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THE BOOK OF MORMON WITNESSES AND THEIR CHALLENGE TO SECULARISM

Daniel C. Peterson

There has been much comment recently on the growth in numbers of the religious “nones.” Not all of them are actually non-theists, but secularism or naturalism is undoubtedly on the rise — and Latter-day Saints have not escaped damage from the trend. Several recent books and articles have sought to help their readers live with doubt, cope with uncertainty, or find value or joy in the Mormon community even when some, most, or perhaps even all of its founding narrative has come to seem untenable. I believe, however, that naturalism should be directly challenged and that the Book of Mormon is among our best tools for doing so. And the Witnesses to the Book of Mormon are, in turn, some of our best evidences for its truth — and the only “secular” evidence that the Lord himself has provided.

The title of this lecture series, *Reason for Hope: Responding to a Secular World*, presupposes that the world — or at least *our* world, the affluent West — is largely and perhaps increasingly secular.¹ This seems to me a reasonable assumption. It also invites participating lecturers to respond to the challenge posed by secularism.

Of late, several books and articles published for a Latter-day Saint audience have sought to help their readers live with doubt, cope with uncertainty, or

1. These remarks were delivered at a 16 November 2017 symposium, sponsored by Brigham Young University’s Wheatley Institution, dedicated to the topic *Reason for Hope: Responding to a Secular World*. Other participants in the symposium were Julie B. Beck, former general president of the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Jenet Jacob Erickson, formerly a member of the faculty in BYU’s School of Family Life; and emeritus BYU professor of philosophy C. Terry Warner. The talk is presented here as it was given, which accounts for its somewhat non-academic character and rather loose footnoting.

find value or joy in the Mormon community, even when some or most or perhaps even all of its founding narrative has come to seem untenable.

Such approaches can obviously be helpful to different people in different circumstances. But I see no reason to surrender or to despair or to be resigned — I don't regard palliative care as our only option; I think full and robust spiritual health remains an option for everybody — and so my approach today will be quite different. I intend to challenge secularism directly. Moreover, I propose to do that by means of a resource given to us, in my judgment, very deliberately by God himself.

"Be ready," says 1 Peter 3:15, "always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

Like the empty tomb on the first Easter morning — for which, by the way, I think the secular evidence is surprisingly solid — the Book of Mormon represents a concrete, tangible challenge to secular or naturalistic understandings of reality. It exists, and its existence requires explanation.

There are many arguments available in support of the historical authenticity (and hence the divine authority) of the Book of Mormon — ancient Middle Eastern parallels, corroborating linguistic features, elements of Mesoamerican archaeology, and so forth — and I myself have written extensively on such topics. I think they're very much worth pursuing, and they can often be quite powerful.

(Lately, to name just a few recent items, I'm especially intrigued by the research of Royal Skousen and Stan Carmack demonstrating the humanly inexplicable presence of Early Modern English in the Book of Mormon; by the work of Brian Stubbs on apparent Egyptian and Semitic influence on the Uto-Aztecan language family; and by Matthew Bowen's examination of Semitic wordplays in Book of Mormon names — all of which appear or are discussed in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*.)

But, if I may so term it, only one "secular" or "objective" argument for the Book of Mormon directly involves divine aid. Only one that, from the beginning, was directly ordered by God. I'm referring, of course, to two solemn declarations — "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" and "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses" — that have been published with the Book of Mormon since 1830.

Significantly, both of the declarations — of the Three and of the Eight Witnesses — and both taken together eliminate the possibility that all of this rests merely on Joseph Smith's imagination, whether that imagination is deemed deranged or deceptive. He isn't the only person who claimed to perceive these things. Others claimed to have seen, and in some cases to have handled, the related physical artifacts as well.

Joseph grasped the import of this point very clearly. In her *History*, Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, records his relief after the Three Witnesses had their experience:

Joseph threw himself down beside me, and exclaimed, ... "you do not know how happy I am: the Lord has now caused the plates to be shown to three more besides myself. They have seen an angel ... and they will have to bear witness to the truth of what I have said, for now they know for themselves, that I do not go about to deceive the people, and I feel as if I was relieved of a burden which was almost too heavy for me to bear."²

Very importantly, however, the two statements — of the Three and the Eight — are distinctly different both in their tone and in what they describe.

In the first, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris affirm that they've seen the plates from which Joseph translated the Book of Mormon. But they also claim to have seen the angel who brought those plates and to have heard the voice of God himself testifying to the truth of the volume and commanding the witnesses to testify of its truth. Their statement is overtly and strongly religious in tone.

By contrast, the statement of the Eight Witnesses is strikingly sober, legalistic (note, for example, its three rather dry references to "the said Smith"), quite reserved (e.g. "the plates ... have the appearance of gold" as well as "the appearance of ancient work"), and almost distinctly nonreligious in tone. No divine voice is mentioned nor is any angelic appearance. God is invoked, but solely as guarantor of the truth of their affirmation, rather in the manner of courtroom testimony or the pronouncing of a solemn oath. They too claim to have seen the plates; unlike the three, however, they also claim to have "hefted" those plates, and to have "handled" them one by one.

What is the point of having these two distinct declarations?

One thing, at least, is clear: They make the task of coming up with a single naturalistic explanation of the witnesses considerably more difficult.

Someone determined to reject the testimony of the Three Witnesses, for example, might argue that their experience was merely "visionary," and, thus — if visions are decreed to be impossible — the product of hallucination or overactive imaginations. And the same would have to be said of Mary Whitmer, the mother of the witnesses David, Jacob,

2. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 453.

John, Christian, and Peter Whitmer Jr., who also saw the plates and, evidently, an angel.

However, although some have also sought to dismiss the experience of the Eight Witnesses as merely visionary (which, they insist, naturally means merely imaginary), it occurred in broad daylight and remains stubbornly matter-of-fact.³ It seems to have included no explicitly supernatural elements.

In late 1839, Hyrum Smith wrote an account for the *Times and Seasons* newspaper covering, among other things, his four months of hungry and cold imprisonment in Missouri's ironically named Liberty Jail, under recurring threats of execution, while his family and fellow members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were being driven from their homes during the wintertime:

"I thank God," he told the Saints,

that I felt a determination to die, rather than deny the things which my eyes had seen, which my hands had handled, and which I had borne testimony to. ... I can assure my beloved brethren that I was enabled to bear as strong a testimony, when nothing but death presented itself, as ever I did in my life.⁴

One might dismiss this declaration of willingness to die for his testimony as an empty boast, mere retrospective bravado, were it not for the fact that, fewer than five years later in Illinois, fully understanding the risk, he did in fact go voluntarily to Carthage Jail. There, with his prophet-brother, he died a martyr — which, in ancient Greek, means "witness" — in a hail of bullets.

The accounts left behind by the Eight Witnesses are replete not only with claims to have "seen and hefted" the plates, to have turned their individual leaves and examined their engravings, but also with estimates of their weight, descriptions of their physical form and the rings that bound them, and reports of their approximate dimensions as well.

Wilhelm Poulson's 1878 interview with John Whitmer provides an excellent summary:

I — Did you handle the plates with your hands? He — I did so!

I — Then they were a material substance? He — Yes, as

3. See Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Attempts to Redefine the Experience of the Eight Witnesses," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/1 (2005); Steven C. Harper, "Evaluating the Book of Mormon Witnesses," *Religious Educator* 11/2 (2010).

4. Hyrum Smith, "To the Saints Scattered Abroad," *Times and Seasons* 1 (December 1839): 20.

material as anything can be.

I — They were heavy to lift? He — Yes, and you know gold is a heavy metal, they were very heavy.

I — How big were the leaves? He — So far as I can recollect, 8 by 6 or 7 inches.

I — Were the leaves thick? He — Yes, just so thick, that characters could be engraven on both sides.

I — How were the leaves joined together? He — In three rings, each one in the shape of a D with the straight line towards the centre. ...

I — Did you see them covered with a cloth? He — No. He handed them uncovered into our hands, and we turned the leaves sufficient to satisfy us.⁵

William Smith, who knew the Eight Witnesses well — his father and two of his brothers were among them — explained “they not only saw with their eyes but handled with their hands the said record.”⁶ Daniel Tyler heard Samuel Smith testify that “He knew his brother Joseph had the plates, for the prophet had shown them to him, and he had handled them and seen the engravings thereon.”⁷

Those who seek to dismiss the testimony of the Eight Witnesses must, on the whole, flatly brush aside what those Witnesses actually and very forcefully said.

If their worldview demands it, though, many skeptics are admittedly up to the task of dismissing the experience of all of the witnesses as merely hallucinatory: “Once you eliminate the impossible,” Sherlock Holmes explains in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1890 story “The Sign of the Four,” “whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.” And for certain anti-theists, visions and the supernatural — and ancient Nephite gold plates — are flatly impossible.

In other words, if we respect the primary historical sources, the explanation that skeptics favor for the Three Witnesses — hallucination

5. Cited by Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Provo, UT: Seventy’s Mission Bookstore, 1981), 25.

6. Anderson, “Attempts to Redefine the Experience of the Eight Witnesses,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/1 (2005), 29.

7. Cited in Richard L. Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 140.

or imagination — simply can't work for the Eight Witnesses, nor for several ancillary witnesses.

Lucy Mack Smith “examined” the Urim and Thummim and “found that it consisted of two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles.”⁸

Describing the Nephite breastplate, she recalled that

It was wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief, so thin that I could see the glistening metal, and ascertain its proportions without any difficulty.

It was concave on one side and convex on the other, and extended from the neck downwards, as far as the centre of the stomach of a man of extraordinary size. It had four straps of the same material, for the purpose of fastening it to the breast, two of which ran back to go over the shoulders, and the other two were designed to fasten to the hips. They were just the width of two of my fingers, (for I measured them,) and they had holes in the ends of them, to be convenient in fastening.⁹

William Smith, not one of the Eight Witnesses, repeatedly told of his own experience with the plates:

I handled them and hefted them while wrapped in a tow frock and judged them to have weighed about sixty pounds. I could tell they were plates of some kind and that they were fastened together by rings running through the back.¹⁰

Joseph's wife Emma and his sister Katharine both had to move the plates about on more than one occasion. Later, too, Emma testified that

The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one sometimes thumb the edges of a book.¹¹

8. Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 379.

9. *Ibid.*, 390.

10. Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, 24.

11. Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints' Advocate* (2 October 1879): 52, 289–90.

A conscientious unbeliever is required, accordingly, to assume fake artifacts, for the creation of which absolutely no evidence exists — and no sign, among Joseph Smith’s associates, of the required fabrication skills. Moreover, as later statements from the Three Witnesses indicate, they saw not only the plates but various other objects (e.g., the Liahona, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim and breastplate) that only an expert metalworker could have forged.

But let’s return to the suggestion that the Three Witnesses were merely hallucinating. Dismissing even the testimony of the three is more difficult than some seem to imagine, for their experience didn’t occur all at one time. To the contrary, it occurred on two separate occasions. And something experienced by three distinct persons besides Joseph Smith and — since Martin Harris received his witness separately from Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer — at two distinct times and in two distinct locations is substantially harder to brush off than an experience claimed by only a single individual.

After all, as the evangelical philosopher Gary Habermas has observed regarding Christ’s post-resurrection appearance to the eleven apostles, “Hallucinations are private events observed by one person alone. Two people cannot see the same hallucination, let alone eleven.”

Please note, by the way, that Professor Habermas’s comment applies remarkably well to the official Book of Mormon Witnesses, of whom there were — perhaps not coincidentally — exactly eleven.

In support of his position, Habermas cites personal correspondence “from a well-published psychologist,” who writes:

Hallucinations are individual occurrences. By their very nature only one person can see a given hallucination at a time. They certainly are not something which can be seen by a group of people. Neither is it possible that one person could somehow induce an hallucination in somebody else. Since an hallucination exists only in this subjective, personal sense, it is obvious that others cannot witness it.¹²

12. Gary R. Habermas and Antony G. N. Flew, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? The Resurrection Debate* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 50. The “well-published psychologist” is Gary R. Collins, cited from personal correspondence with Gary R. Habermas, dated 21 February 1977. See also J. P. Brady, “The Veridicality of Hypnotic, Visual Hallucinations,” in Wolfram Keup, *Origin and Mechanisms of Hallucinations* (New York: Plenum Press, 1970), 181; Weston La Barre, “Anthropological Perspectives on Hallucination and Hallucinogens,” in

“Hallucination is a solitary phenomenon,” agrees the Catholic writer Karl Keating. “In medical literature, there are no records of even two people having the same hallucination at the same time.”¹³

Perhaps I can illustrate my point with a quotation from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and his bride-to-be, Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, have just heard the tale told by the lovers Hermia, Lysander, Helena, and Demetrius, of strange transformations and fairies in the woods. Hippolyta is impressed and puzzled by the story:

Hippolyta: “’Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.”
 Theseus: “More strange than true: I never may believe
 These antique fables, nor these fairy toys. . .”
 Hippolyta: “But all the story of the night told over,
 And all their minds transfigured so together,
 More witnesseth than fancy’s images
 And grows to something of great constancy.”¹⁴

Now *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is obviously fiction, and fiction of the most fantastic kind. Still, within the framework of the play, we know that the lovers’ story is actually true and that Oberon, Titania, Puck, and the others were in fact active realities. Hippolyta’s point is an entirely sound one. The consistency of the tale told by various witnesses indicates that it rests upon more than mere imagination.

William E. McLellin was chosen as one of the Twelve Apostles in 1835 but was excommunicated from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1838. However, he never abandoned his faith in the Book of Mormon, and one of the pillars of his faith rested upon his early, searching interviews with the witnesses to that book. He was a highly intelligent man (and, it seems, a rather irascible one), and he was very careful and intent upon getting at the truth.

McLellin left a number of statements on his investigations. This one comes from a previously unpublished manuscript he wrote between January 1871 and January 1872. I find it fascinating and, since I don’t think it’s very well known, I’ll quote it at length:

Hallucinations: Behavior, Experience and Theory (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), 9–10.

13. Karl Keating, *What Catholics Really Believe: 52 Answers to Common Misconceptions About the Faith* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 73–4.

14. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, V.i.1–4, 23–6.

In 1833, when mobbing reigned triumphant in Jackson Co. Mo. I and O. Cowdery fled from our homes, for fear of personal violence on Saturday the 20th day of July. The mob dispersed, agreeing to meet again on the next Tuesday. They offered eighty dollars reward for any one who would deliver Cowdery or McLellan in Independence on Tuesday. On Mond[a]y I slipped down into the Whitmer's settlement, and there in the lonely woods I met with David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery. I said to them, "brethren I have never seen an open vision in my life, but you men say you have, and therefore you positively know. Now you know that our lives are in danger every hour, if the mob can only ~~only~~ catch us. Tell me in the fear of God, is that book of Mormon true? Cowdery looked at me with solemnity depicted in his face, and said, "Brother William, God sent his holy angel to declare the truth of the translation of it to us, and therefore we know. And though the mob kill us, yet we must die declaring its truth." David said, "Oliver has told you the solemn truth, for we could not be deceived. I most truly declare ~~declare~~ to you its truth!!" Said I, boys I believe you. I can see no object for you to tell me false <hood> now, when our lives are endangered. Eight men testify also to handling that sacred pile of plates, from which Joseph Smith <read off the> translation that heavenly Book.

And he continues:

One circumstance I'll relate of one of these eight witnesses. While the mob was raging in Jackson Co. Mo. in 1833 some young men ran down Hiram Page <in the woods> one of the eight <witnesses,> and commenced beating and pounding him with whips and clubs. He begged, but there was no mercy. They said he was <a> damned Mormon, and they meant to beat him to death! But finally one then said to him, if you will deny that damned book, we will let you go. Said he, how can I deny what I know to be true? Then they pounded him again. When they thought he was about to breathe his last, they said to him, Now what do you think of your God, when he dont save you? Well said he, I believe in God-Well, said one of the most intelligent among them, I believe the damned fool will stick to it though we kill him. Let us let him go. But his life was nearly run out. He was confined to his bed for a length of

time. So much for a man who knows for himself. Knowledge is beyond faith or doubt. It is positive certainty.

I in company with <a> friend, <I> visited one of the eight witnesses <in 1869>—the only one who is now alive, and he bore a very lucid and rational testimony, and gave us many interesting particulars. He was a young man when he had those testimonies. He is ~~now~~ <was then> sixty eight years old, and still he is firm in his faith. Now I would ask what will I do with such a cloud of faithful witnesses, bearing such a rational and yet solemn testimony? These men while in the prime of life, saw the vision of the angel, and bore their testimony to all people. And eight men saw the plates, and handled them. Hence these men all knew the things they declared to be positively true. And that too while they were young, and now when old they declare the same things.¹⁵

William McLellin was closely acquainted with the Smith and Whitmer families from the time of his 1831 conversion. He carefully questioned them about the Book of Mormon. In 1880, long alienated from Mormonism, he still asserted their credibility: “I believed them then and I believe them yet.”¹⁶

The Book of Mormon has sometimes been explained as the product not of simple fraud perpetrated by one fiendishly, peerlessly clever individual (Joseph Smith), but of a more complex, collective fraud. We might call this notion “Collective Deceit” (deception, that is, by Joseph Smith, the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, and presumably others).

This hypothesis would explain the “supernatural” events associated with the recovery of the Book of Mormon by declaring, simply, that they never happened. Everybody testifying to them must have been lying to further a grand conspiracy.

15. These paragraphs come from Mitchell K. Schaefer, ed., *William E. McLellin's Lost Manuscript* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2012), 166–67. The editorial marks (and McLellin's curious misspelling of his own name) and the occasional omitted word are all faithfully reproduced and double-checked. The witness whom McLellin visited in 1869 must have been John Whitmer, who died in 1878.

16. Published in Larry C. Porter, “William E. McLellan's Testimony of the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 10/4 (Summer 1970): 485–87.

However, such an explanation collides with abundant evidence regarding the character of Joseph Smith.¹⁷ Moreover, it clashes directly with what we know about the character of the witnesses and their subsequent behavior.¹⁸

Many of those who interviewed David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses, over his last decades noted the reverential awe with which he regarded the manuscript of the Book of Mormon that he had in his possession. He refused to part with it for any price, although he was by no means wealthy, and both he and his family felt not only that it was divinely protected but that they would share in that divine protection so long as they owned it.¹⁹ Whether their sense of the manuscript's near-supernatural potency was misplaced or not is irrelevant to the issue at hand: Such attitudes are impossible to square with cynicism and conscious deception.

David Whitmer was once confronted by a mob of 400-500 Missourians who demanded, on pain of death, that he deny his published testimony of the Book of Mormon. Instead, he forcefully reasserted it. Neither he nor the other witnesses come across as cynical conspirators.²⁰

There is simply no sign of dishonesty and no evidence for a conspiracy among Joseph Smith's associates — and, in the case of a group so large (eleven official witnesses, plus Mary Whitmer, Emma Smith, Lucy Mack Smith and William Smith), it would have been inconceivably difficult to keep such a conspiracy secret. Particularly so since the alleged conspirators suffered a great deal (including death, in a few cases) for their supposed plot, gained nothing, were (in many cases) alienated from Joseph Smith and, collectively, lived several decades after the death of the Prophet, and were entirely isolated from any supportive or ego-gratifying community.

As the lawyer James H. Moyle, who had interviewed David Whitmer, justly observed, "If there had been fraud in this matter Joseph Smith would have cultivated those men and kept them with him at any cost. The truth is that when they became unworthy they were excommunicated, even though they were witnesses to the Book of Mormon."²¹

17. See, for example, the materials gathered by Mark McConkie in his 2003 book *Remembering Joseph*.

18. The relevant information is most conveniently summarized in various works by Richard Lloyd Anderson, including his classic *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*.

19. See Lyndon W. Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, UT: Grandin Book Company, 1991).

20. See generally Anderson's *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*.

21. As cited in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 169.

In a letter dated 22 September 1899, David Whitmer's grandson, private secretary, and business partner George Schweich recalled of his grandfather, "I have begged him to unfold the fraud in the case and he had all to gain and nothing to lose but to speak the word if he thought so — but he has described the scene to me many times, of his vision about noon in an open pasture — there is only one explanation barring an actual miracle and that is this — If that vision was not real it was HYPNOTISM, it was real to grandfather IN FACT."²²

I've argued that hallucination, whether individual or collective, cannot explain the facts surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. But the facts are heavily against conscious conspiracy, too. As the early 19th-century Mormon convert John Corrill remarked, "As to its being a revelation from God, eleven persons besides Smith bore positive testimony of its truth. After getting acquainted with them, I was unable to impeach their testimony, and consequently thought that it was as consistent to give credit to them as credit the writings of the New Testament, when I had never seen the authors nor the original copy."²³

What are the principal objections to the witness' testimonies? I routinely encounter the confident declaration that the witnesses to the Book of Mormon didn't really see or touch anything at all and didn't actually claim to have seen or touched anything. They only "saw" the plates with their "spiritual eyes," I'm assured, and "spiritual eyes," to them, means "in their imaginations."

I'll leave aside the question of whether it's even remotely plausible that the witnesses sacrificed so very much for something they recognized as merely imaginary. Let's look at their explicit verbal testimonies. Several of the eleven official witnesses were obviously confronted during their lifetimes with accusations that they had merely hallucinated, and they repeatedly rejected such proposed explanations.

In fact, David Whitmer, one of the initial Three Witnesses, could easily have been addressing today's skeptics when he declared "I was not under any hallucination, nor was I deceived! I saw with these eyes and I heard with these ears! I know whereof I speak!"²⁴

It's difficult to imagine how he could have been any clearer.

22. Capital letters in the original, in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 255–56.

23. Cited by Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, 188–89.

24. Interview with Joseph Smith III, et al. (Richmond, Missouri, July 1884), originally published in *The Saints' Herald* (28 January 1936) and reprinted in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 134–35 (emphasis in the original). Compare Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 92, 188, 192–93.

And listen, once more, to Hyrum Smith's declaration about the months he spent in Liberty Jail, condemned to death: "I thank God that I felt a determination to die, rather than deny the things which my eyes had seen, which my hands had handled."²⁵

Some years ago while driving through the countryside just north of Kansas City, Missouri, my wife and I saw a number of banners hanging at various Protestant churches, inviting people to join tours to the Holy Land. I lead tours to biblical sites myself; I recognize that visiting such places has enormous spiritual and educational value. However, western Missouri itself is the burial place of several much more recent eyewitnesses who are, in important ways, comparable to the early disciples of Jesus. They too saw. They too knew for themselves.

And with the plates, as with the incarnation of Christ himself, we have a fully material, entirely tangible incursion of the divine into our mundane world, a very palpable refutation of the secular worldview.

But aren't such testimonies a dime a dozen? Isn't there an obvious parallel in the case of James J. Strang, the leader of a short-lived splinter group after the murder of Joseph Smith?

Let's have a look.²⁶

Though little remembered today, James Jesse Strang campaigned seriously to lead the LDS Church after Joseph Smith's 1844 assassination.

When the general membership rejected the obscure new convert's claim that a secret letter had appointed him as Joseph Smith's successor, Strang started his own sect, ultimately headquartered on Beaver Island, Michigan. Like Joseph, he eventually claimed to have translated ancient metal plates and provided eleven corroborating eyewitnesses.

By 1856, when he himself was murdered, he had several thousand followers, including members of Joseph Smith's family, former apostles, and Book of Mormon witnesses.

Incidentally, the fact that some Book of Mormon witnesses credited Strang argues for their sincerity: Had they been knowing perpetrators of a fraud with Joseph Smith, they would likely have been far more skeptical of Strang.

25. Smith, "To the Saints Scattered Abroad," 20.

26. What follows is drawn from Milo Milton Quaife, *The Kingdom of Saint James: A Narrative of the Mormons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1930); Roger Van Noord, *The King of Beaver Island* (Champaign/Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

But does the fact that Strang had witnesses like Joseph's mean that, for consistency's sake, modern believers in Mormonism must either accept Strang's claims or reject both Joseph and Strang?

No. Because the two sets of witnesses and their experiences were very different.

The two sets of inscribed plates that Strang claimed to have found in Wisconsin and Michigan beginning in 1845 almost certainly existed. Milo Quaife's early, standard biography of Strang reflects that, while Strang's angelic visitations "may have had only a subjective existence in the brain of the man who reported them, the metallic plates possessed a very material objective reality."

And they were almost certainly forgeries.

The first set, the three "Voree" or "Rajah Manchou" plates, were dug up by four "witnesses" whom Strang had taken to the plates' burial place. Illustrated and inscribed on both sides, the Rajah Manchou plates were roughly 1.5 by 2.75 inches in size — small enough to fit in the palm of a hand or to carry in a pocket.

Among the many who saw them was Stephen Post, who reported that they were brass and, indeed, that they resembled the French brass used in familiar kitchen kettles. "With all the faith & confidence that I could exercise," he wrote, "all that I could realize was that Strang made the plates himself, or at least that it was possible that he made them." One source reports that most of the four witnesses to the Rajah Manchou plates ultimately repudiated their testimonies.

The 18 "Plates of Laban," likewise of brass and each about 7.5 by 9 inches, were first mentioned in 1849 and were seen by seven witnesses in 1851. These witnesses' testimony was published as a preface to "The Book of the Law of the Lord," which Strang said he derived from the "Plates of Laban." (He appears to have begun the "translation" at least as early as April 1849. An 84-page version appeared in 1851; by 1856, it had reached 350 pages.) Strang's witnesses report seeing the plates but mention nothing miraculous. Nor did Strang supply any additional supporting testimony comparable to that of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

One of the witnesses to the "Plates of Laban," Samuel P. Bacon, eventually denied the inspiration of Strang's movement and denounced it as mere "human invention." Another, Samuel Graham, later claimed that he had actually assisted Strang in the creation of the plates.

"We can hardly escape the conclusion," writes Quaife, "that Strang knowingly fabricated and planted them for the purpose of duping his credulous followers"; and, accordingly, that "Strang's prophetic career was

a false and impudent imposture.” A more recent biographer, Roger Van Noord, concludes that “based on the evidence, it is probable that Strang — or someone under his direction — manufactured the letter of appointment and the brass plates to support his claim to be a prophet and to sell land at Voree. If this scenario is correct, Strang’s advocacy of himself as a prophet was more than suspect, but no psychological delusion.”

Thus, Strang’s plates were much less numerous than those of the Book of Mormon, his witnesses saw nothing supernatural, and his translation required the better part of a decade rather than a little more than two months. (Quite unlike the semiliterate Joseph Smith, Strang was well-read. He had been an editor and lawyer before his involvement with Mormonism.) Perhaps most strikingly, unlike the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, at least some of Strang’s witnesses later denied their testimonies.

The contrasts work very much in Joseph Smith’s favor.

I’ve only begun to scratch the surface of the case that can be made for the reliability of the Book of Mormon witnesses. Our time is far too short to do the matter justice.

But I want to indicate very clearly what their testimony entails, if it’s accepted. For one thing, acceptance of their accounts entails that there were tangible, real, material plates — which effectively eliminates the stance that the Book of Mormon represents only Joseph Smith’s imagination. And, since collective hallucination is vanishingly unlikely, it means either that they were dupes of a fraud or themselves partners in one. But what we know about their characters and of their biographies, to say nothing of Joseph’s, makes the idea that they were engaged in a conspiracy to commit fraud extremely difficult to maintain. Nor is there anything to suggest that Joseph or anybody in his circle had the ability to manufacture bogus plates.

Let’s return for a moment to the dictum of Sherlock Holmes: “Once you eliminate the impossible,” he said, “whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”

If theism and revelation aren’t deemed altogether impossible, the testimonies of the witnesses must be taken very seriously.

I realize that rejection of Joseph Smith doesn’t require the abandonment of theism. There are many other options on the market. But let’s close by considering what is involved in opting for a completely secular worldview. What is that alternative?

“Apatheism” is the witty term coined for the complete indifference to great issues of faith and religion that’s fashionable in some circles.

"If there were a God," a supremely complacent atheist once told me online, "I think (s)he'd enjoy hanging out with me — perhaps sipping on a fine Merlot under the night sky while devising a grand unified theory."

"If you live in this very moment," another atheist wrote to me a year later, "you'll find happiness. You realize that life isn't about getting to the shore. It's about enjoying the feel of the water glide against your skin, feeling the power in your arms as you systematically push water behind you, deeply breathing the fresh salty air, feeling a moment of awe as you turn your head and see the sunset, and feeling the love that you share with your fellow swimmers. This life is a precious thing in and of itself. There may be something beyond it, there may not. But this life is wonderful enough."

I understand his attitude; things can be very good indeed for those who win life's lottery. But it hasn't been so good for many, and there's nobody for whom it's always grand.

Speaking very broadly and taking the religious or theistic and the naturalistic or materialistic positions in their most generic sense, it must be said that, if it's true, the naturalistic position is very bad news for the generality of humankind, whereas the religious position, if true, is deeply good news.

This isn't to say that atheists can't point to and enjoy human goodness and love, the satisfactions of family life and community, various physical pleasures, aesthetic appreciation, creative expression, the glories of nature, the quest for scientific understanding, food, sports, and entertainment. They surely can, and all these unquestionably are, or can be, good.

But the simple fact is that a substantial proportion of humanity has been largely denied access to such things. Perhaps even, speaking historically, an overwhelming majority. Those who profit from material prosperity in stable societies, who benefit from adequate nutrition and decent medical care, who enjoy reasonably good health and have received fairly solid educations, who have been born into rich and relatively healthy cultures — those who, in the late British philosopher John Hick's phrase, "have been lucky in the lottery of life" — have a shot at more or less happy lives.

Even in such cases, though, happiness is scarcely guaranteed.

"I will say nothing against the course of my existence," the great German poet and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote in 1824. "But at bottom it has been nothing but pain and burden, and I can affirm that during the whole of my 75 years, I have not had four weeks of

genuine well-being. It is but the perpetual rolling of a rock that must be raised up again forever.”²⁷

Even the most fortunate of humans will have their illnesses, their sorrows and bereavements, their frustrations and missed opportunities, and their ruptured relationships, although these will befall them in a generally positive context. They will inevitably encounter pain, sorrow, grief, disappointment, despair, frustration, sickness, aging, and, finally, death. But there will be some compensating satisfactions.

For those, by contrast, who suffer from congenitally poor health, whose lives are blighted by plague or war or political oppression, who are mired in hopeless poverty, there is no favorable context to which they can return. There will be relatively few compensations — and perhaps essentially none at all.

Any atheist or humanist, to be realistic, must acknowledge this fact. But it isn’t often that such atheists or humanists, at least in the West — belonging, as they do, to the well-educated, comfortable, lucky elite — seem to realize the depths of the pointlessness and the hopelessly inescapable misery to which their sunny nihilism condemns the majority of their fellow human beings.

“If I were to die now,” commented a nineteenth-century atheist cited by the great Harvard philosopher and psychologist William James,

being in a healthy condition for my age, both mentally and physically, I would just as lief, yes, rather, die with a hearty enjoyment of music, sport, or any other rational pastime. As a timepiece stops, we die — there being no immortality in either case.²⁸

But most people don’t die suddenly. Most of us don’t pass painlessly from robust health into oblivion while accompanied by a first-rate string quartet. Rather — whether for a brief period or over the course of a lengthy decline — they suffer physical deterioration and the loss of mental faculties. And, for all too many even today, this concludes lifetimes of frustration, hunger, humiliation, pain, and injustice.

Perhaps 40 percent of the population of classical Athens were slaves. In ancient wars, husbands and fathers were often put to the sword; their women and children were enslaved without rights. But urban slaves were

27. Cited at William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature, Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (New York and London: Longmans, Green, 1902), 137.

28. Cited at James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 92.

the lucky ones. Others went to the Athenian silver mines, where, rarely seeing the sun, they were harshly beaten, starved, and worked to death.

Nearby Sparta depended upon a population of “helots,” fellow Greeks — seven for every citizen — who farmed the city’s lands under continual military occupation. Sparta’s teenagers honed their military skills by roaming in gangs through the helots’ settlements, terrorizing them and destroying their hovels. And every year, somewhat in the spirit of *The Hunger Games*, Sparta’s rulers declared ritual war on the helots, murdering anybody who showed signs of leadership.

Such was life for many in classical Greece, at the fountainhead of Western civilization. And conditions surely weren’t better under the ancient Assyrians or Babylonians, or the medieval Huns and Mongols.

While comfortable people often observe that money doesn’t bring happiness, poverty and hunger make happiness very elusive. According to the United Nations World Food Programme, one in nine people is chronically undernourished, therefore lacking the energy and mental acuity needed for a full life. One quarter of those in sub-Saharan Africa suffer from malnutrition. More than three million children under the age of five die from malnourishment each year. And I’ve said nothing about the cruelty of oppressive armies and murderous tyrants.

In his 1870 *Grammar of Assent*, John Henry Newman quotes the words of a dying factory girl from a then-popular story:

I think if this should be the end of all, and if all I have been born for is just to work my heart and life away, and to sicken in this (dreary) place, with those millstones in my ears for ever, until I could scream out for them to stop and let me have a little piece of quiet, and with the fluff filling my lungs, until I thirst to death for one long deep breath of the clear air, and my mother gone, and I never able to tell her again how I loved her, and of all my troubles, — I think, if this life is the end, and there is no God to wipe away all tears from all eyes, I could go mad!²⁹

Even for fate’s most favored children, there will inevitably be regrets and areas of disappointment.

“Take the happiest man,” suggests William James, “the one most envied by the world, and in nine cases out of ten his inmost consciousness is one of failure. Either his ideals in the line of his achievements are pitched far higher than the achievements themselves, or else he has

29. John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979 [1870]), 247–48.

secret ideals of which the world knows nothing, and in regard to which he inwardly knows himself to be found wanting.”³⁰

None of this, of course, demonstrates that there is a God, nor that we are immortal, nor that a world of compensating rewards awaits us on the other side of the grave. But certainly it illustrates why the question of whether such a world exists is and ought to be of profound concern to normal people. “Apatheism” is an expression, it seems to me, of thoughtless complacency.

Moreover, increased secularization is likely to have negative consequences for the poor and disadvantaged even in this life.

For as long as I can remember, those who disagree with my fairly libertarian economic views have told me how much more they care about the poor than I do. And nonreligious people have assured me that, while I’m supposedly focused on some sort of illusory “pie in the sky when I die” and on “saving” others from mythical sufferings in a fairy-tale afterlife, they’re devoted to making life in this world, on this planet, tangibly better for everybody.

In my particular case, the critics may be right. They’re very likely far better people than I am — more charitable, kinder, more concerned for their fellow humans. However, unless they actually supply evidence to demonstrate it, recent research has made it much, much harder for secularists to preen themselves, as a class, on their superior compassion.

Arthur Brooks, formerly a professor of public administration in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University in New York and now president of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC, has studied patterns in charitable giving and service for many years and is widely recognized as perhaps the pre-eminent authority on the subject. Still, he reports that even he has been surprised by what he has found.³¹

Religious people, it turns out, give more to charity than do nonreligious people. They donate more money — and not merely to their churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. “Religious people are more charitable in every measurable nonreligious way — including secular donations, informal giving, and even acts of kindness and honesty — than secularists.” They’re more likely to give money to family and friends, and, when they do, to give larger amounts. They’re more likely to volunteer and to give blood. Even non-churchgoers, if they were

30. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 137.

31. The data here are taken from Arthur C. Brooks, *The Surprising Truth About Compassionate Conservatism: Who Really Cares* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

raised in religious households, are more likely to donate to charity than those who were not.

Not surprisingly, private charity in ever-more-secular Europe has plummeted — to the point, in some areas, almost of extinction. Brooks, who also argues that charitable giving is essential to a strong economy, points to polling data suggesting that Europeans are, according to their own reports, less happy with their lives than Americans are, and suggests that their unhappiness may be connected with their low rates of charity and volunteerism. Humans feel better when they give.

As befits a premier social scientist, Brooks concentrates heavily on multiple streams of contemporary statistical data to form his judgments. However, the historical record also seems to support the general conclusions of his very important book:

Rodney Stark, in an insightful 1996 study of *The Rise of Christianity*, has shown that the superior charity of the ancient Christians was a vital factor in the rapid growth of the early Christian movement. And, as an examination of the surviving sources demonstrates, even the pagans recognized that. “The impious Galileans support not only their poor, but ours as well,” lamented the fourth-century Roman Emperor Julian (known to subsequent history as “the Apostate” for his efforts to turn back the religious tide even after his uncle Constantine had declared Christianity the official religion of the empire). “Everyone can see that our people lack aid from us.”

“Religion is the opiate of the people,” Karl Marx famously complained. Elsewhere, he remarked that, while “philosophers have said that the purpose of philosophy is to understand the world, the purpose is to change it.” Religion, in his view, was a distraction from the real business of making this world a better place. Unfortunately for Marx’s thesis, though (and even more so for those who had to live through the 20th century), the millennium recently closed was heavily influenced at its end by Marxism and by a related ideology that went under the names of fascism and “National Socialism” or Nazism. We now have quite graphic evidence of exactly how such theories tend to “change the world”: Scores of millions of people were murdered, and many national economies were destroyed.

A religious approach to the world and life doesn’t look too bad by contrast. But even when contrasted with the soft secularism — the “apatheism” — that has come to dominate Europe and perhaps Canada and certain portions of the American elite, and even though religious

people can undoubtedly do much more and much better than they are doing now, believers fare pretty well.

None of these sad realities proves the existence of God, life after death, or ultimate justice. In fact, quite understandably, many see in them a powerful argument against God. Surely, though, they illustrate why the hope for eternal joy and compensation is so deeply important.

“In light of heaven,” said Mother Teresa, who was well aware of poverty and human agony, “the worst suffering on Earth, a life full of the most atrocious tortures on Earth, will be seen to be no more serious than one night in an inconvenient hotel.”

If she’s right, that’s fabulous news for everybody who has ever lived.

Finally, if a purely naturalistic secularism is true, might that not entail the death of reason and, strikingly, an inability even to judge whether it’s true or false? If our “thinking” is merely the accidental byproduct of neurochemical processes in our brains, which are in turn the accidental byproducts of a random, meaningless, and undirected process of biological evolution, what real significance should we grant to that “thinking”? Is a brain adapted to survival and reproduction on the African Savannah likely to be well-suited to judging issues of cosmic meaning? And, if, as one reductionist puts it, brains secrete “thinking” the way livers secrete bile, how does it make sense to judge such thinking as either “right” or “wrong”? After all, bile is neither “right” nor “wrong.” Nor is *bile* “about” anything, any more than oxidation or rust is “about” anything. How would it make any more sense to say that the neurochemical processes in Newton’s brain were “about” calculus than to say that his digestive processes were?³²

It seems arguable, to me, that acceptance of a thoroughgoing naturalism, a complete secularism, might well require the abandonment of reason altogether — and thus, ironically, the abandonment of any ability to argue that secularism is, in fact, true.

I think I’ll stick with theism. *Mormon* theism, in fact. And I recommend that you do, too.

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32. I won’t develop these ideas here, but I’ve been influenced in them by readings in Charles Darwin, C. S. Lewis, Victor Reppert, and others.

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THEIR IMPERFECT BEST: ISAIANIC AUTHORSHIP FROM AN LDS PERSPECTIVE

Daniel T. Ellsworth

Abstract: For Latter-day Saints, the critical scholarly consensus that most of the book of Isaiah was not authored by Isaiah often presents a problem, particularly since many Isaiah passages in the Book of Mormon are assigned post-exilic dating by critical scholars. The critical position is based on an entirely different set of assumptions than most believers are accustomed to bring to scripture. This article surveys some of the reasons for the critical scholarly position, also providing an alternative set of assumptions that Latter-day Saints can use to understand the features of the text.

I have a tradition from my grandfather's house that the same communication is revealed to many prophets, but no two prophesy in the identical phraseology.

—*Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 89a*

When presented with the critical scholarly consensus that the Book of Isaiah was written and compiled by multiple authors and redactors over a period of time that stretches into the post-exilic period of ancient Israelite history, our reflexive response as Latter-day Saints is often to adopt a defensive posture and dismiss the critical scholarly consensus. The obvious reason for this response is that the Book of Mormon contains writings that critical scholars believe were written, redacted, and incorporated into the Isaianic corpus of writings after the time Lehi left Jerusalem. To accept the multiple-Isaiah theory, then, requires a believing Mormon to adopt any number of creative thought

processes to explain how Lehi's party arrived in the Americas with scriptures that had not yet been produced.

Assumptions

In discussing the multi-author theory, I think I should begin by stating the assumptions I bring to scripture. First, I have what might be termed liberal views of scripture: I believe the Lord's directive to Oliver Cowdery in Doctrine and Covenants 9:8 to "study out" scripture in his mind before writing represents a model of scriptural development that utilizes the author's own mental and intellectual resources. This helps to explain the vast discrepancies in style, content, and rhetorical approach found in scriptures produced by prophets operating as contemporaries in the same political and cultural circumstances. The uncomfortable possibility that this model of scriptural development presents to the orthodox or inerrantist believer is the intrusion of the author's own worldview into the process, resulting in scriptural narratives that include such features as ancient Near Eastern cosmology or outdated, unproductive notions of race or gender.

Second, I also hold conservative religious views of scripture: I believe God does use scripture as a vehicle to advance our understanding of His purposes and His dealings with humanity, and I also believe scripture often provides a reliable view of future events before they come to pass.

Third, I believe the Book of Mormon is what its introduction claims it to be: "a record of God's dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas." I believe in the book's origin story of angels, plates, prophetic gifts, and translation/transmission that occurred by the "gift and power of God."¹

Fourth and finally, I accept the basic critical scholarly view that Isaiah of Jerusalem is not the author of all the text attributed to him in the book of Isaiah. However, I reject the three-part division of the book that has been used by critical scholars since the emergence of Bernhard Duhm's 1892 study,² which has provided the foundation for most studies that assert a three-part division of the book.³

Stating the Problem Accurately

I have often seen LDS commentators frame the Book of Mormon's "Isaiah problem" as some form of the following: *In the book of Isaiah, scholars only attribute the first 39 chapters to Isaiah of Jerusalem, and attribute the remainder of the book to post-exilic authors whose contributions could not have been available on the Brass Plates that Lehi's family brought to*

the New World from Jerusalem.⁴ This is a simple summary of what is in fact a very complex scholarly position. In the Yale Anchor Bible Isaiah commentary, for example, the three volumes of the commentary are divided into the traditional critical scholarly division of chapters 1–39 (vol. 1), 40–55 (vol. 2), and 56–66 (vol. 3). In volume 1 of the commentary, representing chapters 1–39, Isaian authorship is contested for most chapters, either as a whole or in part. There are many reasons for this, and I will discuss some of these reasons further along in this article.

I believe it extremely important to state our “Isaiah problem” as accurately as possible. My attempt to do so results in a three-part statement:

1. Among critical scholars of the Bible, there has emerged a consensus that the book of Isaiah contains significant amounts of material that cannot be reliably attributed to Isaiah of Jerusalem. This consensus is the result of scholars’ observations of changes in authorial tone, linguistic features, anachronisms, and other textual elements that cannot be accounted for by
 - a. Changes in Isaiah’s religious and political perspective over a prophetic career spanning 40+ years,
 - b. Different audiences for the various prophetic narratives and oracles, and
 - c. Centuries of reproduction and redaction of the text.
2. The Book of Mormon contains material from Deutero-Isaiah, particularly chapters 48–53, that critical scholars attribute to post-exilic authors. If the critical scholarly position is valid, this would imply that these chapters could not have been included in the Brass Plates and would have been unavailable to Lehi’s party.
3. Latter-day Saints have not yet developed robust theoretical frameworks for assessing the findings of critical Biblical scholarship and integrating these findings, where necessary, into our narratives regarding the production and transmission of scripture. This has resulted in responses to critical scholarship that are inadequate in the face of the evidence that emerges from critical analysis of Biblical texts.

My discussion of this problem will frequently be personal in tone because scripture in general, and the book of Isaiah in particular,

inform my deepest religious convictions. However, as I proceed through discussion of the problem and some possible responses to it, it will become clear that I believe few if any scholarly stakeholders in the questions of authorship of the book of Isaiah are approaching the text from a dispassionate or logically consistent point of view and that both the conservative/devotional and the liberal/critical positions are characterized by significant blind spots that undermine the soundness of their positions.

The Reasons for the Critical Scholarly Position

In Eerdman's commentary on Isaiah 1–39, Marvin Sweeney summarizes Duhm's three-part division of the book:

During most of the 20th Century, it has been customary to treat Isaiah 1–39 as a distinct prophetic book. This is based on the historical presuppositions that stand behind Duhm's identification of First, Second, and Third Isaiah within the book as a whole. Duhm's paradigm holds that chs. 1–39 must be associated with the 8th-century prophet, Isaiah ben Amoz; that chs. 40–55 are the work of an anonymous prophet of the Babylonian exile identified only as Deutero-Isaiah; and that chs. 56–66 reflect the work of a postexilic prophet identified as Trito-Isaiah.⁵

Sweeney presents some of the thinking scholars employ in support of late authorship for deutero-Isaiah:

Second Isaiah displays a number of concerns that point to a context in late 6th-century Babylonia at the time of the submission of the city to King Cyrus of Persia. Of course, the first indication of this concern is the identification of Cyrus as YHWH's messiah and temple-builder in 44:28 and 45:1⁶

As the famed Cyrus Cylinder indicates, the outset of Cyrus's reign as Babylon's new monarch saw his decree that the various nations that had been exiled by the Babylonians could return to their homelands with their gods and reestablish their temples while maintaining loyalty to Cyrus and the Persian Empire. ... Although Judah is not mentioned in the Cyrus Cylinder, Cyrus's decree to allow Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple is in keeping with the announcement recorded in the Cyrus Cylinder.⁷

The prophet's political shift from David to Cyrus likewise points to a Babylonian setting for chs. 40–55.⁸

Cyrus was proclaimed king of Babylon at the Akitu festival of 539, and it is likely that Deutero-Isaiah's images from Isaiah 46 represent an eyewitness account of that event.⁹

The use of the term *ḥārēd*, “he who trembles,” to refer to those who observe the covenant as “those who tremble” (*ḥārēdīm*) at the word of YHWH also points to the interrelationship between Isaiah and Ezra-Nehemiah ... Apart from 1 Sam 4:13, these are the only occurrences of this term in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁰

In addition, critical scholars employ other evidence in determining later dating for Isaiah texts. An example would be the presence of language and theological concepts utilized by the Deuteronomist school of historians and redactors, whose influence on the Biblical text is often dated to a period of time during and following Josiah's reign. Joseph Blenkinsopp, for example, uses as evidence for later authorship of Isaiah 44 the fact that “the sobriquet *Jeshurun* for Israel the Chosen ... appears only in the Deuteronomic poems (Deut 32:15; 33:5; 26) and in Second Isaiah (Isa 44:2).”¹¹

The common use of pseudonymous authorship in ancient sacred texts provides a basis for scholars to conceptualize additional authors for texts such as the book of Isaiah. This phenomenon of pseudepigrapha was common in the ancient world, where concepts of plagiarism and misattribution of texts did not carry the same level of negative stigma they do in modern times. Anciently, it was common practice for authors to attribute their work to a different, more prominent historical figure in order to increase its audience and enhance its status.¹² The pervasiveness of this practice in the Biblical era has led scholars to conclude that pseudonymous authorship and misattribution have explanatory power for many of the inconsistencies and anachronisms that characterize Biblical writings.

One of the more controversial aspects of the critical scholarly perspective on dating of texts is that scholars assign later dates to texts based upon the presence of predictive prophecy in the text. Critical scholars are correct to point out that this is only one of many factors they consider when attempting to assign a production time frame to a text; however, conservative scholars are also correct to point out that the

rejection of predictive prophecy is extremely pervasive in critical studies, and it serves to color how critical scholars select, evaluate, and prioritize all the other evidence they consider in questions of authorship. Some typical examples of dating based on rejection of predictive prophecy include the following:

The date of composition [of Isaiah 13] cannot be fixed for certain. That it is not directed against the Assyrians as rulers of Babylon and therefore does not come from the lifetime of Isaiah can be deduced from the prominence given to the Medes ... The final verses have led several commentators to conclude that the poem is predictive of an event to take place in the near future, and must therefore have been composed shortly before the fall of Babylon in 539 BCE¹³

Since [Isaiah 14:1–2] refers to the return from Exile and the conversion of pagan *nations*, it has affinities with the second part of Isaiah, namely, chs. 40–55, and perhaps its date of composition is the same.¹⁴

[Isaiah 21:1–10] was written by an anonymous prophet, active at the time of Babylon's fall in 539 BCE¹⁵

Though the dating of the three oracles in Isaiah 21 is disputed ... the more dominant view today tends to put the oracles later, usually in the period of the Babylonian exile ... The dating to the period of the Babylonian exile is largely based on the mention of the fall of Babylon in v.9 and the assumed role of the Medes and Elamites in this event.¹⁶

The Latter-day Saint Response

The critical scholarly consensus concerning the production of the book of Isaiah transforms Isaiah of Jerusalem from the towering, enormously influential prophetic figure revered by Lehi's descendants and the writers of the Gospels into a figure who produced very little original material over 40+ years of ministry but whose body of work was, for some reason, expanded by possibly more than 200% over time by the work of pseudonymous authors and redactors operating over a period of centuries.

In the face of this challenge to our understanding of Isaiah, the apologetic instinct is to counter the critical consensus with arguments for unity of the text based on statistical analysis¹⁷ or reiteration of facts such

as that the book of Isaiah has always been found as currently arranged. A middle ground may have been sketched by Hugh Nibley when he asked, “Can it be that [Isaiah chapters 2–14 and 48–54] represent what pretty well was the writing of Isaiah in Lehi’s time?”¹⁸ While I think the apologetic arguments deserve to be taken seriously, I also believe that often the apologetic impulse can lead believers to ignore more productive approaches.

A Theory for a Theory

The multiple-Isaiah theory has been the dominant view of critical scholars for more than a century. Since its inception, the theory has been supported by the intellectual scaffolding of countless studies, and its influence has rippled out to influence the ways scholars assess the authorship of other Biblical books, such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. Just as important, however, is the way the multiple-Isaiah theory influences scholarly perspectives on the dating of the earlier chapters of the book. Consider, for example, this discussion of Isaiah 2 from the Anchor Bible commentary:

Picking our way through the editorial debris that has gradually accumulated in this passage ... we discern the outline of a poem on Judgment Day composed, typically, of indictment (6–8) and verdict (12–16). One of the most obvious additions to this poetic core occurs at the end of the indictment (“to the work of their hands they bow down, to that which their fingers have made,” 8b), *being an example of standard anti-idolatry polemic of a kind frequently encountered in the second part of the book (40:18–20; 45:20), probably therefore from the late Neo-Babylonian or early Persian period.*¹⁹

Some of the assumptions supporting this theory are very sound, but other elements of support for the theory are based on subjective judgment calls and conflicting views on nontrivial matters, such as the amount of thematic correspondence between different sections of the book. This discussion of thematic correspondence and textual similarities is a debate that has been underway for more than a century. A typical argument for similarity is found in the list of correspondences detailed in John Howard Raven’s 1906 book *Old Testament Introduction: General and Special*.²⁰

Verbal Agreement		Similar Thought or Figure				
40:5	1:20	40:3–4	35:8–10		51:4	2:3
58:15		49:11			51:9	27:1
43:13	14:27	41:17–18	35:6–7		53:1	6:9–12
45:11	19:25	43:19			53:2	11:1, 10
60:21	29:23	42:1	11:2		54:7–8	26:20
51:11	35:10	61:1			55:12	14:8
56:8	11:12	42:7	9:2			32:15
61:2	34:8	42:13	31:4		35:1–2	
63:4		42:18–20	6:9	56:7	2:2	
65:25	11:9	43:8		56:12	22:13	
		43:13	14:27	59:3	1:15	
		43:24	1:14	59:11	38:14	
		43:26	1:14–19	60:13	35:2	
		45:9	29:16	60:18	26:1	
		64:9		60:21	11:1	
		45:15	8:17	61:8	1:11, 13	
		57:17		62:10	11:12	
		47:3	3:17	63:17	6:10	
			20:4	65:3	1:29	
		47:10	29:15	66:17		
			30:1	65:19	35:10	
		49:2	11:4	65:25	11:6	
		49:26	9:20	66:16	27:1	

Blenkinsopp’s response to these arguments for linguistic and thematic similarity is representative of the critical position:

Several recent commentators have convinced themselves of close editorial or compositional connections between 1–39 and 40–66 on the basis of motifs or turns of phrase that appear throughout both major sections, but on the whole the differences are more in evidence than the similarities.²¹

In addition to these textual arguments, the studies arguing for multiple authorship are themselves buttressed by meta-studies that debate whether scholarly inquiry is properly weighing and evaluating evidence and whether tools for analyzing the text are being properly used. Over more than a century’s time, the theory has evolved from an

educated hunch into a massive scholarly ecosystem that best explains to critical scholars the textual and thematic features of the book of Isaiah, as well as its relationship to other books of the Bible.

For Latter-day Saints to engage the critical scholarly enterprise in defense of a model of Isaianic unity would be fruitless for two reasons. First, Latter-day Saint scholars bring very different assumptions to their analysis of scripture than do critical scholars and even believing, conservative scholars of other faith traditions. For example, the Latter-day Saint religious tradition brings ample resources to assume the following:

- Predictive prophecy is a real phenomenon.
- A prophet's perspective can change in very significant ways in response to new information and continued revelation. The likelihood of this is high when a prophetic career spans multiple decades.
- A significant level of change and revision to the Biblical text has occurred over centuries of transmission.

Second, most Latter-day Saint scholars who are familiar with critical scholarship are not likely to defend a pure conservative position that the book was authored, word for word, by Isaiah of Jerusalem. The appropriate Latter-day Saint response to the multiple-Isaiah theory, then, is not to respond with a scholarly turf war over authorship of discrete sections of text in the book of Isaiah, such as whether a given set of verses show evidence of redaction or the gloss of authentic Isaianic material versus different authorship. The most productive response, I believe, would be the development of a uniquely Mormon theory of development of scripture, of which the authorship of Isaiah would be only a part.

The Role of the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon's use of Isaiah begins with Nephi's reprinting of Isaiah 48, a prophetic salvo asserting the reality and purpose of predictive prophecy in Isaiah's ministry:

3 Behold, I have declared the former things from the beginning;
and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them. I
did show them suddenly.

4 And I did it because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy
neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;

5 And I have even from the beginning declared to thee; before it came to pass I showed them thee; and I showed them for fear lest thou shouldst say — Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them.

6 Thou hast seen and heard all this; and will ye not declare them? And that I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.

7 They are created now, and not from the beginning, even before the day when thou heardest them not they were declared unto thee, lest thou shouldst say — Behold I knew them. (1 Nephi 20:3–7)

While the use of Isaiah 48 in early Nephite scripture would be considered anachronistic by critical scholars, there are other chapters of the Biblical Isaiah, such as chapters 1 and the 36–39 history, that critical scholars consider to be post-exilic and are not found in the Book of Mormon.

Hugh Nibley's conjecture that the Book of Mormon may serve as an indicator of the state of the text of Isaiah at the time of Lehi implies that a believer can use the Book of Mormon as an authoritative boundary for the findings of critical scholarship. The obvious problem with this approach is that it might imply that the Book of Mormon is a reliable guide as to which Biblical scriptures are pre-exilic and which are post-exilic. This is not a capability the Book of Mormon claims for itself.

The Book of Mormon contains several examples of post-exilic scriptural language; this often poses a problem for believers due to the assumption most believers bring to the text that Joseph Smith's own mental resources — including scriptural language he had internalized from years of reading and discussing the Bible — had no role or influence in the transmission of the ideas contained in the plates of brass. One of many examples of Book of Mormon text that seems to reflect Joseph's affinity for Biblical language would be 2 Nephi 4:17, where the phrase "Oh wretched man that I am!" is the same used by Paul in Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Another example is 2 Nephi 26, which includes language from Malachi 4.

Refuting the notion of absolute originality in scriptural authorship, the Book of Mormon itself presents examples of prophetic language borrowed from other prophetic language. In *The Book of Mormon: A*

Reader's Edition, Grant Hardy demonstrates, through his use of italics in 2 Nephi 26, how Nephi seemed to be greatly influenced by the words of Isaiah and effortlessly borrowed from the language of Isaiah 29 in prophesying for his own people:

After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles; yea, after the Lord God shall have *camped against them round about*, and shall have *laid siege against them with a mount*, and *raised forts against them*; and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten. For those who shall be destroyed *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*. For thus saith the Lord God, "They shall write the things which shall be done among them, and they shall be written and sealed up in a book, and those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not have them, for they seek to destroy the things of God." Wherefore, as those who have been destroyed have been destroyed speedily; and *the multitude of their terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away* — "yea," thus saith the Lord God, "*it shall be at an instant, suddenly*" — And it shall come to pass, that those who have dwindled in unbelief shall be smitten by the hand of the Gentiles.²²

Nephi provides yet another example of borrowing, as he is the only Book of Mormon author to utilize Jeremiah's teaching, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5). Nephi uses Jeremiah's phraseology in 2 Nephi 4:34, where he says "I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm" and again in 2 Nephi 28:31, saying, "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm ... "

In neither of these examples does Nephi see fit to delineate exactly which of his writings have origin in his own mental and spiritual

processes and which reflect the influences of his prophetic forebears and peers. In this sense, Nephi's approach to the development of scripture is reflective of what he must have been exposed to in his own study of scripture, as the books of the Old Testament are replete with examples of prophetic and scribal borrowing, repurposing, and expansion of other texts.²³

An example from the Old Testament is found in the pronouncement of woes against the pastors and shepherds (religious and political leaders) of Judah, found in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

Jeremiah 23	Ezekiel 34
<p>1 Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.</p> <p>2 Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.</p> <p>3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.</p> <p>4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.</p> <p>5 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth</p> <p>6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.</p> <p>7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;</p>	<p>2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?</p> <p>5 And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.</p> <p>11 ¶ For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.</p> <p>12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.</p> <p>13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.</p> <p>15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God.</p> <p>16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.</p>

Jeremiah 23	Ezekiel 34
8 But, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.	23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 24 And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

Using dates of composition to determine any kind of direction in borrowing is complicated in this instance by the fact that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were contemporaries. Jack Lundbom says of Jeremiah 23:

The view of some scholars (Cornill; Volz; Rudolph; Mendecki 1983) that v3 is an exilic or postexilic gloss owing to its inspiration to Ezekiel 34 should be rejected. The verse is entirely consistent with the thought of Jeremiah and fits in well with v4. Lust (1981:126) also points out that “gathering and return,” which figures prominently in Jeremiah (and Ezekiel) is not a “Deuteronomistic” idea. Nothing in any of these oracles requires a post-586 BC date, a setting other than Jerusalem, or an attribution to someone other than Jeremiah.²⁴

Moshe Greenberg agrees: “The influence of Jeremiah, both in the image and in the terminology, on both components of this oracle is patent. It is plausibly accounted for by the assumption that Ezekiel had access to the words of his older Jerusalemite contemporary.”²⁵

A more striking, commonly-cited Old Testament example of these textual similarities is found in the language of Isaiah 2 and Micah 4:

Isaiah 2	Micah 4
2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.	1 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

Isaiah 2	Micah 4
<p>3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.</p> <p>4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.</p>	<p>2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.</p> <p>3 ¶ And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.</p>

The superscription in Isaiah 2:1 claims that the verses to follow represent “The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem,” whereas Micah 4 makes no such claim. As a believer, I cannot reject outright the possibility that God revealed similar language to these two prophets; however, this position is complicated by the fact that after these similar verses, Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 diverge sharply in their content. The two chapters are dissimilar except for these three verses. Blenkinsopp says of these verses, “Every possible explanation of this duplication has been given at one time or another ... In this instance certainty is unattainable, but it seems the complex topoi represented in the passage is more at home in Isaiah than Micah.”²⁶ Schultz also notes that most scholars recognize a number of less extensive parallels between Isaiah and Micah:

Micah		Isaiah
1:11	<->	47:2–3
2:13	<->	52.12
3:5	<->	56.10–11
3:8	<->	58.1
3:11	<->	48.2
4:7	<->	24.24
4:9	<->	13:8, 21:3
4:13	<->	41:15–16, 23:18

Micah		Isaiah
5:5	<->	9.6
5:13	<->	2.8
6:7	<->	1.11
6.8	<->	1.17
7.1	<->	24:13
7.2	<->	57:1
7.3	<->	1:23
7.17	<->	49:23

The obvious problem here for adherents to the deutero-Isaiah theory is that these parallels are between prophetic contemporaries, and the aforementioned passages from Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 strongly suggest

some interaction between these two. Most of these less-extensive parallels consist of verses that scholars consider to be written by someone other than Micah or Isaiah.²⁷

Isaiah and Jeremiah

The Oracles Against Nations (OAN) are a series of prophecies against the nations surrounding Israel, and they are found in several prophetic books. The correspondence between OAN passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah is strong enough to suggest that, like Nephi, Jeremiah's thinking was heavily influenced by the writings of Isaiah. Isaiah 13, 14, and 21 contain oracles against Babylon, which many scholars find anachronistic.

The Jewish Study Bible:

[Isaiah 13] assumes that Babylonia, rather than Assyria, is the world power. It must, therefore, have been addressed to an exilic audience in the mid-6th c., not to the 8th c. audience of Isaiah son of Amoz.²⁸

The Oxford Study Bible:

Since Babylon did not develop into a ruling power until 612 BCE when it destroyed Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, this oracle is probably later than Isaiah.²⁹

The assumption in these statements seems to be that a prophet would not produce oracles against a nation that is not the "world power," but there are many examples to the contrary. Isaiah's OAN utterances are directed at Moab (Ch. 15), Damascus (Ch. 17), Egypt (Ch. 19), Arabia (Ch. 21:11–17), Tyre and Sidon (Ch. 23), and Edom (Ch. 34). Although each of these nations posed a threat to Israel at one point or another, the geopolitical status of these various lands seems to have had no bearing whatsoever on the appropriateness of their targeting for prophetic warnings of destruction. Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's oracles are against similarly diverse groups of lands.

The following represent some examples of similar language between the oracles of Isaiah and Jeremiah, to an extent that suggests literary and rhetorical influence:

War Coming from the North

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>14:31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.</p> <p>41:25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.</p>	<p>1:14 Then the Lord said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.</p> <p>15 For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.</p> <p>6:22 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.</p> <p>23 They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.</p> <p>50:3 For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.</p> <p>41 Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.</p> <p>42 They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon.</p>

Flee Babylon

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>48:20 ¶Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob.</p>	<p>50:8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.</p> <p>51:6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.</p>

The Medes

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>14:17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.</p>	<p>51:11 Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple.</p>

Fanning / Threshing

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>21:10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.</p> <p>41:15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.</p> <p>16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.</p>	<p>51:2 And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.</p> <p>33 For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.</p>

Taunt (Babylon)

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>14:4 ... How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!</p> <p>6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.</p> <p>14 ... how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!</p> <p>21 Babylon is fallen, is fallen! — Other nations also are destroyed.</p>	<p>50:23 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!</p> <p>51:41 How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!</p>

Babylon to be Desolate Except for Wild Beasts

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>13:19 ¶And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.</p> <p>20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.</p>	<p>50:39 Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.</p> <p>40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.</p>

Isaiah	Jeremiah
21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. 22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.	51:29 And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. 37 And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.

Singing Over Babylon

Isaiah	Jeremiah
14:7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. 8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.	51:48 Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the Lord.

The Jewish Study Bible explains:

Jeremiah is steeped in prophetic traditions. He is familiar with the genre of visions (1:11–12, 13–19; cf. Amos 7:1–9), symbolic actions (Jeremiah 13:1–11), and oracles against the nations (ch 48 concerning Moab; cf. Isaiah chs 15 and 24; see Jeremiah 48:43 and Isaiah 24:17; to Edom in Jeremiah 49:7–22 and Obad.), and various other prophetic genres.

Further,

In some cases, there are significant similarities between oracles against the nations recited by different prophets (see esp. Jeremiah 49:9–16; Obad. 1:1–6), suggesting that prophets or editors of prophetic books borrowed from one another.³⁰

The similarity between Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s oracles against Babylon presents another problem of attribution, since Isaiah’s oracles in chapters 13, 14, and 21 are considered by most critical scholars to have a post-exilic period of composition. The Oxford Study Bible recognizes the problem and attempts to resolve it by suggesting *multiple authorship for Jeremiah*:

Persons other than [Jeremiah] and his biographer may be responsible for certain passages, especially within the

‘prophecies against the nations’ (Ch. 46–51), but also elsewhere in the book. Some of the passages are written after the manner of Deuteronomy or in the style of the later chapters of Isaiah.³¹

The Jewish Study Bible similarly asserts that “Jeremiah’s ‘followers’ contribute similarities to Ezekiel and to Deutero-Isaiah.”³²

The similarities in theme and phrasing continue with Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s oracles against Moab:

Weeping Over Moab

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>15:3 In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.</p> <p>4 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.</p> <p>5 My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.</p> <p>8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.</p> <p>16:7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.</p>	<p>48:3 A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.</p> <p>4 Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard.</p> <p>5 For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.</p> <p>31 Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres.</p> <p>32 O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage.</p>

Mourning Moab in the Body

Isaiah	Jeremiah
<p>16:10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.</p> <p>11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.</p>	<p>48:33 And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting.</p> <p>36 Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres: because the riches that he hath gotten are perished.</p>

Pride of Moab

Isaiah	Jeremiah
16:66 ¶We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.	48:29 We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart. 30 I know his wrath, saith the Lord; but it shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it.

The Jewish Study Bible refers to Jeremiah’s oracles against Moab as “a funerary lament over Moab, comprised of phrases and themes from Isaiah 15:2–3, 7a, and 16:11.”³³ This assessment seems to imply directionality in borrowing, that Jeremiah borrowed language from Isaiah in the production of the laments in Ch. 48. Schultz agrees:

Although it is easy to suggest why Jeremiah 48 uses some of the same descriptions of Moab as Isaiah 15–16, it is considerably more difficult to achieve any consensus regarding the nature and implications of these verbal parallels. If the possibility of an anonymous third source is excluded, nearly all scholars agree that it is Jeremiah 48 that is using Isaiah 15–16 (but not necessarily in its present canonical form) and not vice versa, noting that Isaiah 15–16 displays greater thematic unity, more appropriate contexts for the parallels, and superior textual readings, while Jeremiah 48 displays multiple borrowings and a more composite structure.³⁴

The critical scholarly position seems to be that given the similarities between Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s OAN passages, it is reasonable to assume that Jeremiah borrowed from Isaiah’s oracles, except in instances when those writings are assumed to be post-exilic in their composition (as evidenced by predictive prophecy or orientation toward a land that was not a “world power” during the time of Isaiah), in which case a later author or redactor was responsible for inserting the language into both prophetic books. Critical scholars prefer to imagine additional new authors for the book of Jeremiah (“followers” suggested previously in the Jewish Study Bible) than question the assumption that Isaiah would not have prophesied against Babylon.

The similarities between Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s OANs present other interesting questions. In the Masoretic Hebrew text of the Bible as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jeremiah’s OANs are placed toward the end of his writings after chapter 45, while in the Septuagint, they are found in the middle of Jeremiah’s writings, beginning in Chapter 25. Why the

difference in placement? Is one sequence of writings more “authoritative” than the others? If it could be demonstrated with certainty that the Masoretic text best represents the earliest sequencing of the writings of Jeremiah, it might be easier to conclude that Jeremiah’s oracles against the nations were appended to his writings by a post-exilic author who was familiar with similar writings attributed to Isaiah. However, there is more scholarly consensus that the Septuagint provides the more reliable ordering of the text. The Anchor Bible Jeremiah commentary explains: “The location here [in the Septuagint] has long been thought to be earlier, which is doubtless correct. In the MT the Foreign Nation Oracles have been relocated to the end of the book, where they appear in Chaps. 46–51.”³⁵

Finally, in another interesting example, Jeremiah seems to allude to language in Isaiah 53 as he describes the conspiracy of the men of Anathoth to silence him:

Jeremiah	Isaiah
11:19 <i>But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.</i> (Emphasis added)	53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. (Emphasis added)

The similarities are enough to warrant consideration as yet another example of Jeremiah’s familiarity with Isaianic phrases that are typically assigned a post-exilic period of composition. However, this example differs from the affinities between the OANs in an important way: it demonstrates Jeremiah’s use of phrases from Isaiah 53 in a descriptive, poetic context, as if they come naturally to him due to his consideration or “pondering” of those passages over time. Lundbom’s Anchor Bible Jeremiah commentary seems to agree, as it refers the reader to Isaiah 53:7 and 8 in its discussion of Jeremiah 11:19, and suggests that Jeremiah identifies with the “suffering servant” of Isaiah 53.³⁶ However, the commentary adds additional context to the passage, suggesting that the secretive actions of the conspirators against a proponent of Josiah’s reform, as well as Jeremiah’s young age at the time (assumed through

textual hints), date the production of this passage to an early point in his career.

The aforementioned examples of similarities in texts, and the tracing of likely “borrowing” among prophetic works, are a fruitful area of exploration that should inform our evaluation of critical arguments for authorship and dating. They demonstrate the challenge of credulity that critical scholars face in assenting to Isaian influence on a significant amount of Jeremiah’s prophetic work, while reversing the directionality of borrowing, and even imagining additional authors for Jeremiah, when commonalities in the two texts seem to conflict with Duhm’s three-part division and the critical approaches to dating that have emerged over time to support it.

Productive Engagement with the Critical Position

As demonstrated in this paper, the assumptions Latter-day Saints bring to questions of scriptural authorship sharply diverge from those of most critical scholars. However, despite some compelling textual reasons to question the critical scholarly consensus around the dating of the material comprising the book of Isaiah, I believe it would be a tremendous mistake for Latter-day Saints to simply discard scholarly approaches to the book of Isaiah out of a desire to defend the historicity of the Book of Mormon.

The shift from an overly-simplistic imagining of Isaiah of Jerusalem penning every chapter of the book that bears his name, to a new imagining of a core set of Isaianic writings that were sealed up by Isaiah’s disciples (Isaiah 8:16) and then opened, assembled, expanded, and redacted over centuries, is a shift in thinking that makes possible new, helpful perspectives on the text for lay readers like me. For example, the critical scholarly assertion that Isaiah 14 is composed of two discrete poems³⁷ is an extremely valuable insight that may help to explain other seemingly misplaced passages, such as prophecies of Christ nested in geopolitical discussions in chapters 7, 9 and 11. Though I consider much of the scholarly consensus around dating of the book to be unsupportable in light of Isaiah’s evident influence upon other, pre-exilic Biblical texts, I am entirely persuaded by the scholarly view of the compilation of the book by followers and disciples who were doing their imperfect best to assemble, make sense of, and assign context to, the elements of the book.

The idea that the three-part division model of authorship for the book of Isaiah must be entirely accepted or entirely discarded is a false

binary choice that results in missed opportunities to develop a better, more nuanced understanding of the text.

Conclusion

The Latter-day Saint response to the theory of multiple authorship of Isaiah that prevails in critical scholarly circles should not be to engage critical scholars in their old arguments over multiple authorship vs. unity, or to provide yet another voice in smaller scholarly disputes over authorship at the level of chapter and verse. The differences in assumptions that Latter-day Saints bring to questions of production of scripture — including our experiences in observing and analyzing the production of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants — effectively constitute a barrier to entry for a Latter-day Saint response to the critical position on critical terms. This is not, however, a “surrender” to the critical position. On the contrary, it is an opportunity and invitation to develop a uniquely Latter-day Saint theory of authorship for Isaiah (and other books) using a toolset of very different assumptions:

- The statement in our Articles of Faith that “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly” is an expression of how the Bible can serve as the word of God in influencing the life of the believer, and not an assertion that the Bible was authored or even compiled by God. The discussion of the transmission of the Biblical text in 1 Nephi 13:23–29 asserts a great deal of human error in the transmission of the Bible, resulting in the loss of “plain and precious things.” The Book of Mormon can serve not only as a corrective to extreme assumptions of textual infallibility, but also as a corrective to the excesses of modern critical scholarly perspectives on the formation and transmission of the Biblical text.
- Prophets can and do develop significant changes in perspective over time, even on very consequential matters.
- A prophet’s tone, phraseology, and topical emphasis are likely to change to significant degrees depending upon the prophet’s audience, specific life experiences, observations of social or geopolitical trends, or even the prophet’s own stage of life.
- Prophetic writings influence the work of later prophets, who respond to previous prophetic writings by incorporating,

restating, alluding to, or sometimes even reversing the teachings of their predecessors.

- Prophets can predict future events before they come to pass.
- In questions of dating of scripture, the repeated presence of textual “borrowing” across authors carries far more evidential weight than anachronisms or other textual features that are possible results of redaction or simple misplacement of passages in the process of compiling a prophet’s writings.

With these assumptions in mind, it is possible to trace the enormous influence of Isaiah on other Old Testament and nonbiblical figures over time (as well as document the influence of previous books on Isaiah’s own thinking), and the picture that emerges is not of a marginal prophetic figure whose writings became a catch-all repository for a vast amount of pseudonymous material. On the contrary, what we see is a highly prophetic, influential, and evolving figure, whose writings were assembled, modified and edited over time, formed the basis for much of Lehiite theology and self-perception, filled the caves at Qumran more than any other prophet, and served as the primary catalyst for Lehiite and early Christian understanding of the mission of Jesus Christ.

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Endnotes

1. See Book of Mormon Introduction
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3. When discussing multiple authors for Isaiah, scholars often use the terms *proto*, *deutero*, and *trito* to refer to the three supposed and unknown authors.
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7. Sweeney, *Isaiah 40–66*, 33.
8. *Ibid.*, 34.
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15. Mueller, Sakenfeld, and Suggs, *The Oxford Study Bible*, 724.
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17. See Adams, La Mar, “A Scientific Analysis of Isaiah Authorship,” BYU Religious Studies Center, accessed April 08, 2017, <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/isaiah-and-prophets-inspired-voices-old-testament/scientific-analysis-isaiah-authorship>.
18. Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), Kindle Location 3498–3505.
19. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 194, emphasis added.
20. John Howard Raven, *Old Testament Introduction, General and Special* (New York: F. H. Revell, 1906), 190–191.
21. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 43.
22. Grant Hardy, *The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 122–123.
23. There is at least oblique reference to Nephi doing this. See 1 Nephi 19:23, where he mentions reading the scriptures to his people but notes that he “did liken all scriptures unto us” for the “profit and learning” of the people to whom he was preaching.
24. Lundbom, Jack R. *Jeremiah 21–36: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., Vol. 21b, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 165–166.
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26. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 190.
27. Schultz, Richard L., *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets*, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2009), 306.
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31. Mueller, Sakenfeld, and Suggs, *The Oxford Study Bible*, 778.
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33. Ibid., 51560–51561.
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“I KNEELED DOWN BEFORE MY MAKER”: ALLUSIONS TO ESAU IN THE BOOK OF ENOS

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: The Book of Enos constitutes a brief literary masterpiece. A close reading of Enos’s autobiography reveals textual dependency not only on 1 Nephi 1:1-2 and Genesis 32–33, but also on earlier parts of the Jacob-Esau cycle in Genesis 25, 27. Enos’s autobiographical allusions to hunting and hungering serve as narrative inversions of Esau’s biography. The narrative of Genesis 27 exploits the name “Esau” in terms of the Hebrew verb ‘śh/‘śy (“make,” “do”). Enos (“man”) himself incorporates paronomastic allusions to the name “Esau” in terms of ‘śh/‘śy in surprising and subtle ways in order to illustrate his own transformation through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. These wordplays reflect the convergence (in the Genesis narratives) of the figure of Esau before whom Jacob bows and whom he embraces in reconciliation with the figure of the divine “man” with whom Jacob wrestles. Finally, Enos anticipates his own resurrection, divine transformation, and final at-one-ment with the Lord in terms of a clothing metaphor reminiscent of Jacob’s “putting on” Esau’s identity in Genesis 27.

As noted in a previous study,¹ Enos begins his relatively brief autobiography with a self-introduction modeled on that of his uncle Nephi, including the latter’s use of onomastic wordplay:

The name Nephi is best explained as a derivation from the Egyptian lexeme *nfr*,² whose basic meaning is “good, fine, goodly” (of quality);³ “beautiful, fair” (of appearance);⁴ and (as a noun) “beauty,” “good,” “kindness,” “goodness.”⁵ The name Enos (Hebrew *’ēnôš*) is a Hebrew poetic term for “man” (a single male individual, or used collectively for human beings in general).⁶

1 Nephi 1:1	Enos 1:1
I, Nephi [Egyptian <i>nfr</i> = “good,” “goodly”], having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father ; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God , therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.	I, Enos [Hebrew <i>ʿenôš</i> = “man”] knowing my father that he was a just man — for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord — and blessed be the name of my God for it —

Thus, we see Nephi’s self-introduction with his name closely juxtaposed with terms that match the etymology of his name — “good(ly)” and “goodness” — imitated by Enos, whose self-introduction closely juxtaposes his name with a term that precisely matches its etymology — “man.” The autobiographical wordplays in 1 Nephi 1:1 and Enos 1:1 occur within highly similar structures. Together, both constitute as lucid examples of textual dependency and onomastic wordplay as one could wish to find in the Book of Mormon.

Enos’s use of onomastic wordplay, however, does not end with this imitation of Nephi’s autobiographical wordplay. John Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper long ago noted the similarity between Enos’s autobiography and Genesis 32, including allusions to Peniel.⁷ In a subsequent study I went even further,⁸ demonstrating that Enos used a word rendered “wrestle” (*wayyē’ābēq/bēhē’ābēqô*) from Genesis 32:23-24 as a deliberate play on the name Jacob (*ya’āqōb*) — the name of his patriarchal ancestor and his own father — and the word “struggle”/“strugglings” as a wordplay on Jacob’s cognomen “Israel”:

Genesis 32:24-25 (MT 25-26); 28 (MT 29)	Enos 1:2; 10-11; 14
<p>And Jacob [<i>ya'āqōb</i>] was left alone; and there wrestled [<i>wayyē'ābēq</i>] a man [<i>'iš</i>] with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's [<i>ya'āqōb</i>] thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled [<i>bēhē'ābēqō</i>] with him. (Genesis 32:24-25 (MT 25-26))</p> <p>And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob [<i>ya'āqōb</i>] but Israel [<i>yisrā'ēl</i>]: for as a prince hast thou power [<i>struggled, šārītā</i>] with God [<i>'ēlōhīm</i>] and with men [<i>'ānāšīm</i>], and hast prevailed. (Genesis 32:28 [MT 29])</p>	<p>And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had [i.e., the wrestle which I wrestled] before God, before I received a remission of my sins. (Enos 1:2)</p> <p>And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came to my mind again, saying: I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments. And after I, Enos [<i>'ēnōš</i> = "man"], had heard these words, my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; and I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites. (Enos 1:10-11)</p> <p>For at the present our strugglings were vain in restoring them to the true faith. (Enos 1:14)</p>

The fact that *'ēnōš* is a poetic synonym of *'iš* ("man")⁹ and shares the same plural form, *'ānāšīm*,¹⁰ further helps us appreciate Enos's sophisticated use of Genesis 32 and its wordplay. On one level, Enos's "wrestle" enabled him to identify with his ancestor Jacob/Israel and with his own father Jacob. On still another level, the salient occurrence of *'iš* and *'ānāšīm* in the pericope allowed *'ēnōš* to identify with Esau and the divine "man" (*'iš*) — the "men" (*'ānāšīm*, "Enoses") — with whom Jacob/Israel "wrestled" and "struggled" and whom he eventually "embraced."¹¹

In the study that follows, I wish to elucidate additional examples and levels of onomastic wordplay and literary allusion that show that Enos is not only appropriating the biographical Jacob and Esau material from Genesis 32–33 but from Genesis 25 and 27 as well. Enos, who is well-aware of the literary meanings associated with his father Jacob's name, also evidences an awareness of literary meanings that revolve around Esau's name. Enos's use of allusion and paronomasia emerges as sophisticated and skillful.

Enos as "Esau": What Type of "Man"?

As noted above, the name Enos, Hebrew *'ēnōš*, denotes "man."¹² Enos's description of his father as a "just man" not only harks back to the autobiographical literary structure of 1 Nephi 1:1 and the "man" with

whom Jacob wrestled in Genesis 32, but it further recalls early biblical biographical descriptions of Esau and Jacob. Note the biblical narrator's emphasis on Jacob and Esau as diametrically opposite types of 'iš ("man"):

Enos 1:1	Genesis 25:27; 27:11
Behold, it came to pass that I, Enos [<i>ʾēnôš</i> = poetic Hebrew "man"], knowing my father [Jacob] that he was a just man [<i>ʾiš, ʾēnôš šaddiq</i> ; note: <i>ʾēnôš, ʾiš,</i> and <i>ʾādām</i> are synonyms] — for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord — and blessed be the name of my God for it —	And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter [<i>ʾiš yōdēaʿ šayid</i> , literally, a man knowing hunting], a man of the field [<i>ʾiš šādeh</i>]; and Jacob was a plain man [<i>ʾiš tām</i> ; or, a "man of integrity"], dwelling in tents. (Genesis 25:27) And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man [<i>ʾiš šāʾir</i>], and I am a smooth man [<i>ʾiš ḥālāq</i>] (Genesis 27:11).

Enos's own name comes out of a nexus of anthropic names and name-associations in the Genesis's primeval history (Adam ["man," "humankind"], Cain of whom Eve says "I have gotten a man [*ʾiš*] from the Lord," Enos ["man"]).¹³ Enos's use of the phrase "just man" recalls the Genesis narrative's description of Noah ("Noah was **a just man ... perfect** [*ʾiš šaddiq tāmim*] in his generations," Genesis 6:9). Enos's name and explanation further recall the description of Jacob in Genesis 25:27 as an *ʾiš tām*, an expression which certainly means more than "plain man" (KJV). Stanley Walters renders this expression "moral person."¹⁴ Jacob was a "man of integrity." Biblical texts associate the related term *tāmim* with "perfect" or "unblemished" animals acceptable for sacrifice.¹⁵ The Lord so describes Job in Job 1:8; 2:3 ("Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, **a perfect** and an upright **man** [*ʾiš tām*], one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?").

Over against Jacob as *ʾiš tām* ("moral man," "man of integrity") stands the narrator's description of Esau (*ʾēsāw*) as an *ʾiš yōdēaʿ šayid* ("a man knowing hunting" — i.e., "a man knowledgeable about hunting") and an *ʾiš šādeh* ("man of the field," Genesis 25:27). These contrastive descriptions describe two distinct modes of life. Esau is much more the "outdoorsy" type, while Jacob is what we might call a "homebody."

Jacob's reported description of Esau as an *ʾiš šāʾir* ("hairy man") versus himself as an *ʾiš ḥālāq* ("smooth man") serves a similar function. The phonological similarity between *ʾēsāw* and *šāʾir* ("hair") is one that

the narrator exploits in paronomastic fashion in several places within the text.¹⁶ This wordplay constitutes a humorous narrative etiology, rather than a scientific etymology drawn from proper philological sources. This segment of the narrative employs a pun on Esau's physical features to explain, in part, why Esau's descendants inhabited the hill country of Seir.¹⁷

Moreover, Enos's description of himself — a "man" — as "knowing" (Enos 1:1), recalls Nephi's "great knowledge" (1 Nephi 1:1), but subtly mirrors the Genesis narrator's description of Esau as "a man knowing" (*'iš yōdēa'*, Genesis 25:27), a connection not obvious in English translation. Enos's name itself — Hebrew *'ēnôš* — recalls the patriarchal period and his namesake, the patriarch Enos.¹⁸ Enos ("man") was the grandson of Adam ("man," "humanity"). The narrator repeatedly connects the name Adam (*'ādām*) with the "ground" (*'ādāmā*) (e.g., Genesis 2:5, 7; 3:17; 7:23). He further correlates "Adam"/"man" with the gendered terms "Woman" (*'iššā*) and "man" (*'iš*): "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from **man** [*hā'ādām*], made [built] he a **woman** [*'iššā*], and brought her unto **the man** [*hā'ādām*]. And **Adam** [*hā'ādām*] said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called **Woman** [*'iššā*], because she was taken out of **Man** [*'iš*]" (Genesis 2:22-23).

Similarly, the Genesis narratives connect Esau with a triliteral *'dm* root that is either cognate or homonymous with the root whence *'ādām* originates. Two passages in Genesis 25, both etiological in character, implicitly connect Esau's cognomen, Edom (*'ēdôm*), with the earthy color of red clay — i.e., "origin[ally] the area distinguished by red soil"¹⁹:

And the first came out **red** [*'ādmônî*], all over like an **hairy** [*šē'ār*] garment; and they called his name **Esau** [*'ēsāw*]. (Genesis 25:25)

And Jacob sod pottage: and **Esau** [*'ēsāw*] came from the **field** [*šādeh*], and he was faint: And **Esau** said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with **that same red pottage** [*hā'ādôm hā'ādôm hazzeh*, literally, "this red, red stuff"]; for I am faint: therefore was his name called **Edom** [*'ēdôm*]. And Jacob said, **Sell me this day thy birthright**. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the **point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?** And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he **sold his birthright** unto Jacob. Then **Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink**, and rose up, and went his way: thus **Esau despised his birthright**. (Genesis 25:29-34)

The narrative here puts the focus on Esau's connection to the physical, the human, and the earthly. Enos ("man"), the son of Jacob, seems fully aware that his name connects him with the "earthy" origins of Adam ("man," "humankind"), the physical father of the human family, and with the "earthy" Edom — Esau — who prized physical things over spiritual things and temporal well-being over eternal well-being. Enos came to the recognition that his Esau/Edom-like self (his "natural **man**") would need to undergo a mighty transformation in which he came to prize the same things that his father valued (e.g., "eternal life and the joy of the saints," Enos 1:3).

Esau and Enos: Hunters

Enos further draws himself into comparison with Esau with one simple statement: "I went to hunt beasts in the forests" (Enos 1:3). The verb *ṣwd* ("hunt," "hunt for, hound")²⁰ and its cognate noun *ṣayid* ("game," "game bag, venison")²¹ occurs eleven times as a *Leitwort* (lead-word)²² in connection with Esau in Genesis 25 (twice) and 27 (nine times). Esau was an *'iš yōdēa' ṣayid* while Enos was also a *knowing* "man" who "went **to hunt** [**lēṣûd*] beasts in the forest."²³ Enos was a "hunter" just like Esau and what was Esau's "field" (*śādeh*) was Enos's "forest."

Enos's allusion to his "hunt[ing] beasts in the forest" further recalls the Genesis narrator's statement that follows directly after Isaac's blessing Jacob, "Esau came in from his hunting" so that his father Isaac's "soul" might "bless" him (Genesis 27:30-31). Enos wants his audience to understand that he was like Esau before his spiritual transformation occurred. He was like Esau, but he allowed the words of his father (Jacob) to "sink deep within [his] heart" (Enos 1:3). This caused his "soul" to "hunger" ("and my soul hungered," Enos 1:4). Enos's was not a physical or bodily hunger that needed to be fed or a craving that needed to be slaked like Esau's (see Genesis 25:29-34), but a spiritual hunger. Enos's *soul* hunger made him like his ancestor Jacob (for whom his father was named) who had faith in the God of his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham, rather than the physically hungry Esau. Enos acquired "faith in Christ" (Enos 1:8), the god of his father Jacob, his uncle Nephi, and grandfather Lehi (cf. 1 Nephi 6:4; 2 Nephi 1:15; 33:6). For this reason, Enos would receive the kind of birthright and blessing that Esau had despised (at least at first).²⁴

"Made" or "Maker": A Literary Meaning for "Esau"

Enos also appears to use verbal echoes of the name Esau. A precise etymology for the name "Esau" is uncertain at best and impossible at worst.²⁵ Jeremiah 49:10 may hint at a derivation from *ḡśy/śh* ("protect, cover").²⁶ Midrashic derivation of the name Esau from the Hebrew Semitic/Hebrew verb *śh/śy* was so natural as to be almost inevitable. As Shaul Bar notes: "*Targum Jonathan*, Rashi, Rashbam (acronym for Rabbi Samuel ben Meir 1080-1174), Bekhor Shor (Joseph ben Isaac; twelfth century), all derive the name from the Hebrew word *ś-y* (to make)."²⁷ Targum Pseudo-Jonathan states: "and they called his name **Esau** [i.e., "made"], because he was born **altogether complete** [*kwlyh gmyr*], with the hair of the head, and the beard, and teeth, and grinders."²⁸ Rashi's etiology for Esau (*św*) as "made" or "done" (*nśh*) is similar.²⁹

However, there are additional biblical texts that treat the name Esau in this way. There is the evidence of Genesis 27 itself, which we will examine momentarily. Amos 4:12 also subtly puns on the names Jacob and Esau:

Therefore thus **will I do** [*e'ěśeh*] unto thee, O Israel:
and **because** [*ēqeb*] **I will do** [*e'ěśeh*] this unto thee,
prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. (Amos 4:12)

Noting a pun on "Jacob" in this verse, Moshe Garsiel writes: "The name of 'Israel' appears here twice, while 'Jacob' (*y'qb* – יעקב) does not — but it is to 'Jacob' that the MND [midrashic name derivation] of *qb* [*ēqeb*] refers; within the text it constitutes a new homiletic variation upon *y'qb*, which it treats as a causative conjunction. The clumsiness of the phrasing in Hebrew is evidence of the prophet's desire to include the MND."³⁰ Here, however, Garsiel observes an additional pun on Esau in terms of the verb *śh/śy* ("make," "do"): "The double use of the verb 'do' (*śh*) may also be deliberate, for in the Genesis narrative this verb supplies an MND for Jacob's twin brother Esau (*św* – עשו)."³¹

Garsiel's point here is an important one. The narrator subtly uses *śh/śy* as a *Leitwort* in the Genesis 27 account of Jacob's obtaining the blessing of the firstborn. *śh/śy* is a key term — arguably *the* key term — in the narrator's description of how Rebekah helps Jacob transform himself, as it were, into Esau in order to obtain the blessing that Isaac intended for the latter:

And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called **Esau** [*ěśāw*] **his eldest son**, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore **take, I pray thee, thy**

weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And **make** [*wa'āšēh*] me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; **that my soul may bless thee before I die**. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to **Esau** [*'ēśāw*] his son. And **Esau** [*'ēśāw*] **went to the field to hunt for venison**, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto **Esau** [*'ēśāw*] thy brother, saying, **Bring me venison, and make** [*wa'āšēh*] me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee **before the Lord** [*lipnē yhwē*] **before my death**. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and **I will make** [*wē'e'ēseh*] them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth. (Genesis 27:1-9)

Here the narrator moves to create a paronomastic verbal link between the name Esau (*'ēśāw*) with the verb *śh/śy* (“make,” “do”) some nine times throughout the pericope (Genesis 27). Isaac commands Esau to “make” him the “savoury meat” that his “soul” (i.e., his physical appetite) craves. This language establishes Esau as “maker.” Rebekah understands she and Jacob will have to imitate Esau’s “making” in order to obtain his father’s blessing.

We should note in addition that the phrase “before the Lord” (Hebrew *lipnē yhwē*) literally “to the face of Yahweh” anticipates the events of Genesis 32 and Jacob’s wrestle with a divine “man” at “Peniel”/“Penuel” (i.e., “face of”) which he so names because “I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved” (Genesis 32:30-31). Enos’s language refers both to the expression “before the Lord” (“to the face of the Lord”) in Genesis 27:7 and Peniel/Penuel (*pēni'ēl/pēnū'ēl*, “face of God”), the site of Jacob’s wrestle in Genesis 32 in his use of the phrases “the wrestle which I had before God” (Enos 1:2); “kneeled before my maker” (Enos 1:4); “stand before him” and “see his face with pleasure” (Enos 1:27). They also allude to Genesis 33:10 (see below).

The interplay of *'ēśāw* and the verb *śh/śy* continues as Jacob follows Rebekah’s directions and Rebekah acts shrewdly on behalf of her son Jacob:

And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother **made** [*wata'as*] savoury meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son **Esau** [*'ēśāw*], which were with her in the house, and **put them upon** Jacob her younger son: And she **put** the skins of the kids of the goats **upon his hands**, and **upon the smooth of**

his neck: And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had **prepared** [*āśātā*], into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, **I am Esau** [*ēsāw*] **thy firstborn; I have done** [*āsītī*] according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, **that thy soul may bless me.** (Genesis 27:14-19)

Rebekah helps Jacob become Esau, by helping him “put on” Esau in the form of goat skins with their rough “hair” — a play on Seir. Moreover, she “prepared” or “made” the bread and savoury meat that Isaac craved. The text increasingly revolves around the juxtaposition of verb *šh/šy* (“make,” “do,” etc.) as first Rebekah and then Jacob become its subjects. In the dialogue, Jacob feigns that he is Esau, because he has *become* Esau in every sense that matters for his obtaining of the blessing that Isaac intends to give Esau. The latter, too, will “make,” “do,” or “perform” what his father Isaac requests, but he is, alas, too late:

And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of **blessing Jacob**, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that **Esau** [*ēsāw*] his brother came in **from his hunting**. And **he also had made** [*wayya’as*] savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son’s venison, **that thy soul may bless me.** And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn **Esau** [*ēsāw*]. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and **have blessed him?** yea, **and he shall be blessed.** And when **Esau** [*ēsāw*] heard the words of his father, **he cried** [*wayyiš’aq*] **with a great and exceeding bitter cry** [*šē’āqā*], and said unto his father, **Bless me, even me also, O my father.** (Genesis 27:30-34)

The narrator’s expression “And he also had made” (Hebrew *wayya’as*) plays on the name *ēsāw* yet again. Ironically, Esau “makes” savoury meat for his father that will not procure the blessing Isaac intended to give and that Esau intended to receive. Rebekah, in effect, “makes” Jacob into Esau and Jacob becomes Esau, while Esau “makes” in vain.

Moreover, In Esau’s “**cry[ing]**” [*wayyiš’aq*] with a great and exceeding bitter **cry** [*šē’āqā*]” we detect an additional wordplay on the name Isaac

(*yīṣḥāq*). Esau's "cry" evokes the opposite emotion suggested in the meaning of Isaac's name "may he laugh" or "may he rejoice."

And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away **thy blessing** [*birkātekā*]. And he said, Is not he rightly named **Jacob** [*ya'āqōb*]? **for he hath supplanted me** [*wayya'qēbēnī*] these two times: he took away **my birthright** [*bēkōrātī*]; and, behold, now he hath taken away **my blessing** [*birkātī*]. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a **blessing** [*bērākā*] for me? And Isaac answered and said unto **Esau** [*'ēśāw*], Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and **what shall I do** [*'e'ēśeh*] **now unto thee, my son?** And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. (Genesis 27:35-38)

The wordplay on the name Jacob in terms of the denominative verb *'qb* "supplant" ("he hath supplanted me") is one of the more well-known examples of paronomasia in the Hebrew Bible and one that looks forward to later wordplay in terms of "wrestle" and "embrace." Less well-known and overlooked is Isaac's subtler but equally poignant wordplay on Esau here in terms of *'sh/'sy*. From an audience standpoint, Esau's character is no more pathetic (or sympathetic) than when Isaac asks Esau his poignant final question: "What **shall I do** [*'e'ēśeh*] now for thee, my son?" This is wordplay on Esau (*'ēśāw*) in terms of *'e'ēśeh* ("shall I do...?").

The final wordplay on Esau in terms of *'sh/'sy* occurs Genesis 27:45, at the very end of the pericope. Rebekah, aware of Esau's intent to kill his brother Jacob, urges her son to flee to their kin in Padan-Aram "until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which **thou hast done** [*'āśītā*] to him." This concluding use of *'sh/'sy* as a play on *'ēśāw* again makes Jacob the subject of the verb and refers directly to Jacob's overall "supplanting," "usurping" or "robbing" of Esau (*wayya'qēbēnī* "he hath supplanted me," Genesis 27:36). In this way, the narrator brings together the running wordplay on Esau's name (nine times) and the wordplay on Jacob in terms of *'qb*, in Genesis 25:26; 27:36.

"I Kneeled Down Before My Maker": Enos, Esau and Peniel

As has already been noted, Enos enriches the onomastic wordplay and allusions to the Jacob-Esau cycle in Enos 1:1-2 with additional allusions and onomastic wordplay in Enos 1:3-4. Here it should be noted that Enos

1:3 has suffered some textual loss since its translation and dictation into the original manuscript as the following comparison shows:

Enos 1:3 (1981, 2013)	Enos 1:3 (Skousen)
Behold, I went to <u>hunt</u> beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.	Behold, I went to <u>hunt</u> beasts in the forest, and [I remembered] ³² the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life and the joy of the saints; and the words of my father ³³ sunk deep into my heart.

Enos's remembering his father's words and "the words of [his] father s[i]nking deep into [his] heart" brings about further biographical connections between his own life and the story of Jacob and Esau:

And my soul hungered; and **I kneeled down before my Maker** [Hebrew *ʾōśāy*],³⁴ and **I cried unto him** in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did **I cry unto him**; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. (Enos 1:4)

First, Enos's statement "my soul hungered" recalls Esau's being famished and faint with physical hunger in Genesis 25:29-34, hunger which led him to sell and despise his birthright (*bēkōrā*). It also recalls Isaac's physical craving for Esau's venison, whereby Isaac intended that his "soul" might "bless" his son Esau. However, Enos subverts this image and language in a powerful way: Enos's "soul" — Hebrew *nepeš* — does not just hunger physically (contrast Esau), but hungers with deep spiritual hunger.

This spiritual hunger brings Enos to "kneel down before [his] maker." The denominative verb³⁵ "kneel" (*brk*, which is probably related or derived from the verb *bārak*, "bless")³⁶ recalls both the blessing and the birthright from the Jacob-Esau story (more on this below). Moreover, the expression "before" (Hebrew *lipnê*, literally "to the face") immediately recalls Enos's previous statement about his "wrestle which he had [wrestled] **before God**," thus recalling the onomastic wordplay on Jacob in terms of **bq* and Peniel/Penuel (*pēnī'ēl*, "the face of God"). But there is even more to Enos's literary allusion.

The expression "my maker" mostly likely represents the Hebrew participle *ʾōśēh* ("making," "doing" or "maker," "doer"). For example, the Psalms frequently describe the Lord as "maker" (*ʾōśēh*) of "heaven and earth."³⁷ Job 35:10 attests the form *ʾōśāy*, "my maker" ("Where is God my maker ...?" cf. Job 32:22; "my maker [*ʾōśēnī*; i.e., the one making me]

would soon take me away”). The collocation “my Maker” occurs first in the Book of Mormon in the writings of Jacob (“shrink with shame before the presence of my Maker,” Jacob 2:6). Jacob’s phraseology very likely influenced Enos’s language. An additional text worth noting, especially in the context of the language of Enos 1:1-4 are the words attributed to Eliphaz the Temanite in Job 4:17:

Shall **mortal man** [ʾənôš] be **more just** [yiṣdāq] than **God** [ʾēlôah]? Shall a man [*geber*, strong man] be more pure than **his maker** [ʾōšēhū]? (Job 4:17)

The participle *ʾōšēh* constitutes a divine epithet for Yahweh in Isaiah 51:13 (“and [thou] forgettest the Lord **thy maker** [ʾōšekā]”); 54:5 (“For **thy Maker** [ʾōsayik] is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name”), among other biblical passages.³⁸

A much more important text for our purposes here, however, is Psalm 95:6. Psalm 95 has been widely recognized as an enthronement Psalm and a text that was likely sung as a hymn or performed in the Jerusalem temple. When Enos states “I kneeled down before my maker,” he appears to quote Psalm 95: “O come, let us worship and bow down: **let us kneel** [*nibrēkā*] **before the Lord our maker** [ʾōšenū]” (Psalm 95:6). Enos thus alludes to an important temple text that is elsewhere alluded to throughout the Book of Mormon.³⁹

The literary genius of Enos’s incorporation of Psalm 95:6, however, is his making the phrase “before the Lord our Maker” a reference to Isaac’s promise in Genesis 27:7 and Jacob’s experience at Peniel. Moreover, it makes the divine title “Maker” (*ʾōšēh*) or “my Maker” (*ʾōsāy*) into a paronomastic pun on “Esau” (*ʾēsāw*), one that corresponds with the Genesis narrator’s identification of the *man* (*ʾiš*) “Esau” with the divine *man* (*ʾiš/ʾēlōhîm*) with whom Jacob wrestles (see Genesis 32–33). We especially recall that Jacob says to Esau: “I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me” (Genesis 33:10). This point is perhaps strengthened by the fact that Esau’s cognomen Edom (*ʾēdôm*) also constituted a divine name,⁴⁰ attested in the name Obed-edom (*ʾōbēd ʾēdôm* or *ʾōbēd ʾēdôm*).⁴¹ David invested a man named Obed-edom with the keeping of the Ark of the Covenant before its eventual “rest” in the Holy of Holies of Solomon’s temple (see 2 Samuel 6) and another Obed-edom was the “head of the family of [temple] doorkeepers and singers.”⁴²

We should further note Enos’s possible allusion to and adaptation of the Genesis narrator’s description of Esau’s “**cry**[ing] [*wayyiṣʿaq*] with a great and exceeding bitter **cry** [*šēʾāqâ*],” which plays on, or alludes

to, the name Isaac (*yīṣḥāq*). Esau's "cry" evokes the opposite emotion suggested in the meaning of Isaac's name "may he laugh" or "may he rejoice" (Genesis 18:12-15; 21:6-9; 26:8).⁴³ Enos makes a twofold reference to "crying" for his own soul: "I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him" (Enos 1:4).⁴⁴

In all of this, Enos ("man") is attempting to describe how the Lord who "made" him, "makes" him from an Esau-like "man" into a Jacob-like divine "man" through his atonement. That process begins with the "remission of [his] sins" (Enos 1:2).

"Lord, How Is It Done?"

In response to his own lengthy "cry" to the Lord, Enos informs us that "there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee,⁴⁵ and **thou shalt be blessed**" (Enos 1:5). The Lord's promise to Enos, "and thou shalt be blessed [(*gam*) *bārûk tihyeh*]," echoes Isaac's reported statement regarding Jacob, "[I] **have blessed him** [*wā'ābārkehû*] and **he shall be blessed** [*gam bārûk yihyeh*]" (Genesis 27:33). It also recalls the blessing that Jacob procured through his "wrestle": "I will not let thee go, except **thou bless me**" (Genesis 32:26); "And **he blessed him** there" (Genesis 32:29).

It further recalls the numerous purpose clauses and other statements throughout the earlier pericope (Genesis 27) pertaining to Isaac's desire to "bless" his son Esau: "that my soul **may bless** thee before I die" (Genesis 27:4); "that I may eat, and **bless thee before the Lord** before my death" (Genesis 27:7); (Rebekah to Jacob) "**that he may bless thee** before his death" (Genesis 27:12); "I shall bring a curse upon me, and **not a blessing**" (Genesis 27:12); "that thy soul may bless me" (Genesis 27:19); "so **he blessed him**" (Genesis 27:23); "that my soul may bless thee" (Genesis 27:25); "he smelled the smell of his raiment, and **blessed him**," "the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord **hath blessed**" (Genesis 27:27); "**Bless me**, even me also, O my father" (Genesis 27:34); "Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy **blessing**" (Genesis 27:35); "he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away **my blessing** ... Hast thou not reserved a **blessing** for me?" (Genesis 27:36); "Hast thou but one **blessing**, my father? **bless me**, even me also, O my father" (Genesis 27:38); and finally, "Esau hated Jacob because of **the blessing** [*habbērākâ*] wherewith his father **blessed him**" (Genesis 27:41).⁴⁶ The repetition of **brk* (e.g., *bārak* ["bless"] and *bērākâ* ["blessing"]) and the homonym *bēkōrâ* throughout the cycle⁴⁷ may constitute a paronomastic pun on Rebekah

(*ribqâ*). We can thus see Enos employing a pun of his own in his use of the term “blessed” (Enos 1:1, 5, 27, especially v. 5) juxtaposed with the verb “kneeled” (*brk*, Enos 1:4). Enos becomes the spiritual heir of his father, Jacob — Lehi’s “firstborn in the wilderness” (2 Nephi 2:1-2, 11), just as his ancestor, Jacob, had become the spiritual heir of his father, Isaac.

Following the Lord’s promise that Enos would be “blessed,” onomastic wordplay on Esau — and perhaps Jacob — resurfaces in Enos’s question to the Lord and the Lord’s subsequent response. Here we can compare Enos’s and the Lord’s statements to the onomastic wordplay on Esau and Jacob in Amos 4:12 mentioned earlier, as cited by Garsiel.

That Enos uses or has reference to the Hebrew verb *ʾšh/ʾsy* — *naʾăšâ* or *yēʾăseh* — with the word that has been rendered “done” makes excellent grammatical sense for reasons that will become even clearer later on. It also makes very good sense in the immediate context of his description of God as “my maker” (Enos 1:4) — Enos’s “maker” was also the one who “wrought out,” “accomplished,” “performed,” “made,” or “did” Enos’s remission or forgiveness of sins through the Atonement. However, the most compelling reason to suspect Enos’s use of *ʾšh/ʾsy* here is the profusion of this term as a pun on Esau throughout Genesis 27. Rebekah helps Jacob “make” himself — that is, transform himself — into Esau (*ēśāw*). Enos recognizes that the Lord has “made” and is “making” him into something else through the Atonement — he is making him divine.

Enos 1:7-8 (Skousen)	Amos 4:12 and Genesis 26:4-5
Enos’s blessing: (“thou shalt be blessed,” Enos 1:5; “my guilt was swept away,” Enos 1:6) And I said: Lord, how is it done ? And he said unto me: Because [cf. <i>ʿeqeb</i>] ⁴⁸ of thy faith in Christ , whom thou hast not seen or heard — and many years passeth away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole. (Enos 1:7-8; following Skousen) ⁴⁹	Israel’s punishment: Therefore thus will I do [<i>ʿēśeh</i>] unto thee, O Israel: and because [<i>ʿeqeb</i>] I will do [<i>ʿēśeh</i>] this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. Isaac’s blessing: And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; Because [<i>ʿeqeb</i>] that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. (Genesis 26:4-5)

“It Shall Be Done Unto Them According to Their Faith”

The verb “do/done” occurs again in a salient way in Enos 1:18. Regarding the Lord’s promise to him regarding the restoration of his Lamanite brethren to the covenants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Enos records “And the Lord said unto me: Thy fathers have also required of me this thing; and **it shall be done** [Hebrew *yē’āśeh*] unto them according to their faith; for their faith was like unto thine” (Enos 1:18). Again, the text plausibly reflects the verb *’sh/’śy*⁵⁰ and constitutes another allusion to the name Esau.

The Lord’s statement here directly recalls Enos’s earlier question, “Lord, how **is it done** [*yē’āśeh*]?” and the Lord’s response “Because of thy faith in Christ.” Enos’s “soul” could “rest” because he knew it would be according to the covenant which he had made [Hebrew *kārat*, “cut”]. In other words, Enos knew that the Lord performs what he promises. Enos’s “maker” (*’ōśāy*, Enos 1:4) would “do” it.

The passive verbal form *yē’āśeh* (“be done”) in the collocation “be done unto” is used as a wordplay on “Esau” at least once in the biblical text, outside of Genesis 25 and 27. We note here that the brief book of Obadiah, whose message focuses a great deal on the nation of Edom, contains abundant wordplay on Edom and Esau (the name Edom is used twice and Esau seven times). In decrying Esau-Edom’s national treachery against Judah, Obadiah plays on the name “Edom” (*’ēdōm*) three times in terms of the expression “their calamity”: “Thou [Edom/*’ēdōm*] shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of **their calamity** [*’ēdō*]; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of **their calamity** [*’ēdō*], nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of **their calamity** [*’ēdō*]” (Obadiah 1:13; cf. *’ābdām* = “their destruction” in 1:12). In consequence of Esau-Edom’s perfidy, Obadiah prophesies that their deeds will return to them, employing an emphatic pun on the name Esau: “For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: **as thou hast done** [*’āśītā*] **it shall be done unto thee** [*yē’āśeh lāk*]; thy reward shall return upon thine own head” (Obadiah 1:15). The “thou,” of course, is Esau-Edom. Obadiah directly juxtaposes the 2nd person active perfect verb form of *’śy/’sh* with the third-person masculine passive — *’āśītā yē’āśeh lāk* — as an emphatic wordplay on *’ēśāw*. Esau-Edom’s punishment will be commensurate and retributive.

All of this helps us better appreciate Enos’s allusion to the name Esau when he asks “Lord, how is it done?” (Enos 1:7) and the allusion to Esau in the Lord’s subsequent promise, “it shall be done unto them according to their faith” (Enos 1:18). The Obadiah example is particularly helpful here in that it illustrates the long-term hatred that resurfaced between Judah (descendants of Jacob-Israel) and Edom (descendants of Esau)

— estranged brothers whose relationship needed “at-one-ment” like the enmity between the Nephites and Lamanites (cf. Genesis 32:20; 33:10-11).

“Our Labors Were Vain”: The Lamanites as “Esau”

Although, Enos’s literary use of the Jacob-Esau cycle suggests not only his hope for, but assurance of, an eventual reconciliation between the Nephites and Lamanites, nevertheless he emphasizes the aggravated separation that persisted between the Nephites and their estranged brethren. The traditional Lamanite charge that Nephi (and his descendants/people) had “robbed them” of their property and right to the government (Mosiah 10:16-17; Alma 54:17) which was their birthright, which itself echoes Jacob’s “supplanting,” “usurping,” or “robbing” Esau (Genesis 27:36)⁵¹ underlies Enos’s report, if not explicitly stated therein:

And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God. But **our labors were vain; their hatred was fixed**, and they were led by their evil nature that they became wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and **their skill was in the bow, and in the cimeter, and the ax**. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat; and they were **continually seeking to destroy us**. (Enos 1:20)

Enos’s remark that “our labors were vain” restates his previous statement “our strugglings were vain.” The onomastic allusion moves from “Israel” (“Let El struggle” or “he struggles with God”)⁵² to “Esau” in terms of “labors” (possibly *ma’āśeh/ma’āšim*).⁵³

Moreover, Enos’s subsequent statements that “their hatred was fixed” and “they were continually seeking to destroy us” (Enos 1:20) echoes his father Jacob’s words in Jacob 7:24-25. Both passages recall the Genesis narrator’s description of Esau in Genesis 27:41: “And **Esau hated** [*wayyišṭōm*] **Jacob** because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; **then will I slay my brother Jacob**” (cf. 2 Nephi 5:1-7, 14).

Enos, like his father Jacob⁵⁴ and unlike Jacob his ancestor, would remain unreconciled to his estranged brethren (the Lamanites) during his lifetime. However, his “soul did rest” with the divine assurance that

the long hoped- and prayed-for reconciliation would happen in the Lord's "own due time" (Enos 1:16-17).

"Wrought Upon by the Power of God": Enos's Sanctification Through Christ's Atonement

Another subtle allusion to the name Esau in terms of the Christ's Atonement and its transformative effects can be detected as Enos concludes his record:

And I saw that I must soon go down to my grave, **having been wrought upon** by the power of God that I must preach and prophesy unto this people, and declare the word according to the truth which is in Christ. And I have declared it in all my days, and have rejoiced in it above that of the world. (Enos 1:26)

Spoken or written in Hebrew, the collocation "wrought upon" (i.e., "worked upon") probably reflects the verb *ʿsh/ʿsy* at some level — a verb which, as has been previously noted, serves as a *Leitwort* in the story of Jacob's assumption of Esau's identity in order to receive the firstborn blessing that his father intended to give Esau.

The collocation "wrought upon" occurs in one Old Testament passage in the KJV, which describes those who "wrought upon" — i.e., "worked on" — the Jerusalem temple. The underlying verb in this passage is *ʿsh/ʿsy*: "And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that **did** [*ʿôśê*] the work, that had the oversight of the house of the Lord: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, **that wrought upon** [*haʿôśîm*] the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 12:11).⁵⁵

If the supposition that "wrought upon" represents *ʿsh/ʿsy* in translation is correct, Enos uses the same verb to describe his sanctification over the course of his life, to his initial experience of being justified — having his sins and his "guilt ... swept away." "How [was] it **done**?" (Enos 1:7). It was "done" initially and "wrought" over the course of a lifetime through the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ — Enos's "Maker" (Enos 1:4-8; 26). Enos's use of *ʿsh/ʿsy*, "wrought upon," in Enos 1:26 as another play on Esau has the added literary function reminding his audience of his previous conversion and helping them understand by what power he became one of the "blessed" mentioned in Enos 1:27.

"Putting on" Immortality and the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Near the end of his autobiography, Enos also subtly reworks the “clothing” motif from Genesis 27 in which Jacob, at Rebekah’s instigation and with her help, “puts on” Esau’s clothing and identity — in effect, “putting on” Esau (Genesis 27:15-16). Enos anticipates “putting on” a resurrected body and a divine identity: “And I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when **my mortal shall put on immortality**” (Enos 1:27).⁵⁶ On one level, Enos’s language appears to have direct reference to his father’s doctrinal statements on the atonement and the resurrection in 2 Nephi 9:7: “Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement — save it should be an infinite atonement this corruption could not **put on** incorruption. Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration. And if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more.” Jacob’s statement, in turn, represents his exegesis of the clothing-resurrection imagery Isaiah 52:1-2: “Awake, awake; **put on** thy strength, O Zion; **put on** thy beautiful garments [cf. the resurrected body], O Jerusalem, ... Shake thyself from the dust [cf. spirit world and the grave]; **arise**, and sit down [i.e., on a throne], O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion”; or as Lehi commanded, “Arise from the dust, my sons, and **be men** [*’ānāšīm*] ... Awake, my sons; put on the armor of righteousness” (2 Nephi 1:21, 23). Like his father, Jacob, Enos (“man”) knew that “the bodies and the spirits of **men** [*’ānāšīm*] will be restored one to the other” and that “[his] spirit and ... body [would be] restored to itself again” since “all **men** [*’ānāšīm*] become incorruptible, and immortal” (2 Nephi 9:13). He anticipated coming forth in the first resurrection “**clothed** with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness” (2 Nephi 9:14). Moreover, Enos (“man”), like his father Jacob, anticipated that at the time “when all **men** [*’ānāšīm*] shall have passed from this first death unto life, insomuch as they have become **immortal**, they must appear before [*lipnē*] the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel,” it would be a pleasant, rather than a dreadful experience (2 Nephi 9:15; Jacob 6:13; Enos 1:27).

Thus on still another level Enos’s words point to becoming something infinitely above the meaning of his own name, “man,” and beyond what the patriarchal figures Jacob and Esau, to whom he so often alludes, represent: imperfect mortal men. Although one cannot say for certain what word or expression might underlie the word “mortal” in Enos 1:27, Eliphaz in Job 4:17 asks, “Shall **mortal man** [*’ēnôš*] be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his **maker**?” It is probably significant

that the KJV translators opted to render *ʿēnôš* not simply “man” in Job 4:17, but “mortal man.”⁵⁷ Scholars have long noted the homonymic, if not etymological, relationship between the poetic noun/name *ʿēnôš* and the verb *ʾānaš*,⁵⁸ to “be mortally sick, weak.”

Commenting on the use of *ʿēnôš* in Psalm 103:15-16, John Goldingay writes: “The word *ʿēnôš* can designate a human being in a neutral way (e.g., [Psalm] 55:13 [14]), but *ʾānaš* means ‘be weak/sick.’ Although there may be no etymological connection between the words, contexts sometimes imply that *ʿēnôš* suggests mortal humanity, humanity in its frailty (e.g., [Psalm] 8:4 [5]; 90:3), and this [Psalm 103:15] is an example.”⁵⁹ It is no accident that the phrase “not-man” (*lōʾ-ʾiš*) constitutes a collocation for divinity in Numbers 23:9 and Hosea 11:9. Thus, King Benjamin’s use of “mortal man” might constitute a usage of *ʿēnôš* similar to the foregoing: “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** [i.e., an *ʿēnôš*]. But I am like as yourselves, **subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind**” (Mosiah 2:10-11).

It is also noteworthy that King Benjamin tells his people that they must “**putteth off the natural man** [cf. *ʿēnôš*] and **becometh** a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19). Benjamin may have had at least partial reference to Enos’s language (Enos 1:27). Enos became one of the “saints” of which his father spoke by “putting off” the natural man, knowing that he would one day also put off his mortal “man” and “put on” immortality.

As indicated above, the verbal construction “put on,” used by Enos, refers to putting on clothing, and corresponds to the Hebrew verb *lābaš/lābēš* (“put on [a garment],” “clothe,” “clothe oneself [with]”).⁶⁰ The Greek verb used to express this idea is *enduō* (or *endyō*).⁶¹ Paul uses the expression “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27; see also Romans 13:14)⁶² as a means of describing putting on the Atonement. This clothing metaphor evokes Genesis 3:21, which describes how the Lord clothed Adam and Eve before their expulsion from Eden: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God **make** [*wayyaʿas*] **coats** [*kotnôt*, tunics] of skins, **and clothed them** [*wayyalbišēm*]” (Genesis 3:21). As L. Michael Morales has observed,⁶³ this is the same language used in Leviticus 8:13 to describe the clothing of priests: “And Moses brought Aaron’s sons, and **put** [*wayyalbišēm*] coats [*kuttônôt*, tunics] **upon them**, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the Lord commanded Moses.” Thus, the coats or tunics of animal skins suggest the performance of sacrifices within the garden sanctuary/temple.⁶⁴ Since, as the first couple

learned later, the animal sacrifices were in “similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten” (Moses 5:4-8),⁶⁵ the Lord had symbolically clothed them in his Atonement.

The account of Adam and Eve’s being clothed in animal skins (Genesis 3:21) finds a later echo in the Jacob-Esau narrative. Rebekah helped her son Jacob “put on” Esau in order to receive his father’s blessing and become what the “firstborn” had the potential to become: “And Rebekah took **goodly raiment** of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and **put them upon** [*wattalbēš*] Jacob her younger son: And she **put** [*hilibīšā*] the **skins** [*‘ōrōt*] of the kids of the goats **upon** his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck (Genesis 27:15-16).

Adam and Eve’s “garments” or “tunics” of skin and Jacob’s use of Esau’s clothes and “skins” of goat kid are reminiscent of priestly temple vestments that are themselves emblematic of what we are “becoming” but are not yet. Just as the Lord clothed Adam and Eve in (“put on”) Christ and his atonement, Rebekah “put on” Jacob the status of “firstborn.” So, too, we “put on” sacred clothing in the sacred precincts of the temple in anticipation of the time when, like Enos, our “mortal” will “put on” immortality — the celestial resurrection body, in the likeness of Christ’s body, if we have been true and faithful. We will “put on” divinity.

“I Shall See His Face with Pleasure”: Final Atonement

Enos’s final words anticipate his final “at-one-ment” with the Lord. Notably, however, they contain clear echoes of Genesis 33:10, which describe Jacob’s emotions upon his final reconciliation with his brother, Esau:

Genesis 33:10	Enos 1:27
And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.	... and [I] shall stand before him ; then shall I see his face with pleasure , and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed , there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen.

Jacob had obtained Esau’s privilege of being “bless[ed] ... before the Lord” (“Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and **bless thee before the Lord** [*wa’ābārekēkā lipnē yhwh*] before my death,” Genesis 27:7) — literally, blessed to the Lord’s face. Jacob’s wresting the blessing away from Esau (“supplanting” him) and Isaac’s blessing Jacob “before the Lord” anticipated his “wrestling” the divine “man” at Peniel/Penuel (“face of God”) in which he “s[aw] **God face**

to face [*rā'itī 'ēlōhīm pānīm 'el pānīm*]” had “[his] life [soul, *napšī*]... preserved” (Genesis 32:30) and was “blessed” by the divine “man” there. Moreover, Jacob was subsequently reconciled to his brother Esau in a manner that recalls the events at Peniel/Penuel: “I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God [*kir'ōt pēnē 'ēlōhīm*]...” (Genesis 33:10).⁶⁶ To which Jacob adds “thou was pleased with me [*wattirṣēnī*].”

In Enos 1:27, Enos recalls all of the foregoing, with his statements “I shall stand before him” (i.e., “to his face”), “then shall I see his face with pleasure” (playing again on Hebrew *pānīm*, “face”), and “he will say unto me: Come unto me ye blessed.” He recalls his own earlier puns on the names Jacob and Peniel (“the **wrestle** [**hē'ābēq*] which **I had** [possibly, “which I wrestled,” **ne'ēbaqtī*] **before God** [**līpnē 'ēlōhīm*, literally, “to the face of God”]) as well as his earlier corresponding wordplay on Esau, Peniel, and the blessing (“I kneeled down before my maker”). With these final allusions to Jacob, Esau, Peniel and “blessings,” Enos’s testimony was that he had become everything that his ancestor Jacob’s blessing represented in spiritual terms. He had become what own father, Jacob, had become and had hoped Enos himself would become: atoned to and identified with his “maker” and one of those who would be eternally “blessed” in his “presence” (to his “face”).

Conclusion

Enos’s writings begin with him as an Esau-like “man” wrestling a Jacob-like “wrestle” before God (Enos 1:1-4). Enos initially describes himself in terms reminiscent of Esau — e.g., as one who “hunt[ed]” and “hungered.” They conclude with his “having been wrought upon by the power of God” (i.e., having been sanctified by Christ’s atonement which motivated him to testify of that atonement throughout his life; Enos 1:26). Enos further anticipates his “putting on” immortality (i.e., the divine nature) and becoming like God, this in preparation for “seeing his face with pleasure” (Genesis 1:27).

The Genesis 27 narrative, which describes Jacob obtaining the blessing intended for Esau by their father Isaac, creates a strong paronomastic link between the name Esau and the Hebrew verb *śh/śy*. Accordingly, Enos uses *śh/śy*-terminology (“Maker,” “how is it **done**?” “it shall be done unto them,” “wrought upon”) in describing his obtaining of a divine blessing, his Jacob-like transformation through the atonement, and the Lord’s keeping his covenant with Enos and his fathers.

Enos’s skillful adaptation and reworking of numerous details from the Jacob-Esau cycle to tell the story of his own divine “wrestle,” experiences

with Christ's atonement, subsequent spiritual "struggles," and final sanctification through the Christ's atonement makes his autobiography a short masterpiece. They further reveal Enos to have been a diligent reader of the scriptures and a faithful "man" who became a prophet of God worthy of the legacy of his father Jacob and his patriarchal ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

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Endnotes

1. Matthew L. Bowen, "Wordplay on the Name Enos," *Insights* 26/3 (2006): 2. On Nephi's autobiographical use of wordplay in 1 Nephi 1:1, see idem, "Internal Textual Evidence for the Egyptian Origin of Nephi's Name," *Insights* 22/11 (2002): 2. On Nephi's use of wordplay elsewhere, see idem, "Nephi's Good Inclusio," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17 (2015): 181-195.
2. On Nephi as the Egyptian lexeme *nfr* and its pronunciation, see John Gee, "A Note on the Name Nephi," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 189-91; and idem, "Four Suggestions on the Origin of the Name Nephi," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 1-5.
3. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute/Ashmolean Museum, 1999), 131-132.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. See Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 60. Hereafter cited as BDB. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 70. Hereafter cited as HALOT.

7. John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper, "Jacob and Enos: Wrestling before God," *Insights* 21/5 (2001): 2-3.
8. Matthew L. Bowen, "And There Wrestled a Man with Him" (Genesis 32:24): Enos's Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 151-160.
9. BDB, 60. Hebrew *'iš* is possibly cognate with Egyptian *si, s* "man."
10. I.e., *'ānāšīm* constitutes the plural form of *'iš* in the vast majority of occurrences. In a few instances (e.g., Isaiah 53:3; Psalm 141:4; Proverbs 8:4), the poetic rare plural *'īšīm* occurs rather than *'ānāšīm*.
11. As Hugh W. Nibley (*The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed. [CWHN 16; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2005], 434) long ago observed, "One of the most puzzling episodes in the Bible has always been the story of Jacob's wrestling with the Lord. When one considers that the word conventionally translated as 'wrestled (*yē'āvēq*)' can just as well mean 'embrace' and that it was in this ritual embrace that Jacob received a new name and the bestowal of priestly and kingly power at sunrise (Genesis 32:24-30), the parallel to the Egyptian coronation embrace becomes at once apparent." Notably, the Hebrew verbs **'bq* ("wrestle") and *ḥbq* ("embrace") may both be related to Akkadian *epēqu(m)*, "to embrace; grow over, round." See *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, ed. Jeremy Black, Andrew George and Nicolas Postgate; SANTAG 5 (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2000), 74. Both *'bq* (Genesis 32:24-25) and *ḥbq* (Genesis 29:13; 33:4; 48:10) are key terms used to play on the name "Jacob" (*ya'āqōb*) in the biblical text (see Bowen, "And There Wrestled a Man with Him," 155-160).
12. BDB, 60; HALOT 70.
13. Cf. Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 138-139. See also *ibid* (p. 196) where Garsiel sees Ezekiel tying the name "Edom" to *'ādāmā* ("ground," "land") in paronomastic fashion in Ezekiel 36:5-6.
14. Stanley D. Walters, "Jacob Narrative," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary, Volume 3: H-J*, ed. David Noel Freedman et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 607. Special thanks go to Robert F. Smith for

- calling my attention to Walters' commentary on the meaning of *'iš tām*.
15. Cf. Akkadian *tamīmu* "perfect" for sacrificial animals = Hebrew *tāmīm* "perfect" as discussed by H. Yosef ben Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew: Etymological, Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalence with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2009), 432-433.
16. Genesis 25:25; 27:11, 23.
17. See, e.g., Genesis 32:3; 33:14, 16; 36:8-9; 20-21; 30.
18. See Genesis 4:26; 5:6-7; 9-11; 1 Chronicles 1:1; Luke 3:38.
19. HALOT, 12.
20. HALOT, 1010; BDB, 844.
21. HALOT, 1020.
22. Martin Buber ("Leitwort Style in Pentateuch Narrative," in *Scripture and Translation* [ed. Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig; trans. Lawrence Rosenwald and Everett Fox; ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994] 114) who coined the term *Leitwort* ("lead-word," or "guiding word"), defines it thus: "By *Leitwort* I understand a word or word root that is meaningfully repeated within a text or a sequence of texts or complex of texts; those who attend to these repetitions will find a meaning of the text revealed or clarified, or at any rate made more emphatic. As noted, what is repeated need not be a single word but can be a word root; indeed the diversity of forms strengthens the overall dynamic effect."
23. Following Skousen's singular reading of "forest." See Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Two: 2 Nephi 11-Mosiah 16* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2005), 1072-1073.
24. See especially Genesis 25:29-34.
25. See, e.g., HALOT, 893.
26. HALOT (p. 893) cites Ezekiel 17:17; Proverbs, 12:23; 13:16 as instances where *ḡśy/śh* fits the context of the passage better than *śy/śh*, "make, do." Jeremiah 49:10 appears to polemicize against Esau/Edom in terms of "protect, cover": "But **I have made Esau bare**, I have **uncovered** his secret places, and **he shall not be able to hide himself**: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not."

27. Shaul Bar, *A Nation is Born: The Jacob Story* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 7.
28. The English translation here follows J.W. Etheridge's (*The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch; with the Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum from the Chaldee, Volume 1* [London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862], 240) translation.
29. Rashi on Genesis 25:25: *wyqr'w šmw lw šw: hkl qr'w kn, lpy šhyh n'sh wngmr bš'rw kbn šnym hrbh*.
30. Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 134.
31. Ibid.
32. Following Skousen's (*Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, 2:1073-1075) proposed emendation.
33. Ibid.
34. Cf. Job 35:10.
35. Cf. HALOT, 159.
36. Cognate with Egyptian *brkt* "blessings" *Book of the Dead* spell 162 S 3 (T. G. Allen, *Book of the Dead*, SAOC 37 [Oriental Institute, 1974]), and with Akkadian *karābu* "to bless, pay homage; blessing" Tawil, *Akkadian Lexical Companion*, 58-60.
37. Psalm 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 146:6; see also Isaiah 44:24; 45:7.
38. E.g., 1 Samuel 12:6; Isaiah 17:7, 22:11, 27:11; Hosea 8:14; Job 4:17; Proverbs 14:31. Numerous additional passages describe the Lord's creative activity in terms of *šy/šh* ("make," "do"). See, e.g., Genesis 2:4; 2 Kings 19:15/Isaiah 37:16; Isaiah 37:26; 66:22; Jeremiah 32:17.
39. Psalm 95:7-8 is quoted in Jacob 6:6; throughout Alma 12; Alma 10:6. Psalm 95:11 is quoted or alluded to in Jacob 1:7; 4; Alma 10, 12:36-37; 13:6, 12, 16, 29; 16:17; 60:13; 3 Nephi 27:19; and Moroni 7:3 just for starters.
40. Cf. HALOT, 12, 776.
41. 2 Samuel 6:10, 12; 1 Chronicles 13:13-14; 1 Chronicles 15:18, 21, 24; 16:5; 38; 26:4, 8, 15; 2 Chronicles 25:24.
42. HALOT, 776.
43. On the significance of the name Isaac, see Matthew L. Bowen, "'In the Mount of the Lord It Shall Be Seen' and 'Provided': Theophany

and Sacrifice as the Etiological Foundation of the Temple in Israelite and Latter-day Saint Tradition,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2015): 205-206.

44. Mormon appears to have reference to Enos’s experience in Mosiah 21:14: “And they did humble themselves even in the depths of humility; and they did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long did they cry unto their God that he would deliver them out of their afflictions.” Both Enos 1:4 and Mosiah 21:14 may have direct reference to Exodus 2:23: “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and **they cried** [wayyiz’āqû; biform of [wayyiṣ’āqû] and their cry [šaw’ātām] came up unto God by reason of the bondage. See also Exodus 5:15; 14:10; Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3, 6:6-7; 10:10; 1 Samuel 7:8-9; Psalm 34:17 [MT 16]; 107:6, 13, 19, 28, etc.
45. There is an interesting phraseological parallel in Luke 5:20: “Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.” The name Enos, as noted above, means “man.”
46. Cf. Deuteronomy 33:1.
47. Devora Steinmetz (*From Father to Son: Kinship Conflict and Continuity in Genesis* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991], 97) notes that “the words for ‘birthright’ and ‘blessing’ are nearly identical in Hebrew (*bekora* and *beraka*) and the [Jacob-Esau] narrative plays extensively on the connection between them.”
48. See HALOT, 873.
49. Following Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, 2:1075-1077. 34. Cf. Job 35:10. 50. Cf. passages such as Exodus 21:31; Deuteronomy 25:9; 1 Samuel 11:7; Jeremiah 5:13; and Obadiah 1:15. See also, e.g., Isaiah 5:4; Daniel 9:12.
50. Cf. passages such as Exodus 21:31; Deuteronomy 25:9; 1 Samuel 11:7; Jeremiah 5:13; and Obadiah 1:15. See also, e.g., Isaiah 5:4; Daniel 9:12.
51. See Matthew L. Bowen, *Jacob’s Protector* (forthcoming).
52. Bowen, “And There Wrestled a Man with Him,” 153-154, 159-160.
53. Cf., e.g., Genesis 5:29; Exodus 5:4, 13; 23:12, 16; 26:1, 31; 28:11, 32; Isaiah 65:22; Ezekiel 46:1; Habakkuk 3:17.
54. See Jacob 7:24-25.

55. Compare the use of this idiom in 3 Nephi 7:22 ("And as many as had devils cast out from them, and were healed of their sicknesses and their infirmities, **did truly manifest unto the people that they had been wrought upon by the Spirit of God**, and had been healed; and they did show forth signs also and did do some miracles among the people") and Moroni 6:4 ("And after they had been received unto baptism, and **were wrought upon and cleansed** by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ"). See also 1 Nephi 13:12-13; 17:52; 19:12; Alma 20:24 and contrast Mormon 1:19.
56. The apostle Paul, who uses similar language to describe resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:53-54), cites the resurrection as a fulfillment of Isaiah 25:8 ("he shall swallow up death in victory" or "death shall be swallowed up in victory").
57. I am pursuing this line of inquiry at the suggestion of Mark Campbell (personal communication, February 16, 2015).
58. See, e.g., BDB 60.
59. John Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 3, Psalms 90-150* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 173.
60. HALOT, 519-520.
61. Walter Bauer, Fredrick William Danker, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (rev. and ed. by Fredrick William Danker; 3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 333-334.
62. Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"; Romans 13:14: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."
63. L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 53.
64. Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary" in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 141-143.
65. Moses 5:4-8: "And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way

toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence. And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying: **This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.**" See also Joseph F. Smith's vision of those who had died before Jesus's advent in mortality: "And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality; And **who had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice the Son of God**, and had suffered tribulation in their Redeemer's name. All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand. They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death. Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy" (D&C 138:12-17).

66. In addition to Genesis 32:30 and 33:10, Enos's conclusion in Enos 1:27 echoes Genesis 46:30: "And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since **I have seen** [*rě'ôti*] **thy face** [*et-pānêkâ*], because thou art yet alive."

TWO NEW STUDIES OF BIBLICAL REPENTANCE

Noel B. Reynolds

Review of Mark J. Boda, *'Return to Me:' A Biblical Theology of Repentance*, volume 35 of *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, ed. by D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 198 pp. plus bibliography, author index, and scripture index (\$24, paper); and of David A. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical: Judaism, Christianity, and the Interpretation of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 224 pp. plus bibliography and indices of primary sources and subjects (\$74, hardcover).

While repentance will always be an important topic for readers of the Bible, scholarly treatments of this subject peaked in the middle of the twentieth century, and it has hardly received further attention until recently. As one promotional blurb correctly points out, the repentance theme in the Bible has received little sustained attention over the past half-century of scholarship, which has been largely restricted to word studies or focused on a particular text or genre. Studies of the overall theology of the Bible have typically given the theme only passing mention.¹

Even theological commentaries on the Bible tend to skip over this topic while relying on the conclusions of mid-twentieth century linguistic studies. The recent 900-page *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* presents 282 topical articles by 172 distinguished contributors without featuring the topic of repentance in any that I have found. Notwithstanding that "the ultimate aim of the present work is to commend ways of reading Scripture that lead to the blessing of knowing God and of being formed unto godliness,"² *repentance* is never featured as a topic. Even the three-page treatment of *sin* does not include a single

1. See back cover of Boda, *'Return to Me.'*

2. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (general editor), *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 25.

mention of the word *repentance*.³ Fortunately, the situation is now changed. The recent publication of two major studies now provides students of biblical theology with thorough and up-to-date analyses of this central biblical topic. It is also helpful that each is written from a different philosophical/theological perspective — highlighting thereby the competing methodological assumptions of each study. Both authors represent the highest scholarly standards in their respective traditions. Both scholars feature the early origins of repentance language and literature in the Hebrew Bible, which makes their work especially valuable for students of the Book of Mormon, who can appreciate more help with pre-exilic Hebrew traditions.

Mark J. Boda is an extraordinarily prolific scholar whose early passion for the Hebrew Bible led him to a PhD at the University of Cambridge. Now a professor of biblical literature and theology at McMaster Divinity College, he has authored 13 significant books, 100 academic articles, and a comparable number of other related publications over the last 25 years. Clearly a star in the expanding field of highly competent evangelical biblical scholars, he is actively engaged with other scholars and institutions across a broad range of scholarly collaborations and associations and graduate student supervision, while maintaining an active ministerial agenda. *Return to Me* appears as the culmination of a significant sequence of earlier works on penitential themes and texts and provides evangelicals generally with a much-needed treatment of repentance both supportive of their theological commitments and informed and guided by first-rate scholarly principles and methodologies.

Since completing his third degree in Near Eastern languages and civilizations at Harvard University in 2004, David A. Lambert has continued to focus on his dissertation topic of repentance and on how the concept has evolved through centuries of interpretation and translation. Methodologically, Lambert deliberately stands apart from much traditional biblical scholarship by assuming that theological terms like *repentance* must have developed over time and that it would be a serious mistake to look for a constant core of meaning across the full sweep of biblical texts. As his published articles and this award winning book amply illustrate, Professor Lambert consistently integrates a historical criticism of the biblical text with a similar criticism of the interpretations and translations of the text through the ages. Now a professor in the University of North Carolina Department of Religious Studies, he recently received the American Academy of Religion reward of excellence for this

3. Ibid., 748–51.

book. In both his teaching and his academic writing, he emphasizes the importance of recognizing the assumptions that students, academics, and historical interpreters of scripture bring to that enterprise.

Boda and Lambert are clearly aware of each other's projects, though both books avoid a direct confrontation. From Lambert's historical perspective, it must be obvious that Boda is searching the earliest biblical writings for evidences of conceptual continuity with the later Christian scriptures and teachings. On the other hand, Boda might be inclined to question Lambert's assumption that there was a time before repentance, a time in biblical origins in which our modern religious interest in repentance would have been unrecognizable.

The traditional bridge that Boda is trying to cross in reverse direction is the longstanding recognition of biblical scholars that the principal Hebrew word for repentance in the Old Testament was *shuv*, meaning "turn" or "return" as actions leading to changes in direction of movement, while the New Testament writers moved on to the Greek terms *metanoia/metanoeo*, meaning a "change of mind." Even though the four gospels held on to *epistrepho* as a translation for *shuv*, other New Testament writings and certainly the early Christian writers shifted their preferred usage to *metanoia/metanoeo* and associated references to mental thinking and feelings. Accordingly, Boda is quick to notice Old Testament references to feelings of remorse or regret, to rituals of confession or penitence, that may be associated with instances of repentance. Lambert, on the other hand, notes how rare such references to mental and emotional interiority are in his search for the original meanings of *shuv* in the oldest Hebrew texts.

In his systematic examination of the sequence of texts from the Judeo-Christian tradition, Lambert finds the first occurrences in YHWH's warnings to Abraham's descendants that they not seek direction from (turn to) oracles identified with other gods, and that they not put their trust in (turn to) the armies of stronger nations through treaties and alliances. Rather, he calls them to *return* or *turn* to him. From this simple beginning, in which it would not be easy to distinguish faith from repentance, Lambert tracks five major stages of development for this "genealogy of repentance." Even more provocatively, he concludes that our modern theological discourse around repentance was a product of the Hellenistic period; it began within moral philosophy, as a technique for the progress of the sage, and was taken up around the turn of the Common Era, within emerging forms of Judaism and

Christianity, as a practice of subjective control for shaping communal discipline and defining communal boundaries.⁴

Boda, on the other hand, argues for a deep continuity of meaning for *repentance* throughout the Bible as is exemplified in Zechariah 1:1–6 and in Acts 26:16–20.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Return [*shuv*] to me,” declares the Lord of hosts, “that I may return [*shuv*] to you,” says the Lord of hosts. ... Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Return[*shuv*] now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.”

... Then they *repented* [*shuv*] and said, “As the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.” (Zechariah 1:3–6, New American Standard Bible, emphasis added)

Boda finds the same basic meaning in Paul’s recounting of his original vision — in which he uses all three New Testament terms for repentance, when he was told that he would be sent to Jews and Gentiles

to open their eyes so that they may turn [*epistrepho*] from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God... That they should *repent* [*metanoeo*] and turn [*epistrepho*] to God, performing deeds appropriate to *repentance* [*metanoia*]. (Acts 26:18–20, New American Standard Bible, emphasis added)

Beginning with the Genesis account of Cain, Boda shares his analysis of every biblical passage relating to *repentance*. Like Lambert, he sees the Torah picturing “repentance as a return to relationship with Yahweh” which may require “abandoning other gods.” But while this returning focuses on behavior, Boda also sees in many passages the requirement of “an inner reorientation that engages one’s heart and soul.” He points in this regard to Leviticus, which “emphasizes the verbal and affective dimensions of repentance, exhorting confession of sin and humility of heart.” He also finds Deuteronomy emphasizing both “the behavioral and affective dimensions of repentance, exhorting obedience and a change from the heart.”⁵ Finally, after completing his detailed review of the rest of the Old Testament and the New Testament, Boda concludes that Christian scripture supports the same “essential relational character of the theology of repentance.”

4. Lambert, 9.

5. Boda, 46–47.

This relational return to our Creator and Redeemer arises from the depth of the human heart, enabled by the work of the Spirit. Such Christian repentance will often be expressed through oral confession and necessarily entails turning from the sinful attitudes and actions that frustrate the intimacy we as humans can enjoy with our Creator and Redeemer.⁶

Students of the Book of Mormon will find a great deal in both these books to help them in their study. Both present a thorough analysis of all the early biblical texts that could be thought to have influenced Lehi and his successors. Lambert reads those texts through the lens of contemporary historical criticism. And Boda reads them through the lens of the redemptive teachings of the New Testament. Both will be relevant for the Book of Mormon reader. What neither of these books picks up on at all is how often the biblical passages they analyze characterize repentance as turning or returning to the Lord's *path* or *way* to walk with him, the metaphor that dominates Book of Mormon teaching.⁷

Noel Reynolds (*PhD, Harvard University*) is an emeritus professor of political science at Brigham Young University, where he taught a broad range of courses in legal and political philosophy, American heritage, and the Book of Mormon. His research and publications are based in these fields and several others, including authorship studies, Mormon history, Christian history and theology, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

6. Boda, 198.

7. For development of this metaphor from a Book of Mormon perspective, see Noel B. Reynolds, "The Ancient Doctrine of the Two Ways and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly*, 56/3 (Fall 2017): 49–78 and "This is the Way," *Religious Educator*, 14/3 (2013): 71–83.

A MODERN TRANSLATION OF GENESIS 1–11 IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE

Dominic Kent

Samuel L. Bray and John F. Hobbins, *Genesis 1–11: A New Old Translation for Readers, Scholars, and Translators* (Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse, 2017). 326 pages, \$14.99, paperback.

Abstract: Samuel L. Bray and John F. Hobbins have recently released a new translation of Genesis chapters one to eleven. The highlight of the work is their extensive notes that provide insight into not just their translation process, but on the process of Bible translation as a whole. The book offers a great deal to interest Bible readers, scholars, and translators.

Samuel L. Bray and John F. Hobbins have done something very special with their new translation of Genesis 1–11 (technically, it's Genesis 1–12:9). They have not only produced a translation that is stimulating and thought provoking, they give their readers a deep understanding of the process of translation. Having read the copious notes (they have written 140 pages worth), I admire their diligence, patience, and skill.

In a world of multiple English-language Bible translations, one may well ask if another is wanted or required. As this one is born out of the translators' "love for the old translations, and a measure of disappointment with the new ones,"¹ they answer this question with a resounding yes.

The translation itself is refreshing to read, due to its layout. The text is free from headers, footnotes, and comments, with versification discreetly placed at the side. This unencumbered text makes for a very pleasant reading experience. The translators follow the sectioning of the Masoretic Text *Codex Leningradensis*, not just due to its antiquity, but

1. Bray, *Genesis*, 3.

because the phrasing of this codex is significant. This decision created a real shift in my personal understanding of the text as I saw that it ends each section on a note of hope amid the despair it has just described.

The translators' aim is to keep to a close translation, very much in the tradition of the Tyndale and the King James Version; theirs is not a trendy, contemporary English translation, and they are candid with their reasons why they chose this path. "The King James Version seemed old-fashioned to its first readers, and the same was true for readers in antiquity of most of the books of the Bible in Hebrew — their style has had a classical feel for at least the last twenty-two centuries."² In a world where much is being dumbed down, they resist this trend and invite the reader to grapple with the text as it is. Their aim is to help us become a "more discerning reader of biblical stories."³

Latter-day Saint readers will instantly feel familiar with the translation, as it is very close to the KJV. Bray and Hobbins are also conscious of the need for scripture to be suitable for reading aloud, which is a hallmark of the KJV, in my opinion. It is pleasing to see a modern translation that sees this communal side of scripture as important to the translation process. This is a translation meant not just to be read but to be heard.

The notes make up the majority of the book, and that is where the real value of this book lies. Translation is a complicated and convoluted undertaking. Here we get a glimpse inside the translators' scriptorium. They lay out candidly and in great detail the reasons why they chose to translate the way they did. They discuss their translation process to a degree I've never seen in book form before. I did some biblical seminars with one of the translators for the New International Version years ago, and he furnished us with many descriptions of that work, which I loved. We get similar insights with the notes in this book. They are humble enough to admit their translation is not definitive, but their reasoning is made clear, allowing the reader to decide whether or not they agree with their choices. There were a few times I didn't agree with their choices, but I could at least understand why they had chosen that word/phrase.

Their notes on the use of wordplay and puns in the Hebrew text were some of the most helpful. I knew there were some in the Hebrew text but that many were lost in translation. This translation helpfully puts the wordplays in italics so the reader can see the author is making a pun or linking between these words, such as the Hebrew words for the

2. Ibid., 10.

3. Ibid., 193.

nakedness (*'arummim*) of Adam and Eve and the shrewdness (*'arum*) of the serpent in Genesis chapter 2:25–3:1.

Not only do these notes illuminate Bray and Hobbins' translation process, but the reader will gain insights into many other translations — both the older ones, such as KJV, and more contemporary ones, such as the English Standard Version and New Living Translation. On numerous occasions, I had to make notes in my personal scriptures because of what I read in Bray and Hobbins' work. This became a lengthy but enjoyable process as I went through all my English translations, making notes on some of those translators' word and phrase choices.

After the notes, the reader is given a superb glossary and bibliography that has brought many books to my attention. The indexes are excellent, especially the six-page index of translations referenced in the notes. The thoroughness of their research is incredible; I don't think there is a single English translation they have not examined, in addition to the numerous Hebrew and Greek sources they have investigated.

The subtitle of the book is "A New Old Translation for Readers, Scholars, and Translators," and I highly recommend this serious and studious book for all who fall into those categories. It is accessible to those new to biblical studies but will also stretch more seasoned scholars. I have gained a greater cognizance of Genesis chapters one to eleven and also have a greater appreciation for those involved in the work of translation. I look forward to the publication of future volumes.

Dominic Kent *lives in the UK and has a degree in theatre studies from Manchester University. He is currently studying for an MA in Aspects and Implications of Biblical Interpretation. His areas of interest and academic study are temple theology, hermeneutics, the theatrics and performance of ritual, the early Jerusalem church, and James the brother of Jesus.*

“HOW LONG CAN ROLLING WATERS REMAIN IMPURE?”: LITERARY ASPECTS OF THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

Richard Dilworth Rust

Abstract: Many parts of the Doctrine and Covenants are literary in character. That is, their content is made appealing and more memorable and meaningful through aesthetic qualities. With content often determining form and form revealing content, profound concerns are presented in ways that reach us deeply. A statement in the Doctrine and Covenants regarding things which come of the earth applies well to the book's literary elements: They “please the eye and ... gladden the heart; [they] enliven the soul” (D&C 59:18-19).

In his letter from Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith used comparisons to reflect on how “ignorance[,] supe[r]stition and bigotry placing itself ... in the way of the prosperity of this church” were “like the torant of rain from the mountains that floods the most pure and christle stream with mire and dirt and filthyness.”¹ Yet eventually, as the Prophet then asked rhetorically, “How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens?” This vivid comparison follows: “As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it

1. Joseph Smith, Letter to the Church and Edward Partridge, 20 March 1839, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-church-and-edward-partridge-20-march-1839/14> and <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-church-and-edward-partridge-20-march-1839/15> (accessed December 1, 2016).

up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (D&C 121:33).²

Responding to the literary quality of this passage, Steven C. Walker notes that “tonal richness sometimes expresses itself in vivid metaphor. A single section of the Doctrine and Covenants, for example, displays a sensitive sequence of images of water-progress like ‘rolling waters’ that cannot ‘remain impure’ (D&C 121:33), evil prospects that shall ‘melt away as the hoar frost melteth before the burning rays of the rising sun’ (121:11), and doctrine that will ‘distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven’ (121:45).”³

As with the examples from the 121st section, many parts of the Doctrine and Covenants are literary in character. That is, their content is made appealing and more memorable through aesthetic qualities. More than that, though, with content often determining form, and form revealing content, profound concerns are presented in ways that reach us deeply. A statement in the Doctrine and Covenants regarding things which come of the earth applies well to the book’s literary elements: They “please the eye and ... gladden the heart; [they] **enliven the soul**” (D&C 59:18–19). (Here and elsewhere in D&C quotations, emphasis is added.) To Arthur Henry King, there is in the Doctrine and Covenants an “extraordinary gamut of styles” with a number of “beautiful passages” that “lift and sing.”⁴

In great literature, beauty and truth belong together. As John Keats memorably wrote in “Ode on a Grecian Urn”:

2. B. H. Roberts responded to this passage of scripture in his Semi-annual General Conference talk on October 7, 1917:

The Prophet Joseph, in one of his revelations to the Church, asks this question, or at least the Lord asks it through him: “How long can rolling waters remain impure?” It is the stagnant waters that breed miasmas and that become dangerous to the health of communities. The glorious stream that dashes down the mountain gorge and flows over precipices in waterfalls and then goes rushing down the rapids, broken into spray, kissed by the sunlight, and purified by its exposure to the air in its great race for the ocean — such waters quickly purify themselves, and so do peoples, so does a world in commotion, in intense action.

<https://archive.org/stream/conferencereport1917sa#page/n101/mode/2up/search/roberts> (accessed 3 August 2017).

3. Steven C. Walker, “Doctrine and Covenants as Literature,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:427.

4. Arthur Henry King, *The Abundance of the Heart* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986), 27–28.

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” – that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.⁵

Plato would have added goodness to truth and beauty, as did Mormon when he said, “That which is of God [truth] inviteth and enticeth [beauty] to do good continually” (Moroni 7:13).

Memorable prose is, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge expressed it, “words in their best order.” Coleridge’s definition of poetry also fits aesthetically effective prose: “the *best* words in the best order.”⁶ To this I would add, the best words in their best order with the best purposes — meaning a combination of truth, beauty, and goodness.

As I see it, great literature deals with themes of great consequence. Herman Melville expresses this in *Moby-Dick* when he has Ishmael say, “To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme.”⁷ In that spirit, I would like to delineate how several mighty themes in the Doctrine and Covenants are developed through literary aspects of their treatment — which, to apply the words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “brings the whole soul of man into activity.”⁸

The Savior and His Restoration of the Gospel in the Latter Days

The “mighty theme” of Christ’s establishment of his latter-day kingdom on earth is emphasized in sections 1 and 133 — which are considered to be the preface and appendix to the Doctrine and Covenants.⁹ While found in a number of parts of the Doctrine and Covenants, this theme is developed in those sections in poetic prose with literary similarities to what John Livingstone Lowes called “the noblest monument of

5. John Keats, *The Complete Poetical Works of John Keats: The Complete Poems*, 3rd ed., ed. John Barnard (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1895), 297.

6. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Routledge, 1884), 63.

7. Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern UP and The Newberry Library, 1988), 456.

8. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, vol. 1 (London: Rest Fenner, 1817), 11.

9. The Lord calls section 1 “my preface unto the book of my commandments” (D&C 1:6), and the Sidney Rigdon copy of the Book of Commandments calls the current section 133 “An appendix to Revelation.” *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents 2*, ed. Matthew C. Godfrey, et al. (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2013), 116.

English prose,”¹⁰ the King James Version of the Bible. Regarding those similarities, Steven Walker says, “Although a truly unique religious text, the Doctrine and Covenants contains more than 2,000 close parallels to biblical passages, and the literary manner of the book is similar to the Bible in subject matter.”¹¹

The preface to the Doctrine and Covenants begins with a close parallel to Isaiah, who wrote: “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” (Isaiah 64:4). This was repeated with variation in an epistle by the apostle Paul to the Corinthian saints: “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). These are amplified in the opening of Section 1:

Hearken, O ye people of my church,
saith the voice of him who dwells on high,
and whose eyes are upon all men;

yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar;
and ye that are upon the islands of the sea,
listen together.

For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men,
and there is none to escape;
and there is no eye that shall not see,
neither ear that shall not hear,
neither heart that shall not be penetrated.
(D&C 1:1–2)

As with Isaiah’s poetry, a poetic characteristic here is parallelism. Usually, the second line of a Hebraic poem repeats, with some intensification or amplification, the thought of the first line; contrasts an opposing idea to the first line; completes the idea; or repeats the idea in a reverse order.¹² Roger G. Baker says we remember the poetic in Hebrew

10. John Livingstone Lowes, *Of Reading Books: Four Essays ... the Pilgrim’s Progress; The Noblest Monument of English Prose; Two Readings of Earth; Of Reading Books* (London: Constable, 1930).

11. Walker, “Doctrine and Covenants as Literature,” 1:427.

12. Wilfred G. E. Watson in *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1984), 46–47, sets forth some of the principal indicators of Hebraic poetry: evident line-forms, ellipsis, unusual vocabulary, conciseness, unusual word-order, regularity and symmetry, parallelism in various forms,

poetry “because of the repetition, especially when it includes a crescendo of an idea.”¹³ Here, “Hearken” (hearing) is amplified by “voice” (speaking) and followed by “eyes” (viewing). In a parallelistic manner, the audience is expanded from “people of my church” to “people from afar” to “all men.” Contrasting with the past tense of Paul’s “Eye hath not seen,” the opening of Section 1 projects this into the future with “there is no eye that shall not see.”

The appendix likewise begins with the emphatic word “Hearken.” In the following introduction to Section 133, hearkening applies to anticipating the coming of the Lord to his temple — which is connected to Malachi’s prophecy: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:1). The message to people of the Lord’s church is set forth in parallelistic lines with intensification: Hearken/hear; Lord suddenly come/ Lord who shall come; upon the world/upon all the nations/upon all the ungodly; make bare ... in the eyes/all ... shall see; all the nations/the ends of the earth.

*Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the Lord your God,
and hear the word of the Lord concerning you —*

the Lord who shall suddenly come to his temple;

*the Lord who shall come down upon the world with a
curse to judgment;*

*the Lord who shall come down upon the world with a
curse to judgment;*

*yea, upon all the nations that forget God,
and upon all the ungodly among you.*

*For he shall make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the
nations,*

*and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of
their God. (D&C 133:1–3)*

As in its preface and appendix, in the Doctrine and Covenants there is a relationship between poetry and prophecy akin to that found in the Bible. David Noel Freedman says:

word-pairs (e.g., day/night), chiastic patterns, envelope figures, and repetition in various forms.

13. Roger G. Baker, “Teaching the Poetry of Latter-day Saint Scripture,” *Religious Educator* 3/2 (2002): 201.

The basic and persistent medium of classic religion and revelation is poetry. ... Prose may be adequate to describe setting and circumstances and to sketch historical effects and residues; only poetry can convey the mystery of the miraculous and its meaning for those present. ... In the case of the great prophets, there is a remarkable congruence between content and form, a welding of prophecy and poetry which authenticated both messenger and message.¹⁴

Effective figurative language, as Robert Frost put it, is “saying one thing in terms of another.” “It is the height of poetry, the height of all thinking,” he continued, “to say matter in terms of spirit and spirit in terms of matter.”¹⁵ Borrowing figurative language from the Song of Solomon, Judges, and Isaiah, ¹⁶ Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple so that God’s “church may come forth out of the wilderness of darkness, and shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners; and be adorned as a bride for that day when thou shalt unveil the heavens, and cause the mountains to flow down at thy presence, and the valleys to be exalted, the rough places made smooth; that thy glory may fill the earth.” (D&C 109:73–74).¹⁷

The restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ necessarily required restoration of priesthood authority. In the following passage, this restoration is set forth in a rhetorical device, anaphora, which is a repetition of initial words or phrases. Here, the concept of receiving builds one promise upon another, climaxing with all that the Father has:

And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me,
saith the Lord;
for he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;
and he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;
and he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s

14. David Noel Freedman, “Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 96/1 (1977): 15, 20, 25.

15. Robert Frost, “Education by Poetry: A Meditative Monologue,” in *Robert Frost: An Introduction*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg and James G. Hepburn (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), 84.

16. Song 6:10, Judges 5:5, Isaiah 40:4.

17. D. Kelly Ogden provides an extensive treatment of figurative language in his essay, “Biblical Language and Imagery in the Doctrine and Covenants,” *The Doctrine and Covenants: A Book of Answers*, ed. Leon R. Hartshorn, Dennis A. Wright, and Craig J. Ostler (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), 169–187. Ogden shows how the Doctrine and Covenants perpetuates many of the “timeless comparisons and figurative expressions drawn from the biblical world — its landscapes, flora and fauna, harvests, vineyards, shepherding, royalty, battle, and marriage images” (186).

kingdom;
 therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.
 (D&C 84:35–38)

In the following progression that leads to coming unto God the Father, the italicized words are effectively linked one to another:

And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the *words* of eternal *life*. For you shall *live* by every *word* that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. For the *word* of the Lord is *truth*, and whatsoever is *truth* is *light*, and whatsoever is *light* is *Spirit*, even the *Spirit* of Jesus Christ. And the *Spirit* giveth *light* to every man that cometh into the world; and the *Spirit enlighteneth* every man through the world, that *hearkeneth* to the *voice of the Spirit*. And every one that *hearkeneth* to the *voice of the Spirit* cometh unto God, even the Father.
 (D&C 84:43–47)

Light

As is also evident in the above scripture, light is a mighty theme. A consideration of this theme reveals expansive intertextuality between the Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants. A major factor for this might well have been Joseph Smith's immersion in the Bible while revising it for his "New Translation." As Robert J. Matthews put it, "Many of the revelations that comprise the Doctrine and Covenants have a direct relationship to the translation of the Bible which the Prophet Joseph was making at the time the revelations were received."¹⁸

A prominent interaction of the Doctrine and Covenants with the Bible pertaining to light is with the writings of John. Here are some instances:

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). This is echoed in the Doctrine and Covenants: "I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (D&C 93:2).

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). "Their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations; and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (D&C 21).

18. Robert J. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," *Joseph's Smith's Translation of the Bible* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 255.

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (D&C 106:46).

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36). “Gird up your loins, that you may be the children of light” (D&C 106:5).

Like early Christian literature, the following passage in the Doctrine and Covenants develops the implications of Jesus being the light of the world. It does so with reference to both the individual and the universal:

This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. ... And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space — the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. (D&C 88:7, 11–13)

In a subsequent revelation, recognition of Christ as “the true light” is the culmination of gaining perfect knowledge of Christ in his presence. This comes from part of Section 93 wherein Roger Petersen finds “that sublimity and transcendence of thought that marks the true poet.”¹⁹

Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am; and that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (D&C 93:1–3)

The literary device of personification brings to life this passage about light:

19. Roger K. Petersen, “Joseph Smith: Prophet-poet,” *Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, January 26, 1980), 269. Petersen subsequently amplified his insights with his PhD dissertation, “Joseph Smith Prophet-poet: A Literary Analysis of Writings Commonly Associated with His Name” (Brigham Young University, 1981).

The earth rolls upon her wings,
 and the sun giveth his light by day,
 and the moon giveth her light by night,
 and the stars also give their light,
 as they roll upon their wings in their glory,
 in the midst of the power of God. (D&C 88:45)

Light manifest by fire and the sun characterize the glorified Jesus Christ who appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. This passage also has some striking similes.

We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit,
 before us. ...
 His eyes were as a flame of fire;
 the hair of his head was white like the pure snow;
 his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun;
 and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters,
 even the voice of Jehovah. (D&C 110:2–3)²⁰

Discipleship

Discipleship is a theme that in various places in the Doctrine and Covenants is developed through literary devices.

As recounted in the gospel of John, Jesus used the metaphor of white fields and subsequent harvest to teach his disciples the mighty theme of sowing seeds of truth and reaping “fruit unto life eternal.” He said: “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35).

While this is the only instance in which this metaphor appears in the Bible, it is used eight times in the Doctrine and Covenants. Here is one of those instances. Notice how the Johannean metaphor is amplified

20. The *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* gives this in response to the question as to why the Prophet Joseph Smith used figurative language in D&C 110:1–3 to describe the gloried Christ:

A complete description of the glorified Savior in human language is probably not possible. But by comparing the indescribable things of a spiritual realm to things within our comprehension, the Prophet could give us some sense of the glory and appearance of the Lord. The language of the Prophet’s description is similar to that of the descriptions written by Daniel (see Daniel 10:4–8) and by John the Revelator (see Revelation 1:13–17). <https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-student-manual/section-110-121/section-110-messengers-with-keys?lang=eng> (accessed August 7, 2017).

and deepened. “Behold, the field is white already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God” (D&C 6:3). (The other instances are found at D&C 4:4, 11:3, 12:3, 14:3, 31:4, 33:3, and 33:7.)

The Savior’s literary device of the parable of the wheat and the tares is responded to in the Doctrine and Covenants with striking additions and a notable difference. In his explanation of the parable, Jesus said that “the reapers are the angels” with the charge to “Gather ye together first the tares” (Matthew 13:39, 30), while in the Doctrine and Covenants it is the latter-day disciples who are the harvesters and who are commissioned to “first gather out the wheat from among the tares” (D&C 6:7).

The parallelism in this passage emphasizes the basic requirement to be a disciple: “He that receiveth my law and doeth it, the same is my disciple; and he that saith he receiveth it and doeth it not, the same is not my disciple, and shall be cast out from among you” (D&C 41:5).

Repetition is used to emphasize the basic quality necessary to be a disciple:

Whoso receiveth you receiveth me;
and the same will feed you, and clothe you, and give you
money.
And he who feeds you, or clothes you, or gives you money,
shall in nowise lose his reward.
And he that doeth not these things is not my disciple;
by this you may know my disciples. (D&C 84:89–91)

A challenge to “go forward” as disciples in the latter-day work was set forth poetically in an epistle from Joseph Smith the Prophet to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, dated at Nauvoo, Illinois, September 6, 1842.

Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause?
Go forward and not backward.
Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!
Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad.
Let the earth break forth into singing.

Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King
Immanuel,
who hath ordained, before the world was,

that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison;
for the prisoners shall go free. (D&C 128:22)

Last Days

An extensively developed theme in the Doctrine and Covenants pertains to revelations regarding divine purposes in the last days and during the millennium.

At Jerusalem, Jesus lamented: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:27). In the Doctrine and Covenants, this similar apocalyptic lament is for all nations of the earth: “O, ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!” (D&C 43:24).

In a revelation given through Joseph Smith in March, 1831, a month later than the above, the apocalyptic theme is developed in a parable of the ten virgins. It is prefaced by an account of how

The Lord shall utter his voice,
and all the ends of the earth shall hear it;
and the nations of the earth shall mourn,
and they that have laughed shall see their folly.
And calamity shall cover the mocker,
and the scorner shall be consumed;
and they that have watched for iniquity
shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.
(D&C 45:49–50)

The parable provides reasons not found in the Bible as to why the wise virgins “shall abide the day” of the Lord’s coming:

At that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins. For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived — verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day. (D&C 45:56–57).

We see in the following a transition in focus from the apocalypse to the millennium:

I, the Almighty, have laid my hands upon the nations, to scourge them for their wickedness. And plagues shall go forth, and they shall not be taken from the earth until I have completed my work, which shall be cut short in righteousness — Until all shall know me, who remain, even from the least unto the greatest, and shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and shall see eye to eye, and shall lift up their voice, and with the voice together sing this new song, saying:

The Lord hath brought again Zion;

The Lord hath redeemed his people, Israel,
According to the election of grace,
Which was brought to pass by the faith
And covenant of their fathers.

The Lord hath redeemed his people;
And Satan is bound and time is no longer.
The Lord hath gathered all things in one.
The Lord hath brought down Zion from above.
The Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath.

The earth hath travailed and brought forth her strength;
And truth is established in her bowels;
And the heavens have smiled upon her;
And she is clothed with the glory of her God;
For he stands in the midst of his people.

Glory, and honor, and power, and might,
Be ascribed to our God; for he is full of mercy,
Justice, grace and truth, and peace,
Forever and ever, Amen. (D&C 84:96–102)²¹

In this “new song,” the process of redemption in the first stanza moves to the accomplishment of redemption in the second. In the third, “earth” is followed by “heavens.” The literary device of personification describes the earth as giving birth (“travailed”) and then being clothed with “the glory of her God.” Christ, who earlier is said to have redeemed

21. The “new song” is lined out as poetry in the Doctrine and Covenants. T. Edgar Lyon, *Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: LDS Department of Education, 1955), 202–204, notes that these words were set to music by Arthur Shepherd and published under the title, “The Lord hath Brought Again Zion.”

his people, is then honored for his redemptive mercy, justice, grace, truth, and peace.

Praise to God

Praise to God is developed in Joseph Smith's 1842 epistle from Nauvoo as a poetic adaptation of Isaiah's declaration, "Break forth into singing, ye mountains," and of God's question to Job as to where Job was "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Isaiah 44:23; Job 38:7). Heightened by the literary device of personification, the poem moves from the earth to the heavens, and ends with a striking crescendo:

Let the mountains shout for joy,
and all ye valleys cry aloud;
and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal
King!

And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with
gladness.

Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord;
and ye solid rocks weep for joy!

And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together,
and let all the sons of God shout for joy!

And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and
ever! (D&C 128:23)

Commenting on this poem with its beautiful lyrical quality, Charles Swift says, "As we read the poetry in this epistle, we not only learn of the Prophet's commitment to the restored gospel and his enthusiasm for the work of the Lord but also experience it. And this experience helps us to feel more committed and more enthusiastic. The language the Prophet uses does not just inform us — it *changes* us."²² Steven Walker notes the lyric refrain (shout/weep for joy) in each stanza, and affirms that "the concluding passage of the revelation is exultant, exhilarated, and profound — a masterpiece of stylistic craftsmanship."²³

Eternal Kingdoms

22. Charles Swift, "The Literary Power of the Doctrine and Covenants," *Religious Educator* 10/1 (2009): 24.

23. Steven C. Walker, "The Voice of the Prophet," *BYU Studies* 10 (Autumn 1969): 104.

The ultimate destination of God's children is set forth poetically in Section 76, initially called "The Vision." Joseph Smith said that "that document is a transcript from the Records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action ... are so much beyond the narrow mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim; It came from God."²⁴

"The Vision," according to Steven Walker, is "preeminent among the revelations both in its stylistic majesty and in its sustained spiritual fervor. This is, of course, entirely in keeping with the sublimity and profundity of its subject matter."²⁵ Throughout "The Vision," as William H. Brugger has shown, there are "chiasmic and repetitive structures, parallelism, imagery, and figures of speech — characteristics commonly found in biblical poetry."²⁶

A majestic witness of "the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father" highlights this exposition on the degrees of glory in the resurrection. The rhetoric is that of testimony, of personal seeing and hearing:

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given
of him,

 this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That
 he lives!

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God;
 and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only
 Begotten of the Father —

That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are
and were created,

 and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and
 daughters unto God. (D&C 76:20, 22–24)

The eternal character of the Lord is set forth poetically in the opening of Section 76. The rhythms fit David Noel Freedman's view that "in any mythic or epic situation, involving the divine and the human and communication or action between heaven and earth, the appropriate

24. History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]; 25 January–16 February 1832 • Wednesday–Thursday, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/198> (accessed December 1, 2016).

25. Steven C. Walker, "The Voice of the Prophet," 105.

26. William H. Brugger, "Section 76 as Literature in the Doctrine and Covenants" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1993), 51.

language is that of poetry.”²⁷ Though the form of this opening is an apostrophe, Brugger points out that it is energized by the statement being literal.²⁸ As with other portions of the Doctrine and Covenants we have considered, it interrelates with the Bible — particularly Isaiah, whose vision begins with the words, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken” (Isaiah 1:2), and who wrote, “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour” (Isaiah 43:11).

Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth,
and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof,

for the Lord is God,
and beside him there is no Savior.

Great is his wisdom,
marvelous are his ways,
and the extent of his doings none can find out.

His purposes fail not,
neither are there any who can stay his hand.

From eternity to eternity he is the same,
and his years never fail. (D&C 76:1–4)

The Voice of the Lord and Continuing Revelation

The Lord’s preface and appendix “to the doctrines, covenants, and commandments given in this dispensation”²⁹ serve as structural bookends to set forth and recapitulate some of the major themes of the book, especially continuing revelations given by the Savior. The voice of Jesus Christ is heard throughout the work, beginning in section 1 and climaxing in section 133. Indeed, the phrase “voice of the Lord,” or variations of it, is found one hundred times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

“The voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth,” the Lord says in his preface. “My word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:11, 38). Echoing this in his Appendix, the Lord commands, “Hearken and hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth. Listen, ye elders of my church together, and hear the voice of the Lord; for he calleth upon all men, and he commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” The Lord “shall

27. Freedman, 20.

28. Brugger, 90.

29. Headnote to Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants, <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/1?lang=eng> (accessed November 30, 2016).

utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people; and it shall be a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, which shall break down the mountains, and the valleys shall not be found. (D&C 133:16, 21–22).

As suggested in the following examples, this motif is repeated with intensity throughout the Doctrine and Covenants.

“Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful” (D&C 27:1).

“Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I AM, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins” (D&C 29:1).

“Hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, whose word is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, soul and spirit” (D&C 33:1).

“For the day cometh that the Lord shall utter his out of heaven; the heavens shall and the earth shall and the of God shall sound both long and loud” (D&C 43:18).

In an extended anaphora and with repetitive and cumulative power, the Lord in the following declaration refers to spiritual, then physical, and again spiritual voices, closing with a tone of sorrow:

How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants,
and by the ministering of angels,
and by mine own voice,
and by the voice of thunderings,
and by the voice of lightnings,
and by the voice of tempests,
and by the voice of earthquakes,
and great hailstorms,
and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind,
and by the great sound of a trump,
and by the voice of judgment,
and by the voice of mercy all the day long,
and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life,
and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation,
but ye would not! (D&C 43:24–25)

The voice of the Lord continues with challenges and promises:

“Hearken unto my voice, lest death shall overtake you” (D&C 45:2).

“Behold, and hearken unto the voice of him who has all power, who is from everlasting to everlasting, even Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end” (D&C 61:1).

“Behold, I, the Lord, utter my voice, and it shall be obeyed” (D&C 63:5).

“Whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” (D&C 68:4).

“Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of truth out of the earth; glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy. ... And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers!” (D&C 128:19, 23).

In sum, through many of its parts being poetic and memorably descriptive in their nature, the Doctrine and Covenants effectively testifies of Jesus Christ, of continuing revelation, and of the Savior’s redemptive power.

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GAZELEM THE JAREдите

Elliott Jolley

Abstract: Alma refers to Gazelem in his instructions to his son Helaman in Alma 37:23. This article proposes and explores the concept of identifying Gazelem as a Jaredite seer. Other theories of the identity of Gazelem are addressed in this article but not explored in depth. It discusses the full context of Alma's words, the Jaredite secret combinations and their oaths, Gazelem's seer stone, and the Nephite interpreters. Additionally, it proposes a possible timeline that Gazelem lived among the Jaredites. It also discusses the usage of "Gazelam" as a substitute name for Joseph Smith in early editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

One of the more mysterious passages of the Book of Mormon is Alma's reference to Gazelem in Alma 37:23.¹ Gazelem has been interpreted by various authors to be the name of a seer stone, a name-title for seer, or a prophecy of Joseph Smith, among other things. This article proposes that Gazelem was a Jaredite prophet who received revelations about the Jaredites through a seer stone.² Considering this idea necessitates the discussion of several topics: Alma's instructions to Helaman,³ the use of a seer stone, the "interpreters," the Book of Ether, the secret combinations

1. The Book of Mormon has multiple individuals named "Alma." The Alma referred to in this article is commonly called "Alma the Younger" or Alma₂. Throughout this paper this individual will simply be referred to as "Alma."

2. The word "Jaredite" is never used in the Book of Mormon but is used in this article. The phrase "Jaredite plates" is used as a substitute name for the record of the Jaredites: "the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limhi, which is called the Book of Ether" (Ether 1:2).

3. The Book of Mormon also has multiple individuals named "Helaman." In all instances in this paper, except one, references to "Helaman" are to the son of Alma. The one exception, noted hereafter as Helaman₂, is to Alma's grandson.

of the Jaredites, and “Gazalam” as a substitute name for Joseph Smith in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

The discussion begins with the full context of Alma’s words to his son, Helaman:

And now I will speak unto you concerning those twenty four plates,
that ye keep them,
that the mysteries and the works of darkness and their secret works
— or the secret works of those people which have been destroyed —
may be made manifest unto this people
— yea, all their murders and robbings and their plunderings
and all their wickedness and abominations may be made manifest unto
this people —

yea, and that ye preserve these directors.
For behold, the Lord saw that his people began to work in darkness
— yea, work secret murders and abominations —
therefore the Lord said
if they did not repent,
they should be destroyed from off the face of the earth.
And the Lord said:

***I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem
a stone which shall shine forth in darkness unto light,
that I may discover unto my people which serve me —
that I may discover unto them the works of their brethren,
yea, their secret works, their works of darkness,
and their wickedness and abominations.***

And now my son, these directors were prepared
that the word of God might be fulfilled which he spake, saying:

***I will bring forth out of darkness unto light
all their secret works and their abominations.
And except they repent, I will destroy them from off the face of the
earth.***

***And I will bring to light all their secrets and abominations
unto every nation which shall hereafter possess the land.***

And now my son, we see that they did not repent;
therefore they have been destroyed.

And thus far the word of God hath been fulfilled;
yea, their secret abominations have been brought out of darkness
and made known unto us.

And now my son, I command you
that ye retain all their oaths and their covenants
and their agreements in their secret abominations;

yea, and all their signs and their wonders ye shall retain from this
 people,
 that they know them not,
 lest peradventure they should fall into darkness also and be destroyed.
 (Alma 37:21–27)⁴

Theories

Some proposed theories about the identity of Gazelem are summarized by the quotations below. The purpose of this article is not to discredit or disprove these theories, simply to propose my own. These quotations serve as a representative sample of their number and variety. I include them here to demonstrate that there is no consensus among them, and sometimes there isn't a consensus within them.

- With reference to the name Gazelam, it is interesting to note that Alma in directing Helaman to preserve both the Urim and Thummim and the plates containing the Book of Ether, says that such record will be brought to light by the Lord's servant Gazelem, who will use "a stone" in his translation work. (Alma 37:21–23.) It may be that Gazelem is a variant spelling of Gazelam and that Alma's reference is to the Prophet Joseph Smith who did in fact bring forth part at least of the Ether record. Or it could be that the name Gazelem (Gazelam) is a title having to do with power to translate ancient records and that Alma's reference was to some Nephite prophet who brought the Book of Ether to light in the golden era of Nephite history.⁵
- "I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem, a stone." This may well be a play on words. Is Gazelem the seer stone or the servant? It is difficult to tell from the passage and depends very much on the placement of a comma in the sentence. Perhaps it could refer to both. It is interesting to note that when Jesus called Simon Peter to the ministry, he said: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a seer, or a stone" (JST, John 1:42). Though this name or title of Gazelem may be

4. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). This edition is used for the passages quoted from the Book of Mormon throughout this article. The ***bold italic*** text indicates suspected quotations from the Jaredite plates.

5. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 307.

used in regard to any seer who utilizes seer stones, it seems in this instance to be a direct reference to Joseph Smith the Prophet.⁶

- Whether Gazelem refers to the servant or the stone is unclear. ... If it is the name or title of a servant, Gazelem could refer to the brother of Jared, who received the interpreters from the Lord, or to Mosiah, who used them to translate the Jaredite record for the benefit of the Nephites.⁷
- Alma used this prophecy to emphasize the prophetic role of Mosiah II and his translation of the 24 gold plates. He apparently felt that the person “Gazelem” was Mosiah II and that it was relevant that he translated with the two seer stones bound in a metal bow.⁸

My Servant Gazelem

Royal Skousen has argued from a linguistic and textual standpoint that Gazelem is probably the name of a person and not the name of a stone.

Most likely, the phrase here in Alma 37:23, “my servant Gazelem,” intends to say that the name of the servant was Gazelem. One reason is that there are numerous instances in the text of the expression “my servant <name>”: my servant Abinadi (Mosiah 26:15), my servant Amulek (Alma 8:29), my servant Samuel the Lamanite (3 Nephi 23:9), my servant John (Ether 4:16). Another reason is that if the name of the stone were *Gazelem*, we would expect the word order to be different, with the indefinite *a stone* preceding its name (something like “I will prepare unto my servant a stone, Gazelem”). ... The critical text will therefore interpret the name *Gazelem* as the name of the servant, not the name of the stone.⁹

6. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 3:278.

7. Stan Spencer, “Reflections of Urin: Hebrew Poetry Sheds Light on the Directors-Interpreters Mystery,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 14 (2015): 187–207, note 18.

8. Michael Hubbard Mackay and Nicholas J. Frederick, *Joseph Smith’s Seer Stones* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center-Brigham Young University, 2016), 103.

9. Royal Skousen, “Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Four: Alma 21–55” (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2007), 2361–63.

This article will also interpret Gazelem to be the name of the servant. The question then becomes, who was he? And why does Alma refer to him?

Alma's Instructions to Helaman

The words of Alma to his son Helaman include Alma chapters 36 and 37.¹⁰ Chapter 36 is a beautiful retelling of Alma's conversion, including personal exhortations to Helaman, formed as an ancient chiasm.¹¹ In Alma 37, Alma instructed Helaman regarding certain artifacts, "sacred things" he would be charged with preserving: the plates of brass, the 24 Jaredite plates, the brother of Jared's "interpreters" which Alma called "directors,"¹² and the Liahona. He took the opportunity to teach Helaman certain doctrines relative to each one. Dividing this chapter into topical sections based on each of these "sacred things" reveals a structure wherein Alma combined his discussion of the 24 plates and the directors together under the broader topic of the Jaredites' secret combinations. His reference to Gazelem originated within that discussion. Alma taught Helaman how secret combinations destroyed the Jaredites and warned him that they could also destroy the Nephites. He instructed him how to approach this subject — to readily teach the people to abhor secret combinations but not to reveal the particulars of the Jaredite oaths.

Alma described the secretive subculture that overtook and extinguished the Jaredites with these words: "mysteries," "works of darkness," "secret works," "murders," "robbings," "plunderings," "wickedness," "abominations," "secret murders," "secret abominations," and "secret combinations."¹³ This article will refer to them simply as secret combinations. Helaman was told to freely teach the Nephites the consequences of these. Alma described the agreements between members of those secret combinations with these words: "oaths," "covenants," "agreements," "signs," "wonders," and "secret plans."¹⁴ This article will refer to them as oaths. Alma commanded Helaman not to reveal the oaths of the Jaredites' secret combinations to their people; therefore, it

10. The chapter breaks in the Original Manuscript indicate that Alma 36 and 37 were originally one chapter.

11. See John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 3 (1969): 69–83.

12. The word "directors" was replaced with "interpreters" in the 1920 LDS edition of the Book of Mormon. For a discussion of this change see Skousen, "Textual Variants," 2359–2361. See also: Stan Spencer, "Reflections of Urin" 187–207.

13. Alma 37:21–32.

14. Alma 37:27–32.

stands to reason that both the history of the secret combinations and the details of their oaths were written on the Jaredite plates.

The secret combinations that Alma referred to were in the Nephites' past — the Jaredite secret combinations. Secret combinations among the Nephites didn't exist at the time Alma spoke these words to Helaman. They were foreign to the Nephites until just before Alma's grandson, Helaman₂, became chief judge.¹⁵ Kishkumen and Gadianton formed a secret band with their own secret signs, words, laws, and covenants. Mormon made sure to inform us that "those secret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the records which were delivered unto Helaman."¹⁶

Gazelem

Within Alma's discussion of the Jaredite secret combinations, he introduced the historical context of Gazelem:

For behold, the Lord saw that his people began to work in darkness
— yea, work secret murders and abominations —
therefore the Lord said
if they did not repent,
they should be destroyed from off the face of the earth.
(Alma 37:22)

Note that Alma used past tense: "the Lord *saw* that his people *began*." In light of the circumstances of these verses (Alma's giving the Jaredite record to Helaman), this statement is clearly a reference to Jaredites and their secret combinations, as written on the Jaredite plates. It is a discussion of the past, not a prophecy of the future. Alma was summarizing the Lord's interactions with the Jaredites — how he responded to their wickedness. He was retelling a sequence of historical events, a give-and-take or cause-and-effect. The Lord *saw* their wickedness; *therefore*, the Lord spoke. The Lord had a message for the Jaredites: repent, or be destroyed. Simple as it sounds, this conditional consequence was the crux of the Jaredites' fate. A few verses later, Alma referred back to this prophecy by observing:

we see that they did not repent;

15. Helaman 1:9–12; 2:2–14; 6:15–31.

16. Helaman 6:22–26. See also Alma 63:12.

therefore they have been destroyed.

(Alma 37:26)

Later in his instructions, Alma applied the same requirements to all future inhabitants of this land:

Yea, and cursed be the land forever and ever
unto those workers of darkness and secret combinations, even unto
destruction,
except they repent before they are fully ripe.

(Alma 37:31)

After introducing the history of the Jaredites' secret combinations, it appears that Alma quoted two scriptural passages.¹⁷ His source text is not available to us.¹⁸ Neither did Alma specify where the words came from. However, we can make several deductions with confidence. These quotations were written in the voice of the Lord. They were spoken to the Jaredites. Alma was well acquainted with these words and wove them seamlessly into his teachings about the consequences of the Jaredites' secret combinations. Alma's omission of their source might indicate that Helaman was already familiar with the quotes and their origins. Given all this, the strongest possibility is that Alma quoted directly from the Jaredite plates, the same records he was entrusting to Helaman.

If we combine the two blocks of quoted text from Alma's instructions to Helaman, we see how they may have originally been one continuous passage:

I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem
a stone which shall shine forth in darkness unto light,
that I may discover unto my people which serve me —
that I may discover unto them the works of their brethren,
yea, their secret works, their works of darkness,
and their wickedness and abominations.
I will bring forth out of darkness unto light
all their secret works and their abominations.
And except they repent, I will destroy them from off the face of the
earth.
And I will bring to light all their secrets and abominations

17. See the bold italic text in the passages quoted at the beginning of the article.

18. "While we do not yet have Ether's full record, we do have what may be a fragment from that account in the prophecies of Alma when he entrusted these records to his son Helaman." (Matthew Roper, "A Fragment from the Unabridged Record of Ether," <http://etherscave.blogspot.com/2014/10/a-fragment-from-unabridged-record-of.html>, September 19, 2017).

unto every nation which shall hereafter possess the land.
(Alma 37:23–25)

Whether or not they were one passage, it is important to point out that these words were spoken by the Lord before the Jaredites were destroyed. They were given to the Jaredites as a warning. There was still a chance for them to repent. “If they did not repent” and “except they repent” are the conditions proposed. Therefore, the Lord spoke these words when the Jaredite secret combinations existed. The Lord brought their secrets “out of darkness unto light” at that time.

As discussed previously, these revelations commenced when “the Lord saw that his people began to work “secret combinations.”¹⁹ In response, he revealed their secret works to “their brethren.” A logical interpretation is that the brethren of the wicked Jaredites were the righteous Jaredites, those who served the Lord. The Lord revealed to them “all the secret works” of their brethren.

According to these passages, the instrument for these revelations was a stone, given to a servant of the Lord. The name of this servant was Gazelem, and the revelations he received were written on the Jaredite plates.

A Stone

The function of this seer stone sounds similar to what is known about the translation of the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith used either the Nephite interpreter stones or his own seer stone (eventually, either instrument became synonymous with the term “Urim and Thummim”). Joseph placed the seer stone into a hat and then put his face into the hat to look upon the stone in darkness. The words revealed to Joseph were then dictated to his scribe.²⁰ The seer stone that the Lord prepared for Gazelem was similarly a stone which would “shine forth in darkness unto light.”²¹

19. Alma 37:22.

20. Richard E. Turley Jr., Robin S. Jensen, and Mark Ashurst-McGee, “Joseph the Seer,” *Ensign*, October 2015, 49–54; Michael Hubbard MacKay and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, *From Darkness Unto Light: Joseph Smith’s Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT and Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book, 2015); Roger Nicholson, “The Spectacles, the Stone, the Hat, and the Book: A Twenty-first Century Believer’s View of the Book of Mormon Translation,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 121–90.

21. Alma 37:23. Moroni alludes to Joseph Smith’s future translation of the gold plates in Mormon 8:16: “And blessed be him that shall bring this thing to light, for it shall be brought out of darkness unto light, according to the word of God; yea, it

Thus the Jaredite record describes three different types of sacred stones which had divine functions: the sixteen stones that the brother of Jared asked the Lord to touch with his finger to give light to the Jaredite barges,²² the two stones that the Lord gave to the brother of Jared on the mount (the “interpreters” or “directors”),²³ and the seer stone of Gazelem. As indicated by the text, Gazelem’s seer stone was a single stone. Conversely, the interpreters are always described in the plural — as “stones,” “directors,” or “interpreters” — specifically as “two stones ... fastened into the two rims of a bow.”²⁴

Interpreters

I propose that the revealing of the Jaredite secret combinations to the Nephites was a two-step process. First, Gazelem used his seer stone to reveal the secret combinations of his contemporaries during his time. Those revelations were subsequently recorded on the Jaredite plates. Later, Mosiah₂ translated these words into the Nephite language with the interpreters.²⁵ Through these two revelatory steps, the secret combinations of the Jaredites were manifest to the Nephites. Both times, interpreters and seers worked in tandem to bring them to light — first Gazelem and his seer stone and, much later, Mosiah₂ and the interpreters. Alma referred to both instruments via the two quotations (above) to describe that process. The first quotation (discussed above) refers to Gazelem and his use of a seer stone. Part of the second quotation (discussed below), includes a prophecy that Alma considered to be fulfilled by Mosiah₂’s use of the interpreters.

The language of the Jaredites was completely unknown to the Nephites.²⁶ Providentially, the Lord gave the brother of Jared the interpreters, which were prepared “for the purpose of interpreting languages.”²⁷ There are questions as to whether Mosiah₂ used his own “interpreters” or the two stones given to the brother of Jared.²⁸ I personally conclude they were the same as those given to the brother

shall be brought out of the earth, and it shall shine forth out of darkness and come unto the knowledge of the people, and it shall be done by the power of God.”

22. Ether 3:1–6; 6:1–3.

23. Ether 3:21–4:7, Mosiah 8:12–18, Mosiah 28:11–19, D&C 17:1, JS — H 1:35.

24. Mosiah 28:13, see also JS — H 1:35.

25. Mosiah 28:11–19.

26. Mosiah 8:11. “[T]here is no one in the land that is able to interpret the language or the engravings that are on the plates.”

27. Mosiah 28:14.

28. Mackay and Frederick, *Joseph Smith’s Seer Stones*, 96–102.

of Jared (which were also the same that Joseph Smith used) and that the first reference to these interpreters being used is when Mosiah₁ translated a large stone containing the writings of Coriantumr, a lone Jaredite survivor who had lived with the people of Mulek for a short time.²⁹ Decades later, Mosiah₁'s grandson, Mosiah₂, used the interpreters to translate the 24 Jaredite plates which had been found by the people of King Limhi.³⁰ We do not know how Mosiah₁ came to possess the brother of Jared's interpreters or why the interpreters and the Jaredite plates were not deposited together — the Nephites recovered them separately as the passage below demonstrates. However these questions are answered, for the sake of this discussion it only matters that Mosiah₂ was a seer who used the interpreters to translate the 24 Jaredite plates, then publish them.

Ammon, who aided the return of the people of King Limhi, was familiar with the abilities of a seer and the functioning of the interpreters. He told King Limhi:

I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records;
for he hath wherewith that he can look
and translate all records that are of ancient date,
and it is a gift from God.
And the things are called interpreters,
and no man can look in them except he be commanded.
(Mosiah 8:13)

He continues with the description of a seer, which can be applied to the brother of Jared, Gazelem, Mosiah₂, Joseph Smith, and others in the scriptures.

But a seer can know of things which are passed,
and also of things which are to come;
and by them shall all things be revealed
— or rather shall secret things be made manifest —
and hidden things shall come to light,
and things which is not known shall be made known by them,
and also things shall be made known by them

29. Omni 1:20 “And it came to pass in the days of Mosiah there was a large stone brought unto him with engravings on it, and he did interpret the engravings by the gift and power of God.” Joseph Smith used the same phrase, “by the gift and power of God” to describe his experience with the translation of the Book of Mormon (*The Book of Mormon*, 1830, *Preface*).

30. Mosiah 28:11–19.

which otherwise could not be known.

(Mosiah 8:17)

He further declared, “a gift which is greater can no man have.”³¹

Alma taught Helaman the crucial role that these interpreters played in revealing the Jaredite secret combinations by quoting a second passage from the Jaredite plates. In this second Jaredite quotation, the use of the connecting pronouns “they” and “their” — referring to those who indulge in secret combinations — suggests that it is a continuation of the first Jaredite quotation.³²

And now my son, these directors were prepared
that the word of God might be fulfilled which he spake, saying:
***I will bring forth out of darkness unto light
all their secret works and their abominations.
And except they repent, I will destroy them from off the face of the
earth.
And I will bring to light all their secrets and abominations
unto every nation which shall hereafter possess the land.***
And now my son, we see that they did not repent;
therefore they have been destroyed.
And thus far the word of God hath been fulfilled;
yea, their secret abominations have been brought out of darkness
and made known unto us.

(Alma 37:24–26)

This second Jaredite quotation has three important parts. The first two lines are a continuation of the first Jaredite quotation. The next line is the source for the words that Alma paraphrased to Helaman as he began his discussion of the 24 plates: “[T]he Lord said if they did not repent, they should be destroyed from off the face of the earth.”³³ The last two lines are a prophecy that future nations would know of the Jaredite secret combinations. After quoting this prophecy, Alma pointed out its fulfillment to Helaman. Mosiah₂ had used the interpreters to translate the Jaredite plates and publish them to the Nephites. Alma emphasized, “And thus far the word of God hath

31. Mosiah 8:16.

32. The bold italic text indicates suspected quotations from the Jaredite plates. The interpreters may not have been explicitly mentioned in the original Jaredite quotation here. Alma apparently saw how the interpreters fulfilled this prophecy and inserted his comment into the middle of the original quotation.

33. Alma 37:22.

been fulfilled; yea, their secret abominations have been brought out of darkness and made known unto us.”

According to Alma, the fulfillment of this prophecy is one of the purposes of the interpreters. They “were prepared that the word of God might be fulfilled.” Their instrumentality brought the secret combinations of the Jaredites to the knowledge of the Nephites. However, this prophecy includes more than just the Nephites; it also predicts that a knowledge of the Jaredite secret combinations will come to “every nation which shall hereafter possess the land.” Hence Joseph Smith’s translation of the Book of Mormon and our knowledge of its contents, especially Moroni’s abridgement of the Book of Ether, continues its fulfillment in our day.

The Book of Ether

Having considered the idea that Gazelem was a Jaredite and that he brought the secret combinations and oaths of the wicked Jaredites to light through revelations from the Lord, which were subsequently written in the Jaredite plates, the question then arises: When did Gazelem live among the Jaredites?

Moroni abridged the Jaredite plates (or their earlier Nephite translation) and included it with his writings at the end of the Book of Mormon.³⁴ His abridgement is relatively small, and includes many of his own thoughts. In the course of his account, he wrote the names of 55 individuals; 30 are the same as those given at the beginning of the book, in the genealogy from Ether to Jared, but in reverse order.³⁵ Of the 55 named individuals, 34 were kings. Non-specific groups of “prophets” are mentioned seven times, but none of the prophets are named except Ether.³⁶ Even the brother of Jared isn’t named. It isn’t surprising then, that Gazelem’s name wasn’t included in the abridgment. Moroni said, “I could not make a full account of these things which are written” and “the hundredth part I have not written.”³⁷ We can therefore appreciate how much of the record he was able to append.

Without any specifics about Gazelem from the Book of Ether, we can only guess as to a possible time that he lived. Alma prefaced his reference to Gazelem by saying, “The Lord saw that his people *began* to work in darkness.”³⁸ Using this information as a starting point, we can find

34. Ether 1:1–2.

35. Ether 1:6–33.

36. Ether 7:23–26; 9:26–29; 11:1–3; 11:5–8; 11:12–13; 11:20–22; 12:2.

37. Ether 3:17, 15:33.

38. Alma 37:22.

multiple times in the Book of Ether when the Jaredites were involved in secret combinations. However, the first instance of secret combinations is notable because Moroni included many details of its establishment, mentioned the oaths, inserted his own commentary, and added a warning about secret combinations to latter-day readers.³⁹ This beginning was in the days of Jared, the son of Omer, five generations from the original Jared.

Jaredite Secret Combinations

Jared's daughter was "expert" and inspired him in a plot to kill his father and obtain the kingdom. She asked her father:

Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep?

Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old,
that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory?
(Ether 8:8–9)

Moroni appropriately placed the blame on the three individuals who initiated the secret combinations that plagued the Jaredites until their destruction:

And it was the daughter of Jared
which put it into his heart to search up these things of old;
and Jared put it into the heart of Akish.
(Ether 8:17)

Akish willingly led the coup, following the plans of Jared and his daughter:

And Akish did administer unto them [his kindred and friends] the oaths
which was given by them of old, who also sought power,
... And they [the secret combinations] were kept up by the power of the devil,
to administer these oaths unto the people, to keep them in darkness,
to help such as sought power to gain power
and to murder and to plunder and to lie

39. Ether 8.

and to commit all manner of wickedness and whoredoms.
(Ether 8:15–16)

Akish eventually had Jared beheaded using these same secret combinations. He then assumed the throne.⁴⁰

With this historical backdrop, Moroni broke from his abridgment to discuss, at length, the evils of secret combinations:

For the Lord worketh not in secret combinations,
neither doth he will that man should shed blood;
but in all things hath forbidden it from the beginning of man.
(Ether 8:19)⁴¹

Moroni's entire discourse there is worth reading. He added a warning to his future readers about secret combinations in their day, but he also obeyed Alma's commandment not to disclose the specific oaths:

And now I Moroni do not write the manner of their oaths and combinations,
for it hath been made known unto me that they are had among all people;
... And they have caused the destruction of this people of which I am now speaking,
and also the destruction of the people of Nephi.
(Ether 8:20–21)

Moroni's declaration that he would not include their oaths at this point in his abridgment implies that the oaths were written in the Jaredite record in connection with the history of Jared and Akish. If the Lord revealed the oaths proximate to the same time they happened in Jaredite history, the association between Alma's discussion with Helaman and these historical events is strengthened. For the righteous Jaredites (who presumably kept the records), knowledge of these specific conversations between Jared and his daughter, the secret meetings of Akish and his kindred, and the specific oaths they used would have required revelation from the Lord.⁴² The detailed record of their deeds corresponds with Alma's description: when the Lord "saw that his people began to work in

40. Ether 9:5–6.

41. See also 2 Nephi 9:9.

42. In this and other secret combinations, revealing the secrets is discouraged by being punishable by death. See Helaman 6:24, Moses 5:29.

darkness,” he declared that he would “discover to (his people) the works of their brethren ... all their secret works and abominations.”⁴³

Close reading of the events that led to the first Jaredite secret combinations, coupled with a close look at Moroni’s commentary therein, leads to the dating of Gazelem’s lifetime sometime within the generations surrounding the reign of Jared and Akish.⁴⁴

Gazelem the Jaredite

The Lord mercifully warned King Omer in a dream to flee before Akish could assassinate him.⁴⁵ His family (and a few others who eventually joined them) fled to the seashore, to a place called Ablom.⁴⁶ Perhaps Gazelem was a member of Omer’s household, who fled with him. If he didn’t, the prospects for survival under the reign of Akish weren’t very good. “So great had been the spreading of this wicked and secret society that it had corrupted the hearts of all the people.”⁴⁷ A civil war “which lasted for the

43. Alma 37:22–25.

44. Besides the time of Jared and Akish, there are five other times when secret combinations are mentioned, which are also candidates for when Gazelem lived: (1) The reign of Heth, 8 generations from the original Jared: “Heth began to embrace the secret plans again of old,” killed his father, and commanded his people to kill the prophets (Ether 9:26–29). (2) The reign of Com, ~22 generations from Jared: “there began to be robbers in the land, and they adopted the old plans and administered oaths after the manner of the ancients” (Ether 10:33). Com fought against the robbers and protected the prophets who prophesied of the destruction of the people. (3) The reign of Shiblon, ~23 generations from Jared: his brother (who is not named) caused that the prophets should be put to death (Ether 11:4–8). There was a great calamity; “they hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord because of their wicked combinations.” (4) The days of Ethem ~26 generations from Jared: “there came many prophets and prophesied again unto the people; ... the Lord would utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth except they repented” (Ether 11:12–13). The people hardened their hearts and “the prophets mourned and withdrew from among the people.” The similar wording here to Alma 37 should be noted; Alma 37 may be the actual quotation from the Lord and Ether 11:12 may be a summary or paraphrase made by Moroni. (5) The days of Coriantor ~28 generations from Jared: “many prophets ... prophesied of great and marvelous things and cried repentance unto the people” (Ether 11:20–22). The Lord would utterly destroy them, and “bring forth another people to possess the land ... they did reject all the words of the prophets because of their secret society and wicked abominations.”

45. Ether 9:1–3.

46. Ether 9:3.

47. Ether 9:6.

space of many years,” between Akish and his own sons left only 30 people alive.⁴⁸ Omer then returned to reclaim his kingdom unopposed.

The Lord speaks of Gazelem in the third person — “my servant Gazelem”⁴⁹ — which includes the possibility that the Lord is speaking about Gazelem to someone else. Perhaps these words of the Lord that Alma quoted were part of Omer’s dream.⁵⁰ The Lord may have instructed Omer to take Gazelem and the others with him and promised Omer “I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem, a stone.”⁵¹ Those people who fled with Omer to the seashore may have been the righteous servants to whom Lord revealed the secret combinations through Gazelem: “That I may discover unto my people which serve me (Omer and his people) — that I may discover unto them the works of their brethren (Jared and Akish), yea, their secret works, their works of darkness, and their wickedness and abominations.”⁵²

Their proximity to the seashore may have reminded Omer’s people of the voyage their ancestors made across the sea. The description of the 16 stones the brother of Jared put in each end of the barges shares similar wording with the description of Gazelem’s stone — “Thus the Lord caused *stones to shine in darkness, to give light* unto men, women, and children, that they might not cross the great waters in darkness.”⁵³ When the Lord said he would prepare for Gazelem “a *stone which shall shine forth in darkness unto light*,”⁵⁴ perhaps he was drawing a parallel that had deep cultural meaning for the descendants of those who crossed the sea with lighted stones.

It’s possible Gazelem found his stone at the seashore. But it seems too speculative to glean any more from the Book of Ether. We don’t know what became of Gazelem or his seer stone.

48. Ether 9:12. The almost entire destruction of Akish’s kingdom may be a partial fulfillment of the promise of the Lord that “except they repent, I will destroy them from off of the face of the earth.”

49. Alma 37:23.

50. Similarly, the prophet Lehi also received specific revelations from the Lord in a dream — when he was told to flee Jerusalem, eventually journeying to the seashore. See 1 Nephi 2:1–3.

51. Alma 37:23.

52. Alma 37:23.

53. Ether 6:3; see also Ether 3:4. Matthew Roper, “A Fragment from the Unabridged Record of Ether,” <http://etherscave.blogspot.com/2014/10/a-fragment-from-unabridged-record-of.html>, September 19, 2017.

54. Alma 37:23.

Questions

The concept of Gazelem as a Jaredite prophet raises several questions. Why would the Lord reveal these things to Gazelem through his own stone and not the interpreters given to the brother of Jared? Did Gazelem have access to the interpreters? It is possible that none of the Jaredites did. The brother of Jared was commanded “that he should seal up the two stones which he had received and shew them not until the Lord should shew them unto the children of men.”⁵⁵ What we know from the text is that the Nephites found the interpreters and the 24 plates independently.⁵⁶ Therefore, the prophet Ether may not have inherited the interpreters in the end — they aren’t specifically mentioned as being in his possession. If he did have them, why would he deposit them apart from the 24 plates? Perhaps the brother of Jared buried or hid the interpreters with his sealed record. Moroni comments that he was commanded to hide the sealed portion and the interpreters “again in the earth.”⁵⁷ This implies that they were hidden in the earth previously. Mosiah₁ may have been guided to where the Brother of Jared buried them.⁵⁸ Some of these questions may have been answered on the lost 116 pages.⁵⁹ In any case, if Gazelem didn’t have access to the interpreters, it makes sense for the Lord to prepare a seer stone for him.

Gazelam

When Joseph Smith and his associates were preparing the publication of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the names of many individuals and places were substituted with other names to protect the identity of church leaders. Joseph Smith’s name was replaced with the

55. Ether 3:28.

56. Mosiah₂ already possessed the interpreters when Limhi’s people discovered the Jaredite plates. See Mosiah 8:6–21.

57. Ether 4:3.

58. Ether 4:1–7. Perhaps the sealed portion was buried with the interpreters and Mosiah₁ found them together. If so, then the 24 plates that Limhi found would not have had the sealed portion written on them. The Nephites may not have known about Mosiah₁’s possession of this sealed record. It was “forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that [Christ] should be lifted up upon the cross. And for this cause did king Benjamin keep them, that they should not come unto the world”. After Christ came, “he commanded that they should be made manifest”. Moroni again sealed up this record and reburied it in the earth.

59. See Don Bradley, “Piercing the Veil: Temple Worship in the Lost 116 Pages,” FairMormon.org, 2012, <https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2012/piercing-the-veil-temple-worship-in-the-lost-116-pages>.

names “Enoch,” “Baurak Ale,” and “Gazelam.”⁶⁰ This may have been an alternate spelling or misspelling of “Gazelem.” Joseph Smith’s and early church members’ interest in learning Hebrew or the language of Adam may have played a role in which names they selected.⁶¹ These names were gradually removed from subsequent editions of the Doctrine and Covenants and the real names inserted.

Many early Latter-Day Saints used the name Gazelam (Gazelem) to refer to Joseph Smith or his seer stone. The following are some notable examples, compiled by Mark Ashurst-McGee:⁶²

- Of Wilford Woodruff, it was written: “In his possession he had many relics, among which was the seer stone, known as ‘Gazelem,’ which was shown of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith.”⁶³ It is not clear whether the unknown author of this statement was quoting President Woodruff or if they interjected the phrase about Gazelem themselves.
- In 1855, approximately 11 years after the funeral of Joseph Smith, William W. Phelps wrote down the sermon he gave on that occasion, according to his memory. He wrote: “Joseph Smith, who was Gazelam in the spirit world, was, and is, and will be in the progress of Eternity: — The Prince of Light. ‘Tis so; and who can dispute it?”⁶⁴
- Brigham Young and Willard Richards included an index to the 1841 edition of the Book of Mormon which had the entry: “Gazelem, a stone, (secret).”⁶⁵

60. *Joseph Smith Papers*, “Substitute Words in the 1835 and 1844 Editions of the Doctrine and Covenants.” <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/bc-jsp/content/jsp/images/content/library/pdf/chart7.pdf>.

61. *Ibid.*, 1.

62. Mark Ashurst-McGee, *A Pathway to Prophethood: Joseph Smith Junior as Rodsman, Village Seer, and Judeo-Christian Prophet* (MA Thesis, Utah State University, 2000). Ashurst-McGee conjectured that Gazelem may have been both Joseph’s spirit/temple name and also the name of his white seer stone, a theory that combines all these sources.

63. No author, untitled statement, George A. Smith Papers, Box 174, folder 26, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

64. William Wines Phelps, “The Funeral Sermon,” MS, 13 June 1866, Church History Library. Phelps reconstructed his funeral sermon in 1855.

65. *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon Upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, trans. Joseph Smith (Liverpool, UK: Printed by J. Tompkins for Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Parley P. Pratt, 1841), 640, col. 1.

How do these usages of the name reconcile with the idea of Gazelem as a Jaredite prophet? One line of reasoning is that our knowledge of the name Gazelem began when early Latter-Day Saints became familiar with the Book of Mormon. Since Alma 37 is one of the few places in the Book of Mormon that mentions the act of receiving revelations through a stone, early church members readily repurposed the name Gazelem and associated it with elements of Joseph Smith's divine calling as a seer.⁶⁶ In addition, for the early saints, this passage initiated the question of whether Gazelem is the name of the person or the name of the stone, with no apparent consensus. The same question persists among the saints today, also without a consensus. The substitution of "Gazelam" for Joseph's name in the Doctrine and Covenants reinforced the perception that it was a prophecy of Joseph. After his death, that perception would have been amplified by a nostalgia for Joseph by those who knew him, or a desire to elevate his prophetic station.

We don't know whether Joseph saw himself as a fulfillment of these verses, just felt a kinship with whoever Gazelem was, or even chose the substitute name himself. There are no surviving statements from Joseph declaring that he or his seer stone was named Gazelem.

A prophecy concerning Joseph Smith already exists in the Book of Mormon, in 2 Nephi chapter 3, and it mentions his given name "Joseph" explicitly. This prophecy actually comes from the plates of brass — the writings of Joseph of Egypt — with which Alma would have been very familiar. Immediately before giving Helaman the 24 plates, Alma had entrusted him with the plates of brass.⁶⁷ But Alma doesn't appear to be prophesying of future events. He points out that these prophecies and words he quotes have already been fulfilled "thus far," including the use of the interpreters.

And *thus far* the word of God hath been fulfilled;
yea, their secret abominations have been brought out of darkness
and made known unto us.

(Alma 37:26)

In this context, it doesn't seem that Alma is prophesying of the then-future restoration to be accomplished by Joseph Smith in the latter-days, other than the quotation of the Lord that he would "bring to light all their secrets and abominations unto every nation which shall

66. Mackay and Frederick, *Joseph Smith's Seer Stones*, 105–106.

67. Alma 37:3–20.

hereafter possess the land.”⁶⁸ Interpreting Gazelem as a Jaredite prophet does not diminish Joseph Smith’s foreordained calling or his important work of translating the Book of Mormon.

Summary

This article is an attempt to determine who Gazelem was, placing the burden of proof on the text of the Book of Mormon instead of the myriad subsequent interpretations or applications of the name.

The purpose of this article is also to provide a scriptural framework for interpreting Gazelem as a Jaredite prophet. Some important points for understanding this concept are summarized below:

- In these verses about Gazelem, Alma speaks to Helaman about the Jaredites — the Jaredite record, the Jaredite secret combinations, and their destruction.
- Alma quotes twice from the Jaredite plates.
- Alma uses the quotations to teach about both the seer stone of Gazelem and the use of the interpreters by Mosiah₂.
- Gazelem was a servant of the Lord, whose revelations were recorded on the Jaredite plates.
- Alma is speaking to Helaman about history — prophecies already fulfilled. The Jaredite secrets had been revealed. Gazelem was a seer in their past, not the future.
- Gazelem’s seer stone is a different revelatory instrument than the interpreters. Thus, the Book of Mormon describes the prophetic use of both a seer stone and the interpreters as examples we can study to understand Joseph Smith’s experience in translating and receiving revelation.
- Gazelem’s stone and the brother of Jared’s interpreters were both used to reveal the Jaredite secret combinations to the Nephites in a two-step process. The stone was used at the time the secret combinations began and the interpreters were used during the time of the Nephites.
- Gazelem is not mentioned by name in the Book of Ether because the names included in the abridgment are typically the Jaredite kings or their political relatives.
- Alma recounts a history when secret combinations started, when “the Lord saw that his people *began* to work in darkness.” One possibility for Gazelem’s ministry, then,

68. Alma 37:25–26.

is the reign of Omer, when Jared and Akish founded the first secret combinations of the Jaredites.

- “Gazelam” was used as a substitute for the name of Joseph Smith in early publications of the Doctrine and Covenants. He may have seen the language in Alma 37 as echoing his own experience with a seer stone, and adopted the name as a fitting substitute.

Conclusion

The text indicates that Gazelem was a Jaredite prophet, that he lived among the Jaredites at a time when they had begun to indulge in secret combinations, and that a seer stone had enabled him to reveal those secret combinations to the righteous Jaredites. These revelations were written down on the Jaredite plates — to justify and record the reason the Jaredites were destroyed. After the people of Limhi discovered those plates, Mosiah₂ used the interpreters to translate them. This included the revelations that had been received by Gazelem through his seer stone. Alma referred to both instruments, quoted twice from the Jaredite plates, and noted the fulfillment of those prophecies as he taught his son Helaman about Jaredite history, their secret combinations, how those secret combinations were brought to the knowledge of the Nephites, and why the Nephites should reject such wickedness.

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SHOULD WE APOLOGIZE FOR APOLOGETICS?

Steven T. Densley Jr.

A review of Blair G. Van Dyke & Loyd Isao Ericson, eds., *Perspectives on Mormon Theology: Apologetics*. Greg Kofford Books, 2017, 279 pages with endnotes and index. \$25.95 (paperback).

Abstract: An analysis of the history, scope, and effectiveness of Mormon apologetics is long overdue. Unfortunately, Perspectives on Mormon Theology: Apologetics falls short of providing an in-depth analysis of the field and instead provides a very limited history, very little discussion of the scope of Mormon apologetics, and little discussion of the impact of Mormon apologists on Mormon thought. Furthermore, no attempt is made to discuss how apologetics has affected the arguments of critics of Mormonism. While a few articles do approach apologetics in a positive way, the work is largely critical of the activity of defending the Church with scholarship or of providing academic research to help support the testimonies of members of the Church.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a missionary church. We often hear the motto “Every member a missionary.” As members and full-time missionaries alike share the gospel message with the world, they usually give investigators reasons to believe that our Church is true. These reasons often take the form of arguments supported by evidence, either in the form of personal experiences, scriptural references, logical analysis, or sometimes academic findings. In making these arguments in support of their faith, members of the Church engage in what is called *apologetics*.

Apologetics is not a word frequently used by members of the Church. Mormon apologists are sometimes asked by other members of the Church, “What are you apologizing for?” As of this writing, the word

apologetics appears in only four sources found at LDS.org, and none of these are general conference references. By contrast, many evangelical schools offer courses and even graduate degrees in apologetics.¹ Of course the vocabularies of Mormons and the broader Christian world differ in many ways. However, since Mormons do not often use the word *apologetics*, some, perhaps thinking that this term refers only to academic pursuits, may wonder if the leaders of the Church are opposed to the practice of scholarship-based apologetics. However, rather than opposing the use of scholarship in support of faith, the Church's website at LDS.org recently highlighted the work of the apologetic organizations FairMormon, Book of Mormon Central, and the Interpreter Foundation, listing these groups on its website as unofficial sources for reliable answers to gospel questions.²

Lay Church members are not the only parties involved in apologetics: Church leaders themselves have also long engaged in apologetics and have emphasized its important role in helping to strengthen our faith. One recent example is Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's address delivered at Brigham Young University during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the discovery of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon.³

Elder Holland emphasized that in building a strong testimony, it is important to engage both our hearts and our heads:

Faith and testimony, gospel devotion and Church loyalty, conviction so strong it leads to covenants and consecration are ultimately matters of the Spirit. They come as a gift from God, delivered and confirmed to our soul by the Holy Ghost in His divine role as revelator, witness, teacher of truth. But it should be noted that truly rock-ribbed faith and uncompromised conviction comes with its most complete power when it engages our head as well as our heart.⁴

1. For an example of such schools, see "The Top 10 Graduate Programs in Christian Apologetics," The Best Schools, accessed August 31, 2017, <https://thebestschools.org/rankings/top-10-graduate-programs-christian-apologetics/>.

2. See "Gospel Topics, Essays, and Other Resources," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, accessed August 31, 2017, <https://www.lds.org/si/objective/doctrinal-mastery/gospel-sources?lang=eng>.

3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Greatness of the Evidence" (speech, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, August 16, 2017). <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/transcript-elder-holland-speaks-book-of-mormon-chiasmus-conference-2017>.

4. Ibid.

He also stressed the important role of evidence in supporting our faith:

I don't have to be [a lawyer] to understand in a court of law the power and primacy of evidence. In making our case for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, I believe God intends us to find and use the evidence He has given — reasons, if you will — which affirm the truthfulness of His work.⁵

Elder Holland noted that Christ himself provided evidences, or proofs, of his resurrection. Luke introduced the Book of Acts by noting that after he rose from the grave, Christ “*shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs*, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”⁶ Elder Holland added that upon receiving evidence of the truth, “surely we are honor bound to affirm and declare that truth and may be upbraided if we do not.”⁷

He continued:

Our testimonies aren't dependent on evidence — we still need that spiritual confirmation in the heart of which we have spoken — but not to seek for and not to acknowledge intellectual, documentable support for our belief when it is available is to needlessly limit an otherwise incomparably strong theological position and deny us a unique, persuasive vocabulary in the latter-day arena of religious investigation and sectarian debate. Thus armed with so much evidence of the kind we have celebrated here tonight, we ought to be more assertive than we sometimes are in defending our testimony of truth.⁸

Elder Holland closed with the following prayer:

May our Father in Heaven bless us and an ever-larger cadre of young scholars around the Church to do more and more to discover and delineate and declare the reasons for the hope that is in us, that ... we may with bold conviction hold up to a world that desperately needs it “the greatness of the evidences which [we have] received,” especially of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, the keystone of our religion.⁹

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., quoting Acts 1:1–3, emphasis added.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

Turning now to an examination of the book *Perspectives on Mormon Theology: Apologetics*, it is interesting to examine these various essays in light of Elder Holland's enthusiastic support of defending the Church with scholarship and of the exercise of using evidence to sustain and declare our beliefs.

Blair Van Dyke

The collection begins with an article by co-editor Blair G. Van Dyke that aims to provide a historical and theological backdrop for the chapters to follow. He begins by defining the word *apologetics*, which is a helpful starting point, since many Mormons are unfamiliar with the word, and even those who regularly engage in the practice of apologetics sometimes disagree on what the word means. As Van Dyke explains, the word *apologetic* comes from the Greek word *apologia* and refers to a defense by rational argument. With respect to Mormon apologetics, there are two basic types of apologetics: *positive apologetics*, which provides arguments in support of the Church; and *negative apologetics*, which provides responses to criticisms against the Church.

At this point, Van Dyke's focus turns to an explanation of the distinctions between belief that is based on evidence and belief that is not based on evidence, which are known as *fideism* and *presuppositionalism*. Given Van Dyke's extended focus on these topics, one might think that this is the central problem of Mormon apologetics: argument without evidence. However, he provides no example of an article published by any apologetic organization that responds to the critics by merely arguing that one must "just believe" (p. 7). Nor did he cite any examples from the apologetics created from among the first generation of Saints — such as Orson and Parley P. Pratt and a host of other lesser-known missionaries. He likewise makes no appeal to such an approach by later authors, such as B.H. Roberts or Hugh Nibley.

Of course one might argue, correctly, that Mormon apologists do not argue from a position of pure objectivity, since they believe the Church to be true before engaging the critics. However, one might just as well criticize Mormon studies scholars for not being objective because they hold certain facts to be true before choosing a topic, collecting the data, conducting the study, interpreting the data, or presenting the results. As I discuss further below, pure objectivity is a myth. Furthermore, anyone who takes a position and then defends it is an *apologist*. The fact that a person has chosen a position does not mean the argument itself is without merit.

A main distinction between Latter-day Saint apologists and some authors of secular religious studies is that it is often difficult to tell the perspective from which a scholar of religious studies approaches a subject. While we all have biases, apologists are more open about their biases. Also, the fact that apologists are committed to the Church does not mean they have chosen their positions without evidence. Evidence that forms the basis for commitment to the Church may come in all varieties, including personal revelation from God. However, even if one's testimony is based solely on a spiritual witness, it would not be accurate to equate such a testimony with belief without evidence. Yet this is what Van Dyke does.

Of course, it is fair enough to observe that a testimony based on an experience with the Holy Ghost does not provide an artifact that can be examined by third parties (except, perhaps, for the life of the individual him or herself). It would also be fair to observe, as Van Dyke does, that members of the Church are often told a testimony should center on personal revelation. However, it is incorrect to suggest, as Van Dyke also does, that the history of Mormon apologetics is marred by a long and dark period of anti-intellectualism when an appeal to evidence was absent in the arguments of Mormon apologists.

In what purports to be a general overview of the history of Mormon apologetics, Van Dyke focuses on the period during the late twentieth century when Church leaders became deeply concerned about certain Mormon scholars who were openly criticizing official Church positions on a variety of topics. He quotes Ezra Taft Benson who, in 1980, listed "intellectuals" as one of two groups that "have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet" (p. 13). Van Dyke argues that during this period, religious scholarship within the church languished, as did academically grounded apologetics. Ironically, it is during this period when the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) rose to ascendancy. And rather than serving as an example of the failure of Mormon apologists to produce academically reliable research, FARMS has been recognized by both evangelical and Catholic scholars as producing solid and credible scholarship.¹⁰

10. See, e.g., Paul Owen and Carl Mosser, "Mormon Scholarship, Apologetics, and Evangelical Neglect: Losing the Battle and Not Knowing It?" *Trinity Journal*, 19/2 new series (Fall 1998): 179–205, http://www.forananswer.org/Top_LDS/Evangelical_Neglect.htm; Introvigne, "The Book of Mormon Wars: A Non-Mormon Perspective," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 5/2 (1996): 1–25, <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1117&context=jbms>.

Van Dyke not only fails to acknowledge the important contributions of FARMS, he also fails to discuss the work of early Mormon apologists like John Taylor or Parley P. Pratt or later ground-breaking apologists like Hugh Nibley, John Sorenson, and John W. Welch. It may be that in doing so, it would be more difficult for him to advance his thesis that Mormon apologists have frequently argued without evidence.

All but one of the examples of Mormon apologists Van Dyke cites as engaging in non-evidence-based apologetics come from statements of prophets and apostles who encourage members to seek spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of the Church. However, encouraging people to seek after personal revelation is neither an argument against a critic nor an argument in support of the Church. Personal revelation is a way by which people can become convinced the Church is true, but revelation is an epistemology distinct from rational argument. In other words, Van Dyke criticizes Church leaders for engaging in non-evidence-based apologetics, whereas in these examples, they are not really engaging in apologetics at all.

As the final example of the institutional Church making an argument not based on evidence, Van Dyke points to the Church's opposition to gay marriage. Van Dyke notes that following the 2013 Supreme Court decision upholding gay marriage, the Church issued a statement in support of traditional marriage, "which," the Church argued, "for thousands of years has proven to be the best environment for nurturing children" (p. 19). Van Dyke claims this argument is based on presupposition rather than being an evidence-based argument. Ironically, Van Dyke may here betray a personal tendency toward presupposition on the issue of gay marriage, since there is indeed evidence that supports the statement of the Church. As a joint report from Princeton University and the left-of-center Brookings Institution observed, "Most scholars now agree that children raised by two biological parents in a stable marriage do better than children in other family forms across a wide range of outcomes."¹¹

11. Sara McLanahan and Isabel Sawhill, "Marriage and Child Wellbeing Revisited: Introducing the Issue," *The Future of Children*, Princeton-Brookings, 25/2, (2015): 4, <https://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/Full%20Journal%20Marriage%20Revisited.pdf>. See, also, Mark Regnerus, "How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study," *Social Science Research*, 41/4, (2012): 752–770, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X12000610>. More evidence in support of the Church's position has emerged since 2013. See, e.g., Donald Paul Sullins, "Emotional Problems Among Children with Same-Sex Parents: Difference by Definition," *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*, 7/2

In summary, rather than providing, as promised, an overview of the history of Mormon apologetics, Van Dyke engages in a critique of methods that reject the use of reason and evidence and rely instead on presupposition, as if this were a widespread problem in Mormon apologetics. However, he provides no examples of apologists for the Church, arguing in response to rational argument, that we should simply accept these matters on faith. Rather, he quotes various prophets and apostles who emphasize the general importance of a spiritual witness in gaining a testimony of the Church. Van Dyke minimizes the value of an inner conviction based on personal experience and a spiritual witness and equates this kind of internal evidence with a conviction based on no evidence at all.

In introducing the topic of Mormon apologetics, Van Dyke seems merely to be tracking the history of Christian apologetics generally more than Mormon apologetics specifically. He seems to be arguing that the history of Mormon apologetics fits into the pattern that characterizes the history of non-Mormon apologetics. This proves to be an imperfect fit, to say the least, but it does provide the reader with a window into some of the controlling biases at work among the later authors in the anthology who disparage apologetics.

Daniel C. Peterson

Dan Peterson then provides a sort of apologetic in defense of apologetics. He acknowledges that just as there are good and bad doctors, lawyers, and scientists, there are also good and bad apologists. He also acknowledges that rational arguments can no more assure salvation than medicine can assure recovery from a sickness. Nevertheless, apologetics is necessary. Quoting Austin Farrer,

Though argument does not create conviction, lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish. (p. 31)

(2015): 99–120, <http://www.sciencedomain.org/abstract/8172>. Note, too, that more recent research has called into question the scientific reliability of the conclusions cited by Van Dyke. See Loren Marks, “Same-Sex Parenting and Children’s Outcomes: A Closer Examination of the American Psychological Association’s Brief on Lesbian and Gay Parenting,” *Social Science Research*, 41/4 (2012): 735–751, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X12000580>.

Peterson points to Peter's injunction that we "be ready always to give an answer [*apologia*] to every man that asketh you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Furthermore, not only the Apostles but Christ himself argued to the Jews on the basis of the miracles and fulfilled prophecy that Jesus was the Messiah (see, e.g., John 14:11; Luke 24:25–27 and Acts 2:22–32). The apostles further argued to non-Jews that nature itself was evidence that God exists (see, e.g., Acts 14:14–17; Rom. 1:18–20). Paul cited the evidence of hundreds of witnesses to the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians. 15:3–8) and even quoted Greek poets in support of his arguments (Acts 17:18–34). In doing so, Peterson argues that they did not show a lack of confidence in the power of the Spirit to convert people; rather, "they trusted that the Holy Ghost would work through their arguments and their evidence to convert those whose hearts were open to the Spirit" (p. 35).

After providing similar examples from the Book of Mormon, he then quotes the Lord's command to William McLellin to "bear testimony in every place, unto every people and in their synagogues, reasoning with the people" (D&C 66:7). Of course, one could read this verse to mean that reasoning with the people is part and parcel of bearing testimony. Peterson then points out that the simple act of bearing testimony can take the form of logical argument. For example: "I have felt divine love and am therefore confident that God exists."

Peterson concludes by observing that while not everyone is interested in or has the ability to engage in scholarly apologetics, all who are under covenant to "stand as witnesses of God" (Mosiah 18:9) have a duty to do apologetics in some form. Indeed, whether we like it or not, anyone who takes a position and provides a reason for taking that position is an apologist. The question is whether or not we will *choose* to give an answer to everyone who asks us a reason for the hope that is within us.

Neal Rappleye

While it would be easy to assume that apologetics functions in a way that preserves the status quo, Neal Rappleye persuasively argues that Mormon apologetics has actually expanded theological boundaries in a variety of ways. As one example, Rappleye notes that it has become popular among Mormon apologists to adopt many of the conclusions of non-Mormon scholar Margaret Barker regarding the pre-exilic Israelite religion. Barker has cast doubt on the predominant understanding of King Josiah as a righteous religious reformer, arguing that in fact, Josiah corrupted the true religion and stamped out an earlier understanding of a council of

gods consisting of a father, a mother, and a son of the father. When we consider that Lehi argued against apostasy among the people of Jerusalem in a period immediately after the reign of King Josiah, it is easy to imagine how Lehi might have been arguing against the reforms of Josiah, which caused, among other things, the people to think that there is only one God and not, as earlier understood, a council of gods. It also casts Laman and Lemuel in a new light: perhaps their attempts to kill Nephi could arguably have been justifiable, in their eyes, under Deuteronomic laws against false prophets. (See, e.g., Deuteronomy 13:1–11; 18:20.) This perspective can both expand the horizons of the traditional interpretations of scripture and can, at the same time, add credence to the argument that the Book of Mormon is an authentic historical document.

Similarly, the work of apologists who have examined geographical and cultural references in the Book of Mormon have both challenged long-held assumptions about where the events of the Book of Mormon took place and have provided insights that help readers to understand how the stories found there fit comfortably into an ancient context.

Rappleye's article provides an interesting take on apologetics. Indeed, it would have been interesting to expand on what he has written with an additional article that explores further how the work of those defending the Church has contributed to changes not only in the way Mormons understand scriptural doctrine and history, but also how the work of those defending the Church may have affected policies and practices within the Church.

Michael Ash

As one who has been on the front lines of modern Mormon apologetics, Michael Ash is well positioned to comment on the ways in which the endeavor has been executed, for better and for worse, on the Internet. He notes a great deal of confusion among Mormons over what apologetics actually is and whether it is a useful undertaking. Much of this is due, contends Ash, to the fact that on Internet message boards, a wide variety of methods may be used, and those involved have varied levels of expertise and professional demeanor. It can become easy to paint all Mormon apologetics with a broad brush based on a limited number of on-line experiences. If those experiences are with individuals who are not careful in their methods and intemperate in their approaches, the entire enterprise may receive a black eye.

Nevertheless, even when apologetics is at its best, there are those, even within the ranks of Mormon academia, who doubt the efficacy of

apologetics or even contend that it is harmful. These critics often claim that apologetics is not “real scholarship” because apologists do not take an objective approach to the evidence. Since apologists believe the Church is true, these critics explain, apologists cannot simply follow the facts wherever they may lead.

In response to this criticism, Ash turns to psychological and neurological research demonstrating that, apologist or not, we all have biases and prejudices, many of which we do not even recognize. Further, although the term *apologetics* often refers to the defense of a religious position, whenever a scholar takes a position and defends it, the scholar engages in apologetics. Secular scholars themselves do not wander about aimlessly doing research. Even in the most noncontroversial of fields, in merely choosing a hypothesis to study, a scholar takes a position and thereby exhibits a bias. The scholar has some idea of what he or she will find and, after beginning the research, often adjusts the hypothesis, depending on what the facts may begin to show. This does not, however, render the academic pursuit worthless or damaging to the field of inquiry. As Ash explains, “Study after study demonstrates that we are all apologists for our personal worldviews and that holding worldviews doesn’t vitiate scholarly discourse. At times, all people seek data for an interpretation rather than an interpretation for the data” (p. 81). In short, Ash argues, it would be wrong to draw lines that would exclude apologetics from the arena of academics. In fact, the act of doing so would itself be an exercise in apologetics. At this juncture, the reader cannot help but remember Van Dyke’s introductory essay, and the manner in which his unacknowledged or unconscious biases skewed his account of Mormon apologetics.

Benjamin E. Park

Following appropriately on the words of Michael Ash, the discussion then shifts to one regarding the place of apologetics in academia. Benjamin Park argues that it has no place, contending that it would be best for Mormon studies and for apologetics alike if there were a “wall of separation” between the two disciplines. However, it is unclear what Park means by this or how it would be accomplished. It would be strange to think that Park actually suggests that the Neal A. Maxwell Institute, which holds itself out as an institution engaged in “Mormon studies,” should prohibit work that defends the Church, either by responding to critics or by publishing material that helps strengthen commitment to the Church. It would also be strange to think that Park may be calling

for FairMormon to discontinue work that constitutes “Mormon studies.” How can an organization defend Mormonism and not engage in a study of Mormonism? Should a Mormon studies program discriminate against work that happens to strengthen faith in the Church? If it overtly did so, could it still maintain academic credibility, or would it come to be seen as an organization with an ax to grind against the Church?

Park provides two examples of how what he has been suggesting has worked. The first is Paul Reeve’s publication *Religion of a Different Color* with Oxford University Press. However, as Park points out, Reeve appeared at the FairMormon conference to discuss this work. So it is unclear how this constitutes a successful separation of Mormon studies and apologetics. Park explains that Reeve addressed non-Mormon audiences as well as Mormon ones. Similarly, the other supposed example of a successful approach was that of Patrick Mason, who published *The Mormon Menace* with Oxford University Press and also *Planted* with Deseret Book, a strange example, since these works address two entirely different subjects. In any event, the suggestion here is that in order to maintain a successful separation of Mormon studies and apologetics, a scholar must address non-Mormon and Mormon groups separately. Does this mean the Maxwell Institute should not write for Mormons? Should FairMormon not reach out to non-Mormons or respond to critics outside the Church? One is left wondering whether creating a “wall of separation” between apologetics and Mormon studies would be either workable or desirable. And one is again struck by Park’s failure to account for Mormon studies — like all academic disciplines — as having its own set of agendas, biases and presuppositions that might influence its product every bit as much as they would that of a religious apologist. Ironically, Park himself offers an “apologetic” (i.e., a reasoned argument for a proposition that is not a question of pure fact) against apologetics.

Ralph C. Hancock

Though Park did not take up this vital aspect of the question, Ralph Hancock next explores the futility of seeking pure objectivity in the practice of Mormon studies. He admits those who engage in religious apologetics maintain certain fundamental commitments:

Are we to imagine that, unlike the mere “apologist,” the “secular” student of Mormonism wakes up every morning ready to cast all inherited and habitual elements of his worldview aside and to start afresh to discover the meaning of life — including his own scholarly activity — with not the

slightest prejudice in favor of, say, what he has already been doing, what people expect him to do, what others praise and pay him to do, etc.?” (p. 94)

Hancock addresses directly the “wall of separation” model proposed by Park, concluding that this is a transparent attempt to put scholars who overtly defend the Church into a box where they are excluded from academic discussions:

On the one hand, exclusion of believing voices and the emphasis on one or another scholarly framework that excludes the problem of ultimate meaning can only result in the reduction of Mormonism to a network of explanatory causality that leaves no opening for the question of religious truth. On the other hand, the narrowing of faith to a subjective, non-rational feeling or identity strips Mormonism, or any other religion, of its claim of access to things as they really are. In practice, the “good fence” strategy is transparently a means of rendering the content of religious belief harmless and irrelevant to serious engagements with what is held to be reality. (p. 95)

Hancock next addresses the criticism that apologetics often carries too harsh a tone. He observes that criticisms of tone are rarely, if ever, backed by examples. He concedes that such examples are likely to be found if searched out. However, Hancock contends, a lack of civility and appeals to emotion are as likely to be found among the advocates of a “wall-of-separation” in Mormon studies as among the apologists. And although a harsh tone may undermine persuasive power, it has nothing to do with whether the arguments themselves are true.

Beyond that, it seems that concerns regarding tone perhaps kept the Maxwell Institute from publishing a well-documented review of the podcast “Mormon Stories,” hosted by the now-excommunicated John Dehlin. It is hard to see how the cause of truth, scholarship, or even charity were served by the suppression of this review. Indeed, while the publishers of the *Mormon Studies Review* may have seen themselves as charitable toward Dehlin for refusing to expose his apostate activities, Hancock asks, “Was it really a responsible exercise of Christian love, either toward Dehlin or toward those seducible by his fairly crude but specious arts, to suppress publication?” (p. 99). While some costs may have been imposed by non-Mormon scholars and critics of the Church had the review been published in the *Mormon Studies Review*, “the costs

involved in ignoring and thereby seeming to grant the legitimacy of attacks on the Church are not negligible” (p. 99).

Perhaps the publishers of the *Mormon Studies Review* wished to be seen as neutral regarding the criticisms Dehlin leveled against the Church. One wonders how the publishers will respond when scholars submit publications that, rather than criticize an enemy of the Church, criticize the Church itself? Will the editors also suppress such an article and risk being seen as non-objective advocates for the Church? If they publish an article openly critical of the Church, will their standing with Brigham Young University be in jeopardy? It raises legitimate questions with regard to the sustainability of a Mormon studies program at the Church’s university.

As those promoting secular Mormon studies seek respect and legitimacy in the academy, Hancock insightfully observes that “there are two main ways in which distinctively LDS views normally run afoul of respectable scholarly opinion: let’s call them 1) history and 2) sex” (pp. 109–10). It is interesting to observe here that these are two of the main areas of focus of the “Mormon Stories” podcast. When it came to exposing John Dehlin as one who does not subscribe to the core historical claims of the Church and does not support the Church’s positions on sex and family matters, the Maxwell Institute shied away from open confrontation. If one is trying to ingratiate oneself to the scholars of modern academia, standing up for the reality of angelic visitations or for traditional marriage simply will not do. This suggests that in order to be successful in the field of secular Mormon studies, certain claims made by the Church regarding history and family structure will remain open to attack by critics who will remain unopposed by Mormon practitioners of secular Mormon studies. (In the present volume, Van Dyke’s criticism of the Church’s claims about child rearing in traditional families in the wake of the gay marriage debate becomes almost predictable if Hancock is correct.)

Brian D. Birch

Brian Birch returns to the history addressed in Van Dyke’s essay regarding the Church’s uneasy relationship with academia. In fact, at this point in the volume, especially following not only Van Dyke’s overview but also the essays of Park and Hancock, Birch’s paper seems a bit superfluous. Nevertheless, Birch’s essay exceeds Van Dyke’s in fleshing out the history and development of secular Mormon studies versus apologetics in the Church. The article goes into more detail regarding the development of scholars within the Church in the first half of the twentieth century, the skepticism that arose regarding excessive intellectualism, and also the rise of apologetics during the second

half of the twentieth century. He discusses Hugh Nibley, the *FARMS Review*, and the unceremonial ouster of Dan Peterson from the Maxwell Institute. Yet he merely asks the same questions posed by these preceding authors: Can a Mormon scholar serve two masters? Is it really possible to be a successful academic in the field of religious studies and also defend the Church against the attacks of scholarly critics?

In a fashion similar to that of Van Dyke and Park, Birch also overstates the Church's resistance to academia and, unfortunately, misrepresents the Church's statement regarding symposia. One who is unfamiliar with the history would be led to believe the Church sought to stamp out all academic discussion at symposia. In fact, the Church's Statement on Symposia expressed more narrow concerns regarding symposia that "included some presentations relating to the House of the Lord, the holy temples, that are offensive"; and some material that was "seized upon and publicized in such a way as to injure the Church or its members or to jeopardize the effectiveness or safety of our missionaries."¹²

More generally speaking, Van Dyke, Park, and Birch tend to create an impression that during the second half of the twentieth century, the Church was led by men who sought to suppress intellectual inquiry in favor of total reliance on authoritative statements from Church headquarters.¹³ (We here again see the influence of a controlling bias or *myth* prevalent among disaffected Mormons and some Mormon studies academics.) They suggest that since then, due to the Internet, Church leaders lost their ability to control the internal discussion of Church history and doctrine; leaders now have no choice but to turn to academics to sort out the thorny issues raised by critics. If this is truly their view, it is sad to observe how Van Dyke, Park, and Birch all seem to suggest that the practitioners of secular Mormon studies should not bother themselves with responding to the attacks of critics, since they must expend their effort in building bridges toward non-Mormon intellectuals in the hope of building academic credibility for the field of secular Mormon studies and that building a small fiefdom where those with religious studies degrees can make a living and contribute to

12. "Statement on Symposia," *Ensign*, November 1991, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1991/11/news-of-the-church/statement-on-symposia?lang=eng>.

13. Birch concludes his article with a quote from Harold B. Lee: "[I]f anything squares not with the revelations, then we may be certain it is not truth." He juxtaposes this quote over one of the evangelical preacher Billy Sunday, who said "the consensus of scholarship can plumb go to hell" (p. 138). Birch suggests that these quotes reflect the same perspective.

the existing body of academic literature is more important than using their considerable talents to build the Kingdom of God. They cannot be blamed for wanting to pursue their interests and make a living. However, to the extent they argue that in order to be credible scholars, they simply cannot defend prophets and revelation and must instead adopt a purely secular approach to religion — and suppress or denigrate the work of those who do offer a reasoned defense — they only add credence to some of the concerns regarding excessive intellectualism raised by Church authorities in the 1980s.

Juliann Reynolds

The next section of the book consists of three articles that discuss women's issues. Juliann Reynolds begins by noting that early in Church history, Mormon women played a prominent role in defending the Church, ironically enough, during the era when the Church was under attack for the practice of polygamy. In the face of prevailing assumptions that the Church degraded and demeaned women, these early female apologists argued, in effect, as Sharon Eubank would declare at the FairMormon conference more than a century later, "This is a woman's church!"¹⁴

Of course, Reynolds notes, while many women today consider themselves defenders of the faith, it is a rare woman who would call herself an "apologist." This is perhaps partly due to confusion over what the term means, which rarely enters the Mormon lexicon. It is unclear why else that might be, but what is clear is that Mormon women have not gotten involved in groups like FairMormon or Book of Mormon Central in the same proportions as men. Reynolds observes that as of 2015, women made up only 18 percent of the FairMormon volunteers (p. 149).

Nevertheless, while it is fair of Reynolds to observe that women are not involved with the traditional apologetic organizations at the same rate as men, women who do get involved are often among the most popular and effective of the apologists. This fact was evidenced by the reception of Sharon Eubank's FairMormon address, which was so popular and well-received, it was immediately celebrated with a standing ovation at the conference, it was posted on the Mormon Newsroom's website

14. Sharon Eubank, "This is a Woman's Church," (2014 FairMormon Conference, Utah Valley Convention Center, Provo, UT, August 2014), <https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2014/womans-church>.

within days,¹⁵ and it was later reprinted in the *Ensign* magazine.¹⁶ The excitement with which this address was received is still unparalleled by that of any address given by any male at any FairMormon conference.¹⁷ No one can dispute that women can be effective apologists, and they are very warmly received when they do engage in apologetics. Thus the fact that more women are not involved cannot be attributed to a lack of ability or a calculated resistance toward women's involvement.

The reason women do not get involved in publishing articles and engaging directly with critics in equal numbers as men remains an open question. In a subtle critique of the group dynamics of modern Mormon apologetics, Reynolds suggests that it may be related to the reason women do not participate in the science and engineering workforce or politics in numbers that are equal to those of men. Borrowing from studies conducted by political scientists who have examined the participation of women in group settings, Reynolds notes that women enter apologetic discussions "holding less value and authority because of their gender" (p. 151). She suggests that women are therefore less confident in their ability to engage in situations where conflict is involved, such as in on-line arguments over religion. (p. 151)

Reynolds also wonders whether a reason that Mormon women do not get involved in apologetics as much is because they are overwhelmingly satisfied with their position within the Church. In support of this hypothesis, she cites a 2011 Pew poll which finds "that 90 percent of Mormon women are satisfied with the priesthood policy" (p. 152). However, while this may explain why movements such as Ordain Women have not become more popular, Reynolds seems to suggest that the reason men engage in apologetics is that they are dissatisfied with the way in which the Church is being treated by society, but women are not so concerned. Yet that seems unlikely. Rather, perhaps women have the desire to defend the Church in equal numbers, but they do it in ways not often recognized, even by themselves, as "apologetics."

15. Tracie Cayford Cudworth, "'This Is a Woman's Church,' Says Director of Humanitarian Services and LDS Charities," *Newsroom*, August 12, 2014, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/this-is-a-womans-church-says-director-humanitarian-services>.

16. Sharon Eubank, "Being a Woman: An Eternal Perspective," *Ensign*, August 2016, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2016/08/being-a-woman-an-eternal-perspective?lang=eng>.

17. Similarly, as Reynolds notes, the FairMormon addresses of Neylan McBaine and Valerie Hudson Cassler were included in a volume published by Oxford University Press called *Mormon Feminism: Essential Writings* (p. 152). Neylan McBaine also expanded upon her FairMormon address and published a best-selling book with Greg Kofford Books entitled *Women at Church*.

One striking example of this phenomenon may be the rise of Mormon Women Stand, an organization founded in 2014 in the wake of calls for the ordination of women to the priesthood by Ordain Women and the now-excommunicated Kate Kelly. “By September 2015, Mormon Women Stand had nearly 40,000 members, and in some weeks, a Facebook reach of 1.2 million people” (p. 148).¹⁸ The group is not normally included among those referred to as “apologetic.” However, from a brief review of the topics of interest to its members, which includes apostasy, priesthood authority, homosexuality, and immigration, this group is dedicated to defending the Church from a woman’s perspective.

Reynolds acknowledges various other efforts by women to defend the Church that are not normally counted among “apologetic” enterprises, such as posting Church-friendly comments on Twitter and Facebook, podcasting, and the publishing of the popular *Meridian Magazine*, co-founded by Harvard-educated Maurine Proctor. To these efforts, we could add the activities of countless Mormon “mommy bloggers,” such as Stephanie Nielson and others.¹⁹ While women who publish academic papers, present at conferences, and directly engage with critics are welcomed and have proven their effectiveness, perhaps we should worry less about trying to force women into an ancient box called “apologetics” and learn to recognize and celebrate the new and varied ways in which women are choosing to defend the Church on their own terms.

Julie M. Smith

Though she does not claim that it is deliberate, Julie Smith observes that because apologists are mostly men, there are times when apologetic arguments tend to be discouraging or even harmful to women. She suggests that this is the case in topics such as polygamy and the priesthood. She doesn’t elaborate on specific examples of the male apologists’ offenses. Rather, in an effort to help prevent these negative, likely unintended, consequences of apologetics, Smith suggests four guideposts for apologists to follow in framing arguments that involve women.

18. As of this writing, the Mormon Women Stand Facebook page has 53,603 followers. By contrast, FairMormon has 8,589, and the Interpreter Foundation has 3,071.

19. Stephanie Nielson, *NieNie Dialogues* (blog), <http://www.nieniedialogues.com/>. For a discussion on the success of Mormon mommy bloggers and thoughts regarding the missionary work that attends such efforts, see Herb Scribner, “The reason why Mormon mommy bloggers are so successful.” *Deseret News*, September 23, 2016.

The first principle is inversion: This “requires the apologist to invert the position of the genders and determine if the argument being proposed is still logical and palatable” (p. 156). It is an intriguing suggestion and may be very helpful. Of course, it applies only in situations where there are no differences between men and women or in situations that would offend people who assume that men and women are identical.

Second, Smith asks apologists to consider if what we are saying about the state of our experience on earth is consistent with what we know about the heavenly state. This would be a helpful guideline to the extent we have clear knowledge of what things are like in heaven. However, given the fact that so much of what is said about heaven is speculative, it may be better to avoid making such comparisons, for they may create other problems with an apologetic argument. For example, she assumes that our Heavenly Mother is not primarily involved with nurturing, so we should not expect women on earth to be primarily nurturing. However, she provides no evidence of the way that we were raised by our Heavenly Mother before we came to this earth that would lead us to conclude that our exalted Mother is not nurturing.²⁰

The third principle requires that we apply a “strict scrutiny” test to apologetic arguments that are consistent with our cultural practices. In other words, we should be skeptical and consider rejecting arguments that conform to our current cultural beliefs and practices. As an example, Smith states that “the belief that women are naturally nurturing deserves strict scrutiny as culturally conforming” (p. 162).

Certainly it would be wise to ask ourselves whether our arguments are unduly influenced by cultural biases. But Smith is not clear on just how skeptical we should be. By using the term “strict scrutiny,” Smith, perhaps unknowingly, borrows a phrase from constitutional law that refers to the highest of legal standards when considering whether a law violates constitutional rights. The standard is so high, in fact, that it is commonly assumed that if a strict scrutiny standard applies in assessing the validity of a law, the law will most likely be ruled unconstitutional.

Of course, Smith does not seem to suggest that arguments that are consistent with our culture should usually be rejected, but she comes close when she concedes that “surely not everything which aligns with the larger culture is necessarily contrary to the gospel” (p. 162). Of course she

20. Of course, the concept that “[m]others are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children” does not emerge from irresponsible apologetics, but rather from the text of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, November 1995, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1995/11/the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world?lang=eng>.

also uses the phrases “extra scrutiny” and “close examination” (p. 161), thus further confusing the standard she sets. Further, she admits that the “standard does not demand the abandonment of this belief simply because it conforms to the culture” (p. 161). Still, the way in which this standard is to be applied is unclear.

Also, it is unclear how this standard is supposed to help avoid harming women. Which culture are we to measure our arguments against? Smith references the “larger culture” in reference to two *Ensign* articles, which in this case would probably mean American culture, or perhaps Western culture (pp. 160–61). Smith seems to assume that Western culture has a tendency to denigrate women so should be rooted out of our arguments whenever possible. So are we to conclude that if a belief is consistent with the cultural practices of the smaller culture of Saudi Arabia, we run less risk of offending women and no longer need to examine our assumptions? Although that is a dubious proposition, it is nevertheless always wise to check one’s biases.

Smith’s fourth and final proposition is that we should take care to avoid “dismissing the strands of tradition that do not mesh well with current practice” (p. 165). Smith correctly notes the many competing strands within Mormon history, doctrine, and culture. For example, when the end of polygamy was announced, some plural wives rejoiced and others did not. Smith suggests that apologists should be careful to take into account the variations in history and doctrine and not cling too tightly to one strand over another: “There has been a demonstrable tension in the Church’s teachings; in order to be faithful to the entire Mormon tradition, apologetics needs to maintain that tension — not smooth it out” (p. 164). Fair enough. However, again, it is not clear how this approach will necessarily help women avoid pain. One woman may take comfort in knowing there were early plural wives who rejoiced as polygamy ended. But the same woman may be distressed to learn that some women did not favor ending the practice.

All in all, Smith makes some valuable suggestions in helping to ensure apologetic arguments are more solid and well-reasoned. However, not all the suggestions are helpful, and it is not clear that these suggestions will help to prevent the pain to women that we all hope to avoid.

Fiona Givens

Of all the articles in this volume, I found this one to be the most intriguing. However, it seems the least likely article to be included with the others because it does not actually discuss apologetics. To be sure,

the article itself offers an apologetic in support of the exalted role that women should play in the historical and modern Church. Indeed, it argues in favor of acknowledging that when we speak of “God” as an exalted being, we speak not only of a father but of a mother as well.

She recounts the statements of Joseph Smith and other early leaders of the Church that explicitly state that men and women are exalted together and that we have a Heavenly Mother as well as a Heavenly Father. She notes that while Charles Penrose was editor of the *Millennial Star*, an editorial published by that paper held that our Heavenly Mother was, in fact, the third member of the Godhead, also known as the Holy Spirit (p. 174). She continues by reviewing some of the history of the ancient Jews and early Christians which suggests that the Mormon belief in a Mother in Heaven is not an invention of the modern Church.

She then proceeds to discuss various ways in which women have been expected to hold positions of authority in the Kingdom of God. In addition to indications in the Bible that various women were considered to hold positions of respect and authority, some even called *prophetesses*, in the modern Church, members such as Eliza R. Snow understood the Relief Society would enable women to become “Queens of Queens, and Priestesses unto the Most High God” (p. 180).

At this point, I should mention an aspect of the article that one should approach with caution. Givens, noting that it has been said that Joseph “ordained” women in the Relief Society (p. 190), concludes that Emma therefore held “the keys to preside over the Relief Society” (p. 190). This point of history was elaborated on in a Gospel Topics article published by the Church:

In organizing the Relief Society, Joseph spoke of “ordain[ing]” women and said that Relief Society officers would “preside over the Society.” He also declared, “I now turn the key to you in the name of God.”

These statements indicate that Joseph Smith delegated priesthood authority to women in the Relief Society. Joseph’s language can be more fully understood in historical context. During the 19th century, Latter-day Saints used the term *keys* to refer at various times to authority, knowledge, or temple ordinances. Likewise, Mormons sometimes used the term *ordain* in a broad sense, often interchangeably with *set apart* and not always referring to priesthood office. On these points, Joseph’s actions illuminate the meaning of his words: neither Joseph Smith, nor any person acting on his behalf, nor any of his

successors conferred the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood on women or ordained women to priesthood office.

In later years, words like *ordination* and *keys* were more precisely defined, as when President John Taylor, who acted by assignment from Joseph Smith to “ordain and set apart” Emma Smith and her counselors, explained in 1880 that “the ordination then given did not mean the conferring of the Priesthood upon those sisters.” Women did receive authority to preside in the women’s organization and to appoint officers as needed to conduct the organization in the pattern of the priesthood, including being led by a president with counselors.²¹

So the official position of the Church is that while Emma did preside over the Relief Society, she was not ordained to a priesthood office with the keys to direct the work of the organization in the same way that, for example, a bishop is ordained to his office and given keys to direct the affairs of a ward. Givens needs to engage this perspective, or at least acknowledge its existence and its considerable doctrinal authority, given the statements by President Taylor and others. To leave it unmentioned and unengaged risks misleading the reader. Nevertheless, Givens’s larger points are interesting, informative, and helpful in establishing the important role women have played and should continue to play in our families, the Church, and in the heavens.

David Knowlton

David Knowlton next engages in a criticism of FairMormon with respect to its apologetic approach to some of the issues pertaining to Lamanites. Mormons have long been assailed by some critics for being racist, not only due to withholding priesthood ordination and temple access to African Americans but also because the Book of Mormon describes a curse that came upon the Lamanites for their iniquity and a “skin of blackness” described as having come upon the Lamanites “that they might not be enticing unto” the Nephites. (See 2 Nephi 5:21, and also Jacob 3:5, 8–9; Alma 3:4–19.) The Book of Mormon later states that once Lamanites joined with the Nephites, “their curse was taken from them, and their skin became white like unto to Nephites” (3 Ne. 2:12–15).

21. “Joseph Smith’s Teachings about Priesthood, Temple, Women”, Topics, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, published October 2015, <https://www.lds.org/topics/joseph-smiths-teachings-about-priesthood-temple-and-women?lang=eng>.

It is easy to see how critics and mainstream Mormons alike could conclude from these various verses that the Book of Mormon describes a phenomenon whereby the skin of the unrighteous actually became darker until they repented, when it then became lighter. In response to the critics who claim that Mormons are racists, apologists have developed a number of alternative interpretations of these verses, suggesting that these verses should be read metaphorically or that they refer to cultural rather than physiological differences.²²

Rather than engaging in a discussion of whether these various alternative interpretations are valid, Knowlton seems to question the need even to respond to the critics. Knowlton claims, without evidence, that what the scholars of FairMormon are really doing is not responding to critics. Rather, “at the heart of their quest lies a crisis of faith” (p. 207) over statements regarding Lamanites and race made by General Authorities and found in the Book of Mormon. Knowlton claims that FairMormon members turn to scholarship to manage this crisis of faith and “do not take seriously the thought and ways of Mormons who, not being scholars and intellectuals, manage to create lives of faith and obedience without falling into the textual crisis of faith. The apologists allow themselves no out except exegesis” (p. 207).

Knowlton also claims that FairMormon apologists create a division between faithful Mormons and critics similar to that which exists in the Book of Mormon between the Nephites and Lamanites. He claims that the apologists see themselves as the righteous Nephites, while the critics and cultural Mormons (whom Knowlton defines as Mormons who lack faith) are the unrighteous Lamanites (pp. 198, 202, 207). Again, he draws these conclusions without offering evidence. He suggests that FairMormon has supposedly done a terrible thing but does not elaborate on this point. He also claims that FairMormon apologists create divisions between themselves and non-scholarly Mormons by suggesting that they possess a more scholarly understanding of the scriptures (p. 208).

In summary, Knowlton uses FairMormon’s discussion of the Lamanites as a way to criticize apologetics generally but does not offer much evidence or reasoning. Knowlton apparently sees the apologetic enterprise as one that creates needless divisions and serves only to assuage a supposed crisis of faith experienced exclusively by the apologists themselves.

22. See the discussion and various sources cited in: “The Lamanite Curse”, *Find Answers*, FairMormon, accessed August 31, 2017, https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Book_of_Mormon/Lamanites/Curse.

While it is certainly true that countless Mormons have remained faithful to the Church before FairMormon came along, Knowlton gives us no reason to believe that, on balance, the Church is worse off because of apologetics; that no divisions would exist within its ranks; or that no one would otherwise experience a crisis of faith.²³ Knowlton would have us believe that there exists a class of Mormons he calls the “non-scholars,” who never experience a crisis of faith and thus have no need for scholarly apologetics. These “non-scholars” are apparently never exposed to arguments by critics of the Church, so the real villains are the apologists who create unnecessary divisions between themselves, the “non-scholars,” and the critics. One wonders what alternative to responding to the critics Knowlton imagines, but he never provides one.

Loyd Isao Ericson

Loyd Ericson attacks apologetics on a different front, arguing that religious claims cannot be defended through secular scholarship, so the effort to do so is futile or even harmful. He writes that “rather than defending any religious claims, apologetics actually establishes or affirms the false criterion by which those religious beliefs may be unfortunately lost. In other words, instead of tearing down potential stumbling blocks to faith, Mormon apologetics actually and unknowingly engages in building and establishing those blocks” (p. 209).

In arguing that apologetics cannot help defend religious claims, Ericson defines his terms in ways that assume what he is trying to prove. He begins by clarifying that he does not address *apologetics* in its broad sense, where the word is used to refer to “an argument defending a position.” Rather, he specifically addresses *religious apologetics*, which he defines as the “attempt to *utilize scholarship* to prove or defend religious claims” (p. 210).

“Religious claims,” as the phrase is defined by Ericson, “are not the sort of thing that can be proven or defended with [the tools of philosophy and scholarship]” (p. 211). He writes that these include statements such as that “The Book of Mormon is the word of God,” and “Joseph Smith is a prophet of God” (p. 212). Ericson emphasizes the point that “religious claims are things of the soul and can be evaluated and known only by

23. Knowlton’s thesis also sits uneasily with the Church’s decision to list FairMormon, The Interpreter Foundation and Book of Mormon Central among the resources that “can enhance gospel learning and help provide answers to doctrinal, historical, and social questions.” See “Gospel Topics, Essays, and Other Resources,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, retrieved September 12, 2017, <https://www.lds.org/si/objective/doctrinal-mastery/gospel-sources?lang=eng>.

the experiences of the soul” (p. 220). In other words, apologetics is the attempt to utilize scholarship to prove or defend things that “can only be known by experiences of the soul” (p. 221) — that is to say, not by or through scholarship. Another way of saying this would be, ‘apologetics is the attempt to do something that cannot be done.’

Ericson contends not only that the tools of scholarship are unable to penetrate the realm of spiritual knowledge but also that defending religious claims with scholarship can place stumbling blocks in the path of believers, since what is known through scholarship tends to change over time. If one bases one’s belief in religious claims on scholarship, one’s belief may be undermined at a later time as the scholarship changes (p. 212). Ericson advises that we should therefore avoid placing our religious beliefs at the mercy of scholarship (p. 213).

Ericson ignores a key point here, however: Secular scholarship is often marshaled (rightly or wrongly) to attack religious claims. Ericson claims that antireligious apologetics also has no place in scholarship. That is, no one ought to attempt to utilize scholarship to *disprove* or *attack* religious claims. However, what are we to do when someone “misuses” scholarship to disprove or attack a religious claim? Do we allow such attempts to pass unanswered?

Do “real scholars,” even in the secular field of Mormon studies, not have a duty to reject or rebut such efforts? If they do, aren’t they then engaging in the forbidden activity of religious apologetics? And if not, why do covenant members of the Church not have a duty to respond to an abuse of both scholarship and the Church?

As Ericson uses the term *scholarship*, he seems to exclude the kinds of apologetic arguments used in the scriptures by prophets, apostles, and Christ Himself. Dan Peterson references this point in his article, as discussed above. Ericson indicates the word *scholarship* includes “studies in fields such as historical research and methodology, philosophy, biblical and textual studies, ancient languages, genetics, anthropology, and archaeology” (p. 210). Of course, the methods of modern scholarship were largely unavailable to the ancient prophets and apostles, so we cannot know whether they would have used them had they been available.

An exception to this may be where the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants specifically indicate that witnesses should be relied on to establish the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon (see Ether 5:2–4; 2 Ne. 27:12–14; D&C 5:11–13). The testimony of these witnesses is to “stand as a testimony against the world at the last day”

(Ether 5:4). Using the statements of witnesses in crafting historical arguments is a method of modern historical scholarship. It seems that Ericson would nevertheless reject the use of witness testimony as a viable means of defending the Church when it would seem to be a use of scholarship to defend religious claims.

Ericson's argument that apologetics cannot be used to support religious claims also depends on such narrow definitions of *religious claims* and *apologetics* that it is not relevant to a discussion of most criticisms against the Church. For example, in what is generally called *Christian apologetics*, it is commonly argued that Mormons are not Christians. This argument might rely on creedal statements about the Godhead, or it might point to various scriptures that are interpreted by creedal Christians differently than Mormon Christians. Presumably, Ericson would not object to a Mormon responding to this argument, but he would likely call the exercise one of theology and not of "apologetics," since it addresses theological claims and not "religious claims." Nevertheless, the effect of a Mormon response to this argument would be to defend what most people would likely say are core religious claims of the Church.

Similarly, if one were to respond with historical evidence to an argument that the witnesses of the plates on which the Book of Mormon was written did not really see the plates, Ericson might say that this is an exercise in historical scholarship and not "apologetics." Yet again, by the ordinary meaning of the words, defending with historical documents the claim that there were witnesses who saw the plates helps to defend the religious claim that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.

Furthermore, when theology and historical research are used to respond to critics of the Church, this scholarship can help create the space within which spiritual conviction can thrive. For example, a person who has been told that Mormons are not Christians might resist even studying the Book of Mormon. In order for that person to have the religious experience to which Ericson refers, that person may first need to overcome the reluctance to read the Book of Mormon. A theological argument, called *apologetics* by most people, though not by Ericson, may be necessary in order to clear the way to a spiritual manifestation of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

In seeking to convince us that using scholarship to support faith is futile and harmful, Ericson claims that "when faithful Latter-day Saints study the Book of Mormon as *scripture*, they are not trying to identify where in the Western Hemisphere the events took place. ... They are looking for inspiration on how to raise their families, deal ethically in

their community, strengthen their relationship with the divine, situate themselves in a world of suffering, and ‘know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins’ (2 Nephi 25:26)” (p. 214). Certainly these are reasons that people read the Book of Mormon. However, why should we think they are the only reasons? Do not families and investigators of the Church also read the Book of Mormon in order to help them determine whether this Church is what it claims to be? That Joseph Smith is a prophet and the Book of Mormon is a history of an ancient people who lived on the American continent? And cannot a scholarly examination of such things — not only the structure of the book itself but also such things as archeology and ancient documents — help to answer those questions? Ericson’s response is essentially “No, only experiences of the soul can help us to know religious claims.”

Ericson makes a valid point when he draws a distinction between things known through scholarship and things known through “whispers of the Spirit, burning bosoms, visions or other subjective religious experiences” (p. 210). However, while it would be correct to conclude that we should not base our testimony solely on scholarship, dangers lie in basing it solely on “subjective religious experiences” as well. For example, not all those who were converted by such experiences remain loyal to the Church. They may later come to doubt what they have felt, often because of challenges posed by scholarship. This may be why we are counseled to “teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). Religious claims “survive at the mercy of scholarship” (p. 213) only when that is all they are founded on, instead of being more broadly founded on spiritual experience, personal application, etc. There is no reason why we must limit ourselves to only one mode of knowledge.

One can imagine how a person might begin to doubt the spiritual manifestation one has experienced when it is argued by a critic of the Church that the witnesses of the plates did not really see the plates. These doubts may be overcome by some historical scholarship, and thus confidence might be restored in what was felt and understood to be a spiritual confirmation that the Book of Mormon is true. In this way, historical scholarship, which is often called *apologetics*, serves as a way of helping to maintain the religious understanding that the Book of Mormon is true. Many other illustrations could doubtless be reviewed in many other fields, including archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, and even fields like genetics, psychology, and sociology.

In fact, not only can secular scholarship help maintain one's confidence in past spiritual experiences or clear the way for a new religious experience, many people report having had religious experiences through the study of secular topics. (I would include myself among these people.) Nevertheless, Ericson criticizes Brian and Laura Hales for saying that their "examination of the historical record has *reinforced our convictions* that Joseph was a virtuous man and *a true prophet* of the living God" (p. 220). Ericson claims that their religious conviction that Joseph is a prophet of God is based on revelation, not historical research and therefore "can only be evaluated and known by experiences of the soul" (p. 221).

Of course, it is not clear whether Brian and Laura Hales are claiming that their convictions that Joseph Smith is a prophet were strengthened merely by scholarship or if it was through scholarship attended by a spiritual confirmation. In either event, Christ said that we can know a prophet by his fruits (Matt. 7:15–20). To a large degree, the fruits of Joseph Smith's work are a part of the historical record and therefore can be examined using the tools of a historian.

Also, Ericson gives us no reason to think it impossible that the study of history may act as a catalyst in producing a religious experience. Much of what is written in the scriptures purports to be a recounting of history. Why should it be impossible to have an "experience of the soul" when reading, for example, Joseph's Smith's recounting of his First Vision? And if it is possible to develop a spiritual conviction based on a study of this history, why not through a study of historical documents that have not been canonized? Indeed, why should it not be possible to have an "experience of the soul" when studying not only history but also archaeology, anthropology, or even linguistics?

Ericson is of course correct to the extent he contends that you cannot argue a person into having a spiritual experience (p. 216). However, as we have seen, various arguments, or rationally persuasive techniques, may be helpful before a person is willing to do what is necessary to have a spiritual experience. And further reasoning is sometimes necessary so that a person may continue to have confidence in past spiritual experiences. Ericson may not want to call those kinds of arguments *apologetics*. Yet by the common definition of the term, that is what they are.

David Bokovoy

In yet another critique of apologetics, David Bokovoy first establishes the premise that prophets are fallible and scripture is not inerrant. He begins by recounting his own experience with the Adam-God theory and the “faith crisis” he experienced when he found that Bruce R. McConkie had written that Brigham Young’s view on the matter was mistaken (pp. 223–24). He then recounts his experience in discovering Biblical Historical Criticism as a graduate student at Brandeis and how he came to accept the idea that the Bible had separate documentary sources (the *Documentary Hypothesis*) (p. 226). He then notes how the Book of Mormon itself cautions us that it may contain mistakes. (See, e.g., 1 Nephi 19:6 and Title Page of the Book of Mormon.)

Bokovoy then shifts the discussion to a criticism of apologetics, which he defines as “an active attempt to defend a specific religious paradigm or belief system” (p. 227). He claims that “apologetics assumes that we *have* the answers. Instead of allowing critical thinking to shape our relationship and understanding with divinity, apologetic defense may simply disguise a fear that God and the universe are much more complex than we would like to believe” (p. 227). Once again, we see assumptions made about the apologetic enterprise that are not supported by the citation of evidence but instead seem based on unexamined or unacknowledged biases arising out of a secular religious studies orientation. One would think, from Bokovoy’s formulation, that scholars of Mormonism never assume they “*have* the answers” but always “allow ... critical thinking to shape ... [their] understanding.” Yet, as Michael Ash and Ralph Hancock discussed in their articles, this is unlikely, if not impossible. Religious apologists and Mormon studies apologists may have more in common than the latter would like to admit.

In starting his essay with his own personal experience, Bokovoy seems to be telling us that he is the one who sought to defend an entire religious system, that he oversimplified things and did not allow critical thinking to shape his understanding of religion. However, there is no reason to believe this is a necessary stance for all apologists of the Church. Indeed, a Mormon apologist need not even attempt to defend the entire system at once or believe to have all of the answers. Most Mormon apologists specialize in certain areas and may address specific and discrete issues, such as polygamy, the Book of Abraham, the Book of Mormon, or other such topics. A Mormon apologist is quite unlikely to claim to have all the answers or to be unwilling to consider new evidence. So although Bokovoy may have been the kind of apologist he describes,

he gives us no reason to believe that all Mormon apologists are alike in this way. Furthermore, if Bokovoy approached the defense of Mormon matters in this unwise manner, is it beyond the realm of possibility that he or another Mormon studies author might make the same error within the Mormon studies discipline?

Bokovoy emphasizes that he is “not entirely opposed to apologetics. But [he is] opposed to academic apologetics” (p. 231). He writes, “I do not believe that the tools of scholarship can be used to establish the validity of religious experiences” (p. 231). An apologist who uses empirical facts to create a case for his religious convictions is fighting a losing battle. I believe apologetics, therefore, is best performed by simply demonstrating to others the spiritual benefits to living a religious life” (p. 232).

As an example of why he opposes academic apologetics, he explains that a historian “seeks to uncover the most likely things that occurred in the past” (p. 231). Since miracles are unlikely, “historians can never take seriously such miraculous things as golden plates or resurrection. These things may be true, but they are beyond the ability of a historian to address. They are matters of religious belief.”

Of course it is true that in assessing the reliability of historical evidence, it is helpful to consider, among other criteria, whether certain conclusions regarding the evidence are probable or not considering what is generally accepted about how the world works. This would suggest that secular historians would conclude that miracles do not occur. However, that does not mean the tools of modern historical analysis are entirely unfit for use in defending the Church. Certain major claims may be made, such as that the Church is true or that Joseph Smith talked to God, which we cannot establish by secular means. However, certain other claims can be examined by historians, such as how long it took for Joseph Smith to produce the Book of Mormon. Did Joseph Smith have the skills or access to the materials that would be necessary to produce metal plates? Did Joseph Smith have access to historical documents that could help explain the depth and complexity of the Book of Mormon? Similarly, the tools of archaeology, genetics, and other sciences can be used to examine other such narrow claims. Critics of the Church do not usually make broad, conclusory assertions such as “The Book of Mormon is a fraud” and let it rest at that. They usually make various narrow claims in support of the major conclusion that the Church is not true. Apologists can respond to these narrow claims by use of the tools of modern academia. And while

such scholarly argument does not “create belief,” it “maintains a climate in which belief may flourish” (p. 31, quoting Austin Farrer).

If Bokovoy means to say that we cannot, using the tools of secular academics, definitely establish that the man called “Nephi” in the Book of Mormon existed, saw angels, and wrote the record of these events in the Book of Mormon, he is correct. But this is a straw man. No apologist claims that we can prove beyond all doubt, through secular means, that the miracles described in the Book of Mormon actually occurred. Perhaps he is merely saying that he personally has found it difficult to maintain a testimony of some matters that relies in any way on scholarship, so no one else should try. Of course this creates a false dichotomy. A testimony need not be founded solely on scholarship or solely on spiritual experiences. As discussed above, we are to learn by study *and* by faith.

Joseph M. Spencer

In the most unique criticism of Mormon apologetics, Joseph Spencer boldly claims that “apologetics should not resolve crises of faith but provoke them” (p. 241); “apologetics fails when it instead attempts to solve doubts too quickly” (p. 241).

To illustrate his point, he cites the example of the time-worn attack against the Book of Mormon that it runs afoul of the injunction found in Revelation 22:18–19 against adding to or taking away “from the words of the book of this prophecy.” Spencer concedes that the standard Mormon responses to this attack are “entirely accurate and largely effective,” That is, (1) that the verse actually refers to the Book of Revelation and not to the Bible as a whole, (2) that the Book of Revelation was likely not the last book in the Bible, so if read as the critics suggest, the verse would prohibit other books in the New Testament itself and not just the Book of Mormon, and (3) that Deuteronomy 4:2 warns not to “add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it,” which would presumably prohibit not only the Book of Mormon, but also the New Testament and the entire Bible after the Pentateuch. While these apologetic responses are accurate and effective, Spencer complains that they “do nothing to reveal the real stakes of believing the Book of Mormon to be true” (p. 242). In other words, an “ideal apologetic response” should go “far beyond merely undercutting the credibility of the critics or their criticism” (p. 246). Indeed, Spencer would argue that it should go beyond even providing evidence that might support belief. Rather, ideally, “apologetics radicalizes, bringing into the open

how much more extreme the faith demanded by the Restoration is than its critics recognize” (p. 246).

Spencer’s example of the ideal apologetic response to the above attack on the Book of Mormon centers on Nephi’s vision of the coming forth of the Bible, and the Book of Revelation in particular. Spencer points out how Nephi is told that by the time we, in the latter days, receive the Bible, “many parts which are plain and most precious” (1 Ne. 13:26) will have been removed. Spencer further observes that the apostle John is specifically identified as an author who would write “concerning the end of the world” (1 Nephi 14:22, 27) and that his original writings were identified as “plain and pure, and most precious” (1 Nephi 14:23). From this, Spencer concludes, “*The Book of Revelation as it has come down to modern Christianity is already the product of the very taking-away-from warned against within that same book*” (p. 245). Spencer concludes that this is “an ideal apologetic response to the criticism that Revelation 22:18–19 warns against accepting something like the Book of Mormon as scripture” (p. 246).

It is hard to see, however, how this is an ideal argument in favor of the Book of Mormon. Spencer seems to argue that this is an ideal argument *because* it is hard to accept. It makes the “conditions for belief ... *less* favorable” (p. 246). But let us be clear on just why it is hard to accept.

Spencer claims that his argument is hard to accept because “one can no longer attempt to embrace the Book of Mormon without at the same time embracing claims regarding the instability of biblical texts” (p. 246). Because this is a difficult concept to accept, it is “profound,” has “depth,” and “richness,” and is therefore “all the more inviting” (p. 246). However, it is not at all clear that because an argument is difficult to accept, it is necessarily profound, deep or rich.

In a number of more basic ways, Spencer’s argument, as he states it, is hard to accept. First, the Book of Mormon is not explicit in stating that things have been taken away from the Book of Revelation. It directly states only that the Book of Revelation will be in the Bible, and the Bible will have things taken away from it. Of course, it is still ironic that Revelation 22:19 states that nothing should be taken away from the “book” when the angel tells Nephi that by the time we receive the Bible, things will have already have been taken away. But this fact does not respond to the argument that the Book of Mormon adds to the Bible and therefore violates the command of Revelation 22:19.

Next, central to Spencer’s apologetic argument is the point that “the canon is not *simply* but *radically* open” (p. 246). However, the mere fact that things have been taken away from the Bible does not mean that the

canon is open. Also, in order to accept Spencer's argument, one must first accept that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. So Spencer would ask critics of the Book of Mormon to believe the book is true by first assuming the Book of Mormon is true. As a rational argument, this seems less than "ideal."

Seth Payne

Seth Payne argues "that religious apologetics must be approached as a devotional act — an act not necessarily intended to 'rescue' those who question, but rather as an expression of our inner convictions and commitments" (p. 250). He further proposes "that contemporary apologetics should be both formulated and expressed with an awareness of the pastoral theology which motivates all Christian ideals of friendship, empathy, and compassion" (p. 250). Payne offers as an example that the early Christian apologist Justin Martyr "shows great respect for his intended audience. He does so not only with his chosen tone, but also because he shows a deep understanding of the beliefs, traditions, history, and philosophy of the Roman empire" (p. 253).

He concedes that "we need not be weak or timid when we engage in apologetics. Paul was often firm and sharp in both establishing and exerting his apostolic authority, but it is clear that this firmness was born of Paul's deep and abiding love for the Saints" (p. 255). As people who have covenanted to "bear one another's burdens," and "comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mos. 18:8–9), Payne calls us to engage in what he calls "pastoral apologetics," which he defines as "a response to doubt that focuses primarily on the spiritual, social, and psychological desire for meaning, purpose, and mysticism" (p. 256–57). He sets this approach in contrast to an academic approach, adding that "propping up spiritual doubt with academic answers is unsustainable in the long-term" (p. 257).

Payne's calls for compassion and care for those we seek to help are a welcome reminder to those of us who engage in the academic study of scripture, for it can become easy for us to become more concerned about ideas than people. Apologetics should be "honest, charitable, respectful, and kind, lest our efforts inadvertently create unnecessary and problematic stumbling blocks for others during their time of spiritual need" (p. 258). And it seems correct, as Payne explains, that our primary concern in ministering to those with doubts should be to "address issues of the heart and the [universal] desire to feel connected to a sense of expansive, or ultimate meaning" (p. 257). However, as Payne's essay progresses, it becomes increasingly unclear what an exercise in "pastoral

apologetics” would look like in practical terms. One might assume it would simply consist of a “kinder and gentler” rational argument. But Payne seems to have something else more expansive in mind.

As he sets out his vision for apologists, he first says that pastoral theology “cannot be bogged down by dogma, policy, tradition, or authority” (p. 257). This may be a fair caution; it recognizes that there may be exceptions to the rule. However, it goes too far to the extent it suggests that such things as doctrine, policy, and authority should be taken lightly.

Despite Payne’s advice, we should recognize that our attempts to help others may tragically backfire if we do not take heed of the counsel of living prophets as we reach out to those in need. Policies set by authorities and even traditions in the Church usually arise out of the wisdom of experience and revelation. Their intent is to help alleviate and avoid suffering and to bring lasting joy. When properly applied, policies and tradition can serve to best help those who are in need, even when those of us with more limited experience and knowledge do not in the moment always recognize how.

Payne then draws a contrast between apologists who have argued “their views in an overly-confident academic manner,” and Christian theologians like Kierkegaard, who have rejected traditional apologetics on the basis that the truth claims of Christianity are not rationally demonstrable and instead must simply be accepted on faith and put into practice. (pp. 258–59) Payne notes that our faith is not “based solely on logic and reason,” but that Mormon missionaries, relying on Moroni 10:4, invite investigators to “seek out and receive a direct spiritual experience” (p. 260).

In this light, Payne complains that “Mormon culture drives us towards abstract correctness wherein tremendous value is placed on certain ‘facts’ that may have very little bearing on the direct experience of divinity” (p. 260). The example Payne provides is the concept that our Heavenly Father has a body of flesh and bones. The mere fact that God has a body is not important. Rather, it is important because it “helps us to feel more connected to Him and gain confidence in His love and willingness to answer sincere prayers” (p. 261). Again, while it is true that we should not emphasize mere facts over the meaning those facts impart to our spiritual lives, it is not at all clear that “Mormon culture” does this. While it is true that we teach of an embodied God, it is not clear that we do this to the exclusion of emphasizing that He is our Father who loves us and wants us to become like Him. Furthermore, if the fact that God has a body is *true*, then it may matter very little whether that fact helps or hinders our faith. One would think that a scholar would

appreciate the value of true facts for their own sake, even if they produce temporary difficulty for some. In any event, the broad concept stands as a fair warning to apologists that they should strive to find the meaning in their work and not merely focus on the raw facts.

As a final warning to apologists, Payne cautions against “exalting rationality above — or even placing it on equal footing with — the precepts of Christian living and Christian community” (p. 262). He warns that “if as defenders of faith in the modern world we lose sight of the devotional and soul-centric aspects of apologetics, *we have failed, utterly and absolutely*” (p. 263). These are strong statements, but where are the Mormon apologists who argue that we *should* exalt rationality above the precepts of Christian living? I am not aware of any.

Payne may not be pointing fingers but simply trying to raise awareness of a need for balance. While acknowledging a need for an intellectual approach, he calls for well-researched, substantive arguments that treat the claims of our critics fairly and honestly. At the same time, he stresses a need to shepherd our brothers and sisters toward Christ. He promotes a focus on underlying principles and broad meaning but counsels against using this “practice to avoid directly addressing difficult questions” (p. 264). By promoting a concept of “pastoral apologetics” and suggesting that we should strike an appropriate balance in our approach, Payne provides a reminder of what is at stake: We do not seek merely to win a war of ideas. We seek to win souls for Christ.

Conclusion

Perspectives on Mormon Theology: Apologetics is heavily weighted toward negative perspectives of Mormon apologetics. Of the 15 chapters, only those by Peterson, Ash, and Hancock defend apologetics directly. Rappleye offers a positive analysis of some results of apologetics, and Fiona Givens actually engages in apologetics. The remaining ten chapters criticize Mormon apologetics in various ways, sometimes quite harshly, including the claims that apologists ignore evidence, rely too heavily on evidence, or do not include enough women among their ranks. It seems as though this volume was not compiled in order to illuminate the history and explore the practice of Mormon apologetics so much as to convince those involved in Mormon studies that it would be best to avoid using their academic training to defend the Church and, perhaps, to convince all readers that they should avoid using apologetics in their study and sharing of the gospel. Apologetics is purported to be a futile, even a dangerous, enterprise. The unstated but potent subtext of social

pressure informs those who wish to fit in and be accepted in the field of Mormon studies that they should hide their apologetic lights under a bushel, if they do not snuff them out altogether.

A few positive articles appear in the volume, but these few essays do not entirely salvage what may have otherwise been a very important contribution to the study of Mormon theology. It would have been marvelous to see a book that explored the history of Mormon apologetics, the variety of topics that have been addressed, the way in which critics have responded to apologetic arguments, and more important, the way in which apologetics has affected the lives of ordinary Mormons.²⁴ Unfortunately, we must still await such a volume.

Having at least one editor who did not share the biases and priorities of secular Mormon studies might have pushed those who offered negative evaluations to justify the claims made only by assertion or to deal with some of the issues to which I have tried to draw attention in this review. Ericson and Van Dyke, the two editors, both contributed essays that evaluated apologetics negatively — and it is perhaps not surprising that the gaps in their analyses matched each other's and the other negative articles which they included. It would seem that believing apologists are not the only ones at risk of blind spots and unexamined or unchallenged assumptions.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge that my own testimony of the Church does not depend on academic arguments. As I encounter intellectual problems for which I do not have an immediate response, I usually study the matter further and sometimes must put the matter aside as I patiently wait to find the answer. Such challenges have not destroyed my faith because my faith is based on more than mere scholarship. However, if the gospel made no sense to me, if no scholarly evidences supported it, I think it would be very hard to maintain my faith. I am therefore deeply grateful for supporting evidence, scholarly responses to the critics, and the work of apologists.

24. The FairMormon website includes a few messages from patrons of the site who share their appreciation for the site and the information it offers. It would be very interesting to explore the experiences of people such as these who claim to have been spiritually strengthened by the scholarship provided by the FairMormon apologists. See *Testimonials*, FairMormon, retrieved August 30, 2017, <https://www.fairmormon.org/about/testimonials>.

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MARJORIE NEWTON ON “THE MORMONS IN AUSTRALIA” — A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

Louis Midgley

A Review of Marjorie Newton, *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia*, foreword by Lawrence Foster (xiii-xv). (Laie, HI: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1991). xxvi+283 pp., with a glossary of Latter-day Saint Terms (257–59), Bibliography (261–71), Index (273–83). Softcover (out of print, but copies are still available).

Abstract: This is a survey of Marjorie Newton’s account of Latter-day Saints in Australia which identifies the roots of her agenda — that is, what she was striving to accomplish in her first book in 1991 (and the other related essays) which she published before turning her attention to a criticism of the faith of Māori Latter-day Saints, first in 1998 and then in 2014. Midgley locates in her early publications on the Saints in Australia early signs of her controlling cultural Mormon agenda and hence how and why she insists that there has been a trampling of the Māori culture by what she considers a Mormon version of American cultural imperialism.

Until the fall of 1996 I was only barely aware that Marjorie Aileen Burnett Newton¹ had published a book on “The Mormons in Australia.” I was also not aware she was working on a PhD thesis at the University of Sydney on “Mormonism in New Zealand.”² Then I noticed an essay in the *Journal of Mormon History* in which she opined on

1. This is the name under which the Church History Library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah, catalogues her publications.

2. Newton, “Mormonism in New Zealand: A Historical Appraisal,” PhD thesis, History Department, University of Sydney, 1998.

how Latter-day Saint mission presidents dealt with Māori customary modes of marriage (and divorce).³ A note on the first page of this essay indicates that “she is currently completing her doctoral dissertation on Mormonism in New Zealand at the University of Sydney.” She finished her thesis in February 1998. In 2014, the substance of her thesis, augmented by some troubling assertions about the Book of Mormon, was published,⁴ two years after her excellent, faith-affirming *Tiki and Temple*⁵ appeared in print.

Keith Thompson, who knows well the Latter-day Saints in both New Zealand and Australia, contrasted Newton’s faith-affirming *Tiki and Temple* with her *Southern Cross Saints*. Her book on “the Mormons in Australia,” he noted, has been “the subject of criticism because some felt that it did not adequately address the faith of the members or the spirit of revelation that guided the work” in Australia.⁶ *Southern Cross Saints* was radically unlike her faith-affirming *Tiki and Temple*.⁷ His observation led me to look into Marjorie Newton’s first book and her other essays on Australian Latter-day Saints.

Publishing and Academic Milestones

Marjorie Newton, born in 1933, began her studies at the University of Sydney in 1967 as “a mature-age student (a very mature-aged student),” she explains.⁸ The most important milestones in her academic career are the following:

3. Newton, “From Tolerance to ‘House Cleaning’: LDS Leadership Response to Maori Marriage Customs, 1890-1990,” *Journal of Mormon History* 22/2 (Fall 1996): 72–91.

4. Newton, *Mormon and Maori* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014).

5. Newton, *Tiki and Temple: The Mormon Mission in New Zealand, 1854-1958* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012).

6. A. Keith Thompson, review of Newton’s *Tiki and Temple*, *BYU Studies* 52/2 (Fall 2013): 186–90. Professor Thompson is currently associate professor and associate dean at the University of Notre Dame Australia School of Law, Sydney, Australia. For his vitae, see <http://www.nd.edu.au/sydney/schools/law/staff/kthompson>. See also <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/author/keith/>.

7. For my own affirmative assessment of Newton’s *Tiki and Temple*, see *Journal of Mormon History* 40/1 (2014): 253–56; and also my essay “Māori Latter-day Saint Faith: Some Preliminary Remarks,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 8 (2014): 45–65.

8. See “Q&A with Marjorie Newton, author of *Mormon and Maori*” (Greg Kofford Books, May 12, 2014), available without pagination at <http://gregkofford.com/blogs/news/14114933-q-a-with-marjorie-newton-author-of-em-mormon-and-maori-em>, accessed on 25 November 2016. This interview consists of eight brief questions to which she has provided answers. (I have numbered

- After completing her high school degree by correspondence in 1967, she was awarded, at age 34, what she describes as “a mature-age scholarship” to the University of Sydney, where she began her bachelor’s degree, which was awarded in 1976 when she was 44.
- She then began work on her master’s degree in the history department at the University of Sydney. In 1987, at age 54, she completed this degree.
- *Southern Cross Saints*, which is a revision of her MA honors thesis on Mormons in Australia, was published in 1991 when she was 58.
- In 1988 she began work on a doctorate in the School of Religious Studies at the University of Sydney, where she worked on “Mormonism in New Zealand,” which is the title of her PhD thesis.
- In February 1998, she was awarded her PhD at age 65.
- Major revisions of two portions of her PhD thesis were eventually published as two books, the first of which was *Tiki and Temple* in 2012.
- In 2014, at age 81, 16 years after she had completed her PhD, *Mormon and Maori* was published. It is the capstone of her scholarly career.
- Her remarkable publishing career, which began in 1986, includes the following: two theses, three books, one monograph,⁹ and 17 reviews and essays.¹⁰

the questions to facilitate location of the language cited; hereafter cited as “Q&A with Marjorie Newton”). Some information useful in establishing a timeline for Newton’s studies can be found in “Australian Author Receives Award for ‘Mormon and Maori,’” available at <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org.nz/article/australian-author-receives-award-for-mormon-and-maori>.

9. *Hero or Traitor: A Biographical Study of Charles Wesley Wandell* (Independence, MO: Independence Press, 1992). This 104-page monograph is a biography of Wandell (1819-1875), who was born in Courtland, NY, and became a Latter-day Saint on 5 January 1837. He completed a Latter-day Saint mission to Australia, where his missionary companion was John Murdock. Wandell ceased being a Latter-day Saint in 1864 and later joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, for whom he was a missionary in Australia.

10. See Newton’s “‘Almost Like Us’: The American Socialization of Australian Converts,” *Dialogue* 24/3 (1991): 9–20; “An Australian Viewpoint,” *Dialogue* 24/4 (1991): 74–78; and “Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia,” *Dialogue* 29/1 (1996): 193–206.

Newton began writing about the Saints in Australia, then shifted to New Zealand, where her primary focus was on the faith of Māori Latter-day Saints. However, she soon published six essays setting out her opinions on the Saints in Australia. My commentary will also draw on the contents of these other essays. Instead of merely setting out my own assessment of *Southern Cross Saints*, I will begin with a summary of two fine reviews of this book. I do this to avoid being seen as reading into *Southern Cross Saints* something that is not there.

Two Expert Opinions

The first review was written by Professor Peter Lineham,¹¹ a gifted New Zealand Church historian.¹² He points out that “in nineteenth century Australia Mormon missionaries struggled desperately, and the Australian side of the Australasian mission was abandoned for a mission to the Maori of New Zealand.”¹³ The reason was that the scant LDS missionary resources were sent where there was an opportunity for the Kingdom of God to prosper. This increasingly was New Zealand, not Australia. Why?

Newton explains that the Australasian Mission, the official name of Latter-day Saint missionary endeavors in Australia, began in 1851 with a limited presence in Australia. There were only a few Saints in this large and diverse land until after World War II. Beginning in 1854, LDS missionary activities also included a periodic presence of a few missionaries in New Zealand. In 1897, the Brethren made these two British dominions separate missions, each with its own Mission president and headquarters. In addition, beginning in 1878 and before this division, the Australasian Mission headquarters were in New Zealand. For instance, William M. Bromley, the Australasian Mission president in 1881-1883 — under whom missionary work among the Māori began at the very end of 1882, which soon led to a large and an essentially Māori community of Saints in New Zealand — never visited Australia. The reason for this shift from Australia to New Zealand seems to be that Australia was far more “godless” than New Zealand. In addition, though travel was difficult in New Zealand, this difficulty was minimal when compared with what has been called “tyranny of distance” in Australia.

11. Peter Lineham, review of Marjorie Newton’s *Southern Cross Saints*, in *Pacific Studies* 16/1 (March 1993): 125–26. Hereafter cited as Lineham.

12. For Professor Lineham’s “Research Outputs,” see <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/expertise/profile.cfm?stref=641100>, for evidence of Professor Lineham’s impressive publishing career.

13. Lineham, 125.

Lineham also indicates that *Southern Cross Saints* makes a valuable contribution not only to “Mormon historiography but also to Australian religious history.”¹⁴ The key reason is that “she sees the Church in the general context of the *religious tone of her country*” and hence she also interprets the Latter-day Saint “experience in Australia as compatible to that of other churches and its struggles as a by-product of *Australian godlessness*.”¹⁵ Lineham’s astute observation seems to me to be a fine summary of Newton’s stance. But the problem, also according to Lineham, is that her tentative explanation “does not really explain the contemporary growth” of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia after World War II,¹⁶ since Australia seems to have become even more and not less godless.

Again, according to Lineham, “Newton prefers to emphasize the *American character of the church* as what made it different, and her section on Australian Mormons’ frustrations with this must be read for sheer enjoyment.”¹⁷ Lineham senses that Newton is annoyed by the American features she detects and deeply resents in her own community of faith. She is not fond of America (or Americans). She may like individual Americans, but she resents American influence in Australia. Put more bluntly, Lineham identifies Newton’s hostility to what she sees as an LDS version of a variety of American cultural imperialism.

Rapid growth in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia has taken place during Newton’s adult lifetime. Lineham insists that she fails to explain why American Latter-day Saint missionary endeavors in Australia soon after World War II led to many among the presumably worldly, skeptical, often unchurched Australians becoming faithful Latter-day Saints. The reason seems to be that in *Southern Cross Saints*, there is little about the actual faith and memory of Australian Saints. Instead, Newton has much to say about “cultural conflict.” In addition, from my perspective, she overlooks the impact of the message on those willing to listen and accept a message taught only incidentally by American Latter-day Saint missionaries. In my own experience, the Good News about the victory over both spiritual and mortal death has a *transcultural* power and appeal. She does not ask how this happens, very often despite vast cultural differences between peoples.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., emphasis added.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 126.

In his review of *Southern Cross Saints*, Geoffrey F. Spencer¹⁸ indicates that he believes that Newton sets out some sound reasons why there had been so few Australians becoming Latter-day Saints until “the early 1950s,” when in the next 40 years the LDS membership in Australia grew from 2,000 to 76,000.¹⁹ (The number of Latter-day Saints in Australia may now have even doubled.)

The reasons Newton sets out for the earlier, very slow growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia during its first hundred years, according to Spencer, include the fact that “Church authorities in Utah simply failed to understand the formidable barriers to proselyting, supervision, and communication in a land mass approximately the size of mainland U.S.A.,” whose urban areas are scattered mostly along or near the rim of this vast, mostly empty continent. Even if they had understood these sorts of things, the Brethren were under restraints that would have rendered such a comprehension null, given the resources available and also the situation in Australia.

Also, again according to Spencer, Newton identifies several special “cultural factors”²⁰ that hampered Church growth in Australia until, of course, the very rapid growth beginning shortly after World War II. These include “not so much domestic influences as to policies and attitudes emanating from Utah” but also events in the United States as well as large events in the world. In addition, “New Zealand was more generously equipped than its sister dominion” by the Brethren in Salt Lake City.²¹ The reason, of course, was the remarkable openness of the Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, who after 1882 soon made the Church primarily a Māori community of Saints.

Spencer also draws from Newton’s book the claim that American Latter-day Saints were indifferent to “Australia’s peculiar culture and

18. Geoffrey F. Spencer (1927-2005) was born and raised in Australia and was educated at the University of Sydney. He first taught high school in 1949-1953, then was employed in 1954 as a pastor by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Australia; then, beginning in 1966, also a pastor in Independence, Missouri. He was an Apostle for the RLDS (1984-1994), and then the president of the quorum of their Twelve Apostles (1990-1994). For details, see the obituary for Geoffrey F. Spencer at <http://www.speakschapel.com/book-of-memories/102057/Spencer-Geoffrey-F/obituary.php>.

19. See Geoffrey F. Spencer, review of Newton’s *Southern Cross Saints*, *Journal of Mormon History*, 19/1 (1993): 190–94 at 191. Hereafter cited as Spencer with page number(s).

20. Ibid., 191.

21. Ibid., 192.

history.” For instance, they insisted on “standardized materials and programs,” which they imposed in Australia.²² Both Lineham and Spencer call attention to Newton’s concern over this sort of essentially true but trivial thing, which clearly irritates Newton. For Newton, the story of the Church in Australia is of an American lack of interest in or indifference to what she sees as important elements of Australian “national culture.”

Seeking to Understand Newton’s Agenda

Although I have tried to figure out what might have generated Marjorie Newton’s concern about “cultural conflict,” I have found no evidence that those who lectured in the history department at the University of Sydney, including Professor J. K. (John Kenneth) Cable (1929-2003), who supervised her master’s thesis, generated her concerns that became the key element in her publishing agenda. Professor Cable, though not familiar with the history of Latter-day Saints, was a faithful Anglican and also an expert on the Anglican history in Australia. He was also the only one in the history department with any interest in sectarian church history or even “religion.” In addition, no one in the history department at the University of Sydney was interested in the faith of Latter-day Saints or familiar with the unique and interesting history of Latter-day Saints in Australia. Professor Cable could, and I assume did, provide Newton with assistance on archival and other research. *Southern Cross Saints* is clearly the work of someone who has learned well this part of the historian’s craft.

In Australian as well as American universities, students research and then write on topics about which no one in a department is interested or at all knowledgeable. And students can also get caught in partisan ideological struggles between faculty members. For quality control, Australian universities require an “expert” from outside of Australia to approve to disapprove a master’s thesis.²³ With no one in that history department with “any experience in Mormon history,” the burden for approving Newton’s thesis was shifted to Lawrence (Larry) Foster, an American historian and well-known critic of the faith of Latter-day Saints, to assess and approve Newton’s “*Southern Cross Saints*.” He later provided the “Forward” to her *Southern Cross Saints*. (For the same reason, a PhD thesis in Australia is routinely examined by three scholars from outside of Australia who are, it is hoped, experts on the topic. The author of a thesis may even have a say in the selection of these outside examiners.)

22. Ibid.

23. For the PhD, three “experts” from outside Australia are paid to evaluate a thesis.

After *Southern Cross Saints* appeared in print, Newton indicates that Professor Cable encouraged her “to proceed to a doctorate but not in Mormon history. This was because,” she explains, “no one in the history department at Sydney University at that time had any expertise in Mormon history.”²⁴ Professor Cable was unwilling to supervise a PhD thesis by Newton on a Mormon topic. Perhaps this was because Cable was not willing to rely on three outside “experts” picked by her to assess the quality of her work. Be that as it may, she grants that at this point she had “virtually given up the idea of a doctorate.”²⁵

Then something happened: Professor Eric J. Sharpe (1933-2000) agreed to supervise Newton’s PhD thesis (on the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Zealand) if she shifted from the history department to religious studies. Professor Sharpe was the inaugural professor of religious studies in the School of Religious Studies, which he founded in 1977.²⁶

It seems that at some point, Professor Sharpe,²⁷ having read Newton’s master’s thesis, “offered to supervise” her PhD thesis, even though he was not familiar with Mormon history or the history of New Zealand. She claims that Sharpe saved her academic career; without his “interest and encouragement, not only would my thesis not have been completed,

24. This is a quote from Newton’s second answer to “Q&A with Marjorie Newton,” author of *Mormon and Maori* May 12, 2014.” This can be accessed online at <http://gregkofford.com/blogs/news/14114933-q-a-with-marjorinewton-author-of-em-mormon-and-maori-em>. This interview consists of eight brief, unnumbered questions to which she has provided answers. I cite this as “Q&A with Marjorie Newton.”

25. “Q&A with Marjorie Newton,” question #2.

26. Newton quotes Professor Sharpe from an address titled “Manning Clark Revisited,” read on 22 August 1993 on the Australian Broadcasting Commission Radio in her *Mormon and Maori*, 112; and see also what is cited under Professor Sharpe’s name in her “Bibliography” to *Mormon and Maori*, 208. (This talk is on a controversial Australian historian.) She also cites the notes she made on a conversation she had in May 1996 with Professor Sharpe. He seems to have merely urged her to follow her agenda.

27. Newton has described Professor Sharpe as a “missiologist.” See “Q&A with Marjorie Newton,” question #2. However, this label does not capture the contents of his many books and essays. Instead, *religious studies*, as Sharpe conceived it, included “world religions,” such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, understood with presumably neutral explanations and through the lens of secular categories, with only incidental attention to Christian missionary endeavors. For details about Sharpe’s academic career, see the Wikipedia entry on “Eric J. Sharpe,” at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_J._Sharpe.

it would not have been begun.” There is, however, very little or no indication that Professor Sharpe contributed substantively to Newton’s thesis.²⁸ And her secular agenda was in place prior to having him direct her PhD thesis. Instead, it seems that her own dogged determination over three decades of studies, driven by a passion to publish her opinions about the faith of Māori Saints, led to the publication of the capstone of her academic career, *Mormon and Maori*.

In addition, she has the disposition and training necessary to do original archival research. *Southern Cross Saints* is thus packed with an impressive assortment of details flowing from extensive and careful research. It is not, however, a chronological, narrative account, nor is it merely the story of Latter-day Saint missionary work in Australia. Rather it is a complex, thematic, topical treatment of “The Mormon Church in Australia.” She does not focus on the contents of the faith of the very few Australians who became Latter-day Saints in Australia beginning in the 1850s, when the first tiny missionary endeavors began, nor on the grounds or contents, after World War II, of the faith of new converts, when the Australian community of Saints began to grow rapidly.

In her *Southern Cross Saints*, Newton seeks to explain the very rapid growth of an American religion after World War II in a land where, as she puts it, “working class people” are largely indifferent to faith in God. Why the indifference? In his justly famous *Democracy in America*,²⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville showed the importance for the future mores of America of an initial “Puritan founding” (which preceded the later “Republican founding”), which set in place an *ethos* that in subtle ways is still present among Americans. Australia had a far different founding, including prison ships from England³⁰ then gold seekers and others not linked to churches. Australia was mostly initially colonized by those who were often unchurched, whose descendants are now often apathetic about, if not hostile to, faith in God.³¹

28. “Q&A with Marjorie Newton,” question #2.

29. For a truly remarkable translation of *Democracy in America*, and also a fine introduction to this book, see the translation by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, published by the University of Chicago Press in 2000.

30. See Robert Hughes’s best-selling *The Fatal Shore: The Epic of Australia’s Founding* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986). (This remarkable book is available in paperback from Vintage Book, 1988.) The second wave of colonists were often gold-diggers eager for instant wealth and often indifferent to things divine.

31. See Newton, *Southern Cross Saints*, 69-76, for her interesting treatment of “Religious Apathy” among Australians.”

In contrast, New Zealand was largely colonized by devout religious communities, whose impact is still present despite the growing secularization taking place. Where the Latter-day Saint missionaries, who first began visiting New Zealand in 1854, faced considerable sectarian religious bigotry (and hence also closely related legal restrictions), Church missionaries for a hundred years in Australia faced mostly apathy and indifference. Then, shortly after World War II, what Newton tends to picture as an alien American faith became attractive to some Australians.

Missing the Mark

Marjorie Newton's lack of interest in the reasons for the faith of the Latter-day Saints in Australia seems to me to be intentional. Why? She indicates that non-Latter-day Saint scholars are busy trying to figure out the nature of the strange Mormon movement and its strained relationship with its many host cultures. Even though she is Latter-day Saint, she has chosen to follow those who claim they are not interested in the question of the truth (or untruth) of that faith.³² Marjorie Newton's own understanding of the faith of the Saints manifests indifference to truth questions. An indifference to truth-claims prevents or hampers understanding what believers find soul-satisfying. It is a mistake to follow non-Latter-day Saint scholars who claim they merely examine what they consider cultural influences or challenges generated by shifts in public opinion among those who are not Latter-day Saints.

After the publication of *Southern Cross Saints*, Newton found several venues in which she opined about the Church in Australia, which for a century had been tiny communities of Saints scattered around a vast continent. Then, soon after World War II, this changed, and the Australian community of Latter-day Saints grew rapidly. It seems this happened despite its being, from Newton's perspective, an alien American cultural imposition on Australian "national culture."³³

I am confident the faith of the Latter-day Saint, when taken seriously, does not challenge the noble but the base elements found in every human culture. This began as part of the history of Christian faith from the moment the first disciples of Jesus sought to take the Good News to the world.³⁴ Does Newton believe, I wonder, that we are merely witnessing

32. Ibid., preface, xvii-xxii at xix.

33. See the three essays Newton published in *Dialogue*, cited in note 10, above.

34. What could be the greatest mass conversion to Christianity began to take place in China when Mao began terrible persecution. For a brief review of some of the literature on this remarkable change that has taken place despite or because of

American cultural imperialism as the Church gains a foothold and then becomes a faithful community of Latter-day Saints in a host of locations not limited to Latin America, the Philippines, islands in the South Pacific, sub-Saharan Africa, and even in the United States of America?

Perhaps this is what she believes. Why? In the “preface” to *Southern Cross Saints* she claims that “since World War II, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (commonly known as the Mormon Church) has expanded enormously, not only numerically but also, if many acute observers are to be believed, in wealth, power, political influence, and social prestige.”³⁵

The LDS Church exerts political power in both the United States and in Central and South America far out of proportion to its numerical strength. Moreover, the Mormon Church has once again come under the intense public scrutiny as its increasing visibility has brought criticism and even legal challenges to some of its practices and doctrines for the first time since the anti-polygamy campaign of the nineteenth century.³⁶

Again, according to Newton, having previously survived certain challenges,

the Church is facing pressure from another source, because women are not eligible for ordination to the priesthood. Thus, at present, Mormonism is receiving a considerable degree of attention from not only investigative journalists, but also from sociologists, cultural anthropologists, political scientists and historians.³⁷

Given this new critical “attention,” she asks: “Why has an American church experienced such growth in Australia?”³⁸

Without really addressing the grounds and contents of the faith of Australian Latter-day Saints, though describing, for example, how some lesson materials were not well-suited for Australia, which Professor Lineham found amusing, coupled with her annoyance that direction comes from Salt Lake City, she struggles and fails to explain how — what she pictures as a strange, marginal, controversial American religious movement, which struggled and even languished for a century — soon after World War II managed to become, especially in worldly Australia, a

terrible persecution of Christians, see Midgley, “Christian Faith in Contemporary China,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 2 (2012): 35–39.

35. *Southern Cross Saints*, xvii.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*, preface, xvii.

38. *Ibid.*

thriving community of faithful Latter-day Saints. Professor Thompson was right about Newton's *Southern Cross Saints*. Unfortunately, her *Mormon and Maori* has far more serious flaws, as I will demonstrate elsewhere.

Louis Midgley (PhD, Brown University) is an emeritus professor of political science at Brigham Young University, where he taught the history of political philosophy, which includes efforts of Christian churchmen and theologians to identify, explain, understand, and cope with the evils in this world. Dr. Midgley has therefore had an abiding interest in both dogmatic and systematic theology and the alternatives to both. His doctoral dissertation was on the religious socialist political ideology of Paul Tillich, a once famous German-American Protestant theologian, most famous for his systematic theology which is a radical elaboration of classical theism. Dr. Midgley's encounter with the writings of Leo Strauss, an influential Jewish philosopher/intellectual historian drew his attention to the radical challenge posed by what is often called modernity to both the wisdom of Jerusalem, which is grounded on divine revelation, and also the contrasting, competing wisdom of Athens, which was fashioned by unaided human reason. Dr. Midgley has an interest in the ways in which communities of faith have responded to the challenges posed by modernity to faith in God grounded on divine special revelation.

THE DIVINE COUNCIL IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

Stephen O. Smoot

Abstract: The Book of Mormon purports to be a record that originates from the ancient Near East. The authors of the book claim an Israelite heritage, and throughout the pages of the text can be seen echoes of Israelite religious practice and ideology. An example of such can be seen in how the Book of Mormon depicts God's divine council, a concept unmistakably found in the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament). Recognizing the divine council in both the Hebrew Bible and the Book of Mormon may help us appreciate a more nuanced understanding of such theological terms as "monotheism" as well as bolster confidence in the antiquity of the Nephite record.

"I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him to the right and to the left of him"
(1 Kings 22:19 NRSV).

"He saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God" (1 Nephi 1:8).

Although most of its narrative takes place in ancient Mesoamerica, the Book of Mormon is yet in many regards a book rooted in the ancient Near East. The book opens during "the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah" (1 Nephi 1:4),¹ shortly before the Babylonian decimation of Judah at the beginning of the sixth

1. An earlier version of this paper appeared in the Fall 2013 issue of the journal *Studia Antiqua: A Student Journal of the Ancient World*, published by the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University. This updated and expanded version is republished here with permission. All citations from the Book of Mormon come

century BC. Its primary authors were Israelites, and its later authors and eponymous editor, even as ancient Mesoamericans, were evidently familiar with Israelite literary conventions.² Even after centuries of integration and exchange with the cultures of ancient Mesoamerica,³ Book of Mormon peoples retained at least some degree of cultural familiarity with the ancient Near East.

For instance, the Book of Mormon exhibits, in many respects, an intimate familiarity with ancient Israelite religious concepts. One such example is the Book of Mormon's portrayal of what is called the divine council. Following a lucid biblical pattern, the Book of Mormon provides a depiction of the divine council and narrates several instances where

from Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

2. See John A. Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1991), 77–91; "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Languages and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 2:195–196; David E. Bokovoy and John A. Tvedtnes, *Testaments: Links between the Book of Mormon and the Hebrew Bible* (Tooele, UT: Heritage Press, 2003); Melvin Deloy Pack, "Hebraisms," in *The Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 321–25; Donald W. Parry, "Hebraisms and Other Ancient Peculiarities in the Book of Mormon," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 155–89.

3. On such, see generally John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1985); "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1992): 1–34; *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998); *Mormon's Codex: An Ancient American Book* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2013); Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, six volumes (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007); *Traditions of the Fathers: The Book of Mormon as History* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015); Mark Alan Wright, "'According to Their Language, Unto Their Understanding': The Cultural Context of Hierophanies and Theophanies in Latter-day Saint Canon," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 3 (2011): 51–65; "Nephite Daykeepers: Ritual Specialists in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon," in *Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings of the Expound Symposium, 14 May 2011*, Temple on Mount Zion, 1 ed., Matthew B. Brown et al. (Salt Lake City and Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2014), 243–257; "Axes Mundi: Ritual Complexes in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 12 (2014): 79–96; Mark Alan Wright and Brant Gardner, "The Cultural Context of Nephite Apostasy," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 1 (2012): 25–55.

prophets were introduced into this assembly, made privy to heavenly secrets, and commissioned to preach their newfound knowledge to others. This paper explores how the Book of Mormon depicts this important aspect of ancient Israelite religion as well as how its depiction of the divine council fits strikingly well with the presentation of the same in the Hebrew Bible.

Israelite Monotheism, Polytheism, and Monolatry

Before looking at the divine council in the Hebrew Bible and the Book of Mormon, however, we must first define the terms used in this paper as well as their significance from a biblical perspective. Biblical texts such as the first commandment of the Decalogue, “you shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3),⁴ the Shema of Deuteronomy, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (KJV Deuteronomy 6:4), and the polemics of Isaiah (Isaiah 43:10–12; 44:6–8; 45:5–7, 14, 18, 21–22) are typically marshaled to buttress the claim made in contemporary mainstream Judeo-Christianity that the Hebrew Bible is strictly monotheistic: it acknowledges only the existence of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

While it is commonplace to speak of the biblical depiction of God as monotheistic, there is in fact a much more complex phenomenon occurring in the pages of the text (to say nothing of what occurred in Israel’s history as manifest in recovered extra-biblical texts and artifacts).⁵ This includes an acknowledgement of the existence of a plurality of divine beings. So clear are these “polytheistic” tendencies in the Bible that Gerald Cooke began his foundational 1964 study with the following admonition: “Any serious investigation of conceptions of God in the Old Testament must deal with the recurrent references which suggest a pluralistic conception of deity.”⁶

Scholars have taken Cooke’s charge very seriously in subsequent studies. Nearly three decades after the appearance of Cooke’s article, Peter Hayman questioned whether “monotheism,” as understood and used today, is a misused term by modern readers to describe Israelite religion. “The pattern of Jewish beliefs about God remains monarchistic

4. Unless otherwise indicated, all English biblical citations are from the New Revised Standard Version. All Hebrew citations are from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.

5. See generally William Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005).

6. Gerald Cooke, “The Sons of (the) God(s),” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 35, no. 1 (1964): 22.

throughout,” writes Hayman. That is, the Hebrew Bible depicts God as “king of a heavenly court consisting of many other powerful beings, not always under his control,” and as “not the only divine being.”⁷ Michael S. Heiser, an Evangelical scholar, has recently agreed that the nature of Israelite “monotheism” is not as straightforward as readers of the Bible might suspect and must be qualified. “Monotheism’ as it is currently understood means that no other gods exist. This term is inadequate for describing Israelite religion,” he observes.

“Henotheism” and “monolatry,” while perhaps better, are inadequate because they do not say enough about what the canonical writer believed. Israel was certainly “monolatrous,” but that term comments only on what Israel believed about the proper object of worship, not what it believed about Yahweh’s nature and attributes with respect to the other gods.⁸

Mark S. Smith further warns against cavalierly tossing out terms such as “monotheism” and “polytheism” to describe the theology of the Hebrew Bible.⁹ These terms, Smith reminds us, have nuanced meanings and have been understood differently by various religious groups over time.¹⁰ The problem, according to Smith, lies in the fact that our modern terms “monotheism” and “polytheism” are just that — modern. Not just the words themselves but the very concepts underlying these modern constructs would probably have been incoherent to the ancient Israelites. “Monotheism and polytheism in themselves hold little meaning for the ancients apart from the identity of the deities whom they revered and served,” Smith writes.

No polytheist thought of his belief-system as polytheist per se. If you asked ancient Mesopotamians if they were polytheists, the question would make no sense. If you asked them if they or the other people they knew acknowledge a variety of deities, that’s a different question, because for them the deities in question mattered, not the theoretical position of polytheism.

7. Peter Hayman, “Monotheism — A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 15.

8. Michael S. Heiser, “Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism?” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18, no. 1 (2008): 28–29.

9. Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10–14.

10. Modern Christians who may take for granted the idea that orthodox Trinitarianism is “monotheistic” should just ask their Jewish or Muslim acquaintances their thoughts on the matter.

The point applies to monotheism as well. If you asked ancient Israelites ... if they were monotheists, they would not have understood the question. If you asked them if there is any deity apart from Yahweh, then that's also another question, because for them what mattered was the exclusive claim and relationship of the Israelite people and their deity.¹¹

Matters are further complicated, according to the Egyptologist Jan Assmann, because ancient Israelite “monotheism” appears to have assumed a “polytheistic” worldview that acknowledged the reality of multiple deities. As Assmann explains,

This idea [of monotheism] presupposes the existence of other gods. Paradoxically, the implied existence of other gods is of fundamental importance to the basic idea of biblical monotheism. The opposition of “God” and “gods” reflects the opposition of Israel and the nations (*goyim*, or gentiles), and the difference of uniqueness that sets “God” apart from the “gods” reflects the difference of being among the chosen or choseness and of belonging within the *b'rit* (“covenant”) that sets Israel apart from the nations. In the same sense that the idea of the chosen people presupposes the existence of other peoples, the idea of the “one God” (*YHWH echad*) presupposes the existence of other gods. Decisive is not the oneness of God, which is a philosophical idea, but the *difference* of God ... The biblical concept of God is not about absolute but about relational oneness.¹²

And so we are left wondering just how to describe the religious system of biblical Israel. Indeed, the recent treatment by Benjamin Sommer indicates that this debate is not likely to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction anytime soon.¹³ Contrary to Hayman, for instance, Sommer believes “monotheism” is in fact an appropriate term to define the biblical conception of deity—especially with regards to describing “how Israelite religion differs crucially from its environment”—but nevertheless acknowledges that any definition of “monotheism” used to describe ancient Israelite religion must nevertheless account for the clear evidence of polytheism in the Hebrew Bible. “Studying the Hebrew Bible

11. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 11.

12. Jan Assmann, *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 3–4, emphasis in original.

13. Benjamin D. Sommer, “Monotheism,” in *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion*, ed. John Barton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 239–270.

within its own cultural context ... suggests that the polarity between monotheism and polytheism is of less explanatory value than many students of religion suppose,” he remarks.¹⁴ However one interprets the relevant biblical passages, it must be admitted that “the possibility that biblical texts describing a divine council are polytheistic must be taken seriously.”¹⁵

Since our modern term “monotheism” may or may not do justice in describing the Israelite conception of God, we are put in an awkward position: how to translate biblical concepts into a modern vocabulary. Perhaps the closest modern word to describe Israelite religion is one mentioned above, namely, *monolatry*: “The worship of one god, especially where other gods may be supposed to exist.”¹⁶ In a monolatrous religious system, one deity is reserved for worship without explicitly denying the existence of other gods. This may be the most appropriate modern term to describe early Israelite religion, inasmuch as “monotheism” appears to be inadequate, “polytheism” too far-reaching, and “henotheism,” which posits that other familial, tribal or national gods may not only exist but may also be the object of syncretic worship, does violence to the biblical injunction for Israel to reserve worship for Yahweh alone.

This should not be too difficult for Latter-day Saints to grasp, inasmuch as our own modern conception of God is arguably monolatrous. The Prophet Joseph Smith articulated what is apparently a monolatrous theology in a discourse given on June 16, 1844. “Paul says there are Gods many and Lords many,” the Prophet preached on that occasion, appealing to 1 Corinthians 8:5–6. “I want to set it forth in a plain and simple manner ... to us there is but one God — that is, pertaining to us — and He is in all and through all.” Joseph insisted, “I say there are Gods many and Lords many, but to us only one; and we are to be in subjection to that one.”¹⁷

This very brief survey, I freely admit, cannot do full justice to this very complicated matter. It should, hopefully, keep us alert and attentive to these complications as we fashion an understanding of the biblical conception of God. Acknowledging that we cannot capture the religion of ancient Israel with only one descriptor but cautiously using *monolatry*

14. Sommer, “Monotheism,” 264.

15. Ibid., 255.

16. *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition, s.v. “monolatry.”

17. History, 1838–1856, volume F-1 [1 May 1844–8 August 1844], 102, online at <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-f-1-1-may-1844-8-august-1844/108>, spelling and punctuation standardized.

as a practical term for our present purposes, we proceed to look at the divine council in the Hebrew Bible.

The Council (and Counsel) of (the) God(s)

When the Hebrew Bible speaks of the divine council it frequently employs the noun **סֹד** (*sôd*), which carries both the sense of “council” as well as “counsel.” One standard Hebrew lexicon defines *sôd* as both a “council, in familiar conversation ... divan or circle of familiar friends ... assembly, company” as well as a “counsel, taken by those in familiar conversation ... secret counsel, which may be revealed.”¹⁸ The latter sense of *sôd* is comparable to the Greek **μυστήριον** (*mystērion*), which is used in later biblical writings to denote secret counsel (LXX Judith 2:2; Tobit 12:7, 11; 2 Maccabees 13:21) or otherwise unknowable answers to secrets that God reveals to his prophet (LXX Daniel 2:18–19, 27–30). But *mystērion* only goes so far in adequately conveying the sense of the Hebrew, which is much more complex than simply “mystery.”¹⁹ In his discussion of *sôd* in the Hebrew Bible, S. B. Parker informs us that the word “may be applied to both the human and divine spheres” (compare Jeremiah 15:17 with 23:18).²⁰ Or, as Taylor Halverson explains it, “Just as a royal court consists of different members with different roles and purposes (e.g., counselor, messenger, jester, warrior, or bodyguard), so too God’s heavenly court was composed of a variety of heavenly beings.”²¹ The Hebrew Bible itself offers varied terminology for this council, including:

18. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, ed. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, reprint ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1010), s.v. *sôd*.

19. For a discussion, see Heinz-Josef Fabry, “**סֹד**,” in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Riiinggren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1986), 5:775–782.

20. S. B. Parker, “Council,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons of the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 391.

21. Taylor Halverson, “The Path of Angels: A Biblical Pattern for the Role of Angels in Physical Salvation,” in *The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. D. Kelly Ogden, Jared W. Ludlow, and Kerry Muhlestein (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 154.

- The Assembly of God (עדת-אל; *ʾadat ʿēl*)²²
- The Congregation of the Holy Ones (קהל קדשים; *qēhal qēdōshīm*)²³
- The Council of the Holy Ones (סוד קדשים; *sōd qēdōshīm*)²⁴
- The Council of Yahweh (סוד יהוה; *sōd yhwēh*)²⁵
- The Council of God (סוד אלוה; *sōd ʿlōh*)²⁶

Furthermore, just as the biblical authors use a number of different names to refer to the divine council itself, they also used a litany of names and titles for its members. Ronald Hendel, in his introductory remarks on Israelite religion, straightforwardly tells us that Yahweh was “not the only god in Israelite religion. Like a king in his court, Yahweh was served by lesser deities.”²⁷ Turning to the Hebrew Bible, we discover numerous designations for these deities—the members of Yahweh’s court—as including:

- The Host(s) of (the) Heaven(s) (צבא השמים / צבאות; *ṣēbāʾ ha-šāmaʾim / ṣēbāʾōt*)²⁸
- Gods (אלהים / אלים; *ʿēlīm / ʿlōhīm*)²⁹
- Sons of the Most High (בני עליון; *bēnē ʿelyōn*)³⁰
- Sons of God(s) (בני אלהים; *bēnē ʿlōhīm*)³¹
- (The) Heavens (שמים; *šāmaʾim*)³²
- Morning Stars (כוכבי בקר; *kōkbē bōqer*)³³
- Angels (מלאכים; *malākīm*)³⁴

22. Psalm 82:1.

23. Psalm 89:5.

24. Psalm 89:7.

25. Jeremiah 23:18.

26. Job 15:8.

27. Ronald Hendel, “Israelite Religion,” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, ed. Harold W. Attridge (New York: HarperOne, 2006), xlv.

28. 1 Kings 22:19; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 37:16; Psalm 89:8; 148:2; Jeremiah 33:22; 44:25; Daniel 8:10; Haggai 2:6; Malachi 3:10.

29. Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 10:17; 32:8, 43; Joshua 22:22; Psalm 8:5; 82:1, 6; 86:8; 95:3; 96:4; 97:9; 135:5; 138:1.

30. Psalm 82:6–7.

31. Genesis 6:2, 4; Job 2:1; 38:7; Psalm 29:1; 89:6. For an excellent discussion, see S. B. Parker, “Sons of (The) God(s),” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons of the Bible*, 1499–1510.

32. Psalm 89:6.

33. Job 38:7.

34. Genesis 28:12; Psalm 78:49; 91:11; 103:20; 148:2.

As we see from this sampling of citations, the biblical authors were by no means reticent to describe Yahweh's *sôd* and its members. But besides merely naming these divinities, the Hebrew Bible contains several passages (both narrative and poetic) that depict how the divine council was functionally conceived in ancient Israel. By looking at just a few of these passages we can sketch the contours of the biblical conception of deity and compare such with the Book of Mormon (which we shall do below).

The Divine Council in the Hebrew Bible

The first place where we detect the divine council in the Bible is, fittingly, in the beginning: Genesis. According to the account of the Creation found in Genesis 1:1–2:4a, the last creative command of God (אלהים; *’ēlōhīm*) was, “Let us [נעשה; *na’āseh*] make humankind in our image [צלמנו; *ṣalēmēnū*], according to our likeness [דמותנו; *dēmûtēnū*]” (Genesis 1:26). The presence of the first person plural prefix on *’āseh* and the first person common plural suffix on both *ṣalēm* and *dēmût* has long perplexed orthodox Christian and Jewish exegetes, whose strict monotheism did not allow them even to entertain the idea of a plurality of gods. Such interpreters have commonly offered the argument that Genesis 1:26–27 is an example of what is commonly called the *pluralis majestatis*. Briefly stated, the idea is that monarchs, when acting in a courtly scene, are known to address themselves in the plural, and so God, who is the ultimate monarch, can rightly address himself in the plural as well.³⁵ However, when the plurals here and elsewhere (e.g. Genesis 11:5–7) are read as reflecting the presence of the divine council, a plausible alternative exegesis immediately arises. “The plural *us*, *our* ... probably refers to the divine beings who compose God’s heavenly court,” writes David M. Carr in a succinct representation of the view of many modern biblical

35. J. R. Dummelow offered just such an explanation in his popular, though now outdated, commentary. See *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, ed. J. R. Dummelow (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 5. Some Latter-day Saint writers have also been attracted to this explanation. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915), 38.

scholars,³⁶ which includes Hendel,³⁷ Levenson,³⁸ Cooke,³⁹ Brettler,⁴⁰ and others.

Another instance in the Hebrew Bible where we encounter a plurality in the text is the fortieth chapter of Isaiah: “Comfort [נַחֲמֹוּ; *naḥāmû*], O comfort [נַחֲמֵן; *naḥāmû*] my people, says your God [אֱלֹהֵיכֶם; *’ēlohēykem*]. Speak [דַּבֵּר; *dabērû*] tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry [קִרְעִי; *qir’ē’û*] to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1–2). This passage employs the plural imperative suffix on the verbs throughout. Likewise, the subject *’ēlohîm* features the masculine plural possessive suffix. This, in conjunction with other evidence, has lead scholars to conclude the divine council is being addressed in this text.⁴¹ As summarized by J. J. M. Roberts, in this passage “God commissions the divine council to issue a message of consolation to the people of Israel, and the prophet, who overhears the voices of the council, clarifies the message [The] imperatives are all plural, addressed to the angelic members of God’s royal council.”⁴²

But besides hinting at the divine council in technical grammatical constructions, there are also fairly explicit narrative depictions of prophets enwrapped in heavenly visions and receiving the *sôd*. The

36. David M. Carr, “Genesis,” in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Michael D. Coogan, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12.

37. Ronald Hendel, “Genesis,” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, 6. “The plural seems to refer to the lesser deities of the divine assembly described in other biblical texts.”

38. Jon D. Levenson, “Genesis,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 12. “The plural construction (Let us ...) most likely reflects a setting in the divine council ... God the King announces the proposed course of action to His cabinet of subordinate deities, though he alone retains the power of decision.”

39. Cooke, “The Sons of (The) God(s),” 22–23. “[I]t must be acknowledged as at least a strong possibility that [Genesis 1:26–27] represent[s] a conception of a plurality of divine beings.”

40. Marc Zvi Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42–43. “[T]he text is implicitly portraying God in terms of a human king: God is talking to his royal counselors or cabinet ... The creation of people is so significant that this creative act alone demands God consult his cabinet, comprised of angels or other divine figures.”

41. Frank M. Cross Jr., “The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 4 (Oct. 1953): 274–77; Christopher R. Seitz, “The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 2 (1990): 229–47.

42. J. J. M. Roberts, “Isaiah,” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, 961.

biblical precedence for this phenomenon is readily discernable in a passage beloved by Latter-day Saints: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret [סוד; *sôd*] unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7 KJV). More than merely a “secret” as implied by the KJV’s rendering, the *sôd* in this passage is not just confidential instruction delivered by God but also the manifestation of God’s heavenly court.

That the *sôd* functions as both divine instruction as well as God’s council is seen clearly in passages such as 1 Kings 22. In this pericope, controversy arises over whether Judah and Israel are to recommence their warfare with Aram. While King Ahab of Israel declares his earnest desire to go to war, King Jehoshaphat of Judah remains reluctant until he can be assured victory by “the word of the Lord” (1 Kings 22:1–12). The prophet Micaiah is consulted, who prophesies defeat for Ahab and Jehoshaphat if they go to war (1 Kings 22:13–18). Skeptical of the veracity of this oracle, Ahab presses Micaiah to furnish his prophetic credentials, whereupon Micaiah proclaims:

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven [צבא השמים; *šēbā’ ha-šāmāim*] standing beside him to the right and to the left of him. And the Lord said, “Who will entice Ahab, so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?” Then one said one thing, and another said another, until a spirit [רוח; *rûāḥ*] came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, “I will entice him.” “How?” the Lord asked him. He replied, “I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.” Then the Lord said, “You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do it.” So you see, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has decreed disaster for you. (1 Kings 22:19–23)

This text provides an excellent example of how a prophet received the *sôd*. It included both a theophany of Yahweh on his throne surrounded by his heavenly retinue and subsequently being made aware of confidential heavenly secrets. In so doing the prophet was legitimized; his message bore divine sanction. The receipt of the *sôd* being an essential component to a prophet’s legitimacy can be seen, for instance, in Jeremiah 23, where Jeremiah’s prophetic competitors assuring Judah’s safety in the face of the pending Babylonian conquest are dismissed as illegitimate precisely because they had *not* been introduced to Yahweh’s council (v. 18, 22). “Unlike these [false] prophets,” Brueggemann suggests, “who are so readily

dismissed, it is to be inferred that Jeremiah did indeed stand in the divine council, was sent by YHWH, and so speaks a true word (see 23:18).⁴³

The book of Job further furnishes a description of the function of the divine council, albeit without any explicit prophetic commission. Beginning in Job 1 and continuing into Job 2, a company of the *bēnê 'ēlōhîm*, God's "celestial entourage,"⁴⁴ convenes before Yahweh in his court. Included among the *bēnê 'ēlōhîm* is השטן (*ha-šāṭān*), "the accuser" or "the adversary" (Job 1:6–7; 2:1). The council deliberates over Job's faithfulness, with the accuser insisting that Job only remains faithful because of his abundant blessings (Job 1:7–12; 2:2–8). To prove Job's faithfulness, Yahweh deigns to allow the accuser to test him.

We now turn to the Psalms for a glimpse at a series of poetic depictions of the divine council. Despite the protestations of some interpreters to the contrary, Psalm 82 is in fact "the textbook passage" to "demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible assumes and affirms the existence of other gods."⁴⁵ This psalm opens with a depiction of God taking "his place in the divine council [עדת-אל; *ădat 'el*]" and holding judgment "in the midst of the gods [אלהים; *'ēlōhîm*]" (Psalm 82:1). After reprimanding these gods for failing to uphold their divine mandates (Psalm 82:3–4), God then issues a warning: "I say, 'You are gods [אלהים; *'ēlōhîm*], children of the Most High [בני עליון; *bēnê 'elyôn*], all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince" (Psalm 82:6–7).

Some have gone to great lengths to argue that these "gods" in Psalm 82 are mortals,⁴⁶ perhaps judges or magistrates, but this argument fails for many reasons. Besides the insurmountable linguistic and exegetical absurdities in such a reading, when the imagery of Psalm 82 is compared with other Psalms, such as Psalm 29:1 ("Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings [בני אלים; *bēnê 'ēlîm*; literally "sons of gods"], ascribe to the Lord glory and

43. See the commentary by Walter Brueggemann, *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 58–60.

44. Robert Alter, *The Wisdom Books: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 12.

45. Heiser, "Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism?" 2. Rebecca Lesses agrees, noting that "the divine council also appears in Psalm 82:1, where its members are called 'gods.'" See Rebecca Lesses, "Divine Beings," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 544.

46. I have collected and summarized these arguments in Stephen O. Smoot, "Psalm 82: A Latter-day Saint Reading," in *2014 BYU Religious Education Student Symposium* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2014), 156–158.

strength.”) and Psalm 89:5–8 (see below), it becomes clear these gods cannot be humans but must be divine beings.⁴⁷

In turning to Psalm 89, we see a striking depiction of the divine assembly of Yahweh.

Let the heavens [שמים; *šāma'im*] praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones [קדש קדשים; *qēḥal qēḏōshīm*]. For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings [בני אלים; *bēnē 'ēlīm*] is like the Lord, a God feared in the council of the holy ones [סוד קדשים; *sōd qēḏōshīm*], great and awesome above all that are around him? (Psalm 89:5–7)

In typical imagery found in other biblical passages describing the divine council (that, as we shall see, is also present in the Book of Mormon), the heavenly assembly of the sons of the gods in this psalm is said to be surrounding [סבב; *sābab*] the incomparably awesome Yahweh. Thus, to insist that Psalm 82 is the exception to an explicit and consistent rule in the psalms is nothing more than special pleading.

One final example will suffice. This one should be of particular interest to Latter-day Saints since it not only serves as an example of the divine council but also an example of the corruption of the biblical text at the hands of ancient copyists. Deuteronomy 32, sometimes called the Song of Moses, contains a poem Moses is said to have recited to “the whole assembly of Israel” (Deuteronomy 31:30) just before his death. The KJV, following the Masoretic version of the text, renders one crucial part of the poem as follows:

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people *according to the number of the children of Israel*. For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance. (vv. 7–9, emphasis added)

47. Heiser, “Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism?” 18–20; Daniel C. Peterson, “‘Ye Are Gods’: Psalm 82 and John 10 as Witness to the Divine Nature of Humankind,” in *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Daniel C. Peterson (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), esp. 475–84; Daniel O. McClellan, “Psalm 82 in Contemporary Latter-day Saint Tradition,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 (2015): 79–96.

As it reads in the KJV, Moses sings here that God established national boundaries based on the number of the children of Israel (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; *bēnē yiśrā'ēl*) and retained the Israelites ("Jacob") for himself. More recent translations of this passage, however, contained a significant variant reading.

Remember the days of old, consider the years long past; ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you. When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples *according to the number of the gods*; the LORD'S own portion was his people, Jacob his allotted share. (NRSV vv. 7–9, emphasis added)

Here the nations are not divided according to the number of the children of Israel but rather according to the number of the gods. Whence this new reading? The ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known today as the Septuagint recorded that God divided the nations "according to the number of the angels of God" (κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ; *kata arithmon angelōn theou*).⁴⁸ This was long assumed to be an error, and so the Masoretic Text was preferred by the translators of the KJV. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the mid-twentieth century, however, scholars revisited this matter. Among the recovered fragments was a text (4QDeutⁱ) giving a much earlier reading of v. 8 that significantly diverged from the Masoretic Text. Rather than dividing the nations according to the number of the children of Israel, God, in this textual witness, is said to have divided the nations according to the number of "the sons of God" (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים; *bēnē 'ēlōhīm*).⁴⁹ Carmel McCarthy, writing in the authoritative *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, could see no other reason for this variant than it arose through "deliberate emendation" by scribes with "theological motives."⁵⁰

But the scribal alterations did not end with v. 8. At the conclusion of the song, Moses exults, "Rejoice, O ye nations [גִּיּוֹם; *gōyīm*], with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and

48. Some Septuagint witnesses read υἱὸν θεοῦ (*uiōn theou*; "sons of God"). See Michael S. Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (January-March 2001): 52–53.

49. Patrick W. Skehan, "A Fragment of the 'Song of Moses' (Deut. 32) from Qumran," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 136 (December 1954): 12–15.

50. Carmel McCarthy, ed., *Biblia Hebraica Quinta: Deuteronomy* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 140–141, 152–153. On v. 8 in general see Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God," 52–74.

to his people” (KJV v. 43). Again, consulting modern translations reveals a significant difference. “Praise, *O heavens*, his people, *worship him, all you gods!* For he will avenge the blood of his children, and take vengeance on his adversaries; he will repay those who hate him, and cleanse the land for his people” (NRSV v. 43, emphasis added). The reading provided by the NRSV (among other modern translations), draws from the textual witness of 4QDeut^q. As preserved in this fragment, Moses adjures the members of the divine council, identified as “gods” (אלהים; *’ēlōhîm*), to worship Yahweh. A poetic parallelism conceptually linking the “heavens” (שמים; *šāmaîm*) and the “gods” (אלהים; *’ēlōhîm*) is also evident in the Qumran version, but lost in the Masoretic reworking, which changed “heavens” to “nations” and omitted reference to the gods worshipping Yahweh altogether. The reading in 4QDeut^q aligns closely with the Septuagint, which represents Moses as commanding: “Rejoice, O heavens, with him [i.e. God], and bow down before him, all you sons of God” (εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ἅμα αὐτῷ, καὶ προσκυνήσατωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ; *euphanthēte ouranoi hama autō euphanthēte ouranoi hama autō kai proskynēsatosan autō pantes uiōi theou*).⁵¹

The transmission of Deuteronomy 32 indicates that the divine council is (or was) so overtly present in the text that scribes wishing to downplay the apparent polytheism undertook alterations that would make it theologically suitable for emerging orthodox trends toward a “purer” monotheism. Bernard Levinson sees in this passage “mythological imagery of God presiding over the divine council” that “almost certainly” challenged the monotheism of the copyists handling the text, which in turn “triggered the attempts to purge the text of polytheistic elements.”⁵² Paul Sanders summarizes the current scholarly consensus on this matter nicely: “Both in v. 8b and 43a the fragments from Qumran contain references to gods beside YHWH whereas such references are not found in the [Masoretic Text] and the Samaritan Pentateuch. In the latter versions the absence of these references would seem to be due to deliberate elimination.”⁵³

51. Skehan, “A Fragment of the ‘Song of Moses’ (Deuteronomy 32) from Qumran,” 13–14. See the extended discussion in Paul Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1996).

52. Bernard M. Levinson, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 423.

53. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1996), 250. Cf. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*, 157: “Scholars now generally assume that the [Masoretic Text reading of Deuteronomy 32] is the result of adaptation of the older reading for theological reasons. Later generations would have deemed the concept expressed in these verses unacceptable.”

To summarize, the Hebrew Bible contains rich and dramatic depictions of God's *sôd*, his intimate cabinet of attending divine beings that he consults in his dealings. As we've seen, these deities are clearly depicted as existing just as much as Yahweh himself, thus negating any conventional use of "monotheism" to describe the Hebrew Bible's depiction of God. However, these deities are never said to be the objects of proper worship by the prophets who participate in the *sôd*, thus negating any use of "polytheism" or "henotheism."⁵⁴ If space permitted, we would look more closely at additional depictions of the divine council in the Hebrew Bible, and would explore what term(s) to use to describe the biblical understanding of God. Suffice it to say that the Hebrew Bible is saturated with descriptions of the divine council.⁵⁵

The Divine Council in the Book of Mormon

With this understanding of the divine council in mind, we now turn our attention to the presence of this council in the Book of Mormon. Before we begin our investigation, it must be acknowledged that the Book of Mormon's depiction of the divine council is neither as frequent nor explicit as the depiction in the Hebrew Bible. Possible reasons for this want of explicit detail might include the fact that, by their own admission, Book of Mormon authors and redactors were obliged to heavily abridge their accounts due to the lack of space on their writing medium (Jacob 3:13; Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Mormon 8:5; 9:33–34; Ether 15:33). Another likely reason, as suggested by Mark Alan Wright, is that as Lehite prophets integrated with the predominant Mesoamerican culture around them, they began, naturally, to couch their experiences in the cultural language and

54. Indeed, as we just saw, 4QDeut^a goes so far as having Moses imploring these deities themselves to worship Yahweh in Deuteronomy 32:43. See Martin Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1999), 193.

55. For an extensive look at the divine council in the Hebrew Bible, see Peterson, "Ye Are Gods," 472–594. Many of the subjects discussed in this paper are more fully treated by Peterson. Another look at the divine council from a Latter-day Saint perspective is found in Joseph F. McConkie, "Premortal Existence, Foreordinations, and Heavenly Councils," in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. C. Wilfred Griggs (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1986), 173–98. Peterson's article approaches the subject with a stronger exegetical reading, while McConkie's article is eisegetical in nature by looking at the subject more through the lenses of modern Latter-day Saint theology. The two should therefore provide a good balance when read alongside each other.

paradigm of Mesoamerica, rather than the ancient Near East. After all, “each prophet was a product of his own culture, and the manner in which the divine was manifested to the prophets was largely defined by the semiotics of their culture.”⁵⁶

Be that as it may, there are nevertheless narrative details in the Book of Mormon that bespeak a presence of the divine council. The Nephite record wastes no time in introducing the divine council to its readers, in fact. After a characteristically Near Eastern colophon,⁵⁷ Nephi begins his account by describing the prophetic commission of his father Lehi. Embedded within his account is specific language indicating that Lehi followed the example of the prophets in the Hebrew Bible who also received Yahweh’s *sôd* (including Lehi’s contemporary Jeremiah).

The account in 1 Nephi begins with a report of Lehi’s prophetic activity in Jerusalem on the eve of its razing by Nebuchadnezzar II, the king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire who suppressed an unsuccessful Judahite uprising and sacked Judah’s capital in 587 BC.

Wherefore it came to pass that my father Lehi, as he went forth, prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people. And it came to pass as he prayed unto the Lord, there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him, and he saw and heard much. And because of the things which he saw and heard, he did quake and tremble exceedingly. (1 Nephi 1:5–6)

What did Lehi see that was so terrible? Nephi writes that his father “saw the heavens open and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God” (1 Nephi 1:7–8).⁵⁸ From the midst of these heavenly beings,

He saw one descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noonday. And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed

56. Wright, “According to Their Language, Unto Their Understanding,” 51.

57. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert/The World of the Jaredites/There Were Jaredites* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988), 17–18; John A. Tvedtnes, “Colophons in the Book of Mormon,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 13–17.

58. For the intriguing suggestion that the “numberless concourses of angels” represent a heavenly prayer circle, see Hugh Nibley, “Worthy of Another Look: Classics from the Past: The Early Christian Prayer Circle,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 19, no. 2 (2010): 70.

that of the stars of the firmament. And they came down and went forth upon the face of the earth. (1 Nephi 1:9–11)

One of these heavenly beings, Nephi writes, “came and stood before my father and gave unto him a book and bade him that he should read” (1 Nephi 1:11).⁵⁹ After reading this text containing heavenly, prophetic knowledge, including knowledge that “manifested plainly the coming of a Messiah” (1 Nephi 1:19), Lehi was prompted to recommence his tumultuous prophetic career by issuing a warning against Jerusalem and her inhabitants: that Jerusalem would be destroyed, and “many should be carried away captive into Babylon” (1 Nephi 1:12–13, 18–20).

Upon the completion of this revelation, Lehi was overcome with ecstasy and joyfully exclaimed: “Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty. Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power and goodness and mercy is over all the inhabitants of the earth. And because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish” (1 Nephi 1:14). Nephi concludes the account by noting, “[Lehi’s] soul did rejoice and his whole heart was filled because of the things which he had seen, yea, which the Lord had shewn unto him” (1 Nephi 1:15).

Stephen D. Ricks has called attention to the parallels between the throne-theophany of Lehi and that of Isaiah⁶⁰ and concludes after a point-by-point analysis that the prophetic calls in both of these texts “establishes in the minds of the people the prophet’s authority and his extraordinary standing with the Lord.”⁶¹ John W. Welch, building on earlier work,⁶² has examined Lehi’s throne theophany not just within the confines of Isaiah’s prophetic commission but also within a

59. On the heavenly book motif in the Book of Mormon and the ancient Near East, see Brent E. McNeely, “The Book of Mormon and the Heavenly Book Motif,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 26–28.

60. Stephen D. Ricks, “Heavenly Visions and Prophetic Calls in Isaiah 6 (2 Nephi 16), the Book of Mormon, and the Revelation of John,” in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 171–90.

61. Ricks, “Heavenly Visions and Prophetic Calls in Isaiah 6 (2 Nephi 16), the Book of Mormon, and the Revelation of John,” 187.

62. Blake T. Ostler, “The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis,” *BYU Studies* 26, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 67–96; John W. Welch, “The Calling of a Prophet,” in *First Nephi: The Doctrinal Foundation*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), 35–54.

broader ancient Near Eastern context.⁶³ After an illuminating analysis, Welch argues that “Lehi’s prophetic attributes can be understood and confirmed in light of classical Israelite prophecy specific to his own contemporaneous world,” and, furthermore, that “his call as a prophet in 1 Nephi 1 gives a foundation of divine authority, revelation, and guidance for everything that follows father Lehi’s posterity throughout the Book of Mormon.”⁶⁴

We can therefore reasonably infer that Nephi’s quick inclusion of his father’s prophetic call and reception of the *sôd* was to immediately establish the prophetic credibility of Lehi throughout the rest of Nephi’s narrative. It provides legitimacy for Lehi’s prophetic activities, similar to the example we’ve already seen with Micaiah and Jeremiah. What’s more, with the inclusion of Lehi’s vision of the divine council at the beginning of his narrative, it seems likely that Nephi also wished to anticipate the opposition of his own brothers Laman and Lemuel to Lehi’s prophetic legitimacy (1 Nephi 2:11–13; 3:4–5).

Further insights into the prophetic commissions of Lehi and Isaiah come from David Bokovoy, whose work arguing that these are *sôd* narratives not only nicely compliments the earlier work of Ricks and Welch, but is now among the standard treatments on the subject.⁶⁵ Bokovoy argues:

Lehi appears, like Isaiah, as a messenger sent to represent the assembly that had convened in order to pass judgment upon Jerusalem for a violation of God’s holy covenants. Nephi’s account may represent this subtle biblical motif through a reference to Lehi assuming the traditional role of council member, praising the high god of the assembly.⁶⁶

In turning to Isaiah 6 itself, we quickly discern several convergences between the two accounts. Exactly like Lehi, Isaiah is reported to have seen Yahweh “sitting on a throne, high and lofty” (Isaiah 6:1) and to have been introduced to the divine council (“Seraphs [who] were in attendance above [Yahweh]”⁶⁷) who also praised Yahweh with acclamations of,

63. John W. Welch, “The Calling of Lehi as a Prophet in the World of Jerusalem,” in *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*, ed. John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 421–48.

64. Welch, “The Calling of Lehi as a Prophet in the World of Jerusalem,” 437–38.

65. David E. Bokovoy, “On Christ and Covenants: An LDS Reading of Isaiah’s Prophetic Call,” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 3 (2011): 29–49.

66. Bokovoy, “On Christ and Covenants,” 37.

67. These seraphs are depicted as fiery attendants of Yahweh who extol Yahweh’s holiness and carry out the purification of Isaiah (Isa 6:6–7). For more

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts [יהוה צבאות; *yhwh šēbā’ôt*]; the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:3).⁶⁸ The reactions of Lehi and Isaiah are similar (with both prophets reacting to their respective theophanies with wonder and terror [1 Nephi 1:6; Isaiah 6:4–5]), as are their respective commissions to pass judgment upon the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem (1 Nephi 1:13–15, 18–20; Isaiah 6:9–13).

A pertinent question is if these parallels occur coincidentally or purposefully. Given Nephi’s access to Isaiah’s writings, which he quotes at length (2 Nephi 16 = Isaiah 6), and the evidence examined above, it seems highly likely that Nephi deliberately crafted, or “likened” (1 Nephi 19:23), the narrative of his father’s experience to mirror Isaiah’s. This suggests a very cogent and conscious literary development of the narrative of Lehi’s *sôd* vision. Perhaps Nephi paid careful attention to formulate his father’s vision to read like the visions of other biblical prophets, particularly Isaiah, and he established a logical beginning point that would establish Lehi as a prophet. This is not to negate the reality of Lehi’s vision or to otherwise suggest it was a merely literary fabrication but rather to say that Nephi consciously employed these literary methods in the description of his father’s experience.

Important to note at this point is Alma’s *sôd* experience reported in Alma 36, which directly quotes the text of Lehi’s throne theophany. While in his near-death state after being rebuked by an angel, Alma relates the following to his son Helaman: “Methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded by numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God” (Alma 36:22). Thereafter Alma reported his reception of heavenly knowledge through this theophany, namely, that “inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God, ye shall prosper in the land” (see Alma 36:1, 5, 26, 30), which is what in turn prompted him to commence his missionary activities in declaring repentance. As with Isaiah and

on the seraphim of Isaiah 6, see David G. Burke, “Seraph, Seraphim,” in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 687. That these seraphs constitute Yahweh’s divine council seems likely given the very similar language employed in Isaiah 6 and the divine council scene in 1 Kings 22. See the comments by Min Suc Kee, “The Heavenly Council and its Type-scene,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31, no. 3 (2007): 263, 269. Kee’s entire article gives a very helpful look at the divine council not only in the Hebrew Bible but also in other Canaanite and Mesopotamian religious literature.

68. The angelic song of praise in both Lehi’s and Isaiah’s experience is a literary device called the Qedussa, which is discussed by Ostler, “The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission,” 80–81.

Lehi, Alma was commissioned to be a prophet in the same pattern: he was called up into God's divine council (note that Alma is said to have both seen God and been instructed by angels), given heavenly knowledge, and commissioned to preach a divine message (Alma 36:24–26; cf. Mosiah 27:32–37).⁶⁹ And, like Nephi, it seems that Mormon took extra care to ensure that his readers would catch the connection between Lehi's commission and Alma's. He even goes so far as to quote Alma as repeating the words of Lehi found on the small plates.

Continuing further into Nephi's narrative, we turn to the account in 1 Nephi 11. In this text we read of Nephi "pondering in [his] heart" the meaning of another of his father's many visions. Nephi is then suddenly "caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain" (1 Nephi 11:1) and engages in a dialogue with "the Spirit," who interrogates Nephi on whether he believes the vision of his father (1 Nephi 11:4). Nephi answers in the affirmative, whereupon the Spirit, like the seraphs of Isaiah 6 and the angels of 1 Nephi 1, proclaims, "Hosanna to the Lord, the Most High God, for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all" (1 Nephi 11:6). What follows is a revelation wherein Nephi is granted the same (or at least a similar) version of the vision of his father in 1 Nephi 8 and the interpretation of the symbols thereof.

Certainly there is much to be said of this account, including the fact that it captures other authentic aspects of pre-exilic Israelite religion.⁷⁰ We turn again to Bokovoy, who offers a reading of this text as Nephi's own *sôd* experience.⁷¹ When read in light of our understanding of the

69. Wright and Neal Rappleye have noticed that Alma's own experience departs from Lehi's in one significant way. Alma's throne theophany came after a near-death experience, which is consistent with an ancient Mesoamerican but not an ancient Near Eastern religious experience. Given Alma's theophany occurred centuries after Nephite integration in Mesoamerica, this would be entirely expected. See Wright, "According to Their Language, Unto Their Understanding," 58–64; Neal Rappleye, "Put Away Childish Things: Learning to Read the Book of Mormon with Mature Historical Understanding," presented at the 2017 FairMormon Conference, 32–33, online at https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Rappleye_2017FM_Presentation.pdf.

70. Daniel C. Peterson, "Nephi and His Asherah: A Note on 1 Nephi 11:8–23," in *Mormons, Scriptures, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson*, ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 191–243; Margaret Barker, "Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 69–82.

71. David E. Bokovoy, "'Thou Knowest That I Believe': Invoking the Spirit of the Lord as Council Witness in 1 Nephi 11," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon*

divine council, this text reveals “that Nephi’s conversation ... echoes an ancient temple motif. As part of this paradigm ... the text depicts the Spirit of the Lord in a role associated with members of the divine council in both biblical and general Near Eastern conceptions.”⁷² Specifically, Bokovoy argues that the exchange between Nephi and the Spirit mirror other biblical and ancient Near Eastern *sôd* dialogues. What’s more, the exchange in 1 Nephi 11, when coupled with the accounts of King Benjamin (Mosiah 5) and the brother of Jared (Ether 2–3) constitute a type scene or “template for depicting an official encounter between witness and worshiper in preparation for the introduction to advanced revelatory truths” that is recurrent throughout the Book of Mormon.⁷³ In the case of the account in 1 Nephi 11, Bokovoy concludes:

Nephi participated in a celestial ascent to an exceedingly high mountain possessed by the most high God. The description of this experience in 1 Nephi 11 shares much in common with traditional Near Eastern imagery concerning the divine assembly and invocation of heavenly beings as council witnesses. In this context, Nephi’s exchange with the Spirit of the Lord provides a dramatic portrayal of the faith necessary to receive introduction to advanced spiritual truth. Through his testimony, as born to the Spirit of the Lord, Nephi proved himself worthy to pass by the heavenly sentinel and enter the realm of greater light and knowledge.⁷⁴

Nephi’s inclusion of the account of his own *sôd* experience can further be seen to perpetuate the same goal as the inclusion of his father’s. Remembering that one aspect of the *sôd* narrative is to establish the legitimacy of a prophet’s calling, particularly in a time of controversy, this casts Nephi’s account of his *sôd* experience in a new light. In this instance the controversy arose between Nephi and his elder brothers over matters relating to the interpretation and meaning of their father’s vision. Upon returning to his family after his sequestered vision, Nephi was “grieved” to discover that his brothers “were disputing one with another concerning the things which my father had spoken unto them.” The cause of this contention was due to the esoteric nature of Lehi’s vision, “which was hard to be understood save a man should inquire of

Scripture 1 (2012): 1–23.

72. Bokovoy, “‘Thou Knowest That I Believe,’” 1.

73. *Ibid.*, 17–18.

74. *Ibid.*, 22.

the Lord” (1 Nephi 15:3–4). “Behold,” the brothers lamented concerning aspects their father’s vision, “we cannot understand the words which our father hath spoken” (1 Nephi 15:7). Nephi informed his brothers that their ignorance stemmed from the fact that, unlike him, they had not inquired of God, and therefore were not privileged to receive the requisite knowledge needed to understand their father’s vision.

Nephi thus established his own credibility as his father’s prophetic successor. Having participated in the *sôd*, Nephi was granted the heavenly secrets needed to know and understand the apocalyptic visions granted to his father (1 Nephi 15:8–11). These same heavenly secrets were not imparted to Nephi’s brothers, who were barred from participating in the *sôd* because of “the hardness of [their] hearts” (1 Nephi 15:10). “Do ye not remember,” Nephi urged his brothers, “the thing which the Lord hath said? — if ye will not harden your hearts and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you” (1 Nephi 15:11).

To cap off his record, Nephi earnestly implored his readers to become fluent in “the tongue of angels” (2 Nephi 31:13–14; 32:2–3), which Neal Rappleye has convincingly argued was the young prophet’s idiomatic language for entering the presence of the heavenly assembly and becoming a deified member therein.⁷⁵ This “democratization,” we might call it, of the *sôd* experience would have been radical by the standards of Nephi’s pre-exilic Israelite religious culture, given that the *sôd* was reserved for prophets, but by his own generous standard (cf. 2 Nephi 26:23–33) as well as the standard of what would eventually become idealist Nephite egalitarianism, this is understandable. “Nephi makes it clear that he himself has stood in this council, has become one of the heavenly hosts, and now speaks with the tongue of angels. Nephi also makes it clear, however, that this is not merely the prerogative of the prophets. Nephi’s carefully crafted narrative teaches that all are both *invited* and *commanded* to follow the path that leads to entrance into the Lord’s presence, and ultimately grants membership into the heavenly assembly.”⁷⁶

Continuing further into the Book of Mormon, we discover the account in Mosiah 22 that serves as a council text on a temporal level. In ancient Near Eastern thought, the earthly court of the king was (at least ideally) the earthly counterpart to God’s heavenly council. In this

75. Neal Rappleye, “‘With the Tongue of Angels’: Angelic Speech as a Form of Deification,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 303–323.

76. Rappleye, “‘With the Tongue of Angels,’” 323, emphasis in original.

chapter, Ammon and Limhi “consult[ed]” (one could say “counseled”) with the people as to how they should “deliver themselves out of bondage” (Mosiah 22:1). The people “gather[ed] themselves together” and deliberated for some time, with Gideon eventually presenting himself before the king with a desire to “be [the king’s] servant and deliver this people out of bondage” (Mosiah 22:4). Gideon successfully pled his case (Mosiah 22:5–8), and was commissioned to be an agent of the king’s in delivering a perfidious tribute of wine to their Lamanite captors to incapacitate them during the people’s escape (Mosiah 22:9–16). The format of the proceedings of the council scene in Mosiah 22 follows that of the divine council scenes in 1 Kings 22 and Isaiah 6 and 40 nicely, albeit on a temporal level.⁷⁷

Another possible divine council narrative can be found in Helaman 10, although with some irregularities. Regardless of these irregularities, this narrative is worth looking at, as it offers some details that seem to indicate a divine council scene. In this account, Nephi, the son of Helaman, returned defeated after being rejected as a prophet by the people of Nephi: “And it came to pass that there arose a division among the people, insomuch that they divided hither and thither and went their ways” (Helaman 10:1). This is a classic set up for a divine council narrative, where controversy arises that will eventually need settling by prophetic intervention. Nephi, in retreat, retired “towards his own house” and began pondering “upon the things which the Lord had shewn unto him” (Helaman 10:2). As Nephi pondered his situation “a voice came unto him” and delivered divine consolation (Helaman 10:3). What followed was God’s reaffirmation of Nephi’s prophetic call (cf. Helaman 7:1–2). “Behold, thou art Nephi and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels that ye shall have power over this people” (Helaman 7:6). Note that God was said to have declared this in his council of angels, a significant detail that indicates the presence of the divine council in the text.

What makes this possible divine council account irregular is that Nephi is never explicitly said to have seen God and his council but rather that a voice merely came to him. This silence does not entirely rule out the possibility that Nephi *saw* the council as he *heard* the voice, but the lack of an affirmatively explicit narrative detail is such that it cannot be positively said that he did. Another irregularity is that God, and not one of his divine messengers, is said to have given Nephi his call directly. In the examples

77. I am grateful to my friend Neal Rappleye for introducing me to this reading of Mosiah 22.

previously examined, it is one of the messengers of the council that delivers the commission. Notwithstanding these irregularities, what follows the commission is like the prophetic call narratives examined in this paper, as Nephi “did return unto the multitudes . . . and began to declare unto them the word of the Lord” straightway after his theophany (Helaman 10:12).

Conclusion

Much more could be said about the divine council in the Hebrew Bible and the Book of Mormon than this brief survey will allow. Besides the examples cited in this paper, there remain other narratives possibly depicting the divine council in the Book of Mormon that deserve our close attention (including 3 Nephi 17:11–25; 28). Additionally, the texts discussed above clearly indicate the presence of a divine plurality. These texts urge us to be more nuanced in how we define our terms such as “monotheism” and “polytheism.” Seemingly Trinitarian passages in the Book of Mormon (e.g. 2 Nephi 31:21; 3 Nephi 11:27; Mormon 7:7), for instance, are counterweighed by the passages above that depict the divine council.⁷⁸

However we might understand or define these terms, the Book of Mormon very clearly portrays the divine council in such a way that indicates its close familiarity with the Hebrew Bible and ancient Israelite religion. This, accordingly, should not only help us understand the Book of Mormon’s teachings about the nature of God and raise our appreciation for it as an ancient record, but also entice us to look more carefully for the presence of the divine council in other scriptural texts.⁷⁹

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78. See the discussion in David L. Paulsen and Ari D. Bruening, “The Social Model of the Trinity in 3 Nephi,” in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Gaye Strathearn (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book, Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2012), 191–233.

79. I have made some initial steps to do just such in Stephen O. Smoot, “‘I am a Son of God’: Moses’ Ascension into the Divine Council,” in *2012 BYU Religious Education Student Symposium* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2012), 129–143; “Council, Chaos, & Creation in the Book of Abraham,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22, no. 2 (2013): 28–39.

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MIRACLES IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

Gary P. Gillum

Review of Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Miracles of the Book of Mormon: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages*, 2015, Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 447 pp. + bibliography, appendix of Brief Biographical Sketches of Ancient and Modern Non-LDS Sources Cited, index, etc. Hardbound. \$27.99.

Abstract: *Author Alonzo L. Gaskill has used his considerable scholarly and spiritual skills to provide the reader with a book that describes and applies to our lives the miracles found in the Book of Mormon, some of which may have slipped the reader's eyes, mind, and heart.*

We live in a world where the media and many of those who speak for churches and religious movements insist that there are no longer any miracles, even if there once were. Many highly educated people, including scientists, affirm that only tangible things are real and important. Then, along comes a book that supports the thoughts of one of the greatest scientists who ever lived, Albert Einstein, who said: “There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as if everything is.”¹ The ever-childlike Einstein was always discovering, wondering, and seeking during his amazing life.

But if everything is a miracle, what sets apart the 59 miracles in the Book of Mormon that Gaskill so passionately describes? His focus is on that which almost everyone, believer or unbeliever, would acknowledge as extraordinary — that is, “on those events in the Book of Mormon that confront us with a sense that God’s power is absolutely incomprehensible and unexplainable to finite humans” (1). In fact, Gaskill does not include the dreams and visions of Lehi, Nephi, and others among his 59 miracles.

1. Quoted in Eben Alexander, *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife*, 2012, New York: Simon and Schuster, 147.

His reason for not including them is simply that many believers — even in this era of skepticism and worldliness — are also partakers of similar phenomena that can excite, comfort, guide, and give testimony to our lives. In other words, among the Latter-day Saints, they are very commonplace, even though they are not talked about often because of their sacred nature.

As Gaskill discusses each Book of Mormon miracle, he follows a consistent pattern, citing its scriptural source and summarizing the miracle and its context, its symbolism, allegorization, and application. Gaskill's gift in exegesis is manifest especially in the chapters about Ammon and King Lamoni (196–209), where he interprets “arms” not as the upper bodily limbs of the enemies but rather by the weapons they carried, and Lehi and Nephi's transfiguration (257–66) with Gaskill's amazing application for the Saints by describing his own conversion to the gospel.

Gaskill enables the reader to grasp the power of the Book of Mormon, suggesting how each miracle can apply to the reader's life today. Andy Skelton, another reviewer, found this true of himself: “I have also begged for forgiveness [like Alma the Younger in Alma 36] and have been granted it as soon as I have asked. This may be the most powerful and relevant miracle of the Book of Mormon. Everyone who asks for forgiveness gets it. Starting with Laman, Lemuel, and Nephi” (421).²

Gaskill is well suited to write this commentary, particularly since he is both a scholar of religion and a fairly recent convert from Greek Orthodoxy to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Having been on “both sides of the aisle” myself, I have seen that it is even more effective, among those coming from “the outside,” to provide friendly support from both ancient and modern sources. Gaskill's sources include St. Hilary of Poitiers (AD 300–68), who believed “scripture consists not in what one reads, but in what one understands.” Gaskill has taken this as a challenge: he strives to help his readers understand the Book of Mormon in a manner in which they may not have understood it previously. Similarly, Mother Teresa is quoted more than once, as are Confucius and others.³

I am pleased that Gaskill often cited and quoted Hugh Nibley. It appears that Nibley had as much influence on Gaskill's reading of the Book of Mormon, as he did on mine. It is also no surprise that Gaskill would dedicate his book to this great LDS scholar and mentor. Like

2. This may be a promotional blurb included by Gaskill in the final pages of the text, as part of the final footnote.

3. A useful two-page list and one-line bio of the writers Gaskill cites is found in an appendix at the end of the book (422–25.)

Nibley, Gaskill has respect for the miracles (mostly of healing) in the New Testament as well as lesser known miracles, of which there is testimony in the Eastern Orthodox tradition and also in early Roman Catholicism. An example is the ministration to Joan of Arc by Michael the Archangel and by Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Margaret of Antioch.⁴

I was much relieved and found it most refreshing that the author did not resort to higher criticism or invoke the skepticism prevalent in mainstream Christian theological treatises and commentaries. Gaskill insists his book is more for the ordinary Church member than for the scholar.

I highly recommend this book to readers who seek an edifying new way to understand the Book of Mormon. This book will, I believe, strengthen the faith of readers. They will see the Book of Mormon on a deeper, higher, and broader level and hence as the very Word of God.

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4. Cited in Albert Bigelow Paine, *The Girl in White Armor: The Story of Joan of Arc*, 1967, New York: Macmillan, *Reader's Digest* condensation, 157.

BARLOW ON BOOK OF MORMON LANGUAGE: AN EXAMINATION OF SOME STRAINED GRAMMAR

Stanford Carmack

Abstract: *Comments made by Philip Barlow on Book of Mormon language for an Oxford-published book are examined. Inaccuracies are pointed out, and some examples are given that show matching with 1611 King James usage as well as with other earlier usage. One important conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that those who wish to critique the English language of the Book of Mormon need to take the subject more seriously and approach it with genuine scholarship, instead of repeating earlier errors. This has a direct bearing on forming accurate views of Joseph Smith and Book of Mormon translation.*

There are some errors which is easilier persuaded unto than to some truths.

Henry, Earl of Monmouth (translator)¹

Most LDS scholars have not carefully investigated Book of Mormon grammar before passing judgment. As a result, this is an area where error and misinformation abound. Even now, few take the trouble to study the earliest textual usage systematically. Work performed in this area by most researchers is done piecemeal and superficially. This has consequences for understanding the text.

Many have accepted and furthered the view that Joseph Smith was the English-language translator, chiefly because of perceived bad grammar. This currently dominant view, however, is greatly weakened because virtually all of its “bad grammar” is attested in literate writings

1. 1671, Henry Carey (translator; died 1661), Jean-François Senault’s *The Use of Passions* [*De l’usage des passions* (1641)], page 267 [*Early English Books Online* A59163]. Spelling and punctuation have been slightly modified.

of the past. Furthermore, there is a significant amount of suspect grammar found in the earliest text of the Book of Mormon that does not appear to have been the kind of grammar that Joseph Smith knew or would have used.

To be clear, however, the determination that suspect grammar is well-formed is not primary. First and foremost, descriptive linguistic studies show that the Book of Mormon contains a host of archaic and extra-biblical forms, constructions, and vocabulary items, and many of these do not fall into the category of potential bad grammar. All this evidence means that the earliest text is not pseudo-archaic, which in turn has explanatory power vis-à-vis questionable grammar. With the passage of time and a greater availability of external textual evidence, an ungrammatical view of Book of Mormon language will become increasingly anti-intellectual.

There is plenty of published opinion on Book of Mormon language that is largely inaccurate. For almost two centuries, writers have not felt a need to know or study past English usage or to be sufficiently and competently trained in English linguistic analysis before passing judgment on Book of Mormon usage. This is a call for all students of Book of Mormon grammar to begin to take the matter more seriously and carefully.

Present-day English intuitions about past usage as well as biblically derived grammatical perceptions can be entirely misleading. Consequently, not only must we reject and discard the grammatical opinions that have been made by many non-Mormon and anti-Mormon critics with respect to Book of Mormon usage, but we must also reject and discard the grammatical opinions made by many prominent LDS scholars.

Barlow's Comments

Philip L. Barlow — who recently directed a conference titled “New Perspectives on Joseph Smith and Translation” at Utah State University (16 March 2017) — wrote the following about Book of Mormon language:

Like other translators of ancient texts and following the precedent set with earlier revelations, Smith cast the book into seventeenth-century prose, though his own vocabulary and grammar are evident throughout. Because Jacobean speech was not his native idiom, he sometimes rendered the style inexpertly: “ye” (properly a subject) sometimes lapsed into “you” (object) as the subject of a sentence, as in Mosiah 2:19; an Elizabethan suffix attached to some verbs but was inconsistently omitted from others (“yields ... putteth,” Mosiah 3:19). Much of this

strained language was refined in the second edition (Kirtland, Ohio, 1837). The preface, for instance, was changed from its 1830 rendering, "... now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men." Similarly, some 227 appearances of "saith" were changed to "said."²

This quotation differs slightly from the first edition reading,³ telling us that Barlow reviewed and modified this paragraph for the 2013 edition. With the help of the Oxford English Dictionary, we can take the meaning of the adjective *strained* as used in this context to mean that Joseph Smith employed language "in a laboured, far-fetched, or non-natural" way.⁴

Despite Oxford's mission to "[further an] objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education,"⁵ much of this Barlow quotation is, lamentably, inaccurate. Although he is correct in saying Jacobean speech wasn't Joseph's native idiom, Barlow didn't research 1611 King James grammar before criticizing Book of Mormon usage, and he didn't consult text-critical materials for his updated edition of 2013, when oversights could have been more easily avoided. Because Barlow's observations are taken by many to be accurate, this book contributes to misperceptions about Book of Mormon language.

Critique of Barlow's Comments

First, the earliest revelations that Joseph Smith received — at least those meant for broad publication — were of the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, it is highly likely the language of the 1828 dictation was similar to the extant translation of Mormon's abridgment. Thus the dictation of the text of the Book of Mormon in 1828 and 1829 came before and at the same time as early Doctrine and Covenants revelations;

2. Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 27–28.

3. Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 27. In the first edition Barlow also gave the current reading of the title-page phrase in this paragraph: "if there are faults they are the mistakes of men." In both editions he writes that the phrase in question was found in the 1830 preface, even though the two-page preface is different from the title page. This is another minor inaccuracy. The 1830 preface begins on page iii (unnumbered) and contains Doctrine and Covenants revelatory language.

4. Oxford English Dictionary, **strained**, *adj.*, definition 5:

1747 LD. CHANC. HARDWICKE in G. Harris *Life* (1847) I. 374

I own I thought this a strained construction, and did not scruple to say so.

5. Oxford University Press (website), accessed 15 May 2017, global.oup.com.

it did not come after. In this way Barlow's mention of "earlier revelations" isn't accurate. Most readers are left with the wrong impression of things.

The three earliest Doctrine and Covenants revelations were given between the dictation of the 116 lost manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon and the dictation of the text that would be published in 1830. Other slightly later Doctrine and Covenants revelations were given not earlier than the 1829 dictation of the Book of Mormon.⁶

Second, the statement that Joseph's "own vocabulary and grammar are evident throughout" is a mischaracterization. In the ten years before 2013, Royal Skousen published a variety of material on archaic lexical usage found in the dictation of the Book of Mormon that Joseph Smith probably wasn't familiar with.⁷ This lexical evidence was available to Barlow and could have been noted. In addition, John A. Widtsoe had written in 1951 "that the vocabulary of the Book of Mormon appear[ed] to be far beyond that of an unlettered youth."⁸ Barlow doesn't convey or discuss this reality either.

Moreover, digital databases demonstrate that the earliest text of the Book of Mormon contains an abundance of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century grammatical usage that often does not overlap with King James idiom. Thus Book of Mormon grammar was effectively foreign to Joseph Smith's own grammar. Some of it is fairly common, but some of it is rather obscure and compelling, since a non-specialist in the early nineteenth century (someone who wasn't an English philologist) wouldn't have been able to make so many matches — both systematically and individually — with earlier usage.

Third, Barlow gives a naïve view of subject *ye* ~ *you* usage. This ultimately follows from a received view of Book of Mormon translation, which is the foundational assumption that Barlow operates from (this assumption is laid out below). Interestingly, he follows the generally

6. See Joseph Smith Papers, "Documents, 1828–1829," accessed 15 May 2017, www.josephsmithpapers.org/the-papers/documents/pre1830.

7. Royal Skousen published information on obsolete "but if" under Mosiah 3:19 — one of the verses referred to by Barlow in the above quotation — in Part Two of *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS and BYU, 2005). *Analysis of Textual Variants* (2004–2009) contains many other discussions of archaic vocabulary. See also "The Archaic Vocabulary of the Book of Mormon," *Insights: A Window on the Ancient World* 25.5 (2005): 2–6; and "Editor's Preface," *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xxxvii–xxxix.

8. John A. Widtsoe, *Joseph Smith: Seeker after Truth, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1951), 42.

accepted view of Book of Mormon translation even though the opposing view — the textually more likely view — makes very good sense of data that he discusses on following pages.

According to a large database of Early Modern English, subject *you* had become the preferred form no later than the year 1570.⁹ Consequently, subject *you* is found throughout the 1611 King James Bible. Only in later printings is it rarely found.¹⁰ Here is an example of nearby subject *ye* ~ *you* variation taken from the 1611 Bible, with the original spelling retained and bolding added:

Job 19:3

These tenne times haue **ye** reproched me:
you are not ashamed that **you** make your selues strange to me.

1769 reading: These ten times have **ye** reproched me:
ye are not ashamed *that* **ye** make yourselves strange to me.

In Job 19:3 we see subject *ye* and subject *you* used very close together. There are a number of instances of this in the 1611 Bible and in the earliest text of the Book of Mormon, as in the following examples:

Mosiah 5:15

that **you** may be brought to heaven,
 that **ye** may have everlasting salvation and eternal life

Alma 7:6

Yea, I trust that **you** do not worship idols,
 but that **ye** do worship the true and the living God

This was typical usage of earlier English, clearly shown by *ye* occurring within nine words of “that you” more than 1,000 times in EEBO Phase 1 texts (see note 9). This nearby variation of subject *ye* ~ *you* occurs at a slightly higher rate in sixteenth-century writings, but there are more than 750 seventeenth-century examples of it in EEBO Phase 1 texts. Thus it is something found in writing throughout the Early Modern English period.

Fourth, Barlow mentions the *yields* ~ *putteth* inflectional variation currently found at Mosiah 3:19. But the modern form, *yields*, was introduced by Joseph Smith in 1837, marked by him in the printer’s manuscript.¹¹ (This appears to have been an unnecessary, entirely

9. The WordCruncher database used for this study was prepared from nearly 25,000 publicly available *Early English Books Online* texts (EEBO Phase 1).

10. See Royal Skousen, *Grammatical Variation* (Provo, UT: FARMS and BYU Studies, 2016), 1268.

11. See Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, Mosiah 3:19; and Royal Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, 457.

optional edit; the dictated form was *yieldeth*.) For the 2013 edition, Barlow could have easily checked whether a modernizing edit had been made at Mosiah 3:19, but he didn't. Nor did he point out the obsolete *but if* = 'unless' occurring just before "he yieldeth." Lexical usage such as *but if* dismisses Barlow's observation about vocabulary and weakens his foundational assumption (see below).

Suppose the *yields* ~ *putteth* inflectional variation had been original to the earliest text of the Book of Mormon — a reasonable consideration since this kind of variation is found elsewhere in the text. As it turns out, seventeenth-century writings have the same nearby variation:

1637, William Camden, *Britain*

Of joy and mirth the gladsome signes it **putteth** forth at last.
And now her ancient honour she doth vaunt in happy plight,
When to her Sovereigne Lord she **yeelds** all service due by right.

1681, Thomas Frankland, *The annals of King James and King Charles the First*

as in the other Cases where the Law **putteth** the King to any particular charge for the protection of the Subject,
it always enables him thereto, **yields** him particular supplies of money for the maintenance of the charge:

And here is a rare example from the 1611 King James Bible in which {-s} inflection varies closely with {-th} inflection:

1 Esdras 4:21

He **stickes** not to spend his life with his wife,
and **remembreth** neither father, nor mother, nor countrey.

This is from the Apocrypha;
the verse is shown here in the original spelling.

In this verse "he sticks" is followed by "and [he] remembereth." We find similar examples of nearby variation in the Book of Mormon, sometimes with the same verb:

Omni 1:25

for there is nothing which is good save it **comes** from the Lord;
and that which is evil **cometh** from the devil.

This inflectional variation remains in the current LDS text.

Here is an example of this same inflectional variation with the same verb, from an important seventeenth-century author who wrote the influential and widely read book titled *The Pilgrim's Progress*:

1669, John Bunyan, *The Holy City*

Gold, as it **comes** from the mine,
it **cometh** commixed with its dust and ore;

From this type of evidence we learn that nearby variation of {-s} and {-th} inflection was part of Early Modern English usage and was even rarely employed in the 1611 Bible.¹² As English changed over decades and centuries, there was a huge amount of closely occurring inflectional variation. Because of phonology, syntax, and other factors, usage could be quite variable. So it's incorrect to think that the variation was somehow defective. In fact, it is axiomatic that variation is characteristic of natural language and that it does not necessarily equate with ungrammaticality.¹³ (This can be verified generally by studying large textual databases or even smaller corpora of the writings of individual authors.)

In English, once {-th} inflection passed from general use, remaining only in exceptional cases, the notion took over among those predisposed to make black-and-white grammatical rules that inflectional variation was strained grammar. These prescriptivist views have been used by Barlow and others to critique Book of Mormon grammar.

The thinking may have proceeded along these lines:

- Joseph Smith was responsible for the English language of the earliest text of the Book of Mormon.
- Joseph Smith didn't know there was closely occurring third-person singular {-s} ~ {-th} variation in earlier English; or, earlier English didn't have closely occurring third-person singular {-s} ~ {-th} variation.
- Therefore, closely occurring inflectional {-s} ~ {-th} variation in the Book of Mormon is defective.

The first item is foundational to Barlow's view, but it is a premature assumption. Scholars must carefully study the form and structure of Book of Mormon language before making such a judgment. Most don't undertake such study; instead, they follow ideology or prior, inexperienced opinions.

Joseph didn't know a lot of the archaic semantic and syntactic usage of the earliest text. For instance, external textual evidence indicates that he wasn't familiar with *but if* = 'unless,' *counsel the Lord* = 'consult the Lord' (Alma 37:37), *the waters departed* = 'the waters divided' (Helaman 8:11),

12. Besides invariant *is*, there isn't much {-s} inflection in the 1611 version; for example, there is one case of *takes* (Ecclesiasticus 22:2) but none of *has* or *makes*.

13. Consider the following statements found at "Language Variation and Change," Linguistic Society of America, accessed 29 May 2017, www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/language-variation-and-change: "First, all living languages are always changing"; "Language change inevitably leads to variation, and variation within a speech community often leads to social valuation of particular features as 'good' or 'bad.'"

and *whereby* = ‘why?’ (Ether 8:9) (see note 7). And he wasn’t familiar with high-rate, non-emphatic *did*-periphrasis of the sixteenth century, yet there it is in the Book of Mormon.¹⁴

Archaic, extra-biblical grammar found throughout the Book of Mormon argues strongly against the generally accepted assumption that Joseph could have been responsible for the English-language text. Systematic, extra-biblical Book of Mormon language importantly includes (but is not limited to) the core of grammar: the present-tense verbal system, the past-tense verbal system, the perfect-tense verbal system, and the future-tense verbal system. All these are genuinely archaic but unlike King James idiom in a variety of ways.¹⁵

Fifth, Joseph Smith didn’t refine the language of the Book of Mormon in 1837; he attempted to modernize the text, and his editing was inconsistent.¹⁶ Changing *yieldeth* to *yields* in Mosiah 3:19 is obviously one instance of that. It isn’t difficult to argue from examples that he even occasionally eliminated some beautiful aspects of the text. As a linguist who considers a multitude of prior usage, I happen to find syntactically mediated subject–verb agreement variation quite interesting and unobjectionable. Most of these have been eliminated, and many by Joseph himself. Here is an example of that:

Alma 57:36

Yea, and I trust that the souls of **them which has** been slain
have entered into the rest of their God.

The “which has” was changed to “who have” in 1837.¹⁷

The same kind of syntactically influenced *has* ~ *have* variation is found in the seventeenth century:

1681, Roger L’Estrange [1616–1704], *The character of a papist in masquerade*, page 66 [EEBO A47819]

the whole strain of **them that has** been taken off by the hand of Justice,
... **have** so behaved themselves at the last cast,

Larger context: “And it is not to say, that this is the transport of a *mad man*; but it is the effort of the very Principle, and the whole strain of them that has been taken off by the hand of Justice, (not for *treasonous words* neither, but *actual rebellions*) have so behaved themselves at the last cast, as if the

14. Periphrastic *did* in the Book of Mormon matches sixteenth-century usage patterns on multiple levels. See Stanford Carmack, “The Implications of Past-Tense Syntax in the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 14 (2015): 120, 123, 158–159, 169–172 (bit.ly/2nLFliA).

15. The details are more complex than this, but this statement is generally accurate.

16. See Royal Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, 36.

17. *Ibid.*, 467, 890, 1200.

whole Schism were upon a vie who should damn bravest.”

These examples exhibit nearby verb agreement variation in the same sentence. In the latter part of the Early Modern English period, plural *has* (along with plural *hath*, etc.) was relatively favored after relative pronouns, but even in those contexts plural *has* was not common. In the above examples, this underlying tendency is expressed overtly. The usual verb form *have* occurs outside of the relative clause, as the head of a predicate whose complex subject contains the exceptional verb form *has*.

Sometimes Joseph Smith reduced overall textual consistency in his 1837 editing, as in the following example:

1 Nephi 15:13 [1830 edition: page 36, line 16]
 after **that** the Messiah **hath manifested himself**
 in body unto the children of men,
 changed to
 after the Messiah **shall be manifested**
 in body unto the children of men,

The deletion of archaic *that*, though unnecessary, is hardly objectionable. But Joseph also changed active, reflexive “hath manifested himself” to passive “shall be manifested” in his 1837 editing. The passive switch is contraindicated, as shown by internal textual comparison: “everywhere else the text says that the Savior will ‘manifest himself’ (23 times), never that the Savior will ‘be manifested.’”¹⁸

Sixth, the title page’s “if there be fault, it **be** the mistake of men” is an example of contextually influenced subjunctive, since we don’t find “it be” without a governing subjunctive trigger elsewhere in the earliest text. The “it be” follows from the influence of a preceding subjunctive form — in this case, the *be* of “if there be.” Here is a likely seventeenth-century example, since “it be” is in a resultative clause not directly governed by the hypothetical:

1629, Lancelot Andrewes (died 1626), *Sermons*

But, **if there be** no cause, and so **it be** in vaine, *I joy therein and will joy.*

Italics in the original; bolding added.

18. Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants*, 1 Nephi 15:13. The insertion of *shall* by Joseph Smith, to make it like the surrounding language, was an optional edit, since the original Book of Mormon variation is well-formed and found in the textual record. Changing *hath* to *shall have* would have been a more conservative, better edit.

Brant Gardner, on page 184 of *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), makes assertions about tense usage in this passage that do not stand up to scrutiny. A critique of Gardner’s view may be carried out at a later time.

This English bishop and scholar oversaw part of the translation of the King James Bible. He was the chief of the Westminster Translators and director of the First Westminster Committee, responsible for the translation of Genesis to 2 Kings. The above usage by Andrewes was not illiterate or strained; by extension, neither is that of the Book of Mormon.

In the next example, a stronger grammatical case can be made for a following subjunctive “it be,” but the indicative mood was employed, telling us that indicative “it is” was possible in the Lancelot Andrewes example, where the independence of the clause was more likely:

1648, John March (compiler), Court of King’s Bench:
England and Wales, *Reports*

But **if there be** a *Venire facias*, and **it is** erroneous,
it is not holpen by any Statute.

Italics in the original; bolding added.

Singular *be* usage in indicative contexts is uncommon in the earlier textual record, but it can be found, even when there is no closely preceding subjunctive that might have led to the use of *be*:

Numbers 5:30

Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him,
and **he be** jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord,

King James “he be” is often rendered “he is” in modern versions.

1618, John Wood, *The true honor of navigation and navigators*

Though the Iewes would haue stoned him, Herod would haue killed him,
and here **he be** in a great tempest, to all shewes in extremitie of danger:
yet no maruell if hee sleepe securely,
knowing that no harme could come to him.

More common in the textual record is **plural be** in indicative contexts. Here are some examples that contain either contextually influenced subjunctive “they be” or indicative “they be” (depending on how one wants to look at it), matching Book of Mormon usage:

1532, Gentian Hervet (translator), Xenophon’s *Treatise of household*

No by my faith, and **if there be** any, **they be** very fewe.

1577, Barnabe Googe (translator), Conrad Heresbach’s *Four books of husbandry*

which is a signe, that there is eyther but one king,
or **yf there be** moe, **they be** agreed:

1578, John Florio, *Familiar speech, merry proverbs,
witty sentences, and golden sayings*

if there be any, **they be** brought,

Mormon 8:17

and **if there be** faults / **they be** the faults of a man

Seventh, *saith* is frequently employed in the earliest text for the historical present, as it is in the King James Bible.¹⁹ Barlow includes this item under the umbrella of strained language, perhaps because of a high usage rate, which in any event is not automatically chargeable to Joseph Smith.

Conclusion

The foregoing critique clarifies that understanding the English language of the Book of Mormon requires much more knowledgeable consideration than has been proffered by most LDS scholars through the years. Some well-known figures in the field might currently misunderstand Book of Mormon translation issues because of under-informed, inaccurate views of its vocabulary and grammar. Reliable pronouncements on Book of Mormon language must proceed from careful scholarship that involves the consulting of large databases of modern English (both early and late) as well as the 1611 King James Bible (and even other early Bibles). Analysts will take an important step forward once they free themselves of a desire to stipulate, against descriptive linguistic evidence, that the earliest text of the Book of Mormon is full of bad grammar and that Joseph Smith corrected much of it for the 1837 edition. Rather, the text and the textual record demand that we seek to know and understand the archaic English — both biblical and extra-biblical — that makes up the fiber of the book's language.

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19. See Royal Skousen, *Grammatical Variation*, 410, which gives Luke 24:36 as an example, where *saith* is used for present-tense *légei*. A sampling shows *saith* to be the most common translation of this Greek word, with *said* the second most common, followed by minor variants such as *saying*, *spake*, and *calleth*.

“HE DID GO ABOUT SECRETLY”: ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE LITERARY USE OF ALMA’S NAME

Matthew L. Bowen

*Abstract: Mormon describes Alma the Younger’s “go[ing] about **secretly**” to destroy the church that his father, Alma the Elder, had established (Mosiah 27:8–10), this as a narratological inversion of that period when Alma the Elder “went about **privately**” teaching the words of Abinadi and establishing a church “that it might not come to the knowledge of the king” (Mosiah 18:1–6). In Mosiah 27:10, Mormon subtly reworks Alma the Younger’s autobiographical statement preserved in Alma 36:6, adding in the former passage a word rendered “secretly” to create a midrashic or interpretive pun on the name Alma, echoing the meaning of the Semitic root ‘lm, “hide,” “conceal”). Mosiah 27:8–10 contains additional language that evokes the introduction of the name Alma in the Book of Mormon (at first in terms of ‘elem [“young man”] but also in terms of the homonymous root ‘lm) in Mosiah 17:2–4 but also re-invokes allusions in the latter passage to Mosiah 14:1 (Isaiah 53:1).*

Alma: The “Young Man” Who Becomes “Hidden”

Latter-day Saint scholars have put together a convincing case that Alma constitutes an example of a Semitic name attested in the Book of Mormon but unattested in the Hebrew Bible.¹ Elsewhere I have proposed that Mormon’s narratological introduction of the name Alma into the Book of Mormon text in juxtaposition with the description “and he was a **young man**” (Hebrew ‘elem = “young man”)² constitutes a

deliberate wordplay — or play on meaning — involving the name Alma.³ I have further argued that Mormon’s subsequent statements regarding Alma’s being “hidden” and “concealed” and going about “privately”⁴ while writing the words of Abinadi and establishing a church constitute an interpretive (or midrashic) paronomasia⁵ on the name Alma in terms of the Semitic/Hebrew root *ʿlm* (“conceal,” “hide”)⁶ possibly employing one of its synonyms.⁷

However, Mormon’s narrative art goes even further. In this article I will attempt to show that Mormon crafted his description of Alma the Younger’s furtive attempts to destroy his father’s church in Mosiah 27:8–10 as a narratological inversion of his (Mormon’s) earlier description of Alma the Elder’s proselyting and efforts at building and establishing a church in Mosiah 18:1–6, especially the statement, “he went about **privately**” (Mosiah 18:1).⁸ In particular, Mormon subtly reworks Alma the Younger’s autobiographical statement, “For I went about with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the Church” (Alma 36:6), into the more vivid biographical description, “for he did go about **secretly** with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the Church” (Mosiah 27:10). Mormon’s addition of an expression rendered “secretly” constitutes an additional interpretive pun — or paronomasia — on the name Alma, exploiting the latter in terms of the meaning of the Semitic/Hebrew root **ʿlm*, to “hide” or “conceal,” probably in terms of one of its synonyms.

Moreover, I will attempt to demonstrate that Mormon’s biographical statements regarding Alma the Younger in Mosiah 27:8–10 recall his narrative introduction of Alma the Elder — and the name Alma — into the Book of Mormon text in Mosiah 17:2–5. In other words, Mosiah 27:8–10 employs additional language that evokes the introduction of the name Alma in the Book of Mormon in Mosiah 17:2–5 but also re-invokes important allusions in Mosiah 17:2–5 to Mosiah 14:1 (Isaiah 53:1).

“For He Did Go About”/“For I Went About”

First, Mormon’s editorial use of Alma’s autobiographical account of his conversion to his son Helaman, which Mormon includes wholesale later as (what is now) Alma 36, in composing what is now Mosiah 27 should be noted:

Mosiah 27:10	Alma 36:6
And now it came to pass that while he was going about to destroy the church of God, <u>for he did go about secretly with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church,</u>	<u>For I went about</u> with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to destroy the church of God; but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop us by the way

Mormon quite clearly fashioned his biographical statement about Alma the Younger in Mosiah 27:10 from Alma’s autobiographical statement to his son Helaman in Alma 36:6. In fact, Mosiah’s 27:10 use of language preserved in Alma 36:6 constitutes as transparent an example of textual dependency as one could wish for.

The textual dependency of Mosiah 27:10 on Alma’s statement to Helaman (Alma 36:6) draws even more attention to Mormon’s deliberate inclusion of terminology rendered “secretly,” which appears to reflect a literary interpretation (or midrash) of the name Alma in terms of the Semitic Hebrew root **lm* (see below), a phenomenon detailed in two previous studies.⁹ Mormon’s addition of the adverbial construction “secretly” (often in biblical Hebrew *bassēter* [*bē* + *sēter*, literally, “in secret”]; cf. Hebrew substantivized participles like *‘ālumênú*¹⁰ [“our secret sins”] and *ne’lām* [“secret thing”])¹¹ represents a deliberate authorial and editorial decision that begs further investigation. Not only does Mosiah 27:10 evidence an intertextual relationship with Alma 36:6, but Mosiah 27:8–10 also evidences a strong intertextual relationship with Mosiah 18:1–6.

“He Did Go About Secretly”/“And [He] Went About Privately”

Mormon’s logic for supplementing Alma the Younger’s autobiographical language (preserved in Alma 36:6) with an expression rendered “secretly” in Mosiah 27:10 becomes apparent in a comparison of Mosiah 27:8–10 with Alma the Elder’s “private” or “hidden” church-building activities in Mosiah 18:1–6.

Mosiah 27:8–10 (Alma the Younger)	Mosiah 18:1–6 (Alma the Elder)
<p>Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers; and also one of the sons of Alma [‘<i>almā</i>’] was numbered among them, he being called Alma [‘<i>almā</i>’], after his father; nevertheless, he became a very wicked and an idolatrous man. And he was a man of many words, and did speak much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities. And he became a great hinderment to the prosperity of the church of God; stealing away the hearts of the people; causing much dissension among the people; giving a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his power over them. And now it came to pass that while he was going about to destroy the church of God, for he did go about secretly [cf. Hebrew <i>bassēter</i>] with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church, and to lead astray the people of the Lord, contrary to the commandments of God, or even the king —</p>	<p>And now, it came to pass that Alma [‘<i>almā</i>’], who had fled from the servants of king Noah, repented of his sins and iniquities, and went about privately [cf. Hebrew <i>bassēter</i>] among the people, and began to teach the words of Abinadi — Yea, concerning that which was to come, and also concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the redemption of the people, which was to be brought to pass through the power, and sufferings, and death of Christ, and his resurrection and ascension into heaven. And as many as would hear his word he did teach. And he taught them privately [i.e., in secret, cf. Hebrew <i>bassēter</i>], that it might not come to the knowledge of the king. And many did believe his words. And it came to pass that as many as did believe him did go forth to a place which was called Mormon, having received its name from the king. ... Now, there was in Mormon a fountain of pure water, and Alma [‘<i>almā</i>’] resorted thither, there being near the water a thicket of small trees, where he did hide himself [cf. Hebrew *<i>hit ‘allēm, neḥbā</i>’] in the daytime from the searches of the king. And it came to pass that as many as believed him went thither to hear his words. (Mosiah 18:1–6)</p>

In narratological terms, Alma the Younger’s “going about secretly” to destroy the church through flattery, “causing much dissension,” leading

many to "do after the manner of his iniquities" represents the diametric opposite of his father's attempts to teach¹² and *establish* a church¹³ "privately" and while "hidden." In Mosiah 27:10, as in Mosiah 18:1–6, Mormon's mention of the furtive nature of Alma the Younger's activities ("he did go about secretly") is a midrashic wordplay on Alma in terms of the meaning of the root *'lm.

Contributing further to the inversionary or refractory picture of Alma the Younger's activities against the backdrop of his father's biography is the fact that both conduct their activities "secretly" in opposition to the king. Alma the Younger sought to "lead astray the people of the Lord, contrary to the commandments of God [and] the king"; namely, righteous King Mosiah (cf. especially Mosiah 27:10). Alma the Elder's work was done "privately, that it might not come to a knowledge of the king" (Mosiah 18:3)¹⁴ — i.e., wicked King Noah.

"Among The Unbelievers": Alma the Younger's Initial Disbelief in Alma the Elder's Report

Mormon's biographical statements that introduce Alma the Younger into his narrative also beg a comparison with his earlier introduction of Alma the Elder into his narrative. Mormon introduces the name Alma into his record for the first time in Mosiah 17:2. He does so with an apparent wordplay on Alma in terms of Hebrew *'elem*, "young man," "stripling"¹⁵ and in terms of the root *'lm* and its meaning.

Mormon's repetition of the name Alma (2x) in Mosiah 27:10 recalls the partial repetition of Alma in Mosiah 17:2 — "Alma" (*'almā*) juxtaposed with the expression "young man" (Hebrew *'elem*).

Moreover, Mosiah 17:2 preserves the datum that Alma the Elder was a descendant of Nephi ("he also being a descendant of Nephi"). As has been noted in a previous study,¹⁶ this verse is textually dependent on Nephi's autobiographical statements in 1 Nephi 1:1 and 1 Nephi 2:15. And, as noted above, Mormon intended Mosiah 27:8–10 to refract information given in Mosiah 17:2–4. Thus, Mormon's introductory biographical statement regarding Alma the Younger in Mosiah 27:8 that Alma the Younger "became **a very wicked and idolatrous man**. And he was **a man of many words**," may invert two earlier autobiographical introductory statements from Nephi's small plates:

Autobiographical Introductions	Biographical Introductions (Mormon, editor)
<p>I, Nephi [Egyptian <i>nfr</i> = good], having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father [cf. Hebrew <i>'ābî</i>] ...</p> <p>yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God ... ” (1 Nephi 1:1)</p> <p>And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceedingly young [i.e., he was an <i>'elem</i>], nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father [cf. Hebrew <i>'ābî</i>] (1 Nephi 2:16)</p> <p>I, Enos [<i>'ēnôš</i> = “man”], knowing my father that he was a just man [Hebrew <i>'iš/ 'ēnôš</i>] — for he taught me in his language ... (Enos 1:1)</p>	<p>But there was one among them whose name was Alma (<i>'almā</i>), he also being a descendant of Nephi.</p> <p>And he was a young man (Hebrew <i>'elem</i>), and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them. (Mosiah 17:2)</p> <p>Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers; and also one of the sons of Alma was numbered among them, he being called Alma, after his father; nevertheless, he became a very wicked and an idolatrous man [cf. Hebrew <i>'iš</i>]. And he was a man of many words,¹⁷ and did speak much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities. (Mosiah 27:8)</p>

Mosiah 27:8–10	Mosiah 17:2–4
<p>Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the <i>unbelievers</i>; and also one of the sons of <u>Alma</u> (<i>‘almā</i>) was numbered among them, he being called <u>Alma</u> (<i>‘almā</i>) after his father [<i>‘ābiw</i>] nevertheless, he became a very wicked and an idolatrous man. And he was a man of many words, and did speak much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities. And he became a great hinderment to the prosperity of the church of God; stealing away the hearts of the people; causing much dissension among the people; giving a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his power over them. And now it came to pass that while he was going about to destroy the church of God, for he did go about <u>secretly</u> [cf. Hebrew <i>bassēter</i>] with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church, and to lead astray the people of the Lord, contrary to the commandments of God, or even the king —</p>	<p>But there was one among them whose name was <u>Alma</u> (<i>‘almā</i>), he also being a descendant of Nephi. And he was a young man [Hebrew <i>‘elem</i>] and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them; therefore he began to plead with the king that he would not be angry with Abinadi, but suffer that he might depart in peace. But the king was more wroth, and caused that <u>Alma</u> should be cast out from among them, and sent his servants after him that they might slay him. But he fled from before them and hid himself [cf. Hebrew <i>*wayyit ‘allēm</i>,¹⁸ <i>wayyissātēr</i> or <i>*wayyēhābē</i>] that they found him not. And he being concealed [cf. Hebrew <i>ne‘lam</i> or <i>*‘ullam</i>]¹⁹ for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken.</p>

Alma the Elder began as a “young man” and “one among” King Noah’s priests but later “believed the words which Abinadi had spoken.” These details recall the autobiography of his “goodly” ancestor Nephi, who albeit “young,” nevertheless “believed all of the words which had been spoken by [his] father.” On the other hand, Mormon describes Alma the Younger as “one of the sons of Alma ... numbered among [the unbelievers], he being called Alma,” refracting the description of his father as a “one among” King Noah’s wicked priests and a “young man [who] believed the words which Abinadi had spoken.”

If Alma the Elder had honored his descent from Nephi, his “good” ancestor,” by “believing” the words of Abinadi (perhaps, “my father has shown himself generous” or “my father is willing”) just as Nephi “believed” the words of his father (Lehi), Alma the Younger, as an “unbeliever,” “became a very wicked and an idolatrous man ... and a man of many words.” As such, he represents an inversion of Nephi, Enos, and his own father Alma, who became worthy of their given names, because they “believed” or had “faith” in the “words” that they had been taught (1 Nephi 2:16; Enos 1:3–8; Mosiah 17:2).

“Traveling Round About ... Publishing”: Reversal and Reparation

Following his encounter with and correction by the “angel of the Lord,”²⁰ Alma’s life takes an entirely different trajectory. Mormon uses language that emphasizes the nature of Alma and the sons of Mosiah’s repentance as a complete reversal of his previous activities:

And now it came to pass that **Alma** began from this time forward to teach the people, **and those who were with Alma** at the time the angel appeared unto them, **traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen**, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were **unbelievers**, being smitten by many of them. (Mosiah 27:32)

Mormon here emphasizes that whereas Alma previously “did **go about secretly** [cf. Hebrew *bassēter*] with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the Church” (Mosiah 27:10), he now “**travel[ed] about** throughout all the land” with the sons of Mosiah (“those who were with Alma”) “publishing” — i.e., publicly causing the people to hear (cf. *mašmīaʿ*, Isaiah 52:7) — his firsthand experiences. Thus, Alma the Younger’s “go[ing] about secretly” — i.e., “insidiously” and “craftily” (cf. the “dissemblers” [*naʿālāmîm*] of Psalm 26:4) — becomes a very public form of repentance.²¹ Apart from those who were with him at the time the angel appeared to him, the “unbelievers” who had been Alma’s friends and supporters at this point turn against him.

As if to drive the point home, Mormon repeats much of the foregoing data regarding Alma’s great reversal and repentance:

And **they traveled throughout all the land** of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of king Mosiah, **zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing all their sins, and**

publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them. (Mosiah 27:35)

Since Alma the Younger had done harm to the church established by his father, by "going about secretly ... to destroy [it]," his repentance involved, in proportion, "traveling round about through all the land ... publishing" including "travel[ing] throughout all the land of Zarahemla," again "publishing all the things which they had seen."

The strategy of Mormon's repetition of a verb rendered "publish" (Mosiah 27:32, 35; Hebrew *mašmîa'* < *hišmîa'* "cause to hear" < *šama'*, "hear") becomes evident in subsequent verses

And thus they were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer. And how blessed are they! **For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good;** and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth. (Mosiah 27:36–37)

Mormon here, of course, paraphrases Isaiah 52:7, linking Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah with Isaiah's "proclaimer of peace," and thus to Abinadi, and Alma the Elder from the previous narratives.²² Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah had been "numbered among the unbelievers." Now they, like Alma the Elder, had become those "to whom" or "upon whom" (*al-mî*) the Lord had revealed his arm (Isaiah 53:1; Mosiah 14:1; 17:2):

And behold, when I see many of my brethren truly penitent, and coming to the Lord their God, then is my soul filled with joy; then do I remember what the Lord has done for me, yea, even that he hath heard my prayer; yea, then do I remember **his merciful arm which he extended towards me.** (Alma 29:10)

The Lord's previously *hidden* arm of mercy²³ — hidden, at least from Alma the Younger's perspective — is now revealed to him and upon him, just as it was revealed "to" and "upon" his father (cf. Mosiah 14:1; 15:31; 16:12). Moreover, the "power" or "hand" of the Lord is now revealed in a new way to Alma the Elder, his father (Mosiah 27:21–23). Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah will now go forth in the Lord's power, as "instruments in the **hands** of God" (Mosiah 27:36) to bring thousands of people to a knowledge of their Redeemer.²⁴ As divine "instruments" or "weapons," they will, ironically, help thousands of Lamanites "lay down the weapons of their rebellion" (Alma 23:7; see also Helaman 5:51; Mormon 7:4).

Finally, we might mention here that Mormon's use of the phrase "zealously striving to repair" may evidence an additional point of textual dependency. Alma the Younger, in a final exhortation to his son Corianton, who evidently experienced some of the same struggles as his father and his grandfather before him, enjoined him to "turn to the Lord with all your mind, might, and strength; that ye lead away the hearts of no more to do wickedly; but rather return unto them, and **acknowledge your faults and repair**²⁵ **that wrong which ye have done**" (Alma 39:13). Alma the Younger here declares the precise manner of his own repentance. Thus, Mormon seems to have crafted his statement in Mosiah 27:35, especially the statements "zealously striving to **repair** all the injuries which they had done to the church" and "**confessing** all their **sins**," on the basis of this verse.²⁶

Conclusion: Every Word Counts

Alma the Younger repeatedly admonishes his sons Helaman and Corianton to "learn wisdom" and to take counsel in their "youth [cf. Hebrew *ʾălûmîm*²⁷]: ("O my son Helaman, behold, thou art **in thy youth**" [Alma 36:3]; "O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom **in thy youth**; yea, learn **in thy youth** to keep the commandments of God" [Alma 37:35]; "behold, thou art **in thy youth**, and ye stand in need to be nourished by your brothers" [Alma 39:10]). Nor is it by chance that Alma praises his son Shiblon for having "commenced **in your youth** to look to the Lord your God" (Alma 38:2). Alma the Younger, like his father Alma the Elder, had made decisions as "young men" (cf. *'elem*) in their "youth" to learn wisdom, rather than continue on a course toward destruction.

As we examine the language that revolves around the name "Alma" and the stories of Alma the Elder and his son Alma the Younger, it seems clear that Mormon was aware of the name's potential meanings — real and paronomastic — and exploited them for literary effect. This awareness shaped his inclusion and stitching together of events. The direct dependency of Mosiah 27:10 on what became Alma 36:6, and the deliberate refraction of Mosiah 18:1–6 in Mosiah 27:8–10 — especially in the phrases "went about privately"/"he did go about secretly" suggests that Mormon was not a novice storyteller or a clumsy editor-historian. Mormon's skills as a historian and editor most certainly included the ability to write a cogent, compelling narrative of marked literary sophistication.

As the intertextual evidence within the Book of Mormon itself continues to be examined, this evidence may have some bearing on the "tight control" versus "loose control" debate regarding the book's

translation.²⁸ A plausible translation model needs to account for the narratological and intertextual complexity of the book. I believe we can say with certainty that every word counts in the translation text of the Book of Mormon and that Mormon and Moroni included no idle words or phrases in its *vorlage*. Thus, one important task of future Book of Mormon scholars and exegetes will be to unpack the richness of meaning in each word and phrase.

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Notes

1. Hugh W. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 76; Paul Y. Hoskisson, "Alma as a Hebrew Name," *JBMS* 7/1 (1998): 72–73; Terrence L. Szink, "New Light: Further Evidence of a Semitic Alma," *JBMS* 8/1 (1999): 70. See further Terrence L. Szink, "The Personal Name 'Alma' at Ebla," *Religious Educator* 1/1 (2000): 53–56. John A. Tvedtnes, John Gee, and Matthew Roper, in "Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions," *JBMS* 9/1 (2000): 41–51, further suggest that "a number of other biblical names have been found at Ebla, which is in the region that some scholars consider to be the homeland of the Hebrews."
2. See, e.g., Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 835. Hereafter cited as HALOT.
3. See Matthew L. Bowen, "'And He Was a Young Man': The Literary Preservation of Alma's Autobiographical Wordplay," *Insights* 30/4 (2010): 2–4; Matthew L. Bowen, "Alma — Young Man, Hidden Prophet," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 19 (2016): 343–53.

4. Ibid.
5. I follow Richard A. Lanham (*A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd ed. [Berkley: University of California Press, 1991], 110) who defines paronomasia as “playing on the sounds and meanings of words.”
6. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 761.
7. For some biblical examples of onomastic wordplay in terms of synonymic substitutes, see Moshe Garsiel (*Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett [Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991], 98–126 and *passim*) cites numerous examples of interpretive wordplay or paronomasia in the Hebrew Bible accomplished through the exploitations of synonyms and similar literary phenomena.
8. Cf. Latin *privatus* as “withdrawn from public life” (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/private). In Webster’s 1828 dictionary, one meaning of “private” is “Sequestered from company or observation; secret; secluded; as a private cell; a private room or apartment; private prayer” (<http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/private>). The Oxford English Dictionary cites several examples of early modern English instances in which “private” is used in the sense of “kept or removed from public view or knowledge; secret; concealed (obs.).” For example:

1472–3 *Rolls of Parl*> VI. 29/2 After that dyvers of the Lordes and Knyghtes of the Shires were departed, by mervelous pryvat labour a Bille signed by the Kyng was brought to the seid Commens.

1533 J. BELLENDEN tr. Livy *History Rome* (1901) I. 225/12 The faderis, movit to hie displeseris be thir persand wourdis, held. mony private consultatiouns.

1594 SHAKESPEARE *Henry VI, Part 2* II. ii. 60 In this priuate place, be we the first to honor him with birthright to the Crown.

1615 R. BRATHWAIT *Strappado* 120 Which he suspecting, lay in priuate wait, To catch the knaue.

1669 R. MOUNTAGU in *Buccleuch MSS* (Hist. MSS Comm.) (1899) I. 441 She desired.to send it over in my name, because that way it would be privater. “private, adj.1, adv., and n.” OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/1>

51601?rskey=L3FXQw&result=1 (accessed September 13, 2017). The OED also gives some examples of the early modern English use of the adverb "privately" in the sense of "in private; without the participation, presence, or awareness of the public; in a retired or quiet manner; secretly, confidentially; (also) furtively (obs.)":

c1425 *Bk. Found. St. Bartholomew's* (1923) 15 (MED) With prikyng enuye, many preuatly, many also opynly, azenste the seruant of God cesid nat to gruge.

?a1475 (?a1425) tr. R. Higden *Polychron.* (Harl. 2261) (1872) IV. 47 (MED) This wikkede and vnhappy man Alexander did sle the secunde broþer to hym and causede the thridde to lyve priuately [a1387 J. Trevisa tr. *priveliche*; L. *private*] by the space of v yere.

1548 N. UDALL *et al.* tr. Erasmus *Paraphr. Newe Test.* I. Luke iii. f. 35 He had priuately had testimonie geuen him of Aungels, of Elizabeth, of Simeon, of Anna, of y^e Magians.

1580 in D. Masson *Reg. Privy Council Scotl.* (1880) 1st Ser. III. 281 Gif he depairtit privatlie from this place.

1617 F. MORYSON *Itinerary* I. 210 All falling on our knees, praying euery man priuately and silently to himselfe.

1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* III. xlii. 277 If thy Brother offend thee, tell it him privately. "privately, adv." OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151611?redirectedFrom=privately> (accessed September 13, 2017).

9. See Bowen, "And He Was a Young Man," 2–4; Bowen, "Alma – Young Man, Hidden Prophet," 343–53.
10. Psalm 90:8: "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our **secret sins** [*‘ālumênû*] in the light of thy countenance."
11. Ecclesiastes 12:14: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every **secret thing** [*ne‘lām*], whether it be good, or whether it be evil.
12. Mosiah 18:1, 7, 18; 23:15; 26:38.
13. Mosiah 25:19–24; 26:17; 27:13.
14. As regarding the language of Mosiah 18:3, 3 Nephi 6:23 provides an interesting point of reference: "Now there were many of those who testified of the things pertaining to Christ who testified boldly, who were taken and put to death **secretly** by the judges,

that the knowledge of their death came not unto the governor of the land until after their death.”

15. Cf. 1 Samuel 17:56; 20:22.
16. Bowen, “And He Was a Young Man,” 2–3.
17. Cf. Mormon’s later description of Amalickiah as “a man of cunning device and a man of many flattering words that ... led away the hearts of many people to do wickedly; yea, and to seek to destroy the church of God” (Alma 46:10). Alma the Younger at this early period of his life stood as an antetype of Amalickiah the usurper and insurrectionist.
18. Cf. Deuteronomy 22:1, 3–4; Isaiah 58:7; Psalm 55:1 [MT 55:2].
19. Cf. Leviticus 4:13, 5:2–4; Numbers 5:13; 1 Kings 10:3; Job 28:21; Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Chronicles 9:2; and Ben Sira 11:4; see HALOT, 834.
20. Mosiah 27:11, 18; Alma 36:6; 38:7.
21. HALOT, 834. The term *naʿālāmîm* is a plural participial form of *ʾlm*, meaning “those who conceal themselves, i.e., insidiously, craftily.”
22. Aaron P. Schade and Mathew L. Bowen, “To Whom Is the Arm of the Lord Revealed?” *Religious Educator* 16/2 (2015): 91–111.
23. In addition to Alma 29:10, we see the “arm” used as a symbol of divine mercy in Psalm 136:12; 2 Nephi 28:32; Jacob 6:5; Mosiah 16:12; Mosiah 29:20; Alma 5:33; 34:16; 3 Nephi 9:14; D&C:1:29. All examples in the books of Mosiah and Alma are interrelated through the generational story of Alma the Elder and Alma the Younger and their respective stories of personal and communal redemption.
24. On the “hand” as an iconographic and scriptural symbol of divine justice, see David M. Calabro, *Ritual Gestures of Lifting, Extending, and Clasping the Hand(s) in Northwest Semitic Literature and Iconography* (PhD Dissertation; Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2014).
25. Following Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Four: Alma 21–55* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2007), 2394–96; Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2009), 769.

26. Another candidate for textual dependency on Alma 39:13 is Helaman 5:17: "And it came to pass that they did preach with great power, insomuch that they did confound many of those dissenters who had gone over from the Nephites, insomuch that they came forth and did confess their sins and were baptized unto repentance, and immediately **returned to the Nephites to endeavor to repair unto them the wrongs which they had done.**"
27. See, e.g., Isaiah 54:4; Psalm 89:45; Job 20:11 [Qere] and 33:25.
28. On the case for "tight control," see, e.g., Royal Skousen, "How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7/1 (1998): 22–31; Royal Skousen, "The Archaic Vocabulary of the Book of Mormon," *Insights* 25/5 (2005): 2–6. On the case for "loose control," see, e.g., Brant Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2011). On the Case for a "complex" translation process that is both "tight" and "loose" like a targum, see Kevin L. Barney, "A More Responsible Critique" Review of: "Does the Book of Mormon Reflect an Ancient Near Eastern Background?" (2002), by Thomas J. Finley, and "Rendering Fiction: Translation, Pseudotranslation, and the Book of Mormon" (2002), by David J. Shepherd, *FARMS Review* 15/1 (2003): 97–146.

JANUS PARALLELISM IN THE BOOK OF JOB: A REVIEW OF SCOTT B. NOEGEL'S WORK

Jeff Lindsay

Abstract: Janus parallelism is a recently discovered tool evident in ancient Hebrew poetry. Like the two-faced Roman god Janus, Janus parallelism employs a Hebrew word with two meanings that faces two ways. One meaning of the word relates to the preceding text while the other meaning of the word relates to the following text. Examples of such wordplays have been found in many parts of the Old Testament, though the Book of Job appears to be especially rich in these sophisticated puns.¹ A valuable tool for exploring the richness of Janus parallelism is Scott B. Noegel's detailed work, Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2009), where over 50 examples are considered. His book can greatly strengthen our appreciation for the intense and clever wordplays in Job, a book laden with puns and semantic artistry. In many cases, important new layers of meaning are revealed by understanding the long-overlooked wordplays in Job's many Janus parallelisms.

An outstanding work of biblical scholarship is found in Scott B. Noegel's research work, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*,² based on his PhD dissertation at the University of Sheffield and related to a variety of publications.³

1. Nahum M. Waldman, "Some Aspects of Biblical Punning," *Shofar*, 14/2 (Winter 1996): 38–52, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42942471>.

2. Scott B. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2009).

3. Examples include Scott B. Noegel, "Janus Parallelism in Job and Its Literary Significance," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115/2 (Summer 1996): 313–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3266858>; Scott B. Noegel, "Wordplay and Translation Technique in the Septuagint of Job," *Aula Orientalis* 14 (1995), 33–44, <http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/PDFs/articles/Noegel%2013%20-%20Aula%20Orientalis%201995.pdf>; and Scott B. Noegel, "A Janus Parallelism in the Baal and 'Anat Story," *Journal of*

After all the centuries of biblical studies, it is fascinating to see how much continues to be found in the pages of the Bible. In the heavily investigated areas of poetry and especially parallelism in the Hebrew Bible, only recently have scholars begun to uncover evidence of an intriguing form called Janus parallelism. Referring to the two-faced Roman god Janus, this form of parallelism uses a single word or phrase with two meanings. One meaning completes or relates to the immediately preceding text, while the second meaning relates to the following text. It is a clever wordplay in which one word works in two ways, looking forward and backward.

Cyrus Gordon discovered and named this technique in a 1978 publication where he examined a verse in Song of Solomon 2:12:

The **blossoms** appear in the land
the time of the *zâmîr* [**pruning season** / **music**] has arrived
and the **song** of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.⁴

Gordon noted that *zâmîr* means either the “pruning season” or “music” and can thus relate appropriately to the preceding and following phrases, using both its meanings. What Gordon called Janus parallelism has been given different labels by others, including Shalom M. Paul’s delightful “polysensuous polyvalency.”⁵ Gordon himself later called the technique “asymmetric Janus parallelism,”⁶ but the simple original term seems to have stuck.

The wordplays in Janus parallelism are often classified as a form of polysemy, wherein a single lexical unit has two or more meanings. Paul Raabe, in his examination of many forms of ambiguity in the Psalms, notes that while technically one should distinguish between polysemy and

Northwest Semitic Languages 21/1 (1995): 91–94, <http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/PDFs/articles/Noegel%2005%20-%20JNSL%201995.pdf>. A full list of Noegel’s monographs and books is available at “Scott B. Noegel - Publications - University of Washington,” University of Washington, Seattle, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/pubs.html>.

4. Cyrus Gordon, “New Directions,” *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, 15/2 (1978): 59–66, emphasis added, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24518753>.

5. Shalom M. Paul, “Polysensuous Polyvalency in Poetic Parallelism,” *Sha’arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, eds. Michael Fishbane, Emanuel Tov, and Weston W. Fields (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 147, as cited by Jason M. H. Gaines, “Poetic Features in Priestly Narrative Texts,” vol. 1 of 2, PhD dissertation, Brandeis University, Dept. of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies (Waltham, MA: 2013), 49–50.

6. Cyrus Gordon, “Asymmetric Janus Parallelism,” *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982): 80–81, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23619564>.

homonymy (when two or more etymologically unrelated lexical units are identical in sound and spelling), it is often difficult to clearly distinguish between the two, and thus he ignores the distinction as he examines lexical ambiguity, phonetic ambiguity, and grammatical ambiguity.⁷

Noegel's work likewise embraces Janus parallelisms with a variety of forms. Some occur based on alternate pronunciation of words, making the parallelism an *oral* one. Others rely on words written in the same way or nearly the same way, although the pronunciation may be different, making them a *visual* Janus parallelism. Each proposed Janus parallelism is labeled to show whether it is visual or not, oral or not, and symmetric or asymmetric. If a Janus parallelism comprises three stichs with the pivot word (the word with double meaning) in the second stich, it is classified as symmetric. If it is composed of two stichs, it is considered asymmetric. Noegel's lexicon departs from the terminology of Gordon, whose "asymmetric Janus parallelism" was composed of three stichs with a central pivot, defined as symmetric by Noegel.

Janus parallelism has now been extensively studied in Hebrew, a language well adapted for complex wordplays, and also has been reported in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Arabic, and Sumerian. A similar feature occurs in Japanese court poetry,⁸ and I suppose many examples can be scoured from Chinese poetry, where puns abound, and a single written character can have not only multiple meanings but, through homonyms or relationships to different characters with similar appearance, can invoke a variety of other words to add complex layers of wordplays.

Regardless of what it and related forms are called, Gordon's insight has helped many scholars strengthen their approach in interpreting or translating ambiguous passages in scripture. Gordon explained that, in the past, commentators encountering a word like *zâmîr*, while fully aware that it could have an agricultural meaning and a musical meaning, would make the mistake of assuming it must be intended as one or the other and did not generally recognize that the ambiguity may be intentional, with both meanings correct.⁹ Since then, there has been

7. Paul R. Raabe, "Deliberate Ambiguity in the Psalter," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110/2 (Summer 1991): 213–27, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3267083>.

8. David Toshio Tsumura, "Janus Parallelism in Nah 1:8," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 102/1 (March 1983): 109–11, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3260750>. Tsumura states that the Japanese poetic device, *kake-kotoba* in the *tanka* is a Janus-like phenomenon. He cites R. Brower and E. Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1961).

9. Gordon, "Asymmetric Janus Parallelism," 80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23619564>.

healthy progress in recognizing and learning from many other instances of intentional ambiguity with a Janus function. Other possible cases of Janus parallelism, sometimes tentative, include:

- Genesis 6:3 (“going astray”/“in that, inasmuch as”),¹⁰ Genesis 15:1 (“shield”/“giver, donor”),¹¹ Genesis 49:6 (“enter”/“desire” and “be united”/“rejoice”),¹² and Genesis 49:26 (“parents”/“mountains”)¹³
- Exodus 33:13 (“way”/“power”)¹⁴
- Ruth 1:21 (“to answer”/“to afflict”)¹⁵
- Psalm 22:17 (“encircles”/“dismembers”),¹⁶ Psalm 30:13 (one word can mean “be silent”/“mourn”/“perish,” with connections before and after its occurrence),¹⁷ Psalm 55:3 (“I groan”/“I am in a panic”),¹⁸ and Psalm 75:2 (“your name”/“your heavens”)¹⁹
- Jeremiah 25:10 (“tillage” or “tilled land”/“lamp” — but Noegel disputes this, arguing that the meaning of “land” is unsupported²⁰)²¹

10. Duane Christensen, “Janus Parallelism in Genesis 6:3,” *Hebrew Studies* 27/1 (1986): 20–24, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27908970>.

11. Gary Rendsburg, “Notes on Genesis XV,” *Vetus Testamentum* 42/2 (Apr. 1992): 266–72, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1519505>.

12. Gary Rendsburg, “Double Polysemy in Genesis 49:6 and Job 3:6,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44/1 (January 1982): 48–51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43716181>.

13. Gary Rendsburg in “Janus Parallelism in Gen 49:26,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980): 291–92, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3265816>.

14. Walter Herzberg, personal communication with Cyrus Gordon, as cited by Gordon, “Asymmetric Janus Parallelism,” 80.

15. Walter Herzberg, “Polysemy in the Hebrew Bible” (New York University doctoral dissertation, 1979), 63–65, 116, as cited by Gordon, “Asymmetric Janus Parallelism,” 80.

16. James R. Linville, “Psalm 22:17b: A New Guess,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124/4 (Winter 2005): 733–44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3004106>.

17. Raabe, “Deliberate Ambiguity in the Psalter,” 215–16.

18. John S. Kselman and Michael L. Barré, “Psalm 55: Problems and Proposals,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60/3 (July 1998): 440–62, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43723328>.

19. John S. Kselman, “Janus Parallelism in Psalm 75:2,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121/33 (Autumn, 2002): 531–32, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3268159>.

20. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, 183.

21. Daniel Grossberg, “Pivotal Polysemy in Jeremiah XXV 10–11a,” *Vetus Testamentum* 36/4 (Oct. 1986): 481–85, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1518330>.

- Habakkuk 3:4 (“rays”/“horns”)²² and 3:15 (“foaming”/“clay” [for a bowl])²³
- Amos 1:13 (“not let him return”/“blow, fan” [a fire], a wordplay also in Amos 1:6, 9, 11, 2:1, 4, 6)²⁴
- Nahom 1:8 (“its place”/“the rebels”)²⁵

But the richest source of such wordplays appears to be in the Book of Job, based on the thorough and groundbreaking work of Scott Noegel, whose book is based on his PhD dissertation and preceded by a publication in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*.²⁶

Noegel's Contribution

Noegel's work not only outlines how each of his uncovered Janus parallelisms works but also how it relates to other portions and themes in Job. After expounding the meaning and beauty of the pun, he shows how other translators and commentators have treated it in the past. Occasionally it appears the translators of the Targum or Vulgate recognized the double meaning and sought to build something similar into the text, but usually it appears that translators and others did not recognize that a double meaning might have been intended.

As an example, consider the treatment of Job 7:6–7, Noegel offers this translation:

6. My days are more trifling than a weaver's shuttle. They go without תְּקִיָּה.

7. Remember, my life is but a wind, my eyes will see no more good.²⁷

22. David Toshio Tsumura, “Janus parallelism in Hab. III 4,” *Vetus Testamentum* 54/1 (Jan. 2004): 124–28, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1519036>.

23. David Toshio Tsumura, “Twofold Image of Wine in Psalm 46:4–5,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series* 71/3 (Jan. 1981): 167–75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1454390>. While Tsumura focuses on wordplays in Psalm 46:4–5, he considers a potential Janus parallelism in Habakkuk in footnote 13.

24. Anthony R. Ceresko, “Janus Parallelism in Amos's “Oracles against the Nations” (Amos 1:3–2:16j), *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113/3 (Autumn 1994): 485–90, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3266783>.

25. Tsumura, “Janus Parallelism in Nah 1:8.”

26. Scott B. Noegel, “Janus Parallelism in Job and Its Literary Significance,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115/2 (Summer 1996): 313–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3266858>.

27. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, 50–51.

Noegel explains that the word תִּקְוָה (*tiqvah*, Strong's 8615²⁸) means both "thread" and "hope." "Thread" parallels "a weaver's shuttle" in line 6, while "hope" parallels Job's failing hope in line 7. Noegel points to related usage of key words here in other biblical passages to strengthen the case that the relationships here are intentional.

He then examines the Septuagint and the Vulgate, both of which reflect only the meaning of "hope" for the pivotal word, but the Vulgate adds "(more) than the web is cut by the weaver" suggesting an attempt to convey the allusion to thread. The Targum attempts to capture the pun with some extra words: "they wear out and are cut off without hope." Noegel notes that nearly all commentators recognize the pun, but its specific role as a Janus parallel apparently was not recognized.

Noegel then returns to the use of "hope" and other relevant words in Job to show how the reader is prepared earlier for the wordplay in 7:6. Noegel also explores Bildad's response to Job in 8:14–15, which builds on Job's pun in 7:6, demonstrating that both meanings were intended, while trying to get the upper hand with his own pun:

The hope of the godless will perish; his confidence is a mere gossamer thread; his trust, but a spider's web.²⁹

Here Bildad has used both meanings of תִּקְוָה, and has turned the "weaver's shuttle" of 7:6 into a spider. The root for the word "weaver's shuttle" in 7:6 occurs in Isaiah 59:5 in connection with a spider, further highlighting "the skill with which both Job and Bildad weave their remarks."³⁰

In addition to identifying several types of Janus parallelism, Noegel also distinguishes it from related poetical techniques such as antanaclasis, in which a word with the same root is repeated twice but conveys differing meanings.³¹ A single word or expression is used in Janus parallelism, and different roots may be involved but not always.

Across the 222 pages of his book, Noegel unravels several dozen sometimes intricate puns and brings out substantial new meaning and beauty in the process. It is a careful work with extensive footnotes and fascinating detail.

In addition to the core of his work with the Book of Job, in Appendix 1, he also discusses a handful of additional newly discovered Janus parallelisms he has found in other parts of the Old Testament. For

28. Strong's H8615, *Blue Letter Bible*, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H8615&t=KJV>.

29. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, 52.

30. *Ibid.*, 52.

31. *Ibid.*, 187.

example, in Isaiah 14:11–13, Noegel finds a Janus parallelism wherein one word can mean both Bright One (Lucifer) and Boastful One. As Bright One, it is parallel with the “stars of Elohim” in verse 13, while “Boastful One” is parallel with “your pride” in the previous verse.³²

In Appendix 2, Noegel examines new Janus parallelisms he has found in extra-biblical sources, including texts in Akkadian, Sumerian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Arabian, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and medieval Hebrew. This section is substantial and especially detailed in the Akkadian section. Finally, in Appendix 3, Noegel discusses a variety of Janus parallelisms in the Old Testament that others have proposed but which don’t meet the criteria to be valid Janus parallelisms. His objections are often based on challenging the evidence for a proposed second meaning of a Hebrew word.

Noegel’s work should greatly enhance our appreciation of Job as a literary marvel. The onslaught of cunning puns in that text astounds me, in particular the sophisticated use of Janus parallelisms. The Book of Job is like the transcript of a heated contest of punsters battling for literary mastery, with God being the ultimate victor. Noegel’s work is a thorough, intelligent, thought-provoking work and a significant contribution in biblical studies, in my opinion.

In light of Noegel’s work, it may be worthwhile to also compare some of the patterns he identifies in Job to possibly related passages in the Book of Mormon, where there may be value in considering the speculative possibility that Janus parallelism may have been used by some Nephite writers. A tentative exercise along these lines will be pursued in a future article.

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32. Ibid., 155.

helping many companies with innovation and IP strategy. Jeff has been in China for five years, where he works with various APP companies and mills in advancing their intellectual property and innovation. Since 2015, Jeff has been recognized as a leading IP strategist by Intellectual Asset Magazine in their global IAM300 listing based on peer input. He is also lead author of Conquering Innovation Fatigue (John Wiley & Sons, 2009). He is active in the chemical engineering community and was recently named a Fellow of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Jeff served a mission in the German-speaking Switzerland Zurich Mission and currently serves as counselor in the district presidency of the Shanghai International District. He and his wife Kendra are the parents of four boys and have nine grandchildren.

AN IMPORTANT YEAR IN HISTORY

Craig L. Foster

A review of *Turtle Bunbury, 1847: A Chronicle of Genius, Generosity & Savagery* (Dublin: Gill Books, 2016). 388 pages, \$43.00, hardback.

I'm one of those people who love finding out when people's lives have crossed each other in reality or even in time-span, such as the fact the last veteran of World War I was born in 1901 and died in 2011. He was born four years before the last veteran of the War of 1812 died. That man was born in 1800 and died in 1905.

I also love finding out what happened on certain dates or in certain years, how diverse events can be, and how fascinating the people can be who experienced these events. Happily, I am not alone in being fascinated by certain days and years.

Turtle Bunbury, a gifted and award-winning Irish historian, has taken a single year and woven a remarkable tale of people and events from around the world. As Bunbury explains about 1847, "In my mind, there is no doubt that an inordinate number of curious, brilliant and dreadful events took place during those particular 12 months" [ix]. Curious about events in 1847 — the same year that construction of "Lisnavagh," his family's home, was commenced — the curiosity soon turned into an obsession and later a book. In 36 chapters he describes 38 events or people with colorful imagery and page-turning narrative.

Among the remarkable people and stories Bunbury discusses are of John O. Muesebach and his German colonies in the Republic of Texas; Ben Forbes, an opium trader who sent supplies to famine-devastated Ireland; Irish actress, dancer, courtesan, and mistress Lola Montez; the shelling of Huế, Vietnam, by the French in the beginning of what eventually became the establishment of French Indochina; the capture and beheading of Kenesary Kasymov, the Khan of the Middle Horde in what is now Kazakhstan; the coming of ballet to America; the fall of

Carlo di Borbone, the last Prince of Capua, in what was one of the great royal scandals of the nineteenth-century; Hanson Gregory of Rockport, Maine, the inventor of the doughnut; and, the explorer Richard Burton in Karachi doing what Richard Burton did best.

But of particular interest to *Interpreter* readers is Turtle Bunbury's chapter entitled "Mormons on the March: Of Roadometers, Choirs & Baseball." It is the largest chapter in the book and I think one of the best. Given the fact Bunbury is Irish, it is only fitting that he begins the chapter talking about Irish-born Howard Egan, who was among the 1847 pioneers and five years later stood trial for killing the seducer of his wife.

Bunbury then gives a quick overview of Church history up to the time the Saints left Nauvoo. At this point, the pace slows a little, allowing more detail of the creation and historic journey of the Mormon Battalion, the journey of the Vanguard Company, and even the story of the *Brooklyn* Saints. The result is an excellent overview with fun tidbits such as the invention of William Clayton's roadometer, forerunner of the modern odometer, and a story of the Battalion members playing the first baseball game in California.

Informative and entertaining, the book is also well researched, including the chapter on the Mormons, albeit most of the sources are secondary. Probably the best feature of the book is that it helps put a very important year in Mormon history into a broader historical context. I heartily recommend *1847*. As the book is published and printed in Ireland, do not expect to find it at your local Deseret Book. However, it is available online at Amazon and presently at a significant discount.

Craig L. Foster earned a MA and MLIS at Brigham Young University. He is also an accredited genealogist and works as a research consultant at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. He has published articles about different aspects of Mormon history. He is the author of two books, co-author of another, and co-editor of a three-volume series discussing the history and theology of plural marriage. Foster is also on the editorial board of the John Whitmer Historical Association Journal.

HERALDING A NEW AGE OF BOOK OF MORMON SCHOLARSHIP

Steven T. Densley Jr.

A review of John W. Welch, Neal Rappleye, Stephen O. Smoot, David J. Larsen, and Taylor Halverson, eds., *Knowing Why: 137 Evidences That the Book of Mormon is True*. Covenant Communications, Inc., 2017, 380 pages including endnotes and biographical material. \$34.99 (paperback).

Abstract: Book of Mormon Central has produced a fantastic resource for students and teachers of the Book of Mormon. Knowing Why updates prior discoveries and provides new and interesting insights based upon solid scholarship.

In 1979, John W. Welch founded the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, known by the acronym “FARMS.” In its heyday, FARMS published regular research updates containing the most recent information regarding the study of ancient scripture, especially the Book of Mormon. I looked forward each month to receiving the FARMS newsletter so that I could see what new evidences were being discovered that supported the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

FARMS later compiled and published many of these research reports in a book called *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*.¹ As the information kept coming, FARMS published another book just a few years later called *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*.² They then produced an excellent compilation of this work called *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*.³

1. John W. Welch, ed. *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992).

2. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne, eds. *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999).

3. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch, eds. *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002).

In 2006, FARMS became a formal part of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, and FARMS was later absorbed into the Maxwell Institute's Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies. As FARMS faded away, so did the short, insightful, and ground-breaking articles that had been published regularly in support of the Book of Mormon.

Then, on January 1, 2016, a new era of Book of Mormon scholarship began with the creation of Book of Mormon Central, co-founded by Lynne Wilson and FARMS founder John W. Welch. The new organization hit the ground running by publishing short pieces highlighting Book of Mormon scholarship five times a week during the entire year. These articles were accompanied by short, high-quality video presentations, a podcast that provided the article in audio format, and, many times, original artwork created especially for Book of Mormon Central. The articles have often been supplemented by helpful infographics that summarize the material and that have been posted to social media sites such as Instagram, Pinterest, etc. The first 137 of the articles have been reedited, updated, and published in a new book entitled *Knowing Why: 137 Evidences That the Book of Mormon is True*.

Each article highlights some “historical, archaeological, cultural, linguistic, literary, legal, devotional or prophetic insight in the Book of Mormon” (p. xiii). In creating this new series, Book of Mormon Central created a new word to describe each entry: a “KnoWhy.” The origin and meaning of this new word is not very intuitive and takes some explaining.

It is common to hear Mormons, especially at a testimony meeting, say that they “know the Book of Mormon is true.” What is perhaps more uncommon is to hear an explanation of *why* they know it is true. When there is an explanation, it is commonly tied to such things as personal revelation that has come through applying Moroni's promise found in Moroni 10:3–5. Of course, personal revelation is a legitimate form of knowledge. However, there are other valid answers to the question “how do you know?”

As the Book of Mormon Central website explains, the Book of Mormon itself relates that, along with personal revelation, there are other ways we may come to know spiritual truths. When Alma was challenged by Korihor, Alma said, “I know there is a God, and also that Christ shall come” (Alma 30:40). Alma proceeded to explain *why* he knew. Rather than merely appeal to an inner witness Alma himself had received, he challenged Korihor with the evidence of witnesses: “the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets.” Alma continued by

reasoning that “[t]he scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44).⁴ Alma not only testified, “I know there is a God,” he also explained why by providing the foundation for his knowledge.

With respect to the *KnoWhy* articles, the Book of Mormon Central website explains: “Each *KnoWhy* seeks to build up testimony, strengthening the ‘I know’ by providing substance, insights, and evidence, that can expand the reasons *why* you *know*.”⁵ This is not intended to diminish the central role of personal revelation. Rather, historical, archaeological, cultural, linguistic, literary, legal, devotional, or prophetic insights can help strengthen a testimony that is based primarily upon personal revelation. As Elder Jeffery R. Holland has said, “[T]ruly rock-ribbed faith and uncompromised conviction comes with its most complete power when it engages our head as well as our heart.”⁶

The people at Book of Mormon Central have taken seriously the divine command that we should “teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study *and also* by faith” (D&C 88:118, emphasis added). As explained on the Book of Mormon Central website:

The dynamic and productive relationship between secular evidences and spiritual witnesses can be likened to many ordinary parts of our daily lives. Like two friends and allies, they work together to achieve shared goals in the pursuit of truth. Like two eyes, together they make depth perception possible. Like two legs, they allow us to walk the path of life

4. “Why *KnoWhy*,” Book of Mormon Central, accessed October 9, 2017, <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/why-knowhy>.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Jeffery R. Holland, “The Greatness of the Evidence” (speech, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, August 16, 2017). <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/transcript-elder-holland-speaks-book-of-mormon-chiasmus-conference-2017>. In the same address, Elder Holland added, “I believe God intends us to find and use the evidence He has given — reasons, if you will — which affirm the truthfulness of His work.” He further said, “Our testimonies aren’t dependent on evidence — we still need that spiritual confirmation in the heart of which we have spoken — but not to seek for and not to acknowledge intellectual, documentable support for our belief when it is available is to needlessly limit an otherwise incomparably strong theological position and deny us a unique, persuasive vocabulary in the latter-day arena of religious investigation and sectarian debate.”

smoothly, and like two hands that cooperate in playing a violin, they produce beautiful music of the soul. Functionally, they are like “two riders on a tandem bicycle. When both riders pedal together, the bicycle (the search for truth) moves ahead more rapidly. Each rider must work or the other must bear a heavy and exhausting burden. Only one (faith) can steer and determine where the bicycle will go, although the other (reason) can do some back-seat driving.” Faith and spiritual witness must always lead the way, but reason and evidence can and should make a contribution to the success and enjoyment of our journey.⁷

In addition to this meaning of the word “KnoWhy,” the format of each KnoWhy article takes one step beyond merely providing reasons for belief. Each article “shares something to know and explains why that thing is worth knowing” (p. xiii).

Each article is also well-supported with citations to the most recent research on the Book of Mormon, from a broad range of sources. It is interesting to note that articles reference not only what are considered to be orthodox believers but sometimes less-orthodox believers as well as non-Mormon scholars. While there is a clear effort to produce faith-promoting material, it is also clear the authors of these articles made an impressive effort to use the best information available regardless of whether or not it came from believing members of the Church. Each article also includes a list of one or more sources that can be explored for more in-depth information.

While it is a paperback book, it is printed on high-quality paper with brilliant colors. Each article includes artwork that helps to introduce the topic. Some of the art is photographic and some is in the form of paintings, drawings, and sculpture. It is interesting to note that much of the art was produced in response to a 2016 art contest sponsored by Book of Mormon Central. Therefore, as one might expect, the quality of the art in the book is somewhat uneven. However, it is exciting to see that Book of Mormon Central is encouraging a new generation of artists to produce art that illustrates the stories of the Book of Mormon.

7. “Why KnoWhy,” Book of Mormon Central (<https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/why-knowhy>), quoting John W. Welch, “The Role of Evidence in Religious Discussion,” 261, in *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 283.

Graphical material accompanies some of the articles, such as tables comparing various concepts or verses of scripture. However, it is unfortunate that none of the infographics have been included. They would have been an interesting and helpful addition to the text that appears in the book.

The book does not indicate who wrote each article. What is known is that there are five editors and 38 peer reviewers. Among those listed as editors and reviewers are some of the top Book of Mormon scholars, including John W. Welch himself.

The book is organized to coincide with the books of the Book of Mormon from Nephi through Alma. Each article references a specific verse or verses in the Book of Mormon. This makes it convenient for teachers and students to find material to supplement lessons and personal study. However, unlike on the website, there is no subject index, making it more difficult to find articles addressing specific topics. It should also be noted that it ends with commentary related to Alma 29. So we can look forward to at least one more volume with the KnowWhy articles that supplement the remaining books of the Book of Mormon.

As the title suggests, there are 137 separate articles; however, not all present what would be described as “evidences” that the Book of Mormon is true. Rather, some of them are explanatory or devotional in nature such as an article explaining how the Book of Mormon was used to help inform early Church leaders on how the restored Church should be run, (pp. 4–6) and excerpts from the testimony of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland regarding the Book of Mormon. (pp. 322–23)

Many of the articles cover topics that will be familiar to long-time students of the work produced by FARMS, such as chiasmus, Nahom, barley, horses, reformed Egyptian, etc. However, the most recent research pertaining to these topics is included here, adding new insights and significant weight to prior conclusions.

Furthermore, there has been groundbreaking research and new discoveries since the last of the FARMS publications was issued. Royal Skousen has published his work on the critical text of the Book of Mormon, and Brant Gardner, Mark Wright, Kerry Hull, and others have published a significant amount of research in the field of Mesoamerican studies. Many of the articles in *Knowing Why* have benefitted and relied upon this research.

In short, *Knowing Why* is a fantastic resource for students and teachers of the Book of Mormon. It provides interesting insights based upon solid scholarship. With the demise of FARMS, it also marks

a welcome and significant step forward in continuing the effort to encourage scholarly study of the Book of Mormon and to publish the evidences that support its authenticity.

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JACOB'S PROTECTOR

Matthew L. Bowen

ABSTRACT: *The name Jacob (ya‘āqōb) means “may he [i.e., God] protect,” or “he has protected.” As a hypocoristic masculine volitive verbal form,¹ it is a kind of blessing upon, or prayer on behalf of the one so named that he will receive divine protection and safety (cf. Deuteronomy 33:28). Textual evidence from Nephi’s writings suggests that his brother Jacob’s protection was a primary concern of their parents, Lehi and Sariah. Lehi saw Nephi as the specific means of divine protection for Jacob, his “first born in the wilderness.” Moreover, the term “protector” is used twice in LDS scripture, in both instances by Jacob himself (2 Nephi 6:2; Jacob 1:10), this in reference to Nephi, who became the “great protector” of the Nephites in general and Jacob in particular. All of the foregoing is to be understood against the backdrop of the patriarch Jacob’s biography. Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, and Enos all expressed their redemption in terms reminiscent of their ancestor Jacob’s being “redeemed ... from all evil,” a process which included Jacob “wrestling” a divine “man” and preparing him to be reconciled to his estranged brother by an atoning “embrace.” Mormon employed the biblical literary etymology of the name Jacob, in the terms “supplant,” “usurp,” or “rob” as a basis for Lamanite accusations that Nephites had usurped them or “robbed” them of their birthright. Mormon, aware of the high irony, shows that the Gadianton [Gaddianton] robbers take up the same polemic. The faithful Lehiites, many of whom were descendants of two Jacobs, prayed “May the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, protect this people in righteousness, so long as they shall call on the name of their God for protection” (3 Nephi 4:30). By and large, they enjoyed the God of Jacob’s protection until they ceased to call upon their true protector for it.*

“May He Protect”

1. Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2011), §§40b, 48.

The name Jacob easily constitutes one of the most important personal names in the biblical corpus. It is equally important in the Book of Mormon. With the benefit of comparative Semitic linguistic evidence, scholars now generally accept that the name “Jacob” is a hypocoristic volitive (or jussive) form of a Semitic verb **qb* meaning “to protect” or “guard,”² rather than a derivation from a denominative verb formed on *‘eqēb* (“heel”),³ i.e., “to grab the heel” or “to supplant” as suggested by the onomastic etiological puns of Genesis 25:26 (“he took hold on Esau’s heel” [*ba’āqēb*]) and 27:36 (“he hath supplanted me” [*wayya’qēbēnī*]). The related text Hosea 12:3 [MT 12:4] states “He **took his brother by the heel** [*āqab*] in the womb” (Hosea 12:4). Phyllis Tribble describes it as a “folk etymology” which gives his name the meaning of “grasper, schemer, or conniver.”⁴ I dislike the term “folk etymology” since it is sometimes equated with “false” etymology. As Moshe Garsiel has rightly noted, “We are dealing here [in Genesis 25:26, 27:36, Hosea 12:3 (MT 12:4)] with a literary etymology (and not a ‘popular’ one).”⁵ From a scientific etymological perspective, “Jacob” (*ya’āqōb*) has the much more positive meaning, “may he [i.e., God] protect,” or “he has protected.”⁶ That is, it

2. Most still follow Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der Gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT 3/10; Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 1928), 177-78, 197. See also Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 422, 872. Hereafter cited as HALOT.

3. Ultimately, these **qb*-terms may have the same origin. Ugaritic *qb* suggests that this root may have originally meant to “follow closely,” which can be understood positively (“to follow closely in order to protect”) or negatively (“to follow closely in order to assail”). Cf. H.-J. Zobel, “עקב / יעקב; *ya’āqōb* / *ya’āqōb*” in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:189-90; Manfred Dietrich and Oswald Loretz, “Zur ugaritischen Lexikographie (I),” *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 23 (1966): 127-33. Victor P. Hamilton (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 179) suggests that “‘follow closely’ may develop into ‘restrain, stop, hold back’ (i.e., ‘guard,’ ‘protect’), as in Job 37:4.” (“He does not restrain [or guard] them when his voice is heard” (cf. NSRV; what “them” refers to is never specified).

4. Phyllis Tribble, “Biblical Views: Wrestling with Faith,” *Biblical Archeology Review*, 40/5 (September–October 2014). Online at <https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/40/5/10>.

5. Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 21.

6. Hamilton suggests that taking *ya’āqōb* as a past tense verb “would be particularly appropriate given the uncertain pregnancy Rebekah had to endure.

is probably short (hypocoristic) for Jacob-El as $y'qb-'l$ “may-El-protect (him),” as the original text of Deuteronomy 33:28 likely read.⁷

As a Semitic name, Jacob was not unusual. The similarly formed name of the 14th dynasty Semitic Hyksos ruler Yaqub-Har ($y'qb hr$ “may Horus protect” or $y'qb-'r$ “may the exalted one protect”) is attested in scarab seals.⁸



Photo 1: “Shiqmona” scarab. Photo 2: “Berlin” scarab with cartouche.⁹

The etymological and semantic connection between the name “Jacob” and divine protection surfaces at several salient moments in the Book of Mormon. This paper will look at how Lehi, Sariah, and their family may have understood the name Jacob and why Lehi and

Jacob has survived that ordeal” (*Genesis*, 179).

7. David Noel Freedman, “The Original Name of Jacob,” *Israel Exploration Journal*, 13 (1963):125-26; John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1981), 93; Moshe Garsiel also suggests that “Jacob” is “a shortened form of the common name $y'qb-'l$ [יעקבאל] and its like.” Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 21.

8. William A. Ward, “Royal-Name Scarabs,” in *Scarabs and their Contribution to History in the Early Second Millennium B.C.* Olga Tufnell and Geoffrey Thorndike Martin. 2 vols. (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1984), 2:168, fig. 29; K.S.B. Ryholt, *The Political Situation in Egypt During the Second Intermediate Period c. 1800-1550 B.C.* (Copenhagen: Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies/Museum Tusculanum Press, 1997), 44; Rolf Krauss, “An Examination of Khyan’s Place in W. A. Ward’s Seriation of Royal Hyksos Scarabs,” *Ägypten und Levante* 7 (1998), 41.

9. “Scarab Seals of Jacob-HR,” *Biblical Archaeological Review* 14/1 (Jan/Feb 1988). <http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=14&Issue=1&ArticleID=16>.

Sariah likely bestowed this important name on their “firstborn in the wilderness” (2 Nephi 2:1-2, 11) not only to commemorate their ancestor, but in the express hope that their son Jacob would be the beneficiary of divine protection. I will also endeavor to show that Jacob’s references to his brother Nephi as a “protector” may also allude to Jacob’s own name and his father Lehi’s blessing. I will further attempt to show that Mormon uses the biblical literary etymology of the name Jacob in terms of “supplant,” “usurp,” or “rob” as an editorial theme around which the Lamanites’ Esau-like accusations that the Nephites had usurped them or “robbed” them of their birthright revolve (e.g., Mosiah 10:10; Alma 20:13; cf. Alma 54:24). Mormon demonstrated the irony of the Gadianton [Gaddianton] *robbers* using the age-old anti-Nephite polemic (e.g., 3 Nephi 3:10). After defeating the Gaddianton robbers in a battle for survival, the faithful Lehtes, many of whom were descendants of two Jacobs, prayed “May the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, protect this people in righteousness, so long as they shall call on the name of their God for protection” (3 Nephi 4:30). That God, Yahweh or Jesus Christ, was Jacob-Israel’s — and thus the Lehtes’ — true “protector.” For the greater part of Lehte history, the Nephites enjoyed the God of Jacob’s protection until they no longer “came unto Jesus Christ with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but ... did curse God, and wish to die” but still “would struggle with the sword for their lives” (Mormon 2:14).

“He Hath Protected”

The name “Jacob” first appears in the Book of Mormon at 1 Nephi 5:14 in connection with Lehi’s sons obtaining the brass plates and Lehi’s discovery of their contents:

And it came to pass that my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of **Jacob**, who was sold into Egypt, and **who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob**, and all his household from perishing with famine. (1 Nephi 5:14)

Nephi here summarized Joseph’s enslavement in Egypt and the eventual source of divine protection and preservation for Jacob and the rest of his family. This statement is more important than may appear at

first glance. Here Nephi succinctly recounted the narrative of Genesis 37–50, a fuller form of which was preserved on the plates of brass.¹⁰

Nephi, probably as his father did, read the entire narrative of Genesis 37–50 (in the much fuller form that he had it) as a story of protection and “preservation.” Indeed, there appears to be an allusion to the meaning of Jacob’s name (“may he protect”) in the verb translated “preserve” (cf. Genesis 32:20: “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, **and my life [soul] is preserved** [*wattināšēl napšī*]”; Genesis 45:5: “God did send me [Joseph] before you **to preserve life** [*lēmiḥyā*]”). It is worth noting here that the Semitic verb ‘*qb*’ as preserved in the Ethiopic verb ‘*aqaba*’ (“guard, watch, keep watch, safeguard, tend [flocks], preserve ... protect”)¹¹ and substantive participle ‘*aqābbi*’ (“guardian, guard, keeper, watchman, protector, official” cf. KJV Akkub)¹² and South Arabic ‘*qbt(n)*’ (“watchtower”)¹³ and **m’qbt* (“guard, guardian”)¹⁴ convey this sense of protection.

Lehi and Sariah evidently named their youngest sons Jacob and Joseph — whose births are finally mentioned in 1 Nephi 18, though they were born years earlier — after their ancestors Jacob and Joseph, quite conceivably because of the (fuller) brass plates account of Genesis 37–50. However, they may have had additional purposes in the naming of their sons. Consider the powerful testimony that Sariah bears concerning the Lord’s protection and preservation of her (then only) four sons after they had returned with the brass plates.

And she spake, saying: Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness; yea, and I also know of a surety that **the Lord hath protected** my sons, and delivered them out of the hands of Laban. (1 Nephi 5:8)

10. See, e.g., 2 Nephi 3 and Alma 46:24: “Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a remnant of Joseph; yea, let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, he saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed. And he said — Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment.”

11. Wolf Leslau, *Concise Dictionary of Ge'ez* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 174.

12. Ibid. Hebrew ‘*aqqûb*’.

13. Joan Copeland Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaean Dialect* (Harvard Semitic Studies 25; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 380.

14. Ibid. Attested as *m’qbthmw* (“[their] guards”).

Sariah's statement, "the Lord hath protected," precedes Nephi's first mention of his brother Jacob by a mere six verses. Jacob would be born about one year later.¹⁵ Of all the names in the Hebrew onomasticon through which an Israelite parent might express hope for protection or gratitude for past protection, "Jacob" is by far the most prominent, suitable, and likely candidate. Jacob's name, in effect, becomes Sariah's "psalm" as preserved in 1 Nephi 5:8.

Thus, Jacob's naming plausibly memorialized not only their ancestor, the forefather of all Israel, whom the Lord had protected and preserved (from Esau, Laban, the famine in Canaan, etc.), but also commemorated the Lord's protection and preservation of Jacob's four older brothers when they travelled to obtain the brass plates so that the family might be spiritually protected and preserved — i.e., from "perish[ing] in unbelief" (1 Nephi 4:13). The plates taught them more about their ancestors, protecting many of their posterity from similarly "perish[ing] in unbelief" (1 Nephi 4:13). In fact, Jacob's name may have constituted a kind of prayer for the preservation of the family throughout their wilderness journey and beyond, expressing the added hope of "protection" for the special son who was their "firstborn in the wilderness" (2 Nephi 2:1-2, 11), born far away from their homeland.

"Thou Shalt Dwell Safely with Thy Brother"

Before discussing the connection between Jacob ("may he protect," "he has protected"), divine protection, and Jacob's use of the term "protector," it is necessary to note textual evidence of parental concern over divine protection for Jacob. 1 Nephi 18, the chapter that mentions the births of Jacob and Joseph (see 1 Nephi 18:7), mentions the threat that their abusive elder brothers and brothers-in-law (Laman, Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael) posed to Lehi's young sons: "And Jacob and Joseph also, being young, having need of much nourishment, were grieved because of the afflictions of their mother" (1 Nephi 18:19).

15. The births of Jacob and Joseph are first mentioned in 1 Nephi 18:7, but they were certainly born much earlier, probably several years earlier. See S. Kent Brown, "A Case for Lehi's Bondage in Arabia," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997): 206-207. The giving of these two specific names almost certainly coincides with what was "found" on the brass plates (1 Nephi 5:14). Jacob could have been born in the days, weeks, or months after this event (Sariah may have been pregnant with him at the time). Joseph would have been born sometime after the party turned east across the Arabian desert, in the days of Lehi's "greatest sorrow" (2 Nephi 3:1).

It was this abusive situation (and probably many others) that Lehi referenced when he acknowledged that Jacob had suffered great “afflictions” and “much sorrow” as a boy (1 Nephi 2:1). Lehi, however, promised Jacob that he would eventually be beyond the grasp of his abusive brothers:

And now, Jacob, I speak unto you: Thou art my first-born in the days of my tribulation in the wilderness. And behold, in thy childhood thou hast suffered afflictions and much sorrow, because of the rudeness of thy brethren. Nevertheless, **Jacob** [may-he-protect], thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thy afflictions for thy gain. Wherefore, thy soul shall be blessed, and **thou shalt dwell safely with thy brother, Nephi**; and thy days shall be spent in the service of God. Wherefore, **I know that thou art redeemed**, because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer; for thou hast beheld that in the fulness of time he cometh to bring salvation unto men. (2 Nephi 2:1-3; cf. Deuteronomy 33:28)

And so the very blessing that Lehi bestowed on Jacob prior to his death was a blessing of divine protection through his brother Nephi: he would enjoy divine protection under his brother's care so that all of his time could “be spent in the service of God” — i.e., as a priest and a teacher in the Nephite temple.¹⁶ The blessing on Jacob-Israel in Deuteronomy 33:28 (“Israel shall then dwell in safety”) was also Jacob's personal and familial blessing.

In order to help Nephi to protect the faithful members of the Lehi/Ishmaelite family and perhaps “others”¹⁷ in the land of promise who had attached themselves to the clan, the Lord gave Nephi advanced warning of another attempt by his brothers upon his life and person:

And it came to pass that the Lord did warn me, that I, Nephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with me. Wherefore, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph,

16. 2 Nephi 5:26 (cf. 2 Nephi 26:16); Jacob 1:16-18.

17. John Gee and Matthew Roper, “‘I Did Liken All Scriptures unto Us’: Early Nephite Understandings of Isaiah Implications for ‘Others’ in the Land,” in *The Fulness of the Gospel: Foundational Teachings from the Book of Mormon: The 32nd Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (ed. Camille Fronk Olson, Brian M. Hauglid, Patty Smith, and Thomas A. Wayment; Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2003), 51-65.

my younger brethren, and also my sisters, and all those who would go with me. And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God; wherefore, they did hearken unto my words. (2 Nephi 5:5-6)

Only separation from Laman and Lemuel et al. or “depart[ure] from them” permitted Jacob and any other member of the family to escape an increasingly abusive situation and to “dwell safely with . . . Nephi” (2 Nephi 2:3).

Nephi’s protective measures were not simply reactive, but proactive. He knew that departure from his older brothers would not be enough. Therefore, using the sword of Laban as a prototype, he fashioned numerous swords to protect his people:

And I, Nephi, did take the sword of Laban, and after the manner of it did make many swords, lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us; for I knew their hatred towards me and my children and those who were called my people. (2 Nephi 5:14)

Nephi’s foresight proved accurate. He subsequently noted that “forty years had passed away, and we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren” (2 Nephi 5:34). These passages provide the backdrop for Jacob’s description of Nephi as “protector” in the introduction of his speech in 2 Nephi 6:2, a mere two verses after Nephi’s statement regarding “wars and contentions with our brethren” (2 Nephi 5:34).

“Unto Whom Ye Look as a King or a Protector”

The word “protector” is used twice in Latter-day Saint scripture¹⁸ and Jacob uses it in both instances (2 Nephi 6:2; Jacob 1:10). That fact, coupled with the fact that Jacob’s name means “may he [God] protect” or “he has protected,” bids us to consider the potential relationship of both these statements to Jacob’s name and biography. His first recorded words in the Book of Mormon are preserved in a speech given to the Nephites, probably shortly after Nephi’s “coronation” or ascension as leader of the

18. KJV Deuteronomy 32:38 uses the noun “protection” once. It would have been better translated hiding place. Deuteronomy 32:37-38: “And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, Which [Who] did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them [him] rise up and help you, and [let him] be your **protection** [*sitrâ* = place of hiding, covering].” Equally interesting, and more important, is the confluence of *ya’äqōb* and *’el’ēl* (in parallel with *yīsrā’ēl*) in Deuteronomy 33:28, which may have been the full original name, and is part of what appears to be an archaic zodiacal sequence, likewise a part of the blessing in Genesis 49.

nascent Nephite nation.¹⁹ Jacob's introduction to the written version of this speech is an autobiographical note. It is here that Jacob uses the term "protector" for the first time, echoing the original, non-pejorative meaning of "Jacob" as a part of the following chiasmic structure:

- A Behold, my beloved brethren, I, **Jacob** [may-he-protect],
 B **having been called of God and ordained** after the
 manner of his holy order,
 B' and **having been consecrated by my brother Nephi**,
 A' unto whom ye look as a king or a **protector**, and **upon whom**
you depend for safety... (2 Nephi 6:2; cf. Deuteronomy 33:28)

By means of this structure, Jacob's speech highlights the connection between his name and divine protection, as further accentuated by the close identification that he makes between his divine calling and ordination and Nephi's consecrating him. Jacob thus rearticulates his father's blessing of protection and safety upon him that was bound up with his future priestly, temple service: "thou shalt dwell safely with thy brother Nephi, and thy days shall be spent in the service of thy God" (2 Nephi 2:3).

It is difficult to surmise precisely what term for "protector" Jacob would have used here. The related Hebrew name Akkub may yield one possibility. Akkub (*'aqqûb*), itself a *qattûl/qattûl* noun formation from the verb *'qb* and cognate with the name Jacob, denotes "protector" or "protected"²⁰ (cf. Ethiopic *'aqqābi*). Other possibilities conceivably include substantive participial forms of *šmr* or *nšr*. Whatever the case, Jacob's use of a rare term rendered "protector" in connection with his own name Jacob ("may [God] protect") together with the phrase "depend upon for safety" as a possible allusion to Deuteronomy 33:28 ("Israel shall then dwell in safety"), this in juxtaposition with an allusion to

19. The first recorded words of Jacob, Nephi's brother, in the Book of Mormon are not those found in his personal account. Nephi includes a lengthy sermon that Jacob presented to the people of Nephi, possibly on the occasion of "Nephi's coronation." See John W. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon" in *Temples in the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 328. The structure of the sermon suggests that it was a prepared text read aloud.

20. Cf. the name Akkub, attested in Ezra 2:42, 45; Nehemiah 7:45; 11:19, 12:25; 1 Chronicles 3:24, 9:17. The name follows a *qattûl* pattern which suggests the active meaning "protector" or the passive meaning "the protected one." See HALOT, 847. In many of foregoing passages the name refers to a family of gatekeepers.

Lehi's blessing ("shalt dwell safely with thy brother, Nephi," 2 Nephi 2:3), merits special attention.

Nephi was not just the Nephites' "protector," he was Jacob's, too, in fulfillment of his father's final blessing and the wish expressed in his parents' naming him Jacob ("may-he [God]-protect"). Sariah recognized that "the Lord hath protected my sons" (1 Nephi 5:8); her youngest sons and that part of the family "who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God" (2 Nephi 5:6) continued to receive divine protection.

When Jacob added to "protector" the words "upon whom you depend for safety" (2 Nephi 6:2), he alluded to Deuteronomy 33:28 ("Israel shall then dwell in safety, untroubled²¹ is the fountain of Jacob [-El]") and back to the content of his father's dying blessing upon him personally: "**thou shalt dwell safely** with thy brother, Nephi; and thy days shall be spent in the service of thy God" (2 Nephi 2:3). Perhaps apart from his younger brother Joseph, nobody depended upon or benefited from Nephi's protection more than Jacob himself. Jacob's brother Nephi became the fulfillment of Lehi's and Sariah's eponymous hope for Jacob — "may he [the Lord] protect" him. Nephi himself constituted the Lord's means of protecting Jacob, Joseph, and the other faithful members of the Lehi-Ishmaelite clan.

"A Great Protector"

Years later, when Jacob received the small plates from Nephi, he alluded to the written version of his speech as preserved upon the small plates within Nephi's personal writings. The introductory portion of his personal record thus recalls the introduction of his written sermon:

Wherefore, I, **Jacob**, take it upon me to fulfill the commandment of my brother Nephi. Now Nephi began to be old and saw that he must soon die, wherefore, he anointed a man to be a king and ruler over his people ... The people having loved Nephi exceedingly, he having been a great **protector** for them, **having wielded the sword of Laban in their defense**, and having labored in all his days for their welfare. (Jacob 1:8-10)

Of all the details in Nephi's life that Jacob could have chosen to include in commenting on Nephi's death, he mentioned that the people

21. I follow KJV for the first colon or line, and then NSRV's rendering of *bdd* (*bādād*) as "untroubled" (or "alone").

“loved Nephi exceedingly,” in no small part because “he [had] been a great protector for them.”

Just as Nephi, whose name apparently derives from the Egyptian word *nfr*²² (“good,” “fair,” “goodly”),²³ suggests that his name was appropriately bestowed because he was one “having been born of **goodly** parents” and one “having a ... knowledge of the **goodness** and mysteries of God” (1 Nephi 1:1),²⁴ Jacob’s statements in 2 Nephi 6:2 and Jacob 1:10 suggest that his name was also fitting for one who whom the Lord had **protected** (along with the other “Nephites”) from the Lamanites, Nephi being the instrumentality of that divine protection and the fulfillment of Lehi’s final blessing upon Jacob.

“Redeemed ... from All Evil”: Divine Wrestling and Protective Embraces

Over a decade ago, John Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper insightfully noted that Enos’s autobiographical description of his “wrestle ... before God” was a literary allusion to Jacob the patriarch’s “wrestling” with a “man” at Peniel.²⁵ In a previous more recent study,²⁶ I noted that the use of the verbal noun “wrestle” [*hē’ābēq* from *’*bq*, cf. *wayyē’ābēq/bēhē’ābēqô*] constituted a deliberate wordplay on Enos’s father’s name “Jacob” (*ya’āqōb*) in terms of the verbal root ’*bq* in Enos 1:2. I have further argued that this holds additional implications for Enos’s autobiographical wordplay on his own name in Enos 1:1, especially in view of the patriarch Jacob’s (subsequently Israel’s) having “ha[d] ... power [*sārītā*; or better,

22. John Gee, “A Note on the Name *Nephi*” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 189-91; Gee, “Four Suggestions on the Origin of the Name Nephi,” in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 1-5.

23. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1999), 131.

24. Matthew L. Bowen, “Internal Textual Evidence for the Egyptian Origin of Nephi’s Name,” *Insights* 22/11 (2002): 2; Bowen, “Nephi’s Good Inclusion” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17 (2016): 181-95.

25. John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper, “Jacob and Enos: Wrestling before God,” *Insights* 21/5 (2001): 2-3.

26. Matthew L. Bowen, “‘And There Wrestled a Man with Him’ (Genesis 32:24): Enos’s Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 151-160.

struggled]²⁷ with God and with **men** [*ʾānāšīm*, cf. *ʾēnōš* = “man”; cf. also *ʾīš*] and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:28).

Genesis 33 completes the arc of Jacob’s divine “wrestle” in Genesis 32, with his reconciliatory “embrace” by Esau. I wish here to suggest that several divine protection and divine embrace passages in 2 Nephi and Enos should be understood against the backdrop of Jacob’s “wrestle” and “embrace” in Genesis 32–33. When Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, and Enos used the terms “redeem” and “redeemer,” they bring to mind Jacob’s biography:

In Genesis 48, Jacob’s blessing of Joseph’s sons was recorded thus:

And he [Jacob] blessed Joseph, and said,
[The] God [*hāʾēlōhīm*], before whom [*lēpānāw*] my fathers
Abraham and Isaac did walk,

The God [*hāʾēlōhīm*] which fed me all my life long unto this
day,
The Angel which redeemed me [*hammalʾāk haggōʾēl ʾōtī*]
from all evil, bless the lads;
and let my name [i.e., Jacob/Israel] be named on them,
and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.
(Genesis 48:15-16)

The juxtaposition of “before whom” [*(ʾāšer...) lēpānāw*] and “God” [*hāʾēlōhīm*] recalls Jacob’s “wrestling” experience at Peniel (*pēnīʾēl*) wherein he had “seen **God face to face** [*ʾēlōhīm pānīm ʾel- pānīm*]” (Genesis 32:30), and the subsequent reconciliatory “embrace” of his brother and his “see[ing] [Esau’s] **face** [*pānēkā*]”, as though [he] had seen the **face of God** [*pēnē ʾēlōhīm*]” (Genesis 33:10). Jacob’s mention of “the Angel [who] redeemed me” in parallel with “the God” alludes back to the divine man/angel/God with whom he “struggled” (becoming “Israel”) and “prevailed.”

The biblical narrator in Genesis 32, by means of a paronomasia on *yaʾāqōb* (Jacob) and *wayyēʾābēq* (“and there wrestled”) and *bēhēʾābēqō* (“in his wrestling”) inextricably linked the name Jacob (“may he [God] protect”) with the idea of being locked in the arms of divinity. Hugh Nibley writes:

27. Enos refers to the verb *šārītā* and the name Israel when he states that he speaks of “struggling in the spirit” on behalf of his fellow Nephites (Enos 1:10), “pray[ing] unto [the Lord] with many long strugglings for [his] brethren, the Lamanites” (Enos 1:11), and “strugglings” to restore the Lamanites “to the true faith” (Enos 1:14).

One of the most puzzling episodes in the Bible has always been the story of Jacob's wrestling with the Lord. When one considers that the word conventionally translated as wrestled (*yē'āvēq*) can just as well mean 'embrace' and that it was in this ritual embrace that Jacob received a new name and the bestowal of priestly and kingly power at sunrise (Genesis 32:24-30), the parallel to the Egyptian coronation embrace becomes at once apparent.²⁸

The paronomastic lexical association between "wrestling" and "embracing" in terms of the name Jacob is confirmed in the subsequent reconciliation or (at-one-ment) of Jacob with his brother Esau: "And Esau ran to meet him, **and embraced him** [*wayḥabbēqēhū*], and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept" (Genesis 33:4). Our English word "embrace" ultimately derives from Latin *in* + *bracchium* ("arm"; cf. Spanish *brazos*, "arms") — i.e., "in arms." The German verb *umarmen* (*um*, "around" + *Arme* "arms"), "embrace," "enfold," to "lock in ... one's arms," concretely expresses the image.

As Stephen Geller observes, "the story becomes the account of a gracious, if not guarded, reconciliation. So the linking of *wayḥabbēqēhū* and *wayyē'āvēq* is no casual ornament but a device deeply meaningful to the logic of the story: the surest sign of literary intention."²⁹ In fact, the somewhat homonymous Hebrew verbs *'bq* ("wrestle") and *ḥbq* ("embrace") that feature so prominently in Genesis 32–33 may ultimately derive from the same Semitic root. In Ugaritic *ḥbq* means "to embrace, take in one's arms, cover."³⁰ Both appear to be cognate with the Akkadian verb *epēqu* (or earlier, *epēqum*) = "to embrace; grow over, round" and "embrace (in affection),"³¹ which was *ḥabāqum* in Eblaite.³²

28. Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed. (CWHN 16; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2005), 434.

29. Stephen A. Geller, "The Struggle at Jabbok: the Uses of Enigma in a Biblical Narrative," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 14 (1982): 42–43.

30. Gregorio Del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 352–53.

31. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, ed. Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), 74. Cf., Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 352.

32. Written LÁ.LA = 'à -ba-gu-um. (Ibid.).

Mark Smith suggests that “**hbq* means to hold someone by wrapping one’s arms around the person.”³³ This appears to be the exact sense of Lehi’s words in 2 Nephi 1:15, a passage which Nibley further cites as an example of the “ritual embrace” or divine embrace “that consummates the final escape from death”³⁴: “But behold, **the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love**” (2 Nephi 1:15).³⁵

Tremper Longman writes, “the verb *hbq* (embrace) refers to a gesture or action that denotes affection for another ... especially in the context of greetings or welcomes, particularly for the first time or after separation (Gen. 29:13; 2 Kings 4:16).”³⁶ The patriarch Jacob is the object of this verb in Genesis 29:13 (“then Laban heard the tidings of **Jacob** [*ya’āqōb*] his sister’s son, that he ran to meet him, **and embraced him** [*wayḥabbeq-lō*], and kissed him, and brought him to his house”) and Genesis 33:4 (“And Esau ran to meet him, **and embraced him** [*wayḥabbēqēhū*], and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept”). He is the subject of the verb in Genesis 48:10: “And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, **and embraced them** [*wayḥabbēq lāhem*].” In each instance, the *hbq-ya’āqōb* paronomasia serves to strengthen the cognitive link between Jacob’s name and the affectionate, protective embrace. The Lord’s embrace of Lehi speaks to a kind of realized eschatology that his ancestor Jacob had attained to through the events of Genesis 32–33. Recognizing the paronomasia on *ya’āqōb-wayyē’ābēq-wayḥabbēqēhū* is key to not only understanding the entire cycle that deals with Jacob’s life and redemption, but also to understanding how Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, Enos, and their successors may have read and understood that cycle. For example, Mormon describes Alma’s experience that recalls the Jacob-Esau cycle and Enos’s autobiography: “Nevertheless **Alma labored much in the spirit, wrestling with God in mighty prayer**, that he would pour

33. Mark S. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23: Royal Constructions of Opposition, Intersection, Integration, and Domination* (SBL Resources for Biblical Study 51; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 96.

34. Hugh W. Nibley, *Approaching Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 559.

35. See Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd rev. ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), “Sign List,” 453, D32.

36. Tremper Longman (*The Book of Ecclesiastes* [New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998], 116) commenting on Ecclesiastes 3:5 “a time to embrace [*‘ēt laḥābōq*], and a time to refrain from embracing [*wē’ēt lirḥōq mēḥabbēq*].”

out his Spirit upon the people who were in the city; that he would also grant that he might baptize them unto repentance" (Alma 8:10). The new name Israel had been bestowed or put upon Jacob as part of his requested blessing while enfolded in the arms of—"wrestling" with—this God/Angel, just as Lehi was "encircled about eternally in the arms of [the Lord's] love" (2 Nephi 1:15).

It might be easy here to overlook additional language that firmly links Lehi's experience back to that of his ancestor Jacob. Lehi moreover declared that "the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell" just as Jacob invoked "the God" or "the Angel which redeemed me from all evil" to put the name Jacob-Israel on them. Both Jacob and Lehi had "seen" their Redeemer's face (Genesis 32:30 [MT 32:31]) or "glory" (2 Nephi 1:15) and had been in the arms of Divinity as the *summa res* of their redemption.

It is against the biblical Jacob-wrestle-embrace-redemption backdrop that we should examine Lehi's earlier promise to his son Jacob:

Wherefore, **thy soul shall be blessed**, and **thou shalt dwell safely with thy brother, Nephi**; and thy days shall be spent in the service of thy God [i.e., in the temple]. Wherefore, **I know that thou art redeemed, because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer** [cf. Jacob's *gō'ēl*]; for **thou hast beheld** that in the fulness of time **he cometh to bring salvation unto men**. And **thou hast beheld** in thy youth **his glory**; wherefore, **thou art blessed** even as they unto whom he shall minister in the flesh. (2 Nephi 2:3-4; cf. Deuteronomy 33:28)

Jacob had seen his divine protector, the Lord — the protector implied in his hypocoristic, theophoric name. Nevertheless, we note that Lehi gave Jacob a blessing ("thy soul shall be blessed"; "wherefore thou art blessed") of divine protection bestowed through his brother Nephi ("thou shalt dwell safely with thy brother"), the promise of "redemption" (i.e., atonement, "I know that thou art redeemed"), and declared Jacob's earlier theophany as a young man ("thou hast beheld that ... he cometh to bring salvation unto men. And thou hast beheld in thy youth his glory"; Nephi later asserted, "My brother, Jacob, also has seen him").³⁷ All of this recalls, and appears

37. 2 Nephi 11:2-3: "And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words. For I will liken his words unto my people, and I will send them forth unto all my children, for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him. And my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him; wherefore, I will send their words forth unto my children to prove unto them that my words are true."

to be meant to recall, their ancestor Jacob's esoteric "temple" experience at Peniel, and his subsequent reconciliation with Esau.

Shortly thereafter, Nephi and his younger brothers fled from their older brothers in much the same way that Jacob fled from the anger and hatred of his brother, Esau. The charge in both cases was "supplanting" or "robbery" (see Genesis 27:35-36; Mosiah 10:16; Alma 20:13; 54:17, see further below). Genesis 27:41 states, "Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." In 2 Nephi 4:13, Nephi recorded, "And it came to pass that not many days after his death, Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were angry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord."

Rebekah warned Jacob to "flee" ("flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran," Genesis 27:43) from his brother Esau. Similarly, the Lord warned Nephi to flee from older brothers, "the Lord did warn me, that I, Nephi, should depart from them and **flee into the wilderness**, and all those who would go with me" (2 Nephi 5:5; cf. 4:33). In both instances, the warning to flee constitutes a part of the divine protection being afforded the two Jacobs.

Years later, when Esau went out to meet his brother Jacob, the latter's "terror is almost palpable"³⁸ as evident in his arrangement of his family in two camps, the children of the concubines (or wives of lesser status) in the front, etc. Jacob's distress is evident in his prayer:

And Jacob said, **O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord** which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. **Deliver me**, I pray thee, **from the hand of my brother**, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. (Genesis 32:9-12)

Jacob's prayer finds its analog in Nephi's Psalm (which clearly has other antecedents in the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible). Like Jacob's prayer,

38. Geller, "The Struggle at Jabbok," 43; Stephen Geller, *Sacred Enigmas: Literary Religion in the Hebrew Bible* (London: Routledge, 1996), 13.

Nephi's Psalm is both a plea for protection and cry for redemption, which are themselves not mutually exclusive. The "wrestle" with the divine "man" ('îš, 'ēlōhîm, or *mal'āk*, Genesis 32:24, 28; 48:16) that follows Jacob's prayer is matched by a similarly envisioned divine encounter that Nephi anticipated:

O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin? May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite! O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road! O Lord, **wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!** O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way — but that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy. (2 Nephi 4:31-33)

Nibley cites Nephi's petition as an example of a ritual embrace and "a dramatic situation" (cf. temple drama): "It was the custom for one fleeing for his life in the desert to seek protection in the tent of a great sheik, crying out, '*Ana dakhîluka*', meaning 'I am thy suppliant,' whereupon the Lord would place the hem of his robe over the guest's shoulder and declare him under his protection."³⁹ Nephi's plea, "O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul," was a plea for protection and atonement. As Nibley puts it, "to be redeemed is to be atoned."⁴⁰ Nephi's subsequent plea, "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me in the robe of thy righteousness!" constitutes a more intense plea for the same outcome. Nephi desired the same redemptive embrace(s) that Jacob his ancestor (Genesis 32-33) and his father Lehi had experienced.

A temple situation is presupposed by the imagery of "gates" — "the gates of [thy] righteousness [*ša'ârê-šedeq*]" (Psalm 118:19-20)⁴¹ or "gate

39. Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 559.

40. Ibid, 567. He continues, "From this it should be clear what kind of oneness is meant by the Atonement — it is being received in a close embrace of the prodigal son, expressing not only forgiveness, but oneness of heart and mind that amounts to identity, like a literal family identity as John sets it forth so vividly through chapters 14 through 17 of his Gospel."

41. Psalm 118:19-20: "Open to me the gates of righteousness [*ša'ârê-šedeq*]: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: This gate of the Lord [*hašša'ar lyhwh*],

of heaven [ša'ar haššāmayīm]⁴² (of the “house of God[s] [bêt 'ēlōhīm, cf. Bethel]” in Genesis 28:17) opposite “the gates of hell.” Nibley clearly recognized the “temple” nature of Nephi’s Psalm:

He [Nephi] comes to the tent of the Lord and enters as a suppliant; and in reply, the Master, as was the ancient custom, puts the hem of the robe protectively over the kneeling man’s shoulder (*katafa*). This puts him under the Lord’s protection from all enemies. They embrace in a close hug, as Arab chiefs still do; the Lord makes a place for him and invites him to sit down beside him — they are at-one. (2 Nephi 4:33; Alma 5:24)⁴³

Patriarch Jacob’s triumph consisted in his being reconciled to the Lord and to his inimical brother Esau and thus being “redeemed ... from all evil.” Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, and Enos experienced reconciliation and at-one-ment with the Lord, too. They longed to experience the reconciliation that Jacob experienced with Esau with their own family members who “would not come unto [Lehi] and partake of the fruit” of the tree of life (1 Nephi 8:18) — i.e., were not willing to come.⁴⁴

Subsequently and appropriately, Jacob, son of Lehi, is the one who established the image of the divine embrace as a primary means of teaching about the protective aspects of the atonement and divine mercy. Jacob’s use of divine embrace imagery in the context of Psalm 95:7-11,

into which the righteous shall enter”; cf. Isaiah 26:2: “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” 2 Nephi 9:41: “O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that **his paths are righteous**. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and **the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel**; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.” Note the typical Egyptian temple as “the doors of heaven” (Edward F. Wente, “Egyptian Religion,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 2:409). See also John Gee, “The Keeper of the Gate,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen Ricks (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 233-74.

42. Helaman 3:28: “Yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God.”

43. Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 559.

44. Jennifer C. Lane, “The Presence of the Lord,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision: The 40th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson; Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 130.

which he quoted, portrayed the worshipper at the veil or the threshold of “enter[ing] into” the Lord’s “rest”:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I beseech of you in words of soberness that ye would repent, and come with full purpose of heart, and **cleave unto God as he cleaveth unto you** [cf. Hebrew *dbq* = “cleave”]. **And while his arm of mercy is extended towards you in the light of the day**, harden not your hearts. (Jacob 6:5; cf. 2 Nephi 32:4)

Jacob’s influential image of the Lord’s “arm of mercy” being “extended” appears throughout the remainder of the Book of Mormon (see, e.g., Mosiah 16:12; 29:20; Alma 5:33; 19:36; 29:10; 3 Nephi 9:14; Mormon 6:17). Certainly, the exodus image of Yahweh’s redeeming “outstretched arm” (e.g., Deuteronomy 26:8; Jeremiah 27:5) influenced Jacob’s development of this idea (see especially the Lord’s “arm” in 2 Nephi 8:5, 9 as quoted from Isaiah 51:5, 9-11). However, the “arms of [the Lord’s] love” (2 Nephi 1:15) must have also influenced Jacob, as did Zenos’s and Isaiah’s image of the Lord’s “stretched forth” or “spread out” hands (Jacob 5:47; Isaiah 65:2; see especially Jacob 6:4). But it is the reconciliatory wrestling and embrace of Genesis 32–33 that evidently became, for Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, and their successors, a specific source for preaching the atonement of Jesus Christ and its effects.

The impact of ancestral stories about Jacob and his divine protection are perhaps nowhere more evident than in the writing of Jacob’s son, Enos, whose autobiographical introduction contains wordplay both on his name and the name of his father, Jacob:⁴⁵

Behold, it came to pass that I, **Enos** [*’ēnôš*, Hebrew “man”], knowing my father [i.e., *ya’āqōb*] that he was a just **man** [*’îš/’ēnôš*]—for he taught me in his language and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it—And I will tell you of the **wrestle** [**hē’ābēq*, pun on *ya’āqōb*] which I had **before God** [*lîpnê ’ēlōhîm*, cf. Peniel],⁴⁶ before I received a remission of my sins. (Enos 1:1-2)

Enos’s autobiography evidences a notable parallelistic feature—Enos (man), “father” (Jacob) – “man” (*’îš/’ēnôš*), “wrestle” (echoing Jacob)—wherein the terms flip: first, Enos (man) flips from the name itself to emphasize its meaning—i.e., to “man” (*’îš-’ēnôš*) and second,

45. Bowen, “And There Wrestled a Man with Him,” 151-60.

46. Tvedtnes and Roper, “Jacob and Enos,” 2-3.

“father” as identifying Jacob (the son of Lehi) to the term “wrestle” which functions as a paronomastic identifier of Jacob (the son of Isaac, and patriarchal ancestor of Israel).

In this way, Enos’s introduction cunningly recalls both Nephi’s autobiographical wordplay and the paronomasia on “Jacob” found throughout the Genesis narratives, especially the scene in Genesis 32, in which Jacob (*ya’āqōb*) “passed over the ford **Jabbok**” (*yabbōq*) and “there **wrestled** [*wayyē’ābēq*] **a man** [*’îš*, cf. *’ēnōš*]” (32:22, 24 [MT 23, 25]).⁴⁷ Jacob refused to break his hold on the “man” unless the “man” blessed him, whereupon the “man” pronounced a new name on Jacob: “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but **Israel** [*yisrā’ēl*] for **as a prince hast thou power** [*šārītā*, or, **thou hast struggled**]⁴⁸ with **God** [*’ēlōhīm*] and **men** [*’ānāšīm*, plural of “Enos”]” (32:26-29). The patriarch Jacob gave the place the new name “Peniel” (*pēnī’ēl*, “face of God”) because he had “seen **God face to face** [*’ēlōhīm pānīm ’el-pānīm*],” a name to which Enos alluded when describing his “wrestle ... **before God** [**lipnē ’ēlōhīm*],” as Tvedtnes and Roper note.⁴⁹ This is the pivotal event in the life story of him who went from being a grabber of his brother’s “heel” and a “supplanter” to one whom his once-estranged brother “embraced” (*wayhabbēqēhū*, Genesis 33:4; cf. *wayyē’ābēq*, Genesis 32:24 [MT 25]), another sublime pun on “Jacob” (*ya’āqōb*).

Moreover, it is significant that Enos — unlike the Genesis narrator who specified that a “man” wrestled with Jacob — never explicitly mentioned the individual with whom he “wrestled.” That is because the “wrestle that [he] had before God” was also with a “man,” namely himself — Enos (Heb. *’ēnōš* “man”)! Enos also seemed to allude to Jacob’s new name “Israel” when he described his and his people’s later “strugglings” on behalf of, and with the Lamanites (Enos 1:10, 11, 14). Amid these struggles Enos obtained a promise that the Nephite records would be protected or “preserved” (1:15-18).

“May ... the God of Jacob Protect this People”

47. *’ēnōš* is a poetic synonym of *’îš* (“man”) and both share the same (usual) plural form: *’ānāšīm*. Jacob “struggled” (or “had power”) with divine beings and “Enoses.”

48. There are two **sry* roots in Hebrew: one is a biform of **šrr* (“rule, reign”; see HALOT, 1362), the other means to “strive, contend with” (see HALOT, 1354), i.e., to “struggle with.” The latter seems to best fit the context (cf. “wrestling”). The author’s use of wordplay, however, allows for both: a “new name” is not infrequently a throne name.

49. Tvedtnes and Roper, “Jacob and Enos,” 2-3.

In addition to the writings of Nephi, Jacob, and Enos, another part of Nephite sacred history that revolves around the Jacob-Esau story is the traditional Lamanite grievance that Nephi had “robbed” their fathers. As Zeniff reported, “they said that he **robbed** them” (Mosiah 10:16) — i.e., he had taken the plates of brass, and “supplanted” them in their right to rule. In the words of Lamoni’s father: “Behold, he **robbed** our fathers” (Alma 20:13). As noted above, Nephite writers — e.g., Enos and his successors — recognized that Nephi and his successors fit the biblical type of Jacob and the Lamanites fit the type of Esau in terms of fraternal relationship dynamics and their underlying grievances.

Moreover, that the Nephites themselves were likely aware⁵⁰ of the prophet Jeremiah’s pejorative wordplay on the name Jacob is well-known: “Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will **utterly supplant** [*‘āqōb ya‘qōb*], and every neighbour will walk with slanders” (Jeremiah 9:4). Malachi, perhaps cognizant of Jeremiah’s earlier wordplay, used a similar wordplay in his well-known declaration on tithing and “robbing” God (see immediately below). Importantly, Malachi 3-4 became “Lehite” texts when Jesus himself quoted them in full to the Nephites and Lamanites.

Thus, when Jesus quoted Malachi in 3 Nephi 24-25, Malachi’s declaration on tithing and “robbing” God took on additional significance for the Lamanite and Nephites in light of two historical issues that had existed among them: Lamanite charges of “robbery” against the Nephites and the more recent, but related issue of the Gaddianton “robbers.” It should be remembered here Jesus’s audience were “the house of Jacob,” “the seed of Jacob,” “the remnant of Jacob” or “the sons of Jacob”:

For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore **ye sons of Jacob** [*bēnē ya‘āqōb*] are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts. But ye say: Wherein shall we return? **Will** a man **rob** [*hāyiqba’*] God? Yet ye have **robbed** [*qōbē‘īm*] me.

50. Nephi states that the brass plates contained “many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah” (1 Nephi 5:13). Nephi himself quotes Jeremiah 17:5 (“Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord,” 2 Nephi 4:34, see also 2 Nephi 28:31). Similarly, Nephi’s use of the phrase “fountain of living waters” (1 Nephi 11:25) appears to derive from Jeremiah’s twofold use of the same phrase (Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13). Jeremiah’s prophecies remained important among the Nephites even in later years as evident in Helaman 8:20 (cf. 3 Nephi 19:4).

But ye say: **Wherein have we robbed [qěba'ănûkā] thee?** In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for **ye have robbed me [qōbē'im], even this whole nation.** (3 Nephi 24:6-9; quoting Malachi 3:6-9)

As Luis Alonso-Schökel and Moshe Garsiel have individually noted,⁵¹ Malachi played on the name Jacob (*ya'ăqōb*) in terms of verb *qb'*, to “rob.” The wordplay takes the form of paronomasia exploiting the homophony of Jacob and the verb *qb'*. The use of *qb'* in connection with the name Jacob emphasizes that “Jacob” or the “sons of Jacob” (i.e., Israel as a nation) stands guilty of “robbing” the Lord. This is considered such an important point that the verb is repeated four times in closed proximity for emphasis.

Jesus declared that he was “commanded” to “give” this particular text to his Lamanite and Nephite audience. Citing this scripture to the “sons of Jacob” not only suggested but *ensured* that they would be included in “this whole nation” (or, “the nation — all of it”). In other words, they would be brought under the same condemnation as their brethren in the eastern hemisphere. This wordplay also recalls the Genesis narrative with its paronomasia on “Jacob,” “heel,” and the denominative verb *qb*, to “supplant,” “usurp” (Genesis 25:26; 27:36). The verbs *qb'* and *qb* are formed from the same three root letters, homophonous (similar in sound), and as LXX Greek Malachi 3 suggests, can be treated as virtually synonymous.⁵² In other words, “supplanting” was tantamount to “robbing.”

This very issue — “supplanting” or “robbery” — had long been one of the traditional grievances of the Lamanites against the Nephites. According to this tradition, Nephi “robbed” the birthright of Laman (Mosiah 10:16; Alma 45:17).⁵³ Nephi not only “robbed,” but *supplanted* Laman and Lemuel’s “right” to rule, just as Jacob “supplanted” Esau: “he had taken the ruling out of their hands” (Mosiah 10:15). Nephite writers

51. See Luis Alonso-Schökel, *A Manual of Biblical Poetics* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988), 31; Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 21.

52. Cf. the rendering of the verb *qb'* with the verb *pternizein* “to betray” (literally, to strike at or trip up by the heel) in LXX Greek suggests that the Hellenistic Jewish translator recognized the wordplay and its connection to the Jacob-Esau cycle (Genesis 25:26; 27:36; Hosea 12:3).

53. See Noel B. Reynolds, “The Political Dimension in Nephi’s Small Plates,” *BYU Studies* 27/4 (Fall 1987): 15-16.

like Enos and Zeniff manifested awareness of this biblical parallel. They understood that this perceived “robbery,” “supplanting” or “usurpation” constituted the basis for the Lamanites’ longstanding “hatred” and treatment of the Nephites — i.e., robbery, plunder, and murder (Mosiah 10:17).

When it came to the issue of systematic “robbery,” however, the Nephites were by no means faultless. According to Mormon’s abridgment of Helaman’s record, secret combinations began among the Nephites as a political dispute (see Helaman 1). Bearing in mind the original meaning of “Jacob” (“may he protect”) and the pejorative associations ascribed to the name by the Genesis text (Genesis 25:26; 27:36) and prophetic texts (Jeremiah 9:4 and Malachi 3:6-9), it is interesting to consider Mormon’s description of the Gadianton robbers’ (hereafter Gaddianton robbers’, see below) program of systematic “protect[ion] and preserv[ation]”:

But behold, Satan did stir up the hearts of the more part of the Nephites, insomuch that they did unite with those *bands of robbers*, and did enter into their covenants and their oaths, that they would **protect and preserve** one another in whatsoever difficult circumstances they should be placed, that they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their **stealings**. (Helaman 6:21)

Mormon further informs us that during this same period the Nephites were in “a state of such awful wickedness” in part because “those *Gaddianton robbers* [were] filling the judgment-seats — having **usurped** [cf. the negative, denominative meaning of *qb*, “supplant,” or “usurp”] the power and authority of the land; laying aside the commandments of God, and not in the least aright before him; doing no justice unto the children of men” (Helaman 7:4). Not insignificantly, Mormon indicated that the *Gaddianton robbers* themselves eventually adopted the old traditional anti-Nephite Lamanite polemic that the Nephites had “robbed” or “retained” from the Lamanites their “right[s] to the government”⁵⁴ (see especially 3 Nephi 3:10 in view of Alma 54:17-18, 24)⁵⁵

54. See, e.g., 2 Nephi 5:3; Mosiah 10:16; and Alma 54:17-18, 24.

55. From *Giddianhi*’s epistle to Lachoneus: “And I write this epistle unto you, Lachoneus, and I hope that ye will deliver up your lands and your possessions, without the shedding of blood, that this my people may recover their rights and government, who have dissented away from you because of your wickedness in retaining from them their rights of government, and except ye do this, I will avenge their wrongs. *I am Giddianhi.*”

in order to justify their own practices of robbery, plunder, and murder (3 Nephi 4:5).

In Helaman 2:11-12, Gaddianton is spelled with the double-*d* in the Original Book of Mormon Manuscript, and is allowed by the O MS spacing at Helaman 2:4. As pointed out by John W. Welch and Kelly Ward in 1985, the Hebrew word for “band; bandits,” *gēdūd*, is spelled with the double-*d*.⁵⁶ In fact, the Hebrew phrase *’iš gēdūdīm* “band of robbers” is even used in Hosea 6:9 (cf. Hosea 7:1 “bandits” NRSV; Genesis 30:11 “troop”⁵⁷ KJV), and this matches the plural Neo-Babylonian *gudūdānu*, and Phoenician *b’l ’gddm* “gang of robbers” (cf. Psalm 56:7 *yāgôddû* “they form a gang,” as emended).⁵⁸

By the time the Savior appeared to the Lamanites and Nephites in 3 Nephi 11, both politico-ethnic groups had been heavily involved in the practices of the *Gaddianton robbers* (Helaman 6:17-18, 30-31, 37-38). They had been guilty of “robbing” God in their ceaseless attempts to “get gain”⁵⁹ and their concomitant oppression of the poor (Helaman 6:39).

Just one generation after the time of Nephi the son of Helaman and just two generations after the rise of the Gaddianton robbers, they threatened the very survival of the Nephites and Lamanites. Like many of the “robbers” themselves, the Lamanites and Nephites were “Jacob” or “the seed of Jacob” (3 Nephi 5:24; Mormon 5:24; 7:10; cf. Alma 46:23). 3 Nephi 4:10 states that they “did not fear [the robbers]; but they did

56. “Gadianton”, Book of Mormon Onomasticon, last modified on 14 November 2015, <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/GADIANTON>; citing John W. Welch and Kelly Ward, “Thieves and Robbers,” July 1985 *FARMS Update* (reprinted in John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research* [Provo, UT: FARMS; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 248-49).

57. LDS *Holy Bible* (1979), 45 n, play on Hebrew words *gedud* “troop” and *gad* “good fortune.”

58. Hayim ben Yosef Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew: Etymological, Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalence with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2009) 64; citing Genesis 49:19, Psalm 94:21 *yāgôddû* (“band together against”) from *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, Volume 5*, “G.” Ed. Leo Oppenheim (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956), 120a; Wolfram von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965-1981), 1:295b; Herbert Donner and Wolfgang. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968), 26A I:13:13-15.

59. On the wordplay on the name Cain in terms of “get gain” (Helaman 6:17, 27; Mormon 8:40; Ether 8:15-16, 22-23; cf. Moses 5:31), see Matthew L. Bowen, “Getting Cain and Gain,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 (2015): 115-41.

fear **their God** and did supplicate him for **protection**.” Miraculously, the robbers were defeated and the faithful preserved. The jubilation that followed (4:29-31) took on a ceremonial nature where the text quotes three liturgical exclamations thanking the Lord and invoking his continual “preservation” or “protection.” The second, in particular, seems to play on the meaning of “Jacob”:

And they did rejoice and cry again with one voice, saying:
May the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and **the God of Jacob, protect** [cf. *ya'āqōb*] this people in righteousness so long as they call on the name of their God for **protection**.
 (3 Nephi 4:30; cf. Deuteronomy 33:28)

The Lord did protect Lehi's family and descendants, including Jacob's descendants, “so long as they call[ed] on their God for protection,” protection that also came as an extended fulfillment of the ancient blessing of Jacob-Israel in Deuteronomy 33:28 and Lehi's son, Jacob, in 2 Nephi 3:2.

When they ceased to “call upon God for protection” (a few generations later), swift destruction ensued. The “robbers” from which the descendants of Jacob had been protected would play a decisive role in the destruction of the Nephites: “And they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would **struggle** with the sword for their lives” (Mormon 2:14). Mormon promised his readers, “in the end of this book [i.e., the entire Book of Mormon] ye shall see that this Gaddianton did prove, yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi” (Helaman 2:13).

Accordingly, Mormon marked the presence and influence of the Gaddianton robbers at each stage of his people's destruction. When he was “forbidden to preach” to the people as a whole “because of the hardness of their hearts” (Mormon 1:17), Mormon wrote that concomitantly, the “*Gaddianton robbers*, who were among the Lamanites, did infest the land” (Mormon 1:18). Increasingly, “the land was filled with robbers and with Lamanites” (Mormon 2:8; cf. 10) until, Mormon tells us,

My heart did sorrow because of this the great calamity of my people, because of their wickedness and their abominations. But behold, we did go forth against the Lamanites and the **robbers of Gaddianton**, until we had again taken possession of the lands of our inheritance. And the three hundred and forty and ninth year had passed away. And in the three hundred and fiftieth year we made a treaty with the Lamanites

and the **robbers of Gaddianton**, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided. (Mormon 2:27-28)

Mormon notes that it was not just the “unbelieving”⁶⁰ Lamanites that destroyed the Nephites, but also the Gaddianton robbers from whom he had once saved and “protected” the Nephites and Lamanites (3 Nephi 4) — the seed of Jacob (“may he protect”).

In the end, however, the Lord removed that protection, and the Nephites, once so favored of the Lord, were destroyed. But the Lord removed his divine protection from the Lamanites too. Moroni states, “And behold, it is the hand of the Lord which hath done it. And behold also, **the Lamanites are at war one with another; and the whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed**; and no one knoweth the end of the war” (Mormon 8:8). The *Gaddianton* problem remained a danger for them: “And now, behold, I say no more concerning them, for **there are none save it be the Lamanites and robbers** that do exist upon the face of the land” (Mormon 8:8-9).

“The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” had ceased to “protect” the Nephites and Lamanites “in righteousness” because they no longer “call[ed] on the name of their God for **protection**” (see again 3 Nephi 4:31; cf. Deuteronomy 33:28). The Lord did, however, protect Nephite records (including the “plates of Jacob”) in accordance with the promise secured by Enos and his fathers, including his father Jacob.

Conclusion

The last thing that Mormon wrote before his death informed his latter-day audience that they are descendants of Jacob and that this identity is critical to their eternal welfare: “And ye will also know that ye are a **remnant of the seed of Jacob**; therefore ye are numbered among the people of the first covenant; and if it so be that ye believe in Christ, and are baptized, first with water, then with fire and with the Holy Ghost, following the example of our Savior, according to that which he hath

60. See, e.g., Mormon’s and Moroni’s descriptions of the Lamanites in Mormon 5:15; 9:6; Ether 4:3. For more on the Nephite polemical use of “unbelief” (cf. Hebrew *lō’-’ēmun*, Deuteronomy 32:20) as means of characterizing the Lamanites, see Matthew L. Bowen, “Not Partaking of the Fruit: Its Generational Consequences and Its Remedy,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision (2011 Sperry Symposium)*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 240-63.

commanded us, it shall be well with you in the day of judgment. Amen" (Mormon 7:10). His son wrote, similarly, "But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are" (Mormon 9:11).

Amulek appealed to his ancestors' and forebears' (Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, and Enos's) use of the image of Jacob's "wrestle" and atoning "embrace" to teach about how the atonement of Jesus Christ *protects* the truly penitent from the demands of divine justice: "And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and **encircles them in the arms of safety**, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance **is exposed** to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption" (Alma 34:16; cf. 2 Nephi 1:15; 4:33; Enos 1:2; cf. "mercy, which overpowereth justice," Alma 34:15).

Although mercy through the atonement protects the repentant, it cannot and will not save a man or a woman "in" his or her sins. Perhaps, then, we can again detect an allusion to "Jacob" in Alma's explanation of this doctrine to Corianton: "What, do ye suppose that mercy can **rob** justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God" (Alma 42:25).

In the end, the Nephites, whom "the Lord would not always suffer ... to take happiness in sin" (Mormon 2:13), were overtaken by divine justice and the consequences of their unrighteousness. It might have been otherwise, as Mormon laments: "For I know that such will sorrow for the calamity of the house of Israel; yea, they will sorrow for the destruction of this people; they will sorrow that this people had not repented that they might have been **clasped in the arms of Jesus**" (Mormon 5:11).

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CHRISTMASTIME: WHEN OUR SOULS CAN SING

Jenny Oaks Baker

Abstract: Christmas is upon us, and it is a special, magical time. I have seen the love of God touch countless lives through the glorious music of the season.

Christmas is a magical time. It is a time when the joy of Christ's birth is heralded through the streets, and hearts are turned toward the Savior of the world. It is a time when Christians, without fear of offense, can publicly profess their faith through vocal and written greetings of "Merry Christmas." It is a time when people throughout the world publicly speak of the Savior of mankind and the peace, joy, and gladness that His birth brings to the earth. It is a wonderful time of spirituality, symbols, service, traditions, lights, gifts, generosity, faith, food, friends, and family. And it is a time of glorious and meaningful music.

There is something truly special about the music we hear and perform at Christmastime. It feeds our souls and gladdens our hearts. For a time, radio stations defer the next new song and instead play the favorite old song. As these classic songs reign supreme, we hear the tunes of our youth, and we rejoice together. And for the faithful Christian hearing these beloved Christmas carols, many of which are sacred testimonies to the divinity of the Savior Jesus Christ, it is a balm for the weary, isolated soul and feeds faithful devotion.

As a musician, I am often privileged to be the conduit of sacred music that provides sustenance to starving souls. As a performer, my most treasured performances have been those when I have felt God's immense love for everyone in the audience. This love is real, powerful, and all-encompassing. Good music softens hearts and opens them to feel the grace of God's love. It is joyously electrifying to be the deliverer of this divine love through inspired music.

I remember the first time I experienced this as a performer. In my early twenties I was invited to perform as a soloist with The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra on Temple Square on President Gordon B. Hinckley's 90th Birthday Celebration, a concert held in the brand new 25,000-seat LDS Conference Center and broadcast throughout the world.

When the producers of the show contacted me to ask what songs I would like to perform, in my youthful desire to prove myself as a violinist and a performer, I suggested a few flashy and virtuosic violin show pieces — songs that would draw attention to the level of my playing. The producers conferred with President Hinckley and then related to me his desire to have me perform something slower and more familiar to the audience. It was decided that I would perform the Celtic ballad *Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms*. I was disappointed at the time, worrying that I was missing a chance to show off my violinistic skills.

However, during the dress rehearsal, as I saw the entire program unfold, I could see this song was the perfect selection for the program, and I was so grateful for President Hinckley's wise direction. It was the perfect song because it was not about me as a performer — it was about unifying, uplifting, and touching the audience, honoring the prophet, and praising God.

As I performed the song in the show, I experienced for the first time what it feels like to be the musical vessel through which God's love shines down upon His children. It was an incredible experience and was a turning point in my career. From that moment on, I have come to understand that I was given a musical gift not to impress my audiences with *my* playing but to touch their hearts, give them joy through music, and bring them closer to God.

Good music is impactful. Sacred music is divine. Christmas is such a joyous time, when entire musical programs throughout the world are centered on Jesus Christ. Joining with fellow believers in praising the Savior of the world through music is a glorious, transcending experience. It truly brings the magic of Christmas into our lives and enables our souls to sing!

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