



# THE WITNESS

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*“Come unto me, O ye Gentiles,  
and I will shew unto you the greater things,  
the knowledge which is hid up  
because of unbelief.”*



# From the Board

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Cover photo courtesy of Dale Godfrey  
 (Ether 1:109 RLDS) [Ether 4:13 LDS]



# Directions

## A Study in Book of Mormon Geography

By Gaylord E. Shaw

### Early Nephite Travel

*Chapter Synopsis:* This chapter presents the record of the families who left the land of Jerusalem and traveled to the Promised Land. It shows that they sojourned for a period of eight years in a direction that would have taken them to the Pacific Ocean. Other theories of travel are also presented and discussed.

### A. The Lost Record

The first book on the golden plates was Mormon's abridgement of the Book of Lehi. After Joseph Smith had translated that section, he permitted Martin Harris to take the hand-written record to show to his family. Those 116 pages, close to twenty-five percent of The Book of Mormon, were stolen, and Joseph was not permitted to retranslate them. Without those pages our current The Book of Mormon begins with the epistle of Lehi's son, Nephi. However, two copies of the Book of Lehi may still exist, so the lost manuscript could be recovered and retranslated, or the Lord could restore the original account.

Although a description of the travels from the Land of Jerusalem to the Promised Land is found in the First Book of Nephi, Nephi described the Book of Lehi as revealing even more topographical details:

And upon the plates which I made I did engrave the record of my father, and also our journeyings in the wilderness... Wherefore, the record of my father... and the more part of all our proceedings in the wilderness are engraven upon those first plates [the Book of Lehi]... Wherefore, the things which transpired before that I made these plates are, of a truth, more particularly made mention upon the first plates... Wherefore, I, Nephi, did make a record upon the other plates... which gives a greater account, of the wars and contentions and destructions of my people;

(1 Nephi 5:219, 221-222, 225 RLDS)

[1 Nephi 19:1, 2, 4 LDS]

Nephi also told his brother Jacob what to put on the small plates. Jacob wrote:

And he gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these [small] plates a few of the things which I considered to be most precious, That I should not touch, save it were lightly, concerning the history of this people... For he said that the history of this people should be engraven upon his [Nephi's] other plates

(Jacob 1:2-3 RLDS/LDS)

The loss of geographic details in the Book of Lehi, the history of their wilderness pilgrimage and their wars, is calamitous. Mormon believed all of this would be included when his abridgement was later translated. With guidance from the Spirit, besides writing the Book of Lehi, Nephi also wrote a smaller set of plates which Mormon inserted unedited into his abridgment, both of the writers doing this "for a wise purpose" (1 Nephi 2:99, Words of Mormon 1:10 RLDS) [1 Nephi 9:5, Words of Mormon 1:7 LDS]. We have assumed that with the inclusion of the information on Nephi's plates, God had prepared for the eventual loss. But consider the exhaustive labor Mormon put into that extensive abridgment, and the effort Moroni spent caring for that hefty record for decades—only for it to be lost? Now we are left to extract data about their travels from only Nephi's record. If ever the reader has felt a lack of specific details, this loss of twenty-five percent of the record may be part of the reason.

Let us now look at the book, reason about their travels, and trace the geography supplied by those journeys.

### B. The Borders by the Red Sea

In response to the commandment given to him in a dream in 600 BCC (Before the Coming of Christ), Lehi "...departed into the wilderness; And he came down by



the borders near the shores of the Red Sea.” (1 Nephi 1:29-30 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:4-5 LDS] The wilderness would have been only a short distance from Jerusalem. Even though we were not given the amount of time it took Lehi’s group to get near the Red Sea, some readers believe it was explained by the three days mentioned in the following verses:

...when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley beside a river of water”  
 (1 Nephi 1: 33 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:6 LDS]

As a sidelight, calling a waterway “a river of water” seems redundant to us unless we know that the writer was from an arid region of the world where most riverbeds were dry except during the rainy season. Then at times the waterways would very quickly fill with dangerous flash floods. For Nephi to mention stopping to set up camp by a river of water probably implied that they left Jerusalem around the time of the spring rains.

Another citation to the amount of time spent traveling is found in the preface to 1 Nephi where “the Lord warns Lehi to depart out of the Land of Jerusalem...He taketh three days’ journey into the wilderness with his family.”

A direct line as the crow flies from Jerusalem south to the Red Sea is approximately 150 to 160 miles. But we realize that their course in that area would not have been in an unswerving line, so the actual distance would have been more.

**At least during the Old Testament era, there are various instances where the Red Sea covered much more territory than it does today:**

**First – The Gulf of Aqaba.** The Bible mentions that “..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 IV/KJV). We know these places and the land of Edom are located on the Gulf of Aqaba, which was part of the Red Sea (Figure 2-1).

**Second – The Gulf of Suez.** References of this gulf being identified as the other arm of the Red Sea are found in Exodus: “And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 10:19 IV/KJV), and “But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea; and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 13:18 IV/KJV).

**Third – The Persian Gulf.** Josephus told us that the Red Sea also included this gulf when he clarified that the “Euphrates also, as well as Tigris, goes down into the Red Sea” (Book 1. Ch. 1, v.3), (Figure 5-6). Therefore anciently, the Gulf of Suez, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Persian Gulf on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula were all part of the Red Sea. More recent terms have clouded our understanding, so when we consider the Red Sea, we assume Lehi traveled far to get there, but it seems the upper shores of the Gulf of Aqaba (Figure 2-1) may have been the borders mentioned. Another plausible explanation would be that the gulf extended further



Figure 2-1 Jerusalem and the Red Sea



Figure 5-6





Figure 2-2 The Red Sea Surrounding the Arabian Peninsula

to the north toward the Dead Sea than what we see now. When Nephi wrote they had traveled three days, he may have meant to those borders. Because we are dealing with 2,600 year-old descriptions, a recent satellite photograph or a topographical map shows evidence of a great depression that exists between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. **Could the Gulf of Aqaba have been much closer to Jerusalem than it is today? Was there more water flowing into the Gulf at that time, particularly all the more so in the spring? Would the title Red Sea, or the description of the fountain of the Red Sea, have applied to this area also?** Considering Nephi's description of the Valley of Lemuel with the River Laman flowing through it (1 Nephi 1:35-37 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:8-10 LDS], the possibility of such borders of the sea cannot be quickly dismissed.

### C. Beasts of Burden

The Book of Mormon scholars surmise Lehi's family, carrying provisions and tents over rough terrain, could have made the 150-mile journey from the Jerusalem area to the Red Sea in three days. But to accomplish that, they would have had to travel pretty much non-stop at least fifty or more miles a day. We discover in the following website the possible distance Lehi and his people could cover. "A typical walking speed on a gentle trail with a daypack is 2.5 - 3 miles per hour...More load and a tougher trail may slow you down" (*wilderness-backpacking.com*).

According to this, in conjunction with the distance assumed by the scholars, plus disregarding their hiking in a rocky wilderness and transporting all the necessities—which would definitely slow them down, they would be lucky to get a total of four hours of rest a day. Since that seems almost impossible, let's consider the use of camels, as they would have been the pack animals most likely to survive in that environment.

Carrying 200 pounds, camels can travel an average of 20 miles per day. If...you want to travel by camel for a longer distance you'll need to take into consideration how many days it will take to reach your destination and how many pack camels will be needed to carry your supplies. —*Morocco Travel Guide*<sup>1</sup>

At that rate, we can assume they would have totaled a mere sixty miles in three days. This is not nearly enough to get them from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Aqaba, or, as was pointed out earlier, even further to what today we know as the Red Sea.

No mention of camels or other beasts of burden was made, but Lehi may have had animals to ride and to carry their essentials. Even so, 'may have' is not good enough if we want to rely solely on the words in the book to establish the geographical facts. In fact, Nephi did not indicate animals were used when he recorded that Lehi "took nothing with him save it were his family and provisions and tents, And he departed into the wilderness" (1 Nephi 1:29 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:4 LDS].

There were several desperate times when lack of food became a life or death situation. If animals had been available then, they would have quite possibly been used for food instead of for carrying provisions or people. The only mention of animals is in the context of those hunted for food.

Walking and carrying their own provisions would not have gotten them to the gulf, or likely even half way. **So how far did they go in those three days?**

The fact the brothers returned to Jerusalem gives reason to suppose that the distance was much shorter than the 150-160 direct miles required to reach the upper gulf. Three days traveling brought them to the river Laman and the valley Lemuel, named by Lehi after

<sup>1</sup> Morocco Travel Guide. [www.journeybeyondtravel.com/news/morocco-travel/camel-4x4-quad-tours-morocco.html](http://www.journeybeyondtravel.com/news/morocco-travel/camel-4x4-quad-tours-morocco.html). Nov 2012.



his two eldest sons. Geographically, we find the river Laman "...emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea," (1 Nephi 1:36 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:9 LDS]. The 1828 Webster's Dictionary, which explained terms used in Joseph Smith's day, defines fountain as a spring or source; therefore, at least this one source of the Red Sea could have been in an area much closer to Jerusalem than the distant gulf.

Upon direction from the Lord, after obtaining the plates of brass and arriving back in camp, Nephi and his brothers made a return trip to Jerusalem in order to bring Ishmael, his daughters, and his sons with their families down to Lehi's encampment.

### *D. Precise Directions*

After many great experiences with the Lord at this place, "the voice of the Lord spake unto my father by night and commanded him that on the morrow he should take his journey into the wilderness" (1 Nephi 5:10 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:9 LDS].

A round ball "of curious workmanship" made of "fine brass" (1 Nephi 5:11 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:10 LDS], also referred to as a director, liahona, or compass (Alma 17:71RLDS) [Alma 37:38 LDS], was provided by the Lord at that time. Following where it pointed, they then left and traveled "...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 Nephi 5:16 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:13 LDS].

It may be because of the liahona that they knew the actual direction they traveled, but it is also evident that the term south, southeast was fairly precise and tells us they were aware of exact directions and took this knowledge with them to the Land of Promise. When subsequent scribes described their travels, battles and locations, terms proposed by modern scholars—such as Nephite north—must not be substituted. These investigators invented terminology so The Book of Mormon's ancient sites would fit the current maps of Mesoamerica, and thus they twisted the cardinal directions to suit their ideas of those historical locations. In "From the

East to the West: The Problem of Directions in the Book of Mormon," Brandt Gardner has an interesting solution based on the Maya world-view. In our society, the points of the compass are in the shape of a cross. "The Mesoamerican system, on the other hand, is better represented in the form of an 'x.' East is not a line toward the sun at the equinox, but the entire wedge created by tracing the passage of the sun along the horizon from solstice to solstice from the center" (126-127). But even with this broader unique perspective, plus a flexible centering concept, the limited Maya cultural boundaries did not extend enough to make this a valid application to the far-ranging ideas of modern geographers.

The precious liahona was preserved and may have been used by the Nephites when they later fled from the land of their first inheritance in the Americas (2 Nephi 4:7-12 RLDS) [2 Nephi 5:5-8 LDS] and perhaps even as they further withdrew, under the direction of Mosiah, and traveled to the land of Zarahemla (Omni 1:20-23 RLDS) [Omni 1:12-13 LDS]. Much later in the book, Alma entrusted it to his son Helaman (Alma 17:71, 83 RLDS) [Alma 37:38, 47 LDS].

Modern day preconceived notions assuming geographic details in The Book of Mormon change over time and create the appearance of an awkward and inconsistent record and should not be tolerated. The ancients knew their directions and were very aware of their bearings, for example, perfectly aligning buildings to the sun. **We must accept that north was north, east was east, west was west, south was south, and south, southeast was south, southeast!** If this assumption is adhered to, the terms northward and southward may then be extrapolated from the basic cardinal directions. **What does it do to the plain and precious nature of the record written by The Book of Mormon prophets and translated by the gift and power of God by Joseph Smith, Jr., if something as simple as these terms must be wrested by the reader in order to understand what the writers really meant?** Look up the compelling comments by Matheny<sup>2</sup> about the contorted Nephite North theory.

<sup>2</sup>Matheny, Deanne G. "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography" Chapter 8. Signature Books Library. <http://signaturebookslibrary.otg/?p=10224>





Figure 2-3 Location of Nahom

### E. From Shazer to Nahom

Lehi's party left Shazer and followed the directions of the liahona, and, as Nephi wrote, traveled:

...Following the same direction, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness which were in the borders near the Red Sea. And...we did travel for the space of many days... And we did follow the directions of the ball which led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness. And after that we had traveled for the space of many days, we did pitch our tents for the space of a time...  
 (1 Nephi 5:18-21 RLDS)[1 Nephi 16:14-17 LDS]

This new location was not named, but it was here that Nephi broke his steel bow, obtained food and later

followed the directions given on the ball. (1 Nephi 5:26-34 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:21-28 LDS]

They left this place, and again "...traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning...traveled for the space of many days [to]...the place which was called Nahom" (1 Nephi 5:42-44 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:33-34 LDS].

Unlike Shazer, which was named by them, Nahom was presumably already named. Recently near the city of Ma'rib in the Arabian Peninsula, a monument has been translated with the tribal name Nahom carved on it. It is the only archaeological site found, so far, that bears this word on a permanent ancient stone marker dated to as early as the sixth or seventh century BCC (*S. Kent Brown*<sup>3</sup>). **But was this the location of The Book of Mormon Nahom, or merely an altar erected for those who were there and whose name appears on it?** Let us examine the location and distances from the Red Sea and the time intervals to help us discover the answer.

Because the text does not mention the use of animals for transportation, and we are basing this discussion solely on The Book of Mormon information, and for other reasons previously discussed, we need to look at their travels in the context of walking.

To review their travels, initially they spent three days in the wilderness, then four, then many days, then an additional journey of many days. In the first journey, they were essentially escaping from the environs of Jerusalem. They returned twice, so the distance to the Red Sea could not have been very great. We don't actually know, but what we do know is that they would not have been as far south as the Gulf of Aqaba, that was also known as the Red Sea.

After leaving the first stopping place where Lehi had "...pitched his tent in a valley beside a river of water [which] ...emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 1:33, 36 RLDS) [1 Nephi 2:6, 9 LDS] and following the direction of the liahona, he took his people on a trip of four more days. Again, we don't know the distance, only the time it took. We do realize, however, that the group now included Ishmael's family and was much larger with a different makeup with additional sons and daughters—older individuals—and perhaps young children. The distance would not have been very great before they "...did pitch their tents again" (1 Nephi 5:16 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:13 LDS] in Shazer.

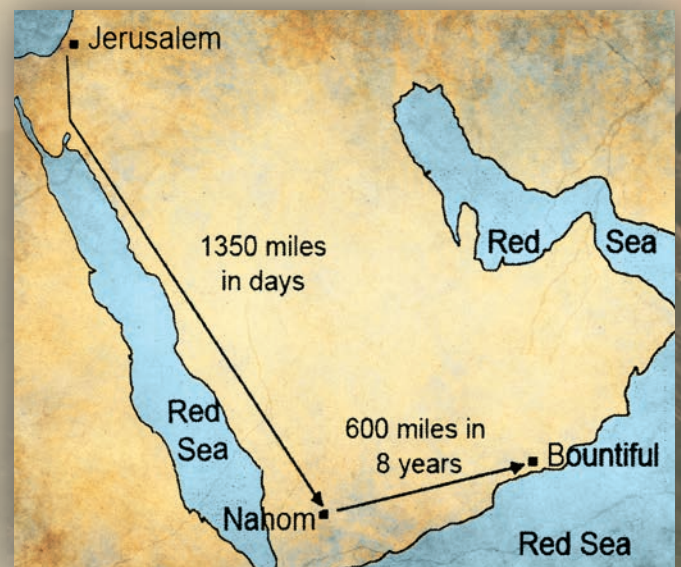


Figure 2-4 Distance from Jerusalem to Nahom and the proposed site of Bountiful

<sup>3</sup> S. Kent Brown. "On NAHOM / NHM".  
[https://www.nephiproject.com/on\\_nahom.htm](https://www.nephiproject.com/on_nahom.htm)



On the next sojourn, 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." (1 Nephi 5:18 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:14 LDS] They then stopped to "pitch our tents for the space of a time, that we might again rest ourselves and obtain food." (1 Nephi 5:21 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:17 LDS] This location is not named, but it was here that Nephi broke his steel bow. After that they traveled to Nahom where "Ishmael died and was buried." (1 Nephi 5:44 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:34 LDS]

The distance from their previous location is not given, and the traveling time is again many days. However, the direction of travel is designated as "nearly the same course as in the beginning" (1 Nephi 5:42 RLDS) [1 Nephi 16:33 LDS], which was south because, on examining a map, we see they had to travel south from Jerusalem to avoid the Salt Sea, commonly known as the Dead Sea. (*Figure 2-1*)

The very definite south, southeast was only specified after they received the liahona and after they left that first valley. Again, when consulting a map, from that camp we see that to proceed in a south, southeast direction does not lead to the Gulf of Aqaba but to an area east of it. If we would still assume fairly long distances each day for the Lehi-Ishmael party, their continuous traveling in this direction would have positioned them at the main body of the red Sea long before they reached the very distant Nahom. Assuming shorter distances would have located them somewhere close to the Gulf of Aqaba (*Figure 2-1*) but not anywhere near the 1,350 air miles from the head of the Red Sea to the proposed site of Nahom in present day Yemen (*Map distance from Ataq to Aqaba*).

## F. An Eight-Year Journey

After leaving Nahom, the family of Lehi "did travel nearly eastward from that time forth...And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea even eight years in the wilderness" (1 Nephi 5:55, 61 RLDS) [1 Nephi 17:1, 4 LDS]. Scholars propose the Lehi group went from Nahom to Bountiful, modern day Salalah in Oman (*Warren P. Aston*<sup>4</sup>), (*Figure 2-4*) on the southern Arabian coast. That desert expedition from Nahom would entail only 600 miles. To travel the 1,350 air miles from Jerusalem to Nahom, which Nephi measured in days, would have demanded an exceptional marathon accomplishment! To traverse the 600 miles

in eight years would have required them to slow down to less than baby steps!

Alma mentioned that the compass worked when they were faithful, but also that they brought difficulties upon themselves when they wandered without its guidance. He said if

They were slothful and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence, And then those marvelous works ceased and they did not progress in their journey; Therefore, they tarried in the wilderness, or did not travel a direct course, and were afflicted with hunger and thirst...

(Alma 17:76 RLDS) [Alma 37:41 LDS]

If they were continually sinful and consequently perpetually wandering around in circles without any guidance—or essentially stuck in one location, I believe Nephi would have mentioned it. Their travel in the desert suggested by some scholars would not have produced the physically strong people portrayed. (1 Nephi 5:56-57 RLDS) [1 Nephi 17:1-2 LDS] More than that, under such harsh conditions many of them would either have died, or the families of Laman, Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael would have certainly turned back to Jerusalem. These were the same sons who threatened to kill Nephi because they felt forced to leave that city. Since they had traveled in the most fertile parts of the wilderness which were in the borders near the Red Sea, they would have had only to keep the sea on their left in order to return through the wilderness to locations they recognized—a journey of no more than two to three months at most.

Following the eight years, Nephi records:

And we did come to the land, which we called Bountiful... And we beheld the sea which we called Irreantum, which being interpreted is "many waters."

(1 Nephi 5: 62, 64 RLDS) [1 Nephi 17:5 LDS]

In Lehi's time, we have learned that all fingers of the Arabian Sea were also known as the Red Sea. Therefore, the Arabian Peninsula was completely surrounded by the Red Sea. With Lehi's cosmopolitan background of living in a very populated area and being familiar with more than one language, he would have quite likely been aware of the extent of the sea. If this were true, then why would they give another name, Irreantum, to the sea?

<sup>4</sup>Aston, Warren P. "Find Nephi's 'Bountiful' in the Real World". <http://ldsmag.com/ldsmag/bookofmormon/080117nephi.html>



According to the supposed location of Nahom (in the lower peninsula), going from there to Bountiful would not have taken long; therefore, an eight-year sojourn in this area does not match the description given in *The Book of Mormon*.

The report of their travel conditions, the food provided, the strength gained—particularly with the women, and the necessity of the brass ball leads to the conclusion that the wilderness they were going through was much more than just 600 miles. These people had to have turned east much sooner and traveled—not on the Red Sea peninsula, as some have proposed, but according to the amount of time out of Jerusalem, to the coast of Asia and waters of the Pacific.

While the blessing of the liahona was apparent from its very arrival, it may not have been as important as it was while traveling those eight years. At the start, they were essentially traveling south, southeast in an area that was somewhat familiar to them, at least by reputation. On the way to the Far East, the functionality of the liahona would certainly have demanded a faith and diligence crucial for directing them safely through the lands they would have encountered.

In his description of their journey, Nephi used the phrase “**nearly eastward**” in regard to which way they traveled. He was writing after-the-fact, while in the Promised Land, and many details of their travels were left out. Remember that the small plates he was writing on were to contain the more sacred record, and he knew the large plates contained the full account written chiefly by Lehi, but also by himself. This was lost when the 116 pages were stolen. So Nephi’s description was very sparse here. To record they were traveling **nearly eastward** when writing after a long ocean voyage, doesn’t have the same precision as south, southeast does. We must also assume the term eastward was consistently east, much like the use of the terms northward and southward do not indicate directly north and south.

### *G. Nearly Eastward*

**If these people from Jerusalem didn’t go to the southeastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, but traveled overland to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, where did they turn east, and what lands did they travel through?** From *The Book of Mormon* descriptions, the distance to the Nahom cited would have put them close to the northern borders of the Gulf of Aqaba.



Figure 2-5 *Nearly Eastward for Eight Years*

Turning east from there, they would have encountered the Arabian Desert.

Similar to the desert of the lower peninsula, this area is not hospitable, so they would have spent as little time as possible there. However, possessing the liahona, carrying provisions for the trip, and possibly having some roads, it might have been a somewhat better experience than we can imagine from our present day.

Recent satellite maps have shown, to the surprise of many, ancient roads and what looks like village ruins in this area. A direct eastward journey from the area of Aqaba would have put Lehi near the thirtieth parallel and would have taken them across the desert to the mountainous areas east of the Persian Gulf. We have previously shown by the writings of Josephus that this body of water was also called the Red Sea.

Although a nearly eastward trail—the Silk Road—didn’t exist until 400 years (206 BCC) after Lehi’s journey, the liahona could have led them along that most effective 4,000-mile route to the East. They would have been directed through steep mountain passes, would have skirted foreboding deserts and would have been led to welcoming oases along the way (*The Silk Road*<sup>5</sup>).

Eight years of going eastward seems to be more consistent with the physical description of their travels than does the Nahom-Bountiful theory, no matter how

<sup>5</sup> “The Silk Road”. [www.ess.uci.edu/~oliver/silk.html](http://www.ess.uci.edu/~oliver/silk.html). Oct 19, 1913.



convincing that theory might be. Here is what took place in those eight years:

And we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth; And we did travail and wade through much affliction in the wilderness; And our women bore children in the wilderness; And...we did live upon raw meat in the wilderness, our women did give plenty of suck for their children and were strong, yea, even like unto the men; And they began to bear their journeyings without murmuring. 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 ways and means whereby they can accomplish the thing which He hath commanded them; Wherefore, He did provide ways and 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.

(1 Nephi 5:55-61 RLDS)

[1 Nephi 17:1-4 LDS]

**Where in the lower Arabian Desert would they find enough raw meat and water for the women to nurse their children? Where, in the short distance**

**previously proposed for the Nahom-Bountiful journey, would these people gain strength for eight arduous years?**

The direct distance from the Red Sea to the east coast of Asia is approximately 6,000 miles. A group proceeding only 200 days a year (which allows for 165 days to rest, to grow crops, etc.) and no more than ten miles per day would progress about 2,000 miles per year. At that rate, in eight years the distance covered would be somewhere around 16,000 miles. Since they needed to go only 6,000 miles, either the distance needed to cover each day would diminish to around three to four miles or they would stop more often for extended camping along the way. Certainly circumventing rivers, mountains and other less favorable regions, some daily treks would be shorter. Traveling for even three to four miles per day is a modest estimate, as is traveling for two hundred days per year. The Empty Quarter area of the Arabian Desert would not be the place they spent their eight-years.

### *H. Sea Travel*

Some investigators have developed a very detailed scenario for the location of Bountiful on the coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It is complete with a large hill or mountain to which Nephi was supposed to have gone when the Lord directed him to build a ship, and which provided nearby iron ore deposits

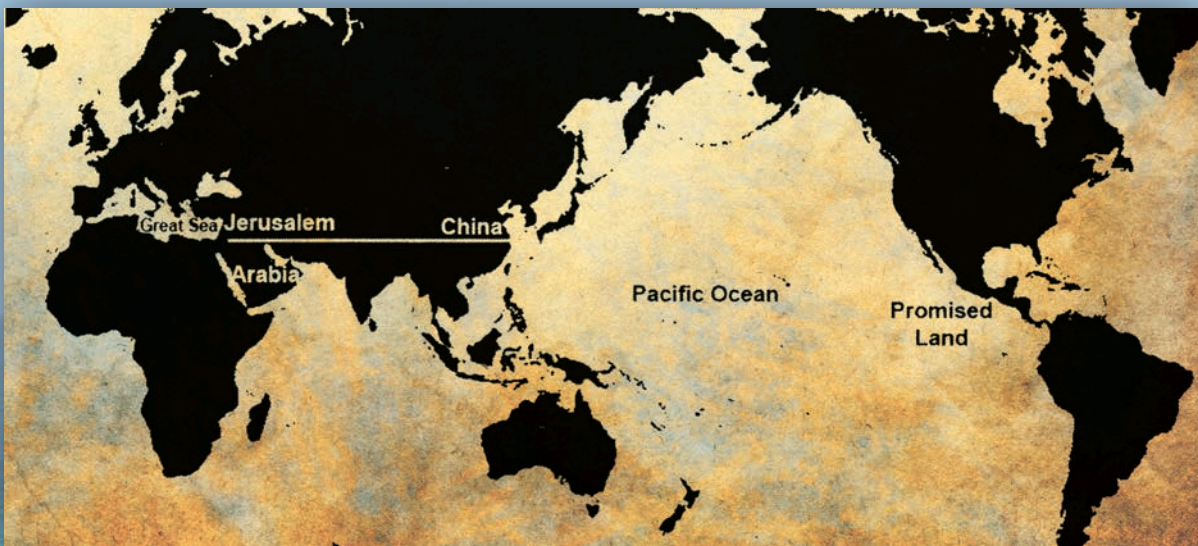


Figure 2-6 Nephte Sea Travel



for him to make tools. It had fruit trees, a beach and everything else they felt was necessary for it to be the location of Bountiful. Stones found there are even identified as sanctuary markers, house stones, and possibly animal pens. Tour groups visit these places and are told, "This is the location from which Lehi left for the Promised Land." But the text tells a different story—the true story.

After the ship was constructed, a long ocean voyage was undertaken. It is presumed they sailed east and landed in the Promised Land somewhere on the western shores of the American continent. The Jaredites also came to this continent by boat many years earlier. Some have proposed the Jaredites traveled overland to the eastern shores of Asia and then in 344 days crossed the Pacific Ocean. (Ether 3:13 RLDS) [Ether 6:11 LDS] Close examination of the last chapter of this booklet, "Moron: The Land of Their First Inheritance", will show this is incorrect.

If the Lehi-Ishmael group did leave from the Arabian Sea, the ocean distance would have increased over that which has been proposed for the Jaredites by at least 6,000 to 7,000 miles. Examine the many seas between Arabia and the Pacific Ocean to visualize the territory the Nephites would have had to navigate just to reach the Pacific Ocean (*Figure 2-6*).

As it is, the distance from Shanghai on the coast of China to Guatemala City in Central America

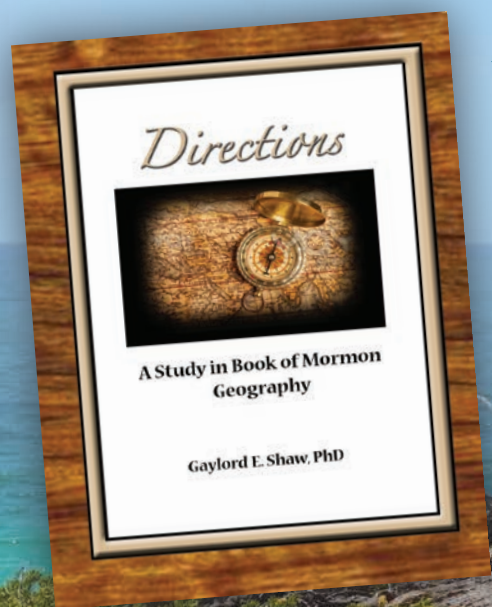
is 8,617 miles. Add an additional 6,000 to that if Lehi's people had left from the southern Arabian coast, which means they would have sailed about 14,600 miles. That's over 2,000 miles more than going halfway around the world! Nephi mentioned they were on the water "many days" twice at different times during the voyage. (1 Nephi 5:182, 212 RLDS) [1 Nephi 18:9, 23 LDS] Lehi's family was not veteran sailors. One must ask if the above presumed course is consistent with what we know about the facts of the time, the directions and the people the Lord loved and lead to the Promised Land. It is not.

Perhaps at some future time the information in the Book of Lehi will again be available. If it is, we will know more about their travels in the wilderness. For now, we must use what we have, and what we have tells us that these people, under God's direction, left Jerusalem, traveled south, then south, southeast, and finally eastward, until eight years later they reached an area by a sea which "we 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...We were exceedingly rejoiced when we came to the seashore." (1 Nephi 5:62-63, 66 RLDS) [1 Nephi 17:5-6 LDS]

At this location, also under the Lord's direction, a unique ship was built. Then the ocean was crossed and the Land of Promise was reached.

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*This portion of Directions A Study in Book of Mormon Geography printed with permission from Faye Shaw.*



Available for purchase at The Book of Mormon Foundation. \$15



# Jesus Came Here Also

by Frank Evan Frye

Jesus Christ said that He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He said that they would hear His voice. The Lord also prophesied through Ezekiel that He personally would seek out His lost sheep of the house of Israel. This small booklet shows some of the evidence that our Lord ministered to His lost sheep of the House of Israel in America and elsewhere shortly after His ascension into heaven nearly two thousand years ago.

It is because of His visits to the many tribes of native Americans that there are so many legends of a bearded God who descended from the heavens and taught the people here a new and better way of life many centuries ago.

Carved in stone and engraved in the hearts of the ancient people of the Americas is the same God of Israel and God of the whole earth—Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the Old Testament and the Savior of the New Testament. He came and taught His “other sheep” and then He left with the promise to return.

## THE EVIDENCE OF PRE-COLUMBIAN MANUSCRIPTS AND LEGENDS

There is a persistent story in the history of North, Central and South America of a bearded god who descended from the heavens in their distant past. He had many different names depending on languages and cultures, but his characteristics were nearly always the same wherever he appeared. **Quetzalcoatl** was also known among other cultures and language groups as **Kukulkan**, **Gucumatz**, and others (**QKG**).

No matter where he appeared, He was always characterized by the same teachings:

- He was identified as the god of creation.
- He was known as the source of all light, knowledge and life.
- A new star was associated with his birth.
- He was born of a virgin and lived about 2000 years ago.
- He descended and ascended in a cloud.

*Kukulkan, the bearded white god,  
Chitzen Itza, Mexico*

- He wore a white robe and a beard.
- He had a lighter complexion than the people that he visited.
- He taught love and peace.
- He sacrificed his own life for his creation.
- There were three days of darkness at his death.
- He returned from the land of the dead (resurrection).
- He promised to return.

His followers identified him with many symbols, some of which were:

- The morning star (Venus).
- The cross.
- The feathered serpent (as opposed to a non-feathered serpent).
- Maize (the *bread of life* or staple for the native Americans).

All of these characteristics point directly to one person who is known and still loved and worshipped around the world—Jesus Christ the Messiah of the Bible. They characterize the life and ministry of Jesus also.

**The Old Testament** begins with the promise of a Messiah, one who would be born of a virgin. As Biblical history develops, God selected a certain people to be a special witness for Him. God named them Israel and gave them many promises through the prophets. In Deuteronomy, God gave blessings for Israel if they would be obedient. He told the people of Israel what would befall them if they were disobedient.





Quetzalcoatl, National Palace, Mexico City



He said that they would “be removed **into all the kingdoms of the earth.**” (Deuteronomy 28:25 IV/KJV) The promise is made that they would be scattered “among all people, **from one end of the earth even unto the other.**” (Deuteronomy 28:64 IV/KJV) Later in the Bible, Jeremiah speaks the word of the Lord saying: “And I will cause them to be removed **into all the kingdoms of the earth.**” (Jeremiah 15:4 IV/KJV)

Israel became disobedient, so the Lord prophesied through Ezekiel to the leaders of Israel. He said that they had not properly cared for the sheep, the flock of Israel: “My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea **my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth.**” (Ezekiel 34:6 IV/KJV) Because of this, the Lord promises in verse 11: “For thus saith the Lord God; **Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.**” (Ezekiel 34:11 IV/KJV)

**The New Testament** records these significant statements by Jesus. In Matthew 15:24 (IV/KJV), Jesus said: “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” If Israel had been scattered over all the face of the earth and into all nations, then Jesus’ ministry cannot have been limited to the small area around Jerusalem where he traveled during his earthly life. In fact, Jesus told his disciples that his ministry *would not* be limited to the “sheepfold” around Jerusalem. In John 10:16 (IV/KJV) he stated: “And **other sheep** I have, which are **not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice;** and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.”

**In the Old Testament**, the Lord promised that He personally would seek out his lost sheep of the house of Israel. In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus makes a similar declaration where He promises that these other sheep which are not of the fold (corral or land around Jerusalem), will be sought out by Him personally, and they will hear His voice. How could they hear his voice and be personally tended to if He did not visit them? In order to fulfill that prophecy Jesus had to travel elsewhere.

**The Book of Mormon** declares that Jesus did descend from heaven and minister to His “other sheep” in the Western Hemisphere. Jesus announced to His people in the Land Bountiful (in southern Mexico), “And verily, I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said, other sheep I have which are not of this fold.” (3 Nephi 7:20 RLDS) [3 Nephi 15:21 LDS]

Continuing, Jesus said:

And verily, verily, I say unto you, that I have other sheep, which are not of this land; neither of the land of Jerusalem; neither in any parts of that land round about, whither I have been to minister. For they of whom I speak, are they who have not as yet heard my voice; neither have I at any time manifested myself unto them.



Cruciform Tomb, Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico



But I have received a commandment of the Father, that I shall go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold, and one shepherd; therefore I go to shew myself unto them. (3 Nephi 7:24-26 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:1-3 LDS]

According to these accounts, Jesus descended from heaven just as the native Americans described the visit of their bearded god from heaven. Anyone can easily see the similarities between Jesus the Messiah and the god who came down from heaven and taught the people of the Western Hemisphere so long ago. These similarities are too numerous and similar to be easily ignored by the open minded investigator.

The common occurrence of the cross in Mesoamerica and the belief in Christian doctrines and practices, on the part of many native Americans, such as resurrection from the dead, baptism for remission of sins, a form of the partaking of bread and wine as an ordinance, and many others, make it difficult to deny the clear teachings of both the Bible and the Book of Mormon about an extended ministry of the Lord Jesus to other parts of the world after his ascension from the saints in the Old World.

The Book of Mormon teaches that Jesus left the Israelites to whom he had appeared in the Land Bountiful, to visit others of the lost sheep of the House of Israel in parts unknown to them. It is easy to identify where He visited by examining the beliefs and teachings of indigenous peoples in other parts of the Western Hemisphere and the islands of the sea. The clear footprints of His ministry take us into many areas of North America, Canada, other parts of Mexico and Central America, South America, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

Some of the symbols identified with Quetzalcoatl/Kukulcan/Gucumatz (QKG) may not be obvious to western Christianity, but they are truly Christian symbols just the same. We must remember not to impose the meaning of symbols from our culture upon a symbol with similar appearance from another culture. Symbols must always be taught by those who already know their meaning. Thus, when Jesus states in the book of Revelation (22:16 IV/KJV) that he is “the bright and morning star,” we should not be surprised when others who were taught by that same Jesus, choose to use the symbol of the morning star to represent Him, even if we do not.

Some question how the feathered serpent symbol can have a possible connection with Jesus Christ. It is really quite simple to establish a clear and Biblical relationship. The Lord commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and lift it up on a pole for the healing of the people who had sinned (Numbers 21:6-9 IV/KJV).

The symbolism of the serpent lifted up on a pole is very ancient. It appears first in Sumer after the flood of Noah. It always has had the meaning of “healing.” It was carried from ancient times into the Greek mythology in the form of Hermes and to the Roman pantheon in the form of Mercury and into our modern culture as the symbol of medical science.

How could this symbolize Jesus? How could a metal snake have healing powers? The brass serpent did *not* have healing powers. The only virtue that it had was its symbolism of Jesus Christ and the faith that the Israelites had in Him. Jesus clearly explained that the brazen serpent represented Him and his ministry of atonement. When the Israelites began to worship it years later, one of the kings of Israel had it destroyed (2 Kings 18:1-4 IV/KJV).



Yalalag  
Crosses



Caduceus: The symbol for  
medical science  
and healing



Moses & the Brazen Serpent  
(art by Glenn Scott)



In John (3:14-16 IV/KJV) Jesus himself explains it to us:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish; but have everlasting life.

Note that Jesus compares himself to the brass serpent that was lifted up to heal the people.

Why did Jesus choose a serpent to represent his own person and ministry? Paul explains it well in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (IV/KJV).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Why were the

ancient Israelites healed when they turned to look at a serpent raised up? As they turned to look, they exercised faith in the coming Messiah—Jesus Christ. Moses would never have set up an idol for the people. That was forbidden in the Law (Exodus 20:4 IV/KJV). He made a brazen serpent at God’s command, and he would have taught them of its true meaning—that it was a symbol of their Savior the Messiah.

As Jesus the Messiah hung on the cross, the sins of the world were poured upon Him. He became sin for us. He received the punishment of eternal death that we were destined for. Even His Father forsook Him in the hour of His death. He that was lifted up became detestable, and that serpent which was lifted up, became a fitting symbol of our redemption and of the atonement.

The Book of Mormon explains this event in detail:

Yea, did he [Moses] not bear record, that the Son of God should come? And as he lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, even so shall he be lifted up who should come. And as many as should look upon that serpent should live, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God, with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that life which is eternal.

(Helaman 3:47-48 RLDS) [Helaman 8:14-15 LDS]



Palace of Cortez, Cuernavaca, Mexico

Even the prophet Malachi makes an indirect reference to this ministry of the coming Messiah when the Holy Spirit testifies through him: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” (Malachi 4:2 IV/KJV)

The Israelites in the New World had come from Jerusalem more than 600 years closer to the time of Moses than the writers of the New Testament. The symbolism of the serpent that had been lifted up to save their ancestors was still vivid in their memories. As their art and religious traditions developed, they included these symbols which had meant so much to their national history.

The DVD *Quetzalcoatl: Evidence that Jesus Christ Ministered in Ancient America* will explain in greater detail the history of this great historical figure. It is available now. Call 816-716-1026. It is also available at The Book of Mormon Foundation, 210 W White Oak, Independence, Missouri 64050.



Feathered Serpents, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico





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# PROPHECY WATCH

One of the prophetic signs of the times is very active in the news today! The large influx of people from Mesoamerica, especially children, is on the increase and can't seem to be stopped by our border patrol. They are coming from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, which are countries thought by many scholars to be Book of Mormon lands. The Book of Mormon specifically speaks about this prophetic sign as Jesus described events we would see in the last days:

But if the Gentiles will repent, and return unto me, saith the Father, behold, they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel; And I will not suffer my people, who are of the house of Israel, to go through among them, and tread them down, saith the Father. But if they will not turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, yea, I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down. (3 Nephi 7:38-40 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:13-15 LDS]

A recent article by Hansi Lo Wang reports on some of the details.

For the past three years, Guatemala has been one of the top countries of origin for migrant children crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Last November, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops released a report on unaccompanied migrant children after a fact-finding trip in Central America. Their findings included:

"A significant number of youth migrating from Guatemala are from indigenous Mayan communities and are fleeing domestic violence, organized crime and poverty. Mayan youth speak up to as many as 21 distinct Mayan languages, and are from indigenous and rural settings and therefore require specialized attention, to include interpretation and translation in their language of choice and cultural understanding of Mayan culture and how that may affect the way they disclose information."

The Lord commands us, through latter day revelation, to know and look for the signs of the times and the coming of the Son of man. (D&C 45:6a, 68:1h RLDS) [D&C 45:39, 68:11 LDS] We should be watching and praying about these events as they unfold. It helps empower our testimony to those who are seeking scriptural answers, and calls us to prepare for participation in the great things coming upon the earth. (D&C 34:3d RLDS) [D&C 35:8 LDS] The great and marvelous work is real! For more information read the full article:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2014/06/27/326156407/wave-of-guatemalan-migrant-children-presents-unique-challenges>