

Understanding Book of Mormon Chronology

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1. The Problems

Contrary to what might be assumed by reading a “historical” book with the year seemingly footnoted on almost every page, the process of affixing dates to the events in the Book of Mormon, correlating those dates with known historical calendars, and establishing a compatible chronological record is an extremely complex process that hasn’t yet led to a consensus solution. Rather, this complexity has resulted in various different theoretical interpretations. My goal with this paper is not to decide who is right and who is wrong; my goal is to simply lay out the basic reasoning as I see it that supports these theories, list the sources that support the theory, provide a corresponding chronological list of events, and then ask some basic questions that have come into my mind as I have tried to assimilate the reasoning.

I don’t claim to be an astronomer, or an expert on calendars, or an expert in biblical history, or a shrewd analyst that can detect every flaw in these theories. I am just seeking to go forward in my studies of the Book of Mormon and make sense of some of the complexities within the text. In other words, I am just seeking some clarification of the Book of Mormon story, not only for myself, but for those who might read this paper. To me it stands to reason that the more I (or we) establish historical correlation with some of the major events and some of the major prophecies in the Book of Mormon, the more significant the gospel message becomes. Moreover, I feel that if I don’t give myself some significant perspectives from which to ask questions, I can’t expect to receive any significant answers. Thus, my hope in this article is to provide some insights into the task of understanding Book of Mormon chronology.

STEP #1: CLARIFYING THE PROBLEMS

In trying to understand Book of Mormon chronology, one has to come to terms with a number of factors which might create differences in interpretation:

1. Common Reference Points

One can compare our written history and astronomical history of the world with the history contained in the Book of Mormon. In doing so we should be able to come up with at least some

correlation of events in order to have a reference point in time. In the Book of Mormon textual history the following are some of the possible reference points:

- a. The commencement of the reign of Zedekiah. (1 Nephi 1:4)
- b. The destruction of Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 1:4; 2 Nephi 1:4)
- c. The birth [or sign of the birth] of Christ. (3 Nephi 1:19)
- d. A day and a night and a day with no darkness (3 Nephi 1:19)
- e. The death of Christ. (3 Nephi 8:2-5)
- f. Three days of darkness (3 Nephi 8:19-23)
- g. Volcanic eruptions and destruction in the Americas. (3 Nephi 8:5-25, 9:1-12)
- h. The appearance of Christ (Quetzalcoatl) in the Americas. (3 Nephi 11:1-11)
- i. Occupation on the American continent of two, possibly three major civilizations corresponding to the Jaredites, Mulekites, and Lehites

There is scholarly debate about each of these reference dates; however, there are limits to the range of years in the debate.

2. Prophecies chronologically tied to certain events

In the Book of Mormon we have prophecies, sometimes in the very words of an angel, linking certain events to a chronological date or time frame:

- a. In 1 Nephi 10:4, Nephi records the following prediction made by Lehi in conjunction with his dream: "Yea, even six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem, a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews--even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world." *How many days in one of these "years"?*
- b. Nephi writes about the coming of Christ: "And behold he cometh, according to the words of the angel, **in six hundred years** from the time my father left Jerusalem." (1 Nephi 19:8) (see also 2 Ne. 25:19) *What calendar was "the angel" using?*
- c. Alma makes a prophecy to his son Helaman that "in **four hundred years** from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them, the people of Nephi shall dwindle in unbelief . . . even until [they] shall become extinct. (Alma 45: 8-14) *What does the word "manifest" mean?*
- d. Samuel the Lamanite seems to reiterate this **400-year prophecy** of Alma about **destruction** and extinction, BUT he does not mention Alma. He credits the words of the prophecy to "an angel of the Lord" (v. 7) and then directly to "the Lord" (v. 8). (Again, Alma had referenced his 400-year prophecy to the time when Christ would "manifest himself unto them") But here nothing is specifically said. It even might be implied that the reference point was the 86th year. (Helaman 13:1-10)

Samuel also talks about those of the “fourth generation” still living at this time of destruction. (Nephi also—see 2 Nephi 26:9.) *What is a “generation”?*

- e. Samuel the Lamanite makes a prediction about the “coming” (birth) of Jesus Christ (Helaman 14:1-7). In verse 2 he says that “I give unto you a sign for **five years more cometh and behold then cometh** the Son of God. In verse 3 he says there will be no darkness that night. But in verse 26 he credits the source of his words to an angel.

How long after the five years does the word “then” imply?

- f. Samuel makes a prophecy that signs will be given of **Christ’s death** (Helaman 14:20-27).

How do the thunderings and lightnings and three days of darkness in the Promised Land correlate with the “day” of Christ’s death in the Old World?

- g. Samuel the Lamanite prophesies concerning the time in which the Lamanites would be restored to the knowledge of the truth, but does not give a specific time (Helaman 15:11-13). (But see 2 Nephi 30:3-6)

- h. Mormon cites fulfillment of the **sign of Christ’s birth**. But he writes that **in the 92nd year** there were some who thought that the time had passed for words spoken by Samuel the Lamanite to be fulfilled (3 Nephi 1).

What could have caused this confusion in the calendar years?

- i. Mormon cites the fulfillment of the sign of **Christ’s death** “in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month” (3 Nephi 8:5-22). *How does this calendar dating correlate with the dating of Christ’s death in the Old World?*

- j. Moroni cites the fulfillment of the prophecies of Nephite destruction and extinction in Mormon 8:6-7: “And behold, **four hundred years have passed** away since the coming of our Lord and Savior. And behold, the Lamanites have hunted my people, the Nephites, down from city to city and from place to place, even until they are no more.”

Does “the coming” mean the sign of the birth of Christ, or does it mean the appearance of Christ to the Nephites?

3. The Length and Type of Calendar Year

The Book of Mormon is replete with the term “year,” but nothing specific is said about what type of calendar system was behind the term “year,” (that is, how many days made up that year) or whether there were changes in that calendar system as time went by, or whether there were multiple calendar systems being used at the same time.

- a. Calendars vary in length depending on their purpose:

1. Some chart the days from a specific event. (Mayan Long Count Calendar)
2. Some are religious and relate to cycles of the Moon. (354 day Lunar Calendar)
3. Some are agricultural and relate to cycles of the Sun. (365.24 day Solar Calendar)

Note* In an internet article titled “How Accurate Are Calendars?,” I found the following chart:

<u>Calendar</u>	<u>Beginning</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Accuracy</u>
Persian calendar	2nd millen.BCE	365.2421986 days	Less than 1 sec/year (1 day in 110,000 y ...)
Revised Julian calendar	1923 CE	365.242222 days	2 sec/year (1 day in 31,250 years)
Mayan calendar	~2000 BCE	365.242036 days	13 sec/year (1 day in 6500 years)
Gregorian calendar	1582 CE	365.2425 days	27 sec/year (1 day in 3236 years)

(www.timeanddate.com)

Note* As one can see, if these calendars were divided into months and days, then every so often the calendar would have to be re-aligned with the sun. For example, in the Gregorian calendar we have:

4 months of 30 days = 120 days

7 months of 31 days = 217 days

February = 28 days = 28 days

Total = 365 days -- but that leaves .2425 days

So about every 4th year we have a “leap year” with February having 29 days. But then that doesn’t entirely correct the dating. On the website www.history.com we find the following:

Six things You May Not Know About the Gregorian Calendar by Jennie Cohen

[Note* I have only listed three of the six]

A. The original goal of the Gregorian calendar was to change the date of Easter.

In 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII introduced his Gregorian calendar, Europe adhered to the Julian calendar, first implemented by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. Since the Roman emperor’s system miscalculated the length of the solar year by 11 minutes, the calendar had since fallen out of sync with the seasons. This concerned Gregory because it meant that Easter, traditionally observed on March 21, fell further away from the spring equinox with each passing year.

B. Leap years don’t really occur every four years in the Gregorian calendar.

The Julian calendar included an extra day in February every four years. But Aloysus Lilius, the Italian scientist who developed the system Pope Gregory would unveil in 1582, realized that the addition of so many days made the calendar slightly too long. He devised a variation that adds leap days in years divisible by four, unless the year is also divisible by 100. If the year is also divisible by 400, a leap day is added regardless. While this formula may sound confusing, it did resolve the lag created by Caesar’s earlier scheme—almost.

C. The Gregorian calendar differs from the solar year by 26 seconds per year.

Despite Lilius' ingenious method for syncing the calendar with the seasons, his system is still off by 26 seconds. As a result, in the years since Gregory introduced his calendar in 1582, a discrepancy of several hours has arisen. By the year 4909, the Gregorian calendar will be a full day ahead of the solar year.

(a. Calendars vary in length depending on their purpose – **continued**):

4. Some calendars just have a set number of days. (360 day Egyptian Year Calendar)

Note* If taken “as is,” then this calendar would be similar to a Mesoamerican TUN year, which would invite comparison by those proposing a Mesoamerican geographical setting.

However, if this calendar had twelve 30-day “months” plus a 5-day end-of-year period, this would actually equal a set 365-day calendar year. This would be similar to a Mesoamerican HAAB year, which would invite comparison by those proposing a Mesoamerican geographical setting.

*For a discussion on the possibility of these similarities with the Book of Mormon, see Book of Mormon Central, “Why Did Samuel Make Such Chronologically Precise Prophecies?,” [KnowWhy](#) 184 (September 9, 2016). Within this article there are further references to published works by authors experienced in Mesoamerican archaeology and antiquity. See also an article by Neal Rappleye, “The Time is Past”: A Note on Samuel’s Five-Year Prophecy. *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, vol. 29 (2018): 21-30.*

Question: Were the Mesoamerican calendars ever intercalated to match the days? For example, a 365-day HAAB year would be off about 1 day every four years.

b. In our present Book of Mormon we have 3 different calendar systems that chart the years from a specific event:

1. Years from when Lehi left Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 1:10; 2 Nephi 5:28)
2. Years from the beginning of the Reign of the Judges. (Alma 1:1)
3. Years from the sign of Christ's birth. (3 Nephi 2:8)

A question arises, however, as to whether the “year” in all the calendar systems above were of the same standard length.

As an approximate standard of reference, chronological footnotes to the Book of Mormon text carry dates according to the B.C/A.D (Dionysian) Calendar.

4. Beginning Day of the Calendar Year (Point of Reference)

a. For any calendar system, there has to be a starting day for each "year" in that system. Thus for the Book of Mormon text:

1. Lehi left Jerusalem on a specific day within a specific year. Nephi uses that "specific day" and/or "specific year" as the beginning reference point for his calendar (Years from when Lehi left Jerusalem).

2. The reign of the Judges started on a specific day within an existing year, and the new calendar proceeded forward from that day. Whether or not it required a changed "day 1" and/or a changed "month 1" of the new calendar year is not specifically noted in the text.

3. Christ was born on a specific day within an existing year, and the new calendar proceeded forward from that day. Whether or not it required a changed "day 1" and/or a new "month 1" and/or a new "calendar year length" is not specifically noted in the text.

b. Our present-day Gregorian/Julian calendar begins on the 1st day of the 1st month (January) and ends on the 31st day of the 12th month (December).

c. The Israelites used two calendar systems with different beginnings: one beginning in the fall and one beginning in the spring. Their calendar originally began in the fall; however, after the Lord took the children of Israel out of Egypt, a change was made in their reckoning of years so that the first month was in the spring (see Exodus 12:2, 13:3-4). This makes them different from our present Gregorian Calendar. Thus, there is a possibility that Book of Mormon phrases like "the end of year one" and "the beginning of year two" could be interpreted to fall either in the fall or the spring of our January—December years.

5. B.C./A.D. Calendar

- a. B.C. = Before Christ in the Western Calendar.
- b. B.C.E. = Before the Common (Christian) Era
- c. A.D. = Anno Domini, which means "in the year of the Lord"

The B.C./A.D (Dionysian) Calendar was originally designed with 365-day, 12-month (Jan—Dec) years moving in both directions from a central division point exactly between 1 B.C. (1 year Before Christ) and A.D. 1 (Anno Domini—in the year of our Lord). There was no "0" year. Scholars and students find value in this system not because it is necessarily correct, but because it has become an accepted standard of reference. In other words, by using this system one can postulate, for example, that "Christ was born in 5 B.C.," even though that specific date for the birth of Christ is contrary to how the B.C./A.D. system was set up originally.

Note* Because confusion can arise when writers with different chronological theories use different B.C./A.D. dates relative to the same Book of Mormon events, in my opinion the author and theory corresponding to the dates referred to in written articles and charts should be referenced, as much as possible, along with at least one of the three calendar systems actually referred to in the text of the Book of Mormon.

6. Ambiguous Phrases

There are certain ambiguous phrases that are repeated by the Nephite record keepers when referring to time. Some of the phrases are "about," "[. . .] years had passed away," "in the latter end of the year," "in the year," "thus ended the year," etc. It becomes very difficult to communicate detailed chronology unless the specific time period of these phrases is defined.

7. Multiple Interpretations

There are many verses regarding chronology and time in the Book of Mormon that are subject to interpretation. The possible variations on these verses can at times make the task of chronology seem rather formidable; however, it is my opinion that we can at least do two things: (1) Make a list of as many of the verses relating to chronology as possible (or at least the basic ones); and then (2) Record the varying interpretations.

8. Lack of Internal Chronological References

The Book of Mormon is not a consistently detailed history when it comes to chronology. In the Book of Alma we have approximately seventy verses that refer to the calendar. These span a period of one hundred and sixty-five years (70/165). On the other hand, from the beginning of the book of First Nephi to the beginning of the book of Alma, there are only sixteen calendar-related verses that span a period of five hundred and nine years (16/509). With these chronological voids in the record, we must piece together the story as best we can.

9. Priority of Facts

History can be very difficult to explain at times. When faced with a choice between scriptural sources and secular sources, a decision has to be made as to what to believe. What do we do when the statements of authoritative Church leaders differ? What do we do when well-reasoned scholarly opinions collide on what is considered compelling evidence? In other words, at what point should I consider historical secular sources or statements by a Church leader as an "end all" proof that terminates discussion rather than a scholarly aid to understanding? If my desired focus is the illumination and interpretation of the inspired verses in the Book of Mormon, then where do I draw the line? For an example of this problem I will cite the words of Randall Spackman:

“The question is not whether Lehi's 600-year prophecy was fulfilled. The Book of Mormon records its fulfillment (see 3 Nephi 1:1-21). The Book of Mormon is true. The question is how Lehi's 600-year prophecy was fulfilled.” (*FARMS Review of Books*, Vol. 10/1 (1998), p. 10.)

Yet it is this same Randall Spackman who makes the claim that Mormon made a chronological **mistake** in recording the heading to Third Nephi. (“The Problem with Nephi’s Memory,” 2011 and “Seeking to Understand the Proposed Error,” 2011-2012)

In all the articles I have read on Book of Mormon Chronology (see the list at the end of this paper), perhaps there are four that most exemplify the problem of “priority of facts.” Because these articles all deal with the birth date of Jesus Christ, I would recommend to the reader that they would take the time to read these four excellent scholarly papers in the following “point-counterpoint” order:

(1) Lincoln H. Blumell and Thomas A. Wayent, “When Was Jesus Born? A Response to a Recent Proposal,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (2012): 53-81.

Note* The “Recent Proposal” was an article by Jeffrey R. Chadwick. While it is not required reading here, the citation is Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “Dating the Birth of Jesus Christ,” *BYU Studies* 49, no 4 (2010): 5-38.

(2) John P. Pratt, “Yet Another Eclipse for Herod,” *The Planetarian*, vol. 19, no. 4 (Dec. 1990): 8-14.

(3) John A. Tvedtnes, “When Was Christ Born? *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, Vol. 10 (2014): 1-33.

Note* This article was originally written in 2002, updated in 2010, and again in 2014.

(4) John P. Pratt, “The Birth Date of Jesus Christ,” (accessed on www.johnpratt.com), June 24 2018.

In the first article (“When Was Jesus Born”), Blumell and Wayment fully demonstrate their very high scholarship and knowledge of ancient history regarding the date of the birth of Christ. Their paper is extremely well documented. At the end of this very well-written paper, they conclude with two statements that I would like to quote and comment on:

(1) “As stated previously, extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, and perhaps the only things that can be agreed upon with respect to the evidence concerning Jesus’s birth date is that it is extraordinarily complex.”

Comment: Their paper is a testament to delving into the complex and being very cautious with any claims. However, they seem to go counter to this idea with their next conclusory statement:

- (2) “In all likelihood, the evidence supporting Jesus’s birth probably cannot justify more than to say that Jesus was born before Herod ‘the Great’ passed away in the spring of 4 BC and probably not any earlier than 6 BC, and that he died under the prefecture of Pontius Pilate.”

Comment: This statement refers back to a previous statement on page 60 of their paper in which they write:

“In many respects, the death of Herod provides a solid *terminus post quem* for Jesus’s birth since, according to Matthew 2:15, 19 and Luke 1:5, Herod was alive when Christ was born and died sometime thereafter when Jesus was still a child. Since there is **compelling evidence** that Herod died sometime in the spring of 4 BC, Jesus’s birth **must** be placed sometime before this event.”[footnote 25]

Footnote 25 reads as follows:

“There is **compelling evidence**, at least by ancient standards, to believe that Herod did indeed die no later than the spring of 4 BC. [multiple articles are then listed] In Josephus’s account of Herod’s death, he reports that Herod died shortly after a **lunar eclipse** and a little while before Passover. A partial eclipse took place on a date coinciding with March 13, 4 BC, which would have been about 28-29 days before the Passover.

Comment: So despite the tone of their paper being cautious of ancient recorded history, they seem to hang everything on one lunar eclipse. This sets the stage for my second recommended article.

In 1990, in a brief but extensively supported paper titled “Yet Another Eclipse for Herod,” John P. Pratt makes a case, in my opinion, for keeping one’s mind open despite what Blumell and Wayment might term “a solid *terminus post quem*,” and “compelling evidence” for when Christ was born. Moreover, in doing so he presents some intriguing positive support for a different scenario for Christ’s birth outside the parameters that Blumell and Wayment have set as their “compelling evidence.”

Pratt, who is now in his 70s, and who received a Ph.D. in astronomy, and who, over his lifetime, has specialized in ancient astronomical calendars and historical chronology, systematically addresses a multitude of pertinent factors linked to the eclipse associated with Herod’s death. Pratt not only identifies multiple eclipses identified by other authors who have written on the birth of Christ, but ultimately decides on an eclipse that favors an April 6, 1 BC birthdate for Christ.

In 2014, an article titled “When Was Christ Born?” by John A. Tvedtnes (former senior resident scholar for BYU’s Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship) was published in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (Vol. 10 – 2014 – Pages 1-33). It reviews and agrees for the most part with the same topical information that was addressed by Blumell and Wayment, but gives valuable additional insights and bibliographical sources. Tvedtnes writes: “I have come to believe that the Blumell/Wayment article must be read in connection with mine and wish that the three of us had collaborated to produce a single article.” Of John Pratt’s article he writes in a footnote (#4) “Pratt is a Latter-day Saint, and while

I find his research interesting, he seems to have preconceived ideas that guide his conclusions, and there are a number of problems with some of his reasoning that cannot be discussed here.”

In 2018, John P. Pratt would write an 11-page article (“The Birth Date of Jesus Christ”) answering the controversial questions regarding the date of the birth of Jesus Christ. He concludes that “there is **compelling evidence** from the Bible, Book of Mormon, and sacred calendars* that Jesus was born on the evening before Thu 6 Apr 1 BC.”

Note* John Pratt has posted numerous articles on his website (www.johnpratt.com) that tend to prove his theory by correlating it with multiple other planetary calendars and sacred calendars. A few of the many pertinent articles that are listed on his website are:

“The Resurrection of Christ” Part 1: Dating, 2: Passover (1985)

"The Restoration of Priesthood Keys on Easter 1836, Part 1: Dating the First Easter," *Ensign* 15, No. 6 (June, 1985): 59-68. A summary of the evidence used to date the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and proposing that Sunday, 3 April A.D. 33 (Greg.) is the most likely date.

"Book of Mormon Chronology," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 169-171.

“Passover: Was it symbolic of His coming? (Jan 1994)

“Lehi’s 600-Year Prophecy of the Birth of Christ” (31 Mar 2000)

“Enoch’s Constellations Testify of Christ” (23 Aug 2006)

"Venus Testifies of Christ" *Meridian Magazine* (10 Feb 2010). The evening and morning star has Eight key orbital places, and each corresponds to one major event in the life of Jesus Christ.

“Jubilee Witness,” *Meridian Magazine* (October 17, 2012)

“Ten Sacred Calendars Testify of Christ” (19 Aug 2014)

In concluding this section on “Priority of Facts,” what I am trying to say is that despite what might seem like compelling arguments in a sea of complexity and scholarship, I feel that it is better for me to not dogmatically “close doors” in my quest to gain perspectives, for these perspectives will, in turn, lead me to a better understanding of the chronology of Book of Mormon events. That is not to say that I can’t choose a personal “favorite” theory to follow it through the text. Rather it is to say that my primary goal is to understand the problems inherent in Book of Mormon chronology and how they might reflect on the purpose and message of the Book of Mormon.

2. The theories

STEP #2: SETTING THE STAGE

(PRE-BOOK OF MORMON HISTORY)

The following is a chronology of those events preceding and coincidental with the beginning of the Book of Mormon story: (Note* Events are correlated with Robert Smith's "Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East," F.A.R.M.S., 1984.)

DATE EVENT

- 627 BC Jeremiah called to be a prophet (Smith, p. 9)
- 622 BC Josiah (King of Judah) institutes religious reformation (Smith, p. 9)
- 609 BC Jehoaahaz succeeds Josiah as King (Smith, p. 11)
- 609 BC Necho (King of Egypt) places Jehoiakim ("Eliakim") (age 25) as king over Judah (2 Kings 23:31-34) (p. 11)
- 608 BC Jehoiakim begins official reign on 1 Nissan (2 Kings 23:36) (Smith, p. 11)
- 605 BC Jeremiah put in prison overnight, banned from the temple till 598 B.C. (Smith, p. 11)
- 605 BC Jeremiah commanded by the Lord to write all prophecies down (Jer. 36:1-8)
- 605 BC (June) Egyptians (Necho II) beaten by Babylonians at Carchemish (Smith, p. 11)
- 605 BC (Sept. 7) Nebuchadnezzar becomes king of Babylonia (Smith, p. 11)
- 604 BC (1 Nissan) Nebuchadnezzar begins official reign (Smith, p. 11)
- 604 BC Baruch reads words of Jeremiah in temple, King has roll burned (Jer. 36:9-25)
- 604 BC Jeremiah and Baruch go into hiding (Jer. 36:19,26)
- 604 BC Jeremiah commanded by the Lord to rewrite all prophecies (Jer. 36:27-32)
- 604 BC Daniels prophecy of 70 years of captivity for Judah (Smith, p. 11-12)
- 603 BC Babylonia captures Gaza (Smith, p. 12)
- 601 BC Egypt recaptures Gaza (Smith, p. 12)
- 598 BC Jehoiakim revolts against Babylon, Jehoiakim dies/killed (2 Ki. 24:6; 2 Chr. 36:6; Jer. 22:19) (Smith, p. 14)
- 597 BC (early January) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah & lays siege to Jerusalem (Smith, p. 14)
- 597 BC (January 16) Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim) starts to reign 3 mo. 10 days (2 Ki. 24:8; 2 Chr 36:9) (p. 14)
- 597 BC (March 16) Jerusalem falls (Smith, p. 14)
- 597 BC (March) Nebuchadnezzar deports 3023 Jews (Jer. 52:28) (Smith, p. 14)
- 597 BC (April 22) Nebuchadnezzar deports 10,000 Jews (Ezek. 40:1; 2 Chr. 36:10; 2 Ki. 24:12-16) (p. 14)
- 597 BC (April 22) Mattaniah ("Zedekiah") placed on the throne (age 21) (Smith, p. 14)
- 596 BC (April) Possible 1st official year of Zedekiah's reign (Smith, p. 15)
- 589 BC Zedekiah plans revolt against Babylonia, expects help from Egypt (Smith, p. 16)
- 588 BC (Jan 15) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah to put down revolt, lays siege to Jerusalem (Smith, p. 16)
- 588 BC (Summer) Jeremiah imprisoned for the duration of the siege (Jer. 32-33, 37:4-38:28) (Smith, p. 16)
- 588 BC Jeremiah's worst prison named "Malchiah Son of the King" (Mulek Son of the King) (Smith, p. 16)
- 587 BC (January 7) Babylonian siege lifted temporarily to fight Egyptian army marching along the coast

(p. 17)

587 BC (April 29) Babylonian army defeats Egyptian army, siege reinstated (Smith, p. 18)

586 BC (July 19) Walls of Jerusalem breached (Smith, p. 18)

586 BC (Aug 15-18) Temple destroyed (Smith, p. 18)

586 BC (August) Zedekiah captured at Jericho, taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters. Sons slain before his eyes, his eyes put out. Taken to Babylon (2 Ki. 25:4,6-7) (Smith, p. 18)

586 BC Major deportation of Jews (2 Kings 25:11) (Smith, p. 18)

STEP #3: THE DEPARTURE DATE FOR LEHI—REVIEWING THE THEORIES

In 1 Nephi 10:4, Nephi records the following prediction made by Lehi: "Yea, even six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem, a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews—even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world." In order to reconcile the 600-year period alluded to in this prophecy with other scriptural and secular historical references, the following theories have been proposed:

Theory #1: This theory is presented in the following books:

Book of Mormon (1920-present)

Basic Points of Reference:

Adherence to the Dionysian calendar

600 B.C. = 1st year of the reign of Zedekiah (1 Nephi 1:4)

Lehi left Jerusalem in the year 600 B.C. (1 Nephi 2:4)

Destruction of Jerusalem = For 1 Nephi 10:3-4 the date "between B.C. 500 and 592" is given.

For 2 Nephi 1:3-4 the date of "Between B.C. 588 and 570" is given.

2 Kings 23:26-37; 24:1-20; 25:1-21 is also worthy of consideration:

Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him with. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. (2 Kings 23: 26-27)

Calendar Year = Implied 365.24 Solar year throughout

Birth of Christ = April, A.D. 1 (If we assume that the calendar year change in 3 Nephi 2:8 was such that the year started on the day that Christ was born, or the sign given, then the reference in 3 Nephi 8:5 regarding his death ("in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month") correlates with passover and a 365+ day calendar year.

Beginning of the Reign of Judges = April (Passover), 91 B.C. (Alma 1:1; 8:3; 14:23)

Death of Christ = April (Passover), A.D. 34 (3 Nephi 8:5)

Jaredite Chronology = None given

Mulekite Chronology = The time of the discovery of the people of Zarahemla by Mosiah is dated to "Between B.C. 279 and 130" (see Omni 1:12-19). Verse 15 states that "the people of Zarahemla came out from Jerusalem at the time that Zedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon."

A Few of My Questions: [Refer to "Chronology Chart - Theory #1"]

1. How would you explain 600 B.C. being the 1st year of the reign of Zedekiah (1 Ne 1:4) in view of the lack of historical evidence?
2. How would you explain an A.D. 1 birthdate of Christ in view of D & C 20, and in view of secular evidence?
3. Jaredite departure from the tower = In the LDS Bible Dictionary Chronological Tables, the Tower of Babel is listed at 2200 BC.
4. Mulekite departure = in the LDS Bible Dictionary in the list of the Kings of Judah and Israel, Zedekiah is listed at 598 B.C.

Theory #2: This theory is presented in the following books or articles:

- 1866 Orson Pratt, *Millennial Star* 28:808-811 (Dec. 22, 1866). **Nephte Calendar was 365 days.**
- 1970 Sidney Sperry, *Book of Mormon Chronology*. SLC: Deseret Book Company, 1970.
- 1980 John Lefgren, *April Sixth*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980.
- 1985 John P. Pratt, "The Restoration of Priesthood Keys on Easter 1836: Part 1: Dating the First Easter." *Ensign*, Vol. 15, No. 6 (June 1985): 59-68.
- 1989 Joseph L. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon* Orem, Utah, S.A. Publishers, 1989, p. 22-25.
- 1990 John P. Pratt, "Yet Another Eclipse for Herod" *The Planetarian* 19, No. 4 (Dec. 1990), p. 8-14.
- 1992 John P. Pratt, "Book of Mormon Chronology," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., N.Y.: Macmillan, 1992, vol. 1, p. 169-171.
- 1994 John P. Pratt, "Passover: Was it Symbolic of His Coming," *The Ensign* 24, 1 (Jan. 1994), p. 38-45.
- 1999 Bruce W. Warren, "1 Ben 6 Mak: Part One." *Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest* 2,
- 1999 Bruce W. Warren, "1 Ben 6 Mak: Part Two." *Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest* 2, no. 3 (1999). P. 1, 4-5, 13.
- 2000 John P. Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy of the Birth of Christ." *Meridian Magazine* (March 31, 2000).
- 2004 John P. Pratt, "The Nephite Calendar." *Meridian Magazine* (January 14, 2004).
- 2008 Joseph Lovell Allen and Blake Joseph Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Second Edition. Orem: Book of Mormon Tours and Research Institute, LLC, 2008.
- 2018 John P. Pratt, "The Birth Date of Jesus Christ." June 24, 2018.
Pratt corroborates his dating using four additional sacred calendars:
The Hebrew Calendar
The Sacred Round
The Venus Calendar
The Mercury Calendar

Basic Points of Reference:

601 B.C. = Joseph Allen proposed that this was the 1st year of Babylonian rule with a treaty that guaranteed peace. Thus: 601 B.C. = 1st year of the reign of "Zedekiah" because the title "Zedekiah" had reference to the beginning of Babylonian rule (as opposed to Egyptian rule).

Lehi's Departure = April, 601 B.C.

597 B.C. = 1st year of Mattaniah ("Zedekiah")

587 B.C. = Destruction of Jerusalem

Calendar Length = 365 days throughout the Book of Mormon. Also a 365.22 solar calendar correlated with an intercalated Hebrew Calendar for the 600-year prophecy of Christ's birth so that Christ would be born at Passover.

Note* In 2018, John Pratt would write: "What calendar did the Nephites use? They kept the law of Moses, so our first guess could be the Hebrew Calendar . . . A second choice is that the Nephites used a

version of the Egyptian Calendar, which was used throughout the area of Jerusalem as a civil calendar when Lehi left. It had 365 days in every year, never adding a leap day nearly every four years as does the Gregorian calendar which we use. “ Pratt does not explain the full ramifications in 2018, but he had explained those ramifications in 2004—most especially the events surrounding the prophecy of Samuel. He writes:

A 365-day Nephite year would also explain why 600 Nephite years expired some months before the birth of Christ. Such a calendar would drop behind our Gregorian calendar by about one day every four years because it has no leap-days. Thus, if the day 1 First, 1 Lehi was in early April in 601 BC, then after 600 years the day 1 First, 601 Lehi would occur about 150 days (about 5 months) earlier in early November 2 BC. So a 365-day year explains why the Nephites reckoned that 600 years had expired several months before Christ was actually born. The angel had been talking about exact Hebrew years (Passover to Passover), but the Nephites had been using a slightly shorter Egyptian year, so it looked as though the Savior had delayed his coming.

April 6, 1 B.C. = Birth of Christ

April 6, 1 B.C. = Birth of Quetzalcoatl

Sun 3 April, A.D. 33 = Resurrection of Christ

In 2018, John Pratt would tie the above dates to multiple sacred calendars—giving it much more detail and substance. He includes in his 2004 article the following chart on what he calls “The Nephite Calendar.”

<u>Event</u>	<u>Gregorian Date</u>	<u>Nephite Date</u>	<u>Ref.</u>
Lehi hears Jeremiah prophesy	608 BC	—	1 Nep. 1:4, Jer. 26:1-9
Lehi departs	Sat 5 Apr 601 BC pm*	1 First, 1 Lehi	1 Nep. 10:4
First Destruction of Jerusalem	Dec 601 BC	Ninth, 1 Lehi	2 Kings 24:2, 2 Nep. 25:10
Many taken captive	Sat 10 Mar 597 BC	11 Twelfth, 4 Lehi	2 Kings 24:14, 1 Nep. 1:13
Arrive at Bountiful	593 BC	9 Lehi	1 Nep. 17:4
Second Destruction of Jerusalem	Summer, 587 BC	Summer, 15 Lehi	2 Kings 25:3, 2 Nep. 1:4
King Benjamin's Speech	Sat 2 Oct 126 BC	26 Tenth, 476 Lehi	Mos. 6:4
Last day of Reign of Kings	Wed 2 Dec 93 BC	5 End, 509 Lehi	Mos. 29:46
Begin Reign of Judges	Thu 3 Dec 93 BC	1 First, 1 Judges	Alma 1:1
<u>Event</u>	<u>Gregorian Date</u>	<u>Nephite Date</u>	<u>Ref.</u>
Angel appears to Amulek	Sun 2 Jun 83 BC	4 Seventh, 10 Judges	Alma 10:6
Ammonihah destroyed	Sat 4 Jan 82 BC	5 Second, 11 Judges	Alma 16:1
Amalickiah found slain	Mon 27 Nov 68 BC	1 First, 26 Judges	Alma 52:1

Samuel the Nephite prophecies	7 BC	86 Judges	Hel. 13:1-2
600 Nephite years ended	Thu 11 Nov 2 BC	1 First, 92 Judges (601 Lehi)	3 Nep. 1:1
Nephi prays for deliverance	Wed 5 Apr 1 BC	27 Fifth, 92 Judges	3 Nep. 1:12
Morning after sign given	Thu 6 Apr 1 BC	1 First, 1 Christ	3 Nep. 1:13
Destruction at Christ's death	Fri 1 Apr AD 33	4 First, 34 Christ	3 Nep. 8:5

Mulekite Chronology =

Jaredite Chronology =

A Few of My Questions: [Refer to "Chronology Chart - Theory #2]

1. If Lehi leaves on April 6, 601 B.C., how do you explain the water in the river Laman (1 Ne 2:9) if the rainy season is December-February? *(Potter & Wellington answer this)*
2. What are the corresponding Jewish calendar days for April 6, 601 B.C.; April 6, 1 B.C.; and April 6, 1830? *SEE Pratt's 2018 article.*
3. What about the 360-day year figured into the prophecies of John (Revelations, Genesis, and Daniel)?
4. What about the statements of Church scholars regarding the death of Herod in 4 B.C.? *See the Tvedtnes 2014 article.*
5. Would the Jews use any other calendar system than the Lunar calendar? *John Pratt has an answer for questions 2,3,4,5,*
6. On the issue of the birthdate of Christ being April 6, 1 BC., a rebuttal was offered by S. Kent Brown, C. Wilfred Greggs and H. Kimball Hansen in "Review of *April Sixth* by John C. Lefgren." *BYU Studies* 22 (Summer 1982): 375-383. Pratt replied in *BYU Studies* 23 (Spring 1983): 252-255.
7. See Jay Huber and Randall Spackman for their reasoning of a 5 BC birthdate (and thus against a 1 BC birthdate).
8. See also James E. Talmage, *Jesus The Christ*, 32nd ed. SLC: UT: Deseret Book, 1962, p. 103-104.
9. If Lehi departs from Jerusalem on April 6, 601 BC, how could Nephi's retrieval of the plates of Laban coincide with a Passover celebration proposed by Don Bradley and still be in 601 BC? It might better fit the Spackman theory.
10. If Lehi left Jerusalem on April 6, 601 B.C., how do you explain 2 Nephi 25:10 where Nephi says: "Wherefore, it hath been told them [the Jews] concerning the destruction which should come upon them immediately after my father left Jerusalem"? And yet in 1 Nephi 17:14 Nephi quotes the Lord in saying that "after ye have arrived in the promised land ye shall know that I the Lord . . . did deliver you from destruction yea that I did bring you out of the land of Jerusalem." And in 2 Nephi 1:4 Lehi declares while in the Promised Land that "I have seen a vision in the which I know that Jeru slam is destroyed." In other words, how does the destruction come immediately after Lehi departs from Jerusalem, and yet Lehi is apparently unable to confirm that destruction until some 14-15 years after he departed from Jerusalem?

Theory #3: This theory is presented in the following books and articles:

Jay Huber, "Lehi's 600 Year Prophecy and the Birth of Christ" Provo, UT: FARMS, 1982.

John W. Welch, "Longevity of Book of Mormon People and the "Age of Man" in *The Journal of Collegium Aesculapium*, 1985, p. 35-45. Reprinted by FARMS.

Robert F. Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East." Provo, UT: FARMS, 1984.

John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*. SLC, UT: Deseret Book Company and Provo, UT: FARMS, 1985, p. 270-276.

John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Record." *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds. Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997, 409.

Neal Rappleye, "The Time is Past": A Note on Samuel's Five-Year Prophecy. *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, vol. 29 (2018): 21-30.

Basic Points of Reference:

597 B.C. = 1st Official Year of "Zedekiah"

Note* For authoritative support, see Neal Rappleye, "Jerusalem Chronicle (ABC 5/BM 21946)," *Nephite History in Context* 1 (Nov. 2017): 1-5.

597 B.C. = Lehi's Departure (November) *[When does Nephi return for the plates ?]*

586 B.C. = Destruction of Jerusalem

Lehi's Calendar = 360-Day "TUN" year, 360-day Egyptian year, or 360-day prophesy year of Daniel, John, and Exodus.

Birth of Christ = 5 B.C. (April)

365+ day Year initiated after Christ's birth (Calendar adjusted A.D. 6)

Christ's death = April, A.D. 29

Jaredite Chronology =

A Few of My Questions: [Refer to "Chronology Chart - Theory #3]

1. Why would the Jews seek Lehi's life for prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem if Jerusalem had already fallen? (1 Nephi 1:18,20) [Possible answer: Lehi prophesied of Christ?—1 Nephi 1:19-20]

2. Why wasn't Laban deported with the 10,000 (2 Kings 24:14) if he was a man of position (1 Ne 3:31) and if he was wealthy (1 Ne 4:9,20)? [Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]

3. Why did Laban still have command over 50 men (1 Nephi 3:31) if Jerusalem had already fallen?
[Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]

4. Why would not Nephi mention the turmoil going on associated with Zedekiah (deportation of 10,000)?

5. Why would Laman and Lemuel think that Lehi was following the "foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11) if Jerusalem had already fallen?

6. Why did neither Laman or Lemuel "believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed" (1 Nephi 2:13) if it had already fallen?

7. In regard to Neal Rappleye's article on the completion of Samuel the Lamanite's 5-year prophecy, Rappleye postulates that the time discrepancy brought up by the Nephites over the date of Christ's birth was related to a 360-day TUN year verses a 365-day HAAB year (where many times the Haab year has also called a "TUN" year by historians of the Maya culture). Rappleye notes the possibility that the discrepancy of Christ's birthdate could have originated even from the start of the reign of the judges. If for simplicity we chart just 5 years, then the discrepancy would be 25 days. However, if we chart ninety 360-day TUN years from the beginning of the reign of the judges, then we find that the set 365-day HAAB calendar would be off by some 450 days (5 X 90), and the solar year would be off by about 23 days more. So beyond the 5-year prophecy of Samuel, what calendar were the Nephites charting the reign of the judges by, and what calendar were they charting the 600-year prophecy from? If the answer is 360-days, then Rappleye might follow Huber's reasoning. But what was Huber's reasoning?

Theory #4: This theory is presented in the following books and articles:

Randall Spackman, "Lehi's Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth"

Randall Spackman, "Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology: The Principal Prophecies, Calendars, and Dates." Provo, UT: FARMS, 1993.

Spackman, Randall P., "The Jewish/Nephite Lunar Calendar" *The Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, No. 1 (Fall, 1998): 49-59.

Randall Spackman, A review article in *FARMS Review of Books*, Vol. 10/1 (1998): 1-11.

Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 6 vols. SLC, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2007. (see 1:66 n.25)

Jerry D. Grover, Jr., *Translation of the "Caractors" Document*, Self-published, 2015

A Source Book for Book of Mormon Chronology by Randall P. Spackman (www.bookofmormonchronology.net)

In an appendix, Randall Spackman has three articles that are a rebuttal to Allen's and Pratt's (Theory #2) proposals regarding Lehi's departure from Jerusalem in "the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" (601 BC):

"'Many' and 'Few' Enter Captivity" (2011-2012)

"Was Jerusalem Destroyed in 601 BC? (2010, 2012)

"Jehoiakim Was Not Nephi's Zedekiah" (2010)

Basic Points of Reference:

597 B.C. = 1st Official Year of "Zedekiah"

The Babylonians imposed a siege on Jerusalem in 588 B.C.

The Babylonians withdrew the siege Jan 7, 587 B.C.

Lehi departed Jan 25, 587 B.C.

Nephi returned for plates (March 1--April 1)

Nephi returned for Ishmael (May 1--June 10)

Babylonians re-imposed the siege June 21, 587 B.C.

Destruction of Jerusalem 587 B.C. (2 Nephi 25:9-10 says that there was a "destruction (of Jerusalem) immediately after Lehi left."

Lehi's calendar = 354.367 Day Lunar Calendar--Non intercalated

Birth of Christ = 5 B.C. (March)

Calendar after sign of Christ = 365 day solar

Calendar change occurred 9 years after the sign

Death of Christ = March, A.D. 29

A Few of My Questions: [Refer to "Chronology Chart - Theory #4"]

1. Why would the Jews seek Lehi's life for prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem if Jerusalem had already fallen? (1 Nephi 1:18,20) [Possible answer: Lehi prophesied of Christ?--1 Nephi 1:19-20]

2. Why wasn't Laban deported with the 10,000 (2 Kings 24:14) if he was a man of position (1 Ne. 3:31) and if he was wealthy (1 Ne 4:9,20)? [Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]

3. Why did Laban still have command over 50 men (1 Nephi 3:31) if Jerusalem had already fallen? [Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]

4. Why would not Nephi mention the turmoil going on associated with Zedekiah (deportation of 10,000)?

5. Why would Laman and Lemuel think that Lehi was following the "foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11) if Jerusalem had already fallen? [Possible answer: same reasoning as with Jeremiah?]

6. Why did neither Laman or Lemuel "believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed" (1 Nephi 2:13) if it had already fallen? [Possible answer: same reasoning as with Jeremiah?]

7. Why would Nephi not mention the turmoil if the siege had been in place for many months? (1 Ne 2:11,13)

8. Why would Nephi note "the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Ne 1:4) but not the year that Lehi supposedly left (587 B.C.), especially when Lehi's 600-year prophecy of the coming of the Messiah related to the year Lehi left Jerusalem? **Note*** In regard to the idea of Lehi's departure late in Zedekiah's reign, Spackman writes the following in a 2010-2014 paper titled "When Did Lehi Escape from Jerusalem: An Introduction":

My proposal in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* that Lehi's escape from Jerusalem occurred late in the reign of Judah's king Zedekiah (rather than in his first regnal year as Mormon stated) received an immediate, but brief rejoinder from David Rolph Seely and JoAnn H. Seely. (See David Rolph Seely and JoAnn H. Seely, "Lehi & Jeremiah: Prophets, Priests & Patriarchs," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/2 (1999): 28.) Two years later, S. Kent Brown joined with David Rolph Seely to publish a tradition-driven counter-argument to my proposed time for Lehi's departure. (See S. Kent Brown and David Rolph Seely, "Jeremiah's Imprisonment and the Date of Lehi's Departure," *The Religious Educator* 2/1 (2001): 14-32.)

9. Why would the daughters of Ishmael want to go back to Jerusalem? (1 Nephi 16:36)

10. How does one account for the fact that Lehi sojourned "eight years in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 17:4) and still had to learn about the destruction of Jerusalem by a vision after they had landed in the promised land? **Note*** In a 2010 article titled "Faithfulness and Diligence," Spackman writes:

That Lehi's family spent four to five months at their base camp by the Red Sea seems to be a credible assumption. That they traveled and camped for another five to six months until prompted to leave Nahom seems equally reasonable. When the group headed eastward for their sojourn in what seems to have been mostly hiding or servitude, they could have been less than nine to eleven months away from the time when the siege of Jerusalem was lifted (which seems to have occurred in Zedekiah's tenth year; Jeremiah 32:1-2). If the city did not fall to the Babylonians until about the time when Lehi's group began to journey eastward from Nahom, then after that time the group might not have been able to get reliable reports. News from 1,400 to 2,100 miles away probably was not distributed consistently, if at all, in the depths of the Arabian Desert. At the seashore in Bountiful, information about Jerusalem's destruction seven years earlier also might not have been available or, if available, might not have been accurate. . . . Even if some sort of seafaring along the coast can be assumed, I cannot assume the transmission of reliable reports, perhaps not even rumors, to Lehi's family after they left Nahom.

Note Potter & Wellington would tend to prove this assumption by Spackman very misleading.*

11. What about Alma 52:1/56:1 in view of a Lunar (354 day non-intercalated) calendar?

12. What about the superscript of 3 Nephi which says that Lehi "came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah"? One of Spackman's articles in this regard is titled "The Problem with Nephi's Memory." Another article in defense of this position is titled "Seeking to Understand the Proposed Error" in which he writes:

I am obliged by the principles of rational reserve natural uniformity and consistency to consider Mormon's specification ["Lehi, who came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Judah" in the heading to the book of Third Nephi] to be a possible chronological error because it would appear to be contradicted by the words of Nephi, an eyewitness to the events (1 Nephi 7:13-14; 2 Nephi 25:10), when his narrative and prophetic texts are placed in what appears to be their Biblical context. Thus, rational principles of interpretation now require me to seek for understanding about the proposed error.

Note This approach is unsettling to me. If I see it correctly, Spackman bases his assumption of "the first year" error on:*

(1) the fact that this portion (1 Ne. 1:4) of the Original Manuscript is not extant. Thus Spackman **assumes** that Nephi never did write the phrase "in the first year of" in the first place.

(2) forty years after the fact, Nephi used a chronological term "immediately" (2 Nephi 25:10) relative to the destruction of Jerusalem happening "immediately" after Lehi's departure.

(3) according to Spackman, Jerusalem was ONLY destroyed once—in 587 B.C. Thus Lehi MUST have departed just previous to that. **Question:** Does the word "destroy" imply ONLY once? Or could it be an ongoing process as a result of grievous disobedience to the Lord's covenant?

(4) Mormon **misinterpreted** Nephi's words "in the commencement of [] the reign of Zedekiah to mean that Lehi departed "in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" and **mistakenly** wrote that phrase in his heading to 3 Nephi. **Note*** Does Spackman assume that Mormon only referred to the Small Plates on this issue? Would he not refer to the Large Plates which contained Lehi's account? And would Joseph Smith not have read this account in his translation of the "116" lost pages of the Original Manuscript? And would the Lord, (who directed the words that Nephi, Mormon and Moroni wrote, and the words that Joseph Smith translated) allow this to happen?

(5) Apparently in his writing of the Printer's Manuscript for 1 Nephi 1:4, according to Spackman's theory, Oliver Cowdery first copied what was recorded in the now non-extant Original Manuscript that Spackman assumes DOES NOT contain the words "in the first year of the." Then, after copying this verse (without the phrase) onto the Printers Manuscript, Oliver remembered or reviewed the heading to the book of 3rd Nephi on the Original Manuscript which DID contain the phrase. He then inserted supralinearly into 1 Nephi 1:4 those words "in the first year of", which were then printed in the 1830 Book of Mormon.

(6) Apparently, Spackman assumes that Joseph Smith, in his 1837 editing of the Printer's Manuscript, overlooked this distinctly supralinear addition of "in the first year of" in 1 Nephi 1:4 by Oliver Cowdery and **mistakenly** left it in place. And that Joseph also read Mormon's incorrect heading to Third Nephi and **mistakenly** left the phrase "in the first year of" in place.

Question 13 (and comments). In 1993, after reviewing the writings of Randall Spackman on Book of Mormon Chronology, John L. Sorenson made the following observations:

"I find Spackman's arguments generally persuasive. They should be considered to supersede any statements on the Nephite calendar I have made."

"Spackman's complex analysis still needs serious criticism by experts in the several subjects he treats, including **the Jewish calendar, other Near Eastern calendars, astronomy, and Mesoamerican calendars.**" (John L. Sorenson, "Comments on Nephite Chronology," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 207-211.)

It is intriguing to me that when a person with all those needed qualifications to do exactly what Sorenson wished for came forward in the form of John P. Pratt, an astronomer specializing in historical calendars, the people at FARMS would follow Spackman, a lawyer. Why?

In Alma chapter 30 there are some passages that, to me, resound with the solution to questions of Book of Mormon chronology. Alma is confronting the anti-Christ Korihor, who among other disbeliefs, doesn't believe that Christ will come. Alma responds in this manner:

Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all . . . the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth . . . and its motion, yea, and also all the planets

which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator. And yet do ye go about, leading away the hearts of this people . . . ?

For April 6, 1833, the following is recorded in the *History of the Church*:

On the 6th of April, in the land of Zion, about eighty officials, together with some unofficial members of the Church, met for instruction and the service of God, at the Ferry on Big Blue river near the western limits of Jackson county, which is the boundary line of the state of Missouri and also of the United States. It was an early spring, and the leaves and blossoms enlivened and gratified the soul of man like a glimpse of Paradise. The day was spent in a very agreeable manner, in giving and receiving knowledge which appertained to this last kingdom—it being just **1800 years since the Savior laid down His life that men might have everlasting life, and only three years since the Church had come out of the wilderness, preparatory for the last dispensation.** The Saints had great reason to rejoice: **they thought upon the time when this world came into existence,** and the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; **they thought of the time when Israel ate the ‘Passover,’** as wailing came up for the loss of the firstborn of Egypt; **they felt like the shepherds who watched their flocks by night,** when the angelic choir sweetly sang the electrifying strain, ‘Peace on earth, good will to man;’ and the solemnities of eternity rested upon them. **This was the first attempt made by the Church to celebrate the anniversary of her birthday, and those who professed not our faith talked about it as a strange thing.”** That Christ, who is called both the “Firstborn” and the “beginning” of God’s creation in both the Bible and early Christian texts, should be born on the day commemorating the creation is especially significant, for it was through him that God created the earth. (Joseph Smith, Jr. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Documentary History)*. 7 vols. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978, 1:336.)

Here Joseph (or someone approved by Joseph) associates April 6th with the anniversary of the Creation, the Exodus, the birth and death of the Savior (1800 years previous), and the organization of the restored Church. Believe it, or disbelieve it, that is your choice, but should we ignore it? In my mind, Pratt is the only person that has sought to prove Alma’s words to Korihor. In multiple articles he has sought to enlighten his readers on how the calendar rotations of various planets testify of Christ’s birth and death, the Creation, the Passover, and the Restoration, etc.

Would it not make sense (even remotely) that Jesus Christ, the Creator of this world would organize everything in such a way that even the motions of the planets would testify of Him, as Alma said? When His works are finally revealed to mankind, is there a reason why “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess” that He is who the prophets always claimed He was?

I have read Spackman’s three well-reasoned and well-researched responses to Pratt’s theory related to just when Lehi left Jerusalem (see my source list under the year 2020). In these responses Spackman guides us through a myriad of historical interpretations with his own interpretations. Is his paper worth reading? Definitely. Is everything he says true? He thinks so. Moreover, he welcomes Pratt’s and Allen’s research, declaring: “their work has value because their alternative perspectives enabled them to identify and emphasize texts in the Book of Mormon that, when understood in terms of rational principles of interpretation, help clarify the internal chronology presented in the Book of Mormon.”

I would echo that approach, but what if I choose not to embrace Spackman's theory? Would it be asking too much to give at least some consideration, if not support, to John Pratt's research? Or is it easier to assume, like Spackman, that Nephi didn't say what is recorded in 1 Nephi 1:4, that Mormon made a mistake in the heading of Third Nephi, that Moroni missed both mistakes in his 20 years of solitude (see Mormon 8:16-17), that Joseph Smith was at fault for not picking up on either of these mistakes during his lifetime, and that the Lord didn't bother to prompt any of His prophet-seers relative to these two mistakes (see 1 Nephi 14:28; 19:3; Words of Mormon 1:6-7,9; 3 Nephi 26:11-12; Ether 4:4-5; 5:1; 8:9-26; 12:22; 13:13)? And is it easier to believe that news of the destruction of Jerusalem didn't travel down the absolutely vital Frankincense Trail for the eight years that followed that destruction, as Spackman would have us believe, using as he terms it, "rational principles of interpretation"?

Note In 2020, John Pratt has posted on his website (www.johnpratt.com) some disturbing articles relative to his newfound alliance with a "reborn Church" supposedly above, but still somehow attached to, the "Mormon" Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and with a new (additional?) Brazilian prophet. He has backed up these actions with various calendar systems. I can't support such ideas or such actions. However, I do still wonder about the idea of the motions of planets testifying of Christ. I would still like to see Pratt's earlier work be examined on its merit, but I don't have the expertise to do it.*

Theory #5: This theory is presented in the following articles

- 2003 Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Has the Seal of Mulek Been Found?," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12/2 (2003): 72-83, 117-118 n. 24
- 2006 Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "An Archaeologist's View," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15/2 (2006): 68-76, 123 n. 7.

Chadwick writes basically the same as in 2006, so I will quote from the 2006 footnote:

I will, however, offer a very brief outline of my own solution, which is that Jesus was most likely born in the winter of 5 BC/4 BC (just months prior to the death of Herod the Great in April of 4 BC) and that Lehi's departure from Jerusalem probably occurred 600 years earlier, in late 605 BC. In this model I presume that the "first year of the reign of Zedekiah" spoken of in 1 Nephi 1:4 does not refer to 21-year-old Zedekiah's installation by Nebuchadnezzar, but to the year 609 BC., theorizing that following the death of Zedekiah's father, Joseph (see 2 Kings 23:30-34), the young 8-year-old Zedekiah was recognized by **Judah** as legitimate heir to the throne, even though the Egyptians installed his older half-brother Jehoiakim (see 2 Kings 23:34). This solution further theorizes that the exilic or postexilic composer of the last segment of 2 Kings (comprising 2 Kings 23:26—25:30) was unaware of the situation with young Zedekiah and reported only the tenure of the Egyptian vassal Jehoiakim, first mentioning Zedekiah at his installment by the Babylonians at age 21. However, it would have been the 8-year-old Zedekiah, in a 609 BC context, of whom Nephi was speaking in 1 Nephi 1:4.

Thus I date "the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" mentioned by Nephi (1 Nephi 1:4) to 609 BC, when eight-or-nine-year-old Zedekiah could logically have been regarded as the genuine successor to his deceased father Josiah and his deposed brother Jehoahaz (see 2 Kings 23:29-33); on the question of whether an eight or nine-year-old son of Josiah could plausibly have inherited the kingship, compare the account in 2 Kings 22:1, where Josiah himself was only eight years old when he was placed on Judah's throne. This means that Lehi's ministry in Jerusalem may have lasted as much as four years (609-605 BC) prior to his departure. But these issues of dating are far from settled.

Basic Points of Reference:

609 B.C. = I date "the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" mentioned by Nephi (1 Nephi 1:4) to 609 BC, when eight-or-nine-year-old Zedekiah could logically have been regarded as the genuine successor to his deceased father Josiah and his deposed brother Jehoahaz (see 2 Kings 23:29-33) This means that Lehi's ministry in Jerusalem may have lasted as much as four years (609-605 BC) prior to his departure.

Lehi departed = late 605 BC.

Nephi returned for plates

Nephi returned for Ishmael

Destruction of Jerusalem =

Lehi's calendar =

Birth of Christ = born in the winter of 5 BC/4 BC (just months prior to the death of Herod the Great
in April of 4 BC)

Calendar after sign of Christ =

Death of Christ = **March, A.D. 29**

Questions.

1 Neal Rappleye notes that

“Chadwick suggests that the Jews viewed Zedekiah as the rightful heir in 609 BC, rather than his half-brother Jehoiakim, who was appointed as a vassal king by the Egyptians. Of the three approaches, Chadwick’s is the most problematic. Not only does it require that we theorize, based on virtually no evidence at all, that the Jews saw Zedekiah as the true king in 609 BC. It is problematic because in 609 BC he would have been known as Mattaniah not Zedekiah (though this could presumably be explained as a translator’s anachronism).

2 Where is the full article that develops all the details of this theory?

CHRONOLOGY CHART—THEORY #1

DATE = BC/AD Calendar

EVENT = What happened

DATE EVENT

- 600 BC Nebuchadnezzar extracts treaty of allegiance to Babylonia from Jehoiakim
- 600 BC 1st year of the reign of Zedekiah (1 Ne 1:4)
Nephi narrative recorded with Egyptian/Hebrew influence (1 Ne 1:2)
Many prophets appear (1 Ne 1:4)
Lehi's visions (1 Ne 1:6-16)
Jews seek Lehi's life (1 Ne 1:18-20)
- 600 BC Lehi leaves Jerusalem with his family (1 Ne 2:4)
Lehi's travels (2 weeks) dwells in valley of Lemuel (1 Ne 2:14)
- 600 BC Laman & Lemuel thought Lehi had left Jerusalem "because of the foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Ne 2:11)
- 600 BC Laman & Lemuel "did not believe Jerusalem could be destroyed (1 Ne 2:13)
- 599 BC Return trip for plates of Laban (1 Ne 3 & 4)
Lehi searches the plates Of brass (1 Ne 5:10)
Jeremiah being cast into prison is mentioned (1 Ne 7:14)
- 598 BC Return trip for Ishmael's family (1 Ne 7:1-22)
- 597 BC Lehi's Tree of Life dream & prophecies (1 Ne 8,10)
Lehi's 600-year prophesy of the Messiah's coming (1 Ne 10:4)
Nephi's Vision (1 Ne 11,12,13,14,15,)
Lehi's sons and Ishmael's daughters marry (1 Ne 16:7)
- 597 BC Jacob is born (1 Ne 8:14-17) (2 Ne 2:1)
- 597 BC Jehoiakim revolts against Babylon, Jehoiakim dies/killed (2 Kings 24:6, 2 Chron 36:6, Jer 22:19)
- 597 BC (early January) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah & lays siege to Jerusalem
- 597 BC (January 16) Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim who dies) starts to reign 3 mo. 10 days. (2 Kings 24:8, 2 Chron 36:9)
- 597 BC Liahona (1 Ne 16:9-10)
- 597 BC Travel 4 days to Shazer (a few weeks stay?) (1 Ne 16:13)
Short stop for hunting (1 Ne 16:14)
- 597 BC (March 16) Jerusalem falls
- 597 BC (March) Nebuchadnezzar deports 3023 Jews (Jer 52:28)
- 597 BC (April 22) Nebuchadnezzar deports 10,000 Jews (Ezek 40:1, 2 Chron 36:10, 2 Kings 24:12-16)
- 597 BC (April 22) Mattaniah ("Zedekiah") placed on the throne (age 21)
- 596 BC (April) Possible 1st official year of Zedekiah's reign
- 596 BC Travel "many days" to place of "broken bow" (about 1 year?) (1 Ne 16:17)
- 595 BC Travel "many days" to Nahom (3 year stay?) (1 Ne 16:33)
Ishmael dies (1 Ne 16:34)
- 595 BC Joseph is born (2 Ne 3:1)
- 592 BC Travel eastward with much affliction (1 Ne 17:1)

592 BC "And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness"
(1 Ne 17:4)

592 BC Lehi's group dwells at Bountiful (1 Ne 17:5)

Ship construction -- 2-3 years?

Provisions

590 BC Lehi's group sets sail for promised land (1 Ne 18:8) (1-2 years?)

588 BC Arrival-Land of first Inheritance (1 Ne 18:23)

Seeds planted, Ore mined, animals hunted (1 Ne 18:24-25)

Nephi begins large plates (1 Ne 19:1-3)

Meanwhile back in Jerusalem

589 BC Zedekiah plans revolt against Babylonia, expects help from Egypt

588 BC (Jan 15) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah to put down revolt, lays siege to Jerusalem

588 BC (Summer) Jeremiah imprisoned for the duration of the siege (Jer 32-33, 37:4-38:28)

588 BC Jeremiah's worst prison named "Malchiah Son of the King" (Mulek Son of the King)

587 BC (January 7) Babylonian siege lifted temporarily to fight Egyptian army marching along the coast

587 BC (April 29) Babylonian army defeats Egyptian army, siege reinstated

586 BC (July 19) Walls of Jerusalem breached

586 BC (Aug 15-18) Temple destroyed

586 BC (August) Zedekiah captured at Jericho, taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters, sons slain
before his eyes, eyes put out, taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:4,6-7)

586 BC Major deportation of Jews (2 Kings 25:11)

586 BC (approx.) Mulek leaves the Middle East (Omni 1:5-6, Hel 6:10, Hel 8:21, Jer 43:6-7)

Meanwhile back in the Promised Land

Prophecies of Zenos, Isaiah-Gentile Nation (1 Ne 19,20,21,22)

586 BC Lehi has vision that Jerusalem is destroyed (2 Ne 1:4)

CHRONOLOGY CHART--THEORY #2

DATE = BC/AD Calendar

EVENT = What happened

DATE EVENT

- 601 BC Egypt recaptures Gaza
- 601 BC Nebuchadnezzar extracts treaty of allegiance to Babylonia from Jehoiakim
- 601 BC 1st year of the reign of Zedekiah(1 Ne 1:4)
 - Nephi narrative recorded with Egyptian/Hebrew influence (1 Ne 1:2)
 - Many prophets appear (1 Ne 1:4)
 - Lehi's visions (1 Ne 1:6-16)
 - Jews seek Lehi's life (1 Ne 1:18-20)
- 601 BC Lehi leaves Jerusalem with his family (1 Ne 2:4)
 - Lehi's travels (2 weeks) dwells in valley of Lemuel (1 Ne 2:14)
- 601 BC Laman & Lemuel thought Lehi had left Jerusalem "because of the foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Ne 2:11)
- 601 BC Laman & Lemuel "did not believe Jerusalem could be destroyed (1 Ne 2:13)
- 600 BC Return trip for plates of Laban (1 Ne 3 & 4)
 - Lehi searches the plates of brass (1 Ne 5:10)
 - Jeremiah being cast into prison is mentioned (1 Ne 7:14)
- 599 BC Return trip for Ishmael's family (1 Ne 7:1-22)
- 598 BC Lehi's Tree of Life dream & prophecies (1 Ne 8,10)
 - Lehi's 600-year prophesy of the Messiah's coming (1 Ne 10:4)
 - Nephi's Vision (1 Ne 11,12,13,14,15,)
 - Lehi's sons and Ishmael's daughters marry (1 Ne 16:7)
- 598 BC Jacob is born (1 Ne 8:14-17) (2 Ne 2:1)
- 598 BC Jehoiakim revolts against Babylon, Jehoiakim dies/killed (2 Kings 24:6, 2 Chron 36:6, Jer 22:19)
- 597 BC (early January) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah & lays siege to Jerusalem
- 597 BC (January 16) Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim who dies) starts to reign 3 mo. 10 days. (2 Kings 24:8, 2 Chron 36:9)
- 597 BC Liahona (1 Ne 16:9-10)
- 597 BC Travel 4 days to Shazer (a few weeks stay?) (1 Ne 16:13)
 - Short stop for hunting (1 Ne 16:14)
- 597 BC (March 16) Jerusalem falls
- 597 BC (March) Nebuchadnezzar deports 3023 Jews (Jer 52:28)
- 597 BC (April 22) Nebuchadnezzar deports 10,000 Jews (Ezek 40:1, 2 Chron 36:10, 2 Kings 24:12-16)
- 597 BC (April 22) Mattaniah ("Zedekiah") placed on the throne (age 21)
- 596 BC (April) Possible 1st official year of Zedekiah's reign
- 596 BC Travel "many days" to place of "broken bow" (about 1 year?) (1 Ne 16:17)
- 595 BC Travel "many days" to Nahom (2 year stay?) (1 Ne 16:33)
 - Ishmael dies (1 Ne 16:34)
- 595 BC Joseph is born (2 Ne 3:1)
- 593 BC Travel eastward with much affliction (1 Ne 17:1)

593 BC "And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness"
(1 Ne 17:4)

593 BC Lehi's group dwells at Bountiful (1 Ne 17:5)

Ship construction -- 2-3 years?

Provisions

590 BC Lehi's group sets sail for promised land (1 Ne 18:8) (1-2 years?)

588 BC Arrival-Land of first Inheritance (1 Ne 18:23)

Seeds planted, Ore mined, animals hunted (1 Ne 18:24-25)

Nephi begins large plates (1 Ne 19:1-3)

Meanwhile back in Jerusalem

589 BC Zedekiah plans revolt against Babylonia, expects help from Egypt

588 BC (Jan 15) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah to put down revolt, lays siege to Jerusalem

588 BC (Summer) Jeremiah imprisoned for the duration of the siege (Jer 32-33, 37:4-38:28)

588 BC Jeremiah's worst prison named "Malchiah Son of the King" (Mulek Son of the King)

587 BC (January 7) Babylonian siege lifted temporarily to fight Egyptian army marching along the coast

587 BC (April 29) Babylonian army defeats Egyptian army, siege reinstated

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586 BC (Aug 15-18) Temple destroyed

586 BC (August) Zedekiah captured at Jericho, taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters, sons slain
before his eyes, eyes put out, taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:4,6-7)

586 BC Major deportation of Jews (2 Kings 25:11)

586 BC (approx.) Mulek leaves the Middle East (Omni 1:5-6, Hel 6:10, Hel 8:21, Jer 43:6-7)

Meanwhile back in the Promised Land

Prophecies of Zenos, Isaiah-Gentile Nation (1 Ne 19,20,21,22)

586 BC Lehi has vision that Jerusalem is destroyed (2 Ne 1:4)

CHRONOLOGY CHART—THEORY #3

DATE = BC/AD Calendar

EVENT = What happened

DATE EVENT

- 605 BC (early) Jeremiah put in prison (Jer 36:5)
- 604 BC (1 Nissan) Nebuchadnezzar begins official reign
- 601 BC Nebuchadnezzar extracts treaty of allegiance to Babylonia from Jehoiakim
- 598 BC Jehoiakim revolts against Babylon, Jehoiakim dies/killed (2 Kings 24:6, 2 Chron 36:6, Jer 22:19)
- 597 BC (early January) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah & lays siege to Jerusalem
- 597 BC (January 16) Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim who dies) starts to reign 3 mo. 10 days. (2 Kings 24:8, 2 Chron 36:9)
- 597 BC 1st year of the reign of Zedekiah (1 Ne 1:4)
 - Many prophets appear (1 Ne 1:4)
 - Lehi's visions (1 Ne 1:6-16)
 - Jews seek Lehi's life (1 Ne 1:18-20)
- 597 BC Lehi leaves Jerusalem with his family (1 Ne 2:4)
 - Lehi's travels (2 weeks) dwells in valley of Lemuel (1 Ne 2:14)
- 597 BC Laman & Lemuel thought Lehi had left Jerusalem "because of the foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Ne 2:11)
- 597 BC Laman & Lemuel "did not believe Jerusalem could be destroyed" (1 Ne 2:13)
- 597 BC Return trip for plates of Laban (1 Ne 3 & 4)
 - Lehi searches the plates of brass (1 Ne 5:10)
 - Jeremiah being cast into prison is mentioned (1 Ne 7:14)
- 597 BC Return trip for Ishmael's family (1 Ne 7:1-22)
- 597 BC Lehi's Tree of Life dream & prophecies (1 Ne 8,10)
 - Lehi's 600-year prophesy of the Messiah's coming (1 Ne 10:4)
 - Nephi's Vision (1 Ne 11,12,13,14,15,)
 - Lehi's sons and Ishmael's daughters marry (1 Ne 16:7)
- 597 BC Jacob is born (1 Ne 8:14-17) (2 Ne 2:1)
- 597 BC Liahona (1 Ne 16:9-10)
- 597 BC Travel 4 days to Shazer (a few weeks stay?) (1 Ne 16:13)
 - Short stop for hunting (1 Ne 16:14)
- 597 BC (March 16) Jerusalem falls
- 597 BC (March) Nebuchadnezzar deports 3023 Jews (Jer 52:28)
- 597 BC (April 22) Nebuchadnezzar deports 10,000 Jews (Ezek 40:1, 2 Chron 36:10, 2 Kings 24:12-16)
- 597 BC (April 22) Mattaniah ("Zedekiah") placed on the throne (age 21)
- 597 BC Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem, Zedekiah/Mattaniah established as king over Jerusalem
- 597 BC Travel "many days" to place of "broken bow" (about 1 year?) (1 Ne 16:17)
- 596 BC Travel "many days" to Nahom (6 year stay?) (1 Ne 16:33)
 - Ishmael dies (1 Ne 16:34)
- 595 BC Joseph is born (2 Ne 3:1)
 - Travel eastward with much affliction (1 Ne 17:1)

589 BC "And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness"
(1 Ne 17:4)

589 BC Lehi's group dwells at Bountiful (1 Ne 17:5)

Ship construction -- 2-3 years?

Provisions

587 BC Lehi's group sets sail for promised land (1 Ne 18:8) (1-2 years?)

586 BC Arrival-Land of first Inheritance (1 Ne 18:23)

Seeds planted, Ore mined, animals hunted (1 Ne 18:24-25)

Nephi begins large plates (1 Ne 19:1-3)

Meanwhile back in Jerusalem

589 BC Zedekiah plans revolt against Babylonia, expects help from Egypt

588 BC (Jan 15) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah to put down revolt, lays siege to Jerusalem

588 BC (Summer) Jeremiah imprisoned for the duration of the siege (Jer 32-33, 37:4-38:28)

588 BC Jeremiah's worst prison named "Malchiah Son of the King" (Mulek Son of the King)

587 BC (January 7) Babylonian siege lifted temporarily to fight Egyptian army marching along the coast

587 BC (April 29) Babylonian army defeats Egyptian army, siege reinstated

586 BC (July 19) Walls of Jerusalem breached

586 BC (Aug 15-18) Temple destroyed

586 BC (August) Zedekiah captured at Jericho, taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters, sons slain before

His eyes, eyes put out, taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:4,6-7)

586 BC (approx.) Mulek leaves the Middle East (Omni 1:5-6, Hel 6:10, Hel 8:21, Jer 43:6-7)

Meanwhile back in the Promised Land

Prophecies of Zenos, Isaiah-Gentile Nation (1 Ne 19,20,21,22)

586 BC Lehi has vision that Jerusalem is destroyed (2 Ne 1:4)

CHRONOLOGY CHART—THEORY #4

DATE = BC/AD Calendar

EVENT = What happened

YEAR EVENT

- 603 BC Babylonia captures Gaza
- 601 BC Egypt recaptures Gaza
- 598 BC Jehoiakim revolts against Babylon, Jehoiakim dies/killed (2 Kings 24:6, 2 Chron 36:6, Jer 22:19)
- 597 BC (early January) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah & lays siege to Jerusalem
- 597 BC (January 16) Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim who dies) starts to reign 3 mo. 10 days. (2 Kings 24:8, 2 Chron 36:9)
- 597 BC (March 16) Jerusalem falls
- 597 BC (March) Nebuchadnezzar deports 3023 Jews (Jer 52:28)
- 597 BC (April 22) Nebuchadnezzar deports 10,000 Jews (Ezek 40:1, 2 Chron 36:10, 2 Kings 24:12-16)
- 597 BC (April 22) Mattaniah ("Zedekiah") placed on the throne (age 21)
- 597 BC 1st year of the reign of Zedekiah (1 Ne 1:4)
Many prophets appear (1 Ne 1:4)
Lehi's visions (1 Ne 1:6-16)
- 589 BC Zedekiah plans revolt against Babylonia, expects help from Egypt, Jews seek Lehi's life
(1 Ne 1:18-20)
- 588 BC (Jan 15) Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to Jerusalem
- 587 BC (January 7) Babylonian siege lifted temporarily to fight Egyptians
- 587 BC (001) (Jan 10?) Lehi leaves Jerusalem with his family (1 Ne 2:4)
-
- 001 Lehi's travels (2-3 weeks) dwells in valley of Lemuel (4yrs?) (1 Ne 2:14)
Laman & Lemuel thought Lehi had left Jerusalem "because of the foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Ne 2:11)
Laman & Lemuel "did not believe Jerusalem could be destroyed according to the words of the prophets" (1 Ne 2:13)
- 001 Return trip for plates of Laban (1 Ne 3 & 4)
Lehi begins to search the plates of brass (1 Ne 5:10)
Jeremiah imprisoned for duration of siege (Jer 32-33,37-38)
Jeremiah's prison named "Malchiah (Mulek) Son of the King"
- 001 Return trip for Ishmael's family (1 Ne 7:1-22)
Jeremiah being cast into prison is mentioned (1 Ne 7:14)
- 587 BC (001) (April 29) Babylonian army defeats Egyptian army, siege reinstated
Lehi's Tree of Life dream & prophecies (1 Ne 8,10)
Lehi's 600-year prophesy of the Messiah's coming (1 Ne 10:4)
Nephi's Vision (1 Ne 11,12,13,14,15)
Lehi's sons and Ishmael's daughters marry (1 Ne 16:7)
- 001 Liahona (1 Ne 16:9-10)
- 001 Travel 4 days to Shazer (1 Ne 16:13)
Short stop for hunting (1 Ne 16:14)
- 001 Travel "many days" to place of "broken bow" (1 Ne 16:17)

- 001 Travel "many days" to Nahom (1 Ne 16:33)
Ishmael dies (1 Ne 16:34)
- 001 Travel eastward with much affliction (1 Ne 17:1)
- 586 BC (002) (July 19) Walls of Jerusalem breached (Aug 15-18) Temple destroyed
- 586 BC (002) (August) Zedekiah captured, sons slain, taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:4,6-7)
Mulek escapes death and starts on journey to American continent (Omni 1:5-6; Hel 6:10;
Hel 8:21; Jer 43:6-7)
- 586 BC (002) Major deportation of Jews (2 Kings 25:11)
- 002 "And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness"
(1 Ne 17:4)
- 003 Jacob is born (1 Ne 8:14-17) (2 Ne 2:1)
- 005 Joseph is born (2 Ne 3:1)
- 009 Lehi's group dwells at Bountiful (3 year stay?) (1 Ne 17:5)
Ship construction--Provisions
Laman & Lemuel think Nephi a "fool" to try to cross waters (1 Ne 17:17)
"After ye have arrived in Promised Land ye shall know" (1 Ne 17:14)
"Our Father hath judged them" (People of Jerusalem) (1 Ne 17:22)
- 012 Lehi's group sets sail for promised land (1 Ne 18:8) (1-2 year?)
- 014 Arrival-Land of first Inheritance (1 Ne 18:23)
- 014 Seeds planted, ore mined, animals hunted (1 Ne 18:24-25)
- 015 Nephi begins large plates (1 Ne 19:1-3)
Nephi-according to angel-God of Israel to come 600 years from time Lehi left Jerusalem
(1 Ne 19:8)
Lehi quotes prophecies of Zenos, Isaiah, (Gentile nation) (1 Ne 19-22)
- 017 Lehi mentions vision that Jerusalem is destroyed (2 Ne 1:4)

EVENTS SURROUNDING THE COMING OF CHRIST

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>(The YEAR chronicles the reign of the judges)</u>
83rd	Nephites begin to wax strong in iniquity (11:36)	
84th	Nephites wax strong in iniquity (11:36)	
85th	Nephites wax stronger in iniquity (11:37)	
	<u>Prophecy of Samuel, the Lamanite</u>	
86th	Lamanites keep law of Moses (Helaman 13:1)	
	Samuel the Lamanite prophesies (13:2)	
	Five more years cometh . . . then cometh the Son of God (14:2)	
	In the night before he cometh . . . no darkness (14:3)	
	Signs of Christ's death:	
	No light for 3 days (14:20)	
	Earthquakes, lightning, thunder for many hours (14:21)	
	Samuel flees, never to be seen again (16:7-8)	
87th	Nephites remain in their pride and wickedness (16:10)	
88th	Nephites remain in their pride and wickedness (16:11)	
89th	Nephites more hardened in iniquity (16:12)	
90th	Great signs & wonders given to the people (16:13)	
	End of Book of Helaman (the record of Helaman & his sons) (16:25)	
92nd	The ninety and first year had passed away (3 Nephi 1:1)	
	It was six hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem (1:1)	
	Lachoneus is the chief judge and the governor over the land (1:1)	
	Nephi had departed out of the land (1:2)	
	Nephi's son Nephi has charge of the sacred records. (1:2)	
	in the commencement of the ninety and second year the prophecies begin to be fulfilled (1:4)	
	there was a day set apart by unbelievers for the sign - otherwise death to believers (1:9)	
	at the going down of the sun there was no darkness (1:15)	
	a new star did appear (1:21)	
	the ninety and second year did pass away (1:26)	
93rd	Peace, except for the Gadianton robbers who dwell upon the mountains (wilderness = mountains?) (1:27)	
94th	Gadianton band increase in number because of Nephite dissenters & Zoramite led Lamanites (1:29)	
95th	Gadianton band increases (2:1)	
96th	People begin to forget signs (2:1)	
97th	People begin to forget signs (2:4)	
98th	People begin to forget signs (2:4)	
99th	People begin to forget signs (2:4)	
100th	Six hundred and nine years had passed away since Lehi left Jerusalem (2:6)	
	Nine years had passed away from the time when the sign was given (2:7)	
	Nephites begin to reckon their time from the sign (2:8)	
10 A.S.	Therefore, nine years had passed away (2:8)	
	Nephi, the father of Nephi did not return (2:9)	
11 A.S.	Spent in iniquity (2:10)	
13 A.S.	Wars and contentions throughout all the land against Gadianton band (2:11)	
	Lamanites unite with Nephites - Curse taken away (2:12-15)	
14 A.S.	The war becomes exceedingly sore (2:17)	
15 A.S.	The Gadianton robbers gain advantages (2:18)	
16 A.S.	Lachoneus (governor of the land) receives an epistle from the Gadianton leader (Giddianhi) (3:1)	
	Lachoneus appoints Gidgiddoni as chiefest captain of the Nephite armies (3:18)	
17 A.S.	By proclamation, Nephites gather to the land of Zarahemla, and the land between Zarahemla & Bountiful (3:23)	
18 A.S.	Gadianton robbers take possession of vacated lands on north & south (4:1)	
	Nephites had reserved provisions for 7 years (4:4)	

YEAR EVENT

- 19 A.S. Giddianhi comes up to battle in **the sixth month** (4:7)
Nephites beat them - Giddianhi is slain (4:14)
- 20 A.S. Robbers do not come to battle (4:15)
- 21-25AS obbers lay siege around people of Nephi (4:16)
New robber leader is Zemnarihah (4:17)
No wild game - Nephites slay thousands & tens of thousands (4:21)
Zemnarihah tries to withdraw to the furthestmost parts of the land northward (4:23)
Gidgiddoni cuts them off - Zemnarihah hanged on a tree (4:28)
- 26 A.S. Nephites return to their own lands (6:2)
People begin to prosper (6:4)
- 27 A.S. There is great order in the land (cities rebuilt, highways & roads built) (6:4-8)
- 28 A.S. Continual peace (6:9)
- 29 A.S. People begin to be distinguished by ranks- according to riches & learning (6:12)
Church begins to be broken up (6:14)
- 30 A.S. The Church is broken up in all the land except for a few Lamanites (6:14)
Lachoneus, son of Lachoneus is chief judge & governor (6:19)
Lawyers & judges unite to destroy governor & establish a king (6:30)
They murder Lachoneus (7:1)
People separate into tribes - government is destroyed (7:2)
Jacob becomes the head (king) of the secret combinations (7:9)
Jacob & his people go to the northermost part of the land (7:12)
- 31 A.S. Remaining tribes agree not to go to war with one another (7:14)
Nephi (ministered to by angels daily) goes forth in power among the people (7:15-18)
He raises his brother from the dead (7:19)
- 32 A.S. Few converted to the Lord (7:21)
- 33 A.S. Preaches repentance and baptism - Many are baptized (7:23-26)
- 34 A.S. **in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month** (8:5)
a great storm, terrible tempest, terrible thunder, sharp lightnings (8:5-7)
Many great cities sunk, many burned, many shaken (8:8-15)
All these terrible things were done **in about the space of three hours** (8:19j)
Darkness **did last for the space of three days** - no light seen (8:23)
Christ speaks from heavens - no more sacrifices & burnt offerings (9:19)
There is silence **for the space of many hours** (10:1,2)
Christ speaks again - promises to gather his people (10: 3-8)
Thus did the three days pass away and it was in the morning, and the darkness dispersed (10:9)
In the ending of the thirty and fourth year, behold (Mormon) will show that people had great blessings (10:18)
Soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did manifest himself unto them (10:18)
- 34 A.S. (Christ's First Main Appearance to the Nephites)
In the ending of the thirty and fourth year, behold (Mormon) will show
that people had great blessings (3 Nephi 10:18)
Soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven
he did manifest himself unto them (3 Nephi 10:18)
A great multitude is gathered at the temple in Bountiful (3 Nephi 11:1)
A heavenly voice repeats 3 times ""Behold my Beloved Son" (3 Nephi 11:3-7)
Christ descends from heaven (3 Nephi 11:8)
People allowed to feel his wounds (3 Nephi 11:14)
Doctrine of baptism (3 Nephi 11)
Jesus calls and commissions the twelve (3 Nephi 12)
The Sermon at the Temple (3 Nephi 12 – 14)

3. The Sources

A Chronological Listing of LDS Sources Pertinent to Book of Mormon Chronology

Note* *The attributed annotations come from A Guide to Publications on the Book of Mormon: A Selected Annotated Bibliography, edited by Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, and Sandra A. Thorne. Provo, UT: FARMS, 1996.*

- 1830 **Book of Mormon** *(Includes discussion relative to the Original Manuscript and Printers Manuscript)*
(Title Page) “If there be fault, it be the mistake of men” (O)
See Mormon 8:17
- (1 Ne. 1:4) “in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah”
Linked to Zedekiah 597 BC or previous – see Allen, Pratt, Chadwick?
- (1 Ne. 2:11-13) “. . . they [Laman and Lemuel] did murmur in many things against their father, because he was a visionary man, and had led them out of the land of Jerusalem . . . And this they said he had done because of the foolish imaginations of his heart. . . **Neither did they believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed** according to the words of the prophets. And they were like unto the Jews who were at Jerusalem, who sought to take away the life of my father.”
*Note that the words are “could be” not “would be.”
If this refers to the conditions of 597 B.C. as the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, how could Laman and Lemuel NOT believe that Jerusalem could be destroyed. Whereas, if this had happened under Jehoiakim (“Zedekiah”), then at that time Jerusalem had not been sacked.*
- (1 Ne. 7:14) “for behold they [the Jews] have rejected the prophets and Jeremiah have they cast into prison and they have sought to take away the life of my father insomuch that they have driven him out of the land.”
If this is a chronological complaint, then Jeremiah could have been cast into prison (605 B.C.) before Lehi left Jerusalem.
- (1 Ne. 10:4) “Yea, even six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews—even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world.”
- (1 Ne. 12:12) “And I, Nephi, also saw many of the fourth generation who passed away in righteousness” (see 2 Nephi 26:9)
- (1 Ne. 16:36) “they [the daughters of Ishmael] were desirous to return again to Jerusalem”
To what extent had Jerusalem already been conquered by Babylonia?
- (1 Ne. 17:4) “And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea even eight years”

- (1 Ne. 17:14) “Yea, and the Lord said also that: After ye have arrived in the promised land, ye shall know that I, the Lord, am God; and that I, the Lord, did deliver you from destruction; yea, that I did bring you out of the land of Jerusalem.”
- (1 Ne. 17:43) “I [Nephi] **know not** but they are at this day about to be destroyed; for I **know** that the day must surely come that they must be destroyed, save a few only, who shall be led away into captivity”
Lehi must have left at least 8 or more years previous to this (see 1 Ne. 17:4) and still doesn't know of the destruction.
- (1 Ne. 19:5-7) “I proceed according to that which I have spoken; and this I do that the more sacred things may be kept for the knowledge of my people. Nevertheless, I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be sacred. And now, if I do err, even did they err of old; not that I would excuse myself because of other men, but because of the weakness which is in me, according to the flesh . . . For the things which some men esteem to be of great worth, both to the body and soul, others set at naught and trample under their feet.”
Nephi is not admitting “specific” mistakes in dates because he declares the correctness of the calendar from the mouth of an angel. Nephi seemingly struggles because of his literary abilities and spiritual abilities to make his message of such force that it cannot be denied.
- (1 Ne. 19:8) “He cometh, according to the words of the angel, in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem”
- (2 Ne. 1:4) “I [Lehi] have seen a vision, in which I know that Jerusalem is destroyed”
- (2 Ne. 25:19) “ the Messiah cometh in six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem”
- (2 Ne. 25:10) “Wherefore, it hath been told them concerning the destruction which should come upon them, **immediately** after my father left Jerusalem; nevertheless they hardened their hearts; and according to my prophecy they have been destroyed, save it be those which are carried away captive into Babylon. (2 Nephi 25:10)
Note What if the punctuation is changed here? Note also the tense of the verb.*
(1) “Wherefore, it hath been told them concerning the destruction which should come upon them.
(2) Immediately after, my father left Jerusalem.
(If this was part of the first combined sentence, then then instead of the verb “left” it should read “was to leave Jerusalem”)?
Furthermore, why would Lehi tell the people he was going to leave Jerusalem?
- (2 Ne. 26:9) “But the Son of righteousness shall appear unto them; and he shall heal them, and they shall have peace with him, until three generations shall have passed away, and many of the fourth generation shall have passed away in righteousness.” (see 1 Ne. 12:12, Alma 45:12)
- (Jacob 1:1) “it came to pass that fifty and five years had passed away from the time that

Lehi left Jerusalem” (Jacob 1:1)

A time is used as a basis for the calendar, therefore it couldn't have been a vague time period, but rather precise.

(Enos 1:25) “and an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away from the time that our father Lehi left Jerusalem.”

(Omni 1:20-21) “and he [Coriantumr] dwelt with them [the people of Zarahemla] for the space of nine moons.”

Omni uses “moons” as a means of time, which implies the use of a lunar calendar by the Mulekites.

(Mosiah 6:4) “And he began to reign in the thirtieth year of his age, **making in the whole**, about four hundred and seventy-six years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem.

What does “in the whole” imply?

(Mosiah 29:46) “And it came to pass that Mosiah died also, in the thirty and third year of his reign, being sixty and three years old; **making in the whole**, five hundred and nine years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem.

The chronological phrase, “making in the whole . . . years” seems to be used only three times in the Book of Mormon: Mosiah 6:4, Mosiah 29:46, and Mormon 3:4.

What does “in the whole” imply? Does it imply that the 600-year prophecy was not an approximation?

(Alma 45:8-11) “Then Alma said unto him: Blessed art thou . . . But behold, I have somewhat to prophesy unto thee . . . yea, what I prophesy unto thee **shall not be made known, even until the prophecy is fulfilled**; therefore write the words which I shall say. And these are the words: Behold, I perceive that this very people, the Nephites, according to the spirit of revelation which is in me, in four hundred years from the time that Jesus Christ shall manifest himself unto them, shall dwindle in unbelief, . . . [and] become extinct.”

John Tvedtnes writes (“When Was Jesus Born?, 2014, p. 16):

“Some Book of Mormon prophecies indicate that the Nephite nation would be destroyed in “the fourth generation” following Christ’s appearance (see also 2 Nephi 26:9, Alma 45:12; Helaman 13:10; 3 Nephi 27:32), though other passages indicate that it occurred **after about** 400 years (Mormon 8:6; Moroni 10:1), while the great battle at Cumorah took place after 385 years (Mormon 6:5). Thus, both “generation” and “hundred” are used as approximations.” [So] “it is likely that the 600 years should be read as an approximation, i.e., six centuries.

Tvedtnes fails to include this specific prophecy in Alma 45:8-11.

*And Tvedtnes is also misleading here with his final proof that the battle at Cumorah took place after 385 years, because not everybody was killed at that time (Mormon 6:11). Additionally Tvedtnes says that Mormon 8:6 was written “**after about** 400 years” when in reality, although Mormon 8:6 was written by Moroni a number of years after the battle of Cumorah*

(possibly fifteen to be exact), Moroni uses standard specific chronological language to state: “Behold, four hundred years have passed away since the coming of our Lord and Savior.” Thus, Moroni specifically notes the fulfillment of Alma’s prophecy in Alma 45:8-11.

*Moroni 10:1 (“**more than** four hundred and twenty years have passed away since the sign was given of the coming of Christ”) by the use of the words “more than” can be seen as an indefinite date (Moroni is wandering), but this is not critical to the idea of a specific 400-year prophecy.*

Tvedtnes can choose to see these “400 year” verses as an approximation, but they can also be used to verify a specific time period because they refer back to a specific calendar beginning time—the manifestation of the Lord (the time when the sign was given). Moreover, why would Alma give this special secret prophecy to his son when the “fourth generation” prophecies had already been given by Nephi and they will also be found in Helaman 13:10; 3 Nephi 27:32? The implication is that Alma’s prophecy was specific. The “fourth generation” statements do not imply a specific date.

- (Alma 45:12) “yea, I say unto you, that from that **day** [see Alma 45:10], even the fourth generation shall not all pass away before this great iniquity shall come.”
- (Alma 49:1) “And now it came to pass in the eleventh month of the nineteenth year, on the tenth day of the month, the armies of the Lamanites were seen approaching . . .
*Can we be certain of the number of months in a calendar year: eleven is the highest number mentioned. (see also Alma 46:37; 48:2, 21.)
When were the seasons of warfare?*
- (Alma 52:1-2) “And now, it came to pass in the twenty and sixth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, behold, when the Lamanites awoke on the first morning of the first month, behold, they found Amalickiah was dead in his own tent; and they also saw that Teancum was ready to give them battle on that day. And now, when the Lamanites saw this they were affrighted; and they abandoned their design in marching into the land northward, and retreated with all their army into the city of Mulek, and sought protection in their fortifications.
See Sorenson, Ancient American Setting, p. 275.
- (Hel. 12:15) “surely it is the earth that moveth and not the sun”
Not only is this statement astronomically true, but it implies a motion to the earth (see Alma 30:44) and perhaps that the sun does not circle around the earth, but the earth orbits around the sun. This, in turn, is the basis of the solar calendar.
- (Hel. 13:10) “Yea, I will visit them in my fierce anger, and there shall be those of the fourth generation who shall live, of your enemies, to behold your utter destruction; and this shall surely come except ye repent, saith the Lord; and those of the fourth generation shall visit your destruction.

- (Hel. 14:2-6) “Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name . . .
A celestial sign related to a five-year prophecy is given both an early completion date and a late completion date, implying a calendar system used by the angel and the Lord beyond the Nephite “reign of the judges” calendar and possibly the “years from when Lehi left Jerusalem” calendar used by the Nephites. (see 3 Nephi 1:21)
- (Hel. 14: 14-28) “And behold, again another sign I give unto you, yea, a sign of his death . . .
- (3 Ne. Heading) “Nephi who was the son of Lehi, who came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Judah”
- (3 Ne. 1:1,4) “Now it came to pass that the ninety and first year had passed away and it was six hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, . . . And it came to pass that in the commencement of the ninety and second year, behold, the prophecies of the prophets began to be fulfilled more fully . . .
- (3 Ne. 1:5-9) “But thee were some who began to say that the time was past for the words to be fulfilled, which were spoken by Samuel, the Lamanite. . . . Now it came to pass that there was a day set apart by the unbelievers, that all those who believed in those traditions should be put to death except the sign should come to pass, which had been given by Samuel the prophet.
- (3 Ne. 1:19-21) “And it came to pass that there was no darkness in all that night, but it was as light as though it was mid-day . . . And it came to pass also that a new star did appear, according to the word.
- 3 Ne. 2:5-6) “And also an hundred years had passed away since the days of Mosiah, who was king over the people of the Nephites. And six hundred and nine years had passed away since Lehi left Jerusalem.
- (3 Ne. 8:2) “if there was no mistake made by this man in the reckoning of our time”
Is this a cautionary question, or a statement of emphasis.
- (3 Ne. 8:5-6) “My father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolk, and I have not friends nor whither to go; . . . Behold, four hundred years have passed away since the coming of our Lord and Savior.”
- (3 Ne. 27:32) “But behold, it sorroweth me [Jesus Christ] because of the fourth generation from this generation, for they are led away captive by him even as was the son of perdition . . .

[Note: In 3 Nephi 27:32 we find the Savior prophesying concerning the future generations of the Nephites: “it sorroweth me because of the fourth generation from this generation.” This 4-generation prophecy builds on the vision of Nephi wherein he saw this generation (see 1 Nephi 12:11-12, 15, 20). Nephi also repeats this 4-generation prophecy

in 2 Nephi 26:9-11. Almost 500 years later (about 70 B.C.), Alma came to his son Helaman and repeated this prophecy concerning the destruction of the Nephites. Helaman recorded this prophecy in Alma 45:9-14. Just previous to the Savior's birth, Samuel the Lamanite included words concerning the Nephite destruction among his prophecies (see Helaman 13:5-19). That Mormon was able to include prophecies such as these in his record is a testament to the historical narrative. That he will cite their fulfillment (see Mormon 6:5, 8, 11, 15) and that his son Moroni will confirm this (see Mormon 8:6) is a literary testament to the Book of Mormon.]

(Mormon 8:5) “Behold . . . My father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolk, and I have not friends nor whither to go . . . Behold, four hundred years have passed away since the coming of our Lord and Savior”

See the commentary and my explanation for Alma 45:8-11.

(Morm 8:10-12) “And there are none that do know the true God save it be the disciples of Jesus, who did tarry in the land until the wickedness of the people was so great that the Lord would not suffer them to remain . . . But behold, my father and I have seen them, and they have ministered unto us. And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these. Behold, I am Moroni; and were it possible, I would make all things known unto you.

Once again, Mormon does not seem to be focusing on specific mistakes in dates or events, but the content and power of the message.

(Morm 8:16-17) “And blessed be he that shall bring this thing to light . . . and it shall be done by the power of God. And if there be faults they be the fault of a man. But behold, we know NO fault. Nevertheless God knoweth All things. Therefore he that condemneth let him be aware/beware (Mormon 8:17)

In focusing on Nephi or Mormon or Moroni as fallible “authors” of the Book of Mormon we miss the point, for I doubt that any would claim as much. In multiple passages in the text we find that it was the Lord who was the one directing what was included and what was not (see 1 Nephi 14:28; 19:3; Words of Mormon 1:6-7,9; 3 Nephi 26:11-12; Ether 4:4-5; 5:1; 8:9-26; 12:22; 13:13).

(Morm 9:31) “Condemn me not because of min imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been. And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

Again, it doesn't sound like this is referring to specific mistakes related to

the calendar, but rather in the content and power of the message.

(Ether 12:23-25) “And I said unto hi: Lord the Gentiles will mock at these things, because of our weakness in writing; for Lord thou has made us mighty in word by faith, but thou has not made us mighty in writing; for thou hast made all this people that they could speak much, because of the Holy Ghost which thou hast given them; And thou hast made us that we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands. Behold, thou hast not made us mighty in writing like unto the brother of Jared, for thou madest him that the things which he wrote were mighty even as thou art, unto the overpowering of man to read them. Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore, when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words.

Again, this is talking about literary style that can convey the power and truthfulness of a message. It doesn't sound like this is referring to specific mistakes related to the calendar. The phrase “because of the awkwardness of our hands” is a literary device that substitutes “hands” for literary ability.

1830 April 6, 1830 **The LDS Church is Organized.**

In the Doctrine & Covenants 20:1-2 we find:

“The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the law of our country, by the will and commandments of God, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April, which commandments were given to Joseph Smith, Jun. who was called of God . . .

Note* In the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Period I: History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet by Himself*, Vol. 1, p. 64, the following are remarks concerning D&C 20:1-2:

In this manner did the Lord continue to give us instructions from time to time, concerning the duties which now devolved upon us; and among many other things of the kind, we obtained of Him the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which according to His will and commandment, we should proceed to organize His Church once more here upon the earth:

[D&C 20 is then quoted]

Note by Skousen on the source of verse 1 being written by John Whitmer? John Whitmer was only a scribe. Joseph Smith was in charge.

1833 Joseph identifies April 6th with the anniversary of the creation, the Exodus, the birth and death of the Savior (1800 years previous), and the organization of the restored Church. The relevant passage from *History of the Church* 1:336 reads:

On the 6th of April, in the land of Zion, about eighty officials, together with some unofficial members of the Church, met for instruction and the service of God, at the Ferry on Big

Blue river near the western limits of Jackson county, which is the boundary line of the state of Missouri and also of the United States. It was an early spring, and the leaves and blossoms enlivened and gratified the soul of man like a glimpse of Paradise. The day was spent in a very agreeable manner, in giving and receiving knowledge which appertained to this last kingdom—it being just 1800 years since the Savior laid down His life that men might have everlasting life, and only three years since the Church had come out of the wilderness, preparatory for the last dispensation. The Saints had great reason to rejoice: they thought upon the time when this world came into existence, and the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; they thought of the time when Israel ate the ‘Passover,’ as wailing came up for the loss of the firstborn of Egypt; they felt like the shepherds who watched their flocks by night, when the angelic choir sweetly sang the electrifying strain, ‘Peace on earth, good will to man;’ and the solemnities of eternity rested upon them. This was the first attempt made by the Church to celebrate the anniversary of her birthday, and those who professed not our faith talked about it as a strange thing.” That Christ, who is called both the “Firstborn” and the “beginning” of God’s creation in both the Bible and early Christian texts, should be born on the day commemorating the creation is especially significant, for it was through him that God created the earth. (Joseph Smith, Jr. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Documentary History)*. 7 vols. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978, 1:336.)

What is the original publication date and who is the compiler?

Note* I do not know the specific source of this account. It would not have been Joseph Smith, as he was in Kirtland at the time. This time period was covered by the *Manuscript History of Joseph Smith*, which was incorporated into the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. In the 1980 edition of *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Period I: History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet by Himself*, Vol. 1, Preface (p. I-VII) we find the following:

In publishing the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, it is felt that a solemn duty is being performed to the Saints and to the world. The events which make up the history of the Church in this age are the most important that history can chronicle. . . .

It is important, too, that so far as possible the events which make up the history be related by the persons who witnessed them, since such statements give the reader testimony of the facts at first hand; and there is placed on record at the same time the highest order of historical evidence of the truth of what is stated. It was these considerations which induced the Church authorities, under whose auspices this history is published, to take the narrative of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as found in the manuscript History of the Church—now in the archives of the Historian’s office—for the body of the work, rather than to authorize the writing of a history in the ordinary way. . . .

From the first the Prophet Joseph Smith had a clear apprehension of the importance of keeping a faithful record of the events connected with the great work which God was bringing forth through his instrumentality . . . with the result that more complete historical data have been written and preserved respecting the coming forth of the work of God in these last days than any other great movement whatsoever. . . .

The manuscript annals of the Church are astonishingly free from errors of dates, relation of facts, or anachronisms of every description. When the Church historians George A.

Smith and Wilford Woodruff completed their publication of the *History of Joseph Smith*, down to the 8th of August, 1844, which history was published in instalments in the *Deseret News*, Utah, and in the *Millennial Star*, England, they expressed themselves upon the correctness of what they had published in the following manner:

“The History of Joseph Smith is now before the world, and we are satisfied that a history more correct in its details than this was never published. To have it strictly correct, the greatest possible pains have been taken by the historians and clerks engaged in the work. They were eye and ear witnesses of nearly all the transactions recorded in this history, more of which were reported as they transpired, and, where they were not personally present, they have had access to those who were. . . . We therefore, hereby bear our testimony to all the world, unto whom these words shall come, that the History of Joseph Smith is true, and is one of the most authentic histories ever written.”

The most careful attention has been given to this work by those engaged in its preparation. The manuscript has been read to the Church Historian, President Anthon H. Lund, with constant reference to the original manuscript history and all copies of its published in the *Times and Seasons* and the *Millennial Star*; and also to various editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Book of Commandments* published at Independence, Missouri, in 1833, where the revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith are contained.

Note* In his later 6-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church*, B.H. Roberts still mentioned the April 6th, 1833 meeting, but deleted this material concerning the Creation, the Passover, the birth and death of Christ, etc. However, one must take into consideration who B. H. Roberts’ audience was. It was for people who read the historical *Americana* magazine. In the Preface to Volume 1 he writes:

“A *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* is the “History of the Mormon Church” that was published in the *Americana* from June 1909 to July 1915, now revised by the author and brought up to date of April 6th, 1930, A.D. . . . in *The Americana* articles the title “History of the Mormon Church” was used. But now that the History appears in a more permanent form, in six volumes, it is thought to be sufficiently pretentious to bear the official title of the church, given to her by revelation from God—“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;” “for thus shall my church be called in the last days,” said the Lord. (D&C 115:3-5)

1833? ????, *Book of Commandments*, Zion: o Www. Phelps & Co., 1833.

Reprinted in W.C. Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*. Vol. 2. SLC: W.C. Wood, 1962.

1835 ???? , *Doctrine and Covenants*. Kirtland: F.G. Williaims & Co., 1835.

Reprinted in W.C. Wood *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*. Vol. 2. SLC: W.C. Wood, 1962.

1866 Orson Pratt, “**Divinity of the Book of Mormon.**” *Millennial Star* **28** (June 16, 1866): 369-371.

See also *Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt* compiled by N. B. Lundwall. SLC, UT: Lundwall, n.d., 387-390.

The gospel writers of the New Testament fix the time of day of the Savior’s crucifixion at noon, and at three o’clock he was removed from the cross. The Book of Mormon

records that the sign was given in the morning. The time difference is not contradictory, rather it offers proof that the Book of Mormon was not written by Joseph Smith, who could not have put such detail into the record. Three o'clock in the afternoon in Jerusalem would have been seven-thirty in the morning in America at one hundred twelve degrees west of Jerusalem. [Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]

1866 Orson Pratt, *Millennial Star* 28:808-811. (Dec. 22, 1866).
Nephite Calendar was 365 days.

1870 Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* 13:126-127. (April 1870)

“It can be reasonably inferred, according to the revelations that we have in the Book of Mormon, that God organized His kingdom, precisely to a day, 1,800 years after the crucifixion. Of course, we do not learn this directly from the Book of Mormon; but we learn enough there of data on which to found a calculation.

We learn not only from this book, but also from the antiquities of the Jews, from the New Testament, from historians and from some of the Mosaic rites that Jesus was crucified about the time of the Passover, and that happened some time after the vernal equinox; and that 1833 years had passed from the time of the birth of our Savior before the organization of this latter-day kingdom.

[Orson Pratt placed the birth of Christ at 11 April, 4 BC. (Article or Book?)]

1870 Fayette Lapham, “**Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, Forty Years Ago. His Account of the Finding of the Sacred Plates.**” *Historical Magazine* [second series] 7 (May 1870): 305-309.

For details see 2019 Don Bradley, *The Lost 116 Pages: Reconstructing the Book of Mormon’s Missing Stories*,

1888 B. H. Roberts and A.D. Bolitho, “**Book of Mormon Controversy.**” *Millennial Star* 50 (February 20, 1888): 113-117.

An interchange of correspondences between Bolitho, who endeavors to prove the Book of Mormon false through a discussion of dates of Christ’s birth and death, and Roberts who explains the possible differences between the Nephite and Jewish calendrical systems.
[Annotation by Anita Cramer Wells]

1882 Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, “**Book of Mormon Chronology,**” in *A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel*, SLC, Ut: Deseret News Press, 1882, p. 289-301.

A list of Book of Mormon events with their attendant dates in chronological order.
[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]

1888 George Reynolds, “**Book of Mormon Chronology,**” in *The Story of the Book of Mormon*. SLC: Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1888, p. 473-487.

- 1902 B. H. Roberts, *Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*. (3rd edition) SLC, UT: The Deseret News, 1902
- 1902 B. H. Roberts, “**Some Objections to the Book of Mormon Answered,**” *Improvement Era* 5 (March 1902): 339-350.
Roberts uses the Bible and historical records to answer alleged contradictions contained in the Book of Mormon regarding . . . the date of Christ’s birth and the three days of darkness that covered the earth at his crucifixion. [Annotation by Bruce R. Murdock]
- 1909 B. H. Roberts, “**The Witness of the Western Hemisphere,**” in *New Witnesses for God: Volume II – The Book of Mormon*. SLC: Deseret News, 1909, p. 21-37.
- 1915 James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission According to Holy Scriptures Both Ancient and Modern*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1915, p. 104.
“We believe April 6th to be the birthday of Jesus Christ as indicated in a revelation of the present dispensation already cited (D&C 20:1), in which that day is made without qualification the completion of the one thousand eight hundred and thirtieth year since the coming of the Lord in the flesh. This acceptance is admittedly based on faith in modern revelation, and in no wise is set forth as the result of chronological research or analysis. We believe that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, April 6, B.C. 1.”
- 1 James E. Talmage was an apostle*
2 He wrote the book under commission from the First Presidency
3 He wrote it in a special room in the Salt Lake Temple
4. It was published by the Church
- 1919 Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants Containing Revelations Given to Joseph, Jr., the Prophet*, p. 128
(AGREED on the date of April 6th, but rejected Talmage’s assertion about 1 BC being the year in which Christ was born. with Talmage)
For the quotation information—see 1981 Bruce R. McConkie.
- 1920 **Book of Mormon**, 1920 edition.
Chronological footnote 600 BC / 1 AD added to the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon for the departure of Lehi /and the birth of Christ.
James E. Talmage was part of a committee organized to edit and enhance understanding of this edition.
- 1928 Jesse A. Washburn, **Chronology Chart: Bible and Book of Mormon Events**. Provo, UT: n.p., 1928
Contains four maps and a long fold-out chronological chart showing sacred and secular events from both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. [Annotation by Daniel B. McKinlay]
- 1949 Wendell O. Rich, **A Chronology of the Book of Mormon**. Logan, Ut: n.p., 1949.
A Chart that shows the chronology of events that take place in the Book of Mormon. It portrays the Nephites, Lamanites, and Mulekites on a timeline extending from 600 B.C. to A.D. 450, and shows corresponding world events in Greece, Rome, and Babylon.
[Annotation by Anita Cramer Wells]

- 1954 J. Reuben Clark, ***Our Lord of the Gospels: A Harmony of the Gospels***, SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1954, p. vi-vii.
Reprinted by the Church as the Melchizedek Priesthood handbook for 1958.
(disagreed with Talmage entirely)
[J. Reuben Clark viewed the Savior as being born in December, 5 BC

[For the full comment and notation, see 1981 Bruce R. McConkie.]
- 1955 George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl. *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*. 7 vols. SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1955
CHECK
- 1955 M. Wells Jakeman, “**The Ancient Middle-American Calendar System: Its Origin and Development.**” *University Archaeological Society Newsletter* 31 (December 9, 1955): 1-2.
Evidence shows that in middle America the calendar was first developed in the Lehite-Mulekite period. Calendars duplicate the ancient Israelite system. There is evidence of a final migration from Central America into Mexico that corresponds with the final migration of the Nephites in A.D. 327. The birth of the Christ-like god took place on April 6, A.D. 2, in correspondence with Joseph Smith’s revelation (D&C 201).
[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]
- 1956 **Babylonian Chronicles** translated into English. One tablet (the “Jerusalem Chronicle” records events from 605-594 BC. Includes the invasion of Jerusalem and the dating of 597 as the first year of king Zedekiah. [See the Neal Rappleye article.]
- 1956 George Reynolds, “**Chronological Chart of Nephite and Lamanite History.**” SLC, Ut: Deseret Book, 1956.
A full color chart with a historical time line dealing with the Nephites and Lamanites.
[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]
- 1960 Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium*. SLC: Bookcraft, 1960.
- 1961 Milton Jenkins Jones, **Book of Mormon Chart Book**. SLC: Visual Arts Press, 1961
Four different charts show the Book of Mormon timeline, the historical setting of the books of the Book of Mormon, the angel Moroni’s visits, and the translation of the book.
[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]
- 1963 W. LeRoy Mahoney, “**A Comparison of the Egyptian and Mayan Calendars.**” In ***14th Symposium on Archaeology of the Scriptures***, edited by Forrest R. Hauck. Provo, UT: BYU, 1963, p. 87-94.
Lehi’s measurement of time was influenced by the Egyptian calendric system, a system that was ultimately handed down to the Mayans. Several points of similarity between the Egyptian and Mayan calendars are noted, such as a luni-solar year consisting of twelve months of thirty days. [Annotation by Daniel B. McKinlay]

- 1970 Sidney Sperry, ***Book of Mormon Chronology***. SLC: Deseret Book Company, 1970.
Written to correct minor errors in the chronology of the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon. Book-by-book discussion of the given chronology, suppositions, and variant interpretations. *[Annotation by Anita Cramer Wells]*
- ???? Sidney Sperry, *The Book of Mormon Testifies*, ????, p. 294, n.4
Challenges an early appearance of Christ to the Nephites right after the destruction.
- 1975 Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*. 3 Vols. SLC: Bookcraft, 1975.
- 1976 **“Book of Mormon Chronology Chart.”** *Ensign* 6 (September 1976): 55-57.
Provides three color pages listing Book of Mormon events according to their chronological order with a chart showing their order and scriptural passages where they are discussed. *[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]*
- 1976 David S. Tanner, ***Heaven and Earth: Past, Present and Future. A Correlation of LDS Scripture and Other Writings***. Volume II. San Jose, CA: Davis S. Tanner, 1976.
Covers the period of time from Solomon to Christ. Shows a comparative chronologically of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, as well as early Church writings and writings of Joseph Fielding Smith.
[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]
- 1977 Stanley R. Larson, **“I Have a Question: Chronological dates are recorded at the bottom of the pages in the Book of Mormon. How reliable are these dates? Are there any that need to be corrected?”** *Ensign* 7 (September 1977): 38-39.

“In a very real sense, the Book of Mormon has always had its own chronology. Built into its text are three different chronological dating systems: the years since Lehi left Jerusalem, the years of the judges, and the years since Christ’s birth. From our perspective today, it is convenient to convert all dates to years B.C. and A.D. This was first done in the large-size edition of 1888. In that edition the dates were placed in the margin next to the verse involved. The large-size edition was reprinted in 1906 with some modification of the dates. Then starting in the 1920 edition, revised chronological dates were placed at the bottom of the page, and every page of the text (except Ether) had a date assigned. . .

The Nephite year seems to have begun in the month we call April. (3 Ne. 8:5) Thus, if a reference is made to “the commencement of the fourteenth year” (3 Ne. 2:17), that fourteenth year began in April of A.D. 14 and continued through March of A.D. 15. The same situation is found in B.C. dates, since the tenth year of the reign of the judges begins in 82 B.C. (Alma 8:3), but the tenth month of the same year is in 81 B.C. (Alma 14:23).

Another fact that helps us to understand the chronological dates is the special meaning attached to the word **“about”**. Most of the time “about” means any time during the last nine months of the year mentioned and up to the first three months of the next year.

Thus. Thus, a phrase such as “about B.C. 83” does not imply that it could be a few years on either side of this date, but rather indicates that the time of the events narrated fits somewhere in the period April 83 B.C. through March 82 B.C.

The general rule is that the dates show the time period involved for the events narrated. However, there are certain cases that do not follow this pattern and perhaps need a little clarification. In 1 Nephi 9:2-5 information is related that apparently was not known until around 570 B.C. (2 Nephi 5:28-30), though the date on the page indicates “between B.C. 600 and 592.” Also, the Isaiah material in 2 Nephi, chapters 12 through 24, having the dates “between B.C. 559 and 545,” does not indicate either when Isaiah wrote these things or when they happened, but rather the approximate time during which Nephi copied them onto the Small Plates. (2 Ne. 12—24) The Words of Mormon (W. of M 1) is dated “about A.D. 385,” but verses 12 through 18 discuss the early reign of King Benjamin, which ended in 124 B.C. Chapters eight and nine of Moroni present two of Mormon’s letters to his son and the dates “between A.D. 400 and 421” indicate the approximate time Moroni transcribed them onto the plates, since the letters must have originally been written sometime before the hill Cumorah battle of A.D. 385.

It is the inspired translation of the Book of Mormon proper that is scripture, and the other things such as verse divisions, chapter summaries, cross-references, and chronological dates are additions intended to help the modern reader. These chronological dates at the bottom of the page may be helpful, but of course they are only as accurate as they properly reflect the information in the Book of Mormon text.

There are a few difficulties with the present dates. Sometimes they are due to an error in arithmetic, such as thirty years having passed away making 569 B.C. instead of 570 B.C. (**2 Ne. 5:28**). Another example is that Ammon left with his men in 121 B.C. (Mosiah 7:2-3), but the present dating indicates that they arrived back after rescuing Limhi and his people a year before they left (**Mosiah 21:22**)! *[corrected to “about 121 B.C. in 1981 edition]* Obviously, the date for the latter event needs to be lowered at least one year. The events in **Mosiah 23:25—24:25** must be dated at least 121 B.C. *[NOT corrected in 1981 edition]*, since the army that found Alma was the one that had been hunting for Ammon and Limhi (Mosiah 22:15-16; Mosiah 23:30, 35), and based on the information in Alma 17:6, the date of the departure of the sons of Mosiah should be changed to 91 B.C. (**Mosiah 28:9**) *[NOT corrected in 1981 edition]* Also, since the events in **Alma 36:1 to Alma 43:2** occurred in the eighteenth year of the judges they should be dated “about B.C. 74.” *[NOT corrected in 1981 edition]*

All of the dates in our present Bok of Mormon represent the chronology as established by the Book of Mormon committee responsible for the 1920 edition.

1978 D. H. Ludlow, ***A Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants***. 2 Vols. SLC: Deseret Book, 1978.

1980 President Spencer W. Kimball, “**Remarks and Dedication of the Fayette, New York, Buildings**,”

Ensign, May 1980, p. 54.

President Spencer W. Kimball talked about the birth of Christ during the Sesquicentennial celebration of the organization of the Church during General Conference on April 6, 1980. He said: “My brothers and sisters, today we not only celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the organization of the Church, but also the greatest event in human history since the birth of Christ on this day 1,980 years ago. Today is Easter Sunday.”

1980 John Lefgren, *April Sixth*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980.
Proposes April 6, 1 B.C. as the birthdate of Christ.

1981 Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*. SLC: Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1981. Chapter 20: “Jesus Is Born” (p. 339-350), 349-350n.2

In Chapter 20: “Jesus Is Born,” McConkie writes on page 343: “Of this most important of all births, Luke says simply: “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes , and laid him in a manger, because there was none to give room for them in the inns.”[footnote 2]

On pages 349-350 footnote #2 reads:

What is the date of our Lord’s birth? This is one of those fascinating problems about which the wise and the learned delight to debate. There are scholars, of repute and renown, who place his natal day in every year from 1 B.C. to 7 B.C., with 4 B.C. being the prevailing view, if we may be permitted to conclude that there is a prevailing view. How much the answer really matters is itself a fair question, since the problem is one, in part at least, of determining whether there have been errors made in the creation of our present dating system.

We do not believe it is possible with the present state of our knowledge—including that which is known both in and out of the Church—to state with finality when the natal day of the Lord Jesus actually occurred. Elder James E. Talmage takes the views that he was born on April 6, 1 B.C., basing his conclusion on Doctrine and Covenants 20:1, which speaks of the day on which the Church was organized, saying it was “one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the flesh.” April 6 is then named as the specific day for the formal organization. O Elder Talmage notes the Book of Mormon chronology, which says that the Lord Jesus would be born six hundred years after Lehi left Jerusalem. (Talmage3, pp. 102-4.)

Elder Hyrum M. Smith of the Council of the Twelve wrote in the *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*: “The organization of the Church in the year 1830 is hardly to be regarded as giving divine authority to the commonly accepted calendar. There are reasons for believing that those who, a long time after our Savior’s birth, tried to ascertain the correct time, erred in their calculations, and that the Nativity occurred four years before our era, or in the year of Rome 750. All that this Revelation means to say is that the Church was organized in the year commonly accepted as 1830, A.D.” Rome 750 is equivalent, as indicated, to 4 B.C.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in *Our Lord of the Gospels*, a scholarly and thoughtful work, says in his preface that many scholars “fix the date of the Savior’s birth at the end of 5 B.C., or the

beginning or early part of 4 B.C.” He then quotes the explanation of Doctrine and Covenants 20:1 as found in the [Smith’s] *Commentary*, [Clark] notes that it has been omitted in a later edition, and says: “I am not proposing any date as the true date. But in order to be as helpful to students as I could, I have taken as the date of the Savior’s birth the date now accepted by many scholars,—late 5 B.C., or early 4 B.C., because Bible Commentaries and the writings of scholars are frequently keyed upon that chronology and because I believe that so to do will facilitate and make easier the work of those studying the life and works of the Savior from sources using this accepted chronology.” This is the course being followed in this present work, which means, for instance, that Gabriel came to Zacharias in October of 6 B.C.; that he came to Mary in March or April of 5 B.C.; that John was born in June of 5 B.C.; and that Jesus was born in December 5 B.C., or from January to April in 4 B.C.

To illustrate how the scholars go about determining the day of Christ’s Nativity, we quote the following from Edersheim: . . . (Edersheim 2:704.) . . .

We repeat, as President Clark repeated, that this is not a settled issue. Perhaps also it does not matter too much as long as we have an accepted framework of time within which to relate the actual event of his life, and one that gives us a reasonably accurate view of when those events took place.

- 1982 S. Kent Brown, C. Wilfred Gregg, and H. Kimball Hansen. “**Review of April Sixth by John C. Lefgren.**” *BYU Studies* 22 (Summer 1982): 375-383.
- 1982 Jay H Huber, “**Lehi’s 600-Year Prophecy and the Birth of Christ.**” FARMS Preliminary Report, 1982.
Using historical data to date the time that Lehi left Jerusalem and the time of Christ’s birth and death, the author concludes that the Nephites used a 360-day calendar and Christ was born on or near 11 April, 4 B.C., or September/October of 5 B.C. “The 360-day hypothesis agrees with all historical data dealing with Zedekiah and Herod, is consistent with the Book of Mormon account, and allows us a plausible explanation for the heavenly signs inferred from the Nephite account.” [Annotation by Andrew Teasdale]
- 1983 Dell Van Orden and Malan Heslop, “**Book of Mormon—Place in Time,**” *Church News* 53 (November 27, 1983 and December 4, 1983): 8-9, 8-9.
Chart synchronizing Book of Mormon events with biblical and secular history, beginning with the Jaredites and continuing until the Nephite destruction.
[Annotation by Anita Cramer Wells]
- 1984 S. Kent Brown, “**Jesus among the Nephites: When Did it Happen?**” In *Church Education System’s Religious Educators’ Symposium on the New Testament* (15-17 August, 1984, BYU) (Updated in 1989 and 1998)
- 1984 Jesse N. Washburn, *The Miracle of the Book of Mormon*. Orem, UT: Book Production Services, 1984.

Among other things, it correlates Book of Mormon scriptures with biblical chronological events. *[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]*

- 1984 Robert F. Smith, "**Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East.**" Provo, UT: FARMS, 1984.
Explores the events that occurred in the ancient Near East preceding the time and just following Lehi's departure for the promised land. It includes a suggested dating system for Book of Mormon peoples based upon the Mesoamerican calendar.
[Annotation by Jeanette W. Miller]
- 1985 John L. Sorenson, **An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon.** SLC, UT: Deseret Book Company and Provo, UT: FARMS, 1985, p. 270-276.
- 1985 John P. Pratt, "**The Restoration of Priesthood Keys on Easter 1836, Part 1: Dating the First Easter,**" *Ensign* 15, No. 6 (June, 1985): 59-68.
A summary of the evidence used to date the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and proposing that Sunday, 3 April A.D. 33 (Greg.) is the most likely date.
- 1985 John W. Welch, "**Longevity of Book of Mormon People and the "Age of Man"** in **The Journal of Collegium Aesculapium,** 1985, p. 35-45. Reprinted by FARMS.
- 1985 Verneil W. Simmons, "**Another Look at the Book of Mormon Ministry of Christ,**" **Zarahemla Record** 29-31 (Summer, Fall 1985, Winter 1986): 1-3, 23.
Suggests that Christ appeared to the Nephites on Rosh Hashanah (near September 22).
[Annotation by Andrew Teasdale]
- 1985 John W. Welch, "**King Benjamin's Speech in the Context of Ancient Israelite Festivals.**" Preliminary Report. WEL-85c. Provo, UT: FARMS, 1985.
- 1986 Sadie B. Cadman and Sara Cadman Vancik, **A Concordance of the Book of Mormon.** Monongahela, PA: Church of Jesus Christ, 1986.
A complete but not exhaustive concordance. Contains a historical chronology of the events in the Book of Mormon. *[Annotation by Donald W. Parry]*
- 1986 John W. Welch, "**The Calling of a Prophet: An Analysis of the Call of Lehi in 1 Nephi 1.**" Preliminary Report. WEL-86c.
(See the notation for 1988)
- 1989 John W. Welch, S. Kent Brown, and John A. Tvedtnes, "**When Did Jesus Appear to the Nephites in Bountiful?**" Provo, UT: FARMS, 1989
Three theories about the timing of Jesus' appearance in Bountiful are set forth:
[1] shortly after the crucifixion,
[2] about 50 days after the crucifixion,
[3] about 11 months after the crucifixion.
Given the ambiguous reference in 3 Nephi 10, no definite conclusion can be reached.
[Annotation by John W. Welch]

1988 John W. Welch, “The Calling of a Prophet,” in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, JR. Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1988, p. 35-54.

This article is valuable because it possibly explains how in a 597 B.C setting, Laman and Lemuel did NOT believe that Jerusalem could be destroyed (1 Nephi 2:11-13). However, one should note that the wording is NOT “would be destroyed” but “could be destroyed,” possibly two very different implied meanings.

John W. Welch writes on page 36:

This was undoubtedly an unforgettably troubling year, for in the first part of December, 598 B.C., Jehoiakim king of Judah, had died. His son Jehoiachin, who was probably only an adolescent, was made king. Three months and ten days later, on 16 March (2 Adar) 597 BC., Jerusalem fell, having been besieged by the Babylonians (2 Kings 24:10-16). They deposed king Jehoiachin and deported him to Babylon, along with many of the leading citizens, soldiers, and craftsmen of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 24;1). Leaving Jehoiachin’s uncle, the mere twenty-one-year-old Zedekiah, on the throne as a puppet king. Therefore, at the time when Lehi became concerned about the welfare of his people, the still insurgent Jews at Jerusalem already knew well the indomitable military power of the Babylonians and were in a weakened political position with an inexperienced, twenty-one-year-old king at their helm. The situation in Jerusalem was grave and volatile, if not already desperate.

Such circumstances as trouble in the land and the coronation of a new king often precipitated prophetic action in the ancient world. One scholar, for example, has argued from circumstantial evidence in the Old Testament that prophecy played an especially important role at or around the coronation of each new king. He suggests that the distinctive council visions and messenger prophecies of Micaiah (1 Kings 22:1-38), Isaiah (Isaiah 6, 40), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1-10), and Amos (Amos 7:1-3, 4-6, 7-9; 8:1-3; 9:1), as well as Jeremiah’s temple sermon (Jeremiah 26:1)—which have much in common with 1 Nephi 1—all occurred around the New Year, at the “epiphany and enthronement of Yahweh,” the day when the king was typically crowned and the fates or destinies pronounced. If there is any merit to such suggestions, we may understand more clearly the sharply negative reaction which Lehi’s public message evoked, [footnote 10] since it was apparently near the day when the Israelites were celebrating Zedekiah’s enthronement, or at least “in the commencement” of the first year of his troubled reign, that many prophets including Lehi came forth and spoke out pessimistically against Zedekiah’s newly installed regime.

Footnote 10: The reaction of the people in Jerusalem was political in the sense that his message indicated and condemned the city whose inhabitants then collectively sought Lehi’s life. This would have involved, in my opinion, several forms of legal and political action, much like the lawsuit brought against Jeremiah and the extradition procedure initiated in the case of Urijah discussed in Jeremiah 26.

???? Jerome Horowitz, “Some Thoughts on 3 Nephi 1909:18 Concerning the Time of Christ’s Visit to

the Nephites,” paper submitted to FARMS.

- 1989 S. Kent Brown, **“When did Jesus Appear to the Nephites in Bountiful?”** Provo, UT: FARMS, 1989
Brown concludes that “the cumulative evidence weighs in the direction of the Savior’s having come to the Nephites only after a substantial period of time. That period must have assuredly extended into the latter half of the year—presumably between October and April—if we trust Mormon’s chronological notions concerning the timing of both the destruction (3 Nephi 8:5) and the manifestation of the Savior (3 Nephi 10:18).”
[Annotation by Brian Dickman]
- 1989 John A. Tvedtnes, **“The Timing of Christ’s Appearance to the Nephites.”** In **When Did Jesus Appear to the Nephites in Bountiful.** Provo, UT: FARMS, 1989.
Originally presented as a paper at the annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures & Allied Fields, October 1988 the article challenges proposals by Kent Brown and Jerome Horowitz that Christ’s appearance to the Nephites in the city Bountiful took place several months after his resurrection.
[Annotation by John A. Tvedtnes]
- 1989 Joseph L. Allen, ***Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*** Orem, Utah, S.A. Publishers, 1989, p. 22-25.
On page 25 her writes: “In summary, I prefer to date Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem in the early part of 600 BC. This dating allows the proper time period to elapse (600 years) from Lehi’s departure to the birth of Christ (at 1 BC). I also favor the current Biblical dating of 597 BC as the first year of the reign of Zedekiah/Mattaniah.”
- 1990 John P. Pratt, **“Yet Another Eclipse for Herod,”** *The Planetarian*, vol. 19, no. 4 (Dec. 1990): 8-14.
- 1990 John L. Sorenson, **“Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica,”** In ***Warfare in the Book of Mormon***, edited by Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin. SLC, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990, p. 445-478.
Reviews possible calendars used by the Nephites and notes in extensive tables the time of year when battles and preparations for battles were made. The records show that most occurred during the end of dry season in Mesoamerica.
[Annotation by N. Keith Young]
- 1990 John L. Sorenson, **“The Chronological Discrepancy between Alma 53:22 and Alma 56:9,”** Provo, UT: FARMS, 1990.
Alma 53:22 and Alma 56:9 give dates for the same event two years apart. Examines how this chronological discrepancy may be explained. *[Reviewed by John L. Sorenson]*
Note* For a response to this article, see the series of articles posted on my website: alanminer.com I show that Sorenson has misinterpreted these verses.
- 1990 Gordon Heady, **“Time and the Calendar in the Book of Mormon.”** *Witness* 71-72 (Winter, Spring 1990): 9-10, 10-14.
Investigates textual clues to determine what type of calendrical system was used by the

Nephites and the Jaredites and when these systems commenced and fell into disuse.
[Annotation by Anita Cramer Wells]

- 1991 John L. Sorenson, "Seasons of War, Seasons of Peace in the Book of Mormon," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, edited by John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne. Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991, p. 249-255.
- 1992 John P. Pratt, "Book of Mormon Chronology," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1992), vol. 1, p. 169-171.
Nephite history had three time references—time since they left Jerusalem, time from the commencement of the reign of the judges, and time from the birth of Christ. A table compares events in the three time references. [Annotation by N. Keith Young]
- 1992 John L. Sorenson, "The Nephite Calendar in Mosiah, Alma, and Helaman." In *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, edited by John W. Welch. SLC, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992, p. 173-175.
The Book of Mormon refers to dates in the Nephite time reckoning system, but there is no method of correlating the dates to our own calendar. Research has shown that major battles coincided with the end of the Nephite year.
[Annotation by N. Keith Young]
- 1993 Randall Spackman, "Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology: The Principal Prophecies, Calendars, and Dates." Provo, UT: FARMS, 1993.
See the 2020 Randall P. Spackman, *A Source Book for Book of Mormon Chronology*
- 1993 John L. Sorenson, "Comments on Nephite Chronology," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 207-211.

"I find Spackman's arguments generally persuasive. They should be considered to supersede any statements on the Nephite calendar I have made."
"Spackman's complex analysis still needed serious criticism by experts in the several subjects he treats, including the Jewish calendar, other Near Eastern calendars, astronomy, and Mesoamerican calendars."
Note It is intriguing to me that when a person with all those qualifications came forward (John P. Pratt, an astronomer specializing in historical calendars) the people at FARMS would follow Spackman, a lawyer. Why?*
Note* Sorenson also doubts his earlier comments on Warfare and the new year. He adopts Spackman's February. *Note* but the harvest is not completed until the end of February in highland Guatemala.*
Note Would a March-April date work in a 365+-day Haab(Tun) /Hebrew intercalated calendar?*
- 1994 John P. Pratt, "Passover: Was it symbolic of His coming?" *Ensign* (Jan 1994): 38-45.
- 1994 Alan C. Miner, "A Chronological Setting for the epistles of Mormon to Moroni." *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3 (Fall 1994): 94-113.

- 1994 John A. Tvedtnes, "Historical Parallels to the Destruction at the Time of the Crucifixion," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3 (Spring 1994): 170-186.
- 1995 Thomas O. Moore, "A Detailed Chronology of the Book of Mormon" (Wall Chart). Lindon, Utah: Power Graphics, 1995.
- 1996 Robert F. Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 2 (1996): 98-147.
- 1997 John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Record." *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds. Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997, 409.
- 1997 John L. Sorenson, "Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica," in *Nephite Culture and Society: Collected Papers*. SLC: New Sage Books, 1997, p. 155-179.
- 1997 John L. Sorenson, "Appendix: Annals of the Nephite Wars," in *Nephite Culture and Society: Collected Papers*. SLC: New Sage Books, 1997, p. 181-193.
- 1998 Randall P. Spackman, "Thomas A. Moore, A Detailed Chronology of the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review of Books* 10, no. 1 (1998): 1-11.
- 1998 Spackman, Randall P., "The Jewish/Nephite Lunar Calendar" *The Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, No. 1 (Fall, 1998): 49-59.
- 1998 Randall Spackman, A review article in *FARMS Review of Books*, Vol. 10/1 (1998): 1-11.
- 1999 John W. Welch & J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching*. Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999.
Section 3: "Chronology of the Book of Mormon" contains Charts 26-40 illustrating various chronological arrangements of Life spans, Flashbacks, Kings, Chief Justices, etc.
- 1999 David Rolph Seely and JoAnn H. Seely, "Lehi & Jeremiah: Prophets, Priests & Patriarchs," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/2 (1999): 28.)
This article counters Spackman's date for Lehi's departure.
- 1999 Bruce W. Warren, "1 Ben 6 Mak: Part One." *Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest* 2,
- 1999 Bruce W. Warren, "1 Ben 6 Mak: Part Two." *Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest* 2, no. 3 (1999). P. 1, 4-5, 13.
- 2000 John P. Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy of the Birth of Christ." *Meridian Magazine* (March 31, 2000).
- 2000 John P. Pratt, "Chronology," in *To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel H. Ludlow, S. Kent Brown, and John W. Welch, eds.

Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000, p. 65-68.

- 2001 S. Kent Brown and David Rolph Seely, "**Jeremiah's Imprisonment and the Date of Lehi's Departure,**" *The Religious Educator* 2/1 (2001): 14-32.
A counter argument to Spackman's time for Lehi's departure.
- 2003 David Rolph Seely, "**Chronology, Book of Mormon,**" in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 2003, p. 196-204.
- 2003 Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "**Has the Seal of Mulek Been Found?,"** *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12/2 (2003): 72-83, 117-118 n. 24
Chadwick writes basically the same as in 2006, so I will quote from the 2006 footnote:

I will, however, offer a very brief outline of my own solution, which is that Jesus was most likely born in the winter of 5 BC.4 BC (just months prior to the death of Herod the Great on April of 4 BC) and that Lehi's departure from Jerusalem probably occurred 600 years earlier, in late 605 BC. In this model I presume that the "first year of the reign of Zedekiah" spoken of in 1 Nephi 1:4 does not refer to 21-year-old Zedekiah's installation by Nebuchadnezzar, but to the year 609 BC., theorizing that following the death of Zedekiah's father, Joseph (see 2 Kings 23:30-34), the young 8-year-old Zedekiah was recognized by **Judah** as legitimate heir to the throne, even though the Egyptians installed his older half-brother Jehoiakim (see 2 Kings 23:34). This solution further theorizes that the exilic or postexilic composer of the last segment of 2 Kings (comprising 2 Kings 23:26—25:30) was unaware of the situation with young Zedekiah and reported only the tenure of the Egyptian vassal Jehoiakim, first mentioning Zedekiah at his installment by the Babylonians at age 21. However, it would have been the 8-year-old Zedekiah, in a 609 BC context, of whom Nephi was speaking in 1 Nephi 1:4.

Thus I date "the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" mentioned by Nephi (1 Nephi 1:4) to 609 BC, when eight-or-nine-year-old Zedekiah could logically have been regarded as the genuine successor to his deceased father Josiah and his deposed brother Jehoahaz (see 2 Kings 23:29-33); on the question of whether an eight or nine-year-old son of Josiah could plausibly have inherited the kingship, compare the account in 2 Kings 22:1, where Josiah himself was only eight years old when he was placed on Judah's throne. This means that Lehi's ministry in Jerusalem may have lasted as much as four years (609-605 BC) prior to his departure. But these issues of dating are far from settled.

- 2004 John P. Pratt, "**The Nephite Calendar.**" *Meridian Magazine* (January 14, 2004).
- 2005 Thomas Wayment, "**The Birth and Death Dates of Jesus Christ,**" an appendix to volume 1 (of 3) of *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*, eds. Richard Neitzel Holzappel and Thomas A. Wayment. Deseret Book Company, 2005, Appendix.
- 2006 S. Kent Brown, "**Refining the Spotlight on Lehi and Sariah,**" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 2 (2006): 44-57.
- 2006 Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "**An Archaeologist's View,**" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15/2 (2006): 68-76, 123 n. 7.

Neal Rappleye notes that

“Chadwick suggests that the Jews viewed Zedekiah as the rightful heir in 609 BC, rather than his half-brother Jehoiakim, who was appointed as a vassal king by the Egyptians. Of the three approaches, Chadwick’s is the most problematic. Not only does it require that we theorize, based on virtually no evidence at all, that the Jews saw Zedekiah as the true king in 609 BC. It is problematic because in 609 BC he would have been known as Mattaniah not Zedekiah (though this could presumably be explained as a translator’s anachronism).

A similar, but somewhat different and even more problematic approach, was taken by Joseph L. Allen and Blake J. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Revised Edition (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2011), p. 69-72. The Allens propose that “Zedekiah” is a royal title imposed by the Babylonians, that the first “Zedekiah” was Jehoiakim, and that 1 Nephi 1:4 therefore refers to 609 BC (see p. 70) There is not a shred of evidence for this claim, and it is riddled with problems, not the least of which is the fact that Jehoiakim was appointed as a vassal king by the Egyptians, not the Babylonians. *[Note* Why would Babylonia use a Hebrew throne name of Zedekiah (Hebrew- meaning the Lord is just) in order to establish a king who was first named Mattaniah (Hebrew- meaning gift of Jehovah)? And why would the Egyptians use a throne name like Jehoiakim (Hebrew- meaning established by God) in order to replace a name Eliakim (Hebrew- meaning God will establish)? The name Jehoahaz (whom God holds fast, or strongly) is also referred to as Jehoiachin (strength of the Lord).*

See Randall P. Spackman, “Jehoiakim was Not Nephi’s Zedekiah,” in *A Source Book for Book of Mormon Chronology* (accessed December 16, 2012) . . . although Spackman is responding to an older form of the argument, his criticisms still apply.

- 2007 David B. Cummings, “**Three Days and Three Nights: Reassessing Jesus’s Entombment,**” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16, no. 1 (2007): 56-73, 86.
- 2007 A. Brant Gardner, ***Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon***, 6 vols. SLC, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2007.
He notes that he follows Spackman’s chronology in volume 1, page 66, note 25.
- 2008 Joseph Lovell Allen and Blake Joseph Allen, ***Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon***, Second Edition. Orem: Book of Mormon Tours and Research Institute, LLC, 2008.
On page 72 they write: : “In summary, we prefer to date Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem in the latter part of 601 or early part of 600 BC. This dating allows the proper time period to elapse (600 years) from Lehi’s departure to the birth of Christ (at 1 BC/AD 1) the meridian of time.
On page 71 they write: “this thinking also validates the fact that Lehi’s six-hundred year prophecy of the birth of Christ (1 Nephi 10:4) was, in reality, six hundred years of 365.25 days per year.
Note I have highlighted in yellow the slight modifications from their first edition.*
- 2008 Don L. Brugger, “**Toward the Ultimate Book of Mormon Time Line,**” *The FARMS Review* 20, no. 1 (2008): 1-13.

- 2012 Ronald P. Millet, **“Elder James E. Talmage and the Birth Date of Jesus Christ,”** posted 30 October 2012, <http://www.ldsmag.com> (*Meridian Magazine*)
Millet writes three successive articles in support of James E. Talmage’s statement that Christ was born on April 6 BC 1. He quotes other Apostles who support the statement. He also refers to John Pratt’s latest Meridian article, “Jubilee Witness” that supports that birthdate. While he supports D&C 20:1, he quotes John Pratt in his “Jubilee Witness” article: “My research has proposed that the birth of Jesus Christ occurred on the evening preceding Thu 6 April 1 BC. This date was not arrived at by depending on the testimony of any modern religious leaders or traditions. It was found by counting backwards from the better established date of the Resurrection on Sun 3 Apr AD 33, as well as using many other sacred calendars.
- 2012 Ronald P. Millet, **“Why So Bold a Statement? Elder James E. Talmage and April 6,”** posted 12 November 2012, (www.ldsmag.com) (*Meridian Magazine*)
- 2012 Ronald P. Millet, **“Pope Declares Calendar Error on Date of Christ’s Birth,”** posted 27 November 2012, www.ldsmag.com (*Meridian Magazine*)
- 2012 John P. Pratt, **“The Birth Date of Jesus Christ,”** (accessed on www.johnpratt.com), June 24 2018.
- 2012 Lincoln H. Blumell and Thomas A. Wayent, **“When Was Jesus Born? A Response to a Recent Proposal,”** *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (2012): 53-81.
Note* The “Recent Proposal” was an article by Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “Dating the Birth of Jesus Christ,” *BYU Studies* 49, no 4 (2010): 5-38.
- 2014 John A. Tvedtnes, **“When Was Christ Born? *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*,** Vol. 10 (2014): 1-33.
Note* This article was originally written in 2002, updated in 2010, and again in 2014.
- 2014 Neal Rappleye, **“Lehi’s 600 Year Prophecy: Some Notes on a Question of Book of Mormon Chronology,”** Blog posted on June 26, 2014. *Studio et Quoque Fide*.
In discussing Lehi’s departure in 597 and the use of a “tun” year (360 days), Rappleye cites John Sorenson (*An Ancient American Setting*, p. 270-276), but then says that “Sorenson himself has since deferred to Spackman on the subject of chronology: “I find Spackman’s arguments generally persuasive. They should be considered to supersede any statements on the Nephite calendar I have made.” (Sorenson, “Comments on Nephite Chronology” p. 208 [in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993)].
- 2015 Jerry D. Grover, JR., ***Translation of the ‘Caractors’ Document*,** Self-Published, 2015
<http://www.bookofmormoncaractorstranslation.com/>
- 2016 Book of Mormon Central, **“How Does the Book of Mormon Help Date the First Christmas?,”** KnoWhy #255, December 21, 2016.

- 2017 Book of Mormon Central, “**Are There Mistakes in the Book of Mormon?**” in ***Knowing Why: 137 Evidences That the Book of Mormon Is True***. American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2017, p.12-14.
They write: “By its own admission, the Book of Mormon is not a perfect text, something about which the book’s authors and compilers themselves frequently insisted.”
It is one thing to declare a text literarily imperfect by prophetic standards or heavenly standards, it is quite another to admit that you have made glaring mistakes in chronology.
- 2017 Book of Mormon Central, “**How Does the Book of Mormon Help Date Christ’s Death?**”, KnoWhy #300 Springville, UT: Book of Mormon Central, April 14, 2017.
- 2018 Book of Mormon Central, “**Why Did Some in Lehi’s Time Believe that Jerusalem Could Not Be Destroyed?**,” KnoWhy #451. Springville, UT: Book of Mormon Central, July 19, 2018.
- 2018 Book of Mormon Central, “**How Could Nephi Have Known about Jeremiah’s Imprisonment?**” (1 Nephi 7:14). KnoWhy #463. Springville, UT: Book of Mormon Central, Aug. 30, 2018.
- 2018 Book of Mormon Central, “**When Did Lehi Leave Jerusalem?**,” KnoWhy #475, October 11, 2018.
- 2018 Book of Mormon Central, “**Why is So Little Said about the Timing of Christ’s Temple Ministry?**” (3 Nephi 10:18), KnoWhy #481. Springville, UT: Book of Mormon Central, Nov. 1, 2018.
- 2018 Neal Rappleye, “**The Time is Past’’: A Note on Samuel’s Five-Year Prophecy. *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture***, vol. 29 (2018): 21-30.
- 2018 John P. Pratt, “**The Birth Date of Jesus Christ.**” June 24, 2018.
Pratt corroborates his dating using four additional sacred calendars:
The Hebrew Calendar
The Sacred Round
The Venus Calendar
The Mercury Calendar
- 2019 Book of Mormon Central, “**Why Did Samuel Give Such Chronologically Precise Prophecies?**” In ***Knowing Why: 127 More Evidences That the Book of Mormon Is True***. American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, p. 136-137.
- 2019 Don Bradley, ***The Lost 116 Pages: Reconstructing the Book of Mormon’s Missing Stories***. SLC, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2019, p. 121-144.

In Chapter 7 “A Passover Setting For Lehi’s Exodus,” Don Bradley writes (pages 121-124):

In early 1830, shortly before the Book of Mormon came off the Grandin press, Palmyra businessman Fayette Lapham and his brother-in-law Jacob Ramsdell called at the Joseph Smith Sr. home in Manchester to get information on the forthcoming book. [footnote 2] As Palmyra residents, Lapham and Ramsdell would have heard the considerable buzz in town about the Book of Mormon but were not yet able to satisfy their curiosity by reading its pages. Instead the two young men enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing the Prophet's father relate the story of the Book of Mormon's emergence, and they were given an oral sneak preview of its contents. Four decades later, Lapham published an extensive account of this interview in an 1870 issue of *The Historical Magazine*. [footnote 33] Despite the lapse of years and the account's occasional garbling of facts, Lapham's narration is filled with firsthand information that demonstrates his reliance on a primary source with knowledge of the actual information and events, indicating that he may have written his newspaper account from detailed notes of his interview with Joseph Sr. [footnote 4] Whether Lapham's source was interview notes or an extraordinary memory, his accuracy on many obscure but confirmable details, such as the order in which Joseph Smith translated Mormon's abridgement and Nephi's small plates after the manuscript loss, lends credence to additional, unique details he provides. [footnote 5]

In relating Nephite history, Lapham's account largely retells familiar Book of Mormon stories. Yet at key points it also adds to the existing narrative some story elements not found in the published Book of Mormon. These additional pieces of Nephite narrative, though new or unknown, fit remarkably well into the familiar, known narrative, suggesting that they are not errors but echoes of narrative from the lost pages. . .

Fayette Lapham's Account of Nephi's Quest for the Brass Plates

. . . He [Lehi] sent his son back to the city to get them; and when his son arrived in the city, it was night, and he found the citizens had been **having a great feast**, and were all drunk. . .

Lapham's account adds a crucial new story element that suggests that the officer who possessed the brass plates was drunk when Nephi found him because of a feast being celebrated at the time, one which would fit the characterization of a Jewish festival. . . . The evidence presented below will demonstrate that the celebration of Passover closely fits this narrative's details, enabling us to draw fresh insights about both the available Book of Mormon text and its lost pages. . . .

1 The Nephite calendar dates were marked from when Lehi left Jerusalem (Jacob 1:1; Enos 1:25; Mosiah 6:4, 29:46; 3 Ne. 1:1, 2:6, 5:15).

2 The time of Lehi's exodus is also used as a benchmark to predict the coming of the Messiah, and in Passover language that symbolically connects Lehi's exodus to the birth of Jesus, the "Lamb of God" (e.g., 1 Ne. 10:4-10) [footnote 10]

3 The time of Jesus’s crucifixion—at Passover—aligns closely with the beginning of the Nephite calendar year. In the Gospel of John, the Crucifixion occurs on the fourth and final day of the Passover preparatory period (John 19:14); in 3 Nephi it occurs on the fourth day of the Nephite calendar year (3 Ne. 8:5)

Collectively, these three points establish that the Nephite calendar year began with the Passover season: If Jesus’s crucifixion was on the fourth day of the preparatory period preceding Passover and on the fourth day of the Nephite calendar year, then that would mean that the Nephite calendar began with the opening of the four-day preparation for Passover. And given that the Nephite calendar was based on Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem, this, in turn, would mean that Lehi and his family began their exodus from Jerusalem at the beginning of the preparation for Passover. [footnote 11]

2020 Randall P. Spackman, ***A Source Book for Book of Mormon Chronology*** (www.bookofmormonchronology.net)

In an Introduction dated April, 2020, Randall Spackman writes:

After BYU acquired and apparently repurposed FARMS (“BYU FARMS”), I began placing my chronological studies in a source book format at this website. From 2015 through 2017, my wife and I served volunteer missions for the Church . . . Thus [now] this source book is undergoing a major transition. Some divisions include several of my pre-2015 studies, which appear in Arial font. Over time, my post-2017 studies, tables and revisions of pre-2015 studies will be posted in their appropriate divisions, all in Times New Roman font to make the transitions clear. A List of Tables was added to the Table of Contents file in December 2019 and an Errata section was added to the same file in April 2020.

Since most all of the posted articles are updated sections from Spackman’s lengthy original theoretical writings (“Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology: The Principal Prophecies, Calendars, and Dates.” Provo, UT: FARMS, 1993) I will post the pertinent articles and updates here, listing the years of the updates.

In an appendix, Randall Spackman has three articles that are a rebuttal to Allen’s and Pratt’s (Theory #2) proposals regarding Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem in “the first year of the reign of Zedekiah” (601 BC):

“‘Many’ and ‘Few’ Enter Captivity” (2011-2012)

“Was Jerusalem Destroyed in 601 BC? (2010, 2012)

“Jehoiakim Was Not Nephi’s Zedekiah” (2010)

In a 2010 article titled “Faithfulness and Diligence,” Spackman writes:

That Lehi's family spent four to five months at their base camp by the Red Sea seems to be a credible assumption. That they traveled and camped for another five to six months until prompted to leave Nahom seems equally reasonable. When the group headed eastward for their sojourn in what seems to have been mostly hiding or servitude, they could have been less than nine to eleven months away from the time when the siege of Jerusalem was lifted (which seems to have occurred in Zedekiah's tenth year; Jeremiah 32:1-2). If the city did not fall to the Babylonians until about the time when Lehi's group began to journey eastward from Nahom, then after that time the group might not have been able to get reliable reports. News from 1,400 to 2,100 miles away probably was not distributed consistently, if at all, in the depths of the Arabian Desert. At the seashore in Bountiful, information about Jerusalem's destruction seven years earlier also might not have been available or, if available, might not have been accurate. . . . Even if some sort of seafaring along the coast can be assumed, I cannot assume the transmission of reliable reports, perhaps not even rumors, to Lehi's family after they left Nahom.

Note A very weak, if not impossible argument according to the writings of George Potter and Richard Wellington.*

Randall Spackman, "Lehi's Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth"

LIST SPACKMAN's ARTICLES with note on updating.

Jaredite and Mulekite Chronologies (See Book of Mormon Geography)