

Geographical Theory Maps for A Covenant Record Volume 1
(Maps.Vol 1.Expanded)

Note* The reader will find below a proposed list of titles I have made for maps that would satisfactorily illustrate Book of Mormon geographical settings. Each title represents a particular geographical movement along with a correlated time frame for that movement. As much as possible, these maps should clearly illustrate both internal and external criteria. (See my paper, "Evaluating Book of Mormon Geography"). For chronological dating and criteria, see my "Evaluating Book of Mormon Chronology" in the Appendix.

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Geographical Map Headings

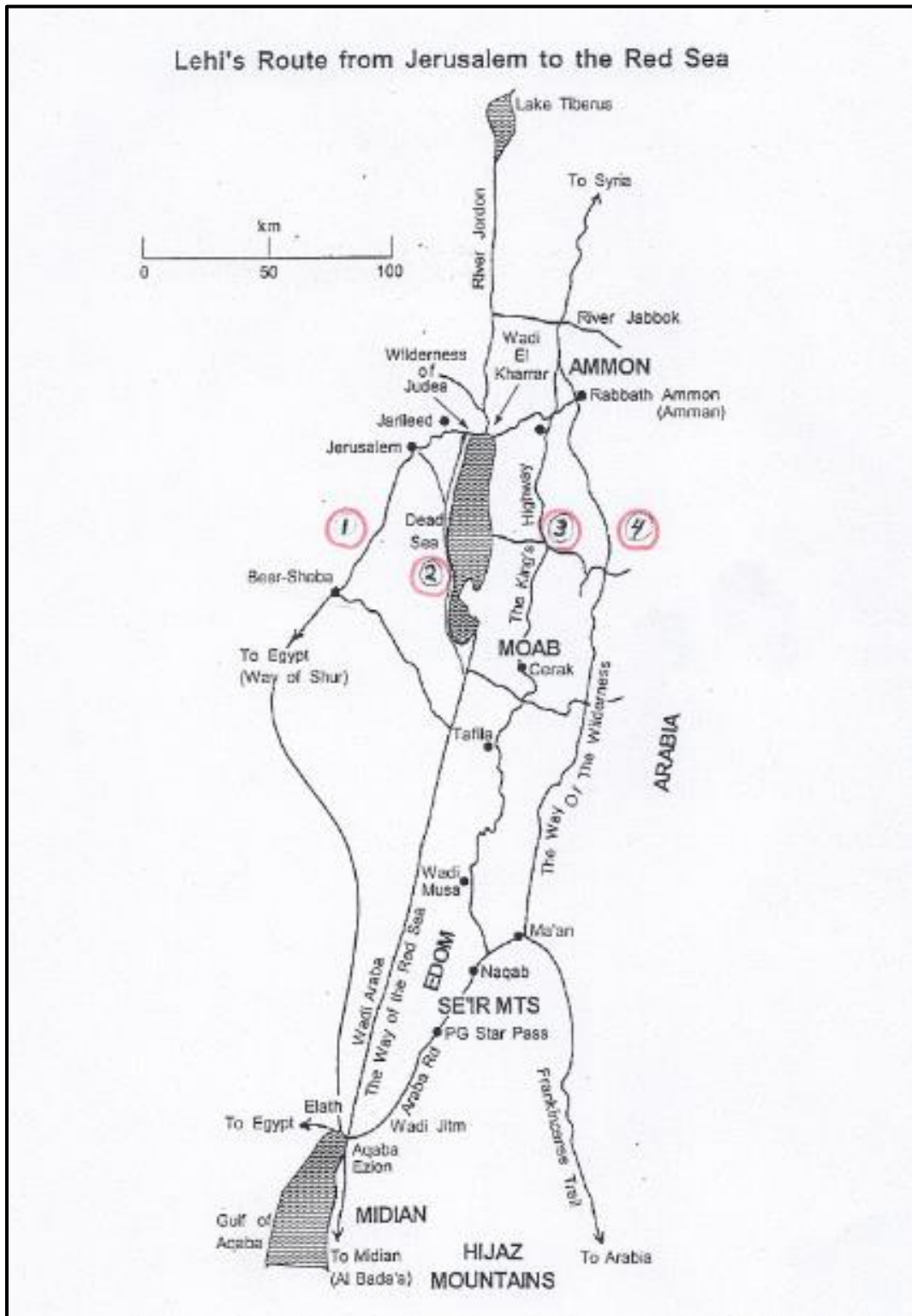
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Note* For an explanation of the chronology of years, see the Appendix portion of this file.



Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Four proposed routes of escape. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, [Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail](#), Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]

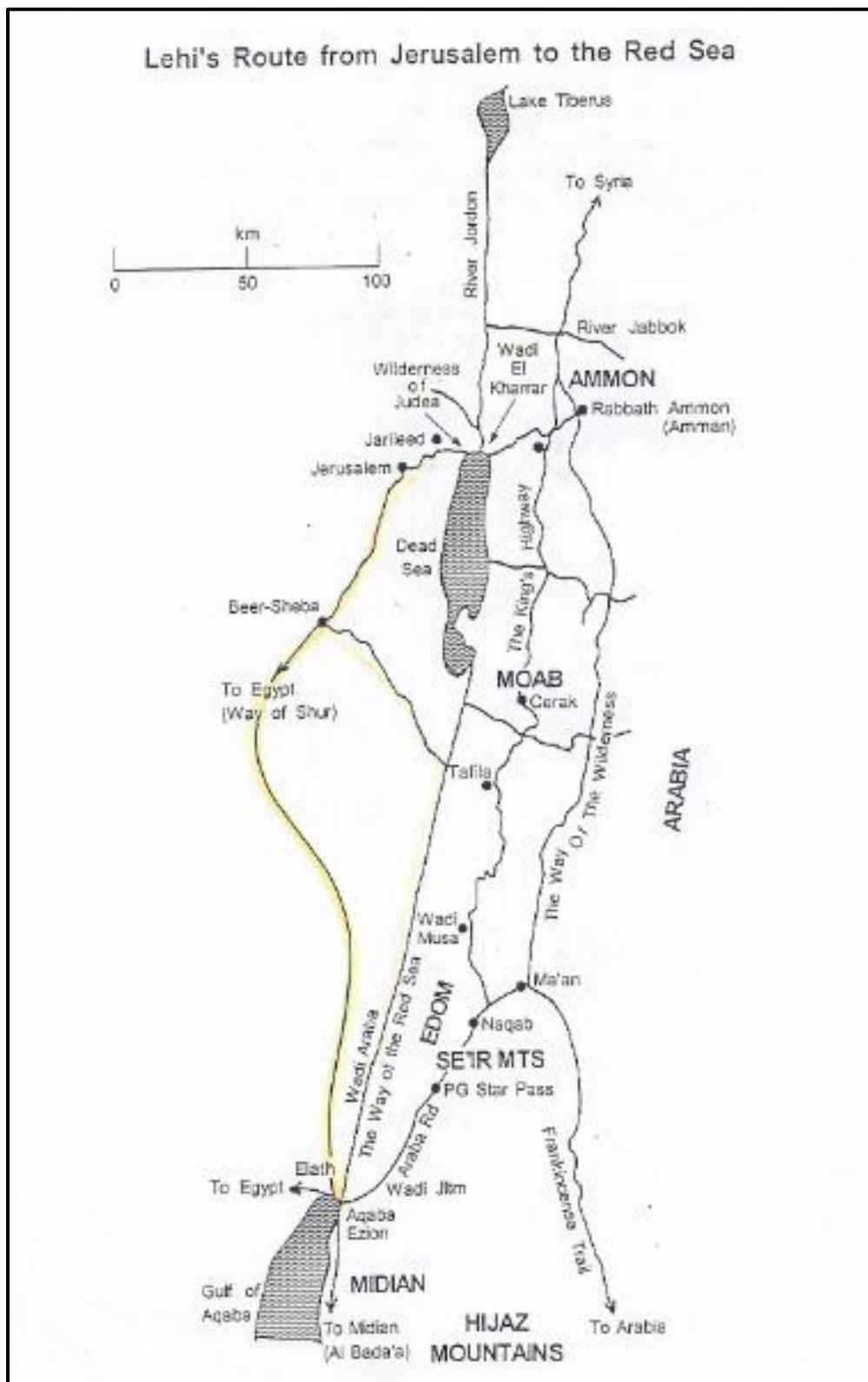
Nephi says that they departed "into the wilderness" (1 Nephi 2:4) and that they "came down by the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5). There are four basic routes that Lehi could have taken to reach the borders near the Red Sea (where ancient Ezion-geber near modern Aqaba was located (see illustration). These are:

(1) Southwest from Jerusalem via Beersheba to Ezion-geber (near Aqaba).

(2) Eastward (a) or southeastward (b) from Jerusalem to the west of the Dead Sea, then south through wadi Araba to Ezion-geber (near Aqaba).

(3) East from Jerusalem across the Jordan River, then south along the King's Highway to Ezion-geber (near Aqaba).

(4) East from Jerusalem across the Jordan River, and also across the King's Highway to join the Way of the Wilderness going south, then towards the end going back southwest to join the King's Highway to Ezion-geber (near Aqaba).



Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Route #1.(highlighted in yellow - unlikely) [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]

ROUTE #1 In 1968, Sidney B. Sperry wrote as follows:

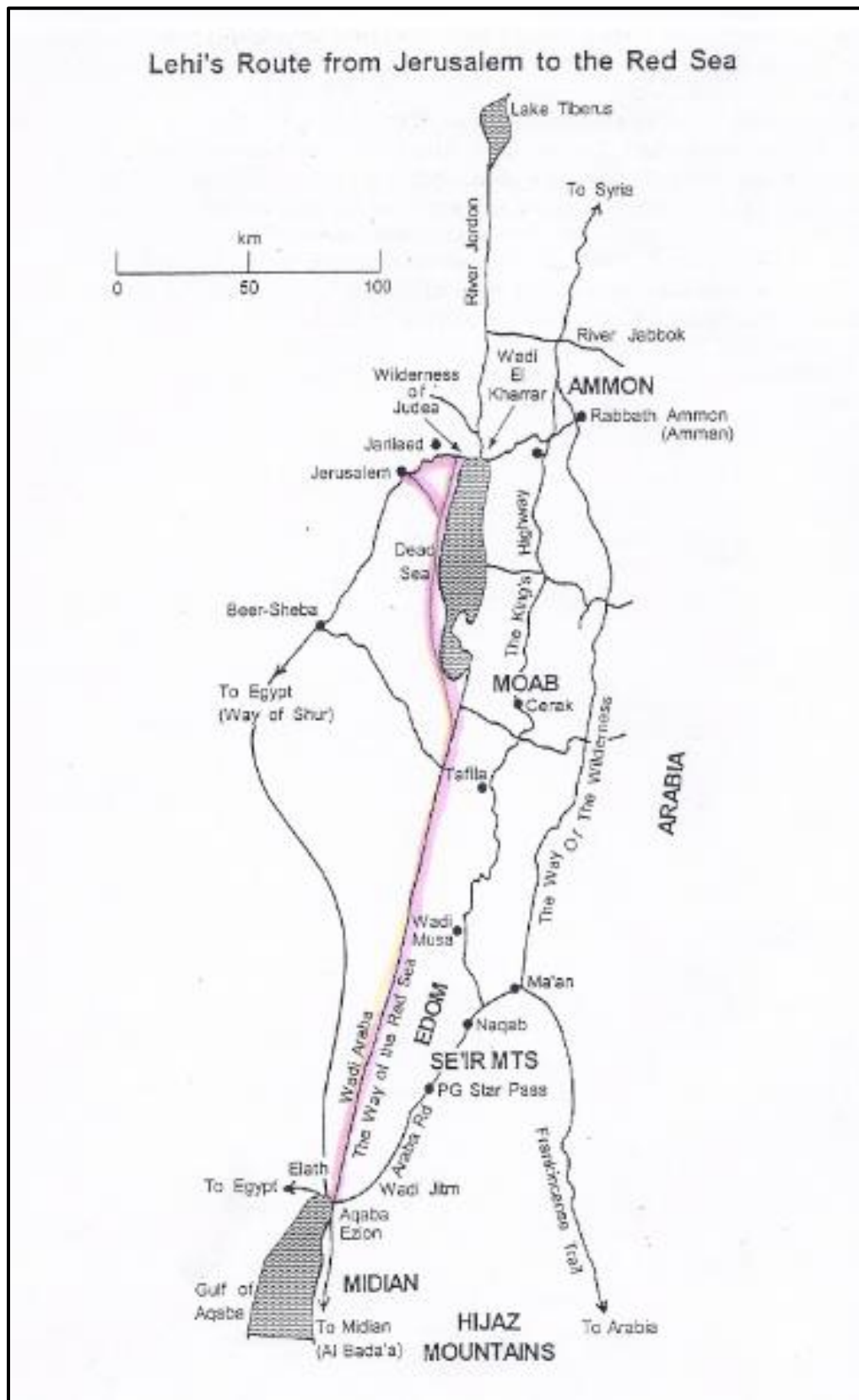
As for a route to the Red Sea, they had two choices: [Route #1] they could go either directly south[west] of Jerusalem by the road through Hebron and Beersheba and thence [southward] through the great wilderness to the northern tip of what is now the gulf of Aqaba, or [Route #3] they could go directly east [through the Judean wilderness] across the Jordan until they struck the ancient "King's Highway" and then proceed south, or nearly so, until the Gulf of Aqaba was reached. Lehi probably used the western route." (Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Compendium*, pp. 97-98)

In 1976, the Hilton's saw Route #1 as improbable since the route remains in the hill country, near population centers, instead of entering the wilderness as the account in 1 Nephi says.

Also, in 1987, Kelly Ogden wrote that during 1986-1987, accompanied by students and faculty from various Brigham Young University study groups, he walked the full distance from Jerusalem to the Red Sea and formulated certain opinions about the route from firsthand experience. He noted: "It seems to me unlikely that they would have used the King's Highway, or that they would have journeyed straight southward through populated centers like Hebron and Beersheba. The account specifically points to immediate entry into the wilderness.

The question both the Hiltons and Kelly Ogden raise here is, "What was termed 'wilderness'?"

A related concern concerning the viability of Route #1 is that it passed southwest via Beersheba in territory almost exclusively under the control of Zedekiah.



Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Route #2 (unlikely). [George Potter and Richard Wellington, [Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail](#), Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]

ROUTE #2 For route #2, the Hiltons and Kelly Ogden have proposed that Lehi could have initially traveled (a) east, or (b) southeast to the west side of the Dead Sea, and then come south down the west side of the Dead Sea to En-gedi, then southward by the "Way of the Red Sea," which runs through Wadi Araba, a large valley that leads from the Dead Sea south to the Gulf of Aqaba (see illustration). They state that "the very name 'Araba' means wilderness," giving exact conformation of the way Lehi was commanded to travel into the "wilderness."

The problem here might be twofold: (1) the part of the journey down the west side of the Dead Sea would have been within the power of king Zedekiah, and (2) the rift valley of al-Araba was never traversed by any large transport route. Musil noted: "During the dry season many animals and human beings would have perished from the heat there, nor would it have been possible to avoid the steep ascent [or descent]. The transport routes of antiquity pass only through places which offer a minimum of obstacles."ⁱ

In 1976, the Hiltons objected to Route #3 because the King's Highway passed south through foreign lands with border complications, taxes, and so on. The Hiltons therefore concluded that the third option (Route #2) was the likely route. (Lynn and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, p. 38)

In 1976, Lynn Hilton proposed Route #2a, in which Lehi would have gone straight east to the northern end of the Dead Sea, then south past Qumran, En Gedi, Masada, and then continuing on south to the Red Sea.

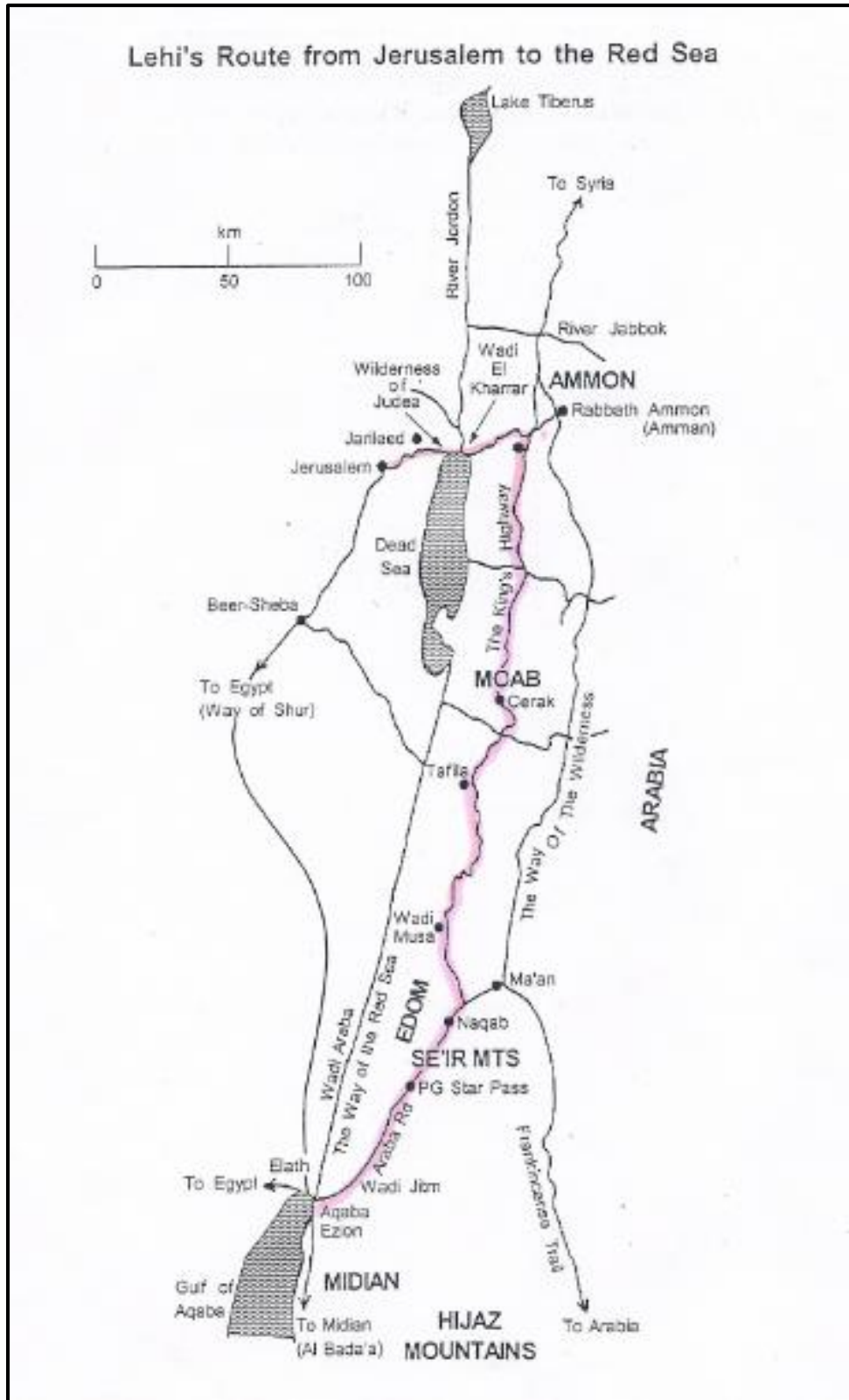
However, in 1987 wrote that during 1986-1987, accompanied by students and faculty from various Brigham Young University study groups, he walked the full distance from Jerusalem to the Red Sea and formulated certain opinions about the route from firsthand experience. He notes:

The Hiltons' preference [Route 2a], east to the area of Qumran, then south, however, is . . . most unlikely, as the fault escarpment of the Rift Valley drops down sharply and dramatically to the waters of the Dead Sea and allowed no passage to the south. There was no evidence of a road along the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea until the Israelis cut and paved one in 1967.

Kelly then proposed Route #2b and Route #2c. He writes:

A viable course for Lehi's journey is [Route #2b] southeast out of Jerusalem toward Tekoa and then along an ancient road to En Gedi (called the cliff or ascent of Ziz in 2 Chronicles 20:16), and thence southward through the Rift Valley, and Arabah. An alternate route [2c] could have been from Tekoa southward, passing between Juttah and Carmel, down into and across the eastern Negev to Mampsis, then eastward to the Arabah. [D. Kelly Ogden, "Answering the Lord's Call," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, 7? p. 22-23]

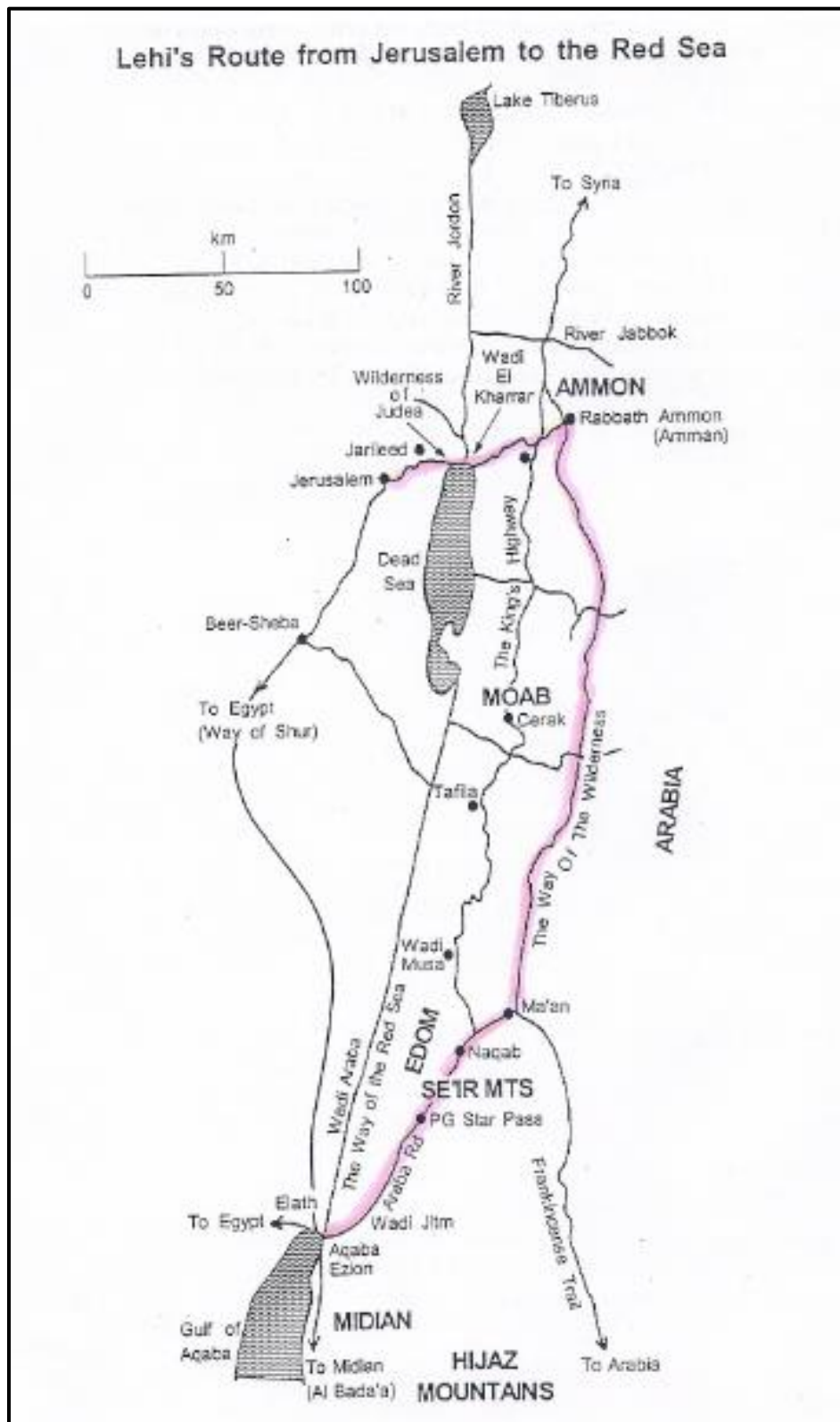
[Map showing three routes from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Kelly Ogden, unpublished]



Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea--The King's Highway. (Route #3 – Unlikely) [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]

ROUTE #3: After crossing the Jordan River, the first route leading south to the Red Sea would have been the "King's Highway" (Numbers 20:17; 21:22). (see illustration) The King's Highway was a direct route south out of Ammon, leading to Moab, Edom and finally Midian.

A potential problem with Route #3, however, is that the part of the King's Highway south of Rabbath-Ammon (Amman) ran along high ground through good arable land or farmlands. Accordingly, Graeme Donnan notes: "all of the principle settlements south of Amman, with the notable exception of Ma'an lie astride the King's Highway."ⁱⁱ In view of these farms and settlements, Nephi's description of traveling in the "wilderness" does not sound like a journey down the King's Highway south of Amman.

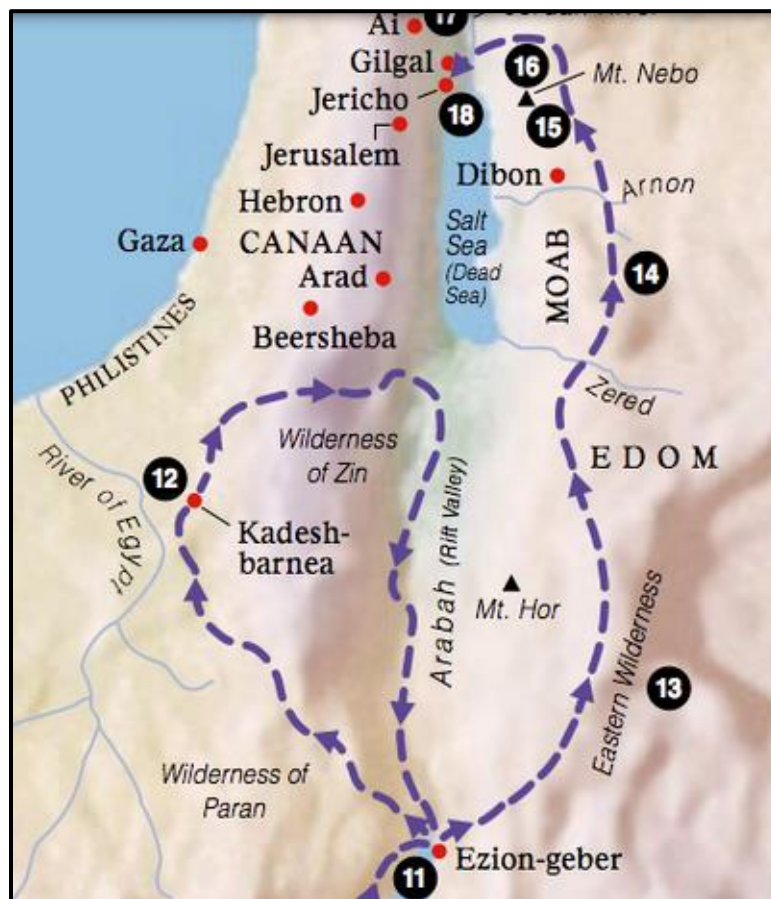


Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea--The Way of the Wilderness (Route #4 - Likely). Also showing wadi El-Kharrar and the Wilderness of Judea. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]

ROUTE #4: According to George Potter and Richard Wellington, by continuing about 5 miles further east of the King's Highway, Lehi would have reached a second major route leading south towards the Red Sea. This desert highway was known as "The Way of the Wilderness" (2 Samuel 15:23-28). (See Map) This route avoided the settled areas of the King's Highway and seems to fit perfectly with Nephi's description of traveling in the wilderness (uninhabited desert areas).

It is worthy of note here that the quickest and safest initial route away from Zedekiah's influence and into the "wilderness" would have been east from Jerusalem to Jericho and then continuing on across the Jordan River (Routes #3 and #4). The recent discovery of the remains of churches at Wadi el-Kharrar, marking the place where John the Baptist ministered and where Elijah was caught up into heaven (see 2 Kings 2:11-13) would seem to add weight to the hypothesis that Lehi's family indeed went eastward "into the wilderness."ⁱⁱⁱ The scriptures tell us that John the Baptist was "preaching in the wilderness of Judea" (Matthew 3:1). Wadi el-Kharrar is a little over one mile east of the Jordan river across from Jericho. [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 10:9]

There is tremendous symbolism in this route. Joshua (Jeshua --- "Jesus") led the children of Israel across the Jordan River (symbolizing baptism) into the covenant Land of Promise. Moses was left on Mount Nebo. Jesus chose this location of the river crossing of the children of Israel to be baptized. John the Baptist was apparently preaching in that area near. Symbolically, Jesus was to lead a "new" covenant people into the Land of Promise. In a similar manner to Moses, John the Baptist was left in view of Mount Nebo.



Exodus Route

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According to Route #3 or Route #4, Lehi and his family (and later Nephi with the records) were going in the opposite direction along the same path taken by Joshua and the children of Israel into the covenant Land of Promise. Thus symbolically, Lehi and his family (and Nephi with the records) were departing this covenant Land of Promise because the covenant people had broken the covenant.

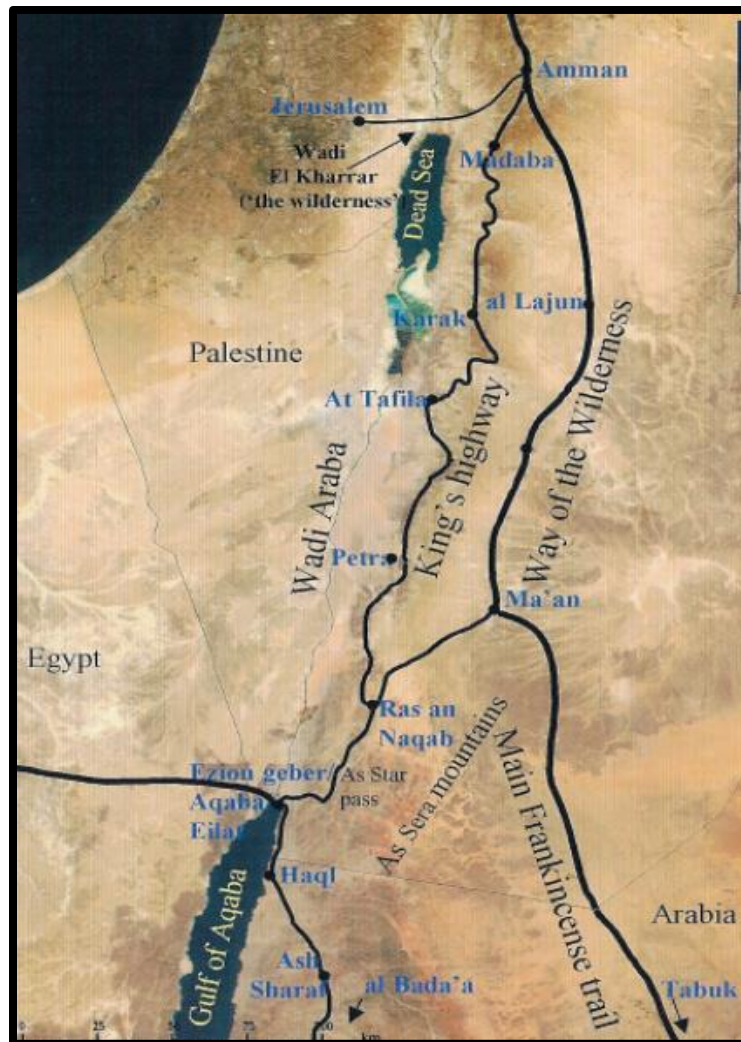
In 1949, operation "Flying Carpet" began in which some fifty thousand Yemenite Jews were flown back to Israel for resettlement.^{iv} (Yemen is located on the southern shores of the Arabian peninsula.) These Yemenite Jews had no remaining written records of their history, all having been destroyed in numerous purges, or left behind as they escaped the mobs.^v Thus their traditions were oral. A number of different traditions exist as to how they reached the Yemen but according to Reubon Ahroni:

The most prevailing tradition, however, relates that the earliest Jewish immigration to Yemen took place forty-two years *before* the destruction of the first temple [587 B.C. plus 42 years = 629 B.C]. This immigration, so it is claimed, was prompted by Jeremiah's proclamation: "He who remains in this city [Jerusalem] shall die by the sword, by the famine and by the pestilence: but he who goes forth to the Chaldeans shall live" (Jeremiah 38:2). As a result of this prophecy of doom, seventy-five thousand courageous men from the nobles of the tribe of Judah, who firmly believed Jeremiah's prophecy of impending national catastrophe, left Jerusalem accompanied by priests, Levites and slaves. This multitude, carrying their possessions with them, crossed the Jordan River and went into the desert in search of a place of refuge, *thus tracing back the route of their entry into Canaan*. They traveled eleven days in the desert and arrived in the land of Edom. From there they turned south until they arrived in Yemen.^{vi}

Here we see an almost perfect description of Lehi's journey east from Jerusalem then southwards down the Way of the Wilderness for 135 miles, to join the King's Highway just before Naqab, the same route by which the children of Israel entered Canaan. (see also Deuteronomy 2:1-37; Numbers 20:14-17).^{vii} Lehi would then have traveled the last 50 miles to the Gulf of Aqaba along the King's Highway, the final 23 miles of which passed through the Se'ir Mountains to Ezion-geber. It may well be that the precedent for Lehi's journey had already been set, and Lehi initially just followed a large contingent of Judaeans who had already headed south.

According to Potter and Wellington, there would also seem to be another historical pattern for the family escaping to the east. Burton MacDonald stated that the "Judaeans fled east of the Jordan river when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and scattered themselves among the lands of Ammon, Moab and Edom."^{viii} Abu Hurairah, an early Islamic period geographer, wrote of the Jews who settled in northwest Arabia to escape the persecution of Nebuchadnezzar.^{ix} This flight resulted in large numbers of Jews living in al-Hijr, Khaibar and Medina. These Jews were contemporaries of Lehi's family. Additionally, as the walls of Jerusalem were being breached, we find that king Zedekiah and his sons tried to escape (2 Kings 25:4), but they were captured when they reached the plains of Jericho (Jeremiah 52:8). In other words, Zedekiah was also heading east apparently to cross the river Jordan.

Readers should note that a recurring theme in Nephi's account is that of the Exodus.^x Nephi repeatedly uses it when attempting to call his brothers to repentance (1 Nephi 4:2-3; 1 Nephi 17:23-43). Further on in Nephite history, King Limhi will draw a parallel between the escape of the Israelites from Egypt and the departure of Lehi and his family from Jerusalem (Mosiah 7:19-20). Alma will use the same analogy when teaching his son Helaman (Alma 36:28-38). [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 9-18]



Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea – The Way of the Wilderness south to the King's Highway and on to Ezion geber at the Gulf of Aqaba. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, p. 14]

Taking The Way of the Wilderness south would have led to the oasis town of Ma'an, where mineral springs still flow (see illustration that follows). At Ma'an, rather than continue on south into Arabia, Lehi would have taken a branching route which led southwest from the Way of the Wilderness to join the King's Highway at Naqab in the Se'ir Mountains. From Naqab the King's Highway led along the "Araba Road" to the ancient town of Ezion-geber (Tell al Khalaifah), situated near the modern town of Elath, and 2 miles west of the modern town of Aqaba. This last 50-mile southern section of the King's Highway was out of the control of king Zedekiah with

noticeably fewer settlements in desert terrain. Thus, the "wilderness" route #4 seems to be a logical route of escape for Lehi's family. It allowed Lehi the greatest freedom of movement and the least possibility of interception by Judean authorities.

Question: What About the Preface to the book of First Nephi?

Both believing students of the Book of Mormon and anti-Mormons alike have pointed to the potential problems of distance between Jerusalem and the Valley of Lemuel by what is stated in the Preface to the book of First Nephi, where it mentions that Lehi seems to have traveled only "a three-days journey."

This dilemma can be explained through my structured text. Compared to the text of 1 Nephi chapter 2, the Preface of the book of First Nephi (shown below) is abbreviated:

An **account** of _____ **Lehi**
and [of] **his** wife _____ **Sariah**
and [of] **his** four _____ **sons**
being called
beginning at the eldest **Laman**
[and] **Lemuel**
[and] **Sam**
and **Nephi**

The Lord warns **Lehi** to *depart _____ *out of the land of Jerusalem*

because he [**Lehi**] **prophesieth** unto the [covenant] people [the **Jews**] concerning their **iniquity**
and [**but**] they [the covenant people--the Jews] **seek to __destroy his life**

He [**Lehi**] **taketh** **three days' journey** *into the wilderness*
with his **family**
[He] **Nephi** **taketh** his **brethren**

and [he **Nephi**] **returneth** [____ **days' journey**] *to the land of Jerusalem*
after the **record** of the **Jews**

The **account** of **their** **sufferings**

They take the **daughters** of **Ishmael**
to **wife**

They take their **families**

and [**they**] *depart _____ into the wilderness*

and **Their** **sufferings**
[**their**] **afflictions** _____ *in the wilderness*

The course of **their** _____ *travels in the wilderness*

They *come _____ to the large waters*

The reader acquainted with the full story in 1 Nephi will note that there seems to be lines of information referring to travel in the structured Preface above that have been omitted. There is also no mention of borders. Thus It seems like Lehi's journey and all the trips back and forth by Nephi written about in the full text of 1 Nephi appear somewhat conflated in the Preface. To be more specific about the lack of information in the Preface:

- 1 There is no mention of any location points along the way to Bountiful and Irreantum.
- 2 Only certain points are emphasized—one being “a three-days journey.”

For this reason, I would have to rely on the textual account in 1 Nephi 2:4 rather than the Preface, because the Preface is lacking in reference points. In other words, in the Preface there is no reference point for the “three days journey.”

Question: What were the borders near the Red Sea? Were they political? Were they geographical. Were they both? How could one travel IN the borders near and nearer the Red Sea?

1 Nephi 2:5 ***Borders near the Shore of the Red Sea:***

Before progressing further with our discussion of “borders” near the Red Sea, I would like to establish the general perspective of “borders.” Borders can be man-made as is political or military borders which represent a man-made boundary. However, these boundaries often coincide with natural boundaries or “borders” such as mountains, rivers, or large bodies of water. As Lehi traveled to the northern tip of the Red Sea there are a number of options regarding “borders” that have been discussed by various authors. Perspectives can be gained by the various approaches.

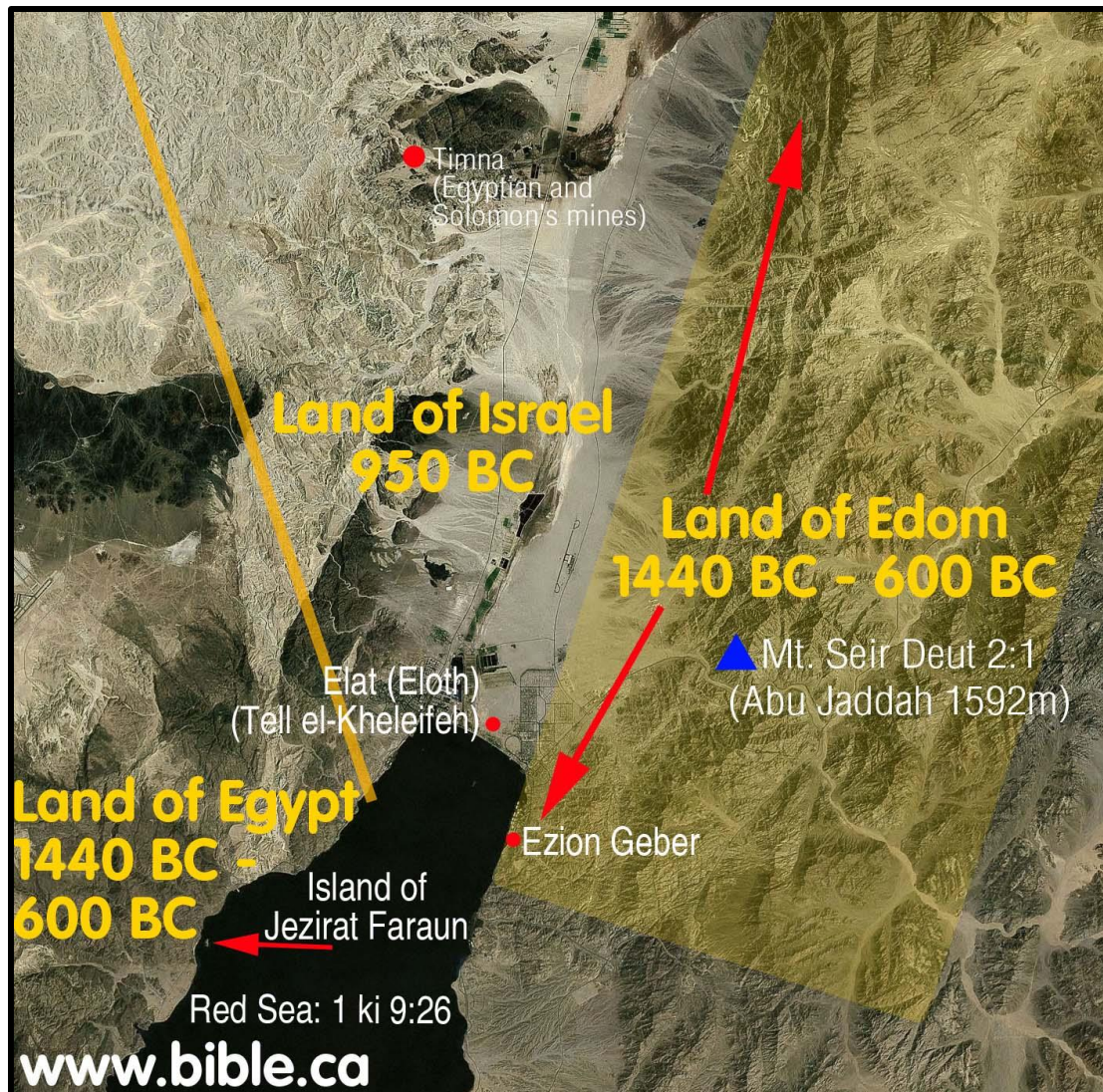
The term "borders" is mentioned not only here in 1 Nephi 2:5, but also later on in regard to the Land of First Inheritance in the New World being "on the west in the *borders* by the seashore" (Alma 22:28, italics added), and later in reference to the cities or lands of Antionum, Moroni, Nephihah, Lehi, Morianton, Omner, Gid, Mulek, and Bountiful "all of which were on the east *borders* by the seashore" (Alma 31:3, italics added; 51:22, 26, 32). Once again, the Book of Mormon reader should be aware of the fact that although "borders" can be political, they usually involve some geographical features which by nature tend to separate people (such as rivers, mountains, and seas). In its glory days under King Solomon, Israel's political borders of Judah stopped at the tip of the Red Sea near where the ancient port cities of Elat and Ezion-geber were located. In modern times, there is a port city of Aqaba on the east and a port city of Eilat on the west of the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (the Red Sea). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 2:5 **Borders Near the Shore of the Red Sea (Symbolic Political Borders):**

Steve Rudd writes the following about the ancient city of Ezion-Geber and the city of Elat (Eloth) located nearby at what is now the ruins of tell el-kheleifeh

Elat (Eloth) (Ailath):

The Onomasticon or "Dictionary of Bible Places" was created in 325 AD by Eusebius of Caesarea. This ancient geographical dictionary of Bible towns, regions and wildernesses is the oldest in existence and the most complete. Eusebius recorded that: "Ailam (Ailath). Is situated at the extremity of Palestine between the southern desert and the Red Sea where cargo was transported by ship from both Egypt and India.



Elat was what is now the ruins of Tell el-Kheleifeh. Gary Pratico excavated the site and in 1985 wrote: "The Jordanian site of Tell el-Kheleifeh is located approximately 500 m from the northern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, roughly equidistant between modern Eilat (Israel) and Aqaba (Jordan). The western side of the mound, today . . . demarcates the neutral zone between Jordan and Israel." (Excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh: A Reappraisal, Gary D. Pratico, 1985 AD)

Ezion-geber

The general location of Ezion-geber is on the east shore of the Red Sea in modern Jordan as indicated on a map from the "Aqaba Special Economic Zone" Business guide printed by the Jordanian government in 2004. Ezion-geber is mentioned a number of times in the Bible:

"King Solomon also built a fleet of ships in Ezion-geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom." 1 Kings 9:26

"Then Solomon went to Ezion-geber and to Elath on the seashore in the land of Edom." 2 Chron 8:17

"All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah. He built Elath and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers." 2 Kings 14:21-22

A few years before the Assyrian captivity of 722 BC, the Edomites recaptured Elat again from Edom, after Azariah died: "At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, and cleared the Judeans out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans (Edomite) came to Elath and have lived there to this day." 2 Kings 16:6

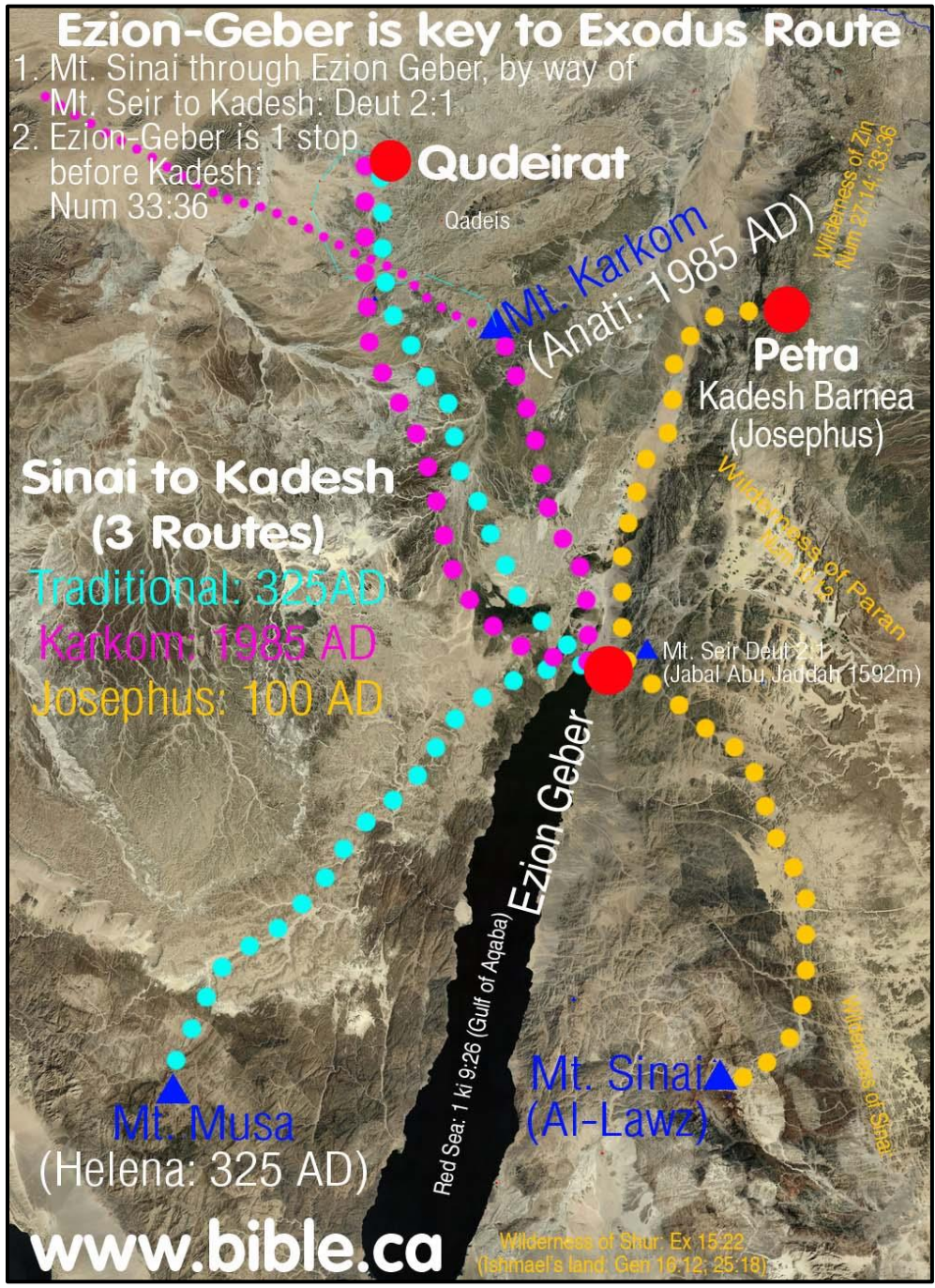
[Steve Rudd, "Solomon's Fortress at Elat: Elat and Ezion-geber: Twin cities," " (www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-ezion-geber-elat-aqaba.htm). See also Steve Rudd, "The Exodus Route," <http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route.htm>]

Sidenote* Steve Rudd additionally writes that the ancient location of Ezion-geber is a critical key in determining the Exodus route of Moses (see illustration below):

Ezion-Geber is the only "stop" of the exodus route that is known for sure where it is located. (Num 33:36) Scripture says it was located on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom, very near Elat. Both Elat and Ezion Geber are located at the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba.

One of the critical factors in the location of Ezion-Geber, is that it was one stop before the 11 day journey from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh Barnea (Deut 1:2), by way of Mt. Seir. The theory that Mt. Sinai was located at Jebel Al-Lawz in modern Saudi Arabia and Kadesh Barnea was located at or near Petra fits perfectly, given that Moses would pass right by Mt. Seir, the seat of transjordan Edomite territory.

Notice that Ezion Geber is on the shore in the land of Edom: (see 1 Kings 9:26; 2 Chron 8:17). This means that Ezion Geber was located in transjordan in modern Jordan and not in the modern Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. We know this, because the Edomites never lived in the Negev until after the Babylonian captivity of 586 AD. Therefore, Ezion Geber was located on the east shore of the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba.



All theoretical routes of the Exodus must run through Ezion Geber. Israel traveled from Mt. Sinai, THROUGH Ezion-Geber, passing beside Mt. Seir, en route to Kadesh Barnea: (see Deut 1:2.)

Ezion-Geber is one stop before Kadesh Barnea: (see Num 33:36) The only route that fits is from Mt. Lawz to Petra. Josephus said that Kadesh was located at Petra in 110 AD. Although it is 100 km from Ezion-geber, they traveled up the Arabah Valley to get to Kadesh at Petra. Since the Arabah Valley had no towns or outstanding geologic features that the Hebrews took note of, it makes perfect sense for them to not mark any stops in the Arabah itself. We have no doubt that they made several camps as they made the 100 km journey, just that

Moses didn't take note of it. The same thing happened in the route from Goshen to the crossing of the Red Sea. Moses noted only one stop between Goshen and the Red Sea-- Succoth, even though it is 380 km trip. Therefore we have a precedence for why Ezion-geber could be only one stop from Petra (Kadesh) and yet be a 100 km journey.

The traditional route from Mt. Sinai (Mt. Musa in the modern Sinai Peninsula) to Kadesh Barnea (Qudeirat) makes little sense, since they would not travel way out of their way, through the mountains to get to Ezion-Geber, then north to Qudeirat. They would not travel east to Ezion-geber, but north from Mt. Musa directly through the easy to travel through desert to Qudeirat.

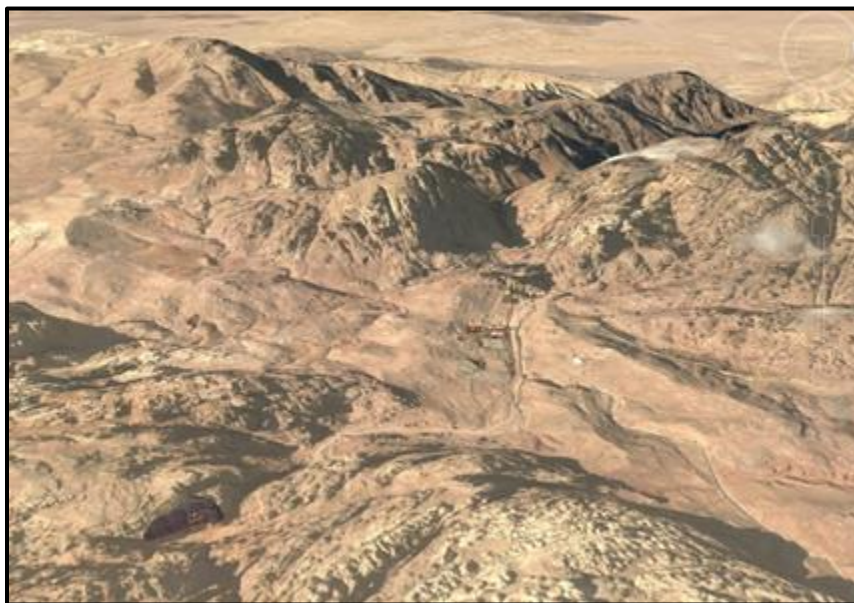
If Mt. Musa really was Mt. Sinai, as Queen Helena "saw in a vision" in 325 AD, then they certainly would never travel through Ezion-geber.

The only exodus route that can harmonize an 11 day journey from Mt. Sinai through Ezion Geber to Kadesh Barnea is the route from Mt. Lawz in Saudi Arabia (Sinai) to Petra (Kadesh Barnea). This fits nicely with the exodus route since Ezion Geber is a direct line path between the two.

1 Nephi 2:5 He Came down by *the Borders* near the Shore of the Red Sea (Natural Borders):

In 1 Nephi 2:5, Nephi mentions "the borders" twice. According to Hugh Nibley that should be capitalized because that's what that area has been called, the Jabal, which means "the Borders." Joseph Smith didn't know that. Neither did Oliver Cowdery, so they left it uncapitalized. But that area in which they went was the Jabal. Jabal is the range of mountains that separates one country from another. This had the name, Jabal. So they went down into the Borders.

[Hugh W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 1, p. 122]



Mt. Seir Petra

bermuda-triangle.org

According to Wikipedia, Mount Seir was a mountainous region stretching between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah, demarcating the southeastern border of Edom with Judah. It may also have marked the older historical limit of Egypt in Canaan

Mount Seir was named for Seir, the Horite, whose offspring had previously inhabited the area (Genesis 14:6, 36:20). The children of Esau (the Edomites) battled against the Horites and destroyed them (Deuteronomy 2:4-5, 12, 22). It is specifically noted as the place where Esau made his home (Genesis 32:3; 33:14, 16; 36:8; Joshua 24:4).

The prophet Balaam, predicting Israelite victories over the Trans-Jordanian nations at the end of their Exodus from Egypt, stated "Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession" (Numbers 24:18). [\[Wikipedia\]](#)

1 Nephi 2:5 **He Came down by the *Borders* Near the Shore of the Red Sea (Potter Theory):**

In the first six verses that describe the first camp of Lehi's family in the wilderness, Nephi used the word "borders" three times (1 Nephi 2:5-10). Knowing what Nephi meant by the term "borders" is an important key for identifying the location of the valley of Lemuel. As one traveled south from the land of Jerusalem in Nephi's day, the final outpost of civilization was a shipping port called Ezion-Geber on the tip of the northeastern branch of the Red Sea (known today as the Gulf of Aqaba). Today the town of Aqaba is a mile east of the ruins of that biblical city (Ezion-Geber).

According to the theory of George Potter, as Lehi led his family south of this site, he would have "departed into the wilderness" (1 Nephi 2:4). (see illustration) South of the port of Aqaba, the ancient caravan route passed by mountains on the east. Thus according to George Potter, the mountains of northwest Arabia are the "borders" described by Nephi. Sir Richard Burton called these borders, the "kingly Mountains of Midian"^{xi} (the "land of Midian" being the name that the region was called by in Bible times during the life of Moses--see Exodus 2:15). Potter notes several reasons why the term "borders" should be correlated with mountains:

(1) The wilderness itself distinguished political borders.

(2) The mountains form the natural borders that separate the tribal lands of this region.

(3) The Hebrew word *gebul* means border. *Gebul* cognates with Arabic *jabal* (colloquial *jebel*) which means mountain.^{xii} Hugh Nibley explains:

It mentions "the borders" twice in the fifth verse [1 Nephi 2:5]. That should be capitalized because that's what the area has been called, the *Jabal*, which means "the Borders." Joseph Smith didn't know that. Neither did Oliver Cowdery, so they left it uncapitalized. But that area in which they went was the *Jabal*. *Jabal* is the range of mountains that separates one country from another. This had the name *Jabel*.^{xiii}

(4) Another name given to the mountains in this part of Arabia is "Hegaz" or "Hijaz," meaning "the Borders or Barriers."^{xiv} Hijaz ("Borders") is still today the place name used for these mountains, and its label stands as a testament to the purity of Joseph Smith's translation.

(5) The Semitic language association of mountains to borders is illustrated in the language of the Old Testament when the children of Israel were commanded of the Lord: "go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it" (Exodus 19:12)

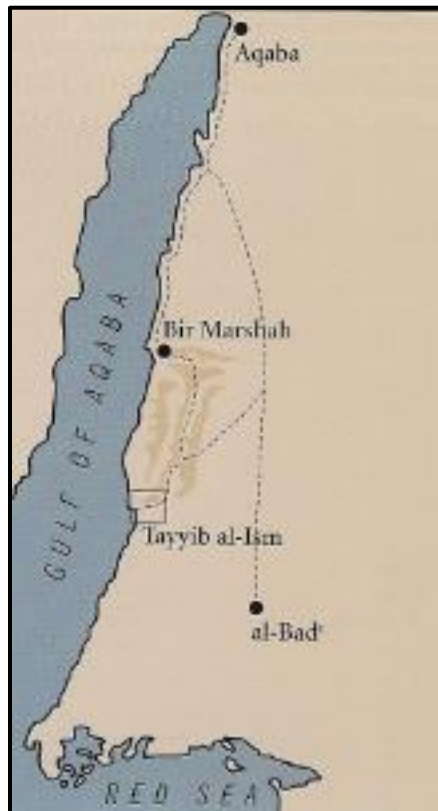
[George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, pp. 17-20, 22, 24]

1 Nephi 2:5 **BY the Borders Near the Seashore (Potter Theory):**

George Potter notes that according to the text, Nephi traveled "by the borders near the seashore" (1 Nephi 2:5). According to Potter, to fully appreciate the historical accuracy of this statement, one needs to consider the geography of northwestern Arabia. Assuming that the term "borders" means "mountains" (as discussed previously), as a traveler moved southward along the historic camel trail from the northern end of the Red Sea or Gulf of Aqaba into Arabia, he found on his right the waters of the Red Sea, and on his immediate left he found mountains ("borders"). Thus, he was traveling "by" the mountains or borders on his left. The area in which he traveled (between the sea and the mountains) was a narrow, relatively flat coastal plain called the Thema. As Nephi entered Arabia at sea level, the mountain peaks rose on the east (his left) to a height of 3570 feet. By the second day of his journey, the peaks were towering over 6,000 feet above the plain. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 22, 24]



The shore of the Red Sea or Gulf of Aqaba going south into Arabia. The reader should notice the mountain "borders" on the left (east). Photo by George Potter. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 24]



Tayyib al-Ism [George D Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Num. 1, FARMS, 1999, p. 58]

Nephi talks about coming down "by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea" and traveling "in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5). One might ask, What distinction was he making? George Potter notes that on leaving the port town of Ezion Geber (Port Aqaba), Lehi would have been traveling on the eastern shoreline of the Red Sea, still on the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba. Between the shoreline and the mountains (or "borders") on his left was a sandy plain never more than three miles in width. Nephi's description defines exactly this topography along this shoreline. That is, he says that they "came down BY the borders [mountains] NEAR the shore of the Red Sea."

One next finds that after traveling southward along the shoreline for about twenty miles, the mountains (or borders) that parallel the coast on one's left split into two parallel ranges (see illustration). While both branches or ranges continue to parallel the shoreline southward, and while the eastern range is a little over 20 miles inland, the western branch continues to be on one's immediate left. Thus, one can continue to travel another 25 miles southward along the shoreline and still be "by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea."

At a point 45 miles from Aqaba, one runs into a blocked trail caused by the mountain range immediately on the left running into the sea (see illustration).



Shoreline of the Gulf of Aqabaq as one approaches the mountains near the well Bir Marshah that block further travel south. Note the valley in the center of the photograph which leads eight miles upward to a pass that connects to the upper valley. Photo by George Potter. [George D. Potter , "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, num. 1, , 1999, p. 56]

Potter describes the situation Lehi would have faced at this blockage:

In front of him the trail was blocked by the borders/mountains. To his left were mountains towering over six thousand feet. His only realistic option was to turn into the mountains. Apparently, this seems to be what Lehi did . . . we rather unsurprisingly found the only valley or wadi that leads from the shoreline and into the mountains. . . As we explored the wadi, it narrowed to where at points we were certain it was a dead end, however, around each bend, we were delighted that the trail would continue on deeper [southward] into ["in"] the mountains [or "borders nearer the Red Sea"]. What we also found was that the wadi "in the borders" provided a good camel trail that had a level gravel bed and a smooth upward grade. . . . We learned from the Bedouins in the area that the valley's name was Wadi Tayyib al-Isim, the *Wadi of the Good Name*. . . . We had wondered how Lehi and his family could have traveled "in" the mountains of Midian on camels. Here was the answer, a straight level wadi with an ideal camel trail of sand and gravel. A trail near the shore, yet still "in the borders." (see illustration)

Thus the text is correct when it says that after Lehi traveled "by the borders [or mountains] which were near the Red Sea," he then traveled "in the wilderness IN the borders NEARER the Red Sea" [or in the branch of parallel mountains which was nearer to the Red Sea]. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, [Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel](#), Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, pp. 24-31]

1 Nephi 2:6 When He Had Traveled Three Days in the Wilderness, He Pitched His Tent, in a Valley, by a River of Water (Potter Theory) :

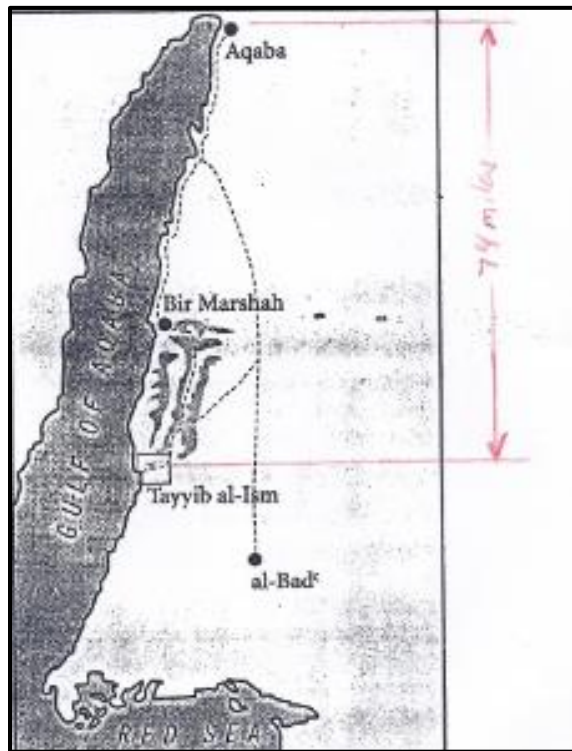
The valley of Lemuel was "in the borders" (1 Nephi 2:8). This valley was also a journey of "three days in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 2:6). According to George Potter, if the meaning of "borders" can be correlated with mountains, and if the term "wilderness" is associated with Arabia and started at the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, then the search for the location of the valley of Lemuel becomes much more specific.

Frankincense trail expert Nigel Groom noted that a loaded camel travels "slightly less than 21/2 miles an hour" and "rarely exceeds 25 miles" per day.^{xv} Alan Keohane, who actually lived and traveled with a Bedouin tribe for a year reports that they traveled up to 40 miles in a day when they were traveling to winter pastures.^{xvi} Reasonably speaking, Lehi's family could have traveled by camel on the good trails proposed anywhere from 25-30 miles a day. Potter records:

To be conservative, we felt we had to have an odometer reading of less than 75 miles. As our trail odometer read seventy-one miles from Port Aqaba, the Wadi Tayyib al-Isim changed course from due south to southwest and headed toward Jabel (Mount) Mazenfah and the Red Sea. At the seventy-three mile marker we came to the eastern-most grove of the oasis of the Waters of Moses. (see illustration) One mile further down the valley the Wadi Tayyib al-Isim narrowed into a spectacular canyon. In the canyon we came to the small [continuously running] river. (see illustration) [Amazingly we had duplicated what would have been a "three days" journey "in the wilderness" and come to "a river of water" which was "in a valley" (1 Nephi 2:6) and now we were about to set up our camp (or "pitch our tents") by that river.]

When one thinks about it, Nephi's account is truly exceptional. There appears to be only one perennial river in all of Saudi Arabia, a country almost the size of Europe, and Nephi's words still lead to it. How could [Joseph Smith] have known the specific geography seen when travelling south along the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba? How could he have known the name of the mountains in Midian is "the Borders." How could he have known there are two mountain ranges in Midian, one near and the other nearer the Red Sea? How could he have known there was a good camel trail through the shoreline mountains of "Rocky Arabia," and that the trail led to [a unique] place--a river of flowing water. There can be only one explanation. Nephi [had actually traveled this trail.]

[George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 21, 32-34, 74]



A Three Day Journey. A map adapted from a general map of the area of the travels of George Potter and Craig Thorsted. (George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Num.1, FARMS, 1999, p. 58) [Alan C. Miner, Personal Collection]



The desert stream that runs "continually" toward the Red Sea. [George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Num.1, FARMS, 1999, p. 62]

1 Nephi 2:9 The Waters of the River Emptied into the . . . Red Sea . . . This River, Continually Running (Potter Theory):

George Potter begins his argument by noting that according to Hugh Nibley, Hogarth argues that Arabia "probably never had a true river in all its immense area."^{xvii} The United States's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports that Arabia has, "no perennial rivers or permanent water bodies."^{xviii} The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Agriculture and Water, with the assistance of the US Geological Service (USGS) spent 44 years surveying the kingdom's water resources. Their study consisted of seismic readings, surface and aerial surveys and even landsat satellite photo analysis. They concluded that Saudi Arabia may be the world's largest country without any perennial rivers or streams.^{xix} The satellite photograph of northwest Arabia reveals a terrain that appears as arid and barren as the surface of the moon. Clearly from space, it appears impossible to find a river in this naked desert land of granite mountains, dark lava flows, sandstone hills, and sandy wadis where dried up rivers last ran during the previous ice age.

Some author's attempts to explain why their proposed "River Laman" is not at this time a "continually running" stream are grounded on the idea that significant changes in the Near East climate have taken place since Lehi's time. Kelly Ogden presented a version of this theory in the LDS Church News in 1996.^{xx} It is also alluded to in the Book of Mormon itself (see 1 Nephi 2:6 footnote 6b, Joel 1:20:

The beasts of the field cry also unto thee; for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

However, this theory does not square with Biblical or meteorological history. Midian was the land where Moses lived with his father-in-law Jethro (D&C 84:6-7). While there, Moses lived in a desert. (Exodus 3:1) Scientists, including those of the United States Geological Service, cite of Arabia: "The past 6000 years have been marked by more arid conditions, similar to those of the present."^{xxi} Hugh Nibley explains: "though some observers think the area enjoyed a little more rainfall in antiquity than it does today, all are agreed that the change of climate has not been considerable since prehistoric times--it was at best almost as bad then as it is now."^{xxii}

So where is this "river" which "emptied into the . . . Red Sea," and which is described as "continually running" (1 Nephi 2:9)? First of all, the "river of water" mentioned in 1 Nephi 2:6 was probably only a small stream. When translating Nephi's description of the river, the Prophet Joseph Smith did not specify the size of the river. The Semitic language expert, Dr. Hugh Nibley notes that, "The expression 'river of water' is used only for small local streams."^{xxiii}

[George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, pp. 39, 42-43]

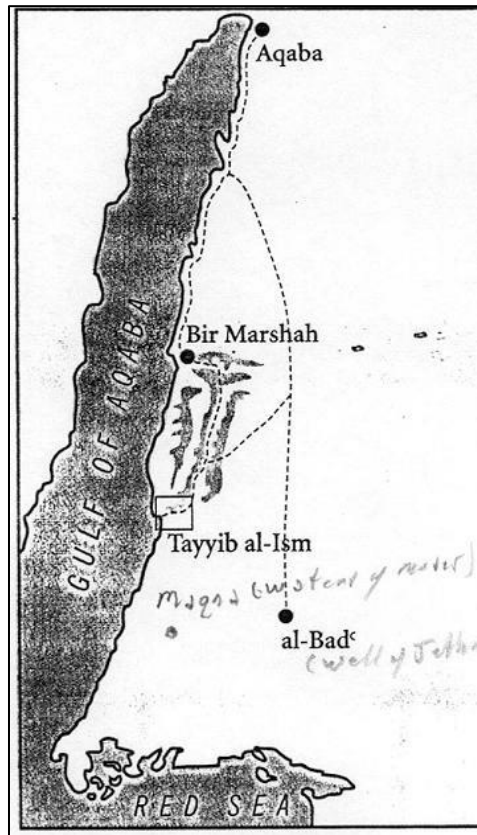
In May 1995, George Potter and Craig Thorsted were searching for one of the Arabian candidates for Mount Sinai when they stumbled on a "continually running" stream by the Red Sea. This stream was part of a valley complex that seemed to fulfill all the requirements for the "valley of Lemuel."

Potter and Thorsted had first traveled to al-Bad to explore the Wells of Jethro, the priest of the ancient land of Midian. (see illustration)



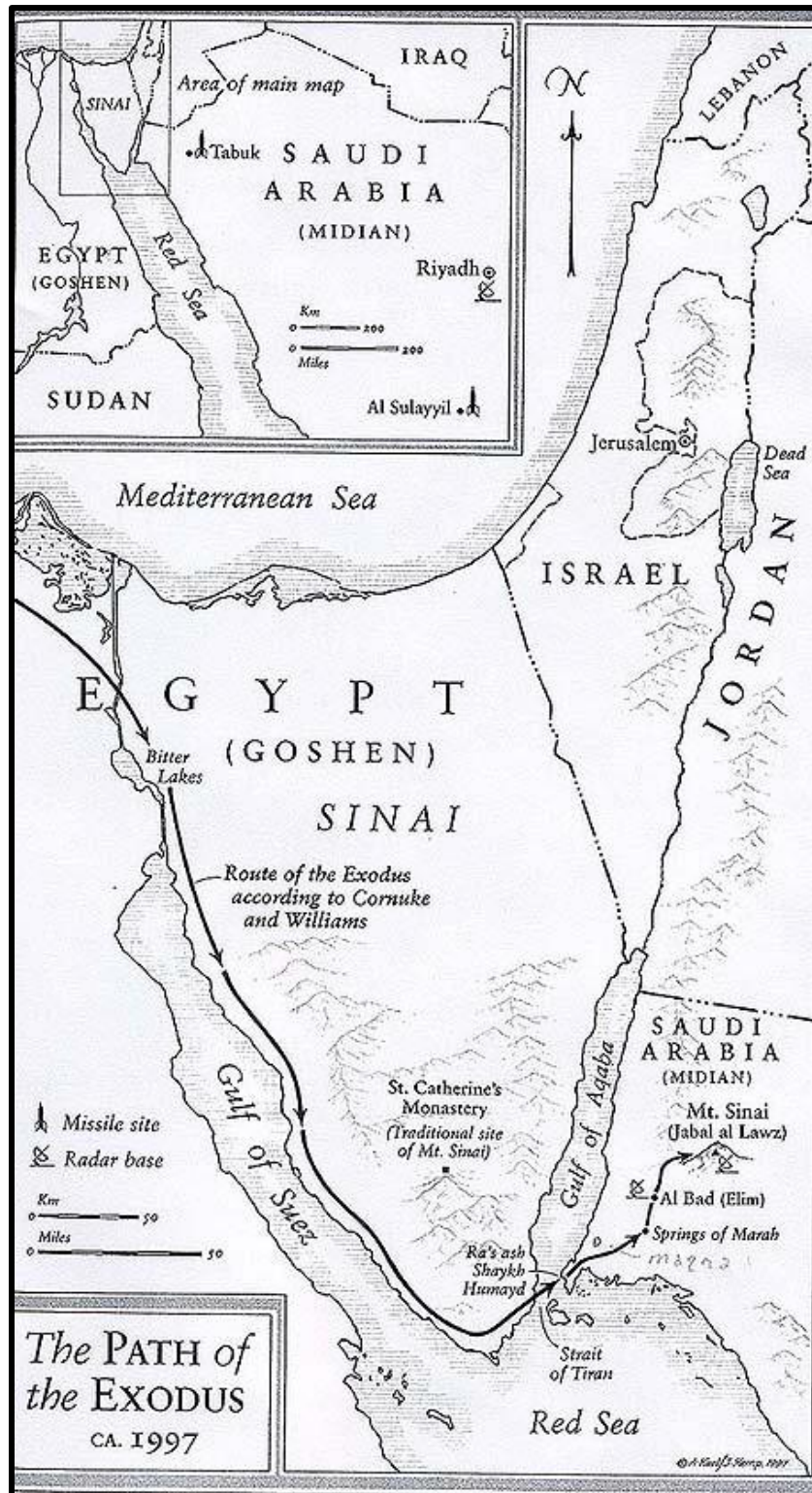
Larger of Wells of Jethro, al-Bada'a. Photo by George Potter. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 45]

On a suggestion from a town official, they traveled 20 miles west to the village of Maqna where supposedly the Waters of Moses were located. (see illustration)



Map showing the location of Maqna (the Waters of Moses) and al-Bad (the Well of Jethro). Adapted from a sketch by Timothy Sedor. (George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 8, Num.1, FARMS, 1989, p. 58)

According to local tradition, Maqna had been the first camp of Moses after the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba (see illustration),



The Path of the Exodus. Adapted (Howard Blum, The Gold of Exodus, 1998, preface)

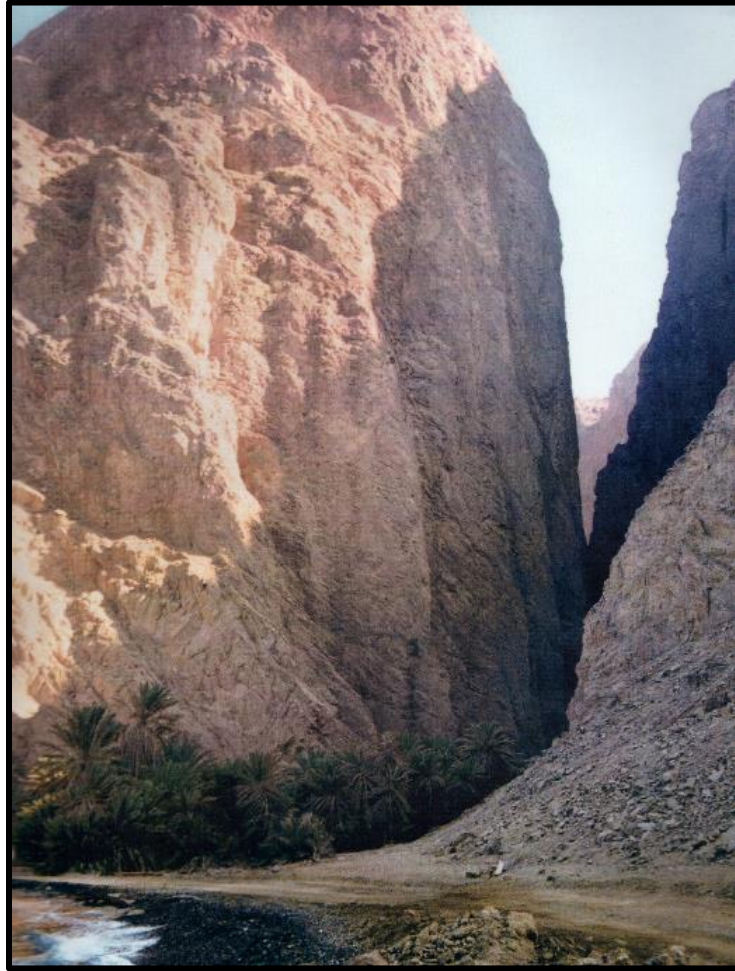
The Waters of Moses was where Moses had touched his staff to the rock and 12 springs gushed forth (**see** illustration), one for each tribe (see Qur'an 7:160).



George Potter at the twelve natural springs at Maqna. Photo by Richard Wellington. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 46]

However, they were additionally directed to another site 12 miles to the north.

Eight miles north of Maqna, Potter and Thorsted found that the southern end of a mountain range forced them towards a small coastal road running northward along the Red Sea. After 4 more miles they came upon a magnificent narrow canyon. (**see** illustration)



Narrow canyon opening up on the shores of the Red Sea, which George Potter and Craig Thorsted came upon while traveling eight miles north of Maqna in search of the Waters of Moses. Photo by George Potter. (George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 8, Num.1, FARMS, 1989, inside back cover)

They decided to walk up this canyon and after 33/4 miles it opened into a beautiful oasis with several wells and three large groves of date palm trees. However, what caught their interest most was the stream that started in the canyon near its upper end and ran down the wadi virtually all the way to the sea.

Potter and Thorsted found that the stream in the canyon met all of the physical criteria for the valley of Lemuel and the river Laman.

(1) This valley lies just over 70 miles (on the ground, not in a direct line) south of Aqaba. Thus it was within a journey of "three days in the wilderness" by foot or camel ride beyond the northeast tip of the Red Sea (1 Nephi 2:5-6).

(2) If Lehi gave the river a name (1 Nephi 2:8) then it might not have been a major stream. Otherwise, in the hot dry Near East, a permanent settlement and a name would have already been in place.

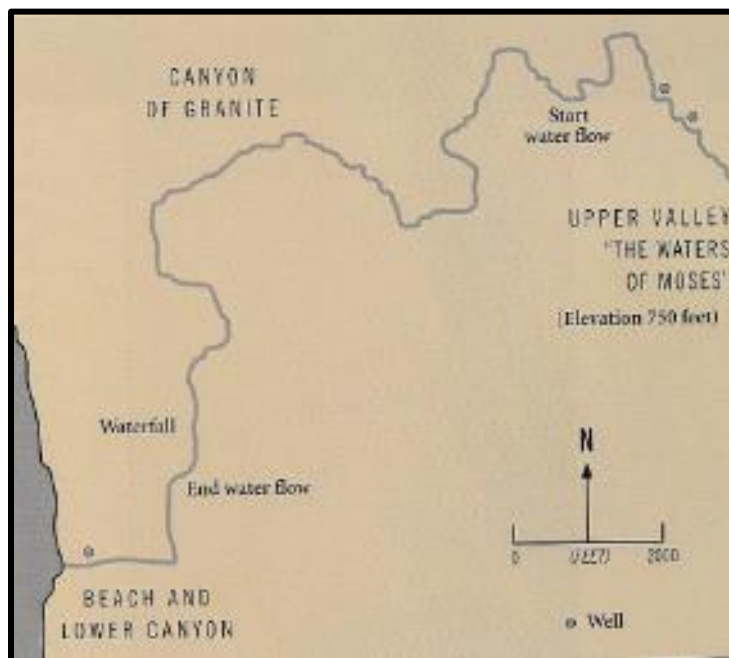
(3) The "waters of the river [Laman] emptied into the . . . Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:9).

(4) Lehi referred to the stream as "continually running" (1 Nephi 2:9).

Potter and Thorsted confirm that after having visited the valley in the months of January, April, May, November, and December, and after colleagues have visited in July and August, they have observed that "the volume of water in the river seems rather constant throughout the year (even though from 1995 to 1999 the volume seems to have decreased perhaps 50 percent due to the continued effects of pumping the water in the upper valley)."

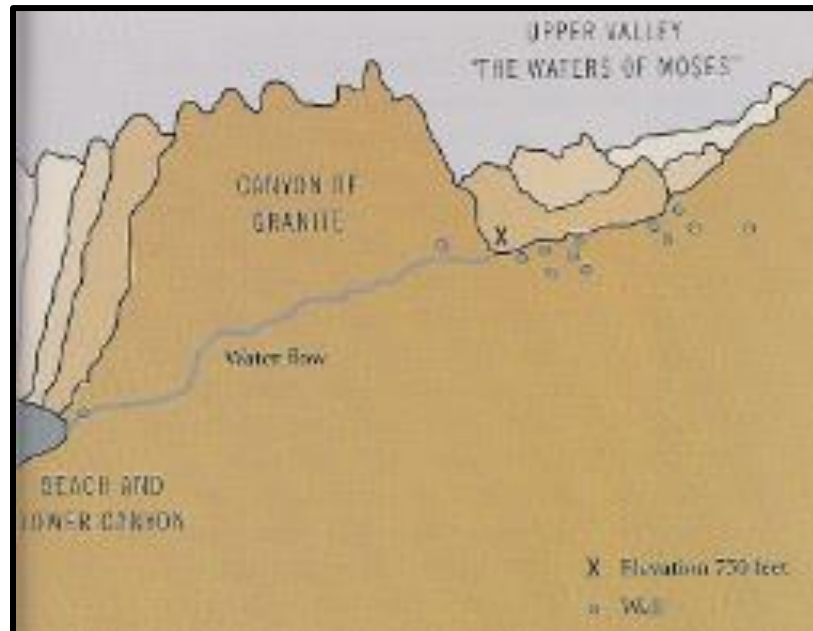
A consulting geologist, Wes Garner, gave the following explanation for this water system (see illustration):

When the occasional rains fall in the long wadi to the north, they are trapped in the sands. This watershed of sand runs southward for 20 miles until its downward course to the sea is blocked by the granite underpinnings of the towering cliffs to the west. (Richard Wellington, Potter's writing and exploring companion, has estimated the size of the watershed to be approximately 105 square miles). This subterranean rock runs deep beneath the surface, forming a dam. The subsurface waters are thus trapped at the upper end of the canyon in an underground reservoir. The canyon and its stream run westward from the area of this underground reservoir for 33/4 miles, starting at an elevation of 750 feet and ending at sea level in the Gulf of Aqaba. The floor of the canyon descends steadily. Within a few hundred feet, a spring begins to flow as the canyon floor drops to the level of the underground reservoir. The waters form the small river that runs above ground almost the rest of the way. At the point where the river comes to a level grade in the canyon floor, it runs just underground, leaving the soil moist. But soon the grade increases in its descent, and the river reappears. It is last seen as it reaches a gravel bed in the lower part of the canyon about 3/8 mile from the beach. From there, the water runs underground to the gulf where it feeds a well—used by the coast guard post a short distance away. (see illustration)

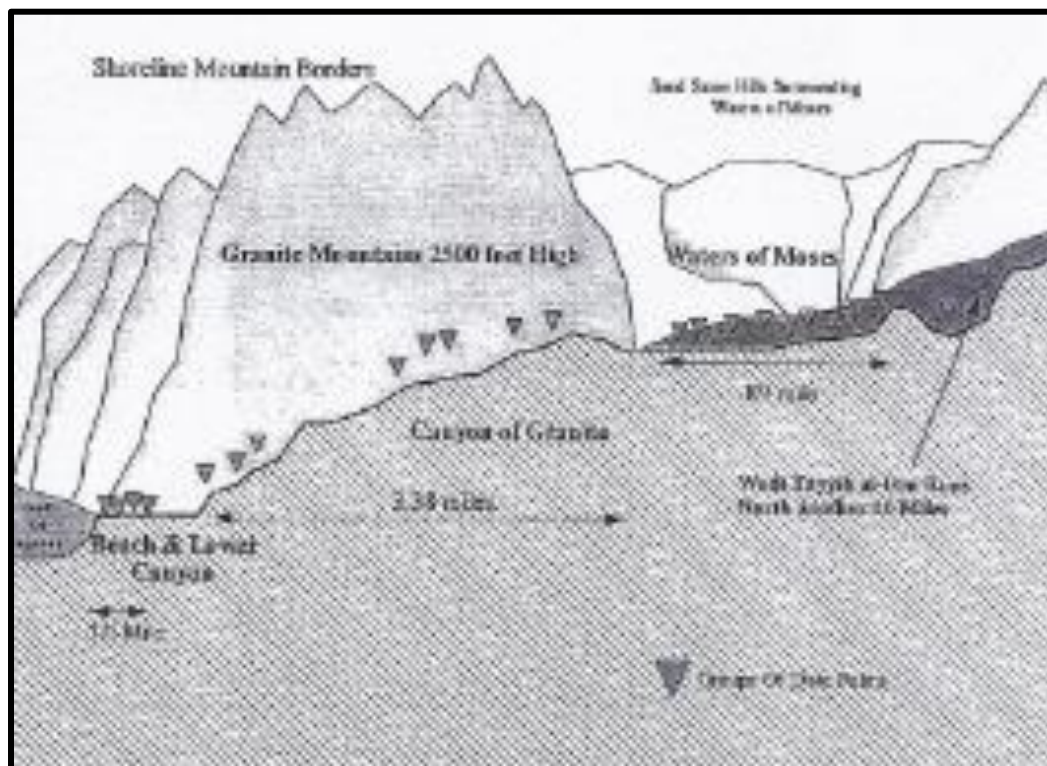


Sketch of the winding 33/4 mile course of the canyon, Tayyib al-Isim (east-west). The exit on the Gulf of Aqaba lies southwest of the point at which one enters the canyon from the upper valley. Sketch courtesy of Timothy Sedor. [George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Num.1, FARMS, 1989, p. 57]

The narrow gorge or valley, cut through a massive granite mountain, was composed of three sections starting from Potter and Thorsted's beach area on the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba: (1) the lower canyon, (2) the canyon of granite, and (3) the upper valley, (see illustration).



Cross-section of the canyon showing the drop of the stream from the upper end (750 feet) to sea level. Courtesy of George D. Potter. [George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Num.1, FARMS, 1989, p. 63]



Cross Section Model of the Valley Lemuel. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, *Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 69]

The upper valley (or what local people called the Waters of Moses) was situated at the south end of a twelve mile long wadi--known as Wadi Tayyib al-Isim (see illustration).



George D Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Num. 1, FARMS, 1999, p. 58)

This upper valley spread out over approximately one square mile with several hundred palm trees and 12 wells. The canyon of granite consisted of an approximately 33/4 mile long fracture in the granite mountain which permitted the stream to flow towards the Red Sea. The 2,000 foot height of the canyon walls provided a dramatic shelter from the intense 120 degree Fahrenheit heat and torrential winds. The lower canyon walls ended within 60 feet of the waters of the gulf.

If Lehi's camp were upstream a bit from the mouth, in the shade of the precipitous cliffs, as one might suppose, the stream would still have appeared to Lehi to flow right into the Gulf. However the reason the river does not reach the Red Sea today is simple. The elevation of the floor of the canyon is not the same as it was at the time of Lehi. According to geologist Garner:

in Lehi's era this lowest part of the canyon was submerged by the Red Sea. Where the river ends today was below the surface of the Red Sea in ancient times. . . . During the 2,600 years since Lehi would have camped in the area, the canyon floor has risen out of the Red Sea, perhaps as much as 200 to 400 feet.

Again, we believe that the river does not flow the same today as it did in 600 B.C. or even in 1970 (A.D.). Evidence suggests that up to just a few years ago a greater volume of water ran through the canyon. such a river would have undoubtedly run the entire distance to the Red Sea regardless of the changes in height of the floor of the lower canyon.

Even though only a small flow remains from what was probably a much larger stream, this desert river flows continuously, and, in so doing, it washes away any assertions that there are no qualified candidates for the river of Laman in Midian. Even the name of the Wadi (Tayyib al-Isim) possibly alludes to this unique attribute. Its name is now written *Tayyib*, or "good" a rather odd placename. It is possible that over time, the name has become confused with another arabic placename, *Thaab*, meaning "flowing water."^{xxiv} [George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 8, Num.1, FARMS, 1989, pp. 54-63] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 4:2; 3 Nephi 25:4]

1 Nephi 2:9 **Fountain of the Red Sea:**

Nephi mentions that "the waters of the river [Laman] emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:9). According to Hugh Nibley, the 100 mile long northeastern extension of the Red Sea, (or the sector where Lehi's party possibly first came upon the sea) is not an open sea at all, and is not the Red Sea, . . . but opens out to the sea at its mouth. A glance at the map will show that there is a northwestern extension of the Red Sea also, closely resembling the one on the northeast. This western arm anciently had the mysterious and much-discussed name of "Yam Suph," Sea (or fountain) of Weeds (or rushes)." If the one on the west was called a "yam" (or fountain), what is more natural than that its twin gulf to the east should bear the same designation? [Hugh Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, F.A.R.M.S., p. 76]

1 Nephi 2:9 **O That Thou Mightest Be Like unto This River, Continually Running into the Fountain of All Righteousness:**

After fleeing from the land of Jerusalem, Lehi's family came down by the Red Sea and traveled in the wilderness until they came to a valley with a river of water (1 Nephi 2:5-6) After offering sacrifices and giving thanks to the Lord, Lehi spoke to his eldest birthright son, Laman, saying: "O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness" (1 Nephi 2:9). This statement was obviously metaphorical, but the extent of this metaphor is worth investigation.

According to Ted Chandler, Nephi (and presumably Lehi) intentionally paralleled his narrative with historical narratives. Thus we find that in their exodus from what was considered by the children of Israel as the Promised Land, Lehi's group traveled a course opposite to that of the Israelites when they originally crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan near Jericho.

With respect to the historical subject of "fountains" Josephus describes "a fountain by Jericho." Originally, this fountain of water had "a sickly and corruptive nature," causing harm to vegetation and new-born children. Elisha prayed over the fountain and made it "wholesome and fruitful." Josephus says that the ground watered by the fountain grew "most excellent gardens that are thick set with trees," and that the area produced honey and balsam. According to Chandler's proposed exodus route, Lehi's family would have viewed this area on their journey into the wilderness.

In another reference to Israelite history and fountains, Josephus says that after Samson repented of his pride, God "raised him up a plentiful fountain of sweet water at a certain rock; whence it was that Samson called the place the Jaw-bone, and so it is called to this day." As William Whiston, the translator, pointed out, the Hebrew word for "jaw-bone" is Lehi: "This fountain, called Lehi, or the jaw-bone, is still in being. . . ." (See Josephus 12984, 1:77, 329; 2:334-35)

[Ted Chandler, "Recent Defenses of the Book of Mormon," www.mormonstudies.com/defense2.htm, p. 1] [See the commentary on the name of Lehi in 1 Nephi 1:4

Note* The Bible refers to this incident in Judges 15:16-19:

And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi. And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day.

The footnote at the bottom of the LDS Bible defines "En-hakkore as "the spring of him who calls." So, one might ask, Could Lehi's use of the "fountain" metaphor be alluding to any of the following:

- (1) Samson's repentance episode?
- (2) the "sweet waters" which were an answer to Samson's prayers to avoid death?
- (3) the name "Lehi" which was where Samson was miraculously delivered by the Lord?
- (4) the Lord's restitution to life of the sickly waters by Elisha?

In other words, was Lehi metaphorically asking Laman to realize that he had been miraculously delivered by the Lord and to repent and live up to his responsibilities as the eldest son of "Lehi."? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 2:10 **Like This Valley, Firm and Steadfast, and Immovable:**

Lehi rhetorically challenged Lemuel to be like "this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable" (1 Nephi 2:10). Hugh Nibley questions who, west of Suez, would ever think of such an image? We, of course, know all about everlasting hills and immovable mountains . . . but who ever heard of a steadfast valley? The Arabs to be sure. For them the valley, and not the mountain, is the symbol of permanence. It is not the mountain of refuge to which they flee, but the valley of refuge. The great depressions that run for hundreds of miles across the Arabian peninsula pass for the most part through plains devoid of mountains. It is in these ancient riverbeds alone that water, vegetation, and animal life are to be found when all else is desolation. they alone offer men and animals escape from their enemies and deliverance from death by hunger and thirst. The qualities of firmness and steadfastness, of reliable protection, refreshment, and sure refuge when all else fails, which other nations attribute naturally to mountains, the Arabs attribute to valleys. [Hugh Nibley, An Approach to the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 234-235]

Note* There are not any verses in the Bible that speak of a "firm valley" or a "steadfast valley," or an "immovable valley."

1 Nephi 2:10 **This Valley, Firm and Steadfast, and Immovable (Potter Theory):**

Lehi described the valley as "firm, steadfast, and immovable" (1 Nephi 2:10). According to George Potter, while the very image of Arabia is that of sand dunes, desert plains and sand stone hills melting away by the wind into the great sand deserts, it would seem unlikely that such a valley could be found. Thus the valley of Lemuel must have been impressive. As Albert Einstein noted, "Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted counts." A garden-variety valley would not have found its way to the plates.

The grandeur of the valley, which I believe was the site of Lehi's first wilderness camp, is difficult to portray in words or even photographs. The valley consists of three sections. I refer to these as the Upper Valley or the Waters of Moses (9/10ths of a mile long), the Canyon of Granite (the valley of Lemuel proper, 33/8ths miles long), and the Lower Canyon (3/8ths of a mile long). These three geological features are found together at the western end of the Wadi Tayyib al-Isim (**see illustration**).

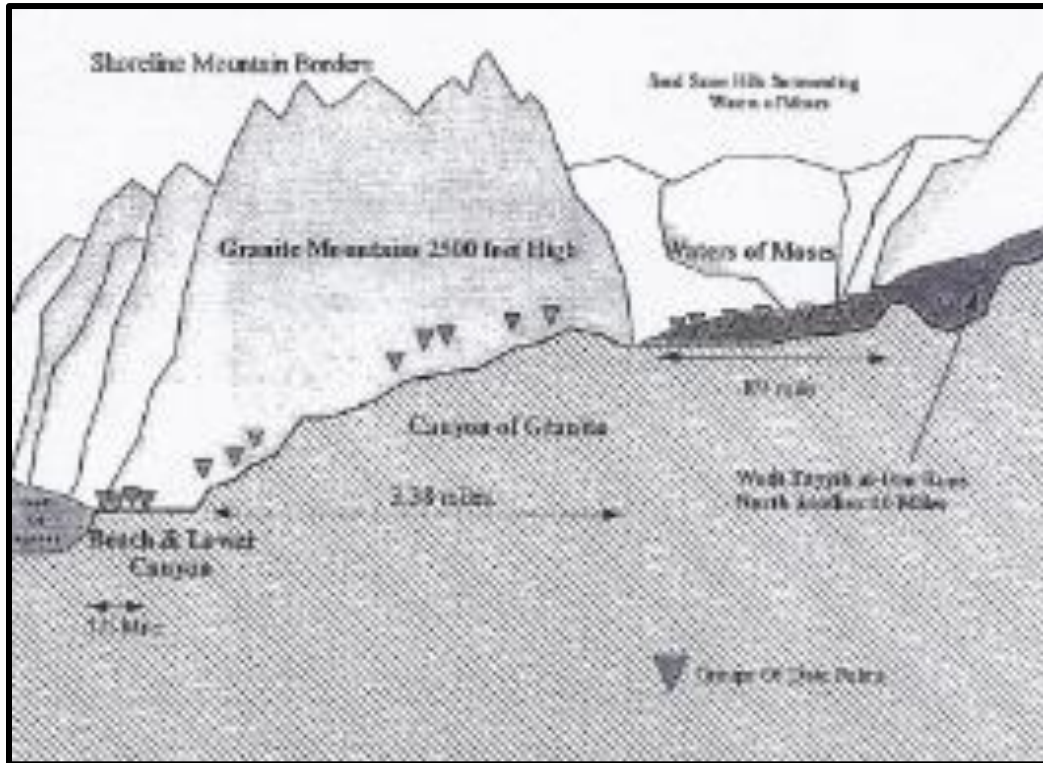
Coming from the north, the first section of what I call the "Valley Lemuel" that Lehi would have entered would have been what local residents call the Waters of Moses. This oasis is located in the last mile of the wadi Tayyib al-Isim before it veers west and enters the shoreline mountains where a narrow canyon leads through the mountains to the sea. This upper valley is a pleasant jewel, with several hundred palm trees and twelve wells, spread out over approximately half a square mile. The date palms and the wells suggested to us that this could have been the second campsite of Moses after crossing the Red Sea. The site he called "Elim." Moses recorded finding twelve wells and three score and ten palm trees (Exodus 15:27). As implied in the name (Waters of Moses), the idea that Moses camped here was not new to the local "Midianites."

The second section I call the "Canyon of Granite." This great fracture in the granite mountain border provides a passage to the sea. The "Canyon of Granite" provides a pleasant environment year round, even during the terrible heat of an Arabian Summer. On several occasions I have escorted groups into the Canyon of granite. Each time those in the party are astounded by the sight of the canyon. Not once has anyone seeing the canyon questioned its qualifications as a candidate for the "firm, steadfast, and immovable" valley of Lemuel. The towering cliff walls of the valley are so tall that it is difficult to photograph the canyon. Small groupings of date palms, berries, gourds, patches of tall grass and grain and other plants are found intermittently throughout the Canyon of Granite. . . . Temperatures average between 115° and 125° Fahrenheit in the Midian region of Arabia during the summer months. The Canyon of Granite would have been an ideal camp in which to wait through these months before continuing south in the Fall.

The final section of the "Valley Lemuel" I term the "Lower Canyon" (see illustration) and the beach (see illustration). The Granite Canyon ends in a section that has a flat floor a few feet above sea level. This level area of the canyon runs for about 3/8ths of a mile. This is perhaps the most impressive section of the canyon. Here the height of the canyon walls are at their maximum. The granite cliffs rise over 2,000 feet straight up from the canyon's floor. The floor of the lower canyon was underwater during the time of Lehi. Dr. Wes Garner noted that the valley floor has risen over two hundred feet since Lehi's era. The smooth stone bed of the lower canyon and the cave-like undercuts at the base of the walls would have been caused by wave action over countless years. Yet even now, the lower part of the canyon starts within sixty feet from the waters of the Gulf. Not

surprisingly, the canyon ends just as Nephi indicated, with the stream "empt[ying] into the Red Sea. The beautiful palm laden beach cove, with its narrow canyon exit from giant granite cliffs is a spectacular scene.

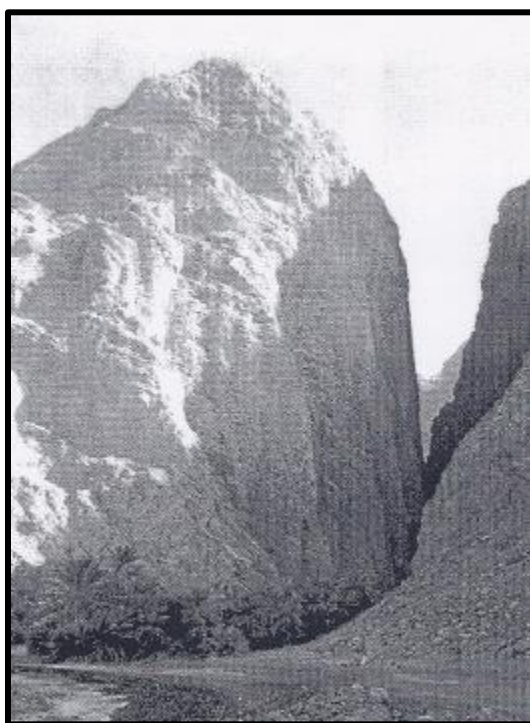
Does the river run through a firm, steadfast, and immovable valley? Yes. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, pp. 48-49, 81, 65-73]



Cross Section Model of the Valley Lemuel. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 69]



West most of three groves of date palms found in the upper valley or Waters of Moses. Photo by JS. [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 49]



Shoreline ending of the Wadi Tayyib al-Isim. Photo by GW [George Potter with Richard Wellington, Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 48]

1 Nephi 2:11 **This He Spake Because of the Stiffneckedness of Laman and Lemuel:**

“The neck typifies the spirit and attitude of nations and men, usually denoting callousness and hardness (2 Ne. 6:10; Prov. 29:1). Men having necks of ‘iron sinew’ (1 Ne. 20:4) or having ‘stiffness of necks’ (2 Ne. 25:12; 1 Ne. 2:11) are those who are unable to glance sideways at the concerns of their neighbor or to look upward toward their Creator.” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Donald W. Parry, *A Guide to Scriptural Symbols*, “Neck”)

1 Nephi 2:14 **The Valley of Lemuel :**

The "valley of Lemuel" (1 Nephi 2:14) seemed to be a safe place for Lehi to rest. Its location according to some was probably "three days" beyond the governing borders of Judah (which stopped at the tip of the Red Sea) and therefore presumably beyond the reach of any political powers in Jerusalem that might harm him or his group. Just as important, or more, the valley was blessed with a "continual" flow of water (see 1 Nephi 2:9). What is also important to consider here is that this valley is situated in the ancient land of Midian.

According to the Hiltons, this area in northwest Saudi Arabia had a vast livestock population: the armies of Israel, after conquering Midian, took as booty 675,000 sheep plus much other treasure (Numbers 31:43). Jethro, "the priest of Midian" and father-in-law of Moses, lived as a Bedouin in the land of Midian. (Exodus 2:16, 3:1). Concerning the presence of other people in Lehi's time, there can be no doubt that nomadic Bedouin tribes occupied the Arabian peninsula from ancient times.

[Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, In Search of Lehi's Trail, pp. 27, 28, 33]

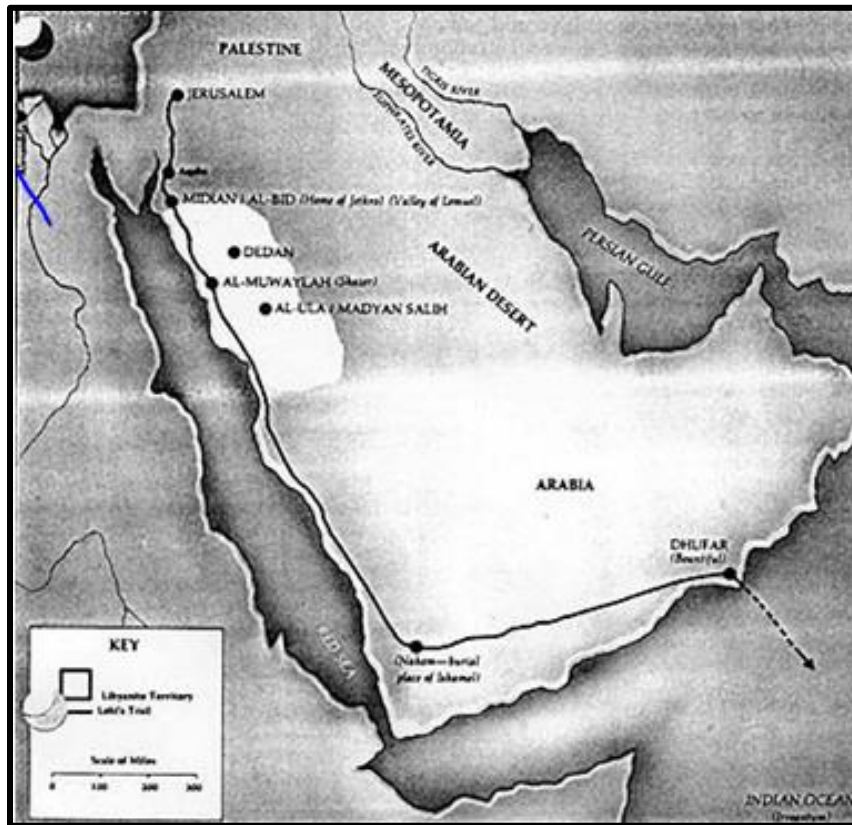
Lynn and Hope Hilton note that from earliest times, the Midianites lived on the east shore of the Gulf of Aqaba, ca. 1,500 to 1,000 B.C. We know of them through 68 separate Bible references from Genesis to Habakkuk.^{xxv} Although they were caravaneers and stock raisers, and somewhat nomadic, they did build cities, the foremost, their capital, Jethro of Midian, being located at al-Bad, Saudi Arabia. They left an extensive archaeological record buried in the ruins of 56 ancient city sites which have been identified as Midianite.^{xxvi} Their nation was bounded by Wadi Tayyib al-Isim ("The good name") on the north, the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea on the west, Wadis Tiryam and Sadr on the south, and the desert on the east

Midianites are descendants of Midian, the son of Abraham and his plural wife Keturah (Genesis 25:1-4). In the days of Moses, the Midianites were a powerful people, kin to the Hebrews, but often in conflict with them. Midianites have been identified in the Bible as early as the second millennium B.C. They are mentioned by name as early as 1700 B.C. as those who carried Joseph, son of Jacob, into slavery in Egypt (Genesis 37:28). Their archaeological remains are found today. In contrast, no Midianite shards were discovered by the 1980 Saudi Archaeological survey done in the area north of Tayyib al-Isim or south of Wadi Sadr.^{xxvii} These limits identify the boundaries of ancient Midian.

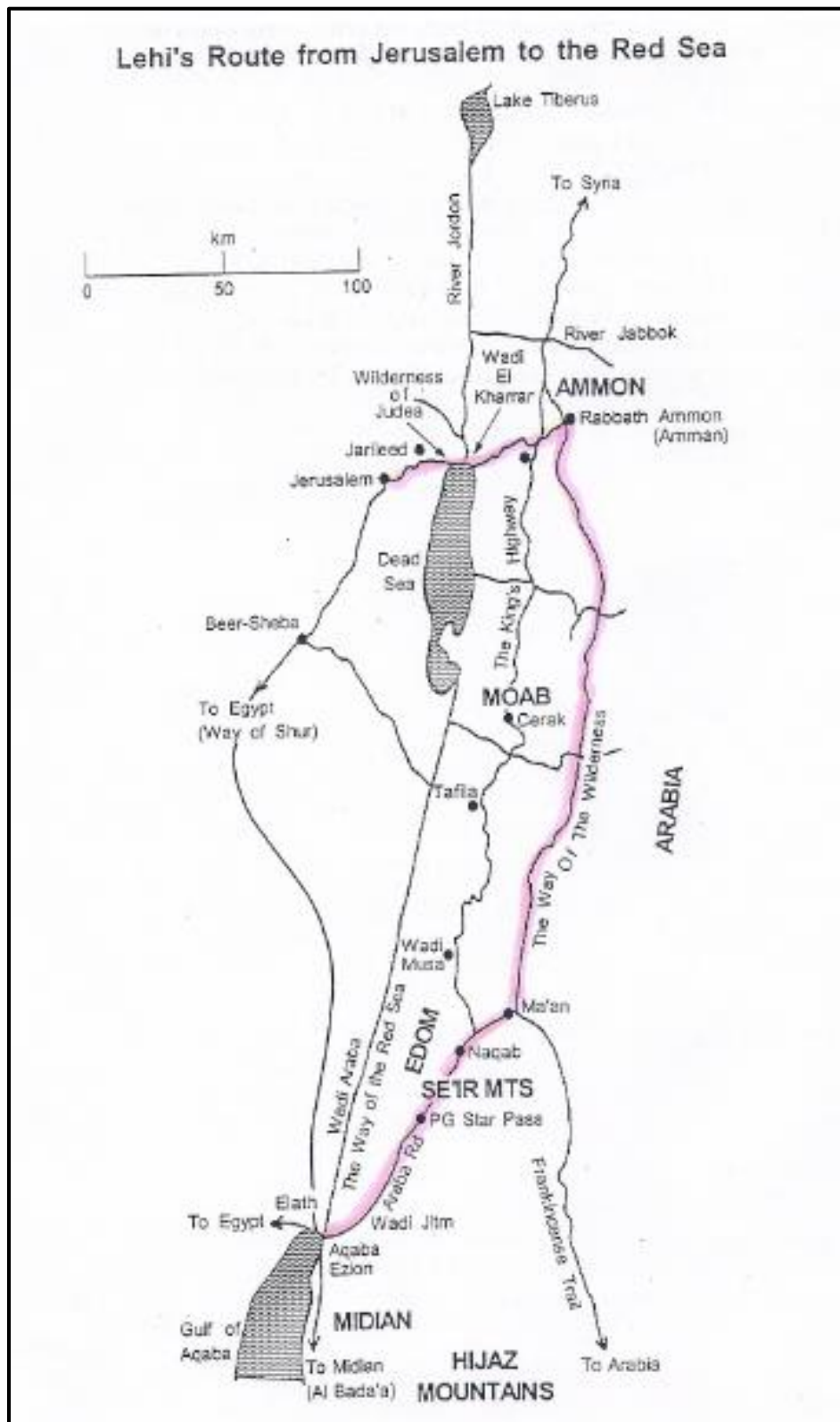
The Midianites were absorbed by succeeding civilizations, including the Dedanites. The Dedanite kings were in power when Lehi and Nephi made their visit about 600 B.C. However, when Lehi arrived in this area, he would have probably lived among the descendants of Midian while he remained in the Valley of Lemuel. The Dedanites prospered in this area from approximately 1,000 to 500 B.C. We know of the Dedanites because the Bible makes eleven references to them between Genesis and Ezekiel.^{xxviii} The location of the ancient capital city of Dedan^{xxix} is just four kilometers north from the modern city of al-Ula. Later, after the fall of Dedan, the Lihyanites built their capitol on top of Dedan. The Lihyan ruin is called al-Kieribah.

[Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia, 1996, pp. 78-80]

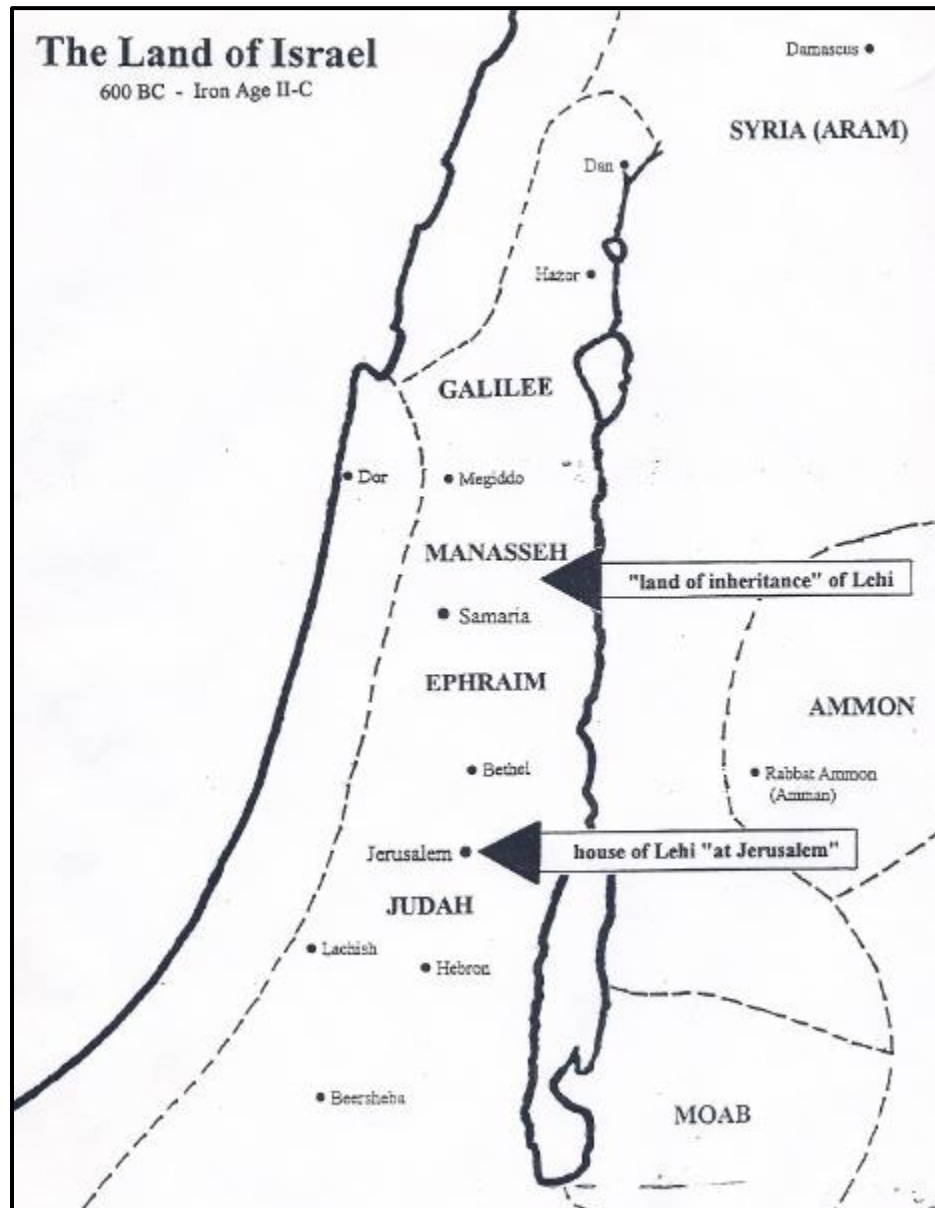
Note* The Book of Mormon reader should take note of the striking coincidences here between the life of Moses and the life of Nephi. Moses and Nephi were both forced to flee to the same land of Midian (see Exodus 2:15). While there they both were married (see Exodus 2:21), both were in the company of a father holding the priesthood (see Exodus 2:16), both talked with the Lord (see Exodus 3:2), and both were prepared and called to lead their respective children of Israel through the wilderness to the promised land (see Exodus 3:7-10). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the Potter commentary on 1 Nephi 16:14]



Kingdom of Liyan (Lehi-an) 500 B.C. - 200 B.C. and "Liyanite Territory." These illustrations show that the area where Lehi first camped was associated with the Land of Midian (the land where Jethro lived) and the name of Lehi. [Hope A. and Lynn M. Hilton, "The Liyanites," p. 7]



[George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]



1 Nephi 3:16 **Let us go down to the land of our father's inheritance (Illustration):** "The Land of Israel 600 B.C." [Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Lehi's House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance," 1999, illustrative map in an unpublished 1993 paper]

1 Nephi 3:16 **Let Us Go Down to the Land of Our Father's Inheritance (Chadwick Theory):**

According to Jeffrey Chadwick, while the text specifies that Lehi "dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days" (1 Nephi 1:4) and had "his own house at Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 1:7), apparently the bulk of his fortune reposed at his "land of inheritance" because Lehi "knew that Jerusalem must be destroyed because of the wickedness of the people" (1 Nephi 3:16-17). This land of inheritance was apparently some distance from the "land of Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 3:1,9,11,16,22-23).

Based on archaeological, geographical, and historical evidence accumulated from the study of the old tribal areas of Manasseh, Ephraim, Judah and Jerusalem, Chadwick postulates the following:

1. About the time of Lehi's young adulthood (630 B.C.), the Assyrian withdrawal from the Land of Israel left Judean king Josiah with control not only of Judean territory, but of northern Israelite territories such as Ephraim and Manasseh as well. Thus, after 630 B.C., the Manassite "land of inheritance" would once again have been available for claim by Lehi and the sons who would be born to him.

2. Upon being informed by the Lord that "Jerusalem must be destroyed," Lehi secured his supplies of precious metals (gold, silver, etc.) by hiding them at a location outside the city--the "land of inheritance" which he possessed in Manasseh.

[Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Lehi's House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance," 1999, pp. 1-12, unpublished paper]

1 Nephi 3:16 **Let Us Go Down to the Land of Our Father's Inheritance (Christensen Theory):**

B. Keith Christensen writes:

By the start of Zedekiah's reign, Judah was encircled by Egyptian and Babylonian forces except to the south. Babylon's vassal ally, Edom, was to the southeast. There is no indication of Lehi's journey (or Lehi's sons return to their father's land of inheritance) being contested. It was only to the south that the land was generally secure. This favors Lehi's land of inheritance being in that direction.

Geographically, Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, stood at an elevation of 2593 feet. It was guarded on two sides by deep valleys. To go either east or west of Jerusalem, Lehi's sons would have had to have gone up over the mountains that formed these valleys. The land north of Jerusalem was generally higher than the rest of Judah. To the east beyond the heights on that side, the terrain of course goes down, but to the Dead Sea and the Wilderness of Judah, unlikely places for a land of inheritance. To the west of Jerusalem, beyond the heights that formed the valley on that side, the land slopes toward the Mediterranean, but Egyptian and Babylonian armies in that direction would have precluded the land of inheritance being there. It seems that the only possible direction from Jerusalem to Lehi's land of inheritance would have been south.

Beersheba was the southernmost district in King David's kingdom and referred to as "the Negeb of Judah." King Solomon paid particular attention to the Negeb, constructing a network of small forts to protect the caravan routes and establishing agricultural settlements. . . . About 20 to 30 miles south of Beersheba, there began a region that the Bible calls the Wilderness of Zin (Numbers 13:21; 20:1; 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51; Joshua 15:1,3) and beyond that was the Wilderness of Paran (Genesis 21:21; Numbers 10:12; Deuteronomy 1:1; I Samuel 25:1; I Kings 11:18). . . .

[B. Keith Christensen, The Unknown Witness, pp. 46,53-55,227, unpublished]

Note* King Solomon was also protecting the mining industry of that region. A number of sites have been suggested as the location of his mines, including the workings at the Timna valley near Eilat.

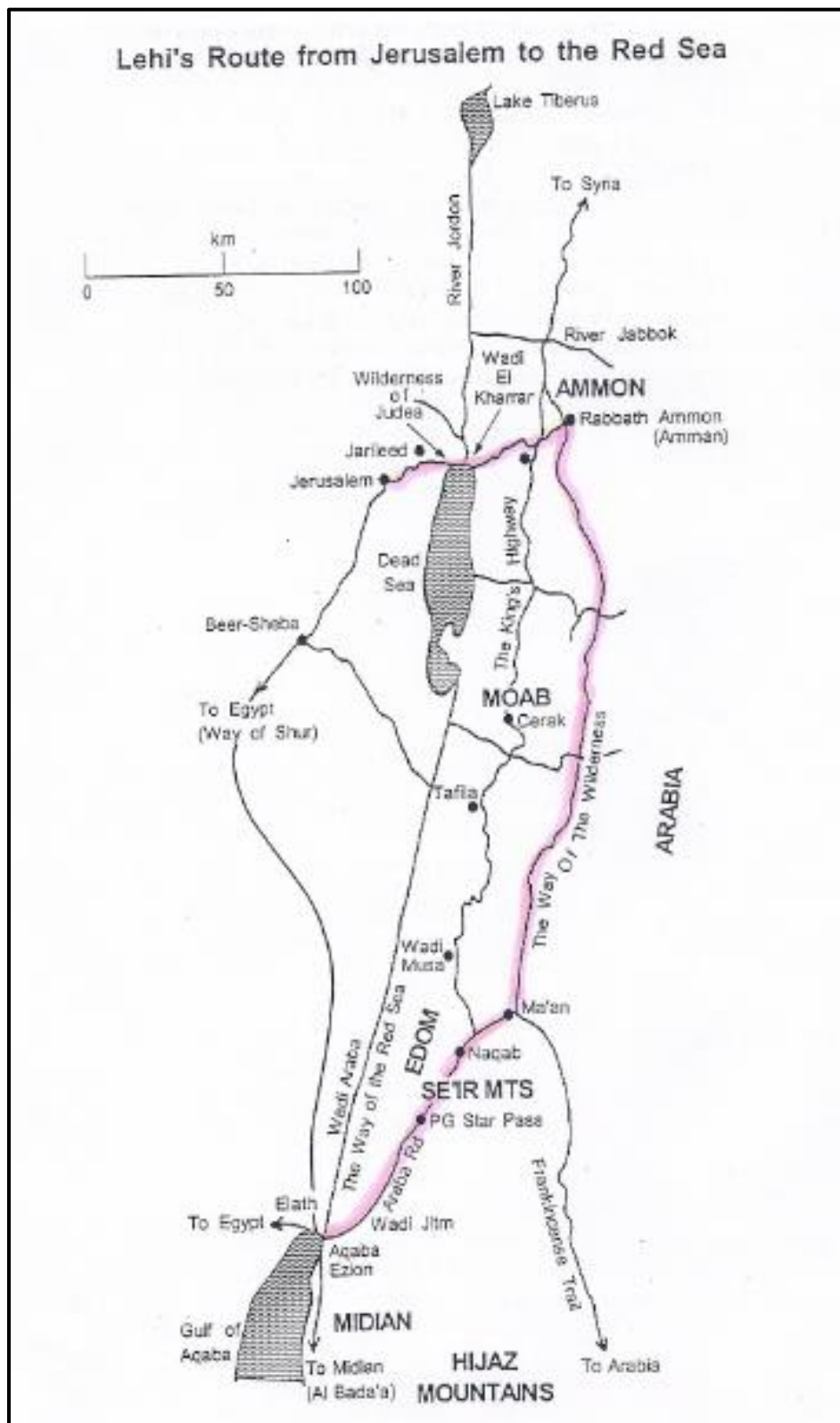


Cave near Jerusalem

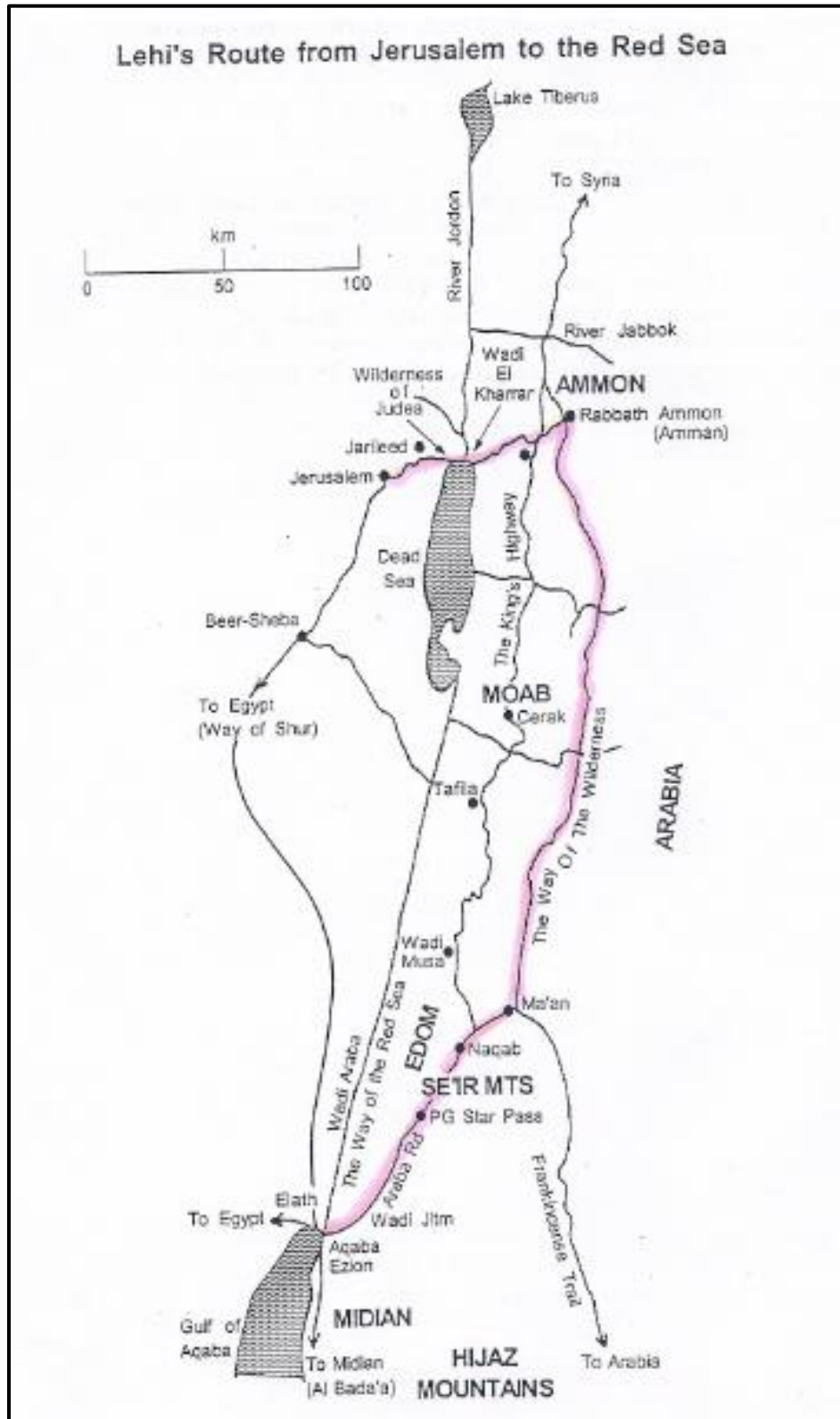
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According to Hugh Nibley, since the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* started to appear many years ago, its readers have been treated to a constant flow of official reports on newly-discovered caves in and near Jerusalem. The country is peppered with them; for the area southwest of the city, "it is difficult to give an account of the principal excavations of this type [of caves] without appearing to use the language of exaggeration. . . . To attempt a descriptive catalogue of these caves would be altogether futile. The mere labor of searching the hills for examples . . . would be almost endless." . . . But who in America knew of these hiding places a hundred years ago?

[Hugh Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, F.A.R.M.S., p. 93-94]



Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea--The Way of the Wilderness. Also showing wadi El-Kharrar and the Wilderness of Judea. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]



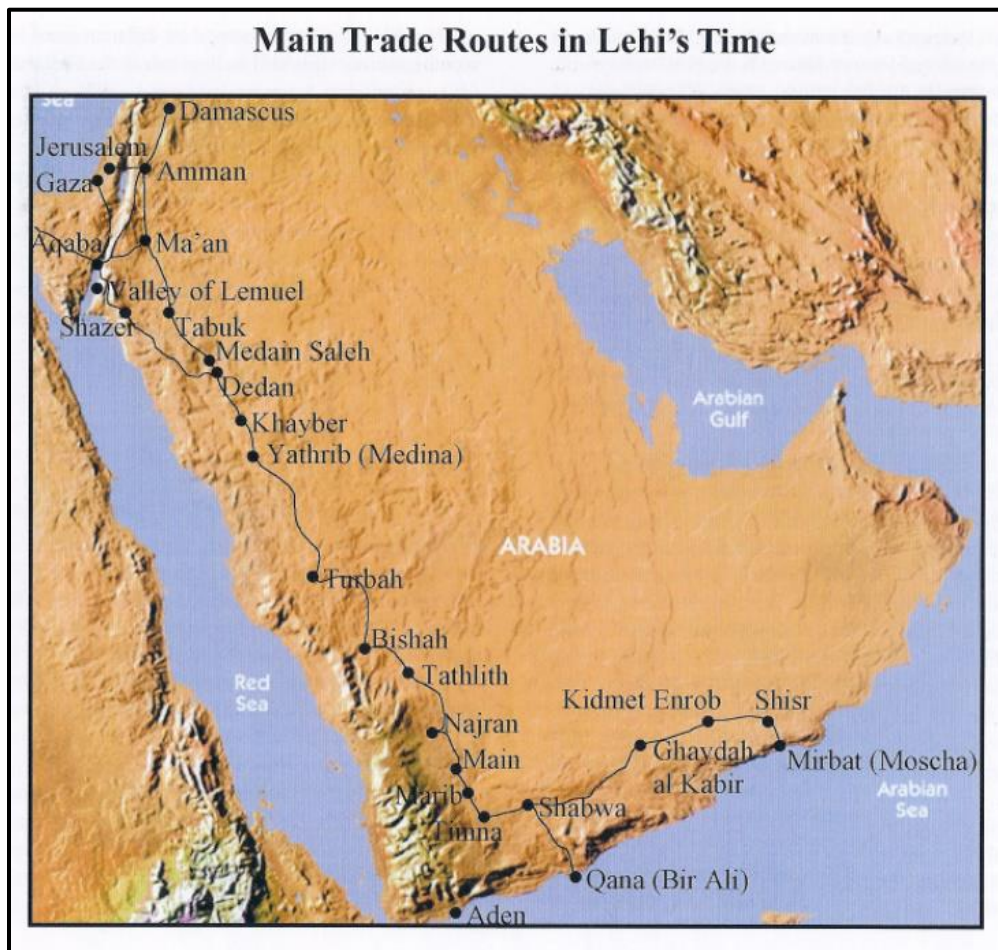
Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea--The Way of the Wilderness. Also showing wadi El-Kharrar and the Wilderness of Judea. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]



George D Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Num. 1, FARMS, 1999, p. 58)

While seemingly there should be no need for another map here, the events that happened while in the Valley of Lemuel might have a tremendous bearing on where the land Bountiful might be located. Beyond the acquisition of the Brass Plates and the family of Ishmael, there are some other factors that should be addressed:

- (1) Nephi was taken up onto an exceedingly high mountain (similar to Moses). There is mounting evidence that Mt. Sinai was located in the land of Midian, where the Valley of Lemuel was located. (See my Commentary) Nephi had a vision concerning his future.
- (2) In that vision he saw that he would be led to a land of promise across great waters. This would necessitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, materials and manpower in order to build and then navigate an ocean-going ship. There were only two places which offered those circumstances.
 - (a) The first was at the port of Sidon, which was managed by the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians ruled the seas of the Mediterranean and beyond. They were experts in the manufacture and use of brass (copper + tin from England). The scope and manner of their navigation was kept secret, but they were capable of navigating in all situations (day/night, stars/no stars, sun/no sun). They got their name from a purple dye they extracted in a special manner from tiny shellfish. They ruled the Mediterranean for over a Millennium (roughly 1200 BC to 200 BC). At the time of Lehi they were commissioned by the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho II to circumnavigate the continent of Africa and report back to him, which they did.
 - (b) The second possibility was at the end of the Frankincense Trail, where ships carried their valuable cargo over the oceans.
Lehi might have been waiting for the Lord to tell him which way to go.
- (3) Nephi and Lehi had acquired the Brass Plates. It would be advantageous while in a semi-comfortable location, to read, teach, and implement the commandments of the Lord.
- (4) Since the Lord directed Lehi to go to the end of the Frankincense Trail, and then across the oceans, he would need some sort of navigational instrument. Lehi received the brass Liahona.



Main Trade Routes in Lehi's Time [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, p. 57]



When the time came, Lehi's party left the valley of Lemuel and traveled to their next halting place where Nephi notes, "we did pitch our tents again and we did call the name of the place Shazer" (1 Nephi 16:13). According to Potter and Wellington, while the number of helpful pieces of information Nephi gives about this stage of the journey are scant, they are nevertheless insightful:

A. *They departed into the wilderness* (1 Nephi 16:12).

From the valley of Lemuel (proposed wadi Tayyib-al-Isim) Nephi notes that they traveled south-southeast. Taking this heading would have led them back into the mountains and towards the huge wadi Ifal which runs north/south some 13 miles from where they were camping and towards the town of al Bada'a. Al Bada'a was a major stop on the Frankincense trail^{xxx} some 20 miles to the southeast. Lehi or Nephi may have even visited it during their long stay in the valley of Lemuel. The terrain between the valley and al Bada'a is essentially the same as they had encountered entering the valley; mountains interspersed with winding wadis, and the occasional stunted tree. Certainly this was still "wilderness," the very word Diodorus uses to describe this area around wadi Ifal.^{xxxi}

B. *They traveled in "nearly a south-southeast direction"* (1 Nephi 16:13).

Nephi tells us that the trail they took ran in the direction nearly south-southeast. A bearing of south-southeast is $157\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ from north. This bearing took Lehi's family down one of the branches of the frankincense trail. In fact, various Arab geographers have given us the names and order of the rest stops along this branch. (see chart above) However, some items of caution regarding direction should be noted:

a. "Nearly south-southeast" could mean a bearing anywhere between 147° and 170° .

b. We do not know by what method Nephi was measuring north. He may have been referring to the north celestial pole (pole star)^{xxxii} or to magnetic north. Magnetic north varies from true north by a little over 3° at the Gulf of Aqaba.

c. Nephi gave only one direction to cover the entire trip from the valley of Lemuel to Nahom, a journey of approximately 1200 miles. There were obviously twists and turns in the journey which would allow the family to follow the logical course.

d. Nephi wrote his account on metal plates over 30 years after he made the trip to Shazer (2 Nephi 5:28, 34). The details he chose not to include are unknown to us.

C. *A "commandment" to "take [their] journey" "on the morrow." They traveled "for the space of four days"* (1 Nephi 16:13).

From the text of 1 Nephi 16:9, 11-13 it would appear that prior to Lehi receiving a "commandment from the Lord "by night" to depart from the valley of Lemuel (Tayyib al-Isim) "on the morrow," that the family did not know that they would be departing the following day. Dismantling their camp and packing for their journey would have taken some time, however, they would have probably reached al-Bada'a the following day. Since al-Bada'a was on the main trail, the family would then have been synchronized with the subsequent rest stops which travelers were accustomed to reaching after each day's journey. Day 3 would have taken them to as-Swer, and by the end of day 4 they would have reached al-Agharr and "pitched their tents."

Wadi Al-Gharr has 18 miles of cultivation running through it, including thousands of date palms. There is simply no other place in the northwest corner of Arabia that the expression, "Shazer," which means "a valley with trees," more aptly describes. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 104]

D. *They stopped at a place they called "Shazer" (1 Nephi 16:13).*

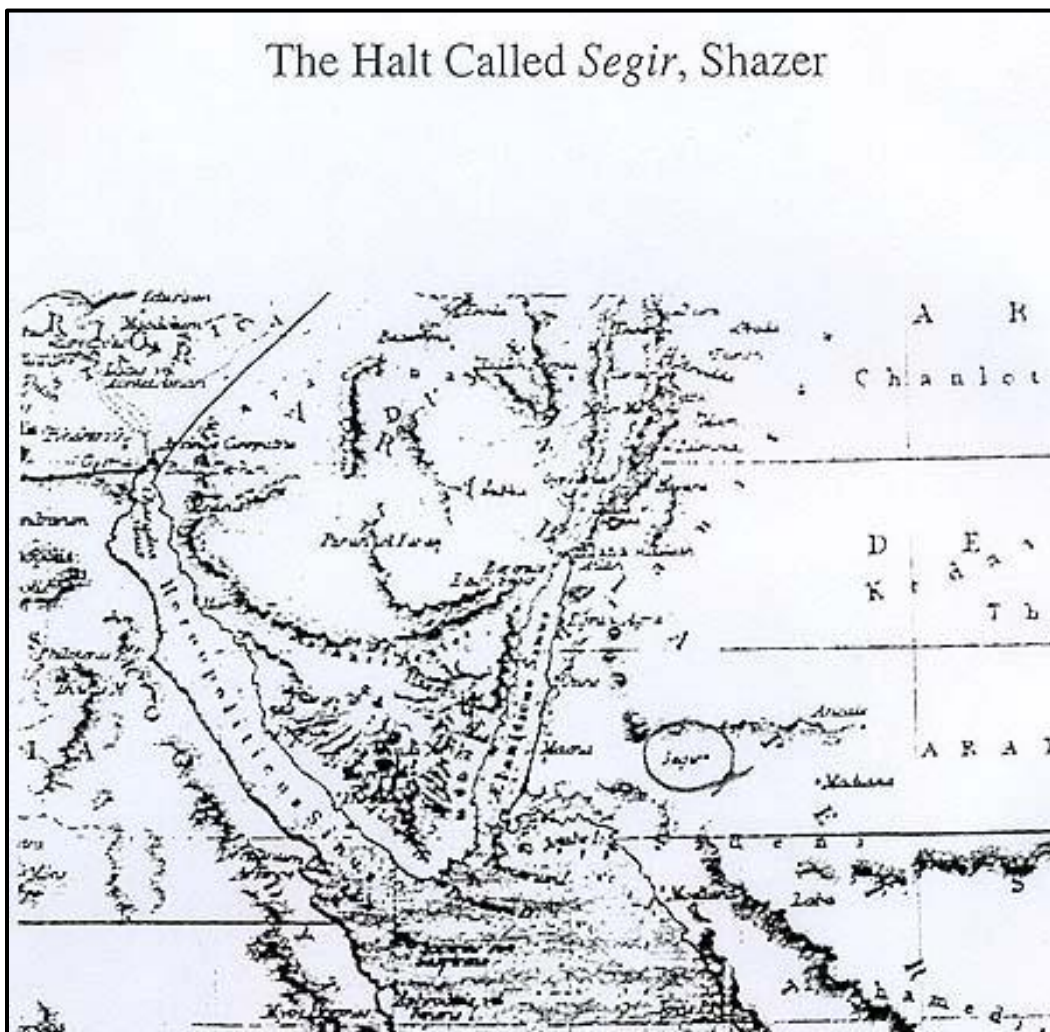
Could Lehi have named the location "Shazer" because of some obvious feature which might have survived to this day? Dr. Hugh Nibley wrote of the meaning of the name Shazer:

The first important stop after Lehi's party had left their base camp was at a place called *Shazer*. The name is intriguing. The combination *shajer* is quite common in Palestinian place names; it is a collective meaning "trees," and many Arabs (especially in Egypt) pronounce it *shazher*. It appears in *Thoghret-as-Sajur* (the Pass of Trees), which in the ancient Shaghur, written *Segor* in the sixth century. (Nibley, (1) pp. 78-79)

The De L'isle's map of 1701^{xxxiii} shows this interchangeable situation of Shajer and Segor by using both names for a given location (see map #1). Nigel Groom uses a number of variations of the place name: Shajir, Shajirah, Shajra, Ashjar, Mushjir and Mashjarah.^{xxxiv} These variations are explained by the fact that Arabic is a vocalized language where the vowels are interchangeable. While Groom uses "Shajir" and Nibley "Shajer," both words are identical. Groom's definition of Shajir is almost identical to Nibley's, being: "a valley or area abounding with trees and shrubs."^{xxxv} The plural for "trees" is pronounced "Ash-jar" by Saudi Arabs and "Ash-gar" by Egyptian Arabs. This leads to Groom's variant spelling of "Ashjar."

A variant spelling of "shasar" means a "cleft." Dr. Nibley also indicates that the name Shazer might be "connected somehow or other and denoting either seepage--a weak but reliable water supply--or a clump of trees." (Nibley, (1) pp. 78-79) In Hebrew the word "Shazer" is associated with twisting or intertwining.

George Potter happened to stumble across an old map made by Ptolemy (see map #2). On this map there is a location of Segir (the old name for Shajir) past al-Bada'a and to the east of Macna (Maqna). Musil commented on Ptolemy's record: "That the names of these towns or settlements in many cases denote only the more important wells or camping places is evident from the character of the country."^{xxxvi} Obviously Lehi's journey far predates this map, but to Potter and Wellington, it was encouraging to see that historically, the first halt after al-Bada'a was considered worthy of the name "tree, the same name which Lehi appears to have given to their first stopping place after joining the trail at al-Bada'a. At the very point that Ptolemy placed a location named "Segir," Potter and Wellington found an oasis with a few small farms and a handful of humble dwellings. This may be just as it was two and a half thousand years ago. It must surely be a great coincidence that not only do we find an ancient trail leading south-southeast from the valley of Lemuel (Tayyib al-Isim), but also a place called Segir (Shazer) on that trail about a four-day journey from the valley. The assumption is often made that this campsite had no name since Nephi records, "we did call the name of the place Shazer" (1 Nephi 16:13), however, this statement of Nephi's does not preclude that the place already had a variant on the local name.



E. *Shazer was a place where they could hunt* (1 Nephi 16:14).

It seems strange that the family would go to the effort of breaking camp and then, after only four days of travel, unpack everything and set up camp again. Besides, Nephi had mentioned only three verses earlier that they took their provisions with them when they left the valley. It would seem unlikely that the family had run low of food after only four days. What seems likely is that they reached an area of excellent hunting and here was the opportunity to eat well and stock meat before they continued. (see 1 Nephi 16:14) It seems possible that the Lord took this opportunity to have the men hone their skills. Diodorus, who wrote of this area in 20 B.C., mentioned that the local people lived primarily by hunting: "The inhabitants . . . are called Banizomeneis. They engage in hunting and eat the flesh of animals of the mainland." Wadi Gharr has steep mountains on each side of it standing nearly 7000 feet high (see illustration). According to Groom the place name Aghar means a "precipice, crevice or cave, depressed place in a mountain; wild animal lair, a steep place."^{xxxvii}

F. *After leaving Shazer they were still in the "borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:14).*

As discussed earlier, the "borders" to which Nephi refers were the mountains which formed the border between the Tihama (beach) and the Negev (desert). These mountains were known as the Hijaz. The fact that after leaving Shazer the family kept "in the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:14) implies that they must have been close to or in the Hijaz mountains. It also implies that Nephi could tell they were near the sea, or in essence, they were on the seaward side of the range and could still see the Red Sea.

Conclusions:

The halt of al-Aghra qualifies in every important way as Shazer. It was the first authorized halt on the Frankincense trail after leaving al-Bada'a. Shazer was Lehi's first halt after restarting his trail into the wilderness. It is a four-day journey from the valley of Lemuel (Tayyib al-Isim) and is in a nearly south-southeast direction. Indeed it is in the same basic location to where an old map shows "Segir," and established variant spelling for Shazer. Unlike the rest of Midian, which is barren and almost entirely void of trees, wadi Agharr has miles of trees growing within it, and the most likely meaning of Shazer (Shajir) is a "valley abounding with trees." It may be that Lehi chose a name for the halt which was a clever word play combining a number of meanings of the word "Shazer": a valley with trees, a cleft in a rock with water, and an intertwining (here the trail intertwined with the valley track, all three being found at this location. Finally, there would have been a good reason for Lehi to stop; at Agharr as it is surrounded by tall mountains that abound with large game.

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 91-103]



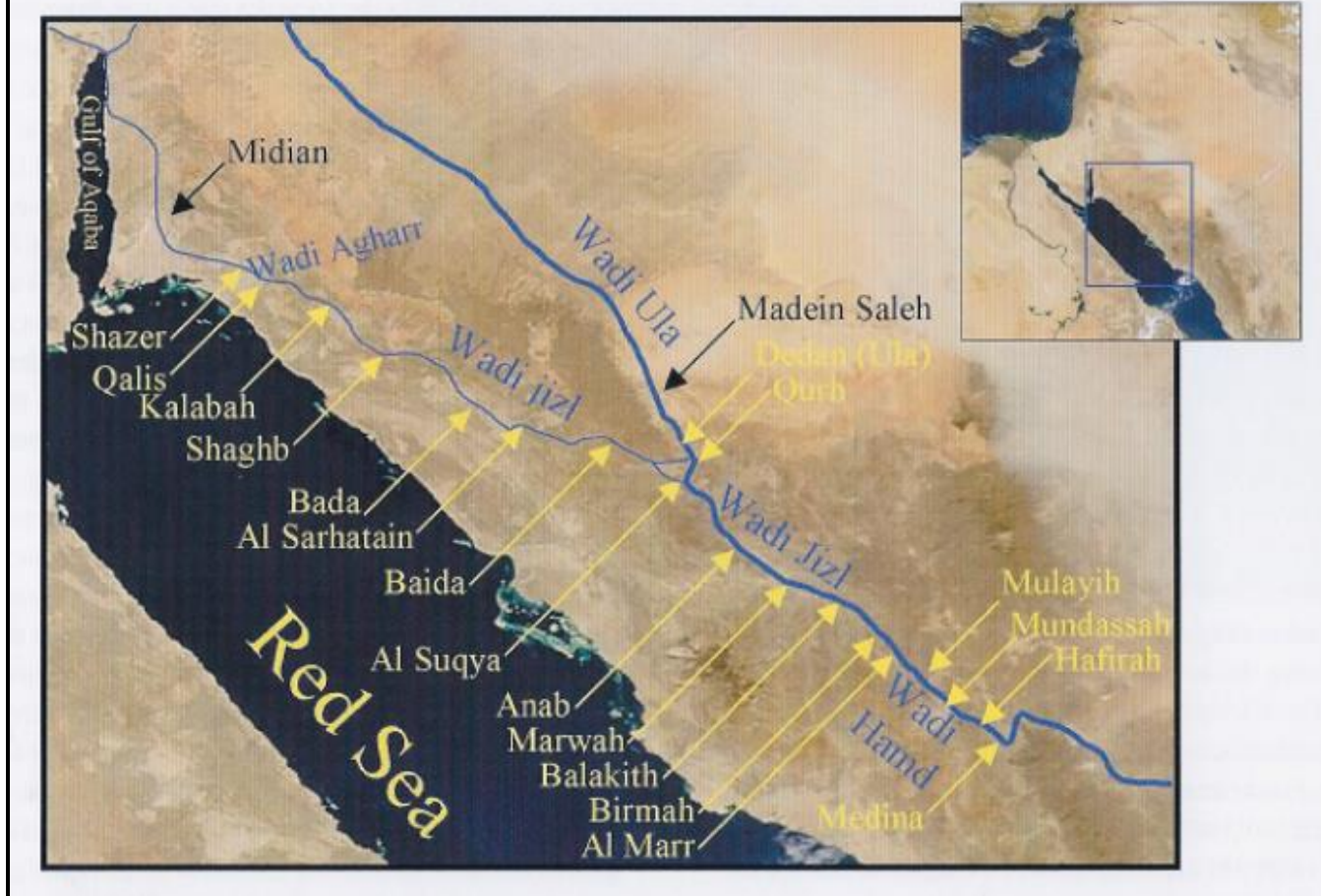
Potter and Wellington note that the title of "the most fertile parts" seems to have been derived from the productivity of the farmlands. In writing about the period of Mohammed, Hitti notes of these oases that "most of these fertile tracts were cultivated at the time of the Prophet by Jews."^{xxxviii} It has already been noted that these villages would have been home to the escaping Jews in Lehi's time. (see the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:2) If such was the case, could Lehi's family have stayed for some time there among people who were inclined to believe as they did? Nephi's text seems to give a number of clues in this regard:

(1) The phrase "keeping in the most fertile parts" might be interpreted to mean "staying or remaining for some time in the most fertile parts."

(2) During almost the entire journey in the wilderness, Nephi reports that they hunted or ate raw meat. The only part of the trail where he fails to refer to eating flesh seems to be in the most fertile parts. This makes sense. Why would they hunt while in rich farming villages?

(3) The absence of murmuring through the most fertile parts could also testify that they felt safe during this part of the journey. The fact that Jews were fleeing Jerusalem and coming to the Arab villages in large numbers suggests that the migrants from Jerusalem in Lehi's time were welcomed in this part of Arabia by the controlling tribes. These were skilled craftsmen and farmers, both valuable assets in a wilderness community.

The Muhajirun, the Most Fertile Parts



"The Most Fertile Parts"

The Qura Arabiyyah, or "Arab Villages" (in yellow), are fertile areas sitting astride the Frankincense Trail. They were also referred to as the Muhajirun, which means "the fertile parts [of land]," corresponding to the "most fertile parts" that Nephi informs us they passed through (1 Nephi 16:14). Nowhere else along the trail was there such a high concentration of farms and caravanserais. After Medina the trail passed through fewer farms, corresponding to the "More fertile parts" (1 Nephi 16:16).

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, p. 84]



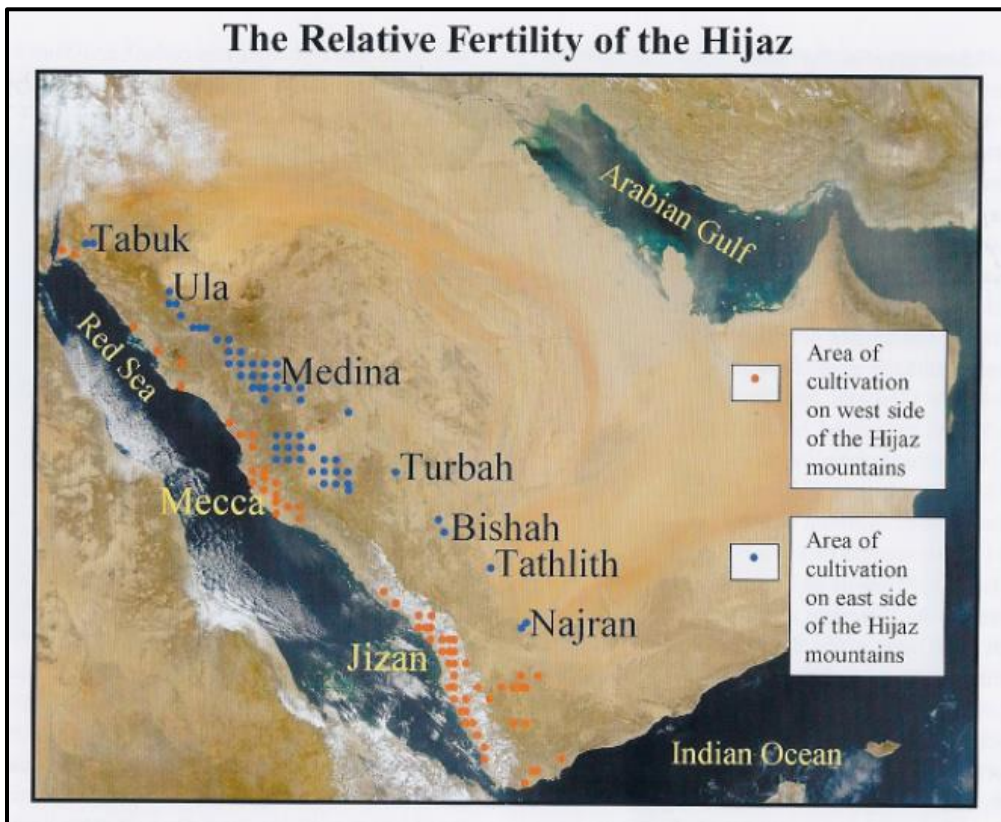
According to Potter and Wellington, it is intriguing that the Book of Mormon account of these different parts of the journey conforms to the actual fertility of the lands along the main branch of the Frankincense trail as it proceeds through the "most fertile" Qura Arabiyyah, and then through the "more fertile" parts south-southeast from Medina to Bishah.

Just south of Medina (Yathrib) there were two branches of the trail that Lehi could have taken:

(1) The more westerly one followed the Wadi al-Aqiq in a southwesterly direction to Mecca, and then in a southeasterly direction to Bishah. This branch of the trail would have provided Lehi with a milder climate and established trails, however the coastal mountain route was rocky and not as well suited for camels. The mountains in this part of Arabia are called the Asir, which means "difficult" "because of the impact of the terrain on travel."^{xxxix}

(2) The alternative route, or more easterly route, traveled on a general south-southeast bearing, skirting the lava fields and staying in the Arabian shelf desert. Frankincense trail expert Nigel Groom believes that this route was the main one for reasons of topography.^{xl} After leaving Medina, this easterly main trail exited the mountains and into the flatlands. This inland route through the flat desert plain, called the Arabian shelf, had its own problems, yet these were more than outweighed by the benefit of good footing for the camels.

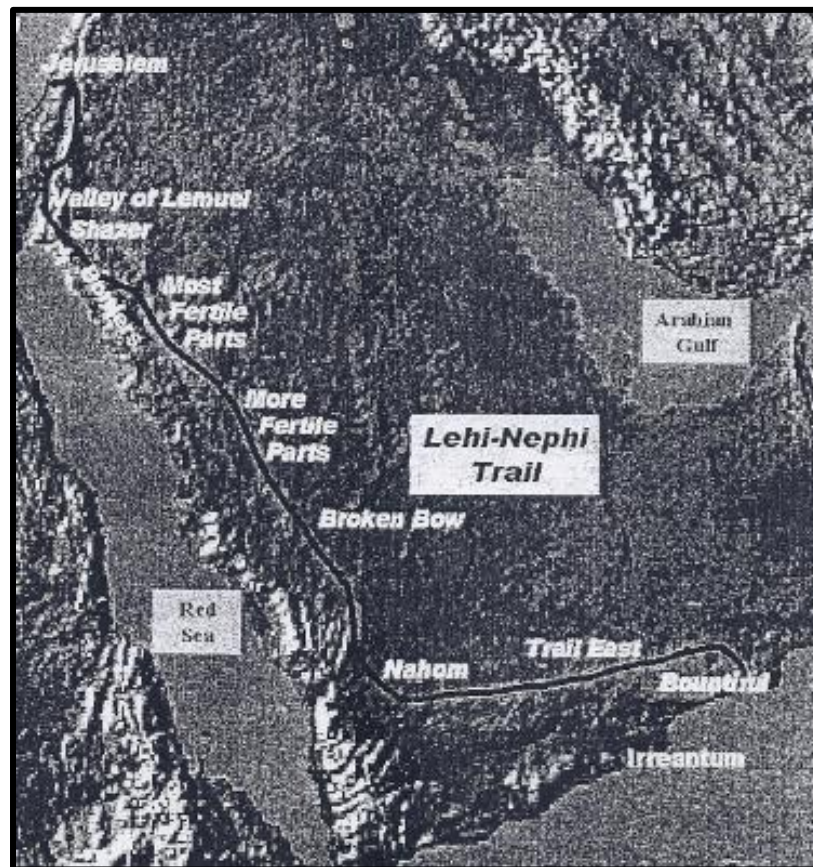
The Book of Mormon text seems to favor the more easterly main trail. That route's exit from the mountains would explain why Nephi no longer makes any mention of "the borders near the Red Sea." Furthermore, as one traveled on this trail south of Medina, farms became fewer and farther between. Potter and Wellington write of using Tactical Pilotage Charts (TPC) which indicate areas of cultivation in order to verify this information. Between al-Ula and Medina ("the *most* fertile parts"), there were 25 places marked. On the average, there was a cultivated area every 11 miles. However, from just south of Medina past Turbah and on to Bishah ("the *more* fertile parts"), the land was markedly less fertile (see illustration). There were only 6 areas labeled "cultivation" on the charts, an average of roughly one cultivated area every fifty miles. Thus hunting would shifted from a nicety to more of a necessity, a fact alluded to in the text.



"The Relative Fertility of the Hijaz" Cultivation in modern Arabia relies on fertile soil and aquifers and therefore gives a guide to approximate levels of fertility. Lehi's party could have encountered on their journey south. The Frankincense Trail, to the east of the mountains, agrees with Nephi's description of the journey encountering first "the most fertile parts" at the northern end then "the more fertile parts," and finally the parts where things were apparently less fertile because they struggled. Travel down the shore of the Red Sea provides the exact opposite picture with areas of least fertility to the north and increasing fertility as one progresses southward. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Lehi in the Wilderness, p. 81]

The entire course from Medina to Bishah (the "more fertile parts") would have been approximately 350 miles. Groom estimates that an incense caravan would have taken fifteen to eighteen days to complete this part of their journey. Lehi's family would have traveled at a slower pace. Nephi notes that they traveled "for the space of many days."

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 127-129]



[George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 141]

1 Nephi 16:17 And After We Had Traveled for the Space of Many Days We Did Pitch Our Tents for the Space of a Time That We Might Rest Ourselves and Obtain Food (Potter Theory):

After noting that they "had traveled for the space of many days" (1 Nephi 16:17) through "the more fertile parts of the wilderness" (1 Nephi 16:16) Nephi notes: "we did pitch our tents for the space of a time", that we might again rest ourselves and obtain food for our families. For Lehi's family, travel along this part of the journey had become strenuous. This is not surprising, especially if there were now pregnant wives and newborn children in the party. Lehi's decision was to stop, rest and resupply.

At this stop some interesting events takes place. Nephi breaks his bow (1 Nephi 16:18) and then Makes a new one out of wood (1 Nephi 16:23). Nephi's description of the events surrounding these actions are very pertinent to the verification of Lehi's position on the Frankincense trail.

According to Potter and Wellington, while we will probably never know with great certainty where the campsite of the broken bow was, they can propose a reasonable scenario.

They note that the entire course through the more fertile parts of the wilderness from Medina to Bishah would have been approximately 350 miles. Towards the end of that journey, it is highly probable that Lehi passed along the main Frankincense trail through the rough terrain between Turabah and Bishah. The trail passed through the rocky and barren lava fields. By the time they reached the leg of the journey between Bishah and Najran, they would have been exhausted and ready to rest and prepare themselves for the even more difficult trail which lay ahead. To make matters worse, the hot season may well have been upon them which brought the tormenting exposure to the sun. If such was the case, the caravan traffic would have already ceased for the summer. As a result, the commercial interests at Bishah would have closed their shops and the residents would have departed to the cooler mountains. Thus, there would have been no help for Lehi in Bishah, a virtual ghost town during the off overly-hot summer season.

By this time in his narrative, Nephi has dropped the term "fertile" altogether. Indeed the TPC maps show that from Bishah to Najran and then approximately another 100 miles south to the end of the Dahm Sand Dunes where the Frankincense trail turned east, there are no areas marked "cultivation." Hilton provides an appropriate comparison for this land: "the last 60 miles of this route [to Najran] might be situated in Death Valley California, so similar is the landscape."^{xli}



With the Asir mountains within sight of the trail at Bishah, but with the trail now detouring to the southeast, it would have made sense for Lehi to have left the unbearable heat of the flats, waiting out the summer in the foothills or high valleys of the Asir mountains where the summer temperatures are relatively pleasant, usually remaining in the eighties Fahrenheit. These Asir mountains are blessed with rains from summer thunder storms. The TPC maps also confirm that there are numerous wells in the high wadis on the eastern side of the mountains. From the Frankincense trail staging center at Bishah, the high wadis of the Asir mountains are no more than sixty five miles distant. At least in the mountains Lehi could obtain food by hunting. Lehi probably followed the migrant workers of Bishah in a westerly to southwesterly direction up the wadi Tabalah to the high valleys. Tired and afflicted, the party finally reached the temperate climate of the high wadis, and knew that meat would be available from the hunt. However, Nephi's bow broke and his brother's bows were found to have lost their spring. Tired and hungry, the tolerance of the family members was at a minimum and they began to complain (1 Nephi 16:20). Instead of joining the others in murmuring, the ever self-reliant Nephi may have discovered from the locals that a bow could be made from a branch of the Atim tree that grows on the nearby slopes, or perhaps he recognized as much. They may well have already been camped in the wadis that are between 5,000 and 7,000 feet elevation. Still Nephi knew from experience that the best hunting would be in the mountain tops. But where? There are numerous high peaks between 8,000 and 9,300 feet at the ends of the wadis leading west from Bishah. Guided by the Liahona Nephi went to the top of the mountain (1 Nephi 16:26-30) and there he found and hunted wild "beasts" (1 Nephi 16:31), providing enough meat to satisfy the family to the point where the murmuring stops, as well as enough to restore their provisions (1 Nephi 16:31-32).

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 127-140]

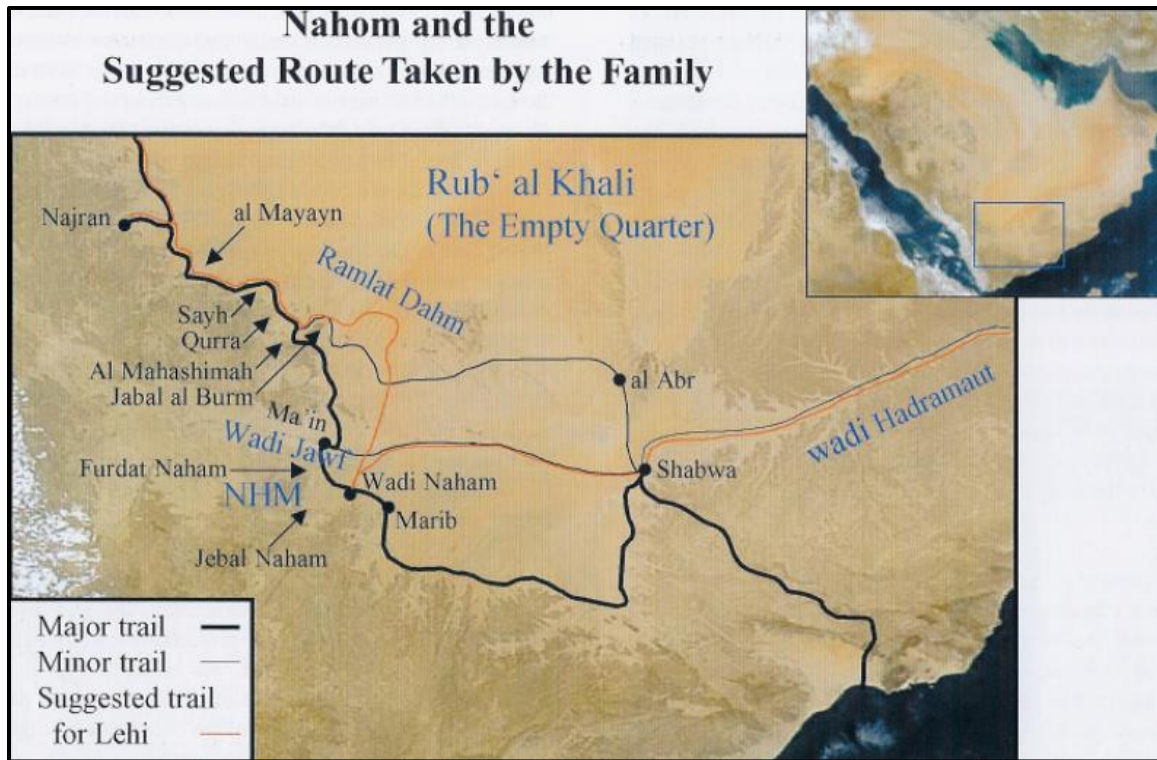


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1 Nephi 16:33 **And It Came to Pass That We Did Again Take Our Journey, Traveling nearly the same Course As in the Beginning (Potter Theory):**

Nephi records that from where Nephi broke his bow, they "did again take [their] journey, traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning" (1 Nephi 16:33). He then records that "after [they] had traveled for the space of many days [they] did pitch [their] tents again, that [they] might tarry for the space of a time. And it came to pass that Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:33-34) The questions here are, How far did they travel before they reached Nahom and in what direction?

Since Lehi's party traveled "south-southeast" in order to reach Nahom (1 Nephi 16:33), and since from the location of Nahom they would travel "nearly eastward from that time forth" (1 Nephi 17:1), then the position of Nahom would seem to correlate with the location of an easterly branch of an approximately north-south trail. According to Potter and Wellington, the first easterly trail that Lehi's family would have encountered on the Frankincense trail after leaving Najran (Okhdood) would seem to be the most likely to lead to the Nahom scenario as described by Nephi. (see illustration) One hundred miles southeast of Najran, this easterly trail initially splits off in a southeasterly direction.^{xliii}



"Nahom and the Suggested Route Taken by the Family," George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, p. 114

In order for the Book of Mormon to understand Potter and Wellington's choice of this first branching trail south of Najran as leading to Nahom rather than the main trail south, I will include some of their reasoning. For additional reasoning, the reader is referred to their commentary on Nahom (1 Nephi 16:34). It also goes without saying that one must consult the map as noted above to follow what is said.

According to Potter and Wellington, in southern Arabia (Yemen, Oman) a number of the frankincense trails came together and formed into one main trail that headed north^{xliiii} That means for Lehi's party heading south out of Najran along that main trail, they would have faced a decision on which of many routes to take.^{xliiv} After leaving Okhdood (Najran), a well traveled main trail headed south past Ma'in (also known as QRNW, Qarnaw), the capital of the Minaean kingdom, and on to Marib, the Sabaeen capital and then to Timna, the capital of Qataban. Once there the trail continued in a generally southern direction to Hagar and Nab and then turned east and then north to Shabwa, the capital of Hadramawt. After turning southeast at Shabwah, the trail ended at one of the major ports on the south coast of Arabia. This port was called Qana. Since Qana is the final

coastal destination, this would imply that it would have to be a candidate for the land Bountiful. This hardly seems the case. The relatively short distance to Qana from Najran could have been traveled in about a week which would not seem compatible with Nephi's account of the journey as found in 1 Nephi 17:1-4, where he describes the women giving birth and the family living on raw meat. The area leading to Qana could hardly be described as a wilderness, yet Nephi states that they traveled in the wilderness for eight years. Finally, the harbor at Qana is not a verdant area.

It is worthy to note, however, that the advantage of this well traveled trail was the combination of easy terrain through the cultivated valleys of Saba and Qataban and the protection offered by the kingdoms through which it proceeded. The down-side to this trail was that all of these kingdoms extracted a levy from the caravans as they passed. This meant that if Lehi chose this trail, they would be subject to expensive tribute money.

Pliny recounts that in order to cut down the length of time of this enormously expensive journey along the frankincense trail and to avoid the levies that would be applied if one passed through all the "state capitals," a number of "shortcuts" or secondary trails came into existence.^{xlv} Thus other trails existed and all of them turned basically east from the main trail. But as they went east they traversed desert country--either the more southerly Ramlat Sabatayn, or the more northerly Ramlat Dahm. This desert travel offered more difficult going and a dearth of wells and caravansaries. Such was the desert trail Nephi chose to take according to Potter and Wellington.

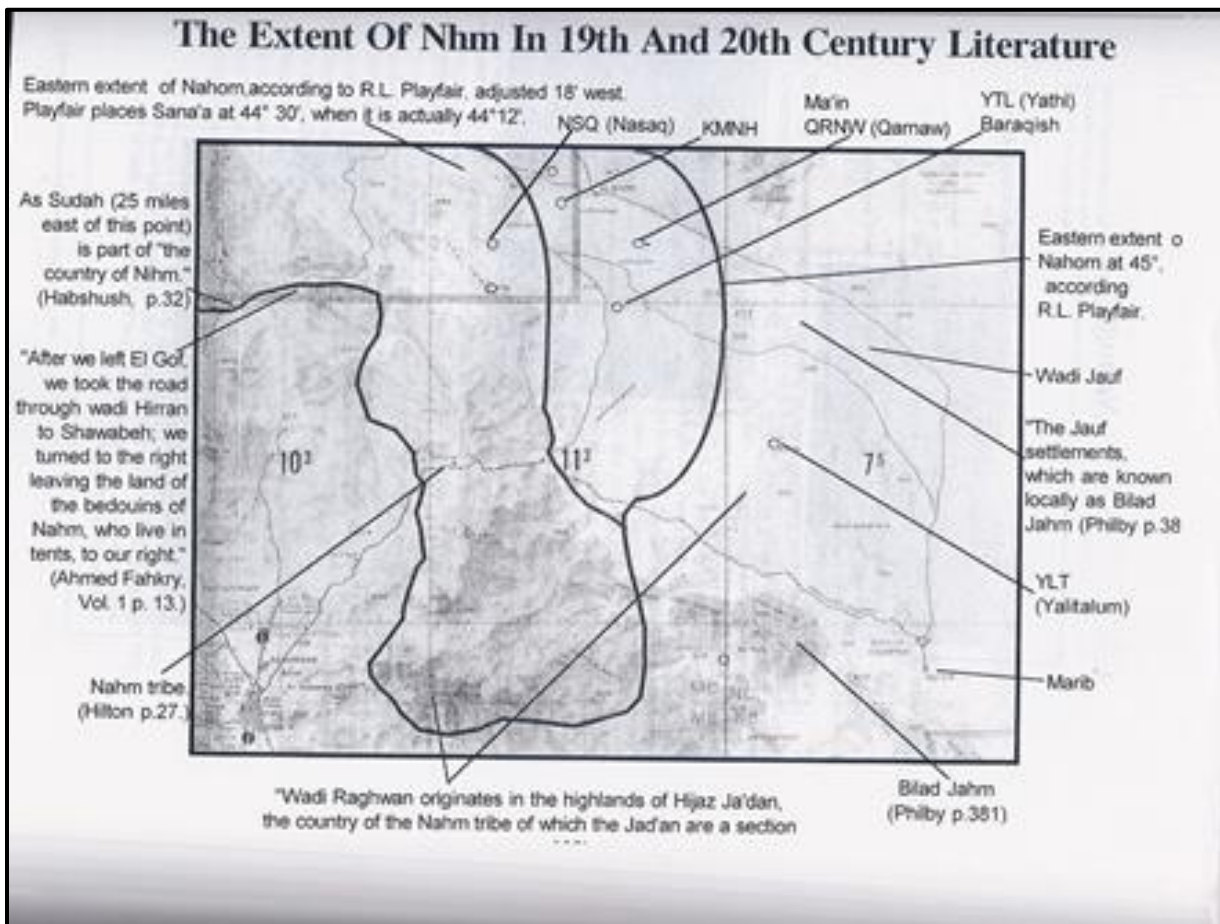
[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 147-151]

1 Nephi 16:34 **Nahom (Potter Theory):**

Potter and Wellington propose the location for Nahom to be somewhere in the 50 miles north of Jabal al-Lawdh (N16°10', E45° 05') and south of wadi Khabb.(see illustration) (See also their commentary on 1 Nephi 16:38 for their reasoning). This location is not in accordance with the prevailing theory at the moment. In explaining the prevailing theory they note that in 1978 Dr. Ross T. Christensen published a brief article pointing out that in Yemen a community named "Nahom" existed 18 miles northeast of the modern capital Sana'a.^{xlvi} In 1991 Warren and Michaela Aston also accepted this idea. They identified a map by Groom which showed a burial site on the southern edge of wadi Jawf, marked with the name Nehem.^{xlvii} Furthermore, the recent finding by a German archaeological team, of an inscribed altar at Marib, bearing the name of Bi'athar . . . the Nihmite^{xlviii} and dated to around the time of Lehi, seems to confirm that the Nihm tribe existed at the time Lehi would have passed through southern Arabia. North of Sana'a is the Nihm tribal lands, near a mountain named Jabal Nihm. Thus, other scholars have generally accepted this reasoning on the location of Nahom. So why do Potter and Wellington suggest that Nahom and the events preceding it did not take place either at Jabal Nihm or at the wadi Jawf burial ground Nehem? Clearly it could not have taken place at both places, but the present extent of the Nihm tribal lands does not extend to the trail north of wadi Jawf, so why are they placing their location outside this area?

According to Potter and Wellington, one needs to look further into the extent of the Nihm tribe. Multiple historical sources (which they cite) imply that the borders of the area of influence of the land of Nihm were not static through time. That the influence of these ancient tribes extended over a far greater area than they do today can be attested to by the fact that the tribes gave their names to features that are many miles from their present tribal homelands. They also note an old map of the Yemen showing the area "Nehem," which they superimposed onto a modern map and found that the area occupied by the place-name Nehem included part of the Rub'al Khali east of Ramlat Dahm. This location was where the most direct trail to Moscha (Dhofar), the most likely candidate for the place Bountiful, leads off to the east. They then ask a pertinent question: Why would the tribal place-names Nihm (Nahom), Dahm and Jahm be found so far north of the lands controlled by the tribes of that name? There are two probable reasons for this. First, these could have been the desert areas that the nomads originally came from carrying the name of their homeland with them. A second possibility exists, and once again Kamal Salibi can help with a possible answer:

While their neighbors in the highlands to the south seem to have identified themselves in geographic terms according to the country to which they belonged (Saba', Qataban, Awsan or Hadhramut), the Minaeans thought of themselves in terms of community rather than land. Wherever they went to settle as traders, the people of Ma'in carried their tribal identity (and their tribal gods) with them.^{xlix}



The Extent of Nhm in 19th and 20th Century Literature. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 162]

So we see the possibility that the Minaeans carried the names of their tribal homelands with them as they pushed their control of the frankincense trail out into the desert to the north and east. As such is it not possible that if the Dahm tribe controlled the trail area east of wadi Jawf, and the Jahm the area to the east of that, then could not the Nahm tribe also have carried their name out to the area of the trail they controlled, the place called Nahom, to which Nephi refers? The idea is far from outrageous.

Research by the Italians into the prehistory of Yemen has provided evidence that there was agriculture in the highlands in the bronze age beginning about 3,000 B.C. and ending abruptly about 1,500 B.C. It has been concluded from this that "perhaps the civilization shifted eastwards and, as a result of population growth, gave rise to the early towns, principally Marib, the capital of Saba"ⁱ According to Walter W. Muller, Yemen is unique inasmuch as "nowhere else in the Orient does there exist such a strong, unbroken continuity from the many names of places and tribes that have remained unchanged for almost 3,000 years"ⁱⁱ Since we know the NHM name goes back farther than that, is it not possible that the tribe and name also moved from the highlands out to the east, to the edge of the desert in seeking control of the frankincense trail? And with the collapse of the frankincense trade nearly two millennia later, could not the tribes have moved back to their homelands, abandoning their desert outposts and the ancient association of the name Nahom with the frankincense trail lands? In view of the historical evidence, and the correlation of Nephi's narrative with the frankincense trail, it is the contention of Potter and Wellington that indeed NHM may well have covered a larger area in Lehi's time than it does today and that the Nihm tribe probably held a position of greater prominence.

They conclude by saying that with only 7 verses of scripture to guide the reader (1 Nephi 16:33-39) students of the Book of Mormon will probably never know exactly what took place at Nahom or where that was precisely. And like others before them they feel that the similarities between the location of the tribal lands of NHM and Nephi's "place which was called Nahom" are too numerous to be coincidental. Both are associated with the frankincense trail. Both are on the eastern side of the mountains. Both are in the area where there are trails heading to the east. The trail from Najran to Ma'in covers nearly 150 miles of desert terrain with few wells and no cultivation between the two cities. By assuming an expanded territory for the tribe of Nihm, and that an error was made in reading the Liahona, or a misdirection was made in travel, Lehi's family would have been led into affliction in the desert where their supplies would have been rapidly depleted. This is exactly the kind of location in which the drama at Nahom appears to have taken place.ⁱⁱⁱ [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, pp. 152-158] [See the Potter commentary on 1 Nephi 16:33; 1 Nephi 16:38]

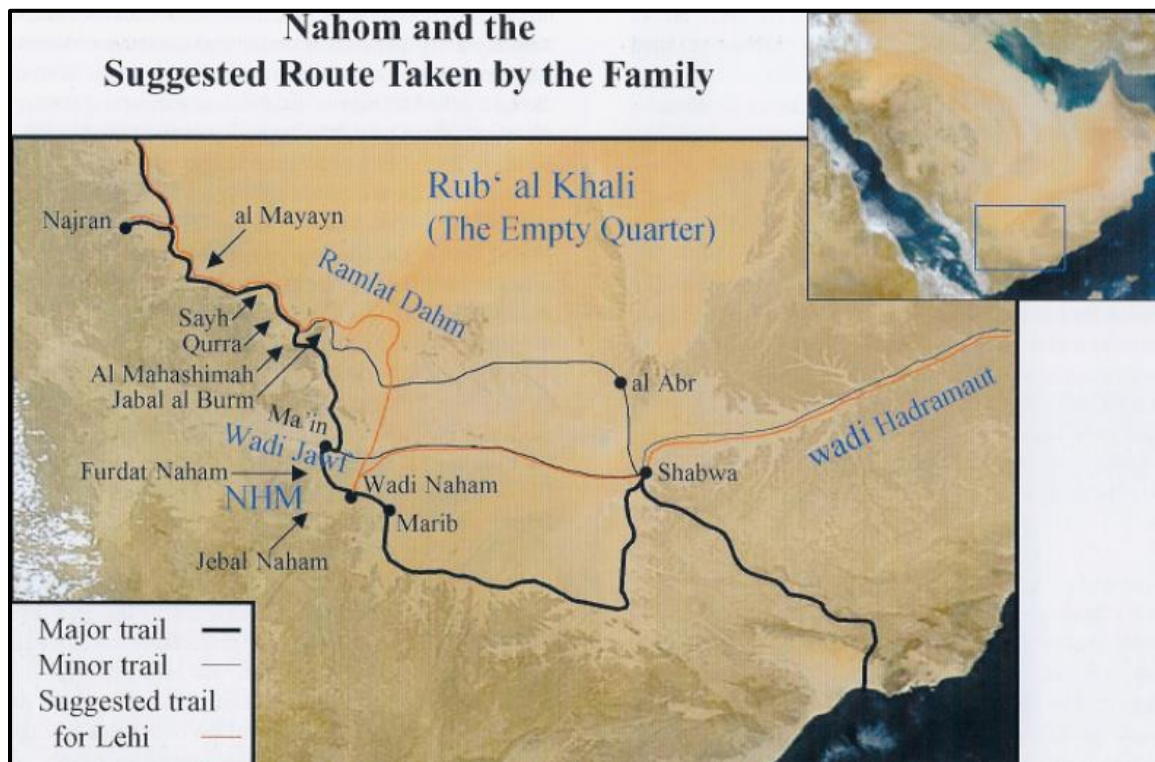


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In the year 2000, George Potter and Richard Wellington wrote that while they do not know exactly where Nephi turned eastward, whether it was on the edge of the desert north-east of wadi Jawf or whether it was around wadi Jawf itself (see illustration below), 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.^{liii}



"Nahom and the Suggested Route Taken by the Family," George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, p. 114]

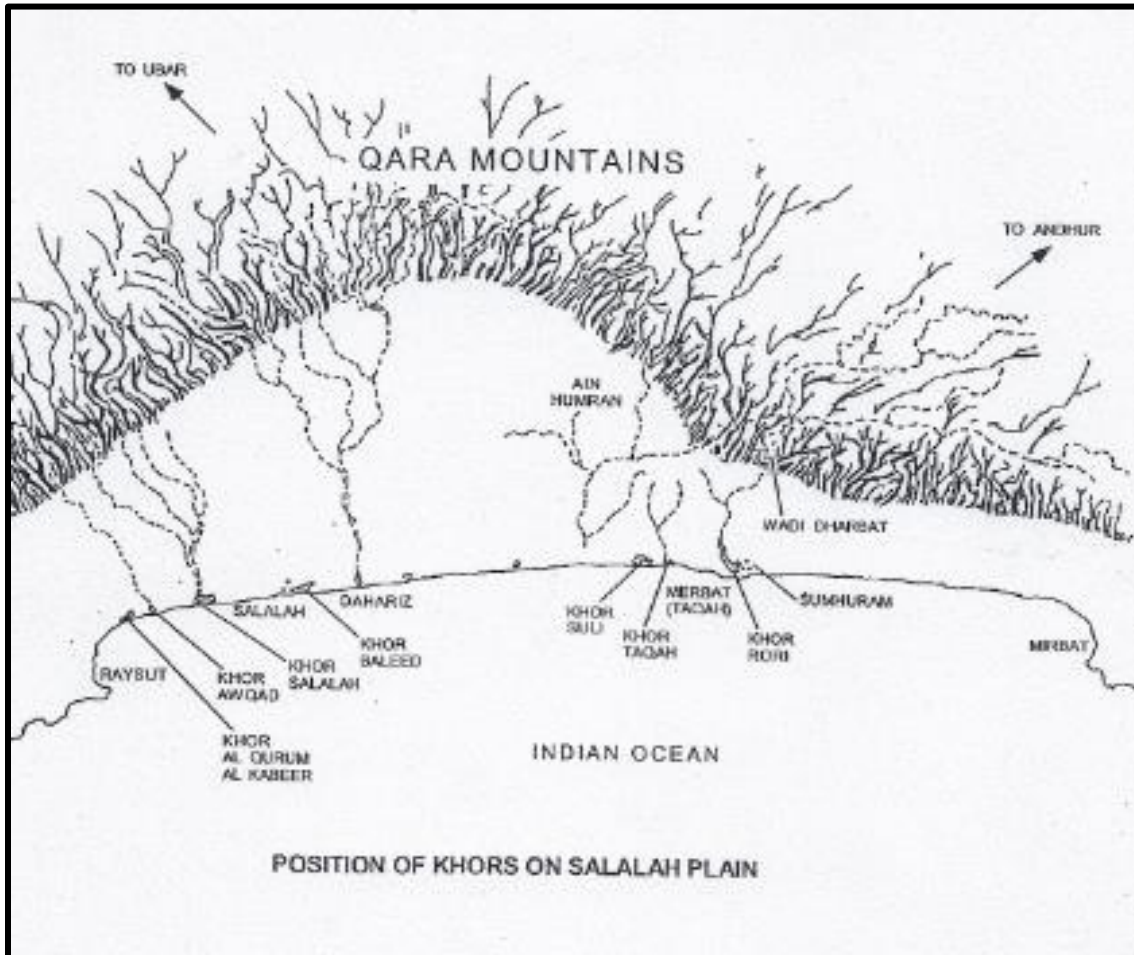
Fortunately for Potter and Wellington, the overland, easterly route to Dhofar did, in fact, come to light within the same time frame that they were writing their book. It came about with the discovery of the ruins of "Ubar" in 1991. The ruins of "Ubar" are found at the village of Shisur in northwest 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.^{liv} According to legend Ubar was established by Noah's great great grandson "Ad."^{lv} 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."^{lvi} 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."^{lvii} More than 40 ancient camp-sites at Ubar where "the caravans would have grouped and waited to enter Ubar. have been uncovered"^{lviii}



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.^{lix} 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]

According to Lynn and Hope Hilton, 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.



Positions of the Khors (Ports) on the Salalah Plain. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 261]

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 Sumhuram and al-Baleed, sea ports dating to the first millennium B.C."^{lx} 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."^{lxi}

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 caravaneers, 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]

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 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 17:4-5 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.^{lxii}

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]



Examiner.com

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:

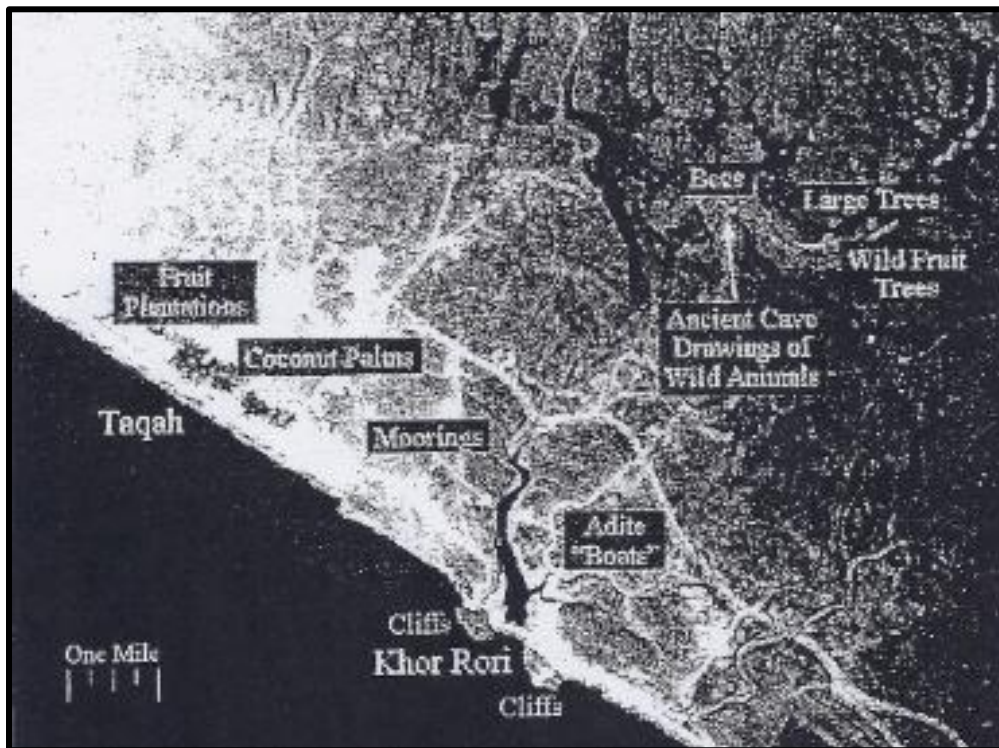
- (1) It was "nearly eastward" from Nahom. (1 Nephi 17:1)
- (2) It had abundant and a wide variety of fruits. (17:5; 18:6)
- (3) It had wild honey. (1 Nephi 17:5)
- (4) It had an accessible seashore. (1 Nephi 17:6)
- (5) It was adjacent to "many waters." (1 Nephi 17:6)
- (6) There was a mountain nearby. (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.

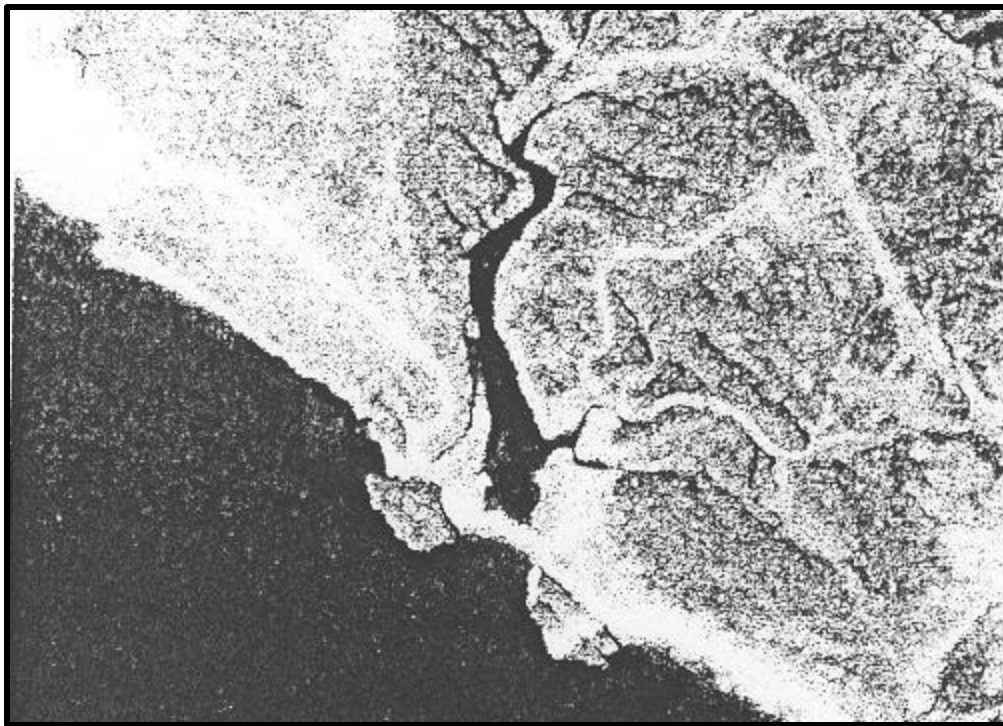
(12) Cliffs directly above deep water. (1 Nephi 17:48)

[George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 185, 209-223]



Satellite image of the area of "Merbat" (Taqah), the port of Moscha at Khor Rori, [and wadi Dharbat]. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 261]

Note* The natural inlet or port extends over 3 miles inland. With the centuries-old silt build-up removed, the extent and depth of this natural inlet would look much different. (And also be much easier for archaeologists to uncover the remains of previous occupation. It is hard to imagine this natural port not being used for shipbuilding and launching from the earliest of times.



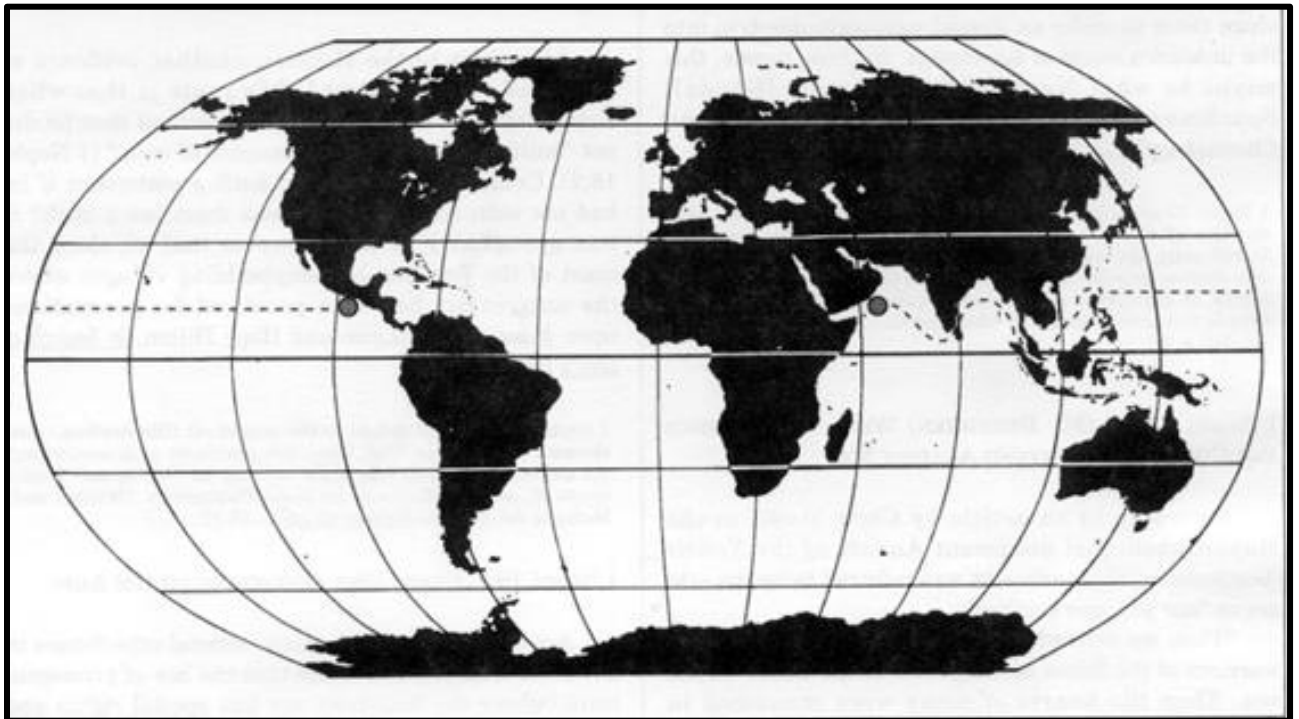
The satellite image shows the amazing cliffs at the mouth of Khor Rori. These natural breakwaters combined with the size of the khor to make it the premiere port in Dhofar. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 261]

Table to Compare the Possible Ports in Dhofar.

	Kharfot	Reysut	Quran al Kabeer	Awqad	Salalah	al Baleed	Dhabariz	Suli	Taqah	Rori	Mirbat
Large enough to accommodate a large ship	0	4	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	4	4
Protected year round from monsoon winds	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0
Evidence of-Ancient Port	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	4	3	4	3
Opened into sea in 6 th c. BC	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	4	3
Protection from high surf	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	4
Moorings	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	4	3
Beach with much fruit	0	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Cliffs above deep water	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0
Trade with India for large timbers for shipbuilding	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	3	2
Large domestic timber	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Coconuts (Rope & Caulking)	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sails (India) or fiber for sails	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2
Iron ore nearby	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
*Adite Shipwrights	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2
Captains with time to teach Nephi to captain a ship	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0
The 'mountain' where Lord would appear.	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Instructors, place to teach crew	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	2
A mountain with ore nearby	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Flint available near the ore	0	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4
Totals	7	41	18	23	18	37	28	40	43	65	46

Scoring system. Yes-4, Probable-3, Possible-2, Remote-1, No-0

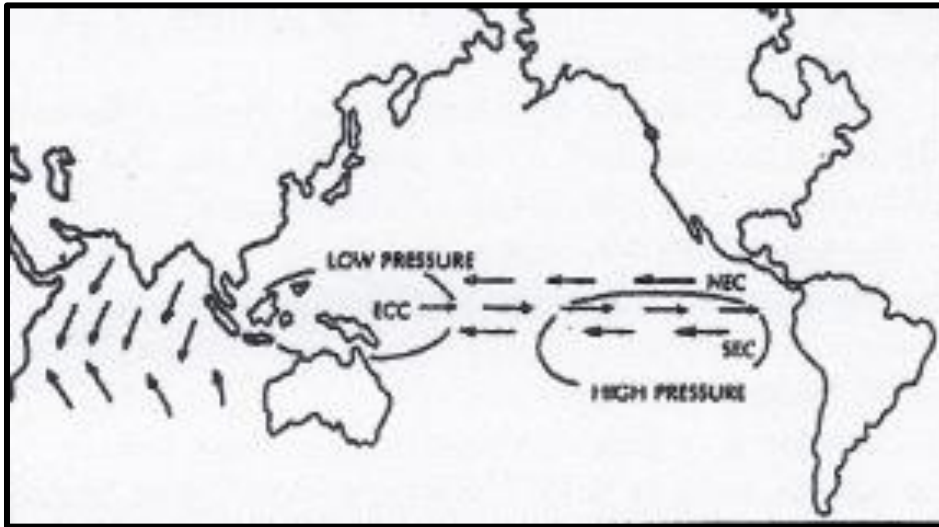
Table to Compare the Possible Ports in Dhofar. [George Potter & Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 242]



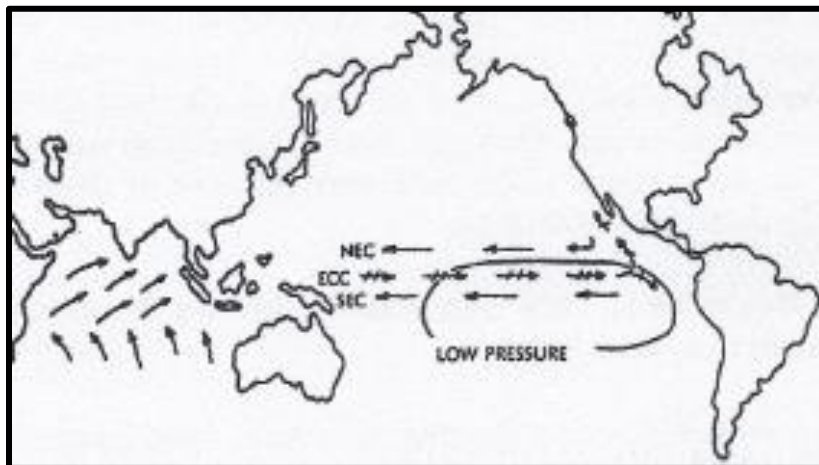
1 Nephi 18:8 **We Were Driven Forth before the Wind towards the Promised Land:**

Alma 22:28 says that the place of the Lamanites' first inheritance in the Promised Land was along the seashore west. If this was where Lehi landed, then Lehi probably sailed eastward from Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:1). According to a F.A.R.M.S. article by David Clark, if we assume that the launching site was somewhere on the Indian Ocean, the next question that needs answering is simply how this curious ship was able to travel across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean in an eastward direction that most of the time is directly opposed by the wind patterns and surface currents of those oceans. In answering the first part of this question, the Hiltons say that "as shipping records clearly indicate, although from October to May the trade winds come from the northeast; from June to September, the winds come from the southwest. At least by the sixth century A.D., Arab entrepreneurs were sailing their ships all the way from the Arabian Peninsula to China. Arab ships rode the monsoons to the Malabar coast of India, then on to Ceylon in time to catch the summer monsoon (June to September) and speed across the often treacherous Bay of Bengal, past the Nicobar Islands, through the Malacca Straits, and into the South China Sea. The trip from the Arabian peninsula to China took approximately 120 days of straight sailing, or six months counting provisioning stops along the way." In attempting to answer the second part of the question dealing with the crossing of the Pacific, Clark says that since the beginning of the twentieth century, men have known that every three to four years, "normal" atmospheric and oceanic circulation in the tropical Pacific is altered, producing the so-called El Nino effect. If Lehi sailed from the Arabian Peninsula during August of a "El Nino" year, the time would have been not only optimal for northeast monsoon circulation, but also for the harvesting of "fruits and meat and honey in abundance." Lehi could then reasonably expect to arrive in the Indonesian area in time to catch an El Nino counter current. (Trips from the Arabian Peninsula took four months of straight sailing time.) The El Nino-driven current could then have delivered Lehi's group to the west coast of Central America. In calculating the time of the voyage from Book of Mormon verses,

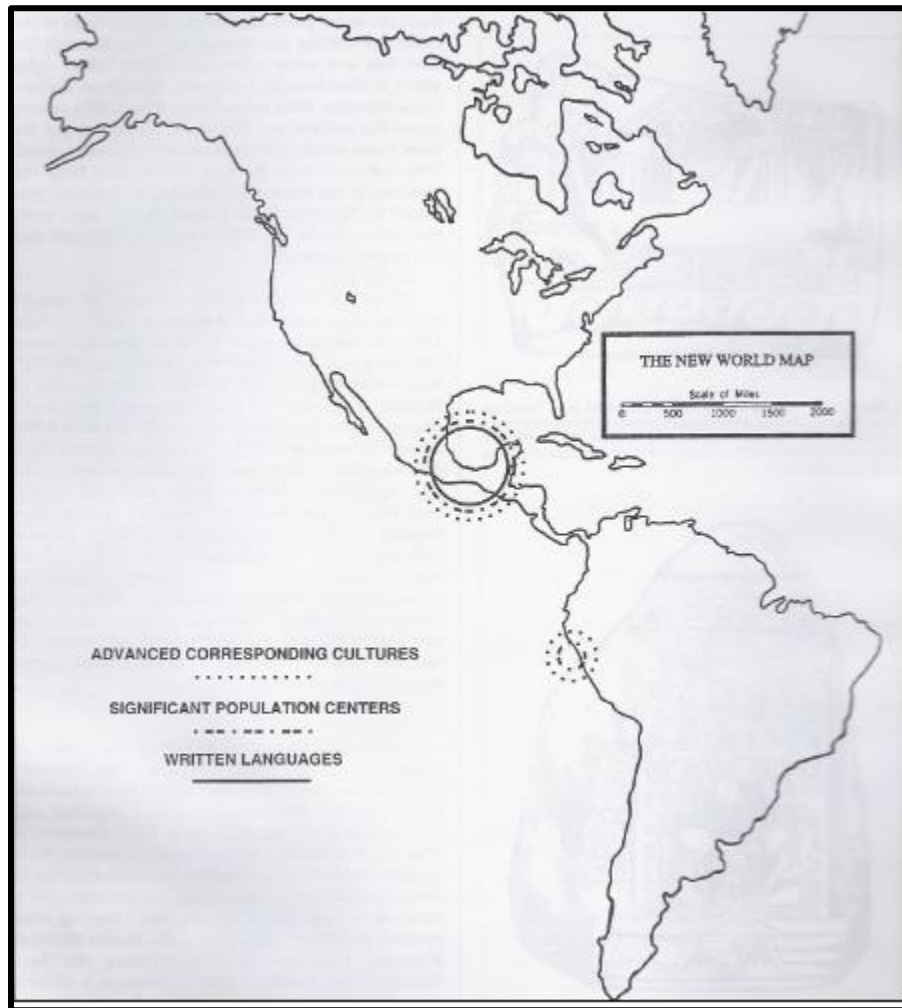
Nephi only mentions on two separate occasions that they sailed for the "space of many days." The Liahona, or compass, stopped working, and it wasn't until after four days that Nephi was freed and a true course restored. However, according to the Hiltons, if it took 120 days to sail from Arabia to China, it would probably have taken Nephi a year to fifteen months to cover the three-times longer distance between Arabia and America. [David Clark, "Lehi and El Nino: A Method of Migration," F.A.R.M.S, p. 57]



1 Nephi 18:8 **We . . . were driven forth before the wind (Illustration):** Winter ocean currents in the Indian Ocean and normal ocean currents and atmospheric pressures in the Pacific Ocean. The ECC (the narrow Equatorial Counter Current) is the only Pacific current moving east. The other two, the NEC (North Equatorial Current) and the SEC (South Equatorial Current) move West. [David Clark, "Lehi and El Nino : A Method of Migration," p. 3]



1 Nephi 18:8 **We . . . were driven forth before the wind (Illustration):** Summer ocean currents in the Indian Ocean and ENSO ocean currents and atmospheric pressures in the Pacific Ocean. The Equatorial Counter Current is intensified during an ENSO period. [David Clark, "Lehi and El Nino: A Method of Migration," p. 3]



1 Nephi 18:23 **We Did Arrive at the Promised Land:**

The unique geographical characteristics of this Book of Mormon "promised land" (1 Nephi 18:23) limits the number of possible areas on the American continent where Lehi could have landed.

According to the factors listed below, he probably landed in Mesoamerica.

1. *The Distance between the Lands of Nephi and Zarahemla:*

Around 61 percent of the whole Book of Mormon story takes place in and around either Nephi and Zarahemla. Alma the Elder's group, with their flocks and herds, took a few more than 21 days to traverse the distance between these two lands. This means that 61 percent of the Book of Mormon (about 600 years of history) probably took place within a 200 to 400-mile radius. All the necessary population centers, cultures, written languages, bodies of water, wilderness areas, and strategic landmarks such as the narrow neck of land had to be circumscribed within or close to that 400-mile radius.

2. *Ancient Cultures in the Americas:*

The Jaredite culture lived from about 2500 to 300 B.C. The Lamanite, Nephite, and Mulekite cultures flourished between 600 B.C. and A.D. 400. The Lamanite culture continued after A.D. 400. The only place where corresponding cultures and population centers flourished during these times was in Mesoamerica. The Mesoamerican cultures date from approximately 2500 B.C. to A.D. 1500. These civilizations include the Lowland and Highland Maya, the Olmec culture, the Zapotec culture, and the Valley of Mexico core culture.

3. *Written Languages in the Americas:*

The Nephites kept written records: that is why we have the Book of Mormon. We know that in the last battles between the Nephites and Lamanites, the Nephites wrote to the Lamanite king and received a response (Mormon 6:2-3). At present, it seems that the only place on the continent where there was a phonetic written language at the time of the Book of Mormon was in Mesoamerica.

4. *Significant Archaeological Sites in the Americas:*

The Book of Mormon people had cities of cement (Helaman 3:7,9,11). At present, 90% of the significant culturally advanced archaeological sites from Book of Mormon times are located in Mesoamerica.

5. *Bodies of Water:*

Within the Book of Mormon, the following bodies of water must be accounted for: the river Sidon (Alma 2:15), the waters of Sidon, the waters of Mormon (Mosiah 18:8), the waters of Sebus (Alma 26:34), the land of pure water (Mosiah 23:4), the land of many waters (Mosiah 8:8), the place where the sea divides the land (Ether 10:20), the waters of Ripliancum (Ether 15:8), the large bodies of water in the land which was northward, the sea south (Helaman 3:8), the sea north (Helaman 3:8), the sea west (Alma 22:27), and the sea east (Alma 22:27).

6. *Wilderness Areas:*

The Promised Land was apparently rugged enough that at least the following wilderness areas must be accounted for: the unspecified wilderness that Nephi, Mosiah, Limhi, Ammon, and Alma wandered in; the west wilderness (Alma 22:28), the wilderness of Hermounts (Alma 2:37), the south wilderness of the Mulekites (Alma 22:31), the north wilderness (Alma 22:27), the narrow strip of wilderness (Alma 22:27), and the east wilderness (Alma 25:5).

7. *Small Neck -- Narrow Neck -- Narrow Pass -- Narrow Passage:*

The Book of Mormon scriptures make reference to "a small neck of land" (Alma 22:32), a narrow neck of land" (Alma 63:5; Ether 10:20), "a narrow pass" (Alma 50:34; 4 Nephi 3:5), and "a narrow passage" (4 Nephi 2:29) all of which seem to be of strategic importance. These "small neck -- narrow neck -- narrow pass -- narrow passage" terms are mentioned from Alma's time in (90 B.C.) to Mormon's time in A.D. 362. They are also linked to the Jaredite times. What would make these geographical areas strategically important over so many years?

In Mesoamerica, a narrow travel corridor stretches from the Pacific coast of Guatemala through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to the Atlantic coast of Veracruz, Mexico. Almost all northward-southward land traffic and trade passed through this corridor from ancient (Jaredite) times until well past the end of Book of Mormon times (A.D. 420).

[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

UNDERSTANDING BOOK OF MORMON CHRONOLOGY

Affixing calendar dates to the events in the Book of Mormon and putting those dates in chronological order is an extremely complex process, but I believe that the process has merit. It stands to reason that if we don't illuminate the circumstances surrounding the gospel message of the Book of Mormon, we don't give ourselves any perspective from which to ask questions. And if we don't ask any questions, we can't expect any answers. Hopefully, by constructing a much more detailed chronology than is presently footnoted in our recent editions of the Book of Mormon, we can produce a much more detailed set of questions relative to the cultural setting of the book.

STEP #1: CLARIFYING THE PROBLEMS

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

1. Common Reference Points

One must compare our written history of the world and the history contained in the Book of Mormon and be able to come up with at least some correlation of events in order to have a reference point in time. In the Book of Mormon history we have the following possible reference points:

- a. The commencement of the reign of Zedekiah. (1 Nephi 1:4)
- b. The destruction of Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 1:4; 2 Nephi 1:4)
- c. The birth [or sign of the birth] of Christ. (3 Nephi 4-26)
- d. The death of Christ. (3 Nephi 8:5)
- e. Volcanic eruptions and destruction in the Americas. (3 Nephi 8:5-25, 9:1-12)
- f. The appearance of Christ (Quetzalcoatl) in the Americas. (3 Nephi 11:1-11)

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

2. The Length and Type of Calendar Year

- a. Calendars vary in length depending on their purpose:
 1. Some chart the days from a specific event. (Mayan Long Count Calendar)
 2. Some are religious and relate to cycles of the Moon. (354.36705 day Lunar Calendar)
 3. Some are agricultural and relate to cycles of the Sun. (365.2422 day Solar Calendar)
 4. Some just have a set number of days. (360 day Egyptian Year Calendar)

Because in the Book of Mormon text the length of a "year" is not stated precisely, one is left to his own assumptions.

- b. In our present Book of Mormon we have 3 different calendar systems that chart the years from a specific event:
 1. Years from when Lehi left Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 1:10; 2 Nephi 5:28)
 2. Years from the beginning of the Reign of the Judges. (Alma 1:1)
 3. Years from the sign of Christ's birth. (3 Nephi 2:8)

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

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

- a. For any calendar system, there has to be a starting day for each "year" in that system. Thus for the Book of Mormon text:
 1. Lehi left Jerusalem on a specific day within a specific year. Nephi uses that "specific day" and/or "specific year" as the beginning reference point for his calendar (Years from when Lehi left Jerusalem).
 2. The reign of the Judges started on a specific day within an existing year, and the new calendar proceeded forward from that day. Whether or not it required a changed "day 1" and/or a changed "month 1" of the new calendar year is not specifically noted in the text.
 3. Christ was born on a specific day within an existing year, and the new calendar proceeded forward from that day. Whether or not it required a changed "day 1" and/or a new "month 1" and/or a new "calendar year length" is not specifically noted in the text.

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

c. The Israelites used two calendar systems, one beginning in the fall and one beginning in the spring. Their calendar originally began in the fall; however, after the Lord took the children of Israel out of Egypt, a change was made in their reckoning of years so that the first month was in the spring (see Exodus 12:2, 13:3-4). Thus, Book of Mormon phrases like "the end of year one" and "the beginning of year two" could actually fall within the same year within our present day calendar system because the "end" and the "beginning" would both be either in the fall or the spring of our January-December years.

4. B.C./A.D. Calendar

B.C. = Before Christ in the Western Calendar.

B.C.E. = Before the Common (Christian) Era

A.D. = *Anno Domini*, which means "in the year of the Lord"

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

Note* Because confusion can arise when writers with different chronological theories use different B.C./A.D. dates relative to the same Book of Mormon events, it is the opinion of the author that dates referred to in written articles and charts should be referenced, as much as possible, to at least one of the three calendar systems actually referred to in the text of the Book of Mormon and not just to the chronological footnotes listed at the bottom of the page.

5. Ambiguous Phrases

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

6. Multiple Interpretations

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

7. Lack of Internal Chronological References

The Book of Mormon is not a true history. In the Book of Alma we have approximately seventy verses that refer to the calendar spanning a period of one hundred and sixty-five years. On the other hand, from the beginning of the book of First Nephi to the beginning of the book of Alma, there are only sixteen calendar-related verses that span a period of five hundred and nine years. With these voids in the record, we must piece together the story as best we can.

8. Priority of Facts

History can be very difficult to explain at times. When faced with a choice between scriptural sources and secular sources, a decision has to be made as to what to believe. My desired focus is the illumination and interpretation of scriptural sources. To that end, I consider historical secular sources as scholarly aids to understanding and not an "end all" proof that terminates discussion. To give an example of this manner of thinking I cite the words of Randall Spackman:

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

STEP #2: SETTING THE STAGE
(PRE-BOOK OF MORMON HISTORY)

In order to give the reader a setting for the beginning of the Book of Mormon narrative, I have listed below a **proposed** chronology of those events preceding and coincidental with that beginning. What is important are the events listed, and perhaps the order in which they are listed, but NOT necessarily the proposed date.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
627 BC	Jeremiah called to be a prophet (Smith, p. 9)
622 BC	Josiah (King of Judah) institutes religious reformation (Smith, p. 9)
609 BC	Jehoahaz succeeds Josiah as King (Smith, p. 11)
609 BC	Necho (King of Egypt) places Jehoiakim ("Eliakim") (age 25) as king over Judah (2 Kings 23:31-34) (p. 11)
608 BC	Jehoiakim begins official reign on 1 Nisan (2 Kings 23:36) (Smith, p. 11)
605 BC	Jeremiah put in prison overnight, banned from the temple till 598 B.C. (Smith, p. 11)
605 BC	Jeremiah commanded by the Lord to write all prophecies down (Jer. 36:1-8)
605 BC	(June) Egyptians (Necho II) beaten by Babylonians at Carchemish (Smith, p. 11)
605 BC	(Sept. 7) Nebuchadnezzar becomes king of Babylonia (Smith, p. 11)
604 BC	(1 Nisan) Nebuchadnezzar begins official reign (Smith, p. 11)
604 BC	Baruch reads words of Jeremiah in temple, King has roll burned (Jer. 36:9-25)
604 BC	Jeremiah and Baruch go into hiding (Jer. 36:19,26)
604 BC	Jeremiah commanded by the Lord to rewrite all prophecies (Jer. 36:27-32)
604 BC	Daniels prophecy of 70 years of captivity for Judah (Smith, p. 11-12)
603 BC	Babylonia captures Gaza (Smith, p. 12)
601 BC	Egypt recaptures Gaza (Smith, p. 12)
598 BC	Jehoiakim revolts against Babylon, Jehoiakim dies/killed (2 Ki. 24:6; 2 Chr. 36:6; Jer.22:19) (Smith, p. 14)
597 BC	(early January) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah & lays siege to Jerusalem (Smith, p. 14)
597 BC	(January 16) Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim) starts to reign 3 mo. 10 days (2 Ki. 24:8; 2 Chr 36:9) (p. 14)
597 BC	(March 16) Jerusalem falls (Smith, p. 14)
597 BC	(March) Nebuchadnezzar deports 3023 Jews (Jer. 52:28) (Smith, p. 14)
597 BC	(April 22) Nebuchadnezzar deports 10,000 Jews (Ezek. 40:1; 2 Chr. 36:10; 2 Ki. 24:12-16) (p. 14)
597 BC	(April 22) Mattaniah ("Zedekiah") placed on the throne (age 21) (Smith, p. 14)
596 BC	(April) Possible 1 st official year of Zedekiah's reign (Smith, p. 15)
589 BC	Zedekiah plans revolt against Babylonia, expects help from Egypt (Smith, p. 16)
588 BC	(Jan 15) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah to put down revolt, lays siege to Jerusalem (Smith, p. 16)
588 BC	(Summer) Jeremiah imprisoned for the duration of the siege (Jer. 32-33, 37:4-38:28) (Smith, p. 16)
588 BC	Jeremiah's worst prison named "Malchiah Son of the King" (Mulek Son of the King) (Smith, p. 16)
587 BC	(January 7) Babylonian siege lifted temporarily to fight Egyptian army marching along the coast (p. 17)
587 BC	(April 29) Babylonian army defeats Egyptian army, siege reinstated (Smith, p. 18)
586 BC	(July 19) Walls of Jerusalem breached (Smith, p. 18)
586 BC	(Aug 15-18) Temple destroyed (Smith, p. 18)
586 BC	(August) Zedekiah captured at Jerico, taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters. Sons slain before his eyes, his eyes put out. Taken to Babylon (2 Ki. 25:4,6-7) (Smith, p. 18)
586 BC	Major deportation of Jews (2 Kings 25:11) (Smith, p. 18)

Note* Events are correlated with Robert Smith's "Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East," F.A.R.M.S., 1984.

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

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

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

Book of Mormon (1920-present)

Basic Points of Reference:

Adherence to the Dionysian calendar

Lehi left Jerusalem in the year 600 B.C.

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

Destruction of Jerusalem = 11th year of the Reign of Zedekiah (2 Ki. 25:1,8; Jer. 52:12) (589 B.C.)

Calendar Year = 365+ days throughout (365.2422 days)

Birth of Christ = April, A.D. 1 (If we assume that the calendar year change in 3 Nephi 2:8 was such that the year started on the day that Christ was born, or the sign given, then the reference in 3 Nephi 8:5 regarding his death (“in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month”) correlates with 96^{approx.}96 and a 365+ day calendar year.

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

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

Questions: [Refer to “Chronology Chart — Theory #1”]

1. How would you explain 600 B.C. being the 1st year of the reign of Zedekiah (1 Ne 1:4) in view of the lack of historical evidence?
2. How would you explain an A.D. 1 birthdate of Christ in view of D & C 20, and in view of secular evidence?

Theory #2: This theory is presented in the following books or articles:
Joseph Allen, Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon
John Lefgren, April Sixth
John Pratt, "Another Eclipse For Herod"
Sidney Sperry, Book of Mormon Chronology

Note* This theory has been slightly modified in recent years. See the following articles:

Pratt, John P. "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy of the Birth of Christ,"

www.meridianmagazine.com/articles/000331sixhundred.html

Allen, Joseph L. "Zedekiah I," in *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Vol. III, Issue III (September 2001), pp. 10-11.

[This is my choice. See my Commentary on 1 Nephi 1:4]

Basic Points of Reference:

601 B.C. = 1st year of Babylonian rule with a treaty that guaranteed peace.

Thus: 601 B.C. = 1st year of the reign of "Zedekiah" because the title "Zedekiah" had reference to the beginning of Babylonian rule (as opposed to Egyptian rule).

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

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

587 B.C. = Destruction of Jerusalem

Calendar Length = 365+ (Solar) Days throughout (365.2422 days)

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

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

April 6, A.D. 33 = Resurrection of Christ

Questions: [Refer to "Chronology Chart — Theory #2]

1. If Lehi leaves on April 6, 601 B.C., how do you explain the water in the river Laman (1 Ne 2:9) if the rainy season is December-February?
2. What are the corresponding Jewish calendar days for April 6, 601 B.C.; April 6, 1 B.C.; April 6, A.D. 33, and April 6, 1830?
3. What about the 360 day year figured into the prophecies of John (Revelations, Genesis, and Daniel)?
4. What about the statements of Church scholars regarding the death of Herod in 4 B.C.?
5. Would the Jews use any other calendar system than the Lunar calendar?
6. Is the recent modification affected by the superscription associated with the title to the book of 3 Nephi: "The Book of Nephi . . . being a descendant of Nephi who was the son of Lehi, *who came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Judah*"?

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

Jay Huber, "Lehi's 600 Year Prophecy and the Birth of Christ"

John W. Welch, "Longevity of Book of Mormon People and the "Age of Man"

Robert F. Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure"

Note* Garth Norman also supports a theory similar to this because of the date of 597 B.C. recorded on an Izapan stela.

Basic Points of Reference:

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

597 B.C. = Lehi's Departure (November)

586 B.C. = Destruction of Jerusalem

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

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

365+ day Year initiated after Christ's birth (365.2422 days) (Calendar adjusted A.D. 6)

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

Questions: [Refer to "Chronology Chart — Theory #3]

1. Why would the Jews seek Lehi's life for prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem if Jerusalem had already fallen? (1 Nephi 1:18,20) [Possible answer: Lehi prophesied of Christ?— 1 Nephi 1:19-20]
2. Why wasn't Laban deported with the 10,000 (2 Kings 24:14) if he was a man of position (1 Ne 3:31) and if he was wealthy (1 Ne 4:9,20)? [Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]
3. Why did Laban still have command over 50 men (1 Nephi 3:31) if Jerusalem had already fallen? [Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]
4. Why would not Nephi mention the turmoil going on associated with Zedekiah (deportation of 10,000)?
5. Why would Laman and Lemuel think that Lehi was following the "foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11) if Jerusalem had already fallen?
6. Why did neither Laman or Lemuel "believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed" (1 Nephi 2:13) if it had already fallen?

Theory #4: This theory is presented in the following books and articles:
 Randall Spackman, "Lehi's Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth"
 Randall Spackman, "Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology: The Principal Prophecies, Calendars, and Dates"
 Randall Spackman, A review article in FARMS Review of Books, Vol. 10/1 1998, pp. 1-11.

Basic Points of Reference:

597 B.C. = 1st Official Year of "Zedekiah"
 The Babylonians imposed a siege on Jerusalem in 588 B.C.
 The Babylonians withdrew the siege Jan 7, 587 B.C.
Lehi departed Jan 25, 587 B.C.
 Nephi returned for plates (March 1—April 1)
 Nephi returned for Ishmael (May 1—June 10)
 Babylonians reimposed the siege June 21, 587 B.C.
 Destruction of Jerusalem 587 B.C. (2 Nephi 25:9-10 says that there was a "destruction (of Jerusalem) immediately after Lehi left."
Lehi's calendar = 354.367 Day Lunar Calendar—Non intercalated
 Birth of Christ = 5 B.C. (March)
Calendar after sign of Christ = 365 day solar
 Calendar change occurred 9 years after the sign
 Death of Christ = March, A.D. 29

Questions: [Refer to "Chronology Chart — Theory #4"]

1. Why would the Jews seek Lehi's life for prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem if Jerusalem had already fallen? (1 Nephi 1:18,20) [Possible answer: Lehi prophesied of Christ?— 1 Nephi 1:19-20]
2. Why wasn't Laban deported with the 10,000 (2 Kings 24:14) if he was a man of position (1 Ne 3:31) and if he was wealthy (1 Ne 4:9,20)? [Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]
3. Why did Laban still have command over 50 men (1 Nephi 3:31) if Jerusalem had already fallen? [Possible answer: politically linked to Zedekiah?]
4. Why would not Nephi mention the turmoil going on associated with Zedekiah (deportation of 10,000)?
5. Why would Laman and Lemuel think that Lehi was following the "foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11) if Jerusalem had already fallen? [Possible answer: same reasoning as with Jeremiah?]
6. Why did neither Laman or Lemuel "believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed" (1 Nephi 2:13) if it had already fallen? [Possible answer: same reasoning as with Jeremiah?]
7. Why would Nephi not mention the turmoil if the siege had been in place for many months? (1 Ne 2:11,13)
8. Why would Nephi note "the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Ne 1:4) but not the year that Lehi supposedly left (587 B.C.), especially when Lehi's 600 year prophecy of the coming of the Messiah related to the year Lehi left Jerusalem?
9. How does one account for the fact that Lehi sojourned "eight years in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 17:4) and still had to learn about the destruction of Jerusalem by a vision after they had landed in the promised land?
10. What about Alma 52:1/56:1 in view of a Lunar (354 day non-intercalated) calendar?
11. What about the superscript of 3 Nephi which says that Lehi "came out of Jerusalem in the *first* year of the reign of Zedekiah"?

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

John A. Tvedtnes, "Book Review of Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*," in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, FARMS, Vol. 3, 1991, p. 199.

According to John Tvedtnes, it is very doubtful that we can take the "600 years" of Nephi's prophecy as literal, since Lehi left Jerusalem no earlier than the first year of Zedekiah (1 Nephi 1:4), which would have been 598 B.C.—already too late for the prophecy to have been fulfilled precisely 600 years later. Thus, Alma (see Alma 3:14-17) could have been aware of Nephi's statement and taken it as an approximation only, rather than as a precise date. It is Mormon's rewriting of the history which has the birth of Christ occurring in the six hundredth year (3 Nephi 1:1). And it was this same Mormon who acknowledged that there could have been errors in the chronology (3 Nephi 8:1-2).

CHRONOLOGY CHART—THEORY #2 (My Choice)

DATE = BC/AD Calendar

Calendar Length = 365+ (Solar) Days throughout (365.2422 days)

EVENT = What happened

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

CHRONOLOGY CHART—THEORY #2 (My Choice)

- 590 BC Lehi's group sets sail for promised land (1 Ne 18:8) (1-2 years?)
- 588 BC Arrival-Land of first Inheritance (1 Ne 18:23)
Seeds planted, Ore mined, animals hunted (1 Ne 18:24-25)
Nephi begins large plates (1 Ne 19:1-3)
- Meanwhile back in Jerusalem
- 589 BC Zedekiah plans revolt against Babylonia, expects help from Egypt
- 588 BC (Jan 15) Nebuchadnezzar arrives in Judah to put down revolt, lays siege to Jerusalem
- 588 BC (Summer) Jeremiah imprisoned for the duration of the siege (Jer 32-33, 37:4-38:28)
- 588 BC Jeremiah's worst prison named "Malchiah Son of the King" (Mulek Son of the King)
- 587 BC (January 7) Babylonian siege lifted temporarily to fight Egyptian army marching along the coast
- 587 BC (April 29) Babylonian army defeats Egyptian army, siege reinstated
- 586 BC (July 19) Walls of Jerusalem breached
- 586 BC (Aug 15-18) Temple destroyed
- 586 BC (August) Zedekiah captured at Jerico, taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters, sons slain before his eyes, eyes put out, taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:4,6-7)
- 586 BC Major deportation of Jews (2 Kings 25:11)
- 586 BC (approx.) Mulek leaves the Middle East (Omni 1:5-6, Hel 6:10, Hel 8:21, Jer 43:6-7)
- Meanwhile back in the Promised Land
- 586 BC Prophecies of Zenos, Isaiah-Gentile Nation (1 Ne 19,20,21,22)
Lehi has vision that Jerusalem is destroyed (2 Ne 1:4)

NOTES

1 Nephi 2:11,13 Neither Did They Believe That Jerusalem . . . Could Be Destroyed According to the Words of the Prophets:

According to Potter and Wellington, the apparently strong reaction of the people of the city to Lehi's message, their hard-hearted rejection to the call of repentance from a Prophet of the Lord, can best be understood in the light of the events of the previous century. In 701 Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, mounted a campaign against Syria and Palestine with the aim of capturing the road to Egypt in preparation for his campaign against the Egyptians. Egypt's allies surrendered one by one as the Assyrian army approached and the Egyptian army was defeated at Eltekeh in Judah. Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem. Attempts to buy off the Assyrian army proved fruitless (2 Kings 13-16) and without allies Hezekiah's position seemed hopeless. Yet, at this time of near desperation, the Prophet Isaiah came forward to bolster the courage of the people by saying "He shall not come into this city . . . For I will defend the city to save it . . ." (Isaiah 37:33,35). Despite attempts to incite insurrection in the ranks of the defenders Hezekiah's resistance was successful. Sennacherib cut short the attack and left Palestine with his army which, according to the Old Testament (2 Kings 19:35), had been decimated by an epidemic, leaving some 185,000 dead.

In the years that followed, this event would be recounted until "Later generations could ascribe this deliverance to nothing less than a supernatural intervention, second only to one which had secured the freedom of the Israelites from the Egyptian captivity."^{ixiv} Regarding this event Professor Benjamin Mazar wrote:

Embellished by legendary accretions, it strengthened the popular view of the impregnability of the city, and the ultimate sanctity and inviolability of mount Zion and the Temple. This confidence remained intact through subsequent generations down to the last years of the monarchy, until the day that the city walls were breached, the defending forces overwhelmed, and the city itself destroyed by the armies of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar."^{ixv}

[George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 2]

Note* How could the Jews at Jerusalem feel that the city was impregnable until a final destruction in 587/6 B.C. when in 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar had just taken 10,000 people, including the royal family, the palace officials, members of the army and all the craftsmen and smiths to Babylon (see 2 Kings 24:14-16)? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:22]

^{i.} Alois Musil, *The Northern Hijaz-A Topographical Itinerary* (New York: Published under the patronage of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts and of Charles R. Crane, 1926), 254.

^{ii.} Graeme Donnan, *The King's Highway* (Amman: Al Kutba Publishers, 1994), 18.

^{iii.} A team from the Department of Antiquities of Jordan has conducted systematic excavations in the area since March 1997, and these continue under the supervision of Dr. Mohammed Waheeb.

^{iv.} This fascinating story of the history and eventual return of the Jews of Yemen to their homeland can be read in Reubon Ahroni's *Yemenite Jewry* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1986)

^{v.} Saphir also records that the Jews of Sanaa had written genealogies which were destroyed in the mid eighteenth century by Rabbi Shalom Iraqi, a prominent Jew from Egypt, whose son was denied marriage to

one of their daughters because he could not prove his descent from one of the ancient and noble families. Jacob Saphir 1866. *Even Sappir*, Vol. 1, 101.

vi. Reubon Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1986), 25.

vii. The Good News Bible translates this verse: "So we moved on and left the road that goes from the towns of Elath and Ezion-geber to the Dead Sea, and we turned northeast toward Moab." *The Good News Bible*, American Bible Society, New York.

viii. Burton MacDonald, *Ammon, Moab and Edom* (Amman: Al-Kutba Publishers, 1994), 46.

ix. Abdulla al-Wohaibi, *The Northern Hijaz, in the Writings of the Arab Geographers 800-1150 (A.D.)* (Beirut: Al-Risalah, 1973), 196-197.

x. S. Kent Brown (3), "The Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon," in *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla*, Religious Studies Center (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University), 75-98. A summary of those papers which have dealt with this subject are included below, as taken from footnote 1/ of S. Kent Brown (3), *Ibid.*, 90:

1. Notable are 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: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1981), 246-62; a summary of work by George S. Tate, John W. Welch, and Avraham Gileadi in "Research and Perspectives: Nephi and the Exodus," *Ensign*, April 1987, 64-65; Noel B. Reynolds, "the Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," *BYU Studies* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 15-37, particularly the Moses-Nephi typology on 22, 24, 29, 33; Terrance L. Szink, "To a Land of Promise" (1 Nephi 16-18), "in *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 7: 1 Nephi to Alma 29, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 60-72; and three essays in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1991); Terrance L. Szink, "Nephi and the Exodus," 35-51; Alan Goff, "Mourning, Consolation, and Repentance at Nahom," 92-99; and David R. Seely, "The Image of the Hand of God in the Book of Mormon and the Old Testament," 140-50.

xi. Richard Francis Burton, *The Gold-Mines of Midian, and the Ruined Midianite Cities (1878)*, Oleander, Cambridge, 1979, p. 65.

xii. Anonymous, F.A.R.M.S. review notes to the author, July 1998.

xiii. Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Semester 1*, F.A.R.M.S., Provo, 1988-1990, p. 122.

xiv. William Facey, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Ninth Ed., London: Stacy International, 1993, p. 49.

xv. Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade*, London: Longman, 1981, pp. 173, 211.

xvi. Alan Keohane, *Bedouin, Nomads of the Desert*, London: Stacey International, 1994, p. 36.

xvii. (Nibley, (1), pp. 79-80.

xviii. (LDS Infobase, CIA World Report).

xix. (Water Atlas of Saudi Arabia, p. XV).

xx. Kelly Ogden, *LDS Church News* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News), 6 January 1996.

xxi. Ministry of Agriculture and Waters, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the cooperation of the Saudi Arabian United States Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation and The US National Geographic Center and the United States Geological Service, *Water Atlas of Saudi Arabia*, Riyadh: Saudi Publishing, 1984, p. 9.

xxii. Hugh Nibley, *Collective Works of Hugh Nibley*, Vol. 5, pp. 50-51.

xxiii. Hugh Nibley, *Collective Works of Hugh Nibley*, Vol. 6, p. 256.

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- xxiv. Groom, *Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames*.
- xxv. A sample of Bible references on "Midian": Genesis 37:28, Exodus 2:15-16, Exodus 4:9, Numbers 25:15, Numbers 31:2-3, Judges 6:14, 1 Chronicles 1:46; also one reference in D&C 84:6 to "Jethro."
- xxvi. *Archaeology*, "Description of Midianite Antiquities," ATLAL, *The Journal of Saudi Arabian* (Ministry of Education, Department of Antiquities and Museums, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1980-1981), vol. 4, plate 81, vol. 5 plate 93.
- xxvii. Michael Lloyd Ingraham, et. al., "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwest province," ATLAL (1979), vol. 3, 74-75.
- xxviii. A sample of Bible references on "Dedan": Genesis 25:3, Jeremiah 25:23, Isaiah 21:13, Ezekiel 25:13, Ezekiel 38:13.
- xxix. Garth Bawden, ATLAL, (1979), vol. 3, 70.
- xxx. Groom (2), 206.
- xxxi. Diodorus Siculus. *Bibliotheca Historica*: Vol. III, 43 f. Vols 1-3 edited by Fredericus Vogel, vols 4-5 edited by Curtius Theodorus Fischer, in *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Leipzig, 1888-1906).
- xxxii. The north celestial pole is not constant and while Polaris, or the pole star, is near the north celestial pole at the moment it has not always been so. The earth is not spinning absolutely still on its axis but is "wobbling," somewhat like a top, so that the projection of the earth's axis onto the heavens describes a full circle every 26,000 years. This is known as *precession*. The net result is that in 600 B.C. the north celestial pole was approximately 14° (ignoring the minor effects of mutation) from Polaris somewhere between Ursa Minor and Draco. Thus if Nephi were using a "pole star" for navigation it would not have coincided absolutely with true north (in the same way that Polaris is not on the earth's axis of rotation) and his measurements would consequently be a few degrees off absolute. See Donald Menzel, *A Field Guide to the Stars and Planets* (London: Collins), 329-331.
- xxxiii. DeL'isle, G. "Carte de la Turquie, de l'Arabie et de la Perse." 1701, [from Atlas de la Geographie. Paris 1715?] fol. BM. Maps. 37.f.13. Also in "G.R. Tibbetts, *Arabia in Early Maps* (New York: Falcon Oleander Press, 1978), 110.
- xxxiv. Groom (1), *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames*.
- xxxv. DeL'isle, G. "Carte de la Turquie, de l'Arabie et de la Perse." 1701, [from Atlas de la Geographie. Paris 1715?] fol. BM. Maps. 37.f.13. Also in "G.R. Tibbetts, *Arabia in Early Maps* (New York: Falcon Oleander Press, 1978), 110.
- xxxvi. Musil, 312.
- xxxvii. Groom (1), *A Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames*.
- xxxviii. Hitti, 17-18.
- xxxix. The Asir, *Saudi Arabia at a Glance*. Broadcast on Saudi channel, 20th June 2000.
- xl. Groom, 193.
- xli. Hilton (2), 138.
- xlii. Stark, 302-303: records:
This northern road is a shortcut to the Minean lands. It still exists and is used by caravans between Hadhramaut and Yemen whenever there is a condition of comparative tranquility along that wild

border. I was in the Hadhramaut at such a time, and met one of these caravans coming by way of 'Aba and Shabwa. The following itinerary for this route was written down by the grandfather of the present 'Attas Sayyids of Huraidha in Wadi 'Amd, and I copied it from his MSS. In Huraidha he collected the names from beduin, and I give it for what it may be worth. No European has been along this way.

'Arudh 'Ain (border of Hadhramaut) 'Aba (marked on maps) Mlais (tiny hamlet) Mishainiq (spring) Shira (wadi, good water) Hadhbar a; Ja'aid (hill in wilderness with water) Khailaifa (little water) Najran: 8 days altogether.

xliii. Jenner & Groom, map of South Arabia.

xliv. A first trail turned east at Mecca and another trail turned east at Najran, however both trails passed north of the Dhofar region (Potter and Wellington's proposed Bountiful) to near Muscat on the Gulf, so they do not merit any further discussion here).

xlv. In: Kiernan, 31.

xlvi. Ross T. Christensen, *Ensign*, August 1978.

xlvii. Nigel Groom, "A sketch map of South West Arabia. Royal Geographical Society, London, 1976.

xlviii. S. Kent Brown (4), "'The Place That Was Called Nahom': New Light from Ancient Yemen" in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 8, Number 1 (Provo Utah: F.A.R.M.S., 1999), 66.

xlix. Salibi, 34.

i. *From the Queen of Saba to a Modern State*. 2. <http://www.gpc.org.ye/ancient0.html>

ii. Walter W. Muller (2), 7.

iii. Some might wonder why Potter and Wellington oppose the two sites which bear the name NHM today. These sites have certainly been suggested in the past by a number of scholars. **(note i)** But in their opinion, neither the mountain Jabal Nehm in the present day mountainous Nihm tribal lands, nor the Nehem burial ground on Jabal Yam seem to do that. They give the following reasons:

(1) Nephi tells us that they turned east at Nahom. Here they were starving. Yet the proposed burial site at wadi Jawf was only 15 miles from the capital city of Ma'in (QRNW), and some 8 miles from the city of Nesca (NSQ). How could the family be starving to death in a fertile oasis wadi which supported a population of tens of thousands and whose capital city Ma'in, meaning "spring-water," was only a few hours walk away? Admittedly these towns were not to reach their zenith until many hundreds of years after Lehi's time but settlements undoubtedly existed in wadi Jawf in 600 B.C., and probably not inconsiderable in size.

(2) Both Jabal Nihm and wadi Jawf Nehem are close to mountains that were undoubtedly excellent hunting lands in Lehi's time. Previously Nephi had met with great success hunting in the mountains at Shazer and also when the bow broke. Here the family would have been camped below the mountains Jabal at Tiyal at 11,520 feet and Jabal Sara at 10,500 feet. today, even with the encroachment of man, almost all of the larger carnivores in Arabia (Leopard, Striped Hyena, Arabian Wolf, Caracal, Wild Cat) are found in the western mountains (see note iv) indicating the presence of ample game there. By this stage in the journey the men were accomplished hunters so starving in the mountains seems completely contrary to what is known about the area in antiquity.

(3) Wadi Jawf could hardly be described as a "wilderness" in any sense of the word. It was one of the most fertile areas of Arabia, and perhaps one of the wealthiest lands of its time. Indeed the relatively small area of Southern Arabia historically supported half the populations of the whole Peninsula.

(4) The Minaeans of the area were idolatrous. (see note viii) It has been suggested that Ishmael's body was transported to Nahom in order to bury his body in the cemetery there. Why would the family go to the effort of transporting the dead body of Ishmael all the way to a hill burial site in Wadi Jawf only to leave him in a pagan cemetery? And why this burial ground, since there must have been many others in the well-populated area covered by the principality of Nahom? Furthermore, one cannot overlook the fact that the name "Nahom" is related to a Hebrew verb "Naham" meaning "to console oneself." The assumption is

always made that NHM and Nahom are synonymous but it is certainly possible that they are not the same. It is even possible that Nahom was a Jewish colony and totally unrelated to NHM.

(5) Nephi states that they reached Nahom by traveling south-southeast. To reach Jabal Nihm traveling in this direction would have taken Lehi through the heart of the Asir mountains. There was no ancient route through the mountains running in this direction. Also the camel was not an animal of the mountain, the camel trails often took large detours to avoid them.

(6) Wadi Jawf also makes little sense as the location for Nephi's story. To make it fit, the story must be distorted almost beyond recognition. "Tarrying" must be interpreted to mean planting crops, yet this area was inhabited at that time. . . . The arable land was produced and maintained through irrigation. Lehi would have had neither the resources nor the permission to tamper with the rights to these lands. The phrase "we must perish in the wilderness with hunger" must now mean "we don't like it here amidst all this fertility and abundance."

(7) Finally, one has to ask how the family of Lehi could have been lost in wadi Jawf. Not only was it populated but also travel by camel was confined to within the wadi by the mountains to the north and south. The family was supposedly wandering lost in a limited area without running into any of the numerous inhabitants or seeing any of the towns, villages or farms. To have reached the burial ground identified with the name NHM, the family would have had to travel up the entire length of the wadi, which is only 25 miles wide, pass what would become the ten walled cities of the Minaeans and still believed they were lost. A most unlikely scenario.

lii. Stark, 315.

liv. Jurius Zarins. *Archaeology* Vol. 50 Number 3, May-June 1997. "Atlantis of the Sands." www.archaeology.org/9705/abstracts/ubar.html

lv. "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.

lvi. Clapp, 202.

lvii. Reported by High Davies & R. Barry O'Brien, *The Daily Telegraph*, Feb 1992.

lviii. John Beasant, *History Yields Its Secrets in Ubar*, *Gulf News*, Thursday March 5th 1992, p. 12.

lix. Clapp, 205.

lx. 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.

lxi. *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, article "Arabia," vol. 13:815.

lxii. 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.

lxiii. According to *The Golden Home and High School Encyclopedia*, the tropical year is the year of our seasons. The length of the tropical year is 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 46 seconds. The Roman calendar, based on 12 moon months a year with an additional month now and then, was 85 days off by 47 B.C. At that time Julius Caesar was in Alexandria, Egypt. There he secured the aid of Sosigenes, who constructed a calendar similar to that used by the Egyptians. It was called the Julian calendar in honor of Julius Caesar. It ignored the moon month and fixed the year at 365 days divided into 12 slightly unequal months. Every four years a day was added to the Julian calendar, but that advanced the calendar days a little too much.

By the spring of 1582, which officially began on March 21, the Julian calendar was ten days early. Pope Gregory XIII decreed that the days between October 5 and 15 would be dropped to set the calendar right again. This "Gregorian Calendar" assigned 365 days to each year plus a 366th day every fourth year, called a leap year. Because the extra day exceeded the needed amount by an average of 11 minutes 14 seconds per year, the calendar left out the 366th day of each leap year ending in an even hundred, such as the years 1700, 1800, and 1900, except for those evenly divisible by the number 400, such as the year 2000. This meant that in every 400 years three days would be dropped, which reduced the difference between 400 Gregorian calendar years and 400 tropical years (the year of our seasons) to less than three hours.

The Gregorian calendar was readily adopted in Catholic countries, but wasn't made official in England until 1752. [*The Golden Home and High School Encyclopedia*. New York: Golden Press, 1961, Vol. 4, p. 477; Vol. 19, p. 2826]

lxiv. Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 42.

lxv. Mazar, 57.