

(The photographs above are remnants of the Olmec Civilization which lived near the Southern Gulf of Mexico)

Another interesting finding pertains to Mayan heiroglyphics. "The phrase 'and it came to pass' occurs in the English translation of the Book of Mormon 1,381 times...Apparently, the Maya people, who lived in southeast Mexico and Guatemala, may have adopted the phrase 'and it came to pass.' Recent discoveries in the translation of the glyphs of the 7th century A.D. Maya ruins of Palenque manifest the phrase 'and then it came to pass' and 'it had come to pass.' Recently, another glyph has been interpreted as 'and it shall come to pass.'" (*Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Joseph L. Allen, Ph.D.)



FIGURE 3-2  
The breakdown of the Maya glyph UTCHI—"and it came to pass."

A well known archaeological finding among Mormons is that of Stella 5 found at Izapa, Chiapas. As I served as a missionary in Southern Mexico, I was able to see a replica of this stone carving being 45 mintues north of Izapa, Chiapas. The interpretation of the carving is also debated but all seem to conclude that the central figure is the tree. This stone is believed by many to have reference to the Tree of Life vision mentioned in 1 Nephi 8 of the Book of Mormon. The following is one interpretation, however, it may be biased.



- 1. The Tree of Life

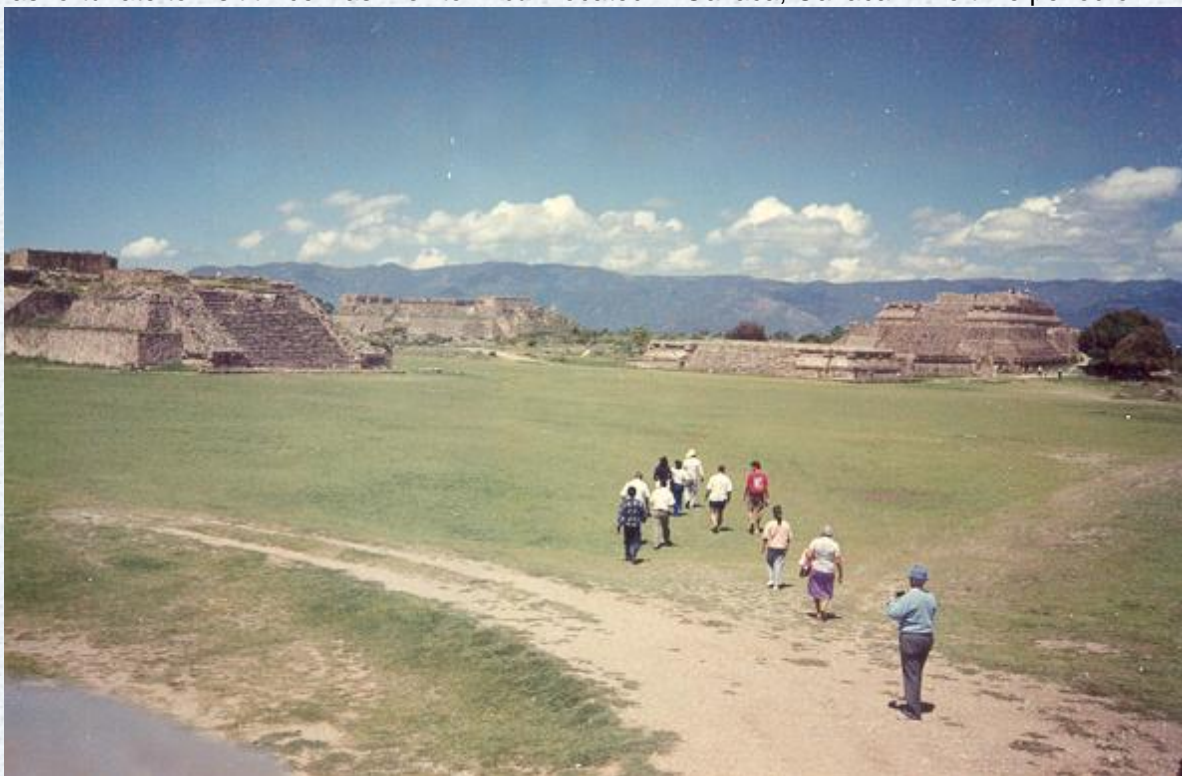


- 2. 12 roots representing the 12 tribes/disciples
- 3. Cheribums guarding the tree of life
- 4. An elder giving instruction (Lehi)
- 5. Man of great stature (Nephi)
- 6. Man in supportive role (Sam)
- 7. Old female (Sariah)
- 8. Two men with their back to the tree (Laman/Lemuel)
- 9. Rod of Iron
- 10. The filthy waters

Another archaeological site I was fortunate to visit twice was **Monte Alban** located in Oaxaca, Oaxaca. The time period of

Monte Alban is categorized according to cultural manifestations, but in all it ranged from 500 B.C. to 750 A.

D. Joseph L. Allen, Ph.D. made several interesting notes in relation to the Book of Mormon: "*Mound J of Monte Alban is labeled an observatory and dates back to the time of Christ. We are certainly safe in assuming that whoever the scientists were who occupied the observatory, they probably recorded both the astrological events that occurred at the birth of Christ and the catastrophic events that occurred at the time of his death....The ending of Monte Alban period II is dated at 350 A.D. This is the precise time that the Nephite period was coming to a close. Mormon*



*2:28-29 tells us of the treaty wherein the Nephites gave up, to the Lamanites, the Land Southward all the way to the Narrow Pass that led into the Land Southward....The date of the Nephite-Lamanite treaty is the same date as the archaeological dating at Monte Alban when a culture change began to occur - 350 A.D....A cultural setting like we experience at the ruins of Monte Alban gives us an idea of how Benjamin must have addressed his people. The walls of the city form a natural acoustic setting. The temple platforms in Mesoamerica are consistent with Book of Mormon statements such as 'I come UP INTO the temple.' The large central plaza at Monte Alban, the size of seven football fields, is adequate for people to gather with their tents." (Exploring the Land of the Book of Mormon)*