

Book of Mormon Lacks Archaeological Evidence — Cheat-Sheet

CORE CRITIC CLAIM

No archaeological evidence confirms Book of Mormon civilizations, cities, or artifacts — therefore the Book of Mormon is not historical.

KEY DEFENSIVE POINTS

- **Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.** Hittites, House of David, Belshazzar, and the pool of Bethesda were all considered unhistorical until archaeology confirmed them.
- **Major biblical narratives also lack archaeological confirmation.** The Exodus, the Patriarchs, Noah's Flood, and the Tower of Babel have no direct archaeological evidence. This does not disprove the Bible.
- **Mesoamerican archaeology is young and incomplete.** Serious work began mid-20th century. Maya script was deciphered only in the 1980s-90s. 2018 LiDAR surveys in Guatemala revealed 60,000+ previously unknown structures.
- **Spanish conquest destroyed indigenous records.** Bishop Diego de Landa burned virtually all Maya codices in 1562. Only four survive.
- **The limited geography model constrains expectations.** Book of Mormon events likely occurred in a small area among a small population — not across the entire Western Hemisphere.
- **Convergent evidence exists (not proof, but noteworthy).** Nahom (NHM altars in Yemen), cement construction, chiasmus, Hebraisms, pre-Columbian barley.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Scripture	Point
Hebrews 11:1	"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"
Moroni 10:3-5	The Book of Mormon's own test: spiritual witness through the Holy Ghost
Alma 32:17-21	Faith is belief in things "not seen, which are true"
Ether 12:6	"Ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith"
2 Corinthians 5:7	"We walk by faith, not by sight"
1 Nephi 16:34	Nahom — potential Old World correlation with NHM altars
Helaman 3:7-11	Cement construction — confirmed Mesoamerican practice

ONE-LINE OBJECTION RESPONSES

Objection	Response
"The Smithsonian says it's not historical."	The Smithsonian has never conducted a systematic study of Book of Mormon claims; its form letter reflects methodological neutrality, not a considered verdict.
"If it's true, evidence should be everywhere."	That assumes the abandoned hemispheric model; the limited geography model expects evidence in a small, constrained area.
"DNA disproves Israelite migration."	A small founding population absorbed into a larger indigenous population would leave no detectable genetic signal after thousands of years.
"Horses, steel, and wheat are anachronisms."	Loan-shifting (familiar English words for unfamiliar items); pre-Columbian barley has since been found; Hittites were once considered anachronistic too.
"Biblical archaeology has mountains of evidence."	After 200+ years of intensive research in well-preserved regions — and the Exodus, Patriarchs, and Conquest still lack confirmation.
"We would have found Nephite cities by now."	2018 LiDAR revealed 60,000+ unknown structures in Guatemala alone; the assumption of completeness is demonstrably false.
"No Reformed Egyptian has ever been found."	Most ancient scripts were unknown until discovered (Linear A/B, Maya glyphs, Elamite); absence of discovery is not proof of non-existence.

QUICK EVIDENCE POINTS

Item	Detail
Nahom (NHM)	Votive altars with NHM tribal name found in Yemen, 7th-6th century BC, matching 1 Nephi 16:34
Cement	Helaman 3:7-11 describes cement; confirmed in Mesoamerican construction (Maya, Teotihuacan)
Chiasmus	Complex Hebrew literary structure identified throughout Book of Mormon (John W. Welch, 1969)
Hebraisms	Cognate accusatives, if/and conditionals, construct chains consistent with ancient Near Eastern authorship
Barley	Pre-Columbian <i>Hordeum pusillum</i> found at archaeological sites; once considered an anachronism
Large populations	LiDAR confirms Mesoamerican populations far larger than previously estimated — consistent with Book of Mormon scale

BIBLICAL PARALLELS: CLAIMS ONCE DENIED, LATER CONFIRMED

Biblical Claim	Confirmed By	Year
Hittites	Hattusa excavation	1906
House of David	Tel Dan Stele	1993
Pontius Pilate	Pilate Stone, Caesarea Maritima	1961
Pool of Bethesda	Excavation, Jerusalem	19th c.
Belshazzar	Nabonidus Cylinder	1854

ESSENTIAL LINKS

- [Book of Mormon and DNA Studies — Gospel Topics Essay](#)
- [FairLatterdaySaints: Book of Mormon Archaeology](#)
- [FairLatterdaySaints: Anachronisms](#)
- [Book of Mormon Central](#)