# INSIGHTS
## AN ANCIENT WINDOW

**FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH & MORMON STUDIES**

*"...by study and also by faith."* D&C 88:118

## IS MULEK MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?

Helaman 6:10 records that Zedekiah, King of Judah in Lehi's day, had a son named Mulek who escaped execution by the Babylonians, despite the statement in 2 Kings 25:4-7 that the king's sons were slain. While the name *Mulek* is not mentioned directly in the Bible, scholars have recently drawn some interesting conclusions about a person named Malchiah, mentioned in Jer. 38:6. Could he have been Mulek?

Malchiah (or better, MalkiYahu) was "the son of Hammelech" according to the King James translation of Jeremiah. But clearly this should have been translated "the son of the king" since *-melech* in Hebrew means the same as *melek,* king. Several factors now indicate that Malchiah was in fact not just the son of an anonymous king but the son of Zedekiah. Thus concluded Yohanan Aharoni, the late head of the Department of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University.

Furthermore, it is known that names like Malchiah (BerekYahu for example) took a shortened form in the 6th century B.C. The short name for BerekYahu was Baruch, the familiar name of Jeremiah's scribe. A similar abbreviation would reduce Malchiah (MalkiYahu) to something very much like "Mulek" as in the Book of Mormon.

A prominent Old Testament scholar visiting in Provo during March was impressed to learn that the Book of Mormon names Mulek as a son of Zedekiah. He remarked, "If Joseph Smith came up with that one, he did pretty well!"

## Metonymy in the Book of Mormon

A suggestion by Gordon Thomasson led to a May 3 seminar where 11 F.A.R.M.S. collaborators examined another subtle stylistic feature in the Book of Mormon. Metonymy is the practice of giving a person or place a name whose meaning reflects an event or trait associated with that person or place. A closely related practice sees a person's name become symbolic of some phenomenon. An example of metonymy is in I Sam. 25 where a man is said to have been named Nabal, "fool," because he refused to aid David and his supporters. The second pattern is shown in the statement "to be a Judas" and in the common reference to New York as "Babylon on the Hudson."

Thomasson noted particularly that the name *Zeezrom,* given to one who tried to bribe Alma and Amulek with silver money (Alma 11:22), can be read in Hebrew as "the ezrom (money)" or perhaps "the one with money," since an ezrom was a Nephite measure of silver (Alma 11:12). In another example, Isabel, the harlot of Siron visited by Corianton (Alma 39:3), may be related in moral concept to Jezebel of the Old Testament (2 Kings 9:22), because of the essentially similar names they bore.

The group's discussion both questioned and supported a wide range of detail about several suggested metonymic name associations in the Book of Mormon. Other aspects of naming were spun off, so the end result was an array of challenging possibilities for further research. John Tvedtnes, Benjamin Urrutia, Robert Smith, Blake Ostler, John Robertson, and others brought varied language and linguistic resources to the discussion, which ranged into topics such as nicknaming, taboo names, punning, and the significance of writing systems for the reading of names.