship of the golden calf. In the second account, the LORD again becomes angry with Israel because of their unbelief, stating that he would disinherit them, destroy them with disease and make of Moses a greater nation than Israel (Numbers 14:12).

Israel, and the specific lineage (Judah) that Messiah was to have come through, would have been completely annihilated, had it not been for Moses' intercession (which leads us to Ms. Bodine's next critique of the Book of Mormon)!

Reply to Bodine's Fortieth (40th) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Anti-Mormons never cease to amaze me, especially when they clutch at straws, and, in the process, unknowingly attack the Bible. What is fascinating about the last two historical events just mentioned, is that one could certainly say the same thing about the God of the Bible, that Ms. Bodine says about the God of the Book of Mormon! In these two events, the LORD desires to destroy the Israelites and tells Moses to stand back while he consumes them.

In first account (Exodus 32:7-14), Moses stops the LORD and tells him about what the Egyptians would say about it. He then, seemingly, demands that the LORD turn from his wrath and change his mind concerning what he was about to do (32:10-12). For good measure, Moses also reminds the LORD of the Abrahamic covenant (32:13). The LORD then changes his mind (32:14).

In the second account (Numbers 14:10-37), the LORD becomes angry with Israel because of their disbelief, and states that he is about to destroy Israel. Moses tells the LORD what the Egyptians would say, and speaks of the gossip that would pass from nation to nation (14:11-14). The nations would say that God annihilated Israel because of his inability to bring the Israelites into their promised land (14:15-16). Moses reminds the LORD of his great mercy, and begs him to pardon the people (14:17-19). Again, the LORD pardons them according to Moses' word (14:20) and changes his course of action (14:21-37).

To summarize both events (using Ms. Bodine's reasoning):

First, the LORD is about to wipe Israel out of mortal existence because he is angry. Moses then says, "Uh, LORD, that's a bad idea. What do you think the other nations are going to say? They're going to say that you weren't able to live up to your promises, so you killed them in the wilderness! They'll make you look bad! Don't do this! Please, forgive them."

Finally, the LORD changes his mind. In other words, the God of the Bible needs to be given instructions and corrections, for his instructions are foolish.

I suppose Moses could have benefited from Ms. Bodine's suggested reading assignment of Job, chapters 38-40. If we were to follow Ms. Bodine's logic, the Bible would not stand a chance! CRI's answer would probably be that it was not really the LORD's intention to destroy Israel. He just wanted to test Moses! Let us have no double standards here! What is good for the goose is good for the gander, as the saying goes! The Lord just wanted the brother of Jared to use his brain a little. The Lord's wisdom is infinite. Often times, he allows us opportunities to do things for ourselves before he helps us, as a test of our faith. In reading the story of the fall of man (Genesis 3:1-13), one might get the impression that God did not know where Adam was hiding (3:9-10), or who told him he was naked (3:11). God knows all. He knew that Adam had eaten the fruit, and he knew where Adam was hiding. Yet, God gave him the opportunity to confess his sin and test him. Shame on Ms. Bodine for attacking the Book of Mormon for the same type of thing that occurs in the Bible! Why does CRI wish to operate upon a principle of double-standard?

Reply to Bodine's Forty-first (41st) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

Again, Ms. Bodine ignores crucial information and misses the point! The text nowhere says that he was redeemed because he saw the finger of the Lord! It teaches us that he was redeemed from the fall because he had faith in the Lord and knew that he was a God of truth and could not lie. Because of this, he was redeemed and was brought back into the presence of the Lord. Because he had this knowledge, the Lord showed himself to him. Ether 12:19-21 corroborates by saying that it was by faith that the brother of Jared saw the Lord.

Ms. Bodine seems to think that the brother of Jared did not offer any offerings to the Lord. That this is taking place during the Old Testament period, it is a given that there were offerings made. The problem with the Book of Ether is that it is a translation of an abridgment of a translation of an abridgment of the history of the people of Jared. Indeed, even the hundredth part was not written (Ether 15:33)! Should we expect every detail, about the day-to-day practices of the brother of Jared, to be contained in our current Book of Ether?

Ms. Bodine, also, completely misses the point that the author of Hebrews was trying to make. While it is true that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin, she ignores the context of Hebrews 10:1-18. It is the sacrifice of Jesus that brings remission of sins. Was it not Paul's contention that Abraham was justified by faith (Romans 4:1-3; Galatians 3:5-11)? Hebrews 10:4-11 read:

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the **same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:**

That should settle the matter. Ms. Bodine's citing of Genesis 3:7 is interesting, considering that it has nothing to do with Abel. It rather is part of the story of the fall of man, and speaks of the opening of Adam's and Eve's eyes, their realization that they were naked, and the making of their fig leaf aprons! It is Genesis 4:4 that Ms. Bodine is probably referring to, although this story is of no real help to Ms. Bodine's point. Telling it is, that there has been no proof-reading, no correction and, in short, no accuracy! What else could we expect from CRI?

Reply to Bodine's Forty-second (42nd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

There is nothing fanciful about this episode. This neurological reflex is known as decerebrate rigidity, and occurs when the upper brain stem becomes disconnected from the brain itself. Dr. Gary M. Hadfield, M.D., published in *BYU Studies*, (1993) 33:324, this statement:

Shiz's death struggle illustrates the classic reflex posture that occurs in both humans and animals when the upper brain stem (midbrain/mesencephalon) is disconnected from the brain. The extensor muscles of the arms and legs contract, and this reflex action could cause Shiz to raise up on his hands.

According to B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, Vol. 3, p.556-557:

Mr. G. W. Wightman, of the Seventeenth Lancers of the British Light Brigade, and a survivor of the wild charge at Balaclava, relates, in the "Electric Magazine" for June, 1892,...the still more remarkable case of Sergeant Talbot's death:

'It was about this time that Sergeant Talbot had his head clean carried off by a round shot, yet for about thirty yards farther the headless body kept the saddle, the lance at the charge firmly gripped under the right arm.'

To say that a similar, though somewhat subdued, phenomenon does not occur in some human decapitations such as that of Shiz, is asking too much! Sadly, some foolish evangelicals question the integrity of the evidence, just presented, solely because it is found in LDS publications. To those who do not wish to face facts, and for the interest of those who do, I refer to several further sources.

Sir Charles Scott Sherrington, in his "Decerebrate Rigidity, and Reflex Coordination of Movements," in the *Journal of Psychology* 22 (1898):319, graphically describes the occurrence

of this phenomenon in both animals and human subjects. Several others of his works also mention the same (any good university or public library will have these other writings readily available for the reader to peruse).

John D. Spillane's *An Atlas of Clinical Neurology*, London: Oxford University Press (1975), second ed., p. 372, also luridly describes the onset of decerebrate rigidity in some patients due to accident or other cause. In some cases of this condition:

the limbs may be disposed in a manner resembling the decerebrate or decorticate postures of the experimental animal. It will be recalled that section of the brain stem between the superior colliculus and pons produces a degree of spasticity of the antigravity muscles of all four limbs which enable the animal to 'stand'. In the human patient decerebrate rigidity is often incomplete, but in varying degree and distribution, rigid extension of the four limbs may be seen. The upper limbs are internally rotated at the shoulders, the elbows extended and the wrists flexed. The legs are straight and, if there is spasm of the adductors, they may be crossed.

This posture could easily, if the person it afflicted were lying face-down, have the appearance of rising up on his or her hands. The *Oxford Medical Companion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1994), p. 183, also offers the following:

Decerebrate Rigidity is a posture of fixed extensor rigidity of the trunk and limbs which ensues in experimental animals when the brainstem is transected [i.e., cut across] below the midbrain and lower motor neurone activity is released from cerebral influence. A similar state may occur in man.

The phenomenon of decerebrate rigidity is also discussed under "Decerebrate" in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, 4:328:

Deprived of the cerebrum; having the cerebrum removed or the brain-stem cut; also, resulting from this, as decerebrate rigidity, a state in which the limbs are extended and certain skeletal muscles rigidly contracted. So **decerebration**, removal of the cerebrum, cutting of the brain-stem.

As can be seen from the foregoing, the eventful decapitation of Shiz in the Book of Mormon is medically plausible. Since the Book of Mormon record is silent on just how much of the head was smitten off (if any, since the term smitten off is used in the Bible to indicate the piercing of Sisera's head with a tent peg (Judges 4:21; 5:26-27)), and due to the fact that neither Ms. Bodine nor we were on the scene to witness this act, Ms. Bodine's objection stands mute-her case against the Book of Mormon, impotent.

Reply to Bodine's Forty-third (43rd) Reason for Rejecting the Book of Mormon.

One last straw to pull from Ms. Bodine's clutching hand, readers may find the following quotation of interest:

One final characteristic, reflecting a tempo of life style perhaps forever gone, is the Hebrew lack of urgency to get a thing said. Any modern editor would feel duty-bound to

blue-pencil out much of the Old Testament. (Edward W. Goodrick, *Do It Yourself Hebrew And Greek*, (1980, Zondervan Publishing/Multnomah Press), p. 15:6)

Rather than being a fault that proves that the Book of Mormon cannot be true, this criticism turns out to be a good evidence of its truthfulness! Too bad for CRI that someone did not blue-pencil out all of Ms. Bodine's paper.

Ms. Bodine concludes her paper by asking: "How many lies do you have to find in a book to know it is not from God?" After trudging through her paper, the reader should rather ask, "How many stupid statements, misquotes, misrepresented texts and antiquated arguments do you have to find in a paper to know that it is neither accurate research on the Book of Mormon nor valid scholarship?"

Nevertheless, the shoddy "scholarship," the polemic flavor and the parroting of badly outmoded arguments *ad nauseum* are hardly the worst of it! What makes this paper more atrocious is the fact that there have been excellent answers to most of its contentions in many published materials, both LDS and non, for a good number of years!

There is simply no excuse. The author of the paper, and CRI (the main distributor) have read and quoted a few of these materials and should know better! Of course, the alternative would be to (heaven forbid!) come up with something original, or to do some valid research that conforms to scholarly convention-something of which the people at CRI appear abysmally incapable.

Worse still, what are Evangelicals to do when Hank Hanegraaff, the President of the Christian Research Institute himself, endorses Marian Bodine as **the** most knowledgeable person, in things Mormon, on the entire planet earth?!? As the reader has plainly seen from reading this paper, Marian Bodine knows little to nothing about the Book of Mormon and Mormonism. If she is supposedly the most knowledgeable person in the world on the subject of Mormonism and knows as little as she really does, what does that say about everyone else at CRI? What does that say about all of the other anti-LDS ministries? Were I a *thinking* Evangelical, I would seriously reconsider my position in using materials published by CRI, or by any other anti-LDS ministry for that matter, to attack the LDS faith! Were I a regular contributor to, or ministry partner with these ministries, I would withdraw all of my financial support from these organizations and put the funds to good use-feeding the poor, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and afflicted. Jesus would expect as much (Matthew 25:34-46).

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- Please note: If you are not reading this review in its proper frames and think that the CRI paper that I have reviewed is divested of its context, you may obtain a copy of Marian Bodine's paper directly from CRI or read it on their web site. If you do not have access to the resources to check my quotes or cannot obtain them, you may also obtain copies of my source materials with a complementary copy of the Book of Mormon from me. If you are a critic of the LDS Church and think that you can refute the contents of this paper, you may attempt to show me my errors in writing. If you are not a critic of the Church and find out that CRI has revised Ms. Bodine's paper or find any writing that seems to refute the work you now are reading, please forward it to me as quickly as you are able (unlike CRI writers, I like to keep my work up to date and as accurate as is humanly possible).
 - **Write to:** D. Charles Pyle, Mailbox 53, 18151 E. Valley Blvd., La Puente, CA 91744-5860 or, E-mail me at: dcpyle@linkline.com.