The Book of Mormon annals open in an ancient Near Eastern context. The archaeological-historical context is carefully outlined here within a systematic chronology that is tied to fixed, absolute dates of recorded astronomical events—particularly those from cuneiform eponym calendars. The resultant matrix allows those early Book of Mormon events to be understood in a rational, familiar, and meaningful way—that is, in a biblical context. In addition, an excursus is devoted to understanding the Arabia of the Book of Mormon as the Lehite exiles must have known it. Throughout it is clear that the world depicted by the Book of Mormon dovetails remarkably well with what we know of the ancient Near East.
Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East

Robert F. Smith

Abstract: The Book of Mormon annals open in an ancient Near Eastern context. The archaeological-historical context is carefully outlined here within a systematic chronology that is tied to fixed, absolute dates of recorded astronomical events—particularly those from cuneiform eponym calendars. The resultant matrix allows those early Book of Mormon events to be understood in a rational, familiar, and meaningful way, i.e., in a biblical context. In addition, an excursion is devoted to understanding the Arabia of the Book of Mormon as the Lehite exiles must have known it. Throughout it is clear that the world depicted by the Book of Mormon dovetails remarkably well with what we know of the ancient Near East.

This technical, bibliographical paper outlines the main events that occurred in the ancient Near East around the time of Lehi and Nephi and their immediate ancestors and is designed to aid in examining the strictures within which one must set the upper end of the Nephite chronological scale, i.e., the date of departure of Lehi from Jerusalem. In the course of doing that, I provide a consistent system of dating, along with some readily available sources, which

Nearly two decades ago, Professor John L. Sorenson asked me to prepare this piece as part of his larger program to place Book of Mormon events in real time and space. I especially wish to thank Cynthia Booras, Rebecca M. Flinders, and Marc-Charles Ingerson for their help in preparing this paper for publication.

SMITH, BOOK OF MORMON EVENT STRU

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Given the nature of the Nephite ning of the scale is the sine qua no spectrum of Book of Mormon date called to prophetic office “in the c of the reign of Zedekiah, king of : 24:17-18), but that he left Jerusalem six hundred “years” before the superscription, 1:1; 2:6)—and the carefully computed and methodica date of that prophesied birth (1 Ne Helaman 14:2). Not only does any with “round-number” dating in t plausible, but, among scholars, the about the absolute status of 597 B. rezzar II first placed Zedekiah on this scholarly unanimity, the Rev. N stated the dilemma for the Book o

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Event Structure: Near East

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annals open in an ancient Near Eastern-historical context is carefully chronology that is tied to fixed, mical events—particularly those of the Near East. The resultant matrix allows us to be understood in a rational, biblical context. In understanding the Arabia of the exiles must have known it, depicted by the Book of Mormon what we know of the ancient

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Sorenson asked me to prepare a list of events in the Book of Mormon events in real time. Cunningham, Rebecca M. Flinders, in preparing this paper for publication.

Smith, Book of Mormon Event Structure

the enterprising student will want to consult. Other modern sources differ only slightly in their accounts of these ancient Near Eastern dates and events, and I have covered some of the more important differences of opinion where appropriate. It must be emphasized, however, that most of the dates presented here are based upon and carefully tied to fixed, absolute dates of recorded astronomical events. As Jay Huber has pointed out, the interlocking nature of these astronomical events and the consequent "correlation between the Babylonian and Julian calendars" is in no way mere happenstance.¹

Given the nature of the Nephite annals, establishing the beginning of the scale is the same quae non for understanding the entire spectrum of Book of Mormon dates. It is not only that Lehi was called to prophetic office "in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah" (1 Nephi 1:4, 2 Kings 24:17–18), but that he left Jerusalem in that same first year—fully six hundred "years" before the birth of Jesus Christ (3 Nephi superscription, 1:1; 2:6)—and the Book of Mormon applies a carefully computed and methodically recorded countdown to the date of that prophesied birth (1 Nephi 10:4, 19:8; 2 Nephi 25:19; Helaman 14:2). Not only does any suggestion that we are dealing with "round-number" dating in the Book of Mormon seem implausible, but, among scholars, there is not the slightest question about the absolute status of 597 B.C. as the year when Nebuchadrezzar II first placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah. Aware of this scholarly unanimity, the Rev. Mr. Wesley P. Walters succinctly stated the dilemma for the Book of Mormon:

Smith was unaware that Zedekiah must be dated at 597 B.C. instead of the 600 B.C. date the Book of Mormon assigns him. He was unaware that the birth of Christ must now be placed some time prior to 4 B.C., so he wove into the fabric of the book a modern chronological error. The error was Dionysius Exiguus' scheme, who set up the present system of dating from the

birth of Christ in the sixth century A.D. He mistakenly equated A.D. 1 with the Roman year 754 (A.U.C.), whereas Herod the Great had died four years earlier in the Roman year 750 (A.U.C.); or, in 4 B.C. by our present dating system. The only way scholars can correct this error is to date the actual birth of Christ prior to 4 B.C., yielding less than 593 years between Zedekiah and the birth of Jesus.²

While certainly correct in stating that less than 593 solar years can be fitted between those two ends of the scale, and in suggesting that the consensus among scholars is that Herod died in early 4 B.C.,³ Walters was unaware that, within the predominant Mesoamerican calendar, “reckoning was not by those [365-day] years, but by tun (360 days),”⁴ i.e., 600 Mayan tun = 591.4 solar years, as correlated with the Book of Mormon first by Professor John L. Sorenson.⁵ No other “year” system accommodates the

² Independence (Mo) Examiner, 17 September 1977 (Church of Christ ad); Apostle Orson Pratt had long before noted the very same dating error of Dionysius in JD 15:254–55 (29 December 1872).
⁶ Smith, Book of Mormon Event Structure, a similar 360-day count may to Lehi in the ancient Near East. Of nothing of the ancient Mayan Long redoubtable Orson Pratt, who came to consideration at first seemingly counter to but comes to the closer examination to be as authenticity.

The following collection of data and further research on the chronological scale. The main body period from 793 to 445 B.C., to which the Lehite sojourn in Arabia.

Book of Mormon Events

Ancient Near East

793–752 B.C. Jeroboam II, king of Israel (782); late in his reign, the prophets Amos and Hosea at Bethel Kingdom where social and religious Uzziah/Azariah, 742–740 B.C., 4:55, throne in 792, died in 740, active by Israel), with his son, Jotham, his death.⁸ David Noel Freedman

facts, and a similar 360-day count may already have been familiar to Lehi in the ancient Near East. Of course, Joseph Smith knew nothing of the ancient Mayan Long Count (so also with the redoubtable Orson Pratt, who came closer than anyone to an early and successful solution to the chronological question). Thus, evidence at first seemingly counter to the Book of Mormon, turns out on closer examination to be astonishingly favorable to its authenticity!

The following collection of data can be used to assist in discussion and further research on the upper end of the Nephite chronological scale. The main body of this paper covers the period from 793 to 445 B.C., to which is appended an excursus on the Lehite sojourn in Arabia.

Book of Mormon Event Structure: Ancient Near East

793–752 B.C.
Jeroboam II, king of Israel (coregent 793–782); late in his reign, in the mid-eighth century, the prophets Amos and Hosea began to preach in the Northern Kingdom where social and religious decay were rampant.

792–740 B.C.
Uzziah/Azariah, king of Judah (accession to throne in 792, while his father was held captive by Israel), with his son, Jotham, coregent from 750 B.C. until his death.

David Noel Freedman says that seismologists and...
archaeologists estimate the great earthquake in the land (Amos 1:1) at about 8.0 on the Richter scale.9

776 B.C. First Olympiad; Coroebus of Elis wins the only race (200 m dash).

ca. 767 B.C. Pharaoh Shoshenq V, ruler of the eastern delta (ca. 767-730 B.C.; 22nd Dynasty).10

763 B.C. Eclipse, 15 June 763 B.C., in the 10th year of Ashur-dan III.11

753 B.C. Founding of the city of Rome (legendary) = 0 A.U.C. (ab urbe condita); year begins on April 21 festival; from 152 B.C. (601 A.U.C.), the year began when the consul took office (generally January 1, in the Julian calendar).

753–713 B.C. Pi’ankhi [Pi, Piye, Paanchy], pharaoh of Nubian Dynasty 25, from Napata. He conquered all of Egypt; also called Userma’atre, Menkheperre, and Seneferre; he was the father of Shebitku and Taharqa; the Great Stele of Piankh is dated to his 21st year = 734 B.C.;12 cf. Nibley on the ca. 1085 B.C., Dynasty 21 high-priest ‘Amon-Piankhy, whom

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BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES 5/2 (1996) at earthquake in the land (Amos scale).9

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ytian Chronology and the Hebrew Mon-

tem Society of Columbia University 5 blem of Chronology in Mesopotamia,”

2.


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Klaus Baer accepted as the son of Ḫeriḥor13—though formerly saying he was not the son, but merely the successor to Ḫeriḥor.14

753-752 B.C. Zechariah, king of Israel, on death of his father Jeroboam, but was murdered within six months by Shallum ben Jabesh (752), who was in turn killed a month later by Menahem ben Gadi (752), all of which led to civil war.15

752-742 B.C. Menahem, king of Israel.16

752-732 B.C. Pekah ben Remaliah (Pakaha), rival king of Israel from Gilead; allied with Rezin of Damascus, against Assyria, and against Ahaz of Judah (for refusal to join their coalition).17 Took throne in Samaria from Pekahiah in 740 B.C. after assassinating him.18

750-732 B.C. Jotham, king of Judah (coregent 750-740 B.C., and overlapped with the Assyrian favorite, Ahaz, 735-732). Isaiah called as prophet to Judah (740-ca. 688 B.C.). Micah called as prophet to Judah around the same time as Isaiah, and he preached into the reign of Hezekiah.19

747 B.C. King Nabonassar of Babylon—his era begins.

745-727 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul), king of Assyria.20 His inscription (ca. 735 B.C.) mentions the Arabic cities of Tayma' and Maṣṣā',21 the latter of which is the city of the only biblical Lemuel (Lemuel).22

15 Bright, History of Israel, 271; Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 123-24.
16 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 124-28; Menihimma paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III in 743, ibid., 139-43, 160.
17 Bright, History of Israel, 273.
19 Bright, History of Israel, 288-98. Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 131-33.
742–740 B.C. Pekahiah, king of Israel, on death of his father, but was soon assassinated by Pekah ben Remaliah, his rival as well as his officer in Gilead.23

735–715 B.C. Ahaz, king of Judah as a vassal state to Assyria,24 Overlap of reign with Jotham, 735–732, due to pro-Assyrian faction.25 Edom was lost during the reign of Ahaz.26

734 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III conquered Gezer (Gazru) during his coastal campaign through Phoenicia and Philistia, and it is depicted on his palace relief at Nimrud and mentioned in his eponym calendar for that year.27

733–716 B.C. Accession of King Osorkon IV in Eastern Delta, Egypt; 22nd Dynasty.28

732 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) destroyed Damascus and captured much of northern Israel (2 Kings 15:29, 16:9).29

20 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 125.
21 Frederick V. Winnett and William L. Reed, Ancient Records from North Arabia (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1970), 101.
23 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 128–29.
24 Bright, History of Israel, 276.
25 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 133–34, 152.
29 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 151.

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732–723 B.C. Hoshea ben E Pekah; he им tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III.30 Е Hazor V by Pul in 733/732 B.C. Transjordan converted into Assy and Gilead.31

727–722 B.C. Shalmaneser V

725/724 B.C. King Hoshea V, after hav Shechem destroyed 725/724 B.C. Samaria by Shalmaneser V.35

722 B.C. Destruction of the Kingdom of Judah, deportation of northern tribes in Media by Sargon II. Israel is now in exile.36

722–705 B.C. Sargon II, king of Assyria (722).37

721 B.C. Eclipse 19 Mardokempa Era.38

30 Bright, History of Israel, 275; 163–72.
33 Bright, History of Israel, 275.
34 Ibid., 276.
35 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 128–29.
37 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 128–29.
38 Ibid., 227.
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732–723 B.C.    Hoshea ben Elah, king of Israel, after killing 
Pekah; he immediately surrendered and paid 
tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III.30 Destruction of Megiddo IV and 
Hazor V by Pul in 733/732 B.C., with the coast, Galilee, and 
Transjordan converted into Assyrian provinces: Dor, Megiddo, 
and Gilead.31

727–722 B.C.    Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria.32

725/724 B.C.    King Hoshea taken prisoner by Shalmaneser 
V, after having allied himself with Egypt.33

Shechem destroyed 725/724 B.C. by the Assyrians.34 Siege laid to 
Samaria by Shalmaneser V.35

722 B.C.    Destruction of Samaria (Shamarain) 
and Northern Kingdom by Shalmaneser V, with 
deportation of northern tribes in 721 to Upper Mesopotamia and 
Media by Sargon II. Israel is never heard from again (2 Kings 
17:5–6).36

722–705 B.C.    Sargon II, king of Assyria (from late December 
722).37

721 B.C.    Eclipse 19 March 721 B.C., the first year of 
Mardokempados = 27th year of Nabonassar Era.38

30 Bright, History of Israel, 275; Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 134–38,
163–72.
31 Yohanan Aharoni, Archaeology of the Land of Israel (Philadelphia: 
Westminster, 1982), 251.
32 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 125.
33 Bright, History of Israel, 275.
34 Ibid., 276.
35 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 163.
36 Bright, History of Israel, 275; Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 137–38,
163–72, citing Hayim Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A 
and Albert T. Olmstead, "The Fall of Samaria," American Journal of Semitic 
Languages and Literatures 21 (1905): 179–82; Albert T. Olmstead, "The Text of 
Sargon's Annals," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures 47 
37 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 163–64.
38 Ibid., 229.
720 B.C.  Stele of Paanchi (Pianchi) 1:1-6 (ca. 720 B.C.)//Jeremiah 1:4-5 (cf. Isaiah 49:5) 39//Stele of Darius I (ca. 522-486 B.C.), Tel el-Maskhuta, Egypt (near Ismailiya); these documents all share a common motif. 40 Eclipses 8 March and 1 September 720 B.C., 2nd year of Mardokempados = 28th year of Nabonassar Era. 41

717 B.C.  Carchemish (“City-of-Chemish”) destroyed by Sargon II.

715-686 B.C.  Hezekiah, king of Judah. 42

ca. 715 B.C.  It'amra, king of Saba', South Arabia; contemporary with Sargon II of Assyria. 43 Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II mention South Arabian queens Zabibe and Samsi, 44 i.e., Saba' allied with Aribi. 45 Sargon II mentions a Pharaoh who is possibly Bocchoris of the 24th Dynasty. 46

715-701 B.C.  King Hezekiah of Judah centralized worship and “took away” the “high places” (bamot, 2 Kings 18:22), which may have included the razing to bedrock of the strata II and III temple at Tel Be'er Sheba', the stratum II altar being the best remaining evidence for it; Tel Sheba III = Tel Gezer VI = Israelite Iron II bc (eighth and ninth centuries B.C.);

41  Tiele, Mysterious Numbers, 229.
42  Ibid., 174-76.
46  Bright, History of Israel, 284 n. 32.

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Tel Sheba II = Lachish III = 'Arad V century B.C.. 47

713 B.C.  Piankhy died 717/716 at the earliest, and Shabako his second year (at least by 712 B.C.)

712 B.C.  Sargon II of A

705-681 B.C.  Sennacherib 10th death of Sargo


49  Kitchen, Ancient Orient, 83-84
date Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.)


49  Kitchen, “Late-Egyptian Chronology,” 82-84.

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parallel to Jeremia I 4–5,” Vetus Testamentum:


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Tel Sheba II = Lachish III = ‘Arād VII = Israelite Iron II c (eighth century B.C.).

713 B.C.

Piankhy died by this date at the latest, 717/716 at the earliest, and Shabako2 conquered all of Egypt by his second year (at least by 712 B.C.); Sargon II mentions Shil-kannini/ Osorkon IV ‘Akeperre’ in 716 B.C. as Pharaoh, 22nd Dynasty, but in 712 B.C. is dealing with a king of Egypt who also rules Kush-Nubia, i.e., Shabako2 (Piankhy never ruled north of Abydos and the Thebaid, and never met the Assyrians on his raid into North Egypt against King Tefnakht in 734 B.C. [Piyé’s 20th year]. Shabiku became king in 702/701 B.C.

712 B.C.

Sargon II of Assyria negotiates with the Pir‘u of Musri (the Pharaoh of Egypt), Shabako2 of Nubia and Egypt (717/716–702/701 over Nubia, and 716/715 [or 713/712]–702/701 B.C. over all Egypt), who had recently defeated Osorkon IV, king of Northern Egypt (ending Dynasty 22).

705–681 B.C.

Sennacherib of Assyria (Sanherib), upon death of Sargon; Hezekiah then allies himself


with Egypt and prepares for rebellion. Aramaic Wisdom of Ahiqar dates itself to the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. Sometime after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., in "year 15," oil and wine tax receipts (the Samaria Ostraca), containing seven of the clan names of the tribe of Manasseh known from Numbers 26:28-32 and Joshua 17:1-2, were produced in the north. Naturally this brings to mind that Lehi is of the tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3). Archaeologist Bryant Wood takes this as evidence "that customs from Israel's earlier tribal history survived well into the kingdom period."52

702/701-690/689 B.C. Shebitku king of Egypt; not coregent with Taharqa as erroneously suggested by John Bright;53 Shebitku died in 690/689 B.C., and was immediately succeeded by his brother Taharqa.54

701 B.C. Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir) III was destroyed ca. 701 B.C. by Sennacherib of Assyria, which ended most of the production by Hezekiah of the famous lmlk storage jars.55 Heavy tribute paid by Hezekiah to Sennacherib.

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52 Wood, "Biblical Archaeology's Greatest Achievement," 34.
53 Cf. Bright, History of Israel, Chronology Chart VI, with Shebitku dying 685/684 B.C.
56 Bright, History of Israel, 311.
57 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 131.
58 Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology of Israel," Chronology Chart VI, and vary on dating these kings.
59 Bright, History of Israel, 293; 36-37/2 Kings 18:17-19:37.
60 Bright, History of Israel, 310.
61 Rabin, "The Song of Songs," 43.
62 Van Beek, "The Land of Sheba,
63 Cf. Fitchard, ed., Ancient Near...
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125; Ephraim Stern, “Israel at the Close haeological Survey,” Biblical Archaeolo-
Journal of Biblical Literature 64 (1945): nd Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament
James H. Charlesworth, ed., Old Testa-
’s Greatest Achievement,” 34.
Chronology Chart VI, with Shebitku dy-
onology,” 225–33; Kitchen, Ancient Ori-
i; cf. Hershel Shanks, “Destruction of

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>696–642 B.C.</td>
<td>Reign of King Manasseh of Judah (probably coregent 696–686); the prophets Zephaniah and Nahum (Nahum) are contemporary; Manasseh paid tribute to both Esarhaddon and Asshurbanipal of Assyria; Manasseh sacrificed his own son by fire, among other pagan practices (2 Kings 21:6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>690/689 B.C.</td>
<td>Accession of Pharaoh Taharqa (690–664 B.C.; biblical Tirhakah), following the death of his brother, Shebitku.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ca. 688 B.C.</td>
<td>Death of Isaiah, following an unsuccessful campaign by Sennacherib of Assyria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>687 B.C.</td>
<td>Death of Hezekiah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 685 B.C.</td>
<td>Karibatil, king of Saba’ (biblical Sheba/Yemen), a contemporary of Sennacherib of Assyria. Biblical references to South Arabia can be found in 1 Kings 10:1–15, as well as in Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Song of Songs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>681/680 B.C.</td>
<td>Esarhaddon, king of Assyria (681–669 B.C.) upon assassination of Sennacherib. Esarhaddon established vassal treaties, 677–672 B.C., with Ba’al of Tyre, he campaigned against Egypt 674–669 B.C., appointed rulers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


56 Bright, History of Israel, 311.


58 Kitchen, “Late-Egyptian Chronology,” 225–33; contra Bright, History of Israel, Chronology Chart VI, and 299–302, who summarizes the controversy on dating these kings.


60 Bright, History of Israel, 310.


over various Egyptian nomes, including the nomarch of Athisibis, Bkn-n-fy, and he had dealings with Arabs.

679 B.C.

Magiddo/Megiddo, stratum III, had an Assyrian governor, probably since about 732 B.C., following the destruction of Megiddo IV by Tiglath-Pileser III.

676/672 B.C.
The 26th Olympiad—games held in Sparta; Terpan of Lesbos wins the prize for music.

669/668 B.C.
Asshurbanipal, king of Assyria (669–633 B.C.) upon death of his father, Esarhaddon. He campaigned against Egypt 667–663 B.C., and had dealings with Arabs, also known as Osmany/Asnapper (Ezra 4:10).

664 B.C.
Pctamk/Ptsametichus I, Pharaoh of Egypt (664–610 B.C.) upon the death of his father's enemy, Taharqa; beginning of Dynasty 26, the so-called Saite Dynasty, because the capital was at Sais (biblical So) in the Delta (664–525 B.C.).

663 B.C.
Thebes (biblical No'-Amon) destroyed by the Assyrians under Asshurbanipal, and Taharqa's son, Tanut-Amon, was forced to retreat from Thebes to Kkipi (back into his Nubian homeland), thus ending the 25th Dynasty (Nahum 3:8). The Book of the composition ca. 663–612 B.C. The edited in the early seventh century 1 as with Job, they are far more arch seventh century or early sixth century Phoenicia, although, in its original 1 Patriarchal period.

661 B.C.

650 B.C.
Jewish military lished on Elep the reign of Manasseh of Judah in Egypt.

648 B.C.
Birth of Josiah (2 Kings 21:15)

645 B.C.
Birth of Jeremoth in Benjamin

64 Stern, "Israel," 46.
68 Aharoni, Archaeology of the Land of Israel, 251.
70 Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology," 225–33; Kitchen, Ancient Orient, 82–84; Bright, History of Israel, 311, and Chronology Chart VI.
71 Bright, History of Israel, 311
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Dynasty (Nahum 3:8). Book of the prophet Nahum (Naḥum) composed ca. 663–612 B.C. The Pentateuch and Ruth were edited in the early seventh century B.C. ("J" redaction), though, as with Job, they are far more archaic; Job was redacted in the seventh century or early sixth century B.C. in North Israel or near Phoenicia, although, in its original form, it was composed in the Patriarchal period.

| ca. 661 B.C. | 'Ammínadah, king of 'Ammon pays tribute to Asshurbanipal of Assyria. |
| ca. 652 B.C. | Possible birth of Lehi (Lehi) at 70 years from 582 B.C.—an estimate only (cf. 1 Nephi 1:4, 18:7, 2 Nephi 1:4; 4:12; 5:28). |
| ca. 650 B.C. | Jewish military fortress and community established on Elephantine Island, Egypt, during the reign of Manasseh of Judah and Pharaoh Psammetichus I of Egypt. |
| 648 B.C. | Birth of Josiah when his father, 'Amon, was 16 (2 Kings 21:19; 22:1). |
| ca. 645 B.C. | Birth of Jeremiah at 'Anathoth, a Levitical village in Benjamin, just north of Jerusalem. |

King 'Amon of Judah reigns. His father, King Manasseh, had named him for the Egyptian god of Thebes, 'Imn/Amon.

King 'Amon of Judah assassinated. Josiah/Yoshiyahu takes the throne, at age eight, in 640 (his accession year; first regnal year in 639) (2 Chronicles 34:1). Josiah’s expansion certainly went as far as Geba (Et-Tell), just south of Shiloh, and he may have annexed North Israel, including Galilee. Before Josiah’s reform, despite the efforts of Hezekiah, there were numerous sanctuaries and temples in Palestine, e.g., large temples at 'Arad, Be'er-sheba, Lachish, Geba, Beth-El, etc. Most were defiled or destroyed by Josiah, thus centering worship on Jerusalem. Josiah’s sons include (1) Johanan, b. 635? (2) Jehoiakim-Eliakim b. 634, (3) Jehoahaz-Shallum b. 632, and (4) Zedekiah-Mattaniah b. 618 B.C. (cf. 1 Chronicles 3:15)—their births when Josiah was 13, 14, 16, and 30 years of age, respectively (2 Kings 23:31, 36; 24:18, to his wives Zebudah and Hamutal [Hamutal]).

Siege of Ashdod by Pharaoh Psammeticus I lasted for 29 years.

Reform movement and de facto independence of Judah initiated by King Josiah. The

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77 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 178-79.
82 Bright, History of Israel, 317, 322.
83 Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, Macmillan Bible Atlas, 102, citing 2 Chronicles 34:6-7 (2 Chronicles 34-35/2 Kings 22-23).
84 Stern, “Israel,” 46.
86 Bright, History of Israel, 316-25
87 Stern, “Israel,” 28; Parker and
88 Zephaniah preached before the prophetess Huldah (Huldah) active (2 Kings 22:14-19).
89 Ashur-er-ti-ilani Nabopolassar of Babylon, the Assyrian Empire, Palestine on horses; Scythian invasion in Ashkelon, Beth-Shean, Scythians (Ashkenaz) disappeared 2:4, 7; Jeremiah 51:27; 2 Maccabees Greek (Carian-Agean) a garrison (Yabneh-Yam) on the coast of ostracon and proved by p
90 Herodotus, Historiae I, 105.
91 Keller, Bible as History, 272-
92 William F. Albright, “Neglect of the American Philological Association, 227b, and n. 18, citing 2 Kings 11:4, ostraca are to Aegeans generally rather than Scythians, “Arad,” 9-18; D. Winton Th
93 Study (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 397-
of Judah reigns. 77 His father, seeh, had named him for the mon. 78

of Judah assassinated. 79 Josiah/ takes the throne, at age eight, in egnal year in 639) (2 Chronicles certainly went as far as Geba and he may have annexed North re Josiah's reform, despite the ef- merous sanctuaries and temples in Arad, Be'er-sheva, Lachish, Geba, or destroyed by Josiah, thus cen- osiah's sons include (1) Johanan, b. 634, (3) Jehoahaz- Shallum b. sh b. 618 B.C. (cf. 1 Chronicles was 13, 14, 16, and 30 years of , 36; 24:18, to his wives Zebudah

id by Pharaoh Psm menuicu u 134 1 years. 85

ement and de facto independence itiated by King Josiah. 86 The

178-79, II-III,” in The Archaeology of Ancient Greenberg (New Haven: Yale University Egyptian cultural influ ences), 370 fig. mageddon,” 272 n.18.
chronology of Israel and the Ancient Near - East, ed. G. Ernest Wright (Garden City, millan Bible Atlas, 102, citing 2 Chroni- ngs 22-23).

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prophetess Huldah (Huldah) active during the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:14-19).

627 B.C. Ashur-til-ilani of Assyria (627-623 B.C.); Nabopolassar of Babylonia (627-605 B.C.), 87 call of Jeremiah of ‘Anathoth, son of Hilkiah the priest, 627 B.C. (his prime secretary was the priest Baruch ben-Neriah [BrkYhw], at least after 605 B.C., and assisted by Baruch’s brother Seraiah later), during the reform period initiated by King Josiah. 88

626 B.C. Chaldean (Aramaean) Nabopolassar becomes king of South Mesopotamia (626-605 B.C.; Neo-Babylonia); 89 Scythian invasions from the Caucasus into Media, the Assyrian Empire, Palestine, and to the Egyptian frontier on horses; Scythians plundered the Temple of Aphrodite Ura- nia in Ashkelon, 90 Beth-Shean renamed Scythopolis; yet the Scythians (Ashkenaz) disappeared within a decade (Zephaniah 2:4, 7; Jeremiah 51:27; 2 Maccabees 4:47). 91 Ca. 625 B.C. East Greek (Carian-Aegean) garrison at a small fortress near Jannia (Yabneh-Yam) on the coast of southern Palestine, dated by a He- brew ostracon and proved by the presence of Carian painted ware in considerable quantities there and at Tell el-Milh. 92

Birth date (traditional) of Lord Siddhārtha Gautama of the Šakyas, the Buddha (Western historians prefer 566/553 to 486/473 B.C.); md. Princess Yasodhara, 608 B.C.; son Rahula born ca. 607 B.C. His Great Going Forth (break with past), 595 B.C., 6 years as an ascetic in raja yoga, then in the meditative Middle Way, and finally to the Bodhi Tree (the Enlightenment Tree) and the attack of Mara, there becoming The Buddha, The Enlightened One.93 Thales of Miletus (ca. 624–545 B.C.); others place the life of this Karian-Phoenician genius from 640 [Olympiad 35.1] to 652), predicted total solar eclipse of 23 May 585 B.C. (or 29 July 588),94 which stopped the war between Lydia and Media during the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar II; Thales also mentions the use and properties of magnetite/lodestone (mined in Magnesia).

**622/617 B.C.**

Egyptian-Assyrian alliance entered into between 622 and 617 B.C.97

**621 B.C.**

Lunar eclipse in 5th year of Nabopolassar, 22 April 621 = 127th year of Nabonassar Era.98

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the ostracon is from 'Araad stratum VI; cf. Ezekiel 27:11–13, where Yawan/Eonia is mentioned as an important center of trade (cf. Genesis 10:2).


94 Albright, "Neglected Factors," 229.


98 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 179, 181, 229.
BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES 5/2 (1996)

(traditional) of Lord Siddhārta of the Śākya, the Buddha (Western 36/473 B.C.). md. Princess Yasodārāma ca. 607 B.C. His Great Going B.C., 6 years as an ascetic in raja dle Way, and finally to the Bodhi and the attack of Mara, there brightened One. Thales of Miletus: the life of this Karian-Phoenician 5.1] to 562), predicted total solar 29 July 588), which stopped the during the 19th year of Nebuchadne the use and properties of magne sia).

dalaman (Anlaman), ruler of Napata Kingdom, Nubia (623– Pyramid Nuri IV (Piankhi had 3–713 B.C.). Sin-shar-ishkum of assyrian alliance entered into be hind 617 B.C. 97

se in 5th year of Nabopolassar, 22 = 127th year of Nabonassar Era. 98

2. in Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God " 229.
4. Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS,


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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca. 616 B.C.</td>
<td>Megiddo became an Egyptian base before 616, but after 646 B.C., and remained under Egyptian control until 605 B.C. Megiddo stratum II fortress built by Pharaoh Psamtik I, or Josiah. 99 The Egyptian army defeated the Babylonians under Nabopolassar on the upper Euphrates as they advanced against Assyria—in 616, or earlier. 100 Birth of Jehoiachin. 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>614 B.C.</td>
<td>Cyaxares, ruler of Media (ca. 625–585), leads the Medes in the destruction of Assyria, and Neo-Babylonians help loot the city, having recently become allied with the Medes. 102 Possible birth of Nephi ca. 614 B.C. at 18 years from 596 B.C. (cf. 1 Nephi 1:4, 2:16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>612 B.C.</td>
<td>Nineveh destroyed by the Medes and Neo-Babylonians (Zephaniah 2:13; Nahum 3:1–3). 103 Asshur-uballit, ruler of a rapidly waning Assyria (612–610 B.C.). 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610 B.C.</td>
<td>Destruction of Ḥarran by the Medes and Babylonians, from whence the Assyrian government-in-exile flees—despite efforts by their Egyptian allies to aid them. 105 Necho II (Niku; 610–594) succeeds his father, Psammetichus I, as Pharaoh of Egypt between July and September; also known as N-kw, Whm-lb-R. 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>609 B.C.</td>
<td>Egyptian aid, including Greek mercenaries, rushed to the Euphrates (by Necho II) for the second year, in an effort to assist Asshur-uballit in retaking Ḥarran; Josiah attempted to oppose passage of the Egyptian army at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99 Malamat, "Josiah’s Bid for Armageddon," 274.
100 Bright, History of Israel, 316.
101 Ibid., 397; 2 Kings 24:8.
102 Bright, History of Israel, 315–16; Keller, Bible as History, 273.
103 Bright, History of Israel, 324; Keller, Bible as History, 273.
104 Bright, History of Israel, 294, 303; Stern, "Israel," 28.
105 Bright, History of Israel, 324; Stern, "Israel," 28; Malamat, "Josiah’s Bid for Armageddon," 273.
106 Malamat, "Josiah’s Bid for Armageddon," 274; Bright, History of Israel, 324.
Megiddo and was killed in battle. The Battle of Megiddo is evidenced by the destruction of Megiddo II at this time. Josiah’s death came shortly before Tammuz (Du’uz/Duzu = June–July) 609 B.C.; this was followed by the three-month reign of his son, Jehoahaz-Shallum at age 23 (2 Kings 22:1, 23:31; 2 Chronicles 34:1, 36:2; during Tammuz, Ah, and Elul = June/July through September/October), while the Egyptians and Assyrians laid a two-month siege to Harran (until Ulul) which failed; Necho then had Jehoahaz brought to his base at Riblah, Hamath; deposed him and exiled him to Egypt; and replaced him with his brother, Eliakim-Jehoiakim, whose accession was in Ethanim-Tishri (September–October), 609, but whose first regnal year began 1 Nisan 608 B.C. (2 Kings 23:31–34). During this period between the fall of Assyria and the rise of Babylon, Egypt gained control of Syro-Palestine and North Transjordan. Timnah/Tammun (Tell Batash), on the mid-Sorek River in the Shephelah, destroyed shortly after Josiah’s death.

608–598 B.C. Jehoiakim-Eliakim, king of Judah at age 25 (2 Kings 23:36); prophet Uriah ben-Shemaiah of Qiryat-Yearim executed by Judahite officials, after fleeing for his life to Egypt, during the reign of King Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 26:20–23). The prophet Habakkuk also preached during the reign of Jehoiakim, and the prophet Ben-Yoḥanan ben Igdaliah was active during the same period (Jeremiah 35:4 LXX).

605 B.C. Battle of Carchemish, Simanu (May–June) 605 B.C., during 4th year of the reign of...

107 Malamat, “Josiah’s Bid for Armageddon,” 273; Bright, History of Israel, 324.
113 Bright, History of Israel, 333.
The Battle of Megiddo is of Megiddo II at this time. Before Tammuz (Du'uz/Duzu = 'allowed by the three-month reign at age 23 (2 Kings 22:1, 23:31; ing Tammuz, Ab, and Elul = October), while the Egyptians and age to Harran (until Ulul) which az brought to his base at Riblah, d him to Egypt; and replaced him jaiakim, whose accession was in ober), 609, but whose first regnal Kings 23:31–34). During this ia and the rise of Babylon, Egypt and North Transjordan, Tim- the mid-Sorek River in the er Josiah's death.


Jehoiakim (4th regnal year beginning 1 Nisan 605; Jeremiah 46:2, 17, 22; 2 Kings 24:7). In 606, and now in 605, the Egyptians had had to face the Babylonians alone at the Euphrates River. This time, the Egyptians under Necho II were annihilated by the Babylonian troops under crown prince Nebuchadrezzar. 605 is also the first year of Nebuchadrezzar II of Babylon (605/604–562 B.C.; Jeremiah 25:1), i.e., Nabopolassar died 16 August 605 (= 8 Ab), and Nebuchadrezzar’s accession began 21 days later, 7 September (1 Elul)—his first regnal year beginning 1 Nisan 604 B.C.114 Nabu-kudurri-šušur, “Nabû-My-Boundary-Protect”115 or “Nabû-My-Heir-Protect” = Nebuchadrezzar.116 In early 605, Jeremiah was put in stocks overnight by the chief of the temple police (Jeremiah 20:1–4);117 he was also prohibited from entering the temple ever again, and he did not enter from 604 to 598 B.C. (Jeremiah 36:5; Jeremiah 35 is prior to 605 B.C.).

604–537 B.C. Duration of 70 years of captivity of Judah, according to G. Larsson,118 i.e., from 29 Elul (October) 604 to 537 B.C. as 70 lunar years (Jeremiah 25:3, 11–12) = 67.8 solar years (= 24,780 days at 354 days per year [but 24,803.8 days at 354.34 days per year]). Larsson and others suggest that a token captivity of Jews began in 604 B.C. (including young Daniel-Belte-shazzar the Prophet, Daniel 1:1, 2 Chronicles 36:6–7).119 However, 70 years can also be figured in 360-day years from August (Ab) 586 to March (Adar) 515 B.C. (from de-struction to rebuilt temple), or in lunar years from January (Tebeth) 588 to December 521 B.C. (from siege to Darius). However, the evidence for such a token captivity in either 604 or 605

116 Ibid., 226; Porten, Archives from Elephantine, 40 n. 100, claims that Nebuchadrezzar is a scribal error.
19a: Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews X, 90–93, the third year of Jehoiakim.
119 Ibid., 46; cf. Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 183.
is inadequate, and Daniel 1:1 may refer to a deportation in 597. King Adon of Ekron sent his Aramaic letter, with address on the outside in demotic Egyptian, requesting aid from Pharaoh Necho ca. 604, 603, or 598 B.C. = Saqqarah Letter of ‘Adon “to the Lord of Kings, the Pharaoh,” which was prompted by a threatening foray by Nebuchadrezzar’s army as far as Aphek on the Yarkon River. The script of this papyrus letter is contemporaneous with ‘Arad stratum VI, late seventh century B.C. After a siege, Ascalon-Ashkelon was captured by Nebuchadrezzar II in December 604 B.C. The brother of the Aeolic lyric poet Alcaeus, who had been in Babylon, took part in the siege.

Capture of Gaza by Babylonians (Jeremiah 46:47).

Nebuchadrezzar II defeated by Necho II at Magdolus-Migdol, Egypt, in 601 or early 600 B.C. Necho then chased the Babylonian army to Philistia and conquered Gaza. This is the date of the prophecy of Jeremiah against Philistia (Jeremiah 46:1–2, 5, 13; 47:1).

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122 Joseph Naveh, “The Scripts in Palestine and Transjordan in the Iron Age,” in Near Eastern Archaeology, 278–79; 282 n. 12. J. T. Milik suggests that it was sent from Tyre, while others have suggested Gaza or Ashdod.

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ca. 600 B.C. King ‘Aminadab Transjordan. The famous contemporaries of Lehi at sixth centuries B.C., were Arion of Lesbos (mid-seventh century B.C.), Anaximander of Miletus (fl. 545 B.C.), Memnemon of Calabria (fl. 620 B.C.), Alcaeus (fl. 620), Psappho; Lesbian Aesop; Lesbos (late seventh and early sixth of Paros (seventh century B.C.), Solon Bia of Ionia (sixth century B.C.), P. 500, taught that the spherical earth point, and also taught by his follower Phalera of inhabited worlds). Xenophon of Colophon (ca. 560–ca. 620 B.C.), Cleisthenes Alcaeus Corona (fl. 550–47; 621 B.C.), Chiania of Berytos, sixth century), King Croesus of Sardis captured by the Persians in both Pharaoh Amasis II and Nub (Zoroaster; ca. 625–551 B.C.), (Confucius; ca. 551–7 B.C.), Siddharma (ca. 535 B.C.),

128 Campbell, Mars of God, 2:2 God (New York: Viking, 1959), 1452 B.C.
Gaza by Babylonians (Jeremiah 2:5, 13; 47:1)¹²⁶

wiley, Peake’s Commentary on the Bible

of King Adon,” Biblical Archaeologist
imes on Aramaic Epistolography,”
: 201–25; Malamat, “Josiah’s Bid for
,. Fabrication of Objects from Fish and
an Eastern Society 5 (1973): 314 n. 22,
a Palestine and Transjordan in the Iron
8–79; 282 n. 12, J. T. Milik suggests
have suggested Gaza or Ashdod.
’ 230.
aggeddon,” 277 n. 33; cf. Bright, Hist-
2 Kings 24:1; cf. Josephus, Antiquities
arath (Jeremiah XLVII
1–51; Egyptian Mkr = Jeremiah 46:14
Magdolos (26:14); Malamat, “Josiah’s
the capture of Gaza in 600 B.C.; Keller
as History, 275.

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<table>
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<th>Time Period</th>
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</table>
| ca. 600 B.C. | King ‘Aminadab (mndb) of ‘Ammon in Transjordan.¹²⁷ Kapila of India;¹²⁸ other of the famous contemporaries of Levi and Nephi, in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., were Arion of Lesbos, Periander of Corinth (both late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C.), Terpander of Lesbos (mid-seventh century B.C.), Thales of Miletus (624–548/545 B.C.), Anaximander of Miletus (610-ca. 546 B.C.), Anaximenes of Miletus (fl. 545 B.C.), Tyrtaeus (mid-seventh century B.C.), Mimmerus of Colophon (mid-seventh century B.C.), Alcaeus (Asian Aeolic, fl. 620–580 B.C.), Sappho of Lesbos (Psappho; Asian/ Lesbian Aeolic, fl. 610–580 B.C.), Pitaccus of Lesbos (late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C.), Archilochus of Paros (seventh century B.C.), Solon of Athens (630–560 B.C.), Bias of Ionia (sixth century B.C.), Pythagoras of Samos (ca. 582–500; taught that the spherical earth moves around a fiery fixed point, also taught by his follower Philolaus, who included the plurality of inhabited worlds),¹²⁹ Polycrates (fl. 535–522 B.C.), Xenophanes of Colophon (ca. 560–478 B.C.), Peisistratus of Athens (ca. 600–527 B.C.), Cleisthenes of Athens (ca. 570–508 B.C.), Alcmaeon of Croton (ca. 550–475 B.C.), Draco of Athens (ca. 621 B.C.), Sanchuniathon of Berytus (Phoenician priest, early sixth century), King Ceresus of Lydia (560–546 B.C.; capital at Sardis captured by the Persians in 546 B.C.; he was allied with both Pharaoh Amasis II and Nabonidus of Babylon), Zarathustra (Zoroaster; ca. 625–551 B.C.), Lao-Tzu (Tao), Kung Fu-Tzu (Confucius; ca. 551–479 B.C.), Sun-Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha), Gosala (ca. 535 B.C.), and Vardhamana the Mahāvīra

¹²⁸ Campbell, Masks of God, 2:250, 255–58; Joseph Campbell, Masks of God (New York: Viking, 1959), 1:452, perhaps as early as the eighth century B.C.
¹²⁹ Giorgio de Santillana and W. Pitts, “Philolaus in Limbo,” Isis 42 (June 1951): 128.
Jina (Jainism; ca. 540–468 B.C., or died ca. 485 B.C.). 130 Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Jainism arising contemporaneously with Jeremiah and Ezekiel suggests to J. N. D. Anderson that “the possibility of some cross-fertilization of ideas . . . can by no means be discounted.” 131 Moreover, were the Buddha and the Mahāvīra anti-Brāhmanic Ksatriyas? Ca. 600 B.C., Pharaoh Necho II sent an expedition of Phoenicians by ship around the Cape of Africa from Ezion-Geber Island (Jazirat Fara’un) on the Red Sea—the crew reported that the sun was observed on their right as they rounded the Cape, which Herodotus regarded as an error, 132 though C. H. Gordon and Isaac Asimov regard such a report as excellent evidence of the authenticity of the voyage. 133 and this may have been a repeat of earlier such voyages. 134 By the seventh century B.C., Phoenicia had tradingposts at Mogador and Lixus on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and its bases and settlements elsewhere were already centuries old: Cyprus, Sicily (Motya), Malta, Sardinia (Nora, and Sulcis), Spain (Almuñecar, Cadiz, Utica, and Carmona), and North Africa generally (Libya, Carthage [“New-City”], etc.). 135 The “Pillars of Hercules” was once the equivalent of the westernmost extent of the Phoenician trade network, i.e. Gades (Cadiz). The Temple of He had two bronze columns with his Hercules.” 136 Prophets contemp included Zephaniah (ca. 680–620 (ca. 609–598), Nahum (620–605) of Lamentations, Ben-Yohanan (ca. 605–537), Uriah ben Shemaiah (598), and young Ezekiel, who (called in 593, and preached 20 yr. ca. 643, near the end of the reign covered the period from 627–582

In his 11th : Babylonian 1 attempted but failed to control the Jehoiakim died while Nebuchadnezzar (Syro-Palestine) to occur and fettered by him after 2 Kings 24:6; 2 Chronicles 36:6) his army in Judah in Kislam (1:597) of his seventh year—and i l e m. Jehoiachin (Coniah/Yokin), months and ten days (2 Kings 24 Days (22 Arakhamshu) S Saturday, 16 March (2 Addaru) 597 to his exile and reple [Abib]) 597. 139 Immediately

130 Hugh W. Nibley has covered many of these in An Approach to the Book of Mormon, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 33–35, and in Slasheh 239–41.


132 Herodotus, Histories IV, 42.


the Phoenician trade network, i.e., Lixus, Tingis (Tangier), and Gades (Cadiz). The Temple of Hercules at Gades (Cadiz-Gadeira) had two bronze columns with inscriptions called the “Pillars of Hercules.”

Prophets contemporary with Jeremiah and Lehi included Zephaniah (ca. 680–620), Huldah (622 B.C.), Habakkuk (ca. 609–598), Nahum (620–585?), Daniel, the unknown author of Lamentations, Ben-Yohanan ben Igdaiah (Jeremiah 35:4 LXX; ca. 605–537), Uriah ben Shemaiah (Jeremiah 26:20–23; ca. 609–598), and young Ezekiel, who was carried to Babylon in 597 (called in 593, and preached 20 years); Jeremiah himself was born ca. 643, near the end of the reign of Manasseh, and his ministry covered the period from 627–582 B.C.

In his 11th year, Jehoiakim revolted against Babylonian rule. At first, the local garrisons attempted but failed to control the rebellion. It is unclear whether Jehoiakim died while Nebuchadrezzar II was en route to Hatti-land (Syro-Palestine) to control the rebellion, or was captured and fettered by him after his arrival (Jeremiah 22:19; 2 Kings 24:6; 2 Chronicles 36:6). Nebuchadrezzar arrived with his army in Judah in Kislimu (late December 598/early January 597) of his seventh year—and immediately laid siege to Jerusalem. Jehoiachin (Coniah/Yokin), son of Jehoiakim, reigned three months and ten days (2 Kings 24:8; 2 Chronicles 36:9), i.e., from 9 December (22 Arkhamsamu) 598 to the capture of Jerusalem on Saturday, 16 March (2 Addaru) 597, or from 16 January (1 Tebeth) 597 to his exile and replacement on 22 April (10 Nisanu [Abib]) 597. Immediately upon the capture of Jerusalem,

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137 Bright, History of Israel, 336–37; many prophets were sent, 2 Chronicles 36:15–16; Iddo the prophet is probably not the same as Zechariah’s father, Zechariah 1:7; 2 Chronicles 12:15; 13:22.


Nebuchadrezzar deported 3,023 Jews (Jeremiah 52:28), but as many as 10,000 on 10 Nisan—just after the beginning of his 8th year on 1 Nisan (2 Kings 24:12–16; Ezekiel 40:1; 2 Chronicles 36:10). It was during this foray against Judah that Nebuchadrezzar destroyed the Citadel at ‘Arad (stratum VI), as well as the fortress at Kadesh-Barnea in the Negeb (= Tell el-Qudeirat).

Mattaniah-Zedekiah placed on throne at age 21 as king of Judah by Nebuchadrezzar II on 10 Nisanu (22 April) 597. This was his accession year (= 9th year of Nebuchadrezzar), but he was not officially crowned until at least 1 Tishritu (ca. 6 October) of that year, or on 1 Nisanu (ca. 1 April) of the following year—his first regnal year beginning then (either can be New Year’s Day). The Bible uses various methods of reckoning. It is not clear just which of these years is being referred to by Jeremiah 49:34 (Masoretic Text) as “in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah” (Jeremiah 25:20 Septuagint; cf. 1 Nephi 1:4). Lehi called as a prophet (1 Nephi 1:4–20); he and his family probably left Jerusalem in mid-April [Nisan] 596 B.C.


Josephus, Antiquities X, 96–98.

Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past, 591–92.


Jeremiah 52:28–29 by official “regnal” years (Egyptian ḫs-śp), and 2 Kings 24:12; 25:8 by the vague “accession” year system (known to the Babylonians as rēš ūṭârû, and to the Egyptians as ṯmpt iḥy); Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past, 594, 596; Parker and Dubberstein, Babylonian Chronology 626 b.C.—A.D. 45, 12; cf. Avraham Malamat, “The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem: An Historical-Chronological Study,” Israel Exploration Journal 18 (1968): 137–56; Siegfried H. Horn and L. H. Wood, “The Fifth-Century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine,” Journal of Near Eastern Studies 13 (1954): 2 n. 9; Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 186–190; Stern, “Israel,” 28, has his reign as 596–586; regnal years were figured either from Ethanim (Tishri—Kings and Daniel), or Abib (Nisan—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah), see Edwin R. Thiele, A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 68–69, and Appendix C.

B.C. Lehi’s first regnal year to fall of 596 to obtain the city 3:2–4:38, and Lehi’s brother-in-law’s accession in the same year (1 Nephi 1:4), first official regnal year ends on Lehi’s Egyptian learning and ability to move rapidly in the vouch safe have been part of the cosmos until the day, which was a legacy of t (Israel, Tyre, and Sidon then still) and the international trade invol terranean to the Red Sea and it involved in trade, or as a skilled (Qenites), Lehi may have found one occasion—and for extended expertise in Egyptian. The Lehi’s route south from Jerusalem through Zif, then down “the Way of I (Tamar), and through the wadi. The wadi was Edomite during the period, including such cities as Punon/Tenel-la, Beisan/Tawilan, ar 63:1, Amos 6:12, Jeremiah 4:1, Judah, between 597 and 586, eighth-century figure of 250,000.


149 Bright, History of Israel, 3 The Biblical Period from Abraham
B.C.\textsuperscript{145} Nephi and his brothers probably returned in the summer to fall of 596 to obtain the clan records from Laban (1 Nephi 3:2–4:38), and Lehi’s brother-in-law Ishmael joined them all perhaps in the same year (1 Nephi 7:2–22; Zedekiah’s latest possible first official regnal year ends on 1 Nisan, ca. 21 March, 595 B.C.). Lehi’s Egyptian learning and language skills, his wealth, and his ability to move rapidly in the wilderness all indicate that he may have been part of the cosmopolitan “merchant aristocracy” of the day, which was a legacy of the Davidic and Solomonic period (Israel, Tyre, and Sidon then shared a trade agreement [\textit{khिबur}], and the international trade involved many nations from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and India).\textsuperscript{146} Whether as a caravaneer involved in trade, or as a skilled metallurgist (cf. the semi-nomadic Qenites), Lehi may have found himself in Egypt on more than one occasion—and for extended periods, if one is to judge by his expertise in Egyptian. The Lehites may have taken the most direct route south from Jerusalem through Hebron, ‘Arad Rabbat, and Zif, then down “the Way of Edom” to the Wadi ‘Arabah (and Tamar), and through the wadi via the “Way to the Red Sea.”\textsuperscript{147} The wadi was Edomite during the seventh-sixth centuries B.C., including such cities as Punon/Feinan (Numbers 33:42), Sela/\textit{Umm el-Biyara}, Teiman/Tawilan, and Bozrah/Buseirah (Isaiah 34:6; 63:1, Amos 1:12, Jeremiah 49:13, 22).\textsuperscript{148} The population of Judah, between 597 and 586 B.C., was now reduced from an eighth-century figure of 250,000 to around 125,000.\textsuperscript{149} More

\textsuperscript{145} Zedekiah’s first regnal year; 1 Nephi 2:1–4; 3 Nephi superscription; the most probable birth and death dates for Jesus set controlling limits here, i.e., from 6 September 5 B.C. – A.D. 18 March 29.

\textsuperscript{146} Cf. Rabin, “The Song of Songs,” 209, on sailing to India from ‘Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea.


\textsuperscript{149} Bright, \textit{History of Israel}, 328 n. 51, 344, citing William F. Albright, \textit{The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra} (New York: Harper Torchbooks,}
than a decade after the end of the exile, in 522 B.C., the total population of Judah was only around 20,000.\textsuperscript{150}

\textbf{594 B.C.} Pharaoh Psammeticus II/Psamtik II/Nfr-ib-R\textsuperscript{r} II (594–589 B.C.) rules Egypt.\textsuperscript{151} He uses Jewish mercenary troops in his Nubian campaign.\textsuperscript{152}

\textbf{ca. 593 B.C.} Ezekiel ben-Buzi, the priest, received his call to prophetic office at Til Abibi, near Nippur, Babylonia (Ezekiel 1:1–2), and he served until ca. 571/570 B.C. (Ezekiel 29:17). His wife died ca. 587/586 B.C. (Ezekiel 24:18).

\textbf{592 B.C.} Jehoiakim (Ya-u-kinu), king of Judah in exile, mentioned in cuneiform stores receipts (ration records) in Babylon, in the 13th year of the reign of Nebuchadrezzar II, five years after the first fall of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 52:34).\textsuperscript{153}

\textbf{589 B.C.} Pharaoh Ḥophra/Aprius/Ha-lu-R\textsuperscript{r} IV (589–568 B.C.), the destroyer of Babylonian Sidon and Tyre in 587 B.C.; accession in February 589; deposed and executed by Amasis II in 570 (Jeremiah 44:30), fol-


150 Bright, History of Israel, 365, and n. 57, citing Albright, Biblical Period, 87, 110–11.

151 Malamat, “Josiah’s Bid for Armageddon,” 274.


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The exile, in 522 B.C., the total und 20,000. 150

namechus II/Psammk II/Nfr-ib-R I (B.C.) rules Egypt. 151 He uses
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luzi, the priest, received his call office at Til Abibi, near Nippur,
e served until ca. 571/570 B.C. 587/586 B.C. (Ezekiel 24:18).

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rst fall of Jerusalem (Jeremiah

hnr/Apries/H“-ib-R I/ Whl-ib-R I (B.C.), the destroyer of Baby-
C; accession in February 589;
II in 570 (Jeremiah 44:30), fol-

cient Israel (New York: McGraw-Hill,
all Palestine in the eighth century B.C.
the British census of Palestine in A.D.
of Western Palestine in the Roman-
ican Schools of Oriental Research 236
be attained in the Roman-Byzantine
of Iron Age Palestine in the Light of a
and Population Density,” Bulletin of the
39 (1980): 32, argues that the optimal
gth century cannot be higher than
f rural inhabitants.
and n. 57, citing Albright, Biblical
ageddon,” 274.

c-Southward,” Jeremiah 44:1; H. Idris
an Egypt (New York: Philosophical
9: Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 189,
in in Exile,” Biblical Archaeologist 5

SMITH, BOOK OF MORMON EVENT STRUCTURE

followed by Nebuchadrezzar’s invasion soon thereafter. 154 The
ambassadors of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon met with
King Zedekiah in Jerusalem to plan a revolt against Babylonian
rule in light of the new king of Egypt, Apries/ Hophra (Jeremiah
27:3; 2 Kings 24:20). 155

588 B.C.

On 15 January of 588 (10th day of Tebeth in
his 18th year), King Nebuchadrezzar arrived
to put down the revolt—only three cities held out for any length
of time, i.e., Azeqah, Lachish, and Jerusalem (Jeremiah
34:7; 2 Kings 25:1). This was in the 9th regnal year of Zedekiah. 156 He
soon deported 832 Jews as a preliminary move (deserters or capti-
sers? Jeremiah 52:29). 157 Jeremiah purchased land and then was
arrested as a deserter in the summer of 588 or 587 and was im-
prisoned for the duration of the siege (Jeremiah 32–33, 37:4–
38:28); 158 Jeremiah’s worst prison was named for “Malchiah
son of the king,” i.e., for a “contemporary son of king Zede-

Kings of Judah,” 137–56.

155 Keller, Bible as History, 283.

156 Stern, “Israel,” 28; Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past, 594.

157 Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past, 592, and n. 17.

158 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 190; if that is the imprisonment referred
to in 1 Nephi 7:14, the bulk of the Lachites’ eight-year sojourn in the wilder-
ness was spent tenting in the Wadi Lusail before moving on, SSE, into South Ar-
abia—1 Nephi 16:12–39, and then East around 19 degrees to the vicinity, per-

159 Yohanan Aharoni, “Three Hebrew Ostraca from Arad,” Bulletin of the
also Avigad, “Jerahmeel & Baruch,” 117, and Nahman Avigad, “Baruch the
Scribe and Jerahmeel the King’s Son,” Israel Exploration Journal 28 (1978):
54–55; cf. A. Reifenberg, “Hebrew Seals and Stamps IV,” Israel Exploration
Journal 4 (1954): 140, pl. 13, seal 3, for the name Malkiyahu on Hebrew ostraca
from Arad; mklyh is also listed at Elephantine by Michael H. Silverman, “Aramaic
Name-Types in the Elephantine Documents,” Journal of the American Oriental
Society 89 (1969): 707; recent finds of similar names on contemporary buil-
cles show that a hypocoristic form of Malkiyahu as Mulek is entirely reason-
able (this is confirmed by consultation with international experts); cf. Avigad
on BRKYHW = Baruch in “Jerahmeel & Baruch,” 115; cf. Lawrence E. Stager and
Samuel R. Wolff, “Child Sacrifice at Carthage—Religious Rite or Population
Control?” Biblical Archaeology Review 10/1 (1984): 45, 47, on mk as melek
“king” or mukh “tophet-vow, child-sacrifice”; Helaman 8:21; 6:10.
('Amon and Josiah) married and began begetting children in their early teens, it is quite possible that, when Zedekiah took the throne at age 21, he may already have had a son of age 8 named Malkiyahu, "My-King-is-Yahu," who could have been married and around age 16 when Jeremiah was placed in his dungeon. Moreover, polygyny was a regular practice of the kings of Judah and other prominent men, thus enhancing the likelihood of offspring (cf. Josiah). Total eclipse of sun in eastern Asia Minor (predicted by Thales) 29 July 588 B.C., during a battle between the Medes and Lydians in the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar (or 23 May 585 B.C.).

588/587 B.C. Lachish II (Tell ed-Duweir) destroyed by the Babylonians, and it is to this burn level that the 21 Lachish "Letters" are to be dated. According to Y. Yadin, the ostraca represent drafts of the papyrus letters sent from Lachish to Jerusalem.

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SMITH, BOOK OF MORMON EVENT S

587 B.C. The Babylonians temporarily breached on 19 July (9 Tamuz 15 thru 18 August (7-10 Ab) the gates of the guard (= Nabû-Se Babylonia). King Zedekiah is captured from Jerusalem by night He is taken to Nebuchadrezzar’s palace (except for Malkiyahu/Mu 8:10) are slaughtered before he is then taken to Babylon for a life of servitude. On 5 Tebeth of the 12th after a five-month journey for

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164 Malamat, "The Last Kings of Babylonia," 283.

165 Finegan, Light from the Ancients, 280.


As Benjamin Urrutia points in verses 1–10 makes the lack of "all" cf. Jeremiah 32:5.
The Babylonian siege of Jerusalem was lifted temporarily on 15 Tebeth (7 January) 587 with the approach of the Egyptian army under Pharaoh Apries. This may refer only to an Egyptian foray along the Phoenician coast, as described by Herodotus, in which Apries conquered Tyre and Sidon (Jeremiah 37:5). However, the Egyptians suffered defeat by the Babylonians on 7 Nisan (29 April) and the siege of Jerusalem was then reestablished.\textsuperscript{164}

In the 11th year of Zedekiah/the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar,\textsuperscript{165} the walls of Jerusalem are breached on 19 July (9 Tamuz) and the temple destroyed from 15 thru 18 August (7-10 Ab) 586 B.C. by Nebu-zar-Adan, captain of the guard (= Nabû-Serî-Idinna), the grand vizier of Babylonia.\textsuperscript{166} King Zedekiah is captured near Jericho, after escaping from Jerusalem by night in late July or early August 586. He is taken to Nebuchadrezzar’s headquarters at Riblah, where his sons (except for Malkî/Yahu/Mulek, who escaped; Helaman 6:10; 8:10) are slaughtered before him and his eyes are put out; he is then taken to Babylon for a life of imprisonment (2 Kings 25:4, 6-7).\textsuperscript{167} On 5 Tebeth of the 12th year (= 6/8 January 585 B.C.), after a five-month journey from Jerusalem, a refugee reports the

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\textsuperscript{164} Malamat, “The Last Kings of Judah,” 151-52; Keller, Bible as History, 283.

\textsuperscript{165} Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past, 594.


\textsuperscript{167} As Benjamin Urrutia points out to me, a series of five “all” in Hebrew in verses 1-10 makes the lack of “all” with “sons” very conspicuous in verse 7; cf. Jeremiah 32:5.
destruction.\textsuperscript{168} Since it would have taken not less than two months for the news to have traveled into southernmost Arabia, the Lehites may have sailed away by October/November 586 B.C., with news of the destruction of Jerusalem only coming via revelation after landfall in the New World (2 Nephi 1:4). Moreover, New World landfall for the Lehites may have come as early as July–August 586.\textsuperscript{169} Around this time, another group, including a son of King Zedekiah named Mulek (possibly the Phoenician form of his name), left the Middle East by an unknown route and sailed to the New World.\textsuperscript{170} A major deportation of Jews followed the destruction (2 Kings 25:11). Lamentations was written in Judah by an unknown eyewitness and contemporary of Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{171} Edom now took advantage of the defeat of Judah by moving into the Negeb proper, including ‘Arad and ‘Elath level V (2 Kings 16:6),\textsuperscript{172} and even turned some Jewish escapees over to the Babylonians (Obadiah 1:14; Psalm 137:7). By the end of the sixth century B.C., the Edomites had occupied southern Judah.\textsuperscript{173}

585 B.C. Thirteen-year siege laid to Tyre by Nebuchadrezzar without more than an acknowledgment of Babylonian suzerainty.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{168} Finegan, \textit{Light from the Ancient Past}, 595, on Ezekiel 33:21; cf. the four-month journey in Ezra 7:9.

\textsuperscript{169} Perhaps they set sail into the Arabian Sea (Irrearum means “many waters,” as in Jeremiah 51:13) during the northeast (winter) monsoon season after a couple of years in Bountiful. This would mean that they moved southeast. It is also possible that they sailed northeast toward India and Indonesia in March or April with the southwest (summer) monsoon; Rabin, \textit{The Song of Songs}, 209; John L. Sorenson, “Winds and Currents: A Look at Nephí’s Ocean Crossing,” in \textit{Reexploring the Book of Mormon}, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 53–56 (see Excursus herein on Arabia).

\textsuperscript{170} They probably traveled via the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and possibly with Phoenician and Egyptian help; cf. Omri 1:15–16; Helaman 6:10; 8:21 (Jeremiah 43:6–7).


\textsuperscript{172} Aramaic ostracon 6043; Myers, \textit{“Edom and Judah,”} 382–83, 387–88, 390.

\textsuperscript{173} Bright, \textit{History of Israel}, 344 n. 6.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 352; Ezekiel 26–29.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{SMITH, BOOK OF MORMON EVENT} & \textbf{DATE} \\
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\textbf{ca. 582 B.C.} & Revolt against Judah and year of Nebuchadrezzar II. Geoc by one Ishmael, a member of 25:22–26; Jeremiah 40:6–41:11 (turn I). Ishmael escaped to ‘An-allowed, and this effectively de-scholars now claim that the daycare as earlier believed,\textsuperscript{176} St. Egypt, where Jewish commu-niti-Jehoahaz had been in exile since 30:1–2; 31:1; Jeremiah 24:8: cluded the friends of Gedaliah: Zedekiah (Jeremiah 43:6–7) and Tahpanhes (Daphne/Tell Defne) words) (Jeremiah 43:8–13, ar Seraiah, edited his work and c. B.C., when Amasis led a mutin-followed by Nebuchadrezzar’s (Jeremiah 44:30).\textsuperscript{178}

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\textbf{573 B.C.} & 25th anniv. (28 April) \\
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Revolt against Gedaliah, the governor of Judah under Babylonian suzerainty (23rd year of Nebuchadrezzar II). Gedaliah was assassinated by Jews led by one Ishmael, a member of the exiled royal house (2 Kings 25:22-26; Jeremiah 40:6-41:18; cf. Gedaliah Seal, Lachish stratum I). Ishmael escaped to ‘Ammon. A third deportation followed, and this effectively depopulated Judah, although some scholars now claim that the decimation of population was not as great as earlier believed. Small groups of Jews escaped into Egypt, where Jewish communities already existed and where King Jehoahaz had been in exile since 609 B.C. (2 Kings 25:26, Isaiah 30:1-2; 31:1; Jeremiah 24:8; 43:7; 44:1); these escapees included the friends of Gedaliah—who escorted the daughters of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 43:6-7) and took Jeremiah, against his will, to Tahpanhes (Daphne/Tell Defneh), Egypt (where he spoke his last words) (Jeremiah 43:8-13, and 44). Jeremiah’s scribe there, Seraiah, edited his work and completed his biography by 570 B.C., when Amasis led a mutiny and deposed Pharaoh Hophra, followed by Nebuchadrezzar’s invasion of Egypt in 568 B.C. (Jeremiah 44:30).

573 B.C. 25th anniversary of exile of Judah, 10 Nisan (28 April) 573, which was in the 14th year

ca. 582 B.C. 175

175 Bright, History of Israel, 330-31.
178 Bright, History of Israel, 352; Seraiah’s Hebrew version of Jeremiah is now known only in the Greek LXX translation, while that of his brother, Baruch, was edited in Babylon and is the source of the traditional Masoretic Hebrew text derived from there and transmitted by the rabbis.
after the conquest of 586 B.C. (Ezekiel 40:1).179

572 B.C. Siege of Tyre lifted by Nebuchadrezzar II,180 although Aradus (Arvad) and Sidon were destroyed. The Phoenician priest of Ba'al-Shamem, Sanchuniaton, fled from Tyre to Berytus/Beirut—he was a contemporary of Thales of Miletus.181

570 B.C. Accession of Pharaoh ‘Ah-mose II/Amosis II/Hmnb-R’ (570–525 B.C.), a friend of Polycrates and a patron of the arts—he greatly expanded trade with Greece.182

568 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar’s punitive expedition against Egypt, which resulted in better long-term relations.183 Eclipse 4 July 568 B.C., 37th year of Nebuchadrezzar = 180th year of Nabonassar Era.184

562 B.C. Accession of Amel-Marduk/Evil-Merodach of Babylon (October 562–August 560 B.C.).185 The new king releases Jehoiachin of Judah from prison in the 37th year of his exile (2 Kings 25:27; Jeremiah 52:31).186 This confirms that the first year of his exile was based on the capture of Jerusalem on 2 Adar 597.187

180 Bright, *History of Israel*, 352.
182 Malamat, “Josiah’s Bid for Armageddon,” 274.
183 Bright, *History of Israel*, 352.
185 Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* 63 B.C.—A.D. 45, 12.

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SMITH, BOOK OF MORMON EVENT

560 B.C. Accession of Babylon (A)

556 B.C. Two-month Ion (May–J

the last king of Neo-Babylonia 556 to August–October 539 Taima/Tema on the Arabian which the only biblical Leum 31:1 MT; cf. Genesis 25:14; there for 8–10 years, because Babylon over his impiety. Belshazzar/Bel-shar-usur, son charge of affairs in Babylon (e. 12 October 539 B.C.). Nab Arabia as far south as Yathrib/ M

553 B.C. King Hiram mentioned in the Paratha Inscription (ca. 5 F. Albright, Frank Moore Cr

189 Ibid., 12.
191 Bright, *History of Israel*, 35.
193 Mark Lidzbarski, *Handbuch t gewählten Inschriften* (1898; reprint, 1962); see Cyrus H. Gordon in next ne
Accession of Nergal-shar-uṣur/Neriglissar of Babylon (August 560–April/May 556).  

Two-month rule of Labashi-Marduk of Babylon (May–June 556). He was succeeded by the last king of Neo-Babylonia, Nabûnā'id/Nabonidus (May–July 556 to August–October 539 B.C.), who moved his capital to Ta'īmā/Tīmā on the Arabian caravan route south of Maššā', to which the only biblical Lemuel (Lemu'el) is localized (Proverbs 31:1 MT; cf. Genesis 25:14; 1 Chronicles 1:30); he remained there for 8–10 years, because of the anger of the citizenry of Babylon over his impiety. Cf. Daniel 5 and 9 on Belshazzar/Bel-shar-uṣur, son of Nabonidus, who remained in charge of affairs in Babylon (e.g., handwriting on wall interpreted 12 October 539 B.C.). Nabonidus extended his control into Arabia as far south as Yathrib/ Medina.

King Hiram III of Tyre (553–533 B.C.), mentioned in the Pyrgi Inscription (550) and in the Paraiba Inscription (ca. 536 B.C.). The latter, also known as the Pedra Lavrada Inscription, is considered a forgery by William F. Albright, Frank Moore Cross, and Mark Lidzbarski.

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189 Ibid., 13.
193 Mark Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik nebst ausgewählten Inschriften* (1898; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962); see Cyrus H. Gordon in next note for complete sources.
However, other experts have considered it authentic: C. H. Gordon and Konstantin Schlottman (in 1874). 194

ca. 551 B.C. Destruction of the Jaredites, and the finding of Coriantum by the Mulekites (Ether 1:5; Omni 1:21).

541 B.C. Nephi began to be old and gave up record to Jacob (Jacob 1:1, 9, 12), at ca. 72 years of age.

539 B.C. Cyrus II the Great, Achaemenid Persian ruler of Babylonia (October/November 539, January 538 to June/August 530 B.C.). 195 He had already taken over Media in 550 B.C., and had been ruler of Anshan before that. 196 Darius the Mede (539–525; Daniel 5:31; 6:1–3), otherwise unknown to history, may have been Gubaru, governor of Gutium under Nabonidus, but commander of Cyrus’ armies in conquering Babylon and administering the empire. 197 However, since Daniel 5 and 6 follow 7 and 8 chronologically, it is also possible that the reference is to Darius I Hystaspes (whatever the case, the book of Daniel is held by most scholars to be an apocalyptic pseudopigraphon).


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202 Bright, History of Israel, 3: Nehemiah (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 104.

203 Porten, Chronicles from Elephantine, 2, 281–282.

204 Bell, Cults and Creedes, 28, cit. with Jeremiah 2:8 and Hosea 2:16–17 absent from the Book of Mormon.

205 Bright, History of Israel, 40: New Light on the Elephantine Colonies, 28, 64.

eited it authentic: C. H. Gordon '4).

the Jaredites, and the finding by the Mulekites (Ether 1:5;

be old and gave up record to 1:1, 9, 12), at ca. 72 years of

Great, Achaemenid Persian ruler (October/November 539, Janu-

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i Gubaru, governor of Gutium of Cyrus’ armies in conquer-

the empire. However, since chronologically, it is also possible ystases (whatever the case, the

rus II for restoration of Jews in the seventh century B.C.E., the name appears in a

city of the Phoenician Text from Paraclete.

H. Gordon, “The Canaanite Text from


yrus H. Gordon, “Reply to Professor

rus H. Gordon, “Toward a History of

ity 40 (12 July 1975): 8–11.

nian Chronicle 626 B.C.E.–A.D. 45, 14.

Darius the Mede: An Update,” Andrew

200 Parker and Dubberstein, Babylonian Chronicle 626 B.C.E.–A.D. 45, 14.


202 Bright, History of Israel, 346–47, 364–65; Jacob M. Myers, Ezra, Nehemiah (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), XXII–XXIII.


204 Bell, Cults and Creeds, 28; cf. Bright, History of Israel, 376; in accord with Jeremiah 2:8 and Hosea 2:16–17, Ba’al is mentioned only once, and is absent from the Book of Mormon.


time. Jews later built temples at Leontopolis (Tell el-Yehudiyeh, Egypt), Araq el-Emir (in Transjordan), Sardis (in Lydia), etc.208

523 B.C. Eclipse 16 July 523 B.C., seventh year of Cambyses = 225th year of Nabonasser Era.209

522 B.C. Pseudo-Bardiya/Smerdis/Gaumata rules for several months, following the suicide of Cambyses (March/July to September 522).210 Nebuchadrezzar III Nidintua-Bel rules for a month (October–November/December 522 B.C.).211 Darius I Hystaspes then took the throne in December 522/January–February 521 until a revolt in August/September 521, during which he was displaced by Nebuchadrezzar IV Araka, until October/November 521. Darius then retook the throne in December 521/January 520 and ruled until September/November 486 B.C.212

ca. 520 B.C. Decree of Darius I confirming the Decree of Cyrus II in 538 B.C. for restoration of Jewish temple and polity; building of the temple begins in 2nd year of Darius, under governor Zerubbabel, royal nephew of Sheshbazzar (ca. 570–500; Ezra 4:5, 24; 5:5–7; 6:1–12; Haggai 1:1–2:1, 10, 18). Haggai and Zechariah prophets of this period (ca. 520); Joshua ben-Jehozadak the high priest.213

515 B.C. Jewish temple dedicated in Jerusalem in the sixth regnal year of Darius I, 23 Adar (March

12) 515, about 70 years after the death of Solomon in 586 B.C. The sec-ond New Year Festival (Israel 2008). 502 B.C. Eclipse 1

Darius I: 491 B.C.

Eclipse 2: 486 B.C.

Accession of Artaxerxes I: 466/Janua-

ry origin of Book of Esther is to be

seen in his successor, Artaxerxes I, c.

(404–358 B.C.), i.e., perhaps with the

final editor of Esth-er, “Script” and “language” at

8:9 (cf. Nehemiah 13:24; Isaiah

465 B.C.

445 B.C.

Accession of Artaxerxes I, c.

Decree of Artaxerxes I, c.

build the city walls of Jerusalem

of Artaxerxes); Nehemiah

(Nehemiah 2:1–8, 5:14, 10:1).2

214 J. van Goudoever, Biblical

215 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers

216 Ibid.

217 Carey A. Moore, Esther (Cambridge

LVIII, 3–4.

218 Cf. Charles F. Nims and Richard

Psalm 20:2–6 from the Aramaic Text

con Oriental Society 103 (1983): 261

Churchman, History of Israel.

Comma Prince (London: Hodder an

Critics’ Den (London: Nisbet, 1902).

Sunday was thus A.D. 6 April 32 (69

years; Daniel 9:25; Luke 19:36–38,

(14 Nisan);” in this claim, Anderson:

207 See the general study by Boulos A. Ayad, Jewish-Aramaean Communities in Ancient Egypt (Cairo: Institute of Coptic Studies, 1975).


209 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 229.

210 Parker and Dubberstein, Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.—A.D. 45, 14–15.

211 Ibid., 15.

212 Ibid., 16–17; Bright, History of Israel, 369 (on the Stele of Darius I, see at 720 B.C., above).

213 Bright, History of Israel, 366.
523 B.C., seventh year of Nabonassar

Smerdis/Gaumata rules for following the suicide of Cambyses II. Nebuchadrezzar III took the throne in December/November by Nebuchadrezzar IV Araka, and then retook the throne in September/November.

is I confirming the Decree of B.C. for restoration of Jewish temple begins in 2nd year of royal nephew of Sheshbazar 6:1–12; Haggai 1:1–2:1, 10, etc. of this period (ca. 520); st.213

12) 515, about 70 years after the destruction of the Temple of Solomon in 586 B.C. The seven-day celebration leads to 1 Nisan and the New Year Festival (Ezra 6:13–18).214

- **502 B.C.**
  - Eclipse 19 November 502 B.C., 20th year of Darius I = 246th year of Nabonassar Era.215

- **491 B.C.**
  - Eclipse 25 April 491 B.C., 31st year of Darius I = 257th year of Nabonassar Era.216

- **486 B.C.**
  - Accession of Xerxes I the Great (December 486/January 485 to March/August 465 B.C.); origin of Book of Esther is to be placed in this reign or in that of his successor, Artaxerxes I, or even of Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404–358 B.C.), i.e., perhaps contemporary with the Chronicler, with the final editor of Esther in the Hellenistic period.217
  - “Script” and “language” are carefully distinguished in Esther 8:9 (cf. Nehemiah 13:24; Isaiah 19:18).218

- **465 B.C.**

- **445 B.C.**
  - Decree of Artaxerxes I, 14 March (1 Nisan) 445 B.C., at the request of Nehemiah, to rebuild the city walls of Jerusalem with royal supplies (= 20th year of Artaxerxes); Nehemiah was made governor of Judah (Nehemiah 2:1–8, 5:14, 10:1).219

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215 Thiele, Mysterious Numbers, 229.
216 Ibid.
219 Bright, History of Israel, 380–81; Sir Robert Anderson, in The Coming Prince (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881), and Daniel in the Critics’ Den (London: Nisbet, 1902), etc., believes that this means that Palm Sunday was thus A.D. 6 April 32 (69 x 7 x 360 = 173,880 days = 476.1 solar years; Daniel 9:25; Luke 19:36–38), and that Passover was Thursday, 10 April (14 Nisan); in this claim, Anderson appears to be in error, as pointed out pri-
Excursus

The Arabian Nexus

Not only did Jews flee to Moab, Edom, Ammon, and Egypt in the wake of Nebuchadrezzar’s invasion and conquest of Judah (Jeremiah 40:11; 42–44; Deuteronomy 28:64–68), but Hebrews other than Lehi may well have taken up residence in Arabia proper during the Exile—possibly as mercenary troops for King Nabonidus, who was in residence in Arabia from about 550 to 540 B.C. He held court at Teimā/Taba‘ (= Qasr Zallum, with its seven-mile circuit of wall), while extending military control southward along the main caravan trail as far as Yathrib/Mecca (= Madinah al-Nabi, the refuge of the Prophet Muhammad). It is quite possible that, as was the case then at Aswan, Egypt, an Israelite community existed in Arabia already by the eighth century B.C., formed of fugitives from the fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It is gone down to Egypt at that time... Since Solomonic times, were undoubtedly involved the South Arabian caravans ‘Ezion-Geber to India during with their spices and other... a British lieutenant provided us with a description of the coast on behalf of the British. A number of areas along the “bountiful” description of the olden time to prepare for their voyage to the Eastern Hafranaut (b. Saqal in Lehi’s time) is the Book of Mormon, and a late Carter, described it as being...
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om, Ammon, and Egypt in the conquest of Judah (28:64–68), but Hebron residence in Arabia, mercenary troops for King Rabia from about 530 to 540 Qasr Zallum, with its seven-military control southward Yathrib/Medina (= Madinat ihammadi). It is quite possible, Egypt, an Israelite company the eighth century B.C., from Samaria and the Northern

and Parker and Dubberstein agree (April (Sunday or Monday) of A.D. 30, as the date to be of Aratines II, 458/457 B.C. (Ezra 6:9) which bring us to Jesus’ n A.D. 27, though Bright insists that the year 391–402; cf. Nehemiah: for the start of Jesus’ ministry, see s (New York: Scribner’s, 1977), chap. 252 a. 9, 257, 260–27; A. Kindler, Israel Exploration Journal 6 (1956): Chronology and Chronology (New York, 1982), 54, re Daniel 9:24–27. 9 March 1985, suggests that 70 x 7 is one to A.D. April 23, even though the Book of Mormon Impossi-


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Kingdom of Israel. It is unknown whether Lehi’s ancestors had gone down to Egypt at that time.

Since Solomonic times, and long before Lehi, other Israelites were undoubtedly involved in the extensive incense trade along the South Arabian caravan routes, as well as in sailing from Ezion-geber to India during the summer monsoon, and returning with their spices and other trade goods during the winter monsoon, presumably making stops at ports along the way. More recently, a British lieutenant contemporary with Joseph Smith provided us with a description of his exploration of that same Arabian coast on behalf of the British East India Company.

A number of areas along the South Arabian coast might fit the "bountiful" description of the place at which the Lehites stopped to prepare for their voyage across the bounding main. Dhufar and the Eastern Hafran (biblical Hafran, possibly called Sa’kal in Lehi’s time) is the site of choice for most students of the Book of Mormon, and a late contemporary of Joseph Smith, H. J. Carter, described it as being "like a garden with a dreary arid

waste on either side."225 However, the mountains are higher and more verdant in either 'Oman proper [Muscat], or in the Yemen. Certainly the rainfall is greater in the Yemen.226 The Yemen itself receives the most monsoon rain of any country in Arabia—primarily during the spring and early summer.227 Warren and Michaela Aston of Queensland, Australia, have reported on their visit to the Yemen, which demonstrated to them the likelihood that Lehi's course may have taken him to a Bountiful in the Hadramaut or other part of the 500-mile coast along which frankincense trees grew anciently.228

What was South Arabia like in the middle of the first millennium B.C.? Through what sort of world did the Lehites move? Who lived there? What was so felicitous about Arabia Felix? If we are told so little of this South Arabian world by the Book of Mormon, is it because the book is not a travelogue? In 1 Nephi, as in the Bible, there is only a peripheral interest in the sights and sounds of the ancient world. As John Bright put it, the

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227 The mountains vary from 5,000 to 10,000 feet, Van Beek, "The Land of Sheba," 42; Van Beek, "Arabia Felix," 36.


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229 Bright, *A History of Israel* 74; all other citations herein are to

230 The climate undoubtedly conditions of the Early and Middle Neolithic and Early Bronze I periods, as shown by the prehistoric settlements of the 'Himyar and that they have in common with the surrounding areas.

231 Van Beek, "The Land of S Arabia Felix," *Arabian Sands* (New York: Dutton, 1959), 33–34. The climate is most of which are pluvial in Arabia Felix, in a much less arid climate than in the modern Arabian Peninsula.


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mountains are higher and Muscat, or in the Yemen.  

The Yemen itself any country in Arabia—  

summer. Warren and Lia, have reported on their  

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nia,” Journal of the Royal Asiatic  

ited in F. Nigel Hepper, “Arabian  

Archaeology 55 (1969):  

Dhufar, though najdi and shari  

drawing of Boswellia Carterii in  

Felix, “Scientific American  

Oman, Land of Frankincense and  

(1973): 204-29; see the entire May—  

1983), for a beautifully illustrated  

cf. also Wilfred Thesiger, Arabian  

the jungle in the 3,000-foot Qara  

in annually, although the average  

Southwest Saudi Arabia, adjacent to the  

sand and its Power,” National  

0,000 feet, Van Beck, “The Land of  

, in the Footsteps of Lehi: New  

Bountiful (Salt Lake City: Deseret  

the early position of the Hiltos)  

1 Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian  

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Genesis narrative is painted in blacks and whites on a  

simple canvas with no perspective in depth. It depicts  

certain individuals and their families who move  

through their world almost as if they were alone in  

it.

The climate was less arid than at present, with much more  

abundant animal life and vegetation throughout the region.

Under such conditions, precipitation caused less erosion, and the  

desert regions had not yet encroached on arable lands to the  

tent that they have in our own time. Climatic variability is  

shown in the greatly increased rainfall throughout the Mediterra-  

ean and Arabo-Persian Gulf areas during the medieval “Little  

Ice Age.” Throughout Syro-Palestine, the current vegetation is  

mostly of the well-adapted interpluvial type, except for the trees—  

most of which are pluvial in nature, and which tell the true story of  

a much less arid climatic past. In Saudi Arabia, the most recent  
sinter formation (siliceous/calcareous) is dated by C-14 to ca.

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229 Bright, A History of Israel, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972),  

74; all other citations herein are to the 3rd ed.

230 The climate undoubtedly profited from the recent “Atlantic Optimum”  

conditions of the Early and Middle Bronze periods in the Middle East; cf.  

Rudolph Cohen and William G. Dever, “Preliminary Report of the Third and  

Final Season of the Central Negev Highlands Project,” Bulletin of the  


and F. Alayne Street-Perrott, “Post-glacial Arid Episodes in Ethiopia Have  


231 Van Beek, “The Land of Sheba,” 43, mentions Ramlat Sabatni in the  

Yemen as an example; the dessication has been very noticeable even during the  

last 2,000 years, according to Groom, Frankincense and Myrrh, 225-27, at  

close.


Developments in Old World Archaeology,” American Antiquity 44 (1979): 695,  

citing Claudio Vita-Finzi “Recent Alluvial History in the Catchment of the  

Arabo-Persian Gulf,” in The Environmental History of the Near and Middle East  


255-61.

233 Aharon Horowitz, The Quaternary in Israel (New York: Academic Press,  

1979), 20-22, 344-48; rain in Israel is primarily from October through March,  

with rare rain in April-May; Galilee gets the most (23 inches), the Negeb and  

Araba the least; cf. Henri Daniel-Rops, Daily Life in the Time of Jesus (1962;  

3080 B.C., in the As-Salb Plateau, northwest of Al-Jirathamiah. The region has grown more arid since then.\textsuperscript{234} Not only climate, however, but the depredations of man have led to a deteriorating watershed, i.e., flora as well as fauna have been intensively over-utilized. Only in Israel have massive programs of reforestation and soil conservation been successfully undertaken in recent times. Arabia has only recently begun similar efforts. Whatever the case, certainly some perennial streams (“rivers”) exist in Arabia today, as in Wadi Sayq in Oman.

South Arabia had been occupied by man since the Old Stone Age, but even by the middle of the second millennium B.C., only nomads could be found in South Arabia. Although nomadism among the Arabs has continued from that time to the present, a developed sedentary culture then suddenly appeared. Linguistic evidence suggests an earlier date, but Semites certainly settled Sabā’ (biblical Sheba), central Yemen, by ca. 1300–1200 B.C.\textsuperscript{235} At Ḥajar bin Humeid, in Wādi Beihan, for example, the earliest level of occupation (stratum S) is to be dated to ca. twelfth century B.C.\textsuperscript{236} W. F. Albright insisted that the South Arabian kingdom began in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries B.C.\textsuperscript{237}


\textsuperscript{236} MASCA recalibration of the eleventh-century date in Gus W. Van Beek, Ḥajar Bin Humeid: Investigations at a Pre-Islamic Site in South Arabia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1969), 365, fig. 133, C-14 dates from stratum Q can be recalibrated at 1100–840 B.C., and iron bands (H 2892) were found in stratum R = ca. eleventh century B.C.; iron rivets, knife blades, spear points, etc., from the same period were found there; Van Beek, “Arabia Felix,” 43.

\textsuperscript{237} Notes by William F. Albright to article by Albert Jamme, “Preliminary Report on Epigraphic Research in Northwestern Wadi Hadramawt and at Al-‘Abar,” Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 172 (1963): 54; he expressed surprise at the number of developed tells in Wadi Beihan, which
The unnamed Queen of Sheba (Saba’) appeared in tenth-century B.C. Jerusalem, in the midst of King Solomon’s reign, as the ruler of a very important and rich kingdom which wanted to secure good trade relations with other nations—particularly when there was such direct competition with Phoenician traders who were bypassing the caravan route and working on behalf of Solomon (1 Kings 10:1–13; 2 Chronicles 9:1–12, 14). This Sabaean queen came with a camel caravan loaded with gold, precious stones, and spices; frankincense and myrrh were the real reasons for the great wealth of South Arabia then and for over a millennium thereafter. She came over 1400 miles, probably via the inland Marib-Yathrib-Dedan route through Wadi al-Qurā, in no more than 2 1/2 months. With the vigorous overland trade which went on with Arabia, it is no surprise that J. Kelso has found a ninth-century B.C. South Arabian stamp seal at Bethel, that Y. Shiloh’s Jerusalem excavations have recovered pottery with South Arabian script from the seventh to sixth century B.C. City of David, nor that eighth and ninth century B.C. Assyrian kings mention making war upon and receiving tribute from the northern colonies of Saba. Pliny the Elder and Diodorus Siculus later thought the Sabeans to be the richest people in the world.


238 Pliny the Elder claimed that it took 65 stages from Tanmu’ to Gaza; Van Beek, “Arabia Felix,” 41; Van Beek, “Frankincense and Myrrh,” 2:124–26; Lehi hewed to the less-traveled lowland coastal route along the Tihama.


240 Yigal Shiloh lecture, “The Uncovering of the City of David,” University of Missouri-Kansas City, 23 March 1981.


As we have seen, there may have been some perennial rivers in Arabia ca. 600 B.C., but we cannot be certain of the precise climatic conditions there at the time when Lehi left Jerusalem. Thus, aside from some constant streams fed by springs, conventional wisdom has it that there were no perennial rivers in South Arabia then—only wadis (river-beds) with occasional seizes (flash-floods a few weeks of the year). So early South Arabian irrigation sought mostly a quick and broad distribution of the seizes. The best example of this is the 600-meter Marib diversionary dam at the mouth of Wadi Dhan, 8 km west of Marib. It was not designed to hold a reservoir, but diverted water into a canal system via stone sluices, with secondary and tertiary sluices built of rubble. 1,620 hectares (4,000 acres) were irrigated in this manner. Crops grown then included grapes, cumin, flax, sesame, barley, millet, oats, and teff (teff may have been the primary source of flour in ancient South Arabia and is still used to make bread in Ethiopia). The dam was destroyed in the sixth century A.D. Across Wadi Dhan, 3 km from Marib, is the strongly fortified, oval-walled Temple of Marib, Mahram Bilqis, with a large bronze basin in the floor at the doorway, and a sixth century B.C. Phoenician-style statue of Baal Melqart in a lion skin in the peristyle hall.

At 1 x 0.5 km, Marib itself was comparable in area to other great cities of the ancient Near East. The Sabaeans and Minaeans had established their capital at Qarnaw; in Wadi Sab, there was a large mound (which was four times the size of the site destroyed in A.D. 15), and including Dhofar, the Qara was the capital of Shabwa; between these two, they had built an unknown capital. These karibs (MKRB), “priest-king maliks (muluk),” “king of the establishment of these states” (versus, all were apparently in control). The Sabaeans and Minaeans had a long, well-developed city, Didan/Dedan (al-Khuraybe al-Hijri/Hijra), around which the town formed the well-developed center of Safa. These latter states were known to Lehi, though the exact date is much earlier. Indeed, as someone has noted, the Semitic root for the word for sheep is the same.

243 Van Beek, “The Land of Sheba,” 43–44.
244 Van Beek, “Arabia Felix,” 39.
245 Van Beek, “The Land of Sheba,” 49.
246 Ibid.
249 Van Beek, “Chronology of Ancient South Arabia,” 43.
250 SEHA presentation at BYS, and Lynn M. Hilton, as “The Libyan Pharaohs,” 4–8; note however the caveat of “Reader’s Forum,” Sunstone (April).
n some perennial rivers in certain of the precise cli-
Lehi left Jerusalem. Thus, by springs, conventional
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The Sabaean tell of Marib
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and modern Near East-
se, Shiloh, and Kasten. Or,
per hectare, the population
ling to other known ra-
well be halved, i.e., 6,750

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to 11,250; all figures here are in accord with an estimate that
10% of the buildings were governmental.

Other than the Sabaean state, with its final capital at Marib,
there also arose in southernmost South Arabia a number of later
Iron Age contemporaries: In North Yemen there was Ma’in, with
its capital at Qarnaw; in West Aden, centering on Wadi Beihan, and
bordering on Saba’, there was Qataban, with its capital at Tanma’
(which was four times the size of Israelite Megiddo! [Tanma’ was
destroyed in A.D. 15, and never reoccupied]); in the Hadramaut,
including Dhofar, the Qara’ Mountains, etc., there was Sa’kal, with
its capital at Shabwa; between Qataban and Aden was Ausan, with
an unknown capital. These early states were first ruled by muk-
karibs (MKRB), “priest-kings,” who were later replaced by ordi-
nary maliks (muluk) “kings.” Although precise dating of the estab-
ishment of these states is still a matter of study and contro-
versy, all were apparently in existence before the time of Lehi.
The Sabaean and Minaeans established colonies along the inland
caravan route to the north, at such sites as Yathrib (Medina),
Didan/Dedan (al-Khuraybah, near al-Ula), and Mada’in Salih
(al-Hijr/Hijra), around which later coalesced tribal groups that
formed the less well developed states of Thamud, Liyian, and
Safa. These latter states were formed too late to have been
known to Lehi, though the tribes themselves may have existed
much earlier. Indeed, as suggested by Lynn M. and Hope A.
Hilton, the Semitic root for the names Lehi and Liyian are one
and the same.250 Winnett and Reed note that “the kingdom of

Tell Village in North Yemen,” Bulletin for the American Schools of Oriental

248 Van Beek, “Frankincense and Myrrh,” 2:104, 107, 126; Albright,
“Chronology of Ancient South Arabia,” 6, 8–9, and n. 8, following the high
dating of Maria Höfler; cf. Moscati, Ancient Semitic Civilizations, 182–85;
Peter M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, eds., The Cambridge


250 SEHA presentation at BYU, 22 October 1983, published by Hope A.
and Lynn M. Hilton, as “The Liyianites,” Sunstone (January–February 1984):
4–8; note however the caveat of David J. Johnson and Richard N. Jones in
Liyan . . . dates to the Persian and Hellenistic periods,” after Dedan, which was a Minean colony, showing that Liyan lasted from ca. 400 B.C. to ca. A.D. 500.

The AFSM (American Foundation for the Study of Man) continued its South Arabian excavations after a thirty-year hiatus. During the 1982–83 seasons, 101 mostly pre-Islamic sites were found in Wādi Al-Jubah, North Yemen. Dated by C-14 to the first millennium B.C., these “sites were part of a massive agricultural system which was located in a protected wadi system, and which lay on the trading routes between Qataban, Sheba, and finally either the Syro-Palestinian coast, Egypt, or the Persian Gulf.”

Adjacent to the border of North Yemen, during 1983, a team of Saudis and Americans found ancient smelters and tons of mining slag at ten separate sites, along with available sources of gold, copper, and iron. Archaeological leavings are sufficiently rich now that the Saudi government has established six site museums—at Taima, Najran, Jizan, Hofuf, al-Jauff, and al-Ula. Indeed, the U.S. Geological Survey has suggested that the Mahd Dhabah, “Cradle of Gold,” in the neighborhood of Taima on the Haj route in Saudi Arabia was truly the site of the fabulous Solomon’s Mines, from whence Solomon and Hiram brought nearly 31 metric tons of gold (1086 talents) = half the known gold supply of the ancient world.

Beginning in 1882, hundreds of Yemenite Jews began traveling by foot along the coast of the Arabian Peninsula to Palestine or Aden for transportation via the Red Sea. As late as 1950, one clan of these Yemenite Jews came to the newly formed state of Israel from Habban, a town in central Hadramaut (the tribe of Ḥimyar had anciently been just to the South). When their ancestors had arrived in 1950, in Levites or kohanim (priests), they settled at Moshav. In Najran and to the South, the ancestors lived in Kinda, Aden, Zatna throughout the Hijaz until mentioned in Liyanite inscriptions to hold that the Jews were all males of the larger Hijaz put to the sword, and many into Arab society as slaves. South, Judaism in this area.

The details of Liyans are never be entirely clear to us, but that the clan did and encountered stood as nothing out of the ordinary for the Iron Age or later. In Levites or “temple” was the site although it venerated a māt Black Stone,” which later became a legend, and which was one preserved by iconoclastic Isla

251 Winnett and Reed, Ancient Records from North Arabia, 39, 116–17.
254 ibid., 49.
255 “King Solomon’s Mine,” Science Digest 80/3 (September 1976): 16;

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256 Menachem Weinstein, “Habban,” Encyclopaedia Judaica
ancestors had arrived in Hadramaut is unknown, but they had no Levites or kohanim (priests), and they dressed very strangely. They settled at Moshav Bareket and Kefar Shalem in Israel in 1950, and in 1970 their clan numbered around 180 families.\textsuperscript{256} In Najran and to the South, in pre-Islamic Yemen (Yamanat), Jews lived in Kinda, Aden, Zabid, Zafar, and San``. Jews also lived throughout the Hijāz during the early Roman period and are mentioned in Līyānīmite inscriptions. Indeed, there is good reason to hold that the Jews were then actively preaching their religion and successfully converting pre-Islamic Arabs. With the rise of Muhammad (whose new religion was a form of Judaism), the males of the larger Hijāzī Jewish communities were expelled or put to the sword, and many of their women and children absorbed into Arab society as slaves. Except for those Jews further to the South, Judaism in this area ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{257}

The details of Lehi’s trek down the Tīyāma of Arabia may never be entirely clear to us, but the real nature of what he and his clan did and encountered en route can be guessed at and understood as nothing out of the ordinary for Jews in that area during the Iron Age or later. In Lehi’s day, Mecca (= Classical Makorba, “temple”)\textsuperscript{258} was the site of just another pagan shrine, the Ka’ba, although it generated a meteoric stone, al-Ḥajjar al-Aswad, “The Black Stone,” which later came to be connected to Abrahamic legend, and which was one of the few such pagan objects to be retained by iconoclastic Islam (there was also a Ka’ba at Nejran on...
the Saudi-Yemen border, and one at San’ā). Lehi and Nephi may have avoided such centers and stayed in marginal caravan and nomad areas. Such a small clan would have presented little threat to already extant tribes, and, as E. Marx recently pointed out, tribesmen do not necessarily reserve pastures for their own use. In South Sinai, for instance, each tribe grants the others the use of pastures in its territory, but reserves for its members the right to build houses, plant orchards, and use smuggling trails.

The rules of the pastoral nomads themselves would have made it possible for Lehi to move down the Peninsula unobtrusively. It seems unlikely that his small clan would even have been charged a caravan levy.

Although we are not told, Lehi’s clan undoubtedly moved through the wilderness by camel—for illustrations of camels and Israelite dress of the period, see the Jehu panel on Shalmaneser III’s Black Obelisk261 and the palace bas reliefs of Sennacherib’s conquest of Lachish.262 The physical type of these people—Jews and Arabs—was uniformly Mediterranean.263 Moreover, their languages were very similar.264 Nibley cites Albright and others to the effect that there was little culture among the desert Israelite periods,265 this similarity to the past and culture.

Indeed, the name L. Safaitic, Liyanite, Than (including theophoric forms among Safaitic names as up among Safaitic and Malnafay, “exile”),266 alt more likely for Laman above). Finally, the name Arabic context due to the place-name Marṣa‘ in Ptolemaic period in a ca. 735 B.C. in to have been located just mentioned in Taymanite

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259 Guillaume, Islam, 10n.
to the effect that there was no real distinction in language or culture among the desert peoples of the Patriarchal and later Classical Israelite periods.\textsuperscript{265} It is a major mistake, however, to extend this similarity to the particulars of recent Bedouin (Arab) dress and culture.

Indeed, the name \textit{Lehi} is a common personal and clan name in Safaitic, Libyanite, Thamudic, Minaean, Qatabanian, and Sabaean (including theophoric forms);\textsuperscript{266} Laman can likewise be found among Safaitic names as L\textit{mn}, “Mender.”\textsuperscript{267} Even Nephi shows up among Safaitic and Minaean personal names as N\textit{fy} (= Arab. \textit{nafa'i}, “exile”),\textsuperscript{268} although an Egyptian etymology appears more likely for Laman and Nephi (as suggested at 681 B.C., above). Finally, the name \textit{Lemuel} may also have a very strong Arabic context due to its appearance in association with the place-name \textit{Masha’} in Proverbs 31:1.\textsuperscript{269} The place-name first appears in a ca. 735 B.C. inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III and seems to have been located just to the north of Taimâ’. \textit{Masha’} was later mentioned in Taymanite and Thamudic script.\textsuperscript{270}

\textsuperscript{259} Lehi and Nephi lived in marginal caravan settlements have presented little to Marx recently pointed to.

\textsuperscript{260} The pastures for their stock, each tribe grants its territory, but recently build houses, plant terraces would have made it more unobtrusively. It even been charged a penalty.

\textsuperscript{261} As we are undoubtedly moved illustrations of camels and other panel on Shalmaneser’s palace and reliefs of Sennacherib’s palace of these people—Jews and others.

\textsuperscript{262} Moreover, their citadels Albright and others.


\textsuperscript{266} Cf. Harding, \textit{An Index and Concordance}, 512–13.

\textsuperscript{267} \textit{Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum}, 946, 3443, possibly = Arab. \textit{laman}, “scoundrel” (cf. South Arabic \textit{inna} “intervention”; Akkadian \textit{inan}, “evil”), or Arab. \textit{layman}, “lives.”

\textsuperscript{268} Enno Littmann, \textit{Safaitic Inscriptions} (Leiden: Brill, 1943), 1025.

\textsuperscript{269} In the Hebrew text, but misunderstood by the KJV translators; cf. Genesis 25:14, 1 Chronicles 1:30.

\textsuperscript{270} The tribe of \textit{Masha’} may have occupied the N.W. Nafud and the south edge of Wādī Sirhan, according to Albright, “The Biblical Tribe of Massa’,” 1–14; Albright, \textit{Yahweh and the God of Canaan}, 253 n. 133; cf. Winnett and Reed, \textit{Ancient Records from North Arabia}, 29, 90–91, 192; cf. however, Paul Franklyn, “The Sayings of Agur in Proverbs 30: Piety or Skepticism?” Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 95 (1983): 239–40, who prefers “oracle” for \textit{masha’}.