



Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume 5a - Helamen through Third Nephi 7

Brant A. Gardner

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Stop looking for the Book of Mormon in Mesoamerica and start looking for Mesoamerica in the Book of Mormon! Second Witness, a new six-volume series from Greg Kofford Books, takes a detailed, verse-by-verse look at the Book of Mormon. It marshals the best of modern scholarship and new insights into a consistent picture of the Book of Mormon as a historical document. Taking a faithful but scholarly approach to the text and reading it through the insights of linguistics, anthropology, and ethnohistory, the commentary approaches the text from a variety of perspectives: how it was created, how it relates to history and culture, and what religious insights it provides.

The commentary accepts the best modern scholarship, which focuses on a particular region of Mesoamerica as the most plausible location for the Book of Mormon's setting. For the first time, that location—its peoples, cultures, and historical trends—are used as the backdrop for reading the text. The historical background is not presented as proof, but rather as an explanatory context.

The commentary does not forget Mormon's purpose in writing. It discusses the doctrinal and theological aspects of the text and highlights the way in which Mormon created it to meet his goal of "convincing . . . the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God."

"Gardner not only provides a unique tool for understanding the Book of Mormon as an ancient document written by real, living prophets, but he sets a standard for Latter-day Saint thinking and writing about scripture, providing a model for all who follow. One can only hope that others who write about scripture will see what he has done and imitate it in their own way. . . . No other reference source will prove as thorough and valuable for serious readers of the Book of Mormon."--James E. Faulconer, Richard L. Evans Professor of Religious Understanding at Brigham Young University, Neal A Maxwell Institute for Religious Understanding

About the author: Brant Gardner received an M.A. in anthropology from the State University of New York, Albany, emphasizing Mesoamerican ethnohistory. His research into the Mesoamerican setting of the Book of Mormon has led to publications in the FARMS Review of Books and the online Meridian magazine. He has made several presentations to the annual Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research conference and has also presented at the Book of Mormon Archaeological Forum, Sunstone, and other academic symposia.

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