

WAS LEHI Here?

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The Book of Mormon paints a vivid picture of the trials and triumphs Lehi and his family experienced after they left their home in Jerusalem and journeyed through the wilderness. As you read, you feel that you can understand and relate to their experiences. While we can't trace their exact route, we can still get a sense of the general areas where Lehi and his family traveled and, by doing so, gain an even greater appreciation for what they went through. Recent research gives us a clearer picture of some of these areas and the conditions Lehi's group would have encountered.¹

NOTE

1. Information in this article came from the following sources published by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship (see www.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu):
 - S. Kent Brown and Peter Johnson, eds., *Journey of Faith: From Jerusalem to the Promised Land* (2006).
 - *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2006).
 - *Journey of Faith* (DVD, 2005).
 - George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the 'Valley of Lemuel,'" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1999), 54–63.

Mediterranean Sea

Jerusalem

IRAQ

JORDAN

The valley of Lemuel
and the river Laman

KUWAIT

SAUDI ARABIA

Nahom

YEMEN



After Lehi's family left Jerusalem, they stopped in a place they called the "valley of Lemuel" (1 Nephi 2:14), which was a three-day trip from the north-east tip of the Red Sea (see 1 Nephi 2:5–6). The valley was "by the side of a river of water," which Lehi named Laman and which was "continually running" (1 Nephi 2:6, 9). Lehi called the valley of Lemuel "firm and steadfast, and immovable" (1 Nephi 2:10).



Above and below: This wadi, or small valley, called *Tayyib al-Isr*, is typical for the area and contains perhaps the only stream that flows year-round in the region today. This canyon's solid granite walls are an impressive sight, and they offer plenty of shade in an area where the temperature in the summer is usually over 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43°C).

**Above: The river Laman emptied into the Red Sea (see 1 Nephi 2:8).
Right: Here we see where the Wadi Tayyib al-Isr meets the Red Sea.**



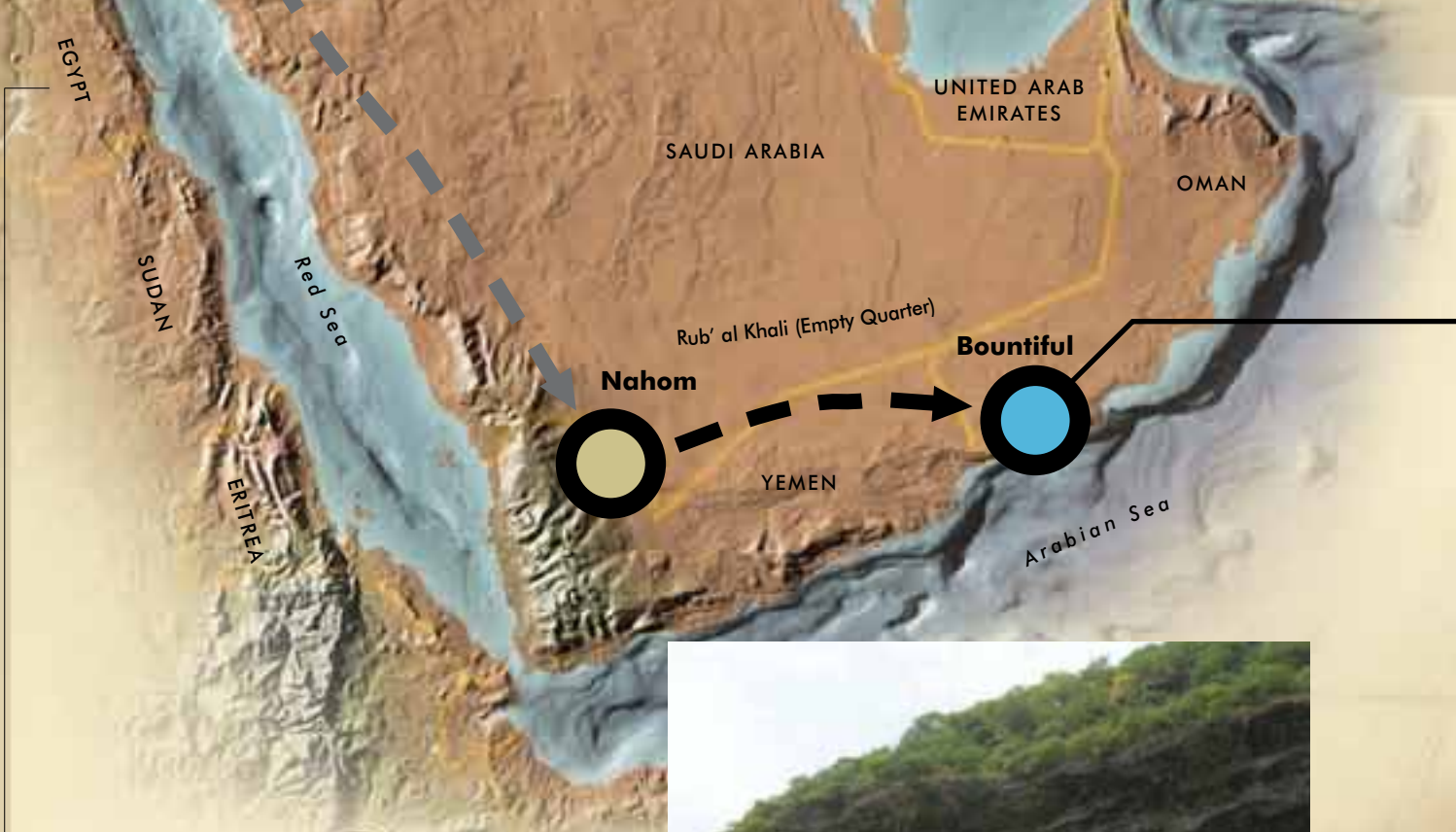
Lehi's family continued their journey, "traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning" for "many days" (1 Nephi 16:33). Then Ishmael died and "was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (v. 34). The place pictured here lies in the general area where the group traveled and for many years has had variations of the name *Nahom* associated with it.



Right: In recent years archaeologists have discovered these stone altars, which have a form of the name Nahom inscribed on them (see inset with letters electronically emphasized) and date back to the sixth or seventh century B.C., during Lehi's day.



MAPS BY MOUNTAIN HIGH MAPS, EXCEPT AS NOTED; LEFT: ILLUSTRATION BY JOSEPH BRICKEY; INSET: MAP BY JERRY THOMPSON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN ANDREWS, WARREN ASTON, S. KENT BROWN, KIM HATCH, DAVID LISONBEE, AND GEORGE POTTER, EXCEPT AS NOTED



THE WITNESS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

“The power of the Holy Ghost . . . must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary to this. . . . No arrangement of evidence, however skilfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place. . . . [However,] secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first-rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God’s purposes.”

Elder B. H. Roberts (1857–1933) of the Seventy, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (1909), 2:vii–viii.



The cliffs pictured here have hives of honeybees in them.



Although the precise route of Lehi’s family is not known, they would likely have crossed such a sandy waste while traveling in the desert between Nahom and Bountiful. This part of the journey would have been especially difficult.



At Bountiful, Nephi “did go into the mount oft, and [he] did pray oft unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 18:3). The peak shown here is representative of where Nephi may have gone to pray to the Lord and to receive instruction.

After leaving Nahom, Lehi’s family traveled “nearly eastward from that time forth. And [they] did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 17:1).

Following an eastward course, Lehi’s group would have reached the southeastern shore of the Arabian peninsula. Some locations along that coastline are shown here. Since they had just traversed a barren wasteland, it’s no wonder they would call such a place Bountiful, “because of its much fruit and also wild honey” (1 Nephi 17:5). **NE**



Some spots along the southeastern coastline of the Arabian peninsula have pockets of vegetation, which stand out in the surrounding desert.

Fruit trees, including fig trees, still grow in this area.



A modern example of shipbuilding in this region. Bountiful is where Nephi built his ship using tools made of “ore which [he] did molten out of the rock” (1 Nephi 17:16). The ship was made of “timbers of curious workmanship” (1 Nephi 18:1). In this area there are two iron ore deposits, as well as many trees that could be used for shipbuilding.

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF REPLICA OF PLATES BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN; ILLUSTRATION OF BOAT BY JOSEPH BRICKEY; INSETS: PHOTOGRAPH OF BEES BY IROCHKA © FOTOLIA; DETAIL OF NEPHI’S VISION, BY CLARK KELLEY PRICE; PHOTOGRAPH OF FIG TREE BY RICHARD L. W. CLEAVE