

Jared, his Brother and their Friends

A Geographical Analysis of the Book of Ether

Lynn and David Rosenvall, January 2010

We are frequently asked how the Jaredite story in the Book of Ether fits into our geography of the Book of Mormon lands, and by what route the Jaredites would have reached Baja California. The Jaredites are an often-forgotten people, even though their story is intertwined at several points with the history of the people of Zarahemla (the Mulekites) and the Nephites (Omni 1:20-22; Mosiah 8:6-21; Mosiah 21:26-28; Alma 22:30; Alma 63:4-9; Ether 7:6; Ether 9:3, 31; Ether 15:11). The Jaredite account, as abridged by Moroni into the Book of Ether, was taken from the twenty-four gold plates discovered by king Limhi's failed expedition while attempting to find the land of Zarahemla (Mosiah 21:22-32). It was later translated by king Mosiah (the second) and then sealed to come forth at a time declared by the Lord (Mosiah 8:9-21; Mosiah 28:11-20; Ether 4:4-7). The 15 chapters of the Book of Ether, rich in geographical detail, allow us a glimpse into the origins of the Jaredite people, their journey to a choice land, their agriculture and industry, and their settlement locations within a new homeland. The following is our geographical analysis of these numerous details and the probable routes and locations they describe. We have attempted to organize these geographical topics chronologically, from the great tower to the tragic end of the Jaredite civilization many years later.

Surprisingly, the term *Jaredite* is not found in Moroni's abridgment of the Book of Ether, even though the name is in common usage today. The term Jaredites, however, is mentioned one time in Mormon's



Proposed Jaredite locations in Baja California.

second epistle to Moroni, wherein he likens his people, the Nephites, “unto the Jaredites, because of the wilfulness of their hearts” (Moro. 9:23). The group departing for the promised land was composed of the families of Jared and his brother and their friends and their families (Ether 1:41). “The friends of Jared and his brother were in number about twenty and two souls; and they also begat sons and daughters before they came to the promised land; and therefore they began to be many” (Ether 6:16). Mainly for economy of language, we need a single name to label this assemblage of separate families. And even though the title *Jaredites* can be misleading and not fully representative, we use this familiar name to represent the families of Jared and his brother and all their friends. At the same time it is essential that we differentiate these disparate groups of fellow-travelers in our geographical analysis.

The Jaredites were told by the Lord that they would be led into a land which is “choice above all other lands of the earth” (Ether 1:42). Likewise, the Lord told the Nephites they



Vineyards and orchards dot the northwest region of Baja California. This area is potentially one of the most abundant agricultural areas in North America.

would be “led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands” (1 Ne. 2:20). Understandably, the Jaredites and the Nephites would need to be led to the same general geographical area if both were to occupy the “most choice” area. Indeed, they did settle in the same limited geographic area but at different times, with a short overlap of space and with a short overlap of time.

The Jaredite story begins at the great tower of Babel in western Asia in approximately 2200 to 1800 B.C. and ends sometime before 200 B.C. with the annihilation of descendants of Jared and the destruction of their civilization at hill Ramah in northern Baja California. The hill Ramah is described as the same hill as the hill Cumorah where the last battle of the Lamanites and Nephites took place and the place where Mormon “hid up ... all the records which had been entrusted to [him] by the hand of the Lord” save a few plates which he gave his son Moroni (Morm. 6:6; Ether 15:11). There are several

geographical markers within the Book of Ether we can analyze to produce a spatial pattern of the Jaredite journey between these two far-flung locations.

Moroni provides more details surrounding the Jaredite’s long journey to their new home in North America than for any other period of their history. This journey has two components – a land journey across the wilderness of Asia (including a voyage on an inland sea) and a 344-day sea journey across the “great sea” of the Pacific Ocean to Baja California. In between the two segments of this extended journey, the Jaredites “dwelt in tents upon the seashore for the space of four years” before building eight barges on the east coast of Asia (Ether 2:13). They called the place “Moriancumer.” Let us follow along the numerous geographic descriptions, as recorded by Moroni, that confirm and support this two-part route and the possible locations, modes of travel and the numbers of people who traveled. (For an insightful analysis of the Jaredite culture and travels see Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*, Bookcraft, 1952)

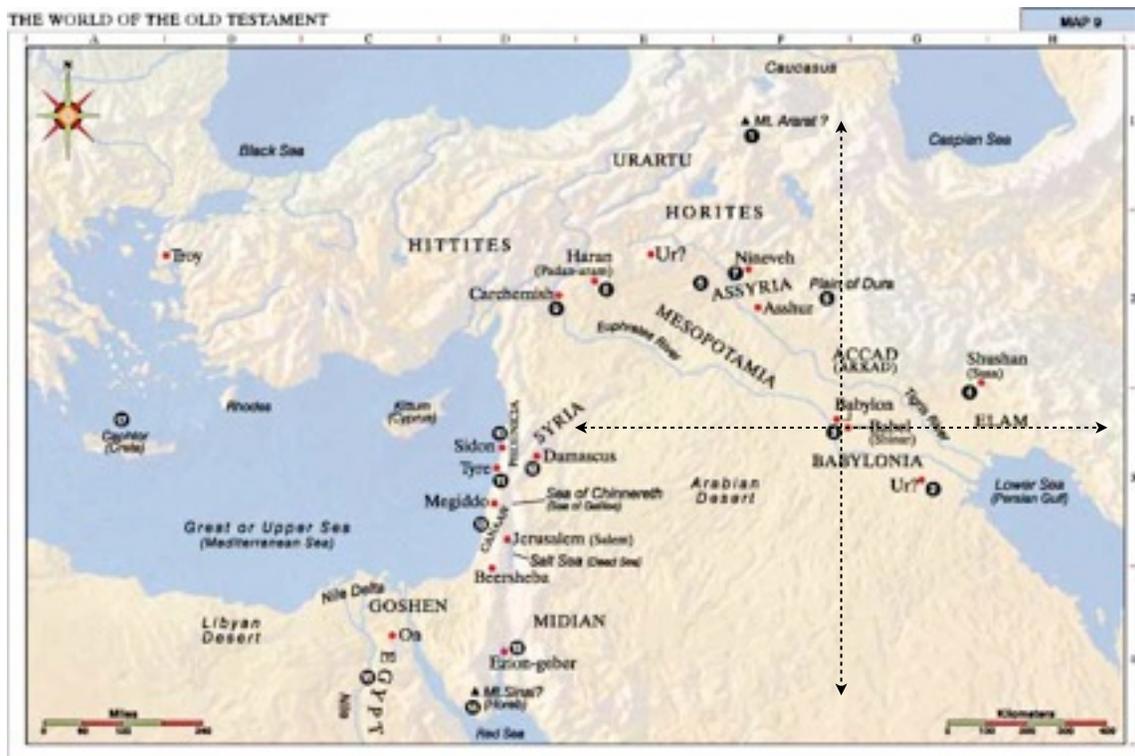


A schematic of the Jaredite route from the Great Tower (Babel) to a Choice Land.

Traveling Across the Wilderness of Asia

Preparing for the Journey

The Jaredite journey begins at the “great tower” at the time the Lord confounded the “language of the people, and swore in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth” (Ether 1:33). Jared and his brother cried to the Lord that “he confound not their language,” and the language of their families and their friends, “that we may not understand our words” (Ether 1:34-37). The Lord honored their request and agreed to lead them “into a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth” (Ether 1:42). All of this took place at the “great tower” which, although not stated, appears to be the tower of Babel, located along the Euphrates River south of Bagdad in present-day Iraq (See Gen. 11:1-9; and *Bible Dictionary*, “Babylon or Babel,” and Map 9, “The World of the Old Testament,” in the *LDS Bible Appendix*).

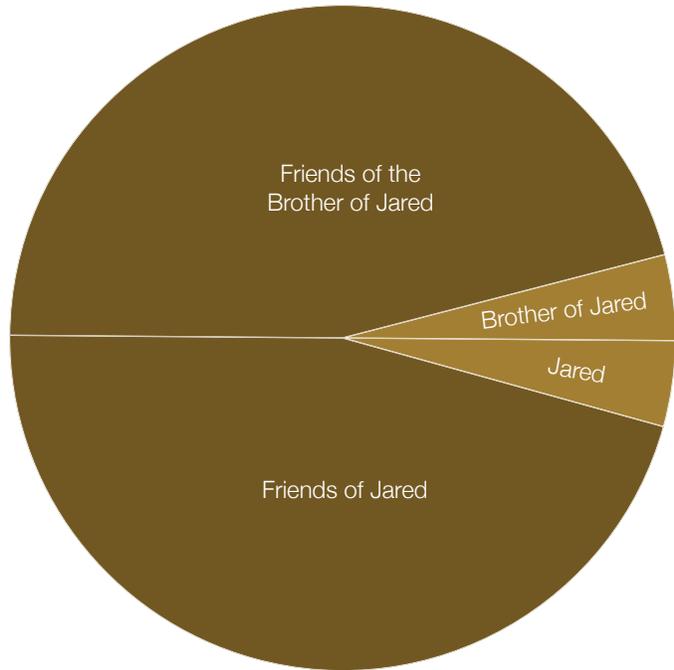


“The World of the Old Testament,” *LDS Bible Appendix*. The dotted lines delimit the four quarters centered on ancient Babel, located in present-day Iraq.

Jared and his brother were instructed to “gather together [their] flocks, both male and female, of every kind; and also of the seed of the earth of every kind; and [their] families,”

and the Lord would meet them in the “valley which is northward” (Ether 1:41-42). The Lord promised to bless them and lead them to a choice land where he would make of them “a great nation. And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth” (Ether 1:43).

The Lord directed that the departing group would be composed of the brother of Jared’s “families; and also Jared thy brother and his family; and also thy friends and their families, and the friends of Jared and their families” (Ether 1:41). This was potentially a rather substantial group when it expanded to include many “friends and their families.” Clearly the Lord wanted significantly more people than Jared and his family and the brother of Jared and his families to venture forth to the promised land. The families of their friends would provide potential spouses for the children of Jared and his brother, not unlike the blending of Ishmael’s children with Lehi’s family when they journeyed from Jerusalem (1 Ne. 16:7). Note that the text says that Jared had *a family*, and the brother of Jared had *families* (plural). This could mean that the brother of Jared’s family was older and his children already had families of their own, whereas Jared, being younger, had a family with no married children. If the brother of Jared were the oldest, this could explain why he was the leader of the group. At the end of the brother of Jared’s life, each of his four sons refused their inherited right to succeed their father as the leader of the two families, and the succession of kingship authority was transferred from the brother of Jared’s family to Jared’s family (Ether 6:19-30).

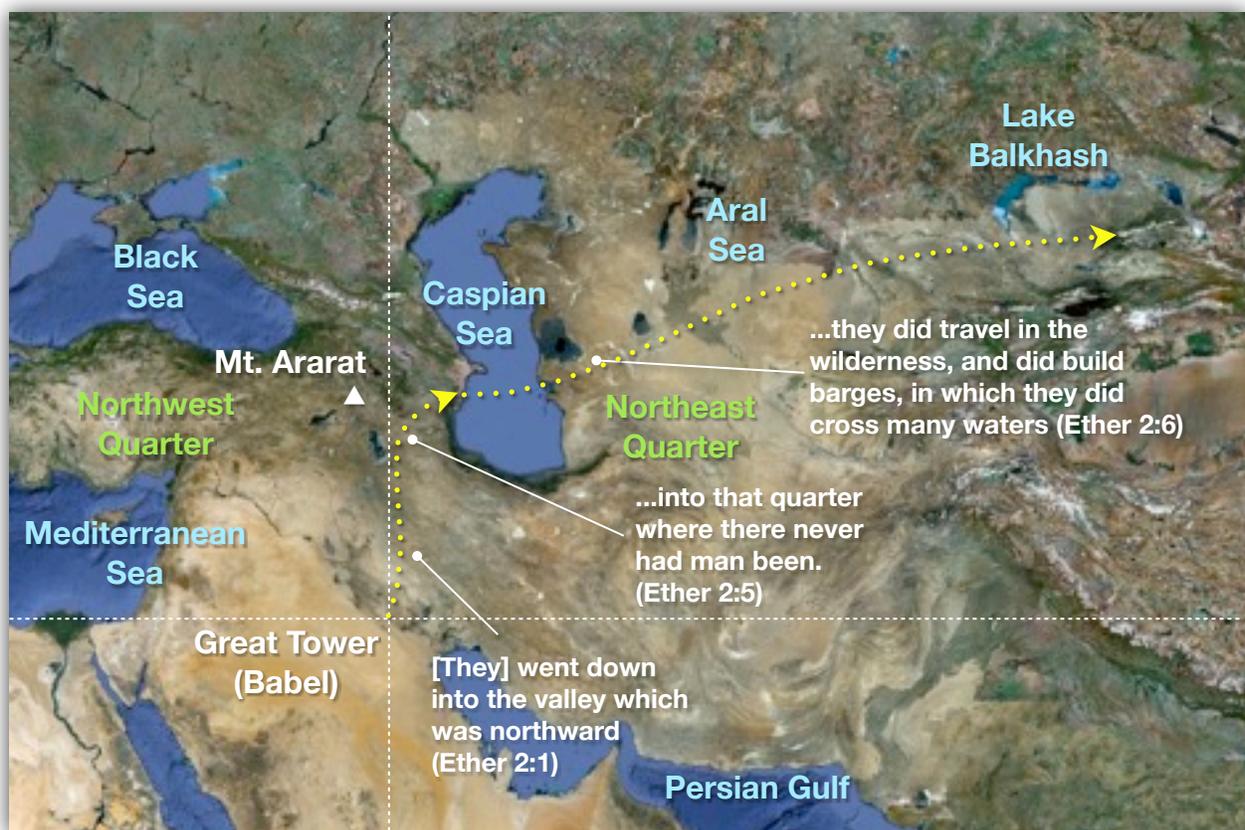


The original Jaredite group that left the Great Tower with their families.

Traveling into an Unknown Quarter of the Land

The company of travelers “went down into the valley which was northward, (and the name of the valley was Nimrod, being called after the mighty hunter) with their flocks which they

had gathered together, male and female, of every kind” (Ether 2:1). The valley appears to have been known because it carried a name—the name of Nimrod, the mighty hunter, a great-grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:1-9). The Jaredite group laid snares to “catch fowls of the air; and they did also prepare a vessel, in which they did carry with them the fish of the waters. And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees, and all manner of that which was upon the face of the land, seeds of every kind” (Ether 2:2-3). All of these items are primary sources of portable food—fowls, fish, honey bees, flocks, and seeds. (For a discussion of the Jaredite animals see, *Sorting out the Jaredite Animals*, below)



The probable travel route of the Jaredites from the Great Tower to “that quarter where there never had man been” (Ether 2:5).

The group then traveled northward through the valley of Nimrod and went “forth into the wilderness, yea, into that quarter where there never had man been. And it came to pass that the Lord did go before them, and did talk with them as he stood in a cloud, and gave directions whither [to which place] they should travel” (Ether 2:5). The crucial question at this point is: Which direction did the Jaredites travel to place them in a “quarter” of the land

“where never had man been”? Because they were traveling northward, the empty or unpopulated quarter would have been either to the northwest or the northeast of the tower of Babel. According to the Book of Genesis, the ark of Noah landed “upon the mountains of Ararat” (Gen. 8:4). These mountains are located in eastern Turkey to the northwest of Babel, so the quarter of the land to the northwest, where Noah’s ark landed, would not have been an area “where there never had man been.” This leaves the northeast quarter as the only possible direction for a Jaredite route into an unpopulated northern quarter of the land as they departed the valley of Nimrod north of Babel, located south of present-day Bagdad (See *Bible Dictionary*, “Ararat,” and Map 9, “The World of the Old Testament,” in the LDS Bible *Appendix*).

Encountering a “Sea in the Wilderness”

The Lord then led the Jaredite group in a general eastward direction toward the vast unknown and unpopulated “wilderness” of Asia until they came to an inland “sea in the wilderness” called “many waters” (Ether 2:5-7). What is meant by the term “sea” and the phrase “many waters” when describing

a body of water? A sea is defined as an expanse of salt water that covers most of the earth's surface and surrounds its land masses. The term “sea” is sometimes incorrectly used to describe a fresh water lake, for example, the *Sea of Galilee*, which today is more accurately called *Lake Kinneret*. For this analysis, the term “sea” refers to bodies of salt water that are at least large enough so that one cannot readily see a land mass on the opposite side. This definition would apply to not only oceans but also large inland bodies of salt water like the Salton Sea in southern California and the Great Salt Lake (or Sea) in northern Utah.



Lehi’s route through the wilderness to the Indian Ocean, a body of salt water the Nephites called “Irreantum” or “many waters.”

The phrase “many waters” is used by Nephi elsewhere in the Book of Mormon to describe bodies of salt water. After traveling eastward through the barren desert of Arabia, the families of Lehi and Ishmael came upon a coastal area they “called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey” (1 Ne. 17:5). From this isolated oasis they “beheld the sea,” which they “called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters” (1 Ne. 17:5). In this verse Nephi equates the definition of “sea” with the word “Irreantum” and the phrase “many waters.” All three appear to have the same meaning. Using this interpretation and definition and correlating it to the Indian Ocean (or sea) to the east of Bountiful, we gain a better understanding of what was meant by the phrase “many waters.” Obviously, the Book of Mormon people would have readily understood that the expansive sea they “beheld” from their camp along the Arabian sea coast, and called “Irreantum” or “many waters,” was *salt* water and not *fresh* water. Thus Nephi’s record appears to define “many waters” as a sea, a large body of salt water.

Historically there have been relict bodies of salt water within the continents that remained after the great flood of Noah and became more saline over time. Ether recorded “that after the waters had receded from off the face” of the Jaredite’s promised land “it became a



Historic inland seas (lakes) in western North America.

choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord” (Ether 13:2). The waters receded after the great flood for several thousand years, not only in the Jaredite lands of North America but in Asia and other places. These inland seas are *endorheic*, meaning they are closed bodies of salt water that have one or more inflows but no natural outflow. Most of these bodies of water are still receding. The Jaredites in the promised land, as Ether mentioned many years later, confronted several receding bodies of water in northern Baja California and western North America. Examples include ancient Lake Bonneville (the Great Salt Lake and other smaller bodies of water are remnants) and

ancient Lake Cahuilla, a saline body of water (a sea), that evaporated and diminished in size to become the Salton Sea today, a body of salt water, located just north of the Colorado River delta. This sea was much larger 2,000 to 3,000 years ago, within the time of the Book of Mormon record. When this body of water was at its expanded size, historians refer to it as historic Lake Cahuilla. This salt water lake was more than six times larger than the Salton Sea today, with a length of over 100 miles and width of some 35 miles, and extended into northern Baja California. For comparison, this ancient lake was about twice as large as the Great Salt Lake today. Lake Cahuilla began as a fresh water lake but became more saline as it evaporated and diminished in size.



Approximate location of the historic *Paratethys Sea* of western Asia. The Caspian, Black and Aral seas are remnants of this inland body of salt water.

This receding of the waters “from off the face” of the land happened not only in North America but also in Asia and elsewhere. Within Asia the historic receding body of inland water is known as the *Paratethys Sea*. The size and exact location of this historic inland sea of western Asia cannot be mapped precisely because it has significantly shrunk in size over time. Today, the Aral, Caspian and Black seas are remnants of the *Paratethys Sea*; the first two seas, completely cut off from the ocean, have become more saline while the Black Sea, connected to the Mediterranean Sea by way of the Bosphorus Strait, has developed into an uncommon body containing both fresh and salt water areas. Farther to the east is Lake Balkhash, another large saline body of water that could have been part of the ancient *Paratethys Sea*. The Caspian, Aral and Balkhash seas are closed bodies of salt water that have one or more inflows but no natural outflows.

Even though these inland seas are called “many waters” in the Nephite and Jaredite records, the phrase “many waters,” unfortunately, is often equated with the large fresh water lakes of North America by proponents of Book of Mormon geography models (Mosiah 8:8; Morm. 6:4; Ether 2:6). We note that in the Book of Mormon, the term *lake* never appears in geographical descriptions to describe a body of water within Jaredite and Nephite lands. After the waters “receded from off the face of this land,” remnants of these “many waters” remained as saline bodies of water and not fresh water lakes. (See our topic article, *From the Sea West to the Sea East*, and, *The Waters of Mormon*, in our main article, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon Geography*)

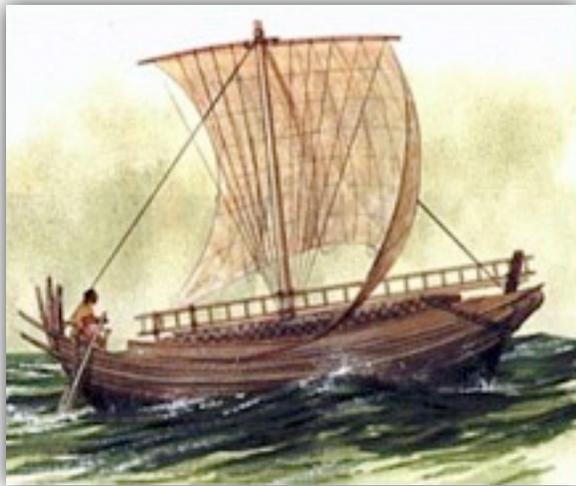
Building Barges (Boats) to Cross the “Sea in the Wilderness”

We might not know the size of the Paratethys Sea, the inland “sea in the wilderness,” at the time of the Jaredite encounter, but we know its historical existence. The Jaredite response to this travel impediment was to “build barges, in which they did cross many waters, being directed continually by the hand of the Lord” (Ether 2:6-7). This inland sea of western Asia must have been of such a size that it was better to cross by barges than to travel around. Also, there is no mention of building multiple sets of barges to cross a series of inland seas.

We next need to know what is meant by the term “barge.” In the English of the early 1800s, when the Book of Mormon was translated, the *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates the word barge denoted “a small seagoing vessel” or “any small boat.” The word barge is connected to the word “bark,” a small ship, and derives from old French *barque*, Latin *barica*, Greek *baris* “Egyptian boat,” Coptic *bari* “small boat,” and even hieroglyphic Egyptian *ba-y-r* for “basket-shaped boat.” By extension, the term “embark” literally means to board the kind of boat called a “bark” (or barge or barque).

Dictionary Definitions

In our studies of the Book of Mormon text, we have found it helpful to search for word definitions that were acceptable and appropriate at the time the Book of Mormon was first printed in 1830. These older definitions have been selected, with that date as a benchmark, from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the accepted authority on the evolution of the English language over the last millennium. Current definitions often obscure the original meanings of scripture text. Where appropriate, these older definitions are provided in our analysis of the Book of Mormon text.

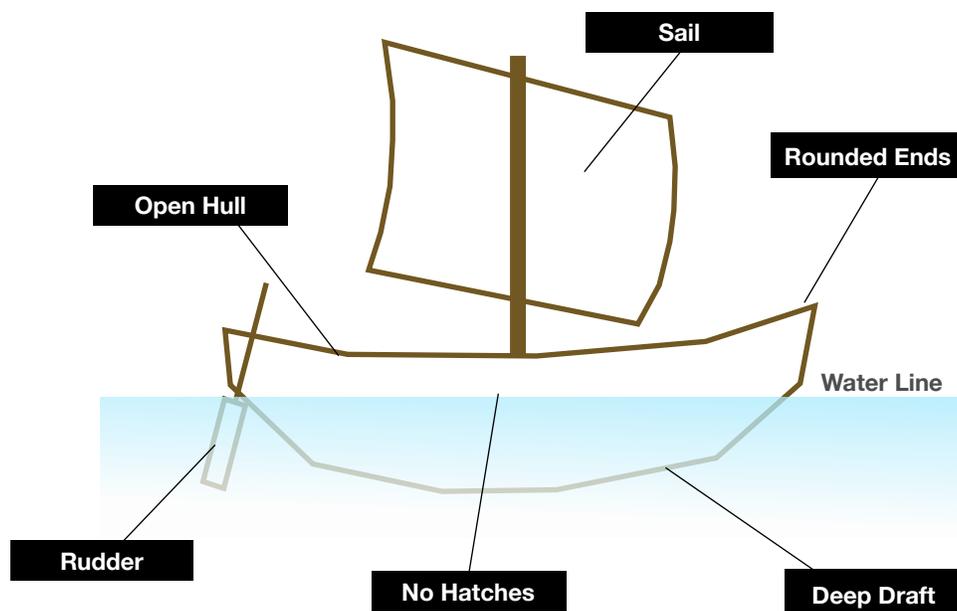


Artist's drawing of an early boat or "barge."

The term barge, therefore, was merely the common word for any small boat, not the flat-hulled vessels that haul bulk goods we call barges today. These Jaredite barges or boats, built to cross the "sea in the wilderness," most likely were sailing vessels, complete with sails to catch the wind, a deep draft to prevent toppling, and a rudder for steering. It would not have been worth the effort to build boats unless an efficient means of propulsion, such as the wind, was readily available. In this area of Asia, a zone of westerlies, the winds could

drive a sailing vessel from west to east, the direction of the Jaredite travels. Rowing a boat heavy-laden with people, animals and supplies is not efficient and often not possible.

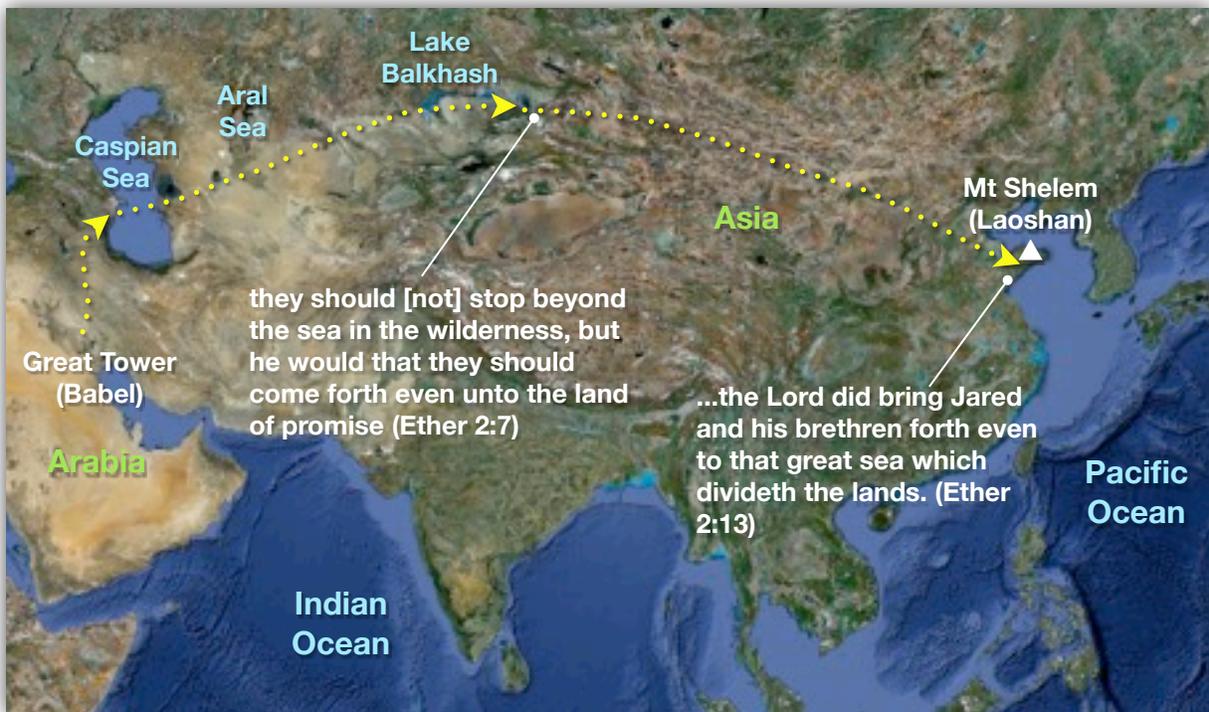
The brief account of their travels in the "wilderness," in three verses of the Book of Ether, may raise more questions than it answers, but this we do know: The Jaredites crossed an inland "sea in the wilderness" of western Asia in some type of boats with the Lord's direction (Ether 2:5-7). Also, these first boats were constructed somewhat differently than the eight vessels which were later built to cross the "great deep" of the Pacific Ocean (see *Constructing Another Set of Barges (Boats)*, below).



A possible design of first set of Jaredite boats.

Continuing the Journey Eastward

The account next states that the “Lord would not suffer [allow] that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness,” but they should continue to go “forth even unto the land of promise” (Ether 2:7). This would imply that the terrain they encountered after crossing the “sea in the wilderness,” and continuing “forth,” was also wilderness, and this terrain would have been at a somewhat higher level than the inland sea to provide a basin or containment for the water. The distance across the wilderness on the eastern side of the inland sea in Asia to a distant seashore farther to the east is not indicated, nor is the nature and characteristics of the wilderness terrain.

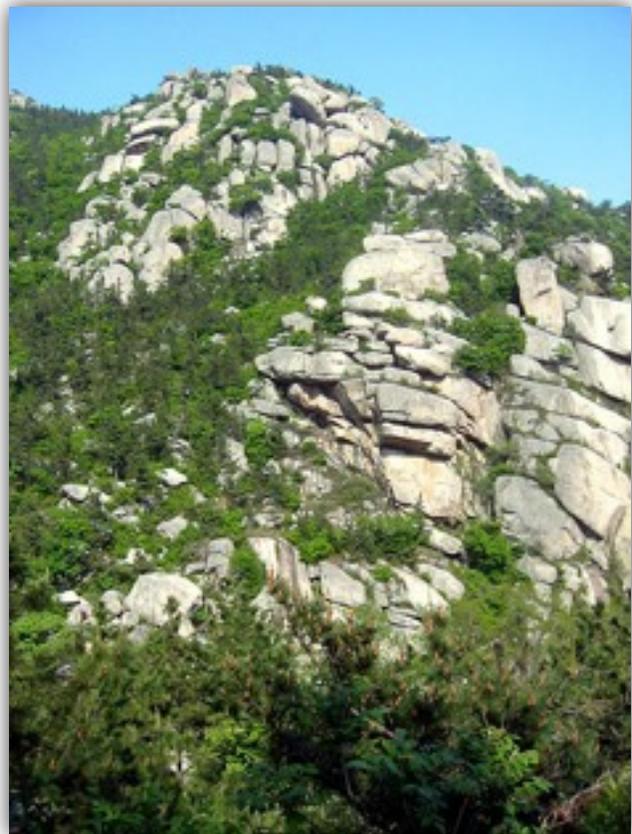


After crossing a “sea in the wilderness,” the Jaredites probably continued eastward until they arrived at the Pacific Ocean, “that great sea which divideth the lands.” They dwelt four years on the seashore.

Camping on the Shores of the Great Sea

Arriving at the Seashore Location of Mount Shelem

The Lord directed the Jaredites to go “forth” until they arrived at “that great sea which divideth the lands” (Ether 2:13). We believe their journey took them across the breadth of Asia. The terminus of their land journey was the east coast of what is now China, and the “great sea which divideth the lands” was the Pacific Ocean which divides the Asian and North American continents. According to the record, at this seashore location there was a “mount, which they called the mount Shelem, because of its exceeding height” (Ether 3:1). On the top of this mount, the brother of Jared later importuned the Lord to touch 16 small stones to “shine forth in darkness” to illuminate the enclosed vessels they had been commanded to build (Ether 3:4). This “exceedingly” tall mountain was located where they “dwelt in tents upon the seashore for the space of four years” (Ether 2:13), and thus on the seashore where they built their eight vessels (Ether 2:16-18). Along the entire 9,000-mile coastline of present-day China there is only one mountain on the coast—Mount Laoshan. This remarkable mountain is of “exceeding” height, rising directly from the seacoast to an elevation of 3,717 feet and covering an area at its base of 172 square miles. It adjoins the city of Qingdao, a major seaport, naval base and industrial center. Beijing, the capital of the People’s Republic of China, lies 340 miles to the northwest. Mount Laoshan is a major tourist attraction, with numerous scenic areas. It was the site of several Chinese Summer Olympic events in 2008.



One of the peaks near the top of Mount Laoshan in Qingdao, China.

The mountain has alternate Chinese names that translate into English as: *Number one coastal mountain*; *Land for supernatural being*; and *Fascinating and blessing place*. It is claimed that Qin Shi Huang (259 – 210 B.C.), the first emperor of a centralized China, made

a pilgrimage to Mount Laoshan to visit the supernatural beings. The mountain is a historic center of the Taoist religion, and at one time boasted nine palaces, eight temples and 72 nunneries. Through time Mount Laoshan has been considered sacred by followers of several Chinese religions and is still venerated today.

The height, location and historical significance of Mount Laoshan is rather striking, especially its singular location on the east coast of Asia. All of this appears to match, in a remarkable way, the Jaredite account of an “exceeding” high mountain on the seashore of “that great sea which divideth the lands,” the Pacific Ocean, where the Lord caused stones to “shine forth in darkness.”



Probable location of Mount Shelem (Laoshan) on the east coast of China north of the city of Qingdao.

Tenting on the Shores of the Great Sea for Four Years

When the Jaredites reached mount Shelem and its coastal location, “they pitched their tents; and they called the name of the place Moriancumer; and they dwelt in tents, and dwelt in tents upon the seashore for the space of four years” (Ether 2:13). The name

Moriancumer is of interest because the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that the name of the brother of Jared was *Mahonri Moriancumer* (see footnote in George Reynolds, “The Jaredites,” *Juvenile Instructor*, 1 May 1892, page 282). Moriancumer was an isolated place, far from their home near the great tower of Babel, and in a location “where there never had man been” (Ether 2:5).

The record emphasizes that they “dwelt in tents” for “four years” in what appears to be a somewhat settled mode. At the end of the four years, “the Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him. And for the space of three hours did the Lord talk with the brother of Jared, and chastened him because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord” (Ether 2:14). The Lord forgave the brother of Jared and his brethren of their sins and reminded them that his “Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore, if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord” (Ether 2:15). It is not clear if the travelers thought they were at the end of their journey, and did not need any more direction from the Lord, or if they were exhausted and discouraged after a long 4,000-mile trek across Asia and did not wish to face an extended ocean voyage. Nonetheless, the group appears to be not as worshipful and sinless as the Lord expected, nor eager to move on to another land promised them for their “inheritance.”

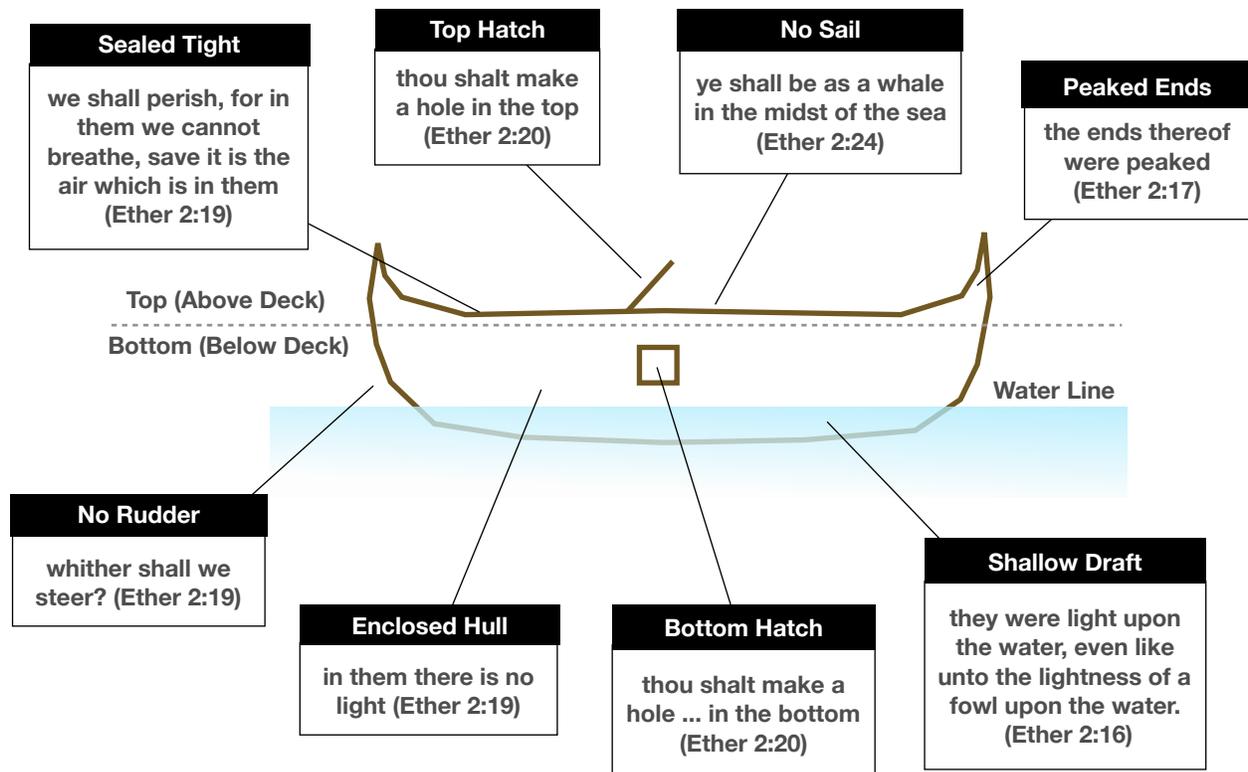
Constructing Another Set of Barges (Boats)

The Lord commanded the people to go to work and build boats, “after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built.” And they “built barges after the manner which they had built,” only this time with additional “instructions of the Lord” (Ether 2:16). The new boats were “small, and they were light upon the water, even like unto the lightness of a fowl upon the water” (Ether 2:16). Now “the number of the vessels which had been prepared was eight” (Ether 3:1). And “they were tight like unto the ark of Noah” (Ether 6:7). The construction details of this second set of Jaredite boats possibly provide insights into the type of vessel Noah built, its mode of propulsion and the manner of construction.

These eight boats were not intended to be sailing vessels, unlike the first set of boats that crossed the “sea in the wilderness,” even though the “manner” of construction was to be similar. This second set of boats was designed by the Lord, not for sailing, but for drifting across the expansive Pacific Ocean on a long 344-day voyage (Ether 6:11). The boats were the “length of a tree,” possibly 40 to 50 feet (Ether 2:17). They were designed to hold

out water, like a “dish” or bowl, on the top, side and bottom by being built “exceedingly tight.” Both ends were “peaked.” The door, probably located on the side of the bottom hull or part of the top deck and large enough for boarding people and animals, was also “tight like unto a dish” when it was shut.

The brother of Jared reported to the Lord that they had built the boats according to his instructions—boats built for drifting across an ocean. He then mentions three problems presented by the design of the vessels. These were new challenges, and challenges not encountered when constructing the first set of boats, otherwise the brother of Jared would already have had solutions. First, the watertight vessels had “no light” in them. Second, they had no means to steer or propel the vessels, so “whither [to which place] shall we steer” (Ether 2:19). Third, how would they obtain enough air in such tight boats, for “we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them; therefore we shall perish” (Ether 2:19). The new problems of no ability to steer and no means of propulsion probably implies that the first set of boats was capable of being steered and being propelled by sails, and if those first boats had a somewhat open top rather than a completely watertight deck covering, there would have been no air problem and no need to provide additional light.



A possible design of second set of Jaredite boats.

Solving Three Design Problems

The three problems of no air, no steering or propulsion capability and no light challenged the Jaredite boat builders, but the Lord's response provided the necessary solutions:

The Problem of Lack of Air within the Boats—The Lord's remedy for no air was to direct the brother of Jared to “make a hole in the top, and also in the bottom; and when thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air. And if it be so that the water come in upon thee, behold, ye shall stop the hole, that ye may not perish in the flood” (Ether 2:20). It would stand to reason that these “holes” were hatches that could be opened or removed for air (unstopped) when necessary, and closed tight when necessary, to prevent the entry of water. The term “hole” does not imply that the opening had to be round. The top hatch most likely was positioned on the top deck of the boats and the bottom hatch was located on the bottom hull, not underneath the boat below the water



Waves generated from ocean currents and strong winds.

surface, but on the side of the hull above the waterline. A hole in the bottom hull, but under the waterline, as sometimes suggested, would not allow the passage of air and would create a waterproofing problem and serve no useful purpose. A location on the side, but above the waterline, would still be “in the bottom” hull as implied by the scriptural text. This side position of the hatch would solve the problem of access to air without the attendant challenges of locations below the

waterline. Note that the hull already had a larger door on the side or top for boarding people, animals and supplies, that “when it was shut, was tight like unto a dish” (Ether 2:17). Unlike the door, the two hatches could be smaller, say two feet by two feet, but still large enough for passage of air and for access to the exterior of the boat from the top or the side, without opening a sizable boarding door.

The Problem of No Steering or Propulsion for the Boats—The eight vessels were designed by the Lord to be “light upon the water” and to drift by movement of the winds and ocean currents across the “great deep” to the promised land, and to protect them when

temporarily submerged by the waves. These were not submarines that could travel and maneuver below the level of the ocean. The Lord assured the brother of Jared that “the winds have gone forth out of my mouth” (Ether 2:24). And that he had prepared them “against the waves of the sea, and the winds which have gone forth, and the floods [overflow] which shall come” (Ether 2:25). The Lord did cause the wind to “blow upon the face of the waters, towards the promised land; and thus they were tossed upon the waves



The *Great Wave*, a well-known depiction of vessels drifting through waves of the Pacific Ocean.
Artist: Katsushika Hokusai

of the sea before the wind” (Ether 6:5). The “wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind” (Ether 6:8). Maneuvering and navigation was accomplished by the Lord through the controlling of the winds and the ocean currents, with no need for the occupants to steer the boats as they drifted without the necessity of rudder control or the requirement of sails.

The Problem of No Light within the Boats—The Lord’s solution for no light required pondering, problem solving and work by the brother of Jared, coupled with instruction on gospel doctrine. The brother of Jared told the Lord: “I have done even as thou hast commanded me; and I have prepared the vessels for my people, and behold there is no

light in them. Behold, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?” (Ether 2:22). The Lord responded: “What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels? For behold, ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you, for ye shall not go by the light of fire. ... Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths [dips] of the sea?” (Ether 2:23, 25).

The boats were to travel like a “whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you,” and sometimes they would be covered by the “waves of the sea” and would need light when “swallowed up in the depths [dips] of the seas” (Ether 2:24-25). It is when the waves came upon them that they would require light, but not necessarily at times when one or both of the two hatches could be opened. So the Lord asked the brother of Jared the vital question: “What will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths [dips] of the sea” and are covered by the waves (Ether 2:25)?

The brother of Jared, directed by the Lord to devise a solution, “went forth unto the mount, which they called the mount Shelem, because of its exceeding height, and did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass;



A walking path near the top of Mount Laoshan.

and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount” (Ether 3:1). Note that the 16 “white and clear” stones were small enough to be carried in the brother of Jared’s hands, possibly smaller than the size of cherries. They were molten out of a single rock. “Molten” means the rock that produced the transparent-like stones (probably glass or silicon) had been heated to a high melting point.

Mount Shelem was not a hill nor an extended mountain range, but a tall mountain of “exceeding height,” positioned on the seacoast where they camped (Ether 3:1; 2:13). On the top of mount Shelem the brother of Jared importuned the Lord to “touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in

darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we shall cross the sea” (Ether 3:3-4). Then “the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger. And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear” (Ether 3:6). He was then taught by the Lord of his redeeming power and the nature of the body of his Spirit and other relevant gospel teachings (Ether 3:9-28). The Lord told him: “Write these things and seal them up; and I will show them in mine own due time unto the children of men” (Ether 3:27). And these things would not “come unto the children of men until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them, that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people” (Ether 4:1; see also chapters 4 and 5). The brother of Jared was given two stones—*Interpreters* or *Urim and Thummim*—which “shall magnify to the eyes of men” in the Lord’s “own due time,” the things which he wrote (Ether 3:24).

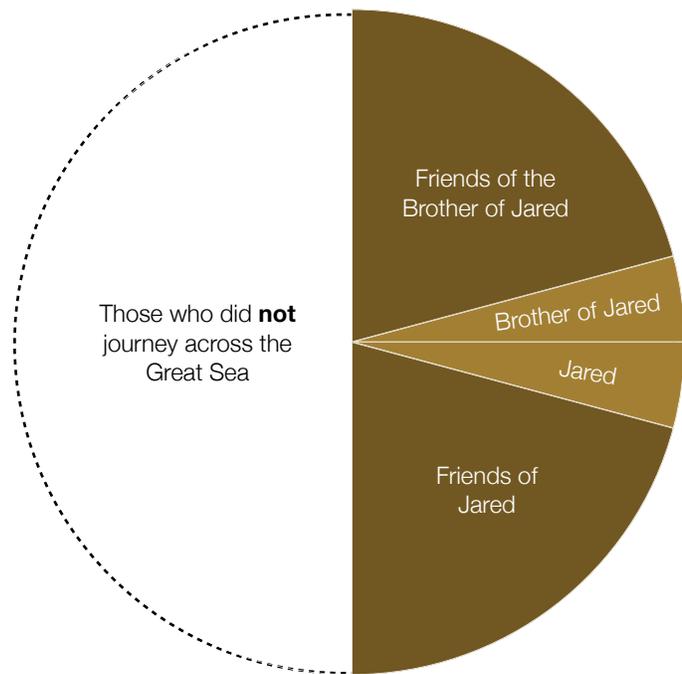
The brother of Jared “came down out of the mount, and he did put forth the stones into the vessels which were prepared, one in each end thereof; and behold, they did give light unto the vessels. And thus the Lord caused stones to shine in darkness, to give light unto men, women, and children, that they might not cross the great waters in darkness” (Ether 6:2-3).

Crossing the Great Sea

Preparing to Board the Vessels

After the design problems had been solved by the Lord, then came the moment to prepare for boarding. This was not to be a short trip, but a long ocean voyage that ended after 344 days. The people “prepared all manner of food, that thereby they might subsist upon the water” (Ether 6:4). They also prepared “food for their flocks and herds, and whatsoever beast or animal or fowl that they should carry with them” (Ether 6:4). We suspect the Jaredites would have known the length of the looming voyage, so they could provide sufficient provisions for themselves and their animals, with no burdensome surplus. Some of the animals carried aboard the vessels could have been for human consumption during the voyage or for milk and eggs. Unlike at the start of the journey, at the great tower of Babel, no mention is made of fish or bees. (For a fuller discussion of the Jaredite animals, and the meaning of such words as beasts, fowls, flocks and herds, see *Sorting out the Jaredite Animals*, below)

There is no mention of the number of people who entered the boats nor their names. There is also the question of how many persons a boat could reasonably hold, including animals and supplies. Noah’s ark, watertight like the vessels of the Jaredites, carried only four families (Ether 6:7 and Gen. 7:7). Would the eight vessels convey 32 or more families? Also, it is difficult to envisage not having some adults or parents aboard each of the boats. Assuming at least one adult couple per boat, this would require at least eight couples. There were children aboard the vessels (Ether 6:3). But how many adults and children elected to stay behind on the Asian coast, or were required to remain because of lack of space within the boats? The record is silent on these issues. We do know, however, that a significant

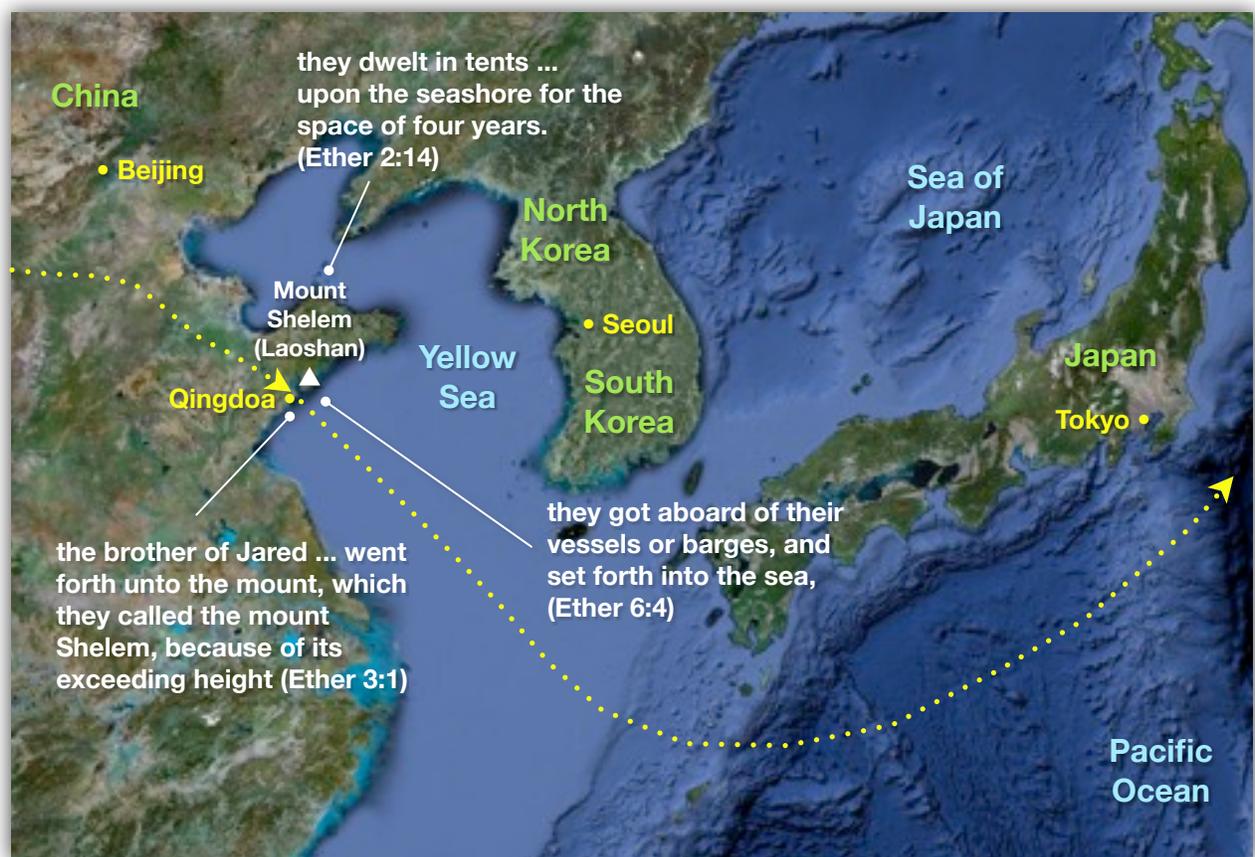


The potential group that boarded the eight barges and crossed the Great Sea to the Promised Land.

number of families departed from the great tower, and numerous families reached the promised land (Ether 1:41; 6:13-16; and see below, *Spreading and Multiplying on the Land, and Did Some Families Remain Behind in Asia?*).

Enduring a 344-day Ocean Voyage

After boarding the eight vessels, the intrepid pilgrims “set forth into the sea, commending themselves unto the Lord their God” (Ether 6:4). It is our opinion that the Jaredite ocean route from Moriancumer on the eastern coast of Asia near mount Shelem (Laoshan) continued eastward across the northern Pacific Ocean to the western coast of North America, somewhere near Baja California. This view is based on our knowledge of the patterns of wind circulation and ocean currents in the Pacific Ocean and the historical geography of the Pacific region.



After camping on the seashore for four years, the Jaredites “set forth into the sea” aboard their barges.

Once under way, and apparently without delay, the Lord “caused that there should be a furious [extremely angry] wind blow upon the face of the waters, towards the promised

land; and thus they were tossed upon the waves of the sea before the wind” (Ether 6:5). “Many times” the eight vessels were “buried in the depths [dips] of the sea, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them, and also the great and terrible tempests which were caused by the fierceness [intensity or velocity] of the wind” (Ether 6:6). “Tempests” are circular winds moving at significantly high velocity around low pressure cells—counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere—forming tropical storms and hurricanes. But “when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters” (Ether 6:7).

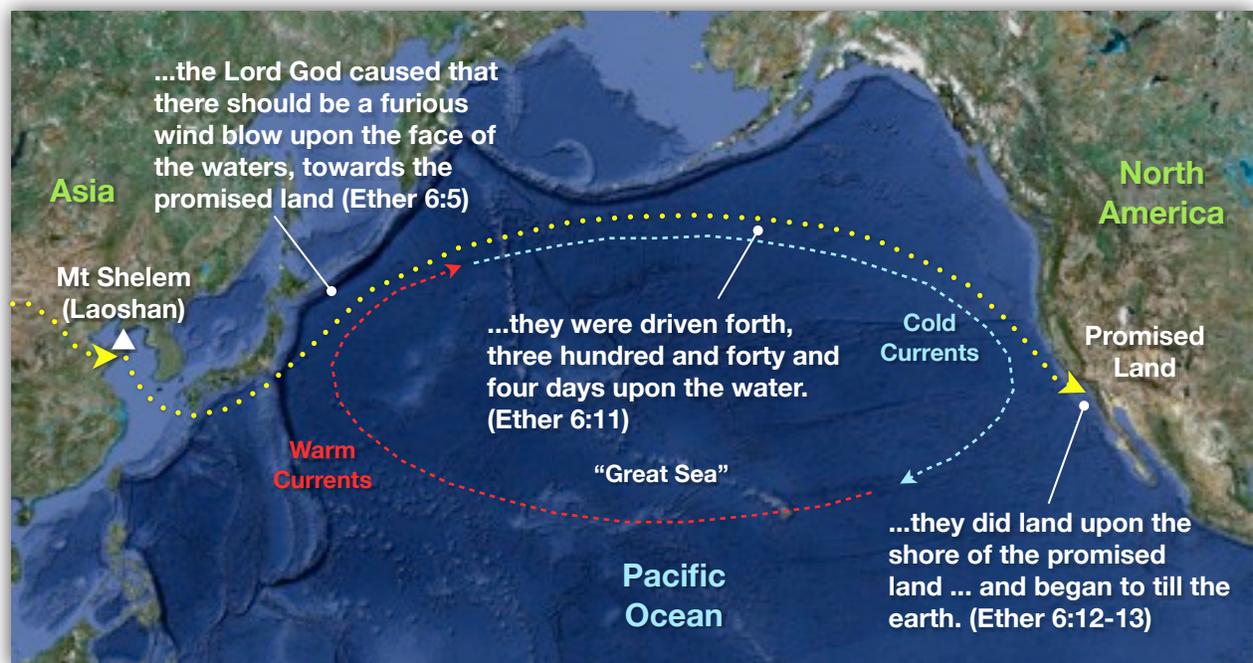


Satellite image of a typhoon (hurricane) east of Mount Laoshan.

To the east of mount Shelem (Laoshan) is the Yellow Sea, with its warm Kuroshio (Black) Current, sometimes called the Japan Current. The Kuroshio Current is one of the roughest in the western Pacific Ocean with eddy-like circular movements of the water, counter to the dominant current along the China coast. The brother of Jared called these waters the “raging deep” even before their boats were put to sea (Ether 3:3). The strong Kuroshio Current is analogous to the powerful Gulf Stream in the Atlantic Ocean. The warm waters of the Yellow Sea are a source region for periodic tropical storms and hurricanes (tempests), with typical hurricane speeds of 75 miles per hour or more. According to the *Beaufort Scale*, an empirical measure for describing wind speeds based on observed sea conditions, the winds associated with tropical storms and hurricanes correlate with ocean waves reaching heights of 30 to 50 feet.

It appears that the winds and ocean currents driving the Jaredite vessels eventually settled down to a more acceptable intensity or velocity, but “the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind” (Ether 6:8). Beyond the Yellow Sea into the Pacific Ocean near the

Philippines and Japan, the ocean currents and the wind patterns in the north Pacific follow a clockwise circular motion because of the movement of the earth's atmospheric circulation around high pressure cells that control the direction of the winds and the water beneath. The westerly trade winds are developed in the mid-latitude segment of this clockwise circulation. Sailing vessels took advantage of these "westerlies" and ocean currents when sailing from the Orient to North America. Beginning in 1565, hundreds of Spanish galleons for nearly three centuries sailed from China and the Spanish-held Philippines, laden with silk cloth, spices, porcelain and other riches from the Orient, to the lucrative North American and European markets. Many of these Manila galleons sailed for some three to four months directly to Baja California ports such as La Paz and later to more northern locations in what is now the state of California.

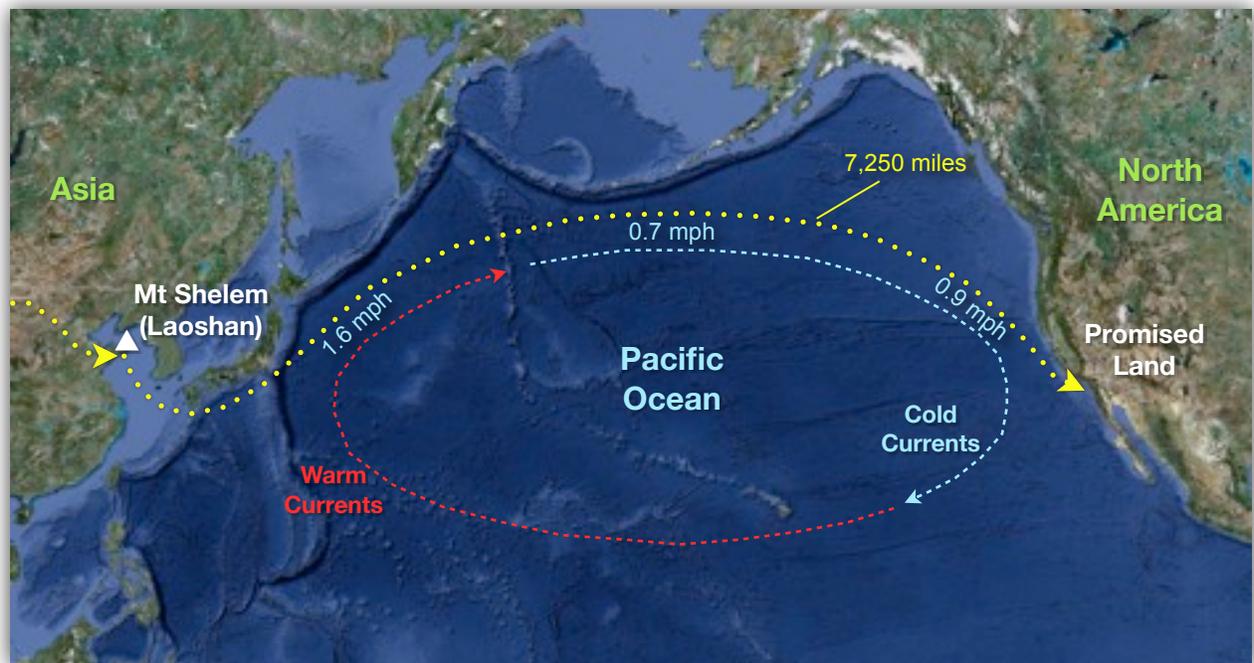


The Jaredite voyage across the Great Sea to the Promised Land lasted for 344 days, nearly a full year. The eight boats would have followed the westerly trade winds and ocean currents from Asia to North America.

With the Lord's guidance and protection, and the favorable winds and ocean currents, the peninsula of Baja California would have provided an eminently reachable destination. Others have sailed this general route. The Jaredites were only one of many. We suggest the family of Lehi and the people of Zarahemla (Mulekites) traveled along this mid-latitude course of the northern Pacific Ocean (see *From Jerusalem to Baja California*, in our main article, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon Geography*). In calmer waters the Jaredites "did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord,

and he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord” (Ether 6:9).

The eight vessels “were driven forth” before the wind and “no monster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar [hinder] them; and they did have light continually, whether it was above the water or under the water” (Ether 6:10). In three sequential verses Moroni emphasizes they were “driven forth” before the wind (Ether 6:8, 10-11). The vessels drifted as they were “driven” by the prevailing westerly winds. Maneuvering and navigation was accomplished by the Lord through the controlling of the winds and the ocean currents, with no need to steer the boats as they drifted without the necessity of rudder control or sails. It is intriguing to ponder how the eight vessels stayed together. Or did they? If they did, were the boats tied together by lengths of strong cord? Were the eight vessels lashed together as a unit? This would solve the multiple landing problem— they could all land together at the same time and at the same place.



The varying drift speeds of the North Pacific ocean currents that can be used to calculate the estimated drift time from the east coast of China to Baja California.

The vessels “were driven forth, three hundred and forty and four days upon the water” (Ether 6:11). This seemingly endless voyage lasted three weeks short of a full year. The distance from Mount Laoshan on the coast of eastern China to northern Baja California, tracking along the circular course of the ocean currents, is some 7,250 miles. This calculates to an average travel rate of 21.1 miles per day or 0.9 miles per hour for the

344-day journey. This rate is much slower than the typical speed of traveling the same route in a sail-driven vessel. The Spanish galleons and others sailed this Pacific Ocean route to Baja California in three to four months, a rate three to four times faster than the Jaredite drifting speed. Clearly, the Jaredite boats were not sailing vessels.

This 7,250-mile route comprises three major ocean currents—the warm and fast-moving Kuroshio (Black) Current in the Yellow Sea to the east of China, the slower North Pacific Current extending across the vast northern Pacific Ocean and the cooler and somewhat faster-moving California Current veering south along the west coast of North America.

We have calculated the average drift speeds of the three ocean currents comprising this 7,250-mile route. The Kuroshio Current has an average ocean drift speed of 1.6 miles per hour along a 1,800-mile sector (producing a drifting time of 47 days); the longer North Pacific Current has an average drift speed of 0.7 per hour along the central 3,650-mile portion (a 217-day drifting time); and the California Current has an average drift speed of 0.9 miles per hour for the last 1,800-mile section (an 83-day drifting time).

These three drift rates, when merged over the full 7,250-mile route, calculate to a total ocean drift time of some 350 days or an average of 0.9 miles per hour (20.7 miles per day). This is a remarkably close match to the calculated drift rate of approximately 0.9 miles per hour (21.1 miles per day) for a 344-day Jaredite voyage over the same route.

We know of no other ocean route—in the Atlantic, Indian or any other ocean—where one could match so closely the required direction and distance of travel, the drifting speed, and the wind circulation, and all to be accomplished without the need for sails and without attempting to drift counter to the prevailing winds and ocean currents, or even sailing without inordinate tacking. Matching these descriptive signposts in the Book of Ether to actual locations on the surface of the earth is a difficult challenge for any proponent of a proposed Book of Mormon geography. But when we add in a land journey starting at the great tower of Babel and extending into an unknown northern quarter, a barge journey across a “sea in the wilderness,” camping by an exceedingly tall coastal mountain (mount Shelem), and reaching a destination point on the west coast of North America—all appearing to match the descriptions in the scriptural text—we find the resulting spatial pattern to be striking.

Arriving in the Promised Land

Landing Upon the Shores

After nearly a year on the water, the Jaredites landed “upon the shore of the promised land. And when they had set their feet upon the shores of the promised land they bowed themselves down upon the face of the land, and did humble themselves before the Lord, and did shed tears of joy before the Lord, because of the multitude of his tender mercies over them” (Ether 6:12).

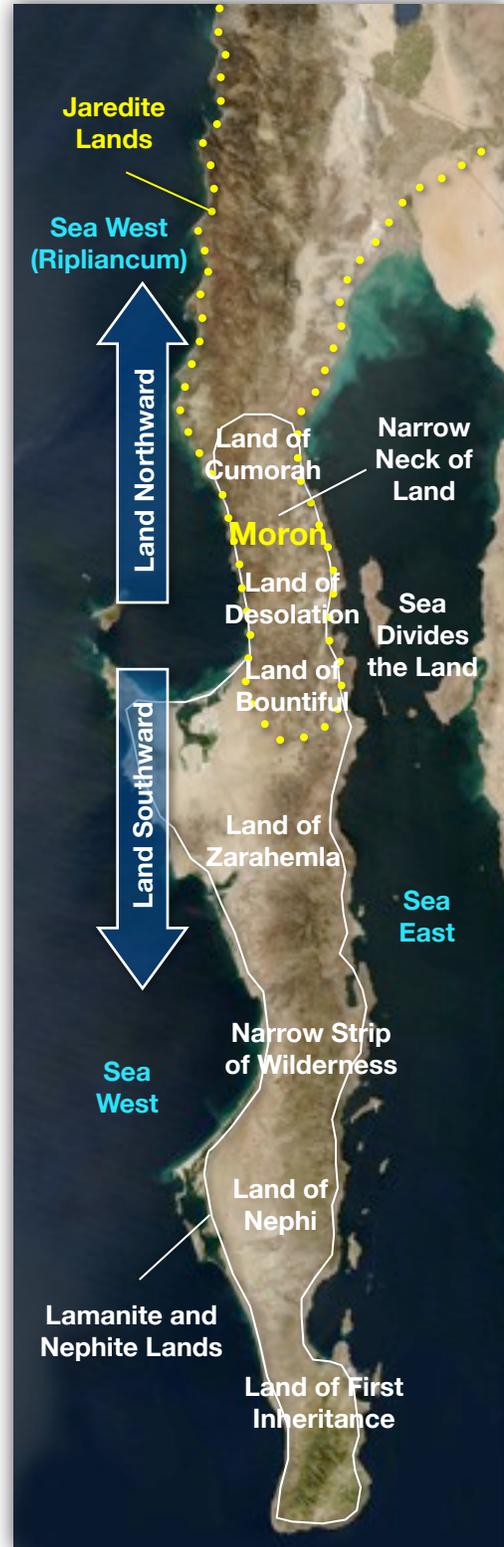


The proposed route the Jaredites followed from the Great Tower to the Promised Land in Baja California.

If the eight Jaredite vessels reached the west coast of North America by way of the Pacific Ocean, as we suggest, where did they land? And which area did the Jaredites settle? There is no mention of the landing location in the record. Moroni at the beginning of the Book of Ether, however, provides helpful background answers to these two questions. He states that the Jaredites “were destroyed by the hand of the Lord upon the face of this north country” (Ether 1:1). “This north country” in the Nephite geographical realm was the area directly north of the narrow neck of land, comprising the land of Desolation and the adjacent areas to the north (Alma 22:29-31; see our topic article, *From the Sea West to the Sea East*, and also, *Mormon’s Description of Book of Mormon Lands*, in our main article, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon Geography*). And the “this” in the phrase “this north country” was the area where Mormon and Moroni lived their lives, participated in the final battle between the Nephites and the Lamanites in the land of Cumorah, and where Moroni was then living when he wrote his record, and not some distant region in the far north. And “this north country” was the same area the descendants of Jared continuously occupied from the time of their landing in the promised land until their demise.

Moroni in his abridgment mentions that “the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called Desolation by the Nephites” (Ether 7:6). The “king” at this time was Kib, the son of Orihah, and Orihah was the son of Jared and the only son among all the sons of Jared and his brother who would accept the kingship for the family (Ether 6:22-28). Thus Moroni places the most significant and central location of the Jaredite realm, the place where the king dwelt in the land of Moron, in this same “north country” near the land of Desolation, which after the annihilation of the descendants of Jared became a Nephite occupied land (Alma 63:4-10; Hel. 3:3-13). Moroni’s statement also places the Jaredite monarchy in the land of Moron within the first generation of their reaching the promised land.

Moroni indicates that the twenty-four gold plates, which were the source of his account in the Book of Ether, “were found by the people of Limhi” (Ether 1:2). In about 121 B.C. king Limhi secretly sent a “small number of men” northwards from the land of Nephi, “to search for the land of Zarahemla,” and to obtain help for freeing his people from bondage (Mosiah 21:22-32). The search party attempted to reach the land of Zarahemla, “but they could not find it, and they were lost in the wilderness” (Mosiah 21:25). The lost searchers continued northward—probably several-days journey, not thousands of miles—until they found numerous bones within the desolate land of the destroyed Jaredite civilization. The Jaredites most likely would have perished within some 100 years or so of the search party’s arrival, because bones and other evidence, such as breastplates and swords were still recognizable



Relative locations of the major Jaredite lands and the major Lamanite and Nephite lands in Baja California.

(Mosiah 8:10-11; 21:26). The lost group mistakenly assumed that the remains of the destroyed civilization were associated with the people of Zarahemla they were attempting to find—because they knew nothing about the Jaredite lands—and “returned to the land of Nephi” (Mosiah 21:26). During the expedition, king Limhi’s men discovered a “record of the people whose bones they had found” (Mosiah 21:27), on twenty-four gold plates which king Mosiah later translated and Moroni subsequently abridged into the Book of Ether, as the record of the same Jaredites they mistakenly assumed to be the people of Zarahemla. This account of king Limhi’s search party also places the Jaredites in northern Nephite lands, but not too far north of where they had expected to find the land of Zarahemla. (See journey of king Limhi’s search party in our topic article, *The Narrow Strip of Wilderness—Spatial Features, Orientation and Recorded Journeys*)

The proximity of the Jaredite lands to the lands of the people of Zarahemla (the Mulekites) and the Nephites led to fleeting intertwinings of their histories at several points in time (Omni 1:20-22; Mosiah 8:6:21; Mosiah 21:26-28; Alma 22:30; Alma 63:4-9; Ether 7:6; Ether 9:3, 31; Ether 15:11). However, there is only one recorded encounter of a Jaredite



Wilderness area in the land of Desolation, located in central Baja California.

with other Book of Mormon people. Amaleki, a record keeper of the Book of Omni, states that in the “days of Mosiah [the first], there was a large stone brought unto him with engravings on it; and he did interpret the engravings by the gift and power of God. And they gave an account of one Coriantumr [a Jaredite], and the slain of his people. And Coriantumr was discovered by the people of Zarahemla [the Mulekites]; and he dwelt with them for the space of nine moons. It also

spake a few words concerning his fathers. And his first parents came out from the tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people; and the severity of the Lord fell upon them according to his judgments, which are just; and their bones lay scattered in the land northward” (Omni 1:20-22; Alma 22:30). We assume the phrase “nine moons” implies nine lunar months, or about 265 days.

Thus the southern extent of the Jaredite lands (the land Desolation) adjoined the northern extent of the Nephite lands (the land of Bountiful) at the time of the annihilation of descendants of Jared and the destruction of their civilization at hill Ramah. Their demise happened sometime before 200 B.C., the approximate time the Nephites under Mosiah (the first) joined with the people of Zarahemla, and, of course, no later than the encounter of the people of Zarahemla with Coriantumr, the lone Jaredite survivor, at an unknown time after their arrival in the promised land about 590 B.C. And most significantly, the hill Ramah, in the land Desolation, is described by Moroni as the same hill as the hill Cumorah where the last battle of the Lamanites and Nephites took place in A.D. 385 (Ether 9:3; 15:11; Morm. 6).



Proposed hill Ramah (Cumorah) at the northern end of the narrow neck of land.

Within our proposed locations for the Book of Mormon lands, these scriptural references place the Jaredite territory, as described by both Moroni and Mormon, in the northern one-third of the peninsula of Baja California and what is now the southern part of the state of California. This combined area, with a delightful Mediterranean climate and a prodigious agricultural carrying capacity, has a total population exceeding 23 million people today. We would suggest that the eight Jaredite vessels landed somewhere on the west coast of this extended area. (See our topic article, *From the Sea West to the Sea East*)

Tilling the Land

The people “went forth upon the face of the land, and began to till the earth” (Ether 6:13). Tilling the earth and planting seeds was also the first chore of Lehi’s family upon arriving in the land of promise (1 Ne. 18:24). Tilling the land implies that they prepared the soil for cultivation and the planting of seeds—seeds that they, like the Nephites, brought with them from their distant homeland (Ether 1:41; 2:3). In both accounts, there is no mention of a need to clear the land before tilling the earth and planting seeds, or to seek a higher elevation or an inland location.

Jared's Descendants Inherit the Kingdom

Spreading and Multiplying on the Land

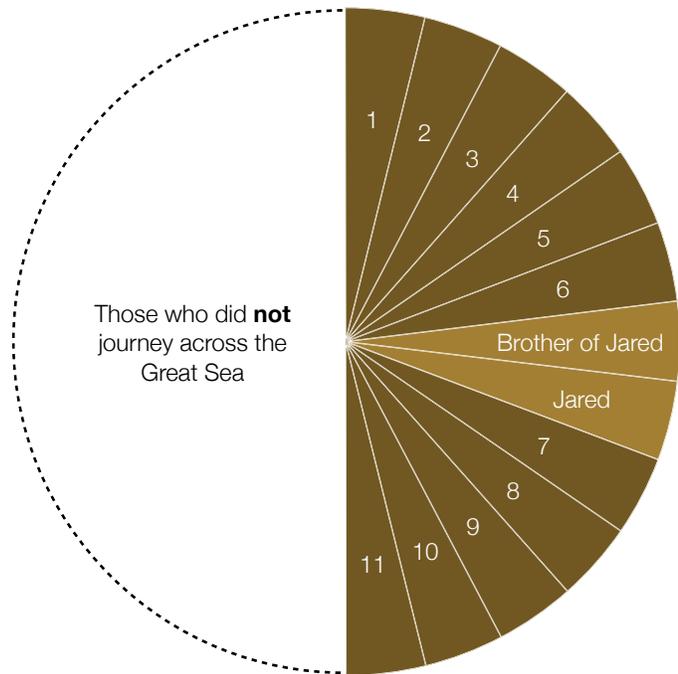
The Book of Ether provides a general census of those who “went forth upon the face of the land, and began to till the earth” after their arrival in the promised land (Ether 6:13).

Three groups are mentioned:

Jared's Family	“Jared had four sons; and they were called Jacom, and Gilgah, and Mahah, and Orihah” (Ether 6:14).
The Brother of Jared's Family	“The brother of Jared also begat sons and daughters” (Ether 6:15).
The Friends of Jared and his Brother and their Families	“The friends of Jared and his brother were in number about twenty and two souls; and they also begat sons and daughters before they came to the promised land; and therefore they began to be many” (Ether 6:16).

The statement that “the friends of Jared and his brother were in number about twenty and two souls” is significant. Does this number indicate there were 22 heads of families or 22 husbands and wives representing 11 families? In either case, these additional families, who were friends of Jared and his brother, had “begat sons and daughters before they came to the promised land; and therefore they began to be many” (Ether 6:16). Based on the use of the word “soul” elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, we are of the opinion that the “twenty and two souls” could represent husbands and wives (11 families), but not necessarily their children, because the “twenty and two souls” were “friends” of Jared and his brother, and a friend, presumably, would be someone whose age would be nearer their own ages (Mosiah 18:16, 35; Hel. 3:26; 3 Ne. 17:25; Ether 6:20). This view is also supported by the statement that the 22 souls “begat sons and daughters before they came to the promised land,” and, therefore, would have been adults and not children (Ether 6:16). Accepting this to be the case, these first-generation families, at a minimum,

would total 13—the two families of Jared and his brother and the 11 families of their friends. With eight barges, this would allow one or two first-generation families per barge. The record is not clear, but there could have been a number of second-generation families who boarded the boats. The total population of men, women and children, upon their arrival in the new land, can only be estimated. Even a rough estimate would be difficult to calculate, but could approach 100. The families and their children “began to spread upon the face of the land, and to multiply and to till the earth; and they did wax strong in the land” (Ether 6:18).



The probable number of families, including the families of Jared and his brother, that landed in the Promised Land after crossing the Great Sea.

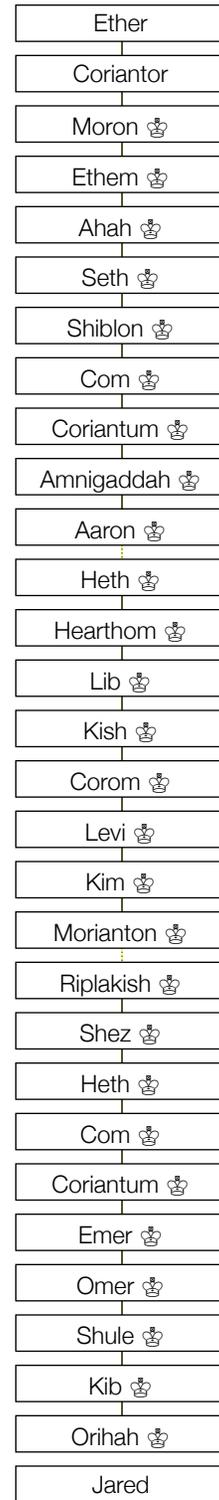
Transferring the Rights of the Kingdom to Jared’s Descendants

The record states that when “the brother of Jared began to be old, and saw that he must soon go down to the grave,” he said unto Jared: “Let us gather together our people that we may number them” (Ether 6:19). The count disclosed that “the number of the sons and the daughters of the brother of Jared were twenty and two souls; and the number of sons and daughters of Jared were twelve, he having four sons” (Ether 6:20). This census, as reported by Moroni, did not include the number within the families of their children. Nor did the count include their friends and the families of these friends, who appear by that time to have separated themselves from the families of Jared and his brother (Ether 6:19-30).

The people appealed to Jared and the brother of Jared to “anoint one of their sons to be a king over them” (Ether 6:22). The brother of Jared responded grievously: “Surely this thing leadeth into captivity.” But “Jared said unto his brother: Suffer them that they may have a king. And therefore he said unto them: Choose ye out from among our sons a king, even whom ye will” (Ether 6:23-24). Each of the brother of Jared’s four sons, in turn, refused his inherited right to succeed his father as the leader of the two families, and the succession of

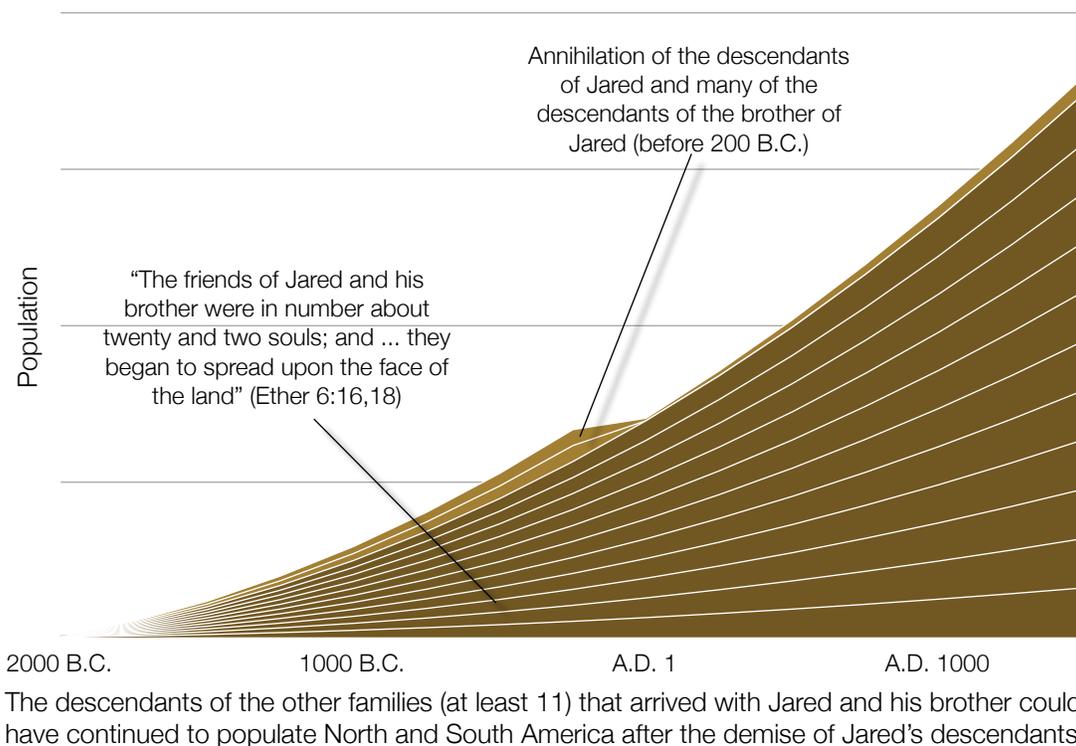
kingship authority was transferred from the brother of Jared’s family to Jared’s family (Ether 6:19-30). Thus Orihah, one of Jared’s sons, was “anointed to be king over the people” after all the other sons of Jared renounced their right to the throne (Ether 6:27). And “Orihah did execute judgment upon the land in righteousness all his days” (Ether 7:1).

With the transferral of the proffered kingship from the family of the brother of Jared to Jared’s son Orihah, all rights to “the land of their first inheritance” (Ether 7:16), and the patriarchal and political authority, as well as the rights of record possession and record keeping were also transferred. As would be expected, the Jaredites had records which their “fathers brought across the great deep” (Ether 8:9). Moreover, the brother of Jared’s descendants forfeited these entitlements and responsibilities in perpetuity. As a result, the remainder of the Book of Ether is a record of Jared’s descendants, starting with Orihah, who took over the kingship responsibilities, down to the reign of the last king, Coriantumr (Ether 1:33; 6:27; 12:1). This transferral of kingship and patriarchal rights is crucial to an understanding of the Jaredite history and the consequences that follow to the end of the record. Note that Ether, the last record keeper, was a descendant of Jared and not a descendant of the brother of Jared who had led the people from the great tower to the promised land (Ether 1:6-33). The genealogy in the first chapter of the Book of Ether is Ether’s own, showing descent from Jared and king Orihah (with some breaks in the lineage for brevity) and not from the brother of Jared. Nearly all the people mentioned in the narrative of the Book of Ether—from Orihah’s ascension to the throne to those named in the last chapter of the record—are Jared’s descendants (Ether 6–15). And 27 of the 29 names listed in Ether’s genealogy, reappear in the last two-thirds



The genealogy from Jared to Ether. The symbol (☪) indicates Jaredite kings.

of Moroni's abridgment of Ether's record as members of the kingship line of descent (Ether 6–15). And all recorded events and places in the new land—from wars to imprisonments to cities and oceans—are located in the area where it is apparent the descendants of Jared lived, because they are essentially the only people mentioned by name in the record. Thus the Book of Ether, for almost its entire history, is a record of Jared's family. Only the account of the first few years leading up to their arrival in the new land includes the activities of the brother of Jared or any others. We would suspect that many of the descendants of the brother of Jared, after relinquishing the kingship, moved on and occupied other locations. We should note, however, that there would have been marriages between the descendants of the two brothers and the sons and daughters of their friends before this separation, and possibly for some time afterwards. It would not be unexpected, therefore, to have a “mighty man” obtain the kingdom who was “a descendant of the brother of Jared” (Ether 11:17-18).



The numerous families (at least 11) of the friends of Jared and his brother, like the descendants of the brother of Jared, “began to spread upon the face of the land, and to multiply and to till the earth; and they did wax strong in the land” (Ether 6:18). It would appear that all these families separated themselves from the descendants of Jared. They are never mentioned again in the Book of Ether, and yet the family of Jared is only one out of minimum of 13 first-generation families arriving in the promised land. As a consequence,

we never learn the fate of the descendants of the brother of Jared nor the descendants of the many “friends.” Did they suffer a similar end as the descendants of Jared, with a complete annihilation and destruction of their civilizations at locations similar to hill Ramah? Maybe only a few families completely perished. We do not know, because we have no record of their history. We strongly suspect that many of them eventually scattered to distant locations throughout North and South America. Their descendants today could be among the millions of indigenous people now living in widespread locations on these two continents, most of whom have cultures, languages and DNA that do not seem to match the cultures, languages and DNA one might expect if they were descendants of the Lamanites and Nephites. It is our opinion that this is the case. The record of Ether certainly provides a credible background for such a scenario to unfold and evolve over time.



Native American tribes and nations throughout North America. Notice the high concentration on the west coast that correlates to the initial settlement location of the numerous Jaredite families.

The Royal Land of Moron

Moroni records that the “land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called Desolation by the Nephites” (Ether 7:5, 6, 17). We assume the land of Moron had a capital city because it was “where the king dwelt,” and the location of the throne, from where a long succession of Jaredite kings reigned (Ether 7:18; 9:5-6; 10:6; 14:6, 9). The land of Moron was the royal center of power from the beginning to the end of the Jaredite monarchical history. Kib, the grandson of Jared who came from the great tower, reigned in the land of Moron (Ether 7:1-6). Some 1,500 years later, following one of the last battles of the Jaredite people, the brother of Shared “came forth to the land of Moron, and placed himself [for a short time] upon the throne of Coriantumr” (Ether 14:5-6).

The Jaredite Promised Land

Our primary goal has been to analyze and map the journey of Jared and his brother and their friends from the great tower to the promised land. In the last half of the Book of Ether, however, Moroni provides a concisely abridged sweep of some 1,500 years of Jaredite history, an average of 150 years per chapter (Ether 15:33). This part of the record—from the arrival of Jared’s family in the promised land to Ether’s account of the final events leading to the demise of their descendants—contains a number of geographical topics that help clarify the Jaredite story and broaden the analysis.

A Variety of Crops

The record indicates that the Jaredites made “all manner of tools with which they did work their beasts” and made “all manner of tools to till the earth, both to plow and to sow, to reap and to hoe, and also to thrash” (Ether 10:25-26). Thrash is an older English word for thresh, as in threshing grain, the separating of grain from a plant by flailing. The Jaredites grew “all manner of fruit, and of grain,” and produced “silks” and “fine linen” (Ether 9:17). “Fruit” in old English referred to fruit as we use the term today, as well as vegetables and nuts. Linen production requires the growing of flax. The producing of “silks” (note the plural) could refer to the lustrous fiber created by silkworms and made into thread and fabric, as historically developed in China, or the “silks” in an old English usage, that referred to any high quality cloth woven from cotton or wool or similar fibers. The climate of Baja California would allow the abundant growing of all the crops mentioned in the Jaredite record.



Commercial tomato production. Baja California is known for it’s ability to abundantly grow nearly any type of crop.

Sorting out the Animals

The Jaredite animals are briefly discussed above, but the topic deserves fuller consideration. When the Jaredites began their journey at the great tower they gathered

their flocks and laid snares to “catch fowls of the air; and they did also prepare a vessel, in which they did carry with them the fish of the waters. And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees, and all manner of that which was upon the face of the land, seeds of



Vessels (containers or casks) for carrying fish as portable food.

every kind” (Ether 2:1-3). As we have noted, all of these items are primary sources of portable food—fowls, fish, honey bees, flocks, and seeds. The gathering and moving of these food sources and domesticated animals appear to have been a necessary exercise for providing and continuing their consumption and utilization among the Jaredites, and not an exercise for propagating a vast wild-animal kingdom along their journey or

in their new homeland. It was commonplace for similar traveling groups to carry dried fish or fish in salt brine within vessels (containers) for portable food. The use of vessels for fish does not need to imply that the fish were kept alive in transportable aquariums.

There is no mention of the specific kinds of animals that arrived in the new land, but before beginning their ocean voyage, the Jaredites prepared “food for their flocks and herds, and whatsoever beast or animal or fowl that they should carry with them” (Ether 6:4). The term “flock” in old English meant an assemblage of one kind of any domesticated animal, feeding or traveling in company—from horses to swine to sheep to geese or even elephants. The term “herd” meant a collection of flocks. Thus the sometimes-questioned Book of Mormon phrase, “flocks of herds,” is appropriate, when referring to the several flocks that comprise a combined entity called a herd. One, therefore, can have “flocks of herds,” meaning the flocks within a herd (Enos 1:21). The term “fowl” meant a bird, a feathered vertebrate animal.

Unlike the Jaredites, the family of Lehi did not carry animals aboard their sailing vessel, but they found upon the land “beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men” (1 Ne. 18:25). The animals found by Lehi’s family, “in the wilderness,” ostensibly were progeny of the animals brought to the promised land by the

Jaredites. Later in the Book of Ether the record mentions that the Jaredite people had prospered and had become exceedingly rich in “all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man. And they also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms; all of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants and cureloms and cumoms” (Ether 9:17-19). The people also went into “land southward, to hunt food for the people of the land, for the land was covered with animals of the forest” (Ether 10:19). There is no further mention of fish or honey bees in the Jaredite record after beginning their journey at the great tower.

We, like others, would want to know the animals represented by the names, *cureloms* and *cumoms*. Camels would be a valuable addition to the collection and top our list of potential animals. These unknown animals, like the horses, asses and elephants, “were useful unto man.” This implies they were domesticated. Camels can be domesticated, but some animals, such as the American bison, resist domestication. Camel bones, and bones of the named animals in the Book of Ether, have been found in various locations of Baja California and southern California, and especially the *La Brea* tar pits in the urban center of Los Angeles. The tar pits were often covered with water, and over many centuries, animals came to drink and were trapped in the tar and their bones preserved.



The discovery of camel bones in Baja California may provide an insight into the variety of domesticated animals among the Jaredites.

Drought, Famine and Serpents upon the Land

Because of iniquity among the people, a widespread catastrophe beset the Jaredites. The unforeseen calamity was of such a magnitude that it was deemed worthy of placement in Moroni’s highly abridged record. There was a great dearth (shortage of food) “upon the land, and the inhabitants began to be destroyed exceedingly fast because of the dearth, for there was no rain upon the face of the earth” (Ether 9:30). Iniquity was the cause, and

no rain (a drought) was the heaven-sent retribution. “And there came forth poisonous serpents [large snakes] also upon the face of the land, and did poison many people. And it came to pass that their flocks began to flee before the poisonous serpents, towards the land southward, which was called by the Nephites Zarahemla. And it came to pass that there were many of them which did perish by the way; nevertheless, there were some which fled into the land southward” (Ether 9:31-32). The land southward comprised the contiguous Nephite lands of Bountiful and Zarahemla located south of the narrow neck of



Rattlesnake (*crotalus catalinensis*) found in Baja California.

land. The narrow neck of land was situated between the land Bountiful on the south and the land Desolation on the north. The land Desolation was an integral part of the Jaredite lands and later became a Nephite land (Ether 7:6; Alma 22:29-34). Today, the corresponding area of Baja California is rife with snakes of many kinds in a conducive environment.

The Lord caused “the serpents that they should pursue them no more, but that they should hedge up the way that

the people could not pass, that whoso should attempt to pass might fall by the poisonous serpents” (Ether 9:33). The people followed “the course of the beasts, and did devour the carcasses of them which fell by the way, until they had devoured them all. Now when the people saw that they must perish they began to repent of their iniquities and cry unto the Lord” (Ether 9:34). The term “beast” in old English referred to any four-legged animal, either wild or domesticated.

The people humbled themselves and the Lord sent “rain upon the face of the earth; and the people began to revive again, and there began to be fruit in the north countries, and in all the countries round about. And the Lord did show forth his power unto them in preserving them from famine” (Ether 9:35). These calamitous events of drought, famine and a plague of snakes occurred where the southern lands of the Jaredites and the later northern lands of the Nephites spatially overlapped. The “north countries” mentioned by Moroni are the lands to the north of the narrow neck of land—the land Desolation and the adjoining lands to the north. (See our topic article, *From the Sea West to the Sea East*)

Hunting Wild Game

Some years later, in the days of Lib, a Jaredite king, “the poisonous serpents were destroyed. Wherefore they did go into the land southward, to hunt food for the people of the land, for the land was covered with animals of the forest. And Lib also himself became a great hunter. 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” (Ether 10:18-21). The “land southward,”

where the Jaredite hunters went “to hunt food for people,” could not have been too far from the “land northward” which was “covered with inhabitants.” The meat from game animals would be difficult to haul long distances and would spoil beyond a short time. The Nephites called this area the land of Bountiful, a wilderness “filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had come from the land northward for food” (Alma 22:31).

Today, the corresponding area of Baja California continues to be a highly favorable habitat for wild game, such as deer, pronghorns, wild goats, game birds and rabbits.



The *desert pronghorn* is endemic to Baja California but under international protection because of encroachment into its habitat. The pronghorns above are young animals.

Ores, Tools, and Weapons

The Jaredites acquired all manner of “gold, and of silver, and of precious things” (Ether 9:17). They “were exceedingly industrious, and they did buy and sell and traffic one with another, that they might get gain. And they did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals; and they did dig it out of the earth; wherefore, they did cast up mighty heaps of earth to get ore, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of copper. And they did work all manner of fine work” (Ether 10:7, 12, 22-23). The Jaredites “did make all manner of tools to till the earth, ... and they did make all manner of tools with which they did work their beasts. And they did make all manner of weapons of war. And they did work all manner of work of exceedingly curious

workmanship” (Ether 10:25-27). The phrase “curious workmanship” in old English meant expert or careful workmanship. Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. The ores of zinc, copper, silver, gold and iron are found in many locations in Baja California and have been mined from the time the Jesuit fathers first reached the peninsula in the late 1600s. Indeed, the availability of gold, silver and copper was a major motivation for early Spanish appropriation of these Jaredite lands.



Unusual rock formations are found in the central part of Baja California, near Catavina.

Cities on the Land

The Jaredites built cities, but there is no mention of towns or villages. It appears the term “city” applies to settlements of all sizes. The city Nehor is the only named city. The record states that Shule, a member of the Jaredite ruling family, “returned to the city Nehor, and gave battle unto his brother Corihor, by which means he obtained the kingdom and restored it unto his father Kib” (Ether 7:8-9). The record mentions that Coriantum, an early Jaredite king, “did walk in the steps of his father, and did build many mighty cities” (Ether 9:23). Also Shez, a great-grandson of Coriantum, “build up many cities upon the face of the land, and the people began again to spread over all the face of the land” (Ether 10:4). Morianton, another Jaredite king, “gathered together an army of outcasts, and went forth and gave battle unto the people; and he gained power over many cities” (Ether 10:9). Thus Morianton “built up many cities, and the people became exceedingly rich under his reign, both in buildings, and in gold and silver, and in raising grain, and in flocks, and herds” (Ether 10:12). Near the end of the Jaredite record, Shiz, the brother of Lib, “pursued after Coriantumr,” his nemesis, and “did overthrow many cities, and he did slay both women and children, and he did burn the cities” (Ether 14:17). It is difficult to burn cities consisting of stone buildings. We assume these Jaredite structures were mainly made of wood, as were the Nephite buildings.



The Jaredites “built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land” (Ether 10:20).

Moroni mentions that the Jaredites “built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land” (Ether 10:20). This description provides a known physical location, the narrow neck of land, where we can place this Jaredite city in relation to the Nephite-named lands of Desolation and Bountiful. A location “by the narrow neck of land” also allows us to place this Jaredite city within a known area of Baja California. The phrases, “great city” and “mighty city” can be misleading. In old English the term “great” in this context refers to the role of the city and not its size. A great city would be a capital city (political, administrative or monarchical) or a city that functions as a central marketplace, even though its size could be rather small. The term “mighty” refers to a city’s power and strength as a fortified or defensible center and not its size.

Ablom by the Seashore

Omer, the great-great-grandson of Jared who came from the great tower, “departed out of the land with his family, and traveled many days, and came over and passed by the hill of Shim, and came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed, and from thence eastward, and came to a place which was called Ablom, by the seashore, and there he pitched his tent” (Ether 9:3). This brief travel description places the hill Shim, the hill where Mormon obtained the records of Nephites, near the place where the Nephites were destroyed—the hill and land of Cumorah (Morm. 1:1-5; 2:17-18). The hill Cumorah is the same hill as the hill Ramah where the Jaredites were destroyed and the place where Mormon hid all the records of Nephites, save the plates he gave to his son Moroni (Morm.

6:6; Ether 9:3; 15:11). Eastward of the hill Ramah (Cumorah) was the seashore location of a place called Ablom. The casual and offhand wording of Moroni's travel narrative strengthens the impression that the three locations—hill Shim, hill Ramah (Cumorah) and Ablom by the sea—were relatively close together and well-known even among the Nephites. This travel account also places the hill Cumorah in a location just to the west of a sea. We propose that the sea in question is the “sea east,” the sea that bordered the eastern seacoast of all the major Book of Mormon lands. We also propose that the Sea of Cortez, to the east of Baja California, is the “sea east.” (See our topic article, *From the Sea West to the Sea East*)

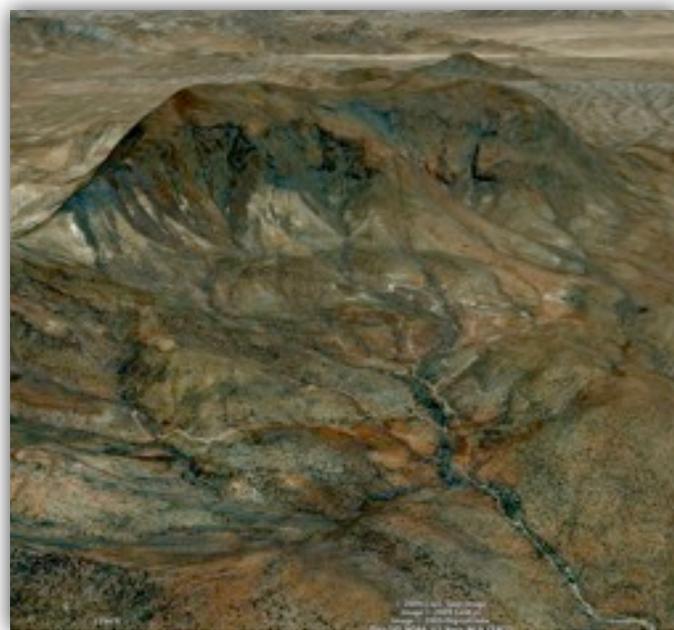


Omer traveled from Moron, past the hill Shim and by the place where the Nephites were destroyed (Cumorah), and then eastward to the seashore location of Ablom.

The Hill Ephraim

Moroni records that Shule, a member of the Jaredite ruling family, “came to the hill Ephraim, and he did molten out of the hill, and made swords out of steel for those whom he had drawn away with him; and after he had armed them with swords he returned to the city Nehor, and gave battle unto his brother Corihor, by which means he obtained the kingdom and restored it unto his father Kib” (Ether 7:9). The molting (melting or smelting by heating to a high temperature) of iron ore and other metals to make swords of steel is informative, but the name of the place of molting, the hill Ephraim, is unexpected. The name “Ephraim” seems out of place in the Jaredite lexicon. We suspect it is not a Jaredite name, but a name that was commonly used among Moroni's people when referring to this hill of iron ore. Moroni identifies other locations within the Jaredite lands by their Nephite names, such as Desolation, Zarahemla and the hill Cumorah (Ether 7:6; 9:31; 15:11).

The name Ephraim, of course, is associated with the house of Israel, and a name mentioned in the Nephite record when quoting the prophet Isaiah from the brass plates (2 Ne. 17:2, 5, 8-9, 17; 19:9, 21; 21:13). There is a hill Ephraim in the central area of the land of Israel, the area inherited by the tribe of Ephraim and where they dwelt before moving northward in 721 B.C. The Biblical hill Ephraim was a known site of iron production at the time the family of Lehi and the people of Zarahemla (Mulekites) departed the land of Jerusalem. We suspect the people of Zarahemla named the hill with iron ore in their new homeland after the name of the hill with iron ore they knew in the old world. The descendants of Lehi would not have encountered the hill Ephraim in the northern Jaredite lands until about 50 B.C., some 550 years after their arrival in the promised land, and after



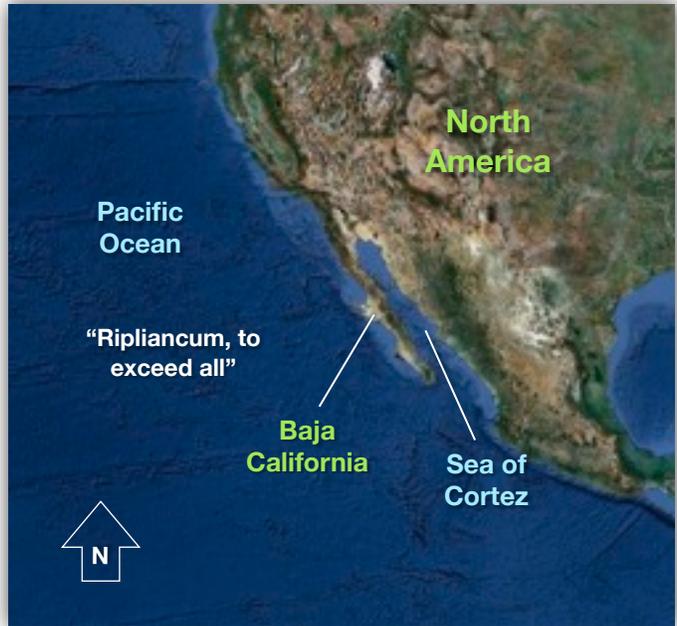
Proposed hill Ephraim in Baja California. Note the modern mining roads near the base of the hill.

they had united with the people of Zarahemla under the first Mosiah (Omni 1:12-19; Alma 63:4-10; Hel. 3:3-13). The people of Zarahemla, however, landed along the shores of the Jaredite lands, close to the site of the hill Ephraim (Alma 22:29-31). It would appear the people of Zarahemla named several distinctive landscape features in these northern lands after Biblical locations: the river Sidon, the wilderness of Hermounts (the Hermonites or Mount Hermon), the valley and city of Gilgal, the cities of Boaz and Judea and the lands of David, Jershon, Jordan and Joshua.

The hill Ephraim provided a common geographical link for the Jaredites, the Nephites and the people of Zarahemla. The shared attraction for all three cultures, of course, was the valuable ore within the hill. A hill, by definition, is a naturally raised area of land, not as high or craggy as a mountain, that extends above the surrounding terrain. There are a number of hills in central Baja California, near the Jaredite royal land of Moron, that are candidates for the hill Ephraim. These ore-producing areas are commercially mined today.

The Waters of Ripliancum

At the end of the Jaredite record, Moroni indicates Coriantumr fled from the people of Shez and “came to the waters of Ripliancum, which, by interpretation, is large, or to exceed all; wherefore, when they came to these waters they pitched their tents; and Shiz also pitched his tents near unto them; and therefore on the morrow they did come to battle” (Ether 15:8). In our proposed geography of Book of Mormon lands, we equate the “waters of Ripliancum, which, by interpretation, is large, or to exceed all” with the Pacific Ocean on the west of Baja California. The area encompassing the Pacific Ocean (the sea west) is larger than the surface areas of all the other oceans of the world combined. This correlates with the superlative expression, “to exceed all.” The Book of Mormon people understood that their ancestors traveled a great distance by sea to arrive in the promised land and would have been aware of the relatively larger expanse of the “sea west” compared to the “sea east,” the Sea of Cortez.



Relative size of the Pacific Ocean (Ripliancum, or sea west) compared to the Sea of Cortez (sea east).

The Demise of a Blessed Civilization

The Hill Ramah (Cumorah)

The hill Ramah, where the Jaredite civilization was destroyed, is described by Moroni as the same hill as the hill Cumorah, the site of the final battle of the Lamanites and Nephites (Morm. 6:6; Ether 9:3; 15:11). We place this hill and its surrounding battlegrounds in northern Baja California and not in the state of New York. We have not been able to stretch the geography of the hill Cumorah (Ramah) to reach as far as New York without abandoning all the other geographical descriptions and spatial relationships recorded in the Book of Mormon.

Is there one hill Cumorah or are there two hills with the same name? There was one hill Cumorah at the time Mormon and Moroni wrote their accounts—namely, the hill where Mormon before his death deposited all the records in his care except for the gold plates



Panoramic view from the top of a proposed hill Cumorah in Baja California, looking southwest across a vast open valley.

which he give to his son Moroni (Morm. 6:6). That hill was in what the Book of Mormon calls the land of Cumorah, in the land northward, a land not many days north of the land of Zarahemla, in the area where the Nephite and Jaredite civilizations were destroyed (Morm. 1-6). The Book of Mormon account says the hill Cumorah is near the hill Shim. And the hill Shim is where Ammaron deposited the Nephite records that Mormon later retrieved (Morm. 1:3; 4:23; Ether 9:3). We don't

know the precise locations of these two hills, but in our proposal we indicate a possible setting within northern Baja California. There are hills in this area with features that match the geographical descriptions in the Book of Mormon. Someday we may be able to identify the exact location of the hill Cumorah (Ramah) and the hill Shim.

There was only one hill Cumorah at the time the Prophet Joseph Smith received the Book of Mormon plates—that is, the hill in the distant land of Cumorah where the Nephite and

Jaredite civilizations were destroyed. The hill where Moroni deposited the gold plates, near the village of Manchester in New York, is not the same hill as the hill Cumorah where his father Mormon buried all the records of the Nephite history, except for the few plates that



The hill north of Manchester, New York, where in 1827 Joseph Smith retrieved the plates deposited by Moroni.

were given to Moroni (Morm. 6:6). The Prophet Joseph Smith described the hill near his home only as a “hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood” (JS-H 1:51). In his history, the Prophet Joseph Smith did not call this hill, “the hill Cumorah,” nor did Moroni. Sometime later, members of the Church started calling the hill near Manchester, New York, the hill Cumorah, and that name has indelibly entered into our language, most likely to stay. It would have been far less

confusing if it had been given a name such as Manchester Hill (the village it is near), Moroni’s Hill, or Mormon Hill. Residents in the area have called it Mormon Hill. Someday we may know more about how Moroni transferred the plates in his care to the hill near Manchester, New York.

It is not unheard of to have two places with the same name. In this case, two hills called Cumorah—one in the state of New York where Moroni deposited the gold plates and one in a distant place where his father Mormon deposited all the records in his possession. There is a river named Jordan in Utah and a Mount Nebo, along with cities called Lehi and Nephi, but these places should not be confused with their namesakes elsewhere.

The hill Cumorah (Ramah), to be a hill, would need to be a naturally raised area of land that rises significantly above all the surrounding terrain. The surrounding terrain of the hill Cumorah would need to be of such a surface configuration that the Nephites could pitch their thousands of “tents round about the hill.” The surrounding terrain would need to be

sufficiently expansive and reasonably flat to serve as a suitable battleground by approximately 600,000 or more Nephite and Lamanite combatants. And all 23 Nephite groups of 10,000 people each would need to be spread over the surrounding terrain such that when Mormon and Moroni and 22 other survivors climbed to the top of the hill Cumorah “on the morrow, when the Lamanites had returned unto their camps,” the hill would be of sufficient



The land of Cumorah, on the north of the land of Desolation, where Mormon buried the Nephite records.

height, and the surrounding terrain of such a surface configuration, that they could observe all 230,000 of their dead and identify the 23 groups led by their commanders. Yet the hill would also need to be of a height that Mormon and the others could climb to the top, make their observations and return within a realistic amount of time. Any hill proposed as the hill Cumorah would need to fully match these recorded requirements (Morm. 6:1-15).

The Last Tragic Events

Before the last few battles of the Jaredites, “there had been slain by the sword already nearly two millions of [their] people, ... two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children” (Ether 15:2). The record appears to be saying that the “two millions” included men, women and children, and this number had “already” been slain in multiple battles, not just a single battle, and apparently over an extended time-period and in numerous locations (Ether 13:25 –15:11).

After these many wars, and the slaying of some two million, there was a four-year gathering of “all the people upon the face of the land” to the hill Ramah (Ether 15:14). Those “who were for Coriantumr were gathered together to the army of Coriantumr; and the people who were for Shiz were gathered together to the army of Shiz” (Ether 15:11-13). “They were all gathered together, every one to the army which he would, with their wives and their children—both men, women and children being armed with weapons of war, having shields, and breastplates, and head-plates, and being clothed after the manner of war—they did march forth one against another to battle” (Ether 15:15). After

several days of sustained fighting, only the two Jaredite leaders, Coriantumr and Shiz, had outlasted the other combatants. The final struggle ended when Coriantumr “smote off the head of Shiz” (Ether 15:30). The record does not indicate how many gathered for these final days of battle, and, consequently, we do not know how many were killed. Ether, stealthily observing these tragic events, finished his record and “hid them in a manner that the people of Limhi did find them” (Ether 15:33; Mosiah 21:25-28). Ether’s last words were: “Whether the Lord will that I be translated, or that I suffer the will of the Lord in the flesh, it mattereth not, if it so be that I am saved in the kingdom of God” (Ether 15:34).

In the days of Mosiah (the first), “there was a large stone brought unto him with engravings on it; and he did interpret the engravings by the gift and power of God. And they gave an account of one Coriantumr, and the slain of his people. And Coriantumr was discovered by the people of Zarahemla [the Mulekites]; and he dwelt with them for the space of nine moons” (Omni 1:20-21). Coriantumr spoke “concerning his fathers. And his first parents came out from the tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people; and the severity of the Lord fell upon them according to his judgments, which are just; and their bones lay scattered in the land northward” (Omni 1:22).

We know the Book of Ether to be a true and correct account of the Jaredite cultures and civilizations. We also believe that the most important contribution of the Book of Mormon is not its geography or its cultural and historical details, but its clear and masterful contributions to our understanding of gospel doctrines of salvation, correct principles of behavior, and the consequences of unrighteous choices.

We conclude our geographical analysis of the Jaredite record with a comment by Moroni:

And thus the Lord did pour out his blessings upon this land, which was choice above all other lands; and he commanded that whoso should possess the land should possess it unto the Lord, or they should be destroyed when they were ripened in iniquity; for upon such, saith the Lord: I will pour out the fulness of my wrath (Ether 9:20).

And thus it was.

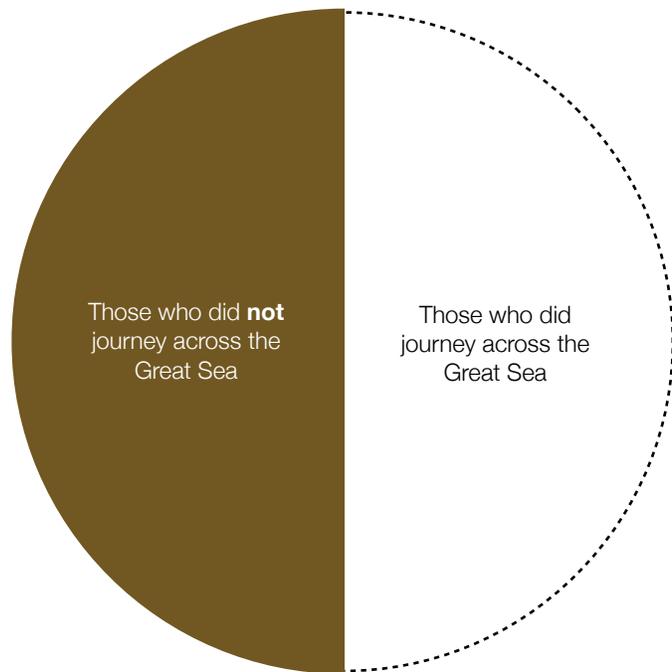
Did Some Families Remain Behind in Asia?

It is our opinion that not all the people in Moriancumer, who dwelt “upon the seashore for the space of four years” at mount Shelem on the coast of Asia, would have boarded the boats that crossed the Pacific Ocean to a promised land in North America. We expect some stayed behind at their familiar—and possibly comfortable—seaside location in eastern Asia, after four or more years of settled life, rather than face an unknown future and the rightfully-anticipated difficulties of a one-year confined ocean voyage.

The people in Moriancumer had been remiss for four years by not praying to the Lord and seeking divine guidance, including their leader, the brother of Jared. Also, the Lord had chastened them for their sins and not seeking divine direction (Ether 2:14-15). When the Mormon pioneers journeyed from Palmyra to Kirtland to Independence and on to Nauvoo and later to the Salt Lake Valley, it was not unusual for numbers of people to reluctantly stay behind at each location, for personal and faith-based concerns, and not move on to the next stage of the exodus. The Nephites, when migrating

from their first landing to the land of Nephi and much later from the land of Zarahemla to the lands northward, also sadly left many behind at every stage. We strongly suspect the Jaredites did the same. With the Lord’s direction and blessings, those who remained at the seacoast location of Moriancumer could well have become the ancestors of a future east Asian population—Chinese, Korean, Japanese or others.

This opinion appears to find support in several Chinese legends such as the well-known account of the “Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea.” This narrative tells of people who arrive at the east sea of Asia and encounter an extremely rough sea with turbulent waves. They successfully cross the sea using their individual special skills. This celebrated story has overtones of the Jaredite account of eight boats crossing the same turbulent east sea and



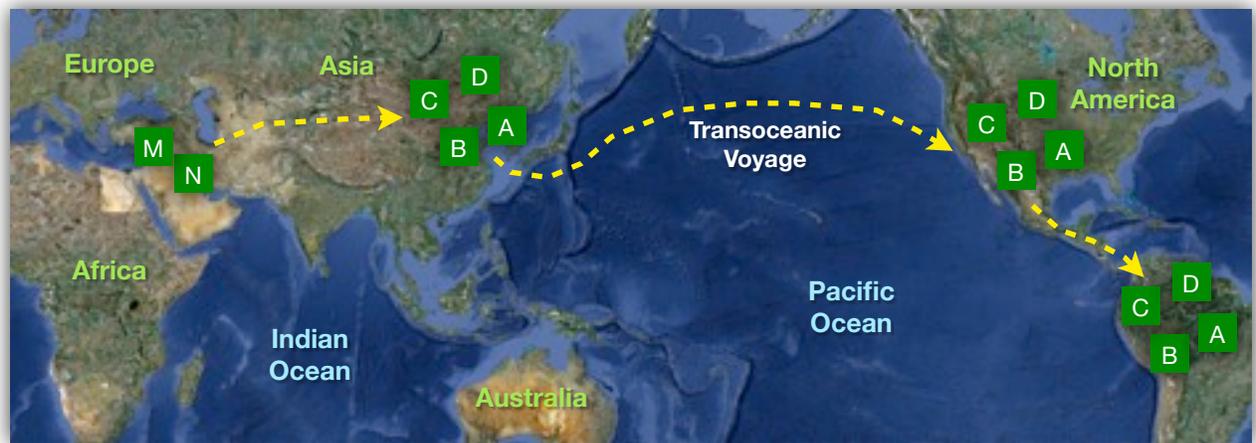
We suggest that not everyone who left the Great Tower crossed the Great Sea. Some could have remained behind and populated the eastern area of China.



The story of the *Eight Immortals* is found in art and sculpture throughout China. Each depiction consistently portrays eight people leaving on boats towards the turbulent east sea and never returning.

continuing across the Pacific Ocean. The eight immortals saga is prevalent in Chinese stories, idioms and literary quotations and appears in Japanese historical accounts. Then there is the respected tradition of the “Three Pure Ones,” the three highest deities in the Taoist pantheon, with symbolism suggestive of the three individuals within the Godhead. The time-honored story of the “Three Pure Ones” has influenced the teachings of other Chinese religions. We should note that the region surrounding mount Shelem (Laoshan) on the east coast of Asia is considered to be the cradle of Chinese civilization. This area of historic Chinese culture is centered on the valley of the Yellow River (Huang He) and referred to as “China Proper.”

Could the Lord have initiated the populating of Asia by sending the Jaredites “into that quarter where there never had man been” as well as colonizing a promised land on another continent (Ether 2:5)? If this were the case, the problem of DNA of the majority Asian population matching the DNA of many of the indigenous people of both North and South America, and not matching the DNA of people in the land of Jerusalem where the family of Lehi originated, all of a sudden evaporates and ceases to be an issue.

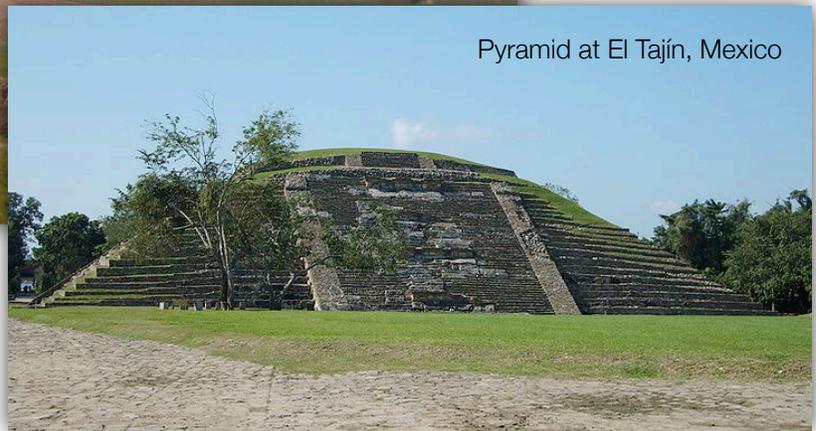


DNA migration patterns match the Jaredite travels recorded in the Book of Mormon.

In the past, attempts have been made to link the Nephite and Lamanite cultures of the Book of Mormon to all or most of the indigenous people of North and South America. A close reading of the Jaredite history, as we outline above, cautions strongly against attempting to explain how all indigenous groups—and ancient civilizations—in the New World are descendants of the Lamanites and Nephites. Instead, the Jaredite story provides a compelling link to numerous Jaredite families and their friends who scattered and migrated across the western hemisphere. It also provides a link to the earlier Jaredite families who ostensibly would have stayed behind on the coast of Asia in Moriancumer and then later scattered and migrated from that coastal location.



Pyramid near Xi'an, China



Pyramid at El Tajín, Mexico

Numerous Chinese pyramids (above) were built as burial monuments. Meso-America pyramids (right) appear to have similar religious purposes.

The implications and consequences of these wide-ranging Jaredite migrations prompt many questions. We encourage anyone interested in the subject of Book of Mormon migrations to explore the numerous sources on Chinese history, culture, languages and origins, and the many similarities to building designs (including pyramidal forms), languages, calendars and other items associated with past cultures of North and South America. In areas such as Meso-America there appear to be more similarities to the highly complex Chinese cultures than the less ostentatious cultures of the Lamanites and Nephites, as portrayed and described in the Book of Mormon. We have attempted in our writings to show that the Lamanite and Nephite people were confined primarily to the peninsula of Baja California and only later, after the near annihilation of their population, expanded to the surrounding areas. The Jaredite migrations in North America, on the other hand, appear to have started at least 1,500 years earlier, with numerous families quickly scattering and multiplying throughout the hemisphere and creating a larger and a more-widespread imprint on the land than the Lamanites and Nephites. It is to be hoped that we have provided a groundbreaking framework, using our geographical analysis of the Book of Ether, that will allow us and others to ponder, evaluate and attempt to fill-in the missing pieces of this far-reaching puzzle.

Electronic Sources of Information

In this age of the Internet, a world of information is available at our fingertips. Not unlike the printed word, information found by electronic means has to be evaluated and sorted with care. And the needle we are seeking in an electronic haystack is frequently obscured when a full haystack of information falls upon us. Even so, electronic searching has grown into an essential tool and often the best or only means available for obtaining information on some subjects. We encourage readers to search the geographical topics we introduce as supportive information for our analysis of the Book of Mormon text. For example: *The Paratethys Sea, Endorheic Seas, Mount Laoshan, Beaufort Scale, Ocean Currents, La Brea Tar Pits, and The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea.*

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