

Chart III
The 1830 Book of Mormon Chronology Related to Lehi's Escape from Jerusalem
Assuming the Biblical Chronology of the Destruction of Jerusalem and
Mormon's Chronological Error

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1. A man named Lehi, a descendant of Manasseh (Alma 10:3), owned a house at Jerusalem (1 Nephi 1:7) and land in the kingdom of Judah (1 Nephi 2:4, 11; 3:16, 22-23). He had lived at Jerusalem all his life (1 Nephi 1:4) and had acquired a treasure of gold, silver, and precious things (1 Nephi 2:4, 11). With his wife Sariah, he had a family consisting of four unmarried sons: Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi (1 Nephi 2:5; 16:7).
2. **Mattaniah, the twenty-one year old son of the late king Josiah, was placed on the throne of Judah by Nebuchadrezzar II of Babylonia, after king Jehoiachin surrendered the city of Jerusalem to a Babylonian siege on 2 Addaru (in the Babylonian calendar), Friday/Saturday, 15/16 March (J), 9/10 March (G) 597 B.C. JDN 1503444. Nebuchadrezzar changed the new king's name to Zedekiah and received Zedekiah's covenant of allegiance and oath in the name of the Lord to uphold the covenant. Apparently, either eight days or perhaps five weeks after the surrender of the city, Jehoiachin, his mother and wives, his officers, the princes, the men of might, the craftsmen and metal workers (some 10,000 or 18,000 people) and a great treasure taken from the city and temple, all were removed to Babylonia (2 Kings 24:8-18; 2 Chronicles 36:9-11, 13; Ezekiel 17:12-14; 40:1; Babylonian chronicle, British Museum tablet no. 21946).**
3. In the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, many prophets came to the people of Jerusalem, prophesying that the people must repent or their great city would be destroyed (1 Nephi 1:4). Lehi believed the prophets' message and prayed with all his heart for his people (1 Nephi 1:5). During that time, Lehi was away from the city and, as he prayed, a pillar of fire appeared and came to rest on a rock. He saw and heard many things that caused him to quake and tremble exceedingly (1 Nephi 1:6). When the vision ended, Lehi returned to his house in the city. Overcome by the Spirit and what he had seen and heard, he cast himself on his bed (1 Nephi 1:7).
4. A second vision opened the heavens to him. He thought he saw God on his throne surrounded by innumerable angels who were singing and praising God. One of them, whose luster was brighter than the sun at non-day, descended to the earth. He was followed by twelve other bright beings. The first one came to Lehi, stood before him, gave him a book, and asked him to read. As Lehi read, he was filled with the Spirit: "Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem" was the message. The city and its inhabitants should be destroyed; many should die; many should be taken captive to Babylon (1 Nephi 1:8-13). In addition, Lehi saw many great and marvelous things that caused him to praise God for his works, power, goodness, and mercy in all the earth. Lehi saw and heard that those who come to God will not perish. Lehi's soul rejoiced, his heart was filled (1 Nephi 1:14-15), and he was commanded to declare a specific message to his people (1 Nephi 2:1).
5. Lehi then went among his people, declaring to them the things that he had seen and heard. He testified of their wickedness and abominations, and he declared the coming of a Messiah and the redemption of the world. The people mocked Lehi and were angry with him. Some

sought to kill him (1 Nephi 1:18-20). **Other messengers of God were also mocked and misused (2 Chronicles 36:15-16).**

6. **Jeremiah's prophetic ministry continued throughout the reign of Zedekiah (e.g., Jeremiah 27-29, 32, 34). Zedekiah did not rebel and place Jerusalem at risk of destruction until about the ninth year of his reign and, even after the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem near the end of the ninth year of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 39:1; 52:4; Ezekiel 24:1-2), the officials under Zedekiah had not been able to convince the king to imprison Jeremiah (Jeremiah 37:1-5). Jeremiah prophesied the immediate destruction of the city and, when the siege was lifted temporarily in the tenth year of Zedekiah, Jeremiah prophesied the Babylonian army would return and utterly destroy the city. At the command of the Lord, he called on the inhabitants of the city to flee for their lives (Jeremiah 21:1-10; 34:1-7, 17-22; 37:7-8; 38:1-4).**
7. In a dream, Lehi was blessed by the Lord for his faithfulness in declaring the Lord's message. The Lord warned Lehi of a plot on his life and commanded him to take his family and depart into the wilderness (1 Nephi 2:1-2).
8. Lehi gathered his wife, sons, provisions, and tents. The family left their house at Jerusalem and their land in the kingdom of Judah, and traveled in the wilderness down to the borders of the Red Sea and then three days' journey further south by the Red Sea until they came to a valley with a river where they established a base camp (1 Nephi 2:4-10).
9. Lehi **did not leave** the city of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, **as Mormon stated many hundreds of years later** (3 Nephi, preface).
10. Nephi's prophecy of destruction for the people of Jerusalem (1 Nephi 7:13-14) was fulfilled immediately after Lehi's escape from the city (2 Nephi 25:10).
11. At the base camp, Laman and Lemuel were rebellious. They thought their father was foolishly imagining his visions. They did not believe in the dealings of God. They believed that Jerusalem could not be destroyed. In these matters, they were like the conspirators in Jerusalem who sought to take Lehi's life (1 Nephi 2:11-13; compare 1 Nephi 16:37-38).
12. At the time of the escape, Nephi was exceedingly young, but large in stature (1 Nephi 2:16; 4:31). He wanted to know the mysteries of God and cried to the Lord, who visited him. The Lord softened his heart, so that he did not rebel like Laman and Lemuel. Nephi attempted to convince his brothers that the Holy Spirit had manifested the truthfulness of their father's words to him. Sam believed Nephi, but Laman and Lemuel did not. Being grieved for them, Nephi again went to the Lord, who counseled Nephi and told him he would be blessed with leadership roles and a land of promise if he kept God's commandments (1 Nephi 2:16-24).
13. About this same time, Lehi had a dream in which the Lord commanded him to send his four sons back to Jerusalem to get the Hebrew scriptures engraved on the brass plates held by Laban (1 Nephi 3:1-4). Nephi's brothers did not want to go (1 Nephi 3:5) and their parents were worried about how Laban would treat their sons (1 Nephi 5:5, 8). Nonetheless, Lehi, with the help of Nephi, somehow convinced the older brothers that they could accomplish the task (1 Nephi 3:6-9). When they arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers cast lots and Laman was chosen to seek the brass plates from Laban. Laban reacted with anger and became violent, calling Laman a robber and seeking to kill the young man, but Laman escaped to rejoin his three brothers (1 Nephi 3:10-14).

14. Nephi convinced his brothers that they should use their father's treasure (which the Lord had commanded Lehi to leave behind) to trade for the brass plates. Nephi argued that they would not be coming back because Lehi's prophetic knowledge required Jerusalem to be destroyed due to wickedness; the people had rejected the words of the prophets; and if Lehi were to come back after being commanded by the Lord to leave, he would also perish (1 Nephi 3:15-18). In addition, the family needed the brass plates to preserve their language and prophetic wisdom (1 Nephi 3:19-20). No mention was made about Jeremiah having been cast into prison (compare 1 Nephi 7:14).
15. The brothers went to their land, acquired the treasure, and returned to Laban's house. When the brothers proposed to Laban the exchange of the treasure for the brass plates, he again became violent and called his servants to kill the sons of Lehi (1 Nephi 3:21-25). The brothers escaped, but had to leave their father's treasure behind. However, once they reached a safe hiding place, they argued and fought each other so violently that an angel of the Lord appeared to protect Nephi (1 Nephi 3:26-31).
16. Nephi then convinced his brothers that with the Lord's help, he could obtain the brass plates. His brothers hid outside the city at night and he alone crept into Jerusalem, killed Laban in obedience to the command of the Spirit, and obtained the brass plates by stratagem from Laban's treasury. The brothers and Zoram, a servant of Laban who had been convinced by Nephi to join them, traveled back to their camp by the Red Sea, where Lehi and Sariah met them with great joy, sacrifices and thanksgiving (1 Nephi 4:1-5:9).
17. **While the siege of Jerusalem was lifted, Jeremiah attempted to leave the city on a business matter. He was arrested at the gate, charged with desertion, beaten and placed in a vault in a cistern house that had been turned into a makeshift dungeon. Later, he was summoned by Zedekiah, interviewed and sent to remain imprisoned in the court of the guard house, where he was given a ration of bread (Jeremiah 37:11-21). In the court of the guard house, Jeremiah appears to have been able to receive visitors (Jeremiah 32); so, his prophesying of destruction and call for desertion from the city likely continued. The princes of Zedekiah then demanded that Jeremiah be executed for treason. Zedekiah gave his approval and Jeremiah was cast into a nearby muddy cistern, and there he was left to die (Jeremiah 38:1-6).**
18. After Lehi's sons returned from Jerusalem, he searched the brass plates and discovered their scriptural and genealogical contents were complete down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah **(1 Nephi 5:10-16), when the craftsmen and metal workers had been exiled (2 Kings 24:16)**. Lehi prophesied concerning the future of his descendants and the brass plates (1 Nephi 5:17-22). Then Lehi heard the word of the Lord, commanding his four sons to return to the land of Jerusalem, and to bring Ishmael and his family to their temporary base camp. The brothers traveled to Ishmael's abode in the land of Jerusalem, found favor in his sight and spoke to him concerning the words of the Lord. Ishmael's heart was softened by the Lord. The four brothers, Ishmael and his wife, their two married sons with their families, and Ishmael's five unmarried daughters, all set out for the camp by the Red Sea (1 Nephi 7:1-5).
19. During the journey to the Red Sea, the travelers divided into two groups. Laman and Lemuel, two of the daughters of Ishmael, and the two of the sons of Ishmael with their families, all rebelled against continuing to the base camp with Nephi, Sam, Ishmael and his wife, and their three other daughters. The rebellious ones wanted to return to the land of Jerusalem (1 Nephi 7:6-7). Nephi argued with Laman and Lemuel, and they became exceedingly angry (1 Nephi 7:8-16).

20. As part of this argument, Nephi repeated his earlier statements to his brothers, prophesying himself this time that the words of the prophets would be fulfilled concerning the city's destruction because the Spirit would soon cease to strive with the people at Jerusalem, who had rejected the prophets and sought to take away their father's life. Nephi also mentioned that Jeremiah had been cast into prison and he prophesied further that if any in the group returned to the land, they would perish, but if they were faithful to the Lord, they would be able to obtain a land of promise (1 Nephi 7:12-15).
21. Nephi's rebellious brothers fought with him, bound him with cords and sought to leave him in the wilderness to be eaten by wild beasts (1 Nephi 7:16). Nephi prayed for strength and the cords were loosed, so that he could again stand and confront his rebellious brothers. With the intervention of other family members, the rebellious brothers were prevented from killing Nephi. Eventually, the whole group continued their journey from the land of Jerusalem to meet Lehi and Sariah in the wilderness, where they dwelt for a period of time, offering sacrifice (1 Nephi 7:17-22), receiving many prophetic revelations (1 Nephi 8:1-9:1; 10:1-16:6, 8) and marrying the single males to the single females within the group (1 Nephi, preface; 16:7).
22. Then, at the command of the Lord and in a south-southeast direction set by the Lord, the extended family began their journey toward the land of promise without any murmuring to return being recorded by Nephi (1 Nephi 16:9-12).
23. **Some time after Jeremiah was thrown into the cistern in the court of the guard house, Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian servant of Zedekiah, saved Jeremiah's life by convincing Zedekiah to release the prophet from the cistern and return him to the safety of the court of the guard house, where the prophet again became available for a secret interview with Zedekiah (Jeremiah 38:7-26). There Jeremiah remained until the city fell to the Babylonians (Jeremiah 38:28-39:14).**
24. After making three treks, two of which involved many days of travel in the wilderness, Lehi and his followers reached another camp where they tarried. About that time, Ishmael died and was buried in a place called Nahom (1 Nephi 16:33-34). The mourning for Ishmael and the difficulties of the journey (particularly hunger) led to murmuring against Lehi and Nephi, with the daughters of Ishmael expressing their desire to return to Jerusalem. Laman attempted to convince the others that they should kill Lehi and Nephi. The voice of the Lord came to them and chastened the rebellious ones. The Lord then blessed them with food, so they would not perish (1 Nephi 16:35-39). The wilderness journey began again (this time in a nearly eastward direction), with the women bearing children in the wilderness after leaving the area near Nahom (1 Nephi 17:1).
25. **The Babylonians defeated the Egyptians as prophesied (Jeremiah 21:1-10; 34; Ezekiel 29:1-16; 30:20-26; 31) and the siege of Jerusalem was re-imposed. The city wall was breached in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. Executions followed and the city was torched. Then the walls were torn down and more exiles were taken to Babylonia (Jeremiah 39:4-6; 52:5-7, 12-15, 24-27). Nephi's prophecy of destruction for the people of Jerusalem (1 Nephi 7:13-14) was fulfilled immediately after Lehi's escape from the city (2 Nephi 25:10).**
26. After eight years of sojourn in the wilderness (1 Nephi 17:2-4), the travelers reached a seashore abundant with fruit and wild honey. They called this stopping place "Bountiful." In writing of their time in Bountiful, Nephi recorded a message that seems to have been

received from the Lord earlier in the journey, part of which was that their faith would be tested and, after they reached the promised land, they would know that the Lord delivered them from destruction and brought them out of the land of Jerusalem (1 Nephi 17:12-14).

27. In Bountiful, Nephi received a revelation from the Lord to build a ship (1 Nephi 17:7-11). His brothers derided this idea, complaining that Lehi's foolishness brought them out of the land of Jerusalem and Nephi's imaginations would waste their time in Bountiful attempting to build a ship. As part of this murmuring, his brothers complained that their women had toiled in pregnancy and they bore children in the wilderness and suffered everything, but death; and it would have been better that they died at Jerusalem rather than to have suffered their afflictions in the wilderness. They claimed that the people in the land of Jerusalem were righteous and judged unfairly by their father; if the family had stayed in the land of Jerusalem, they might have been happy, and enjoyed their possessions and the land of their inheritance (1 Nephi 17:16-22).
28. As part of Nephi's reply to his brothers, he relied on the pattern of the exodus from bondage in Egypt and the murmuring that occurred then; nonetheless, the children of Israel "were led forth by [God's] matchless power into the land of promise" (1 Nephi 17:40-42). Then Nephi said, "And now, after all these things, the time has come that [the people at Jerusalem] have become wicked, yea, nearly unto ripeness; and I know not but they are at this day about to be destroyed; for I know that the day must surely come that they must be destroyed, save a few only, who shall be led away into captivity. Wherefore, the Lord commanded my father that he should depart into the wilderness; and the Jews also sought to take away his life" (1 Nephi 17:43-44). Even at this point, the family had heard no reliable news of the city's destruction.
29. After building the ship and sailing to the promised land (1 Nephi 18:1-23), they settled in an abundant land (1 Nephi 18:24-25). Lehi gathered his people and reminded them of the great things the Lord had done in bringing them out of the land of Jerusalem (2 Nephi 1:1). He reminded them how merciful the Lord had been warning them to flee from the land of Jerusalem and bringing them to the promised land, a land choice above all other lands. And he bore witness from his vision that they would have perished if they had stayed for the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Nephi 1:3-4).
30. **As noted above, many hundreds of years after Lehi left Jerusalem, Mormon wrote the preface of the book of Third Nephi. He mistakenly identified the year when Lehi left the city of Jerusalem as the first year of the reign of Zedekiah (3 Nephi, preface), perhaps in reliance on passages he read in the small plates (Words of Mormon 1:3-7), such as 1 Nephi 1:4 and 5:11-13. Such inadvertent errors are common in human communication, for which reason Mormon's son, Moroni, noted that they might appear in the Book of Mormon: "And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ" (Book of Mormon, title page).**