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FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH AND MORMON STUDIES

Robert F. Smith

Book of Mormon Event Structure The Ancient Near East

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Summary:

Robert Smith works out a detailed chronology of events in Palestine and the surrounding area from 793–445 B.C. to show what was happening in the years prior to Lehi's departure from Jerusalem and journey to and settlement of the New World. He also describes the topographical and climatic conditions of the land through which Lehi and his colony may well have traveled on their way to the Americas.

Reprint
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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 *sine qua 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 Nebuchadnezzar 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', who set up the present system of dating time from the

¹ Jay H. Huber, "Lehi's 600-Year Prophecy and the Birth of Christ" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1983), citing especially Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and Richard Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C. to A.D. 75*, 3rd ed. (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1956), throughout.

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 excursus is devoted to understanding the Arabia of the Book of Mormon as the Lehiite 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.

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 Mesopotamian calendar, "reckoning was not by those [365-day] years, but by *tuns* (360 days),"⁴ i.e., 600 Mayan *tuns* = 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).

³ Various Latter-day Saint General Authorities have come to the same conclusion on Herod, e.g., Orson Pratt, *JD* 15:255, 260; J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Our Lord of the Gospels* (1954; reprint, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), vii; and Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979-1981), 1:349-50, 356, 4:6, 19-20, 196—all of whom wisely allow that the date of Jesus' birth could have been in 5 B.C., and his death in A.D. 30, in lieu of an official Church position on the matter. Recent studies by Latter-day Saint scholars, on the other hand, have failed to come to grips with the hard realities of either Book of Mormon or ancient Near Eastern chronology, e.g., John Lefgren, *April Sixth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980); John Pratt, "The Restoration of Priesthood Keys on Easter 1836, Part 1: Dating the First Easter," *Ensign* 15 (June 1985): 59-68; Joseph T. Hepworth, "Dating the Birth of Jesus Christ," *Sunstone* (January-February 1984): 9-13; cf. replies by Ray Soller, "Seek History, Not Harmony," *Sunstone* (February 1985): 3, and Kathleen R. Snow, "Examine Assumptions," *Sunstone* (March 1985): 2.

⁴ J. E. S. Thompson under "Chronology," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., Macropædia, 4:581a.

⁵ John L. Sorenson, "Observations on Nephite Chronology," Book of Mormon Working Paper 8a (April 1970); John L. Sorenson, "Comments on Nephite Chronology," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 207-11; John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA* 139 (December 1976): 8 n. 55 (now distributed as a FARMS reprint); John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book*

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.,⁶ to which is appended an excursus on the Lehiite 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.⁷

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.⁸ David Noel Freedman says that seismologists and

of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985), 270-76. Cf. Randall P. Spackman, "Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology: The Principal Prophecies, Calendars, and Dates" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1993).

⁶ For additional detail over much of this period, see William W. Hallo's still useful "From Qarqar to Carchemish: Assyria and Israel in the Light of New Discoveries," *Biblical Archaeologist* 23 (1960): 34-61, reprinted in *Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, ed. Edward F. Campbell and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday-Anchor, 1964), 2:152-88.

⁷ John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 257-66; Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 116-18.

⁸ Bright, *History of Israel*, 257-59; also known as Azriyau/Azriau of Yaudi to the Assyrians; see *ibid.*, 270, citing James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 282-83; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 118-23.

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 Piankhy is dated to his 21st year = 734 B.C.;¹² cf. Nibley on the ca. 1085 B.C., Dynasty 21 high-priest 'Amon-Pi'ankhy, whom

⁹ David Noel Freedman, "The Prophet Micah: The Central Message," Biblical Archaeology Society Los Angeles Seminar, Marina Del Rey, 21 October 1995; cf. Bryant G. Wood, "Biblical Archaeology's Greatest Achievement," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21/3 (1995): 34.

¹⁰ Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology and the Hebrew Monarchy," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (1973): 226.

¹¹ Jonathan T. Glass, "The Problem of Chronology in Mesopotamia," *Biblical Archaeologist* 47 (June 1984): 92.

¹² Klaus Baer, "The Libyan and Nubian Kings of Egypt: Notes on the Chronology of Dynasties XXII to XXVI," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 32 (1973): 24–25; Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology," 225–33; William F. Albright, *Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthography* (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1934), 33–34, III.A., and 37–39, V; Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1966), 82–84; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*, vol. 3, *The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 67, citing Günther Vittmann, "Zur Lesung des Königsnamens P₃-nhj," *Orientalia* 43 (1974): 12–16.

Klaus Baer accepted as the son of Herihor.¹³—though formerly saying he was *not* the son, but merely the successor to Herihor.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 Taymā' and Maśā'a;²¹ the latter of which is the city of the only biblical Lemuel (Lemu'el).²²

¹³ Hugh W. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 20–21, 22–23; and Klaus Baer, "The End of the Ramessides—and the Steps Leading to the Libyan Takeover," 13 February 1986, Ramses II International Lecture at BYU.

¹⁴ Klaus Baer, "The Mind of Ancient Egypt: Time," Question and Answer Session, 21 August 1974, Education Week, BYU—contra Budge and Wilson.

¹⁵ Bright, *History of Israel*, 271; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 123–24.

¹⁶ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 124–28; Menihimu paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III in 743, *ibid.*, 139–43, 160.

¹⁷ Bright, *History of Israel*, 273.

¹⁸ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 129–31; cf. Hosea 5:5; 11:12.

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.

²² Proverbs 31:1, 4; cf. William F. Albright, "The Biblical Tribe of Massa' and Some Cognates," in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1956), 1:1-14.

²³ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 128-29.

²⁴ Bright, *History of Israel*, 276.

²⁵ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 133-34, 152.

²⁶ Nelson Glueck, "The Civilization of the Edomites," in *Biblical Archaeologist Reader* 2:51-58; cf. J. R. Bartlett, "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Edom," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 104 (1972): 26; Edward Neufeld, "Fabrication of Objects from Fish and Sea Animals in Ancient Israel," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (1973): 314-15.

²⁷ Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, rev. ed. (New York: Carta/Macmillan, 1977), map 147; William G. Dever, "Gezer Revisited: New Excavations of the Solomonic and Assyrian Period Defenses," *Biblical Archaeologist* 47 (December 1984): 212-14, 216; cf. Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 151.

²⁸ Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology," 226-27; not to be confused with Osorkon III of Dynasty 23, *ibid.*, 227 n. 6.

²⁹ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 151.

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 Chronological-Historical Study," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (1958): 39; 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 (1931): 262-63; cf. Jeremiah 3:18, 16:15, 31:8; 4 Ezra 13:39-50.

³⁷ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 163-64.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 229.

720 B.C.

Stele of Paanchi (Pianchi) 11:1-6 (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 Arbi.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" (*bāmôt*, 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.);

Tel Sheba II = Lachish III = 'Arād VII = Israelite Iron II c (eighth century B.C.).⁴⁷

713 B.C.

Piankhy died by this date at the latest, 717/716 at the earliest, and Shabako' conquered all of Egypt by his second year (at least by 712 B.C.); Sargon II mentions Shilkanni/Osorkon IV 'Akheperre' 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., Shabako' (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. [Piye's 20th year]). Shebitku became king in 702/701 B.C.⁴⁸

712 B.C.

Sargon II of Assyria negotiates with the Pir'u of Musri (the Pharaoh of Egypt), Shabako' 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).⁴⁹

705-681 B.C.

Sennacherib of Assyria (Sanherib),⁵⁰ upon death of Sargon; Hezekiah then allies himself

⁴⁷ Le Grand Davies, "New Light from Excavations at Tel Sheva, Israel (Biblical Beersheba)," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA* 138 (July 1976): 1-8; Yohanan Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," *Biblical Archaeologist* 31 (1968): 26-27; Philip C. Hammond, "The Capitals from 'The Temple of the Winged Lions,' Petra," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 225 (1977): 49-58; James F. Strange, "The Capernaum and Herodium Publications," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 225 (1977): 67-68; Bright, *History of Israel*, 282 n. 38; contra Yigael Yadin, "The Cult Place Destroyed by King Josiah," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 222 (1976): 5-17, esp. 9, 11, who claims that Be'er Sheba' Bldg. 430 was a cult place destroyed by King Josiah, i.e., that stratum II is seventh century B.C., and that Aharoni's "temple" and altar are merely a *bāmâ*, as described in 2 Kings 23:8; cf. chart in William G. Dever et al., "Further Excavations in Gezer, 1967-71," *Biblical Archaeologist* 34 (1971): 132.

⁴⁸ Kitchen, *Ancient Orient*, 83-84; Kenneth A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.)* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1972); Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology," 226-27; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3:67.

⁴⁹ Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology," 227; Kitchen, *Ancient Orient*, 82-84.

³⁹ M. Gilula, "An Egyptian Parallel to Jeremiah I 4-5," *Vetus Testamentum* 17 (1967): 114.

⁴⁰ Albright, *Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthography*, 33-34, III.A., and 37-39, V; cf. W. Golenischeff, "Stèle de Darius aux environs de Tel el-Maskhouth," *Recueil de Travaux* 13 (1890): 106.

⁴¹ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 229.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 174-76.

⁴³ Chaim Rabin, "The Song of Songs and Tamil Poetry," *Studies in Religion* 3 (1973-74): 208; cf. A. F. L. Beeston, "Problems of Sabaean Chronology," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16 (1954): 43.

⁴⁴ Gus W. Van Beek, "The Land of Sheba," in *Solomon and Sheba*, ed. James B. Pritchard (London: Phaidon, 1974), 40.

⁴⁵ Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, 3rd ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), 13, re Job 1:15.

⁴⁶ Bright, *History of Israel*, 281 n. 32.

with Egypt and prepares for rebellion. Aramaic *Wisdom of Ahiqar* dates itself to the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon.⁵¹ 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 *lmk* storage jars.⁵⁵ Heavy tribute paid by Hezekiah to Sennacherib.

⁵⁰ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 125; Ephraim Stern, "Israel at the Close of the Period of the Monarchy: An Archaeological Survey," *Biblical Archaeologist* 38/2 (1975): 28.

⁵¹ Albert T. Olmstead, "Could an Aramaic Gospel Be Written?" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1942): 55-56; cf. Cullen I. K. Story, "The Book of Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Literature," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 64 (1945): 319-37; R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 2:715-84; James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 2:479-507.

⁵² Wood, "Biblical Archaeology's Greatest Achievement," 34.

⁵³ Cf. Bright, *History of Israel*, Chronology Chart VI, with Shebitku dying 685/684 B.C.

⁵⁴ Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology," 225-33; Kitchen, *Ancient Orient*, 82 n. 19, citing Kawa V:14-15.

⁵⁵ George L. Kelam and Amihai Mazar, "Three Seasons of Excavations at Tel Batash—Biblical Timnah," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 248 (1982): 29-32, citing David Ussishkin (an excavator of Tell ed-Duweir), "The Destruction of Lachish by Sennacherib and the Dating of the Royal Judean Storage Jars," *Tel Aviv* 4 (1977): 28-60, on the stratum III/701 B.C. synchronism; cf. Bright, *History of Israel*, 284 n. 41, and 322 n. 34; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 174-76; cf. Hershel Shanks, "Destruction of

696-642 B.C. Reign of King Manasseh of Judah (probably coregent 696-686);⁵⁶ the prophets Zephaniah and Nahum (Nahum) are contemporary; Manasseh paid tribute to both Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal of Assyria;⁵⁷ Manasseh sacrificed his own son by fire, among other pagan practices (2 Kings 21:6).

690/689 B.C.

Accession of Pharaoh Taharqa (690-664 B.C.; biblical Tirhakah), following the death of his brother, Shebitku.⁵⁸

ca. 688 B.C.

Death of Isaiah, following an unsuccessful campaign by Sennacherib of Assyria.⁵⁹

687 B.C.

Death of Hezekiah.⁶⁰

ca. 685 B.C.

Kariba'il, king of Saba' (biblical Sheba/Yemen), a contemporary of Sennacherib of Assyria.⁶¹ 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.⁶²

681/680 B.C.

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,⁶³ he campaigned against Egypt 674-669 B.C.,⁶⁴ appointed rulers

Judean Fortress Portrayed in Dramatic Eighth-Century B.C. Pictures," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 10/2 (1984): 48-65; Wood, "Biblical Archaeology's Greatest Achievement," 34-35; David Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1982).

⁵⁶ Bright, *History of Israel*, 311.

⁵⁷ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 178, citing Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 291, 294.

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.

⁵⁹ Bright, *History of Israel*, 293; Isaiah 14:24-27; 17:12-14; 31:4-9, 36-37//2 Kings 18:17-19:37.

⁶⁰ Bright, *History of Israel*, 310.

⁶¹ Rabin, "The Song of Songs," 208; cf. Beeston, "Problems of Sabaean Chronology," 43.

⁶² Van Beek, "The Land of Sheba," 40.

⁶³ Cf. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 289-95.

over various Egyptian nomes, including the nomarch of Athribis, Bk-n-nfy,⁶⁵ and he had dealings with Arabs.⁶⁶

679 B.C.

Magiddu/Megiddo, stratum III, had an Assyrian governor,⁶⁷ probably since about 732 B.C., following the destruction of Megiddo IV by Tiglath-Pileser III.⁶⁸

676/672 B.C.

The 26th Olympiad—games held in Sparta; Terpander of Lesbos wins the prize for music.

669/668 B.C.

Assurbanapal, 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;⁶⁹ also known as Osnappar/Asnapper (Ezra 4:10).

664 B.C.

Psamtik/Psammetichus I, Pharaoh of Egypt (664–610 B.C.) upon the death of his father's enemy, Taharqa; beginning of Dynasty 26, the so-called Saic Dynasty, because the capital was at Sais (biblical So) in the Delta (664–525 B.C.).⁷⁰

663 B.C.

Thebes (biblical No-'Amon) destroyed by the Assyrians under Assurbanipal, and Taharqa's son, Tanut-'Amon, was forced to retreat from Thebes to Kipkipi (back into his Nubian homeland), thus ending the 25th

⁶⁴ Stern, "Israel," 46.

⁶⁵ Anthony Spalinger, "Assurbanipal and Egypt: A Source Study," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 (1974): 322, citing Prism A, 90–109; Labib Habachi, "A Statue of Bakennifi, Nomarch of Athribis during the Invasion of Egypt by Assurbanipal," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 15 (1957): 68–77.

⁶⁶ Diana Kirkbride, "Ancient Arabian Ancestor Idols: Pt. II: The Interpretation of the Sanctuary at Risqeh," *Archaeology* 22/3 (1969): 195. See Excursus for further possible etymologies of Nephi.

⁶⁷ Abraham Malamut, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon: The Background of the Judean-Egyptian Encounter in 609 B.C.," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 5 (1973): 274.

⁶⁸ Aharoni, *Archaeology of the Land of Israel*, 251.

⁶⁹ Kirkbride, "Ancient Arabian Ancestor Idols," 195; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 178; Stern, "Israel," 28; Pritchard, ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 297–301.

⁷⁰ Kitchen, "Late-Egyptian Chronology," 225–33; Kitchen, *Ancient Orient*, 82–84; Bright, *History of Israel*, 311, and Chronology Chart VI.

Dynasty (Nahum 3:8).⁷¹ Book of the prophet Nahum (Nahum) composed ca. 663–612 B.C.⁷² 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.⁷³

ca. 661 B.C.

'Aminadab, king of 'Ammon pays tribute to Assurbanipal of Assyria.⁷⁴

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.⁷⁵

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.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Bright, *History of Israel*, 311; cf. Spalinger, "Assurbanipal and Egypt," 322 n. 42, 325.

⁷² Kevin J. Cathcart, "Treaty Curses and the Book of Nahum," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 35 (1973): 179.

⁷³ William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968), 244–49, 253, 258; cf. Pope, *Job XXX-XL*, who dates the Dialogue section to the seventh century, but argues at length for the ancient epic substratum. Cf. Song of Songs.

⁷⁴ Nahman Avigad, "Ammonite and Moabite Seals," in *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. James A. Sanders (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 285.

⁷⁵ Bezael Porten, *Archives from Elephantine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 119–20; Bezael Porten, "Did the Ark Stop at Elephantine?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21/3 (1995): 61–67, citing especially the *Letter of Aristeas* (see Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:13), and Herodotus, *Histories* II, 30.

⁷⁶ Bathja Bayer, "Jeremiah," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), 9:1345–61.

642-640 B.C.

King 'Amon of Judah reigns.⁷⁷ His father, King Manasseh, had named him for the Egyptian god of Thebes, 'Imn/'Amon.⁷⁸

640 B.C.

King 'Amon of Judah assassinated.⁷⁹ Josiah/Yoshi'yahu takes the throne, at age eight, in 640 (his accession year; first regnal year in 639) (2 Chronicles 34:1);⁸⁰ Josiah's expansion certainly went as far as Geba (Et-Tell), just south of Shiloh,⁸¹ and he may have annexed North Israel, including Galilee.⁸² Before Josiah's reform, despite the efforts of Hezekiah, there were numerous sanctuaries and temples in Palestine, e.g., large temples at 'Arād, Be'er-sheba', Lachish, Geba', Beth-'El, etc. Most were defiled or destroyed by Josiah, thus centering worship on Jerusalem.⁸³ Josiah's sons include (1) Johanan, b. 635? (2) Jehoikim-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 [Ḥamutal]).

630 B.C.

Siege of Ashdod by Pharaoh Psammeticus I⁸⁴ lasted for 29 years.⁸⁵

629/628 B.C.

Reform movement and de facto independence of Judah initiated by King Josiah.⁸⁶ The

⁷⁷ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 178-79.

⁷⁸ Gabriel Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, ed. Amnon Ben-Tor, trans. R. Greenberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 357 (also listing other Egyptian cultural influences), 370 fig. 9.48.

⁷⁹ Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 272 n.18.

⁸⁰ David Noel Freedman, "The Chronology of Israel and the Ancient Near East," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. G. Ernest Wright (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), 212.

⁸¹ Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 271.

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.

⁸⁵ Herodotus, *Histories* II, 157.

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

627 B.C.

Ashur-etil-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 [Brk'Yhw], 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 Uraia 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 Jamnia (Yabneh-Yam) on the coast of southern Palestine, dated by a Hebrew ostracoon and proved by the presence of Carian painted ware in considerable quantities there and at Tell el-Milh.⁹²

⁸⁶ Bright, *History of Israel*, 316-25; the reform climax came in 622 with the discovery of the Book of the Law in the temple archives by Hilkiah the priest, and it ended in 609 B.C.

⁸⁷ Stern, "Israel," 28; Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* 626 B.C.-A.D. 45, 11-12.

⁸⁸ Zephaniah preached before the reform; Bright, *History of Israel*, 320-21, 334, and n. 29; Nahman Avigad, "Jerahmeel & Baruch: King's Son & Scribe," *Biblical Archaeologist* 42 (1979): 114-18.

⁸⁹ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 180; Bright, *History of Israel*, 315; Werner Keller, *Bible as History*, trans. William Neil, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Morrow, 1981), 272.

⁹⁰ Herodotus, *Histories* I, 105.

⁹¹ Keller, *Bible as History*, 272-73.

⁹² William F. Albright, "Neglected Factors in the Greek Intellectual Revolution," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 116/3 (June 1972): 227b, and n. 18, citing 2 Kings 11:4, and references to Kittiyim in the 'Arād ostraca are to Aegeans generally rather than to Citiium (Cyprus), and Crete; Aharoni, "Arad," 9-18; D. Winton Thomas, *Archaeology and Old Testament Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 397-400; Bright, *History of Israel*, 322 n. 33.

624 B.C.

Birth date (traditional) of Lord Siddhārta Gautama of the Śakyas, 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 562), 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 Nebuchadnezzar II; Thales also mentions the use and properties of magnetite/lodestone (mined in Magnesia).

ca. 623 B.C.

Pharaoh Yenalamani (Anlaman), ruler of pre-Meroitic Napata Kingdom, Nubia (623–593 B.C.) = King 'Ankh-Re' = Pyramid Nuri IV (Piankhi) had ruled the same kingdom ca. 753–713 B.C.;⁹⁵ Sin-shar-ishkum of Assyria (623–612 B.C.).⁹⁶

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

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

⁹³ Pali Canon, first century B.C. in Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God* (New York: Viking, 1962), 2:252–55.

⁹⁴ Albright, "Neglected Factors," 229.

⁹⁵ G. A. Reisner, "The Meroitic Kingdom of Ethiopia: A Chronological Outline," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 9 (1923): 66, 70, 75; Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 463–64 n. 113.

⁹⁶ Stern, "Israel," 28.

⁹⁷ Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 273, citing the Babylonian Chronicle ("Gadd's Chronicle") of Nabopolassar and his successors, 626–539 B.C.; cf. D. Winton Thomas, *Documents from Old Testament Times* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 77–78.

⁹⁸ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 179, 181, 229.

ca. 616 B.C.

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 Asshur—in 616, or earlier.¹⁰⁰ Birth of Jehoiachin.¹⁰¹

614 B.C.

Cyaxares, ruler of Media (ca. 625–585), leads the Medes in the destruction of Asshur, 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).

612 B.C.

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

610 B.C.

Destruction of Haran 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, Wm-ib-R.¹⁰⁶

609 B.C.

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 Haran; Josiah attempted to oppose passage of the Egyptian army at

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.¹⁰⁷ The Battle of Megiddo is evidenced by the destruction of Megiddo II at this time.¹⁰⁸ 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, Ab, 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 Ethaniam-Tishri (September-October), 609, but whose first regnal year began 1 Nisan 608 B.C. (2 Kings 23:31-34).¹⁰⁹ During this period between the fall of Assyria and the rise of Babylon, Egypt gained control of Syro-Palestine and North Transjordan.¹¹⁰ Tammuz/Tamna' (Tell Batash), on the mid-Sorek River in the Shephelah, destroyed shortly after Josiah's death.¹¹¹

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).¹¹² The prophet Habakkuk also preached during the reign of Jehoiakim,¹¹³ and the prophet Ben-Yohanan 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.

¹⁰⁸ Bright, *History of Israel*, 325 n. 39, citing 2 Chronicles 35:20-24.

¹⁰⁹ Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past: The Archaeological Background of Judaism and Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 2:590; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 180-81.

¹¹⁰ J. G. Snaith, "Literary Criticism and Historical Investigation in Jeremiah Chapter XLVI," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16 (1971): 17; between the battles of Megiddo and Carchemish.

¹¹¹ Kelm and Mazar, "Three Seasons of Excavations," 32.

¹¹² Stern, "Israel," 28.

¹¹³ Bright, *History of Israel*, 333.

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 Nebuchadnezzar. 605 is also the first year of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon (605/604-562 B.C.; Jeremiah 25:1), i.e., Nabopolassar died 16 August 605 (= 8 Ab), and Nebuchadnezzar's accession began 21 days later, 7 September (1 Elul)—his first regnal year beginning 1 Nisan 604 B.C.¹¹⁴ Nabu-kudurri-ušur, "Nabū-My-Boundary-Protect"¹¹⁵ or "Nabū-My-Heir-Protect" = Nebuchadnezzar.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 destruction 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

¹¹⁴ Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 5:273, 277 n. 33; Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 2:568-69, 590; Stern, "Israel," 28; Freedman, "The Chronology of Israel," 212; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 207.

¹¹⁵ A. van Selms, "The Name Nebuchadnezzar," in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament: Studies Presented to M. A. Beek*, ed. M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss et al. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 226.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 226; Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 40 n. 100, claims that *Nebuchadnezzar* is a scribal error.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1329 n. 19a; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* X, 90-93, the third year of Jehoiakim.

¹¹⁸ Gerhard Larsson, *The Secret System: A Study in the Chronology of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 45, 116-17.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 46; cf. Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 183.

is inadequate, and Daniel 1:1 may refer to a deportation in 597.¹²⁰ King 'Adon of 'Eqron 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 Nebuchadnezzar's army as far as Aphek on the Yarkon River.¹²¹ The script of this papyrus letter is contemporary with 'Arād stratum VI, late seventh century B.C.¹²² After a siege, Ascalon-Ashkelon was captured by Nebuchadnezzar II in December 604 B.C. The brother of the Aeolic lyric poet Alcaeus, who had been in Babylon, took part in the siege.¹²³

603 B.C.

Capture of Gaza by Babylonians (Jeremiah 46–47).¹²⁴

ca. 601 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar 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.¹²⁵ This is the date of the prophecy of Jeremiah against Philistia (Jeremiah 46:1–2, 5, 13; 47:1).¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley, *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Nelson and Sons, 1962), 592.

¹²¹ Bezalel Porten, "The Identity of King Adon," *Biblical Archaeologist* 44 (1981): 36–52; Joseph Fitzmyer, "Some Notes on Aramaic Epistolography," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974): 201–25; Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 276; cf. Edward Neufeld, "Fabrication of Objects from Fish and Sea Animals," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 5 (1973): 314 n. 22, for an earlier date.

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.

¹²³ Albright, "Neglected Factors," 230.

¹²⁴ Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 277 n. 33; cf. Bright, *History of Israel*, 327.

¹²⁵ Herodotus, *Histories* II, 159; 2 Kings 24:1; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* X, 88.

¹²⁶ H. J. Katzenstein, "'Before Pharaoh Conquered Gaza' (Jeremiah XLVII 1)," *Vetus Testamentum* 33 (1983): 249–51; Egyptian *Mktr* = Jeremiah 46:14 *Migdol* (MT) = LXX and Latin Vulgate *Magdolus* (26:14); Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 277 n. 33, places the capture of Gaza in 600 B.C.; Keller confuses Magdolus with Megiddo, *Bible as History*, 275.

ca. 600 B.C.

King 'Aminadab ('mndb) of 'Ammon in Transjordan.¹²⁷ Kapila of India;¹²⁸ other of the famous contemporaries of Lehi 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.), Mimnermus 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.), Pitaeus 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 Croesus 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, Siddhārta Gautama (the Buddha), Gosala (ca. 535 B.C.), and Vardhamāna the Mahāvira

¹²⁷ Frank Moore Cross, "Notes on the Ammonite Inscription from Tell Siran," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 212 (1973): 12–15; G. W. Ahlström, "The Tell Sirān Bottle Inscription," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116 (1984): 12–15; name found inscribed on bottle during excavation of Tell Siran on the campus of the University of Jordan, Amman (Rabbat 'Ammon).

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 (Jaina; 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 Kṣatriyas? 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 trading posts 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 (Almuñécar, 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

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), 33–55, and in *Since Cumorah*, 239–41.

¹³¹ J. Norman D. Anderson, *Christianity and Comparative Religion* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 45; cf. William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), 317–18, and n. 57, on Sanchuniathon.

¹³² Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 42.

¹³³ Cyrus H. Gordon, “America and the Ecumene of the Old Testament,” *Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA* 125 (July 1971): 4.

¹³⁴ Robert R. Stieglitz, “Long-Distance Seafaring in the Ancient Near East,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 47 (1984): 140–41, citing 1 Kings 10:22, 22:49–50, 2 Chronicles 9:21; 20:36–37.

¹³⁵ Roland de Vaux, “On Right and Wrong Uses of Archaeology,” in *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 71–72, 79 n. 7 citing André Jodin, *Mogador, comptoir phénicien du Maroc atlantique* (Tangiers: Éditions marocaines et internationales, 1966); cf. Sabatino Moscati, “A Carthaginian Fortress in Sardinia,” *Scientific American* 232 (February 1975): 82–85; W. A. Ward, ed., *The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilizations*, Papers Presented to the Archeological Symposium of the American University of Beirut, March 1967 (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1968).

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.”¹³⁶ Prophets contemporary with Jeremiah and Lehi included Zephaniah (ca. 680–620), Huldah (622 B.C.), Habakkuk (ca. 609–598), Nahum (620–605?), Daniel, the unknown author of Lamentations, Ben-Yohanan ben Igdaliah (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.¹³⁷

598 B.C.

In his 11th year, Jehoiaqim revolted against Babylonian rule. At first, the local garrisons attempted but failed to control the rebellion. It is unclear whether Jehoiaqim died while Nebuchadrezzar II was en route to Ḥatti-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).¹³⁸ 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 Jehoiaqim, reigned three months and ten days (2 Kings 24:8; 2 Chronicles 36:9), i.e., from 9 December (22 Arakhsamnu) 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]) 597.¹³⁹ Immediately upon the capture of Jerusalem,

¹³⁶ Strabo, *Geography* III, 5, 5; Gary M. Turnquist, “The Pillars of Hercules Revisited,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 216 (1974): 13–15.

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.

¹³⁸ Alberto R. Green, “The Fate of Jehoiaqim,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20 (1982): 103–9.

¹³⁹ Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 590–91, 596; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 208; Keller, *Bible as History*, 279–80, 283; Freedman, “The Chronology of Israel,” 211–13; Donald J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626–556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 32–35; Gerhard Larsson, “Is Biblical Chronology Systematic

Nebuchadrezzar deported 3,023 Jews (Jeremiah 52:28).¹⁴⁰ 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).¹⁴¹ It was during this foray against Judah that Nebuchadrezzar destroyed the Citadel at 'Arād (stratum VI),¹⁴² as well as the fortress at Kadesh-Barnea in the Negeb (= Tell el-Qudeirat).¹⁴³

597 B.C.

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 Tashritu (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.¹⁴⁴ 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

or Not," *Revue de Qumran* 6 (1969): 499–515, esp. 503; Stern, "Israel," 28; cf. 2 Kings 23:36; 24:12; 2 Chronicles 36:9–10.

¹⁴⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities* X, 96–98.

¹⁴¹ Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 591–92.

¹⁴² Yohanan Aharoni, "Seals of Royal Functionaries from Arad," *Eretz-Israel* 8 (1967): 71*, 103.

¹⁴³ Rudolph Cohen, "Did I Excavate Kadesh-Barnea?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7/3 (1981): 26–27; hieratic-with-Hebrew on ostrakon there.

¹⁴⁴ Jeremiah 52:28–29 by official "regnal" years (Egyptian *hꜥ-šꜣ*), and 2 Kings 24:12; 25:8 by the vague "accession" year system (known to the Babylonians as *rēš šarrūti*, and to the Egyptians as *ꜥꜣꜣꜣ ꜥꜣꜣꜣ*); 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 Ethaniam (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.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 [*khibur*], and the international trade involved many nations from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and India).¹⁴⁶ Whether as a caravaner 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 Lehitess may have taken the most direct route south from Jerusalem through Hebron, 'Arād Rabbat, and Zif, then down "the Way of Edom" to the Wādi 'Arabah (and Tamar), and through the wadi via the "Way to the Red Sea."¹⁴⁷ The wadi was Edomite during the seventh-sixth centuries B.C., including such cities as Punon/Feinan (Numbers 33:42), Sela/Umm el-Biyara, Teiman/Tawilan, and Bozrah/Buseirāh (Isaiah 34:6; 63:1, Amos 1:12, Jeremiah 49:13, 22).¹⁴⁸ The population of Judah, between 597 and 586 B.C., was now reduced from an eighth-century figure of 250,000 to around 125,000.¹⁴⁹ More

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.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Rabin, "The Song of Songs," 209, on sailing to India from 'Ezion-Geber on the Red Sea.

¹⁴⁷ Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *Macmillan Bible Atlas*, maps 9 and 10; Yohanan Aharoni and Ruth Amiran, "Excavations at Tel Arad: Preliminary Report on the First Season, 1962," *Israel Exploration Journal* 14 (1964): 147; Jackson Campbell, "Renascence of Iron Age Arad," *Biblical Archaeologist* 40 (1977): 35; 1 Nephi 2:4–10.

¹⁴⁸ Jacob M. Myers, "Edom and Judah in the Sixth-Fifth Centuries B.C.," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of W. F. Albright*, ed. H. Goedicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 384–90—the Edomites moved into the Negeb proper only after the final Babylonian conquest of Judah.

¹⁴⁹ Bright, *History of Israel*, 328 n. 51, 344, citing William F. Albright, *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 20,000.¹⁵⁰

594 B.C.

Pharaoh Psammetichus II/Psamtik II/Nfr-ib-R^c II (594-589 B.C.) rules Egypt.¹⁵¹ He uses Jewish mercenary troops in his Nubian campaign.¹⁵²

ca. 593 B.C.

Ezekiel ben-Buzi, the priest, received his call to prophetic office at Til Abubi, 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).

592 B.C.

Jehoiakin (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 Nebuchadnezzar II, five years after the first fall of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 52:34).¹⁵³

589 B.C.

Pharaoh Hophra/Apries/H^c-ib-R^c I/ W^h-ib-R^c 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-

1963), 84, 105-6; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 1:67, gives a maximum figure for all Palestine in the eighth century B.C. of one million, which is also the figure for the British census of Palestine in A.D. 1931; Magen Broshi, "The Population of Western Palestine in the Roman-Byzantine Period," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 236 (1979): 1-10, only allows such a figure to be attained in the Roman-Byzantine period, and Yigal Shiloah, "The Population of Iron Age Palestine in the Light of a Sample Analysis of Urban Plans, Areas, and Population Density," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 239 (1980): 32, argues that the optimal figure for all Israelite towns in the eighth century cannot be higher than 150,000, with an indeterminate number of rural inhabitants.

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

¹⁵¹ Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 274.

¹⁵² Cf. Pathros/P³-b-rsy, "The-Land-Southward," Jeremiah 44:1; H. Idris Bell, *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), 27-28.

¹⁵³ Keller, *Bible as History*, 277-79; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 189, citing William F. Albright, "King Joiachin in Exile," *Biblical Archaeologist* 5 (1942): 49-55.

lowed by Nebuchadnezzar'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 Nebuchadnezzar 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 captives? Jeremiah 52:29).¹⁵⁷ Jeremiah purchased land and then was arrested as a deserter in the summer of 588 or 587 and was imprisoned 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 Zedekiah."¹⁵⁹ Since several of the immediately preceding Davidides

¹⁵⁴ Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 274; cf. Malamat, "The Last 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 Lehighites' eight-year sojourn in the wilderness was spent tenting in the Wadi Lemuel before moving on, SSE, into South Arabia—1 Nephi 16:12-39, and then East around 19 degrees to the vicinity, perhaps, of modern Dhofar, 1 Nephi 17:1-4; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* X, 112-15.

¹⁵⁹ Yohanan Aharoni, "Three Hebrew Ostraca from Arad," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 197 (1970): 22, citing Jeremiah 38:6; so 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 'Arād; *mlkyh* is also listed at Elephantine by Michael H. Silverman, "Aramaean Name-Types in the Elephantine Documents," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89 (1969): 707; recent finds of similar names on contemporary bullae show that a hypocoristic form of Malkiyahu as Mulek is entirely reasonable (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 *mlk* as *melek* "king" or *mulk* "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).¹⁶⁰ 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 Nebuchadnezzar (or 23 May 585 B.C.).¹⁶¹

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.¹⁶² According to Y. Yadin, the ostraca represent drafts of the papyrus letters sent from Lachish to Jerusalem.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Tryggve Kronholm, "Polygami och monogami i Gamla testamentet," *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 47 (1982): 49–92; note also the practice of polygyny among the Nephites in the sixth century B.C., Jacob 3:5.

¹⁶¹ Bartel L. van der Waerden, *Science Awakening*, vol. 2: *Birth of Astronomy* (Leyden: Noordhoff International, 1974), 120–22, and n. 1, citing Herodotus, *Histories* I, 74, and Xenophanes.

¹⁶² The ostraca provide 90 lines of text fixed to just before the fall of Jerusalem; see translations in Harry Torczyner, *The Lachish Letters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938); William F. Albright, "Palestinian Inscriptions: The Lachish Ostraca," in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 321–22; Harry Torczyner and Olga Tufnell, *Lachish*, vols. 1–4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938–); cf. Abraham Negev, ed., *Archaeological Encyclopaedia of the Holy Land* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1972), 184; this destruction occurred in 588/587 B.C., as the dating of one letter to the ninth year of Zedekiah makes clear; Bright, *History of Israel*, 330; Aharoni, *Archaeology of the Land of Israel*, 272, 279; Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), 340–46; G. Ernest Wright, "Judean Lachish," in *Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, 2:301–9; Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (London: Benn, 1979), 301–2; 2 Kings 24:10–17; 25:1–12; Jeremiah 39; 52.

¹⁶³ Oded Borowski, "Yadin Presents New Interpretation of the Famous Lachish Letters," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 10/2 (1984): 74–77; this negates G. W. Ahlström's suggestion that the correct identity of Tell ed-Duweir is Libnah/Lobana, not Lachish, in Amihai Mazar, "Iron Age Fortresses in the Judean Hills," *Palestinian Exploration Quarterly* 115 (July–December 1983):

587 B.C.

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 reinstituted.¹⁶⁴

586 B.C.

In the 11th year of Zedekiah/the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar,¹⁶⁵ the walls of Jerusalem are breached on 19 July (9 Tammuz) and the temple destroyed from 15 thru 18 August (7–10 Ab) 586 B.C. by Nebu-zar-Adan, captain of the guard (= Nabū-Seri-Idinam), the grand vizier of Babylonia.¹⁶⁶ King Zedekiah is captured near Jericho, after escaping from Jerusalem by night in late July or early August 586. He is taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters at Riblah, where his sons (except for Malki'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).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

103–4; cf. Graham I. Davies, "Tell ed-Duweir = Ancient Lachish: A Response to G. W. Ahlström," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 114 (1982): 25–28; David Ussishkin, "Lachish in the Days of the Kingdom of Judah—The Recent Archaeological Excavations," *Qadmoniot* 15 (1982): 42–56; Anson F. Rainey, "The Biblical Shephelah of Judah," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 251 (1983): 17.

¹⁶⁴ Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah," 151–52; Keller, *Bible as History*, 283.

¹⁶⁵ Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 594.

¹⁶⁶ Keller, *Bible as History*, 283–84; 2 Kings 25:1, 8; Jeremiah 52:12; 2 Nephi 1:4; Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 593–94; Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah," 154–55; Freedman, "The Chronology of Israel," 211–13; Stern, "Israel," 28; cf. Hayim Tadmor, "Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15 (1956): 226–27; Edwin R. Thiele, "New Evidence on the Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 143 (1956): 22–27; Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 568–69.

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.¹⁶⁸ Since it would have taken not less than two months for the news to have traveled into southernmost Arabia, the Lehighites 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 Lehighites may have come as early as July–August 586.¹⁶⁹ 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.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.¹⁷¹ Edom now took advantage of the defeat of Judah by moving into the Negeb proper, including 'Arād and 'Elath level V (2 Kings 16:6),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.¹⁷³

585 B.C.

Thirteen-year siege laid to Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar without more than an acknowledgment of Babylonian suzerainty.¹⁷⁴

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

¹⁶⁹ Perhaps they set sail into the Arabian Sea (Irreantum 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, "The Song of Songs," 209; John L. Sorenson, "Winds and Currents: A Look at Nephi's Ocean Crossing," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 53–56 (see Excursus herein on Arabia).

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

¹⁷¹ D. R. Hillers, *Lamentations* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), XVIII–XIX; Lamentations 4:20 refers to King Zedekiah, *ibid.*, XX–XXI; cf. Barkay, "The Iron Age II–III," 339.

¹⁷² Aramaic ostrakon 6043; Myers, "Edom and Judah," 382–83, 387–88, 390.

¹⁷³ Bright, *History of Israel*, 344 n. 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 352; Ezekiel 26–29.

ca. 582 B.C.

Revolt against Gedaliah, the governor of Judah under Babylonian suzerainty (23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar 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.¹⁷⁵ 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.¹⁷⁶ 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).¹⁷⁷ 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 Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt in 568 B.C. (Jeremiah 44:30).¹⁷⁸

573 B.C.

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

¹⁷⁵ Bright, *History of Israel*, 330–31.

¹⁷⁶ Keller, *Bible as History*, 284–85, citing S. A. Cook, C. C. Torrey, Albright, and Enno Janssen, "Juda in der Exilzeit" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kiel, 1956); cf. Bright, *History of Israel*, 344; Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 593 n. 18; cf. Jeremiah 52:30.

¹⁷⁷ Keller, *Bible as History*, 284; Bright, *History of Israel*, 346–47; Cyrus H. Gordon, "The Origin of the Jews in Elephantine," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14 (1955): 56–58; Boulos A. Ayad, *The Jewish-Aramaean Communities in Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: Institute of Coptic Studies, 1975), 64–66; cf. E. C. B. MacLaurin, "Date of the Foundation of the Jewish Colony at Elephantine," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 27 (1968): 96, for the view that Israelites had remained in Egypt from the time of the Exodus.

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 (Arwad) 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 'Aḥ-mose II/Amosis II/Hḫm-fb-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/Ḫil-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

¹⁷⁹ Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 596; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 188, 191.

¹⁸⁰ Bright, *History of Israel*, 352.

¹⁸¹ Miletus was the place from whence there was a "sudden explosion of Greek thought" during this axial era, Albright, "Neglected Factors," 227; cf. 239–40; Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 233, citing Otto Eissfeldt, "Das Datum der Belagerung von Tyrus durch Nebuchadnezzar," *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 9 (1933): 421–22; reprinted in *Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1963), 2:1–3.

¹⁸² Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon," 274.

¹⁸³ Bright, *History of Israel*, 352.

¹⁸⁴ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 229.

¹⁸⁵ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* 626 B.C.–A.D. 45, 12.

¹⁸⁶ Yehuda T. Radday, "Chiasm in Kings," *Linguistica Biblica* 31 (1974): 54; Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 594–95.

¹⁸⁷ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 186–90.

560 B.C.

Accession of Nergal-shar-usur/Neriglissar of Babylon (August 560–April/May 556).¹⁸⁸

556 B.C.

Two-month rule of Labashi-Marduk of Babylon (May–June 556).¹⁸⁹ He was succeeded by the last king of Neo-Babylonia, Nabūna'id/Nabonidus (May–July 556 to August–October 539 B.C.), who moved his capital to Taimā/Tēmā' on the Arabian caravan route south of Maśā'a 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.¹⁹⁰ Cf. Daniel 5 and 9 on Belshazzar/Bel-shar-usur, 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.¹⁹¹

553 B.C.

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,¹⁹² and Mark Lidzbarski.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* 626 B.C.–A.D. 45, 12; Jeremiah 39:3, 13.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁹⁰ Kirkbride, "Ancient Arabian Ancestor Idols," 195; Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* 626 B.C.–A.D. 45, 13–14; Winnett and Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, 91; cf. Jozef Milik on 4QPrNabar in "Prière de Nabonide" et autres écrits d'un cycle de Daniel: Fragments araméens de Qumrān 4," *Revue biblique* 63 (1956): 407–15.

¹⁹¹ Bright, *History of Israel*, 353; William F. Albright, "The Conquests of Nabonidus in Arabia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1925): 293–95; William H. Shea, "Nabonidus, Belshazzar, and the Book of Daniel: An Update," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20 (1982): 133–49.

¹⁹² Frank Moore Cross, "Phoenicians in Brazil?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 5/1 (1979): 36–43; Frank Moore Cross, "The Phoenician Inscription from Brazil: A Nineteenth-Century Forgery," *Orientalia* 37 (1968): 445–54 (suggesting forgery done in 1872).

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 Coriantumr 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 pseudepigraphon).

538 B.C.

Decree of Cyrus II for restoration of Jews and their temple (2 Chronicles 36:22–23; Isaiah 44:27–28; 45:1–5; Ezra 1:1–6//6:3–5).¹⁹⁸ confirmed in 520 B.C. by Darius I. Project placed under direction of Prince Shesh-bazzar/Shenazar, fourth son of Jeconiah (ca. 592–522; 1 Chronicles 3:18).¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Cyrus H. Gordon, "The Authenticity of the Phoenician Text from Parahya," *Orientalia* 37 (1968): 75–80; Cyrus H. Gordon, "The Canaanite Text from Brazil," *Orientalia* 37 (1968): 425–36; Cyrus H. Gordon, "Reply to Professor Cross," *Orientalia* 37 (1968): 461–63; Cyrus H. Gordon, "Toward a History of Ancient America," *Dialogue* 4/2 (1969): 64–71. Cf. William F. Dankenbring, "Who Discovered America First?" *The Plain Truth* 40 (12 July 1975): 8–11.

¹⁹⁵ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* 626 B.C.–A.D. 45, 14.
¹⁹⁶ Bright, *History of Israel*, 354, 360.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 360; William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20 (1982): 229–47.

¹⁹⁸ Bright, *History of Israel*, 361.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 362, 366.

530 B.C.

Cambyses II, ruler of Babylonia (August/September 530 to March/April 522); coregent with Cyrus II from March 530.²⁰⁰

525 B.C.

Cambyses conquers Egypt (using Greek mercenaries, while Amasis was allied with the Tyrant of Samos), and has himself crowned Pharaoh; Amasis has meanwhile died and been replaced by his son Psammetichus III. The Jewish colony at Elephantine/Yeb is first mentioned;²⁰¹ it may have been established by a pharaoh of the 26th Dynasty, such as Apries, or Amasis II,²⁰² although Isaiah appears to refer to a Jewish colony there in the eighth century B.C. (Isaiah 49:12 = 1 Nephi 21:12, Sinim, "Syene/Aswan"). Possibly during the reign of Manasseh, the paganizing king of Judah (664–610 B.C.), priests fled for refuge to Elephantine and built the temple there which was found later by Cambyses.²⁰³ This was a real five-gated temple (despite Deuteronomy 12:13–14), and the fifth-century Elephantine papyri are surprising in that they lack any reference to the Law, Moses, Exodus, Patriarchs, Sabbath, Levites, etc., and the only festival mentioned is Unleavened Bread.²⁰⁴ Their temple was destroyed possibly three times: (1) in 410 B.C. by the priests of Khnum—the Persian military commander, Vidranga, looking the other way; it was rebuilt before 402 B.C.; (2) the second destruction came ca. 399 with the accession of Pharaoh Nephertites I, founder of the 29th Dynasty;²⁰⁵ (3) however, the last papyrus from there is dated between 375–350 B.C.,²⁰⁶ implying a possible later destruction of a Jewish temple rebuilt there for the third

²⁰⁰ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology* 626 B.C.–A.D. 45, 14.
²⁰¹ H. L. Ginsberg, trans., "Aramaic Letters," in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 492.

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

²⁰³ Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 119–20.

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.

²⁰⁵ Bright, *History of Israel*, 406–7, 409 n. 7, citing Emil G. Kraeling, "New Light on the Elephantine Colony," *Biblical Archaeologist* 15/3 (1952): 64.

²⁰⁶ David Golomb, "The Date of a New Papyrus from Elephantine," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 217 (1975): 49–53.

time.²⁰⁷ 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 Nabonassar 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 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.

Accession of Artaxerxes I Longimanus/Ahasuerus (465–423 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

²¹⁴ J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 44; Bright, *History of Israel*, 372; cf. Jeremiah 27:22; 29:10–14; 52:12; Daniel 9:2, 25; Zechariah 1:12; 7:5.

²¹⁵ Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 229.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Carey A. Moore, *Esther* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), LVIII, 3–4.

²¹⁸ Cf. Charles F. Nims and Richard C. Steiner, “A Paganized Version of Psalm 20:2–6 from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983): 261–74.

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);²²⁰ in this claim, Anderson appears to be in error, as pointed out pri-

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

²⁰⁸ Michael E. Stone, “Judaism at the Time of Christ,” *Scientific American* 228 (January 1973): 84–85.

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.

Excursus

The Arabian Nexus

Not only did Jews flee to Moab, Edom, Ammon, and Egypt in the wake of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion and conquest of Judah (Jeremiah 40:11; 42-44; Deuteronomy 28:64-68),²²⁰ 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/Taymā (= Qaṣr Zallum, with its seven-mile circuit of wall), while extending military control southward along the main caravan trail as far as Yathrib/Medina (= Madinat al-Nabi, the refuge of the Prophet Muhammad).²²¹ 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

vately by John P. Pratt, since Fotheringham and Parker and Dubberstein agree that Passover must have been either 13 or 14 April (Sunday or Monday) of A.D. 32; cf. Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, rev. ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern, 1946), 201-21, who suggests that the date to be used is the arrival of Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, 458/457 B.C. (Ezra 7:6-26; 6:14; Daniel 8:14), for the 483 solar years which bring us to Jesus' baptism and the beginning of his ministry in A.D. 27, though Bright insists that this date for Ezra cannot be accepted (and I agree), since Ezra probably could not have come before Nehemiah—Bright, *History of Israel*, 391-402; cf. Nehemiah 12:47; however, on A.D. 27 as the best year for the start of Jesus' ministry, see William R. Wilson, *The Execution of Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 197), chap. 1; Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 252 n. 6, 257, 260-61; A. Kindler, "More Dates on the Coins of Procurators," *Israel Exploration Journal* 6 (1956): 54; Ben Zion Wacholder, *Essays on Jewish Chronology and Chronography* (New York: KTAV, 1976), 252-53; cf. Gleason Archer, Sr., *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 54, re Daniel 9:24-27. Alternatively, John Pratt, in a letter of 19 March 1985, suggests that 70 x 7 lunisolar years from April 458 B.C. brings one to A.D. April 33, even though this clearly renders any sort of 600-year count in the Book of Mormon impossible.

²²⁰ Bright, *History of Israel*, 347.

²²¹ Ibid., 353, and the sources cited in nn. 32-33; cf. Albright, "The Conquests of Nabonidus," 293-95; P. Kyle McCarter, "What Are Two Aramaic Stelae Doing in Saudi Arabia?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21/2 (1995): 72-73.

Kingdom of Israel.²²² 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.²²³ 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.²²⁴

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 Hadramaut (biblical Hazarmaveth, 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

²²² Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, 2nd ed. rev. (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1956), 10-11; cf. Isaiah 49:12//1 Nephi 21:12; Isaiah 19:19.

²²³ Rabin, "The Song of Songs," 209; Sorenson, "Winds and Currents"; cf. Samuel W. Matthews, "Science Explores the Monsoon Sea," *National Geographic* 132/4 (October 1967): 559; on Phoenician and Hebrew ships of the First Temple period, see Nahman Avigad, "A Hebrew Seal Depicting a Sailing Ship," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 246 (1982): 59-62; the National Maritime Museum at 200 Allenby St., in Haifa, Israel, features Mediterranean ships and maps from high antiquity; Samuel W. Matthews et al., "The Phoenicians: Sea Lords of Antiquity," *National Geographic* 146/2 (August 1974): 149-89; Robert R. Stieglitz, "Long-Distance Seafaring in the Ancient Near East," *Biblical Archaeologist* 47 (September 1984): 134-42; William F. Edgerton, "Ancient Egyptian Ships and Shipping," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 39 (1923): 109-35.

²²⁴ James R. Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia* (1838; reprint, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1978), based on his articles in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* from his voyages of exploration, 1830 to 1835, especially of Oman (Muscat), Nakab al-Hajar in the Hadramaut, and the Yemen; cf. Eugene England, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 143-56.

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

225 H. J. Carter, "Frankincense in Arabia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay Branch* 2 (1848): 380–90, cited in F. Nigel Hepper, "Arabian and African Frankincense Trees," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 55 (1969): 66, focusing on the Shazri Boswellia trees of Dhufar, though *najdi* and *sha'bi* type frankincense trees grow elsewhere; see the drawing of *Boswellia Carterii* in Gus W. Van Beek, "The Rise and Fall of Arabia Felix," *Scientific American* 221/6 (December 1969): 46; cf. Robert Azzi, "Oman, Land of Frankincense and Oil," *National Geographic* 143/2 (February 1973): 204–29; see the entire May–June issue of *Aramco World Magazine* 34/3 (1983), for a beautifully illustrated look at the land, history, and people of Oman; cf. also Wilfred Thesiger, *Arabian Sands* (New York: Dutton, 1959), 33–34, on the jungle in the 3,000-foot Qara' Mountains.

226 Saudi Arabia averages 4 inches of rain annually, although the average is 20 inches in the montane Asir Province of Southwest Saur'dia, adjacent to the Yemen, Robert Azzi, "Saudi Arabia: The Kingdom and Its Power," *National Geographic* 158/3 (September 1980): 317.

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

228 Warren P. and Michaela Knoth Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), citing (contra Van Beek and the early position of the Hiltons) especially Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (London: Longman, 1981).

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.²²⁹

The climate was less arid than at present, with much more abundant animal life and vegetation throughout the region.²³⁰ Under such conditions, precipitation caused less erosion, and the desert regions had not yet encroached on arable lands to the extent that they have in our own time.²³¹ Climatic variability is shown in the greatly increased rainfall throughout the Mediterranean and Arabo-Persian Gulf areas during the medieval "Little Ice Age."²³² 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.²³³ In Saudi Arabia, the most recent sinter formation (siliceous/calcareous) is dated by C-14 to ca.

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 American Schools of Oriental Research* 243 (1981): 73; cf. Richard Gillespie and F. Alayne Street-Perrott, "Post-glacial Arid Episodes in Ethiopia Have Implications for Climate Prediction," *Nature* 306 (15 December 1983): 680–83.

231 Van Beek, "The Land of Sheba," 43, mentions Ramlat Sabatein 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.

232 Eugene L. Sterud, "Annual Review of Old World Archaeology: Recent 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 Since the Last Ice Age*, ed. William C. Brice (London: Academic Press, 1978), 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; reprint, Ann Arbor: Servant, 1981), chapter 1.

3080 B.C., in the As-Salb Plateau, northwest of Al-Jirhamiyah. The region has grown more arid since then.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 overutilized. 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 Saba' (biblical Sheba), central Yemen, by ca. 1300–1200 B.C.²³⁵ At Hajar bin Humeid, in Wādi Beihan, for example, the earliest level of occupation (stratum S) is to be dated to ca. twelfth century B.C.²³⁶ W. F. Albright insisted that the South Arabian kingdoms began in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries B.C.²³⁷

²³⁴ Saad S. Al-Sayari and Josef G. Zoeltl, eds., *The Quaternary Period in Saudi Arabia* (Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 1978), 1:31–44, 301–3; cf. 257, fig. 84; cf. also Gillespie and Street-Perrott, "Post-glacial Arid Episodes," 680–83, on variable lake levels in post-glacial Ethiopia; Rushdi Said, ed., *The Geology of Egypt* (Rotterdam: Balkema, 1990), on the Holocene climatic history of Egypt.

²³⁵ Van Beek, "Arabia Felix," 39; Gus W. Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh," in *Biblical Archaeologist Reader* 2:104, 106–26; reprinted from *Biblical Archaeologist* 23 (1960): 69–95; cf. Gus W. Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh in Ancient South Arabia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 78 (1958): 149–51; Van Beek, "The Land of Sheba," 41.

²³⁶ MASCA recalibration of the eleventh-century date in Gus W. Van Beek, *Hajar 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.

²³⁷ Notes by William F. Albright to article by Albert Jamme, "Preliminary Report on Epigraphic Research in Northwestern Wadi Hadramawt and at Al-'Abat," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 172 (1963): 54; he expressed surprise at the number of developed tells in Wādi 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 Sabaeen 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 Wādi al-Qurā, in no more than 2 1/2 months.²³⁸ 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,²³⁹ that Y. Shiloh's Jerusalem excavations have recovered pottery with South Arabian script from the seventh to sixth century B.C. City of David,²⁴⁰ nor that eighth and ninth century B.C. Assyrian kings mention making war upon and receiving tribute from the northern colonies of Saba'.²⁴¹ Pliny the Elder and Diodorus Siculus later thought the Sabaeans to be the richest people in the world.²⁴²

became the center of the kingdom of Qataban, William F. Albright, "The Chronology of Ancient South Arabia in the Light of the First Campaign of Excavation in Qataban," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 119 (1950): 8 n. 9; cf. Sabatino Moscati, *Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*, sections 4.1–5; William F. Albright and Thomas O. Lambdin, "The Evidence of Language," *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., 1:1 (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1970), 137–38, placing the Southeast Semitic inscriptions from the eighth through the sixth centuries B.C.

²³⁸ Pliny the Elder claimed that it took 65 stages from Tamna' 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.

²³⁹ James L. Kelso, "A Reply to Yadin's Article on the Finding of the Bethel Seal," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 199 (1970): 65.

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

²⁴¹ Sabatino Moscati, *Ancient Semitic Civilizations* (New York: Putnam, 1960), 196.

²⁴² Diodorus, III, 47, 5–8, cited by Van Beek, "The Land of Sheba," 44–45.

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 seils (flash-floods a few weeks of the year). So early South Arabian irrigation sought mostly a quick and broad distribution of the seils. The best example of this is the 600-meter Marib diversionary dam at the mouth of Wādi Dhana, 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);²⁴³ the dam was destroyed in the sixth century A.D.²⁴⁴ Across Wādi Dhana, 3 km from Marib, is the strongly fortified, oval-walled Temple of Marib, Maḥram Bilqis, with a large bronze basin in the floor at the doorway, and a sixth century B.C. Phoenician-style statue of Ba'al Melqart in a lion skin in the peristyle hall.²⁴⁵

At 1 x .5 km, Marib itself was comparable in area to other great cities of the ancient Near East.²⁴⁶ The Sabaeen tell of Marib now has only a small village with about 15 families, but might have had a peak population of 22,500 people in its approximately 50 hectares if we follow the ratio of 500 people per hectare (10,000 m²) estimated for various ancient and modern Near Eastern cities by Braidwood, Reed, Weulersse, Shiloh, and Kasten. Or, at 5 persons per house, and 60 houses per hectare, the population of Marib might have been 13,500. According to other known ratios, these two population figures might well be halved, i.e., 6,750

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.*

to 11,250;²⁴⁷ all figures here are in accord with an estimate that 10% of the buildings were governmental.

Other than the Sabaeen 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'īn, with its capital at Qarnaw; in West Aden, centering on Wādi Beihan, and bordering on Saba', there was Qataban, with its capital at Tamna' (which was four times the size of Israelite Megiddo! [Tamna' 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 mukaribs (MKRB), "priest-kings," who were later replaced by ordinary maliks (*muluk*) "kings." Although precise dating of the establishment of these states is still a matter of study and controversy, all were apparently in existence before the time of Lehi.²⁴⁸ The Sabaeans and Minaeans established colonies along the inland caravan route to the north, at such sites as Yathrib (Medina), Didan/Dedan (al-Khurybah, 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, Lihyan, and Safa.²⁴⁹ 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 *Lihyan* are one and the same.²⁵⁰ Winnett and Reed note that "the kingdom of

²⁴⁷ Gus W. Van Beek, "A Population Estimate for Marib: A Contemporary Tell Village in North Yemen," *Bulletin for the American Schools of Oriental Research* 248 (1982): 61–67.

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 Höfner; cf. Moscati, *Ancient Semitic Civilizations*, 182–85; Peter M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 4:7–9.

²⁴⁹ Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh," 2:106–26.

²⁵⁰ SEHA presentation at BYU, 22 October 1983, published by Hope A. and Lynn M. Hilton, as "The Lihyanites," *Sunstone* (January–February 1984): 4–8; note however the caveat of David J. Johnson and Richard N. Jones in "Reader's Forum," *Sunstone* (April 1985): 2–3; cf. G. Lankester Harding, *An*

Lihyan . . . dates to the Persian and Hellenistic periods," after Dedan, which was a Minaean colony,²⁵¹ showing that Lihyan 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."²⁵² 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.²⁵³ Archaeological findings are sufficiently rich now that the Saudi government has established six site museums—at Taima', Najran, Jizan, Hofuf, al-Jauf, and al-Ula.²⁵⁴ Indeed, the U.S. Geological Survey has suggested that the Mahd Dhahab, "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.²⁵⁵

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 Ḥabban, a town in central Hadramaut (the tribe of Ḥimyar had anciently been just to the South). When their

Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1971), 512-13.

²⁵¹ Winnett and Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, 39, 116-17.

²⁵² Jeffrey A. Blakely, "Wadi al-Jubah Archaeological Project," *American Schools of Oriental Research Newsletter* 35/2 (November 1983): 7.

²⁵³ Dora Jane Hamblin, "Treasures of the Sands," *Smithsonian* 14/6 (September 1983): 48.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁵⁵ "King Solomon's Mine," *Science Digest* 80/3 (September 1976): 16; Denis Baly, "Arabia," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 42.

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.²⁵⁶ In Najran and to the South, in pre-Islamic Yemen (Yamanat), Jews lived in Kinda, Aden, Zabid, Zafar, and San'a. Jews also lived throughout the Ḥijāz during the early Roman period and are mentioned in Lihyanite 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 Ḥijāzi 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.²⁵⁷

The details of Lehi's trek down the Tiḥāma 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")²⁵⁸ was the site of just another pagan shrine, the Ka'ba, although it venerated a meteoric stone, al-Ḥajar al-Aswad, "The Black Stone," which later came to be connected to Abraham's 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

²⁵⁶ Menachem Weinstein, Yehuda Ratzaby, and Hayyim J. Cohen, "Ḥabban," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 7:1018-20.

²⁵⁷ Hayyim J. Cohen, "Arabia," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 3:233-34; Gordon D. Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia, from Ancient Times to Their Eclipse under Islam*, ed. Frederick M. Denny (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 119-20; Guillaume, *Islam*, 10-13, 26-30, 33, 38, 41, 43-44, 46, 49-52, 60-62, 66, 69, 71, 73, 130-31; Edward Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968); Edward Ullendorff, "Hebraic-Jewish Elements in Abyssinian (Monophysite) Christianity," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1 (1956): 216-56; Ernst Hammerschmidt, "Jewish Elements in the Cult of the Ethiopian Church," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 3 (July 1965): 1-12.

²⁵⁸ "Temple," in Holt, Lambton, and Lewis, *Cambridge History of Islam*, 1:23.

the Saudi-Yemen border, and one at San'ā).²⁵⁹ 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.²⁶⁰

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 Obelisk,²⁶¹ 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

²⁵⁹ Guillaume, *Islam*, 10n.

²⁶⁰ Emanuel Marx, "Back to the Problem of Tribe," *American Anthropologist* 8 (1979): 124.

²⁶¹ J. Kenneth Kuntz, *The People of Ancient Israel* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 259.

²⁶² "Destruction of Judean Fortress Portrayed in Dramatic Eighth-Century B.C. Pictures," review of *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib*, by David Ussishkin, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 10/2 (1984): 48–65; cf. G. Ernest Wright, "Bringing Old Testament Times to Life," *National Geographic* 112/6 (December 1957): 833–64, and his "The Last Thousand Years Before Christ," *National Geographic* 118/6 (December 1960): 812–53.

²⁶³ N. Haas and H. Nathan, "Anthropological Survey of the Human Skeletal Remains from Qumran," *Revue de Qumran* 6/23 (February 1968): 348–49, fig. 5, on the pre-500 B.C. settlement of this S.W. area; cf. Tel Hashomer Government Hospital, "A Survey of Some Genetical Characters in Ethiopian Tribes," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 20 (1962): 167–208B.

²⁶⁴ Jamme, "Epigraphic Research," 41–54; Willard G. Oxtoby, *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin* (New Haven: American Oriental Society,

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.²⁶⁵ It is a major mistake, however, to extend this similarity to the particulars of recent Bedouin (Arab) dress and culture.

Indeed, the name *Lehi* is a common personal and clan name in Safaitic, Lihyanite, Thamudic, Minaean, Qatabanian, and Sabaeen (including theophoric forms);²⁶⁶ Laman can likewise be found among Safaitic names as L'mn, 'Mender.²⁶⁷ Even Nephi shows up among Safaitic and Minaean personal names as Nfy (= Arab. *nafai*, "exile"),²⁶⁸ although an Egyptian etymology appears more likely for Laman and Nephi (as suggested at 681 B.C., above). Finally, the name *Lemu'el* may also have a very strong Arabic context due to its appearance in association with the place-name Maśša' in Proverbs 31:1.²⁶⁹ 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 Taimā. Maśša' was later mentioned in Taymanite and Thamudic script.²⁷⁰

1968), 13, 15; cf. Joseph H. Greenberg, "An Afro-Asiatic Pattern of Gender and Number Agreement," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 80 (1960): 319.

²⁶⁵ Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 80–82; cf. H. J. Polotsky, "Aramiac, Syriac, and Ge'ez," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 9 (1964): 1–10.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Harding, *An Index and Concordance*, 512–13.

²⁶⁷ *Corpus Inscriptionem Semiticarum*, 946, 3443, possibly = Arab. *laman*, "soudrel" (cf. South Arabic *lmn* "intervention"; Akkadian *lmn*, "evil"), or Arab. *laymun*, "limes."

²⁶⁸ Enno Littmann, *Safaitic Inscriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1943), 1025.

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

²⁷⁰ The tribe of Maśša' may have occupied the N.W. Naḥd and the south edge of Wādi Sirhan, according to Albright, "The Biblical Tribe of Massa," 1–14; Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 253 n. 133; cf. Winnett and Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, 29, 90–91, 192; cf. however, Paul Franklin, "The Sayings of Agur in Proverbs 30: Piety or Scepticism?" *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 95 (1983): 239–40, who prefers "oracle" for maśša'.

