

# A Detailed Chronology of LDS Thought on the Geography of Lehi's Journey from Jerusalem to the New World: 1981- Present

Note 1: The mark ^ after the year is purely a research tool indicating that a copy of the article or book is on file in the author's personal library.

Note 2: The year (listed on the left) for the event or quote is not always the same as the date of the primary source (listed on the right) from which the information was taken. If the source information (the later publication of the information) was significant, in and of itself, to the later time period in which it came forth, there will also be a separate listing for that later year. When appropriate, additional sources will be listed.

**1981<sup>^</sup> John Sorenson, "A Map for Lehi's People" (Draft Copy), 1989, pp. 1, 5-7.**

Note\* This is a manuscript copy of an article prepared for the *Ensign*. It never was approved by the Correlation Committee. The first few pages concern some significant historical authoritative statements regarding Book of Mormon geography that, for the most part and although arranged differently, would be included in Chapter 1 of Sorenson's 1985 publication, *An Ancient American Setting For the Book of Mormon*. However, included in these first pages of manuscript are some significant ideas that, to my knowledge, had never before appeared in print, nor would they be included in the 1985 publication, nor would they appear in any other publication after 1985 till the present. I have underlined them below. Sorenson writes:

In September and October 1976, the ENSIGN published a carefully documented proposal locating Lehi's trail from Jerusalem to a launching point at Salallah on the Arabian Sea. For the first time, in a major way, a site for Lehi's ancient Bountiful had been tentatively identified, thanks to the research and on-site observations of Lynn and Hope Hilton and their photographer, Gerald Silver. Even though theirs is an educated, documented guess, it naturally raises other questions that call for continued and careful archaeological, anthropological, and linguistic scrutiny.

The ENSIGN now presents another proposal for consideration and study, one of much wider scope, raising a correspondingly greater number of questions: the location of the Book of Mormon lands in America. . . .

## *Statements on Book of Mormon Geography by Church Leaders*

There have been two periods of serious concern with Book of Mormon geography--the time of Joseph Smith himself, and our own day. During the intervening years of colonizing the West, enduring persecution, and expanding the Church, this subject--one for which a substantial body of direct evidence was singularly lacking--did not find place in the mainstream of Latter-day Saint study. One of the problems created by those intervening years, however, is a blurred understanding of what was thought in Joseph Smith's time.

Three statements about Book of Mormon geography have been attributed to Joseph Smith, but we are not sure if he actually said any of them. (See Figure 1. below) The first is a record in Frederick G. William's handwriting stating that the Prophet said, "Lehi and his company . . . landed on the continent of South America, in Chile thirty degrees, south latitude." Apparently, Brother Williams himself claimed that

this was a revelation to the Prophet. In later generations, Elder B. H. Roberts of the First Council of the Seventy and Elder John A. Widtsoe of the Quorum of the Twelve, both of them careful students, were hesitant about the statement's origin, doubting that it could be confidently ascribed to the Prophet.

The second statement connected to the Prophet appeared in the *Times and Seasons*, a Church newspaper, on 15 September 1842. Six months before, on March 15, Joseph Smith had assumed sole responsibility for the contents of the paper, although John Taylor was formally the editor. Thus, the Prophet could have known and approved an editorial stating that "Lehi . . . landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien [today Panama]." (15 Sept. 1842, p. 922.) But several months later, the Prophet requested that his name be removed from the masthead of the paper, declaring that on at least one occasion it had published inappropriate material which he did not wish to be responsible for. Further, Dean Jessee of the Church Historical Department, a student of the writing style of the early leaders, feels that this unsigned editorial shows more characteristics of Wilford Woodruff's style than the Prophet's. Wilford Woodruff was at that time the paper's business manager and daily associated with its publication.

In any case, the two statements reflect a geography differing by about 3,000 miles, from Chile to Panama. Within a few weeks, the third statement appeared, again in the *Times and Seasons*. The paper had printed extracts from John Lloyd Stephen's very popular *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, published in 1841, describing for the first time in English eyewitness accounts of the wonders of the Maya ruins. (14 Sept. 1842, pp. 911-15.) Two weeks later, an editorial commented: . . . [For the full text, see the Sept. 14, 1842 Notation]

Again the question arises: did Joseph Smith write this editorial? Or even, with his busy schedule, did he have time to approve it personally? Joseph Smith was at this time in hiding from his enemies and may not have been personally available for direct management of such details. Clearly, there is enough question about authorship that we should be hesitant to place too much emphasis on these statements. *But what all these statements together do tell us, at least, is that the people around Joseph Smith, and perhaps Joseph Smith himself, considered the geographical question an open one and were willing to draw on the best resources of secular scholarship then available to help them understand it better.*

The last clear statement from that generation is a note by Orson Pratt in the *Millennial Star* that the Nephite nation "inhabited the cities of Yucatan at the time they were attacked and driven from the land southward."

As the nineteenth century moved toward its close, a few of the Saints found time to concern themselves again with the subject of Book of Mormon geography. Church leaders were careful not to let the Saints divide into camps on the question or to turn opinions into dogma. Elder George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency, one of the leading intellectual forces in the Church then, noted in 1890 that Book of Mormon geography was a popular study topic and that "the brethren who lecture on the lands of the Nephites have often been asked to prepare a suggestive map illustrative of Nephite geography but have never consented to do so. Nor are we acquainted with any of the Twelve Apostles, who could undertake such a task." President Joseph F. Smith, Elder Anthony W. Ivins, and Elder John A. Widtsoe were among later authorities who explained that the Church took no position on Book of Mormon locations. When someone asked President Smith to approve a map "showing the exact landing place of Lehi and his company," he replied that "the Lord had not yet revealed it." Elder Ivins, then a member of the First Council of the Seventy, wrote in 1929 that "there has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles the question. . . . We are just waiting until we discover the truth." Elder Widtsoe affirmed that the question was still open and encouraged members to "diligent, prayerful study" that would lead them "to a better understanding of times and places in the history of the people who move across the pages of the divinely given Book of Mormon." In sum, the facts are that individual General Authorities have sometimes inclined toward one explanation or another, but there has never been an authoritative statement binding upon members of the Church. It is equally significant that no Church leader has ever taught that only through revelation would we come to discover the lands of the Book of Mormon. That clearly points to the

possibility that new information and new discoveries could enlighten us in the same way that biblical archaeological research has proven so helpful in the study of the Old and New Testaments.

[1981 **Figure 1: Four Early Statements on Book of Mormon Geography.** John Sorenson, "A Map for Lehi's People" (Draft Copy), 1989, p. 5a]

Sorenson then provides internal reasoning for a basic configuration of Book of Mormon Geography accompanied by some maps. He has the Land of Nephi in the extreme southwestern portion of the land southward.

[1981 **Basic Description of Book of Mormon Geography.** Map 1: Basic "hour-glass" configuration of Book of Mormon lands. John Sorenson, "A Map for Lehi's People" (Draft Copy), 1989, p. 8a]

On page 16 he writes:

Highland Guatemala matches the Book of Mormon description of the land of Nephi in important ways. (see Map 6) We know that the "land of first inheritance," where Lehi landed, was on the west coast. When the original party broke up, Nephi led his group inland (and therefore upward) to a highland location. (see 2 Ne. 5:5-8) . . .

[1981 **Book of Mormon Lands in the Mesoamerican Setting.** Map 6: Geographical features of the Book of Mormon lands, superimposed on a map of Mesoamerica. Topographical features of this area show a substantial correspondence with Book of Mormon descriptions. John Sorenson, "A Map for Lehi's People" (Draft Copy), 1989, p. 15a]

Source: Personal Files of John L. Sorenson.

Note\* See the 1985 Sorenson notation.

1981^ **David A. Palmer, *In Search of Cumorah.*** Bountiful: Horizon Publishers, 1992, p. 255.

Although the text has essentially nothing on Lehi's travels, Map 3, (an internal map overlaid on Mesoamerica) has the "Nephite landing" located approximately in El Salvador.

[1981 **Map 3: Book of Mormon Geography.** David A. Palmer, *In Search of Cumorah.* Bountiful: Horizon Publishers, 1992, p. 255]

1982^ Lamar C. Berrett, "The So-called Lehi Cave," Unpublished manuscript, F.A.R.M.S., Provo, Utah: 1982

Lamar Berrett writes:

About twenty miles south-west of Jerusalem and ten miles west-north-west of Hebron, the government of Israel constructed a security road in 1961 to protect the border between Jordan and Israel. During the course of construction an ancient burial cave was uncovered on the eastern slope of Khirbet Beit Lei. The Israel Department of Antiquities excavated the cave during the month of June, 1961, under the direction of Joseph Naveh, Professor of Archaeology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. They named the cave the "Jerusalem Cave."

The LDS interest in the cave comes from both the Book of Mormon incident of the brothers hiding in a cave, as well as the particular graffiti on the walls of the cave. Three human figures are represented, as well as two very crude ships. The old inscriptions have been translated as:

"The mountains of Judah--Yahveh [is] the God of the whole earth; the mountains of Judah belong to him, to the God of Jerusalem."

" The [Mount of] Moriah Thou has favoured, the dwelling of Yah, Yahveh"

"[Ya]hveh deliver [us]!"

Attempts to date the cave and its inscriptions have proved interesting. Paleography, the study of the form of letters, was of auxiliary value in drawing chronological conclusions concerning these inscriptions. The form of the letters varied greatly. "In view of the nature of the graffiti," says Naveh, "we assume that all the inscriptions and drawings belong to a short period of time, and they were incised by a number of persons." He concludes that the form of the burial cave and the script are of the pre-exilic period, or prior to 587 B.C."

The most fascinating interpretation of the graffiti comes from Frank Moore Cross, Jr., professor at Harvard University. Dr. Cross proposes a 600 B.C. date for the inscriptions, and notes: "It is very difficult to avoid the speculation that inscription A is the citation of a lost prophecy, and that it and its companion inscriptions were written by a refugee fleeing the Chaldeans who conquered Judah and who destroyed the holy city in 587 B.C. Most documents, especially manuscripts and papyri, found in Palestinian caves were left behind by men in such circumstances. The same may be true of these graffiti. Perhaps such speculations are built on too flimsy a foundation of facts; at all events we should suppress the temptation to suggest that the oracle and the petitions may have been the work of a prophet or his amanuensis fleeing Jerusalem." (Lamar C. Berrett, "The So-Called Lehi Cave," FARMS reprint, 1982, pp. 1-3)

According to Brant Gardner, clearly the LDS community would be interested in a cave associated with the name *Le'i*, containing inscriptions related to a fleeing prophet, and particularly noting sailing vessels. Have we found the cave that Nephi and in brothers hid in? Probably not. Nevertheless the cave is very instructive of the times. Certainly it indicates that the *act* of hiding in a cave was a known tradition. At the very least, it places Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi in very good ancient company. [Brant Gardner, "Brant Gardner's Page, "[http://www.highfiber.com/~nahualli/LDStopics/1 Nephi/1 Nephi3.htm](http://www.highfiber.com/~nahualli/LDStopics/1%20Nephi/1%20Nephi3.htm), pp. 15-16]

Note\* 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., pp. 93-94]

**1982<sup>^</sup> Eugene England, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds, Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982, pp. 143-156.**

In the introduction we find the following:

Eugene England, Associate Professor of English at Brigham Young University . . . has carefully studied the passage in the Book of Mormon recounting the emigration of Lehi from Jerusalem, thoroughly reviewed the information about Arabia accessible to Joseph Smith, and examined the reports of explorations since then, particularly the records of a journey in 1975 along the route described in the Book of Mormon as reported by Lynn M. and Hope Hilton in their book *In Search of Lehi's trail*. . . . In this article England develops the argument that the Book of Mormon account of Lehi's journey across the Arabian Peninsula could not have been written in the 1820s. More than twenty significant geographic details accurately described in the Book of Mormon but not known in America in Joseph Smith's time serve as evidence that it is indeed an ancient document, written from firsthand information. . . .

Eugene England writes:

. . . it may have been possible for an early nineteenth-century American who was uncommonly imaginative and coherent in his thinking to produce a reasonable, even captivating, fiction about an emigration of sixth-century B.C. Hebrews across essentially unknown Arabia and the Pacific Ocean and about their development as a culture in America. But if the story claims to be literally *true*, it must hold up against all the subsequent 150 years of detailed scientific explorations and linguistic study of these areas and cultures. In this essay I will look only at the *route* taken by the Book of Mormon emigrants from Jerusalem across Arabia to the sea . . .

The standard geographies of the time, those that were possibly available to Joseph Smith in the public libraries at Canandaigua, Ithaca, and Rochester in western New York, were consistently spare in describing Arabia as "generally a barren uncultivated waste. (Frederick Butler, *Elements of Geography and History Combined*, 4th ed., Wethersfield, Conn.: Deming and Francis, 1828, p. 245.) with sometimes a little information on the "bizarre" customs surrounding the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Some of them added (based on the surviving ancient references to "Arabia Felix" and on Karsten Niebuhr's account of his explorations of Yemen and the Hijaz, published in English in 1972) this kind of misleading generality: "The southern division is fertile in a high degree, and produces rice, maize, etc., and abounds in frankincense, gums, balsams, honey, wax, spices, and all the tropical fruits." (note 2--see below)

Note 2 reads:

I have examined the great variety of the geographies or "gazetteers" that could possibly have been available to Joseph Smith. They range from R. Brooke's *General Gazetteer*, published in London in 1794 and very popular, republished in a number of editions (finally, with revisions by John Marshall in the U.S. in 1844), to Nathaniel Dwight's *Short but Comprehensive System of the Geography of the World . . . Designed for Children* (Northampton, Conn.: Simeon Butler, 1811), which was also republished many times. All of these are sketchy, very general and vague, and though generally consistent with each other, even obviously all dependent on Brooke's early work, they are contradictory about a central matter, the nature and location of any fertile areas in Arabia. All of those before 1835, when more careful explorations began to have their effect, subscribe to the ancient Romantic idea of an "Arabia Felix" in the south, but some identify the whole southern third as that poetic area (Butler, op. cit); some speak of "some few fertile spots [in the interior], which appear like islands in a desolate ocean"--Jedediah Morse, *A New System of Geography, Ancient and Modern, for the Use of Schools*, 24th Edition (Boston:

Richardson and Lord 1824), p. 228; some identify such fertile oasis as in "the *south-western* [italics added] extremity toward the shores of the Red Sea"--*A System of Geography; or, a Descriptive, Historical and Philosophical View of the Several Quarters of the World*, 4 vols. (Glasgow: Niven, Napier, and Khull, 1805) Vol. II, p. 273; and some claim that "in the *south-southeastern* part, called Arabia Felix, there is, in some spots, a fine soil, and luxuriant vegetation" (Dwight, op. cit., p. 109; italics added). None implies there is any timber such as would be needed for shipbuilding. Dwight stating specifically, "there is very little timber in Arabia of any kind." None suggests any fertile areas along the coast, some specifically denying it, such as Conder's Arabia (*The Modern Traveller Series*, London, 1825), p. 9.

And this is the extent of the knowledge reasonably available to "an unlettered farm boy" in western New York. But suppose Joseph Smith were a clever, multilingual researcher--or at least had access to one. What was the *most* he could possibly have known about Arabia?

Actually it turns out that the more he had known based on contemporary expertise the more wrong he is likely to have been, especially in details he included about large river courses, the particular directions traveled, and the specific location of an isolated luxuriant spot (that his emigrants called "Bountiful"), where were not only flowers and fruit trees but also ore for toolmaking and large trees good for shipbuilding. For instance, had he read Niebuhr in detail he would have known the littoral zone on the northeast shore of the Red Sea as a possible route, but he would have gotten the impression there was not any such system of wadis (valleys of the seasonal riverbeds) as became important in his story.

And if in some way he had gotten hold of John Burckhardt's information before it was published in 1829 and 1831, or of reports of the British experience in Muscat, he would have been convinced that the earlier popular geographies and gazetteers were far too optimistic about southern Arabia being a comparatively fertile area. For instance, under the impact of the information that became generally available by the 1830s, McCulloch's *Universal Gazetteer* (New York, 1843) was willing to assert that the ancient references to Arabia Felix were "erroneous" and that the southern coast was dreary and unproductive. This was based on explorations that did not move inland and especially on the reports from Muscat at the eastern end of the southern shore of what is now Oman. Europeans could read imaginative descriptions of heat so great it roasted animals on the plain and fowls in the air; a sailor's account commented "there is only a sheet of brown paper between here and Hell."

[ Note\* If the earlier popular geographies and gazetteers were "far too optimistic about southern Arabia being a comparatively fertile area," the Joseph Smith would have known to locate his Bountiful in the southern portion of Arabia.]

*Conder's Arabia* (London, 1825), the most complete general guide possibly available to Joseph Smith, describes the whole southern coastline as "a rocky wall . . . as dismal and barren as can be; not a blade of grass or a green thing." It is this kind of information, the most up-to-date available for potential explorers, that led James Wellsted, a British naval officer who was able to travel in eastern Oman in the mid-1830s, to write in great surprise about his visit to oases near Minna:

As we crossed these, with lofty almond, citron, and orange-trees yielding a delicious fragrance on either hand, exclamations of astonishment and admiration burst from us. I "Is this Arabia," we said, "this the country we have looked on heretofore as a desert?" . . . I could almost fancy we had at length reached that "Araby the blest," which we had heretofore regarded as existing only in the fictions of our poets.

[ Note\* If "Araby the blest" existed in the fictions of [the] poets" in the times before Joseph Smith, then the idea of fertility in the southern portion of Arabia was in print at the time of Joseph Smith. Whether Joseph even read these accounts or believed them is another story.]

The same [1830s Wellsted] expedition explored the coast southwest of Muscat and got some better information on Dhofar (the area in western Oman that corresponds best to Joseph Smith's "Bountiful," the

fertile coast where the emigrants built and launched their ship). There they found the same surprising luxuriance reported by Wellsted and noted the promontory just west of Dhofar, "from which coasting vessels had turned for nearly two thousand years, their monsoon filling sails as their prows pointed to India."

[ Note\* If these ideas were available to early members of the Church, it is surprising that none of them ever made their way into the LDS periodicals of the day (*Messenger & Advocate*, *Times & Seasons*) as "proof" of the Book of Mormon. The reason why might be answered in what follows.]

And ten years later the same navy ship that had brought Wellsted, the *Palinurus*, returned to Dhofar, and Surgeon H. T. Carter went ashore and made the first modern examination of the frankincense trees that grow there. But as a twentieth-century account of "the unveiling of Arabia" notes, the reports of these were neglected and their names forgotten, so that in 1894, when Mr. and Mrs. James Theodore Bent went inland in Dhofar, they reported, "That arid Arabia could produce so lovely a spot, was to us one of the greatest surprises of our lives."

As late as the 1920s Bertram Thomas was surprised at the "thickly wooded wadis" . . .

[Question: Did any LDS authors prior to Nibley (1950) ever refer to any of the works available at the time concerning Arabia in discussing Lehi's travels?]

Clearly the information on Arabia available to Joseph Smith was vague, inaccurate, contradictory. He would have been wise to choose a better-known route--or at least to be vague and general himself about the journey through Arabia and the shipbuilding. But he is not. The account is extremely detailed, leaving itself open on nearly every page to easy falsification through subsequent discoveries. . . . But the exploration of the Arabian peninsula by Westerners, which has occurred mainly in the twentieth century, especially since the penetration of Bertram Thomas into the Empty Quarter (1920s) and Wilfred Thesiger into Dhofar, has produced *no single contradiction* of Joseph Smith's daringly detailed "conjectures" and most remarkably has shown a high correlation of the actual discoveries to his specific details.

Modern research has recovered knowledge of an ancient caravan route, "The Frankincense Trail," from Dhofar, the ancient source of that precious material, to near Jerusalem; the trail conforms in detail to Joseph Smith's account of distances, turns, and specific geography. And modern travelers along that route have described details that fit the implications of his descriptions of topography, relative desolateness, weather conditions, etc. Of course, this route, and its remarkable beginning point, the uniquely fertile Salalah area in Dhofar, were known and written about anciently, for instance in the work of Strabo and Pliny (note 15-see below)

Note 15 reads:

*The Geography of Strabo*, seven volumes, translated from the Greek by Horace Leonard Jones (London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1939), vol. 7, pp. 299-365; Pliny, *Natural History*, translated from the Latin by H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1952), pp. 37-63. There is also an ancient anonymous travel account, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century*, translated from the Greek by Wilfred H. Schoff (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corp., 1974), with notes by Schoff. Even in the highly unlikely event that any of these esoteric classical works could have been available to Joseph Smith, they do not contain details in relation to modern geographical terms sufficient to have been helpful with the particular claims about the route we are discussing here.

but not with sufficient detail to account for more than a few of the correspondences, even if those documents had been available to Joseph Smith or if they were considered trustworthy or were detailed enough to be related to specific geography by anyone who did have access to them. The real state of popular and educated belief about the nature of Arabia is best indicated in the sketchy gazetteer accounts I have reviewed, . . .

Note\* In view of the fact that the Hiltons proposed route was along the Red Sea coastline (a route not available until much later than the wadi route on the eastern side of the mountains that parallel the coast), and that many of the Hiltons' ideas would later be proved to have shortcomings, England's statements here are quite bold.

[England now reviews in some detail the Hiltons' information regarding their route described in *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 1976]

He concludes:

For Joseph Smith to have so well succeeded in producing over twenty unique details [note 22-see below] in the description of an ancient travel route through one of the least-known areas of the world, all of which have been subsequently verified, requires extra-ordinary, unreasonable faith in his natural genius or his ability to guess right in direct opposition to the prevailing knowledge of his time. Of course, any particular detail might be coincidental, and I do not claim that such things as distances traveled can be exactly proven, but the piling up of parallel detail after detail, with *no* contradictions, is conclusive. . . .

Note 22 reads:

A quick review of these details:

- (1) The route south to Aqaba is an anciently primary way out of Jerusalem.
- (2) The ancient route, the Frankincense Trail, leaves the beach coast at Aqaba, so it is "near: the Red Sea; then it returns to it, so it is "nearer."
- (3) The location of a major oasis about three days' journey along the trail from Aqaba.
- (4) The location there of an impressive valley that could be used for poetic metaphor and
- (5) of a continually flowing river that
- (6) flows into an arm of the Red Sea called anciently a "fountain" and
- (7) is capable of supporting extended settlement and growth of crops.
- (8) Four days from this oasis, in a south-southeast direction, is another major oasis where
- (9) wild animals that can be hunted with bow and arrow begin to be available.
- (10) Further in the same direction, still along the Frankincense Trail that is in this whole area the only tenable route, with anciently dug or natural water holes at regular intervals,
- (11) the area (north and south of modern Jiddah) becomes more inhospitable, a source of "much affliction," with fewer water holes,



(12) many sand storms and metal-destroying salt air and humidity where a steel bow would break and wooden ones lose their spring but

(13) where there is excellent pomegranate wood for new bows and

(14) a mountain where wild game is plentiful.

(15) Many days further in the same direction is another major oasis capable of supporting a caravan through a growing season, and

(16) this is where the Frankincense trail turns sharply to the east and then

(17) skirts the notorious "Empty Quarter," the worst desert in Arabia, another period of "much affliction" for the group and

(18) a place where danger from Bedouin raiders could require traveling without firebuilding.

(19) There is, exactly where the direct route east intercepts the southern Arabian coast, a unique fertile area of fruit and wild honey, with

20) a gentle beach and yet nearby high cliffs dropping into deep water,

(21) mountains nearby with iron ore for toolmaking,

(22) sycamore-fig trees growing on the mountains that are excellent for shipbuilding and

23) strong monsoon winds used anciently for sailing to India and out into the Pacific Ocean.

**1983**     **Randall K. Mehew, *Historical Outline of the Book of Mormon***, Orem: Millennial Press, (Lehi) 1983.

**1983^**     **FARMS Staff, "Lands of the Book of Mormon--Footnoted and Annotated Script,"** Provo, UT: FARMS, 1983.

In 1983 FARMS produced a videotaped and narrated slide presentation portraying "the lands and places associated with the Book of Mormon as far as they can be reasonably identified at this time." This was accompanied by a footnoted and annotated script. 31 of the 113 slides dealt with the Old World. The remaining 82 focused on the New World--specifically Mesoamerica. A 12 minute panel discussion is appended to the videotape.

This presentation was intended for use in a classroom or fireside setting in order to convey the assurance to students of the Book of Mormon that the "story took place somewhere, that it has a bona fide historical and cultural context, that more is known about the book's geographical setting than many students may have realized heretofore." It was also intended to convey the idea that "serious students of the Book of Mormon have achieved a notable consensus regarding the New World setting of the text, [and that] there is general agreement that Mesoamerica is the heartland of the Book of Mormon." It was hoped that this production would "cause many people to reconsider some of their naive assumptions about the Book of Mormon and its place in ancient America," that they would "study the scriptural text more carefully and they [would] be more discriminating when considering sites or artifacts that may have an implied Book of Mormon relationship."

## Transcript of the Panel Discussion

Susan Roylance: Do we really know any sites that relate directly to the Book of Mormon?

Stephen Ricks: . . . The Book of Mormon account mentions the party of Lehi travelling close to the Red Sea in a south-south-easterly direction which may suggest to us a route along the western coast of Saudi Arabia, although we can't know for sure exactly where it was. In addition to that, at some point they seem to have moved in from a south-south-easterly direction perhaps now away from the sea and in an easterly direction. We can't again know precisely where they stopped, but given the description of Bountiful as a place of much fruit and of wild honey, there is only one place here that fits that description and that is Salalah in modern Oman.

Susan Roylance: In terms of the Americas, though, once they got in the ship and crossed the ocean, do we know where they landed and where they may have had particular events occur in the American continent? And what criteria do you use to choose those particular sites?

John Sorenson: There are specific geographical, social, cultural statements in the Book of Mormon, and obviously any area of the New World that is going to qualify to be the scene where Lehi and his descendants lived has to show those characteristics or else it can't be the right place. . . .

Script, Final Version, Approved 9/02/83

(#1) (#2) (#3) The Book of Mormon records an epic religious drama seldom equaled in human history. (#4) This epic began in Jerusalem with the Prophet Lehi and his wife Sariah and their children. (#5) Lehi's home was in the countryside around Jerusalem, but his roots were 25 to 30 miles north (#6) in Samaria, the ancestral homeland of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. . . .

. . . They gathered provisions and set out across the desert south toward the Red Sea. (#9) After traveling nearly 200 miles the group set up camp and grew crops for a season in a valley they named Lemuel . . .

*[Note] The valley of Lemuel was near the mouth of the Red Sea. (1 Ne. 2:8-10) That would put it about 200 miles south of Jerusalem.*

. . . They must have followed well-travelled caravan routes for only along these established trails could they depend on finding waterholes at regular intervals.

*[Note] Lehi probably followed the ancient frankincense trail down the western coast of Saudi Arabia. Some excellent information about that trail can be found in the various reports of the 1976 Lynn and Hope Hilton Expedition to Arabia. A two-part article appeared in the September and October 1976 issues of The Ensign magazine. A richly illustrated book came out that same year. (Lynn and Hope Hilton, In Search of Lehi's Trail, Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1976) An analysis of the Book of Mormon's description of Arabia in the light of Joseph Smith's information environment was published in 1982. (Eugene England, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" in Noel B. Reynolds, editor Book of Mormon Authorship, Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982.*

The divinely prepared Liahona led them through the more fertile parts of the wilderness to a place they called Shazer. (#14) . . .

. . . *The Hiltons suggest that Shazer may be the ancient oasis Wadi Al Azlan in Saudi Arabia. Lynn and Hope Hilton, In Search of Lehi's Trail, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976, p. 77.*

After traveling many more days they came to a campsite near modern Jiddah. (#15) In this area metals corrode rapidly from the intense heat and salty humidity. Nephi's fine steel bow broke and he was forced to fashion a replacement out of wood. (#16) Pomegranate trees growing in the mountains around Jiddah would have provided excellent wood for a new bow. This is one of the few places on the Arabian Peninsula where wood suitable for bowmaking can be obtained. (#17)

*Hugh Nibley, Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952, pp. 67-8 discusses bow-wood and hunting the Jiddah/Mecca region.*

Traveling many more days to the south, they again established camp and remained for a time at Nahom where Ishmael died and was buried. . . . (#18) It may be the modern Al Qunfudhah where the ancient Frankincense Trail divides into an eastern and a southern route. (#19)

*Lynn and Hope Hilton, In Search of Lehi's trail, Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1976, p. 95 suggests the Nahom/Al Qunfudhah possibility. . . . The trail forked at about 19 degrees north latitude. (BYU Studies, 12:312-314)*

Lehi's party apparently chose the eastern branch of the trail and travelled in that direction along the southern edge of the Empty Quarter, the driest sand desert on earth. (#20) During this part of their journey their record speaks of much suffering and affliction. They were compelled to live on raw meat. Fire would have attracted bandits who preyed on passing caravans. (#21) After eight arduous years of life in the desert, Lehi's group arrived at an oasis by the seashore. (#22) . . . Along the entire south coast of the Arabian Peninsula only one place has the kind of luxuriant vegetation described by Nephi--Salalah in modern Oman. (#26) Here grows the Jumaise or Sycamore Fig tree which has been used for ship timbers since ancient times. (#27) In the mountains ringing Salalah there is iron ore that Nephi could have smelted and forged into a set of tools. (#28) With divine direction he built a ship and the little party put forth into the great Arabian Sea. (#29) Driven before the westerly monsoon winds, they sailed east many months, crossing the Pacific Ocean and eventually landing in the New World, their promised land. (#30)

*The Pacific crossing is made certain only by the fact that the land of first inheritance of Lehi's people was on the west coast of the promised land. (Alma 22:28) The actual course at sea is not given.*

Although Arabia was a little known land of mystery in Joseph Smith's day, the Book of Mormon's description of it has proven remarkably accurate in many details. (#31) Lehi's travels in the Old World correlate nicely with known sites on the modern near Eastern map. (#32) The world of Joseph Smith knew even less about ancient America, but again the Book of Mormon's description is proving accurate and consistent. (#33) Although many new world locations have been proposed as scenes for Book of Mormon events, most serious students now agree that Book of Mormon history took place primarily in southern Mexico and northern Central America. Taking this region as the heartland of the Book of Mormon leads to impressive correlations.

*A summary of the many conflicting theories can be found in Paul R. Cheesman, The World of the Book of Mormon, Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1978, pp. 28-34.*

**1983 Vernal Holley, Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look, Ogden: Zenos Publications, 1983. (anti-Mormon)**

Note\* Holley's underlying assumption was that the Book of Mormon originated when Joseph Smith, Jr., plagiarized the "Spaulding Manuscript" and that the basic geography and place names were taken from the area where Joseph lived. The site names on Holley's model are derived (according to Holley's reasoning) from historical names in the states and province indicated.

**[1983 Illustrated Model Vernal Holley LIMITED GREAT LAKES]**

L.S.=Western New York, western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio / N.N.=isth. immediately west of the Niagara river / L.N.=Lower Ontario / H.C.=New York / Sid. R.=Genesee River

Source: Vernal Holley, *Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look*, Ogden: Zenos Publications, 1983.

Note\* Holley's underlying assumption was that the Book of Mormon originated when Joseph Smith, Jr., plagiarized the "Spaulding Manuscript" and that the basic geography and place names were taken from the area where Joseph lived. The site names on Holley's model are derived (according to Holley's reasoning) from historical names in the states and province indicated.

**1984^ Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton "The Lihyanites," *Sunstone* 9 (January-February 1984): pp. 4-8.**

This paper was first presented at the thirty-second annual Symposium on Archaeology of the Scriptures at Brigham Young University, 22 October 1983. Some of the more pertinent ideas that the Hiltons addressed in this paper are as follows:

Did Lehi and his party influence the peoples and culture of the Arabian peninsula as they made their way to the promised land? . . . While research has not yet provided conclusive answers to these questions, excavations during the past thirty years of a northern Arabian civilization named Lihyanite (pronounced *Lehi-an-ite*) raises interesting questions and provocative possibilities. . . .

One of the best known of these civilizations is the biblical community of Midian, a group predating the Lihyanites by several hundred years. . . . It was from this civilization in the fifteenth century B.C. that Jethro emerged as Moses' father-in-law (Ex. 3:1), a holder of the true line of priesthood (D&C 84:6-7). . . .

Eventually the Midianites were conquered by the people of Dedan, a society known to the Israelites and mentioned in the Bible several times from Genesis to Ezekiel. . . . The Dedanites were considered the trade route protectors or caravaneers of the frankincense trail and were known for their "shaven heads" (Jer. 25:23). Their rule extending southward from Edom, Dedan became a rich and powerful nation by extracting taxes from each northbound camel caravan laden with frankincense. . . .

By the sixth century B.C. Dedan's power was waning. Then, from almost nowhere, a tribe known as Lihyan began to take control of the area. According to Dr. Alios Musil, noted Saudi Arabian archaeologist, the Lihyan people were a native clan ruling first from Dedan and later spreading fifteen miles south to an oasis called Ula. Reported to be the most beautiful oasis in northern Arabia, this location became the Lihyanite capital. The archaeological remains of this group are centered in but not confined to the cities of Dedan and Al-Ula.

Little is known of the origins of this people. Biblical accounts make no mention of a man named Lehan or Laeanites, but at least one writer from the second century, Agatharchides from Persia, was familiar with Aqaba as the "Laeanic Gulf." . . .

Several archaeologists date the Lihyanite civilization to the fourth or third centuries B.C. In contrast, a recent issue of *Smithsonian* magazine pushes the date of this culture back as far as 600 B.C., referring to it as the Dedantic-Lihyanite civilization. . . .

In our book *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, we theorized that Lehi and his family stayed three or more of their eight wilderness years at the large oasis of All-Bid [Valley of Lemuel], identified by scholars as the former Midianite capital. . . .

After leaving this area, Lehi's party "traveled for the space of four days, [in] nearly a south-southeast direction," perhaps to the large well-watered oasis of Al-Muwaylah on the caravan trail. This ancient route heads south-southeast along the borders near and nearer the Red Sea. The distance from Al-Bid to Al-Muwaylah is approximately seventy-six miles, a stretch which could be traversed comfortably in four days by camel. Thus, we believe Al-Muwaylah to be the most likely location of "Shazer," the place Lehi's party stopped after this four-day journey. (1 Ne. 16:13)

Because of the many ruins now surveyed (but as yet uncovered) by archaeologists in the northern Hejaz, it is apparent this area was heavily populated in the sixth century B.C. If Lehi were traveling through this area at this time, he would likely have encountered at least some of the peoples living there. Furthermore, since Lehi was a prophet, it is not implausible to suppose that he was preaching and warning various groups of people along his way just as he had done in Jerusalem. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the neighboring town of Makna (today Al-Hql) is known to have been a Jewish colony in 600 B.C. . . .

Of course, the most striking connection to the Book of Mormon narrative is the name *Lihyanite* itself, a name so similar to *Lehi*, one would think the Mormons had made it up themselves. Too, the appearance of the Lihyanite culture at exactly the same time and place as Lehi and his party raises interesting possibilities. . . .

Combining this information with a little speculation produces an interesting hypothesis: Being a prophet of God, Lehi warned not only those in Jerusalem but the Dedanites to repent and be baptized or be destroyed. At least some of the many Israelites living in the northern Hejaz in the sixth century B.C. were converted by Lehi's words. Lehi's influence reached the mysterious group of pastoral people who later called themselves by his name, "Lihyanites." As their culture grew, they built cities and temples . . . reaching its apogee some two hundred years after Lehi's journey through their communities. . . .

[1984 **Map: Lehi's Trail and Lihyanite Territory.** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, "The Lihyanites," *Sunstone* 9 (January-February 1984): p. 7]

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

1984.

According to Robert F. Smith:

This technical, bibliographical paper outlines the main events that occurred in the ancient Near East around the time of Lehi and Nephi and their immediate ancestors, and is designed to aid in examining the strictures within which one must set the upper end of the Nephite chronological scale, i.e., the date of departure of Lehi from Jerusalem. . . .

In an updated section at the end entitled "Excursus: The Arabian Nexus," this paper also includes some detailed, footnoted commentary concerning the Southern Arabian Peninsula as it might have impacted Lehi's journey. A sample of the pertinent commentary is as follows:

Not only did Jews flee to Mo-ab, 'Edom, 'Ammon, and Egypt in the wake of Nebuchadrezzar's invasion and conquest of Judah (Jer. 40:11, 42-44, Deut. 28:64-68; Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed., p. 347), but Hebrews other than Lehi may well have taken up residence in Arabia proper during the Exile . . . It is quite possible that, as was the case then at Aswan, Egypt, an Israelite community existed in Arabia already in the 8th century B.C., formed of fugitives from the fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom of Israel (A. Guillaume, *Islam*, rev. ed., pp. 10-11; cf. Isa 49:12 / 1 Nephi 21:12). . . . Since Solomonic times, and long before Lehi, other Israelites were undoubtedly involved in the extensive incense trade along the South Arabian caravan routes, as well as in sailing from 'Ezion-Geber to India during the summer monsoon, and returning with their spices and other trade goods during the winter monsoon, presumably making stops at ports along the way (Ch. Rabin, *Studies in Religion*, III [1973/1974,], 209; "Winds and Currents: A Look at Nephi's Ocean Crossing," *FARMS Update*, April 1986; cf. *National Geographic*, Oct 1967, p. 559; . . . [p. 23]

A number of areas along the South Arabian coast might fit the "bountiful" description of the place at which the Lehites stopped to prepare for their voyage across the bounding main. Dhufar and the Eastern Hadramaut (biblical *Hazarmaveth*, possibly called *Sa'kal* in Lehi's time) is the site of choice for most students of the Book of Mormon, and a late contemporary of Joseph Smith, H. J. Carter, described it as being "like a garden with a dreary arid waste on either side" (F. N. Hepper, "Arabian and African Frankincense Trees," *JEA*, 55 [1969], 66. . . . see the entire May-June 1983 issue of *ARAMCO World*, 34:3, for a recent, beautifully illustrated look at the land, history, and people of Oman; cf. also Wilfred Thesiger, *Arabian Sands* [Penguin, 1964], p. 47, on the jungle in Dhofar and the 3,000 foot Qara' Mountains). However, the mountains are higher and more verdant in either "Oman proper [Muscat], or in the Yemen. . . .

Warren and Michaela Aston of Queensland, Australia, have recently reported on their visit to The Yemen, which demonstrated to them the likelihood that Lehi's course may have taken him to a Bountiful in the Hadramaut or other part of the 500-mile coast along which frankincense trees grew anciently ("The Search for Nahom and For the End of Lehi's Trail: A Preliminary Report of a Visit to the Yemen Arab Republic in November 1984," citing [contra Van Beek and the early position of the Hilton] especially N. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, pp. 99, 109-111, 114, 211). [p. 24]

Not only climate, however, but the depredations of man have led to a deteriorating watershed, i.e., flora as well as fauna have been intensively over-utilized. Only in Israel have massive programs of reforestation and soil conservation been successfully undertaken in recent times. Arabia has only recently begun similar efforts. Whatever the case, there may have been perennial rivers in Arabia in Lehi's time, though we cannot speak of specific instances. [p. 25]

The unnamed Queen of Sheba (Saba') appeared in tenth century B.C. Jerusalem, in the midst of King Solomon's reign . . . This Sabaeen Queen came with a camel caravan loaded with gold, precious stones, and spices: Frankincense and myrrh were the real reasons for the great wealth of South Arabia then and for over a millennium thereafter. She came 1400+ miles, probably via the inland Marib-Yathrib-Dedan route through Wadi al-Qura, in no more than 2 1/2 months (Pliny the Elder claimed that it took 65 stages from Tamna to Gaza; Van Been in *Sci. Amer.*, 221:6, p. 41; *BA Reader*, II:124-126; Lehi hewed to the less-traveled lowland coastal route along *at-Tih'ama*). [p. 26]

As we have seen, there may have been some perennial rivers in Arabia ca. 600 B.C., but we cannot be certain of the precise climatic conditions there at the time when Lehi left Jerusalem. Thus, aside from some constant streams fed by springs, conventional wisdom has it that there were no perennial rivers in South Arabia then--only *wadis* (river-beds) with occasional *seils* (flash-floods a few weeks of the year). [p. 26]

The Sabaeans and Minaeans established colonies along the inland caravan route to the north, at such sites as Yathrib (Medina), Didan/Dedan (al-Khuraybah, near al-Ula), and Mada'in Salih (al-Hijr/Hijra), around which later coalesced tribal groups . . . [p. 27]

The details of Lehi's trek down the *Tih'ama* ("Plain, Lowland-coast," *CIH*, 540) of Arabia may never be entirely clear to us, but the real nature of what he and his clan did and encountered en route can be guessed at and understood as nothing out of the ordinary for Jews in that area during the Iron Age or later. In Lehi's day, Mecca (= Classical *Makorba*, "Temple"--Holt, Lambton, and Lewis, *CHI*, I:23) was the site of just another pagan shrine, the Ka'aba . . . Lehi and Nephi may have avoided such centers and stayed in marginal caravan and nomad areas. Such a small clan would have presented little threat to already extant tribes, and, as E Marx recently pointed out in the *American Anthropologist* (8 [1979], 124), ". . . tribesmen do not necessarily reserve pastures for their own use. . . ."

The rules of the pastoral nomads themselves would have made it possible for Lehi to move down the Peninsula unobtrusively. It seems unlikely that his small clan would even have been charged a caravan levy. Although we are not told, Lehi's clan undoubtedly moved through the wilderness by camel . . . [pp. 28-29]

**Parallel," in *Newsletter and Proceedings of the S.E.H.A.*, Number**

158, edited by Ross T. Christensen, December, 1984, p. 13.

Garth Norman writes:

Following the archaeoastronomy symposium of September, 1984 (see above, 158.6), I conducted field research at the ruins of Izapa and at the Mexico National Museum on a problem I had been working on for several years: the possible use in Mesoamerica of the cubit, a characteristic Old World unit of linear measure.

Evidence now indicates that the Izapa temple center and monuments were planned utilizing a 495mm unit (19 1/2 inches), which is precisely equal to the cubit of the famous king Gudea, who reigned at Lagash in Mesopotamia about 2000 BC. (The Izapa study, incidentally, was not colored by a search for possible Near Eastern correspondences, for the Gudea cubit came to my attention only after I had already discovered the Izapa unit.)

One Izapa sculpture of a human figure has been found with the same measurement, 495mm, from the elbow to the tip of the extended fingers.

Since the invention of units of measure among various peoples is always arbitrary, the possibility of exactly the same unit being invented independently twice is virtually nil. preliminary research indicates that this unit probably began to be used in the Izapan cultural period, which Book of Mormon students recognize as the time just following the migrations of Lehi and Mulek, and continued elsewhere in Mesoamerica, such as at Monte Alban and Teotihuacan, into Early Classic times. The fact that the 495mm unit was evidently altered in Middle Classic times implies that its use may have been confined largely to the Nephite-Mulekite period. . . .

**1984^ Jesse N. Washburn      *The Miracle of the Book of Mormon*, Orem, UT: Book Production  
Services, 1984, p. 9**

Washburn writes:

The Nephite colony left Jerusalem in 600 B.C. From Jerusalem they traveled south for a time, then south by east, until they came to a sea, 1 Nephi 17:1. The sea is generally supposed to have been what we in our time call the Indian Ocean.

There they embarked on a ship of their own construction, and eventually sailed into and across one of the world's great oceans until they came to the western shore at some undisclosed location.



Note\* Although Washburn seems to portray a completely unbiased approach to the direction of Lehi's journey to the Promised Land, on page 81 he presents a map of the lands of the Book of Mormon from an internal perspective. (see below) On this map he has the "Land of First Inheritance" at the extreme southwestern coast of the land southward. Regardless of the extent of Washburn's model on the Western Hemisphere, this would imply a Pacific Ocean crossing.

**[1984 Map No. 7: Composite Map of All Cities, Towns, and Geographical Features Mentioned in the Book of Mormon.** Jesse N. Washburn, *The Miracle of the Book of Mormon*, Orem, UT: Book Production Services, 1984, p. 60]

**1985^      John L. Sorenson      *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon.***

S.L.C.: Deseret Book and Provo: FARMS, 1985

Republished in 1996.

John Sorenson writes:

The task of establishing a realistic setting for the Book of Mormon is a big, challenging one. Research by Latter-day Saints and others over the past 40 years has made it possible for us to know a good deal of concrete detail about the Jerusalem from which Lehi led his family; in our mind's eye we can now follow his party through a line of campsites down the Red Sea side of the Arabian peninsula and across to a specific "bountiful land" on the Hadhramaut coast. But the minute the party climb into Nephi's ship and launch their journey into the Indian Ocean, we lose that sense of concreteness. Landed in the New World, they are just vaguely "somewhere." (pp. xvi-xvii-Introduction)

Many Latter-day Saints facing problems like Book of Mormon geography automatically turn to the leaders of the church for answers. It seems appropriate, then, to begin by determining whether or not Book of Mormon geography has already been settled by these leaders.

The historical sources give no indication that Moroni's instructions to young Joseph Smith included geography, nor did Joseph Smith claim inspiration on the matter. Ideas he later expressed about the location of events reported in the book apparently reflected his own best thinking. . . . One indicator of that is an 1836 record in Frederick G. Williams handwriting attributing the statement to Joseph Smith that "Lehi and his company . . . landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees, south latitude." Church leaders B. H. Roberts and John A. Widtsoe, both careful critics, were hesitant to accept the statement's origin with the Prophet yet it certainly wouldn't be surprising if the Prophet had once held this view, since other early Church members seem to have believed it. (Williams later claimed that the statement about Chile was made to him by an angel rather than by Joseph. In view of the fact that the Prophet's ideas matured on other subjects over time, his thinking on Book of Mormon geography could also have undergone change. In 1842, an editorial in the Church newspaper the *Times and Seasons* (September 15, pages 921-22) asserted that "Lehi . . . landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien (Panama." Joseph Smith had assumed sole editorial responsibility for the contents of the paper six

months before (page 710), although John Taylor was the formal editor. The location mentioned is, of course, about three thousand miles north of the point in Chile mentioned in the Williams note. . . . (Chapter 1, pp. 1-2)

Sheer survival as the chief concern of the Saints for the next generation. When, later in the nineteenth century interest in Book of Mormon geography revived, Church leaders were careful not to let the Saints divide into camps on the question or to turn opinion into dogma. [He then quotes George Q. Cannon--1890]

President Joseph F. Smith, Seventies President Anthony W. Ivins, and Apostle John A. Widtsoe were among later authorities who affirmed that the Church took no position on specific Book of Mormon location. President Smith, for instance, when asked to approve a map "showing the exact landing place of Lehi and his company," declined, saying that the "Lord had not yet revealed it." Elder Ivins cautioned in 1929, "There has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles the question [of Book of Mormon geography]. So the Church says, yes, we are just waiting until we discover the truth." This caution has been the consistent course followed ever since, leaving individuals free to examine and study the topic without getting Church authorities into the predicament of having to defend or refute someone's personal viewpoint. . . .(pp. 3-4)

Lehi and his party launched their vessel into the Indian Ocean from the south coast of the Arabian peninsula. The winds no doubt bore them on the same sea lanes that Arab, Chinese and Portuguese ships used later, touching India and ultimately the Malayan peninsula. From that point Nephi's ship likely threaded through the islands of the western Pacific, then across the open reaches north of the equator to landfall around 14 degrees north latitude. Nephi left us no information in the Book of Mormon about the route, nor did he tell us in modern terms where they landed. But when we analyze Book of Mormon statements about geography and events, the "land of first inheritance" can lie only on the west (Pacific) coast of Central America (1 Nephi 18:23; Alma 22:28; see chapter 1). . . . (Chapter 4, p. 138)

Note\* Sorenson's internal map (overlaid on the background of Mesoamerica) has the land of "First Inheritance" located on the coast of El Salvador. (see map below)

[1985 **Map 5: Plausible Locations in Mesoamerica for Book of Mormon Places.** John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, S.L.C.: Deseret Book and Provo: FARMS, 1985, p. 37]

1985<sup>^</sup> **Charles S. Bagley** "A Textual Geography of the Book of Mormon," Manuscript, 1985, pp. 5-8

In this paper, Charles Bagley proposes a Mesoamerican setting, while differing dramatically in the arrangement of the lands. Starting on page 5 he makes the following remarks on early geographical interpretations. He writes:

The most important of these [interpretations] is the general belief, held by members of the Church since early days, that the Prophet Joseph Smith had identified the Nephite landing place by divine revelation and this site, near Valparaiso [sic] in Chile, was a fiducial point of reference on which any study of the geography had to be anchored. The thought that this belief could be hearsay and possibly misleading was not allowed to enter the minds of those who struggled faithfully but vainly, to reconcile textual descriptions with the impossible geographic conditions it imposed. (See David A. Palmer, *In Search of Cumorah*, Horizon Publishers 1981, pp. 34-35). . . While there is no satisfactory basis for believing Joseph Smith ever received such a revelation (see Note "A" below) the effect of believing that he had has created a confused, ambiguous and contradictory geographic pattern.

Note A: Some writers try to ascribe to Joseph Smith statements made by others on the basis that he was cognizant of them and, since he was responsible for the publication in which they appeared, had automatically confirmed them as divine revelations. Having been severely chastened over the loss of the manuscript containing the first translated portion of the Book of Mormon, (D&C 3) Joseph became exceedingly humble and cautious when specifying what was a divine revelation. Since he made no such specificity concerning "the course that Lehi and his company traveled from Jerusalem to America, we must conclude as did B. H. Roberts, that the evidence of it being a 'revelation to Joseph the Seer' rests on a very unsatisfactory basis." (Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3:501-2, quoted by Cheesman, *The World of the Book of Mormon*, Deseret Book Co., 1978, p. 22.) It is also understandable why the Prophet would neither endorse nor correct such a statement, because to do so could lead to a revelation of things he had been forbidden to reveal. The Lord's commandment to Joseph is unmistakable: "Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of thy hands" (D&C 10:30). The statement "those words" is inclusive enough to opine that some of them were specific geographic identities. If this is true, then we can look forward to a verification or refutation of any solution to the geography we may make. When the information from the "lost manuscript" is again in our hands. . . .

On pages 6-7 Bagley writes the following concerning the site of Lehi's landing:

First we shall consider a more reasonable landing site among coastal areas most likely to receive wreckage from transpacific shores. The equatorial countercurrent, which parallels the equator and flows counter to the general oceanographic circulation in the Pacific, frequently deposits floating debris from the East Indies on the southern shores of Central America. This current, reinforced by the prevailing westerly winds, may have been instrumental in conveying Lehi's colony to America. If this is so, then the boat which Nephi had built with reluctant help from his brothers would be found approaching the Promised Land from a southerly direction. . . .

Over the rolling waves and occasional whitecaps distinct objects could be seen projecting above the horizon exposing a row of snowcapped peaks glistening in the reflection of an early morning sun. The most westerly of these, the quiet Tajumulco and Tanana volcanos thrusting almost 14,000 feet into the blue sky would command their attention. It would be to them as if God had put them there, a beacon to guide and announce their arrival in the promised land. We can only imagine with what rejoicing and thanksgiving they would set sail to make their landing. (1 Nephi 18:22-25).

[1985 Illustrated Model (LIMITED MESOAMERICA) Charles S. Bagley, "A Textual Geography of the Book of Mormon," Manuscript, 1985]

Note\* See the notation for 1963. See also the 1927 Sjordahl notation.

**1985^ Gail B. Porritt (Book of Mormon Lands Map), undated (abt. 1985)**

Included in a folder with some manuscript articles "The Jaredites" and "Location of the Nephite Hill Cumorah" is a map of Book of Mormon lands which locates these lands in southern Mexico and Guatemala. The site for Lehi's landing has an arrow pointed to the coastal border between Guatemala and El Salvador.

Source: Personal files of John L. Sorenson.

**[1985 Illustrated Model (LIMITED MESOAMERICA) Lehi's Landing Site = Coastal border between Guatemala and El Salvador**

Gail B. Porritt, Papers in the possession of John Sorenson.

**1986 FARMS "Winds and Currents: A Look at Nephi's Ocean Crossing," *FARMS Update*,**

April 1986

This article was later included in a FARMS book in 1992--see the 1992 notation for the details.

1986    Staff?    "Lehi's Trail and Nahom Revisited," in *FARMS Update*, September 1986.

In 1976 Lynn M. and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), p. 94, and *Ensign* (September-October 1976), proposed that the place called Nahom (1 Ne. 16:34), where Ishmael died and was buried, was around al-Qunfidah near the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia. Ross T. Christensen, *Ensign* (August 1978), p. 73, soon suggested an alternative location farther south for Nahom, based on a map of Yemen prepared as a result of a 1762-64 exploration by Carsten Niebuhr for the Danish King Frederick V.

Accordingly, in November 1984, Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston of Australia visited North Yemen searching for additional evidence concerning Nahom and how far south Lehi and his party travelled before turning east. They were able to locate a 1776 map at the University of Sana'a in the Yemen Arab Republic that showed "Nehem" located some 35 miles northeast of Sana'a. This appeared to be the same region Niebuhr listed as "Nehm." Moreover, the Nahm or Naham tribe has existed in the area since at least the tenth century A.D. If further work supports their tentative findings associating "Nehem" with the Book of Mormon "Nahom," several details regarding Lehi's route will need to be reassessed. In particular, the identification of the land Bountiful on the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula, from which the group set sail for the New World may need to be moved westward from that proposed by the Hiltons. . . .

The Astons further found that current scholars plot out a more complicated trail system for the frankincense trade than was thought a decade ago. Those trails came farther south along the Red Sea coast before branching off eastward than the Hiltons' sources showed. And instead of there being only a single area, Dhofar (Zufar), producing frankincense, it now appears that an area some 500 miles long along the south coast of the Arabian peninsula produced this precious substance. Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (London: Longman Group, 1981). See also "Arabia's Frankincense Trail," *National Geographic* 168:4 (October 1985): 474-512. It was shipped from the eastern areas (including the Salalah area favored by the Hiltons for Bountiful) in coastal vessels to Qana, thence northward along the trail toward the consuming centers in the Near East. These facts make it less likely than had appeared that Lehi's party would have reached the sea as far east as Salalah.

Instead, Lehi's group may have ended its desert journey in the coastal Hadramawt area of modern South Yemen. In that region, William Hamblin has found pre-Islamic traditions about a prophet named Hud, whose tomb is located near the border between Oman and South Yemen: "Pre-Islamic Arabian Prophets," in Spencer Palmer, ed., *Mormons and Muslims* (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1983), pp. 87-89. Like Lehi, Hud reputedly prophesied against certain idol worshippers who were "renowned for their elaborate buildings" (cf. 1 Ne. 8:26), was rejected because of the pride of the people (cf. 1 Ne. 8:27), but escaped while the wicked were destroyed. See Qur'an 7:65-72; 11:50-60; 26:123-40. Lehi and Hud seem to have been kindred spirits.

More work is clearly needed on these subjects. The Astons believe that a carefully staged trip into the Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), currently difficult for Westerners to enter, would be valuable.

Note\* The Astons would later update and revise their findings after more research--see the 1989 notation.

1986^ Verneil W. Simmons *Peoples, Places and Prophecies: A Study of the Book of Mormon*,

(RLDS) Independence, MO: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1986, pp. 63-79.

Verneil Simmons writes about the Jaredites, Nephites, and Mulekites, who journeyed from the Old World to the New World. He cites geographical, historical, and archaeological evidences in order to prove the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Concerning Lehi's travels he says the following:

The dwellers of the city-states of that historical period saw nothing wrong with making the city, and the land belonging to the city, synonymous. The practice is attested to in many ancient documents. This is helpful when we consider that the phrase "land of Jerusalem" is used more than a dozen times in First and Second Nephi. . .

Lehi's tribal lineage was of Joseph through Manasseh. When Moses led the people up from the desert to the east of the Jordan River, he encountered the strong king Sihon, who opposed the passage of the people. The king was slain and his territory was given to the new arrivals. (including "the half tribe of Manasseh"--see Deut. 29: 7,8)

It was this half-tribe, east of the Jordan, which maintained connections with Jerusalem. The other half tribe of Manasseh settled to the north of Jerusalem and became a part of the northern kingdom, which went into captivity to Assyria. A portion of Manasseh stayed at Jerusalem. "And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh" (1 Chronicles 9:3). Lehi, being of the house of Manasseh, could have held ancestral lands in the area east of the Jordan, near the city of Heshbon, and also could have maintained property in Jerusalem. In the region of Heshbon was grown the wheat, olives, and vineyards which could mean wealth to one who traded these products for the textiles of Egypt and the spices of Arabia. Both Jeremiah and Isaiah left a prophecy directed against Moab which may contain an ambiguous reference to Lehi's departure. Both prophets refer to branches or the vine of Sibma (Israel) which are to go over the sea, and who apparently come from the area of Jazer and Heshbon (Jeremiah 48:32, 45, Isaiah 16:8). If Lehi's inheritance lay in the "shadow" of Heshbon, then he had direct access to the ancient road known as the King's Highway, which led directly south from Heshbon to the head of the Gulf of Aqubah, the east arm of the Red Sea. [pp. 63-64]

Here Simmons notes another option for Lehi's route to the Red Sea. He writes that the name Lehi is also associated with a land or perhaps a village close to the Philistine border somewhat southwest of Jerusalem. He remarks:

In recent years a hill in that area has been found by modern archaeologists to have the Arabic name of Khirket Beit Lei. The name can be translated as "ruin of the House of Lehi." A tomb discovered in this hill contained inscriptions scratched in the soft stone walls, written in the Old Hebrew script of the sixth century B.C. If Lehi's ancestral lands lay in the area of Samson's homeland, then he would have had easy access to the highway leading to the Red Sea. . . .

Nephi implies that the family went directly down to the borders of the Red Sea from the lands of their inheritance. The King's Highway ended at Ezion-geber, Solomon's supposed smelting site at the head of the Gulf of Aqubah, the northeastern arm of the Red Sea, or the Yam Suf, as it was called in the ancient Hebrew, "And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom" (1 Kings 9:26).

Nelson Glueck, the great biblical archaeologist, was instrumental in locating and directing excavation at this site. In describing the location of the city at the head of the Gulf of Aqubah, he writes that he had traveled by camel back from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the city on the shore and it had required thirteen days.

Thus when Nephi writes that they "came down by the borders near the shores of the Red Sea" we can be sure they had already been on the road for a couple of weeks or more. It is at this point that Lehi leaves the well traveled highway and heads into the "wilderness" nearer to the Gulf itself. We have already pointed out that the definition of "wilderness" usually means uninhabited area, in biblical terms. At this point Lehi was looking for a comfortable camp, in a spot that would be safely away from the trade routes. It took three days travel in this "wilderness" area before he found what he wanted--a valley with a river of water emptying into the Gulf.

That the river was filled with water tells us they arrived during the winter months. The rainy season begins in October and continues until March; only then would a "river of water be found in the Arabian desert. . . . it is in this hidden valley, by the river of water, that Lehi takes up his residence in the manner of the desert Arab. Nephi succinctly describes their new life-style: "And my father dwelt in a tent" (1 Nephi 1:46). [pp. 64-65]

Nephi gives eight years as the total time they spent in the wilderness. This would begin with Lehi's setting up camp in the valley of Lemuel. How long they lived in the valley can only be conjectured. Two lengthy trips were made back to the land of Jerusalem, each involving several weeks or months. . . . It is quite possible that crops were planted and harvested more than once before they left the valley. With the records in hand and his sons provided with wives, Lehi had fulfilled the Lord's commandments. He probably was not surprised to receive the word of the Lord that it was time to move on. . . .

And now the long journey began. (see Map #4 below) They traveled for a period of days and then would stop to rest for a time and gather food. On one of these stops at some oasis where there would be food and water, Ishmael died and was buried. . . .

**[1986 Map: Lehi's Travels through Arabia and the Beginning of the Voyage.** Verneil W. Simmons, *Peoples, Places and Prophecies: A Study of the Book of Mormon*, Independence, MO: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1986, p. 75]

They had been traveling south and southeast since the beginning of their journey. Following Ishmael's death, Nephi writes that they traveled in a nearly eastward direction from that time on. At whatever parallel they turned east away from the Red Sea, they moved directly into the Empty Quarter, the trackless desert of southern Arabia. Survival there depended on locating water. They could never have crossed it without the compass provided by the Lord. . . .

Eventually they came out of the desert and beheld a land filled with fruit and wild honey on the shores of the great salt sea, which they called Irreantum. Nephi explains that this means "many waters." Today's scholars have found the Akkadian language (early Semitic of Babylonia) had a word for the salt ocean which they translate as *ti ha ma turm*. This is close enough to *Ir re an tum* to indicate that Nephi was using the Akkadian word which he knew meant the "salt ocean." (note 13) [pp. 75-76]

One of the strong criticisms leveled at Joseph Smith concerning the Book of Mormon relates to Nephi's story of a land so fertile that they called it Bountiful on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It was not until the middle of the 1930s that travelers in the Arabian desert reported that such an area actually exists. The best description comes from the book *Arabian Sands*, written by the Englishman Wilfred Thesiger and published in 1959. Mr. Thesiger lived for several years with the Arabs of the Empty Quarter and crossed it more than once by camel. He describes coming out of the barren, blazing desert and looking down from the cliff top on the fertile plain.

Some peculiarity in the shape of these mountains draws the monsoon clouds, so that the rain concentrates upon the southern slopes of Jabal Qarra, which are in consequence covered with mist and rain throughout the summer and were now dark with jungles in full leaf after the monsoon.--Page 47.

. . . All the way along the south Arabian coast for 1400 miles from Perim to Sur, only these twenty miles get a regular rainfall. . . . Massive tamarinds grow in the valleys and on the downs great fig trees rise above the wind-rippled grass like oaks in an English park. . . . To the south were green meadows where cattle grazed, thickets and spreading trees, whereas a stone's throw to the north was empty desert--sand, rocks, and a few wisps of withered grass. . . . To the south grassy downs, green jungles, and shadowy gorges fell away to the plain of Jarbib and to the Indian Ocean which opened on to another world, whereas immediately to the north a landscape of black rocks and yellow sand sloped down to the Empty Quarter.--Pages 47, 48, 83.

Mr. Thesiger's description is sufficiently ecstatic to convey the feelings that must have filled the hearts of Lehi's people when they walked out on the desert cliff and saw below them the blue of the sea and the green of the fertile plain. [p. 76]

After "many days" the Lord again spoke to Nephi and sent him to the mountaintop to receive further instruction. Like the Jaredites, centuries before, Lehi's people had not yet come to their "promised land," and they would have to leave this pleasant place and cross the great ocean. They, too, would have to become ship builders. . . .

Following Solomon's day, the Jews left shipping and ships to the Phoenicians. Possibly the only oceangoing ships they knew were the Phoenician merchant ships or warships, which employed banks of rowers. Nephi had to build a small craft capable of crossing an ocean, which could be handled by the few adult males in the group. It had to have sail-power, not oar-power.

We can be certain of only seven male adults in the group and possibly some young boys, if Ishmael's sons had male children when they joined the group. Lehi was too elderly to be much help and Ishmael was dead. The ship must have been a small sailing vessel, capable of carrying as many as forty, some of whom would be children and babies. . . .



This small family group of farmers and traders were venturing out on the unknown ocean in a tiny sailing vessel, not knowing where they were going nor how long it would take them to reach the land the Lord had promised them. . . .

We may have thought that this venture into an unknown sea made Nephi's people pioneers of the ocean, but it was new only to them. Had Nephi spent time in Phoenician ports or in Babylonia near the Persian Gulf, he would have known that centuries before his day Arab sailors had learned the secret of the monsoon winds and had built deep-draught dhows that sailed from south Arabia and the Persian Gulf to India and even Ceylon. In certain months of the year, the winds would carry their vessels directly toward the India land mass and into the islands scattered beyond. reversal of the wind currents returned the ships to their home ports months later. Not knowing this,, Nephi had to depend on the instructions written on the compass provided by the Lord as to the proper time to set sail. But certainly the Lord would have sent them off in the springtime to give them the monsoon winds which would carry them directly on their way. Many islands of today's East Indies must have provided necessary opportunities for landfalls to get fresh water and replenish their food supplies. Once they sailed into the western Pacific, we can follow, with some certainty, the course they must have taken.

About five degrees north of the equator the Equatorial Countercurrent flows directly toward the American continents. It runs between two strong currents, flowing rapidly toward the west. The northern current is the return of the Japan current, and the southern, the return of the Humboldt current. The narrow countercurrent is not easy to sail and should not be attempted even today without compass direction. . . . With [the Liahona] they could sail to the "promised land" by the most direct route, on a warm water current, and with the minimum of discomfort. (See Map #3 below) [pp. 77-78]

**[1986 Map: Lehi's Voyage from Arabia to the Promised Land.** Verneil W. Simmons, *Peoples, Places and Prophecies: A Study of the Book of Mormon*, Independence, MO: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1986, p. 36]

In the South Pacific there is no strong single current setting toward the South American continent and what there are flow so near the Antarctic that they are cold currents, in a cold climate. The Humboldt current flowing north from the Antarctic along the coast of western South America is cold and difficult for navigation. It, too, sets back strongly toward the west just off the Colombian coast, south of the equator. This is the current used by Thor Heyerdahl on his epic voyage with the balsa raft, *Kon-Tiki*, from Peru to the Tahitian Islands.

Nephi's people had lived for several years in the heat of the Arabian desert. They were unprepared to spend weeks, or months, traveling in cold, chilling winds, and rough seas. And why should the Lord require this extra sacrifice when he had provided the necessary instrument to bring them safely across on a warm water current that would provide the least hazards? . . .

The whole story, as described, can be explained today by modern knowledge of the Pacific Ocean in the area of the equator. If a ship sailing east on a narrow Counter-Equatorial Current lost its directional control and fell off either to the north or south into the area of the strong, westward setting currents, it would find itself subject to stormy, turbulent weather. Unable to continue eastward, without sail and in a storm, the currents would carry the ship "back" the way it had come, exactly as described by Nephi. With the compass working again, they would have returned to the proper course and the eastward flowing current would have hurried them along to their destination.

Where would this current bring them to land? It would set them gently on the western coast of Central America. The Gulf of Fonseca might be a good haven to suggest as a landing site. The idea, held in

earlier days, that his colony landed in Peru is a misconception that has been too long accepted without investigation. to have sailed down the west coast of South America, after having crossed the Pacific, would have required them to have sailed hundreds of miles against the strong Humboldt current to reach an arid and barren coast, a rather unlikely "promised land," when they could have come ashore on a fertile, tropical shore in Central America weeks before.

Nephi settles the matter himself. He tells us what they did as soon as they had landed and pitched their tents. First they planted all the seeds brought so carefully from Jerusalem--"and they grew exceedingly." requirements? Water, rich soil, and an equable climate. Second, in their exploring trips outside their camp they found many animals in the forests. Requirements? Forests, and animals which they considered domestic, such as the cow and ox, horse and ass, and goats. Also many wild animals of all kinds. Third, they discovered minerals in the form of ore. Requirements? Deposits of gold, silver, and copper near their landing area.

How are these requirements met by the desert coast of Peru? They are not, of course. Planting there is seasonal and restricted to the narrow mouths of the few rivers that run down from the high mountains. j There are few wild animals and no forests on the Peruvian coast. Deposits of mineral-bearing ore can be found only in the distant mountains. [pp. 78-79]

1986^      Church Educational System                      Seminary Student Manual: Book of Mormon, Salt

Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

1989, p. 11

In 1986 the Church Educational System prepared a commentary for use in all its Seminary courses. This manual was reprinted in 1989. On page 11 we find the following:

*1 Nephi 2:1-6 What Was Lehi's Probable Route? . . . After having left the land of Jerusalem and having sighted the Red Sea, Lehi traveled another three days. He may have gone down the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba toward the Red Sea. (See the route suggested on the map below.)*

The route described in the Book of Mormon can be traced using some of the landmarks still visible today. How could Joseph Smith, an unschooled farm boy, have known of all these things? It would have required many years of scholarship or a personal knowledge of this area. . . . 1 Nephi is filled with detail on the way Lehi's family moved from their home in the Jerusalem area and traveled through the Arabian Desert for eight years. The way they did things was typical of their time and area . . . [The reader is then referred to a number of cultural items referenced from Hugh Nibley's *Lehi in the Desert*.

**[1986      Map: Lehi's Probable Route** CES, *Seminary Student Manual: Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986, p. 11]

Note that on the map the Valley of Lemuel is situated far to the south of the Hilton's 1976 proposed site at al-Bada which appeared in the *Ensign* (see the 1976 notation).

No commentary or map is found detailing the route of any of the other segments of Lehi's journey. However on page 27 we find the following:

How long did it take Lehi's colony to travel from Jerusalem to Bountiful? . . . The distance is about two thousand miles, but, as Nephi said, they "did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 17:1). The Arabian Peninsula is a very hot, dry, and desolate area. It was difficult to obtain food and water. The party probably traveled partly on foot and partly on animals.

An internal map of the New World ("Possible Book of Mormon Sites") is found on page 174 with a note: "Map originally prepared by Daniel H. Ludlow; used by permission. The Land of First Inheritance is placed at the extreme southern end of this map. (see below)

**[1986 Possible Book of Mormon Sites.** CES, *Seminary Student Manual: Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986, p. 174]

**[1987 Illustrated Model Bruce Warren LIMITED MESOAMERICAN]**

L.S.=Mesoamerica S. of Isth. of Tehuan. / N.N.=Isth. of Tehuan. / L.N.=N. of Isth. of Tehuan. to Valley of Mexico / H.C.=Cerro Vigia / Sid. R.=Grijalva

Source: Bruce L. Warren and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *The Messiah in Ancient America*, Provo: Book of Mormon Research Foundation, 1987.

**1987^ D. Kelly Ogden "Answering the Lord's Call (1 Nephi 1-7)," in *Studies in Scripture, Volume***

***Seven: 1 Nephi to Alma 29***, Kent P. Jackson ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret

Book, 1987, pp. 17-33.

Kelly Ogden notes that in recent years, researchers have ventured to describe the route Lehi and family took from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. In 1968, Sidney B. Sperry wrote as follows:

As for a route to the Red Sea, they had two choices they could go either directly south of Jerusalem by the road through Hebron and Beersheba and thence through the great wilderness to the northern tip of what is now the gulf of Aqaba, or they could go directly east 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)

Thus, the first two options are:

(1) from Jerusalem southward past Hebron and Beersheba and then eastward to join the Rift Valley, called the Arabah;

(2) eastward from Jerusalem through the Judean Wilderness to the plateau on the eastern side of the Rift Valley to the King's Highway.

In 1976, Lynn Hilton added a third possibility to the previous two:

(3) straight east to the northern end of the Dead Sea, past Qumran, En Gedi, Masada, and on the south to the Red Sea.

The Hiltons saw the first option as improbable since the route remains in the hill country, near population centers, instead of entering the wilderness as the account says. They objected to the second option, the King's Highway, because of passage through foreign lands with border complications, taxes, and so on. The Hiltons therefore concluded that the third option was the likely route. (Lynn and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, p. 38)

Interestingly, Ogden states 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:

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 Hiltons' preference, east to the area of Qumran, then south, however, is also 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. A viable course for Lehi's journey is 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 could have been from Tekoa southward, passing between Juttah and Carmel, down into and across the eastern Negev to Mamphis, then eastward to the Arabah. (pp. 22-23) Thus, Ogden added a fourth option with a couple of variations:

(4a) 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.

(4b) southeast out of Jerusalem toward Tekoa and then from Tekoa southward, passing between Juttah and Carmel, down into and across the eastern Negev to Mampsis, then eastward to the Arabah.

[1987 **Illustrated Map: Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea.** Ideas taken from D. Kelly Ogden, "Answering the Lord's Call (1 Nephi 1-7)," in *Studies in Scripture, Volume Seven: 1 Nephi to Alma* 29, Kent P. Jackson ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987]

**1988^ Rachael Schoonmaker "BYU Students Relive the Trek," in *Church News* 58 (2 January**

1988): pp. 11, 13.

Beginning in the Winter 1986 semester, and pieced together sequentially over an 18-month period, a group of 200 students from Brigham Young University's Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies walked over various portions of the 200 miles separating Jerusalem and the Red Sea under the direction of Dr. Kelly Ogden in order to relive "Lehi's Trek." They intermittently covered the distance in 65 hours.

Beginning in Jerusalem, the students route descended 3,500 feet to the shores of the Dead Sea, which at more than 1,000 feet below sea level is the lowest spot on Earth. Then they followed the barren western shore of this stagnant body of water for 50 miles, at times gingerly working their way around the base of sheer cliffs that rose virtually from the water's edge.

From there the groups traveled straight south for about 120 miles through the Arabah, a desert valley between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea. The mostly flat, desolate terrain was broken up only by an occasional acacia tree and the mountains of Edom and Moab looming in the distance to the east 5,000 feet above the valley floor.

The trail finally ended on the rocky beaches of Aqaba, which look out over the narrow Gulf of Aqaba that eventually opens into the Red Sea.

The 60 students who left Jerusalem to begin the trek on a blustery, early spring morning walked 30 miles in two days. They camped overnight but couldn't sleep because of the cold. Groups walking during the summer months traveled at night to avoid daytime temperatures soaring well above 100 degrees. Even beginning at 2 a.m., Dr. Ogden reported it "was an oven." . . .

**1988^ Joseph Douglas "He [Lehi] May Have Gone Another Way," in *Church News* 58**

(2 January 1988): p. 11, 13.

In the January 2, 1988 Church News article, we find the following:

The Book of Mormon is not a book of geography, and so far as known, no one knows the exact route Lehi and his family traveled from Jerusalem to the great sea they crossed to the promised land, but it is interesting to look at some possible routes.

Most writers on this subject believe Lehi traveled from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Aqaba (also Akabah and Acquaba), following the Frankincense Trail, south down the Arabian Peninsula to approximately the 19th parallel. They feel Lehi turned east at Najran in Arabia to travel across the lower portion of the Arabian Peninsula to Salalah Oman.

Using the verses from the Book of Mormon that record Lehi's travels, another route might be proposed. This would take Lehi from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Suez, southeast along the African side of the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, then east across the horn of Africa to the "great sea," or Arabian Sea, which is a part of the Indian Ocean. The land Bountiful perhaps would be present-day Somalia.

The writer of this article then goes on to propose a theory which was first proposed by Ariel Crowley in a January 1944 *Improvement Era* article (see the 1944 notation). According to this theory, because "there are no natural rivers running into the Red Sea," Lehi's River Laman in the valley of Lemuel was apparently a fresh water canal in Egypt which linked the river Nile to Lake Temseh (one of the "Bitter Lakes" between Egypt and Sinai and north of the Suez arm of the Red Sea. It is further proposed that Lehi traveled down the western shores of the Red Sea.

Many writers have implied that this river [River Laman] was merely a wadi or a dry wash that flowed after a thunderstorm. But Nephi said the river flowed continually: . . . (1 Nephi 2:9)

There are no natural rivers running into the Red Sea, but there is another possibility that should be considered. Anciently there was a portion of the Nile River that ran into the Red Sea through a canal dug by the Egyptians in the early 20th century B.C., possibly during the reign of the Pharaoh Sesostris I, the Egyptians dug a canal from the Nile Delta to the Red Sea near the present port of Suez. Pharaoh Necho II began to restore it about 600 B.C., and the restoration was completed about 500 B.C. by the Persian conqueror Darius I.

This freshwater canal may have been the river Laman. It flowed down a natural valley called the Wadi Tumilat (sometimes called the At-tumaylat Valley) and linked the Pelusiac branch of the Nile with the Red Sea. It had a large flow of water that allowed transport of grain from the Nile Valley for shipment to Mecca. This waterway was used, modified, destroyed, and rebuilt over a period of several hundred years. It was finally put out of commission by Caliph Abu Jaafar Adbullah al-Mansur in the 8th century A.D.

Lehi's party could have camped on the east side of this waterway in a natural valley. The river or canal would have been flowing continually into the mouth of the Red Sea. Crossing the river was probably not a simple task, hence Nephi's mention of the event.

Lehi's use of the word "fountain" in his admonition to his son has more significance when the River Laman is considered to be this ancient canal that brought fresh water from the Nile into the Red Sea.

After Lehi's party crossed the River Laman, they traveled four days in a south-southeast direction and pitched their tents again in a place they called Shazer (1 Ne. 16:13). Along this route there are several places with springs and trees that could have provided a rest stop for Lehi's family. The word *Shazar* pronounced "shazer" by the Arabs, means "trees." (See *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 114, by Daniel H. Ludlow.)

The seashore along the west side of the Gulf of Suez runs in a south-southeasterly direction, which fits the description given in the scriptures. There is a narrow plain between the Red Sea and the mountains to the west, along which Lehi's party could have traveled as they went down the west side of the Gulf of Suez and then continued south-southeast along the Red Sea. The continuation of the journey is described in 1 Ne. 16:14.

The west side of the Red Sea is a very arid region. The route I am suggesting would have taken Lehi and his family through present-day Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia. They would have traveled across barren, uninhabited stretches of desert.

This route seems to explain several things about the scriptural account of the journey. First, the account does not mention that the family made contact with any other people. The Frankincense Trails, which many people feel Lehi and his family followed, were some of the most heavily traveled roads of the ancient world. It would seem very unlikely that the family could have traveled these trails without encountering many other people. If they had traveled along the west side of the Red Sea, we can account for the silence of the scriptures about fellow travelers.

Second, if Lehi was following well-known trails, why did the Lord give him the Liahona, and why did Laman and Lemuel accuse Nephi of leading them into a "strange wilderness"? (1 Ne. 16:38). Routes like the Frankincense Trails were in common use at least 900 years before Lehi's day. However, if his party had traveled through what is today Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia, they indeed would have needed a Liahona, for they would have been in a "strange wilderness" with few people around to guide them.

Third, why did they live on raw meat and why did the Lord command them not to build fires? (1 Ne. 7:2, 12) If they had been on well-traveled trails, surely other people would have been building fires. If, however, they were in an unfamiliar area with little knowledge of who or what surrounded them, it may have been unwise and unsafe to build fires.

Fourth, in their journey down the west side of the Red Sea, Lehi's group would have passed through Egyptian territory. This could help to explain the many references Lehi and Nephi make to Egypt. Nephi frequently used examples drawn from the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt. (1 Ne. 4:2-3; 5:14-15; 17:23, 27,40; 19:10) These examples would have had especially powerful effects upon his family if they had been traveling in the very area where these events took place. It is also interesting to note that Lehi named his two sons born in the wilderness Jacob and Joseph, after his ancestors who lived in Egypt.

Fifth, Lehi's party would have likely chosen to travel through territories where the people were friendly to the Jews. Egyptian territory was friendly. In fact, there were numerous cities in Egypt where Jews had settled. Also, the territory along the Gulf of Suez and then south along the Red Sea was largely uninhabited. The populations of the Sudan and Ethiopia were located along the Nile or in the highlands. Somalia likewise had a sparse population. The people along the route through Edom, Midian, and Arabia were not friendly to Jews. IN fact, they had a long tradition of great hatred toward the Hebrews. When the Chaldeans besieged Jerusalem, the Edomites joined them and exited them to utterly raze the city and temple. This was only 11 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. There were few, if any Jews, living in the towns and territories of the Edomites.

The end of the wilderness journey was the land Bountiful. In this area, Nephi and his brothers constructed a ship and prepared to sail to the promised land. (1 Ne. 17:1-6)

In present-day Somalia, there is a place that could well have been the land Bountiful, for it matches the location and bounty of the area described in the scriptures. The Nogal Valley, which runs from northwest to southeast, is a low depression, that, despite sparse rainfall, is relatively well watered. its name means "the fertile land." since it was once very fertile. In recent years, however, erosion has caused rapid loss of its rich soil and thick vegetation.

Lehi's wilderness journey from Jerusalem to the place where the ship was constructed was an arduous journey. Whether the family traveled down the Arabian Peninsula or down the west side of the Red Sea to the horn of Africa is not known, but at least the Book of Mormon reader has two possible routes to consider.

Note\* Ariel Crowley's view was rebutted by Hugh Nibley in his 1952 *Lehi in the Desert*, pp. 93-95--see notation. In their 1996 book, *Discovering Lehi*, the Lynn and Hope Hilton would devote chapter 4 and two maps to a rebuttal of this argument. They write:

The Ismailia Canal could not have been the River Laman because Nephi said he arrived there by traveling in the borders "near" and "nearer" the Red Sea (1 Ne. 2:5) not by departing from the Red Sea and going 48 miles in the opposite direction (see figure 4-1). In addition, the Doctrine and Covenants confirms that Lehi's wilderness camp was "on the borders of the Red Sea" (D&C 17:1) not at a location which suggests a site 48 miles inland."

The Hiltons further state that "the Ismailia Canal does not pass through any "valley" but flows down a broad flat plain of the Nile delta. It is practically as flat as a pancake along its entire course. . . . A river without a valley will hardly satisfy Nephi's description of "this valley firm and steadfast, and immovable" (1 Ne. 2:10).

The Hiltons could easily have been consulted before this Church News article ever appeared, which makes one wonder why this old discarded theory was ever brought up in the first place.

On the other hand, Duane Aston would resurrect some of the ideas of Crowley and Douglas in his 2003 book *The Other Side of Cumorah*--see notation.

As a final note, I have to point out that the editors of the Church News seem to feel at liberty to print questionable material on Book of Mormon geography in the Old World so that "at least the Book of Mormon reader has two possible routes to consider." Yet at the same time, they go to great lengths to avoid relating the geography of the Book of Mormon in the New World to any of the locations proposed by reputable authors.

**[1988 Map: Figure 4-1 Lehi's Wilderness Journey. Did it pass through Arabia or Egypt? Lynn M. and**

(1996) Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort,



1996, p. 44]

**[1988 Map: Figure 4-2 The canal dug by Necho, king of Egypt, 609-695 B.C. takes Nile River water at**

(1996) Cairo and ends in Lake Timsah at Ismailia. This canal crosses the flat delta of the Nile and ends 548 miles from the Red Sea. Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1996, p. 45]

**1988^ Ingemar Sahlin Undated letter (January 6, 1988?) with 20 maps.**

In January, 1988, Ingemar Sahlin of Sweden sent a letter to President Ezra Taft Benson along with 20 maps on Book of Mormon geography. The letter was translated and forwarded to John L. Sorenson. Among other things, Sahlin said the following: "Without the slightest doubts on my part, the homeland of the Book of Mormon lies in southern Mexico. The descriptions which are to be found in the Book of Mormon agree with these old cities." However, while Sahlin locates the land of Lehi in Guatemala, he fails to detail the location of Lehi's landing site.

**1988^ Donna Cochran & "Is the Mormon Figure Lehi Connected with Prophetic Inscription near**

**Editor's response Jerusalem?" (containing a letter from Donna Cochran and a response**

**from the editor), *Biblical Archaeology Review* 14 (November**

**-December 1988): p. 19**

In this issue there is a letter to the editor by Mrs. Donna Cochran of Riverside, California in which she says the following:

I have just received a letter informing me of a site called "Beit Lehi" 20 miles southeast of Jerusalem, not far from the ancient fortress of Lachish in the Judean mountains. . . . According to my informant, on the walls of the cave were scratched some sailboats and an inscription . . . I am told of a Dr. Joseph Naveh of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a Dr. Frank More Cross, Jr., . . . who had something to do with this find. Do you know anything about this?

The Editor replies with the following:

. . . A number of papers by Mormon authors have appeared that attempt to connect these inscriptions with the travels of one Lehi who, according to the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 8) sailed to the New World from Palestine about 590 B.C. See, for example, Joseph Ginat in Newsletter of Society for Early Historic Archaeology 129 (April 1972) and Vernon W. Mattson, Jr., *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Important Discoveries* (Buried Record Production, 1979, pp. 53-57). The alleged connection with Lehi in the Book of Mormon was based on the name of the site. However, the name of the site is not Beit Lehi, as your letter suggests (this is your important error), but Beit Lei, or, in its older Arabic form, Bayt Layy.

The question is whether there is any linguistic connection between Lei (older Layy) and Lehi. We put this question to Professor Cross. Here is his reply:

As you know, the site of Khirbet Beit Lei (older Layy) was connected by Mormon authors with Biblical Lehi (see Judges 15) and ultimately with the Mormon figure Lehi. The connection of the name Lei with Lehi is based on a linguistic blunder, however. The Arabic *Lei*, classical Arabic *Layy*, is based on a root *lwy*, and means "bend, twist," etc. Hebrew *Lehi* on the other hand, is based on the Semitic root *lhy*, meaning "jaw." And *lwy* and *lhy* cannot be confused in Semitic. The *h* is a strong laryngeal spirant in Semitic, somewhat like *ch* in German Buch or *ch* in Scottish loch.

Neither Naveh nor I would for a moment support the equation *layy* = *lehi*, any more than we would confuse (Robert E.) Lee with (John) Locke.

I should add that when lecturing at Brigham Young University I discussed these issues in detail and made clear my name was not to be associated with such popular, unscholarly claims.

The inscriptions, which have now been removed and are kept in the Israel Museum, are of unusual importance, despite the absence of any connection between Lei (or Layy) and Lehi.

Professor Cross believes the inscriptions are not funerary inscriptions, but were scratched on the wall later by someone who got into the cave. The inscription you correctly quoted is, according to Cross,

a prophetic oracle in which Yahweh speaks in the first person, and in a poetic form . . . [The] language is reminiscent of Jeremiah and Second Isaiah. It is very difficult to avoid the speculation that Inscription A [the one you quote] is the citation of a lost prophecy, and that it and its companions were written by a refugee fleeing the Chaldeans [Babylonians] who conquered Judah and destroyed the holy city [Jerusalem] in 587 B.C.

Who was the refugee from Jerusalem who scratched this prophetic oracle and pleas for deliverance on the wall of this cave? Simply an ordinary refugee? Or perhaps the amanuensis of the prophet? Or the prophet himself? We have no way of knowing for sure.--Ed[itor]

**1988^ Zarahemla Research Foundation First Nephi: ZRF Study Book of Mormon,**  
Independence,

(RLDS) MO: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1988.

Footnote (1 Nephi 1:30-33):

"Lehi's probable route took them south from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Aqaba, then southward beside the eastern side of the Red Sea, eventually heading east to the shore on the Arabian Sea. His route probably paralleled the Frankincense Trail."

Footnote (1 Nephi 5:20):

"*more fertile parts* = oases and wadies."

Footnote (1 Nephi 5:62):

"There is a small area on the south coast of the Arabian peninsula which receives monsoon rainfall, creating a 20 mile strip which fulfills the description of Bountiful given by Nephi. The Qara Mountains line the coast (see v. 69) This area is near the city of Salalah in Oman."

**1988 Charles H. Quilter (Unpublished Manuscript), 1988.**

According to this Limited Mesoamerica model, the Nephite landing is presumed to have been along the Pacific coast of Guatemala

Source: An untitled 83-page manuscript by Charles H. Quilter (of Salt Lake City) located in the FARMS archives. Also ^John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, Provo: FARMS, 1990, pp. 149-151.

**[1988 Quilter Model (Limited Mesoamerica)** Lehi's landing is along the Pacific coast of Guatemala. "Quilter 1988 (External) Model," in John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, Provo: FARMS, 1990, p. 150]

**1988^ Paul R. Cheesman "Lehi's Journeys" in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal***

*Foundation*, Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr.

Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, B. Y. U., 1988, pp. 241-250.

As Paul Cheesman writes of the travels of Lehi, he basically uses as sources the writings of Hugh Nibley and the Hiltons, although he uses footnotes sparingly. He writes:

The story of Lehi's leading the company of Israelites from Jerusalem to America is told in 1 Nephi 2-18. Many of these chapters, however, deal with Nephi's visions (1 Nephi 11-15) and his comments on the records he is keeping (1 Nephi 6, 9). That leaves about twenty-five pages wherein the group's travels are recorded, and most of these pages record opposition of the elder sons Laman and Lemuel to their father and younger brother Nephi. The result is that we have only a sketchy account of Lehi's travels given us in the Book of Mormon. We are therefore left to surmise several related things based upon consideration of other evidences.

That Lehi lived in Jerusalem did not necessarily mean that he dwelt in the *city* of Jerusalem. The *land* of Jerusalem encompasses much more of the immediate area surrounding the city. We are of the opinion that Lehi's property lay somewhere in the land of Jerusalem and not within the walls of the city. . . .

There are three possible routes from Jerusalem to the Red Sea: (1) from Jerusalem northeast to Jericho, east across the Jordan River, and then south on the east side of the Dead Sea; (2) from Jerusalem to Jericho and down the west side of the Dead Sea; and (3) from Jerusalem southwest through Hebron, then east or southeast to a point below the Dead Sea. All three routes converge south of the Dead Sea and lead to Aqaba.

Lynn M. and Hope Hilton have suggested that Nephi could have seen metal smelting and shipbuilding at Aqaba that would have benefited him later. From Aqaba Lehi's group journeyed "three days in the wilderness" and camped in the "valley of Lemuel" (1 Nephi 2:10, 14). After traveling in this area, the Hiltons conclude that the valley of Lemuel is most probably the place now known as Al Beda in the Wadi El Afal, in Saudi Arabia. Al Beda contains the ruins of what has been considered the traditional home of Moses' father-in-law Jethro. The ruins are still called by his name. Lehi's colony could have stayed at Al Beda several seasons. . . .

The Book of Mormon indicates that after the group left the valley of Lemuel, they traveled for the space of four days in a "south-southeast direction" (1 Nephi 16:13). Most researchers believe that the trail Lehi took was near or on the passage most commonly taken by travelers, and known as the Frankincense Trail. It is reported that Joseph Smith was of the opinion that Lehi's party "traveled nearly a

south-southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; and then nearly east to the sea of Arabia." The exact route is not known. It was revealed to Lehi where he was to go, and so it is not possible or necessary to establish the exact route.

Reynolds suggests that the ancient Aztec map known as the Boturini Codex bears certain figures in hieroglyphic drawing which might depict Lehi's travels. . . .

It is estimated that their trip to the Arabian Sea was somewhere near twenty-five hundred miles in length. The company would probably travel for a few days, rest, hunt, and then take up their journey as the Liahona directed. . . .

An average encampment was calculated to be about twelve days long, but some crop-growing ones were perhaps as long as six months. How fast did the Lehi company travel? Major R. E. Cheesman, an experienced traveler in that area in the 1920s, has estimated that the average caravan could travel thirty miles a day.

During this journey, the group also may have fished along the coasts of the Red Sea . . .

After traveling four days from the valley of Lemuel, the company camped in a place they called Shazer (1 Nephi 16:13). Calculating their average traveling distance, this place could be the modern oasis of Azlan in the Wadi Azlan. Even another harvest season could have elapsed in this area. . . .

After leaving Shazer, the narrative indicates that Nephi broke his bow and the colony was desperate for food (1 Nephi 16:18ff). Nephi found wood to build a new bow (1 Nephi 16:23). . . .

Nibley cites another witness to the building of a new bow. According to Arab writers, the only bow wood available grew near the mountains of Jasum and Azed. As nearly as we can surmise, this is where the Lehi group was encamped when Nephi broke his bow and sought to make another (1 Nephi 16:23). Jiddah [closeby on the coast] is also a shipbuilding city and perhaps Nephi could have observed craftsmen in this area which would have benefited him later.

Moving on in the same easterly direction, they came to a place that was called Nahom. It was not named by Lehi but was apparently a desert burial ground. . . . A possible site of Nahom where Ishmael was buried is thought by the Hiltons to be al Kunfidah in Arabia. . . .

After traveling in an easterly direction, as the Book of Mormon indicates (1 Nephi 17:1), the party went through an area where they "did wade through much affliction." This arid wasteland was perhaps the worst desert of all. It did merge, however into a paradise by the sea which they named Bountiful. There is just such an area in the Qara Mountains on the southeasterly coast of Arabia. There is one place in the entire fourteen-hundred-mile southern Arabian peninsula that meets the description of Bountiful in the direction from Nahom suggested in the Book of Mormon and by the Prophet Joseph Smith as noted earlier. This is modern Salalah. . . .

Even though building a ship was a new experience for Nephi, he surely would have observed native shipbuilders in the many villages he passed as he traveled along the coast of the Red Sea. The sycamore-fig shade tree that grows in the desert produces a very hard wood, is strong, resistant to water, and almost free from knots. . . . The ship was built and the people sailed for the promised land.

The weather and geography of Arabia have changed little, if any, since Lehi's day. Most LDS scholars are of the opinion that current studies of Arabic geography and history are in complete harmony with Lehi's story. It is also the opinion of those who have traveled and studied the area involved in Lehi's exodus that everything recorded in 1 Nephi concerning the travels of Lehi actually could have happened.

1988^ John L. Sorenson "Transoceanic Crossings" in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The*

*Doctrinal Foundation*, Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D.

Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, B. Y. U., 1988, pp.

251-270.

John Sorenson writes:

. . . The voyage by Lehi's party is treated in 1 Nephi 17:5-18, 49-51, and in chapter 18. . . . The fragmentary information in the text has led Latter-day Saints to pay but cursory attention to the voyages and their significance for the history and culture of Book of Mormon peoples. This paper analyzes the Lehi trip, for which we have the most textual and external comparative information, and demonstrates how we can expand our understanding of such events. . . .

To understand in this sense, we need to accumulate the largest possible body of information on the voyage described in 1 Nephi. An exhaustive set of questions will serve to alert us to new facts about the event, jarring us out of the mental rut induced by simply reading the text again and again. . . . we need to phrase our questions in two forms: those addressed directly to the scriptural voyage [internal analysis], and those intended to elicit complementary data from parallel cases [external data].

Sorenson then lists 36 pertinent questions:

- (1) Questions about the origin of the voyage (#1-4)
- (2) Questions about preparations (#5-16)
- (3) Questions about the voyage (#17-25)
- (4) Questions about consequences of the voyage (#26-36)

Sorenson then addresses "as many of the thirty-six questions concerning this voyage as the Book of Mormon deals with directly or by inference":

- (1) *What voyages can be usefully compared with this particular case?*

[Note\* It is unfortunate that Tim Severin's 1983 *Sindbad Voyage* was not discussed here. Sorenson fails to make any discussion on the matter.]

(2) *What historical and cultural factors led to this voyage? What historical and cultural factors led to voyages in comparable cases?:* According to the Book of Mormon, the historical and cultural factors involved in the departure of the Lehi group from the land of Jerusalem center in the fact that the sociopolitical establishment there had rejected Lehi's warning message and standing as a legitimate prophet. . . . 1 Nephi 7:14 implies that they were generally the same as for his contemporaries. . . . The record of Nephi before the eighteenth chapter does not make explicit but does imply that the Lord intended Bountiful to be only a stopover on a longer journey [to a "land of promise"] Lehi and Nephi understood that, but it appears that Laman and Lemuel and perhaps others in the party did not see it that way (17:5-18) . . .

(3) *What did members of this party know about destinations, routes, and nautical technology? What did comparable voyagers know of these matters?* No hint can be found in the text that anyone in Lehi's party had any knowledge whatever of nautical matters, nor is it likely that any had even been on a vessel before. . . . Note the brothers' unbelief that they could cross "these great waters." Nor did they manifest any belief or interest in the possibility of constructing a ship, even though the mercantile connections their father apparently enjoyed at Jerusalem probably had acquainted them with the existence of commercial destinations around the Indian Ocean.

(4) *Was this voyage referred to in later history in the area of origin? Were comparable voyages known to later history in their areas or origin?:* . . . As to a tradition or record of their leaving the land of Bountiful, there is no apparent reason why local inhabitants of that area (who are not noted in Nephi's record but unquestionably were present, as archaeology and linguistics show [note 6]) would have known of their departure or would have paid particular attention to it. On the south coast of the Arabian peninsula where their vessel was built, the possibility is tiny that this one among a number of vessels constructed in that day would be specifically noted in local tradition or records. Nephi's record gives us no reason to suppose that the departure was noted by others.

(5) *What vessel technology was available to the voyagers in this case?* At least some of the technology Nephi used on his ship differed from that used by contemporary shipbuilders (18:2). . . . We have no reason to suppose that the repertoire of skills he and his family possessed were superior to or even different from those common among nonspecialists in the Jerusalem area in his day. . . . The implication is that the chief differences were in quality of workmanship and some aspects of design. . . . Consider . . . the case of the Salt Lake Temple, for which Brigham Young reported visionary guidance as to its plan, although the techniques, materials, and architecture employed remained within a range not surprising to nineteenth-century American craftsmen.

(6) *Was a suitable vessel procured or procurable without new construction of one?* The text implies that no existing vessel was available, or suitable, for the party's use in or near the Bountiful area. The family had been wealthy (2:4); had the Lord desired that they purchase a ship presumably they could have brought sufficient portable wealth through the desert to buy one. Moreover, they could have been led this way or that a few hundred miles from where they were to some other destination on the Indian Ocean coast that could have provided such a ready-made vessel, had there been a superior one about. Much time and labor would have been saved had they not had to build one, but perhaps they needed the experience to toughen them physically and spiritually for the arduous voyage. . . . note that the answer to this question in the case of Mulek's party, which likely departed from Egypt via the Mediterranean Sea, could be quite different.

(7) *What materials, tools, and knowledge were obtained in order to construct the vessel, and from where and how were they procured?* We learn from 17:9-11 and 16 that Nephi began from scratch,

personally locating and surface mining ore, constructing bellows and starting fire in order to manufacture woodworking tools. . . . Adequate timbers likely would not have been available to them on the immediate coast, only back in the hills a certain distance. Probably not more than five or six men in such a small group would be available to "go forth" (18:1) to the hills for timber. . . . Nothing hits other than that the party made all their tools and did all the construction by themselves, perhaps because their poverty did not allow paying local craftsmen.

(8) *What was the design of the vessel, and how was it constructed?* Questions of the ship's design cannot even be approached from the text aside from a few generalities. First, because the vessel was sail powered, it had to have at least one mast, sail(s) and rigging, and it probably was keeled and had some type of rudder (18:13). Second, given the amount of stores implied (18:6), it is likely to have been decked, with supplies secured below from storm (18:15; compare verse 6: "we did go down into the ship, with all our loading";) . . . The Hiltons estimate that the party by this time consisted of around seventeen adults and thirty-two children, requiring a sixty-foot ship. Perhaps, but it could have been smaller. Note that Columbus's *Nina* may have been only sixty feet long.

(9) *How long did construction take?* The length of time it took to build the vessel can only be surmised. The Hiltons suggest under two years. Given the builders' inexperience and small number and the necessity of carrying out other routing tasks simultaneously, it could well have taken more . . .

(11) *What training was necessary to prepare the crew for the voyage?* People of the desert would certainly require training in even the most rudimentary management of a vessel before they set sail. The most plausible way to get that knowledge would be instruction by sailors on boats already in that vicinity. One can imagine also a combination of inspiration and trial and error as a means, particularly if Nephi's ship was of novel design.

(13) *What was the ethnic, social, and cultural composition of the group making this voyage?* The text is clear enough that apart from Zoram, only Lehi's and Ishmael's family members were in the voyaging party. All were Hebrew-speakers and at home with cultural ways of the Jerusalem area and not ethnically or socially varied among themselves, however cosmopolitan some of them might have been due to travel or learning. . . .

(15) *What seasonal timing was involved in preparation and departure?* Being "driven forth before the wind" (18:8) implies dependence on the monsoon winds from the west to bear the vessel across the Indian Ocean . . . Typically, ships left the Arabian coast on that wind between mid-March and early May, although a date a bit later or in late August-early September cannot be ruled out.

(16) *How was the vessel launched?* All that is said about launching is that "we did put forth into the [out to?] sea" (18:8). I suppose that the sizable vessel had already been put into the water from the beach (on rollers?) and had undergone shakedown sailing off the coast even before provisioning, let alone departure. . . .

(18) *What route was followed? Were other routes to the same destination feasible? What natural conditions were met and would likely have been met on alternate routes?* The most economical explanation of the course followed supposes that the Lord typically uses natural forces familiar to us to



accomplish his ends. In this case, he would have directed the party over a course where winds and currents would carry any vessel toward the intended spot in America with a minimum of miraculous intervention. No doubt other seafarers would already have passed over certain legs of the same route, though probably not the whole of it. (Compare the LDS pioneers of 1847 crossing the plains to the Great Salt Lake via the sensible North Platte River valley, and so on, rather than through mountain-cluttered New Mexico, Colorado, or Montana.)

Across the Indian Ocean the routine course taken by sailing ships in premodern times followed near 15 degrees north latitude, which carried them straight east to the Malabar coast of Indian. From there they would round Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and sail east near 10 degrees north latitude to the Straits of Malacca and past the site of modern Singapore. One feasible course thereafter would wend between major islands of today's Indonesia to the Admiralty group north of New Guinea, thence past Tonga and through Polynesia near the Marquesas. Recently scientists have discovered that every dozen years or so what is known in the meteorology of the eastern Pacific as the "El Nino condition" develops in which unusual winds from the west replace the typical trade winds. At such time sailing eastward across the mid-Pacific and even on to America is feasible. However, this was not the only possible route, for the sea off China and across the north Pacific between 25 and 40 degrees north could also have served.

The Book of Mormon is silent about conditions encountered after the ship met with the tropical storm (18:9-21), which was probably in the Indian Ocean or the Bay of Bengal. Failure of the record to mention other difficulties on the voyage may imply that no life-threatening situations were encountered after the one great storm, or at least none significant enough for Nephi to describe on the small plates. Either route suggested would offer, but not guarantee, the possibility of a safe trip across the ocean. (Contrast the vivid language about the continuously stressful Jaredite journey in Ether 6:5-11, which fits conditions only on a north Pacific route around 45 degrees north.) Nephi simply said that "after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land" (18:23).

(21) *What stops were made, why, and for how long?* Arab ships on the Indian Ocean route typically stopped ashore to repair storm damage, such as obtaining a new mast, as well as to scrape speed-impeding barnacles off the hull. Especially after the one almost disastrous storm, the need to stop for repairs seems likely, perhaps in Sri Lanka or Sumatra. Another reason for stops would be to take on a new supply of water and fresh, anti-scurvy foods. Also, they may have spent periods in port, waiting for seasonal winds to turn the right direction or avoiding a storm. Some of the waits could have been fairly long. After all, if the journey through Arabia consumed eight years, we need not suppose the Lord would hasten the party across the ocean, more than ten times as far, in hasty, uninterrupted fashion. . . .

(22) *How long did the voyage take?* No information is given about duration, but the distance alone allows us to estimate time. This distance traveled would have been on the order of seventeen thousand miles. We get valuable comparative data about rates of travel in the mid-Pacific by examining a recent voyage under pre-European conditions by the reconstructed Polynesian double-hulled canoe named *Hokule'a*. The vessel traveled eight thousand miles in six legs, ranging from three hundred to three thousand miles: Hawaii to Tahiti, Tahiti to the Cook Islands, on to New Zealand, then Tonga, Samoa, and back to Tahiti and Hawaii. total sailing time was nearly eighty-two days, for an average of ninety-eight miles per day. Surprisingly, the speed sailing east "against the trade winds" was twice what it had been going west. This practical experience confirms warnings by nautical experts that maps that show "average" wind velocities and directions are meaningless as predictors of what may happen on any particular voyage. Had Lehi's ships been able to travel continuously at the same rate as *Hokule'a*, the entire voyage would have taken only about half a year. But we cannot assume such a thing. . . . we know that for the Indian Ocean portion of the route, Arab, Chinese, and Portuguese ships sometimes . . . waited for months for desired winds. . . . *Hokule'a's* eighty-two days at sea actually stretched over more than a year,

as crew members flew home to hawaii for rest after each leg of the trip! Moreover, the Polynesian crew already had accumulated a large body of lore and expertise about sailing in that particular part of the Pacific . . . Given these conditions, a full year seems a minimum period to accomplish the long voyage from Arabia to (Central) America. Two years are not unlikely. . . .

(25) *Where did the vessel land?* Nephi does not give us useful information about where the ship landed, but two later statements in the scripture do. Mosiah 10:13 mentions "the land of their [the Lamanites] first inheritance, after they had crossed the sea." Then Alma 22:28, as part of a comprehensive description of geography in the land of promise, speaks of Lamanites spread in the wilderness "on the west in the land of Nephi, in the place of their fathers' first inheritance, and thus bordering along by the seashore." When this information is put together with other geographical statements, it becomes clear that the land referred to was on the "west sea" coast at the southern extreme [???] of the territory spoken of in the Nephite record. . . .

The most plausible correlation of Book of Mormon geography with today's map identifies the land of first inheritance or initial landing zone with a stretch of the Pacific coast a few score miles on either side of the Guatemala-El Salvador border. . . .

Note\* It is evident that the process of working up a paradigm is not only worthwhile, but necessary for one to progress forward in their understanding of Lehi's travels. One should be careful, however, to not take too much stock in the conclusions derived therefrom. Otherwise they can become "locked in" by a particular perspective that, given a few additional facts, becomes outmoded. Thus progress is delayed while ideas are dismissed that in the long run prove more profitable for understanding Lehi's journey in particular and Book of Mormon geography in general. It is interesting to compare the agreements and disagreements of the ideas listed above by Sorenson with those of Potter & Wellington's works--see the notations for 1999, 2000, and 2003.

**1988^ Delbert W. Curtis    *The Land of the Nephites*, American Fork, UT: Delbert W. Curtis, 1988**

Precursor to his 1993 *Christ in North America*.

**1988    Michael Hobby & Troy Smith    "A Model for Nephite Geography," in *Zarahemla Quarterly*" 2 (1),**

1988, pp. 4-14. Also "The Mulekite Connection," in *Zarahemla Quarterly* 2 (1), 1988.

Note\* See *The Mulekite Connection*, 1992.

[1988 Illustrated Model Michael Hobby and Troy Smith HEMISPHERIC]

Page #1 Page #2

L.S.=South Amer. / N.N.=Panama / L.N.=N. of Panama to New York / H.C.=New York / Sid . R.=Orinoco River

Source: Michael Hobby and Troy Smith, "A Model for Nephite Geography," in *Zarahemla Quarterly* 2 (1), 1988, pp. 4-14. Also "The Mulekite Connection" *Zarahemla Quarterly* 2 (1), 1988.

1988^ F. Richard Hauck *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon: Settlements and Routes in Ancient America*, S.L.C.:Deseret Book, 1988, pp. 8-9.

Richard Hauck writes:

Unlike the debarkation of the Mulekite and Jaredite colonies on the Gulf of Mexico, Lehi's party came ashore some 300 miles to the southeast on the Pacific coast. This spatial study identifies this west sea locality as the land of Judea in the west sea land of Bountiful also called "the place of their fathers' first inheritance." (Alma 22:28) . . . A special temple complex was later erected at the site to commemorate the historic significance of the locality.

The geographic model correlates the locality of Lehi's landing with Tapachula, a Mexican city adjacent to the Guatemalan border. Indeed, archeological research on the architecture and art of the nearby ancient site of Izapa suggests that this location was developed as a commemorative shrine by Lehi's descendants. Construction of the sacred site may actually have begun during Lehi's lifetime while the original colony resided in the area. Although most of the development of the site occurred during the first century B.C., its artwork demonstrates a philosophical continuity that spans the intervening four hundred years. Bas-relief stone sculptures erected during the various stages of site development symbolically depict sacred concepts, such as the tree of life, blood atonement through a divine sacrifice, judgment and punishment of the wicked, premortal life, and resurrection. These concepts were the important religious

themes of Lehi's day, as evidenced in the writings of Nephi, and they continued to have great influence on Lehi's successors throughout the course of Nephite history.

Izapa's 25 centuries of preservation, the correlation of its art with primary themes in the Book of Mormon, and its geographic identification with the land of Judea, as developed in the following chapters, all show the existence of an extremely significant cultural identity.

**[1988 Illustrated Model Richard Hauck LIMITED MESOAMERICA]**

Lehi's landing site = Tapachula, Mexico, L.S.= S. of Guatemala highlands from Soconusco to Bay of Honduras / N.N.=Pacific coastal plane of Guate. & Chiapas / L.N. / H.C. = Tuxtla Mountains-Cerro Vigia

Source: F. Richard Hauck, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon: Settlements and Routes in Ancient America*, S.L.C.:Deseret Book, 1988.

**1988^ Frederick G. Williams III Frederick G. Williams III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile?": An**

(abt. Frederick G. Williams) **Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," FARMS,**

1988, pp. 15-16.

After extensive review of all the possible origins of the Frederick G. Williams document containing a statement on the course of Lehi's travels, Frederick G. Williams III concludes:

The source of the statement about Lehi's travels, therefore, remains uncertain. Although none of the original documents gives any evidence that the statement is anything more than an interesting attempt to plot out Lehi's journey, the tradition of a revelatory origin was widely accepted in the middle and late nineteenth century. However, as early as 1909, B. H. Roberts cast doubt on the reliability of theories attributing the statement to Joseph Smith. Much has been written since that time both upholding and challenging the origin of the statement as a revelation to Joseph Smith. These secondary sources are of little use in unraveling the mystery of the statement's origin. Perhaps we will never know the full history of the statement, but whatever we surmise, it must be based on the primary documents. As has been shown, no primary source contains sufficient evidence to attribute the statement to Joseph Smith (or to anyone else) or to revelation. Without such evidence, it is erroneous to view the idea that Lehi landed in Chile as settled.

**[1988 Illustration: Frederick G. Williams Document.** (LDS Archive, Ms d 3408 fd 4 v, SLC, Utah). Source: Frederick G. Williams III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile?": An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," FARMS, 1988, Document 1]

Note\* An interesting sidelight here might be mentioned concerning access to Church Archives. In doing his own article, Frederick G. Williams III desired access to the Frederick G. Williams manuscript illustrated above from the Church Archives. He was denied. It was only after John Welch sought access on behalf of FARMS that the request was okayed. (Personal Communication, Frederick G. Williams III, October 2003).

Note\* This paper was written before an article in 2000 by Michael Marquardt detailing an 1830 newspaper article reporting on the missionary labors in Ohio of Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt, of whom it was said preached about the Indians "*whose ancestors landed on the coast of Chili 600 years before the coming of Christ.*" This information about "Chili" predates the Frederick G. Williams document. It should be added that when the missionaries left Kirtland, they took with them Frederick G. Williams, who had recently been converted.

(See the notations for 1830, 1831, 1836, 1845, 1882, 1909, 2000)

1988^     **Hugh Nibley**             ***Lehi in the Desert / The World of the Jaredites / There Were Jaredites:***  
***The***

***Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 5, The Book of Mormon***, edited

by John W. Welch with Darrell L. Matthews and Stephen R. Callister. Salt

Lake City: Deseret Book Company and Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient

Research and Mormon Studies, 1988.

One of the projects of the FARMS organization was to see that all Hugh Nibley's works were published or republished. As part of that process, Hugh Nibley's 1952 book *Lehi in the Desert* was republished in 1988. On the positive side this made Nibley's ideas once again available to a much wider audience. On the negative side Nibley's investigative reasoning was based on sources that were now 36 years older than at the time of the first publication. The following is excerpted from the inside of the paper bookcover:

Hugh Nibley is probably still best known for his groundbreaking investigations into the ancient Near Easter backgrounds of Lehi and of the Jaredites. Those classic studies are contained in this volume-the first of several books to appear in the volumes of *the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* that deal with the Book of Mormon.

Dr. Nibley's broad knowledge of the ancient Near East, and especially his fluent Arabic, allowed him to reconstruct the probable cultural backgrounds of people like Lehi and Nephi and to read between the lines in the Book of Mormon to identify evidences of their cultural world. Much of that evidence is quite direct and strong; other times it is subtle and more remote. In either case, no one else had even thought of seeing such things; yet without such insights, the lives of Lehi and the Jaredites would "remain in the shadows," as Elder John A. Widtsoe said in his foreword to the 1952 publication of *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*.

This book began in 1948 with Dr. Nibley's article "The Book of Mormon as a Mirror of the East," which soon grew into three lengthy serials, "Lehi in the Desert" in 1950, "The World of the Jaredites" in 1951-52, and "There Were Jaredites" in 1956-57, all of which were published in the *Improvement Era*. In 1952, the first two serials were published as a book entitled *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*. That volume has enjoyed wide circulation for thirty-five years.

In the present volume, the work of the editors has been confined largely to technical tasks. The earlier texts remain substantially unchanged, but they have been edited lightly. All the information found in "The Book of Mormon as a Mirror of the East" (much of which was inserted into "Lehi in the Desert" in 1950) has been worked into the text and notes of "Lehi in the Desert." . . .

The kinds of ancient Near Eastern facts and observations Dr. Nibley correlates with details in the Book of Mormon are drawn from areas of language and literature, archaeology and history, culture and politics. Taken alone, few single factors are overwhelmingly impressive, but all together they fit very convincingly into what Dr. Nibley calls "The Big Picture."

As he writes at the conclusion of his findings: "There is no point at all to the question: Who wrote the Book of Mormon? It would have been quite as impossible for the most learned man alive in 1830 as it was for Joseph Smith."

Note\* See the 1952 notation for textual excerpts.

**1989<sup>^</sup> Warren P. Aston "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern  
Michaela J. Aston Arabia." Provo, Utah: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1989.**

Note\* This is a revised version of a paper presented October 17, 1986, at the 35th Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures sponsored by the Society of Early Historic Archaeology at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Based upon field research by the authors in the Yemen Arab Republic and the Sultanate of Oman 1984-88, it was revised October 1988.

The Astons write:

In a general sense, the course taken by the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi and his family after leaving Jerusalem about 600 B.C. has never really been in doubt. They traveled in "nearly a south-southeast direction" along the eastern coast of the Red Sea (1 Nephi 16:13), probably following, at least in part, one of the trade routes that carried a huge volume of incense and other commodities north from southern Arabia. After an unspecified, but apparently extended period of travel through the desert, Lehi's party pitched their tents and prepared to "tarry for the space of a time" (1 Nephi 16:33), probably long enough to plant and harvest crops. During this time Ishmael died "and was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:34). When they resumed their journey, they "did travel nearly eastward from that time forth" (1 Nephi 17:1), or toward the Indian Ocean. One consequence was to minimize contact with the region to the south, which archaeological data now suggests was relatively heavily populated, even though doing so meant they then had to traverse the most difficult terrain of their entire journey. Their travel in the wilderness ended at the seashore in a land they called Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:5)

Because Nahom is a pivotal point in Lehi's journey, marking a major change in direction, identifying the place on today's map is critical to an understanding of the actual route the journey followed. Its location also becomes a significant clue to the location of Bountiful, the launching place for Lehi's sea voyage to the American continent. This paper examines historical, geographical, and archaeological evidence which help us specify the location of Nahom and thus also of Bountiful.

. . . the words of 1 Nephi 16:34, "the place *which was called* Nahom," indicate rather clearly that Nahom was an existing, locally known place name.

In 1978, Ross Christensen of Brigham Young University noted the intriguing possibility that a form of the name Nahom may have survived to modern times. He referred to a map of Yemen prepared in 1763 by Carsten Niebuhr showing a district called Nehhm located about 25 miles northeast of the capital, Sana'a. The following factors argue that "Nehhm" (as the name is given in Niebuhr's map) is the most likely candidate for Nahom. When considered together, all the evidence to date indicates that Lehi's turn "nearly eastward" occurred in or very near the wadi Jauf adjacent to Nehhm in what is today the Yemen Arab Republic.

1. *Indications of Antiquity.* . . . the present-day district of Nehem in Yemen has been known as such since the pre-Islamic era. The earliest map located to date showing Nehem is the French cartographer Jean Bourguignon D'Anville's 1751 map of Asia. It shows the relation of Nehem to Sana'a the same as on later maps, and is significant because D'Anville used as his sources the writings and maps of much earlier Arab geographers, including Idrisi (1100-1165), Abu'l-Fida (1273-1331), and Katib Chelebi (1609-1657). D'Anville's map showed the western world its ignorance of inland Arabia.

Desiring to correct this ignorance, Danish King Frederick V sponsored an expedition to Arabia in 1761-64. Carsten Niebuhr, a German surveyor and mapmaker, was the sole survivor of the expedition. His 1763 map of Yemen showed Nehhm located about 25 miles northeast of Sana'a. (See Figure 1 below) . .

[1989 **Figure 1: Niebuhr's 1763 Map of Yemen.** Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern Arabia." Provo, Utah: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1989]

Niebuhr's original writings describe Nehhm as a "Lordship" and also as an independent "State of Yemen," one of thirteen such states listed as additional to the dominions of the Imam at Sana'a. . . . Other maps printed in succeeding years and as recently as 1985 confirm the name and location of Nehem. [ A number of these maps are then listed]

Nehem today in the Yemen Arab Republic is a fairly large and somewhat loosely defined district, well known within the country and still associated with the Nahm tribe. However, because it is not one of the administrative provinces of the present-day Republic, it seldom appears on contemporary maps.

2. *The Nahm Tribe.* The longtime existence of the Nahm tribe, after which the district of Nehem is named, provides further evidence of the antiquity of the name. Unlike most parts of the Arab world, the tribes of Yemen have in some instances survived to the present from the earliest recorded Arab history, long before the advent of Islam (see Figure 2 below)

**[1989 Figure 2: The Tribes of Yemen.** Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern Arabia." Provo, Utah: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1989]

Although many Yemeni tribes are named after a common ancestor, it is likely that the Nahm tribal name is from a place name rather than the name of any individual. . . . A recognized authority on Yemeni tribes has commented: "The first thing to be noted about yemeni tribes is that they have been where they are for a very long time. . . . Tribes as such do not move. Nor do they over-run each other." . . . Continued existence of the tribe in this same area since at least the tenth century A.D. and likely earlier, when coupled with the longevity of the place name, suggests the possibility of a link with the Book of Mormon Nahom.

3. *The Meaning of Nahom.* Two closely related Semitic language roots are possible for the term *Nahom* on the basis of Nephi's account: *NHM* and *NHM*. Both roots have similar connotations and both relate to the experiences of Lehi's group in Nahom. The basic meaning of *NHM* is "comfort, console," and other derivations extend its meaning to include "compassion" and "rest." . . . In Hebrew the *NHM* root is used extensively with reference to "consoling" the bereaved and "mourning" the death of another (as in Genesis 37:35; 38:12; 2 Samuel 10:2-3; Isaiah 51:19; Jeremiah 16:7) . . .

The second root, *NHM* is also found in biblical Hebrew, meaning "to roar" (Isaiah 5:29-30), or to complain or be hungry. . . . The meaning of this root is as apt as *NHM* in view of the reference to hunger, hardship, and complaining in 1 Nephi 16:35. It is this root which appears today in the Arabic name Nehem. . . .

4. *The Rarity of the Name.* Although the roots *NHM* and *NHM* are relatively common in the Hebrew biblical corpus in various contexts, both are rare as either a personal or place name in Southern Arabia. G. Lankester Harding's exhaustive compilation, *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions*, lists only a single occurrence of *NHM* in the Southern Arabian dialects. . . .



5. *Burial Grounds.* Another factor tying the present-day Nehem to the Nahom of Lehi's day is the existence of an ancient burial ground in its hills, and of another more extensive region of tombs farther to the east. The tombs in Nehem . . . have only recently been examined by archaeologists and may date to 3000 B.C. or earlier. Use of them and even further construction probably continued until about 1000 A.D. [The] second area of tombs to the east, made known to the outside world by Philby in 1936, remains one of the largest burial sites in Arabia. . . .

6. *Ruins and Agriculture and Climatic Factors in the Jauf Area.* . . . A picture of a land of perennial streams, extensive vegetation cover, and herds of wild animals long since extinct is quite different from the arid wastes which typify most of Arabia today, but it is none which now has ample topographical, cultural, and archaeological support. Nowhere is this more true than in the Wadi Jauf, next to the mountains of Nehem, which may have been irrigated in part from the great dam at Marib until its collapse about A.D. 570. . . . (See Figure 3 below)

[1989 **Figure 3: The Wadi Jauf.** Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern Arabia." Provo, Utah: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1989]

The physical evidence now indicates that an area which today supports only a few scattered bedouin, once allowed extensive agriculture and a settled population. Such conditions would be important to clarifying the Book of Mormon record if, as the text implies, Lehi's family remained in this region to grow crops and replenish supplies before departing eastward into the barren wastes skirting the Empty Quarter.

7. *The Easterly turning of the Incense Trail.* Perhaps the strongest evidence for the location of Nahom and Lehi's easterly turning point lies in the trade routes in use about 600 B.c. (see Figure 4 below). As stated above, the direction of Lehi's travels in the wilderness probably followed the incense trading routes. . . . it cannot be assumed that Lehi avoided all populated regions and cities on his journey. . . . The narrative proceeds without mention of other people, although contacts may have been frequent.

[1989 **Figure 4: The Ancient Incense Trade Land Routes.** Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern Arabia." Provo, Utah: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1989]

It seems reasonable that they grew crops in the area around Nahom in preparation for the last part of their journey. (It would have been physically impossible to acquire any significant stock of food in the area traversed since the hunger reported in 1 Nephi 16:18-20.)

The major trunk of the incense trading route (i.e. the section between Ma'in and Marib) passed through the Jauf valley within a few miles of Nehem; additionally, the first of several branches of the route in fact turns eastward in the same area, exactly as suggested by our reading of the account of 1 Nephi.

Given the quite precise directional description ("nearly a south-southeast direction") recorded in 1 Nephi 16:13, it may be significant that the direction given by Nephi after leaving Nahom seems almost nebulous by comparison. One reason, of course, may be that the water sources followed may have led the party to meander to the extent that Nephi could justifiably only generalize the direction traveled. Another possibility is that their path was so close to true east (or at least their concept of east) that a more specific direction could not be given other than "nearly eastward," in which case Bountiful should be sought farther south and west than the Dhofar bay. In any event, by Lehi's taking one of these paths across the plains, he would have arrived at the fertile coastal region where incense trees grew, the only general region in Arabia where Bountiful could plausibly have been situated. . . .

### *The Land Bountiful.*

Contained within or implied in the Book of Mormon text are a number of indications of the nature of Nephi's land Bountiful. [Multiple descriptive scriptural references are cited from 1 Nephi 17]

Although it can now be shown that most scriptural requirements for Bountiful can be met at several sites along either the Dhofar or Hadramaut coastal region, Salalah in southern Oman has been considered the most suitable, if not the only, candidate for Lehi's Bountiful since the volume by the Hiltons. The primary basis for this thought has been a belief that frankincense growth was limited to Dhofar, and that the trading route (i.e. water sources) would therefore have resulted in the group's arriving there. Furthermore, it has been assumed that this was the only place which had the necessary timber for Nephi to use in building a ship.

Continued research, however, has raised problems with the view that Bountiful was at Dhofar. . . .

1. *Where Was the Frankincense Growing Region?* Scholars earlier held that frankincense grew only in the Dhofar region (now southern Oman) and only at certain altitudes, usually stated as above 2000 feet. Nigel Groom, however, has recently established that frankincense also grew at lower altitudes and, more importantly, that it was grown over an extended stretch of coastline from Dhofar south along the Hadramaut. . . .

2. *Was Dhofar Accessible Enough to Be Bountiful?* . . . most modern and ancient maps do not show any overland branch of the trading route to and from Dhofar. The frankincense produced in Dhofar was usually shipped southward by sea to the port of Qana (the present Bir Ali in Yemen) and only then overland to the north. Nigel Groom states that it seems improbable that any more than "a trickle of frankincense ever reached Shabwah from Zufar by [the overland route]," and he cites the following points against any major overland traffic from Dhofar:

- A. Two possible overland routes were explored by Thesiger who found nothing to indicate either was ever used as a major trade route.
- B. There were no sites where caravans could have assembled before leaving Dhofar and there is a paucity of archaeological sites in Dhofar in general.
- C. Early Arab geographers make no references to the land route from Dhofar to Shabwah as being of any significance in the incense trade.
- D. The extreme barrenness and the minimal availability of water would not have allowed a heavy or frequent trade on that route.

. . . Salalah, characterized by comparatively small fertile valleys back in the Qara mountains and separated from the coast by a broad arid plain devoid of natural vegetation, does not meet all the criteria for Bountiful in any one location. From a scriptural point of view, a much more likely candidate is the bay of Rakhyut some 50 miles south of Salalah. With mountains extending right to the seacoast, Rakhyut receives a higher rainfall and naturally occurring vegetation (which includes large trees) extends over a much larger area than at any part of Salalah. Other fertile pockets farther south along the Omani coastline are known, however the inland terrain at those points is so impenetrable as probably to rule them out as candidates for Bountiful.

While Salalah may yet prove to be the "Bountiful" place Nephi wrote of, when all aspects--including the proposed location of Nahom--are considered, it is clear that the bases for its selection as Bountiful are not at this time compelling.

### 3. *The Case for a Hadramaut Bountiful.*

A. *"We did travel nearly eastward" (1 Nephi 17:1).* . . . assuming the Nehem in Yemen is equivalent to Book of Mormon Nahom, a strict interpretation of this statement of direction would suggest a location for Bountiful on the coast southwest of the Dhofar region, although the latter is still within the bounds of possibility.

B. *Fertility.* Almost nothing has been recorded concerning the upper Hadramaut coastline, however stretches of heavily wooded area within the Wadi Masila ("Valley of Floods") today may at least be indicative of coastal conditions in the past under a more favorable climate. There can be little doubt that the general fertility of the region--evidenced by the production of incense anciently--is such that this criterion for Bountiful may be met in a number of coastal areas.

C. *Terrain.* As shown in Figure 7 (see below), a natural pathway to the coast from the interior deserts is provided by the Wadis Hadramaut and Masila. Almost directly east of Nahom and the Jauf valley, the Wadi Masila reaches the coast a little south of Sayhut and encompasses the only perennial river in the entire Arabian peninsula. . . .

**[1989 Figure 7: The Hadhramaut.** Warren P. Aston and Michaela J. Aston, "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern Arabia." Provo, Utah: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1989]

While there is nothing in the Book of Mormon text indicating that Lehi followed a wadi to the coast, neither is there any reference which rules it out, and it seems reasonable.

D. *The Prophet Hud*. An additional factor which might have some relevance to the present discussion is the possible, yet distant, similarity between Arab traditions of a prophet named Hud and the literary images contained in Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life. This subject has been explored by William Hamblin. Relevant to this study is the fact that the legend of Hud centers in the Hadramaut region. . . .

#### *Conclusion.*

On the basis of the arguments presented, we propose that after the burial of Ishmael at Nahom, Lehi and his family travelled almost due east through the Wadi Jauf and across the northern edge of the Ramlat Sab'atayn desert to the Wadi Hadramaut, thence to the coast through the Wadi Masila, emerging either at the main mouth of the river south of Sayhut or perhaps at a lesser tributary of a little further to the north. (See Figure 7 above) All the geographical elements relating to the desert travels of Lehi can thus be shown to fit in the Arabian setting. The preservation of the name NHM, and the evidence of travel routes leading us to the Wadi Jauf in Yemen as the easterly turning point of Lehi's journey. The place Bountiful fits locations on either the Hadramaut or the Dhofar coast. There are no inconsistencies or unreasonable statements in the account written by Nephi. Instead, we find an account in which geographical incidentals become ever more accurate and appropriate as our understanding of South Arabia of Lehi's day increases.

Note\* The site of Sayhut as Bountiful will be found lacking in further studies by the Astons published in 1991--see notation. In their 1994 book which includes much of this article, their map of the final stages of Lehi's journey (p. 11) is different than Figure 7 above. Their idea of Nehem as Nahom will also be found lacking by Potter and Wellington in 2000, 2003--see notations.

**1989<sup>^</sup> Joseph L. Allen** *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Orem, UT: BYU Print Services,

1989, pp. 263-270

In Chapter twenty two, "The Voyage of Lehi's Colony," Joseph Allen traces Lehi's journey. He refers to the students of Kelly Ogden who made their own "Lehi's trek" to the Red Sea (see the notation for 1988). He then basically follows the theory of Lynn and Hope Hilton (1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*) quoting them multiple times in describing the route Lehi took through Arabia. He then addresses the question of where Lehi landed, by associating this place with the land of first inheritance referred to in Alma 22:28. He then notes Rick Hauck (1988, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*) as identifying the ruins of Izapa on the Mexico-Guatemala border as "the place of their fathers' first inheritance." He also states the following concerning Izapa:

The Izapa ruins, where the Tree-of-Life Stone is located, are certainly tangible evidence of a Jewish background community. In addition to Stela No. 5, which some researchers feel portrays the dream of Lehi (see Chapter 9, "The Izapa Culture and the Tree-of-Life Stone"), other manifestations include such things as the cubit as a unit of measurement and the manifestation of doctrinal concepts of a messiah and eternal life.

The question still remains as to whether the area of Izapa is in reality, the place where Lehi landed or if Izapa was settled by the Mulekites of the gulf of Mexico coastal area. Lehi may have landed a little southward of Tapachula. Nevertheless, Izapa is in the right location and possesses the right culture patterns to qualify possibly for the landing-site area of Lehi and his colony.

After reviewing the Frederick G. Williams "Lehi's Travels" statement, he gives the B. H. Roberts 1909 *New Witness for God* response. He then summarizes as follows:

Little evidence is available, other than limited geographical directions in the Book of Mormon and the fact that Jerusalem and the Red sea have not changed over the centuries, to plot the course of Lehi to America.

Therefore, we can only assume that the Nephites launched their ship by the Hadramant Valley and sailed past India, through the Straits of Malacca, and up the China Coast into the Pacific.

Indeed, we have more information once they arrive in the Americas because we have the assistance of both archaeological and traditional data to assist in our understanding of the Book of Mormon.

[1989 **Map: Lehi's Journey from the Valley of Lemuel to Bountiful.** Joseph L. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Orem: S.A. Publishers, 1989, p. 265]

[1989 **Map: Proposed Land of First Inheritance and Landing Site of Lehi off the Coast of Guatemala or Mexico.** Joseph L. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Orem: S.A. Publishers, 1989, p. 268]

1989^ Church Educational System Book of Mormon Student Manual Religion 121 and 122, Salt

Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

1996, p. 5

In 1989 the Church Educational System prepared a commentary for use in all its Religion 121-122 courses for the decade which followed. The only mention of Lehi's travels is as follows:

*1 Nephi 3:1-10. The Journey Back to Jerusalem:* The distance from Jerusalem to the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba) is about 180 miles through hot, barren country infested anciently by many marauders. Lehi and his family traveled three days' journey beyond this point (see 1 Nephi 2:5-6). This meant at least a twelve-to-fourteen-day trip one day, which gives added meaning to Nephi's response in 1 Nephi 3:7. [see map below]

**[1989 Map: The Journey Back to Jerusalem.** CES, *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, p. 5]

An internal map of the New World is found on page 163, along with the following: "No effort should be made to identify points on this map with any existing geographical locations (cf. 3 Nephi 8:5-18) [which speaks of the great destruction at the death of Christ]. The Land of First Inheritance is placed at the extreme southern end of this map. (see below)

**[1989 Illustrated Model "Possible Book of Mormon Sites (in Relationship to Each Other)." INTERNAL--Hemispheric]**

Source: Church Educational System, *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, 1989, p. 163.

Note\* This map was originally prepared in about 1964 by Daniel H. Ludlow, J. Grant Stevenson, F. Kent Nielsen, and Richard Cowan.

**1989^ Arthur J. Kocherhans *Lehi's Isle of Promise, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises,***  
1989,

pp. 95-119.

While his overall model of Book of Mormon geography takes a Limited Andean South American perspective, Arthur Kocherhans writes the following about Lehi's travels to the promised land:

Lehi leaves Jerusalem and travels south to the Red Sea. He then travels three days in the uninhabited areas near the shores of the Red Sea and finally sets up camp at what he calls the river Laman. Conceivably he could have traveled down either side of the Red Sea. A reasoning for traveling the west side can be found in the "*Church News*" of January 2, 1988, page 11. (See Map 13)

**[1989 Map 13: Red Sea Overview.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises,* 1989, p. 94]

I have drawn travel down the east side because by doing so it gives me room to put the names of locations on the map without covering the Red Sea. It would be of value to know on which side the Lehi colony traveled, however, no scripture is found to give us that understanding. . . . What we can know for

surety is that the first encampment was near the river they named Laman, a three-day journey after the colony arrived on the borders of the Red Sea. . . .

The exact course Lehi traveled in the wilderness is not clear. . . . I have placed straight travel lines on the map as a matter of convenience. . . . Two more specific locations are mentioned by name in their travel, Shazer and Nahom. How far apart were they? We don't know, but I have placed the names on the map at about an equal distance because it looks symmetrical to the eye. . . . from Nahom, Lehi traveled "nearly eastward" and came out at the sea where Nephi built a ship (1 Nephi 17:8). So the line of travel is drawn to the east, until it runs into the Arabian Sea. Nephi called it Irreantum (1 Nephi 17:5) See Map 14.

**[1989 Map 14: From Nahom Eastward.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 96]

This same line of travel could be moved to the west side of the Red Sea and drawn through Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia until it would turn east and run into the Indian Ocean. Readers can come to their own conclusions on this matter, but we should learn the scriptural value of the travel information. . . .

A study of a Winds map (see Map 16) shows that southward travel from the Arabian peninsula is feasible. Once in the general area of the Madagascar island, head winds would be encountered. Conceivably, it would be about this time that Nephi is bound with cords and a great storm arises. The brothers lose control of the ship. Then Nephi is released, he regains control of the ship and, by using the compass which the Lord had provided, the Lehi colony progresses towards the promised land (1 Nephi 18:12).

**[1989 Map 16: Driven Before the Wind Toward the Land of Promise.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 100]

Nephi, by the compass and careful navigation, would have sailed through the head winds that had been driving them back at Madagascar (until the time when he was released). he then would have picked up the west wind drift, and continued to have been "driven before the wind," which would ultimately have taken them to the west coast of South America. (see map 16)

It appears that Nephi could have traveled two other ways, although there is no scripture to support such a claim. After leaving the Arabian peninsula, he could have connected with the Equatorial Counter Current and possibly stayed in it until arriving on the west coast of Central America. (See map 17)

**[1989 Map 17: Ocean Currents.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 102]

Another possibility would have been that after connecting with the Equatorial Counter Current he might have taken the North Equatorial Current and sailed north on the Kuro Siwo and Japan currents. With this route of travel they would have landed on the west coast of North America. (see Map 17)

Can any of this be correlated with additional scriptures? The scriptures are true and accurate. If any part of the world is selected for Lehi's landing place and it does not meet all scriptural requirements, then the correctness of that selection would be subject to question. Let us look and see if there IS a part of the world that can meet each scripture specification. . . .

In 1 Nephi 18:23-24 we find the following: "after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land . . . we began to plant seeds . . . which we had brought from the land of Jerusalem. And it came to pass that they did grow exceedingly . . ."

As we all have studied in school, the earth is made up of many climates and so agriculture varies all over the world. But here Nephi is telling the reader that "seeds" from the land of Jerusalem grew "exceedingly" where the colony had disembarked from their long ocean voyage. . . . let us look for understanding and search world climates and see if, in fact there is any consistency in this account of "seeds" that can be co-ordinated with the three possible landing areas already discussed: the west coast of Central America, the west coast of North America (neither scripturally-supported for the scriptures do not mention following ocean currents [but "winds"]), or the scripturally-supported west coast of South America.

From the climate maps it will be observed that the west side of Central America falls in a Monsoon Tropical region (see Map 18)

[1989 **Map 18: Monsoon Tropical Climate.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 108]

and the east coast [of Central America] is recognized as a Rainy Tropical region (see Map 19).

[1989 **Map 19: Rainy Tropical Climate.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 108]

Therefore, seeds from the land of Jerusalem, which is a Mediterranean Subtropical region, would NOT grow "exceedingly" on either coast of Central America. . . .

Let us examine the two remaining areas that were available: the west coast of North America (not supported by the scriptures) and the scripturally-supported west coast of South America.

If Nephi, by his father's compass, had sailed the ship through the Indonesian Islands and taken the North Equatorial Current, ignoring for the moment that he would not be driven before the wind, he could well have come into what is today the Los Angeles, California area.



From climate Map 20, note the shaded areas labeled #5. This number represents a Mediterranean Subtropical region. The reader will observe that there are five land masses showing these shaded areas and that each lies the same degrees north or south of the equator.

**[1989 Map 20: Mediterranean Subtropical Climate.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 110]

In and around the Los Angeles, California area, the Jerusalem seeds would grow "exceedingly," just as they would in the Mediterranean area at Jerusalem.

Observe now South America. There is a small area with a Mediterranean Subtropical climate on the west coast of today's Chile. Lehi could have successfully planted all his seeds, which he had brought from the land of Jerusalem, at this location and they would have grown "exceedingly." See Map 21, #5. . . .

**[1989 Map 21: Climates of South America.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 110]

In 1 Nephi 18:25 Nephi explains: "we did find all manner of ore, both [two] of gold, and of silver, and of copper." . . . I found understanding of these sentence structures on my own book shelf, in Volume 3 of the "World Book" (Field Enterprises Educational Corp., Chicago, 1969, p. 370C). Observe the diagram taken from that volume (see Diagram 23).

**[1989 Map 23: Minerals of Chile.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 114]

I have searched up and down the American west coast for reference to mineral deposits and only in Chile have I been able to find gold and silver as a unit. Close observation will reveal that this unit of two or "both" is within the Mediterranean Subtropical climate of that country; and then that unit is surrounded by the unit of copper. Thus the unit of gold and silver, as precious metals, and the unit of copper are available to match scripture requirements.

The Book of Mormon is specific about FOUR identifiable characteristics of the Lehi colony landing place:

- 1) They travel by sea driven before the WINDS and they have a compass for guidance.
- 2) They land and plant their SEEDS from the land of Jerusalem, which GROW EXCEEDINGLY.
- 3) They go into the FORESTS and find animals.

4) They also locate ORE of "both" gold, silver and copper.

Because of these scriptural requirements, Central America becomes self-eliminating as a landing place for the Lehi colony since two factors are missing. The climate and the ores. . . . The Los Angeles, California area . . . is also self-eliminating because it does not contain the ores mentioned by Nephi. . . . (see Map 24)

[1989 **Map 24: Minerals of California.** Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise*, Placentia, CA: Kobo Enterprises, 1989, p. 116]

I can find only the one location, the west coast of Chile that meets all the requirements to fulfill the Book of Mormon scriptures. . . . The land of Chile between the 25th and 40th degree south latitude meets all Book of Mormon scriptures requirements. The Lehi colony had to land some place. Why not in the Mediterranean Subtropical climate area of today's west coast of Chile?

Note\* Manuscript copies of the Preface and Appendix of this book were sent to FARMS in 1986.

1990^ **Stephen D. Ricks** **Book Review: Hugh W. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites***, ed. John W. Welch, Darrell L. Matthews, and Stephen R. Callister, vol. 5 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1988, xviii + 462 pages; **in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon***, vol. 2, Provo: FARMS, 1990, pp. 128-142

Among the positive things that Stephen Ricks writes about *Lehi in the Desert* we find the following:

Nibley . . . asks about the story of Lehi: "Does it correctly reflect 'the cultural horizon and religious and social ideas and practices of the time'? Does it have authentic historical and geographical background? Is the *mise-en-scene* mythical, highly imaginative, or extravagantly improbable? Is its local color correct, and are its proper names convincing?" (p. 4) . . .

Subsequent studies of 1 Nephi 1-18 by the Astons, Brown, England, the Hiltons, and Tvedtnes have all tended to validate the evidence that Nibley presents in *Lehi in the Desert*. Indeed, this whole section squares well with what is known of the life and geography of the Arabian Peninsula, much of which was scarcely known to the West until the twentieth century. There were few *vade mecums* in the early nineteenth century that could have provided Joseph Smith a thorough and accurate picture of the Arabian Peninsula. The outstanding geographic studies by Adolf Sprenger and Forster in the 1840s were among the first to describe the Arabian Peninsula in any detail, but even these would have provided no help for the place name Nahom, now in the Arab Republic of Yemen, recently visited by Warren Aston, which is in a location that plausibly corresponds to what is known about the site in the Book of Mormon.

**1990^ John L. Sorenson *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, Provo: FARMS,**

1990.

In 1990 John Sorenson published a "Source Book" which was a collection of various items relative to Book of Mormon geography. He notes that "Since 99% of the text's reflections of geography concern the American promised land scene, I shall drop the parenthetical label and simply suppose that hereafter "the geography of Book of Mormon events" will be taken as referring to the question of what locations in the New World constituted the scene of the events reported in the Book of Mormon after Lehi's arrival in the American promised land." It contained a xerox copy of numerous maps that had been produced by various authors down through the years. This *Source Book* also contained a section entitled "A History of Ideas: The Geography of Book of Mormon Events in Latter-day Saint Thought." This section make a general chronological review of authoritative thought on concerning Book of Mormon geography. In regards to Lehi's travels, the information quoted only pertains to where Lehi landed in the New World. There is a chart detailing the chronological changes in geographical thinking (see chart below). One section of that chart chronicled "Nephi's Landing." In Appendix A we find a collection of "Statements, by Date, Relevant to the Geography of Book of Mormon Events, by LDS Leaders or Others Reflecting Views Current in the Church." This section represented the most complete collection of quotes that had ever been made up to that time. A few related to Lehi's travels, but again, only in regard to where he landed in the Americas.

Note\* It is after these sections that this present work (*A Detailed Chronology of LDS Thought . . .*), is patterned, although with extensively more detail and citations.

**1990 Illustration Chronological Listing of Book of Mormon Geography Models & Their Key Points**

Source: John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, FARMS, 1990, p. 46.

1990^ David L. Clark "Lehi and El Nino: A Method of Navigation," in *BYU Studies* 30 (summer 1990):

pp. 57-65. Also, Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991.

Natural means might have been used to transport Lehi's group to the promised land. Under ordinary circumstances it would be difficult to traverse eastward from Indonesia to America as the ocean currents flow westerly. But a natural occurrence that happens every two to ten years changes the flow of currents to an easterly direction--it is called *El Nino*. Had Lehi traveled from the Arabian Peninsula in August at the height of the monsoonal cycle and reached the Pacific in time to catch the El Nino, he would have landed on the west coast of Central America.

Source: Jeanette W. Miller, in Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, *A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography*. Provo, UT: Research Press, 1996, p. 101.

1990^ Bruce W. Warren *The Jaredite Saga*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1990.

David A. Palmer

In Chapter 10 ("New Settlers"), starting on page 21 we find the following:

Lehi was given a miraculous compass called a "Liahona." It worked on the principle of faith. He followed its direction which took the families down the shoreline of the Red Sea. Eventually they turned east. They had considerable hardship in crossing the southern part of the great desert that is part of modern Saudi Arabia. However they finally arrived at a beautiful place on the seacoast. That spot, unknown at the time of translation of the *book of Mormon*, is called Salalah. It is located in modern Oman, and indeed has all the natural resources spoken of in the *Book of Mormon*. For further information refer tot he book by Hilton and Hilton (1976).

#### Ocean Voyage

. . . The more probable route, illustrated on Map 10-1, would take them directly towards American int he Equatorial countercurrent. That is a good and strong current. However, it is very narrow and extremely

good navigation is needed to stay in it. . . . The trip brought the family of Lehi to a landing that was probably between Izapa, Mexico and the northwestern edge of El Salvador.

**1991^ Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston "The Place Which Was Called Nahom: The Validation of an**

**Ancient Reference to Southern Arabia," FARMS paper, 1991.**

The Astons attach a note in the beginning of this 1991 paper that says the following:

An early version of this paper was presented October 17, 1986, at the 35th Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures sponsored by the Society of Early Historic Archaeology at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Based upon field research by the authors in the Republic of Yemen 1984 - 1990, it was revised January 1991.

In actuality, this 1991 paper is basically the first part of a revised 1989 paper by the Astons ("The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail in Southern Arabia." Provo, Utah: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1989.) That revised 1989 paper was based on the 1986 paper. (see both the 1986 and the 1989 notations) The main differences (other than a few minor added footnotes) between this 1991 paper and the 1989 paper are as follows:

(1) The last half of the 1989 paper dealing with the location of Bountiful has been deleted (the Astons would publish a separate paper on Bountiful in 1991--see notation).

(2) The 1989 map tracing the route from Nahom to Bountiful (Sayhut) has been deleted. In its place is a map which illustrates the route to Bountiful going instead to Wadi Sayq. (see illustration below)

**[1991 Map: Route through Nahom to Bountiful.** Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston, "The Place Which Was Called Nahom: The Validation of an Ancient Reference to Southern Arabia," FARMS paper, 1991]

(3) They end their article with the following:

In conclusion, any attempt to account for the antiquity and origins of the place Nehem/Nahom must be cognizant of all the foregoing factors. The following scenario develops on that basis:

The name NHM likely had its genesis no later than the Neolithic period, deriving from the construction and use of a large burial area in the foothills overlooking the [then] fertile Jauf valley. It remains possible

that the burial territory originally embraced the large area of tombs northeast of Marib, making it a much more extensive area than the present-day tribal district.

The etymology of the name makes its association with both burial and mourning clear, suggesting the likelihood that the place may have been a neutral ("hawtah") enclave where regional tribes were able to participate in those rituals for their dead.

Control of the site(s) and the resultant close identification with the name by a local tribe or tribal confederation can be confidently postulated at an early stage in the development of NHM. The process of the tribal name itself becoming NHM may not have been complete until near the close of the pre-Islamic era however. Other than the possible reduction in the area encompassed by NHM referred to, there is no indication of tribal relocation at any stage.

The near proximity of NHM to the walled cities of YTL (Baraqish) and Ma'in, as well as to the smaller and less permanent population centers on the Jauf plains, must also have contributed significantly to the establishment of NHM as an accessible burial place utilizing the non-productive surrounding hills. Further, the converging of the trade-routes--still developing in 600 B.C.--at that same juncture would have helped assure its importance and ensure transmission of the name throughout the region.

With the increasing desiccation of central Arabia at the same time the incense trade and its associated city-states began to decline, the resultant population loss would result in NHM eventually ceasing to have more than a purely local importance. A millennia or more of virtual disuse since then would have meant the swindling of its original significance in the collective memory of its people until the true origins of the tribal name were lost.

The preservation of this otherwise rare name, with all its inherent parallels to the narrative, down to the present day, in the one place which fits--precisely--all aspects of the Lehigh account, must be considered striking confirmation of the historicity of the record in which it appears. The Book of Mormon reference to Nahom as an ancient place-name in southern Arabia can now truly be considered validated.

**1991^ Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston "And We Called the Place Bountiful," Provo, UT:**

FARMS, 1991, pp. 1-19.

Warren and Michaela Aston write that this 19-page paper filled with maps, photographs and charts is,

A summary of the scriptural and historical evidences concerning the Arabian Bountiful, with an evaluation of all possible coastal locations on the Arabian peninsula based upon exploratory fieldwork by the authors in the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Yemen from 1984 to 1990.

They write:

A close examination of the direct and implied references about Bountiful in the First Book of Nephi yields a surprisingly detailed profile of the place:

1. Bountiful was "nearly eastward" of Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1) As Nehem in Yemen lies near sixteen degrees north latitude, coastline further east than Salalah in Oman and further west than al-Mukalla in Yemen is likely outside the parameters implied in Nephi's generalized statement of direction.

2. Terrain and water sources permitted reasonable access from the interior deserts to the ocean coast (17:5)

3. Usage of the descriptive term translated as Bountiful seems to indicate that both the general area (17:5, 7) and the particular location where the Nephites camped (17:6) were fertile.

4. Bountiful was a coastal location (17:5) suitable for a seashore encampment (17:6) and the construction and launching of a ship (18:8)

5. It was very fertile, notable for its "much fruit" and honey (17:5, 6; 18:6) and perhaps small game which could be hunted (18:6). Agricultural and fishing pursuits are further possibilities.

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

7. Freshwater supplies available year-round would have been necessary for the extended stay necessitated by construction of the ship.

8. there was a mountain prominent enough to justify reference to "the mount" (17:7, 18:3) and near enough to the coastal encampment that Nephi could go there to "pray oft" (18:3).

9. Cliffs can be reasonably implied by the incident recorded by Nephi (17:48)

10. Ore from which metal could be smelted and tools fashioned was available in the vicinity (17:9-11,16). First Nephi 17:11 also suggest the presence of flint near the ore source.

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

12. Suitable winds and sea currents were required to bear a vessel out into the ocean (18:8,9).

. . . Salalah, capital of the Dhofar province in Oman, has generally been considered the most suitable--usually the only--candidate for Bountiful by LDS writers. The primary basis for this thought, first suggested by Hugh Nibley in 1950 on the data then available, has been the belief that frankincense growing was limited to Dhofar in Oman and that the trading routes (i.e., water sources) would therefore have resulted in the Lehiters arriving there. It has been further assumed that the Salalah area was the only place which had the necessary timber for ship-building on the Arabian coast. . . . The stony coastal plains upon which Salalah, at 17° north latitude, is situated lie in a crescent shape between the Qara hills and the sea. [See map below] Ranging from five to twelve miles in width, the plains stretch some forty miles from Mirbat in the east to just west of Raysut, site of a modern deep-water port. . . . In addition to the surrounding mountains, the three-to-four month monsoonal period with its high rainfall each year . . . may have been an impelling factor in Lehi moving his group on once their ship was complete.

**[1991 Map: Salalah Area.** Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston, "And We Called the Place Bountiful," Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991, p. 11]

Continuing research and fieldwork in Oman has raised serious difficulties with the view that Bountiful could have been situated in the Salalah area. It can now be demonstrated that the Dhofar region was only the eastern end of a very much larger growing region than scholars had previously recognized. Further, recent studies have revealed that incense was rarely transported overland from Dhofar, and, as already noted, its production is not a reliable indicator of the presence of other trees. . . .

Until now, attempts by scholars to propose a location for the Arabian Bountiful have suffered from a lack of complete and reliable data about the eastern coast of the peninsula. Even now the general region remains little known by outsiders. The program of exploration undertaken by the authors from 1984 to 1990 has attempted, in a systematic manner, to develop a body of objective data about the entire coastline and to identify and evaluate possible locations for Bountiful from a scriptural perspective.

With the coastal examination now complete, only six locations approached the minimal requirements for Bountiful (defined as an accessible coastal location with freshwater sources) to any degree. [See the map below] Of these six candidate areas [Hajr, Masilah, Dhalqut, Wadi Sayq, Rakhyut, Salalah/Raysut], wide variation resulted with respect to the twelve criteria defined in the Book of Mormon. [See chart below] There can be absolute certainty in one thing, of course--one of these six sites is the original Bountiful. There can be no other possibilities.

**[1991 Map: Candidate Sites for Bountiful.** Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston, "And We Called the Place Bountiful," Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991, p. 3]

**[1991 Chart: A Summary of the Candidate Areas for Bountiful: Evaluated Against the Scriptural Profile.** Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston, "And We Called the Place Bountiful," Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991, p. 17.]

For the first time since publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, it is now possible to demonstrate that there does exist in Arabia a location which conforms to the scriptural profile of Bountiful in every respect, except for the presence of a known source of ore. All previously nominated locales have serious flaws.

The well-watered and uniquely fertile Wadi Sayq emerges as the only location anywhere on the Arabian coastline which fits the picture which Nephi gives us of his departure point to the New World. The highly specific criteria recorded in scripture--coupled with the essentially unchanging physical nature of the Arabian coast---makes it possible to propose this present-day site with more confidence and a much higher degree of certainty that would usually be justified.

This study concludes therefore that the "place" Bountiful is the present-day Wadi Sayq, with the surrounding coastal area from Rakhyut in the east to west of Dhalqut as the ore general "land of Bountiful" referred to. . . .



There is no data indicating any significant variations in the wind and ocean current conditions at any of the candidate areas along the Arabian coast. For thousands of years, mariners have utilized annual monsoon conditions permitting travel west across the Indian Ocean in the region. The cyclical "El Nino" effect--an expansion of the normally narrow and unreliable eastward-moving Equatorial Counter Current is then the most plausible explanation to account for Lehi's sea voyage across the Pacific after passing through or near to the Indonesian islands.

[The Astons make a significant note here "that for a firsthand account of a modern sea voyage from Oman to China, see Tim Severin, *The Sindbad Voyage* (London: Arrow Books, 1982)." This non-LDS book was a tremendously significant publication because of the insights into the specifics of Arab-Omani shipbuilding and sailing which it provided. In essence, it brought Nephi's shipbuilding and sailing experiences from "fairy tale" to reality. Ironically, these specifics would later cause Potter and Wellington to discount Wadi Sayq as a candidate for Bountiful--see the Severins notation for 1982 and the Potter and Wellington notations for 1999, 2000, 2003]

Note\* Starting in 1999, Potter and Wellington would show how the Astons had skewed their scriptural profile, and that there was another candidate, Khor Rhori, on the eastern side of the Salalah crescent, which provided a better answer to what the scriptures actually said about Bountiful.

1991^ ??? "A Panel Discussion: Where in the World Did Lehi Land?" in Joseph L. Allen

ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1991, pp. 6-11.

The following is a theoretical panel discussion wherein information is drawn from statements dating from the publication of the Book of Mormon to the present day. Statements are also included from non Latter-day Saint scholars where deemed appropriate . . .The moderator is Joseph L. Allen . . .

*Moderator:* We welcome our panel of illustrious guests today on the question as to where in the promised land Lehi and his colony landed. The initial statement in the Book of Mormon is found in 1 Nephi 18:28: "And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land . . ." Do any of our panel members have any opening remarks?

*John Sorenson:* The task of establishing a realistic setting for the Book of Mormon is a big, challenging one. Research by Latter-day Saints and others over the past 40 years has made it possible for us to know a good deal of concrete detail about the Jerusalem from which Lehi led his family; in our mind's eye we can now follow his party through a line of campsites down the Red Sea side of the Arabian peninsula and across to a specific "bountiful land" on the Hadhramaut coast. . . .

Note\* Here there is an illustration of the proposed route of Lehi from Jerusalem to "Probable Bountiful" (Salalah). However, not only is Salalah situated in the wrong place, but the caption doesn't mention Salalah as Bountiful, but Wadi Sayq, which is not listed on the map. The reader is only told that Wadi Sayq is "the area west of Salalah." (see the illustration below).

**[1991 Map: Proposed Route of Lehi from Jerusalem to the Waters of Irreantum (Bountiful).** A recent study by Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston presents convincing evidence that a better location for Bountiful is the area west of Salalah called Wadi Sayq. For more information see FARMS update no. AST-91b, 1991, 19pp. Source: "A Panel Discussion: Where in the World Did Lehi Land?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1992, p. 6.]

. . . But the minute the party climb into Nephi's ship and launch their journey into the Indian Ocean, we lose that sense of concreteness. Landed in the New World, they are just vaguely "somewhere."

Until recently, after 150 years since the Nephite record was first published by Joseph Smith, we had neglected to pin down the location of a single city, to identify confidently even one route the people of the volume traversed, or to sketch a believable picture of any segment of the life they lived in their American promised land. In many respects, the Book of Mormon remains a sealed book to us because we have failed to do the work necessary to place it in its setting.

*Moderator:* Brother Williams, you were a counselor to the Prophet Joseph Smith when the Church had its headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio. You wrote something about the landing site of Lehi.

*Frederick G. Williams:* The course that Lehi traveled from the city of Jerusalem to the place where he and his family took ship, they traveled nearly a south south East direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of North Latitude, then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia then sailed in a south east direction and landed on the continent of South America in Chile thirty degrees south Latitude.

*Moderator:* Thirty degrees south latitude is about 200 miles north of Santiago, Chile. Brother Williams, this information was written in your handwriting on a piece of paper that was found in the possession of your grandson. Also, it was on the same piece of paper where you recorded, in your handwriting, the revelation of John found in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 7. The information about Lehi's landing site was published in 1882 by Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little. Are we to understand that this "landing site" statement was given by Joseph Smith as revelation?

*Brigham H. Roberts:* If no more evidence can be found to establish this passage in Richards and Little's Compendium as a revelation to Joseph the Seer, than the fact that it is found in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams, and on the same sheet of paper with the body of revelation about John, the

beloved disciple, the evidence of its being a revelation to Joseph the Seer, rests on a very unsatisfactory basis.

*Moderator:* The statement by Frederick G. Williams was written about 1833. There is another statement written in 1842 proposing Lehi's landing site to be the Isthmus of Panama. This statement appeared in the Church's Periodical, *Times and Seasons*.

Joseph Smith was the editor and John Taylor was the assistant editor of *times and Seasons*. About December 1842, John Taylor became the editor. President Taylor, will you tell us what was written in *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, pp. 921-922, September 15, 1842?

*John Taylor:* [w]e read in the Book of Mormon that Jared and his brother came on this continent from the confusion and scattering at the Tower, and lived here more than a thousand years, and covered the whole continent from sea to sea with towns and cities; and that Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean, and crossed over to this land, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien [Panama].

*V. Garth Norman:* The statements by Franklin D. Richards and those appearing in *Times and Seasons* conflict as to the general area where Lehi landed. It suggests to me that the early brethren were in a continual process of learning and investigation.

This is further verified by a later statement in *Times and Seasons* wherein it states that "Since our 'Extract' was published from Mr. Stephens' *Incidents of Travel*, etc., we have found another important fact relating to the truth of the Book of Mormon."

*Bruce W. Warren:* Other statements in *Times and Seasons* between 1841 and 1845 implicate northern Central America and southern Mexico as containing ruins relevant to the Book of Mormon history.

If that is the case, then there are some problems with the statement about the Isthmus of Panama. The "land of first inheritance" was in the west borders by the seashore and west in the land of Nephi (alma 22:28).

If the main cities in the land Southward of the Book of Mormon were in southern Mexico and northern Central America, then having the "land of First inheritance" south of the Isthmus of Darien provides a contradiction to the text of the Book of Mormon.

Archaeologically, we do have tow stone monuments that would tend to place the "land of first inheritance" in the area of the Soconusco coast along the border between Chiapas, Mexico, and Guatemala.

These monuments are Stela 5 [see illustration below] with a scene of origins as illustrated by 12 or 13 roots at the base of the "Tree of Life" and Monument No 21 at Bilbao, Guatemala [see illustration below] with a scene of origins for seven lineages or tribes.

We need to balance and weigh statements from the nineteenth century when little was known of Ancient America's past with the knowledge available today. Therefore, I would evaluate the "south of the Isthmus of Darien" statement in light of our current understanding of Book of Mormon geography.

[1991 **Illustration: Stela 5 at Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico.** Illustrates 12 or 13 branches, as highlighted. Dates to 176 B.C. Source: "A Panel Discussion: Where in the World Did Lehi Land?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1992, p. 7]

[1991 **Illustration: Frontispiece, Monument 21, Bilbao, Guatemala.** The highlighted portions illustrate seven tribes or lineages. The word for flint (a) in Hebrew is Zoram. Monument dates to 500 A.D. Source: "A Panel Discussion: Where in the World Did Lehi Land?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1992, p. 8]

*Moderator:* Is it possible to extract from the Book of Mormon enough evidence to determine where Lehi landed?

*Joseph Allen:* It is possible from information in the Book of Mormon, combined with the geographical and archaeological information available to us now to eliminate certain areas from being the "place of their fathers' first inheritance."

Assuming that the statement in Alma 22:28, "the place of their fathers' first inheritance," is also the place where Lehi landed, then logically we are forced to eliminate Chile, Peru, and Panama as potential landing sites for Lehi and his colony. For example, "the place of their fathers' first inheritance" (1) bordered along the seashore, (2) was west of the city of Nephi, and (3) was yet still in the land of Nephi.

We also know that there was a sea on the east and a sea on the west of the land of Nephi (Alma 22:27). In fine, the lack of archaeological and linguistic evidence directly east of proposed landing sites in Chile, Peru, and Panama, accompanied with the absence of a logical east sea, makes these three areas unlikely candidates for the "land of their fathers' first inheritance."

*John Sorenson:* Lehi and his party launched their vessel into the Indian Ocean from the south coast of the Arabian peninsula. The winds no doubt bore them on the same sea lanes that Arab, Chinese and Portuguese ships used later, touching India and ultimately the Malayan peninsula. From that point Nephi's ship likely threaded through the islands of the western Pacific, then across the open reaches north of the equator to landfall around 14 degrees north latitude. Nephi left us no information in the Book of Mormon about the route, nor did he tell us in modern terms where they landed. But when we analyze Book of Mormon statements about geography and events, the "land of first inheritance" can only lie on the west (Pacific) coast of Central America (1 Nephi 18:23; Alma 22:28) . . .

[T]he southernmost portion of Guatemala's Pacific coast or adjacent El Salvador is likely where Lehi's party landed and first settled.

*Joseph Allen:* The archaeological zone in consideration in El Salvador is Acajutla. In Sorenson's writing he proposed that the area of the archaeological zone of Kaminaljuyu in Guatemala City is where the city of Nephi was located. Landing in Acajutla, El Salvador would cause the "place of their fathers' first inheritance" to be southeast instead of west as required by the Book of Mormon text. (Alma 22:28). On the basis of direction, it is therefore necessary to eliminate Acajutla also as the "place of their fathers' first inheritance."

*David Palmer:* My own study of directional systems employed during the Nephite time period suggest that use of true north for orientation was rare. Because of the twenty-five millennia precession of the axis of the earth (it wobbles like a top), Polaris was not a pole star in Lehi's time. Instead, it described a circle of about twenty-four degrees in the night sky. In the absence of a visible pole star, directions would have been difficult to determine from just the sun's rising and setting, which vary by fifty degrees over the course of a year.

Serious investigation of Mesoamerican ruins built before the time of Christ suggest that the inhabitants based their directions on the solstice readings, the extremes of the sun's travel on 21/22 June and 21/22 December. That solstitial direction is sixty-five degrees west of true north and was probably used as "Nephite North"

*Joseph Allen:* Directionally, that still negates Acajutla, El Salvador as being the land of their first inheritance. When we propose a rotated compass of 65 degrees to the west, Acajutla then becomes directly south of Nephi (Kaminaljuyu) rather than west as required by the Book of Mormon text. [See illustration below]

**[1991 Illustration: Acajutla is located southeast of Kaminaljuyu. If the map were rotated 65 degrees, Acajutla would be directly south of Kaminaljuyu.** Source: "A Panel Discussion: Where in the World Did Lehi Land?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1992, p. 9]

...

*Garth Norman:* Realistically, the Land of First Inheritance must be located within the southern Mesoamerican land of ancient America's highest civilization. This did not extend southward beyond El Salvador in the Late Preclassic cultural period dating from the sixth century B.C. Two options, then, for First Inheritance considered here are first, the coastal area of Usulután in El Salvador as a Lamanite cultural manifestation and second, Izapa in the Guatemala-Mexico region. The archaeological evidence at Izapa qualifies it to be the land of first inheritance. (see enclosed feature article)

*Question from Audience:* It appears to me that for the most part the panel has eliminated Chile, Peru, and Panama as being the land of first inheritance on the following grounds: (1) we have lack of adequate archaeological and linguistic evidence and (2) the geographical picture breaks down with no credible east

sea, narrow strip of wilderness, etc. El Salvador breaks down from a directional perspective both for cardinal compass and the rotated compass directions. Setting directions aside, is there archaeological evidence that would qualify El Salvador as the land of first inheritance?

*Bruce Warren:* First of all, I don't think you set directions aside. In answer to your question, there is archaeological evidence all along the coast of El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Pacific corridor of southern Mexico.

1991^ Garth Norman "Where Was the Land of First Inheritance?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book*

*of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1991, pp. 15-18.

Garth Norman writes:

Realistically, the Land of First Inheritance must be located within the southern Mesoamerican land of ancient America's highest civilization. This did not extend southward beyond El Salvador in the Late Preclassic cultural period dating from the sixth century B.C. . . . Two options, then, for First Inheritance considered here are first, the coastal area of Usulután in El Salvador as a Lamanite cultural manifestation and second, the Soconusco region in the Guatemala-Mexico border area with Izapa as the capital and principally a Nephite development in the third century B.C.

*Is Usulután in the Land of First Inheritance?*

Usulután is known for a negative resist ceramic trade ware produced there during the Middle and Late Preclassic that is a distinctive cultural marker for the spread of related peoples and culture. Could this ceramic ware be a product of Lamanite culture that first took root in the Land of First Inheritance? The spread of Usulután ware northward up the coast and through the highlands seems to fit well into the corresponding spread of Lamanite culture from the south as can be constructed in a very general way from the Book of Mormon. While not probable, it is still a tempting prospect. It is curious how a ceramic type from the coast of El Salvador, on the southern fringe of Mesoamerica, gained such popularity. Could it be that important Lamanite tribal ties to the area of Usulután took root making the Land for First Inheritance the seat of ancestral power, and a place of pilgrimage? The enduring Lamanite conflict was over the patriarchal authority that Nephi "stole" from his two older brothers. A Lamanite pilgrimage center at First Inheritance would have been one means of asserting an ongoing right of Lamanite rulership and could have served to spread Usulután ware. Future development of this scenario must rest on discovery of Lamanite culture in archaeological remains.

I think west coastal El Salvador has to be a serious contender for the Land of First Inheritance. It is fully within the Mesoamerican cultural sphere during the Late Preclassic and accordingly has to be part of the greater Land of Nephi.

## *Is Izapa the Land of First Inheritance?*

Are there evidences at Izapa that suggest that it could be the Land of First Inheritance? while such evidences would not necessarily prove a First Inheritance identity for Izapa, they would certainly add credence to the prospect. My research on Izapa does, in fact, have significant clues for this First Inheritance land or origin theme. I will consider here briefly three areas of evidences: (1) migration origin from across the sea, (2) calendar origin, and (3) Near Eastern cultural roots.

### *1. Lehi's Boat? [Migration Origin from across the Sea (Stela 67)]:*

We might expect Lehi's epic journey by boat across the western sea to be commemorated on a monument at Lehi's land of First Inheritance. Stela 67 [see illustration below] could depict the origin tradition of the first ancestors of the Cakchiquel Maya Indians, "from the west, . . . from across the sea," that could relate back to Lehi's journey. A bearded man wearing a priest-king mask sits in a boat and holds scepters in his outstretched hands that resemble the Egyptian anke "life" scepter. Could this be Lehi? An umbilical cord issuing up from his abdomen relates to the origin of life or birth genesis of the original ancestors theme, as does the rainbow with a sun or conch crest that surrounds him. An inverted slanting boat above suggests a horizon sunset or sunrise as depicted in Maya hieroglyphics. A god mask in the water panel has a *kin* (sun) cross on its head. The two masks that flank the water panel suggest the horizon lands of the rising and setting sun beyond the seas. Beneath the boat, fish and water waves move from left to right, which is directionally from west to east on various Izapa carvings. This is consistent with Lehi's coming across the western sea. Finally, it is curious that the wave water scroll is inverted beneath the water panel. This indicates that the boat is traveling from the underworld sea beyond the horizon, as similarly portrayed by Egyptian barks (ships). In this case, could the underworld be Lehi's Near Eastern homeland halfway around the world?

**[1991 Illustration: Stela 67, Chiapas, Mexico; may depict Lehi's journey to the New World.** Garth Norman, "Where Was the Land of First Inheritance?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1992, p. 17]

### *2. 597 B.C. [Calendar Origin (Stela 12)]:*

What about the date of origin at Izapa? According to Garth Norman, archaeological beginnings at Izapa date back to about 1600 B.C., but construction of the main temple center with its stone monuments was initiated at 300 B.C. This temple construction dates to the early developmental period of Nephite civilization. I have deciphered a new year's commemorative date on Izapa Stela 12 [see illustration below] of 1 Imix 4 Pop as autumn equinox 176 B.C. A distance number dating to 421 years earlier in the base panel extends back to 597 B.C., in the true solar year. The year 597 B.C. may be an important date relating to Lehi's exodus from Jerusalem. The Nephite calendar probably started with the Hebrew civil new year at the autumn equinox 597 B.C. Lehi departed during the first year of the reign of Zedekiah. According to the Babylonian chronicles, Zedekiah was inaugurated king at the spring equinox Babylonian new year in 597 B.C. Further research appears to connect this date at Izapa directly to the first ancestors' migration origin on Stela 5.

**[1991 Illustration: Stela 12, Chiapas, Mexico; could mark the beginning of the Nephite calendar, 597 B.C.** Garth Norman, "Where Was the Land of First Inheritance?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1992, p. 18]

### 3. *The Cubit [Near Eastern Cultural Roots]:*

Finally, are there Near Eastern cultural roots at Izapa? This subject needs a separate lengthy treatment, but one recent discovery stands out dramatically. I reported on this in the December, 1984 Newsletter and Proceedings of the S.E.H.A., item 158.7, "The Cubit in Ancient Mesoamerica? A possible Near Eastern Parallel." (This research has also been reported at several professional archaeology symposiums and a detailed monograph is in progress.)

During field research in 1984 at Izapa and at the Mexico National Museum, I succeeded in confirming the first Mesoamerican standard unit of measure, a 495mm unit (19.5 inches), which is precisely equal to the famous Royal Babylonian cubit that remained in use in the Near East for over 2,000 years. Its earliest origin has been traced to a statue of king Gudea who reigned at Lagash in Mesopotamia about 2000 B.C. I first deciphered the unit on Izapa sculpture and subsequently confirmed it through measurements on many other carvings at other sites. My findings included identifying the forearms (cubit) as the basis of the standard measure, and also discovering an Izapan cubit measuring rod. Among various circumstantial evidences of near Eastern origins in Mesoamerica, I consider this standard of measure discovery as virtual proof.

**[1991 Illustration: Archaeologist Garth Norman measuring the cubit at Quirigua, Guatemala.** Garth Norman, "Where Was the Land of First Inheritance?" in Joseph L. Allen ed., *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Fall 1992, p. 16]

In conclusion, we have considered two possible locations for the Land of First Inheritance: (1) the area of Usulután in El Salvador and (2) Izapa in the Guatemala-Mexico border region. Because of lack of data, other areas in between have not been considered. The more compelling argument has been made for Izapa, based on available archaeological data. . . . If the Land of First inheritance is memorialized as the place of origin, then Izapa seems to fit the bill. Stela 67 is a good candidate for a monument to Lehi's journey across the Pacific. A date on Stela 12 could mark the beginning of the Nephite calendar at Lehi's exodus from Jerusalem. Discovery of a standard unit of measure at Izapa, identical to the Royal Babylonian cubit, seems to confirm a direct Near Eastern culture tie to Izapa and related sites.

An argument can also be made for coastal El Salvador as the Land of First Inheritance. This is based on overall Mesoamerican cultural relations there and on Book of Mormon geographical requirements and correlations as I read them.

I personally lean towards the El Salvador view, but the question is very open. . . .

### 4. *Religious Themes (Stela 5 and Monument 21):*



Most all the stelas that are located in Izapa portray a religious theme, as if Izapa was always considered a religious center. According to Bruce W. Warren, we have two stone monuments that would tend to place the "land of first inheritance" in the area of the Soconusco coast along the border between Chiapas, Mexico, and Guatemala (near Izapa). These monuments are Stela 5 with a scene of origins as illustrated by 12 or 13 roots at the base of the "Tree of Life," and Monument No. 21 at Bilbao, Guatemala, with a scene of origins for seven lineages or tribes. [Bruce W. Warren as quoted in Joseph L. Allen ed., The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest, Fall 1992, p. 7]

1 Nephi 18:23 **We did arrive in the promised land (Landing Site) [Illustration]:** Stela 5 at Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico, illustrates 12 or 13 branches, as highlighted. Dates to 176 B.C. [Joseph L. Allen ed., The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest, Fall 1992, p. 7]

1 Nephi 18:23 **We did arrive in the promised land (Landing Site):** Prontispiece, Monument 21, Bilbao, Guatemala. The highlighted portions illustrate seven tribes or lineages. The word for flint(a) in Hebrew is Zoram. Monument dates to A.D. 500. [Joseph L. Allen ed., The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest, Fall 1992, p. 8] [See Jacob 1:13]

1991^ James H. Fleugel **Book Review: Arthus J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise: A Scriptural***

***Account with Word Definitions and a Commentary***, Fullerton, CA: Et

Cetera, 1989, xv + 211 pages; in ***Review of Books on the Book of***

***Mormon***, vol. 3, Provo: FARMS, 1991, pp. 96-100.

On pages 98-99 James Fleugel writes:

In chapter 3 Kocherhans tries to show how the Lehi party must have come to Chile based upon global wind direction, climate, and resources. He provides no source references for his information on climate and wind conditions, but his source for the Chilean area that provides the best confirmation of 1 Nephi 18:25 ("we did find all manner of ore, both of gold and of silver, and of copper") is a map from the *World Book Encyclopedia*. Although Kocherhans's title for the map is "Minerals of Chile" (p. 114), the encyclopedia itself clearly labeled the map as showing modern (Kocherhans uses the 1969 edition) industrial sites. That Kocherhans could not find corresponding information (supposedly from the *World Book Encyclopedia* as well) for Mesoamerica is proof enough for him that that region could not be the Lehiite landfall. Needless to say, maps of modern industrial sites in a popular encyclopedia do not confirm or deny the existence of Book of Mormon ores in Mesoamerica. (see John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985, 278-88)

[See the notation for 1989]

1991^     **Stephen Mark Alvis**     *Nephite America*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1991

In this 22-chapter manuscript, Stephen Alvis lays out a North American Jaredite geography and a Central American Nephite geography, with the Hill Ramah/Cumorah in New York. In chapter 4 ("The Tulteca-Nephites") he outlines Lehi's journey:

The next group of newcomers were 7 families of Israelites whose ancestors had fled Jerusalem in 600 B.C, whose story is told in detail in the *Book of Mormon*. . . .

Reportedly, Joseph Smith, the translator of the Book of Mormon, said that Lehi's route paralleled the Red Sea, and "traveled a south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia (*Book of Mormon Student Manual*, p. 42)." This is the old Spice Road used by caravans for millennia to transport frankincense and myrrh northward to the cities of the Middle East. In eight years of intermittent travel, Lehi's party covered over 1,900 miles of desert.

Lehi's first stop was the Valley of Lemuel, a place he named himself in the manner of desert shieks. Researchers have placed this on the Gulf of Aqaba at Al Bada. Lehi's party then headed south-southeast along the Red Sea coast for four days to Shazer (1 Nephi 16:13), which is likely to be the oasis at Al Azlan. There Nephi and his brethren did some bow hunting for game in Arabia's Hejaz Mountains. **The location of Nahom, where Ishmael died (1 Nephi 16:34), may be placed at Ash Shuqayq, nearly 300 miles down the coast.** From there, the group passed up a wadi over the Jabal al Hijaz to the edge of the vast Empty Quarter (1 Nephi 17:1) They must have skirted the dune country north of the Hadramawt until they came to Oman and the Land Bountiful.

Although their draft animals are not mentioned in the records, they must surely have traversed this Spice Road by camel, for they carried with them tents, seeds, brass plates, and little children.

Leaving the Arabian Desert, they arrived at Salalah, a wonderfully well-watered spice-growing region on the south coast of Oman facing the vast Indian Ocean. Salalah is a small crescent of land wrapped around a bay, 28 miles long and 7 miles deep back to the mountains. The abundant fog and rain cause groves of large trees to flourish there. Throughout the 1,400 miles of the barren south coast of the Arabian Peninsula, Salalah is the only place matching the records's requirements. This land they "called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey (1 Nephi 17:5)."

There, on the brink of the vast blue Indian Ocean, the little company of pilgrims faced a crises. Lehi's third son, Nephi, made metal tools to build a ship, while his two older brothers complained: "our brother is a fool, for he thinketh that he can build a ship; yea, and he also thinketh that he can cross these great waters (1 Nephi 17:17)." The Quiche' Maya recall this debacle by the sea in the *Anales de los Xahil*:

Then we arrived at the border of the sea. All of the warriors of the tribes gathered together at the seashore. Then the hearts of many were full of anguish.

It cannot be crossed. it has never been told that the sea has been crossed, said all the warriors of the seven tribes. "who will tell us how we may cross the sea? Oh our younger brother, thou art our hope,' they all exclaimed. 'Yes, how shall we cross this?' we all asked . . .

We told them: we also suffer, oh, our older brother. We cannot live, scattered along the seashore, unable to see our land . . .'

How shall we cross the sea, oh, our younger brother?' they aid. And we answered: then we traveled eastward and arrived there (cited by Milton R. Hunter, *Great Civilizations of the Book of Mormon*, p. 80, 87)."

Under the supervision of the younger brother, Nephi, they built a ship which carried them across the tumultuous Indian Ocean and the undulating Pacific, sailing ever eastward to their Promised Land. . . .

**I identify Nephi's landing place as [the] west coast of Guatemala in Central America**, their Land of First Inheritance (1 Nephi 18). This is a land of tropical fruits: coconut, tamarind, melon, watermelon, and mango. On the gentle slopes of mountain ranges is fertile soil composed of volcanic ash and where crops of corn, beans, rice, vegetable, and cotton are grown today. As Lehi's colony put their Old World seeds in the soil of the New World, "it came to pass that they did grow exceedingly; wherefore we were blessed in abundance (1 Nephi 18:24)." . . .

Tending to corroborate the Guatemala landing is the discovery there of two Egyptian *ushabti* figurines which were dug up near the beach on the western side of El Salvador (and now residing in a San Salvador museum). Such touches of Egyptian paganism are consistent with the background and leanings of Laman and Lemuel who were imbued with "the learning of the jews and the language of the Egyptians (1 Nephi 1:2)." . . .

**1992 Lynn and Hope A. Hilton "Wild Beasts Still Stalk Lehi's Route,," *Church Section-Deseret News*,**

February 8, 1992.

**1992^ Melvin S. Draper *Babel to Cumorah and Beyond By: Ixtlilixochitl (Montezuma's***

*Grandson and Others.* Compiled by Melvin S. Draper, Huntsville, AL:

B2CAB Research, April 23, 1992.

This manuscript is a collection of different native accounts of their origins. It includes a map of Mesoamerica with a proposed landing place of the "2nd Settlers" on the broad expanse of the western coast of Guatemala. It notes that "The exact point where the 2nd settlers landed is not known."

[1992 **Extrapolated Map of Ancient America.** Melvin S. Draper, *Babel to Cumorah and Beyond By: Ixtlilxochitl (Montezuma's Grandson and Others.* Compiled by Melvin S. Draper, Huntsville, AL: B2CAB Research, April 23, 1992, p. 29]

1992^ FARMS Staff "F.A.R.M.S.-Sponsored Team Will Examine Arabian Site," in *Insights an*

*Ancient Window*, No. 5, FARMS, September 1992, p. 1.

In a lead article of their "Insights" newsletter we find the following:

A team of researchers, sponsored jointly by BYU and F.A.R.M.S., will examine a likely site for Old World Bountiful, where Nephi's family built the boat that carried them to their promised land. Over the last few years, Warren and Michaela Aston have surveyed the coast of southern Arabia for possible sites for Bountiful. Their research has identified a site at Wadi Sayq as the most likely candidate, matching in great detail the criteria that the Astons have identified from the account in the Book of Mormon.

F.A.R.M.S. has helped to sponsor the Astons' research and has published their developing results. The Foundation is now pleased to join with BYU to sponsor a team of scholars who will test the Astons' findings. David Johnson of the BYU Department of Anthropology is the team leader. He will be assisted by Warren Aston; Paolo Costa, an archaeologist from Italy; Ali Ahmed Ali Al-Shahri, an epigrapher from Oman; Paul Cox, a botanist from BYU; and William Christiansen, a geologist from Salt Lake. . . . They will conduct a detailed survey of sites in the wadi mouth, perform test excavations (including carbon 14 sampling), examine geological data, gather samples for mineralogical analysis, and analyze all epigraphic material at the site. They will also create a photographic record of the area and their work on it.

This expedition has been made possible by the generosity of F.A.R.M.S. donors. The findings of the expedition will be published in scholarly journals and will be reported and reprinted by F.A.R.M.S.

1992^ Rulon Eames "Book of Mormon: First Book of Nephi," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, edited

by Daniel H. Ludlow, 1:144-45. 5 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1992.

In the section on "the Book of Mormon," and in an article titled "the First Book of Nephi," Rulon Eames writes the following:

When Jerusalem persisted in its arrogance, a host of prophets, including Jeremiah and Lehi, warned of destruction. As people conspired to kill Lehi, he was warned by the Lord and escaped with his family south into the desert. . . . Lehi's group then completed a grueling odyssey that covered eight years in the wilderness, arriving at a verdant spot on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula.

A map by the BYU Geography Department representing these travels is included. (see below)

**[1992 Map: Possible Route of Lehi in the Old World, from Jerusalem to the Ocean, c. 600-587 B.C.** Rulon Eames, "Book of Mormon: First Book of Nephi," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, 1:144-45. 5 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1992, p. 144]

The article also has a picture of Wadi Sayq with the following caption:

Wadi Sayq, near the border between Yemen and Oman on the Gulf of Aden (1989). Areas with vegetation such as this along the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula match the description of the place where Lehi and his group built their ship (1 Ne. 17:5), but they were unknown to Westerners until after the Book of Mormon was published. Courtesy Warren Aston.

Note\* This map was not reprinted in 2000 when FARMS republished articles from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*.

**1992^ John E. Clark "Book of Mormon: Geography," Daniel H. Ludlow ed. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. New York: Macmillan, 1992, vol. 1, p. 178**

John Clark writes:

Two issues merit consideration in relation to possible external correlations of Book of Mormon geography. What is the official position of the Church, and what are the pervading opinions of its members?

In early Church history, the most common opinion among members and Church leaders was that Book of Mormon lands encompassed all of North and South America, although at least one more limited alternative view was also held for a time by some. The official position of the Church is that the events narrated in the Book of Mormon occurred somewhere in the Americas, but that the specific location has not been revealed. This position applies both to internal geographies and to external correlations. No internal geography has yet been proposed or approved by the Church, and none of the internal or external geographies proposed by individual members (including that proposed above) has received approval. Efforts in that direction by members are neither encouraged nor discouraged.. In the words of John A. Widtsoe, an apostle, "All such studies are legitimate, but the conclusions drawn from them, though they may be correct, must at the best be held as intelligent conjectures" (Vol. 3, p. 93).

Three statements sometimes attributed to the Prophet Joseph Smith are often cited as evidence of an official Church position. An 1836 statement asserts that "Lehi and his company . . . landed on the continent of South America, in Chili [sic], thirty degrees, south latitude" (Richards, Little, p. 272). This view was accepted by Orson Pratt and printed in the footnotes to the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon, but insufficient evidence exists to clearly attribute it to Joseph Smith ("Did Lehi Land in Chili[sic]"; cf. Roberts, Vol. 3, pp. 501-3, and Widtsoe, Vol. 3, pp. 93-98).

In 1842 an editorial in the Church newspaper claimed that "Lehi . . . landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien [Panama]" (*T&S* 3 [Sept. 15, 1842]: 921-22). This would move the location of Lehi's landing some 3,000 miles north of the proposed site in Chile. Although Joseph Smith had assumed editorial responsibility for the paper by this time, it is not known whether this statement originated with him or even represented his views. Two weeks later, another editorial appeared in the *Times and Seasons* that, in effect, constituted a book review of *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, by John Lloyd Stephens. This was the first accessible book in English containing detailed descriptions and drawings of ancient Mayan ruins. Excerpts from it were included in the *Times and Seasons*, along with the comment that "it will not be a bad plan to compare Mr. Stephens' ruined cities with those in the Book of Mormon: light cleaves to light, and facts are supported by facts. The truth injures no one" (*T&S* 3 [Oct. 1, 1842]: 927).

In statements since then, Church leaders have generally declined to give any opinion on issues of Book of Mormon geography. When asked to review a map showing the supposed landing place of Lehi's company, President Joseph F. Smith declared that the "Lord had not yet revealed it" (Cannon, p. 160n.). In 1929, Anthony W. Ivins, counselor in the First Presidency, added, "There has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles that question [of Book of Mormon geography]. . . . We are just waiting until we discover the truth" (*CR*, Apr. 1929, p. 16). While the Church has not taken an official position with regard to location of geographical places, the authorities do not discourage private efforts to deal with the subject (Cannon). . . .

Of the numerous proposed external Book of Mormon geographies, none has been positively and unambiguously confirmed by archaeology. More fundamentally, there is no agreement on whether such positive identification could be made or, if so, what form a "proof" would take; nor is it clear what would constitute "falsification" or "disproof" of various proposed geographies. Until these methodological issues have been resolved, all internal and external geographies-including supposed archaeological tests of them-should, at best, be considered only intelligent conjectures.

Note\* If such uncertainty exists on Book of Mormon geography, how come it is okay to print maps depicting theoretical material on Book of Mormon geography in the Old World (but using real geographical outlines of Arabia as a background) and also a picture of Wadi Sayq, a site proposed as Bountiful just a year before in 1991 by the Astons (see Rulon Eames' article above); yet in this same

section on the Book of Mormon in this article titled "geography," there is not one map depicting even theoretical Book of Mormon geography against an outline of the New World? And how come, when the subject of Book of Mormon geography comes up, we always see the 1890 George Q. Cannon statement quoted, yet no one ever brings up the 1908 editorial statement in the September 1, 1908 issue of *Juvenile Instructor*, when at the time we find "Joseph F. Smith, Editor; George Reynolds, J. M. Tanner, Assistant Editors"? (see the notations)

The issue here seems to be theory based on scientific inquiry and actual on-site investigation versus someone just sitting down and putting some dots on a map. Using such a scientifically researched theoretical map on an actual backdrop map of the real world has little to do with whether the theory is totally true (without revelation on the matter we will never know); rather, it has more to do with the fact that the map is more believable (based on scientific research) than all the others. Thus such a map can more easily be used to teach with than any other map because it has fewer incongruities.

1992^ K. Duane Erickson *The Hourglass does not exist? as to exterior shape of the lands of the*

*book of Mormon. Eliminate it from your mind, try this theory, see if it*

*fits.* K. Duane Erickson, 1992.

This 105-page book by Duane Erickson appears to be a precursor for his 1995 publication, *The Promised Land Everyone Knows*. Some of the pertinent material is quoted below (Note\* all words and sentences appear as in the text)

[p. 13] I read nothing that indicates that the Promised Land is in any other land other than the United States of America.

[p. 44]

1. Lehi's Landing Place (California) . . .

[1992 (1990) Map: The Promised Land (U.S.A.) Copyright 1992 by K. Duane Erickson]

1992^ (Warren P. and Michaela Aston, "Lehi's Trail and Nahom Revisited," in *Reexploring the Book*

Stephen D. Ricks, John W. Welch) *of Mormon*, John W. Welch, ed., SLC: Deseret Book and

FARMS, 1992, pp. 47-52

Note\* In the introduction to this book we find the following:

In December 1984, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.), based in Provo, Utah, issued its first monthly Update. . . . Since that first Update, researchers have written and circulated a steady stream of innovative findings and insights. This book collects all those Updates, together with similar studies from the F.A.R.M.S. newsletter. . . . These Updates were written by many people but were originally published as unsigned articles because they emerged from collaborative research efforts. No Update has been released without close scrutiny by several scholars. Notes have now been added at the end of each chapter to identify the principal researchers and to refer the reader to other more recent, related material. . . . The eighty-five chapters in this book chronicle some of the ongoing Book of Mormon research of the 1980s and early 1990s. . . .

In the article we find the following:

In 1976, Lynn M. and Hope Hilton traveled through Arabia and published an illustrated report in which they proposed that the place called Nahom, where Ishmael died and was buried, was around Al Kunfidah near the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia. Ross T. Christensen soon suggested an alternative location for Nahom, based upon a map of Yemen prepared as a result of a 1762-64 exploration by Carsten Niebuhr for Danish King Frederick V. To investigate these competing claims, Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston of Australia visited Yemen in November 1984, searching for additional evidence concerning Nahom and the route taken by Lehi and his party.

The Aston's located a 1976 map at the University of Sana'a in the Yemen Arab Republic that showed "Nehem" located some thirty-five miles northeast of Sana'a (further south than the site proposed by the Hiltons). This appeared to be the same region Niebuhr listed as "Nehm." Moreover, the Nahm or Naham tribe has existed in the area since at least the tenth century A.D. If further work supports their tentative findings associating "Nehem" with the Book of Mormon "Nahom," several details of Lehi's route will need to be reassessed. In particular, the identification of the land Bountiful on the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula, from which the group set sail for the New World, probably needs to be moved westward from Salalah, the site proposed by the Hiltons (which also happens to keep it in the proper relationship "nearly eastward" [1 Nephi 17:1] with Nahom). . . .

The Astons further found that current scholars plot out a more complicated trail system for the frankincense trade than was thought a decade ago. Those trails came farther south along the Red Sea coast before branching off eastward than the Hiltons' sources showed. And instead of there being only a single area, Dhofar (Zufar), producing frankincense, it now appears that an area some five hundred miles long along the south coast of the Arabian peninsula produced this precious substance. It was shipped from the eastern areas (including the Salalah area favored by the Hiltons for Bountiful) in coastal vessels to Qana, thence northward along the trail toward the consuming centers in the Near East. These facts make it less likely than had appeared that Lehi's party would have reached the sea as far east as Salalah. Instead, Lehi's group may have ended its desert journey between Salalah and the coastal Hadramawt area of modern South Yemen. In that region, William Hamblin has found pre-Islamic traditions about a



prophet named Hud, whose tomb is located near the border between Oman and South Yemen. Like Lehi, Hud reputedly prophesied against certain idol worshippers who were "renowned for their elaborate buildings" (compare 1 Nephi 8:26), was rejected because of the pride of the people (compare 1 Nephi 8:27), but escaped while the wicked were destroyed. While probably not closely connected, Lehi and Hud seem to have been kindred spirits. . . .

After the time of this Update in September 1986, which was based on research by Warren P. and Michaela J. Aston, Stephen D. Ricks, and John W. Welch, the Astons made other trips to south Arabia, traveling also into Oman. The most recent versions of their regularly updated and enhanced reports, "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail," "The Place Which Was Called Nahom," and "And We Called the Place Bountiful--The End of Lehi's Arabian Journey," can be ordered from F.A.R.M.S.

In Particular, the Astons' examination of the central stretch of the south coast of the Arabian peninsula has produced exciting new results. A previously unexplored fertile valley called Wadi Sayq, tucked away on the south Arabian coast, seems the most likely candidate for the place of Lehi's Bountiful.

**[1992 Map: This map shows the probable route of Lehi from Jerusalem to the place he called Bountiful.** His path followed the general route of the ancient frankincense trails, which pass through an area known for centuries as Nehem. Wadi Sayq, a verdant valley on the sea coast, has been explored only recently by Warren Aston. From *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, courtesy Macmillan Publishing Company. From research by Warren P. and Michaela Aston, Stephen D. Ricks, John W. Welch, "Lehi's Trail and Nahom Revisited," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, SLC: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992, pp. 47-52]

Note\* In the caption to the map we find: "This map shows the probable route of Lehi from Jerusalem to the place he called Bountiful. . . . From *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, courtesy Macmillan Publishing Company." In the *Encyclopedia* article, the caption on the map reads as follows: "Possible Route of Lehi in the Old World, from Jerusalem to the Ocean, c. 600-587 B.C." Note also that the sites "Nehem," "Salalah," "Wadi Sayq" and "Hadhrumout" are included on this map for illustrative purposes but absent from the map in the *Encyclopedia*.

**1992^ (John L. Sorenson) "Winds and Currents: A Look at Nephi's Ocean Crossing," in *Reexploring the***

***Book of Mormon***, edited by John W. Welch, SLC: Deseret Book and FARMS,

1992, pp. 53-56.

This article first appeared as a FARMS Update, in April 1986.

*1 Nephi 18:23 "We had sailed for the space of many days."*

The Book of Mormon provides only fragmentary information about the voyage of Lehi's party from Arabia to America. But external sources help us grasp what might have been involved. If one were to sail from the southern coast of Arabia across the Indian Ocean and then across the Pacific to Central America (which seems to have been Lehi's most likely route), what combination of winds, currents, times, and distances would make the voyage feasible under the normally prevailing conditions?

*From Arabia to Indonesia:* Navigation on the Indian Ocean remained in many ways the same from very early times until the development of steamships. Sailing there has always depended upon the monsoons. The word *monsoon* is from the Arabic *mawsim*, which literally means "the date for sailing from one port in order to reach another." According to Tibbetts, the end of March or beginning of April was the best time to head east from the south Arabian coast; if delayed too long after that, a ship would encounter huge, dangerous swells as it neared the west coast of India. (note 2)

The route would have gone essentially straight east at about fifteen degrees north latitude to the Indian coast, then south around Ceylon in time for the southwest monsoon, first felt in May in the Bay of Bengal. Sumatra would have been reached no later than September. The great storm noted in 1 Nephi 18:13-14 could have been either a cyclonic storm or a typhoon, which are violent in the Bay of Bengal. The "great calm" in 1 Nephi 18:21 may have been a doldrum. If Nephi's vessel continued through the Java and Flores Seas of modern Indonesia, the westerly winds from December to March could have taken it past those areas within the first year of the trip. This route is most likely, although there are other possibilities.

Since boats routinely had to be beached for repairs after storms, or to have their bottoms scraped, or to await favorable winds, it is reasonable to assume that Lehi's party would have stopped from time to time on their journey through these islands. The closeness of major islands and historical records of other voyaging in the area suggest further that travelling from Java to the Admiralty Islands off the north coast of New Guinea would not have been especially difficult.

*Across the Pacific:* Professor Ben Finney, an authority at the University of Hawaii on Pacific Island voyaging, has recently pointed out how early voyagers could have moved from Melanesia out into the broad Pacific to the east. Until recently, he notes, scholars have been puzzled about easterly travel by Polynesians across the Pacific, since the normal trade winds would appear to have posed an almost insurmountable barrier to easterly movement. Finney reports that new information about the meteorological phenomenon known on the west coast of South America as El Nino now changes the picture.

When El Nino conditions prevail, warm surface water from the equatorial zone moves south down the coast of South America, upsetting many normal conditions. It is now known that the trouble begins with a slackening of the normal trade winds. This causes a strong easterly flow of water from the western Pacific all the way to South America. That is accompanied by unusual westerly winds in place of the trades. Under these conditions, travel from Melanesia to South America is quite feasible. Finney proposes that the makers of Lapita pottery sailed out of Melanesia on such westerlies, reaching western Polynesia before 1000 B.C. Their descendants would have used the same winds to move, perhaps all the way to the Marquesas Islands from Tonga. Finney further suggests that the same winds might bear a vessel virtually to the Americas. Depending on conditions, the winds could then take a vessel either to South or Central America. It seems likely that these spells of westerlies have occurred every seven to sixteen years throughout the past. Other combinations of winds and routes eastward are also possible, as Finney notes.

*How long might Nephi's voyage have taken?* From Tonga to the Marquesas is about 30 percent of the distance from the Bismarck Archipelago to America. Finney figures it could have taken about thirty days to sail this distance under El Nino conditions. thus, the whole Pacific distance might be four or five times that, or, in other words, a little less than half a year; the entire journey from Arabia to Central America might have taken from one to two years, depending on the route and time allowed to stop for food, water, and repairs."

Of course, Nephi could not have explicitly planned such a voyage. He indicates that his group was guided by God through the Liahona (see 1 Nephi 18:12, 21-22). Divine knowledge of wind and sea conditions, within the range we now know to have existed, could indeed have permitted the successful crossing of two oceans--more than halfway around the earth--in a plausible period of time.

This Update was based on research by John L. Sorenson, April 1986. For further reflection on other aspects of Lehi's voyage, see Sorenson's "Transoceanic Crossings," in Monte Nyman and Charles Tate, eds., *First Nephi* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1988), 252-70. A monumental reference work documenting and annotating hundreds of proposed or possible transoceanic connections between the Old and the New Worlds is John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish, *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans* (Provo: Research Press, 1990).

Note\* See the 1988 article by Sorenson.

Note\* Some maps would have helped here.

**1992^ (Frederick G. Williams III) "Did Lehi Land in Chile?" in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*,**

edited by John W. Welch, SLC: Deseret Book and FARMS,

1992, pp. 53-56.

*1 Nephi 18:23 "We did arrive at the promised land."*

From the earliest days of the Church, the site of Lehi's landing in the New World has been a topic of discussion. Much of the debate has centered around the origin of a statement written by Frederick G. Williams, stating that Lehi "landed on the continent of South America in Chile thirty degrees south Latitude." This idea was so popular during the nineteenth century that Orson Pratt included it in his notes to the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon and in several other publications. Where did this idea come from? A recent comprehensive examination of the original documents yields some new answers.

Franklin D. Richards, it seems, was the first author to attribute the specific Williams statement to Joseph Smith and to revelation. In 1882, Richards published a statement nearly identical to the wording of William's handwritten copy, adding the title "Lehi's Travels--Revelation to Joseph the Seer." There is no solid historical evidence, however, attributing this statement to Joseph, let alone to revelation, and the assumption that such information was received by revelation is inconsistent with other evidence. An editorial in *Times and Seasons* gives another landing site for Lehi's party: "Lehi . . . landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien." or modern Panama. If Joseph had received a revelation concerning Lehi's landing only a few years earlier (or if he knew of someone else's receiving such a revelation), it is unlikely that he would have allowed this contradictory statement to be published. [see note below] Given the variety and sparsity of statements about Book of Mormon geography during Joseph's lifetime, it seems that, at least in his mind, the location of Lehi's landing remained indefinite.

The Williams handwritten document is the prime source of information about its own origin. His statement about Lehi's travels is found at the bottom of that sheet. [see photocopy below]

[1992 **Photocopy: Notes from the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio.** At the bottom is the statement by Frederick G. Williams. Courtesy of the Church Historical Department. "Did Lehi Land in Chile?" in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, edited by John W. Welch, SLC: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992, pp. 53-56.]

The three items above it are separated by lines drawn across the page. Together, they give a possible context to the statement about Lehi's travels. The first item on the sheet, known today as Doctrine and Covenants 7, is a revelation given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery regarding John the Beloved. It was received in 1829 and published in 1833. The second item is entitled "Questions in English, Answers in Hebrew." It quotes from Jacob 5:13 ("For it grieveth me that I should loose [sic] this tree and the fruit thereof") and 7:27 ("Brethren, I bid you adieu"), and then below each statement gives "An[swers]," translating the English into rough Hebrew. The third time, headed "characters on the book of Mormon" and "the interpretation of Languages," gives two characters under each. The statement about Lehi's travels is then the fourth item on the sheet.

It appears likely that these statements were part of what was being studied at the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, since the first three deal with translation. This idea is corroborated by another known document, virtually identical to the second and third items on the Williams paper, with the signature "written and kept for profit and learning--by Oliver." The Cowdery paper, like the Williams document, appears to contain notes, written only for "profit and learning" as these men studied together in the School of the Prophets, sometimes held in the Kirtland Temple.

On the back of the Williams paper are other characters and a statement written by Ezra G. Williams, Frederick's son. It reads: "G. S. L. City, April 11, 1864. This paper is in the hand writing of my father, Fred G. Williams. The *Characters* thereon *I believe* to be a representation of those shown to him at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple." This statement discloses several important facts: (1) While Ezra knows that the page is in his father's handwriting, (2) he only believes the characters had something to do with the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. (3) Nothing ties Ezra's statement on the back to any of the four items on the front (indeed, it makes no sense to link Doctrine and Covenants 7 from 1829 to the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836). Furthermore, Ezra does not attribute the statement about Lehi's travels (4) to Joseph or (5) to revelation.

It is easy to understand, however, how the context of the statement of Lehi's travels could have been misunderstood. The error can possibly be traced innocently to the partial copy, made in 1845, of Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Bible. John Mm. Bernhisel wrote the same statement on the last sheet

of his copy, preceded by several blank pages. The isolated statement is given no context, heading, or comment, and it is not attributed to Joseph or anyone else. The mere fact that it was copied at the back of the Joseph Smith Translation, however, may have led people to assume that the Lehi statement was also an inspired statement by Joseph Smith. Bernhisel's source, however, appears to be the Williams document, since Bernhisel's copy has the identical wording and nearly the same spelling, capitalization, and punctuation as the Williams copy, with both misspelling the word "latitude."

As early as 1909, B. H. Roberts doubted that the statement about Lehi's travels came from Joseph Smith. Even before that, George Q. Cannon, First Counselor in the First Presidency, issued a statement in the *Juvenile Instructor* urging students of Book of Mormon geography to avoid contention and confusion, and to exercise caution in "drawing all the information possible from the record which has been translated for our benefit." If we had certain knowledge from a revelation of Book of Mormon geography, including Lehi's landing site, there would be neither speculation nor the need for such a caution. As it is, there is both.

This July 1988 Update, based on recent research by Frederick G. Williams III was followed by an extensive treatment of this topic by Williams, edited by John W. Welch and John L. Sorenson, entitled "Did Lehi Land in Chile? An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement" (Provo: F.A.R.M.S., 1988). Further information may also be found in John L. Sorenson, "The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book" (Provo: F.A.R.M.S., 1990).

Note\* The writer above states that "If Joseph had received a revelation concerning Lehi's landing only a few years earlier (or if he knew of someone else's receiving such a revelation), it is unlikely that he would have allowed this contradictory statement to be published." By this same logic Joseph Smith should have contradicted Oliver Cowdery's 1835 statements verifying the New York Hill Cumorah as the site of the final battles. Future research would find that the idea that Lehi landed in Chile was being promoted by missionaries as early as 1830--see the notations for 1830 and 2000.

Cannon's 1890 statement is taken out of context here. How could Cannon have intended his words to apply caution to the 1882 Lehi's Travels statement when it was included in the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon, and Franklin D. Richards was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve?

1992^ B. Keith Christensen *The Unknown Witness: Jerusalem, Geology, and the Origin of the*

*Book of Mormon*, Manuscript, 1992.

In an unpublished book with some different approaches to Lehi's journey, and using multiple maps, Keith Christensen takes some different approaches to understanding Lehi's journey to the promised land. In chapter 4 ("Lehi and the Original Tulan") he writes the following:

The Book of Mormon states that Lehi "left his house, and the land of his inheritance . . . and departed into the wilderness. . . . And he came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea;[\*] and he did travel in the wilderness with his family . . . And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water." (1 Ne. 2:5-6)

Note\* Where the brackets are [\*], Christensen has left out the phrase "and he traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea;" This omission is critical to his discussion which makes his argument suspect.

Nevertheless, Christensen writes:

. . . Nephi mentions the three days of travel after he mentions the Red Sea. So it might appear to some that it says Lehi traveled these three days after he reached the Red Sea, and lead to some misconceptions. . . . Yet the account shows he did travel the three days first.

1. To reach the Red Sea he obviously had to "travel" to get there. So "travel" would not start when he reached the Red Sea.

2. To travel three days in the wilderness his journey would have to be counted from when he entered the wilderness.

[3]. There is nothing said about another wilderness after reaching the Red Sea to start counting from there. It is all one wilderness. . . .

It is generally assumed that when Lehi "departed into the wilderness" he went directly from Jerusalem. But a close reading of the account shows this was not the case.

The Book of Mormon says that Lehi had "his own house at Jerusalem" (1 Ne. 1:7) Then it relates that "he left his house, and the land of his inheritance." (1 Ne. 2:4) For him to enter the wilderness directly from Jerusalem, and leave the land of his inheritance, his land of inheritance would have to be at Jerusalem. . .

Christensen postulates from the difference in phrases regarding the word "house" that while Lehi had a "house" for his family on the land of his inheritance (1 Ne. 2:4), he also had "his own house at Jerusalem" (1 Ne. 1:7). He writes: "This distinction is significant in locating his land of inheritance. Rich men in all ages have had family homes in rural areas and had their own houses in cities for business or politics. Their rural homes, particularly in ancient times, are frequently the places they were born, the places where their families lived for generations. [pp. 43-46]

Christensen notes that history might tell us where Lehi's "land of inheritance" was located. The story of Lehi begins in the first year of the reign of the Jewish king, Zedekiah. Shortly before this, Egypt tried to assert itself in the region. At that time Babylon was expanding its empire from the east. So 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. [p. 46] (See map below)

[1992 **Map: Figure 2: The wilderness and political borders from Jerusalem to the Red Sea.** Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, 1992, p. 47, unpublished]

From Jerusalem, Nephi and his brothers went "down" to the land of their inheritance. 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.

Significantly, Christensen reasons:

To some it may seem to be too much to suggest a precise correlation; but in the context of the [Mesoamerican] Indian histories claiming an Israelite heritage as outlined in Chapter Three, Beersheba in the State of Israel shows indications of being connected anciently with the Indians' ancestral homeland of Civan-Tulan. This coincides with Lehi's escape from Jerusalem, with his land of inheritance being on his way to the Red Sea, and the meanings of the names *Beersheba* and *Civan-Tulan* . . . The definition of the compound name [*Civan-Tulan*] is given as "the city of Seven Caves or Ravines." . . . All of the derivations for the name Beer-sheva encompass either the notion of wells, or seven, or both . . . Wells and caves are alike since they are cavities in the earth . . . [Thus] Taking the definitions and associations for *ravine* and *cave/water-cave* together could describe a "narrow, deep hollow inside the earth . . . [pp. 47-51]

According to Christensen, Lehi's family entered the "wilderness" from near the land of their inheritance, which was south of Jerusalem, and the total time spent to get to the valley of Lemuel (near Aqaba) was three days. (This is in contrast to the Hiltons who have Lehi's group traveling an additional "three days in the wilderness" after reaching the Red Sea from Jerusalem.)

Beersheba was the capital of the Negeb, the southernmost district in King David's kingdom. For control over the trade routes in the Negeb, Solomon and Uzziah established military-agricultural settlements up to 30 miles south of Beersheba. Beyond this would become the ancient border of cultivated lands. The Book of Mormon does not say how far Lehi traveled from his land of inheritance to the wilderness frontier, but his land of inheritance could have been anywhere between Beersheba and the wilderness frontier, 30 miles south of Beersheba. The essential point is that there was a wilderness frontier from where to measure the three days of travel specified in the Book of Mormon. From this 30-mile frontier it was about 100 miles to the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba along a trade route from Egypt and Beersheba. (see map below)

[1992 Map: Figure 3: Beersheba, the Negev Wilderness and the Frontier. Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, 1992, p. 54, unpublished]

The average rate of travel for a party such as Lehi's would have been about 35 miles a day for a 3-day total of 105 miles. Camel caravan speeds are somewhat over 3 miles per hour with thirty miles or more being a good average for the day. . . . Additionally, the idea of *only* a three day journey in the wilderness seems to be reinforced by the headnote summary paragraph for the book of First Nephi: "He taketh three days' journey into the wilderness with his family. Nephi taketh his brethren and returneth to the land of Jerusalem . . .". [pp. 45, 226]

1 Nephi 2:5 says that "[Lehi] came down *by* the borders *near* the shore of the Red Sea; and he traveled in the wilderness *in* the borders which are *nearer* the Red Sea" (italics added). . . . A border is "a dividing line or territory between two countries, states, etc." When Lehi left Jerusalem, Judah was weak as shown by the Babylonians placing Zedekiah on Judah's throne. Whenever Judah was weak the Edomites took control of the territory of Elath near the tip of the Red Sea called Elath and the port at the tip of the Red Sea called Ezion-geber. So, if the Edomites were in control of their own land (which would have been the circumstances at the time of Lehi) this would have resulted in there being an Edomite border north of Ezion-geber. Lehi would have come to this border at some point. The phrase relating that Lehi was "by" borders could refer to this political border or to arriving at the edge of the geographic borders in which he subsequently traveled. The "borders near and nearer" description in 1 Nephi 2:5 would reflect the progress in Lehi's journey from the wilderness frontier south of Beersheba, going near and then nearer the Red Sea. [pp. 237-238]

The word "fountain" means "reservoir" and this would apply here for Lehi speaks of the river Laman flowing into the "fountain of the Red Sea." Those who think the three days are counted from the head of the gulf, propose the first encampment to be at the oasis of Al beda about 75 miles south of Ezion-geber, with the river Laman emptying southward into the body of the Red Sea. By recognizing that fountain means all of the Red Sea we can find the likely area where Lehi's first encampment was located, at Ezion-geber.

In their journey when Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, they "encamped at Ezion-geber (see map below) Before reaching Ezion-geber Moses had problems about drinking water for the Israelites for the waters of Marah were bitter, but the Lord showed Moses a tree, "which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." When they camped at Kadesh where there was no water at all, the Lord commanded Moses to strike a rock with his staff and "water came abundantly." At Ezion-geber Moses had many thousands of Israelites camping without any mention of miracles regarding water, indicating that there was some source such as a river of water. North from Ezion-geber about 50 miles there is a wall of mountains rising 4,600 to 5,600 feet. There is a present-day stream-bed which has its source in these mountains. All this points to an ancient perennial river or brook that flowed into the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba at the time of Lehi. [pp. 59-65] (see map below)

[1992 Map: U. S. Army Topographic Command Map Figure 3: Beersheba, the Negev Wilderness and the Frontier. Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, 1992, p. 64, unpublished]



Lehi and his people "did sojourn in the wilderness" for eight years before they reached Bountiful where they finally built their ship. *Sojourn* means to live somewhere temporarily . . . stay for awhile. . . .The circumstances and evidence leave no reasonable doubt that Lehi's first encampment was likely in the vicinity of Ezion-geber for a substantial length of time. This being so, the situation could imprint a cultural remembrance of Edom and Ezion-geber on Lehi's descendants. so the place-name near Lake Ilopango [in present-day El Salvador] with roots that show a possible connection with Edom and Ezion-geber shows a consistency with the account in the Book of Mormon. [p. 69]

In chapter 6, Christensen writes the following:

When Lehi led his people from their first encampment, Nephi says: "We traveled for the space of four days, nearly a south-southeast direction, and we did pitch our tents again; and we did call the name of the place Shazer." (1 Ne. 16:13) "A south-southeast direction" would be within an arc on either side of south-southeast. (see illustration below)

**[1992 Illustration: Figure 1 South-southeast.** A south-southeast direction would be within an arc on either side of south-southeast. [Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, p. 72, Unpublished]

Interestingly, by following a nearly south-southeast heading from the area suggested for Lehi's first encampment in Chapter Five, we find that this heading leads to the north end of a wadi (valley, ravine) that lies on the same heading. (see illustration below--Figure 2). This converges with another wadi lying in the same direction. It then links with a third wadi that continues on essentially the same heading, providing a route that reaches about 650 miles from Ezion-geber. (*Wadi Al Jizl* to *Wadi Al Hamd* to *Wadi Al Aqiq*) (See Figure 2.) . . .

**[1992 Illustration: Figure 2. Lehi's Wadi Route.** Illustration of Lehi's wadi route with the direction of south-southeast superimposed on the Red Sea. Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, p. 73, Unpublished]

The path formed by these linked wadis runs parallel to and not too far from the Red Sea. In recent times at least part of this route has been used by others, indicating its viability. A trail is marked in this wadi route on a 1959 map along with trails in other wadis. A larger scale 1944 map also shows a track in this wadi route. These show the feasibility of these wadis providing a ready-made course for Lehi.

From his first encampment Lehi's heading and wadi route would be parallel to and about 60 miles from the Red Sea. This might seem rather far to be near the Red Sea but it was the borders that were near the Red Sea; not that Lehi's route was. His route could be well inland while the wilderness or geographic borders he was in extended to the Red Sea.

Note\* This is a very important idea because it runs counter to the Hiltons proposed coastal route, even though the Hiltons did show this route on their map. (see the 1976 and 1996 notations) Eventually, Potter and Wellington will provide the necessary data to make the "wadi" route the most preferred. (see the 1999, 2000, 2003 notations)

We saw that Lehi and his people made their second encampment at a place they called *Shazer*. (see Figure 2 above) Since "they" called it by this name, it was not an established name used by others. . . .

It was only four days travel from their first encampment to *Shazer* but it took "a space of many days" to reach the third. This phrase suggest a long distance. They kept "in the most fertile parts of the wilderness." Since the climate was then wetter there would have been greater fertility than now. The need for water is not mentioned in the list of early privations but it is later. There are seasonal and year-round springs and wells on the northern segment of this wadi route today and fewer on the south segment. In earlier times, when the climate was wetter, at least some of the seasonal springs would have likely flowed year-round. [pp. 72-74]

Note\* The idea of "fertility" will be emphasized by Potter and Wellington as denoting a geographic region. (see the 1999, 2000, 2003 notations)

Nephi broke his bow . . . Nephi made a bow and sought direction where to hunt and returned with meat. (1 Ne. 16:32)

Then [Nephi] says:

we did again take our journey, traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning; and after we had traveled for the space of many days we did pitch our tents again, that we 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.

Because it "was called Nahom," it has been assumed this was a pre-existing name and so its identity has been speculated on. But research that could verify its existence would need to rely on old maps but "the Arabs were no cartographers." So maps would hold little hope of retaining the name even if it existed. Besides, "The Arabs 'often coin a new name for a locality . . . and probably, as often as not, the Israelites named for themselves their own camps.'" So it would be consistent for Israelites led by Lehi to name their encampments as they did with *Shazer*. If it was they who named Nahom, as the name *Shazer* did not survive, the name *Nahom* likely would not either. . . . its likelihood of surviving is so slim there is no point in being concerned about it. For our purposes it is only of significance because it tells us that there was a particular place at which Lehi and his people turned to go "nearly eastward" to Bountiful. (1 Ne. 17:1-5)

Note\* On page 241 Christensen notes the following:

Hugh Nibley cites a statement attributed to Joseph Smith that Lehi turned nearly eastward at 19 degrees north of the equator and says some take it to be revelation. He says it is "probably genuine,," but evidently because it agrees with his own conjecture. (Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, p. 125) But when this coordinate is applied to Lehi traveling "nearly eastward" it does not fit for "-ward" is not a general description of direction as typically supposed, but a specific direction: nearly due east. (see the illustration below)

Another scholar notes that north of the Sabean capital of Sana there was the district of *nehhm* far south in Arabia. He poses the question of whether *Nehhm* is the "equivalent" of *Nahom*. (Ross T. Christensen, *The Ensign* magazine, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Aug., 1978, p. 73) But even if the meaning is the same, that would not mean it would be the Book of Mormon *Nahom* for to go there would take Lehi further south than necessary to go east to Salalah that fits Bountiful. (see illustration below).

**[1992 Illustration: Joseph Smith's statement that Lehi turned nearly eastward at 19 degrees north compared with the position of Salalah and Nehhm.** Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, p. 241, Unpublished]

From *Nahom* Lehi traveled "nearly eastward" (1 Ne. 17:1), but Christensen asks, "where was the area in which *Nahom* was located where they turned east?"

The region of Najran is "a series of oases." (see illustration below--Figure 3) It is a region from which Lehi could have gone nearly eastward to reach a fertile coast that meets the description "bountiful." This coastal area is presently marked by the town of Salalah. (see Figure 3)

The oases of Najran are described as wells, springs, and waterholes. Due to the wetter climate anciently there likely would have been even more or larger oases than today. But whether there were or not, this is where an encampment would be made so people could "tarry for the space of a time" with water at hand and be in the right place to prepare for the most difficult state of their journey--nearly due east to the coast at Salalah.

**[1992 Illustration: Figure 3. Traveling "Nearly Eastward" from Nahom.** Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, p. 76, Unpublished]

After traveling east, Nephi says, "we did come to the land which we called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and wild honey; and . . . (1 Nephi 17: ) Salalah is the only place on all the coasts of Arabia that matches the route and description given by Nephi (see map below--Figure 4) and has the trees from which to make timbers to build a ship. It is on the 1400-mile south coast where "only these twenty miles get a regular rainfall." It is encircled against the sea by the Quara Mountains and was not discovered by the West until 98 years after publication of the Book of Mormon. The explorer Bertram Thomas came upon it [in 1928] when coming out of the desert too and describes it much as Nephi does, but with more detail . . .

[1992 **Illustration: Figure 4. Lehi's Route to Bountiful (Salalah).** Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, p. 78, Unpublished]

The town of Salalah is now located there. A naturalist and explorer, Wilfred Thesiger, says the town "lies on the edge of the sea and has no harbor, the rollers from the Indian Ocean sweeping in to the white sands beneath the coconut palms that fringe the shore." And we have a description of this being a verdant place. . . . Thesiger also tells of Mount (Jabal) Qara. . . . according to Thesiger, only Mt Jabal Qara is identified by name on maps while the higher peaks surrounding it are nameless. It is the central geographic feature. (see illustration below--Figure 5) It seems noteworthy that the Book of Mormon speaks of "the mountain" as if it were obvious as with Jabal Qara. Still, this is only a possible minor consideration. [Christensen then quotes a number of excerpts from the Hilton's 1976 *In Search of Lehi* concerning Salalah. [pp. 77-83]

[1992 **Illustration: Figure 5. Jabal Qara.** Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, p. 80, Unpublished]

Christensen does not give any details on Nephi's ocean voyage. Rather he jumps into a discussion trying to relate Lake Ilopango in El Salvador with the city of Jerusalem in the Book of Mormon. In doing so he notes that Cuzcatlan was near Lake Ilopango. [pp. 85-86] After much discussion he writes:

In the Book of Mormon context we find something by which it could be that Cuzcatlan and Cuzco were culturally connected. In speaking of Lehi's voyage to the American continent, Joseph Smith said that Lehi "landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien." (Panama) An unreliable source has Joseph Smith saying Lehi landed as far south as Chile. (see Appendix O) Since the coast of South America runs north on the east side of the isthmus, it means that he would have had to land on the west coast. (see illustration below--Figure 2)

[1992 **Illustration: Figure 2. Lake Ilopango, Cuzcatlan, and Lehi's Landing in South America Near Cuzco.** Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness*, p. 93, Unpublished]

In Arabia they had a "sojourn for the space of many years . . . even eight years." (1 Ne. 17:4) In that time their journey parallel to the Red Sea took "the space of many days." (1 Ne. 16:33) That distance alone would have been about 1000 miles and eastward to Salalah was also about 1000 miles for a total of 2000. So going up to 1500 miles from "a little south" of Panama to Cuzcatlan in "many days" even up to years would not be extraordinary in the Book of Mormon context. . . . Nephi records that after he and his people settled in the land of Nephi, "we lived after the manner of happiness." (2 Ne. 5:27) . . . Then he states that after "forty years had passed away . . . we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren." (2 Ne. 5:34) The passage of this much time in which the Nephites lived in peace possible up to nearly the fortieth [year] indicates that they had put a lot of distance between themselves and the Lamanites.

[1992    **Illustrated Model**    **Keith Christensen**    **LIMITED SOUTHERN MESOAMERICA]**

L.S.=S. of line extending from Rio Dulce to Pacific Coast / N.N.=extending from Rio Dulce to Pacific Coast / L.N.= from line North to the east of Chiapas Depression and including Yucatan

Source: B. Keith Christensen, *The Unknown Witness: Jerusalem, Geology, and the Origin of the Book of Mormon*, Manuscript, 1992.

**1992^    Michael M. Hobby    *The Mulekite Connection*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Zarahemla Foundation**

Press, 1992, p. 6.

Although focusing on the Mulekites, the general geographical approach is Hemispheric, with Nephi landing a little south of Panama (approximately located in Peru or Ecuador from the map--see below). On page 6 we find the following:

The Nephites also escaped from Jerusalem in about 600 B.C. and landed in the New World SOUTH of the Narrow Neck. After the Lord warned Nephi of the plot to kill him, he escaped into the Andes, where the Nephites developed an Andean [Mountain] civilization.

[1992    **Book of Mormon Geography Map**. Michael M. Hobby, *The Mulekite Connection*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Zarahemla Foundation Press, 1992, p. 16.]

**1993^    FARMS Staff    "F.A.R.M.S.-Led Expedition Examines Likely Candidate for Lehi's Old-World**

**Bountiful," in *Insights: an Ancient Window*, No. 5, FARMS, September 1993,**

p. 1, 3-4.

In a lead article in the "Insights" newsletter, we find the following:

The much-delayed and long-awaited examination of Wadi Sayq, a likely site for Old World Bountiful, became a reality recently. In April, a team of researchers examined the port area of Khor Kharfot ("Fort Inlet" in English) through which the Wadi Sayq enters the Indian Ocean on the southern coast of Oman, at the extreme western end near the border with Yemen. Their findings indicate that Khor Kharfot may be the site of Lehi's Bountiful. [see map below]

Through almost one decade of preparatory research, Warren Aston of Australia, with the assistance of his wife Michaela, has identified this site as a possible location of ancient Bountiful where Lehi's party camped and built the ship by which they sailed to the promised land. . . .

Since excavation was not to be part of the expedition's work, the original team leader, David Johnson of BYU, whose major interest was excavation, was replaced by Noel Reynolds, the president of F.A.R.M.S. . . .

The team assembled in Salalah, Oman, beginning April 10, 1993, and spent most of the following week on the site. The team's findings were reported in part by [Paolo] Costa at a meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies in London on July 24. We expect that further information about Khor Kharfot will be published soon in an article by Warren Aston in the Ensign.

**[1993 Map: Location of Wadi Sayq.** FARMS Staff, "F.A.R.M.S.-Led Expedition Examines Likely Candidate for Lehi's Old-World Bountiful," in *Insights: an Ancient Window*, No. 5, FARMS, September 1993, p. 1]

## FINDINGS

1. Khor Kharfot used to be a small harbor formed by a seasonal river flowing out of Wadi Sayq into the Indian Ocean. Though it is now blocked year round by a beach thrown up by the ocean, it may have been open to the sea as recently as the present century.

2. Though the port is now uninhabited, there are surface ruins of dozens of structures. minimally three different types which appear to correspond to ruins found elsewhere suggest at least occasional occupation of the general area over as much as a five-thousand-year period.

3. Even in the dry season, Khor Kharfot provides a sharp contrast to the arid land sparse vegetation that characterize all areas a mile or further from the coastline. In the fall, after the summer monsoons, it is covered with a luxuriant green canopy. It features a variety of trees (including dates and figs), shrubs, flowers, and other plants. It is not year known how the present ecosystem and plant species might differ from those of three thousand years ago. A Greek source describes a kind of tree growing in nearby Bahrain in 300 B.C. that when used to build boats would resist the water for 200 years or more.

4. Geological and archaeological evidence suggest that, as might be expected from the known gradual desiccation of the Arabian Peninsula over the last five thousand years, the present supply of fresh surface and spring water in Khor Kharfot is much less than in times past.

5. Wadi Sayq is unique among Omani wadis in that it runs due west and provides access to a Yemen plateau. This plateau leads directly west into the area long identified with the Nahum tribe. The center of this ancient tribal area is less than one-half degree off due west from Khor Kharfot. (After burying Ishmael at Nahom, Lehi's party traveled nearly due east until they hit the sea.)

6. While remote and protected by rugged terrain and the ocean, Khor Kharfot is accessible in several ways. Though the wadi is protected from the view of passing vessels, due to the oblique angle at which it reaches the sea, it is a simple matter to land a boat there. While the coastline is quite rugged, it is possible to move up and down it on foot. This does, however, entail endless climbing up and down the mountainside to avoid impassable ravines. There is also an improved trail (possibly of ancient construction) which rises directly up the mountain from the springs, working its way between cliffs and rock outcroppings to the plateau above. These are all difficult trails which would be relatively simple to defend. The wadi itself provides an easy trail into the deep interior of the country, but is only readily accessible from the plateau at some distance from the coastline.

7. No obvious source of ore has been identified at or near the site. However, ancient Oman was a principal source of metals for the Mesopotamian empires. Copper mines first developed five thousand years ago are now being worked with modern machinery and methods. The basic geological features of the entire country are similar. The wadi area abounds in chert (flint), providing stones that will start a fire.

8. Ancient Oman was an international center for trade by sea. Ships were built there to equip a commercial fleet that linked India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Africa, Egypt, and eventually China. Long before 600 B.C. the Omani seafarers were the Indian Ocean's equivalent of the Mediterranean's Phoenicians. In ancient times, it was the obvious place to build and launch a ship for a journey eastward into the Indian Ocean.

Khor Kharfot features a vast beach area, providing plenty of space to pitch tents. During the monsoon storms, the stone and thatch structures in the area may have been used as dwellings. It has been estimated that Lehi's party may have needed three years or more to build and adequately provision a ship for the Pacific crossing.

10. Khor Kharfot features several crop areas enclosed by stone fences and serviced by an irrigation system. While the present walls and canals probably date from the Islamic era, a similar farming system might well have preceded them.

11. Some apparently older ruins of probably less than a dozen small buildings, surrounded by a wall, lie above and beyond the rest. A trail (possibly constructed) leads down to the beach and main Wadi area. On the other sides this site is protected by high cliffs that drop straight into the sea and the mountain that rises directly behind it. Although the entire area is mountainous, this mountain would be the obvious one to call "the mountain." This site provides at ready hand a perfect place for throwing an undesirable person to his death in the sea (see 1 Nephi 17:48).

## CONCLUSION:

Khor Kharfot and its environs have all the features mentioned in the Book of Mormon in connection with Old World Bountiful. It has no features that would conflict with the Book of Mormon account. A survey of alternative sites in the Arabian Peninsula has turned up not others that come close to fitting the criteria for Bountiful so well. On this analysis, Khor Kharfot emerges as the most probable site for Lehi's Bountiful.

Note\* Beginning in 1997 FARMS would be repeatedly approached by George Potter and Richard Wellington with systematic documentary evidence of another candidate for Bountiful--Khor Rhoiri, on the east of the Salalah coast. Moreover, they systematically rebuffed the evidence put forth by FARMS for Khor Kharfot. They were repeatedly denied support by FARMS for further research of their ideas, both in print and monetarily. (See the Potter & Wellington notations for 1999-2003 for their manuscripts, publications, and videos.

**1993^ Scot Facer Proctor      *Light from the Dust: A Photographic Exploration into the Ancient***

**Maurine Jensen Proctor      *World of the Book of Mormon*, Salt lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1993.**

In 1993 the Proctors published a photographic essay on the cultural and geographical features related to the Book of Mormon. In the captions to their photos from the Arabian Peninsula, they use the ideas and writings of Hugh Nibley (*Lehi in the Desert, 1988*), The Hiltons (*In Search of Lehi's Trail, 1976*), and the Astons ("The Place Which Was Called Nahom," 1991; "And We Called the Place Bountiful," 1991), along with some of their own ideas. The Photo captions are as follows:

Pages 16-17: The ancient King's highway in modern Jordan is a likely route for Lehi and his family to have traveled as they journeyed south. . . .

Pages 26-27: The tremendous Dead Sea rift zone, of which this Wadi Al-Arabah gorge is part, extends through parts of Jordan and Israel . . .

Pages 28-29: View at sunset across the Gulf of Aqaba near the border of modern Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Lehi refers to such an area in the record as the "fountain of the Red Sea."

Page 33: Ancient, hand-cut steps in a side canyon of Wadi Musa, in modern Jordan, where Petra is located. The ancient King's Highway, the route Lehi may have traveled, comes by the mouth of the wadi. . . .



Page 34: Morning light touches ancient, 85-foot high lock of the Marib Dam in modern Yemen, which stood from 750 B.C. until its collapse in A.D. 570. It provided water in ancient Sheba for growing crops. Lehi probably led his family southeast along the Red Sea to Nahom, probably in ancient Sheba, where they may have stopped to raise crops before turning eastward to skirt the most forbidding desert on earth.

Page 35: Hundreds of years of lowering water pots by rope have grooved this wood in an ancient well in Yemen. The travelers of the desert had to know of the water sources or they would perish. There are only 118 known wells along the course that parallels the Red Sea where Lehi and his family might have traveled. . . .

Pages 36-37: The brightness of the afternoon sun is nearly obliterated during this sandstorm in the Arabian peninsula near the borders of the Red Sea. Driven by winds in excess of seventy miles an hour, sand particles cut with abrasive power any object or life form they touch. Bowmaking was a skill reserved to specialists in the ancient world. "The only bowwood obtainable in all Arabia was the nab wood that grew only 'amid the inaccessible and overhanging crags' of Mount Jasum and Mount Azd, which are situated in the very region . . . the broken bow incident occurred." (Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, p. 232.) . . .

Page 38: 3,000-year old city of Barqish on the incense trails of Sheba with two ancient tombs in the foreground. The modern name of this region is Nehem, named after the Yemini tribe who have dwelt in the area for at least a thousand years. It is hard not to observe the similarities between this place and the Nahom mentioned in Nephi's account. . . . Thousands of ancient graves have been discovered in this area, making this probably the largest burial site in Arabia. In such a place "the daughters of Ishmael did mourn exceedingly, because of the loss of their father."

Page 39: Afternoon clouds build, but little rain ever comes in the area of Wadi Jauf in Yemen. Pre-Islamic legends in the area speak of one Hud (or Yahud, which means Jew) who came through the region and was a prophet. . . . Perhaps as Lehi traveled, if he came upon those who would hear the word, he would preach to them.

Page 40: View into the great Empty Quarter of the Arabian Desert. No habitation exists in this forsaken area of a quarter-of-a-million square miles. Lehi's party likely skirted the south end of this area as they made their way across the last 800 miles of the journey to Bountiful. Ancient caravans took from two to three months to cross to the Dhofar region, the area where frankincense trees were indigenous and abundant. That it took Lehi's party eight years to cross tells us much about the wilderness experience and the Lord's desire to test and try His people as He did in the days of Israel's journey from Egypt. A fuller account of their journey is included in the Large Plates of Nephi.

Pages 42-43: Looking into the ominous barren canyons of Wadi Sayq (pronounced sike) in modern Oman. The elevation here is over 4,000 feet and within twenty miles will drop to the ocean. In one of these feeder canyons Lehi and his party may have entered the wadi and followed the directions of the Liahona through the main canyon to the ocean. Certainly, viewing this foreboding canyon, they would not

have known that lush Bountiful was directly ahead. By this time the party had at least 33 individuals, likely over 1200 camels, probably eight large tents (each weighing as much as 500 pounds), remaining provisions, and numerous sacks of all varieties of seeds they had brought from Jerusalem.

Pages 48-49: Awesome evening light colors clouds and sky at remote and isolated Wadi Sayq at 16 degrees 44 minutes latitude. Is this where Nephi built the ship? Best evidence suggest it may be. There are only six potential candidates for the location, and this is the only one that fits the description given by Nephi in every particular. (See Aston and Aston, "And We Called the Place Bountiful," Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1991) The location of this beach is significant in that Lehi and his family would have been separated from the outside world as they prepared for their journey across the globe to the new world. Perhaps the isolation would help keep the wayward sons focused on the work at hand and kept the influence of the polytheistic cultures in the regions nearby away from their thinking. . . .

Page 50: Western light spills over the mount and gives last touches to greenery at the seashore site of Wadi Sayq. This is a freestanding mountain next to the isolated beach and, if this is where the ship was built, then this is the most likely place Nephi would have come to receive instructions from the Lord. . . .

Page 51: Large trees sixty to eighty feet high grow in abundance starting about a half mile from the sea. Hardwood trees in the area include *tamarindus*, sycamore, and boscia. Timber would be needed for nearly every aspect of shipbuilding, including large amounts for the scaffolding and framework around the ship as well as for a large ramp for the ship to slide into the ocean. As the party was travelling along the Red Sea they could have seen local shipbuilders in their trade. Therefore, Nephi said, he "did not work the timbers after the manner of men."

Page 52: Abundant deposits of jasper (a flint-like rock) are strewn along the upper reaches of the canyon of Wadi Sayq. If two of these rocks are struck repeatedly and sharply together, they will make sparks that can be used to ignite tinder and light a fire. It may have been this kind of rock Nephi used to start a fire. . . .

Page 53: Looking west across one of the freshwater sources and up Wadi Sayq in Oman toward the beautiful, lush mountainsides. Nephi is careful to place in the record his feeling about the land of Bountiful: "We did come to the land which was called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey; and all these things were prepared of the Lord that we might not perish." . . .

Page 54: Morning light illuminates cliffs along the shore of the Arabian Sea at the west end of the Wadi Sayq area. Significantly, the waters along the beach here are only shallow for a few short feet, and then they drop rapidly to great depths, an appropriate place to launch a ship. Nephi records that his brothers were "desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea," which seems to indicate there wa a physical height, such as a cliff nearby. Cliffs line the ocean front in this area.

Page 55: This large and interestingly shaped stone was found not far from the possible ship site above. The stone is concave, like part of a Near Eastern oven. A shaft for air at the bottom of the stone and the center of the oven area runs about fifteen feet to the back of the large rock. Deposits of carbon cover the front of the oven area.

Page 55: View from the east end of the Wadi Sayq beach looking nearly south into the Arabian Sea. Noteworthy is the pattern of rocks shaped like a ship in the upper beach area in the foreground of this picture. It does appear that someone built a ship here. Vegetation grows readily among the rocks, further emphasizing the ship pattern. Larger buildup of rocks can also be seen at the fore, middle, and aft part of the site. The pattern measures 130 feet long and 65 feet wide at the center. Three interspersed larger piles of rocks are seen to the left middle of the picture, leading down to the high-tide position of the ocean and may have been foundation stones for a ramp to the sea.

Page 56: View across the wadi area with a large man-made mound visible on the right. A double line of stones can be seen in the picture; these run many hundreds of feet from the mound to the wadi itself and may have been the foundation of a water transportation system that could have carried timber from farther up the wadi to the ship-building site. Initial observations suggest that the ancient, fourteen-foot-high, forty-five-foot-in-diameter weathered mound could have been used for some type of waterworks to run machinery. The large outcropping of rock in the center of the picture has graffiti on it, some in a language not yet identified. Clearly some major effort took place here in ancient times. . . .

Page 57: Ancient graffiti of yet-undetermined date on the rock face near the mound shows a ship or sailing vessel, camels, and many other items. . . .

Page 58: Late afternoon light washes across a double line of stones that leads to the mound at Wadi Sayq. The thought of people of the desert becoming mariners seem preposterous unless we consider that they were led by the hand of the Lord. Describing the loading of the ship, Nephi notes that it was done "every one according to his age."

Page 59: Pulling away from Wadi Sayq, we see the raised ship-like pattern of rocks on the shore at the center of the picture with the piles of rocks leading to the water also visible. The huge rock at the top of the lighter-colored beach has the ancient graffiti, and the possible foundry stone can be seen just to the lower left of the large rock. . . .

There are no photos or discussion of any proposed ocean voyage. On page 63, and without any correlated photos, however, the Proctors write: "From Jerusalem, Lehi's party had made an epic journey covering two-thirds of the globe across the Pacific Ocean, probably to the western shores of Central America." In a caption on page 5 they also write: "It is notable that Joseph's thinking on the geography of the Book of Mormon leaned to Central America, not South America as long tradition has held."

There is a small map entitled "Lehi's Wilderness Journey" on page 5. While it has no Book of Mormon names written on it, it does seem to follow the combined proposals of Nibley, the Hiltons and the Astons as written above in the captions.

[1993 **Map: Lehi's Wilderness Journey.** Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, *Light from the Dust: A Photographic Exploration into the Ancient World of the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1993, p. 5]

1993^ **Hugh Nibley** *Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Semester 1.* Transcripts of lectures presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University  
1988-1990. Provo: FARMS, 1993.

Hugh Nibley writes gives out the following ideas on 1 Nephi:

But let's consider now just the second chapter . . . He [Lehi] took all his stuff and went down to the borders. It mentions "the borders" twice in the fifth verse. 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 that name, Jabal. So they went down into the Borders. Notice they found here, after three days, a valley beside a river of water. What a "river of water"? Because usually it's a "river of sand," *nahr raml*. But this is a river of water. Well, how would they find a river of water in the desert at that time? (We might as well unfold the map here.)

Note\* Presumably Nibley is using the map that was published in 1957 by BYU--see the notation.

Here is the trip they took. Here's where they came. They left Jerusalem and went down here, a three day's journey. On camel the normal rate is thirty miles a day, but you can make thirty to sixty miles a day. Under pressure, you could make a hundred miles a day. Camels move right along. (It would be down here.) They call this the Jawf, and this is called the Araba--this long depression. . . .

It tells us in 1 Nephi 1:4 that it was at the commencement of year. So this was the winter time when there was water running. . . .

It says down here [on a map], to my surprise, that it was prepared by me. No it wasn't because I would never call this Irreantum. This is Irreantum. There's an Egyptian writing that tells us it's the fountain of the Red Sea and even uses the word *Irreantum*. Somebody put that down there and said I was responsible. Why do we know that they went this way? They turned this way. This is the Rub' al-Khali, the empty quarter. And it is empty. It hadn't been crossed by anybody supposedly in 1930. Then there were two

men who claimed to have crossed it. It's a milk run now. This is the world we live in. Joseph Smith said it was on the nineteenth parallel that they turned south by east, and this is the way they went (east and a little south). That would have them come out at the Qara Mountains which are rich in timber and very unexpected. They caught Captain Bertram Thomas by complete surprise. He discovered these mountains, and they weren't discovered until the 1930's Imagine that! They didn't even know that there was such a nice fertile place there. We will refer to this later, but you get the idea. They came down the coast there. [pp. 122-123]

Note\* For Nibley to be quoting the "Lehi's Travels" statement about Lehi turning east on the nineteenth parallel implies that he would also support the quoting of the rest of the statement to the end that Lehi landed near the t degree south latitude in Chile.

If any water runs for more than half an hour, it is considered continual (practically perennial) by the people of that area. But it is seasonal. Notice, it says this was at the commencement of the year when the waters would be running. . . . [p. 124]

Well, this wasn't discovered until the 1920s at Shibam and other such places in Arabia. I was able to dig up an old *National Geographic* that will show you what we are talking about here. These really exist; they go back to Babylonian times. With all the space in the world why would people shoot up ten- and twelve-story skyscrapers? These are ancient. (You get a good view of it from there, I'm sure; as good a view as the pilot did here.) "These are the ancient skyscrapers of Shibam. Many of them centuries old hark back to the power of the Hadhramaut Kingdom." Here they are, and they are still occupied. All along the outside here, the windows don't begin until at least twenty or thirty feet above the ground. This is for safety, so they can't be raided. But they are high in the air, and at night, if it is lit, that's what you see--a great and spacious building shining in the air. . . . It's on the caravan routes, the Hadhramaut, the incense route. [p. 177]

Here is the main drag, as it tells us--the pass through the mountains east of Aqaba following the road to Ma'an. . . . Here they are crossing the terrible Rub' al-Khali of desolation, and it is utterly desolate. It took them [Lehi's group] eight years to cross this, and it describes what they went through. We are not going to dwell on that. That's in *Lehi in the Desert*. [p. 179]

Remember, it tells us where they turned east, and Joseph Smith said it was the nineteenth parallel--almost south-southeast there, taking them to the Empty Quarter. The whole trip took eight years because of the long stops. For example, they must have spent about a year at the Waters of Laman in the Valley of Lemuel. [p. 194]

*Shajar* is a clump of trees; it's pronounced *shazer*, of course. It's a group of trees in the desert. Well, naturally, the place they would park next would be where there were some trees, some water, etc. So they camped in a place called *Shazer*, "the trees" (lots going cheap). Here they went, as we said before. Joseph Smith said, "When they turned nearly straight east, it was at the nineteenth parallel." Here's the

nineteenth. Of course, this would take them out to the Qara Mountains where you find trees. This is the standard shipbuilding place from ancient times in Arabia because they could find a special type of trees for ships--very good and very big. I have this book by the Hiltons here on that. So they came to Bountiful and they turned here.

I want to point this out here (this is Mecca near the coast, and this is Medina) because something happened along here. They were going in these mountains, and the mountains are considerable all the way. This is Saba down here. They cut clear of this because this was a rich kingdom at the time. We showed those skyscrapers. They knew about the skyscrapers; they were down here. This is where Jasum and Shibam and all the great skyscraper cities were, down here in the Hadhramaut. So we have them going on. [pp. 216-217]

The reason I pointed out Medina there is that along the coast here there was a German baron called Julius Euting who wrote a classic work, and he hunted everywhere. The only place in Arabia where you can find very good hunting is in the mountains along here, especially Mount Jasum and Mount Azd. Well, this is very important because they are the only places in Arabia where you can find nab' wood which is wood for bows. It makes excellent bows, but it is exceedingly rare. It's only found in the mountains right along here. This is where they would have been at that time, keeping in the mountains near the Red Sea. They came here and [their bows] lost their springs and all that. We don't know exactly where they were, but around the same area where you find the bow wood at Mount Jassum and Mount Azd, you also find very rich game---oryxes, mountain goats, everything you can imagine at the tops of the mountains. Of course those creatures live up high. They don't live down in the desert . . . [p. 218]

I showed these pictures before of the Qara Mountains. Here are some pictures of the woods in the distance. . . . Well anyway there was the land Bountiful and the wild honey. "And we beheld the sea, which we called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters." There's a very important Egyptian writing that was read in all the temples every morning in which that name *Irreantum* was used for *the sea*. It's a very interesting name, but we won't go into it. [p. 222]

Until they got to the Rub' al-Khali, they were always moving through occupied territory and they were always trespassing. That's why the Arabs are always raiding and always at war. . . .

Time is up, but there is a book by the Hiltons [*In Search of Lehi's trail*]. . . .We asked them to follow the steps of Lehi from Jerusalem to the land called Bountiful, if you can discover where it might have been." Their adventures were published in [the *Ensign*] in 1976, beginning in October. They went and traveled, and they had some marvelous experience. They followed right down along the coast and finally got to the place where they build boats. It's interesting that they build them now the way they have always built them. After all, we have very accurate pictures of boats, both Asiatic boats and Nile boats. [p. 223]

We were talking about Lynn and Hope Hilton's book, where they followed the supposed trail of Lehi down here, and they came to Jiddah which is on the coast, halfway down. That's the port of Mecca, where you go to Mecca, and he tells us that there is a branch of the Church of about 75 members in Jiddah (on the coast of Arabia) today--didn't know that. And they make ships there and they make them at other places. There's one at Yenbu, one at Jiddah, and one at Salalah down in the south in the Qara Mountains--that's where they make ships. It's most marvelous the way they do it, as Brother Hilton tells us here: [p. 225]

[Nibley quotes the Hilton's book, *In Search of Lehi's Trail* (pp. 85-86, 87) about shipbuilding]

On pages 232-233, Nibley finishes his remarks about Lehi's Journey by continuing to quote from the Hiltons' book about their description of the journey across the sea to the promised land--pp. 114-115.

**1993^ Delbert W. Curtis *Christ in North America: Christ Visited the Nephites in the Land of Promise***

*in North America*, Resource Communications, 1993.

Delbert Curtis promotes a Book of Mormon geography limited to the Great Lakes region with the New York Hill Cumorah as the cornerstone. Concerning Lehi's travels to the promised land he writes:

For many hundreds of years the "Frankincense Trail" followed the shore of the Red Sea to about the nineteen degree of north latitude, and turned east to the only spot that matches Nephi's description on the Sea of Arabia. (see illustration below) . . . (p. 36)

**[1993 Map: Lehi's Route through Arabia.** Delbert Curtis, *Christ in North America*, Resource Communications, 1993, p. 31]

After Lehi and his party left the shore of the Sea of Arabia, no direction or course is given except that they were to go to the promised land. . . .

A map of the world's ocean currents and winds indicates that the shortest route would be around the southern tip of Africa, up the west coast of Africa, across the Atlantic to the east coast of North America, up the coast to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, up the St. Lawrence River, into Lake Ontario, west to the west end of Lake Ontario (the Sea East), and into the very heart of the land of promise. . . . (p. 33)

**[1993 Map: Ocean Currents.** Delbert Curtis, *Christ in North America*, Resource Communications, 1993, p. 32]

**[1993Map: Gulf of St Lawrence Leading to the Land of Promise.** Upon reaching the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it would be easy to sail up the river to the west end of Lake Ontario (the Sea East) to the heart of the land of promise. Delbert Curtis, *Christ in North America*, Resource Communications, 1993, p. 44]

**[1993 Map: Book of Mormon Lands.** Delbert Curtis, *Christ in North America*, Resource Communications, 1993, p. 32]

If Lehi and his family had left the land of Bountiful in early spring, the wind would have been favorable until they reached Madagascar. From Madagascar until they reached the west coast of Africa, the winds would have been light and variable, good sailing winds. North, along the west coast of Africa, the prevailing winds would have been to the north. By the time they started their Atlantic Crossing, the winds would have been shifting to give them a good following breeze and current all the way to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. (p. 35)

**[1993 Illustrated Map Ocean Currents: Probable route by Lehi in dashes]**

Source: Delbert W. Curtis, *Christ in North America*, (back cover).

Curtis also makes some detailed arguments against the 1842 *Times & Seasons* article in which it stated that Lehi landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien." He notes that the prophet Joseph Smith would have been in hiding during this time. He also makes some detailed arguments against the Frederick G. Williams "Lehi's Travels" statement, noting that the wording in the supposed "revelation" is different than other revelations recorded in the D & C..

**1993^ E. L. Peay *The Lands of Zarahemla*. SLC: Northwest Publishing, 1993, pp. 1-53**

In this approach, E. L. Peay quotes verbatim from the pertinent scriptural verses and then adds bits of simple commentary with limited footnotes and some maps. The following is some of the more pertinent reasoning:

[1 Nephi 2:5] Lehi gives us a quick overview of their travels along the borders of the Red Sea. . . .



[2:6] Lehi's family reached the borders near the Red Sea but apparently were still some distance from the water. It is doubtful they would have gone from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea, approximately 150 miles in 3 days. . . .

[2:7] . . . Animals were a necessary part of sacrifice in their religious offerings. At this first camp there were . . . times when burnt offerings were made to the Lord . . . Throughout the balance of their twelve years' journey, there is nothing said of making burnt offerings. . . . There were no burnt offerings at Bountiful, nor when they finally reached the Promised Land. The reason, I believe, is because they had no more animals in their possession to appropriately offer thanks to the Lord.

[2:8] It appears that they did not realize at first that the river where they had camped and had named Laman ran into the Red Sea because he [Nephi] says, "when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea." From that I surmise that they were some distance from the Red Sea. In the area to the north of the Red Sea, the hills and land mass are much higher, 250-500 meters (800-1600 feet) above sea level, from which they could have seen the Red Sea from a distance of possibly 30 miles.

[16:12] Shazer, the second camp, was four days more, making seven days journey south-southeast from Jerusalem. Campsites were necessarily determined by the available sources of water and grazing for their animals.

[16:14-17] At this third camp, they mentioned that they made camp in order to rest themselves and to build up their food supply. . . . it is doubtful they would travel on the Sabbath; so their many days of travel probably were less than seven. Today along the Red Sea coast, there are cities at the mouths of most main canyons where water is available now and probably was then.

[16:33-36] This is the fourth camp since leaving the land of Jerusalem, or the third camp along the Red Sea. It possibly took 30 days of actual traveling time. I think they did not stay in each camp for very long because they would not be suffering with hunger, thirst and fatigue if they had spent a lot of time in camps. It appears that none of the women were pregnant or had any children yet, or they would have said something about it in their anger. . . .

In summary, their first camp, between the Gulf of Aqaba and Jerusalem, was where the Lord gave them the Liahona. They traveled four days to the second camp, Shazer. Many more days of travel, probably six days, brought them to the third camp. Then after another "many days' travel", they camped the fourth time . . .

**[1993 Map: Lehi's First Four Camps.** E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla: A Book of Mormon Commentary*, vol. 1., Salt Lake City, Utah: Northwest Publishing Inc., p. 34]

[71:1] From their fourth campsite, they changed directions from south-southeasterly to east. In my estimation, this campsite near the Red Sea was about 530 miles southeast of Jerusalem at about the twenty-fifth north parallel. Prior to turning east, their wives apparently hadn't had children. But after turning east, they noted bearing children over that eight year period. Their fourth camp was probably just less than a year from their departure out of Jerusalem. The map on the following page [see below] shows a great number of cities today which probably existed centuries ago in Lehi's time as oases along the course they traveled as the Lord guided them through this harsh land. The Lord truly guided them through the more fertile parts of the wilderness.

**[1993 Possible Oases in Lehi's Time Along His Route.** E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla: A Book of Mormon Commentary*, vol. 1., Salt Lake City, Utah: Northwest Publishing Inc., p. 36]

Some have suggested that Lehi and his people journeyed eight years in Arabia. To me, this is inconsistent with Nephi's statement that after the fourth camp, they journeyed eight years in a nearly easterly direction. Also, the idea that Lehi followed the Red Sea as far south as the 22nd parallel or further before pursuing an easterly route, seems highly unlikely. An easterly route anywhere south of that would have been virtually impossible because of the high mountain range of the Hijaz-Asir Plateau rising over 9,800 feet (3000 meters) above sea level, and to the east of that, the world's largest sand pile known as the Empty Quarter. I think survival of such a journey would not be possible. This is definitely not the more fertile parts of the land through which Lehi was guided toward the Promised Land.

The southern coast of Arabia was inhabited by Egyptians at that time. They populated the seaports of Samhar, Qana, Ocelis ([Hammond Past Worlds](#), p. 184). Land and sea routes passed through these cities along the Red Sea on into India and even China.

For those that think that Lehi's group may have camped on the Arabian Sea coast while they built their ship destined for the Promised Land, I call attention to the fact that no iron ore is found in that area ([National Guide & Atlas of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](#), p. 37). They needed ore to make their tools to build the ship.

I believe that Lehi's group took their eastward course at about the Tropic of Cancer, and from "that time forth" they continuously traveled east for eight years until they came to the sea (Pacific Ocean).

[17:2-4] These four verses are the entire record of their eight years of journeying and sojourn in the wilderness. . . . The record says they traveled eight years in a near eastward direction. I believe this easterly course for eight years took them across the Persian Gulf and overland to the east coast of the South China Sea. . . . The route shown on the map from Jerusalem to the east coast of China is

approximately seven thousand miles. That would require traveling 875 miles a year or 17 miles a week. . .

**[1993 Lehi and His People Traveled Easterly Eight Years to Bountiful.** E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla: A Book of Mormon Commentary*, vol. 1., Salt Lake City, Utah: Northwest Publishing Inc., p. 40]

Traveling for eight years with hardly any explanations allows a lot of filling in. There are some likely possibilities that would facilitate such a long trip. For instance, there are at least two rivers that flow to the east, which could be easily traveled by building barges made by lashing large logs or trees together--the Yamuna, then the Ganges River, across eight hundred miles of the plains of India. Then following the Brahmaputra River, they could have crossed Burma, the mountains, and southern China to the East China Sea. They may have traveled on the Honghui River, which reaches the South China Sea at Macau, near Hong Kong, (National Geographic Atlas of the World, 6th Ed., p. 71). This river is similar in size to that of the Mississippi River in the U.S.A. . . . The people of Lehi now were in proximity with the progressive Chinese people who traded and communicated over the centuries with the people of India, Africa, Asia, Europe, and apparently the Americas. . . .

[17:7-10] Nephi was divinely guided to build a superior ship. . . . The Chinese had a fleet of ships as early as 1000 B.C. The Egyptians also used the sail as early as 4000 B.C. and had a Mediterranean fleet during Lehi's time (Hammond Past Worlds, p. 13) If men had been building ships for thousands of years, why not Nephi with the help of the Lord? The Lehi group was on the east coast of south China in a place where all the materials were available. There was the proper kind of timber and iron ore, there was a high mountain where Nephi conversed with the Lord (1 Nephi 17:7), and there was a sea current and prevailing winds moving in the direction of the Promised Land. (Atlas of the World 6th ed., p. 7).

1. mountain: Practically all of eastern China is mountainous.

2. timber: Teakwood is found all along the coast of eastern China.

3. ore: Iron ore is found near the mouth of the Yangtze River and Shanghai. It is also found south of there in the area of Guangdong. China has been noted for its mining of iron ore, nickel, and copper. Chinese steel swords are noted for their quality (National Geographic Atlas of the World, 6th ed., p. 10).

4. sea currents and prevailing winds: These winds and currents flow toward the north and east. This makes the north Pacific Ocean current flow in a large clockwise motion. (National Geographic Atlas of the World 6th ed., p. 7).

[18:20-25] I believe the terrible storm was part of the Lord's plan to place Lehi and his family in the proper path to be carried and blown to Central America by the prevailing sea currents and winds.

[1993 **Lehi Driven to the Promised Land.** E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla: A Book of Mormon Commentary*, vol. 1., Salt Lake City, Utah: Northwest Publishing Inc., p. 51]

[1993 **Land of Promise.** E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla: A Book of Mormon Commentary*, vol. 1., Salt Lake City, Utah: Northwest Publishing Inc., p. 52]

1994^ **E. L. Peay** *The Lands of Zarahemla: Nephi's Land of Promise*, vol. 2. Provo, Utah: E. L.

Peay, 1994.

E. L. Peay presents a limited Mesoamerican setting for the New World, but completely southward from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, primarily in El Salvador, Honduras Guatemala, Yucatan Peninsula and Belize. Although volume 2 covers from Alma 45 through the end of the Book of Mormon, it does contain a summary of volume 1 and a couple of illustrations [see below] concerning the travels of Lehi. Some pertinent excerpts from the summary are as follows:

Being commanded of the Lord, Lehi led his family out into the desert. . . . They traveled three campsites southeast along the Red Sea, then turned to the east and traveled for eight years through the more fertile parts of the land until they arrived at the South China Sea (1 Nephi 17:1). Nephi, third son of Lehi, was directed by the Lord in building a ship by which they sailed to the Promised Land (1 Nephi 17:8). They landed on the southwestern coast of what is known today as Central America, calling it the Land of Lehi.

[1994 **Map: Lehi's Eastward Journey.** E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla: Nephi's Land of Promise*, vol. 2. Provo, Utah: E. L. Peay, 1994, p. 11]

[1994 **Map: Mulek Landed North, Lehi Landed South.** E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla: Nephi's Land of Promise*, vol. 2. Provo, Utah: E. L. Peay, 1994, p. 127]

1994^ **Mark J. Johnson** "The Exodus of Lehi Revisited,," in *Journal of Book of*

***Mormon Studies*** 3, no. 2, 1994, 123-126.

Mark Johnson writes:

In 1952, Hugh Nibley first pointed out the significance of the name Nahom in relationship to the death of Ishmael. He also mentioned the importance of Ishmael's daughters mourning his loss. What also becomes apparent is that, by the way Ishmael is buried in the desert, they (the Lehites) are following in the footsteps of their fathers (the children of Israel under Moses).

Let us examine, side by side, two accounts of death and burial in the desert:

And it came to pass that Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called nahom. (1 Nephi 16:34)

And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought. (Josh. 24:32)

I feel that it is most likely that Ishmael died well before (possibly weeks or even months) the Lehites arrived at Nahom. Dr. Nibley points out it is not uncommon for desert people to carry their dead many miles to locate the proper place of burial. Just as Joseph was buried in a special parcel of land, it seems only natural that the Lehites would wait until they found a proper place to bury Ishmael.

In their report to FARMS, Warren and Michaela Aston show that the place of Nahom is a few miles off the main trail that the Lehites took. It is unlikely that they would go out of their way unless it was rather important. Surely, one thing that would make them go out of their way would be the death of a loved one. It is important to note, as do the Astons, that Nahom already existed and was already a place of burial. The chances seem slim that Ishmael would die as the party arrived at Nahom. The logical conclusion is that Ishmael died along the way and was carried to Nahom. We cannot conclude whether the Lehites were aware of the parallels to the Exodus as they were reenacting them, although it appears that Nephi did at least thirty years later. We can be sure that, like the children of Israel, they honored their patriarchs and also were following ancient ritual in burying their dead.

**1994^ Les Campbell Book review of E. L. Peay, *The Lands of Zarahemla*, Salt Lake City: Northwest**

Publishing, 1993, in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, volume 6

number 2, Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994,

pp. 139-145.

Les Campbell writes:

Peay's commentary begins with the departure of Lehi into the wilderness and ends with Alma 52. I assume the author plans a second volume.

Peay's interpretation of Lehi's travels is shown on the map on page 40. According to the author, the eight years of travel by the Lehi group took them 530 miles south of Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Somewhere close to the imaginary Tropic of Cancer lies Umla, where Peay has the travelers turn east and traverse the Arabian Peninsula just north of the Empty Quarter. They arrive at Al Kasab, just south of the Straits of Hormuz. A map of the possible oases used by Lehi along the route is included on page 36. Peay then has Lehi's party cross the Persian Gulf, presumably in a boat of some sort, and from there east across the plains of northern India. Barges are built at least twice for travel on the Yamuna and Ganges Rivers. This allows for 800 miles of travel on the water. On the next leg of the journey, Lehi follows the Brahmaputra River through Burma and eventually arrives at the East China Sea. In Peay's second option to this last leg, Lehi floats down the Honghui River, arriving at Macau near the South China Sea.

Peay suggests the present-day city of Hong Kong as a probable land of Bountiful, part of a route used in 1000 B.C. by the Chinese, Indians, Asians, and Europeans. As Lehi traveled through this area, Peay believes he was exposed to many cultural traits that later show up in the promised land. Peay believes that all the requirements of Bountiful met in this area. He also believes that the sea currents and prevailing winds to be right to help Lehi arrive at the promised land.

I was extremely disappointed in the lack of sources in a book 300 pages long . . . This book does not deliver the goods. Peay used eighteen sources outside the scriptures and referred to them forty times. . . . The author very nearly ignores all major research of the last twenty-five years. . . . With the exception of two quotes from Nibley's "Lachish Letters," Peay also seems to ignore entirely the research of respected LDS scholars who have made significant contributions to our understanding of the many cultural and geographical facets of potential relationship to the Book of Mormon. . . .

Peay is to be commended for giving us numerous maps on which he places his interpretation within a real-world framework. . . . Rather than critique each map, I thought it easier and shorter to list some of the parallels between the Book of Mormon text and the author's model.

Bountiful (Old World) = Macau near Hong King (p. 41) . . .

Lehi's landing site = Pacific coast of Guatemala (p. 52)

**1994<sup>^</sup> Warren and Michaela Aston *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across***

***Arabia to Bountiful*** SLC: Deseret Book, 1994.

In this book, while assuming the general coastal route for Lehi's travels through Arabia as outlined by Nibley in 1950-52, and the Hiltons in 1976, the Astons focus their studies on the proposed locations for

Nahom and Bountiful. The first section is titled "The Place Which Was Called Nahom." It draws substantially from their previous 1989 article ("The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail"). Of interest, however, is the story of how the Astons began their research:

One morning early in 1984, Warren was commuting to work and took a six-year old issue of the *Ensign* magazine with him to read. This randomly selected issue (August 1978) printed a letter from Ross Christensen, a BYU professor of archaeology, that discussed a possible location for the place Nahom mentioned in the First book of Nephi. (note 3) The letter suggested that Nahom may equate to a place called "Nehhm" about twenty-five miles northeast of the Yemen capital Sana'a appearing on a 1763 map by the German surveyor and mapmaker Carsten Niebuhr. Dr. Christensen proposed that a search for other maps and references to the name should be made. Although Warren had read the issue previously, the letter now intrigued him, and he began wondering what had been done to follow up the points raised by Dr. Christensen. Although sure that scholars had pursued the matter, over the following days he was unable to resist the growing impression that he should discover the outcome. We contacted the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) in Provo, Utah . . . and it was to them that we turned for advice. What had been learned about Nahom in the years since the *Ensign* had published the letter? Surprisingly, it eventually became clear that no one had taken Brother Christensen's suggestions further, and a plan for doing so began to take shape. Although we had little to base the project on other than our previous experience traveling in the Middle East and a strong interest in the scriptures, we began planning to visit the legendary land of Sheba, Yemen.

The opportunity to do so came much sooner than we expected . . . in November, we were in Egypt. A series of minor miracles saw us obtain air tickets and visas there to visit the Yemen Arab Republic. . . . Throughout our stay . . . we were politely but firmly advised that travel to some areas we planned to see was not possible. As our time in Yemen began to run out, we did not seem to be getting very far. It was not until our last full day in the country that we had our first small but encouraging success. We located a recently printed map showing "Nehem" in the same general area as the 1763 map, and it became clear that they both referred to the same place about twenty-five miles northeast of Sana'a. The name, therefore, had survived to the present from at least the time Niebuhr had produced his map. We also determined that Nehem was connected with the name of an important present-day tribe occupying the mountains overlooking the large Jawf valley. In this small beginning lay the clues from which we would eventually trace the history of this name to near the time of Lehi." [pp. 5-10]

The following are improved illustrations and charts (improved from the 1989 article):

[1994 **Figure 1: The Arabian peninsula, including incense trade routes and major centers.** Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* SLC: Deseret Book, 1994, p. 6]

[1994 **Figure 3: Map of southeastern Arabia showing the final stages of Lehi's journey and all locations referred to in the text.** Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* SLC: Deseret Book, 1994, p. 11]

[1994 **Figure 4: Niebuhr's 1763 map of Yemen showing the tribal district of NEHHM northeast of Sana'a.** Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* SLC: Deseret Book, 1994, p. 15]

[1994 **Chart: Summary of the Evidence Recording the Name "Nihm."** Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* SLC: Deseret Book, 1994, p. 18]

[1994 **Figure 5: Map of the Nahom/Wadi Jawf area.** (Reproduced from "A Sketch Map of South West Arabia" compiled by Nigel Groom and published by the Royal Geographical Society, London, in 1976. Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* SLC: Deseret Book, 1994, p. 24]

Part two is titled "And We Called the Place Bountiful." This section draws substantially from their 1991 article ("And We Called the Place Bountiful: The End of Lehi's Arabian Journey." Here they propose Wadi Sayq as the Old World Bountiful rather than the previously proposed Salalah or Qara mountains. Of interest is the account of their "journey of discovery":

Even today, little is known about the history of the Arabian coast. Much of the coastal areas in both Yemen and southern Oman have never been visited by scientist of any discipline, and what work has been done is necessarily tentative and incomplete. Two nineteenth-century accounts describe, briefly, sea voyages made by Europeans along the Qamar and Mahra coasts westward. Both make mention of the port of Rakhyut, but not a word is said about Khor Kharfot, which suggests that nothing was visible to attract attention; obviously no port or harbor was in operation then. In short, it seems to have looked much the same as it now does and consequently kept its secrets until late in the following century.

Wadi Sayq lies in the very heart of the most unexplored section of coastline of all, the Qamar coast at the western extremity of Oman. It was not until 1989 that this southernmost region of Oman was properly linked by road with Salalah; previously it could be reached overland only by a daunting and circuitous journey of some 125 miles via the inland settlement of Mudayy. The new road was magnificently engineered to cross Wadi Afawl--a chasm so deep that it almost severs the region from the remainder of the country--and thus real development in the Qamar region has become a possibility.

There is another reason why this special place has escaped attention for so long. Unless it is reached by traveling from the interior desert plateau (as Lehi would have done), it remains almost completely hidden. . . . Even when viewed from the sea, the valley is hidden from view by the oblique angle at which it reaches the coast. The high beach also obscures the freshwater lagoon, the trees, and most of the vegetation from the view of passing vessels. . . .

Our own exploration of Oman had its beginnings in the early 1980s. Although we were absorbed in our research to locate Nahom in Yemen, we had a desire to visit neighboring Oman to see Salalah for ourselves, seemingly the only possible place where Bountiful could have been. . . . It was not until



October 1987 that permission was finally granted, and Warren, traveling alone, visited Oman for five days while en route to Yemen . . .

Although Warren had gone with the sole expectation of seeing "Bountiful," by the time he departed Oman, serious doubts that this could be the place were emerging. The Salalah area did indeed have most of the requirements for Bountiful, but it took hours of driving to see them as they were widely scattered over the barren coastal plain. The only natural vegetation, timber trees, and springs were miles from the coast, and the area seemed very different from Nephi's description.

The first breakthrough came when Warren, with some considerable probing, heard a report of "large trees" growing near the Yemen border. As this report was firsthand, the myth that Salalah was the only place large trees grew was demolished; access to the border area, however, seemed impossible. The road from Salalah finished only half an hour away at Mughsayl at the base of the Qamar range. Attempts to proceed further failed, and Warren returned to Australia knowing only that Salalah was an unlikely candidate and that more work needed to be done.

Both Warren and Michaela returned the following October (1988) to Oman determined to examine the coast further west of Salalah. . . . We left our Salalah hotel before sunrise the next morning . . . our destination, Rakhyut. . . . After years of traveling and exploring in Arabia, the sight was both so unexpected and so impressive that we seemed almost spellbound, gazing down into a Middle East Shangri-La. . . .

The following year, 1989 . . . After trying in vain to arrange travel to Dhalqut by road, we returned to Rakhyut. Here, on October 2, we managed to convince some local fishermen to take us down the coast in their aluminum boat. . . . We had hoped to land at Dhalqut, but conditions were too rough to do so . . . To compensate for not landing at Dhalqut, the fishermen agreed . . . to land us at Wadi Sayq, roughly halfway back to Rakhyut. We had passed it on the way down the coast and thought little of it, not realizing it was the same verdant location that had so impressed us the previous year. From the sea it had appeared as little more than a shallow bay with a beach. We walked up from the sea, the late afternoon sun highlighting clouds of insects and pollen in the air, into a place so lush that Claire wasted no time in announcing that here at last was Bountiful. . . . We had only a brief hour to explore and photograph before it was necessary to leave. . . .

Wadi Sayq was a literal paradise in the midst of an already impressive region, but still questions remained. How could anyone have reached this location from the desert? Was there a passage from the interior we knew nothing of? . . .

Finding the answers to these and other questions spurred our research on. We first established that what we had seen was only the coastal mouth of a long valley leading through the mountains from the desert interior. This narrow valley offered a feasible route that a group of travelers with camels could use to reach the coast at this point. We were able to locate satellite-based maps from London that clearly showed the wadi's beginnings out in the border area, and the reason that it was uninhabited was clear: despite its attractiveness, the coast was simply too difficult to reach. For anyone other than a divinely led prophet, the long miles of travel through the arid valley, with no route out other than by sea, would make little sense. (See illustrations below)

**[1994 Figure 14, 15, 16: 3-D maps of Wadi Sayq showing the valley leading from the desert interior to the coast. Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* SLC: Deseret Book, 1994, pp. 50-51]**

[1994 **Figure 17: Map of Khor Kharfot, "Bountiful."** Warren and Michaela Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* SLC: Deseret Book, 1994, p. 52]

Note\* It is interesting that the Astons relate in a most overwhelmingly positive way their proposal of Wadi Sayq for "Bountiful" as early as October 2, 1988. However, in their 1989 article "The Search for Nahom and the End of Lehi's Trail" which was "revised October 1988" they have a map showing the route of Lehi from Nahom (Nehem) to the site of Sayhut with a note, "Possible Route of Lehi from Nahom to Bountiful." Sayhut is hundreds of miles to the west of Wadi Sayq. One has to wonder why the Astons failed to correct this.

Part three gives details and photographs of the FARMS expeditions to Wadi Sayq (April 1993 and September 1993). They conclude:

What can be said now in conclusion from both expeditions? We can state that everything that has been found at this site has been confirmatory and tends to strengthen our belief that Khor Kharfot/Wadi Sayq is the Bountiful Nephi spoke of. Aside from metal ore (for which no qualified person has yet sought), it meets all of the scriptural criteria exceptionally well. We have found no inconsistencies or problems to cast doubt upon the account that Nephi recorded.

We can now go further and state that the two 1993 visits have, in their turn, begun to shed additional light on the Nephite experience at Bountiful. Nowhere is this more true than in the sea-inlet concept that must now be considered certain. At some point in the past, Kharfot was probably a good-sized port, overlooked by the fort that gave rise to its name and that may now be represented by the large mound ruin on the east side of the bay. Knowing that this place was once an inlet of considerable size allows us to propose how a sizable ship could have been constructed close to the ocean despite the violent storms and high seas of one or more monsoons. Building the vessel on or near the slightly raised west side of the bay would have provided the required shelter and still allowed it to be launched via the inlet into the open sea. [see Figure 17 above] Additionally, knowing that the ocean extended even closer to timber trees and also to the likely place of settlement on the plateau than it now does helps us to view the place as even more attractive and suitable than it now appears.

We have no data yet to indicate how long the present beach has been in existence, but it must predate the 1895 voyage along the coast by Theodore Bent and his wife. Judging from their detailed description of the coast and its ports, Kharfot would certainly have merited a mention had it then been an inlet and port, but they do not mention the place.

Archaeological data indicates that the site has been occupied at various periods over the past several thousand years, and, pending proper excavation, it appears that the earliest settlement was located on the small western plateau. Significantly, this is also the location other factors indicate is the most likely encampment for the Lehites. As we reexamined what Nephi said about the place, we were struck by the fact that after mentioning that he went "up into the mountain" (1 Nephi 17:7), he never again refers to going "up" to converse with the Lord, only that he went "into" the mount (18:1-3). Then, in relation to the ship, he uses the expression "down" four times (1 Nephi 18:5,6,8), all of which makes perfect sense if the group moved from the seashore up onto the western plateau, partway up the mount, at the time Nephi began receiving his instructions from the Lord. From there, of course, it was always "down into" the ship. It remains possible of course, that going "down into" may simply indicate that the ship had decks, or perhaps both explanations are correct.

Understanding that settlement has been intermittent here allows us to resolve the seeming paradox of such a fertile and attractive place likely having no local population during Lehi's sojourn there. The unique

combination of climate and geographic isolation makes it entirely feasible, even likely, that Kharfot may have been uninhabited during the brief years of Lehi's time there and yet have provided vacant housing or at least abundant building materials. . . . bearing in mind the factors that make this place unique on the Arabian coastline, it is perhaps unsurprising that the possibility has now been raised that the Bountiful site may have later played an important role in the history of the incense trade. Several of the early accounts refer to the port of "Moscha" as the primary port for the sea transportation of Dhofari incense. Although Khor Rori, east of Salalah, has often been identified as Moscha, there are strong epigraphic reasons for doubting this and, additionally, the Periplus places Moscha some distance west of Khor Rori or closer to the general area of Khor Kharfot. Although questions remain, the extensive ruins at Kharfot and the attractiveness of its inlet-port have drawn attention to the possibility that Moscha may have been just such a place.

With the single exception noted earlier, Khor Kharfot/Wadi Sayq meets all the scriptural criteria for Nephi's Bountiful. With other members of the Church we now await the day when excavations can take place and tell us more of the history of this unique and beautiful corner of Arabia.

Note\* George Potter and Richard Wellington would soon challenge the idea of Bountiful being at Wadi Sayq, and especially that "Moscha" was at any other place than Khor Rori. In fact they would propose Khor Rori as the site for Bountiful. (see the notations for 1999, 2000, 2003)

1995^ L. Ara Norwood "Bountiful Found," BOOK REVIEW: Warren P. Aston and Michaela

**Knath Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's***

***Journey across Arabia to Bountiful***, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994,

vi + 88 pages; in ***Review of Books on the Book of Mormon***, vol. 7,

Issue 1, 1995, Provo, Utah: FARMS, pp. 85-90.

Ara Norwood writes:

*In The Footsteps Of Lehi* begins with a prologue . . . Then follow three main sections of the book. Part One concerns the Astons' work in locating Nahom, where Ishmael was buried (see 1 Nephi 16:34). Part Two deals with the place called Bountiful, where Nephi built his ship (see 1 Nephi 17:5-6). And finally, Part Three, which includes a 16-page section of 26 color photos on glossy paper, chronicles in very personal terms some of the inside details concerning their several expeditions to the Arabian coast in 1993.

This book is a valuable contribution to the literature on the Book of Mormon. . . . The Astons proceed to present very compelling evidence that the place the Book of Mormon calls Nahom bears an authentic place name still present on the Arabian peninsula. They further show that neither Joseph Smith nor any person in New York living in the 1820s could have had access to the kind of information we find in the Book of Mormon, ergo Joseph Smith is a prophetic figure who translated an ancient document by the gift and power of God.

The areas of focus for the Astons relative to their research on Nahom include the following seven items:

(1) Nahom was one place name that, unlike the valley of Lemuel, the river Laman, or Shazer, was not named by Lehi but rather was already so named prior to Lehi's visit. Thus we should not be surprised if such a place can be located on ancient (or modern maps);

(2) the name itself is rare enough to be found nowhere else on the Arabian peninsula; thus no debate of which Nahom is the correct candidate need occur;

(3) the etymology behind the word Nehem/Nahom suggests a striking correlation with the circumstances attending the Lehi party. In fact, even though there are two distinct Semitic roots behind the word, either of their meanings ("to comfort, console, to be sorry" vs. "to roar, complain, or be hungry") is right at home with the Book of Mormon paradigm;

(4) the dating of Arabia's Nehem predates the time of Lehi's sojourn; it would be strongly negative for the Astons' hypothesis if this were not the case;

(5) the presence of burial grounds in the Arabian Nehem correlates precisely with the Book of Mormon account that Ishmael was buried at Nahom;

(6) the climate of today's Arabia is not necessarily the same as the climate present in Lehi's day. Thus, ancient Nehem may have had a milder climate supporting a greater population;

(7) coming from Jerusalem, the trade routes in Arabia turn eastward at Nehem. this correlates perfectly with the Book of Mormon text as given by Nephi . . .

The conclusion by the Astons on the Nahom issue bears repeating: "The Book of Mormon reference to Nahom as an ancient place-name in southern Arabia can now truly be considered validated" (p. 25). I would heartily agree and would be interested to see how the critics of the Book of Mormon respond to such evidence.

In their treatment of Bountiful, the Astons scrutinize the text of the Book of Mormon for every clue they can attain about the place. They list twelve [textual] characteristics that should be present in any serious candidate for Bountiful (pp. 28-29) . . .

The Astons also rightly examine previous studies on the location of Bountiful. Of the six previously proposed candidates for Bountiful, they find that only one of the six, the Wadi Sayq in Oman, meets all of the criteria set forth by the text of the Book of Mormon itself. After describing why it was a largely unknown part of Arabia for so long, and after detailing their expedition, which led to the discovery of this land, the Astons write,

All of the effort and expense had been justified, we felt with the discovery of Wadi Sayq, a place about which no literature made mention, no history was recorded and no proper scientific investigation had ever

been mae. It was a great thrill also when we determined that Wadi Sayq lies almost exactly "eastward" of Nehem in Yemen. So far as Bountiful was concerned, Latter-day Saints could for the first time demonstrate that such a place did in fact exist, just as Nephi described twenty-six hundred years ago. (p. 53)

Even more impressive is the way in which they conclude their findings with respect to both Nahom and Bountiful:

The first location, Nehem/Nahom, is unique in that it may well be a place-name recorded in the Book of Mormon that has survived to the present day, in addition to being associated to other aspects of Nephi's account. The second, Wadi Sayq/Khor Kharfot, impressively fits Nephi's detailed description of Bountiful in ways that no other place does. Further, it is directionally linked with Nehem just as 1 Nephi 17:1 requires. Locating such a precisely defined place anywhere in the world would be a remarkable thing, but to find a site (and only one) exactly matching the criteria in that most unlikely and barren of all regions--Arabia--must appeal to the honest in heart as compelling evidence that Nephi's account is based on reality. (p. 58)

. . . The Astons present their hard research on the Book of Mormon in a fascinating, arresting way. I appreciated their thoroughness, for as I absorbed their data, questions would invariably come into my mind--questions that were answered by them, usually within a few paragraphs. . . . I was pleased to see so many figures and illustrations. I was especially impressed with the quality of the color photographs.

I highly recommend this book to those interested in evidence supporting the Book of Mormon as a divinely inspired ancient document . . . it will cause all seekers after truth to recognize that the descriptions of Nahom and Bountiful in the Book of Mormon are in complete harmony with what we now know of the Arabia of Lehi's day.

Note\* In just a few years, the Aston's research would come under scrutiny by Potter and Wellington and found wanting in many areas.

1995^ Lynn M. Hilton "Nephi's 'Eastward' Journey," in Ancient America Foundation (AAF)

Newsletter, Num. 5, August 1995, p. 1-2

In an interesting note regarding directions, Lynn Hilton writes:

He [Nephi] recalled that when the Lehi colony, traveling south-southeast in the borders of the Red Sea, finally arrived in Nahom (we identify Nahom as being near Saana, Yemen), his family changed the direction of their travels to "travel nearly eastward from that time forth" (1 Ne. 17:1).

Does this mean going eastward only from Nahom to Bountiful, where he built his ship (proposed identification is Salalah, Dhufar, Oman)? Or could he have meant *continuing* eastward across the oceans to the Land of the First Inheritance (proposed identification is Tapachula / Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico) and *still* going eastward to the city of Nephi (proposed identification Guatemala City, Guatemala) where Nephi reigned as king of the Nephites and engraved the account of his travels . . . ?

In this part of the Book of Mormon, we have no choice but to assume that "east" meant east as measured today. This is because the south-southeast direction in the borders of the Red Sea is very close to the actual direction. The actual reading averaged over the Red Sea coast is a bearing of 149 degrees, whereas the true direction of south-southeast is a bearing of 157.5 degrees, or a deviation of only 8.5 degrees to the east or left. But this direction of travel, 149 degrees, is much closer to "south-southeast" than to southeast, where the deviation is 14 degrees, or to any other cardinal point of the compass. Thus, we conclude that Nephi knew the true directions of his travels and described them with the words for direction he had in his vocabulary. This means that when he said "nearly eastward," he meant a heading of nearly 90 degrees on our compass.

We advance the idea that Nephi really meant "eastward" until the end of his travels. This theory allows us to reconstruct Nephi's routing from Arabia across the "mighty deep" to the ultimate end of his travels into the city of Nephi. If we know the location of any of these places, we can get a good idea where the other three are, because all will be lined up on the same parallel of north latitude.

The table in Figure 1 [see below] shows the four sites on this "eastward" journey. We show the degrees and minutes of north latitude for each of the sites as identified on a modern map. Note how they cluster along the fifteenth parallel. Figure 2 [see below] is a table giving the numerical values of these deviations. The greatest deviation is a maximum of only 83 miles, the other sites deviate even less from true east. Consider that these small deviations are after hundreds of thousands of miles of travel. We believe that Nephi's use of the words "nearly eastward" rather than "east" would allow such deviations.

Figure 3 [see below] is a world map showing the four sites Nephi mentions on his eastward trip to the Promised Land and his final destination into the city of Nephi. Starting at Nahom, Yemen, it is approximately 794 miles to arrive at the tropical paradise Bountiful (Salalah, Dhufar, Oman) with its huge hardwood trees, which he could have used to "work the timbers" for his ship (1 Ne. 18:1). The deviation from the heading Nahom-Salalah to true east is 83 miles for this leg of the journey. The sea voyage from Bountiful (Salalah, Dhufar, Oman) to the Land of the First Inheritance (Tapachula / Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico) is approximately 15,000 miles. In all these travels, Nephi was guided by the instructions in the Liahona, which no doubt told him how to circumnavigate the land masses he would confront in the eastward journey--such as skirting India to the south and the same for Southeast Asia. Perhaps he sailed down the Malacca Straits, in front of Singapore, north of Borneo and north of Mindanao, Philippines. It is easy to imagine that the Nephi party put ashore at some of these landfalls for water and food. Then Nephi could return to the fifteenth parallel of north latitude to continue eastward to his landfall in the Promised Land at the place of the First Inheritance near Tapachula / Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico. The deviation after a 15,000 miles sea voyage from true east of Nahom is about 48 miles! This achievement is really astonishing and should be considered as a serious proposal for the starting point for Book of Mormon geography in the New World.

Mariners and even desert travelers in ancient Arabia used a simple device, composed of a small board and a knotted leather thong, to measure the angle of Polaris above the horizon, to navigate due east or due west. They achieved surprising accuracy with this device. With such a device, as well as with the Liahona, Nephi could easily navigate eastward.

Our LDS literature is full of discussions of ocean currents and wind patterns in the Pacific, but such discussions of drifting with the currents rather than purposefully steering and sailing directly "eastward" in our opinion is of lesser importance, because Nephi specifically said he "sailed" (1 Ne 18:22) and "steered" (1 Ne 18:13) his ship. He did not just allow it to coast along with the natural currents. Remember, it is the "set of the sails and not the gales" that tells you where to go.

The final leg of the eastward travels of Nephi came after the death and burial of Lehi in the Land of the First Inheritance. Nephi had serious disagreements with his older brothers and then took all who would follow him, including Zoram, Sam, Jacob, Joseph, and his sisters and journeyed many days in the wilderness (2 Ne. 5:7). Apparently, he also took flocks and herds with him. He established the city of Nephi perhaps near Guatemala City, at a distance of approximately 110 miles from the Lamanites. Guatemala City is but a scant deviation of 69 miles from true east of Nahom! Corroboration of the idea that the Land of the First Inheritance was "west" of the City of Nephi is found in the scripture Alma 22:28.

Once located here, Nephi completed his mortal life and was buried in the City of Nephi, thus ending the "nearly eastward" journey he started at Nahom in Arabia so many years before.

[1995 **Figure 1: Latitude of Sites on Nephi's Eastward Journey.** Lynn M. Hilton, "Nephi's 'Eastward' Journey," in *Ancient America Foundation (AAF)Newsletter*, Num. 5, August 1995, p. 1]

[1995 **Figure 2: Table of Deviations.** Lynn M. Hilton, "Nephi's 'Eastward' Journey," in *Ancient America Foundation (AAF)Newsletter*, Num. 5, August 1995, p. 2]

[1995 **Figure 3: 15th Parallel North Latitude.** Lynn M. Hilton, "Nephi's 'Eastward' Journey," in *Ancient America Foundation (AAF)Newsletter*, Num. 5, August 1995, p. 2]

1995 Eugene E. Clark "A Preliminary Study of the Geology and Mineral Resources of Dhofar, the

Sultanate of Oman." Provo, UT: FARMS, Preliminary Report, 1995.

**1995^ Paul Hedengren** *The Land of Lehi: A Book of Mormon Geography*, Bradford & Wilson, 1995.

Paul Hedengren presents novel approaches to Lehi's travels through Arabia, the voyage across the sea to the New World, and the geographic location of the Promised Land. He writes:

From Jerusalem, Lehi and his family come down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea. The part of the Red Sea nearest Jerusalem is the Gulf of Aqaba. They then travel three days in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea. . . . They come to a valley they call Lemuel which has a flowing stream in it they call the river Laman. here they set up camp. Apparently they are not too familiar with the area for Lehi seems not to know that the river Laman flows into the fountain of the Red Sea until he sees it. . . .

According to the 1828 edition of *Webster's Dictionary* that reflects word use at Joseph Smith's time, a fountain is a source of water. Since the Gulf of Aqaba receives water from a considerable surrounding area which then flows out of the Gulf into a larger area of the Red Sea, it seems reasonable to consider the Gulf of Aqaba to be a fountain of the Red Sea. It also seems reasonable to consider the Gulf of Aqaba to be a mouth of the Red Sea. Thus the river Laman likely flows into the gulf of Aqaba.

In the area are several wadis. . . . For water to have flowed continually during the time Lehi was camped by it, the flow likely comes from springs. There are springs in the bottom of some wadis in the general vicinity of the Gulf of Aqaba. The wadis flowing into the Gulf of Aqaba in the area are identified on maps. Yet with one exception, none of the consulted maps show any of these wadis to have year-round flow. The one exception is found on a United States Army map which shows the lower portion of Wadi an Nuwaybi to have continual flow. [see map below] . . .

**[1995 Map of Wadi an Nuwaybi.** United States Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, Washington, 1961, map K502XNH3612. Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: A Book of Mormon Geography*, Bradford & Wilson, 1995, p. 5]

This map was prepared for military use and shows great care in the identification of sources of water in this arid region. springs are not only identified, but the quality of their water is indicated. Given the apparent concern in accurately identifying water sources in the area, it is reasonable to assume this map to be accurate in its representation of the continuous flow from within a valley to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Even if there were no continuous flow of water today in the Wadi an Nuwaybi because of a less moist modern climate, this is still likely the valley Lemuel because no other wadi passes through what contour lines show markedly to be a valley. [pp. 3-5]

According to Hedengren, by crossing this river in Wadi an Nuwaybi, and continuing up Wadi Umm Jurfayn, one can continue on for several days in a "nearly south-southeast direction" (1 Nephi 16:13). Only from the upper half of the Gulf of Aqaba is it possible to travel four days in a "nearly south-southeast" direction. Attempted from the lower half, the traveler runs into the Red Sea.



Note\* This is a good point to consider. Keith Christensen has also addressed this aspect. However, one does not have to travel in a direct line all the time. It is the sum total of all the correctional changes that determine direction. The reader will notice that Hedengren uses the "sum-total" approach when considering Lehi's travel "eastward" from Nahom to Bountiful (see his illustration on page 31). As for his location for the valley of Lemuel, there are problems not thoroughly investigated: (1) Wadi an Nuwaybi lies only about 15 miles from Aqaba. (Grid lines = 10 kilometers--about 6 miles). Does this constitute only "three days" travel into the wilderness? (2) Although he might interpret the map as a river, there has been no actual confirmation of a continually running river. (3) There has been no actual confirmation of conditions (food, fodder for the animals, shade, etc.) necessary to sustain a family for possibly a number of years.

Traveling south southeast, they were "led in 'the more fertile parts of the wilderness,' which appears from the vegetation relief map to be the east slope of the mountain range that parallels the Red Sea. [see map below]

[1995 **Map: Vegetation.** Source: *Hammond Citation World Atlas*, Hammond, Maplewood, New Jersey, 1992, p. 55. Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: A Book of Mormon Geography*, Bradford & Wilson, 1995, p. 8]

This area is fertile enough to allow them to slay food as they travel. After traveling for a space of many days, they set up their tents. . . . First, they set up tents in the place they call Shazer which they reach after they cross the river Laman and travel for four days. Second, when they leave Shazer, they travel many days in the same direction and eventually pitch tents again to rest to hunt. . . . Nephi breaks his bow. Yet he is able to find and slay some wild beasts in a quantity that he is able to carry back to camp. With these provisions, they travel again in the same direction. third, after many days they pitch their tents again. Apparently at this camp Ishmael dies. When they travel again, they travel eastward. . . . [p. 8]

If Bountiful is in northeastern Oman, then since it was reached by eastward travel, we can easily identify a credible course of travel for Lehi and his company. Lehi and company:

1. Travel from Jerusalem to the east shore of the Gulf of Aqaba to camp in a valley on the north side of Wadi an Nuwaybi.
2. Travel from the Gulf of Aqaba south southeast on the east side of the mountain to about the Tropic of Cancer.
3. Wander for several years , making progress eastward along the Tropic of Cancer.
4. Arrive on the shores of the Arabian Sea in eastern Oman.

In this course of travel, once they left the Gulf of Aqaba, whose opposite shore is clearly visible, no body of water would be seen until the Arabian Sea . . . the most difficult part of the trip would be the last legs from south eastern Saudi Arabia to the oasis south of Qutuf in the United Arab Emirates, and from there to the Al Buraymi oasis near the Oman border. . . . such a journey would clearly be feasible for Lehi and his company. [p. 15] (see map below)

**[1995 Map: Lehi's Journey.** Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: A Book of Mormon Geography*, Bradford & Wilson, 1995, p. 15]

Hedengren continues:

Suppose a modern sailing vessel were in the Arabian Sea today and were to go to some place on the western hemisphere. What route would it take, assuming the Suez Canal was not available? It would take the same route available to Lehi, southwest around the tip of Africa and then northwest across the Atlantic Ocean. This route is favored by both winds and currents. As drawn using a modern guide book of cruising routes for sail boats, the likely route is shown (see map below). Clearly the shore of the western hemisphere most accessible from the Indian Ocean is the eastern shore. And the easiest point to reach along that shore would be in south America. yet winds and currents make it possible to sail with the wind to any place along the eastern shore, except in the extreme north or extreme south.

While modern sailboats are able to sail up into the wind by having a precisely shaped and rigged sail, it is not apparent that Nephi would have had suitable means to make such sails and rigging. [p. 17]

**[1995 Map: Lehi's Voyage.** Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: A Book of Mormon Geography*, Bradford & Wilson, 1995, p. 17]

This region [the states of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware--where Lehi sailed to in the New World--see map below] is consistent both in size and location with the region in which the events described in the Book of Mormon occurred. Given that the New York hill is the hill Cumorah referred to in the Book of Mormon, no other area appears to be properly situated to be consistent with the text of the Book of Mormon.[p. 28]

**[1995 Illustrated Model Paul Hedengren Limited N.E. United States]**

Area of the Events of the Book of Mormon.

Source: Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: A Book of Mormon Geography*, Bradford & Wilson, 1995, p. 28

Hedengren next has a "Questions and Answers" section. The following are worth noting:

2. *What do you think is the strongest evidence against the positions developed here?*

*In regard to Lehi's travels in the Arabian peninsula, the biggest problem is accommodating the construction of the ship. It really was a miracle that they could do this. Of course it required revelation. With the present day climate, it is also hard to see how they could have acquired sufficient quantity of suitable wood to build a ship large enough to accommodate the group.*

yet since others in the area were apparently constructing ships around the same time, materials must have been available, even if they were imported. . . . More research is needed on the origin of period Omani ships.

In regard to placing the Lehites in northeastern America, I do not know of any major problem except that which confronts all theories, the problem of acquiring adequate physical evidence to support the theory. It is encouraging that the most recent archaeological investigations in northeastern America have indicated that the period inhabitants were culturally more advanced than had been previously thought.

4. *Are your sources credible?*

. . . *Atlas of the Middle East* by The Central Intelligence Agency:

There are more mineral deposits in central and central western Saudi Arabia than indicated on either the original or my reproduction. . . .What is relevant is that no mineral deposits are identified on the eastern side of Arabia except those in eastern Oman.

*The Heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

The map I included in chapter 2 is based on, but simplified from, the original source. There are only two uses I wish to make of this map. The first is to show that trade routes existed anciently going west to east through the center of the Arabian peninsula. I do not think this is a point of dispute.

My second use of this map is to show there is no ancient land trade route from northwestern Yemen to Salalah in western Oman. The original from which my map was drawn indicates that trade along the southern coast of Arabia was conducted by sea, a fact confirmed elsewhere, as cited below.

Detailed maps of Arabia, showing wells and oases, confirm the reasonableness of eastward travel across the land as proposed, though it would be a difficult trip. (See United States Geological Survey, Arabian Peninsula, 1963 Map I-270 B-2)

7. *Why have you not considered the Dhofar region in the west of Oman to be a possible site for Bountiful?*

This has long been a popular choice. Yet I find three deficiencies. First there is no known ore. Second there seems to be no place to toss someone into deep water. third there seems to be no appropriate route from the west that would sustain the Lehites in their long eastward travel. I also have some reservations about the adequacy of the quantity of available wood. . . .

8. *Is Nahom, the place where Ishmael was buried, the same place now called Nehem?*

. . . it seems that it is more likely that the place where Ishmael dies and is buried is called by the Lehites "consolation" than they just happened to be at a place called by Arabs by this assumedly Hebrew name.

9. *Did the Lehites follow the frankincense trade route?*

Nothing in the text indicates this. In fact, in their initial travels, we read that they were kept in the "most fertile parts of the wilderness" rather than being kept on a trail, however broad it may have been. (1 Nephi 16:14) And it would seem , if the Lehites were to travel a well known trade route, they would not have suffered as much hunger and thirst.

Also Alma tells us the Lehites "did not travel a direct course." (Alma 37:42) yet what could be a more direct course than an established trade route? . . .

Had they followed the frankincense trade route would they have arrived at Salalah in the Dhofar region of present day Oman? It was once thought that the frankincense trade route turned eastward in what is present day northwestern yemen towards Salalah in the Dhofar region of Oman (See Hugh Nibley, "Lehi in the Desert," *Improvement Era*, Vol. 53, October 1950, p. 805)

As a result of more recent research, it is now more commonly held that frankincense obtained east of Qana (see present day Bir Ali, Yemen) was shipped down along the coast to Qana before being transferred to animals for land travel northward. (See Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, Longman, London, 1981, chapter 9)

So if Lehi traveled eastward from the area of present day western Yemen he would not have traveled on a major trade route, but through an area so desolate and devoid of water that it would be doubtful if any group could subsist in it for the extended time indicated by the text of the Book of Mormon.

10 *Could Bountiful have been at Khor Kharfot at the mouth of Wadi Sayq in the Dhofar region of Oman?*

To be a possible site of Bountiful all the requirements given by the text of the Book of Mormon must be satisfied. There are several questions to be considered.

First are ore deposits found in the area? Again I know of no reports published as of October 1, 1995 that establish the existence of such deposits.

Second, is there at Khor Kharfot deep water into which Nephi could be tossed by his brothers? . . . There are indeed some cliffs, but it is not apparent to me from published photographs that someone could be tossed into deep water from them. . . .

Third could Khor Kharfot be reached from the interior land? Although Wadi Sayq flows from the interior, there is insufficient photographic evidence that Khor Kharfot would be clearly accessible from the interior. It is important to remember that despite the freshwater springs and vegetation of the immediate area, Khor Kharfot is so difficult to get to that it remains uninhabited today. Those who come to explore it do so by boat, a choice not available to Lehi.

Fourth, even if Khor Kharfot is accessible from the interior, is there a route that Lehi and his company could have taken from the west that would have sustained them with water and food for what the text suggest was years of travel? . . .

. . . What were their fruits? Dates from date palms have been a major export from Oman in recent centuries, but are there date palms in Khor Kharfot? Palm trees are shown in photographs of the Khor Kharfot area, but no dates are visible in the photographs. . . .

. . . Where is the wild honey at Khor Kharfot?

**1995^ Duane Erickson *The Promised Land Everyone Knows*, SLC: Duane Erickson, 1995.**

Duane Erickson develops a limited North American geographical model focusing on the United States as the "Land of Liberty," and as the area where the record keepers of the Book of Mormon lived and recorded their histories---thereby keeping the New York hill Cumorah as THE Hill Cumorah. He claims that "After spending the most of 20 years trying to make sense of the Book of Mormon geography of others, exploring Central America jungles by dugout canoe, he discovered the real land in his own backyard. Here in the United States, the only land of liberty." He claims that his model of Book of Mormon geography originated in 1980. He includes 15 chronological maps showing the lands and cities of the Book of Mormon overlaid on a map of the United States. Lehi's landing area, "the Land of Lehi" is located on the west coast of California. Reasons for that location are not given.

**[1995 Illustrated Model Duane Erickson LIMITED NORTH AMERICA]**

Source: Duane Erickson, *The Promised Land Everyone Knows*, SLC: Duane Erickson, 1995, Map 14.

**1995^ Hans Ralf Caspary Moreno "Las Ruinas de Tiwqanaku y Su Relacion Con El Libro de Mormon,"**

Unpublished Manuscript, Lapz, Bolivia: Centro Multidisciplinario de Investigaciones, 1995.

In September of 1995, Hans Ralf Caspary, a student of archaeology at the Universidad Mayor de San Andres-La Paz, Bolivia printed a 27-page paper "Tiwanaku La Cultura Milenari de Los Andes" (Tihuanaco, the Millennial Culture of the Andes), followed by a 25 page manuscript paper about the ruins of Tihuanaco and their relationship with the Book of Mormon (accompanied by a 15 page scriptural appendix). This manuscript was given to his Mission President, Gordon Wilson, from whom I was able to secure a copy. Among other things he says the following:

El profeta "Joseph Fielding Smith" (note 4), escribe en uno de sus libros lo siguiente: Generalmente se entiende que "Lehi" con su familia desembarcaron en la America del sur, y que sus naciones, le de los Nefitas y la de los Lamanitas, habitaron el Dud y Centro America, durante la mayor parte que duraron aqui, o sea la tierra prometida.

Tal como describe el libro de Mormon, su geografia se aplica y se relaciona plenamente con Sud America.

Otros eruditos tambien han hecho la afirmacion que "Lehli" con su familia desembarcaron en la tierra prometida o sea America del sur, pero hasta el momento no hay otro profeta o persona alguna que haya descrito el lugar exacto de la llegada de "Lehi" con su familia com lo dicho por el profeta . . .

Spencer W. Kimball", cuando vino a Boliva en 1979, y en sintesis el resultado de este trabajo de investigacion, es el resultado de lo que el profeta dijo cuando visito las ruinas de "Tiwanaku". (note 5)

El profeta **"Spencer W. Kimball", dijo que "Lehi", con su familia desembarcaron en lo que hoy es "Coquimbo-Chile", America del sur**, bajo esta afirmacion y segun lo que describe el libro de Mormon, es que tratamos de dar una explicacion sobre el origen, apogeo y destrucion de "Tiwanaku".

**1995^ Clate Mask " Where Did Lehi Land and Why Does It Matter?"** Clate Mask, Unpublished

Manuscript, 1995. This material also appears in other unpublished

manuscripts with the titles "And They Called the Place Bountiful" plus "And

They Called the Place 'Tulan'."

In this 40-page richly illustrated manuscript, Clate Mask details the reasons as to where Lehi might have landed and why it is important to seek such information from the perspectives of (1) the historicity of the Book of Mormon; (2) the authoritative statements which have been made; (3) Native documents; (4) the internal textual verses in the Book of Mormon narrative; and (5) external archaeological and monumental evidences. The following are some of the pertinent comments:

. . . Years ago, a young university student asked his religion instructor where the Book of Mormon took place and was told, "I don't know and I don't care." Later, another teacher responded to the same inquiry, "somewhere in the Americas, but don't worry about it because it is not important to your salvation. Knowing the setting of the book is irrelevant, unimportant, and highly speculative." Many young people have wisely been taught that the doctrines and teachings are the most significant aspects of that sacred scripture. But when they are taught that the incidental information regarding military strategy, geographical locations, topographical features of the land, and details of their travels from place to place should be ignored to avoid confusion and controversy, they ask, "Then why did Mormon waste so much precious space on the plates if these things were not important?" . . .

Recently, several of the Brethren in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have spoken out on the historicity of the Book of Mormon. In a Church produced video, "Gift and Power of God," Elder Neal A. Maxwell strongly testifies of the reality and historicity of the sacred record. Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke at the F.A.R.M.S. Annual Dinner on this problem and said:

These practitioners of so-called "higher criticism" raise the question of whether the Book of Mormon, which the prophets have put forward as the preeminent scripture of this dispensation, is fact or fable-history or just a story . . . I maintain that the issue of historicity of the Book of Mormon is basically a difference between those who rely exclusively on scholarship and those who rely on a combination of scholarship, faith, and revelation.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's remarks at the 1994 CES Symposium left no doubt as to his profound feelings about the historicity of the Book of Mormon:

And let's not have any of the embarrassingly silly pap we have heard from some recently about Joseph earnestly "thinking" he saw an angel and "imagining" he translated from a set of gold plates. Excuse me if I am speechless--absolutely, totally, and bewilderingly incredulous--at such a comment.

These Brethren believe that the Prophet Joseph Smith translated the abridged plates by the gift and power of God, the doctrines and teachings are true, that it happened and it happened somewhere, and that Nephi, Alma, Abinadi and wicked King Noah were real people who lived in the very tangible city of Nephi. Most LDS scholars feel that those ancient prophets took such pains to engrave the so-called incidental information for us because the setting is indeed important and significant to a deeper, richer understanding and appreciation of those great prophets from Lehi to Moroni. If you believe that both the doctrine and the events are true, then you know it had to take place somewhere, but where?

Most students of the Book of Mormon today who defend the historicity of that great volume feel it probably occurred where 90% of Book of Mormon time-dated archaeological ruins exist. (1% are in North America, and 5-10% are in South America). It's also the only area in all the Americas where a written phonetic language was in use during that same time period. The Incas of Peru did not have a written language at the time of the Spanish conquest in the 16th Century. . . .

In looking for evidence of the historicity of the Book of Mormon, let's begin the search sometime after Lehi left Jerusalem. After an arduous, grueling journey from Jerusalem, along the borders of the Red Sea, then eastward across the southern tip of the world's most terrible desert wilderness, the Empty Quarter of the Arabian Desert, Lehi's party finally arrived at a beautiful verdant, lush land of vegetation and precious water. In stark contrast to the barren, arid wasteland they had traversed over many years, this gorgeous area by the seashore must have been a beautiful sight indeed, and they "called the place Bountiful because of its much fruit and also wild honey" (1 Nephi 17:5). . . .

Where is the land of Bountiful where Lehi's party built the ship? An impressive array of evidence has been recently discovered at the Old World proposed site of Bountiful on the southern coast of Oman. Warren and Michaela Aston reported on their exploratory fieldwork first in a FARMS publication in 1991, and later shared their findings in a book published by Deseret Book in 1994. In 1993, a well qualified FARMS research team went to Oman, examined the proposed location of Old World Bountiful, and reported their findings and conclusions:

In April (1993), a team of researchers examined the port area of Khor Kharfot . . . through which the Wadi Sayq enters the Indian Ocean on the southern coast of Oman, at the extreme western end near the border with Yemen. Their findings indicate that Khor Kharfot may be the site of Lehi's Bountiful . . . Khor Kharfot and its environs have all the features mentioned in the Book of Mormon in connection with the Old World Bountiful. It has no features that would conflict with the Book of Mormon account. A survey of alternative sites in the Arabian Peninsula has turned up no others that come close to fitting the criteria for Bountiful so well. On this analysis, Khor Kharfot emerges as the Most Probable Site For Lehi's Bountiful.

**[1995 Map: Location of Wadi Sayq.** Clate Mask, "Where Did Lehi Land And Why Does It Matter," Unpublished, 1995]

Maurine and Scot Proctor used the Aston's research as a basis for their fascinating article "Where Did Nephi Build the Ship?" in the fall of 1993. Scot was able to take some beautiful photographs of the probable Bountiful at Wadi Sayq and used them in their *Light from the Dust* published by Deseret Book in 1993. They later released a video "Light From the Dust" that has the Proctors describing some of their unusual experiences encountered in their photographic odyssey. In their description of Wadi Sayq, the Astons write:

The valley has its beginnings some sixteen miles inland amid rolling desert country averaging about 4,000 feet altitude north of Sarfait. The wadi soon becomes a well-defined and narrow (typically about 100 feet across) pathway through very steep limestone mountains, descending gradually to sea level as the coast is approached.

[The Astons] seem to be describing a ravine. 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."

The Aston's and FARMS's "most probable site for Lehi's Bountiful" is on the Saudi Arabian Peninsula south of the area of ancient Babylonia. At Bountiful, they planted seeds, raised crops, built the ship and set sail into Irreantum, probably the Indian Ocean. Interestingly, the Tulan ("bountiful" in Maya) of the Maya-Quiche's ancestors was also by Babylonia:



". . . our ancestors had come from the other side of the sea, from Civan-Tulan at the confines of Babylonia."

It must have been difficult indeed to have to leave Tulan, a fertile, choice spot described as "abundance or bountiful" and launch out into the unknown. The ancient historians among the Maya-Quiche wrote that the people

". . . wept in their chants because of their departure from Tulan; their hearts mounted when they left Tulan."

The Maya say that the ancients also called the west sea landing site Tulan ("abundance or bountiful", not to be confused with Bountiful in the Book of Mormon). The Maya-Cakchiquel historians of Guatemala wrote,

"from the west we came to Tulan, from across the sea; and it was at Tulan where we arrived."

In 1950, the authors of *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*, Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson pointed out that some ancient Maya writings said that their ancestors came from Tulan (bountiful) near Babylonia and that they landed in the Americas at Tulan and that,

"the Lord supplied the "Giron-Gagal" (director) and led the colony across the sea ' . . . because they were the sons of Abraham and of Jacob."

Elder Robert E. Wells also mentioned this "giron-gagal" at the 1991 Sperry Symposium at BYU:

If Lehi brought the Liahona to the Americas, can we find any trace of such an instrument in the legends of the Lamanites before Columbus? . . . Well, almost . . . On page 157 of the book *In Search of Cumorah*, we read: "The concept of a sacred ball was not unique to the Tarascan Indians, . . . the Guatemalan Quiche and Cakchiquel histories mention a sacred ball or rock in connection with their legend of migration across the sea . . . before leaving, the main leader was given a present by the god Nacxit. It was called the giron-gagal, or sacred bundle. Taking it with him, by miraculous balam-quitze, he was able to lead his people across the sea." In my years in South America, I heard of other similar legends. So perhaps there are signs remaining of an ancient spiritual compass.

[But] the Maya-Quiche and the Maya-Cakchiquel live in highland Guatemala. Didn't Lehi land in Chile? Sorenson, Allen, Warren, Hauck, Palmer, and Norman indicate that the latest evidence points not to Chile, but to Mesoamerica--what archaeologists call northern Central America and southern Mexico.

The first time I read of the Guatemala area being proposed as the plausible Lehi landing site and land of their father's first inheritance, I was personally offended because I had always believed that the Prophet Joseph Smith was unequivocally on record as saying that Lehi landed in Chile. I felt strongly about the matter for I had been taught that doctrine by teachers I admired and respected. Some of the

Brethren had alluded to the Chile statement and I have always followed the Brethren with loyalty and respect. Consequently, I continued to teach that same idea as "almost" doctrine whenever students later asked me about Lehi's landing site.

Luke P. Wilson, a Christian [anti-Mormon] writer, wrote about the disagreements in the LDS Church between the official Church doctrine on Book of Mormon geography as taught by the Brethren and the "theories of modern Mormon scholars" . . . In a FARMS journal article, William J. Hamblin responded to this assertion:

. . . Wilson attempts to make Joseph Smith responsible for the Hemispheric Geography Model . . . Wilson also claims that "Joseph Smith identified the coast of Chile as the place where Lehi's part arrived in the New World." In fact, this statement is based not on the writings of Joseph Smith, but on Frederick G. Williams's interpretation of an anonymous manuscript, which Williams believed derived from Joseph Smith; this statement did not appear in print until 1882. Much of the subsequent attribution of the Hemispheric Geography Model to Joseph Smith-and thereby the acceptance of that model by Latter-day Saints- comes from the mistaken assumption that the Chile interpretation represents a revelation to Joseph Smith. A careful examination of the manuscripts and development of this idea, however, has demonstrated that there is no reason to attribute this idea to Joseph Smith, and it certainly was never put forward as a revelation. Indeed, questions concerning the authenticity of the attribution of this statement to Joseph Smith were raised by B. H. Roberts and others as early as 1909. . . .

Most Book of Mormon scholars today place the City of Nephi in the area of Kaminaljuyu in Guatemala City. Hauck prefers the site of Mixco Viejo, a mere 19 miles to the northwest, still in the same general area. When Nephi left the land of their first inheritance near Lehi's landing site by the west sea, he and his followers went many days to the land of Nephi and built a temple in the city of Nephi around 578 B.C. (2 Nephi 5:5-8). We are NOT TOLD specifically HOW FAR they traveled NOR IN WHAT DIRECTION. However, about 500 years later the king of the land of Nephi, King Lamoni's father, sent a proclamation to this people who were living "on the WEST in the land of Nephi, in the PLACE OF THEIR FATHER'S FIRST INHERITANCE, and thus bordering along BY THE SEASHORE" (Alma 22:28). The city of Nephi was always up (in elevation not in direction) from Zarahemla and the city of Zarahemla was always down (in elevation) from Nephi. If the city of Nephi was located in the Guatemalan highlands around Guatemala City as proposed by so many scholars, what significant event would have occurred WEST BY THE SEASHORE? The scriptural text of the Book of Mormon implies that the city of Nephi is inland and EAST of the land of first inheritance. . . .

**[1995 Map: Internal Location of The Land of First Inheritance.** Clate Mask, "Where Did Lehi Land And Why Does It Matter," Unpublished, 1995]

After years of research, some serious Book of Mormon students and scholars place both Lehi's landing site and the land of their father's first inheritance west of the Guatemala City area (west by the seashore, Alma 22:28) near Izapa. . . .

[1995 **Map: Location of Izapa.** Clate Mask, "Where Did Lehi Land And Why Does It Matter," Unpublished, 1995]

. . . It is well known that ancient Semitic people revered sacred occurrences and sometimes built commemorative shrines. Father Abraham made his near-sacrifice of his son Isaac on Mt. Moriah located in what is now the Holy City of Jerusalem. The descendants of Isaac built the Temple of Solomon on that sacrificial spot and many centuries later the descendants of Isaac's brother Ishmael erected the Dome of the Rock which still stands today on that same Temple Mount. . . .

How would a people from Jerusalem, with their near Eastern Semitic customs, feel about Lehi's death? Where would Father Lehi probably have been buried? Having such honor, respect and reverence for their venerable patriarch, Father Lehi, what would his children probably do to commemorate such an important event? Would they leave a stone or some kind of monument to mark the sacred spot?

The ancestors of the Maya-Quiche arrived at the west sea landing area of Tulan. In their historical account, *The Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, there are several interesting details about their landing site. As summarized in the footnotes in the translation of the *Popol Vuh*:

. . . they left Tulan (bountiful), crossed the sea, arrived at the edge of a lake where they made huts (houses with roof of straw), but disgusted with the place, they continued on to the place called Chicpach, where they lived, and LEAVING A STONE THERE AS A MONUMENT, they continued their wanderings . . .

Why did they leave a stone there as a monument? They don't say. What significance did that area possibly have?

#### Izapa -- Most Important Civil and Religious Center

El Hueyate, the lake or lagoon near Izapa, is somewhat swampy. [see map below] Their ancestors could have been "disgusted with the place" (especially the mosquitoes!) and continued east along the Pacific to the mouth of the Suchiate River. That deep water channel could have taken them to Izapa just as it does for Book of Mormon cruise tours today.

[1995 **Map: Detailed Map of the Izapa Area.** Clate Mask, "Where Did Lehi Land And Why Does It Matter," Unpublished, 1995]

There is an interesting piece of historical evidence that seems to suggest that the Maya's ancestors came from the west from Tulan (Bountiful), landed at Tulan, and may be referred to on the "Tree of Life Stone" at Izapa. V. Garth Norman explains:

The Cakchikel (Maya tribe in highland Guatemala) manuscript of Totonacapan (Recinos 1953:45) tells of sacred places called Tulan that correspond to the three Tamoanchans of other traditions as the chosen homeland in Mesoamerica, the western place of birth and origin, and heaven. "From the west we came to Tulan, from across the sea; and it was at Tulan where we arrived." References to all three mythical and ancient legendary Tamoanchan/Tulans may be found on the Izapa Stela 5 tree-trunk dating to at least 300 B.C.

. . . The mounds and ceremonial temple complexes at Izapa have been called by V. Garth Norman and others "the most important civil and religious center on the Pacific coast from 600 B./C. to 400 A.D."

Why? What could have possibly happened at or near Izapa to qualify that particular site as THE most important religious center on the west coast during Book of Mormon times? Archaeological sites in Mesoamerica were damaged or mutilated and later rebuilt. According to Norman, Izapa was virtually untouched over the centuries even though it was occupied by different cultures. Why was the religious center of Izapa so respected and left intact? . . .

In the New World Archaeological Foundation's *Izapa: An Introduction to the Ruins and Monuments* we read:

These stones surrounded or comprised a true monument plaza, with all of the sculptures facing the ample courtyard, their bases at approximately the same level . . . All of the monuments here have been in contemporaneous use or VENERATION as presently arranged, although they have been sculptured over many years.

Richard Hauck adds the following insightful information:

Indeed, archaeological research on the architecture and art of the ancient site of Izapa suggests that this location was developed as a COMMEMORATIVE SHRINE by Lehi's descendants. Construction of the sacred site may actually have begun during Lehi's lifetime while the original colony resided in the area. Although most of the development of the site occurred during the first century B.C., its art work demonstrates a philosophical continuity that spans the intervening four hundred years. Bas-relief stone sculptures erected during the various stages of site development symbolically depict sacred concepts, such as the tree of life, bloods atonement through a divine sacrifice, judgement and punishment of the wicked, premortal life, and resurrection.

[1995 **Illustration: Monuments at Izapa, Group A.** Clate Mask, "Where Did Lehi Land And Why Does It Matter," Unpublished, 1995]

Note\* For the next nineteen pages and with multiple illustrations, Mask associates the area of Izapa with a number of monuments that could be related to the Land of First Inheritance. He summarizes with the following:

For years most of us have been aware of the "Tree of Life Stone" or Stela 5 with a possible Lehi name-glyph at Izapa. Now we are aware of Stela 67, possibly depicting Lehi's voyage on the ship. There is also Stela 12 with the date of 597 B.C., the date Lehi may have left Jerusalem and the beginning date of the Maya religious calendar. There is evidence that the Royal Babylonian cubit was the measuring rod of the builders of Izapa implying an Old World connection. There is a commemorative shrine at Group A venerating someone with Stela 5 being only one of the monuments in the commemorative complex -- all at Izapa.

There seems to be enough archaeological and Maya historical evidence at Izapa and the surrounding area to warrant a closer examination and analysis. The evidence seems to strengthen the hypothesis that the area of Izapa could be the plausible landing site of Lehi and the land of their first inheritance. Thirty-five miles down the Pacific coast at Abaj Takalik is where the Olmec [Jaredite?] remnants merged with another group (Lamanites?) to possibly form the Maya civilization. Fifty miles further at Bilbao, the seven lineages theme is found on Monument 21 with a "Zoram" name-glyph and a possible jawbone glyph ("lehi" in Hebrew) identifying Father Lehi (dated at around A.D. 500). Stela 10 from Kaminaljuyu (dated at 147 B.C.) depicts the transfer of kingship from a king who was killed, to another king who is in captivity. (Mosiah 17 is around 148 B.C.). The law of witnesses declares, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matt. 18:16). There is a great deal of evidence crying from the dust near the Mexico-Guatemala border. It is witnessing to us from Izapa to Kaminaljuyu in Guatemala City, 130 miles away, that someone from Tulan (bountiful) arrived on these shores at Tulan and made their way to Kaminaljuyu in Preclassic Book of Mormon times.

[1995 **Map: Location of Abaj Takalic.** Clate Mask, "Where Did Lehi Land And Why Does It Matter," Unpublished, 1995]

[1995 **Map: Location of Monuments: Stela 5, Monument 21, Stela 10.** Clate Mask, "Where Did Lehi Land And Why Does It Matter," Unpublished, 1995]

Source: From the archive files of AAF

1996^ **David B. Galbraith** *Jerusalem: The Eternal City*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996,

**D. Kelly Ogden**

pp. 113-114 (footnote 25).

**Andrew C. Skinner**

In footnote 25 on page 113 of the book *Jerusalem: The Eternal City*, we find the following relative to the so-called *Lehi Cave*:

During military clearing operations for a new road in the southeastern Shephelah in 1961 at a site called Khirbet Beit-Lei, an undisturbed cave, now called the "Jerusalem Cave," was broken into and discovered to contain some hastily carved figures and words. Some have wondered--because the figure of a man appears to have arms extended toward heaven and an inscription speaks of the God of Judah in Jerusalem, because the graffiti are so hastily scrawled on the cave walls, and because there is even the semblance of a ship--if perhaps this could have been the work of the prophet Lehi and company fleeing Jerusalem on their way to the Red Sea in the year 600 B.C. Some rather elaborate "evidences" have been devised to support claims about this "Lehi Cave." WE do know, however that:

(1) There is no evidence that the cave incisions date to 600 B.C. Some scholars suggest that the cave's temporary tenants could have been refugees from the Babylonians during the war atmosphere of the late seventh century before Christ, but others have proposed that the refugees were fleeing the Assyrians a century earlier.

(2) There is no evidence that Lehi or anyone else heading toward the Red Sea would have traveled southwest instead of southeast. Indeed, the Book of Mormon specifies that they abandoned their home in the land of Jerusalem and fled into the wilderness--in a southeastern route. See 1 Ne. 2:2, 4.

(3) There is no evidence that Lehi and his group knew anything about the future prospect of building a ship; that was yet eight years away.

For more information about the moribund controversies over this cave and its graffiti, see Berrett, "The So-called Lehi Cave." . . . [1882]

The cave walls have been transferred to the Israel National Muiseum mainly because the graffiti represent the earliest known appearance of the name *Jerusalem* in archaic Hebrew. The inscription reads: "I am Jehovah thy God; I will protect the cities of Judah and will redeem Jerusalem!" See Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 60.

1996^ **Lynn M. Hilton**  
Springville:

***Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia,***

**Hope A. Hilton**

Cedar Fort Inc., 1996.

In this book the Hiltons present additional evidence and insights to the geographical and cultural information published previously in their 1976 book *In Search of Lehi's Trail*. In the Preface they note that on September 19, 1975, they officially accepted the challenge from Jay Todd, the managing editor of the Ensign to "Follow in the steps of Lehi from Jerusalem to the land called Bountiful--if you can discover where that might have been." He told them that such a trip had never been tried in the 146 years since the publication of the Book of Mormon. In January of 1976 they departed on a five-week "Lehi safari" we resulted in their two published articles in September and October of 1976 and their book *In Search of Lehi's Trail*." They note:

Since our first work on Lehi was published in 1976, we have been employed and lived in Arabia for eleven years. Seven of these years we lived in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, right on the old Lehi-Nephi trail. This allowed us many opportunities to further explore each detail of the old trail, and the new data are written into this revised and enlarged edition of the original work. We now have at least double the data on Lehi and Nephi in Arabia than we had in 1976. . . .

We offer the ideas in this volume, realizing some of them may be new or different, in the hope they will stimulate discussion of the subject. We realize that some people may have different opinions and that is acceptable. . . . excellent work and more research on the sites of Bountiful and Nahom has already been done by the Astons and the Proctors. Their contributions are cited herein.

The Hiltons begin with a discussion of population in Arabia: "That there were villages and a well-established civilization in the barren wilderness along the Arabian Red Sea shore within six hundred years of Lehi's day is verified by several eye-witness records." They then quote from *The Geography of Strabo* and *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* concerning routes traveled (see illustration below). [p. 12]

**[1996 Maps: Two ancient Reports Possibly Related to the Lehi Trail.** Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville:Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 11]

They write:

Since we first made the journey along Lehi's Trail, vast new research efforts have been published by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education under the acronym *ATLAL*, the Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology, published in seven volumes. Volume five, published in 1981, describes the results of a comprehensive archaeological survey of the northwestern province of Saudi Arabia, the area usually referred to as the "Hijaz," or "Levant." The survey team, made up of both Saudi and expatriate scholars, studied and listed all the ancient sites along what we call the Lehi Trail from the Jordan border on the north to the Yemen border on the south, perhaps two-thirds of the entire Lehi Trail.

These authors describe in detail one of the principal north-south corridors for traffic in this region (See map below: Figure 2-3). It runs along the coastal wadis, now known as the "Egyptian Pilgrim Route" (See map below: Figure 2-4). [pp. 12-13]

[1996 **Maps: Egyptian Pilgrim (Hajj) Route to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.** Figure 2-3 (Dept. of Antiquities, Saudi Arabia, 1983). Figure 2-4 (Sir Richard F. Burton, 1897). Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville:Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 13]

. . . Population counts in 1983 in Saudi Arabia show that five of its thirteen largest cities lie on or close to the old coastal frankincense trail (Lehi's supposed route). Today, over two million people live along this trail. We do not know how many people Lehi could have met enroute, but it appears probable that he met many. It was a major discovery for us to find that both ancient and modern maps of the area show several known frankincense trails among the most heavily traveled roads of the ancient world. One ran along the Red Sea coast about three-quarters of the length of the Arabian peninsula, then turned eastward near the 15th parallel of north latitude. The second route roughly paralleled the first a hundred or more miles inland. Both routes met in Nahom (see note below). One route continued south to Sanaa in Yemen and on to Aden, while the other, the more dangerous route, went directly east from Nahom to Salalah in Dhufar. These routes were in common use at least nine hundred years before Lehi's day and likely even hundreds of years before that. Evidence of these caravan roads is ample even today, the routes being easy to follow (see map below: Figure 2-5). Today we find crumbling ruins of strategically placed stone forts built in the tenth century B.C. by the Sabaeen civilization, fortifications added to by the Dedanite-Lihyanite peoples, by the Nabateans and later by the Romans and Ottoman Turks, as they sought to protect the passing caravans.

These forts were also used as taxing points for the kingdoms through which the trail passed. In ancient times it was customary to pay a tribute to the king's agents as you traveled in caravans through his territory (Ezra 7:24). After Muhammed's time in the seventh century A.D., the old frankincense trails were reactivated with renewed vigor (after having fallen into disuse in the fourth century A.D. as the incense market declined).

Also, from Petra in Jordan to Nahom in Yemen, the trail route is easily identifiable by desert graffiti carved by thousands of camel drivers in the flat stones of the hills, often on both sides of the route. . . . [p. 14]

[1996 **Map: Figure 2-5.** While there are many ancient caravan trails in Arabia, there is one that travels down the shore of the Red Sea and over land to the east just as described in the Book of Mormon. Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville:Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 15]

Note\* The Hiltons basically maintain the route of Lehi as coming down the eastern shores of the Red Sea as was previously proposed in their 1976 book, however they have modified their theory somewhat. They move their originally proposed site for Nahom (Abha) inland to a position south of Abha and west of Marib. Their proposed site for Bountiful is still the Dhofar region (Qara mountains) of Oman. They include a chapter which rebuts an article published in 1988 that promotes the idea that Lehi traveled down the western side of the Red Sea. (This material has been included in the notation for 1988 which discusses this theory).

1 Nephi 2:5 Lehi departed into the wilderness:



The Hiltons note:

We discovered three routes out of Jerusalem, each of which would have taken Lehi to the city of Aqaba at the head of the Red Sea. Nephi says outright that they headed to the "Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5).

(1) One route went east from Jerusalem to Jericho through the bleak Judean wilderness, then crossed the Jordan River and went up and joined the King's Highway, going down the east bank of the Dead Sea through the towns of Madaba, Karak, and Petra to Aqaba, all of which are in the present-day Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This is the main ancient north-south road, winding up mountains and over wadis. . . . This route was well-known even 800 years before Lehi; Moses mentioned it in asking permission to proceed along it with the host of Israel without turning "to the right hand nor to the left" on their way to Canaan (Num. 20:17, 21:22). However, Lehi would have had to pass through the kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom on this eastern route; and even though the family might not have been in any danger, they would almost certainly have been delayed and taxed at each border.

(2) Another possible route leaves Jerusalem and goes south to Hebron, continues southwest to Beersheba, then goes down Wadi al'Araba to Aqaba at the Red Sea. A variation of this route turns east at Hebron and crosses Salt Mountain on a trail that is still just a footpath, descends a steep slope, and emerges on the west shore of the Dead Sea just below the oasis of En-gedi, joining at that point the third possible route . . . This second route seems to be an unusually complicated and difficult alternative.

(3) The third route goes east from Jerusalem on the same road as the first route, turns south just before Jericho, passes the Dead Sea on the west, continues past the caves and cliffs of Qumran, and then through the Wadi al 'Araba to emerge at Aqaba. Our friends in the Middle East, knowledgeable in the history of their past, told us that this latter route is the most probable--and one Lehi could travel the entire distance without crossing an international border, for the road all lay within Judea until after Aqaba. Even though this routing exposed Lehi to the Jewish government security forces longer, it was the shortest and fastest way to the Red Sea, which was their goal (1 Nephi 2:5).

But no matter which route Lehi took from Jerusalem, all three converge south of the Dead Sea in the Wadi al' Araba, which leads to Aqaba on the Gulf of Aqaba at the head of the Red Sea. . . . it was center for ore smelting and shipbuilding . . . Aqaba, formerly called Ezion-geber, was the chief city of the ancient desert kingdom of Edom. . . . [it was] the intersection of civilization and the wilderness in that ancient world. [pp. 19-20]

#### *1 Nephi 2:5 The Borders Near . . . Nearer the Red Sea:*

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). What distinction was he making? The Hiltons note:

. . . once we arrived on the site it became clearer what Nephi might have meant.

Traveling south from Aqaba, the western Arabian *Tihama* or coastal plain is squeezed into the area lying between the Red Sea and the mountains of the Arabian peninsula. Called Tihama by the local residents, this coastal plain is the location of the ancient route of the frankincense trail and the most logical route for Lehi's party as well--we believe the only route possible.

We went straight south from Aqaba down the coast in the Tihama about eighteen miles to Wadi Umm Jurfayn, which comes down (westward) through the steep mountainside to a small oasis on the Red Sea

called al-Humaydah. This oasis is, in one sense, the end of the Tihama or plain, since a little ways south, steep cliffs fall precipitously, straight into the sea, obviously blocking the trail farther down the beach. The geographically logical thing to do--indeed, the only thing to do--is to turn away from the Red Sea and go east up the hills in Wadi Umm Jurfayn through the mountain range in wide, sweeping bends. Storms have long ago filled in the rough places with a sand and gravel "roadbed" for all of the twenty miles to the head of the wadi (elevation 3,135 feet). This is the route of the ancient frankincense trail and in more recent centuries the Egyptian Hajj trail down the Red Sea coast to Mecca.

At the summit of Jurfayn, the wadi branches. One branch leads out to the desert on the east toward Tabuk, while the other wadi (Wadi al-Afal) slopes downhill to the south in a sweeping curve all the way to the Red Sea shore. . . . We drove down Wadi al-Afal, which we think represents the "borders near" the Red Sea, in contrast to the actual beach of Tihama which Nephi could have referred to as "borders nearer" the Red Sea. We finally stopped at Wadi Afal's only oasis, a major village called al-Bad, Saudi Arabia. . . .

Once again, we believe the borders "nearer" the Red Sea are the eighteen miles between Aqaba and al-Humaydah, where the trail is right on the beach. The borders "near" would have been the route where Nephi turned east and then south through the 58 miles of the Wadi Umm Jurfayn and Wadi al-Afal to al-Bad.

[Some might say that the Hilton's have the term's "nearer" and "near" in reverse chronological order, however they try to clarify.] When Lehi's party finally broke camp in the valley of Lemuel and traveled further on down the seacoast from al-Bad, then they would have returned to the Tihama trail and been in the "borders nearer" the Red Sea again. When Nephi, after his family moved on past "Shazer," again referred to "keeping in the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:4), he was probably designating the area about halfway down the coastal plain where the trail widens near Jiddah; they were once again traveling farther inland from the coast itself. [pp. 49-51]

**[1996 Illustration: Adapted from a photograph, taken from space, of northwest Arabia near the Gulf of Aqaba.** Those geographical places mentioned by the Hiltons in describing Lehi's journey to the valley of Lemuel are highlighted and labeled. Photo by Landsat, US Geological Survey, EROS Data Center. Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996. p. 50]

**[1996 Map: Modern Road from Aqaba through al-Bad.** The modern highway mostly follows the ancient trail. Map from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Petroleum. Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 52]

*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:*

The Hiltons determined how far Lehi might have been able to travel in three days. Using a pencil compass, they marked 60 miles, plus or minus, and made a sweep on the map that distance out from Aqaba, the place where Lehi would have first approached the Red Sea, to see if they might identify possible locales for the valley of Lemuel and the River Laman. They targeted al-Bad! (see illustration above) [This would have been 60 miles "as the crow flies" however] In actuality, they traveled 18 miles

south from Aqaba to al-Humaydah. There they turned east and then south through 58 miles of the Wadi Umm Jurfayn and Wadi al-Afal to al-Bad. [This makes an total of 76 actual miles.] [pp. 49, 51]

*1 Nephi 2:9 The River Laman . . . Emptied into the Red Sea . . . This River, Continually Running:*

After naming the river of water by which they pitched their tent "the river Laman" (1 Nephi 2:8), Lehi mentioned that it "emptied into the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:9). Because of this drainage, and because of the mountains which parallel the Red Sea on the east, the route of Lehi would probably have been somewhere between the mountains and the sea. Lehi also uses a figure of speech in comparing Laman to a river that was "continually" running (1 Nephi 2:9). The Hilton's mention in their first book that there is not a single river of any significance that flows year round and reaches the sea in all the Arabian peninsula. This means that the reader must consider the possibility that this river was the direct result of spring rains (a wadi may flow temporarily with water in the rainy season). If so, the beginning of Lehi's journey may have begun in the rainy season (Dec-Feb); and if so, the word "continually" may refer to the nature of a "flowing" river and not to the length of time it flowed.

Since the Hiltons first made the journey along Lehi's Trail, vast new research efforts have been published by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education under the acronym ATLAL, *the Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology*. ATLAL says that the Wadi Afal (which the Hiltons have identified as the River Laman of the Book of Mormon) drains the largest watershed in the entire area; the delta of the wadi where it enters the Red Sea is a vast triangle extending from Jebal al-Shu'aytijah to Khuraybah (a delta identified by the Hiltons as the Fountain of the Red Sea; see 1 Nephi 2:9). It was of no small interest to the Hiltons that the Book of Mormon locates Lehi's camp, the probable place of his longest stay and the site of a "river of water," inside this largest wadi system. (see illustration below) In fact, this wadi system is the largest the Hiltons would see anywhere on Lehi's trail to Bountiful. According to the Hiltons, Wadi Afal could qualify as the river of water in Lehi's day and be dry now. The sharp escarpment of the canyon bears clear marks of erosion of the passing of much water in former ages. In fact, the Hiltons have seen a "river" flowing after a rain storm and waded in it. Perhaps the weather has become arid since Nephi's time. In view of what they have found, the Hiltons feel that just because now, 2,500 years later, the Wadi Afal is mostly dry, we should not disqualify this area as the site of the river Laman when there is such clear evidence of ancient waters. [pp. 12-13, 45-46]

*1 Nephi 2:9 The Waters of the River Emptied into the Fountain of the Red Sea . . . This river, Continually Running:*

Nephi makes a point of recording that Lehi drew a moral from the river for his son when he "saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:9). Perhaps this implies that Nephi could not tell at first from his campsite, but only later, that the waters emptied into the Red Sea. Al-Bad (the Hilton's proposed Valley of Lemuel) is located eighteen miles northwest from where the Wadi al-Afal empties into the Red Sea. An examination of geographical maps (see illustration) suggests a meaning of the phrase "fountain of the Red Sea." A fountain is a headwater, a spring, a source. Since Wadi al-Afal empties into the very upper reaches of the Red Sea (and not the Gulf of Aqaba), Nephi's meaning seems clear: this spot is the "fountain." It was exciting to follow the ancient stream bed south-southeast from al-Bad through its vast triangular delta until the main stream entered the salt waters of the Red Sea. A few date palms along the beach now mark the site. [In other words, the river Laman would have eventually "emptied" or merged with other drainage from the Wadi al-Afal. The site where this total drainage flowed into the Red Sea would have been termed the "fountain of the Red Sea"] [pp. 52-54]

**[1996 Illustration: A map showing the major wadi drainages into the Red Sea from the ancient land of Midian.** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 79]

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

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. 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. (see map below) They left an extensive archaeological record buried in the ruins of 46 ancient city sites which have been identified as Midianite. (see map below) Their nation was bounded by Wadi Tayyib al-Ism ("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 (see illustration above).

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). [While] their archaeological remains are found today, . . . no Midianite shards were discovered by the 1980 Saudi Archaeological survey done in the area north of Tayyib al-Ism or south of Wadi Sadr. These limits identify the boundaries of ancient Midian. (see illustration above)

**[1996 Map: Figure 2-1 Al-Bad, Saudi Arabia is shown on this map as "Jethro"** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 8]

**[1996 Illustration: Figure 5-7: 46 Archaeological Midianite Sites.** The sites in and around al-Bad (Valley of Lemuel), all of Midianite origin and all dated prior to Lehi's arrival. Map from *ATLAL, Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology*, Department of Antiquities and Museums. Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 64]

*1 Nephi 11:1 I Was Caught Away . . . into an Exceedingly High Mountain:*

. . . the ancient ruins at al-Bad' are still called "Jethro," signaling that this may be also the traditional home of Moses's father-in-law. . . . This priest of Midian welcomed Moses after he rescued the venerable patriarch's seven daughters from harassment when they were trying to water their flocks, perhaps at this very well at al-Bad (Ex. 2-3). Moses became Jethro's son-in-law (D&C 84:6) by marrying his daughter and working as a shepherd in the land; and he followed the custom of taking the sheep from the home base for pasturage, as the Bedouins still do. On one such leisurely trip, he "led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb" (Ex. 3:1), where he beheld the burning bush and was commissioned to free Israel from Egyptian bondage.

The actual site of Moses' Mount Sinai has long been an open question. The traditional site at St. Catherine's in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula is only one of several possible sites. However a new look, following indications from infrared pictures taken from a satellite, has identified a broad, ancient trail from Egypt that passes down the west side of the Sinai Peninsula (bypassing St. Catherine's) to arrive at the Straits of Tiran. The infrared data identifies the trail coming out of the Red Sea 10 miles away on the east side of the Strait in Saudi Arabia (see Figure 5-3 below). The trail goes to Jethro of Midian (near al-Bad) and ends in a huge campsite on the east side of Mt. Lawz, a large mountain only 15 miles northeast of the village of al-Bad. Could this be the real Sinai?

If this theory is true, we can ask the question did Lehi flee religious persecution at home and travel directly to Mt. Sinai, near the oasis of al-Bad, a traditional place of safety and inspiration, as other prophets had done such as Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-21)? We simply hold out this postulate as an explanation of why Lehi went directly there. If so, Lehi was not the only pilgrim to make the journey. Before him were Moses, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, Israelite pilgrims and Elijah, each of whom sought refuge at Mt. Sinai. It is also possible the Apostle Paul later made a similar trip. (see chart below)

**[1996 Map: Figure 5-3 Alternate Sites of Mt. Sinai.** Illustration of visits made to Mt. Sinai as identified in Midian (Arabia). Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 59]

**[1996 Chart: Figure 5-4 Theory of Visits to Mt. Sinai in Midian.** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 60]

*1 Nephi 16:13 We traveled for the Space of Four Days, Nearly a South-Southeast Direction:*

After departing the Valley of Lemuel, Nephi's actual direction of travel in the borders near and nearer the Red Sea (1 Ne. 16:14) was a heading of 149°. This direction is closer to south-southeast than to any other cardinal point of the compass. Southeast is 135°, true south-southeast is 157.5°, and true south is 180°. (See illustration below)

**[1996 Illustration: Figure 13-1** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 169]

Note\* This discussion and illustration on directions seems to be a rebuttal to the ideas of Keith Christensen (see the notation for 1992).

*1 Nephi 16:13 We Did Pitch Our Tents Again; And We Did Call the Name of the Place Shazer:*

In 1996 the Hiltons write that there is a surprising corroboration of Nephi's statement about finding a camping site four days journey south-southeast from the Valley of Lemuel (al-Bad). Seventy-six miles down the Tihama (or shores of the Red Sea) and within four miles of our forecast location, we burst out of the arid desert into a large green and fertile oasis in the mouth of Wadi Surr. This place now bears the name of al-Muwaylih, Saudi Arabia. We offer it as our candidate for the likely place of Nephi's Shazer (1 Nephi 16:13). Comprising about 80 acres of date palms, it rises immediately adjacent to the beach of the Red Sea. This lovely spot is the only oasis with more than a handful of palm trees between al-Bad and al-Wajh, a distance of 124 miles, and therefore is the most likely site for Shazer. (see illustration below)

We accepted as added evidence of the location of the ancient trail a string of 300-400 year old Turkish forts built to protect the water sources. Here at al-Muwaylih we found the ruins of one of the largest forts, which covers an area the size of a city block. Approaching Duba, we found another fort at al-Azlam, built around an ancient well. Another fort is located at al-Wajh, also built around an ancient water well. [p. 111] [See also Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, p. 90]

**[1996 Map: Figure 9-1 shows a dotted line for the ancient caravan trail (now a modern highway) between al-Muwaylah, the Book of Mormon "Shazer" and al-Wadjh.** Note there are at least 23 ancient ruins, mostly villages, marked along this section of the old trail. Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 106]

**[1996 Map: Figure 9-4, One of the ancient trade routes in Arabia.** This trail runs along the beach of the Red Sea, all the way from Aynima in the north to the tip of the peninsula in the south. On the map, the Hilton's proposed location of Shazer--al-Muwaylah would be just north of Duba. Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 113]

*1 Nephi 16:14 We Did Go Forth . . . Keeping in the Most Fertile Parts:*

Note\* The Hiltons note that history and tradition tell of the Jewish and Israelite families that settled in the northwestern part of the Arabian peninsula, called the Hijaz, from the time of Moses to the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. . . . Numerous traditions account for the origins of other Jewish families in Arabia. One is that some came during the reign of David, and many more during the reign of Hezekiah. It is well known in Islamic circles that much of the population in the Hijaz (the state in northwest Arabia) was Jewish when Mohammed rose to power in the seventh century A.D. [p. 117]

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 (al-Bad). 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. The location of the ancient capital city of Dedan 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. (see illustrations below) The Lihyan ruin is called al-Kieribah. [pp. 78-80]

[1996 **Map: Figure 8-5 Borders of the Old Kingdom of Lihyan (People of Lehi), 500-200 B.C.** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 83]

[1996 **Chart: Figure 8-1 Succession of Rulers of Arabia.** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 77]

The Hiltons note that in a revelation from the Lord through Joseph Smith to two early LDS missionaries we find the statement: "Open your mouths and they shall be filled, and you shall become as Nephi of old, who journeyed from Jerusalem in the wilderness. Yea, open your mouths, spare not, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs" (D&C 33:8). That is, they would make many converts, presumably as Nephi did. The Hiltons write:

We postulate Nephi opened his mouth in the Arabian wilderness, the wilderness "from Jerusalem" (D&C 33:8); he preached the full gospel message. His preaching must have produced marvelous results, because the modern elders, when laden with many sheaves upon their backs, will be "even as Nephi of old" (D&C 33:8). [p. 75]

*1 Nephi 16:18 I Did Break My Bow (Location):*

When Lehi and his family moved on past "Shazer," Nephi referred to "keeping in the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:14). According to the Hiltons Nephi was probably designating the area about halfway down the Red Sea coastal plain where the trail widens near Jiddah. The bow breaking incident occurred after the party had traveled "for the space of many days" (It is interesting that Nephi repeats that phrase twice, both in 1 Nephi 16:15 and in 16:17). Since Nephi says that they again traveled "for the space of many days" (1 Nephi 16:33) to reach Nahom after leaving this camp of the broken bow, it may have been halfway between Shazer and Nahom. If so, the incident may have been roughly in the vicinity of the ancient port of Jiddah, on the shores of the Red Sea. Here the weather is a merciless combination of heat, humidity, sand, and salt--forces strong enough to destroy steel by rust. Between March and November the heat is pitiless. Even in late January the daytime temperature hovers around 85 degrees. Humidity averages about 60 per-cent year round, and in the more moist part of a fifteen-year cycle the humidity rises to a yearly average of 92 percent. Unpainted iron or steel simply cannot survive long in such conditions. [pp. 51, 114]

*1 Nephi 16:30 I, Nephi, Did Go Forth up into the Top of the Mountain:*

The Hiltons explain that the old (frankincense) trail continues down the coastal plain all the way to Yemen. At al-Qunfidhah one branch of the old trail proceeds southeastward up the wadi Tayyah. It crosses the broad Tihama and winds up through the foothills until it enters the narrow, sand-bottomed valley between massive cliffs that tower up on either side. . . . At the approach to Abha the escarpment has been thrust higher than anywhere else in Arabia. . . . The road is cut into the face of the cliff and rises up from the seacoast to 8,000 feet in only 35 miles (see illustration). . . . Elevation at Soodah, 14 miles out of Abha, is 10,000 feet, the highest point in Saudi Arabia; the city of Abha is about 7,000 feet high.

The rest of Arabia slopes gently eastward down from the top of the escarpment across the entire peninsula to the Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf). Once on top, Lehi's party travelled mostly downhill the balance of his journey to Bountiful (Dhofar, Oman). [pp. 130-131]

**[1996 Illustration:** Proposed routing of Lehi's trail, following one of the ancient frankincense trails from the Red Sea coast up the Sha'ar Ascent to Abha, Khamis Mushait and Nahom. [Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 131]

**[1996 Map: Figure 10-4.** Proposed reconstruction of the Lehi-Nephi trail along one of the ancient frankincense roads from the Red Sea to Bountiful. [Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 133]

*1 Nephi 16:34 Ishmael Died, and Was Buried in a Place Which Was Called Nahom:*

The Hiltons note that from Abha, the trail runs in a gradual descent through Wadi Najran, leading ancient travelers right to the city gates of Najran. The last 60 miles of this route might be situated in Death Valley California, so similar is the landscape. But in contrast, one can see the bright green foliage of the date palms in the large Najran oasis. This ancient caravan city on the incense trail was once both walled and towered. The old trail continues south on through Najran to the caravan city of Sadah, Yemen, and then to Nahom. [p. 138]

The Hiltons write:

After we published our material in the *Ensign* in September and October 1976, Dr. Ross T. Christensen, then of the BYU faculty, prepared a comment on the location of Nahom, which was published in the August 1978 *Ensign*. He pointed out a community still named "Nahom," just 18 miles northeast of Sanaa, the modern capitol of Yemen. . . .

Armed with this information, we went to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and examined over 100 ancient maps of Arabia, and to our delight we found the name Nahom on over a fourth of them. Of course each author spelled the name differently. We found *Nehem*, *Nehhm*, *Neahm*, *Nehm* and *Nahm*. We also obtained a government map of the tribal territories in Yemen, undated, but obviously a modern production. It shows *Nah'm* as a tribe located just northeast of Sanaa (See illustrations below: Figure 10-1 and 10-2)

**[1996 Map: Figure 10-1. Ancient Yemani tribe called *Nahm* proposed as the same as "Nahom" (1 Ne. 16:34).** Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 127]



[1996 **Map: Figure 10-2.** Map of Yemen showing modern towns and highways. Note *Neh'm* between Sana'a and Ma'rib. Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 133]

*1 Nephi 17:1 We Did Travel Eastward from That Time Forth:*

Note\* Nephi was writing this material on directions from a location in the New World. See the end of the Hilton's comments for some perspectives on Nephi's directions.

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

According to the Hiltons, Salalah, Oman which is nestled near the Qara Mountains is the best candidate for Nephi's land Bountiful. They feel that this area can satisfy the criteria established by the Astons in a much better manner than Wadi-Sayq, although not necessarily according to the Astons' interpretation. The Hiltons write that one reason the Astons looked beyond the village of Salalah for the land Bountiful was that a frankincense road from the desert was not to be considered because most of the frankincense was "rarely transported overland from Dhufar." Since the Aston article in 1991, a widely published discovery was reported of the ancient Arabic city of Ubar. This city referred to as "Atlantis of the Sands" by T. E. Lawrence was located by high-tech images from the satellite Landsat 5, Shuttle Challenger's Imaging Radar B and by the French SPOT Satellite.

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

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

In ancient times the Himyaritic tribe ruled Dhufar [the region encompassing the Qara Mountains]; they were overturned by Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Archemerid dynasty in 563 B.C. We conclude then that the Himyaritics were in power when Lehi's colony arrived on the scene in 592 B.C. That people were living in several towns in Dhufar, Oman at the time of Lehi is clear. In addition to the Ubar and it's 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." 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.

Once again, if the Hilton's conclusion that the Dhufar region of Oman is Bountiful is correct, Lehi's colony was not alone there. This was the end (or start) of the frankincense trail, where the frankincense trees grew, so there would also have been farmers, merchants, inns, businesses and other activities. In addition to the trail caravaners, there would have been sailors and ships, for Salalah was also a sea port. 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." [pp. 151, 153-56]

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

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

IR--RE--ANT--UM

ER--[R]Y--THRA--EM

[p. 21]

Note\* The mape below illustrates the the sea commonly called the Sea of Arabia, and the subsitution of the name "Erythraeum Sea" for the Arabian Sea.

[1996 **Map: Empire of Alexander the Great.** Barnes & Co, Barnes General History: A Brief History of Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern Peoples, with Some Account of Their Monuments Institutions, Arts, Manners, and Customs. New York: American Book Company, from the Press of A. S. Barnes & Co., 1883, p. 152. (Note included for 1 Nephi 17:5 in Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996) ]

[1996 **Map: Early Races & Nations.** Barnes & Co, Barnes General History: A Brief History of Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern Peoples, with Some Account of Their Monuments Institutions, Arts, Manners, and Customs. New York: American Book Company, from the Press of A. S. Barnes & Co., 1883, p. 11. (Note included for 1 Nephi 17:5 in Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996) ]

*1 Nephi 18:2 I, Nephi, Did Not Work the Timbers after the Manner Which Was Learned by Men:*

In an explanation of his shipbuilding, Nephi says that he "did not work the timbers after the manner which was learned by men" (1 Nephi 18:2). According to the Hiltons, apparently the shipyards on the coast of the Red Sea had at least given him enough understanding to know that in following the Lord's style of construction, he would be departing from "the manner of men."

Shipbuilding was part of the Red Sea culture at least a thousand years before Lehi's time even though all the timber had to be imported. Drawings and sculptures convince one that the style, shape and size of present Arab dhows (average length 65 feet) are not unlike those of antiquity.

From Tim Severin's book (*The Sindbad Voyage*) we learn that "all early texts make it abundantly clear that early Arab ships were not nailed together, but that their planks were sewn together with cord made from coconut husks" (Severin:6).

Marco Polo had observed the stitched hulls of the Arabs and was not impressed:

Their ships are very bad, and many of them flounder, because they are not fastened with iron nails but stitched together with thread made of coconut husks. They soak the husks until they assume the texture of horse hair: then they make it into thread and stitch their ships . . . This makes it a risky undertaking to sail in these ships. And you can take my word that many of them sink, because the Indian Ocean is often stormy.

Such a stitched boat could never have made it to America. Nephi must have built his in a way different from what he had observed. Was Nephi's ship different because it was nailed together? The plan was given to him by God. We know it had sails, because he "sailed" it (1 Nephi 18:22), a rudder because he "steered" it (1 Ne. 18:13), and perhaps a deck on which the families of Laman and Lemuel and Ishmael's sons could sing and dance (1 Ne. 18:9,22). [pp. 120-121]

*1 Nephi 18:2 I, Nephi, Did Not Work the Timbers after the Manner Which Was Learned by Men:*

The Hiltons noticed two basic patterns of traditional shipbuilding. In each case, the builder laid the keel and fastened the ribs to it. Planks were fastened to the skeleton either by nailing or "sewing."

The Hiltons notes that in the "nailing" method, the builder drilled a hole through the plank and rib with an iron-tipped hand drill. Through the hole, he drove a large iron spike; a packing of coconut fibers soaked in fish oil encircled the shaft under the large head. The spike was then bent over on the inside to cinch the nail in place. They watched while a native shipbuilder placed the rib, marked it, and hewed it to the line with an adze, installed it and nailed it in place by drilling holes and setting each nail head in the

wood, then clinching it on the inside. He had not power tools, only ancient hand tools. He used Jumaise (Sycamore) logs for ribs, but flat lumber from India or Indonesia for planks and iron nails. He said that a ship of the size he was making (20 meters) could easily carry over a hundred people on a journey such as the Hiltons had described for Nephi's group.

One reason the Astons looked beyond the village of Salalah for the ship-building site was that big trees for the ship's timbers were several miles away from the beach. However, in building his own ship, Nephi could have cut down trees and dragged them to the sandy beach using camel power, or he could have purchased dressed lumber from the local people. Nephi does not tell us how he got his timbers, but he does comment that the completed ship "was good, and that the workmanship thereof was exceeding fine" (1 Nephi 18:4).

As the Hiltons have noted before, Nephi did not build the ship "after the manner of men," but "after the manner which the Lord had shown unto" him (1 Nephi 18:2). Their examination of ancient shipbuilding serves only to illustrate that Nephi's acquaintance with contemporary construction techniques "after the manner of men" was extensive. He built in an area where shipbuilding was well-known. Indeed, even though his ship was not "after the manner of men," he probably used a number of the methods and elements of design or building techniques known to the people of his time, the Lord directing him in unstated ways to make a ship different enough to be able to carry them on the extraordinary trip across the Indian and Pacific Oceans to America.

While nails had been known and used at least 400 years before Nephi's day, there is no indication they were used in ship-building. The earliest texts make it abundantly clear that early ships were sewed. However, if Nephi built the first nailed ocean-going vessel while the local Arabs looked on and then had the nerve to load up and set sail straight out into the "mighty deep," the locals could have repeated what Nephi had pioneered. Arabs have been building nailed dhows ever since. [pp. 161-162]

#### *1 Nephi 18:4 I Had Finished the Ship:*

The Hiltons note that a 60-70 foot ship would not have been excessively large to build by hand; many of the dhows now sailing the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea are as large as 180 feet, all handmade.

They asked a shipwright how many working days would be required to build a complete 60-foot long vessel. He estimated that the four men working in his shipyard, using pre-cut lumber on hand, could do it in five months, or a total of 600 man days. At least part of the time, Nephi had the labor of eight men in his father's colony, and possibly some of the children. Working together, they could perhaps have harvested the lumber and built such a ship in about a year. Of course, if the ship were bigger, and it could well have been, more time would have been needed.

Assuming that all the men could not be working on the boat all of the time--because of sickness, family concerns, hunting, planting, harvesting, etc.--a more likely time-span for building the ship might be two years, especially if we allow that Nephi fetched his own tresses and cut them to size. And since Nephi also had to smelt the metal to make the tools, the shipbuilding project could easily have taken even three or four years. [p. 164]

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

The Hiltons note that at least by the sixth century A.D., Arab entrepreneurs were sailing their dhows all the way from the Arabian peninsula to China. The round trip from the Arabian peninsula to China took

approximately a year of straight sailing, or six months each way, counting layovers at each end of the journey. Once they emerged from the Malacca Straits, the dhows would sometimes be blown completely off course and would end up in the Pacific, "Where, the Chinese believed, the drain spout of the world's ocean sucked the unwary sailor into oblivion."

Although these records date from at least five hundred years after Lehi's party left Arabia, the existence of coastal shipping and the monsoons may have been the combination of events that enabled Nephi, inspired of the Lord, to reach the Pacific Ocean. If it took later sailors 120 days to sail from Arabia to China, it would possibly have taken Nephi one year to fifteen months to cover the three-times longer distance between Arabia and the Promised Land in America. That voyage is a great testament of faith and courage and an inspiring tribute to Nephi's ship. What a story remains to be told! [pp. 165-166]

The Hiltons propose a novel idea concerning directions. They write:

Nephi, in the latter years of his life, manufactured plates of ore and from memory and his father's record wrote the words we now read as the first chapters of the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 19:2). At the time, he was probably living in the promised land in the city of Nephi, or perhaps in the land of their first inheritance. The city of Nephi is the place where Nephi finished his plates, died and was buried. He recalled that when the Lehi colony, traveling south-southeast in the borders of the Red Sea, finally arrived in Nahom (which we identify Nahom as being near Saana, Yemen), his family changed the direction of their journey to "travel nearly eastward from that time forth" (1 Ne. 17:1).

Does this mean going eastward only from Nahom to Bountiful, where he built his ship? Or could he have meant continuing eastward across the oceans to the land of the first Inheritance (proposed identification: near Tapachula/Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico) and still further eastward to the City of Nephi (proposed identification Guatemala City, Guatemala), where he reigned as king of the Nephites and engraved the account of his travels, then died and was buried? . . .

The table in Figure 13-2 shows the four sites on this eastward journey. We show the degrees and minutes of north latitude for each of the sites as identified on a modern map. Note how they cluster near the fifteenth parallel. Figure 13-3 (see below) illustrates the places for measuring the deviation of each site, compared to true east direction from Nahom. . . .

**[1996 Chart: Figure 13-2 Latitude of Four Sites on Nephi's "Eastward" Journey (1 Ne. 17:1).** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 170]

**[1996 Chart: Figure 13-3 Deviations from True East from Nahom.** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 171]

Figure 13-4 (see below) is a world map showing the four sites Nephi mentions as we reconstruct his "eastward" trip to the Promised Land and his final destination in the City of Nephi. . . . The sea voyage from Bountiful (Dhufar, Oman) to the land of the first inheritance (near Tapachula/Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico) is approximately 15,000 miles. In all these travels Nephi was guided by the instructions on the Liahona,

which no doubt told him how to circumnavigate the land masses he would confront in the eastward sea journey, such as skirting India to the south and the island passages of Southeast Asia. Perhaps he sailed down the Malacca Straits, in front of Singapore, north of Borneo and north of Mindanao, Philippines. It is easy to imagine that the Nephi party put ashore at some of these landfalls for water and food. Then Nephi could return to the fifteenth parallel of north latitude to continue eastward to his landfall in the Promised Land at the place of the first inheritance presumably near Tapachula/Izapa, Chiapas, Mexico. The deviation after a 15,000 mile sea voyage from true east of Nahom is about 32 miles. This achievement is really astonishing. . . .

Our LDS literature is full of discussions of ocean currents and wind patterns in the Pacific, but such discussions of drifting with the currents rather than purposefully steering and sailing directly "eastward" are, in our opinion, of lesser importance, because Nephi specifically said he "sailed" (1 Ne. 18:22) and "steered" (1 Ne. 18:13) his ship. He did not just allow it to coast along with the natural current. Remember, it is the "set of the sails and not the gales" that tell you where to go.

The final leg of the eastward travels of Nephi came after the death and burial of Lehi in the land of the first inheritance. Nephi had serious disagreements with his older brothers and then took all who would follow him . . . and journeyed many days in the wilderness (2 Ne. 5:7). . . . He established the City of Nephi perhaps near Guatemala City, at a distance of approximately 110 miles from the Lamanites. Guatemala City is but a scant deviation of 39 miles from true east of Nahom. [pp. 169-173]

**[1996 Map: Figure 13-4 Traveling "eastward" (1 Ne. 17:1) on the fifteenth parallel of N. Latitude..**  
Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 172]

Note\* In their 1976 book, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, the Hiltons had Lehi landing in South America. (see 1976 notation)

**[1996 Illustrated Model The Hiltons [FRANK. TRAIL-COASTAL ROUTE-SALALAH]**

Source: Lynn and Hope Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1996, p. 5.

**[1996 Chart: Nephi's Wilderness Journey.** Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, Springville: Cedar Fort Inc., 1996, p. 32]

Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

1996, p. 5

In 1996 the Church Educational System would republish a "Revised Edition" of the 1989 Book of Mormon commentary for use in all its Religion 121-122 courses for the years which would follow. Interestingly, nothing had changed in the way of Book of Mormon geography. The only mention of Lehi's travels would still be the following:

*1 Nephi 3:1-10. The Journey Back to Jerusalem:* The distance from Jerusalem to the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba) is about 180 miles through hot, barren country infested anciently by many marauders. Lehi and his family traveled three days' journey beyond this point (see 1 Nephi 2:5-6). This meant at least a twelve-to-fourteen-day trip one way, which gives added meaning to Nephi's response in 1 Nephi 3:7. [see map below]

[1996 **Map: The Journey Back to Jerusalem.** CES, *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, p. 5]

1996^ **Glenn A. Scott, Jr.** *Voices from the Dust: New Light on an Ancient American Record*,

Independence: School of Saints, 1996, pp. 67-87

In 1996 Glenn A. Scott, Jr. made a comparison of some of the major theories that had been proposed to date regarding Lehi's travels:

[Lehi] gathered his family and provisions for a trip of unknown length and destination and entered the wilderness. . . .

At this point we must read between the lines noting that (a) Lehi "departed into the wilderness," (b) "came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea;" (c) traveled in the wilderness in the borders which were nearer the Red Sea;" (d) and finally "when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley [wadi] by the side of a river of water". (1 Nephi 1:28,20,31,33 [2:4-6]). Note that it does not say three days from Jerusalem. It is far more likely that this means it was three days from Ezion Geber at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, which is only an arm of the Red Sea (see Map 6, illustration below). . . .

[1996 **Illustrated Map: Map 6, Various Theories Proposed of Lehi's Trail.** Glenn A. Scott, Jr., *Voices from the Dust: New Light on an Ancient American Record*, Independence: School of Saints, 1996, p. 78]

Also, the words, "the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea: (1 Nephi 1:35 [2:9]) must have meant the Gulf of Aqaba, an arm branching off of the main body of the Red Sea. If this is the case, then the river was probably in the Wadi El Afal, and their camp probably at nearby Al Beda where there is a spring and is said to be where Moses met his father-in-law, Jethro. (Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 65.) (see Map 6, above)

We are not told how long Lehi's little group stayed in Valley Lemuel. . . . After receiving the Liahona, they gathered all they had brought with them "and all the remainder of our provisions *which the Lord had given unto us*" (1 Nephi 5:13 [16:11]), suggesting they stayed long enough to grow food for the next leg of their journey. With the Liahona pointing south-southeast, they crossed the River Laman into the wilderness. From Nephi's record they must have followed what was known as the Frankincense Trail," (Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 27) a trail used by camel caravans carrying that expensive, fragrant resin . . .

Often they followed the wide plain of the Red Sea coast. (see Map 6 above) At times they turned inland to skirt rocky wadis too deep to cross. Always the Liahona directed them to the most fertile parts of the desert. Day after day they traveled, hunting wild beasts with their arrows and slings. Nephi found the best hunting in the steep rugged mountains between Medina and the Red Sea. (see Map 6 above) Here gazelles, oryx, ibex, goats, wild asses, even wild reem (cattle) were to be found. (John Burckhardt, 1968, *Travels in Arabia*, 403.) . . .

While camped at an unidentified oasis, possibly near the present city of Jiddah (see Map 6 above), Nephi broke his bow of fine steel. . . . According to Arab writers, the only wood in Arabia suitable for bows is that of the nab tree, which is found only in difficult areas of Mount Azd or Mount Jasm. Mount Jasm is close to jiddah, and Mount Azd is further south near the coast. (Nibley 1998, *Lehi in the Desert*, 61.) The only other usable wood was of the pomegranate tree, also found near Jiddah. (Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 95.)

The resumed their journey and traveled for many days, then again they stopped to "tarry for a space of a time" (1 Nephi 5:43 [16:33]), probably a growing season. This place was called Nahom (1 Nephi 5:44 [16:34]), and since Nephi did not say that they named it, it may have already had that name. A check of maps as old as AD 1165 and as new as 1985, reveals a place matching Nephi's description (variously named Nehm, Nehem, Nahm, or Naham) located in the Wadi Jauf, about thirty miles northeast of San'a in modern Yemen. (Harry Philby, 1939, *Sheba's Daughters*) Following Wadi Jauf, Lehi's party would have bypassed the most populated parts of the ancient kingdom of Saba (Sheba). . . .

Nephi recorded that from that time on they traveled nearly eastward. In the early days of the Restored Church, Frederick G. Williams (one-time counselor to Joseph Smith, Jr.) in a notation about Lehi's colony wrote, "they traveled nearly a south south East direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of North Latitude [sic] then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia." (F. Williams III 1988, "Did Lehi Land in Chile?" FARMS paper WIL-88, 2.) Thus Williams added to Nephi's words his own assumption. A harmless speculation, but in 1882 a Salt Lake City printer, F. D. Richards, attributed Williams's notation to Joseph Smith, Jr., and called it a revelation. That claim was refuted by William's great-great-grandson who said "The page on which the original Frederick G. Williams statement is found, gives no evidence of revelatory origin. . . . It should not be given any more authority than any other theory." (Ibid., 16) [However, the 1894 RLDS Committee on Book of Mormon Geography placed Lehi's route on the nineteenth parallel--(see Map 6 above)]

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



Lynn and Hope Hilton have proposed and explored a more southerly route from Al Qunfudhah on the nineteenth parallel, southeast through the Wadi Ababish and the caravan city of Abha, to the ancient site of Najran which they equate with Nahom. (Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 95.) (see Map 6 above) Due east would have brought Lehi's party to a point in the Jabal Qara mountains north of Salalah, a small fertile valley on the Dhofar coast of Oman, at the eastern limit of the frankincense growing area. (Aston & Aston 1989, "The Search for Nahom," FARMS paper AST-89c, 1-16.)

However, Warren and Michaela Aston have pointed out that even this course would require traversing (or at least skirting) 300 miles of the terrible Rub al Khali, then crossing over the 3,000 foot Jabal Qara mountains to find a small valley separated from the sea by the wide arid Jarbib plain. They propose that Camp Nahom was near the village of Nehem in the Wadi Jauf on the sixteenth parallel. (see Map 6 above) From there one possible route would lead through the Wadis Hadramaut and Masilah, a natural gate through the Hadramaut mountains to the Bay of Sayhut. (Ibid, 25-25). But another fertile pocket further east called Wadi Sayq, may fit Nephi's description better. In it is one of the only two perennial rivers on the Arabian peninsula, and it has large trees more suitable for shipbuilding than the Jumaise (sycamore-fig) trees at Salalah. (Aston & Aston 1991, "We Called the Place Bountiful," FARMS paper AST-91b.)

Regardless of which of these fertile pockets on the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula may have been Nephi's Valley Bountiful, it is interesting that for a hundred years after the publication of *The Book of Mormon* the scholarly world ridiculed such a possibility. . . .

Imagine the thrill Lehi and his sunbaked followers must have felt when, after eight years in the desert, they came out of the mountains into the verdant valley with its fruit and wild honey. No wonder they called it Valley Bountiful. . . . Joseph Smith, Jr., could not have known of such a place. He [had] never been there, and the geographies and travel books of his day described the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula, as "a rocky wall . . . as dismal and barren as can be . . . not a blade of grass or a green thing." (Josiah Conder 1926, *A Popular Description of Arabia*, 9). . . .

Also, how could Joseph Smith, Jr., have known the route described by Nephi was the only practical way Lehi could have led his little colony out of the Land of Jerusalem? Northeast was the enemy Babylon; north was Syria under the heel of Babylon; northwest was Phoenicia under siege by Babylon; west were the Philistines under Egyptian domination; southwest was Egypt itself, hostile to the prophets who urged King Zedekiah to surrender to Babylon; east were the Nabateans of Petra, no friends of the Hebrews; and southeast was the central Arabian desert which was obviously impassable.

That left only the route south along the west coast of Arabia. Even the turn east from camp Nahom was necessary to avoid the populous area of the Kingdom of Saba (Sheba), and though that route included some of the world's most rugged terrain, in retrospect it was the safest. After such a difficult, eight-year journey, Lehi's exhausted party pitched their tents and settled down to rest and recover "for the space of many days" (1 Nephi 5:68 [17:7]).

Finally . . . the Lord told Nephi that they too must become shipbuilders, saying, "Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall shew thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters" (1 Nephi 5:70 [17:8]). . . . Nephi was directed to a place where he found ore deposits although he did not record whether they were of iron or copper.

Authors Lynn and Hope Hilton wrote that "an iron and steel manufacturing industry had been carried on since at least the ninth century B.C at Aqaba." (Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 107.) . . . Warren and Michaela Aston wrote that the only metal found in the Hadramaut mountains is copper. (Aston & Aston 1989, "In Search of Nahom," FARMS paper AST-89, 17). In any event [Nephi] wrote "I did make tools of the ore which I did molten out of the rock" (1 Nephi 5:84 [17:16]). . . .

We can only speculate what a ship designed by God looked like. It had to be simple enough for nine inexperienced men to build. Lehi's little colony was at Valley Bountiful for three years before their ship was completed. We are not told if it took all that time to build it. The Hiltons asked an Arab shipwright how many working days would be required to construct a typical sixty foot sailing vessel. He estimated about 1575 (experienced) man-days, but there are many Arab *dhow*s sailing the Red Sea and Indian Ocean as long as 180 feet which would obviously take much longer to build. (Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 113.) . . .

. . . now after miraculously finding this beautiful valley filled with nature's bounty, they had to leave it all behind and board that bobbing, untried, handmade vessel. . . . It is amazing that Nephi recorded no rebellion from his brothers at this critical time. Maybe they were so proud of the result of their unaccustomed labor that they were anxious to try it out.

Humbling themselves before the Lord, they boarded the ship and put out into the Arabian Sea. . . . they were "driven forth before the wind, towards the promised land" (1 Nephi 5:181 [18:8]).

Shipping records say that the trade winds in this area blow steadily from the southwest from June to September, and from the northeast from October to May. Arabs have been sailing their dhows to and from East Africa and India for centuries using those trade winds. (Hilton & Hilton 1976, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 114.) (see Map 7, illustrated below)

**[1996 Illustrated Map: Map 7, Two Possible Routes for Lehi's Voyage to the Land of Promise.**  
Glenn A. Scott, Jr., *Voices from the Dust: New Light on an Ancient American Record*, Independence: School of Saints, 1996, p. 84]

Some scholars suggest that Lehi's ship sailed east and south past India and Sumatra, through the straits of Malacca, threaded its way through the maze of islands of the East Indies, and emerged in the Pacific Ocean near the equator. (see Map 7 above) If that route was not complex enough, he would have had to find the narrow equatorial countercurrent which flows east between the strong west-flowing Japanese (North Pacific) equatorial current and the equally strong west-flowing Humboldt (south Pacific) equatorial current. (Simmons 1986, *Peoples, Places and Prophecies*, 77-78) Even that narrow band is marked by light and unpredictable winds called the doldrums.

In view of the complexity of that proposed route, plus Nephi not mentioning encountering or even sighting any land, it seems that an alternate route might be considered--one that would not require them to have sighted any land until they arrived at the land of promise.

A possible alternative route would have required them to depart the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula in the winter, when the trade winds blow from the northeast. At that season, both the trade winds and ocean currents would have carried them south along the east coast of Africa and through the Madagascar channel (258 miles wide). (see Map 7 above)

South of Madagascar the ocean current swings eastward across the southern Indian Ocean, south of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, into the South Pacific Ocean at about 48 degrees south latitude. At that latitude Lehi's ship would have been more than fifty miles from any land and over a thousand miles north of the Antarctic Circle. In fact London England is 245 miles closer to the Arctic Circle than this route would have been from the Antarctic Circle.

The current in the South Pacific Ocean would have carried Lehi's ship steadily eastward into the Western Hemisphere and the Humboldt current would then have carried them northward without sighting land until they arrived at the west coast of Mesoamerica. (see Map 7 above)

This route, seemingly more circuitous (when viewed on a flat map) than the equatorial route, is actually about the same total distance. This is because of what international airline pilots call The Great Circle Route. . . .

After proposing this alternate route in 1983 I was surprised to later learn that Verla Birrell had suggested that same route in 1948. (Verla Birrell 1948, *Book of Mormon Guide Book*, Map II.) Although Birrell later narrowed her choice of Lehi's landing place to South America (a widely accepted view in 1948), her map did allow for other possible landing sites, near Panama, in Guatemala, and in Mexico (see Map 8, illustrated below) . . .

**[1996 Illustrated Map: Map 8, Map of Verla Birrel (1948) Book of Mormon Guide Book, pp. 62-63: Suggested Route of Lehi's Party between the Old World and the Western Hemisphere.** Glenn A. Scott, Jr., *Voices from the Dust: New Light on an Ancient American Record*, Independence: School of Saints, 1996, p. 78]

Lynn and Hope Hilton estimated the length of Lehi's voyage at from twelve to fifteen months. Nephi recorded, "after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive to the promised land" (1 Nephi 5:212 [18:23]). . . .

. . . if the entire western hemisphere is a promised land (Ether 3:13-14 [6:12]; 1 Nephi 5:212 [18:23]), where did Lehi's colony land? Some LDS authors have proposed a landing site further west; e.g., John Sorenson proposes, "the southernmost portion of Guatemala's Pacific coast, or adjacent El Salvador, is most likely where Lehi's party landed and first settled." (Sorenson 1991, "Where in the World Did Lehi Land" *Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, 8.) Les Campbell wrote, "Archaeological evidence suggest that Lehi landed along the Pacific side of the Guatemala-Mexico border." (Campbell 1991, *Ibid.*, 5) And Bruce Warren said archaeological evidence all along the coast of El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Pacific corridor of Mexico . . . qualify as the land of first inheritance. (Bruce Warren 1991, *Ibid.*, 10.)

**1996^ John E. Clark "Two Points of Book of Mormon Geography: A Review" A book review of Paul**

**Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi***, Provo, Utah: Bradford & Wilson, 1995 in *Review*

*of Books on the Book of Mormon*, volume 8 number 2, Provo: Foundation for

Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1996, pp. 1-24.

John Clark writes:

If books came with warning labels, all treatises (on Book of Mormon geography) would carry the warning *caveat lector*: Reader Beware! Every such study that I have read presents an undifferentiated blend of scripture, testimony, zealous opinion, sound and naive arguments, flimsy evidence, and unfulfilled and unrealistic expectations. Even the best are deficient; even the worst contain slivers of silver among the dross. Paul Hedengren's *The Land of Lehi* typifies the genre on all counts. Readers of this book need to be wary; they should sift through its contents with caution and with considerable attention to subtle details. Hedengren's study is not the best I have seen, but neither is it the worst. (p. 1)

Hedengren rejects traditional wisdom concerning Lehi's travel route from Jerusalem (pp. 3-11) and the location of the Old World Bountiful, the embarkation point for the New World. He marshals a variety of information concerning the distribution of mineral deposits, plant and animal life, and evidence of ancient trails (pp. 11-14). Hedengren argues that Lehi and his company sailed from the Arabian Sea around the tip of Africa, across the Atlantic Ocean, and probably into Chesapeake Bay. The reason for this rather unusual sailing route becomes apparent in chapter 3, which is a detailed argument for the location of Cumorah. (p. 2)

Note\* Contrary to Clark's review, Hedengren's Bountiful does not exactly lie on the Arabian Sea. According to Hedengren, "Bountiful is in northeastern Oman" (p. 15). From this position, Lehi would have sailed from the Gulf of Oman. See map below

[1997 **Map: Hammond Middle East Crisis**, Maplewood, N. J.: Hammond Incorporated, 1991]

[See the notation for 1995]

1997^ **Warren P. Aston** **Book review of Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia***, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 1996, in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, volume 9 number 1, Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997, pp. 15-24.

Warren Aston writes:

From a 1997 perspective it is possible to look back . . . and see how much Arabian Book of Mormon studies owe their current impetus to the vision and effort of just a few individuals. . . .

It would be a mistake to regard this new book as merely an updated version of their original 1976 work, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, which was also excerpted in the September and October issues of the *Ensign* that year. Twenty years later, *Discovering Lehi*, subtitled *New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia*, contains about twice the material of its predecessor, and most of the original photography has been replaced with other, more useful pictures, maps, and diagrams. . . .

One of the book's strengths is its incorporation of enough supplementary and anecdotal material to paint a fairly comprehensive and accurate picture of Arabian culture and customs for those not familiar with that part of the world. The authors attempt to tackle most aspects of Nephi's account of the journey: the composition of the group, the mode of travel, geography, desert life, and customs. . . .

[This book] is vintage Hilton, giving us the only Latter-day Saint analysis to date of the lengthiest section of the entire overland journey made by the Lehiters: the route followed from Jerusalem to Nahom. Inserted in the midst of this analysis is some interesting material, based on recent scholarship, on the likely site for Mt. Sinai--relevant, as the Hiltons point out, because Lehi may have been following a well-established tradition in fleeing Jerusalem to the mount.

After a full chapter spent discussing Semitic marriage customs, chapters 7 & 8 make the Hiltons' case that missionary preaching by Lehi and Nephi during their passage through Arabia may have spawned a civilization known to scholars as the "Lehyanites." This idea, however, is introduced through what I believe is the unwarranted assumption that D&C 33:8 indicates that Nephi preached to large numbers of people during the passage to Bountiful, converting many of them. This latter-day scripture, of course, actually refers to Nephi's rebuking his rebellious brothers (2 Nephi 1:27-8), and I see no hint anywhere in scripture that the Lehiters actively preached their beliefs in Arabia, much less made converts in such numbers that a new civilization resulted. This does not mean, of course, that it could not or did not happen, only that it cannot be supported scripturally. The Lehyanite nation, centered in the general area of northern Arabia, where the valley of Lemuel and Shazer must have been located, was prominent between about 500 and 200 B.C. . . . It is worth noting that the Lehyanites are not the only possible imprint of the prophet Lehi in tribal Arabia; other parallels suggestive of Lehi's prophetic role have been noted on the other side of the Arabian peninsula. . . .

To their credit, over the years the Hiltons have usually been quick to acknowledge research advances by others in the areas covered by their book. Thus we find their acceptance that the Book of Mormon Nahom is located at the place of the same name in the Yemen Arab Republic, rather than at Al Qunfidah in Saudi Arabia as they had speculated in their first book. . . .

The book rightly comes to a focus and conclusion at Nephi's Bountiful, the place marking the transition from the Old to the New World in the Book of Mormon. The Hiltons departed on their 1976 journey believing that the only viable candidate for Bountiful must be Salalah in modern Oman, basing this on Nibley's studies, which in turn relied on the 1932 eyewitness account of Bertram Thomas. So far as the location of Bountiful is concerned, they now accept that Khor Kharfot (usually referred to as Wadi Sayq in the text) is "probably the best proposed [site] to date" (p. 153). But they still express concerns. . . .

On page 34 the Hiltons feature a small map of Lehi's journey [see below]; however, the map misplaces Nahom and shows the path of the expedition gracefully arching down to Salalah instead of in the "nearly eastward" direction Nephi describes.

[1996 **Map: Figure 3-3: Direction of Travel for Lehi-Nephi Trail, 600-588 B.C.** Lynn and Hope Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1996, p. 34]

Even earlier in the book, page 15 reproduces a map [see below] showing a zigzag course from the west coast to the east coast of Arabia before continuing along the coast up to Salalah. The southern portion of this map bears little resemblance to recognized trade routes and the coastal section ending at Salalah is geographically impossible. Such a route could not have been described by Nephi as "nearly eastward" and would have had the Lehiters arriving first on the Hadhramaut coast and then wending their way along the coastline for hundreds of miles northeast to Dhofar . . . It is misleading and confusing to label this map as depicting a route "just as described in the Book of Mormon."

**[1996 Map: Figure 2-5** While there are many ancient caravan trails in Arabia, there is one that travels down the shore of the Red Sea and over land to the east just as described in the Book of Mormon. Lynn and Hope Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1996, p. 15]

The map on page 133 [see below], showing in more detail the Hiltons' proposed routing to Bountiful/Salalah, is little better than the other maps just discussed and suggests Lehi followed a circuitous inland route from Nahom east to Shabwah, northeast for quite some distance, east again to the highly contested site of "Ubar,," and finally southeast to Salalah. Suffice it to say that those who prefer to take Nephi at his word and accept that travel after Nahom was "nearly eastward," as scripture records, will find that a completely feasible straight-line route from Nahom, deviating less than half a degree from true east, will arrive at the only candidate in Arabia that matches the scriptural criteria, Khor Kharfot.

**[1996 Map: Figure 10-4 Proposed reconstruction of the Lehi-Nephi trail along one of the ancient frankincense roads from the Red Sea to Bountiful.** Map from the travel notes of the author's. Lynn and Hope Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1996, p. 133]

Throughout the book, the present-day location of Bountiful is usually given as "Dhofar." But this choice of nomenclature is ultimately quite misleading. While it is true that the only site meeting all of Nephi's very precise criteria for Bountiful, Khor Kharfot [according to Aston's writings], is technically in the southern province of Dhofar, it is part of a distinct and entirely different geological region, being backed by the Qamar mountain range rather than the Qara hills behind Salalah. The two sites have little more than an arbitrary political description in common. The Hiltons, who have never visited any of the other possible sites for Bountiful in either Yemen or Oman, nowhere attempt a comprehensive analysis of what Nephi actually says about Bountiful. When one does so the shortcomings of Salalah as a candidate become rapidly apparent. . . . As of 1992, the entire east coast of the Arabian peninsula has been ground-surveyed from a Latter-day Saint perspective [by Aston], an essential prerequisite to settling the question of Bountiful's present-day location, and the need no longer exists to rely solely on historical accounts or theories as the Hiltons do in this book. . . .

Although I ultimately find their theories regarding the Lehyanters and the origin of Lamanite skin color unconvincing and their continued (albeit often ambiguous) support for a Salalah Bountiful frustrating, the book has the merit of much original thought based on more than armchair research. Read with caution and in conjunction with other published research, the book well deserves a place in the scanty Latter-day Saint literature dealing with this area. The Hiltons' writing is at its best and most valuable when discussing the early stages of the Lehiite desert odyssey, and it still represents the only significant commentary on

the long journey down the east coast of the Red Sea. Until more fieldwork is undertaken in Arabia that will remain the case.

The book *Discovering Lehi* is the result of twenty years of research. Lynn and Hope Hilton's continued efforts are a needed reminder that Latter-day Saints have much work still ahead to mine the wealth of insight, enlightenment, and confirming evidence awaiting us in the well-preserved Old World setting where the Book of Mormon story begins.

**1997^ Noel B. Reynolds "Lehi's Arabian Journey Updated," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*:**

***The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds, Provo:**

FARMS, 1997, Chapter 14, pp. 379-389.

Noel Reynolds begins with ideas taken from the Eugene England article, "Through the Arabian to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" from his previous 1982 FARMS publication, *Book of Mormon Authorship*. He writes:

We can be certain that Joseph Smith knew almost nothing of the Arabian peninsula, and that what he might possibly have heard would have led him astray had he tried to imagine a journey of Israelite refugees through its foreboding wastes. Yet the Book of Mormon confidently describes an orderly exodus, directions of travel, stages of travel and rest, significant landmarks and turning points, and access to food sources and materials for shipbuilding. . . .

Reynolds then draws on Warren and Michaela Aston's technical reports in their FARMS papers, "The Place Which Was Called Nahom" (Provo, Ut: FARMS, 1991) and "And We Called the Place Bountiful" (Provo, Ut: FARMS, 1991), and draws "especially on their beautifully illustrated book, which gives a larger overview and more personal experience" (see Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994]).

To the information about Bountiful, he adds the following about ore from Eugene Clark's 1995 FARMS-sponsored mineralogical survey of the Dhofar region, "A Preliminary Survey of the Geology and Mineral Resources of Dhofar, the Sultanate of Oman," (Provo, Ut: FARMS, 1995):

The text does not specify whether Nephi used copper or iron for his tools, but only ore. The enormous copper deposits of Oman have been exploited for millennia and are noted in records dating to the time of Abraham as the source of copper sold in Ebla (Syria). However, the ancient copper mines are in the northern half of Oman, some distance from Dhofar.

Iron would make far better tools for woodworking, but ancient iron mining is not documented in this region. Nephi may have needed as much as fifty to one hundred pounds of iron to make tools for his crew. Specular hematite is the form of iron most commonly used in primitive smelting procedures, and

stores of specular hematite have been reported on the Mirbat plain, just a few days' hike to the east of Khor Kharfot. Recent geological surveys show that this and other forms of iron ore were available even closer to the site, making Nephi's account of being shown by the Lord where to find ore perfectly plausible in Khor Kharfot. . . .

He concludes:

These important details run directly counter to all knowledge of Arabia in Joseph Smith's day and to most popular belief about Arabia even today. The simplest and most reasonable explanation is that Joseph Smith and his contemporaries did not know these things; . . . Every serious effort to understand the geography of Nephi's account of his wilderness travels reveals its complexity and accuracy in describing the real world. The geographical account, often thought fantastic, must be seen as a powerful witness of the Book of Mormon's divine origins and ancient authorship.

Note\* In this article no mention is made of any articles or publications outside of FARMS. It seems that Reynolds was pushing the idea that FARMS was at the forefront of all serious investigation of Lehi's travels, and that the Astons' ideas were incontrovertible. This drive for prominence and the connections with the Astons would have their consequences. First of all, FARMS rejected the opportunity to help Lynn Hilton publish his 1996 *Discovering Lehi* manuscript, noting that it contained "nothing new." (**note** on manuscript) Readers can judge for themselves (see the 1996 notation and the 1997 review). They would also reject publication of any of Potter and Wellington's research findings relative to Khor Rhoiri being the site of Bountiful rather than Wadi Sayq, the site proposed by the Astons. (see the notations for 1999, 2000, 2003).

1997^ Vaughn E. Hansen *Discovering Book of Mormon Lands*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1997

Without citing hardly any external evidence and relying mainly on his own opinion and a few maps, Vaughn Hansen proposes a Guatemala-Yucatan setting for the Book of Mormon. On page 63, after reviewing the scriptural account of Lehi's travels, there is a map of "Lehi's journey from Jerusalem down the east side of the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea."

[1997 **Map: Figure 15. Lehi's journey from Jerusalem down the east side of the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea.** Vaughn E. Hansen, *Discovering Book of Mormon Lands*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1997, p. 63]

Hansen then says the following:



From their place of launching, trade winds would have carried them in a generally eastward direction across the Indian and Pacific oceans to the western shores of Central America. A few authors have suggested that they sailed westward around Africa, across the Atlantic Ocean, and landed on the east coast of North America. But the general consensus today is that they came across the Pacific Ocean and landed in Southern Mexico or Guatemala. The early Nephite record places them in the western part of "the land of Nephi." . . . The Pacific coast of Southern Mexico and Guatemala meets these criteria [described in 1 Nephi 18:23-25].

[1997 **Map: Figure 16. Lehi crossed the Pacific Ocean and landed on the west coast of Mesoamerica.** Vaughn E. Hansen, *Discovering Book of Mormon Lands*, Springville: Cedar Fort, 1997, p. 65]

1998^ Warren P. Aston "The Arabian Bountiful Discovered? Evidence for Nephi's Bountiful,"

in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 7, num. 1, Provo: FARMS,

1998, pp. 4-11

In this article Warren Aston summarizes his reasoning on why Wadi Sayq and Khor Kharfot fit the criteria of Bountiful. He writes:

. . . For many decades the writings of Hugh Nibley, first published in the *Improvement Era* in 1950, represented the only work by a Latter-day Saint scholar on the Old World setting in which the Book of Mormon account begins. Nibley drew upon a handful of early writings that described life in Arabia, including an account of a visit to Oman early this century by the English explorer Bertram Thomas. Thomas's enthusiastic description of the fertility of the area near the regional capital Salalah, in the south of the country, made it seem likely to Nibley that this was the place that Nephi had written about two and a half millennia earlier.

In the early 1970s Jay Todd, the managing editor of the *Ensign*, initiated a visit to the general areas where the Book of Mormon story began. He invited Lynn and Hope Hilton, who had extensive experience in the Middle East, to go to the Arabian Peninsula on behalf of the *Ensign*. Traveling with their daughter and with photographer Gerald W. Silver early in 1976, the Hiltons became the first Latter-day Saints to journey through western Saudi Arabia and, very briefly, southern Oman, examining possible routes that Lehi and his family may have used. What they saw and photographed established that parts of the southern coast of Oman had many of the features described by Nephi.

Civil unrest in Oman continued to keep the country isolated, however, and another eleven years would pass before LDS researchers again visited southern Oman. In 1987 I visited the area for several days and made a more extensive examination of the Salalah area. That visit made it apparent that while Salalah met most of the requirements for Bountiful, as described in the Book of Mormon, the most important of these requirements--natural vegetation, large trees, and fresh water--were found only several miles inland, separated from the ocean by an arid coastal plain. Yet the Book of Mormon description

makes it appear that Nephi's Bountiful, where Lehi's group lived while they built and launched their ship, was right on the coast. ruins of city ports dating to the first millennium B.C. showed that the coastline has not changed appreciably in thousands of years in the Salalah area, so these necessary elements were unlikely to have been any closer to the coast anciently. . . .

In 1988 my wife and I began a four-year program of exploration, visiting in stages the remote coastal areas of Oman to the west of Salalah and also the entire eastern coastline of neighboring Yemen, which stretches more than 700 miles down to Aden at the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. This unprecedented land survey gave us basic information on the entire region and established, to our satisfaction, that no serious Bountiful candidates were to be found outside the southern Dhofar region of Oman.

The survey also revealed that the most fertile places along this coastline lay within a small, little-known region of Oman backed by the Qamar mountains near the Yemen border. Unlike Salalah, this small region had places where extensive natural vegetation, including sizable trees, was found on the coast itself. This fertility is apparently due to the existence of small narrow valleys that funnel the annual monsoon rains inland, creating well-watered valleys. We soon discovered that here, as nowhere else, all the factors that Nephi mentioned were found in one place.

Our interest soon focused on the greenest portion of this small region, the bay of Khor Kharfot ("Fort Inlet" or "Fort Port"). This unique spot is so isolated that even today it is almost unknown in other parts of Oman. It lies at the end of a long, narrow ravine, the Wadi Sayq ("River Valley"), that provides the only access from the interior desert to the coast through the Qamar mountains. In April and September 1993, two teams of specialists, including a geologist and an archaeologist, jointly sponsored by FARMS and Brigham Young University, visited Khor Kharfot for further examination.

One of their first findings was that the place had once been a sheltered sea inlet until sometime in the last few hundred years when a beach was formed that closed off the bay. They also identified several distinct areas of ruins, indicating intermittent settlement at Kharfot over the centuries. . . .

#### *MATCHING THE CRITERIA FOR BOUNTIFUL*

. . . The direct statements of the Book of Mormon, combined with some logical conclusions drawn from them, allow us to establish a rather long list of characteristics about Old World Bountiful.

*Nephi's Bountiful was "nearly eastward" from Nahom:*

This clear directional relationship between the two places (see 1 Nephi 17:1) was likely fairly precise, rather than just a general direction. In this Old World setting, Nephi was very precise about directions, recording earlier in his account, for example, that their travel from Jerusalem was in "nearly a south-southeast direction" (1 Nephi 16:13).

. . . So far, only one site seems to meet the scriptural requirements for Nahom: the tribal area still known as Nehem which lies about twenty-five miles northeast of Sana'a, capital of the Republic of Yemen. . . . Furthermore, the Jawf valley where Nehem is located marks the point where the ancient incense trade route, which runs parallel to the Red Sea coast of Arabia, turns east. . . . An eastward course from Nehem would pass near the dreaded Empty Quarter of Arabia, which has virtually no sources of water. The aridity of the entire area might explain why Nephi's record suggests that this last stage of their desert travel was the hardest of all.

Since Nehem lies at a latitude of about 16 degrees north, we should expect their trek "nearly eastward" to reach Bountiful close to the same latitude. Khor Kharfot lies at 16 degrees 45 minutes, or in other words less than one degree of deviation from true east over the nearly 600 miles of the last leg of their journey.

*Overland access to Bountiful was possible from the interior desert:*

Access to the southern coast from the interior of Oman is usually difficult and in some places impossible. Geologically separate from the rest of the southern region, the Qamar mountains hinder access to the small, most fertile region where we would expect Bountiful to be situated. However, a single route, the Wadi Sayq, leads through those mountains to the coast, offering a narrow, gradually descending pathway to the sea at Khor Kharfot. This narrow pass, scoured by millennia of annual flood runoff from the Qamar mountains through which it runs, offers the only direct overland route to the ocean from the interior along many miles of coastline. In addition to information from detailed satellite mapping, an examination in 1993 of Wadi Sayq from the very beginning of the valley confirmed that access from the inland desert was still feasible.

*Bountiful was fertile:*

Nephi describes Bountiful as yielding "meat" (perhaps small game that could be hunted), "much fruit," and "honey" (see 1 Nephi 17:5, 6; 18:6). Khor Kharfot is quite fertile. Trees grow naturally, some bearing fruit, and there are nesting birds, a variety of small animals, bees that provide wild honey, and abundant fish. Although the record does not say that the party grew crops from the seeds they brought from Jerusalem, the Kharfot area is sufficiently fertile to have supported such crops.

*The area surrounding Bountiful was probably fertile:*

Nephi's use of the expression "the land of Bountiful" suggests that not only was the specific encampment fertile (see 1 Nephi 17:6), but the general area ("land") was also quite fertile (see 1 Nephi 17:5, 7). The Wadi Sayq/Khor Kharfot area lies at the eastern end of the most naturally fertile section of coastline on the whole coast of Arabia, a small strip only a few miles in length bounded by arid terrain on three sides and ocean on the fourth. (see illustration below)

**[1998 Illustration: The Arabian Peninsula is surrounded on three sides by water.** The interior desert is one of the harshest in the world. Warren P. Aston, "The Arabian Bountiful Discovered? Evidence for Nephi's Bountiful," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 7, num. 1, Provo: FARMS, 1998, p. 9]

*Bountiful was suitable for a long encampment and for shipbuilding:*

It would likely have taken Nephi and his brothers at least a year to construct a ship substantial enough to carry perhaps thirty people two-thirds of the way around the globe. . . .For several months each year during the monsoon, heavy seas, fog, and rain envelope the southern Arabian coastline, making outdoor activities like shipbuilding difficult. Presumably Nephi and his brother stopped work on the ship during this period of the year or Bountiful offered enough shelter to allow them to continue. At Kharfot, a small plateau of higher ground overlooks the western side of the bay, and it might have provided a suitable site for work in bad weather. The ruins on this plateau appear to be the oldest at Kharfot.

*Timber was readily available:*

To build his ship, Nephi would have needed access to sufficient timber of the right types and sizes to fashion a seaworthy vessel (see 1 Nephi 18:1, 2, 6). Moving timber to the shore would have been a time-consuming and arduous task, so it is likely that trees were available very near the coast; this is probably part of what Nephi meant by "Bountiful."

Numerous large trees are still found at Khor Kharfot almost down to the ocean, and they were certainly even more plentiful in the past. (Drought in recent centuries has reduced the natural forests that formerly covered the sides of the valley and the surrounding mountains.) Timber from several species identified at Kharfot--particularly the sycamore fig (*Ficus sycamorus*) and the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*)--would have been suitable for building a seagoing craft.

Of course we can only speculate on the type of vessel that Nephi constructed. Arabia is the birthplace of the well-known "sewn" boats--vessels stitched together using tough cord without nails or other metal--but we have no way of knowing if Nephi used this method of shipbuilding. Nephi emphasized the fact that neither the preparation of the timbers nor the construction method were "after the manner of men" (1 Nephi 18:2) and that revelation from the Lord was necessary on a regular basis as construction proceeded (see 1 Nephi 18:1, 3). . . .

*A year-round supply of freshwater must have been available for the camp:*

Kharfot contains the largest source of freshwater on the Arabian coast, and there is evidence that water was even more abundant in ages past. By comparison, eastern Yemen has only three small and irregular streams of coastal water in its 700-mile length, yet in the Dhofar province of Oman alone, small streams and springs are found at Rakhyut a few miles east of Kharfot and in the Salalah foothills, in addition to Wadi Sayq.

*Bountiful had a prominent mountain:*

A mountain prominence that Nephi referred to as "the mount" (1 Nephi 17:7; 18:3) was close enough to the campsite that he could go there to "pray off" (1 Nephi 18:3). Nephi's choice of words indicates that he was referring to an isolated and prominent mountain rather than a mountain range. Fittingly, at Kharfot the highest and most prominent peak is isolated directly above the little western plateau where evidence of former settlement is most abundant and on which Lehi's family would have been most likely to camp.

*Bountiful probably had cliffs overlooking the ocean:*

Laman and Lemuel attempted to kill Nephi by throwing him into the sea (see 1 Nephi 17:48). This seems to imply cliffs overlooking the ocean, since Nephi's life would not have been threatened by being thrown into the ocean from a beach. At Khor Kharfot, dangerous cliffs averaging 200 feet high overlook the ocean at the edge of the elevated western plateau.

*Bountiful had a source of ore:*

Ore from which metal could be smelted for making tools must have been available near enough to the camp that Nephi could be shown where to find it without unusual effort, along with flint to start a fire (see 1 Nephi 17:9-11, 16). Oman has a history of copper smelting over several thousand years, but the primary known deposits are in the northern half of the country. However, a recent FARMS-sponsored survey of the area surrounding Kharfot revealed numerous small sources of specular hematite that could yield iron suitable for making shipbuilding tools. The same general area, only a few miles inland from the coast would not have posed the same problem with ore that it likely would have with timber, since only small quantities of ore would have been necessary, as opposed to large quantities of timber.

*It seems unlikely that Bountiful was inhabited by other groups at this time:*

The Book of Mormon mentions no interaction with other groups at Bountiful. Had such groups existed, Nephi probably would not have needed specific divine revelation on where to go to obtain ore for making tools or perhaps on how to construct the ship, since he might have gathered this information from other residents. So Bountiful probably had no resident population during the period that Nephi constructed the ship. This seclusion may have been important to keep Lehi's group uncontaminated from the polytheistic beliefs then common throughout Arabia and to insulate them from the diversions and enticements of the trading ports.

As noted earlier, the preliminary archaeological evidence suggests only intermittent periods of human habitation at Kharfot. Because of the rugged coastline, overland travel to Kharfot along the coast is very difficult; this is probably the primary reason why such an attractive and fertile place as Kharfot has remained uninhabited for most of the time, including the present day. Aside from travel through the long valley from the interior desert, the sea offers the only other reasonable access to Kharfot. Other people were likely no closer to Kharfot in ancient times than the Salalah area, a difficult journey of several days. Such isolation may be why Laman and Lemuel assisted with the shipbuilding and seem not to have objected to leaving Bountiful.

*Lastly, suitable winds and currents were needed to carry the ship out into the Arabian Sea and eventually into the Indian Ocean:*

Arab and earlier sources assure us that at a particular season of the year, voyagers from the Red Sea and the southern Arabian coast routinely sailed eastward to southern India and Ceylon. Nephi could have used the same winds from Kharfot to sail across the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, every few years the marine and meteorological phenomenon popularly known as the El Nino effect changes the pattern of winds across the Pacific so that travel in an easterly direction, even as far as America, becomes possible for a period of a year or two. . . .

The research summarized in his article assures us that the southern Arabian Peninsula is a thoroughly plausible geographical setting for the Old World land of Bountiful described in 1 Nephi. The physical realities that Nephi describes are easy to grasp. Mountains, rivers, a fertile valley, ore deposits, and other criteria are found in southern Oman, and especially at Khor Kharfot, in relationships completely consistent with the scriptural text. While research has not yet established that Kharfot is *the* place called Bountiful, it has established that a place meets the criteria for Bountiful, something that Joseph Smith or anyone else from western civilization did not know in his day. . . .

Latter-day Saint researchers have much work yet to do in Arabia to build on the foundation of research done so far. It is now time for specialists to probe deeper into every facet of this significant place. . . .

1998<sup>^</sup> Terry B. Ball, S. Kent Brown, "Planning Research on Oman: The End of Lehi's Trail," in

Arnold H. Green, David J. *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7:1, FARMS, 1998,

Johnson, and W. Revell Phillips pp. 12-21.

In February 1998, five Brigham Young University faculty members spent more than a week together in Oman to determine what new research projects ought to be undertaken in that area. This article reports selections from their conversation after their return. They focus on what they learned about the region where Lehi's Trail ended and what they think should be done in the future. The participants include:

Terry B. Ball, Assistant Professor of Ancient Scripture and an archaeobotanist;

S. Kent Brown, Director of Ancient Studies, Professor of Ancient Scripture, and team leader for this study.

Arnold H. Green, Professor of History, a specialist in the Middle East;

David J. Johnson, Associate Professor of Anthropology, an Archaeologist;

W. Revell Phillips, Emeritus Professor of Geology, a minerals specialist.

. . .

Arnold Green: . . . Concerning future work in Oman, our research must be done in a professional way according to the standards of our fields of research. . . .

Kent Brown: . . . it is important to look for evidence that will help us reconstruct the southern Arabian world into which Lehi and Sariah came soon after 600 B.C. . . . we can establish that deposits of ores exist that people could have exploited for making tools. Gene Clark, who is a geologist with several years of experience in Oman and who made a previous exploration in this area has made preliminary finds of ores, and so did we. Further, we can determine the kinds of trees that a person could have used to build a keel and a frame for a ship. . . .

Terry Ball: Three important botanical studies can probably be done as a result of our visit. First of all, good collections of Arabian Peninsula vegetation are difficult to find in any herbarium in the United States for U.S. scientists to study. In Oman, we essentially obtained permission to make that collection, and we have obtained permission from the BYU herbarium to house the collection here. . . The second important study would be to prepare a reference collection of the phytoliths or plant microfossils produced by the vegetation. Phytoliths are fossilized fragments of plants that one finds at archaeological or geological sites. . . . Finally, the third study that I think would be really exciting would be an ethnobotanical study-- that is, a study of how the people use those plants. . . .

David Johnson: The archaeological material along the Dhofar coast has been studied in the past and, as I learned, is starting again to be explored quite extensively. [see chart and map below] Italian researchers are renewing excavations at Khor Rori in the eastern Dhofar region, a site from the Graeco-Roman period (332 B.C.--A.D. 363) that was first excavated in the 1950s. It consisted of a colony from the Hadramawt region of southern Yemen that moved into Dhofar in order to extract frankincense. Also, a number of other sites have been surveyed as far west as Khor Mughsayl, which is in the western part of Dhofar. . . . During the Graeco-Roman period, at least, a number of sites along the coast were probably involved in the transportation of frankincense by sea from the Dhofar region westward to Yemen. Then from Yemen, starting at a site called Qana, the frankincense was transported overland along the old incense trail. . . . In other words, frankincense was being gathered inland and then shipped out of Khor Rori or out of al-Balid, the other major site that is now being excavated by the Germans. . . .

[1998 **Chart: Chronologies of Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Civilizations.** Terry B. Ball, S. Kent Brown, Arnold H. Green, David J. Johnson, and W. Revell Phillips, "Planning Research on Oman: The End of Lehi's Trail," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7:1, FARMS, 1998, p. 16]

[1998 **Dhofar Map.** Terry B. Ball, S. Kent Brown, Arnold H. Green, David J. Johnson, and W. Revell Phillips, "Planning Research on Oman: The End of Lehi's Trail," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7:1, FARMS, 1998, p. 16]

David Johnson: The problem in answering your question [regarding the time period of Lehi] is that little excavation has been done. A survey has been done, yes. But the next steps have to be major excavations. The only places that are being excavated are al-Balid, where the prior archaeological emphasis has been only on the Islamic material, through there are probably earlier materials there, as the Germans will determine, and at Khor Rori, where the Italians are working. Khor Rori has a presumed connection with the Queen of Sheba, a rather romantic tie. But a number of other inland and coastal sites need to be excavated.

Terry Ball: . . . At Khor Rori, although it sits on the coast, the remains of various civilizations are still separated into different strata, and also at al-Balid, at least for the Islamic period. It will be a challenge for the Germans when they excavate the Iron Age level at al-Balid, because the Iron Age there is deflated.

Terry Ball: The deflation or mixing of artifact layers tends to discourage excavation, doesn't it?

David Johnson: What discourages excavation is excavating and not finding spectacular materials. . . .

Revell Phillips: . . . Many wadi mouths along the Dhofar coast are now enclosed by . . . bay-mouth [sand] bars, leaving isolated lagoons behind the bars. At one time, and perhaps at various times, these bays were open so that ships could sail into the wadi mouths. But longshore currents have gradually deposited sand as spit bars that grew across the bays to deny access by boat. . . .

Revell Phillips: . . . We didn't need to search for iron ore on the beach sands east of Mirbat because it was so abundant in the soils surrounding the weathered igneous (granite) outcrops. It is this igneous-metamorphic area east of Mirbat and south of Jebel Samhan that interest me. . . . The modernization of Oman is so recent that I don't think the Omanis are totally aware of the area's mineral potential. . .

Revel Phillips: We need to do two things before we return. First, we need a sponsor in Oman for an excavation. Second, we need a letter from the U.S. Embassy to obtain topographic maps. . . .

Arnold Green: Another avenue worth following is the study by the Palestinian woman working with Scott Woodward, a BYU professor who is doing trailblazing work on tracing connections between peoples by using DNA. Her name is Rana El-Farra, and her dissertation will analyze DNA from hair samples of people throughout the Arabian Peninsula to see whether she can reconstruct migration patterns. If we could steer her in the direction of Dhofar . . . she might reach conclusions that would offer insight into when people arrived in that region, or whether they are related to people elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula. . . .

Kent Brown: Naturally, further studies will depend on the availability of resources. Such resources, of course, take the form of funds and persons with needed skills. For our recent trip, we received important support from BYU's Ancient Studies program, the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), the Department of Ancient Scripture, and the Near Eastern Studies program. In addition, we received generous assistance from Rod and Rosalea McIntire of Muscat. Without their help, we would have accomplished much less than we did.



1998 "Oman Piques LDS Interest," *Daily Universe*, April 7, 1998, 1.

1998^ (Unknown) **Book of Mormon Study Map,** Scripture Creations, Lindon, Utah, 1998.

This is an 8 x 11 laminated internal map of the geography of the Book of Mormon. There are numbers along the top and alphabetical letters down the side which allow the reader to match the cities and lands typed on the reverse side with a code--for example Aaron (E5). The land of first inheritance is located at the very bottom of an extended land southward.

[1998 **Book of Mormon Study Map.** Reed Hansen, Scripture Creations, Lindon, Utah, 1998.]

1998^ **John L. Sorenson** *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life,*  
Provo,

Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Research

Press, 1998, pp. 188-189.

John Sorenson writes:

Mesoamerica is the only part of the western hemisphere that qualifies as the Nephites' "land of promise." Just where were the Nephites located within Mesoamerica? Only when we have an idea of that can we know which historical traditions or archaeological sequences can be compared most usefully with Mormon's text. . . . The map on this page [189-see below] displays the most likely specific correlation between "Mormon's map" and Mesoamerican territory.

Note\* On the map the Nephite landing is located in the region of El Salvador.

[1998 **Map: Plausible Book of Mormon Lands in Mesoamerica.** John L. Sorenson, *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life*, Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Research Press, 1998, p. 189]

1998^ Duane R. Aston ***Return to Cumorah: Piecing Together the Puzzle Where the Nephites***

*Lived*, Sacramento: American River Publications, 1998.

Note\* According to the Limited North America theory of Duane Aston, the Nephite "land of first inheritance" was located south of Lake Erie, somewhere in northern Ohio. [compare map A4&A5 with map B--below]. Apparently, if Lehi's group sailed into the Great Lakes from the St. Lawrence River, they would then have had to sail across Lake Ontario, come south past Niagara Falls, and then sail west across Lake Erie in order to reach the land of first inheritance.

[1998 **Map A4&A5: Eastern Great Lakes Book of Mormon Interpretations.** Duane R. Aston, *Return to Cumorah: Piecing Together the Puzzle Where the Nephites Lived*, Sacramento, American River Pub., 1998, pp. 178-179]

[1998 **Map B: Western New York, Ontario, Canada, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.** Duane R. Aston, *Return to Cumorah: Piecing Together the Puzzle Where the Nephites Lived*, Sacramento, American River Pub., 1998, back inside cover]

1998 T. Michael Smith **Book Review: Delbert Curtis' *Christ in North America* [1993] in *Ancient***

*America Foundation Newsletter*, No. 13, May 1998, 13.4

[PUT WITH 1993. & REFER TO THAT NOTATION HERE]

1999^ George Potter *Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel,*

Richard Wellington Unpublished Manuscript, 1999

This manuscript would be revised & edited to create a new manuscript: *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, unpublished manuscript, 2000. Ideas from this manuscript would be used to create an article for FARMS: "A New Candidate in Arabia for the 'Valley of Lemuel,'" (see the 1999 notation).

Note\* The contents of this 1999 manuscript have been included in the textual excerpts of the 2000 manuscript.

1999^ George D. Potter "A New Candidate in Arabia for the "Valley of Lemuel," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, num. 1, Provo: FARMS, 1999, pp. 54-63.

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 in Wadi Tayyib al-Isim 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 below)

[1999 **Illustration: Map showing the location of al-Bad' (the Well of Jethro).** Maqna (the Waters of Moses) would be west of al-Bad' almost to the Gulf of Aqaba. 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]

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. 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, and the Waters of Moses was where Moses had touched his staff to the rock and 12 springs gushed forth, one for

each tribe (see Qur'an 7:160). 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. (Tayyib al-Isim--see illustration above) 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 below):

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.

**[1999 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]

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 (see illustration below): (1) the lower canyon, (2) the canyon of granite, and (3) the upper valley. 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.

**[1999 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]

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. Potter writes:

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.

It is believed 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. It's 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."

1999^ John W. Welch "Twelve Requirements for the Land of Bountiful," in Charting the

J. Gregory Welch Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching,

Provo: Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies,

1999, Chart 148.

John and Gregory Welch write:

. . . Twelve required characteristics of Bountiful, identified by Warren and Michaela Aston, narrow the location of Bountiful to six spots along the Arabian coast. The current-day Wadi Sayq (more specifically Khor Kharfot, a portion of Wadi Sayq, located in Oman) is the most probable location of Bountiful because it is the most fertile coastal location on the Arabian Peninsula.

**[1999 Map: The Land Bountiful.** John W. Welch & J. Gregory Welch, "Twelve Requirements for the Land of Bountiful," in Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching, Provo: Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1999, Chart 148. Note\* While a specific Old World location for Bountiful such as Wadi Sayq, as proposed by the Astons, is cited, the illustration on the opposite page consists of a internal map. ]

Unless the wadi is reached by traveling through the Arabian interior, as Lehi would have done, Wadi Sayq remains almost completely hidden. Wadi Sayq lies "nearly eastward" of Nehem, Yemen (assumed to be "Nahom"; 1 Nephi 16:34; 17:1), and is the only area in which fruit grows without being cultivated. It also contains the largest freshwater source on the Arabian coast. The twelve required [scriptural] characteristics for the land of Bountiful are listed in this chart.

*Source:* Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 1994), 28-29. Map used by permission from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism.

Note\* Although the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (1992) is cited for the origin of the map, a very similar map appears in a September 1993 *Insights* (FARMS) article, "F.A.R.M.S.-Led Expedition Examines Likely Candidate for Lehi's Old-World Bountiful." However in the FARMS map the locations of Nehem, Wadi Sayq, Salalah and the Hadhramout region are specifically identified. (See 1992 and 1993 notations)

1999^ S. Kent Brown "The Place That Was Called Nahom': New Light from Ancient Yemen"

in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, num. 1, Provo: FARMS,

1999, pp. 66-68.

Kent Brown writes:

A recently discovered carved altar from the southwest Arabian peninsula provides dramatic new evidence for locating "the place that was called Nahom," referred to by Nephi in his narrative. . . .

One of the challenges facing LDS researchers has been determining where such a place might have been located. They have sought evidence in ancient sources of information that there was a spot, and a population, that was called Nahom. The first confirmation came twenty years ago, when the late Ross T. Christensen, an archaeology professor at BYU, discovered a place named "Nehhm" on an eighteenth-century map drawn by the famous German explorer Carsten Niebuhr. Presumably, the name Nahom was spelled with the same three consonants, N-H-M, assuring those knowledgeable in Semitic languages that "Nahom" could well be related to "Nehhm." . . .

Warren and Michaela Aston have been the most persistent in following the lead offered by Christensen. In their book, they have drawn together references to a number of Arabic sources that predate the work of Niebuhr by several centuries. These Arab authors, Ibn al-Kalbi and al-Hamdani, refer variously to a pagan god known as Nuhum (Ibn al-Kalbi), a tribal ancestor named Nuham (Ibn al-Kalbi), and a region and a tribe called Nihm (al-Hamdani), all in southwest Arabia. Even so, these references come from the pens of individuals who lived in the ninth and tenth centuries A.D., 1,400 or more years after Lehi's party passed through the area. In reaching their conclusions, the Astons assumed that there was a continuity of such terms in that region for 11/2 millennia because others had assumed it. After all, there is still a tribe and an area called Nihm to this day. Of course, the assumption was open to challenge, particularly because the earlier Greco-Roman authors who wrote about Arabia did not mention anything about a region or a tribe by the name of Nihm or Nehem. But that has now changed.

A German archaeological team under the leadership of Burkhard Vogt has been excavating the Bar' an temple in Marib, the ancient capital of the Sabaean Kingdom that lies about 70 miles due east of modern San'a, the capital of Yemen. (It is likely that the queen of Sheba began her journey to visit King Solomon from Marib.) Among the artifacts uncovered at the temple, the excavators turned up an inscribed altar that they date to the seventh or sixth centuries B.C., generally the time of Lehi and his family. A certain "Bi'athar, son of Sawad, son of Naw'an, the Nihmite" donated the altar to the temple. The altar has been part of a traveling exhibit of artifacts from ancient Yemen that appeared first in Paris and has most recently been shown in Vienna.

The inscribed reference to the tribe of Nihm on this altar is the earliest known mention of this name, or a variant of it. It predates by almost 1,500 years the Arabic sources cited by the Astons which refer to such a term. Moreover, the inscription establishes that a tribe by this name had produced a person of means who could donate a finely carved altar to the temple. Although we cannot determine that at that time there was a *place* called Nihm or Nehem, it is reasonable to surmise that the tribe gave its name to the region where it dwelt, evidently a few dozen miles north of modern San'a, in the highlands that rise to the north of Wadi Jawf. [see illustration below] Was it this name that Nephi rendered Nahom in his record? Very probably.

[1999 **Illustrated Map: Jebel (Mount) Nihm lies about 30 miles north of San'a, the modern capital of Yemen.** S. Kent Brown, "The Place That Was Called Nahom': New Light from Ancient Yemen" in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, num. 1, Provo: FARMS, 1999, p. 67]

1999^ **Jeffrey R. Chadwick** "Lehi's House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance," 1999,

Unpublished paper, pp. 1-12.

According to Jeffrey Chadwick, the Book of Mormon text not only specifies that Lehi "dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days" (1 Nephi 1:4), but that Lehi had "his own house at Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 1:7). 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. Lehi's (and Ishmael's) ancestral grandparents must have moved from the Manasseh/Ephraim area around 722 B.C., due to the pressure of the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom.

2. These ancestors must have moved to Jerusalem either immediately or within a very few years of their initial journey southward, and would have settled among the people of the *Mishneh* neighborhood that was annexed to the city with the building of Hezekiah's Wall prior to 701 B.C.

3. Being essentially landless, Lehi's grandparents would not have been able to farm for a living in the restricted area of Judah around Jerusalem. At some point, the family appears to have turned to the craft of metal smithing to make their living (see John Tvedtnes, "Was Lehi a Caravaneer?" F.A.R.M.S., 1984)

4. Had Lehi's ancestral grandparents moved from the Manasseh region to the Judean countryside or to any city or town outside Jerusalem, and established residence there, they would almost surely have been deported away from Judah in the Assyrian attack on Judah in 701 B.C. for it says that "Sennacherib king of Assyria [came] up against **all** the fenced cities of Judah, and took them" (2 Kings 18:13-14; compare Isaiah 36:1) Also from the "Prism of Sennacherib" we find: "As to Hezekiah the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled fortresses, and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered by means of well stamped ramps and battering rams . . . I drove out 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, . . . His towns which I had plundered I took away from his country and gave them to Mitinti king of Ashdod, Padi king of Ekron, and Sillibel king of Gaza." (Translation from *The Ancient Near East*, Vol. 1 by James B. Pritchard, pp. 199-200.)

5. Lehi was probably born sometime around 650 B.C., to parents who had lived in Jerusalem, and he grew up living in Jerusalem "all his days." By this time, the "refugee" home of his grandparents in the *Mishneh* would have been replaced with a respectable "four room house" in the now upscale *Mishneh* area. Lehi was likely trained as a metal smith.



**[1999 Map 6: Jerusalem -- 700 BC to 587 BC.** By 701 B.C., Jerusalem's population was about 20,000 people. From 700 to 600 B.C., succeeding generations of the Mishneh population built their quarter into a respectable, upscale neighborhood of the capital. During king Josiah's reign (640 B.C.) such notables as the prophetess Huldah, wife of a royal minister, lived there (see 2 Kings 22:14, where the Hebrew *Mishneh* is translated "college"). It is likely that the house of Lehi, a descendant of Manasseh, would have been in the Mishneh (10). Housing in the city filled all the area of the Western Hills or Mount Zion (see Zephaniah 1:10-11, where *Mishneh* is translated as "second"). The topographic cove in the northern wall of Hezekiah, later called the "Broad Wall" (P) was fortified with a straighter outer wall and defensive tower (U) now known as the Israelite Tower.. This is the Jerusalem of Jeremiah and Nephi, which fell to the Babylonian army in 587 B.C., when the city and Solomon's temple were destroyed. [Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "The Development of Biblical Jerusalem," Map 6 in a 1998 unpublished paper]

According to 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.

**[1999 Map: "The Land of Israel 600 B.C."** Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Lehi's House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance," 1999, unpublished paper. Note\* The map is dated 1993]

Note\* Lehi seemed to first learn that he was a descendant of Manasseh AFTER reading the brass plates which Nephi and his brothers brought back from Jerusalem ( ). If such were the case, Nephi also had no knowledge of this genealogical connection. What then would have prompted Nephi and his brothers to go north from Jerusalem into the original western lands of the tribe of Manasseh seeking "the land of our inheritance"? In going after the gold and silver that were there, Nephi would have needed not only specific instructions on where the gold and silver was located (likely hidden), but legal papers as well. If Nephi had an original deed or title to the land it would have preceded the Samaritan occupation and certainly would have implied that Lehi was part of the tribe of Manasseh. Jeff Chadwick does not address this issue.

1999^ Lyle L. Fletcher "From the Wilderness of Arabia to the Precious Land of Promise."

Paper written for F.A.R.M.S., Provo, Utah, 1999.

In 1999 the FARMS organization paid Lyle Fletcher to research aspects of Arabian shipbuilding and travel and document them so they could be used by the FARMS writers. In this 40-page manuscript, Fletcher gives numerous short footnoted details about the ancient environmental and cultural conditions of Arabia pertinent to Lehi's journey in the Book of Mormon narrative. It involves extensive research. Interestingly however is the fact that Fletcher prefaces this host of details with the following:

Another danger we face in trying to reconstruct what is plausible is that we often run up against unknowns. We know so little today about Arabia (meaning the Arabian peninsula) in the time of Nephi. Few, if any, historical documents date to the time of Nephi in Arabia. Many date prior to Nephi's time (usually centuries earlier), and many date later. Many of the artifacts historians use to reconstruct the past (have been destroyed by the elements (e.g., volcanoes, earthquakes, monsoons, fires, shifting sands, and flashfloods) and later inhabitants of Arabia. Those inscriptions archaeologist and explorers do find . . . offer little help in reconstructing everyday life around 600 B.C. for Nephi and his company. The southern coast of Arabia is one of the least known areas of the world, more especially in the time period surrounding Nephi's sojourn there.

Some of the more pertinent quotes are as follows:

To transport goods from the southwestern coast of Arabia to areas north of the Red Sea, early inhabitants of Arabia traveled north by land on the west along the trade routes (usually by caravan) that paralleled the Red Sea. A map and good discussion of caravan trade along the coast of the Red Sea (mainly from 500 B.C. on) is in Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (New York: Longman, 1981, 192-- . . . [concerning sailing in the Red Sea he writes] Most sailing vessels of these times used square or rectangular sails. "The square sail was intended primarily for sailing before the wind. Crew either took to their oars or bided their time when winds were contrary." (Shelley Wachsmann, "Seafaring," in Eric M. Meyers, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 5 vols., New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 4:506)

From what we've examined thus far, we have evidence for "timber boats" sailing long distance on the rough water of the Indian Ocean many centuries before Nephi and his company arrived on the scene. As we know, Nephi worked "timbers" and "sailed" to the promised land.

We don't know the shape of the sail on Nephi's ship, but Nephi tells us they "were driven forth before the wind towards the promised land." (1 Nephi 18:8) Nephi also tells us that "there arose a great storm, yea, a great and terrible tempest, and we were driven back upon the waters for the space of three days." (1 Nephi 18:13) With a lateen (triangle-shaped) sail, ships can travel almost against the wind by tacking (zig-zagging while heading into the wind), but ships with a square sail can only sail with the wind, not against it. Casson points out that "The Arab dhows [with their lateen sails] that sail to Indian today and have for centuries . . . can travel against the wind but . . . only against a light one." (Lionel Casson, *Ancient Trade and Society*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984, 285).

Theodore Bent and Mrs. Theodore Bent, (traveling in 1894--*Southern Arabia*, London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1900), 230) describe the southern coast of Arabia:

The plain of Dhofar, along which we were now coasting, is quite an abnormal feature in this arid coast. It is the only fertile stretch between Aden and Maskat. It is formed of alluvial soil washed down from the Gara mountains; there is abundance of water very near the surface, and frequent streams make their way down to the sea, so that it is green. The great drawback to the country is the want of harbours; during the north-east monsoons dhows can find shelter at Merbat, and during the south-west monsoons at Risout, but the rest of the coast is provided with nothing but open roadsteads, with surf always rolling in from the Indian Ocean. . . . Between Capes Risout and Merbat we found the sites of ruined towns of considerable extent in no less than seven different points, though at the two capes where now is the only anchorage, there are no ruins to be seen, proving, as we afterwards verified for ourselves, that anchorage of a superior nature existed in the neighbourhood in antiquity, which has since become silted up, but which anciently must have afforded ample protection for the boats which came for the frankincense trade. (Ibid., 233, 240; see also 270-71, 274. For a more recent description of Dhofar and its people, see Jorg Janzen, *Nomads in the Sultanate of Oman: Tradition and Development in Dhofar*, Boulder, CO:L Westview Press, 1986).

The challenges we've examined thus far make it seem almost improbable that someone could build a boat on the southern coast of Arabia and sail safely to India, much less to the promised land. First, we currently have a timberless coast, except for Dhufar. Traveling inland in Dhufar, the Bents found "the hill slopes around were decked with fine sycamores and acacia-trees" *Southern Arabia*, 256. For a list of plant species found by the Bents in Dhufar, see *ibid.*, 431-34. Most of the trees growing in all of Arabia are not suitable for making ships that will last on a long voyage. The preferred type of timber required for building a long-voyage sailing vessel would most likely be teak. "Ships of durable teak from India still sail in Pacific water," (Harry A. Morton, *The Wind Commands: Sailors and Sailing Ships in the Pacific*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975, 205). Teak is "the most valuable of all known timbers" because it is "very durable," "not very hard," "easily worked," and "has great elasticity and strength." In addition, "once seasoned, . . . [it] does not split, crack, shrink, or alter its shape." (George Fadlo Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951, 90). Since "the western half of the Indian Ocean, from Ceylon round to East Africa, forms a cultural unity, which has to be treated as a whole," "evidence from Western India may be as significant as that which comes from the Persian Gulf" (Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 91)

The dangers of long-distance voyages across the Pacific Ocean are immense and innumerable. An expert authority on ship travel on the Pacific gives many details on its dangers and challenges and adds, "each of these problems--or challenges--was greater in the Pacific because the Pacific itself is greater," (Harry A. Morton, *The Wind Commands*, 161). We present just a few here:

\* *Immensity of the Pacific Ocean*: "Accurate navigation was important to deep-sea sailors on all oceans. But on the huge Pacific it was vital, for against its vastness even the width of the Atlantic seemed insignificant. (Morton, *The Wind Commands*, 163)

\* *Need for Navigation*: "Ordinarily, a navigator knows where he wishes to go, in what direction, and how far. . . . A navigator, to know the direction of his destination at any time, must know where he is himself and he must also have some way of telling accurately in what direction he is going. These things are difficult enough on land, but, on the open sea when the sky is overcast, they are impossible--without instruments. . . . A navigator cannot measure the distance traveled unless he knows both where he started and where he is (and the angle of the sun gives only half the answer to that), nor can he find his speed unless he knows both the distance travelled and the length of time the journey took." (Ibid., 163-64)

\* *Proper Planning*: "In the Pacific especially it is necessary to plan well. An accurate estimate of time was, and still is, important in planning for provisions or equipment for the voyage. . . . (Ibid., 164)

\* *No Landmarks*: "Out of sight of land, navigators can look only to the sky. When the weather is clear, they have the sun by day and other stars and the moon by night. But, when the weather is bad, there are neither landmarks nor skymarks." (Ibid., 167)

\* *Subject to Winds and Tides*: "Sailing ships could not go where and when they pleased, even given a sufficient depth of water. Not only the direction but the timing of arrival or departure was set by tide and wind. Captains simply had to wait for a reasonable wind, and, when it arrived, they sailed--and quickly." (Ibid., 187-88) . . .

\* *No Winds*: "It was the wind that counted most. . . . The wind was necessary for movement, and sailors would put up with a rough sea as long as progress was made. . . . Although winds set limits to the direction sailed, calms left the ships motionless" which negatively affected morale--something "of overwhelming importance in long voyages. Almost any Pacific voyage was a long one." (Ibid., 197)

\* *Other "Real, But Very Unusual" Dangers*: Running aground, earthquakes that create tidal waves, icebergs, waterspouts, thunder and lightning, fire by carelessness or lightning. (Ibid., 193-197).

Note\* FIND THIS MAN AND DETERMINE HIS PUBLICATION INTENTIONS! ADD TO THE ABOVE

1999^ Larry Strong "Proposed Book of Mormon Lands about 70 BC," [larrystrong@networld.com](mailto:larrystrong@networld.com),

Revision 4, Nov 17, 1999.

On this Limited Mesoamerican map, with the land southward in Guatemala and Peten and the land northward in Yucatan, Larry Strong marks the Nephite landing in the area of the ruins of Izapa, near Tapachula, Mexico on the Pacific Coast border of Southern Mexico and Guatemala.

2000^ Church Educational System Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual, Salt Lake

City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

2000

In the year 2000, the Church Educational System prepared a commentary for use in all its Seminaries. There are two internal maps illustrating the location of Lehi's landing. On page 95 there is a map locating the site of Lehi's landing (Land of First Inheritance) on the West Sea, south of the local land of Nephi. On page 291 we find Daniel H. Ludlow's map, "Possible Book of Mormon Sites (in Relation to Each Other) in which the Land of First Inheritance is located not on the west sea, but at the extreme southern end of the land southward, south of the local land of Nephi.

[2000 **Map of Nephite Migration.** CES, *Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual*, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000, p. 95]

[2000 **Map:Possible Book of Mormon Sites (in Relation to Each Other).** CES, *Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual*, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000, p. 291]

2000^ **Jerry L. Ainsworth** *The Lives and Travels of Mormon & Moroni*, U.S.A.: Peacemakers Publishing,

2000, pp. 85-87, 95.

Jerry Ainsworth writes:

The story of Lehi's exodus from the "land of Jerusalem" to the New World is well known to Latter-day Saints. Lynn and Hope Hilton have done an admirable work of documenting the possible route of the journey of Lehi's group over the Arabian Peninsula to the original land of Bountiful, where Nephi built the ship that carried them to the promised land (*Discovering Lehi*, [1996]). The Hiltons have identified places such as the Valley of Lemuel, Shazer, and Nahom in Arabia. They have also inspired others such as Scot and Maurine Proctor to investigate further. The latter's visit to the Emirate of Oman has yielded data that supports Wadi Sayq in Oman as a possible location of the original land Bountiful (*Light from the Dust*, [1993]).

Most Book of Mormon scholars now agree that Lehi's landing in the New World took place on the Pacific coast of Guatemala or El Salvador (Sorenson, "The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book," [1990]). . . .

Book of Mormon scholars base their belief about the Pacific coast as the site of Lehi's landing on the emergence of a new civilization in the highlands of Guatemala around 600 BC. John Sorenson puts it this way: "Nephi left us no information in the Book of Mormon about the route, nor did he tell us in modern times where they landed. But when we analyze Book of Mormon statements about geography and events, the 'land of first inheritance' can lie only on the west [Pacific] coast of Central America" (*An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, [1985], p. 139).

A likely spot for Lehi's landing in the New World is in the area of three rivers on the Pacific coast of Guatemala (see *map 2*, chapter 8). Each river has a name suggesting arrival from another place: (1) Rio Nahualate--the word *nahua* meaning "from the other side of the waters"; (2) Rio de la Puerta--"River of the Doorway/Opening"; and (3) Rio Madre Vieja--"River of the Old Mother"--which is another way of referring to a place of ancient birth or origins.

**[2000 Map 2: Landing Site of Lehi.** Jerry L. Ainsworth, *The Lives and Travels of Mormon & Moroni*, U.S.A.: Peacemakers Publishing, 2000, p. 49]

A tapestry hanging in the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City appears to confirm Lehi's landing. The tapestry is a codice going back to ancient times. It shows a group of people coming out of the ocean as if out of a womb. The man leading the party is carrying a round object before his face (see illustration 46). The historical tapestry then shows how these people migrated to various locations in Mexico and Mesoamerica. Always they carried the round object in front of them (see illustration 47). Their last location appears to have been in the state of Michoacan, in northern Mexico, where the tapestry originated. The scene depicted in the tapestry parallels the story of the Liahona, which Lehi used as a "director" or "compass" in all his travels (see Alma 37:38). The Quiche name for the object depicted on the tapestry is Giron-Gagal, which means "compass" or "director." Enemies of the Quiche believed that whoever had this object could not be defeated in battle because they had the blessing of the gods. (*The Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, 170). . . .

**[2000 Illustration #46.** A historical tapestry from the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, possibly showing the migrations of the Nephites.

**Illustration #47.** A close-up of the first panel of the tapestry, showing a man leading (birthing) people into this land. He is carrying an instrument referred to as the Giron-Gagal, "compass" or "director." Jerry L. Ainsworth, *The Lives and Travels of Mormon & Moroni*, U.S.A.: Peacemakers Publishing, 2000, p. 87]

A plausible map of Central America as it relates to Book of Mormon peoples appears on page 36 in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson's book, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*. I have revised the map somewhat and show it on the facing page (*map 12*).

**[2000 Map 12: Origins of Central American Peoples according to Native Traditions.** Jerry L. Ainsworth, *The Lives and Travels of Mormon & Moroni*, U.S.A.: Peacemakers Publishing, 2000, p. 95]

2000^ Phyllis Olive *The Lost Lands of the Book of Mormon: A Geographical and Historical Study of the*

*Book of Mormon Using the New York Setting at a Time When Primeval Forests and Ancient Waters Filled the Land.*, Springville, UT: Bonneville Books, 2000.

This book argues for a correlation between the Nephite nation and the Mound Builders of the eastern United States." Essentially the geographical setting is in a limited area around the Great Lakes.

In chapter one, Phyllis Olive devotes sixteen pages to a review of authoritative statements regarding Book of Mormon geography. Among others she discusses the "Lehi's Travels" statement by Frederick G. Williams, Orson Pratt's statements regarding Lehi's landing in Chile not far from Valparaiso, B.H. Roberts' 1908 note of caution with respect to the Frederick G. Williams statement, the 1842 *Times and Seasons* statement that Lehi landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien," the statements of Parley P. Pratt locating the cities of the Book of Mormon in Yucatan, the 1890 George Q. Cannon statement on geography, the 1950 Widtsoe statement, etc. On page 14 Olive sums up her approach:

It appears the approach used by early theorists was to first locate a landing site and then to try to build a probable setting around it. In contrast, a newer approach would take us right to the scriptures themselves-obviously we must look for an over-all destination before we can even begin to try and pinpoint a probable landing site.

Now, since the proposed landing site of Lehi wa not a revelatory statement we are obviously not bound by the original premiss that Lehi landed in Chile and can begin our search without any preconceived ideas on either landing sites or over-all setting. And, likewise, since the lands in Central America have no basis for any presumption that the lands of the Book of Mormon were ever located in that area either, we can dismiss the Mesoamerican setting as well and can begin our search with a clean slate.

Regarding the voyage of Lehi and the approximate landing site, on page 101 there is an illustration of Lehi's voyage (see below) as coming southwest from the southern coast of Arabia and around the tip of Africa, then across the Atlantic to just off the Florida coast, then up the eastern seaboard to the entrance to the St. Lawrence river. Additionally on page 105 we find that "The first land of Nephi refers to the place of their first inheritance near the southeastern shores of Lake Erie." This supposes that Lehi sailed down the St. Lawrence river into the Great Lakes before landing on the southeastern shores of Lake Erie.

**[2000 Illustration: Lehi's Voyage.** Phyllis Olive, *The Lost Lands of the Book of Mormon: A Geographical and Historical Study of the Book of Mormon Using the New York Setting at a Time When Primeval Forests and Ancient Waters Filled the Land.*, Springville, UT: Bonneville Books, 2000, p. 101]

Note\* In her 2001 sequel (*The Lost Tribes of the Book of Mormon*), on page 106, Olive apparently will change her mind on the landing site of Lehi. She will have him coming up the Mississippi from the south. (see notation)

**2000^ George Potter & Richard Wellington** *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript,

2000

In the year 2000, George Potter and Richard Wellington would present in unpublished manuscript form the most extensively researched writings by LDS authors to date on Lehi's travels through Arabia. They had updated and edited their 1999 manuscript *Following Nephi's Words*, and with multiple illustrations and maps, they would substantiate a route from Jerusalem down to the Red Sea to Aqaba, then by and in the Hijaz mountains (borders) of Midian until they came to an oasis called the "Waters of Moses" in wadi Tayyib-al-Isim containing all the elements of the Valley of Lemuel including a continual running stream. Unlike the Hiltons who traced Lehi's journey down the shores of the Red Sea, Potter & Wellington would trace Lehi's group down the Gaza Branch of the Frankincense Trail, first coming to a halt called Segir (Shazer) and passing through the fertility of settled villages called the *Qura Arabiuuah* ("the Most Fertile Parts") and then through a lesser fertile section of the Trail ("the More Fertile Parts") before coming to a place where Nephi broke his bow. According to Potter & Wellington, as Lehi's group continued on in desolate surroundings, they turned east at a point on the northern extension of the Nhm territory (Nahom) rather than the previously proposed location of NHM which was located in more southerly fertile regions, and traveled along the borders of the Empty Quarter until finally turning south past the ancient city of Ubar into the Qara Mountains of the Dhofar region of Oman, settling at the ancient port of Khor Rori (Bountiful). Potter & Wellington then investigate the details of ancient shipbuilding and why Khor Rori was a suitable harbor where Nephi could have built and launched his ship (and why he wouldn't have done so at wadi Sayq). This manuscript had been in development for a number of years and was to be the basis for a series of videos, articles and a more simplified published book. Their ideas related to the scriptures detailing Lehi's travels are as follows:

1 Nephi 2:5 He Came down by the Borders near the Red Sea:



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). According to Potter and Wellington, there are four possible routes of escape that Lehi could have used to reach the shores of the Red Sea (see Map #1 below). These are:

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

(2) Eastward from Jerusalem to Jericho then south, passing to the west of the Dead Sea, through wadi Araba to Ezion-geber.

(3) East from Jerusalem towards Heshbon, then south via the King's Highway to Ezion-geber.

(4) East from Jerusalem to join the Way of the Wilderness, then southwest to join the King's Highway to Ezion-geber.

**[2000 Map #1: 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]

After leaving Jerusalem, apparently Lehi's family headed immediately for the wilderness on their way to Arabia. Lehi would have wished to travel quickly, so he would no doubt have chosen an existing route in order to escape Zedekiah's sphere of influence as quickly as possible. All of the routes mentioned above would have led the family to the Red Sea, however there are some problems to consider:

Routes 1 & 2: Since Lehi would have doubtless wanted to escape Judean influence as quickly as possible it seems unlikely he would have taken routes 1 or 2. Route #1 passes southwest via Beersheba in territory almost exclusively under the control of Zedekiah. (see Map #2)

**[2000 Map #2: Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Route #1.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]

For route #2, both the Hiltons and Kelly Ogden have proposed that Lehi could have initially traveled eastward and then come 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 Map #3). [see the comments of Kelly Ogden on the initial part of this route] They state "The very name 'Araba' means wilderness," giving exact conformation of the way Lehi was commanded to travel into the "wilderness." The problem here is twofold: (a) the initial journey down the west side of the Dead Sea would have been within the power of king Zedekiah, and (b) 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."

**[2000 Map #3: Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. Route #2.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 8]

Routes 3 & 4: 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. 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." 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.

Nevertheless, according to Potter and Wellington, while these initial correlations with Lehi's travel route seem enlightening, there is a need for more information because after crossing the river Jordan and heading east, the family would have had to choose between two roads headed south, "The Kings Highway" (route #3) and "The Way of the Wilderness" (route #4).

Route #3: After crossing the river Jordan, the first route leading south to the Red Sea would have been the "King's Highway" (Numbers 20:17; 21:22). (See Map #4) The King's Highway would have been the most direct route out of Ammon and south into Moab, Edom and finally Midian. However, 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." 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.

**[2000 Map #4: Lehi's Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea--The King's Highway.** 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: 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 #5) 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). (See the illustration below) Taking The Way of the Wilderness south would have led to the oasis town of Ma'an, where mineral springs still flow. 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 (see illustration). Thus, the "wilderness" route #4 seems to be the most 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.

**[2000 Illustration #5: 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]

There would also seem to be a historical precedent 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." Abu Hurairah, an early Islamic period geographer, wrote of the Jews who settled in northwest Arabia to escape the persecution of Nebuchadnezzar. 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.

In 1949, operation "Flying Carpet" began in which some fifty thousand Yemenite Jews were flown back to Israel for resettlement. 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. 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.

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 the LDS Bible Dictionary, Map 3 below); see also Deuteronomy 2:1-37); Numbers 20:14-17). 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. Readers should note that a recurring theme in Nephi's account is that of the Exodus. 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). [pp. 9-18]

[2000 **Map: The Route of the Exodus.** This map shows that in retracing the route of the Exodus, the Jews would have headed east past Jericho, across the river Jordan into the wilderness and then south to the Red Sea. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *LDS Bible Dictionary*, Map 3]

[2000 **Map: Lehi's Trail into Wadi Tayyib al Ism (The Valley of Lemuel).** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 26]

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

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" (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. 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.

- (4) Another name given to the mountains in this part of Arabia is "Hegaz" or "Hijaz," meaning "the Borders or Barriers." 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)

[*Following the Words of Nephi*, pp. 17-20, 22, 24]

[1999 **Map: The Borders near the Red Sea.** George Potter with Richard Wellington, *Following the Words of Nephi: Part One*:

(2000) *Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 34]

*1 Nephi 2:5 BY the Borders Near the Seashore:*

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. [*Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 22, 24]

[1999 **Illustration: The shore of the Red Sea or Gulf of Aqaba going south into Arabia.** The reader should notice the mountain

(2000) "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]

*1 Nephi 2:5 He Came down BY the Border(S) Near the Red Sea . . . He Traveled IN the Wilderness Nearer the Red Sea:*

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). 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-Ism, 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]. [*Following the Words of Nephi*, pp. 24-31]

[1999 **Map: The Ancient World at the Time of the Patriarchs.** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *LDS King James Bible*,

(2000) 1979 edition]

[2000 **Illustration: Blue boxes denote the two mountain ranges in Midian.** George Potter & Richard Wellington, *Discovering Nephi's Trail*, Chapter 1, p. 3, Unpublished]

[1999 **Illustration: Mountain range or borders slightly inland from the shoreline of the Red Sea.** The second and more easterly

(2000) mountain range is twenty to thirty miles inland, and its peaks reach a height of over 7,800 feet. George Potter with Richard

Wellington, *Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 25]

**[1999 Illustration: Shoreline mountains blocking passage down the shoreline.** Photo by George Potter. George Potter with Richard

(2000) Wellington, *Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999, p. 24]

**[1999 Illustration: Diagram of how the trail deviates eastward, because of the trail blockage, into the wadi.** George Potter with

(2000) Richard Wellington, *Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, Unpublished Manuscript, 1999,

p. 25]

*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:*

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. 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. 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.]

[*Following the Words of Nephi: Part One: Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, pp. 21, 32-34, 74]

[Potter & Wellington's pertinent geographical ideas on the valley of Lemuel have been given in their 1999 article, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, num. 1, FARMS, 1999. However much more incidental detail was given in the 2000 manuscript]

#### *1 Nephi 16:10 The One Pointed the Way Whither We Should Go into the Wilderness:*

According to Potter and Wellington, Lehi would have had some sense from Nephi's vision and from his own knowledge of the huge task which lay ahead in getting across the "many waters" to the promised land (1 Nephi 13:12). There were only a few places where ships large enough to even attempt to take them such a distance were built and sailed. When the Liahona pointed "the way whither [they] should go into the wilderness" (1 Nephi 16:10) and that direction turned out to be "south-southeast" (1 Nephi 16:13), Lehi and Nephi must have realized that the Lord was leading them toward the ports which sat at the end of the Frankincense trail.

One might ask, How can anyone claim that Lehi really knew these ports existed? The valley of Lemuel in which Lehi camped was less than twenty miles from the Gaza branch of the Frankincense trail. The Frankincense trail got its name from the product which was primarily transported along it--frankincense, a sweet smelling gum, the sap of the Frankincense tree (*Boswellia sacra*). The Frankincense trees were native to southern Arabia, specifically the Dhofar region and the Hadramawt region. Thus the southern Arabians became wealthy on the sale of this aromatic, highly prized substance. Evidence suggests it was used in Egypt as early as 5,000 B.C., and eventually became an integral part of temple ceremonies in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome and Israel.

There were three main ports in southern Arabia: Aden, Cana and Moscha (see illustration). The merchant ships of these three ports virtually monopolized trade with India and the Far East until the first centuries B.C.-A.D. Aden (Eden) and Qana (Canneh) were known to the people of Palestine in Lehi's time (see Ezekiel 27:23). Moscha ("Meshah"--Genesis 10:30) was the major port in Dhofar. The Frankincense trail ended only when it reached one of these ports. Moscha was a place where ships and captains could be found that were capable of sailing in the open waters of the Indian Ocean.

Nephi's assignment was basically to build a ship and sail it across "many waters" to the promised land. In our times it might be somewhat comparable to the Lord asking you to go to the moon. Even if you had inspiration from the Lord you would probably want to visit a large aerospace manufacturer, find out where suppliers are located so you could acquire the necessary components, and finally consult with an



experienced astronaut for lessons. Nephi had to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills necessary to make this ocean voyage, and he had limited time. What more could he seek than a place where he could draw on accumulated experience and tradition. That place existed at the end of the Frankincense trail.

But what evidence is there that Nephi and Lehi really knew such a place existed? Lehi was of the "free class" and a land owner (1 Nephi 4:33; 2:4). He was wealthy (1 Nephi 2:4), multi-lingual (1 Nephi 1:2), and therefore probably of the noble or merchant class. Most likely, Lehi had as good, if not better, knowledge of the overland and seafaring routes of his day than did his contemporary prophets. And if Ezekiel and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 10:9) knew about these large ocean-going ships of the Indian Ocean and the overland trail route leading to the Indian Ocean ports (Jeremiah 49:7-8), then certainly Lehi knew about them. Moreover, the brass plates told of these ships (see 2 Nephi 12:16). These plates mentioned Ophir (2 Nephi 24:12) which, according to the LDS Bible dictionary was "probably a port of southern Arabia." According to Oman historian S.B. Miles, Ophir appears to have been the port of Moscha (Meshah) in Dhofar (Sephah) (Genesis 10:29-30; 1 Nephi 5:11). The scriptures told of Solomon sending his navy to Ophir to acquire gold (1 Kings 9:28), a "great plenty of almug trees," and precious stones (1 Kings 10:11). "By the time of Job 22:24, Ophir had become a synonym for a gold producing land." Over hundreds, even thousands of years, gold and precious things had come to that area through the sale of the precious Frankincense, native to only that area. [pp. 71-73]

**[2000 Map: The Three Ancient Ports of Southern Arabia: Aden, Cana, and Moscha.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 88]

*1 Nephi 16:10 The One Pointed the Way Whither We Should Go into the Wilderness:*

According to Potter and Wellington, phrases in Nephi's record appear to describe a journey to and then along the Frankincense trail. There are multiple corroborative references like coming "down by the borders of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5), traveling "three days" in "borders near . . . nearer the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5-6), then traveling "nearly a south-southeast direction" (1 Nephi 16:13) "keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 16:14). But one might ask, Why was it necessary for the Liahona to point "the way whither we should go" (1 Nephi 16:10) if Lehi and Nephi were traveling on such a well established trail such as the Frankincense trail? There are a number of reasons:

1. *Water:* The course of the Frankincense trail can be explained in one word, "water." Lynn Hilton notes: "Where there is water--that is the inescapable fact of Arabian life--and the great oases of the Arabian peninsula do not move from place to place" The great oases of western Arabia, Tabuk, Hijra, Dedan (Ula), Medina, Mecca, and Najran are all found on the Frankincense trail or a branch of it. The eastern side of the coastal mountains forms an underground sea, trapping large pools of water in aquifers. The inland underground reservoirs, called the Basalt Aquifers, run almost the entire length of the northern and central parts of the Frankincense trail, providing dependable wells and springs along its course. The Frankincense trail was used because it had a reliable water supply. Yet water was not a free resource for all but rather a jealously guarded commodity. Water holes were guarded and regulated public property of the ruling tribe. Without permission from the local tribe one cannot drink from them. And those wells which were not part of a settlement were often covered with a large rock and a bush so that one could even stand on the well and never know it was there unless informed of such by one of the local tribesman.

Some might argue that the Liahona could have directed Lehi through the desert without a trail. Even if that were possible, the party needed to rejoin the trail at the wells. They had no other choice. The need to

find water in the desert made it relatively easy for the emirs to control passage through their lands. Taylor writes:

Like the soldiers and traders who had made their way through Arabia before them, they (pilgrims) knew there were supplies of water, scanty and brackish through they might be, on the road ahead. Fortified *kellas* or water stations, protected by iron-plated doors and garrisons of soldiers, dotted the route at long and irregular intervals. Although it might have been two or three days' march from one to another, at least the water supplies were known and plans made accordingly.

2. *Supplies*: The Frankincense trail also provided the other important elements needed to survive the trip through the desert: food and, when needed, fresh camels. At the camps or "caravansaries" along the trail, the traveler could also share news and companionship with other travelers as well as inquire about the trail ahead. Every Bedu herdsman was responsible to the local emir to be an informer. To this day, they still receive rewards for notifying authorities of strangers traveling in their lands. Andrew Taylor writes of the earlier Europeans that journeyed into the Arabian wilderness: "Like other explorers before and after them, the Blunts (Wilfrid and Ann Blunt) were amazed at how news of their presence had spread among the tribes." Lehi would have understood that in order to travel through Arabia he would need the continued information and supplies offered by an authorized trail.

3. *A Good Road*: Mohammed Al-Mansour and his family were wealthy caravan-traders from Qassim, due east from Medina. His great grandson, Waleed Al Mansour, keeps a long genealogy that includes personal histories. He notes that to this day, his uncles can describe the footing of each of the main camel trails in Arabia, that is, gravel, hard sand, dry river bed, etc. The routes were not straight courses, but often deviated far distances to avoid lava beds, mountains or soft sand, none of which were good terrain for camels. Such considerations were far from incidental. If one's camels became lame in the desert, the traveler's fate was in serious jeopardy. The courses of the Frankincense routes were derived from thousands of years of experience, and were faithfully followed in an effort to minimize the risk of losing camels or of getting lost.

4. *Places to Acquire Income*: Besides money for tributes, Lehi would have needed funds for acquiring provisions, and probably for replacing camels that became lame or died on the trail. Lehi apparently did not take his gold and silver into the wilderness. However Randolph Linehan, an international attorney specializing in international commerce, and one who practiced law in Arabia, speculates that in the commercial centers that were located along the Frankincense trail, Lehi and his older sons could have exchanged their highly valued personal services for tribute and provisions. Lehi was wealthy. He had taught not just his oldest sons, but his younger ones as well, reading, writing, and the trade languages: Egyptian, Canaanite script, Judahite Hebrew. They made written records and had scriptures in their possession. This might, to some degree, explain why it took Lehi eight years to cross Arabia.

5. *Protection from Plunder*: Remaining on the Frankincense trail would have provided Lehi with a couple of good security measures: (1) they would have been traveling with many other people; and (2) they would have the opportunity to pay proper tribute to local authorities who guarded the trail. The Bedouins of Arabia watched the passages and wells and knew who traveled in their lands. To wander off this trail invited death from those officials who derived their income from the caravan trade. Those entering tribal lands without permission were considered by those in authority to be trespassers, tribute dodgers or what we might call illegal immigrants. The family would thus have been fair game for plunder, enslavement and perhaps even death.

Staying on the trail also meant traveling with large groups. Waleed Al-Monsour relates that his grandfather's caravan's numbered two to three hundred camels, each few camels being accompanied by an armed man. When a smaller group wished to make a long journey they would wait at a village (or caravanserai) until enough people could band together to make a sizable traveling party. The caravan

was thus a small army traveling across the desert. The same strategy applied to the pioneers of the American West.

Arabist Alan Keohane explains why it was in the interest of the tribes to encourage travel:

Traders and cultivators paid them protection money, called *khawah* to keep themselves safe from raids. The desert sheikhs--a title of respect derived from the Arabic word for "to be old"--became so powerful that many were given the grander title of *emir* or prince. They were also fabulously wealthy.

For this reason, the tribes that ruled trade routes went to great efforts to protect their trails and to organize small parties into larger groups for travel between villages. These tribute-paying travelers needed a degree of safety or they would find other routes. The travelers were their customers, and the tribute from the trail was their main source of income. Andrew Taylor writes of one nineteenth century Emir in northern Arabia:

Emir Mohammed ibn Rashid at Hail, who would briskly lop off the heads of strangers found loafing around near the roads in his domain as an example to anyone thinking of mounting an armed attack on passing travelers. It was . . . an effective policy--there had been no robberies on the Emir's highways for years . . .

Nigel Groom notes of the Minaeans, one of the incense kingdoms of southern Arabia that controlled the trade in Lehi's time:

Over the long period of the overland incense trade, power and influence will have shifted among the different tribes of central Arabia and it seems likely that the Minaeans organizing the trade will always have been much concerned in dealings to ensure the safe passage of their caravans through the territories of tribal chiefs with varying and fluctuating degrees of authority. A general measure of law and order must have been maintained, however, for the trade to have continued over the centuries without, so far as we know, any major interruption.

[pp. 74-83; see also *Discovering Nephi's Trail*, Chapter 4, p. 4, 8, Unpublished]

*1 Nephi 16:13 Shazer:*

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 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.

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 $\frac{1}{2}$ ° 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 below) 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) 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."

**[2000 Illustration: The town of Midian (al-Bada'a)**, home of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, would have been the first town the family of Lehi would have encountered after leaving the Valley of Lemuel (Tayyib al-Ism). It was a major halt on the trail that led from Egypt to southern Arabia. 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 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*. 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." 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." 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-Ism), 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.

**[2000 Illustration: Map #1 showing the double listing of the names *Segor* and *Schajar*.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 102]

[2000 **Illustration: Map #2 The Halt Called Segir -- Shazer.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 103]

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.

Note\* The ibex (*capra ibex nubiana*) is a shy animal with curved horns resembling a rather stout goat. It lives high among the steep craggy mountains, where few other animals can survive. The ibex does not obtain all of its water requirements from its food and so must come down from the peaks to drink. It is at this time that it is susceptible to ambush by hunters. We would suggest that the men in Lehi's group may well have left the rest of the family in the protected halt and traveled into the mountains just as the text infers in order to hunt this most noble of beasts.

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 Algharr 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. [pp. 91-103]

*1 Nephi 16:14 We Did Go Forth . . . Keeping in the Most Fertile Parts of the Wilderness, Which Were in the Borders Near the Red Sea (Hilton & Potter Theories Compared):*

According to Potter and Wellington, the Hijaz mountain range runs the entire length of Arabia in an approximate north-south direction paralleling the coast of the Red Sea and just a few miles to the east of the Red Sea. In traveling "south-southeast," Lehi's party had two choices in making their way southward towards the place which they called "Shazer" (1 Nephi 16:13) and beyond: (1) They could either cross through the heart of the Hijaz mountains and continue on the Frankincense trail which followed along the east side of the mountains; or (2) They could travel down the coastal shoreline of the Red Sea on the west side of the mountains. Obviously they could not travel directly along the mountain chain because they would have been traversing one thousand miles of jagged peaks from six to ten thousand feet in height.

The Hiltons have suggested that the family traveled to the western side of the Hijaz range, down the Red Sea shoreline. (see illustration below) In 1 Nephi 16:14, Nephi informs the reader that from the place called Shazer "they did go forth again in the wilderness, following the same direction, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea. Adherents to the Hiltons' theory interpret the word "borders" in 1 Nephi 16:14 to mean the shoreline plain, which is called the *Tihama*.

Potter and Wellington disagree with the Hiltons' proposed shoreline manner of travel for a number of reasons. Some of the main reasons are listed below:

(1) The first and most notable of these is that there is no evidence that a trail existed down the shore of the Red Sea until well after Lehi's time. Crossing Arabia was a very difficult process. Such long journeys in the desert would have required logistical support, or in essence dependable and maintained wells, fodder for animals, and provisions. A review of the official maps of the pre-Islamic trade routes in Arabia exhibited at the National Museum of Bahrain and the Antiquities Museums of Saudi Arabia at Najran and Damman show a network of trading routes through Arabia--yet none are located along the shoreline of the Red Sea. Virtually all of the texts, printed in English, that deal with the pre-Islamic trade routes show the Frankincense trail inland and no trail along the coastline. For a short distance in the south of Arabia a branch of the incense route traveled along the coast but then joined up again with the Frankincense trail. However, it was fifteen hundred years after the time of Lehi before a trail existed along the Red Sea coast, with its infrastructure of supply stations and wells, from Palestine to the Hadramawt in southern Arabia.

(2) Nephi noted that they traveled in "the most fertile parts." The entire northern two thirds of the Red Sea coastal plain is barren wasteland. The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Agriculture has tested the soils along the Red sea plain and determined that they are "non-arable soil due to the high salinity."

(3) A journey along the coast would provide terrain that is the direct opposite to what Nephi describes. Nephi states that they traveled first in the *most* fertile parts of the wilderness, then in the *more* fertile parts. He also says that on the last part of the journey south, at Nahom, the family was suffering from

starvation. Yet a look at a map showing areas of cultivation on the west of Arabia shows that the coastal route is just the opposite of that. There are no areas of cultivation on the first part of the trip, then they increase in number by the time one reaches Jeddah, and on the final southerly stretch on the Tihama plain they are plentiful.

(4) Nephi's text states that they turned east only *after* Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1). The Hiltons propose that Lehi's family used the Shar ascent to go from the shoreline up into the mountains, turning east after al-Qunfidhah to pass through Abha and Khumis Mushayt, before coming to Nahm. This route runs east for 75 miles from Ash Shi'b to Ash Sh'ar, 400 miles *before* reaching Nahm. The western side of the mountains in southern Saudi Arabia is the most fertile portion of all of Saudi Arabia with terraced cultivation on the mountains and fields on the Tihama. Since the area supported a larger population anciently than it does today this was probably also the case in Lehi's time. Yet by the time they reached Nahom the family was starving (1 Nephi 16:35).

[pp. 83-84]

#### *1 Nephi 16:14 And We Did Go Forth Again . . . in the Most Fertile Parts of the Wilderness:*

According to Potter and Wellington, after Lehi's group finished hunting at Shazer (al-Gharr), they continued south-southeast ("the same direction") on what appears to be the Gaza branch of the Frankincense trail and kept in what the text describes as "the most fertile parts of the wilderness" (1 Nephi 16:14). One might ask, How could there be "most fertile parts" in the desert land of northwest Arabia, where rainfall averages less than four inches per year and extreme summer temperatures bake everything? Isn't this a contradiction?

In order to solve this problem, some LDS scholars have suggested that the phrase "most fertile parts" meant that Lehi rode his camels through the lowest spots in the wadis where slightly more desert bushes are found. This notion would seem to reinvent the definitions of "most" and "fertile," especially in light of what these words would have meant to the author Nephi and Joseph Smith, the translator. Nephi came from Jerusalem, part of the "fertile crescent." He came from an agrarian society and undoubtedly knew the precise meaning of fertility. Therefore, it seems reasonable to believe that the words Nephi used for "most" and "fertile" meant just what they imply.

As in many other instances, what might at first seem to be a great flaw in Nephi's text is actually one of the most compelling witnesses for its historical accuracy. Based on research and explorations by Potter and Wellington, they believe there are two rational explanations for Nephi's wording:

(1) Based on broad assumptions, the phrase "keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness" might have meant that Lehi's family visited the large oasis towns which were mostly located on the Frankincense trail. These were, in order: al-Bada'a, Al-Aghra at wadi Sharma, Shuwaq, Shagbh, Dedan, Medina, Najran, etc. (see illustration below). Each of these oases had a farming community associated with it.

(2) It is more likely, however, that "the most fertile parts" was the particular section of the Frankincense trail from Dedan to Medina. That is to say, "the most fertile parts" was an actual place, a series of villages and farms called the *Qura Arabiyyah* which were found on the Frankincense trail.



**[2000 Illustration: Halts on the Frankincense Trail.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 122]

According to Groom, *Qura* or *Qara* means "a region or place of fixed abode; villages, a cultivated land." Thus *Qura Arabiyyah* means villages of Arabia. To Nephi and fellow Palestinians of his day, the *Qura Arabiyyah* were the settled villages of the "Arabs" who lived in a great desert; everything else in the peninsula was Bedouin country, the land of the "A'rabs." The distinction of the two words in quotation marks is very important. Al-Wohaibi explains:

It is from *Qura Arabiyyah* that the name "Arab" as opposed to "A'rab" is to be derived, since the word "Arab" denotes the settlers, as opposed to "A'rab" the Bedouin. This distinction is definitely pre-Islamic and can be assumed to have originated in this region which is known to have possessed commercial, agricultural centres.

Al-Wohaibi infers that in ancient times, the only lands considered *Arabia* were the villages (occupied by "Arabs") between Wadi Qura, the home of the empire of Dedan, and the great oasis of Medina. Thus *Qura Arabiyyah* included twelve villages, a chain of fertile farmlands which ran for over two hundred miles to the south-southeast. Only these *Qura* villages are what ancient Palestinian and Syrian historians considered Arabia or Arabiyyah. The term Arabia or *Bilad al-Arab* ("the land of the Arab") did not apply to the entire peninsula until well after the advent of Islam. Even more interesting to the Book of Mormon reader is the fact that the Prophet Mohammed referred to these villages as the *Muhajirun*, which means "the fertile parts [pieces] of land." In essence, the title *Muhajirun* (fertile parts) or *Qura Arabiyyah* (villages or cultivated lands) seems only to have applied to the villages that were located on the Gaza or Egyptian branch of the Frankincense trail, the exact route that Lehi would have taken from Tayyib al-Ism (the valley of Lemuel) to Medina. In other words, when Nephi referred to the "most fertile parts," he appears to have been using the actual place-name for the area that Lehi's family was traveling in.

With this in mind it is interesting to note two things about the 1830 original translation of the Book of Mormon:

- (1) capitalization was generally not a part of the text; and
- (2) the phrase actually read, "keeping in the most fertile parts, which WAS in the borders."

This implies once again that "the most fertile parts" was a place-name for a unique area, in essence, the *Muhajirun*, the *Qura Arabiyyah*.

One final note. No reliable record existed of a westerner visiting these most fertile parts of the Frankincense trail until after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Department of Antiquities and Museums of Saudi Arabia cites: "Charles Doughty was the first who visited al-Ula (Dedan) in 1876 and opened the doors for study and research for the others." [pp. 105-120]

**[2000 Illustration: Map showing the Trail Taken by the Family through Arabia.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 260]

*1 Nephi 16:14 KEEPING in the Most Fertile Parts:*

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." 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.

(4) One additional factor might have to do with Lehi and Nephi's calling to be the Lord's servants. D&C 33:7-8 implies that somewhere Nephi might have been a missionary. Lynn and Hope Hilton suggested that it was perhaps to the predecessors of the Lihyanites (the people of Lihy) at al-Bada'a, Midian who came to power in northwest Arabia over four hundred years after the passage through Arabia of Lehi's family. However, it also seems likely to Potter and Wellington that Nephi might have taught for a lengthy time in the most fertile parts. The Lihyanite capital city was in the Wadi Ula, and their temple at Dedan. The Hiltons go into great length to associate the cistern at the Dedan temple to the Brazen Sea of Solomon's temple. Apparently someone was a gospel missionary in this area. An intriguing story is related by al-Wohaibi of the old Arabia geographer "Ibn Zabal and recorded by both al-Samhudi and al-'Abbasi, . . . they allege that there is an inscription on two stones at Medina, one of which says that a messenger of Solomon or Jesus was sent to Qura Arabiyyah or Yathrib (Medina) or to 'this village.'" It is worth noting from a missionary aspect that Arabiyyah villages were so close to each other that "travelers would leave a village in the afternoon and spend the night in another and so on for several days." Thus, Nephi could conveniently move from village to village preaching the gospel. [pp. 118-123]

*1 Nephi 16:15-16 And It Came to Pass That We did Travel for the Space of Many Days . . . in the MORE Fertile Parts of the Wilderness:*

After describing how they kept in "the most fertile parts of the wilderness," Nephi states the following about the next section of their journey:

And it came to pass that we did travel for the space of many days, slaying food by the way, with our bows and our arrows and our stones and our slings. And we did follow the directions of the ball, which led us in the MORE fertile parts of the wilderness. (1 Nephi 16:15-16; emphasis added)

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."

(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. 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 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." [pp. 127-129]

**[2000 Illustration: The More Fertile Parts.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 140]

**[2000 Illustration: Map Showing the Trail Taken by the Family through Arabia.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 260]

*1 Nephi 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:*

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."

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). [pp. 127-140]

*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:*

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.

**[2000 Map: Major Trails in Ancient Yemen.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 164]

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. 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. 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. 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. [pp. 147-151]

### *1 Nephi 16:34 Nahom:*

Potter and Wellington propose the location for Nahom to be somewhere in the 50 miles north of jabal al-Lawdh (N16o10', E45o 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 San'a. 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. Furthermore, the recent finding by a German archaeological team, of an inscribed altar at Marib, bearing the name of Bi'athar . . . the Nihmite" 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.

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" 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" 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. [pp. 152-158]

1 Nephi 16:34 **Nahom (Illustration--Potter Theory):** Map Showing the Trail Taken by the Family through Arabia. [George Potter and Richard Wellington, Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 260]

[2000 **Map: The Extent of Nhm in 19th and 20th Century Literature.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 164]

[2000 **Map: Major Trails in Ancient Yemen.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 164]

*1 Nephi 16:35 We Have Suffered Much Affliction, Hunger, Thirst and Fatigue:*

Potter and Wellington note that between Najran and this first trail branch to the east, Lehi's family would have encountered a number of wells. The first well was Bi'r Khadra, about 15 miles out of Najran, the second at Al Muyayan another 30 miles further on. Sayh well was another 30 miles after that and then finally two wells came in rapid succession: Qurra about 20 miles after Sayh and bi'r Al Mahashimah, which marked the break where the trail headed to the east. (see illustration below) However, of all the branches heading east, this was the only place where there was no city at the junction point, and according to Groom, the next well on this eastern trail was at Mushayniqah some 60 miles across the edge of the rub'al Khali. Furthermore, after leaving Najran, one had to travel over 140 miles in order to reach the next fertile area (the settlements of wadi Jawf to the south). According to the TPC maps there are no areas of cultivation marked between the two oases. Thus there are indeed possibilities for Lehi's

family to have "suffered much affliction, hunger, thirst and fatigue" (1 Nephi 16:35) during this part of the journey, especially if hunting proved unprofitable as the terrain would seem to dictate. But how and why did this suffering take place. [pp. 150-151]

*1 Nephi 17:1 We Did Again Take Our Journey in the Wilderness; and We Did Travel Nearly Eastward from That Time Forth:*

With Nephi at the head, the party departed from Nahom and turned eastward (1 Nephi 17:1). Potter and Wellington note that they do not know exactly where Nephi turned eastward, but whether it was on the edge of the desert north-east of wadi Jawf or whether it was around wadi Jawf itself, in either case the journey from there to Bountiful was "nearly eastward." From wadi Jawf to Khor Rori (the location that they propose as Bountiful), is 70 off east, and from the split in the trail north-east of wadi Jawf to Khor Rori, is 30 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.

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). 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. According to legend Ubar was established by Noah's great great grandson "Ad." 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." 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." More than 40 ancient camp-sites at Ubar where "the caravans would have grouped and waited to enter Ubar. have been uncovered"

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. 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. [pp. 164-167]



[2000 **Map: The Trail East.** Map showing a trail east to Dhofar based on the work of world renowned American archaeologist Juris Zarins. Map from John Noble Wilford, "Ruins in Yemeni Desert Mark Route of Frankincense Trade," New York Times, Tuesday, January 28, 1997. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 178]

[2000 **Map: The Frankincense Trail from Mashyniqah to Moscha. (Nahom to Bountiful)** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 178]

[2000 **Illustration: Numerous ancient trails spread out southeast from "Ubar" to the frankincense groves of the "Adites."** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 178]

1 Nephi 17:1 We Did Travel Nearly Eastward from [Nahom]:

Potter and Wellington write that one of the criteria met by their proposed land of Bountiful is that it was eastward from their proposed site of Nahom. The coast of Dhofar adjacent to the end of the trail at the ancient site of Ain Humran *is 5 degrees off true east* from the point in Yemen where the eastward trail to Dhofar splits off the main frankincense trail, and *is 13 degrees off true east from wadi Jawf*. [p. 185]

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

Nephi uses the word "wade" (1 Nephi 17:1) in describing the journey eastward from Nahom. According to Potter and Wellington, it is interesting that Nephi used the word "wade," just as someone might use it to describe "wading through water" or "wading through soft sand." The Rub'al Khali has sand dunes which are at times 700 to 800 feet high. [p. 146]

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

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)

[pp. 185, 209-223]

**[2000 Illustration: Map Showing the Trail Taken by the Family through Arabia.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 260]

**[2000 Illustration: Land Bountiful.** A satellite photo of Dhofar showing the trail leading to the frankincense port of Moscha at Khor Rori and the city of Merbat at Taqah. The extensive fruit plantations at Salalah and Taqah are clearly visible. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail*, Unpublished Manuscript, 2000, p. 194]

*1 Nephi 17:6 We Did Pitch Our Tents by the Seashore:*

Potter and Wellington write that one of the criteria met by their proposed land of Bountiful is that it was accessible to the seashore. Parallel to the southern coast of Arabia there is a mountain range which runs from Yemen to Dhofar. As Nephi looked south out over the ocean from the mountains of Dhofar, the next landfall would have been Antarctica. In order to reach the coast from the trail, the family had to cross the mountains. Camels laden with four to five hundred pounds of tents and provisions could only cross the

mountains on established trails through passes. Maps of the ancient trade routes in southern Arabia show only four passes through the mountains to the coast. (see illustration) The first is through wadi Hardabah to the port of Aden in Yemen; the second is through wadi Hajar in Yemen to the port of Cana; the third is through wadi Hadramaut to Sayhut; and the fourth is through a pass in the mountains to the Salalah plain and Ain Humran. This pass is now the modern Salalah/Thammarit road. The misguided idea that Lehi's family forged their own trail and hid out in an isolated place in Dhofar is highly unlikely. The Frankincense lands were the source of great wealth, and were heavily guarded. The Roman historian Pliny recorded how in the Hadramaut those who dared leave the official frankincense road were summarily executed.

Locations west of the Salalah plain, namely the inlets of Dhalkut, Kharfot and Rakhyut are not readily accessible from the hinterland. To approach Dhalkut from the desert would take a 75 kilometer journey across a 5,000 foot mountain range. Wadi Sayq, Kharfot and Rakhyut would be about a 50 kilometer journey across the same mountain range. There are no records of any ancient trails that lead inland to these areas. In fact, the only recorded ancient trail to the coast of Dhofar is at Salalah. [pp. 185-186]

*1 Nephi 18:2 I, Nephi, Did Not Work the Timbers after the Manner Which Was Learned by Men:*

According to Potter and Wellington, using imported lumber would certainly not contradict Nephi's claim that he worked timbers. (1 Nephi 18:2) Historically, the first records in the Near East of timbers being imported from foreign lands date to an inscription of Ur-Nanshe, King of Lagash in Sumer in about 2520 B.C. The cargoes which the ships from Meluhha (India), Magan (Oman) and Dilmun (Northwest Persian Gulf) carried to Mesopotamia consisted of copper, other metals, diorite, carmelian, onions, spices and wood--which perhaps included Indian teak, as in later historical periods, for ship building. In ancient Yemen teak was the wood of preference for building ships, and was imported from India. The Omani Ministry of National Heritage and Culture also notes:

Teak and coconut wood were used exclusively for building hulls. Teak had to be imported from India, and the Periplus of the Erythraean suggest that this practice was already current when it was written, at least 400 years before Islam, since it states that the port of Omana imported "beams and rafters" from Barygaza. Indeed, the virtues of the wood would have been known in the Gulf from the earliest sea voyages to the Indus in the third millennium B.C. . . . Coconut wood also had to be imported--mainly from the Maldive and Laccadive Islands from where it is possible that the coconut tree spread to Dhofar in the Middle Ages.

Presently it is not certain if coconuts were cultivated at Dhofar in Nephi's time. In the eleventh century Nasir-I-khusraw observed coconuts growing in Oman. If Nephi found large plantations of coconut palms in Bountiful, it was possible that he made some of the parts of the ship using timber and fiber from the palm. Potter and Wellington guess that Nephi saw coconut palms around Khor Rori.

It appears that all the ancient commodities needed for shipbuilding were available at Khor Rori either grown domestically or acquired by trade. These would have included timber (teak, deodar, etc.); rope from vegetation fiber; cotton, flax or rush matting for sails; bamboo or wood, or bronze for pegs or nails; stones for anchors and ballast, and probably bitumen, resin, fish oil or animal fat for caulking. But this begs the question: How could Nephi have afforded the imported lumber or imported materials? In Oman in 1990, a 110 foot Dhow made of imported wood cost up to \$535,000 to build. Assuming relative parity in cost over time, it is difficult to see how the family could have earned enough to import all the wood for the ship from India. But there are a number of possibilities: (1) Camels need for the trip could have been sold; (2) Nephi could have used a large amount of local timber and his group's labor; (3) The journey to Jerusalem was

only 4 months. Lehi could have sent an agent to negotiate with some servants left behind at his land of inheritance. [pp. 248-250]

Note\* An agent could have been sent back to Lehi's land of inheritance anytime from the valley of Lemuel onward (see 1 Nephi 2:16-20). Lehi's gold and silver could also have been retrieved by Zoram & Nephi. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

#### *1 Nephi 18:4 I Had Finished the Ship:*

According to Potter and Wellington, Nephi's statement that "I had finished the ship" (1 Nephi 18:4) certainly did not mean that he built it by himself. If Alexandre Eiffel said, "I finished my tower in Paris," it would not mean that he built it alone. Nephi does not tell us how many people worked on the construction of his ship, only that "we did work timbers" (1 Nephi 18:1), and that at least some of the workers were his reluctant brethren (1 Nephi 17:18). [p. 220]

#### *1 Nephi 18:8 We Had All Gone down into the Ship . . . We Did Put Forth into the Sea:*

According to Potter and Wellington, the fact that Nephi mentions that they had "gone down into the ship" (1 Nephi 18:8) implies that Nephi's ship was tied to a mooring before they disembarked. Moored next to a port seawall, Nephi would have used a gangplank to "walk down" into the ship. This appears to be the picture Nephi described as they put their supplies aboard the ship, and as the family entered the ship for the final voyage. Nephi also says that they "put forth into the sea" (1 Nephi 18:8), once again implying that the ship was initially in a port that was somewhat protected from the sea and had to "put forth into the sea." Nephi's words also bring up the necessity of a port for building and launching a ship. With this in mind Potter and Wellington made an analysis of all the possible ports in Dhofar using criteria gleaned from the text and also from historical and cultural settings. The following criteria were listed for Nephi's port:

1. The port would be large enough to accommodate a large ship.
2. The port would have been protected year round from monsoon winds.
3. The port should show evidence of ancient use.
4. It would have been open to the sea during the time of Lehi.
5. It would have had protection from high surf.
6. It was only necessary that Nephi had a place to moor his ship while finishing it.
7. Nephi wrote that the place had "much fruit" (1 Nephi 17:5)
8. There were apparently cliffs above deep water nearby because of Laman & Lemuel's attempt to throw Nephi to his death. (1 Nephi 17:48)
9. Trade with India would have been necessary for large timbers suitable for shipbuilding.
10. There would need to be large domestic timbers nearby.

11. There would need to be access to thousands of coconuts or other material for ropes.
12. Sails would need to be available or the material to make canvas for sails.
13. Iron ore to make tools was nearby. (1 Nephi 17:10)
14. Experienced shipwrights were needed.
15. Experienced ship captains were needed in order to teach Nephi to captain a ship.
16. There was apparently a mountain nearby where the Lord instructed Nephi. (1 Nephi 17:7; 18:3)
17. Sailors capable of teaching Nephi's crew needed to be available along with facilities for conducting sea trials.
18. "Stones" to make fire with, or flint was needed nearby. (1 Nephi 17:11)

From the results of this comparison (see chart below) Potter and Wellington found only five serious candidates for the place where Nephi built and launched the ship: Raysut, Khor Soli, Khor Taqah, Khor Rori, and Mirbat--all on the Salalah plain. Interestingly, they found no evidence that Khor Kharfot was ever a port in Nephi's time or at any other time for that matter. By far the strongest candidate was the port of Moscha at Khor Rori, especially when one considers the village of Taqah and Khor Rori as one site, as they are only two miles apart. [pp. 211, 235-242]

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

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

**[2000 Illustration: 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]

**[2000 Illustration: 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\* A series of videos would be produced which illustrate the basic facts related to Potter & Wellington's manuscript detailing Lehi's journey through Arabia. For the sake of simplicity at the present time, the video series will be listed below. They are all produced by George Potter in conjunction with Timothy Sedor under the organizational name of "Nephi Project":

**Part One: *Discovering the Valley of Lemuel*, 2000.**

**Part Two: *Discovering Lehi's Trail & Shazer*, 2002.**

**Part Three: *Discovering the Most Fertile Parts & the People of Lehi*, 2003**

**Part Four: *Discovering Nephi's Trail & His Bow Wood*, 2003**

**Part Five: *Discovering the Land of Bountiful*, 2001.**

**Part Six: *Discovering Nephi's Harbor*, 2001.**

[2000 George Potter & Richard Wellington Gaza Branch of the Frankincense Trail--> Khor Rori]

Map Showing the Trail Taken by the Family from Jerusalem to Bountiful.

Source: George Potter & Richard Wellington, *Discovering the Lehi-Nephi Trail* (Manuscript), 2000, p. 260.

2000^ Michael Marquardt H. Michael Marquardt, "Note on Early Book of Mormon Geography,"

<http://www.xmission.com/~research/central/resth1b.htm>.

Michael Marquardt details an 1830 newspaper article reporting on the missionary labors in Ohio of Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt, of whom it was said preached about the Indians "*whose ancestors landed on the coast of Chili* 600 years before the coming of Christ." This information about "Chili" predated the Frederick G. Williams document of 1836.

(See the notations for 1830, 1831, 1836, 1845, 1880, 1909)

**2000 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.**

Joseph Allen notes that while on tour retracing the steps of Lehi, most members of the group felt that it was more probable that Lehi crossed the Jordan River near Jericho, and then traveled south for two reasons. First, his family would have immediately been out of danger from the Jewish king, Jehoiakim-Zedekiah. Second, the well-marked Frankincense Trail (dated to before 900 B.C. along established caravan routes) would have streamlined their journey.

**2000 Jeffrey D. Keith "Nephi's Tools: An Overview of Iron Ore Occurrences in Oman."**  
FARMS Project Report, *Insights* 20, no. 5, 2000.

**2000^ Rulon D. Eames "First Book of Nephi," *To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Selected by Daniel H. Ludlow, S. Kent Brown, and John W. Welch. Provo: FARMS, 2000, pp. 39-41.**

In an article titled "the Book of Mormon," and in the section on the First Book of Nephi, written by Rulon Eames, we find the following:

When Jerusalem persisted in its arrogance, a host of prophets, including Jeremiah and Lehi, warned of destruction. As people conspired to kill Lehi, he was warned by the Lord and escaped with his family south into the desert. . . . Lehi's group then completed a grueling odyssey that covered eight years in the wilderness, arriving at a verdant spot on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula.

Note\* The article has a picture of Wadi Sayq with the following caption:

Wadi Sayq, near the border between Yemen and Oman on the Gulf of Aden (1989). Areas with vegetation such as this along the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula match the description of the place where Lehi and his group built their ship (1 Ne. 17:5), but they were unknown to Westerners until after the Book of Mormon was published. Courtesy Warren Aston.

Note\* There was a map of Lehi's travels through Arabia included in the original article that does not appear in this article. (see the notation for 1992)

2000^ John E. Clark "Geography," in *To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from*

*the Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Selected by Daniel H. Ludlow, S. Kent

Brown, and John W. Welch. Provo: FARMS, 2000, pp. 97-101.

Note\* See the text of this article in the 1992 notation.

2000^ Embaye Melekin *Manifestations Mysteries Revealed: An Account of Bible Truth and the*

*Book of Mormon Prophecies*. Toronto: Embaye Melekin, 2000.

In the Forward Embaye Melekin writes:

This book is a fulfillment of the prophecies of our forefathers. It analyses the Book of Mormon in its entirety and proves that the provisions in the book were exclusively written to our African ancestors and were meant to reach us through the Gentiles or the white people.



After citing 1 Nephi 10:11-14, Melekin writes on page 83:

These prophecies were made around the year 590 BC. Lehi, our original father and ancestor who migrated to Africa from Jerusalem, with his children, knew that there would be a Messiah that will come over to save mankind.

On page 95 we find:

The Abyssinian Book is consistent with regard to the children of Israel throughout the long journey of our forefathers into the heart of the continent of Africa. The narration is that of a people that were forced to abandon their country, heritage and their ancestral place and sojourn into a wilderness and establish a new beginning. Their path was paved by the Almighty God and their journey dictated to them. [1 Nephi 16:9-14 is then quoted, with the words "borders near the Red Sea" emphasized]

**2001**                    **"Book of Mormon Linked to Site in Yemen,"** *LDS Scene, Ensign*, SLC: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 2001, p. 79.

**2001<sup>^</sup>**    **Warren P. Aston**                    **"Newly Found Altars from Nahom,"** in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/2 (Fall 2001): 56-61.

Warren Aston writes:

Many readers have read about the finding of ancient votive altars in Yemen that appear to bear the Book of Mormon place-name Nahom. . . . A 1999 article by S. Kent Brown in the *Journal* noted that an altar recently uncovered at the excavation of a temple near Marib in Yemen bore the tribal name Nihm, apparently a variant of Nahom, where Ishmael was buried while Lehi's group was en route to Bountiful (1 Nephi 16:34). [see the 1999 notation] Because archaeologists had already dated the altar to the seventh or sixth centuries B.C., Brown concluded that this earliest known reference to the name "very probably" referred to the Nahom of which Nephi wrote.

At that time it seemed unlikely that more could be learned about this find, since the altar was one of two altars in an exhibit on ancient Yemen touring Europe since October 1997 and could no longer be examined at the Bar' an temple site. Although a photograph of the altar appeared in the commemorative

catalog accompanying the exhibit, the full engraved text--including the actual reference to Nihm--was not visible in the photograph, and readers had to be content with the translation provided in the catalog's caption. Since then, however, two additional altars bearing the name Nihm have been identified at the same temple site. (see photo below)

On 12 September 2000, I and fellow researchers Lynn Hilton and Gregory Witt identified and examined [briefly] one of the two additional altars at the site, where excavation and reconstruction had been completed by an expedition from the German Archaeological Institute. . . . Early in November 2000, I returned to Yemen and, with the kind cooperation of the German restoration team, was able to make an extended examination . . . Then during May 2001, David Johnson, a BYU archaeologist working in Marib as part of an excavation team, identified the tribal name Nihm on [another] altar. . . .

The Bar' an site lies about three miles from the ruins of the original city of Marib (see illustration below).

**[2001 Photo: Altar 2, with the name NHM enlarged at left (read right to left).** Map by Andy D. Livingston. Warren P. Aston, "Newly Found Altars from Nahom," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/2, Fall 2001, p. 60]

**[2001 Illustration: NIHM Tribal Area.** The distance from Jerusalem to the Nahom region and the Nearby city of Marib is approximately 1,400 miles. Map by Andy D. Livingston. Warren P. Aston, "Newly Found Altars from Nahom," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/2, Fall 2001, p. 58]

Aston continues:

In my view, it is unlikely that Lehi and his family passed close to Marib. After leaving Nahom, northwest of Marib, the "nearly eastward" route recorded by Nephi would have taken them along the uninhabited southern edge of the Empty Quarter, some distance north of Marib. They were then no longer on the famed incense route but were traveling parallel to its eastward leg.

[Question\* Does this view represent Aston's previous view?]

Most readers of the *Journal* will be aware of the ongoing fieldwork being conducted on the southern coast of Oman. This area, the only one that matches Nephi's detailed description of "Bountiful lies within one degree of being due east of the Nahom region. Such precise directional linking of Nahom with the only plausible site for Bountiful is striking confirmation of the accuracy of Nephi's account. . . .

The altar discoveries lend strong support to the view that anciently Nahom/Nihm may have extended over a much larger area than it now does, a concept first proposed in 1995 . . .

At the same time that the Bar'an excavation was completed, a French team conducted the first archaeological examination of a huge area of ancient burial tombs at 'Alam, Ruwayk, and Jidran, just 25 miles north of Marib. While there are isolated burial tombs scattered throughout the Nahom region, this vast cemetery covering many square miles and numbering many thousands of tombs is the largest burial area known anywhere in Arabia.

If in fact Nahom extended into this region in ancient times, this burial area now takes on special significance. The tombs date back as far as 2300 B.C., evidence of the large population in the area even earlier than the generally accepted dates of the Sabaeen period, when Marib was at the height of its influence in the region. Could this unique site be the actual scene of "the place which was called Nahom"-the actual burial area referred to by Nephi?

2001^ Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson *1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of*

and Anthony E. Bentley

*Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust:*

*500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon.*

Salt Lake City: Envision Press, 2001., pp. 152-158.

The authors use excerpts from Hugh Nibley (*Lehi in the Desert*, 1952), *the Hiltons (In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 1976; *Discovering Lehi*, 1996) and the Astons ("*Lehi's Trail and Nahom Revisited*," 1992) in order to provide evidences for the following:

Evidence No. 720: Lehi's Converts in the Arabian Peninsula

Evidence No. 721: The Lihyanite Temple

Evidence No. 722: The Name of Nephi in Southern Arabia

Evidence No. 723: The Valley of Lemuel and the River Laman

Evidence No. 724: The Travel Route Along the Red Sea

Evidence No. 725: Nahom Rediscovered

Evidence No. 726: The Broken Bow Incident

Evidence No. 727: Arabia's Interior Climate

Evidence No. 728: Irreantum

Evidence No. 729: Arabia's Bountiful

[2001 **Map: Lehi's travels through the Arabian Peninsula.** Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, *1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Envision Press, 2001, p. 154]

2001^ **Phyllis Carol Olive** *The Lost Tribes of the Book of Mormon: The Rest of the Story*,  
Springville: Bonneville Books, 2001

This book is a sequel to Phyllis Olive's 2000 publication (*The Lost lands of the Book of Mormon*). It essentially contains more of the same type and quality of arguments regarding the "correlation between the Nephite nation and the Mound Builders of the eastern United States." (See the notation for 2000)

Regarding the travels of Lehi there is an interesting modification from the first book. In the first book the voyage of Lehi is illustrated on page 101 as coming southwest from the southern coast of Arabia and around the tip of Africa, then across the Atlantic to just off the Florida coast, then up the eastern seaboard to the entrance to the St. Lawrence river. Additionally on page 105 we find that "The first land of Nephi refers to the place of their first inheritance near the southeastern shores of Lake Erie." This supposes that Lehi sailed down the St. Lawrence river into the Great Lakes before landing on the southeastern shores of Lake Erie.

Interestingly in this sequel (*The Lost Tribes of the Book of Mormon*), on page 106, we find the following:

. . . as disputes among them increased, the Nephites, who at first may have settled in the fertile regions of upper Ohio after possibly coming up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, migrated further northward into New York, while the Lamanites migrated southward along the Ohio River and settled in central and southern Ohio. (see map below)

[2001 **Illustration: Map of Nephite and Lamanite Territory.** Phyllis Carol Olive, *The Lost Tribes of the Book of Mormon: The Rest of the Story*, Springville: Bonneville Books, 2001, p. 107]

[2001 Joseph L. Allen "Proposed Book of Mormon Sites," LIMITED MESOAMERICAN]

Source: Joseph L. Allen, Book of Mormon Tours. (This is an update of the model proposed in 1989.)

2001^ David R. Seely "Lehi's Altar and Sacrifice in the Wilderness," *Journal of Book of Mormon*

*Studies* 10/1. Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2001, pp. 62-69

David Seely summarizes the content of his article with the following:

Nephi recorded of his father Lehi "that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness . . . that he built an altar of stones, and made an offering unto the Lord, and gave thanks unto the Lord our God" (1 Nephi 2:6-7). This statement may simply be due to the historical fact that Lehi and his family traveled for three days before they stopped for a significant rest. [See illustration below] But the note on the three days' journey may also be Nephi's way of saying that Lehi and his family were acting in accordance with an understanding of the law of Moses found in Deuteronomy 12. [Scholars call this series of injunctions the "centralization of the cult" or the centralization of worship," referring to how the sacrifices and offerings that were the most prominent rituals of the Mosaic law were to be carried out in one location.] That understanding is consistent with what we find preserved in the Temple Scroll:

[You shall not slaughter a clean ox or sheep or goat in all your towns, near to my temple (within) a distance of three days' journey; nay, but inside my temple you shall slaughter it, making it a burnt offering or a peace offering, and you shall eat and rejoice before me at the place on which I shall choo{se} to put my name." (11 QT 52:13-16)]

According to [the above], the building of an altar and the offering of sacrifice were allowed only outside the radius of a three days' journey from the temple in Jerusalem. To put the matter differently, sacrifices beyond the three-day limit were acceptable under the law of Moses. In this view Lehi was conforming to the Mosaic requirement expressed in Deuteronomy 12 when he built an altar in the wilderness and offered sacrifice.

[2001 A Three Days Journey. The length of a "Three days' journey" from Jerusalem depended on the terrain. The concentric circles represent an 18-mile journey per day. Map by Andrew D. Livingston. David R. Seely, "Lehi's Altar and Sacrifice in the Wilderness," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/1. Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2001, p. 68]

2001^ Bruce S. Sutton *Lehi, Father of Polynesia: Polynesians are Nephites*, Orem: Hawaiiki

Publishing, 2001, p. 74-75.

Bruce Sutton writes:

The Lord commanded Lehi to flee with his family . . . This small intrepid band traveled in the wilderness, southeast towards the Red Sea and eventually, to the Arabian Coast near Salalah, bordering the Indian Ocean. Nephi, the son of Lehi was commanded to build a ship and take their families to a promised land . . . (1 Nephi 17:4-14))

It is the opinion of the author that Lehi and his family sailed south with the trade winds from or near Salalah, Oman [see map below], along the East Africa Coastal Current, merging into the South Indian Current, sailing east, along the West Wind Drift, then northwards, along the South Pacific/Peru Current into the Pacific Equatorial Countercurrent and making their landing in Mesoamerica, on the Pacific Coast, near the present day borders of Mexico and Guatemala, possibly between Tapa Chula, Mexico and Puerto de San Jose, Guatemala.

**[2001 Map: Ancient Hawaiian and Maori Place Names and Homelands.** Bruce S. Sutton, *Lehi, Father of Polynesia: Polynesians are Nephites*, Orem: Hawaiki Publishing, 2001, p. 74]

Note\* This ocean route is similar to that proposed by Verla Birrell (see 1948 notation).

**2001^ John Heinerman *Hidden Treasures of Ancient American Cultures*, Springville, Utah:**

Cedar Fort Inc., 2001, p. 183.

John Heinerman relates a number of stories (including his own) about hidden treasures related to the Book of Mormon peoples. In the process he cites a number quotes from Church authorities. In relating the findings of ancient artifacts near Wales, Utah, he writes the following:

Brewer and I eventually cut away the vegetative covering on the box and were quite intrigued with its unusual design patterns. We saw bits and pieces of Hopi and Maya cultures in the themes thereon depicted. And yet we knew it was still of Jaredite origin, only from a much later era (probably when some war survivors made contact with the Mulekites somewhere in the Yucatan Peninsula). (for the uninformed, the Mulekites were one of three distinctive cultural groups mentioned in the Book of Mormon to emigrate to the Americas in ancient times. First came the Jaredites from the Tower of Babel via the Yellow Sea and the North Pacific Ocean to the west coast of Mexico; probably near present-day Acapulco. Then came the Nephites and the Mulekites out of Jerusalem between 599 and 588 B.C., each taking separate routes of travel to the New World--the former reached Valparaiso, Chile in South America via the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, while the latter went via the Mediterranean Sea, the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea to somewhere around the Yucatan peninsula in eastern Mexico. Both

groups eventually met each other a few centuries later in Columbia in the extreme northwestern part of the South American continent, where they united into a single nation. . . .

**2002^ Edwin Goble and Wayne May *This Land: Zarahemla and the Nephite Nation.*** Published by Ancient

American Archaeology Foundation. Printed by Hayriver Press,

Colfax, Wisconsin, March 2002.

In the Introduction to their book, Edwin Goble and Wayne May detail a continuing evolution to the Limited North America (Limited Great Lakes) concept of Book of Mormon geography and then add:

Our theory was the first to show how the whole Great Lakes System was the West Sea spoken of. We have shown that the ancients did not regard these as separate bodies of water, but as one great whole, for it was the "sea" that divided the land, not seas. . . .

While Goble and May do not touch on Lehi's travels in the text, their evolutionary geographical thinking allows them to tilt the map of the United States to "Nephite North" and to place Lehi's landing site on the southern Louisiana coast (somewhat near the Mississippi ["Sidon"] River --see map below).

**[2002 Map: Limited North America Model.** Edwin Goble and Wayne May, *This Land: Zarahemla and the Nephite Nation.* Published by Ancient American Archaeology Foundation. Printed by Hayriver Press, Colfax, Wisconsin, March 2002, p. 75]

**[2002 V. Garth Norman LIMITED MESOAMERICA]**

Note\* This Book of Mormon map was produced by V. Garth Norman in 1990 from his manuscript works as the archaeologist guide for a Mesoamerican/Book of Mormon tour with Ricks Tours, and revised in

2002. It is based on comprehensive Book of Mormon contextual analysis, place name linguistic analysis with Biblical geographic archetypes, Mesoamerican ethnohistory, environmental geography, geology, and archaeology. Major lands and features are labeled while numbers relate to specific locations. In an accompanying Gazetteer, scriptural references are noted and also related archaeological sites.

Source: V. Garth Norman

(See the notation for 1974)

**2002^ Joseph L. Allen Video: *Lehi's Land of First Inheritance*** Book of Mormon Archaeological Foundation

In a very professional presentation produced by David Asay and assisted by Chris Heimerdinger, and representing the first part of a projected multi-part video series, Joseph Allen very adroitly lays out four basic criteria that must be adhered to before anyone proposes the location for Book of Mormon lands in the Americas: (1) Written Languages; (2) Archaeology; (3) Culture & History; and (4) Geography. He then shows how evidence points toward Mesoamerica as the lands of the Book of Mormon in general, and how the archaeological site of Izapa, near Tapachula, Mexico on the Pacific coast close to the border of Guatemala presents the best evidence for Lehi's land of first inheritance in the New World.

**2002^ S. Kent Brown "New Light from Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book***

***of Mormon***, edited by Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W.

Welch. Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham

Young University, 2002, pp. 55-125.

Kent Brown first assesses the probabilities that Jews would flee Jerusalem towards Arabia at the time of Jeremiah and Lehi:

[p. 56] The mild surprise in the early part of the narrative is that anyone fleeing Jerusalem or its environs would head for Arabia, camping near the Red Sea. Almost all flights into exile that are recorded in the Bible show people going southwest to Egypt, not southeast into Arabia. To be sure, hundreds of years later Jews would flee the Roman siege of Jerusalem by traveling into Arabia (A.D. 68-70). But unless a reader knew the unfamiliar names of Arabian cities and peoples noted in the Bible, there are few



hints of meaningful connections in that direction as early as the seventh century B.C., when Lehi and Sariah were on the move. Now there is a growing body of evidence, made available long after Joseph Smith's day, for extensive contacts between Arabia and Jerusalem in antiquity, most commercial and military.

Note\* It is hard to know where Brown is going here. On the one hand he is saying that at the time of Lehi and Jeremiah, there were no Jews fleeing Jerusalem into Arabia. (This is counter to what Potter & Wellington propose--see the 2000, 2003 notations) On the other hand, he is saying that there were extensive contacts between Arabia and Jerusalem in antiquity, but only commercial and military.

[pp. 56-59 ] Lehi, Sariah, and their four sons could have followed a number of routes from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. None of them would have run north and south along the shoreline of the Dead Sea, except along the western shoreline from the Ein Gedi oasis southward. On both the east and west sides of the Dead Sea the terrain slopes steeply from cliffs to water's edge and would not have allowed them to pass.

Kent Brown then gives a few more details that add to the descriptions of Kelly Ogden (see 1987 notation) for the routes Lehi might have taken in leaving Jerusalem and going to the Red Sea:

[1] One was the trade route that led south to Hebron, then to Arad and down through the Zohar Valley into the Arabah Valley, which continues the Jordan Valley southward. This trail would have been the most direct and would have led them toward the tip of the eastern arm of the Red Sea where Aqaba and Eilat are now located. In this connection one should not discount the possibility that the family generally followed a trade route . . .

[2] A second southward trail open to them would have carried them down into the Arabah Valley next to the Dead Sea. It was the so-called ascent of Ziz (see 2 Chronicles 20:16 Revised Standard Version), which connected the area near Tekoa, birthplace of the prophet Amos, and Ein Gedi, which lay on the west shore of the Dead Sea. Tekoa lies south and slightly east of Jerusalem, and the party could have reached the neighborhood by traveling through or near Bethlehem. From here the trail descends [from Bethlehem] eastward through rugged country to the oasis of Ein Gedi. At that point the party would have turned south toward the Red Sea, keeping at first to the west shore of the Dead Sea.

Brown then describes two options for trails that led east from Jerusalem down to Jericho and into the highlands of Moab where they would have turned south:

[A] The first departed from the east side of Jerusalem and skirted southward around the Mount of Olives, then turned eastward and followed the trade route that connected with the northwest shore of the Dead Sea through Wadi Mukallik (Nahal Og). This trail was known in antiquity as the "Route of Salt" because caravans carried salt extracted from the Dead Sea from its northwest shore up to Jerusalem. The family could have broken off from following this trail at any point after descending into the Jordan Valley and then aimed for the mountains of Moab, perhaps reaching the King's Highway near Mount Nebo.

[B] The second or more northerly route would also have taken the family from the east side of Jerusalem, but on an eastward track up over the Mount of Olives near the modern village of At-Tur and eventually down through Wadi Kelt. This path, too, carried trade and travelers between the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem. The family would have exited Wadi Kelt just south of Jericho. From there is was an easy trek across the Jordan Valley to the base of the mountains of Moab.

After taking either of these two options, the family could have turned south to the Red Sea using one of two routes:

[3] the King's Highway

[4] a road that ran farther east through Edomite territory toward the Red Sea [promoted by Potter & Wellington in an unpublished 2000 manuscript sent to Brown but not cited here]

Note\* Option #4 had been promoted for the first time by Potter & Wellington in an unpublished 2000 manuscript sent to Brown but Brown does not cite any source. Brown also ignores the route suggested by the Hiltons from Jericho southward along the west coast of the Dead Sea. His map also fails to detail the above options sufficiently.

[pp. 60-62] Brown cites 5 factors regarding the location of the Valley of Lemuel:

(1) Northwest Arabia, also known as Midian, "was rather heavily populated in antiquity."

(2) they camped about three days' journey south or southeast of modern Aqaba, a distance of between forty-five and seventy-five miles, depending on their speed and endurance (see 1 Nephi 2:6).

(3) the camp lay next to a "river of "water" (v. 6) While Brown notes that "students of geography believe that Arabia has been largely a desert for thousands of years and that water flows only after heavy rains, he remarks that "there is an unforeseen surprise in the mountains south of Aqaba, a surprise that Joseph Smith could not have learned about."

(4) the valley was described as "firm and steadfast" (v. 10)

(5) Lehi gave a name to the valley

Note\* Potter and Wellington (2000) had additionally noted the real geographical conditions of the trail and the "borders" that imposed limitations on the directions and extent of travel.

Brown then gives three options:

(1) Nibley: "In 1952 Hugh Nibley pointed out that the camp had to lie near 'the Gulf of Aqaba at a point not far above the Straits of Tiran' where Lehi, 'perhaps from the sides of Mt. Musafa or Mt. Mendisha,' beheld that the stream of water ran into the Red Sea."

(2) The Hiltons: "In 1976 Lynn and Hope Hilton visited the area and proposed that the likely location of the camp was at the oasis Al-Bad in Wadi al-Ifal, about seventy-five miles south and east of Aqaba. Although any running water at the oasis was seasonal, flowing only after heavy seasonal rains, there were spring."

(3) "More recently, George Potter has come upon a deep valley that cuts through the granite mountains that border the Gulf of Aqaba on its east shore. Known locally as Wadi Tayyib al-Isim ("Valley of the Good Name") and lying almost seventy-five miles south of Aqaba by foot, the valley holds a stream that flows year-round. . . . Hence, Wadi Tayyib al-Isim is a very attractive candidate . . . "

Note\* Brown's map does not recognize Potter & Wellington's position for the Valley of Lemuel situating it in a location more closely to Al Beda, the preferred site of the Hiltons.

On page 55, Brown writes:

While spending months, perhaps years, at a base camp near the northeastern arm of the Red Sea, the family maintained occasional contact with their estate at Jerusalem . . . Then, after the Lord directed the party to move deeper into the desert, they packed up their tents and provisions and crossed the "river Laman," never to return again to Jerusalem . . . "

After giving a brief review of the ancient and modern writings on Arabia (pp. 69-77), Brown then writes concerning the location of Shazer:

[pp. 77-] A range of mountains, called Al-Sarat, runs almost the entire length of the west coast of Arabia and separates the coastal lowlands from the uplands of the interior. The peaks in the north rise to heights of five thousand feet while those in the south reach much higher. A limited number of passes and valleys offer access from one side of the range to the other. At some point the party had to cross the mountains before reaching "the place which was called Nahom," where the group turned "nearly eastward" (1 Nephi 16:34; 17:1) Otherwise, the mountains would have formed a major barrier to their eastward trek.

Brown then gives clues for the location.

(1) after leaving Shazer they traveled "for the space of many days, slaying food by the way" (v. 15) "This expression indicates abundant cover for hunters that one finds in the mountainous terrain rather than in the open, flat region of the maritime plain that runs along the shore of the Red Sea.

(2) Shazer lay "four days" travel in "nearly a south-southeast direction" from the first camp (vv. 13-14). Traveling this general direction would have kept the group near the shore of the Red Sea, at least initially. But after the family departed from Shazer, Nephi's account mentions the Red Sea for the last time, a significant point.

(3) as the party moved south from the first camp, Nephi wrote that party members traveled "in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea" (16:14). In this context, the term *borders* may well point to mountainous area.

(4) A fourth clue has to do with "the most fertile parts of the wilderness." Such areas did not lie along the coastal plain immediately south of the base camp. Because that territory has been known for centuries as a region that does not support much plant life. Hence, one would not expect to find large numbers of wild animals there either. Such "fertile parts," as Nephi described them, either lay in the mountains, perhaps in a season when there was rain, or consisted of the oases that lay on the eastern side of the mountain range. The oases were already populated but often lay a good distance from hunting grounds.

Brown summarizes:

In this light, we can theorize two possible locations for Shazer. Both point to the family's leaving the Red Sea coast soon and travelling into the mountains.

(1) First, Shazer may have lain next to the coast a few miles from the mountains and may have been the party's last stop before they entered mountainous terrain. which would explain Nephi's last mention of the Red Sea. [The Hilton's had proposed an oasis at Wadi al-Azlan near the Red Sea coast, but as Brown notes, "This site is about midway between the modern coastal towns al-Muwaylih and al-Wajh, . . . A person can travel through the mountains from both al-Muwaylih and al-Wajh." Thus either site would have been viable.]

(2) Second, it is also possible that Shazer lay inside a mountain valley not far from the Red Sea, a valley that led into and across the mountains.

(3) Brown also notes that "in an era later than Lehi and Sariah's time, a spur of the incense trail connected al-Bad eastward and southward to the main road near Dedan (modern al-Ula). See Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh*, 192 (map) and 206. [Question: Is this the position taken by Potter and Wellington in their unpublished 2000 manuscript?]

Note\* The map is lacking when it comes to Brown's discussion of the location of Shazer:

Brown then skips to the location of Nahom with the following:

[p, 83- ] Essentially, the trail carried caravan traffic, loaded with frankincense and myrrh, from southern Arabia into the Mediterranean and Mesopotamian regions. Until late antiquity, the trail ran along the east side of the mountain range in western Arabia rather than along the west or coastal side. . . . Indeed it was one of the most important economic highways of the ancient world, and therefore competition and disruption were not tolerated. The party of Lehi and Sariah could easily have followed, or traveled parallel to, the trail as they moved deeper into Arabia, except in areas where rugged hills or extensive boulder fields at the sides of the trail prevented a person from leaving the main road. The trail and its spurs kept to the main wells and grasslands where caravaners could obtain water and food for their animals and themselves. . . .

Note\* Is traveling "parallel to the trail" the same as traveling on the trail? If not, then Brown seems to be at odds with himself for he says that "competition and disruption were not tolerated." (See Potter & Wellington who write that people who did NOT travel on the trail were killed.)

Brown writes:

[p. 81- ] The issue of where Nahom was located is basically settled. From the first camp the family journeyed to "the place which was called Nahom," whence they turned "nearly eastward" (1 Nephi 16:34; 17:1). Nephi's statement about Nahom reveals that the name was already attached to this spot. Members of the party must have learned it from natives of the area. . . .

On the basis of three inscriptions dated to the time of Lehi and Sariah, the location of Nahom almost certainly lay in the area near Wadi Jawf, a large valley in northwest Yemen. The inscriptions appear on small voice altars given to the Bar'an Temple near Marib by a certain Bi'athar of the tribe of Nihm. This tribe is known from Islamic sources that date to the ninth century A.D., fifteen hundred years after Lehi and Sariah. In this later period the tribe dwelt south of the Wadi Jawf, near Jebel (or Mount) Nihm, where it currently resides. The inscriptions, which date to the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., certify that the Nihm/Nehem/Nahom area lay in the same general region, almost fourteen hundred miles south-southeast of Jerusalem. In the world of archaeology, written materials are valued above all other evidence, and these inscriptions secure the general location of Nahom.

Note\* On Brown's map Lehi's route then follows the frankincense trail on the eastern side of the Hijaz mountains (simulating Potter and Wellington's unpublished research), but dips farther south into the area of Marib than Potter & Wellington had theorized before turning east.

Concerning the journey from Nahom to Bountiful Brown writes:

[p. 88- ] The most important piece in this section concerns Nephi's note that "we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth," after events at Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1) . . . We first observe that, northwest of Marib, the ancient capital of the Sabeian kingdom of south Arabia, almost all roads turn east, veering from the general north-south direction of the incense trail. Moreover--and we emphasize this point--the eastward bend occurs in the general area inhabited by the Nihm tribe. Joseph Smith could not have known about his eastward turn in the main incense trail. No source, ancient or contemporary, mentions it.

. . .

. . . actually, from the north the trail held in a south-southeast direction, as Nephi said. But after passing south of Najran (modern Ukhud, Saudi Arabia), both the main trail and several shortcuts turned eastward, all leading to Shabwah the chief staging center for caravans in south Arabia. Wells were there, and authorities at Shabwah controlled the finest incense of the region that was coming westward from Oman, both overland and by sea. It is the only place along the incense trail where traffic ran east-west. Further, ancient laws mandated where caravans were to carry incense and other goods, keeping traffic to this east-west corridor. Neither Joseph Smith nor anyone else in his society knew these facts. But Nephi did.

. . . it seems that the party spent the bulk of its "eight years in the wilderness" on this leg of the journey (1 Nephi 17:4). This observation should not surprise us. There is no clear evidence that, during the era of Lehi and Sariah, an established incense trail ran east of Shabwah, the major south Arabian city where

caravans stopped to allow grading and taxing of incense coming from that general area. Instead, almost all goods reached Shabwah from the ancient seaport of Qana, which lay to the south. Hence, Lehi and Sariah could not even travel parallel to a route taken by camel drivers and their cargoes. [From Shabwah?] Presumably their party followed a course that snaked eastward between the sands of the "Empty Quarter" on the north and the craggy landscape on the south. In addition, it is now known that the tribes in the region east of Shabwah were in a constant state of tension with one another and that a person could not cross tribal boundaries without having to negotiate afresh the terms of safe conduct. Such negotiations could and often did lead to temporary servility for the traveler among local tribes. Moreover, there were no assured sources of food in the region east of Shabwah except flocks and herds that belonged to tribesmen. Agriculture was little practiced.

Such challenges fit the vivid reminiscences of the party's troubles preserved by writers other than Nephi. These later Book of Mormon authors, who enjoyed access to the fuller account of the party's journey, preserve recollections of troubles that differ markedly from details in Nephi's rather full narrative of the trip from Jerusalem to Nahom. For instance, King Benjamin recalls that at certain points along the way party members "were smitten with famine" (Mosiah 1:17). To be sure, the family had suffered from lack of food during the trip from the first camp to Nahom (see 1 Nephi 16:17-32, 39). But the word *famine* sounds a more ominous note. Moreover, Alma also writes of Lehi's party suffering "from famine" as well as "from sickness, and all manner of diseases" (Alma 9:22). In addition, Alma records that party members "did not travel a direct course, and were afflicted with hunger and thirst" (Alma 37:42). In contrast, according to Nephi's account, experiencing famine and disease, and not traveling a direct course, had not occurred to the party before arriving at Nahom. Hence, we should probably understand that the difficulties noted by Benjamin and Alma befell the group only after they turned "nearly eastward" at Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1).

Note\* These ideas of a lengthy journey between Nahom and Bountiful are contrary to the Hiltons who emphasize the length of stay in the Valley of Lemuel, and Potter and Wellington, who emphasize the length of stay in the regions of "the most fertile parts" and "the more fertile parts."

Brown continues with ideas (some are his own original ideas) concerning "Enemies":

[p. 91- ]In almost identical language, both Amaron and Alma write of God's preserving Lehi's party from "the hands of their enemies" (Omni 1:6; Alma 9:10). Who were these enemies? According to the fuller part of Nephi's narrative, it was not anyone whom party members met between the first camp and Nahom. The most attractive possibility is that the group met such people on the leg of the journey between Nahom and the seacoast, even though Nephi himself does not mention enemies. (Nephi's abbreviated account of crossing south Arabia from Nahom consists of only four verses, 1 Nephi 17:1-4). Such a view strengthens the impression that the toughest and longest period of the trip came between Nahom and the sea. Another piece that fits into this part of the trip is Nephi's note that party members had not made "much fire, as [they] journeyed," an evident attempt to avoid drawing the attention of marauding raiders (1 Nephi 17:12). As a final addition to the portrait, Alma seems to tie a recollection of ancestors who were "strong in battle" to Lehi's party, whom God "delivered . . . out of the land of Jerusalem" (Alma 9:22). If so, then we are to think that the party struggled against more than the harsh realities of the desert as they forged on toward the seacoast. This is, one of their biggest challenges may have come in dealing with tribesmen whom they met. This impression, too, matches what we know of tribal troubles in this part of Arabia.

Such a scene of desperate difficulties consisting of disease, famine, and enemies--difficulties that find expression chiefly in sources other than Nephi's narrative--resonates with the situations that one would certainly encounter in south Arabia. What is the likelihood that Joseph Smith knew such details of life there? The answer is zero.

Note\* The length of time involved on this leg of the journey has to be squared with the ability to survive on the trail. This would directly affect the route involved.

Concerning the location of Bountiful, Brown writes:

[p. 92- ] There is only one area along the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula that matches botanically Nephi's description of Bountiful as a place of abundant fruit, wild honey, and timbers (see 1 Nephi 17:5-6; 18:1-2, 6). It is the Dhofar region of southern Oman. . . . Although one must view attempts to tie Bountiful to a specific locale in Dhofar with deep caution, Latter-day Saint writers have rightly pointed to this area as the probable general region where the party of Lehi and Sariah emerged from the desert. . . .

Note\* Brown's map includes Wadi Sayq as a possible site for Bountiful (proposed by the Astons and promoted by FARMS), but additionally includes the site of Khor Rori, a site proposed in the unpublished manuscripts of Potter & Wellington, and Salalah (proposed by Nibley and the Hiltons).

Note\* See the 2004 Brown notation.

**[2002 Map: Lehi's Possible Routes to Bountiful.** Map by Andrew Livingston. S. Kent Brown, "New Light from Arabia on Lehi's Trail," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, edited by Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch. Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2002, p. 58]

2002^ John E. Clark "Evaluating the Case for a Limited Great Lakes Setting," in *FARMS Review of Books*,

Vol. 14, numbers 1-2, 2002, pp. 9-77

Review primarily of Duane R. Aston, *Return to Cumorah: Piecing Together the Puzzle Where the Nephites Lived*, Sacramento, Calif.: American River Publications, 1998. ix + 197 pp., with 16 maps, 23 illustrations, bibliography, and subject index.

Also Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: Further Evidence for the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed., version 2.3. Provo, Utah: Tepran, 199, 160 pp., with 33 maps, 25 illustrations, and subject index.

Also Phyllis Carol Olive, *The Lost Lands of the Book of Mormon*, Springville, Utah: Bonneville Books, 2000, xiii + 333 pp., with 40 maps, 9 illustrations and bibliography.

John Clark writes:

In this review, my fourth discussion of Book of Mormon geographies, I evaluate current theories proposing a Limited Great Lakes (LGL) setting. . . .(p. 10)

The first, immediate consequence of choosing [a Limited Great Lakes setting] is that all Book of Mormon peoples must have landed somewhere near there. This identification requires the Lehitites to have sailed their craft around the Cape of Good Hope and across the Atlantic Ocean, which counters expectations based on some old hearsay in the Mormon tradition. I agree with the LGL authors that such hearsay evidence of Lehi's landing should not count as real evidence, for reasons already mentioned. The Book of Mormon does not specify the oceans crossed; rather, they have been inferred from internal reconstructions of the geography. Hedengren and Curtis provide evidence of winds and currents that show the physical feasibility of Atlantic crossings for the Jaredites, Nephites, and Mulekites. Other advocates have done the same for Middle American geographies and Pacific Ocean crossings. For the Lehitites, the travels of Nephi and his band indicate a landing on the shores of the west sea, with subsequent travels northward and eastward to escape the Lamanites. The sense of the text is that the Lehitites suffered a long journey across an immense sea and landed quickly and gratefully on its shore. For me, the Pacific Ocean and a Middle American landing appear the best explanation. . . .

The LGL proposals have all the groups approaching the promised land from the east rather than the west. Hedengren proposes an ocean shore landing for the Lehitites in the Chesapeake Bay, but it is southeast of his projected Book of Mormon lands. This does not work. Locating the Jaredites and Mulekites presents other problems, as they settled lands north of the Nephites. Hedengren speculates that they also landed on the Atlantic coast and worked their way inland following rivers until they reached western New York. In contrast, Olive and Aston argue that the Nephite landing was on the eastern shore of Lake Erie. Curtis has the Nephites and Mulekites landing on the southern shore of Lake Ontario. His proposal has the minor advantage of not forcing his people to sail upstream over Niagara Falls, as implied in Aston's and Olive's proposals. These proposed arrival points are a logical necessity, given their commitment to a Palmyra Cumorah and to the Great Lakes as Book of Mormon "seas." But such landings present logistical difficulties. How did the ocean craft sail upstream and over shallows, rapids, and falls to reach lakes hundreds of miles inland? Such a route would have been extremely difficult, and it certainly could not have been the first landing by any stretch of the imagination. There must be a vast literature on the travails of actual peoples who attempted this route. Those who argue this position ought to examine this literature. For the Nephites, and others, it would have required a month or more of additional travel



and probably change in water craft and periodic portage to work their way inland from the Atlantic coast, none of which is warranted by the text.

In truth, all LGL geographies have difficulties with the water passages of the text. They have potential seas in all directions but no easy way for their travelers to get to them from the Atlantic Ocean. (pp. 33-34)

2002<sup>^</sup> Robert A. Pate *Mapping the Book of Mormon: A Comprehensive Geography of Nephite*

*America*, Logan, Utah: The Alma Jacob Pate Family in cooperation

with Salt Lake City: Cornerstone Publishing & Distribution Utah, 2002, p. 10.

Robert Pate writes:

There appears to be a correlation between the Book of Mormon record of Lehi's travels and these remnants of historical legend recorded by the indigenous peoples [of Mesoamerica] and the early Spaniards. . . .(p. 45)

As noted in Chapter One, the *sh*, *tz*, *t*, *x*, and *z* sounds were used interchangeably to represent transliterations of Mesoamerican words. Thus, Tula could have originally been pronounced Shula, Shulan, or Shullum, a name that bears a striking resemblance to the common names for Jerusalem today.

Thus, the second hypothesis proposed in this book is that the name in Mesoamerica for Jerusalem is Tula and its variants Tula, Tulua, etc. . . . If we apply this hypothesis, we find the following important correlations between the Book of Mormon and the early chronicles [*Title of the Lords of Totonicapan, The Annals of the Cakchiquels, etc.*] cited above. The above-quoted footnote from the editors of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* says four groups came from the same area. Obviously, the family of Lehi was one of those groups. They went south, then east, thus coming from the ocean west of Central America, and as we shall see, they may have arrived on the western shores of El Salvador where they named a city Jerusalem, or Tula as it is still known to this day. . . .(pp. 37-38)

The indigenous writers of the chronicles have given us more information about the departure point than has previously been realized. They came from a place called Pa-Tulan, Pa-Civan (Goetz 1953, 169). *Pa* means "at or by." (Dr. Allen J. Christenson, telephone interview, 2001) If one compares the Quiche, Cakchiquel, Nahuatl, and Andean native languages, this root is used generally to mean "the land of." Thus, Pa-Tulan would be the land of Jerusalem.

So what is Pa-Civan? *Civan* is usually translated as the number "seven" and also as "canyon." . . . Is there a land named Seven or Civan, and if so, where is it? In Infobase's Hebrew Lexicon, the number seven is *shba* or *shebaw'* which in the English biblical rendition is *sheba* as in the Queen of Sheba. Thus it appears Lehi's family may have set sail from the land of Sheba, not, as some have postulated, from Oman (which is in the northeast direction 700 to 1400 miles of dry desert away).

The Land of Sheba (Sheba being the Hebrew name for the Arabic name Saba) flourished from 750 BC to about 115 BC, when the Romans invaded it. The capital, after about 600 BC, was Ma'rib, which is located east of the present day city of Sanaa in Yemen. The narrow coastal plain of Yemen is the wettest part of the Arabian Peninsula and receives about 20 inches of rain each year. There are, however, no permanent streams. In the rainy season the mountains catch the water and this feeds springs and oases that provide the local water needs throughout the year.

Lehi's family sojourned in the wilderness for eight years. Sojourn does not mean travel but rather to reside or stay as a temporary resident. An extended sojourn of eight years duration would only have been possible in the land appropriately named Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:5-7). This time was needed to make preparations for the long voyage. This stay could only have been in a region where crops could be raised. In the wilderness, they just found enough meat to stay alive and they had to keep moving to find sufficient game. . . . But for eight years they sojourned in Bountiful, and did not have to move around to find food.

There is a place in this area that still bears the name Lahiji. The phonetic connection between that name and Lehi seems too strong to be an unrelated coincidence. A large group residing in this area for six or seven years (and possibly the full eight years, 1 Nephi 17:3-4) could create a place name that endured among the pastoral, unorganized Bedouin. The region produces fruit, grain, vegetables, cotton, coffee, and livestock. Mining has also been a significant part of the local culture. In fact, the very old port city of Aden actually means "mining" in Arabic. The sea is the Gulf of Aden, which may have relevance to the sea Irreantum (1 Nephi 17:5) or Irre-aden or the Greek name Erythraem (Hilton 1996, 11, 21, 158).

Another relevant name shows up some 240 miles up the coast to the east. It is Cana or Qana, depending on the orthographer and is a very old seaport. The phonetic connection between Cana, cane (English), *qaneh* (Hebrew, which means "reeds, canes, and bones") and even the land of Canaan is obvious. Canaan was the Israelites "Promised Land" and from the scouting report of Joshua and Caleb it was very bountiful (Numbers 14:6-7). In the Maya language, *kana'* means "handsome, magnificent, rich, or a precious thing" (Recinos 1953, 45). In an arid land, any spot where reeds or canes grew abundantly might well have been considered rich and bountiful.

The ancient port city Cana or Qana was one end of the Gold and Incense Road. Gaza on the Mediterranean was the other. . . . The trip from Cana to Gaza required 60 to 70 days by camel caravan and the size of the caravans grew to two or three thousand camels per caravan.

In the Quiche' and Nahum tongues, the common name for "reeds" or "canes" is *tula* and the variants mentioned earlier. This includes the "tales" in the English language. When the old Quiche' scribes wrote that they came from Pa-Tulan (the land by the reeds), it appears Tulan may have had a double meaning. It referred back to Jerusalem or Salem in the land of Canaan but also the Cana, the land by the reeds, where they built their boat. Reeds still grow in this area of the Arabian Peninsula. . . . (pp. 46-49)

**[2002 Map: Figure 2. Yemen, Possible Area of Lehi's Departure.** Robert A. Pate, Mapping the Book of Mormon: A Comprehensive Geography of Nephite America,, Logan, Utah: The Alma Jacob Pate Family in cooperation with Salt Lake City: Cornerstone Publishing & Distribution Utah, 2002, p. 52]

In recent years there has been significant excitement in the land southward (BYU) about the rediscovery of a place named Naham in the land of Yemen. If one looks on the Internet under the search words Yemen and Naham, the town shows up. This is not a lost burial place for Ishmael (Nahom, 1 Nephi 16:34), but a current town or location where large quantities of zinc and manganese were rather recently discovered. . . . The complete name of the town is Furdath Naham. As we can tell from the Book of Mormon text, Naham was a fork in the road where Lehi's family turned east (1 Nephi 16:34; 17:1). . . . The closest

word to Furdat is a Syrian word *furtai'ki*, which means "fork." . . . To Lehi, as today, Furdat Naham was the fork in the road where the road separates. The right branch goes south to Sanaa and Aden, while the left branch goes east to the port city of Cana (Qana) at the very end of the Gold and Incense Road. . . . (pp. 50-52)

*The Voyage:* The Book of Mormon talks of their shipbuilding and subsequent voyage. Many Native American legends and paintings depict the journey from Tullum. . . . In the Indian Ocean there is a counterclockwise circulation pattern. some adjustment would be necessary to get out of that pattern and into either the flow that goes eastward to Australia and on toward the Pacific Ocean and South America or the counter current flow that goes through Indonesia and the Polynesian Islands. (See Figure 3 below)

[2002 **Map: Figure 3. Possible Paths of Lehi's Voyage.** Robert A. Pate, Mapping the Book of Mormon: A Comprehensive Geography of Nephite America,, Logan, Utah: The Alma Jacob Pate Family in cooperation with Salt Lake City: Cornerstone Publishing & Distribution Utah, 2002, p. 54]

Where is the land of Lehi, the land of their first inheritance, where Lehi and his family landed in the New World? It appears almost certain that Lehi's ship arrived on the west coast of Central America, but exactly where? . . . sweeping southeastward down the west coast of Guatemala toward El Salvador . . . there are two natural harbors . . . Punta San Juan in El Salvador, and Golfo de Fonseca between El Salvador and Nicaragua. . . . By triangulation, the area in which to look appears to be Punta San Juan.

About sixty miles west of Punta San Juan, is a city of ruins called Tula (Jerusalem). this is possibly the Jerusalem mentioned by the chroniclers as the Tula to which they arrived rather than the Tula in Mexico City (Recinos 1953, 45). This would be the Tula (Jerusalem) where the Book of Mormon people arrived after traveling east across the ocean from the original Jerusalem. After arriving on the western shore of El Salvador they apparently started a new Tula, or Tulan (Jerusalem), as mentioned in the Book of Mormon (Alma 21:1). . . . (pp. 54-57)

. . . the part of the American continents with which the great historian Mormon was familiar was limited to a very small part of Central America. Specifically, Mormon appears to have lived his entire life on the South Coast of Guatemala (Costa Sur) and the adjacent highlands. . . . This study will show that the part he knew personally was limited to a region of southern Guatemala just 100 miles east to west and 60 miles north to south. These three regions--the Costa Sure of Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Comayagua region of Honduras--constitute what we will call in this text "Mormon's world." . . . He knew of Lehi's arrival in El Salvador . . . (p. 10)

We find the following in "Appendix A: Book of Mormon Geography": "*Lehi-1*: This is the land of their first inheritance where Lehi's family first landed" (see "*Lehi 1-Acajutla*" on the map below).

[2002 **Map: "Mormon's World."** Robert A. Pate, Mapping the Book of Mormon: A Comprehensive Geography of Nephite America,, Logan, Utah: The Alma Jacob Pate Family in cooperation with Salt Lake City: Cornerstone Publishing & Distribution Utah, 2002]

**2002 Thomas J. Finley "Does the Book of Mormon Reflect an Ancient Near Eastern Background," in**

(anti-Mormon) ***The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement***, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen,  
Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2002, 535 ppp.

Note\* See the FARMS Review notations for 2003.

**2003^ Kevin L. Barney "A More Responsible Critique," in *The FARMS Review***, vol. 15,  
num. 1, 2003, pp. 128-132.

Kevin L. Barney reviews Thomas J. Finley's article, "Does the Book of Mormon Reflect an Ancient Near Eastern Background," in *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement*, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2002, 535 ppp. with glossary and indexes. Barney writes the following:

#### Geography

Finley next addresses the geography of 1 Nephi. I frankly found his argument here to be rather odd. The conventional understanding of Latter-day Saints is that Lehi and his family traveled from Jerusalem south "into the wilderness," veering to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba, heading south-southeast along or near the Frankincense Trail and the eastern shores of the Red Sea, turning eastward at or shortly after Nahom, and then alighting at Bountiful on the coast of the Arabian Sea, from which they departed by boat. Finley notes that the geographic indications in the text are somewhat sketchy, and he correctly observes that the "south south-east" direction indication only applies once the family reaches the Red

Sea and does not necessarily convey their direction of travel as they leave Jerusalem. So Finley would have the family leave the city veering west south-west and coming to the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez in the Sinai peninsula, so that as they travel "south south-east" they are doing so along the Gulf of Suez into the western Sinai rather than along the Red Sea in Arabia.

What I found odd about Finley's argument is that he makes no attempt to describe his alternate route as an implausibility that would argue against a possible historical basis to the Book of Mormon account. . . . So why does he want to place the family in the Sinai rather than in Arabia if that alternate scenario would not advance his cause? Here I believe the cynicism of this argument becomes apparent, as he is aware that Latter-day Saint scholars have painted a highly plausible picture of the journey of Lehi and his family through Arabia to the sea, and so he wants to place them in a different location.

The implausibility of Finley's scenario is made manifest simply by looking at a map and considering the "eastern turn." If I am understanding his argument correctly, he would have Lehi and company go far out of their way to the west, go down the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez in the western Sinai, then turn back to the east, with their Bountiful located on the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba into the eastern Sinai. Notice that Finley has the group going almost in a full circle. Why would they go so far out of their way when they could simply have gone down the western side of the Gulf of Aqaba to get to the same spot? Finley realized this is a glaring weakness in his proposal and therefore suggests that perhaps the Lehitites wanted to reenact a portion of the exodus. It is certainly true that a profound exodus symbolism is present in the story, but that symbolism is topological, not literal. . . .

To make his case, Finley tries to portray the "three days into the wilderness" of 1 Nephi 2:6 as describing the journey from Jerusalem, rather than three days of travel after they had arrived at the Red Sea, as Eugene England takes it. I think Finley is almost certainly wrong. To appreciate why England's reading is correct, we need to read the verse in context with the previous verse:

And he came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea; and he traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea; and he did travel in the wilderness with his family which consisted of my mother, Sariah, and my elder brothers, who were Laman, Lemuel, and Sam.

And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days into the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water. (1 Nephi 2:5-6)

It is true that Lehi and his family went from Jerusalem into the "wilderness," and the pluperfect "had" of verse 6 could conceivably refer to their initial travel from the city. I find this to be a highly doubtful reading, however. In verse 5 they have already arrived at the Red Sea, and they travel "into the wilderness" near the Red Sea. "In the wilderness" is repeated twice in verse 5, both to inform us that the "wilderness" was near the Red Sea and to state that Lehi was travelling with his family there. It seems quite clear to me, therefore, that the three days of travel "in the wilderness" of verse 6 refers to the same wilderness as has just been emphasized in the preceding verse, that which is near the Red Sea.

Finley's back-up argument is that even if Lehi and his family traveled in Arabia, there is nothing about the geography of that region that Joseph [Smith] could not have known. Finley's discussion of this topic is seriously flawed because he displays no knowledge of recent research on the subject. . . .

2003^ John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper "One Small Step," in *The FARMS Review*, vol. 15,

num. 1, 2003, pp. 189-194

This is a review of Thomas J. Finley, "Does the Book of Mormon Reflect an Ancient Near Eastern Background," in *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement*, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2002, 535 ppp. with glossary and indexes. Beginning on page 190 we find the following:

Finley claims that "Nephi makes no reference to any countries traversed on this journey, which presumably would have included Moab, Edom, and Sheba if the journey was actually made through Arabia" (p. 360). No quite. Moab was located in what is today Jordan, east of the Dead Sea, while Edom is immediately on the south of Moabite territory. The people of Moab and Edom were essentially nomadic shepherds in ancient times and Lehi's party could have easily passed through either territory virtually unnoticed. Even today, ones can walk for many days through the region and not see another soul--or at least ensure that no one sees you. If, as many think, Lehi, Lehi traveled south through the hills of Judah prior to descending to the Arabah Valley that leads to the Red Sea, he would have bypassed Moab altogether and would have traversed only the tip of Edomite territory int he south. The ancient kingdom of Saba' (KJV Sheba) was situated in Yemen and was the most populated region in the Arabian peninsula. But Lehi's group turned east after burying Ishmael at Nahom, so they would have passed only on the outskirts of Sheba. More to the point, however, is that 1 Nephi is an abridgment that Nephi prepared thirty years after their departure from Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:28-33). He specifically wrote that "if my people desire to know the more particular part of the history of my people they must search mine other plates" (2 Nephi 5:33), meaning the large plates, which contained a more detailed history.

If, as some critics claim, Joseph Smith had access to Bible dictionaries, one might expect that he would have looked at one of the maps and selected place names published thereon. The fact that the Book of Mormon does not mention Moab, Edom, Sheba, etc., is evidence that Joseph Smith did not consult other materials.

Finley finds the "three days in the wilderness" of 1 Nephi 2:6 problematic. . . . Still, it seems likely that the three-day journey denotes the time it took to arrive at the valley of Lemuel after reaching the borders near the Red Sea. An oasis with a perennial stream running tot he Red Sea about seventy miles south of the Jordanian city of Aqaba fits Nephi's description of the journey. (see George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the Valley of Lemuel,," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/1, 1999, pp. 54-63). One wonders if Finley considers this to be another of Joseph Smith's lucky guesses.

. . . Finley writes [of the term *borders*] . . . one wonders why Joseph Smith didn't choose a term like *valley* or something that would be more descriptive? (p. 361). . . . [In response] researchers have suggested that the "borders" of which Nephi wrote were mountains. Anciently, borders tended to be natural barriers (e.g., ravines, shorelines, or mountains). . . .

Lehi and his family went neither west nor north, but *south* down by the borders of the Red Sea (1 Nephi 2:5). [Interestingly] in 1842 one critic chided, "Why were they not directed to the Mediterranean Sea, which was so near Jerusalem, instead of being made to perform the long and perilous journey to the borders of the Red Sea? more especially since the voyage through the former would have been shorter by six or seven thousand miles, (no trifling distance,) than the one performed according to the data given. An easterly course from the borders of the Red Sea would have taken them across the Desert of Arabia to the Persian Gulf." (Daniel P. Kidder, *Mormonism and the Mormons: A Historical View of the Rise and Progress of the Sect Self-Styled Latter-day Saints*, New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1842, p. 265)

Recently researchers have identified a plausible site for the valley of Lemuel [see above citation] approximately seventy miles from Aqaba (well within a three-day journey from there whether on camel or on foot). The valley has cliffs suggestive of Lehi's references to firmness and steadfastness and immovability (1 Nephi 2:10), and it also has a perennial stream, a "continually running" river (1 Nephi 2:9) that has existed there for millennia and that empties into the Red Sea, apparently the only stream known in that region that would fit Nephi's and Lehi's descriptions. [Critics have chided,] How could there be "a valley at the mouth of a river on the border of the Red Sea, where there never was a river for more than 300 miles either way along the shore of the sea[?]" (S. Burnet, *The Evangelist*, 30 September 1880, cited by Joseph Smith III in *The Spaulding Story Re-examined*, Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Office, 1883, p. 14.)

Other research indicates that a group traveling in a south-southeast direction from there would have followed or shadowed the spice road along the eastern side of the Red Sea where wells that occasionally provided water are now known to have existed. A site known as *Nhm* is located at the eastward turning of this route precisely as Nephi's account suggests. Although unknown to Joseph Smith, that name is attested as early as the seventh to fifth centuries B.C. in the region. Almost directly eastward of *Nhm* is a "bountiful" region that also fits Nephi's description. Even if Joseph Smith had by some fortuitous chance learned of a fertile region on the southeastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula, the Book of Mormon specifies the characteristics of that region.

[A number of these characteristics of Bountiful are then cited from verses in the Book of Mormon. The following few are of interest because they have been the focus of previous critical remarks by anti-Mormons which is referenced in footnotes:]

\* The availability of fruit (1 Nephi 17:5-6, 18:6) and the plentiful nature of the region suggests the availability of fresh water at this location as well. [Yet Gordon Fraser writes} "Here, again, is a blunder of ignorance of known factors. The coastline of the Persian Gulf was utterly inhospitable and barren." (Gordon H. Fraser, *What Does the Book of Mormon Teach? An Examination of the Historical and Scientific Statements of the Book of Mormon*, Chicago: Moody, 1964, p. 37) As recently as 1985 one critic confidently proclaimed, "Arabia is bountiful in sunshine, petroleum, sand, heat, and fresh air, but certainly not in 'much fruit and also wild honey,' nor has it been since Pleistocene times." (Thomas Key, "A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon," in *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 37/2, 1985, p. 97)

\* Timber was available that could be used to construct a ship (1 Nephi 18:1). For objections to timber, see Fraser, *What Does the Book of Mormon Teach?*, p. 37, and Key, "A Biologist Examines the Book of Mormon," p. 97.

\* Sources of flint (1 Nephi 17:11) and ore (1 Nephi 17:9-10) were available in the region. For objections to ore see Samuel W. Traum, *Mormonism against Itself*, Cincinnati: Standard, 1910, p. 989. For recently discovered evidence for ore, see Wm. Revell Phillips, "Metals of the Book of Mormon," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/2, 2000, pp. 36-41.

Researchers [Warren and Michaela Aston?] have been able to identify only one location along the whole southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula that meets all these criteria. Although subsequent research [by George Potter and Richard Wellington?] has suggested modification of some of his arguments, our conclusions agree with those made by Hugh Nibley in his pioneering work fifty years ago on Lehi's desert journey: "It would have been quite as impossible for the most learned man alive in 1830 to have written the book as it was for Joseph Smith. And whoever would account for the Book of Mormon by any theory suggested so far--save one--must completely rule out the first forty pages." (Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, p. 123)

Finley assumes that everything and anything that could have been known in Joseph Smith's time about the ancient world must have come to his attention, whether by the Prophet reading the relevant material or by listening to preachers' sermons. If this was so, one wonders how it is that no Latter-day Saint scholars noticed the material until a century or more later. . . .

**2003^     George Potter                     *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003.**

**Richard Wellington**

Note\* This book by George Potter and Richard Wellington is a condensed and refined version of their 2000 manuscript. It represents the finest in research to date on Lehi's journey, yet it is written for a general readership. While some of their ideas have been modified, the maps and photo illustrations are elegant. Rather than repeat basic information here, I will refer the reader to the material in the 2000 notation. A few selections of textual ideas and maps are listed below.

**[2003     Map: Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 14]

**[2003     Map: Main Trade Routes in Lehi's Time.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 57]

**[2003     Map: The Relative Fertility of the Hijaz.** George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 81]



[2003 **Map: *The Muhajirun, the Most Fertile Parts***. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 84]

[2003 **Map: Suggested Location for Nephi's Broken Bow**. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 101]

[2003 **Map: Nahom and the Suggested Route Taken by the Family**. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, 114]

[2003 **Map: The Trails through the Incense Kingdoms**. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 117]

[2003 **Map: Dhofar**. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 127]

[2003 **Map: Trade Routes to Moscha**. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2003, p. 157]

2003^ S. Kent Brown "Lehi, journey of, to the promised land," in *Book of Mormon Reference*

*Companion*, Dennis Largey editor, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003,

pp. 511-516.

In this short article, Kent Brown gleans a few thoughts from essentially his own previous writings:

In this journey, three geographic locales are known: Jerusalem, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Nephi called the ocean "the sea, which we called Irreantum, which, being interpreted is many waters" (1 Ne. 17:5). Joseph Smith, in turn, called it "the great Southern Ocean" (267). Tenable locations for the first camp, Nahom, and Bountiful have also been established.

More than half of the space in Nephi's first book ties to events associated with the first camp (1 Ne. 2:2-16:12), which was in the area known anciently as Midian. Nephi mentioned leaving Jerusalem, reaching the Red Sea, continuing another three days (presumably between forty-five and seventy-five

miles depending on the speed of the travelers) and finally making camp by a river they named Laman, in a valley they called Lemuel (1 Ne. 2:5-10; 10:16). Explorers have suggested two plausible locations for the camp, both north of the Straits of Tiran (Hilton; Potter). Nephi's narrative does not tell readers the exact route of this segment of the trip, a distance of about two hundred fifty miles. The party could have traveled south, turning eastward into the Jordan Valley and then journeying south until reaching the Red Sea. Party members could also have gone east through the Jordan Valley into the hills of Moab before turning south and generally following the King's Highway (Ogden, 22-23; Brown, "New Light from Arabia"). . . .

Nephi recalled that when the party left the first camp the general direction was "south-southeast"(1 Ne. 16:13), the proper direction for traveling along the west coast of Arabia. After traveling four days they camped again at a place they called "Shazer" (1 ne. 16:13). From there they continued to travel "in the most fertile parts of the wilderness . . . in the borders near the Red Sea" as they were led by the Liahona (1 Ne. 16:14-16).

Eventually they came to "the place which was called Nahom" (1 Ne. 16:34). The wording suggests that party members learned the name "Nahom" from others. The locale likely lies in the area of Wadi Jawf in northwest Yemen. The keys to this identification are three inscribed altars from the seventh century B.C.--the time of Lehi and Sariah--recently discovered at the Bar'an temple in Marib, the ancient capital of the Sabaeen kingdom. . . . (Brown, "Place"; "New Light from Arabia"; Aston, "Newly Found"). . . .

From Nahom Lehi's group traveled "nearly eastward"--the direction of travel along the incense trail from the area of Nahom/Nihm (Brown, "New Light from Arabia")--finally arriving at a land they "called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey" (1 Ne. 17:1-5). Bountiful most probably lay in the Dhofar region on the southern coast of the Sultanate of Oman. It is the only area on the seashore of Arabia that matches Nephi's description of fruit, honey, and timbers (1 Ne. 17:5; 18:1). Moreover, a number of lagoons or inlet bays lie along that coast where a group of persons could build and launch a ship. There, the monsoon rains of summer sustain a rich, diverse vegetation which supports human and animal life (Ball et al.).

[2003 **Map: Lehi's Journey: Possible Route.** S. Kent Brown, "Lehi, journey of, to the promised land," in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, Dennis Largey editor, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003, p. 514]

2003^ Duane R. Aston *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in*

*Their Land of Promise.* Sacramento, California: American River

Publications, 2003, pp. 167-227

This is Duane Aston's second book promoting an eastern Great Lakes setting for Book of Mormon events. (see the notation for 1998 --*Return to Cumorah*). In the second section of this book he presents some of his viewpoints on Lehi's travels from Jerusalem to the promised land. He "introduces the idea that Lehi left Jerusalem and came to the Sinai Peninsula, following a path that in some ways parallels that of the 'Children of Israel.'" Although the first of Aston's theory is somewhat connected to a 1944 theory by

Ariel L. Crowley (see notation), the rest has never been proposed by anyone. The following ideas are excerpted from his book:

Lehi departed out of Jerusalem into the wilderness. Next he came to the borders near the shore of the Red Sea. Then after three days travel in the border wilderness, he was at the Red Sea (1 Nephi 1:4-6). [see the map below]

**[2003 Illustration: Map 15A.** Lehi may have traveled the established Way to Shur, to the south of Beersheba. he then could have gone directly to the Red Sea at the point where he encountered a river of water. Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 178]

Why the Red Sea? After all, reaching the Red Sea hardly lies on any reasonable route to America. Regardless of where on the Red Sea, Lehi would face an incredibly long ocean voyage to America by departing from the Red Sea. Sailing from the southern shores of the Arabian Peninsula, around the tip of Africa, would involve an ocean voyage of more than 16,000 miles. Or, from southern Arabia sailing into the Indian Ocean and hence eventually across the Pacific Ocean would involve something like a torturous 17,000 miles voyage to America, perhaps taking as long as two years to complete. Such long voyages seem inconsistent with the "many days" voyage specified in 1 Nephi 19:23.

On the other hand, if Lehi had merely come to the Red Sea, as a *diversion*, and later continued onward and northward to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, from there he would face a much shorter 7,500 mile voyage across the Mediterranean Sea, and hence out across the Atlantic Ocean to America. [pp. 177-178]

It is proposed here that the Large Bitter Lake of today was "the" fountain of the Red Sea, not only because it probably received the fresh waters from the Nile River [from the Nile River Canal] in Lehi's day, but because a candidate River Laman must also empty into the fountain. How this author first came across the candidate River Laman is presented briefly here: When I first laid eyes on it, as it appeared in an old 1913 bible map [see illustration below], I stepped back in amazement. There it was on the biblical map, a large ancient river staring me right in the eye--a potential candidate for the River Laman of Lehi's day. It was in just about the location where one might expect to find it within the border of the western Sinai Peninsula. Like other rivers of Sinai, this huge river was indicated by dotted lines, suggesting that it had once been there, leaving traces of its former riverbed still in evidence. This "river" emptied into the Large Bitter Lake, not far from where a canal of the Pharaohs had also emptied into the Lake in ancient times. It thus seemed reasonable that the Large Bitter Lake itself was seen by Lehi as "the" fountain of the Red Sea. [pp. 182-183]

**[2003 Illustration: Map 15C.** A candidate River Laman, from a 1913 biblical map. Produced by Charles F. Kent. Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 183]

Going on further, detailed contour maps of the Sinai Peninsula were consulted and sure enough, evidence for the existence of such an ancient river does exist, as seen on recent contour maps of the Sinai Peninsula. Today there are regions east of the Bitter Lakes where an area of higher elevation is located, with small mountains as high as 2,000 feet above the Bitter Lakes exist. When rains come, these mountains provide streams of water today, some of which empty into the Red Sea by other streams. [see map below] . . . The candidate River Laman . . . is seen to have likely originated from highland areas lying some 75 miles to the east of the Bitter Lakes. These waters are identifiable as Wadi Umm Khisheba and Wadi el Giddi . . . The headwaters of these two streams are about 10 miles apart from each other, but they head out into the sand and gravel plains, and today disappear into the ground about 30 miles or so from their origins. However, in more recent centuries, the land to the west of these [origins] apparently has gradually risen, and the flow of these two streams were thus cut off from the Red Sea. [pp. 184-186]

**[2003 Illustration: Map 15D.** Headwaters for the candidate River Laman of Map 15C. The solid lines represent today's water flow from the mountainous areas. The dotted lines suggest the ancient flow. Note elevations suggest the direction of water flow. Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 185]

. . . if in ancient times the Red Sea had reached further north than it does today, this might have placed the shore of the Red Sea at the mouth of the valley of the ancient riverbed, Al Ambak [see map below] . . . What is most important is that the "valley" Al Ambak lies in just the right location to match the projected terminus of the two streams of Map 15C [and 15D?].

**[2003 Illustration: Map 15E.** Carlberg, in 1936, made note of Al Ambak, an ancient riverbed, taken here as River Laman. Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 186]

So did this former river have a notable existence at the time of Lehi? Did this River Laman candidate exist some 2600 years ago? It is certainly possible. Did a canal of the Pharaohs connect Nile River waters with the Red Sea in Lehi's time? Based upon known accounts of canal building of the Pharaohs, this author investigation reveals that proof, while inconclusive, is certainly likely.

In biblical times the Red Sea most likely extended about 50 miles further northward above present day Suez. By the time the Suez Canal was constructed, this northern arm of the Red Sea had already dried up, probably due to a gradual rising up of the lands of the Sinai Peninsula. A thoughtful study of the proposed River Laman suggest that this ancient river of water once connected an old Red Sea extension. But as the land rose in elevation, the water flow for the river could not reach the Red Sea at the Bitter Lakes. [pp. 187-188]

Note\* See Ariel Crowley 1944 notation. See Nibley's comments on Crowley's theory (1952 Hugh Nibley notation); see also the Hilton's comments on this theory (1988 Joseph Douglas notation).

When Lehi pitched his tent beside the River Laman, in like fashion, he may have seen that the fountain of the Red Sea likely introduced sufficient fresh water there to support wildlife among reeds, just as in the case with the Great Salt Lake.

Thus Lehi may have found species of birds, fish and even animals that may have existed on the extreme northern shores of the Red Sea, providing Lehi with sustenance.

It is possible that Lehi remained in his tent on the River Laman for quite some period of time, perhaps even months, while Nephi and his brethren made repeated trips back to Jerusalem. Thus Lehi may have found it easy to live off the wildlife in certain portions of the Red Sea.

After Lehi and his group crossed over the River Laman and headed southward the mixing of the fresh and brackish waters of the Red Sea may have gradually lost their ability to support wildlife along the shoreline to points southward. Consequently the family of Lehi may have found it increasingly more difficult to find food and fresh water. [pp. 195-196]

(Please refer to Map 16, next presented)

**[2003 Illustration: Map 16. A proposed route for Lehi in Sinai.** It assumes that Lehi followed in the footsteps of the Children of Israel in Sinai. It is suggested that Lehi's party traveled a path eastward from Nahom, just south to the Tih Plateau (see map key). The traditionally assumed Mt. Sinai is shown. Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 196]

[With the Liahona to lead them in their wanderings] the Lord wanted Lehi to follow in the footsteps of his Israelite ancestors that were led by Moses, in their flight out of Egypt, and toward their promised land. Thus after crossing the River Laman, Lehi proceeded to travel for four days, nearly in a south-southeast direction. They pitched their tents at the place that they called Shazer (1 Nephi 16:13).

If Lehi had left the area of the tip of the northeastern shore of the Large Bitter Lake, traveling for the space of four days, he could have covered a distance of about 60 miles from the River Laman to the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez. With some wandering, he could have progressed 15 miles per day. At this point, Lehi may have reached the area of present-day Suez, for there the terrain makes an abrupt change, becoming more hemmed-in with relatively high mountains near present-day Suez.

The Children of Israel, in their journeys through Sinai, made a mountain encampment at a place called Shapher, pronounced "Shay-fur." It might be significant that there is only one mountain mentioned in Israel's Exodus, Shapher, other than Mount Hor, as Israel ended its forty years of wanderings (see Numbers 33:23, 38). Inasmuch as the Children of Israel's route through Sinai likely involved many mountains, it is interesting that only one mount is mentioned. . . . It may be significant that the people of Lehi named a key place in their wilderness route, Shazer, pronounced "Shay-zer." The similarity with "Shay-fur" is striking. This could have been the first significant mountains encountered by Lehi after coming to the Red Sea. . . . they may have simply named their mount Shazer, a mountain with a name reminiscent of the mount Shapher of the Exodus account.

Near present-day Suez, to the west lies Gebel (Mount) Atoa, of elevation 2,857 feet above sea level. Nearly equi-distant to the east are other peaks that rise some 1,600 feet in elevation. Thus the name

Shazer would seem appropriate for a mountain at this point, a relatively high mountain, visible to the west. While in the vicinity of Shazer, some of Lehi's group took their "bows and arrows" and went forth into the wilderness to slay food (1 Nephi 16:14) . . .

After hunting, they returned to their families in Shazer, Lehi's group continued to travel forth again, following the same direction of travel. In so doing, they traveled in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea. (1 Nephi 16:14). It is quite likely that these fertile parts of the wilderness near the Red Sea, in Sinai to the south of Suez, were fed by various wadi that provided water for vegetation that made the borders near the Red Sea areas of fertility. This would be true especially in the rainy seasons of the year as storms spawned on the Tih Plateau of Sinai (refer to Map 16) shed their waters down from the escarpment plateau. [pp. 197-199]

After Lehi's party left Shazer, following the same direction in the wilderness, they continued to travel for the "space of many days" (1 Nephi 16:15) . . . The further south Lehi proceeded, the terrain would have become more hostile, and the seashore of the Red Sea may have become much less supportive of wildlife, other than an occasional oasis. (Please refer to the previous Map 16. Some locations are suggested, by comparison with traditional sites suggested for the exodus route of the Children of Israel.)

It is difficult to say just how far Lehi may have traveled until Nephi broke his bow on one of his hunting expeditions. But a many-days hunt-as-you-go travel, may have amounted to something as little as 3 miles per day. In three weeks (many days) Lehi may have reached a point along the eastern coast of the Red Sea, possibly only 65 miles south of Suez, perhaps at the present-day Wadi Gharandal oasis, typically associated with Elim of the Exodus accounts. . . . While not plentiful, there is found in Sinai hardwood from the acacia tree that could have easily provided Nephi with adequate wood from which to make a suitable bow, and arrows. [pp. 200-202]

Following the bow incident, Lehi and his party took journey, "traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning." After "many days" they pitched their tents that they might tarry for a while. It came to pass that "Ishmael died and was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:33-34). Herein seems to lie a clue as to where Lehi had come to at this point in his journey. The clue comes from an examination of the wanderings of the Children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. . . .

According to Exodus 16:1, Numbers 33:10-11 the Children of Israel came into the "wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai," where they "encamped by the Red Sea." Thus it had been 45 days since they departed out of the land of Egypt. A proposed location for this encampment is at Abu Zeneima. It is about 90 miles south from the town of Suez. . . . What happened to the Children of Israel when they reached this point in their journey is significant. It was here that "the whole congregation of the Children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." (Exodus 16:1-3, 8) . . .

If Lehi had traveled for many days from where Nephi had broken his bow, . . . This place may have been the area that was known as the Wilderness of Sin in the days of Moses. It is recorded that "Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 16:34). In recent times, a lot has been theorized about this simple statement. There appears to be a difference, for example, between accounts that say a place "which was called" Nahom", instead of a place that "we called" Shazer. The implication is that Nahom was given that name prior to Lehi coming to it, whereas, the place Shazer was named by Lehi or someone in his family group.

The questions are: How did Lehi learn that the place was called Nahom? Next, why might the place have been called Nahom? Regarding Lehi coming to know that the place was called Nahom. One reasonable answer might be that the Lord told Lehi the name of the place. This is possible because Lehi had nobody else to ask the name of the place. But, another possible answer is that perhaps Lehi was well

aware that he was following the trail of his ancestors, the Children of Israel. This would also imply that he knew that Ishmael had died in that area known to the children of Israel as the Wilderness of Sin.

It has been suggested that perhaps Ishmael was buried in a place different from that where he died. But the account states that "Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom." No mention is made of carrying Ishmael's body elsewhere, although the possibility exists. [pp. 202-204]

Map 16, presented above, suggests that from the place Nahom, the party of Lehi traveled in a nearly eastward direction for a distance of nearly 100 miles (1 Nephi 17:1). It is proposed that they traveled a route just south of the Tih Plateau Escarpment of central Sinai. . . . Whether Lehi was following the route of the Children of Israel across southern Sinai may be a matter of debate. For if one accepts the site of the assumed traditional Mt. Sinai, Jebel Musa (Moses), then he was not. However, biblical scholars are not in agreement on just where Mt. Sinai was located. Various places are proposed. Could it be that Lehi's proposed route eastward across Sinai was more likely the route taken by the Children of Israel?

However, Lehi may have eventually made his way northward to the area of Kadesh-Barnea, lands where many scholars accept that the Children of Israel spent most of their forty years sojourning in the wilderness. . . . Wherever Lehi did go, he and his family sojourned (dwelled) in the wilderness for eight years (1 Nephi 17:4)

Historically Book of Mormon scholars have ruled out a Sinai journey for Lehi because of time and distance factors. Sinai is thought to be ruled out because Lehi would have reached the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula at Nahom, and whence he would have been unable to travel "nearly eastward" from that time onward.

In spite of these possible objections, two important considerations emerge that can support a Sinai wilderness experience for Lehi. First when Lehi traveled "many days," he need not have gone all that far directly southward. Book of Mormon accounts relate that Lehi "wandered much." Thus Lehi, while traveling nearly southward even over greater distances, he need not have ended up all that far directly southward. Secondly, the operative word seems to be, "nearly." Consulting the map of Sinai presented in this chapter for Lehi's route, it is seen that Lehi's proposed eastward travel from Nahom would have been indeed "nearly eastward."

The accounts relate that *after* his eastward travel, Lehi then dwelled in the wilderness for some eight years. It appears that the borders of the Red Sea presented here can indeed support a Sinai wilderness experience for Lehi. [pp. 206-208]

Please refer to the map below.

**[2003 Illustration: Map 17A. Lehi's proposed route after he crossed River Laman, to the southern edge of Sinai's Tih Plateau, and then nearly eastward. After dwelling in the wilderness for 8 years, he eventually came to a Bountiful Place on the sea.** Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 212]

After Ishmael died, Lehi traveled nearly eastward for an unspecified time. It is mentioned that he next sojourned, or dwelt in the wilderness for 8 years. Had Lehi been following in the footsteps of the Children of Israel, this may have occurred in the area of Kadesh-Barenea, where the Children of Israel is thought to have spent 40 years wandering. While the accounts in 1st Nephi do not mention how Lehi came to a Bountiful place of the sea, it is proposed that Lehi's group actually traveled northward from Sinai, perhaps through the wilderness areas to the east of Judeah, eventually arriving on the seacoast of ancient Lebanon near Sidon. . . .

[Note\* Actually, 1 Nephi 17:1 (written from a much later perspective in the Americas) says the following after Lehi left Nahom:

And it came to pass that we did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth. And we did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness; . . .

And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them; wherefore he [God] did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness. And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness.

And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful . . .

In context, the eight years sojourn is linked to obedience to the commandments of God, which in Nephi's narrative, started with the flight from Jerusalem. Moreover, there is no indication that the eight years can be disconnected, or placed after, the travel "nearly eastward" from Nahom. Thus there is nothing in the scriptures to counter the idea that Lehi's party traveled "nearly eastward" until they came to Bountiful. The most that could be said is that the phrase "nearly eastward" was a general term which encompassed minor (not major) deviations.]

Aston continues:

Why would Lehi have been led to make a big circle, as it were, arriving at the Great Sea on the north of Jerusalem? Could it be that Lebanon was the Lord's choice because of its rich and bountiful natural resources, and its access to the sea? . . . Please consult the following map of Lebanon.

**[2003 Illustration: Map 17B. Lebanon, showing points of interest, the Litani River, the Awali River, and Mount Hermon (consisting of three peaks, the highest indicated).** Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 215]



Mount Hermon is part of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range, divided from the Lebanon Mountains on the west by the al-Beqaa Valley. Through this valley passes the Litani River that empties into the Mediterranean Sea, just above the ancient city of Tyre on the coast. Another river, the Awali River, originates in the foothills to the west of the Lebanon Mountains, flowing southward, it then turns west and makes its way out to the sea just north of the ancient city of Sidon.

It is noted here that in Alma 2:26-37 is found an account where the Lamanites cross the River Sidon and flee north and west to a wilderness area called Hermounts. Aston writes that Hermounts in this story should be "taken here as a reference to biblical Mount Hermon.

The names Sidon and Hermounts, mentioned in these accounts, are significant because they suggest that Lehi may have sailed to America from ancient Lebanon where these two names are prominently known, and not far from each other. [pp. 213-216]

Aston cites additional scriptural and historical links to Mount Hermon:

While still in the wilderness, Lehi had his dream of the Tree of Life. Nephi was desirous to know of the things that his father had seen. Nephi was thus "caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into "an exceeding high mountain" that he had never seen nor set foot upon (1 Nephi 11:1).

This is truly an interesting comment, for it suggests that Nephi was brought to a mountain of special significance. On this special exceeding high mountain, Nephi had the heavens opened and he saw the "mother of the son of God." Nephi was also shown the Lamb of God" going forth among the children of men." He saw the baptism of the Lamb of God, as well as his being "lifted upon the cross." (1 Nephi 11:14-33). Following a great destruction in the New World, Nephi also saw that the Lamb of God came down out of the heavens and showed himself to the seed of Nephi's brethren "in the land of promise" (1 Nephi 12:1-6)

It is entirely possible that this Christ-centered mountain of exceeding height was quite likely Mount Hermon, Christ's mountain of revelation. But, there may be still another connection to this special mountain. After many days since coming to the seashore of the land Bountiful, the voice of the Lord came to Nephi telling him: "Arise, and get thee into the mountain." Nephi did arise, and he went into "the mountain,," wherein he cried unto the Lord (1 Nephi 17:7). There seems to be something significant about the Lord using the term, "the" mountain. If this mountain was known to the Lord, it must surely have been a mountain of significance. . . .

As previously suggested, it is quite likely that "the" mountain that Nephi went to was a mountain of the Lord, perhaps Mount Hermon, an excellent candidate for the Mount of Transfiguration wherein the Lord appeared to his apostles. It is highly likely that it was on this mount, known for its ores, that Nephi went and the Lord showed him where to find ore that he could make tools in order to construct a ship.

It can be further noted that the Brother of Jared may have also had revelations on Mount Hermon, where the Lord Jesus Christ revealed himself to the Brother of Jared (Ether 4:1). [pp. 219-221]

The River Sidon and the Nephite Hermounts thus become definite clues in establishing that Lehi most likely sailed across "many waters," from whence he arrived at the eastern great Lakes area in America. Why might the Nephites have named the only river mentioned in The Book of Mormon, River Sidon? Might it be that Nephi built a ship on a river not far from the old Phoenician seaport city of Sidon? Since the Nephites named no city in America, Sidon, the clue is that it was probably a river closely associated with ancient Sidon, that Lehi and his family had some significant association with an old world river, named Sidon.

It does not seem likely that Nephi would have built his ship in Sidon harbor. The ancient seaport of Sidon, a beehive of shipping activity, would hardly be the place where Lehi and his family could build a ship. However, two rivers today empty into the sea not far from Sidon: the Litani to the south and the Awalli River just north of Sidon. Somewhere, inland on either of these two candidate rivers, Nephi may have built a ship not far from the sea, and launched it into a local river, from which Lehi and his family could have floated down to the seashore of the Mediterranean Sea, from which they could have sailed onward out across the Atlantic Ocean, to America.

Ancient Lebanon can easily qualify as being a very bountiful place. There Lehi could have found a land rich in food provisions, including honey, and an abundance of iron ore from which tools could be made, and great timbers. . . . [pp. 216-218]

Please refer to Map 17C.

**[2003 Illustration: Map 17C. The Mediterranean Sea, a place of many seas, proposed here as the "Many Waters" of Irreantum.** Not far from ancient Sidon, Nephi is seen to have built a ship that would carry the party of Lehi to America. Duane R. Aston, *The Other Side of Cumorah: The Nephite Struggle for Survival in Their Land of Promise*. Sacramento, California: American River Publications, 2003, p. 218]

When Lehi came to the sea, they called it "Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters (1 Nephi 17:5). Here Irreantum can be seen as the Mediterranean Sea. The name Mediterranean Sea is derived from the Latin, "medius or middle," and "terra" meaning earth or land. One reason is that here was a place, where the "sea divided the land," and ancient peoples believed that this sea stood at the center of their world.

Interestingly the Book of Mormon interpretation is not associated with anything land, rather it is associated with water, i.e., "many waters." One might also note that the term used is "many waters," as it could have been "much water." This is a definite clue that Irreantum refers to many seas.

The Mediterranean Sea, historically the Great Sea, is truly a sea of "many waters." Connected to this large inland body of water is a number of seas, as follows:

[A] to the northeast is the *Black Sea*, and on the southwest connected to the *Aegean Sea* by the *Sea of Marmara*,

[B] to the northeast of Italy there is the *Adriatic Sea*, to the south of which lies the *Ionian Sea*.

[C] and to the southwest of Italy lies the *Tyrrhenian Sea*.

Thus the "many waters" of Irreantum consisted of *many seas* associated with the Great Sea, or Mediterranean Sea. Thus we have a rather convincing concept that the Lehi's Irreantum is an identifiable body of water, consistent with Lehi's journey to America, as presented in this work. [pp. 218-219]

[Note\* In Mosiah 8:8 we find the following about the party of King Limhi that had been sent to find Zarahemla: And they were lost in the wilderness for the space of many days, yet they were diligent, and found not the land of Zarahemla but returned to this land, having traveled in a land among *many waters* . . . ]

Once in the "many waters" of Irreantum, Lehi's family and friends would face a 2,500 mile voyage across the Mediterranean Sea, and then an approximate 5,000 mile voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to America. It took Christopher Columbus about a month to cross the Atlantic Ocean to reach America. It may have taken Lehi something like a few weeks more to complete his "many waters" voyage to America in "many days." [p. 225]

2004     Randall K. Mehew     *Ancient Testament From a Land of Promise: Historical Highlights of*  
*(Leh)*                             *the Book of Mormon*, Orem: Millennial Press, 2004.

2004^     S. Kent Brown     "Jerusalem Connections to Arabia in 600 B.C.," in *Glimpses of*  
*Lehi's*  
*Jerusalem*, John W. Welch, David R. Seely and Jo Ann H. Seely eds.,  
Provo: FARMS, 2004, pp. 630---

2004^ S. Kent Brown "Out of Jerusalem," and "Into Arabia and Across the Sea," in *Book of*

*Mormon Insights*, American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2004,

pp. 1-26, 27-65.

In this book, Kent Brown uses simplified language in order to clarify many of the ideas and insights relative to Lehi's journey which he had previously detailed in an article in 2001 (see the notation). He also adds some new insights. In his acknowledgements he writes, "A couple of teenaged neighbors, Aaron and David Pinegar, read chapters to see whether I had aimed my language too high." Whether this simplification proved advantageous, or not will be up to the reader to decide.

The following are pertinent excerpts which express his perspectives on Lehi's travels:

[p. xi] In the days before Lehi's divine calling, Zedekiah, whose birth name was Mattaniah, had been installed as a puppet king by the Babylonians in 598 B.C. . . .

[p. 3] In order to save Lehi's life, and ultimately the lives of his family, the Lord ordered them to leave . . . All of their moveable wealth they left behind, striking out generally south and east "into the wilderness," not yet knowing their destination. (See 1 Ne. 2)

The family's exact route to the tip of the northeastern arm of the Red Sea remains unknown. At least four options lay before them. . . . [These are the same as detailed in Brown's 2001 article, pp. 56-60--see notation] By any route, the Red Sea lay almost 200 miles away. They continued on another "three days"--a ritually significant number. After arriving into the area south of modern-day Aqaba, the family found itself about 250 miles from Jerusalem . . .

[2004 **Map: Possible Routes for Approaching the Red Sea.** S. Kent Brown, "Out of Jerusalem," and "Into Arabia and Across the Sea," in *Book of Mormon Insights*, American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2004, p. 4]

[pp. 5-6] The location of the camp has long been a matter of discussion. Assuming a travel rate of fifteen to twenty-five miles per day, the family reached a point between forty-five and seventy-five miles south of Aqaba in their three days of travel after arriving at the northeast tip of the Red Sea, which would locate them in one of two promising spots. First, it is possible that they walked into the valley called Wadi Al-Ifal . . . If in fact they set up camp in the Wadi Al-Ifal, they would have pitched their tents into the area of the oasis now known as Al-Bad', where there were wells and, very occasionally, a seasonal stream. . . .

A more promising candidate for the camp is Wadi Tayyib Al-Ism, which lies west and slightly north of Al-Bad' in the range of mountains that cuts off a traveler moving south along the seashore from Aqaba. The distance from the northeast tip of the Red Sea to Wadi Tayyib Al-Ism, where a year-round stream bubbles up, is about seventy-five miles, a distance that Lehi and his family could have traveled in "three days." Not only does the valley feature a flowing stream that spawns an oasis in the mountains, but the steep canyon walls form an impressive, narrow, three-and-one-half miles valley that runs westward down to the coastline of the Red Sea. (See 1 Ne. 2)

Note\* In using the term "more promising" in relation to the camp at Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, Brown moves from his 2001 neutral observer perspective (where he referred to this location only as "a very attractive candidate"-p. 61) into the camp of Potter and Wellington on the location of the Valley of Lemuel.

[p. 12] [In Lehi's dream] the Lord gave him a glimpse of what lay ahead in his route through southern Arabia. For instance, Lehi's dream of the tree, highly symbolic on one level, was prophetically realistic in terms of the geography farther south, where his family was about to go. The scenes alternated between long, lonely stretches wherein Lehi traveled only with his guide (see 1 Ne. 8:4-8); deep wadis or canyons that were impossible to cross ("great and terrible gulf" [12:18; also 15:28]) and whose seasonal streams would fill with mud and debris ("filthiness" [15:26-27]); verdant areas graced not only by sources of water--there were already extensive irrigation works in south Arabia--but also by lush vegetation represented by the tree full of delicious fruit (8:9-13); heavily traveled paths or roads, which led to the green areas (8:20-21); "forbidden paths" and "strange roads" of the desert where the unwary would become "lost" (8:23, 28, 32); and the "spacious building" typical of the wealthy cities in southern Arabia--evidently several stories high as they were then --wherein many prosperous, economically powerful people resided who were made wealthy by the highly developed commerce of the region (8:26-27, 33). In addition, the necessity of traveling into the night to avoid daytime heat appears in the dream when Lehi travels "for the space of many hours *in darkness*" (8:8; emphasis added; cf. 17:13: the Lord stands as "light in the wilderness"). Further, Lehi's mention of "a mist of darkness, yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness" (8:23) reminds one of the heavy mists and fogs of the monsoon season that blanket the southeast coast of Arabia, the place where the family emerged from the desert.

Note\* This description is much more concise and to the point than the pages contained in the 2001 article. Once again, Brown differs from Potter and Wellington in the focus of the geographical symbolism within Lehi's dream. Potter and Wellington relate the phrases more to conditions found within the Valley of Lemuel itself. Perhaps both perspectives are noteworthy.

[p. 28] Measuring from beginning to end, the family traveled more than 2,100 miles through the desert, the distance from Los Angeles to Chicago . . . Up to that point, their desert trek had moved them only ten percent of the total land distance of their journey, although there is no indication from Nephi's account that anyone had a clear notion of their final destination. To be sure, Lehi's dream billowed with allusions to what they would find farther south and east in Arabia. But, other than the desert conditions pictured in the dream, some of which are unique to that area, it is not evident whether anyone even understood this fully as they set out, for Lehi had drawn the main attention of his family not to desert imagery but to the Messiah and to Israel's future. (See 1 Ne. 8, 10).

Note\* In overly focusing on what is strictly contained in the text, here Brown might be missing an important cultural point. It would be impossible for Lehi and Nephi not to have been aware of the locations along the Frankincense trail--a cultural entity that had been bringing incense (and information) to Jerusalem for centuries. Potter and Wellington believe that Nephi saw the land of promise in his dream and from that determined that his family would be required to cross the sea. Once Nephi understood that they were going to a promised land and that it was across the sea (a fact which Brown does not acknowledge) it would be impossible for them not to realize that there were only two geographical destinations that qualified in knowledge--both practical and theoretical and materials to not only enable Nephi to build an oceangoing vessel, but to navigate it under all hypothetical conditions. They could either go to the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean or to the Arabs in southeastern Arabia in what is now Oman. Potter and Wellington believe that the Lord directed Nephi at this time to go through Arabia.

It is also interesting to point out that in apparent contradiction to the idea that Nephi could have comprehended real geography from a dream, on page 16 Brown writes the following geographical note about what Nephi learned of the Messiah in his dream:

Nephi's view of the Messiah was in the form of a story, starting with His place of dwelling, "the city of Nazareth." Although it is not evident how Nephi recognized and thus could name this city, because it consisted of no more than a few buildings in his day, he saw that "in the city" lived "a virgin," the most important woman in the vision.

**[2004 Map: Lehi's Proposed Route through Arabia to Bountiful.. S. Kent Brown, "Out of Jerusalem," and "Into Arabia and Across the Sea," in *Book of Mormon Insights*, American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2004, p. 29]**

[p. 31] But noting the assistance of the divine compass, one presumes that the Lord would not lead the family into areas where Lehi's pack animals would struggle excessively because of difficult terrain. Of course, there were to be struggles. But according to the accounts, they had to do with water and forage, not terrain.

Note\* I know this is not a major point, but once again Brown might be overly focusing on the text. Problems with terrain (or the inability to adequately progress from one source of water and food to another source of water and food) are implicit with any discussion of problems with "water and forage." Whether one considers these hypothetical problems with terrain less "excessive" than hunger and thirst is a moot point. Brown has no problem accepting camels for transportation although they are not explicitly mentioned in the text, yet fails here to keep that open perspective on the possibility of other non-mentioned issues related to the camels.

[pp. 31-33] The route south from the base camp, which Lehi had set up "in the borders . . . nearer the Red Sea" (1 Ne. 2:5) has been a matter of discussion. . . . There was one main trade route running inland in a direction southeast from the location of modern Aqaba. (To reach the trade route, the party had to

cross the Al-Sarat range of mountains.) . . . This route passed through the interior in a south-southeast direction from the Arabah Valley, paralleling the coast of the Red Sea, but a hundred miles inland, on the east side of the range of mountains that marches along the Red Sea coast. For his part, Lehi seems to have started along a different route, one that initially takes a person along the coastline itself. . . .

In a passage bearing the markings of a written itinerary, Nephi wrote that "we traveled for the space of four days, nearly a south-southeast direction." When the party stopped, "we did call the name of the place Shazer," now in the midst of the Hijaz region of northwest Arabia. . . . Calculating a pace of twenty to twenty-five miles per day, one possible spot along the coast of the Red Sea for the family to rest would have been the oasis at Wadi Al-Azlan, possibly Lehi's Shazer, lying ninety or so miles south-southeast of their former camp.

Note\* The scenario Brown has detailed in the text favors the coastal site named by the Hiltons in 1976 (whose trail continued along the coast). While in a footnote Brown notes that "Potter and Wellington favor Wadi Agharr," he fails to note that this location was not directly along the coast but along the Gaza branch of the Frankincense Trail near the mountains. The name al-Agharr also has a strong linguistic link with the ancient name of the first halt after Midian (al-Bada'a) which went by the name "Al-Aghra. It also has many trees, which links it linguistically with the name Shazer which means "wadi of many trees."

**[2004 Map: Lehi's Proposed Route through Arabia to Bountiful (Shazer).** S. Kent Brown, "Out of Jerusalem," and "Into Arabia and Across the Sea," in *Book of Mormon Insights*, American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2004, p. 29]

[pp. 33- 34] The family moved again, traveling "for the space of many days, slaying food by the way." by this point, they had learned to follow carefully "the directions of the ball" or compass, "which led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness," a feature of the journey that was envisioned by no less a prophet than Isaiah. For Nephi affirmed that Isaiah spoke "concerning us" (1 Ne. 19:21 ), prophesying that "they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places." At the end of this arduous part of the trip, "we did pitch our tents for the space of a time, that we might rest ourselves and obtain food." They rested but supplying food proved difficult.

[pp. 37- ] Explicitly, of course, Nephi informed his readers that the family spent "eight years in the wilderness" (17:4) before arriving at their Bountiful on the seashore. he also offers implicit information. While we do not know how long the family spent at the base camp--perhaps a year, probably less--Nephi tells readers indirectly that the journey from the base camp to Nahom, where the party turned "eastward," required less than a year. How so?

The five marriages performed at the base camp (see 1 Ne. 16:7) would naturally have led to the birth of two or three children less than a year afterward, for some of the new brides would likely have become pregnant within the first months of marriage. Since the extended family evidently departed the base camp soon after the marriage festivities and since Nephi does not mention the birth of any children until the party turned to "travel nearly eastward" (17:1) one concludes that the almost 1,200 mile trip to this locale took at most ten or eleven months. . . . On the basis of Nephi's notes on the marriage of and the births of

the first children of the new brides, then, the family took a year or less to move from the northeast tip of the Red Sea to the turning point at Nahom, whereas they required perhaps as much as six years to travel the 700 miles across southern Arabia from the turning point to the sea.

Note\* Here Brown bypasses any discussion of Potter & Wellington's interpretation of "the most fertile parts," the "more fertile parts" being descriptive of actual groupings of stops or villages along the trail where wells and crops were located to help resupply the caravans. Perhaps the reason is that Brown's interpretation of the text is that Lehi's party traveled from the Valley of Lemuel to Nahom in 6 months (see below), while Potter & Wellington give not such restriction to the time of travel, allowing Lehi's party to dwell in these populated regions for a time. It should be emphasized that Nephi's narrative was retrospective. To say that births were post-Nahom because they were not mentioned until after Nahom was mentioned in the narrative is to also say (by the same reasoning) that the eight years travel in the wilderness mentioned also had to take place after reaching Nahom. Such does not have to be the case.

[pp. 38-39] As soon as party members entered the interior of Arabia, after crossing to the east side of the Al-Sarat Mountains, they would have run into people, farms, and cities. Before reaching Nahom, the family most certainly passed through the region of Najran, if not the city itself--one of the important stops on the caravan trail. Here they would have caught an early glimpse of the splendid urban architecture of the Sabaeans. Najran's large buildings and magnificent temples remind one of the "large and spacious building" of Lehi's dream (1 Ne. 8:26). In fact, the skyscraper buildings farther south--erected up to six stories by the eighth century B.C.--may well have been what Lehi saw. . . .

At Najran, a settlement that would become an important city of the Minaean kingdom a century later, family members would also have begun to notice the prosperity of the south. Lehi's dream had foreseen this affluence among the inhabitants of the "large and spacious building" whose "manner of dress was exceedingly fine" (1 Ne. 8:26-27). . . .

From Najran, the party would have continued south for another 170 miles to Wadi Jawf into "the place which was called Nahom." From this area, it was another eighty or so miles to the city of Marib, the capital city of the Sabaean kingdom. It was during this stage of the journey that Ishmael died, at Nahom in the area of the Wadi Jawf.

Nephi writes that from "the place which was called Nahom . . . we did travel nearly eastward" (1 Ne. 16:34; 17:1). In fact, from the region of Nahom-Nihm, all roads turned east. Even the shortcuts across the Ramlat Al-Sabatayn desert, which connected the incense trail north of Nahom-Nihm, ran east-west, connecting to Shabwah, which lay more than 200 miles east of Nahom and was the main center for gathering incense harvested in south Arabia. . . .

The part of Lehi and Sariah were traveling the opposite direction from the loaded camels of the caravans, an observation that helps to explain why some members of the party thought that they could return to Jerusalem even though at Nahom they were about 1,400 miles away (see 1 Ne. 16:36). Indeed, it is Nephi's note about the tribal area of Nahom and its connection to the eastward turn that signals to readers that his party was travelling along the incense route.



Marib, of course, would have been even more impressive than Najran. Its status as the seat of the Sabaeen government insured that it was the commercial and cultural center of south Arabia. Perhaps its most impressive physical feature was the system of waterworks that ran out of the Marib dam and irrigated dozens of square miles of land.

Note\* Why would Nephi write of the suffering just before Nahom if this area with Marib marked the cultural center of Arabia and had a vast system of waterworks? How could Nephi get lost and almost perish for lack of food on this part of the trail if caravans laden with food and water were constantly going the other way back to Jerusalem?

**[2004 Map: Lehi's Proposed Route through Arabia to Bountiful (Nahom).** S. Kent Brown, "Out of Jerusalem," and "Into Arabia and Across the Sea," in *Book of Mormon Insights*, American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2004, p. 29]

[pp. 42- ] The family began to "travel nearly eastward" from the tribal region of Nahom/Nihm, perhaps passing through the city of Marib itself. The opportunity to reprovision was certainly available there, although we do not know how the family did so, with little or no disposable wealth that they could trade for food or exchange for fabled animals. It was possibly here, or farther east, that family members evidently sold themselves for a time--perhaps more than once--as servants in order to earn enough to acquire supplies needed for the most arduous part of the journey, across the southern edge of Arabia's Empty Quarter. This segment ran approximately 700 miles to the seacoast at Dhofar Oman, Lehi's Bountiful. To theorize that the party may have farmed for a season in the Nahom or Marib regions misses the point that every square foot of cultivable ground was owned by someone whose own needs came before those of itinerant travelers. We do know that at Nahom the party was perilously low on supplies and that, after a family reconciliation, "the Lord did bless us again with food, that we did not perish" (1 Ne. 16:39). But by all odds, this last part of the journey across southern Arabia was the toughest segment of the trip. (See 1 Ne. 16, 17)

[p. 43- ] Beyond Shabwah, however, there were no roads in that era that continued east to southern Oman, the party's Bountiful. In that territory between the high dunes of the Empty Quarter on the north and the elevated and fractured tableland to the south, the party would have found itself among hostile, warring tribes who jealously protected their territories and water and food resources. Evidently, it was during this stage of the journey that the family "did not prosper nor progress in their journey, but were driven back" (Mosiah 1:17).

Note\* The connection of Mosiah 1:17 to Lehi's journey out of Nahom seems very tenuous at best when there is no allusion in the text to being driven back, although many things are possible that are not mentioned in the text. A more obvious connection is to the sea voyage where Nephi explicitly records that "the tempest began to be exceeding sore. . . . And after we had been driven back upon the waters for the space of four days, my brethren began to see that the judgments of God were upon them, and that they must perish save they should repent of their iniquities . . . (1 Ne. 18:14-15)

If the 700 mile stretch from Nahom to Dhofar (Bountiful) was the toughest, and the wells were farthest apart, wouldn't Lehi want to travel through it in the quickest manner possible? If so we are only dealing with a month of travel. Is Brown implying that Lehi's party spent the remaining 7 years in Marib?

[pp. 44-45] Whether the party entered the city of Shabwah remains unknown. But this large settlement would have offered a final chance to family members to reprovision themselves before pushing farther eastward. For they evidently did not follow the path down the Wadi Hadramaut, the largest system of canyons and valleys in Arabia, which carried runoff and spring water toward the Arabian Sea in a long curving arc east and south beyond Shabwah for 290 miles. The party seemingly maintained their eastward journey along the southern edge of the Empty Quarter, traveling just to the north of the high plateaus of southern Yemen. . . .

Some have suggested that an overland caravan route connected Shabwah to the Dhofar area of modern Oman, the area with the best frankincense in antiquity. If so, then Lehi's party might have been generally following or paralleling this trade route. But no real evidence exists that caravans or any size traveled through this region during Lehi's era, for water was unavailable in the quantities needed by caravans. From the last major water hole north of Dhofar, the well at Shisur, one had to travel west eight days by camel toward Shabwah to reach the next one on the southern edge of the Empty Quarter. Such were the severe conditions that a traveler would meet while crossing the southern edge of the Empty Quarter . . .

There is also another aspect of danger and hardship. The Empty Quarter--Ar-Rub Al-Khali in Arabic--remains the harshest desert climate on earth, with summer daytime temperatures exceeding 125 degrees Fahrenheit. Except in the brief rainy season, there would have been little water and no feed for pack animals on the edge of the desert. Moreover, to cross any part of the Empty Quarter from west to east would have entailed endless effort and constant peril.

Note\* I don't understand where Brown is going here. First he alludes to authors proposing a route from Shabwah to the Dhofar area, but does not name them. He then states that "the party seemingly maintained their eastward journey along the southern edge of the Empty Quarter," yet he then says that route would be too formidable, even for someone traveling as rapidly as they could to take advantage of the rainy season. So how would he have Lehi's party taking most of eight years to cross this terrain?

**[2004 Map: Lehi's Proposed Route through Arabia to Bountifu (Bountiful).** S. Kent Brown, "Out of Jerusalem," and "Into Arabia and Across the Sea," in *Book of Mormon Insights*, American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2004, p. 29]

[pp. 46-47 The ultimate destination, whether known to the family or not, was the Dhofar region in the south of modern Oman. It constitutes a botanical anomaly in Arabia, a virtual Garden of Eden during the

rainy season. No other region, north or south, matches even remotely the Bountiful described by Nephi, a place of "much fruit and also wild honey." Here he found "timbers" sturdy enough for constructing an oceangoing vessel, although the kinds of trees currently growing in this area might not have qualified. . . .

Little is known of the ancient history of Dhofar . . .

Some of the small inlet bays along the Dhofar coast became staging points where harvested frankincense was loaded aboard westward-bound vessels headed for ancient Qana, and would have offered to Nephi a choice of places to construct his ship. . . .

Note\* A staging area where goods can be transferred from shore by small boats to a larger boat does not qualify a site for the construction and launching of a oceangoing vessel.

Again, it is odd that Nephi mentions no other people in the vicinity of his Bountiful. Surely, because of its natural abundance there were people living in the region. It is possible, of course, that he and his family found themselves on a part of the coast that was not inhabited by others, even seasonally, leaving them essentially alone. It is more likely, however, that one or more neighboring tribes lived in the vicinity but that the family of Lehi did not seek connections with them, keeping to themselves as much as they could. Whatever the case, the family seems to have been self-sufficient, not relying on others for their needs. (See 1 Nephi 17)

Note\* Here is another case where Brown overly focuses on the text. In an area where the ultra-valuable frankincense was harvested, it would almost be impossible to be isolated. Furthermore, if a ship needed to be constructed, outfitted and sailed, there would likely be much communication with the people in this area.

[pp. 48-49] The question of ore for tools has largely been solved by recent geological studies of the Dhofar area. The person who conducted the first field study in 1995, Eugene Clark, found a number of small deposits of specular hematite. . . . Although none of the deposits is large enough for economic development, an aspect that the Oman government asked the geologists to report on, the surveys prove conclusively that iron ore was available within a few days' walk of any place along the shore in the Dhofar region. Whether Nephi made nails for fastening the ship as well as his tools for shaping the timbers is not known. (See 1 Ne. 17, 18)

Concerning shipbuilding, it is evident that Nephi knew something about this skill, for he speaks of working "timbers after the manner which was learned by men," though he did not pursue this approach (1 Ne. 18:2) . . . . And where did Nephi learn the skill of shipbuilding? One answer has to be that he learned at least some techniques through the Lord tutoring. Another answer is that he may have acquired at least some skills before reaching the southern coast of Arabia. Although there is a long tradition of boat building and repairing in the Dhofar area, there is no firm evidence that these skills were plied among inhabitants as early as Lehi, though it would be surprising if people living along the seashore had not developed skills at least for repairing boats. The firmest evidence of early shipbuilding in Arabia comes from Bahrain in the Persian Gulf, on the north, whence vessels sailed to the southern shores. (See 1 Ne. 17, 18)

Note\* Why would Brown downplay the shipbuilding and sailing aspect of this area when Potter and Wellington have done such outstanding research to support it? Why and how would Nephi acquire shipbuilding and navigational skills before coming to this area if had never resided anywhere near a port city on the coast?

53-J The ancient techniques for shipbuilding were essentially two: sewing and nailing. The technique of choice in the Arabian peninsula was sewing timbers of the hull together. Nails were known, for the remnants of ancient iron nails, predating Lehi, have been recovered near the modern Jordanian seacoast town of Aqaba. . . . The advantages of sewn ships were two: lower costs in building, and a vessel that could withstand mishaps with less damage. The disadvantages included constant leaking between planks and the endless need for maintaining the fiber ropes and caulking.

The matter of sails is important. . . . the ship must have depended on sails. Although it is not possible to tell whether they were square or rectangular, as were those of antiquity, or whether the Lord's instructions had modified the design, it is certain that the ship responded to winds and thus was rigged with sails: "we . . . were driven forth before the wind towards the promised land" (18:22).

Note\* Square sails can be driven before the wind but do not respond well to sailing against the wind. If Nephi was to respond adequately to a multitude of navigational problems he would have needed a different design such as "lateen" or triangular sails.

[pp. 56-58] Is it possible that the ship docked at various points along the way in order to take on fresh water? The answer has to be yes. Water was one commodity that they could have acquired from others with little or no expense. Thus they would not have needed to dip into their precious cargo for items to trade. Certainly the use of skins for storage of fresh water has to be affirmed. Presumably, ceramic ware would have served to store honey and certain other goods. As all who are acquainted with sea voyages will know, however, fresh water is a minimum requirement. The family may have stored hundreds of gallons on board the ship. But with forty or so people drawing on the supply, it would not take many weeks to consume the entire amount, creating the need to go ashore to replenish the stores of water. (See 1 Ne. 18.)

Note\* Brown does not discuss here the many other provisions that would have needed to be replenished or the repairs to the ship that would have been needed.

Which way did the ship sail? Two possibilities exist, and they depend on the direction of the monsoon winds. During the winter months, the winds blow from the northeast. If the family had set out, say, between November and April, they would have been carried southward along the east coast of Africa. In this view, they would have rounded the Cape of Good Hope and landed on the eastern shore of the Americas, presumably at a spot somewhere north of South America. The other view ties to the monsoon winds that blow from the southwest during the summer months. If the family had departed Bountiful, say, between May and September, they would have been pushed eastward toward Indian, eventually finding

themselves into the Pacific Ocean. On this view, the party would have landed on the west coast of the Americas, anywhere from Chile northwards. (See 1 Ne. 18)

The latter view, that of sailing east from Arabia and landing on the west coast of the Americas, is more attractive for several reasons. The first has to do with terrain, the second with a glaring omission, and the third with the book of Isaiah . . . :

[1] The matter of terrain arises in Nephi's description of the initial separation of the family into two parts some years after their arrival in the promised land. Again, the issue concerned leadership. The quarrels had reached such a dangerous pitch that the Lord instructed Nephi to take as many as would follow him and depart. He did so, journeying "in the wilderness for the space of many days" to a place where they finally "did pitch [their] tents," calling "the name of the place Nephi" (2 Ne. 5:2-8). From later sources we learn that the area of Nephi, both what is termed the "land of Nephi" and the city in its midst, were located in an upland, because generations later, a group led by the first King Mosiah fled this area and "came down into the land of Zarahemla" (Omni 1:13; emphasis added). Less than twenty years later, a number of the people who had fled with Mosiah to Zarahemla sought to return, "to go up" to take possession of their old homesteads (Mosiah 9:3; emphasis added). In this light, it becomes clear that the area to which Nephi and his followers originally fled was a highland, evidently not a long distance from those who stayed by the seashore because the two groups maintained at least a casual contact (see Enos 1:20), and the lowlanders eventually mounted a number of invasions of the upland (see Jarom 1:7). Knowing that the highland was within reasonable distance of the lowland where the family had landed their ship and begun to establish themselves, we can rule out virtually the entire east coast of the Americas, from southern Argentina to the Maritime provinces of Canada, as a landing site for the family of Lehi. Because of these mountains, only the east coast of southern Brazil and Central America might qualify as the place of landing. In contrast, along the entire west coast of the Americas runs a mountain chain which can be reached from the shoreline merely by walking. (See 1 Ne. 18)

[2] The glaring omission, the least compelling reason for proposing a landing on the western shore, comes in a brief notice of the arrival of the people of Zarahemla. Their origins reach back to a younger son of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. It is widely and reasonably assumed that those who traveled with this younger son to the Americas came from the east, landing at a spot on the east coast of the Americas. In fact, it was while discussing the territories held by Lamanties and Nephites at the time of the mission of the sons of the younger King Mosiah that Mormon noted that "the place of [the] first landing" of the ancestors of the people of Zarahemla was "the land . . . northward" which "was called Desolation" (Alma 22:30-31). What Mormon did not say, and could have said if it were true, was that his own Nephite ancestors had landed on the same shoreline.

[3] The selection from Isaiah, chapters 48 and 49, which Nephi added to his first book, may offer a clue about the direction that the family of Lehi sailed to reach the land of promise. In introducing these chapters from Isaiah, Nephi declared that the Lord had shown "unto many [prophets] *concerning us*" (1 Ne. 19:21; emphasis added). . . . Nephi plainly understood that Isaiah was among those whom the Lord had shown "concerning us." and what does Isaiah say? In speaking of the scattering and gathering of the "house of Israel," he points to those traveling "from the north and from the west," the very directions of travel that Nephi's family members had followed from Jerusalem through Arabia to Bountiful. Isaiah then commands, "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; for the feet of those who are in the east shall be established; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for they shall be smitten no more." Who are "those who are in the east" and "shall be smitten no more"? For Nephi, they were his family members. Of course, Isaiah's mention of "those who are in the east" could geographically point to Nephi's family in Bountiful. But "the east" could also refer to the direction that Nephi's ship sailed (1 Ne. 21:12-13; ia. 49:12-13).

Note\* The above discussion presents good insights into the problem of the direction of Lehi's voyage which have not appeared in any of Brown's previous articles. Reasons #2 and #3 are new, Brown being the first one to have these insights. [CHECK!]

2005^ Heather Brown Moore *Out of Jerusalem: A Light in the Wilderness,* American Fork, Utah:

Covenant Communications, Inc., 2005.

In fictional form, Heather Brown Moore provides some insights into the thinking of her father, S. Kent Brown. Although she has done background research from the works of other LDS authors, she closely follows the views of her father, including the route south from Nehm through Marib and Timna before turning northeast to Shabwa. In a more detailed manner than even her father had written before her, she lays out his "believable setting" (backcover) which includes 5 years of servitude (slavery) on the borders of the Empty Quarter in a mythical place called the "Mudhail Settlement" which she patterned after "Liwa-- 'an oasis with palm groves and villages which extended for two days' camel journey' (Thesiger, 101)" [p. 310]. They preserve the sword of Laban, the Liahona and the Brass Plates by burying them before being taken into slavery, and they return to the same spot in the wilderness 5 years later and dig them up, proceeding eastward.

On the inside cover is a map by Andy Livingston detailing not only Lehi's proposed route, but a route overlaid on one found in Wilford Thesiger's book, *Arabian Sands*. Moore writes: "A map of wells appears at the back of Thesiger's book, *Arabian Sands*, outlining possible oases where Lehi's party may have stopped." (p. 315)

Note\* Strangely H. B. Brown has Lehi's party coming over the Qara Mountains by foot (camel) from the north to Ma Shadid, they meet nobody and they go directly to the shoreline. Can Wadi Sayq be reached by camel from this point? Moore writes: "If traveling from Shisur to the Dhofar region (possible location for Bountiful), the family could have encountered the oasis Ma Shadid, **then Aiyun, and/or Kismim.** (p. 315).

2005 (IEHI'S JOURNEY) FARMS Video

This work amounts to video plagiarism and BYU intellectual hubris. In retracing Lehi's supposed route, NONE of the groundbreaking researchers are cited- not the Hiltons, not the Astons, not Potter and Wellington. Kent Brown appears in various segments to make his proposals and ideas known as to the route and chronology of Lehi's journey (without any acknowledgment of the groundbreaking scholars). Only BYU and FARMS scholars are highlighted as if the ideas presented came from their research. Although Khor Rori is mentioned as a possible site for Bountiful (without any mention of Potter and Wellington), Wadi Sayq (again without any mention of the Astons) is highlighted as the most probable site for Bountiful with the idea that Nephi built his ship using his own manpower, knowledge and tools, and using the trees and materials at Wadi Sayq. The route into Wadi Sayq is shown coming over the Qara mountains which is contrary to the Astons' reasoning for locating Bountiful there in the first place. Critical problems with shipbuilding and navigation are glossed over. Noel Reynolds even goes so far as to say that all the books in Joseph Smith's time described Arabia as a veritable wasteland.

[REVIEW VIDEO AND TRANSCRIBE EXACT QUOTES]

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