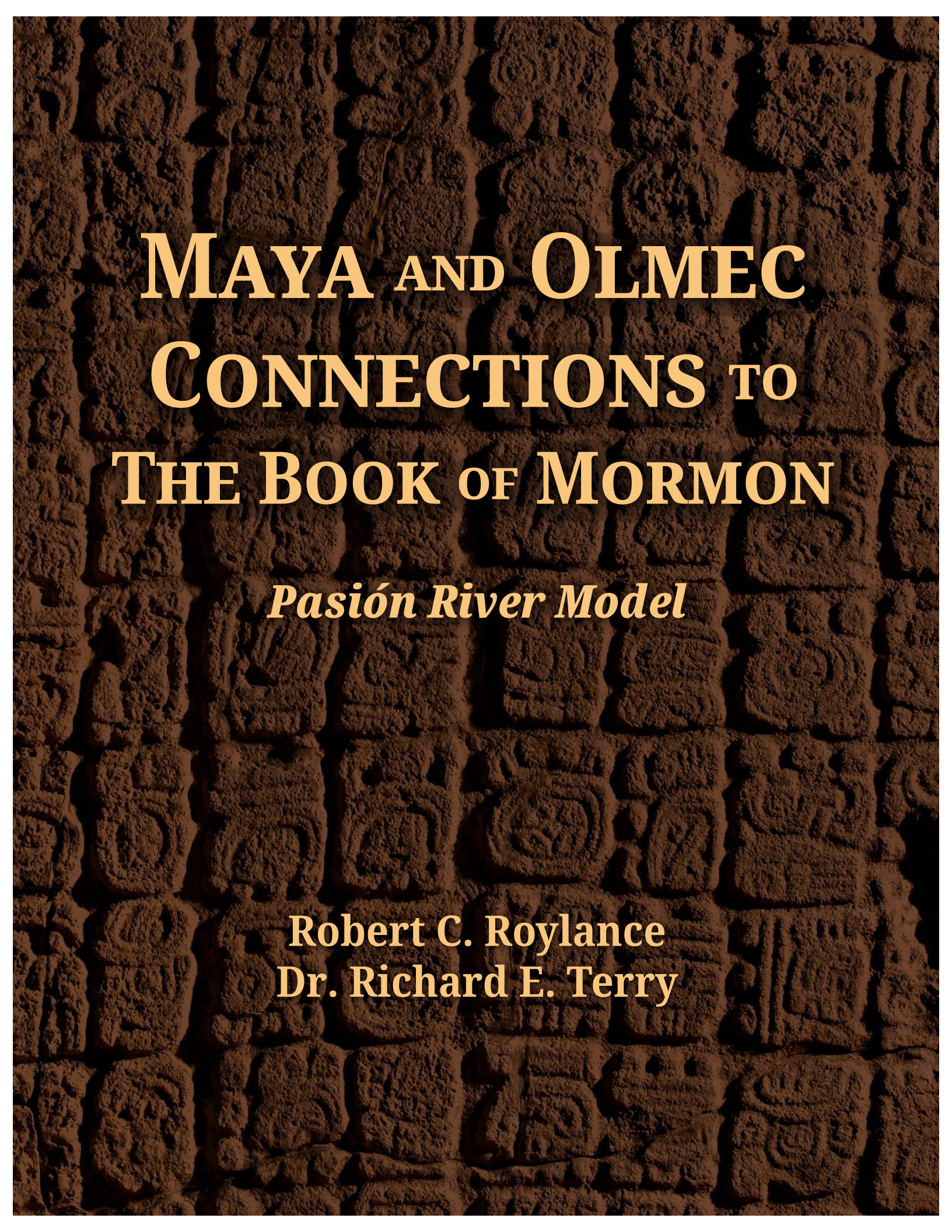




MAYA AND OLMEC CONNECTIONS TO THE BOOK OF MORMON

Pasión River Model

Robert C. Roylance
Dr. Richard E. Terry

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**Robert C. Roylance
Dr. Richard E. Terry
— 2026 —**

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Robert C. Roylance

Dr. Richard E. Terry

Image on cover: Maya stela, Am1928,Q.79, 600-800 BC

Belize, Toledo (district): Pusilha

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**We welcome all who have an interest or perspective
to contribute an honest review, so that the work may be improved
through collective insight and careful consideration.**

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CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Preface	3
1. The Greater Land of Zarahemla	9
Matching maps.....	9
Locations within the <i>greater land of Zarahemla</i>	10
Ceibal – the city of <i>Zarahemla</i>	11
350 AD treaty with the <i>Lamanites</i>	12
Archaeological excavations at Ceibal	13
Aerial LiDAR of Ceibal	14
Minor pyramid temples and leadership hierarchy	15
Nixtun-Ch'ich (<i>Mulekite city</i>)	16
Two sectors in Ceibal	16
<i>Moroni, Lehi and Helaman's</i> efforts to control the <i>Lamanites</i>	17
Cancuen – proposed city of <i>Manti</i>	18
A remarkable find in Cancuen	19
The head of the Pasión River (<i>Sidon</i>).....	19
The city of <i>Antionum</i> and its numerous connections	20
The <i>Hermounts War</i> – 87 BC	23
The <i>land of Melek</i>	23
2. Land of Nephi	25
Locations in the <i>land of Nephi</i>	25
<i>Alma's</i> journey to <i>Helam</i>	26
The <i>valley of Alma</i> connection.....	27
Wine production.....	27
<i>Mosiah's</i> escape to <i>Zarahemla</i>	28
<i>Forest of Mormon</i>	28
<i>Waters of Mormon</i>	28
<i>Alma's</i> route to the thicket	29
The devastation associated with <i>Christ's</i> visit	29
City of <i>Jerusalem</i>	30
The sons of <i>Mosiah's</i> missionary travels	30
<i>Waters of Sebus</i>	30
Seven righteous <i>Lamanite</i> cities	30
<i>Amulon's</i> district	31
<i>Limhi's</i> search for <i>Zarahemla</i>	32
3. Establishing the Location for the Land of Cumorah	33
Important events occurred in the Land of Cumorah	33
Scriptural requirements.....	34
<i>Promised land</i>	34

Book of Mormon place names and people are in italics.

Ancient sites or current locations are in bold.

The names of Maya kings are underlined.

<i>Jaredites</i> ocean travel route	35
Hill Achotal (<i>Hill Cumorah and Hill Ramah</i>)	35
<i>Jaredite</i> and <i>Nephite</i> wars.....	37
Ancient fish farming	37
The <i>land of Desolation</i> and the <i>land of Moron</i>	37
Mural of ancient activity in the Museum of Belize	38
 4. The Narrow Neck of Land	39
Historical perspective from other models	39
Establishing a target area	40
Locating the target area of the <i>narrow neck</i>	40
The massive fortification	40
The complete <i>narrow neck</i> complex.....	41
Fortification – Day's journey for a <i>Nephite</i>	42
<i>East sea</i> and <i>west sea</i>	42
Evidence of large bodies of water.....	43
<i>Narrow passageway</i>	44
<i>Land of Bountiful</i>	45
The <i>line</i>	45
Water around the <i>land of Nephi</i> and the <i>land of Zarahemla</i>	46
<i>Land northward</i> and <i>land southward</i>	46
<i>Land of Desolation</i>	46
<i>Desolation city</i> (Uaxactun).....	47
City <i>Teancum</i> (La Cuernavilla).....	47
<i>Lib's city</i> (<i>Jaredite City</i>).....	48
 5. Twenty-five Maya Kings	49
Tikal – The dominating force.....	49
Early royal lineage at Tikal	49
327-350 AD and the treaty.....	50
<u>Great Jaguar Paw</u>	50
Documentation regarding the final war years of the <i>Nephites</i>	52
Stela 29 at Tikal	52
Stela 28 at Tikal	52
Stela 13 at Caracol	53
Stela 26 at Tikal	54
Stela 19 at Uaxactun	54
Stela 39 at Tikal	54
Stela 31 at Tikal	55
Stela 24 at Naachtun	55
Stela 4 at Tikal	55
Stela 5 at Uaxactun	56
Rio Azul Murals	56
Jade stone at Blue Creek	57
Stela 9 at Dos Pilas and other stelae.....	57
12-Mile Fortification.....	58

Book of Mormon place names and people are in italics.

Ancient sites or current locations are in bold.

The names of Maya kings are underlined.

Different classifications of evidence.....	59
A chronological listing of events with Maya kings	60
6. The Land of the Mulekites and the Land of Bountiful.....	63
Coastal cities.....	65
The <i>land of Bountiful</i>	66
Location of <i>Christ's</i> visit.....	67
Locations of glyphs that show marks of the crucifixion.....	69
Cities that could be candidates for the location of <i>Christ's</i> visit.....	70
7. Catastrophic Events when Christ was Crucified	71
Evidence that volcanoes were responsible.....	71
Evidence of <i>Nephite</i> cities submerged in water.....	72
Earth covered the city of <i>Moronihah</i>	72
Causing the water to "come up"	73
A catastrophic fissure and a sunken temple.....	74
8. The Jaredites	75
Phase 1: The Archaic Period: 2500 BC – 2000 BC	75
Phase 2: Early Formative 2000 BC – Middle Preclassic 950 BC.....	78
Phase 3: Middle Preclassic 950 BC – Late Preclassic 400 BC.....	80
Phase 4: Late Preclassic 400 BC – Early Classic 250 BC	82
The final <i>Jaredite</i> war.....	83
The <i>land of Corihor</i> wars	84
<i>Hill Comnor</i>	85
<i>Hill Ramah</i> and <i>Hill Cumorah</i> are the same hill	86
What role did the Olmecs play in Book of Mormon events?	87
Timeline for groups that are part of <i>The Book of Mormon</i>	92
Summary from a Book of Mormon Perspective	94
Assurance Ratings of Sites in <i>The Book of Mormon</i>	95
About the Authors	98
References.....	99
Index	109

Book of Mormon place names and people are in italics.

Ancient sites or current locations are in bold.

The names of Maya kings are underlined.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Chronological framework of Ceibal (Maya and Book of Mormon time periods)	4
Twenty-seven Book of Mormon research models	6
Map showing Pasión River Model compatible with the four seas	6
Massive fortification example (artist creation)	6
Photo of Dr. Richard Terry and students in fortification area	7
Book of Mormon Text Audit	8
Map of Guatemala/Belize/Mexico	9
Conceptual map of <i>The Book of Mormon</i> by BYU Virtual Scriptures	9
Map of locations within the <i>greater land of Zarahemla</i>	10
Photo of Ceibal (proposed <i>Zarahemla</i>)	11
Aerial LiDAR photo of Ceibal	12
Ceibal timeline by Dr. Gordon R. Willey of Harvard University	13
Aerial LiDAR image of Ceibal in the Petén of Guatemala	14
Photo of three-dimensional scale model of Ceibal (in Ceibal archaeological site)	14
Triadic structures at Ceibal using LiDAR satellite image	15
Triadic structures locations at Nixtun-Ch'ich using LiDAR	16
Archaeological site plan of Ceibal with proposed structures by Dr. Terry	16
Map/photo of site locations for wars between 74 and 62 BC	17
Photos of Cancuen – the proposed site of <i>Manti</i>	18
Photo of Pasión River	18
Photo of glyph panel in Cancuen (possible "and it came to pass")	19
Photo of the head of Pasión River	19
Photo of Uxbenká archaeological site – proposed site for <i>Antionum</i>	20
Photo/map of locations that correlate and triangulate with <i>Antionum</i>	20
Photo/map of possible <i>Lamanite</i> route from <i>Antionum</i> to the <i>Sidon river</i>	21
Photo of the village of Chajmaic – near proposed head of Pasión River	21
Photo/map of area around hill Chabilchoch – proposed <i>hill Riplah</i>	22
Photo/map of the proposed <i>land of Melek</i>	23
Aguateca (artist's rendition)	24
Dos Pilas (artist's rendition)	24
Photo/map of Salama valley – proposed <i>land of Nephi</i> cities and ancient names	25
Photo of Salama valley – proposed <i>land of Nephi</i> cities	26
Photo of Tactic – proposed site of <i>Helam</i>	26
Map/photo of <i>Alma's</i> proposed journey from <i>valley of Alma</i> to <i>Helam</i>	27
Photo of winery in Salama Valley	27
Map/photo of proposed <i>forest of Mormon</i> and surrounding cities	28
Photo of proposed <i>waters of Mormon</i>	28
Map/photo showing <i>Alma's</i> proposed route to <i>forest of Mormon</i>	29
Map/photo showing destruction along Polochic river and Polochic fault line	29
Photo of where the proposed city of <i>Jerusalem</i> is submerged beneath water	30
Photo of proposed <i>waters of Sebus</i>	30
Map of proposed <i>land of Nephi</i> with seven cities in <i>Lamanite</i> territory	31
Map of proposed <i>Amulon's</i> district – wicked leader in <i>Lamanite</i> territory	31
Map/photo showing possible route of <i>Limhi's</i> search for <i>Zarahemla</i>	32
Conceptual map of Book of Mormon locations by BYU Virtual Scriptures	33

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The names of Maya kings are underlined.

Map of proposed <i>land of Cumorah</i> and <i>narrow neck</i> target area	33
Photo of Chetumal Bay – proposed <i>Jaredite first landing</i>	34
Photo of cattle in Belize – near proposed early <i>Jaredite</i> settlements.....	35
Photo of sugar cane field – favorable cropping conditions for early settlers.....	35
Map of ocean currents for <i>Jaredite</i> travel to <i>promised land</i>	35
Photo of proposed <i>hill Cumorah</i> , which must be near the <i>first landing</i>	35
Largest deposits of chert (for making arrowheads) in Mesoamerica	36
Photo/map of rivers and waters near proposed <i>hill Cumorah</i>	36
Photo of chert arrowheads found near proposed <i>hill Cumorah</i>	36
Evidence of “Early Formative” farming practices near the <i>Jaredite</i> landing	37
Map/photo of proposed Book of Mormon territories	37
Drawing in Belize Museum that shows early habitation time frames	38
Map/photo establishing the target area for lands of <i>The Book of Mormon</i>	39
Map/photo identifying the target area for proposed <i>narrow neck</i>	39
Picture depicting the massive <i>narrow neck fortification</i> (artist created)	40
Photo showing Richard and students in a trench	41
Map/photo showing the proposed <i>narrow neck</i> complex	41
LiDAR map showing wetlands in area of proposed <i>narrow neck</i>	43
Map showing proposed 12-mile fortification and ancient waterways	44
Map showing waters receding at each end of proposed <i>narrow neck</i>	44
Illustration of the <i>narrow passageway</i> in the <i>fortification</i>	45
Photo of workers standing in ancient <i>narrow passageway</i>	45
Map showing water surrounding the proposed <i>lands of Zarahemla</i> and <i>Nephi</i>	46
Map identifying the proposed <i>land northward</i> and the <i>land southward</i>	46
Map showing location of the proposed <i>land of desolation</i>	46
Artists drawing of city of Uaxactun (<i>Desolation</i>) layout	47
Map showing proposed <i>Nephite</i> cites involved in the 350 AD treaty	50
Drawings of powerful kings (<i>Lamanites</i>) involved with final <i>Nephite</i> war	51
Photo of Tikal Stela 29 – <u>Foliated Jaguar</u> (around 300 AD).....	52
Photo of Tikal Stela 28 – <u>K'inich Muwaan Jol</u> (<u>Radiant Hawk Skull</u>)	52
Photo of Caracol Stela 13 – <u>Te' K'ab Chaak</u> king of Caracol	53
Photo of Tikal Stela 26 – <u>Chak Tok Ich'aak I</u> (<u>Great Jaguar Paw</u>) (360 AD).....	54
Photo of Uaxactun Stela 19 – confirms arrival of <u>Siyaj K'ak'</u> from Teotihuacan .	54
Photo of Tikal Stela 39 – tells of <u>Great Jaguar Paw</u> at 375 AD and 376 AD wars .	54
Photo of Tikal Stela 31 – information on <u>Entrada</u> from Teotihuacan	55
Photo of Naachtun Stela 24 suggests <u>Entrada</u> of <u>Siyaj K'ak'</u> in 378 AD.....	55
Photo of Tikal Stela 4 – <u>Yax Nuun Ahlin I</u> (<i>Mormon</i> requests to go to <i>Cumorah</i>)	55
Photo of Uaxactun Stela 5 – <u>Siyaj K'ak'</u> 's entry into the 378 AD war.....	56
Murals at Rio Azul link <u>Siyaj K'ak'</u> and Tikal kings with final <i>Nephite</i> war.....	56
Photo of a jade stone tells "the demise of Blue Creek's royal line"	57
Photo of Dos Pilas Stela 9 – <u>B'alaj Chan K'awiil</u> and kings from 14 Maya cities ...	57
LiDAR photo reveals 12-mile <i>fortification</i> , with proposed <i>Nephite</i> cities added	58
Photo/map shows proposed <i>Jaredite</i> and <i>Mulekite</i> territories	63
Map showing ancient city of Hulze as the proposed <i>Mulekite</i> landing site	63
Ceibal timeline by Harvard Excavation Team establishes six key events	64
LiDAR map of Lake Petén Itzá and Nixtun-Ch'ich (proposed <i>Mulekite</i> city).....	65

Book of Mormon place names and people are in italics.

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Photo of early ancient site of Altun Ha	66
Map/photo of four possible cities for <i>Christ's visit</i>	67
Photos of Xunantunich, Yaxa, Altun Ha, Ceibal, Aguateca and Uaxactun	68
Map and photos of possible <i>Crucifixion</i> hand glyphs and site locations	69
Chart of cities that could be considered as a location of <i>Christ's visit</i>	70
Photo of volcanic explosion (representing 27 volcanoes in Guatemala)	71
Map with locations of volcanoes in proposed area of <i>Pasión River Model</i>	71
Map with photos of locations with evidence of sunken cities in water	72
Map/photo of area where four cities were destroyed along Polochic fault line	73
Photos of how proposed <i>Onihah, Mocum</i> and <i>Jerusalem</i> were covered by water ...	73
Photo of deep fissure in land at Aguateca , near Ceibal	74
Map showing distance between Aguateca and Ceibal	74
Photo depicting the departure of the <i>Jaredites</i>	75
Map showing a possible <i>Jaredite</i> land route to where they departed by barges	76
Photo of forest in Pyranees mountains , showing tall straight trees	77
Drawing of ocean currents in North Atlantic Ocean	77
Map of proposed landing site of Chetumal Bay	78
Picture of ancient farmers in <i>promised land</i> (artist rendition)	78
Map showing early fish- and crop-farm locations	79
Map showing Maya expansion locations	80
Chart showing relationship between Maya and Olmec	81
Photo of Cuello , one of the earliest Maya sites	81
Map of the proposed final <i>Jaredite</i> war locations	83
Map of the proposed <i>land of Corihor</i>	84
Map of the proposed <i>valley of Corihor</i> and <i>valley of Shurr</i>	85
Map/photo of proposed area of the final <i>Jaredite</i> battle	86
Photo of a cenote by hill Achotal (<i>Ramah/Cumorah</i>)	86
Aerial photo/map of hill Achotal (<i>hill Ramah</i>)	86
Chart showing chronological progression of Maya and Olmec people	87
Map showing the assimilation of the Olmecs into Maya society	88
Map showing Olmec trade routes in the land of the Maya	89
Chart showing sites with trading evidence between Olmec and Maya	90
Map of Maya cities	90
Map of Maya cities in southern Guatemala (in relation to proposed city of <i>Nephi</i>)	91
Timeline chart of Maya, Olmec, <i>Jaredites</i> , <i>Mulekites</i> , <i>Nephites</i> and <i>Lamanites</i>	92

Book of Mormon place names and people are in italics.

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Introduction

Over the past 50 years, archaeologists and other scientists have made remarkable discoveries significantly improving our understanding of ancient American civilizations. For believers in *The Book of Mormon*, these discoveries serve to help authenticate the scriptural record, providing better insight into where in the Americas *The Book of Mormon* took place. Even before these more recent discoveries, scholars searching the location of Book of Mormon lands had already concluded that the events of the book most likely took place in Mesoamerica – a designation of a geographical region that includes the southern parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador.

The most advanced ancient civilization in Mesoamerica was the Maya. The Maya excelled in astronomy, building, trade and writing. In the late twentieth century and continuing to the present, scientists have learned that the hieroglyphic writing system of the Maya was as detailed and complex as any ancient written language. Remarkably, gifted intellectuals put their heads together and “broke the Maya code.” Now, ethnographers can translate nearly everything the Maya wrote. The Maya loved to write: inscribing histories and other events in stone, on vases and in books. Unfortunately, the Spaniards burned nearly all of the books. Regardless, much has been learned from the Maya stone carvings, depictions on vases and temple walls and from the few books that did survive from the Maya themselves, before they lost the ability to write in their hieroglyphs a short time after the arrival of the Spaniards. Book of Mormon scholars have been able to study these translated writings from the ancient Maya language and learn of events amongst the Maya that correspond to events in the same time frames as described in *The Book of Mormon*. In this book, the relationship between *The Book of Mormon* and ancient Maya writings will be explored.

Recent discoveries also provide insights in other areas beyond writing. For example, scientists have concluded that Mesoamerica was much wetter than it is now. There were large lakes in areas that are now only “bajos” or swamps. This discovery has led Book of Mormon researchers to be able to re-evaluate the region and propose a location for the *narrow neck of land* that connected the southern and northern lands in *The Book of Mormon*.

Another example of recent discoveries is how archaeologists are now using a technology called LiDAR in their studies of ancient ruins. By scanning areas with LiDAR (a form of radar that can penetrate through the forest canopy to see what is on the ground), archaeologists are able to do preliminary studies of vast areas that are virtually impossible to explore because of thick jungles. With the help of “ground proofing,” archaeologists have found fortifications that correlate well with what is described in *The Book of Mormon*, and have learned that certain areas of Mesoamerica were very heavily populated at times, just as described in *The Book of Mormon*.

By applying these recent discoveries, the authors of this book have been able to build on prior Book of Mormon scholarship and refine it. With that refining, the actual location of cities and certain events in *The Book of Mormon* are proposed. You are invited to join us in this exciting path to discovery that will compliment your testimony of *The Book of Mormon*.

—Bradley N. Roylance

Narrow Neck

The following artist's creation could be similar to the fortification that some Maya scientists claim is the largest structure in all of Maya land. Situated between two ancient inland seas — it is the proposed *narrow neck*.

Helaman 4:7 . . . they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day's journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified . . .

See pages 39-48



Preface

If you truly want to know whether *The Book of Mormon* is divinely inspired, that confirmation does not come through the study of ancient ruins or other external sources. The only way to gain such knowledge is to read the record carefully, pray with real intent, and live by the precepts it teaches. Near the close of his life, the prophet *Moroni* promised that if we read *The Book of Mormon*, ponder its message, and ask God in prayer whether it is true, He will answer through the power of the Holy Ghost (see *Moroni* 10:3–5). By reading *The Book of Mormon* and applying its teachings, we also learn that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (*Mosiah* 2:17).

After receiving such spiritual confirmations, the pages of *The Book of Mormon* can draw readers closer to Christ. Physical experiences can reinforce that witness, such as standing in the Garden Tomb or visiting Liberty Jail. Visiting places associated with Book of Mormon geography can be equally moving: picking up sling stones at the base of the *hill Cumorah*; standing on the banks of **Chetumal Bay** and envisioning the arrival of the eight *Jaredite* barges; walking through **Uaxactun** (the proposed city *Desolation*), while reading about the war of 375 AD; or standing in the gap of the *narrow strip of wilderness*, knowing that *Ammon* and his brethren once ushered thousands of converts through that very spot.

A popular talk show host, holding a copy of *The Book of Mormon*, once interviewed a prominent Christian leader and asked for his opinion of the book. The leader responded that it “had to be satanic.” Even in condemning it, he conceded – albeit negatively – that the text could not have originated from mere human authorship. This raises an important question: What influences have led such prominent voices to these conclusions? What prevents them from accepting this remarkable book?

Thirty years ago the Smithsonian Institution stated (1996) that archaeologists “see no connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book [Book of Mormon].” To many observers, *The Book of Mormon* appears to be a fictional narrative set in imaginary locations. For academic critics, the primary reason for rejecting it has been a perceived lack of archaeological evidence. Rather than discouraging inquiry, this widespread perception should inspire renewed and diligent exploration.

John L. Sorenson, a prominent advocate for a limited Mesoamerican setting for Book of Mormon events, conceded that no specific Book of Mormon peoples or cities have been definitively identified in the archaeological record (Sorenson 1985). This is not merely one man’s opinion; others who have ardently supported Mesoamerican models have similarly struggled to overcome this challenge. Despite the influx of information from technologies like LiDAR, there has been little – if any – new evidence emerging in support of the limited Mesoamerican theory. That should raise serious concerns. **In contrast, the research team behind the Pasi3n River Model has considered a wealth of newly available data.** They have identified over thirty locations that correlate and triangulate in remarkable ways. Most of these locations have been verified through carbon dating. Additionally, the team has gleaned extensive information from stelae, murals, plaques and ancient writings – providing compelling, well-documented evidence that aligns with the lands described in *The Book of Mormon*.

During the years 2006 through 2010, Dr. Richard Terry, professor of Soil and Environmental Sciences at Brigham Young University, along with his graduate and undergraduate students, conducted soil and archaeological research at the northern Guatemalan site of **Ceibal** in cooperation with Dr. Takeshi Inomata. Dr. Inomata is one of the premier Maya archaeologists of our time. Dr. Terry and his students conducted soil chemical research in Mesoamerica for twenty years beginning in 1997.

Dr. Terry and Robert Roylance are the primary developers and the co-authors of the Pasi3n River Model of Book of Mormon geography. While studying the soil resources of the ancient Maya site of **Ceibal**, Dr. Terry recognized several evidences that suggest **Ceibal** could be a Book of Mormon city. Initially he never had any intention of searching out Book of Mormon lands, he was only there on his annual Maya archaeological trip with a number of university students. However, numerous Book of Mormon evidences began to emerge, and it reached the point that he could not just ignore it. He was convinced that **Ceibal** had to be a serious candidate for the city of *Zarahemala*.

Chronological framework of Ceibal (Maya and Book of Mormon Periods):

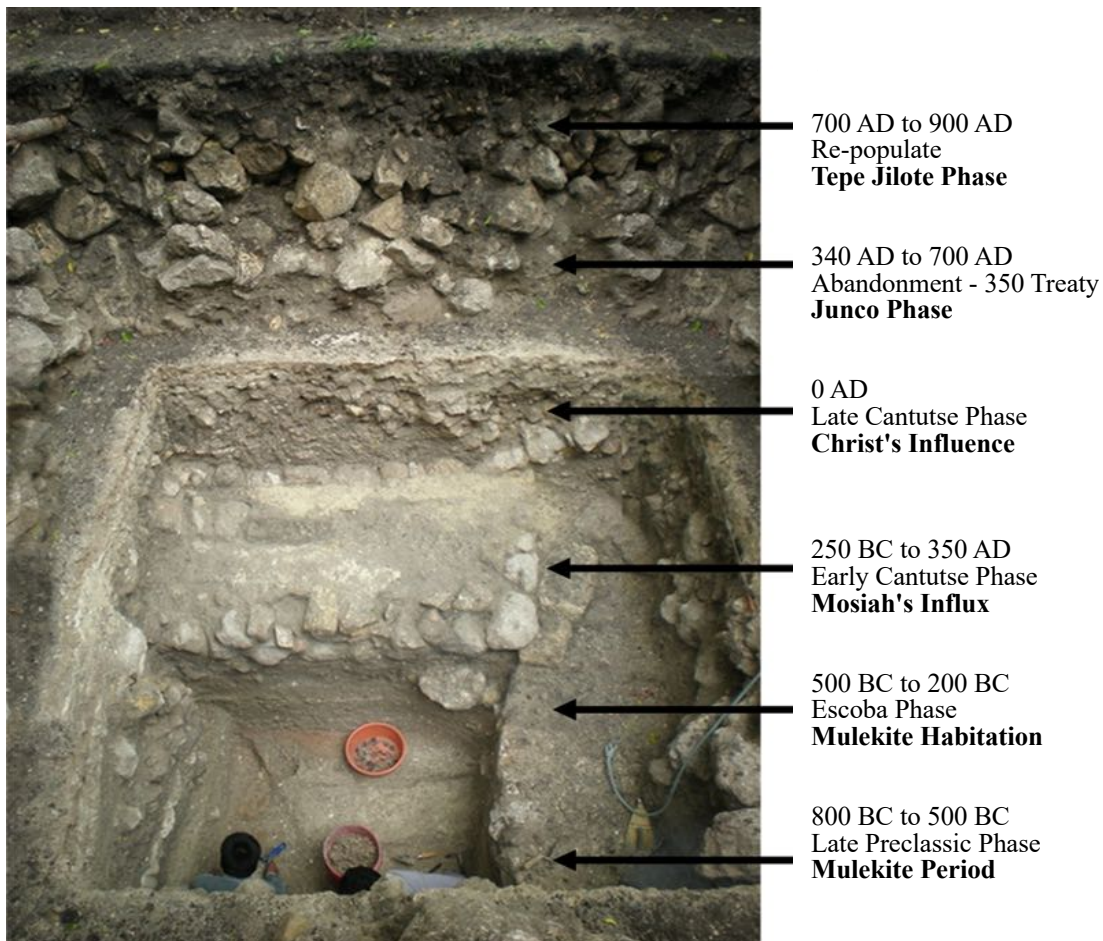


Figure 1. Dr. Inomata's excavation of the floors of the A-24 platform in front of temple pyramid A-24 at **Ceibal**. The arrows are approximations (photograph by Richard E. Terry).

Around the early 1950s, Dr. Gordon Willey, a Maya researcher from Harvard University, was the director of excavations at **Ceibal**. It appears that his experience at **Ceibal** resulted in his interest in *The Book of Mormon*. Evidently, he and another Harvard archaeologist Alfred Kidder, a foremost archaeologist of his day, became involved with the New World Archaeological Foundation, a church-oriented organization founded by the two Harvard archaeologists and Thomas Stuart Ferguson. Ferguson was a church member and an avid Book of Mormon researcher. Apparently, the LDS Church was impressed with their work, insomuch that they contributed a substantial amount of money to their efforts. President McKay was very grateful for what they were doing and wrote Gordon Willey a "thank you" letter expressing his appreciation for his good work.

One has to wonder why this high level of interest and support from professional archeologists came to an abrupt end in the latter part of the 20th century. Could it have been due to the general belief that the *narrow neck of land* was the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, a concept that violated all kinds of directional and distance issues? However, it is interesting to note that currently Takeshi Inomata is the one who did further work on **Ceibal** and verified most of what Gordon Willey had done.

Robert C. Roylance, the other primary partner in the Pasión River Model, first became interested in Book of Mormon geography when a tour guide approached him in the airport at Flores, Guatemala. The guide was familiar with *The Book of Mormon*, and suggested that he knew where some Book of Mormon sites were located. Initially skeptical, Roylance agreed to spend the next day with the guide. After traveling on a horrible dirt road for three hours and then up a river for almost another hour, they finally arrived at **Ceibal**. Upon his return to Utah, Roylance spent a whole day at the BYU library studying the scientific papers on **Ceibal**.

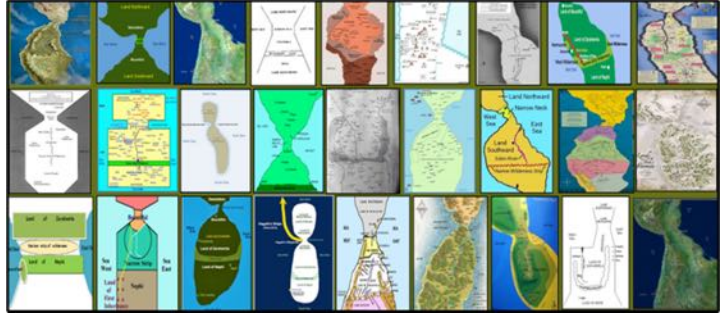
That started a series of events that has led to a highly legitimate model, one that received a positive score of 100% on the 246-questionnaire considering distances, directions and elevations – administered by Book of Mormon Central. Based on the BYU Ancient Scripture hypothetical map, they had a perfect score, one of the few that accomplished that.

Roylance's next step was to identify additional locations to correlate and triangulate with Book of Mormon lands. That opportunity emerged several years later when he met archaeologist Dr. F. Richard Hauck, who organized an extensive study in the **Salama Valley** with the hope of locating the *land of Nephi*. If Hauck's findings proved accurate, this could create a valuable correlation between **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) and the **Salama Valley** (*land of Nephi*). Hauck identified forty-four independent evidences that resulted in a 95% probability that the **Salama Valley** was the *land of Nephi* – correlations that aligned perfectly with **Ceibal** (Hauck 2018).

Historically, the search for Book of Mormon lands began by first identifying the location of the *narrow neck of land*. Scholars initially proposed the **Isthmus of Panama** and later the **Isthmus of Tehuantepec**. Both assumptions shaped their models and led to numerous questionable outcomes. To facilitate their research, 27 researchers agreed that a hypothetical map should resemble an upright hourglass (Sorenson 1992).

The following group shows the possible configurations suggested by the various models:

Even though 27 researchers reached a consensus, a land mass that accommodates the basic “hourglass” design did not fit anywhere. However, based on these hypothetical maps the land of Cumorah had to be northeast of **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*), and once we knew that, a target area for the *narrow neck* could be set.



27 Hypothetical Maps

Yet, most of the proposed hourglass models struggled to meet the scriptural requirement of "the four seas."

Helaman 3:8 *And it came to pass that they did multiply and spread . . . from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east.*

The word “seas” was also used to describe inland bodies in their homeland of Israel – the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Interestingly, the word “lake” is not found in *The Book of Mormon* when it makes reference to bodies of water.



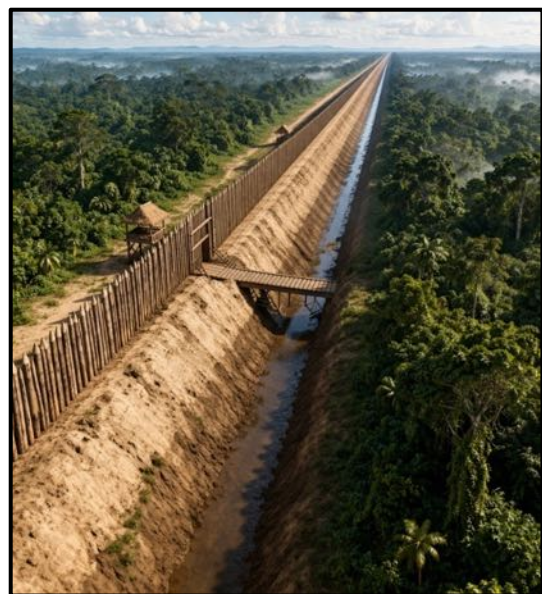
Four Seas Requirement

After the Pasión River research team established the *lands of Nephi* and *Zarahemla* in central Guatemala, they realized the *land of Cumorah* must lie northeast of the **Salama Valley** and **Ceibal**. This would place *Cumorah* in southern Mexico or northern Belize. The Pasión River Model research team began an extensive search for the *narrow neck of land*. They determined that the *neck* must be located somewhere in northern Guatemala.

This allowed for the search for a ten-to-twenty-mile fortification, a fortification that is clearly a very large structure, possibly the largest structure in Maya land. This is described in *Helaman 4:7*.

Helaman 4:7 *And there they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea even unto the east; it being a **day's journey for a Nephite**, on the line which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country. [Emphasis added.]*

This scripture establishes the requirement that a massive fortification must be found. When found, it would be the lynch pin to tie all the proposed lands together. Locating this would provide definitive proof that their earlier discoveries were sound. The research team had long suspected the fortification’s general area, but dense jungle had concealed it. (The picture to the right is an artist's conception of what the fortification might have looked like.)



Massive Fortification - Narrow Neck

In a desperate attempt to find an answer to the two seas, Roylance felt that there appeared to be a natural narrow neck in northern Guatemala – where there was only one way to get to the extreme northern part of Guatemala and the Petén. It was an ancient travel route that passed along the higher elevations of the area, where extensive water systems create a continental divide. The eastern water systems end up in the Caribbean and the western water systems end up in the Gulf of Mexico. He wondered if the low-lying areas could have silted over time and eliminated the *east sea* and *west sea*. He thought it would be helpful to hire someone in Guatemala to drill some boreholes.

To his surprise, Richard Terry's name came up on a Google search of boreholes in Maya soils. He had met him once before when he visited the BYU Agronomy Department. Part of Terry's involvement in that area was to establish ancient cropping systems, accomplished by boring holes into the fields. At their initial meeting, as each man cautiously assessed the other, Dr. Terry's opening question was, "Which river in Mesoamerica is the *River Sidon*?" When Roylance replied, "**The Pasi3n River**," Terry's eyes lit up. His second question concerned the location of *Zarahemla*. When the reply was "**Ceibal**," he answered simply, "**We are together!**" They have worked in concert ever since.

It turned out using boreholes to find the *narrow neck* was not a good idea, so they searched for features of the *narrow neck* – like the huge fortification. Somewhere in northern Guatemala was a good place to start.

As they narrowed down the options, they realized it had to be north of **Tikal**; however, that looked impossible, too. The largest Maya fortification structure would have to be at that location, but it was nowhere to be found. They recognized the problem may be the dense jungle, but even with that, there should be some sign of the fortification.

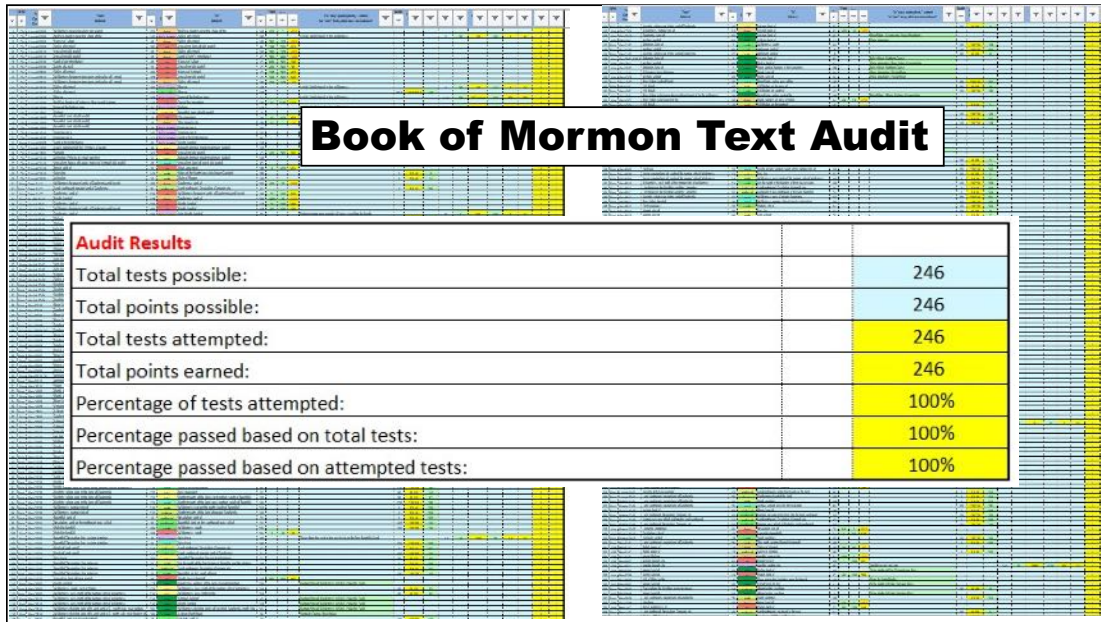
Then Richard recalled when they were evaluating ancient cropping systems north of **Tikal**, he was with his crew in unusually straight and depressed area. He thought, "could that have been an obscure remnant of the required fortification?" **It was the fortification!** The rest is history. (This is discussed in greater detail on page 41.)



Terry and students standing in the massive fortification.

When they found they could consistently and accurately predict where ancient cities should be located, they knew they were on the right track to discovering Book of Mormon lands. Their initial success in the **Salama Valley** (*land of Nephi*) was repeated many times. They reasoned that if a geographic model cannot predict actual ancient sites, it is probably in error.

Several years later Richard Terry and Robert Roylance, the author of this book, joined forces and formulated the Pasión River Model. They participated in a "Book of Mormon Text Audit," sponsored by Book of Mormon Central. This marked a subsequent milestone: the Pasión River Model scored a perfect 100 percent on 246 audit questions involving distances, directions and elevations.



The image shows a screenshot of a spreadsheet application with a grid of data. A central text box reads "Book of Mormon Text Audit". Below it, a table titled "Audit Results" is displayed. The table has three columns: the first column lists the audit metrics, the second column is empty, and the third column contains the numerical results. The results are: Total tests possible: 246, Total points possible: 246, Total tests attempted: 246, Total points earned: 246, Percentage of tests attempted: 100%, Percentage passed based on total tests: 100%, and Percentage passed based on attempted tests: 100%.

Audit Results		
Total tests possible:		246
Total points possible:		246
Total tests attempted:		246
Total points earned:		246
Percentage of tests attempted:		100%
Percentage passed based on total tests:		100%
Percentage passed based on attempted tests:		100%

Over the past two decades, there has been a flood of archaeology and geographical data published about the lives and places of ancient Mesoamericans that we should consider as we evaluate the geography of Book of Mormon lands. Of the numerous scientific references used in this work, most of them were published after 2000 AD. It is time to use the most recent research to reconsider, and to shift, the Mesoamerican paradigm of Book of Mormon geography.

There is ample scientific evidence from ancient settlements across the Americas that provide researchers with numerous archaeological indicators supporting the historicity of Book of Mormon events. Verified sites – whose dates have been securely established – correspond to *The Book of Mormon* timeline, and many additional data points draw direct connections to the text.

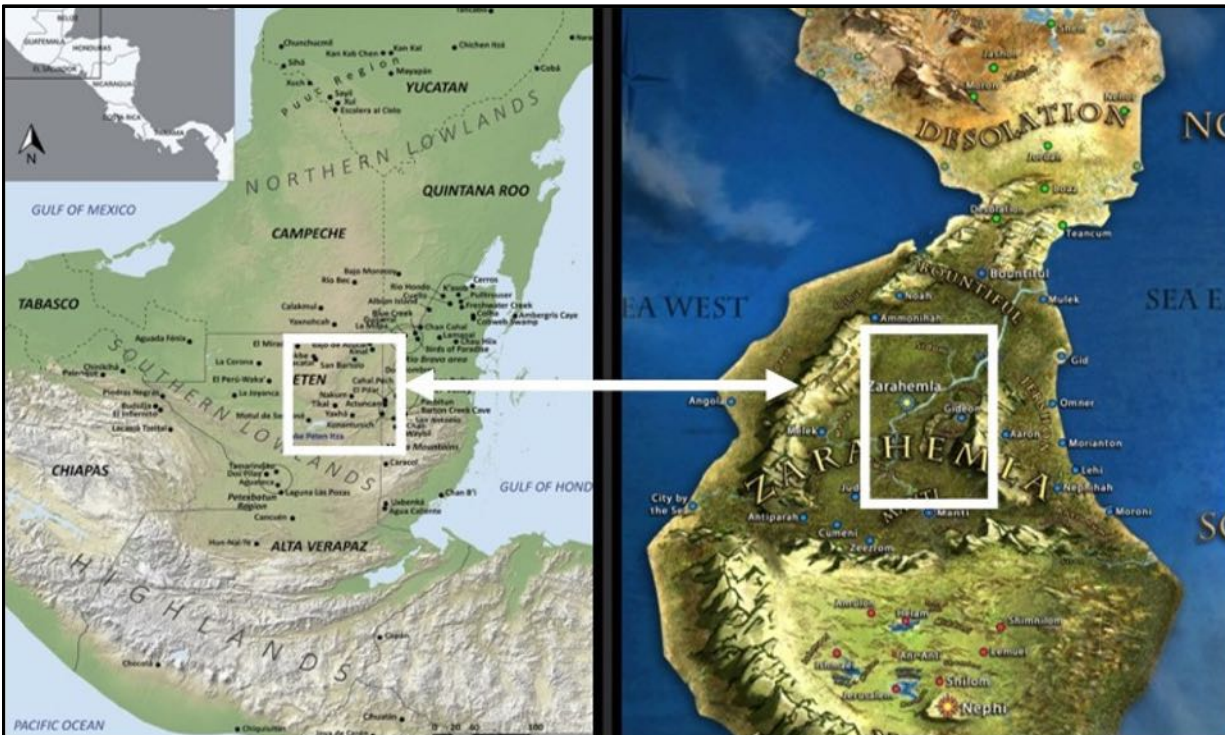
Any geographic model that lacks such concrete ties rests on shaky ground. It is difficult to understand how some proposals rely solely on conjectural placements of ambiguous lands without identifying specific locations, such as the cities of *Nephi*, *Zarahemla* or *Manti*. Research done by the Pasión River team has now identified and pinpointed more than thirty distinct sites, and many secondary sites, with a high degree of locational accuracy. Their findings are set forth and called the Pasión River Model in this book, with charts and references given to readers who might want "a deeper dive."

Like ourselves, the Maya wrote on paper, keeping thousands of books in which they recorded their history, genealogy, religions and rituals; but their libraries and archives perished into dust or in the flames of Spanish conquerors (Schele 1986).

1 – The Greater Land of Zarahemla

A Geographical and Historical Analysis

This chapter examines the geographical and historical context of the *greater land of Zarahemla* and the *Sidon River*, integrating scriptural references with archaeological findings. Using scriptures from *The Book of Mormon* and archaeological discoveries, this study establishes correlations between ancient locations and present-day sites in Mesoamerica.



Actual map of Guatemala/Belize/Mexico

<https://virtualscriptures.byu.edu/book-of-mormon-conceptual-map>

Matching Maps

BYU Virtual Scriptures developed a Book of Mormon conceptual map, based solely on the text itself. This creates a **relational map** rather than a definitive geographical correlation. The map allows users to explore Book of Mormon geography based on textual evidence.

This same procedure has been utilized by more than thirty different scholars of Book of Mormon geography, each with the objective of establishing a model that could help identify the actual lands of *The Book of Mormon* – an objective distinct from that of the BYU map. All of their maps share a similar upright hourglass shape. Unfortunately, most models rotate their hypothetical map on its side to accommodate their chosen geographic locations.

However, this adjustment is unnecessary in the Pasión River Model, which demonstrates remarkable similarities to the original relational map. The illustrations above help verify the legitimacy of these proposed locations.

Locations Within the Greater Land of Zarahemla



The *greater land of Zarahemla* refers to the extensive territory held by the *Nephites* – between the years 200 BC and 350 AD. The name *Zarahemla* also refers to the capital city within that larger land. *Zarahemla* started with the *Mulekites* and expanded over time.

Original inhabitants: The *land of Zarahemla* was first settled by a group descended from *Mulek*, who fled Jerusalem around 600 BC. Discovered by a party of *Nephites* led by *King Mosiah*, the two peoples united to become the *Nephite* nation.

Expansion: During the reign of the judges, the *Nephite* population grew and expanded across a wide territory. This larger realm became known as the *greater land of Zarahemla*."

Location: *The Book of Mormon* describes the *greater land of Zarahemla* as being south of the *land of Bountiful*, north of the *narrow strip of wilderness* and situated between the east and west seas (see Alma 22:27). This specific geographical location is in the **Pet6n** – in northern Guatemala.

Eventual destruction: *The Book of Mormon* records the city of *Zarahemla* destroyed by fire during the cataclysmic events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. Though it was later rebuilt, the land and its people were eventually overtaken by the *Lamanites* in war (associated with a treaty in 350 AD), and destroyed in a series of conflicts that culminated within the *land of Cumorah*.

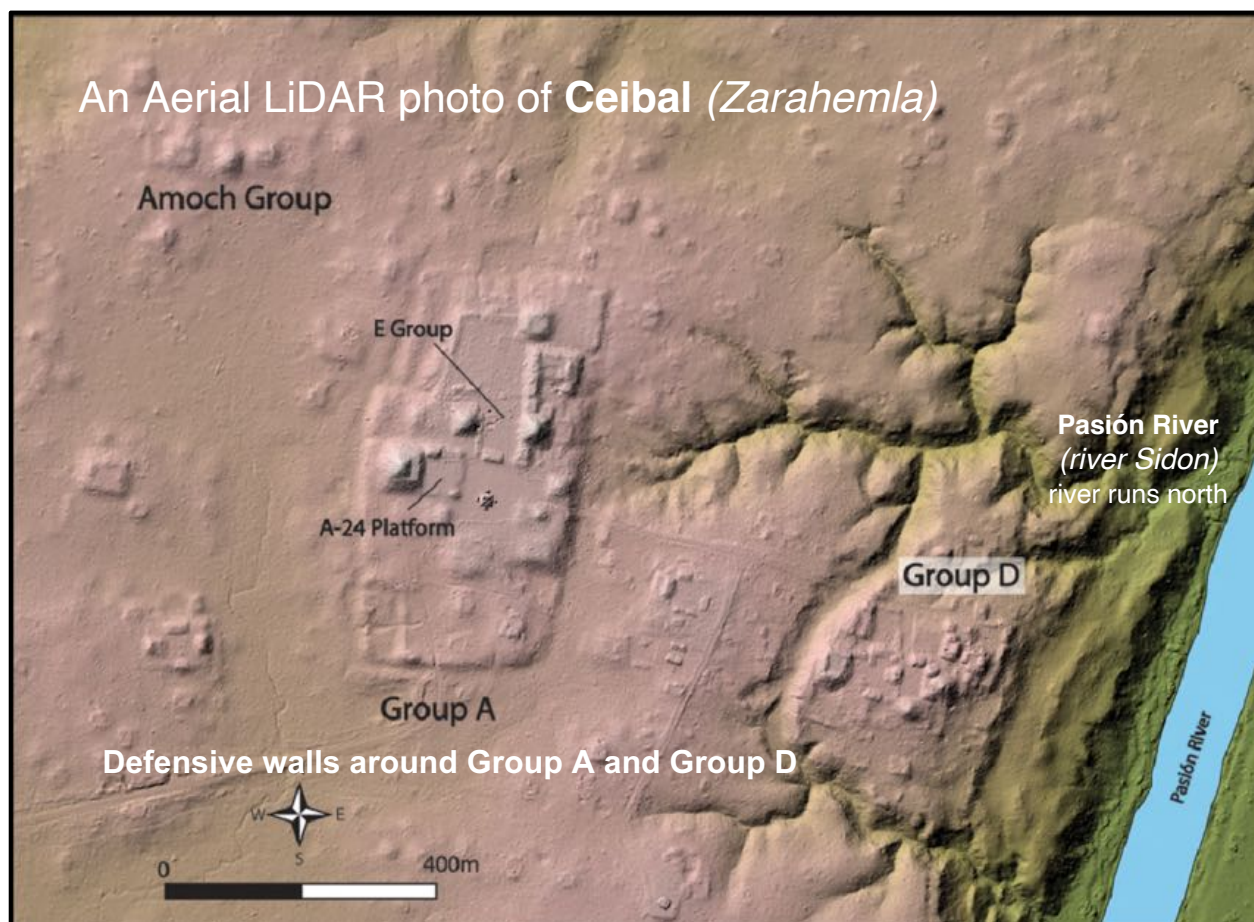
Ceibal – the City of *Zarahemla*

The ancient Maya city of **Ceibal** was the catalyst that ignited a partnership between Richard Terry and Robert Roylance, the principal partners in the Pasión River Model. They both believed this city had to be *The Book of Mormon* city of *Zarahemla*. Prior to this time, these men had no intention of becoming heavily involved in the search for Book of Mormon lands. The evidence they discovered on their first visit was so compelling that neither could turn his back on these incredible findings!



Some required evidences of the city of *Zarahemla*:

- An increase in population at the time of the *Mulekite* migration
- An influx of people at the time of *Mosiah's* migration
- Cultural changes at the time of Christ
- Numerous sacred structures
- Abandoned at the same time as the 350 AD Treaty (when Nephites migrated to the north country)
- Correlation with 14 other *Nephite* cities located within the boundaries of the greater land of *Zarahemla*
- A moderate river located to the east that runs north
- In the center of the land
- The *narrow neck of land* positioned perfectly between the *land of Zarahemla* and the *land of Cumorah* to the northeast (a scriptural requirement)
- West of the hill *Amnihu*
- *Hermounts* to the northwest
- Well-fortified
- Steep riverbank facilitating the piling of *Lamanite* bodies
- Strong correlation with *Antionum*, *Manti*, the *south wilderness* and the headwaters of the *Sidon*



This LiDAR photo of **Ceibal** provides clarity to the basic features of the city of *Zarahemla*. There appear to be two separate sectors in the city – possibly Group A for the Mulekites and Group D for the Nephites.

350 AD Treaty with the Lamanites in *The Book of Mormon*

Mormon 2:28-29

28 And the three hundred and forty and ninth year had passed away. And in the three hundred and fiftieth year we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.

*29 And the Lamanites did give unto us the **land northward, yea, even to the narrow passage** which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward. [Emphasis added.]*

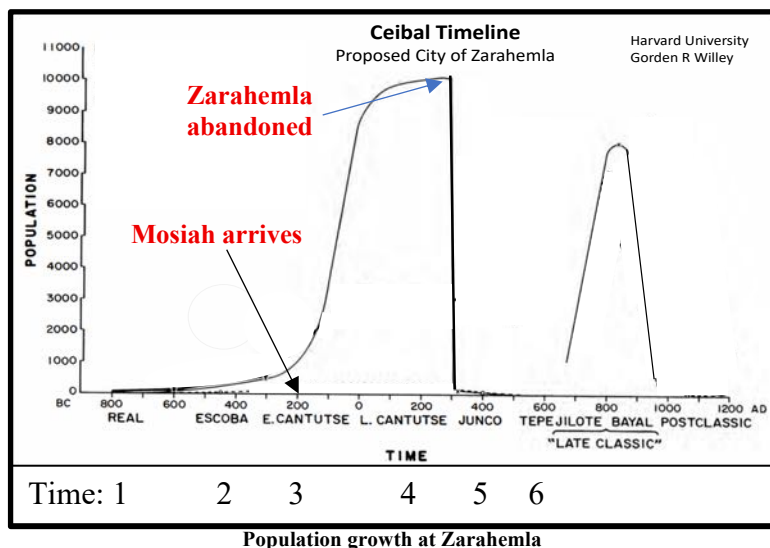
Historical Evidence: In the chapter on the Maya Kings, information is provided about the death of the king of **Caracol** in 349 AD. **Caracol**, a mountainous city near **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) is proposed to be a city of Gadianton robbers. Archaeological evidence indicates a period that is "archaeologically quiet" between 350 and 360 AD. *The Book of Mormon* says the treaty was broken in 360 AD (Mormon 3:4) – which corresponds with the arrival of **Great Jaguar Paw**, who became the king of the **Tikal** area (a proposed Lamanite city). In 378 AD, another major change occurred with the arrival of Fire Is Born (also known as Siyaj K'ak').

Archaeological Excavations at Ceibal (also known as Seibal)

Conducted by Dr. Gordon R. Willey of Harvard

Dr. Gordon R. Willey, renowned scholar and archaeologist at Harvard, identified six key periods at **Ceibal**. These six periods appear to correspond with different phases of *Zarahemla's* history, as written in *The Book of Mormon*.

This chart was the initial inspiration for Terry and Roylance to begin their search for the lands described in *The Book of Mormon*. Below is a summarized version of these ancient periods and their parallels in *The Book of Mormon*.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERIODS

1. REAL

Represents the time with only a small number of people residing at this ancient location.

2. ESCOBA

Represents the time during which the *Mulekites* establish a small community. However, their main body was actually located in the fertile nine-lakes district in northern **Petén**, with sites along the **Belize** and **Moapan** rivers. **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) is located in a dense jungle, one where the people are subject to high humidity, insects, snakes and ferocious animals. (*This is likely a reason some Nephites desired to return to the land of Nephi.*)

3. EARLY CANTUTSE

Represents the time when there was a major influx of people (*a time that corresponds with the arrival of the Nephites from the land of Nephi under the direction of Mosiah*). Ceramics from the **Salama Valley** (*land of Nephi*) were found in **Ceibal**, which provides evidence that some people had migrated from the **Salama Valley**.

4. LATE CANTUTSE

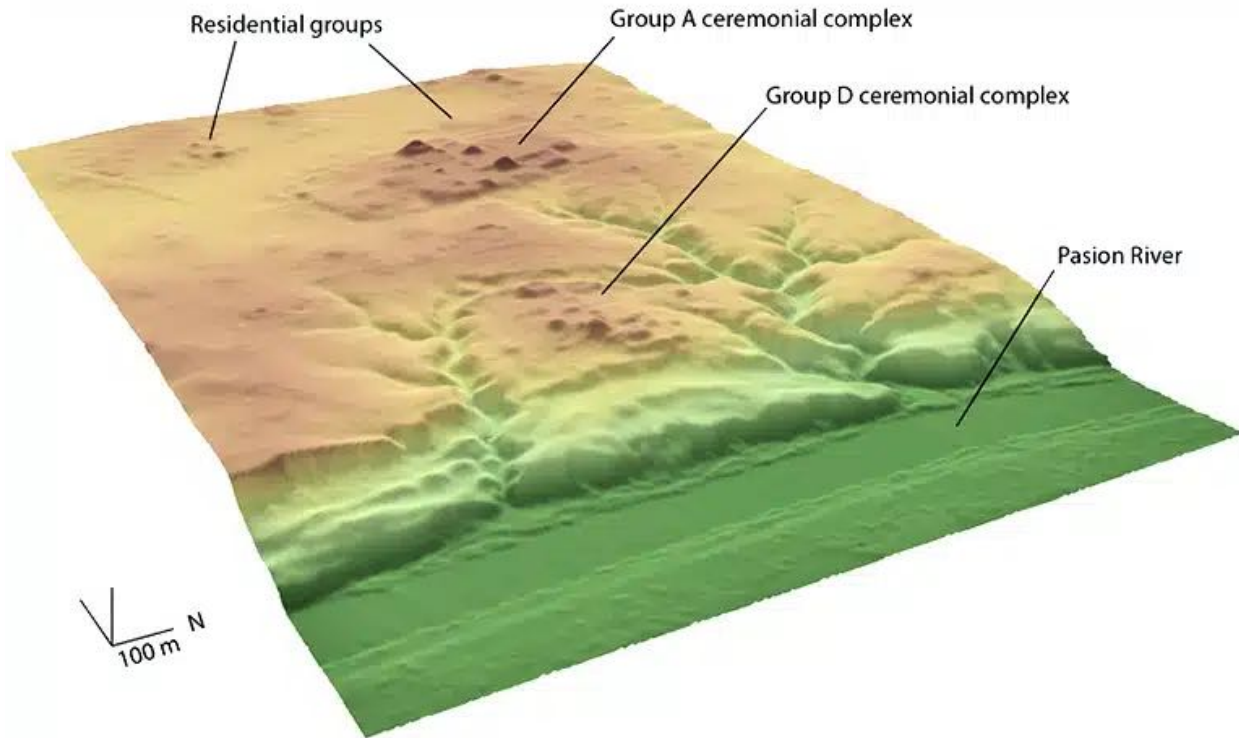
Represents the time after Christ, also a time of peace – a time when the construction of massive Mayan temples was put on hold. It lasted for about two hundred years.

5. JUNCO

Represents a time when **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) was abandoned, a time that corresponds to *hostilities that forced the Nephites to move northward* as agreed upon by the 350 AD Treaty.

6. TEPE JILOTE

Represents the time when **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) was repopulated, after it had been abandoned as a result of the 350 AD Treaty. This evacuation period also represents the same time when fourteen cites in the **Petén** were repopulated. These facts establish the validity of the *350 AD treaty and the cities that were involved* (see chapter on Maya Kings).



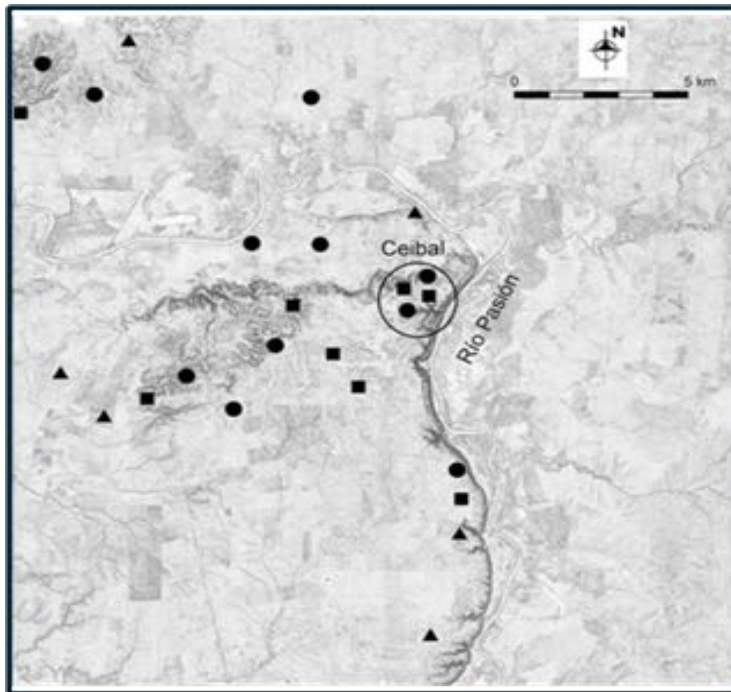
This aerial LiDAR image of **Ceibal** in the **Petén** region of Guatemala was obtained by the National Center for Airborne Laser Mapping (NCALM) of the University of Houston during a 2015 airborne LiDAR image of **Ceibal** in the **Petén** of Guatemala.



This three-dimensional scale model of **Ceibal** is at the **Ceibal** archaeological site in **Petén**, Guatemala.

Minor Pyramid Temples and Leadership Hierarchy

Harvard archaeologists, led by Dr. Gordon R. Willey, excavated **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) in the 1960s. They were surprised to find a minor ceremonial center with smaller pyramid temples scattered in the neighborhoods of the city, and also within short distances outside the city. These LiDAR satellite images of **Ceibal** reveal the distinct layout of smaller temple structures. These formations suggest a hierarchical city structure, where different levels of leadership may have been present. These unique features of **Ceibal** were believed to have been used for religious worship. This aligns with the following scriptural descriptions:



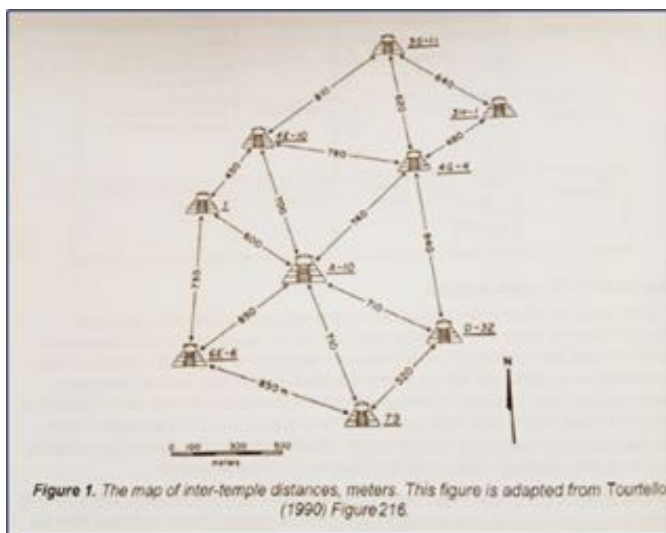
LiDAR image of Ceibal

Mosiah 25:19 . . . *king Mosiah granted unto Alma that he might establish churches throughout all the land of Zarahemla; . . .*

Mosiah 25:21 . . . *they did assemble themselves together in different bodies, being called churches; every church having their priests and their teachers, . . .*

Mosiah 25:22 . . . *notwithstanding there being many churches they were all one church, yea, even the church of God; . . .*

Ceibal contains over thirty triadic structures, a unique architectural style that does not exist elsewhere in Mesoamerica at the same frequency, with the possible exception of **Nixtun-Ch'ich**. (*Both of these cities are considered to be part of the newly formed Nephite nation, and it appears that both of them had a strong religious component.*) These triadic structures have often been interpreted as religious sites. Some scholars suggest that these triadic designs might symbolize the Godhead or represent the Maize God's resurrection – a significant theme in Maya culture (Szymanski 2014).



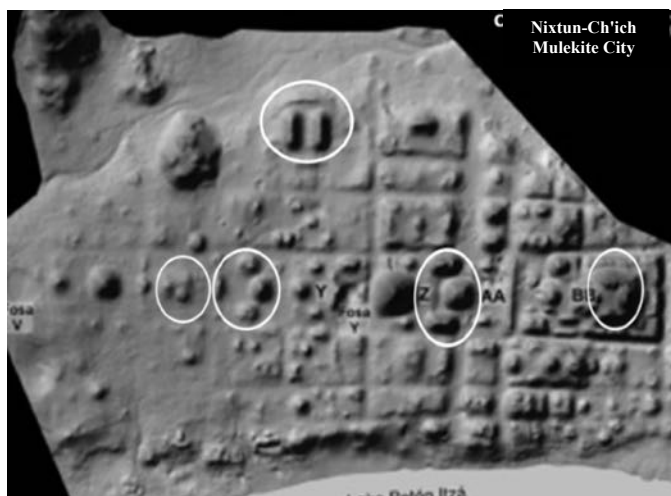
Map of inter-temple distances

Nixtun-Ch'ich (*Mulekite City*)

Nixtun-Ch'ich is another proposed *Mulekite* city with a number of triadic structures. Just north of **Ceibal**, **Nixtun-Ch'ich** is a very unusual city, using street grids that commonly reflect the administration of urban populations and attempts to enhance city life. Planned grids are not typical of ancient Mesoamerican and especially Maya settlements, yet recent research at **Nixtun-Ch'ich** in the **Petén**, Guatemala, has revealed a modular grid layout that is also diagrammatic. Excavations determined that the grid was constructed before 500 BC (Pugh 2017).

Nixtun-Ch'ich appears to be a non-Mayan city established about the same time as the arrival of the *Mulekites*, near the center of the proposed *land of Bountiful*. In addition, it is close to **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) and appears to have triadics in the urban planning. Triadics suggest a close connection to religious practices of **Ceibal**.

There appears to be two separate sectors in the city of *Zarahemla* (**Ceibal**) - possibly one for the *Mulekites* and one for the *Nephites*. (See LiDAR on page 14 and the map to the right).



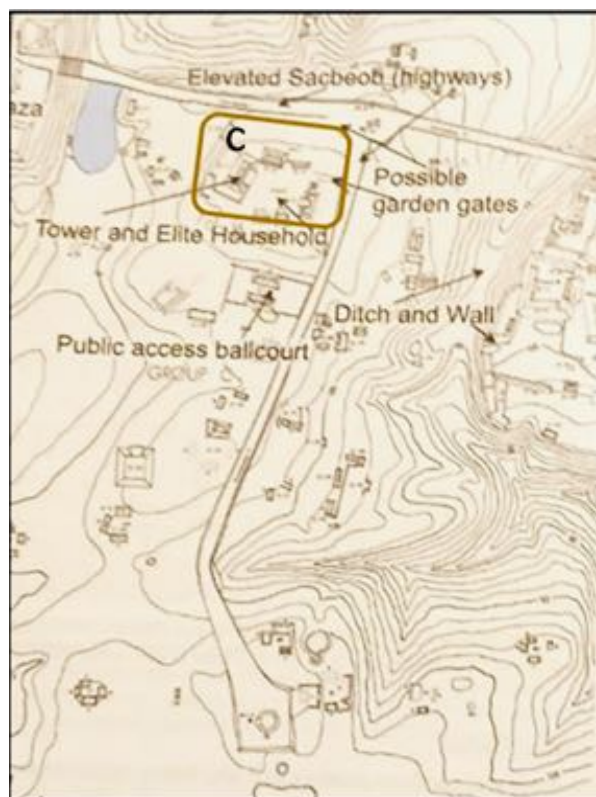
Nixtun-Ch'ich triadics

Two Sectors in Ceibal

The map to the right presents a possible layout of central **Ceibal** and a proposed location for *Nephi's tower*. This central location might have housed the city's leaders.

Helaman 7:10 describes *Nephi's tower* as situated near a highway and a marketplace. Household C in **Ceibal** matches this description, given its central location and its proximity to public areas suitable for large gatherings.

Helaman 7:10 *And behold, now it came to pass that it was upon a tower, which was in the garden of Nephi, which was by the highway which led to the chief market, which was in the city of Zarahemla . . . ,*



Layout of central Ceibal

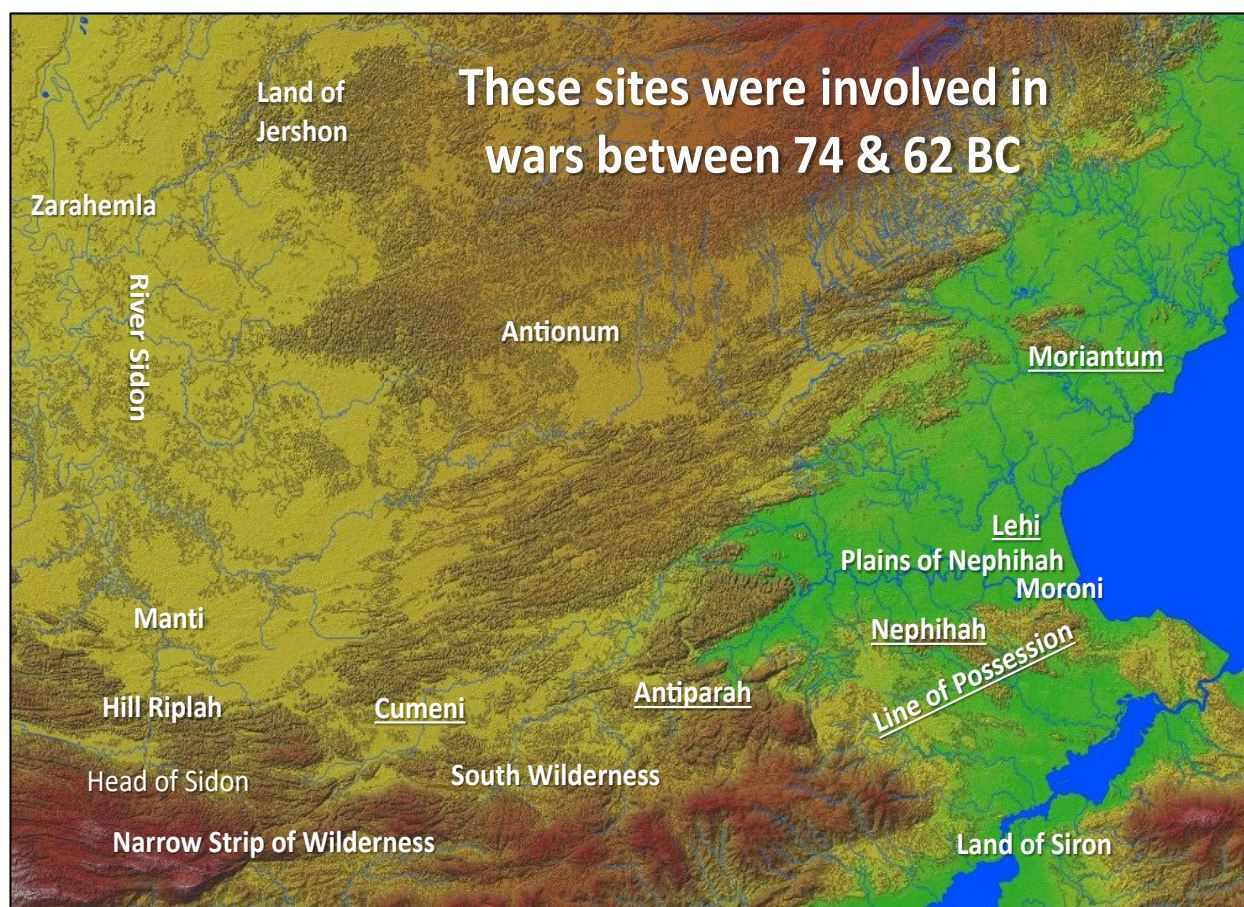
Moroni, Lehi and Helaman's Efforts to Control the Lamanites **74 BC to 62 BC**

Between 74 BC and 62 BC, there was a great deal of fighting along the northern edge of the *south wilderness*. *Moroni* attempted to establish a defensive zone – cutting off the *Lamanites* by building fortifications and cities between the *east sea* and the east end of the *narrow strip of wilderness*.

These fortifications and cities were characterized by referring to them as the “*line of possessions*” (Alma 50:13). The fortifications were designed to keep the *Lamanites* contained to the south. This only worked for a few years because of the aggressive nature of the *Lamanites*. (Apparently, some cities did not survive very long because no archaeological evidence is found for them. Those cities are underlined).

There is a fairly large distinctive open area along the Caribbean Ocean that is the likely location for the *plains of Nephihah*. This could mean that the cities of *Nephihah* and *Lehi* were in the vicinity.

The following is an overlay of a map of the area – with possible locations, based on natural terrain, to match geographical descriptions in *The Book of Mormon*.



Cancuen – Proposed City of *Manti*

The following scriptures help to establish requirements for **Cancuen** to be the city of *Manti*:

1. The south wilderness is on the **east side of the river** (*Sidon*).

Alma 16:6 . . . *the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness, away up beyond the borders of the land of Manti. . . .*

2. *Manti* is located at a **lower elevation than the south wilderness**, near the *Sidon River*.

Alma 16:7 . . . *Zoram and his sons crossed over the river Sidon, with their armies, and marched away beyond the borders of Manti into the south wilderness, which was on the east side of the river Sidon.*

3. *Manti* is located **southward from the land of Gideon and Zarahemla**.

Alma 17:1 . . . *Alma was journeying from the land of Gideon southward, away to the land of Manti, behold . . . he met with the sons of Mosiah journeying towards the land of Zarahemla.*

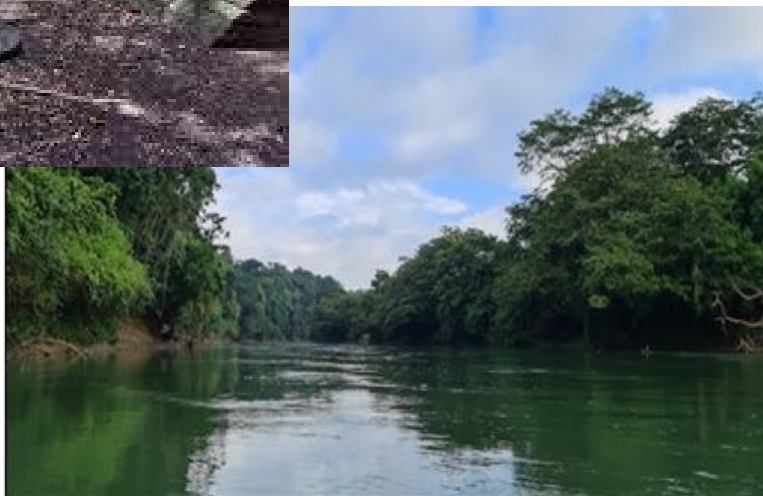
4. The *land of Manti* is a short distance and at a **lower elevation than hill Riplah**, on a river that is running north.

Alma 43:32 *And the remainder he concealed in the west valley [near hill Riplah], on the west of the river Sidon, and so down into the borders of the land Manti. [Emphasis added.]*



Cancuen - proposed as Manti

The photo on the right is the **Pasión River** – the proposed *river Sidon*. This river is near **Cancuen**, the proposed site of *Manti*.



The photo on the left is in **CANCUEN**, the proposed site of *Manti*. Notice the dense jungle. This could explain in part why it was a difficult task to travel between *Nephi* and *Zarahemla*.

A Remarkable Find in Cancuen, Guatemala

A remarkable discovery in **Cancuen**, identified as the ancient city of *Manti*, is a glyph panel located within the site. **Cancuen** is one of several Maya locations believed to convey the phrase, “And it came to pass,” aligning it with numerous similar expressions found in *The Book of Mormon*. This strengthens the case for the Pasión River Model being geographically accurate.

In Daniel Johnson’s article for *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Forum*, he analyzes two glyphs from the panel (yellow coloring used to highlight glyphs discussed): the top glyph reads *utya*, meaning “It had come to pass,” and the bottom one reads *f-u-ti*, meaning “and then it came to pass” (Johnson 1978).



Glyphs – “it came to pass”

The Head of the Pasión River (*Sidon*)

Local Description: One of the sites for the head of the *Sidon River* has been marked by a sign that reads, “The Head of the **Pasión River**.” It is located just south of the proposed city of *Manti*, at the point where it emerges from under **hill Chabilchoch**. While *The Book of Mormon* indicates that the river begins higher in the mountains, this shows the river also runs under a part of the mountain, even though it may have actually originated in the mountains further south.



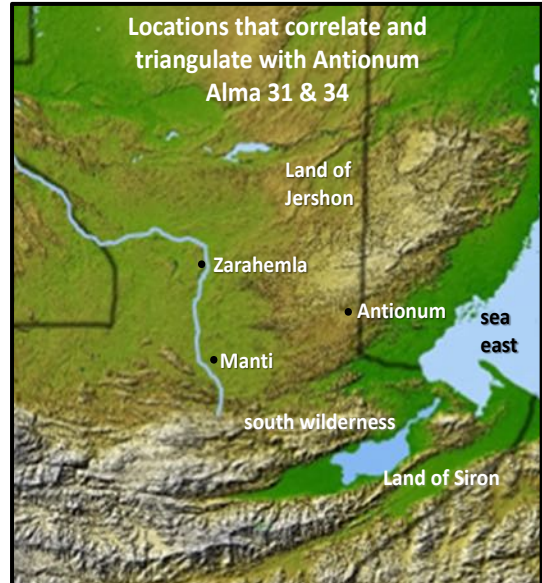
Pasión River – coming out from under a mountain

The City of *Antionum* and its Numerous Connections

The city and land of *Antionum* contain numerous correlations and triangulations that help identify multiple sites within the *greater land of Zarahemla*, making it a key reference point for locating at least ten other sites.



Ancient ruins of Uxbenka (*Antionum*)



Locations that correlate with *Antionum*

In addition to having numerous correlation and triangulation connections to other Book of Mormon sites, it was settled by a people who originated from the **Petén** (*land of Zarahemla*) during the Early Classic period. After the death of *Korihor*, they gathered themselves in the *land of Antionum* (**Uxbenká**) around 74 BC, which corresponds to the Early Classic period (Prüfer 2015).

Alma 31:3 *Now the Zoramites had gathered themselves together in a land which they called Antionum, which was east of the land of Zarahemla, which lay nearly bordering upon the seashore, which was south of the land of Jershon, which also bordered upon the wilderness south, which wilderness was full of the Lamanites.*

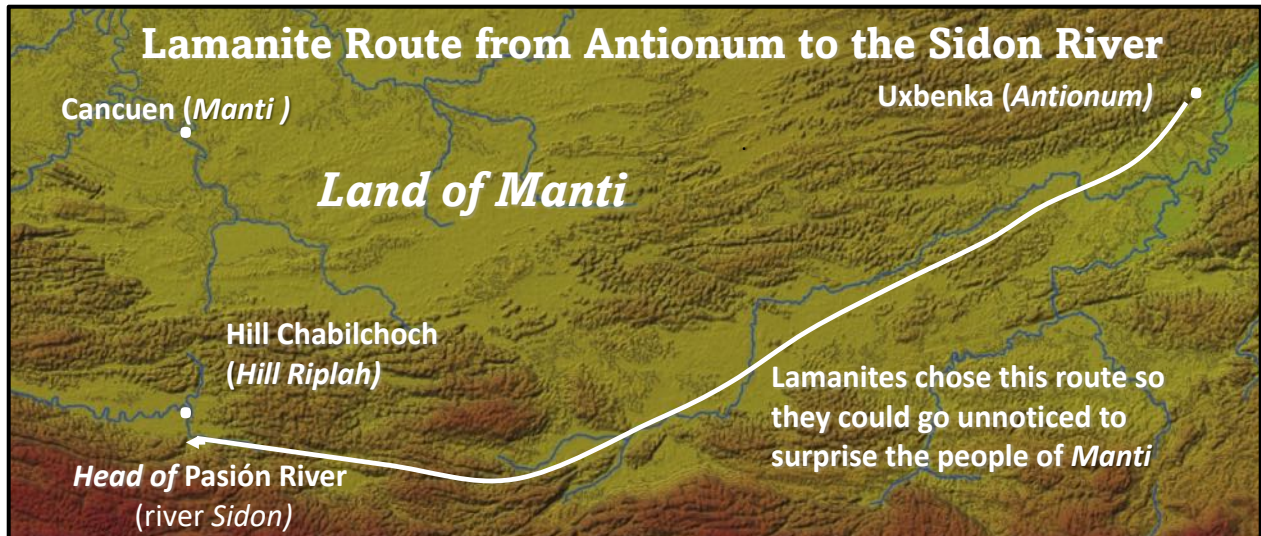
Alma 43 provides additional correlations that indicate the city of *Antionum* is likely the Maya city of **Uxbenká**.

Alma 43:22 *Behold, now it came to pass that they durst not come against the Nephites in the borders of Jershon; therefore they departed out of the land of **Antionum** into the wilderness, and took their journey round about in the wilderness, away by the **head of the river Sidon**, that they might come into the land of **Manti** and take possession of the land; for they did not suppose that the armies of Moroni would know whither they had gone.* [Emphasis added.]

The ancient city of **Cancuen** is the proposed Book of Mormon city of *Manti*. In addition to triangulating with *Antionum*, *Manti* has strong ties to the city of *Zarahemla* (**Ceibal**), which lies a short distance north of **Cancuen**. *Manti* is also one of 14 cities associated with the evacuation that occurred as a result of the 350 AD Treaty. A detailed analysis of this event is covered in the chapter on Maya Kings. Collectively, these factors create favorable conditions for establishing locations within the greater land of *Zarahemla*.

The *Lamanites* were initially thwarted by *Moroni* near the *land of Jershon*; however, their hatred toward the *Nephites* was so great that they instead chose to attack the city of *Manti* (**Cancuen**). Evidently, they believed that by traveling through the wilderness (**Sierra de las Minas**), they could surprise the inhabitants of *Manti* and overcome them without *Moroni*'s knowledge.

The head of the river is a key component of the triangulation tie between *Antionum* and *Manti*. However, its precise location remains somewhat vague without establishing additional clarification, as Alma 16:6 states:



Alma 16:6 . . . *the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness, away up beyond the borders of the land of Manti.*

This small village of **Chajmaic** is near the proposed location of the head of the **Pasi3n River** (*Sidon River*). This is the point where a river from the east and a river from the west converge before heading north, forming the headwaters of the **Pasi3n** (*Sidon*) river. This river continues in a northerly direction until it passes by **Cancuen** (*Manti*) before continuing on to **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*).



The river actually runs under the hill **Chabilchoch** (*Riplah*) and comes out on the other side of the mountain. This feature is described in *The Book of Mormon* when it says that the army stood on the north side of the hill before going down into the land of *Manti*. This indicates that the *Sidon River* runs north.

Alma 43:24 *And it came to pass that the word of the Lord came unto Alma, and Alma informed the messengers of Moroni, that the armies of the Lamanites were marching round about in the wilderness, that they might come over into the land of Manti, . . .*

Moroni clearly understood the *Lamanite* strategy and prepared to meet them on the northern side of hill *Riplah* (**Chabilchoch**).

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

Alma 43:31 *Therefore, he divided his army [Lehi's portion of the Army] and brought a part over into the valley, and concealed them on the east, and on the south of the hill Riplah; [Emphasis added.]*

Alma 43:31 refers to a distinctive hill located between the head of the *Sidon River* and the city of *Manti*. The sequence of movements described in *The Book of Mormon* aligns with the physical landscape surrounding hill **Chabilchoch**.

This map illustrates the *Lamanite* travel route and their need to climb hill *Riplah* in order to ascend into the land of *Manti*, and ultimately attempt to attack the city of *Manti*, which lies only a few miles to the north.



Alma 43: 34-35; 40-41

34 *And it came to pass that the Lamanites came up on the north of the hill, where a part of the army of Moroni was concealed.*

35 *And as the Lamanites had passed the hill Riplah, and came into the valley, and began to cross the river Sidon, the army which was concealed on the south of the hill, which was led by a man whose name was Lehi, and he led his army forth and encircled the Lamanites about on the east in their rear.*

40 *And they were pursued by Lehi and his men; and they were driven by Lehi into the waters of Sidon, and they crossed the waters of Sidon. And Lehi retained his armies upon the bank of the river Sidon that they should not cross.*

41 *And it came to pass that Moroni and his army met the Lamanites in the valley, on the other side of the river Sidon, . . .*

Hill Riplah and its associated locations – such as the head of the *Sidon River* and the city of *Manti* – are strong examples of correlations and triangulations that exist with the cities of *Antionum* and *Zarahemla*.

The Hermounts War – 87 BC

Alma 2:35-37 describes the *Nephite* northwestern pursuit of *Lamanites* into the wilderness of *Hermounts*. It is interesting to note that the *Pasión River* makes a convenient turn to the west so the armies can travel in that direction without crossing the river.

Alma 2: 36-38

36 *And they fled before the Nephites towards the wilderness which was west and north, away beyond the borders of the land; and the Nephites did pursue them with their might, and did slay them.*

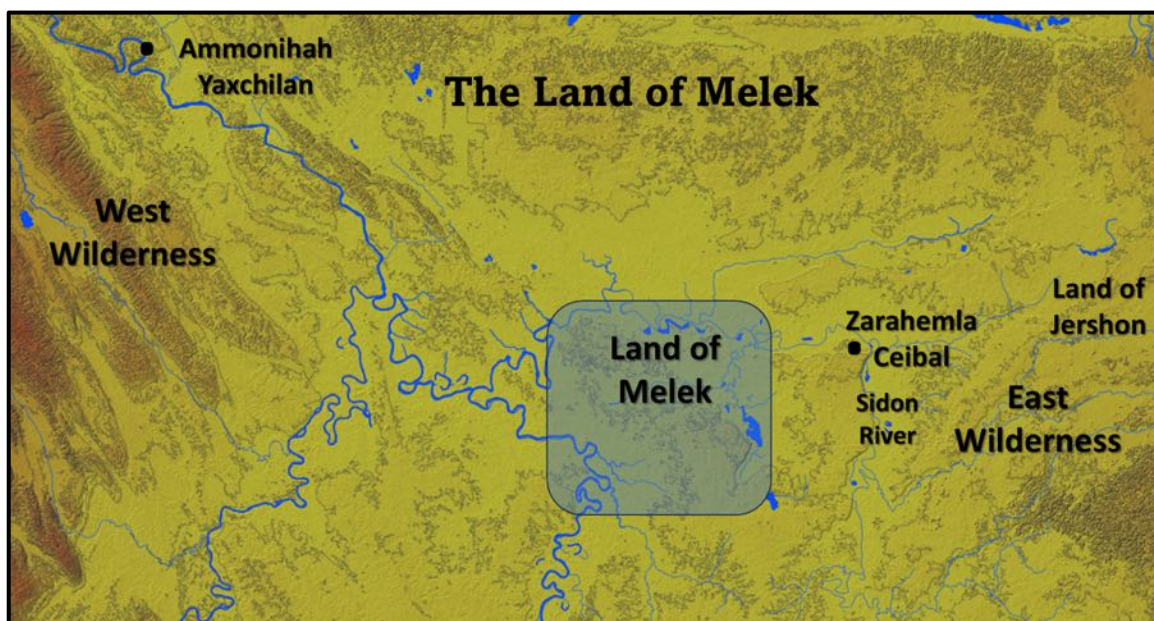
37 *Yea, they were met on every hand, and slain and driven, until they were scattered on the west, and on the north, until they had reached the wilderness, which was called Hermounts; and it was that part of the wilderness which was infested by wild and ravenous beasts.*

38 *And it came to pass that many died in the wilderness of their wounds, and were devoured by those beasts and also the vultures of the air; and their bones have been found, and have been heaped up on the earth.*

Lacandón (*Hermounts*) is a region infested with wild beasts. **The Sierra del Lacandón National Park** in present-day Guatemala, is known for its dangerous wildlife and aligns with this description, supporting its identification as the wilderness of *Hermounts*. There are numerous life-threatening animals still in the **Lacandón jungle**, such as vultures, crocodiles, Puma and poisonous snakes (Duarte 2004).

The Land of Melek

Where the *People of Ammon* (*Anti-Nephi-Lehites*) settled about 82 BC



Alma 8:3 places *Melek* west of the *Sidon River*. **Aguateca**, an ancient Maya site in the **Petexbatun Basin**, fits this description due to its strategic location and archaeological evidence of fortified settlements. It is considered the most fortified of Nephite settlements. These defensive structures were essential to protect the people (*Anti-Nephi-Lehites*) who took vows that they would never take up weapons of war again.

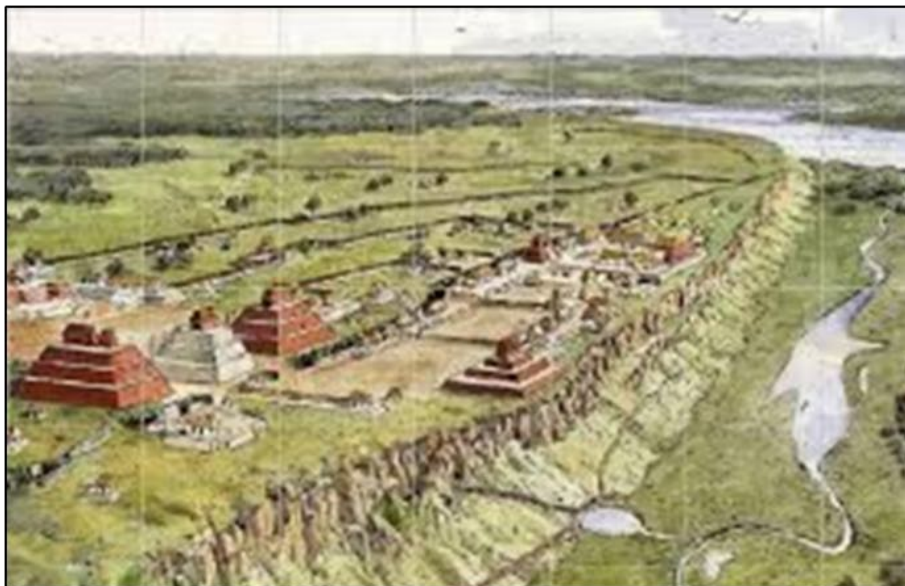
Alma 8:3 *And it came to pass in the commencement of the tenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, that Alma departed from thence and took his journey over into the land of Melek, on the west of the river Sidon, on the west by the borders of the wilderness.*

The following pictures are artist aerial renditions of **Aguateca** and **Dos Pilas**, proposed cities in the *land of Melek*. Note many features developed by the *people of Ammon* (*Anti-Nephi-Lehites*) to maximize their protection.

Dos Pilas

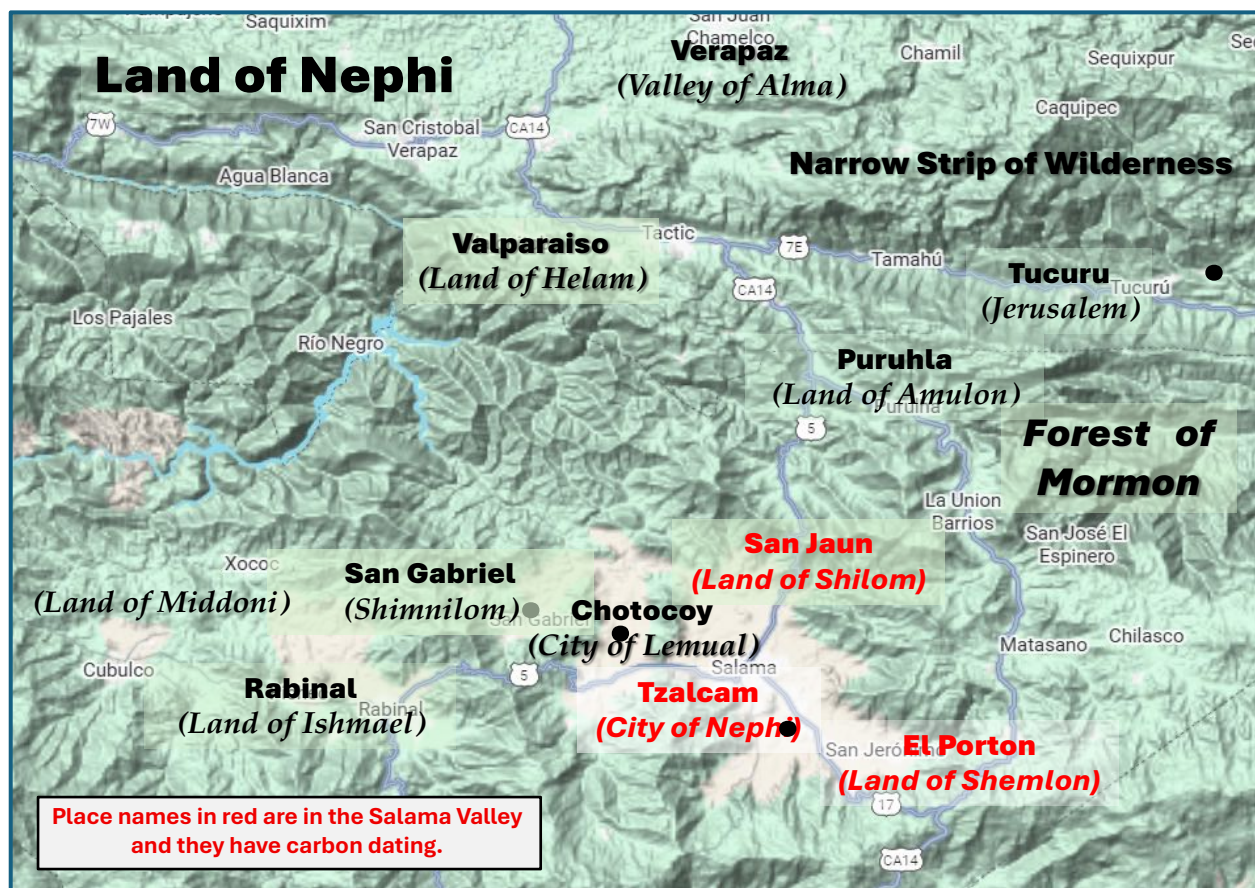


Aguateca



2 – The Land of Nephi

This map includes all the major elements of the *land of Nephi*, which are likely to correlate with other Book of Mormon locations. Note that locations in red have carbon dating to validate findings. The *valley of Alma*, located on the northern boundary of the *greater land of Zarahemla*, is approximately 120 kilometers south of the city of *Zarahemla* and about 120 miles northeast of *Lehi's landing* location

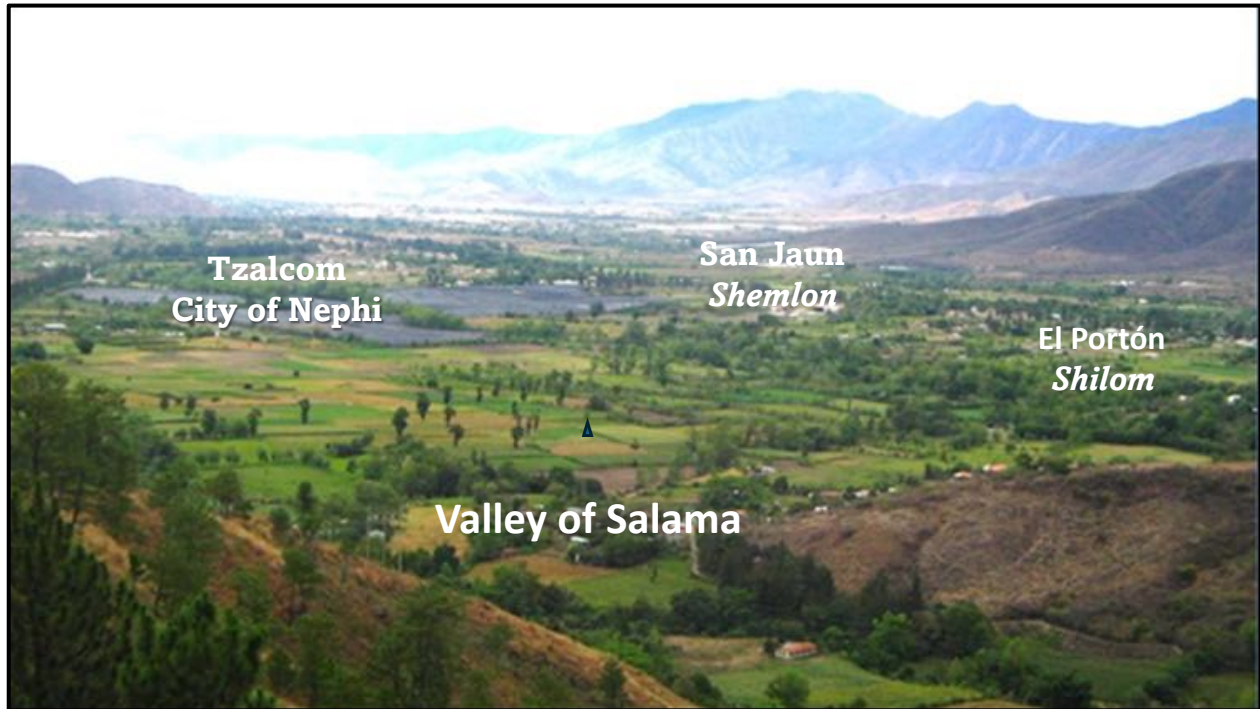


Members of the Pasión River Model research team spent parts of two summers assisting Dr. Richard Hauck and his team in researching the **Salama** area. Over the course of three years, professionals on-site conducted intensive studies, concluding that the **Salama Valley** was likely part of the *land of Nephi*. These findings perfectly align with the Pasión River team expectations, especially in relation to the scriptural directions of the **Salama** area's distance from *Zarahemla*.

Helaman 6:10. Now the land south was called *Lehi*, and the land north was called *Mulek* [the land of *Zarahemla*], which was after the son of *Zedekiah*; for the Lord did bring *Mulek* into the land north, and *Lehi* into the land south. [Emphasis added.]

After three years of research, Dr. Hauck, Dr. Ray Matheny, Dr. Diane Matheny and Joe Anderson made the following statement: "We believe that there is a ninety-five percent probability that the **Salama Valley** is the area where the *city/land of Nephi* was located" (Hauck 2018).

The **valley of Salama** aligned perfectly with the expectations of the Pasi3n River team. Correlations and triangulations suggested that the *city/land of Zarahemla* is a fitting match for the *city/land of Nephi*. The next step in identifying the location of the *narrow neck of land* was to pinpoint the *land of Cumorah*, which will be addressed in the chapter on the *Land of Cumorah*.



Mosiah's Escape to Zarahemla (about 200 BC)

After 350 years of fighting with the *Lamanites*, the Lord directed *Mosiah* to depart into the wilderness. At that time, *Mosiah* was unaware of the *Mulekites* (who had been living in the northern end of the *land southward*). The *Mulekites* had built a sizable settlement, where they experienced periods of peace, but also wars that impacted their population. According to the Harvard population growth chart of **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*), the population size of **Ceibal** was around one thousand when *Mosiah* arrived. The timeline on page 13 shows a large growth after his arrival.

Wine production

Wine is mentioned several times in *The Book of Mormon*. It was used both as a means of disabling *Lamanite* guards and as a way of satisfying *King Noah*.

Mosiah 11:15 *And it came to pass that he [King Noah] planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made wine in abundance . . . [Emphasis added.]*



Winery in Salama Valley (*land of Nephi*)

An 18th-century winery still stands in the **Salama Valley**. Wine production typically occurs in prime agricultural areas, reinforcing the idea that the *land of Nephi* was ideal for grape cultivation – unlike *Zarahemla* (**Ceibal**) and the lands to the north.

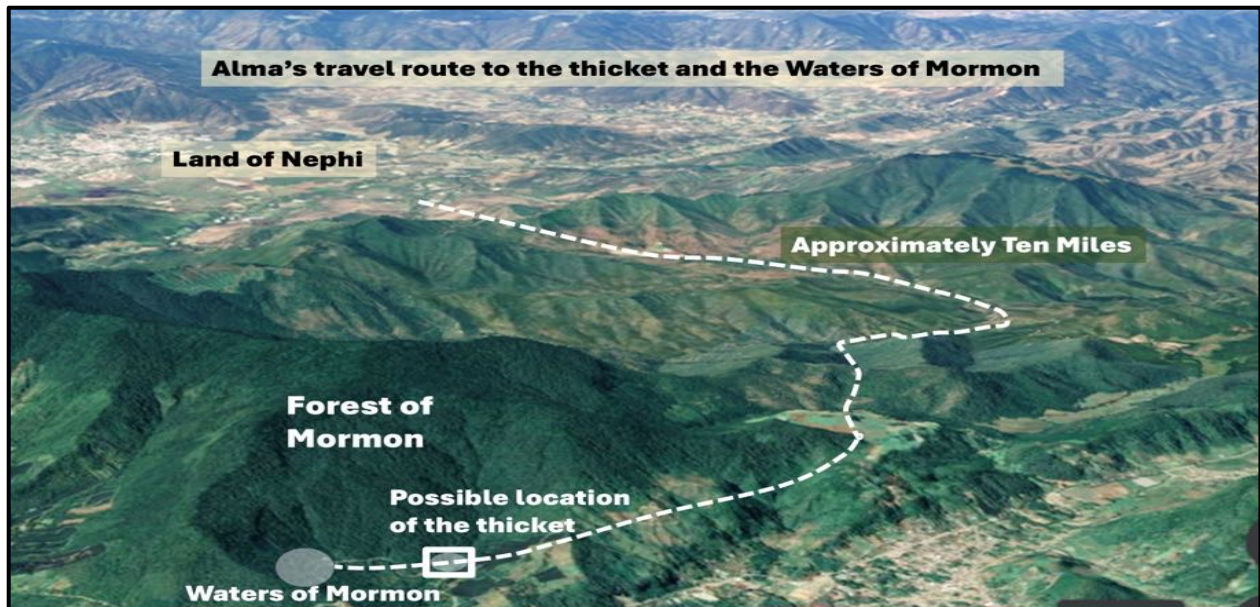


Area around Salama Valley (*land of Nephi*)

Alma's Route to the Thicket

Alma's proposed route to the thicket (about ten travel miles) is displayed below.

Mosiah 18:5 *Now there was in Mormon a fountain of pure water, and Alma resorted thither, there being near the water a thicket of small trees, where he did hide himself in the daytime from the searches of the king.*



The forest of Mormon is a key geographic location because it ties the *land of Nephi* to other key locations such as: the *waters of Mormon*, the southern boundary of the *city of Jerusalem*, *Mt. Antipus*, the *Amulonites territory* and the *city of Helam*

Waters of Mormon (146 BC)

The proposed location of the *waters of Mormon* is in the **Biotopo del Quetzal State Park**, which is also home to the Quetzal bird. The image to the right shows one of several possibilities in the area, located just five aerial miles from the city of **Shilom**, the proposed site of *King Noah's* court. This could be a potential location for the *waters of Mormon*.



Waters of Mormon

Alma's Journey to Helam

Alma's eight-day journey to may seem unnecessarily long, but the terrain and safety likely dictated the route. A direct path would have exposed them to the king's army, so they were forced to detour through the mountains south of *Nephi*, eventually approaching *Helam* from the south.



City of Tactic (proposed city of Helam)

When they reached a vantage point overlooking the valley, they saw a beautiful land with pure water. The modern city of **Tactic** is home to numerous pure springs, which match the Book of Mormon description: "And they came to a land, yea, even a very beautiful and pleasant land, a land of pure water" (**Mosiah** 23:4).

The Valley of Alma Connection

Another connection between the *land of Nephi* and the *land of Zarahemla* is found in *Mosiah*:

Mosiah 24:20 *And Alma and his people departed [from Helam] into the wilderness; and when they had traveled all day they pitched their tents in a valley, and they called the valley Alma, because he led their way in the wilderness. [Emphasis added.]*



Alma's Journey from *Helam* to the *Valley of Alma*

The key phrase in the scripture is: "they pitched their tents." Why stop after only one day of travel when they knew *Amulon* and his army were pursuing them? The answer likely lies in geography: they had just passed through the gap in the narrow strip of wilderness and entered *Nephite* territory.

Limhi's People Search for Zarahemla

Shortly after *Limhi's* men passed through the gap in the *narrow strip of wilderness*, they reached the **Chixoy River** and mistakenly thought it was the river that would lead them to *Zarahemla*. However, the **Chixoy River** carried them northward to the **Mirador Basin**. This area is also the proposed location of the *land of Moron* (see chapter on the *Jaredites*). The map to the right demonstrates how easy it was for *Limhi's* search team to miss the correct river.

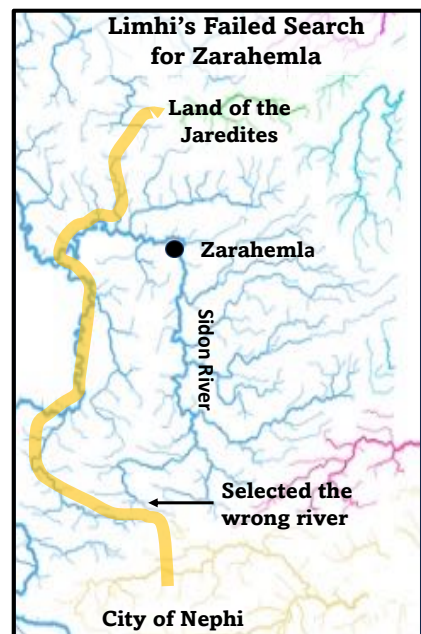
Mosiah 21:25-28

25 Now king Limhi had sent . . . a small number of men to search for the land of Zarahemla; but they could not find it, and they were lost in the wilderness.

26 Nevertheless, they did find a land which had been peopled, yea, a land which was covered with dry bones; yea, a land which had been peopled and which had been destroyed; and they, having supposed it to be the land of Zarahemla, returned to the land of Nephi, . . .

27 And they brought a record with them, even a record of the people whose bones they had found, and it was engraven on plates of ore.

28 And now Limhi was again filled with joy on learning from the mouth of Ammon that king Mosiah had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings; yea, and Ammon also did rejoice. [Emphasis added.]



The Sons of Mosiah's Mission to the Lamanites in the Land of Nephi

At the time the *sons of Mosiah* went on a mission to the *Lamanites*, the entire *land of Nephi* was controlled by the *Lamanites*.



This map above shows possible destinations of the *sons of Mosiah* – where they went to teach the *Lamanites*. There is strong evidence that *Aaron* went east to **Tamahu-Jerusalem** and later ended up helping his brothers. *Ammon* initially traveled to the west to the **land of Rabinai**. The rest of the sons of Mosiah traveled to the cities near the *city of Nephi*. There is a vast mountain range to the south that separates the *Land of Nephi* from other locations, so it is unlikely they went further south.

Ammon Leading the Righteous Lamanites to Safety

The Lamanites in these seven cities eventually became strong members of the Church – which led to extreme persecutions by the Lamanites. This culminated in the evacuation of their seven cities.

Alma 23:8 Now, these are they who were converted unto the Lord. **9** The people of the Lamanites who were in the **land of Ishmael**, **10** And also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the **land of Middoni**, **11** And also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the **land of Nephi**, **12** And also of the people of the Lamanites who were in the **land of Shilom**, and who were in the **land of Shemlon**, and in the **city of Lemuel**, and in the **city of Shimnilom**. [Emphasis added.]

Alma 27:14 And they gathered together all their people and did gather together all their flocks and herds, and departed out of the land, and came into the wilderness which divided the Land of Nephi from the Land of Zarahemla and came over near the borders of the land [Zarahemla]. [Emphasis added.]

Thousands of *Ammonites* (*Anti-Nephi-Lehies*) from these seven cities were able to migrate north through the pass in the *Narrow Strip of Wilderness*, without incident.

Waters of Sebus

The water system to the right is near the proposed *land of Ishmael* (**Rabinal**) and could be the *waters of Sebus*.

Alma 17:34 *Therefore, they did as Ammon commanded them, and he went forth and stood to contend with those who **stood by the waters of Sebus**; and they were in number not a few.*
[Emphasis added.]



Possible waters of Sebus

City of Jerusalem

The Book of Mormon says that *Aaron* went first to the city of *Jerusalem*, but the *Amalekite* people rejected him, so he went to other cities, eventually arriving in the *land of Middoni*.

During the time of the great destruction, at the time when *Christ* was crucified, *Jerusalem* was covered with water. The cities of *Mocum* and *Onihah* were also submerged, though over time silt has accumulated in the area.



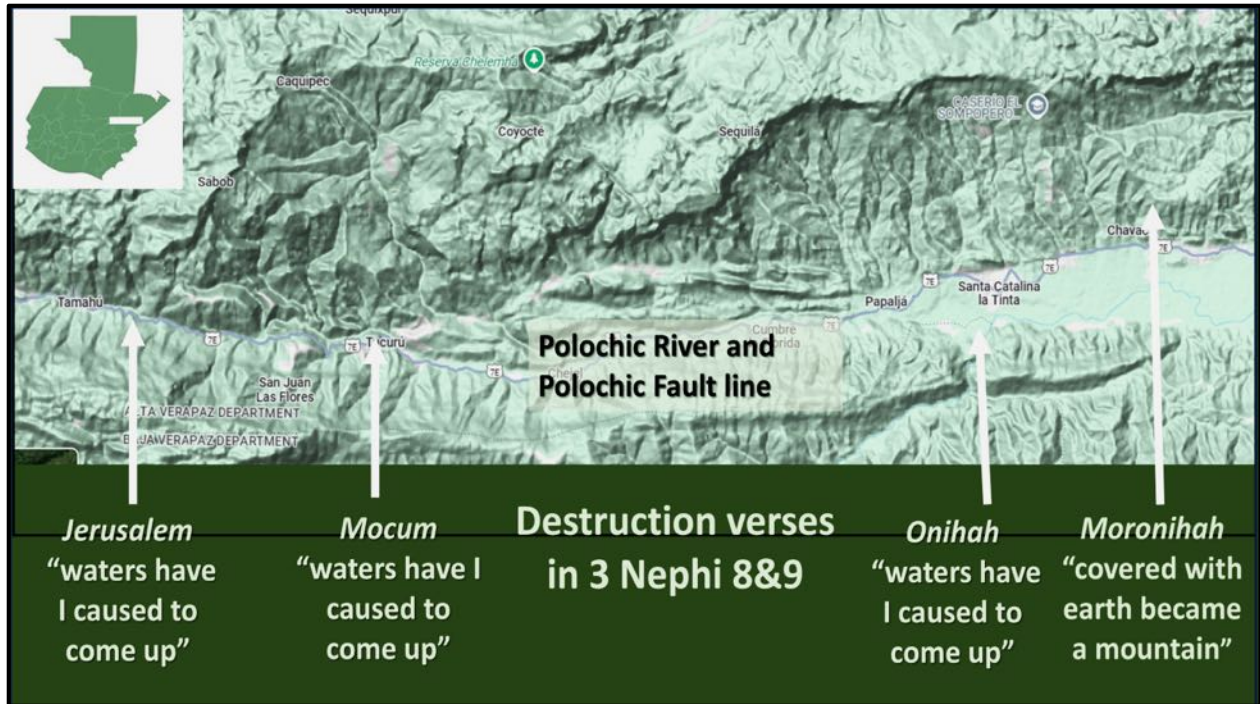
Proposed city of *Jerusalem* – covered by water – near Tamahu

This picture shows where a huge part of the mountain broke off, forming a dam over the **Poloctic River**. This location of the city of *Jerusalem* correlates and triangulates with the *forest of Mormon*, *Amulon*, *Helam*, the *narrow strip of wilderness* and the *land of Nephi*.

3 Nephi 9:7 *Yea, and the city of Onihah, and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Mocum and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Jerusalem and the inhabitants thereof; and waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them.*

The Devastation at the Time of Christ's Crucifixion is Located in the Land of Nephi

The **Polochic River** originates in the *land of Nephi* and flows eastward toward the **Caribbean**. It is bordered by two extremely high mountains, each over 4,000 feet in elevation, with the river's elevations near sea level. As shown in the picture below, these mountains are prone to landslides, due to the steep slopes and the **Polochic Fault line** which runs at the base of the mountains.



Summary

The groundbreaking work by Dr. Richard Hauck and his colleagues served as a major catalyst for the Pasi3n River research team. After years of research in the **Salama** area, Dr. Hauck and his crew calculated that there was a 95% confidence level that **Salama** was in the *land of Nephi*. This strong evidence reinforced the claim that **Ceibal** was the city of *Zarahemla* – due to how well it aligned and triangulated with other findings. As the Pasi3n River team continued to explore the area south of the *narrow strip of wilderness*, it became increasingly evident that the regions of *Nephi* and *Zarahemla* were closely connected. These findings fueled further investigation into the *land of Cumorah* (see chapter on the *land of Cumorah*).

3 – Establishing the Location for the Land of Cumorah

The third and final step in establishing the target area for the *narrow neck of land* is to locate the *land of Cumorah*.

The location of the *lands of Nephi* and *Zarahemla* establishes a high confidence level because they correspond to the BYU Virtual Scriptures conceptual map.



BYU Virtual Scriptures conceptual map

Pasión River Model on actual map

In order to accommodate evidences outlined in the Pasión River Model, and the numerous hypothetical maps, the *land of Cumorah* must be northeast of the *land of Zarahemla*, as shown in these maps.

Important events occurred in the *Land of Cumorah*:

- **First landing of the *Jaredites***
- **The final war of the *Jaredites* on *hill Rama***
- ***Nephite* occupation when driven to the *land Northward*.**
- **The final war between the *Nephites* and *Lamanites* on the *hill Cumorah***
- ***Mormon's* burial of other historical plates, and presentation to *Moroni* of *The Book of Mormon*, which is on gold plates**
- ***Mormon* is buried there. *Moroni* escaped with *The Book of Mormon*.**

The geographic setting for the *land of Cumorah* is proposed to be in northern Belize and a small portion of southeastern Yucatán, Mexico.

The next step shows that the scriptural requirements line up with this proposed area.

Scriptural requirements:

1. The *Jaredites* landed in a *promised land* – one that is “choice above all others:”

Ether 1:42 . . . *I will go before thee into a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth.*

Ether 2:12 . . . *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.*

The proposed landing location is near **Cerros**, close to the southwest shore of **Chetumal Bay**, aligning with the previous scriptural requirements. In addition, the Archaic sites along the **Hondo** and **New** rivers are the earliest in Mesoamerica, and conform to the *Tower of Babel* timeline. Sites along these two rivers are bordered by very fertile soils, and serve to make **Cerros** a fitting place for the Jaredites to begin their New World experience.



Belize is a tropical paradise, offering a 365-day growing season, which qualifies it to be a promised land. The region is ideal for livestock production and the cultivation of a wide variety of crops.

Currently, there are thousands of acres of highly-productive sugar cane, as well as very successful cattle ranches. The climate produces grass all year around. These pictures of cattle and sugar cane are examples of the productivity of the area and contribute to the assurance that their land is a promised land. In addition, it is a tropical paradise, making it a very desirable place to live.

Ether 6:13 *And it came to pass that they went forth upon the face of the land, and began to till the earth.*



Belize - successful cattle ranches



Belize - highly-productive crops

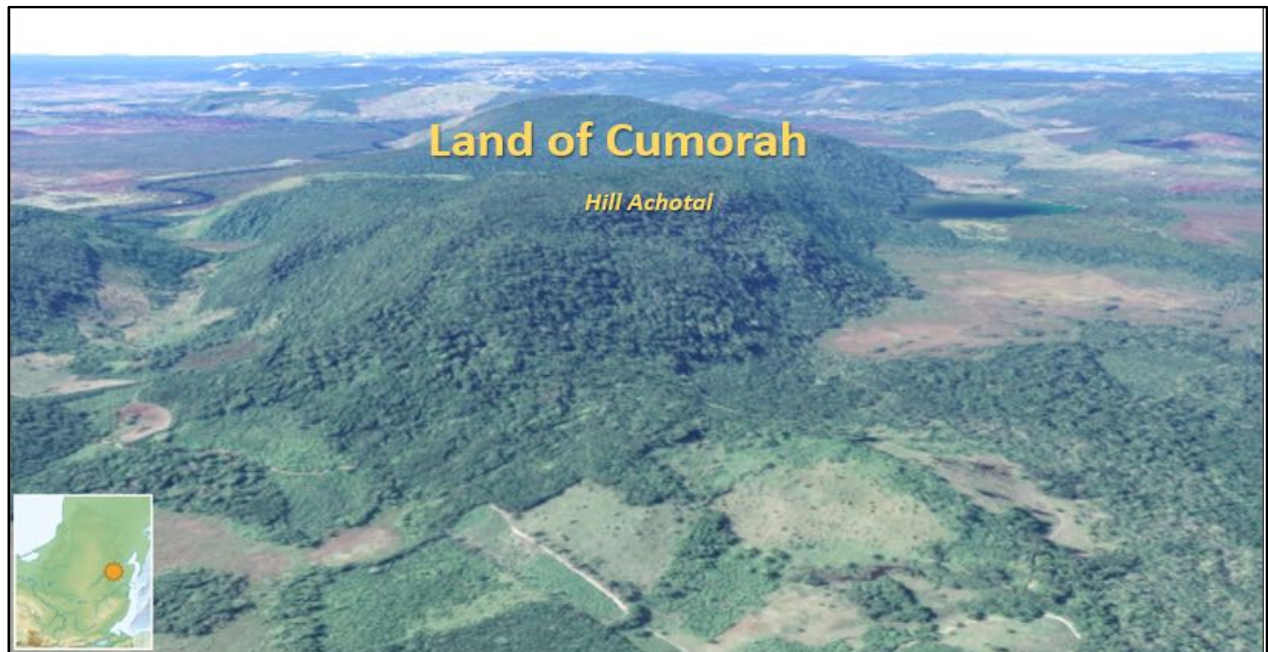
2. There must be a reasonable ocean travel route to accommodate the ocean arrival of the Jaredites.

The Caribbean route is ideal for depositing the eight barges on the shores of **Chetumal Bay**. In addition, the Canary and Portugal ocean currents contribute to a successful ocean route. *Alma 22:30* talks about the "first landing" and requires all Mesoamerican models to have the *Jaredite* landing located on the Atlantic side of the ocean crossing – where the *first Jaredite landing* occurred.

Alma 22:30 *And it bordered upon the land which they called Desolation, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken, which was discovered by the people of Zarahemla, it being the place of their **first landing**. [Emphasis added.]*



3. There must be a hill near where the Jaredites landed (and were later destroyed). The hill must provide a military advantage for the Nephites.

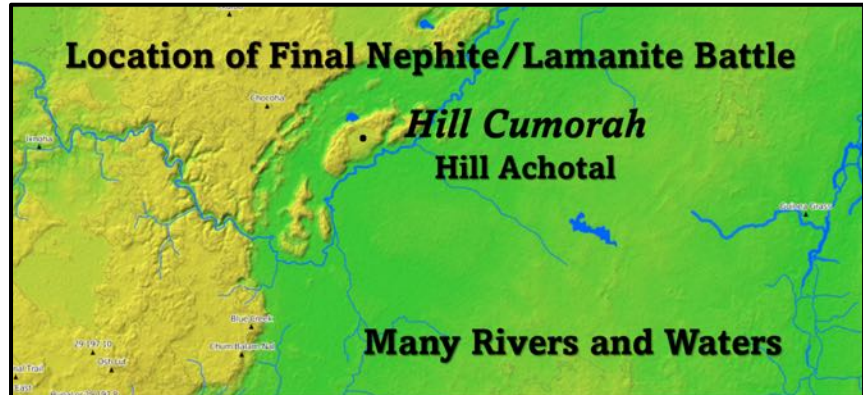


Hill Cumorah and Hill Ramah (Hill Achotal)

Mormon 6:2 *And I, Mormon, wrote an epistle unto the king of the Lamanites, and desired of him that he would grant unto us that we might gather together by a hill which was called Cumorah, and there we could give them battle.*

Hill Achotal is on **Yucatan's** southern border and just north of two rivers that create the boundary between Belize and Mexico. It is a huge hill with features that could certainly provide additional military advantages. (It is many times over the size of the *hill Cumorah* in New York.)

The hill is partly surrounded by water, with a flat top that could provide space for tens of the thousands of people. Its steep sides allowed warriors, and others, to sling stones from an advantaged position. (Incidentally, there are still thousands of sling stones at the bottom of the hill.)



Mormon 2:4 *And it came to pass that we did march forth to the land of Cumorah, and it was in a land of many waters, rivers, and fountains; and here we had hope to gain advantage over the Lamanites.*

There are six rivers within ten miles of the proposed *hill Cumorah*. Additionally, over 30 cenotes are located within five miles of the hill and some of them are overflowing.

Weapons made of chert are on display at a museum ten miles to the south. These weapons come from an abundance of nearby chert deposits. In addition, there is evidence of an ancient military outpost on top of the **hill Achotal**.



Mayan spears made of chert.

Jaredite and Nephite wars

Correlation of the final ten years of the *Jaredites*, the final *Nephite* war and the **Maya Kings** information, provide additional evidences that the *land of Cumorah* is located in northern Belize and southeast Yucatan.

Mormon hid records in the hill Cumorah

Mormon 6:6 . . . *behold I, Mormon, began to be old, and knowing it to be the last struggle of my people, and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not suffer the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were sacred, to fall into the hands of the Lamanites, (for the Lamanites would destroy them) therefore I made this record out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni. (Emphasis added.)*

Moroni tells us that the hill Cumorah and hill Ramah are the same hill

Ether 15:11 *And it came to pass that the army of Coriantumr did pitch their tents by the hill Ramah; and it was that same hill where my father Mormon did hide up the records unto the Lord, which were sacred. [Emphasis added.]*

4. There could be evidence of ancient fish farming

Ether 2:2 . . . *they did also prepare a vessel, in which they did carry with them the fish of the waters.*

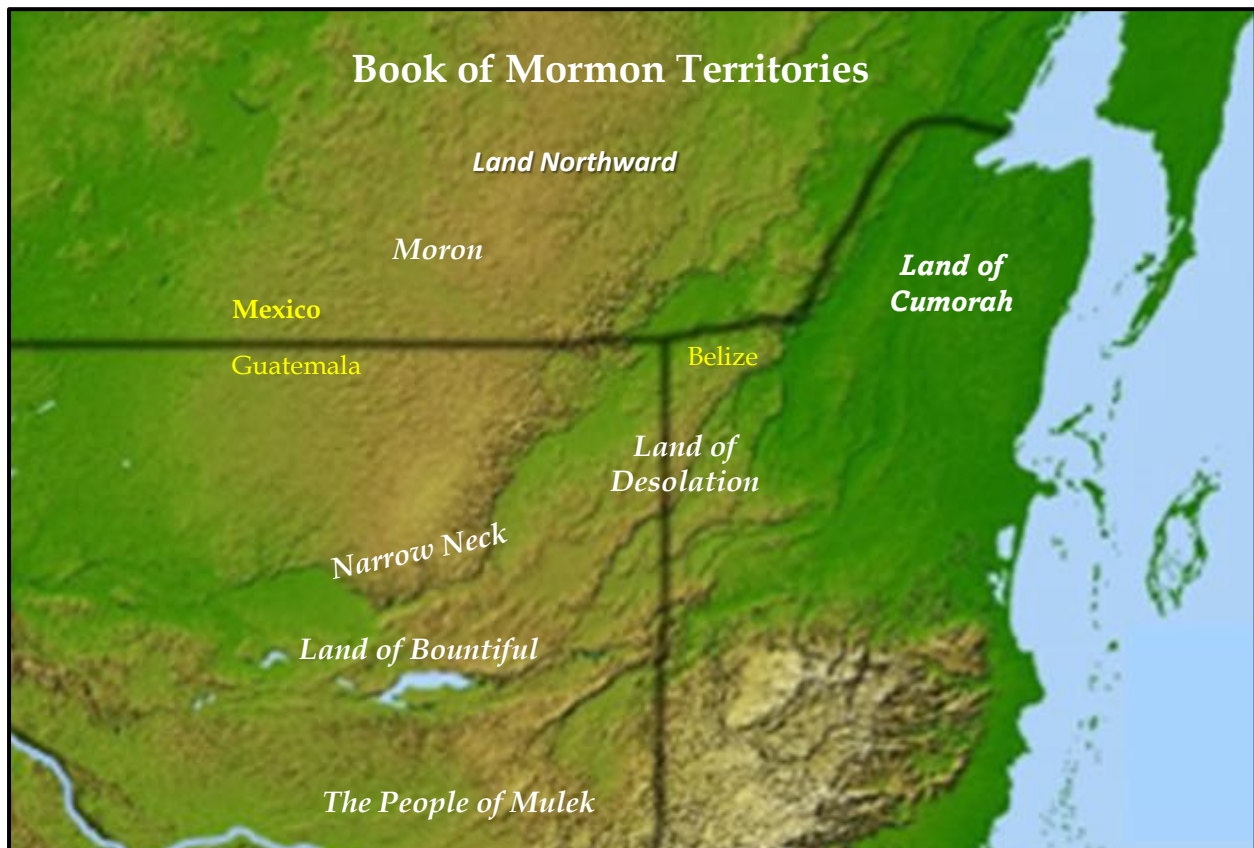
Evidence of a 4,000-year-old network of zigzag earthen canals and interconnected holding ponds has been discovered in the **Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary** in northern Belize.

Constructed by the Late Archaic hunter-gatherers (approximately 2200–1900 BC), this system was used for fish harvesting.



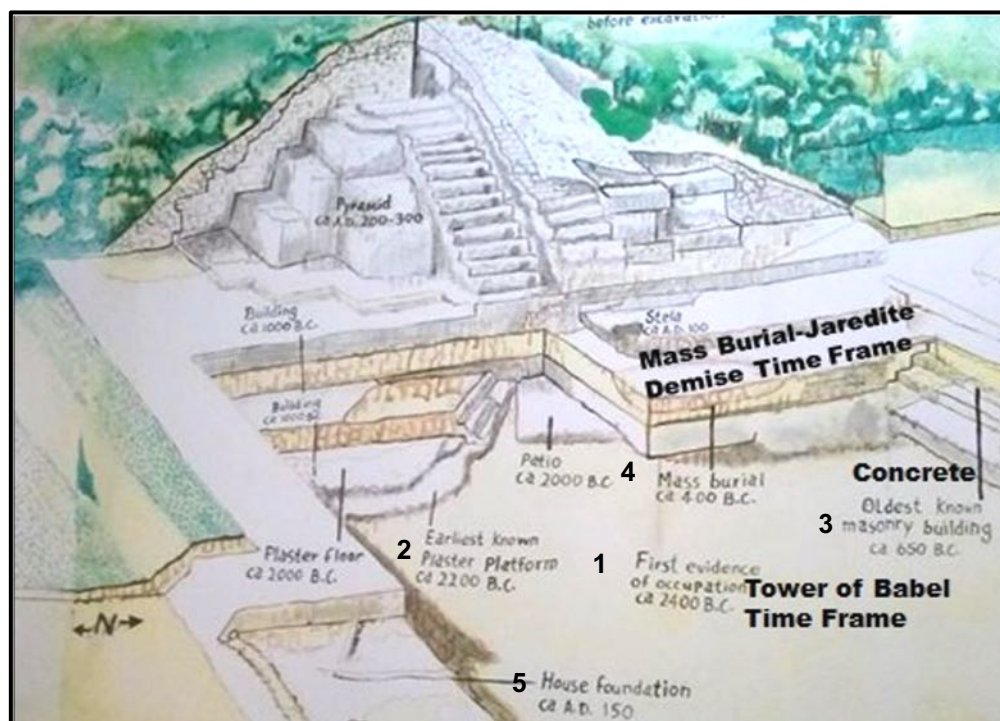
Ancient fish harvesting – northern Belize (artist rendition)

5. The *Land of Cumorah* is in the northern part of the *land of Desolation*. *Desolation* also borders *Moron* on the east and *Bountiful* on the south.



Alma 22:30 *And it [Bountiful] bordered upon the land which they called Desolation, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken, which was discovered by the people of Zarahemla, it being the place of their first landing. [Emphasis added]*

The southern border of the *land of Desolation* is just south of the **Belize River**, which also forms the eastern border of the *land of Bountiful*. In addition, the northern boundary of the *land of Bountiful* also forms the southern boundary of the *land of Desolation*. The *land of Bountiful* extends westward into the **Nine Lakes District**.



This mural, in the Museum of Belize, provides a historical account of ancient activity in that area (dark black words and numbers added).

To illustrate the various time periods, this artist's conception draws from stela and other forms of archaeological discoveries. It depicts the progression of the Maya, and is located in the Museum of Belize in **Belize city**.

It corresponds with the remarkable specific timing of *The Book of Mormon*. The different stages on this mural represent the different stages of Maya/Jaredite culture.

1. The beginning of their culture 2400 BC – Approximately the same time as the exodus from the Tower of Babel.
2. Earliest known use of plaster 2200 BC – Evidence of a civilized society
3. Earliest known use of concrete 600 BC – Evidence of an advancing society
4. Mass burial 400 BC – Approximately the same time as the final *Jaredite* war
5. House foundation 150 AD – Evidence that the *Nephites* were inhabiting the land.

Summary

The lands northeast of the *land of Zarahemla* are lands that have matched with every requirement to be the *land of Cumorah*. This was the first step to an accurate location for the *narrow neck* written about in *The Book of Mormon*.

4 – The Narrow Neck of Land

Historical perspective from other models

Historically, the *narrow neck* has been a focal point of all attempts to identify the lands mentioned in *The Book of Mormon*. The Isthmus of Panama was initially seen as the pivotal point, with everything else needing to fit around it; however, when examined closely it failed to meet a number of essential requirements.

The most defining moment in the history of Book of Mormon geography was the creation of the Sorenson map. In 1985, John L. Sorenson published *An Ancient American Setting for The Book of Mormon*, a work that has had a lasting impact on this significant field of study. Unfortunately, this map led to major divisions within the Mesoamerican Book of Mormon research community, spawning numerous alternative models. Sorenson's book presented an amazing portrayal of scientific work, much of which has been considered by Mesoamerican scholars as conclusive and accurate. However, there is a distinctive portion of his work that remains controversial, particularly the non-use of cardinal directions – resulting in the formation of factions pursuing different possibilities. These divisions have even led to a complete withdrawal of support and comment from Church leaders, who do not wish to show favoritism. In the years preceding the Sorenson model, the search for *Book of Mormon* lands in the general Mesoamerican area received considerable support from the Church.

Researchers associated with the Pasi3n River Model agree that the *narrow neck* has a high priority but approach it from a different angle. They aim to build on the substantial work done by earlier researchers who proposed hypothetical models to represent the geographical details described in *The Book of Mormon*. Over thirty such models have been created, most featuring the same basic design – an upright hourglass shape. This is one area of *Book of Mormon* geography where a consensus emerged, yet the problem remained as there is no landmass to fit this configuration.

Simple adjustments in thought can help resolve the landmass challenge. For example, *Lehi* came from a country where inland bodies of water were referred to as "seas," such as the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. This concept allows for modifications to the narrow section of the hourglass, fitting it into the geographical and cultured context. When this is coupled with adherence to the following scripture, a hypothetical model can fit a landmass:

Helaman 3:8 *And it came to pass that they did multiply and spread and did go forth from the land southward to the land northward and did spread insomuch that they began to cover the face of the whole earth, from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east.* [Emphasis added.]

Establishing a Target Area

The Pasi3n River Model research team was confident they were on the right track in locating the *narrow neck* and developing a map. Based on new research (conducted over the last fifty years), they strongly believe they have accurately identified the correct model.

Here is their map, compared to the BYU Virtual Scriptures conceptual map. Note the near-perfect comparison between the two maps. However, the lack of visible bodies of water was of significant concern.



The team pressed on, as the evidence seemed overwhelmingly supportive. They established a target area to identify a possible location for the *narrow neck* and the required seas.

Locating the Target Area of the Narrow Neck

The Pasión River Model research team had made significant strides in establishing legitimacy for areas such as the lands of *Zarahemla*, *Nephi* and *Cumorah*. The evidence found in those areas left little doubt that the Pasión River Model was on the right track. With that in mind, they decided to establish a target area between the *land of Cumorah* and the *land of Zarahemla*, which aligns with the perspectives of other Book of Mormon modelers. That target area is in northern Guatemala.

The Massive Fortification

One of the most obvious features of the *narrow neck* is the massive fortification described in *The Book of Mormon*.

Helaman 4:7 *And there they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day's journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country. [Emphasis added.]*

This scripture describes a massive fortification – roughly a day's journey for a *Nephite*.

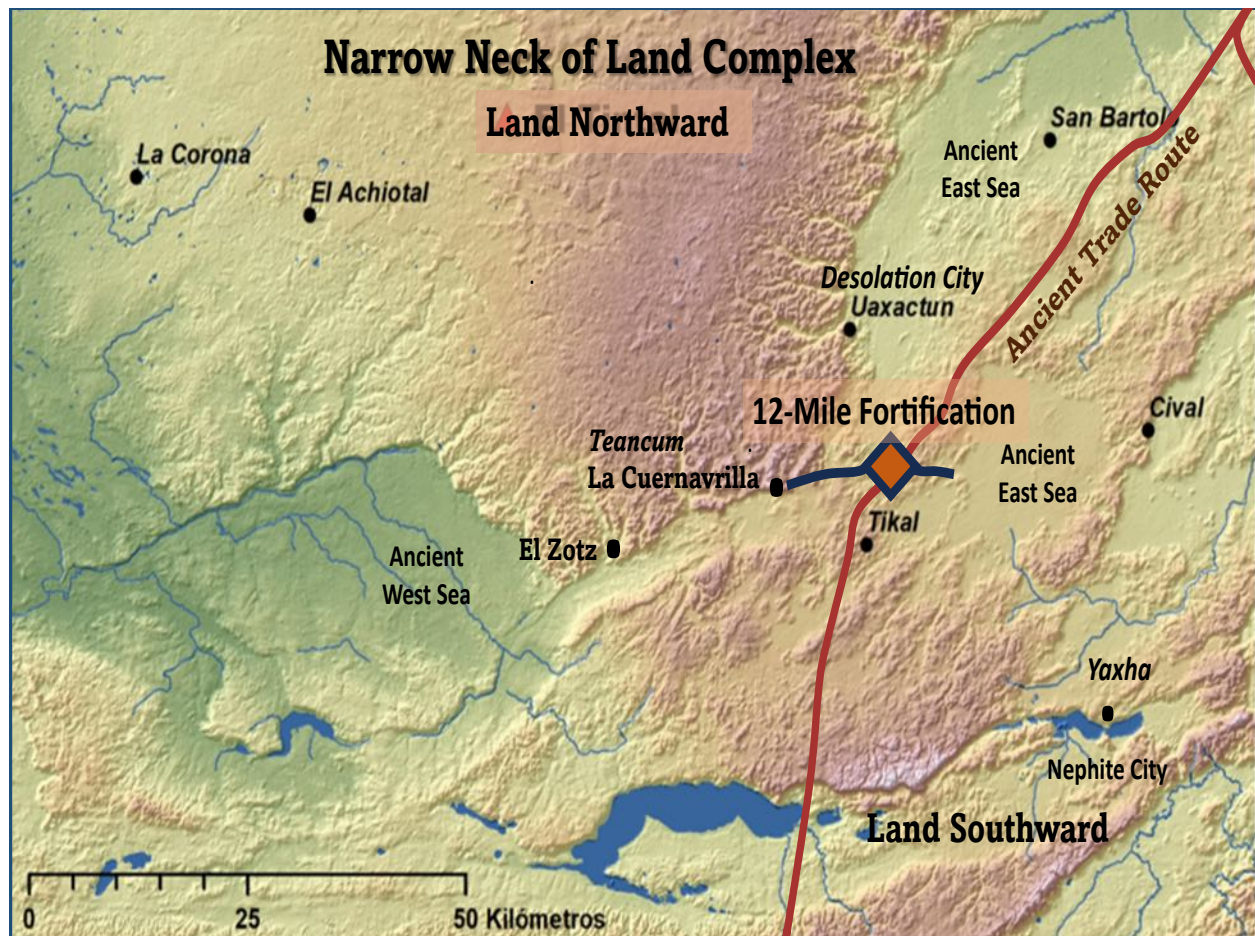


Richard recalled evaluating ancient agricultural lands just north of **Tikal**. He and his students found themselves in a large trench and initially thought little of it, assuming it was just a natural feature. Now he wondered if the trench could hold the key to identifying the location of the described fortification. This led them to a research paper titled "Defensive Earthworks at **Tikal**," written by Puleston and Callender, which described a massive fortification used by the ancient Maya to defend **Tikal** (Puleston 1967).



The Complete Narrow Neck Complex

The next step was to round out the complete *narrow neck* complex as outlined in *The Book of Mormon* scriptures. The maps show the various components, how they relate, correlate and triangulate with each other.



The Narrow Neck – 12 Components

1 – Fortification – Day's Journey for a Nephite

Locating the massive fortification was the key in locating and verifying the entire *neck of land*. The discovery of this fortification was the lynch pin in solidifying confirmation that the Pasión River Model was accurate (Puleston 1967).

Archaeologists, guided by LiDAR images of a remote region of northern Guatemala, have discovered 20-foot-high walls, watchtowers and other evidence that ancient Maya societies waged large-scale warfare over many years. Among the most startling discoveries was a large fortress complex, now called **La Cuernavilla**, built on a steep ridge extending all the way to **Tikal**. This heavily fortified site included high walls, moats, watchtowers and caches of round stones that likely served as ammunition for warriors' slings. It is the largest defensive system ever discovered in the region. Stephen Houston, a Brown University archaeologist and Maya scholar, adds "and possibly in all of the ancient Americas" (Clynes 2019).

The discovery of this wall assured that it was an essential part of the *narrow neck* complex. It also meant that there had to be sizable water systems on both ends of it.

2 – East Sea and West Sea

Helaman 4:7 . . . *they did fortify . . . from the **west sea**, even unto the **east**: it being a day's journey for a Nephite.* [Emphasis added.]

Alma 50:34 . . . *they did head them, by the **narrow pass** which led by the sea into the land northward, yea, by the sea, on the **west** and on the **east**.* [Emphasis added.]

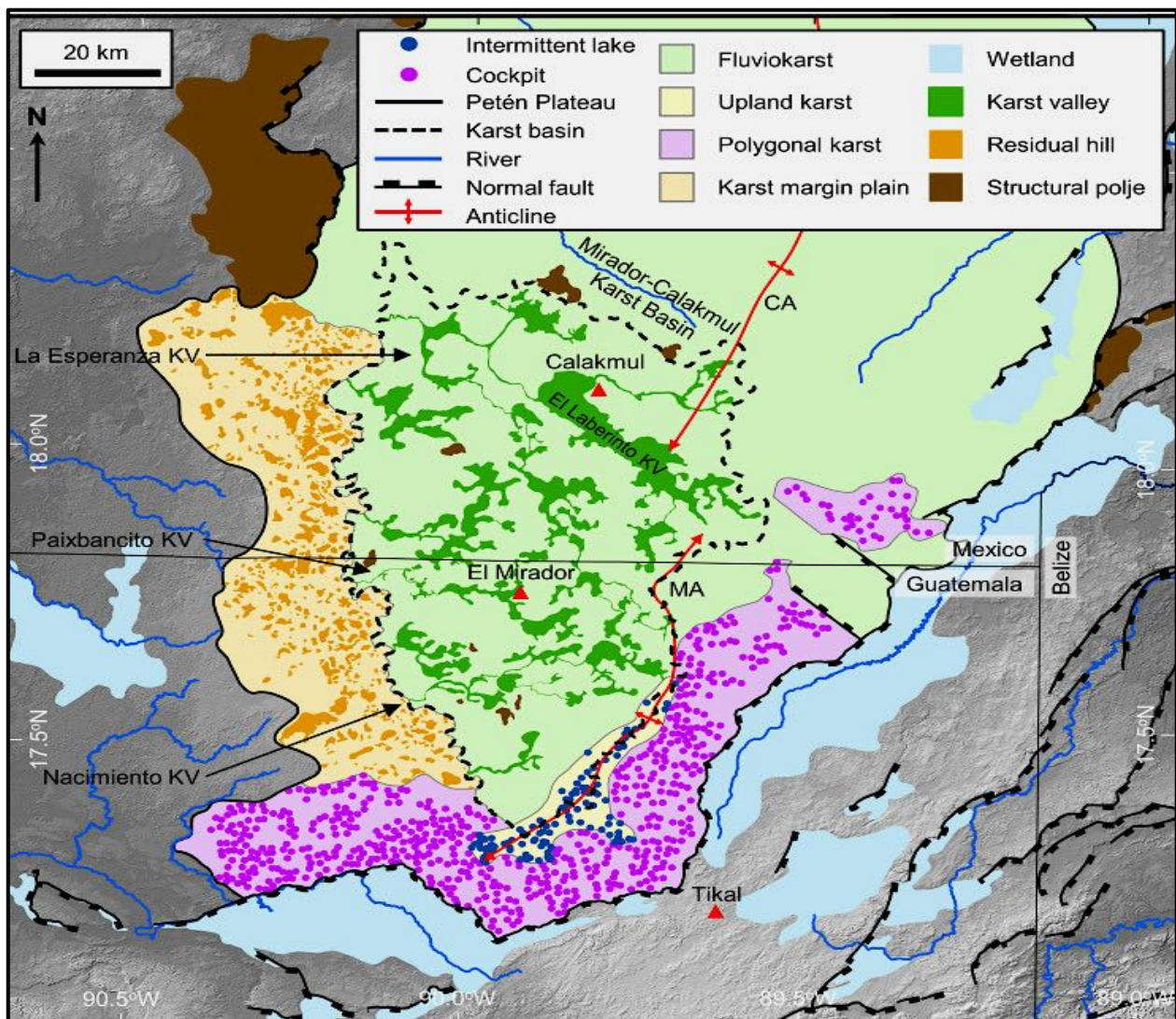
There are rational reasons why, during certain periods, the east and west seas are often nothing more than swampy areas (referred to as "bajos" in Spanish). This has caused the northern part of Guatemala to be overlooked as a possible location for the *narrow neck*. If there had been two distinct beautiful seas, this controversy would have been resolved long ago.

Robert Roylance and Dr. Ray Matheny had discussions clarifying the weather conditions during *The Book of Mormon* times, as well as dry seasons in this area. Ray Matheny and his wife Diane Matheny, both archaeologists, have worked in the area for many years – primarily at **El Mirador**. Dr. Matheny said there are times when the bajos become seas, and they are large enough you can see the curvature of the earth. Apparently, we are currently in a severe drought, a condition that may have contributed to the collapse of the Maya civilization. At present, water must be trucked into **Tikal** to meet the needs of tourism.

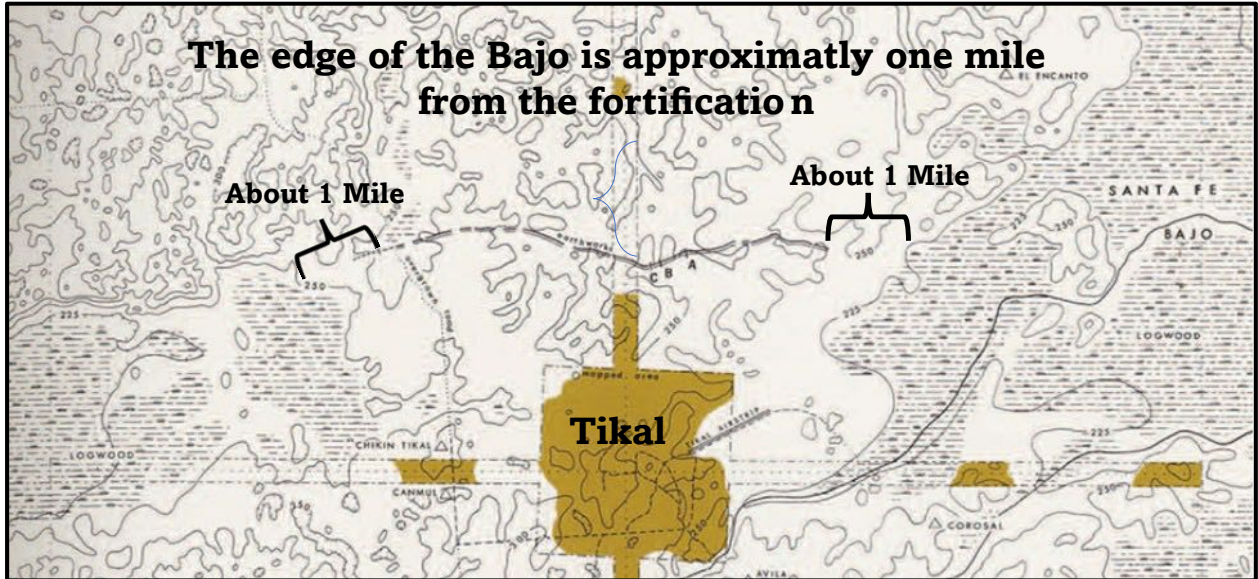
One critical difference is: *The Book of Mormon* refers to inland bodies of water as seas, not lakes – a distinction that is essential for interpreting the region's geography. In Israel, *Lehi's* former home, large bodies of water were referred to as "seas" – the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

3 – Evidence of Large Bodies of Water

- Michael Coe, a prominent Maya archaeologist, claims that **rainfall during the Preclassic period was twenty percent higher** than it is today (Coe 1999).
- The ancient, raised highways in the **Mirador Basin** may have been built to withstand periods of excessive rainfall.
- Studies of **stalagmite growth indicate that rainfall during the Preclassic period was significantly higher**, which aligns with the Book of Mormon timeline (Miller 2012).
- Dr. Hansen notes that during the Preclassic period, **many bajo areas remained filled with water for decades at a time**, a situation that matches the 22-year period outlined in *The Book of Mormon* (Hansen 2007).



The above map was produced by "multiple forms of remote sensing data", including LiDAR (Ensley et al 2021). It shows wetland areas that could have been part of ancient lakes (seas) in the times of *The Book of Mormon*.

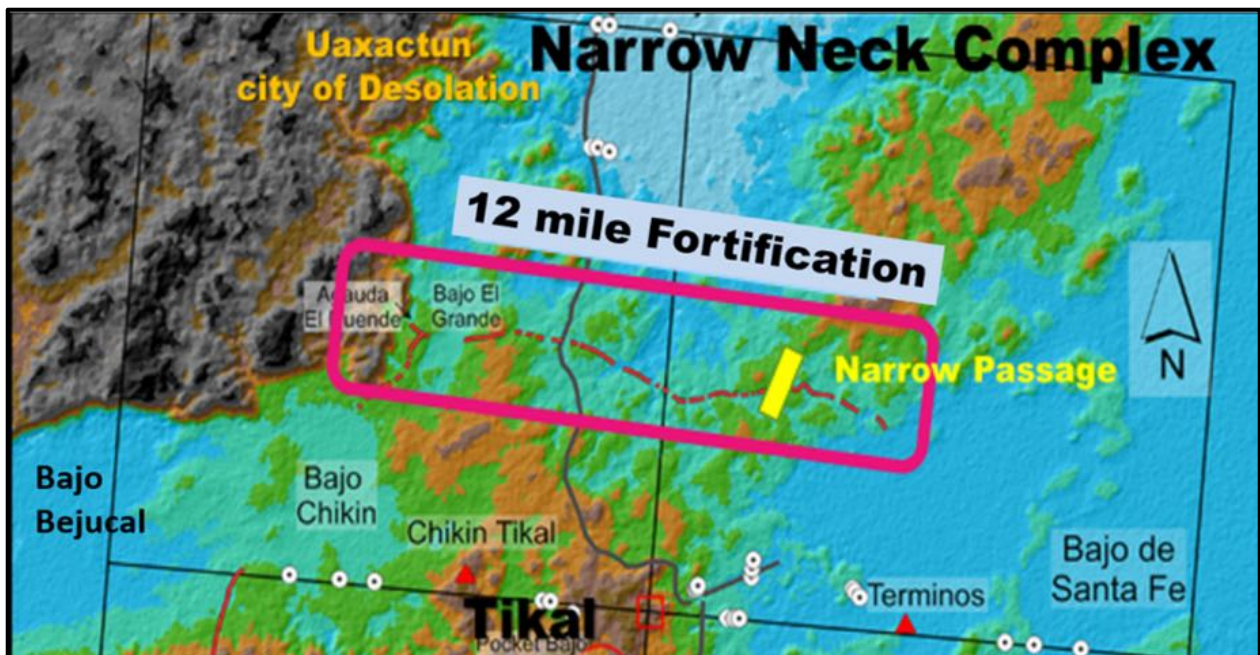


Both ends of the 12-mile fortification are located roughly one mile from the current water's edge, suggesting that **water levels have since dropped** (Puleston 1967).

4 – Narrow Passageway

The scriptures cited below explicitly mention a *narrow passageway* located within a fortification. In addition, the illustrations reproduced from Puleston's study further reinforce this description, demonstrating a clear connection between the scriptural account and the archaeological evidence documented by Puleston (1967).

Mormon 2:29 *And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to the **narrow passage** which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward.* [Emphasis added.]



Mormon 3:5 *And it came to pass that I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land Desolation, to a city which was in the borders, by the **narrow pass** which led into the land southward. [Emphasis added.]*

Alma 52:9 . . . *fortify the land Bountiful and secure the narrow pass.*

Mormon 3:5 . . . *by the narrow pass which led into the land southward.*

Further information is found about the passageway in *Defensive Earthworks* by Dennis Puleston and Donald Callender. The following illustration and picture show how the *narrow passage* looked (Puleston 1967).

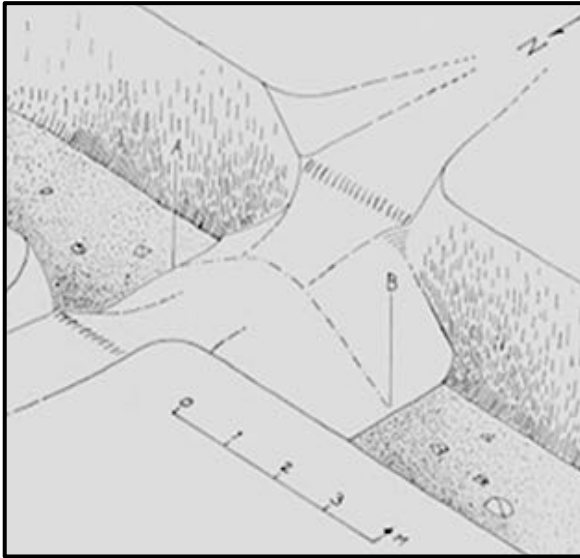


Illustration of the passageway in *narrow neck*



Archaeological workers standing on *passageway*

5 – Land of Bountiful

The *land of Bountiful* is located on the southern edge of the fortification and is a strip of fertile land stretching from the Caribbean to the west of **Lake Petén Itzá**. It lies in northern Guatemala, where numerous water systems are found. This strip of land (*land of Bountiful*) begins at the mouth of the **Belize River**, which is located near the city of **Belize**, then shifts into the **Moapan River**, which continues upriver through the *land of Jershon* (the area east of the **Maya Mountains**).

Alma 50:11 . . . *fortifying the line between the Nephites and the Lamanites, between the land of Zarahemla and the land of Nephi, from the west sea . . .*

Alma 22:33 . . . *the Nephites had inhabited the land Bountiful, even from the east unto the west sea, and thus the Nephites in their wisdom, with their guards and their armies, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south, that thereby they should have no more possession on the north, that they might not overrun the land northward.*

6 – The Line

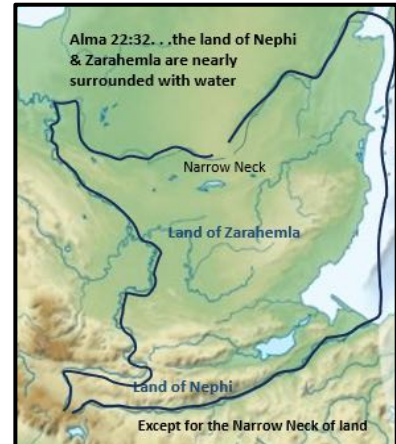
Alma 50:11 . . . *fortifying the line which was northward of the land Bountiful.*

This "line" is an imaginary boundary separating the *land of Bountiful* from the *land of Desolation*. It divides the land northward from the land southward, as well as the *Jaredites* from the *Mulekites*. The *narrow neck* separates these geographical regions.

7 – Water Around the Land of Nephi and the Land of Zarahemla

Alma 22:32 . . . *land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a **small neck of land** between the land northward and the land southward.* [Emphasis added.]

This scripture plays a crucial role in identifying a legitimate geographic location for *The Book of Mormon*. This unique requirement for water, to almost surround the land, makes it difficult to apply to most other models. It also highlights the relationship between the *narrow neck* and the *greater lands of Zarahemla and Nephi*. By following the water systems around these two lands, excluding the area that constitutes the *narrow neck*, this requirement is met.



Water surrounding narrow neck

8 – Land Northward and Land Southward

Alma 50:11 . . . *fortifying **the line** which was northward of the land Bountiful.* [Emphasis added.]

Mormon 2:29 *And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to the **narrow passage** which led into the land southward.* . [Emphasis added.]

The map to the right illustrates the two distinctive lands separated by the *narrow neck*.



Narrow neck between land northward and land southward

9 – Land of Desolation

Mormon 3:5 . . . *I did cause my people that to gather themselves together at the **land Desolation**, to a city which was in the borders, by the narrow pass which led into the land southward.* [Emphasis added.]

Alma 22:30 *And it [Bountiful] bordered upon the land which they called **Desolation**, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken . . . being the place of their first landing.* [Emphasis added.]

Ether 7:6 *Now the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called **Desolation** by the Nephites.* [Emphasis added.]

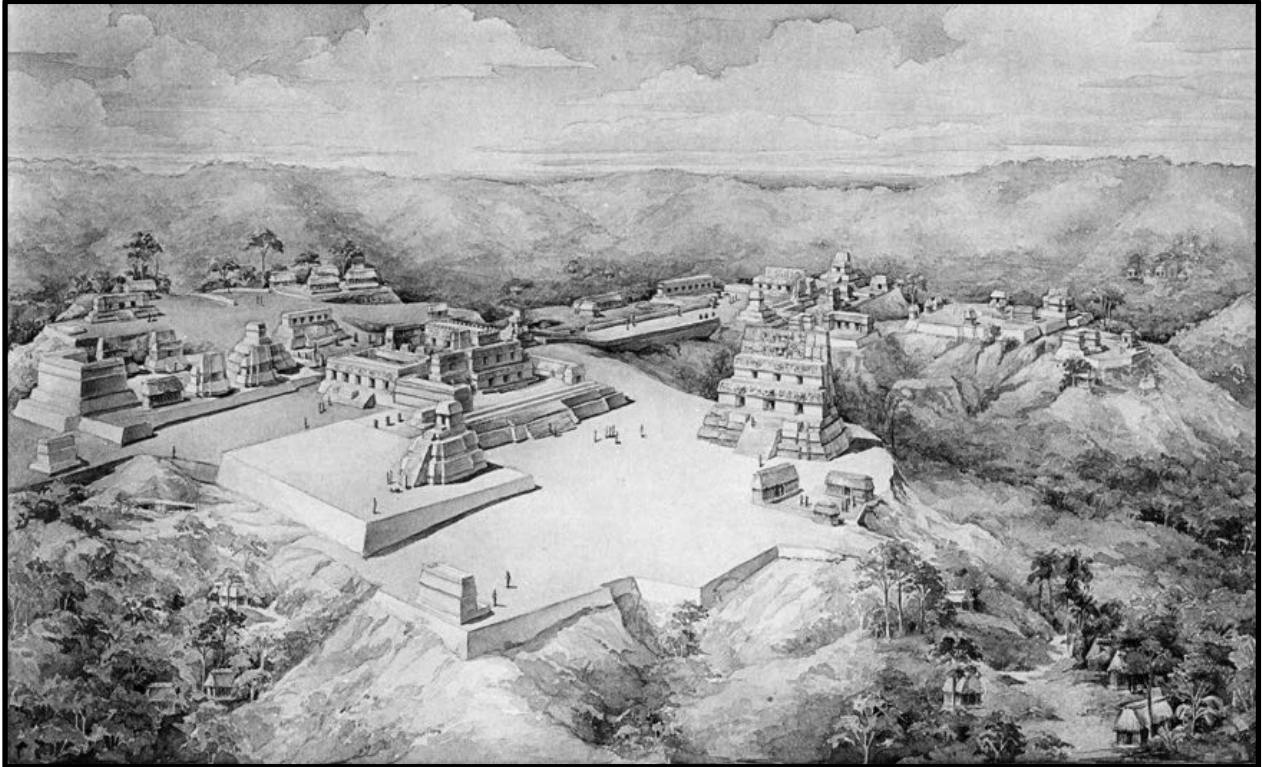


Area of land of desolation

The scriptures are clear that the *land of Desolation* must be near the *land of Moron*, the narrow pass, the land of Bountiful and the first Jaredite landing.

10 – Desolation City (Uaxactun)

Mormon 4:8 *And it came to pass that they were repulsed and driven back by the Nephites. And when the Nephites saw that they had driven the Lamanites, they did boast again of their own strength; and they went forth in their own might and took possession again of the city **Desolation**.* [Emphasis added.]



Artist rendition of **Uaxactun** (city of *Desolation*)

Several battles recorded in *The Book of Mormon* took place near the *land southward*, the city *Desolation* (**Uaxactun**), and the city *Teancum*, before the final confrontations.

11– City Teancum (La Cuernavilla)

Mormon 4:3 *And the remainder [from the defeat at the city of *Desolation*] did flee and join the inhabitants of the city *Teancum*. Now the city *Teancum* lay in the borders by the seashore; and it was also near the city *Desolation*.* [Emphasis added.]

La Cuernavilla is the proposed city of *Teancum*. It is located close to the city of *Desolation* [**Uaxactun**] and is situated at the western end of the twelve-mile fortification near the west sea. The fortifications at this site are similar to descriptions found in *The Book of Mormon*, as described above.

National Geographic, in "Lasers Reveal Maya War Ruins," reported the following from the PACUNAM LiDAR Initiative, a sweeping aerial survey of some 800 square miles of the **Maya Biosphere Reserve** in northern Guatemala:

Archaeologists guided by laser images of a remote region of northern Guatemala have discovered 20-foot-high walls, watchtowers, and other evidence that ancient Maya societies waged large-scale warfare over many years. The finds have upended long-established impressions of a civilization that tamed the jungle and built thriving cities, then declined and disappeared beneath the dense tropical forest.

Among the most startling discoveries was a large fortress complex now called **La Cuernavilla**. Built on a steep ridge between the Maya cities of El Zotz and Tikal, the heavily fortified site included high walls, moats, watchtowers, and caches of round stones that likely served as ammunition for warriors' slings (Clynes 2019).

12 – Lib's City (Jaredite city)

Ether 10:19 *And it came to pass that Lib also did that which was good in the sight of the Lord. And in the days of Lib the poisonous serpents were destroyed. Wherefore they did go into the land southward, to hunt for 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.*

Ether 10:20 *And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land.*

Tikal is proposed as Lib's "great city." It lies south of the *narrow neck* and is a place of abundance, teeming with deer and turkey (Terry 2024).

Conclusion

Locating the massive fortification was certainly a major breakthrough in establishing the authenticity of the Pasi3n River Model. The other eleven unique and specific elements of the *narrow neck* validate the model's legitimacy.

There is no doubt that a compelling case can be made for the existence of large bodies of water in the region during the Preclassic period, particularly between 90 BC and 30 BC. These are specifically referenced in *The Book of Mormon*. This, along with the other geographic evidence presented here, help to clarify how the Book of Mormon features are now shown in the Pasi3n River Model – without the problems of previous models.

5 – Twenty-Five Maya Kings that Correlate with Book of Mormon Scripture

This chapter has two segments: (1) The basic story of the Maya kings and (2) The listing of 23 documents that verify the existence of the kings and their activities.

The Story of the Maya Kings

Tikal – The Dominating Force (**Tikal** is proposed to be ruled by *Lamanites* after 200 AD)

By 500 AD there were thousands of Maya cities. LiDAR survey data revealed “61,480 ancient structures in the survey region,” supporting population estimates of “7 to 11 million” in the Maya Lowlands (Canuto 2018). Approximately 50 cities were large enough to have kings. However, **Tikal** was essentially the only Maya city with kings during the final four centuries recorded in *The Book of Mormon* (or until 384 AD) when the *Nephites* met their demise.

Two exceptions did exist: **Caracol** (ruled by Te’ K’ab Chaak, 331–349 AD) and **Yaxchilan** (with king Yopaat Bahlam I in 359 AD). Both of these rulers appeared to have played a part in the last *Nephite/Lamanite* conflicts. **Tikal**’s dominance in that Book of Mormon time frame has to be a compelling factor in formulating conclusions about the conflicts going on between the *Nephites*, *Lamanites* and *Gadianton robbers*.

This chapter is about those kings and how they relate to *The Book of Mormon*. There is direct evidence with some of these kings. However, most of it is circumstantial. This is a situation where the preponderance of the circumstantial evidence is overwhelming. The conclusion that it must be accurate is the only logical choice. The Pasión River Model research team has identified 63 items supporting this conclusion.

Early Royal Lineage at Tikal

As recorded in 3rd Nephi, Christ’s visit ushered in two hundred years of righteousness. During those two hundred years there is no mention of kings. However, **Tikal**’s first king, Yax Moch Xok, emerged around the turn of the first century and it is likely he was a righteous king. **Tikal** had a tendency to be a wicked city because of the trade that took place at the crossroads between the *land northward* and *land southward*. Yax Moch Xok probably lived about a century before there were widespread *Nephite* defections.

4 Nephi 1:45-46

45 *And it came to pass that when **three hundred years** had passed away, both the people of Nephi and the Lamanites had become exceedingly wicked one like unto another.*

46 *And it came to pass that the robbers of Gadianton did spread over all the face of the land . . .*

By roughly 300 AD, increasingly unrighteous kings occupied **Tikal**’s throne. Foliated Jaguar (reigned 292 AD) and his successor, K’inich Ehb, were on the throne when the *Lamanites* struck with “*exceedingly great power*,” forcing *Nephite* armies into disarray and retreat toward the north.

Harvard archaeologist Gordon R. Willey independently observed that **Ceibal** (which could equate with the city of *Zarahemla*) shows signs of a mass evacuation around 325 AD. This is the same date as the war recorded in Mormon 2:3. **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*) is less than a hundred miles from **Tikal** and would likely be an enticing target for the wicked **Tikal** kings.

Mormon 2:3 *And it came to pass that in the three hundred and twenty and seventh year the Lamanites did come upon us with exceedingly great power, insomuch that they did frighten my armies; therefore they would not fight, and they began to retreat towards the north countries.* [Emphasis added.]

327–350 AD and the Treaty

Later kings Siyaj Chan K'awiil I (307 AD) and Une Bahlam (317 AD) likely drove the *Nephites* northward, culminating in the 350 AD treaty – an agreement that partitioned lands between *Nephites* and *Lamanites* (Mormon 2:28). The *Lamanite* army of 50,000 could hardly be fielded by **Tikal** alone; evidence suggests an alliance with *Gadianton* forces in the **Maya Mountains**, centered in **Caracol** under Te' K'ab Chaak (331-349 AD). Mormon 2:25 notes the *Nephites* fought 30,000 against 50,000, underscoring the outside help **Tikal** probably received. It is possible the *Lamanite* army received recruits from other *Lamanite* cites as well.

Mormon 2:25 *And it came to pass that we did contend with an army of thirty thousand against an army of fifty thousand.* . . . [Emphasis added.]

It is logical for the *Lamanites* to have received help from Te' K'ab Chaak, the **Caracol** king. The ancient Maya city of **Caracol** is considered to have been the *Gadianton* stronghold. The scriptures state that they "dwelt upon the mountains." This site is the only significant ancient site in the **Maya Mountains**, the only mountains anywhere close to the *greater land of Zarahemla*.

3 Nephi 1:27 *And it came to pass that the ninety and third year did also pass away in peace, save it were for the Gadianton robbers, who dwelt upon the mountains.* . . . [Emphasis added.]

Mormon 2:28 . . . *And in the three hundred and fiftieth year we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.* [Emphasis added.]



Great Jaguar Paw

Great Jaguar Paw broke the 350 AD treaty the same year that he was made king (360 AD) and immediately resumed the *Lamanite* aggression upon the *Nephites*; however, the *Nephites* prevailed after eight years of fighting and had seven years of peace. This peace ended abruptly when it appears that Great Jaguar Paw (also called Chak Tok Ich'aak I) resumed hostilities in 375 AD in an overpowering and aggressive way. The *Lamanite*

coalition, who likely received assistance from Spear Thrower Owl of **Teotihuacan**, suddenly swept the *Nephites* “as a dew before the sun,” – overpowering them at *Desolation* (often linked to **Uaxactun**) and *Boaz* (**Rio Azul**), but stalling at *Jordan* (**La Milpa**). This was three years before the Entrada from **Teotihuacan** – an event that started in 378 AD when Spear Thrower Owl came with great military power.

Given this dramatic show of power, it is likely that Great Jaguar Paw received support from an external force. Previously, **Tikal**'s kings had received help from the *Gadianton robbers* (see Mormon 2:28), but since they are not mentioned during this time, it suggests that significant aid came from another outside source. Initially, scholars believed Spear Thrower Owl's involvement began with the Entrada in 378 AD. However, new evidence suggests he may have been active in the region prior to that date and could have been the source of Great Jaguar Paw's new found strength (Chase 2025). Increasingly, it appears that Spear Thrower Owl was the driving force behind the campaign to annihilate the *Nephites*.

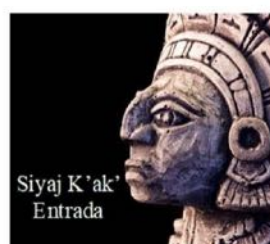
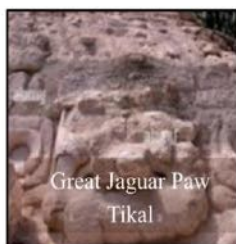
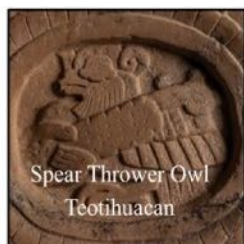
Spear Thrower Owl evidently grew dissatisfied with Great Jaguar Paw's inability to crush the *Nephites*. In 378 AD he dispatched Siyaj K'ak', overthrew Jaguar Paw, and installed his own son, Yax Nuun Ahiin I, on **Tikal**'s throne – the watershed conquest archaeologists call the Entrada. The campaign dovetails with the *Nephites*' final wars (ending in 385 AD), hinting that destroying the *Nephite* culture may have been part of **Teotihuacan**'s broader strategy. The *Nephites* numbered in the millions at this time and he considered them a threat to their nation.

Siyaj K'ak''s (Spear Thrower Owl's military general) presence in the land was felt on many fronts. There is evidence that he conquered **El Puru**, **Tikal** and **Uaxactun**. He also conquered other Preclassic Maya cities such as **Naachtun**, **Rio Azul**, **Holmul** and possibly many others. It appears that he not only recruited heavily in these cities but also turned these cities into military outposts to prepare for an extended conflict with the *Nephites*. In order to defeat millions of *Nephites*, it required a massive army. Spear Thrower Owl and Siyaj K'ak' were able to accomplish that.

Because the *Nephites*' final defeat also occurred around 385 AD, these dates align with the periods spoken of both by archaeologists and in the pages of *The Book of Mormon*.

Teotihuacan's military incursion into Maya land stands as the most significant event in Maya history. The Entrada is documented by archaeologists. in 378 AD is known by archaeologists as the Entrada. It appears Spear Thrower Owl's intention was to annihilate millions of *Nephites* and wipe them from off the face of the land. The final war between the *Nephites* and the *Lamanites* ended in 385 AD. The identical corresponding dates strongly suggest that the final battle near the *land of Cumorah* was a major part of the Entrada campaign.

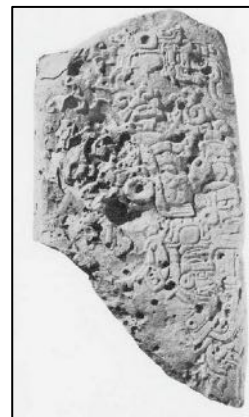
The principal players associated with the final *Nephite* war



Documentation Regarding the Period Between 300 AD and 385 AD – the Final War Years of the *Nephites*

Stela 29 at Tikal

According to hieroglyphs written on Stela 29 at **Tikal**, Foliated Jaguar was the **Tikal** king around 300 AD, apparently at a time when severe hostilities were creating serious problems with the *Nephites*. His actions appear to coincide with the abandonment of **Ceibal** that happened around 325 AD – actions that led to the 350 AD treaty. *The Book of Mormon* records that the *Nephites* fled northward in 327 AD (Willey 1978).



Stela 29 - Tikal

The Book of Mormon Connection:

Mormon 1:10 *And it came to pass that the war began to be among them in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon.*

Mormon 2:3 *And it came to pass that in **the three hundred and twenty and seventh year** the Lamanites did come upon us with exceedingly great power, insomuch that they did frighten my armies; therefore they would not fight, and they began to retreat towards the north countries.* [Emphasis added.]

Apparently, Foliated Jaguar was one of the kings who was creating problems with the *Nephites* in the *greater land of Zarahemla*. These actions correlate with the abandonment of *Zarahemla* in 327 AD (Coe 1990).

Stela 28 at Tikal

While the inscriptions on this stela are seriously damaged, some scholars believe this stela represents K'inich Muwaan Jol (Radiant Hawk Skull), the king prior to the reign of Great Jaguar Paw. He is also mentioned on Stela 31 (Martin and Grube 2008).



Book of Mormon connection:

Mormon 3:25 *And it came to pass that we did contend with an army of **thirty thousand** against an army of **fifty thousand**.* [Emphasis added.]

He could have been the king engaged in the 350 AD treaty and the war that led up to the treaty. He would likely have worked with Te' K'ab Chaak, the *Gadanton* king of **Caracol**, to assemble a 50,000-man military to defeat *Mormon* and to drive the *Nephites* out of the *greater land of Zarahemla* into the north countries (Jones 1982).

Stela 13 at Caracol

Te' K'ab Chaak, recognized as the founding king of **Caracol**, is identified through inscriptions on Stela 13, a monument discovered at the site. **Caracol**, situated along the western slopes of the **Maya Mountains** in present-day Belize, stands as one of the most significant ancient Maya cities. In addition to the epigraphic record, what makes Te' K'ab Chaak particularly noteworthy is the discovery of his tomb within the Northeast Acropolis at **Caracol** – placing him among the relatively small number of Maya rulers whose physical remains have been definitely recovered. He was the king between 331 and 349 AD (Chase 2025).



Stela 13 - Caracol

The Book of Mormon connection:

Mormon 3:25 *And it came to pass that we did contend with an army of **thirty thousand** against an army of **fifty thousand**.* [Emphasis added.]

Mormon 2:28 *And in the **three hundred and fiftieth year** we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.* [Emphasis added.]

The Pasión River Model identifies the wicked city of **Tikal** as the main source of conflict and wars leading up to the 350 AD treaty. They are the *Lamanites* referred to in *The Book of Mormon*. However, it would be difficult for **Tikal** to come up with fifty thousand warriors. This suggests that military support would have been needed from another dynasty.

Mormon records that the 350 AD treaty was signed by both the "*Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton*." Since **Caracol** is the only other Maya city with a king, and only eighty kilometers from **Tikal**, it is likely that **Tikal** and **Caracol** joined forces against the *Nephites*.

K'inich Muwaan Jol of **Tikal** and Te' K'ab Chaak of **Caracol** were the only kings in the entire Maya empire at the time. **Caracol's** proximity (80 km) combined with its emerging political significance during this time period, position it as a potential participant in the conflict.

There is no scriptural proof, but it appears the Maya/*Lamanites* turned on the *Gadianton robbers* soon after the treaty was signed. This seems likely because: (1) the *Gadianton robbers* are never mentioned again in the Book of Mormon, (2) Te' K'ab Chaak, **Caracol's** king, died about that time, (3) there was little activity reported at **Caracol** for the next 100 years, the only Maya city with a gap of that magnitude, (4) the *Gadianton robbers* were previously *Nephites* and were probably on the Maya/*Lamanites* list to exterminate, and (5) this appears to be a prelude to the wars in the near future, a period before the destruction of the entire *Nephite* nation.

Stela 26 at Tikal

Great Jaguar Paw (Chak Tok Ich'aak I) took the throne on 7 August 360 AD and reigned until his death in 378 AD, apparently at the hands of invaders from central Mexico (Martin 2008).

The Book of Mormon connection:

Mormon 3:4 *And it came to pass that after this tenth year had passed away, making, in the whole, **three hundred and sixty years** from the coming of Christ, the king of the Lamanites sent an epistle unto me, which gave unto me to know that they were preparing to come again.* [Emphasis added.]

It is likely that Great Jaguar Paw sent the epistle to *Mormon* at, or near, the time he took the throne in 360 AD (Coe 1958, 1990). By that time, the people in the *Nephite* cities had moved north, as agreed in the treaty.



Stela 26 - Tikal

From 360 AD on there were continual wars. It appears *Mormon* held the *Lamanite's* advance under control until 375 AD, when the *Lamanites* attacked with such force the *Nephites* were swept off "as the dew before the sun" (Mormon 4:18). It appears the *Lamanites* received a great deal of help from **Teotihuacan** warriors at that time. This corresponds to the Entrada (Beliaev 2025).

Stela 19 at Uaxactun

Stela 19 gives information of the 375 AD war, and confirms the arrival of the **Teotihuacan** warlord Siyaj K'ak' in 378 AD. Following the invasion, **Uaxactun** ceased to be an independent power, becoming a subordinate a city-state controlled by **Tikal** (Beliaev 2025).

The Pasión River team considers **Uaxactun** to be the *Nephite's* city *Desolation* in *The Book of Mormon*, a city of *Nephites*. The overthrow of **Uaxactun** occurred at the same time the *Nephites* were driven northward. (Historical and Book of Mormon timelines match.)



Stela 19 - Uaxactun

Stela 39 at Tikal

Stela 39 at **Tikal** was severely damaged so the information on it is questionable. The stela appears to be making reference to Chak Tok Ich'aak I (Great Jaguar Paw) around 376 AD (Martin 2008).

The Book of Mormon connection:

Mormon 5:4 *And there were also other cities which were maintained by the Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off that they could not get into the country.*



Stela 39 - Tikal

Stela 39 verifies the existence of Great Jaguar Paw during a time when the *Lamanites* were at war with the *Nephites*. He had great success in 375 AD, but it appears that he could not penetrate the western border of the *land of Cumorah* (Moholy-Nagy 2019).

Stela 31 at Tikal

Stela 31 has been described as the greatest Early Classic sculpture to survive at **Tikal** (or possibly anywhere else). It tells of the famous Entrada, where warriors from **Teotihuacan** (under the direction of Spear Thrower Owl) ended the king dynasty at **Tikal**.

Stela 31 records the death of Great Jaguar Paw and the continued aggression on **Uaxactun** and other cities. A long hieroglyphic text carved onto the back of the monument describes the arrival of Siyaj K'ak' at **El Peru** and **Tikal** in 378 AD (Drew 1999).



Stela 31 - Tikal

The Book of Mormon connection:

***Mormon 5:6** And it came to pass that in the **three hundred and eightieth year** the Lamanites did come again against us to battle, and we did stand against them boldly; but it was all in vain, for so great were their numbers that they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet. [Emphasis added.]*

The Entrada set the stage for the next phase of the final *Nephite* war, orchestrated by Siyaj K'ak', who is mentioned in Stela 31 under the direction of Spear Thrower Owl. It would take another eight years of intense fighting before *Mormon* and the *Nephites* would fall (Martin and Grube 2008).

Stela 24 at Naachtun

Stela 24 records the presence of Siyaj K'ak'. **Naachtun** was a Maya city also positioned along the western border of the *land of Cumorah*. It is likely a place where Siyaj K'ak' recruited warriors, using it as a military base prior to attacks on the *Nephites* (Stuart 2014).



Stela 24 - Naachtun

The Book of Mormon Connection:

***Mormon 5:4** And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city.*

Stela 4 at Tikal

Stela 4 for Yax Nuun Ahiin I, also known as Curl Snout, was a fourth century ruler of the Maya city of **Tikal**. He took the throne on 12 September 379 AD and reigned until his death.



Stela 4 - Tikal

The Book of Mormon connection:

***Mormon 6:2** And I, Mormon, wrote an epistle unto the king of the Lamanites, and desired of him that he would **grant unto us that we might gather together our people unto the land of Cumorah**, by a hill which was called Cumorah, and there we could give them battle. [Emphasis added.]*

Mormon 6:3 *And it came to pass that the king of the Lamanites did grant unto me the thing which I desired.*

Curl Snout was the **Tikal** King who gave *Mormon* permission to take his people to *hill Cumorah*. However, there is no doubt that General Siyaj K'ak' would have been involved in that decision (Martin and Grube 2008).

Stela 5 at Uaxactun

Stela 5 has a fragmentary text describing the 378 AD "arrival" event of Siyaj K'ak' to **Uaxactun** (Stuart 2014).

The Book of Mormon connection:

Mormon 5:4 *And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city. And there were also other cities which were maintained by the Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off that they could not get into the country. . . .*

Mormon 5:5 . . . *three hundred and seventy-nine years passed away.* [Emphasis added.]



Stela 5 - Uaxactun

The inscription on Stela 5 indicates Siyaj K'ak' arrived in **Uaxactun**. The date is consistent with the dates of the second phase of the final *Nephite* battle. This was around 378 AD – just after the previous king was killed and Siyaj K'ak' took over.

Rio Azul Murals

The **Teotihuacan** warlord Siyaj K'ak' is mentioned in an inscription at **Río Azul** dated to AD 393, during the reign of King Yax Nuun Ayiin I at **Tikal**. The military costume of Yax Nuun Ayiin I depicted on monuments at both **Tikal** and **Río Azul**, combined with a number of hieroglyphic texts, links the **Tikal** king with the political events at **Río Azul** at this time (Borowicz 2003).

The Book of Mormon connection:

Mormon 5:4 *And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city.*

The **Río Azul** mural recorded the presence of Siyaj K'ak'. **Río Azul** was a Maya city positioned along the western border of the *land of Cumorah*. It is likely a place Siyaj K'ak' used as a military base prior to attacking the *Nephites* (Estrada-Belli 2009).



Río Azul Murals

Jade Stone at Blue Creek

A jade plaque discovered at **Blue Creek** (less than five miles from **hill Achotal**) reads: “The demise of **Blue Creek**’s royal line; its polity was burned and brought to an end.” Although this stone was deposited in a shaft cache about 500 AD, the inscription strongly suggests an earlier catastrophe. The stone is currently curated at the Central Archaeological Collections Facility and Research Centre, **Belmopan**, Belize (Guderjan 2007).



Jade Stone - Blue Creek

The Book of Mormon Connection:

Mormon 6 (header) *The Nephites gather to the land of Cumorah for the final battles – Lamanites are victorious, and the Nephite nation is destroyed – hundreds of thousands are slain with the sword (about 385 AD).* [Emphasis added.]

This reported collapse of a nation, on the jade stone, is contemporary with the *Nephite* collapse.

Stela 9 at Dos Pilas

This stela is for King B'alaj Chan K'awiil (648-695 AD). The stela shows a king that represents thirteen other stelae or monuments that make reference to Maya kings from fourteen different Maya cities that were abandoned and later repopulated. Dos Pilas was abandoned due to the 350 AD treaty when the *Nephites* were forced to flee to the land northward (Guenter 2021).



Stela 9 - Dos Pilas

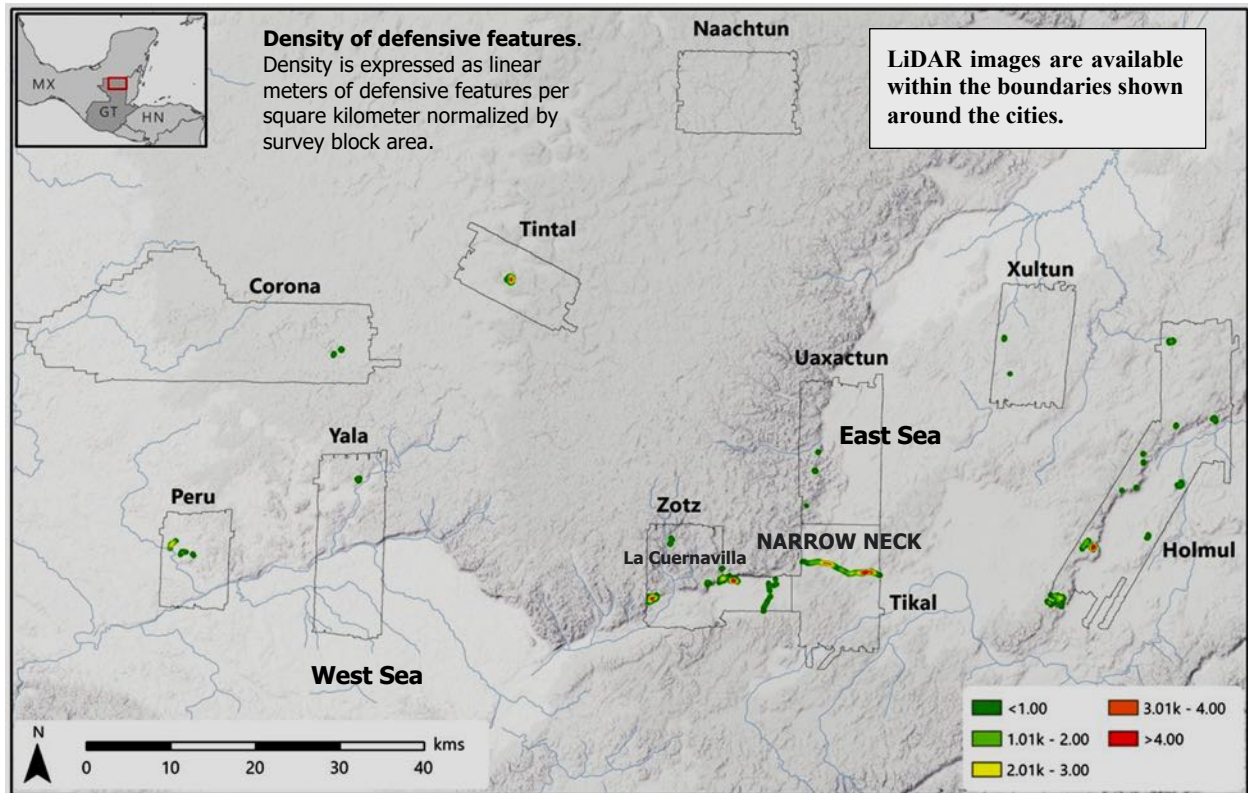
The Book of Mormon connection:

Mormon 2:28 *And in the **three hundred and fiftieth year** we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.* [Emphasis added.]

Around 350 AD, a major disruption occurred among the *Nephite* populations inhabiting the *greater land of Zarahemla* – generally corresponding to the **Petén** region of north-central Guatemala. During this period, numerous cities were abandoned as populations were driven northward into new territories. Archaeological and historical indicators suggest that many of these urban centers did not remain permanently deserted but were eventually reoccupied.

One of the most reliable markers of resettlement is the beginning of a new dynastic leadership. In Maya inscriptions, the establishment of a new ruling lineage often signals a reorganization or reestablishment of political authority following a period of disruption. Evidence indicates that this pattern of dynastic renewal occurred approximately two to three centuries after the initial evacuations.

A systematic examination of sites within the affected region reveals that at least fourteen cities in this region exhibit evidence of new royal accessions within this defined timeframe. Among these is the site of **Dos Pilas**, where Stela 9 records the accession of B'alaj Chan K'awiil. This monument preserves the earliest known reference to the ruler who presided over the city following its earlier abandonment. **Dos Pilas** is one of the fourteen Maya cities that used to be a Maya *Nephite* city.



LiDAR map includes narrow neck and massive fortification (also see map on page 44)

The 12-Mile fortification – the Largest Structure in Maya Land

In addition to stelae and murals, one other remarkable piece of geographical evidence helps solidify proofs found documented on the stelae mentioned above. A massive land structure is located between **Tikal** and **Uaxactun**. It is 12 miles in length. Whenever there was any warring between these two locations, the *narrow neck* fortification had to be involved. It happened many times. This area is called **La Cuernavilla** and it is in Guatemala. (See further information in the chapter on the *narrow neck*.)

The fact that this enormous structure (the largest structure in Maya land) has recently been discovered is a major breakthrough in establishing a viable Pasión River Model. **National Geographic** reported extensively on LiDAR's role in revealing the vast, complex Maya civilization, highlighting discoveries like the massive fortification system at **La Cuernavilla**, the largest defensive system ever found in the region. "Following the 378 AD **Teotihuacan** Entrada, **La Cuernavilla** was transformed into a major fortress" (Garrison 2023).

Summary

Evidence substantiating the connection between the final *Nephite* war and physical evidence tying it to the Entrada (and other associated wars) is overwhelming. The following list summarizes these validations:

- There are twenty-four documented kings with ties to these final wars.
- The Entrada has to be the major war associated with the final *Nephite* demise. This event happened at the same exact time as described in *The Book of Mormon*. It is documented as the largest event in Maya history (it destroyed millions of *Nephites*).
- There has to be a connection to the 375 AD war and the final *Nephite* war. Spear Thrower Owl, the apparent king of **Teotihuacan**, appears as the driving force.
- The *land of Cumorah* as described in *The Book of Mormon* has amazing correlations to the land mass in northern **Belize** and parts of the **Yucatán**. It also correlates and triangulates with the physical landscape of the final *Jaredite* war.

A Discussion of Different Classifications of Evidence:

There are basically three classifications of evidences associated with Book of Mormon lands: direct, indirect or circumstantial.

An example of direct evidence is the name of the city where *Ishmael* died: **Nahome**. It is not only named in *The Book of Mormon*, and at a place that is geographically correct, but is also the ancient name of the city in the area where *Ishmael* died.

Some of the most compelling examples of possible direct evidence in this chapter are stelae 18 and 19 in Uaxactun. The dates coincide with the 375 AD war. This war is mentioned in Mormon 4.

Mormon 4:16 *And the Lamanites did not come again against the Nephites until the **three hundred and seventy and fifth year**.* [Emphasis added.]

Just because two dates match does not mean that the 375 AD war took place, so it cannot be considered as direct evidence. However, when numerous associated evidences are considered, it comes close to becoming direct evidence. In the legal world, this is sometimes called the "preponderance of evidence" – enough evidence sufficient to prove a case.

In the case of the 375 AD war date at **Uaxactun**, there is sufficient secondary evidence to create a preponderance of evidence, establishing a high level of evidence that would be considered essentially the same as direct evidence. This happens over and over again, as shown in this chapter on Maya Kings. It is also prevalent throughout the entire Pasión River Model. There are over thirty stelae, monuments and paintings that provide evidence regarding the warring that took place during the last fifty years of the *Nephite* civilization – as written about in *The Book of Mormon*. There is not one of them that provides direct evidence about Book of Mormon lands. However, collectively they provide a preponderance of evidence that leaves no doubt concerning the location of Book of Mormon lands.

A Chronological Listing of Events that are Associated with Maya Kings	
Book of Mormon	Kings of Tikal
Over two hundred years of peace followed Christ's visitation - 200 AD	
4 Nephi 1:17 <i>There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God.</i>	Maya society underwent a series of profound transformations between 100 AD and 250 AD, which resulted in the cessation of monumental building at many Preclassic sites . . . (Share 2006).
4 Alma 1:24 <i>And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.</i>	The first king in Maya land was Tikal's king, <u>Yax Ehb Xose</u>. It is likely he was a righteous king. Other kings followed, but it wasn't until after 200 AD that the kings became aggressive.
300 AD – the era of peace appears to be over	
4 Nephi 40 . . . <u>two hundred and forty and four years</u> had passed away, and the more wicked part of the people did wax strong, and became exceedingly more numerous than were the people Of God.	Numerous kings emerged at Tikal (the only city that had kings in all of Maya land) around 300 AD. These kings appear to have become more aggressive: <u>Foliated Jaguar</u>, <u>K'inich Ehb</u> and <u>Sihych Chan K'awwiil</u>.
327 AD – there began to be war in the land	
Mormon 2:3 <i>And it came to pass that in the <u>three hundred and twenty and seventh year</u> the Lamanites did come upon us with exceedingly great power,</i> Mormon 2:9 <i>And now, the Lamanites had a king, and his name was Aaron; and he came against us with an army of forty and four thousand. And behold, I withstood him with forty and two thousand.</i>	According to hieroglyphics written on Stela 29 at Tikal, <u>Foliated Jaguar</u> was the Tikal king around 300 AD – about the time when severe hostilities were creating serious problems with the <i>Nephites</i>. <u>Foliated Jaguar's</u> actions appear to coincide with the abandonment of Ceibal, that happened around 325 AD (Willey 1978). These actions led to the 350 AD treaty, and the northward flight of the <i>Nephites</i>.
The Gadianton Robbers were located at Caracol - near Tikal	
Mormon 2:28 <i>And the three hundred and forty and ninth year had passed away. And in the <u>three hundred and fiftieth year</u> we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.</i> 3 Nephi 1:27 . . . <i>the Gadianton robbers, who dwelt upon the mountains, who did infest the land . . .</i>	The ancient Maya city of Caracol is the only significant city located in the Maya Mountains, and they are the only mountains near the Petén (the <i>greater land of Zarahemala</i>). <u>King Te' K'ab Claak</u> is the first king at Caracol, the only other location that had kings at that time. He died during the later stages of the war.

360 AD - the 350 Treaty was broken by Great Jaguar Paw	
Mormon 3:4 <i>And it came to pass that after this tenth year had passed away, making, in the whole, <u>three hundred and sixty years</u> from the coming of Christ, the king of the Lamanites sent an epistle unto me, which gave unto me to know that they were preparing to come again to battle against us.</i>	Great Jaguar Paw was made king in 360 AD (dates come from Stela 31 and Stela 29 at Tikal). It appears that Great Jaguar Paw was a war monger and had strong negative feelings toward the <i>Nephites</i>. For the next ten years he was in constant battle with the <i>Nephites</i>, however, he was not able to penetrate the <i>Nephite</i> border. Uaxactun is the proposed city of <i>Desolation</i> (<i>Nephites</i>).
Evidence that major cities in the land of Zarahemla (Petén) actually happened	
Mormon 2:29 <i>And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to the narrow passage which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward.</i>	After the 350 AD Treaty, all of the cities in Petén (<i>greater land of Zarahemla</i>) were abandoned. There is scientific proof that fourteen of these previous cities were re-inhabited around 200 years later. This gives evidence they were likely <i>Nephite</i> cities, and the people went northward.. See information on Maya Kings for further explanation.
Evidence of this 375 AD war is found on stelae 18 & 19 in Uaxactun and Tikal	
Mormon 4:18 <i>And from this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun.</i> Mormon 4:19 <i>And it came to pass that the Lamanites did come down against the city Desolation; and there was an exceedingly sore battle fought in the land Desolation, in the which they did beat the Nephites.</i>	There is evidence on stelae 18 and 19 at Uaxactun and Stela 39 at Tikal that the armies from Tikal overthrew Uaxactun in 375 AD in a very big way. Great Jaguar Paw was the king of Tikal at the time, and was undoubtedly supported by Spear Thrower Owl. The Tikal armies appear to have been supported by the <i>Gadianton robbers</i> (from Caracol) in the previous war; however, there is no mention of them for the 375 AD war.
376 AD - Great jaguar Paw could not penetrate the borders of the <i>land of Cumorah</i>	
Mormon 5:3 <i>And it came to pass that the Lamanites did come against us as we had fled to the city of Jordan; but behold, they were driven back that they did not take the city at that time.</i>	The king of Tikal, Great Jaguar Paw, had great success during his first few encounters, however, he failed to penetrate the borders of the <i>land of Cumorah</i> (<i>Nephites</i>). Apparently, this displeased Spear Thrower Owl, because he came with his army and killed Great Jaguar Paw and took over Tikal in 378 AD. This was known as the beginning of the Entrada. This event has been characterized as the most significant event in Maya history.
378 AD - Siyaj Kak' succeeded in conquering Uaxactun but failed at the <i>Cumorah</i> border	
Mormon 5:4 <i>And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city. And there were also other cities which were maintained by the Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off that they could not get into the country which lay before us, to destroy the inhabitants of our land.</i>	Stela 5 at Uaxactun tells of Siyaj K'ak''s victory in 378 AD; however, it appears that he had officially overpowered the <i>Nephites</i> at their border. There is evidence that he spent the next three years strengthening his army. It is proposed that some of the <i>Nephites</i> were in Uaxactun (<i>Desolation city</i>).

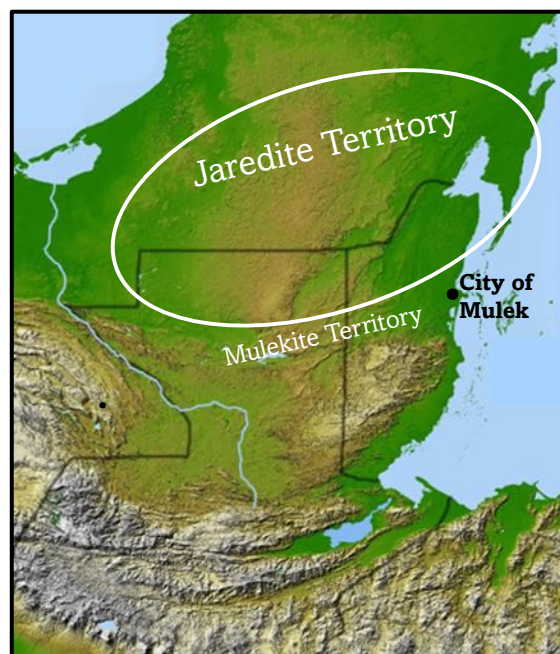
380 AD – Evidence that the armies from Teotihuacan overpowered the Nephites	
Mormon 5:6 <i>And it came to pass that in the <u>three hundred and eightieth year</u> the Lamanites did come again against us to battle, and we did stand against them boldly; but it was all in vain, for so great were their numbers that they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet.</i>	The army that came from Teotihuacan , under <u>Siyaj K'ak'</u> , spent three years recruiting warriors from the following Maya cities: Rio Azul , La Sufricaya , Naachtun and El Peru . Undoubtably, other cities were also recruited.
384 AD - King Yax Nuun Ahlin likely gave Mormon permission to go to Cumorah	
Mormon 6:3 <i>And it came to pass that the king of the Lamanites did grant unto me the thing which I desired.</i>	In 384 AD it appears that <u>Yax Nuun Ahlin</u> was the only Maya king at the time. <u>Yax Nuun Ahlin</u> was the son of <u>Spear Thrower Owl</u> .
384 AD - Mormon gathered his people at the <i>hill Cumorah</i> to make their final stand	
Mormon 6:6 <i>And it came to pass that when we had gathered in all our people in one to the land of Cumorah, behold I, Mormon, began to be old; and knowing it to be the last struggle of my people . . . I made this record out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni.</i>	According to Mormon 6, there were around two hundred and fifty thousand warriors killed at the <i>hill Cumorah</i> . One has to wonder what was going through <i>Mormon's</i> mind in regard to the women and children. Would he have placed them on the top of hill Achotal (<i>Cumorah</i>) to protect them? This hill is very large and the top could hold tens of thousands of people. In addition to hill Achotal , there are two other sizable hills nearby that could hold many more thousands. There are piles of sling stones at the bottom of hill Achotal . One could imagine the plight that these women and children were in when the <i>Lamanites</i> started climbing the hill. One could also imagine the women picking up these stones and hurtling them down at the <i>Lamanite</i> warriors as they proceeded up the hill.
A Jade Plaque near the <i>hill Cumorah</i> tells of the final war - 385 AD	
Mormon 6:17 O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! Mormon 6:20 <i>But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return.</i>	A jade plaque discovered at Blue Creek – less than five miles from <i>hill Cumorah</i> (Cerro Achotal) – reads: "The demise of Blue Creek's royal line, it's polity was burned and brought to an end." Although it was deposited in a shaft cache about AD 500 (Guderjan 2007), the inscription strongly suggests a catastrophic collapse – contemporary with the <i>Nephite</i> collapse. It is currently curated at the Central Archaeological Collections Facility and Research Centre, Belmopan , Belize.

6 – Land of Mulekites and Land of Bountiful

Zedekiah was taken captive in 586 BC, marking the likely beginnings of his son *Mulek's* journey to the Americas. As Nebuchadnezzar pursued them toward Egypt, it seems probable that *Mulek's* family arranged for ships to carry them away from danger, possibly with help of Phoenician renowned sailors and traders. Phoenicians were known for their maritime expertise, making such a voyage feasible. This notion is supported by Ezekiel 26:15-17, which contrasts the limited maritime resources of the Jews with the Phoenicians' dominance of the seas (Magelby 2020).

Upon arriving in Mesoamerica, the *Mulekites* needed an ideal location to establish a new civilization. While many areas were inviting, some were already inhabited and potentially hostile. Logically, the *Mulekites* sought a place both welcoming and rich in resources.

A prime location for settlement requires fertile soil and abundant water resources. The *land of Bountiful* is described in 1 Nephi 17, which was noted for its "much fruit." This land was likely chosen by meeting these criteria: fertile soil, water (rivers, streams and lakes), a favorable climate and an abundance of animal life. The areas surrounding the proposed *land of Mulek* and the *land of Bountiful* are quite similar; therefore, a section on the *land of Bountiful* is included in this chapter.



Map showing nearness of Jaredite and Mulekite areas

The *Jaredites* previously designated this area as a game preserve. *Lib*, the great hunter, established it as a place to hunt animals (Ether 10:21). This aligns with the "bountiful" characteristics of the land. For example, the fertile fields of northern **Petén** are known for producing tropical fruits, highlighting the area's abundance.

While it is uncertain how many people were part of the group that escaped with *Mulek*, it is reasonable to assume that some of *Zedekiah's* friends and staff joined the journey. They likely brought a substantial portion of the kingdom's treasure to fund their voyage. Additionally, guards would have been necessary to protect the king's family and entourage from potential threats, as the new land would likely have been hostile to newcomers.



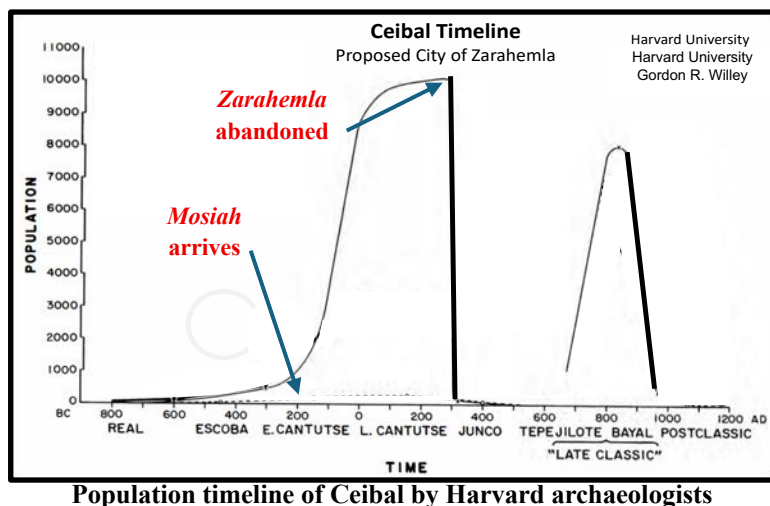
Holzus - Mulekite landing area

The *Mulekites* probably landed near present-day **Belize City**, a site originally known as **Holzus**. The Pasión River team proposes this location as the *city of Mulek* in *The Book of Mormon*. (The

Mulekites probably named the coastal city in honor of their leader.) The site is strategic, located at the head of the **Belize River**, with shores well-suited for harboring ships.

The area currently serves as the primary harbor along the Belize coastline, and settling further north would have placed the *Mulekites* in conflict with *Jaredite* and **Olmec** territories. The region surrounding the **Belize River**, already identified as a "bountiful land," would have been an ideal place for settlement (Helmke 2020).

According to the 1978 Harvard exploration team, the **Ceibal** site was previously inhabited by the **Olmecs** around 700 BC. This chart also shows the possibility of an increase in population at 400 BC. This increase could be the result of a *Mulekite* takeover of **Ceibal**. Around 200 BC this study shows a major influx of people arriving at **Ceibal**. This population increase aligns perfectly with the arrival of *Mosiah* and his people.



Mosiah 25:2 *Now there were not so many of the children of Nephi, or so many of those who were descendants of Nephi, as there were of the people of Zarahemla, who was a descendant of Mulek, and those who came with him into the wilderness.*

It appears the *Mulekites* were well established in other areas before they came to **Ceibal** and established *Zarahemla*. The large population of *Mulekites* can be attributed to the proposed *Mulekite* cities scattered across northern **Petén** and central Belize, such as **Xunantunich**, **Yaxha**, **Nixtun Ch'ich**, **Altun Ha**, **Naachtun**, in addition to **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*). These sites fit the *Mulekite* timeline and are situated in desirable locations, including several along the **Belize River** (Helmke 2020).

Omni 1:17 *And at the time that Mosiah discovered them, they had become exceedingly numerous. Nevertheless, they had had many wars and serious contentions, and had fallen by the sword from time to time; and their language had become corrupted; and they had brought no records with them; and they denied the being of their Creator; and Mosiah, nor the people of Mosiah, could understand them. [Emphasis added.]*

One of the reasons why there appears to be a limited amount of interest in **Ceibal** is the humid environment, filled with aggressive snakes, mosquitoes, crocodiles and pumas, which would have made settling difficult. It is not surprising that *Nephites* in the area often longed to return to the *land of Nephi* (Terry 2024). However, it is strategically placed to avoid military confrontations.

The *land of Mulek* and the *land of Bountiful* are closely connected; however, the designation as the *land of Bountiful* did not take place until approximately 100 BC. According to this, the land was initially occupied by the *Mulekites* before they were joined by the *Nephites*.

While *The Book of Mormon* only explicitly mentions **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*), which has significant archaeological evidence, circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that the *Mulekites* also inhabited other nearby sites. **Nixtun-Ch'ich**, in particular, exhibits several features consistent with a *Mulekite* settlement:

- Its origins date back to around 500 BC, aligning with the *Mulekite* migration westward to **Lake Petén Itzá**.
- The city's unusual layout does not resemble typical Maya architecture.
- The area is fertile, making it an attractive location for the *Mulekites*.
- It is located near the Maya city of **Ceibal** (*Zarahemla*), which could have served as the *Mulekite* capital.
- **Nixtun Ch'ich's** street grids are unlike those of other Mesoamerican cities, suggesting urban planning akin to European designs. Excavations indicate that this grid was established before 500 BC, making it the oldest known example in Mesoamerica (Pugh 2017).
- **Nixtun-Ch'ich** is also a strong candidate for the site where *Christ* appeared to the *Nephites*. It is located near the center of the land, a few miles south of the *narrow neck of land*. It would have provided easy access for *Nephites* from the north. It is also a well-organized city, implying a higher level of advancement and progress. Situated along the shoreline of **Lake Petén Itzá**, it also allowed for easier access to resources.



LiDAR map of Nixtun-Ch'ich

Coastal Cities

The following scriptures outline the physical requirements for the city of *Bountiful*:

Alma 53:3 *By the orders of Moroni, they commenced laboring in digging a ditch round about the land, or the city, of Bountiful.*

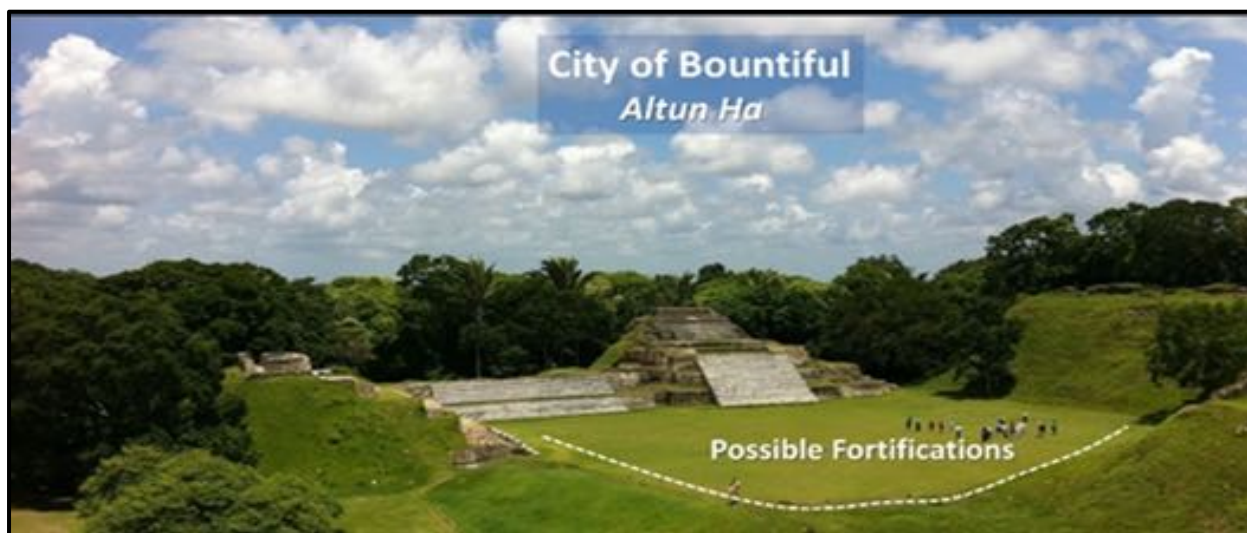
Helaman 1:23 *Now he did not tarry in the land of Zarahemla, but he did march forth with a large army, even towards the city of Bountiful.*

The cities of *Mulek*, *Bountiful* and *Gid* must have been close to each other, with *Bountiful* situated just north of *Mulek* and *Gid*.

Alma 55:26 *And it came to pass that when he had fortified the **city of Gid** according to his desires, he caused that his prisoners should be taken to the **city of Bountiful**; and he also guarded that city with an exceedingly strong force.* [Emphasis added.]

Alma 59:22 *Therefore he caused that Teancum should take a small number of men and march down near the seashore; and Moroni and his army, by night, marched in the wilderness, on the west of the **city Mulek** . . .* [Emphasis added.]

These three cities are described as being on the east coast, near the sea.



Altun Ha - Proposed city of Bountiful

Alma 52:17 *Teancum made preparations to make an attack upon the **city of Mulek** . . . he abandoned his designs and returned again to **the city of Bountiful**.* [Emphasis added.]

Alma 51:26 *And thus he went on taking possession of many cities, the **city of Nephihah**, and the **city of Lehi**, and the **city of Morianton**, and the **city of Omner**, and the **city of Gid**, and the **city of Mulek**, all of which were on the east borders by the seashore.* [Emphasis added.]

The Land of Bountiful

The Pasión River research team argues that there is only one *Bountiful* in the New World, located in a place abundant with fruit and honey, similar to *Nephi*'s description of the area where they built their ship; therefore, it was also called the *land of Bountiful*. Sometimes people are confused that the same names were used in both the Old and New Worlds for lands abundant in resources.

1 Nephi 17:5 *And we did come to the **land which we called Bountiful**, because of its much fruit and also wild honey . . .* [Emphasis added.]

There are large areas of fertile land along the **Belize River** and several ancient cities (from the time of the *Mulekite* arrival) can still be found. It begins at the mouth of the **Belize River**, located near the city of **Belize**, and continues west where it meets up with the **Moapan River** in Guatemala and then flows through the land of Jershon. According to Alma 27:22, the *land of Bountiful* is the northern border of the *land of Jershon*. **Lake Yaxha** is considered to be the sea mentioned in the same scripture.

Alma 27:22 *And it came to pass that the voice of the people came, saying: Behold, we will give up the **land of Jershon**, which is on the east by the sea, which joins the **land Bountiful**, which is on the south of the **land Bountiful**; and this **land Jershon** is the land which we will give unto our brethren for an inheritance. [Emphasis added.]*

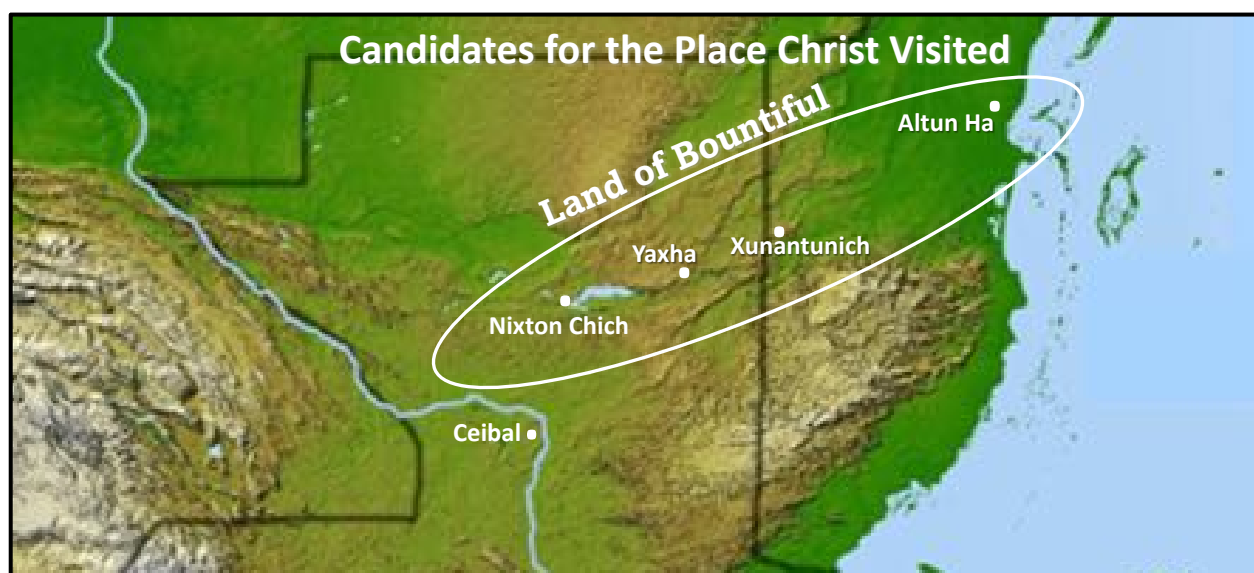
Location of Christ's Visit

The most important event in *The Book of Mormon* occurred in the *land of Bountiful*, as described in 3 Nephi:

3 Nephi 11:1 *And now it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful; and they were marveling and wondering one with another and were showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place.*

3 Nephi 11:8 *And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him . . .*

The proposed location of the *land of Bountiful* spans a large area, making it challenging to narrow down Christ's visit to a specific site. Several possibilities include **Nixtun-Ch'ich**, **Yaxha** and **Xunantunich**. All are located near the center of the land.



Some Candidates for the Location of Christ's Visit



Xunantunich – *Land of Bountiful*



Yaxha – *Land of Bountiful*



Altun Ha – *Bountiful City*



Ceibal – *Zarahemla City*



Aguateca – *Melek City*



Uaxactun – *Desolation City*

14 *Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may **feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet**, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.*

Book of Mormon names and locations are in italics.
Ancient sites or current locations are in bold.

Cities that could be candidates for the location of Christ's visit							
Maya Location	Book of Mormon Location	Total	Near Population Centers	A Nephite City	Significant City	Close to Water	Pierced Hand Glyphs
Yaxha	<i>Land of Bountiful</i>	28	10	5	5	5	3
Nixtun Ch'ich	<i>City of Noah</i>	26	10	5	4	5	2
Motul de San Jose	<i>Land of Bountiful</i>	24	10	5	3	2	4
Nakum	<i>Land of Bountiful</i>	20	10	0	4	1	5
Tikal	<i>Land of Bountiful</i>	20	10	0	5	0	5
Xunantunich	<i>Land of Bountiful</i>	19	7	2	5	4	1
Aguateca	<i>City of Melek</i>	18	3	5	5	3	2
Ceibal	<i>City of Zarahemla</i>	16	3	5	5	3	0
Dos Pilas	<i>Land of Melek</i>	15	3	5	3	1	3
Altun Ha	<i>City of Bountiful</i>	14	2	4	3	5	0
La Florida	<i>Land of Melek</i>	13	3	5	2	1	2
La Amelia	<i>Land of Melek</i>	13	3	5	2	1	2
Uaxactun	<i>City of Desolation</i>	11	4	0	4	0	3

The pierced hand values were based on how close to a city with a hand glyph (5 means there's a glyph in that city)

The Coming of Christ

4 Nephi 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10

1. *And it came to pass that the thirty and fourth year passed away, and also the thirty and fifth, and behold the disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ in all the lands round about. And as many as did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins, were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost.*

2. *And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.*

3. *And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift.*

5. *And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus, insomuch that they did heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cause the lame to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear; and all manner of miracles did they work among the children of men; and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus.*

7. *And the Lord did prosper them exceedingly in the land; yea, insomuch that they did build cities again where there had been cities burned.*

10. *And now, behold, it came to pass that the people of Nephi did wax strong, and did multiply exceedingly fast, and became an exceedingly fair and delightsome people.*

7 – Catastrophic Events when Christ was Crucified

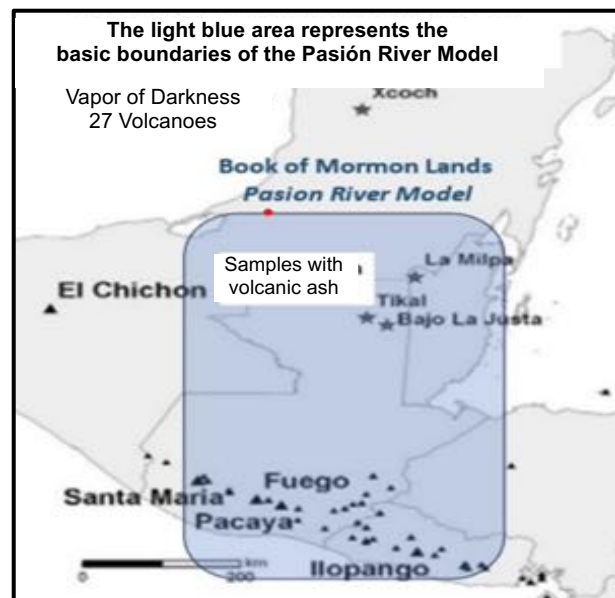
Evidence that volcanoes were responsible for three days of darkness:



Nephi 8:20 *And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof who had not fallen could feel the vapor of darkness.*

Dr. Tankersley from the University of Cincinnati conducted a survey in northern Guatemala to examine volcanic ash levels and their impact on agriculture. The findings clearly indicated that volcanic ash was a significant component of the regional soils (Tankersley 2016).

Additionally, Dr. Richard Terry discovered substantial deposits of volcanic ash in soil samples taken from the bajo's region in northern Guatemala.



Evidence that Nephite Cities were Submerged in Water

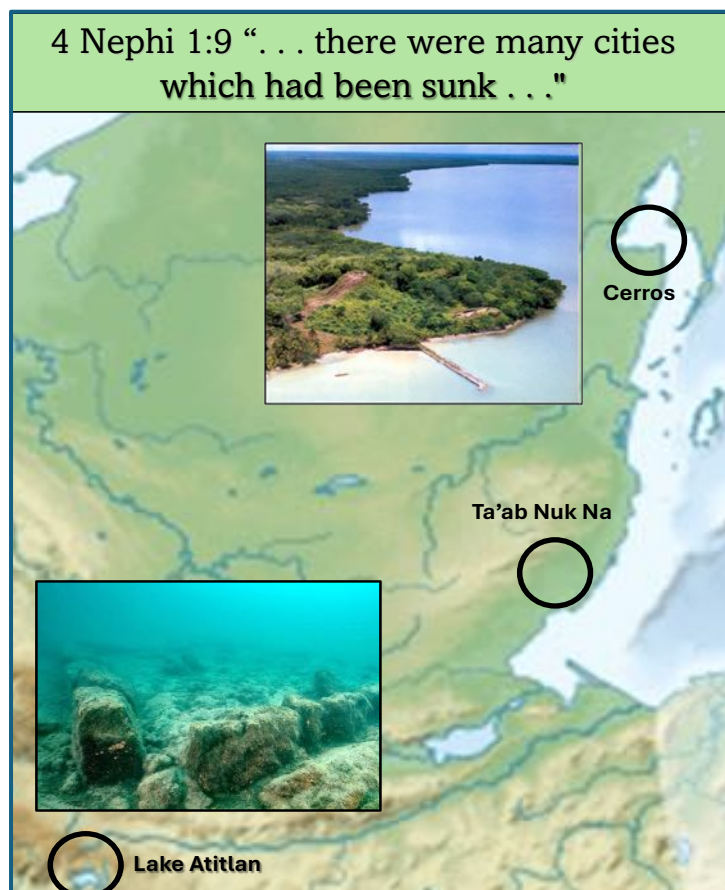
Evidence of underwater cities in the vicinity of the proposed location of the city of *Moroni*:

3 Nephi 8:9 *And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof were drowned.*

Underwater excavations of ancient Maya cities have uncovered important clues. One significant site is **Ta'ab Nuk Na**, which was inhabited between 600 and 800 CE. This area of **Paynes Creek** (city of *Moroni*) in Belize is home to approximately 110 submerged Maya sites, but **Ta'ab Nuk Na** stands out as one of the largest and most informative (Hale 2022).

For several years, underwater archaeologists have uncovered ancient artifacts near a potential sunken city in **Lake Atitlan**, Guatemala, and along the southern coast of Belize in the Caribbean Sea (Norman 2024).

Belize's minister said there are several cities under water off Belize coast. One is adjacent to the ruins of **Cerros**; another is further south. Evidence of these ancient sites under water can be ascertained by the presence of potshards that wash up from the sea on a regular basis. He also said that a part of the **Cerros** city sank around 50 AD (Ainsworth 2012).

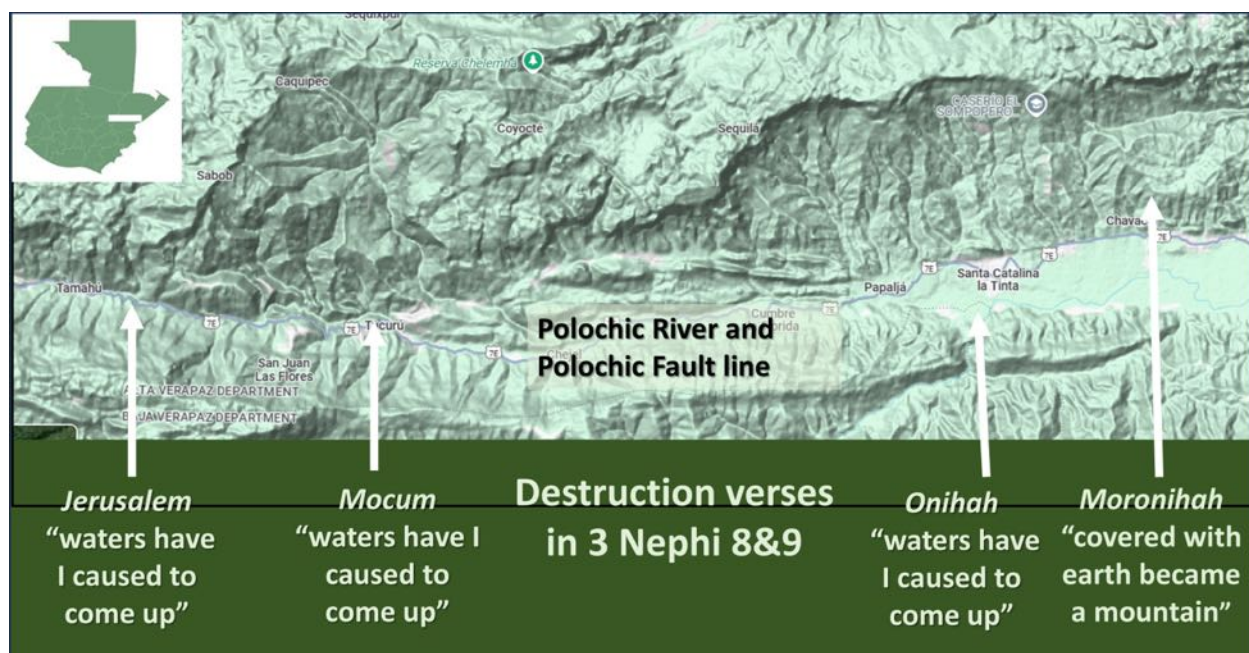


Earth Covered the City of Moronihah

3 Nephi 8:10 *And the earth was carried upon the city of Moronihah. . . .*

The following image shows an ancient landslide that fell across the **Polochic River** creating earthen dams that caused waters to submerge three cities and actually covered an entire city with landfill. This is a unique situation because the river follows the **Polochic Fault Line** which is prone to active earthquakes.

Further geological evidence suggests that some of the highest mountains in the area, where the city of *Moronihah* is believed to have been buried, stand over 6,000 feet tall. The size of the mountain that would have covered these cities is estimated at around 2,000 feet high. This reinforces the idea that these cities could have been buried under tremendous natural forces.



Causing the Water to "Come Up"

In 3rd Nephi it tells of the water that came up to destroy cities and the inhabitants that resided there. There are several places along the **Polochic River** where major landslides definitely took place, which is probably the best way for water to come up in a natural way. One of these sites is the proposed city of *Jerusalem*, a site that correlates and triangulates very well with the *forest of Mormon*, *Helam*, *Amulon* and the *narrow strip of wilderness*. The Pasión River Model research team knew where this landslide should be before they found it on the map or actually visited the location. This site still has water where the city was covered up. Other sites are now covered up with silt. In the case of the **La Tinta** site, there is approximately one hundred feet of silt where the water used to be. Centuries of landslides and heavy rains have caused have silt to wash down and fill them up.

3 Nephi 9:7 *Yea, and the city of Onihah and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Mocum and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Jerusalem and the inhabitants thereof; and waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof. . . .*



A Catastrophic Fissure in the Earth and a Sunken Temple

In addition to landslides that buried cities and created water dams, massive fissures, likely caused by earthquakes, have also been discovered. A particularly noteworthy fissure at **Aguateca**, near **Ceibal**, is one kilometer long and about 30 meters deep. The magnitude of the earthquake required to cause such destruction would have been enormous (Ishihara 2008).



Fissure at Aguateca



Showing proximity of Ceibal and Aguateca

This is also evident as far north as **Chetumal Bay**, where a Maya temple became partially submerged in the waters by **Cerro**s (Andrews 1995). According to local geologists, this horrific event occurred around 50 AD, remarkably close to the time frame described in 3rd Nephi (Ainsworth 2012).

Conclusion

This chapter presents compelling geological claims that support the catastrophic events described in *The Book of Mormon*. The overwhelming evidence found in the regions around the Pasió River Model directly correlate with the scriptural accounts. Each climatic description in 3rd Nephi 8 and 9, of *The Book of Mormon*, including phrases like "great storm, such as one as never had been known in all the land" (3 Nephi 8:5) or "shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder" (3 Nephi 8:6) seems improbable to a trained geologist. Yet, the evidence from these extreme events is undeniable.

What was once considered impossible to prove is now backed by substantial geological data. The evidence from volcanic ash deposits, submerged cities, massive landslides and earthquake-induced fissures paint a vivid picture of the catastrophic events that may have unfolded during the time of Christ's death and resurrection, aligning with the dramatic events recorded in *The Book of Mormon*.



8 – The Jaredites

Only a few chapters in the book of Ether provide information about the lives of the *Jaredites*, and the story of their early existence during the Early Formative time frame. A large part of their story is somewhat speculative, but it all seems to add up. The *Jaredites* eventually advanced beyond the formative stage where the scientific community classified them as Maya. This amazing story began when they departed from the *Tower of Babel* and ended at their final collapse around 300 BC.

The Pasi3n River Model's research team has tracked the *Jaredites*, starting with their journey to the promised land (where there were amazing beginnings in northern Belize), the rise and fall of their great empire, the horrendous *Jaredite* war, and the remnant which survived. These accounts are segmented and match the time frames established by the scientific community involved in research in Mesoamerica.

Phase 1: Archaic Period: 2500 BC – 2000 BC

It is impossible to produce an exact assessment of the *Jaredite's* travel route because geographical information in the scriptures is very vague. However, enough information is given to have confidence that an Atlantic Ocean route is possible. This particular route is necessary for the essential connection to the location of the “first landing.” There is strong evidence requiring the “first landing” to be on the shores of **Chetumal Bay**.

Alma 22:30 *And it [the land of Bountiful] bordered upon the land which they called Desolation, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken . . . it being the place of their **first landing**. [Emphasis added.]*

Based on the belief that the *land of Cumorah* was the location of the destruction of their people, the *Jaredite* arrival would have to originate from the Atlantic Ocean.

Even though the foregoing description of the proposed route is lacking in solid evidences, it legitimately appears to be superior to the Pacific route.



The following scriptures provide a limited amount of information for a suggested route:

Ether 1:33 *Which Jared came forth with his brother and their families, with some others and their families, **from the great tower**, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, . . .* [Emphasis added.]

Ether 1:42 *And when thou hast done this thou shalt go at the head of them **down into the valley which is northward**. . .* [Emphasis added.]

Ether 2:5 *And it came to pass that the Lord commanded them that they should go forth into the wilderness, yea, into that quarter **where there never had man been**. . .* [Emphasis added.]

Ether 2:6 . . . *they did travel in the wilderness, and did build barges, in which they **did cross many waters**, . . .* [Emphasis added.]

Ether 2:13 . . . *the Lord did bring Jared and his brethren forth even to that **great sea which divideth the lands**. [Emphasis added.]*

Ether 2:16 *And the Lord said: Go to work and build, **after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built**. . .* [Emphasis added.]

It is unclear where *Jared* was when they began the trek northward. It was probably in northern Iraq. Bible experts speculate that the *Tower of Babel* was somewhere in northern Iraq, which does seem reasonable since the elevations are higher in that area – they would be closer “to reaching heaven.” However, some feel the tower was built towards the south at a lower elevation. Either way, they would be heading north, a scriptural requirement, and eventually encounter the **Black Sea**. The Book of Mormon text is not specific enough to know exactly where they traveled, but in order to match up with an Atlantic crossing they would have to go across Europe. If they followed the **Danube River** it would take them well across Europe, getting them fairly close to the Atlantic.

There is only one location along the Atlantic coast that meets the scriptural requirements of having the mountains and forests to provide long straight logs, essential for building their long barges. That location is in the **Pyrenees Forests**, at the border of Spain and France.

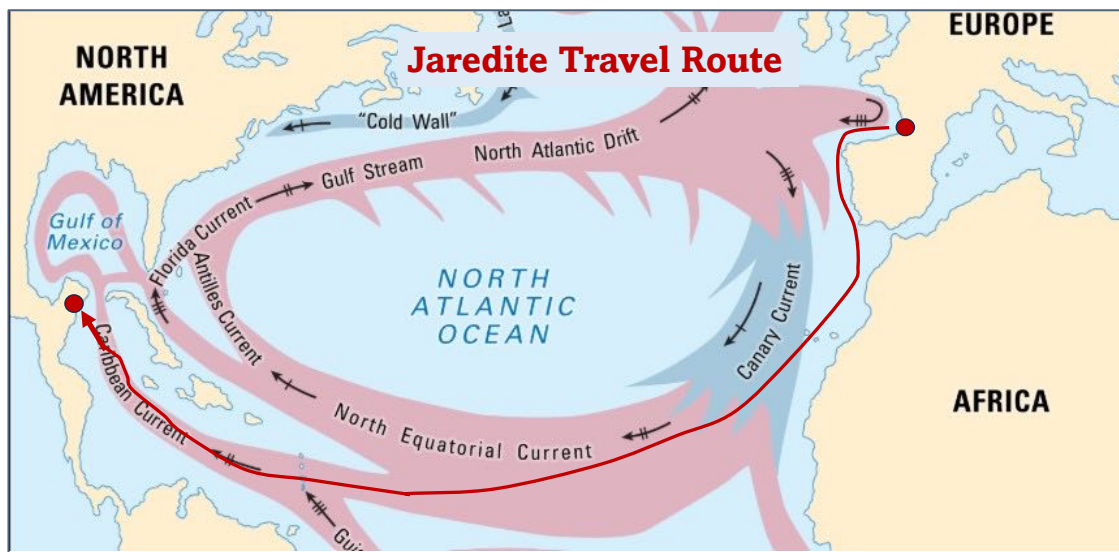
Ether 2:16 *And the Lord said: Go to work and build, after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built. And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did go to work, and also his brethren, and built barges after the manner which they had built, according to the instructions of the Lord. And they were small, and they were light upon the water, even like unto the lightness of a fowl upon the water.*



Pyrenees Forest

This was an ideal place to prepare for a long journey across the great waters. It was at a location where the **Pyrenees Mountains** extended their forest to the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. These forests contained large, straight logs that would be invaluable for building barges. This area also includes the **Cantabrian Mountains** next to the north shore of the Atlantic Ocean, making an ideal location for the brother of Jared to find the stones for light.

Ether 2:25 *And behold, I prepare you against these things; for ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, and the winds which have gone forth, . . .*



Once the barges reached the northwest corner of Spain the currents would take them straight to **Chetumal Bay**. However, just north of Spain the current is weak. The winds would get the barges to the Canary Current and then on to the Caribbean Current.

It took the *Jaredites* 344 days to cross the Atlantic, which seems excessive. This is likely due to the possibility of stopping off along the way to take care of their animals and bees. Also, they could have hugged the shoreline for a considerable distance.

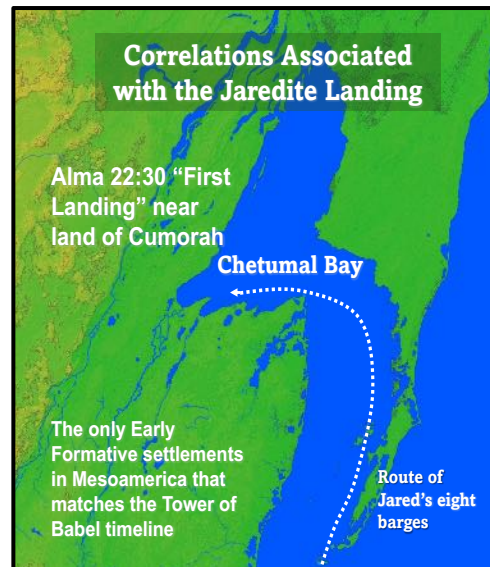
Did they find a *promised land* – a land that was choice above all others?

Ether 6:12 *And they did land 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 6:13 *And it came to pass that they went forth upon the face of the land and began to till the earth.*

Ether 6:18 *And it came to pass that they 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 6:28 *And he [Orihah, son of Jared] began to reign, and the people began to prosper; and they became exceedingly rich. [Emphasis added.]*



Phase 2: Early Formative 2000 BC – Middle Preclassic 950 BC

Late Archaic farming and large-scale fisheries in the wetlands of the pre-Columbian Maya lowlands

The **Smithsonian** magazine reported in November 2024:

Roughly 4,000 years ago, hunter-gatherers in Central America built a network of canals and ponds to trap fish. Their system could have captured enough seafood to feed 15,000 people each year, according to a study published in the journal *Science Advances*.

The *Jaredites* landed near **Cerros** in **Chetumal Bay**, where they were greatly blessed with the land's capacity to produce crops year-around because of ideal soil, water and climate conditions. During their early years they utilized the fertile soil along the riverbanks and in the wetland areas. The picture to the right illustrates how they utilized the wetlands and water system to develop advanced cropping systems. They were also able to use these resources to farm the fish that they had carried with them on the long oceanic voyage.

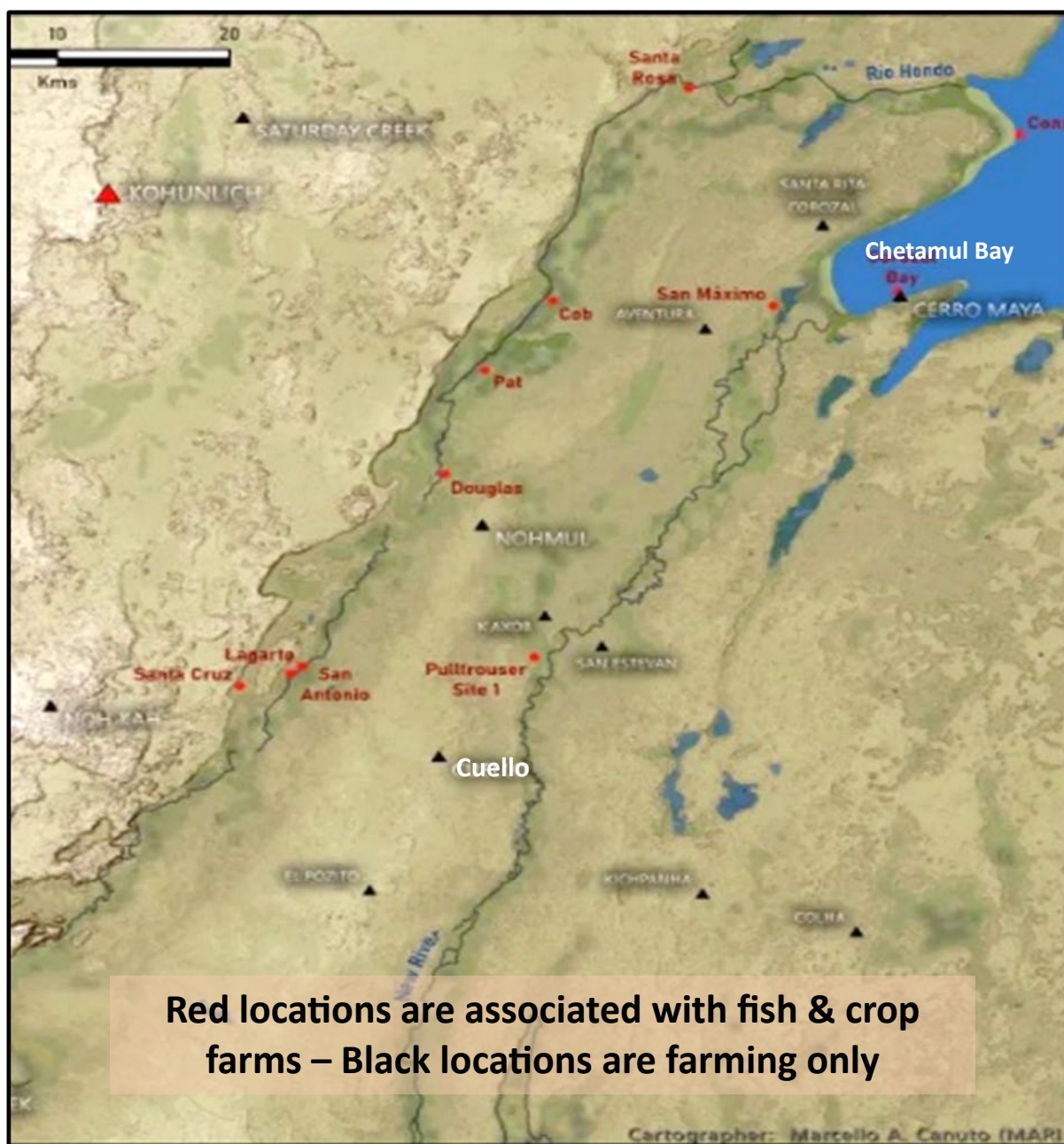


Farming the wetlands

The area in northern Belize is the only area in Mesoamerica where this early intensive farming took place, which solidifies the accuracy of the Pasión River Model (Turner 1981). These areas

have been scientifically evaluated and the established time frames match very well with the periods in the book of Ether – soon after the *Tower of Babel*.

The map below illustrates the early locations where they began to till the earth. The red and black marks indicate the locations where they planted crops and farmed their fish.



Around 1450 BC – during the Early Preclassic period – coincident with archaeological evidence of early settlements, there is an abrupt increase in human activity (Wahl 2007).

Ether 10:4 *And it came to pass that his father did build up many cities upon the face of the land, and the people began again to spread over all the face of the land. . .*

About 1000 BC the Maya started to expand their territory into the **El Mirador Basin**, to the ancient Maya site of **Nakbé**, and later to the city of **El Mirador** (Hansen 2022).

Calibrated radiocarbon dates from pottery at the site of **Cuello** fall between 1100 and 400 BC (Andrews 1990).

LiDAR coverage of a large contiguous area within the **Mirador-Calakmul Karst Basin** of northern Guatemala has identified a concentration of Preclassic Maya sites (1000 BC to 150 AD) connected by causeways, forming a web of implied social, political and economic interactions (Hansen 2022).

Northern Belize serves as a valuable region for researching and understanding early Maya developments. In particular, the ancient Maya site of **Colha** in northern Belize is a focal point of some early developments beginning in the Archaic period (Valdez 2021).



Phase 3: Middle Preclassic 950 BC – Late Preclassic 400 BC

Throughout the Middle Preclassic, Mayan farmers gradually spread across the lowlands, primarily by following rivers inland before colonizing the interior forests (Sharer 2006).

These earliest Mayans lived in small, independent villages composed of pole-and-thatch houses and ancillary structures, usually built on low platforms (Hauk 2015).

It is very difficult to determine a developmental pattern during these formative periods because their structures were made of perishable materials (Inomata 2013).

The following scriptures place *Riplakish* and *Morianton*, *Jaredites* who ruled around 1000 BC, at about the same time the larger structures were starting to be built.

Ether 10:5 *And it came to pass that Riplakish did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord, for he did have many wives and concubines, and did lay that upon men's shoulders which was grievous to be borne; yea, he did tax them with heavy taxes; and with the taxes he did build many spacious buildings.*

Ether 10:12 *And it came to pass that 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, and such things which had been restored unto them.*

During this time the Olmecs were infiltrating the Maya settlements, especially in northern Guatemala, Belize and southern Yucatán (Mexico). This development demonstrates major implications in Mayan culture.

Possibly the earliest Maya site in all of Maya land is located near the riverbanks of northern Belize. This site dates back to the Early Formative period. The small structure at **Cuello**, Belize, may provide information about the beginning of temple building and other structures. (Other nearby mounds have not been excavated.)

Jaredite Relationships with the Maya and Olmec			
Year Settled	Olmec Locations	Maya -Jaredite	Pre Maya - Jaredite
2000 _{BC}			Northern Belize
1900			↓
1800			
1700			
1600			
1500			
1400	San Lorenzo	Nakbe	
1300		El Mirador	
1200		Cuello	
1100	Ceibal	Aguada Fenix	
1000	Aguada Fenix		
900	La Venta		
800		Ceibal	
700			
600			
500			
400			

The *Jaredites* were continuing to expand, during this time period, beyond the northern borders of Belize and the **Mirador Basin** of Guatemala. It appears they were migrating to many areas, such as southern Guatemala (in places like **Copan**, **Kaminaljuyu** and a little later, **Quirigua**). This migration pattern became a factor in their coming relationship with the Nephites.

Lehi and his family arrived during this time period, as well as Mulek and his family. Mulek and his followers apparently arrived at the mouth of the Belize River around 600 BC. They then worked their way up the river into an area where the Maya (*Jaredites*) were maintaining a game preserve. This could have created a conflict between the *Mulekites* and the *Jaredites*, as it is recorded in Omni 1:17 that the *Mulekites* " . . . had had many wars and serious contentions, and had fallen by the sword from time to time; . . ."



Phase 4: Late Preclassic 400 BC – Early Classic 250 BC

By approximately 400 BC the *Jaredites* (identified here with early Maya populations), along with the *Nephites* and *Mulekites*, had become well established across much of Guatemala, Belize, and the Yucatán Peninsula (Mexico). Eventually, internal *Jaredite* conflicts intensified and escalated into catastrophic civil war. Eventually, the last of the *Jaredites* (*Coriantumr*) was rescued by the *Mulekites* and lived with them for "nine moons." *The Book of Mormon* tells of *Coriantumr*'s arrival to *Zarahemla*, and how the *Mulekites* learned of the history of the *Jaredite* people.

Omni 1:20 *And it came to pass in the days of Mosiah; 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.*

Omni 1:21 *And they gave an account of one Coriantumr, and the slain of his people. And Coriantumr was discovered by the people of Zarahemla [Mulekites]; and he dwelt with them for the space of nine moons. [Emphasis added.]*

The Final Jaredite War

Ether 13:1 *And now I, Moroni, proceed to finish my record concerning the destruction of the people of whom I have been writing.*

Ether 13:15 . . . *there began to be a great war among the people, for there were many who rose up, who were mighty men, and sought to destroy Coriantumr by their secret plans of wickedness. . . .*

The great *Jaredite* nation had been blessed by God many times for over two thousand years, however it reached a point where wickedness prevailed. When *Ether* and other righteous men no longer had any influence, it became inevitable that these *Jaredite* people were ripe for destruction.

For the first one thousand years they found success by living the simple life of being nothing more than peasant farmers engaged in righteous living. Although there were times when trouble surfaced, they were always able to rebound. As these common people started to become active in the formation of a more advanced society, and as long as they were righteous, they were blessed, having a more advanced lifestyle. However, in approximately 300 BC, trouble became more than a temporary conflict. There arose a segment of the population set on taking over the "old guard," attempting to overthrow the pattern of lineal succession.

Coriantumr

Coriantumr was associated with the ruling class of those who were a part of the lineage that went back to the great prophet, the *brother of Jared* (the prophet who guided them out of Babylonia). **This pattern of lineal succession** came under siege by two sets of brothers: *Shared* and *Gilead* (brothers) and *Lib* and *Shiz* (brothers). It was not long before it was an all-out war when millions of men, women and children were killed.

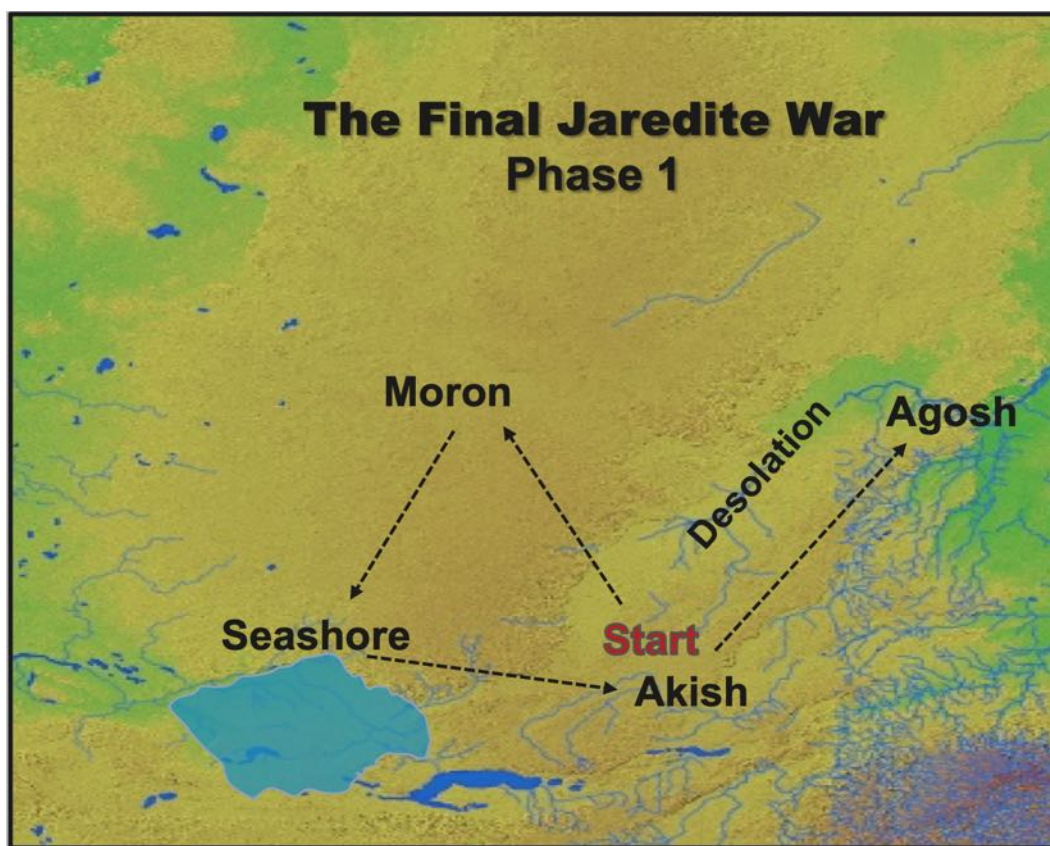
Ether 14:17 *Now the name of the brother of Lib was called Shiz. And it came to pass that **Shiz pursued after Coriantumr, and he did overthrow many cities, and he did slay both women and children, and he did burn the cities.*** [Emphasis added.]

Ether 14:18 *And there went a fear of Shiz throughout all the land; yea, **a cry went forth throughout the land**—Who can stand before the army of Shiz? Behold, he sweepeth the earth before him!* [Emphasis added.]

Ether 14:21 *And so great and lasting had been the war, and so long had been the scene of bloodshed and carnage, that **the whole face of the land was covered with the bodies of the dead.*** [Emphasis added.]

Phase 1 of the Final Jaredite War:

The **Mirador Basin** (*Land of Moron*) has been identified as a strong legitimate Book of Mormon location, and a location of the final *Jaredite* war. Other locations mentioned earlier (*Heshlon*, *Gilgal* and *Akish*) are not known, but are likely in the vicinity of the *land of Moron*. After their battle in the *land of Akish*, they proceeded up to the *land of Moron* and then on to the seashore. The following two scriptures help identify where the *land of Moron* is located by (1) being at a higher elevation and (2) being near to the *land of Desolation*.



Ether 7:5 *And when he had gathered together an army he **came up unto the land of Moron** where the king dwelt . . .* [Emphasis added.]

Ether 7:6 *Now the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was **near the land which is called Desolation** by the Nephites.* [Emphasis added.]

After the west sea, they went to the *land of Akish* again and then on to the *plains of Agosh*. After *Agosh* they went east to the seashore, which was the Caribbean Ocean. It appears they passed just north of the *narrow neck* and hit the *land of Akish* again. The *Mulekites* later called this the *land of Desolation* after the final Jaredite war "the whole face of the land was covered with the bodies of the dead."

Ether 14:15 . . . *Lib did pursue him until he came to the plains of Agosh.* . . .

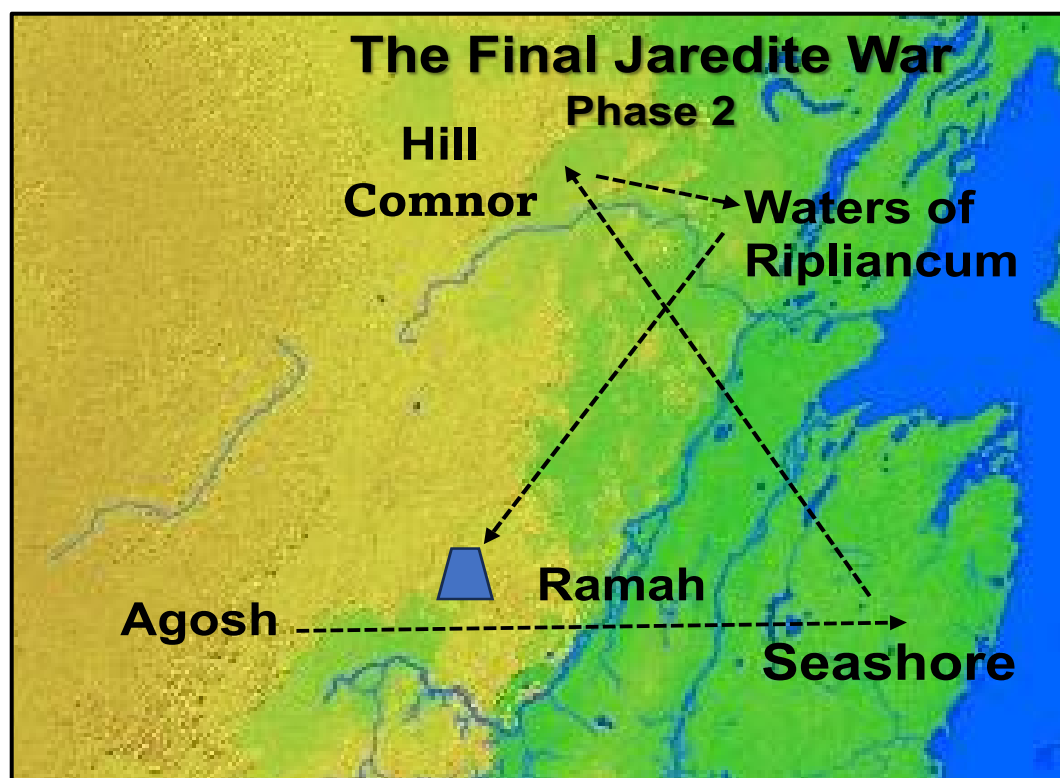
Ether 14:26 *And it came to pass that Shiz did pursue Coriantumr eastward, even to the **borders by the seashore*** . . . [Emphasis added.]

The *plains of Agosh* to the northeast appear to be near the **Rio Azul River**, the river that eventually connects with the **Hondo River**. They later went east to the **Caribbean Ocean**, where they fought another battle.

Phase 2: The Land of Corihor Wars

The *land of Corihor* is located in the southeast corner of **Quintana Roo**, Mexico. It is a very fertile area where many *Jaredites* lived. It was the place of the major *Jaredite* war where hundreds of thousands of people perished.

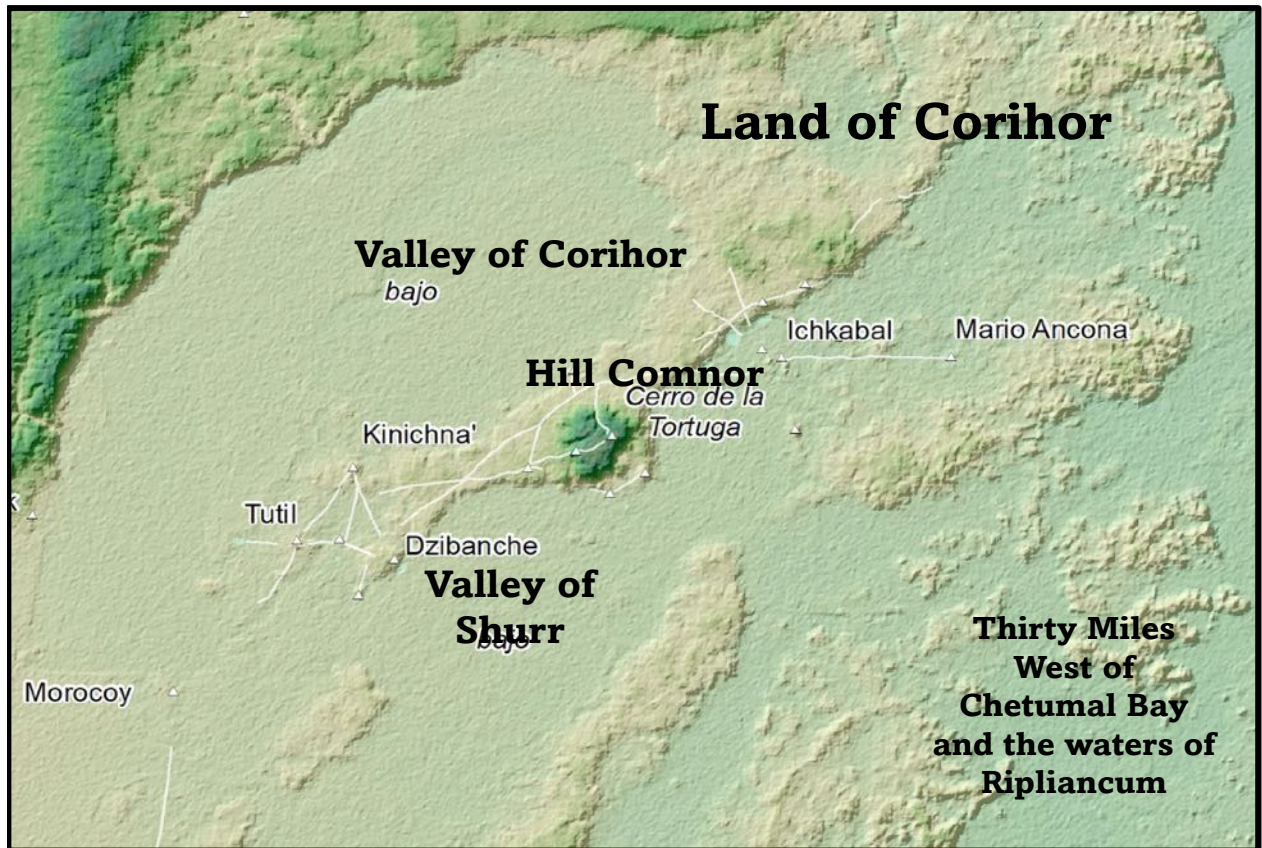
Ether 14:31 *Now the loss of men, women and children on both sides was so great that Shiz commanded his people that they should not pursue the armies of Coriantumr.* . . .



Ether 15:2 *He saw that there had been slain by the sword already nearly two millions of his people, and he began to sorrow in his heart; yea, there had been slain two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children.*

Hill Comnor is about thirty miles west of **Chetumal Bay**.

Ether 14: 28 *And they [army of Shiz] pitched their tents in the **valley of Corihor**; and Coriantumr pitched his tents in the **valley of Shurr**. Now the **valley of Shurr** was near the **hill Comnor**; wherefore, Coriantumr did gather his armies together upon the **hill Comnor** and did sound a trumpet unto the armies of Shiz to invite them forth to battle. [Emphasis added.]*



Ether 15:8 *And it came to pass that he 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 them; and therefore, on the morrow they did come to battle. (Emphasis added.)*

Ether 15:10 *And it came to pass that the armies of Coriantumr did press upon the armies of Shiz that they beat them, that they caused them to flee before them; and they did flee southward and did pitch their tents in a place which was called Ogath.*



The dark circles on the left side of this picture are cenotes. These are formed by the collapse of limestone caves and sinkholes. Some of them are deep pools of water, others overflow as fountains. The picture at the right shows a cenote next to the **hill Achotal**, the proposed site of the *hill Ramah/Cumorah*.



Hill Ramah and Hill Cumorah Are the Same Hill

Ether 15:11 *And it came to pass that the army of Coriantumr did pitch their tents by the hill Ramah; and it was the same hill where my father Mormon did hide up the records unto the Lord, which were sacred. [Emphasis added.]*

Ether 15:14 *Wherefore, they were for the space of four years gathering together the people, that they might get all who were upon the face of the land, and that they might receive all the strength which it was possible that they could receive.*



The Olmec Role in Book of Mormon Events

The question of whether the Olmecs may have played a role in events described in *The Book of Mormon* – particularly during periods of potential interaction with emerging Maya societies – invites careful consideration. While definitive conclusions remain elusive, the topic presents several avenues for thoughtful exploration.

Modern scholarship has not reached a universal consensus regarding the factors contributing to the decline of the Olmec civilization. Within this context of scholarly discussion, it may be useful to consider whether broader regional disruptions could provide additional interpretive frameworks.

If a proposed chronology places aspects of Olmec transformation or decline near periods associated with the *Jaredite* narrative, this temporal proximity may warrant examination.

Such comparisons do not imply direct correlation but may offer opportunities for comparative analysis. This perspective naturally introduces demographic considerations. Scriptural descriptions of large-scale warfare, involving substantial populations, raises questions about regional population dynamics and the possible presence of multiple interacting societies.

In interpretive models where Olmec and Maya populations are viewed as having experienced sustained interaction, the potential for shared regional experiences (including conflict, migration or integration) becomes a subject of inquiry rather than conclusive. Viewed from this analytical standpoint, the involvement of additional regional populations could represent one possible lens through which to examine descriptions of extensive wartime losses.

Similarly, disruptions described in succession traditions may be understood as consistent with periods of social or political instability, a pattern commonly observed in many ancient societies.

This table provides a greater understanding of the chronological progression of both the Maya and the Olmec. The Pre-Maya column represents the period of time when the *Jaredites* were transitioning into a more advanced society, eventually merging from primitive dwellings into more sophisticated development. During that time, they achieved higher population levels and eventually expanded into the **Mirador Basin**, as well as other areas in the Americas.

One prominent Harvard archaeologist observed:

Olmec influences were assimilated into the emerging Maya civilization. They became fully Mayanized and, in the artistic and intellectual realms, the Lowland Maya far exceeded any other people (Willey 2010).

Chronological Progression of Maya and Olmec

Year Settled	Olmec Locations	Maya -Jaredite	Pre Maya - Jaredite
2000	BC		Northern Belize
1900			
1800			
1700			
1600			
1500			
1400	San Lorenzo	Nakbe	
1300		El Mirador	
1200		Cuello	
1100	Ceibal	Aguada Fenix	
1000	Aguada Fenix		
900	La Venta		
800		Ceibal	
700			
600			
500			
400			

The Olmecs seem to have abruptly started around 1500 BC, which means their population expansion levels were delayed when compared to the Maya. It also appears they were already fairly sophisticated when they first started.

For an unknown reason, within 400 years the Olmecs essentially moved out of the Gulf Coast area. It is amazing, however, that the first place they concentrated on was **Aguada Flex**, a location in Maya land. This would suggest that there was some level of compatibility there.

The map below illustrates the Maya and Olmec level of compatibility. Scientifically, it appears that the Maya already occupied **Aguada Flex** shortly before the Olmec arrived.



This map also suggests the Olmec made very little progress in expanding their land base. They had hundreds of years to do that. They had to go somewhere. Evidence shows they actually assimilated or integrated into the Maya culture. This would also support the claim that the Olmec presence provides the higher population levels needed to meet the scriptural requirements of having many millions involved in the final *Jaredite* battle.

Ether 15:2 *He saw that there had been slain by the sword already nearly . . . two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children.*

This scripture explains the status of the war before they gathered at *hill Shem*. One would assume that they still had an additional large number of men ready for the final battle. However, they postponed the war for four years so they could spend the time recruiting others. Therefore, when the two million men with *Coriantumr* are considered along with similar numbers from *Shiz*'s men, four million men had been destroyed. Add new recruits plus the families of those slain, the death toll numbers are staggering.

It is important to point out that the war was likely isolated within the main *Jaredite* area – a region that includes northern Guatemala, Belize and southern Yucatán.

The scripture below provides additional insight as to the numbers of people who were annihilated. It could easily exceed ten million. It would appear that the war would need additional people to satisfy the required number and this is where the Olmec fit in. There were certainly many more *Jaredites* in the Central America area, however most of them were outside the war zone.

Ether 14:22 *And so swift and speedy was the war that there was **none left to bury the dead**, but they did march forth from the shedding of blood to the shedding of blood, leaving the bodies of both men, women, and children strewed upon the face of the land, to become a prey to the worms of the flesh.* [Emphasis added.]

An indicator used to measure the amount of assimilation would be the amount of trade conducted between the two entities. The map below shows the trade routes that existing between the two ancient cultures (Netchev 2025).



Olmec Trade Routes Covered a Significant Portion of the Land of the Maya

Evidence of extensive trading within the lower portion of Maya land provides additional evidence the Olmec assimilated into the Maya regions. The following list provides additional support for these claims.

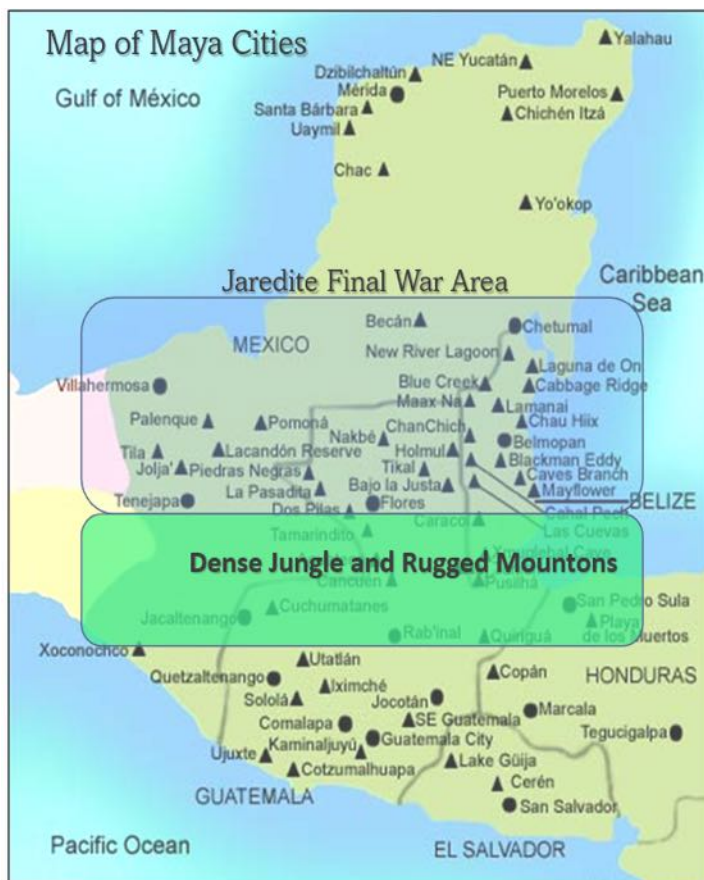
Sites with trading evidence (trafficking) between the Olmec and Maya

Region	Site	Time Period	Key Sources
Guatemala	Ceibal	Middle Preclassic	Inomata, et al. 2013
Guatemala	Tak'alik Ab'aj	Middle–Late Preclassic	Graham, Heizer & Shook
Guatemala Highlands	Kaminaljuyú	Middle–Late Preclassic	Sharer & Traxler 2006
Guatemala	Chocolá	Middle Preclassic	Kaplan & Valdés studies
Belize	Cahal Pech	Early–Middle Formative	Garber, et al.
Belize	Blackman Eddy	Early Formative	Brown, Garber & colleagues
Northern Belize	Cuello	Early Preclassic	Hammond 1991
Chiapas	Chiapa de Corzo	Middle Formative	Bachand & Lowe; Lowe studies
Southern Mexico (Chiapas)	Izapa	Late Formative	Clark, Lee & Lowe
Guatemala Highlands	Salama Valley	Middle Preclassic	Houk et al.

There is clear evidence of many Maya who did not die in the final war. The map to the right outlines the location of where the war was likely fought, and also the locations where there were *Jaredites* not even aware of the war due to natural barriers.

The cities in southern Guatemala and Honduras appear to have also avoided the war. This is because there is a considerable distance between the war zone and the *land of Nephi*. This is likely due to the dense jungle and mountainous terrain. This also means any Maya who were neighbors of the *Nephites* would have no idea what was going on to the north of them.

Some of the *Jaredite* lands not affected by the war are located in southern Guatemala. These were *Lamanite* lands referenced in the first five books within *The Book of Mormon*.



Natural barriers between war area and land southward.

The *Nephites* were located primarily in the **Salama** area and the Maya in most other parts of **central Guatemala**. The map to the right has *Lehi* landing right in the middle of Maya country at places where it would be easy to associate with them. It is possible *Laman* and *Lemuel* became part of that society after *Nephi* left. *Jacob* called all people that would seek to destroy the people of *Nephi* as *Lamanites*, and those who were friendly to *Nephi* were called *Nephites* (Jacob 1:4).



There are two obvious reasons why *Laman* and *Lemuel* could have become more involved with them; they developed a darker skin, and they became more numerous than the *Nephites*.

2 Nephi 5:21 *And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.*

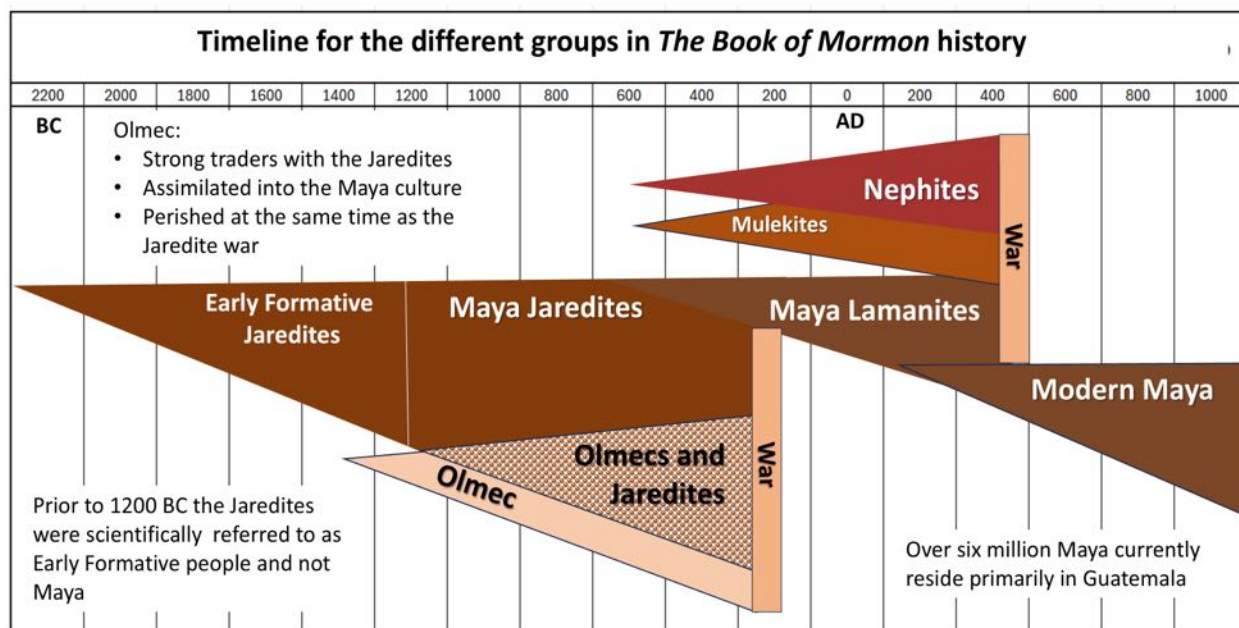
The second indicator, that supports other civilizations already residing near the *land of Nephi*, is the rapid growth of the people of *Laman* and *Lemuel* and their descendants.

This is when the Pasión River Model's research team realized the Mayan people in southern Guatemala were to some extent the people in *The Book of Mormon* referred to as *Lamanites*. There are now 6.5 million people in Guatemala that are considered to be indigenous people (Maya).

One other interesting factor: while the Roylances were serving in Guatemala, they visited with tour guides working near a popular vacation spot located right in the middle of people who consider themselves to be Mayan. For some reason, this vacation spot is very popular with Israeli tourists, who only speak Hebrew – so the tour guides had to learn Hebrew. One of these young men grew up in the jungle, where he did not have access to a school. He had somehow mastered not only their local Q'eqchi' language, but also spoke Spanish, English and Hebrew. The Roylances were surprised and commented that it must have been difficult to learn the Hebrew language. The guide responded, "not at all. It is just like the Q'eqchi' language." He said there were even similar words. LDS Church members from **Central Guatemala**, who speak this language, are convinced they are descended from the *Lamanites* in *The Book of Mormon*.

Some of the *Jaredite* (Maya) lands that were not affected by the war are located in southern Guatemala and were likely *Lamanite* lands that are associated with the first five books in *The Book of Mormon*.

Summary



***Jaredites* – from the time they left their homeland to the present**

Jaredite Route to the Promised Land

The proposed route to *the promised land* is presented primarily as a set of possibilities; it includes relatively few hard facts and is offered as a plausible pathway rather than a definitive reconstruction. It is generally assumed that the group traveled north from their homeland, although the homeland location remains uncertain and is often associated with the region of the Tower of Babel. In this version of the journey, they pass through the Black Sea and continue up the Danube River to France, where they construct barges and then spend 344 days crossing the Atlantic. At present, this scenario is best understood as a reasoned narrative rather than a fact-based itinerary.

The Promised Land

Over time, they find that the promised land is for real. After several centuries of farming the lowlands along numerous waterways, they develop into an advanced society, build more substantial homes, and expand into other regions – first into the **Mirador Basin**. In this framework, they later become recognizable within the scientific narrative as the Maya. Through the centuries, they experience growth across much of the Americas, along with famines and wars, yet the civilization endures.

Maya and Olmec Assimilation

Around 1300 BC, the Maya begin developing relationships with the Olmec, and a major trading network emerges – described by some scholars as a process that ultimately led to large-scale Olmec assimilation into Maya society.

The Final Jaredite War

Around 350 BC several men challenged the *Jaredite* establishment and succeeded in waging a horrific war that resulted in massive loss of life. In this proposal, the conflict is largely confined to northern Guatemala, Belize and the southern Yucatán (Mexico), while other Maya regions escape the worst of the catastrophe. This interpretation also suggests significant Olmec involvement, aligning the end of Olmec society with the devastation of the war.

Lamanites and Maya

There are also those who believe that Maya groups in southern Guatemala, and Maya settlements such as **Kaminaljuyu**, **Quirigua**, **Cobán**, and others, were located near *Lehi's landing*. In the same view, *Laman* and *Lemuel* may have assimilated with Maya populations, but still be referred to as *Lamanites* within *The Book of Mormon*.

Some Mayan People Survived

Meanwhile, the broader Maya world survived and continues into later centuries. During the Spanish inquisition, some of the indigenous communities avoided persecution by seeking refuge in the mountains of Guatemala and Belize. This saved their lives, as it was difficult to get to the places where they lived. Only recently have roads been built into the areas where they live. Today, various Maya groups are associated with communities recognized by local governments, including the Q'eqchi' and Lacandon, among others.

Summary from a Book of Mormon Perspective

Maya and Olmec Connections to the Book of Mormon: Pasi3n River Model presents a comprehensive effort to demonstrate that the events described in *The Book of Mormon* occurred in a real, identifiable setting within ancient Mesoamerica. For readers who accept *The Book of Mormon* as a true historical record, the book offers a framework in which scriptural geography, archaeology and modern scientific discoveries converge in meaningful and faith-affirming ways.

The central thesis is that the lands of *The Book of Mormon* can be located in the region of present-day Guatemala and Belize, with the **Pasi3n River** identified as the *River Sidon* and the ancient Maya city of **Ceibal** corresponding to *Zarahemla*. The authors present multiple lines of evidence – population changes, construction phases, cultural shifts and geographic relationships – that align with key events recorded in *The Book of Mormon*, such as migrations, periods of righteousness and peace, and eventual destruction.

From this perspective, recent archaeological advances, especially LiDAR imaging, are seen as particularly significant. These technologies reveal vast cities, fortifications and dense populations hidden beneath the jungle, providing a plausible context for the large and complex societies described in *The Book of Mormon*. Discoveries such as extensive fortification systems are interpreted as physical evidence of the defensive works and warfare described in the text.

The model also emphasizes that numerous locations – over thirty in total – can be correlated with Book of Mormon places through consistent relationships in distance, direction and elevation. This high level of internal consistency is presented as evidence that the geography described in the scripture is not random nor fictional, but reflects a real, coherent landscape.

Additionally, the book situates the *Jaredites*, *Mulekites* and *Nephites* within known Mesoamerican cultures, suggesting that the Olmec and Maya civilizations may represent these peoples or their descendants. Chronological alignments between archaeological periods and Book of Mormon timelines further reinforce this connection.

Importantly, the authors affirm that while archaeology can support and illuminate the text, a testimony of *The Book of Mormon* ultimately comes through spiritual means. The purpose of this research is not to replace faith, but to complement it – providing tangible, intellectual support that strengthens belief and deepens appreciation for the historical reality of the scripture.

Overall Perspective

For believers, this work can be understood as a modern witness that *The Book of Mormon* describes real people in real places. By aligning scriptural accounts with emerging archaeological evidence, the Pasi3n River Model seeks to reinforce confidence that the narrative is grounded in history, while inviting further study, exploration, and spiritual reflection.

Assurance Ratings of Sites in *The Book of Mormon*

Step 1 - Basic Requirements

1. The site must exist
2. It must be carbon dated
3. It must be of sufficient size
4. It must triangulate with two other sites
5. It must adhere to distance and elevations
6. It must adhere to directions

Step 2 Determine Assurance Rating

Rating #1 - Four (or more) of the basic requirements

Rating #2 - Three of the basic requirements

Rating #3 - Two of the basic requirements

Rating #4 - One of the basic requirements

Rating #5 - Unknown geographic location

Locations with a #1 Assurance Rating			
<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location	<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location
<i>Antionum, city of</i>	Uxbenka	<i>Melek, land of</i>	Sayaxche political division
<i>Bountiful, city of</i>	Altun Ha	<i>Moron, land of</i>	El Mirador Basin
<i>Bountiful, land of</i>	Land of Lakes & Belize River	<i>Moroni, city of</i>	East of Narrow Strip of Wilderness
<i>Cumorah, hill</i>	Achotal, hill	<i>Narrow neck</i>	Between Tikal and Desolation
<i>Desolation, city of</i>	Uaxactun	<i>Narrow pass</i>	Between Tikal and Desolation
<i>Forest of Mormon</i>	Biotopo del Quetzal area	<i>Narrow strip of wilderness</i>	SW Shore of Chetumal Bay
<i>Fortification, narrow neck</i>	Four km North of Tikal	<i>Nephi, greater land of</i>	South of Narrow Strip of Wilderness
<i>Gideon, city of</i>	Machaquila	<i>Nephi, land of</i>	Salama & Rabinal Valley
<i>Helam, land of</i>	Area around Tactic	<i>North country</i>	Lands north of Uaxactun
<i>Ishmael, land of</i>	Rabinal Valley	<i>Ramah, hill</i>	Achotal, hill
<i>Jaredite first landing</i>	SE Chetumal Bay	<i>Sidon River</i>	Pasión River
<i>Jerusalem, city of</i>	Tamahu	<i>Waters of Ripliancum</i>	West of Chetumal
<i>Lehi-Nephi, land of</i>	Salama Valley	<i>Zarahemla, city of</i>	Ceibal
<i>Manti, city of</i>	Cancuen	<i>Zarahemla, greater</i>	The Petén
<i>Manti, land of</i>	Southern end of the Petén	<i>Mulek, city of</i>	Ancient city of Belize City

Locations with a #2 Assurance Rating			
<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location	<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location
<i>Agosh, plains of</i>	Eastern side of Campeche	<i>Mulekite landing</i>	Belize City
<i>Ammonihah, city of</i>	Yaxchilan	<i>Nephite defensive corridor</i>	Between Coban and Tactic
<i>Antionum, land of</i>	South of the Maya Mountains	<i>Ogath</i>	East of Chetumal
<i>Boaz, city of</i>	Rio Azul	<i>Promised land, Jaredite</i>	Northeastern Belize
<i>Comner, hill</i>	West of Chetumal Bay	<i>Riplah, hill</i>	Hill Chabilchoch
<i>Corihor, valley of</i>	West of Chetumal Bay	<i>sea east</i>	Caribbean
<i>Cumorah, land of</i>	Northern Belize	<i>sea north</i>	Caribbean
<i>Desolation, land of</i>	NE Guatemala & Belize	<i>sea south</i>	Pacific Ocean
<i>East sea</i>	Bajo de Sante Fe	<i>sea west</i>	Gulf of Mexico
<i>East sea coast</i>	Caribbean coast	<i>Shemlon, land of</i>	Salama Valley
<i>East wilderness</i>	Maya Mountains	<i>Shilom, hill north</i>	North of San Juan
<i>Gadanton's mountain</i>	Maya Mountains	<i>Shilom, land of</i>	Salama Valley
<i>Gideon, land of</i>	Machaquila River Basin	<i>Shurr, valley</i>	West of Chetumal Bay
<i>Helam, city of</i>	City of Tactic	<i>Sidon, the head of</i>	North of Manti
<i>Hermounts wilderness</i>	Lacandon National Park	<i>Siron, land of</i>	East end of lake Isabel
<i>Inheritance, land of</i>	Izapa	<i>Teancum, city of</i>	East of Uaxactun
<i>Jershon, land of</i>	Eastern Petén	<i>Waters of Mormon</i>	Biotopo del Quetzal
<i>Jordan, city of</i>	La Milpa	<i>Waters of Sebus</i>	In Rabinal Valley
<i>Lib's great city</i>	Tikal	<i>West sea</i>	Bajos northwest of Tikal
<i>Middoni, city of</i>	Valley of Rabinal	<i>Zarahemla, land of</i>	Area around Ceibal

Locations with a #3 Assurance Rating			
<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location	<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location
<i>Moroni, land of</i>	East of NSW	<i>Jaredite, first sea</i>	Black Sea
<i>West wilderness</i>	Tonina Area	<i>Joshua, by seashore</i>	Northern Guatemala
<i>Mocum</i>	Along Polochic River	<i>Laman, city of</i>	Near Salama Valley
<i>Akish, wilderness of</i>	Northeastern Belize	<i>South wilderness</i>	Santa Cruz wilderness
<i>Ammonihah, land of</i>	Northwestern Petén	<i>Manti, hill</i>	In Ceibal
<i>Amnihu, hill</i>	Central Petén, east of Ceibal	<i>Morianton, city of</i>	Along Caribbean coast
<i>Amulon, land of</i>	Near Puruhla	<i>Moronihah, city of</i>	Along Polochic River
<i>Ani Anti</i>	Salama Valley	<i>Nephihah, plains of</i>	Southern border of Belize
<i>Antiparah, city of</i>	West of Caribbean	<i>Omner, city of</i>	Coastal city
<i>Antipus mount</i>	Sierra De La Minas	<i>Onidah hill</i>	South of the Maya Mountains
<i>Cavity of a rock</i>	Near hill Achotal	<i>Onihah, city of</i>	The city of Santa Catalina
<i>Cumeni, city of</i>	Central Santa Cruz Mountains	<i>Shem, land of</i>	East of Chetumal Bay
<i>Hagoth, launch site</i>	East of Tikal	<i>Shim, hill</i>	NE Belize
<i>Jaredite second sea</i>	Atlantic Ocean	<i>Shimnilom, city of</i>	Near Salama Valley

Locations with a #4 Assurance Rating			
<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location	<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location
<i>Nehor, city of</i>	East of Mirador Basin	<i>Noah, land of</i>	East of Yaxchilan
<i>Nehor, land of</i>	East of Mirador Basin	<i>Shem, city of</i>	East of Chetumal Bay
<i>Nephihah, city of</i>	S. Coastal City	<i>Sidom, city of</i>	Northern Peten
<i>Noah, city of</i>	San Diego area	<i>Sidom, land of</i>	Northwestern Petén

Locations with a #5 Assurance Rating			
<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location	<i>Book of Mormon Location</i>	Geographic Location
<i>Gilgal, city of</i>	Unknown	<i>Jacob, city of</i>	Unknown
<i>Gilgal, valley of</i>	Unknown	<i>Jashon, land of</i>	Unknown
<i>Gingimno, city of</i>	Unknown	<i>Josh, city of</i>	Unknown
<i>Heth, land of</i>	Unknown	<i>Kishkumen, city of</i>	Unknown

About the Authors

Robert C. Roylance is an internationally recognized Agricultural Economist and formerly a General Manager with Farm Management Company, the agricultural investment arm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During his career, he developed and managed a 50,000 acre farm in Washington State (pumping water out of the Columbia River) and managed around 300 commercial farms. Most of them were leased to local farmers; however, he directly managed several large farms – from 1,000 to 25,000 acres. Robert's focus in agriculture internationally has been to help overcome the serious soil degradation which has led to starvation in some African and other developing countries. He has advised farmers in many countries, including Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, Indonesia, Uruguay, Mexico, Guatemala and Pakistan.

This book is the culmination of 30 years of study, research and on-site investigation of lands of *The Book of Mormon*. Robert has traveled to many of the ancient archaeological sites in Mesoamerica, and he and his wife lived in Guatemala from 2021 to 2023. He has a great love for the area, and for the people of that area – both anciently and today. His love for the people of *The Book of Mormon* increased his desire to learn more about the places they lived and the things they both enjoyed and endured.

Dr. Richard E. Terry is Professor Emeritus of Soil Science at Brigham Young University. Dr. Terry received a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy from Brigham Young University and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Soil Biology and Biochemistry from Purdue University. Dr. Terry's research in soil resources of the ancient Mesoamericans in southern Mexico and Central America began in 1997 when he was invited by BYU archaeologist Stephen Houston and geographer Perry Hardin to assist in setting up a field laboratory and analytic procedures for the measurement of soil phosphorus that resulted from ancient Maya activities related to food preparation, consumption, and waste disposal at the ancient city of Piedras Negras, Guatemala.

In the subsequent 20 years, Dr. Terry's soil research in Mesoamerica expanded beyond extractable phosphorus, plant nutrients and heavy metals to include stable carbon isotope analyses to help identify ancient corn fields. During that time, he published over 55 scientific journal articles about the soil resources of ancient Mesoamerica. At the time he retired, Dr. Terry collaborated with many prominent Mesoamerican archaeologists. He continues to communicate with them, and that has helped him with issues associated with *The Book of Mormon*. Initially, he never had any intention of becoming immersed in Book of Mormon geography, but as years passed, he began to pick up on situations that seemed to be relevant to *The Book of Mormon*. With time, he began to realize that he had been working in Book of Mormon country all along.

Robert Roylance had been doing a lot of research in Mesoamerica but was stumped when it came to the *narrow neck of land*. He thought that making some soil boreholes might provide additional information, so he Googled “boreholes Guatemala,” and Richard Terry's name came up. It turns out that Richard was taking soil samples associated with his work analyzing ancient Maya agriculture. Robert had met Richard many years earlier, when Richard was a member of the BYU Agronomy and Horticulture Department. During their first meeting, they realized they were both on the same page regarding Book of Mormon Geography, so a new partnership was born.

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INDEX

- 100 BC 66
 200 AD 62
 244 AD 62
 300 AD 52, 62
 325 AD 52, 62
 327 AD 52, 62
 350 AD treaty 10-13, 20, 50 52, 53,
 57, 59, 62, 63
 360 AD 12, 53, 63
 375 AD 51, 54, 58, 60, 61, 63
 376 AD 54
 378 AD 12, 54, 56, 58, 63
 379 AD 55, 56
 380 AD 55, 64
 384 AD 64
 385 AD 51, 52
 400 BC 66, 45, 46, 52
 500 BC 67
 586 BC 65
 700 BC 66
 Aaron 30, 31, 62
 Achotal, hill 35, 36, 64, 57, 88
 Agosh 85, 86
 Aguada Fenix 89, 90
 Aguateca 24, 70, 72
 Akish, land of 85, 86
 Alma 18, 20, 21, 22, 27, 29
 Alma, valley of 24, 28, 29
 Altun Ha 66, 68, 70, 72
 Amalekites 31
 Ammon 30
 Ammon's hill 27
 Ammonites 31
 Amnihu, hill 11
 Amulon, land of 24, 27
 Ancient trade route 42
 Anderson, Joe 25
 Andrews, Anthony 82
 Anti-Nephi-Lehies 23, 30, 31
 Antionum 11, 17, 20, 21
 Antiparah 17
 Archaic period 82
 Atitlan, lake 74
 Atlantic Ocean 35
 B'alaj Chan K'awiil, king 57, 58
 Babylonia 84
 Bajo 1, 42, 44
 Beliaev, Dmitri 54
 Belize City 38, 65
 Belize River 13, 45, 66, 69
 Belize, coastline 66
 Belmopan, Belize 57, 64
 Biotopo del Quetzal State Park 28
 Black sea 78, 94
 Blue Creek 57
 Boaz 51, 57
 Borowicz, James 56, 57
 Bountiful, city 10, 37, 67, 68, 72
 Bountiful, land of 16, 45, 46, 65,
 67-69, 72
 Brown University 42, 48
 BYU Hypothetical Model 9, 33, 40
 Cahal Pech 91, 92
 Calakmul 82
 Callender, Donald 41, 45
 Canary Ocean Current 35, 79
 Cancuen 18, 19, 20, 21
 Cantabrian Mountains 79
 Caracol 12, 49, 50, 53, 62
 Caracol, Northeast Acropolis 53
 Caribbean Ocean 7, 17, 35, 45, 79
 Ceibal 4, 5, 11-16, 20, 23, 26, 50,
 52, 66, 67, 70, 72, 76, 89, 92
 Ceibal abandonment 62
 Cerros 33, 34, 36, 74, 80
 Chabilchoch, hill 19, 22
 Chajmaic 21
 Chak Tok Ich'aak I 50, 53, 54
 Chak Tok Ich'aak II 50
 Chase, Arlen 51
 Chert 36
 Chetumal Bay 3, 33, 34, 76, 77, 79,
 80, 87
 Chiapa de Corzo 92
 Chixoy River 29
 Chicolà 92
 Chotocoy 24
 Christ 11, 13, 31, 49, 67, 69, 70, 72,
 73, 76
 Christ glyphs 71
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
 Saints 5
 Cival 42
 Clynes, Tom 42, 48
 Cobán 95
 Coe, Michael 43, 54
 Colha 82
 Comner, hill 86, 87
 Copan 83
 Coriantumr 86, 90
 Corihor 86
 Corihor, land of 85, 87
 Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary 37
 Cuello 80, 83, 89, 91, 92
 Cumeni 17
 Cumorah, hill 3, 35, 37, 40, 56, 57,
 64, 88
 Cumorah, land of 7, 10, 11, 26, 32,
 33, 34, 36, 38, 54, 56, 57, 58,
 60, 63
 Curl Snout/Curl Nose 55, 56
 Danube River 78, 94
 Dead Sea 7, 39, 42, 44
 Desolation, city 36, 37, 40, 41, 47,
 51, 54, 72
 Desolation, land of 44, 45, 46, 85,
 86
 Dos Pilas 24, 57, 58, 72
 Drew, David 55
 Duarte, Luis 23
 Early Classic 20, 84
 Early Formative 80
 Early Preclassic 81
 Earthquake fissures 76
 Earthquakes 73
 East Sea 10, 41, 42, 45
 East Wilderness 23
 Egypt 65
 El Mirador 42, 82, 89, 91
 El Perú 51, 55, 64
 El Porton 26, 30
 El Zotz 41, 48
 Entrada 51, 55-58, 59, 60, 63
 Estrada-Belli, Francisco 56
 Evidence, three types 61
 Ferguson, Thomas 5
 First Landing 33, 37, 46
 Flores, Guatemala 5
 Foliated Jaguar 49, 52, 62
 Forest of Mormon 27, 30, 31
 Fortification 8, 17, 41-44, 47-48,
 58, 59
 Four seas 7
 Gadianton robbers 12, 49, 50-53,
 62-63
 Garrison, Thomas 59
 Gid, city 68
 Gideon, land of 18
 Gilead 84
 Great Jaguar Paw 12, 50-51, 54, 55,
 63
 Grube, Nikolae 55
 Guatemala/Belize border 45
 Guderjan 64, 57
 Guenter, Stanley 57
 Gulf of Mexico 7
 Hale, Tom 74
 Hansen, Richard 43, 82

- Harvard Archaeologists 13, 15, 50,
 Harvard Exploration Team 66
 Hauck, Richard 5, 32, 82
 Headwaters of Sidon 17, 20, 21
 Helam 27, 28, 29, 31
 Helam, land of 24
 Heleman 16, 17, 24
 Helmke, Christophe 66
 Hermounts 11, 22
 Heshlon 85
 Hieroglyphics 1, 19
 Holmul 51, 58, 60
 Holzus, Eric 65
 Hondo River 33, 86
 Houston, Stephen 42, 48
 Hypothetical maps 9
 Inomata, Dr. Takeshi 4, 5, 82
 Ishmael 61
 Ishmael, land of 24, 27, 30
 Isthmus of Panama 39
 Isthmus of Tehuantepec 5, 6
 Izapa 92
 Jade stone at Blue Creek 57, 60, 64
 Jaredite barges 3
 Jaredite travel route 79
 Jaredites 29, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 46,
 48, 65, 66, 77-95
 Jershon, land of 17, 20, 23, 45, 69
 Jerusalem 24, 27, 31 75
 Johnson, Daniel 19
 Jordan 51, 54
 K'inich Ehb 49, 62
 K'inich Muwaan Jol 50, 52, 53
 Kaminaljuyu 83, 92, 95
 Kidder, Alfred V. 5
 La Amelia 72
 La Corona 42
 La Cuernavilla 41, 42, 47, 58
 La Florida 72
 La Milpa 51
 La Sufricaya 57, 64
 La Tinta 75
 La Venta 89, 90
 Lake Izabal 74
 Lake Petén Itza 45, 67
 Lamanites 10-12, 17, 20-23, 26, 30,
 49-55, 58, 61-64, 72, 93-95
 Lancandon 21, 23, 95
 Land northward 41, 44-46
 Land of Nephi 5, 13, 24, 26, 29-31,
 32, 45, 46
 Land southward 41, 44-48
 Landslides 76
 Late Archaic 37
 Late Preclassic 82, 84
 Lehi 17, 24, 39, 68
 Lehi's landing 95
 Lemuel, city 30
 Lib 48, 84, 86, 65
 Lib's city 48,
 LiDAR 1, 3, 12, 14, 58, 59
 Limhi, king 29
 Line of Possession 17, 45-46
 Long Count date 57
 Magelby, Kirk 65
 Mahk'ina Bird Skull 52
 Maize God 15
 Manti 8, 11, 17-19, 21
 Manti, land of 18, 20, 21
 Martin 53, 55
 Matheny, Dr. Diane 25, 43
 Matheny, Dr. Ray 25, 43
 Maya 1, 4, 8, 11-13, 16, 19, 20, 38,
 42, 89, 90
 Maya Biosphere Reserve 48
 Maya kings 21, 49
 Maya land 51, 41
 Maya Mountains 45, 50, 53, 62
 McKay, David O. 5
 Melek, land of 23, 24, 72
 Mexico 9, 34
 Middle Preclassic 80, 82
 Middoni, land of 24, 27, 30, 31
 Military outpost 36
 Mirador Basin 29, 43, 83, 85, 89, 94
 Moapan River 13, 45, 69
 Mocum 27, 31, 75
 Morianton 17, 68, 82
 Mormon 50, 53, 54, 61, 62-64, 88
 Moron, land of 32, 37, 46, 85, 86
 Moroni 17, 21, 67, 68
 Moroni, city 74
 Moronihah 29, 74, 75
 Mosiah 10-11, 13, 15, 26
 Mosiah, king 32
 Mosiah, sons of 30
 Motul de San Jose 72
 Mulek 10, 24, 65
 Mulek, city of 65, 68
 Mulek, land of 65, 67
 Mulekites 10-13, 16, 26, 46, 65-72,
 83-84, 86, 94
 Museum of Belize 38
 Naachtun 51, 55, 64, 66
 Nahome 59, 61
 Nakbé 82, 89
 Nakum 72
 Narrow neck 6, 8, 11, 26, 33, 38-
 41, 42, 44, 46, 48, 58, 59, 86
 Narrow passage 42, 45, 46
 Narrow strip of wilderness 10, 17,
 26, 27, 29, 31
 Nebuchadnezzar 65
 Nephi, city of 8, 18, 26, 27, 28, 29,
 30
 Nephi, land of 26, 30
 Nephihah 68
 Nephihah, plains of 17
 Nephites 6, 10-11, 13, 16, 21, 35,
 38, 49-54, 56, 58, 60, 62-64, 66-
 67, 83-84, 92-94
 Natchev 91
 New River 33
 New York 35
 Nine Lakes District 37
 Nixtun Ch'ich 15, 16, 66, 67, 69, 72
 Noah, king 26, 28, 72
 Norman, Cheryl 74
 North Equatorial Current 79
 Northeast Acropolis Caracol 53
 Ogath 87
 Olmec 66, 68, 89, 90, 91
 Onihah 29, 31, 75
 PACUNAM LiDAR Initiative 48
 Palace B-XIII at Uaxactun 59
 Pasi6n River 18, 19, 23, 24
 Passageway 44, 45
 Paynes Creek 74
 People of Ammon 23, 24
 Pet6n, Guatemala 10, 13, 14, 16, 57,
 62, 63, 65
 Petexbatun Basin 24
 Phoenicians 65
 Polochic Fault Line 29, 30, 74, 75
 Polochic River 29, 32, 74, 75
 Portugal Ocean Current 35
 Preclassic period 43, 45, 51
 Pr6fer, Keth 20
 Pugh, Timothy 67
 Puleston, Dennis 41, 44, 45,
 Puruhla 24
 Pyrenees Mountains 78, 79
 Q'eqchi 93, 95
 Quintana Roo 86
 Quirigua 83, 95
 Rabinal, land of 24, 30, 31
 Ramah, hill 35, 37, 85, 88
 Rio Azul 51, 56, 64
 Rio Azul mural 57
 Rio Azul River 86
 Riplah, hill 17, 18, 21, 22
 Riplakish 82
 Safronov, Alexander 54, 59
 Salama 32, 93
 Salama Valley 5, 7, 8, 13, 25, 26,
 27, 92
 San Bartol 42
 San Gabriel 24

- San Juan 26, 30
San Lorenzo 89, 90
Schele, Linda 8
Sea of Galilee 7, 39, 44
Shem, hill 90
Shemlon, land of 26, 30, 31
Sherer, Andrew 62, 82, 84
Shilom, land of 26, 28, 30
Shimnilom 30
Shiz 84, 86, 90
Shurr, valley of 87
Sidon River 7, 9, 11, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 29, 52
Siron, land of 17
Siyaj Chan K'awiil I 50, 62
Siyaj K'ak' 12, 51, 54-58, 63, 64
Sling stones 64
Smithsonian Institution 3
Sorenson, John L. 3, 5, 6, 39
South Wilderness 11, 17, 18, 21
Spaniards 1, 95
Spanish conquerors 8, 95
Spear Thrower Owl 51, 55, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64
Stalagmites 44
Stela 1 at Tikal 56
Stela 4 at Tikal 55
Stela 5 at Uaxactun 56, 63
Stela 6 at Holmul 57
Stela 9 at Dos Pilas 57, 58
Stela 13 at Caracol 53
Stela 16 at El Perú-Waka' 56
Stela 18 at Uaxactun 54, 61, 63
Stela 19 at Uaxactun 54, 61, 63
Stela 22 at Uaxactun 56
Stela 24 at Naachtun 58
Stela 26 at Tikal 54,
Stela 28 at Tikal 52
Stela 29 at Tikal 52, 62, 63
Stela 31 at Tikal 55, 56, 63
Stela 39 at Tikal 54, 63
Stuart, David 55, 56
Submerged cities 76
Sunken temple 76
Ta'ab Nuk Na, city of 74
Tactic 28
Tak'alik Abaj 92
Tamahu, city 30
Tankersley, Dr. 73
Te' K'ab Chaak 49, 50, 52, 53, 62
Teancum, city of 41, 47, 68
Teotihuacan 51, 54-58, 59, 60, 64
Terry, Richard 4, 5, 41, 48, 66, 73
Thicket 27
Tikal 12, 1, 41-42, 44, 48-58, 59-60, 62-63, 72, 91
Tintal 58
Tower of Babel 33, 38
Triadic structures 15, 16
Tucuru 24
Turner, B. L. 80
Tzalcum 24, 26, 30
Uaxactun 3, 41, 44, 47, 51, 54-57, 59-61, 63, 70, 72, 91
Uaxactun, mural painting 58, 59
Une Bahlam 50
University of Houston 14
Uxbenka 20, 21
Valdez, Fred 82
Valparaiso 24
Verapaz 24
Volcanic ash 76
Wahl, David 81
Waters of Mormon 28
Waters of Ripliancum 85, 86, 87
Waters of Sebus 31
West Sea 10, 41, 42, 45
West Wilderness 23
Willey, Dr. Gordon R. 5, 13, 15, 50, 52, 62, 89
Wine production 26
Xultun 58
Xunantunich 66, 69, 70, 72, 91
Yax Ehb Xose 62
Yax Moch Xok 49
Yax Nuun Ahliin I 51, 55, 56, 64, 57
Yaxchilan 23, 49
Yaxha 41, 66, 69, 70, 72
Yopaat Bahlam I 49
Yucatán Peninsula 84
Zarahemla, city 4, 5, 8-11, 16-17, 20, 23-24, 26, 28, 29, 32, 38, 40, 50, 52, 67, 76, 84
Zarahemla, land of 7, 10, 11, 18, 26, 27, 30, 53, 57, 62
Zedekiah 24, 65
Zotz 58, 60

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Maya and Olmec Connections to The Book of Mormon

—NEW EVIDENCE—

Archaeological excavations reveal:

- Earliest settlements in Mesoamerica conform to the Jaredite time frame.
(See "Jaredites" – page 80.)
- Population periods of Ceibal match the fluctuating populations of Zarahemla.
(See "Greater Land of Zarahemla" – page 13.)

LiDAR laser penetrates foliage to show:

- Twelve-mile massive fortification between land southward and land northward. (See "Narrow Neck of Land" – page 43.)
- Thousands of Maya/Olmec settlements with estimates of millions of people.
(See "Maya Kings" – page 49.)

Maya stelae verify:

- 350 AD treaty, 360 AD and 375 AD wars – as recorded in the Book of Mormon.
(See "Maya Kings" – pages 53-56.)
- The invasion of Teotihuacan warriors impacted the final Nephite destruction.
(See "Maya Kings" – page 51.)