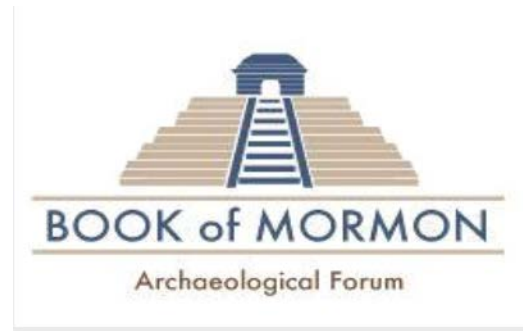




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## The “Heartland Model”: The Rest of the Story

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**Abstract:** To most readers who believe in the historicity of the Book of Mormon, the book is a real account about real people who lived somewhere in the New World. This article was written primarily about those readers who believe that all New World events recorded in the Book of Mormon took place in the continental United States, mostly in the territory from the Great Lakes on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south. By their own preference, these readers tend to refer to themselves as “Heartlanders” because to them, their proposed geography of the Book of Mormon took place in the “heartland” of the United States.

In this article, Heartlander thinking is compared frequently with the proposals of another group, some of whom call themselves “Mesoamericanists” because they believe, in general, that all New World events of the Book of Mormon took place in Mesoamerica.

This article is not truly a book review. However, the analyses in the article are mostly comments about the content of two books: (1) the nineteenth-century Book of Mormon and (2) a twenty-first-century book whose authors are devoted believers of the Heartland Model for Book of Mormon geography.



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## The “Heartland Model”: The Rest of the Story

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*To most readers who believe in the historicity of the Book of Mormon, the book is a **real** account about **real** people who lived **somewhere** in the New World. This article was written primarily about those readers who believe that all New World events recorded in the Book of Mormon took place in the continental United States, mostly in the territory from the Great Lakes on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south. By their own preference, these readers tend to refer to themselves as “Heartlanders” because to them, their proposed geography of the Book of Mormon took place in the “heartland” of the United States.*

*In this article, Heartlander thinking is compared frequently with the proposals of another group, some of whom call themselves “Mesoamericanists” because they believe, in general, that all New World events of the Book of Mormon took place in Mesoamerica.*

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*Prophecies and Promises: The Book of Mormon and the United States of America* by Bruce H. Porter and Rod L. Meldrum<sup>1</sup> is very interesting and thought provoking. It forces the reader to comprehend a complete meaning of the Book of Mormon as a fulfillment of the prophecies (spiritual and physical) that relate to its geography. And it is the basis for what has become known as the “Heartland Model” for the geography of the Book of Mormon.

Kieth Merrill correctly states in his foreword that the book is “fascinating and enlightening.” However, it is incredible how he can justify saying that the book is “void of pitching or proselytizing,” as that is exactly what it does. That is also what two other Heartlanders, Rod Meldrum and Wayne May, do in their firesides and presentations in addition to their sales and tourist promotions.

The overall import of *Prophecies and Promises* is that the geography of the Book of Mormon could not have taken place in Mesoamerica or anyplace other than the lands where Joseph Smith stood or within the nation to which he belonged, primarily because of the definition of the demonstrative “this” place.<sup>2</sup>

Part One of *Prophecies and Promises* discusses the place where the New Jerusalem is to be established, where the U.S. Constitution was inspired, where the gospel was restored, and where the new single nation was created in which “all” of the authors’ thirty-six prophecies and promises were to be fulfilled as proof that the United States of America is the *only* place where the Book of Mormon geography could have taken place. Part Two attempts to corroborate this “Heartland Theory” by showing that because mtDNA (mitochondrial DNA) Haplogroup X2a is present in some native North American cultures and in Israel and because no Haplogroup X has

been found in any Central or South American populations, Central America could not have been the location of the New World events of the Book of Mormon.

This article will respond only to Part One. A reasoned, objective response for Part Two is a relatively recent article, “Book of Mormon and DNA Studies,” sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and found on both [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) and [www.bmaf.org](http://www.bmaf.org).<sup>3</sup>

The following quotations from *Prophecies and Promises* presumably set forth the foundation for understanding the geography of the Book of Mormon from the perspectives of Bruce Porter and Rod Meldrum—two dominant leaders in the Heartland movement. In general, we agree with these quotations. However, in writing *Prophecies and Promises*, Porter and Meldrum violate the intent of every one of the quotations, as will be shown in the discussion that follows in this article:

Anything that Church authorities—including Joseph Smith—have said about “Book of Mormon geography” is irrelevant if it conflicts with what is in the Book of Mormon itself.<sup>4</sup>

[John L.] Sorenson correctly concludes . . . that the researcher should “*use the entire scripture without exception*” and review “*every statement in the text.*”<sup>5</sup>

A textual study of Book of Mormon geography should include an unbiased review of *all passages that might pertain to [the] subject.*<sup>6</sup>

A study of “textual geography” (the theoretical determination of geography by scriptures) should also look at the language and grammatical context, especially of the words of direction and specificity. In other words, the “demonstratives” that gives “*definiteness*,” “*direction*” and “*distance*” within the text.”<sup>7</sup>

It is regrettable that so many cannot simply take Joseph Smith at his word.<sup>8</sup>

Joseph Smith stated that the scriptures “say what they mean and mean what they say.”<sup>9</sup>

According to Porter and Meldrum, “a hierarchy of authoritative witnesses must be established to qualify and narrow the choices of acceptable geographical settings for the Book of Mormon.”<sup>10</sup> They then list four types of witnesses by priority of the weight to be given each type. This article will proceed in that same order:

1. Book of Mormon prophecies and promises found in scriptures.
2. Joseph Smith’s prophetic statements.
3. Physical, real-world evidence.
4. Geographical indicators or passages in the Book of Mormon.<sup>11</sup>

However, readers must remember that the primary witnesses that trump all others are the witnesses and statements (the prophecies and promises) of the Book of Mormon itself as well as the statements of Moroni while he served as the Prophet Moroni and the Angel Moroni.

All emphasis by bolding is the authors' unless stated otherwise. All Book of Mormon quotations are italicized.

## 1. Book of Mormon Prophecies That Are Omitted by Porter and Meldrum

In their introduction, Porter and Meldrum state that by “extensive research” of the text of the Book of Mormon, they found thirty-six prophecies and promises about the geography of the Book of Mormon. Eventually, they make the point that those thirty-six prophecies and promises prove that the Book of Mormon’s geography was located exclusively within the confines of the United States of America.<sup>12</sup>

However, Porter and Meldrum omitted three of the most important, controlling prophecies and promises that will be the focus of the first section of this article:

- Moroni’s statement and meaning of “this continent.”
- The prophecy that Columbus went to Central America and not the United States (see 1 Nephi 13:12).
- Nephi’s use and understanding of the term “promised land,” which Porter and Meldrum never once cite within the thirty-six prophecies and promises in their table of prophecies and promises.<sup>13</sup>

Kieth Merrill correctly says that we should ask the following questions: “What *did* Jesus say about the lands of the Book of Mormon?” and “What did Joseph Smith know and what did he say?”<sup>14</sup> We’ll answer those questions.

### The First Prophecy and Promise Omitted by Porter and Meldrum— “This Continent”

When the Angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith on September 21, 1823, he spoke to Joseph in English and told Joseph exactly what Jesus had told him to say: “*There [is] a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of **this continent** and the source from which they sprang*” (Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith; emphasis added).

Moroni eventually repeated the identical message at least three times. **He did not say that the book was the only account** or that there were no other ancient inhabitants beyond those mentioned in the Book of Mormon (see Introduction to the Book of Mormon).

The truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, including all of its contents and meanings, is based upon the actions and statements of Moroni, who was born in the land of promise. He was the last man to have all the records and was the one who deposited them in the earth. He survived the last great battle between the Nephites and Lamanites. He and his father Mormon abridged and organized the ancient records to produce what we now have as the Book of Mormon. No one

knows more about this sacred record than the Angel Moroni. He was the one responsible for bringing the ancient record “*forth from the earth as the voice of a people speaking from the dust, and [having it] translated into **modern speech** by the gift and power of God*” (Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith; emphasis added).

Thus, Moroni communicated in English (modern speech) in a manner that seventeen-year-old Joseph Smith understood. In describing where the events of the Book of Mormon took place, Moroni could have said the “former inhabitants of this city,” “of this state,” “of this nation,” “of this country,” or “of this world,” but he did not. He said what he meant and meant what he said when he said “of this continent.” His message came directly from the Lord. No one should try to limit or modify what he meant except to note that he communicated in a manner that Joseph understood. Therefore, the only truly relevant question associated with Porter and Meldrum’s thirty-six prophecies and promises is, **what did Joseph Smith understand the term “this continent” to mean?**

In 1820, the prevailing view of most of the world, as well as much of the United States, including New York where Joseph Smith lived, was that North and South America comprised one continent.<sup>15</sup> That view was clearly supported by the dictionary definition of *America* from Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary—just two years before the Book of Mormon was published:

One of the great continents, first discovered by Sebastian Cabot, June 11, O.S. 1498, and by Columbus, or Christoval Colon, Aug. 1, the same year. It extends from the eightieth degree of North, to the fifty-fourth degree of South Latitude; and from the thirty-fifth to the one hundred and fifty-sixth degree of Longitude West from Greenwich, being about nine thousand miles in length. Its breadth at Darien is narrowed to about forty-five miles, but at the northern extremity is nearly four thousand miles. From Darien to the North, the continent is called *North America*, and to the South, it is called *South America*.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, Book of Mormon analysts must conclude that Moroni and Joseph Smith understood that “this continent” included both North and South America. Further, analysts must also conclude that North and South America as “a continent” is “*the land of promise*,” or Zion, which, according to the Book of Mormon, is “*the land choice above all other lands*” (see, for example, 1 Nephi 7:13, 1 Nephi 13:30, 2 Nephi 1:5).

This understanding and conclusion were specifically advocated by Brigham Young on August 18, 1844, not long after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith:

Joseph has always been preserved from his enemies, until now, but he has sealed his testimony with his blood, and his testament is now in force. While the testator lived it was all in his hands, but now he is dead. . . I will give you the key. **North and South America is Zion**. . . I give you this as a key. You may go all over **North and South America** and build up stakes when the time comes. **The whole continent of America** must be organized into districts and presiding elders appointed over each district: the time has come when all things must be set in order.<sup>17</sup>

Joseph Smith made almost identical remarks in the April conference of 1844. At that time, he said, “You know there has been great discussion in relation to Zion—where it is, and where the gathering of the dispensation is, and which I am now going to tell you. The prophets have spoken and written upon it; but I will make a proclamation that will cover a broader ground. *The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south.*”<sup>18</sup>

Bruce R. McConkie agrees, stating, “All of this speaks of Lehi and his seed, a mighty people **in the Americas** and of the visit of the Lord Jesus to them after his mortal ministry in Jerusalem.”<sup>19</sup>

Spencer W. Kimball states, “[The] ministry of Christ [involves] his coming to the **Western Hemisphere and organizing his Church here.**”<sup>20</sup>

In *Prophecies and Promises*, Porter and Meldrum mistakenly claim that Alvin R. Dyer meant the North American continent when they quote him: “We see the reasons why America, or the continent of America, is the promised and choice land, choice above all other lands. . . . I bear testimony of the fulfillment and the destiny of the land of America as Zion.”<sup>21</sup>

However, using the same article, Porter and Meldrum omit the content where Elder Dyer clarifies that he meant North and South America: “*The Gentiles . . . have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations, upon the face of the land **which is choice above all other lands (North and South America)**, which is the land that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of their inheritance.*”<sup>22</sup>

The text of the Book of Mormon seems to confirm this conclusion. The Nephites were led by the Lord to “*the promised land*” (see 1 Nephi 18:22–23; emphasis added), which was “*a land which is choice above all other lands*” (2 Nephi 1:5; emphasis added). The Jaredites were led by the Lord, “*and they did land upon the shore of the promised land*” (see Ether 6:5–12; emphasis added), which was “*a land choice above all other lands*” (Ether 2:15; emphasis added). These “promised lands” were separate from each other, and the people living there had no apparent knowledge of each other’s existence from about 588 BC to about 300 BC when the Jaredites destroyed themselves.

Because the land of the Jaredites was a separate land from the land of the Nephites, being “*so far northward,*” and because each “promised land” was also “*choice above all other lands,*” here’s the question that readers should ask themselves: Which of the two lands was the more choice? Either one was more choice than the other, or they were considered to be part of the **same land** that was choice above all other lands. If the latter is the case, as it was, then the question is, How big was this “*land choice above all other lands*”?

If the Book of Mormon lands are restricted to the area where Joseph Smith, as a mortal, was standing or in close proximity thereto, as claimed by Porter and Meldrum, then how close is close? And how large was the United States when Joseph received the plates? Was the seed of Lehi restricted only to the area comprising the United States at the time Joseph Smith received the plates, as Porter and Meldrum seem to say? Where were the borders for the land of inheritance for the “seed of Lehi” in 1830? The areas of Utah, Arizona, California, Texas, and Missouri were a part of Mexico at that time. Which part of “this continent” did Moroni state was

the land for the seed of Lehi? What part of “this continent” is not a land of promise? Which part of it is not part of the land of Zion?

According to the Book of Mormon, there are many lands of promise within “this continent” (the greater land of promise) and also within the land of Israel:

1. The Nephites were given “a land of promise” (2 Nephi 1:5; Jacob 2:12), and they called the place where they landed “the promised land” (1 Nephi 18:23).
2. The Jaredites were given “a [different land far to the north] land of promise” (Ether 2:9, 15). The place where they landed was also called “the promised land” (Ether 6:12).
3. The Lord “leadeth away the righteous into **precious lands**” (1 Nephi 17:38; emphasis added).
4. The Jews “shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established **in all their lands of promise**” (2 Nephi 8:2; emphasis added).

Moroni answered the question as to the size of the land of promise and the size of the land choice above all other lands when he declared to the Prophet Joseph Smith exactly what Jesus told Moroni to tell Joseph—that it encompassed “this continent,” meaning all of North and South America, as the populace of the United States understood the definitions of “America” and “continent” throughout all of Moroni’s visits. Clearly, both modern-day prophets and scripture indicate there will be many Zions, many lands of promise, and even many New Jerusalems upon “this continent.”<sup>23</sup>

**Then what should the demonstrative “this land” mean?** The first part of *Prophecies and Promises* focuses on the meaning of the demonstrative “this,” stating, “The use of the demonstrative ‘this’ demands that the speaker and the listener both have an intimate knowledge of the specific object of discussion or ‘this’ could not be understood by the listener.”<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, it is conclusive that Joseph Smith, the listener, and the Angel Moroni, the speaker, both understood that “this continent” meant North and South America and that “this land” was also Zion. It is a shame that Porter and Meldrum refuse to simply take Joseph Smith at his word. Yes, the Book of Mormon says what it means and means what it says. Porter and Meldrum briefly addressed and then dismissed this issue, stating the following:

Either this [former inhabitants of *this continent*] refers to “this continent” or it does not. If it does not refer to the United States, a person would have to ignore the demonstrative “this” and then redefine “this continent” into a generality of hemisphere or continent(s). To assume the latter would mean that either Joseph or Moroni made a mistake in the description and the use of the demonstrative in pointing to the “which” continent. . . . **Even though in the early 1800’s the American continent was defined by Noah Webster’s dictionary to be all of North and South America**, later refinements divide North America from South America as two distinct and separate continents. If a North American geographic setting is applied, then Joseph’s statement remains true both then

and now, but if a South American setting is used, then Joseph’s statement was true only during his time, and is no longer true because Joseph was never on the South American continent.<sup>25</sup>

Incredible! If Joseph Smith understood the meaning of “this continent” in the 1820s to include North and South America, then that meaning should *never* change, even though governments, politicians, historians, or authors might change some boundaries or argue rules of grammar. Neither Joseph Smith nor Moroni made a mistake in the use of the demonstrative “this.” Why did Porter and Meldrum forget, or perhaps intentionally omit in the above statement, (1) that Central America has *always* been a part of North America and (2) that Central America—not the United States of America—was where the Lord guided Columbus?

Not once in the entire text of *Prophecies and Promises* do Porter and Meldrum quote Nephi when he prophesies about Columbus coming to the promised land:

*And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, **even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.*** (1 Nephi 13:12; emphasis added)

However, Porter and Meldrum further state in “classic double-talk language”:

The phrase “this land” . . . must be intimate to the speaker and the listener, or the prophet writing the text. “This land” must then be definite, specific, and under the feet of the listener to answer the question of which land. The demonstrative solidifies the understanding of which land is “this land,” the land where they are.<sup>26</sup>

At this point, conclusions about “the rest of the story” associated with the exclusivist beliefs of Porter and Meldrum for Book of Mormon geography must be singularly stated so everyone will understand the ramifications.

Thus, if “this land” is restricted to where the Prophet Joseph was standing and if he said, while standing in Missouri, that “**this** land of promise was the land of Missouri (which he did; see Doctrine and Covenants 57:2), then “that land” of New York or Ohio or anywhere else could not have been the land of promise because the demonstrative “this” defined the boundaries of “the land of promise” to be the land of Missouri. Did Joseph Smith make a mistake in the use of the demonstrative “this”? Shouldn’t it also have included the demonstratives “that” or “those” other locations so that other areas could have been included in the land of promise?

Of course not!

The term “this land” is not limited to the area under the feet of Joseph Smith, but it includes the land under his feet, the nation where he lived, and “this continent.” “This continent,” all of it, is a land designated as a land for the inheritance of the seed of Lehi—including Gentiles and others by adoption—being the “remnant of the house of Joseph,” and is Zion, “**the land choice above all other lands,**” according to Moroni, the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young,



Alvin R. Dyer, and many other prophets. This statement, which covers all of North America and South America, should have no bearing on similar promises that might have been made to other pre-Abrahamic cultures/peoples, such as the Jaredites, Maya, etc., who, if worthy, will also inherit their share of this land of promise as their “Zion.” All who qualify will be sons and daughters of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 5:7–8). This is the essence of the law of adoption.<sup>27</sup>

Obviously, “this land” is not limited to the United States of America; therefore, the Heartland Model is fatally flawed as to its conclusion that all of the New World Book of Mormon events occurred exclusively in the United States.

Thus, part of the “rest of the story” here is that Porter and Meldrum in *Prophecies and Promises* pursue invalid thinking as the basis for their “exclusivity doctrine” that designates *only* the territory of the continental United States—the Heartland Model territory from the Great Lakes on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south—as “this land,” “this continent,” and “the promised land” of the seed of Lehi.

### **The Second Prophecy and Promise Omitted by Porter and Meldrum—The Prophecy of 1 Nephi 13:12 That Columbus Would Come to Central America and Not to the United States**

The conclusion that “this continent” refers to North and South America does not mean that any specific geography of the lands of the Book of Mormon encompassed all of North and South America. It means only that somewhere within North and South America (1) there was a land of promise for the Jaredites from about 2200 BC to about 300 BC (called **the promised land to them** where they landed) and (2) a different land of promise was given to the Nephites from about 588 BC to about AD 400 (called **the promised land to them** where they landed) somewhere upon “this continent.”

Where were these promised lands located in the New World according to the Book of Mormon? The answers to that question are the essence of this article, as explained in the next paragraph. In that paragraph, readers will see that, according to the Book of Mormon, these promised lands in the New World were located initially within Mesoamerica.

A further witness that “this continent” means all of North and South America and that the primary geography of the Book of Mormon must be in Mesoamerica is the prophecy and promise located in 1 Nephi 13:10–12 (the prophecy and promise associated with Columbus), which Porter and Meldrum “conveniently” omit in *Prophecies and Promises*. This scripture certainly does not support their basic “Heartland Model” that presupposes that the lands of the Book of Mormon were located exclusively within the United States of America.

By now, readers should have deduced that Porter and Meldrum have clearly violated the very principles they claim the Central American proponents—the Mesoamericanists—violate:

1. That readers must use the entire scripture without exception.

2. That readers must review every statement in the text that pertains to the subject matter.
3. That readers must include an unbiased review of all passages.
4. That the Book of Mormon says what it means and means what it says.

The content of 1 Nephi 13 shows that there were at least two separate groups of European Gentiles who were prophesied to come to different parts of “this continent”—or the greater land of promise—to scatter and smite the seed of Lehi (the remnant of the house of Israel). Porter and Meldrum “forgot” about the southern European Gentiles, led by Columbus. For the sake of convenience, in this article, the southern European Gentiles, including Portugal, will be denoted the “Spanish” Gentiles, and the northern European Gentiles, including France and Holland and others, who came out of captivity, will be called the “English” Gentiles:

*And it came to pass that I looked and beheld many waters; and they divided the Gentiles [both Spanish and English Gentiles] from the seed of my brethren.*

*And it came to pass that the angel said unto me: Behold the wrath of God **is upon the seed of thy brethren.*** [Note that the term “seed of thy (Nephi’s) brethren” here refers to those referred to as “Lamanites” by the Nephites.]

*And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; **and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man [Columbus]; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren [Lamanites], who were in the promised land.*** (1 Nephi 13:10–12; emphasis added)

The following maps show (1) that Columbus visited the Central America area but that he never visited the United States area and (2) where Columbus (representing the Spanish Gentiles) landed as compared to where Lehi landed west and south of the narrow strip of wilderness within Central America and where the English Gentiles landed in northern North America.



Figure 1: Map of the voyages of Columbus to Central and South America. He did not go to northern North America.



Figure 2: Map of possible voyages of Lehi, Columbus and the Spanish Gentiles, and the English Gentiles

The account in 1 Nephi 13 continues:

*And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God that it wrought upon **other Gentiles** [English]; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. . .*

*I beheld **many multitudes of the Gentiles** [English and Spanish] upon the land of promise; [North and South America] and I beheld the wrath of God that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles [English and Spanish] and were smitten.*

*And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord that it was upon the Gentiles [English and Spanish] and they did prosper and obtain the land [this continent] for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceedingly fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain. (1 Nephi 13:13–15; emphasis added)*

From this point, the scriptures talk about the “English” Gentiles who came out of captivity and how they became humble and were blessed by the Lord to defeat the Mother Gentiles and so forth, as set forth nicely in *Prophecies and Promises*, forming a new nation above all other nations. Then, Nephi states:

*Nevertheless, thou beholdest that the Gentiles [English] who have gone forth out of captivity . . . have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations, upon the face of the land which is choice above all other lands [“all other nations” means that all nations upon “this continent” of North and South America constitute the land “which is choice above all other lands”]. Wherefore, thou seest that the Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles [English] will utterly destroy **the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren.** (1 Nephi 13:30; emphasis added)*

Then, the next few scriptures include the Spanish Gentiles:

***Neither** [meaning someone other than the English Gentiles] *will he suffer that the Gentiles [Spanish] shall destroy **the seed of thy brethren.*** [Remember that the Lord guided Columbus and the Spanish Gentiles to “*the seed of thy brethren who were in the promised land.*”]*

*Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles [all Gentiles, English and Spanish] shall forever remain in that awful state of blindness. . .*

*Wherefore saith the Lamb of God: I will be merciful unto the Gentiles, [English and Spanish] unto the visiting of the remnant of the house of Israel [seed of Lehi, verse 34, wherever they would be located] in great judgment. . .*

*Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel—and **this remnant of whom I speak is the seed of thy father** [the mixture of the seed of Nephi and the seed of his brethren wherever they might be located]—wherefore, after I have visited them in judgment, and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after the Gentiles [Spanish and English] do stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, . . . I will be merciful unto the Gentiles [English and Spanish] in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them . . . much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb. (1 Nephi 13:31–34; emphasis added)*

Clearly, the “English Gentiles” came to a “mixture of the seed of Nephi” located in the eastern United States and performed their required purging, and the “Spanish Gentiles” came to the seed of the brethren of Nephi located in the promised land in Mesoamerica (and to the seed of Lehi in South America as well) and performed their required purging. In the fulfilling of these prophecies, the European (Gentile) influence killed, by war and disease, between 80 to 90 percent of the entire indigenous population of both North and South America, which was estimated to have been between fifty and a hundred million people at the time of their contact with the Europeans.<sup>28</sup> Those data are common historical facts.

An interesting pattern is evident all across “this continent” that is consistent with the fulfilling of all the relevant prophecies and promises contained in the Book of Mormon:

1. A land of promise on “this continent” was given by the Lord to each of several very small groups of people who included the Jaredites, perhaps the descendants of the eleven families who came with the Jaredites, the Nephites, the Lamanites, the Mulekites, and others of which Book of Mormon analysts have no specific knowledge.
2. The resurrected Christ visited many parts of “this continent,” not just the United States of America.
3. By definition in the Book of Mormon, anyone not a Nephite or not a believer in Christ or anyone opposing the Nephites was a Lamanite (by blood, by belief, or by action). Therefore, after about AD 400, everyone on “this continent” would have been considered a Lamanite by Book of Mormon writers. Each group of people described in the Book of Mormon initially believed in Jesus Christ, thrived, spread, had wars, mixed with existing cultures, went through various cycles of righteousness, and then rejected Christ and declined eventually into “abject darkness.”
4. Hundreds of years later, European Gentile nations conquered the indigenous people, smote (but did not utterly destroy) them, and then embraced and protected those who were left.
5. The “modified” Bible that “*went forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles*” (1 Nephi 13:29) was carried by the Gentiles (English and Spanish) to this “remnant of Lehi” on “this continent” (1 Nephi 13:29). Did not Columbus and the Catholic Church (and other churches) take the “modified Bible” to all of Central America, South America, and most of North America in direct fulfillment of prophecy?
6. These Gentiles (English and Spanish) procured the lands on “this continent” as their inheritance.
7. These Gentiles and “remnants of Lehi” gained independence from their conquering “Gentile kings,” leaving no Gentile king controlling any nation upon “this continent.” Notice that 2 Nephi 10:11–12 does not say “no kings upon this land.” Many kings ruled among the Book of Mormon people, such as King Noah, King Nephi, King Laman, and

others, as well as among the native populations. Verse 12 speaks of “*no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles.*” This means no Gentile kings loyal to the Gentile nations shall live upon “this continent.” Verse 12 further says, “*I will fortify this land [North and South America] against all other nations.*” And verse 13 says, “*he that fighteth against Zion [meaning North and South America as stated by Joseph Smith] shall perish.*”

8. Eventually, the basic principles of freedom were secured to the people of all the nations of “this continent.”
9. The restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon are being “carried” to all the people on “this continent.” As one “sign” of those efforts on “this continent,” the Church of Jesus Christ currently has more Spanish-speaking members than any other language—in direct fulfillment of these prophecies and promises. Again, Porter and Meldrum “conveniently ignore” the fulfillment of prophecies and promises about Spanish-speaking members of the Church. A separate article is needed to explain how these members of the Church are today fulfilling Book of Mormon prophecies and promises.

Following is the history of independence of the nations of “this continent” from their Gentile nation invaders:

1. United States of America from England, July 4, 1776.
2. Mexico from Spain, September 16, 1810.
3. Brazil from Portugal, July 7, 1822.
4. All South American and Mesoamerican nations won independence between 1807 and 1824.
5. Canada from France and England, 1867–1931.

Although “this continent” (consisting of both North America and South America in the vernacular of the peoples of 1830 and the early Church members) was the location of all the above events, the Lord placed special blessings and requirements upon the English Gentiles, such as establishing a land of liberty, restoring the gospel, correcting the Bible, etc. Such events are discussed extensively and beautifully in *Prophecies and Promises*. However, Porter and Meldrum came to the wrong conclusion that *only* the United States can be where all the New World events of the Book of Mormon took place or will take place.

Because “this continent” is “*the land choice above all other lands*” and is Zion, then all of the thirty-six prophecies and promises, except Numbers 10, 25, 27, 32, 33, and 36, as stated on pages 84–86 of *Prophecies and Promises*,<sup>29</sup> are not exclusive to the United States. Therefore, they cannot be determinative that the geography of the Book of Mormon took place there. The listed prophecies and promises above are specific to the English Gentiles and were to be fulfilled in the

United States of America among the “mixture” of the seed of Nephi, as nicely stated by Porter and Meldrum.

It is a shame, and in violation of their own stated law of witnesses, that in their analyses and in their thirty-six prophecies and promises, Porter and Meldrum omitted the most important geographic prophecy of “the promised land”—the New World location where Columbus visited (see 1 Nephi 13:12).

The prophecies relating to the “Spanish Gentiles” have to have been fulfilled in Central and South America. Because Columbus did not visit the United States and because he visited “the seed of Nephi’s brothers” in the promised land in Central America, then the New World geography of the Book of Mormon could not have occurred exclusively in the continental United States of America.

### **The Third Prophecy and Promise Omitted by Porter and Meldrum— “Promised Land”**

Several statements in *Prophecies and Promises* involving the expression “promised land” are erroneous, as explained in the discussion that follows.

A distinction must be made between the terms “the promised land” and “land of promise” as used in the Book of Mormon because Porter and Meldrum seem to misuse these terms and mix them at will without understanding how the terms were and are used. Perhaps this usage was by mistake, **but more likely it was by design to avoid pointing the reader to the above omitted prophecy and promise of Columbus coming to “the promised land” in Central America.**

Significantly, the term “promised land” is not used in any of the thirty-six listed “prophecies and promises” in *Prophecies and Promises*. The term “the promised land” is used twenty-four times in the Book of Mormon—but never in reference to “a single nation,” as claimed on page 86. Porter and Meldrum give no citation for that statement.

Twenty times the term “the promised land” is used as a destination on “this continent.” Three times it refers to the Old World. One time it is used in a spiritual sense. In 1 Nephi 14, an angel talks to Nephi about the English and Spanish Gentiles who do not harden their hearts against the Lamb of God:

*They [the Gentiles, English and Spanish] shall be numbered among the seed of thy father; yea they shall be numbered among the house of Israel; and they [Gentiles, English and Spanish] shall be a blessed people upon **the** promised land [this continent] forever; they shall be no more brought down into captivity; and the house of Israel shall no more be confounded. (1 Nephi 14:2; emphasis added)*

The angel of this verse is speaking prophetically and spiritually of events of the past, events of the present that are in process, and events of the future that are yet to come. The term “**the** promised land,” as used in this verse, is used as a destination and therefore must be referring to Zion because the verse says “forever” and therefore involves “forever” the remnant of the house

of Israel, the seed of Lehi, the Gentile peoples who live north and south of the United States borders, and, therefore, the peoples of “this continent.”

The term “**a** land of promise” is used five times in the Book of Mormon, meaning an area within the larger area of “**the** land of promise.” The term “**the** land of promise” is used eight times. The term “the face of the land of promise” is used one additional time in a spiritual sense when Nephi foretold of the death of Christ (1 Nephi 12:4). Apparently, the term “**the** land of promise” is also referring to the greater land of promise, or to Zion, or to all of the lands of promise that make up the “*land choice above all other lands*”—in other words, “this continent.”

In *Prophecies and Promises*, neither the name of Columbus nor even the scripture clearly referring to him is mentioned. Porter and Meldrum merely dismiss any possibility of any Gentiles coming to “this continent” except the “Gentile Pilgrims and Puritans.” They then state that the “Spanish conquistadors” did not come out of captivity and were kept ignorant of the land of promise in North America.

Really? Here are their very words:

**The Gentiles prophesied in the scriptures above cannot include** the Spanish military conquests involved in the rapine plunder of the peoples of Central and South America for the sake of personal and national gain. The Spanish Conquistadors like Cortez, Pizzaro and others, who came into Central and South America did not come out of captivity but under the direction and authority of the King of Spain and effectuated what was considered to be a Spanish Conquest.

The Gentile Pilgrims and Puritans were led to a land **protected from the knowledge of other European Gentile nations.**<sup>30</sup>

This approach to history is inaccurate and misleading. Did not the English and French Gentiles, who came out of captivity, rape, plunder, and massacre thousands upon thousands of Native American people of North America? And was it not for the purpose of personal and national gain? Did the Lord not guide Columbus, under the “authority and direction of the King of Spain,” to the “promised land” to the “seed of thy brethren, the Lamanites?”

How can Porter and Meldrum conclude, with a straight face, that the United States area was kept from the knowledge of the “southern” European Gentile nations? That outcome has no merit unless Florida and all areas west of the Mississippi River, including Missouri, were not part of the “land of promise”! In the 1500s, the Spanish Gentiles took control of Florida and all areas west of the Mississippi river, including Missouri. They founded the oldest city in the United States at St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565. How was it kept secret from the Spanish Gentiles? Because no one was to come to the land of promise unless guided by the Lord, then how can the Spanish Conquistadors not be a part of the Gentiles whom the scriptures talk about?

Where is the “unbiased review of all passages that might pertain to this subject”?<sup>31</sup> Why, after being so critical of John Sorenson, do Porter and Meldrum not “review every statement in the text,” and why do they not “use the entire scripture without exception”?<sup>32</sup> And why do they try



so hard to keep the scriptures about Columbus, “the promised land,” and “Spanish Gentiles” (those who did not come out of captivity) away from the reader?

The primary witness, of course, is the internal statements in the Book of Mormon relative to the use of the term “the promised land.” Twenty references are cited below for “the promised land.” Most of them show that the terms refer to “going to,” “arriving at,” or “being in a specific area or destination” called “the promised land.” The following fifteen apply specifically to the Lord guiding Columbus, the Nephites, and the Jaredites to the same area called the promised land to them:

- [The Lord guided Columbus] *even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in **the promised land***. (1 Nephi 13:12; emphasis added)
- [The Lord promised Nephi that] *inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards **the promised land***. (1 Nephi 17:13; emphasis added)
- *After ye have arrived in **the promised land**, ye shall know that I, the Lord, am God*. (1 Nephi 17:14; emphasis added)
- *We . . . were driven forth before the wind towards **the promised land***. (1 Nephi 18:8; emphasis added)
- *I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that we sailed again towards **the promised land***. (1 Nephi 18:22; emphasis added)
- *After we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at **the promised land***. (1 Nephi 18:23; emphasis added)
- *We went forth upon the land, and did pitch our tents; and we did call it **the promised land***. (1 Nephi 18:23; emphasis added)
- *They [Nephi’s brothers] were wroth with him when they had arrived in **the promised land***. (Mosiah 10:15; emphasis added)
- *Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, that I could have joyed with him in **the promised land***. (Helaman 7:7; emphasis added)

The Lord also guided the Jaredites to the promised land:

- *The Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind blow . . . towards **the promised land***. (Ether 6:5; emphasis added)
- *The wind did never cease to blow [the Jaredites] towards **the promised land***. (Ether 6:8; emphasis added)

- *They [the Jaredites] did land upon the shore of **the promised land**.* (Ether 6:12; emphasis added)
- *And when they [the Jaredites] had set their feet upon the shores of **the promised land** they bowed themselves down upon the face of the land.* (Ether 6:12; emphasis added)
- *They . . . begat sons and daughters before they came to **the promised land**.* (Ether 6:16; emphasis added)
- *He remembered the great things that the Lord had done for his fathers in bringing them . . . into **the promised land**.* (Ether 7:27; emphasis added)

Book of Mormon writers did not accidentally use the above references to describe the same general area where the Nephites, the Jaredites, and Columbus landed—somewhere in Mesoamerica, which was known by them as the promised land.

In 1 Nephi 14:2, Nephi does not use the term “**the promised land**” to refer to a destination. Rather, he points out that the righteous Gentiles will, in the distant future, become part of the inheritance of Lehi, or the “Zion” of North and South America, called, in this instance, “**the promised land**” and used in the same sense as “**the land of promise**.”

Two other scriptures in which the term “the promised land” is used are 3 Nephi 20:29, which refers to the destination of “the land of Jerusalem” as “**the promised land**” to the seed of Abraham forever, and Alma 36:28, in which Alma refers to ordeals experienced by the children of Israel before they eventually settled in their destination, **the promised land**.

Another prophecy and promise that was omitted by Porter and Meldrum is also controlling. It mentions the promised land two more times. It also differentiates between the terms “the promised land” and “a land of promise.” Again, the scripture refers to the term “the promised land” as a physical destination, whereas the “land of promise” is a spiritual destination:

*It is as easy to give heed to the word of Christ . . . as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass [the Liahona], which would point unto them a straight course to **the promised land**. . . . For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to **the promised land**, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into **a far better land of promise**.* (Alma 37:44–45; emphasis added)

Elder Orson Hyde, speaking at the same celebration as President Young, made perhaps the most intriguing reference to this theme, connecting Columbus’s voyage and discoveries with the ministry of Moroni, the ancient American prophet and divine messenger and caretaker of the records of the Book of Mormon. Referring to him as the “Prince of America,” Elder Hyde noted that Moroni

presides over the destinies of America, and feels a lively interest in all our doings. . . This same angel was with Columbus, and gave him deep impressions, by dreams and by

visions, respecting this New World. . . The angel of God helped him—was with him on the stormy deep, calmed the troubled elements, and guided his frail vessel to the desired haven.<sup>33</sup>

The conclusion is inescapable and controlling. That is, because Columbus did not land on or near the United States of America but was “guided by the Lord” to Mesoamerica, to **the seed of the brethren of Nephi “who were in the promised land,”** then Mesoamerica is where the Nephites and Jaredites landed in their “promised lands” and hence where the principal New World lands of the Book of Mormon are located. From Mesoamerica, these people spread north, south, east, and west, (1) eventually mixing their seed with native populations and thereby forming a “remnant” of the “seed of Lehi,” albeit very diluted, or (2) potentially becoming part of the “remnant seed of Lehi” by adoption. Both situations occurred, and is still continuing, throughout “this continent.”

It seems more consistent, and in conformity with what the Book of Mormon says, that wherever the seed of Lehi—or, in other words, “the remnant of the house of Israel”—spread upon “this continent,” it was a land of promise unto them. From 588 BC to AD 1492, this remnant of the seed of Lehi did not remain exclusively within the confines of the continental United States of America as claimed by Porter and Meldrum:

“The Book of Mormon specifies that **only one nation may be the Promised Land, and that nation must fulfill every one of the prophecies and promises** listed above.”<sup>34</sup>

Bottom line: All of those prophecies and promises of the Book of Mormon *could not* have been fulfilled exclusively in the continental United States.

Again, the Heartland Model is fatally flawed because it excludes the above references and controlling “prophetic markers.” It completely omits and, therefore, disrespects the role of Columbus and the “Spanish Gentiles” in fulfilling significant prophecies and promises relating to the geography of the Book of Mormon.

Further, when the three additional prophecies and promises discussed in this article are added to the thirty-six identified by Porter and Meldrum, the “rest of the story” is that these three additional prophecies and promises successfully challenge the validity of Porter and Meldrum’s thinking about the location of the New World events of the Book of Mormon.

## 2. Geographical Statements by Joseph Smith Cannot Be Neglected

According to *Prophecies and Promises*, if Book of Mormon analysts are to have a valid setting for the geography of the Book of Mormon, statements by the Prophet Joseph Smith must corroborate any proposed geographic setting: “What did he know and what did he say about it?”

We certainly agree with this proposition and hastily add When did he last say it or believe it. If there are any contradictions in his statements—or in his beliefs or approvals, then the latest statements or beliefs or approvals must prevail. The question then arises as to whether a given statement was made by Joseph Smith or by someone else and whether such a statement was

justifiably attributed to Joseph Smith and when. I submit that in the interest of integrity and a full disclosure of truth then any and all proposed statements by the Prophet should be discussed and disclosed from the very outset. Then one should weight the evidence and the nature of the statements to determine its probable verity. If a conflict occurs in any of Joseph Smith's statements— or other's statements that he did not disapprove of—then his latest statements— or other's statements that he had not rejected—must prevail.

The Prophet Joseph Smith is claimed to have stated in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842 that “the city of Zarahemla stood upon this land,” meaning in Guatemala. The actual quotes follow.

But first, John Lund has shown that the articles in the September 15 and October 1 issues of the *Times and Seasons* were actually written by the Prophet Joseph Smith.<sup>35</sup> Jonathon Neville has shown that possibly Joseph Smith did not write them but that perhaps Benjamin Winchester wrote or inspired them. Regardless of whether Joseph wrote them himself, he neither disavowed nor disapproved them to the day of his death. The only other two potential authors— with authority to speak for the church— who could have written them— were either John Taylor or Wilford Woodruff. Because all three were prophets, seers, and revelators, as well as eventual Presidents of the Church, and because neither Joseph Smith, John Taylor, nor Wilford Woodruff disapproved or disavowed the statements contained in those issues, then the statements therein must stand procedurally and quasi-doctrinally as approved by three Presidents of the Church.

Contrary to what is claimed by some analysts, including Wayne May, Rod Meldrum, and Bruce Porter, the Prophet Joseph Smith did actually put the equivalent of his signature on the stated issues of the *Times and Seasons*, making him, even if not the author, completely and legally responsible.<sup>36</sup>

According to Porter and Meldrum:

Latter-day Saints should be seeking for reconciliation between the Prophet Joseph Smith's statements, and the setting for the Book of Mormon, rather than searching to find reason for doubt. **One cannot reject or neglect the statements of the Prophet, nor the prophecies and promises in the Book of Mormon** to legitimize a belief in a theoretical map founded on inconclusive passages.<sup>37</sup>

Porter and Meldrum should look in a mirror. The last thing desired is doubt. Of course this statement is true. Joseph Smith's latest statements of belief or approval of them regarding the geography of the Book of Mormon are found in the *Times and Seasons*, which statements, according to Porter and Meldrum, cannot be neglected— even though Porter and Meldrum neglected them and even failed to mention them contrary to their expressed intent to use the highest standards of conduct when writing on this subject. The following are the actual words which Joseph Smith never disapproved, modified, or disagreed with :

Mr. Stephens' [John Lloyd Stephens's] great developments of antiquities are made bare to the eyes of all the people by reading the history of the Nephites in the Book of Mormon. *They lived about the narrow neck of land, which now embraces Central America, with all the cities that can be found.* Read the destruction of cities at the

crucifixion of Christ, pages 459–60 [of the first-edition Book of Mormon]. *Who could have dreamed that twelve years would have developed such incontrovertible testimony to the Book of Mormon? Surely the Lord worketh and none can hinder.*<sup>38</sup>

We have found another important fact relating to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Central America, or Guatemala, is situated north of the Isthmus of Darien and once embraced several hundred miles of territory from north to south— ***The city of Zarahemla, burnt at the crucifixion of the Savior, and rebuilt afterwards, stood upon this land.***<sup>39</sup> [Note here the demonstrative “this” in this case refers not to where Joseph was standing or where the *Times and Seasons* was printed but to the subject of discussion, Guatemala.]

It is certainly a good thing for the excellency and veracity, of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, that *the ruins of Zarahemla have been found where the Nephites left them:* and that a large stone with engravings upon it as Mosiah said; and a “large round stone, with the sides sculptured in hieroglyphics,” as Mr. Stephens has published, is also among the left remembrances of the, (to him,) lost and unknown. *We are not going to declare positively that the ruins of Quirigua are those of Zarahemla, but when the land and the stones, and the books tell the story so plain, we are of opinion, that it would require more proof than the Jews could bring to prove the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the tomb, to prove that the ruins of the city in question, are not one of those referred to in the Book of Mormon.*<sup>40</sup>

Analysts, whether Heartlander or Mesoamericanist, can have no justifiable reason for doubt here. The above statements are clear and give definiteness, direction, and distance in placing the events of the Book of Mormon as occurring in Central America. While it is possible that Joseph Smith did not write these articles, it is not possible that he did not know and understand them. From the time they were first made, while he was editor of the *Times and Seasons*, until the time of his martyrdom some twenty months later, the prophet Joseph Smith never refuted, contradicted, modified or in any way disagreed with any of the above statements. Likewise, neither John Taylor nor Wilford Woodruff—nor, for that matter, any Prophet/President of the Church— has refuted or modified the *Times and Seasons* statements at any time—even to the present day.

Frankly, the 1842 *Times and Seasons* articles that bear the putative “signature” of Joseph Smith via the procedural use of “Ed.” at the end of the articles overwhelmingly support the Mesoamerica Model for Book of Mormon geography.

Analysts who are knowledgeable about the above discussion and who are also honest in their pursuit of truth about Book of Mormon geography could write, among other statements, a summary statement such as the following as an enlargement upon a similar statement made earlier in this article:

It is a shame that Porter and Meldrum cannot simply take Joseph Smith, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff at their word, or at their personal belief, that it occurred in Mesoamerica.

In other words, the Heartland Model for Book of Mormon geography is fatally flawed—as proven by the statements and/or consent and approval of these three great prophets. These statements are in complete agreement with a vast and growing body of knowledge and evidence proving that the geography of the Book of Mormon did indeed take place in Central America. That conclusion reflects a straightforward, definitive statement that only partially summarizes “the rest of the story” about the Heartland model for Book of Mormon geography.

### 3. Real-World Evidence

#### 4. Geographical Passages in the Book of Mormon

The next required proofs of real-world evidence and geographical passages in the Book of Mormon relate to archaeological, anthropological, and geographical evidence as compared to geographic statements in the Book of Mormon; therefore, these topics will be discussed together.

#### Internal Map Requirements Based on “Definiteness,” “Direction,” and “Distance”

The theoretical internal map, as described hereafter, is not based on “inconclusive passages” but upon precisely what is stated in the Book of Mormon itself.

Porter and Meldrum correctly state that the specific lands of the Book of Mormon must meet all of the specific geographic and cultural requirements of the Book of Mormon, including a reliance on “the language and grammatical context, especially of the words of direction and specificity. In other words, the ‘demonstratives’ that give ‘*definiteness*,’ ‘*direction*’ and ‘*distance*’ within the text.”<sup>41</sup>

However, as noted previously, Porter and Meldrum did not do this with regard to Columbus as given in 1 Nephi 13:12: “*And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.*”

And, as pointed out previously, **they have completely and intentionally omitted that scripture or any mention of it in the text of *Prophecies and Promises*!** They have also failed to deal with many geographic indicators in the Book of Mormon.

Contrary to what Porter and Meldrum believe, many geographical indicators and passages in the Book of Mormon are well defined, specific, and identifiable and require that the events of the Book of Mormon occurred in Mesoamerica and could not have happened in the United States. Following is a list of specific mandatory requirements for locating the geography of the Book of Mormon. Some are very identifiable. All are interrelated and provable, and all corroborate what the Prophet Joseph Smith said—or believed, or did not deny—about the geography of the Book of Mormon in the area of Mesoamerica:

1. There must be evidence of two extensive separate cultures, each using a written language and living adjacent to, but separate from, each other between the years of ca. 588 BC and 300 BC (Omni through Alma). One of the two cultures must have lived “so far northward” from the other culture (Alma 22:30).
2. The area must have been visited by Columbus because he was led by the Lord to “*the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land*” (1 Nephi 13:12; emphasis added). It was **the same promised land** to which the Lord guided the Nephites: “*We did arrive at the promised land . . . and we did call it the promised land*” (1 Nephi 18:23; emphasis added).
3. The territory must contain the most dominant geographic feature of the entire Book of Mormon, a narrow strip of mountainous wilderness:
  - That runs from “*the sea east even to the sea west,*” the referent being the land of Nephi (see Alma 22:27–28).
  - That runs “*in a straight course from the east sea to the west [sea]*” (Alma 50:8–11).
  - That could have provided a military defensive line, the narrow strip of wilderness, dividing the Nephites on the north from the Lamanites on the south (Alma 22:33–34, Helaman 4:7–8).
  - That was mountainous—Helaman 11:31, “*retreat back into the mountains*”; 3 Nephi 3:17, “*let us go up upon the mountains and into the wilderness*”; and Alma 22:27, “*through the borders of Manti by the head of the river Sidon.*” (See also 4 Nephi 4:1, Omni 1:13, and Mosiah 11:13.)
4. The narrow strip of mountainous wilderness must be surrounded by evidence of *many cities* that existed between about 200 BC and AD 400 and in which a written language was used as documented in the books of Omni to Mormon: Zarahemla, Gideon, Melek and Ammonihah on the north; Nephi, Shilom, Shemlon, Ishmael, etc. on the south; Nephihah, Moroni, Jershon, etc. on the east; and Cumeni, Antiparah, Judea, etc. on the west. Manti was located right in the middle near the head of the river Sidon (Alma 22:27).
5. The climate must have been such that men would have been comfortable in loincloths, with their heads shaved, even during war in the winter (Alma 3:5, 20–25). The Amlicite battles occurred in the winter months.<sup>42</sup>
6. Lehi’s landing must have been west of the land of Nephi (1 Nephi, 22:28) and west and south of the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness (Helaman 6:10–12). The place Lehi landed must also have been west of the river Sidon (Alma 22:28). That is, Zarahemla was west of Sidon, and the west sea was west of Zarahemla. Therefore, Lehi’s landing must have been on the west coast of a continent in the New World.

7. There must be evidence of substantial gold and silver in a variety of locations:
  - In the land of first inheritance (gold, silver, and copper; 1 Nephi 18:25).
  - In the land of Nephi (copper, gold, silver in great abundance; 2 Nephi 5:15).
  - In the land of Zarahemla (gold, silver, precious ore; Helaman 6:9–11).
  - In the land of the Jaredites (all manner of gold, silver, and iron; Ether 10:23).
8. The river Sidon must have its headwaters about midway between the east sea and the west sea near Manti, which was located on the northern side of the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness, and Sidon must flow northerly past, and on the east side of, Zarahemla. The river Sidon cannot flow southerly from the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness (Alma 22:27–28 and Alma 2:15, 34–35).
9. The land of Nephi must be located south of Manti and at a lower elevation than Manti (Mosiah 7:6); and Manti and Nephi must be located at a higher elevation than Zarahemla (Omni 1:13, 27–28).
10. The west sea must be located west of the river Sidon (Alma 22:28–29).
11. The overall territory must exhibit evidence of massive volcanic activity in addition to major earthquake activity to satisfy the extensive destruction and three days of darkness about AD 34 as recorded in 3 Nephi 8.<sup>43</sup>

Any proposed Book of Mormon geographic model that does not meet all of the above criteria cannot be the location of the New World lands of the Book of Mormon. Because the above points are specific geographic indicators stated in the Book of Mormon, they must be part of the “supreme law of the geography of the Book of Mormon.”

Following is a proposed geographical map precisely following all of the above relevant Book of Mormon scriptures, showing the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness in the volcanic zones of Guatemala, and indicating many Preclassic (Book of Mormon time period) ruins surrounding it, many of which contain evidence of a written language.



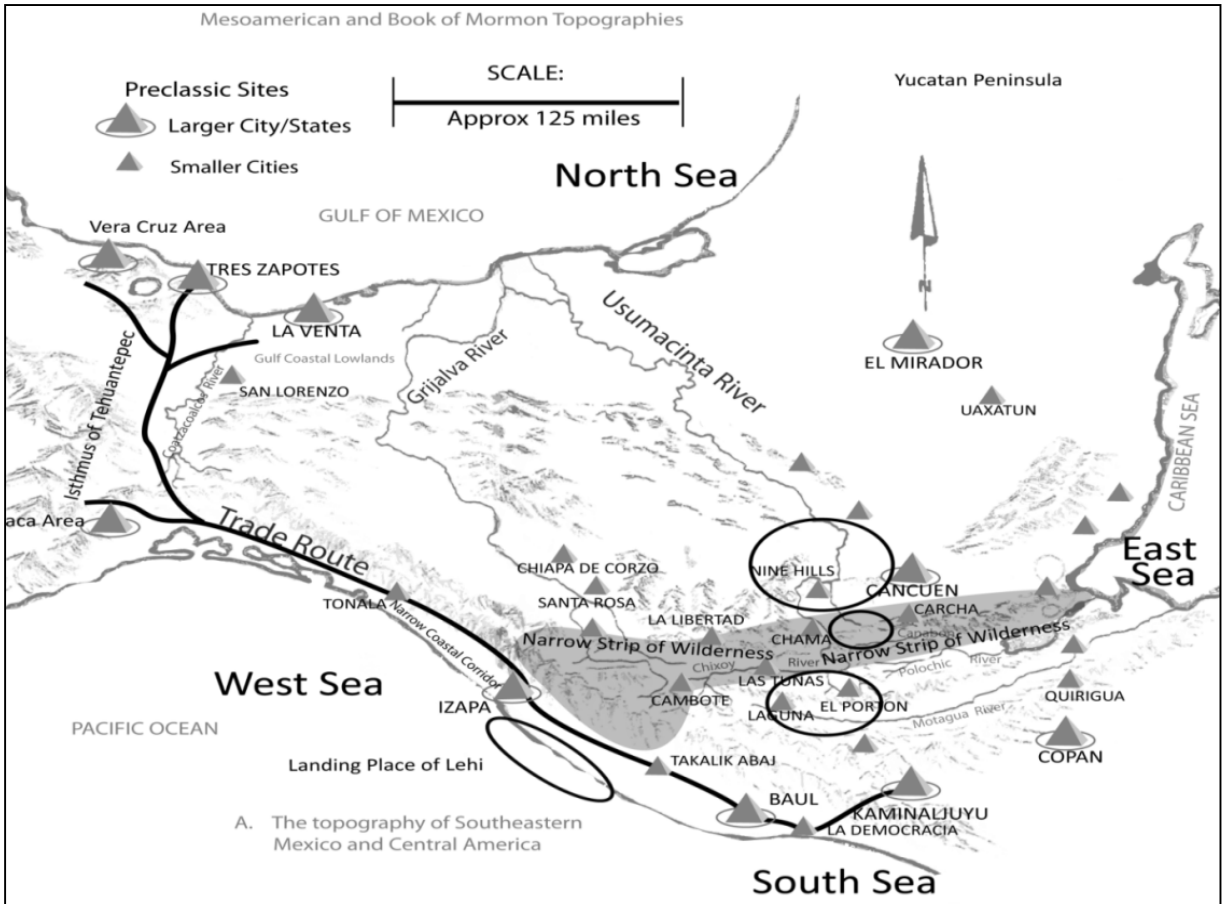


Figure 3: Proposed location of narrow strip of mountainous wilderness and coastal trade route ca. 588 BC

**Geographic Reasons Why the Heartland Theory Is Incorrect**

Facts are facts. In that respect, yes, the originators and proponents of the Heartland Model must adhere to their “facts” as they have stated them. At the same time, the facts about Book of Mormon geography as they are found in the Book of Mormon *must* match the real-world “facts” about the geography of the continental United States if the Heartland Model is to have any credence or validity.

Following are some facts about the proposed Heartland Model geography of the Book of Mormon as they relate to the unequivocal facts about the geography of the continental United States:

1. The Heartland Model *requires* that the Mississippi is the river Sidon and that it began at its confluence with the Missouri—or Ohio—River. This proposal is impossible because the Sidon must flow north, whereas the Mississippi flows south. Sidon must have its “head” in the mountains of the narrow strip of wilderness that goes from the east sea to the west sea. The head of the Mississippi is in Canada and west of the Great Lakes. Because the west sea must be west of the river Sidon (the Heartlanders’ proposed Mississippi River), then the west sea could be only the Pacific Ocean. The west sea cannot be any of the Great Lakes because all of them are located east and north of the

confluence of the Mississippi with the Ohio or the Missouri and not west as required by the Book of Mormon.

2. Manti cannot be in Missouri because Manti must be high up on the northern edge of the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness near the head of the river Sidon. There is nothing even close to a narrow strip of mountainous wilderness in Missouri, let alone a narrow strip of wilderness that extends from the east sea (the Atlantic or Lake Ontario) to the west sea (the Pacific). Any statements to the contrary by Joseph Smith—or anyone else—are invalid and irrelevant because the primary source, the Book of Mormon, so states with “definiteness,” “direction,” “distance,” and “specificity” (see page 30 of *Prophecies and Promises*).
3. Zarahemla cannot be across the Mississippi River from Nauvoo, Illinois, because the river Sidon must flow northward from Manti past Zarahemla (Porter and Meldrum claim that Huntsville, Missouri, was Manti). Moreover, the simple impossibility of the entire Heartland Model being where the Book of Mormon events took place is epitomized by their proposal that Zarahemla was across the Mississippi from Nauvoo. That is, Joseph Smith planned to build a new city across the river from Nauvoo and name that city “Zarahemla.” What possible relationship does that location have with the city of Zarahemla in the Book of Mormon? For instance, if that location is, indeed, the Book of Mormon’s location for the city of Zarahemla, where are the ruins? None—not even one brick or stone that would have matched the time period for Zarahemla of the Book of Mormon—can be identified at the proposed site across the river from Nauvoo. What in the world were the Heartlanders thinking to make such a critical mistake in their geographical model?
4. Manti must also be located west of the Sidon river, “*in the west valley, on the west of the river Sidon, and so down into the borders of the land Manti*” (Alma 43:32). “Show me” is a motto of the people of Missouri. It could be applied to the Heartlanders’ proposed location for Manti—with devastating outcomes because of the impossible geographic relationships of the Heartlanders with the real-world geography involved.
5. The eastern half of the United States cannot be included in lands of the Book of Mormon because there must be evidence of substantial gold, silver, iron, and copper. Yes, copper is found in abundance in the eastern half of the United States; however, only small amounts of silver and almost no gold have been found east of the Mississippi and west of the Great Smoky Mountains.
6. The northeastern quadrant of the United States cannot be included in Book of Mormon lands because the weather is not conducive to men wearing only loincloths and with their heads shaven year around. The Nephites simply would not have fought battles crossing the freezing Mississippi on foot north of St. Louis in the wintertime while most of the Lamanites were nearly naked.
7. There is no narrow strip of mountainous wilderness in the eastern half of the United States that runs from the east sea to the west sea. Further, there is also no evidence of

large cities where a written language was used surrounding the nonexistent narrow strip of wilderness from between ca. 200 BC and AD 400.

8. Columbus never visited the “seed of the brethren of Nephi” in the United States or any part thereof. In other words, a dedicated Heartlander must deny the legitimacy of the Columbus prophecy of the Book of Mormon in 1 Nephi 13:12 because it certainly was not fulfilled anywhere in the continental United States, especially as the U.S.A. was constituted in 1830.
9. There is no evidence of any settlement in the northeastern United States that was built out of cement as required by the Book of Mormon (Helaman 3:3–11).<sup>44</sup>
10. The Adena culture could not have been the Jaredite people, and the Hopewell culture could not have been the Nephite people. Why? Following are several substantial, valid reasons:
  - Neither had a written language between 200 BC and AD 200. The claimed language used by the Adena/Hopewell cultures was Cuneiform. However, this has been proven false. James E. Talmage, among many other qualified scientists, has confirmed that the only evidence of writing was on clay tablets, and that evidence was declared to be a forgery.
  - The Adena did not live “far northward” from the Hopewell. In contravention of the Book of Mormon, the Hopewell were not even in existence until after the Adena had disappeared as a recognizable culture. At the time of the destruction of the Jaredite society about 300–250 BC, the Jaredites had a population of well over six million people: “*Yea, there had been slain two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children*” (Ether 15:1). **No evidence supports the northeastern United States of such numbers having existed or of such massive battles having occurred at that time period.**
  - The archaeological evidence shows the Adena/Hopewell did not live contiguous to, separate from, and without knowledge of each other’s existence for at least 250 years, between ca. 580 BC and 300 BC, as required by the Book of Mormon. The Adena declined about 200 BC, and the Hopewell began emerging about 200 BC, growing out of the remnants of the Adena culture and initially occupying the same area. The following comparison from Wikipedia will help readers understand that the Adena culture was not a massive multimillion people nation that coexisted with and lived “*so far northward*” of the Hopewell people for at least 250 years, as required by the Book of Mormon.
  - As shown in a map of the archaeological cultures of Ohio, the **Adena culture (the Jaredites to the Heartlanders)** was a pre-Columbian Native American culture that existed from **1000 BC to 200 BC**, in a time known as the Early Woodland Period. The Adena culture involved what were probably a number of related Native American societies who shared a burial complex and ceremonial system. The Adena

lived in many places, including Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Kentucky, and parts of Pennsylvania and New York.<sup>45</sup>

- “‘**The Hopewell tradition’ [the Nephites according to the Heartlanders]** is the term used to describe common aspects of the Native American culture that flourished along rivers in the northeastern and Midwestern United States from **200 BCE to 500 CE**. The Hopewell tradition was not a single culture or society, but a widely dispersed set of related populations, which were connected by a common network of trade routes, known as the Hopewell Exchange System. At its greatest extent, the . . . system ran from the Southeastern United States . . . into the southeastern Canadian shores of Lake Ontario.”<sup>46</sup> [These people were still thriving in AD 400 after the Nephites had been destroyed.]

11. The Heartlanders proclaim very forcefully that the massive destruction recorded in 3 Nephi 8 when Christ was crucified took place because of earthquakes in the Midwestern United States.<sup>47</sup> However, reputable Latter-day Saint geologists, including especially Bart

Kowallis<sup>48</sup> and Jerry Grover,<sup>49</sup> state that the massive destruction of 3 Nephi 8 had to be caused by volcanic eruptions. Yes, earthquakes were associated with the destruction, but the root cause of the destruction came from volcanic eruptions. Severe earthquakes have occasionally occurred in the Midwestern United States. However, a clearly understood geologic fact is that *volcanoes have never occurred in the Midwestern United States*. Thus, the Heartlanders knowingly and deceptively claim the presence of a massive geologic event that could never have occurred east of the Mississippi because volcanoes are simply not associated with that territory.

12. An indispensable feature of any model for New World Book of Mormon geography must be the “northward territory” that must be ascribed to the Jaredite civilization. The sheer magnitude of the Jaredite civilization is hinted at by Moroni when he said, “*And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth*” (Ether 1:43). Further, in the geography of the Book of Mormon, a division point must be identifiable as part of a separation point between the land southward and the land northward; and evidence of the massive Jaredite civilization must be in evidence northward of that separation point. Significantly, in the Heartlanders’ model for Book of Mormon geography, the territory of the Jaredites is almost nonexistent. That is, the separation point to the Heartlanders is an inconsequential strip of real estate apparently between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.<sup>50</sup> From that point, the question of the twenty-first century is the following: Where are the absolutely necessary Jaredite ruins—none greater at one point in time than any other civilization on the earth—in the Heartlanders’ land northward? Answer: Jaredite ruins are entirely nonexistent, a fact that in and of itself negates totally the validity of the Heartlander New World geographic model for Book of Mormon geography. This aspect of their geography is routinely overlooked by Book of Mormon analysts.

“The rest of the story” about Heartland Model Book of Mormon geography is expressed with undeniable validity in the above geographic reasons for why the Heartland Model is incorrect. In fact, any one of the twelve negates the Heartland Model. In that respect, many more than twelve could be cited. The primary point here is that Heartlanders must do ludicrous “geographic calisthenics” to make the geography of the heartland of the United States fit the geography of the Book of Mormon.

“Impossible,” “insane,” and “invalid” are three potentially appropriate adjectives for **any** theory that attempts to place the New World geography of the Book of Mormon in the continental United States.

### **All of the Prophecies and Promises Relating to the Geography of the Book of Mormon Could Not Have Been Fulfilled Exclusively in the United States of America**

Porter and Meldrum’s conclusions that “this land” is exclusive to the United States of America are not accurate. Their conclusions are repeated again here:

The phrase “this land” . . . [2 Nephi 1:5–9] must be intimate to the speaker and the listener, or the prophet writing the text. “This land” must then be definite, specific, and **under the feet of the listener** to answer the question of “which land.” The demonstrative solidifies the understanding of which land is “this land,” the land where they are. Because of these demonstratives the land where they are must be the same land where the specific prophecies and promises are to be fulfilled.<sup>51</sup>

However, “The land where they are” must include where they landed and where Columbus landed. In that respect, Lehi was speaking when he said the following:

*We have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord [including the southern European Gentiles].*

*There shall none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord.*

*Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring.* (2 Nephi 1:5–7; emphasis added)

According to these scriptures, “this land” is not limited to the Gentiles who came out of captivity but is for “**all those who shall be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord.**” Because the Lord brought Columbus and the Southern European Gentiles to Mesoamerica and South America, the term “this land” must include all of North and South America as a “**land consecrated unto him whom he shall bring,**” just as Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni prophesied and promised.

Clearly, most of the prophecies and promises listed on pages 84–86 of *Prophecies and Promises* that use the term “this land” must apply that term to *all* the lands of promise located on “this continent.” As has been shown, most of these “prophecies and promises” have been fulfilled in *both* North and South America. Some of those prophecies are, however, clearly specific to the remnant of the mixture of the seed of Nephi, to be fulfilled in the United States as cited wonderfully by Porter and Meldrum.

However, the following statements of *Prophecies and Promises* are inaccurate:

- “Each country listed below [all the countries listed are in North and South America] except for a couple, are nations that are governed by the native inhabitants that have been there for centuries” (pages 86–87). False.

Response: Almost 90 percent of all indigenous people on “this continent” (North and South America) were destroyed by the Spanish and English Gentiles who then made “this continent” the land of *their* inheritances. Although some of the Gentiles mingled with the “remnant” of the indigenous people (Lamanites) more than others, still the Gentiles

(English or Spanish) have never relinquished control or governance to the indigenous people. And although some indigenous people now have some representation in the nations of “this continent,” none govern the Gentiles (which includes the Mestizos).

A person would have to be naive or ignorant to believe that Guatemala, the most indigenous nation of the western hemisphere, is governed by its indigenous people. It would also be ignorant to believe that the Spanish Gentiles did not almost destroy totally the native inhabitants of Central and South America and Mexico or that they did not make these lands *their* inheritance as prophesied in the Book of Mormon. The evidence is clear that the Spanish and Portuguese Gentiles, in concert with the Catholic Church, conquered, decimated, dominated, and governed—and still today govern the indigenous people. For many years, the capital of the Spanish Gentiles in Guatemala was actually in Antigua, Guatemala, from whence the church and political control spread throughout most of North America, Mexico, Central America, and South America. All of the nations of “this continent” are still controlled by Gentiles, which include the Mestizos, and they control all of the indigenous people much like the United States still governs the remnant native Indians.

- “The Book of Mormon is clear that the promised land it is referring to is a single new nation” (pages 86–87). False.
- “The Book of Mormon specifies that only one nation may be the promised land, and that nation must fulfill every one of the prophecies and promises listed above” (pages 86–87). False.

As demonstrated in this article, these bulleted statements are totally incorrect. The Book of Mormon never states that the term “the promised land” refers to “a single new nation.” And Columbus was certainly not sent to the United States area but to the promised land in Central America.

### **Conclusion**

To believe that the single nation of the United States alone must fulfill *all* the prophecies and promises of the Book of Mormon flies in the face of reason, doctrine, prophetic statements, and Book of Mormon statements. The “rest of the story” that Porter and Meldrum omitted can be summarized as follows:

1. Joseph Smith and many other prophets have stated that all of North and South America is the land of Zion. The United States of America cannot fulfill this prophecy and promise by itself.
2. Moroni prophesied that the Book of Mormon is an account of the ancient inhabitants on “this continent.” The United States alone cannot fulfill this promise.

3. Columbus and the Spanish Gentiles, who did not come out of captivity, must be accounted for, and their accounts could not have taken place exclusively in the United States.
4. The scattering of the other native inhabitants of “this continent” could not have taken place in the United States.
5. Prophecy and Promise No. 17 on page 85 of *Prophecies and Promises* is incorrect because 1 Nephi 13:35 does not say “this land.” What it says is the following: “I [the Lord] will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, . . . and after thy seed [the Nephites] shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and **also the seed of thy brethren [the Lamanites]**, behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles [English and Spanish]” (emphasis added).

Readers should remember that 1 Nephi 13:12 says, “**A man among the Gentiles [Columbus] . . . went forth . . . even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land**” [emphasis added].

6. The Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon never meant to say that the United States is “**the** promised land.” The Doctrine and Covenants says, “I . . . deign to give unto you greater riches, even **a [not “the”]** land of promise . . . for the land of your inheritance” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:18–20).

And the Book of Mormon says, “*The Spirit of the Lord . . . was upon the [English] Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance*” (1 Nephi 13:15).

7. The seed of Lehi must include all the Gentiles whom the Lord directs to “this continent,” who become believers, and so forth. That cannot happen exclusively in the United States.

As has been conclusively shown, the Heartland Model for a geographical setting for the Book of Mormon exclusively in the United States of America is fatally flawed on many counts, a few of which are as follows:

1. The river Sidon flowing the wrong direction.
2. Columbus not visiting the United States itself.
3. Failure to recognize the non–English-speaking members of the “seed of Lehi.”
4. Failure to recognize Joseph Smith’s statement that the New World events of the Book of Mormon occurred in Central America.
5. The Hopewell and Adena not coexisting between 588 BC and ca. 300 BC.
6. No written language by either the Adena or Hopewell.



7. No evidence in the United States of any cement buildings dating to ca. 100 BC.
8. No evidence of any gold in the area of the proposed heartland of the United States, let alone an abundant supply by the Adena/Hopewell.
9. No evidence that the Adena lived “*so far northward*” from the Hopewell.
10. No evidence the Hopewell even existed until after the demise of the Adena.
11. The west sea being in the wrong location (Lake Michigan), not west of the Mississippi and Missouri; also, the west sea cannot be north of Zarahemla, according to the Book of Mormon.
12. No narrow strip of mountainous wilderness going from the east sea to the west sea.
13. Failure to recognize that “the promised land” was where Columbus, Lehi, and Jared landed in Central America in fulfillment of prophecy.
14. The landing place of Lehi on the south coast of the Gulf of Mexico instead of “west of the land of Nephi” and “south of the narrow strip of wilderness,” as required by the Book of Mormon; this event could have occurred only in Central America.
15. Failure to recognize that Moroni promised, and Joseph Smith stated, that the land choice above all other lands was “this continent,” North and South America.
16. The lack of required volcanoes and earthquakes in the eastern United States to fulfill the massive-destruction needs of 3 Nephi 8.
17. Failure to recognize and admit that the Heartland Model cannot accommodate the geographic and civilization needs of the Jaredites in the land northward—in Canada. That is, the territory in Canada north of Lakes Erie and Ontario simply does not have required ruins that reflect the Book of Mormon’s statement that the Jaredite civilization would be the greatest upon the earth at one period of time (see Ether 1:43).
18. Failure to recognize and accept the fact that today, more than half the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints speak Spanish—and most of those members live “south of the border.” In fact, members of the Church in the twenty-first century are literally seeing Book of Mormon prophecies and promises fulfilled outside the borders of the United States as they apply just one scripture to the situation: “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20).

Many more reasons could be listed, but the principle of “a point of diminishing returns” dictates a stopping point for now in “the rest of the story.”

All of the above flaws of the Heartland model are in direct conflict with what is stated with specificity in the Book of Mormon.

The United States of America is the most blessed nation upon the earth, but it is not the exclusive “land choice above all other lands.” The “English” Gentiles who came out of captivity had the blessing and responsibility to form the United States of America, to participate in the restoration of the gospel, and to manifest it throughout the nations of the earth. They have a special responsibility to take the gospel to the seed of Lehi, the remnant of Israel living on “this continent,” North and South America, the land choice above all other lands. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are fulfilling the attendant prophecies and promises and all others contained in that great book, the Book of Mormon, the truthfulness of which is attested to in this article.

## Notes

1. Bruce H. Porter and Rod L. Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises: The Book of Mormon and the United States of America* (Mendon, NY: Digital Legend Press and Publishing, 2009).

2. An interesting scenario unfolded as we each did our part in preparing this article. Joe lives in Mesa, Arizona, and has his personal copy of *Prophecies and Profits*. Ted lives in Provo, Utah, and also has his personal copy. Both volumes show a copyright date of 2009. However, in the process of writing the article, we discovered that the page numbers for the two books did not agree. Further, we discovered many instances in which the wording was different in the two books. Nothing was said in the preliminaries of either book about a revised or updated volume. We resolved the issue by purchasing what we assumed is the latest version of the book, which at that time was the fourth printing under the date of 2010. All *Prophecies and Promises* used in this article refer to the fourth printing, unless noted otherwise. Therefore, if the page numbers in your copy of *Prophecies and Promises* do not agree with the page numbers in the volume we used as we prepared this article, you will know that the discrepancies can be attributed to what we think are unorthodox publishing procedures followed by Porter and Meldrum. We apologize for any inconvenience those procedures may have caused our readers.

3. See “Book of Mormon and DNA Studies,” <http://www.bmaf.node/515> or <https://www.lds.org/topics/book-of-mormon-and-dna-studies?lang=eng>.

4. Quotation attributed originally to John L. Sorenson but endorsed by Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 2.

5. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 10; italics emphasis in original; bold emphasis added.

6. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 27; italics emphasis in original; bold emphasis added.

7. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 30; emphasis in original.

8. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, First Printing, October 2009, 102.

9. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 128.

10. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, First Printing, October 2009, 16.

11. Porter and Meldrum *Prophecies and Promises*, 1, 19.

12. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 1, 86–88.

13. Porter and Meldrum’s table of thirty-six “Promised Land Prophecies and Promises” is found on pages 84–86 of the fourth printing of *Prophecies and Promises*. Based on (a) dictionary definitions of such words as *America* and *continent* during Joseph Smith’s lifetime and (b) usage and declared definitions of such terms as *this land, promised*

*land, land of promise, and Zion* by prophets before and during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, we invite readers to examine carefully the thirty-six prophecies and promises to verify those that apply to the “continent” of North and South America just as well as they apply, as a reflection of Porter and Meldrum’s exclusivist thinking, to the territory of the continental United States between the Great Lakes on the north and the Gulf of Mexico on the south.

14. Kieth Merrill, in Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, Foreword; emphasis in original.
15. “Continent, History of the Concept,” Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continent#History\\_of\\_the\\_concept](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continent#History_of_the_concept) (accessed May 11, 2015).
16. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: S. Converse, 1828), s.v. “America.”
17. Brigham Young, *History of the Church*, 7 vols., August 18, 1844 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 7:258; emphasis added.
18. Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 362; italics emphasis in original; bold emphasis added.
19. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 187; emphasis added.
20. Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, April 1949, 108; emphasis added.
21. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 45.
22. See Alvin R. Dyer, *Meaning of Truth*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1961), 48; emphasis added; the parenthetical notation is Elder Dyer’s.
23. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah*, 301–2.
24. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 26.
25. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 97; emphasis added.
26. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 35–36.
27. At this point, readers are invited to think about the spirit of the law of adoption as it applies to peoples of the Book of Mormon beyond the blood descendants of Lehi. In that respect, Nephi states:

*But, said he [Lehi], notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord Hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should [have been or will] be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord. (2 Nephi 1:5)*

Who were those people who were, or would be, “led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord”? From the Book of Mormon and from modern historical, archaeological, and anthropological studies, here are some logical options:

- A few “others” who were not descendants of Lehi—not his “seed”—came to the promised land with Lehi.
- A “whole lot” of “others” came with the Mulekites and merged with Lehi’s descendants (but they were not the “seed” of Lehi).
- A “whole lot” of “others” were descendants of Lehi et al. but emigrated north and south and then beyond the boundaries of the Book of Mormon territories to form their own cultures.

- The Gentiles, who were to come and are still coming to the New world.
- The cultures known today as the “Maya cultures” who preceded “the seed of Lehi” in the New World; we know today via radiocarbon dating that the Early Preclassic Maya even preceded Abraham.
- And of course the Jaredites preceded the Nephites in the New World and were “given” territory in the New World as their “promised land”; and the Jaredites also preceded Abraham.
- As quoted above from 2 Nephi 1:5, Lehi was aware that other peoples would come to the New World and would receive the same blessings in the land of promise that his descendants were promised. Lehi also prophesied that no one would come to the New World except the Lord brought them:

*Wherefore, I, Lehi, prophesy according to the workings of the Spirit which is in me, that there shall none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord. Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them. (2 Nephi 1:6–7)*

That scripture has to have retrospective application. Thus, the pre–Abrahamic Jaredites were a gospel dispensation (see Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 201) and were given a part of the New World as their promised land. Therefore, the Jaredites have a right to every blessing available to every worthy person who ever lived or will live on this “continent.” In other words, the basic principle of adoption applies in these situations.

The essence of the law of adoption as it pertains to the salvation of humanity can be stated as follows:

According to Joseph Smith, “The effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham” [or] “a new creation by the Holy Ghost” (Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150).

“Indeed, the faithful [including pre–Abrahamic people] are adopted into the family of Christ; they become ‘the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters’; they are ‘spiritually begotten,’ for their ‘hearts are changed through faith on his name,’ thus being ‘born of him,’ becoming ‘his sons and his daughters’” (see Mosiah 5:7; see also McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 23.)

The Apostle Paul uses similar words when explaining the doctrine of adoption when he says, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” because they receive “the Spirit of adoption,” being or becoming Israelites, “to whom pertaineth the adoption” (see McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 23, and Romans 8:14–24, 9:4, Galatians 4:5, Ephesians 1:5).

The question arises as to what effect this law of adoption has upon pre–Abrahamic people, such as the Jaredites. Is it necessary for them to become of the seed of Abraham by adoption, or is it sufficient that they have salvation by the same method of becoming spiritually begotten after their hearts are changed through faith on His name and becoming Christ’s sons and daughters and therefore heirs of eternal life by the spirit of the law of adoption? And, in connection with the subject of this article, the designation of both North and South America as a land of inheritance for the seed of Lehi need not be understood as mutually exclusive of the Jaredites and others, such as the Early Preclassic Maya and perhaps other pre–Abrahamic cultures such as the Monte Alto on the Pacific coast ca. 1800 BC.

28. See Wikipedia, “Population History of American Indigenous Peoples,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population\\_history\\_of\\_indigenous\\_peoples\\_of\\_the\\_Americas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_history_of_indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas) (accessed May 12, 2015).

29. Again, we point out that we independently purchased our copies of *Prophecies and Promises* while living in different states and then discovered the copies were not identical in pagination. We have worked with what apparently are four different printings of the book, but none of them is designated as a “revised edition” by Porter and Meldrum. The table of prophecies and promises will probably begin somewhere around pages 80 to 84 in your copy of *Prophecies and Promises*. Throughout our document, except as noted, we have used the fourth printing, which we assume is the latest printing in 2015.

30. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 73–74; emphasis added.
31. See Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 27.
32. See Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 10.
33. Orson Hyde, “Celebration of the Fourth of July,” July 4, 1854, *Journal of Discourses*, photo lithographic reprint of 1859 text (Los Angeles: General Printing and Lithograph, 1961), 6:368.
34. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 84–86.
35. See John L. Lund, “Joseph Smith’s Actual and Verifiable Words as a Supreme Source for Book of Mormon Geography,” [http://www.bmaf.org/articles/Joseph\\_actual\\_verifiable-words\\_lund](http://www.bmaf.org/articles/Joseph_actual_verifiable-words_lund) (accessed May 18, 2015).
36. See John Lewis Lund, *Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon: Is This the Place?* (n.p.: The Communications Company, 2007), 31–32.
37. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 203; emphasis added.
38. “From Stephen’s ‘Incidents of Travel in Central America,’” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 22, September 15, 1842, 914–15; emphasis added.
39. “Zarahemla,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 23, October 1, 1842, 927; spelling updated; emphasis added.
40. “Zarahemla,” *Times and Seasons*, 927; emphasis added.
41. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 30; emphasis in original.
42. See Lund, *Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon*, 207–9.
43. The only viable explanation for the extensive destruction and three days of darkness as recorded in 3 Nephi 8 is associated with massive volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. However, an interesting geologic phenomenon of the continental United States between the Great Lakes on the north and the Gulf of Mexico on the south is that no volcanoes of any kind have ever been recorded in that territory. For further discussions about the lack of volcanic activities in the territory of the Heartland Model, see Ted Dee Stoddard, “Indications of Weather and Climate in the Book of Mormon,” [http://www.bmaf.org/articles/weather\\_climate\\_stoddard](http://www.bmaf.org/articles/weather_climate_stoddard); Ted Dee Stoddard, “‘Thick Darkness’: Volcanoes and the Historicity of the Book of Mormon,” <http://www.bmaf.org/node/511>; and Jerry D. Grover Jr., *Geology of the Book of Mormon* (n.p.: n.p., 2014).

In addition, prophecies about the extensive destruction at the crucifixion of Christ include one by Samuel the Lamanite in which he said, “There shall be many places which are now called valleys which shall become mountains whose height is great” (Helaman 14:23). One example of fulfillment of that prophecy is recorded among destructions of other kinds in the 3 Nephi 8 account: “And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, that in the place of the city there became a great mountain” (3 Nephi 8:10). Another geologic fact about the territory of the Heartland Model is that no mountains whose height is “great” are found within hundreds of miles of the Mississippi River.

Thus, the Book of Mormon prophecies and promises about the massive destruction in “the land” at the time of Christ’s crucifixion involve other real-world and geographical evidences that negate Porter and Meldrum’s “Heartland theory” about the location of the New World events of the Book of Mormon. Frankly, their “theory” is proven invalid if for no other reason than the prophecies and promises about the destruction at the crucifixion of Christ as found in the Book of Mormon.

44. In Mesoamerica, there is substantial evidence of many cities northward from the Guatemala area that made extensive use of cement during the Book of Mormon time period.
45. “Adena Culture,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adena\\_culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adena_culture) (accessed May 18, 2015).
46. “Hopewell Tradition,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopewell\\_culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopewell_culture) (accessed May 18, 2015).
47. See Rod L. Meldrum, *Exploring the Book of Mormon in America’s Heartland: A Visual Journey of Discovery* (New York: Digital Legend, 2011), 200.
48. See Bart J. Kowallis, “In the Thirty and Fourth Year: A Geologist’s View of the Great Destruction in 3 Nephi,” *BYU Studies* 37, no. 3 (1997): 136–90.
49. See Jerry D. Grover Jr., *Geology of the Book of Mormon* (n.p.: n.p., 2014).
50. See Wayne N. May, Rod Meldrum, and Bruce Porter, *Book of Mormon Evidences in North America* (n.p.: The Firm Foundation, n.d.), 2, 22–23. See also Meldrum, *Exploring the Book of Mormon in America’s Heartland*, 194, 198.
51. Porter and Meldrum, *Prophecies and Promises*, 35–36.