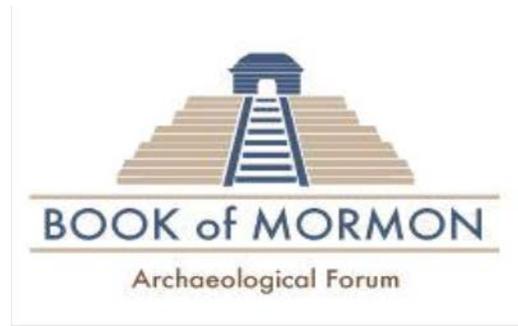




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“Southward”: How It Is Used in the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: In “deciphering the geography of the Book of Mormon,” Book of Mormon readers must understand the various usages of the word “southward.” In this article, all Book of Mormon scriptures that use the word “southward” are cited, and a description is given of how each is used.



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“Southward”: How It Is Used in the Book of Mormon

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In “deciphering the geography of the Book of Mormon,”¹ Book of Mormon readers must understand the various usages of the word “southward.” In this article, all Book of Mormon scriptures that use the word “southward” are cited, and a description is given of how each is used.

When “southward” is used as the name of a place, like a territory or a “country,” it means all of the land southward from the “small neck of land” and includes the greater land of Zarahemla (which included the separate west-sea and east-sea lands Bountiful)² and all of the land of Nephi and all of the narrow **strip of wilderness**. When “southward” is used as a direction, readers must look to the relevant scriptures to determine its reference point, carefully noting that the referent changes.

- In the first section that follows, all the Book of Mormon scriptures that use the term “**the land southward**” as a general location referring to the territory of the land southward are cited in chronological order.
- In the second section, all scriptures using the word “southward” as a direction are cited, and the respective reference points are indicated.
- In the third section, the discussion shows how Moroni used the word “southward” in the book of Ether

1. “The Land Southward” as a Place

To have a correct understanding of the difference in the usage of the terms “the land southward,” as a place, and “on the southward,” as a direction, Book of Mormon readers must read and analyze Alma 22:31 and 22:32 together. In the Book of Mormon, the first use of these terms occurred about 72 BC. In abridging the records of the Nephites, Mormon (about AD 345–385) gives a retrospective summary of the geography of the Nephites/Lamanites in Alma 22.

Between about 74 and 72 BC; see Alma 22:34³

*Alma 22:31: Thus the land on the northward [of the “line”; see verse 32 below] was called Desolation, and the land **on the southward** [of the “line”] was called Bountiful, it [Bountiful] being the wilderness which is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had come from the land northward [Jaredite land northward] for food.*

The migration of the animals from the land northward to the land southward occurred because of the drought in the Jaredite land northward ca. 1200–1100 BC (see Ether 10:19 and 9:32 where animals of the forest covered that part of the land southward [Bountiful] where King Lib [ca. 800 BC] hunted). Some of these animals had entered into the land southward from the land northward before the serpents stopped the Jaredites at the “line.”⁴

Alma 22:32: *And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line* ["between"; see 3 Nephi 3:23]⁵ **Bountiful [hereafter this Bountiful will be called the west-sea land Bountiful]** *and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus⁶ the land of Nephi [Lamanites south of the narrow strip of wilderness] and the land of Zarahemla [Nephites north of the narrow strip of wilderness] were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward.*

Therefore, according to this scripture, "the land southward" as a place must have included the greater land of Nephi and the greater land of Zarahemla and thus must also have included the narrow strip of wilderness that ran from the east sea to the west sea.

The pivotal issue, therefore, is whether the term "land of Zarahemla" included the land Bountiful or whether the term "land Bountiful" meant an area larger than Zarahemla and included the land of Nephi and hence had the same meaning as the "land southward."

If the land Bountiful was the same as the land southward, as claimed by Joseph and Blake Allen,⁷ then the land Bountiful would have to have included areas the Lamanites inhabited because "the land southward" included the land of Nephi south of the narrow strip of wilderness. Apparently, Mormon never intended to include the Lamanite land of Nephi within the land Bountiful because the land Bountiful in 72 BC was exclusively inhabited by Nephites and not Lamanites (see Alma 22:33). At this time, all the Lamanites had been removed from the land north of the narrow strip of wilderness by Moroni and were relocated south of the narrow strip of wilderness. Therefore, the land Bountiful could not have been synonymous with the "land southward" but must have been a much smaller area.

Clearly, in these verses, the terms "the land northward" and "the land southward" are used to refer to everything north and south of the "small neck of land." Mormon did not use these terms the same way he used the terms "on the northward" and "on the southward" in Alma 22:31. He is not equating "Desolation" with "the land northward," nor is he equating "Bountiful" with "the land southward." There was a defined "line" (not a neck of land) between Desolation and Bountiful that ran in an east-to-west direction the distance of only a day and a half's journey (not a day and a night but only a day and half of a day). This defined line could not have exceeded about ten to twenty miles in length. Something larger than a single "line" existed between the larger *lands northward/southward*, and that was called a "*small neck of land*."

Surely, Mormon knew that a small neck of land was a bit larger than a single "line." Because Bountiful was a part of the land southward, because Desolation was a part of the land northward, and because a "line" divided Bountiful from Desolation, then that line must have been located within and probably crossed the "small neck of land." Likely, the width of the small neck of land that separated the **Jaredite** land northward from the land southward was defined by the length of the "line"—about ten to twenty miles—at that part of the small neck of land where the line was located.

Because the Book of Mormon is "the most correct of any book on **earth**," then every word was probably thought out beforehand and was written with great care and exactness. Crossing a line

does not lead into something, but a small or narrow neck of land **or pass or** passage could and did lead into the land northward and into the land southward. If Mormon meant Desolation to be the same as the greater land northward and if he meant Bountiful to be the same as the greater land southward, then why did he use the terms differently? Furthermore, readers should remember that the major capital city in the Jaredite land northward, Moron, was not located within the land Desolation,⁸ nor was the city/land of Zarahemla a part of the west-sea land Bountiful or a part of the east-sea city/land Bountiful.⁹

The answer to the initial inquiry is that the land Bountiful that bordered the west sea was a small subdivision of the land of Zarahemla, which was a subdivision of the greater land southward, just as the land of Nephi was also a subdivision of the land southward. The land of Nephi was not considered a part of the land of Zarahemla until probably after 30 BC, when the Lamanites were more righteous than the Nephites, and then after the Crucifixion when all things were held in common by the Nephites and the Lamanites.

About 46 BC

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

Because Helaman 3:3–12 is talking about many Nephites and others who migrated into the Jaredite land northward, then the term “the land southward” must be referring to the territory of the land southward. “This land” in verse 12 refers to the Jaredite land northward. Verses 13 through 16 summarize the nature of the recordkeeping of the Nephites to Mormon’s time about AD 385. “This people” in verses 13 and 14 does not exclusively refer to those migrating into the Jaredite land northward but to all of the “*Lamanites and of the Nephites, and of their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching*” etc. in all lands occupied by the Nephites and the Lamanites from about 46 BC to the time Mormon abridged the records.

About 34 BC

*Helaman 4:6–8: And the Nephites and the armies of Moronihah were driven even into the land of Bountiful [from the land of Zarahemla]; And there they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea even, unto the east; it being a day’s journey for a Nephite, on the line [between Desolation and Bountiful] which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country [meaning Desolation and the rest of the Jaredite land northward]. And thus those dissenters of the Nephites, with the help of a numerous army of the Lamanites, had obtained all the possession of the Nephites which was in **the land southward** [everything south of the “line” between Desolation and Bountiful]. And all this was done in the fifty and eighth and ninth years of the reign of the judges.*

All the Nephite refugees and the armies of Moronihah “were driven even into the land of Bountiful” where they defended their “north country” (Jaredite land northward) at the “line” that

began on the west sea. This location was where Moronihah stationed his armies a distance of one day's journey "*on the line*" from the "*west sea to the east.*" This is the only place where Moronihah could have relocated because the Lamanites had taken possession of all the Nephite lands and cities in the land southward. Therefore, this must be the same line that divided Desolation from Bountiful, **and** where the treaty line of AD 350 was located, **and** where Lachoneus took refuge for six years.

Clearly, the term "the land southward" was used here as a place name to mean all of the land of Zarahemla and the land of Nephi and even included the land Bountiful to the "line" where Moronihah stationed his army to protect their "north country"—the place in the Jaredite land northward where many Nephites and sympathetic Lamanites had been migrating since about 72 BC.¹⁰

By the end of 30 BC; see Helaman 6:1

Helaman 5:16: [Nephi and Lehi visited all of the Nephites beginning at city Bountiful,] *even from one city to another, until they had gone forth among all the people of Nephi who were in the **land southward**; and from thence into the [city/] land of Zarahemla, among the Lamanites.*

Readers should remember that in 35–33 BC, the Lamanites (with the help of Nephite dissenters) had taken possession and control over all the lands and people of the Nephites in the land southward except for a core group of "refugees," including the Nephite army, which fled to the "line" Bountiful/Desolation) for two years (see Helaman 4:5–10). Therefore, by the end of 31 BC, when the Nephites had retaken half the kingdom (Helaman 4:16), including the city/land of Zarahemla, a lot of Lamanites were still living in the area, and free intercourse and trade between the Lamanites and Nephites were beginning to occur and became pervasive during 29 BC (see Helaman 6:1–8). This harmony and "*free intercourse*" among the Nephites and the Lamanites was a direct result of perhaps the greatest of all missionary efforts by any Christian missionary ever, except perhaps Enoch. The missionary work occurred **entirely within** the year 30 BC.

During 30 BC (see Helaman 4:18, 5:1, and 6:1, which describe this as the sixty-second year of the judges), Nephi and Lehi gave up the judgment seat and performed a phenomenal mission to the entire Nephite population living in the land southward (exclusive of the Nephites then living in the Jaredite land northward). This mission also included most of the Lamanites living in the land of Nephi. They began their mission in the northeastern-most military outpost of the east-sea city Bountiful (Helaman 5:14–16) and traveled southward, visiting every Nephite city (this event implies that no Nephite lived north of city Bountiful **because they did not go north of city Bountiful**). They then baptized eight thousand Lamanites living in the city/land of Zarahemla. After Nephi and his brother Lehi had baptized eight thousand Lamanites in the city/land of Zarahemla and the area "round about," they crossed the narrow strip of wilderness into the land of Nephi where they were so successful that the "*Lamanites had become, the more part of them, a righteous people, insomuch that their righteousness did exceed that of the Nephites*" (Helaman 6:1). These events were completed within the year 30 BC (see Helaman 6:1 to verify that these events happened before the beginning of 29 BC). During 29 BC, Mormon notes the "*free*

intercourse one with another to buy and sell, and to get gain . . . whether it were among the Lamanites or among the Nephites” (Helaman 6:8).

These verses point out clearly that the only possible reference to the Jaredite land northward during the year 30 BC is the implication that the Nephites living in the Jaredite land northward at this time were not part of those Nephites visited by Nephi and Lehi in the land southward in the year 30 BC. A year later, at the end of the year 29 BC (Helaman 6:6), Nephi and Lehi went on a very unsuccessful six-year mission (28 to 22 BC) to the Jaredite land northward.

About AD 322

Mormon 1:6: *And it came to pass that I, being eleven years old, was carried by my father into **the land southward**, even to the land of Zarahemla. [In this case, the “land of Zarahemla” was the city/land of Zarahemla because it was here that Mormon **resided and was** appointed captain of all the Nephite armies at age fifteen.]*

The term “land southward” in this scripture probably refers to a place. This scripture emphasizes that the city/land of Zarahemla was a subdivision of that “country” or territory called the land southward because of the wording, “*even [as far as] to the land of Zarahemla,*” distinguishing **the city/land of Zarahemla** from other areas within the land southward.

About AD 350

Mormon 2:28–29: *In the three hundred and fiftieth year we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided. And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward [of the “line”], yea, even to [not in] the narrow passage which led into **the land southward**. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward [of the line including the narrow passage that led into the land southward].*

The narrow passage (by the west sea) leading into the land southward must have been a part of the *small neck of land* that divided the lands northward/southward and it also must have been a part of the land southward. The Lamanites did not give this narrow passage to the Nephites because this passage began at the treaty “line” and went southward (see Mormon 3:5, following). The Nephites received everything northward of the line (beginning at Desolation). Therefore, it was within Desolation where the other part of the *small neck of land* that divided the lands northward/southward was located. Mormon called this other part of the *small neck of land* the narrow neck/pass that led by the west sea into the Jaredite land northward (see endnote No. 4).

About AD 360

Mormon 3:5: *And it came to pass that I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land Desolation, to a city which was in [within] the borders [of the land Desolation], by [near but not in] the narrow pass which led into **the land southward** [because this pass had been given to the Lamanites and robbers by treaty].*

Only one location was called “Desolation” by the Nephites, and it always bordered the west sea. The narrow pass/**passage** that led into the land southward started at the line between Desolation and Bountiful, and that line **also began on** the west sea. City Desolation was not located within this pass/passage. City Desolation was located within the narrow neck/pass that also led by the west sea but into the Jaredite land northward. City Desolation was located northward of, and close to, the same treaty line because it was located *by* [but not in] *the narrow pass which led into the land southward*. The conclusion that city Desolation was located near the line and very near the west sea is confirmed by the fact that the Nephites threw the bodies of the Lamanites that were killed near Desolation, within the narrow neck/pass, into the west sea. (See the map at the end of this article.)

2. All Other Scriptures Use Southward as a Direction

About 77 BC

*Alma 17:1: And now it came to pass that as Alma was journeying from the land of Gideon **southward**, away to the land of Manti, behold, to his astonishment, he met with the sons of Mosiah journeying [northward from Manti] towards the land of Zarahemla.*

Without any question, this verse contains the first occurrence of the word “southward” in the Book of Mormon. Further, “southward” is used here as a direction and does not refer to the “land southward.” The referent here is the land of Gideon **which was located south of hill Amnihu which hill was located east of river Sidon. Therefore, Gideon was located southeast of the city/land of Zarahemla.**

About 16 to 13 BC

*Helaman 11:20: And thus it did come to pass that the people of Nephi [this now included most of the Lamanites] began to prosper again in the land [southward], and began to build up their waste places, and began to multiply and spread, even until they did cover the whole face of the land, both on the northward [of the narrow strip of wilderness] and **on the southward** [of the narrow strip of wilderness], from the sea west to the sea east. [This was the time when the “more part of the people, both the Nephites and the Lamanites, did belong to the church” (see verse 21).]*

The "land" here is referring to the where the Nephites and Lamanites were living (see Helaman 11:6) in the land southward. No social or military division existed at this time between the Nephites and the Lamanites. The term “on the northward” could not be referring to the Jaredite land northward because of Mormon’s reference to the Nephites’ “waste places.” Also, Mormon gives no evidence that the Nephites had previously prospered at these locations or that they needed to “prosper again” in the Jaredite land northward. In addition to that, the Book of Ether never references an east sea or a west sea or that the land of the Jaredites extended from the east to the west.

The terms “on the northward” and “on the southward” are clearly directional, and the referent is the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness that extended from the east sea to the west sea. That

the referent was the narrow strip of wilderness is confirmed because the scriptures preceding verse 20 indicate that everything happening was happening to both the Nephites and the Lamanites. In Helaman 11:6, Mormon states that the drought was “*even among the Lamanites as well as among the Nephites.*” And Mormon notes in Helaman 11:27 that the robbers who inhabited the narrow strip of wilderness “*did make great havoc, yea, even great destruction among the people of Nephi, and also among the people of the Lamanites.*” These events were not happening in the Jaredite land northward but in the populated areas north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness.¹¹

About AD 17 (see Helaman 3:22)

3 Nephi 3:23-24: *...And the land which was appointed was...the land Bountiful, yea, to the line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation. 24. And there were a great many thousand people who were called Nephite, [Nephite and Lamanite armies (see verse 14)] who did gather themselves together in this **land**. Now Lachoneus did cause that they should gather themselves together in the **land southward [of the “line”]**, because of the great curse which was upon the **land northward**. [Lachoneus and the people would have gone into the Jaredite land northward but for this great curse.]*

Clearly, Lachoneus did not occupy all of the land southward; therefore, this use of the term “land southward” must mean they occupied that part of the land southward located just south of the line between Desolation and Bountiful because they had given up all the rest of the Nephite and Lamanite lands in the land southward to the Gadianton robbers. Thus, these Nephites and Lamanites exiled themselves from the Gadianton robbers to this “place of security” from AD 18 to AD 26 when the Nephites and Lamanites finally defeated the Gadianton robbers and returned to their own lands north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness. These Nephites could not have “returned” to “their lands” in the Jaredite land north of the line because Lachoneus and his people had not gone into the Jaredite land northward. It appears probable that this was the same general area to where Moronihah had taken refuge about 50 years earlier in 34 BC.

About AD 26

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

They could have returned only from where they had been, and they had not been in the Jaredite land northward. “They” refers to the combined Nephite and Lamanite armies (see 3 Nephi 3:14). Therefore, the terms “on the north” and “on the land northward” could not refer to the Jaredite land northward. The terms “on the north” and “on the south” had previously been used to mean north and south of the narrow strip of wilderness.¹² Therefore, the term “on the land southward” in this verse must refer to the land of Nephi south of the narrow strip of wilderness where the Lamanites were more righteous than the Nephites.

AD 34 “On the Fourth Day of the First Month” (Today’s April)

3 Nephi 8:11–12: *And there was a great and terrible destruction in the **land southward [of the narrow strip of wilderness]**. But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward [of the narrow strip of wilderness]; for behold, the whole face of the land [land northward of the narrow strip of wilderness] was changed, because of the tempest and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the exceedingly great quaking of the whole earth [meaning in the areas north of the narrow strip of wilderness];*

From 23 BC to the time of the Crucifixion, nothing is mentioned about anything happening in the Jaredite land northward where the people there had completely rejected Lehi and Nephi for six years. This Jaredite land northward was located a very great distance from the city of Zarahemla, a distance of probably about three hundred air miles. Mormon gives no information about any specific locations or cities of the Nephites who had migrated into the Jaredite land northward at the time of the Crucifixion. Therefore, when the names of cities and places that were ravaged by the earthquakes and volcanic activity at the time of the Crucifixion are mentioned, they must have been names of cities that the people knew of and had been living in.

The greatest destruction occurred to **the Nephite territories including the** city/land of Zarahemla, which was totally burned and all the inhabitants destroyed; the city of Moroni on the east coast, which was completely sunk into the depths of the sea; and the city of Moronihah, which was replaced with a huge mountain. These were the areas where the “*more great and terrible destruction*” occurred and none of these locations were located in the Jaredite land northward. Therefore, the term “*in the land northward*” in this instance is directional, and the referent is the narrow strip of wilderness and not the **narrow** neck of land that led into the Jaredite land northward. If the term “*in the land northward*” in this instance refers to the narrow strip of wilderness, then “*in the land southward*” in this same verse must also refer to the narrow strip of wilderness.

Therefore, according to this scripture, the land southward of the narrow strip of wilderness, the land of Nephi, was damaged but not as severely as the areas north of the narrow strip of wilderness. This conclusion seems consistent with the Lord’s promise of protection to the “more righteous” people. At that time, the Lamanites were more righteous than the Nephites.

3. How Moroni Used “Southward” in the Book of Ether

About 1200–1100 BC

Ether 9:31: *And there came poisonous serpents also upon the face of the land [Jaredite land northward], and did poison many people. And it came to pass that their flocks began to flee before the poisonous serpents, towards [not “in” yet] **the land southward**, which was called by the Nephites Zarahemla.*

The term “land southward” here is a place name. Clearly, the dividing line between the Jaredite land northward and the territory of the land southward was always the “line” between

Desolation/Bountiful, which line started at the west sea and was located within the “small neck of land” that led by the west sea into the lands northward/southward. Mormon’s father had carried Mormon through **this same small or** narrow neck of land bordering the west sea that the “flocks” had followed. **This has been described as** the “only reasonable passage way” to the city of Zarahemla **from the Jaredite land northward** (see footnote No. 14).

Ether 9:32: *And it came to pass that there were many of them [beasts, see verse 34] which did perish by the way; nevertheless, there were some [beasts or animals of the forest] which fled into the **land southward**.* [This verse does not mean that the beasts or animals of the forest occupied the entire territory of the land southward. And if the only **reasonable** entrance into the land southward from the land northward was via the west sea corridor, then the animals must have entered into the west-sea land Bountiful.]

Ether 9:33: *...**the** Lord did cause the serpents that they should pursue them [the beasts or wild animals of every kind] no more, but that they should hedge up the way that the **people** could not pass, that whoso should attempt to pass might fall by the poisonous serpents.* [The people could not follow the animals into the land southward (that part called Bountiful) until the Lord removed the serpents in the days of King Lib.]

Seven Leadership Generations Later or about 900–800 BC

Ether 10:19: *And it came to pass that Lib also did that which was good in the sight of the Lord. And in the days of Lib the poisonous serpents were destroyed. Wherefore they did go into **the land southward** [beginning at the “line” between Desolation and Bountiful], to hunt food for the people of the land [living north of the “line”], for the land [south of the line] was covered with animals of the forest. And Lib also himself became a great hunter.*

The territory of this verse appears to be **close to** the same general area where Lehi landed because in 1 Nephi 18:25, Nephi mentions “*beasts in the forests of every kind . . . and all manner of wild animals.*” In addition, this was near the area that was located west of the city/land of Nephi (Alma 22:28) and south of the narrow strip of wilderness (Helaman 6:10) as described in the Book of Mormon as the place of landing of Lehi.

Ether 10:20–21: *And they built a great city by the narrow neck of land, by the place where the sea divides the land. And they did preserve the **land southward [of the “line”]** for a wilderness, to get game. And the whole face of the **land northward** was covered with inhabitants [everything northward from the “line”]. [This city was built within the Jaredite land northward just north of **the “line” near the** entryway into the Bountiful part of the land southward.]*

This verse was written by Moroni between ca. AD 385 and 400 while he was abridging the twenty-four plates containing the history of the Jaredites. His father, Mormon, had twice referred to the entryway into the land southward as the “*narrow pass/passage that led into the land southward.*”¹³ Readers should notice here that the flocks or beasts or “animals of the forest,”

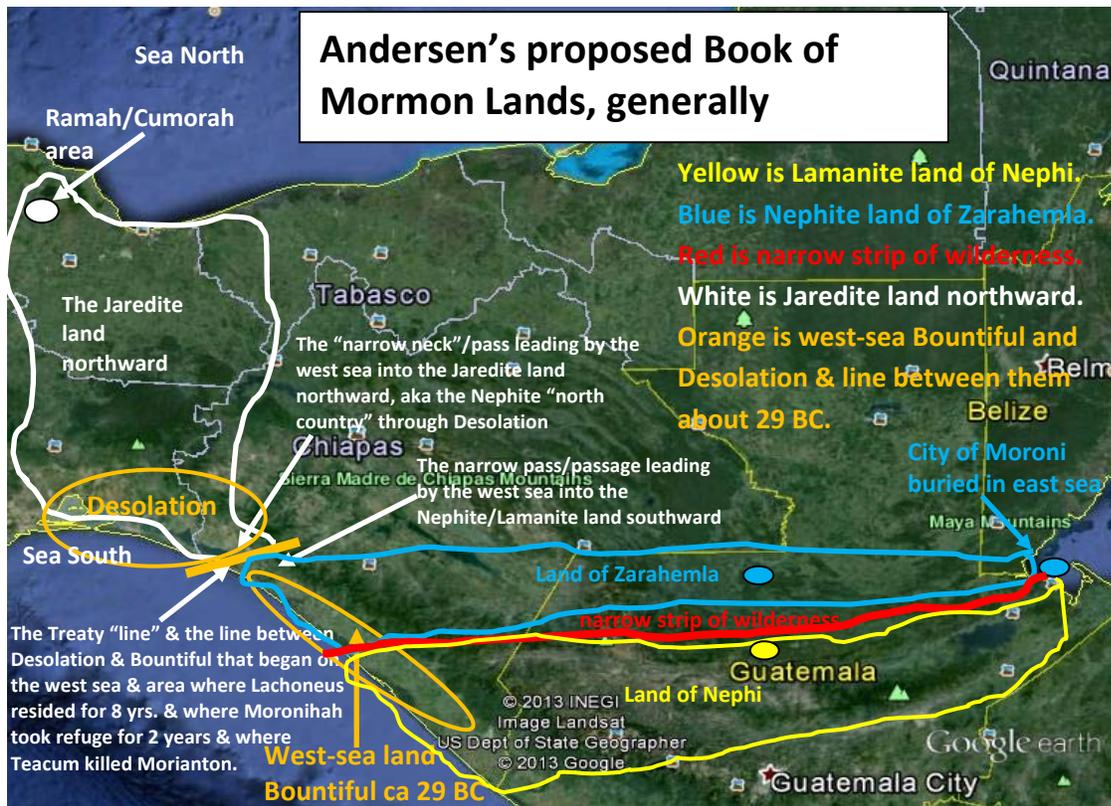
associated with the Jaredites, were fleeing in a southward direction because of the drought in the land northward.

This city was built within the Jaredite land northward just north of the "line" and near the entryway into the Bountiful part of the land southward. This is the only instance of the use of the term "narrow neck of land" and clearly this was not referring to a large area. This seems to be the same small narrow area that divided the lands northward/southward as described in Alma 22:32 *"there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward."* The only other use of the term "neck of land" is when Hagoth launched his ships into the west sea "... *on the borders of the land Bountiful, by the land Desolation, and launched it forth into the west sea, by the narrow neck which led into the land northward* (see Alma 63:5).

The only way ever described by Mormon or Moroni into the Nephite land southward from the Jaredite land northward was by the same narrow pass/passage that was adjacent to the west sea. The land/city Desolation is always associated only with the west sea in the Book of Mormon and is never associated with an east sea. Because the thing that is described as dividing the land Desolation from the land Bountiful is a "line," the length of which was the distance of about ten to **fifteen** miles, because this line is always described as extending to the west sea, because the "narrow neck" or "pass" that led **by the west sea** into the land northward had to have met **the "narrow pass" or "passage" that** led into the land southward at the line, and because the narrow neck that led into the land northward existed adjacent to the west sea, then the conclusion is inescapable that the only way the Nephites ever are described as going into the Jaredite land northward from the land southward is via the west sea [Pacific] corridor (see endnotes **13 and 14**). The single incident of the scouts of Limhi that got lost when attempting to find Zarahemla and instead found the Jaredite land northward should not be confused as a route that was used by the Nephites to enter into the Jaredite land northward.

This conclusion is further confirmed because the entire Jaredite land northward, at the time of Lib, from the "line" between Desolation and Bountiful, was *"covered with inhabitants."* And those inhabitants had not previously been able to enter into the land southward because the serpents had hedged up the way at the entrance into the land southward at the "line." This is why Lib built a great city near the entryway into the land southward beginning at the line Bountiful/Desolation. This line was easily protected because it was in length only a day or so journey from the east to the west sea. Thus, he was able to *"preserve the land southward [from the line] for a wilderness to get game."* It is not discernible how far into the land southward Lib traveled to provide game for his people; however, in Alma 22:31, Mormon notes that this area on the *"southward [of the line] was called Bountiful."* As stated previously this location **appears to be** near the same area where Lehi landed.

Therefore, the west-sea land Bountiful obviously was but a small subdivision of the land of Zarahemla, which was a subdivision of the greater land southward. Hence, the land Bountiful and the territory of the land southward just do not equate. However, they do share their common northwestern border with Desolation because whenever the term "southward" is used as a direction and the referent is the "line," then it must be the same "line" where the west-sea Bountiful began. This was the only entryway that is described in the Book of Mormon from the land southward into the greater Jaredite land northward.¹⁴



Notes

1. *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon* is the title of F. Richard Hauck's book published in 1988 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book). Via this book, he is the first Book of Mormon scholar to identify most of the geographic conclusions contained in this article.

2. See my article entitled "Three Separate Lands Bountiful: Where Located? What Size? To Which Bountiful Did Christ First Appear?" (http://www.bmaf.org/articles/three_bountifuls__andersen).

3. According to Alma 22:34, "*The Lamanites could have no more possessions only in the land of Nephi and the wilderness round about.*" This did not happen until about 72 BC after Moroni had forced all the Lamanites out of all areas north of the narrow strip of wilderness to south of the narrow strip of wilderness. Therefore, this geographic recap has to be referencing about 72 BC and prior. Moroni did not appear until 74 BC (see Alma 43:16).

4. Under the assumptions that Mormon was consistent in the way he used the term "the land southward" and that Bountiful was a part of the land southward, then the point at which the animals entered into the land southward from the land northward must have been at the "line" between Desolation and Bountiful. Readers should remember also that Mormon describes a "narrow pass" and a "narrow neck" that led from the "line" by the west sea into the land northward:

Alma 50:34 [talking about Teancum stopping Morianton before Morianton could get into the Jaredite land northward]: *And it came to pass that they did not head them until they had come to [not in] the borders of the land Desolation; and there they did head them, by [not in] the narrow pass which led by the [west] sea into the land northward, yea, by the sea, on the west.*

Alma 63:5: *Hagoth . . . built him an exceedingly large ship, on [within] the borders of the land Bountiful by [near but not in] the land Desolation, and launched it forth into the west sea, by [near but not in] the narrow neck which led into the land northward.*

Mormon also describes a "narrow passage" and a "narrow pass" that led from the same "line" into the land southward:

Mormon 2:29 *And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to [not in] the narrow passage which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward.*

Mormon 3:5 *And it came to pass that I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land Desolation [therefore near the west sea], to a city which was in the borders [of land Desolation], by [but not in] the narrow pass which led into the land southward.*

If there was a narrow neck or narrow pass that led into the land northward and a narrow passage or pass that led into the land southward, if the Jaredite land northward was divided from the Nephite land southward by a "small neck of land" (Alma 22:32), if Desolation was a part of the land northward and Bountiful was a part of the land southward, and if there was a "line" (about a day and a half in length from the east to the west sea) between Desolation and Bountiful, then that "line" must have been located within the "small neck of land." It then stands to reason that it must also have been where the two narrow passes or passages met, one going northward through Desolation into the land northward and the other going southward through Bountiful into the land southward.

This being the case, then the conclusion seems inescapable that "the narrow neck of land" referred to in Ether 10:20 must have been that same narrow neck or pass or passage that led by the west sea into the lands northward and southward and therefore could not have been the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. This thinking is confirmed by Ether 10:19–21, which states:

Ether 10:19–21: *And it came to pass that Lib also did that which was good in the sight of the Lord. And in the days of Lib the poisonous serpents were destroyed. Wherefore they did go into the land southward, to hunt food for the people of the land, for the land [Bountiful; see Alma 22:31] was covered with animals of the forest. And Lib also himself became a great hunter. And they built a great city by [near but not in] the narrow neck of land [that led by the west sea into the land southward], by [near but not in] the place where the sea divides the land. And they did preserve the land southward [from the line separating Desolation from Bountiful] for a wilderness, to get game. And the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitant. [Therefore, the entire Isthmus and northward to the Papaloapan Basin was covered with inhabitants but the narrow neck of land and southward was only covered with game, at that time.]*

What follows from this conclusion is that the city Desolation and the "place where the sea divides the land" must also have been located by the west sea just northward from the "line" because only one entrance into the lands northward/southward is described in the Book of Mormon. And there is only one area called Desolation, and that is also where the Nephites cast the bodies of the dead Lamanites into the sea.

From these conclusions, readers can further deduce that this "line" must have been where the animals from the land northward entered into the land southward beginning at Bountiful. And it was also where the poisonous serpents were finally able to stop the Jaredites from entering into the land southward:

Ether 9: 32: *There were many of them [beasts] which did perish by the way; nevertheless there were some which fled into the land southward.*

Another conclusion also follows that this "line" not only was where the snakes in Ether 9:33 were able to "hedge up the way" that the people could not pass into the land southward but also it must have been the place where the righteous King Lib was able to protect and preserve the land southward from competitors and maintain it as his place for hunting food for his people. (This event occurred about the year 800 BC and, of course, was about two hundred years before Lehi landed within the west-sea land Bountiful about 588 BC.) King Lib ruled in Moron from about 900 to 800 BC (eleven generations before Ether and Coriantumr (see Ether 1:6–18). (See also Joseph L. and

Blake J. Allen's time analysis, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed. rev. [American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2011], 119.

5. 3 Nephi 3:23: *And the land which was appointed was the land of Zarahemla, and the land which was between the land Zarahemla and the land Bountiful, yea, to the **line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation***

6. Alma 22:27--35 (referred to by some as "Mormon's Map"): Verses 27 through the first sentence of verse 31 of Alma 22 apparently indicate Mormon's understanding of the geography of these lands as it existed about Captain Moroni's time (about 72 BC; see endnote 2) when Moroni created the protectable division between the Nephites and the Lamanites at the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness that extended from the east sea to the west sea. Therefore, the sentence in verse 31 beginning with "Thus" should begin a new verse because following this is a summary conclusion of the previous statements. This new verse is denoted in this article as "31a." Mormon apparently wanted his readers to understand Alma 22:27--35 as follows (note that this description begins before Moroni divided the lands along the narrow strip of wilderness and ends after the division because it begins with the Lamanites still in the east wilderness north of the narrow strip of wilderness and ends after they have "all" been driven to their own lands south of the narrow strip of wilderness):

Mormon's Map, proposed as it should be understood

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

28. *Now, the more idle part [distinguishing from the majority who lived in the city/land of Nephi, which was located south of the narrow strip of wilderness] of the Lamanites lived in the [narrow strip of mountainous] wilderness, and dwelt in tents; and they [the idle Lamanites] were spread through the wilderness on the west [the western and southern part of the narrow strip of wilderness, and therefore], in the land of Nephi; yea, and also on the west of the land of Zarahemla, in the borders by the seashore [because these idle Lamanites were spreading west of the city/land of Zarahemla, then they were beginning to surround the Nephites on their western side], and on the west in the land of Nephi, [therefore south of the narrow strip of wilderness] in the place of their [the Lamanite] fathers' first inheritance, and thus bordering along by the seashore [the west seashore south of the narrow strip of wilderness (see Helaman 6-10 where "the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north and Lehi into the land south" of the narrow strip of wilderness). (See Footnote No. 11)].*

29. *And also there were many Lamanites on the east [from the city/land Zarahemla] by the seashore, whither the Nephites had driven them. [The east-sea Bountiful and none of the east-sea cities had been built at this time.] And thus the Nephites were nearly [on three sides, south, east, and west] surrounded by the Lamanites; nevertheless the Nephites had taken possession of all the northern parts of the land bordering on the [narrow strip of] wilderness, at [from] the head of the river Sidon, from the east to the west, round about on the [western] wilderness side [of the narrow strip of wilderness]; on the north [of the western part of the narrow strip of wilderness], even until they [Nephites] came to the land which they called Bountiful. [Therefore, this west-sea land Bountiful was deemed by Mormon as a land distinct from the land of Zarahemla, and it was located northward from the narrow strip of wilderness. Also, because the Nephites were already in possession of the city/land of Zarahemla, then this new land that they "had taken*

possession of” must be referring to that land that was west of the city/land of Zarahemla and northerly from the western part of the narrow strip of wilderness.]

30. *And it [Bountiful] bordered upon the land which they [the Nephites] called Desolation, it [Desolation] being so far northward that it [Desolation] came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, [this precludes any possibility that the Jaredites could have lived in the Central America area and then traveled to a different land northward to have their final battles because this says they were destroyed in the same land where they had lived] of whose bones we have spoken, which [Jaredite land northward] was discovered by the people of Zarahemla, it [Jaredite land northward] being the place of their first landing.*

[It seems more clear and reads better if the next sentence was a part of verse 30 because it is still talking about the people of Zarahemla.] *And they [the people of Zarahemla] came from there [place of first landing] up into the south wilderness [the wilderness south of the Jaredite land northward known as Zarahemla because the Lord guided them directly to Zarahemla where they remained ever since]. [When going southward from anywhere in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, except the seashores, travelers must move upward in elevation. This is another indicator that the Jaredite land northward was, in fact, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec because from anywhere in the Isthmus northward, except along the seashore, travelers must move upward. Therefore, if the Jaredite land northward was located northward from the isthmus, then the Mulekites would necessarily have to have moved downward and crossed the Coatzacoalcos before going up into the wilderness, at that time, south of the Isthmus.]*

31. *Thus the land on the northward [of the line; see 32] was called Desolation, and the land on the southward [of the line] was called Bountiful, it [Bountiful] being the wilderness which is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had come from the land northward [including Desolation] for food.*

32. *And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half’s journey for a Nephite, on the line [between] Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; [The line went from a boundary—not a sea—in an east-to-west direction to the west sea.] [Because the next independent clause in this sentence brings the land of Nephi back into the discussion, then a new paragraph should begin, which seems to be a geographic conclusion from the preceding six verses.]*

32a. *And thus the land of Nephi **and** the land of Zarahemla [the greater land southward] were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward [including Desolation] and the land southward [including Bountiful].*

33. *And it came to pass that the Nephites had inhabited the [west-sea] land Bountiful, even from the east [boundary not a sea] unto the west sea, and thus the Nephites in their wisdom, with their guards and their armies, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south [of the narrow strip of wilderness], that thereby they [the Lamanites] should have no more possession on the north [of the narrow strip of wilderness], that they might not overrun the land northward [probably referring from the narrow strip of wilderness and everything northward from there including the Jaredite land northward into which the Nephites were just beginning to migrate.]*

34. *Therefore the Lamanites could have **no more** possessions **only** in the land of Nephi, [which in 72 BC included only everything south of the narrow strip of mountainous wilderness] and the [western part of the narrow strip of] wilderness round about. Now this was wisdom in the Nephites—as the Lamanites were an enemy to them, they would not suffer their afflictions on every hand, and also that they might have a country [west-sea Bountiful and the Jaredite land northward] whither they might flee, according to their desires.*

35. *And now I, after having said this, return again to the account of Ammon and Aaron, Omner and Himni, and their brethren.*

7. See *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 307, where Joseph and Blake Allen say, “The country or greater land Bountiful was synonymous with the land southward.” Allen and Allen cite Alma 22:31 as justification for this statement: “*Thus the land on the northward [of the line] was called Desolation, and the land on the southward [of the line] was called Bountiful.*”

8. Ether 7:6 says, “*Now the land of Moron where the King dwelt was near [not in] the land which is called Desolation by the Nephites.*”

9. Helaman 4:5–7 (35 BC)—[The dissenters and the Lamanites] *succeeded in obtaining possession of the [city/]land of Zarahemla; yea, and also all the lands even unto the land which was near [but not in yet] the [west sea] land Bountiful. And the Nephites and the armies of Moronihah were driven even into the land of Bountiful; And there they did fortify against the Lamanites from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day’s journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country.* (Clearly, the land Bountiful was considered a separate land from the city/land of Zarahemla by the writers of the Book of Mormon.)

10. Mormon states in Alma 50:11 that the Nephites possessed all the land northward of the west-sea land Bountiful. This territory was called the land Desolation by the Nephites and was the entryway into the Jaredite land northward. Therefore, by 72 BC, the Nephites had begun to migrate into the Jaredite land northward—or more specifically to “their [the Nephites’] north country.”

11. See my article, “‘The Land North’ Always Means North of The Narrow Strip of Wilderness” (http://www.bmaf.org/articles/land_north_narrow_strip_andersen). “The land north” never refers to north of the narrow neck of land.

12. Andersen, “‘The Land North’ Always Means North of The Narrow Strip of Wilderness”

13. Mormon 2:29: *The Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to [but not including] the narrow passage which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward [including the narrow passage].*

Mormon 3:5: *I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land desolation, to a city which was in the borders, by [but not in] the narrow pass which led into the land southward [because the Nephites had already given that territory to the Lamanites].*

14. During the Book of Mormon time period, the only reasonable route between Central Guatemala and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec was the Pacific coastal route. Because the land Desolation was part of the Jaredite land northward (and it began on the west sea), because the west-sea land Bountiful was part of the land southward (and it also began on the west sea), and because there was a “line” between them that ran in an easterly direction from the west sea about twelve miles or so, then that “line” between them must have been part of and within the small neck of land that divided the Jaredite land northward from the Nephite/Lamanite land southward as described in *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*, 145–47. This “line” must have been the gateway that connected the narrow neck/narrow pass leading by the west sea into the Jaredite land northward with the narrow pass/passage that led by the west sea into the greater land southward.

Ted Stoddard identified this west sea corridor as the main commercial and “only reasonable” passageway from the narrow strip of wilderness area to the Jaredite land northward. He explained this in an Email he sent to the author on August 2, 2010: “For centuries, the only reasonable way to get from Chiapas or Guatemala to Veracruz, Oaxaca, or the Mexico valley was to end up on the Pacific coast and go north through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. About Fifty miles into the isthmus, the topography opens up, permitting travelers to continue to Veracruz or to follow trails into the mountains and thence to the Oaxaca or Mexico areas. In a similar vein, travelers from the east wilderness (lowland jungle area of the Peten and Belize) or from the east sea (Caribbean off the coast of Belize) **could not travel due west** to go through the top of the isthmus because of (1) the mountainous terrain, especially in the Hermounts region at the top of and east of the isthmus, or (2) the marshy lagoons and rivers of Tabasco that made east-west travel almost impossible until the arrival of modern highways.”

Hauck agrees with Stoddard on this point and first identified the fact that the only reasonable route from Guatemala to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec during Book of Mormon time periods was through the Pacific corridor (see *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*, 12, 32), entering into the Jaredite land northward via Desolation at the “gateway” located at the “line” (near Horcones, Mexico). (See also my article, “Joshua Near the West Sea Near Izapa: The Final Key” [http://www.bmaf.org/articles/joshua_west_sea_izapa__andersen].)