

Cumorah Messenger

Book of Mormon Directions

By David B. Brown © 2025

The Book of Mormon has a unique vocabulary for directional clues that may assist us in locating the region where the Book of Mormon people lived. After researching the use of directional indicators in the Book of Mormon, we created a chart of the direction passages and the data provides some helpful insight (see chart).

The word “eastward” is used three times. The first usage is by Nephi in his description of their journey across the ocean. The other two times comes from the Book of Ether in reference to troop movements in the series of final Jaredite battles. This is a generalized direction marker indicating all points toward the east between north and south.

The word “east” is used 47 times. Thirty-nine of these are strictly directional in giving geographic location of a

place in relation to a city or land feature. However, eight of these references describe a sea, as in the “sea east” or the “east sea.”

The direction “west” is used 42 times. Again, 28 of these are giving geographic location of a place in relation to a city or land feature with 14 of the descriptions being for the “sea west” or the “west sea.” There are no other variations being used for the direction of west.

The data for the Book of Mormon use of both south and north is very telling. Note that the number of times the word south is used is more than west or east, and the number of times north is used is substantially greater. A cursory review of the directions by the number of times they are used indicates that the geography of the Book of Mormon is

Totals		
39	East	50
8	Sea East	
3	Eastward	
28	West	42
14	Sea West	
35	South	
1	Sea South	57
1	Southeast	
2	Southward	
18	Land Southward	85
37	North	
1	Sea North	
1	Northern	
1	Northernmost	
9	Northward	36
36	Land Northward	
234	Total	

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Comments on Maya Technology *Part 2*

By Eric Scott © 2025

A partial summary of the book The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology by James A. O'Kon PE.

The Maya have long been admired for their understanding of astronomy and calculations of astronomical cycles which were not surpassed until later centuries. Their instruments were limited to handheld sighting tubes, vertical alignment tubes in the roofs of buildings and vertical poles to as-

certain zenith passage of the sun and planets. Maya astronomers knew the earth was round and rotated around the sun and that it wobbled. They computed the time period of the earth's rotation around the sun with an accuracy that is comparable to that of modern astronomers with sophisticated optical and digital instruments to one 100 thousands of a second compared to modern instruments. They

also calculated the orbital lengths of time for Mars and Venus with the same accuracy.

They developed a mathematical system to track astronomical events and was then extrapolated to track quantities of time designating place

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Book of Mormon Directions *continued*

primarily north and south with an emphasis toward the east on the east/west axis. When viewing the Mesoamerican map, these directional usages fit very neatly as we place the city of Zarahemla at the Maya site of Yaxchilan where Neil Steede discovered it on the Mexico side of the Usumacinta River.

Understand that the Book of Mormon is the spiritual record of the Nephite people. Therefore, the Book of Mormon is written from the perspective of the Nephite culture and it contains an embedded context of their geographic location in relation to their neighboring sub-cultures of Desolation, Bountiful and the Lamanites. Because it is a Nephite story, all of the narrative revolves around the Nephite central power city of Zarahemla.

against the Lamanite incursion. By necessity, directions are provided when short explanations of military strategy are included in the text.

Note that the lands belonging to the merged Nephite/Mulekite people is represented in purple and they are positioned between Bountiful in blue on the north and the Lamanites in green on the south and west. All three of these lands are contained in the region known as the Land Southward because all of them are east and south of the narrow neck of land which is the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Zarahemla is positioned at the center of the merged Nephite/Mulekite land on the east/west line between the sea east (Caribbean) and the “borders” (mountains) of the sea west. This unique positioning implies that the

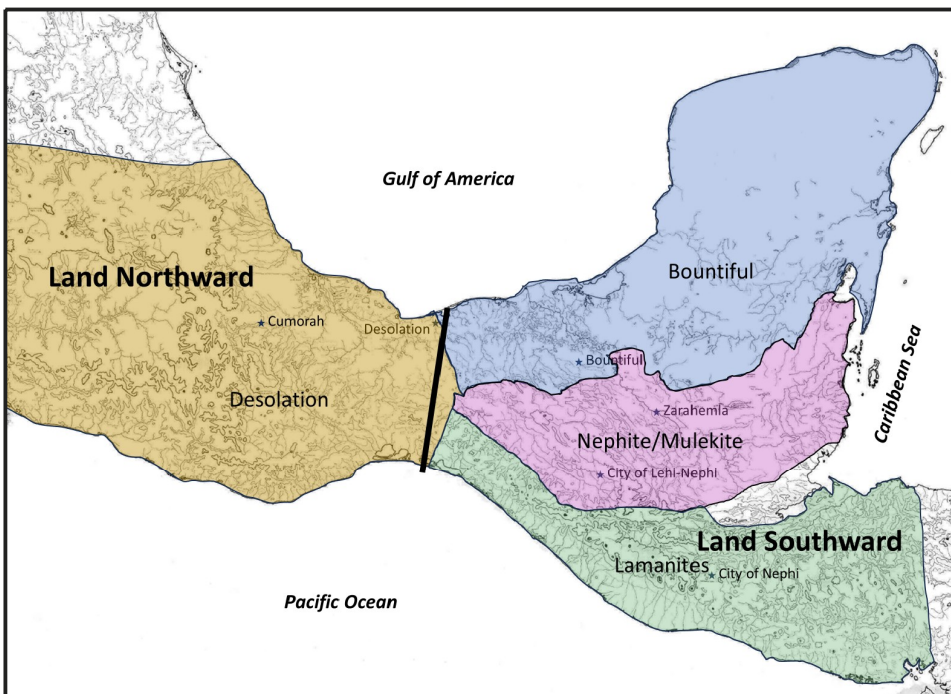
less connected to the main story-line, hence, there is less usage of those directions, as indicated on our chart.

Now, the terms south and north are almost equally represented with the reference of south used 35 times and north used 37 times. These directions are provided to express the relative direction from a city, landmark or military position. However, to me, the most telling hints found in this chart are the clear use of the terms “land northward” and “land southward.” It is the unique geographic shape of Mesoamerica that allows these terms to be understood.

The text very clearly states that the narrow neck of land divides the land between north and south. And, it is further made clear that the lands north of the narrow neck are primarily held by the Jaredites (also called Desolation), while the lands south of the narrow neck are held by the people of Bountiful and the descendants of Lehi. However, on this map, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is clearly an east/west orientation. To better understand this, two things need to be considered.

First, Mormon had to compile information from multiple different authors such as Nephi, Jacob, Mosiah, Alma, Helaman and so on, then he had to choose names and descriptors that would be consistent throughout the 1,000 years of history he was providing. If he didn’t do this, there would be continual confusion from one author to another. An example being the reference to the City of Nephi and City of Lehi-Nephi as we have covered in previous articles. I believe that Mormon tried very hard to be consistent in his reference to the Jaredite lands as the land northward, and the Nephite-related lands as the land southward.

Second, the Jaredite (Olmec) land on the west/north side of the isthmus was populated and developed hundreds of years before the land



The map shown above represents the Book of Mormon region during the 60 BC Moroni Wars described in the Book of Alma which provides the most prolific use of directional clues with a total of 125; this is over half of the total clues found in the Book of Mormon. This abundance of direction usage is due to the details given concerning Captain Moroni’s military defense

interior region along the Usumacinta River system is where the bulk of the Book of Mormon activity took place and this influences the dialogue to express movements that are primarily along a north/south line. Therefore, the directions given in the text include greater usages of indicators for both north and south. This places regions on the east and west as being more peripheral and

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Comments on Maya Technology *continued*

marks in future and past time periods. Their base-20 mathematical system was unique, flexible and simple. When compared to the decimal base-10 used in western mathematics, Mayan mathematics was sophisticated enough to calculate and track massive numbers with the use of just three basic symbols: a dot, a bar and an ellipse (zero). It made possible the basic functions of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and calculus. They developed the concept of the number zero 1,200 years before the Europeans adopted the concept from Arab scholars.

The Maya also developed a complete writing system that enabled them to write anything they wanted in their own language. The Maya script is considered to be one of the world's five original writing systems as well as one of the most complex written languages. The written language is a combination of syllabograms (phonetic characters) and logograms (characters expressing meaning). The syllabogram system allows large conceptual meaning to be expressed in a small amount of space.

Inventive Maya technologies were used to overcome the difficulties of the natural environment, develop high-strength materials for construction, invent innovative structural mechanics for long-span structures, devise durable substitutes for metal tools, construct efficient transportation systems and create agricultural systems that enhance food production. The Maya, the Americas' first civil engineers, employed these innovations to construct the structures and infrastructure systems that created the sophisticated urban fabric of

the world's largest cities of their time.

Maya technology overcame the lack of native metallic ore. They developed specialized tools that were harder than iron for the fine working of stone and wood. Specialized tools fabricated from jadeite, a material harder than steel and fracture resistant, enabled Maya builders and artisans to construct structures of grand architecture replete with finely carved stone friezes. They made the world's sharpest cutting blades from obsidian: obsidian is currently used for scalpels in surgery. The lack of iron ore within the Maya zone made it impossible to make iron tools, but the Maya bypassed the Bronze and Iron Ages by their use of jadeite as a material for the fabrication of their tools. Jadeite is found in quantity in only two locations throughout the world; the Union of Myanmar and Guatemala.

Maya technicians invented the methodology for producing hydraulic cement from native limestone. This cement was used as the basis for the production of cast-in-place concrete which was used to construct strong and durable structures capable of withstanding 2,000 years of harsh environment.

Maya architecture invented the vaulted arch, high rise structural systems, long-span bridges and high-rise buildings.

Maya engineering solutions included shaped cityscapes designed to divert storm water into storage facilities, underground reservoirs, water filtration systems and efficient irrigation systems for agriculture.

Maya engineers developed a super highway system of elevat-

ed paved highways that connected their power centers. All-weather roads provided the Maya with a reliable road system that could be used as year-round transportation. Hundreds of miles of these roads were constructed.

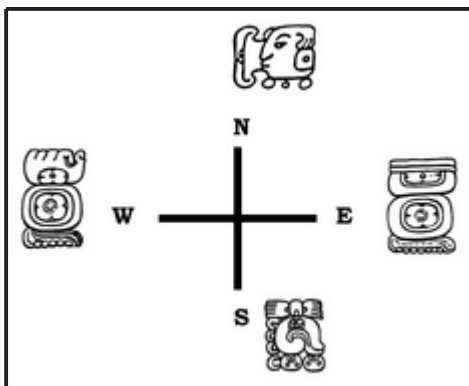
Maya engineering produced creative bridge designs of various types and spans including cast-in-place concrete bridges, timber bridges and long-span rope or cable suspension bridges for crossing large flooded rivers.

The Maya developed man-powered transport systems that were more efficient and economical than animal-powered wheeled transport (see previous article) and they were resourceful sea traders who developed sea-going cargo vessels that enable long-range trade routes.

The Maya civilization meets or exceeds the criteria for a civilization as defined by Vere Gordon Childe. (perhaps the world's most renowned archaeological theorist and a popularizer of archaeology with the public.) For Childe, it was the invention of writing, not the material of the tools of a civilization that was the defining index of a civilization. It is apparent that the use of the misplaced three age (stone, bronze and Iron) system is not an accurate measure for the civilized level of a culture. Archaeologists should consider the adoption of the Gordon Childe definition of civilization which elevates the Maya to the top of the civilization scale, but if they insist on using the three-age system, they should consider classifying the Maya as "technolithic," a technologically advanced culture that is not known to have metal tools.

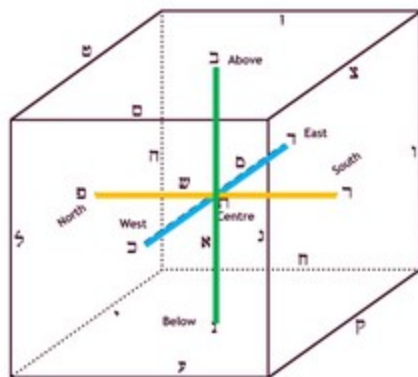
Mayan Esoteric Cardinal Directions By David B. Brown © 2025

With the increased comprehension of the meaning embedded in Maya hieroglyphs, we have found a publication that sheds some light on the Mayan concept of directions and the esoteric meaning attached to each. In the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, Brian Stross from the University of Texas at Austin wrote an article entitled “*Classic Mayan Directional Glyphs*.” Here he laid out the four directional glyphs used by the Maya and he elaborated on the phonemic structure while providing the detailed drawings of these glyphs. As he broke down phonemic meaning, he unlocked some connotations that imply esoteric teachings. In this article, we will investigate some of those meanings.



The glyph for the direction of east has three primary components. The base has 7 seed-like circles over which flows water. The next is the kin-glyph which at times represents the sun and others a flower of Quetzalcoatl. And the top component is an offering bowl with a sun glyph inside, but it is covered by two bars, which in Maya carries a value of ten.

From this imagery we can deduce that since the sun rises in the east to open the day, so too is the beginning of our journey through this plane of four-directions. Our birth



occurs in water and we are created to be creatures of the 7 points—two on the east/west axis, two on the north/south axis, two on the earth/heaven axis and the last point being in our heart where all three axis meet. We are created to be a three-dimensional entity, but because of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, we are a two-dimensional being walking in the two-axis plane of four-directions.

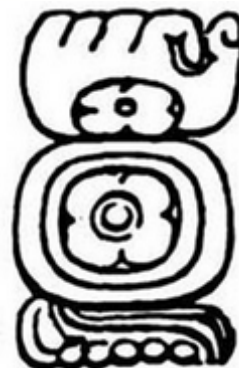
The middle component of the east glyph is the sun, and the upper component is an offering bowl topped with two bars and a sun glyph inside. The offering bowl represents the skull which houses the brain and it is the seat of knowledge. The sun sign within indicates an enlightened mind. The two bars on top represent the Maya number ten and indicates the Ten Commandments from the Law of Moses, especially when it is placed on the “head” as many fundamental Jews practice even today where they carry the law on their forehead. In essence, this glyph illustrates that at birth, each individual is set in motion to complete their intended development by using the guidelines of the law to establish the axis from earth to heaven before death finds them and there is no more opportunity to “know” God.

By contrast, the glyph that represents the west has the same basic structure as the east glyph, however, there are differences.

The foundation of the glyph continues to be water with seed-like beads, but instead of seven beads,

there are only five. This indicates that whatever is set above these five seeds is founded on the plane of five-points which is the four-directions and the intersection of the two axes.

The center component set on top of the water-flow foundation is also the same sun glyph which indicates the pathway of the sun between birth and death since the sun is born in the east and dies in the west. However, the component on the top of the glyph is the left hand and a sun glyph “stamped” on the back of it. This represents the works of light.



In Maya artwork, the right hand represents the works to which the person is faithful—he is making a conscious effort to fulfill what he is doing with his right hand. The left hand then represents the consequential result of those efforts being done by the right hand. Sometimes those consequences are intended, sometimes they are unintended. In this case the person is receiving the wages of their conscious efforts.

The east and west glyphs establish the axis of the pathway of the sun which parallels our life purpose of being born with the potential for spiritual completion, but at death, we will receive the wages for the life we have lived.

The glyph used for the south is quite different. The foundation of this glyph is two circles that appears to have faces in an upside-down position. This indicates death and burial, and may be alluding to our two parents in the Garden of Eden who brought about the fall of man which separated us from God and brought about death. There is a stack of four items on the left which

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Adventures In Scriptures

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Captain Moroni

At only age 25, Moroni became the chief captain of all the Nephite armies. There were two problems that he faced as leader. One was protecting his people from the Lamanites. The second problem was some of the Nephites broke away and went over to the Lamanites.

Moroni was a Christian and man of God. He managed both of these problems with great wisdom, understanding and prayer. Moroni was a strong and mighty man. He did not delight in bloodshed, but knew he needed to defend his people.

First Moroni prepared his troops for battle against the Lamanites by providing them with breast plates, arm-shields, helmets and thick clothing. This gave them an advantage in battle. He also fortified the Nephite cities by building walls of earth and stone. These fortifications helped the Nephites defend their freedom.

Moroni inspired the people to fight for their freedom and the liberty of their lands. He tore a piece from his coat and wrote "*In memory of our God, religion, peace, freedom, wives, and children.*" Then he put it on a pole and waved it among the people. This became a flag of liberty and was displayed on all the towers of the land.

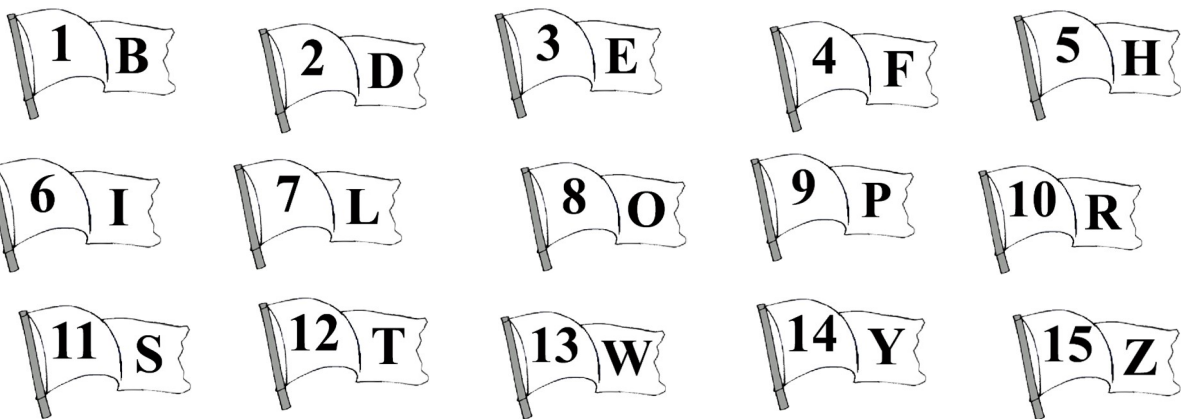
There was never a happier time in the history of the Nephites than in the days of Moroni.

Alma Chapters 20, 21 & 22

B	J	L	R	K	D	M	M	W	M	Y	B	U	C	Y
U	R	A	I	T	A	O	C	O	I	T	Y	H	N	F
M	F	E	F	B	D	O	R	P	R	S	R	G	J	I
Y	S	F	A	E	E	O	L	O	H	I	D	N	N	T
V	Q	B	E	S	N	R	W	D	S	G	F	O	U	R
C	B	R	R	I	T	T	T	T	E	F	R	R	M	O
M	F	E	C	A	E	P	I	Y	C	R	X	T	W	F
A	F	E	R	Y	R	A	L	L	A	O	J	S	N	M
R	J	B	O	E	N	A	O	A	P	P	M	X	R	D
H	E	L	M	E	T	S	Y	A	T	H	I	W	U	I
B	Z	Y	M	O	R	M	P	R	A	E	G	P	T	T
R	J	L	A	E	U	A	B	R	I	L	H	A	Z	Y
V	X	D	W	R	O	D	I	G	N	R	T	V	L	M
Q	X	O	I	K	P	T	Z	I	K	Q	Y	P	I	F
R	T	U	N	D	E	R	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G

Find and circle the words from the story:

Breastplate
 Captain
 Christian
 Coat
 Flag
 Fortify
 Freedom
 Helmets
 Liberty
 Mighty
 Moroni
 Peace
 Prayer
 Strong
 Towers
 Understanding
 Wisdom



Use the letters on the flags to fill in the scripture message below.

$\overline{13} \overline{5} \overline{3} \overline{10} \overline{3}$ $\overline{12} \overline{5} \overline{3}$ $\overline{11} \overline{9} \overline{6} \overline{10} \overline{6} \overline{12}$ $\overline{8} \overline{4}$
 $\overline{12} \overline{5} \overline{3}$ $\overline{7} \overline{8} \overline{10} \overline{2}$ $\overline{6} \overline{11}'$ $\overline{12} \overline{5} \overline{3} \overline{10} \overline{3}$ $\overline{6} \overline{11}$
 $\overline{7} \overline{6} \overline{1} \overline{3} \overline{10} \overline{12} \overline{14}$

2nd Corinthians 3:17



You can color the picture
and letters below if you like

Moroni Inspires His People

Mayan Esoteric Cardinal Directions *Continued*

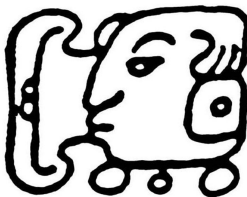
are kernels of corn and this represents the four elements of creation that feed all life; earth, water, fire and air. The largest component is a snail placed in the center. These are then crowned with another kernel of corn that has what appear to



be hands but it also might be an intentional design that alludes to something like butterfly wings.

The interpretation of these elements are as follows: because of the fall of man in the Garden, he was condemned to death in the earth. The elements of creation and the creatures of the earth are his fellows, and like the snail, for life to be sustained, he is bound to the earth and the four elements. However, the fifth element (crowning corn kernel) is love which is the binding element that keeps all creation together. Love is the element of heaven (butterfly wings) but it is also intended to be the motivation for the works of man (hands).

The glyph representing north is also unique. It has two circles with a small “undeveloped” seed between them. On top of these circles



is a head facing left. The Maya read from left to right, so a head facing to the left is looking back at the past. In front of his face on the far left is a rocker-knife. And the handle of the rocker-knife is between the lips and the brow which touches upon something sitting on the forehead. I believe the rocker-knife is representing a concept of judgment similar to what is found in the New Testament fourth chapter of Hebrews where it states, *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any*

two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Therefore, because the handle begins at the brow above the eye, he will be judged by his thoughts and because the handle comes from the bottom of his mouth, he will also be judged by the words that proceed forth from his lips for the mouth reveals the intent of the heart.

Perhaps the circles that are the foundation represent the axes of his life. Two axes would be length and width, which are the plane of existence into which he was born—the physical world of the four directions with the earth as his domain. It appears that this individual may not have developed the third axis from earth heaven where his spirit could reconnected to God. Without the axis of earth to heaven and a relationship with the divine, there is no hope of life after death. But, according to Stross, there is another glyph that is often found to represent north. It is referred to as the zenith glyph.

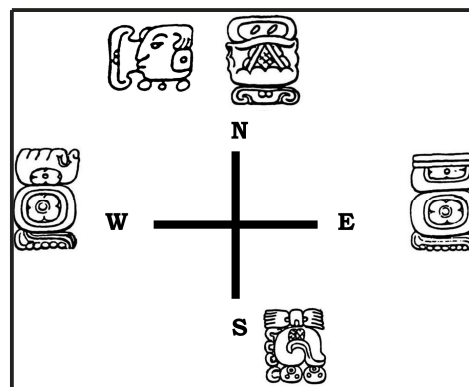
This glyph is founded on an offering bowl which is enclosed by a lid with two “seeds” within. Sitting on this foundation is a component that has the characteristics of the ethereal—it feels like billowy clouds upon which is a chevron with a royal mat background. Above this are two orbs in the sky. The two orbs seem to infer the Sun and Moon which are the lights that reign over the clouds of heaven, while the chevron and royal mat seem to infer the throne of God.



So the south to north axis appears to be teaching that mankind fell to the earth and is destined to remain there unless he makes the work of love the paramount focus of his life so that he is already established in

the work of Heaven when judgment comes (the original north glyph). At the end of his life, the rocker-knife will divide the body from the soul of man. At this point, as Stross notes in his article, the north/south axis then pivots 90 degrees to become the earth to heaven axis. The south becomes the earth (nadir) and represents the grave where the body will be laid, but the north becomes the heavens (zenith) where the spirit will be brought before the throne of God.

This particular concept of the south to north axis pivoting to the



earth to heaven access is demonstrated clearly in the architecture in at least three ancient sites; the Avenue of the Dead at Teotihuacan, the north temple at Tula and the Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal. In each of these locations, the architecture provides an illustration of the spiritual elevation from earth to heaven. However, various aspects of these same concepts are inferred in the architecture in nearly every site of Mesoamerica.

The amazing aspect here is that all of this demonstrates a Judeo-Christian theology. It tells of the creation of man, the fall of man, his redemption to his created purpose through the expression of love, and the eventual wages paid for the work performed while on the earth. All of this culminating in a spiritual judgment as one enters into eternal life. The gospel of Jesus Christ continues to be the key to unlocking the secrets of the Maya and connecting them to the Book of Mormon.

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The views expressed in the articles written for this publication are often a reflection of research and personal opinion of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization.

Book of Mormon Directions *Continued*

east and south of the isthmus was developed. On the chronology chart, the Jaredites were the first to designate that everything south beyond the narrow neck of land as the "land southward." In this original designation, the land southward was heavily forested and full of wildlife—they considered the land to be "bountiful," hence the designation of the name Bountiful. This is all recorded by King Lib at about 1,000 BC.

The Nephite record provides the first entry about the Jaredite culture when Mosiah makes his entry into Zarahemla at about 225 BC. This is also shortly after the Jaredite final battle and later the people of Limhi discovered the bones, breastplates, rusted swords and the 24 Golden Plates. This discovery happens at a place that the Nephites call Desolation (LaVenta) because of the mas-

sive destruction that took place when the Jaredite culture collapsed. Therefore, when the Nephites remark on the Jaredite culture and their desolation, they refer to it as Desolation or the land northward.

Again, why would they say northward or southward when the actual narrow neck of land forces one to be traveling due east or west? If you are traveling from the City of Ishmael at El Tazumal in El Salvador to Tres Zapotes in Veracruz, the totality of your venture is from south to north. But, to do this by land forces one to travel due west as you pass through the narrow neck of land at the isthmus. Hence, the travel pattern is a zig-zag from north, to west and back north again, yet the overall direction traveled is "northward." And, the converse is true, to travel from north to south requires a zig-zag route whose total

travel is primarily south, but requires an east travel to traverse the isthmus and then continuing south to the destination, so one is traveling "southward."

In addition to making the reference to general direction of travel, the land northward and land southward also alludes to two very different cultures with very different origins. These are terms that imply clear distinctions to Book of Mormon contemporaries.

To conclude, there is no other geological, topographical and cultural location in the combined North American and South American continents that fit the directional clues so neatly. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec with their cultures and topography northward and southward make this Mesoamerican region a perfect fit for the Book of Mormon peoples.