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The Editor's Notebook

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Title The Editor's Notebook

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Abstract Introduction to the current issue.

THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

At the Lord's command, Lehi, Sariah, and their children departed Jerusalem and headed for their new world. Ishmael and his family joined them soon afterward. Latter-day Saints are aware that this exodus narrated in the early pages of 1 Nephi involved travels in the Arabian Peninsula. Many, however, are less familiar with the route taken and the circumstances and duration of the stops along the way.

This issue of the *Journal* provides an up-to-date discussion of the correspondence between Nephi's account and the real-world setting of the trip that he and his family took through ancient Arabia. As it turns out, there are amazing correlations between the account of the land travels and shipbuilding that Nephi provides in 1 Nephi 2–18 and locations now known in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Oman. The authors of the main articles in this issue have pursued this topic further than anyone before them, drawing on scripture and other written records as well as personally exploring areas of the Arabian Peninsula.

Our issue begins with a reminiscence by Lynn Hilton. Lynn and Hope Hilton were the first Latter-day Saints to visit the general area of Nephi's "Bountiful." Authors Warren Aston, Richard Wellington and George Potter, and Kent Brown then describe at some length specific possibilities for the trek of Lehi's family from Jerusalem to Bountiful and what they would have encountered en route. A note of caution: one cannot read just one of these three articles and have a complete picture of the complexities and possibilities of the situation. These authors provide the best thinking currently available on the various aspects of the journey from Jerusalem to Bountiful, but while they agree on some points, they disagree on others. All are working with the same textual data, but each gives greater or lesser weight to, or interprets somewhat differently, the available evidence. This issue of the *Journal* provides a marvelous opportunity to compare and contrast the assertions of these author-explorers. Since no author had space to write all he could have, the endnotes should be consulted for further discussion and for citations for additional

reading, including the authors' own recent or soon-to-be published works.

To help readers with the process of evaluating the assertions of these authors, two respondents—David LeFevre and Jeffrey Chadwick—provide their own assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the articles by Aston, Wellington and Potter, and Brown. The articles by Revell Phillips and Stephen Carr further augment our understanding of the Arabian context of the travels of Nephi and his family. Daniel McKinlay's time line helpfully tracks the progress of Latter-day Saint research on this topic. Items by Nancy Hilton and John Sorenson that appear in regular departments of the *Journal* round out the offering in this very full issue.

There will continue to be differing views on how to best "fill in the blanks" on those points for which Nephi provides little or no information concerning his family's wilderness trek through Arabia. Latter-day Saint authors and explorers will continue seeking to comprehend details relevant to Nephi's account. For the here and now, however, this issue of the *Journal* provides a great summary of the current thinking on this topic from the Latter-day Saints who have done the most to study and understand this pivotal migration at the beginning of the Book of Mormon. We now have a remarkably good idea of key locations on the route taken by the families of Lehi and Sariah and Ishmael. I invite you to read, consider, and experience anew this fascinating and significant journey.

Dana M. Pike, guest editor