

**AN ABRIDGMENT  
OF THE  
RECORD OF LEHI**

by

William C. Chappell

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*Abridgment of Lehi*

# **PART I**

## **AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE RECORD OF LEHI**

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## **About the Book**

Part I of this book gives an abridgment of the record of the prophet Lehi, which was the first book engraved upon the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. The original Book of Lehi, which was translated by Joseph Smith in 1828, was stolen and became lost from the Book of Mormon. Since that time they have simply been referred to as the lost 116 manuscript pages.

This plain abridgment of the record of Lehi answers several questions about the origin of the Book of Mormon. For instance, it explains the connection with Egypt, revealing that Lehi was a Jew, or rather an Israelite, from the land of Egypt. It reveals that Laban's plates of brass were actually Lehi's plates of brass that were made by his people in the land of Egypt. As well, it reveals that the land of their inheritance is simply their house and farm, which was near Hebron in the land of Judea.

Since this is from the personal account of the record of Lehi, he describes the nature and function of the Liahona, the making and composition of the metal plates, and their building the ship of Nephi at Bountiful. Lehi further explains something about the characters of their language which were inscribed upon the metal plates. The characters had been developed by his forefathers who were Israelites living in the land of Egypt, which were unique to them, and they cannot be proved to the world.

Part II of this book describes a simple and realistic model for the unknown geography of the Book of Mormon. After all these years the actual geographic setting for the locations found in the Book of Mormon has not been understood. If the account in the book is true, then there is a real geography to be found, as well. The author believes that he has discovered a simple and realistic answer to the question of the Book of Mormon geography.

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## **An Abridgment of the Record of Lehi**

*The record of the prophet Lehi, the son of Samuel, and the father of Nephi and his brothers; Lehi's youth with the Jews in the land of Egypt; his vision of the Lord and his prophecies to the Jews in the city of Jerusalem; his family life on their farm in the land of Judea; their wandering in the desert of Arabia; the description of the brass plates; of the Liahona; their building the ship of Nephi; and their sailing across the great sea to the land of promise. Wherefore, this is an abridgment of the record of the prophet Lehi; or, in other words, I, Lehi, wrote this record.*

## **Chapter 1**

*Lehi makes a record and tells of his forefathers in the land of Egypt. In his youth Lehi seeks for knowledge and the will of God. His kinsmen were coppersmiths and merchants. Lehi leaves his family in Egypt and journeys to Jerusalem. Lehi marries Sariah and his first two sons are born at the house of Laban in the city of Jerusalem. Lehi names his sons after his forefathers.*

1:1 Behold I, Lehi, do make a record of my proceedings in my days. I am the son of Samuel who dwelt all his days in the land of Egypt. And I do inscribe my record on plates of copper and gold alloy, and, behold, I do call it the Book of Lehi.

1:2 And, behold, my father Samuel was a coppersmith and merchant, and he had attained to much riches. And there were many Jews who did seek after riches and the things of the world. For they were like the Jews who dwelt at Jerusalem; for they did not seek after the Lord and the riches of his righteousness, but they did seek after the riches of the world.

1:3 Now my forefathers and the Jews that dwelt in Egypt; even though they did not seek to know their God; nevertheless, they did teach their children to believe in God and to keep the commandments. And my father was a learned man, according to both the learning of the Jews and the Egyptians.

1:4 And I do call my people the Jews in Egypt; but behold, they were Israelites of the tribe of Manasseh who escaped from northern Israel before the war with Assyria. But, behold, most of Israel has become lost to the world, and we are all called Jews by other nations. Wherefore, we do also call ourselves Jews.

1:5 Wherefore, I, Lehi, was taught the scriptures and the traditions of the Jews from the days of our fathers. And I, Lehi, did spend much of my time in the pursuit of knowledge and in seeking the will of the Lord my God. Yea, from the days of my youth I did seek to know my God.

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1:6 And even as a child these things were of the greatest interest to me. Yea, I did seek to understand the things of God with all my heart. Yea, I did even dream that I might someday become like the great prophet Moses, and that I might do some great work for the Lord my God.

1:7 Now the learning and the writing of my father, and the other Jews in Egypt, was not according to the Jews at Jerusalem; nor was it according to the Egyptians. For, behold, the Jews in Egypt did develop their own kind of writing. But, nevertheless, they could speak with both the Egyptians and with the people of other nations. Yea, my people could speak in several languages, for that was useful in the manner of their employment.

1:8 Yea, my father and some of the Jews in Egypt did grow rich by the manner of their employment. Now some of the Jews did barter with the traders among the camel caravans, and they were good with languages. Others of my people became skillful in the working of metal, in the smelting of copper, and in the casting of bronze. And there was also much gold in Egypt. But, behold, the great metal in Egypt was copper.

1:9 But, behold, the time came that I, Lehi, did feel that I should leave the Jews in the land of Egypt and return to the land of my fathers, even back to the land of Jerusalem. And, surely, it was from the promptings of the Spirit of God that I did feel that I should return back to Jerusalem. For, behold, I was there called of God to prophesy unto the Jews in the great city of Jerusalem; and of their impending judgment if they did not repent and return unto the Lord their God. Yea, that was my first calling.

1:10 However, let me first write somewhat concerning my father's family and of my youth among the Jews in the land of Egypt. And I write this record, praying unto the Lord my God, that this record might someday come forth; that it might bear witness to the truth; and that the world might know of the tender mercies of our God and of his longsuffering in behalf of Israel.

1:11 For God was justified in bringing in those judgments upon this people. And the prophets were faithful in doing what they could in their attempt to get the Jews in Jerusalem to repent

and to return back unto the Lord their God. Wherefore I, Lehi, was one of the prophets whom the Lord sent to testify of these things unto the Jews.

1:12 And now as I have written, the name of my father was Samuel, he being named after the prophet Samuel, which was a common name among my people. And his name means child of God in the language of the Jews; for the name Sam means child, and thus did I name my third son.

1:13 But, behold, my father did name me Lehi, which was after the place where Samson slew the thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey. For my father, in his searching for a name; and since I had been a small baby; behold, my father did name me Lehi, which means small one or small thing.

1:14 For Samson had said, in his bragging, that it was a small thing for him that he had slain the thousand Philistines. Thus, the place where he slew them was called Lehi. And now my father had said, in his blessing and naming of the baby, that though you be a small thing, may you be great like Samson.

1:15 So when I was eighteen years of age, I did leave my father and family in the land of Egypt, and I did return unto the land of Jerusalem. I say return, but I mean that I did go back to the land where my people came from anciently. And this I did by the promptings of the Spirit, for the Lord had not yet manifested himself unto me personally.

1:16 Now my father had made arrangements with a certain family in the city of Jerusalem from our own tribe of Manasseh; that I might take me a wife, and her name was Sariah. Behold, her name was like unto that of the wife of our father Abraham, which means she of the royal line.

1:17 And, behold, Sariah was beautiful like the wife of our father Abraham. For the scriptures say that the Egyptians would have slain Abraham to take her to wife. Wherefore, he said that his wife was his sister, when she was his wife; and, yet, Sarah was a half sister of Abraham.

1:18 And I, Lehi, did dwell in the land of Jerusalem, and in the land of Judea, for most of my life. That is, I dwelt in the land

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of Jerusalem since I left the land of Egypt when I was eighteen years of age. And I did marry Sariah and did take her to wife. And, behold, we dwelt in the city of Jerusalem in the house of Laban, where our first two sons were born, for about five years.

1:19 Behold, my first two sons, who were born in the city of Jerusalem, I did name Laman and Lemuel; and I did name them after my father's father and his father. And my third son I did name Samuel after the name of my father, but then Laman and Lemuel did call him Sam, which means child.

1:20 And, behold, my fourth son, Nephi, I did name after the name of my mother. For her name was Nepfreteri, which in the Egyptian language means daughter of the prince, although she was a Jewess. Wherefore, behold, the name Nephi signifies prince or great leader, which I felt to name him.

1:21 And, behold, my last two sons, Jacob and Joseph, who were born to me in the wilderness of Arabia; behold, I did name them after our great patriarchs of old; even our father Jacob who came down into Egypt, and after Joseph who had power in Egypt at the time of the famine.

1:22 Yea, I did leave the land of Egypt with their pharaohs, and the pyramids, and their religion of the dead. And the sphinx, even the lioness of Egyptus; which image they made in worship of Egyptus, the founder of Egypt; yea, a woman named Egyptus, whose son began the reign of the pharaohs.

1:23 Yea, behold, I did leave the land of Egypt with their religion of the dead; and I did travel up to the land of Jerusalem to find and to serve our God, the God of the living.

1:24 And I do inscribe my record upon these plates, which were sent unto me from my father in the land of Egypt. And, behold, the servant of my father did also bring me a set of tools, with which we do engrave our records, even tools of hardened copper. And the name of the servant was Zoram.

## **Chapter 2**

*Lehi seeks for the will of the Lord. He prays and the Lord appears unto him as a flame of fire. Lehi sees a vision of God in heaven, and he reads in a book of the coming of a Messiah. Lehi is called to prophesy unto the Jews in the city of Jerusalem.*

2:1 And, behold, during my days at Jerusalem the Spirit of the Lord did begin to work with me. Now as I have said, I did ever seek to know the Lord; yea, and I did ever seek for his will concerning me. And I did seek for revelation and knowledge all the days of my youth while in the land of Egypt. Yea, I did seek for the wisdom of the prophets.

2:2 And after I returned to Jerusalem, unto the city of the Jews, I did all the more earnestly seek to know God and his will concerning me. Yea, I did go out into the wilderness to fast and to pray unto the Lord my God. For I had felt the promptings of his Spirit since the days of my youth; but the Lord had not yet manifested himself personally unto me. Yea, I did seek to know, and not to believe only.

2:3 And, behold, I, Lehi, did on a certain day go out into the wilderness, and I prayed mightily unto the Lord. And I prayed not only for myself, but for all the Jews, and for all the city of Jerusalem. For, behold, they had dwindled in unbelief, and the city of Jerusalem was full of idolatry and of iniquity. Yea, I did pour out my whole heart and soul unto the Lord my God.

2:4 And God did answer me; for, behold, the Lord did come down in a pillar of light, and he appeared as a flame of fire upon a rock before me. Yea, the Lord did appear as fire upon the alter, and the flame of fire was as the size of a man. And, behold, the Lord did speak to me in his own voice, and as he spoke I did see those things in a vision; for his Spirit was upon me, and I felt as if I had been transfigured before him. Yea, and now, behold, I did know the Lord my God.

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2:5 And, behold, I did see and hear many things which were great and marvelous in my sight. The Lord called me by name, saying that he had called me to be a prophet to prophesy against this great city Jerusalem; and that the Jews must repent or be conquered, and many be slain, and the rest carried away captive by the king of Babylon.

2:6 And, behold, I was overcome by the power of God, and I did return unto the house of Laban where I dwelt, and did cast myself down on my bed. And, behold, I was again carried away in a vision. And I remember that I saw God sitting on his throne in heaven, and he was surrounded by numberless concourses of angels. Yea, I did behold a glimpse of the glory of God.

2:7 And, behold, I, Lehi, did see one as a man descending out of the midst of heaven, out of the midst of the glory of God. And I beheld that the brightness of his luster was above that of the sun at noonday. And I did also see twelve others following after him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament. And they received their glory from him.

2:8 And I saw them come down, and they did go forth upon the face of the earth. And an angel did come and he stood before me; and he gave me a book, and he bade me that I read it. And, behold, from the things which I read in the book, it testified of the coming of a Messiah; even of the coming of a Savior and of the redemption of the world.

2:9 And, behold, I did read in the book, saying: Woe, woe, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations. And except ye repent of your idolatries, and your iniquities, and return unto me; behold, this great city of Jerusalem shall I destroy. Yea, ye shall perish by the sword, and the rest shall I, the Lord, carry away captive into Babylon.

2:10 Nevertheless, even though I did see and hear all these great and marvelous judgments on my people, the Jews, and the city of Jerusalem; behold, I was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Yea, I was filled with praising and glorifying the Lord my God. And I did sing with the angels, saying: Great and marvelous are all thy works, O Lord God Almighty. Thy throne is set high in

the heavens, and thy goodness and mercy is shed forth over all the inhabitants of the earth.

2:11 And, behold, there were several prophets whom the Lord did send to the city of Jerusalem, to warn the Jews of their impending destruction, as a people and a nation, if they did not repent and return to the law of Moses, and to the prophets, and the commandments of the Lord their God.

2:12 Yea, if they did not forsake all their idolatries; for the Jews and all the city of Jerusalem had, for the more part, went awhoring after the false gods of the pagan nations which were round about them. And they were committing all manner of sins and abominations of the heathen nations. Yea, they were doing such things which are forbidden of God.

2:13 And, behold, the Lord did send several prophets unto Jerusalem; saying, that the great city Jerusalem would be carried off captive into Babylon; and that their men, and their women, and their children would be slain, and that Jerusalem would be left desolate, if they did not repent and return unto their God.

2:14 And all these judgments would come upon them in this generation if they did not return to Moses and the prophets. Yea, Judah would be given up of the Lord and cast off; even as he had done performed upon her sister, the northern ten tribes of Israel, that had went awhoring after the gods of the pagan and heathen nations and their abominations.

2:15 And, behold, the Lord did send the prophets unto the city of Jerusalem, that he might be justified in bringing in these judgments upon them. And there were prophets which did arise among the Jews in the land of Judea, and there were prophets whom the Lord did bring from other lands. And I, Lehi, was one of them, for, behold, I was brought up out of Egypt.

2:16 Wherefore, we were Jews which were the prophets that did come from other lands. And the Lord did bring none other people to prophesy against the Jews and Jerusalem, except they were Jews, or that is, from Israel. For, behold, only the tribes of Judah, and Benjamin, and the Levites were left at Jerusalem; for

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the northern ten tribes of Israel had already been carried off by the king of Assyria. But, behold, my people did escape.

2:17 And, behold, because I did prophesy against the Jews, and against the city of Jerusalem; behold, many of the Jews did contend against me. And many of the Jews did begin to mock me, and they did revile against me, even to the casting of me out of their city; for I had come out of Egypt, and who was such an one as I to prophesy against them and their city.

2:18 But, I, Lehi, did return up unto the city of Jerusalem from time to time to prophesy against it; yea, even against their idolatries, and their false worship, and all the heathen practices which they were committing. Yea, even such things which are an abomination before the Lord our God.

2:19 And, behold, the time came, that as I went to prophesy in the city of Jerusalem, that a band of Jews did rush upon me, and they did cast me out of their city. And, behold, they would have stoned me, except by the providence of God I did escape from them. Now this was the custom of the Jews that a prophet must not be stoned to death within the city.

2:20 Now I did dwell all my days in the land of Jerusalem, even in the land of Judea; that is, I did dwell there ever since I left the land of Egypt, when I eighteen years old and was on my own. For, behold, the land for which a man is known is also the land where he lives, and not the land of his birth only.

2:21 And it was in the commencement of the reign of the king Zedekiah, the king of Judah, that I did begin to prophesy to the Jews; even against all their sins and their abominations, as the Lord my God had commanded me. But, behold, they would not hearken unto me, nor would they repent.

2:22 And, behold, as I have said, there were several other prophets who did begin to prophesy in Jerusalem in that same year. And they like myself were mocked, and reviled, and were cast out of the city. And some of the prophets they did stone.

### **Chapter 3**

*Lehi's father gives him his inheritance when he leaves for Jerusalem. Lehi takes the book of brass plates which contained the scriptures of the Jews. Lehi marries Sariah who is a niece of Laban, and he lives in the house of Laban in Jerusalem. Laban casts Lehi and his family out of his house, and Laban keeps the plates of brass which Lehi's fathers had made in Egypt.*

3:1 But before my going up unto Jerusalem, and since I did intend for this to be a permanent thing, or for my future; behold, my father did insist that I, Lehi, should receive my inheritance. Now I did not ask for it, nor did I seek it. But it was the custom of my people, that when a son leaves the family, that he should receive his portion of his inheritance at that time.

3:2 Wherefore, my father did give me some of his gold, and some silver, and other provisions that I should take with me. But all that I desired was that I might take the record of the Jews with me. Yea, what I most desired was that I might take our book of scriptures with me up to the great city of Jerusalem.

3:3 Now, behold, the scriptures which were had among my father's family, and the Jews with us in Egypt, were engraven upon plates of brass. Behold, it was a book with pages of brass sheets; and it was a special ore molten of copper, with zinc and tin, and some gold, and bound together with rings.

3:4 And I would that they had inscribed our scriptures upon plates of pure gold, so they would have been permanent indeed. But my father, and the Jews in Egypt in their smithing and trade, did consider that their gold should be put to better use than that of writing, even if it was the word of God. Nevertheless, they had the gold which they could have used.

3:5 Therefore, I did take the book of our scriptures which were engraven upon plates of brass with me to Jerusalem. Now the inscriptions were neither Egyptian characters, nor were they

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Hebrew. For, behold, it was a writing of their own making that my forefathers had developed. For they lived unto themselves in Egypt; they being separated from both the Jews and Egyptians, except for their work and manner of employment.

3:6 For, behold, the engravings upon the plates of brass is a type of characters for shorthand. The characters were developed from a combination of different languages, and are like none of them in particular. It had begun with their business of trading as a means of secret communication among themselves.

3:7 From that it later developed into a written language, that we call reformed Egyptian. By that I mean it was a new kind of language which was developed in Egypt; for it was a shorthand used among the Jewish merchants in the land of Egypt.

3:8 Now my people who dwelt in the land of Egypt; behold, they did not wish to be known openly among the people. Thus, when they were with Egyptians, they did speak and behave like the Egyptians. And when they were with Arabians, then they did speak and behave like the Arabians. But, nevertheless, they had their own characters for their writing. Thus, they did speak the same as the people, but their inscriptions were secret.

3:9 Wherefore, I, Lehi, did go up to the city of Jerusalem, even the great city of the Jews, which I had so often heard about from my father and his brethren. And now my father did make arrangements that I be given a wife; or rather that I should take me a wife from among the daughters of a family of the tribe of Manasseh which dwelt at Jerusalem.

3:10 And, behold, they did decide upon a maiden from the family of Laban, and her name was Sariah. Now even though a family decided on the marriage of their children; nevertheless, it was their choice to accept each other or not. The young couple might not accept each other, but it was expected that they should accept each other, as it was the desire of the family.

3:11 Now I did seek an opportunity to see my future wife Sariah; and I knew that surely she did wish to see me too before our marriage. And I did see her, and, behold, she was a beautiful

and fair maiden, being no more than fourteen years of age, as I supposed. And Sariah did like me too, as I could tell.

3:12 Now the family of my father Samuel, that dwelt in the land of Egypt, and the family of Laban that dwelt at Jerusalem, were kinsmen. Yea, for they are both of the tribe of Manasseh. Thus, my father Samuel and Laban were distantly related. And I discovered that Sariah was a niece of Laban, and that she dwelt within the household of Laban. Wherefore, I also came to dwell with the household of Laban.

3:13 Now it was after the custom of the tribes of Israel that they marry among their kindred people. Nevertheless, children who were too kin could not marry. But I and Sariah were only distantly related, we both being of the tribe of Manasseh, and of the house of our great father Joseph.

3:14 Wherefore, I, Lehi, did marry Sariah, and did take her to wife. And we dwelt in Jerusalem until I could buy a house of my own. But for the first few years we dwelt with Laban and his family. And at first Laban was like a brother to me; but I found out later that Laban did only fain affection.

3:15 And as I did seek for the mind and will of the Lord; yea, even as I did all the more seek the face of my God, and to obey his commandments; behold, the time came that Laban did cast me out of his house.

3:16 And Laban did keep much of my gold and silver which my father had given me. For he said that I owed him for my stay those years. But worst of all, Laban did keep my scriptures, even the book of the plates of brass that I had brought with me from my fathers in the land of Egypt.

3:17 And, behold, I did try to reason with Laban, even with all of my wit and strength, but it was to no avail. I offered Laban that he could keep the gold and silver, and only let me have the plates of brass, but he would not.

3:18 Yea, Laban did value the book of brass plates, with all their strange inscriptions, even above the gold and silver. For he supposed that they contained some great and secret knowledge

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from the religions of Egypt. But, behold, they did contain only the scriptures of the Jews and our genealogy.

3:19 Wherefore, I had lost my book of the plates of brass to Laban. For he hid them in his house, and he kept them from me. Therefore, I did leave it in the hands of the Lord as to whether I should ever obtain them again.

3:20 For, behold, Laban was a rich and a powerful man, and he was an elder among the Jews. And, behold, he did command a garrison of fifty men who could be called up in defense of the city. Wherefore, who was I to contend with such a man.

## **Chapter 4**

*Nephi becomes a great leader. Lehi fears for the salvation of Laman and Lemuel. They were like twins. Lehi leaves Jerusalem to obey the commandment of the Lord. Lehi is now well stricken in years, and he seeks to finish his record while he is yet among the living. Lehi seeks to clarify a few things which may not be understood in future generations of the world.*

4:1 Behold, I do write this record of my life before we shall reach our land of promise. And it is by the leadership of my son Nephi that I shall seek to finish my record. And it is also by the promptings of the Spirit of God that I do finish it. For I feel that it is for a wise purpose in the Lord, which purpose I know not of at this time. Behold, it shall be for future generations.

4:2 And, behold, my son Nephi has become a great leader of this people, and he has brought us across the wilderness of the desert of Arabia. And we must cross the great sea unto our land of promise; and I know that Nephi shall become a great prophet in the hands of the Lord our God.

4:3 But as for my first two sons, even Laman and Lemuel, behold, I have much reason to fear for their eternal welfare. For, behold, my dreams and my visions by night have much troubled me, and I have oftentimes wet my pillow because of them. For the Spirit of the Lord has ceased to strive with them, and I fear lest they shall be cast off forever. And they are my sons.

4:4 And I have often thought of them as twins. For, behold, they did act like twins, for they were always together, and they agreed on every point. Now my son Laman is the eldest, but my son Lemuel was born in about one year later. And they looked somewhat alike, and they behaved even more alike; therefore, I have often thought of them as twins. But they became the most difficult sons unto me, and, behold, I and my faithful son Nephi did have a double portion to contend with.

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4:5 Nevertheless, as I have said, I did dwell all of my days at the land of Jerusalem; that is, ever since I was eighteen years old, and I did leave the house of my father in the land of Egypt. And, behold, I did dwell in the land of Judea until the Lord did command me that I should depart out of the land to find our land of promise. Now all of the land of Judea was called the land of Jerusalem after the name of the great city.

4:6 Now it was a hard thing for me that I should leave the land of Jerusalem and go into the wilderness of the desert. For, behold, I am a scholar and a man of the Spirit. For I do delight in the study of the scriptures, and in receiving inspiration from the Spirit, and revelation from my God. And for me to have to rough it out in the wilderness, and to live in a tent in the desert, was a grievous thing to be borne. Behold, it was not easy.

4:7 Nevertheless, I did obey the commandment of the Lord. For, behold, the Lord had commanded me that I should take my family; and that we should leave the land of Judea and all of my kinfolk; and that we should sojourn across the wilderness of the dry and barren desert of Arabia.

4:8 Therefore, I did gather my family, and we did leave the land of Judea; yea, even as soon as we could, for the Lord did command it. And, behold, my wife, and my sons and daughters, did murmur against me; saying, that I was a visionary man, and that this was a foolish thing. But how was I to know how soon the king of Babylon would come upon Jerusalem to conquer and to plunder the city of the Jews. Wherefore, I thought it wise to obey when commanded of the Lord.

4:9 And we did gather our provisions, as much as we could at the time, and we did leave the land of Jerusalem. And, behold, we did head to the south, for it was the only direction in which I knew to go. For Assyria did lay toward the north, and Babylon, our enemy, did lay to the east. And Egypt, even the land of my father, did lay to the west. But the Lord had commanded me to find a land of promise for me and my seed forever; wherefore, I did take my family southward out of the land of Judea.

4:10 Now, behold, the things which I have written; which I have inscribed upon these plates of copper alloy; I did begin at our encampments in the desert of Arabia. But the more part of my record I did inscribe at the oasis which I did name Bountiful. Yea, at Bountiful I did write my record.

4:11 For, thus, I felt moved upon by the promptings of the Spirit that I should make this my record; and that I should more particularly make mention of the past; of my proceedings in my days, and my ministry among the Jews in the city of Jerusalem; and, in fine, of the dealing of the Lord with me and the spiritual things that I have experienced in my lifetime.

4:12 And I shall leave the future things to my son Nephi, for he has become a great leader unto this people. Yea, Nephi is a prophet in the hands of the Lord. And this is the fulfillment of the whisperings of the Spirit unto me, that Nephi would be great in the sight of God.

4:13 Again, the time that I did write the more part of this record, on these plates of copper and gold alloy, was at the oasis which we called Bountiful. For, behold, after the eight years of wandering from camp to camp in the desert of Arabia, we have found this place of rest for a season. And, behold, I now have the time and the peace to inscribe my record upon these plates.

4:14 And I do hope to finish this record of my proceedings in my days before we shall arrive in the land of promise. For my eldest sons, Laman and Lemuel and their families, are constant in their contentions against us. And they are almost ripened in all manner of iniquity; even such that they have sought to take our lives, and, behold, even me their father.

4:15 But the faithful of the Lord among us have followed the leadership of myself and my faithful son Nephi. For, behold, Nephi has become a great man of faith and righteousness, and I thank my God daily for him. And I feel that all this is for a great purpose in the Lord. And, surely, it shall be great; for, behold, our sufferings and our afflictions have been great; yea, they have often been almost too bitter to bear.

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4:16 And I do suppose that Nephi and my faithful children must someday separate from Laman and Lemuel, and those who follow after them. Yea, it would be wisdom that they someday separate themselves from Laman and Lemuel. For, behold, they are as men without law, and they do whatsoever they please. So I feel by the Spirit that they must someday separate.

4:17 And I hope that what I do write shall be sufficient; for it is from the promptings of the Spirit to me, that I should write this my history; that it might help to form the foundation for the great work that the Lord shall perform through Nephi.

4:18 And now I, Lehi, the son of Samuel, and the father of Nephi and his brothers, am well stricken in years. For, behold, I have suffered much; yea, and more than one should have to bear since I left the land of Jerusalem. And I have a time or two even murmured against the Lord. And, behold, this was in the desert of Arabia, which was most grievous for all of us, for it was often almost too bitter to bear.

4:19 Yea, we nearly died in the desert of Arabia, and we did often wish that we could have died. And so did my wife Sariah, and our sons and their wives, for we had never been in such an inhospitable place. Yea, the cold and heat, the thirst and hunger, and the constant struggle with the elements was most difficult to bear. Yea, it did age me beyond my years.

4:20 But the Lord did preserve us by his marvelous and his miraculous power; for in all our suffering and our afflictions the hand of his providence could be seen. That is it could be seen by those who had faith among us. But my eldest sons, Laman and Lemuel, had no faith in the Lord, and they were constant in their contentions against us.

4:21 Wherefore, I seek to give this account as a record for my children and the generations which shall follow after them. Now I have assurance in this thing, and I know that it shall be fulfilled. And if this record is lost my prayer unto God is that it might someday be restored. Yea, behold, the Lord our God can bring about all his righteous purposes.

4:22 But let me now try to clarify a few things which may be misunderstood in future generations. Behold, when I say that we are Jews, I mean that all of Israel are called Jews at this time. But, as I have written, my father's family were Israelites of the tribe of Manasseh, and of the house of Joseph.

4:23 And when I speak about the land of our inheritance, it was not Jerusalem, or Judea, or even our new land of promise. For, behold, the land of our inheritance was our house and farm which was near Hebron. Yea, it was our home place where we farmed and raised our children.

4:24 And, behold, when I say that I dwelt at Jerusalem all my days; behold, I mean that I did live in the land of Judea ever since I was a grown man. Now all the land of Judea was called after the name of the great city of Jerusalem, or that is, all Judea was called the land of Jerusalem.

4:25 And when I speak of the plates of brass which we got back from Laban; behold, it was not his plates of brass. But it was my own book of brass plates that my father had given me when I left the land of Egypt. Nevertheless, my sons have only heard about the plates of brass which Laban had.

4:26 And, behold, I perceive of the Spirit of the Lord, that there shall be two great obstacles with our records in the future generations. And it shall be that our records are engraven upon plates of metal; and it will be that the characters of our language are not known in the world and cannot be proved to the world.

4:27 Yea, because the characters of our language cannot be proved to the world; for they are not known in the world; behold, there shall be many in that day who will mock these things. Yea, and there shall be many in that day, in which this record shall come forth unto the children of men, that shall revile against this work. But, behold, the purposes of God shall prevail.

4:28 For known to God are the times of all his works. But, behold, all the works of God are not revealed to man; except a few things are revealed through the prophets; which things can not be understood by the world until they have been fulfilled.

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4:29 And behold, I, Lehi, have since pondered upon these things. And, behold, I have seen that all the works of the Lord are unique. Yea, for he never repeats himself twice. And so was this work. For, behold, the plates of brass, and the Liahona, and the ship of Nephi were done but once among men. Yea, each of these things were unique among men.

4:30 Yet, we were cast out of our land like unto Adam and Eve from the land of Eden; and we did wonder in the wilderness of the desert like unto Moses and the children of Israel; and we did ride upon the great waters like unto Noah and the ark upon the great flood. Yea, behold, I did rejoice when pondering upon these things, for it was the dream of my childhood.

## **Chapter 5**

*Lehi's ancestry of the tribe of Manasseh had fled northern Israel back to the land of Egypt. They are called Jews and were coppersmiths and traders. They began to engrave upon plates of brass in their own type of characters. Lehi leaves Jerusalem and he moves to his house and farm. He instructs his sons to get his plates of brass back from Laban. Why Nephi slays Laban.*

5:1 Now there were some of the children of Israel who did flee from the land of northern Israel, before the king of Assyria did invade the land, and slew many, and did carry others away captive into the land of Assyria. And, behold, the only ones who did escape the carrying away into Assyria were the few who had already fled from the land of Israel. And my forefathers had fled back into the land of Egypt. For, behold, northern Israel was also at war with the kingdom of Judah in the south.

5:2 Wherefore, my father's ancestry had fled out of the land of north Israel, they having heeded the warnings of the prophets which were sent to Israel. And, behold, they took the scriptures with them; even the books of Moses and the prophets down to that time. And, behold, there was a prophet who did lead them; wherefore, they did retain possession of their scriptures. And the name of the prophet was Samuel who did lead my ancestry down into Egypt, even back into the land of Goshen.

5:3 Now we are from the tribe of Manasseh, which was the firstborn son of Joseph; for Joseph did receive a double portion of blessings from his father Jacob. Wherefore, the two sons of Joseph were Manasseh and Ephraim. And behold, I, Lehi, am of the tribe of Manasseh, Joseph's firstborn son; but Ishmael is of the tribe of Ephraim, Joseph's second son.

5:4 Nevertheless, even though my people were of the tribe of Manasseh; yet, after the carrying away of the ten tribes from north Israel, we are all called Jews by other nations. For, behold,

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only the Jews, who are the descendants of the tribe of Judah, are left and known to the world. Therefore, we are also called Jews; wherefore, we do also call ourselves Jews.

5:5 And, behold, my forefathers, even the Israelites, or Jews as they were called, who dwelt in the land of Egypt were copper smiths, and merchants, and traders. And they did dwell down in the land of ancient Goshen, near where the Nile begins to fan out before entering the north sea. And, behold, some of my father's family became rich trading with the camel caravans, since that was a goodly location.

5:6 And my father's family did begin to write; or that is, to engrave, or to inscribe, upon plates of metal in their characters, even in a type of shorthand notation. And, behold, this was had only among themselves, and it was a thing not known to the rest of the world. Yea, they did develop the characters of a language known only unto them, even the ancestry of my father's family who dwelt in the land of Egypt.

5:7 And, behold, my father Samuel had instructed me in the characters of this language. And we did engrave the characters of this language upon plates of brass. Now this was refined copper; or rather, it was copper molten with certain amounts of zinc and tin for the proper hardness, and so it would not so soon corrode. And, behold, Egypt was full of copper, and bronze, and brass.

5:8 Now when I became eighteen years of age, behold, as I have written, I did leave the house of my father in Egypt. And, behold, I did travel with a camel caravan up to the great city of Jerusalem, or as I supposed it to be a great city. For all I knew was what I had heard from my father and his brethren. But once I did arrive there it did not seem so great to me, for it was full of sins and idolatries of every kind.

5:9 And, behold, when I did leave my father in Egypt, I did receive my portion of my inheritance at that time. And, behold, I did also take the scriptures, which were engraven upon plates of brass, which my father did have engraven for me. For my father had taught me in the characters of their language, and in the art of engraving and inscribing them upon the plates.

5:10 And it was planned between our families, even that of my father and Laban, that I should become betrothed to a certain young maiden at Jerusalem. And this was for the purpose that I might take me a wife. For the Jews, and all Israel, did seek that their children should marry within their own tribes. And, behold, only a few of our tribe are known among us.

5:11 And they did name their children after their ancestors; or even after their fathers and mothers, and their forefathers and foremothers, and after our great patriarchs. And, likewise, I did name each of my children after this custom.

5:12 Now my first two sons, Laman and Lemuel, were born unto us, Lehi and Sariah, while we yet dwelt in the household of Laban in the city of Jerusalem. And we were distant kinsmen, we being of the tribe of Manasseh and of the house of Joseph. And all was well until I was called of the Lord to be a prophet, and to prophesy unto the Jews that they must repent.

5:13 Yea, when I did begin to prophesy against the Jews and against Jerusalem; that they must repent or be carried off captive by the king of Babylon; behold, then Laban did begin to contend against me. And the more that I did receive of the Lord my God, the more Laban did contend against me. And, behold, the time came that Laban did cast me out of his house.

5:14 And we did live with other relatives for a while, until I did receive more of my inheritance. For I did receive word, from time to time, from my family back in the land of Egypt. And one day a servant of my father was sent to me saying that my father had died. And he brought with him the rest of my inheritance, even some gold and silver. And, behold, my father did send me new plates of brass, which were blank and most precious.

5:15 And, behold, the name of the servant whom my father did send unto me was Zoram. And having heard of my father's death, behold, Laban did take Zoram, and he made him his own servant. But he had been a bondservant of my father ever since the days of his youth in the land of Egypt.

5:16 Wherefore, I did move out of the city of Jerusalem, with my wife Sariah and our two sons, Laman and Lemuel. And

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I bought my own house and farm which was a few days journey from Jerusalem, and south past Bethlehem near Hebron. Behold, it was near the house of Ishmael. Now Ishmael had been a hired servant of my father, and my friend, who had come with me out of the land of Egypt. But Ishmael did stop at Hebron, and he did stay and he dwelt there, while I went on to Jerusalem.

5:17 And that is what we called the land of our inheritance. It was our house and farm which I had bought with the rest of my inheritance from my father. Wherefore, it was the land of our inheritance, and it was south of Bethlehem near Hebron.

5:18 Wherefore, I told my sons: That if Laban would not depart with the plates of brass, that they should go back to the land of our inheritance; to our house near Hebron to get our gold and silver; and try to buy the plates of brass from Laban. For I had left my property, and my gold and silver, with Ishmael, who was the servant of my father and my faithful friend.

5:19 For, behold, the plates of brass which Laban did have in his possession; behold, they were not his plates. For they are my plates of brass, which I had brought with me from my father in the land of Egypt. But, behold, Laban had kept them from me since the time that I had lived with him in his house.

5:20 Behold, my son Nephi was young when we fled from the land of Jerusalem; for he was still in his teenage years, being not yet seventeen years of age. Now my sons Samuel and Nephi were born at my house, which was near Hebron.

5:21 And I dwelt there with my wife Sariah, upon our farm, where we raised our children. Yea, we had dwelt there for about twenty years, when the Lord commanded me to take my family, and that I flee southward into the wilderness of Arabia.

5:22 Yea, behold, I did send my sons back up to Jerusalem for my plates of brass. For they were mine; and, behold, they did contain the scriptures of the Jews and all my genealogy. And I knew that it was the will of the Lord that we should have them; for, thus, the Lord had commanded me that I must take with us the scriptures of the Jews, which were on the plates of brass. For, behold, this was wisdom in the Lord.

5:23 And as we supposed, or as we knew, the plates of brass with their inscriptions were of no worth to Laban and the Jews at Jerusalem. For as we did suppose, or as we knew, they could not read them; for the characters were a secret writing known only to us. And no man could read them unless he was trained in it. Else it would have to be revealed by a gift of God; for, behold, God knoweth all these things.

5:24 And even that night, when Nephi and his brothers had arrived at Jerusalem in the attempt to get back my book of brass plates; and it was raining; behold, Laban had been out among the elders of the Jews with the plates of brass.

5:25 For, behold, Laban and the elders of the Jews did often seek to decipher the characters on the plates; even that night as Nephi and his brothers sought the plates from Laban. For I had instructed my sons to use every attempt to purchase the plates, and to reason with Laban. But, behold, Laban would not depart with the plates of brass by any means. Wherefore, the Spirit of the Lord did command Nephi to slay Laban.

5:26 And since Laban was wearing a rain cape; because it was raining; behold, Nephi did put the rain cape upon himself. Wherefore, Nephi did appear as Laban unto Zoram. Then when he did recognize Nephi, behold, Zoram was filled with fear; for he was a bond servant unto my father, and he could have been slain for becoming a bond servant unto Laban; but, behold, my son Nephi did spare him for his own reasons.

5:27 Now, behold, there may be some who might question the slaying of Laban by my son Nephi. But can a man question the righteous purposes of the Lord. For this thing was a righteous judgment sent upon Laban of the Lord. Yea, Laban in his own wickedness and rebellion against God had brought this judgment upon himself. For, behold, Laban had stolen my plates of brass, and he had even tried to slay my sons.

5:28 Thus, Laban had become as the Pharaoh of Egypt had become unto Moses; for the name of Pharaoh means Great One in the Egyptian. Wherefore, the Lord commanded Nephi that he slay Laban, and that he take the plates of brass.

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## **Chapter 6**

*Lehi considers the building of the ship of Nephi at Bountiful, and he begins to describe its construction. Lehi considers how he should write his account, but he must write by the Spirit of the Lord. Lehi tells of his sorrows and of his rejoicing. They prepare for their journey into the wilderness.*

6:1 Now for the record I do wish to give the fuller account of my dealings with the Lord and of his great love and mercy on me; yea, of the great blessings of inspiration and knowledge that the Lord my God has given unto me. And I must give the fuller account of my calling to be a prophet, and of my ministry among the Jews in the city of Jerusalem.

6:2 And, as well, to make a record of the account, I must relate some of our sufferings and our afflictions in the wilderness as we wandered across the desert of Arabia. Behold, that was the furnace of our affliction, which was most grievous to be borne by mortal men and women. And, behold, it did make some and it did break others. For Nephi grew and he was strengthened in it, but others murmured. And it did nearly break me, I must admit, and my wife Sariah also.

6:3 But I do wish to jump ahead first, remembering the time when we were encamped at the oasis of Bountiful, which was on the seashore of the Arabian desert; yea, upon the seashore of the great southern sea. Behold, that was the place where Nephi did build the ship. And that was the turning point of our lives, since we had left the land of Jerusalem.

6:4 And I do wish to describe in detail the construction of the great ship which Nephi did construct, and which he caused to be constructed. Behold, Nephi was not yet twenty-five years old; for he was going on seventeen when we left Judea, and we had sojourned in the desert of Arabia for eight years. Yea, Nephi has become a great leader of this people.

6:5 And Nephi has become a mighty man before the Lord our God. For the Lord has spoken with him, and he has sent him angels, and has given him revelations not a few. And, behold, the Lord has given me dreams and visions, whereby I know that he has been called of God. And Nephi has become a great leader; wherefore, behold, I did name him well.

6:6 And Nephi was instructed of the Lord; wherefore, he did construct the most marvelous ship. For he had known nothing of such things, and neither did any of us who were with him. Now Nephi did build the ship at the place which we called Bountiful, which was upon the seashore of the Arabian desert. Yea, and it was upon the seashore of the great southern sea.

6:7 Now the ship which Nephi did build; behold, the design was revealed to him of the Lord. And, behold, the frame was a latticework of small timbers. Yea, and no nail was used, for the timbers were cut and shaped so that they fit perfectly together. And the timbers were tied with strips of young bark, which when dried, behold, did tighten exceedingly.

6:8 And, behold, the hull of the ship of Nephi was woven of young bark, it being crisscrossed together, and tied to the lattice framework. And the deck and the rooms of the ship were woven of bark. Now the lattice framework was of small timbers, being the limbs of small trees. And the entire structure of the ship was pitched within and without. For oil was found in the ground, and Nephi did make tar, for the waterproofing of the ship.

6:9 For, behold, the ship of Nephi was not constructed after the manner of men, but was constructed after the pattern which the Lord had shown unto Nephi on the mount. Now there was not much timber, but there was sufficient trees, and bushes, and bark to provide for the framework of the ship. And, behold, this was a latticework, being very strong.

6:10 And, behold, the sails of the ship of Nephi were woven of sea grass which did grow in abundance around the lagoons at Bountiful. And the women did weave the sails for the ship; for, behold, we did build us looms. And they were as the looms used by our women in our homeland, except they were adapted for the

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weaving of sea grass. Thus, the ship was built, and it was pitched both within and without. Yea, it was tight like unto a dish.

6:11 Behold, I, Lehi, do now seek to write a more particular account of my life. And I do say write, when I am inscribing the characters of my own language upon these plates of copper alloy which are bound with rings into a book. Behold, the entire book is first made before we do inscribe our records upon the plates. And I hope to have enough room to inscribe all my record upon these plates. And, behold, this is the book of blank plates which Zoram, a servant of my father, did bring to me at the time of my father's death. And I inscribe the characters with a set of tools, even tools of hardened copper.

6:12 Behold, I do wish to write more particularly of these matters. Now I will finish my record before Nephi will have the time to make his own book of plates. But it has been because of his encouragement that I shall finish my record. For Nephi has received of the Spirit of the Lord that this should be done for some wise purpose in the Lord, which purpose I know not.

6:13 And we shall inherit a new land of promise to me and my seed forever; for this the Lord has made known unto me and my son Nephi. And, behold, I am old and well stricken in years, and I must soon lie down in my grave. Yea, I must soon go the way of all the earth. And, behold, my heart is broken because of my eldest sons Laman and Lemuel.

6:14 Wherefore, I am well nigh to lie down and sleep in the grave. And my wife Sariah is also stricken in years, but she is yet with me. Yea, she is my help in my old age. Yea, she has been a faithful and loving wife and the comfort of my life. However, I have learned that no marriage is easy; and especially when one is married to a prophet. And neither is it easy for a prophet to be married to a woman, as she is the weaker vessel.

6:15 But, behold, the great joy of my life; yea, my great joy has been my faithful son Nephi. For, behold, he is a great man of God, even a prophet in the hands of the Lord, and he is a great leader of this people. For Nephi has received great things from the Lord, even like unto me. Yea, he has received greater things;

for Nephi has been visited by angels, and the Lord has spoken to him from time to time, and he has received visions not a few.

6:16 Now, behold, Nephi has said that I should write more particularly concerning the history of our people and of our own genealogy, and that we should preserve a record of it. And that I should write of my ministry among the Jews at Jerusalem; even the ministry to which the Lord had called me. But even more particularly that I include the account of the Lord's dealings with me; of my dreams, and visions, and revelations; yea, in fine, that I should write about all my spiritual experiences.

6:17 Wherefore, I should consider to organize the history of my record into these areas: first, that of the history of my people in the land of Egypt; second, that of my marriage, of my family, and my life at our home and farm in the land of Judea; and third, that of my ministry as a prophet of God among the Jews.

6:18 And fourth, I should inscribe the account of our travels and our wandering in the wilderness; yea, even of our sufferings and of our hardships while we sojourned in the desert of Arabia. For those were the days of my greatest suffering; even days that are difficult to be remembered.

6:19 And fifth, I should write about the making of our plates of brass; and sixth, describe the Liahona and its use; and seventh, the building of the ship of Nephi at Bountiful, and of our sailing across the great sea to our land of promise.

6:20 Yea, and I should write more particularly of the good things; even of the great things of the Lord our God; of his great blessings upon us, and of our happiness and joy. For, behold, all has not been sufferings and afflictions. Yea, we were also much blessed, and we did also much rejoice.

6:21 But, behold, I must admit that the cause of my greatest suffering has been because of the contentions and rebellions of my two eldest sons Laman and Lemuel. And, on the other hand, my greatest joy has been because of the uprightness and faith of my son Nephi. And, behold, I do also rejoice in my sons Samuel, and Jacob, and Joseph, and my daughters.

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6:22 But we did have more troubles in the desert than from Laman and Lemuel. For our greatest problem was finding water and food sufficient for our needs. Nevertheless, I did take a few of our goats and sheep with us when we left the land of Judea. For we would have the need of meat and milk. And, behold, we did need them for sacrifice according to the law of Moses.

6:23 And, behold, I did instruct my sons, when I sent them back up to Jerusalem, that they should buy two young camels. For, behold, we did have the need of pack animals. And, behold, Ishmael did bring tents, and tools, and other provisions down to our camp. Wherefore, we did prepare for our needs.

## **Chapter 7**

*Lehi again relates of his coming out of Egypt to Jerusalem, his marriage to Sariah, and the birth of his first two sons Laman and Lemuel. Lehi bought a house and a farm where they raised their crops and herds. Lehi and his sons worked on their farm, that they called the land of their inheritance. Laman and Lemuel were like twins. Other prophets testify unto the Jews and the city of Jerusalem of the coming of a Messiah.*

7:1 And now, behold, I, Lehi, shall inscribe somewhat more about my personal life. Behold, as I have written, I was born and raised in the land of Egypt. And it was among the Israelites from the tribe of Manasseh who did escape the war with Assyria. And they settled in the ancient land of Goshen, where the Nile begins to fan out before entering the north sea. Behold, this was over a hundred years before the king of Babylon did conquer and carry off the southern kingdom of Judah.

7:2 Nevertheless, I did leave my family and my people in the land of Egypt, even the house of my father, when I was about eighteen years old. And I did travel with a camel caravan unto the land of Judea, and up to the city of Jerusalem. Now, behold, my father, whose name was Samuel; and his father was Lemuel, and his father's father was Laman; behold, he did send one of his servants with me, and his name was Ishmael.

7:3 And my father did send Ishmael with me that he might help protect me, and he was also my friend, who also wished to go up to Judea, even back to the land of the Jews. And my father did give me a portion of my inheritance at that time. And I also brought the holy scriptures of the Jews which were engraven on plates of brass, which were bound with rings into a book. And as I have written, behold, that was what I most desired that I should bring with me up to the land of Jerusalem.

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7:4 And, behold, my father Samuel had made arrangements with the family of Laban in Jerusalem, that I and Sariah should be betrothed to be married. And we had not yet seen each other, but that was the custom of the time. But, behold, when I saw her I did love her in an instant; or, rather, I could see that Sariah was very attractive. And I could tell that she liked me too. Therefore, we were soon married, and I took Sariah to wife.

7:5 And I and Sariah did live with Laban and his household in the city of Jerusalem for about five years. For our families were kinsmen, and our tribe did try to intermarry, as best as they could. And so did all the tribes of Israel, before they were carried off captive, even all that were not slain. For, behold, most of the ten tribes of the children of Israel have become lost to us.

7:6 Now my first two sons, Laman and Lemuel, were born at the house of Laban. And for a while Laban was like a brother to me, and he was like an uncle to my sons Laman and Lemuel. That is, he was until the day that the Lord had called me to be a prophet unto this people. Yea, from that day Laban grew angry with me, and he later cast me out of his house. And Laban kept much of my gold, and silver, and my book of brass plates.

7:7 But, behold, it was not long afterward that Zoram, who was a bondservant of my father, was sent unto me from Egypt. Yea, I had heard that my mother had died, and now Zoram came saying that my father had also died. And, behold, he brought me the rest of my inheritance, even some gold and silver, and a new book of blank plates which was most precious unto me. And for this I did truly love my father.

7:8 Thus, with the rest of my inheritance, I did buy a house and farm of my own. And, as I have written, because I did buy it with my inheritance money, we did call our farm the land of our inheritance. Yea, I owned a house and farm, where I dwelt with my wife and our children. And it was a few days journey from Jerusalem, and south past Bethlehem, and near Hebron.

7:9 Behold, I, Lehi, was a prophet and also a farmer. And I did tend the sheep, and did milk the goats; and I did sow the oats, and did sickle the barley. For a prophet is not always a prophet,

but only when he is acting as such. Behold, a man is a prophet when he is speaking for the Lord.

7:10 Yea, behold, we were farmers and herders of sheep and goats. And I did till the fields, and did raise wheat, and oats, and barley. For, behold, men had to raise their own food, or else go hungry, if they did not have family or kinfolk to keep them. For we were cast out, and not only from Laban, but from the Jews in Jerusalem. And Laban had great influence against me, for he was an elder among the Jews.

7:11 Wherefore, for this cause I did move my family out of the city of Jerusalem. And I did also move my family out of the city of Jerusalem because of the great warnings and prophecies against it. And I myself did utter some great and grievous things against the great city of the Jews. Wherefore, should I expect to remain within the walls of the city after I had prophesied of its destruction by Babylon if they did not repent and return unto the Lord their God. And, behold, they would not repent.

7:12 Wherefore, I did separate myself with my family from the great city of Jerusalem. But, behold, the great city Jerusalem was not as great in righteousness as I had supposed; but, instead, it was more great in wickedness. For the Jews, with all of their idolatries, did only appear to observe the law of Moses. Yea, and they did only fain obedience and righteousness.

7:13 Wherefore, as I have said, I did move with my family to our house and farm near Hebron. And it was a private place, and it was a pleasant place to raise a family. For behold, I, Lehi, am myself a private person. Yea, and it was often difficult for me to go up to the city of Jerusalem to prophesy against it. Behold, it was not always easy. But the Lord did sustain me in it.

7:14 Behold, we did move to our house and farm at the time that our first two boys, my Laman and Lemuel, were five and six years of age. Now I did call them twins, for, behold, they did act like twins. They were born less than a year apart, and they were alike in every way. And Lemuel always agreed with Laman, and he followed him everywhere, and they would not be separated.

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7:15 Therefore, we did say that Laman and Lemuel did this; that Laman and Lemuel did say that; and that Laman and Lemuel did contend with us, and so forth. And, behold, we did say that Laman and Lemuel are the eldest sons. So we did consider them as one, even as twins. And when they began to rebel against us, behold, Nephi did have a double portion to contend with.

7:16 Nevertheless, when they were my little children they were not so disobedient. Yea, for it was only after their younger brother Nephi did begin to show forth the qualities of leadership that Laman and Lemuel began to be resentful, for they were the elder sons. And they were of a more practical mind, while they called Nephi, and me their father, a dreamer of dreams. For they did consider the things of this world, even the things which can be seen and proved, to be of the greater worth. And I have often wondered if this came from those first years with Laban.

7:17 Nevertheless, we did work together for several years upon our farm. And during those years Laman and Lemuel were my precious sons. Behold, they were my obedient and honorable sons, and we did work upon our farm together, even shoulder to shoulder. And we did tend the flocks of sheep, and we did milk the goats. And we did sickle the oats and the barley, and, behold, they did thrash it with me. Nevertheless, it was as long as Laman and Lemuel could do everything together.

7:18 Now, even though I had been called of the Lord to be a prophet; yea, to prophesy unto the Jews and against the great city of Jerusalem; that they must repent, or many would be slain, and the rest carried off captive by the king of Babylon; nevertheless, I did have a normal family life, and we lived on our farm. Thus, as I have said, that a prophet is not always a prophet, but only as he is acting as such. Behold, a man is a prophet when he is on an errand for the Lord, and is about the Lord's business.

7:19 Wherefore, during those years that I lived on our farm, and at my house, at the house of Lehi; behold, from time to time I did go up to the city of Jerusalem to prophesy against it. For the Jews were lost in all manner of idolatries and false practices of

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worship. But, behold, my prophecies and warnings served only as a witness against them, for the Jews would not repent.

7:20 And, behold, I, Lehi, did prophesy that their Messiah would come in six hundred years from the time that I left out of the land of Jerusalem. And, behold, other prophets did prophesy that their Messiah would be born in the town of Bethlehem, and that there would be a new star, which would appear on the night of his birth. And surely the Jews shall carry this knowledge with them into Babylon. Yea, this is for future generations.

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## **Chapter 8**

*Lehi describes in great detail the nature and function of the Liahona. It was a hollow crystal globe, which was covered with a metal framework, with two pointers inside. The characters of Lehi's language appeared in the squares of a band which ran all around the ball. Lehi and his son Nephi used the Liahona to find the direction of their travel in the desert. Lehi and Nephi receive answers to their questions upon the Liahona.*

8:1 Let me, herewith, address one particular thing which has come into our possession. Yea, it was marvelous in my sight. It was even the miraculous director, which we called the Liahona. Now this word means, in our language, "which way do we go." And this marvelous instrument was given unto us of the Lord for this very purpose; that we might be guided across the wilderness of the desert of Arabia, and later across the great sea.

8:2 Now, behold, when I say that we did flee from the land of Jerusalem; behold, I mean that we left our house and farm in the land of Judea, near Hebron. And it was already a few days journey from the city of Jerusalem. And, behold, we did stop and make camp on the north side of a river which runs into the gulf of Aqaba, which is one fountain of the Red Sea. Nevertheless, I did search for three more days for a suitable camp. For this was the wet season, and we did wait for the dry season to travel.

8:3 And, behold, the Liahona lay at the door of my tent one morning as we dwelt at our first camp, even at the camp of Lehi. And it was on the selfsame day that we began our journey into the wilderness of the desert of Arabia. And our first encampment was along the northern bank of a small river of water which ran into the gulf of Aqaba, which lay to the west.

8:4 Now this was the small river of water which I did call the river of Laman; and this was the valley which I did also call the valley of Lemuel. And, thus, did I name each of our camps

after the members of our family, for this was the custom of our people when they sojourned in foreign lands. And thus, behold, I did name our first encampment the camp of Lehi.

8:5 Nevertheless, and all of a sudden one morning, and as a surprise to me; behold, at the door of my tent there appeared this marvelous instrument. Now the Liahona was a round ball, which was made of metal in the color of a golden bronze. And it had a lens, or a window, on either side so that I could look into it. And there were two spindles, or two pointers, which I could see as I looked into either of the two lenses. And the spindles did match and cover each other, or else they did cross each other. Behold, this was their only function, to match or to cross each other.

8:6 And, behold, this is how the two spindles, even the two pointers, did function when we sought to find the directions of our travels. First of all we prayed and asked of God which way should we go. And then we did turn ourselves around, while we held the ball, or the Liahona; and we did look through one of the lenses at the pointers. And, behold, when the spindles did come together, so that they covered each other in a straight line; then, that was the direction that we should travel. But if the spindles did cross as and "X" then, behold, we had no direction.

8:7 Behold, this marvelous instrument was found laying on the ground before the door of my tent early one morning. For as I awoke and came out of my tent to stretch and to get a breath of fresh air; behold, there before me lay the Liahona. And, behold, it was this round ball of a most curious workmanship. And this ball, which we did call the Liahona, was about four inches in its diameter, it being about the width of a man's hand.

8:8 And from time to time words did appear upon the ball. Now the Liahona did have a band, about an inch in width, which ran around the circumference of the ball. And only a prophet or some servant of God could use the Liahona. For it did not work for those without faith among us. Yea, behold, it did only work for myself and my son Nephi, and it would not work for my two eldest sons Laman and Lemuel, and neither would they try it.

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8:9 Nevertheless, by the workings of this most miraculous instrument, even the Liahona, we did find our way across all the barren desert of the wilderness of Arabia. Yea, we were directed until we could find the oasis of Bountiful. And, behold, there we did find water, and food, and rest for a season. Yea, and there my son Nephi did build the ship.

8:10 Behold, I, Lehi, wish to describe the Liahona in very particular detail. For, behold, it was I and my faithful son Nephi who used this instrument; yea, even this marvelous director for eight years as we sojourned from camp to camp in the wilderness of Arabia. And, behold, Nephi used it while crossing the great sea to our land of promise. Thus, we became very familiar with the Liahona; yea, it became a great part of our lives.

8:11 Wherefore, I do wish to describe the Liahona in very particular detail. Yea, I do wish to describe its looks, its nature, and its operation. For, behold, my people sought to be great in all knowledge; yea, even in the study of all subjects that pertain to eternal truth. Therefore, what greater joy could I have received when I found the Liahona at the door of my tent.

8:12 For after I discovered its use, behold, it became one of the great joys of my life. And, thus, I know that our God is most gracious in giving us the joy of our hearts. For I had finished my ministry at Jerusalem, and now I was ready for this. For, behold, the Liahona did tell me much; yea, from it I did learn of many things that I did wish to know, even things most precious.

8:13 So I shall now give a more particular description of the Liahona, and of how I and Nephi did use it. Behold, as I did say, the Liahona was a round ball which was about four inches in its diameter. And it was covered with some kind of metal of a most curious workmanship. By this I mean that it was a finely detailed object. But, behold, the metal served only for the covering and protection of the crystal globe inside.

8:14 For, behold, inside of the metal frame, which was of an intricate design, there was a hollow crystal globe. Yea, it was a hollow glass sphere. And it was within the sphere, or the globe, that the two spindles, even the two pointers, were mounted. And

these two spindles were mounted on an axis, and at right angles, to the two lenses of the sphere.

8:15 Thus, the metal frame enclosed the crystal globe. And there were the two windows, or the lenses, which were about two inches in diameter upon each side of the globe. These windows were what we looked through in order to see the spindles inside. And the two pointers were mounted on an axis upon which they moved to either match or to cross each other. Behold, this was their only function, to either match or to cross.

8:16 And, thus, by looking through one of the windows, on either side of the Liahona, the two pointers could be seen inside. And the windows did furnish light by which to see the pointers. And, behold, there was a band that ran around the center of the ball. That is, if the windows were the poles; then, the band would be the equator. And the band was part of the crystal globe, and it was divided into squares of about half an inch each.

8:17 Now, behold, when the ball of curious workmanship was found outside the door of my tent; behold, there was not an angel or a messenger seen. Neither were there any instructions. And, behold, we had not as yet received any revelation from the Lord. Wherefore, at first we could only marvel and wonder as to what the Liahona was for, and how we were to use it.

8:18 But on the very next morning I did find writings on the band of the Liahona. Yea, it did appear upon the band which ran around the circumference of the ball. And, behold, there was a curious thing about the writing that I did not think of at the time. And it was that the characters, which did appear upon the band of the ball, were in the language of my people in Egypt. Behold, they were the same characters as those upon the plates of brass. Wherefore, only myself and Nephi could read them.

8:19 Wherefore, we did get our first instructions as they did appear upon the band of the Liahona. And we did receive further instructions from time to time. And they were all in my language that my fathers had developed in Egypt. Wherefore, everything about the Liahona did teach us things.

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8:20 Now, behold, its primary use was to find directions; that is, we did use it as a compass. But that was not the only use of the instrument. For we did receive instructions from time to time which appeared in the squares of the band which ran around the center of the ball. And it did begin to give us the instructions that we needed, and that were pertinent at the time. But first let me explain in a more particular detail how we used the Liahona to find the direction in which we were to travel. Yea, for that was its primary use, even as our compass.

8:21 Now the first instructions which did appear on the ball were these; and it was in the characters of the language from my forefathers, even in our written language. And, behold, they were in the squares of the band around the ball. And the instructions said that we must hold the ball in our hands; and we must pray unto the Father, in the name of the Son, to receive by the Spirit. And if it be right, then the spindles will match in a straight line. But if it be wrong, then the spindles will cross each other. These were our first instructions upon the band of the ball.

8:22 Now there were no markings upon the ball, and there were no numbers upon the ball, and there were no letters on the ball. Neither were there any directions like north, south, east, or west upon the ball. For, behold, there were only the two spindles and the band of squares which ran around the center of the ball. But the directions were written in the squares of the band when the spindles did point to them. And, behold, there were sixteen squares in the band which ran around the Liahona.

8:23 And as I said, the metal covering of the Liahona was designed of the most curious and intricate workmanship. Neither do I suppose that a man could have made it. Now the metal cover was made of one basic design, and it was that of triangles. And these geometric designs did cover all around the entire Liahona, except for the two windows, and the band of squares which ran around the circumference of the ball.

8:24 And, behold, this is how we did use the Liahona to find the direction in which we were to travel. Now, I, Lehi, did hold the Liahona in my hand, and did turn around in a circle until the

spindles did match. But, behold, Nephi did look through one of the windows at the pointers, as he stood and turned around, and as he looked toward the horizon.

8:25 Behold, this is how Nephi did use the Liahona. Nephi did hold the Liahona up to his eye, and he did look through it, as he did turn around in a circle, as he spanned around the horizon. Now the spindles stayed crossed as an "X" when the answer was no. But when the answer was yes, they matched over each other; and thus, they did point out the direction in a straight line. And we kept the Liahona in a leather bag for its protection.

8:26 Now the Liahona was used primarily for us to find out the directions in which we were to travel during our wandering across the desert of Arabia. And later it read on the band of the ball that we might ask other things pertaining to knowledge. But it said that it would be for eight years only that we might ask for knowledge. And, behold, it could only be a yes or no, or a right or wrong, as the spindles could only match or cross each other. And, again, that we must ask the Father, in the name of the Son, to receive by the Spirit. Behold, these were our instructions.

8:27 And now let me tell about one wonderful experience that I had with the Liahona. It was on a night while we camped in the desert of Arabia. And it was a warm and peaceful night, and I did rest upon my bed. Yea, I did lie on my mat outside of my tent, because of the warmth of the night.

8:28 So here I was, lying upon my bed in the night under all the stars of heaven. And, behold, I did desire to ask a question of the Lord. And there was enough light from the moon and stars so that I could see the spindles within the Liahona. Yea, I did desire to ask a question of the Lord my God.

8:29 So I asked: Am I yet in favor with the Lord? And then, behold, the spindles covered each other in a straight line for yes. And then I asked: Has Jerusalem and the temple been destroyed? And, behold, the spindles did cross to form an "X." Wherefore, I knew that the city of Jerusalem and the temple had not yet been conquered and destroyed by Babylon.

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8:30 Behold, I, Lehi, did have the Liahona, and I did have a gift; and, behold, it has told me many things. And, behold, Nephi did also have the Liahona, and he did have the same gift, and it has told him many things; yea, things most precious.

8:31 Yea, and I do remember that Nephi did oftentimes ask me to inquire with the Liahona about the hunting of game for our food. And I did often inquire of the Lord by the Liahona about the direction of finding game. And, behold, it did often point in the direction that Nephi should go to find game so that we might be sustained. Yea, it did sustain our lives in the desert.

## **Chapter 9**

*Lehi names the families and individuals that came with him out from the land of Jerusalem. Ishmael was the friend of Lehi and servant of his father who had come with him up out of Egypt. Zoram, who became the bondservant of Laban, presented Nephi with the steel bow. Lehi's sons marry Ishmael's daughters mostly according to their ages.*

9:1 Now the people that came with me out from the land of Jerusalem; or that is, from the land of Judea, are these. Behold, I do wish to give a more particular account of them. For we were two families of Israel, of the tribes of Manasseh and of Ephraim, who did flee out of the land of Jerusalem.

9:2 Yea, I did sometimes, or oftentimes, consider that I was like unto Moses, except on a much smaller scale. And we were like unto the children of Israel, for we did also have to wander in the wilderness of the desert. And, behold, this was also from the hopes and dreams of my childhood; that I might be a servant of God, even a prophet like unto Moses.

9:3 And, behold, this was also according to the words of the Lord unto me when he did first appear unto me as the flame of fire; yea, when the Lord did appear as fire upon the altar before me. And, behold, it was also according to the words which were written upon the Liahona, after the time of our murmuring in the desolate wilderness of the desert of Arabia.

9:4 Behold, we were two families of Israel, of the house of our great father Joseph, which came out of the land of Jerusalem; even the family of Lehi and the family of Ishmael. Now, behold, the name Ishmael means God hears us, he being named after the son of Abraham by Hagar. Nevertheless, he was of Ephraim.

9:5 Now at the time of our exodus my family consisted of these; I, Lehi, with my wife Sariah, and our four sons; Laman, Lemuel, Samuel, Nephi, and my two daughters, who had married

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the sons of Ishmael. Thus, at our exodus from Judea my family consisted of five men and three women, being eight souls.

9:6 And, behold, the family of Ishmael were these: Ishmael with his wife, his two sons, and his five daughters. Now the two sons of Ishmael were named Shazer and Nahom, and they were already married to my two daughters. And they also had three children among them. Wherefore, there were twelve souls in the family of Ishmael; that is, when not counting my two daughters. Nevertheless, a married daughter was considered as belonging to the family of her husband by our tradition.

9:7 Now Ishmael and his family did dwell at the village of Hebron, near where I did also dwell with my family on our farm. And, behold, Hebron is a few days journey south of Bethlehem, while Bethlehem is a days journey south of Jerusalem.

9:8 Behold, I did already know Ishmael, for he had come up with me out of the land of Egypt. And, behold, he did have five daughters who were yet unmarried. And, behold, I did have four sons who were yet unmarried. For marriage was taken seriously in our day, and most marriages were arranged, and there was no dating or any such thing beforehand.

9:9 Therefore, for this cause, I did send my sons back up to the land of our inheritance, even back to the village of Hebron to the house of Ishmael. And my sons, or especially my son Nephi, did convince Ishmael of the coming judgments upon the Jews, and Jerusalem, and the land of Judea. And, behold, Ishmael did believe the words of my son Nephi.

9:10 And Ishmael did also believe my sons that I, Lehi, had sent them unto him, and that the Lord had commanded me in this thing. And Ishmael also knew that there would be husbands for his five daughters, even that of my sons whom they had known as neighbors at Hebron. And, behold, it was also because his two sons were already married to my two daughters.

9:11 And Zoram did also come down from Jerusalem with my son Nephi after Laban had been slain. Now Zoram had been a bondservant of my father in Egypt from his youth. But, behold, Laban had taken him upon the death of my father, when Zoram

brought the blank plates to me. For Laban supposed that Zoram could read the inscriptions upon the plates of brass. Thus, when counting Zoram, there were over twenty souls with us.

9:12 And the man Zoram did wish to become a bondservant to my son Nephi; but, behold, Nephi would have nothing to do with it. For Nephi did not believe in such things, and, behold, he did set him free. For Nephi had sworn unto Zoram that he would be a free man like unto us. Wherefore, Nephi did declare Zoram to be a free man and no longer a bondservant.

9:13 Now Nephi does wish to inscribe on his plates only those things which are pleasing unto the Lord; or that is, only the things which are necessary for our salvation. But, behold, I do wish to inscribe the fuller account upon my book of blank plates; that in generations to come they might know of the things which we take for granted. Yea, the simple things which are known to us might be lost to future generations. For, behold, I do seek to prove all things unto my people.

9:14 And I, Lehi, must write according to the Spirit of the Lord, which bears witness with my spirit. But, behold, I am now well stricken in years, and my writing may not be so organized. Yea, because of the hardships and afflictions in the wilderness, behold, I am old before my time. Nevertheless, I, Lehi, do testify that these things are true according to my remembrance.

9:15 And if it so be that I have room upon these plates, then I shall give the full account of the things which I have witnessed in my days. For, behold, the books of brass plates are first made before we begin our engravings on them. Then, behold, we hope to have enough room to finish our account upon them. Yea, the plates are first made and bound with rings to make a book.

9:16 And, behold, I shall try to hereafter give a fuller record of how the plates are made; even as I have described the nature and the workings of the Liahona. Behold, there are many things which I have to write, and one is about the steel bow. Behold, it was Laban's also, along with the steel sword of Laban.

9:17 Now the steel bow was brought down by Zoram who had become the bondservant of Laban. For after Nephi had slain

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Laban, and he had taken Zoram with him; behold, Nephi and his brothers did return with Zoram to the house of Laban and to his treasury. And, behold, they did search for a few precious things of ours, including the plates of brass of Laban, or rather for my plates of brass, for, behold, Laban had robbed me. Yea, this was my property which Laban had kept from me.

9:18 And, behold, Zoram brought the steel bow of Laban with him down to our camp. And when Nephi did not take him to be his bondservant, but set him free; behold, Zoram presented Nephi with the steel bow of Laban. For Zoram knew that Nephi could use it for the hunting of wild game for our food. Thus, that is how Nephi got the steel bow. And any iron which was refined and tempered the Jews did call steel. Nevertheless, when it was cold at night, and the steel bow was not properly warmed before use, behold, the bow did break.

9:19 Now as I was saying concerning the five daughters of Ishmael. Behold, while we did yet camp at our first encampment, which I did name the camp of Lehi; behold, I did bring Ishmael into my tent. And we did sit together in council as two fathers in Israel, and we did consider the marriage of my sons with his fair daughters. For this was our rights as fathers in Israel, and it was after the custom of our people.

9:20 Now I did purpose that my sons should be married to his daughters according to their ages. But there was also Zoram to consider, for he had been a bondservant and was not married. Therefore, it was decided that Zoram should be given Ishmael's eldest daughter to wife, who was comparable in age to Zoram.

9:21 Thus, Ishmael did have four fair daughters left for my four sons, and, behold, they did accept them mostly according to their ages. Yea, we did have each couple to come in before us, their fathers, and to hold hands, and to face one another. And we did ask them if they did accept each other as husband and wife, and that they did covenant to be faithful to each other. And thus were my sons and his daughters married by us their fathers. Yea, we did covenant and bond them together.

9:22 But if I must relate the entirety of the matter; behold, it was not all that simple. For, behold, both Laman and Lemuel had already taken their wives, as they supposed, when they were on their way back down to our camp. And, of course, they wanted the fairest daughters of Ishmael.

9:23 And, behold, this thing was most grievous to me, for they did both contend even against me their father, and against Ishmael. Now I can understand that a man and a woman have the right to accept each other or not; but, behold, Laman and Lemuel did seek only after the things of the flesh. And I had four sons to consider, and Ishmael had five daughters to consider.

9:24 Thus, my sons were not all married exactly according to their ages. But Samuel and Nephi did accept the fair daughters of Ishmael who did desire them, even though they may not have been the fairest daughters, but they were comparable in age. And Nephi did say that he would love the one who most loved him, whomsoever she may be. Therefore, my four sons and his four daughters were married mostly according to their ages. And thus there were now seven families besides those of Lehi and Ishmael in our camp. And they dwelt in their own tents, which they did make from the skins of our animals and wild game.

9:25 And, behold, thus did we dwell as we wandered from camp to camp in the desolate wilderness of the desert of Arabia during those eight years of our sojourn. Yea, each family dwelt in their own tents, which were a total of nine families.

9:26 And, behold, children began to be born to the families of our children in the desert of Arabia. Yea, their woman began to be fruitful, and they bore children to their husbands. And the woman did begin to harden themselves against the harshness of the desert. Yea, behold, they did work as the men in their labors, and all this while bearing children in the wilderness.

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## **Chapter 10**

*Lehi describes the making of the books of metal plates by his fathers in the land of Egypt. They experimented with the different alloys of copper for the composition of the plates. Lehi's father sends him a new book of blank plates on which he inscribes this record. Lehi prophesies concerning the ten lost tribes of Israel, and of these records which are to come forth in the future.*

10:1 Now before my going further with this account let me describe the making of the books of metal plates; yea, even what we called the plates of brass. Behold, I have not yet gotten to the account of my dreams, and my visions, and the spiritual things of my life. But, nevertheless, let me now describe the nature of the metal plates and of our inscriptions upon them.

10:2 Behold, as I have said, my fathers in the land of Egypt did become expert in the working of metal. Yea, they did work with copper, and with bronze, and with gold. And, as I have said, they did develop their own language of written characters. And at first they did this for their trading business.

10:3 Therefore, it was only natural, since my fathers had the scriptures of the Jews, and they had the plates of metal; and since they had developed their own written characters; behold, it was only natural that my people should inscribe their scriptures upon their metal plates. And this was for the purpose that they might preserve a more permanent record of their scriptures.

10:4 Now the great metal in Egypt is copper and the alloys of copper. And when copper is alloyed with tin it makes bronze, and copper alloyed with zinc is brass. In ancient times it was first copper, and then the Egyptians did develop bronze. And, behold, Egypt was full of copper and bronze. Yet, all the alloys of copper the Jews did usually call it brass.

10:5 Wherefore, what we call brass was not always made of only brass, which is of copper and zinc. Nay, they were different

alloys of copper which my fathers; they being expert in the work of copper; did seek to make a permanent metal for their records. Copper was the base metal, with zinc and tin, and some lead and some silver; for, behold, their smelting was not pure. And some, behold, they did surface in pure gold.

10:6 Wherefore, there was much working of metal in Egypt. And my people, who had migrated down into Egypt from north Israel, did take up the trade of copper smithing, and they became expert at the trade. Now the Egyptians did greatly value copper along with their gold, and there was much casting of bronze. So my fathers, they not believing in the religions of Egypt; and not wanting their religion to be known among the Egyptians; behold, they did begin to hide their records upon sheets of metal.

10:7 And, behold, this is the process which they did devise. Now the base metal was copper with certain amounts of zinc and tin and a little silver and lead; for, behold, the smelting of their metals from the ores was not perfectly pure. Yet, the alloy of all these metals did produce the right hardness, and durability, and with a surface upon which to engrave. This is the composition of these plates, even on which I, Lehi, do now inscribe my record; except they have a surface of pure gold.

10:8 Now, behold, my plates on which I do inscribe my own record, are not the plates which I brought with me out of Egypt, and which we call the plates of brass, or the plates of Laban. And neither are they the same alloy as the plates of Nephi. Behold, he did not find sufficient zinc and tin upon the land of promise, But, moreover, there was found much of copper, and silver, and gold. Wherefore, the plates of Nephi were made of more gold.

10:9 But pure gold of itself is too soft, and copper or silver of themselves will soon corrode. But when smelted together in the proper amounts, then behold, they did make excellent plates for the engravings of the characters of our language. Wherefore, the plates of Nephi had a composition of more gold.

10:10 Then, behold, when the plates of the copper and gold alloy are soaked for a time in a solution of weak acid; behold, the gold does come unto the surface. Thus, the plates have a base of

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refined copper, and a surface of gold, upon which we do engrave the characters of our language.

10:11 Wherefore, the engraving, or the inscribing, of all the characters of our language are made in the gold upon the surface. Yea, and the engravings are made with a set of tools of hardened copper, which does require some time and skill. And, behold, all this is done upon plates which are already bound with rings into a book of the metal plates. For, behold, the entire book of plates is first made, and it is bound with rings.

10:12 Behold, I would like to write more particularly about our books of copper plates, and of our brass plates, and our gold plates. For my fathers in the land of Egypt did much experiment with different alloys of copper for the making of the plates. But, behold, I myself did not learn to make the plates.

10:13 And, behold, I would like to explain more particularly concerning the nature of the characters of our language: or that I might tell of their origins, of their meaning, and how my fathers engraved them upon the plates. For the characters are a symbolic and stylized form of shorthand. They were not the Egyptian type of picture writing, nor were they Hebrew letters. For, behold, the Egyptian picture writing only gave my fathers the idea of using a symbolic character type of language.

10:14 Now, behold, the exact process of making the books with plates of copper alloy, that we call the plates of brass, was quite involved. For to describe it in detail would require much of the space in this book. And, besides, and as I have said, I myself did not make the plates, nor learn the smelting of ores.

10:15 But, behold, after we arrived in our land of promise, after crossing the great sea; behold, Nephi did have to make all things himself. Yea, for Nephi did have to build the smelters, and make the tools, and find the ores. And all of this was done while governing this company of people in this foreign land; and while he had so much opposition from the half of them. Nevertheless, Nephi did have the help of the Lord.

10:16 But, behold, Nephi will have the book of brass plates which we took back from Laban. And he will have my book of

gold surfaced copper plates, which he can go by as his examples. Yea, and I have taught him what little I know of the process; but, behold, Nephi will have to make his own set of plates.

10:17 But, again, my book of plates, even these plates upon which I do inscribe this my record; behold, it is of another make. This is the book of blank plates brought to me by Zoram at the time that my father was near death in Egypt. Yea, and my father knew how I loved and desired so much the plates of brass which Laban had kept from me. Wherefore, he had this book of blank plates made for me, so that I might engraven our scriptures upon them in the characters of our language.

10:18 But, behold, I did not use them at that time. Yea, for from the promptings of the Spirit, and by the word of the Lord to me also; behold, I knew that God had yet another work for me to do. And since I had been called to be a prophet of God; behold, I did suppose that I might someday write my own scriptures.

10:19 And, behold, that is what I am doing now upon these plates of gold surfaced copper alloy, which my father did have made as his last gift to me. Yea, for this gift I did truly thank my father. And it is the book which Nephi can go by as his example, and I do call it the Book of Lehi.

10:20 And, behold, the Lord by the power of his Spirit has revealed many great and marvelous things unto us. And, behold, I and my son Nephi have seen far into the future; and we have seen that the records which are engraved on our plates must be preserved. For they are to come forth unto future generations.

10:21 Now, behold, I and my son Nephi do know this thing of asurety. For we have seen and heard this thing for ourselves. Nevertheless, these things are not easily manifested to any of the unbelieving and the unrighteous. Yea, such must first gain some measure of faith. Wherefore, Laman and Lemuel and those who follow after them reject all my words.

10:22 Wherefore, I, Lehi, do seek to inscribe this my record; and praying unto the Lord my God that this record might also be preserved; and that it might come forth in future generations. For the purpose of my writing is that it might bear witness to some

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great work of the Lord. Yea, all that we do is for some great and future work of the Lord our God among the children of men; and of which purpose we are not fully aware.

10:23 And now according to my understanding of the words of the prophet Isaiah; behold, it shall be a work of the Lord our God in the latter-days in these isles of the sea. For, behold, these great northern and southern continents are the isles of the sea in prophecy. Wherefore, great things are prophesied to come forth unto my posterity; and, behold, unto the gentiles also in the own due time of the Lord.

10:24 For, behold, the distant and future descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel will be lost among the gentile nations; and more particularly among the gentiles on the northern continents. Yea, for they shall migrate off into the gentile nations, and they shall mingle with them, even such that the descendants of Israel will not know who they are. But, behold, the Lord our God does know the children of Israel and where they shall be upon all the continents of the earth. And, behold, all the descendants of Israel shall be multiplied exceedingly.

10:25 Behold, this is according to the covenant that the Lord made with our father Abraham; even that all the peoples of the earth would be blessed by his blessings on the children of Israel. How, therefore, could all the peoples of the earth be blessed by his blessings on Israel, unless the children of Israel should dwell among the gentiles in all the nations of the earth.

10:26 Therefore, behold, according to my understanding of the scriptures, the Lord our God shall not do with the ten tribes of northern Israel as he shall do with the one tribe of Judah. For, behold, the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel, who have already been carried off; behold, they shall all be mingled with the seed of the gentiles in all the nations of the earth.

10:27 But the time must come that they shall be gathered as one in all quarters of the world; and then there shall be one fold and one shepherd over all the earth. And, behold, he shall be the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, and the God of the whole earth. And he shall be born and shall minister among the Jews.

## **Chapter 11**

*Lehi relates the beginning of their journey in the wilderness of the desert of Arabia. The Lord judges them because of their murmuring, and they wandered for eight years in the wilderness of the desert of Arabia. Ishmael dies from a fever and is buried. Lehi describes in great detail the building of the ship of Nephi at the place of Bountiful. The dimensions of the ship of Nephi are given and Lehi ponders upon these things.*

11:1 And now, behold, this is a more particular account of our wandering in the dry hot and desolate desert of Arabia. And as I have engraven on these plates; behold, I did take my family, and we did leave our home and the land of our inheritance, and we did flee south into the wilderness.

11:2 Now the river that we did first camp by, which I called the river of Laman; behold, it was a small river which ran during the wet season of the year. And, behold, this was the wet season. During the dry season the river beds are used for travel in this region of country. Yea, and we did use the river beds for travel during the dry seasons of the year.

11:3 And, behold, during the wet season this river did run into the gulf of Aqaba, which is a fountain of the Red Sea. And the valley, in which we did first make camp, I did call the valley of Lemuel. And our first camp I did call the camp of Lehi. And, thus, I did name each of our camps after one of our names in our families, which was the custom of our people.

11:4 And we did camp at Lehi during the wet season of the year. And, behold, it was during the wet season that I did send my sons back to Jerusalem to get my plates of brass from Laban. Now the fuller account of these things I have already inscribed on these plates, even this record of Lehi.

11:5 And, behold, I and my wife Sariah did camp here for a few months during the trips of our sons back up to Jerusalem and the land of Judea. And it was even until they did bring Ishmael

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and his family down to our camp. And, behold, we did encamp, even both of our families, on the north side of the river of water. And it was even until the end of the wet season, when we began our journey into the wilderness of the desert of Arabia. Yea, we did wait for the dry season.

11:6 And thus the day came that we did cross over the river, after the waters began to go down. But it was not until the Lord had given me the commandment that I should arise and depart. And, behold, it was also on the morning that I found the Liahona upon the ground at the door of my tent. Now this was at our first encampment after leaving the land of Judea.

11:7 Yea, even that night the Lord spoke to me in a dream, saying, that we should arise and depart; that the time had come for our departure into the wilderness of Arabia. Yea, this was the beginning of our eight years of wandering in the desert.

11:8 Now at first our party traveled in mostly a southward direction, by the east shores of the gulf of Aqaba, and toward the shores of the Red Sea. From there we traveled in a southeastward direction, or more particularly, toward the south southeastward, in the borders near the east shores of the Red Sea. And, behold, these directions were given unto us upon the Liahona.

11:9 And after many days of our traveling, behold, Ishmael did take sick with a fever. Behold, Ishmael, even my friend and neighbor, who had also come with me out of Egypt in my youth; behold, he did take sick with a fever. And after a few days more we did have to stop and make camp, for Ishmael was too sick to travel. And thus we made camp again for a season; for we could not easily travel with a sick man. Yea, Ishmael was near death, for the travel was hard for him, and he was old.

11:10 Now the camp which we did make when Ishmael did take sick with the fever; behold, I did name it Nahom. And now Nahom was the second son of Ishmael. And I did name our last encampment Shazer, which was after the name of the first son of Ishmael, whose name was Shazer. But, behold, the place of this encampment I did name Nahom.

11:11 And, behold, the place of this encampment was in the borders near the Red Sea, at where we did make camp until the time came that Ishmael did die. Yea, the time came that Ishmael did die of the fever, and we buried Ishmael there. And, behold, his children did sit up a stone at his grave, with his name and the name of our camp; for we did greatly mourn over his death. And from that day the name of the place of Nahom meant mourning and lamentation among us.

11:12 And, behold, we did all suffer many afflictions in the wilderness of the desert of Arabia. And Laman and Lemuel and their wives did much complain against Nephi and me. And my wife Sariah was also grieved in her spirit. And, behold, I also did begin to doubt, and I did murmur against the Lord. But now I did murmur against the Lord as to his purposes in this thing, and for the bitterness of our hardships and our afflictions. And all of us did complain except for Nephi.

11:13 And then, in that selfsame night I did dream a dream in which the Lord did speak unto me. And, behold, the Lord said unto me that on the morning I should read the writing upon the band of the ball. And, behold, this is what the Lord did cause to be written upon the ball, which caused us to fear and to tremble. Yea, the Lord did strictly chasten us because of our murmuring, with these words which appeared upon the Liahona.

11:14 Behold, because ye have murmured against me your Lord; behold, ye shall wander in the wilderness of the desert of Arabia for yet eight years; even for the number of the days which ye have murmured against me. And, behold, ye shall suffer thirst and hunger, and cold and heat, and hardship and fatigue; until ye shall yet become sufficiently humble before me; so that ye might yet accomplish the things that ye have covenanted with me.

11:15 Wherefore, we were shocked, and it was mostly about the time. For it said on the Liahona that it would be for yet eight years that we would wander in the desert of Arabia. And, behold, we were also surprised that the judgments would be so grievous. For it said that we would suffer all these afflictions.

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11:16 And, behold, we did continue to travel southeastward, traveling mostly along the dry river beds, which followed in the borders near the eastern shores of the Red Sea. That is, until I did receive further commandment from the Lord that we should turn to the more eastward into the desolate wilderness of the desert of Arabia. And from then onward we traveled mostly in an east or an eastward direction. Nevertheless, we did wander and sojourn from camp to camp for eight years in the desert.

11:17 And from then onward we traversed across the harsh and cruel desert of Arabia. And we did travel on foot, with our women, even with our pregnant women and our children. And, behold, we did suffer these many hardships and afflictions. Thus, all the words of the Lord were fulfilled according to the writings which did appear upon the band of the Liahona.

11:18 But, behold, we did grow spiritually, and we did learn to harden ourselves against the harshness of the desert. And we did learn hard work, and to sacrifice, and to cooperate one with another. Yea, and we did learn that we could only survive as one family of people. For, behold, we were all alone in the desolate and barren desert of Arabia; and we did depend upon each other for our very lives. And there were also bandits and thieves about such that we could not have fire at night.

11:19 Behold, our sojourn in the wilderness of the desert was the furnace of our affliction. Yea, we did suffer much, but we also learned much, and we did also rejoice much. Yea, when looking back, in a spiritual sense, those were our greatest years. Nevertheless, they were years that were almost too bitter to bear, and difficult to be remembered.

11:20 Thus, were our eight years of wandering from camp to camp in the wilderness of the desert; even till we came to the camp which we called Bountiful, where Nephi did build the ship. And from there we did set sail, and we crossed the great sea to our new land of promise. And, behold, the year was right for our sailing eastward across the great sea. Yea, we did land upon the western shores of the great southern continent in the isles of the sea; and, behold, it was not far south of the equator.

11:21 But let me now explain more about the great ship that Nephi did build. For I have described the Liahona and the nature of its operation. And I have also described the process of making our books of metal plates. But I have only briefly mentioned the construction of the great ship which Nephi did build, and that he caused to be built. Behold, it was these natural things which I did feel that I should first explain, so that this knowledge might not be lost to future generations which shall come after me.

11:22 Now Nephi did construct his ship at the place which we named Bountiful. And, behold, Nephi did not build the ship after the manner of men, but it was built after the pattern which the Lord had shown unto him on the mount. And it was made of a latticework of small timbers, which did all jointly fit together. And, behold, the keel was one tree, which did reach from bow to stern; even a tree which the Lord had prepared. But, behold, the hull of the ship of Nephi was woven of the inner bark of trees.

11:23 And, behold, the ship did have to carry our families, that numbered about fifty by that time; for, behold, our numbers had doubled. And we did have to carry provisions of food, and water, and clothing, and tents, and tools, and seeds of every kind. Nevertheless, the ship of Nephi was designed to provide for all our needs while crossing the great sea.

11:24 Yea, behold, these were the dimensions of the great ship which Nephi did build. The ship was fifty cubits in length; and it was twenty cubits in width; and it was fifteen cubits in its height from the top to the keel. Yea, the ship of Nephi did even compare with the ark of Noah. For, behold, the ship was as long as the ark was wide, and it was half as high as the ark was high. Thus, there was a relationship but on a much smaller scale.

11:25 And, behold, when I did learn the dimensions of the ship of Nephi; behold, I did exclaim and rejoice. For I knew that it was from the Lord. For the ship of Nephi was our ark, and our sanctuary, for our journey across the great sea to our new land of promise. Yea, surely we would be saved upon the great sea.

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## **Chapter 12**

*Lehi finishes his account concerning the building of the ship of Nephi. Nephi directed the men and women in their labors of building and finishing the ship. Each of the people were needed for their part in constructing, furnishing, and supplying the ship of Nephi. They set sail upon the great sea toward their new land of promise; and they land upon the shores of the great southern continent in the isles of the sea.*

12:1 And as I have said, behold, Nephi did have the men to build looms. And the women did gather sea grass; and, behold, they did weave the grass into sections, which were sown together for the sails of the ship of Nephi. But, behold, the hull of the ship was woven of the inner bark of certain trees.

12:2 And, behold, Nephi did make tar for pitching the ship from the oil, which was easily found in this region of country. Yea, for with just a little digging he did find oil, and he did boil it down into tar. And with the sap from certain trees he did make resin. And, behold, Nephi did combine them and did cure them to make a kind of rubbery tar.

12:3 Yea, the hull of the ship was woven with the inner bark of trees, and it was pitched both within and without with the tar, which with the resin did cure into a kind of rubbery tar. But first the bark did dry in the hot sun of Arabia. Then, the entire ship of Nephi was waterproofed with the rubbery tar. Thus, the woven bark, the limbs for the ribs, and the tree for the keel, did form the hull of the ship. And, behold, the weaving of the inner bark from certain young trees did hold it all together.

12:4 Wherefore, the framework of the ship of Nephi was a latticework of the limbs of trees which were steamed and shaped into shape. And the inner bark of young trees was tied and sealed to the frame to form a latticework. Then, the hull of the ship was pitched both within and without with the rubbery tar. And, thus,

the ship of Nephi was pitched and sealed like to the ark of Noah; and, behold, it was tight like unto a dish.

12:5 And, behold, the hull of the ship of Nephi did run deep and narrow to the keel. Yea, the hull was fifteen cubits deep, and it tapered narrow down to the keel, and came to a point at each end. Behold, the ship was thus built so it could cut through the waves, and stay upright, while it was under power from the wind in the sails. Yea, the ship that Nephi did build was a great sailing ship. Yea, and it was waterproof every whit.

12:6 And there were three floors with rooms in the ship. But nevertheless, two floors were below the deck within the ship. For the lower floor was for the storing of all our food, and our water, and other supplies; yea, and also for the storing of our tents, and our tools, and our seeds, and our other provisions.

12:7 Now the middle floor below the deck of the ship was divided into rooms for all our families. Yea, the middle floor was divided into rooms, with one room for each family; which for the more part was for resting and sleeping while sailing across the great sea. Now there were no windows for light below the deck, but we could have light by opening panels upon the deck of the ship. And the panels were shut the during rains, and winds, and storms at sea. Thus, each family had their rooms.

12:8 And, behold, upon the upper deck we could all gather; which for the more part was for our waking hours; for talking, and eating, and so forth during the daytime. But, behold, we did go below deck during rains, and winds, and storms at sea. Yea, the Lord did design the ship for all our needs.

12:9 Now Nephi did organize the men and women in their labors to make the furnishings for the ship. Yea, he did have the men to make the furniture for the ship; even the benches, and the tables, and the beds; and, behold, they were integral parts of the ship. And they were also woven from the inner bark of trees on a lattice framework; and they were waterproofed with the rubbery tar. Yea, the entire ship was built of the same materials. And the women did weave baskets for the storage of our food.

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12:10 And, behold, Laman and Lemuel, and also Shazer and Nahom; who were the sons of Ishmael who had died; were good with their hands when they set their minds to it. Thus, when they did see the ship begin to take shape; behold, they did take heart, and they did all the more help Nephi in building and furnishing the ship. Yea, they did all work together as one in their labors, which did gladden my heart to see. Nevertheless, ever since we arrived at Bountiful my health has begun to fail me, and I could not help Nephi to build the ship.

12:11 Now who could have conceived such a simple and yet such a profound design for the ship of Nephi. And, yet, this was done by men who had never set sail. Yea, this was done by men who had never set foot upon a ship. Wherefore, we did all know that Nephi did surely receive his knowledge from the Lord.

12:12 And, behold, we did find that the wife and daughters of Ishmael were as good at the weaving of baskets as they were at working the looms. For, behold, they did weave the sails for the ship of Nephi. And they did weave baskets of various sizes for the storage of our provisions. And Nephi did have the wife and daughters of Ishmael to weave the barrels for the containers of our food and our other provisions. Yea, behold, the women did work as the men in their labors.

12:13 Yea, the women, the wife and daughters of Ishmael, did weave the sails for the ship of Nephi. Now the sails were all woven from sea grass which the women did gather. For, behold, sea grass did grow in abundance around the lagoons at Bountiful. And they did weave the sails exceedingly tight, so that they did capture the least gusts of wind.

12:14 And, behold, we did find that Zoram; who had been the bondservant of my father in Egypt, and had went to Laban; was expert at the making of pottery. Now this was a thing which we had not known, nor had we expected. Wherefore, Nephi did have Zoram make the earthenware jugs and barrels for our fresh water, which would be needed during such a long voyage at sea. And, behold, Zoram did make the cups, and the plates, and the bowls sufficient for such a long voyage at sea.

12:15 For, behold, we had to take fresh water sufficient with us for such a long voyage at sea. And all our earthenware pottery was made by Zoram, and they were stored in the keel of the ship. And Nephi did design the roof of the ship such that it did collect water during the rains and storms at sea. And the water drained into the earthenware barrels in the keel of the ship. Thus, we did supply our stock of fresh water during our voyage at sea.

12:16 And, behold, Nephi did build a rudder at the rear of the ship. And there was a railing and a cage for safety, so that the helmsman would not be swept overboard. For the rudder had to be tended, especially during storms and cross winds at sea. Yea, behold, that is where Nephi did tend the rudder of the ship. And with the use of the compass, or the Liahona, Nephi did tend the ship toward our land of promise. Yea, behold, the Liahona was our compass while crossing the great sea.

12:17 And, thus, was the construction of the ship of my son Nephi. And, behold, this great feat was accomplished by a man who had never before set sail. And it was done by a people who had never before set foot upon a ship. Nevertheless, this reveals that the Lord can bring great things to pass for those who put all their trust in him. Yea, this was with the help of the Lord.

12:18 Now the ship of Nephi was built upon a framework of timbers near the seashore. And, behold, it was lowered off of this framework down into the sea one night at high tide, when all the loading of the ship was finished. And, behold, we did take our wives and our children down into the ship.

12:19 And then, under the direction of Nephi, the ship was let down into the sea. Yea, the ship of Nephi was lowered down one night at high tide into the sea, and it was cast forth upon the waters of the great sea. And the night that we did set sail was on a full moon, and Nephi did steer the ship out into the sea.

12:20 And, behold, Nephi did make use of the Liahona, or the miraculous director, even our compass. For ever since we set sail upon the great sea; behold, from that day the spindles of the Liahona did function only in pointing the direction for traveling across the sea toward our land of promise.

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12:21 Neither were there any more writings on the band of the Liahona. And, behold, I remembered that the Lord had said that it would be for eight years only that our questions would be answered by the spindles of the Liahona.

12:22 And, behold, we can see that the Lord did provide for the right people, with their talents and abilities, so that this great ship could be built and furnished. Yea, every person, including Zoram, was needed in this great work.

12:23 Now we did set sail upon the ship of Nephi from the southern shores of the desert of Arabia, and from the place which we did name Bountiful. And by the compass, even the Liahona, we were at first directed toward the southeast for many days.

12:24 And, behold, the ship of Nephi did ride wonderfully upon the sea. Yea, it did perform wondrously upon the great sea, under the power of the wind in the sails, and with the control of the rudder. And the keel of the ship cut through the waves, and the ship was watertight like unto a dish. Thus, the design of the ship of Nephi did prove seaworthy indeed.

12:25 And, behold, after the ship had sailed for several days southeastward; beheld, the compass, even the Liahona, did turn more toward the east. And, thus, Nephi did tend the rudder of the ship toward the eastward. And during the rest of our voyage on the great sea, behold, the Liahona did point more or less in this eastward direction toward our land of promise.

12:26 Now our voyage across the great sea did last for five months before we made land upon the shores of our new land of promise. Thus, behold, we were sailing upon the sea in the ship of Nephi, as did Noah and his family in the ark, for five months upon the great waters.

12:27 Yea, the winds did blow ever eastward, except for a few storms, and one great tempest, when Laman and Lemuel did rebel against Nephi. Yea, we were driven back with great winds and waves of the sea for three days and nights. And, behold, this was even until Laman and Lemuel did again repent. Yea, it was even until they did again accept Nephi as their captain.

12:28 And, behold, there were other times of rough seas, and also times of calm seas, in which there was no wind to full our sails. Yea, and at these times Nephi did find that the Liahona did not work. But after sincere repentance before the Lord; then behold, the winds did again blow toward the land of promise.

12:29 And, behold, it is my understanding that during most of our voyage across the sea, that we were south of the equator, and depending upon the prevailing winds. And after five months of our sailing we did make land upon the western shores of the great southern continent in the isles of the sea. And, behold, by my understanding it was not far from the equator.

12:30 And we did make camp, and we did pitch our tents on the land of promise. And there were great forests and much rain. And, behold, there were trees and fruit of every kind, and wild game of every kind upon the land of promise. And we did dwell in the borders near the seashores of the land.

12:31 Now at first after our arrival in the land of promise we all dwelt together, for we were all family; and we had all been together for the past ten years. Yea, we had wondered for eight years in the desert of Arabia; but it was a year before that, and a year after that, before we had reached the land of promise. For, behold, we did camp at Bountiful about half a year.

12:32 Nevertheless, it was soon after my last blessings upon my sons, and upon their children, that my sons and their families did separate to themselves. Yea, Nephi and those that followed after him, did separate from Laman and Lemuel, and those that followed after them. And, behold, they did divide to and fro in the land; and at first to the south and to the north. Nevertheless, they dwelt mostly in the borders of the land near the seashores.

12:33 And now, behold, I, Lehi, am well stricken in years, and I am about to be laid down in my grave. Yea, the tribulation of wandering in the wilderness of Arabia did age me beyond my years. And the contentions and rebellions of Laman and Lemuel did much age me. Yea, my health has been failing me since the time we camped at Bountiful, and I could not help build the ship. Yea, behold, I am old before my time.

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12:34 But, nevertheless, all of the hopes and dreams of my childhood, and of my life as a man and a prophet of God, have been fulfilled. Yea, I shall go down into my grave in fulfillment and satisfaction. For, behold, the Lord my God has much blessed me, yea, and even beyond measure. And he has answered all my prayers, and has fulfilled the hopes of my life and all the dreams of my childhood, even that I might be a prophet.

12:35 And now, behold, I, Lehi, do finish the account of my proceedings in my days, with my engravings upon these plates, and I call it the Book of Lehi. Yea, I, Lehi, the son of Samuel, who dwelt in the land of Egypt; and the father of Nephi and his brothers from the land of Jerusalem; do finish the record of my proceedings in my days upon these plates. Amen.

*Geography of Mormon*

## **PART II**

# **THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON**

*William C. Chappell*

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## **INTRODUCTION TO MORMON GEOGRAPHY**

Let me first of all say a statement of fact. No person on earth knows the true and exact locations of the lands and cities that are given in the Book of Mormon. This includes even the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or the so-called Mormon Church by nickname, who believe the Book of Mormon as one of their scriptures. I will also call the church the Mormon Church for short in this book.

Nevertheless, the Book of Mormon contains a geographical record with numerous references to lands, and seas, and cities, and rivers, and hills, and mountains. And, as well, it is constantly giving directions, especially in the larger plates of Nephi, even the books of Mosiah, and Alma, and Helaman. And many times it mentions the land northward, the land southward, and the sea west, the sea south, the sea east, and the sea north. As well, it gives directions of events in the historical accounts.

Thus, we can ask a logical question. Why have none of the locations in the Book of Mormon ever been found? After all, it has been over one hundred and seventy years since the Book of Mormon was brought forth out of the earth and was given to the world. The seventh millennium has already begun and there are over twelve million members of the church which believes that the Book of Mormon is true. So they should know, and have a right to know, where those places existed.

I think these are some of the major reasons why the true and exact geographical locations in the Book of Mormon have never been found nor understood. First of all, when one considers the whole world of mankind there is only one out of every thousand who believe in the Book of Mormon. But narrowing it down to just the Latter-day Saints, or the so-called Mormons, what could possibly be the reason for the complete lack of knowledge upon the subject of the geography of the Book of Mormon.

The reason for the problem might even be this. The general authorities of the Mormon Church do not know, and they do not

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seek to know, and the members are taught to leave it up to them. Therefore, it does not get done. A few members of the church, and a few other scholars, have studied the matter, and some have written books on the subject. But they do not agree and most are contradictory and unrealistic.

So this is what I say. I say that the Book of Mormon is a true account and that those were real geographic locations, and that I have the right to understand where they existed. And further, if others will not study this subject, nor seek to know it, nor ask of the Lord, then perhaps I should. But of course the major reason why no one understands the geography of the Book of Mormon is because the references are so ambiguous.

I have now been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for more than twenty-five years, and this one subject struck my mind from the very first time that I read the book. I might further add that I had received the most wonderful experience at that moment when my eyes first beheld the Book of Mormon. When my eyes first beheld it, the presence of the Holy Ghost fell on me. Instantly, I just knew that this book was the answer to all of my prayers and that it was to be involved in the purpose of the rest of my life. (My testimony of the Book of Mormon is included at the end of this book).

I now believe that after twenty-five years from receiving my testimony of the Book of Mormon, that I have now received the further light and truth as was promised to me by the Holy Ghost. The greatest thing is an Abridgment of the Book of Lehi, which is part one of this book. However, another thing is to know the geography of the lands in the Book of Mormon.

Those were real lands, and cities, and people, and events that happened there, that were so faithfully recorded in the Book of Mormon. I want to make the people, and those places, and those events more real to people as they read in the Book of Mormon. What greater evidence could there now be, in this world, for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon?

## **WHAT IS THE BOOK OF MORMON**

People need to understand that the Book of Mormon is an ancient volume of scripture which is comparable to the Bible. Some of its enemies have derided it as the "golden Bible," or as "another Bible," when in fact it is another Bible. It is sort of like the Old Testament and the New Testament put together. It covers a time period of over one thousand years, starting in 600 BC and ending in AD 400, with Jesus Christ and his ministry being the center of it all. It is scripture which bridges the gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Of course, it has different men and with different names and different places, for the simple reason that this was an account of people and events on a different continent. It was the same God revealing his word and will to his prophets, just as he did in the books of the Bible. Could God not do that if he wanted to? And might not God have planed to have another witness of his works among men? Thus, the Book of Mormon is the record of God's dealings with another branch of the children of Israel upon the continents of the western hemisphere.

The Book of Mormon came forth by miraculous means, and it was translated by the power of God. It was a "golden Bible" written on sheets of gold by prophets of God, and hidden within a stone box in the ground. It covers the dealings of God with a certain people and country during the time of a thousand years. They taught of Christ, preached of Christ, and prophesied of the coming of Jesus Christ centuries before he his birth.

The Book of Mormon is a volume of scripture having some fifteen different books. There are the books of First and Second Nephi, the books of Jacob, Enos, Jarom, and Omni. The largest and more historical books in the Book of Mormon are the books of Mosiah, Alma, and Helaman. Then follows the books of Third and Fourth Nephi, and ending with the writings of Mormon and Moroni. The very last book is called the Book of Ether, which is

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the record of the Jaredites. These books were written by different prophets and kings during their long and varied history.

There is a small book near the end, which is also itself called the Book of Mormon. It was written by the prophet and leader Mormon who had compiled all the records of the Nephites into the one book of the gold plates. At the death of Mormon, his son Moroni finished the record on the gold plates, and hid them in a stone box buried in the ground. This was the same Moroni, who as a resurrected man; that is, as an angel; revealed the location of the book of gold plates to the young Joseph Smith.

And behold, Jesus Christ visited those people soon after his ascension up into heaven over at Jerusalem. He taught them his gospel and established his church among them. But those people did not have the Book of Mormon, for it was given to the world in the latter-days. The Book of Mormon was never heard of until the angel visited a young man on a certain night. The angel was named Moroni, and he visited Joseph Smith upon the night and early morning of September 21-22 in 1823.

The angel Moroni then told Joseph that there was this book deposited, written on gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent. The angel Moroni also gave Joseph further instructions and quoted several prophecies from the Old Testament. As Moroni talked Joseph could see in his mind's eye where the plates were hidden in the earth. The actual plates were thin sheets of gold, nearly thin as paper. They were about six by eight inches in width and length, being about four inches thick, and bound together with three rings.

## **LOGICAL STEPS AND KEYS OF ANALYSIS**

First of all, let me list some logical steps, which we should take into consideration in our discovery of the actual lands, the directions, and the geographical location of the places and events which are found in the Book of Mormon. Of course, this logical analysis would have to preclude that one believes in the Book of Mormon as being a true record.

That is, these logical steps would be logical only to people who have a testimony of the Book of Mormon. If one does not believe the Book of Mormon to be true, then he could surely not believe any land, or city, or event given in the book. Therefore, this logical analysis is mostly for those who believe in the Book of Mormon as translated by Joseph Smith.

This is the logical thinking that I want us to follow. And we certainly need more logical thinking in this world, and certainly a lot more of inspiration, as well. Now, for those who believe in Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon this is Number One: The prophet Joseph Smith taught that Lehi and his family landed on western shores of South America. It is reported that he said they landed on the shores of Peru, which is about half the way up the South American continent. Joseph probably got this information from his translation of the Book of Lehi.

Number Two: Within a few years after their landing on the western shores of that continent, Nephi had left with as many as believed in the Lord, and they traveled to the northward for some distance. That would have been up the coast of Peru, west of the Andes Mountains. For they could not have gone over the Andes mountains, which have peaks reaching up between three or four miles in elevation. And over on the eastern side there is nothing but the Amazon rain forest. Thus, the only logical conclusion is that Nephi and his party traveled up the western coastline of Peru toward the present countries of Ecuador and Columbia. The only question is how far they traveled up the coastline.

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Next in our quest for a logical analysis of the lands and the geographical locations in the Book of Mormon, let me say this as Number Three: Later in the Book of Alma, it there mentions the land northward and the land southward, which are connected by a "narrow neck" of land. This could be no place other than the Isthmus of Panama. The very definition of the word "isthmus" is a narrow strip of land which connects together two larger areas of land. The two lands are North and South America.

There are very few continents in the world with an isthmus, and there is only one in the western hemisphere, and that one is the Isthmus of Panama. It connects the two continents of North America and South America. Now, the Nephites were in South America and they were traveling north up the western coastline. Thus, when they came unto an isthmus was it not the Isthmus of Panama? Of course it was that isthmus.

This is next in our logical thinking, Number Four: So when the Nephites crossed over the Isthmus of Panama into the land northward, then it was into Central America. That is what it is called, unless we want to call it Latin America or Mesoamerica. We should understand that the North American continent begins in Panama at the narrowest point of land. It is down in Panama and Central America, but it is still the North American continent. That is where this continent begins in the south.

If one follows the narrative further in the Book of Mormon, especially in the Book of Alma, there he will find that the land northward was called the land of Desolation. It was the land of ruins, of empty buildings, and of dead men's bones. Later in the Book of Ether, which is included at the very end of the Book of Mormon, one will find that the land of Desolation was the land where the Jaredite nation was destroyed in the land northward. Thus, the land Desolation was north of Panama, which is Central America. Actually, it began with northern Panama.

Now this is Number Five: The city of Bountiful was at the beginning of the land northward and on the narrow neck of land. And the city of Bountiful was on the west seaside of the narrow passage of land. We can reason that the land of Nephi was south

of there, for the narrow neck was not mentioned until centuries after Nephi. The city of Bountiful was the capital of the Nephites after they were driven out of the city of Nephi.

And for Number Six: What does this leave us in our quest in these steps of logical thinking? The next question is, Where was the land of Zarahemla? The narrative says that it was to the east of the land of Bountiful on the northern seacoast. Thus, it was on the northern coasts of present-day Columbia. These are the three directions and the lands of the Nephite nations. They were on the west and north coasts of the land of Columbia in South America, and up into Central America, being connected by the Isthmus of Panama, which was the narrow neck of land.

Later on in this book I will follow a definite order of analysis and investigation. I will give the verses of scripture as they are found in the Book of Mormon. I will give the interpretation of each verse which concerns any geographical location according to the inspiration that I have received. I wish to do this by giving an expanded or clarified version of each verse. The clarified part will be put in parentheses, and the reference will be abbreviated as CEV, which stands for the Clarified Expanded Version. I shall even try to correct the verses concerning geography so they will make a more natural and realistic sense.

There are a few keys of knowledge that we need in order to better understand the geographical locations given in the record of the Book of Mormon. Key Number One: After knowing that the Book of Mormon is a true historical record, we still need to understand that the Nephites had a limited language. The writers of the different books of the Book of Mormon say so themselves. It was for this reason that they could not explain things with the exactness and detail as we can today. We must take the words of the verses for what they say; however, the author has found that nearly every verse about geography in the Book of Mormon can also be clarified to give a more clear meaning.

Key Number Two is this: We must understand that there are only few geographical references given in the Book of Mormon.

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Most of the references to locations and directions are given just in passing. It would require great subtlety for one to decipher the geography in the Book of Mormon from such few references. Or else it would require great inspiration and revelation from God. The two major places where the text gives a detailed explanation concerning geography is in Alma chapters 22 and 50.

Key Number Three is this: It is because of these two above mentioned keys, plus a lack of faith, knowledge, and inspiration that no one has been able to decipher the geographical locations of the Book of Mormon. It is a lack of faith because people do not believe the book. It is a lack of knowledge because people do not understand it. And it is a lack of inspiration because people have not asked the Lord in prayer.

So what are we to do? We would naturally have to pray for inspiration and revelation on the subject. But there is one further thing that is necessary in order for one to obtain inspiration, and that is knowledge. So for Key Number Four let us simply do the following. Let us just get an atlas of South America and Central America. Is that not the first thing a logical person would do? So let us get an atlas and simply see what lands fit the descriptions given in the Book of Mormon. I will be one of the first to admit, however, that it is complicated and ambiguous.

And for Key Number Five, and the most important one, let us simply read the Book of Mormon. For it is the word of God, and has been translated by the power of God. But one also needs to understand that each and every verse is not written clearly or printed perfectly. I have found this to be the case of the matter, especially when it comes to the verses giving the locations and the directions involved. Some verses are inconsistent.

Key Number Six is more subtle. It has to do with a mind set, with an unwritten policy, or with psychology. It is difficult to put one's finger upon it, but it is always there. There is some reason why the Latter-day Saints will not look at, nor hear, nor can they accept certain subjects. That is, they will not listen to anything when it is from just a member of the church. They are taught that it must come from the leaders of the church.

## **MY INITIAL INSPIRATION ON THE SUBJECT**

Before I go any farther I should give my testimony of how I know these things; of how I would dare to suppose that I might know something about the geographical locations of the lands in the Book of Mormon. Well, I could never have figured out these things on my own. Many people have been reading the Book of Mormon for over one hundred and seventy years by now. There are more than twelve million members in the Mormon Church, and there have been hundreds of general authorities, and dozens of prophets and apostles in the church.

Just recently I have gotten interested in the Book of Mormon again, and especially upon the subject of geographical locations. Then one night, while alone in my room, I got on my knees and prayed a sincere prayer to the Lord. I asked God our Heavenly Father if I might know where the things in the Book of Mormon happened. Where were those lands and seas? Where were those cities? And just what was meant by the land northward, and the land southward, and the narrow neck?

In short, I asked God that I might be inspired of his Spirit to understand the geography of the Book of Mormon. By the way, one can beseech the Lord, and reason with him as a man reasons with another man. That is, one can if he is born again and is in covenant with him. Nevertheless, only if it is God's will, and if he should have a purpose in it. The following was my inspiration on the night and early morning of January 7, 1998.

(1). The land southward is South America, and the land of Nephi was on the northwestern portion of South America. The land of Nephi was western Columbia, and the land of Zarahemla was northern Columbia, in the valleys and seashores.

(2). The city Bountiful was in the center of the lands of the Nephites, on the Isthmus of Panama, which was the narrow neck of land which joined the land southward and the land northward. All directions were considered from the city of Bountiful by the time the Book of Mormon was written.

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(3). The land northward is southern Central America, which the Nephites had called the land Desolation. The land northward includes the northern half of Panama. Now the Book of Mormon is the account of the Nephites and Lamanites in South America. However, the southern half of Panama was the beginning of the south wilderness into Columbia in South America.

(4). The four seas mentioned in the Book of Mormon are but only two seas. The sea west and the sea south are the same sea, for it is the Pacific Ocean. The sea north and the sea east are the same sea, for it is the Caribbean Sea. It is north of Columbia but is east of Panama. As well, the Pacific Ocean is south of Panama but it is west of Columbia. Take note that Central America runs from the southeast to the northwest.

(5). Only one river is named in the Book of Mormon, in the Americas, and it is the river Sidon. There is one interesting thing about the river Sidon. Every time the river is mentioned there is something happening on either the east or on the west side of it. This means that the river runs north and south. The Magdalena River in Colombia, which flows northward to the Caribbean Sea, fulfills this description. It is the river Sidon.

(6). A favorite term within the Book of Mormon is the word wilderness. It was about any place outside a city or a stronghold, for that was a time of city-states. However, the south wilderness was a specific wilderness, for it was the rain forests of Columbia and the rain forests of southern Panama. So the south wilderness was south of Bountiful in Panama and between the land of Nephi to the west and the land Zarahemla to the east in South America. All the directions for the Nephites, at the time of Mormon, were considered as being from the city of Bountiful, that being where Panama City is today. That was their capital.

(7). Several of the cities of the Book of Mormon were at the same locations as the cities are today in Panama and in northern and western Columbia. This includes the valleys and the delta of the Magdalena River in Columbia. The cities given in the Book of Mormon were either destroyed or have been buried under later development. Most are buried under present-day cities.

## **DEPOSITION OF THE GOLD PLATES IN THE HILL (OR THE MOUNTAIN) CUMORAH**

Let us begin at the very beginning of these things. The Book of Mormon was never even heard of before the year 1823. That was the year that the angel Moroni visited the fourteen-year old Joseph Smith and revealed to him the location of the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. It was brought forth out of the earth in 1827, was translated, and published in 1830.

The question of the geographical locations of the lands and cities and the events recorded in the Book of Mormon has never been understood. Let it be known that Joseph Smith, the latter-day prophet who translated the record, did not know where those people lived or where those events occurred. God did not reveal the geography to him. As far as I know, Joseph never studied it, nor did he ask the Lord about that subject.

We could begin at the beginning of the record of the Book of Mormon, with Lehi and his family leaving the land of Jerusalem in the year of 600 BC. That is a long story so let it suffice to say that it covers 1000 years which ended after the year AD 400. Let us now be concerned with the end of the record and its deposition in the hill Cumorah. One of the last leaders and prophets was the man named Mormon, and he compiled their records into a single book of gold plates, and he called it the Book of Mormon.

The Mormon Church, whose official name is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has the copyright and publishes the Book of Mormon. I will call it the Mormon Church for short in this book. Members of the Mormon Church have assumed that the hill in the western part of New York state is the hill Cumorah spoken of in the Book of Mormon. Thus, they have assumed that the gold plates of the Book of Mormon had lain there under the rock for fourteen hundred years, until they were delivered by the angel Moroni to the young Joseph Smith.

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That may not be the actual and ultimate truth of the matter. It is interesting that the Smith family just happened to move to that area, and for Joseph to be living there that year. The odds for that set of events is astronomical. Has anyone attempted to calculate the odds? For if that was the case, then the future is determined, and reality is played out to the least detail. There is a far simpler explanation for that set of events. Let us consider it.

The simple answer would be that the angel Moroni deposited the book of gold plates in hill Cumorah in New York just shortly after the Smith family had moved there. After all, Moroni was an angel of light from the celestial kingdom of God. So he could very well do whatever God gave him to do. As well, Moroni had once taken the plates from Joseph and later returned them to him again. Where were the plates at then but with him in the celestial kingdom? Thus, the angel Moroni could have deposited the gold plates in the hill Cumorah at any time prior to 1823.

One interesting point is that everything with Moroni and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon was always on the date of September 22. We know from the history of the restoration that the angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith on the night of September 21 and on the early morning after midnight of September 22. The angel then visited Joseph at the site on hill Cumorah on the date of September 22 in 1823, and upon each of the next four years in 1824, 1825, 1826, and 1827. It was in the year 1827, on the date of September 22, that Moroni finally delivered the gold plates of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith.

After Joseph Smith had translated the first record found on the gold plates, called the Book of Lehi, they were lost by Martin Harris. They were the lost 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Lehi. Because of this transgression the book of gold plates were taken from Joseph by the angel Moroni for a little season. When Moroni returned the gold plates back to Joseph guess what date it was. It was on the date of September 22 again. So what was so important about that date one might wonder.

The calendar date of September 22 was the first day of the seventh month upon the Mosaic calendar of the Old Testament.

That was the calendar of the Law of Moses, and the first day of the seventh Mosaic month was the memorial for the blowing of trumpets. It is written in the latter-day scriptures that the gospel of the restoration in the latter-days is to go forth even as with the sound of a trumpet. This symbolism is also used in the Book of Revelation. Thus, that was the reason why the Book of Mormon came forth on the date of September 22. As well, we could note that the date of September 22, or of September 23, is the average date of the autumnal equinox each year.

I say that the first and the original hill Cumorah was in South America, and not in the western part of the state of New York. And it was a great mountain, by the way, and not just a glacial drumlin, as the hill in New York state. And Moroni deposited the gold plates in the stone box during his mortal lifetime. For even though Moroni lived for about twenty years after the final battle, it was still about six thousand miles to New York.

I say that the angel Moroni had transported, or had made to materialize, the book of gold plates in the stone box just shortly before his first visit to the young Joseph Smith. For after all, this was all supernatural. The supernatural is real, but it is beyond the natural comprehension. What happened to the stone box and to the other artifacts that Joseph saw in it? Nothing has ever been mentioned but the gold plates and the Urim and Thummin. What happened to the Liahona, and the breastplate, and to the sword of Laban? The understanding is that Moroni took them.

I say by my inspiration that the angel Moroni had deposited the gold plates in the stone box on the date of September 22 in 1820. The angel Moroni may have waited for the First Vision as the sign unto him to deposit the plates in the hill Cumorah. The angel Moroni had told Joseph that there was a book "deposited" written on gold plates. But the book could have been deposited at any time prior to the date of September 22 in 1823. At the least this is something to think about, since the hill where the original plates were buried was in the land southward. The record does say that Mormon took the records and carried them into the land northward, but that began in Panama.

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## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF BOOK OF MORMON GEOGRAPHY**

Let me give a brief history of the study of the geography in the Book of Mormon. First of all, let me reiterate that no land in general, nor any site in particular, is known for sure. The general authorities from the Mormon Church have made no authoritative statement on the subject. They do not encourage the study of the geography of the Book of Mormon.

As well, the scholars and intellectuals of the church have not come to any definite answer on the subject. There have been a few scholarly studies conducted on the subject of geography in the Book of Mormon, but they are never in agreement and they are contradictory. Actually, the leaders from the Mormon Church have given up on this subject. Thus, the members of the church and other interested people are just left to wonder.

Now I do not mean to sound sarcastic, no not at all. For it is obvious that the geography given in the Book of Mormon cannot be deciphered by the human mind. It is just so complicated and seemingly even contradictive. Therefore, no man or church can justly be blamed for not understanding the subject. The secret of this mystery may have to be revealed of God. I have just hoped to be the first person on earth to receive it.

The student manuals produced by the church for the study of the Book of Mormon are now including just a hypothetical map. The map portrays the relative positions of those lands, and seas, and cities named in the narrative of the Book of Mormon. They add the statement that no attempt should be made to place this map on any existing actual map. In other words, all that is given officially of the Mormon Church is a hypothetical map.

But was the Book of Mormon a hypothetical record? Were those lands and cities, those rivers and seas, and the people and events just hypothetical? Of course they were not. How absurd it is for one to think like that when he has a testimony of the Book

of Mormon from the Holy Ghost. So this is what I say. Since the Book of Mormon was a real account; then, the geography of the Book of Mormon is real; and those who have a testimony of the Book of Mormon have the right to learn where it happened.

Ever since the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830 several attempts have been made, and also continue to be made, to structure the Book of Mormon in a geographical setting. There have been several theories and postulations, and some presenting only hypothetical maps, while some others prescribe a tentative caution on the subject. The resulting frustration has caused most in the Mormon Church to ignore anything with the appearance of geography for the Book of Mormon.

However, there are two general theories about the geography found in the Book of Mormon. They are called the Hemispheric Geography Model and the Limited Geography Model. Since the early days of the Mormon Church, and especially because of the teachings of the apostle Orson Pratt, many members believed in the hemispheric model, but it has gradually been replaced with the limited model. These two main theories have to do with the question of the size of those lands.

Basically, the tenants of the hemispheric model are that the "land northward" was all of North America; and that the "land southward" was all of South America; and also that the Isthmus of Panama was the "narrow neck" of land between them. Some basic tenants of the limited model are that the geography of the Book of Mormon was within Central America, or what they call Mesoamerica. Now this theory places the narrow passage at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where there is a narrowing of the land between Yucatan and Mexico. (The above information was taken from the book, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, by Joseph L. Allen published in 1989).

I shall later give a more detailed analysis of these theories, but let me first say this. This kind of thinking is amazing to me. Why can't they simply get the two theories together? Why does it have to be just one or the other, for neither one of the theories make sense. If the original hemispheric model is simply reduced

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down to the size of the limited model; and while still leaving the Isthmus of Panama as the narrow neck; then, we will have the true geographic model for the Book of Mormon.

I cannot understand why the scholars would make up another isthmus anyway, except of course because they are scholars and they must dream up something. It is obvious to a simple person, one with a little common sense, to understand that there is only one "narrow neck" and that is the Isthmus of Panama. For this is the "small passage" of land where the sea almost "divides" the land. The account states that it was so "narrow" that a Nephite could run it in "one day." That is a small isthmus.

There is no other isthmus on the North and South American continents anyway. As well, the events recorded in the Book of Mormon could not have occurred over the whole of both North and South America. Those distances are simply too large for the narrative to cover. So let us reduce the hemispheric model down to Panama and to north and west Columbia and we will have the stage for the play of the events in the Book of Mormon.

Eleven years after the Book of Mormon had been published, a book that is entitled, "Incidents of Travel in Central and South America, Chiapas, and Yucatan," was published by John Lloyd Stephens. Accompanied also by the artist Frederick Catherwood, Stevens visited several of the known ruins in Mesoamerica. His book not only caused a great deal of interest among the public at large, but it also caught the attention of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at Nauvoo, Illinois.

The LDS Church's publication of the "Times and Seasons" commented on different occasions about Stephen's work. Here are a few comments. "From an extract of Stephen's 'Incidents of Travel in Central America,' it shall be seen that the proof of the Nephite and Lamanite dwellings on this continent, according to the account from the Book of Mormon, is developing in a more satisfactory way than even one of the most sanguine believers in that revelation could have anticipated. This certainly affords us a gratification since the world of mankind does not enjoy to give

publicity to such a development as to find the remains and ruins of those mighty people." (Times and Seasons 3:921-22).

After all the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake valley in the mid 1800's, little additional information permeated from Mexico and Central America regarding their ancient civilizations. Latter-day Saints who had the desire to know about the geographical setting of the Book of Mormon had to compare geographical references to a map of the entire North and South American continents.

The thinking that was representative of that whole era was summarized by the apostle named Orson Pratt, who outlined the historical setting of the Book of Mormon. His own geographical philosophy became part of the general Latter-day Saint thinking for the next one hundred years. Orson Pratt's basic geographical premise had been that the entire North American continent was the "land northward," that the entire South American continent was the "land southward," and that the "narrow neck" was the Isthmus of Panama. This is called the hemispheric model.

By the late 1800's a number of theories had emerged which proposed several contrasting geographical settings for the Book of Mormon. This finally prompted George Q. Cannon, who was then in the First Presidency, to make the following statement in the year 1890. "There is a tendency, strongly manifested at the present time among some of the brethren, to study the geography of the Book of Mormon. We have heard of numerous lectures, illustrated by suggestive maps, being delivered on this subject during the present winter, and generally under the auspices of the Improvement Societies and Sunday Schools. We have been lead to these thoughts from the fact that the brethren who lecture on the lands of the Nephites, the geography in the Book of Mormon, are not united in their conclusions. The Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer. It was not written to teach us geographical truth." This statement was from the First Presidency.

George Q. Cannon went on to say that they have objections to the introduction of any maps and their circulation among our people that profess to give the location of the Nephite cities and settlements. However, he further stated that no harm could result

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from the study of the geography of this continent at the time it was settled by the Nephites. Now this was a general authority of the Mormon Church. We are left to wonder who needs enemies when they have friends like this. What in the world did he mean? Was he saying that the geography of the Book of Mormon can never be understood, and that we should not even try? For that is what it sounds like; but you can learn better in this book, for you shall learn that simple geography in truth.

These are the present approaches to the study of geography in the Book of Mormon. The traditional statement says that the history in the Book of Mormon took place within both the South American and North American continents. South America is the land southward and North America was the land northward. The narrow neck of land was the Isthmus of Panama, and those last battles in the Book of Mormon were fought in the western area of New York state at the hill Cumorah.

The official and doctrinal approach of the Mormon Church is that the geographical information within the Book of Mormon is extremely limited. So any attempts to correlate the geographical settings with an existing map are futile. Furthermore, since the doctrine is what is important, then studying the geography in the Book of Mormon should be avoided.

Besides this, all we have is the scholarly approach of the two geographic models that have been described. And as previously stated, there is the hypothetical map which is now included in the study manual of the Book of Mormon. However, I say that these models and theories are totally unacceptable. Let us throw away all this junk and learn the real and simple geography in the Book of Mormon. The priests and the scholars cannot find it, so let us try it the simple way by going to the Lord about it.

## **LAND NORTHWARD, LAND SOUTHWARD, AND THE NARROW NECK**

"And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land. And they did preserve the land southward for a wilderness to get game. And the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants." (Book of Ether 10:20-21).

"And it bordered on the land which they called Desolation; it being so far northward that it came into the land that had been peopled and been destroyed; of whose bones we have spoken, which was first discovered by the people of Zarahemla, it being the place of their first landing." (Alma 22:30).

"And they came from there into the south wilderness. Thus, the land on the northward was called Desolation, and the land on the southward was called Bountiful; it being the wilderness that is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which came from the land northward for food." (Alma 22:31).

"Now it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, upon the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were both nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward." (Alma 22:32).

"And it came to pass that the Nephites had inhabited the land Bountiful, even from the east sea to the west sea; and, thus, the Nephites in their wisdom, and with their guards and their armies, hemmed in the Lamanites on the south, that thereby they should have no more possession on the north, and that they might not overrun the land northward." (Alma 22:33).

"And it came to pass that they did not head them until they had come to the borders of the land Desolation; and there they did head them, by the narrow pass which led by the sea into the

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land northward; yea, by the sea on the west and on the east." (Alma 50:34).

"And he sent orders unto him that he should fortify the land Bountiful, and secure the narrow pass which led into the land northward, lest the Lamanites obtain that point and have power to harass them on every side." (Alma 52:9).

"And it came to pass that Hagoth, he being an exceedingly curious man, therefore, he went forth and built an exceedingly large ship, on the borders of the land Bountiful, and by the land Desolation, and launched it forth into the west sea, by the narrow neck which led into the land northward." (Alma 63:5).

"And the Nephites were driven even into the land Bountiful. And they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even to the east sea; it being a day's journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified and stationed armies to defend their north country." (Helaman 4:6-7).

"And it came to pass that I did cause all my people that they should gather themselves together at the land of Desolation, to a city which was in the borders, by the narrow pass which led into the land southward." (Mormon 3:5).

"And the Lamanites did give to us the land northward; yea, even to the narrow passage which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward." (Mormon 2:29).

Now this is the beginning of my analysis of the geography which is given in the Book of Mormon. I have the computerized scriptures program which is produced by the Mormon Church, and have entered every word concerning geographic references. So let us see if we can decipher that geography. It will require some inspiration, as well, for this is a subject which has not yet been deciphered. It may even require revelation.

So let us delve into the heart of this subject. After one reads each of the verses in the previous section, also have on hand an atlas of the American continents. Now the first thing we need to understand is that the center of the lands of the Nephites was the

"narrow neck," and the city of Bountiful, and land of Desolation. This "narrow neck" of land joined the "land northward" to "land southward." The city of Bountiful upon the narrow neck was the place from which directions of other lands were considered, and the seas, as well, at the time of the prophet Mormon.

In the previous section I have listed every passage giving a reference to the "narrow pass," the "narrow neck," the "narrow passage," and the "small neck" of land. These are all referring unto the same strip of land. Anyone with common sense should know this after reading these verses. But there are those who are too intelligent and too educated to accept such simple truth. For some of the great scholars and theologians have dreamed up unto themselves some other "narrow passage" of land.

Those great scholars do this in their attempt to place all of the Book of Mormon lands in Central America. They are trying to place the "narrow neck" between Yucatan and Mexico, even though that place is more than one hundred miles wide, and it is not even shaped like a neck. So come on you professors. Why do you suppose the Book of Mormon calls it a "neck?" It is because the strip of land was shaped like a neck, which is like a shallow "S" curve. It is like the neck of a bird.

Let us first get this fact straight. The "narrow neck" of land was the isthmus of Panama. Thus, the "land northward" was just north of the isthmus of Panama and on into Central America, and the "land southward" was just south of the isthmus and on into South America. After knowing this, the only question is how far the Nephite lands extended beyond Panama to the north, or just how far the Nephite lands extended to the south of the isthmus of Panama down into South America.

I will tell you that I have had to keep shrinking it, even from my initial inspiration on the subject. I can see now that the lands of the Nephites were only on the western and northern coasts of Columbia, and up into Central America not much above Panama. This was probably no farther than Costa Rica, or Nicaragua, or Honduras. It is noteworthy, as well, that the country of Panama runs in every direction of the compass, for it is truly shaped like

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a "neck." If South America was the body, then North America would be the head connected by the neck of Panama.

The verses speak of the "line" running between the land of Desolation and land of Bountiful. So let me now tell you a thing in all simplicity; that is, if one can receive it. The "line" that was between the "land northward" and "land southward" is where the Panama Canal is today. Believe it or not.

This was at the narrowest part of the "narrow neck" of the isthmus that joins together the two continents. It is a mostly flat and level land which is only about forty miles wide. That is the distance that a Nephite runner, or military courier, could run in a day. Thus, it was "a day's journey for a Nephite." As well, this was the line which the Nephites had fortified in order to protect themselves from the Lamanites who lived mostly in the land of the wilderness of Columbia in the land southward.

Now, I fell sure that this is the central geographical location of the geography revealed within the Book of Mormon. As well, I received, during my initial inspiration, that the lands and cities were at nearly the same locations as the lands and cities are now. Except, of course, some cities were destroyed in the judgments of God during the time of the crucifixion and the death of Jesus Christ. But many are still there with other names.

Now for the clarified and the expanded version of the verses about the land northward, the land southward, and of the narrow neck. By their being "clarified" I mean that words are modified, or different words are used in order to clarify the meaning of that verse. And by their being "expanded" I mean where words or a phrase is added in order to better explain the meaning of a verse. This is what the author calls the "Clarified Expanded Version" of these scriptures, and is abbreviated as CEV.

"And they (the Jaredites) built a great city (upon) the narrow neck of land (Panama), where the sea (almost) divides the land. And they did preserve the land southward (southern Panama) for a wilderness to get game (since it was a rain forest and was full of wildlife). And the whole face of the land northward (north of

central Panama and up into Central America) was covered with inhabitants." (Ether 10:20-21, CEV).

"And it (the land of Bountiful in southern Panama) bordered on the land which they called Desolation (northern Panama and up into Central America); it being so far northward that it came into the land that had been peopled and been destroyed (by the Jaredites in Central America); of whose bones we have spoken, which had been first discovered by the people of Zarahemla (the Mulekites), it being the place of their first landing (up in Central America)." (Alma 22:30 CEV).

"And they came from there to the south wilderness (the rain forest of southern Panama). Thus, the land upon the northward (northern Panama) was called Desolation, and the land upon the southward (southern Panama) was called Bountiful; it being the wilderness that is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had come (south) from the land northward (or from Central America) for food." (Alma 22:31 CEV).

"And now it was but only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite (a military courier), on the line (of defense between the land of) Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east (sea, which is the Caribbean Sea) to the west sea (which is the Pacific Ocean); thus, the land of Nephi (the western seacoast of Columbia) and the land of Zarahemla (the northern seacoast of Columbia) were nearly surrounded by water (or that is, they bordered on the seashore); there being a small neck of land (the Isthmus of Panama) (that separated) between the land northward (or the North American continent) and the land southward (or the South American continent)." (Alma 22:32 CEV).

"And it came to pass that the Nephites had inhabited the land of Bountiful (or southern Panama), even from the east (sea), (the Caribbean Sea) to the west sea (the Pacific Ocean); and thus the Nephites in their wisdom, with their guards and all their armies, hemmed in the Lamanites on the south (in southern Panama and Columbia) that thereby they should have no more possession on the north (northern Panama), so that they might not overrun the

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land northward (up into northern Panama and Central America)." (Alma 22:33 CEV).

"And it came to pass that they (the Nephites) did not head (or get ahead of) them (the Lamanites), until they had come to the borders of the land Desolation (northern Panama); and there they did head them, by the narrow pass (in central Panama) that did lead by the sea (shores) into the land northward; yea, by the sea on the west (the Pacific Ocean) and (the sea) on the east (the Caribbean Sea)." (Alma 50:34 CEV).

"And he sent orders unto him that he should fortify the land Bountiful (or northern Panama), and secure the narrow pass (in central Panama) which led (up) into the land northward, lest the Lamanites obtain that point (of the narrow pass) and have power to harass them (the Nephites) on every side (or that is from every direction)." (Alma 52:9).

"And the Nephites were driven even into the land Bountiful (south Panama). And (there) they did fortify (the line of defense) against the Lamanites, from the west sea (or the Pacific Ocean), even to the east sea (the Caribbean Sea); it being a day's journey for a Nephite (military courier) (to run) on the line (of defense), which they fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country (Panama and northward). (Helaman 4:6-7).

"And it came to pass that I did cause my people (even all the Nephites) that they gather themselves together at the (borders of) the land Desolation, to a city (even the city of Bountiful) in the borders, (near the seashore of the Pacific Ocean) by the narrow pass (where the Panama Canal is today), which led into the land southward." (Mormon 3:5 CEV).

"And the Lamanites did give unto us all the land northward (northern Panama and into Central America); yea, even to (and divided at) the narrow pass (at the Panama Canal), which led into the land southward (southern Panama). And we did give unto the Lamanites the land southward (even southern Panama and down into Columbia, including the land of Nephi in western Columbia and the land of Zarahemla in north Columbia)." (Mormon 2:29).

"And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land. And they preserved the land southward for a wilderness to get game. And the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants." (Book of Ether 10:20-21).

Let me now give a further analysis of the clarified expanded version of these verses. This last verse is from the Book of Ether at the end of the Book of Mormon, and it is about the Jaredites. Now the Jaredites were people who came to the Americas from the time of the Tower of Babel, when the Lord confounded the languages of that people. This was before 2000 BC, and it was some 1500 years before the Nephites came to the Americas. The Jaredites settled in Central America and became one of the great civilizations there in that land.

Ether 10:20 and 21 says that they had built a great city "by the narrow neck of land" by the "place" where "the sea divides the land." It then speaks of the "land southward" and the "land northward." It is obvious that the "narrow neck" of land unto the Jaredites was the same "narrow neck" of land unto the Nephites, even the Isthmus of Panama. It is narrow and shaped like a neck. As well, the isthmus is the place where the sea "almost" divides the land. This fact is obvious when one looks at an atlas.

The verses of Ether 10:20 and 21 would be much more clear if they were written this way: "And they built a great city 'on' the narrow neck of land, and 'near' the place where the sea 'almost' divides the land." For the city was 'on' the narrow neck of land, and not 'by' it. And the city was at the place, and not by it. And the sea almost divided the land, for it did not divide the isthmus of land completely. One can find this type of wording, or where better words could have been used, in several verses.

"Now it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, upon the line Bountiful and the land of Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land in between the land northward and the land

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southward." (Alma 22:32). "And the Nephites and the army of Moronihah were driven even to the land of Bountiful. And there they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea even to the east; it being a day's journey for a Nephite, on the line that they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country." (Helaman 4:6-7).

Here I have put together the verses from two different books which state that it was a day's journey, or one day and a half's journey, for a Nephite to run upon the line between the land of Bountiful and land of Desolation. From the verse in Alma it is not so clear what the "line" means, but the verse from Helaman clearly explains that it was a fortified line of their defense. Thus, it was a fortified line of defense used by the Nephites to keep the Lamanites from taking the land northward, or northern Panama and Central America, from the Nephites.

From these verses it could be implied that the "day's or the day and a half's" journey for a Nephite meant that of a military courier. The line was a fortified line of defense, from sea to sea across the Isthmus of Panama, which was only forty miles wide between the seas. Thus, a military courier could run it in a day's time, or within a day and a half.

As was previously given, this fortified line was about where the Panama Canal is today. It ran from the Caribbean Sea side, which was the east sea, to the city of Bountiful upon the Pacific Ocean side, which was also the west sea in the Book of Mormon. Thus, that fortified line of defense for the Nephites divided the land northward from the land southward. The city of Bountiful was located on the Pacific Ocean side of the line, and it was the center place for all their directions.

The verse of Alma 22:32 is quite scrambled though. It is no wonder that any geography from the Book of Mormon has never been worked out. The information in the verses is confusing and somewhat contradictory. The Book of Mormon was translated by way of a spiritual gift given of God to Joseph Smith. He called it the most correct of any book on earth. However, that is speaking of correct doctrine, and certainly not of grammar, or word usage,

or punctuation. No, in that area there have been more than four thousand changes to bring it into more correct English.

The verse of Alma 22:32 could more correctly be reworded as follows. "And now it was only the distance of one day and a half's journey for a Nephite 'courier to run' on the 'defense' line 'from' the city of Bountiful on the west sea 'coast,' 'along the line of the land of Desolation to the east 'seacoast.' There being a 'narrow' neck 'shaped strip' of land, 'along which their line of defense ran that divided' between the land northward 'from' the land southward. And the land of Nephi and the land Zarahelma were nearly 'all bordering along the seacoasts.'

Take note that at the end of the verse the word "surrounded" by water is omitted, and is replaced with the words, "bordering along the seacoasts." The land of Nephi was along the western seacoasts of Columbia, and the land of Zarahemla was along the seacoasts of the northern part of Columbia. Therefore, they are not really surrounded by water, but bordered on the water of the oceans. It was the land of the Nephites upon the narrow neck of land, even the Isthmus of Panama, which is nearly surrounded by water, for it has oceans on every side.

"And it came to pass that the Nephites had inhabited the land Bountiful, even from the east unto the west sea; and, thus, the Nephites, in their wisdom with their guards and their armies, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south, that thereby they should have no more possession upon the north, so that they might not overrun the land northward." (Alma 22:33).

After one understands the previous verses, then the meaning of this verse should become clear. The land of Bountiful that the Nephites had later inhabited was the land of present-day Panama. Now this was not the original land of Nephi that was in the land southward, for by this time the Nephites had been run out of the land of Nephi and fled into the north. The city of Bountiful was on the seacoast of the Pacific Ocean about where Panama City is today. The city Desolation was on the seacoast of the Caribbean Sea in central Panama where the land Desolation began.

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The west sea, that is also the south sea, is the Pacific Ocean. The east sea, which is also the north sea, was the Caribbean Sea. Along the fortified line of defense, where the Panama Canal is today, is where the Nephite guards and their armies hemmed in the Lamanites upon the south side of the line. In other words, the Nephites kept the Lamanites from getting to the land northward, or into northern Panama, by having the fortified line of defense at the narrowest place on the Isthmus of Panama.

The "line" of the Panama Canal of today is only about forty miles long, and a part of that distance is the Charges River. One thing which would be interesting to find out is if the developers of the Panama Canal had found any remains of a fortification, or a ditch, or embankment of any kind. But it was probably built of only earth and timbers anyway, for that is what is indicated in the narrative of the Book of Mormon.

## **LAND SOUTHWARD OF THE NARROW NECK**

"Now 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 (was brought) into the land south." (Helaman 6:10).

"And they were lost in the wilderness for the space of many days, yet they were diligent and found not the land of Zarahemla, but returned to this land, having traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men and beasts, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people as numerous as the hosts of Israel." (Mosiah 8:8).

"And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, he named all the land that was south of the land Desolation; yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and the south – a chosen land, a land of liberty." (Alma 46:17).

"And the land that was appointed was the land of Zarahemla, and the land which was between the land of Zarahemla and the land of Bountiful; yea, to the line which was between the land of Bountiful and the land of Desolation." (Third Nephi 3:23).

"Thus he cut off the strongholds of the Lamanites in the east wilderness; yea, and also on the west, fortifying the line between the Nephites and the Lamanites; between the land of Zarahemla and the land of Nephi; from the west sea, running by the head of the river Sidon – the Nephites possessing all the land northward; yea, even all the land that was northward of the land Bountiful, according to their pleasure." (Alma 50:11).

"It came to pass that the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land, amongst all of his people who were in his land, who were in all the regions round about, which was bordering even to the sea, on the east and on the west, and which was divided from the land of Zarahemla by a narrow strip of wilderness, which ran from the sea east even unto the sea west, and round about on the

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borders of the seashore, and the borders of the wilderness which was on the north by the land of Zarahemla, through the borders of Manti, by the head of the river Sidon, running from the east towards the west – and thus were the Lamanites and the Nephites divided." (Alma 22:27).

"Now, the more idle part of the Lamanites lived within the wilderness, and dwelt in tents; and they were spread throughout the wilderness upon the west and in the land of Nephi; yea, and also on the west of the land of Zarahemla, in the borders by the seashore, and on the west in the land of Nephi, in the place of their father's first inheritance, and, thus, bordering along by the seashore." (Alma 22:28).

"And also there were many Lamanites upon the east by the seashore, whither the Nephites had driven them. And, thus, the Nephites were nearly surrounded by the Lamanites; nevertheless the Nephites had possession of all the northern parts of the land bordering on the wilderness, at the head of the river Sidon, and from the east to the west, round about upon the wilderness side; on the north, even until they came to the land which they called Bountiful." (Alma 22:29).

"And the land of Nephi did run in a straight course from the east sea to the west." (Alma 50:8).

Since the books which compose the Book of Mormon were written by the Nephite prophets, then the directions were written from the Nephite perspective. As well, the Nephites were forced and driven over the years to different lands by their enemies the Lamanites. Thus, their lands and directions of the lands change. This is another key to help understand the geography.

The original Nephi, the son of Lehi, had moved his people northward and had settled in what is now the western seacoasts of Columbia. Several centuries later the Nephites discovered the Mulekites in Zarahemla and sort of amalgamated with them. The land of Zarahemla was upon the seacoasts and northern parts of Columbia. Even later the Nephites were driven by the Lamanites into Panama, where they were finally forced to build a fortified

line across the narrow neck or passage, which is the Isthmus of Panama. So we must be aware of where they are at in the history or time sequence of the Book of Mormon narrative.

Nevertheless, the great majority of the events recorded in the Book of Mormon had occurred in the land southward which is now the present-day country of Columbia. The early history was mostly in the western parts near the seacoasts which was the land of Nephi. The later history was in the northern parts of Columbia which was the land of Zarahemla. It included the valleys along both sides of the Magdalena River in Columbia which runs to the north and empties into the Caribbean Sea.

The first verse listed in the previous section, even Helaman 6:10, says that "the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north and Lehi was brought to the land south." The Book of Mormon says that Mulek was one of the sons of Zedekiah, the king of Israel, and that he had escaped from Jerusalem before the Babylonian captivity of Israel. That was also near the time that Lehi had left Jerusalem in about 600 BC.

Mulek and his company of people had sailed westward to the Americas and they landed in Central America. That is what was meant by the "land north" in that verse. It should be noted that the North American continent begins at the very narrowest point of the Isthmus of Panama. Then much later during their history the Mulekites migrated down into South America to the northern seacoasts of Columbia. The Nephites called that land the land of Zarahemla after one of their kings.

The same verse says that Lehi was brought into the "land south." This means that Lehi and his family had landed upon the western shores of South America. Here the land south meant the South American continent. Nephi and his group migrated to the north and up the western coasts of Ecuador and into Columbia. However, the Nephites did not discover the Mulekites in the land of Zarahemla in northern Columbia for four hundred years after they left Jerusalem. So that was about 200 BC.

Let us now consider the verse of Mosiah 8:8. There came a time that the king Limhi, who was the king in the land of Nephi,

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which was western Columbia, sent a party of forty-three men in an attempt to find the land of Zarahemla. But the scouting party got lost, or rather they got diverted, and instead they explored a land of ruins. That land was covered with the ruins of buildings of all kinds, and with the bones of men and animals. Obviously, there had been a great war and slaughter, and the land had been abandoned. So what land had they found?

What landform is in the way when one is traveling from the western seacoast of Columbia over to the northern seacoast of Columbia? Why, it was the Isthmus of Panama. Is this not so? Therefore, this scouting party which was sent out by king Limhi from the land of Nephi, had gotten diverted up the seacoasts into the land of present-day Panama and into Central America. The Jaredites, who had traveled from the Tower of Babel, had been destroyed in that land after having a great civilization for over a thousand years. Their record is found in the Book of Ether which is included at the end of the Book of Mormon.

From these verses it sounds as if there was also a "line" that divided the Nephites from Lamanites down in the land of South America. It says that this dividing "line" was a "narrow strip" of wilderness which is mentioned in Alma 22:27. It is a key verse for understanding the Book of Mormon lands in South America, which were within Columbia. When I had entered each key word concerning geography into the Church's computerized scriptures program each one gave a listing in the verse of Alma 22:27.

Or in other words, that verse contained each key word about geography in the land southward, which was within Columbia in South America. We should understand that this verse was written from the Lamanite perspective, for the proclamation was written by a Lamanite king. This is an explanation of that verse.

The lands of the Nephites, by this time, were located in the northern parts of Columbia bordering on the northern seashores, which was the land of Zarahemla. And the land of the Lamanites was in the original land of Nephi which was the western parts of Columbia. Therefore, the "narrow strip" of wilderness, it being

between the two lands, would have been the very same "narrow strip" of south wilderness, which was southern Panama.

One of the favorite terms concerning geography in the Book of Mormon was the word "wilderness." Thus, there was the east wilderness, the west wilderness, the north wilderness, and the south wilderness. Now, the south wilderness had been a specific wilderness, but otherwise a wilderness had meant about anyplace outside of a city or a stronghold.

In the Book of Mormon times it was the time of city-states. You know what is meant by city-states, don't you? It means that it was a time of walled cities, and everyone had to live within the walls of a city, or a stronghold, which was a fort or fortification of some kind for their defense. Back then people could not just live all over the land in their own homes. It was a time of almost continuous wars, with enemies on every hand. So the wilderness was about every place outside of the cities.

Let us consider the verse of Alma 22:28. This states that the Lamanites dwelt within the wilderness on the west in the land of Nephi. This was on the western shores of Columbia between the Andes mountains and the Pacific Ocean. One can note that this region of land from Panama down through the western portion of Columbia is an equatorial rain forest.

Panama, and especially in southern Panama, was the land of Bountiful. It was called Bountiful because it was full of wildlife of every kind. Is not a rain forest full of wildlife of every kind? Of course it is. The country of Panama and the western parts and seacoasts of Columbia is an equatorial rain forest. That is why it was called a wilderness, and the land of Bountiful, as well.

It says the place of their father's first inheritance was in the borders by the seashore. What is meant by the land of their father was the original land of Nephi. His father, the prophet Lehi, had landed on the western shores of Peru. But Nephi later migrated up the coasts to western Columbia. So that was the place of their father Nephi's first inheritance. Therefore, it was called the land of Nephi. However, it was later taken over by the Lamanites by the time of king Limhi.

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Now the verse of Alma 50:8 states that "the land of Nephi did run in a straight course from the east sea to the west." Just what in the world could that statement mean? This verse does not even fit into the narrative of what Alma 50 is talking about. Now this is the interpretation of that verse. By this time in their history the Nephites were living in the land of Zarahemla along with those descendants of the Mulekites. The land of Zarahemla was the northern portions and seacoasts of Columbia. It was not the original land of Nephi, for that was by then controlled by the Lamanites, and was the western portions of Columbia.

The Nephites also inhabited the land northward in Panama, and they had their final line of defense against the Lamanites in central Panama. So this would be the more proper reading of the verse of Alma 50:8. The wording of "Nephi" should be the word "Nephites." It was the land of the Nephites, and not the land of Nephi. This was perhaps an error made in the printer's copy or with the original dictation. Nevertheless, the verse should more properly read in this fashion: "Now the line of defense of the Nephites did run in a straight course from the east sea toward the west sea." (Alma 50:8).

Let me now give the clarified and expanded version of the verses listed from this analysis concerning the lands in Columbia and South America. Again, each of the clarifications are placed within parentheses and are abbreviated as CEV.

"Now the land south (South American continent) was called Lehi, and the land north (even Central America upon the North American continent) was called Melek, which was (named) after the son of Zedekiah; for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north (in Central America), and Lehi (was brought) into the land south (in South America)" (Helaman 6:10 CEV).

"And they (even the Nephite scouting party) were lost in the wilderness (even the rain forest) for the space of many days; yet, (though) they were (very) diligent (they) found not the land of Zarahemla (on the northern seacoast of Columbia), but returned to this land (of Nephi on the west seacoast of Columbia); having

traveled in a land (Central America) among many waters; having discovered a land which was covered with the bones of men and beasts, and was also covered with the ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people (the Jaredites, whose record is the Book of Ether), who were almost as numerous as the hosts (the population) of Israel." (Mosiah 8:8 CEV).

"And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, he named all the land that was south of the land Desolation (even the land of Bountiful); yea, and in fine, all of the land, both on the north and on the south (of the dividing line within central Panama) – a chosen land, a land of liberty." (Alma 46:17 CEV).

"And the land that was appointed was the land of Zarahemla (upon the northern seashores of Columbia), and the land which was between the land of Zarahemla and the land of Bountiful (in southern Panama); yea, to the line (of defense in Panama), which was between the land of Bountiful (to the south) and the land of Desolation (to the north)." (Third Nephi 3:23 CEV).

"Thus he cut off the strongholds of the Lamanites in the east wilderness (or east of the Magdalena River in central Columbia); yea, and also on the west (of the river), (while also) fortifying the line (of defense) between the Nephites and the Lamanites (up in Panama); (which lay) between the land of Zarahemla (the north seashores of Columbia) and the land of Nephi (west seashores of Columbia); (which land of Zarahemla runs) by the head (or by the mouth) of the river Sidon (which was the Magdalena River) – the Nephites possessing all of the land northward (in Panama); yea, even all the land which was northward of the land Bountiful (which is southern Panama), even according to their pleasure." (Alma 50:11 CEV).

"It came to pass that the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land (of Nephi), amongst all his people (the Lamanites) in his land, and who were in all the regions round about, which was bordering even to the sea, upon the east (seashores), (which east sea is the north sea, even the Caribbean Sea), and upon the west (seashores), (which is the south sea, even the Pacific Ocean); and

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which was divided from the land of Zarahemla (on the northern seashores of Columbia) by a narrow strip of wilderness (even the Isthmus of Panama), which ran from the sea east to the sea west; and round about on the borders of the seashore, and the borders of the wilderness that was on the north by the land of Zarahemla, through the borders of (the city) Manti, by the head (the mouth) of the river Sidon, running from the east (sea) towards the west (sea). And thus were the Lamanites and the Nephites divided (by the Isthmus of Panama)." (Alma 22:27 CEV).

"Now, the more idle part of the Lamanites had lived in the wilderness (or the rain forests of Columbia), and dwelt in tents; and they were spread throughout the wilderness on the west (sea coasts) in the land of Nephi (in western Columbia); yea, and on the west (or rather the east) (seacoasts) in the land of Zarahemla (in northern Columbia), in the borders by the seashore, and upon the west in the land of Nephi, the place of their father (Nephi's) first inheritance; thus, bordering along by the seashores (in all of their lands)." (Alma 22:28).

"And also there were Lamanites on the east (in the land of Zarahemla) by the (northern) seashores whither the Nephites had driven them. And so the Nephites were nearly surrounded by the Lamanites; nevertheless, the Nephites had possession of all the northern parts of the land bordering upon the wilderness, at the head (or the mouth) of the river Sidon (or the Magdalena River); from the east (sea) unto the west (sea), and round about upon the wilderness side (southern Panama); on the north (of Columbia), even until they came into the land which they called Bountiful (or the rain forest of southern Panama)." (Alma 22:29 CEV).

"And the (line of military defense) of the (Nephites) did run in a straight course (across the Isthmus of Panama) from the east sea (the Caribbean Sea) unto the west (sea) (which is the Pacific Ocean)" (Alma 50:8 CEV).

## **REFERENCES TO THE RIVER SIDON IN THE SOUTH WILDERNESS**

The river Sidon was the Magdalena River, which runs out of central Columbia northward into the Caribbean Sea. And here is an interesting thing. The verses always say it was the "head" of the river Sidon. This sounds as if it should be at the headwaters, or the beginning of the river. However, this is not the case. The term "head" as used in the Book of Mormon means the "mouth" of the river where it empties into the Caribbean Sea, in the land of Zarahemla, which was on the northern seacoast of Columbia.

Now back to this verse of Alma 22:29. The river Sidon is the Magdalena River within Columbia which flows out of the Andes northward and empties into the Caribbean Sea. What was meant by "from the east to the west" in this verse is simply the east and the west valleys of the river Sidon. The Nephites at that time had inhabited the northern plains of Columbia and the valleys along the Magdalena River in northern Columbia until they came into the land of Bountiful, even the country of Panama.

"And it came to pass that the Amlicites came upon the hill Amnihu, which was east of the river Sidon, which ran by the land of Zarahemla, and where they did began to make war with the Nephites." (Alma 2:15).

"And, thus, he cleared the ground, or rather the bank, which was on the west side of the river Sidon, throwing the bodies of the Lamanites who had been slain into the waters of Sidon; that thereby his people might have room to cross and to contend with the Lamanites and the Amlicites upon the west side of the river Sidon." (Alma 2:34).

"And now as many of the Lamanites and the Amlicites who had been slain on the bank of the river Sidon were cast into the waters of Sidon; and behold their bones are in the depths of the sea, and they are many." (Alma 3:3).

"And now it came to pass that when Alma had made these regulations, he departed from them; yea, from the church which

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was in the city of Zarahemla, and went over upon the east of the river Sidon, into the valley of Gideon; there having been a city built, which was called the city of Gideon, that was in the valley which was called Gideon, it being called after the man who was slain by the hand of Nehor with the sword." (Alma 6:7).

"And it came to pass in the commencement of the tenth year of the reign of the judges over all the people of Nephi that Alma departed from thence and took his journey over into the land of Melek, on the west of the river Sidon, on the west by the borders of the wilderness." (Alma 8:3).

"And now it came to pass that Alma did inquire of the Lord concerning the matter. And Alma returned and said unto them: Behold, the Lamanites will cross at the river Sidon in the south wilderness, away up beyond the land of Manti. And behold there shall ye meet them, on the east of the river Sidon, and there the Lord will deliver unto thee all thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites." (Alma 16:6).

"And it came to pass that Zoram and his sons crossed over the river Sidon with their armies, and marched away beyond the borders of Manti to the south wilderness which was on the east side of the river Sidon." (Alma 16:7).

"And they gathered together their people; yea, all the people of the Lord, and did gather together all of their flocks and herds; and departed out of the land, and came into the wilderness which divided the land of Nephi from the land of Zarahemla, and came over near the borders of the land." (Alma 27:14).

"And now it came to pass that Moroni caused that his army should be secreted in the valley which was near the bank of the river Sidon, which was on the west of the river Sidon within the wilderness." (Alma 43:27).

For an analysis of the verses which give a reference to the river Sidon in the Book of Mormon, there is only one thing that one needs to know. It is that the river Sidon was the Magdalena River in Columbia which runs north into the Caribbean Sea. At that time the south wilderness was in that portion of Columbia

bordering upon the east and west sides of the Magdalena River, which is the river Sidon of the Book of Mormon.

The following are the clarified and expanded version of the verses concerning the river Sidon in the Book of Mormon. And, again, note that the clarifications are put in parentheses and the verses are annotated with CEV.

"And it came to pass that the Amlicites came upon the hill (or rather the mountain) Amnihu (which is also called Shim and Cumorah), which is east (of the mouth) of the river Sidon (the Magdalena River), which ran by the land of Zarahemla (in the valleys of the Magdalena River in north Columbia), where they did began to make war with the Nephites." (Alma 2:15 CEV).

"And thus he cleared the ground, or rather the bank, which was on the west side of the river Sidon (or the Magdalena River), throwing the bodies of the Lamanites who had been slain into the waters of (the river) Sidon; so that thereby his people might have room (to gain access) to cross (over the river) and contend with the Lamanites and the Amlicites on the west side (or rather the east side) of the river Sidon (which was the Magdalena River)." (Alma 2:34 CEV).

"And now as many of the Lamanites and the Amlicites who were slain upon the bank of the river Sidon (even the Magdalena River) were cast into the water of (the river) Sidon; and behold their bones are in the depths of the (Caribbean) sea (at the mouth of the Magdalena River off the seacoast of Columbia), and they are many." (Alma 3:3 CEV).

"And (now) it came to pass that when Alma had made these regulations, he departed from them; yea, from the church which was in the city of Zarahemla (which is just west of the mouth of the Magdalena River on the seacoast), and went over (to) the east side of the river Sidon, into the valley of Gideon (and to the east valleys of the Magdalena River); there having built a city, which was called the city of Gideon, which was in the valley of Gideon, it being called after the man who was slain by the hand of Nehor by the sword." (Alma 6:7 CEV).

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"And it came to pass in the commencement of the tenth year of the reign of the judges over all the people of Nephi that Alma departed from thence and took his journey over into the land of Melek (and to the city of Melek), upon the west side of the river Sidon (even in the west valleys of the Magdalena River), on the west by the borders of the wilderness." (Alma 8:3).

"And (now) it came to pass that Alma inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And Alma returned and said unto them: Behold, the Lamanites will cross over the river Sidon (even the Magdalena River) in the south wilderness (northern Columbia), away up beyond the land of Manti (a city near the mouth on the east of the Magdalena River). And, behold, there shall ye meet them, on the east side of the river Sidon (Magdalena River), and there the Lord will deliver unto thee thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites." (Alma 16:6).

"It came to pass that Zoram and his sons crossed over the river Sidon (or Magdalena River) with their armies, and marched away beyond the (seacoast) borders of (the city of Manti) in the south wilderness (northern Columbia), which (land) was (to the north and to) the east side of the river Sidon (Magdalena River)." (Alma 16:7 CEV).

"And they gathered together all of their people; yea, all the people of the Lord, and did gather together all of their flocks and herds; and departed out of the land (and city of Zarahemla and valleys and delta of the Magdalena River in northern Columbia), and they came into the (south) wilderness (of southern Panama), which divided the land of Nephi (in western Columbia) from the land of Zarahemla (in north Columbia), and came over near the borders of the land (between the land Bountiful and Desolation to the north)." (Alma 27:14 CEV).

"And it came to pass that Moroni had caused that his army should be secreted in the valley which was near the (west) bank of the river Sidon (Magdalena River), which (valley) was on the west (side) of the river Sidon in the wilderness (of Columbia)." (Alma 43:27 CEV).

## **RELATIVE LOCATION OF CITIES IN THE BOOK OF MORMON**

There are numerous cities, or even several dozen, which are mentioned in the Book of Mormon. This is especially true in the accounts of all the fighting and wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites which is recorded in the books of Mosiah, Alma, and Helaman. The prophets and priests also traveled among the various cities as they preached and built up the church.

As well, many cities that were destroyed by the judgments of God at the time of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ are named in Third Nephi. These cities were completely destroyed at that time. Some were burned by fire from lightning, and others were destroyed by earthquakes. Other cities were buried by the earth opening and by ash from volcanoes. Therefore, those cities could not be found now anyway. However, surely the main land features would have stayed intact even after all the destruction of those cities. Only the cities were destroyed.

Now I am not going to give a detailed location of each and every city mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The relative location of two or three cities has already been given in this book. This statement I will make, however. I believe that most of the cities listed within the text of the Book of Mormon were located in the same locations as the cities there are today. The record states that some of the cities which were destroyed had been rebuilt.

So when one reads the Book of Mormon and it names a city, just understand its relative location in the lands described in this book. They were either in the land northward, which is north of the Panama Canal, or else in the land southward, which is south of the Panama Canal and down into Columbia. The Nephite line of defense was roughly at where the Panama Canal is today. The city of Bountiful was on the seacoast of the Pacific Ocean side of the line, and the city of Desolation was on the Caribbean side of the defense line. That was the dividing line.

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Also keep in mind that there is little difference between the name of a city and the name of a land in the Book of Mormon. The city Bountiful was in the land Bountiful. The city Desolation was in the land of Desolation. The city of Nephi was in the land of Nephi, and the city Zarahemla was in the land of Zarahemla. Remember that this was a time of city-states, and there were few of the Nephites living outside of the walled cities which could be defended from the Lamanites. The Lamanites were much more uncivilized and they lived mostly in the wilderness.

Thus, the cities in the land of Nephi would have been located in western Columbia, upon the mountains and the seashores. As well, the cities in the land of Zarahemla would have been located in northern Columbia, and in the valleys upon either side of the Magdalena River, and near the seashores of northern Columbia. The three main lands in the Book of Mormon were given in this book, and the relative directions of the cities from each other is often given in the account of the Book of Mormon. Thus, with a knowledge of these few facts, I believe that the exact location of the cities shall someday be discovered.

As one final thing concerning the cities given in the account of the Book of Mormon let me mention this subject. Remember back in the beginning of this analysis it was stated that the "line" which ran between the land of Desolation and the land Bountiful was where the Panama Canal is today. If that was the case, then where was the location of the city of Bountiful. It says it was on that line, and on the seashore of the west and the south sea.

Would it not be a great thing to learn exactly where the city Bountiful was located? It was at the temple in the city Bountiful that Jesus Christ visited the Nephites shortly after this ascension into heaven. Well, what city is on the Pacific Ocean side of the Panama Canal today? It is Panama City. Thus, I say that the city Bountiful was located where Panama City is today.

## **THE HILL (OR MOUNTAIN) AMNIHU**

Did you catch the name of the hill "Amnihu" that was to the east of the mouth of the river Sidon, and which is the Magdalena River near the seacoasts of northern Columbia. Well, it was not actually a hill for it is a great mountain reaching nearly twenty thousand feet up into the sky. It is a great mountain with several names by different prophets in the Book of Mormon. It was also called the hill Shim. And, behold, it might have been the original hill Cumorah in the Book of Mormon.

So let me end this part of my book with a secret which has been hidden from the foundation of the world. Now the Lord has went to great lengths to keep this secret hidden, even since the translation of the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. Should I reveal it at this time, for I have received the inspiration. Behold, it was the mountain to the east near the mouth of the Magdalena River. It is named after Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the new world. It is a three-sided pyramid shaped mountain and is called by the name of Pico Christobal Colon.

Now, if a person should climb that mountain, unto the same relative direction and position, as the gold plates of the Book of Mormon was found on the hill Cumorah within the western part of the state of New York; then, he might find a cave there which contained all the plates of the Nephites. So it would be as Joseph described the location of the stone box on hill Cumorah, on the north western side about two-thirds of the way up the mountain. Nevertheless, we must remember that the prophet Mormon later removed the plates from that mountain and carried them into the land northward, which was into Central America.

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## **MEANING OF THE NAME MORMON**

There is another precious truth that I wish to share with you, and it is this. The name Mormon means "born again." Thus, it is the "Book of Born Again." That was the purpose of the Book of Mormon, besides it being another witness, or testament, of the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is designed to bring people to Christ, so that they might receive his Spirit, and be born again.

As the Book of Mormon says: "All mankind, yea all must be born again; yea, born of God...changed from this carnal state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters" as is given in Mosiah 27:25. Alma preached the doctrine of their being born again, and it was in the waters of Mormon and in the land of Mormon that Alma had first baptized the people. Alma had also taught them "that ye must be willing to bear one another's burdens." There is the word "bear" which the "mor" in the name means.

Now, as the record states, the prophet Mormon, who wrote the Book of Mormon upon the gold plates, was named after his father. But his father was named after the land of Mormon. The land of Mormon had been named after a king with the name of Mormon. Therefore, since this king had been named "Mormon," which means "born again," what might have been the reason for that? Why was he named "born again?"

This is my inspiration of the Spirit. During the birth of this king, the baby had almost been born when it was miraculously taken back into the womb. When it was born, it had literally been born again the second time. For this cause the child was named "Mormon" in their language. The "mor" means "to bear" and the "mon" means "again." Thus, the name means "to bear again" or "born again." So how appropriate it was that Alma baptized in the waters of Mormon and taught that men must be born again. And how appropriate it is that the book should also bear the great and literally true title of "The Book of Mormon."

## **MY TESTIMONY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON**

When I, William Chappell, was a young man I had tried to be a serious Christian. I was raised upon a little country farm at Tyner, in Jackson County, Kentucky. My family was Baptist and I joined the Baptist church when I was thirteen years old. I read the Bible, tried to pray often, and sometimes walked over a mile to church. I owe my Christian background to my parents, to my Sunday school teachers, and to my pastors who were influential in the spiritual development of my life.

But after going to high school and college I lost my faith in God. I had begun to lose my belief in God in high school, and then completely after taking all the science, the philosophy, and other subjects in college. I was of all men most miserable, for I thought if there was no God, then there was no life after death or any purpose in life. Yet, I was still searching for the truth. All of my life I had wondered, and pondered, and searched for the truth of all things, whatever that might be. I searched after these things first in religion, and then in science, since I had lost any faith or belief in the existence of God.

And after finishing college I enlisted in the United States Air Force; and there being lonely and away from home and family, I began to again long after my faith. I remembered the faith of my childhood, and wondered if both science and religion might not be true. I went to the library and checked out all the books about religion that I could find. And I read about the different religions of the world and about the various denominations of Christianity. I studied and prayed, but there was no answer. So I even visited several different churches to see what they were like, but I could not tell which one was right. There were so many beliefs and the world was full of them. I often thought who could find the truth without an answer from God?

Then one day I received an answer to all my searching and praying for the truth. This is what happened on my very first day

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home from military service. When I had first arrived home there was no one there. Then as soon as I sat down in the living room something upon the table beside my chair caught my attention. It was a blue book with some gold figure and some words upon it. The title of the book was "The Book of Mormon."

In all of my studying and searching for the truth, I had never heard of the Book of Mormon. My eyes had no sooner glanced upon the book then the presence of the Holy Ghost fell upon me. He said that the book that lay before me was holy and was from God. The Holy Ghost actually spoke by his spiritual voice to my spirit. He told me that the promise was given in this book, that if I would ask God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, that a testimony of it would be revealed to me by the Holy Ghost. He further testified that he was the Holy Ghost.

So immediately I bowed my head and then prayed the prayer which I had just been invited to pray. I asked God, my Heavenly Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, if the Book of Mormon was true, and that I might receive a testimony of it from the Holy Ghost. And immediately I did receive an absolute conviction and testimony that the Book of Mormon was the true word of God, and that it bore witness to the truth of God and Christ. I knew it to my very soul without a shadow of a doubt.

I felt so full of joy and of thankfulness. I immediately prayed again and gave thanks unto my God and my Father in heaven for answering my prayer, and for sending down the Holy Ghost to reveal the Book of Mormon to me. And I had not yet opened the book or even touched it. For I felt that I should not pick it up, or open it, until I had first asked of God if it was true and receive a testimony of it. I rejoiced with my God.

In that singular experience I not only learned that the Book of Mormon was the true word of God, but that God existed and that he still answered prayer, as well. When I picked up the book and turned to the first page, it said "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" and "The Prophet Joseph Smith." All of my searching and my prayers for the truth had been answered, for I had found the true prophet and the true church, as well.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

William C. Chappell, the author of this book, was originally from Tyner, Jackson County, Kentucky. He was raised in a large Christian family on a farm among the rolling hills of Appalachia. William is a graduate of Berea College and is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has retired from a career with the Kentucky state government.

The author has been blessed with great inspiration, whereby he has come to the knowledge of the truths revealed in this book. He does not claim any special intelligence or righteousness. He does claim that these things have been made known unto him by the spiritual gift of the word of knowledge. The author's purpose is to restore some of the lost record of the prophet Lehi, and also some of the geography of the Book of Mormon.





