



# Christ's Mission in Ancient South America

George D. Potter

*Christ's Mission to Ancient South America* was written to testify of the accuracy of the prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon.

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President **Russell M. Nelson** when teaching 5,825 missionaries in Brasilia, Brazil said that an effective way to talk about the Book of Mormon with those who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

*“Ask if they know about the mission of Jesus Christ to the people of South America,”<sup>1</sup>*



*President Nelson observing the Gate of the Sun with its famous icon of the White God of the Andes at Tiwanaku, Bolivia. He is guided by archaeologist Dr. Hans Ralf Caspary Moreno, August 27, 2007). Photograph by Enrique Cabezas.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/president-nelson-teaches-missionaries-in-brazil-an-effective-way-to-talk-about-the-book-of-mormon?lang=eng>

Other books by George Potter, the LDS explorer who discovered the Valley of Lemuel, Shazer, the fertile parts, and Nephi's Harbor at Khor Rori.

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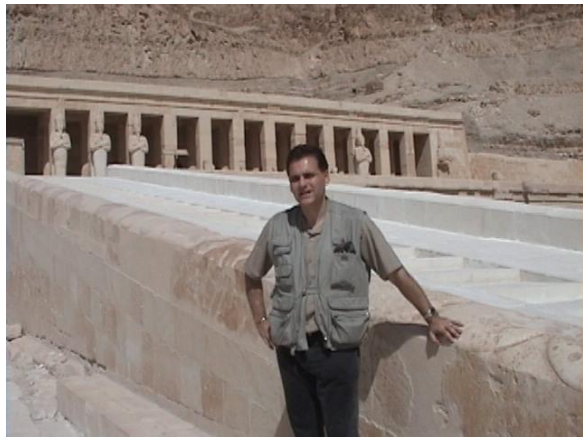
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This book is dedicated to the faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who live in South American and who have exercised their love for the Savior by building His kingdom in their part of the Promised Land.



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*Figure 1 Photographer Matthew Potter & New Friends*





Part One

Evidence for Christ's Mission to Ancient South America

*Jesus has been upon the earth a great many more times than you are aware of.*<sup>2</sup>  
Brigham Young

## Introduction

The Book of Mormon is a Second Witness of Jesus Christ, including an account of the Lord's visit to His other sheep in the Western Hemisphere. In 1991, L. Taylor Hansen wrote in her book, *He Walked the Americas*, describing the many visits Jesus made to the people of the Western Hemisphere and Polynesia. She recorded legends of a fair-skinned and bearded god visiting tribal clans in North America, Mesoamerica, South America, and Polynesia. For example, she wrote of the visit of the god Wakea who visited Polynesia to stop a fight between two groups of islanders fighting over good land. She writes:

Then the islanders saw something white moving toward them. Apparently it had come from the Great Birds, and it glided easily over the water with the rhythmical ease of a man walking.

As the spot of white came closer, they saw in amazement that this was a Fair God, man-like in form, but unlike their people. Soon they could see Him clearly, the gold of the dawn-light shining behind and around Him, making a halo of His long-curling hair and beard. They saw the foam like swish of His garments. As He came up on the wet sand, the warriors stared in fright at His garments; they were dry. Now they knew that a god stood among them, for none but gods can walk on water!

From His garments, so foam-white, they looked to His pale face and then into His eyes. They were strange eyes, grey-green as the depths of the water, and like it, ever changing. Now those eyes flashed with anger as He stared about him and looked upon the injured.

A god had come from the sea to walk among them and His first look was that of anger! The warriors fell down as one man and began an old chant anciently employed to a god for forgiveness. When they dared again to raise up their own eyes, they saw Him going among the injured and dying who arose from their pain to find themselves well of body as soon as His hand or His garments had touched them.<sup>3</sup>

What does this legend imply? First, an ancient god who had the physical and personality characteristics of the Savior appeared to people far away from the Middle East and the Holy Lands. Second, this Christ-like god's visitation had no apparent association with the Lord's mission in Palestine or the events that immediately followed his crucifixion. In other words, this visit of Christ was just another time when the Lord felt He needed to intervene with his believers. Third, the Lord kept his promise to those of the isles of the sea to remember them and all those who have been led from their original homelands in the house of Israel (2 Nephi 10:21-22).

Another example of the Lord visiting His other sheep is the oral tradition of a fair-skinned god visiting a native people in a remote part of Paraguay in the heart of eastern South America. Carly M. Springer wrote of a tribe living in a small village in the vast Amazon basin:

<sup>2</sup> Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 10:114-115, *Journal of Discourses* 7:142

<sup>3</sup> Hansen, L. Taylor, *He Walked the Americas*. Legend Press: Amherst, Wisconsin, 1991, 14-16.

If establishing the Church in the cities seems almost easy, the challenge is in preaching the gospel to those who live far away in the sparsely populated outer regions of Paraguay. Out in the grasslands and jungles, people live in scattered communities, and some tribes have their own separate languages.

However, at least one of these remote tribes has retained native oral traditions tracing back to Book of Mormon events, preparing its people for the gospel.

In 1980, an entire Nivaclé native tribe of 200 people converted to the gospel when missionaries told them the story of the Savior visiting the Americans. The leader of the tribe recognized the story as one passed down from their ancestors and knew he was hearing restored truths.

Today this tribe lives in a community of around 40 LDS families and has renamed their settlement *Abundancia*, Spanish for “Bountiful.”<sup>4</sup>

Countless Latter-day Saint missionaries serving from the Yukon to Chile, including myself, have encountered oral traditions of Native Americans of a fair-skinned god visiting their people, healing their sick, and forgiving them of their sins. This phenomenon is especially true in South America. For example, the Indigenous People of the Amazon worshiped Sumê, the God of Agriculture and Discipline. Sumê had a white beard and provided laws and rules for the people.<sup>5</sup>

A recent and thorough compilation of the oral traditions of the Native Americans of North America, Mesoamerica, and South America was written by David G. Calderwood. His book, *Voices from the Dust* is based on Calderwood’s doctoral dissertation at the University of Texas.<sup>6</sup> Like Hansen’s book, it cites dozens of legends of visitations in the Western Hemisphere of a god who appears to have been none other than Jesus Christ.

While the visit of Jesus Christ to Indigenous People in the Western Hemisphere might seem unconventional to traditional Old World theological teachings, it is not the case for native people who live in the New World. Their most sacred histories answer a fundamental question, “Why wouldn’t the Lord and Savior of mankind visit and teach his brothers and sisters in every part of the world?” Didn’t the Lord Himself declare that He had other sheep that He needed to visit?” (see John 10:16, 3 Nephi 16:1,3)

In his book, *Willka Wasin ViraWiraqocha*:<sup>7</sup> *The House of the Lord*, Van Evans notes about these other sheep: “The Church has held that the indigenous Andean People are called Lamanites and they descend from the sons of Lehi. Apostle Spencer W. Kimball (1971, July) said that the term Lamanite includes all Indians and Indian mixtures, such as the Polynesians, the Guatemalans, the Peruvians, as well as the Sioux, the Apache, the Mohawk, the Navajo...”<sup>8</sup>

While these and other subgroups are descendants of Book of Mormon people, this book will focus on Jesus Christ’s visit to the ancestors of the Andean people in western South America. Their homelands ranged from parts of Columbia in the north and south through today’s Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and parts of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. They lived from the desert shores of the Pacific to the rainforest of the Amazon jungle below the eastern slopes of the towering Andes. These areas are often called ancient Peru. Starting in the early 1400s, these areas became the Inca Empire. William Sullivan<sup>9</sup> provides this insight into the Andean people:

<sup>4</sup> Carly M. Springer, “Tribes knew the Book of Mormon Stories before the Missionaries Arrived,” *LDS Living Magazine*, April 15, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Sacred Blend, Brazilian Indigenous Mythology, <https://sacred-blend.com/brazilian-indigenous-mythology/>.

<sup>6</sup> Calderwood, David G., *Voices from the Dust*, (Austin, Texas: Historical Publications Inc., 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Evans, Van, *Willka Wasin Viracocha: The House of the Lord* (Van Evans: Salt Lake City, 2021) 5.

<sup>9</sup> William Sullivan holds a B.A. from Harvard College and a doctorate from the Center of American Indian Studies at the University of St. Andrew’s.

There is no general term, other than Andean, for the agricultural civilization that, as archaeological research has discovered, constituted the dominant life-way of the Andean highlands for about two centuries before the birth of Christ. The theme of this civilization--as myth confirms--was unity in diversity. Although there were many tribes, languages, and customs within the Andean ecumene, there was, as I will try to show, a unifying religious view...<sup>10</sup>

This book will aim to show that the unifying religious faith of the Andean people was the story handed down by their ancestors of Jesus Christ ministering to their people. Indeed, the native inhabitants of the Andes are still waiting for the Savior's return.

To readers of this work, let me say at the beginning that to understand many references and perspectives in this book a reader will want to read the Book of Mormon to have the overview of that work in mind as you move through all the scholarly information that I will present, and thus to assist you in better understanding the evidence I present I suggest readers have a fair idea of what makes up the text of the Book of Mormon. Second, let me also recommend to the serious reader and student that you also read key sections of my previous book *Nephi in the Promised Land* which significantly expands in detail some of the points I more lightly take up in this work; I do present significant new material in this new book that is not in *Nephi in the Promised Land* but this work is not intended to be a thorough restatement of what is in my previous book. Both books form a more whole unit of understanding and evidence.

The idea that Jesus Christ visited South America is a new paradigm for many students of the Book of Mormon. Considering a new vision of the ancient world is often hard to incorporate into one's preconceived notions. Laplace's principle says "the weight of the evidence for an extraordinary claim must be proportioned to its strangeness."<sup>11</sup> I believe the reader will find the evidence in this book to be extraordinary. I ask the reader to keep an open mind and let the evidence tell its story.

*... life has only lately been enriched with letters and all the other necessities of civilization when once more, ...you start again like children knowing nothing of what existed in ancient times, here or in your own country.*  
Plato - *Timaeus*

<sup>10</sup> Sullivan, William, *The Secret of the Incas*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1996, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Gillispie C.C., *Gratton-Guinness II, Fox R., Pierre-Simon Laplace, 1749-1827: A life in Exact Science*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

*Apu Kontiti Tecce Viracocha Pacha Yachachi*  
 Lord of the Heavens and the Earth  
 who sees all and knows all  
 Temple of Coricancha in Cusco, Peru<sup>12</sup>

## Chapter One

### The Fair-skinned God of South America

According to Andean oral traditions, in ancient times their land was suddenly plunged into darkness, then “there suddenly appeared, coming from the south, a white man of large stature and authoritative demeanor. This man had such great power that he changed the hills into valleys and from the valleys made great hills, causing streams to flow from the living stone.”<sup>13</sup> Similar events are recorded in 3 Nephi 8. The early Spanish chroniclers were told by the Andean Indians that:

...they heard it from their fathers, who in their turn had it from the old songs which were handed down from very ancient times.... They say that this man traveled along the highland route to the north working marvels as he went and that they never saw him again. They say that in many places he gave men instructions how they should live, speaking to them with great love and kindness and admonishing them to be good and to do no damage or injury one to another, but to love one another and show charity to all. In most places, they named him Ticci Viracocha... Wherever he [Viracocha/Wiracocha] passed he healed all that were sick and restored sight to the blind.<sup>14</sup>

To the ancient Peruvians, Viracocha was not only the Creator and healing God, he was also their Savior. The Spanish chronicler Pedro de Gamboa Sarmiento discovered that the Incas “prayed to Viracocha for pardon of their sins.”<sup>15</sup> Evans’ provides a summary of how the natives of South America described their god’s appearance to the early Spanish chroniclers:

Betanzos asked the natives what their tradition had to tell about this Viracocha<sup>16</sup>. He wrote: “They told me he was a man of tall stature clothed in a white robe which came down to his feet and which he wore tightly belted at the waist and had a crown on his head.” When Betanzos asked them the name of the person in whose honor the stone statue was erected they replied, “Con Tici Viracocha Pachayachachic, which means in their language “God Creator of the World.” Sarmiento also described him as “a man of medium height, white, and dressed in a white robe like an alb secured around his waist, and that he carried a staff and a book in his hands.”<sup>17</sup>

Could Viracocha have been anyone save the Lord Jesus Christ? In my opinion, the Spanish priest knew exactly who Viracocha was and feared that exposing Christ’s teaching in South America would contradict their own distorted and idolatry-focused version of Christianity. So intimidated were the Spanish priests by the Peruvian’s faith in Viracocha that the training manual for Jesuit missionaries

<sup>12</sup> The complete name in Quechua of the bearded white god of the Inca, found at the Temple of Coricancha in Cusco, Peru, as recorded by Van Evans in his book *Willka Wasin Viracocha: The House of the Lord*.

<sup>13</sup> Osborne, H., *South American Mythology*. London: Paul Hamilyn, 1968, 74.

<sup>14</sup> Osborne, 74.

<sup>15</sup> Sarmiento, Pedro de Gamboa, *History of the Incas*, written circa AD 1570. Translated by Clements Markham. Cambridge: The Hakluy Society, 1907, 31.

<sup>16</sup> Evans spells Viracocha, Wiracocha. Both spellings are accepted. For clarity this text uses Viracocha.

<sup>17</sup> Evans, 28.

called *The Extirpation of Idolatry* instructed the missionaries that “their very first duty, upon entering a village, was to get their hands on the lineage of *waka* [image of Viracocha] and destroy it.”<sup>18</sup>

Did the oral tradition of Viracocha stem from the days of the Nephites and Lamanites or at a more distant time in history? There is only one known civilization in the Western Hemisphere that dates to the time of the early Jaredites. It is the ruins of the Norte Chico area and its capital city of Caral in the Supe Valley. The remains of Caral are located 110 miles north of the city of Lima, Peru. In my book, *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*, I explain how the civilization of Caral blossomed into existence approximately three hundred years after archaeologists believe the first burnt clay brick ziggurat was built in Mesopotamia. Biblical archaeologists believe the tower of Babel was a ziggurat.<sup>19</sup> The Norte Chico civilization had many similarities to Mesopotamia, including six great pyramids in the style of ziggurats. Cotton fabrics at Caral have been carbon-14 dated to roughly 2627 BC.<sup>20</sup> The discovery of Caral in 1994 has significant implications for Book of Mormon archaeology. For the first time, science confirms that an advanced civilization existed in the Americas that dates to the time of the Jaredites and the tower of Babel. Before Caral, Book of Mormon scholars were left to theorize that the Jaredites were somehow related to the people in Mesoamerica. This was a weak defense since the natives in Mesoamerica were at best living at a Neolithic level when the first Olmec center was established around 1150 BC<sup>21</sup> - that would have been an absence of some 1500 years of Jaredite civilization.

If the founders of Caral were the Jaredites, “Who was their god? The Book of Mormon states that the Jaredites were initially believers in Christ (Ether 3:14). We also know that the Jaredites brought their religion with them to the promised land. Further, the Bible tells us that the people of Mesopotamia were descendants of Noah and that they originally believed in the One True God. Caral is the site where the first artifact showing the icon of the staff god, the bearded white god known as Viracocha, was found in the Americas. The icon of the staff god was craved on a gourd. Using carbon-14 dating, the gourd was shown to have grown in Norte Chico, Peru approximately 2180 BC. Charles Mann writes in his book *1491, New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*:

Norte Chico chiefdoms were almost certainly theocratic, though not brutally so; leaders induced followers to obey by a combination of ideology, charisma, and skillfully timed positive reinforcement...

The only known trace of the Norte Chico deities may be a drawing etched into the face of a gourd.... When Creamer found the gourd in 2002, the image shocked the Andeanists. It looked like an early version of the Staff God, a fanged, staff-wielding deity who is one of the main characters in the Andean pantheon. Previously the earliest manifestation of the Staff God had been thought to be around 500 BC [approximate time of the first Nephites]. According to radiocarbon testing, the Norte Chico gourd was harvested between 2280 and 2180 BC. The early date implies, Haas and Creamer argued, that the principal Andean spiritual tradition originated in the Norte Chico, and that this tradition endured for at least four thousand years, millennia longer than had been previously suspected....Over the millennia, this god or gods transmuted into Viracocha, the Inka creator deity, whose worship was brutally suppressed by Spain.<sup>22</sup> [comment added]

We know that the Jaredites eventually became unrighteous and self-destructed. However, archaeologists believe that a new religion based on the bearded white Staff God, including a lore that parallels that of Adam and Eve, was introduced in southern Peru around 500 BC. We know that this

<sup>18</sup> Sullivan, 24.

<sup>19</sup> Potter, George, *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, Utah, 2020, 4-5, 29-35.

<sup>20</sup> Franzen, Harald, “Caral May Be the Oldest City in the Americas,” *Scientific America*, April 27, 2001, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/caral-may-be-the-oldest-c/>

<sup>21</sup> Britannica, “Mesoamerican civilization,” Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mesoamerican-civilization>.

<sup>22</sup> Mann, Charles C., *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005, 209-212.

was roughly the same time that Nephi appointed Jacob and Joseph to be teachers of the gospel to his people [circa 544-421 BC]. Despite the efforts of the Spanish, the worship of Viracocha, the Staff God, persists in South America to this day.

Perhaps the most famous image of Viracocha is his icon of the Door of the Sun in Tiwanaku, Bolivia. As usual, the image of the deity is that of a god in the form of a man, with tears flowing from his eyes, and holding two staffs. Evans records this remarkable interpretation of this icon.



In 1977, President Spencer W. Kimball visited Bolivia for an Area Conference which took place on March 3. The day before, March 2, President Kimball met with Bolivia President Hugo Banzer. During the meeting, it was reported that President Kimball pointed to an image of Viracocha on the (Door of the Sun) the Bolivian president had in the national palace, and pointing to the right staff referred to it as the stick of Judah (the Bible). He then pointed to the left staff and told Banzer that we have the stick of Joseph (the Book of Mormon). A specially bound copy of the Book of Mormon was given to President Banzer (Ensign, 1977, May).<sup>23</sup>

Even more unique about the images of Viracocha is that they often portray the fair-skinned god of the Andes weeping for his people. In the world's pantheon of ancient gods, who were almost always portrayed as fierce, monstrous, and punishing beings to be feared, is there any other icon of an empathetic god weeping? Yet, the Book of Mormon states that Christ wept and the multitude bore record of it (3 Nephi 17:21).

Of course, the Jaredites were not the only people in the ancient Americas who worshiped Jesus Christ. Nephi brought with him to the promised land a deep love and personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. For this reason, every Peruvian schoolchild knows the historical legend of the four fair-skinned brothers (Viracochas) who came to Peru from across the sea and who brought with them a new religion. According to the Spanish chronicler Sarmiento, the four brothers came to Peru claiming to be the

<sup>23</sup> Evans, 116-117.

“sons of Viracocha Pachayachachi, the Creator, and that they had come forth out of certain windows to rule the rest of the people...Thus they introduced the religion that suited them.”<sup>24</sup>

What is interesting to students of the Book of Mormon is that archaeologists estimate that a new religion was introduced in the highlands of Peru circa 500 BC -- roughly the time of Nephi’s arrival in the promised land. Because this new religion used in its temples stone stele of a man and a woman and a two-headed serpent, archaeologists have called it the Yaya-Mama, sometimes written Yaya-Uma, (Father-Mother) religion.<sup>25</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art states, “ca. 500 BC. The Yaya-Mama (meaning Father-Mother in the Quechua language) religious tradition is believed to have flourished in the southern Altiplano. Male-female imagery of paired deities are carved on stone stele at ceremonial sites in the Lake Titicaca region.”<sup>26</sup>

Some of the earliest Spaniards in Peru believed that the Andean people had previous knowledge of Adam and Eve. Alan Kolata of the University of Chicago writes:

In Cristóbal de Molina’s version of the same myth, these two culture heroes are the Andean Adam and Eve: the primeval male-female pair and the children of Viracocha [Christ]. Like the other variant of the theme of Genesis, the events of the myth begin after a universal flood: all the created things perished through him [Viracocha] except for a man and a woman, who remained in a box, and when the waters receded the wind carried them to tierra Guanaco [city of Tiahuanaco [Tiwanaku] on the shores of Lake Titicaca]” Viracocha orders the pair to remain in Tiahuanaco and gave them as surrogates of the Creator, dominion over the people they are charged with calling forth from the sacred landscape.<sup>27</sup> [comments added]

The Yaya-Mama (Adam and Eve) religion was part of the early Peruvian faith in Viracocha, the Andean white god who created the earth’s first parents, Yaya-Mama. If the Nephites colonized the Altiplano in the Andes, we should not be surprised to find the story of Adam and Eve forming a central element in the Andean temple worship. The story of Adam and Eve was recorded on the brass plates used to teach the Nephites (1 Nephi 5:11), and the principles associated with our first parents were major doctrines of the Nephite religion. If Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen, and Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy (2 Nephi 2:19-27). The Holy One of Israel suffered the pains of all who belong to the family of Adam (2 Nephi 9:21).

On the one hand, the Andean people believed that the person who brought them a new religion was the youngest of the four first Incas - the viracochas, or fair-skinned brothers who had called themselves the sons of Viracocha, their creator god. The Indigenous people call all white men viracochas.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, Nephi, the first king of the Book of Mormon, considered himself a son of Christ and took upon himself the Lord’s name. Furthermore, we know that the early Nephites (circa 500 BC) taught that Christ was the “Creator” God (2 Nephi 9:5).

In his book, *The Secret of the Incas*, William Sullivan confirms the predominate position of Viracocha in the ancient Peruvian faith: “Throughout all these centuries, the teaching of Viracocha remained the essential cultural tool for mastering the complexity of the physical environment of the Andes. Down to the present day and impermeable to time. there endures among the Andean peasantry the fundamental religious principle of Andean agricultural society, taught by Viracocha.”<sup>29</sup> During the

<sup>24</sup> Sarmiento, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Kolata, Alan A., *The Tiwanaku: Portrait of an Andean Civilization*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1993, 79-81,

<sup>26</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), “Timeline of Art History, Central and Southern Andes, 1000BC-AD 1,” <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/04/sac/ht04/sac.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> Kolata, Alan A. *Valley of the Spirits, A Journey into the Lost Realm of the Aymara*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996, 69.

<sup>28</sup> Cobo Bernabe, *History of the Inca Empire*, translated by Roland Hamilton. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1996, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Sullivan, William, 24.



fourteenth century AD, the Inca nobility started to worship the sun. However, the people still held Viracocha as their primary god. Unfortunately, the people in South America, just like the people in Israel, stumbled into idolatry from time to time. Abinadi reminds us that apostate Nephites, like the later Incas, had the practice of worshiping graven images of heavenly bodies (Mosiah 12:35-37; 13:12,25-26).

Historian Daniel G. Brinton wrote of the Spanish attempts to understand the focus of the Inca's faith:

...instituted in 1571, by order of the viceroy Don Francisco de Toledo. The oldest Indians, especially those of noble birth, including many descendants of the Incas, were assembled at different times and in different parts of the country, and carefully questioned, through the official interpreter, as to just what the old religion was. The questions were not leading ones, and the replies have great uniformity. They all agreed that Viracocha was worshiped as creator, and as the ever-present active divinity, he alone answered prayers, and aided in times of need; he was the sole efficient god.<sup>30</sup>

If Viracocha was the Christ, "Why did the Peruvians call him Viracocha and not by his Hebrew name *YHWA* (Yahweh or Lord Jehovah) or *EI*? The answer is simple. Since Jesus Christ was a God, His proper name would have been sacred and inappropriate for common usage. Thus, in the scriptures and for common discussions descriptive names, i.e. Viracocha, were used instead to designate their God's formal name. The name Viracocha meant the whiteness of the foam of the sea. That is, white like the foam of the sea was descriptive of Viracocha's skin color. The use of descriptive names to call Jehovah is found in the Old Testament. In the Bible, the Jews called their deity *EI Shaddai* (Lord God Almighty, 7 times, starting at Gen. 17:1); *EI Elyon* (The Most High God, 28 times, beginning at Gen. 14:18), *Adonai* (Lord Master, 434 times, starting at Gen. 15:2), *EI Olam* (The Everlasting God, The God of Eternity, God of the Universe, God of Ancient Days, 3 times, starting at Gen. 21:33), *Qanna* (Jealous/Zelous, 6 times, beginning at Ex. 20:5), and finally, *Elohim* (God, Judge, Creator, over 2000 times, starting at Gen. 1:1).<sup>31</sup> The Jews were instructed to avoid calling deity by his actual name, and Yahweh was just one of several substitutes. It is predictable then that the followers of Christ in South America were taught to be equally respectful when referring to their Lord. Evans lists 18 different descriptive or metaphoric names for the god of the Andes - each with a meaning that appropriately is descriptive of Jesus Christ. The list included Eternal Light, First Thing Without Beginning, The One True God, Creator of All Things, and The One and Only Lord.<sup>32</sup>

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is referred to as "Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Revelations 17:14). For those of us who have taken upon us the name of Christ, we revered Him as our King and our Lord. The Andean people held the same reverence for Viracocha. Sullivan writes: "In hymns to Viracocha recorded by the indigenous chronicler Pachakuti Yamqui, there exists yet another title for the god, *Cusco capac*. The early chroniclers did not explore the literal significance of this term, nor have scholars in the modern era.... The second word of Viracocha's title is *capaca*. Pachakuti Yamqui usually wrote this word *capac*, understood in the colonial Quechua lexicons as "king." In the phrase *Cusco capac* (with the extra a), Pachakuti Yamqui gives us the Aymara word, also understood to mean "king." Reference to Bertonio's dictionary, however, contributes an unexpected dimension to the term: King or Lord"<sup>33</sup>.

Of course, it is one thing to believe in a fair-skinned bearded god, and another to show that Viracocha taught the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Andean people. We can start by exploring the belief system of the Andean people to see if it parallels the teaching of the Lord in the Old Testament. As noted before, icons of Viracocha have been dated as far back as the third millennium BC - the time of the Jaredites in the New World and the Tower of Babel in the Old World. Thus, the question begs to be answered, Did the ancient people of the Andes practice the law of Moses?

<sup>30</sup> Brinton, D. (1882), *American Hero-Myths: A study in the Native Religions of the Western Continent*, 281-282.

<sup>31</sup> *Blue Letter Bible*, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/name\\_god.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/name_god.cfm)

<sup>32</sup> Evans, 28-32.

<sup>33</sup> Sullivan, 118,119.



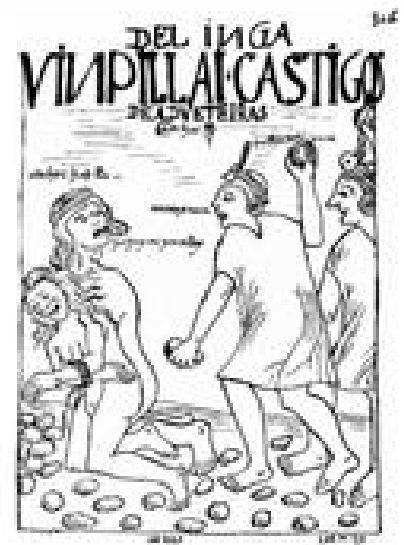
The books of Moses were recorded on the brass plates that the Nephites possessed in the promised land (1 Nephi 5:11), and the Ten Commandments were taught among them (Mosiah 13). Lehities offered “sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord; and they gave thanks unto the God of Israel” (1 Nephi 5:9). The Nephites took the firstlings of their flocks and offered sacrifices according to the law of Moses (Mosiah 2:3). As illustrated by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala in the early 1600’s, the Incas were still observing the sacrificing of unspotted animals when the Spanish arrived. Poma’s illustrations are invaluable in documenting life in the Andes at the time of the conquest and are used throughout this book.

Pedro de Cieza de León, Miguel Cabello Valboa, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, and other early Spanish chroniclers reported evidence that the South American natives performed practices and observed laws similar to those of Israelites. Calderwood notes:

The Law of Moses and especially the observance of the Ten Commandments appeared to be similar to religious tenets that were kept in many areas of the New World. The punishment for breaking one of these New World “Ten Commandments” was frequently carried out in a manner similar to the ancient Israelite customs of meting out punishments.<sup>34</sup>

Among the punishments stipulated in the law of Moses was the stoning to death of adulterers (John 8:4-5). The Incas stoned to death those who committed adultery, executed murderers, severely punished thieves, prohibited homosexual practices, and taught their youth to remain morally pure.<sup>35</sup> Like the Israelites, the Peruvians kept an eternal flame in their temple reminiscent of the eternal flame of Leviticus.

The Incas divided their history into five thousand-year ages, suns or dispensations. The parallels between the Inca historical account, the Old Testament, and the Book of Mormon seem far more than a coincidence. The Inca’s first thousand years parallel the time from Creation to Enoch. It began in the time of premortal darkness (compare to Genesis 1:2). During this thousand-year period, the people only lived with rudimentary technology. The first people wore clothing made of leaves (compare to Genesis 3:7). At first, the people worshiped God. However, they lost faith and began worshiping other creator deities (compare to Genesis 4:4, Moses 3:7). The first age dispensation of the Incas ended in an unspecified manner.



During the Inca second dispensation or age, the people were more technologically advanced than the previous thousand years. This period could be comparable to the time from Enoch to Noah. The people wore clothing of animal skins (compare to Genesis 3:21). They lived simple lives and in peace without warfare (no wars recorded in Genesis 6). They recognized Viracocha (compare to Genesis 5:24). The second dispensation ended in a great flood (compare to Genesis 6:17, Alma 10:22).

<sup>34</sup> Calderwood, 190.

<sup>35</sup> Calderwood, 203, 246-247, 248-250.

The third historical period of the Incas appears to match the time of the Jaredites in their promised land. It was the Age of Purum Runa (“wild men”) (compare to Ether 15:16-22). The society was more complex. Their technology included irrigated agriculture, mining, and making jewelry (compare to Ether 4:11, Ether 6:18). The population grew beyond previous levels, and they migrated into the previously uninhabited lowlands (compare to Ether 7:11). There was a marked increase in conflicts and warfare (compare to Ether 7-15), and each town had its king (compare to Ether 7:20). As a whole, the people worshiped Viracocha (compare to Ether 6:17).

The Inca’s fourth thousand years can be compared to the history of the Nephites. It was the Age of Auc Runa, “warlike people” (compare to 2 Nephi 26:2). The earlier age of the Incas, including the coming of the four brothers (Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi - the only adult son of Lehi at the time of arrival in the promised land) occurred during this time (compare to 2 Nephi 5:18). Their world was divided into quarters (Alma 43:26, 52:10, 56:1, 58:30, 35). The people lived on mountaintops in stone houses and fortifications called pucarás (compare to Alma 51:27, 48:8-9). Warfare continued to increase (compare to Mormon 1-8). Ayhllus, the Quechua word meaning “family,” lineage,” or “part” (meaning “tribe”) became the social order (compare to 3 Nephi 7: 2-14). Technology and material conditions greatly improved (compare to 2 Nephi 5:11-17).

The fifth Age of the Incas parallels the time from the fall of the Nephites to the conquest of the Incas by the Spanish. The sixth age takes us up to our own age. It seems clear that the people of the Andes understood the history of the world according to the Bible and the Book of Mormon. They also appear to have practiced the Old Testament beliefs in Adam and Eve and blood sacrifices in remembrance of the Savior to come. When the Spanish arrived they observed the Incas still sacrificing sheep (the Spanish called alpacas, sheep), lambs, and birds (compare to Genesis 4:4, Mosiah 2:3, John 2:24).<sup>36</sup> Juan de Betanzos recorded that the throats of the sheep and lambs were slit in the presence of the Inca,<sup>37</sup> apparently to collect the blood or to prepare the meat in a manner consistent with the Law of Moses (compare to Leviticus 3:17).

The evidence is quite revealing. Someone taught the ancient Andean people the history, principles, and practices of the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon. Who would be more qualified and dedicated than the Lord Jesus Christ?

<sup>36</sup> Betanzos, Juan de, *Narrative of the Incas*. Translated and edited by Roland Hamilton and Dana Buchanan from the Palma de Mallorca manuscript. Austin: University of Texas, Press, 1996,161.

<sup>37</sup> Betanzos,168.

To the LDS missionaries in Bolivia and Peru:

*It is indeed a pleasure for me to get a communication from that land which at one time was the headquarters of the Church in Book of Mormon history.*

President Joseph Fielding Smith<sup>38</sup>



## Chapter Two

### Jesus Christ's Mission in Ancient South America

The oral traditions of the Indigenous people in the New World suggest that Jesus Christ visited many people throughout the Western Hemisphere and Polynesia. However, the prophet and president of the Church Joseph Fielding Smith indicated that the center of the Church in Book of Mormon history was in the Andean mountains of Bolivia and Peru.<sup>39</sup> Of course, that history includes the Lord's mission to South America starting with His appearance at His temple in Bountiful.

#### The Signs of Christ's Coming to South America

The events surrounding the coming of Jesus Christ are well-detailed in the Book of Mormon. Whether caused by natural occurrences or by extraordinary divine phenomena, these events included miraculous geological upheavals. It should be remembered that the accounts of the calamities in the Book of Mormon were not recorded on the day the events occurred, but were summarized by Mormon nearly four hundred years later.

Two similar events suggest that earthquakes and volcanic eruptions were Messianic signs for the Nephites and Lamanites. The first of these two catastrophic events took place during the mission of Nephi and Lehi. While they were held in prison circa 30 BC, the earth shook and a cloud of darkness formed. The earth shook again and the prison walls trembled. The Lamanites could not flee because of the cloud of darkness. The people repented and the cloud dispersed, then the prophets were encircled by a mysterious fire that did not harm them (Helaman 5:23, 25, 28, 31, 33, 34, 42-44).

Except for the mysterious fire, such a calamity was possibly caused by a volcanic eruption. This first volcanic-type event reminds me of when I lived in the state of Washington. In 1980, Mount St. Helens erupted. The first signs of the volcano's awakening were earthquakes. When the volcano finally exploded, a sizable earthquake occurred, the north side of the mountain collapsed, and a monstrous cloud of pyroclastic debris killed every living thing within twelve miles of its north slope. The superheated lava, ash, and gases ignited fires wherever they touched. The energy from the eruption created a thunder and lightning storm that encircled the mountain. Following the initial eruption, what was left of Mount St. Helens shot massive ash plumes into the air for several months darkening the sky. Although I was living one hundred miles to the north of the volcano, on several occasions my city was engulfed in a thick cloud of volcanic ash. The ash fell like heavy powdered snow covering everything with several inches of dust-like ash and blocking the sunlight.

The second volcano eruption-like event in the Book of Mormon took place at the time of the Lord's death. Mormon recorded that major catastrophes took place throughout all the land, a prime indicator that multiple volcanic eruptions occurred. He wrote that an earthquake did "shake the whole earth" (3

<sup>38</sup> Letter written to Elder Steve Farnsworth, the Bolivia Mission Public Relations Representative, from President Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, received March 1970, and at the request of Mission President Keith Roberts was published in the mission's monthly newsletter.

<sup>39</sup> IBID.

Nephi 8:6), a great storm with thunder and lightnings arose (3 Nephi 8:5-6), the city of Zarahemla burned (3 Nephi 8:8), the earth (lava or lahar) was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, and there became a “*great mountain*” (over the four hundred years to Mormon’s time a volcano must have formed where the city had once been; emphasis added, 3 Nephi 3:8), all seem indicative of several volcanoes erupting at the same time. The darkness came “upon the face” or surface of the land. Mormon described it as a “mist of darkness.” Again, this appears to have been of thick clouds of volcanic ash, but could also have included smoke from fires ignited by lava, pyroclastic clouds, and lightning. So heavy was the darkness that neither candles, torches, nor wood could be lit, nor could the sun, moon, or stars be seen (3 Nephi 8:21-22). We also know that cities sank into the depths of the sea (3 Nephi 9:14) indicating that the accompanying earthquakes must have shifted ground levels along seismic plates.

The people who live in the Andes mountains are well aware of the power of nature. The west coast of South America is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, a tectonic belt of volcanos and earthquakes. The oral traditions of the Andean people include stories strikingly similar to the record found in the Book of Mormon. Calderwood notes:

Betanzos began his manuscript by referring to ancient legends of a time when the land and the provinces of Peru were dark and neither firelight nor daylight existed, and Peru was inhabited by people whose name had long been forgotten. The fact that Betanzos started his account with this legend is indicative of the importance the natives placed on the event of total darkness when there was neither sunlight nor apparently fire of any kind.... Betanzos emphasized that there was no light from any source. Betanzos then relates that during this time of total darkness, the people were visited by a lord whose name was Contiti Viracocha who went to the area known as Tiahuanaco (Tiwanku).<sup>40</sup>

In Poma de Ayala’s description of these calamities, Calderwood sees a close parallel to the events in the Book of Mormon that took place at the death of Christ:

God punished them by sending down fire from heaven to burn them, mountains fell upon them and covered them over, some villages were covered with water, other villages were swallowed up by the earth, all as a punishment sent by God...during the time of the Incas, mountains fell down, rocky cliffs and crags were brought down, volcanoes erupted and rained fire from hell upon them, sand flattened a city and the surrounding areas, earthquakes killed many, tidal waves hit the coastal region killing many. God also sent plagues and pestilence, hail storms, and heavy snows killed many people and animals.<sup>41</sup>

Such major events are not uncommon in the Andes. The early Spaniards in Peru experienced events similar to what we read about in the Book of Mormon. One colonist wrote: “A number of calamities affected our country...for instance, fire rained down upon the town of Cacha in the Collao. The volcano of Putina erupted and caused a rain of dust. Also, the city of Arequipa and the surrounding district were leveled to the ground.<sup>42</sup> As the Spanish conquistadors attacked Quito in Ecuador, they experienced the eruption of one of the great Andean volcanoes. Cieza de León wrote: “The fire that it had within destroyed many Indian houses, killed many men and women and it threw into the air so many ashes as dense as smoke that one could not see while this ashes floated, and the amount that I said was all over. So much fell that those who did not know how believed that from heavens it was raining ashes, which fell more than twenty days.”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Calderwood, 126.

<sup>41</sup> Calderwood, 127, quoting Felipe Guzman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, 65.

<sup>42</sup> Huaman Poma, “Letter to a King,” quoted by Author Kockerhans, *Nephi in Zarahemla*. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing, 2002, 130.

<sup>43</sup> Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, edited and translated by Alexander Parma Cook and Noble David Cook. London: Duke University, 1998. 282-283.



During my mission to Peru in 1970, I witnessed natural forces that could account for the destruction that preceded Christ's visit to South America. A 7.9-force earthquake shook Peru causing roughly 70,000 deaths. The most destructive event was caused by an avalanche from a glacier on Peru's tallest peak,

*Figure 2 Mount Huascarán above remains of Yungay*

Mount Huascarán. It is estimated that nearly 100 million cubic yards of water, mud, rocks, and snow ran down the mountain at a speed of roughly 180 miles

per hour, completely covering up the cities of Yungay and Ranrahirca<sup>44</sup> (compare to 3 Nephi 8:14 - "many cities buried"). Yungay was completely buried under 65 feet of mud (compare to 3 Nephi 9:6 - "buried in the depths of the earth"). The greatest cause of death from the 1970 earthquake was caused by the poor construction of the houses in Peru -- mostly made of mud bricks, that collapsed on their residence<sup>45</sup> (compared to 3 Nephi 8:14 - "many were shaken till the building thereof had fallen to the earth"). The missionaries nearest the great avalanche had to be evaluated by helicopter because the roads were destroyed (compare to 3 Nephi 8:13 - "the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled"). Fortunately, there was only a small tsunami (compare to 3 Nephi 9:7 - "waters have I caused to come up"). The largest city in the earthquake zone, Chimbote had 60% to 80% of its buildings destroyed (compare to 3 Nephi 8:15 - "some cities which remained, but the damage thereof was exceedingly great"). The 1970 earthquake in Peru lasted only 45 seconds.<sup>46</sup> It is hard to imagine the destruction that fell upon the wicked Nephites and Lamanites in the events following the Lord's death. The catastrophic events of that day lasted 3 hours! (3 Nephi 8:19).

From the brief description the Book of Mormon provides of the calamities at the death of Christ, it appears that the city of Bountiful experienced earthquakes, lightning, thunder, and a thick darkness. Further east, in the land of Zarahemla, the city of Moroni sank into the east sea, and the city of Zarahemla burned. At an almost equal distance between Cahuachi (city of Bountiful - see Chapter Ten) and Pukara (city of Zarahemla - see Chapter 8),



*Figure 3 Mount Misti above Arequipa, Peru*

stands a great volcano. It is called El Misti. Like the mermaids of the Lore-lei on the banks of the Rhine River, the mountain is both incredibly beautiful and notoriously dangerous. For certain, El Misti should be admired from a distance. The volcano is located just east of Peru's second-largest city, Arequipa, standing as a constant reminder of the city's eventual doom.

Is the beautiful El Misti volcano guilty as charged of having taken part in the Book of Mormon calamities of the first century AD? Seismologists can show that over the last 14,000 years, El Misti has erupted twenty times. The volcano's average interval between eruptions is once every 700 years. According to the Smithsonian Museum, El Misti was very active around the time of the Lord's death. At that time, two of El Misti's eruptions came close together. Though it is not possible to precisely date

<sup>44</sup> "History of 1970 Ancash Earthquake, History Draft: <https://historydraft.com/story/1970-ancash-earthquake/timeline/742>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> BBC, "In Pictures Peru's Most Catastrophic Natural Disaster," 30 May 2020: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-52839770>.

volcanic eruptions, scientists believe that one of El Misti's eruptions occurred around 80 BC (plus or minus 75 years). Another eruption occurred in AD 90 (plus or minus 300 years).<sup>47</sup> Today El Misti's massive symmetrical cone has a mile-wide cap (summit). Scientists also believe a "pyroclastic flow traveled seven miles south from El Misti about 2000 years ago."<sup>48</sup> El Misti's Meridian-of-time lava flow leads one to wonder if the city of Moronihah, which was buried by earth and rests below a great mountain might be found encrusted beneath the slopes of this massive mountain (3 Nephi 8:10).

As the birth of Christ approached, Zarahemla became an extremely wicked city. Its inhabitants rejected the words of Nephi to the point where the prophet could not stay among them. Their abominations were so grievous that the Lord personally made certain that the city of Zarahemla and its inhabitants were cleansed by fire (3 Nephi 9:3). Archaeologists excavating Pukara, the capital city of southern Peru at the time of Christ, and a serious candidate for Zarahemla, found that the city once burned<sup>49</sup> and had to be reconstructed sometime between 200 BC and AD 100.<sup>50</sup> As we know, the city of Zarahemla burned but was rebuilt (3 Nephi 8:8, 9:3; 4 Nephi 1;8).

As for the evil-doers in the city of Moroni, they experienced a different fate. They sank with their neighbors into the depths of the sea of the east (Alma 50:13, 3 Nephi 8:9, 9:4). As explained in Chapter Six, Lake Titicaca is a solid candidate for the Book of Mormon's east sea. Along with the city of Moroni, the cities of Onihad, Mocum, and Jerusalem were submerged (3 Nephi 9:7). In 2002, "Peruvian divers found pre-Inca stairways, ramps, and walls beneath the waters of Lake Titicaca.... The remains were found at a depth of 6.5 to 26 feet on the eastern side of the lake...They are built with interlocked stones...oceanic engineer and expedition member Gustavo Villavicencio told reporters...'There are studies that show that the lake used to be...around 66 to 98 feet lower, and that was where ancient Peruvians built.'"<sup>51</sup>

Just off the northeast shore of the Isla of the Sun in Lake Titicaca, are the remains of an even more impressive sunken city. The city was discovered by the French oceanographer Jacques Cousteau. Named the city of Mancapampa, the ruins were discovered 65 feet below the surface. Situated between three small islands, Cousteau's divers recovered pottery and gold artifacts, some of which are on display in the Museo de Oro (Museum of Gold) on the Isla of the Sun.



*Figure 4 Lake Titicaca with wild Vicuñas ft.*

<sup>47</sup> Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Global Volcanism Program, <http://www.volcano.si.edu/world/eruptionlist.cfm>.

<sup>48</sup> <http://users.bendnet.com/bjensen/volcano/southamerica/peru-misti.html.vol>.

<sup>49</sup> Klarich, Elizabeth, Ana. From the Monumental to the Mundane; Dissertations, Santa Barbara: University of California Santa Barbara, 310.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 63, 260.

<sup>51</sup> Kurtz, Michele, "Scuba Divers find pre-Inca ruins in Lake Titicaca," *Cyber Diver News Network*, 31 October, 2002, <http://www.cdn.info/industry/021031/i021031.html>.

The Native Peruvians have always claimed there are lost cities beneath the surface of Lake Titicaca. The early Spanish chronicler Pedro Cieza de León wrote that the native people talked of many cities now submerged in Lake Titicaca that had once been ruled by a man called Zapana.<sup>52</sup> Zapana is a possible corrupted spelling of the Book of Mormon names Zarahemla, Zerahemnah, or Zeram.

Searching for the remains of the lost cities in Lake Titicaca has been difficult because of the lake's extreme altitude (12,500 feet above sea level) and its great depth (922 feet). Underwater archaeology at that altitude requires special equipment, training, and conditioning. While earlier observation had discovered underwater fences and terraces in the large Peruvian side of the lake, it wasn't until 2000 that a major discovery was made in the *lago menor*, the lake's smaller sub-basin on the Bolivian side of the lake. In a BBC News article "Ancient temple found under Lake Titicaca," scientists reported finding a submerged temple complex in the waters just off Copacabana, Bolivia.

The ruins of an ancient temple have been found by international archaeologists under Lake Titicaca, the world's highest (navigable) lake.

A terrace for crops, a long road, and an 800-meter (2,600-foot) long wall were also found under the waters of the lake, sited in the Andes mountains between Bolivia and Peru.

Dating back 1,000 to 1,500 years ago, the ruins are pre-Incan.

They have been attributed to the indigenous Tiwanaku or Tiahuanaco people, said Lorenzo Epis, the Italian scientist leading the Atahuallpa 2000 scientific expedition.

The holy temple measures 200m by 50m (660ft by 160ft), almost twice the size of an average football pitch.

More than 200 dives were made into the lake, to depths of as much as 30m (100ft), to record the ruins on film.<sup>53</sup>

Two years later, a bi-national expedition from Bolivia and Belgium started the first major archaeological project to survey the Bolivian side of the lake, *lago menor*, for archaeological sites. The project was sponsored by the Andean Centre of Underwater Archaeology (ARUA), the Université Libre de Bruxelles, and the Bolivian Ministry of Cultural Affairs.<sup>54</sup> In an article titled "Uncovering the 2000 Year Old Underwater Ruins of Lake Titicaca," the author notes that the first year of the project recovered 2,000 artifacts. During the second year, the findings were truly amazing:

Thanks to preliminary explorations in April of 2012 (Geophysical explorations) and in February 2013 (in situ explorations), 6 immerse archaeological sites were located in the smaller sub-basin of the lake and identified as potentially promising.

They exhibited strong evidence of artifacts and built structures linked to domestic and ceremonial functions...<sup>55</sup>

Six submerged archaeological communities and temples in just the small part of the lake! Besides the four Nephite cities that became submerged, the Book of Mormon states that "many great and notable cities were sunk" (3 Nephi 8:14). Presumably, these were Nephite cities. Were there even more Lamanite towns and villages that sank? As the title of the

<sup>52</sup> Cieza de León, Pedro, Segunda Parte de la Crónica del Perú, (Madrid: Tomo V de la Biblioteca Hispano-Utramarina, 1880), 18-19.

<sup>53</sup> BBC News, "Ancient temple found under Lake Titicaca," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/892616.stm>, accessed 3 May 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Andean Centre of Underwater Archaeology – ACUA, <https://casaph13.wordpress.com/about/>, accessed 3 May 2018.

<sup>55</sup> World, "Uncovering the 2000 Year Old Underwater Ruins of Lake Titicaca," <https://www.incaworldtravel.com/eng/news/uncovering-the-2000-year-old-underwater-ruins-of-lake-titicaca-36/>, accessed 3 May 2018.



article announces, some of the sites are estimated to be 2,000 years old – the exact period when the Book of Mormon cities were destroyed before the visitation of the Lord.

It is becoming apparent that Lake Titicaca is dotted with sunken cities. The Peruvian, and much larger side of the lake, has yet to be surveyed by a team of professional archaeologists. During my mission, I served on the Altiplano in Peru just a few miles from Lake Titicaca. The locals told me many rumors of lost cities under the waters of the lake. The French explorer Simone Waisbard recorded over a several-year period the experiences of Uru fishermen who worked the waters of the Peruvian side of the lake. She reported that the fishermen testified of an entire city protruding above the surface of the lake during periods of drought when the water level dropped 13 feet.<sup>56</sup> As far back as 1877, the American archaeologist <sup>57</sup>George Squier reported finding ruins submerged in the northern part of the lake near the Sillustani Peninsula. Squier was of the opinion that the structures he found were originally constructed above the waterline, but that an earthquake made the land subside. Reports of finding submerged megalithic ruins were reported by the Commandant of the Peruvian Navy, Antonio Rodríguez. Finally, academic Dr. Esquinoza Sorano saw beneath the waters of the Peruvian side of Titicaca, “temples of the Sun and Moon, of monolithic stones...pre-Inca architects who belonged to a totally submerged civilization.”<sup>58</sup>

The question needs to be addressed, “How could Joseph Smith have known of these catastrophes when the archaeological record of these events has only come to light in the past two decades?”

Undoubtedly, even the most skeptical observer has to agree that the Andes region possessed all the geological forces required for a region to have experienced the calamities mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

The comparisons between the Inca oral tradition of the physical visitation of their god Viracocha to the Andes and the account of Jesus Christ’s visit to South America are truly amazing. H. Osborn writes of the appearance of Viracocha to the ancient people in the Andes. “There suddenly appeared coming from the south, a white man of large stature and authoritative demeanor. This man had such great power that he changed the hills into valleys and from valleys made great hills, causing streams to flow from the living stone” (compare 3 Nephi 9:8).<sup>59</sup>

In 1586, Cabello Valboa attributed this event to the phenomenon surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and bearded men coming to ancient Peru:

There is a story, passed down by tradition from fathers to sons, that one day, all of a sudden, the earth shook and the sun was darkened and the rocks were broken up by smashing some against the other, and many graves of men dead since many years earlier were seen open. Many of the animals were greatly disturbed. By conjecture and numerous indications, this appears to have taken place on the holy day of the crucifixion and death of our Redeemer Christ because it was also said that within a few years there were seen in some areas of Peru certain men of venerable presence and appearance with long beards who dealt justly with everyone.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Waisbard, Simone, *Tiauanaco, Diez Mil Años de Enigmas Incas*, (Mexico City: Edición Diana, 1987), 59-60.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-102.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Osborne, *South America Mythology*. London: Paul Hamlyn, 1968, 78.

<sup>60</sup> Valboa, Miguel Cabello, *Miscelánea Antártica, Una Historia del Peru Antiguo*, written in manuscript form in 1586, introduction and notes by Lulis E. Vacarcel (first published by the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marco, Facultad de Letras, Institute de Etnología, Lima, 1951, 237.

In 1598, Father Francisco de Avila gave this description of the story told by the elders: “In ancient times the sun died. Because of this [sun’s] death it was night for five days. Rocks banged against each other. Mortars and grinding stones began to eat people. Buck llamas started to drive men.”<sup>61</sup> Calderwood notes, “Father Francisco de Avila inserted his opinion of the event when he exclaimed “Here’s what we Christians think about it. We think these stories tell of the darkness following the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe that is what it was.”<sup>62</sup>

Quoting the chronicler Cieza de León, Hammond Innes relates:

Before the Incas came to reign in these kingdoms or where known there, these Indians tell a thing that far exceeds all else they say.

They state that a long time went by in which they “did not see the sun;....It finally emerged out of Lake Titicaca and shortly afterwards “out of the regions of the south there came and appeared among them a white man, large in stature, whose air and person aroused great respect and veneration.”

Because he could work miracles, “making plains of the hills and of the plains mountains, and bringing forth springs in the living rock,” they called him “the Maker of all things, their Beginning, Father of the Sun...” They say that in many places he instructed people how they should live and spoke to them lovingly and meekly, exhorting them to be good and not do one another harm or injury, but rather to love one another, and use charity to all.<sup>63</sup>

Osborne continues that Viracocha was “a bearded man of tall stature clothed in a white robe which came down to his feet and which he wore belted at the waist.”<sup>64</sup> He walked with a staff and addressed the natives with love, calling them his sons and daughters. As he traversed all the land he worked miracles. He healed the sick by touch. He spoke every tongue even better than the natives. They called him Thunupa or Tarpaca, Viracocha-rapacha or Pacacan.<sup>65</sup>

To someone who has not read the Book of Mormon, it must seem extremely interesting that the Andean god had the same dress, manners, and appearance as Jesus Christ. Viracocha even had blue eyes.<sup>66</sup> Viracocha’s powers transcended even time and space, life and death. Matthew recorded that at the time of Christ’s resurrection “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept rose” (Matthew 27:52-53). It was the beginning of the first resurrection after Christ’s atonement. His atonement was universal so it applied to those in the New World. Calderwood points out:

Miguel Cabello Valboa’s account, as noted earlier, includes this strange phrase about the time of upheaval “y muchos sepulcros de hombres muertos de mucho tiempo atras se vieron abiertos.” (Author’s translation: “and many graves of men, dead since many years earlier, were seen open.”) if the phrase only referred to cemeteries that had been destroyed by an earthquake or flood, which happens periodically in the Andes, the memory of the event would not have been passed forward for centuries.

In the Book of Mormon, Samuel the Lamanite prophesied that the graves should be opened and yield up their dead at the time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Subsequently, when Jesus Christ examined the Nephite records during his brief visit to the New World, he observed that the Nephites had not recorded the

<sup>61</sup> Calderwood, *Voices from the Dust*, 125, quoting Father Francisco de Avila, “The Huarochiri Manuscript, A Testament of Ancient and Colonial Andean Religion, translated from Quechua by Frank Salomon and George L. Urioste. Austin: University of Texas, 1991.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Innes, Hammond, *The Conquistadors*, quoted by Kocherhans, *Nephi in Zarahemla*, Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing, 2002, 133-134.

<sup>64</sup> Osborne, 78.

<sup>65</sup> Osborne, 81.

<sup>66</sup> Osborne, 87.

fulfillment of this prophecy and questioned Nephi whether any resurrected saints had appeared and administered unto the surviving Nephites and Lamanites. When Nephi affirmed that the event had occurred as prophesied, Jesus commanded that it should be recorded (see 3 Nephi 23:11,13).<sup>67</sup>



*Figure 5 Main Temple at Nazca (Cahuachi)*

#### He Descended to His Temple

The temple of Bountiful is noteworthy to students of the Book of Mormon. After the destruction that occurred at the death of Christ, the surviving Nephites in the area gathered at their temple. The prophet Nephi and the others who would become the twelve disciples were all at Bountiful when the Lord appeared at the temple. (3 Nephi 11:1).

As detailed in my book, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, the Nazca civilization is a qualified candidate for the Land of Bountiful.<sup>68</sup> If so, we can be fairly certain that the city of Cahuachi with its massive temples was the city where Christ first appeared to the Nephites. Archaeologists Silverman and Proulx give this description: “Cahuachi is located on the south bank of the Nazca River, in a narrow section of the valley at approximately 365 m (1200 feet) above sea level, at a point where subterranean water emerges to the surface. Cahuachi extends in length for some 2 km (1.2 miles) and covers appropriately 150 ha (hectares, 370 acres). The site is elaborated over a series of brown, barren, hill-covered river terraces just above the valley floor and beneath the Pampa de Atarco.”<sup>69</sup>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York notes about the Cahuachi temple complex: “On the south bank of the Nazca River, is the dominant ceremonial site in southern Peru.

<sup>67</sup> Calderwood, 134.

<sup>68</sup> Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, Chapter Eight.

<sup>69</sup> Silverman Helaine and Donald A. Proulx, *The Nazca, The People of the America Series*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002, 102.

Sprawling over forty low-lying hills capped with adobe structures, it is a pilgrimage center that brought hundreds of worshipers to the region.<sup>70</sup>

Giuseppe Orefici spent seventeen years excavating Cahuachi. He writes of the massive main temple at Cahuachi, "Dated to Nazca 1 [150 BC-100AD], this is the earliest ceremonial structure thus far identified at Cahuachi; surely there are other Nazca 1 ceremonial constructions waiting to be unearthed. The Step-fret Temple shows that Cahuachi was a sacred site from its earliest Nazca occupation."<sup>71</sup>

There are several reasons to point to the Cahuachi temple complex as a likely candidate for where Christ first appeared.

- The city and its temple date to the time period when Christ visited the Nephites.
- It was a traditional pilgrimage site or place of gathering - a natural place for the people to have gathered to after the calamities.
- The temple covers 370 acres and would be large enough for the surviving Nephites to have assembled.
- The temple at Cahuachi was used for sacrificing llamas.
- Cahuachi temples appear to have used a lay priesthood<sup>72</sup>
- The Cahuachi temple ceremony was codified, memorized, and passed down from one generation to the next<sup>73</sup>
- A central theme in the Nazca faith was asking God for agricultural fertility (compare Alma 34:21, 24-25).

However, the most important reason for considering the temple at Cahuachi as the place where Christ first appeared is that the Nazca people believed in Viracocha, the bearded white god. Urton of Harvard University recorded ethnographic testimony from the people living at Cerro Blanco in the Nazca valleys. He writes:

In ancient times, before there were aqueducts in the valley, a great drought occurred and the people had no water for years. The people began crying out to their god, Viracocha or Con. They cried and screamed the word *nanay* [Quechua for "pain"]....The people went en-mass to the foot of Cerro Blanco, which was their principal temple or adoratorio; this was the place where they spoke to the gods. At that moment, Viracocha/Con descended from the sky to the summit of the mountain and heard the weeping of his people. He was so moved by their cries that he began weeping and tears flowed from his eyes.<sup>74</sup>

We learn from the above Nazca oral tradition that 1) their god was Viracocha, the bearded white god of the Andes; 2) the Nazca people believed that they had a personal relationship with Viracocha, even to the point that he could intervene in their behalf and end a drought; 3) Viracocha answered prayers; 4) special prayers were offered at the temple; 5) even in the heavens their god had the form of a man who could "hear," have compassion, and "wept" tears of concern and love; 6) their white god descended from heaven; and 7) Viracocha wept on the temple mount. Although our knowledge is still quite limited, I am amazed at the similarities that seem to exist between this story of the Nazca people and the account of the Nephites in Bountiful who, according to the Book of Mormon:

...saw that they were about to perish by famine, and they began to remember the Lord their God; and they began to remember the words of Nephi.

<sup>70</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), "Timeline of Art History, Central and South Andes, AD 1-AD 500", <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/05/sac/ht05sac.htm>.

<sup>71</sup> Silverman, 98.

<sup>72</sup> Silverman, 197/

<sup>73</sup> Turner, Victor, religious specialist, *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, eds. Arthur C. Lehmann and James E. Myers. Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1985. 82.

<sup>74</sup> Urton, "Report of fieldwork in Nazca, Peru," unpublished manuscript in the possession of Helaine Silverman, quoted by Silverman and Proulx, *The Nazca*, 208.

And the people began to plead with their chief judges and their leaders, that they would say unto Nephi; Behold, we know that thou art a man of God, and therefore cry unto the Lord our God that he turn away from us this famine, lest all the words which thou has spoken concerning our destruction be fulfilled.

...the Lord did turn away his anger from the people, and caused that rain should fall upon the earth, insomuch that it did bring forth her fruit in the season of her fruit. And it came to pass that it did bring forth her grain in the season of her grain.

And behold, the people did rejoice and glorify God (Helaman 11:7,9,17,18).

As for the Lord weeping at Bountiful, the event happened when he “descended” to the survivors gathered at the “temple” (1 Nephi 17:21-22).

### His Second Appearance

The Lord’s visitation to the gathered people in Bountiful was of paramount importance. During his manifestation, He testified of His divinity, reminded the righteous souls who survived that they were some of His lost sheep of the House of Israel, taught them the principles of the new covenant, organized His Church, and sent out 12 disciples and perhaps others to convert all mankind in His name. As significant as His ministry was at Bountiful, it was probably not his only ministry in South America or elsewhere in the New World.

On ending his account of the marvelous events that occurred during the 34<sup>th</sup> year, Mormon indicated that during that year the Nephites and Lamanites had been blessed including the manifestation of Christ to them “soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven.” (3 Nephi 10:18) In the next verse Mormon indicated that he ended his writing about that special year (3 Nephi 10:18), but indicated that he would give an abridged account of the Lord’s ministry “hereafter” (3 Nephi 10:19). That account, was of the event that took place during the first part of the 34<sup>th</sup> year and “soon after the Lord’s resurrection,” (3 Nephi 8:5) and is found in the remaining chapters of 3 Nephi. I understand these verses to mean that within a few days after the great calamities and the Lord’s ascension to heaven, He appeared in the New World.<sup>75</sup> Further, it appears that the Lord’s manifestation was announced at the end of the three days of calamities (3 Nephi 10: 1-10), not at the end of the 34<sup>th</sup> year. If the Lord appeared just days after the total darkness, earthquakes, fires, and other calamities, it would be reasonable to assume that only the Nephites living in proximity to the temple were able to gather at Bountiful. Indeed, the Book of Mormon notes that the “multitude” that initially gathered at Bountiful consisted of only about two thousand and five hundred people including men, women, and children (3 Nephi 17:25, 18:1-2). But what about the Lamanites? Were they not also His other sheep and in need of being taught by the Lord?

Returning to 3 Nephi 10:18, Mormon writes, “I will show unto you that the people of Nephi who were spared, *and also* those who had been called ‘Lamanites,’ who had been spared, did have great favors shown unto them, and great blessings poured out upon their heads, insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them” (emphasis added). I read this to mean that the Lord first manifested himself unto the Nephites at Bountiful, then later manifested himself unto the righteous Lamanites living elsewhere. In other words, Christ’s visitation at Bountiful was solely for the Nephites who lived in a very limited area. It seems reasonable to believe that Jesus

<sup>75</sup> Some have interpreted 3 Nephi 8:5 & 3 Nephi 10:18 to mean that the Lord’s appearance to the Nephites occurred near the end of the 34<sup>th</sup> year implying that the Lord appeared to the Nephites many months after his resurrection. 3 Nephi 10:19 seems to contradict this idea. Further, it seems out of character that the Lord would announce himself to the Nephites in a voice from heaven three days after his death (3 Nephi 10:9) and at a time His people have just suffered terrible calamities including massive deaths, and then He does not return until months later. It makes more sense to me that the Lord announced himself to the Nephites at the end of the three days of calamities, completed his ascension, immediately returned to minister to the righteous Nephites and Lamanites.

loved and visited the Lamanites and other members of the House of Israel living in other parts of South America, Central America, North America, and Polynesia.

The Book of Mormon provides possible clues that the Lord had at least one additional visitation in South America. After the Lord had already told the Nephites about the Lost Tribes of Israel (3 Nephi 15:15) and that they, the Nephites, were also his “sheep” (3 Nephi 15:24), He continued by stating:

I have [yet] *other sheep*, which are not of this land [Bountiful] neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that land round whither I have been to minister. For they of whom I speak are they who have not as yet heard my voice, neither have I at any time manifested myself unto them.

But I have received a commandment of the Father that I shall go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold and one shepherd; therefore I go to show myself unto them (emphasis added, 3 Nephi 16:1-4).

It is widely held that these verses refer to the Lost Tribes of Israel. However, this seems unlikely. Just ten verses before, the Lord already told the Nephites about the Lost Tribes (3 Nephi 15:15), and now He is telling them that he has even “other sheep” (3 Nephi 16:1). I believe that the other sheep were the Lamanites in the Americas, and that He still had to visit them and make them part of his fold - one fold. In this regard, we know that with Christ’s visit to the New World, the animosity between the Nephites and Lamanites was temporarily healed. They became one fold with one shepherd for nearly two hundred years (4 Nephi 1:15, 18). Once could consider, “How did the entire Lamanite nation become converted into the fold of Christ without His intervention?”

The universal conversion of the Lamanite nation at the time of Christ’s visit is not recorded in the Book of Mormon. The golden plates contained only the record of the Nephite people (Jacob 1:2). Therefore, the Book of Mormon would not have included the details of the Lord’s visit to non-Nephites. The pacification of the hearts of the Lamanites did not happen by osmosis. Someone had to convert them, organize them into the Church, and to teach them to love the Nephites. Further, it appears that the Lamanites had no written language, and thus any record of Christ visiting them would have been passed down by their descendants through their oral traditions.

Even so, the Nephite record might allude to the Lord’s visit to the Lamanites. While the Lord was at Bountiful, he commanded his twelve disciples, as he did in the Old World, to take “journeys, where they could preach the gospel and baptize in the name of Christ. While abroad from the land of Bountiful, the disciples gathered to pray. While in supplication, Jesus Christ appeared to them (3 Nephi 27:1) --presumably in a place outside of the land of Bountiful. Since the Lord had organized His church among the Nephites and baptized them, it would seem likely the disciples were not teaching the Nephites, whom the Lord had already converted, but were serving among their Lamanite brothers. This would suggest that the Lord reappeared in the Americas, this time in the land of the Lamanites.

The written record of the Lord’s visit to the Nephites was lost when the Nephite society was abolished and the golden plates were buried. However, the Lamanite tradition of his second visitation would have lived on in the memory of the Lamanite culture. Do the oral traditions of the Andean people support this proposition? The answer is clearly “yes.” There still exists in the Andes the prevailing belief among the Quechua and Aymara people that their ancestors were visited by a bearded white god who appeared on the Island of the Sun in Lake Titicaca and from there walked north through the Andes ministering and teaching the people.

Urton writes of the direction of Viracocha ministry:

For instance, the space traversed by characters in the myth begins at the lake and proceeds north-wester to the coast of Ecuador. The more detailed narration of encounters between the creator and people--those occurring in Chacha and

Urco--center on the Vilcanota, or Urubamba river valley, which courses north-westward near Cusco within the Cusco valley itself.<sup>76</sup>

...Cieza (de León) says that the creator, who had the appearance of a tall white man, traveled along the highland route healing the sick and restoring sight to the blind by his words alone.<sup>77</sup>



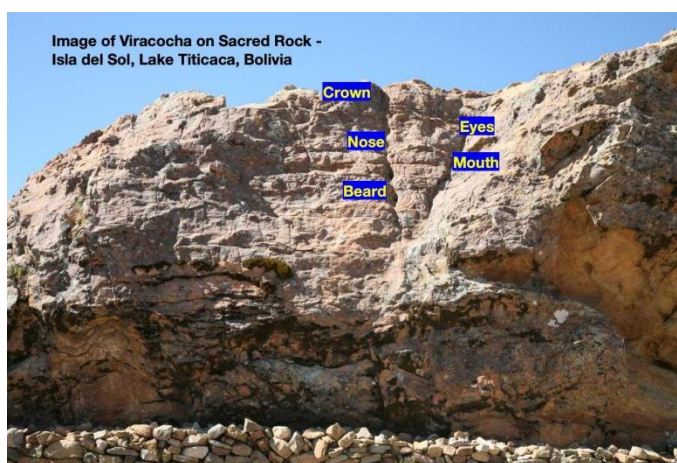
*Figure 6 Author & Juan at the Isla del Sol*

On my first trip to the Isla de Sol (Island of the Sun) in lake Titicaca in Bolivia, I hired a fisherman to take me to the island. Once there, I met a man named Juan who told me he could show me Viracocha's temple. As we walked the half mile to the temple, he suddenly paused, pointed to the path, and showed me a weathered stone with what could have been a very eroded footprint. "This," he explained, "is Viracocha's footprint. It is the very spot where our god descended." Being a

skeptic, I wanted so much to believe Juan. If the legend was true, it meant that I was standing in the very place where the Lord appeared to the Lamanites.

*Figure 7 Altar at the Isla del Sol*

As we continued up the path to the temple, we passed through a stone gateway. Juan indicated that it was one of three gates the ancients had to pass through to reach the temple altar. On reaching the temple area, we came to a stone altar believed to have been there since antiquity. The scene was spectacular, and one I hope anyone visiting Bolivia will take the opportunity to visit. We were standing at an altitude of over 12, 500 feet. To the north, the blue waters of Lake Titicaca stretched as far as the eye could see. To the east were snow-capped mountains tower some 22,000 feet; and here beneath the open air, a simple altar made of uncut stones.



*Figure 8 Sacred Rock cover in Gold when Spanish Arrived*

Just to the east of the altar was the famous sacred rock of the Andean people. The rock face was roughly a hundred feet long and 25 feet tall at its highest point. I had read that when the Spanish saw the rock, it was entirely plated with gold. The back side of the rock descended to the waters of Lake Titicaca, some hundred feet below. In pre-Spanish times, the entire slope leading down to the lake had been covered with a blanket of cloth made from pure vicuna wool, one of the finest

<sup>76</sup> Urton, Gary, *Legends of the Past, Inca Myths*. Austin: University of Texas Press. 1999. 41.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

fabrics on earth. Juan pointed to a large natural feature on the sacred rock. “This is the face of Viracocha,” he pronounced. Sure enough, one could make out the face of a man, with a crown, eyes, nose, mouth, and bearded.

Next, we walked a short distance to the ruins of the temple of Viracocha. The temple consisted of the remains of several rooms built with stone walls.



*Figure 9 Temple at Isla del Sol*

After visiting his temple on the island of the Sun, where did the bearded white god of the Andes go? Alden Mason tells us that Viracocha, with the aid of two assistants, covered the three main corridors of the Andes:

Viracocha himself, with his two assistants, journeyed north...He traveled up the cordillera, one assistant went along the coast, and the other up the edge of the eastern forest...The Creator proceeded to Urcos, near Cusco, where he commanded future populations to emerge from a mountain. He visited Cusco, and then continued north to Ecuador. There, in the province of Manta [perhaps another “Manti” far to the north], he took leave of his people and, walked on waves, disappeared across the ocean.<sup>78</sup> [comment added]

From this account, we learn that Viracocha taught the people that he would command “future” populations to emerge from a mountain. When teaching the people in Palestine about the Last Days, Jesus Christ referred them to the revelations of Daniel (see Matthew 24:15). Viracocha’s description of a future people being commanded by the Lord to “emerge from a mountain” is strikingly close to Daniel’s prophecy of the people of the Church in the last days coming forth as a stone being cut from a mountain -- Utah (Daniel 2:44-45). It is also reminiscent of the North American missionaries who left for South America during the first decades of missionary work there all being trained in Spanish in the heights of Provo, Utah before boarding planes for South America.

<sup>78</sup> Mason, J Alden, *The Ancient Civilizations of Peru*. London: Penguin Books, 1991, 135. See also Garcilaso de la Vera, *The Royal Commentaries of the Incas*: New York: Orion Press, 1961, 132-133, 147-148.



When the Lord served among the Jews, He did not minister alone. Beside Him were the apostles whom He eventually sent forth two by two to share the good news to the world. According to Andean oral traditions, their white god “sent out disciples to various districts which Viracocha had indicated for them.”<sup>79</sup> According to another account, Viracocha assigned himself and his assistants to specific mission areas. Sarmiento recorded:

He [Viracocha] ordered his two servants to charge [write] their memories with the names of all tribes that he had depicted, and of the valleys and provinces where they were to come forth, which were those of the whole land. He ordered that each one should go by a different road, naming the tribes, and ordering them all to go forth and people the country. His servants, obeying the command of Viracocha set out on their journey and work. He went by the mountain range or chain which they call the heights over the plains of the South Sea. The other went by the heights which overlook the wonderful mountain range which we call the Andes, situated to the east of the said sea. By these roads they went, saying with a loud voice “Oh you tribes and nations, hear and obey the order of Ticci Virachoch pachayachachi, which commends you to go forth, and multiply and settle the land” [compare Genesis 1:18]. Viracocha himself did the same along the road between those taken by his two servants, naming all the tribes and places by which he passed. At the sound of his voice every place obeyed, and the people came forth, some from lakes, others from fountains, valleys, caves, trees, rocks, and hills, spreading over the land and multiplying to form the nations which are today in Peru.<sup>80</sup>

The above traditions in the Andes explain in a very natural way, *the mission plan*, for how all the Nephites and Lamanites were converted and became one fold. A possible meaning for the new names Viracocha gave the tribes and places is that He was organizing the converts into units of the Church, i.e. wards and stakes today.

The route taken by the Lord ran through the region called the Colla - the populated high valleys between the two great cordilleras (ranges) of the Andes. Evans found that through the colla, the ancient people built a series of temples dedicated to Viracocha. Each temple was a place where



<sup>79</sup> Osborne, 76.

<sup>80</sup> Sarmiento, 34.

Viracocha had visited their ancestors. The Lord's mission route was called *Qhapaq Ñan* or The Path.<sup>81</sup> Evans also discusses the possibility that Viracocha's mission route through the Colla might have started at Tiwanaku and the Lord later visited the Island of the Sun. He writes:

Cobo wrote that even the Indians were confused as to the exact location where He [Viracocha] first appeared and that they also confused the creation with the flood in the same region (HIE, ch.2). Most chroniclers recorded that Viracocha first arrived at the Island of the Sun near Copacabana, Bolivia, and that He went to Tiwanaku right after. Others state He appeared first in Tiwanaku. In either case, they are just a few miles apart and the difference is not too significant....

The spiritual significance of the Lord's initial appearance to the Indians cannot be overstated. Of all the locations along the Holy Path, the Colla region stands preeminent in sacredness and symbolism. Prior to the Incas taking possession of the Colla in the 1400s, the region was inhabited by the Pucara and Chiripas (2500 BC to 250 AD), the Tiwanaku (200 BC to AD 1100), the Chullpas (AD 1000 to 12000), and the Collas, Aymaras, and Lupacas (AD 1200 to 1400). Each of these pre-Incan cultures held the lake area to be sacred. The Lupacas immigrated to the Colla from Chile due to the sacred fame of the region (Bouysson Cassagne, 1988). The Tiwanaku culture, that overlapped much of the Nephite period of the Book of Mormon, built an enormous temple complex. There is a giant block of andesite carved into the Door of the Sun at the temple of Kalasaya [standing stone] in Tiwanaku. Although most of the temple grounds lie in ruins, the entrance remains standing and there is a rich iconographic representation of Viracocha engraved over the doorway. It is reported that President Spencer W. Kimball partially translated the representation when visiting Bolivia in 1977.<sup>82</sup>

Since Tiwanaku lasted until AD 1100, it would have been a Lamanite city. Geographic clues in the Book of Mormon suggest that the southern part of Lake Titicaca, including Tiwanaku, and Cusco to the north were dominated by Lamanite people during the time of Christ's visit.<sup>83</sup> If so, it supports the theory that this second visitation of Christ in the New World was focused on the Lamanites. Therefore, it would not have been recorded in the Nephite records.



#### What Viracocha Taught His Converts

After nearly two millennia of apostasy, can one decipher what Viracocha taught his people in the Andes and equate how his teachings match the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Bible and Book of Mormon? We can start a search by studying the three core social values taught by Viracocha -- Duality, Reciprocity, and Equilibrium. Van Evans writes:

Where do these values come from? Acosta (2010) tells us that the wisdom and knowledge of *Sumaq Káway*

(Good Life) were collected from the people who lived along the Holy Path, and Guandinango & Crillo (2015) inform us that **“Viracocha is the being who instilled and spread this vision throughout the Holy Path,** indicating we are a part of a whole (family, country, ecosystem)” This good living philosophy is

<sup>81</sup> Evans, 43-45.

<sup>82</sup> Evans, 48-49.

<sup>83</sup> Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, Ch. 6-8.

represented in three fundamental tenets of Andean life: Duality, Reciprocity, and Equilibrium (Dávalos, 2008).<sup>84</sup>

What Evans is pointing out, is that even to this day, the behavior tenets of the people who live in the area where Viracocha taught still practice the teaching of their fair-skinned god.

## Duality

Evans continues:

From the drama in the Garden of Eden we learned that when Adam and Eve partook of the fruit their eyes were “opened” and they became as gods “knowing good and evil” (Moses 4:11, Genesis 3:5). The contrast between god and evil is a fundamental element of reality. Lehi laid out the foundation of this duality to his son Jacob,

For it must needs be, *that there is an opposition in all things*. If not so, my firstborn in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. *Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one*; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility (2 Nephi 2:11, emphasis added).

This is a stunning philological concept, one that drove the fundamental principles and practices of Andean life. *Yanantin* Expressed in several forms, Lehi’s principle of duality or opposition permeated the Andean cosmivision, at societal, communal, marital, and individual levels. The Quechua term *Yanantin* means. “complementary opposites” (Lajo 2002, 23, Milla, 2003, 180). It can also mean “lovers,” since a man and woman are complementary opposites joined as one flesh, or as Lehi put it, “a compound in one.”<sup>85</sup>

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## Reciprocity

The second value Viracocha introduced during his mission along the Holy Path was reciprocity. Sullivan provides this commentary:

The core value of Andean civilization was reciprocity. It remains to the present day the operative principle of indigenous life in the Andean village. Groups of men work together, now preparing one another’s fields for planting, now working together to make adobes for a newly married couple’s first house. Young children tend the flocks. While the women spin and weave, the men collect llama dung on the high slopes for use in the agricultural fields. When it is time to plant, men open the earth with a foot plow, the chaclla, while some place the seed in the earth. Everyone in the village participates in the annual cleaning of the irrigation ditches. One hand washes the other.

The ideal of reciprocity has deep roots in

<sup>84</sup> Evans, 145-146.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 146.

Andean civilization, which sought from its inception to build bridges between the world of the living and the unseen words, the worlds of the gods and of the ancestors. It was from the ancestors that the living had received the body of traditions and skills that made agriculture civilization in the Andes possible. To forget the ancestors was to sever the ties of reciprocal obligation that ensure the welfare of both the living and the dead in their separate modes of existence.<sup>86</sup>

The early Christians, as well as, the Utah pioneers practiced reciprocity. They also shared a reciprocal obligation to their dead ancestors. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Malachi 4: 5-6).

### Equilibrium

Evans informs us that the Quechua word *Rakinakuy* usually refers to the tenet of Equilibrium and means “an agreed upon distribution.”<sup>87</sup> The Inca economy was communal-based. Everyone shared in the work, and the distribution was as follows: 1/3 to the Inca and his government, 1/3 to the religious order, and the remaining 1/3 to the workers according to their needs. As noted before, Viracocha taught the people in the Andes to care for each other. It would seem likely that this meant temporally as much as spiritually or emotionally. In the Book of Mormon, we read how after the Lord’s visit to the people, they “had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free (4 Nephi 1:3). We know that the Book of Mormon concentrated on “sacred” matters, and not temporal (1 Nephi 19:6). It likely that Jesus Christ taught His converts in the Americas a new economic and social order, but that such teachings are not recorded in the Book of Mormon. The evidence for this is that after His visit, the people had all things in common. This was perhaps a shadowing of His teaching to the latter-day faithful when He instituted the United Order wherein His followers were taught that every man should be given “equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs” (D&C 51:3).

The question remains, “1,500 years after the Lord taught the people in the New World, were the Incas still living a social-economic order at resembled to some degree the utopia described in the Fourth Nephi?” (4 Nephi 1:2,3) The earliest Spanish chroniclers were impressed by the Incas society. However, a hundred years after the conquest others believed the system was repressive. Raffino and Stehberg wrote:

Throughout the course of scholarly study of the Inca much polemical debate has been dedicated to the question of how the Inca conquered so many ethnic territories in such a short period of time; the type of hegemonic influence the Pax Inca exercised over conquered ethnic groups; and state governing regulations in the incorporated territories. Such debates began in the mid-1600s in an ambience of antagonism produced by such pro-Tawantinsuyu (Inca Empire) chroniclers as Poma de Ayala, Blas Valera and Garcilazo de la Vega (Murra 1975). The above perspective was eventually contested by Sarmiento de Gamboa and Francisco de Toledo, who viewed the Inca state as a despotic and cruel apparatus.

In the present century, the Inca state has been interpreted primarily from various social-economic viewpoints. Included are the socialist models of Baudin, Means, Mariategui and Valcarcel, the oriental despotic model of Wittfogel, the asiatic mode of production of Marx, Metraux and Godelier, and the feudal model of Soriano. More recently, the utopia model proposed by Moro has gained popularity.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Sullivan, 48.

<sup>87</sup> Evans, 146.

<sup>88</sup> Raffino, Rodolfo and Ruben Stehberg, “Tawantinsuyu, The frontiers of the Inca Empire,” *Archaeology in Latin America*. London: Routledge, 1999, 168-170.

During my two-year mission in Bolivia and Peru, I had many opportunities to observe the communal social-economic order that facilitates life in the remote villages of the Andes. The communities have no central government enforcing their behavior. They have no dictator demanding that they work together. As a result, I side on the utopia model that hints of a long-ago Christian society.

Replenish the Earth and Make the Desert Blossom Like a Rose

During his mission in South America, Viracocha commanded the people to multiply and settle the land. This probably meant that He wanted His converts to repopulate the areas that had become desolate because of the calamities. This also brings to mind Brigham Young calling the Latter-day Saint

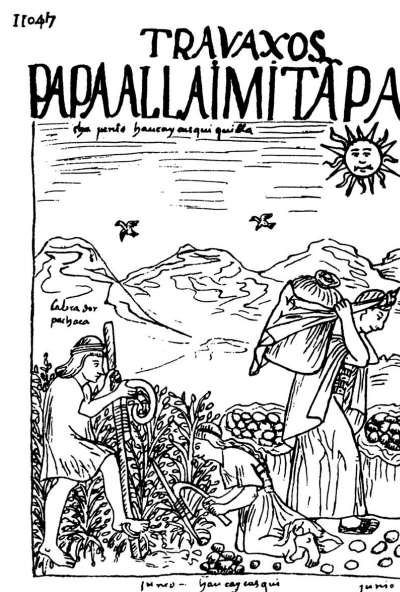


Figure  
10 Terraces in  
Sacred Valley

pioneers to spread out and settle the fertile valleys of Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, California, and even Alberta in Canada. In the literal sense, the Latter-day Saint pioneers used

their skills in irrigation to make the arid North American West blossom like a rose. So effective were the Saints' irrigation skills that over time the LDS Church was invited to send pioneers to colonize barren lands that earlier settlers were unable to farm. For example, Buffalo Bill Cody and the Governor of Wyoming asked the Church to build the Sidon Canal to the Lovell Valley. The amazing canal is still in use.

Francisco de Avila wrote of the legend of Viracocha, "He caused terraces and fields to be formed on the steep sides of the ravines, and sustaining walls to rise up and support them. He also made irrigation channels to flow...and he went in various directions, arranging many things."<sup>89</sup> The engineering feats of the ancient Peruvians are renowned, none more so than their vast network of terraced farms and long irrigation canals. Cieza de León believed that the Incas were unsurpassed in their ability to construct irrigation canals over difficult terrain.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Francisco de Avila, "A Narrative of the Errors, False Gods, and Other Superstitions and Diabolical Rights in Which the Indians of Province of Huarochiri lived in Ancient Times," in *Narratives of the Rites and Laws of Yncas*, vol. XLVIII, trans. and ed. Clemens R. Marcham. London: Hakluyt Society, 1873, 124.

<sup>90</sup> Calderwood, 428.

## Preparedness in Food and Other Essentials



*Figure 11 Inca Collcas for Storing Food & Essentials*

Another practical skill Viracocha taught the people during his mission in South America should ring true to Latter-day Saints in our day. Viracocha taught his people to store food and other essentials.<sup>91</sup> He taught them where to build their storage silos on the hillsides or other places where the cool winds from the tall mountains would preserve their

food stocks. Viracocha taught them how to keep insects away from their food stocks.<sup>92</sup> The Andean people lined the bottoms of their granaries with a variety of mint called *Muña* (*minthustachys mollis*). It would seem that Viracocha taught the people of the Andes to have the ancient world's foremost preparedness program. Not only did they carefully preserve huge stashes of grain, they also stored supplies of garments, wool, footwear, and other items.<sup>93</sup> When the Spanish arrived, they found that the Peruvians had a 10-12 year supply of food. The Inca preparedness program even outperformed the Nephites at Zarahemla who had a 7-year provision of food (3 Nephi 4:4).



## Caring for the Poor

Perhaps the Inca's food storage program represented far more than a communal economic order. As for the Incas' incredible preparedness program that was taught to them by the fair-skinned god Viracocha, Father Cobo wrote:

Therefore, it seems that all of the work done by the Indians would turn out to be beneficial to them. Especially if they were in need of it; and since the clothing that some made and the products that they harvested were not needed by the workers themselves, the Inca gave it to others, but not a thing left his kingdom for foreign kingdoms. In fact, from these same storehouses, he ordered alms to be given to the poor and needy, and after the province was supplied with the necessary provisions, he had them supply the needs of other surrounding provinces, and thus foods were transported from the storehouses of the coastal plains to the sierra and vice versa. All this was done with so much care, order, and speed that nowhere was anything lacking nor was anyone in dire straits, even though there were lean years; for the provisions went from person to person where they were needed,



<sup>91</sup> Sarmiento, 27.

<sup>92</sup> According to tour guide a Raq'chi, Peru.

<sup>93</sup> Betanzos, 99.

and what was left over or not necessary was kept in the storehouses for times of need. These storehouses were always well supplied because ordinarily there was food gathered from ten to twelve years back.”<sup>94</sup>

The Inca food storage program was far more than being good Christian neighbors. It was an empire-wide system for caring for those in need. In many ways, it mirrors the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ enormous welfare program.

#### Leadership Based on Merit Not Power and Equality of Men and Women

Sullivan calls the golden age of the Incas, the Age of Viracocha. I assume this was the time when the Lord visited the Andes and the decades that followed. During this time, “leadership was not based on force or deception, but belonged to the priest-astronomer, who by merit of superior insight alone was able to command respect.” Also during that time Andean men and women were valued equally.<sup>95</sup>

#### The Atonement

Of course, the most important doctrine Christ taught wherever He went in the New World was His gospel of salvation; that through Him man could be saved by repentance, living His gospel, and by enduring to the end, man could be redeemed and have eternal life. In the Old World, the Lord ended his mission by traveling to Jerusalem and teaching in the temple. Viracocha’s mission through the Colla was destined to take him to the great temple dedicated to Viracocha in Cusco, the most sacred of all sites for the Andean people. As discussed in my book, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, the initial temple in Cusco was built by Nephi who settled in the Cusco Valley.<sup>96</sup> When Viracocha reached the Cusco Valley, he brought forth from the grave a notable ancestor. Urton tells us that Viracocha called up out of the earth (resurrected) the great Lord for whom the land was originally named.<sup>97</sup> If indeed, Nephi had settled in Cusco, then the Inca capital was originally named the land of Nephi (2 Nephi 5:8), after him. Who would have been a great king and lord of the Andean people if not their first king Nephi? What greater reward could the brave, faithful, obedient, and courageous disciple of Jesus Christ, even Nephi, have received than to have been personally resurrected by his Savior?

#### Were the People of the Andes Once Christians?

The most fundamental question still must be addressed. If Jesus Christ personally taught the people of South America, is there, after centuries of apostasy, any remaining evidence that the people of the Andes had at one time practiced true Christianity?

The cornerstone of Christianity is the atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Andean Indians have a saying, “*Cay pacha tu coptin atarixunxi llapan chic caocarispá aichantin ymanamcuna canchic*,”<sup>98</sup> which means “When this world comes to an end, we will all rise up with life and with this flesh as we are now.”<sup>99</sup> Hearing the Peruvians saying this phrase, Betanzos wondered, “Someone made them understand this: they know it very well.”<sup>100</sup> Of course, students of the Book of Mormon know who taught the people of South America the principle of the resurrection. It was the Savior and Redeemer Himself.

Chronicler Garcilaso wrote that the Incas believed in the “universal resurrection...of bodies and immortality of souls,” and “everyone “will come alive again in the world and their souls will rise from the

<sup>94</sup> Cobo, 221.

<sup>95</sup> Sullivan, 154-155, 221.

<sup>96</sup> Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, Ch. 5 & 6.

<sup>97</sup> Urton, *The Legendary Past*, 38.

<sup>99</sup> Betanzos, 94.

<sup>100</sup> Betanzos, 94-95.

graves with every part of their bodies restored.”<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, the Andean people believed that when they died they would be united with their spouse.<sup>102</sup>

It appears that the indigenous people of the Andes had a clear understanding of the plan of salvation. Sullivan explains, “According to the indigenous view at the time of the Conquest, the cosmos was composed of three domains: *hantaq pacha*, literally ‘the world above’, *kay pacha*, ‘this world,’ and *ukhu pacha*, ‘the world below.’”<sup>103</sup>

Besides believing in the hereafter, the Andean people believed in the premortal existence. The Spanish who conquered the Incas never quite understood what the Incas meant by their traditional phrase: “In this world we are exiled from our homeland in the world above.”<sup>104</sup> Friar Calancha wrote of the Indians:

In addition to the stone and gold statues that we mentioned, which implied they had some knowledge of the ineffable mystery of the Holy Godhead, some of them knew about the Holy Sacrament, the veneration of the cross, of confession of sins to a priest, anointing with water, and baptism. They believed in the immortality of the soul and that there were rewards and punishments for the just and unjust after this life, and different seats and places for the souls in the next world. They prayed for the dead and had for a virtue a kind of offering for the dead. They fasted...and were chaste. They kept the festival [sabbath?] by doing no physical work.”<sup>105</sup>

In his book, *Willka Wasin Viracocha, The House of the Lord*<sup>106</sup>, Van Evans compares in detail the indigenous beliefs and practices of the Peruvian people to Christianity. Evans speaks Quechua and spent months interviewing traditional Indian priests in the Peruvian highlands. He writes:

It is impossible to overlook the similarities between the beliefs and practices of the Inca state religion and the principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. The Inca religion subscribed to a law of sacrifice, a law of obedience, a law of the gospel, a law of chastity, and a firm law of consecration. As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Ezra Taft Benson outlined “certain ordinances belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ” which are explained in the temples, namely, “the law of obedience and sacrifice, the law of the gospel, the law of chastity and the law of consecration” (Benson, 1977). Despite the corruption that accompanies a dwindling in unbelief, taken altogether, the specific doctrines of:

- Angels
- Dispensations
- The Spirit World
- The resurrection of the dead
- The final judgment and different rewards
- A prophet, seer, and fore-teller
- Priesthood authority and correlation
- The sacrament
- Confession of sins
- Baptism by immersion
- Fasting
- A type of sabbath day

<sup>101</sup> Evans, 79.

<sup>102</sup> Calderwood, 172-173.

<sup>103</sup> Sullivan, 57.

<sup>104</sup> Sullivan, 47.

<sup>105</sup> Evans, 73.



- The consistency of beliefs with the Book of Mormon of transoceanic migrations, signs of Christ's birth, and the darkness and destruction following His death,

all attest to the establishment of Christianity in ancient times.<sup>107</sup>

The recent discovery of secret Jesuit documents" known as the Quito manuscript reveals details about the pre-Columbian religion of the Andean people. A few Quechua-speaking Jesuit priests recorded their discussions with sages and translated ancient khipus (string writing systems). According to anthropologist Laura Minelli (2015), the Jesuits believed:

...there was a very ancient evangelization of the Americas that permits us to consider the Incas not as pagans but as ancient Christians, whose doctrine, therefore, only had to be updated...

(and) the Inca world had been evangelized in very ancient times, so much so that their religion still had traits of Christianity and its organization.<sup>108</sup>

Evans rightfully concludes:

Colonial history reveals an active agenda (by the Spanish) to destroy temples, religious artifacts, sacred vestments, manuscripts, and khipus that linked the Incan people to ancient Christianity. The Jesuits, or Society of Jesus, is a religious order grounded in education and in love for the Savior. More than one courageous Jesuit or priest paid a dear price for taking a stance that the Incas were indeed Christian and that they only needed a restoration of the true gospel. These priests were brought before the Inquisition, tortured, imprisoned, banished, and their texts disappeared.

While the goal to extirpate idolatry was never fully realized, it did successfully remove for a time the belief that Christianity existed among the Incas and ancient Andeans, and that Viracocha was the one true god, Jesus the Christ.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Evans, 86-87.

<sup>108</sup> Minelli, Laura L., *Lo Sagrado en el Mundo Andino*. Puno, Peru: Universidad Nacional de Altiplano, 2015, 21,23. Cited from Van C. Evans, *Willka Wasin Viracocha: The House of the Lord*, 19.

<sup>109</sup> Evans, 72.

*I remember seeing with my own eye old Indians who, upon seeing Cusco, stared at the city and gave a great cry, which then turned to tears of sadness as they contemplated the present and recalled the past*

Pedro de Cieza de León, 1553

## Chapter Three

### The Fall and Redemption of the Andean People

Before the white god Viracocha (Jesus Christ) left the Andes, he gave his people one last sermon. The Catholic Sarmiento recorded: “Intending to leave the land of Peru, he Viracocha made a speech to those he had created, apprising them of the things that would happen. He told them that people would come [the gentiles/Spanish] who would say that they were Viracocha their creator and that they were not to believe them; but that in the time to come he would send his [Christ’s] messengers [LDS missionaries] who would protect and teach them.”<sup>110</sup> [comments added] Again Father Bernabe Cobo noted that the Andean natives “use the name viracocha for all white men.”<sup>111</sup> Some came as wolves in sheep’s clothing, others later as faithful young men and women. Indeed, Viracocha’s last speech to the Andean people seems to be the same warning and eventual blessing Jesus gave Nephi.

And it meaneth that the time cometh that after all the house of Israel have been scattered and confounded, that the Lord God will raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles, yea, even upon the face of this land; and by them shall our seed be scattered.

And after our seed is scattered the Lord, God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed, wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders. (1 Nephi 22:7.8)

#### The Fall

The great builder of the Inca Empire was King Inca Yupanque - the Alexander the Great of Peru. His military campaigns built the largest pre-Columbian empire in the Americas. Among his many noble traits, he suffered two grievous weaknesses. First, like Solomon in the Bible, he allowed the idol gods of his conquered enemies to be placed in the temple of Viracocha in his capital of Cusco. Second, he admired one of these idols more than even Viracocha. He embraced the idol of the sun. He became so obsessed with the idol that he turned against Viracocha and declared himself “the son of the sun.” Inca Yupanque died in 1471, just six decades before the arrival of Pizarro and his tiny army of 180 Spaniards. Perhaps when Inca Yupanque was preparing to die, the king remembered the words of the ancient prophet Nephi who prophesied that “all those who shall hereafter be scattered and be confounded, because of the Holy One of Israel; for against him will they harden their hearts, wherefore, they shall be scattered.... (1 Nephi 22:5). Whatever the reason, Inca Yupanque declared before his death:

After the days of his grandson Huayna Capac there would be *pachacuti*, which means a “changing of the world. “Those lords asked him if that change of the

<sup>110</sup> Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 36.

<sup>111</sup> Cobo, 8.

world would be from a fire, or pestilence. He told them it would not be for any of those reasons but, rather, because white, bearded, and very tall men would come. They go to war with these men and in the end these men would subjugate them.<sup>112</sup>

However, Inca Yupanque's son returned to the worship of Viracocha. After an amazing dream, reminiscent of King Lamoni's dream where the Lamanite king saw Jesus Christ (Alma 19:13), Inca Viracocha saw in his dream the god Viracocha. Father Cobo described his dream as follows:

He, Inca Viracocha told his subjects that while he was in exile, resting one day in the shade of a large rock, the god Viracocha appeared to him in a dream in the figure and dress of a bearded white man with clothing that reached down to his feet. This god complained to him saying that although he was the universal lord and creator of everything---the sky, the sun, the earth, and men--and although everything was under his command, the Indians did not honor and venerate him as they should; rather they worshiped him with the same reverence that they showed to the Sun, Thunder, Earth, and other created things that by themselves had no other power than that which he gave them; and he let the young man know that in the sky, where he lived, he was called Viracocha Yachachic, which means "universal creator"...from then on the prince's name would be Viracocha"<sup>113</sup>

In other words, the prince saw the Creator and took upon him his Lord's name -- even a new name.

Inca Viracocha had relied on his god Viracocha for victory in battle.<sup>114</sup> However, his son, Huayna Capac returned to worshiping the sun. Prior to one battle, Huayna Capac made human sacrifices "to his father the Sun."<sup>115</sup> At this point, the god Viracocha had had enough. It was time for his prophecy to be completed and for the words of Huayna Capac's grandfather Inca Yupanque to be fulfilled. Huayna Capac was the last Inca not subjugated to the Spanish gentiles. Tall bearded white men were about to arrive. They called themselves their gods, but plunder for gold was their only concern.

Sarmiento summarized what he thought of the Indian's belief in the white god called Viracocha and his mission in the Andes: "This absurd fable of their creation is held by these barbarians and they affirm and believe it as if they had really seen it to happen and come to pass."<sup>116</sup>As the world now realizes, the barbarians were not the Andean natives, but the Spanish conquistadors who murdered, raped, and robbed the innocent people who had gracefully welcomed the Spaniards to their homeland. Betanzos reported the first message the king received of Pizarro's arrival. "The Inca asked them [the Inca messengers], 'What do these men [Spaniards] call themselves?' They [the messengers] only knew that they called them viracocha cuna, which means 'god'."<sup>117</sup>

After Pizarro landed in Peru in 1531, a message was sent to inform Inca Huayna Capac of the arrival of the Gentiles from Spain. However, what appears to have been the smallpox virus, reached the king before the message arrived. Huayna Capac died and his son, the crown prince, died a few days later. The Inca throne was left empty and in dispute. A bloody civil war broke out and never again would an Inca king rule the Andes. Inca Yupanque's prophecy had been fulfilled. Gentiles or viracochas had arrived in the Andes fulfilling the prophecies of both Book of Mormon prophets and Viracocha's last words before he left South America.

To seal the demise of the Inca empire, Atahualpa one of the two noble step-brothers trying to obtain the vacant Inca throne, completed a grievous blasphemy against the god Viracocha. Just a few days before Atahualpa learned of the arrival of Pizarro, he sent some lords to make a sacrifice at a large

<sup>112</sup> Betanzos, 128.

<sup>113</sup> Cobo, 127.

<sup>114</sup> Cobo, 127.

<sup>115</sup> Cobo, 154.

<sup>116</sup> Sarmiento, 36.

<sup>117</sup> Betanzos, 235.

*huaca* (temple or shrine) to the white god Viracocha. At the time, Atahualpa was marching toward the capital of Cusco to battle his half-brother for the throne. On route to Cusco, Atahualpa had severely punished those who had sided with his enemy. Betanzos relates that at the temple to the white god an “old man who was there.... He said that the Inca, son of the Sun (Atahualpa), should not kill so many people because Viracocha, who had created the people, was angry about it. He wanted him to know that from it no good would come to Atahualpa,”<sup>118</sup>

Atahualpa was so furious that he “climbed to the *huaca* where the idol (statue of the white god) was.” Atahualpa gave the idol such a blow in the neck with a battle axe he carried that he cut off the head. They then brought there the old man...Atahualpa also beheaded him with his battle axe.”<sup>119</sup> In a craze of anger, Atahualpa stopped his army’s march to Cusco and commanded his men to destroy the temple to the fair-skinned god. While still camped below the temple to Viracocha the first word came to Atahualpa that white men had arrived, and he realized he was doomed because of the prophecy of his grandfather.<sup>120</sup>

Cieza de León describes the beginning of the downfall of the Incas:

The considerable reputation of the Spaniards had already spread among the Indians--very different from what they had originally thought and believed, that they were a holy people, not disposed to kill or steal or do harm, but were friendly and peaceful toward them. Whereas now, according to those from that time who are still around, they say they [the Spanish] were cruel people without justice or truth because they went from land to land like thieves, pillaging and killing those who had not offended them, and that they brought large horses who ran like the wind and swords that cut anything within reach, and they said the same about lances.<sup>121</sup> It was the first warning to Atahualpa that the fifth dispensation had begun. Tens of thousands of Inca warriors had already died in the civil war between the half-brothers. Even more would soon die by the cannons and swords of the Spanish. Atahualpa would soon be betrayed by Pizarro and executed.

Atahualpa made two profound mistakes. First, he destroyed the statue and the temple of Viracocha and killed the old temple caretaker. Second, he did not remember the prophecy that the departing Viracocha gave that someday murderous people would come claiming they were Viracochas (gods) and not to trust them. If he had, Atahualpa would have summoned all his forces to attack Pizarro’s tiny army. As a result, he quickly witnessed that the Spanish were not gods who came to bless his people but rather to subjugate them.



The Spanish conquistadors not only murdered, plundered, and raped their way through the Andes, by killing the empire’s elite class, they left, as Cieza de León notes, “all of Peru was in disarray.”<sup>122</sup>

Centuries after the conquistadors killed tens of thousands of Peruvians, the native Andeans continued dying from European diseases. Henry Dobyns has studied early death records in Peru and calculates that nine out of every ten natives were killed by typhus, influenza, smallpox, diphtheria, and measles. He writes: “They died by scores and hundreds.... Villages were depopulated. Corpses were scattered over the fields and piled up in the houses

<sup>118</sup> Betanzos, 231-232.

<sup>119</sup> Betanzos, 232.

<sup>120</sup> Betanzos, 236.

<sup>121</sup> Cieza de León, 153.

<sup>122</sup> Cieza de León, 259.

and huts...The fields were uncultivated the herds were untended [and] the price of food rose to such an extent that many persons found it beyond their reach. They escaped the foul disease, but only to be wasted by famine.”<sup>123</sup>

The Inca Empire was gone forever, but not the legacy of their ancient forefathers and their faith in Viracocha. As for the shameful deeds of the Spaniards, Cieza de León penned, “Through our sins, wars have never been lacking in this kingdom, and the natives have been so molested and abused that most of the people are gone from it, which is a great shame because it happened in such a short time.”<sup>124</sup> Indeed, within a few months, the great Inca empire collapsed and the people were either dead or scattered, fulfilling the explicit prophecy declared in the Book of Mormon. The centuries that followed the arrival of Europeans were devastating for Native Americans throughout the New World. To the Gentiles, the fate of the Indigenous people of the Americas stands as a warning that the same feat could happen to them, and just as quickly, if they reject the voice of their Redeemer and his servants (1 Nephi 14:6; D&C 1:12-14).

William Sullivan penned these words in describing what happened to the people of the Andes:

When I first began to read the history of the Inca Empire, I was surprised to learn that it had existed for less than a century before being utterly destroyed by the Spanish Conquistadors. More startling still were the genuinely peculiar circumstances surrounding the demise of this South American kingdom, an empire built by military conquest, which stretched down the spine of the Andes from modern-day Columbia to southern Chile, and from the Pacific coast to the eastern foothills of the Andes. Into the midst of this mighty state, a Spanish expeditionary force of 170 adventurers blundered, late in the year 1532, and succeeded in subjugating an empire of some six million souls. Were this story fiction it would be considered the product of a baroque imagination.<sup>125</sup>

## The Redemption of the House of Israel in South America

### & Returning to their true Savior, Jesus Christ

As recorded by the early Spanish chroniclers, the Andean people believed in a god who had fair skin, wore a beard, was tall in stature, and walked and talked face-to-face with their ancestors. They believed Viracocha was like them, a man of flesh and blood. Their ancestors had seen their god and knew firsthand his nature. The people believed they were Viracocha’s children having been created by him and after his likeness. Their earliest records, as found in the Book of Mormon, bore testimony that Jesus Christ had a body just like theirs (Ether 3:7).

Having once had a natural and intimate relationship with their god, He being like them, the Andean people felt a close relationship to their understanding and loving god. Unfortunately, their relationship with God became distorted, blurred, and nebulous with the introduction of Catholicism by the Spanish. Enforced by the Office of the Inquisition in Mexico and Peru, the Spanish tortured and even killed anyone who taught that Jesus Christ was anything other than a vague spirit that filled the universe and was part of a confusing trinity concept foreign to the natives. Over time, their relationship with their creator, who was personal and like them, was forced into the shadows. Their only affiliation to their god of flesh and bones was kept alive in secrecy and taught through legends by their elders and sages.

With the publication of the Book of Mormon in Spanish (1886), Portuguese (1936), Quechua (1979), and Kuna (1981), the people of South America finally had the perfect library for renewing their understanding of the loving nature of their god: He, the Lord, who “has created earth and his children

<sup>123</sup> Mann, Charles, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*. New York: Vintage Books, 2006,102.

<sup>124</sup> Cieza de León, 267.

<sup>125</sup> Sullivan, 1.

to possess it (1 Nephi 17:36). Indeed, the principle purpose of the Book of Mormon is to testify of Jesus Christ:

Wherefore, he [Jesus Christ] will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel (1 Nephi 22:12).

From my limited perspective, the Book of Mormon provides a restored knowledge of the true nature of Viracocha. If I am correct, the promise made by the Lord in the Book of Mormon to the descendants of the Lamanites and the remnant of the Nephites is being fulfilled:

Wherefore, for this cause hath the Lord God promised unto me that these things which I [Nephi] write [in the Book of Mormon] shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation, that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph, that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand.

For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.

We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins (2 Nephi 25:21,22,26).



Perhaps the greatest harm the Spanish imposed on the people of the Andes was how they crushed their self-esteem. Although the Spanish crown had outlawed slavery of their conquered subjects, the law was ignored in the Americas. The common Andean Indian was enslaved as a serf on the new Spanish-owned plantations, a free-labor servant on a religious establishment, or worse of all, sent to the mines to dig for gold and silver - few survived. Outside of religious dogma, education of the indigenous population was generally denied. The atrocities committed by the Spanish were considered justified since many of the conquistadors thought of the natives as heathens, savages, and humans of a lesser class than they.

Before the conquest, Andean people held that they had been created by a caring god, Viracocha. Their god was their father since he made both men and women from clay and provided for them food, clothing, language, the arts, the earth, sun, moon, and stars. Indeed, they had once lived with dignity knowing that they were children of a gracious god. However, for centuries after the conquest, they were subjugated by demeaning circumstances.

Since the publishing of the Book of Mormon, three hundred years after the conquest, the living conditions of the indigenous people in the New World have gradually improved. During a tour I directed to Peru in 2024, nothing was more heartfelt to my guest than a visit to the Uros floating islands in Lake Titicaca. We were introduced to a Uros Indian who was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Her name was Dora and she greeted us with two of her daughters. As soon as we disembarked onto her little floating reed island, she bore her testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel. She told us about her son who was serving a mission for the Church in Santiago, Chile. Photographs and hugs followed. Suddenly, she and her two daughters began singing in Spanish the song, "I am a Child of God." We all wept tears of joy.

Not only has the Book of Mormon restored her self-identify as a noble daughter of Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ, Dora and her husband are using the sacred book to teach their children that they were descendants of Lehi, Joseph of Egypt, Israel, Issac, and Abraham. For the descendants of



Lehi throughout the world, the Book of Mormon is a miracle of knowledge and a healing balm for the soul.

#### The Restoration of Priesthood Power in South America

As noted before, President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote that areas of the Bolivia and Peru missions were the center of the Church in Book of Mormon history. This implies that from Lehi's time forward the holy priesthood of God, after the order of the Son, had been held and exercised by righteous men in South Americas (1 Nephi 2:7; Alma 18:18, 23:17). However, it is reasonable to assume that the last holder of priesthood keys was Moroni. Without keys, the priesthood of God could no longer be exercised in the Americas. Without the rights of the priesthood, the powers of heaven were no longer directly blessing the people in the Western Hemisphere (D&C 121:36). Even a superficial review of the history of North and South American indigenous people gives one the impression that they have suffered grievously under the domain of the European colonizers. Without the powers of heaven being manifest through the priesthood, they

have lived in a period of economic and social obscurity, as well as, religious darkness.

The dedication of South America for missionary work began the restoration of priesthood keys and the power of heaven for the blessing of the people who live on that continent. Having been set apart as missionaries, these young men and women became saviors of the people of Israel in the Americas. The Lord declared: "Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood a savior unto my people of Israel. The Lord hath said it, Amen (D&C 86:11)."

In the Lord's preface to this dispensation, He said:

And after having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jun. might have power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon. And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth. (D&C 1:29, 30).

The first official LDS missionary to South America was Apostle Parley P. Pratt who landed in Chile in the fall of 1851. President Brigham Young had requested Elder Pratt to visit Chile.<sup>126</sup> Pratt reported that he had a special interest in South America since reading the Book of Mormon for the first time in 1830.<sup>127</sup> It is not surprising then that he chose to land at Valparaiso, Chile, at 33 degrees south latitude

<sup>126</sup> Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, May 27, 1849, 2.

<sup>127</sup> Pratt Parley P., "Report of His Mission to Chile," October 31, 1852. *Lost Sermons*, Church History, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/content/museum/lost-sermons-parley-p-pratt-october-1852?lang=eng>

and the nearest port to where he believed Joseph Smith had declared Lehi's party had landed in Chile at 30 degrees south latitude.<sup>128</sup>

However, in 1851 the indigenous populations in South America were still living under suppressive strong-armed governments who squashed their human rights and prohibited freedom of religion. At that time, constitutions throughout Latin America legally and financially supported the Catholic Church as the state's sole religion. Apostle Pratt realized that conditions in South America were not ready for missionaries to return, but hoped that someday the continent would be ripe for the gospel.<sup>129</sup> Elder Pratt publicly demanded many reforms of the governments of South America including, "Give entire freedom to that divine and holy principle called human intellect, liberty, of thought, of speech and of the press."<sup>130</sup>

By the grace of God, the time for the doors to be open for the priesthood to bless South America finally came. While Church activity in Brazil and Argentina had started in the 1920s, these activities were mainly focused on European immigrants. It was not until the late 1950s that LDS missionaries were allowed and called to proselyte throughout South America. What happened from that time on was nothing less than a miracle. Apostle Parley P. Pratt's hope of opening the gospel to the heartland of the people of the Book of Mormon became a reality. The people of South America were finally allowed to freely hear the gospel and be blessed by the Lord's priesthood.

According to LDS Church Statistics, as of July 2024, there are 4,320,129 members of the Church living in South America. There are 91 missions, 5,628 congregations, 1355 Family Search Centers, and 25 temples blessing the members of the Church.<sup>131</sup> On a personal note, when I served my mission in Peru in 1970, the first stake had just been organized. When I completed my mission, my dream was that before I died there might be one temple in Peru to service maybe ten stakes. Today there are two-thirds of a million members of the Church in Peru, 115 stakes, and 9 temples either announced or operating in the country.

The restoration of priesthood keys to South America<sup>132</sup> has endowed Dora and the other four million members of the Church with the blessing of the temple. Could there be a greater blessing? As Russell M. Nelson taught: "We are instructed that all who worship in the temple will have the power of God and angels having 'charge over them.' How much does it increase your confidence to know that, as an endowed woman or man armed with the power of God, you do not have to face life alone? What courage does it give you to know that angels really will help you."



During my tour to Peru in 2024, our group visited the original temple in Lima, Peru. We met temple workers, pure-blooded sons of Lehi. To me, the emotions of seeing these brethren, dressed in white, were overwhelming. The Lima Peru temple was dedicated by Gordon B. Hinckley in 1988. His dedicatory prayer included these inspired words:

We are particularly mindful this day of the sons and daughters of Lehi. They have known so much of suffering and sorrow in their many generations. They have walked in darkness and in servitude. Now Thou hast touched

<sup>128</sup> Palmer, A. Delbert & Mark L. Grover, "Hoping to Establish a Presences: Parley P. Pratt's 1851 Mission to Chile," *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 38, 4, October 1, 1999, Provo, Utah: BYU, 119. Also B. H. Roberts reminds us the the dominant belief among the early Church members was that Joseph Smith revealed that Nephi landed in South America, B. H. Roberts, *New Witness for God*, 501.

<sup>129</sup> Acavedo, Rodolfo, "Apostle's 1851 Visit to Chile, 27 October 2001:

<https://www.thechurchnews.com/2001/10/27/23243374/apostles-1851-visit-to-chile/>.

<sup>130</sup> Palmer, 125.

<sup>131</sup> <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics>, accessed July 22, 2024.

<sup>132</sup> Nelson, Russell M., "Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Key," General Conference, April 2024.



them by the light of the everlasting gospel. The shackles of darkness are falling from their eyes as they embrace the truths of Thy great work. Surely father Lehi has wept with sorrow over his posterity. Surely he weeps today with gladness, for in this holy house there will be exercised the fullness of the priesthood to the blessing, not only of those of this and future generations, but also to the blessing of those of previous generations.

Let Thy people rejoice at the wondrous gift Thou hast bestowed upon them. May they be faithful unto Thee that they may be found worthy always to enter this holy house and partake of the blessings here to be offered. Through the ordinances to be performed in this house under authority of the everlasting priesthood, they now have available every gift for time and eternity that Thou hast bestowed in this the dispensation of the fullness of times.

Bless this nation and its neighbor nations which have befriended Thy servants. Bless those who govern that they may do so with equity, extending to the people that freedom which is consistent with Thy divine plan.

Bless Thy work that it shall blossom and grow in this nation and in its neighbor nations of South America. Remember, Father, Thine ancient covenant with the children of Lehi that in the latter days Thou wouldst favor them and bring to them a knowledge of their Redeemer. Make them strong in faith and magnify them in leadership in Thy kingdom.<sup>133</sup>

#### Humanitarian Work - Nursing Angels

Viracocha not only promised to one day send teachers to his people but also protectors. The Book of Mormon repeatedly refers to the Lord's promise of "temporal" blessing that the Gentiles will provide to those of the house of Israel and that these blessings apply to the seed of Lehi for they are of Israel (2 Nephi 6:4-5). s

They shall be scattered among all nations and shall be hated of all men.

Nevertheless, after they shall be nursed by the Gentiles, and the Lord has lifted up his hand upon the Gentiles and set them up for a standard, and their children have been carried in their arms, and their daughters have been carried upon their shoulders, behold these things of which are spoken are temporal; for thus are the covenants of the Lord with our fathers; and it meaneth us in the days to come, and also all our brethren who are of the house of Israel (1 Nephi 22:5, 6). (also see 1 Nephi 21:22-23, 28, 2 Nephi 6:7; 10:9)

The coming to South America of the holy priesthood and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has brought eternal and invaluable blessings to the people of that continent. However, the Gentiles are still obligated to provide temporal blessings to Lehi's seed living throughout the world. How are these temporal blessings being provided?

The single largest source of temporal blessing comes directly from the Church's World Wide Humanitarian Services and the organized service projects performed by its local congregations. Each year, Church Humanitarian Services and South American Church units provide dozens of humanitarian projects. In just one press release in February 2024, it

<sup>133</sup> Lima Peru Temple Dedicatory Prayer, Dedicated 10-12 January 1986, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

announced nine different humanitarian projects supported by the Church in Argentina, Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.<sup>134</sup>



Still, the responsibility to protect the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas rests squarely upon the shoulders and in the hearts of every person who believes in the Book of Mormon. It is imperative that believers reach out to assist the fallen Lamanite nations, be they in South America, Central America, North America, or among any other population.

Today, there are hundreds of humanitarian projects being performed by individual members of the Church. Here are examples I am personally associated with. In November 1983, over a decade after our missions, Timothy Evans, David Richardson, and I returned to Peru. Tim was my missionary companion in Juliaca, Peru. David was my companion in Cusco, Peru. We did not return as tourists, or even as former missionaries coming to check on the welfare of our converts. We were there to obtain legal status in Peru for the Andean Children's Foundation, a non-profit organization Tim established to help needy children in Peru and Bolivia. We filed the necessary legal documents in Lima and visited orphanages and Catholic relief organizations to see how the new foundation could help. Tim's initial efforts led to the creation of Ascend Alliance which installed over 1,500 freshwater wells in villages in Bolivia and Peru. Tim later co-founded Choice Humanitarian, which according to its website, has touched over 2 million lives, in 750 rural communities with over 2000 field projects.

For 29 years David has worked non-stop for the World Council of Credit Unions designing economic development projects for poor people in credit unions. His work took him to 56 countries around the world where he developed loan and saving projects to help people conquer poverty.

Besides spending countless hours researching evidence for the historicity of the Book of Mormon, I promote a member-owned small tourist business in Peru. During each tour we conduct to Peru our guests visit an orphanage where tour guests have already established financial support arrangements for the children.

My missionary companions are not alone. Members are heeding the Book of Mormon's call to lift up the poor communities of the world. The Lord's promise is being fulfilled and will continue to be fulfilled until poverty and ignorance no longer curse Heavenly Father's children.

<sup>134</sup> <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/service-benefits-children-and-communities-around-south-america#:~:text=The%20Church%20of%20Jesus%20Christ,other%20efforts%20in%20their%20communities.>

*Every activity, every lesson, all we do  
in the Church, point to the Lord and  
His holy house.*

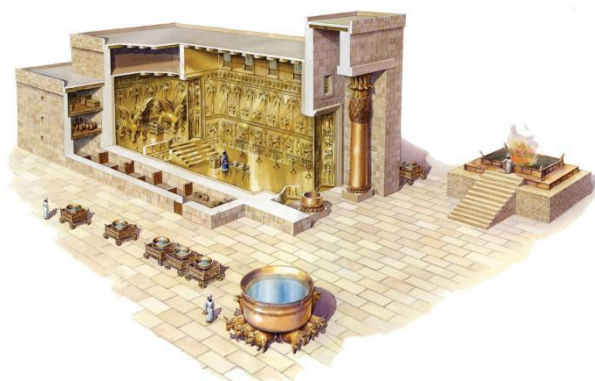
President Russell M. Nelson<sup>135</sup>

## Chapter Four

### Temple Worship in Ancient South America

LDS Bible Dictionary reads, “A temple is literally a house of the Lord, a holy sanctuary in which sacred ceremonies and ordinances of the gospel are performed by and for the living and also in behalf of the dead...Whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth who will obey his word, they have been commanded to build temples.”<sup>136</sup> The Book of Mormon states that there was a time when everyone kept the commandments (4 Nephi 1:12), even a season when the church of Christ existed in all the lands (4 Nephi 1:1). If there were times in the ancient Andes when the people converted to the Lord and obeyed his commandments, then it should follow that the ancients built temples and held sacred temple ceremonies.

It is not surprising that the Book of Mormon history of temples in the promised land started as soon as Lehi’s family arrived. Once Nephi settled in the land of Nephi, he constructed a temple “after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things” (2 Nephi 5:16). Was Solomon’s temple a mud burial mound or a stone



pyramid made for observing the stars, burying the dead, or offering human sacrifices to a blood-thirsty god? The answer is no. Solomon’s temple consisted of the following main components: a courtyard, a large circular font resting on 12 oxen, a pit for sacrificing animals, another smaller circular font for washings, a large enclosed building (180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 50 feet high) consisting of a large ceremonial room and a holy of holies. Such

temple complexes have not been discovered in the Western Hemisphere outside of South America. Evans writes about ancient temples in South America:

The scriptures indicate that God Himself will mandate the design of His temples. As Moses was creating the tabernacle he was charged, “See saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Hebrews 8:5). In constructing Solomon’s temple, “David gave to Solomon his son the pattern...of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about” (1 Chronicles 28:11-12). The Kirtland temple was to have a “lower court and a high court, according to the pattern which shall be given unto you hereafter” (D&C 94:4-5). If the design of Old World and modern-day temples is

<sup>135</sup> Nelson, Russell M., “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings, *Ensign*, May 2001, 32.

<sup>136</sup> Bible Dictionary, *The Holy Bible, Authorized King James version*, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Salt Lake City, 1979, 780-781.

inspired by God, then it should not surprise us to see similar features designed in New World temples. These features include, but are not limited to, stairways up to the temple entrance, the edifice is elevated on a natural or man-made hill, squared inner sanctuaries, a “holy of holies,” and the design elements of the circle and the square (Nibley, 1992, pp 139-173).

For example, several temples at the ancient city of Caral (3000 BC) on the central coast of Peru feature a circular area below with inner sanctuary square areas at the high level. We see the combination again about a millennium later at the Temple of Chavin de Huantar (1800 BC) and another 3000 years later on the Island of Amantaní in Titicaca, where the Temple of Pachamanma [Mother Earth], is round and the Temple of Pachatata [Father in Heaven] is square. [comments added]<sup>137</sup>

Another feature of temples is their symbolic representation of the three phases of the human life cycle: the preexistence, earth life, and the hereafter (telestial, terrestrial, and celestial). The trilogy of these three elements was found in the courtyard of Solomon's temple, the great ceremonial room, and the holy of holies. The same symbolism is found in the three rooms of the great Coricancha temple in Cusco and the three ceremonial rooms at the temple of Puchaucancha, at Pachacamac near Lima Peru.<sup>138</sup>

Three Andean temples built along the holy path Viracocha traveled through the Peruvian highlands are of particular interest and will be discussed in this chapter: the Golden Enclosure temple or Coricancha in Cusco, the Kalasasaya temple at Tiwanaku, and the temple of Viracocha in Raqch'i, Peru. The Coricancha was the most sacred place in the Inca world and the center of the Inca's universe. Similar to the LDS temple in Salt Lake City, every street and city in the empire was addressed by its distance and direction from the Golden Enclosure. The Coricancha the Spanish found was very different from the simple temple originally built on the same site when Cusco was first settled.

The original temple was simple in ornamentation and was constructed by the founder of Cusco, Manco Capac. So who was Manco Capac, the very first builder of the Coricancha? Every Peruvian schoolchild knows the legend of the first four Inca brothers. According to the legend, Manco was the youngest of the four fair-skinned Viracocha brothers who came to the Andes and became their nobles. The oldest brother was cruel and violent, so the youngest brother and head of the family, Manco Capac eventually had to separate from his elder brothers. The descendants of these two brothers have hated each other ever since that initial breach. The youngest brother was kind and taught the people how to grow food, build houses, and live clean lives. Manco Capac also taught them a new religion and led them into battles. So loved was Manco Capac that the people made him their king, the first in a line of 105 Incas<sup>139</sup> or kings. Manco Capac first settled in the Cusco Valley at the village of Wimpillay<sup>140</sup> which dates back to the Inca Late Formative Phase (500 BC to AD 200).<sup>141</sup>

The parallels between the first prophet king in the Book of Mormon and the Andean legend of Manco Capac are obvious to anyone who has studied their two historical accounts. There are considerably more striking matches between these two giant personalities. For this reason, I dedicated an entire chapter in my book *Nephi in the Promised Land* to comparing Manco Capac to Nephi. I came to the conclusion that Manco Capac had to have been Nephi.<sup>142</sup> If so, why did the common Andean people refer to him as Manco Capac and not Nephi? The descendants of Manco Capac, even to this day, consider

<sup>137</sup> Evans, 104.

<sup>138</sup> Evan, 109.

<sup>139</sup> Mann, 397.

<sup>140</sup> Bauer, Ancient Cusco. 172.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 41-43, 186.

<sup>142</sup> Potter, Nephi in the Promised Land, Ch. 5.

themselves to be of a noble class - the Incas. A well-documented fact is that the Nephite “elite” (Mosiah 1:2-3) and the Inca elite spoke a private language not shared by their general populace. This included two different sets of personal names for the same person, Nephi/Manco Capac.<sup>143</sup>

Perhaps the most significant parallel between Manco Capac and Nephi is that they both built an ancient temple in Cusco (city of Nephi). Nephi’s temple was after the manner of Solomon’s and its “construction was like unto the temple of Solomon,” but without “so many precious things” (1 Nephi 5:16). On a small hill in the center of Cusco, Manco Capac built the first temple in Cusco. Cobo wrote:

He [Manco Capac] selected for this a very spacious and prominent site, and on it he started to build the great temple of Coricancha, it was not such a magnificent edifice as it later became, but a humble and crude workmanship with adobe walls. This is because in that unrefined period the technique of stonework that their successors achieved later had not been seen or used. Thus, this Inca only began the magnificent temple of the Coricancha (which means “golden house”), and the other kings who succeeded him raised it up to the magnificence and loftiness it had attained when the Spaniards found it.<sup>144</sup>

Indeed, the loftiness of the Coricancha temple was breathtaking. When the Spanish arrived in Cusco, the world had not seen such adornment. Its decorations were perhaps the most costly of any building built up to that time. It was a wonder of the world with its walls sheathed in pure gold on the side where the sun rose and of gold alloy on the other sides.<sup>145</sup>

The very name of the temple, “Golden Enclosure” or “golden house,” was given because of the incredible wealth of gold that was embedded in the temple’s chapels and its walls from ceiling to floor. It contained an altar of pure gold, and like Solomon’s temple, a large fountain in its courtyard.<sup>146</sup> However, unlike the temple in Jerusalem, with its brazen sea font, the fountain of the Cusco temple was cast in gold. The golden garden in the courtyard of the Coricancha contained life-size golden replicas of plants and animals, as well as, its focus point a life-size golden statue of the fair-skinned god Viracocha.<sup>147</sup>

One historical account indicates that the golden plates that lined the temple walls contain the sacred history of the Incas. We will never know for sure because the Spanish melted down all the plates they plundered from the Coricancha. Still, we know that there was a history recorded on boards (plates) adorned in gold and that the historical records were kept in the temple in Cusco. The fact that the records were kept in the temple and not the royal palace suggests that the records the Spanish destroyed were sacred writings. Sarmiento recorded:

Besides that they had and still have, special historians in these nations, a hereditary office descending from father to son...He [Inca Yapanqui] had them [historians] in Cusco for a long time, examining them concerning their antiquities, origin, and the most notable events in their history. These were painted on great boards, and deposited in the temple of the Sun, in a great hall. There such boards, adorned with gold, were kept as in our libraries, and learned persons were appointed who were well versed in the art of understanding and

<sup>143</sup> Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, 108-110.

<sup>144</sup> Cobo, 110.

<sup>145</sup> Bauer, 143.

<sup>146</sup> Bauer, 143.

<sup>147</sup> Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, 133-139.

declaring their contents. No one was allowed to enter where these boards were kept, except the Inca and the historians, without a special order of the Inca.<sup>148</sup>

What I call the eternity windows is another feature of the main temple of the Coricancha. The temple consisted of three ceremonial rooms - the pre-existence, earth life with the main temple altar, and the hereafter room. Cut in perfect alignment are three windows allowing one to see in a straight line through all three rooms - the eternities.



*Figure 12 Eternal Windows Coricancha Temple, Cusco, Peru*

A revelation in our day seems to confirm that Nephi built the original temple in Cusco, Peru. Mark L. Glover wrote in an article for BYU Studies:

During President Hugh B. Brown's (member of the first presidency at the time) visit to Cusco in February 1963, Elder Tuttle expressed his worry over the Church in that region. On February 7 in a Cusco meeting with sixty-seven people, of which only twenty were members, President Brown echoed Elder Tuttle's concern: "Although there were many men present in the meeting, there were only a few who seemed to have the 'Mormon Look' or seemed to be potential leaders." Two days later, when talking to the four missionaries in the city, President Brown suggested that "opposition was clearly in evidence and the condition of the people beyond description." The missionaries needed to continually recognize that the blood of Israel was among the people, and they needed to be searched out. President Brown believed that "Lehi, Nephi, Mormon, Moroni and other of the Prophets who were on the other side were yearning to have their descendants hear and to accept the Gospel."<sup>149</sup>

An intriguing addition to this event is that there seems to have been more to the visitation of these ancient Book of Mormon prophets. It has been alleged by a former mission president that during that meeting in Cusco, the ancient prophets had a lot more to say to President Brown. Brent Pratt Thomas has taught that the then Andean Mission President Sterling Nicolaysen was contemplating closing the missionary work in Cusco and asked President Brown for his thoughts. President Brown allegedly said that he would give his answer in the morning. The next morning President Brown came down for breakfast and told President Nicolaysen that he had not slept all night. He said that Book of Mormon prophets had been with him that night and that they did not want Cusco closed for missionary work. The prophets, (apparently Lehi, Nephi, Mormon, Moroni, and others) told President Brown that there would be a temple *again* in Cusco. A temple "again" in Cusco implies that there had already been a house of the Lord in Cusco in ancient times.<sup>150</sup> If so, the announcement on April 3, 2022, by President Russell M. Nelson that a temple will be built in Cusco, Peru has special significance to the children of Lehi living in the Andes.

#### The Temple's Golden Altar Piece

<sup>148</sup> Sarmiento, 41-42.

<sup>149</sup> Glover, Mark L. "A Land of Promise and Prophecy, Elder A Theodore Tuttle in South America 1960-65," *BYU Religious Studies*. Provo: BYU Religion Studies Center, 2008. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book/land-promise-prophecy>.

<sup>150</sup> Homestead, Christian, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIC0hSj9UdE&t=669s>.

The holy of holies in the temple in Cusco housed two treasures, a golden bench or altar and a gold altarpiece. The bench was melted into Spanish bullion. Perhaps the most interesting existing artifact from the holy of holies is the great altarpiece that was referred to as “Viracocha’s Standard.” Fortunately, the Inca Pachakuti Yamqui (Juan Pachacuti) made a crude drawing of the altarpiece and marked on it what he believed the symbols on the altar meant. According to Inca oral tradition “Viracocha’s Standard” was created by none other than Manco Capac (Nephi), and thus would have been an item found in the original temple of Manco Capac (Nephi).

According to Sullivan, the symbols on the altarpiece represented important religious concepts. Indeed, they prove that in Manco Capac’s time, the primary god of the Peruvians was Viracocha and not the sun. Sullivan explains that at the very top of the standard is a “male” form of a cross that is represented by the three “equal” stars, (a possible reference to the godhead). Below the cross is a large circle that represents Viracocha, the “sun of the sun” meaning the one who created the sun and its orbits<sup>151</sup> —in other words, the first world age and the creation. To one side of the oval is the icon of the sun, the male icon, while on the other side is the moon, the female realm.<sup>152</sup> LDS Temple seating places men on one side and women on the other. Below the oval symbol of Viracocha is the Inca “female”



cross. William Sullivan believes that the male and female crosses represented the “world parents”<sup>153</sup> and Viracocha was their son. He writes: “Here, then, arrayed about the central symbol of Viracocha—an oval on the staff—are the world parents.... Here also the ultimate, cosmic origin of Viracocha’s [Christ] androgyny is fully expressed. As the creator of the starry and ecliptic realms, Viracocha [Christ] was also their [‘world parents’ – ‘celestial parents’] offspring.”<sup>154</sup> [comments added]

- A. In addition, there is a cluster of 12 or 13 stars on the altar that could be a reference to the Twelve Tribes of Israel or Viracocha and the Twelve Apostles. Of course, no one today actually knows for certain what Manco Capac meant by the drawings engraved on the golden altarpiece, but one does not need to stretch his imagination far to see that the symbols include the fundamental elements from Lehi’s dream. Latin characters have been added to Pachacuti’s drawing to identify the author’s suggestions of how the symbols could have possibly represented the

<sup>151</sup> Sullivan 106, 107.

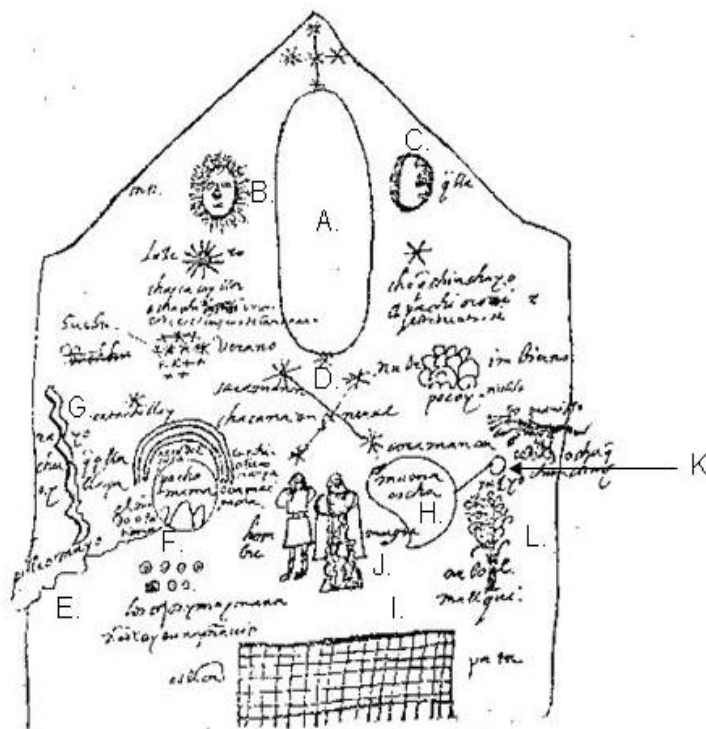
<sup>152</sup> Sullivan, 103, 106.

<sup>153</sup> Sullivan, 104.

<sup>154</sup> Sullivan, 103-105.

elements of Lehi's Dream of the Tree of Life.

## Rough Drawing of Altar of the Temple Of Viracocha



- A. Pachacuti noted that the large golden disk represents Viracocha, whom the Incas called the “Eternal Light.” The Lord told Nephi that He was his “light in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 17:13). The display at the Coricancha provides this description: “Wira-qochan (Viracocha) ‘Teacher of the world’. The author of the drawing comments that this element was a golden plate, round or oval, that symbolized the creator of the world, Wiraqocha, who was the supreme deity of the Incas according to the Pachacuti Yamqui’s chronicle. The plate was made by the order of the first Inca ruler, Manko Qapaq (Manco Capac).”
- B. The Sun (Celestial Kingdom or fruit of the Tree of Life)
- C. The Moon (Terrestrial Kingdom)
- D. Stars (Celestial Kingdom or Southern Cross). Similar symbols of the sun, moon, and stars are found on some Latter-day Saint temples.
- E. A twisting river flowing through a canyon. According to the display at the Coricancha, this symbol represented “Pilcomayo (Pillku-mayu), in Quechua – “river of many colors,” probably an extinct name of some specific river of importance (R. Lehmann-Nitsche).” In his dream, Lehi sees his family following the course of a river. The members of Lehi’s family were descendants or remnants of the house of Joseph. The “remnant” is symbolic of Joseph’s coat of many colors. (Alma 46:23)
- F. Tall mountains from which the river flows—exactly the conditions found in Wadi Tayyib al-Isa, my candidate for the valley of Lemuel, where Lehi had his dream of the Tree of Life. Undoubtedly, the valley of Lemuel formed the imagery of Lehi’s dream.<sup>155</sup> However, the display in the Coricancha provides another interpretation. It claims that the round sphere represents the “earth.” This could be seen as the world, *Idumea*, or the pride of those in the tall and spacious building of Lehi’s dream. The guide at the Coricancha made an interesting observation. He noted that if the ancient Incas knew the world was round, they must have had contact with the ancient Egyptians, who realized that the world was a sphere (1 Nephi 1:2).

<sup>155</sup> Potter & Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, also see George Potter documentary film, *The Tree of Life* (Bear River City, Utah: Bear River Training and Consultancy, 2005).



- G. The display at the Coricancha suggests that it represents the deity of thunderstorms and lightning, the master of rain. The river in Lehi's dream is characterized as being both of pure waters and of filthy waters. In other words, the river had pure waters until a rain storm transformed it into a muddy torrent.
- H. A Lake or gulf where those who let go of the iron rod before reaching the tree perished in its depths. The display at the Coricancha notes "It can be interpreted as the Pacific Ocean or the Titicaca Lake."
- I. This figure is believed to have represented a *colcampata*, meaning terraces or granaries. If this represented a terraced (multi-leveled) man-made structure, it might also have represented a large and spacious building where people mocked those trying to reach the tree of life; letting go of the rod, they wandered into the gulf (see H. above). Between the river and the terraced structure are seven round objects. The Coricancha display suggests that these are "eyes." The eyes could represent people looking from the river to the man-made structure. The Book of Mormon states that when the people saw the tall and spacious building, "they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed" (1 Nephi 8:25-27).
- J. Lehi and Sariah looking toward the Tree of Life. Pachacuti labeled the left figure "*hombre*" meaning "man," and the right figure "*mujer*" and "*Mama*" ("woman" and "mother").
- K. According to the display at the Coricancha, the small circle and line that goes to the oocha or qucha (sea) represent: "Pucyo (*pukyu*), in Quechua— 'water spring.'" In Lehi's dream a straight and narrow path, as well as an iron rod, led to the fountain of living waters" (1 Nephi 11:25, 12:16) The small river that flows in the Valley of Lemuel (wadi Tayyib al Ism) starts at a spring head next to a great palm tree.
- L. The Tree of Life is clearly marked by Pachacuti as "*arbol*," which is Spanish for "tree." The tree appears to be a symbolized palm. The Coricancha display reads: "Manko Qapaq [Manco Capac or Nephi] established a cult to his parents [Lehi and Sariah at the tree] symbolized by two trees in Paqariq Tanpu [perhaps the Valley of Lemuel], the mythical place of origin of the Incas." Above the figure of a tree is a grouping that looks like a pile of stones. The Coricancha display suggests that this represents "Pocóy (*poqoy mita*) in Quechua— "the season when the crops ripen." The fruit of the Tree of Life was of perfect ripeness, being most precious and desirable above all other fruit (1 Nephi 15:36).

### Temple Orientation

I have studied five temples that were constructed along Viracocha's Holy Path from Tiwanaku to Cusco. Starting in the south these included the temples at Tiwanaku, the Isle del Sol, Pukara, Racqh'i, and Cusco. One feature that stands out is that these temples have a single entry gate facing the east. The most important temple in ancient Peru was the Coricancha temple in Cusco. The temple was aligned along the cardinal points and the celestial bodies. Due east of the temple, at the equinox, was mountain Pachatusan with a pillar for measuring space-time.<sup>156</sup> A "ray" or road "ran due east" from the Temple of the Sun to the mountain Pachatusan that was used to observe the fall and spring equinox.<sup>157</sup> The high altar of the temple was on the east end, and the gold-plated sides of the Coricancha temple faced the rising sun to the east. Again, Nephi wrote that he built his temple after the manner of the temple of Solomon.

Joseph Fielding McConkie notes of the temple in Jerusalem:

"It should not go unnoticed that the (temple) gate was always to be located on the east side of the tabernacle. The first of the sun's rays would always point themselves to it. This heavenly light would thus reveal the beauty of the multicolored gate as the light of heaven

<sup>156</sup> Sullivan, 297

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

reveals Christ as “the way, the truth, and the life”...the orientation of the East Gate of the temple of Jerusalem was such that on the days of the spring and fall equinoxes the first rays of the rising sun, heralding the advent of the glory of God could penetrate into the Holy of Holies. Joseph Smith said that the coming of the Son of Man will be as the light of the morning coming out of the east.”<sup>158</sup>

Why were the Andean temples aligned to the east to observe the equinoxes? Brother Hans Ralf Casperly Moreno of Bolivia provides an important insight. His reference point is the great temple of Tiwanaku. The city of Tiwanaku was located on the south end of Lake Titicaca, an area I believe was occupied by the Lamanites during Book of Mormon times. According to Erik Marsh, Tiwanaku was first settled around 110 AD when there was much growth in the area.<sup>159</sup> This period matches the time when there was peace in the Book of Mormon lands, the people were happy, were blessed, and prospered (4 Nephi 1:18). Marsh notes, “Between 450-550 AD other large settlements were abandoned leaving Tiwanaku as the pre-eminent center in the region.”<sup>160</sup> This compares well with the narrative in the Book of Mormon when the Nephite cities were abandoned and the Lamanite civilization dominated. If true, the people at Tiwanaku were once Christians and possibly had true temple rites.

Hans Ralf Casperly Moreno provides an important connection to the alignment of the gate of the temple of Tiwanaku, known as the Kalasasa, and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in the latter days. He writes:

The object of my study, involves the analysis of one of the very own architectural characteristics of the Temples of the Tabernacle of Moses, King Solomon, and Nephi, which was the main door that was oriented towards the East and that gave access to its interior. That portal was oriented towards the east, that is to say to the "East" where the sun rises (Numbers 3: 38). With respect to the Tabernacle, the people of Israel took it with them while they wandered for forty years through the desert. It was during the time of King Solomon (1 Kings 6: 1-38) when the Lord God again gave them the command that the people would have to build a temple for him, but this time, it would no longer be portable, that is, disassembled, made of wood and fabric, but rather a single architectural structure that was built with durable material rooted to the earth.

Throughout the history of Israel, this temple would be known as the Temple of Solomon, with an architectural characteristic very similar to that of its predecessor, and this characteristic was that its portal was oriented in an easterly direction.

The fact that the doors of those temples were placed facing "East" was not done for simple aesthetics, or because it looked better, but rather it conveyed a deep spiritual meaning, and it was a symbolic representation of the door to the Garden of Eden that was towards the "East", and it was through that same direction that Adam and Eve left (Moses 4:31) after their expulsion, with the promise that if they repented, and obeyed the ordinances that the Lord had revealed to them, they would return again to the presence of our

<sup>158</sup> Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985, 102-103.

<sup>159</sup> Marsh, Erick, “Temporal Inflection Points in Decorated Pottery: A Bayesian Refinement of the Late Formative Period Chronology in the Southern Lake Titicaca Basin, Bolivia,” *Latin American Antiquity*, 30 (4) 798-817.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

Heavenly Father, after leaving this state of probation. The other meaning is when the Savior Jesus Christ will return again for the second time with all his splendor and glory (D&C 43:22).

Later, approximately between the years 588-570 BC, a prophet named Nephi built a temple on this American continent (the promised land), which was constructed following the model and architectural design of King Solomon's temple (2 Nephi 5:16). It is very logical to assume that his temple had its main door oriented towards the "East". The Book of Mormon clearly explains that that temple was built following a model similar to Solomon's temple. As stated above, the door of this temple was oriented towards the East. Nephi's temple, as it has been called, had to follow that same order in its architectural structure.

I have always wondered why the Lord instructed his servants to build temples with doors astronomically facing east. The answer is that He would return from that direction (3 Nephi 11:1-8; D&C 88:95-96), and as I explained above, it was in accordance with the symbolism of the door leading to the interior of Eden.

When I meditate and ponder about Nephi's temple, I say that today, there must be archaeological remains of some architectural structure here in America, with the same architectural characteristics of that temple that Nephi and his people say they built.

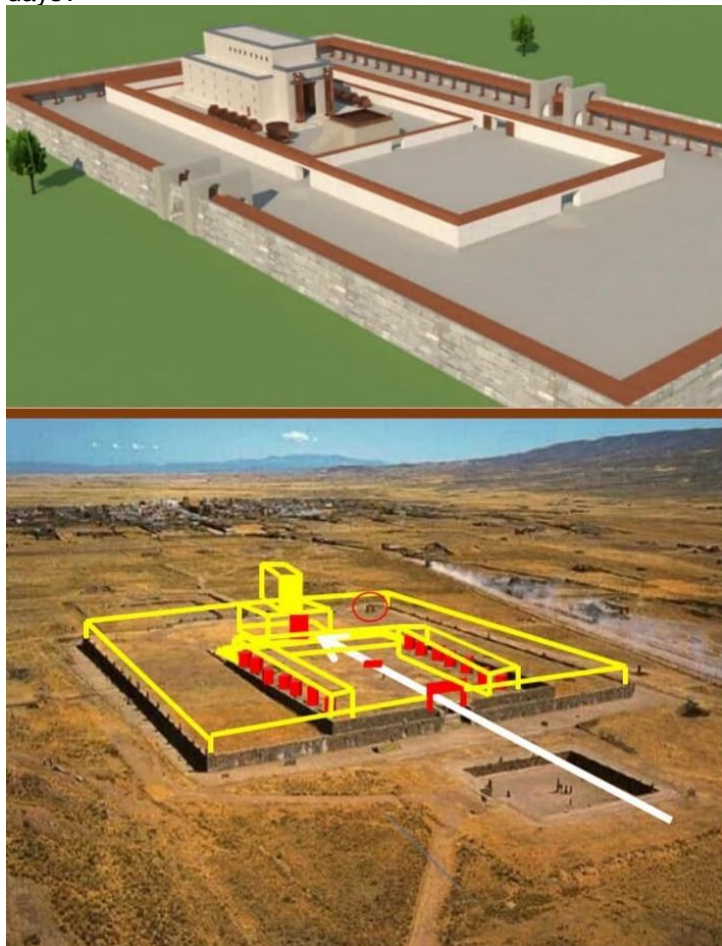
It is extremely interesting on September 21st (Spring Day), between 06:45 - 07:15 am, an astronomical festival occurs at the archaeological site of the so-called Kalasasaya temple, located in the ruins of Tiwanaku (Bolivia) where the first rays of the sun from the east direction, enter through the main door of the temple, thus marking the spring equinox.

This date, you will remember, was an early day of spring when the restoration of this last dispensation began with the first vision of the prophet Joseph Smith, (1820) (JSH. 1: 14-17). On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September from 1823 to 1824 were the dates when the angel Moroni showed him (Joseph Smith) and finally gave him the gold plates to be translated, and which today known as the Book of Mormon. In my opinion, the most important date in the Tiwanakota (Nephite) calendar is September 21, as expressed in the structure of the Kalasasaya temple itself. It is not a coincidence that this occurs, but rather, those who built it knew perfectly well why they were building it with that astronomical orientation toward the East.

Today, at the Kalasasaya temple, a spiritual celebration is held each year on September 21 (by Indigenous people). This date has great significance for the beginning of the restoration of all things (the spring equinox in South America).<sup>161</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Moreno, Hans Ralf Casperly, "Temples Like Solomon's," translation by George Potter, South American School of Book of Mormon Geography. September 21, 2023, [https://www.facebook.com/groups/libromormon/permalink/1421418771768612/?mibextid=Nif5oz&paipv=0&eav=AfZk248CBE5Zaee5bFvwv\\_vROkT0ObjVsmb6XqWP99z-YITX7p40rdSQ7UpyElchRww&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/groups/libromormon/permalink/1421418771768612/?mibextid=Nif5oz&paipv=0&eav=AfZk248CBE5Zaee5bFvwv_vROkT0ObjVsmb6XqWP99z-YITX7p40rdSQ7UpyElchRww&_rdr)

Brother Moreno connects the orientation of the temples dedicated to Viracocha along the Holy Path to the spring equinox - September 21. In the Southern Hemisphere the September equinox announces the return of Spring, new life, and the Sun -- all symbols of the Savior. September 21 appears to have been the most important day for the Nephites and Lamanites. What better day for their ancient record to be brought forth in the Latter-days?



*Figure 13 Comparing Alignment of Solomon's Temple and the Kalasasaya Temple at Tiwanaku, Hans Ralf Casperly Moreno (Bolivia)*

The construction of the Kalasasaya temple has been dated to Book of Mormon times.<sup>162</sup> The orientation of the temple to the equinox is only one of many architectural features of the Kalasasaya temple that has convinced archaeologist Dr. Hans Ralf Casperly Moreno that the complex was built after the manner of Solomon's temple.<sup>163</sup> His research on the Kalasasaya temple and the ordinances performed within it can be studied on the website Escuela Sudamericanista S.U.D. de la Geografía del Libro De Mormon.<sup>164</sup>

Raqch'i - a window into Andean temple worship

During Viracocha's journey north from Lake Titicaca to Cusco an important event took place. At Raqch'i, seventy-three miles south of Cusco, Viracocha approached the lands of the Cacha tribe. By changing the last "a" to "i" in Cacha, we derive Cachi, the common language name of the violent eldest brother of the original four Inca. Therefore, Cachi is a

<sup>162</sup> Marsh, Erik J, "A Bayesian Re-Assessment of the Earliest Radiocarbon Dates from Tiwanaku, Bolivia," Radiocarbon, Vol. 54, Nr 2, University of Arizona, 2012, 213. Approximately AD 310 (range AD 160-410),

<sup>163</sup> <https://youtu.be/oJIU3PmkvaQ?si=ELD15ww9r-MTokUf>.

<sup>164</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/libromormon/>

possible counterpart to Laman. It would follow then that the people of Cacha were probably descendants of Laman and were righteous but not familiar with the Nephite teaching about Jesus Christ. Betanzos recorded the following tradition:

When he [Viracocha] came to a province which they call Cacha, which belongs to the Canas Indians and is eighteen leagues from the city of Cusco, Viracocha called out these Canas Indians. They came out armed, however, and did not know Viracocha when they saw him. They all came at him with their arms to kill him. When he saw them coming, he understood what they were coming for and instantly caused fire to fall from heaven, burning a range of mountains near the Indians. When the Indians saw the fire, they feared they would be burned. Throwing their arms to the ground, they went straight to Viracocha and all threw themselves on the ground before him. When he saw them thus, he took a staff in his hands and went where the fire was. He gave it two or three blows with his staff, which put it completely out, whereupon he told the Indians that he was their maker. The Canas Indians built a sumptuous guaca (huaca), which means a shrine or idol, at the place where he stood when he called fire from heaven, and from which he went to put it out."<sup>165</sup>

Sarmiento recorded the same story but noted that those who tried to kill Viracocha when they saw the fire, "were terrified at the fearful fire. They came down from the hill and sought pardon from Viracocha for their sins. Viracocha was moved by compassion."<sup>166</sup> Once the Indians realized that the white Viracocha was not a Nephite enemy, they asked Viracocha to forgive them of their sins. I ask, "Who can forgive sins but Jesus Christ?" To honor the site of this great miracle, the Incas erected a temple at Raqch'i. The grand structure was the largest enclosed building constructed in the ancient Americas, a two-story temple measuring 328 feet long by 66 feet wide by a height of 48 feet.

Even more than the grandeur of this temple are the ceremonies that took place within its courtyard and rooms. They are of considerable interest. Van Evans spent months at Raqch'i studying with traditional priests the ceremonies that still take place on the temple grounds. In the courtyard was a 14-foot-tall statue of Viracocha.<sup>167</sup> There were two fountains for washings before entering the temple. Evans notes: "From my interviews with the shaman, the interior walls of the temple were reportedly covered in gold and silver plates with scripture written on the walls."<sup>168</sup>

In his book, *Willka Wasin Wiraqocha: The House of the Lord*, Evans discussed the following temple ceremonies still observed at Raqch'i:

- *Karpay* or initiation rite for only those chosen and worthy
- Washing and anointing by a priest - worshiper wears a simple white robe
- Receiving of a new name
- Stone endowment
- Pilgrimage and entrance to the temple, symbolic of Viracocha's holy path through the Andes
- Marriage ceremonies
- Proceeding through temple rooms until the second floor where there was an altar and the image of Viracocha
- Prayer Circle - Ritual of *Yanantin*<sup>169</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Betanzos, 10.

<sup>166</sup> Sarmiento, 35.

<sup>167</sup> Evans, 125.

<sup>168</sup> Evans, 126.

<sup>169</sup> Evans, 128-136.

Remnants of Andean temple worship at Raqch'i are presented in detail in Evans' book. Included in Chapter 10 is a lengthy discussion of the Signs, Tokens, and Covenants associated with Andean temple worship.

## Part Two

### Archaeological & Historical Evidence for the Book of Mormon in the Andes



*I can not but think the Lord  
has a hand in bring to past his  
strange act, and proving  
the Book of Mormon true in the eyes  
of all the people....It will be as it  
ever has been, the world will prove  
Joseph Smith a true prophet by  
circumstantial evidence, in  
experiments, as they did  
Moses and Elijah.*

*Joseph Smith, 1842*



## Chapter Five

### The Archaeological Record Points to South America

When trying to find the civilizations that Christ visited in the Americas, students of the Book of Mormon tend to overlook just how sophisticated the Jaredite and Nephite civilizations were. The Jaredites came from Sumer in Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization at that time. Despite their highly technical roots in Mesopotamia, the Lord promised that “There shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed (the Jaredites), upon all the face of the earth” Ether (1:43). Sumer in Mesopotamia had the world’s first written language, including storytelling and poetry. The first known record of a marriage ceremony between a man and a woman was recorded in Sumer and dates to around 2350 BC. The Sumerian society possessed architectural skills on a grand scale including large public buildings, temples, enormous pyramids, and the use of the arch. They understood mathematics and created the 360-degree circle and from it the current system of time, the sixty-minute hour, and sixty-second minute that is still used. They developed the skill of identifying ores in the earth and how to mine them, smelting them in extreme temperatures, and forging them into a variety of complex alloys. Besides inventing the wheel, they transported goods on the world’s first sailing ships called barges. Their children attended schools. They had a highly organized government, a code of laws, and sophisticated religious practices. Sumerians could enjoy walks through grand buildings and temples decorated with terra cotta ornamentation with bronze accents, beautiful mosaics, imposing brick columns, and metal-cast figures of animals and humans. The Sumerian physician practiced herbalism by extracting chemical elements from plants. They had knowledge of anatomy and used surgical instruments. Their hydraulic engineers created an advanced system of ditches and canals to irrigate fields and to control flooding in the cities. They wore the first cloth-woven textiles, sealed their documents with signet rings, and tilled their fields with animal-driven plows.<sup>170</sup> This was the nature of the Sumerian civilization at the time the Jaredites left their homeland in the third millennium BC. Once the Jaredites arrived in the New World, they established a civilization that became even greater than the nation they left (Ether 1:43).

As for the Nephite civilization, it was even more advanced than the Jaredites. Lehi and his family came from the land of Jerusalem circa 600 BC. The family was literate in at least two languages. Besides their advanced technologies, the Nephites practiced the law of Moses with its strict hygienic codes. Consider the sophistication of Nephi’s kingdom in the Promised Land.

We did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses.

<sup>170</sup> Potter, George D., *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2020, 24-25,



And the Lord was with us; and we did prosper exceedingly; for did sow seeds, and we did reap again in abundance. And we began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind.

And I, Nephi, did take the sword of Laban, and after the manner of it did make many swords,...

And I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance.

And, I did build a temple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon. (2 Nephi 5: 10, 11, 14-16).

To discover civilizations that match the Jaredites and the Nephites, here is an abbreviated list of 25 fundamental characteristics that one would need to find having existed during Book of Mormon times. These are Book of Mormon imperatives. They are archaeological and historical prerequisites, not electives if the Book of Mormon historicity is to be defended in serious arenas of scholarship.

- Ruins of Civilizations that Date to Book of Mormon Times
- Gold Plates
- Gold, Silver, Copper, and Brass in Abundance
- Iron and steel
- Metals as a Form of Exchange and A System for Counting Commodities
- A Fair-skinned Indigenous Population
- A Land Divided by Two Opposing Societies
- A Vanished Written Language
- Raised Flocks and Herds of Sheep and Other Animals
- Animal Sacrifices According to the Law of Moses
- Silk and Costly Apparel
- Armor Made of Thick Clothing
- Climatic Conditions Associated with Nephite Crops
- DNA Supporting Oral Traditions of Origin
- Temples Built after the Manner of King Solomon's
- A Large Highway System
- Walled and Fortified Cities
- Cities and Houses Made of Cement
- Oceangoing Maritime Tradition
- Sunken, Buried, and Burned Cities
- A Decimal System
- Solar and Lunar Calendars
- Highly Skilled Doctors
- Fields of Ancient Bones
- Cultural Evidences of an Ancient Connection to the Near East

Based on the tens of thousands of archaeological excavations that have been studied throughout the Western Hemisphere, any credible archaeologist can explain that the only civilizations that had all these characteristics between 3000 BC and AD 400 were found in South America, starting with Caral and ending with the Incas.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>171</sup> The cradle civilization of Mesoamerica was the Olmec civilization which first appears as no more than simple villages around 1200 BC. "The Olmec Legacy, Ancient Americas, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISO-bFwMx2l>.

## 1) Ruins of Civilizations that Date to Book of Mormon Times

There is only one known civilization in the Western Hemisphere that dates to the time of the early Jaredites. It is the ruins of the Norte Chico area with its capital city of Caral in the Supe Valley. The remains of Caral are located 110 miles north of the city of Lima, Peru. In my book, *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*, I explain how the civilization of Caral



*Figure 14 Ziggurat Style Pyramid, Caral circa 2700 BC*

blossomed into existence approximately three hundred years after archaeologists believe the first burnt clay brick ziggurat was built in Mesopotamia. Biblical archaeologists believe the tower of Babel was a ziggurat.<sup>172</sup> The Norte Chico civilization had many similarities to Mesopotamia, including six great pyramids in the

style of ziggurats. Cotton fabrics at Caral have been carbon-14 dated to roughly 2627 BC.<sup>173</sup> The discovery of Caral in 1994 has significant implications for Book of Mormon archaeology. For the first time, science confirms that an advanced civilization existed in the Americas that dates to the time of the Jaredites and the tower of Babel. Before Caral, Book of Mormon scholars were left to theorize that the Jaredites were somehow related to the people in Mesoamerica. This was a weak defense since the natives in Mesoamerica were at best living at a Neolithic level when the first Olmec center was established around 1150 BC<sup>174</sup> - that would have been an absence of some 1500 years of Jaredite civilization!

Of course, the names archaeologists call the civilizations of the ancient Americans were not their actual names. What the indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere called themselves has been lost in history, unless they are the civilizations recorded in the Book of Mormon.

The late Jaredite period aligns well with the rise and fall of what archaeologists call the Chavín Civilization and Paracas Civilization. Chavín was a highly righteous culture that rose around 900 BC and ended circa 250 BC.<sup>175</sup> Their domain was along the northern coast of Peru as far south as Paracas, Peru<sup>176</sup> (the land northward). The Paracas Civilization was influenced by Chavín and is estimated to have existed between 800-100 BC. In verse 21 of

<sup>172</sup> Potter, George, *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, Utah, 2020, 4-5, 29-35.

<sup>173</sup> Franzen, Harald, "Caral May Be the Oldest City in the Americas," *Scientific America*, April 27, 2001, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/caral-may-be-the-oldest-c/>

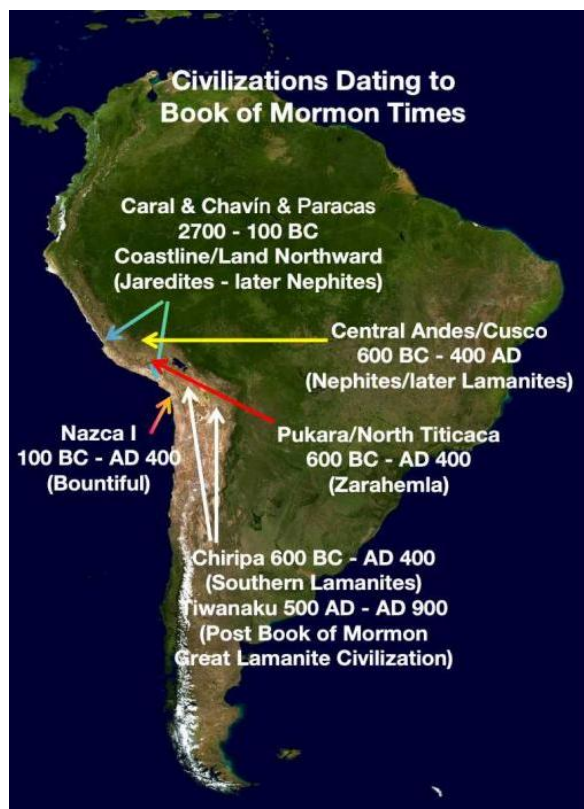
<sup>174</sup> Britannica, "Mesoamerican civilization," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mesoamerican-civilization>.

<sup>175</sup> Burger, Richard L., "Chavín de Huantar and Its Sphere of Influence," *Handbook of South American Archeology*. New York: Springer, 2008, 681-706.

<sup>176</sup> Bennett, Wendell C., "The Position of Chavín in Andean Sequences," *Proceeding of the American Philosophy Society* 86, 2 Symposium on Recent Advances in American Archeology: 1943, 323-327.

the Book of Omni, we are told that when Mosiah's party discovers Zarahemla, the people of that city said to them that the last Jaredite king, Coriantumr, had lived with them for nine moons. The footnote in the Book of Mormon indicates that this occurred between 279 and 130 BC.

Besides Jaredite time period civilizations of Caral in Norte Chico and Paracas, archaeologists have discovered other advanced civilizations in the Andes that match possible Nephite and Lamanite civilizations. These include the civilization centered at Cuzco the Central Andes Early Intermediate 600 BC - 200 AD (candidate for the City of Nephi), the Northern Titicaca Basin Late/upper formative period 500 BC - 400 AD



(candidate for Zarahemla), Early Nazca 100 BC - 400 AD (candidate for Bountiful), northern coastal Moche 100 - 800 AD (candidate for lands northward), the Early Tiwanaku IV late Chiripa II Middle Formative 600 BC - AD 400 (candidate for southern lands of the Lamanites), and the Tiwanaku 500 - 900 AD (possible great Lamanite civilization that rose after the defeat of the Nephites).

Most notable is that the time of the demise of the Caral and Paracas (Jaredites) civilizations is the same period that the Nephites expanded from Bountiful to the lands northward. By 72 BC many Nephites were migrating north and taking possession of "all the land northward, yea, even all the land which was northward of the land of Bountiful, according to their pleasure" (Alma 50:11). The words "according to their pleasure" seem to indicate that there were no longer people in the areas northward to resist the Nephites from taking possession of the lands to their

north. In other words, the Jaredites had destroyed themselves, and the fertile valleys in the land of desolation and northward were open for new settlements.

## 2) Gold Plates



The Book of Mormon informs us that well before Nephi fabricated his plates, the Jaredites had created their library on gold plates (Mosiah 8:9). Nephi commenced writing on his gold plates once he was settled in the promised land (1 Nephi 19:1). Simply put, how could there have been a promised land and the golden plates without gold? Richard L. Burger and Yale geologist Robert B. Gordon discovered thin gold and copper foils in Peru. The foils date to 1410-1090 BC. These ancient dates were confirmed by testing the carbon atoms that collected on the sheets. The gold foils were worked cold, that is, pounded with stone hammers into foils between 0.1 and .05

millimeters thick (.004 to .002 inches). The hammering technique for making golden foils or mate plates is an example of a rarely known technology.

In 2007 archaeologists discovered cold-hammered gold artifacts at a secure and undisturbed burial site at Jiskairumoko, Peru. The artifacts were dated to a Late Archaic-Early Formative period site in the Lake Titicaca basin. Carbon-14 dating indicated that the discovery is the earliest known gold recovery so far in the Americas - 2155-1936 BC.<sup>177</sup> To date, there has been no archaeological evidence of any form of gold working north of Panama that dates to Book of Mormon times.

### 3) Metallurgy: Gold, Silver, Copper, Brass In Abundance

The Nephites and Jaredites possessed highly developed metallurgical skills. They worked brass, iron, and steel (Jarom 1:8; Ether 10:23). Brass meant that the people of the Andes knew how to make alloy metals by combining ores.

Like gold, silver production has a long history in Peru. So far, the earliest discovery of silver smelting in the Lake Titicaca area dates back to 40 BC - 120 AD, which makes it the oldest known silver smelting in the Americas. The discovery was made at Huajje, a mound with pottery shards dating to 500 BC.<sup>178</sup> It seems likely, then, that silver was being mined there even earlier. The process used to produce the silver at Huajje was described as “complex, multistage, labor-intensive.”<sup>179</sup> Several Peruvian silver mines have been dated as far back as 200 BC.<sup>180</sup>



There was a high demand for copper in ancient Peru. Copper and its uses were known to have existed as far back as 600 BC.<sup>181</sup> The metal was used for farming, weapons, and for various domestic uses. George Petersen writes, “The lack of studies and statistics make it difficult to estimate the tons and volume of copper consumed during pre-Columbian time. It is similarly difficult to estimate the extent of copper mining that took place in ancient Peru, however, copper was used widely and was very important to ancient Peruvians.”<sup>182</sup>

The early chronicler Fernando de Montesinos claimed that giants had come to Peru and that they had steel instruments. It is also believed that the Ataucano Indians of Chile used lead weapons against the conquistadors.<sup>183</sup> His giants could have been Nephi and his brothers. Nephi was of large stature and brought with him to the new world a steel sword (1 Nephi 4:9; 2 Nephi 5:14-15). Although there has been no archaeological evidence of steel

<sup>177</sup> Aldenderfer, Mark and Nathan M. Craig, Robert J. Speakman and Rachel Popelka-Filcoff, “Four Thousand Year-Old Gold Artifacts from the Lake Titicaca Basin, Southern Peru,” *Proceeding of the National Academy of Science of the USA*. April 1, 2008, doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0710937105.

<sup>178</sup> Schultze, Carol A. and Charles Stanish, et. al. :Direct Evidence of 1,900 Years of Indigenous Silver Production in the Lake Titicaca Basin of Southern Peru,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, PNAS*, October 12, 2009, 106 (41) 17283-17280. pnas.org/content/106/41/17280.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Petersen, George, “Mining and Metallurgy in Ancient Peru,” *Arqueologicas 12* (Lima, Institute of Anthropological Investigations, 2010), Special Paper 467, The Geological Society of America, 2010, 57.

<sup>181</sup> Petersen, 28.

<sup>182</sup> Petersen, 28

<sup>183</sup> Calderwood, 382-383.

having been forged in the Andes, the metal mentioned in the Book of Mormon could have been a hardened copper alloy or a form of iron that would have rusted away long before our day.

The ancient people in the Andes created brass by mixing copper with zinc and arsenic. Copper-arsenic alloy, brass, was poured into molds to create hard metal farm tools and ornaments. Brass working in Peru have been dated to the Early Moche time period (400 BC).<sup>184</sup>

While wild claims about metalwork have been purported to have existed in parts of North America during Book of Mormon times, these claims are misleading and false. According to the Smithsonian Museum, the Hopewell Culture had no technology for smelting metals. Their Stone Age culture could only pound copper ornaments from pure copper found on surface rocks and tiny iron beads pounded from meteorites.<sup>185</sup> As for Mesoamerica, the Maya society is also classified by archaeologists as a “Stone Age culture” because they had no quantities of metal works until the 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. With only a few ornament pieces discovered during the late classic period circa 600-800 AD, it is believed that the Maya’s eventual knowledge of metalwork was brought from South America via maritime trade.<sup>186</sup>

#### 4) Iron, Steel, and Ziff

William Hamblin argues that the term “steel” in the Book of Mormon, as used in the King James Bible, meant copper or bronze ( a hardened copper alloy created by mixing copper with tin).<sup>187</sup> The ancient Peruvians were amazing metallurgists. A recent study tested 120 different metal alloys worked by the northern Peru cultures that existed in Book of Mormon times.

Petersen explains, “The use of arsenic to harden copper dates to ancient times in the Old World and only .065% arsenic is needed to give copper resistance to deformation. Arsenical copper objects were found in the Middle East that date to the Early Sumero period (before 2358 BC).”<sup>188</sup> Sumero or Sumer was the homeland of the Jaredites. While scientists are clueless as to how the Peruvians became so skilled in a large range of copper alloys, the Book of Mormon implies that someone aboard the Jaredites’ ships must have been a highly skilled metalworker.

Ore deposits are referred to five times in the Book of Mormon. It was not until 2008 that archaeologists discovered the only known pre-Columbian iron ore mine in all the Americas. The mine dates back at least 2,000 years and was discovered in Nazca, Peru.<sup>189</sup> Steel meant that they had the ability to improve iron by smelting out impurities. To date, there has been no evidence of smelting steel in the pre-Columbus Americas. Until such evidence is found, Hamblin’s theory still holds.

<sup>184</sup> Petersen, 61,

<sup>185</sup> Donahue, Michelle Z., “Ancient Native American beads traced to otherworldly source: an iron meteorite,” *Smithsonian Insider*, 23 May, 2017, Smithsonian, Donahue, Michelle Z., “Ancient Native American beads traced to otherworldly source: an iron meteorite,” *Smithsonian Insider*. Smithsonian, May 23, 2017, [https://insider.si.edu/2017/05/ancient-native-american-beads-traced-otherworldly-source-meteorite/#:~:text=](https://insider.si.edu/2017/05/ancient-native-american-beads-traced-otherworldly-source-meteorite/#:~:text=To%20the%20Hopewell%20Culture%2C%20ancient,the%20technology%20to%20smelt%20iron.)

To%20the%20Hopewell%20Culture%2C%20ancient,the%20technology%20to%20smelt%20iron.

<sup>186</sup> Hosler, Dorothy, “Ancient West Mexico Metallurgy, South and Central American Origins and West Mexico Transformation,” *American Anthropology*, 90, 1988,. 832-855.

<sup>187</sup> Hamblin, William, “Steel in the Book of Mormon,” [fairmormon.org/archive/publications/steel-in-the-book-of-mormon](http://fairmormon.org/archive/publications/steel-in-the-book-of-mormon). FAIR Mormon, 2018 Fair conference, August 1-3.

<sup>188</sup> Petersen, 61.

<sup>189</sup> “Archaeologists ‘Strike Gold’ with Finds of Ancient Nazca Iron Ore Mine,” *Science Daily*, February 3. 2008, [science-daily.com/releases/2008/01/0801129125405.htm](http://science-daily.com/releases/2008/01/0801129125405.htm).

The Nephites had a metal called ziff. What kind of metal could it have been? Ziff is mentioned only twice in the sacred record. First it appears in Mosiah: “And he (King Noah) possessed, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of the copper, and of their brass and their iron” (Mosiah 11:3). The footnote in the Book of Mormon refers the reader to the Hebrew words: adjective: “shining” and the verb: “to overlay or plate with metal.” The second use of the word ziff in the Book of Mormon seems to confirm that ziff was a metal overlay or plate used to adorn buildings. “King Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine works of wood, and of all manner of precious things, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of brass, and of ziff, and of copper” (Mosiah 11:8).

When the Spanish arrived in Cusco they reported seeing something the world had not witnessed before or afterwards, a temple complex plated in gold. The temple’s decorations were perhaps the most costly of any building constructed up to that time. On the side of the temple grounds where the sun rose the exterior walls were sheathed in pure gold plates. The other sides of the temple exterior walls were covered with plates made of a gold and copper alloy. The Andean people were the ancient world’s master refiners of metal alloys. The shiny gold and copper alloy that lined three sides of the Cusco temple is a good candidate for the metal ziff.

#### 5) Metals as a Form of Exchange and a System for Counting Commodities

Alma Chapter 11 provides an interesting insight into how the Nephites used metals as a means of trading for commodities and how these commodities were counted. To expedite trade the Nephites used pieces of gold or silver to exchange for commodities (Alma 11:4-10). When the Spanish arrived in South America they found the Andean people were using pieces of copper shaped like axes as monetary exchanges.<sup>190</sup> The word for copper in Quechua is “anta” or in Aymara “anti” which compares well to the Nephite money “antion” (gold coinage Alma 11:19) and “onti” (silver coinage Alma 11:6).

The Nephites used a modified “binary” system to count commodities<sup>191</sup> (Alma 11:8-19). Counting progressed from 1/2 to 1 to 2 and 3. Thus  $1 \times 2 = 2$ ,  $2 \times 3 = 6$ . The Nephite counting system was the same as the binary system used by the Andean people who often employed a tool called the Inca Counting Boards to record commodities (1, 2, 3, 6).<sup>192</sup>

While Mesoamerican and North American people might have used shells and beads as means of exchange, they had no gold or silver during Book of Mormon times, thus, they did not have a monetary system that matches Alma Chapter 11.

#### 6) A Fair-skinned Indigenous Population

There are oral traditions of fair-skinned people who once lived among the peoples of Central and South America, however, is there any evidence? When the Spanish arrived in Peru they found that the ruling Inca tribe “were white, a light brown color, and among the lords and ladies, they were more white, like the Spaniards.” The Book of Mormon hints that not all the Nephites were destroyed (Moroni 1:2). Indeed, the Lord promised that a remnant of the Nephites would survive (2 Nephi 3:3). For this reason, it is interesting that a tall fair-skinned tribe still exists in the Andes of Peru. They are the Chachapoya, and can still be visited. John Roach of the National Geographic News writes “On the eastern slope of the Andes mountains in northern Peru, forests cloak the ruins of a pre-Inca civilization, the size and scope of which explorers and archaeologists are only now beginning to understand.

<sup>190</sup> Smith, M.E., “Axe-Monies and their Relations,” *Ethnohistory* 40 (1) 1993, 148-149.

<sup>191</sup> Smith, Richard Pearson, “The Nephite Monetary System,” *Improvement Era*, Vol 57 No. 5, (May 1954, 316-317).

<sup>192</sup> Mathispower4U, “Inca Counting Boards,” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL1N\\_V89g78](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL1N_V89g78).

Known as the Chachapoya, the civilization covered an estimated 25,000 square miles (65,000 square kilometers). The Chachapoyas, distinguished by fair skin and great height, lived primarily on ridges and mountaintops in circular stone houses.<sup>193</sup>

A 2008 London Daily Article reported that a lost city had been discovered in Peru and that it was linked to the legendary white-skinned people.

Ancient city discovered deep in Amazonian rainforest linked to the legendary white-skinned Cloud People of Peru

A lost city discovered deep in the Amazon rainforest could unlock the secrets of a legendary tribe. Little is known about the Cloud People of Peru, an ancient, white-skinned civilization wiped out by disease and war in the 16th century. But now archaeologists have uncovered a fortified citadel in a remote mountainous area of Peru known for its isolated natural beauty.

It is thought this settlement may finally help historians unlock the secrets of the 'white warriors of the clouds'." The tribe had white skin and blonde hair - features which intrigue historians, as there is no known European ancestry in the region, where most inhabitants are darker skinned. The citadel is tucked away in one of the most far-flung areas of the Amazon. It sits at the edge of a chasm which the tribe may have used as a lookout to spy on enemies.

The area where the lost city was discovered by a team of archaeologists. The Chachapoyas, also called the Warriors of the Clouds, were an Andean people living in the cloud forests of the Amazonian region of present-day Peru....

Even the name they called themselves is unknown. The term Chachapoyas, or 'Cloud People,' was given to them by the Incas. Their culture is best known for the Kuellap fortress on the top of a mountain in Utcubamba, which can only be compared in scale to the Incas' Machu Picchu retreat, built hundreds of years later. Two years ago, archaeologists found an underground burial vault inside a cave with five mummies, two intact with skin and hair.



Chronicler Pedro Cieza de Leon wrote of the Chachapoyas, tribe: 'They are the whitest and most handsome of all the people that I have seen, and their wives were so beautiful that because of their gentleness, many of them deserved to be the Incas' wives and to also be taken to the Sun Temple. 'The women and their husbands always dressed in woolen clothes and in their

<sup>193</sup> Roach, John, "Pre-Inca Ruins Emerge from Peru's Cloud Forest," *National Geographic News*, 16 September 2004, <http://ironlight.wordpress.com/2010/03/17/who-were-the-chachapoyas/> (Accessed 23 December 2011).

heads they wear their llautos (a woolen turban), which are a sign they wear to be known everywhere.<sup>194</sup>

## 7) A Land Divided by Two Opposing Societies

It is hard to read the Book of Mormon without feeling a deep sadness for the disharmony and hatred that existed among the descendants of Lehi. How different it would have been if Laman and Lemuel had accepted the will of the Lord and allowed their righteous younger brother to lead the family. The feud they fostered was never resolved, and as a result, the thousand-year history of the Nephites is one of nearly constant warfare between the Lamanite and Nephite nations.

The Book of Mormon states that the Lamanites and Nephites were separated by a border that ran from the sea on the east and to the sea on the west. (Alma 22:27), and that the Lamanites were primarily in the land to the south (Alma 22:33). As will be discussed later, Lake Titicaca is an excellent candidate for the Book of Mormon's "east sea." If this is the case, then the Lamanites would be represented by the Aymara-speaking people who lived on the southeast end of Lake Titicaca, their capital having been the city of Chiripa and later at Tiwanaku.

Also, evidence will be shown in Chapter Eight that Zarahemla was possibly the ruins of what is today the city of Pukara (meaning the fortress city). If this is true, the Nephite people would have been the Quechua-speaking people to the north and west of Lake Titicaca.

The Aymara tribes or nations ruled a vast expanse of land, which included Bolivia and parts of Peru, Chile, Brazil, and Argentina. The Quechua people (Nephites) controlled the central Andes and probably included the tribes that eventually took back controlled Cusco and eventually became Incas by the time of the Spanish conquest. Historically the two linguistic groups have always been bitter enemies. Alan Kolata writes: "In symbolic terms, Tiwanaku represented the recognized boundary marker that delineated the fault line, or point of cleavage between two archetypal social groups."<sup>195</sup>



A religious, ethnographic, linguistic, and cultural fault line ran straight through the heart and soul of the ancient Andean peoples. That heart was Lake Titicaca, and the history of the lake is that of a broken heart. At 12,500 feet above sea level, the lake's basin provides only limited natural resources that had to be shared by these two competing populations. Sullivan describes the relations: "Pucara [Pukara/Zarahemla], which flourished from about 200 BC until about AD 200, constituted a rival polity of Tiwanaku [Lamanites]. The relationship between these two cities appears to have ranged from intense competition to open hostility. ...Until its complete disappearance in the fourth century [time of the nearly universal destruction of the Nephites], Pucara appears to have been the main rival—perhaps the only serious rival—of Tiwanaku in the Titicaca basin."<sup>196</sup> [comments added]

Placing the Nephites at Pukara (Zarahemla), on the northwest side of the lake between 200 BC and AD 400 provides some interesting possible insights into the Nephite society. First, it

<sup>194</sup> Mail Online, London Daily Mail, 04th December 2008.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1091550/Ancient-city-discovered-deep-Amazonian-rainforest-linked-legendary-white-skinned-Cloud-People-Peru.html#>, accessed January 2009.

<sup>195</sup> Kolata (1), 7.

<sup>196</sup> Sullivan, 212.



appears to have been a “dry” state. Within the ruins of Pukara archaeologists have found no containers for the brewing or consumption of beer, a traditional beverage throughout Andean history. On the Aymara (Lamanite) side of the lake, fancy decorated ceramic *chicha* cups have been excavated indicating that drinking beer was a social activity.<sup>197</sup> The evidence seems to suggest that the Quechua-speaking people during the time of Zarahemla were sober while the Aymara were alcohol drinkers.

Second, Nephi discouraged his people from mixing with the Lamanites, and throughout the Book of Mormon, we see very little interaction, except for wars and infrequent missions, between the civilizations. Likewise, the Quechua-speaking people of Pukara and the Aymara people of early Tiwanaku did not mingle. For at least six hundred years the two nations lived in proximity within the Titicaca Lake Basin. Yet with their capital cities only ninety miles apart, not a single piece of Aymara (Tiwanaku) pottery shards had ever been discovered at the Pukara excavations.<sup>198</sup> Clearly, it was not proper for the Quechua (Nephites) and an Aymara (Lamanites) to mix.

Third, the Quechua had a centralized government located at its capital, Pukara. The Aymara seems to have had a more Lamanite-style tribal organization, which Mann describes as “Less a centralized state than a clutch of municipalities under the common religio-cultural sway of the center...”<sup>199</sup> As the two civilizations matured, the Nephites maintained a centralized government ruled by a king or chief judge. The Lamanites, on the other hand, appear to have conducted their affairs as a loose confederation of tribes, with multiple kings or chiefdoms (e.g., King Lamoni being a king at the same time other Lamanite kings were also reigning, and Lamoni’s father concurrently reigning as the chief king of the Lamanites).

Fourth, generally the Lamanites had little respect for the Nephite religion. Sullivan points out that the famous Thunderbolt Stela found at Tiwanaku has been shown, thanks to the research of Sergio Chavéz, to have been broken from its base in Arapa (then under the control of Pukara) and transported ninety miles by raft across Lake Titicaca to Tiwanaku.<sup>200</sup> In other words, to celebrate a victory over the despised Quechua (Nephites), the Aymara (Lamanites) broke off a huge stone religious icon and hauled the massive block back to their capital city as a trophy.

Fifth, the Quechua people on the west of the lake specialized in maintaining large herds of domesticated animals—an economic system consistent with that of the Nephites in the Book of Mormon. The Aymara, occupying the more fertile southeastern shores and like the Lamanites raised crops and hunted.<sup>201</sup>

Bouyee-Cassagne reminds us that Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, is unique in many ways: “As an element of Aymara thought, Lake Titicaca is not merely a specific geographical location: it is at once a centrifugal force that permits the differentiation of the two terms in opposition and a centripetal force that ensures their mediation. In the symbolic architecture, the *taypi*...is crucial to the equilibrium of the system.”<sup>202</sup> In other words, the blue waters of Lake Titicaca appear to have been the mediating element that periodically allowed the two enemy nations, the Nephites and the Lamanites, to live next to each other in an uncomfortable and unstable peace.

<sup>197</sup> Klarich, Elizabeth Ana. *From the Monumental to the Mundane: Defining Early Leadership Strategies at Late Formative Pukara, Peru*, Dissertation. (Santa Barbara: University of California Santa Barbara, 80, (cites: (Couture 2002; Janusek 2003a; Goldstein 1993, 2003).

<sup>198</sup> Klarich, 46.

<sup>199</sup> Mann, 24.

<sup>200</sup> Sullivan, 212.

<sup>201</sup> Kolata (1), 8.

<sup>202</sup> Bouyee-Cassagne, T., "Urco and Uma: Aymara concepts of space." In J. Murra, N. Wachtel and J. Revel (eds.), *Anthropological History of Andean Polities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 209.

My book *Nephi in the Promised Land* documents more evidence supporting the theory that the remnant of the Nephites and their aligned non-Lehite tribes are the ancestors of today's Quechua-speaking people, while the Aymara-speaking people represent the descendants of the Lamanites.

Recently, I read another research report that seems to support the theory. A team of scientists reported that when comparing the DNA of the two Andean groups:

“Our data revealed high diversity values in the two populations, in agreement with other Andean studies. The comparisons with the available literature for both sets of markers (mtDNA & Y-chromosome) indicate that the central Andean area is relatively homogeneous. For mtDNA, the Aymaras seemed to have been more isolated through time, maintaining their genetic characteristics, while the Quechuas have been more permeable to the incorporation of female foreigners and Peruvian influences.... Particular genetic characteristics presented by both samples support a past common origin of the Altiplano populations in the ancient Aymara territory, with independent, although related histories with Peruvian (Quechuas) populations.<sup>203</sup>

A possible explanation for the differential mtDNA is that Laman, Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael were the founding fathers of the Aymara Indian nation. Their original wives left with Nephi so the elder brothers took Indigenous women as wives (2 Nephi 5:6). This would mean that their mitochondria DNA from their mothers was more homogeneous than the Quechua (Nephite) people whose mitochondria mtDNA had traces of Hebrew and Indigenous mothers. The Aymara's (Lamanites) nearly homogeneous Indigenous mtDNA would also explain other characteristics of the Lamanites, such as darker skin color and behaviors unbecoming of children raised by Hebrew mothers (Enos 1:20).

It appears that three ethnic groups constituted the Nephite society: pure Lehiters who ruled over the Nephite people, descendants of Lehi who had intermarried with Indigenous people, and pure Indigenous people who were aligned with the Nephites. This later group was not considered to be part of the People of Nephi, but were groups friendly to Nephi and were people the Lamanites tried to destroy (Jacob 1:14). This ethnic diversity among the Nephites would account for their more heterogeneous mtDNA. The prophet Mormon informed us that he was “a pure” Lehite. This could imply that most of the people he ruled were non-pure Lehiters. If this scenario is true, there was a small royal family of fair-skinned elite, a large interracial population of Nephites, and a large group of pure Indigenous Nephites. Of course, this description of the Nephite society is conjecture, however, it does compare well with what is known about the pre-Columbian people in the Andes.

The Incas were divided into three main groups, 1) the Inca Royal Blood elite, who had white skin,<sup>204</sup> 2) the non-royal tribes that were loyal to the Incas and who were allowed to live in the Cusco Valley, (these were called the Inca of Privilege,<sup>205</sup> and 3) the common class.<sup>206</sup> The conquistador Pedro Pizarro reported, “The people of this kingdom of Peru were white, and light-brown color, and among the lords and the ladies, they were even more white, like the Spaniards.”<sup>207</sup> Poma de Ayala described the Inca nobility as white and noted that their

<sup>203</sup> Gaya'-Vidal M, Moral P, Saenz-Ruales N, Gerbault P, Tomasso L, Villena M, Vasquest R, Bravi CM, Dugoujon JM, “mtDNA and Y-chromosome diversity in Aymaras and Quechuas from Bolivia: different stories and special genetic traits of the Andean Altiplano populations,” <https://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pubmed/21469069>, March 27, 2017.

<sup>204</sup> Urton, *The Legendary Past*, 41.

<sup>205</sup> Bauer, 15, 17.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>207</sup> Pizarro, Pedro, *Relacion del Descubrimiento y Conquita de Los Reinos del Perú*. Original manuscript presented in Arequipa. Peru on 28 March 1572. Current printing Guillermo Lohmann Villena and Pierre Devols, Pontifica Universidad Catolica del Peru, 1896, quoted by Calderwood, 320.

women were white and very beautiful.<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, he described other Peruvian Indians as being dark-skinned.<sup>209</sup>

To this day, there is no love lost between the Indigenous populations on the north (Peruvian side of Quechua-speakers) and the south (Bolivian side of Aymara-speakers) of Lake Titicaca. As a young missionary, I had the opportunity to serve near Lake Titicaca in both Bolivia and Peru. I heard from Indians on both shores of the lake the legend that once a fair-skinned people lived at Lake Titicaca. However, the two nations warred until the darker-skinned people eliminated the fair-skinned population.

Sullivan wrote of two distinct periods in Inca lore. The first he called the Age of Viracocha. We could assume that this period was the golden age of the Book of Mormon from the time the Lord visited His people in the Western Hemisphere to the beginning of conflicts and wars around AD 200. The subsequent period, he called the Age of the Warrior. He writes:

Viracocha “left the earth.” That something was the advent of organized warfare, previously unknown in the Andes [during the nearly 200 years of peace]... In the social and political upheaval that ensued the Andean ecumene was shaken to its foundations and emerged forever altered [end of the Nephite society], the institution of warfare now permanently woven into the social fabric. Although for reasons including political expediency, the Incas projected their own ancestry back into the thick of the events. [Incas believed they were the descendants of the first four Inca brothers].

In turn, an understanding of this event depended upon a clear grasp of what was lost, or at least badly damaged--namely the old principles of social organization of Andean society, as ordained by Viracocha. [Jesus Christ]. [comments added].<sup>210</sup>

## 8) A Vanished Written Language

The latest research by Gary Urton, the Dumbarton Oaks Professor of Pre-Columbian Studies in the Archaeology Department at Harvard University,<sup>211</sup> supports the oral traditions that the early Incas had a written language that eventually became lost.<sup>212</sup> Indeed, the inability to decipher Peru’s ancient written languages is a direct fulfillment of Jacob’s prophecy. The prophet wrote:

I, Jacob, having ministered much unto my people in word, (and I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates) and we know that the things which we write upon plates must remain; **but whatsoever things we write upon anything save it be upon plates must perish and vanish away.** (bold added, Jacob 4:1, 2)

Jacob’s use of the word “must” implies an unconditional prophecy that all Nephite written records, with the exception of the plates, must vanish. This appears to be exactly what



<sup>208</sup> Betanzos, 272.

<sup>209</sup> Calderwood, 321.

<sup>210</sup> Sullivan, 135,136.

<sup>211</sup> Mann, 397.

<sup>212</sup> Hiltunen Juha J., *Ancient Kings of Peru, The Reliability of the Chronicle of Fernando de Montesinos* (Helsinki, Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1999), 354.

happened when the Lamanites destroyed the Nephite civilization and continued when the Spanish burned the Inca writing system called *quipus*.

Once vanished, is it possible for a written language to return from the dust? The Book of Mormon contains the prophecy of Isaiah that is often used in reference to the book itself. However, the verse might also apply to the recovery of the actual 'speech' and 'language' of those who were destroyed:

For those who shall be destroyed (Nephites), shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground; and their speech shall whisper out of the dust. (2 Nephi 26:16)



*Figure 15 Inca Binary Language Instrument, the Quipu*

*In a dusty unprotected grave in Peru, Urton discovered twenty-one bundles of knotted strings. The multicolored tangles of several dozen arm-length knotted strings are called quipus or khipus. Because the Incas held some of the quipus to be sacred, the Spanish ordered their destruction. At one point in history, it was*

*believed that all the quipus had been burned. Each type of knot on a quipu string and the color of each string has its own meaning. The thousands of combinations of knots and strings could only be read by one trained in the code. Thus, while a quipu might appear to be a decorative wall hanging to the untrained eye, it is an amazing seven-bit binary code capable of conveying large amounts of information.<sup>213</sup> Galen Brokaw, an expert in ancient Andean texts at the State University of New York in Buffalo states, "Most serious scholars of khipu (quipu) today believe that they were more than mnemonic devices, and probably much more."<sup>214</sup> Until 2005, it was believed that the only existing quipus were from the Inca period. Mann writes, "It is widely assumed that the Inca built on other, earlier forms of writing that had been developed in the region."<sup>215</sup> In 2005 a quipu was discovered at Caral which dates to the period of the early Jaredites. Archaeologist Ruth Shady declared, "This is the oldest quipu and it shows us that this society...also had a system of writing (which) continued down the ages until the Inca empire and would last 4,500 years."<sup>216</sup> On observing Quipo readers soon after the Spanish arrival, Father Cobo wrote: "On explaining their meaning, the Indians that know them relate many things about ancient times that are contained in them."<sup>217</sup>*

<sup>213</sup> Wilford, John Noble, "String and Knot, Theory of Inca Writing," *New York Times*, 12 August 2003. Article reports on news conference with Dr. Gary Urton's research on Quipus. His research is funded by the National Science Foundation, the Dumbarton Oaks Foundation, Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, which in 2001 awarded Urton a MacArthur Fellowship. Nicholas Wade, "Untying the Knots of the Inca" (*New York Times*, 19 August 2005).

<sup>214</sup> Brokaw, Galen, quoted by Mann, 395.

<sup>215</sup> Mann, 397.

<sup>216</sup> Shady, Ruth, quoted in, "Caral: Ancient Peru city reveals 5,000-year old writing - The Oldest Quipu," *Gogometry, Incas*, July 19, 2005, [https://gogometry.com/incas1/quipu/caral\\_oldest\\_quipu.html#google\\_vignette](https://gogometry.com/incas1/quipu/caral_oldest_quipu.html#google_vignette).

<sup>217</sup> Cobo, 254.

Anthropologist Urton notes, “It is important to appreciate the role played by one indigenous recording device in particular, the *quipu*, in the collection and recording of Inca myths and histories in early colonial times. *Quipus*, from the Quechua word for ‘knot,’ were linked bundles of dyed and knotted strings, which were used by the Incas to record both statistical information that could be interpreted—in some manner that we do not yet fully understand—by experts called *quipucamayos* (‘knot-makers or keepers’) in narrating stories about the Inca past.”<sup>218</sup>

One of the early chroniclers, Cobo, wrote of the *quipos*: “By these recording devices and registers they conserved the memory of their acts, and the Inca’s overseers and accountants.... On explaining their meaning, the Indians that know them related many things about ancient times that are contained in them. There were people designated for this job of accounting. These officers were called *quipo camayos*, and they were like our historians, scribes, and accountants, and the Inca had great confidence in them.”<sup>219</sup> Father Cobo offered an account he was familiar with that demonstrated that the *quipos* recorded historical information.

Two Spaniards left together from the town of Ica to go to the city of Castro Virreina, and arriving at the *tambo* of Cordoba, which is a day’s travel from Ica, one of them stayed there and the other continued his trip; at this *tambo* this latter traveler was given an Indian guide to accompany him to Castro Virreina. This Indian killed the Spaniard on the road and returned to the *tambo* (royal inns along the Inca highways). After some time passed, since the Spaniard was very well known, he was missed. The governor of Castro Virreina, who at that time was Pedro de Cordoba Mejia, a native of Jaen, made a special investigation to find out what had happened. And in case the man had been killed, he sent a large number of Indians to look for the body in the puna and desert. But no sign of him could be found, nor could anyone find out what had become of him until more than six years after he had been killed. By chance, the body of another Spaniard was found in a cave of the same desert. The governor ordered that this body be brought to the plaza so that it could be seen, and once it was brought, it looked like the one the Indian had killed, and, believing that it was he, the governor continued with the investigation to discover the killer. Not finding any trace or evidence against anybody, he was advised to make an effort to find out the identity of the Indian who was given to the deceased as a guide at the *tambo* of Cordoba. The Indians would know this in spite of the fact that more than six years had passed because by means of the record of the *quipos* they would have kept memory of it. With this the governor sent for the *caciques* (chief of town) and *quipo camayos*. After they were brought to him and he continued with the investigation, the *quipo camayos* found out by their *quipos* the identity of the Indian who had been given as a guide to the aforementioned Spaniard. The Indian guide was brought prisoner immediately from his town, called Guaytara....

Having given his declaration in which he denied the crime, he was questioned under torture, and at once he confessed for having killed the man and then showed the police where the body was. Police officers went with him to the puna (Andes highlands), and they found the body where the Indian guide had hidden it.<sup>220</sup>

Referred to at times as the Pliny of the New World, José de Costa, a Jesuit missionary, wrote in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that *quipus* were “witnesses and authentic writing.” He wrote: “I

<sup>218</sup> Urton, 25.

<sup>219</sup> Cobo, 254.

<sup>220</sup> Cobo, 254-5.

saw a bundle of these strings on which a woman had brought a written testimony of her whole life and used it to confess just as I would have done with words written on paper.”<sup>221</sup> Today, archaeologists have discovered some 700 *quipus*, almost all having been retrieved from dusty graves. Their string-and-knot technology for storing information might seem primitive, but it was quite advanced. Five hundred years after the fall of the Inca Empire, computers were invented. These twentieth-century digital machines use an eight-bit binary code to store data. The knots provide 128 possible permutations multiplied by 24 different colors. Thus the code used by the cord keepers provided them 1,536 separate units of meaning. This compares to the estimated 1,000 to 1,500 Sumerian cuneiform signs, double the number of signs in the hieroglyphs of the ancient Egyptians and the Maya of Central America.<sup>222</sup> Costa might have been right when he wrote nearly five centuries ago, “Whoever wants may judge whether this [the use of *quipus*] is clever or if these people are brutish, but I judge it is certain that, in that which they here apply themselves, they get the better of us.”<sup>223</sup>

What makes the twenty-one *quipus* in Urton’s study so special is that they might contain an Inca deciphering device similar to the famous *Rosetta stone* used to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics. The stone now stands in the British National Museum and was the key that unlocked our knowledge of ancient Egypt. The twenty-one *quipus* in the Harvard group were uncovered from the ruins of the Inca city called Peruchuco. Seven of these *quipus* start with the same binary sequence of knots. It is believed that these identical sequences indicated the name ‘Peruchuco,’ the place the *quipus* came from. Scientists are hopeful that they can use this information and with the help of computers and advanced mathematical algorithms unlock the rest of the code.<sup>224</sup>

Urton and Harvard mathematics graduate student Carrie J. Brezine have been joined by Jean-Jacques Quisquater and Vincent Castus from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, and the father-son MIT computer science team of Martin and Erik Demaine. As of January 2007, the team has already found 3,000 different groups of repeated five-knot sequences.<sup>225</sup> If the team continues its astonishing rate of deciphering, they might soon recover the lost language of the *quipus*, and the world might hear, as Isaiah proclaimed, the voices of “those who shall be destroyed, shall speak unto them out of the ground.” [KJV ‘dust’, Isaiah 29:4] Catherine Julien a historian of Andean cultures at Western Michigan University said of the Harvard attempt to decipher the *quipus*, “We may be able to hear the Inkas for the first time in their own voice.”

Hopefully, the language of the *quipus* will be deciphered. However, the *quipu* code was not the only written language of the Nephites. We know that the Nephites engraved Reformed Egyptian on golden plates, and it is also true that they once had a hand-written language (Alma 30:51-52; Mosiah 2:8). Therefore, it is important to know that the Incas told the Spanish that their ancestors once had a written language that became lost. Noted earlier was the tradition of the priest at the Coricancha temple in Cusco to read their history from plates kept in the temple.

Another possible linguistic indicator that the Book of Mormon took place in the Andes is that there existed in the Andes a dual language culture. The Book of Mormon hints that the Nephites might have spoken one language among themselves and a native language (perhaps Quechua or Aymara) with the indigenous population. For example, King Benjamin had three sons who must have already spoken a common language, yet, he needed to teach them the language of the Egyptians so they could read the engravings (Mosiah 1:4). “He caused that they should be taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding; and that they might know concerning the prophecies”

<sup>221</sup> Cook, Gareth, “Untangling the Mystery of the Inca,” *Wired*, January 2007, (San Francisco), 145-146)

<sup>222</sup> Wilford.

<sup>223</sup> Cook, 147.

<sup>224</sup> Wilford.

<sup>225</sup> Cook, 146.

(Mosiah 1:2). Father Cobo wrote: To this is added the fact that, apart from the language of Cusco, which is the general language that the Incas introduced throughout their empire and was the one they used in speaking to their subjects, they knew a different one, which they used only among themselves when they conversed with those of their own lineage."<sup>226</sup>



#### 9) Raised Flocks and Herds of Sheep and Other Animals

As soon as Nephi landed in the promised land, he discovered “beasts in the forest of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men” (1 Nephi 18:25). Once he settled in the land of Nephi, he wrote that “we began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind” (2 Nephi 5:11). It is hard to determine exactly what animals Nephi saw in the Andes. Today there are at least four kinds of camelids, the llama, the guanaco, the alpaca, and the wild vicuña. However, some hybrid specials have become extinct and the Spanish slaughtered the camelids en masse. What is known is that the llama and alpaca were domesticated by the time the Jaredites and Lehitites arrived in the promised land.<sup>227</sup>

*Figure 16 Andean Alpaca the Spanish Called Sheep*

Why are the camelids so important to discovering the land of the Book of Mormon? Without domesticated animals that can be identified as sheep, it is problematic trying to defend the Book of Mormon. Herds are mentioned 22 times in the Book of Mormon, sheep 14 times, shepherds 17 times, and flocks 63 times. Without sheep, many of the stories in the Book of Mormon would make no sense, i.e. Ammon driving the flocks of King Lamoni to water (Alma 17:27), the priest of Noah being scattered and slain as sheep having no shepherd (Alma 25:12), the Lord telling the Nephites they are his other sheep (3 Nephi 15:21, or dozens of other similar examples in the Book of Mormon.

It seems reasonable that the Jaredites and the Nephites would have used Old World names for animals to describe the domesticated animals they found in their new homeland, “of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep and of swine” (Ether 9:10). When the Greeks saw a hippopotamus for the first time, they called it a horse. When the Romans first encountered elephants, they called them cows.<sup>228</sup> Thus, when Nephi saw the herds of alpacas, animals that look and behave like sheep, he naturally would have called them sheep. Neal Rappleye reminds us:

Matters of translation are complicated, however, and very often fuzzy notions of ‘literal’ translation hinge more on unexplored assumptions than

<sup>226</sup> Cobo, 107.

<sup>227</sup> Diaz-Maroto, and others, “Ancient DNA reveals the latest domestication of South American camelids in Northern Chile and across the Andes,” National Center for Biotechnology Information, National Library of Medicine, March 16, 2021, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8032396/>.

<sup>228</sup> Hamblin, William J., “Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 2. (Spring-Fall 1993): 194.

actual data. What's more, if the Nephites applied Old World terms meaning horse, sheep, cattle, or pig to New World species, then those were the "correct" labels within Nephite taxonomy. As such, translation using those terms is no more "incorrect" than continued American usage of terms like "robin," "elk," and "buffalo," all of which originally referred to completely different Old World species before being borrowed and applied to unfamiliar animals in the New World by European settlers.<sup>229</sup>

Undoubtedly, Joseph Smith had no idea of the types of animals or the advanced husbandry skills of the people of South America. Yet the Book of Mormon's reference to shepherds and sheep is completely in harmony with the ancient Andes. The people of western South America maintained great herds of llamas, alpacas, guanacos, and perhaps other animals that became extinct over time. What is clear is that the Andean people had an array of domesticated animals, which the Spanish chroniclers described in the following account: "The lords of Cusco made many and very great sacrifices...a large amount of livestock in sheep and lambs was sacrificed as well as deer and all the other animals."<sup>230</sup> The Spanish conquistadors described llamas and alpacas as rams, sheep, and lambs,<sup>231</sup> and wrote, "Eating those good rams that they found there, which are extraordinary and more flavorful than the excellent ones of Spain."<sup>232</sup>



The domesticated animals of Peru that the Spaniards called sheep, goats, and horses probably account for what the Jaredites referred to their domesticated animals as their "cattle." Noah Webster's 1828 American dictionary defines "cattle" as: "In its primary sense, the word includes camels, horses, asses, all the varieties of domesticated horned beast of the bovine genus, sheep of all kinds, and goats."<sup>233</sup> Not only were the Andean people the only herdsmen in the pre-Columbian New World, they were probably among the best anywhere in the world. Not only were the pasture lands meticulously divided and controlled to prevent the spread of diseases, the animals were watched over with care. Father Cobo wrote:



In keeping these animals, great care was taken to assign herdsmen and foremen to count the increase in the flocks and the animals that died, and in contributing the people necessary for this purpose, the towns paid a considerable amount of their tribute.

*Figure 17 Andean Llama - Inca Beast of Burden*

<sup>229</sup> Rappleye, Neal, "A Scientist Looks at the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scriptures*, 10, 2014, 123-131.

<sup>230</sup> Betanzos, 77.

<sup>231</sup> Cieza de León, 113.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>233</sup> Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, original edition 1828. Chesapeake, Virginia: American Christian Education, 2006, see Cattle.



This domesticated livestock of llamas was one of the greatest riches that the Indians had. In order to conserve it so that it would always be on the increase, the Inca had ordered two very important things. First, any animal that got *caracha* (a certain illness like mange or scab which these animals often catch, and many die of it) was to be immediately buried alive and very deep, and no one was to try to cure the sick animal or kill it for food, and this was done in order to prevent the disease from spreading, for it is extremely contagious, second, the females were not to be killed for sacrifices for any other reason. Owing to these measures, the vast number of these animals in their kingdom was incredible.<sup>234</sup>

When the Incas saw the Spanish horses, they called them big llamas. In reverse, when Nephi saw the llamas he might have thought they were small horses. Indeed, the llama played the same role in the Andes as the horse in the land of Jerusalem. The short-haired llamas were used in the Andes for people to ride. The long-haired llamas function as beasts of burden to carry heavy loads. Today, llamas are still used to pull carts. In ancient times, two llamas could have pulled a chariot (Alma 18:9; 18:10,12; 3 Nephi 3:22; 21:14).<sup>235</sup>

Having llamas available as beasts of burden and the abundance of gold in the Andes, provide possible answers to two important Book of Mormon questions. First, the record we call the Book of Mormon today is translated from a small percentage of the actual record of the Nephites. It was an abridgment from many volumes of the large and small plates of Nephi. Not counting the Jaredite record, the Book of Mormon represents a small fraction of the library of literate people whose history spanned a thousand years. Where did all this gold come from, if not Peru? Second, how did Ammaron hide the plates in Shim by himself? (Mormon 1:2,3). Did he carry them from his town and up the mountain one set of plates at a time or did he have a small caravan of llamas carrying the load? Llamas were used in caravans to haul salt and other products in the Andes. Kolata writes that the pre-Hispanic llama caravans consisted of up to 2,000 llamas.<sup>236</sup> A llama can carry upwards of 80 pounds over a long distance.<sup>237</sup> Llamas also provide a feasible solution of how Moroni buried the plates in a hill in New York. As a captain in the army, he could have boarded a balsa vessel of the Nephite navy and sailed with his plates and llamas to the west coast of North America and from there led his small caravan to what is today New York.

Apparently, the Nephites knew what a chicken was for the Lord referred to gathering them “as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you” (3 Nephi 10:4-6). At first glance, the Lord’s analogy seems applicable, at least to someone who knew what a chicken was. Since chickens were not native to North or Central America the analogy would have been lost people living north of Panama. The same is not true of South America. When Pizarro arrived, he noted that chickens were a part of the Incan economy. Radiocarbon dating of the bones of five chickens found in El Arenal Chile confirmed that chickens were in South America before Columbus. DNA found in the bones indicated that the chickens were brought to South America from Polynesia.<sup>238</sup> The question begs to be asked, “Who brought the chickens to South America?” It could have been Polynesian traders. The Indigenous People of South America also traded with islanders in the Pacific. One voyager was Hagoth who is connected to Polynesia and also returned at least one time to the promised land before the visitation of Christ in the New World.

The wild animals Nephi described were probably the Andean deer, the wild vicuña (which has never been domesticated), and the puma (Andean mountain lion). That leaves only the

<sup>234</sup> Cobo, 215-216.

<sup>235</sup> Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, 36-37.

<sup>236</sup> Kolata, 47.

<sup>237</sup> McIntyre, Loren, “Lost Empire of the Incas,” *National Geographic* 114, no. 6 (December 1973), 739.

<sup>238</sup> Storey, Alice A., Jose Miguel Ramirez, Daniel Quiros, and Elizath A. Motisoa-Smith, “Radiocarbon and DNA evidence for a pre-Columbian introduction of Polynesian chickens to Chile,” *PNAS, Anthropology*, June 19, 2007.

elephants of the Jaredites needing a reasonable explanation (Ether 9:19). The Jaredite plates were translated (and the word elephant inscribed on the plates of the Book of Mormon) by Moroni around AD 400. The Greek culture and its language were prevailing at the time Lehi left Jerusalem over a thousand years before Moroni recorded the Book of Ether. Although the soldiers of Alexander the Great fought against elephants in India, elephants were not seen in the Mediterranean region until Hannibal the Carthaginian (247-183 BC). Prior to their arrival, the Greeks described any animal with “tusks” as a type of elephant, thus, the Greeks called boars “elephant” which is likely what Moroni would have called a South American peccary.<sup>239</sup> The Book of Mormon also refers to swine (Ether 9:18). The peccary is from the swine family. The Spanish called the Andean peccary “pig flesh.”

In Book of Mormon times, the only domesticated animals north of Panama were ducks, rabbits, turkeys, and dogs. Recent articles claiming that the bones of a small horse dating to Book of Mormon times have been found at San Luis Potosi in Mexico would present a possible paradigm shift.<sup>240</sup> However, credible evidence to date shows 23 sites in Mexico having the remains of horses all dating to between 50,000-10,500 BC.<sup>241</sup> The discovery was published by LDS author Wade Miller in an obscured journal. His process for dating the horse bones is highly questionable. Milled he did not carbon-14 test the actual bones of the tiny horse specimen, but only the surrounding material that appears to have been disturbed by rain and floods.<sup>242</sup> Further, Neal Rappleye notes that Miller’s discovery was in a place that does not seem related to Book of Mormon sites.<sup>243</sup> Until a more robust study of the San Luis Potosi remains can be completed, as well as, replicating the similar findings at other sites, the small horse at San Luis Potosi appears to be from a time far earlier the Book of Mormon era.

The fact that the ancient people of Mesoamerica and North America had no animals that resembled domesticated sheep is no minor problem. Without sheep, the stories in the Book of Mormon make little sense. For example, when Ammon drove king Lamoni’s flocks to water they certainly were not the only domestic animals of Mesoamerica -- dogs, turkeys, rabbits, or ducks? As for the area authors refer to as the Heartland model, the northeast woodlands area of what is today the United States, the Native Americans raised only dogs but also kept wild skunks, otters, and beavers as pets - no herds nor flocks whatsoever.<sup>244</sup> Finally, why would the Savior have taught the Nephites that they were his other sheep and likened to chicks he had gathered if these animals did not exist where they lived? The analogies would have been confusing at best.

#### 10) Animal Sacrifices According to the law of Moses

Blood sacrifices did not start with the Law of Moses, rather offerings started with Father Adam. Animal sacrifice was the sacrament of the Old Testament and in similitude of Jesus Christ (Moses 5:5-8). If the people of the Andes were early Christian observers, then we would expect to find that they practiced animal sacrifices in accordance with the law of

<sup>239</sup> <http://252/chapmanresearch/elephant.html>.

<sup>240</sup> Scripture Central, “New Evidence for Horses in America, January 20, 2018. <https://scripturecentral.org/blog/new-evidence-for-horses-in-america>.

<sup>241</sup> Alberdi, Maria Teresa, Joaquin Arroyo-Cabreales, Alejandro h. Marin-Leya, Osker J. Polaco, “Study of Cedra Horses and their place in the Mexican Quaternary,” *SciELO Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Geológicas*, April 28, 2014,

[https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S1026-87742014000200006](https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1026-87742014000200006).

<sup>242</sup> Southerton, Simon, “Simon Southerton debunks LDS Apolgetic “discovery” on horses”, PHPBB, DiscussMormonism.com, October 24, 2022,

<https://discussmormonism.com/viewtopic.php?f=4&p=2807326>.

<sup>243</sup> Neal Rappleye, “A Scientist Looks at the Book of Mormon”, *Interpreter: A journal of Mormon mormon-anachronisms/*, accessed June 1, 2018. *Scriptures*, 10, 2014, 123-134. <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/a-scientist-looks-at-book-of->

<sup>244</sup> Harper, Ross Kenneth, *To Render the God of the Water Propitious: Hunting and Human-Animal Relations in the Northeast Woodlands*. Unpublished dissertation, University of Connecticut Storrs, Connecticut, 1999.

Moses. When the Spanish arrived they observed the Incas still sacrificing sheep (Mosiah 2:3, probably alpacas or llamas), lambs, and birds (John 2:14).<sup>245</sup> Again Betanzos, recorded that the throats of the sheep and lambs were slit in the presence of the Inca.<sup>246</sup> Sarmiento also mentioned that the Incas sacrificed lambs (young llamas or alpacas).<sup>247</sup> The Incas sacrificed animals in a manner similar to what the Nephites did two thousand years before. “And they (the Nephites) also took of the firstlings of their flocks, and that they might offer sacrifice” and burnt offerings according to the Law of Moses” (Mosiah 2:3). Cieza de León noted that the traditional sacrifice of the Incas required a “lamb of one color without spots.”<sup>248</sup> and that “they made great sacrifices according to their custom. They killed many animals, whose blood they sprinkled on the altars where there were channels to make the offering.”<sup>249</sup>

Finally, from at least the time of Moses, incense was an important offering in Hebrew temples (Exodus 30:34-36), where high priests had to make a duty offering twice a day (Exodus 30:7-8, 30-34). To enter the Holy of Holies, the high priest was required to carry an incense burner as he entered the sanctuary (Numbers 6:24-26). One should not be surprised that within the remains of Yaya-Uma (Adam-Eve) temples in Peru ceramic incensories have been found.<sup>250</sup> Indeed, archaeologists have discovered a widespread distribution of ancient incensories at sacred sites between Cusco and Lake Titicaca.<sup>251</sup>



The Incas observed three main ritual events. One was held during the December solstice, the longest day of the year in the Southern Hemisphere. In one of the most authoritative texts, Avila refers to it as the *capa hucha*. During the ritual tens of thousands of llamas were sacrificed with the blood being collected in small clay vessels and distributed throughout the empire. There is debate over why the animals were sacrificed, but one meaning of the word *hucha* is “sin”.<sup>252</sup> Perhaps the *hucha* ritual was reminiscent of the “sacrifice for sin” or “sin offering” that was practiced in ancient Israel (Numbers 15:30-31; Leviticus 4:2, 22, 27; 5:15, 17) and by the early Nephites who understood the sin offering and made offerings in accordance with the law of Moses (2 Nephi 3:7, Mosiah 2:3).

There is no known tradition of offering animal sacrifices according to the law of Moses anywhere north of Panama. The Maya practiced animal sacrifices, but these ceremonies were far from what Moses observed. The

Mayas sacrificed jaguars, pumas, and other wild animals. Their kings sacrificed the beast to gain the power and spirits of the feared cats. They sought a spiritual companionship with the cats to the point that the Maya kings wore jaguars paws and skulls as part of their clothing.<sup>253</sup>

<sup>245</sup> Betanzos, 161.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>247</sup> Sarmiento, 168.

<sup>248</sup> Cieza de León, Pedro de, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, Chronicles of the New World Encounter, Edited and translated by Alexander Oarma Cook and Noble David Cook, London: Duke University, 1998, 274.

<sup>249</sup> Cieza de León, 274.

<sup>250</sup> Klarich, Elizabeth Ana, *From the Monumental to the Mundane: Defining Early Leadership Strategies at Late Formative Pukara, Peru*. Dissertation, Santa Barbara: University of California San Barbara, 19.

<sup>251</sup> Bauer, Brian, *Ancient Cusco, Heartland of the Inca*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004. 51.

<sup>252</sup> Sullivan, 307-308.

<sup>253</sup> Learn, Joshua Rapp, “The Maya Captured, Traded and Sacrificed Jaguars and other large Mammals,” *Science*, Smithsonian Magazine, September 11, 2018

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/maya-captured-traded-and-sacrificed-jaguars-and-other-large-mammals-180970271/>.

## 11) Silk and Costly Apparel

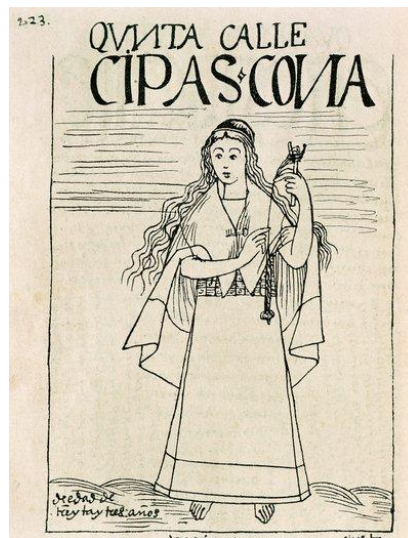
The Book of Mormon states that the Nephites had silk in abundance (Alma 1:29). Growing and breeding cotton and learning how to produce textiles from it are complicated processes. Only four species of cotton have ever been domesticated --two in the Americas and two in the Middle East and South Asia. Cotton was unknown in Europe until the thirteenth century AD. The men aboard Columbus's ship wore flax and wool clothes. Mann points out that "South American cotton once grew wild along the continents' Pacific and Atlantic coasts....In the Andean past, the long, puffy bolls of South American cotton some varieties naturally tinted pink, blue, or yellow, were the soft underpinning of Andean culture."<sup>254</sup>



The Jaredites also produced silks and fine linen (Ether 9:17). Certainly, the Book of Mormon usage of the word silk did not refer to a thread made from the web of an Asian worm. The sacred record was written in Reformed Egyptian and contained Arabic characters (JSH 1:64). The Noah Webster's English Dictionary of 1828 states that "silk; properly any thread, from Arabic *salaka*."<sup>255</sup> In some Arabic dialects, *salaka* means soft, and *selle* means thread or wire. Thus in the original terminology of the Book of Mormon silk meant soft thread, and its usage by Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Mormon attests to the exactness of his translation. The cotton textiles produced in ancient Caral (Norte Chico) Peru were of such quality that they were the main element for regional trade. It was the medium in which the Peruvians created visual arts and was used as a means of exchange and savings.<sup>256</sup> Calderwood cites of the Peruvians, "Cieza de León stated that the Indians could weave as good a tapestry as any woven in Flanders from the wool of their flocks, and so fine a weave that it seemed of silk rather than of wool."<sup>257</sup> Father Bernabe Cobo wrote of the clothing the Inca king wore: "his clothing was different from the usual in that it was made of the finest wool and the best cloth that was wovern in his whole kingdom, with more brilliant colors and finer-quality weaving. The *mamaconas* made his clothing for him, and most of it was made from vicuña wool, which is almost as fine as silk."<sup>258</sup>

and so fine a weave that it seemed of silk rather than of wool."<sup>257</sup> Father Bernabe Cobo wrote of the clothing the Inca king wore: "his clothing was different from the usual in that it was made of the finest wool and the best cloth that was wovern in his whole kingdom, with more brilliant colors and finer-quality weaving. The *mamaconas* made his clothing for him, and most of it was made from vicuña wool, which is almost as fine as silk."<sup>258</sup>

Sliverman and Proulx described the clothing worn by Nazca men, which dates to Book of Mormon times, as "mantles, tunics, turbans and turban bands, head cloths, headbands, loincloths, slings, and fringes. Although most people probably went barefoot, leather sandals have been found in some Nazca cemeteries."<sup>259</sup> Unlike other ancient societies in the New World, the Andean people generally wore clothing similar to the Romans and Greeks of the same period as the Book of Mormon.<sup>260</sup> Since Greek was the prevailing culture of the elite in Palestine at the time Lehi left Jerusalem, it is probable that he did not dress like a Bedouin shepherd, rather his elite family dressed in the



<sup>254</sup> Mann, 207.

<sup>255</sup> Noah Webster, American Dictionar of the English Language, original edition 1828, see "silk".

<sup>256</sup> Mann, 207.

<sup>257</sup> Calderwood, 392.

<sup>258</sup> Cobo, 245.

<sup>259</sup> Silverman, 73.

<sup>260</sup> Hemming, John. *Conquest of the Incas*. New York: Harcourt, Inc, 1970, 60-61.

fashion of the Greeks. It should not be surprising that the same dress traditions were worn by the elite in the ancient Andes.

The Andean people were the world's master weavers. Their textiles had vibrant colors. Silverman and Proulx write: "needle-knitting or the cross knot loops stitch used to produce extraordinarily three-dimensional textiles, plainweave, double cloth, gauze, tapestry, and plaiting. Plainweave textiles could be super-structurally decorated by magnificent embroidery."<sup>261</sup> Certainly, such fabrics could be classified as "costly apparel."

The Book of Mormon mentions that the Nephites had silks and "fine-twined linen" (Alma 1:29). Indeed, at one point the Nephites became proud because of their silks and fine-twined linen (Alma 4:6). In the case of the Zoramites, the rich were distinguished by their "costly apparel," (Alma 31:28) while the poor were cast out of their synagogues because of the "coarseness of their apparel" (Alma 32 2, perhaps a rough linen). Alan Sawyer discovered that the ancient Peruvians used textiles to distinguish status differences in their society.<sup>262</sup>

While the Mesoamericans could make fine linen, they certainly did not reach the same mastery heights as the Incas. The same cannot be said of the Native Americans in North America who had no tradition of costly apparel that could be classified as silk. Further, a comparison between the dress styles of the ancient Andean people, who wore clothing styles similar to those in the Near East, to the half-naked bare-chested loincloth clad men of the Maya or Native Americans further north is quite revealing.

## 12) Armor Made from Thick Clothing



Fine clothing was a main feature of the Nephite culture. In Nazca, Peru a pot has been found that depicts a war scene that is consistent with what is known about the battles recorded in the Book of Mormon. The Nephite General Moroni, "prepared his people with breastplates and with arm-shields, yea, and also shields to defend their heads, and also they were dressed with thick clothing." (Alma 43:19). While the

Nephites were dressed well for battle, the unfortunate Lamanite soldiers fought "naked, save it were a skin which was girded about their loins (Alma 43:20). Painted on Nazca pottery are battle scenes depicting soldiers in varied dress. Archaeologists Lelaine Silverman of Columbia University and Donald A. Proulx from the University of California, Berkeley write, "from naked to wearing a loincloth," to one that "depicts a fully clothed Nazca warrior fighting and grabbing the wild hair of a naked savage whose depiction is spelled 'other' that he must not be Nazca."<sup>263</sup> What Silverman and Proulx fail to mention is that while the fully armed warriors on the pots are depicted with fair skin, the naked soldiers are dark-skinned. When the Spanish fought the Incas, the conquistadors found that the

<sup>261</sup> Silverman, 63;

<sup>262</sup> Sawyer, Alan, quoted by Silverman, 62.

<sup>263</sup> Silverman, 231-232.

native warriors' armor and shields were made of thick woven cloth. Charles Mann writes of the Incas, "Andean textiles were woven with great precision—elite garments could have a thread count of five hundred per inch - and structured in elaborate layers. Soldiers wore armor made of sculpted, quilted cloth that was almost as effective at shielding the body as European armor and much lighter."<sup>264</sup>

The Maya also knew how to fabricate clothing out of flax or hemp linen; and like the Nazca in Peru, they fought the Spanish using armor made from woven material.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, the Maya distinguished the commoners from the elite by the finest of their clothes.<sup>266</sup>

### 13) Climatic Conditions Associated with Nephite Crops

Author and filmmaker Arthur J. Kocherhans researched the lands of the Book of Mormon people for forty years. As a young man, Arthur served a LDS mission in Mexico and Central America. However, his research brought him to the conclusion that Mesoamerica could not have been the area where Lehi and his family disembarked in the promised land. The more he extended his research, the more he believed, that as Joseph Smith taught, Nephi's ship ended its voyage in Chile. Citing 1 Nephi 18:24-25, Kocherhans writes:

The Book of Mormon is specific about FOUR identifiable characteristics of the Lehi colony landing place:

- 1) They traveled by sea driving before the WINDS and they have a compass for guidance.
- 2) They land and plant their SEEDS from the land of Jerusalem which GROW EXCEEDINGLY
- 3) They go into the FOREST and find animals,
- 4) They also locate ORE of 'both' gold, silver, and copper.

Kocherhans concluded: "Because of these scriptural requirements, Central America becomes self-eliminating as a landing place for the Lehi colony since two factors are missing, the climate and ores."<sup>267</sup> At least some of the seeds Lehi's family successfully planted in the New World were from Jerusalem. This would imply that for at least one growing season they were in a climate suitable for growing seeds from Jerusalem. Kocherhans raised the question of where seeds from Jerusalem could grow in the Americas.

The earth is made up of many climates and so agriculture varies all over the world. But here Nephi is telling the reader that "seeds from the land of Jerusalem grew "exceedingly" where the colony had disembarked from their long voyage. Is this information given in the scripture without purpose? Probably not, so let us look for understanding and search the world's climates.

From the climate maps it will be observed that the west side of Central America falls in the Monsoon region and the east coast is recognized as a rainy tropical region. Therefore, seeds from the land of Jerusalem which is a Mediterranean subtropical region, would

<sup>264</sup> Mann, 93.

<sup>265</sup> Scripture Central, "Evidence for Book of Mormon Silk and Linen," June 9, 2024. [https://www.google.com/search?q=silk+in+the+book+of+mormon&rlz=1C5MACD\\_enUS1019US1019&oq=&gs\\_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqCQgDEEUYOxjCAziJCAAQRRg7GMIDMgkIARBFGDsYwgMyCQgCEEUYOxjCAziJCAMQRRg7GMIDMgkIBBBFGDsYwgMyCQgFEEUYOxjCAziJCAYQRRg7GMIDMgkIBxBFGDsYwgPSAQk0MzAwajBqMTWoAgiwAgE&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:779e01ae,vid:eLF\\_qtELL-4,st:0](https://www.google.com/search?q=silk+in+the+book+of+mormon&rlz=1C5MACD_enUS1019US1019&oq=&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqCQgDEEUYOxjCAziJCAAQRRg7GMIDMgkIARBFGDsYwgMyCQgCEEUYOxjCAziJCAMQRRg7GMIDMgkIBBBFGDsYwgMyCQgFEEUYOxjCAziJCAYQRRg7GMIDMgkIBxBFGDsYwgPSAQk0MzAwajBqMTWoAgiwAgE&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:779e01ae,vid:eLF_qtELL-4,st:0)

<sup>266</sup> Brumfiel, Elizabeth M., "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change: Fabricating Unity in Anthropology," *American Anthropologist*, 108 (4): 862-877. Jstor 4499525.

<sup>267</sup> Kocherhans, Arthur J., *Lehi's Isle of Promise*. Fullerton, CA: Et Cetera, 1989. 117.

NOT grow “exceedingly” on either coast of Central America. It appears that we would do well not to ignore these basic facts of agriculture.

Observe now South America. There is a small area with a Mediterranean subtropical climate on the west coast of today’s Chile. Lehi could have successfully planted all his seeds, which he had brought from the land of Jerusalem, at this location and they would have grown exceedingly.<sup>268</sup>

If Kocherhans is correct, then why is there little evidence of plants from the Near East having been introduced in the Andes around 600 BC? Nephi provides a possible clue. After harvesting crops, they left the shoreline and journeyed in the wilderness (1 Nephi 18:25). We know that when Nephi used the word “journey” it meant a migration, as in their journeys in the wilderness in Arabia. Furthermore, it seems that only during their travels and not while they are camped by the shoreline, they discover a forest, all manner of wild animals, and deposits of gold, silver, and copper (2 Nephi 18:25). Nephi’s is a perfect description of leaving the coastline in Chile and entering the ore-rich Andes mountains just a few miles to the east.

It appears then that Lehi’s family left the shoreline where their seeds from Jerusalem thrived and entered a mountainous climate zone. This would necessitate the abandonment of the seeds they brought with them for more durable varieties that could grown in frigid conditions and high altitudes.



*Figure 18 Barley and Quinoa Growing in High Andes*

*Mosiah described some of the crops the Nephites adopted in their new climate zone. These new crops included corn, wheat, barley, neas (perhaps papas, the Quechua word for potatoes), and sheum. The grain sheum could have been the*

*Altiplano native grain varieties, like quinoa. We also know that the Nephite grains would not grow without rain (Helaman 11:13-17), and that periodically the people of the Book of Mormon were subject to drought and famine (2 Nephi 1:18, 6:15; Mosiah 9:3; Alma 10:22, 53:7; Helaman 10:6, 11:4, 13:9; Ether 9:28, 9:30). Thus, quite a climatic change existed between their first camp along the shoreline where seeds from Jerusalem grew and the semi-arid mountainous region where grains only grew when it rained. The Book of Mormon’s description of changing crops, forest*



*Figure 19 Farming in the Sacred Valley,*

*s, ores, and mountain-dwelling animals, appear to match well the climate zones of Peru and Chile. The first was the shoreline where crops grow in alluvial plains and the second, the high Andes where Andean staples of grains and potatoes grew in a climate dramatically affected by the El Niño and La Niña weather cycles.*

<sup>268</sup> Kocherhans, *Lehi’s Isle of Promise*, 109-110.

Where did the crops we can identify in the Book of Mormon grow in the ancient Americas? *Barley* (*genus Hordeum*) grew in temperate climates in parts of North America and the Andes of South America.<sup>269</sup> It was used for food by the Andean people in Book of Mormon times.<sup>270</sup> Barley is mentioned in the Book of Mormon three times (Mosiah 7:22; 9:11; Alma 11:7).

*Wheat* (*Quihicha Amaranthus caudatus*) was called Inca wheat. This grain is a species of the large group of amaranth plants. The grain has been a source of food in the Andes since ancient times.<sup>271</sup> Wheat is identified in the Book of Mormon twice (Mosiah 9:11; 3 Nephi 18:18).

The Nephites grew corn (Mosiah 9:6-9). Corn was raised by the ancient people of both Mesoamerica and South America. Manco Capac, the first Inca king, whose life's accomplishments mirror those of Nephi,<sup>272</sup> introduced the cultivation of corn in the Cusco Valley in Peru around 600 BC.<sup>273</sup> It is also known that wine and drinks similar to wine were consumed throughout the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans. In the Andes, the drink is called Chicha which is made from fermented cassava root or corn.

We know that Nephi introduced farming techniques from the Old World when he founded the city of Nephi (2 Nephi 5:11). The ancient agricultural technique employed by the Andean people was called a "qocha." According to archaeologist Amelia Carolina Sparavigna, "An ancient agricultural technique is based on the use of qochas. Linked together by a network of canals, the qochas form a system of water and soil management, alternately used for crops or pasture. These structures can be found in some areas of the Andean highlands of Peru and Bolivia, near the Titicaca Lake at an average altitude of 4,000 meters (roughly 12,500 feet). They are very numerous and dense in the department of Puno (Peru) where they were discovered and documented. The structure (qocha) gives potatoes the first year, quinoa, oats or barley the second year and then it rest for a year as a fallow pasture."<sup>274</sup>

As Kocherhans explained, the climate and growing conditions in Mesoamerica and northeast North America do not match the climatic conditions implied in the Book of Mormon. Further, the cyclical semi-arid conditions that caused the Nephite grains to grow only when there were rains match the historic El Niño - La Niña growing cycles of the Andes (Helaman 11:13-17).

#### 14) DNA Supporting Oral Traditions of Origin

In my book *Nephi in the Promised Land*, I wrote about the oral traditions of the Incas and how their legends paralleled with the record of Nephi and his brothers. The book describes how the Incas believed they were the descendants of four fair-skinned brothers who originally settled in Peru. Now, DNA studies suggest that the Inca legends are possibly based in fact – which is possible evidence for the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. First, let me briefly compare the two historical accounts.

*The Book of Mormon*: By the time Lehi reached the Promised Land, he was "stricken in years" (1 Nephi 18:17). Nephi had long since taken over the leadership of the family while they were in Arabia (Mosiah 10:13). Besides Nephi, Lehi had five other sons. However, the

<sup>269</sup> The Free Dictionary, "Barley," <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/barley> (Accessed 18 December 2011)

<sup>270</sup> "The Nazca Lines," <http://www.students.sbc.edu/sung08/senior%20seminar/Nazca/TheNazcaLines.htm>. (Accessed 18 December 2011).

<sup>271</sup> "Inca Wheat," <http://www.foodtimeliNephi.org/foodmaya.html> (assessed 15 December 2011)

<sup>272</sup> Potter, George D. *Nephi in the Promised Land*, (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2009) 109-121.

<sup>273</sup> Bauer, 26.

<sup>274</sup> Amelia Carolina Sparavigna, "Qochas on Andean Highlands," *Achaeogate Archeologia Sperimentale*, <http://www.archaeogate.org/sperimentale/article/1396/1/qochas-on-andean-highlands-by-a>.



two youngest sons, Jacob and Joseph were born while Lehi was in Arabia and probably were less than ten years of age when the family arrived in the Western Hemisphere. The four elder sons were married men and had their small children. During the first years, the family was in the Promised Land, the four older brothers would have been the principal elders of the family. These four adult brothers would have been the men who represented the Lehite clan when they confronted native tribes. The youngest of the four, Nephi, was the ruler. His oldest brother, the jealous and violent Laman, desired to kill Nephi on several occasions. Understanding the Lehtes' leadership structure presents a fascinating question, "Were Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi the legendary first four Incas?"

When Nephi used the word "journey," he referred to a migration of the family from one place to another. For example, the Lord commanded Lehi that he should leave the valley of Lemuel and journey with his family in the wilderness (1 Nephi 16:9). In the Promised Land, Nephi used the term "journeyings" (1 Nephi 19:1), to describe their search of a choice land in which to settle. In other words, the Nephites took at least two separate journeys before arriving where he built the city of Nephi. The Book of Mormon does not disclose where Nephi led the family when they left the seashore and headed into the wilderness. However, Nephi hints that the family had moved into the towering Andes Mountains, for on occasions he was "carried away upon exceedingly high mountains" (2 Nephi 4:25). Jacob indicated that at one stage in their journeys, they lived upon an "Isle of the Sea" (2 Nephi 10:20). In the language of the Incas, the 3500 square miles Lake Titicaca is called "Cocha (Sea) Titicaca." This could suggest that the first place they stopped at before settling the city of Nephi could have been the Isle of the Sun on Lake Titicaca, the sacred Isle. The place where the Nephites journeyed next and where they finally settled was the land of Nephi, where Nephi, the youngest brother and beloved by his people was named king and where he built a temple. Before reaching the land of Nephi, the youngest brother was forced to separate from his violent older two brothers.

*Inca Oral Traditions:* What parallels are there between Nephi's journeys and the oral traditions of the migrations led by the first king of the Inca people, again, the youngest of four legendary Inca brothers? According to Inca lore, the first Incas were four fair-skinned brothers who arrived by the sea. The oldest was violent and strong. The youngest of the four brothers was benevolent and loved by the Indigenous People. The natives made the youngest brother their king. The oldest brother was violent and made trouble with the people they encountered. Eventually, the youngest brother and his followers had to separate from his violent older brother and his followers. The Andean people believe that the youngest of the four brothers and his wife came from the Isle of the Sun on Lake Titicaca before settling in the Cusco Valley. At Cusco, the youngest Inca brother built a temple.

Is there any scientific evidence supporting the Andean people's oral tradition that appears to mirror the account of Lehi's family? Remember, the Inca Royals had white skin like the Spanish. The answer is, perhaps. Quoting a recent report,

Peruvian Scientists use DNA to trace the origins of Inca emperors:

Researchers in Peru believe they have traced the origins of the Incas – the largest pre-Hispanic civilization in the Americas—through DNA of the modern-day descendants of their emperors. [the Nephite nobles]

After becoming fascinated by the Inca culture, their organizational skills and their mastery of engineering, researchers Ricardo Fujita and Jose Sandoval of Lima's University of San Martin de Porresit became interested in the genetic profile of their descendants.

"It's like the aim of the study, the first of its kind, was to reveal whether there was a unique Inca patriarch."

The scientists wanted to verify two common legends about the origin of the Incas.

One attributes them to a couple from around Lake Titicaca, in Peru's Puno region (Lake Titicaca) region. The other identifies the first Incas as the (four) Ayar brothers from the Pacaritambo mountain in the Cusco region.

DNA samples were taken from inhabitants of both places.

"After three years of tracking the genetic fingerprints of the descendants, we confirm that the two legends explaining the origin of the Inca civilization could be related," said Fujita.

"They were compared with the genealogical base of more than 3,000 people to reconstruct the genealogical tree of all individuals," said Fujita. "We finally reduced this base to almost 200 people sharing genetic similarities close to the Inca nobility."

The study released some preliminary results in April (2018), in the review of *Molecular Genetics and Genomics*.

"The conclusion we came to is that the Tahuantinsuyo (Inca Empire) nobility is descended from two lines, one in the region of Lake Titicaca, the other around the mountain of Pacaritambo in Cusco. That confirms the legends," said Sandoval. "But it also confirms that the two legends were linked."

"Probably the first migration came from the Puno region (Lake Titicaca) and was established in Pacaritambo for a few decades before heading to Cusco,"<sup>275</sup> he said. [comment added]

Of course, there was a unique patriarch of the ancient Incas, his name was Lehi. Further, there were four brothers who founded the ancient Inca empire; their names were Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. After arriving by sea, the brothers migrated to Lake Titicaca and settled there for a short time. Later the youngest brother separated from his oldest brother and migrated to Cusco.

For Mesoamerica and North America, there is currently no evidence supporting traditions that their people came to those lands in the recent past. A widely promoted myth is that there is DNA research supporting a legend that a tribe of northeast Indians came to what is today the United States by sea from the east. To attempt to promote this misnomer, the proponents claim they have DNA analysis showing that the ancestors of the North American Indians came from Europe. It is true that perhaps one-third of Native American genetic makeup comes from Europe, however, the European DNA came to the Americas via Asia, not by sea from Europe. Current DNA research indicates that the European haplotype "y" found in Native Americans originated from south-central Siberia, near Lake Baikal. It was there that the ancient Europeans mixed with Asians before their posterity moved on to the Americas.<sup>276</sup>

If "y" does not work, try "X". Proponents of the myth argue that the finding of the haplotype X gene in Native Americans is evidence that Lehi's family genes came from what is today

<sup>275</sup> (Peruvian Scientists Use DNA to Trace Origins of Inca Empire, <https://phys.org/news/2018-05-peruvian-scientists-dna-inca-emperors.html>).

<sup>276</sup> Jakobson, Rasmus K., "DNA Linking Native Americans with Europeans," Science Nordic, November 22, 2013, <https://www.sciencenordic.com/anthropology-archaeology-denmark/dna-links-native-americans-with-europeans/1393344>.

France. The claim is completely unfounded. Firstly, genetic research indicates that the haplotype X found in Native Americans in USA is of an Asian subgroup of haplotype X, and not from the subgroup found in the remains of human bones in the Solutré region of France. Second, the ancient Solutrean people were not the people who occupy Europe today. They vanished 10,000 years before modern European people. Thirdly, the haplotype X gene found in North America appears to have flowed to the east from its origins in the west. The oldest known case of the Asian haplotype X in North America comes from the early Holocene period. It is the DNA of the Kennewick Man found in Washington State.<sup>277</sup> Finally, neither the Jaredites nor the Lehighites came from France! Having originated from Mesopotamian and Palestine, both groups were from DNA populations from the Near East.

#### 15) Temples Built after the Manner of King Solomon's

Nephi was explicit in stating that he built a temple after the manner of Solomon's (2 Nephi 5:16). I believe the prophet knew well the required design features of a temple and established basic design standards for future temples in the promised land. As discussed in Chapter Four the ancient temples in the Andes were actual buildings with dedicated rooms for temple rites and their doors faced the east.

#### 16) A Large Highway Network

The Nephites constructed a long and comprehensive highway system (Helaman 14:24). The Book of Mormon records that during one short expansion period "many highways were cast up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, from land to land, and from place to place" (3 Nephi 8:13). This was far more than a single road leading to one or more cities. It was a massive public works project consisting of "many roads" connecting "lands" and "places" to each other. In other words, the Nephites had a vast highway system that interconnected their empire. We also know that the Nephites were experts in cement.

The Andean people, including the Incas, built an incredible highway network that was longer than the Roman highway system and was comparable in quality to the roads that led to Rome.<sup>278</sup> The Inca highway system had some 25,000 miles of surface tracks and was in its time the biggest road system in the world.<sup>279</sup> One Spaniard described the Inca roads:



very rough, with high mountains that seem to reach the clouds and descend again infinitely into profound valleys. Although this is true, the royal highway of the Incas, who were so powerful, is also so well made and built through slopes and sections that one almost does not feel the height of the mountains."<sup>280</sup>

*Figure 20 Inca Highways through the Andes*

<sup>277</sup> Fosaaen, Nathanael, "The Solutrean Hypothesis: Retrace Ancient Footsteps Across Atlantic Ice ft.", Ancient Americas,

[https://www.google.com/search?q=the+solutrean+hypothesis&rlz=1C5MACD\\_enUS1019US1019&oq=The+solutre&gs\\_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAyGAAQyBwgAEAAyGAAQyBggBEEUYOTIHCAIQABIABDIHCAQQLhiABDIICAUQABgWGB4yDQgGEAAyhgMYgAAQYigUyBggHEEUYPagCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:61a5e469,vid:2qaUyGhdJTA,st:0](https://www.google.com/search?q=the+solutrean+hypothesis&rlz=1C5MACD_enUS1019US1019&oq=The+solutre&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAyGAAQyBwgAEAAyGAAQyBggBEEUYOTIHCAIQABIABDIHCAQQLhiABDIICAUQABgWGB4yDQgGEAAyhgMYgAAQYigUyBggHEEUYPagCALACAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:61a5e469,vid:2qaUyGhdJTA,st:0)

<sup>278</sup> Urton, *The Legendary Past*, 15

<sup>279</sup> Mann, 3.

<sup>280</sup> Cieza de León, 264.

The Inca highway system ran straight through the Andean mountains forming parallel north-south tracks running nearly the entire length of the great mountain range. At times the Inca highways were paved with gypsum cement.<sup>281</sup> Cobo writes of the ancient highway system in the Andes:

The Incas had two royal roads constructed that ran the length of their kingdom from the province of Quito [Ecuador] to the Kingdom of Chile, which is nine hundred leagues (2,500 miles each), one along the plains and seacoast and the other inland through the provinces of the sierra. In some places, it was thirty leagues from the coast, in others fifty or sixty more or less, according to the lay of the land. Apart from these roads, which ran together from one end of the kingdom to the other like parallel lines, there were in different places four to six other transverse roads going from one side to the other; these cut across two main roads already mentioned. The length of these transverse roads was equal to the width of the Peruvian Empire. The most important of these ran through the city of Cusco, crossing the long road of the sierra.<sup>282</sup>

Hammond Innes explains that the Inca roads included “pack animal stairways [that] climbed as high as 15,600 feet.” and suspension bridges that utilized “rope cables, some as thick as a man’s body slung the roads across deep river gorges.”<sup>283</sup> Cieza de León reported that the Inca bridge at Vilcas had a span of 166 pasos (approximately 400 feet).<sup>284</sup>

To date, there has not been discovered north of Panama an ancient highway system that compares to the one described in the Book of Mormon. The so-called “Great Hopewell Road” was not so great. It ran a mere 60 miles<sup>285</sup> and certainly did not connect lands to lands and places to places. The recently discovered road of the Maya was not much larger. The LIDAR images show it was just over 110 miles in length.<sup>286</sup>

## 17) Walled and Fortified Cities

As discussed in Part 3, the large Nephite cities of Zarahemla and the City of Nephi had walls and fortifications. My candidates for these cities are Pukara and Cusco. These candidate cities also had walls and fortifications in antiquity. However, only one walled city, Mulek, will be discussed here due to its unique walls and fortifications.

The city of Mulek was located in the land of Bountiful, which was south of the land of Desolation (Alma 22:31). The terrain between the cities of Bountiful and Mulek is described as “plains” (Alma 52:20). The plains were in a “wilderness” (Alma 52:22), which probably meant that the plains were in a desert land.<sup>287</sup> Another geographical clue is that there were borders near the city of Mulek and the seashore. According to linguist Hugh Nibley, the term borders in the Book of Mormon usually meant mountains (in Mesopotamian or

<sup>281</sup> Menzies, Gavin, *1421: The Year China discovered the World*. New York: Harper Collins, 2019. 546.

<sup>282</sup> Cobo, 223.

<sup>283</sup> Innes, Hammond, *The Conquistadors*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969, 780-781.

<sup>284</sup> Calderwood, 427.

<sup>285</sup> Schwarz, Kevin, “The Great Hopewell Road: New Data, Analyses, and Future Prospects,” *Journal of Ohio Archaeology* 4:12-18, Ohio Archaeological Council, 2016.

<sup>286</sup> Reuters, “Ancient Maya cities, ‘super highway’ reveal in latest survey,” January 18, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/ancient-maya-cities-super-highways-revealed-latest-survey-2023-01-16/>.

<sup>287</sup> Hugh Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies*, Eds. John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillu, and Don E. North, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, vol. 1. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 18986, 135. Nibley reminds us that the word wilderness “has in the Book of Mormon the same connotation as in the Bible, and usually refers to desert country.”

Egyptian languages borders translates as mountains).<sup>288</sup> Before the battle for Mulek, the Nephite army camped in the borders (mountains) near to where Amalickiah's army was camped in the mountains by the seashore (Alma 51:31).

The most important attribute for identifying the city of Mulek was its complex and imposing fortifications. General Moroni ordered strong fortifications to be built to protect the city. However, while Moroni's army was fighting the Nephite king-men in the land Zarahemla, the entire Lamanite army, seeking protection within its fortifications, attacked the city of Mulek and captured the city and many neighboring cities and forts (Alma 52:2,4,5,19). The fortifications of the city of Mulek were probably constructed about 66 BC (Alma 52, footnote). Because of the remarkable design and construction of its fortifications, it was impossible for the Nephites to attack the Lamanite army while the Lamanites were protected within the walls of the city of Mulek (Alma 52:17).



As discussed in Chapter 10, the city of Nazca and its great temple complex at Cahauchi is a qualified candidate for the Book of Mormon's City of Bountiful. As indicated in this Google Earth image, the area south of Nazca fits perfectly the description of the terrain where the battle for the city of Mulek occurred. South of Nazca are flat gravel and sand plains in what is part of the driest desert on earth. Within a few miles of the seashore are the foothills of the mighty Andes Mountains.

After Teancum killed Amalickah, the fleeing Lamanites attacked the city of Mulek using "all their army" (Alma 52:2) against the undermanned Nephites whose military forces were split because Moroni was fighting the king-men. As a result, the Nephite-built fortifications at the city of Mulek and many other cities, and forts fell under the control of a large Lamanite army. (Alma 52:2,4,5)

Although the word "fortify" is used in the Book of Mormon before the battle for the city of Mulek, it appears that the term only meant to fortify with arms and the stationing of soldiers in the cities (Jacob 7:25; Alma 48:9). It was not until the time of the great Nephite General Moroni that the Book of Mormon refers to physical fortifications being erected to protect the Nephite cities. Since there only seems to have been approximately a year between the time Moroni ordered fortifications to be built for the cities of Bountiful until the Lamanites captured the fortified city of Mulek (see footnotes for Alma 52), it appears that the fortifications built by the Nephites were quickly erected. For this reason, they used only "cast up dirt round about to shield them from the arrows and stones of the Lamanites" (Alma 51:2). The Nephite fortifications were described as "heaps of earth," "banks of earth," "walls of stone" or a "dug-up ridge." At least some of the banks of thrown-up earth had ditches next to them. The design of the Nephite fortifications allowed entry to a city by only a single place of entrance (probably a guarded gate, see Alma 48:8; 49:18; 50:1,4). An additional feature of the Nephite fortifications were towers from which stones could be cast down upon their enemies (Alma 50:4).

<sup>288</sup> Conversation between Hugh Nibley and George Potter at Brigham Young University, August 13, 2001.

In an archaeological conference paper entitled "The Earliest Fortified Settlement of the South Coast of Peru," Lidio M. Valdez of MacEwan University, presented documentation on the construction, design, and age of the fortifications of settlements he and other archaeologists surveyed that existed in the Acari Valley during the early part of the Early Intermediate Nazca Period (first century BC and first century AD). In all, Valdez cites 77 archaeological publications providing 222 citations.<sup>289</sup> Valdez writes:

Early in the history of archaeological studies in the Acari Valley, researchers noted the presence of aggregated settlements surrounded by large walls that were established during the first half of the Early Intermediate Period (Rowe 1956:137, 1963:11; Menzel 1959:128; Valdez 1998). More recent research has determined that during this period a total of eight aggregated settlements existed in the lower section of the Acari Valley.<sup>290</sup>



Of the eight fortified Acari Valley settlements that date to the Book of Mormon period, the largest and most complex was Tambo Viejo, which appears to be an excellent candidate for the city of Mulek. Archaeologists discovered that the walls that surrounded Tambo Viejo were massive and built of dirt, gravel, some cobblestones, adobes, and mud. Although most of the walls have been demolished to make room for modern agriculture, archaeologists can still trace the overall dimensions of the fortifications. The outer earthen wall at Tambo Viejo extended 1.5 km (nearly one mile) from north to south and 0.5 km (.31

<sup>289</sup> Valdez, Lidio M. "The Earliest Fortified Settlement of the South Coast of Peru." To read the complete paper, including photographs, illustrations and maps see webpage: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268524317\\_The\\_earliest\\_fortified\\_settlements\\_of\\_the\\_south\\_coast\\_of\\_Peru](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268524317_The_earliest_fortified_settlements_of_the_south_coast_of_Peru). Accessed 2016.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 6.

miles) from east to west.<sup>291</sup> The enormous size of the compound could easily have hosted a large Lamanite army. The outer walls were impressive, standing 5 meters or higher (16.4 feet) and having a base width of 6 meters (19.6 feet).<sup>292</sup>

If an enemy could somehow gain access over the outer walls of Tambo Viejo, they faced two more inner walls.<sup>293</sup> At least two of the fortifications in the Acari Valley had ditches found next to the walls. Valdez provides this description: "The ditches were likely produced at the time soil was removed to build the walls; intentionally placed or not, the ditches probably constituted an important component of the defensive system, making it even harder to overcome (to climb) the surrounding walls" (Keeley, Fontana. and Quick 2007:57-60, etc.).<sup>294</sup>

Besides walls of cast-up earth, the Nephite fortifications included towers [Alma 50:4]. The fortifications at Tambo Viejo included 11 man-made high platforms that were probably used as watch towers or to counter-attack.<sup>295</sup>

The fortifications at Tambo Viejo were serious structures involving a significant investment of time and effort on the part of those who built them. As Valdez notes, the fortifications in the Acari Valley were the first built in the south coast region of Peru. The earliest mention of fortifications in the Book of Mormon is in Chapter 48 of the Book of Alma, a footnote indicating 72 BC. However, General Moroni only ordered the cities in the land of Bountiful to be fortified about 66 BC (footnote Alma 52).

When were the fortifications built in the Acari Valley? Valdez cites: "Absolute dates (although still limited) and the ceramic shards found in the walls confirm that these structures were built early in the Early Intermediate Period. The oldest date has been determined for the northern wall of Huarato [one of the eight fortified settlements in the Acari Valley], with a radiocarbon age of 2030 +/- 60 BP (cal. 55 +/- 60 BC)."<sup>296</sup> Thus, the earliest fortifications in all of the southern coast of Peru are found in the Acari Valley and date to 55 BC plus or minus 60 years--an incredibly accurate matching when compared to the construction dates of the Mulek fortification in the Book of Mormon (72 BC).

Because of the design and construction of its fortifications, it was impossible for the Nephites to attack the Lamanite army while it was protected within the walls of the city of Mulek (Alma 52:17). This put General Moroni in a self-made predicament. The fortifications that Moroni's forces built were not only strong; they were meticulously engineered. The Lamanite captains were "astonished exceedingly, because of the wisdom of the Nephites in preparing their places of security" (Alma 49:5). One design feature was a singular fortified place of entrance (Alma 49:4,18). However strong and well-designed, the Lamanites were able to overcome the fortifications and capture the city of Mulek. How could this have happened? As noted before, the capture of the city occurred while the Nephite forces were split because of internal conflict. While Moroni and his army were in the land of Zarahemla, the entire Lamanite army went to attack the land of Bountiful (Alma 51:22), including the city of Mulek and several other cities that were located on the east borders (Andes or East mountains) by the (Pacific) seashore (Alma 51:26). The Book of Mormon records: "And thus had the Lamanites obtained, by the cunning of Amalickiah, so many cities, by their numberless hosts, all of which were strongly fortified after the manner of the fortifications of Moroni; all of which afforded strongholds for the Lamanites" (Alma 51:28).

General Moroni faced a very real predicament. The large Lamanite army that occupied the city of Mulek was protected by the strong and ingeniously designed fortifications that he had designed and ordered to be built. Thus, the Nephites understood just how unwise it

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 7,9,12

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 11,12.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 16.

would be for them to retake the city in a direct assault, even though the Nephite soldiers were great warriors (Alma 51:31). Further, General Teancum most likely knew the exact features of the fortification in Mulek since his own troops probably built them. The Book of Mormon records that General Teancum "saw that it was impossible that he could overpower them [Lamanites] while they were in their fortifications; therefore, he abandoned his designs and returned again to the city Bountiful" (Alma 52:18).

Would the fortifications at Tambo Viejo have discouraged an attack by a well-trained Nephite army? Like the forts designed by Moroni, the walls of Tambo Viejo had a single access guarded by towers.<sup>297</sup> If by chance Teancum's men had overtaken the outer walls or entrance at Tambo Viejo, the Nephites would have found themselves in a death trap of their own making. Valdez describes the engineering of the inner fortifications at Tambo Viejo:

Equally intriguing are the two parallel walls on the western side of Tambo Viejo. Such a design probably was strategic, where the outer wall was likely built to prevent the entrance of enemy parties, whereas the inner wall was to obscure the way of successful intruders, particularly if the attack was carried out at night. Due to the height of the outer wall, perhaps initially standing about 4 meters high (13 feet), the smaller inner wall more likely was invisible from the outside (Valdez 2012c). As noted, the inner wall was covered with gravel likely in a further attempt at camouflage. Thus, attackers who managed to enter the site from its western side not only found an additional unexpected barrier to overcome, but also became trapped between the two walls and were unable to escape.

Furthermore, between the two walls just noted, there is a long empty space, but without an obvious access. This space was divided by a small wall into two halves; the northern section was further subdivided by a large mound built between the two parallel walls. Although it is uncertain why the subdivisions were established in the first place, one can plausibly argue that the overall design of the parallel walls and the divided blocked spaces in between was part of the defensive system that perhaps, following the discussion provided by Roscoe (2008:513-514; Keeley, Fontana & Quick 2007:57-60), featured chokepoints. Indeed, two parallel walls may have been an effective method to obscure the way and slow down the escape of attackers.

If the attackers were successful in overcoming the above obstacle, there was still an additional large wall in front of them before reaching the well protected rectangular compound. Between the western wall of the compound and the inner wall noted above there is a second large space; at the mid-southern side of that space there are two relatively short walls and three mounds nearby. The walls in particular may have been established to force intruders, if entering from the south, not only to turn left and then right and thus be disoriented and vulnerable to defenders standing behind nearby walls, but also to force attackers to enter in a single file and be vulnerable. Likewise, if intruders moved in from the northern end, they had to pass through two narrow gates, again in a single file. Hence, this overall site plan of Tambo Viejo appears to have been carefully designed to lead intruders into the space behind the western wall of the rectangular enclosure, a spot where they could have been easily finished off. Roscoe (2008:515) asserts that attackers are aware that narrow gates and choke points are dangerous spots. Therefore, such features discourage attacks.<sup>298</sup>

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 17,18.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 17.



If Tambo Viejo was the city of Mulek, General Teancum would have been fully aware of the various hidden death traps inside the exterior walls of the city. Certainly, he was wise in not attempting to take the city, but rather waiting for Moroni and his reinforcements to arrive (Alma 52:17. Once at Bountiful, General Moroni and his generals devised an ingenious plan to draw out the Lamanite army away from the city so that the Nephites could retake Mulek (Alma 52:19-16).

Mesoamerican cities generally did not have walled fortifications. Two exceptions were the city of Uxmal (700-1000 AD)<sup>299</sup> and Tulúm (500-600 AD).<sup>300</sup> Both these cities were built long after the golden plates were buried in the hill Cumorah. The same can be said of other Mayan cities without walls, i.e. the Maya masterpiece Chichen-Itza<sup>301</sup> - all built after the fall of the Nephite civilization (circa 400 AD).

The same is true for North America. The three most important pre-Spanish settlements were Poverty Point in Louisiana which had no walls; Chaco Canyon in New Mexico and Cahokia Mounds in Illinois with a two-mile long wall were both built around 800 AD.<sup>302</sup> The only walled earthworks that date to the Book of Mormon era are the dozens of small earthworks of the Hopewell earthworks dating between 100BC and 500AD. Wayne May takes special note of the Ohio East Fork earthwork which is also called the “Hanukkiah Earthworks” because an early drawing of the earthwork appears to have the shape of a menorah inside it.<sup>303</sup> However, the Hanukkah earthwork has long been destroyed and the accuracy of the drawing is questionable.<sup>304</sup> With an estimated length of only 902 feet<sup>305</sup>, the earthwork could not have held the entire Lamanite army, let alone been called a “city.” While the Ohio earthworks were walled, none of the works reflects the necessary scale to host the entire Lamanite army nor the tactical defense sophistication or geographic elements associated city of Mulek.

#### 18) Cities and Houses Made of Cement

The Nephite record tells us that the people who lived in the land northward primarily used ‘cement’ as their building material due to the limited supply of timber (Helaman 3:7). The northern shoreline of Peru is a barren desert plain except for the alluvial valleys where seasonal snow melt flows down from the Andes. In this barren terrain, trees are scarce and forests are non-existent. We read, “And there being but little timber upon the face of the land, nevertheless the people who went forth became exceedingly expert in the working of cement; therefore they did build houses of cement, in the which they did dwell” (Helaman 3:7). So expert in the use of cement were the Nephites in the land northward that they used cement to build their “cities, and their temples, and their synagogues, and their sanctuaries, and all manner of their buildings” (Helaman 3:9).

<sup>299</sup> UNESCO, “Pre-Hispanic Town of Uxmal,” Unesco World Heritage Convention, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/791/#:~:text=The%20Mayan%20town%20of%20Uxmal,reveals%20a%20knowledge%20of%20astronomy.>

<sup>300</sup> Cartwright, Mark, “Tulum,” *World History Encyclopedia*, February 3, 2015, [https://www.worldhistory.org/Tulum/#google\\_vignette.](https://www.worldhistory.org/Tulum/#google_vignette)

<sup>301</sup> UNESCO, “Pre-Hispanic city of Chichen-Itza,” <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/791/#:~:text=The%20Mayan%20town%20of%20Uxmal,reveals%20a%20knowledge%20of%20astronomy.>

<sup>302</sup> National Park Service, “Native American Heritage,” *Archaeology This Month*, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/archeology-this-month-native-american-heritage.htm#:~:text=Indigenous%20people%20built%20America's%20first,%2C%20Europe%2C%20and%20northern%20Africa.>

<sup>303</sup> May, Wayne, *Book of Mormon Geography in North America Overview* (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHVh3bDYGRE>).

<sup>304</sup> McCulloch, J. Huston, “Ohio’s East Fork or ‘Hanukkiah Earthworks,’” *Ancient American*, Vol. 3, #14 (Sept-Oct), 1996, 28-37.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

The Nephites living in the high Andes in the cities of the land southward, such as, the city of Nephi and Zarahemla, used the durable materials of stone and timber to construct their buildings. However, these materials were not available to the Nephites who migrated to the land of the Jaredites in the north. Therefore, it would seem reasonable that one way to identify the land of the Jaredites is to find the ruins of buildings, large and small, temples, and even cities made entirely of cement.

But did the Nephites use ‘cement’ as we understand the term today? It is highly unlikely. Webster’s Dictionary provides the following definition of cement in our day:

#### Definition of cement

Entry 1 of 2

1a, CONCRETE

b: a powder of alumina, silica, lime, iron oxide, and magnesium oxide burned together in a kiln and finely pulverized and used as an ingredient of mortar and concrete also: any mixture used for a similar purpose

2: a binding element or agency: such as

a: a substance to make objects adhere to each other

b: something serving to unite firmly,<sup>306</sup>

Note that Webster’s Dictionary labels its first definition of cement as ‘concrete’. Certainly, no remains of ancient buildings made from poured concrete have been found anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. Thus, it must have been the second definition of cement, a binding element or agency: such as a substance to make objects adhere to each other, that was the building material referred to by Helaman. We can substantiate this by understanding the meaning of the word ‘cement’ in Joseph Smith’s day. Here are the definitions of cement as a building material in Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*:

Cement, n.

1. Any glutinous or other substance capable of uniting bodies in close cohesion, as mortar, glue, sedge, &c. In building, cement denotes a stronger kind of mortar, than that which is ordinarily used.
2. To unite by the application of glutinous substances, by mortar which hardens, or other matter that produces cohesion of bodies.
3. To unite or become solid to unite and cohere.<sup>307</sup>

The American English meaning for cement during Joseph Smith’s time was a process for making bodies cohere, to be glued together, and to harden into a solid to unite and cohere. Concrete was not even mentioned in Noah Webster’s 1828 definition of cement.



*Figure 21 Dr. Jay and Patricia Clark at Huaca Puellana*

What then was the building material that the Nephites in the land northward became so expert in that they could construct houses, temples, and all manner of buildings with it? It had to be a substance that could be made to stick together to form a strong substance it could be used for large structures and even entire cities. I postulate that the Nephites became

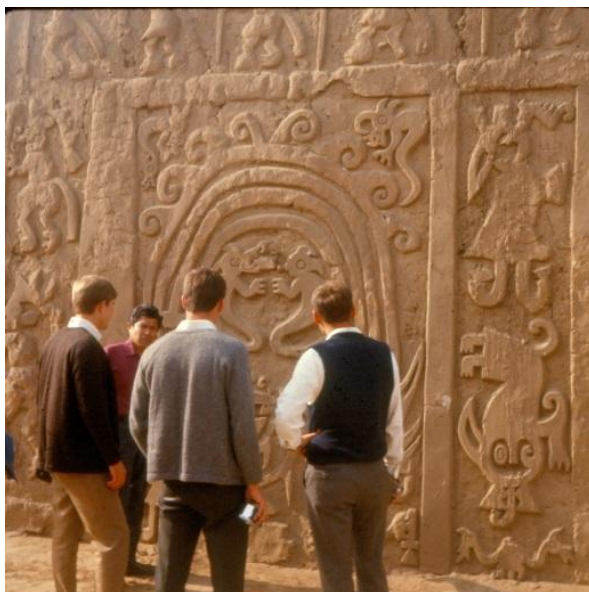
<sup>306</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cement>, accessed 26 May 2020.

<sup>307</sup> Webster, Noah, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 Edition, Republished in Facsimile Edition (San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1995) see: *cement*.

experts in making adobe bricks so durable that enormous temples could be constructed from this form of elementary cement. As with concrete, adobe brick is a composite material made of sand, silt, clay, organic material such as straw or dung, and water.<sup>308</sup> The ideal composite for adobe earth mixture is 15% clay, 10–30% silt, and 55–75% fine sand.<sup>309</sup> Joseph Smith accurately translated the Nephite building material as ‘cement,’ not using the word ‘adobe’ for adobe was not a term in the American language in the Prophet’s day.<sup>310</sup>

During my mission in Peru, I was able to observe the amazing level of skill the ancients possessed in the use of adobe cement. When the Spanish arrived in Lima, the land of the people of desolation, there were dozens of huge pyramids made entirely of adobe bricks. Today only a handful of these ‘huacas’ or pyramids still exist. I visited several of these including the massive Huaca Pucllana (shine or temple) and the Huaca Haullamarca. The Huaca Pucllana dates to 200 AD and was built from seven staggered platforms. It was both a religious and political facility. The shrine was surrounded by a plaza and an exterior wall. Inside the walls, there are still original adobe huts. The huge shrine was 1640 feet long, 328 feet wide, and 72 feet high,<sup>311</sup> and made of an estimated 50 million bricks.

On an even larger scale are the abode structures I visited while serving my mission in Trujillo, Peru. The city of Trujillo is located north of Lima along the Peruvian shoreline. A few minutes south of the city is the enormous Temple of the Sun, an adobe brick pyramid built circa 100 AD. Constructed from approximately 130 million bricks, the original structure was 165 feet tall and 1,115 feet by 525 feet at its base. The complex included royal residences and burial chambers.<sup>312</sup> Attesting to the strength of the Book of Mormon era Peruvian adobe cement bricks, the bricks at the base of the Temple of the Sun supported the weight of 165 feet of bricks above them. The bricks were also capable of supporting chambers within the pyramid.



*Figure 22 Chan Chan with Mango Perez, Elders Dennis Hislop, Scott Lund, and George Potter*

Perhaps the most impressive evidence of the ancient Peruvian’s mastery of abode is the ruins of the ancient city of Chan Chan, also near the city of Trujillo and built around 800 A.D. The Smithsonian Magazine states:

During its heyday, about 600 years ago, Chan Chan, in northern Peru, was the largest city in the Americas and the

largest adobe city on earth. Ten thousand structures, some with walls 30 feet high, were woven amid a maze of passageways and streets. Palaces

<sup>308</sup> Vargas, J.; J. Bariola; M. Blondet (1986). "Seismic Strength of Adobe Masonry." *Materials and Structures*. **9** (4): 253–256. doi:10.1007/BF02472107.

<sup>309</sup> Garrison, James. "Adobe-The Material, Its Deterioration, Its Coatings" (PDF). pp. 5–16. Retrieved 27 February 2013.

<sup>310</sup> Webster, Noah, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 Edition

<sup>311</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huaca\\_Pucllana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huaca_Pucllana); accessed 26 May 2020.

<sup>312</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huaca\\_del\\_Sol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huaca_del_Sol), accessed 26 May 2020.

and temples were decorated with elaborate friezes, some of which were hundreds of feet long. Chan Chan was fabulously wealthy, although it perennially lacked one precious resource: water. Today, however, Chan Chan is threatened by too much water, as torrential rains gradually wash away the nine-square-mile ancient city.<sup>313</sup>

From the Lurin Valley twenty miles south of Lima to as far north as Ecuador, the dry and barren coastal plain of northern Peru is dotted with dozens of antiquity sites that date to the time of the Nephites. All of these archaeological sites were built using adobe cement. The Incas referred to the region as the land of the people of desolation.<sup>314</sup> The Nephites knew it as the land northward where the Jaredites originally settled.

In Mesoamerica, the Maya were experts in the use of plaster and cement. This is especially true after Book of Mormon times. Their use of lime plasters dates back to roughly 8,000 to 10,000 BC. The plasters were made by using calcination of carbonate rocks like limestone to produce quicklime, which was slaked to create portlandite.<sup>315</sup> It has also been discovered that the Maya developed during Book of Mormon times a simple concrete mixture.<sup>316</sup> However, the Maya mixture was not used for building houses. It was used as mortar and plastering of limestone stone blocks used to build temples, observatories, and ball courts.<sup>317</sup> Traditional, Maya houses were made of hardwood poles, thatched roofs, and saplings for walls,<sup>318</sup> and sometimes covered with adobe plaster, not bricks.<sup>319</sup> Having primarily used wood to build Maya houses, it would appear to place them outside of the timberless environment described in the Book of Mormon.

In North America, the Pueblo people of the southwest United States used bricks to build their homes and impressive cities.<sup>320</sup> The word adobe comes from the Arabic word *al-tob* meaning brick. As in Peru, they used a simple adobe cement akin to the definition found in Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary.

## 19) Oceangoing Maritime Tradition

The Book of Mormon inhabitants of the promised land had a long maritime tradition starting with the fact that they traveled many waters to reach their new homelands. Having achieved such a feat and being in a land with four seas, it seems likely that they would not have become landlocked. The strongest evidence for an ancient and sustained maritime tradition in the Americas takes us to South America.

<sup>313</sup> <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/endangered-site-chan-chan-peru-51748031/>

<sup>314</sup> Sullivan, 37,51.

<sup>315</sup> Quелlette, Jennifer, "Archaeologists are unlocking the secrets of Maya lime plasters and mortars," ARS Technica, 4/13/2023, <https://arstechnica.com/science/2023/04/archaeologists-are-unlocking-the-secrets-of-maya-lime-plasters-and-mortars/>.

<sup>316</sup> When Did Cement Become Common in Ancient America?" Scripture Central, KnowWhy #176, August 27, 2020.

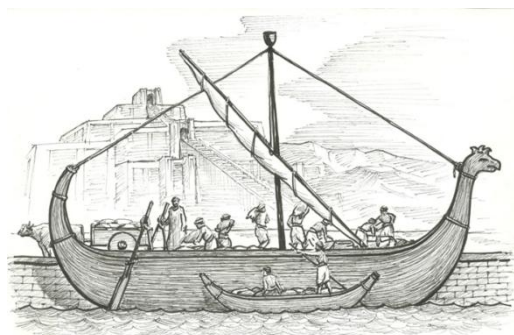
<sup>317</sup> Silverman, Daniel, "They built their own demise, Lime mortar, rinder, and plaster; what role in the decline of Classical Maya civilization," <https://santacruzarchitect.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/they-built-their-own-demise-lime-mortar-render-and-plaster-what-role-in-the-decline-of-classical-mayan-civilization/>.

<sup>318</sup> How to Build a Maya House, EverythingPlayadelCarmen.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23cMKKwDpTk>.

<sup>319</sup> What were Maya homes like? Bitisize, BBC, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zd3vwwx#zgjb7h>.

<sup>320</sup> Francis IV, Lee, "Adobe Brick," Indigi-Genius Episode 6, Public Broadcasting System, April 12, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/video/adobe-brick-fzgfli/>.

The Spanish chronicler Cabello Valboa (a great-nephew of Vasco Nuñez Balboa, who discovered the Pacific for the Europeans) wrote that according to the legend of the Incas, in primordial times, the Peruvian coastal valleys were invaded by people from the sea in a fleet of balsas or rafts.<sup>321</sup> The Jaredites came to the New World in eight barges. They were shipbuilders (Ether 2:16) whose home of origin invented the sail and had a long legacy of building large ocean-going balsa vessels.<sup>322</sup>



*Figure 23 Drawing of Mesopotamian Reed Ship by Jose Flores*

In my book, *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*, evidence is provided showing that the Jaredites migrated from the Pacific coastal areas, i.e. Caral (Norte Chico) to the Lake Titicaca area known as the Altiplano at the time of the great drought. A striking comparison between the technologies employed in ancient Mesopotamia and the Andes in South America were the reed ships fabricated in both civilizations. Reed

sailing ships were first invented in Mesopotamia and are still in use today. Likewise, Totora reeds are still utilized for building boats at Lake Titicaca in both Bolivia and Peru. The Lake Titicaca basin was settled around 1600 BC. The famed explorer Thor Heyerdahl was the first to compare the reed boats of Lake Titicaca to the reed boats of Mesopotamia. When he built a replica of a Mesopotamian ship, he used



*Figure 24 Lake Titicaca Reed Ship*

Bolivian shipbuilders from Lake Titicaca, not Iraqis, to construct his reed ship, *Tigris*. When Thor Heyerdahl first attempted to prove that the ancients could cross the Atlantic in reed ships using the Canary Current, he had a reed ship built by boatmen from Lake Chad in Africa. His ship, the *Ra*, broke apart at sea and had to be abandoned. For his second attempt, is when he used the reed boat builders from Lake Titicaca. The boatmen from Lake Titicaca constructed the *RA II*, which succeeded in reaching Barbados.<sup>323</sup> The similarities between the reed boats of Mesopotamia and South America are remarkable, including the reed animal heads placed on the bow of their boats.

Through the legacy of Hagoth, we know that the Nephites, and perhaps the Lamanites, kept alive their knowledge of ocean-going sailing and the construction of large sailing ships (Alma 63:5-8). We also know that the Peruvians were still building ocean-going balsa ships when Columbus reached the New World. The first encounter the Spaniards had with the Incas was “in the form of an Inca ship sailing near the equator, three hundred miles from its home port, under a load of fine cotton sail. The Inca balsa had a crew of twenty and was easily the size of a Spanish carvelle.”<sup>324</sup> (nearly 100 feet in length) The Spanish encounter with the Inca ship was the first sign that an advanced and wealthy empire was to be found farther south, and even more interesting, it was the first time Westerners saw evidence that a Jaredite-style empire existed in South America. Aboard the Inca balsa ship, the Spanish found “many pieces of silver and gold as personal

<sup>321</sup> Urton, *The Legendary Past*, 59.

<sup>322</sup> For a complete study on the nature of the Jaredite barges, see George Potter, *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*, Chapter 7. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort Inc., 2020.

<sup>323</sup> Ryne, Linn, “Voyagers into History at Norway,” [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reed\\_boat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reed_boat).

<sup>324</sup> Mann, 92.

ornaments...including breastplates; tweezers and rattles and strings of clusters of beads and rubies; mirrors decorated with silver, and cups and other drinking vessels. They were carrying many wool and cotton mantles and Moorish tunics...and other pieces of clothing colored with cochineal, crimson, blue, yellow, and all other colors, and working with different types of ornate embroidery, in figures of birds, animals, fish, and trees. They had some tiny weights and weigh gold...There were small stones in bead bags: emeralds and chalcedonies and other jewels and pieces of crystal and resin."<sup>325</sup> When asked where the Inca ship was going, the Spanish were told they were on a trading mission to islands in the ocean.

In the first century BC, the Nephite homeland was a place of great fear. The Lamanite wars were driving the Nephites toward the sea. The great city of Zarahemla had fallen to the Lamanites. Wicked people prevailed while the righteous were persecuted. During these precarious days, "an exceedingly curious man" named Hagoth built a very large ship (Alma 63:5). So fine was the vessel and so difficult was life in the promised land in his time that it seems Hagoth had no shortage of volunteers willing to sail away with him. "Behold, there were many of Nephites who did enter therein and did sail forth with much provisions, and also many women and children; and they took their course northward" (Alma 63:6).

A year later, Hagoth returned and built other ships. With his enlarged fleet, he took many more colonists northward (Alma 63:7). However, Hagoth was not the only shipbuilder at the time. Another ship was built that perhaps followed Hagoth's instructions for traveling north (Alma 63:8). The Book of Mormon tells us that as the Nephite civilization developed, they built ships large enough to transport timbers from the land of Bountiful to the land northward (Helaman 3:10). So extensive was the Nephite shipping industry that a note is written by Mormon of the Book of Mormon to explain that his record does not include a "hundredth part of the proceedings of this people...and their shipping and their building of ships" (Helaman 3:14). In other words, there must have been a significant oceangoing shipbuilding industry on the part of the Nephites.

In 1851, while serving a mission in Hawaii, Elder George Q. Cannon began teaching the Hawaiians that their Polynesian ancestors included people from the Book of Mormon. Later, Brother Cannon became a counselor in the First Presidency. In a letter written to the Hawaiian king Kamehameha V, President Brigham Young outlined the same information that has been affirmed by other Church leaders that, "Among the Polynesians' ancestors were the people of Hagoth. President Joseph F. Smith said, "I would like to say to you brethren and sisters...you are some of Hagoth's people, and there is NO PERHAPS about it."<sup>326</sup> President Heber J. Grant again endorsed this doctrine in the dedication prayer of the Hawaii Temple, saying that there were descendants of Lehi in Hawaii.<sup>327</sup>

David G. Calderwood describes the amazing level of the pre-Columbian maritime skills of the Andean people and also relates how the Incas were possibly duplicating Hagoth's feat:

Tupa Inca Yupanqui [the king] went overland to the mouth of the Guayas River [the modern city of Guayaquil, Ecuador] and embarked by raft or barge and sailed into the Pacific Ocean for more than one year. Murúa's informants, that Tupa Inca Yupanqui claimed to have reached some islands which he called *Hahua Chumpi* and *Niña Chumpi*.

Manuel Ballasteros Gambrois, wrote that in Quechua *Chumpi* means a belt or a ring and *Niña* means fire. Ballasteros suggests that Tupa Inca Yupanqui may have discovered some islands surrounded by fire

<sup>325</sup> Hemming, 25.

<sup>326</sup> W.A. Cole and E.W. Jensen, *Israel in the Pacific*. Salt Lake City, 1961, 388.

<sup>327</sup> Grand, Heber J., "Improvement Era, Feb. 23, 1920: 283. See *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 3, Polynesians.

or where there was an active volcano. The similarity in the sounds between *Hahua* or *Hawa* and Hawaii cannot be overlooked nor considered mere coincidence, especially when coupled with the description of a ring of fire, possibly in reference to a volcano. The chronicler Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa provided a similar description of the voyage of Lord Inca Tupa Yupanqui into the Pacific. Sarmiento wrote that all along the coast of Peru, the natives believed that there were many islands in the Mar del Sur.<sup>328</sup> (What the Spanish called the Pacific ocean off of South America)

The Incas must have been experienced, confident, and highly competent sailors to have allowed their king to travel deep into the Pacific for over a year. The ability of ancient Peruvians to sail to Polynesia was first demonstrated by Thor Heyerdahl in 1947. His balsa raft *Kon-Tiki* sailed from Lima to the Tuamotu Islands. In 1999, American explorer Phil Buck replicated Heyerdahl's feat. His pre-Columbian type of reed ship, the *Viracocha*, reached Easter Island from Chile. Heyerdahl's successful experiment, the *Kon-Tiki* voyage, led Heyerdahl to postulate that the Polynesian islands could have been colonized in part from South America.

The question begs to be asked, is there any science that supports transoceanic voyages by South Americans to Polynesia, i.e. Hagoth? The answer is yes. It is well documented that indigenous South American DNA has been found among Polynesian groups, or vice versa, Polynesian DNA has been found in indigenous populations in South America. What scientists have not determined is what direction the DNA migrated.<sup>329</sup>

Historian Peter Marsh believes the sweet potato is direct evidence of migrations from Peru to Polynesia:

The *Kumara* or sweet potato (*Iqomoea Batatas*) is a South American plant. In the Kechua dialect of north Peru, the name for sweet potato is *Kumar*. As the general name of the plant is *Kumara* throughout the Pacific, the tuber must have been obtained from an area that used the name *Kumar*.

A small but tasty pineapple as well as tasteless paw paw (both South American plants) are found among ruins in the Marquesas.<sup>330</sup>

Using images drawn on pre-Inca ceramics and also of traditional Polynesian craft designs, the Andean explorer Gene Savoy constructed a replica of an ancient Peruvian vessel. To the degree that it would have matched the design of Hagoth's, we can only speculate. Savoy completed his replica in 1997. The 73-foot double-hulled canoe was made from strong Peruvian mahogany. To form the catamaran, Savoy lashed the hulls together using rope. After a 42-day voyage with no motor, Savoy and his crew of seven completed their passage from Callao (Lima, Peru) to Radio Bay at Hilo, Hawaii. Savoy's voyage showed that pre-Columbian South Americans had the technology to sail to Hawaii and beyond.<sup>331</sup>

As for Mesoamerica, the Maya only appear to have developed a short-distance maritime trade. Their shoreline trade only developed after the era of the Book of Mormon. Their trade route ran between Veracruz, Mexico, and Honduras on the Gulf of Mexico. The Maya traders used large dugout canoes of doubtful utility in the Pacific Ocean.<sup>332</sup> From the days

<sup>328</sup> Calderwood, 371-373.

<sup>329</sup> Schmerker, Jeff, "DNA Links Prehistoric Polynesians to South America," *Integrated DNA Technologies*, November 12, 2020.

<sup>330</sup> Marsh, Peter, "Plants and Animals," see <http://users.on.net/~mkfenn/page7.htm.4>.

<sup>331</sup> Savoy, Gene, <http://genesavoy.org>.

<sup>332</sup> Rissolo, Dominique, "The Ancient Maya and the Rise of Maritime Trade," *Ocean Exploration*, 2011, <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/11maya/background/history/history.html#:~:text=The%20vessel%20of%20choice%20was,humble%20watercraft%2C%20but%20massive%20affairs.>

of the Olmec onward to the Maya only smaller canoes were used for lake and river travel. As for North America, outside of canoes and kayaks, there is no evidence of an oceangoing maritime tradition.

One significant geographical requirement for the land of the Nephites appears to put in question anywhere north of South America as having been the place where Hagoth set sail -- apparently to Hawaii. The west coast of South America, in the southern hemisphere, is the only place in the Western Hemisphere where a ship would have to sail northward to reach Hawaii. Hawaii is 19.89 degrees North Latitude. To sail from Yucatan, at 20.70 North Latitude, one would need to sail westward. From Ohio, one would first need to travel across western North America, build a ship in a foreign land, and sail south for over 20 degrees to reach Hawaii.

## 20) Sunken, Buried, and Burned Ancient Cities

As discussed in Chapter Two, archaeologists have discovered sunken, buried, and burned cities in the Andes. The source of these catastrophic events was possibly volcanic eruptions in the Andes. Similar geological characteristics exist in Central America and were probably the cause for the remains of the sunken city in Lake Atitlan in Guatemala.<sup>333</sup> Undoubtedly the events that took place after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, could just as easily have taken place in Mesoamerica. The likelihood of these same events taking place in North America would have to have been restricted to the volcanic zone of the west coast, and not the eastern parts of North America.

## 21) A Decimal System

The Nephites used a decimal numeric system. A decimal system (also called a base 10 or denary system) had the number 10 as its base. Once a civilization adopts its numeric system, it rarely changes the way it counts. Since around 3000 BC, the Egyptians used a pure decimal system. The Greeks and Romans adapted the efficient decimal system from the Egyptians, as did the Hebrews.<sup>334</sup> Since the Israelites used the decimal system, it is highly likely that the Nephites and Lamanites brought the decimal system based on 10 to the promised land.

What about the ancient people of the Andes who in Book of Mormon times occupied what is today, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and parts of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.? These ancients spoke Quechua and Aymara. Both of these native languages have a numeric system based on 10 and also use the zero. Father Cobo wrote:

In their way of counting, the Indians (of the Andes) have the same kind of numbers that we do. Counting up to ten units, and from there on up reduplicating on the denary numbers, one, two, three units, etc. up to twenty. This number is expressed by two denaries, the number thirty is expressed by three, and in this way the denaries are added in exactly the same way as in our system on up to one hundred, and the hundreds are multiplied up to ten, which is one thousand.<sup>335</sup>

An example of this numeric system in the Book of Mormon is when Mormon organized his armies in lots of 10,000. Sadly, Mormon used the count to determine how many of his

<sup>333</sup> Scripture Central, "Is There Evidence of Sunken Cities in Ancient America?", Jan 16, 2019, <https://scripturecentral.org/why/is-there-evidence-of-sunken-cities-in-ancient-america>.

<sup>334</sup> Ifrah, George, *From One to Zero. A Universal History of Numbers*. New York: Penguin Books 1988, 200-213.

<sup>335</sup> Cobo, 256.



soldiers had been slain (Mormon 6:11-14). Amazingly, Inca chiefs used the decimal system to count their defeated areas and to balance their forces during the Spanish invasion.<sup>336</sup>

Mesoamerican cultures such as the Maya did not use a decimal system. Rather they counted by a base of 20. Pamean languages of Mexico had an octal system with a base of 8. The Yuki who were native to what is now known as California, also used a base of 8.<sup>337</sup> However, the North American Indians generally used a counting system based on 10 or 20.<sup>338</sup>

## 22) Solar and Lunar Calendars



*Figure 25 Intihuatana stone at Machu Picchu used to mark summer and winter solstices.*

The Nephites calculated their history by counting solar years from the time they left Jerusalem. They also calculated time by using lunar months (Omni 1:21). The ancient Andean people,<sup>339</sup> the Olmec, and the Maya used both solar and lunar calendars. Although it is not possible to date how early these calendars were used, it is interesting to note that the earliest

known solar observatory in the Americas was discovered in Peru dating back to the fourth century BC.<sup>340</sup> The Native Americans in North America had names for the moons and also monitored the seasons. The earliest known solar observatory in North America was made by the Cahokia in Illinois around 600 AD.<sup>341</sup>

## 23) Highly Skilled Doctors

Until World War II, far more soldiers died from diseases and battlefield wounds than perished during the actual fighting. This certainly would have been true on ancient battlefields. We read that the Lamanites were warned by General Moroni, "I will command my men that they shall fall upon you, and inflict the wounds of death in your bodies, that ye may become extinct" (Alma 44:7). Even during the American Civil War, which took place after the Book of Mormon was published, survival rates for battlefield wounded were disheartening. The US National Institutes of Health reports that there were 175,000 extremity wounds to Union soldiers during the Civil War. Of these, 30,000 required

<sup>336</sup> Benson, E. "The Quipu: "Written Text in Ancient Peru. Princeton: The Princeton University Press Library, Chronicle 37 (1) 1975, 11-23.

<sup>337</sup> Avelino, Heriberto (2006). "The typology of Pame number systems and the limits of Mesoamerica as a linguistic area" (PDF). *Linguistic Typology*. 10 (1): pp. 41-60, doi:10.1515/LINGTY.2006.002.

<sup>338</sup> Eels, W.C., "Number Systems of the North American Indians," *The American Mathematical Monthly* Vol. XX December 1913, No. 10.

<sup>339</sup> Cobo, 251.

<sup>340</sup> Harris, Richard "Oldest Solar Observatory in Americas Found in Peru." National Public Radio, April 28, 2007, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story.php?storyId=7658847>, 1, Accessed April 2008).

<sup>341</sup> Ojibwa, "Ancient America: Solar Calendars, Daily KOS, August 20, 2020, <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2020/8/2/1965525/-Ancient-America-Solar-Calendars>.

amputation with a 26.3% mortality rate.<sup>342</sup> In contrast, it appears that the Nephi battlefield doctors exhibited incredible skills in saving their warriors. Take for example the Ammonite stripling warriors of whom all 2,066 incurred many battlefield wounds yet none of them expired thanks to immediate battlefield treatment of their wounds and their faith in God.

And it came to pass that after the Lamanites had fled, I immediately gave orders that my men who had been wounded should be taken from among the dead, and caused that their wounds should be dressed.

And it came to pass that there were two hundred, out of my two thousand sixty, who had fainted because of the loss of blood; nevertheless, according to the goodness of God, and to our great astonishment, and also the joy of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish; yea, and neither was there one soul among them who had not received many wounds. (Alma 57:24:25)



*Figure 26 Figure of Nazca Trepanation Skulls*

There are several other instances in the history of the Lamanite wars where Nephites were severely wounded in battle but survived (Alma 3:22; Alma 49:23-24; Alma 52:35).

Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the high survival rates among the Nephite wounded is that their commanders understood the importance of receiving “immediate” treatment for wounds (Alma 57:24). During

the American Civil War doctors only learned this need for urgency as the war progressed. “As the war went on, it was noticed that if amputation was done within 24 hours, mortality was lower than if performed after more than 48 hours.”<sup>343</sup>

Of particular interest are the battlefield wounds to the head. Book of Mormon period Andean doctors practiced advanced brain surgery techniques, which were later improved upon by their descendants. The ancient Andean doctors had significantly higher survival rates for brain operations than did the American Civil War doctors. As reported in the Smithsonian Magazine:

For the study, Tulane University bioarchaeologist John Verano, who literally wrote the book on Inca cranial surgery, and bioarchaeologist Anne Titelbaum of the University of Arizona teamed up with University of Miami neurologist David Kushner to look at surgery success rates over time. With its high elevation and dry climate, Peru is full of well-preserved ancient skulls. In fact, according to a press release, about 800 trepanned prehistoric skulls have been found in Peru, more than the rest of the world combined. The researchers examined the skulls, looking at the edges of the hole. If the edge had been “remodeled,” or healed significantly, the team considered the surgery a success. If the edge of the hole was ragged without signs of healing, they assumed the patient didn’t survive the surgery or died soon after.

<sup>342</sup> Reilly, Robert F., MD “Medical and surgical care during the American Civil War, 1861-1865”, US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings, Dallas, Texas, accessed September 2018.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

Using that metric, they examined various periods of Peruvian trepanation. Wade reports that over the course of 2,000 years, the Inca and their ancestors got progressively better at skull surgery. Of the 59 skulls dated between 400 B.C.E. to 200 B.C.E. only about 40 percent of the patients' skulls showed signs of survival. That rate of survival increased to 53 percent in the analysis of 421 skulls found dating between 1000 C.E. to 1400 C.E. During the Inca period, from 1400 C.E. to 1500 C.E. 75 percent to 83 percent of the 160 skulls examined showed signs of survival.

During the Civil War, by comparison, the mortality rate from skull surgery was between 46 and 56 percent. The study appears in the journal *World Neurosurgery*.

“There are still many unknowns about the procedure and the individuals on whom trepanation was performed, but the outcomes during the Civil War were dismal compared to Incan times,” Kushner says in the release. “The question is how did the ancient Peruvian surgeons have outcomes that far surpassed those of surgeons during the American Civil War?”

Kushner says there are signs that the technique evolved over the centuries. The succession of skulls shows that over time the Peruvian surgeons learned to avoid areas of the skull that would produce excessive bleeding. They also figured out that smaller holes were more survivable than larger holes. And most importantly, it appears their surgeries became shallower, avoiding perforating the dura, or the thick membrane that covers the brain. In fact, some patients appear to have survived multiple surgeries, with one skull showing five trepanation holes.<sup>344</sup>

Of all the numerous ancient civilizations of the Americas, only the doctors of the Andes are known to have exhibited such advanced surgery technology.

#### 24) Fields of Ancient Bones

One of the more sobering accounts in the Book of Mormon is the demise of the Jaredites, a once great nation that self-destructed through pride, sin, and hatred. King Limhi sent a small expedition party to try to locate Zarahemla. The forty-three people failed to find Zarahemla, but did discover the Jaredite remains.

Having traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beast, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind, having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel. (Mosiah 8:8)

<sup>344</sup> Daley, Jason, “Inca Skull Surgeons Had Better Success Rates than American Civil War Doctors,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/inca-head-crackers-had-better-success-rates-civil-war-surgeons-180969324/> accessed 27 July 2018.



*Figure 27 Fields of Bones Near Nazca Peru.*

What can we learn from this verse? First, the Nephite party traveled near the “many waters” which we know from Nephi’s account that “many waters” means ocean (1 Nephi 17:5). In the Andean context, this would have meant that they found bones and ruins along the Pacific shoreline. Second, they found the ruins of cities. Third, there must have been several places where they discovered the bones for the remains were of a people described as numerous.

After nearly two million Jaredites were slain in battle, the opposing armies moved to the waters of Ripliancum which meant “to exceed all” waters (perhaps the Pacific Ocean), and from there they marched southward (Ether 15:3, 8,10). This could place the final Jaredite battle near Lima and the Rimac Valley or Paracas further south which was the southern range of the Chavín Civilization (900-250 BC). Again, Lima, Peru was known by the Incas as the people of the land of desolation. The end of the Chavín civilization would have been roughly 100 years before king Limhi’s expedition party (circa 121 BC) found fields of bones.

After over 2000 years, several feet of atmospheric and volcanic dust would have buried battlefield bones under several feet of earth. The modern city of Lima now covers almost the entirety of the Rimac Valley. However, in some places fields of ancient bones are still to be seen along the Pacific shore of Peru. Amateur researcher Brien Foerster speaks about a photograph of a large field of bones near Paracas, Peru, “The end of Paracas was caused by genocide. People moved in from the north and obliterated or tried to obliterate the royal bloodline...what you see is a killing field...all (skulls) have evidence of blows to the head and the bones are simply scattered.”<sup>345</sup>

<sup>345</sup> Foerster, Brien, Elongated Skulls Phenomenon.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56TrKNDHVU8>.

## 25 Cultural Evidence from the Ancient Near East

Since the Jaredite and Nephite cultures originated in the Near East, one would expect to find elements of eastern cultures having been transferred from the east to the promised land. Here are eight possible examples that such transfers came in South America.

*Ancient Drug Trade:* THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) comes from the cannabis plant (marijuana or hemp). The chemical compound has been found in ancient mummies in Peru<sup>346</sup> Cannabis is not native to South America. It originated in Southeast Asia. By Lehi's era, it was in use by the Greeks and Romans. It was not until 1542 that the Spaniards imported cannabis to Chile as a raw material for making fiber.<sup>347</sup> How did TCH from cannabis from Asia get into ancient Peruvian mummies unless there was some form of contact with the Mediterranean? John I. Sorenson wrote of TCH:

Equally startling has been the discovery of the same drugs in Peruvian mummies that date back to at least AD 100. Chemical analysis revealed the use of tobacco and cocaine (not surprisingly, since the former was widely used in the Americas and the latter comes from the South American plant *Erythroxylon novagranatense*, commonly known as coca).<sup>348</sup>

The drug trade appears to have also flourished in the opposite direction. Sorenson notes:

To the amazement of some scientists and the consternation of others, chemical evidence of tobacco has been found in ancient Egyptian mummies, although tobacco was supposed to be unknown in the Old World prior to Columbus. First, fragments of tobacco were found deep in the abdominal cavity of the 3200-year-old mummy of Pharaoh Ramses II while it was being studied in a European museum. Some skeptics immediately concluded that this had to be due to modern contamination in the museum. This American plant could not possibly have been known in Egypt, they insisted. In 1992 physical scientists in Germany used sophisticated laboratory instrumentation to test nine other Egyptian mummies. They found chemical residues of tobacco, coca (another [South] American plant, the source of cocaine), and the Asian native hashish in the hair, soft tissues, skin, and bones of eight of the mummies. These traces included cotinine, a chemical whose presence means that the tobacco had been consumed and metabolized while the deceased person was alive. (The ninth mummy contained coca and hashish residues but not tobacco.) Dates of the corpses according to historical records from Egypt range from 1070 BC to AD 395, indicating that these drugs were continuously available to some Egyptians for no less than 1,450 years. Investigators have since found evidence of the drugs in additional mummies for Egypt.<sup>349</sup> [comment added]

How did tobacco<sup>350</sup> and cocaine, both native to the Andes, reach Egypt unless the two ancient civilizations maintained an active trade relationship?

<sup>346</sup> Jett, Stephen, Interview "DNA Evidence and Book of Mormon Voyages," The Greatness of the Evidence, A Marvelous Work," July 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmFjNff8fAc>.

<sup>347</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration, "Cannabis," DEA Museum, <https://museum.dea.gov/exhibits/online-exhibits/cannabis-coca-and-poppy-natures-addictive-plants/cannabis>.

<sup>348</sup> Sorenson, John L., "Ancient Voyages Across the Ocean to America: From 'Impossible' to 'Certain,'" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14, no. 1 (2005): 4,5.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Tobacco grew throughout the Americas, however, coca was only known to have grown in South America.

*Mummification:* Lehi's family descended from the tribe of Joseph. The patriarch himself having died in Egypt was embalmed (Genesis 50:26). When the children of Israel left Egypt, Moses took with them the bones of Joseph. It should not be a surprise then that the Lehites would have continued the family practice of mummifying their leaders and holding the mummies in esteem. While the Peruvians did not mummify their dead in the same manner as the Egyptians, they did prepare their dead with care, wrapping them in layers of cloth, and using some of the same drugs to preserve the bodies. Mann writes of the Incas, "When the Inka died his *panaqe* (lineage) mummified his body. Because the Inka was believed to be an immortal deity, his mummy was treated, logically enough, as if it were still living."<sup>351</sup> Sorenson continued: "Furthermore, two species of beetles that infested Egyptian mummies--*Alphitobius Disperinus* and *Stegobium paniceum*--have also been found in mummies in Peru. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that intentional voyages across an ocean were involved in these transfers."<sup>352</sup>

*Preserving raw meat like the desert Arabs:* To this day, Arabs in southern Arabia marinate raw meat with spices and dry it in the sun. It is likely that Nephi observed this practice and learned to preserve meat in this manner. In the West, meat preserved this way is called "Jerky", and the process used for making jerky in the United States originated in Peru. The word "jerky" is derived from the Quechua word *ch'arki*. Jerky is lean meat that has been trimmed of fat, cut into strips, and then dried to prevent spoilage. Nephi documented that



*Figure 28 Jerky Drying in Southern Arabia*

his family ate raw meat during their journey in the wilderness (1 Nephi 17:2). It appears that Lehi's family mainly sustained itself in the wilderness by slaying animals (1 Nephi 16:14, "wild beasts" 1 Nephi 16:30,31). Undoubtedly, the family did not immediately eat all the "beasts" they killed; rather they ate some and preserved the remainder to sustain them on their long journey in the desert. During the last part of their journey, Nephi wrote that the Lord

made their food sweet so they didn't need to cook it (1 Nephi 17:12). The honey bee was not native to Arabia except in its southern countries of Yemen and Oman. It was during this part of the trail that Nephi commented on "sweet meat" and that in Bountiful there was much wild honey (1 Nephi 17:5,12). Since some varieties of jerky are marinated in honey, we can speculate that the Lord showed the Nephites how to make their raw (dried) meat sweet and desirable by marinating it in honey and spices. Further, we know that when the family boarded their ship for the journey to the promised land, they took with them "meat from the wilderness, and honey in abundance" which Nephi referred to as "provisions" (1 Nephi 18:6). We can speculate that Lehi and his family, having spent eight years in the wilderness, having eaten dried meat much of the time, and having spent a long voyage without fresh meat, acquired a taste for dried (raw) meat. That taste also seems to have continued after they arrived in Peru and introduced the meat preservation method of "ch'arki" or jerky.



*Burying of Children:* One of the most emotional discoveries I ever made happened on a winter's morning in 2008. My friends and I were exploring the desert of eastern Arabia when we came upon a Dilmun period tomb (2000 – 1500 BC). Near the base of the tomb, I noticed what I thought was a piece of a ceramic pot lying on the ground near the tomb. As I bent down to

<sup>351</sup> Mann, 98.

<sup>352</sup> Sorsenson, 4,5.

pick it up, I realized that beneath the sand and rocks, was an entire pot, not

*Figure 29 Author with Burial Pot in Arabia*

just a large shard. I uncovered the pot and found within its protective shell the bones of a small child. I donated the ceramic pot to a private museum in Saudi Arabia. Later I learned that it had been a common practice in the Middle East to bury small children inside large earthenware pots.

As I held the funeral pottery in my arms, two thoughts entered my mind. First, I knew from my mission days in Peru that the ancient Peruvians cared for the bodies of their small children in the same manner. The ancient Peruvians had the tradition of burying their deceased young children in large ceramic pots. Second, I was deeply touched by the careful entombing the ancients took to preserve the remains of their dead children. They must have cherished their little ones and felt the need to send them back to their God in as respectful a way as they had available to them.

*Arabian-style tents:* Lehi's family brought Middle Eastern-style tents with them to the promised land (1 Nephi 18:23). It is reasonable to assume that the Nephite tents would have resembled the traditional tents of the Middle East. These tents consisted several tall panels and a roof that together formed of a large family dwellings. One side panel is left open during the day and later closed at night. The Book of Mormon explains that the Nephite tents were arranged in the following manner:

And it came to pass that when they came up to the temple, they pitched their tents around about, every man according to his family, consisting of his wife, and his sons, and his daughters, and their sons, and their daughters, from the eldest down to the youngest, every family being separate one from another (Mosiah 2:5).



*Figure 30 Bedouin tent in Arabia*

Before recent times, this was the exact pattern by which Middle East villages and towns were settled. A father would build his house and then add houses behind it for each of his sons and daughters, starting with the eldest son, then the next son, and finally the daughters.

We read in the book of Mosiah, that the people of Zarahemla “pitched their tents around about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple, that hereby they might remain in their tents and hear the words which king Benjamin should speak unto them” (Mosiah 2:6).

It is doubtful that the tents of the Book of Mormon were animal hide tee-pees with small holes as entries. Rather than seeing the black goat-hair tents of the Middle East, king Benjamin probably saw white tents made from cotton or wool from alpacas or lamas. Each Inca soldier was given cloth material for a tent.<sup>353</sup> One of the earliest accounts of the Spanish conquest of Peru notes that when conquistadors first saw the great Inca army under the command of Atahualpa they saw, “house with trees, reportedly where Atahualpa was staying, and ‘around this house on every side for a distance of more than a half league [1 ½ miles] the ground was covered with white tents.’”<sup>354</sup>

<sup>353</sup> Murra, John V., “Cloth and Its Functions in Inca State,” *American Anthropologist*, 64 (4), 710-718.

<sup>354</sup> Stanish, Charles, *Ancient Titicaca*, (Berkeley: U.C. Press, Berkeley, 259, quoting Sinclair), 29-30.

*The Tradition of Elongating Heads:* At times the upper classes of Egypt, Peru, and others practiced the custom of elongating heads.



*Figure 31 Elongated Head Models from Egypt*

Women, mostly, seem to have practiced the deformation of their heads in some parts of ancient southeastern Europe.<sup>355</sup> Amateur archaeologist Brien Foerster, claims that DNA test performed at the University of California at Los Angeles on the Paracas elongated skulls from Peru indicated that the land of their ancestors was somewhere near the Black Sea in the Near East.<sup>356</sup> While such a finding would support the Jaredite migration, the DNA results have not been confirmed by reliable sources.

*Use of Signet Rings:* During ancient times in the Andes authorized people wore signet rings. Recall in the motion picture *Ben Hur* how the actor Charles Heston pressed his adopted Roman father's signet ring into the pallet sealing an agreement, this same authorization tool was used in pre-Columbian Bolivia. Alan Kolata writes:

A striking find of a terra cotta ring from one house strengthens the inference that the residents of this sector of the city [Tiwanaku], although perhaps not of the highest social stratum, were nevertheless considered wealthier and of higher status than the urban commoners and rural folk who constituted the bulk of Tiwanaku's population. This piece carries an embossed, stylized representation of a masked human wearing an elaborate crown. The intaglio design makes it clear that the ring functioned as a signet device for marking or sealing objects as the property of the owner."<sup>357</sup>

*Near Eastern Underground Irrigation Technology:* Surviving in the arid lands of Persia and Arabia required innovative engineering. Among the most ingenious of their inventions was an underground canal system called *qanats*. Ancient desert dwellers needed a reliable source of water and good topsoil. However, in the arid Near East, these two vital resources are rarely found in the same location. The same is true along the arid shoreline of Peru. What little water there is, is often found in wells that tap into pockets of underground water trapped at the base of mountains where the soil is rocky and barren. About 2000 BC Persians started constructing elaborate tunnel systems they called *qanats* to tap in groundwater from the mountain basins and to funnel it to the topsoil that had accumulated in the lower valleys.<sup>358</sup>

The main underground *qanat* tunnel sloped gently down from the mountains to the farmland. From there, canals would distribute the water to fields for irrigation. The *qanats* were built

<sup>355</sup> Verramah, Krishna R., others, "Population genomic analysis of elongated skulls in Early Bavaria, PNAS, March 12, 2028, <https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1719880115>.

<sup>356</sup> Foerster, Brien, "Finally: DNA Results of the Paracas Elongated Skulls of Peru, Part 1." [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1k\\_b-jmz3k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1k_b-jmz3k)

<sup>357</sup> Kolata, Alan *The Tiwanaku: Portrait of an Andean Civilization*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1993, 167.

<sup>358</sup> <http://www.water-asar.de/lang1/qanats.htm>.



and maintained by professional groups called the “Moghanni.” These early water engineers first dug a vertical shaft into the ground near the base of nearby mountains. If they struck an abundant source of water, they designated this well the “mother well.” From the mother wells they dug a line of entry shafts from 25-40 yards apart the entire distance from the mother well to the farmlands. In some cases, the shafts were up to 200 yards deep.<sup>359</sup>

Because the underground tunnels silt up over time or would collapse, the shafts needed to remain open so the Moghanni could maintain the *qanats*.<sup>360</sup> The workers still had to



*Figure 32 Pre-Columbian Puquios (Qanats) at Nazca, Peru*

periodically enter the shafts to clean away the silt that accumulated in the line tunnels.

Through trade and conquest, the valuable *qanat* technology spread rapidly through much of the Old World, including the harbor of Khor Rori in Oman where Nephi probably built his ship.<sup>361</sup> During Nephi’s time in Khor Rori, he would have observed this vital technology. The *qanat* technology even reached Mexico via Spain. However, the archaeological mystery is “How did this exact technology reach the deserts of Peru before Columbus?” The mystery remains unsolved. The *qanats* in South America are called *puquios*. Over 3,000 pre-Columbian *puquios* have been found in the arid lands of Peru and Chile. The most famous is the *puquios* found at Nazca, Peru, and is believed to have been built during a period of prolonged drought sometime during the sixth century.<sup>362</sup> One of 3000, certainly other *pequios* must have been built earlier, even during Book of Mormon times.

There were many other possible parallels between ancient Andean people and attributes of Old World civilization. These would include, camelid caravans, their manner of dress, pyramids at Caral that resemble the ziggurat of Mesopotamia, small and large reed ships that match the design of reed ships of Mesopotamia, weaving cloth from cotton, and most important, familiar religious beliefs. These would bring our examples of transferred cultural elements from the Old World to South America to more than a dozen.

While comparative archaeology has its risks, the physical evidence seems beyond doubt that there was a substantial cultural influence from the Old World upon the ancient Andean societies. To have written the Book of Mormon, the farm boy Joseph Smith, with no formal education, would need to have been an expert on ancient Middle Eastern cultures, languages, and beliefs, and likewise have been an expert on aspects of ancient Andean civilizations.

Part Two Summary,

<sup>359</sup> Kortum, Gerhard, "Qanate: Bewässern wie im Altertum", Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, unizeit Nr. 29, S. 3, 09.04.2005.

<sup>360</sup> Yazdi, Semsar, "A Survey on the Historical Evolution of Qanats in Iran", International Training Course on Qanats, Yazd, Iran, 07/2007.

<sup>361</sup> Potter, George, "Khor Rori: A Maritime Resources-Based Candidate for Nephi’s Harbor," *Interpreter Journal*, Interpreter Foundation, 51, May 2022, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/khor-rori-a-maritime-resources-based-candidate-for-nephis-harbor/>

<sup>362</sup> Proulx, Donald A., Nazca Puquios and Aqueducts, University of Massachusetts, [http://people.umass.edu/proulx/online\\_pubs/Zurich\\_Puquios\\_revised\\_small.pdf](http://people.umass.edu/proulx/online_pubs/Zurich_Puquios_revised_small.pdf), accessed June 30, 2011.

Since the publishing of the Book of Mormon in 1830, there have been tens of thousands of archaeological excavations conducted in Mesoamerica and North America. Add to this the countless anthropological and mythological studies published about the lifestyles of the people who lived in those areas. Just within the US National Park System, there are 80,000 excavation sites.<sup>363</sup> The state of North Carolina has nearly 50,000 registered archaeological excavation sites.<sup>364</sup> Recent discoveries and new research techniques have helped archaeologists and anthropologists understand how native people of Mesoamerica lived and how their lives varied by social status, gender, age, and ethnicity. However, even with new forms of investigation, i.e., LIDAR imaging, only nominal amounts of new tangible evidence have been found that support the existence of a Nephite-like civilization in Mesoamerica between 2700 BC and AD 400. As for the entirety of North America, there is no archaeological corpse of evidence that would lead a serious scholar to believe that a Nephite-like civilization existed there before the arrival of Columbus. There may be arguments among the choir members about what church leaders might have said or how many hill Cumorahs there were. In reality, there is no credible evidence that Book of Mormon civilizations existed in North America.

What does scientific reasoning suggest? When considering different hypotheses, Ockham's razor uses abductive reasoning to determine which is the most plausible working hypothesis, that is, which theory should be followed unless new evidence indicates otherwise. Another way of using Ockham's razor is to evaluate each competing hypothesis to determine which theory has the fewest strong assumptions that need to be overcome to be validated. For example, for the Book of Mormon to have taken place in North America, all these assumptions would have to be overcome: large and sophisticated civilizations would have to be discovered in North America that date from Jaredite times up to 400 AD, gold mining and goldsmithing would need to be discovered in North America that took place during Book of Mormon times, the same would have to be true for silver, copper, and other metals, metal currency would need to be found and dated to that era, a written language would need to be discovered, bones of animals that resembled sheep, horses, and other animals described in the Book of Mormon would need to be unearthed and carbon dated between 3000 BC and 400 AD, silk-like fabrics uncovered, temples discovered that had the appearance and functionality of King Solomon's, evidence of an oceangoing maritime tradition that could transport sailors to far off islands in the Pacific, etc. The list goes on and on. Again, after hundreds of thousands of archaeological excavations, there is no hint that the characteristics of a Jaredite or Nephite civilization existed before 400 AD. Thus, the probability that the Book of Mormon took place in North America is nil. If the same abductive thinking were to be applied to Mesoamerica, the likelihood that Central America was the historical site of the Book of Mormon would have only a slightly higher degree of feasibility. What is convincing is that nearly all the features of Book of Mormon civilizations have been determined to have existed in South America. Thus, Ockham's razor would indicate that Book of Mormon scholars should focus their future research on South America.

If we are to formulate an impermeable defense for the historicity of the Book of Mormon that could stand its ground in academic circles, I suggest we concentrate on South America. Certainly, the Prophet Joseph Smith had little or no knowledge of pre-Columbian Peru. It was only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that major archaeological discoveries in South America started appearing in scholarly journals. The accounts of the first Spanish chroniclers were hidden away in the vaults of the Royal Academy of History in Madrid and would not be translated into English until decades after the publication of the Book of Mormon. The first books on the history of Peru were inaccurate and were not published in the United States until William H. Prescott's *Conquest of Peru* in 1847 and Clements Robert

<sup>363</sup> National Park Service,  
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/archeology/faqs.htm#:~:text=The%20NPS%20manages%20over%2080%2C000%20archeological%20sites.>

<sup>364</sup> <https://archaeology.ncdcr.gov/get-involved>

Markham's *A History of Peru* in 1892. Yet, the Book of Mormon, published in 1830, describes twenty-five specific archaeological features of the Jaredite and Nephi civilizations - none of which people in rural New York could even have imagined having existed anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. The common view of Indigenous Native Americans by frontiersmen in New York in 1830 was that the natives were uncivilized savages. Yet, the Book of Mormon described their ancient forefathers as having had an advanced civilization that included advanced metallurgists, herdsman, oceangoing mariners, temple worshipers after the manner of Solomon, and most significantly, having at times practiced Christianity. What is the probability that the Prophet Joseph Smith could have known that all twenty-five of the archaeological features described in the Book of Mormon existed in far away South America?, How could he have known the oral traditions of the fair-skinned god having visited South America? Of course, the answer is he could not have without a thorough and accurate library on ancient western South America between 2700 BC and 400 AD. The Prophet had such a record. It was the Book of Mormon.

PART THREE

Creating a South American Map for the Book of Mormon Lands



*From the writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of other inspired men, it seems that all are in agreement that the followers of Lehi came to the western shores of South America.<sup>365</sup>*

Harold B. Lee, Apostle and later President

## Chapter Six

### Tentative Book of Mormon Geographic Model

Why a tentative model for studying the lands where Christ ministered in South America? While there is an abundance of evidence pointing to South America, there is still evidence, though limited, supporting other regions, i.e. Mesoamerica. Furthermore, I believe professional archaeologists have important discoveries yet to uncover through more explicit DNA studies, more refined dating technologies, and more extensive observation systems, such as LIDAR mapping. Also, there is no certainty as to how far and to what extent the Nephites and Lamanites people expanded from the place where they originally settled. Since the Jaredites disembarked in the land of promise, the people of the Book of Mormon continuously inhabited the Americas for nearly 5,000 years. Through trading, exploring, prolonged warfare, migrations due to droughts, and maritime adventures, the people of the Book of Mormon could have influenced, intermarried with, and preached to people from the Yukon in the north to the southern tip of Argentina. We simply do not know to what extent they expanded from where they originally settled. There is still much to be discovered before a highly certain model based on scientific data can be established with any degree of certainty. The incremental process of developing such a map is the challenge that will rest on future generations of Book of Mormon students.

The Book of Mormon history could have played out over the vast territory of the Western Hemisphere continents or it could have happened in a limited area. There have been proposed dozens of well-intended models for where the history of the Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites occurred. Actually there are no definitive geographic clues in the text of the Book of Mormon. However, some authors will suggest that the tentative model proposed in this book violates the geographical indicators found in the Book of Mormon. Be warned, their claims are based on self-defined assumptions as to how they personally read the text. For example, some have claimed that the river Sidon flowed north. The Book of Mormon does not say that. The text only describes features or events on the east and west sides of a section of the river. The river Sidon could have flowed south near Zarahemla. In other places the river could have run east or west. Others might claim that the tentative model violates known distances between Book of Mormon sites. For example, it took forty days to travel between Zarahemla and the land of Lehi- Nephi (Mosiah 7:3). Yet the text states that “they knew not the course should travel in the wilderness to go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi, therefore they wandered many days in the wilderness, even forty days did they wandered.” From the text, it is impossible to determine the distance because we are not told how fast they traveled or how many days they were lost. Some go so far as to claim that they traveled “up” in altitude to reach the land of Lehi-Nephi. Again, this is only an assumption used to fit someone’s preconceived model. A more reasonable interpretation is that they traveled north to reach Lehi-Nephi. As with English, “up” means north in Hebrew, Arabic, Quechua and Aymara. The use of “up” as a directional indicator in the Book of Mormon is obvious since Nephi indicated that they went “up” to the land of Jerusalem from the Valley of Lemuel which was directly south in Arabia (1 Nephi 3:9). Clearly, Nephi didn’t climb a mountain to get to the land of Jerusalem. The fact is, the tentative model presented in this

<sup>365</sup> Christensen, Dale, “History of the Church in Peru,” [https://www.mission.net/peru/lima/sourth/page.php?pg\\_id+3753](https://www.mission.net/peru/lima/sourth/page.php?pg_id+3753).

book, including the proposed locations of the city of Nephi, Zarahemla, and Bountiful can easily fit within the geographic bounds found in the text of the Book of Mormon.

To construct a tentative model, we need a starting point - Lehi's beachhead in the Americas. So where did Nephi's ship land in the Americas? Based on reliable sources, the prophet Joseph Smith is believed to have taught that South America was the starting point for Nephite history in the promised land. If this is true, we can start our model in South America. The prophet's devoted followers were teaching this on their missions as early as 1830. During their mission to the Lamanites (D&C 28:8; 32:1-5), none other than Oliver Cowdery, Ziba Peterson, Parley P. Pratt, and Peter Whitmer Jr. taught that Lehi landed in Chile. These men knew Joseph Smith personally and certainly would not have taught anything contrary to the prophet. While in Kirtland, Ohio, Oliver Cowdery made this statement published in the *Observer and Telegraph* newspaper in Hudson, Ohio (March 18, 1830).

According to the narrative given by one of these disciples--Oliver Cowdery --at their late exhibition in Kirtland....This new revelation, they say is especially designed for the benefit; or rather for the christianizing of the Aborigines of America; who, as they affirm, are a part of the tribe of Manasseh, and whose ancestors landed on the coast of Chili 600 years before the coming of Christ, and from them descended all the Indians of America.

Observer and Telegraph, Hudson Ohio, November 18, 1830<sup>366</sup>

How significant is it that Oliver Cowdery taught that Lehi's family landed in Chile? He would not have speculated about what Joseph Smith taught. He was there. Even before he met Joseph Smith the Lord, Jesus Christ had appeared to him and told him about the golden plates. Lucy Mack Smith wrote that "the Lord appeared unto a young man by the name of Oliver Cowdery and showed unto him the plates in a vision."<sup>367</sup> At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836, the Lord appeared again to him and Joseph Smith (D&C 110). Would a man who personally knew the Savior misrepresent facts about the Book of Mormon? During the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, he met John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John. Oliver Cowdery possessed the gift of revelation (D&C 6:10-11, 8:4) and received the same gift of faith and power as Joseph Smith (D&C 18:9). He was one of the Three Witnesses who beheld the plates and never denied his witness. He was Joseph Smith's scribe who recorded what Joseph Smith said when translating most of the Book of Mormon. Of greatest consequence, Oliver Cowdery was charged by the Lord to "declare *faithfully* the commandments and the revelations [given Joseph Smith] with power and authority unto the church" (D&C 28:3, emphasis added). It seems, one of those revelations was that Lehi landed in Chile.

Eight years later, a hand-written document leaves little doubt that the early leaders of the Church believed that Joseph Smith had taught them that Lehi landed in South America. The document was hand-written by Joseph Smith's scribe Frederick G. Williams, a Counselor to the Prophet. The note stated that Lehi landed thirty degrees south latitude in Chile. The written statement is found on the same page as the body of a revelation that is now part of the Doctrines and Covenants.<sup>368</sup>

Two influential Apostles, Orson Pratt and Franklin D. Richards openly declared that the Prophet taught that Nephi's ship landed at thirty degrees south latitude in Chile. Again, both these men loved the prophet and would not have taught a falsehood or a doctrine contrary to what he had testified. The Church included that Nephi landed in Chile as a footnote to the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon.<sup>369</sup> While contemporary historical revisionists try to

<sup>366</sup> BYU archive of 19<sup>th</sup> Century publications about the Book of Mormon, BYU, Harold B. Lee Library.

<sup>367</sup> Palmer, Grant, *An Insider's View of the Mormon Origins*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002, 179.

<sup>368</sup> Roberts, B. H., *New Witness for God*, vol. 3., 501.

<sup>369</sup> *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 1, "Book of Mormon Geography."

wish away this important teaching in early Church history, B.H. Roberts reminds us that the dominant belief among the early Church leaders was that Joseph Smith taught that Nephi landed in South America.<sup>370</sup>

To start a model for Book of Mormon lands, we can be confident by relying on the words of President Harold B. Lee. When still a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, President Lee stated, "From the writing of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of other inspired men, it seems that all are in agreement that the followers of Lehi came to the western shores of South America."<sup>371</sup> In June 1968, Elder Harold B. Lee said when organizing the Andes Mission in 1968, "As I spoke to the congregation, I was impressed by the Spirit of the Lord, in a way in which I had seldom been impressed before, to tell the people that the land of Peru had been one of the most important lands in all the history and development of the people of the Book of Mormon."<sup>372</sup> President Lee further stated on that occasion that the theater where much of the action found in the Book of Mormon had taken place was in that regions (area of the Andes Mission).<sup>373</sup> These inspired declarations seemed to have been confirmed later by President Joseph Fielding Smith's letter to the Bolivian Mission stating that the center of the Church at the time of Christ was in area of the Bolivia Mission which included Bolivia and parts of Peru.

The model presented in this chapter assumes that Lehi landed in Chile. From that beachhead, we can attempt to build step by step a tentative model for South America. Below is a list of the few explicit clues the Book of Mormon provides for creating a model for the promised land.

As for pure geological features mentioned in the Book of Mormon, we have only these to try to identify.

- A land with four seas
- A land of mountains and deserts
- A narrow strait of land between the west and east seas
- The section of a river that flows either north to south or south to north

Geopolitical clues of the promised land:

- A land divided into four quarters and a land northward and a land southward
- A land of desolation in the land northward
- A narrow neck of Land
- A natural harbor for building ships

City-States of the Book of Mormon

- A Candidate for the City of Nephi
- A Candidate for the City of Zarahemla
- A Candidate for the City of Jacobugath
- A Candidate for the City of Bountiful

### A Land with Four Seas

The Book of Mormon describes four distinct "seas" having existed in the Book of Mormon lands - not the same body of water from different vista. By the first century BC, the Nephites spread across the "whole earth from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east" (Helaman 3:8). The question is, "What did Joseph Smith mean by the word "sea?" From where Lehi originated a "sea" meant any significant body of water, i.e.

<sup>370</sup> Roberts, B.H., 501.

<sup>371</sup> Christensen, Dale, "History of the Church in Peru," [https://www.mission.net/peru/lima/sourth/page.php?pg\\_id+3753](https://www.mission.net/peru/lima/sourth/page.php?pg_id+3753).

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Williams, Frederrick S. & Frederick G. William, From Acorn to Oak Tree. Fullerton, CA: El Cetera, 1987, 300.

the Dead Sea, a large body of landlocked saltwater, the Mediterranean Sea a large inlet from the Atlantic Ocean, and even a relatively small freshwater lake, the Sea of Galilee. The same terminology was used by the Andean people. The Quechua word “qucha” referred to large or smaller saltwater bodies as well as large or small freshwater lakes. In Quechua, *mama qucha* meant “sea” (mother sea), *hatun qucha* meant “a large body of saline water” (an ocean or large saline lake), and *qucha* meant “lake”.<sup>374</sup>

Enabled with this knowledge, we can easily identify the four seas or *quchas* of the Andes. Indeed, they are not hard to find. I believe the four seas are a significant witness to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. *Hatun Qucha Poopó* or Sea/Lake Poopó is a large saline body of water that receives its water from Lake Titicaca in the north. After Lake/Qucha Titicaca, *Qucha Poopós* the second largest lake in Bolivia and is the furthest south of the four seas to be considered. When full, the sea covers an area of 997 square miles. The sea *Poopó* is saline, and like the Dead Sea or the Great Salt Lake, it receives water via the Desaguadero River from the freshwater Qucha/Lake Titicaca. We don’t know exactly when the Nephites’ expansion reached the sea on the south, only that by 45 BC, they had spread to all four seas mentioned in the book of Helaman. In harmony with the Book of Mormon record, according to San Andre’s University in La Paz Bolivia, Qucha Poopó was first settled around 200 BC. Another similarity to the Great Salt Lake in Utah is that Qucha Poopó is adjacent to the Uyuni Salt Flats, the largest in the world.<sup>375</sup> Another name for the Qucha Poopó is Uru-Uru. In Quechua *uru* means spider. However, *urin* means “south”.

The Book of Mormon next identified the sea of the north. This sea is by far the easiest to locate. Why? Its very name in Quechua means, the “north sea.” Thanks to the research of David William Pereira, a student of the Book of Mormon and a member of the Church in South America, we now can identify the lake which still goes by its original Book of Mormon place-name, the “North Sea” or “Chinchayqucha” in Quechua. After Lake/Qucha Titicaca, Lake Junin (the name given by the Spanish) is Peru’s second largest lake. It has been named one of three possible sources for the Amazon River recently measured to exceed the Nile River as the longest river on earth. This sea/lake is located in the northern part of



Peru. The lake was an important resource for the ancient inhabitants of the Andes and has an area of 226 square miles. Brother Pereira sent me this amazing quote from Wikipedia: “Lake Junin or Chinchay (Quechua *chinchay*, *chinchay* north, northern, *chinchay ocelot*, *qucha* lake, lagoon ‘northern lake’ or ‘ocelat lake’, hispanicized spelling *Chinchaycocha*) is

<sup>374</sup> <https://glosbe.com/en/qu/sea>. Also see Sullivan 63.

<sup>375</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake\\_Poop%C3%B3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Poop%C3%B3).



the largest lake entirely within Peruvian territory.”<sup>376</sup> In other words, the Indigenous people of the Andes still call the lake by its ancient name --*Chinchayqucha* meaning “North Sea”. Furthermore, its location to the north fits well into our map for the Book of Mormon in South America.

There should be a consensus regarding the Nephites’ west sea. Since Hagoth sailed to Hawaii and perhaps other Polynesian islands, by default, the Pacific Ocean had to have been the west sea. Furthermore, Nephi’s ship landed in Chile. When I asked an Indigenous Andean what the word for “west” was in Quechua, he replied, “We don’t say west and east. We simply say “mama qucha” (the Pacific Ocean) for west and Andes Mountains for east (Andes is derived from “Anti” - that means east in Quecha).<sup>377</sup>

Finally, for the sea of the east, we can turn to the great body of freshwater English-speaking people have called Lake Titicaca. The proper name for the body of water in the native language is “Titiqaqa qucha.”<sup>378</sup> The qucha is so large that when the Spanish first saw it, they believed they had reached the Atlantic Ocean. The massive freshwater sea is 138 miles long and is the world’s highest navigable body of water. Because of the multiple groups of Indigenous People who lived near the lake, there was no singular name it was known by,<sup>379</sup> except that it was the “sacred lake”. Perhaps the Book of Mormon provides the name the sea was known by when Christ visited South America. As noted in Chapter Two, there are the remains of at least three sunken cities in Lake Titicaca. One of these could have been the city of Moroni which was built near the “east sea”(Alma 50:13), and later sank “into the sea” (3 Nephi 8:9). It seems its size, location and likely reference in the Book of Mormon makes it our “east sea.”

#### A Land of Mountains and Deserts

When receiving divine instructions in the promised land, Nephi was carried away to “exceedingly high mountains” where he was taught “great things” that were so sacred he was forbidden to write them (2 Nephi 4:25).

Hugh Nibley taught that the word *wilderness* “has in the Book of Mormon the same connotation as in the Bible, and usually refers to desert country.”<sup>380</sup> As noted before, he also taught that the word *border* (or *borders*) usually referred to “mountains.” In the Semitic language, the words for mountains and borders share a common derivation. That is, the Hebrew word *gebul* is a cognate of the Arabic *jabal* (jebel, djebel), which means “mountains.” Dr. Nibley also confirmed that in the ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian languages the word for borders meant “mountains.” Arthur Kocherhans believes that placing the descendants of Lehi in the Andes mountains is a direct fulfillment of the blessing Joseph of Egypt received from Israel.<sup>381</sup> Lehi was a descendant of Joseph who was promised that his seed would be “progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills” (Genesis 49:26). Not only do the great South American Andes fit the description of “everlasting hills,” placing the Nephites and Lamanites in the range’s highest inhabitable valleys (up to 13,000 feet above sea level), it is also indicative of the mountains’ “utmost bounds.”

Without knowing the probable meaning of the words *wilderness* and *borders* in the Book of Mormon, it would appear that there are few descriptions of the terrain in the land of the Nephites. However, the opposite is likely the case. The word *wilderness* (desert) is used 214 times in the Book of Mormon and is often used in proximity to seashores. The word *borders*

<sup>376</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake\\_Junin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Junin).

<sup>377</sup> Bustinx, Rudy Chalco, conversation with author, Elk Ridge, Utah, 2022.

<sup>378</sup> <https://glosbe.com/en/qu/Lake%20Titicaca>.

<sup>379</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake\\_Titicaca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Titicaca).

<sup>380</sup> Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 135.

<sup>381</sup> Kocherhans, Arthur J., *Nephi to Zarahemla*. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing, 2002, 48-49.

(mountains) is used 65 times, suggesting that much of the Book of Mormon lands were deserts by the sea or mountains -- a perfect description of the lands of the ancient Peruvian people where the entire shoreline is a desert strip of land that suddenly rises into the mighty Andes Mountains. Indeed the Atacama desert in northern Chile and Southern Peru is the driest desert in the world. The Gadianton robbers used mountains and desert wilderness as hideouts (Helaman 11:25).

Janne Sjodal provided a more direct reasoning for the Book of Mormon lands having been mountainous:

#### ANTI

There are several words in the Book of Mormon in which “anti” is one of the component parts, as for instance, Ani-Anti, the name of the Amalekite village in which Aaron, Muloki, and Amnah preached the gospel (Alma 21:11). Anti-Nephi-Lehi, the name of a king and also of a people (Alma 24:1-5); antion, a piece of gold used as money (Alma 11:19); Antipas, the name of a mountain (Alma 47:7); Antum, the name of the country in which hill Shim was situated (Mormon 1:3), and onti, the name of a piece of silver money (Alma 11:6), are instances of the use of the word *anti* in the Book of Mormon.

The Indian (Quechua) word corresponding to anti is, I believe anta, which Garcilasso de la Vega tells us means “copper.” From anta, the magnificent mountain chain that forms the backbone of South America was called the Andes, possibly because of the metal, especially copper, found in these mountains.

In the Book of Mormon, anti means a mountain or a hill. When it is used to denote a country it probably means a hilly or mountain country, and when the name is applied to a city it may indicate location in a mountain region. In the same way, the Anti-Nephi-Lehi may have been located in a hill country.<sup>382</sup>

Anti appears in Antisuyu, the name given by the Peruvians to the eastern part of their vast domain; that is, to the part that was traversed by the loftiest ridges of the Andes mountains. That proves, beyond question, that the Peruvians used the word exactly as we find it used in the Book of Mormon.

ANTIPAS was the name of a mount or hill on the summit of which Lamanite armies on one occasion had gathered themselves for battle (Alma 47:7). This is a genuine Indian word. On the mountain slope of the Cordillera, in the upper Amazon basin, there is, according to Dr. Brinton, a tribe of Indians, of the Jivaro linguistic stock, known as the Antipas. They are described as “rather tall, of light color, with thin lips, aquiline noses, straight eyes, prognatic jaws, hair black or with reddish tinge.”<sup>383</sup>

The Book of Mormon place name “Manti” provides a line of thinking that seems to support Sjodal’s argument that the Book of Mormon lands were in the Andes mountains. We can start by breaking down the word into “M-anti,” remembering that anti means “mountains.” There was a hill of Manti (Alma 1:15). If Manti meant hills or mountains, this would confirm that borders meant “mountains” in the Book of Mormon, for we read of the Nephites defeating the Lamanites near the “borders of Manti” (Alma 27:54). Other verses use *borders* (mountains) to describe “Manti” (Alma 16:6-7, 43:32). Furthermore, the headwaters of the

<sup>382</sup> Sjodal, Janne M., *An introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, 118-119.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*

Sidon river was near Manti (Alma 43:24-25); headwaters of rivers are normally found high in the mountains. There was also a valley in Manti (Alma 43:27), implying either mountains or hills that formed the valley. There was a hill Riplah in the land of Manti that was so large it could conceal a Nephite army (Alma 43:31-35).

Finally, the Book of Mormon tells us that when the Lord was crucified, mountains were made low and the valleys became mountains (Helaman 14:23). In place of the city of Moronihad a great mountain appears. While there are other places in the Americas where mountains are found along with deserts, the phrase “great mountains” seems to fit well to South America. Nephi’s visits to “exceedingly high mountains” bring to mind that there are nine peaks in the Andes that have a height of over 20,000 feet above sea level.

#### Narrow Strip of Wilderness Between the East and West Seas

In antiquity, the Andes were split between two ethnic groups, the Quechua and the Aymara peoples. These two ethnic groups remain bitter enemies to this day. In the Book of Mormon, the southern lands were also divided between two enemies. The Lamanite king we know as the father of Lamoni declared:

Sent a proclamation through all the land, amongst his people who were in all this land, who were in all the regions round about, which was *bordering even to the sea, on the east and on the west*, and which was divided from the land of Zarahemla by a narrow strip of wilderness, which ran from *the sea east even to the sea west*, and round about on the *borders* [mountains] of the seashore, and the *borders of the wilderness* which was on the north by the land of Zarahemla, through the *borders* [mountains] of Manti, *by the land by the head of the Sidon*, running the *east towards the west* --and thus were the Lamanites and Nephites divided. (Alma 22:27, emphasis and comments added)

The king’s description of a strip of wilderness that separated the enemies and that ran from the east sea to west aligns closely with the borders that separated the Quechua people and their ancient empire called Pukara with the Aymara people settled mostly south of Lake Titicaca.<sup>384</sup> The Nephite controlled lands were separated by a “narrow strip of wilderness” (desert land). There exists a track of arid land that lies between Lake Titicaca (East Sea), and the Pacific Ocean that fits the label of a narrow strip of wilderness. The distance between the two bodies of water at today’s Peru-Chile border is a mere 145 miles.

Starting near Lake Titicaca is a narrow canyon that runs west through the mountains (borders) down to the Moquequa Valley just north of today’s Chilean border. This valley passes through a mountain range that runs as far north as Pukara and the headwaters of the Pukara River. If this strip of desert is the ancient dividing line between the Nephites and the Lamanites, then we have likely candidates for the mountains of Manti, the River Sidon, and perhaps even Zarahemla. Between the mountains and the seashore is a wide coastal plain. The plain is a bone-dry desert wilderness.

#### The Section of a River that Flows either North to South or South to North

The Book of Mormon describes a river called Sidon running adjacent to the city of Zarahemla. There are over 2,000 rivers and streams with their headwaters in the Andes

<sup>384</sup> Potter, *Nephi in the Promised Land*, 82-86.

mountains.<sup>385</sup> However, thanks to King Lamoni's description, we know that the Sidon River was in the land southward and somewhere in the area of the strip of land between the sea on the east and the sea on the west. As noted above, the empire that controlled this region during Book of Mormon times was the empire archaeologists named Pukara. We will explore later in Chapter Eight why Pukara is a qualified candidate for Zarahemla. For now, it will be assumed that the river Pukara was once called the river Sidon.

But is the Pukara River qualified as a candidate for the Sidon River? Here is all that is known about the Sidon River. First, at least a section of the river near Zarahemla appears to have run either north to south or south to north. All the Book of Mormon states is that there were features or events on its east and west sides - implying that the city of Zarahemla was on the west side (see Alma 2). The actual direction of the flow of the river is not recorded in the Book of Mormon. Second, the Sidon River emptied into a sea (Alma 3:3). Although it is not clear which sea the Sidon River emptied into, the inferences in the Book of Mormon seem to imply that it was the east sea (Lake Titicaca, see Alma 22:27, 29). The Pukara River has its headwaters at the La Raya pass and flows southward until it empties into Lake Titicaca (the East Sea). The ruins of a great city that today is called Pukara are found on the river's west banks. The actual ancient name for the ruins of Pukara remains unknown.

#### A Land Divided into Four Quarters and a Land Northward and a Land Southward

No civilization ever called itself "The Inca Empire." When the Spaniards arrived in Peru, they found people living in a civilization called *Tahuantinsuyu*, meaning "the four united quarters." It was only their rulers who were known as the Incas.

At the heart of the land of Tahuantinsuyu was its central temple in the capital of Cusco. The division of the land into quarters was not made by the "late" Incas, but by their earliest ancestors. From its mythical beginning, their kingdom had been divided into four quarters: Chinchaysuyu, Antisuyu, Collasuyu, and Contisuyu. Urton relates the origin of the quarter:

One myth that does account for the division of the Inca world into four quarters at the beginning of time is provided by Garcilaso de la Vega in his work, *Commentarios Reales de los Incas*. Garcilaso says that after the waters of the deluge receded, a man (unnamed in this myth [assume Nephi the first king]) appeared at Tiwanaku. This man was so powerful that he divided the land into four parts, giving each quarter to one of four kings<sup>386</sup> [Lehi's four adult sons, comments add].

Not only did the Incas divide the lands into quarters, they also called the two northern quarters the *Hunansaya* quarters meaning the upper or northern quarters. The two southern quarters were called the *Hurinsaya* meaning lower or southern quarters.<sup>387</sup>

The parallels between the geopolitical divisions of the lands of the Book of Mormon and the kingdom of four united quarters in the Andes are blaring. The Lehites divided their lands between the lands northward and the lands southward (Alma 22:31-32). The Book of Mormon people did not stop there, they divided the land again into quarters (Alma 43:26, 51:10, 58:30, 58:35; Ether 14:15). If the Lehites divided their land at its founding then Lehi, their patriarch, undoubtedly oversaw the division among his four sons.

<sup>385</sup>

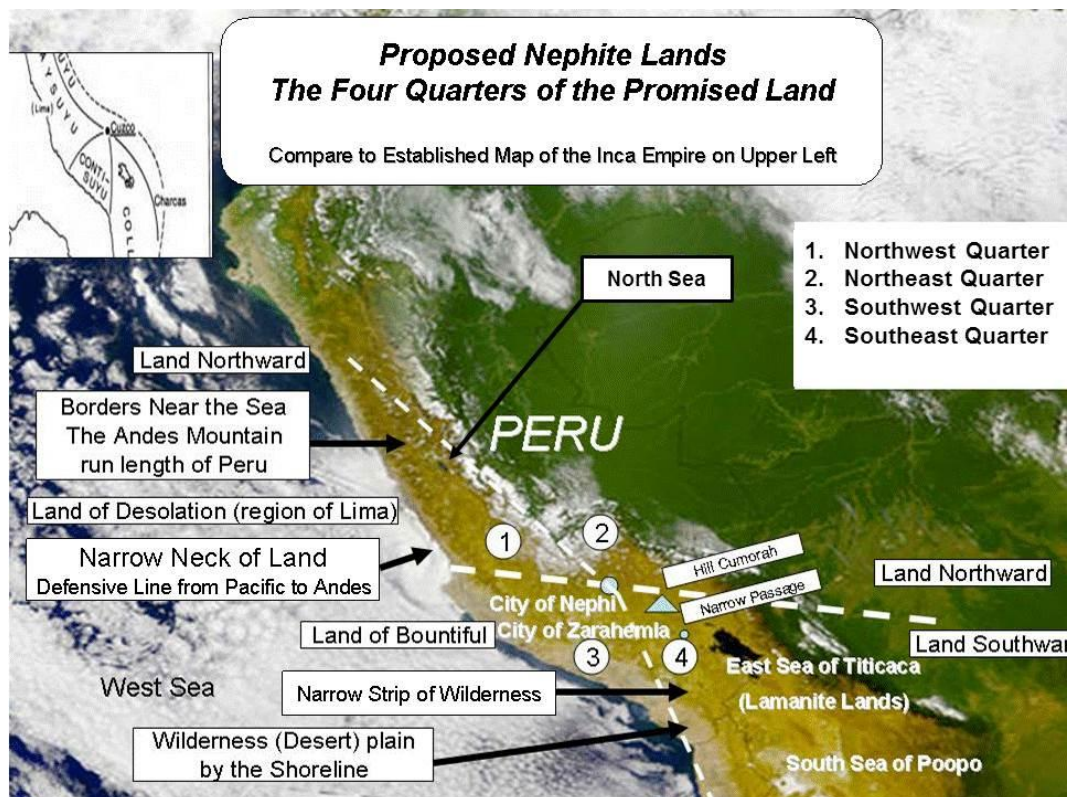
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_rivers\\_of\\_Ecuador#:~:text=Most%20of%20the%20over%20%2C000,eastward%20toward%20the%20Amazon%20River.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_rivers_of_Ecuador#:~:text=Most%20of%20the%20over%20%2C000,eastward%20toward%20the%20Amazon%20River.)

<sup>386</sup> Urton, *The Legendary Past*, 39-40.

<sup>387</sup> Bauer, *Ancient Cuco*, 154.

## A Land of Desolation in the Land Northward

The land of Desolation was on the western seashore of the Pacific Ocean, being the place from which Hagoth set sail for Hawaii or Polynesia (see Alma 22:20). It also bordered the land of Bountiful to its south (see Alma 22:30), placing it in proximity to the narrow neck of land. Although the final battle between the Jaredite armies of Shiz and Coriantumr took place at the hill Cumorah, the proceeding great battles where multitudes were slain took place in the “land of Desolation, which was in the land north” (Ether 15:2, 10,11; Helaman 3:5-6). Just south of the region on Norte Chico/Caral and just north of the Luin Valley (a candidate for the “narrow neck of land”) is a coastal valley where the modern city of Lima is located. The ancient geographic name for the area was *Huarochiri*. This strongly suggests that the valley where Lima is located is the precious location for the Book of Mormon’s land of Desolation. Incredible as it might seem, I discovered that the Incas actually called this valley “the land of the people of desolation.” Historian William Sullivan writes, “People native to the *Huarochiri* area, the origin of the ‘strong and rich...**the people of desolation**’ is not known (emphasis added).”<sup>388</sup> Sullivan, a non-LDS scholar, not only uses the words people of desolation to describe the original people of the land who became desolate, but he also writes that they were once strong and rich. The Book of Mormon notes that the Jaredites “waxed strong in the land” (see Ether 6:18) “and they became exceedingly rich” (Ether 6:28). The Book of Mormon tells us that the land of Desolation was called desolate because the people had been destroy, not because of its geological features. Peru’s land of the people of desolation has the same features as those described in the Jaredite battlegrounds: a seashore (see Ether 14:12), plains by the seashore (see Ether 14:13-15), a wilderness (according to Hugh Nibley probably meant desert;<sup>389</sup> see Ether 14:4), and the inhabited valleys leading east into mountains that were near the sea (also according to Hugh Nibley, border = mountains,<sup>390</sup> see Ether 12:29, 14, 26). Could there be a better candidate for the land of desolation?



<sup>388</sup> Sullivan, 226.

<sup>389</sup> As cited in Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies*, 79-80.

<sup>390</sup> Conversation between Hugh Nibley and author at Brigham Young University, August 13, 2001.

## A Narrow Neck of Land

Along the border that separated the land northward from the land southward and the land of Bountiful was a feature referred to as the “small neck of land.” This feature is one of the most misunderstood features of Book of Mormon geography. As a result, there have developed over time many popular misconceptions about its nature and location. Readers of the Book of Mormon usually assume that the “narrow neck of land” defines a geographical feature, but a closer examination of its context in the Book of Mormon shows that it describes an important military fortification that must be defended to stop a Lamanite invasion. Matthew Roper notes of the narrow neck of land: “Mormon was speaking of a fortified line of defense.”<sup>391</sup> The most commonly cited clues to its nature are found in the book of Alma.

And now, it was only the distance of a *day and a half's journey*--for a Nephite on the *line* Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the *east to the west sea*; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a *small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward*. And it came to pass that the Nephites had inhabited the land of Bountiful, even from the east [Andes mountains] to the west sea, and thus the Nephites in their wisdom, with their *guards and their armies*, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south that thereby they should have no more possession on the north, that they might not overrun the land northward. (Alma 22:32-33 comment and emphasis added)

As important as what is written in this verse is what is not written. The verse does not say the “small neck”...ran from the east sea even to the west sea, nor does it state that it ran between the east to the west seas (plural). Rather the small neck of land ran from the “east” to the west sea. The verse is only referring one sea, the Pacific, and a place called “east.” A similar phrase would be “the Union Pacific railroad ran from the east to the Pacific Ocean.”

This is probably a new notion for readers of the Book of Mormon, but there are two reasons for believing there was no sea on the east side of the small neck of land. First, a Nephite could cross the “line” on the small neck of land in one and one half days. There is nowhere in the Western Hemisphere where one can start at the Pacific Ocean and walk to another separate large body of water (sea) in one and a half days. For example, the first Westerners to cross the Isthmus of Panama were Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and his men in 1513. Even with the help of Indian guides, it took them twenty-three days to cross the notorious jungle of Panama.

Second, what was being traveled in a day and a half was not a crossing between two bodies of water, but a “line” that marked the border between two lands: “Yea, to the line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation” (3 Nephi 3:23), and “it was only the distance of a day and a half’s journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation” (Alma 22:32). It would appear that the “line” was a fortified borderline, a road or a defensive line which must have had a length of no more than forty to fifty miles.

One definition Webster’s Dictionary provides for a “line” is a “disposition made to cover extended military positions and presenting a front to the enemy.”<sup>392</sup> The Noah Webster’s original 1828 American Dictionary of English Language defines a line as “a trench or

<sup>391</sup> Roper, Matthew, “Travel across the “Narrow Neck of Land,” Provo, Utah: Neal Maxwell Institute, BYU, 2000).

<sup>392</sup> Merriam Webster’s, , Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Websters, inc. 1990), 694.

rampart; an extended work in fortifications.”<sup>393</sup> Again, it is important to remember that whenever the small neck of land is mentioned in the Book of Mormon, it is specifically in reference to military defenses needed to protect the land northward from the Lamanites in the south.

Two decades before I derived my analysis, F. Richard Hauck (MA in anthropology from Brigham Young University and a PhD in anthropology from the University of Utah), formulated the same conclusion in his book, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*. Hauck writes:

One of the traditional assumptions of Book of Mormon scholars and casual readers alike has been to equate the “narrow neck of land” with an isthmus. Because this assumption has been widely accepted without careful examination, it has complicated and confused the numerous attempts made to identify the setting of the book for the identification of the proper isthmus is frequently the primary focus of attempts to identify the Book of Mormon geography. Careful analyses of all the references in the text to this topographic feature fails to identify the presence of two seas flanking the transportation corridor. The west sea is clearly evident in the descriptions given in the text, but the east sea is never specifically mentioned as being associated with the narrow corridor. Since two bodies of water flanking a narrow strip of land create an isthmus, the “narrow neck of land” as described in the Book of Mormon does not qualify as an isthmus. The description of a transportation corridor narrowly constricted on the west flank by the sea and on the east flank by a possible mountain barrier does, however, qualify as a land bridge.<sup>394</sup>

The question remains, “What was on the east end of the line?” It appears to have been a highly secured mountain pass that was a strategic gateway between the northward and southward lands. We learn in Alma 52 that the narrow entry or neck leading from the land of Bountiful into the land northward was a “pass,” presumably a narrow mountain pass through the Andes. Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines a “pass” as “a narrow passage, entrance or avenue; a narrow or difficult place of entrance and exit; as a pass between mountains.”<sup>395</sup> The prophet Mormon described the narrow neck of land as a “passage” that led to the land southward from the land northward (Mormon 2:29). Mormon also described this important military feature as a “pass.”:

I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land of Desolation, to a city which was in the borders, by the narrow pass which led into the land southward.

And there we did place our armies, that we might stop the armies of the Lamanites, that they might not get possession of any of our lands; therefore we did fortify against them with all our forces. (Mormon 3:5-6)

The question begs to be asked, “Would the people of the Andes have used the word “line” and “neck” to define a mountain passage? The answer is yes. The most important mountain pass in the Andes is the “Paso La Raya” mountain pass that in ancient times connected the capital city of Cusco with the empires of the Altiplano and Lake Titicaca. “Paso La Raya” translates in English as “crossed the line.”<sup>396</sup> The mountain pass was on the

<sup>393</sup> Webster’s, See “line”, 11.

<sup>394</sup> Hauck, F. Richard, *Deciphering the Geography of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988, 12.

<sup>395</sup> Webster’s, see “pass”.

<sup>396</sup> Google translation, “paso la raya”.

"line" between the Inca's East and South quarters; it was an important trade corridor and an even more important military asset. In Spanish word "raya" has significant military connotations. "Rayar" means "go over the line." "Mantener la raya," means "to keep the line," "keep at bay," or "hold at bay."<sup>397</sup>

Today, the narrow La Raya mountain pass has become famous by passenger trains and tour buses that stop at the summit so passengers can take photographs. The height of the pass is 14,300 feet above sea level. After taking photographs of the sign that indicates the altitude of the pass, the tourists usually turn their cameras to the mountain towering above them, the mighty *Kunka* Mountain with its glaciers and a peak of 17,060 feet above sea level. The mountain's name, *Kunka* in Quechua means "the neck." Think of the neck as a strangulation point on the body or a place where an army can be confined and then destroyed within a narrow mountain pass. It is no coincidence that the Andean people associate the terms "line" and "neck" with narrow mountain passes. Rather, it is another tribute to the amazing accuracy of the Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the golden plates.

The narrow pass or neck is described in the Book of Mormon as having a "point" (Alma 52:9). Webster's dictionary defines a point as "a geometric element determined by an ordered set of coordinates;...a narrowly localized place having a precisely indicated position; [or] a particular place."<sup>398</sup> A strategic road through a narrow mountain pass between two geopolitical lands would form a strategic military point, which was so vital that this single point would allow the Lamanites to attack the Nephites from every side (Alma 52:9). Webster's 1828 American Dictionary includes these definitions of a "point": "a small space; as a small point of land," "the place in which anything is directed."<sup>399</sup> Both these definitions could apply to a narrow passage through the mountains or a particularly hard-to-defend place on the line that could be overpowered by an enemy. For example, the entry point on the line near the shore of the west sea. Hauck notes of the "narrow neck of land":

Throughout Nephite history, this strategic west sea land bridge was critical to their defense of the land northward. Nephite protection of the entrance into this corridor began as early as the first century BC based on the information given in Alma 22:32-34. The Nephi defensive strategy repeatedly included the defense of the entrance into this corridor. It was defended from fortifications at Judea and in the land of Bountiful between 67-65 BC, and again from 35-31 BC. This corridor became the Nephite place of refuge during a war with the Gadianton robbers between AD 17-22. Last of all, it was a pertinent defensive asset to the Nephites in their final war, for it helped them block Lamanite access to their resources and population in the land northward during 48 years of bloody warfare.<sup>400</sup>

In summary, what information do we have that can help us find a candidate for the small and narrow pass in South America?

1. It was a track of land that separated the land of Desolation on the north and the land bountiful on the south.
2. The small neck was probably a "passage" or "pass" which suggests a mountain passage (Alma 52:9; Mormon 2:21, 3:5-6).

<sup>397</sup> Word Hippo, <https://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/what-is-the-meaning-of-ray.html#:~:text=English%20Translation,gál%C3%B3>

<sup>398</sup> Merriam-Webster's, see point.

<sup>399</sup> Webster's, see point.

<sup>400</sup> Hauck, 12-13.





3. It started in the “east” and ended at the “west sea.”
4. From the “east” to the west sea” took a Nephite one and a half days to cross.
5. It included a “line” which in antiquity probably meant a defensive wall. We know that the narrow pass had a military significance, for if the “pass” fell, the Lamanites could possess the land northward. General Moroni ordered Teancum to “secure the narrow pass” (Alma 51:30-32, 52:9; Mormon 3:-5-6). In a later attack by the Lamanites, the same strategic place is called “the line which was between the land Bountiful and the land Desolation” (3 Nephi 3:23) with no mention of a narrow neck of land.
6. It seems a narrow track of land included a “point” of special military significance.
7. The Jaredites built a “great city by the narrow neck of land” (Ether 10:20).

Is there a narrow pass in the Andes that was a strategic transportation corridor and defense line that starts in the Andes mountains and ends at the Pacific Ocean? The answer is yes, and it is not hard to identify. It is right where one would expect it. The narrow Lurin Valley is located exactly between the Inca’s land of the people of Desolation which starts their land northward and their southeast quarter of Contisuyu (southward lands of the Incas and the Book of Mormon also known as the land of Bountiful). From Lima, Peru the Inca’s land of Desolation, it is only twenty miles south to where the Lurin Valley begins at the Pacific shores. Here are the reasons why the Lurin Valley qualifies as a candidate for the Book of Mormon’s narrow neck or passage of land:

1. The border between the Incas’ northwest and southwest quarters was located through the Lurin Valley. The valley is a narrow, almost canyon-like, that starts at the base of the Andes mountains and leads down to the Pacific Ocean.

2. Sullivan informs us that the area the Incas called the land of the people of desolation had a “single high pass.”<sup>401</sup> In both Inca and Spanish colonial times, the main road from the southern [land Bountiful] and south central Andes [City of Nephi and Zarahemla] to the central Pacific coast [Desolation and the land Northward] lay through the pass, where the Incas carved steps into living rock<sup>402</sup> The highway was called the Hurochiri road. The famous pass was located in the Andes at the eastern end of the narrow Lurin Valley that runs from the mountains down to the shoreline. The Lurin Valley was extremely important as a military asset for the Incas. Not only did the passage to the capital at Cusco [city of Nephi] run through it, but it was also the junction with the Inca shoreline highway from the south. The Inca coastal road was along a sixty-mile narrow passage that led from what appears to be the land Bountiful north along the sea to the land of Desolation. This shoreline passage does not widen until it reaches the Lurin Valley. Losing control of the Lurin Valley would have meant the Lamanites could attack the land northward from both the southeast (the land southward) and the south (the land Bountiful).

3. The narrow neck ran from the “east” to the ocean. The term *east* might seem vague to the reader, but to an Andean person, it has a specific meaning. As noted earlier, the Inca Empire was divided along a north-south axis, dividing the land into the west and the east. Once the Inca road through the Lurin Valley reached the Andes, it would have entered the eastern quarter or Antisuyu (the “east” or mountain quarters). In Inca terminology, the narrow neck of land would have run from the mountains of Antisuyu (the east), to the Pacific Ocean (the west sea). In Quechua, the word for east is “anti.”<sup>403</sup> The Antisuyu quarter literally means the “east quarter.” The name for the mountains, *Andes*, is derived from the word “anti” or east. In other words, when the Inca highway through the Lurin Valley reached the Andes Mountains, it meant the highway reached the “east.” In Book of Mormon terminology, it could be stated that the narrow Lurin Valley ran from the Andes (meaning east) to the Pacific Ocean (the sea of the west).

<sup>401</sup> Sullivan, 223.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> <https://glosbe.com/en/qu/east>.



4. The distance from the Pacific Ocean up the Lurin Valley to the Andes mountains is appropriately forty-five miles- a distance a Nephite could have “crossed” in a day and a half. Professor Santiago Aquerto Calvo of the National University of Engineering in Lima ran an experiment along a section of an ancient Inca road to determine how far an untrained runner could travel on the well constructed Inca highways. The experience was designed to confirm the legend that a series of Inca runners, called *Chasquis* could take fresh fish from the sea to Cusco deep in the Andes mountains. He determined that the famed *Chasquis* could carry a message from between 220 and 300 miles in a day. An individual runner could travel 1 mile in 6.5 minutes and could keep up the pace for 3.1 miles (20 minutes).<sup>404</sup> This information can be used to determine how long it would take a *Chasqui* to run the 45-mile length of the Lurin

Valley. At 1 mile per 6.5 minutes would equate to a total running time of roughly 300 minutes for 45 miles. If an untrained *Chasqui* could have run a 3.1 mile leg for 20 minutes, then rested for 40 minutes; then run the next leg of 3.1 miles and rested again for 40 minutes, the runner could have run from the Andes mountains downhill through the Lurin Valley and have reached the Pacific Ocean in less than 15 hours. The experiment shows that a Nephite could have easily crossed the entire Lurin Valley in a day and a half.

5. The Inca highway from the shoreline mouth of the Lurin Valley to the Andes was fortified. The Spanish chronicler Cieza “describes this section of the highway as being some fifteen feet wide protected by a strong wall roughly the height of a man.”<sup>405</sup> A wall height of a man! The wall that ran the entire length of the Lurin Valley from the shoreline to the Andes was, undoubtedly a “line” of defense to halt invading armies from the south. What words would a writer in antiquity use to describe a highway with tall walls on both sides that ran for several miles? Would the words “neck of land,” have been indicative of this man-made feature? Even more descriptive of a “line” is the great wall that was built on the north side of the mouth of the Lurin Valley. Today, the remains of the wall, approximately fifteen feet wide at the base and of equal height, can still be seen. Although only remnants of the wall still exist, the wall appears to have run from where the protective hills of the valley begin and ended at the seashore, thus, forming one last line of defense. For invading armies from the south to have invaded the lands northward, they first had to overrun this massive wall. This wall was a vital “point” that had to be defended at all cost.

6. The Lurin Valley starts on its west as a narrow valley; however, on its east end is a very narrow passage or gorge through the mountains. Cobo described just how narrow the pass



was on the road up the Lurin Valley: “If it passed through hillsides with cliffs and slabs of rock, a narrow path, only wide enough for one person leading a llama or sheep, was dug in the boulders itself; and this type of construction did not run very far, but as soon as the boulder or slab was passed, the road widened again...Along the parts of these hills and slopes where there

<sup>405</sup> Cieza de León, 181-183, see footnotes 3 and 4 on page 183.

was some ravine or narrow gorge that cut off the road, even though it was three or four estados deep, rock walls were also made from below and built up to the level of the road.”<sup>406</sup>

7. The final criterion for any candidate for the narrow neck or pass was that it was near a great Jaredite city. The city was constructed near the end of their era (Ether 10:20). Just two miles north of the Lurin Valley and along the seashore is Huaca Villa Salvador, the site of an excavation of an ancient city. The ruins date to the end of the Early Horizon Period 1000 BC to 250 BC, placing it firmly within the context of the late Jaredites. The ceramics found at the site show that their designs were influenced by northern Peru coastline civilizations. This would be consistent with the Jaredites at Norte Chico/Caral having had a satellite city in the important Lurin Valley.

Using the Book of Mormon’s criteria for the narrow neck of land, we see there was an excellent match in the ancient Andes.

### A Natural Harbor for Ship Building

As mentioned in Chapter Five (Oceangoing Maritime Tradition), Hagoth and others launched oceangoing boats into the Pacific. Vessels with the capacity to take settlers and their provisions to far off islands must be large and strong enough to withstand the forces of the open seas. Such boats required a sheltered harbor with calm waters for their construction, launching, and sea trails. Hagoth launched the first of his ships near the borders of the “land of Bountiful, by the land of Desolation, and by the narrow neck of land”



*Figure 33 Tree of Life Geoglyph at Paracas Peru.*

(Alma 62:5). From Lima, Peru (candidate for the Land of Desolation), it is only 161 miles to the natural harbor of Paracas, Peru. From the Lurin Valley (candidate for the narrow neck of land), it is only 130 miles to Paracas. The bay of Paracas is the largest natural harbor in Peru.

Hagoth sailed the Pacific around 55 BC. His first voyage was successful, so he returned and took more people to colonize the Pacific Islands. This raises an interesting question. How did Hagoth find his way back to his original harbor? Resting on a hillside outside of the Paracas harbor and along the Pacific shores is the giant geoglyph called the *Candelaria*. LDS missionaries refer to it as the Tree of Life. Using pottery found at the geoglyph, archaeologists determine that it was formed around

200 BC.<sup>407</sup> One theory is that it was used by ancient mariners sailing along the Pacific coast to find the entrance to the Paracas harbor. The geoglyph is 600 feet tall and can be seen from 12 miles out to sea. Was it the signal that led Hagoth back to the land of Bountiful?

<sup>406</sup> Cobo 225.

<sup>407</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracas\\_Candelabra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracas_Candelabra).

## PART Four

### The City States of the Book of Mormon

As their ancestors before them in the land of Jerusalem, the Nephites lived in buildings (2 Nephi 5:15). They did not live on top of dirt mounds or in tents. They lived in permanent walled settlements with royal palaces, legal courts, gardens, fortresses, and temples. Nephite cities were sophisticated and interconnected by a vast system of highways. We have already explored the possibility that Tambo Viejo was the walled City of Mulek. Part Four will present candidates for the City of Nephi (Cusco Late Formative Period 500 BC to AD 200), the City of Zarahemla (Pukara (500 BC to AD 400), the City of Bountiful (Nazca 1 150 BC to AD 400), and the City of Jacobugath (Taraco 55 BC +/- 60).



*Figure 34 City of Cusco, Oldest Continually Inhabited City in the Western Hemisphere*

*And after we had journeyed for the space of many days we did pitch our tents. And my people would that we should call the name of the place Nephi.... 2 Nephi 5:5,6*

## Chapter Seven

### Cusco: a Candidate for the City of Nephi

The Peruvian oral tradition that the first Incas were four fair-skinned brothers tells that the youngest was kind and loved by the natives and became their king. His Inca name was Manco Capac; however, as documented in my book *Nephi in the Promised Land*, undoubtedly his Hebrew name was Nephi. Loren McIntyre writes for the *National Geographic*:

From the waters of Titicaca” According to one Inca origin legend— Manco Capac [Nephi], the first Inca, and his sister-wife [cousin], Mama Ocllo, emerged after their creation by the sun. The couple wandered with a golden staff until they found a fertile valley where it [the staff] sank easily into the earth. There they founded Cusco [City of Nephi], which means “navel” in Quechua and ‘richest of the rich’ in the secret Callaway tongue [private language of Incas]. Both meanings fit the great religious and political center of the empire, its temples laden with gold, its warehouses bulging with weapons and clothing.<sup>408</sup> [comments added]

From what is known about pre-Columbian Cusco, it is easy to understand why it was known as the “richest of the rich.” The Lord promised Nephi, “ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands” (1 Nephi 2:20). Of course Nephi was faithful, and through hard work and province, the Nephites did “prosper exceedingly” (2 Nephi 5:13). Cieza de León recorded:

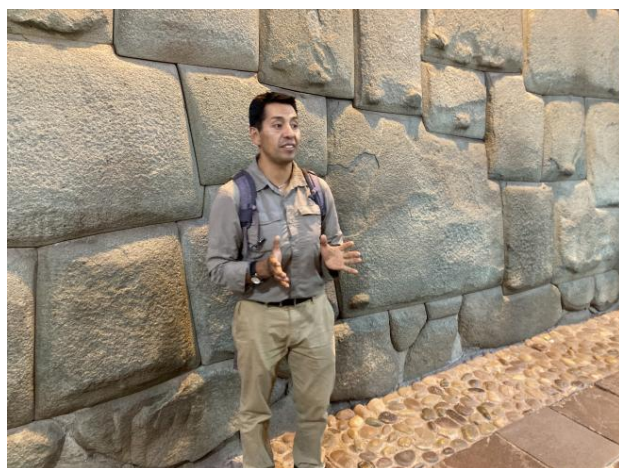
In the month of October of the year of the Lord fifteen hundred and thirty-four the Spanish entered the City of Cusco, head of the great empire of the Incas, where their court was as well as the solemn Temple of the Sun and their greatest marvels.

Although treasure for Atahualpa’s ransom was taken [from Cusco] to Cajamarca, and Quizquiz [Inca general] robbed what has already been related, and even though the Indians thought of destroying it and took a great deal, it did not seem to make a dent in how much remained. It was a marvelous thing and worthy of contemplating because no loot equaled this one, nor in all the Indies was there found such wealth. Neither a Christian nor a pagan prince has or possessed such a wealthy region as the one where this famous city was founded. The high priest abandoned the temple, where [the Spanish] plundered the garden of gold and the sheep and shepherds of this metal along with so much silver that it is unbelievable, and precious stones which, if they were collected, would be worth a city.

Indeed, when the Spaniards entered and opened the doors of the houses, in some they found heaps of very heavy and splendid gold pieces, in others large silver vessels. It irritated them to see so much gold. Many left it, scoffing at it, not wanting to take more than some delicate and fine little

<sup>408</sup> McIntyre, Loren, “Lost Empire of the Incas,” *National Geographic*, 144, no. 6, December 1973, 764.

jewels for their Indian women. Others found beads, feathers, gold ingots, and silver in bullion; indeed, the city was full of treasures. In the fortress, the royal house of the Sun, they found unseen and unheard of grandeur because the kings had deposits there of all the things that can be imagined and thought about.<sup>409</sup>



*Figure 35 Rudy Chalco Bustinza owner of Inka Traces next to 12 Angled Stone of Cusco.*

Anthropologist Brian Bauer writes of Cusco: “Within the city, spectacular elite and religious buildings expanded to fill the entire area between the two rivers, and a large plaza capable of holding thousands of people was built.”<sup>410</sup> Sancho arrived five months after the first three Spaniards entered Cusco:

The city of Cusco is the principal one of all those where the lords of this land had their residence; it is so large and so beautiful that it would be worthy of admiration even in Spain; and it is full of the palaces of the lords, because no poor people live there, and each lord builds there his house, and all the caciques do likewise, although the latter do not dwell there continuously. The greater part of these houses are of stone, and others have half the facade of stone. There are many houses of adobe, and they are all arranged in very good order. The streets are laid out at right angles, they are very straight, and are paved, and down the middle runs a gutter for water lined with stone.<sup>411</sup>

Cusco was a city primarily built from ashlar stone. The Incas’ beautiful stonework, considered the finest in the ancient world, can still be seen today because of its unique earthquake-resistant design. Cobo was in Cusco in 1653 and wrote of the Inca masonry:

...an entire section of a wall that still remains in the city of Cusco, in the Convent of Santa Catalina. These walls were not made vertical, but slightly inclined inward. The stones are perfectly squared, but in such a way that they come to have the same shape and workmanship as a stone for a ring of that sort that jewelers call “faceted.” The stones have two sets of faces and corners, so that a groove is formed between the lesser faces of the fitted stones, separating the faces in relief. Another skillfully made feature of this work is that all the stones are not of the same size, but the stones of each course are uniform in size, and the stones are progressively smaller as they get higher. Thus the stones of the second course are smaller than those of the first, and the stones of the third course are also smaller than those of the second, and in this way the size of the stones diminishes proportionately as the wall becomes higher. Thus the above-mentioned wall of the structure, which remains standing to this day, has a lower course of ashlar blocks of more than one cubit in diameter, while the stones of the upper course are the size of *azulejos* [ornamental tile]. This wall is two or three *estados* high. It is the most skillfully made of all the Inca structures that I have seen. We said that the Indians did not use mortar in

<sup>409</sup> Cieza de León (2), 317-319.

<sup>410</sup> Bauer, 106 (quoting Garcilaso de la Vega 1966: 417-430 [1609: Pt. 1, Bk. 7, Chs. 8-11]).

<sup>411</sup> Bauer, 110 (cities (Sancho 1971: 153-154 [1534])).

these buildings, that all of them were made of dry stone...But this does not mean that the stones were not joined together on the inside with some type of mortar; in fact it was used to fill up space and made the stones fit.<sup>412</sup>

Of course, the Spanish did not enter Cusco to admire it, but to loot it. Cusco had already been looted once by the Spanish when Sancho recorded the second plundering: "Truly it was a thing worthy to be seen, this house where the melting took place, all full of so much gold in plates of eight and ten pounds each, and in vessels, and vases and pieces of various forms with which the lords of the land were served, and among other very slightly things were four sheep in fine gold and very large, and ten or twelve figures of women of the size of the women of that land, all of fine gold and as beautiful and well-made as if they were alive."<sup>413</sup>

One of the most amazing sights the Spanish saw in Cusco was its huge plaza, a portion of which makes up today's large Plaza de Armas in central Cusco. Out of reverence to Viracocha (Christ) who left Peru by sea, the Inca covered the entire plaza in two and a half feet of beach sand that they hauled over the Andes Mountains from the Pacific. Polo de Ondegardo stated in 1559 "...because the plaza is large and the number of loads [of sand] brought into it was countless."<sup>414</sup> Within the sand floor of the plaza were buried many gold and silver vases and tiny figures of llamas and men

Of course, the Cusco the Spanish found would have been quite different from the valley Manco Capac (Nephi) would have looked on for the first time. In his day, the Cusco Valley must have been unblemished, with large forests, wild animals, and villagers who lived a primitive lifestyle. Garcilaso de la Vega witnessed the deforestation of the valley by the Spaniards. In 1604 he wrote: "I remember that the valley of Cusco used to be adorned with innumerable trees of this valuable variety, but within the space of a very few years it was almost stripped of them, the reason being that they provide excellent charcoal for braziers."<sup>415</sup> Bauer writes: "Perhaps the largest concentration of forest lay to the north-west of Cusco, in a vast and rolling area between the city and the slope of Huaynacorcor. Based on the large number of projectile points found during our survey work in these hills, it seems that the northwestern end of the valley continued to be a favored hunting region throughout prehistory. This remained true even in Inca times, as we know that the Inca maintained a royal hunting lodge there."<sup>416</sup> Betanzos recorded: "In the place and site which is called today the great city of Cusco in the province of Peru, in ancient times, before there were any lord orejones, Inca Capacuna, as they called their kings, there was a small town of about thirty small, humble straw houses."<sup>417</sup>

Archaeologists have classified the period ca. 1500-500 BC in the Cusco Valley (the period just before the Nephite Age) as the Middle Formative Period. Bauer states of this prehistoric age: "The Middle Formative Phase in the valley is represented by a series of undifferentiated settlements, which began as hamlets and grew increasingly large through time. We can speculate that these villages would have had leaders (so-called Big Men), whose positions of authority were highly unstable."<sup>418</sup> The architecture during that time was basic—"although some adobe walls were identified, no large architectural features that could be classified as public works were found.... While each village...was likely relatively self-sufficient, each developed its own local specialties, as the restriction accompanying [sedentariness] limited direct or easy access to resources.... No direct evidence was found

<sup>412</sup> Bauer, 129-130.

<sup>413</sup> Bauer, 110.

<sup>414</sup> Bauer, 114,

<sup>415</sup> de la Vega, Garcilaso, *Royal commentaries of the Incas and general history of Peru*, part 1, translated by Harold V. Livermore, (Austin: University of Texas, University Press, 1966), 504.

<sup>416</sup> Bauer, 7.

<sup>417</sup> Betanzos, 13.

<sup>418</sup> Bauer, 40.

to indicate social stratification or craft specialization based on principles other than age and sex.”<sup>419</sup>

### *The Settling of the Cusco Valley*

When the first Inca king Manco Capac, who I believe was Nephi, first arrived at the Cusco Valley, legend tells that he formed two gold plates and wore them as he stood on a hill above the Cusco Valley. When the morning sunlight hit the gold plates, rays of light beamed from Manco Capac, thus causing the native people in the valley to believe that he should be their king. Of course, legends change over time, and we know that Nephi made two sets of gold plates and that the plates indicated that the Lord designated Nephi to be the ruler (1 Nephi 2:22).

On entering the valley where Manco Capac decided to build the city of Cusco a tragedy occurred. Bauer writes, “When Manco Capac and his companions finally reached the place that would become the center of the city of Cusco, the plaza of Huanaypata, Ayar Auca (Sam) was transformed into a stone pillar.<sup>420</sup> Auca’s demise would indicate that Sam must have died shortly after the founding of the city of Nephi. This left only Manco Capac (Nephi), his four sisters, and the boy Cinchi Roca to build the city of Cusco.<sup>421</sup> In comparing the Inca lore to the Book of Mormon account, we find that from the time Nephi separates from his older brothers, the Book of Mormon never again mentions Laman, Lemuel, or Sam.

After long years of wandering without a permanent home, it seems that Nephi wasted no time turning his vision of a new righteous society into a reality. Nephi provided this brief synopsis:

We did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses. And the Lord was with us; and we did prosper exceedingly; for we did sow seeds, and we did reap again in abundance. And we began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind....we began to prosper exceedingly, and to multiply in the land... I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance. (2 Nephi 5:10-15)

### The Initial Cusco Economy

Manco Capac has been credited with introducing of maize into the Cusco Valley in the sixth century BC. Nephi reported planting seeds in the land of Nephi, but no longer specifies that the seeds are from Jerusalem. A possible scenario is that Nephi brought to Cusco maize from the Island of the Sun in Lake Titicaca. Bauer notes of Cusco in the Late Formative Period (500 BC to AD 200): “great quantities of llama bones show that they kept large numbers of domestic animals. Pottery is well made and abundant, and a high percentage of decorated ware is found in the refuse.”<sup>422</sup> He explains:

Agricultural intensification continued during the Late Formative Phase, and we know that quinoa, beans, and presumably potatoes held critical roles in the local economy. It is clear, however, that maize also played a part in the Late Formative diet. Maize pollen, dating to 500 BC has been recovered.... Camelid herds would also have been kept in the upper elevations of the valley during this era. As in earlier times, these herds met a wide variety of

<sup>419</sup> Bauer, 41.

<sup>420</sup> Urton, 51.

<sup>421</sup> Urton, 51.

<sup>422</sup> Bauer, 41.



needs for the people, including food, wool production, and beasts of burden. Nevertheless, deer hunting still continued throughout this period as well.<sup>423</sup>

### Building a City of Fine Buildings

Cobo provides this description of the transformation made by Manco Capac (Nephi) and his wife:

They divided up in that valley, the prince [Nephi still not anointed king] on the one hand and the princess [his wife] on the other, in order to call together its inhabitants and win them over with reasoning and benefits. The prince and the princess let it be known that they were children of the Sun [Viracocha/Christ], sent to provide the people with instructions and benefits. The barbarians, who saw how well dressed and adorned they were, with clothing so different from their own, started to respect them, and on the advice and orders of these children of the Sun [Viracocha/Christ], the barbarians called one another together; and with the skills that the Incas [Nephites] gave them, they built houses on the site where the city stands today, and it was divided into two barrios: one with the people who were attracted by the prince, and the other with those who were brought together by the princess; the former was called Hanan Cusco and the latter Hurin Cusco, meaning “Upper Cusco” and “Lower Cusco”; and this was the feeble beginning of the city of Cusco and the empire of the Incas.<sup>424</sup>

### Transforming Life in the Land of Nephi

After so many journeys in the wilderness, the Nephites finally had a homeland where they could build a city and a society where, by living the commandments, the people “prosper[ed] exceedingly” and where precious metals were found in abundance. Years later, Jacob wrote that the Nephites continued having an abundance of silver, gold, and all manner of precious ores (Jacob 2:12).

The Nephites were known for the “costliness” of their apparel (Jacob 2:13; Alma 1:6; 4:6; 5:53; 31:28; 4 Nephi 1:24; Mormon 8:36). The clothing worn by the Inca nobility at Cusco was perhaps the finest in the ancient world.<sup>425</sup>

### Hostilities against the City of Nephi

While building the city, Nephi reports of having to forge swords to prevent his people from being destroyed by the Lamanites (2 Nephi 5:14). The Lamanites lived within eyesight of the city of Nephi (Mosiah 20:8) and seem to have lived just south of the city, for when they attacked the Nephites, they “had come up” or north (Mosiah 20:9) to the city. Clements Markham writes that a tribe of Indians called Ayamarcas—a similar name to Aymara-speaking [Lamanite] enemies of the Quechua-speaking Incas—“seem to have occupied the country about 15 miles S.S.W. of Cusco.”<sup>426</sup> If the Ayamarcas were Aymara-speaking, this would tell us where the descendants of Laman might have initially settled. Having enemies so close to the city would be consistent with the hostilities Nephi protected his people from (Jacob 1:10). Sarmiento writes of one incident between the two groups living in the valley: “When the Ayamarcas saw that the Huayllacans [from Cusco] had broken their word, they were furious and declared war, considering them as enemies. War was carried on, the Huayllacans defending themselves and also attacking the Ayamarcas, both sides committing cruelties, inflicting deaths and losses, and causing great injury to each

<sup>423</sup> Bauer, 44.

<sup>424</sup> Cobo, 106.

<sup>425</sup> Cobo, 245.

<sup>426</sup> Sarmiento, 73 (footnote 2).

other....both sides saw that they were destroying each other and agreed to come to terms to avoid further injury."<sup>427</sup>

### Nephi Built a Temple

Once Nephi organized his new society, he quickly turned to the project of building a temple in like manner or design of Solomon's. Chapter Four describes how the first Inca - the youngest of the four original brothers - built a temple in Cusco.



The most impressive building in ancient Peru was the main temple in Cusco. We can safely assume that the same was true in the city of Nephi. "I, Nephi, did build a temple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore, it could not be built

*Figure 36 Monastery of Santo Domingo Built on the Ruins of the Cusco Temple*

like unto Solomon's temple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine" (2 Nephi 5:16). According to legend, Manco Capac first settled in the Cusco Valley at a place called Catitampucancha, a small square in Inca times, which today is found inside the Monastery of Santo Domingo in the city of Cusco.<sup>428</sup> On this site, Manco Capac built a great temple called the Coricancha.

### The Tower near the Temple

Between 160-150 BC, the Book of Mormon's wicked King Noah "built a tower (in the city of Nephi) near the temple; yea, a very high tower, even so high that he could stand upon the top thereof and overlook the land of Shilom, and also the land Shelon, which was possessed by the Lamanites; and he could even look over all the land round about" (Mosiah 11:12).

We learn from this verse that the Lamanites lived within sight of Cusco, and from the tower near the temple, the king observed the movements of his enemies. The same was true in ancient Cusco. The cruel eldest brother of Manco Capac, Ayar Cachi (Laman), seems to have taken up residence at Guanacauri, a hill that can be seen "on the horizon of Cusco."<sup>429</sup> Mosley tells us that "Nearby [the Cusco temple] towered the tallest of all edifices, a grand spire of exquisite masonry that cast no noontime shadow at zenith. The coming of zenith was precisely foretold from a tower window by observing sunrise over the marked point of the distant horizon."<sup>430</sup>

### Walls, Resort & Tower on a Hill North of the City

"He [King Noah] caused many buildings to be built in the land of Shilom, and he caused a great tower to be built on the hill north of the land of Shilom, which had been a resort for the children of Nephi at the time they fled out of the land" (Mosiah 11:13). Kocherhans

<sup>427</sup> Sarmiento, 73.

<sup>428</sup> Bauer, 155.

<sup>429</sup> Sullivan, 235.

<sup>430</sup> Mosley, 74-79.

presents an interesting argument for where this second tower of King Noah was located. From verses 12 and 13 of the book of Mosiah chapter eleven, Kocherhans lists several features of the city of Nephi.

1. It is apparent from these scriptures that the temple constructed under the direction of Nephi, around 550 BC, was still in existence four hundred years later and still a landmark in the city of Nephi.
2. The city of Nephi appears to be surrounded by sufficient level ground that from the temple location an area called Shemlon, occupied by Lamanites could be seen and distinguished from the city Nephi.



*Figure 37 Author in front of Massive Stone Walls of Sacsahuaman*

3. To the north of the city of Nephi was a Nephite community called Shilom. It could be seen from the tower by the temple and distinguished from Shemlon and the north borders of the city of Nephi.

4. On the hill on the north of Shilom was a place of last resort\* or small fort built for the protection of the people. It seems reasonable that the distance to the hill from the borders of the city of Nephi would not have been excessive in order for the people to reach it in time of attack [\*Resort: ultimate means of relief, Noah Webster's Dictionary 1828]....<sup>431</sup>

Kocherhans refines our understanding that the Nephite "resort" was a last refuge military fortification. He cited Alma 48:8, "he had been strengthening the armies of the Nephites, and erecting small forts, or places of resort; throwing up banks of earth around about to enclose his armies, and also building walls of stone." Kocherhans concludes:

*Figure 38 Guaman Poma's Drawing Showing the Tower at Sacsahuaman*

After years of research and studying ruins of the western hemisphere, I have found this picture in the book *The Last of the Incas*, by Edward Hyams and George Ordish. On page 153 it shows that a place called Sacsahuaman by the Inca, was an ancient fortress, built on a hill to the north of the city of today's Cusco, Peru.

Then in *Ancient America* by Jonathan Norton Leonard, on page 133, I found an aerial picture of the same fortress, with this caption under the picture: "Massive Triple Walls guard Cusco's Sacsahuaman citadel, whose ruined foundations are visible at top right. Circular



<sup>431</sup> Kocherhans, *Nephi to Zarahemla*, 70-71.

walls marked the site of a tower.

In The *National Geographic*, December 1973 edition, I found still further collaboration with this great picture and commentary: “Navel of the world” they called it Cusco, capital of the Inca Empire. From sketchy Spanish accounts, artist Donald A. Mackay has “reconstructed the city on its still-surviving foundations...” Notice the tower on the north of the city.

One page 776 of the same *National Geographic* issue is a caption that reads: “Rocks of ages underpin much of modern Cusco, sprawling in the valley beyond the massive hilltop fortress of Sacsahuaman. Pachacuti in the 1400s began rebuilding the city, oldest continually inhabited metropolis in the Americas.”

That information also agrees with the Book of Mormon, for we know from the scriptures that the city of Nephi was the main location of both the Nephites and then Lamanites from the time it was established by Nephi and the followers of Jesus Christ throughout Book of Mormon history.

And here in the city of Cusco is an ancient block wall, again built with the same precision as the rock work on the fortress. This could have been part of the base of the high tower that King Noah built, or perhaps of the temple that Nephi built.

It was very exciting to finally find a place that physically matches the Book of Mormon scriptures!!

In all my years of research, I have not been able to find any other location in the western hemisphere that matches so precisely the description in the scriptures of the land and city of Nephi, as does this Cusco, Peru area.<sup>432</sup>

*Figure 39 Inca Throne at Sacsahuaman Main Seat and 12 Seats to the side.*

Although I agree with Kocherhans’s conclusion, that Cusco is the best candidate for the city of Nephi in the Western Hemisphere, it must be remembered that the Inca king Pachacuti rebuilt the city and fortress of Sacsahuaman in the fifteenth century AD. However, Pachacuti was only attempting to rebuild Cusco in the image of its past glory, so one would assume that to some degree he used the original foundations and what was remembered of the city’s past layout as a model for its later reconstruction. In this regard, the strategic location of Sacsahuaman suggests that it is highly probable that in ancient times a fort existed at Sacsahuaman. It would also seem logical to assume that like the later Incas, the builders of the ancient fort would have wisely utilized a lookout tower to determine the movements in the surrounding valleys.

By any measure, Sacsahuaman was a magnificent “resort.” Bauer describes the importance of the fort and notes that archaeologists have now dated the site to an era close to that of King Noah. He writes, “The most important site outside the city but within the Cusco Basin is the massive site of Sacsayhuaman [Sacsahuaman]. It is located on a steep hill that overlooks the city and provides an impressive view of the valley to the southeast. Surface collections at Sacsayhuaman indicate that the site dates back to at least the Qotakalli Period [AD 200-600].”<sup>433</sup> Michael Mosley notes:

The head of the cat was formed by the largest and highest edifices, called Sacsahuaman. Perched atop a high hill, one side of the complex ran along

<sup>432</sup> Kocherhans, *Nephi in Zarahemla*, 73-79.

<sup>433</sup> Bauer, 98-99.

a cliff with a commanding view of the city. The opposite side of the hill was relatively low and encased by three successively higher zigzag terraces. Each wall employed the finest and most impressive of Inca polygonal masonry, including individual stone blocks weighing from 90 to more than 100 metric tons. In plan Sacsahuaman is suggestive of an elongated animal head topped with the great terraces. A marvelous complex of fine ashlar buildings crown a flattened hill, including tall towers, and circular and rectangular structures. Excavations have revealed a complex system of finely cut stone channels and drains suggesting ritual manipulations of water. Cieza de León says that Pachacuti intended Sacsahuaman to be a temple that would surpass all other edifices in splendor. Garcilaso de la Vega relates that only royalty could enter the sacrosanct complex because it was a house of the sun, of arms and war, and a temple of prayer and sacrifice. Construction supposedly employed 30,000 workers who labored for several generations.<sup>434</sup>

Hiram Bingham, the American explorer who discovered Machu Picchu, called Sacsahuaman the “most unbelievable achievement of ancient man in the Americas.”<sup>435</sup> McIntyre writes of Sacsayhuaman: “Later observers doubted that Indians could haul such huge stones up here and shape them so precisely. They thought it was the devil’s doing. Others insisted the Incas knew how to soften stones and mold them like clay. The latest fad attributes construction to extraterrestrial beings.”<sup>436</sup> Today, nothing remains of the buildings or the great tower at Sacsayhuaman. Following a bitter battle between the Spaniards and an Indian uprising, the Spaniards used the buildings of the fortress as a source of building stones. Within a year of the battle, most of the buildings and towers had vanished.<sup>437</sup>

Besides being a fortress, Sacsahuaman was an important religious center in pre-Columbian Peru. Bauer notes: “The most notable feature of this area [middle site of Sacsayhuaman] is the famous carved stone, referred to as ‘the throne of the Incas.’” This carving was a shrine of the Cusco *ceque* system and may have held an important role in the Inca rituals that took place in the complex.<sup>438</sup> “The throne of the Incas” was carved from a single massive stone. The throne rests in front of a large open area where thousands of people can gather. The throne consists of one large central seat and twelve smaller seats on its side. Just to the east of the throne is a building that is separated into twelve niches.



*Figure 35 Throne of the Inca with 12 seats next to it, 3 on one side 9 on the other, Sacsahuaman, Cusco.*

Of course, the foremost evidence that Cusco is possibly the site of the City of Nephi is its great temple that is describe in Chapter Four.

<sup>434</sup> Mosley, 74-79.

<sup>435</sup> McIntyre, 764.

<sup>436</sup> McIntyre, 764.

<sup>437</sup> Betanzos, 157-158..

<sup>438</sup> Bauer, 100.



*Figure 40 Ruins of temple walls of Pukara, meaning the stronghold or fortress.*

*And as they went forth to lay their hands on him,  
Behold, he [Samuel] cast himself down from the wall.*

*Helaman 16:7*

*Neither durst they [Lamanites] march down  
against the city of Zarahemla; neither durst they  
cross the head of the Sidon. Alma 56:25*

## Chapter Eight

## Pukara: a Candidate for the City of Zarahemla

Identifying the Andean city of Cusco as a candidate for the city of Nephi was facilitated in part by analyzing the striking parallels between the first king of the Nephites, Nephi, and his counterpart, the first king of the Incas, Manco Capac. The first Nephite migration to the land of Zarahemla was achieved by another Moses-like leader, Mosiah. It would seem pertinent then to start our search for the land of Zarahemla by first asking, “Is there found among the oral traditions of the Inca kings a ruler who can be matched with a significant degree of confidence to King Mosiah in the Book of Mormon?”

The Inca ruling class consisted of kings and priestly record-keepers. The early Book of Mormon kings appeared to have been the direct descendants of Nephi, while a parallel set of prophet-scribes maintained the sacred plates. When Nephi anointed his successor, he did so “according to the reigns of the kings” (Jacob 1:9), that is, his eldest son succeeded him. Initially, Nephi served as both king and the first record keeper. With time, he ordained his much younger brother, Jacob, to be the record keeper for the next generation (2 Nephi 6:2, Jacob 1:1-2, 17-18). Jacob would have been approximately the same age as Nephi’s eldest son, the second Nephite king. During the time the Nephites ruled the city of Nephi, Jacob was succeeded by his descendants as the record-keeper: Enos, Jarom, Omni, Amaron, Abinadom, and Amaleki. Including Nephi and Jacob, there were eight Nephite record-keepers in the city of Nephi up to the time of Amaleki.

It was during the life of the eighth Nephite record keeper, Amaleki, that Mosiah and his followers fled the city of Nephi and resettled among the Mulekites in the land of Zarahemla. If there were an equal number of generations of kings in the city of Nephi before the fall of the city to the Lamanites, then it is likely that Mosiah would have been the eighth Nephite king. Most likely, he was born a sovereign for when Mosiah arrived in Zarahemla, he was selected to become the king of the land (Omni 1:12). It would follow then, that if Mosiah had ruled in the city of Nephi before he led the exodus to Zarahemla, that like his forefather Lehi, he fled the city of Nephi (Cusco) after having been warned by God.

How does Mosiah’s story compare with the oral traditions of the Inca kings? Current archaeologists believe that the genealogy of the Inca kings of Cusco should be divided into two separate civilizations that were divided by a great time span. The first eight Inca kings ruled Cusco in antiquity, while the remainder ruled just prior to the arrival of the Spanish.<sup>439</sup>

439 According to the oral traditions recorded by Juan de Betanzos, Viracocha Inca had a son named Inca Yapanki. This younger son, refused to leave Cusco, and with his three friends defeated the entire army of the Chanca. The story of Inca Yapanki’s conquest of the Chanca army with only his own efforts and that of three friends makes him a superhero in Inca traditions. It is said that “he fought the Chanca with such bravery that (according to the legend) the very stones rose up to join the fray.”(Mann , 76) The legendary drama THAT SUBSEQUENTLY TOOK PLACE between him and his father, Viracocha Inca, was so Shakespearian in nature, that many scholars question where it actual took place. Mann writes, “The family story makes such terrific melodrama that it seems reasonable to wonder whether it actually happened....some scholars dismiss the chronicles entirely.”(Mann, 76) The Spanish chronicler, Jesuit Bernabé Cobo dismissed the ties of the later Incas to the Viracocha four brothers as “ludicrous” (Mann, 75). In my opinion the storybook rise to power of Inca Yapanki, as the first Inca, who declared himself the son of the sun, is an attempt to legitimize his right to rule by creating the story that his father was Viracocha Inca, a person that seems to have lived nearly two thousand years before him. Remember, Inca Yapanki was not the legitimate heir to the throne; he

According to the oral traditions of the Incas, the eighth Inca king, Viracocha Inca, fled the city before the Chanca Indians (Laman, called Cachi).<sup>440</sup> They also believe that the eighth Inca king, “is the one that was named Viracocha Inca because he was very friendly with his people and affable, governing very calmly, always giving gifts and doing favors. For this reason, the people loved him greatly.”<sup>441</sup>

It should be noted that Viracocha Inca took upon himself the name of the god Viracocha (“Christ or Christian”). The Inca storytellers say that one day the king announced to his people “that Viracocha Pacha-yachachic [God] had spoken to him and that god had talked to him that night. Then all of his people stood up and called him Viracocha Inca, which means king and god, and from then on he was called by this name.”<sup>442</sup> In the tradition of the Biblical prophets Abram, Jacob, and Paul were given new sacred names after seeing the Lord. The eighth Inca king appears to have been given a “new name” after hearing the voice of God.

In my opinion, Viracocha Inca is a possible candidate for the Book of Mormon king, Mosiah. Like the eighth Inca king, Mosiah was warned by the Lord (Omni 1:12,13), fled the capital city with his people (Omni 1:12), was a king (Omni 1:12), and took upon himself the name of his god (believers in Zarahemla were called Christians, Alma 46:14-15). He must also have been beloved of his people, for Mosiah taught the people, united them, and was appointed king by both the minority Nephites and the majority Mulekites (Omni 1:18-19).

#### Pukara, an Empire Parallel to Zarahemla

In brief, here are four reasons why the ruins archaeologists have named Pukara is a likely candidate for Zarahemla. First, Pukara is located just north of Lake Titicaca and was populated by the Quechua-speaking people who were disliked throughout history by the Aymara who lived on the opposite end of Lake Titicaca. This fits the Book of Mormon scenario of the warring Nephites and Lamanites who were separated by a strip of wilderness that stretches between two seas (Pacific and Titicaca). Second, the city of Pukara came into prominence at roughly 200 BC, the same period when King Mosiah arrived at Zarahemla and started a new and prosperous dynasty. Third, Pukara is 120 miles south of Cusco, which is how Zarahemla was geographically situated in reference to the city of Nephi (“down” in Semitic languages and Quechua means “south,” see Omni 1:13, Mormon 1:6). Fourth, the original land of Zarahemla (Pukara) was bordered by the sea on the west (Pacific) and the sea on the east (Titicaca). Alan Kolata states of Pukara:

However we interpret the nature of Pukara influence outside of its *Altiplano* core territory, it is evident that this dynamic *Altiplano* city was the most powerful and well-integrated political force of its time in the southern Andes. For the first time, with Pukara we see evidence of a corporate art style in the service of elites that had extensive impact throughout the Titicaca basin and the adjoining coastal regions of southern Peru and northern Chile...<sup>443</sup>

took it from his older brother Inca Orson. Thus, Inca Yapanki not only made up an heroic story of how he defended the nation ; he also created a false genealogy tracking his lineage back to the first colonizers of Cusco—the famed Manco Capac [Inca] and the other kings for the first eight generations of Cusco rulers. Cusco was colonized in 500 BC, not seven generations before Inca Yapanki, who lived during the fifteenth century AD ...Having the Inca empire's founder legitimized by wild tales of his conquest and savvy is reminiscent of the myth that George Washington chopped down his father's cherry tree. Creating a false genealogy that claims he was a descendant of Manco Capac is no more surprising than the European monarchs having created false genealogies to claim that they were descendants of the house of David. (Steve Jones, 80-82). In other words, the first eight generations of Cusco rulers, from the city's founder Manco Capac until Viracocha Inca's abandonment of the city, appears to be the actual story of the first eight rulers of Cusco, but Inca Yapanki's Herculean account is out of context with time and realism.

<sup>440</sup> Betanzos, 22.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>443</sup> Kolata, *The Tiwanaku: Portrait of an Andean Civilization*, 77.



## Pukara and the Mulekites

Mosiah's followers fled south from the city of Nephi into the wilderness. They eventually discovered a large community of people called the Mulekites, in a land called Zarahemla. The Mulekites left Jerusalem at approximately the same time as Lehi. Thus, for Pukara to have been Zarahemla, the Mulekites would have needed to have settled in the Promised Land on the Altiplano northwest of Lake Titicaca, the area where Pukara was located. Pukara is located approximately 150 miles inland from the Pacific. The Book of Mormon tells us that once the Mulekites crossed the waters and landed, they went "into the land" (Omni 1:16), thus they did not remain along the Pacific shoreline, but settled inland. After their initial migration, the Mulekites remained at the same place (Omni 1:16).

Since we know from the Inca traditions that the lands around today's Lima, Peru were known by the ancient Peruvians as the land of the people of Desolation, then Pukara would have been located in the right direction from the Book of Mormon land of Desolation (Helaman 3:3-5). That is, when the Mulekites arrived, they found the land northward covered with the bones of dead Jaredites (Omni 1:22); thus the Jaredite bones (in the land of Desolation) were in the "land northward" of Zarahemla where the statement was originally recorded. Being located inland and southeast of Lima, Pukara matches the same general location as Zarahemla.

The existence of the Mulekites raises an interesting question. *How could the Nephites have lived for nearly four hundred years in relative proximity to the Mulekites without having discovered them?* In a Pukara model for Zarahemla, the answer is straightforward. There are two explanations for the lack of interaction between the Nephites at the city of Nephi (Cusco) and the Mulekites at Zarahemla (Pukara) approximately 120 miles to the south. First, there were Lamanites to the immediate south of the city of Nephi. Thus, there was an enemy barrier between the Nephites and Mulekites. This appears to have been the case between Cusco and Pukara, where Aymara-speaking people lived between the Quechua-speaking people of Cusco and the Quechua-speaking inhabitants of Pukara. Second, the Book of Mormon indicates that there was a narrow passage between the land northward and the land southward (Mormon 2:29). The narrow "passage" was a unique feature, and should not be confused with the "narrow strip of wilderness" or "the narrow neck of land" that are cited elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, it appears that the "narrow passage" was a route through a mountain range.

Zarahemla was located in the land southward. However, to the north of Zarahemla, in the direction of the city of Nephi, are the mountains called Manti. These mountains formed the watershed of the headwaters of the Sidon River (Alma 22:29). The Manti mountain range (borders meaning mountains), unlike the Andes, runs east to west (Alma 22:27). Thus, the Book of Mormon hints that between the two ancient civilizations was a major geographic barrier, and if the Lamanites controlled the only "narrow passage" through the mountains, it would explain why there was no interaction between the Nephites and Mulekites and why their culture and languages took separate courses for nearly four centuries.

Numerous historical cases show how mountains have isolated two groups of people. Having lived in Switzerland, I was amazed to learn that the people living in each mountainous canton had their own unique dialect, which differed significantly from the dialect of the people living in the very next valley. The towering Alps virtually isolate the alpine communities who live within a few miles of each other.

Although the Inca cities of Cusco and Pukara are only 120 miles apart, the two ancient city-states were separated by a range of glacier-topped mountains that tower over 20,000 feet. The only passage through the Vilcanota Mountains, is the La Raya pass at an altitude of 14,300 feet. Furthermore, the Vilcanota Mountain range (like the Manti mountains) runs east to west between the two great Andes cordilleras, thus forming a massive barrier between the city of Cusco and the city of Pukara.

Mountainous terrain between the two cities of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla would also explain why parties that left Zarahemla got lost in their attempts to find the city of their first inheritance (Omni 1:28-30).

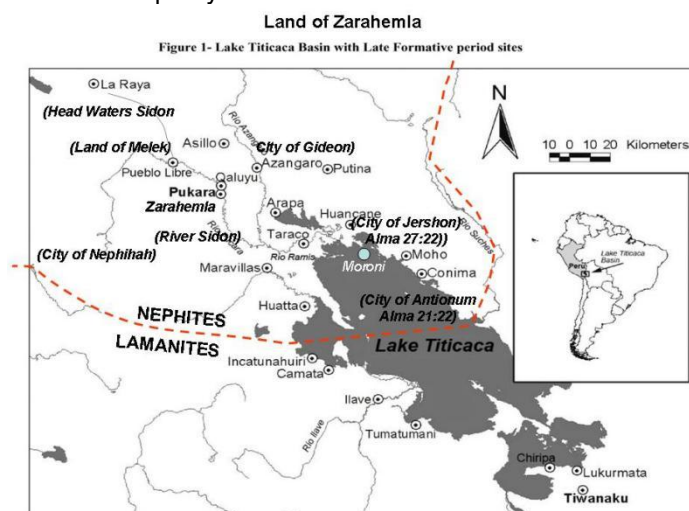
Locating the city of Zarahemla at Pukara would also satisfy another Book of Mormon clue as to the city's location. If the Lamanite (Aymara-speaking) tribes lived in the valleys between Cusco and the La Raya pass, and also in the lands south of the Mulekites (southeast of Lake Titicaca), then it meant that the Lamanites surrounded the land of Zarahemla (compare Alma 22:29).

Amaleki provided another clue for finding the location of Zarahemla. He recorded that a large number of Nephites became "desirous to possess the land of their inheritance" and "went up [North] into the wilderness" (Omni 1:27, 28). Again, in Semitic languages and in Quechua "up" implies "north," the direction one would travel from Pukara to Cusco.

#### Archaeological Evidence for Zarahemla at Pukara

Archaeologists place Pukara squarely in the historical period of Zarahemla. Elizabeth Klarich of the University of California at Santa Barbara cites:

The Late (or Upper) Formative (500 BC-AD 400) is characterized by the development of the first markedly ranked societies in the region centered at the sites of Pukara in the northwestern basin and Tiwanaku (Tiahuanacu) in the southern basin (Stanish et al. 1997; Stanish 2003:137). Stanish defines these polities as complex chiefdoms and, in spite of their scale and influence, argues that many areas of the basin were not under the control of either polity.<sup>444</sup>



Not only did the Pukara civilization start to rise at the time of the arrival of the Mulekites (roughly 500 BC), it fell at the time of the demise of the Nephites (AD 400). Further, no evidence can be found that the city was occupied during the subsequent Middle Horizon period,<sup>445</sup> thus, hinting that a genocide had occurred at Pukara. Referring to that period, Klarich notes: "By AD

400, the Pukara polity had collapsed while Tiahuanacu [Lamanites at the south end of the lake] continued to grow and reorganized into an urban center, one that developed into the first archaic state of the Titicaca region."<sup>446</sup> In other words, in an Altiplano paradigm for Zarahemla, the Nephite society disappeared on the northwest end of Lake Titicaca (circa AD 400), while their enemies, the Lamanites, continued prospering at Tiwanaku (Tiahuanacu).

In further detail, archaeologists divide the Pukara civilization into three sub-periods, which coincide remarkably well with the three distinct Zarahemla periods mentioned in the Book

<sup>444</sup> Klarich, 45.

<sup>445</sup> Klarich, 67.

<sup>446</sup> Klarich, 45.

of Mormon: the Mulekite Period (roughly 550-200 BC), the Nephites (200 BC to AD 30), and the Post-Christ visitation-reconstruction period (AD 30-400). Mujica (1988)<sup>447</sup> divided the Pukara civilization between the Initial Pukara (500-200 BCE.), Middle Pukara (200 BC-AD 100), and the Late Pukara (AD 100-300). Steadman (1995)<sup>448</sup> establishes the Pukara periods as the Initial Pukara and the Classic Pukara 1 (400-100 BC), the Classic Pucara Period (100 BC-AD 100), and the Late Pukara (AD 100-350).

#### Geographic and Demographic Context

The land of Zarahemla was a hegemony that included many other cities and villages. Alma established at least seven churches in the land (Mosiah 25:23). Although the capital was the city of Zarahemla, we know there must have been many small urban centers within a one-day walking distance of Zarahemla. We can infer this because King Benjamin made a proclamation that "...this people, or the people of Zarahemla, and the people of Mosiah who dwell in the land... thereby... may be gathered together; for on the morrow I shall proclaim..." (Mosiah 1:10). The Titicaca Basin in the Late Formative Period consisted of the primary regional centers, the capital cities of Tiwanaku (Tiahuanacu) and Pukara, which attracted large populations.<sup>449</sup> Klarich writes: "The Pukara polity is characterized by a three-tiered site hierarchy with the primate non-urban center of Pukara, smaller secondary centers, and villages and hamlets."<sup>450</sup>

The land of Zarahemla had a river that flowed through it which appears to have defined the land's western border. The river's name was Sidon, and it flowed beside the city of Zarahemla. The Pukara River winds its way through the entire length of the northern Lake Titicaca basin, from the La Raya passage in the north (the border between the northeast and southeast Inca quarters) south to Lake Titicaca (sea east). The remains of the city of Pukara rest just above the river. The river's headwaters, course, and drainage into the giant lake suit well the features attributed to the river Sidon, which extended to the "northern parts of the land bordering the wilderness, at the head of the river Sidon" (Alma 22:29).

The land of Melek was on the west side of the river Sidon (Alma 8:3), suggesting that the western border of the land of Zarahemla was the river Sidon. In an Altiplano scenario, Lake Titicaca would have dominated the land's southern borders, and Zarahemla's eastern border would have ended at the Amazon basin where most of the basin's western flanks are covered with a sheet of water six months of the year.<sup>451</sup> The river, lake, and Amazon flood basin meet the criteria that the "land" of Zarahemla was nearly surrounded by water (Alma 22:32). The Book of Mormon tells us that an extensive range of mountains and wilderness was adjacent to Zarahemla. The terrain allowed the Gadianton robbers to raid the Nephites and then return to their secret places in the mountains where the Nephites could not find them (Helaman 11:25-31, 3 Nephi 1:27). To the immediate east and north of Pukara is one of the greatest mountain wildernesses on earth, the Andes Mountains.

#### A Civilization with a Sophisticated Culture

The Pukara society, like the Nephite community, had a pastoral component to its economy (Mosiah 2:3). Kolata defines Pukara as having been an "agro-pastoral society."<sup>452</sup> The Pukara society also possessed a technical and artistic tradition indicative of what one might expect of the Nephites. Kolata explains:

<sup>447</sup> E. Mujica, "Peculiaridades del proceso histórico temprano en la cuenca norte de Titicaca." Una propuesta inicial. *Boletín del laboratorio de arqueología* 2:75-122, quoted by Klarich, 69.

<sup>448</sup> Steadman, L.H. Excavations at Camata: an Early Ceramic Chronology for the Western Titicaca Basin, Peru. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley: 1995.

<sup>449</sup> Klarich, 45.

<sup>450</sup> Klarich, 20 also see C. S. Stanish, *Ancient Titicaca: The Evolution of Complex Society in Southern Peru and Northern Bolivia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 111.

<sup>451</sup> Mann, 3.

<sup>452</sup> Kolata (1), 70.

The cultural and technological sophistication of Pukara was expressed most clearly through its impressive architectural achievements and through its remarkable stone-carving tradition that far surpasses that of Chiripa {Lamanites, early Tiwanaku} in terms of technical skill and sophistication in design. Pukara stone carvers created both full round and flat relief sculptures. The carvers used *champlevée* and incision techniques to fashion the relief carvings on rectangular stone slabs, or *stelae*. The flat relief sculptures trend to portray a variety of animals, such as fish, felines, lizards, and serpents, with incised surface detail representing cosmological or mythical symbols. One stela with a notched upper end portrays a magnificent human head wearing an elaborate crown with feather and feline appendages. The sculptures carved in full round are relatively realistic portraits of humans, most often depicted holding or wearing trophy heads.<sup>453</sup>

### The Jaredites of Zarahemla

Mosiah learned that a descendant of the Jaredites, Coriantumr, had lived with the people of Zarahemla. (Omni 1:21). This would suggest, that part of the Jaredites lived and fought their last battles in the land of Zarahemla. Three archaeological clues indicate that the Jaredites spent some time at Lake Titicaca.

First, the Nephites found at Zarahemla large stones that had been engraved on by the Jaredites (Omni 1:20). Not only are large monoliths found at Pukara, but large statues are also found at Tiwanaku on the Lamanite side of Lake Titicaca. Dating stone carvings is difficult; however, they are believed to be associated with the early Pukara and Tiwanaku periods when it was possible that the last of the Jaredites were still alive. Urton reports that “Inca informants in the early years following the Spanish invasion told their conquerors that the statues at Tiwanaku represented an earlier race of giants whose origins were in an era before the appearance of the Inca kings.”<sup>454</sup>

Second, as noted in Chapter Five, the Uros Indians of Lake Titicaca still build reed boats that compare to those the Jaredites would have seen and possibly built in Mesopotamia (Ether 2:16).

Third, the people of Norte Chico (Caral), who qualify as candidates for the Jaredites, used a U-shaped architecture when building their temples.<sup>455</sup> The first settlements in the Lake Titicaca Basin used this same U-shape design for their sacred temples (circa 900 BC).<sup>456</sup>

### Climatic Conditions of Zarahemla

Zarahemla had a climate very different from the one Nephi described when his family initially pitched their tents along the coast and successfully grew seeds from Jerusalem. A close examination of the eleventh chapter of Helaman indicates three factors about the climate at Zarahemla: One, it was favorable for growing grain. Two, it was an arid environment where grain grew only when rains fell. Three, there was a distinctive “season of grain,” thus Zarahemla had a clearly defined rainy season (Helaman 11:5,6,13,17). These three conditions match the climatic pattern of the Altiplano where Pukara is located. Palaeo-climatologists from the United States and Chile have concluded:

Along its central portion (15° – 22° south), the widening of the Andes produces distinctive meteorological conditions that we refer to as the climate of the Altiplano. Interest in the climate of the Altiplano has grown in

<sup>453</sup> Kolata (1), 71-73..

<sup>454</sup> Urton, 21.

<sup>455</sup> Mann, 269.

<sup>456</sup> Mann, 258.

recent decades because its variability has a strong impact on the availability of water resources over this semi-arid region and the adjacent lowlands...<sup>457</sup>

The annual rainfall over the Altiplano is largely concentrated in the austral summer months, especially along its southwestern part where more than 70% of the precipitation occurs from December to February.<sup>458</sup>

Accordingly, Danish and Bolivian scientists note about the Altiplano: “the onset and the duration of the rainy season, [indicates] that climate-wise crop production is only possible during 5 months....”<sup>459</sup>

Unfortunately, the arrival of the rainy season in the Andes marks the commencement of the season of sickness and death. The Book of Mormon reports that at Zarahemla some “died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year were very frequent”; however, there were “excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases (Alma 46:40).” The Canadian Foreign Affairs Ministry warns travelers to Peru that with the rainy season “water-borne diseases may also become a threat.”<sup>460</sup> Indeed water-related infectious diseases are still the leading cause of death of children living in the Altiplano,<sup>461</sup> and when the rains wash human and animal waste into the streams and rivers, the water becomes dangerous for human consumption.<sup>462</sup> The New York Times quotes one Peruvian doctor: “Drinking water is drawn from local creeks of uncertain purity...we go from 80 cases a month to almost 250 in the rainy season.”<sup>463</sup> Although many other illnesses are associated with Andean water, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention calls special attention to Yellow Fever, Malaria, Hepatitis A, and Hepatitis B.<sup>464</sup> Fortunately, God has blessed Peru with some of the most effective natural medicines known, including Coca leaves, Maca, Cats Claw, Anchiote, Quinina, Camu Camu, and many others.<sup>465</sup>

#### Climatic Variations Associated with Zarahemla

As in the Bible, the history of the Book of Mormon shows how the Lord used climatic changes to influence the faithfulness of His people. When the Jaredites persecuted the prophets:

...there began a great dearth upon the land, and the inhabitants began to be destroyed exceedingly fast because of the dearth, for there was no rain upon the face of the earth, and there came forth poisonous serpents, also upon the face of the land, and did poison many people, and it came to pass that their flocks began to flee before the poisonous serpents, toward the land southward, which was called by the Nephites Zarahemla. And it

<sup>457</sup> Garreaud, Rene and Mathiasu Vuille, Amy C. Clements, “The Climate of the Altiplano: observed current conditions and mechanisms of past changes,” *Palaeogeograph, Palaeoclimate, Palaeoecology*, Vol. 194, (2003), 6.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>459</sup> Garcia, M., and D. Raes, S.-E Jacoben, T. Michel, “Agroclimatic constraints for rain fed agriculture in the Bolivian Altiplano,” *Journal of Arid Environments*, Vol. 71, Issue 1, (October 2007), Abstract, 109.

<sup>460</sup> Canadian Foreign Affairs Ministry, “Peru,” Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, see [Voyage.gc.ca](http://Voyage.gc.ca), 15 May 2008.

<sup>461</sup> Evans, Timothy, discussion with author, Oakley, Utah, September 2007.

<sup>462</sup> During the author’s mission he was warned by the Peruvian Health Ministry and the Peru Mission to not drink tap water during the rainy season.

<sup>463</sup> Nash, Nathaniel C., “Youth Trampled in Peru’s Gold Rush,” quoting Dr. Carlos Manrique, *New York Times, World*, 17 May 2008, originally printed 26 August 1991, see

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9DOCE4DF1431F935A1575BCOA967958260>.

<sup>464</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Health Information for Travelers to Peru,” 17 May 2008, <http://www.ncdc.gov-health> information for Peru .

<sup>465</sup> No author stated, “Herbals and Alternative Medicine,” *Peru Herbals*, 17 May 2008, <http://www.peruherbals.com/3030/medicine.tml>

came to pass that there were many of them which did perish by the way; nevertheless, there were some which fled into the land southward. And it came to pass that the people did follow the course of the beasts, and did devour the carcasses of them which fell by the way, until they had devoured them all. Now when the people saw that they must perish they began to repent of their iniquities and cry unto the Lord. (Ether 9:30-34).

What do we learn from this passage that can help us locate Zarahemla?

1. The climate became much drier where the Jaredites were living (in the land northward).
2. Poisonous snakes left their previous domain and entered the Jaredite lands.
3. The Jaredites had flocks of domesticated animals that fled from the snakes.
4. The people wandered southward, following the “beasts.”
5. The Jaredites started living in the land the Nephites would one day call the land southward or Zarahemla.

We already know that in all of the Americas, only the ruins of Norte Chico in Peru have been dated to the period of the early Jaredites, and only the Andean people domesticated flocks. In this regard, the climatic history of Peru becomes quite informative. Bauer writes:

By around 3000 to 2000 BC, the climate in the Andean highlands was becoming not unlike that of the modern day [desert coastline/rains in highlands]. In Peru, the coasts became much drier, and the highlands started getting more regular rainfall. It may also be during this interval that El Niño events began (Sandweiss et al. 1996). This had major implications for people and may even be the time when agriculture began to be firmly established in the Andes. This would be consistent with the pollen data examined from both Lake Marcacocha (Chepstow-Lusty et al. 1998) and Lake Paca, as well as macrofossil evidence also from the Junin area, which indicates cultivation beginning around this time (Pearsall 1980, 1983; Hansen et al. 1994).<sup>466</sup>

A likely scenario is that during the famine, the starving Jaredites left the shoreline where the drought had destroyed their crops and the snakes had scattered their sheep (alpacas). To forestall starvation they followed the wild camelids and deer, which live in the high Andes. As the drought worsened, the wild animals would have wandered higher into the Andes in search of fodder. It would also seem likely that the beasts followed the rains southward. Once in the land southward (the southern quarter, which included the Lake Titicaca Basin) the Jaredites finally humbled themselves and the rains returned. Whether the Jaredite migration to Zarahemla occurred during the climate change between 3000-2000 BC or during a subsequent drought cycle, we can only speculate. What is known is that the Andes is famous for its droughts and that super droughts occurred in Peru around 1500 BC, 900 BC, and 700 BC.<sup>467</sup>

#### La Niña – The East Wind

Placing the Nephites high in the Peruvian Andes provides a possible insight into another climatic phenomenon mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Speaking for the Lord, the Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi called the Nephites to repent, “...lest I will smite this my people with sore afflictions, yea with famine and with pestilence; and I will cause that they shall howl all the day long” (Mosiah 12:4).

Perhaps this prophecy indicates that the Lord brought the dreaded El Niño drought to the Andes. El Niño occurs when the waters of the Pacific Ocean warm off the coast of Peru. The warmer waters cause the east winds that cross Peru to subside. As a result, large

<sup>466</sup> Bauer, 25.

<sup>467</sup> Bauer, 29.

amounts of rainfall occur along the coast; however, the moist air from the Amazon can no longer cross over the eastern Andes and the inhabited highland valleys experience severe drought conditions. Abinadi further warned the Nephites that if the drought did not cause them to repent, the Lord would also: “send forth hail among them, and it shall smite them” (Mosiah 12:6). Having spent over a year as a missionary in the Andes at altitudes between 10,000 and 12,500 ft. above sea level, I was often pounded by hail. One evening on the Altiplano, I walked through two inches of hailstones.

Hail following a drought suggests that if the people did not repent and the Lord would cause an even greater curse to come upon the people. That is, large amounts of moisture would fall on the scorched dry earth. If so, the result would be devastating. Abinadi continued: “They shall also be smitten with the east wind” (Mosiah 12:6). Abinadi explained that, unlike the slow death from famine, “the east wind...bringeth immediate destruction” (Mosiah 7:31).

What many people do not realize is that the El Niño that brings severe drought to the Andes highlands has a wicked sister called La Niña, which causes the exact opposite effect. Occasionally a dry El Niño weather oscillation in the Andes is followed by a very moist La Niña weather pattern.<sup>468</sup> According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): “during La Niña, the easterly trade winds strengthen and cold upwellings along the equator and the West coast of South America intensify. Sea-surface temperatures along the equator can fall as much as 7 degrees F below normal.”<sup>469</sup> As a result, the strong east wind brings abnormal levels of moisture across the Andes from the Amazon, causing heavy rainfall, hail, and flooding. The heavy and sustained downpours preceded by a long drought that causes the lands to be parched and barren is a formula for “immediate destruction” (Mosiah 7:31).

A La Niña devastated the southern Andes in 2001. A long-lasting rainfall caused widespread flooding and erosion. The storm is known as the Great Atacama Flood of 2001. The International Red Cross reported that in Bolivia alone the flood affected 238,700 people. The greatest impact was caused by overflowing rivers.<sup>470</sup> With ancient Cusco (city of Nephi) and Pukara (Zarahemla) built beside rivers, the fear of an increase in the east wind must have been real to the cities’ inhabitants.

Further, according to Abinadi the east wind brought with it more than just immediate destruction from hail and flooding on the Nephites’ crops. Abinadi’s prophecy continues, “...smitten with the east wind and insects shall pester their land and also devour their grain.” In other words, the coming of the east wind could easily be directly associated with pests devouring their crops. While locust swarms are relatively rare in Peru, they occur after heavy rains.<sup>471</sup> With the La Niña rains, above-normal levels of grass appear, which allows the locust swarms to form.

#### Pukara, the City of Zarahemla

Approximately fifty miles northwest of Lake Titicaca and resting below an impressive pinkish sandstone outcrop known as the *Peñon* are the ruins of the ancient city of Pukara. First viewed by a westerner in 1540 or 1550, Pedro de Cieza de León reported: “What I saw at Pucará were great buildings in ruin and decay and many statues of stone in the shape of

<sup>468</sup> Ronchail, Josyane & Robert Gallaire, “ENSO and rainfall along the Zongo valley (Bolivia) from the Altiplano to the Amazon basin”, Smithsonian/NASA ADS Physics Abstract Service, <http://absabs.harvard.edu/abs/2006JCl..26.1223R>, 3 December 2007, 1.

<sup>469</sup> US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “Answers to La Niña” asked questions, [http://www.elnino.noaa.gov/lanina\\_new\\_faq.html](http://www.elnino.noaa.gov/lanina_new_faq.html), 3 December 2007, 1.

<sup>470</sup> International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), “Bolivia Floods Appeal No. 05/01 Situation Report No. 3”. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-64BQ3E?OpenDocument>, 3 December 2007, 1.

<sup>471</sup> Cviic, Stephen “Peru battles locust plague”, BBC NEWS, <http://bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/800771.stm>, 3 December 2007, 1.

human figures and other noteworthy things.”<sup>472</sup> A similar account was made in 1681 by Antonio Vásques de Espinosa who described the city’s remains as “...their marvelous works—there were great proud buildings with many stone statues in the likeness of men and other creatures, very neatly worked.”<sup>473</sup> The website of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art states: “...ca. 200 BC Pukara is the largest settlement in the Altiplano north of Lake Titicaca, covering approximately 900 acres. U-shaped courts flanked by fine masonry structures are part of the complex. Three-dimensional stone sculptures depict blocky humans with accentuated ribs and prominent square eyes. Ceramics are slip painted in red, black, white, and yellow, with incisions outlining motifs of frontal humans, spotted cats, llamas, and geometric patterns.”<sup>474</sup>

Although today little remains of the ancient Pukara, its original size of 900 acres is over four times the size of Old Jerusalem (220 acres). The Nephites migrated to Zarahemla sometime around 205 BC.<sup>475</sup> Kolata writes: “In the period between 200 BC and AD 200, Pukara grew to truly urban proportions (Mulica 1978) and took on a distinctly cosmopolitan character, with elegant public buildings and finely constructed private houses.... There is little doubt that Pukara was, at one time, one of the most important cities of the southern Andes—a major religious and secular power.”<sup>476</sup> Klarich confirms: “The dates have been published in a variety of contexts as the temporal limits of the Classic Pukara (200 BC-AD 200) culture for their association with highly decorative, polychrome, incised ceramics.”<sup>477</sup> Bauer notes: “During the Qotakalli Period [Cusco chronology AD 200-600], the site of Pucara (Pukara), approximately 200 kilometers [120 miles] southeast of Cusco in the Peruvian Altiplano near Lake Titicaca, reaches its largest area of influence. It is widely believed that Pucara was the center of one of the earliest and largest complex societies in the south-central Andes.”<sup>478</sup>

Given the current body of archaeological data, Pukara stands out as a likely candidate for the city of Zarahemla and the center of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Andes during the Zarahemla period (Alma 6:1,7). In March 1970, I was a missionary in the small city of Juliaca on the northern side of the Lake Titicaca Basin. My assigned mission area included the ruins of Pukara, just 30 miles northwest of Juliaca. At that time, the Peruvian Altiplano cities of Juliaca and Puno were still part of the Bolivian Mission. That month Elder Steve Farnsworth, the Mission’s Public Relations Representative, received a surprising response to a letter he had sent (with a copy of a mission paper called “Mormon”) to President Joseph Fielding Smith. At the time, President Smith was serving as the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mission President Keith Roberts had the letter included in the mission’s monthly newsletter. In the letter, President Joseph Fielding Smith noted that our mission area “at one time was the headquarters of the Church in Book of Mormon history.”

Other than Pukara, there was no other antiquity site within the March 1970 Bolivia Mission boundaries that could qualify as a serious candidate for Zarahemla. At the time I first read President Smith’s letter, I found it interesting that the prophet referred to the “Land” of the mission instead of simply stating that “Bolivia” had once been the headquarters of the Church. A likely explanation is that the headquarters of the ancient church had been in the “land” of the Bolivian Mission, but not in Bolivia itself. In March 1970, there were only two cities that were part of the mission “land,” but were not in Bolivia. They were the cities of Puno on the shore of Lake Titicaca and Juliaca near the ruins of Pukara. Juliaca is today a Latter-day Saint oasis on the Altiplano, perhaps a rebirth of Zarahemla. When Elders Glenn Kimball, Timothy Evans, and I served in Juliaca in 1970, the town had an LDS branch that

<sup>472</sup> Cieza de León,, 277-278.

<sup>473</sup> Cieza de León, 238.

<sup>474</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), “Timeline of Art History, Central and Southern Andes, 1000 BC—1.AD, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/04/sac/ht04/sac.htm>. (February 12, 2007), 2.

<sup>475</sup> Kocherhans, Nephi to Zarahemla, 112.

<sup>476</sup> Kolata, *The Tiwanaku: Portrait of an Andean Civilization*, 70,71.

<sup>477</sup> Klarich, 62.

<sup>478</sup> Bauer, 50.



consisted of only thirty members, ten of which we had baptized. Today the city is the home of two LDS stakes and a district.

### The Temple of Zarahemla

The city of Zarahemla was of great importance to the people of the Book of Mormon. During part of its occupation, the city served as the Nephite capital and the center of the church (Alma 6:7). It also contained the Church's central temple (Mosiah 1:18). In comparison, Pukara's public buildings were dominated by a massive temple that was erected on man-made terraces or walls. The Pukara ceremonial structure, known as the Qalasaya, was built with dressed-stone blocks. Its three large inner courts were flanked by smaller rooms. Klarich provides this description of the massive structure:

The Qalasaya complex consists of a series of stone-lined terraces and platforms rising steeply 32 m (105 feet) over the central pampa. The complex is in the form of a truncated step-pyramid with both straight and curved walls, a series of variously sized platforms, and a variety of interesting architectural features, many of which are only partially exposed. On the uppermost platform is a series of three sunken courts running north-south that vary slightly in form, orientation, and scale. The Copesco excavations fully exposed the terrace walls and platforms that measure 315m (1033 feet) north-south and 300m (984 feet) east-west and reconstructed the main central staircase (Wheeler and Mujica 1981).<sup>479</sup> The entrance is off-center on the eastern side of the structure and each of the walls has a central stone-lined burial chamber (Mohr-Chávez 1988).<sup>480</sup>

Having three large rooms adjacent to smaller chambers and a single doorway on the east, the Pukara temple complex hints of having associations with true temple services. Further, it appears from the artifacts found at the temple that the people of Pukara worshiped a god with a human body.<sup>481</sup> Stone statues portray their god with human-head images with rayed appendages (an artistic convention used in Old World art to symbolize divinity). Other Pukara artifacts include remains of sacrificed burnt offerings on ceremonial burners, and stone images of the Yaya-Uma (Adam and Eve) religion.<sup>482</sup>

### The Pukara Temple's Public Meeting Grounds

The Pukara temple complex was unusual in that it featured a large open space where great numbers of people congregated on the western side of the temple. Anthropologist Klarich found this area significant and describes the large open field in these words: "The central pampa (large grass-covered plain) abuts the easternmost, lowest level (wall) of the imposing Qalasaya (temple) complex and expands to cover an area at least 300 m x 300 m (approximately 1 million square feet). The multiple tiers of the stone-lined terraces of the Qalasaya (Temple) rise dramatically above the expanse of this area...."<sup>483</sup> (comments added) Standing on the east side of the temple and adjacent to the central pampa, the great temple walls would have provided an acoustical sounding board for a speaker.

The temple's public grounds (central pampa) bring to mind the temple at Zarahemla where "a great number even so many that they did not number them (gathered at the temple); for they had multiplied exceedingly and waxed great in the land" (Mosiah 2:2, comment added). Undoubtedly, the large public area at the Pukara temple could have accommodated the

<sup>479</sup> Klarich, 57.

<sup>480</sup> Klarich, 58.

<sup>481</sup> Klarich, 65.

<sup>482</sup> Klarich, 19.

<sup>483</sup> Klarich, 6.

tents the Nephites pitched next to the Zarahemla temple with their doors opening toward the temple so they could hear the words of King Benjamin (Mosiah 2:6-7).

The public area at the Pukara temple had other features of interest in our attempt to identify Zarahemla. These are man-made mounds that were built on the perimeters of the temple's public grounds. There were seven mounds in all.<sup>484</sup> In the Book of Mosiah, we learn that so many people gathered at the temple to hear King Benjamin that not all could hear his voice, so he had a tower constructed. However, even with the aid of a tower his words could not be heard by all the people, so he had his words read throughout the great congregation (Mosiah 2:8). Obviously, in that day a large number of copies could not have been transcribed in one day. However, a few copies of his speech could have been made and then read at various locations in the congregation. From atop the seven mounds located at the perimeter of the public grounds, readers could have spread the king's message to a large multitude.

#### Zarahemla in the image of the Benevolent King Benjamin

King Benjamin loved his people. So “inclusive” was he as a ruler, that he took laborious steps to make sure that “all” the people could participate in the meeting that he called them to at the Zarahemla temple. Throughout antiquity, it is hard to find kings who expressed real concern for their people and who cared in the least about the opinions of their subjects. Yet there is archaeological evidence that “inclusive” kings ruled Pukara during its early period. Anthropologist Klarich studied the leadership styles of the Pukara rulers. She explains:

The study of alternative leadership strategies has become a major avenue for tracing the development of institutional inequality in complex societies across the globe. In the Lake Titicaca Basin in Peru and Bolivia, the Later Formative period (500 BC-AD 400) is characterized by the development of two regional population centers, Pukara in the northwest [Nephites] and Tiwanaku in the southeast [Lamanites]. The site of Pukara, the subject of the present study, is typically identified with the features of the Qalasaya complex, (the Pukara temple compound) a series of massive terraced platforms with sunken, stone-lined structures, and the presence of sophisticated polychrome pottery and carved monoliths....

The Qalasaya complex and several artificial mounds can be used to trace a shift from inclusive (King Benjamin leadership style) to exclusive leadership strategies at Pukara. The central pampa was originally used as a public space dedicated to the preparation and consumption of suprahousehold-level means and was an integral element of inclusive leadership strategies during the site's early development. Over time, as the monumental architecture of the Qalasaya was reconstructed and ritual activities became more restricted, the central pampa was “cut off” and relegated to the periphery of the ceremonial district.<sup>485</sup> (comments added)

In other words, the earliest rulers in Pukara, which would be comparable in our scenario to Zarahemla's first Nephite kings—Mosiah and Benjamin—had “inclusive” leadership styles. That is, they treated their people as equals and brought them into the decision-making processes by talking directly to the people and consulting with them. Since inclusive leaders were rare in antiquity, the architecture of Pukara provides additional evidence that it is a candidate for Zarahemla. By any measure of ancient politics, King Benjamin was unique

<sup>484</sup> Chávez, S.J., *The Conventionalize Rules in Pucara Pottery Technology and Iconography : Implications of Socio-Political Development in the Northern Titicaca Basin*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 49.

<sup>485</sup> Klarich, xii, xiii.

among ancient leaders. He was so “inclusive” that his temple architecture was designed to allow all his people to hear his words and consult with him. King Benjamin said:

I have not commanded you to come up hither that ye should fear me, or that ye should think that I of myself am more than a mortal man (Mosiah 2:10).

But **I am like as yourselves**, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind; yet I have been **chosen by this people**, and consecrated by my father that I should be a ruler and a king over this people; and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, to serve you with all the might, mind and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me (bold added, Mosiah 2:11).

I say unto you that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you... (Mosiah 2:12).

And it came to pass that when king Benjamin had thus spoken, he sent among them, **desiring to know of his people** if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them. And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe the words which thou hast spoken unto us... (bold added, Mosiah 5:1, 2).

The archaeological theories of the public grounds next to the Pukara temple certainly bring to mind the events cited in the Book of Mormon, where the kings spoke from the temple walls toward an open field where their people camped in tents and listened to the words of their righteous king. Once the address was completed, the king would walk into the congregation and receive their council. Klarich proposes:

The central pampa was an area of interaction in the central ceremonial district and is used to infer both the motivations of early leaders and the role of the local population in the negotiation of social power.<sup>486</sup>

While superficially the area is unimpressive relative to the architectural grandeur of the surrounding mounds and terraces of the Qalasaya complex, the pampa was a dynamic, bustling area within the central district. Originally used as a public space such as a plaza, bustling area, the pampa was a vital element of the central ceremonial district during the site's early development....<sup>487</sup>

Based on the public setting of these activities and a lack of highly specialized serving vessels in most areas, the material remains of these events are most consistent with the expectations developed for patron-role or entrepreneurial feasts (Dietler 1966), both elements of inclusionary leadership strategies.<sup>488</sup>

Patron-role feasts and entrepreneurial feasts are inclusionary events in which “hosts attempt to promote solidarity and equality by widely casting invitations to community members and supporters (LeCount 2001:935).<sup>489</sup>

Zarahemla, the Fortress City

<sup>486</sup> Klarich, 11.

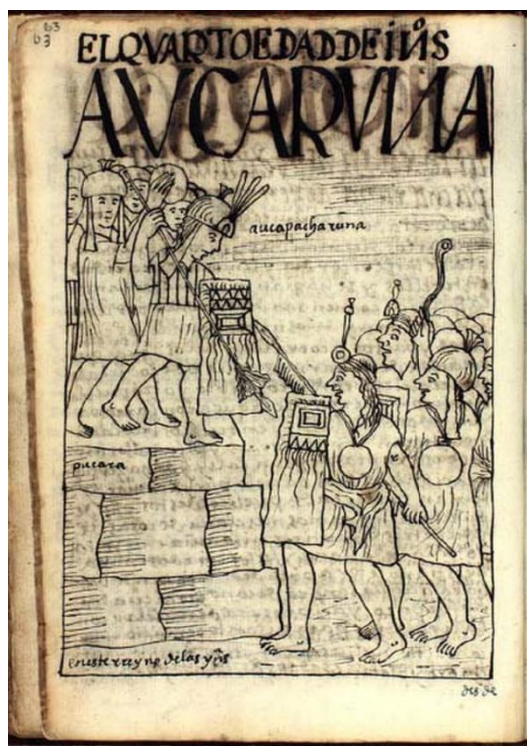
<sup>487</sup> Klarich, 12.

<sup>488</sup> Klarich, 262.

<sup>489</sup> Klarich, 75.

When the Nephites were threatened, they withdrew from their outer cities and villages and fled to the city of Zarahemla (3 Nephi 3:22,23). The prophet General, Mormon, tells us that when he was eleven years old, his father carried him “into the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla” (Mormon 1:6). Two verses later, he provides the probable reason why they gathered to Zarahemla, “in this year there began to be a war between the Nephites...and the Lamanites” (Mormon 1:8). From the limited description we have of Zarahemla, the city must have enjoyed important natural defenses.

Some of Zarahemla’s natural defenses are described in the Book of Alma when the Amlicites attacked Zarahemla. To the east of the city was the hill Amnihu. Between the hill and the city ran the river Sidon, which “ran by the land of Zarahemla” (Alma 2:15). Since the river ran north-south, and the hill Amnihu was on the east side, it would appear that the hill Manti, which was near Zarahemla (Alma 1:15), must have been on the city’s west side. Since the city was protected by the river Sidon, the hills on both flanks and the man-made fortifications of the Nephites, we see why it was written of the Lamanites that “neither durst they march down against the city of Zarahemla” (Alma 56:25). As a matter of curiosity, in Bedouin Arabic, which evolved in part from Egyptian, the words *Zara hamla* mean “the flower to leave alone.”



No one knows the ancient name of the ruins the archaeologists now call Pukara. However, the geographic setting of Pukara would fit well into what we know of Zarahemla. Nestled in a valley, there is a large hill to the city’s east. The entire east approach to the city was blocked by the Pukara River, and to its immediate west, and rising directly above the temple were the sheer cliffs of hill Llallahua.

With such natural barriers to invasion, it is easy to see why in the Quechua language the name “Pukara” means “the stronghold or fortress.”<sup>490</sup> The ancient city was a natural place of refuge from enemy attacks.

From the history of Zarahemla, we learn of several expeditions by the Nephites. For example, Ammon’s small party found the city of Nephi, freed their Nephite brothers and sisters, and returned with them successfully to Zarahemla. Alma and his converts made a similar exodus to Zarahemla. There were also several wars described in the Book of

Mormon, including a battle for Zarahemla. The author, who has traveled extensively in the area, believes that all the movements mentioned in the Book of Mormon are in complete harmony with the geography of Peru. Detailed maps of these movements are found in my book, *Nephi in the Promised Land*.

### Samuel’s Walls

ii

One of the most inspiring events in the Book of Mormon is the visit of the Lamanite prophet Samuel to Zarahemla. Before leaving the city, the brave Lamanite climbed the walls of Zarahemla and boldly called the wicked Nephites to repentance (Helaman 13). The Nephites shot arrows at him, yet they could not hit the prophet. The events of Samuel’s visit fit well into the layout of the city of Pukara, with terraced temple walls reaching over one

<sup>490</sup> Klarich, 51, quoting Rowe: J.H. Rowe, “Sitios históricos en la region de Pucara, Puno”, *Revisita del Instituto Arqueológico* 6(10/11): 66-75).

hundred feet and extending from the west side of the temple up to the mountains at the back of Pukara. The setting would have provided considerable space between the prophet and his attackers, allowing him enough time to declare his prophecies before they could



*Figure 41 Lowest Section of Walls at Pukara Temple.*

reach him. Having finished speaking, Samuel could escape without having to pass through the city; that is, he could proceed west by climbing over the hills on the backside of the temple complex. Klarich notes that “the earliest direct evidence of stone-lined terrace construction is at Pukara, but in this context such construction was used in building retaining walls for the massive platforms of the Qalasaya [temple] complex.”<sup>491</sup> Archaeologist Mary Kidder provided this impression of Pukara: “The most apparent feature is a series of terraces, built with rough stone retaining walls, just southeast of the modern town and almost under the cliff of a great rock.”<sup>492</sup>

#### The Rebuilding of Zarahemla



*Figure 42 Excavation at Pukara Showing that the City Burned.*

As a whole, the people of Zarahemla did not take to heart Samuel’s warning, causing the wicked city of Zarahemla to be burned at Christ’s crucifixion (3 Nephi 8:8, 24). Subsequently, the righteous Nephite nation that followed rebuilt the great city (4 Nephi 1:8). Though only a small percentage of Pukara has been excavated, there are early indications that the city was burned. Klarich notes of the limited

excavations at Pukara:

Block 3: The fill range from 5-20 cm. thick and contained burned and unburned refuse Late Formative period {BC 500-AD 400} oriented at all angles. The soil was moist and loose with a high density of fired clay (10-20%).<sup>493</sup>

<sup>491</sup> Klarich, 40.

<sup>492</sup> Kidder, Mary B., *No Limits but the Sky: The Journal of an Archaeologist's Wife in Peru*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 342.

<sup>493</sup> Klarich, 165.

Underlying deposits included different color clays, a limited number of artifacts, and a substantial concentration of burned wooden beam fragments.<sup>494</sup>

Furthermore, as the Book of Mormon states of Zarahemla, archaeologists have determined that the temple of Pukara was reconstructed sometime between 200 BC and AD 100.<sup>495</sup>

#### The last hours of Zarahemla

Like Pukara, the Nephite civilization ended circa 400 BC, and with it, Zarahemla ceased to exist. If the Nephites and Lamanites co-existed on the Altiplano, it was never a peaceful affair. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Pukara and Tiwanaku civilizations seldom mixed. Cieza de León was informed by the Indians that:

Many of these Colla Indians tell that before the rule of the Incas there were two great lords in their province, one called Zapana [Zarahemla] and the other Cari, and that they won many purcarás, which are their fortresses. And that one of them entered the lake of Titicaca and found on the largest island of that body of water bearded white men with whom he fought until he had killed all of them.<sup>496</sup> [comment added]

If Pukara was Zarahemla, then the archaeological record of the ancient city should provide clues to help us understand the nature of Zarahemla's final demise, and perhaps even how those living in the city might have experienced their final hours.

The ceramic evidence found in the ruins of Pukara indicates that the city with its temples and great walls was abandoned circa 380 AD. Ernest Oshige outlines the Pukara archaeological sequences: "The chronological sequence of ceramic styles of the northern basin would be as follows... Initial Pukara (500-200 BC) Middle Pukara (200 BC-100 AD) and **finally Pukara Late (100-380 A.D.)**"<sup>497</sup> [bold added].

Besides determining that Pukara was abandoned circa 380 A.D., archaeologists have found evidence that the city was evacuated in a manner consistent with that of other Nephite cities at that time. Oshige writes, "Site abandonment and collapse of **Pukara**, "Epach V is called the **Decadent Pukara** occupation and abandonment site, a process that apparently took place **peacefully and quickly**."<sup>498</sup> [bold added]

So what possible insights does this evidence give us about the last hours of those who lived in Zarahemla? Here are my thoughts: The final period of Pukara 100-380 A.D. was referred to as "Decadent Pukara" because of the fine pottery and other fine artifacts discovered at the ruins. This is consistent with the condition of the Nephites before the wars broke out in the fourth century:

And now I, Mormon, would that ye should know that the people had multiplied, insomuch that they were spread upon all the face of the land, and that they had become exceedingly rich, because of their prosperity in Christ. And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of

<sup>494</sup> Klarich, 310.

<sup>495</sup> Klarich, 63, 260..

<sup>496</sup> Calderwood, 327,

<sup>497</sup> Oshige, Ernest David Adams "Earliest Sequence in the Site of Pukara, North Lake Basin Titicaca," (Lima: Pontifical Universidad Católica del Perú, 2000), <http://ebookbrowse.com/oshige-2010-pdf-d71084989>

Accessed February 2013.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and the fine things of the world. (4 Nephi 1:23:24).

Mormon's father brought him to Zarahemla from the land Northward when he was eleven years old (Mormon 1:6). Since Mormon did not mention other members of his family joining them, it is reasonable to believe that Mormon's father was a military leader and was summoned to Zarahemla with only his oldest son to prepare the Nephites for an imminent war. Indeed, within months of his father's arrival in Zarahemla, the battles had commenced.

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" (Mormon 1:6). "And it came to pass in this year there began to be a war between the Nephites, who consisted of the Nephites and the Jacobites and the Josephites and the Zoramites; and this war was between the Nephites, and the Lamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites (Mormon 1:7).

I speculate that Mormon's father (also named Mormon) was a royal prince, chief general, and foremost defender of the Nephites. We know that Mormon took care to mention on the golden plates that he, and therefore his father, were pure descendants of Nephi (Mormon 1:5, 3 Nephi 5:20). Declaring their direct lineage from Nephi possibly denotes that Mormon's father was a prince in charge of the Nephite military and perhaps even the crown prince. If so, it was his responsibility to mentor his son so that one day he could assume his father's responsibilities—thus explaining why his father carried his eleven-year-old son into a land that was preparing for war.

We know that the decades-long war that eventually ended the Nephite civilization started in the borders (meaning "mountains") of Zarahemla by the waters of the Sidon River (Mormon 1:10). A range of the Andes Mountains runs north and west of Pukara and along the Pukara river. The Book of Mormon implies that the Nephites must have prepared well for the war, which resulted in a series of victorious battles over their enemy.

And it came to pass that the Nephites had gathered together a great number of men, even to exceed the number of thirty thousand. And it came to pass that they did have in this same year a number of battles, in which the Nephites did beat the Lamanites and did slay many of them (Mormon 1:11).

In defeat, the Lamanites retreated, and peace prevailed for four years in Zarahemla (Mormon 1:12). However, during this short interlude of peace, the Nephites grew in wickedness. As a result, the Lord took away his beloved disciples, and miracles and healings ceased. It would appear that even if the authority of the priesthood was not taken away, the power of the priesthood was (Mormon 1:13). The revelations and the Holy Ghost were also removed (Mormon 1:14). Indeed, so evil were the Nephites, including those at Zarahemla, that Mormon was visited by the Lord and told that he was forbidden to preach the gospel to the people (Mormon 1:15-16).

After four years, war broke out again, and this time Mormon, only fifteen years old, is made the leader of the Nephite armies (presumably still headquartered at Zarahemla). If Mormon's father was the previous leader of the armies, then he either refused to lead the wicked Nephites (like Mormon did three decades later), or perhaps he had been killed or injured in a previous battle. Being the son of the commander, mentored by his father in warfare, and having inherited his father's royal responsibilities, Mormon was selected to lead the army even though he was only fifteen years old (Mormon 2:1).

By 326 A.D., Mormon was in full charge of the army, but within a year he needed to retreat from the land of Zarahemla to the land northward where the wars continued (Mormon 2:3). Eventually the Nephite armies were given the land northward, including the narrow passage (Mormon 2:29). For the next thirty-six years, Mormon fought the Lamanites in battle after

battle. Finally in his early fifties, the great general refused to lead the unrepentant Nephites (Mormon 3:10-11).

Although the war continued in the lands near the west sea (Mormon 4:1-3,19), Mormon spent seventeen years away from the battlefields. Since there is no record of a battle having taken place in Zarahemla, I tend to believe that Mormon had returned to the fortress city of Zarahemla, which was located far to the southeast. Apparently, during these years, the Nephites still had a chance to repent and reestablish a state of co-existence with the Lamanites.

However, sometime around 379 AD events turned very bleak for the Nephites (Mormon 5:5). Mormon, battled scarred and now in his mid-sixties, again took command of Nephite army (Mormon 5:1). He noted that during this time, “the Nephites did again flee from before them [the Lamanites], taking all the inhabitants with them, both in towns and villages. And now I, Mormon, seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, therefore I did go to the hill Shim, and did take up all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord” (Mormon 4:22-23).

Thus we read that the Nephites left their towns and fled before the Lamanites. Mormon’s record gives us the names of many of the cities that were destroyed by the Lamanites; however, Zarahemla was not one of them. We do not know the year when the Lamanite army approached the city of Zarahemla; however, we can read:

And it came to pass that in the three hundred and eightieth year the Lamanites did come again against us to battle, and we did stand against them boldly, but it was all in vain, for so great were their numbers that they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet. And it came to pass that we did again take flight, and those whose flight was swifter than the Lamanites’ did escape, and those whose flight did not exceed the Lamanites’ were swept down and destroyed (Mormon 5:6,7).

Returning to the archaeological record of Pukara, we understand that:

- Pukara was a decadent city during its final two centuries.
- Pukara was abandoned circa 380 A.D.
- Pukara was abandoned quickly and without a battle.

So here is how I envision the possible last hours of life at Zarahemla -- Mormon and his father had successfully defended the citizens of Zarahemla on several occasions, yet they would not repent. Around 379 A.D., the people realized that they were about to be destroyed and begged the old general to defend them once more. When Mormon agreed to take command of the army, they were relieved. However, it was a false hope, and Mormon knew it. He wrote, “They gave me command again of their armies, for they looked upon me as though I could deliver them from their afflictions. But behold, I was without hope...” (Mormon 5:1,2).

As the Lamanites approached the city of Zarahemla, Mormon engaged the much larger Lamanite army before it could reach the walls of the city. Knowing the situation was hopeless, Mormon’s maneuver was probably designed to give the people of Zarahemla time to gather provisions and abandon the city. However, most of the people lingered in the once-invincible city. As news reached the citizens of Zarahemla that the Nephite army had to retreat before the Lamanites, they must have dropped whatever they were doing and fled the city to try to find refuge in the nearby mountains. Those that could outrun the Lamanites hid in the foothills of the Andes Mountains, while those that could not died at the hands of the Lamanites before reaching the mountains. The great city of Zarahemla was quickly abandoned and has remained in peaceful silence ever since. What happened to its unrepentant citizens was far from serene. Mormon, who for decades had witnessed the horrible slaughter of war, wrote: “And now behold, I, Mormon, do not desire to harrow up



the souls of men in casting before them such an awful scene of blood and carnage as was laid before mine eyes” (Mormon 5:8).

*Great and terrible was the battle thereof,  
yea, great and terrible was the slaughter thereof,  
insomuch that there never was known so great a  
slaughter among all the people of Lehi. 3 Nephi 4:11*

## Chapter Nine

### Taraco: a Candidate for the City of Jacobugath (Capital of the Gadianton Robbers)

Recent excavations in the Peruvian Altiplano have possibly unveiled information about the Book of Mormon's tale of two cities. One city struggled with bouts of unrighteousness, while the other was a full-fledged wicked community. The archaeological discoveries and related interpretation by Charles Stanish and Abigail Levine of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles<sup>499</sup> might have helped us identify one of the bloody battlegrounds mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Their article, a proceeding of the National Academy of Science in June 2011, might seem unrelated to the Book of Mormon unless one realizes that the ruins of Pukara in the northern Titicaca Basin is a candidate for Zarahemla. To understand why the Stanish and Levine article is of interest, let's follow this line of reasoning: first, review the relationship between Zarahemla and its enemy, the city of Jacobugath the home of the Gadianton robbers; second, summarize what the Book of Mormon tells us about Jacobugath; and third, compare the archaeologists' discoveries at Taraco to what we know about Jacobugath.

#### Relationship between Zarahemla and the city of Jacobugath

In recounting the destruction in the land of promise preceding the Lord's visit to his people, he said that he burned two "great cities," the great city of Zarahemla and the great city of Jacobugath. No other burned cities were described by the Lord as "great." Jacobugath was a wicked city and the home of the Gadianton robbers. The Gadianton robbers were a gang of brutal raiders who killed and plundered at will (4 Nephi 4:5). In the years preceding the visitation of Christ, we read in the Book of Mormon:

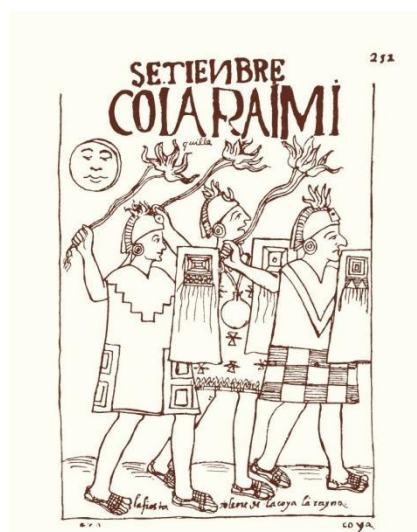
And it came to pass in the thirteenth year since the birth of Christ there began to be wars and contentions throughout all the land; for the Gadianton robbers had become so numerous, and did slay so many of the people and did lay waste so many cities, and did spread so much death and carnage throughout the land, that it became expedient that all the people, both the Nephites and the Lamanites, should take up arms against them (3 Nephi 2:11).

Despite their number, the robbers were only able to gain significant influence over the Nephites when the Nephites became wicked themselves (3 Nephi 2:18). Undoubtedly this is because the order of the Gadianton was an ancient and Satanic brotherhood held together by secret oaths and combinations (3 Nephi 2:3; 3:9). Like the ancient Nabateans in the Old World, who became rich by raiding caravans and then retreating to their mountain hideaway in the hills of Petra, the Gadiantons were "robbers" became rich and powerful at the expense of the people of the cities they plundered. In the decades before Christ's visitation, the Gadianton robbers grew in numbers and strength. They lived in the mountains near Zarahemla from which they raided the Nephite towns and returned to the vast wilderness of the Andes. When the Nephites slid into greater wickedness, they lost control of the great city of Jacobugath to the Gadianton robbers and their antichrist king Jacob (3 Nephi 7:9). The Lord said of Jacobugath:

<sup>499</sup> Stanish, Charles and Abigail Levine, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California at Los Angeles, proceedings of the National Academy of Science, June 2011.

And behold, that great city Jacobugath, which was inhabited by the people of king Jacob, have I caused to be burned with fire because of their sins and their wickedness, which was above all the wickedness of the whole earth, because of their secret murders and combinations; for it was they that did destroy the peace of my people and the government of the land; therefore I did cause them to be burned, to destroy them from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up unto me any more against them (3 Nephi 9:9).

We learn from the Lord that in that day the people of Jacobugath had the singular distinction of being the most wicked people on earth. They were so evil that He had to destroy them by fire. Before the demise of Jacobugath, they had caused the loss of peace among the Nephites through decades of bloody plundering. It was the Nephite members of the Gadianton robbers exploiting their own Nephite brothers and sisters.



By AD 15 the Gadianton robbers were so strong that they sent an epistle to Lachoneus, the governor of the Nephites, demanding that he surrender to them or be destroyed (3 Nephi 3). Lachoneus refused to surrender. Instead, he prepared for war with the robbers by:

- Crying to the Lord to strengthen his people against the robbers, (3 Nephi 3:12)
- Gathering his people and their herds, (3 Nephi 3:13)
- Building fortifications around them and placing guards, (3 Nephi 3:14 and
- Successfully inspiring his people to repent and call upon God for deliverance (3 Nephi 15-16).

Lachoneus appointed the great commander Gidgiddoni to head the Nephi armies against the robbers. When the people requested that Gidgiddoni

“go up [north]<sup>500</sup> unto the mountains and into the wilderness” after the robbers, Gidgiddoni said that the Lord forbade him from going into the mountains where the robbers would destroy them. Rather, Gidgiddoni told the people “We will prepare ourselves in the center of our lands, and we will gather all our armies together, and we will not go against them, but we will wait till they shall come against us, if we do this he [the Lord] will deliver them into our hands.”(3 Nephi 3:21)

North of Pukara (candidate for Zarahemla) is a wilderness within the Andes mountains. To the south was Jacobugath near the shore of Lake Titicaca. Thus, being prepared in the “center” of the land would have signified Pukara (Zarahemla). The Book of Mormon tells us that in 17 AD the Nephites gathered to the land of Zarahemla and the land between Zarahemla and Bountiful (3 Nephi 3:23).

In 18 AD the Gadianton robbers came down from the mountains to battle against the Nephites, and also from their stronghold, and from their secret places (3 Nephi 4:1). The Lord identified the Gadianton “stronghold” as Jacobugath that was to Zarahemla’s south, and it is probable that their “secret places” indicated that robbers had infiltrated the Nephites communities and had become insurgents living among the Nephites. Since the Nephites had left their lands desolate and had gathered to Zarahemla, the Gadiantons had no food to sustain them and were forced to stop raiding from the wilderness. If so, the robbers would have had to “come up [from the south probably from their stronghold at Jacobugath] in open battle against the Nephites” (3 Nephi 4:4-5). In the sixth month, the

<sup>500</sup> As in Hebrew, Arabic or English, the terms “up” meant north and “down” meant south. Sullivan, 18,

robbers came “up” for battle, and “great and terrible was the slaughter thereof, insomuch that there never was known so great a slaughter among all the people of Lehi since he left Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 4:11).

The Nephites defeated the robbers, “insomuch that they [robbers] did fall back from before them” [back to the south from whence they came] (3 Nephi 4:12). The Nephites pursued the Gadiantons “to the border of the wilderness” (3 Nephi 4:13). We read in Alma that the land of Zarahemla bordered “by a narrow strip of wilderness, which ran from the sea east [Lake Titicaca] even to the sea west, and round about the borders of the seashore” [of Lake Titicaca] (Alma 22:27). This leads to the possibility that the Nephites pursued the robbers back south to the shoreline of Lake Titicaca where the city of Jacobugath appears to have been located.

In the decade preceding the Lord’s visit, many of the cities that had been destroyed during the bloody Gadianton war were rebuilt (3 Nephi 6:7). We can assume that this included the Gadianton stronghold at Jacobugath because it was referred to as a great city when the Lord appeared to the Nephites in AD 34. Although the Nephites became temporarily righteous after their deliverance by the Lord during the Gadianton war, by AD 29 they are described as being “lifted up unto pride and boastings because of their exceeding great riches....there were many merchants in the land...people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning....And thus there became a great inequality in all the land, insomuch as the church began to be broken up” (3 Nephi 6:10-14).

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, Jacobugath and other cities were burned or destroyed by other means because of their wickedness. Since Jacobugath was the most evil of all cities (3 Nephi 9:9), we can assume that pride, boasting, and distinguishing according to rank and riches were part of the reason Jacobugath was destroyed by fire. After the Lord’s visit to the promised land, many of the cities that were burned at his coming were rebuilt (4 Nephi 1:7-8). In this later era the Nephites and Lamanites “had all things common among them; therefore there were no rich and poor”(4 Nephi 1:3). Since there were “no rich,” it is likely that there was no industry of luxury goods for at least 200 years after the Lord’s visit.

From the time of Christ’s visit to 200 AD, “There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God (4 Nephi 1:15-16).

However, by 201 AD the people began to be prideful, “wearing of costly apparel, and manner of fine pearls, and of fine things of the world (4 Nephi 1:24), no more goods and substances in common (vs. 25), and divided into classes and to build up churches unto themselves to get gain (v 26).

#### What we know about Jacobugath

Though we cannot be certain about the events that took place at Jacobugath, the Book of Mormon narrative provides this possible picture of their history:

1. Jacobugath and Zarahemla were “great cities” at the time of Christ.
2. At one time the city was the stronghold of the Gadianton robbers.
3. The Gadianton robbers were a secret band of thieves who became rich by plundering and murdering their Nephi brothers; thus, their stronghold must have contained the icons of the rich.
4. Jacobugath had to be south of Zarahemla because the robbers came “up,” meaning to the north, to do battle with Zarahemla.
5. Jacobugath was in the borders near the shoreline of the east sea (Lake Titicaca).

6. The Nephite army pursued the Gadianton robbers to Jacobugath and killed many of them; among the dead was their leader Giddianhi.
7. Jacobugath was among the cities destroyed during the Gadianton War in AD 18.
8. The stronghold was rebuilt circa AD 29-30.
9. There was great inequality among the people of Jacobugath, with class distinctions based on wealth.
10. The Lord destroyed Jacobugath by fire at his death because of their wickedness
11. Jacobugath was rebuilt after the Lord's coming, and there were no longer rich or poor among them; suggesting that no luxury goods were being produced in the city.

#### Comparing Archaeologists' Discoveries at Taraco to Book of Mormon Jacobugath

For this discussion, assume that the ruins at Pukara are indeed Zarahemla and that the ruins of ancient Taraco near the northern end of Lake Titicaca are Jacobugath. Again, no one today knows the original name for Pukara or Taraco.

Why should we assume that Taraco was ancient Jacobugath? First, Taraco was “down” (south) from Pukara on the level plains of the Altiplano. Like Pukara, Taraco is situated on the Pukara/Rámis (Sidon) river. At the time of Christ's earthly ministry, the northern shoreline of Lake Titicaca had many small villages and one large city, which archaeologists now call Taraco. During the Gadianton War, Taraco would have had a population of approximately 5,000 people.<sup>501</sup> Since the robbers had left the mountains (3 Nephi 4:1), we can assume that the number of robbers who fled to Jacobugath far exceeded its residential population. At the same time, Pukara's population is estimated to have been around 10,000.<sup>502</sup> Of course, when the Nephites gathered into one body at Zarahemla and had become “so great a number” (3 Nephi 4:4), it is logical that Pukara's population would also have increased substantially.

Let us now review the recent archaeological findings and deductions about Taraco presented by Charles Stanish and Abigail Levine of the University of California, Los Angeles as Proceedings of the National Academy of Science

1. Taraco and Pukara came into existence at approximately the time the Mulekites would have settled in the land (region) of Zarahemla, and the warfare they experienced is consistent with the violent conflicts described in the Book of Mormon. According to Stanish and Levine:

The two largest centers were Taraco, located near the northern lake edge, and Pukara, located 50 km [30 miles] to the northwest in the grassland pampas. Our data reveal that a high-status residential section of Taraco was burned in the first century AD, after which economic activity in the area dramatically declined. Coincident with this massive fire at Taraco, Pukara adopted many of the characteristics of state societies and emerged as an expanding regional polity. We conclude that organized conflict, beginning approximately 500 BCE., is a significant factor in the evolution of the archaic state in the northern Titicaca Basin. [Mulekites era]

The political landscape changed at approximately 500 BCE. Iconography on carved stone stelae, textiles, and pottery depicts people who seem to be valued for their military prowess. Trophy head motifs, common throughout the central Andes at this time, suddenly appear in the northern Titicaca repertoire of motifs and favored images. Other data also suggest elevated levels of political unrest and warfare. Excavations at a sunken court site in the Pukara Valley yielded trophy heads in association with the Late Qaluyu phase occupation, which dates to ca. 800–200 BCE.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

Archaeological surveys conducted in the northern Basin have also revealed sites of this era that were situated in defensible locales.<sup>503</sup> [comment added]

2. As with the Gadianton Robbers, warfare and raiding were prevalent among the people of the Pukara and Taraco. According to Stanish and Levine, “It is precisely such a cultural landscape that provides the fertile ground for the emergence of first-generation states. In this article, we focus on a case of organized raiding and warfare between competing polities in the Titicaca Basin of southern Peru from ca. 500 BCE to AD 400 as a major factor in first-generation state formation.”<sup>504</sup>

3. The northern Lake Titicaca, including the pampa area where Pukara is located, was a fertile land, an area where people could obtain riches. According to Stanish and Levine:

The Titicaca landscape provides a rich variety of exploitable ecological niches. Vast grasslands support camelid herds that provide wool and meat, whereas the lake provides abundant fish, reeds, and aquatic birds. Arable plains and hillsides, dotted with natural and artificial qochas (sunken fields) and bofedales (marshes), permit intensive agriculture, including the cultivation of tubers and grains. Quaternary geological formations provide abundant mineral and rock resources, including copper and silver, limestone, sandstone, and fine-grain volcanic. Volcanic glass or obsidian, a high-valued commodity in the ancient economy, was generally imported from the Colca Valley, some 200 km away. In short, the Titicaca region is a rich and diverse environment providing a vast array of resources that would have facilitated the development of complex societies.

4. Taraco was a great city for its time and produced luxury goods reminiscent of the riches that caused the class distinction and prideful boasting of the Nephites at Jacobugath. According to Stanish and Levine:

Two were on peripheral mounds to the east and north of the main mound. The third, area A, was placed along the Rámis river edge in the highest part of the mound. Systematic surface collections in area A indicated high quantities of finely made pottery and obsidian. Such artifacts are usually indicators of either a high-status location or a workshop where such items were manufactured.<sup>505</sup>

5. Excavations show that Taraco had been rebuilt, just as the Nephite cities had been rebuilt after the Gadianton War. According to Stanish and Levine, “The excavations in area A revealed a stratified sequence of depositional layers including architectural fill episodes, midden accumulations under and on floors, and buildings that were remodeled, disassembled, or destroyed.”<sup>506</sup>

6. Taraco was destroyed by fire around the time of Christ’s crucifixion. According to Stanish and Levine:

The most significant level in the excavations was a substantial burning episode associated with an early Pukara domestic compound. Evidence of this burn event was detected in all areas tested, including each of the excavations units, as well as in a profile cut along the margin of the river. Cleaning of this profile revealed a continuous stratum of ash and architectural debris measuring at least 35 m in length that corresponded to the same layer identified in excavation units. The burn was so intense that it

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

melted the compound's adobe superstructure in some areas. Three thatched roofs, composed of annual grasses and wooden beams, were burned so thoroughly that they carbonized through the clay floors. There is little doubt that this very high-status area of the site was leveled and burned in a single historical event.

Nine samples of charcoal from the burn event were selected for analysis. The six samples from the annual grasses or reeds—*Stipa ichu*, *Scirpus tatora*—used to thatch the roofs are consistent and place the **intentional fire in the first century AD**. Not surprisingly, the dates from the large roof beams were much older, ranging from 765 to 90 BCE. These differences in age were almost certainly due to the practice of curating large and valuable wooden beams for use in each **rebuilding of a structure**. Such behaviors have been well documented in other arid and/or sparsely wooded areas around the world. Beams that are centuries old are still used in houses today in the Titicaca region. [bold added]

The data strongly suggest that this site-wide burn event was an episode of deliberate destruction, one that represents evidence for intensive raiding. It is unlikely that residents would suddenly destroy their whole community and destroy their own very valuable and rare beams and posts, even if they were abandoning the settlement. Furthermore, the uninterrupted stratigraphy does not indicate any site abandonment. This site-wide burn is further distinguished from earlier instances of burning at the site because nothing was rebuilt immediately after the compound was destroyed, which would have been expected if the devastating burn was accidental or part of periodic household maintenance, renewal, or ritual practices, such as those documented at the site of Chiripa. Those are not site-wide but restricted and controlled. This conflagration would have been immense and visible from a very long distance in the Altiplano landscape.<sup>507</sup>

6. Consistent with the Gadianon War many people were killed at Taraco (Jacobugath) by the armies of Pukara (Zarahemla).

7.

Charles Choi writes: "Their results suggest Pukara waged a violent war against Taraco, possibly killing hundreds with their weapons before burning the state to the ground. In the century that Pukara peaked, the site of Taraco was attacked, and [it] ceased to be a political power in the region," researcher Charles Stanish, director of UCLA's Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, told Live Science. "The inference that Pukara (Zarahemla) was responsible for the raid is extremely strong."<sup>508</sup> (comment added)

8. Coherent with Nephite economics after Christ's visitation in the promised land, after Taraco burned there were no longer any "rich" and no luxury goods manufactured. However, there was evidence of healthy agricultural activity. According to Stanish and Levine:

After the burning episode, area A was leveled, with nearly a meter of fill indicating a large resident population that no longer built with fine stone or regularly engaged in long-distance trade. The data point to a substantial decrease in access to regional resources for the Taraco people after the burn event. The sudden decrease in the regional power of Taraco correlates chronologically with the rise of Pukara as a dominant political force in the first or second century AD. Radiocarbon dates from a deposit of "pure Pucara style rubbish" excavated by Kidder at the site of Pukara in the 1950s virtually overlap in time with these new data from Taraco. In

<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

other words, the Pukara settlement was at its height at the time that Taraco burned.

There is a greater density of hoe/adze fragments in the postburn context. This indicates that agricultural activities were more common in the postburn phase. This finding does not preclude the notion that farming was an important component of daily practice before the burn event but rather indicates a relative decline in other nonagricultural activities after the burn event.

There is a substantial decrease in the abundance of finely made, decorated pottery after the burn event from 12% to 2%. This decline in the use of high-value pottery from pre- to postburn is highly significant ( $\chi^2 = 32.70$ ,  $P < 0.0001$ ) and suggests a corresponding drop in, or shift in the nature of, the ritual-political activities taking place at the site.

Two lines of evidence indicate a dramatic change in the obsidian industry after the burn event. First, there is more obsidian in the preburn contexts, and this is not simply a product of sample size. For flaked tools and debitage, there is a shift in the relative abundance of obsidian vs. nonobsidian (chert, quartz, etc.) artifacts from the preburn occupation to the postburn occupation.... As a relative index of access patterns, this shift in mean artifact size indicates that the residents of area A had greater access to this exotic good before the burn. Alternatively, the reduction in mean artifact size could indicate the recycling of old materials by residents because their access to new raw materials had been curtailed.<sup>509</sup>

Stanish's and Levine's interpretations of the ruins at Taraco fit nicely into the Book of Mormon's tale of two cities. Raiding was a part of the economics at the time. However, it would have been Taraco (Jacobugath) raiding Pukara (Zarahemla), not the opposite. The Gadianton raids would explain why the people of the Altiplano experienced high levels of warfare during Book of Mormon times. By raiding others, Taraco (Jacobugath) became rich before it burned. However, Pukara (Zarahemla) with its larger population eventually defeated the armies of Taraco and destroyed the city (Jacobugath). Tens of thousands were killed, including many hundred robbers at Taraco, among them their leader Giddianhi. Taraco like Jacobugath had been rebuilt after it was destroyed. Based on the excavations at Taraco, Stanish and Levine interpret the artifacts that Pukara's army attacked Taraco and then burned the city. With today's technology, the two UCLA archaeologists have no way of determining the accurate time interval between the killings and the subsequent fire that destroyed the city. However, their sequencing of placing the battle before the fire does fit the events at Jacobugath that occurred approximately sixteen years apart.

The Book of Mormon account indicates that Zarahemla attacked and killed many at Jacobugath during the Gadianton War, that the city was rebuilt, and sixteen years later fire leveled the city. After the fire, Taraco no longer manufactured luxury goods; rather it increased its agricultural activities. Thus, Taraco seems to have become an agrarian society where there were no longer rich among them, yet there was ample food available for its residents.

At this time, it is impossible to know if the ruins of Pukara were Zarahemla or that the ruins of Taraco were Jacobugath. However, the archaeological record presents a strong set of similarities. There is good reason to pursue studying the possibility that Taraco was the notorious stronghold of the Gadianton robbers.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.



*And now it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land of Bountiful....*

*They saw a Man descending out of heaven, and he was clothed in a white robe. 3 Nephi 11:1,8*

## Chapter Ten

### Nazca: a Candidate for the Land of Bountiful

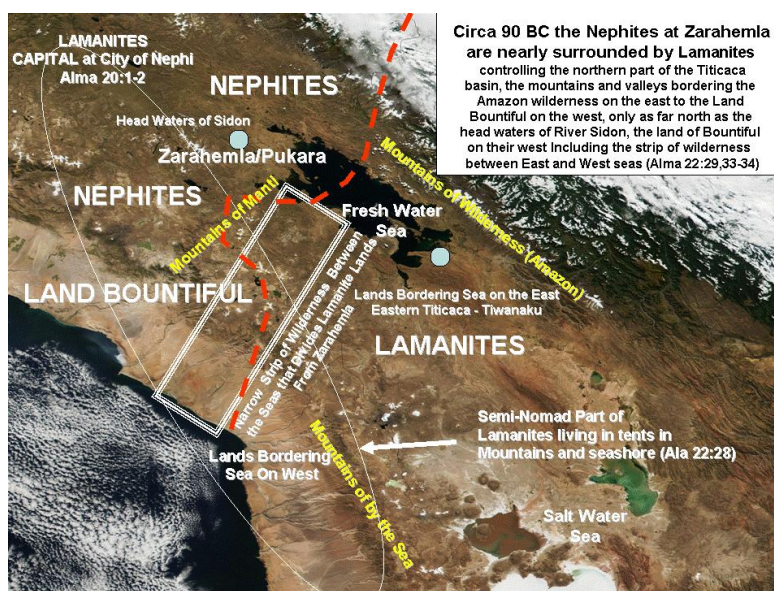
As noted previously, in the century preceding the birth of Christ, Nephi's Promised Land was a dangerous place. The Nephite society suffered from the spiritual cancers of idolatry and faithlessness. Wars between the Nephites and Lamanites were growing in frequency and intensity. The Lamanites were gaining strength in the land southward. The seemingly invincible fortress of Zarahemla fell twice to the Lamanites (Helaman 1:18-27, 4:5). So precarious were the circumstances in Zarahemla that the Church leaders moved out of the city and established their headquarters in the city of Bountiful.

#### Bountiful—Where Christ Appeared to the Nephites

In earlier times, under the righteous kings Mosiah and Benjamin, Zarahemla had prospered. Besides having been a prophet and benevolent ruler, King Benjamin had a gifted military mind. He led campaigns that drove the Lamanites out of the land of Zarahemla (northern Titticaca Basin Omni 1:24), and established peace in his kingdom for the remainder of his days (Mosiah 1:1).

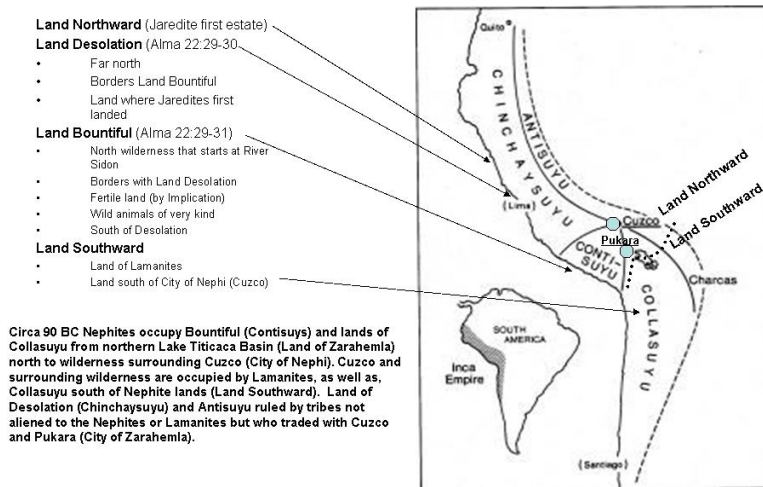
By the first century BC, another powerful nation was growing on the southern end of Lake Titicaca, the empire of Tiwanaku.<sup>510</sup> As this Aymara-speaking (Lamanite) city grew in power, it became a major threat to Pukara (Zarahemla) on the northern side of the lake. If this is correct, it would have meant that Zarahemla was now facing its traditional Lamanite enemy in the land of Nephi on its northern border, Cusco, (Alma 22:28), as well as, a growing threat much closer to home on the south side of the sea on the east, Tiwanaku (Alma 22:33). The Nephites had temporarily blocked in the Lamanites against the eastern shores of the sea in the east (Lake Titicaca, Alma 22:29), yet even to the west of Zarahemla nomadic Lamanite tribes were wandering the wilderness areas of the land of Bountiful (Alma 22:28).

In need of safer habitats, the Nephites of Zarahemla had only three choices: 1) to colonize the land of Bountiful to their west (Alma 22:33), 2) to resettle the shoreline valleys north of Desolation (Alma 22:30) where the Jaredites had once lived. Thus, by 72 BC many Nephites were migrating north and taking possession of "all the land northward, yea, even all the land



<sup>510</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), "Timeline of Art History, Central and Southern Andes, 1000 BC—1.AD, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/04/sac/ht04/sac.htm>. (February 12, 2007), 2; also Klarich, 93.

### Four Quarters of the Nephite World



which was northward of the land Bountiful, according to their pleasure” (Alma 50:11). In a Peruvian context, the route from Bountiful to the Land Northward would have taken the Nephites along the shoreline highway of the Incas, passed the narrow neck of land, and on to the shoreline valleys north of the Land of Desolation.

3) In what was undoubtedly another desperate attempt to find a safer place to live, in 55 BC, Hagoth launched the first of his ships near the borders of the “land Bountiful, by the land Desolation (Alma 62:5), by the narrow neck of land” (Alma 62:5).

It appears that the governing body of the Church and a large number of the Nephites choose option 1. The relocation of the Church’s headquarters from Zarahemla to Bountiful possibly happened in 35 BC, when the Lamanites “did come down against the Nephites to battle, and they did commence the work of death; yea, insomuch that in the fifty and eighth year of the reign of the judges (34 BC) they succeeded in obtaining possession of the land of Zarahemla; yea, and also all the lands, even unto the land which was near the land Bountiful (Helaman 4:5).

#### Nazca Archaeological Record

The archaeological record confirms that during this period there was an extension of Pukara (Zarahemla) influence to the Nazca Empire near the Pacific Ocean and our proposed candidate for Bountiful. Archaeologists have concluded that the most important civilization to arise west of Pukara in the first century BC was the Nazca Empire. The Nazca are famous for their huge *lines* (geoglyphs) of animal figures created in the desert, and can only be visually appreciated from high in the air. An example of their artistry is the large figure known as the *Tree of Life*<sup>511</sup> which appears to have been used by sailors to find the Paracas harbor.

Recent discoveries of Nazca-like geoglyphs in Syria, Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia could indicate that the origin of constructing such lines is from the Middle East. “The local Bedouin, a nomadic people, found in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, Egypt, and Israel call them the ‘works of the old men.’”<sup>512</sup> When retracing Lehi’s Trail in Arabia, I saw in the desert these geoglyphs and found them similar to what I witnessed in places in the Andes.

<sup>511</sup> The German archaeologist Marie Reiche spent 50 years studying the Nazca lines. She believed the *Tree of Life* geoglyph was attributed to the Nazca people (see <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/nazca/nazca-lines.htm>). However, more recent theories suggest that the Tree of Life might have been made in post-colonial times by Spanish guano diggers to direct their ships.

<sup>512</sup> MailOnline, Daily Mail, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2037850/Thousands-strange-Nazca-Lines-discovered-Middle-East.html#ixzz5FvKK6jyr>, accessed May 2108.

Anthropologists Helaine Silverman of the University of Illinois and Donald Proulx of the University of Massachusetts define the time period for the rise of the Nazca Empire as an important political and religious center.

It is highly unlikely that Nazca 1 can be earlier than the final century of the first millennium BC. Nazca 1 also can be cross-dated to the Pucara style of the Lake Titicaca Basin on the basis of Pucara's use of incised lines to separate areas of slip-painted color. Radiocarbon dates from strata of pure Pucara refuse dated to approximately 150 BC to 100 AD. These dates also support the suggestion that Nazca 1 dates to this period of time.<sup>513</sup>

We start from the premise that Nazca was an Andean {Pukara} society. Using the common analytical method of ethnographic analogy, we argue that it is plausible to suggest that ethnographically and ethnohistorically known principles of Andean sociopolitical organization may have operated in Nazca times.<sup>514</sup>

The first mention in the Book of Mormon of a land called Bountiful in the New World is found in the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Alma. The footnote to this chapter dates it to 90-77 BC. However, this reference to Bountiful is to a place that already existed. Thus, it is likely that Bountiful was first colonized by the Nephites sometime during the late second century BC. As noted in the Introduction, a study published in 2014 by a highly credible team of archaeologists is interesting. It was based on skeleton samples from the Nazca valleys in southern Peru. The team took 207 DNA samples from human remains dating from circa 840 BC to 1450 AD. The team's DNA analysis was reproduced by the ancient DNA laboratories at the University of Adelaide and Yale University. Following strict precautions common to ancient DNA analysis the scientists came to some interesting DNA conclusions. They discovered that there was a significant increase in the population of the Nazca area starting around 200 BC. This would be consistent with the Book of Mormon events when the Nephites shifted their capital to Bountiful in Nazca. The scientists also found that there was a "genetic discontinuity" and a decrease in the population of the area time around 440 AD, roughly the time of the Nephite extermination. While the scientists believe that the decline in the population could have been attributed to changes in the climate, they found no corresponding climate change data for that time period. They reported their finding to the United States *National Academy of Science* that "alternative demographic factors such as mass mortality cannot be excluded at this stage."<sup>515</sup>

Not only is Nazca Period 1 considered to have been an offshoot of the Pukara culture, it also seems to have the familiar ruling duality that was employed at Zarahemla. That is, there were both secular rulers and a separate religious hierarchy.<sup>516</sup>

Several specific clues point to the Nazca city of Cahuachi as a candidate for the Nephites' city of Bountiful. As described before, elaborate Nazca pottery depicts war scenes that are consistent with what is known about the battles recorded in the Book of Mormon. As noted earlier, the Nephite General Moroni, "prepared his people with breastplates and with arm-shields, yea, and also shields to defend their heads, and also they were dressed with thick clothing." As noted earlier, a pre-Columbian iron ore mine had never been discovered in the New World, making the Book of Mormon's assertion that the Nephites wore armor seemed suspect. However, in 2008 archaeologists discovered the only known pre-Columbian iron

<sup>513</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 38.

<sup>514</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 239.

<sup>515</sup> Fehren-Schmitz, Lars and Wolfgang Haak, Bertil Machte, Florian Maasch, Bastien Llamas, Else Tomasto Cagigao, Volker Sossna, Karsten Schittek, Johnny Isla Cuadrado, Bernhard Eitel, Markus Reindel, Climate Changes Underlies Global Demographic, Genetic, and "Cultural Transitions in pre-Columbian Southern Peru.", edited by Charles Stanish, UCLA, *Proceeding of the National Academy of Science, PNAS*, July 1, 2014, vol. iii, no. 26, 9443-9448.

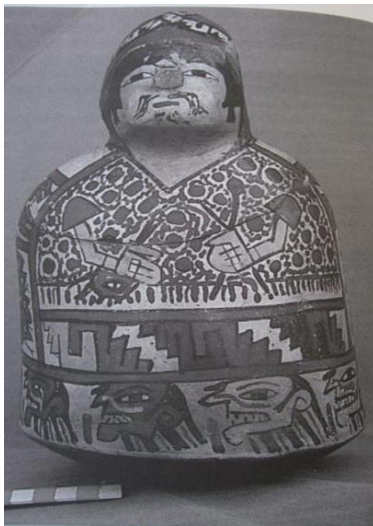
<sup>516</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 266.

ore mine in the Americas. The mine dates back at least 2,000 years and was found at Nazca, Peru.<sup>517</sup>

While the Nephites were dressed well for battle, the unfortunate Lamanite soldiers fought “naked, save it were a skin which was girded about their loins” (Alma 43:20). As noted in Chapter 5, painted on Nazca pottery are battle scenes depicting soldiers of varied dress, “from naked to wearing just a loincloth,” to one that “depicts a fully clothed Nazca warrior fighting and grabbing the wild hair of a naked savage whose depiction is as ‘other,’ suggesting that he must not be Nazca”<sup>518</sup> (Alma 43:19).

The eloquent artistry of the Nazca civilization also brings to mind images of the rich Nephite society (Alma 4:6; 45:24; Helaman: 3:36; 4:12; 6:17). The Nazca Lines are some of the true mysteries and wonders of the ancient world. The potters, weavers, embroiderers, and architects of Nazca were highly skilled. For example, Nazca potters used up to eleven slip pigments on a single vessel, which typically were highly polished.<sup>519</sup> Nazca’s sophisticated society has been classified as one of the Mastercraftman Cultures of the ancient world.<sup>520</sup> We also know that the Nephites of the Bountiful period wore costly apparel (Alma 1:6, 32; 4:6; 5:53; 31:28). As mentioned earlier, the Nazca men wore mantles, tunics, turbans, turban bands, and head cloths.<sup>521</sup>

The women:



*Figure 43 Nazca Ceramic Showing Facial Hair & Two Skin Colors.*

...adorned their hair with feathers or gold plumes. The main item of clothing worn by females is an ankle-length mantle, which is most often shown wrapped around the body, sometimes fastened with a pin. When drawn on a ceramic vessel, these mantles served as the background for mythical creatures that are drawn on top of them. Beneath the mantles women seem to have worn a long tunic, probably consisting of two rectangles of cloth sewn together to form a tubular garment. The major difference between male and female tunics is the length, with some of the later female examples extending to the ankles. Head cloths were sometimes used.<sup>522</sup>

When the Spanish arrived, the indigenous natives of Peru had no facial hair. An intriguing piece of Nazca pottery depicts a man who might have been a direct descendant of the Nephites. Painted on the pot is a well-dressed fair-skinned Nazca male depicted with a long moustache and goatee.<sup>523</sup> At the bottom of the pot are two faces, one darker-skinned and the other fair-skinned.

Excavated tombs have revealed that the “Nazca craftsmen made gold forehead ornaments, gold mouth masks and other gold items of personal adornment such as head plumes,

<sup>517</sup> No author stated, “Archaeologists ‘Strike Gold’ with Finds of Ancient Nazca Iron Ore Mine,” *Science Daily*, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/01/080129125405.htm>, 3 February 2008.

<sup>518</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 231,232.

<sup>519</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 149.

<sup>520</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 11,12.

<sup>521</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 73.

<sup>522</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 73.

<sup>523</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 74.

bracelets, earrings, pendants, clothing plaques, pectorals, and remarkable spear throwers.”<sup>524</sup>

Finally, the Nazca ruins have surrendered artifacts that would be required for any serious candidate as a Nephite archaeological site—evidence of gold-plate technology. Nazca excavations have uncovered gold sheets that were hammered into an “almost uniform thinness.”<sup>525</sup>

#### Trees for shipping north

The Book of Mormon tells us that Bountiful had timbers that they shipped to the Nephites who had colonized the land northward (Helaman 3:10). The numerous inhabitants who had previously lived in the north, the Jaredites, had deforested the land (Helaman 3:6). I flew from Lima (land of Desolation) north along Peru’s barren shoreline. I observed that it would have been easy for the fragile ecosystems of the coastal fluvial valleys to have become deforested. Whatever the cause of the lack of trees, the northern colonists needed to build their houses using cement (Helaman 3:7). Victor Von Hagen writes the, “largest man-made pyramid in all the Americas (near Lima in the Land Northward), was constructed of millions of sunbaked bricks cemented over and frescoed with paintings.”<sup>526</sup> However, to the south, the river valleys of the Nazca abounded with trees that could have been placed aboard Inca ships and transported to the Land Northward.

#### A harbor

To transport timber to the land northward, the land of Bountiful needed a harbor. The Book of Mormon land of Bountiful matches the geography of Contisuyu, the southwest quarter of the Inca Empire. Contisuyu had two Pacific ports. Roughly, eighty miles south of the Nazca capital was the harbor known as Puerto Inca (Port of the Inca). The protected cove was the closest point on the Pacific to Cusco and the place from which fresh fish was delivered to the nobles in Cusco. The late Inca Empire built a permanent settlement at the harbor, and reason suggests that such an attractive port would have been used in earlier periods. As previously described, there was also the large natural harbor at Paracas, an area that was also influenced by Nazca.

#### Cahuachi, the Temple of Bountiful

Again, the temple at Bountiful is interesting to students of the Book of Mormon. After the destruction that occurred at the crucifixion of Christ, the surviving Nephites in the area gathered at their temple and it is there that Jesus Christ appeared to them (3 Nephi 11:1). The main temple was described in Chapter Two. Beside the temple, there was an entire religious complex at Cahuachi. Sprawling over forty low-lying hills capped with adobe structures, it is a pilgrimage center that brought hundreds of worshipers to the region.”<sup>527</sup> Silverman and Proulx write:

Silverman’s determination that Cahuachi was not an urban site is supported by Giuseppe Orefici’s seventeen years of excavation at the site, which further demonstrates its hyperceremonial nature. For example, Orefici has discovered a “Step-fret Temple” (so-called because of a mud frieze decorating its north face). Dated to Nazca 1 [150 BC-100 AD], this is the earliest ceremonial structure thus far identified at Cahuachi; surely there are other Nazca 1 ceremonial constructions waiting to be unearthed. The

<sup>524</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 156.

<sup>525</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 160.

<sup>526</sup> Von Hagen, Victor W., quoted by Kocherhans, *Nephi to Zarahemla*, 123.

<sup>527</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), “Timeline of Art History, Central and Southern Andes, 1-500 AD”, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/05/sac/ht05sac.htm>, (February 12, 2007), 2.

Step-fret Temple shows that Cahuachi was a sacred site from its earliest Nazca occupation....

On the floor of one of the agglutinate rooms on the north-east side of Strong's Great Temple (Unit 2), Orefici discovered a cache of hundreds of broken panpipes. These rooms may have stored the ritual paraphernalia used in ceremonies as well as been facilities for the curation of damaged and obsolete symbolically charged objects. Strong [1957:31] already had recovered ritual paraphernalia from the Great Temple, including fine pottery, colored feathers, and llama remains suggestive of sacrifice and feasting.<sup>528</sup>

#### The Religion Practiced in Nazca at the Time of Christ

Nevertheless, we need to determine if the religion practiced at the great Cahuachi temple was similar to the law of Moses and included practices one would expect of the Nephite faith. It is one thing to excavate an ancient temple or collect ritual attire and paraphernalia, but another matter to try to decipher the actual beliefs of a people who vanished nearly two thousand years ago. From what archaeologists have discovered at Cahuachi, we can glean the following insights into the religious beliefs of the Cahuachi people.

First, during early Nazca Periods 1 and 2 (150 BC–100 AD) the Nazca faithful performed pilgrimages to the temple. Cahuachi was the principal pilgrimage site where people came to offer sacrifices. Rostworowski argues that at Cahuachi "...at a certain time of the year a great number of people— common as well as elite—met there to perform a great *taqui* and dance according to their ancient rites.... After the celebrations everyone returned [home]."<sup>529</sup> We know that the righteous Nephites used the temple at the city of Bountiful as their place of gathering (3 Nephi 11:1). We can also assume that the Nephites would have practiced annual temple pilgrimages. When the temple existed in Jerusalem, the Israelites practiced three "pilgrimage festivals" (*chagim*): Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (*Pseach, Shavouot, and Sukkot*).

Second, the Nazca people offered animal sacrifices. Orefici excavated the burial site of more than sixty sacrificed llamas in an area immediately south-east of one of the small mounds near the temple, and he has recovered the remains of one hundred fifty-four adult and sixty-five young camelids in construction fill-in ceremonial mounds at Cahuachi.<sup>530</sup>

Third, like the Nephites (Alma 1:2,3,16), the Nazca appear to have had a lay priesthood. Silverman and Proulx note: "We do not see evidence of Nazca religion having been a state cult in which the religious officiators were supported by the labor of others."<sup>531</sup>

Fourth, the Nazca temple rites were probably memorized and passed on from one generation to the next. The temple ordinances were performed according to a strict tradition. Victor Turner of Cornell University writes that the Nazca temple priests would have possessed "a body of codified and standardized ritual knowledge [learnt] from older priests and later transmit[ted] to successors."<sup>532</sup> Since Nephi modeled his temple after the one in Jerusalem, it would follow that the Nephites observed the same ceremonial rites. As noted, the Nazca offered animal sacrifices.

Fifth, music was a primary means for expressing the Nazca faith. Orefici writes "For the Nazca people, music was one of the indispensable means of expressing the collective

<sup>528</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 102.

<sup>529</sup> Rostworowski, María, "Origen religioso de los dibujos y rayas de Nazca," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, 79:193.

<sup>530</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 102.

<sup>531</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 197.

<sup>532</sup> Turner, Victor, Religious specialist. *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, ed. Arthur C. Lehmann and James E. Myers, (Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1985), 82.

religious spirit, constituting a true and proper choral language with which it was possible to communicate with the divine.<sup>533</sup> Figurines of individuals playing panpipes, trumpets, and drums have been discovered in Nazca ruins.<sup>534</sup> Instruments used on the temple grounds in Jerusalem, though not in the ceremony itself, included silver trumpets, flutes, harps, lutes, and brass cymbals.<sup>535</sup>

Sixth, a central theme in the Nazca faith was asking God for agricultural fertility. Silverman and Proulx note, "In the situational context of rites,... it is significant that the painted harvest festival textiles depict scores of farmers who are finely dressed in human garb and carry plants."<sup>536</sup> Praying and sacrificing for a good harvest is well inside the context of the Nephite faith. The Book of Mormon's Amulek instructed the Nephites to pray "unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks,... Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase..." (Alma 34:20-25). Of course, praying and sacrificing for successful harvests and for strength against one's enemies are common elements of most faiths. Still, this practice of the people at Cahuachi between 150 BC and AD 100 provides evidence that the early Nazca period religion was harmonious in this regard with that of the Nephites.

Seventh, and most important, as detailed in Chapter Two, the Nazca people believed in their fair-skinned and bearded god Viracocha who answered their prayers, ended their droughts, and wept tears.<sup>537</sup>

#### Advanced Nazca Technologies

After the visitation of Christ in the Americas, a golden age of prosperity dawned. The people were righteous. They prospered exceedingly and were "partakers of the heavenly gift." (4 Nephi 1: 3, 7, 15). Christ's teaching at Bountiful and perhaps other places launched the Nephite golden age. During Book of Mormon times this was probably no more apparent than at Nazca. Besides the amazing geoglyphs, the Nazca people excelled in the arts and crafts. As described in Chapter Four, the Nazca were the ancient world's master weavers. Their doctors performed brain surgeries. They forged metals and molded incredible pottery. They constructed massive subterranean irrigation systems. They held massive religious pilgrimages with feasts and music. Probably the most accurate representation of a Nephite-like society in the ancient Americas was Nazca.

<sup>533</sup> Orefici, Giuseppe, *Nazca: arte e società del popolo dei geoglifi* (Milan: Jaca Books, 1993), 145.

<sup>534</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 201.

<sup>535</sup> Edersheim, Alfred, "Instrumental Music in the Jerusalem Temple, (<http://www.piney.com/Edershi.html>), 16 September 2007)

<sup>536</sup> Silverman and Proulx, 205.

<sup>537</sup> Urton, "Report of fieldwork in Nazca, Peru", Unpublished manuscript in the possession of Helaine Silverman, quoted by Helaine Silverman and Donald A. Proulx, 208.

*The whole of America is Zion  
itself from north to south.*

*The redemption of Zion is the  
redemption of all North and  
South America.*<sup>538</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith

## Conclusion

In my earlier books and films, I explored the possible sites of the Valley of Lemuel, halts along Lehi's Trail, Old World Bountiful, and rational models for the Nephi's harbor and the ships of Nephi, Mulek, and the brother of Jared. These images have helped artists begin to portray the Book of Mormon in a more accurate fashion and have helped students of the sacred book to have a better appreciation of the geographic and environmental conditions surrounding Book of Mormon events. The purpose for writing this book is to help doubters know that the Book of Mormon really did take place. In other words, the Book of Mormon is a true history.

I believe that the body of credible evidence for the historicity of the Book of Mormon is growing and is even now compelling. This is especially true for South America. The oral traditions of the Savior's visit to the Andes, the legend of the four fair-skinned brothers establishing the kingdom of four quarters, the remnants of the Andean people's religious beliefs and temple worship, the impressive archaeological record, the New World's first cradle of civilization at Caral, and the obvious geographic features of the Andes and its ancient civilizations all support this proposition.



*Figure 44 Andean Descendant of Lehi*

Most students of the Book of Mormon already believe it is the history of an ancient people somewhere in the Western Hemisphere. So where are the descendants of the Nephites, Lamanites, and Jaredites? and can we fashion a more accurate picture of who they are today? There is tentative evidence that pre-Columbian Mesoamerican and South American merchants traded along the South Atlantic Coast of what is today the United States.<sup>539</sup> It has been proven that ancient South Americans are known to have traded with Polynesians.<sup>540</sup> John L. Sorenson and Matthew Roper write: "Later indications are that South American was the source of south-to-north influence (a few actual Incan buildings have been found in western Mexico)."<sup>541</sup> What does all this

<sup>538</sup> Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980, 362, 415. Brigham Young also taught this principle. He said that "North and South America are Zion, Journal of Discourses 11:324.

<sup>539</sup> "Totonac, Maya, Arawak, Tupi-Guarani and Quechua Mercantile Words in the Indigenous Languages of the Southeastern United States" (May 27, 2013) [www.peopleofonefire.com](http://www.peopleofonefire.com), accessed 2013.

<sup>540</sup> Greenspan, Jesse, "Did Polynesian Voyagers Reach the Americas Before Columbus?" *History*, March 25, 2024. <https://www.history.com/news/polynesian-sailors-americas-columbus>.

<sup>541</sup> Sorenson, John L. and Matthew Roper, "Before DNA," BYU Scholars Archive, 34, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu>.



interaction mean? It shows that regardless of where the main Book of Mormon history took place, the indigenous populations of the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific Islands are members of Lehi's heritage. They are all of one family.

Undoubtedly the Nephites, Lamanites, and Jaredite bloodlines represented only an extremely thin veneer of an elite family that ruled over a large populace of aboriginals. The same is probably true for the Polynesians. Hagoth and other Peruvian voyagers would have made a small dent in the aborigines' bloodlines in Polynesia; yet, DNA research indicates that they did make a tiny dent.<sup>542</sup> In each case, any Hebrew DNA these travelers introduced would have been a mere drop of Israelite blood in an ocean of endogenous DNA. However small the amount, the seeds of Lehi's descendants would have spread like wildfire throughout the Western Hemisphere. Over the millennia, hundreds or even thousands of trading missions must have taken place between South America, Central America, North America, and between the mainland and the islands of the Pacific. Such traders, refugees, missionaries, or curious explorers would have settled and intermarried among new populations.

A numbers game will prove this point. Lehi had six sons and perhaps an equal number of daughters. Let's assume Lehi had twelve children. The brother of Jared begat twenty-two children. Given this pattern, how many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc. do you think they had? Within a few generations, the numbers become staggering.

As a hypothetical example, let's imagine that Samuel the Lamanite, a wanted man by the wicked, fled the land of Zarahemla and took his wife to Central America in 5 BC. Imagine that they had a relatively small family for their time, say six children, four who survived to bear families of a similar size and fate. Let's assume that this pattern continued until Columbus arrived and each new generation was separated by an average of thirty years. If only 1% of Samuel's descendants married someone who was not another blood descendant of Samuel and his wife, the seed of Lehi, would have spread from Samuel's seemingly insignificant introduction to over two trillion people within 1,600 years. That means that potentially up to two trillion ancestors of Samuel and his wife would have been alive and ready to greet Columbus when he arrived in the Americas. On the one hand, that many people have never lived on the earth and several other factors make this mathematical conclusion misleading. However, it illustrates the impact of just one married couple spreading their bloodlines among an indigenous population other than their own. On the other hand, Samuel would have been only one of thousands who ventured aboard and intermarried with a foreign spouse. Consider the impact of Hagoth's migrants on the Polynesian people. Or what if the Jaredites had migrated in mass to Central America to avoid the great wickedness in their homeland circa 1500 BC?

Are the Timucua Indians of the Atlantic Coast of the United States descendants of Lehi or the brother of Jared? How about the Blackfoot Indians of Idaho or the descendants of the Maya in Mexico or the Navajo Tribes in Arizona or the Tongans living in the remote Pacific, are they all direct descendants of Lehi and inheritors of a great legacy? I believe the answer is yes even though their DNA shows otherwise. Again, a drop of Lehi's blood having been lost in an ocean of indigenous DNA. Dr. Jay Clark writes: "The loss of genetic variation from natural disaster, epidemic disease, massive war, or other calamity, resulting in the death of a substantial part of a population over the millennia, is unknown (population bottleneck). The gradual loss of genetic markers over time (genetic drift) makes it virtually impossible to make a case for or against the Book of Mormon from DNA analysis."<sup>543</sup>

Regardless of whether the Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific have bloodlines extending back to Lehi, they are all the descendants of a chosen people whose ancestors were righteous pioneers led by the Lord to a promised land. The same is true for recent immigrants to the Americas. Father Lehi taught, "Yea, the Lord hath

<sup>542</sup> Greenspan.

<sup>543</sup> Clark, Jay D., *And Then There Were Some*. Lehi, Utah: self published, 2024, 198.

covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord (2 Nephi 1:5).” Of greater importance than being a blood descendant of Lehi is being a “covenant people of the Lord.”

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, wants each of us to return to our Father in Heaven. He has provided an easy-to-understand manual that can lead us safely back to His heavenly home. Through the enormous efforts of His prophets from Nephi to Mormon, to Moroni, and finally Joseph Smith, Jr., we have today this precious book. If we follow the principles that were first engraved on plates of gold, we can accomplish this most important journey. Of course, our safety manual is the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. As its introduction explains: “It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.” May we cherish the Book of Mormon, and show our appreciation for it by developing a deep understanding of its principles and living our lives in accordance to them. May we reflect the Book of Mormon’s primary purpose in our lives by developing a deeper faith in our Savior Jesus Christ and by being His sons and daughters, true Christians, after His way.



*Figure 45 Tiwanaku (Bolivia) the Great Lamanite Civilization After the Fall of the visit of Jesus Christ.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



George Potter is the author of 13 documentary films and eight books on the historicity of the Book of Mormon. His first book, *Lehi in the Wilderness* (endorsed by Dr. Hugh Nibley) has become the standard for Book of Mormon archaeology in Arabia. His other books on Book of Mormon evidence include *Nephi in the Promised Land*, *The Voyages of the Book of Mormon*, and *Discovering the Amazing Jaredites*. George made presentations of his discoveries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Chaplains Conference, the Ensign Magazine, BYU FARMS (Neal Maxwell Institute), and many LDS stakes and wards. While living in Saudi Arabia for 27 years, he traveled extensively in search of Lehi's Trail. He is credited with discovering The Valley of Lemuel, the River Laman, Shazer, the Most Fertile Parts, Nephi's Harbor at Old World Bountiful, and the place where the Jaredites built their barges. In Peru, where he served his mission, he identified probable the Book of Mormon sites: the City of Nephi, Zarahemla, Bountiful, the narrow neck of land, the four seas of the Nephites, the first city of the Jaredites, and many other Book of Mormon candidates. George is a certified public accountant by profession and earned a Master's degree at the University of California, Berkeley. His wife Cristina is also a certified public accountant and owned a travel agency for 16 years. They are now retired and live in Elk Ridge, Utah. For free presentations and tours hosted by George, contact him at [follownephi@yahoo.com](mailto:follownephi@yahoo.com) or view the website [www.christinperu.com](http://www.christinperu.com).