

1 Nephi

Chapter 17

1 Nephi 17:1 **We Did Travel Nearly Eastward from That Time Forth (Hilton & Aston Travel Routes Compared):**

In [YEAR] Glenn Scott noted that in the early days of the Restored Church, Frederick G. Williams (one-time counselor to Joseph Smith, Jr.) in a notation about Lehi's colony wrote, "they traveled nearly a south south East direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of North Latitude [sic] then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia."ⁱⁱ

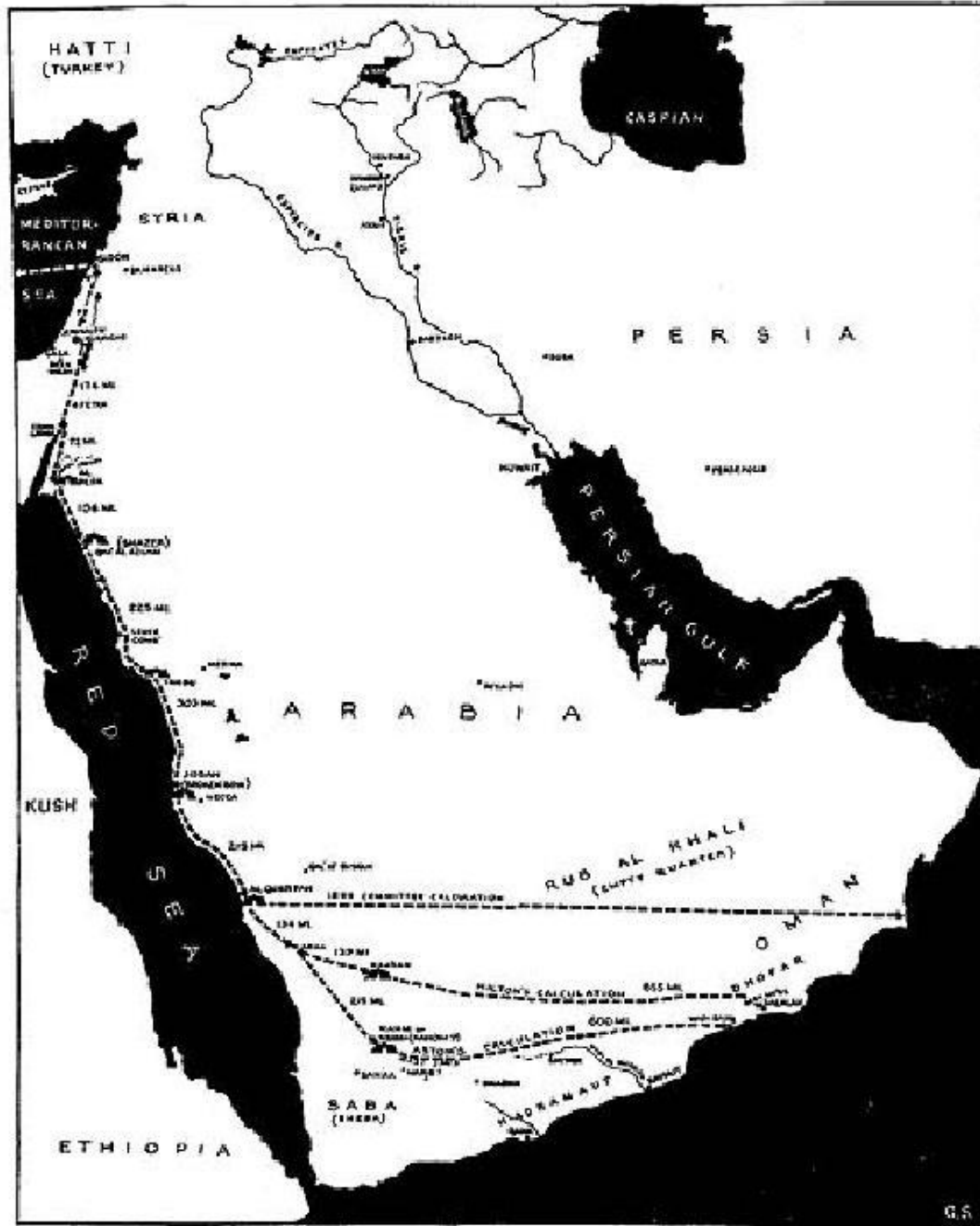
Thus, Williams added to Nephi's words his own assumption. A harmless speculation, but in 1882 a Salt Lake City printer, F.D. Richards, attributed William's notation to Joseph Smith, Jr., and called it a revelation. That claim was refuted by William's great-great-grandson who said "the page on which the original Frederick G. Williams statement is found, gives no evidence of revelatory origin. . . . It should not be given any more authority than any other theory."ⁱⁱⁱ

In 1894 the RLDS Committee to study the geography and culture of the Book of Mormon proposed this route for Lehi (see Map)

Most current Book of Mormon scholars, however, believe the nineteenth parallel is too far north to match Nephi's record. To go eastward at that latitude would have taken them through 600 miles of the Rub al Khali (Empty Quarter The most terrible desert on earth, ending in eastern Oman far beyond the few fertile pockets on Arabia's southern coast.

Scott goes on to list various theories of travel that had been proposed, (Note* Two routes are shown: the lowest being that of the Astons, and the one just above that being that of the Hiltons) But then notes: "regardless of which of these fertile pockets on the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula may have been Nephi's Valley Bountiful, it is interesting that for a hundred years after the publication of The Book of Mormon the scholarly world ridiculed such a possibility." [Glenn A. Scott, Voices from the Dust, p. 80]

VARIOUS THEORIES PROPOSED OF LEHI'S TRAIL

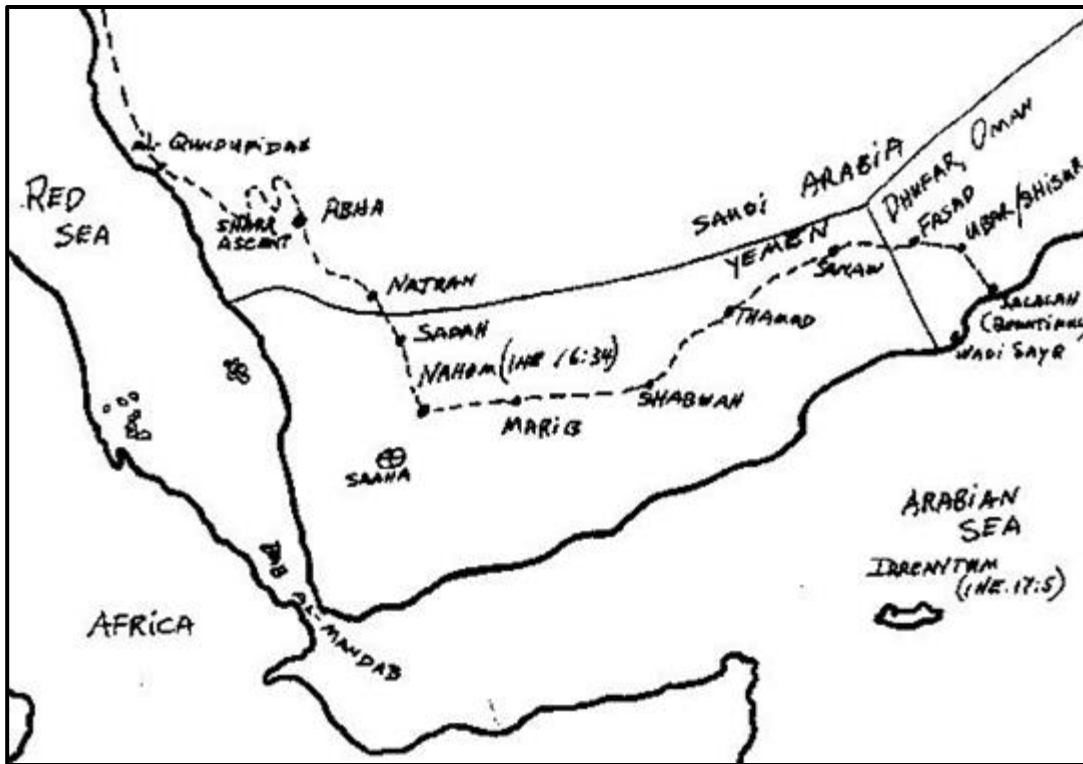


1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration):** Various Theories Proposed of Lehi's Trail. Map 6. [Glenn A. Scott, *Voices from the Dust*, p. 78]



By 1976, Lynn and Hope Hilton had proposed and explored a more southerly route from Al Qunfidhah on the nineteenth parallel, southeast through the Wadi Ababish and the caravan city of Abha, to the ancient site of Najran, which they formerly equated with Nahom but now have the trail continue on through Sadah to Nahom.ⁱⁱⁱ Due east would have brought Lehi's party to a point in the Jabal Qara mountains north of Salalah, a small fertile valley on the Dhofar Coast of Oman, at the eastern limit of the frankincense growing area.^{iv}





1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Hilton Theory) [Illustration]:** Figure 10-4. Proposed reconstruction of the Lehi-Nephi trail along one of the ancient frankincense roads from the Red Sea to Bountiful. [Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, 1996, p. 133]

Note* Although the Hilton's illustrated writings about this theoretical route was a landmark in achievement for its time, and although their ending point at Salalah was generally correct, their trail directly along the Red Sea coast before ascending to Al Qunfidah on the 19th parallel would prove problematic due to the lack of an ancient trail correlating to the time of Lehi. [Alan Miner Personal Note]

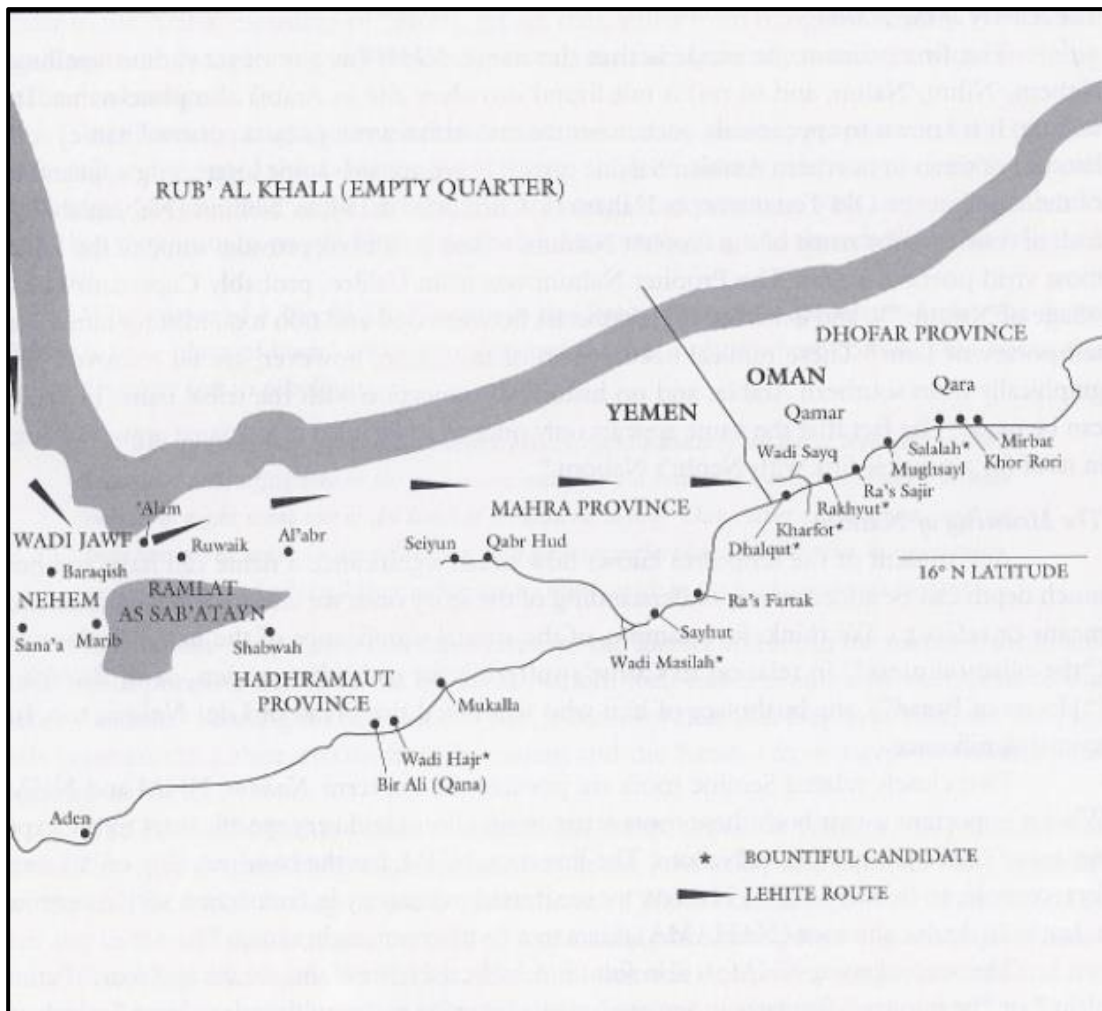
The Aston Route

By 1991 Warren and Michaela Aston had proposed that Camp Nahom was near the village of Nehem in the Wadi Jauf on the sixteenth parallel. From there one possible route would lead through the wadis Hadramaut and Masilah, a natural gate through the Hadramaut mountains to the Bay of Sayhut.^v But another fertile pocket further east called Wadi Sayq, may fit Nephi's description better. In it is one of the only two perennial rivers on the Arabian peninsula, and it has large trees more suitable for shipbuilding than the Jumaise (sycamore-fig) trees at Salalah.^{vi}

The Astons explained that probably the strongest evidence . . . that identifies Nahom (and therefore Lehi's easterly turning point -- 1 Nephi 17:1) can be found in a study of the

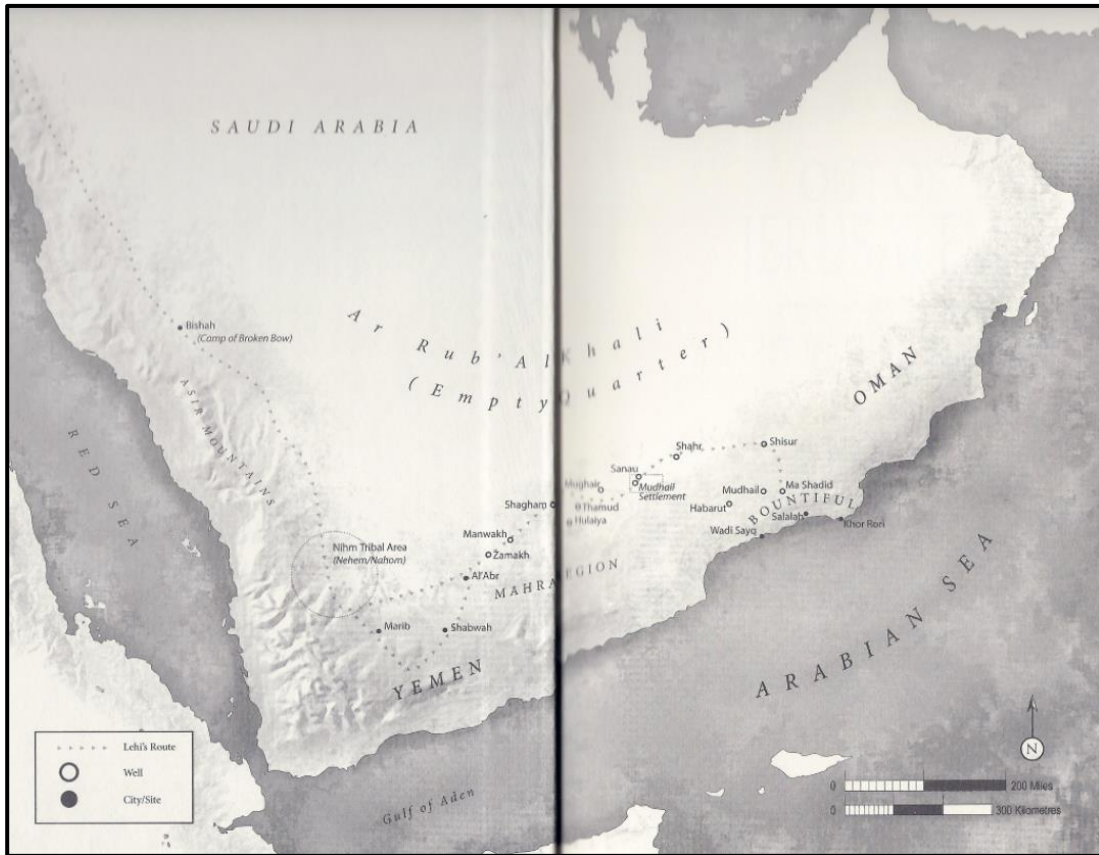
incense trade routes. The trade routes represent, of course, the available water sources, but they also must follow terrain suitable for camel caravans to use. . . . Since water holes do not move, the advent of modern mapping allows us to reconstruct these ancient desert highways with a fairly high degree of certainty. No one in 1830 could do so.

It is of the greatest interest to the student of the Book of Mormon to note that the major trunk of the trade route passed through the Jawf valley within a few miles of Nehem. And it is here--and nowhere else--that the trade route branched *eastward* toward the Hadhramaut coast and the ancient port of Qana, the modern Bir Ali, to which most of the incense was shipped. Some minor trade routes did branch off to the south, but the major route was to the east. [Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, p. 22]



1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Aston Theory) [Illustration]:** Map of southeastern Arabia showing the final stages of Lehi's journey and all locations referred to in the text. Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, p. 11]

[Note* Once again, although the Aston's research, illustrated travels and documented comparisons of various candidates for Bountiful along the southern Arabian coast were landmarks in achievement for Book of Mormon studies, at that time their conclusions proved premature, and their choice of Wadi Sayq proved problematic for a number of reasons.



1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Aston Theory) [Illustration]:** Map of Lehi's Route," by Andy Livingston [H. B. Moore, Out of Jerusalem: A Light in the Wilderness, inside cover.

[Note* Although the above map comes from a novel, the author is the daughter of Kent Brown, and I will assume that the ideas portrayed generally fit the thinking of Kent Brown. Alan Miner Personal Notes]

Potter & Wellington Theory

In the year 2000, George Potter and Richard Wellington proposed another alternative. They noted that while they do not know exactly where Nephi turned eastward, whether it was on the edge of the desert north-east of wadi Jawf or whether it was around wadi Jawf itself, in either case the journey from there to Bountiful was "nearly eastward." From wadi Jawf to Khor Rori (the location that they proposed as Bountiful), is 7° off east, and from the split in the trail

north-east of wadi Jawf to Khor Rori, is 3° off east. Either of these would seem to fit Nephi's description of traveling "nearly eastward" from Nahom to Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:1).

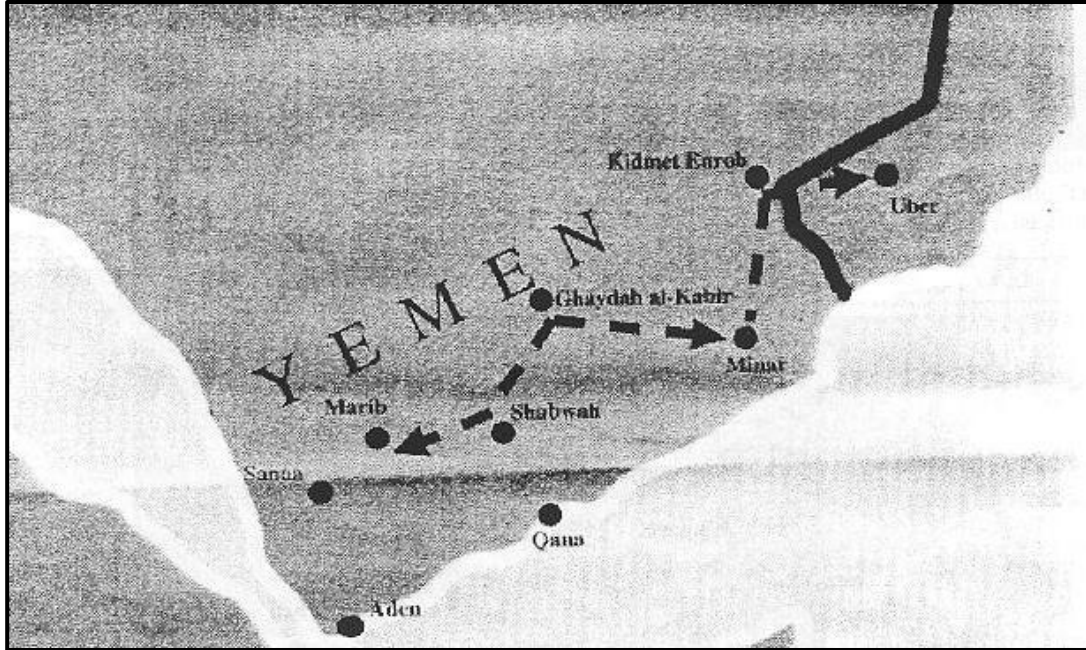
Of this west-east travel, it is intriguing that as recently as 1936 Freya Stark wrote:

The contact between the two incense-bearing regions of east (Dhofar) and west (Hadramaut) must have been intimate and prolonged; the routes by which it was maintained may come to light when the inland country between the wadi Masila and the Qara is explored.^{vii}

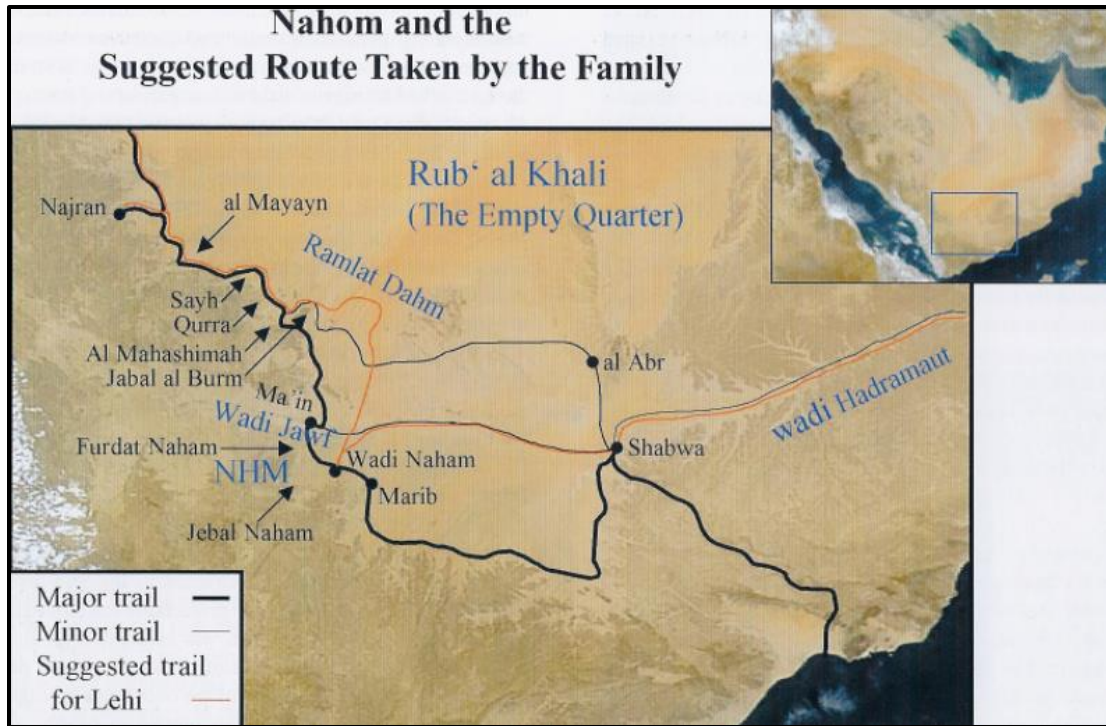
Fortunately for Potter and Wellington, the overland, easterly route to Dhofar did, in fact, come to light within the same time frame that they were writing their book. It came about with the discovery of the ruins of "Ubar" in 1991. The ruins of "Ubar" are found at the village of Shisur in northwest Oman. Since the exact name of this archaeological site is not known with any certainty, the name "Ubar" is used because it is the name the people of Shisur themselves have given to the site. Ubar was a large city, 110 miles (180km) to the northwest of the ancient capital harbor of Dhofar, which was situated at Khor Rori (Moscha). near Salalah. A permanent spring at Ubar had attracted people since Neolithic times (ca. 5,000-2,500 B.C.), and a fortress first built during the Bronze Age (2,500-1,300 B.C.) was in use until A.D. 1500.^{viii} According to legend Ubar was established by Noah's great great grandson "Ad."^{ix} the first patriarch of the people of "Ad." Ubar "old town" was built around 900 B.C. or earlier, which dates it "among the oldest, if not *the* oldest, of Arabia's trading caravansaries."^x Iron age pottery finds show that the city was thriving 400 years before Lehi would have been there. Ubar was a caravanserai of huge proportions and, according to Sir Ranulph Fiennes "More than 2,000 camels and 500 people would have been there at any time."^{xi} More than 40 ancient camp-sites at Ubar where "the caravans would have grouped and waited to enter Ubar. have been uncovered"^{xii}

Dr. Juris Zarins of Southwest Missouri State University researched the frankincense trail which led from Yemen, along the southern fringe of the Rub'al Khali, to Dhofar. In addition to the remains of an ancient fort at Shisur, Zarins found a "sister city" with an identical architectural style, at Ain Humran.^{xiii} The sites at Shisur and Ain Humran in southern Oman, where Ptolemy said the "people of Ubar" lived, would seem to mark the eastern end of the trail. Zarins found similar forts at Gaydah al Kabir and Minar, which would seem to be intermediate fortresses. The position of other settlements found indicates that a trail existed on the southern edge of the Rub'al Khali, which served a frankincense trade, which had been in existence, and based in Dhofar, since before the time of Joseph of Egypt. This trade used both a shipping route and an overland trail, both headquartered in Dhofar, to send the tons of incense first west and then north to Jerusalem and Egypt, as well as other countries.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 164-167] [For information connecting the region of Dhofar with the land of Ophir see the commentary on 2 Nephi 23:12]



1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration--Potter Theory):** The Trail East. Map showing a trail east to Dhofar based on the work of world renowned American archaeologist Juris Zarins. Map from John Noble Wilford, "Ruins in Yemeni Desert Mark Route of Frankincense Trade," New York Times, Tuesday, January 28, 1997. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 175]



1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration--Potter Theory):** , "Nahom and the Suggested Route Taken by the Family," George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, p. 114]



1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration--Potter Theory):** The Frankincense Trail from Mashyniqah to Moscha. (Nahom to Bountiful) [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 175]

~~1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration--Potter Theory):** Taking a rest on the trail east, admiring the scenery! [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 175]~~

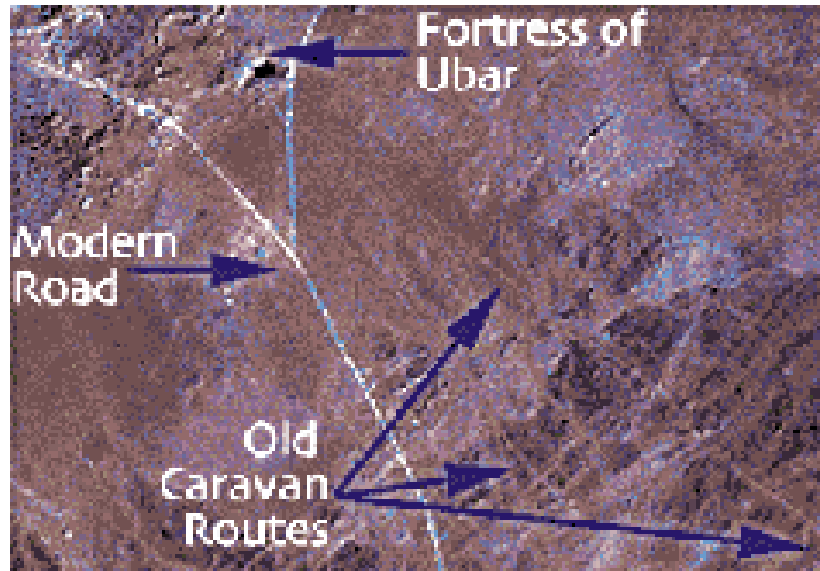
~~1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration--Potter Theory):** The trail ran east along the flat gravel plain bounded on the north by sand dunes and mountains to the south. The halt of Fasad shows up as merely a dot amongst the dunes on the horizon. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 175]~~



Reconstruction of the city of Ubar

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1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration--Potter Theory):** A computer reconstruction of what the city of "Ubar" would have looked like. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 175]



1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration--Potter Theory):** Numerous ancient trails spread out southeast from "Ubar" to the frankincense groves of the "Adites." [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 175]

1 Nephi 17:1 **We did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration—not shown -- Potter Theory):** Somewhere between A.D. 300-500 the city at Shisur collapsed into the ground. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 175]

1 Nephi 17:1 **We Did Travel Nearly Eastward from [Nahom] (Potter Theory):**

Potter and Wellington write that one of the criteria met by their proposed land of Bountiful is that it was eastward from their proposed site of Nahom. The coast of Dhofar adjacent to the end of the trail at the ancient site of Ain Humran *is 5 degrees off true east* from the point in Yemen where the eastward trail to Dhofar splits off the main frankincense trail, and *is 13 degrees off true east from wadi Jawf*.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 185]

1 Nephi 17:1 **Nearly Eastward from That Time Forth (Directional System):**

Continuing the discussion of directions from the commentary on 1 Nephi 16:13 ("South-southeast"), the mention by Nephi of going "nearly eastward" from Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1) is a significant building block for establishing a standard of directions in the Book of Mormon (or at

least on the small plates). Like the previous situation where we plotted a line going "south-southeast" from the tip of the Red Sea to Nahom, we now have substantive data in order to plot a possible line from Nahom (Nehem, Sana'a, Yemen) "nearly eastward" to Bountiful (Dhofar Region, Oman -- see the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:5). While these site correlations might be tentative they are plausible and thus they give us an opportunity to test a directional standard. The pathway from the tip of the Red Sea to Nehem to the Dhofar region can be represented by something that resembles the letter "L" overlaid on the Saudi Arabian Peninsula. The vertical component of the "L" would be represented by a line going "south-southeast." The horizontal component of the letter "L" would be a line going "nearly eastward." By rotating this new "letter L" about an axis at the tip of the Red Sea (see illustration), a cultural and geographical correlation for Lehi's trip to Bountiful becomes more difficult to explain the more the letter is rotated. Thus, without eliminating other directional options out of hand, the proposed pathway of Lehi leading "south-southeast" along the Red Sea and then "eastward" from the ancient site of Nehem, Sana'a, Yemen to the Dhofar region of Oman provides a plausible directional standard similar to our cardinal directions. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 17:1 Nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration): An illustration of the ramifications of directional shift in Lehi's journey to Bountiful.

1 Nephi 17:1 Nearly Eastward from That Time Forth (Directions):

As additional support for Lehi's journey along the Frankincense Trail "eastward" from the ancient site of Nehem in Yemen to the Dhofar region of Oman, John Tvedtnes notes that the basis of the [ancient Israelite] directional system was the path of the sun . . . John Sorenson also cites Morgenstern as maintaining that the first and second temples at Jerusalem were aligned so that the first rays of the sun on the morning of the fall equinox (Israelite New Year's Day) shone directly in through the eastern gate and down the long axis of the court and building into the holy of holies. (A Source Book, pp. 401-407) This equinoctial orientation would seem to indicate that Lehi's group were aware of directional positions similar to our standard cardinal directions. Thus it seems that whatever their position, those who propose directional standards for the Book of Mormon that are different from cardinal directions are obligated to reconcile those differences in plotting Lehi's trip from Jerusalem to Bountiful.

1 Nephi 17:1 Nearly Eastward from That Time Forth (Directions):

John Sorenson has shown that we must be cautious in regards to directions. In a book review article he says, "I have tried several times to make the matter (of directions) clear, but perhaps one more try here will make the crucial points unmistakable." Six ideas are worth

noting.

1. All systems for labelling directions are arbitrary and spring from the unique historical, geographical and linguistic backgrounds of specific peoples. Thousands of such schemes have existed in history, and large numbers still exist.

2. More than one system of direction labels is commonly used in a single culture. The sun is involved in many of these, but in varied ways. After all, at best the sun "rises" or "sets" at the same point on the horizon (if that point can indeed normally be seen at all due to terrain, tree cover, clouds, etc.) no more than two days per year as it moves through its annual cycle, hence "where the sun rises," for example, is indeterminate without further definition. In our society, as in nearly all others, a few specialists (astronomers) determine and tell the rest of us where, for example, "east" or "north" lies. Most people, even today, remain vague about how their culture's ideal system of directions applies in daily life.

3. Various other criteria (e.g., the rising or setting of certain stars, seeing particular landmarks, or the prevailing wind) may take precedence over the sun.

4. When a people move from one location to another, their system of directions is quite sure to undergo change.

5. What exactly were the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the directional terminology (or terminologies) used by Lehi's family in the land of Judah? The Book of Mormon never explains, and other sources such as the Old Testament fail to make the matter clear to us either.

6. The Book of Mormon refers to directions at many points, but no attempt at an explanation of their mental model, however brief, is ever given.

[John L. Sorenson, "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!" A review of Deanne G. Matheny, "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography" in Daniel C. Peterson ed. Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 6, Num. 1, 1994, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 307-308] [For an extensive discussion on cultural disparities in directional systems, see John L. Sorenson, A Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 401-415]

1 Nephi 17:1 **Nearly Eastward from That Time Forth (Directions):**

It might seem to many readers that the phrase "we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth" (1 Nephi 17:1) refers to the direction that Lehi traveled from Nahom to Bountiful; however, it must be kept in mind that Nephi was writing this account from the promised land (the Americas). Therefore, it is possible that Nephi could have used the phrase "nearly eastward

from that time forth" to explain the direction of the total remaining journey to the promised land, including even the voyage across the sea. If so, this phrase might help determine Lehi's landing site in the New World. Theoretically by extending a line "nearly eastward" from the proposed site of Nahom (Nehem) in Yemen toward the Americas on a map, one can see that the extended line would reach to Mesoamerica (see illustration).

According to research presented in the Newsletter of the Ancient America Foundation, Lynn Hilton notes that the four proposed sites of Nephi's eastward journey (Nahom, Bountiful, Land of 1st Inheritance, City of Nephi) cluster along the fifteenth parallel (see illustration). Starting at Nahom, Yemen, it is approximately 794 miles to arrive at the tropical paradise Bountiful (Salalah, Dhufar, Oman) with its huge hardwood trees. . . . The deviation from the heading Nahom-Salalah to true east is 83 miles for this leg of the journey. The sea voyage from Bountiful (Salalah, Dhufar, Oman) to the Land of the First Inheritance (Tapachula/Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico) is approximately 15,000 miles. . . . The deviation after a 15,000 mile sea voyage from true east of Nahom is about 48 miles! . . . The final leg of the eastward travels of Nephi came after the death and burial of Lehi in the Land of the First Inheritance. Nephi had serious disagreements with his older brothers and then took all who would follow him . . . and journeyed many days in the wilderness (2 Nephi 5:7). He established the city of Nephi perhaps near Guatemala City, at a distance of approximately 110 miles from the Lamanites. Guatemala City is but a scant deviation of 69 miles from true east of Nahom! Corroboration of the idea that the Land of the First Inheritance was "west" of the City of Nephi is found in the scripture Alma 22:28. . . .

LATITUDE OF SITES ON NEPHI'S EASTWARD JOURNEY			
North Latitude		Proposed Place Names	
Degree	Minute	B/M Name	Modern Name
15	36	Nahom	Nahom, Sana, Yemen
16	48	Bountiful	Salalah, Dhufar, Oman
16	32	Bountiful	Wadi Sayq, Dhufar, Oman
14	54	1st Inheritance	Izapa, Mexico
14	36	City Nephi	Guatemala City, Guatemala
14	46	City Nephi	Mixco Viejo, Guatemala

This achievement is really astonishing and should be considered as a serious proposal for the starting point for Book of Mormon geography in the New World. [Lynn M. Hilton, "Nephi's 'Eastward' Journey," in Ancient America Foundation (AAF) Newsletter, Num. 5, August 1995, pp. 2-3] [See the illustration for 1 Nephi 18:8 -- Across the Sea to the Promised Land]



1 Nephi 17:1 **Nearly eastward from that time forth (Illustration):** "Traveling Eastward" [Lyn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, p. 172]

1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward (Illustration):** Map of southeastern Arabia showing the final stages of Lehi's journey and all locations referred to in the text. [Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, p. 11]

1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward (Illustration):** The barren Qasmar mountains isolate "Bountiful" and prevent coastal access other than through Wadi Sayq. [Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, pp. 66-67]

1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward (Illustration):** The flood scoured floor of Wadi Sayq leading to the coast at Khor Kharfot. [Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi*, pp. 66-67]

1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward (Illustration):** Looking into the ominous, barren canyons of Wadi Sayq (pronounced sike) in modern Oman. The elevation here is over 4,000 feet and within twenty miles will drop to the ocean. In one of these feeder canyons Lehi and his party may have entered the wadi and followed the directions of the Liahona through the main canyon to the ocean. Certainly, viewing this foreboding canyon, they would not have known that lush Bountiful was directly ahead. [Scot and Maurine Proctor, *Light from the Dust*, pp. 42-43]

1 Nephi 17:1 **We Did Travel and WADE through Much Affliction in the Wilderness (Potter Theory):**

Nephi uses the word "wade" (1 Nephi 17:1) in describing the journey eastward from Nahom. According to Potter and Wellington, it is interesting that Nephi used the word "wade," just as someone might use it to describe "wading through water" or "wading through soft sand." The Rub'al Khali has sand dunes which are at times 700 to 800 feet high.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 146] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 16:38]



1 Nephi 17:1 **We did travel nearly eastward (Illustration):** View into the great Empty Quarter of the Arabian Desert. No habitation exists in this forsaken area of a quarter-of-a-million square miles. Lehi's party likely skirted the south end of this area as they made their way across the last 800 miles of the journey to Bountiful. Ancient caravans took from two to three months to cross to the Dhofar region, the area where frankincense trees were indigenous and abundant. [Scot and Maurine Proctor, Light from the Dust, pp. 40-41]

1 Nephi 17:1 **Our Women Did Bear Children in the Wilderness:**

Camille Fronk cites Doughty as describing the desert birthing bed as "a mantle or tent-cloth spread upon the earth." Older women among the clan typically assisted the mother by taking her away from the camp, "apart in the wilderness," to be delivered. (Charles M. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (New York: Random House, 1936), 268.) [Camille Fronk, "Desert Epiphany: Sariah & the Women in 1 Nephi," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 9, Num. 2, 2000, FARMS, pp. 13, 80]

1 Nephi 17:1 **Women Did Bear Children:**

If the women of Lehi's party "did bear children" (1 Nephi 17:1) at this point in time, and if the marriages took place according to 1 Nephi 16:7 in the valley of Lemuel, then at least nine months had passed. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 17:2 **Raw Meat:**

The Hiltons claim that eating "raw meat" (1 Nephi 17:2) was nothing new to either Lehi's group or the desert Arabs. It is interesting to note that the Arabs subsist on a spicy kind of "soft jerky," dried by the sun, and called by the name "basterna," which interpreted means "raw meat." [Lynn and Hope Hilton, In Search of Lehi's Trail, p. 102]

The Hiltons relate the following story:

Nephi's mention of eating "raw meat" intrigued and repelled us, so we were surprised to find ourselves eating in Cairo when our friend Angie Chukri served us this local delicacy. It was not dripping with blood as we had imagined, but was spiced with garlic and other flavorings and had a pinkish hue. The raw lamb meat, bones removed, is rolled with a rolling pin to expel the blood, the chief cause of decay. After being rolled up, pieces are covered with a paste made of garlic and herbs. It is much like a large bologna in appearance, to be eaten without having ever been near heat or fire.

[Lynn A. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, p. 139]

1 Nephi 17:2 **We Did Live upon Raw Meat in the Wilderness:**

Potter and Wellington note that while they do not know what the range of the Arabian fauna was in Lehi's time one can get an idea of what other animals would have been available to hunt by looking at the animals that inhabit this southern edge of the Rub'al Khali nowadays. In addition to the oryx, these include the sand gazelle, Saudi gazelle, and common gazelle. The range of the wild goat and Arabian Ural may also have extended this far south in earlier times. Nephi must have been both a very skilled and blessed hunter to have constantly supplied meat for the family.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 169]



Gazelle

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1 Nephi 17:2 **Our Women . . . Were Strong:**

Camille Fronk cites Doughty in saying that in addition to their duty to carry, deliver, and nourish children, desert women assumed a daunting list of other responsibilities. They collected water, gathered firewood, churned butter, guarded flocks, prepared meals, spun yarn from which mantles were woven to keep the family warm, braided palm matting that covered tent floors, and wove and repaired cords used to secure the tents.^{xiv} Most remarkable, it was considered women's work to take tents down, load tents and supplies on camels, ensure the security of the children and supplies during transport, and set up tents again when a new campsite was reached.^{xv} Most tents were made of black goatskins, making them significantly heavy.^{xvi} Doughty described the scene as a Bedouin clan set up a new camp:

The housewives spread the tent-cloths, taking out the corner and side-cords; and finding some wild stone for a hammer, they beat down their tent pegs into the ground, and under-setting the tentstakes or "pillars" (*am'dan*) they heave and stretch the tent-cloth: and now their booths are standing. The wife enters, and when she has bestowed her stuff [unloading all the supplies], she brings forth the man's breakfast. . . . After that she sits within, rocking upon her knees the *semila* or sour milk-skin to make this day's butter.^{xvii}

No wonder George Reynolds and Janne Sjodahl observed in their commentary on Lehi's sojourn in the wilderness that "the wives were not an encumbrance on the road, but [the group's] greatest help." (Reynolds and Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Salt Lake*

City: *Deseret News Press, 1955, 1:165*)

[Camille Fronk, "Desert Epiphany: Sariah & the Women in 1 Nephi," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 9, Num. 2, 2000, FARMS, pp. 13-14, 80]

1 Nephi 17:4 **Eight Years:**

What were the beginning and ending points of the "eight years" of sojourning (1 Nephi 17:4)? Did it take eight years to get from Jerusalem to Bountiful? Or was it eight years from Nahom to Bountiful? We might even extend the possibilities by noting that if Nephi recorded this record from the New World between 30 and 40 years after leaving Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:28-34), "eight years" could also be interpreted as the *total* time it took to travel from Jerusalem to the promised land.

Another question that arises with the term "eight years" concerns distance and cultural contacts. If caravans could traverse the same distance from Jerusalem to Bountiful (the Dhofar region) in about 90 days, where were those eight years spent? We have previously referred to the Hilton's finding that "water was the determining factor of any travel in Arabia, and that the ancient trails connected hand-dug wells that required a tremendous amount of effort and time to create. And therefore, wherever there was water, there were people nearby." Thus, even though the Book of Mormon doesn't give many clues about time spent in different areas, we might safely assume that wherever Lehi's group did spend those eight years, they probably were exposed to people of different cultures. Studying the cultures of this area at the time of Lehi might help us acquire an awareness of cultural and geographical clues that could be either assumed or briefly alluded to in the Book of Mormon. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 17:4 **Eight Years:**

According to H. Donl Peterson, the colony spent a total of eight years in the wilderness (1 Nephi 17:4). The distance from Jerusalem to Southern Arabia then east to Bountiful (the Dhofar region) is a distance of between 2,000 to 2,400 miles. The four sons made two additional round trips from the valley of Lemuel to Jerusalem, adding another 800 to 1,000 miles to their travels. By comparison, the Mormon pioneers walked about 1,100 miles--half the distance that Lehi and his colony did. [H. Donl Peterson, "Father Lehi," in The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation, p. 63]

1 Nephi 17:4 **We Did Sojourn . . . Eight Years in the Wilderness:**

According to Potter and Wellington, in Lehi's time the journey from Yemen to the frankincense growing regions of Dhofar, could have been made in a little over a month. The

journey from Palestine to the Dhofar region could have been traveled in about 4 months by camel caravan.^{xviii} So how does one account for sojourning "eight years in the wilderness"? It is possible that if the family were low on resources they had to work to pay for safe passage, supplies, etc. Perhaps the entrepreneur Lehi even undertook some business endeavor here. With the addition of children they would have needed more supplies and therefore more camels to carry them. Additionally, it will be argued that the family needed finances to build the boat and they were not in bountiful long enough to build up that much cash. S. Kent Brown has even suggested that the family had to spend a period of time in servitude during their travel east, which involved conflict and suffering.^{xix} Unfortunately the Small Plates do not provide all the details of the trip and so we are left to extrapolate until the time when all will be revealed to us. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 168-169]

1 Nephi 17:4 **We Did Sojourn for . . . Eight Years in the Wilderness:**

Prior to reaching Bountiful, Nephi continually referred to being "in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 2:5; 16:9,14,35,38; 17:1,4) Potter and Wellington note that a common definition of the word "wilderness" is an area void of signs of human life. Except for the occasional oases along the Frankincense trail, the word wilderness applied perfectly to all the areas they passed through since entering Arabia. It has been argued that wilderness means desert in the scriptures. However this is not always the case. As the family entered a green fertile land at Bountiful it would be easy to understand why Nephi referred to them as no longer being in the wilderness. Yet to Nephi the presence of forests did not preclude somewhere from being a wilderness. He would later state, "as we journeyed in the wilderness . . . there were beasts in the forests of every kind" (1 Nephi 18:25). It seems then that the characteristic these two wilderness locations (desert and forests) had in common was that, for the most part, neither were populated. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 184]

Geographical Theory Map: 1 Nephi 17:1--18:7 Eastward to Bountiful and the Sea Irreantum (Year 008)

1 Nephi 17:5 **And We Did Come to the Land Which We Called Bountiful (Aston Theory):**

The Astons say that the text makes it clear that the place to which the Liahona had led [Lehi's group] was more than just a welcome contrast to the almost waterless desert wastes encountered after Nahom. . . . When we closely examine the direct and implied references about Bountiful in the First Book of Nephi, a surprisingly detailed profile of the place emerges.

1. First, of course there is a clear relationship between the locations of Bountiful and

Nahom. Bountiful was "*nearly eastward*" of Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1). Given the Nephites' ability to determine direction with great accuracy, we should expect Bountiful to lie close to the 16th degree north latitude, just as Nehem does.

2. The terrain and water sources from Nahom onward permitted reasonable *access from the interior* deserts to the coast.

3. Nephi's usage of the term *Bountiful* appears to indicate that *both the general area (1 Nephi 17:5, 7) and the particular location where the Lehites camped (1 Nephi 17:6) were fertile.*

4. Bountiful was a *coastal location* (1 Nephi 17:5) (it would logically have to be on the east coast of Arabia), suitable for a seashore encampment (1 Nephi 17:6) and the construction and launching of a sizable ship (1 Nephi 18:8)

5. It was *very fertile*, notable for its "much fruit" and honey (1 Nephi 17:5, 6; 18:6) and perhaps small game that could be hunted (1 Nephi 18:6). Agricultural and fishing pursuits are additional possible food sources, although not mentioned in the text.

6. Enough *timber* of types and sizes to permit the construction of a vessel able to carry several dozen persons and remain seaworthy for at least a year was readily available (1 Nephi 18:1, 2, 6).

7. *Freshwater* supplies available year-round would have been necessary for the extended stay required for the building of the ship.

8. There was a *mountain* prominent enough to justify Nephi's reference to it as "the mount" (1 Nephi 17:7, 18:3) and also near enough to the coastal encampment that he could go there to "pray oft" (1 Nephi 18:3).

9. The incident of Nephi's brothers' attempting to throw him into the depths of the sea (1 Nephi 17:48) makes sense only if there were *substantial cliffs* overlooking the ocean.

10. *Ore* from which metal could be smelted and tools fashioned was available in the vicinity (1 Nephi 17:9-11,16) together with *flint* (verse 11), seemingly near the ore source.

*11. That Nephi required a specific revelation and great effort to locate ore and fashion tools indicates that, despite the attractiveness of the place, Bountiful may have had *little or no resident population* that could contribute tools and manpower to the ship-building process.

12. Suitable *winds and ocean currents* were required to carry the vessel out into the ocean (1 Nephi 18:8, 9) (pp. 27-29).

Our program of exploration undertaken over several years attempted, in a systematic manner, to develop a body of objective, reliable, and complete data on the Arabian coast in order to evaluate possible sites for Bountiful. With completion of the coastal exploration in April 1992, we determined that only six locations approached even minimal requirements for Bountiful (defined as an accessible coastal location with a freshwater source) in any degree (p. 37).

[Warren and Michaela Aston, In the Footsteps of Lehi, p. 37] [See also Noel B. Reynolds, "Lehi's Arabian Journey Updated," in Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 382-387]

Note* All of the Astons criteria seem reasonable, yet they have made one interpretation on #11 which might come into question. They reason that because "Nephi required a specific revelation and great effort to locate ore and fashion tools indicates that, despite the attractiveness of the place, Bountiful may have had *little or no resident population* that could contribute tools and manpower to the ship-building process." This reasoning is very difficult to justify by the record on the small plates. If Nephi was travelling along the frankincense trail, he would have unquestionably been associated with tribal peoples with their associated claims to territorial land, water and other associated resources; yet, Nephi does not choose to make these facts a part of his record. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 17:5 **And We Did Come to the Land Which We Called Bountiful (Aston Theory):**

Warren and Michaela Aston write:

By describing in such precise detail a fertile Arabian coastal location [for Bountiful], as well as the route to get there from Jerusalem (complete with directions and even a place-name en route), Joseph Smith put his prophetic credibility very much on the line. Could this young, untraveled farmer in rural New York somehow have known about a fertile site on the coast of Arabia? Could a map or some writing other than the Nephite record have been a source for him? The answer is a clear no. Long after the 1830 publication of the Book of Mormon, maps of Arabia continued to show the eastern coastline and interior as unknown, unexplored territory. In fact, until the advent of satellite mapping in recent decades, even quite modern maps have misplaced toponyms and ignored or distorted major features of the terrain.

The classical writings, assuming they had been available to Joseph Smith, are equally unhelpful. Since the fourth century B.C., less than a dozen writers and geographers have left us accounts of what they understood of the incense trade and the actual source of the precious commodity. . . . Even the few eyewitness accounts from travelers to the area fail to mention the existence of lush vegetation, rivers, fruit, and large trees. The first-century author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* described the

incense land only as a "mountainous country wrapped in thick clouds and fog," and later writers such as Marco Polo and the traveler Ibn Battuta in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries described aspects of the incense trade but never the fertile vistas that Joseph Smith ascribed to Nephi. As late as 1833, Andrew Crichton wrote, "The whole southern coast is a wall of naked rocks as dismal and barren as can well be conceived" after sailing the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula.

The first report of a fertile location in Arabia did not come until 1846, sixteen years after publication of the Book of Mormon, following the visit of Dr. H. J. Carter to Salalah in the Dhofar province of Oman. What could be called the first scientific research in southern Oman did not take place until the 1952 expedition led by Dr. Wendell Phillips. [Warren and Michaela Aston, In the Footsteps of Lehi, pp. 29-30]

~~1 Nephi 17:5 **We called [it] Bountiful because of its much fruit and also wild honey (Illustration):** Date palms produce the probable "fruit" that Nephi wrote of, giving rise to the name Bountiful. [Warren and Michaela Aston, In the Footsteps of Lehi, pp. 66-67]~~

~~1 Nephi 17:5 **We called [it] Bountiful because of its much fruit and also wild honey (Illustration):** Delicate flowers shoot forth in their beauty at Wadi Sayq. (p. 53) Looking west across one of the freshwater sources and up Wadi Sayq in Oman toward the beautiful lush mountainsides. . . Agricultural areas were discovered on the west side of the wadi area. (p. 57) Verdant wadi flora about a quarter of a mile from the seashore. [Scot and Maurine Proctor, Light from the Dust, pp. 47-57]~~

1 Nephi 17:5 And We Did Come to the Land Which We Called Bountiful (Hilton Theory):

The Hiltons would write in 1996 that one reason the Astons looked beyond the area of Salalah for the land Bountiful was that a frankincense road from the desert was not to be considered because most of the frankincense was "rarely transported overland from Dhufar." Since the Aston article in 1991, a widely published discovery was reported of the ancient Arabic city of Ubar. This city referred to as "Atlantis of the Sands" by T. E. Lawrence was located by high-tech images from the satellite Landsat 5, Shuttle Challenger's Imaging Radar B and by the French SPOT Satellite.

The *New York Times* carried an article by John Noble Wilford on April 21, 1992 which said the new-found city "was a bustling caravan center as early as 2000 B.C. A major emporium in the ancient frankincense trade." Ubar is located 90 miles inland from the sea at Salalah (see illustration). Also on this same date, the *Deseret News* (page A3) added that a second city "even bigger than Ubar" had been identified 20 miles from Salalah. These two recent discoveries establish the route of the ancient frankincense trail from the sea port at Salalah 20 miles northwest to this second site and another 70 miles to Ubar, proving the major use of overland roads to export frankincense from Salalah, even before Lehi's day.

Thus, the old frankincense road comes through the desolate sand and gravel desert, through the newly discovered city of Ubar, over the Qara Mountains to the northwest, and down to the extended coastal plain of Salalah, which is ten miles deep at its greatest width (from the sea) and about 50 miles long. . . . The Qara Mountains encircle this little plain, their southern slopes covered with vegetation watered by the monsoons that only touch this one place, and no other, on the entire 1400 mile southern coastline of the Arabian peninsula.

In ancient times the Himyaritic tribe ruled Dhufar [the region encompassing the Qara Mountains]; they were overturned by Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Archemerid dynasty in 563 B.C. We conclude then that the Himyaritics were in power when Lehi's colony arrived on the scene in 592 B.C. That people were living in several towns in Dhufar, Oman at the time of Lehi is clear. In addition to the Ubar and its sister dated to 2,000 B.C. as noted above, there are two other "ruins of Sumharam and al-Baleed, sea ports dating to the first millennium B.C."^{xx} Further back along the trail, the "soundings in the silt deposits around the great dam of Marib [Yemen] attest to intensive agricultural exploitation there from at least 2000 B.C."^{xxi}

Note* If the Hilton's conclusion that the Dhufar region of Oman is Bountiful is correct, Lehi's colony was not alone there. This was the end (or start) of the frankincense trail, where the frankincense trees grew, so there would also have been farmers, merchants, inns, businesses and other activities. In addition to the trail caravaners, there would have been sailors and ships, for the area of Salalah was also an area of sea ports [termed "KHOR" in the illustration below]. It is believed that boats for both the west and the east sailed into this busy little haven, some of them no doubt exporting the famous frankincense.

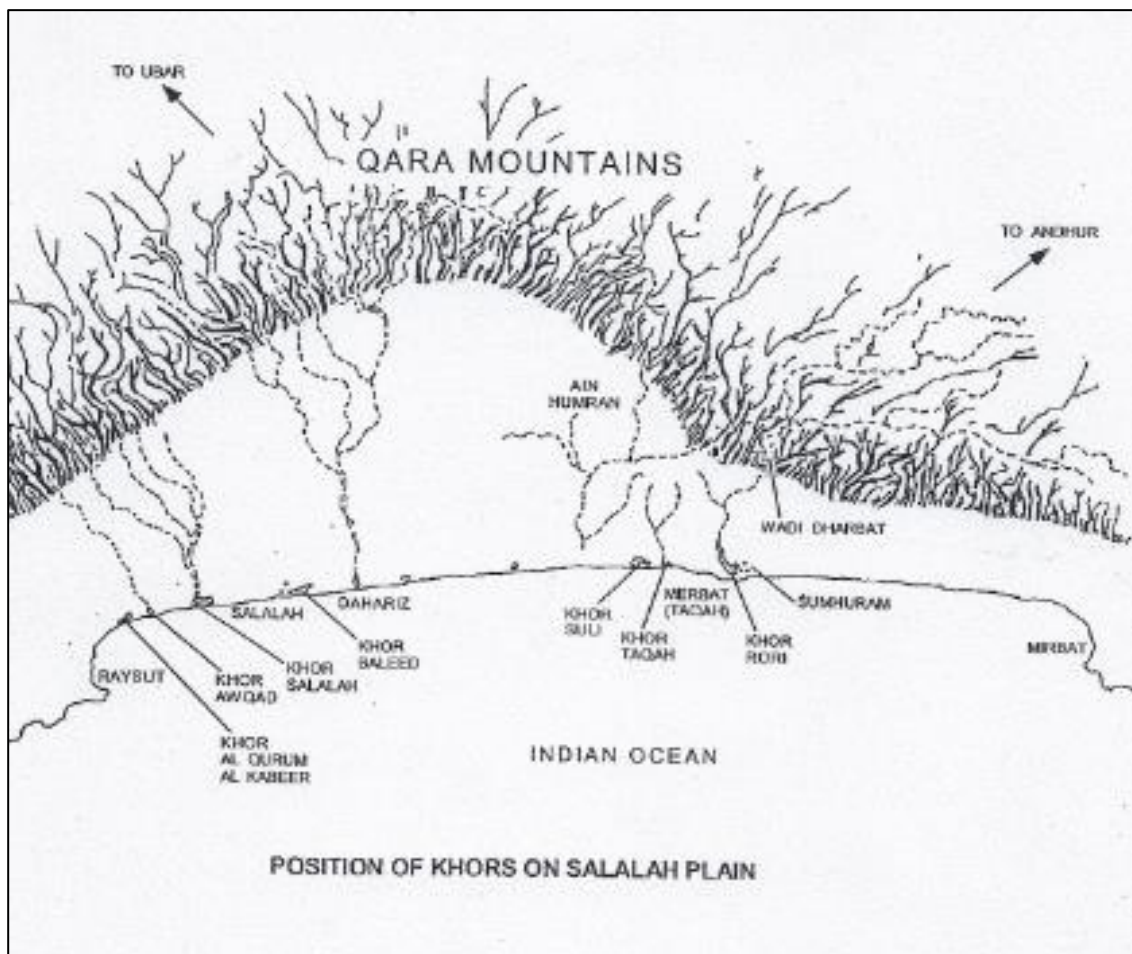
Nineteen miles outside Salalah (going inland from the seashore) they saw their first frankincense grove. The trees were at first sparse, but became more dense as they continued to ascend the steep mountain. They saw the most trees on the back side of the mountains, where they cover a hundred hills. The tree itself is low, spread out. The limbs appear massive and gnarled. The bark peels off like successive layers of fine tissue paper, or the bark of the birch tree. Any scratch to the green inner layer under the bark produces a flow of chalk-white sap, known as frankincense when dried. There is no doubt the Arab middlemen became wealthy from the incense traffic. An accurate picture of this wealth is described by geographer Strabo, (Book 16 chapter 4, section 19) who wrote about 100 B.C. He said these Arabs "have become richest of all; and they have a vast equipment of gold and silver articles."

[Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 151, 153-56]

The Hiltons note that the area of Salalah is the only place on earth where frankincense trees are indigenous. Seedlings have been transplanted to Yemen and Somaliland on the African coast; but at the time of Lehi, the area of Salalah held a near monopoly. (Gus W. Van Beek, "The Rise and Fall of Arabia Felix," *Scientific America*, Dec. 1969, 221:36, 41.) Pliny, a Greek naturalist (A.D. 23-79), described the land of frankincense bounded by the sea and by

high cliffs. He said that only 3,000 families were even allowed to see the trees; during pruning and harvest such supposedly polluting factors as women or dead bodies were strictly forbidden. (Pliny, *Natural History*, H. Rackham tr., London, William Heinemann LTD, 1952, 4:39)
 [Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail: Part I, The Preparation," in the *Ensign*, September 1976, p. 51]

~~1 Nephi 17:5 **And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful (Illustration):** Proposed reconstruction of the Lehi-Nephi trail along one of the ancient frankincense roads from the Red Sea to Bountiful. Map from the travel notes of the authors. [Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, p. 133]~~



1 Nephi 17:5 **And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful (Hilton Theory-Illustration):** Positions of the Khors (Ports) on the Salah Plain. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 261]

1 Nephi 17:5 **We Came to the Land Which We Called Bountiful:**

Joseph Allen notes that one of the intriguing discoveries he made while on tour in the area of Salalah [Dhofar region] was a possible correlation between the Dhofar region and Bountiful:

We were told by two parties, a local guide from India and a native Arab from the desert, that Dhofar means "bountiful or plentiful." Before our arrival in the region we were not aware of this significant possibility.

[Joseph L. Allen, "LDS Group Blazes Lehi's Trail" in Joseph L. Allen ed. The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest, Volume II, Issue V, 2000, p. 6]

~~1 Nephi 17:5 **We Did Come to the Land Which We Called Bountiful (Hedengren Theory):**~~

~~———— According to Paul Hedengren, all the conditions of the land Bountiful are satisfied along the north-east coast of Oman. Lehi would have traveled "eastward" from Nahom through the center of the Arabian peninsula (see illustration); there are sufficient wells and suitable environs to sustain the party, though there certainly would be times of thirst and hunger. The southern part of eastern Oman from Muscat to Ras al Hadd (see illustration) may contain the precise site for Bountiful. Wadi Falaj near Sur, Oman would certainly be a prime candidate. [Paul Hedengren, The Land of Lehi: Further Evidence for the Book of Mormon, p. 32]~~

~~1 Nephi 17:5 **We did come to the land which we called Bountiful (Hedengren Theory) [Illustration]:** (A) Travel from Nahom to Bountiful. (B) Eastern Oman near Ras al Hadd. [Paul Hedengren, The Land of Lehi: Further Evidence for the Book of Mormon, pp. 31, 32]~~

1 Nephi 17:5 **We Called [It] Bountiful:**

In his article, "And They Called the Place Tulan," Clate Mask says: "The Maya-Quiche historical documents, *The Title of the Lords of Totonicapan* and the *Popol Vuh* say that their ancestors' Old World point of departure was "Civan-Tulan" or "Bountiful-in-the-Ravine." [Clate Mask, "And They Called the Place Tulan," p. 2]

~~1 Nephi 17:5 **We called [it] Bountiful (Illustration):** Figures 14, 15, and 16. 3-D maps of Wadi Sayq showing the valley leading from the desert interior to the coast. [Warren and Michaela Aston, In the Footsteps of Lehi, pp. 50-51]~~

1 Nephi 17:4-5 **We Did Sojourn . . . in the Wilderness. And We Did Come to the Land Which We Called Bountiful (Potter Theory):**

To Potter and Wellington, and from a historical point of view, it is obvious that the Frankincense trail led through wilderness areas, but it also led to populated areas. It was impossible for Lehi to move along the Frankincense trail and not be detected by the local inhabitants. Historian William Hamblin makes this comment:

A theoretical reconstruction of Lehi's stay in southern Arabia could run something like this. Lehi and his family eventually arrive in Hadramawt, at that time a highly populated region serving as one of the main trade routes of southern Arabia. There they would have necessarily made contact with the local inhabitants, if only because every well in the region would have been owned by some tribe or city, and strangers would not have been allowed to drink from the wells without permission.^{xxii}

Obviously these same conditions that Lehi faced in the Hadramawt would also have applied in Dhofar.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 183-184] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 18:2]

1 Nephi 17:5 **And We Did Come to the Land Which We Did Call Bountiful (Potter Theory):**

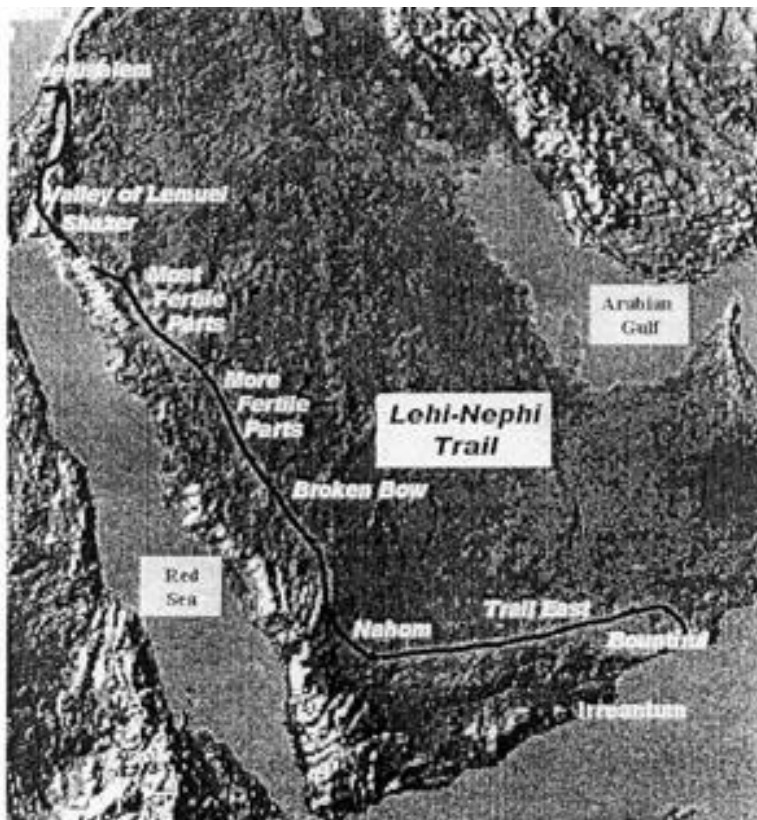
According to Potter and Wellington, the surrounding region of Dhofar in which Ain Humran was situated most closely fits Nephi's textual requirements for Bountiful which are as follows:

- (1) It was "nearly eastward" from Nahom. (1 Nephi 17:1)
- (2) It had abundant and a wide variety of fruits. (17:5; 18:6)
- (3) It had wild honey. (1 Nephi 17:5)
- (4) It had an accessible seashore. (1 Nephi 17:6)
- (5) It was adjacent to "many waters." (1 Nephi 17:6)
- (6) There was a mountain nearby. (1 Nephi 17:7)
- (7) There was ore available. (1 Nephi 17:7)
- (8) There stones available to make fire. (1 Nephi 17:11)
- (9) There were beasts ("skins") available for Nephi to make bellows. (1 Nephi 17:11)
- (10) There was "meat from the wilderness" available. (1 Nephi 18:6)
- (11) Such things as were required to build & sail Nephi's ship. (1 Nephi 17:8)
 - (a) A harbor to build it and launch it from.
 - (b) A protected port to outfit the ship.
 - (c) Materials to construct the ship.
 - (d) Materials to outfit the ship.
 - (e) Expert shipwrights to help construct the ship.
 - (f) A trained crew to sail the ship.
 - (g) A qualified captain to command the ship.
- (12) Cliffs directly above deep water. (1 Nephi 17:48)

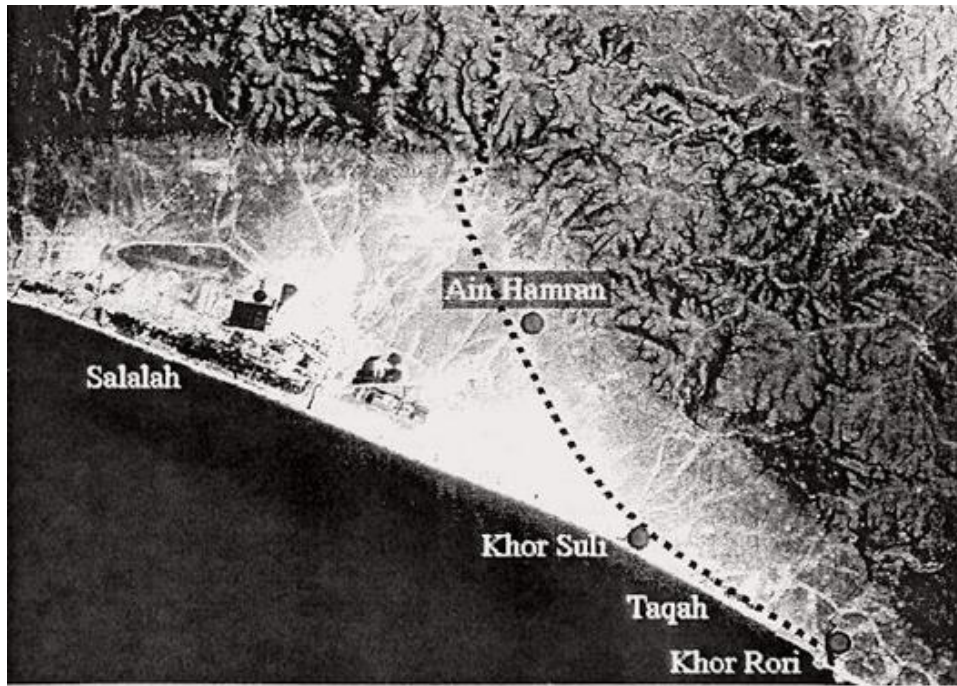
[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished



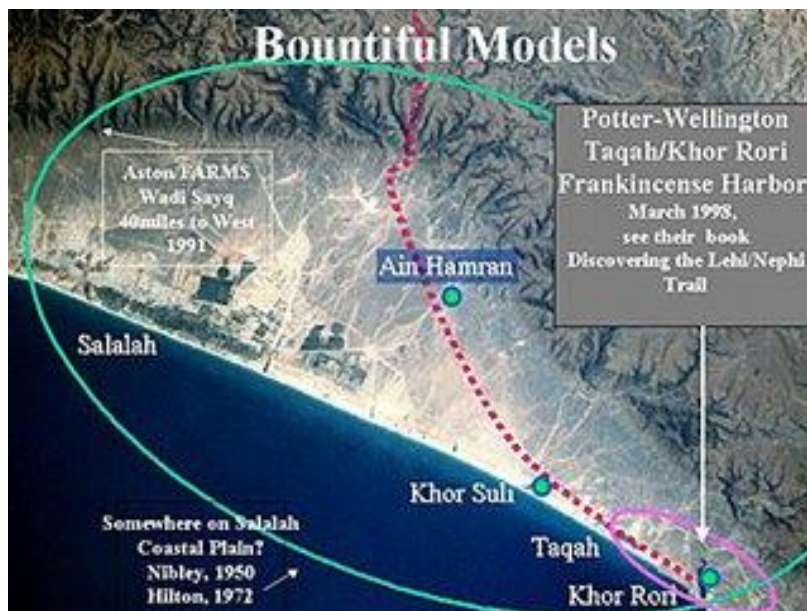
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1 Nephi 17:5 **And we did come to the land which we did call Bountiful (Illustration -- Potter Theory):** Map Showing the Trail Taken by the Family through Arabia. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 260]



1 Nephi 17:5 **And we did come to the land which we did call Bountiful (Illustration -- Potter Theory):** Land Bountiful. A satellite photo of Dhofar showing the trail leading to the frankincense port of Moscha at Khor Rori and the city of Merbat at Taqah. The extensive fruit plantations at Salah and Taqah are clearly visible. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 194]



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1 Nephi 17:5 **And we did come to the land which we did call Bountiful (Illustration -- Potter Theory):** Land Bountiful. Once the family neared the summit of the Qara mountains the contrast with the stark inland side of the mountains must have been amazing. They would have encountered the incredible lushness as the hillsides burst into bloom during the monsoons. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 194]

1 Nephi 17:5 **We Called [It] Bountiful Because of Its *Much Fruit* (Hilton Theory):**

Concerning the qualifications of Salalah (Dhofar), Oman as the land Bountiful, the Hiltons write that Nephi was not exaggerating when he called the land "Bountiful." It is truly fruitful. It springs to life at the touch of water, and the local farmers informed us that they make ten cuttings of alfalfa a year. We saw many fruits and vegetables growing: citrons, limes, oranges, dates, bananas, grapes, apricots, coconuts, beans, pomegranates, eggplant, cabbage, spinach, onions, radish, cucumber, green peppers, tomatoes, carrots, squash, papaya, sugar cane, figs, and melons. They saw a profusion of wild flowers, white jasmine hung in garlands from the trees, and they smelled flower perfumes on the breeze. Thousands of cattle grazed on the mountains. In well-irrigated spots, the grass was above their heads--over six feet tall. Beside the stately sycamore trees which we had come to see, residents grow wild olive trees called *naetan zatoon* and another, the *sograt* tree, both used in building.

[Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 154, 156]

1 Nephi 17:5 **A Land Which We Called Bountiful Because of Its Much Fruit (Potter Theory):**

Potter and Wellington write that one of the criteria met by their proposed land of Bountiful is that it had "much fruit" (1 Nephi 17:5) They also note that as Lehi's family were preparing to depart to the promised land from Bountiful, Nephi tells us that they "prepared . . . much fruits" (1 Nephi 18:6). The most likely explanation for the plural "much fruits" is that there was not only a lot of fruit but also a number of different kinds. Sir Donald Hawley writes:

Near Salalah itself - a garden city surrounded not only by groves of coconuts but also fields of lucerne and vegetables with clusters of paw-paw and other fruit trees - stands the ruined town of Balid, covering an extensive area. This medieval town was occupied until the sixteenth century and was visited by Ibn Batuta and earlier by Marco Polo, who described it as a "beautiful, large and noble city." Ibn Batuta remarks that "The City of Dhofar (al-Bilad) is a garden valley in an isolated desert region."^{xxiii}

If Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta found a "beautiful and noble city" and a "garden valley" what must Lehi have witnessed? After all, Marco Polo was visiting the valley long after the collapse of the frankincense trade. In comparison, when Lehi entered the land, the valley probably attracted hundreds of travelers at any one time: traders, transporters and middlemen associated with the incense trade. The 'Adites who populated Dhofar were highly adept at cultivation. Hamblin writes: "According to the Islamic Hud traditions, one of the chief sins of the tribe of 'Ad was pride symbolized by . . . an attempt to create an earthly replica of paradise." Hamblin sites Yaqut, that this mention of a "paradise" was a direct reference to the Qur'an (2:25) wherein is noted that in paradise one eats fruit at every meal.^{xxiv} Numerous springs, fed by the summer monsoon, irrigate the plain and the area is said to be capable of producing three crops in a year.^{xxv} (see illustrations) The four khors near the ruins of Ain Humran are all fresh water and so irrigation from the streams that feed them would have allowed the inhabitants to grow fruits there then, as now.

Besides the domestically harvested fruit on the Salalah coastal plain, it is probable that Nephi also encountered many imported fruits. Omani sailors had traded with India at least as far back as 1000 B.C.^{xxvi} and probably before that. Paleobotanist L. Constantini has isolated sorghum (*sorghum bicolor*), originating in the Ethiopia/Sudan region, in unbaked clay bricks in the Oman Peninsula datable to around 3,000 B.C.^{xxvii} Perhaps in Lehi's time the Dhofar coast was as it is now: groves of coconut palms bend down over the sand of the beach, banana plantations abound, their leaves a rich deep green, mangos and fields of sugar cane line the edges of the fields.

Despite the farmed and cultivated fruits at Dhofar in modern times, there are on record

18 species of naturally occurring fruits together with seven sweet fruits that were used historically as sweeteners. Some have suggested that this wild fruit that grows in the hills of the Dhofar region was Nephi's "much fruit."^{xxviii} Potter and Wellington question this reasoning. They note that these naturally occurring fruits are found mainly in the hills around Salalah and Taqah and do not occur on the coastline. As they traveled through Arabia, Nephi must have observed tens of thousands of well-groomed date palms in Ula, Madina and Najran, growing the best dates in the world. So why would the family have been excited about scattered wild trees with fruits that can hardly compare with cultivated fruits for taste or fecundity? A cursory knowledge of husbandry tells us that wild fruit trees do not produce "much fruit." The various parable of the pruning and grafting of fruit trees to prevent them from going wild are cases in point. It has also been suggested that wild date palms growing in small clusters along the Dhofar shoreline west of the Salalah plain might have been inspiration for the words, "much fruit." However, the coastal date palms are not self-propagating and have only recently been planted. The dates on the Dhofar coast are drenched by the monsoon rains and rot on the trees before they are ready to eat.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 179, 186-189]

1 Nephi 17:5 A land which we called Bountiful because of its much fruit (Illustration--Potter Theory):

Miles of fruit plantations abound from Salalah east to Taqah. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 194]

1 Nephi 17:5 A land which we called Bountiful because of its much fruit (Illustration--Potter Theory):

The monsoon rains seep into the sandstone of the mountains giving rise to numerous springs that flow year round, like this one near Taqah. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 194]

1 Nephi 17:5 A land which we called Bountiful because of its much fruit (Illustration--Potter Theory):

Wadi Dharbat contains numerous lakes which remain full throughout the year. This photo was taken 5 months after the end of the monsoon. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 194]

1 Nephi 17:5 Wild Honey:

According to the Hiltons, the southern slopes of the Qara Mountains (where the rain falls as the moist air rises) are covered with waist-high grass and clumps of great trees. During the monsoon season, the valleys are filled with mist and rain, and the vegetation becomes luxuriant and tropical. Wild flowers and wild honeybees abound in the hills. They saw honeycombs stacked almost carelessly in hollow tree trunks and thought again of Nephi's description: "We called [it] Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey" (1 Nephi 17:5

The Sultanate of Oman has memorialized honeybees and beehives by issuing a double-size commemorative postage stamp of 50 Baisa (15 U.S. cents) denomination in 1983. The art work depicts honeycombs in their wild state. Some combs are shown hanging in a shallow cave of a rock, one from a tree branch and several in hollow palm logs, bearing the caption "Honeybees in Oman," reminiscent of Nephi's "wild honey in abundance."

[Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 154, 156]

Potter and Wellington write that one of the criteria met by their proposed land of Bountiful is that it had "wild honey" (1 Nephi 17:5). The reference to "wild honey" might seem odd to those who are used to domestic bee keeping as a more efficient means of collecting honey. In Dhofar, however, honey was and is collected from wild bees. Bees are rare in Arabia and the Dhofar coast is one of the few places they are found in Arabia. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 189-190]

1 Nephi 17:5 **And We Beheld the Sea, Which We Called Irreantum:**

When Lehi's party finally arrived at Bountiful, they "beheld the sea, which [they] called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters" (1 Nephi 17:5). The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that "Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean, and crossed over to this land," meaning America (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 267). According to the Hiltons, what would the "great Southern Ocean" have been but the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean to the south of Arabia? . . . The Greeks of the first century A.D. called this sea "Erythraem." The similarities between the Greek name (Erythraem) and Nephi's term (Irreantum) is astonishing:

IR--RE--ANT--UM
ER--[R]Y--THRA—EM

[Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, p. 21]

1 Nephi 17:5 **Irreantum:**

Jeff Lindsay notes that the name "Irreantum," said to mean many waters (1 Nephi 17:5), was what the Nephites called the ocean when they arrived at the shores of southeastern Arabia. Rabbi Yosef ben Yehuda, a non-LDS author of the former Jewishness of the Book of Mormon Website, suggests in an e-mail from Dec. 1997 that Irreantum may be derived from Egyptian:

Ir (river *re* (mouth *na* (many) *tehem* (water)

If so, it sounds like a great name to give to the ocean while standing in a wadi where a large fresh water lagoon and a seasonal river meets the sea.

[jefflindsay.com/BMEvidences.shtml]

1 Nephi 17:6 We Did Pitch Our Tents . . . and We Called the Place Bountiful, Because of Its Much Fruit:

On April 2, 2000 three BYU geology professors and a professional geologist reported on their work of evaluating the Dhofar region of southern Oman as the proposed region of Nephi's Bountiful. According to Eugene Clark, although there are some 230 springs or seeps in the region, only a dozen or so flow year-round. He cautioned that investigators might see some springs and farming areas and assume those areas have always been fertile, but they are often mistaken. Those areas can be relatively new, made fertile with the advent of electricity for pumping water from distant areas. Conversely, because some of the springs that used to carry water have recently been capped in order for the water to be transported to the towns, the wadis which they fed are now dry. Clark also said that most of the soils in the Dhofar area are quite poor but that the best soils are found in the Salalah area.

[Ronald A. Harris, Eugene E. Clark, Jeffrey D. Keith, and W. Revell Phillips, "Nephi's Tools: An Overview of Iron Ore Occurrences in Oman," Brown Bag Lecture on 5 April, 2000. Reported in "FARMS Project Reports," in Insights, May 2000, p. 7]

1 Nephi 17:6 **We did pitch our tents by the seashore (Illustration):** Family of Lehi Camped in Promised Land. Artist: Gary Kapp. [Thomas R. Valletta ed., The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families, 1999, p. 71]

1 Nephi 17:6 We Did Pitch Our Tents by the Seashore (Potter Theory):

Potter and Wellington write that one of the criteria met by their proposed land of Bountiful is that it was accessible to the seashore. Parallel to the southern coast of Arabia there is a mountain range which runs from Yemen to Dhofar. As Nephi looked south out over the ocean from the mountains of Dhofar, the next landfall would have been Antarctica. In order to reach the coast from the trail, the family had to cross the mountains. Camels laden with four to five hundred pounds of tents and provisions could only cross the mountains on established trails through passes. Maps of the ancient trade routes in southern Arabia show only four passes through the mountains to the coast. (see illustration) The first is through wadi Hardabah to the port of Aden in Yemen; the second is through wadi Hajar in Yemen to the port of Cana; the third is through wadi Hadramaut to Sayhut; and the fourth is through a pass in the mountains to the Salalah plain and Ain Humran. This pass is now the modern Salalah/Thammarit road. The idea that Lehi's family forged their own trail and hid out in an

isolated place in Dhofar is highly unlikely. The Frankincense lands were the source of great wealth, and were heavily guarded. The Roman historian Pliny recorded how in the Hadramaut those who dared leave the official frankincense road were summarily executed.^{xxix}

Locations west of the Salalah plain, namely the inlets of Dhalkut, Kharfot and Rakhyut are not readily accessible from the hinterland. To approach Dhalkut from the desert would take a 75 kilometer journey across a 5,000 foot mountain range. Wadi Sayq, Kharfot and Rakhyut would be about a 50 kilometer journey across the same mountain range. There are no records of any ancient trails that lead inland to these areas. In fact, the only recorded ancient trail to the coast of Dhofar is at Salalah.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 185-186]

~~1 Nephi 17:6 **We Did Pitch Our Tents by the Seashore (Accessible seashore—Potter Theory):** Map of southeastern Arabia showing the final stages of Lehi's journey according to the Astons. [Warren P. Aston & Michaela Knoth Aston, In the Footsteps of Lehi, p. 11]~~

1 Nephi 17:7 The Voice of the Lord Came unto Me, Saying: Arise, and Get Thee into the Mountain (Potter Theory):

According to Potter and Wellington, in reading Nephi's account in 1 Nephi 17, it appears that Nephi was asked by the Lord to "Arise and get thee into the Mountain" (1 Nephi 17:7). This would imply that Nephi was not just climbing any prominence, but a special place--"the mountain." Nephi went to the mountain and was told what the design of the ship should be (v. 8). Nephi asked where to find ore (v. 9) and was told where to find it (v. 10).

There are a number of possibilities for this specific mountain to which Nephi resorted to pray. Closest to Ain Humran are the mountains of the Jabal Al Qara range, bounding Wadi Dharbat,, approximately 3,000 feet high (1,000 meters). These are about 5 miles (10 km) away. To the east is Jabal Samhan about 20 miles (32 km) away to the east. At nearly 6,000 feet, it is the highest mountain in southern Oman and. As the tallest mountain in western Oman, it is readily visible from Moscha (Khor Rori). It is one of the few mountains that is mentioned in the Bible (Mount Sephar) and like Khor Rori (Moscha) it is historically associated with Ophir. It is mentioned by name in Genesis 10:30, where it is known as "Sephar, a mount of the east." The Bible also mentions the mountain as a distinguishing landmark of the place where the sons of Joktan (the great great grandson of Noah) dwelt: "And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha [Moscha] as thou goest unto Sephar [Sofar] a mountain of the east" (Genesis 28:29).

Even more interesting is the fact that iron ore is found at the base of Jebel Samhan (Mount Sofar). Since Nephi was a days ride from the rest of the family, he apparently

constructed a bellows where the ore was (1 Nephi 17:11) and smelted the ore to make tools (1 Nephi 17:16). This makes perfect sense. Why would he carry the ore back? It would take many journeys to get enough; it was far easier to smelt the ore and make the tools on-site of the deposit. It might also be significant, seeing that Nephi wasn't directed to the ore until after he went into the mountain, that flint--presumably the stones Nephi used to start the fire for his bellows (1 Nephi 17:11)--has been found at Andhur near Jebel Samhan.^{xxx}

[George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), pp. 190, 246-247]

1 Nephi 17:7 **I arose and went up into the mountain, and cried unto the Lord (Illustration):** Nephi's Vision. Artist: Clark Kelley Price [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The Ensign, January 1988, front and back cover]

1 Nephi 17:8 **Thou Shalt Construct a Ship after the Manner That I Shall Show Thee:**

Although some have professed that the Lord would reveal to Nephi all that he needed to know to "construct a ship after the manner that I shall show thee" (1 Nephi 17:8), the Jewish Torah tells of the Tabernacle being made by those who already possessed the necessary skills to do so, even though they were endowed with divine help to increase their skill in making it (Exodus 25:8, 9; 3:3-5). According to Keith Christensen, it should be remembered that since the times of Solomon, [the Israelites] had been making and sailing ships from the port of Ezion-geber (on the northern tip of the Red Sea). This means that going south along the coast of the Red Sea, there would have been a shipbuilding industry from which Nephi could have learned shipbuilding and what tools were needed.

[B. Keith Christensen, The Unknown Witness, pp. 60-61, unpublished]

1 Nephi 17:8 **Thou Shalt Construct a Ship after the Manner Which I Shall Show Thee (Potter Theory):**

According to Potter and Wellington, when the Lord instructed Nephi to "arise and get thee into the mountain" (1 Nephi 17:7), it was not, as is often believed, to command Nephi to "out of nowhere" build a ship. Nephi already knew the "why." That is why he had come to the Dhofar region on the southern Arabian seashore. That was where the ocean-going ships were built and sailed from. The mountain experience had more to do with the "how," "when," "where" and "with whom" to build such a ship.

We know that in the valley of Lemuel, Nephi had witnessed in a vision the land of promise and the "many waters" that divided the Gentiles from the seed of his brethren (1 Nephi 13:10). If Nephi actually saw the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and how they divided the people of the world, then he must have understood that his voyage would be long and dangerous.

However, the ocean-going vessels of Nephi's time which sailed the Indian Ocean were not completely suitable for making such a long journey. Nevertheless, Nephi needed to know about these ships, and about what it took to sail these ships in order to make his ship capable of getting to the promised land. Once again, that is why Nephi and Lehi were directed by the Lord ("south-southeast" and then "eastward") to come to the Dhofar region.

So what transpired on the mountain appears to have been a familiar process for the faithful. First, Nephi "cried unto the Lord," presumably because he needed the Lord's help. (1 Nephi 17:8) He needed a design for a large oceangoing ship that was capable of reaching the promised land. Upon asking, the Lord answered Nephi's cry, "Thou shalt construct a ship after the manner which I shall show thee that I may carry thy people across these waters" (1 Nephi 17:9). Nephi does not seem surprised on receiving instructions on how to build the ship. On the contrary, he appears to have already studied shipbuilding. When he received the Lord's instructions, Nephi does not ask the Lord what tools he needed, implying that he already knew which shipbuilding tools he needed, only where he could find ore to make the tools (1 Nephi 17:10).

One could argue that it was no problem at all for Nephi to build a ship, for the Lord could have simply supplied Nephi with all the materials and knowledge he needed on request. That is, anytime Nephi needed to know something, presto, the Lord gave him the answer. Likewise, if Nephi required some materials to fabricate his ship, the Lord conveniently showed Nephi where to get them. Potter and Wellington refer to this as the "storybook" version of Nephi's ship. It is a scenario that they think significantly misrepresents how the Lord deals with his faithful servants, significantly undervalues what Nephi actually accomplished through applied faith and works, and leads to a mythological, rather than factual, understanding of the Book of Mormon. Besides, the storybook version makes no sense. If the Lord simply wanted to supply everything for Nephi, one miracle after another, why build a ship in the first place? Why not just have him build an airplane or unfold a magic carpet? Why not have them walk across the ocean?

The likelihood of the Lord-did-it-all theory seems even more doubtful if one considers the context in which the ship was built. Why would the Lord suddenly start intervening in every matter, after having Nephi and his group suffer great afflictions for eight years in the desert where they nearly died? Nephi seems to have had to suffer through each ordeal the same as any man. The sun shone just as hot on him, the rain fell just as wet on him, the wind blew just as hard on him as anyone else. So why now would we believe that the Lord handed everything to Nephi on a platter, giving him skills he had never learned, knowledge he had never gained and abilities he had never developed. This totally misses the point that the building of the ship, as well as the desert journey, were all part of Nephi's development under the hand of the Lord. Nephi would have to learn line upon line, precept upon precept, as all who had gone before him and as all who would come after him.

To hand Nephi everything would have made a mockery of the previous eight years. Building a ship required Nephi to learn from local tradesmen how to smelt ore to make tools, to cut stones to form anchors, to work wood within very tight specification, to weave sails and to fabricate rope, to mold pots for storing water, to tan hides for bellows and for fastening the ships riggings. Along with his trip through the wilderness, the building of Nephi's ship was, one might say, his university. In the New World Nephi would become their ruler and teacher (2 Nephi 5:19), passing on to a new society a storehouse of knowledge that took civilizations thousands of years to acquire. Nephi would personally teach his people the basic skills of metallurgy (2 Nephi 5:15), building construction and the working of all manner of woods (2 Nephi 5:15). One could say that these teachings culminated in the construction of a temple to the Lord of "exceedingly fine" workmanship (2 Nephi 5:16).

Certainly, the Lord inspired Nephi from time to time, but it also seems likely that Nephi used his own initiative in acquiring the skills and resources he required. Brigham Young, who himself led a difficult exodus to a land of promise, taught:

The old theory is that the kingdom of God, and all pertaining to it, is spiritual and not temporal; that is the traditional notion of our brother Christians. But a person may merely *think* until he goes down to the grave, and he will never be the means of saving one soul, not even his own, unless he adds physical labor to his thinking. He must think, and pray, and preach, and toil and labor with mind and body, in order to build up Zion in the last days. You cannot build your house . . . by mere thinking, it also requires physical labor . . . If we talk to you and you sit and hear, that involves labor, and everything connected with building up Zion requires actual, severe labor. It is nonsense to talk about building up any kingdom except by labor; it requires the labor of every part of our organization, whether it be mental, physical, or spiritual, and that is the only way to build up the kingdom of God.^{xxxii}

It is also significant that when asked to go to Jerusalem and acquire the brass plates from Laban, Nephi taught that the Lord "giveth no commandments unto the children of man, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). The Lord did just that, and Nephi acquired the plates, but only after many difficulties, dangers and individual efforts.

Now with the above comments clearly in mind, the Book of Mormon student should note that the Lord also "prepared" the land of Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:5) as a place where they not only could survive for a time, but find the materials and knowledge they needed to build a ship and sail her across the oceans. Indeed, the Lord led them to Bountiful. Why? It was there that Nephi, by applying his own initiative, could learn from experienced people the skills he needed to know, and where he could work for, trade for, or simply discover the materials he needed in order to fulfill the commandment which the Lord had given him. It is an eternal principle that the Lord will help those who ask Him, but only if they are willing to learn and

apply all they can. Nephi would teach this principle in terms of personal salvation: "for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do (2 Nephi 25:23).

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 205-208] [See the commentary on Ether 2:19]

1 Nephi 17:8 **Thou Shalt Construct a Ship:**

The fact that Nephi was to "construct a ship" that would take his family from Bountiful (southeast Arabia) to the Promised Land (the Americas) is a statement loaded with cultural implications. The cultural backdrop for the building of such a ship would place a number of requirements for Nephi's geographical and cultural location, and push his abilities to achieve such a task to the utmost limits, even under favorable circumstances. The following is a brief outline of things that were required to build and sail Nephi's ship:

- (a) Materials to construct the ship.
- (b) Expert shipwrights to help construct the ship.
- (c) A protected port to outfit the ship.
- (d) Materials to outfit the ship.
- (e) A harbor to build it and launch it from.
- (f) A qualified captain to command the ship.
- (g) A trained crew to sail the ship.

These requirements have been brought out very clearly by the experiences and writings of Tim Severin.

In 1976-77, intrigued by ancient maritime tales of distant voyages, and after much research, Oxford trained Tim Severin crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a leather boat in order to prove that the Irish monk St. Brendan could have discovered the American continent more than a thousand years ago. His subsequent book, *The Brendan Voyage* became an international bestseller. For the Book of Mormon student, however, what Severin did after that is of unique importance. After completing his epic journey, Severin became enthralled in recreating one of the most famous travel stories of all time: the seven voyages of Sindbad the Sailor from *The Thousand and One Nights*.

In 1980, after meticulous research and with the help of Omani money and government backing, Severin succeeded in building a replica of an Arab sailing ship of a kind that had not been seen for centuries--a vessel like those which Sindbad and other Arabs navigated a quarter of the way round the globe in search of trade more than a thousand years ago. He named the ship *Sohar* after the town said to have been Sindbad's birth place. It was also the most prosperous trading port and city in Oman at that time, and the terminus for ships embarking or returning from voyages to the farthest Orient. With a crew of twenty, Severin navigated a 6,000

mile journey that took them from Muscat, Oman across the Arabian Sea to India, then to Sri Lanka and across the Indian Ocean to Sumatra and the Malacca Straits, and finally through the China Seas to Canton, China. The story of this astonishing 71/2-month voyage is told in Tim Severin's book, *The Sindbad Voyage*.



sio.midco.net

Severin's book is recommended reading for any Book of Mormon student who wants to gain perspective on the shipbuilding and voyage which Nephi undertook in order to reach the Americas. Despite the fact that Nephi received inspiration and direction from the Lord, the details of what it took for Severin to construct the *Sohar* seem to place certain requirements on Nephi's location in the land Bountiful. I will first list these and then give a few excerpts from his book in order to explain the list.

1. Nephi would have needed a nearby population for construction help. He could not have built the ship without expertly trained carpenters, ropemakers, shipbuilders, sailors, etc.

2. Nephi needed access to the right kind of timber, fibers for sails, ropes, resins for caulking, etc., and the right techniques to work them. While they probably were directly available in the land Bountiful, if there was an existing shipping trade closeby, then some of

these materials could have been accessed by trade. This would have required at least a bay and perhaps a harbor or port.

3. Nephi needed access to ore (either iron or copper) in order to make tools and construct the ship. Although ancient Arab ships were sewn together, Nephi did not make his ship "after the manner of men." He could have used metal nails. This would have made the boat much more secure and cut his construction time in half.

4. Nephi needed a port inlet so that his ship could be launched, checked for leaks, outfitted with masts and rigging, and loaded with supplies without being subjected to heavy destructive tides that might occur on an exposed beach. He would have also needed some smaller boats in order to ferry men and supplies to the ship.

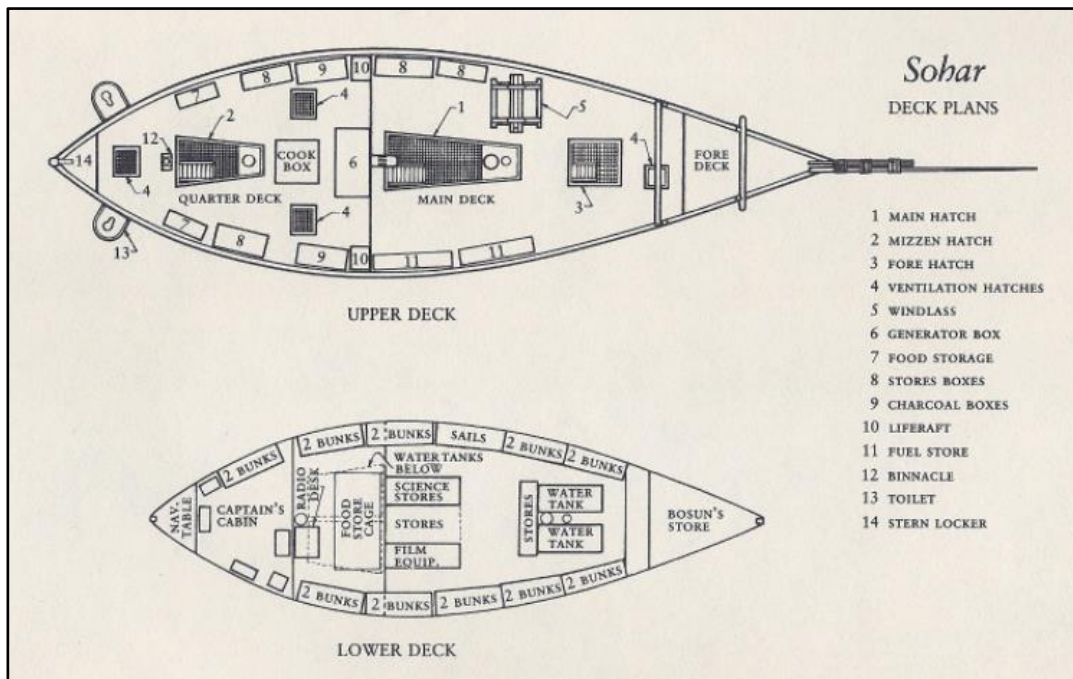
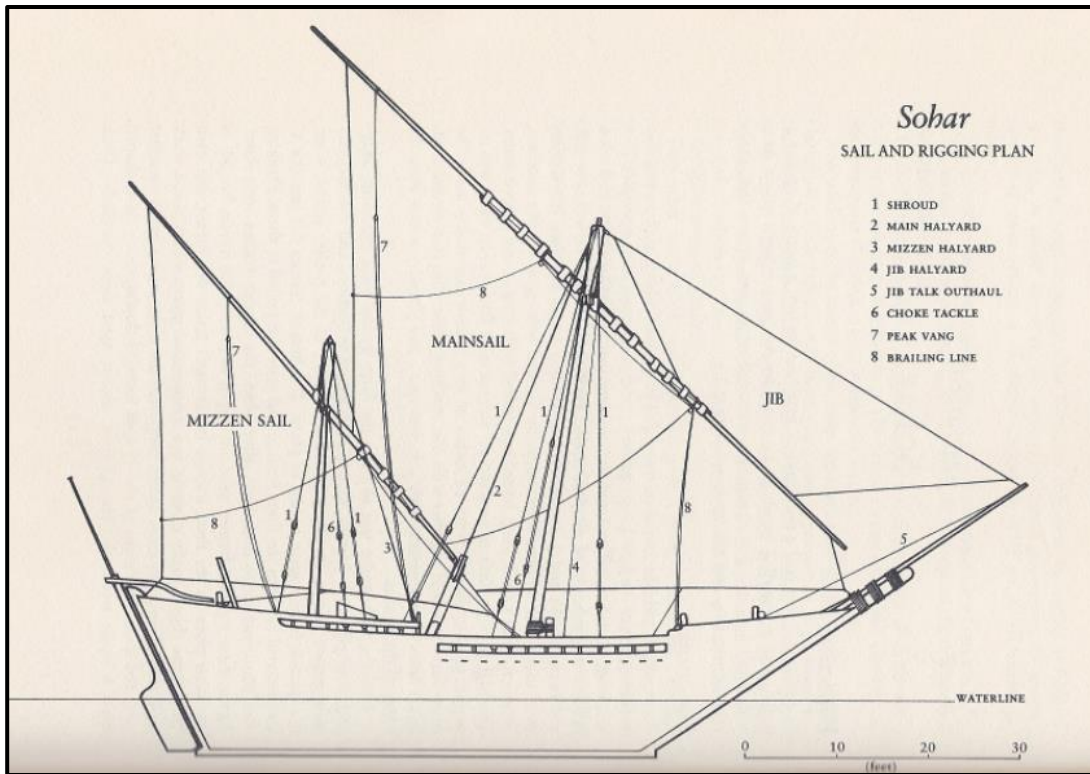
5. Nephi needed contact with experienced sailors and boats in order to obtain the needed training to sail the boat. While it is true that Nephi and the others could have obtained some training during their stay in the Valley of Lemuel on the Red Sea, the conditions at Bountiful were not exactly the same, and the extent of Nephi's voyage would have required much more preparation. Nephi might have even needed some experienced sailors to man his boat, and most especially an experienced ship captain that could teach him what he needed to know.

[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note*Now for the benefit of the reader, I will give some excerpts from Severin's book:

It took nearly five years to plan and carry out the voyage, and to present its results in words, pictures, and film. (p. 1)

The Sindbad Voyage . . . needed the research, design and construction of a full-sized sailing ship.



It required a place to build her, a port to fit her out, and a large crew to sail her. On

board we would have to carry enough spare materials to maintain an early medieval ship at sea for at least eight months of voyaging, with enough food and water for each stage of the journey. (p. 18)

Fortunately the history of Arab ships has attracted the attention of a number of maritime historians, and there were several good studies on the design of early Arab vessels. . . . The earlier Arab vessels had been double-ended, that is, they came to a point at both bow and stern. The only double-ended, ocean-going Arab ship still to be seen widely in the Arabian Gulf was a type of vessel which the Arabs call a *boom*. (p. 19)

All the early texts make it abundantly clear that early Arab ships were not nailed together, but that their planks were sewn together with cord made from coconut husks. It seemed a flimsy way to make an ocean-going ship. Yet all the early authors agreed that this extraordinary method of construction had been the most distinguishing feature of an Arab ship. (p. 20)

[In search of a construction site] I . . . went to take a look at the Omani port of Sur [near Muscat] just inside Cape Ras al Hadd, the most easterly point on the Arabian peninsula. Here, within living memory, a large fleet of wooden merchant ships had been built and maintained. (p. 26)

The timber for building Omani ships is brought nearly 1300 miles from the Malabar coast of India. It is a trade which goes as far back as the earliest records, because Oman lacks trees large enough to provide first-class boat timber. (p. 31)

The timber of these ships was not teak, but a very similar wood called *aini*. . . . Technically it is virtually identical to teak--it has very nearly the same strength, density and weight. It grows to a good size, and is easily worked, but it has a major drawback; it tends to split if nails are driven into it. (p. 35)

The keel of a *boom* is long, straight and massive; it is the very back bone of the vessel, and its dimensions dictate the remainder of the ship. For a shipwright builds mathematically. Once the keel is laid, every other timber relates to it at a particular angle or size, so that if one tells an Arab shipwright the type of vessel--*boom* or whatever--and the length of its keel, he will know exactly the final size and shape of the finished ship. . . . [The timber for the keel] needed two elephants to manoeuvre the great log down to the road. There it was put on trestles, and cut square by two men working a huge double-handed pit saw. (pp. 37-38)

We went back to Beypore to purchase the masts and spars for the ship. Now we were looking for a very special timber which the Indians call *poon*. Like a tremendous spearshaft, a mature *poon* tree sometimes rises 50 feet before it puts out a single

branch. For centuries seamen have known that *poon* makes superb masts and spars. . . . Late that night we came across the perfect log, 65 feet long and tapering to exactly the right dimensions. (p. 43)

"I [sent] 140 tons of timber, much of it in odd shapes and sizes and angles, to Sur." (p. 46)

Minicoy is one of a group of islands where medieval Arab ships picked up the coconut rope used for shipbuilding, and until this century the only export from the Laccadives was *coir*, the rope made from coconut husks. So it seemed logical for me to try to obtain coconut rope for my replica sewn ship from the same source as the Arabs. . . . [I was told] that what I needed for ship building was a very special quality of coconut rope. It had to be hand rolled from the best-quality coconut husks. These husks had to be soaked, or retted, in sea water to loosen the fibres. . . . then pounded with wooden clubs . . . After that, the fibre should be twisted by hand into string. If twisted by machine, the threads would be too feeble. . . . I would need about fifteen hundred bundles of coconut string to build the ship I needed. I calculated the total length, and it came to four hundred miles! This seemed a colossal amount. (p. 40)

Some of the items . . . I would need for the construction of a sewn vessel were truly bizarre. There were the husks of 50,000 coconuts to be used as a kind of wadding, two particular thicknesses of string, and forty bundles of a curious knobby wood from the islands which I suspected was mangrove root. This wood was immensely strong and hard, and Kunhikoya said it would be used for the levers which the ropeworkers would need when they were tightening up the lashings of the ship. There was also a quarter ton of a tree gum called *chundruz*, a natural resin which is more usually employed for making cheap incense. The boatbuilders would use it as a type of shellac, painting it between the planks. . . . [I also needed] half a dozen barrels of fish oil, which was to be mixed with melted sugar and painted on the outside of the completed hull. The oil came from tiny fish which were boiled in vats near Mangalore and the grease skimmed off. The stench of the oil was indescribable. Next there was half a ton of lime to be plastered to the underwater surfaces of the ship as a form of anti-fouling. To obtain the lime, we went to a lime burner near the fish oil vats. . . . A long file of women carried buckets of seashells on their heads to dump them in a heap outside a lone, low hut, which had smoke billowing up through the thatched roof. Inside a very old man, a mere skeleton, pedalled a wheel to force air into the charcoal fired tubs of burning shells.

Item by item, we assembled the ingredients in Kunhikoya's recipe for building a stitched vessel: six augers; soft iron chisels for wood cutting; a hank of flax rope, purpose unknown; four large crowbars, two sledge hammers; an old-fashioned beam balance scale, several large boxes of assorted tools. The only items I was utterly unable to find were the tails of six stingray fish. (The Laccadive islanders were so isolated that they

used the rough tails of rayfish instead of wood rasps). I got the metal files to do the same job. (pp. 41-43)

[At Sur] the place I had picked to build this new ship was no more than a slightly raised mound on the foreshore. It was one of three possible building sites that I had noted as I walked along the beach, and I was not surprised to be told that each of the three sites was exactly where the Suri shipbuilders had built their largest ships in the old days. The particular site I chose had only one major disadvantage: it flooded during the high spring tides. In the old days this had not mattered--the original shipwrights would simply have waited until the tides eased, and the gone back to work. But I could not afford even a day's lost work. (p. 51)

The 52-foot long keel piece was raised on wooden blocks buried into the gravel . . .

Then I called together Hoodaid and the two senior Indian shipwrights to discuss Colin Mudie's lines plans of the ship. Normally, of course, neither Hoodaid nor the greenshirts (carpenters) would have used any drawings for building a ship, they worked only from their experience and by eye. . . . One of the greenshirts not only understood Colin's drawings, but could translate them into the practical necessities of sewing a ship together. (p. 52)

The senior ropeworker divided his men into pairs, an inside man and an outside man. Each pair worked at passing a stand of the finest quality coir cord out through a hole in the plank, back through the opposite in the keel, round the python, and out again. There the outside man took a turn of the cord around his lever of stout wood, put his feet against the hull, leaned back and hauled the string as tight as he could. On the inside, his partner tapped on the string to help it tighten. The string grew tighter and tighter . . . until it could compress no more. The stitch was temporarily locked with a light wooden peg, and then the whole process began all over again with the next pair of holes. (p. 56)



4) After stitching, the holes are packed with a waterproof mix of lime and tree gum (NG, p.

The carpentry for the ship was as remarkable as the stitching. The Arab shipwrights, led by Hoodaid, were responsible for preparing the main frames of the vessel. They sat in the shade of a canvas awning chopping razor-sharp adzes against the 6-inch thick baulks of timber which had been marked out for the frames. As always they worked entirely by eye, in a happy carefree manner. It was a complete contrast to the greenshirts. Inside the shed of palm which we had erected to give shade around the hull, the greenshirt carpenters worked with a frenzy that it was difficult to imagine possible in the blazing heat. Their tools were hammer and chisel.



Shaping the timbers by hand chisel & hammer

Whether cutting a foot-thick lump of timber to size, or shaping the finest sliver of wood for a delicate joint, 90 per cent of the greenshirts' work was done with hammer and chisel; only very reluctantly did they pick up a saw or a plane. The soft iron chisel was their tool, and with it they could work wonders. They could carve a plank into delicate curves, or they could shape the 60-foot spar into a taper as if it had been turned on a giant lathe. They were craftsmen whose original caste in India had been carpenters. Their fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and untold generations before that, had been carpenters.

The accuracy expected of the carpenters was extraordinary. Because the hull was being stitched together, it could not be caulked; that is, it would not be possible to stuff filling material into any small cracks between the planks before the ship was launched, as is the normal practice when building large wooden ships. The action of hammering in a filling material would merely stretch the stitching and force the planks wider apart. So the hull of the new ship had to be made a perfect shell before it was ever put into the water. This meant placing planks edge to edge, without even a hairline crack, along a length as much as 80 feet. It was an achievement which some European engineers who came to visit the worksite considered virtually impossible. . . . To achieve the required accuracy, each plank was fitted into place at least three times before it was finally stitched. . . . Only when the two faces matched perfectly would Mohamed permit the final phase: a thin coating of melted tree gum was painted on both faces of the wood,

and a single strip of light muslin patted down onto the tacky resin so that it would be sandwiched between the planks when they were pressed together ready for stitching. As a last check, Mohamed would then take the protruding edge of the muslin strip, and give it a sharp tug. If the muslin slipped, he would order the job to be done again. A visiting engineer calculated that this work demanded an accuracy of better than 1/64 inch along the full length of the plank.

The penalty for this exquisite care was paid in the number of hours required to build the ship. Stitching a vessel together was perhaps two or three times slower than conventional shipbuilding using nails. (pp. 57-59)

The ribs, too, were stitched into place so that they could flex and slide against the skin of the vessel. A great crossbeam was placed across the ship to take the weight of the mast; the deck was laid on its beams.

I estimated that we had drilled more than 20,000 holes in the planking, and if these holes were not pegged properly the ship would leak like a huge sieve. On the outside of the hull the holes were blocked up with a sticky putty made of molten tree gum mixed with pounded seashells and rolled out on a board to the consistency of pastry. Finally the Agatti men climbed back inside the hull. Tins of vegetable oil were lowered down to them, and using mops and brushes they swabbed oil on to the stitching of the pythons. The coconut fibre soaked up the oil.



Oiling down the inside ribs of the hull

In the final week before launch we applied a coat of anti-fouling to the outside of the hull to protect it from being attacked and eaten by shipworms. The anti-fouling was strictly traditional, a coating of lime mixed with mutton fat and smeared on by hand. (p. 68)



Applying the anti-fouling mixture

[At the time of launch] the vessel seemed immense, towering over the sand, a monument to the skill of the men who had built her, 140 tons of raw timber turned into a single, elegant artefact, every joint and stitch dedicated towards her sole function of harmonizing with the sea.

We strapped a cradle under the hull, knocked away the keel blocks, and shackled up a tractor to tow our creation to the water's edge. Under the skids of the cradle we laid the last of our timber from India, greased with mutton fat. The tractor's engines revved up, and took up the slack. With a loud twang, the steel towrope snapped. We tried again, and again the two parted. We tried again and again, with heavier cable, with levers from astern, and with telegraph poles tucked under each side of the ship and fifteen greenshirts dangling from them like monkeys, in an attempt to unstick the hull. But the ship would not budge--she was immovable. . . . We were trying to drag her uphill. There was only one choice--we had to cut away the gravel platform and remove enough earth to make a downhill slope for the vessel. . . . At last the tide rose to its peak. Standing on the deck of the new ship I gave a signal to the navy men and they began to haul. The greenshirts roared out their work chant, and gave a tremendous heave. Looking astern, I saw the shore sway: the ship was moving. Gently and sweetly she eased out into the water. She was afloat. As she moved into the channel I heard whoops of triumph and there in the shallows were the greenshirts, capering and hallooing. They were ecstatic. . . .



The launching of the hull

We hauled the ship out to the mooring buoy in midstream, cleared away the cradle, and there was a wonderful moment. We went down below deck and inspected the hull. Together we checked the bilge. A trickle of water was coming in, a trickle that would stop as soon as the wood soaked and swelled. (p. 69)

My vessel was alive. [With a crew of thirty men], to build her had taken not three years, nor sixteen months as had been prophesied, but just 165 days. (p. 72)

As designed, *Sohar* had a nominal hull length of 80 feet, a beam of 20 feet 4 inches, and a waterline length of 63 feet. Her designed draught was 6 feet, with a sail area of 2900 square feet, arranged as jib 370 square feet, main 1625 square feet, and mizzen 815 square feet. . . .



The fully outfitted Sohar

The first set of sails were made of 18-oz, No. 3 quality cotton canvas, handsewn from strips 24 inches wide, and edge-roped. These sails were replaced in India with larger sails (the mainsail was increased to over 2000 square feet) made of 22-oz and 24-oz cotton canvas in yard-wide bolts. A third mainsail of approximately 1800 square feet was sewn by Minicoy islanders and proved very satisfactory during the last week's run up the South china Sea. The sail was made of 20-oz canvas, and from 18-inch wide strips. . . .

Each rib of the ship actually came in five independent pieces which could work

separately. Two main cross beams supported the main mast partner on either side, and took the weight of the 61-foot forward-sloping main mast, shaped from a single tree trunk. The 46-foot mizzen mast stood vertically. Deck planking was 21/4 inches thick. Ballast was 15 tons. . . .

The 75-foot mainspar of *poon* wood came in three overlapping sections. When this spar broke in the Indian Ocean, its replacement (timber unknown) was increased to 81 feet to allow more variation in setting the bigger mainsails. Similarly the original jib boom, projecting 11 feet, was increased in Beypore to 16 feet to give more headsail. . . .

The blocks for *Sohar*, including the huge lower main block which stood chest-high to a grown man, were all hand-carved from solid pieces of timber, with wooden wheels and wooden pins. The rigging specification was very precise and ranged from 8-inch circumference rope for the main halyard to 2-inch rope for the lighter stays. All stays were running stays. *Sohar* was first rigged with coconut rope, but this was partially replaced with manila rope as the voyage progressed and the vessel reached countries where manila rope was available. (pp. 235-239)

[Quoted from Tim Severin, *The Sindbad Voyage*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1982] [For more excerpts see the commentaries on 1 Nephi 18:6; 18:8; 18:12; 18:13]

1 Nephi 17:8 **Thou Shalt Construct a Ship:**

John Tvedtnes says, "I believe that there is evidence to show that Lehi and his family were craftsmen and artisans--probably metalworkers. . . . When the Lord tells Nephi, in the land of Bountiful, to build a ship, he has to give detailed instructions on how to do it. (1 Nephi 17:8, 18:1-4). But there is no record that Nephi had to ask how to prepare the metal tools with which he built the ship.

[John Tvedtnes, "Was Lehi a Caravaneer?," F.A.R.M.S., p. 13]

1 Nephi 17:8 **Thou Shalt Construct a Ship:**

NEW MATERIAL ON SHIP FROM VOYAGES

1 Nephi 17:8 **Thy People:**

According to Potter and Wellington, Nephi's record gives some clues that there were non-family members in his party. First, the Lord refers to Nephi's party not as his "family" or "families," but as "thy people" (1 Nephi 17:8).

Up to the last two centuries the names of women, children and servants were very seldom mentioned in literature. A review of the ancient scriptures reveals only a handful of names of women or servants. Nephi was a prophet, but he was also a product of his time. It would have never crossed his mind to have mentioned the names of his sisters (1 Nephi 5:6), the daughters of Ishmael (including the name of his own wife--1 Nephi 7:6, 16:7), let alone any servants and slaves. Another intriguing Near Eastern cultural example of this practice of literary exclusion is found in the writings of Michael Crichton. He placed in a novel format the manuscripts of Ahmad Ibn Fadlan's report to the Caliph of Baghdad in A.D. 922. Crichton writes:

Throughout the manuscript, Ibn Fadlan is inexact about the size and composition of his party. Whether this apparent carelessness reflects his assumption that the reader knows the composition of the caravan, or whether it is consequence of lost passages of the text, one cannot be sure. Social conventions may also be a factor, for Ibn Fadlan never states that his party is greater than a few individuals, when in fact it probably numbered a hundred people or more, and twice as many horses and camels. But Ibn Fadlan does not count-literally-slaves, servants, and lesser members of the caravan.^{xxxii}

Additionally, one cannot rule out the possibility that some of the local people from the Frankincense trail had joined the family. The Hiltons first put forward the argument that Arabs were part of the group, albeit as polygamous wives to Laman and Lemuel^{xxxiii} in order to explain the skin of blackness" or darker skins of the Lamanites referred to initially in 2 Nephi 5:21. It is possible that some of the darker skinned 'Adites in Dhofar accompanied the expedition and later aligned themselves with the Lamanites leading to their relatively darker skins. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), pp. 227-233] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 5:6; 5:21; Jacob 2:27]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Whither Shall I Go That I May Find Ore to Molten:**

When Nephi was commanded by the Lord to build a ship, his only reply was, "whither shall I go to find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship" (1 Nephi 17:9)? According to Keith Christensen, Nephi came from the interior of Judah where ships were not built. Yet he does not plead inability to build one. His question is limited to ore to make tools to do the construction. He exhibits no doubt about his ability to make the tools and build the ship.

Starting about 1000 B.C., King Solomon created at the southern end of the Araba (near

the Red Sea), an industrial establishment to turn his raw materials into manufactured articles . . . the like of which had not been known before his own day, nor was surpassed until comparatively recent times. . . . It is now known that along the entire length of the Wadi Araba (which runs south of the Dead Sea to Ezion-geber) are deposits of copper and iron. . . . Solomon's men employed what is essentially the principle of the Bessemer blast furnace, rediscovered less than a century ago. Ezion-geber was thus not only an important naval base and fortress guarding the crossroads to Arabia and Egypt but also an industrial center. Following Solomon, the activity of this port was a key to the prosperity of the land. The skills and facilities available at Ezion-geber continued to the time of Lehi, as shown by pottery fragments found there that date to the fifth or sixth century B.C.

Solomon traded copper and iron to Arabia in return for spices, incense, and other precious objects obtainable there. . . . The extent of the materials coming through Ezion-geber is told in describing Solomon's ships which "took three years to make a round trip out of Ezion-geber to . . . Africa, Arabia, and perhaps . . . India and Ceylon (1 Kings 10:22). Along with large quantities of gold [of Ophir] and silver, other articles of trade were ivory, spices, precious stones . . . Solomon and his merchants became rich by shipping out of Ezion-geber copper, iron, olive oil, and possibly many products manufactured in Egypt."

This situation would have provided Nephi the opportunity to learn how to smelt ore and work metal to make tools as well as provided the means to learn how to make and engrave plates.

[B. Keith Christensen, The Unknown Witness, pp. 60-61, unpublished]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Lord, Whither Shall I Go That I May Find Ore to Molten (Hilton Theory):**

According to the Hiltons, after Nephi saw the Lord's design for a ship, his first worry when told he was to build it was, "Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown me" (1 Nephi 17:9)? This question might imply that the ore needed wasn't readily available.

After the time their first work on Lehi was published in 1976, the Hiltons lived in Arabia for eleven years. During this time they had a chance to further explore the details of Lehi's journey and give this account of their search for insights into the question of the availability of ore near their proposed site for Bountiful in Dhofar, Oman:

We went to the Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals office in Salalah to ask about metal ores in the local mountains. We spoke with the Senior Exploration Geologist, Dr. Haya A. Qudnai, from India. We were soon astonished by the conversation and felt the Lord was preparing the way for us. After Lynn said he had been a faculty member at a major American university, Doctor Gidnai asked which one. Lynn answered, "Brigham Young

University." Then the doctor replied, "I have done postdoctoral work at both Brigham Young University and also the University of Utah. You must be Mormons!" He took down a large wall map we had admired, rolled it up, and put it under Lynn's arm as a gift. It showed all the mineral occurrences within a hundred miles of Salalah. He explained that there was a 12-inch thick seam of coal six miles from Salalah; the coal had 80 percent ash content (poor quality), but it was adequate in a forge to smelt ores; there was no iron ore deposit of any type or size in the Qara Mountains. In the showcase, he showed us a "trace" of copper he found at a site 50 miles east of Salalah, but there was no copper ore body anywhere about; there was a large deposit of dolomite manganese ore 17 miles north of Salalah close to the summit of the Qara Mountains next to the ancient caravan road. He identified no other mineralization, except gypsum cement 31 miles away and limestone cement six miles away; 56 miles east there was a deposit of lead ore.

Could tools and also rust-proof nails have been smelted of this manganese ore, or of an alloy of manganese and lead? We recalled that the Lord told Nephi where to go to get the ore he needed (1 Nephi 17:10), and therefore it may have been any type of ore and come by miraculous means, as the Liahona had come.

[Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 157-158]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Ore to Molten (Potter Theory):**

According to Potter and Wellington, If the mountain to which Nephi went was Jebel Samhan, which is readily visible from Moscha (Khor Rori) being less than 20 miles to the east, then it might explain Nephi's comments about "ore to molten" (1 Nephi 17:9). Nephi went to the mountain at the request of the Lord (1 Nephi 17:7) and was told what design the ship should be. Then Nephi asked where to find ore and was told where to find it. It just so happens that iron ore is found at the base of Jebel Samhan. The location of iron ore at this spot is significant. Since Nephi was a days ride from the rest of the family, he constructed a bellows where the ore was (1 Nephi 17:11), and smelted the ore to make tools (1 Nephi 17:16). This makes perfect sense. Why would he carry the ore back? It would take many journeys to get enough. It was far easier to smelt the ore and make the tools on-site of the deposit and just carry the tools back.

[George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 247]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Whither Shall I Go That I May Find Ore to Molten:**

Responding to a F.A.R.M.S. request, in 1985 Eugene Clark, former geologist for ESSO in Oman, prepared a preliminary report of geological possibilities of mineral deposits in the Dhofar

region. The report identifies a number of geological possibilities for copper and iron ore accessible to Wadi Sayq, based on published geological studies and surveys. Most promising among the published studies are reports of specular hematite found in small, random deposits on the Mirbat plain east of Salalah. Specular hematite is the most readily available form of high-quality iron and would have been most attractive as a low-tech smelting source for Nephi's tools.



Specular hematite

[flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/14811111@N00/10111111111/)

The report also notes that Dhofar irons would usually occur in mixtures with manganese and carbon, yielding higher-quality steel that would be superior for tools.

[Eugene E. Clark, "A Preliminary Study of the Geology and Mineral Resources of Dhofar, the Sultanate of Oman," Introduction]

1 Nephi 17:9 Whither Should I Go That I May Find Ore to Molten, That I May Make Tools to Construct the Ship:

On April 2, 2000 three BYU geology professors and a professional geologist reported on their work of evaluating the presence of iron ore in southern Oman, specifically the Dhofar region which has been proposed as the area of Nephi's Bountiful. According to Ronald Harris, although Oman has an abundance of ore deposits, most of these deposits are buried beneath a thick cover of sedimentary rock. However, the Dhofar region of Oman is an exception. In fact, it is one of the few places throughout the Arabian Peninsula where the ore deposits are exposed.

Jeffrey Keith noted that the team found deposits of iron-rich carbonate, goethite, and hematite, which can be crushed, mixed together, and heated to make a very usable form of iron ore. In fact, the team extracted some of this ore material, brought it back to BYU, and made iron out of it. These deposits occur in two areas along the southern Omani coast in concentrations sufficient to have enabled Nephi to make tools for building his ship: Raykut and Mirbat (see map below).

1. Mirbat is located a few miles east of the local Salalah coastal plain (Hilton's proposed

Bountiful site), and just west of Kor Rhoi (Potter's proposed site). It would have been easily reached by camel in Nephi's time. There is clear excavation evidence at a mountain site called Jebel Ali of a type of soft iron deposit called "goethite." Having gone through a natural process of breakdown by sulfuric acid, this soft deposit can easily be picked up and transported.

2. Raykut is located somewhat close to, and east of, Wadi Sayq (the Astons proposed Bountiful site); however, it is not reachable overland. One must approach it by boat from Wadi Sayq. Here the geologists found limited amounts of Iron carbonate, Hematite, and also Goethite.

According to Revel Phillips iron was abundant in all levels of society during the time of Nephi, who well could have used a pit furnace and bellows to make iron tools at relatively low temperatures. Inland from the Omani coast are copper deposits that were mined thousands of years ago and from which Nephi could have made bronze tools to build his ship if he did not use iron. [Ronald A. Harris, Eugene E. Clark, Jeffrey D. Keith, and W. Revell Phillips, "Nephi's Tools: An Overview of Iron Ore Occurrences in Oman," Brown Bag Lecture on 5 April, 2000. Reported in "FARMS Project Reports," in Insights, May 2000, p. 7]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Whither should I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship (Illustration):** Map of the Dhofar region showing the location of Mirbat and Raykut relative to proposed Bountiful locations. [Warren P. Aston & Michaela Knoth Aston, In the Footsteps of Lehi, p. 11]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Ore to Molten That I May Make Tools to Construct the Ship:**

When required to make shipbuilding tools, Nephi asks for divine help in finding ore but seems to know how to proceed from there: "Whither should I go that I may find ore to molten that I may make tools to construct the ship" (1 Nephi 17:9).

According to Revel Phillips, in the context of Nephi's day, there were only two reasonable options for a metal to make tools: bronze ("brass") and iron. Nephi lived at a time when iron and simple steel had become commonplace in Jerusalem, yet bronze was retained for special purposes like casting. Bronze was softer and generally inferior to steel for toolmaking, and producing it required a source for its components, copper and tin. Only minor traces of copper minerals have been reported in the Dhofar,^{xxxiv} and tin is unknown there. Of course, tin and copper might possibly have been trade items on the India-Africa trade route.

[Note* Nothing is mentioned here of the Phoenician trade. They were famous because of their "brass" (copper and tin).]

Nephi may have learned metallurgy skills from the smiths in Jerusalem or from his multiple journeys between Jerusalem and the Red Sea, which required him to pass repeatedly

through southern Wadi Arabah, the principal site for mining and smelting of both copper and iron in ancient Israel. He may have learned from the local smiths of the Dhofar or from the Indian traders that passed through nearby trading ports, and he would not have been the first prophet to be instructed by divine beings. Nephi struck stones together to make fire, built a presumably simple pit furnace, and constructed a bellows of animal skins to blow air into the glowing mass of charcoal and ore (see 1 Nephi 17:11). Bellows of skins are depicted in ancient Egyptian tomb paintings and were in common use in Palestine and throughout the Near East from the second millennium B.C.^{xxxv} Nephi's smelting furnace almost certainly never reached the melting point of iron (1535° C or 2795° F), but it didn't need to.

When air is introduced into a hot mixture of iron oxides and charcoal, carbon from the charcoal combines with oxygen from the air to form carbon monoxide, which is a reducing gas. This gas filters upward through the charcoal-ore mixture, removing oxygen from the iron oxides to form carbon dioxide; and tiny crystals of iron, freed of its oxygen, filter downward to accumulate at the base of the fire pit as a gray, spongy mass called a "bloom" or "sponge iron." This form of iron reduction, called the "direct process," begins at about 1200° C (2195° F), which is possible in a simple charcoal furnace. Although the bloom is not molten, silicate impurities in the ore form a molten slag (see 1 Nephi 17:16) that floats to the top to shield the hot bloom from the oxygen and cooling effect of the air above.^{xxxvi} The white hot bloom can be withdrawn from the furnace and hammered ("forged") to squeeze out remaining slag and to weld, or compress, the iron crystals into a solid mass called "wrought iron."^{xxxvii} Iron produced by this direct process is quite pure (99.5 percent). It is softer and more malleable than good bronze and cannot be hardened by any amount of additional forging.^{xxxviii}

Wrought Iron is not suitable for tools or weapons, and added forging drives more slag from the iron, making it even more malleable. Long heating of the wrought iron in direct contact with glowing charcoal, however, causes carbon atoms to diffuse into the outer layers of the iron, creating a simple form of steel (martensite).^{xxxix} This process is called "carburizing," and repeated carburizing and forging produce an outer layer of steel that can be very hard and sharpened to a fine edge. The iron is said to be "case hardened." In antiquity, common soldiers fought with inferior weapons that might dent and bend, but kings welded swords of special steel, each created by a skilled smith after days or months of hard, hot work at his forge (e.g., Excalibur). The sword of Laban, said to be of "most precious steel" (1 Nephi 4:9), was perhaps one of those special swords.

Today we know that the smiths of Damascus fused together thin layers of carburized steel to form a single blade. Repeated forging produced a visible wavy pattern ("watering") of carbon-rich and carbon-poor layers visible in the famous Damascus steel.

In a different process, plunging hot steel into water ("quenching") increases its hardness, but the metal becomes brittle and tools and weapons made from it may break. Reheating to moderate ("red") temperature and slow cooling ("tempering") relieves stress in

the quenched steel, making it less brittle with little loss of hardness.^{xl}

It is important to note that the direct process of iron reduction, forging, carburizing, quenching, and tempering were technologies known throughout the Near East of Nephi's day. All were possible for a learned or inspired man using a simple pit furnace with bellows and a simple forge. These techniques changed little for the arms makers of the Christian crusades or, indeed, for the blacksmiths of the pioneer communities of the American West. Nephi evidently knew all that he needed to know about smelting ore and producing metal tools. What he needed was to learn where he could find a deposit of iron ore. [Wm. Revell Phillips, "Metals of the Book of Mormon," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 9, Num. 2, 2000, FARMS, pp. 37, 41]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Ore to molten that I may make tools to construct the ship (Illustration):** This map of southern Oman shows the locations of the two iron ore deposits, indicated by the scientific abbreviation for iron (Fe). [Wm. Revell Phillips, "Metals of the Book of Mormon," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 9, Num. 2, 2000, FARMS, p. 40]

1 Nephi 17:9 **Whither Should I Go That I May Find Ore to Molten (Ore available):**

Potter and Wellington write that one of the criteria met by their proposed land of Bountiful was that "ore to molten" (1 Nephi 17:9) was available. Anciently copper was found in large quantities all over northern Oman. There is, however, no evidence of copper production in southern Oman, or more especially on the Salalah plain. Copper by itself, without tin is relatively useless for tools as it is too soft. It seems most likely then that Nephi used iron ore. It need only have been a small deposit as Nephi didn't need a lot of metal, just enough for tools. This could easily explain why it had been overlooked as a site for mining. (For a confirmation of iron ore deposits just a few miles from Salalah, see the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:9 by Ronald Harris, Eugene Clark, Jeffrey Keith, and Revell Phillips)

1 Nephi 17:9 **Tools to Construct the Ship:**

In regards to the "tools" mentioned by Nephi (1 Nephi 17:9), the Hiltons give an account of when they were taken to an ancient shipyard at Jiddah, by the Red Sea:

"We saw men carving planks by hand, shaping the keel, bow and ribs with adzes and hand-operated drills in the same fashion as their fathers and grandfathers had done. There was no electrical power nor any modern tools; . . . all we saw were hand-operated woodworking and ironworking tools, and they all looked handmade as well. We saw an adze, which is a sharpened iron blade used to hew lumber to specific shapes. We observed local shippers using this tool to carve huge logs to the desired shape for keels and ribs. We noted wooden and iron hammers and chisels used to skin bark off

tree limbs and notch the ends so the ribs would fit perpendicular to the keel. We observed axes used to rough out basic shapes from tree trunks and limbs before the adze finished each job to the exact shape desired . . ."

"All these tools described, plus others we saw (except the adze), are mentioned in the Old Testament long before Lehi's day and were probably known by him before he left Jerusalem. (ax, Deuteronomy 19:5 and 21:19; boring tool or awl, Exodus 21:6 and Deuteronomy 15:17; saw, Isaiah 10:15 and 1 Kings 7:9; plane, Isaiah 44:13; wedge, Isaiah 13:12; knives, Genesis 22:6-10; measuring line, 1 Kings 7:23; plummet, Amos 7:8; stylus, Isaiah 44:13; hammer, Psalms 74:6; chisel, Exodus 20:25)."

[Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 119-120]

1 Nephi 17:11 **Beasts:**

Nephi used the skins of beasts to make a bellows (1 Nephi 17:11). When loading the ship they took "meat from the wilderness" (1 Nephi 18:6). According to Potter and Wellington, perhaps there is a distinction between these two. It is possible that "beasts" were not wild. Dhofar is the only place in Arabia, apart from modern air-conditioned farms, where cattle occur.^{xlii} The earliest settlers of Dhofar brought their cattle with them:

The pride and sustenance of these people was their cattle; their progress through the peninsula is marked by images of cattle they pecked on blackened rocks. . . . By the time they reached the Dhofar Mountains (the only place in Arabia where a cattle culture still survives), a group of these wanderers had most likely achieved a tribal identity, an identity that would become the people of 'Ad.

It might also have been that it was easier for Nephi to have purchased leather available for sale rather than to search for beasts, kill them, skin them and then make a bellows. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 192]

1 Nephi 17:11 **I Nephi Did Make a Bellows Wherewith to Blow the Fire, of the Skins of Beasts:**

The Hiltons note their discovery of an old skin bellows in Salalah: "The bellows were hanging, blackened and neglected, on the wall of a blacksmith's shop. The blacksmith told us that they had been used by his father, his father's father, and so on back twenty-four generations (an estimated six hundred years). We had never seen a bellows like them before; they were not the pump type, like European bellows, but were more like an accordion. The neck of the tanned goatskin was tied around a wooden coupling tube that fit into an iron neck which would, naturally, have been placed under a fire. It reminded me of a clay pipe dated 1,000 B.C. that we had seen in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem . . . We were impressed that it

really worked well; and we mentally wondered how this bellows differed, if any, from Nephi's." [Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail, Part 2: The Journey," in The Ensign, October 1976, pp. 41-42]

1 Nephi 17:11 **I Nephi did make a bellows wherewith to blow the fire, of the skins of beasts**

(Illustration): This goatskin bellows is said to be hundreds of years old. When Nephi made "a bellows wherewith to blow the fire, of the skins of beasts" (1 Nephi 17:11), it may well have looked like this. [Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail, Part 2: The Journey," in The Ensign, October 1976, p. 37]

1 Nephi 17:11 **I Did Smite Two Stones Together That I Might Make Fire (Flint):**

Nephi tells us "I did smite two stones together that I might make fire" (1 Nephi 17:11). Potter and Wellington note that they stopped to photograph in two sites on the frankincense trail between Ubar and Ain Humran. In each case they found flint lying in abundance on the surface, the identification being confirmed by a geologist of an Arabian oil company. Flint deposits have also been identified at Andhur,^{xliii} the site built in the mountains east of Khor Rori about A.D. 60 by the Hadramautis.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 191-192]

1 Nephi 17:11 **And I did smite two stones together that I might make fire (Illustration):** Abundant deposits of jasper (a flint-like rock) are strewn along the upper reaches of the canyon of Wadi Sayq. If two of these rocks are struck repeatedly and sharply together, they will make sparks that can be used to ignite tinder and light a fire. [Scot and Maurine Proctor, Light from the Dust, p. 52]

1 Nephi 17:12 **For the Lord Had Not Hitherto Suffered That We Should Make Much Fire:**

Nephi's statement that "the Lord had not hitherto suffered that we should make much fire" (1 Nephi 17:12) might be culturally profound. According to Hugh Nibley's commentary regarding travel through the Saudi Arabian deserts, "I remember well" writes Bertram Thomas "taking part in a discussion upon the unhealthiness of campfires by night; we discontinued them forthwith in spite of the bitter cold." Major Cheesman's guide would not even let him light a tiny lamp in order to jot down star readings, and they never dared build a fire on the open plain where it "would attract the attention of a prowling raiding party over long distances and invite a night attack." Once in a while in a favorably sheltered depression "we dared to build a fire that could not be seen from a higher spot," writes Raswan. That is, fires are not absolutely out of the question, but rare and risky--not *much* fire was Lehi's rule. And fires in the daytime are almost as risky as at night: Palgrave tells how his party were forced, "lest the smoke from our fire should give notice to some distant rover, to content ourselves with dry dates," instead of cooked food.

[Hugh Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 63-64]

1 Nephi 17:12 The Lord Had Not Hitherto Suffered That We Should Make Much Fire As We Journeyed in the Wilderness:

Nephi notes that the Lord instructed the family not to make much fire (1 Nephi 17:12). Nibley studied the accounts of the early explorers of the Arabian sand, Philby, Thomas, Palgrave and others and concluded that the family did not have fires because of fear of being raided on by unfriendly Bedu tribes.^{xliii} The tradition of mountain raiding parties seems to have been a common one anciently and not just confined to modern explorers. The classical writers lumped these southern tribes together under the collective name "Scenitae" of which Pliny the Elder tells us, "A singular thing too, one half of these almost innumerable tribes live by the pursuits of commerce, the other half by rapine."^{xliv}

Fear of attack would certainly have been a good reason to avoid making fires, which can be seen for a great distance in the desert. The light travels so far in the clear desert air that it would have been possible to pinpoint the whereabouts on the trail of the family from upwards of 30 miles away.

However, even if they wanted to make fires there is precious little wood available on the southern edge of the Rub'al Khali. Moreover, the tree provided the only shade for travelers and fodder for camels and held a position amongst the tribes of almost mystical and supernatural character. According to Miller and Morris: "In the desert areas where trees are scarce, it was formerly forbidden amongst tribes to damage or cut this tree in any way whatsoever."^{xlv}

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 169-173]

Nephi 17:12 For the Lord Had Not Hitherto Suffered That We Should Make Much Fire:

In Tedlock's 1985 translation of the *Popol Vuh*, the history of the Quiche-Maya people of Guatemala, it says in reference to the ancestors of these people from Mesoamerica, "they walked in crowds when they arrived at Tulan (Bountiful), and *there was no fire*." [Popol Vuh, 1985, p. 172]

1 Nephi 17:12 For the Lord Had Not Hitherto Suffered That We Should Make Much Fire:

Nephi informs us that the group had not been allowed to "make much fire" while in the wilderness (1 Nephi 17:12). According to Terrance Szink, commentators have usually explained

that this was to avoid contact with unfriendly groups. However, an additional reason might have been to provide an opportunity for the Lord to prove to the travelers that he was the one who led them. The reader is advised to compare the passages in 1 Nephi 17:13-14 with Exodus 6:7-8.

The similarity of the texts is interesting, but their differences are enlightening as well. In Exodus the concept of a people chosen of God is emphasized, while in the Book of Mormon the idea of a people choosing God through obedience to his commandments is featured. Another point that seems to be emphasized in this retelling of the Exodus is the fact that "the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one." Perhaps Nephi had seen how the perversion of the "chosen people" idea had contributed to the downfall of his people in Jerusalem, and he may have worried that his brothers' belief that "the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people" (1 Nephi 17:22) was a sign that they were falling into the same trap. [Terrence L. Szink, "To a Land of Promise," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, pp. 66-67] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:13]

1 Nephi 17:12 **Thy Food Shall Become Sweet:**

The word "sweet" is a Hebraism meaning *pleasant* (compare Psalms 141:6, "they shall hear my words; for they are sweet"). [Zarahemla Research Foundation, Study Book of Mormon, p. 37]

1 Nephi 17:13 **I Will Be Your Light in the Wilderness; and I Will Prepare the Way before You:**

According to Terrence Szink, it appears that Nephi purposefully wrote his account in a way that would reflect the Exodus. Here one can compare 1 Nephi 17:13-14 ("I will be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you") with Exodus 6:7-8 ("The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light"). [Terrence L. Szink, "Nephi and the Exodus," in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, pp. 44-45] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:12]

1 Nephi 17:14 **After Ye Have Arrived [to] the Promised Land:**

John Tvedtnes explains that in Biblical Hebrew, the prepositions that are translated *in* and *to* in English are often interchangeable. This would not usually work in English. In at least two Book of Mormon passages, the 1830 edition used *to* and *in* in ways that reflect the Hebrew usage, although later editions were changed to reflect the normal English use (1 Nephi 7:12 and 1 Nephi 17:14). In 1 Nephi 17:14, the 1830 edition read "after ye have arrived *to* the promised

land." Both *in* and *to* are possible in biblical Hebrew, but *arrive to* is much more common. English prefers *arrive at*.

[John A. Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon" in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., p. 88]

1 Nephi 17:14 **After Ye Have Arrived in the Promised Land:**

When did Laman and Lemuel know about the destruction of Jerusalem? According to the chronological theory of Randall Spackman, 1 Nephi 17:14 may be understood more easily if its parallel structure is depicted. Chronologically speaking, the emphasis in this verse comes after the phrase "after ye have arrived" and reads, "ye shall know that I, the Lord, am God." It is one thing to experience and know firsthand of life's hardships and struggles (including the destruction of Jerusalem). It is quite another thing to feel the spirit of the Lord watching over you during these times and to know that He will be there for you in the future and that He cares. Here in Bountiful, Laman and Lemuel could well have known of the actual destruction of Jerusalem, and could even have acknowledged that Lehi might have "guessed right"; however, after having their families suffer so terribly before reaching Bountiful, it would be quite another giant step to convince them to make an almost unimaginable trip into the unknown world of the oceans. In these verses, this might be what Nephi is trying to do. [Randall Spackman, "Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology," F.A.R.M.S., pp. 12-14]

1 Nephi 17:15 **I, Nephi, . . . Did Exhort My Brethren to Faithfulness and Diligence:**

Nephi notes while in the land of Bountiful (Dhofar) that he "did strive to keep the commandments of the Lord, and [he] did exhort [his] brethren to faithfulness and diligence" (1 Nephi 17:15). One might wonder how far his example and his preachings extended. In other words, was there any missionary activity by Nephi or Lehi while in the land of Bountiful (Dhofar)? The Dhofar region, or "land Bountiful" as Nephi describes it, was inhabited by the people of 'Ad. The incense trade brought to this region wealth beyond compare. Anciently the Dhofar region was called Ophir, and Isaiah referred to its wealth in the highest superlatives (see Isaiah 23:12). Interestingly, he also made his comparison in the context of the ultimate destruction of the wicked and the triumph of righteousness. Considering this backdrop of Dhofar (Bountiful), wealth and prophetic exhortations which included warnings of destruction because of unrighteousness, the Book of Mormon student might find the following commentary by Potter and Wellington intriguing.

They write that one Arabian poet mused over what it might have been like "had I been a man of the race of "Ad and of Iram" (Fasad, which sits at the western edge of the land of the "Adites):

Roast flesh, the glow of fiery wine,

To speed on camel fleet and sure . . .
White women statue-like that trail
Rich robes of price with golden hem,
Wealth, easy lot, not dread of ill . . .^{xlvi}

Legend has it that the people of 'Ad were destroyed rapidly. According to the Koran this punishment was meted out as a divine retribution for their pride. The people of Iram, led by their worldly king Shadad, were destroyed because of their refusal to heed the message of the prophet Hud. One might ask, Who was Hud (pronounced "Hood"). Nicholar Clapp's answer to this question is enlightening:

And "Hud" comes from the root HWD: "to be Jewish." This linkage is clearly reflected in the Arabic of the Koran, where "Hud" is not just the name of a prophet but is a collective noun denoting the Jews. Was Hud Jewish? He could well have been . . . It is no stretch of the imagination to believe that a Jewish trader or even a rabbi could have made his way to Ubar and preached the religion of a single God.^{xlvii} (Italics added)

Potter and Wellington note that concerning the possibility of Jews traveling along the trail to Ubar, and thence to Dhofar, Clapp wrote:

It wouldn't have been at all unusual for a wandering Jew to visit Ubar, or even for a faction of the People of 'Ad to have subscribed to Jewish beliefs. Historically, there were several opportunities for Judaism to have penetrated Arabia. As early as the time of Solomon (950 B.C.), Jewish envoys and traders may have travelled the Incense Road. And in one tradition, following their exile to Babylon (587 and 538 B.C.) a contingent of Jews migrated to Dhofar (and Ubar?) and thence to southwestern Yemen, where they quietly survive to this day in the valley of the Wadi Habban.^{xlviii}

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 174, 176] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 18:8; 2 Nephi 23:12]

Note* Could the prophet Hud have had any connection to Nephi? And could the preaching have been concerning the Creator Jehovah, the Son of God coming to earth as the Messiah along with a prophecy of destruction if there was no repentance? Whatever the case, at least we find a confirmation of Nephi's story that "it was no stretch of the imagination to believe that a Jewish trader or even a rabbi could have made his way to Ubar and preached the religion." [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 17:20 It Would Have Been Better That They Had Died before They Came out of Jerusalem:

According to Terrence Szink, quite probably, Nephi, the author of this section, consciously wrote his account of the wilderness journey in a way that would remind the reader of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. . . . In comparing 1 Nephi 17:20 ("It would have been better that they had died before they came out of Jerusalem") with Numbers 14:2 ("Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!") the reader should notice that this desire was irrational because, in both cases, to return could have meant death. The children of Israel likely would have been punished for the death of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea, while Nephi, Laman, Lemuel, and Sam could well have been punished for the killing of Laban in Jerusalem. [Terrence L. Szink, "Nephi and the Exodus," in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, pp. 42-43]

1 Nephi 17:22 We Know That the People Who Were in the Land of Jerusalem Were a Righteous People:

According to Potter & Wellington, by the time Nephi's narrative commences, Lehi would appear to be a well-established businessman. Lehi was of the tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3), whose tribal lands were originally north of Jerusalem in what became the Northern Kingdom of Israel. These lands fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Lehi's ancestors must have left either before that time or when the Assyrian threat became obvious. This extensive migration of many northern Israelites led to dramatic growth in the size of the city of Jerusalem.^{xlix} This increase in population may have been the cause of an economic prosperity during the reign of the great reformer King Hezekiah, which was manifested in a building boom not only in the city of Jerusalem but also in the land round about.ⁱ New defenses were constructed throughout the land, and in Jerusalem a new broad city wall was completed, an underwater conduit was tunneled 1,770 feet from Gihon spring to Siloam pool, and two new residential and business quarters, the Mishneh (2 Kings 22:14) and Maktesh (Zephaniah 1:10), were built.

Hezekiah was succeeded by his son, Manasseh (692-638 B.C.) during whose long reign foreign influences swept into the kingdom. Witchcraft, divination and wizardry became common; the Assyrian god Ishtar was worshiped in the Temple itself and even child sacrifice was practiced in the valley of Hinnom. The prophets were persecuted and even the prophet Isaiah was killed.

After Hezekiah's death there was some political intrigue when his son, Amon, was murdered after only two years on the throne (638-637 B.C.) However, the revolutionary elements were soon suppressed and the eight year old Josiah (637-609 B.C.) was placed on the throne by the landed nobility. In 629 B.C., king Josiah began a purge, removing the pagan idols and repairing the Temple.ⁱⁱ In 619 B.C.ⁱⁱⁱ a hitherto unknown book was found in the Temple (2 Kings 22:8-10). It is generally considered that this "book of the law" was the Book of Deuteronomy. It was read to the king and he in turn had it read to the entire population, both young and old, and all entered into a covenant with the Lord (2 Kings 22 & 23). Laman and Lemuel were probably born around this time. Regarding this time Abram Sachar wrote:

To later chroniclers this brief period of Josiah was looked back upon as a golden age. The people had peace; the laws of the Mosaic faith were carefully practiced. The king was a model of piety and set a worthy example for his people.^{liii}

There followed a period of territorial expansion and economic prosperity under which Lehi's business presumably thrived. This was the environment that Laman and Lemuel were raised in. The king and people were presumed righteous. They had entered into a covenant with the Lord. The Mosaic law was apparently practiced scrupulously and the Lord was apparently blessing them with peace and prosperity. Therefore it is no surprise to find Laman and Lemuel stating:

And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses; wherefore, we know that they are a righteous people . . . (1 Nephi 17:22)

Laman and Lemuel were a product of their environment, they believed, as did the vast majority of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that they were righteous. Not all, however, held this same view. The prophet Jeremiah joined with Zephaniah and other prophets^{liv} and together they sent forth their voice of warning: "Woe unto us! for we are spoiled. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" (Jeremiah 4:13-14).

[George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), pp. 1-3]

Note* This brings up a good question: Would the Lord destroy a righteous people? I doubt it. Thus the covenant compliances of the people might have been outward and not inward. Perhaps they did not fully repent from their acts of divination and wizardry, child sacrifice and the killing of the prophets in the time of Manasseh. In other words, had prosperity, riches and peace allowed the people to display outward religious piety (in order to satisfy king Josiah) while secretly (through secret societies) they continued to foster the decadence that was a part of king Manasseh's era? Furthermore, had corrupt priests secretly suppressed and yet openly preached against the true concept of the Messiah and the doctrine of Christ? What exactly was it that merited the destruction of the Jews?

Potter and Wellington note:

According to the Chroniclers, Zedekiah did evil in the site of the Lord and humbled himself not before Jeremiah. During his reign men and women gave themselves to the worship of the Babylonian goddess of love (Ishtar), as well as the sun-god; and on the other hand the worship of the sacred animals of Egypt was carried on in an underground chamber. . . . Judah's vacillations between suzerains, with its attendant covenant breaking, had brought devastation to the kingdom in the past, and yet the people seemed oblivious to the fate that would await them should their king break the solemn oath he had made to King Nebuchadnezzar. (pp. 5-6)

Are we dealing not just with the breaking of an oath to an earthly king, but the breaking of a solemn covenant oath to a heavenly king, the Lord Jehovah-Jesus Christ? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 1:19-20; 2:1; 2:13] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:35 on the definition of "righteous"]

1 Nephi 17:22 We Know That the People Who Were in the Land of Jerusalem Were a Righteous People:

It is interesting to note that Laman and Lemuel insisted that the Jews at Jerusalem were a "righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord" (1 Nephi 17:22), while prophets administering to the same people were appalled at the depth of their wickedness. A hundred years earlier, such prophets as Hosea, Isaiah, and Amos had rebuked Israel and called them to repentance. Amos, particularly, chastised them for transgression: "They have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments." (Amos 2:4) He was particularly incensed at their immorality, idolatry, and abuse of the poor. (Amos 2:6-8)

The chastisements of the Lord by the hand of Assyria did not bring the people to true repentance, and so one hundred years later the prophets Jeremiah and Lehi were again warning the people against the same grievous sins. As before, the people would not repent; rather, they sought to stop the mouths of the prophets by banishment or murder. Again came the chastening of the Lord. This time the agent was Babylonia, whose armies left Judah a burning ruin.

So spiritually hardened had Judah become that many were still unrepentant, even after

the tremendous calamity of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest and their own exile. Rather than sorrowing for their own sins, some of the survivors responded to their punishment with the hope that Babylon would be destroyed and her little ones dashed upon the rocks. (See Psalm 137, especially vs. 9, which seems to have been written after this great tragedy.) Noting this attitude, one author had commented thus:

There is in this response to the Exile no sense of guilt for the sins of Israel and Judah; no awareness of the message of divine justice and judgment which had been on the lips of Amos and Hosea, of Isaiah and Micah. The righteousness which undergirded such a response is a self-righteousness; with bitterness compounded of a false sense of innocence, this response ignored the question of "Why the Exile?" It merely poured venom upon the Babylonians. But there were others among the exiles who were asking "Why?" Why had this awesome and far-reaching disaster fallen upon God's own people? Struggling with this profound question, the prophets, at least, came to the conclusion that the Exile was just punishment demanded by God's justice. No one, not even the Chosen People themselves, must presume upon God and upon the covenant relationship.^{iv}

[Church Educational System, Book of Mormon Student Manual, Religion 121-122, 1981, pp. 44-45]

1 Nephi 17:22-29 Now ye know . . . Now Ye Know . . . and Ye Know . . . But Ye Know . . . And Ye Also Know . . . Yea, and Ye Also Know:

Terrance Szink notes that as Nephi made tools and was about to begin building the boat as the Lord had commanded him, his brothers, as was their habit, began to murmur. They were skeptical of Nephi's ability to build a seaworthy craft and of his claim that he had been instructed of the Lord. While the first doubt may have been justifiable, the second demonstrates their spiritual immaturity and poor memories. . . . Nephi responded by recounting the history of the Exodus, touching on many of the ideas he would later use in writing the story of his own wilderness journey. (See the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:26) This recapitulation of the Exodus may have been a memorized recitation that was part of the learning of his father (1 Nephi 1:1) mentioned by Nephi at the start of his record. (See S. Kent Brown, "Approaches to the Pentateuch," *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 3: *The Old Testament*, 2:18.) Perhaps Laman and Lemuel had also learned such recitations as children, for as Nephi talked to them, he at first used the phrases "now ye know," "and ye know," "but ye know," "and ye also know," and "yea, and ye also know" when recounting the basics of the story. [Terrence L. Szink, "To a Land of Promise," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, pp. 66-67]

1 Nephi 17:26 Now Ye Know That Moses:

According to Noel Reynolds, in Lehi's final words to his youngest son Joseph, he depends heavily on the writings of two ancient prophets in Egypt--Joseph and Moses (see 2 Nephi 3:4-25). The text invites us to see Nephi also as a parallel figure to these two great leaders and deliverers of Israel. They both shared Nephi's problem--having to justify their unexpected callings to authority over their brethren. Concerning the parallels to Moses, Reynolds notes that Nephi's description of the death of Laban is preceded by a passage where Nephi exhorts his brothers to follow him without fear of Laban or his soldiers: "Let us be strong like unto Moses, for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither, and our fathers came through, out of captivity, on dry ground, and the armies of Pharaoh did follow and were drowned in the waters of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 4:1-3). Not only does Nephi lead them successfully in that venture, but from then on he is their leader through the wilderness, over the water, to the promised land. [Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," *FARMS*, 1987, pp. 32-33]

According to Reynolds, the similarity between the ancient exodus of Israel from Egypt and the experience of Lehi and his people was explicitly recognized by Nephi at the time and by Limhi and Alma in later centuries (see 1 Nephi 17:19-44; Mosiah 7:19-20; Alma 36:28-9). Thus both Lehi and Nephi can be seen as Moses figures. This comparison has been developed by previous writers (see S. Kent Brown, "The Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 30/3 (1990): 111-26; George S. Tate, "The Typology of the Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," in *Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience*, ed. Neal E. Lambert (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1981), 245-62). [Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephite Kingship Reconsidered," in Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World, *FARMS*, pp. 171-177]

1 Nephi 17:26 **Ye know that by his [Moses'] word the waters of the Red Sea were divided (Illustration):** Moses Parting the Red Sea. By the power of God, Moses divided the Red Sea and saved the children of Israel. Artist: Robert T. Barrett. [Thomas R. Valletta ed., The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families, 1999, p. 52]

1 Nephi 17:26 **Now Ye Know That Moses Was Commanded of the Lord to Do That Great Work:**

According to Noel Reynolds, the similarity between the ancient exodus of Israel from Egypt and the experience of Lehi and his people was explicitly recognized by Nephi at the time and by Limhi and Alma in later centuries (see 1 Nephi 17:19-44; Mosiah 7:19-20; Alma 36:28-9). Thus both Lehi and Nephi can be seen as Moses figures. While there are enormous differences in the experiences of Moses and Nephi, the mature Nephi chose to tell his story in such a way that more than twenty explicit and implicit points of comparison stand out.

1. Both Moses and Nephi fled into the wilderness after killing a public figure who is portrayed as repressive or even criminal. Their flight prevented their being detected (see Exodus 2:11-15; 1 Nephi 4:18, 38)

2. Moses was "caught up into an exceedingly high mountain" to receive comprehensive revelation that would both ground and guide his prophetic career (Moses 1:1). Nephi, after trying to know the things his father had seen, was also "caught away . . . into an exceedingly high mountain" where he received this same kind of fundamental revelation (1 Nephi 11:1).

3. As a result of these great visions, both Moses and Nephi prophesied a future scattering and destruction of their own people because of wickedness. Both also prophesied a latter-day restoration of their people (see Deuteronomy 4:26-31; 1 Nephi 12:19-23; 13:30; 34-42).

4. Moses spoke with and even saw God face-to-face (see Exodus 33:11); Numbers 12:8; Moses 1:2, 31). The "Spirit of the Lord" that caught Nephi up into the mountain and narrated the first part of his vision may well have been Jesus Christ. This identification is suggested when the guide vanishes without explanation--at the very point in the narrative when Jesus Christ appears in the vision--and is replaced for the remainder by an unnamed angel as narrator . . . Moreover, Nephi notes that Isaiah had seen the Redeemer, "even as I have seen him" (2 Nephi 11:2).

5. It should be noted of both Moses and Nephi that their respective calls to be God's prophet and the leaders of his people were unexpected in terms of high birth, office, or other social or natural distinction. Moses was a refugee from Egypt and a shepherd in Midian. Nephi was the fourth son of Lehi and a refugee from Jerusalem (see Moses 1:6, 26; Exodus 3:1; 1 Nephi 2:19-24).

6. In their founding visions, both Moses and Nephi were shown the future peoples of the world and the Lord's purposes for them (see Moses 1:8, 27-30; 1 Nephi; 11-14).

7. Both Moses and Nephi were major figures in leading people out of wicked places (see Exodus 3:10; 12:51; 1 Nephi 2, 7, 17:43).

8. Moses invoked the power of God to lead his people miraculously across the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:13-22). Similarly, with divine direction and aid, Nephi led his people in building a ship and crossing the sea, during which crossing his prayers persuaded the Lord to end the typhoon and carry them safely on their journey (see 1 Nephi 17-18). The language Nephi used to describe this incident evokes Moses' parting of the Red Sea: "There arose a great storm, yea, a great and terrible tempest, and we were driven back upon the waters for the space of three days" (1 Nephi 18:13). Moses relates, "And all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind" (Exodus 14:21 NIV).

9. Both Moses and Nephi led their people safely to a promised land (see Numbers 13; Deuteronomy 1; 1 Nephi 19:25). The difference is that Moses was not permitted to enter.

10. The wilderness travels of Moses and Nephi and their peoples also are described with several general and specific similarities. For example, both entailed years of difficult desert conditions, and in both cases the people suffered and murmured against their leaders, thinking fondly of the more comfortable lives they had left behind. The children of Israel lamented, "It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness" (Exodus 14:12), whereas, Laman and Lemuel proclaimed that "it would have been better that [the women] had died before they came out of Jerusalem than to have suffered these afflictions (1 Nephi 17:20).^{lvi}

11. These murmurings became severe on several occasions in both exodus stories, to the point that there was an apparent attempt on Moses' life at least once, and on Nephi's life several times (see Exodus 17:4; Numbers 14:5-10; 1 Nephi 7:16; 16:37; 17:48; 2 Nephi 5:3).

12. The stories of murmuring often end with some form of reconciliation taking place between God and those involved after his power is manifested in a divine act (see, for example, Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 14-16; 20:1-13; 21:5-9; 23; 1 Nephi 3:28-31; 7:6-22; 17-18)

13. Both Moses and Nephi were accused of usurping leadership and being driven by thoughts of self-promoted grandeur. The rebels Korah, Dathan, and Abiram asserted the holiness of the congregation of Israel and asked Moses and Aaron, "Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" and accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to make himself "altogether a prince over" them (Numbers 16:3, 13). When attempting to stop a fight between two Hebrews, "[Moses] asked the one in the wrong, 'Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?' The man said, 'Who made you *ruler and judge* over us?'" (Exodus 2:13-14 NIV; emphasis added). Like the Israelites who challenged the rulership of Moses, Laman and Lemuel accused Nephi of thinking to make himself "a king and a ruler" over them (1 Nephi 16:38).

14. In each account the Lord provided divine means for guiding the people through the wilderness. For ancient Israel this was in the form of a pillar of light by night and a cloud by day (see Exodus 13:21-2). For Lehi's party it was the Liahona (see 1 Nephi 16:10, 16, 28-31; 18:21-2).

15. Both accounts tell how starvation was averted when food was provided through divine intervention (see Exodus 16:2-16; 1 Nephi 16:30).

16. In the Exodus account, when Moses came down from Sinai with the tablets, "his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him" (Exodus 34:29-30 NIV). Similarly, when Nephi was threatened by his brothers, he was "filled with the power of God" and warned them not to touch him lest God smite them and they "wither even as a dried reed" (1 Nephi 17:48), whereupon they were afraid to touch Nephi "for the space of many days" (verse 52). This incident was resolved when the Lord told Nephi to touch his brothers that he might shock them. Being physically shaken by this touch, they acknowledged that it was "the power of the

Lord" that had shaken them (see verses 53-5).

17. Moses and Nephi furnished their people with founding texts that provided religious and prophetic guidance for centuries. The five books of Moses have their parallel in Nephi's large and small plates. These texts established the record-keeping traditions that enabled the people to benefit from centuries of recorded prophecy and religious history.

18. Moses and Nephi both built sanctuaries. The tabernacle of Moses provided the basic model for Solomon's Temple, which in turn was the model for Nephi's temple in the Western hemisphere (see Exodus 25-7, 36-9; 2 Nephi 5:16).

19. Moses consecrated his brother Aaron and Aaron's sons to be priests with authority to administer religious matters for the Israelites (see Exodus 28-9; Leviticus 8; Numbers 8). Likewise, Nephi consecrated his brothers Jacob and Joseph to "be priests and teachers over the land of [his] people" (2 Nephi 5:26).

20. Moses gave Israel the Ten Commandments and the law of Moses as given to him by God on Sinai (see Exodus 20:2-17). Similarly, Nephi provided his people with a new law that was given to him by God. Nephi received the gospel or "doctrine of Christ" (2 Nephi 31:2) from the Father and the Son as they spoke to him on the mountain and explained that repentance, the baptisms of water and of fire and the Holy Ghost, faith in Jesus Christ, and enduring to the end are prerequisites to receiving eternal life (see 2 Nephi 31).^{lvii} Furthermore, Nephi explicitly taught his people that this new law superseded the law of Moses, which they would need to observe only until Christ came into mortality (see 2 Nephi 5:10; 11:4; 25:24-7).^{lviii}

21. Just as Moses "laid his hands" on Joshua to be his successor as leader of Israel (Deuteronomy 34:9), so Nephi anointed a man to be king and ruler after him (see Jacob 1:9).

[Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephite Kingship Reconsidered," in Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson, FARMS, 1998, pp. 172-177]

1 Nephi and the Exodus

1 Nephi	Exodus	Motifs Common to Both Accounts
1:6	3:2	fire present at calling of Lehi and Moses
1:6; 16:16	13:21	Lord's guidance
1:20	1:11–16	oppressive conditions
2:2	3:7–18	Lord's command to depart
2:6–7	3:18; 15:22; 20:25	sacrifice to the Lord after three days' journey
2:11–12; 5:2; 16:20	15:24; 16:2–3	murmuring against the Lord
2:15; 3:9; 10:16	18:7; 33:8	dwelling in tents
2:20	3:17	promise of a new land of inheritance
4:12	17:8–13	victory over enemies
7:6–7	14:12	rebellious desire to return
9:1–4	17:14	a record of the journey
11:1–14:27	19:19–31:18	instruction from God on a high mountain
15:6–16:5	19:3–25	prophet who teaches with divine instruction
16:10	7:9–21; 8:16; 14:16	miraculous objects (Liahona, rod)
16:34	Josh. 24:32	a burial
17:2–5	16:11–18	Lord's provision of ready-to-eat food
17:4	16:35; Deut. 8:2	prolonged wandering in the wilderness
17:6	16:3; 17:1	afflictions in the wilderness
17:26; 18:8–23	14:21–22, 29; 15:19	crossing a sea
17:52	34:30	a transfiguration
17:55	14:31; 20:12	acknowledgment of the Lord's power
18:7	18:3–4	two sons born in the wilderness
18:8	14:21	Lord's providential wind
18:9	32:18–19	wicked revelry
18:20	32:10	death warnings from the Lord
18:23–25	Josh. 11:23	inheritance of a promised land
19:11	20:18	thunderings and lightnings at God's presence

1 Nephi 17:26 **Now ye know that Moses . . . (Illustration):** Chart: "1 Nephi and the Exodus." Lehi's group saw themselves as reenacting the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. [John W. & J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching*, F.A.R.M.S., Chart #94] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 4:2]

1 Nephi 17:35 **He That Is Righteous Is Favored of God:**

Hugh Nibley asks a pertinent question: "Who is righteous in the Book of Mormon?" There's a very simple definition of righteousness in the Book of Mormon, as in the book of Ezekiel. One is righteous because he is repentant, and a person who is not repenting is a person who is not righteous. That's all there is to it, because we're all wicked and we all need to repent all the time. "Say nothing but repentance to this generation (D&C 6:9)." The first word of the Lord to the Nephites was, "This is my doctrine . . . and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere to repent . . ." (3 Nephi 11:32). You have to do that. And as Ezekiel tells us, if a person has been righteous all his life but he's not repenting any more, he's wicked (see Ezekiel 18:20-32). Of course, he may have been wicked all of his life, and if he's repenting now, he's righteous. It makes no difference. So, always repent, always keep repenting. "But behold, all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people shall dwell safely in the Holy One of Israel if it so be that they will repent" (1 Nephi 22:28). The phrase "all nations" occurs ninety times in the Book of Mormon. You see, the gospel isn't just for one special tribe, or a chosen people, or church, or anything like that. . . . So the Church is not provincial and it's not ethnic. [Hugh W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 1, p. 228, 242] [See the section on the doctrine of Christ in The Covenant Story, Vol. 2, 2 Nephi 31-33; see the commentary on 3 Nephi 11:32]

1 Nephi 17:36-38 **(The Concept of a Promised Land):**

In teaching his disobedient brethren, Nephi rehearsed the concept that God provides his children "precious" or promised lands which remain protected as long the people are obedient: Behold, the Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited; and he hath created his children that they should possess it. And he raiseth up a righteous nation, and destroyeth the nations of the wicked. And he leadeth away the righteous into precious lands, and the wicked he destroyeth, and curseth their land unto them for their sakes. (1 Nephi 17:36-38)

The Book of Mormon (as well as other scripture) is replete with examples of these promised lands because they are a type of the ultimate promised land, the Celestial Kingdom. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 1:5; Ether 2:8]

1 Nephi 17:41 **[The Lord] Did Straiten Them:**

According to McConkie and Millet, to "straiten" (1 Nephi 17:41) is to make narrow. The Lord, by the "rod of [his] mouth" (D&C 19:15), straitens Israel in order that they might walk in that path which is straight and narrow. [Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 136]

1 Nephi 17:41 **He Sent Fiery Flying Serpents among Them:**

An article by Wallace E. Hunt Jr. shows that the account of Moses' brazen serpent as taught by the Nephite leaders ("He sent fiery flying serpents among them" -- 1 Nephi 17:41) presents parallels to the symbol and name of the Mesoamerican god Quetzalcoatl. It further explains that the term *flying*, used in the Nephite but not in the biblical account of the fiery serpent, has parallels in the Old and New Worlds. (For a more complete discussion, see the commentary on Helaman 8:14-15). [Wallace E. Hunt Jr., "Moses' Brazen Serpent as It Relates to Serpent Worship in Mesoamerica," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Fall 1993, p. 121]

1 Nephi 17:43 **A Few Only, Who Shall Be Led Away into Captivity:**

[See the commentary on 1 Nephi 1:13]

1 Nephi 17:48 **They . . . were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea (Illustration):** Significantly, the waters along the beach here (in Wadi Sayq) are only shallow for a few short feet and then they drop rapidly to great depths, an appropriate place to launch a ship. . . Cliffs line the ocean front in this area. [Scot and Maurine Proctor, Light from the Dust, p. 54]

1 Nephi 17:48-52 **(Chiastic Parallelism Structure):**

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the inverted parallel structure of parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

An "inverted parallelism takes the form A-B-C/C-B-A. (p. xxxii)

[In my view the chiastic structure can be the most forceful of parallels because all the lines of thought are focused on the center line, making that statement very significant.

A fine example of this Inverted Parallelism (Chiastic Structure) is found in 1 Nephi 17:48-52:

48 And now it came to pass that when I had spoken these words,
they were angry with me,
and were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea;

(A) and as they came forth to lay their hands upon me

(B) I spake unto them, saying:

(C) In the name of **The Almighty God**, I command you that ye touch me not,
for I am filled with **the power of God**, even unto the consuming of my flesh;

and whoso shall lay his hands upon me shall wither even as a dried reed;
and he shall be as naught before **the power of God**, for **God** shall smite him.

49 And it came to pass that I, Nephi said unto them

(D) that they should murmur no more against their father;
neither should they withhold their labor from me,
for **God had commanded me** that I should build a ship.

50 And I said unto them:

(E) **If God had commanded me** to do all things I could do them.

(D) If **he should command me** that I should say unto this water, be thou earth,
it should be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done.

51 And now,

(C) if **the Lord** has such great **power**, and has wrought so many miracles among the
children of men, how is it that he cannot instruct me, that I should build a ship?

52 And it came to pass that

(B) I, Nephi, said many things unto my brethren,

(A) insomuch that they were confounded and could not contend against me;
neither durst they lay their hands upon me nor touch me with their fingers,
even for the space of many days.

[Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns,
F.A.R.M.S., pp. 34-35]

1 Nephi 17:48 **They Were Desirous to Throw Me into the Depths of the Sea (Potter Theory):**

Nephi writes of the end-results of his quarrel with his brethren over his intention to build a ship that "they were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea" (1 Nephi 17:48). Potter and Wellington write of this incident that as one can clearly see, this was no boisterous romp between loving siblings, this was not a prank to get their little brother wet, this was an attempt on Nephi's life. It should be obvious then that merely throwing Nephi into the sea from the shore would not have produced the desired result, he would just swim away a short distance onto the beach and walk off. To accomplish their intended result they would have to throw him from a great height into deep water. There could be no beach for Nephi to swim up onto; he would have to be crushed by the waves upon the rocks, or dragged out to sea by the current. To be thrown into the depths of the sea he would have to be thrown from a vertical or overhanging cliff so that he would go directly into deep water. Additionally, to cast Nephi into deep water or "depths of the sea," he and his brothers would have had to have been at a place jutting far out from the shoreline.

Nephi's description requires tall, vertical or overhanging cliffs with deep water directly

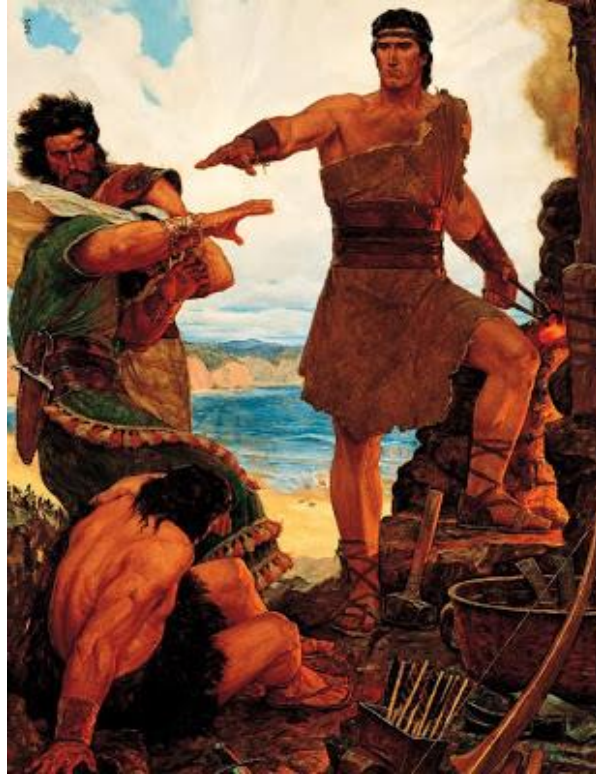
below them. Possibly a strong swell to crush Nephi and nowhere to swim to for safety. The shoreline of Dhofar is made up of sand beaches, and in a few places, cliffs. There are vertical and overhanging cliffs between Khor Rori and Taqah. While there are cliffs at Reysut to the west of Salalah they are not vertical. What truly separates the cliffs at Khor Rori from those of any other spot along the Dhofari shoreline is that they are an odd set of two giant rock promontories that reach into the sea some 150 yards from the natural shoreline. (see illustration) The depth of the water below them is approximately 25-35 feet deep. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), pp. 253-254]

Note* Is there an allusion here to what the Pharaoh planned to do with Moses and the children of Israel? That is, did he plan on throwing their bodies into the sea? Was the justice of what actually happened (the drowning of the Egyptian army) a reversal of what the Pharaoh had decreed for the children of Israel? (see Exodus 14:9-13, 28-30) [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Additional Note* If Nephi's brethren didn't want to work on his ship, and if they represented the older and more numerous part of the family, then why didn't they just overrule him or simply not work? What was it about Nephi's enterprise that so infuriated them? Could it be their group was larger than just the family and that Nephi was intending to use not only their manpower, but trading their money, their camels, their goods in order to barter for the supplies to build a ship rather than for the immediate welfare of the group? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 17:48 **They . . . were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea (Illustration-Potter).**

Richard sits atop one of the vertical cliffs between Taqah and Khor Rori looking down at the deep water below. This may well be the place that Laman and Lemuel attempted to throw Nephi into the depths of the sea. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 261]



1 Nephi 17:48 **Touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God (Illustration):** Nephi Subdues His Rebellious Brothers. [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Gospel Art, #303]



1 Nephi 17:48 **Touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God (Illustration):** Nephi Rebukes His Brothers. Nephi shocks his brothers with the power of God. Artist: Gary Kapp. [Thomas R. Valletta ed., The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families, 1999, p. 55]

Note* The word in the original manuscript was "shake" instead of "shock."

1 Nephi 17:48 Whoso Shall Lay His Hands upon Me Shall Whither Even As a Dried Reed:

According to Potter and Wellington, Nephi's words of warning to his brothers are fascinating. He has spent the previous 25 verses comparing his brothers with the children of Israel led to the wilderness by Moses. Yet now he changes the analogy to comparing them to a reed that will wither. Laman and Lemuel hadn't seen a reed for 8 years while crossing the desert. Why would Nephi suddenly choose a reed? The answer perhaps is part geographical. In Khor Rhori, from the spot of the cliff where they were standing, less than 100 yards below them the banks of the khor are lined with reeds. As Nephi spoke those words, in the lull between the booming of the waves, the sound of the wind rustling through the reed beds would have been all too obvious. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 270]

Note* Another reason for Nephi's use of the term "reed" in warning his brothers might be that the term is often mentioned in the scriptures as a symbolic scepter of rulership and power, the exact thing that Laman & Lemuel were battling Nephi over. Isaiah says the following: "Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so [is] Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him" (Isaiah 36:6; see also 2 Kings 18:21). It is interesting that the soldiers mockingly used a reed for Christ's scepter: "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put [it] upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! (Matthew 27:29) [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 17:50 If . . . [and] . . . :

[See the commentary on Helaman 12:13-21]

1 Nephi 17:50 If He Should Command Me That I Should Say unto This Water, Be Thou Earth, It Should Be Earth:

Terrence Szink explains that Nephi proclaimed the power that the Lord had given him ("If He should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth" -- 1 Nephi 17:50) in a way that brings to mind Moses' power over the Red Sea (And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea -- Exodus 14:16). At the conclusion of this sermon, Nephi reported that his brothers were so humbled by his speech and fearful that they "durst [not] . . . lay their hands upon [him] nor touch [him] with their fingers, even for the space of many days" (1 Nephi 17:52). This situation recalls the return of Moses from speaking to the Lord on Sinai: "When Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him" (Exodus 34:29-30). [Terrence L. Szink, "Nephi and the Exodus," in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, pp. 47-48]

1 Nephi 17:52 (My Brethren) Were Confounded and Could Not Contend Against Me:

According to an article by Clate Mask, in the Maya-Cakchiquel document *Annals of the Xahils* (Guatemalan), the Mayan ancestor was referred to by the others as "our younger brother":

"Then we arrived at the border of the sea. All the warriors of the tribes met together at the border of the sea. Then the hearts of many were consumed in anguish. We can't cross, and isn't it said that we have to cross the sea, said all the warriors of the seven tribes. Who will tell us how to cross the sea? Oh, *our younger brother*, you are our hope, they all said. . . . Then they all said, Have pity on us, oh *our younger brother*, because we are spread along the seashore and can't see [the promised] hills and plains. As soon as we went to sleep, we were defeated, we the *two firstborn sons*, we the hill tops, we the heads, we the first warriors of the seven tribes, oh *my younger brother*, . . . don't kill us."

[Clate Mask, "And They Called the Place Tulan," p. 4]

1 Nephi 17:52 They Durst Not Do This [Lay Their Hands upon Me] . . . So Powerful Was the Spirit of God:

According to Mark Johnson, in the past decade, there have been many reports on what has been called the "Exodus Pattern" in the Book of Mormon. [See the commentary and chart on 1 Nephi 17:26] To the numerous comparisons that have been made I would like to add another. It deals with death in the transfiguration of Nephi as described in 1 Nephi 17:52: And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said many things unto *my brethren*, insomuch that they were confounded and could not contend against me; neither durst *they lay their hands upon me nor touch me with their fingers*, even for the space of many days. Now they durst not do this lest they should wither before me, *so powerful was the Spirit of God*; and thus it had wrought upon them.

Bruce R. McConkie defines transfiguration as "a special change in appearance and nature which is wrought upon a person . . . by the power of God."^{ix} Let us examine the transfiguration of Moses:
And when *Aaron* and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the *skin of his face shone*; and *they were afraid to come nigh him*. (Exodus 34:30; emphasis added)

It is interesting to note that in both instances the literal brothers of Moses and Nephi witnessed the transfiguration. In both accounts, the effect of the power of God upon mortal flesh is detailed. Because Nephi was indeed transfigured by the Lord, he was able to better understand Moses's situation. In fact, Nephi gives a powerful sermon on the symbolism of the

exodus of the children of Israel just prior to his state of transfiguration. [Mark J. Johnson, "The Exodus of Lehi Revisited," in Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., 1999, pp. 56-57; see also Journal of Book of Mormon Studies 3/2 (1994); pp. 123-26] [See the commentary and chart on 1 Nephi 17:26]

NOTES

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- i. F. Williams III 1988. "Did Lehi Land in Chile?" *FARMS paper WIL-88*, 2.
 - ii. Ibid, 16.
 - iii. Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 95.
 - iv. Aston & Aston 1989, "The Search for Nahom," *FARMS paper AST-89c*, 1-16.
 - v. Ibid, 25-25.
 - vi. Aston & Aston 1991, "We Called the Place Bountiful," *FARMS paper AST-91b*.
 - vii. Stark, 315.
 - viii. Jurius Zarins. *Archaeology* Vol. 50 Number 3, May-June 1997. "Atlantis of the Sands." www.archaeology.org/9705/abstracts/ubar.html
 - ix. "Know that in the beginning there were twelve male children of 'Ad son of Uz son of Aram son of Shem son of Noah, and God gave them power He gave to no one else." *The Tales of the Prophets of al Kisa'i*, trans. W. M. Thackston, Jr. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 109.
 - x. Clapp, 202.
 - xi. Reported by High Davies & R. Barry O'Brien, *The Daily Telegraph*, Feb 1992.
 - xii. John Beasant, "History Yields Its Secrets in Ubar," *Gulf News*, Thursday March 5th 1992, p. 12.
 - xiii. Clapp, 205.
 - xiv. Charles M. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (New York: Random House, 1936), pp. 189-90, 266.
 - xv. Doughty, *Travels*, 257, 262.
 - xvi. K. Roubos, "Biblical Institutions," in *The World of the Bible*, ed. A. S. Van Der Woude (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), 1:350.
 - xvii. Doughty, *Travels*, 262.
 - xviii. Nigel Groom (2), 213.
 - xix. Brown (1), 205.
 - xx. Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, *And We Called the Place Bountiful: The End of Lehi's Arabian Journey* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1991):1-18.
 - xxi. *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, article "Arabia," vol. 13:815.

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- xxii. William J. Hamblin, "Pre-Islamic Arabian Prophets," *Mormons and Muslims*, Spiritual Foundations and Modern Manifestations, Edited by Spencer J. Palmer (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1983), 95.
- xxiii. Donald Hawley (2), *Oman and Its Renaissance* (London: Stacey International, 1977, 153-60), 120.
- xxiv. Hamblin, 52. (See Yaqut, vol. 1, 155.)
- xxv. Miles, 515.
- xxvi. John Weelan, *Oman* (London: Middle East Economic Digest), 8.
- xxvii. Tosi, 101.
- xxviii. Aston, 54.
- xxix. Pliny, XII 63-65 as recorded in Doe, 19.
- xxx. Clapp, 127.
- xxxi. Diary of Brigham Young, 290-291.
- xxxii. Michael Crichton, *Eaters of the Dead, The Manuscript of Ibn Fadlan Relating His Experiences with the Northmen in A.D. 922*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), p. 22.
- xxxiii. Hilton (1), 139-147.
- xxxiv. K. Arita and M. Nishiie, "Report on the Geological Survey of the Sultanate of Oman" MS on file, Tokyo, Japan, International Cooperation Agency and Metal Mining Agency of Japan.
- xxxv. See James D. Muhly, "Mining and Metalwork in Ancient Western Asia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Macmillan, 1995).
- xxxvi. See Carl G. Johnson and William R. Weeks, *Metallurgy* (Chicago: American Technical Society, 1977).
- xxxvii. See Ibid.; and J. Gordon Parr, *Man, Metals, and Modern Magic* (Cleveland: American Society for Metals, 1958).
- xxxviii. See Johnson and Weeks, *Metallurgy*; and Muhly, "Mining and Metalwork."
- xxxix. See Johnson and Weeks, *Metallurgy*; and Parr, *Man, Metals, and Modern Magic*.
- xl. See James W. Evans and Lutgard C. DeJonghe, *The Production of Inorganic Materials* (New York: McMillan, 1991).
- xli. Ibid., 221-222.
- xlii. Clapp, 127.
- xliii. Hugh Nibley, *The Improvement Era*, May 1950, 382.

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- xliv. Bostock & Riley, trans. *The Natural History of Pliny*, vol. 2 (London: Henery G. Bohn, 1885), 252.
- xl. Miller & Morris, 176.
- xlvi. Lyall, 64.
- xlvii. Clapp, 89.
- xlviii. Clapp, 254.
- xlix. David Rolph and Jo Ann H. Seely, *Lehi and Jeremiah*, *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, number 2 (Provo, Utah: F.A.R.M.S., 1999), 27.
- i. Benjamin Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord*, (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1975), 56.
- ii. William Fox Albright, *The Jews: Their History*, ed. Louis Finkelstein, (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 46.
- iii. Abram Leon Sachar, *A History of the Jews*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), 68.
- liii. H. H. Ben-Sasson, editor, *A History of the Jewish People*, Ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), 151.
- liv. Other prophets from this era include: Habakkuk, Nahum, Zephanaiah, Urijah son of Shemaiah (see Jeremiah 26:20), the prophetess Huldah, and later in exile Ezekiel and Daniel.
- lv. Harry Thomas Frank, *Discovering the Biblical World*, p. 133.
- lvi. Compare Exodus 2:14; 5:21; 5:11; 16:3; Numbers 14:2; 20:3; 1 Nephi 3:28; 7:6, 16-19; 16:20, 38; 17:20-2.
- lvii. Reynolds interprets the events detailed in 2 Nephi 31 as an expanded version of the vision Nephi reported earlier in 1 Nephi 11. See his "The gospel of Jesus Christ as Taught by the Nephite Prophets," *BYU Studies* 31 (summer 1991): 34.
- lviii. While it has been convincingly demonstrated that the Nephite lists of crimes (compare Mosiah 2:13 and Alma 23:3) reflect the law of ancient Israel, it is not really clear what Nephi means by "the law of Moses." He could mean more or less than students of the Old Testament might expect (see, for example, John W. Welch, "Series of Laws in the Book of Mormon" [FARMS, 1987]).
- lix. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994), 803.