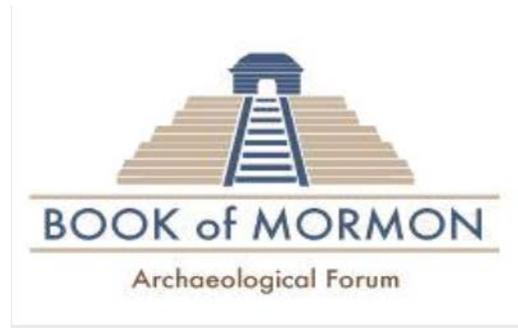




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“Land North” and “Land South”: How These Terms Are Always Used in the Book of Mormon

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The purpose of this article is not only to corroborate that statement but also to discuss similar terms that refer to the narrow strip of wilderness and not to the Jaredite land northward. The following information correctly describes how the authors of the Book of Mormon consistently used these terms. For convenience, emphasis, and accessibility, all scriptures using these terms will be cited and italicized.



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“Land North” and “Land South”: How These Terms Are Always Used in the Book of Mormon

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To have an accurate understanding of the geography of the Book of Mormon, its readers must recognize that whenever the terms “land north” or “land south” are used, the referent is always the narrow strip of wilderness and never the narrow neck of land.¹

The purpose of this article is not only to corroborate that statement but also to discuss similar terms that refer to the narrow strip of wilderness and not to the Jaredite land northward. The following information correctly describes how the authors of the Book of Mormon consistently used these terms. For convenience, emphasis, and accessibility, all scriptures using these terms will be cited and italicized.

1. All Book of Mormon Scriptures That Contain the Terms “The Land North” or “The Land South”

About 29 BC

*And it came to pass that they became exceedingly rich, **both the** Lamanites and the Nephites; and they did have an exceeding plenty of gold, and of silver, and of all manner of precious metals, **both in** the land south [Lamanites] and in the land north [Nephites]. (Helaman 6:9)*

This scripture does not refer to the Jaredite land northward. Readers who carefully study all of Helaman 6 will see that everything happening is occurring to the Lamanites living in the land of Nephi and to the Nephites living in the land of Zarahemla. The referent is **clearly** the narrow strip of wilderness.

In 29 BC, the greater part of the Lamanites had become more righteous than the Nephites; also, “*the more part of the Lamanites*” in the land of Nephi had been converted to the church of Christ. In addition, many Lamanites “*came down from the land of Nephi into the land of Zarahemla*” (see Helaman 6:1–6) and preached to the Nephites. The Lamanites and the Nephites then enjoyed peace and prosperity together with “*free intercourse one with another to buy and to sell and to get gain*” (see Helaman 6:7–8).²

During this time, Lehi and Nephi, and many converted immigrant Lamanites, traveled to the Jaredite land northward; however, Helaman 6 does not follow them into that territory. Further, nothing is ever mentioned regarding cities, conflicts, or specifics about any of their activities in the Jaredite land northward. After six years, Lehi and Nephi, having served as missionaries in the Jaredite land northward, returned to Zarahemla. They had had no success with the people in the Jaredite land northward because “*they did reject all his [Nephi’s] words, insomuch that he could not stay among them*” (Helaman 7:3).

With this background in place, readers can understand that Mormon, in Helaman 6:9, was clearly talking about the lands where the majority of the Nephites and Lamanites resided, north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness. This verse is not referencing north and south of the narrow neck of land or the small neck of land and has nothing to do with the Jaredite land northward.

About 29 BC

Now the land south was called Lehi, and the land north was called Mulek, which was after the son of Zedekiah; for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north [of the narrow strip of wilderness], and Lehi into the land south [of the narrow strip of wilderness].
(Helaman 6:10)

This was the same land south and land north referred to in Helaman 6:9. However, Helaman 6:10 clarifies that the terms “the land south” and “the land north” refer to the narrow strip of wilderness because the Book of Mormon says that Lehi landed west of the city/land of Nephi and south of the narrow strip of wilderness (Alma 22:28). Lehi never went north of the place where he landed. He lived only two to three years in the place of their landing— which located within the land of Nephi— and within the same year that he died, the Nephites moved inland to just south of, and within eyesight of, the narrow strip of wilderness.³

Contrary to what some Book of Mormon readers believe, Mulek was not brought into the Jaredite land northward for permanent residency. He had only a brief “first landing” there (see Alma 22:30). Logically, if a group of people had been involved in a “first landing,” then the same group of people must have been involved in a “second landing.” The Book of Mormon clearly states that the Lord brought Mulek into the land of Zarahemla where his people remained ever since. Or, as stated in Omni 1:16, the people of Mulek “*were brought by the hand of the Lord across the great waters, into the land where Mosiah discovered them; and they had dwelt there from that time forth.*” The Book of Mormon contains no evidence that the people of Mulek dwelt anywhere else and thus leaves no room for any other consideration. They did not remain in the place of their first landing for any length of time, but the Lord guided all of them to their second and final landing, or settling, at Zarahemla. Also, the Book of Mormon contains no basis for the theory that the Mulekites settled in the place of their first landing and then, many years later, divided, with some going to Oaxaca and some going to Zarahemla, thus reflecting a “third move.”⁴

Zarahemla was located just north of and “by,” or near, the narrow strip of wilderness, and that is the only place to which the Lord guided Mulek as the place of his residence.⁵ Therefore, the term “the land north” must mean north of the narrow strip of wilderness and not north of the “narrow neck of land.” That is, the people of Zarahemla had never lived in the Jaredite land northward prior to or during the events of Helaman 6.

About 29 BC

The following scripture uses the words “in the north and in the south” instead of “the land north and the land south”; however, because the scripture follows Helaman 6:10–11, Helaman 6:12 is

inserted here. It also clearly refers to territory that is north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness:

They [Nephites and Lamanites (see verses 1–12)] did raise grain in abundance, both in the north and in the south; and they did flourish exceedingly, both in the north and in the south. And they did multiply and wax exceedingly strong in the land [north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness]. And they did raise many flocks and herds, yea, many fatlings. (Helaman 6:12)

The Book of Mormon’s account of Nephi’s six-year mission to the Jaredite land northward does not include any information about Lamanites and Nephites “flourishing” or about “*great joy and peace, yea, much preaching and many prophecies concerning that which was to come*” (see Helaman 6:12–15) in the Jaredite land northward. Nothing in the Book of Mormon indicates that “they,” the Nephites and Lamanites (see verse 9), were “*waxing exceedingly strong*” in the Jaredite land northward. The terms “in the north” and “in the south,” therefore, must refer to “the land north” and “the land south” mentioned in the preceding verses. Thus, the referent here must also be the narrow strip of wilderness. This is the same time period during which Mormon is talking about both the Lamanites and the Nephites living north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness. Mormon did not simply “change terminology,” and this scripture has nothing to do with the Jaredite land northward, as claimed in *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*.⁶

About AD 1

And they began to know that the Son of God must shortly appear; yea, in fine, all the people upon the face of the whole earth [of the Nephites and the Lamanites] from the west to the east, both in the land north and in the land south [of the narrow strip of wilderness], were so exceedingly astonished that they [all] fell to the earth. (3 Nephi 1:17)

The referent here is again the narrow strip of wilderness. This event occurred only thirty years after the events of Helaman 6. Further, the major events as reported by Mormon were still taking place in the population centers of the lands of Zarahemla and Nephi on both sides of the narrow strip of wilderness. Free intercourse between the Lamanites and Nephites continued. The “face of the whole earth” here is limited, by the scripture itself, to the Nephite and Lamanite areas of occupation from the west sea to the east sea and north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness. The area must be the same area discussed in Helaman above and, therefore, excludes the Jaredite land northward.

If the term “the whole earth” literally meant the entire earth, then “all the people” in such places as Rome, Jerusalem, Yucatan, Teotihuacan, and China must have all fallen to the earth, and the event would have been noticed and enshrined in writing. The Bible certainly does not say that. Therefore, because the area where the people all fell to the earth must be limited in size, then it must be limited to the area being discussed in these verses to the areas of the major occupations of the Nephites and Lamanites living north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness. The area where “*all the people . . . fell to the earth*” must also exclude the Peten and Belize areas because at that time, the millions of Maya living in Peten, Belize, and the Yucatan were not part of the Nephite/Lamanite controlled areas. Nothing in the records of the people who are today called the

“lowland Maya” indicates that they all fell down or that they experienced the three days of darkness and two days and a night without darkness. Those conclusions are confirmed archeologically because during the time period between about 300 BC and AD 100 in the Maya lowlands of Peten and Belize, the Maya were at their zenith of development and were not living a Nephite type of lifestyle. They were also autonomous and certainly not obedient to a polity in Zarahemla or to a religion that adhered to the law of Moses.

During Moroni’s command (about the last part of 72 BC), he had established many cities near the east sea after driving all the Lamanites out of the east-sea wilderness area and into the land south of the narrow strip of wilderness (*the line of the possessions of the Lamanites*; see Alma 50:13) to keep the Lamanites out of the land north of the narrow strip of wilderness. He was successful. However, he did not drive the millions of Maya living in Peten and Belize out of that entire area and relocate all of them to the south of the narrow strip of wilderness as required by the Book of Mormon. Therefore, the Peten and Belize were outside of the Nephite controlled area and were not part of the land of Zarahemla.⁷

By 29 BC, the need for a defensive line no longer existed because the Lamanites had become more righteous than the Nephites and because freedom of movement, trade, and intercourse then prevailed. Samuel the Lamanite had come from the city/land of Nephi to the city/land of Zarahemla (see Helaman 3:1–3 and 16:7). He called the people there to repentance and then removed himself from the wall of the city of Zarahemla and returned to the city/land of Nephi (see Helaman 16:7). Samuel the Lamanite did not go into the Peten or Belize to preach. And he did not go into the Jaredite land northward to preach. Therefore, 3 Nephi 1:17 is talking about the principal lands and cities on both sides of the narrow strip of wilderness and mainly the cities/lands of Zarahemla and Nephi and the cities and villages surrounding those areas.

About AD 18

And it came to pass that in the latter end of the eighteenth year those armies of robbers had prepared for battle, and began to come down and to sally forth from the hills, and out of the mountains, and the wilderness, and their strongholds, and their secret places, and began to take possession of the lands, both which were in the land south and which were in the land north, and began to take possession of all the lands which had been deserted by the Nephites, and the cities which had been left desolate. (3 Nephi 4:1)

The Book of Mormon contains no evidence that the Nephites or the Lamanites deserted any cities or lands in the Jaredite land northward until about AD 375. It also contains no indication that the Nephites ever possessed or deserted any lands or cities north of the city Bountiful or in the Peten or Belize, described in this article as the east-sea land northward. Therefore, the term “the land north” cannot be referring to the Jaredite land northward.

In the years between AD 3–9, the Gadianton robbers had again established themselves and were causing problems to the Lamanites and the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 1:27–30). As stated in verse 27, the Gadianton robbers “*dwelt upon the mountains . . . [and] did infest the land.*” The mountains where the Gadianton robbers were “infesting” must have been in the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness. Therefore, they were not infesting the Peten, where there were no

mountains, or in Belize, but they were located in the mountains within the narrow strip of wilderness near the population centers of the city/lands of Zarahemla and the city/lands of Nephi.

The Lamanites were particularly concerned because their children were being influenced by the Zoramites and becoming part of the robbers (see 3 Nephi: 1:29). Therefore, when the Gadianton robbers proceeded to “*come down and to sally forth from the hills, and out of the mountains, and the wilderness, and their strongholds, and their secret places*” (see 3 Nephi 4:1), they were clearly coming down out of the narrow strip of wilderness and not out of Peten or Belize or the Maya lowlands. Noticeably, they were coming down out of the wilderness and not up from the Maya lowlands.⁸ This scripture means that the cities and villages the robbers were beginning to take possession of, were the cities and villages in the population centers of Zarahemla and Nephi and surrounding areas north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness and had nothing to do with the Jaredite land northward.

The authors of the Book of Mormon were consistent in their use of the terms “the land north” and “the land south” in referring to the lands north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness. These terms did not include the areas of the Peten, the Yucatan, and Belize as claimed in *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*.⁹ Therefore, Allen and Allen made the “change in terminology”—not Mormon. Also interesting and significant is the fact that no other reference is made in the Book of Mormon to the terms “the land north” or “the land south” after AD 18, whereas the terms “northward” and “southward” continued to be used.

2. All Scriptures Using the Term “on the North” or “on the South” in Which the Referent Is Also the Narrow Strip of Wilderness

The terms “on the north” and “on the south” are used in the Book of Mormon mostly directionally. In each instance, readers must carefully find the referent within the context of a particular scripture. In this section, additional scriptures in the Book of Mormon are identified involving these terms where the referent is also the narrow strip of wilderness and not the narrow neck of land.

Book of Mormon readers have a difficult time ascertaining the dating for Alma 22:27–35 because, for the most part, the verses reflect a “flashback” by Mormon of the geographic description of the lands of the Book of Mormon involving the landing of Lehi (ca. 588 BC), the first landing and subsequent settling of the Mulekites, and **including the events immediately** following the time when Captain Moroni had established his defensive line and had driven all the Lamanites to the south of the narrow strip of the wilderness ca. 72 BC.

About 74 to 65 BC

And also there were many Lamanites on the east by the seashore, whither the Nephites had driven them [the Nephites certainly had not driven the Maya to El Mirador or Lamanai because the Maya had already been there for over fifteen hundred years]. And thus the Nephites were nearly surrounded by the Lamanites [on the east, south, and west]; nevertheless the Nephites had taken possession of all the northern parts of the land bordering on the [narrow strip of] wilderness, at [from] the head of the river Sidon, from

the east to the west, round about on the [western] wilderness side; on the north [of the western part of the narrow strip of wilderness], even until they came to the land which they called Bountiful. (Alma 22:29)

The referent here is the narrow strip of wilderness. The Nephites took possession of—and for about thirty years or so until 34 BC—controlled all of the land north of, and bordering on, the narrow strip of wilderness from the east sea to the west sea. Moroni was in a very precarious position and “*dangerous circumstances*” (Alma 52:14) as he tried to control the line of defense he had just established from the east sea to the west sea. The southwestern portion of this land that Moroni was defending (ca. 65 BC) is described in Alma 53:8, 22 as “*on the west sea, south*” and “*on the south by the west sea.*” In Alma 52:11, Moroni states, “*I would come unto you but behold, the Lamanites are upon us in the borders of the land by the west sea.*” This area was the southern border of the west-sea area called Bountiful. Mormon does not indicate how far north of the narrow strip of wilderness the Nephites possessed, except that on the western part near the west sea, their possessions extended northward to the “line” between Bountiful and Desolation.

Apparently, the phrasing “*to the west, round about on the wilderness side*” means that the Nephites were in possession not only to the north of the narrow strip of wilderness but also within part of the mountainous area in the western part of the narrow strip of wilderness. They inhabited that area and also the whole of the west-sea land Bountiful, which territory was bordering along the Pacific until it came to the line between Bountiful and the land Desolation (see Alma 22:33 below).

About 74 to 67 BC

And it came to pass that the Nephites had inhabited the [west-sea] land Bountiful, even from the east unto the west sea [verse 33 continues after the following comments]. (Alma 22:33)

The wording “*that the Nephites had inhabited the land Bountiful, even from the east unto the west sea*” does not say or mean from the east sea to the west sea. The wording here should have the same meaning as that of the preceding verse, Alma 22:32, which describes this distance as a day and a half from some identifiable landmark on the east to the west sea. Therefore, the wording of Alma 22:33 probably means that the west-sea land Bountiful (which was exclusively inhabited by the Nephites at that time) extended in width the distance of about 12 to 20 miles (a day and a half of a day) from some point or object on the east of the west sea and then westerly to the west sea (see Alma 22:33 continuing below).

Verses 33–34 of Alma 22 continue as a summary conclusion of all the preceding geographic descriptions: “*and thus the Nephites in their wisdom, with their guards and their armies, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south [of the narrow strip of wilderness], that thereby they should have no more possession on the north [of the narrow strip of wilderness], that they might not overrun the land northward. Therefore the Lamanites could have no more possessions only in the land of Nephi, and the wilderness round about.*” (Alma 22:33–34)

The referent here is again the narrow strip of wilderness. The only time and place where the Lamanites, as an entire nation, had been hemmed in by the Nephites occurred when Moroni established the defensive line along the narrow strip of wilderness from the east sea to the west sea, which occurred about 72 BC. The term “*no more possessions on the north*” clearly indicates that the Lamanites had possessed some of the Nephite land north of the narrow strip of wilderness until they were driven out. Readers should remember that the Lamanites had nearly surrounded the Nephites on three sides. The term “on the north” could not have meant the Jaredite land northward because the Nephites were just beginning to migrate there and because no indication is given that any Lamanites had migrated into the Jaredite land northward yet. In fact, the statement that the Lamanites “*could have no more possessions only in the land of Nephi*” compels the construction that “on the south” means south of the narrow strip of wilderness because that is the only place where the land of Nephi ever existed.

The phrase “*overrun the land northward*” here could refer to the Jaredite land northward; however; in this instance, it more likely was intended to be directional and meant northward from the narrow strip of wilderness and included both the west-sea land Bountiful and at least that part of the Jaredite land northward called “Desolation” by the Nephites. Apparently, Mormon did not use the term “on the north” to be synonymous with the Jaredite “land northward.” Therefore, in this instance, the phrase “*overrun the land northward*” probably included anywhere north of the narrow strip of wilderness where the Nephites desired to go.

*And it came to pass that the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land [of Nephi], amongst all his people who were in all his land, who were in all the regions round about, which [land of Nephi] was bordering even to the sea, on the east [of Nephi] and on the west [of Nephi], and which [land of Nephi] was divided from the land of Zarahemla by a narrow strip of wilderness, which [narrow strip of wilderness] ran from the sea east [of Nephi] even to the sea west [of Nephi], and [the narrow strip of wilderness continued] round about on the borders of the [west] seashore, and the borders [of that part] of the [narrow strip of] wilderness which was [located] **on the north** by [near] the land of Zarahemla, [and continued] through the borders of Manti, by [near] the head of the river Sidon, [the borders of the narrow strip of wilderness continued] running from the east towards the west—and thus were the Lamanites and the Nephites divided. [The narrow strip of wilderness divided them—not the river Sidon. Therefore, the narrow strip of wilderness, not the river Sidon, ran from the east to the west.] (Alma 22:27)*

The referent here is again the narrow strip of wilderness. The phrase “on the north” is directional and means that the city/land of Zarahemla was located near (“by”) the northern part of the narrow strip of wilderness and also near the city of Manti, which was located within and on the northern edge of the narrow strip of wilderness near but lower than the head of the river Sidon.¹⁰

Apparently, some Nephite territory was located within the western part of the narrow strip of wilderness that the Nephites possessed and was not included in the designated west-sea land Bountiful—because Alma 22:29 says that the Nephites possessed this land “*until they came to*” the west-sea land Bountiful. Therefore, the west-sea land Bountiful was considered by the Nephites as a separate and smaller subdivision of the greater land of Zarahemla. Further, the

west-sea land Bountiful bordered the west sea as distinguished from the land and city Bountiful that were located on the east-sea coastal area.

One result of the above analysis is the conclusion that the New World territory of the Book of Mormon included two separate lands Bountiful, each of which was located on a different seashore. Further, these two lands Bountiful were not large areas but were similar to the description of the Arabian Land Bountiful. This concept is discussed in “Three Separate Lands Bountiful? Where located? What Size? To Which Bountiful Did Christ Initially Appear?”¹¹ This concept was also first identified and discussed by F. Richard Hauck in 1988.¹²

Other scriptures that use the term “on the north” or “on the south” will now be cited. One outcome of these citations is that readers will, hopefully, have a better understanding of why they must look carefully at each scripture to locate the correct referent. In each of the following scriptures, the referent initially appears to be the narrow strip of wilderness. However, on more careful examination, readers will see that the referent must be carefully selected from the narrow strip of wilderness, the city of Zarahemla, or some other location described within the scripture. Clearly, however, the referent in the following scriptures is not the narrow neck of Land or the narrow strip of wilderness.

About 100 BC

And there began to be much peace again in the land [of Zarahemla]; and the people began to be very numerous, and began to scatter abroad upon the face of the earth, yea, on the north and on the south, on the east and on the west, building [not conquering] large cities and villages in all quarters of the land [of the greater land of Zarahemla that was expanding, which did not yet include the east-sea area and also probably did not include the west-sea land Bountiful yet]. (Mosiah 27:6)

The referent here is probably not the narrow strip of wilderness; more likely, it is the city/land of Zarahemla itself because the narrow strip of wilderness, as a dividing line between the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla, was not established until about 72 BC, some thirty years later—or about a hundred years after King Mosiah₁ and few thousand Nephites had relocated in Zarahemla and merged with the more numerous Mulekites. The date involved here was only twenty years after 120 BC when the actual size of the land of Zarahemla has been determined to be about the size of the Salt Lake Valley (see the article entitled “Zarahemla: Its Size and Its Rise and Fall”).¹³ The date was also prior to the time when many thousands of Nephites were killed in the Amlicite civil war.

Mormon would have known of the relative peace within the city/land of Zarahemla between the believers and the unbelievers at that time (see Mosiah 27:1–5). A careful reading seems to require the meaning that the expansion in question was of the people of the Nephites who were expanding into the lands surrounding the city/land of Zarahemla, namely, Gideon, Minon, Ammonihah, Melek, Noah, and Sidom, among others. The Nephites were certainly not conquering millions of Maya in Peten and Belize at this time, nor were they expanding into the Jaredite land northward yet. Within this hundred-year period, they were just getting well established in the city of Zarahemla and surrounding areas.

The Amlicites must have been part of this expansion, possibly separating themselves from Zarahemla and living to the east of the river Sidon (Alma 2:14–15), desiring to have a king, and expressing displeasure with their former King Zarahemla, who had merged with the Nephites and allowed Mosiah to be their new king. About ten years later, the huge civil war with the Amlicites, who had conspired with the Lamanites, occurred. This war is the first time the Book of Mormon affirmatively shows that a large Lamanite army crossed the narrow strip of wilderness to attack the Nephites, and the Lamanites did it in concert with the Amlicites.

These events also show that the Nephites had not expanded into the east wilderness yet (ca. 100 BC) and could not have had the resources to conquer the Maya in the Peten or Belize, **hundreds of miles** to the north and to the east.

About 73 BC

And it came to pass that when he [Moroni] had poured out his soul to God, he named all the land which was south of the land Desolation [the land southward], yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and on the south—A chosen land, and the land of liberty. (Alma 46:17)

The referent here for “on the north and on the south” is the narrow strip of wilderness. Moroni did not designate the Jaredite land northward as “*a chosen land, and the land of liberty.*” He specifically designated all the land south of the land Desolation. At this point, according to the Book of Mormon, Moroni’s knowledge about the Jaredite land northward was that a huge population had lived there and had been destroyed. Why would he have named such a place, known as “Desolation” to the Nephites, as “*a chosen land, and the land of liberty?*” Isn’t that the probable reason that he specifically excluded Desolation? Not until about 72 BC did the Nephites begin migrating into the Jaredite land northward, which, of course, included a small segment of the Jaredite land northward, called Desolation. Nothing in the Book of Mormon indicates that Moroni had ever been in the Jaredite land northward or even in the land Desolation. He had been serving in the military on the east-sea area, and, at the age of twenty-five, in the year 74 BC, he was appointed chief captain of all the armies of the Nephites when they were stationed at Jershon (see Alma 43:5–18). He served in this capacity for eighteen years until he died at age sixty-three in 56 BC (see Alma 63:2–3). His entire life was spent establishing the line of **defense within the** narrow strip of wilderness, chasing all the Lamanites into the land of Nephi south of that line, and then in maintaining that line and protecting the city of Zarahemla. He had never been in the Jaredite land northward; therefore, he named only those lands southward from Desolation as “*a chosen land, and the land of liberty.*” His “title of Liberty” was certainly not meant for **whatever people might be** living in the Jaredite land northward.

About 72 BC

*And it came to pass that the Nephites began the foundation of a city, and they called the name of the city Moroni; and it was by the east sea; and it was on the south [the southern edge of the land of Zarahemla, as it was] by [not in] the line of possessions of the Lamanites. [This was an extension of the **defensive line within** the narrow strip of*

wilderness, also known as “*line of possessions of the Lamanites*” near the east sea to where Moroni had forced all Lamanites from the east wilderness.] (Alma 50:13)

If the east sea is the Gulf of Honduras, then the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness peters out about 15 miles or so east thereof. At that time, there was no defined boundary. Therefore, there was a need to call the division in that area “*the line of possessions of the Lamanites.*” Mormon did not say that the city Moroni was located on the north of the line of possessions of the Lamanites, but what he said means that the city of Moroni was located within the southern part of the land of Zarahemla in the east-sea area (Alma 50:7–8). He clarified the location by adding “*by [but not within] the line of possessions of the Lamanites.*” By this time, the line of possessions of the Lamanites had apparently shifted to the north a bit to include Antionum, which had **possibly** become a Lamanite city by the year 74 BC (Alma 43:4–6).

About AD 26

And it came to pass that they [Nephite and Lamanite armies and Lachoneus and his people] had not eaten up all their provisions; therefore they did take with them all that they had not devoured, of all their grain of every kind, and their gold, and their silver, and all their precious things, and they did return to their own lands and their possessions, [which were located] both on the north and on the south, both on the land northward and on the land southward [of the narrow strip of wilderness]. (3 Nephi 6:2)

Clearly, the wording “on the north and on the south” means north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness because both the converted Lamanites and their armies and the Nephites and their armies had left their homelands north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness and were located together in the land Bountiful, near, but south of, the “line” (between Desolation and Bountiful). Speaking of Moronihah, Mormon says, “*And he caused that armies, both of the Nephites and of the Lamanites, or of all them who were numbered among the Nephites, should be placed as guards. . . . And the land which was appointed was the land of Zarahemla, . . . yea, to the line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation*” (3 Nephi 3:14, 23). They remained there for about eight years until finally the robbers’ siege failed for lack of food. (These robbers initially were concentrated in the mountainous narrow strip of wilderness until they moved into the cities vacated by “the Nephites,” who at this time included Lamanites.) The Nephites conquered the robbers and then returned to their own lands and cities, which must mean the lands north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness. By definition, they could not have returned from where they had not been, and they had not been in the Jaredite land northward. That is, they, the Nephites and Lamanites “*did return to their own lands and possessions.*”

The curse in the Jaredite land northward was the reason Lachoneus had chosen not to take his people into the Jaredite land northward for refuge in the first place. In 3 Nephi 3:24, Mormon states, “*Now Lachoneus did cause that they should gather themselves together in the land southward [of the “line”], because of the great curse which was upon the land northward [of the “line”].*

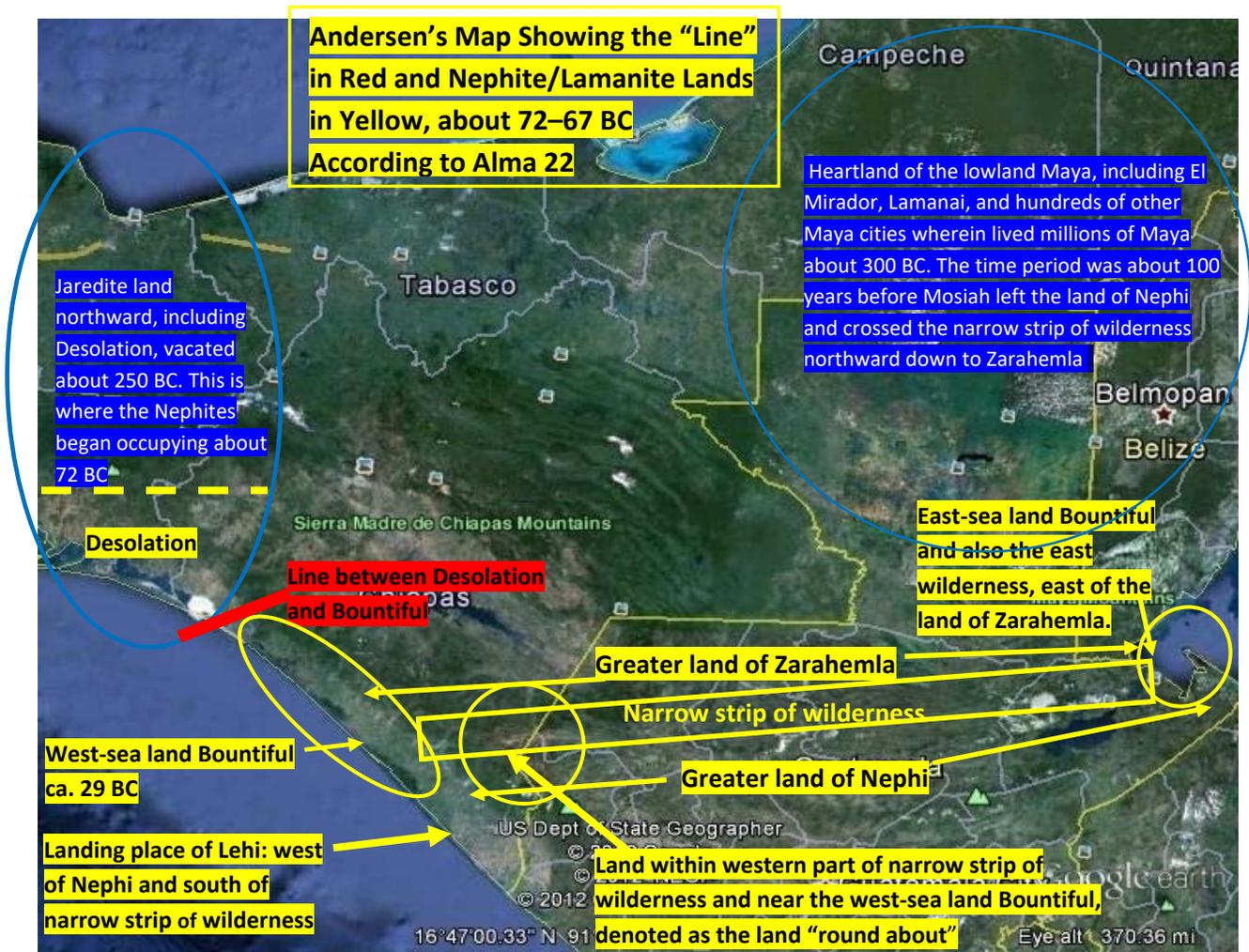
Therefore, in this instance, the 3 Nephi 6:2 terms “on the land northward” and “on the land southward” are probably directional and are referring to the narrow strip of wilderness. To

repeat, at this point in time, these Nephite and Lamanite armies and people had not yet gone into the Jaredite land northward; therefore, they could not have returned to where they had not been.

Conclusion

When the Book of Mormon prophets were talking about the “whole earth,” they were talking about the world of the Nephite writers and the areas within their domain or areas of responsibility—not such territory as that of China, the United States, the Yucatan, Peten, or Belize.

The following map helps illustrate the more restricted areas surrounding the narrow strip of wilderness that the Nephites probably controlled at various times. The map also makes more clear and credible the understanding of archaeologist David Swingle when he states that the Nephite people “were little fish in a big pond full of many ferocious fish.”¹⁴



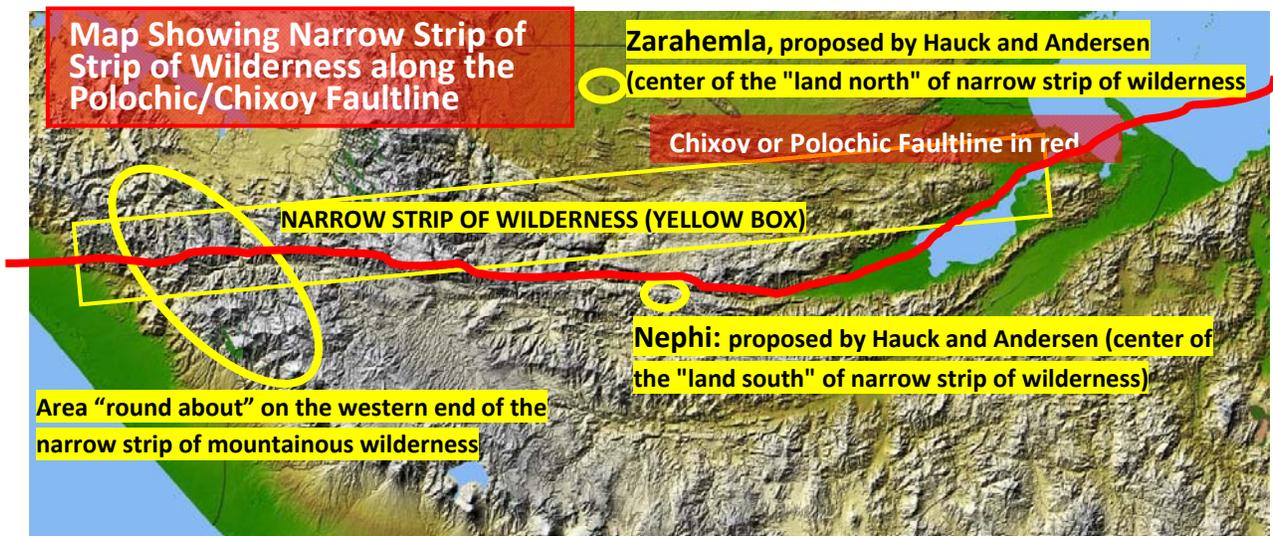
The “whole world” of the Nephites/Lamanites started at their landing place near the southwestern edge of the narrow strip of wilderness in territory they called the “promised land.”

It then spread inland to a limited area just south of the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness. Three hundred fifty years later, about 200 BC, it expanded to Zarahemla located just north of the narrow strip of wilderness. By about 72 BC, it had expanded to the east and west seas and on both sides of the narrow strip of wilderness, “the land north” and “the land south.”

About 35 BC, the Lamanites had conquered all of the land of Zarahemla except the border of the west-sea land Bountiful adjacent to the land Desolation. Nothing is ever mentioned of the east-sea city Bountiful after 29 BC. After the city of Moroni sank into the depths of the sea, the Nephites concentrated in the areas from the city of Zarahemla to the west sea and northward. This territory included the west-sea land Bountiful and the Jaredite land northward. During this entire episode, the Nephites were living among many other cultures (Maya, Lamanites, Gadianton robbers, “Amlicites,” remnant Olmec or Epi-Olmec,¹⁵ Zapotec, etc.)—collectively known by Nephite writers as “Lamanites.” The Nephites were indeed much like “little fish in a big pond full of many ferocious fish.”

The “epicenter” of the Nephite/Lamanite occupation until about the time of Christ was the “land north” and the “land south” of (and within) the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness. These terms never refer to the Jaredite land northward in the Book of Mormon. Interestingly, this area was probably the epicenter of the earthquake and volcanic activity associated with Christ’s death. This is also the area in Mesoamerica that is most prone for these activities—the territory located on both sides of the Chixoy, aka Polochic, fault line that extends from the Gulf of Honduras to the Pacific Ocean and “round about” on the west, in the volcanic zones of Guatemala and southern Mexico. See map below.

This concept of the term "the land north" never referring to the Jaredite land northward is very important and foundational to the correct understanding of the geography of the Book of Mormon.



Notes

1. In this respect, readers should carefully examine Joseph Allen and Blake Allen's thinking about "the land north" and "the land south" (see chapters 19 and 20 of Joseph Lovell Allen and Blake Joseph Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed. rev. [American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2011], 429–77). Some of their explanations seem to be correct, but others suggest that Mormon simply changed meanings and that "the land north" meant the Jaredite land northward.

2. "There was peace in all the land. . . . The Nephites did go into whatsoever part of the land they would whether among the Nephites or the Lamanites. . . . The Lamanites did also go whithersoever they would, whether it were among the Lamanites or among the Nephites; and thus they did have free intercourse one with another, to buy and to sell, and to get gain, according to their desire" (Helaman 6:7–8). These events could not have taken place in the Jaredite land northward.

3. See 2 Nephi 3:1, 25, where Lehi blessed Joseph who was still "little" at the approximate age of six to ten. Lehi died that same year, and the Nephites fled inland for many days shortly thereafter with their tents and many small children. (See also 2 Nephi 4:12–13 and 2 Nephi 1:14, which show that shortly after arriving and rejoicing, Lehi states that "a few more days and I go the way of all the earth"; see also 2 Nephi 2:30.)

Lehi and his followers landed in the land of their first inheritance on the Pacific coast about 588 BC. The Nephites lived a couple of years in or near the place where they landed; they journeyed in or explored the landscape; and then they fled many days inland to a place they called Nephi where they settled. Within the next sixteen to eighteen years, they established a righteous city in which they lived the law of Moses, built a temple after the manner of Solomon's temple, and were taught to "work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ore which were in great abundance." During this same time period, Nephi became king and, of course, was the prophet and spiritual leader of the city of Nephi. They lived "after the manner of happiness" with no wars until the next ten-year period (see 2 Nephi 5).

The above incidents prove that the Nephites did not live in the land of first inheritance more than a couple of years. Lehi and Sariah were old and almost died on the ship. Lehi blessed Joseph when he was yet "little," and then Lehi died and was buried in their land of first inheritance. Because the place where Lehi landed was located west of the city of Nephi (Alma 22:28), they must have journeyed eastward and inland from the west coast to the land and city of Nephi, which were located within eyesight of the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness. There is no possible way that Nephi could have accomplished all of these activities at Kaminaljuyu within twenty years after landing on the west coast. He would have to have conquered the twenty thousand people living there, become king of Kaminaljuyu, converted all of them so they would live the law of Moses, and "live after the manner of happiness" without wars for the eighteen years or so after leaving the west-sea area. Therefore, Kaminaljuyu could not have been the city of Nephi.

4. See Allen and Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 8, 74, and 540, where they state that the Mulekites settled at the place of their first landing, after which some went into the Oaxaca area, some went to Zarahemla, and some even had a "third move."

5. See my 2011 PowerPoint presentation, "Usumacinta Is the River Sidon," in which I show that the city of Nephi was located within a few miles south of the narrow strip of wilderness and that Zarahemla was located about fifty miles north of the narrow strip of wilderness because it was located "by" the narrow strip of wilderness (http://www.bmaf.org/articles/usumacinta_river_sidon__andersen).

6. See Allen and Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 447: "On this occasion, the Book of Mormon terminology changes from 'land northward-land southward' to 'land north-land south.'"

I believe that the Book of Mormon authors were consistent in their usage of such terms and that they did not simply "change terminology." The referent was not the "narrow neck of land"; rather, it was the narrow strip of wilderness.

7. See my article, "Zarahemla: Its Size and its Rise and Fall," (http://www.bmaf.org/zarahemla_size__andersen).

8. See my article entitled “Response to Stoddard’s ‘Maya Problem,’” http://www.bmaf.org/articles/response_stoddards_maya_problem__andersen.
9. See Allen and Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 482.
10. See my article, Additional Truth and the Proof: River Sidon Ran North, Not South
11. See my articles entitled “Why City Bountiful Was Not Located in the Yucatan, the Peten, or Northern Belize,” http://www.bmaf.org/articles/bountiful_not_yucatan_peten_belize__andersen, and “Three Separate Lands Bountiful: Where Located? What Size? To Which Bountiful Did Christ Initially Appear?” http://www.bmaf.org/articles/three_bountifuls__andersen.
12. See Richard F. Hauck, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 31–32.
13. See my article, “Zarahemla: Its Size and Its Rise and Fall,” http://www.bmaf.org/articles/zarahemla_its_rise_and_fall__andersen.
14. See David Swingler, “Looking at the ‘Maya Problem’ from a Different Perspective,” http://www.bmaf.org/articles/maya_problem_different_perspective__swingler: “I hope in this brief essay I have explained the perceptions I see as I look at the thousand years of the ‘Lehiaic Invasion’ and its minimal impact on the evolving histories of the indigenous peoples, and how the massive impact of these ‘Goyim’ or ‘Lamanites’ upon the Lehiaic Group, led unto its utter destruction. We can see it today: they were little fish in a big pond full of many ferocious fish. It is a miracle they survived in this milieu for 1,000 years.”
15. See my article, “Nephites among the Epi-Olmec (in the Isthmus 100 BC to AD 400,” http://www.bmaf.org/articles/nephites_epi_olmecs__andersen.