



QUETZAL CODEX

Book of Mormon Geography: A Valid Subject

Mormon's Hidden Message

Perhaps the most common rejection of the validity of Book of Mormon geography is the great destruction c. AD 34 (3 Nephi 4:6–15 [8:6–18]) at the time of the crucifixion of Christ. Because of the land changes, some conclude it's impossible to identify where the lands were. Mormon is the main compiler/editor of The Book of Mormon and is responsible for nearly 600 geography references. He is writing c. AD 380–384, approximately 350 years after the upheaval. He is also the leading authority on geography, having lived in both the Lands Northward and Southward, as well as serving as commander over the Nephite armies.

Alma 13:68–81 [22:27–34] provides one of the key geographical passages inserted by Mormon using a Hebrew writing device called “epanalepsis” which is

loosely defined as “resumptive repetition.” The writer interrupts a thought with a digression, then the original sentence resumes by repeating the main thought or word. The digression contains material that is parenthetical and may be information which is background or supplemental to the principal thought (RCE Introduction:xi).

The passage begins with the following: “And it came to pass that the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land, amongst all his people which were in all his land, which were in all the regions round about...” (Alma 13:68 [22:27]).

Verse 68 [22:27] and the next thirteen verses (which are also chiasitic) contain references to relationships of the major Book of Mormon lands, followed by Mormon's own words in verse 82 [22:35]: “And now I, after having said this [the verses between the repetitive statements], return again to the account....” This account then resumes by repeating the main thought from verse 68 [22:27]: “Behold, now it came to pass that the king of the Lamanites sent a proclamation among all his people...” (Alma 14:1 [23:1]).

The repetition of Alma 13:68 [22:27] in 14:1 [23:1], coupled with Mormon's declaration in 13:82 [22:35], clearly highlights that everything in between is added by him and that the relationships between the lands were still known in his time.

Seven/Eight Tribes

While we normally think of two main groups in The Book of Mormon, three references reveal that, over time, they are actually made up of seven different tribes, plus one additional separate tribe. Jacob records seven tribal distinctions about fifty-five years after arrival in the New World: four Nephite tribes—Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites and Zoramites; and three Lamanite tribes—Lamanites, Lemuelites and Ishmaelites (Jacob 1:13–14 [1:13–14]). The eighth tribe is the people of Zarahemla, or “Mulekites” (Mosiah 1:15; 11:80 [1:10; 25:4]; Helaman 3:56–57 [8:21]). During the time of the “children of Christ,” after the visitation by the resurrected Lord, there were neither Lamanites “nor no manner of ‘ites’” (4 Nephi 1:20 [8:12]). Then nearly 200 years after Christ's visitation, unbelief and wickedness brought a great division into seven tribes again: True believers are called Nephites and Jacobites and Josephites and Zoramites; those who reject the gospel are called Lamanites, Lemuelites and Ishmaelites (4 Nephi 1:40–42 [36–38]).

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All Book of Mormon references throughout are from the Restored Covenant Edition (RCE) (© 1999 Zarahemla Research Foundation) unless otherwise noted [LDS in brackets].

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The Greater Land of Promise

Shirley R Heater

The Book of Mormon account records that three separate groups were brought to the Land of Promise in the New World, each to a different location—the Jaredites to the Land Northward, Lehi’s group to the Land South in the Land Southward, and the people of Mulek to the Land North in the Land Southward. Nephi also prophesies of a fourth group to come later, the Gentiles.



Jaredites

The earliest group led by God to the New World is the Jaredites from the Great Tower at the time of the confounding of language (Genesis 11:1-9; Omni 1:35-39 [1:20-21]; book of Ether). Moroni records that the Lord identifies the land where He leads the Jaredites, as well as a decree concerning this land:

And the Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness,
But He would that they should come forth, even unto the **Land of Promise** which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people;
And He had sworn in His wrath unto the brother of Jared that who should possess this **Land of Promise** from that time henceforth and forever should **serve Him**, the true and only God,
Or they should be swept off when the fullness of His wrath

should come upon them.

Ether 1:29-30 [2:7-8] (emphasis added throughout)

One might assume that it is Moroni who is applying the term “Land of Promise” to the Jaredites, writing several millennia after the Jaredites. But the verses above, while not a direct quote of the Lord’s words, reveal that this identification is made by the Lord to the brother of Jared. Moroni reiterates that the warning associated with the Land of Promise is an everlasting decree of God and applies to all nations on the Land of Promise, beginning with the Jaredites:

And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land—
That it is a Land of Promise and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall **serve God**,
Or they shall be swept off ... when they are ripened in iniquity;



... he that doth possess it shall serve God
 or shall be swept off,
 For it is the everlasting decrees of God—
 ... this is a choice land;
 And whatsoever nation shall possess it
 shall be free from bondage and from
 captivity and from all other nations
 under heaven,
 If they will but serve the God of the land
 which is Jesus Christ

Ether 1:31-32, 35 [2:9, 12]

The Jaredites were given the new land as their land of inheritance (Ether 1:14, 42 [1:38; 2:15]). As a nation they occupied the Land Northward (see map, p. 2). “The whole face of the Land Northward was covered with inhabitants” (Ether 4:70 [10:22]), while the Land Southward was preserved for a wilderness “to get game” (Ether 4:69 [10:21]). Thus we see that this land of the Jaredites’ inheritance was located on only part of the Land of Promise. And according to the decree of God, the great Jaredite nation was ultimately destroyed when it ripened in iniquity (Omni 1:39 [1:22]). The destruction was so great, their land was called Desolation (Alma 13:74-75 [22:30-31]) by the Nephites who came after the Jaredites (Ether 3:43 [7:6]).

Nephites

Lehi and those who came with him make up the second group brought by the Lord to the Land of Promise. They left the land of Jerusalem about 600 BC and when they arrived in the Promised Land, they settled in the wilderness bordering by the seashore (1 Nephi 5:213-216 [18:23-25]; Alma 13:71 [22:28]). After Lehi’s death, this group split into two groups, Lamanites—those who aligned with Lehi’s eldest son remained, and Nephites—led by God into the wilderness away from the seashore to a place they called Nephi. Throughout the history of the Nephites, the place of their original arrival and settlement is referred to as the land of their fathers’ first inheritance (Mosiah 6:1 [9:1]; Alma 13:71 [22:28]). We learn later in the account that the land they occupied in the southern highlands of the Land Southward is the Land of Nephi, a separate part of the Promised Land from where the Jaredites landed and resided. There is about a 300-400



year overlap of the two nations’ separate existence without recorded contact or interaction.

Nearly 400 years after arriving in the new land, Mosiah, the Nephite leader in the Land of Nephi, and his people were led away by God down into the Land of Zarahemla because of the wickedness and threat of the Lamanites. This land to the north of Nephi was occupied by the third group of people brought to the new Promised Land.

Mulekites

The people of Zarahemla “came out from Jerusalem at the time that Zedekiah, king of Judah, was carried away captive into Babylon” (Omni 1:26 [1:15]; Zarahemla was a descendant of Mulek, the only son of Zedekiah not slain; Mosiah 11:78 [25:2]; Helaman 2:129; 3:56 [6:10; 8:21]).

In the Land of Zarahemla, after the visitation of Christ and the time of righteousness, the people began to dwindle in unbelief. The Nephites also ultimately lost this land after their treaty with the Lamanites, when “we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.” The Nephites were given the Land Northward and the Lamanites were given all the Land Southward (Mormon 1:60-62 [2:28-29]). Following the final battle at Cumorah, the Nephite nation was destroyed—at the same place and a similar fate as the Jaredites nearly 600 years earlier! Only a remnant of the Lamanites (with a “mixture” of other tribes included) survives today.

Thus the decree was fulfilled that in the fullness of the wrath of God, those who ripened in iniquity would be swept off, and a curse remains upon the lands until the remnant receives the words of The Book of Mormon (e.g., 1 Nephi 5:128-129 [17:37-38]; Jacob 2:53 [3:4]; Enos 1:15 [1:10]; Helaman 5:101 [15:11]). This is why the message of The Book of Mormon is so important—it is for the remnant of those former nations, a legacy to them through the covenants with their fathers, to come to them through the Gentiles.

Gentiles

Nephi’s vision is the key scripture of the prophecy of the Gentiles who go forth out of captivity to the Land of Promise and obtain their land of inheritance (1 Nephi 3:148-177 [13:13-30 LDS]).

Let's look at some of the characteristics of these Gentiles and their land:

1. their land of inheritance is upon the Land of Promise (1 Nephi 3:149-151 [13:14-15]; 2 Nephi 7:17 [10:10])
2. they were delivered out of captivity by the power of God (1 Nephi 3:155 [13:19])
3. it shall be a land of liberty with no kings (2 Nephi 7:18 [10:11])
4. they would be lifted up by the power of God above all other nations upon the face of the land (1 Nephi 3:176 [13:30])
5. the Lord God will raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles upon the face of this land (1 Nephi 7:15 [22:7])
6. the Bible would be of great worth (1 Nephi 3:163-164 [13:23])
7. many shall believe the words of The Book of Mormon and carry it to Lehi's remnant (2 Nephi 12:80 [30:3]; 3 Nephi 9:90 [21:4])
8. they would prosper (1 Nephi 3:151 [13:15])
9. they should serve God or be swept off when they are ripened in iniquity (Ether 1:31-34 [6:25-28])
10. if they repent, humble themselves, and not harden their hearts, they shall be numbered among the seed of Lehi and the house of Israel (1 Nephi 3:201 [14:1]; 2 Nephi 7:29 [10:18]; 3 Nephi 7:38; 9:92 [16:13; 21:6])
11. a New Jerusalem would be upon the face of this land (3 Nephi 10:2-3 [21:23-24]; Ether 6:4-10 [13:5-10])


I noted that the Gentiles' land of inheritance is *upon* the Land of Promise and reflected that this does not necessarily mean their land of inheritance covers the entirety of the Land of Promise. It is "a mighty nation among the Gentiles upon the face of this land" (i.e., there are more Gentiles than just in the mighty nation), and is "above all other nations upon the face of the land" (in other words, this nation is not the only nation on this Land of Promise). Perhaps we can all agree that the description of the land of inheritance obtained by the Gentiles in Nephi's vision is fulfilled in the nation of the United States, as known today (most likely the political boundary reflects the spiritual borders).

Where is The Book of Mormon Promised Land?

A question that I've heard over the years is, if the Gentiles were brought to what is now the US and it is the land where the New Jerusalem will be established, how can the lands of The Book of Mormon be in Mesoamerica? Through examining the four groups brought to the Promised Land—three separate areas in Mesoamerica and the Gentiles in the US—I see distinct lands where these nations grew and were given for inheritances. But each of the three early nations was swept off and their lands cursed because of wickedness, abominations and rebellion against the God of the land. The fourth, the Gentiles, were brought "forth out of captivity and ... lifted up above by the power of God above all other nations [other nations on the Land of Promise] upon the face of the land... ." This key description in the prophecy of the Gentiles contributed to my understanding of a *greater* Land of Promise which includes the United States and the

distinct lands of The Book of Mormon in Mesoamerica. The establishment of this free nation just decades earlier, provided the only place The Book of Mormon could come forth at just the right time.

I've also gained something on a more personal level. While rereading Nephi's prophecy of the Gentiles who come to this new land out of captivity, I went back to a book I had read several years ago, *The Light and the Glory* (Marshall and Manuel 1977). Written from a Christian perspective (with no connection with The Book of Mormon), they discovered Columbus's mission/vision "to serve Christ and carry His Light to heathen lands" (Marshall and Manuel 1977:29; Heater 1992a, 1992b), as prophesied in First Nephi 3:147 [13:12]. They also chronicled the desires and covenant commitment of those early Pilgrims who saw their new land as a land of liberty, a Promised Land, a New Jerusalem. Their compact, based on "a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord ... embodied the same principles of equality and government by the consent of the governed which would become the cornerstones of American Democracy [which] could be traced directly back to the ancient Hebrew tradition of all men being equal in the sight of God" (Marshall and Manuel 1977:111, 120).


I felt a connection with these Pilgrims through Nephi's prophecy, as I was also reminded of a family tradition passed on to me by my mother from her father, Warren Henry Walling. The story was that our ancestors came to this land on the Mayflower in 1623 (original name possibly Walloon, later changed to Walling). I had no name nor had I been able to verify this in the past. This time I contacted a cousin who had gathered some family history, hoping he just might have a clue I could follow up on. I learned the name of our ancestor was Ralph Wallen or Wallon, who came with his wife Joyce on the Little James¹ in 1623 (the Mayflower trips were 1620, 1628 and 1630). The Little James arrived at Plymouth and my ancestors joined the Pilgrims. With this new information, I felt a deep personal connection to those Gentiles who came out of captivity and the ultimate mission in this latter time of taking The Book of Mormon to the remnant. 

¹ The Little James is one of two sister ships to the Mayflower. The second is Anne.

Editor's Personal Note

continued from page 1

There should be eight identifiable regional patterns in the archaeological record relating to eight Book of Mormon tribes which lived during specific time periods. Also, the validity of The Book of Mormon geography requires consideration of the facts relating to an even earlier civilization—the Jaredites, as well as cultural and geographical/topographical requirements. Two articles in this issue discuss topographical requirements. "The Ups and Downs in The Book of Mormon" by Frank Evan Frye and "The Greater Land of Promise" by Shirley R Heater contribute to the ongoing preparation of a booklet of maps (by Quetzal) and DVD on geography (by Palenque Press). — SRH 

The “UPS” and “DOWNS” in The Book of Mormon

Frank Evan Frye

In The Book of Mormon certain land areas are consistently described as higher or lower depending upon the direction of travel using terms such as “up” and “down.” The manner of these descriptions puts limitations upon the size of the lands through which the inhabitants traveled. These are clues to locate the lands of The Book of Mormon. All students of The Book of Mormon agree that the lands are in the New World; however, there are many divergent theories about its geography. Some of these theories cause confusion about The Book of Mormon. As faithful witnesses we should be able to detail to an unbelieving world a consistent answer to those who ask, “Where did the story of The Book of Mormon take place?”

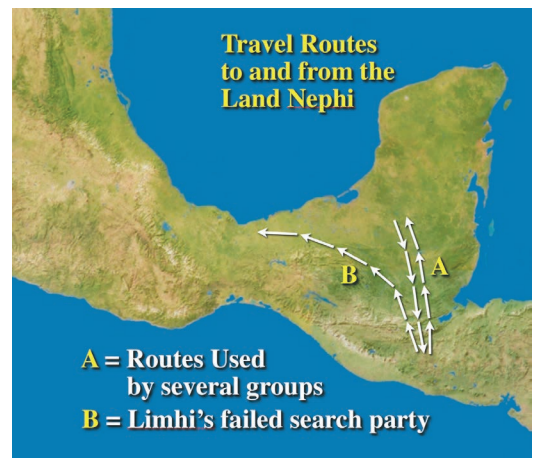
Let’s begin by considering the small group of Nephites under the leadership of Mosiah I who left their homes in the Land of Nephi to migrate **down** into the Land of Zarahemla. There they discovered the people of Mulek (Omni 1:23 [1:13]). A few verses later in the text we learn that a number of Nephites changed their minds and “went **up**’ into the wilderness, to return to the Land of Nephi” (Omni 1:48 [1:27]; see Map 2A). The “wilderness” that they traversed between the Land of Zarahemla and the Land of Nephi must be a range of mountains because later, when sixteen men were sent from Zarahemla “to go **up** to the Land Lehi-Nephi,” they wandered forty days and then “they went **down** into the Land of Nephi” indicating that they had **ascended** to a higher elevation and then gone **down** into the Land of Nephi (Mosiah 4:1–7 [6:1–5]).

¹The bold in this quote and throughout is for emphasis.



Chapter 5 [7-8] of Mosiah gives a brief summary of two generations that passed away since a group led by Zeniff had come **up** from Zarahemla and identifies Limhi, the grandson of Zeniff, as their king. This group had fallen into bondage under the rule of the Lamanites. King Limhi had sent “forty and three” of his people to look for the Land of Zarahemla to find help. This search party got lost but discovered

another land where the final battles of the Jaredite kingdoms had occurred not long before. The search party assumed that the bones and remains of this great battle belonged to the people of Zarahemla (Mosiah 9:168 [21:26]; see Map 2B).



Map 2

Search Party Clues

The descriptions given about the travels of the search parties and various groups in The Book of Mormon give us clues about the distances between the Land of Nephi and two other lands—Zarahemla and the Land Northward. When King Mosiah II’s² search party left Zarahemla to go **up** to the Land of Nephi to find Zeniff’s people who had left two generations before, they were able to find them after a forty-day trek (see Map 2A). On the other hand, the search party leaving from the Land of Nephi who were desperately looking for help from the people of Zarahemla got lost and traveled into an entirely different land. They found themselves in the area of the final battles of the Jaredites in the Land Northward near the real Hill Ramah/Cumorah (Ether 4:4; 6:83 [9:3; 15:11]; see Map 2B). Notice that they believed they had found the remains of the people of Zarahemla. This clue tells us that the distances between these two places could not have been very different.

² Grandson of Mosiah I

Map 1

It is a fair surmise that their grandparents gave them a description of the distance and direction of travel in order to get back to Zarahemla. They knew that Zarahemla was close and that they could get help fairly quickly.

During the reign of the second king of this group of Nephites (Noah—Zeniff’s son), a prophet Abinadi was sent by the Lord to call them to repentance. Abinadi converted one man (Alma I) before Abinadi was burned at the stake (Mosiah 9:1–7 [17:1–4]). Alma began teaching the words of Abinadi to all the Nephites who would come to hear him near a “thicket of trees” at a place called the “Waters of Mormon.” Eventually, when the wicked King Noah “discovered a movement among the people, [he] sent his servants to watch them” (Mosiah 9:69 [18:32]). Then, King Noah sent his army to kill them. When Alma and his people discovered the king’s plans, about 450 Nephites escaped into the wilderness (Mosiah 9:70–74 [18:32–19:1]). The important account of Alma’s escape will be described later.

Limhi’s Escape

After the deaths of Abinadi and the wicked King Noah (Mosiah 9:20–24, 96 [17:13–18; 19:20]), Limhi (Noah’s son) became the third king over that group of Nephites. The Lamanites forced them into bondage, laid heavy taxes upon them and even used them as beasts to carry heavy burdens. When the forty-three man search party arrived from their search for Zarahemla, they carefully devised a plan to escape by giving the Lamanite guards their normal tribute of wine plus even more so that they would get drunk and sleep heavily all night. Under King Noah’s rule, in addition to many other wicked practices, his people had fallen into the use of alcoholic wine, so it was available for their escape plan (Mosiah 7:20–21 [11:14]). During that night the people of King Limhi gathered all they could carry and escaped into the wilderness. They were led by Ammon and his brethren who had just made the journey from Zarahemla, so this group was able to find its way back without getting lost (see all of Mosiah chapter 10 [22:1–16]).

The Lamanite guards followed them for two days but then they became lost. They couldn’t even find their way back to their own home. After searching many days for the way back home, the Lamanite guards stumbled across Alma’s colony (Mosiah 11:34, 40–41 [23:30, 36–37]). They begged Alma and his people to tell them the way back home and even promised that if they did show them the way, they would never come back and put them into bondage. Of course, they lied and did come back with reinforcements to put Alma’s colony into bondage. Ultimately, the Lord helped them escape in a miraculous way.

More Geographical Clues

One probable reason that Limhi’s search party got lost is that they may have followed the wrong river **down** the northern side of the wilderness (mountains). Few rivers in the Western Hemisphere flow northward; however, there are two great river systems that begin in the mountains of southern

Mexico and northern Guatemala—the Usumacinta River and the Grijalva River. The Grijalva is slightly west of the Usumacinta and the Grijalva runs more to the west before emptying into what is known today as the Gulf of Mexico. Limhi’s search party would surely have been told about the River Sidon that ran **down** into the Land of Zarahemla and that if they stayed close to it they would find the City of Zarahemla.

It had been two generations since these Nephites had come **up** to the Land of Nephi to try to re-inherit that land³ from which the Lord had originally led Mosiah I. There is no evidence that they had traveled back and forth from there to Zarahemla since then. Apparently the route through the “wilderness” had been forgotten. But it is probable that Limhi’s search party was told to find the headwaters of the River Sidon and follow it down northward to the city of Zarahemla. However, if they missed that river source, but found the headwaters of the Grijalva and mistakenly followed it **down** northward (north and west) in the direction of the “Land Northward,” that would account for them finding where the final battles of the Jaredites had recently taken place (see Map 2B). Shortly after Limhi’s search party returned, the search party from Zarahemla arrived and helped them escape.

Alma’s Group: Journeys of Eight Days, One Day and Twelve Days (21 Days Total)

In chapter 11 of the book of Mosiah (11:1–76; [23:1–24:25]), we are given a flashback history of Alma’s group (living in the Land of Nephi) and what happened to them after leaving the Waters of Mormon. They “fled **eight days**’ journey into the wilderness” and came to a “beautiful and pleasant land” that they called “the Land Helam” and built a city that they called Helam (Mosiah 11:3–5, 21–22 [23:3–5, 19–20]). After building up their city and having lived in peace for some time, as noted above, the Lamanite guards discovered them while looking for the way back to their own land. These Lamanites put Alma’s people in bondage. After a period of bondage, Alma’s group was also able to escape when the Lord put the guards into “a profound sleep” (Mosiah 11:68 [24:19]). The people of Alma were told by the Lord to prepare all that night for their journey. They gathered their flocks and other things all that night, and the next day they “departed into the wilderness” while the guards were asleep. They traveled all day and then pitched their tents in a valley that they called Alma (Mosiah 11:69 [24:20]).

The Lord spoke to Alma and told him, “Haste thee and get thou and this people out of this land, for the Lamanites have awakened and do pursue thee” (Mosiah 11:73 [24:23]). Alma and his people then continued to travel into the wilderness, and “after **twelve days** they arrived to the Land of Zarahemla” (Mosiah 11:76 [24:25]; see Map 2A). These three brief accounts of travel for Alma’s group, when added

³Now Lamanite territory

together, give us the shortest travel time between the Land of Nephi and the City of Zarahemla—a total of twenty-one days. These travel days were done in haste but they did take their flocks of animals with them, meaning that they could not travel very fast. The distance that they could have traveled would be less than a few hundred miles. It is likely that they followed the river (or floated down the river part of the time) because the City of Zarahemla was located on or near the River Sidon (Alma 4:7–8 [6:7]) which ran generally northward **down** from its headwaters in the wilderness near the Land Nephi.

Alma II and the Four Sons of Mosiah “Go Up”

Chapter 12 [28] of the book of Mosiah relates the story of Alma II, the four sons of Mosiah II and a small number of others who decided to “go **up** to the Land of Nephi” in order to preach to the Lamanites. They had apparently been influenced by the commandment that the children of God “should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and mighty prayer, in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God” (Alma 4:6 [6:6]). In Mosiah chapter 12 [28] the words “go **up**” are used five times (vv. 1, 9, 10, 11, 13 [28:1, 5, 6, 7, 9]), always in relationship to Alma II and the four sons of Mosiah going to preach to the Lamanites **up** in the Land of Nephi. Alma chapter 12 [28] is another flashback story of when these young men made that journey and of what happened to them and to the Lamanites. The introductory statement of chapter 12 [28], as well as verse 13 [28:9] of the same chapter, uses the phrases “went **up**” and “go **up**” from the Land of Zarahemla to the Land of Nephi.

The Land of Nephi—the “place of their fathers’ first inheritance”—is described in the text of Alma 13:71 [22:28] as being on the west (Pacific) coast. In verse 17 of Mosiah chapter 5 [7:13], Ammon, one of the search party, relates that they had “come up out of the Land of Zarahemla,” and that Zeniff had “brought **up** out of that land” (Zarahemla) his followers (their brethren—perhaps family members) two generations before.

Narrow Strip of Wilderness

In Alma 13:68–80 [22:27–34] there is a description of “a narrow strip of wilderness” that extended “from the Sea East even unto the Sea West” that divided the Land of Zarahemla from the Land of Nephi, the “place of their fathers’ first inheritance.” This is the same strip of wilderness that the search parties apparently had to go over in order to get from one land to the other. It just happens that the only mountain range that runs east and west from coast to coast

Map 3

in the Western Hemisphere is the “Sierra de las Minas” mountain range that divides the Maya highlands on the south from the Maya lowlands on the north (see Map 3). Those mountains are found in Guatemala and southern Mexico. The highland Guatemala area has been described by modern day travelers as the “land of eternal spring.” *Just try typing in “land of eternal spring” in Google, Bing or any other search engine for the Internet and you will be given many references to the highlands of Guatemala.*

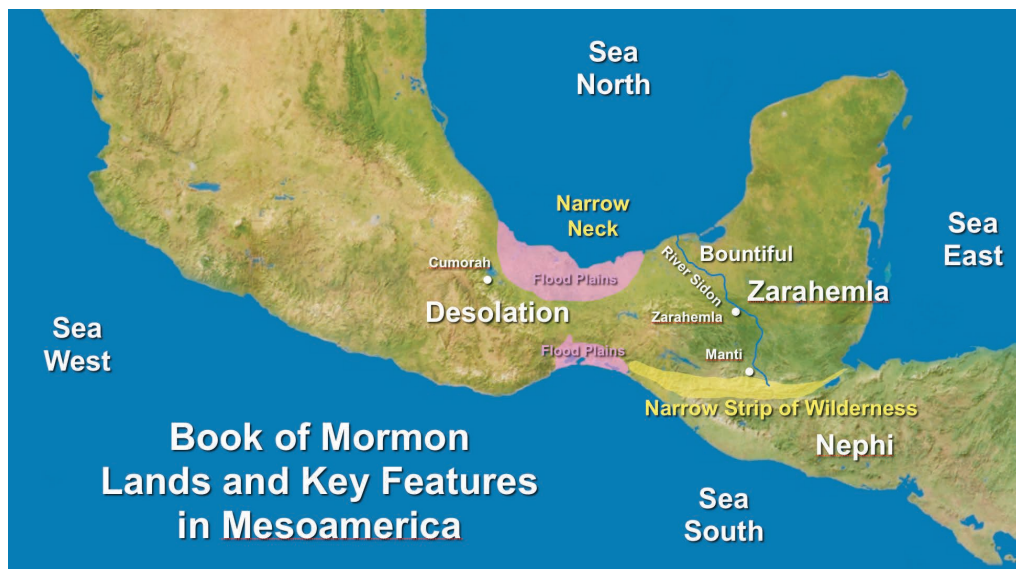
Perhaps that is the reason why Zeniff and his followers wanted to return to their homeland, in spite of the fact that it was filled with their enemies. The lowland Maya area of the “Petén” of Guatemala and southern Mexico is hot, humid and infested with mosquitoes during part of every year. In the Land of Zarahemla “the nature of the climate” is indicated by “some who died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year [were] very frequent in the land” (Alma 21:75–76 [46:40]). *The author of this article has been there many times and the description fits very well—mosquitoes and all.*

“Down Into” the Land Zarahemla to the North

We have seen that there are many references that tell how several groups of people went “**down**” from the Land of Nephi into the Land of Zarahemla to the north.

Two things are understood from these statements. The first is that obviously the Land of Zarahemla is at a lower elevation than the Land Nephi (see Map 4). The second is that if a modern writer had faked The Book of Mormon, he would never have written it that way.

Most of the first readers of The Book of Mormon between 1830 and about 1920 misunderstood its geography and thought it included the entire Western Hemisphere. If a person of the nineteenth century had concocted The Book of Mormon, the usage of the **ups** and **downs** in the text would have referred to north and south, as it is common in our culture to refer to north as **up** and south as **down** because of the way our maps are made. The localized concept of the **ups** and **downs** of Book of Mormon geography were not clearly understood until more than a hundred years





Map 4

later when students of the text began to study the geography seriously. This evidence demonstrates that The Book of Mormon is a real historical account of real people who came to the New World over 2,600 years ago as it claims.

The “Land North” and the “Land South”

Many readers of The Book of Mormon have misunderstood the references to the “Land North” and the “Land Northward.” Likewise they have confused the “Land South” and the “Land Southward.” The Land Southward which contained the Land of Zarahemla and the Land Nephi was divided into two parts: “the Land South was called *Lehi*, and the Land North was called *Mulek*, which was after the son of Zedekiah; for the Lord did bring Mulek into the Land North, and Lehi into the Land South” (Helaman 2:124, 129 [6:6, 10]; italics added, see Map 3). The Land Southward was subdivided into additional smaller lands: Bountiful, Jershon and others (see Map 1).

The Land Northward, however, was largely north of the “Narrow Neck of Land”² and contained the Land Desolation which touched the Land Bountiful at the Narrow Neck, and other areas not well defined because none of the writers of the Nephite records lived that far north until near the end of the record (see Map 1). However, we are told that shortly after Limhi’s search party discovered the remains of the Jaredites in the Land of Desolation, many thou-

² The Narrow Neck of Land should not be confused with the “Narrow Pass that led into the Land Northward” or into the “Land Southward” (Alma 24:10; Mormon 1:69).

sands of the Nephites began to migrate by land and by sea into the Land Northward and far to the north (Alma 30:5–14 [63:4–10]; Helaman 2:3–14 [3:3–15]). They began to migrate into the formerly unknown Jaredite territories which were in the Mexican high plateau areas of today’s Oaxaca, Puebla, the area of Mexico City and even farther northward. It is evident that such great population centers as Teotihuacan and Cholula were built up by Nephites who had migrated into and settled in former Jaredite areas. Since those highland plateaus have much cooler climates than the lower areas of Zarahemla and Bountiful, it is easy to see why they chose to migrate there.

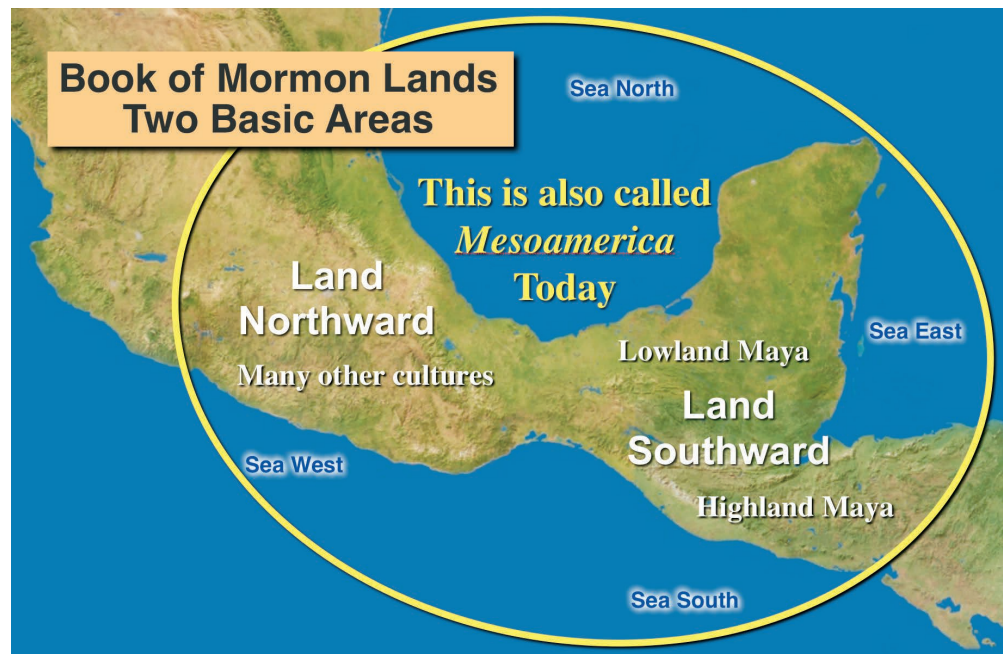
Conclusions

We see no references to “up” or “down” from anywhere in the Land Northward to the Land Southward or vice versa. The *up* and *down* references are exclusively and consistently used as references to elevation between the lands Zarahemla and Nephi (Mulek—Land North, and Lehi—Land South) which are both located in the Land Southward (Helaman 2:129 [6:10]; see Map 4).

Neither Joseph Smith nor the first one hundred years of Book of Mormon students showed any evidence that they understood this concept. This demonstrates that The Book of Mormon refers to many things that were unknown to the English speaking world in 1830, and especially to anyone in the pioneer towns of western New York. The travel distances and references to rivers and mountain ranges restrict the geography to only one possible location in the Western Hemisphere: the area of what has recently been called “the limited Tehuantepec” area of southern Mexico and Central America, also known as Mesoamerica (see Map 5).

The fact that no “cold words” are used in the book—except by Nephi who had seen snow in the area of Jerusalem—and the mention of “the heat of the day” on the last day

Map 5



of the year indicates that the book was written in a sub-tropical to tropical area. The **cement houses** and **cement cities** (see figures 1 and 2) in the Land Northward also limit the Land Northward to central Mexico and some areas southward and not the areas of what is today the United States of America because cement houses and cities are not found in the United States, but they are found in Mesoamerica (Helaman 2:3–10 [3:3–10]). This is not to say that Book of Mormon peoples never migrated that far northward. They most certainly did—both Jaredites, Nephites and later Lamanites.

The true Hill Cumorah is located on the eastern side of southern Mexico just north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (Narrow Neck of Land). The hill in New York, where Joseph Smith found the plates of The Book of Mormon, is not the real Hill Cumorah. That hill was mistakenly called Cumorah by Oliver Cowdrey in letters that he wrote to WW Phelps³ shortly after The Book of Mormon was published. The text of The Book of Mormon clearly states:



Fig. 1 Teotihuacan, cement city



Fig. 2 Cement building at Teotihuacan

“The localized concept of ups and downs of Book of Mormon geography were not clearly understood until more than one hundred years after The Book of Mormon was published.”

“Therefore, I [Mormon] made this record out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the Hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave to my son Moroni” (Mormon 3:8 [6:6]). The plates of The Book of Mormon were the only plates that were NOT hid up in the hill Cumorah! Moroni had The Book of Mormon plates for 36 years after the final battle before he stopped writing on them (Mormon 3:6–8 [6:5–6] and Moroni 10:1 [same]).

We are not told anything about when he finally buried them in their final hiding place. In that amount of time Moroni could have *crawled* “up” north (as we might say) several times to the area of our modern New York where Joseph Smith would need to find them 1,400 years later. 🐛

³Published in the *Messenger and Advocate* between Sept 7, 1834 and Sept 22, 1835.



Map 6 Moroni’s Probably Route



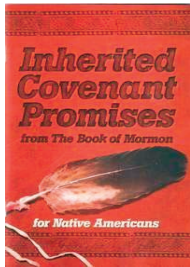
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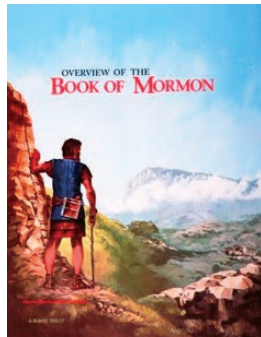
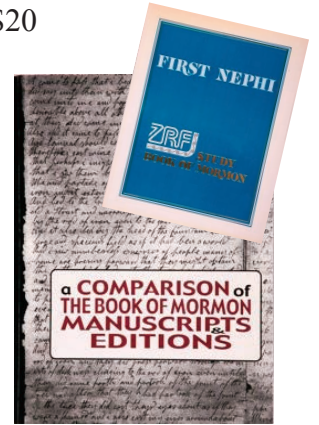


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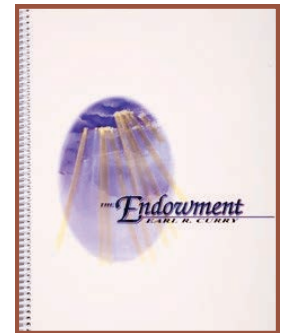


Overview of the Book of Mormon

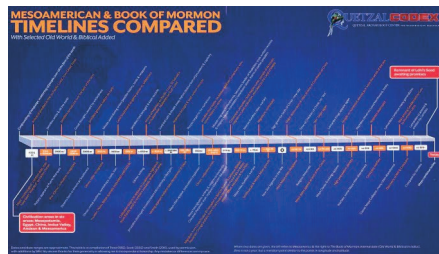
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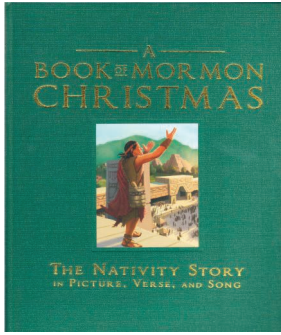
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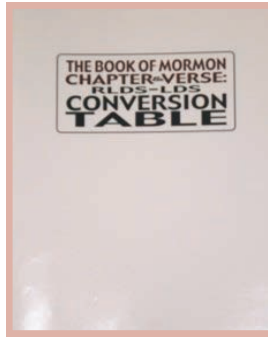


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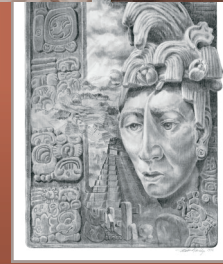
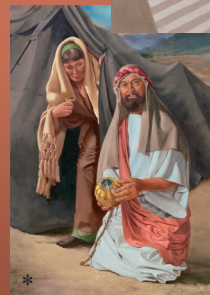
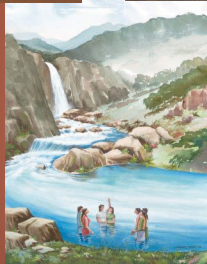
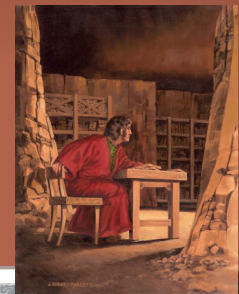
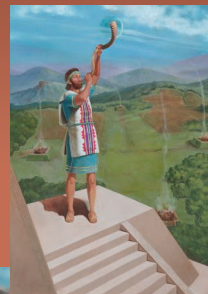
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We continue to ask, what is our heart’s desire? Our desire is to provide nourishment for our faith, to assist in bringing forth good fruit. What sacrifices are we willing to make? We renew our commitment daily to give Him all that we have and are, our complete selves. We know The Book of Mormon will be the center of action because it contains the word of God. We are blessed and thankful to the Lord for the opportunity to share the message of The Book of Mormon—that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. Our goal is to do that in our newsletter, as well as offering materials as shown on pages ten and eleven herein. One reason for new lower prices is that more affordable prices present the opportunity for getting them into the hands of more people rather than just store the books in inventory. Sales will go toward future publishing projects.

Also note that we are offering for the first time canvas prints from the J Robert Farley Collection. His desire was that his paintings be used toward publishing the Study Book of Mormon. Toward that end we have made high resolution scans of his original paintings, along with Bob’s two unfinished original paintings and two in private collections. This has allowed us to produce works of art in smaller sizes on canvas. (Other sizes are available on request.)

New artwork includes “Jacob Bids Adieu” (unfinished, top row, second from left); next to the right is “Nephi, New Moon” (blowing the shofar, unfinished), and last in the row is “Mormon’s Library” (from *Overview of the Book of Mormon*, p. 14); second row, second from left, is “Moroni hides up the plates” (p. 16, *Overview*), third is “Waters of Mormon,” and second from right is “Mesoamerican Images” (the original is a graphite drawing created for a cover of *The Zarahemla Record*). These museum quality prints are all available in two forms: mounting board and canvas wrap over wood framework, ready to hang or frame.

Our prayer in honoring the word of God in The Book of Mormon is that our endeavors will be a blessing, and that we will be good ground to produce good seed. Our foundational principle is to do all this without debt, and trust in God for his ultimate provision. We thank you and value your prayers, encouragement and support as you have responded to His leadings; we invite you to assist us, working together in preparing for the approaching Book of Mormon breakthrough! May we join our voices together as we prepare for the coming harvest in the last days! 

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