

# HCETI Ministry Evolves

By Mike Brown © 2020

In 2001 the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team began annual pilgrimages to a mountain in Mexico called Cerro Rabon, on the eastern edge of the state of Oaxaca. This “hill” juts 6,000 feet into the heavens so it is easily spotted from a distance as it towers above the plains, and may have been the reason that both epoch battles would take place on the grounds surrounding this massive hill. There are many testimonies and experiences that had been shared from early Restoration pioneers about this hill as a possible Hill Cumorah site. We were aware of many of the stories and several ancient legends from about the mid-1900s and up until the year 2001 when our team first visited this hill.

Our trips to the hill during the early years of investigation were strictly for exploration. We largely kept a low-profile and contacted landowners ahead of time for permission to climb the mountain but made no other communications to people in the area. We slipped through town, camped on the hill, and tried to remain as inconspic-

uous as possible. Everything was centered on investigating the stories hidden on the sides of the mountain. Our initial contacts were with four families, all living on the side of Cerro Rabon. Most of our interactions were with the young men that helped us carry backpacks, water and gear up to our camp site. We absolutely fell in love with the people. But the trips were not about the people; the trips were about the archaeology involving arrowheads, hammerheads, chards of pottery and other signs of early cultures and battlegrounds.

Everything changed for us in 2005. Due to a variety of incidents and calamities, we came face-to-face with the communities surrounding the hill. We have shared this testimony in the past and I won’t recount it here but just to say this—we were introduced to the mayor of the city of Jalapa de Diaz, his family, the police, the Federales and the press all during a two-day experience. These are very small,

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# Joseph’s Land of Inheritance

By David B. Brown © 2020

In recent months I have found myself doing extensive research on the history of the Joseph promise in the New World. We find reference to this in the book of Ether where we are told the following:

Ether 6:8 *“Wherefore, the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built up upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded until the end come, when the earth shall pass away.”*

How did Joseph receive a promise from the Lord that this New World continent would be for his posterity? Was there some form of interaction between the New World and Joseph of Egypt that would translate into an inheritance for his descendants? In-

vestigating this question has taken me to some very surprising revelations.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, became a very powerful man in Egypt. In fact, the Bible states that he was second only to Pharaoh. Joseph was placed in charge over all grain and husbandry in the land of Egypt. This was done so that the abundant grain garnered during the seven years of fat would be stored for use during the seven years of lean. The Bible further indicates that this was done so successfully that

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## HCETI Ministry Evolves *continued*

isolated villages and the primary means of “news” is telling events person to person. So, in short order, everyone in the towns were aware of the gringos visiting their area. We became very well-known very quickly. During this week’s visit, we were asked by multiple people to pray for family members that had infections, that were aging and sick, that had heart conditions, etc. In short, we got to know the people and the people got to know us. They shared their stories and we shared ours. By the end of this visit, people were asking when we would return? When can we see you again? Will you visit us again?

What followed from our return home and subsequent meetings was



*The city of Jalapa de Diaz in the foreground with Cerro Rabon as the backdrop. We believe that Mormon’s library is buried on the mountain.*

a question about how we could possibly help these communities. The result was a modest campaign to collect used clothing—primarily children’s clothing—as the need for school clothes was difficult for families to afford. This became the vehicle through which the Lord moved us into a spiritual relationship and ministry to the communities surrounding the hill. Many people at home in the States got involved; found clothing, bought clothing, looked for yard sales and in other ways contributed to this effort. We also supplied school

supplies and we were able to assist with health screening and some medications that were difficult for the people to afford. The primary ministry was the distribution of clothing to four and sometimes five communities surrounding the hill.

In recent years, it has become extremely difficult to take clothing from the US into Mexico. The last two years, it was impossible. We could not get clothing across the border. So, the question became, “What can we do to help in a positive way?” We did not want to do giveaways or cash payments. How can we continue to assist and provide ministry to this people we have grown to love and whose needs are great?

God works in mysterious and subtle ways until the ways become known and then you look back and say, “Oh, that’s what that was about!” Just such a time was when we were introduced to Sergio Estrada, an English teacher in Tuxtepec, Oaxaca, Mexico. This particular trip, we did not have a reliable English/Spanish interpreter/speaker in our team. So, we asked a friend that we had known for several years at the hotel if there might be somebody that could accompany us as we distributed clothing. “Yes, his name is Sergio, and he can meet you at the hotel at 9:00 AM tomorrow morning to accompany your team.” Amazing is the only word to describe how wonderfully Sergio “fit” with the members of the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team. As it turns out, Sergio knew the families in these small communities, because he had been a teacher in that area. His English is very good and the interaction with the community was immediate. People remembered him, embraced him, and communicated as if there had been no time between his teaching experience with them a few years earlier and now this return. So, Sergio has been an integral part of our ministry around the hill for the past

several years.

Since we could no longer take clothing and because we have a deep desire to stay connected to provide both ministry and relief when possible, what do we do now in the age of COVID? Trips to the area are nearly impossible and even if we could go, what can we do to help these communities? What can we do to stay connected and provide ministry in the age of COVID-19? Tim Brown suggested that the HCETI team provide funding for basic essentials to one of the communities, and then evaluate and provide additional help for more communities if warranted or appropriate.

Long story short, HCETI has begun a program whereby certain es-



*Sergio distributes packets of staple products to residents around Cerro Rebon. These are purchased through donations made to the Jalapa Project.*

sential items are provided, in packets, to more needy families in the community. Our friend Sergio Estrada is the main contact between the team and the community. Sergio meets with people in the communities to determine what essentials can be provided to assist in daily

## Joseph's Land of Inheritance *continued*

Egypt became a grain broker in the region as Canaanites were coming into Egypt to purchase grain. Jacob sent his sons to do just that when they ran into their brother Joseph and became reunited with him.

The question that we asked at this point was this, “Did Joseph of Egypt leverage seafarers to augment the grain and livestock supply to help them through the seven years of lean? Is there evidence that these connections were made?”

Using a revised timeline proposed by David Rohl, we estimate that Joseph of Egypt became a benefactor of Pharaoh at about 1670 BC. This places him at the 12th Dynasty of Egypt under Amenemhat III. Murals found at both Akrotiri in Thera and Avaris in Egypt indicate that there was substantial trade being conducted between the Egyptians and the Minoans. So, did Joseph leverage his trade relationship with the Minoans to augment the food supply for Egypt?

There is strong evidence that as early as 2400 BC the Minoans were bringing copper from Nova Scotia and Michigan into the Mediterranean to fuel the bronze age, so there was already seafaring commerce taking place in the North Atlantic. Is there some indication that the Minoans were making their way into the Gulf of Mexico at this time?

Looking at the timeline of the Book of Mormon Jaredites who we believe to be the Olmec in Central American civilizations, we note that there are not dates assigned to the list of kings they provide. However, averaging about 45 years per reign, we note that King Emer is probably a contemporary with Joseph of Egypt and that it is during his reign that we are provided a long list of items that were making the Jaredites “rich.” These items are actually a list of trade commodities.

Ether 4:19 “*And in the space of sixty and two years, they had become exceeding strong, insomuch that they became exceeding rich, having all*

*manner of fruit and of grain, and of silks and of fine linen, and of gold and of silver, and of precious things, [20] And also all manner of cattle, of oxen and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man; [21] And they also had horses and asses; and there were elephants, and cureloms, and cumoms, all of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants, and cureloms, and cumoms. [22] And thus the Lord did pour out his blessings upon this land, which was choice above all other lands; and he commanded that whoso should possess the land should possess it unto the Lord, or they should be destroyed when they were ripened in iniquity; for upon such, saith the Lord, I will pour out the fullness of my wrath.”*

Notice that the list contains grain and livestock which are food commodities that were important to Egypt at the time, and this passage points out they are “useful for the



food of man.” Also notice that the Olmec trade routes were situated on the Gulf coast around Veracruz and on the Pacific Coast next to the Pacific Equatorial Countercurrent and Equatorial North Current that would provide trade routes with Asia and explain the use of elephants for industrial purposes. We are not given specifics of their trade, but the positioning of these trade routes on the

coasts makes it possible not only for large scale trade to take place with neighboring cultures, but also for transoceanic cultures. The



unique location of the Olmec provided access to both oceans from watercraft built for using ocean currents.

Now the question arises, Why would Joseph of Egypt require food all the way from Central America? Surely there are food sources closer to the Mediterranean such as the Iberian Peninsula, the coasts around the Baltic Sea, the British Isles or even the fertile fields of Nova Scotia. What may have occurred at that time which would have required food stores to be shipped all the way from Central America to Egypt?

There has been substantial scientific research done in an effort to isolate the impact of the explosion of the Mediterranean island of Thera, which today is known as Santorini. This island suffered a cataclysmic volcanic explosion that left a six-mile wide caldera which today is filled with ocean water. However, there are two theories concerning when this explosion took place. One theory tends to rest in the mid-1600 BC era and the other in the mid-1400 BC timeframe. A 2019 study of ice cores from glaciers in Greenland revealed an amazing find. There was no volcan-

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## Joseph's Land of Inheritance *Continued*

ic ash particles from Thera found in the glaciers. None. This means that while the explosion of Thera had a huge regional impact, it was not a global one that reached the northern areas of the Atlantic. However, what the scientists did find in the ice cores was a 1627 BC explosion of Mount Aniakchak, a volcano located in the Aleutian Island chain. The caldera from this explosion is nearly 7 miles wide and the ice core records indicate that it created a substantial Northern Hemisphere mini-ice age that lasted several years. This could easily account for the seven years of lean in Egypt along with the unavailability of food sources from other Northern Hemisphere locations previously mentioned. Hence, supplemental food sources from Central America would be a necessity to augment the stored grains in Egypt.

A recent publication entitled In The Shadows by Manolis Koutlis takes the voyage description of Homer's Odyssey and demonstrates that while he is using island names found in the Mediterranean, he is literally describing an ocean voyage using North Atlantic islands and currents to reach the St. Lawrence Bay region. Koutlis further demonstrates how multiple Greek writers such as Pliny and Plutarch made similar references to these same North Atlantic ocean currents and even indicate through geographic description that they were well aware of the Gulf of Mexico. However, in order to maintain control over the sea routes, only the captains had knowledge of how to navigate the seas and this knowledge was literally guarded with their life.

Koutlis further demonstrates how names of cities, rivers and landmarks along various waypoint in the North Atlantic bear the names of Mycenaean influence. Apparently, the Minoan seafaring culture had begun working with the Mycenaeans by about 1500 BC and at this point it was probably not distin-

guishable as to whether the captain was Minoan or Mycenaean.

The research gives us nothing definitive, but there are good indications that seafaring interactions between Egypt (Joseph) and the Olmec (Jaredites) was a real possibility. And, the inference is that the dire necessity of food for Egypt during the seven years of lean drove the seafarers to eventually develop sea routes that connected Central America with the Mediterranean.

When considering the blessing that Israel (Jacob) placed upon the head of Joseph, one can begin to understand that Israel was speaking not only to prophesy of what Joseph's seed would become, he was alluding to the accomplishments that Joseph had already attained through leveraging and manipulating the commercial powers of the day. From Genesis 49:22-26:

***“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall; The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob--from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel--Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb; The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”***

Joseph had already used his position by the well (Mediterranean) to direct the branches (Minoan snakes) to extend over the wall (Atlantic Ocean) to the upmost bounds of the everlasting hills (Americas). His father Israel was documenting this huge accomplishment in the bless-

ing he placed upon Joseph. And, the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh demonstrate how far-reaching those accomplishments would become as we now understand that modern-day Britain is Ephraim and the natives of America are Manasseh. The trade routes established under the tasks Joseph initiated became the lands of inheritance for his children. As a matter of fact, the question can be raised, “Did some of the Ephraim and Manasseh offspring actually people the regions of Britain and Central America at this period, thus solidifying their latter-day inheritance?”

One further discovery found during this research is the symbolism employed by the Minoans. Artifacts found throughout the Minoan culture use the symbol of the Snake Goddess. These statues are found at several of the temples, such as the one erected at Akrotiri in Thera (Santorini). Archaeologists consider this goddess to be a deity to the Minoans, but I submit that it is not a deity—it is a symbol of Minoan



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# Adventures In Scriptures

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## King Lamoni's Conversion

King *Lamoni* and his servants were astonished by the power *Ammon* used while defending the King's flocks. The King was familiar with stories of a "Great Spirit". He wondered if *Ammon* was that "Great Spirit", so he sent for him. When *Ammon* arrived, he asked the king what he could do for him, but the king was unable to speak and was silent for a long time. By the power of the *Holy Spirit*, *Ammon* could tell what the king was thinking. *Ammon* asked if it was his actions in defending the King's flocks that caused him to marvel. The king asked *Ammon* if he was the "Great Spirit" who knows all things. *Ammon* replied that he was not the Great Spirit. He then began to tell the king about *God* and taught him many things. The king believed *Ammon*.

Later the King cried unto the *Lord* to have *mercy* on him and his people, the same mercy that had been shown to the people of *Nephi*. When he said these words he fell to the earth as if he were dead. The servants of the king took him to his wife and laid him on a bed. He lay as if he were dead for two days and two nights.

The queen, having heard of the fame of *Ammon*, sent for him. The queen heard he was a *prophet* of a Holy God and asked *Ammon* to see the king. He did as commanded and realized that the King was not dead, but was under the power of God. *Ammon* told the queen that the king was not dead, but asleep with God, and would rise on the next day. The queen trusted *Ammon*.

The king did arise the next day and said he had seen his *Redeemer*. His Redeemer, *Jesus Christ*, who would make a *sacrifice* that allowed the king to be forgiven of his *sins* and set him free. The King was filled with *joy*, *praise* and *thanksgiving*. King *Lamoni's conversion* was made possible because *Ammon* shared the *gospel story* unknown to the king. The Holy Spirit of *revelation*, revealed to King *Lamoni*, God's great *love* for us and the *gift* of his son, *Jesus Christ*.

Alma

Read the mountains across and fill in the blanks to solve the scripture.

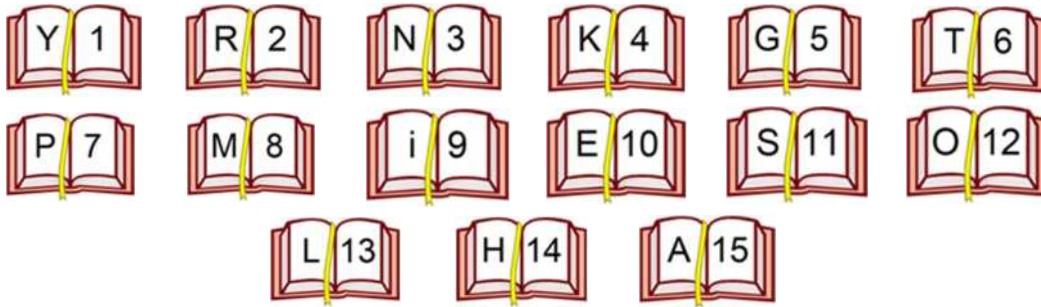
I                    H                    A                    V  
 E S                    E E                    N M                    Y R  
 E D                    E E                    M E                    R A  
 N D                    H E                    S H                    A L  
 L R E                    D E                    E M                    D A  
 L L M                    A N                    K I                    N  
 D T H                    A T                    B E                    L  
 I EV                    EO                    NH                    I  
 S N                    A                    M                    E

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Alma 12:143



Use the key above to find the puzzle message

15 8 8 12 3 6 10 13 13 11

4 9 3 5 13 15 8 12 3 9

6 14 10 5 12 11 7 10 13 11 6 12 2 1

**WORD SEARCH**

Find and circle the words from the story:

C G J K T J K N S I N J O Y X D U A  
 O T R E A H R E D E E M E R D G U S  
 N O F E S M A G I F T R M L Q O P A  
 V P H O A U M N B W K N L A N D R C  
 E D R L E T S O K W D X O M V M A R  
 R Z B O O J S C N S H E R O B J I I  
 S J O B P V Y P H X G C D N I Q S F  
 I U C L D H E P I R D I C I V N E I  
 O M E R C Y E L J R I E V G M F K C  
 N H R B X M A T X R I S P I Q D K E  
 W R E V E L A T I O N T T R N C P M  
 J M H O L Y S P I R I T X B T G Q U

- Ammon
- Conversion
- Gift
- God
- GreatSpirit
- HolySpirit
- JesusChrist
- Joy
- Lamoni
- Lord
- Love
- Mercy
- Praise
- Prophet
- Redeemer
- Revelation
- Sacrifice
- Sin
- Thanksgiving

## Joseph's Land of Inheritance *Continued*

power developed through its trade relationship with Egypt.

The symbolism goes like this; the female figure is the seafaring nation of Minoa. This is a female because nations are the structures that provide for the assembly, interaction and development of shared values by which a culture is nurtured. She holds a snake in each hand. The snakes are symbols of the seafaring cultures of the east and west over which the nation of Minoa holds control, thus she holds them in her hands. She is bare breasted because she feeds the world through her commerce. And, the feline sits on top of her head because it was the feline nation of Egypt that sat at the head of this entire enterprise. This is not a deity, it is a symbol of power that the Minoans established and maintained for as long as they ruled the trade routes of the sea.

There is another point to make concerning this snake symbolism. The snake is actually an object lesson on the life of the mariner. First, the waterways the mariners traversed in the regions where they har-

vested goods were rarely straight-river access, most often the river systems undulated back and forth like the movement of a snake. Second, the technique for using wind sails to propel watercraft requires a series of sail adjustments that create a zig-zag pathway through the water like the motion of a snake. And finally, the delivery of the products to the end-users at the destination was done in a hidden manner where the recipient was unaware of the origin; the true movement of the product from harvest to delivery is undetectable, like the stealth action of the snake. All of these snake-like allusions as sailing features are powerful symbols that have lasted for millennia. Therefore, the use of the image of the snake in ancient times is often referring to the commerce being conducted by those who use seaways and riverways.

We believe that even with the fall of the Minoan culture which probably ended at the time of the Thera (Santorini) explosion in 1447 BC, the imagery of the snake continued for anyone who was part of the seafaring trade. This imagery may even

have appeared in the Book of Mormon with the story of the serpents that invaded the Jaredite land during the reign of Heth at approximately 1440 BC and were eventually destroyed from the land by Lib at about 1000 BC. Yes, I am suggesting that the Book of Mormon is providing us with an allusion to serpents, but that it was actually referring to a cultural invasion. I will develop this concept further in an article to follow.

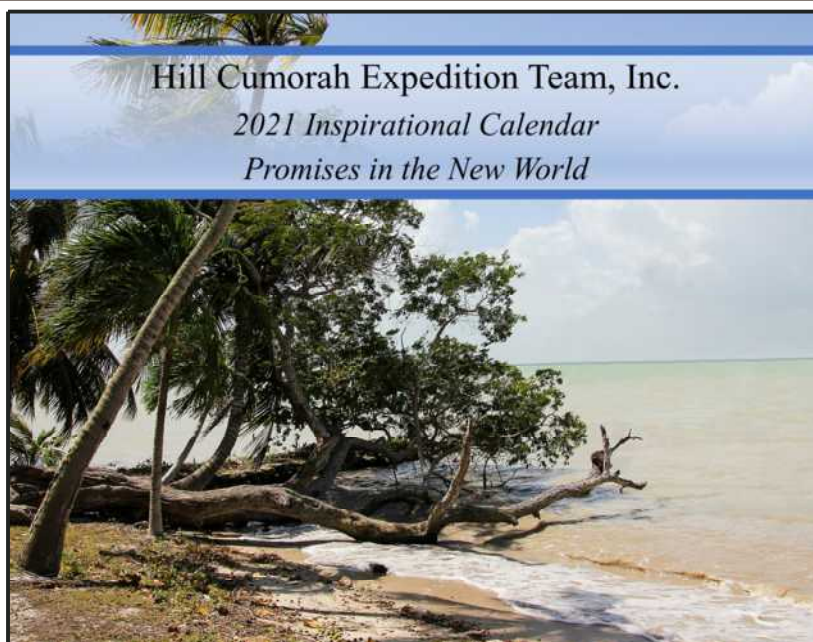
While we do not possess either scriptural or documentable proof that Joseph of Egypt directly interacted with the land that would become an inheritance for his progeny, we are beginning to compile a list of circumstantial evidences that is compelling. And, as in all research, one has to first develop the hypothesis. I am convinced that there are evidences already found that no one knows how to classify until they plug it into this hypothesis and then suddenly a series of evidences fall into place. That is how all research eventually becomes accepted fact.

## 2021 Calendar Fundraiser *By David B. Brown*

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team 2021 Inspirational Calendar is at the printer and will soon be available for purchase. The calendar is one of our fundraisers for operational capital and it is still only \$10.00 for this collection of beautiful photos along with tidbits of archaeological insights that further the concept of how the Mayan and Olmec cultures parallel the Book of Mormon story.

These calendars make excellent stocking stuffers or gifts to someone who you want to introduce to the truths of Book of Mormon insights.

If you want to purchase, please contact us or order through our website at [www.hceti.org](http://www.hceti.org).



**We're on the web at  
www.hceti.org**

*The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc is a Missouri not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, research and dissemination of information as it pertains to the Book of Mormon. Our primary focus is to research and assemble archaeological and other related information to help establish the historical feasibility of the Book of Mormon.*

**HILL CUMORAH EXPEDITION TEAM, INC**

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## HCETI Ministry Evolves *Continued*

necessities. A by-product of this is that Sergio is also working with other Christian churches to help in this endeavor.

At this time, we are providing \$350 per month for Sergio to buy in bulk, and then his family separates family-size packets to be distributed within the community. It can be food or hygiene essentials as defined by the community. We hope to be able to grow this ministry and we are requesting that each person pray for this project that we might continue to minister to both the physical and spiritual need of the communities. We invite you to become involved with us. We have asked for pledges for whatever people are comfortable giving. You can provide a monthly amount, or a one-time contribution, just to be a part of this work and to assist in this program.

We are anxious to return to the hill and to the people. As I mentioned at the beginning, our original intent was strictly an archaeological-type inves-



*Packets of staple food items are received by residents of the area. Your donations are being put into action on a monthly basis.*

tigation, but God molds the effort to meet particular needs and we respond to His guidance. He moved us—forced us—to get up-close-and-personal. Seems to be His way. I am often reminded of the Scripture from Matthew 25:41 “*And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*” If you feel impressed to help, we would love to see how this effort might expand.

If you would like to donate, please make checks payable to “Hill Cumorah Expedition Team” and place “Jalapa Project” in the memo section. The checks can be sent to:

**Hill Cumorah Expedition Team  
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