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Lehi in the Wilderness

Chapter Two

Jerusalem and the Way of the Wilderness

by George Potter & Richard Wellington

Route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea

Lehi “departed into the wilderness” (1 Nephi 2:4 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:28-29 RLDS) and “came down by the borders” (mountains) near the shore of the Red Sea. (1 Nephi 2:5 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:30-32 RLDS)

By departing east from Jerusalem, Lehi would have passed the northern tip of the Dead Sea, the “wilderness of Judea” (Matthew 3:1 KJ) (Matthew 3:27 IV), reaching the main route leading south, the “Way of the Wilderness” somewhere near Amman. This route led to the King’s Highway, which ran through the Se’ir Mountains to Ezion geber and the Red Sea.

The Book of Mormon provides a perfect description of the quickest and safest route out of the land under Jewish control and to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Twenty-six hundred years ago, a single man’s decision to obey the promptings of the spirit expanded the gospel to a new hemisphere. The Lord commanded Lehi “even in a dream, that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness.” (1 Nephi 2:2 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:26 RLDS) The dream forewarned the prophet that the people of Jerusalem were seeking to take his life. The brave prophet had stood up before the Jews, testified that their wickedness would lead to their destruction, and witnessed to all that the Messiah would come and redeem the world. When the Jews heard his message, they mocked the prophet and sought his death. The chronicles of history tell us that it was a dark time in Jerusalem.

Yet, it had not always been that way. Lehi was born while the Kingdom of Judah was still a vassal state of the Assyrian Empire. By the time Nephi’s narrative commences, Lehi appeared to be a well-established businessman. He was from the



tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3 LDS) (Alma 8:3 RLDS), whose tribal lands were north of Jerusalem in what had been the Northern Kingdom of Israel. These lands fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Lehi’s ancestors must have left before that time, just as Lehi would do in response to the Babylonian threat over one hundred years later. This extensive migration of many northern Israelites led to dramatic growth in the size of the city of Jerusalem.¹ This increase in population may have been the cause of an economic prosperity during the reign of the great reformer King Hezekiah, which was manifested in a building boom not only in the city of Jerusalem but also in the land round about.² Through this time of economic prosperity, Lehi’s ancestors would appear to have thrived, passing on to Lehi the lands near the city of Jerusalem, which they apparently had owned for some considerable time since they were described by Nephi as “the land of his inheritance.” (1 Nephi 2:4 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:28-29 RLDS)

Historical Background

Nephi’s first-hand description of life in Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of King Zedekiah is fascinating. It was a time of empires in turmoil and of political intrigue. The apparently strong reaction of the people of the city to Lehi’s message can best be understood in the light of the events of the previous century. In 701, Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, laid siege to Jerusalem. Attempts to buy off the Assyrian army proved fruitless (2 Kings 13-16 KJ/IV),

and without allies Hezekiah's position seemed hopeless. Yet, at this time of near desperation, the Prophet Isaiah came forward to bolster the courage of the people by saying "He shall not come into this city.... For I will defend the city to save it." (Isaiah 37:33-35 KJ/IV)

Despite attempts to incite insurrection in the ranks of the defenders, Hezekiah's resistance was successful. Sennacherib cut short the attack and left Palestine with his army, which according to the Old Testament (2 Kings 19:35 KJ/IV), had been decimated by an epidemic, leaving some 185,000 dead.

In the years that followed, this event would be recounted until "later generations could ascribe this deliverance to nothing less than a supernatural intervention, second only to the one which had secured the freedom of the Israelites from the Egyptian captivity."³ Regarding this event Professor Benjamin Mazar wrote:

Embellished by legendary accretions, it strengthened the popular view of the impregnability of the city, and the ultimate sanctity and inviolability of mount Zion and the Temple. This confidence remained intact through subsequent generations down to the last years of the monarchy, until the day that the city walls were breached, the defending forces overwhelmed, and the city itself destroyed by the armies of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.⁴

In Laman and Lemuel we see the perfect embodiment of that same mind set:

Neither did they believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed according to the words of the prophets. And they were like unto the Jews who were at Jerusalem, who sought to take away the life of my father. (1 Nephi 2:13 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:42-43 RLDS)

Laman and Lemuel felt secure in the knowledge that the Lord would not allow Jerusalem to fall, yet their faith was ill-founded. Hezekiah was succeeded by his son, Manasseh (692-638 B.C.), during whose long reign Judah remained a vassal state to Assyria. Manasseh allowed foreign influences to sweep into the kingdom. Witchcraft, divination and wizardry became common; the Assyrian god Ishtar was worshipped in the Temple itself, and child sacrifice was even practiced in the Valley of Hinnom.

Political intrigue became more intense following the death of Manasseh when his son, Amon, was murdered after only two years on the throne (638-637 B.C.). Lehi was probably born somewhere around this time. In 629 B.C. King Josiah began a purge, removing the pagan idols and

repairing the temple.⁵ In 619 B.C., a hitherto unknown book was found in the temple.⁶ (2 Kings 22:8-10 KJ/IV) It is generally considered that this "book of the law" was the book of Deuteronomy. It was read to the king and he in turn had it read to the entire population, both young and old, and all entered into a covenant with the Lord. (2 Kings 22-23 KJ/IV) Laman and Lemuel were probably born around the time of this reformation. Regarding this time, the scholar Abram Sachar wrote that "the laws of the Mosaic faith were carefully practised. The king was a model of piety and set a worthy example for his people."⁷

There followed a period of territorial expansion and economic prosperity⁸ under which Lehi's business presumably thrived. This was the environment that Nephi, Laman, and Lemuel were raised in. The king and people were righteous, having entered into a covenant with the Lord. The Mosaic law was practiced scrupulously and the Lord was blessing them with peace and prosperity. It is therefore no surprise to find Laman and Lemuel stating:

And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses: wherefore, we know that they are a righteous people. (1 Nephi 17:22 LDS) (1 Nephi 5:98-102 RLDS)

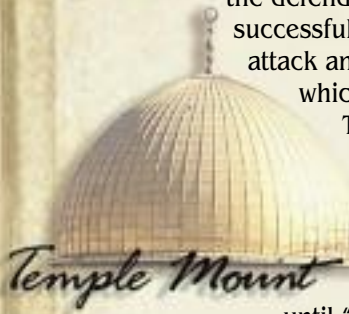
Laman and Lemuel were a product of their environment. They believed, as did the vast majority of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that they were righteous. Not all, however, held this same view.

Jeremiah's prophetic career began in 627 B.C., the thirtieth year of King Josiah's reign. (Jeremiah 1:2 KJ/IV) Jeremiah's message fell on deaf ears and he was expelled from his home village of Anathoth, an hour's walk from Jerusalem. He probably came to Jerusalem soon after. Jeremiah considered the reforms introduced by King Josiah to be entirely inadequate. He joined with Zephaniah and other prophets⁹ and together they sent forth

"...O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved"

their voice of warning: "Woe unto us! for we are spoiled. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." (Jeremiah 4:13-14 KJ/IV) According to Nathan Ausubel, Jeremiah's message was that the "reforms in worship could not guarantee the redemption of Israel from its Assyrian oppressor. Not more devout worship of God, as the prophets and priests counseled, but rather more upright action"¹⁰ was called for. For this reason the hostility of the priestly class was roused against Jeremiah.

In the final years of Josiah's reign the three superpowers—Egypt, Assyria and Medo-Babylonia—became



Temple Mount



embroiled in a power struggle into which Judah was inevitably drawn. When the Assyrians began to weaken they found an ally in Egypt in the form of Psammetichus I. Thus we find in 616 B.C. Egyptian troops fighting alongside Assyrian troops in Mesopotamia. Babylonian prince Nabopolassar, in turn, formed an alliance with the Medes in 614 B.C., following their attack on the Assyrian city of Nineveh. The Medes destroyed the city while the Assyrian army was engaging the Babylonians, thus marking the effective end of the Assyrian empire. Nephi seems to have been born during these years.

The Babylonians opened diplomatic relations with Judah, and King Josiah, switching allegiance, attempted to aid their cause by marching his army to Carchemish to try to interrupt the columns of the Egyptian army. Battle was joined and King Josiah was mortally wounded in 609 B.C. while trying to hold the Megiddo pass. Judah now found herself being swept ever further into a torrent of confusion and political intrigue. Allegiances vacillated between militant extremists who favored insurrection against Babylon and moderates who advocated submission to foreign rule. Following Josiah's death the populace placed his second son, Jehoahaz, on the throne.¹¹ The Egyptians swept into Judah, and within three months Jehoahaz was taken in chains to Egypt where he died. In his place the Egyptians put his unscrupulous brother, Jehoiakim (608-598 B.C.), as vassal king on the throne. Regardless, Egyptian influence was short-lived and in 605 B.C. Assyria collapsed and the Egyptian army was defeated by the Babylonians.¹²

Jehoiakim submitted to the will of the anti-Egyptian party and swore allegiance to Babylon. As long as the king remained loyal to Babylon it seemed that the people would remain unharmed, yet still there were several elements who advocated rebellion. The patriotic party flirted with alliances with the surrounding countries with the intention of throwing off the Babylonian yoke. The prophet Jeremiah now spoke out in full force against these foolhardy radicals. Judah's only hope of survival lay in submission to Babylon. To attempt to stand against her was courting disaster. Abram Sachar wrote: "He (*Jeremiah*) did not share the popular belief that the Holy City could not be destroyed. There was too much faith in the inviolability of Jerusalem. It had hardened into a dogma of popular religion."¹³

By speaking out, Jeremiah put his life in danger.

Jeremiah was publicly struck by a temple priest, placed in the stocks to be taunted and assailed about by the clamoring mob.

He would have been executed if there had not been a fear of killing a prophet.

But Jeremiah's warnings were to no avail, and after three years the king had switched allegiances back to Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar ordered contingents from the surrounding nations to attack, and that winter, as the Babylonian king approached Jerusalem to supervise the siege, King Jehoiakim died and was replaced by his eighteen-year-old

son

Jehoiachin (598-597 B.C.).

The new king reigned only three months. As the capital city was besieged, he threw himself on the mercy of the Babylonian monarch. He surrendered on March 10, 597 B.C.¹⁴ when he, the royal family, palace officials, members of the army, "and all the craftsmen and smiths" (2 Kings 24:14 KJ/IV) were taken captive to Babylon.

A revealing Babylonian chronicle, the counterpart to this Biblical tale (the tablets of which are now in the British museum), tells us Nebuchadnezzar, "took the city on the second day of the month of Adduru. He appointed in it a new king of his liking (literally *-heart*), took heavy booty from it and brought it into Babylon."¹⁵ The new king was Zedekiah.

King Zedekiah

And so the scene is set for the beginning of our story. Nephi's record begins about this point, at the commencement of the first year of Zedekiah's reign (597-587 B.C.). Lehi, obviously, was not one of those previously deported, probably because he dwelt outside Jerusalem proper.

Zedekiah does not appear to have been a righteous ruler since Jeremiah referred to him and his followers as "bad figs."¹⁶ According to the Chroniclers, Zedekiah did evil in the site of the Lord and humbled himself not before Jeremiah. During his reign, men and women gave themselves to the worship of the Babylonian goddess of love (Ishtar), as well as the sun-god; on the other hand the worship of the sacred animals of Egypt was carried on in an underground chamber. Lehi must have seen that, as in Israel's past history, wickedness had preceded political catastrophe. Ben-Sasson wrote:

Zedekiah's first year witnessed extremely difficult conditions in Judah. The new, inexperienced leadership that had replaced the exiled court tended to be more militant and, surprisingly, even adamantly anti-Babylonian.¹⁷

The Lord called many prophets that year to cry repentance to the people. Repent or Jerusalem would be destroyed. Yet false prophets, such as Hananiah ben Azur (see Jeremiah 28 KJ/IV), predicted the destruction of Babylon in a short time. These false prophets exerted considerable influence on the king and the rest of the population. Not surprisingly Lehi was aware of the potential consequences of rebellion against Babylon, and he went to the Lord to pray with all his heart on behalf of his people. (1 Nephi 1:5 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:4 RLDS) The message which Lehi was given to take to the people was the same as the other true prophets— the people needed to repent of their wickedness or else Jerusalem would truly be destroyed. These, however, were two facts the people had great difficulty accepting. Thus, two parties existed in the land. Margolis and Marx noted that "the two parties—the loyalists

who stood by Babylon and the hotheads who looked to Egypt for help—were pitted against each other to the point of violence and bloodshed.”¹⁸

Just as Jeremiah’s life had been threatened (Jeremiah 26:8 KJ/IV) and Urijah had been executed in the reign of King Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 26:23 KJ/IV), the Jews sought Lehi’s life. His brief mission in Jerusalem accomplished, he obeyed the Lord and fled as had Urijah before him.

Judah’s situation continued to worsen. Zedekiah was playing a dangerous political double-game. A vassal king of Babylon, he found himself flirting with the influence of the pro-Egyptians. When Nephi returned to obtain the brass plates of Laban we read of his encounter with Laban’s servant, Zoram.

And he spake unto me concerning the elders of the Jews, he knowing that his master, Laban, had been out by night among them. And he spake unto me many times concerning the elders of the Jews. (1 Nephi 4:22,27 LDS)
(1 Nephi 1:125,130 RLDS)

Zoram showed great interest in knowing the latest twists in the plotting of the influential Laban and the elders. Laban had been at a meeting held in the dead of night, when no one was in the streets to witness his decapitation. How appropriate that Margolis and Marx wrote that, “Apparently those who favored leaning on Egypt thought it discretion to plot in secret.”¹⁹ Is it possible that Laban was one of those who favored an alliance with Egypt?

No two other decades in the history of Judah are better documented than the years 609-586.²⁰ Yet in the Book of Mormon, we are privileged to be able to glimpse into the dealings of a family caught up in the intense political and religious turmoil of the times. The commonly held beliefs of the people had two of their strongest adherents in Lehi’s eldest sons, Laman and Lemuel. The people of Jerusalem were righteous, and their capital, Jerusalem, was an impregnable fortress. The false prophets and the priests of that day comforted the people with the same message. Their father, however, a successful man in his own right—intelligent, insightful and spiritually attuned to the message preached by the prophet Jeremiah, led the family in a direction that would ultimately lead him to direct confrontation with his two eldest sons, who would eventually seek his life.

Escape into the Wilderness

Jeremiah spoke of “the Arabian in the wilderness.” (Jeremiah 3:2 KJ/IV) Such prominent authorities as Joseph Fielding Smith Jr.,²¹

James E. Talmage,²² and B. H. Roberts²³ believed that Lehi fled into Arabia. Hugh Nibley also believed that the great Arabian Desert was Nephi’s wilderness. He reminded us that the word wilderness “has in the Book of Mormon the same connotation as in the Bible, and usually refers to desert country.”²⁴ Nephi’s reference to a wilderness beyond the Red Sea, Arabia, is totally correct because it was not only a physical wilderness, it was also considered a geo-political one in Nephi’s time.

The oral traditions of several Jewish colonies tell of other groups leaving Jerusalem and going into Arabia to avoid Nebuchadnezzar’s captivity. Abu Hurairah, an early Islamic period geographer, wrote of the Jews who settled in northwest Arabia to escape the persecution of Nebuchadnezzar.²⁵ This flight resulted in large numbers of Jews settling at the towns of al-Hijr, Khaibar, and Medina. According to Reuben Ahroni: “As a result of this prophecy of doom (Jeremiah 38:2 KJ/IV), seventy-five thousand courageous men ... Who firmly believed Jeremiah’s prophecy of impending national catastrophe accompanied by priests, Levites, and slaves ... crossed the Jordan River and went into the desert ... and arrived in the land of Eden. From there they turned south until they arrived in Yemen.”²⁶ A similar story of escape from Nebuchadnezzar is told by the descendants of the Jewish colony in India (Cochin).²⁷

The Route to the Red Sea

Is it possible for us to determine what route Lehi took to leave Jerusalem and escape into Arabia? In 1 Nephi chapter 2 LDS, chapter 1 RLDS, Nephi gives us certain facts about the journey, namely that they departed into the wilderness and came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea. There would appear to be few clues here to guide us, but it is still possible for us to glean quite a lot of information from these brief statements.

There are four possible routes of escape that Lehi could have used to reach the shores of the Red Sea. One passed through Beersheba to the west. Another ran south via the Wadi Araba. To the east were two more possible routes. Because the Jews were actively seeking Lehi’s life, we can assume that after leaving Jerusalem Lehi headed immediately for the wilderness on his way to Arabia. Lehi would have wished to travel quickly, so he

The remains of the church at Wadi el-Kharrar marks the site where Elijah was taken up into heaven.



would no doubt have chosen an existing route in order to escape Zedekiah's sphere of influence as quickly as possible. For this reason, we doubt if Lehi followed the trails to the west and south, which passed through lands controlled by Zedekiah. We can start by asking, "Where was the nearest wilderness on route to Arabia from Jerusalem?"

The recent discovery of the remains of a church at Wadi el-Kharrar, marking the place where both Elijah was caught up into heaven (2 Kings 2:11-13 KJ/IV), and also the place where John the Baptist ministered, would seem to add weight to that hypothesis that the area to the east of Jerusalem, beyond the Jericho plain was, in fact, "the wilderness."²⁸ The scriptures tell us that John the Baptist was "preaching in the wilderness of Judea." (Matthew 3:1 KJ, Matthew 3:28 IV) Wadi el-Kharrar is a little over one mile (two kilometers) east of the Jordan River across from Jericho. At the time of Christ this area was still known as "the Wilderness."²⁹ The quickest way for Lehi to exit would therefore have been due east, using an existing road which led to an area known in the scriptures as "the wilderness" (of Judea).

Finding the remains of the church did not prove easy. We had read about the site of an old Christian church that had been unearthed in Wadi el Kharrar that provided strong evidence that John the Baptist had been preaching a few miles north of the Dead Sea and east of the river Jordan. For three days we searched for the site but to no avail.

After three days of searching, we eventually found the site but unfortunately between us and the archaeological dig was a barrier manned by a particularly attentive guard. We pulled up at the gate and the guard walked over to us. Now was the time for some quick thinking, but what to say? Richard blurted out, "I am Doctor Wellington and I am here to see Wadi el-Kharrar." To our surprise the guard promptly opened the gate and pointed to a building. We drove over to the car park in front of the building and an older man who appeared to be in charge came over. "Oh, well," we thought to ourselves, "It was worth a try," but to our surprise the man said, "Welcome, just go over there and Riyadh will show you round." Not wishing to look a gift horse in the mouth we just smiled, said "thank you," and drove over to the assigned spot.

Riyadh, a faculty member of one of Jordan's Universities, was a tall thin man in his early thirties. He leapt around the trenches and walls with the steadiness of a mountain goat that obviously came from his intimate knowledge of every inch of the site. Richard held up his camera and raised his eyebrows as if to ask if it would be okay to take a photo, but carefully never saying such. "Why not?" Riyadh retorted. This was all Richard needed and out came the cameras and lenses. After about thirty minutes of this guided tour we felt we should not press the issue and, after wishing Riyadh well, headed back to the hotel.

It was not until a few days later that we realized why we had been so fortuitous. We happened to be driving a new white Land Rover when we visited the site. Late that week a group of United Nations officials also visited the hotel. A trip

to the car park revealed that they too all drove new white Land Rovers. Presumably the archeologists at the site had been expecting a visitor from the U.N. on the day that we visited. We could only imagine their faces when the real visitors turned up!

By crossing the River Jordan where the church was situated, in an area known as the "wilderness of Judea," and heading east through the wilderness, the family would have passed south of Amman where two roads headed south. The first route Lehi would have encountered leading south to Midian (where the Valley of Lemuel was found) would have been the King's Highway. Though the southern half of the King's Highway traversed the desert, the northern half traversed the heavily populated lands of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, and passed through large areas of arable land. Nephi's description of traveling in the wilderness does not sound like a journey down the northern part of the King's Highway.

The modern road follows closely to the old route of the Way of the Wilderness, which passed through desert country.



By continuing about five miles further east of the King's Highway, Lehi would have reached a second major route heading south, the desert highway known as the "The Way of the Wilderness." (2 Samuel 15:23-28 KJ/IV) The Way of the Wilderness trail ran down the east, or arid side of the Se'ir Mountains. Instead of farm lands, here is found a desert, a wilderness. The most logical route for escaping Judea was to go east into the wilderness across the Jordan River and then to take the desert trail south far outside the jurisdiction of Judean authorities.

Following Nephi's account, we left Jerusalem and drove east to the Jordanian capital of Amman. To this day there are two highways. One follows the route of the King's Highway to Aqaba and the other follows the course of the old "Way of the Wilderness" through the desert. We followed the desert highway south through desert wadis to the oasis town of Ma'an, where mineral springs still flow. At Ma'an they would have taken the trail that 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 leads to the coast at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba of the Red Sea.

While driving the Way of the Wilderness we could not help but wonder how Lehi's family felt. They do not appear to have been tough caravaners. If Laman and

Lemuel are anything to go by, they were an urban family accustomed to the finer things in life, an estate, riches, and servants to wait on them. Now, due to a dream their father claimed to have had, they wandered south into a brutal wilderness. Occasionally they would have passed a goat-hair or came-lhair tent of a Bedouin family trying to scrape out a meager existence from the desert.

As we admired the barren rocky landscape of southern Jordan in our air-conditioned Land Rover, it began to dawn on us just how difficult their journey must have been. Amid this scenery, Lehi's family was enduring long days aboard their new associates, the camels. We have ridden camels, and they are neither the most comfortable mode of travel, nor the best-tempered traveling companions.

Lehi's use of camels is certain, because they brought with them tents. Eventually there were at least ten married couples in the party. We measured the weight of a small (10' by 10') traditional Middle Eastern tent. It weighed 250 pounds not counting floor rugs and bedding. We also know that the family took provisions with them into the wilderness. Obviously they needed beasts of burden. Donkeys and horses would have died with no fodder to eat on the desert trails in Arabia. Indeed, long distance travel in Arabia was impossible before the domestication of the camel.

To westerners, a camel is an odd curiosity, but to one crossing ancient Arabia, this animal was a lifeline. Of constant concern to Lehi would have been the welfare of his camel herd. Dromedaries break down on mountains and rocky paths. Wilfred Thesiger, famous for his explorations of Arabia, wrote in his journal, "If we did not find grazing, the camels would collapse, and that would be the end of us all."⁵⁰ For this reason, despite its bad breath and belligerent temperament, the camel is beloved by the Arab. According to the Qur'an it is a gift from God. We do not know if Lehi shared the same admiration for the camel as do the

Arabs, yet despite its constant companions—the flies and four-inch camel spiders—and its habit of spitting at or biting its handlers, the camels were vital assets.

We tried to envision the small caravan of Lehitites as they traveled south.

Perhaps Lehi, rocking back and forth on his camel, led the party into the desert.

Sariah, his wife, riding behind him, probably covered her face to protect her skin from the dry hot wind, as is still the custom. Several dozen camels followed the parents carrying either a member of the family or a portion of their belongings. We pictured the older brothers Laman and Lemuel, upset at their new station in life, following in the rear complaining. Their complaining led to complete discontent in the dusty air. Perhaps the strong teenage Nephi preferred walking beside his camel. We can imagine him occasionally pulling the ropes of other animals to encourage them as they carried full cloth saddlebags or leather bags of water.

Before sunset the group would halt. The boys would have had the task of unloading the tired camels and then watching the beasts as they grazed. The women and girls would have worked just as hard preparing food and bedding, the latter consisting only of blankets and rugs. En route between long-term camps, it was the practice in Arabia to sleep under the stars. If a sand storm arose they would roll themselves in their rugs and sleep beside their camels using them as wind breaks.

A Bedouin man stands proudly in front of his tent home at al Lajjun.



Another powerful impression touched our hearts as we drove the Way of the Wilderness. We were confused for a long time as to why Nephi would inform us three times (1 Nephi 2:15; 9:1; 10:16 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:45, 2:92, 3:22 RLDS) that once Lehi reached the wilderness, he dwelt in a tent. We had stopped to take a photo of a Bedouin tent on the edge of the desert. A woman came out and we asked her permission to take a photo there. She called to her husband and out he came. We assumed she called him to complain. As he came out she shouted some more and he rushed back into the tent. This time he came out with his *Iqal* and *Ghutra* (head dress) in his hand and hastily put them on as his wife chided him. Instead of chasing us away he proudly stood next to his tent, looking his best for the photo. We couldn't help but notice inside the tent the family's entire possessions could be wrapped into a couple of bed rolls; a few pots and pans, plates, cups, and a few blankets. We felt embarrassed parked there

The king's highway at wadi Mojib. Here the river Arnon marked the border between ancient Ammon to the north and Moab to the south. An old Roman bridge sits at the bottom of the valley.



with more possessions on the back seat of our car than he would ever own. This noble man stood there, with his *thawb* (Arab clothing) threadbare in places. Lehi left his house, gold, jewelry, and land and lived in a tent like a poor man, yet he never complained about leaving his possessions behind. What a contrast we see in Laman and Lemuel, who never let Lehi forget that they wanted to return to their wealth. By mentioning the tent, Nephi is reminding us of his father's humility, never complaining to God about his loss of worldly things.

One final impression came to mind as we crossed the summit of the Se'ir Mountains and headed downhill to Aqaba on the Red Sea. We could see just how accurate and concise was Joseph Smith's translation of (1 Nephi 2: 4-6 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:28-33 RLDS). They "departed into the wilderness" (of Judea, east of Jerusalem) taking the route known as the "Way of the Wilderness." They "came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:5 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:30 RLDS), i.e., they traveled south by the borders, or mountains, so called because they formed the border between the settled peoples and the Arabs. (Again, the word for mountain in the languages of ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamia, Judah and Arabia, all meant borders.³¹) They reached the borders near the shore of the Red Sea, i.e., the mountains at Ezion-geber (near today's Aqaba). The Wilderness Road in Nephi's day—the Way of the Wilderness—connected with the southern part of the King's Highway. From there, the southern part of the King's Highway would have led them to the Gulf of Aqaba through the mountains. The meaning of the place name *Aqaba* is an accurate guide to the topography of the area and the trail Nephi described. *Aqaba* means "A mountain road, a road which goes over a mountain; a difficult place of ascent on a mountain; a road leading up a mountainside to a plateau or high ground; a long mountain crossed by a road."³² Nephi wrote that they came "down" by the mountains near the Red Sea. This was exactly what we did. We followed the wilderness road and King's

Highway south from Jerusalem finally crossing over a mountain pass where we then came down (downhill or south) through the mountains near the Red Sea.

From Ezion-geber, the last caravan town in what was considered the civilized world; Lehi entered the land known in his day as the wilderness, Arabia. As we drove south into Arabia, we knew that Nephi's directions were accurate. We also knew that the Valley of Lemuel was probably the Wadi Tayyib al-Ism at the south end of the shoreline mountains of Midian, approximately sixty-two miles (by crow's flight) from the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba. Thus we decided to put aside our detailed maps of Midian and our global positioning systems and use only Nephi's instructions to retrace the prophet's trail to the Valley of Lemuel. Our premise—if the Book of Mormon is true, the trail would lead us to the valley.

Timothy Sedor and Bruce Santucci joined us as we made our attempt to retrace Lehi's trail from Aqaba to the Valley of Lemuel. It would not be an easy find, for the shoreline mountains are a maze of wadis that turn in all directions. What concerned us most was that the trail had to be nearly straight. Nephi wrote that they came to a river on the third day. Camels have a maximum three-day range of approximately seventy-five miles.

Confidently we headed south along the shoreline into Arabia. Nephi wrote that they came down "by" (1 Nephi 2:5 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:30 RLDS) the mountains that were "near" the Red Sea. About five miles to our left were the mountains of the Se'ir/Hijaz range, the mountains by the Red Sea. To our right were the waters of the Gulf of Aqaba of the Red Sea. After twenty-five miles we came to the town of Haql, the site of a caravan stop during ancient times. From Haql the ancient trail headed east into the mountains, and then south to Bad'a. We had traveled this route and knew it took over 122 miles to reach Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. Lehi could not have used the caravan route to al-Bada'a and then traveled to the valley from there as a laden camel cannot travel 122 miles in three days.

We decided to continue following Nephi's initial instructions and maintained our course down the shoreline. Fifteen miles south of Haql, we came to the shoreline

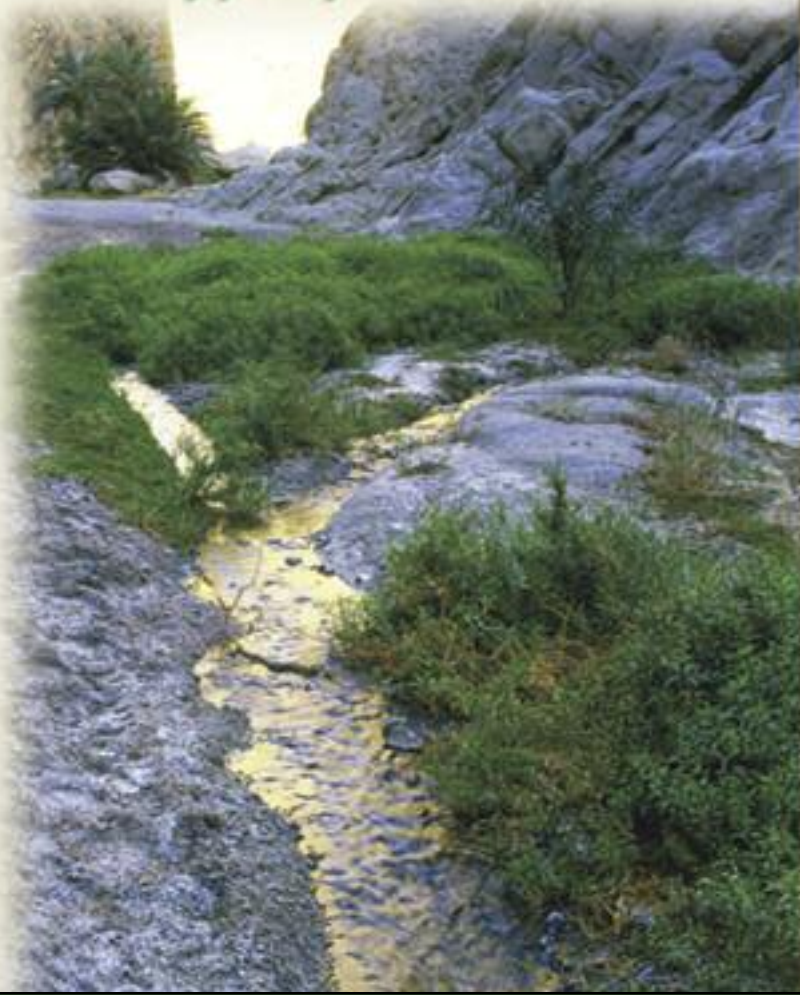
The arm of the Frankincense Trail that led to Egypt followed the coast from Aqaba until it turned inland at Haql. For some reason Lehi did not turn at Haql but continued on the coast until he followed a route that led to wadi Tayyib al-Ism.



mountains, which extended into the sea and blocked our passage. To our left was a wadi that led into the mountains. It was the only valley leading into the mountains that we had passed since leaving Haql. If this were Lehi's trail, then he had no choice but to enter this wadi. We checked Nephi's next instruction, "and he traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea." (1 Nephi 2:5 LDS) (1 Nephi 1:30 RLDS) We knew these were the mountains "nearer" the sea and Nephi said they went "in" them.

We entered the wadi and followed east for six miles and then south for three more. Its bed was good for camels. The wadi finally ended at a rise that opened into another wadi that led south. It was this wadi that really impressed us. It ran straight through the mountains. None of us had seen such a wadi in Midian. It was long and straight and had no obvious exits. As Timothy put it, "if Lehi was a bowling ball, he would have just kept rolling down this wadi until the ball came to its end." In other words if Lehi entered this wadi, he would have followed it to its natural end. We headed down the wadi noticing as we went that its foliage was typical for Midian—practically none! Here and there we saw an occasional acacia tree barely hanging on to life. Certainly there were no signs of water, let alone a river! Our trail odometer read seventy miles, and the wadi had the same arid landscape. We were beginning to think we would find nothing in the seventy-five-mile range that camels could travel in three days. Just then the wadi turned due west and headed directly toward the tallest shoreline mountains. Three miles later, having used only Nephi's directions, we were inside the great granite canyon we had discovered three years earlier. Stepping outside our truck, we were standing next to its river of continually flowing water. For the past twenty-two miles we had actually been driving down the upper section of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, the Valley of Lemuel.

Lehi's journey brought him to a river of continually flowing water.



*** See back cover for George Potter material.**

Notes

1. Seely and Seely, "Lehi and Jeremiah," 27.
2. Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 56.
3. Roth, *The History of the Jews*, 42.
4. Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 57.
5. Albright, *The Jews: Their History*, 46.
6. Nathan Ausubel, *Pictorial History of the Jewish People*, 65.
7. Sachar, *History of the Jews*, 68.
8. Ben-Sasson, *History of the Jewish People*, 151.
9. Other prophets from this era include Habakkuk, Nahum, Zephaniah, Urijah son of Shemaiah (see Jeremiah. 26:20), the prophetess Huldah, and later in exile Ezekiel and Daniel.
10. Ausubel, *Pictorial History of the Jewish People*, 65.
11. Roth, *History of the Jews*, 43.
12. Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.11.1, 224-25.
13. Sachar, *History of the Jews*, 74.
14. Pratt, "When Was Judah's 70-Year Babylonian Captivity?" 65 n. 1: "Adar is the 12th month of both the Babylonian and Jewish calendars, so it was near the end of Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year, which had begun in the spring of 598 B.C. The exact date is taken from the tables of R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 626 B.C.-A.D. 45 (1942), 25, where 1 Adar is listed as 15 March on the Julian Calendar."
15. Quoted from Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 59-60. An alternative translation "he encamped against the city of Judah and on the second day of the month of Adar he captured the city (and) seized (its) king. A king of his own choice he appointed in the city (and) taking vast tribute he brought it unto Babylon" is found in Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 102.
16. The Talmud does not share this same opinion of Zedekiah, pronouncing him righteous and his tormentors vicious. See footnote *Tractate Shabbat 149a, Sanhedrin 103a*.
17. Ben-Sasson, *History of the Jewish People*, 155.
18. Margolis and Marx, *History of the Jewish People*, 110.
19. Margolis and Marx, *History of the Jewish People*, 110.
20. Ben-Sasson, *History of the Jewish People*, 155.
21. Smith, *Way to Perfection*, 193.
22. Talmage, *Great Apostasy*, ch. 1 n. 5.
23. Roberts, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, 1:409.
24. Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies*, 135.
25. al-Wohaibi, *Northern Hijaz, 196-97*.
26. Ahroni, *Yemenite Jewry*, 25.
27. Meyer, "Jews of Cochim."

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

29. This discovery raises an interesting point. Joseph Smith introduced the doctrine of the spirit and office of "an Elias," one who prepares the way (see Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 335-41). This doctrine is unique to Latter-day Saints. Elias is the New Testament form of Elijah. Both Elijah and John the Baptist were acting in the office and spirit of an Elias (see JST John 1:21-28; and JST Matt. 17: 14). The association of John the Baptist and the prophet Elijah in the minds of the people can be seen in the Apostles' answer to Jesus' question "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"

(Matt. 16:13-14). In July 1999, Dr. Mohammed Waheeb wrote concerning this site:

Not far from the Jordan River, at a distance of one mile to the east, is the place where the Prophet Elijah was taken into heaven in a chariot (II Kings 2: 11-13)... The itinerary of the Bordeaux pilgrim (333 A.D.) mentioned that "From there to the Jordan, where the Lord was baptized by John, is five miles. Here there is a place by the River, a little hill on the far bank, where Elijah was caught up into heaven." ... He says explicitly that Jesus was baptized on the east site (Jordan) and he refers to the little hill where Elijah was taken up. Obviously he means the little hill which was called Hermon, Elijah hill, Jebel MarElyas and recently, Tell el Kharrar.... A team from the Department of Antiquities of Jordan has conducted emergency surveys and systematic excavations in the area since March 1997. Archaeological excavations on the southern bank of Wadi el-Kharrar revealed the presence of several sites, with architectural remains scattered throughout the area approximately two kilometers to the east of the Jordan River. The discovered sites consisted of churches, water installations, stepped cisterns, colored mosaic floors, stone piles, caves and other facilities. (Waheeb, "Wadi El Kharrar: The Baptism Site," 40-45)

What better way could John the Baptist have taught the principle of his calling of an Elias than by choosing to preach in the same place as the hill where Elias (Elijah) was taken into heaven? It is interesting that Joseph Smith taught of the doctrine of an Elias when the knowledge of the relationship between the place where John the Baptist preached and the hill where Elias (Elijah) was taken into heaven was only found in an obscure text. One has to question if this is more than coincidence.

30. Taylor, *Traveling the Sands*, 132.

31. Personal conversation between Hugh W. Nibley and George Potter, August 14, 2001, Provo, Utah.

32. Groom, *Dictionary of Arabic Topography and Placenames*, S.v. "aqaba."



Dr. Gaylord Shaw

1939-2008

by Bonnie Anderson

Dr. Gaylord Shaw was God's servant. The 2008 interns experienced Gaylord's servant heart when he and his wife, Faye, came to teach on July 1. Through e-mails, we had discussed the class topic, time frame and date, but Gaylord never mentioned his health issues. When he arrived that Tuesday morning, it was obvious he had lost a considerable amount of weight. We learned that he had been diagnosed with cancer the previous week, and he had his first chemotherapy treatment the day before the class. We certainly would have understood if he had cancelled the four-hour class and the two-hour drive from Lamoni. Instead, he went to his Heavenly Father in prayer and simply asked for the strength he

would need for that day and, as a result, he was blessed, and so were we. He simply did not want to miss an opportunity to share the truths of The Book of Mormon with the young people of the church.

This great Book of Mormon adventure began for Gaylord when he was a student at Graceland College. He and some friends met every evening in the dorm to read The Book of Mormon and traveled to Mexico together at the end of the school year. The central theme of The Book of Mormon is Jesus Christ; which Gaylord cared deeply about and shared with others whenever he had the opportunity.

While Gaylord was a professor at Graceland University, he and Faye co-founded The Christian Center for Book of Mormon Study and Research in Lamoni, Iowa, because he felt there should be a strong witness of The Book of Mormon in a town named after one of the ancient kings. They gave away so many copies of The Book of Mormon that Gaylord made sure he always had some in his office, his car and at the Center. Together, he and Faye produced nearly 100 presentations and shared them in Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Pennsylvania. He set a very high standard for their presentations because he felt the Lord and the peoples of The Book of Mormon deserved only their very best. He was ever so careful not to imply something that may not have been true. Gaylord knew the Lord could direct his studies, so he didn't rely on interpretations by others, but solely on the Spirit and "what the Book said." He was led by the Spirit to study The Book of Mormon geography, definitely not a topic he would have chosen for himself; but it became one of his passions as he recognized scriptures that tell us the temporal and spiritual are related. He insisted that any geographic interpretation of Book of Mormon lands must begin with a word-for-word description given within the book. As a result of this study, he published the book, Directions: A Study of Book of Mormon Geography.

Gaylord had also been on The Book of Mormon Foundation Board and was on the Stone Church Book of Mormon Roundtable Board at the time of his death. He and Faye traveled to Central America five times to explore the ruins and minister among the people there. His interest led him to acquire 1,500-year-old inlaid Maya teeth to try and discover how such delicate, precise work was accomplished by using Graceland's scanning electron microscope. He worked with Dr. Guillermo Mata Amado from Guatemala, who visited his work at Graceland. He also traveled to Belize and met with the Director of Archaeology to examine the inlaid teeth there. Additionally, he collaborated with Florida State University in analyzing wear on stone tools from as early as 3,000 B.C. found in Belize.

Every summer, Graceland hosts Spectacular (SPEC), a week-long camp for teens. One year, Gaylord and Faye set up a display of copies of The Book of Mormon and other related materials just outside the Swarm Inn, the campus snack shop, with the sign "The Book of Mormon, Something Else Spectacular." Six of the 29 books distributed that day went to Peru, and several went to European countries. A few young people spent an hour or more at the table reading and asking questions. The excitement was a joy to see!

Gaylord took his Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants with him every day in a grey leather pouch he made himself. He knew the people and events were real and felt that every word in The Book of Mormon was there for a purpose. One of his testimonies relates to this. He liked to simply open his Book of Mormon and begin to read. This is something he would also suggest to others, as he felt whatever page their eyes fell on would have a timely message. This particular day, Gaylord opened his Authorized Edition to page 775, and began reading at the top of the page (Moroni 10:3 RLDS) [Moroni 10:3 LDS]. As he continued to read to the end of the chapter, he could hear Moroni saying the words. After that powerful experience, he went back to read the beginning verses of the chapter. He was astonished with verse two, "And I seal up these records, after I have **spoken** a few words by way of exhortation unto you."

Gaylord would tell others, "There is a Book of Mormon work for everyone" and believed each home should have a resource center for witnessing. We are so thankful that Dr. Shaw spent his life in service to his Lord through his Book of Mormon work. "...when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God."

(Mosiah 1:49 RLDS) [Mosiah 1:49 LDS]



Santa Cali-Gon Days

by Kelli Pedersen

Perfect love casteth out fear

(1 John 4:18 IV/KJ)

Our mantra for Santa-Cali-Gon Days gave us courage as we entered the ripe field of our community. As we came together this past Labor Day weekend, our hearts were focused on one thing—sharing The Book of Mormon with those whom the Lord sent to us. And He absolutely did send hundreds of souls to our booth! At the conclusion of the weekend, we tallied the cups of water that had been given away and were amazed to see the total was more than 3,000!

Adding to our joy, we discovered that our efforts had placed 150 copies of The Book of Mormon into our community! This number seems wonderful, but a prickling fear nagged many of us as we considered the possibility that several of the books could end up discarded or ruined. However, the Lord was quick to remind us of the prayers which the saints had offered specifically for those books. Before we even began our efforts at the festival, we committed all of the books into God's hands. It may be years before some of them achieve the purpose that God has planned for them and, wherever they have been placed; they will be used to bring souls to the gospel.

This was an event full of blessings. Several branches and individual saints stepped up to support us this year. The enthusiasm with which help was given was a wonderful testimony. Each of our volunteers was blessed to work at this booth that was supported so richly by our church families. Two of our volunteers have recorded one of their testimonies from the weekend.



These Books Testify of
Jesus Christ!

RACHEL PREMEOE

I had a wonderful opportunity to work in The Book of Mormon Foundation booth at Santa-Cali-Gon Days this year. Before my shift, I was preparing and assumed that my contact with the folks at the festival may be limited to ten seconds or less; so my approach needed to be concise and direct. Many people were either already believers, just stopping in for water, or not interested at all. Nonetheless, I did not want to waste a minute. As I gave cups of water away, I began a habit of asking everyone who approached us if they had read The Book of Mormon. If they had not, I then asked if they would be interested. I was surprised at how many were willing to take a book home with them.

Falling into a routine of doing this, I was surprised at the approach of an elderly lady. She seemed interested in the items we had laid out on the table, but she did not respond, in any way, to our friendly questions. I asked her if she had ever read The Book of Mormon, and there was no response. Thinking she did not hear me, I asked a second time. Again, there was no response. As she picked up a Book of Mormon, it suddenly occurred to me that she could be deaf. Just as I thought this, she began to do a little sign language. I remember feeling a rush of excitement as my knowledge of this language came to my mind and we were able to have a conversation about The Book of Mormon. Although our interaction was short, I knew immediately that God had placed me at the booth in that moment and used my knowledge of sign for the purpose of speaking with this lady.

ANDREW HOLMES

I worked at the booth on Sunday evening. My experience in this type of witnessing is very limited, and I have always felt that I need to be more open in sharing with others. Considering these personal goals, I thought the booth might provide a good opportunity for me. While preparing for my shift, I prayed God would bring the right people to the booth and would help me know what to say.

A couple hours into the night, I was getting quite frustrated. We had given away plenty of water, but no copies of The Book of Mormon. I had not even talked to anybody about our beliefs! The only people showing any interest at all were those who were already in the church. When I brought this frustration to God, He showed me a fundamental flaw in my approach to witnessing: I was waiting for others to come to me, rather than reaching out to them. While I ought to be bold in witnessing, my fear had led me to take an easier (though less successful) approach.

At this point in the evening, I had yet to initiate a conversation about my beliefs. I knew that God wanted me to do so, though, and the next time I filled a water cup, I asked, "Have you read The Book of Mormon?" The lady seemed as surprised to hear such a question as I felt to have asked it. She politely answered that she had not. A brief conversation followed and, about a minute later, she left with a Book of Mormon and a gospel tract. I do not know if she will ever read it, but that is in God's hands now. What I do know is that the incident gave me the courage to ask the same question to others who came to the booth for water. Just as some showed no interest at all, several did end up leaving with materials that could change their lives forever.





I Agree With Abinadi



I had the great opportunity to attend the Book of Mormon retreat at the Odessa Hills campground. The theme was “Exploring the Life-Changing Testimony of Jesus Christ.” The weekend was filled with many people sharing their powerful, personal testimonies of how their Lord and Savior helped to change their hearts, souls, and lifestyles to draw them closer to God. The speakers included Tom Mitchell, Stacy Anderson, Jack Hagensen, Aaron Smith and Stu Gage. Jesus Christ truly has the power to overcome any obstacle in our lives—we simply have to let him.

In line with this theme, directors David and Kathy Gilmore challenged us to take action by sharing our testimony of Christ to help change the lives of those around us. The problem is that many of us have a hard time knowing how to start up a witnessing conversation. The solution for this was given to us in the form of a t-shirt. Each camper received a shirt that read, “I agree with Abinadi.” The idea is that when we are wearing the shirt, people will automatically ask us who Abinadi is. This opens up the door for us to begin sharing about the gift of salvation, the love of Christ, and many other aspects of the gospel that Abinadi preached to King Noah and his priests. I encourage everyone to check out chapters 7, 8, and 9 (chapters 11-21 LDS) in Mosiah to read the full account of Abinadi’s words.

There were many great testimonies that came from this weekend. I do not think anyone left there without feeling their own lives had experienced a transformation. I would like to share one of these testimonies the whole camp received. David announced Friday night that Tom Mitchell was sick and probably would not be able to teach his class the next day. He then asked several individuals to pray that Tom would receive a healing. Tom is always a favorite teacher among the youth, especially when he brings his guitar and shares his music with us. The next morning, it came time for Tom’s class, and he was not there. With my lack of faith, I quickly commented that evidently our prayers had not worked as we wanted. Immediately, David stood up and announced that Tom was feeling much better and would be coming later in the day. Not only was he able to come, he was so much better that his voice returned, and he was able to sing several songs for us. To me, this was an amazing example of God’s power to heal and answer prayers.

I praise the Lord that I was able to be a part of this inspiring weekend. I can’t wait to put on my new shirt and share what the Lord has done for me, because I agree with Abinadi when he said, *For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions.* (Mosiah 8:44 RLDS) [Mosiah 15:12 LDS]


Gayle Shepard

The Book of Mormon retreat was a great experience for me. I was feeling spiritually stagnant for awhile. Each class on Saturday spoke to me. The morning started off with a challenge by Kathy and David Gilmore. They taught us different points on Abinadi’s teachings and why we agreed with them. Then, we each received an “I agree with Abinadi” t-shirt to use as a conversation starter to witness of Christ to others. The other classes consisted of different individuals who shared their life-changing testimony of Christ. I was reminded that my quiet testimony of Christ can be a big witnessing tool, as Stacy Anderson shared how she was converted to the church by






Winter Retreat 2009




the countenance of others that had a relationship with Christ. Sometimes, I feel like I don't have many opportunities to share with others who are not of the same faith, but her testimony reminded me that by the way I just present myself, I can affect others' lives and show Christ working in me. Aaron Smith also shared his personal story. I have felt complacent where I am in life as pertaining to spiritual things. I feel like I am a decent person who doesn't go out and enjoy the worldly pleasures, but I am not spiritually growing and have not challenged myself to do so. However, Aaron challenged us to always achieve a higher ground. He said we were never meant to achieve a plateau, but to continue to become more righteous. Following these testimonies, Jack Hagensen, Stu Gage, and Tom Mitchell shared their life-changing testimonies that also gave me strength. We finished the evening performing Book of Mormon skits and having a campfire. I am so glad I went to the retreat, as it has given me a new strength.


Monica Reed



*A*fter a great service on Sunday morning, several small problems and blessings occurred. It started after lunch with Terry's car. It would not start. We used jumper cables to start it. While hooking up the cables, there was a large arc, and lots of sparks flew everywhere. Not knowing why, I tried it again, and sparks went everywhere again. When looking at the cables, it was determined that the positive was connected to the negative, and the negative was connected to the positive, on the live battery. Once these were switched, the car started up with no more sparks.



After this, there was a car that had a tire blown out. Several people were able to help in the repair of this tire, which was a blessing because it took 45 minutes to get the spare tire on, and several tools that did not come with that vehicle.



The third blessing that occurred that day happened on the way back to Rolla about a mile out of Vienna, Missouri. We were driving into town when the engine died. Not knowing what had happened, we pulled over to the side of the road. The car engine would turn over but would not start, so we looked under the hood, but could not see anything. We said a prayer and, 30 seconds later, a minivan pulled over and the driver asked if we needed help. We said yes and told him what had happened. He said the fuel pump had probably gone out. We tried to start it again to no avail. He and his family were nice and took us to the closest gas station so we could stay warm until the tow truck could arrive. When the tow truck arrived, the driver, Isaac, took me back to the car and said there is a trip sensor for safety. If the car gets into an accident, it shuts off the fuel pump. He said we probably hit a pot hole in the road, and it flipped the switch. So it was also a blessing that we did not have to have the fuel pump replaced. What a day!

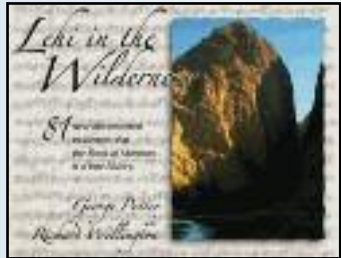
Galeb Baumgart



George Potter's interest in archaeology began as a LDS missionary in Peru and Bolivia. After a year at BYU and his mission, George returned to his home state of California and put aside his amateur archaeology interest. He graduated with high honors from the University of California at San Diego, and two years later received a master's degree from the University of California at Berkeley. On leaving the university he became a certified public accountant and joined one of the so-called Big Five CPA firms. Later he entered management and consulting, two professions which have taken him to over forty countries, including a five-year stay in Zurich, Switzerland. For the last ten years he has owned and operated Bear River Training and Consultancy, a training, e-learning, and financial services company located in Saudi Arabia. He has lectured at universities in the United States, Germany, Switzerland, and Saudi Arabia. George is married to Susan Jensen Potter. Together they have ten children.

Books and DVD's available for purchase through The Book of Mormon Foundation. Contact us at: (816) 461-3722, bmfoundation@live.com or visit our website at www.bmf.org after March 16th.

BOOKS



Lehi in the Wilderness
by George Potter and Richard Wellington
\$30.00

The Book of Mormon begins with a stirring account of Lehi's family fleeing Jerusalem through the wilderness to a new home in the Americas. For decades, scholars have scoffed at many of the locations and conditions described by Lehi's son Nephi. This new evidence shows that Nephi's account is completely accurate.

Two Latter-day Saints, with unprecedented access to the lands of the Middle East, have completed a six-year odyssey documenting the actual locations of Lehi's journey from Jerusalem to the land of Bountiful. Their discoveries give tangible proof of the locations described by Nephi in The Book of Mormon.

Through the authors' detailed descriptions, careful research, and spectacular photographs, such places as the River of Laman, the Valley of Lemuel, and the Land of Bountiful come alive. The authors also make clear where Nephi could have found wood to replace his broken bow, why the Lord commanded them not to build fires, and how Nephi could have built a ship to cross the sea.

Follow these modern explorers as they share 81 evidences that validate the Book of Mormon account.



Ten More Amazing Discoveries
by George Potter
\$13.00

Renowned Book of Mormon explorer George Potter continues to wander the sands of the Middle East because, in his words, "I must." The latest result, Ten More Amazing Discoveries, makes us grateful that he does. Drawing upon years of research, study, and travel, he offers geographical support for Joseph Smith's assertion that the ancient Garden of Eden was located in the New World, not in the Old World. He offers a new, exciting theory on the landing site of Noah's Ark. He shows how Bible scholarship supports the authorship of the Book of Mormon. And he takes us in search of the "real" Mount Sinai and the trail of the Exodus.

"Are these amazing discoveries?" asks the author. "To me they are pearls of truth that bring to life the sacred scriptures and confirm our faith."



The Wise Men of Bountiful
by George Potter with Kathryn H. Kidd
\$12.00

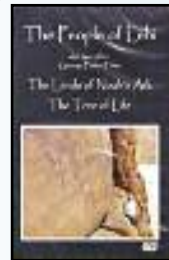
Sabica and Yousef live in the valley Bountiful, where Lehi and his family stopped on their way to the Americas. Their father, King Bashir bin Jared, is one of the frankincense kings. He and his friends, King Saleem and King Jacob, have seen the new star in the east.

Now they are planning to visit the Savior in Judea. King bin Jared feels prompted to bring Sabica and Yousef. Soon they are on their way across the desert, facing perils of every kind but learning many important lessons.

THE WISE MEN BOUNTIFUL (cont'd.)

Author and Book of Mormon explorer George Potter brings to life the story of Christ's birth from a unique LDS perspective. It is a story you will enjoy reading with your family again and again.

DVD'S



The People of Lehi
DVD
\$27.95

"THE PEOPLE OF LEHI", a new DVD that includes three documentary films by George Potter. Included on the DVD are the documentary films: "The People of Lehi", "The Tree of Life and the Imagery of the Valley of Lemuel", and "The Lands of Noah's Ark". As one viewer stated, "The film was electrifying". Other comments included, "Your work is really guided by the spirit" and again and again we heard, "I couldn't believe what I was seeing." The new DVD is another amazing witness that the Book of Mormon is a true history and shows again that there is ample evidence in Arabia to prove it.

~Color, Total Running Time Approx: 1 hour, 54 minutes



Discovering Lehi's Trail
A Six Part Series DVD
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A six part series including:
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Discovering Nephi's Harbor

~Color, Total Running Time Approx: 3 hours, 52 minutes



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