

INTERPRETER



A JOURNAL OF LATTER-DAY SAINT
FAITH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Volume 31 · 2019 · Pages 111 - 138

Messengers of the Covenant: Mormon's Doctrinal Use of Malachi 3:1 in Moroni 7:29–32

Matthew L. Bowen

Offprint Series

© 2019 The Interpreter Foundation. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.

ISSN 2372-1227 (print)
ISSN 2372-126X (online)

The goal of The Interpreter Foundation is to increase understanding of scripture through careful scholarly investigation and analysis of the insights provided by a wide range of ancillary disciplines, including language, history, archaeology, literature, culture, ethnohistory, art, geography, law, politics, philosophy, etc. Interpreter will also publish articles advocating the authenticity and historicity of LDS scripture and the Restoration, along with scholarly responses to critics of the LDS faith. We hope to illuminate, by study and faith, the eternal spiritual message of the scriptures—that Jesus is the Christ.

Although the Board fully supports the goals and teachings of the Church, The Interpreter Foundation is an independent entity and is neither owned, controlled by nor affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or with Brigham Young University. All research and opinions provided are the sole responsibility of their respective authors, and should not be interpreted as the opinions of the Board, nor as official statements of LDS doctrine, belief or practice.

This journal is a weekly publication of the Interpreter Foundation, a non-profit organization located at InterpreterFoundation.org. You can find other articles published in our journal at Journal.InterpreterFoundation.org. You may subscribe to this journal at InterpreterFoundation.org/annual-print-subscription.

MESSENGERS OF THE COVENANT: MORMON'S DOCTRINAL USE OF MALACHI 3:1 IN MORONI 7:29–32

Matthew L. Bowen

ABSTRACT: *Although not evident at first glance, shared terminology and phraseology in Malachi 3:1 (3 Nephi 24:1) and Moroni 7:29–32 suggest textual dependency of the latter on the former. Jesus's dictation of Malachi 3–4 to the Lamanites and Nephites at the temple in Bountiful, as recorded and preserved on the plates of Nephi, helped provide Mormon a partial scriptural and doctrinal basis for his teachings on the ministering of angels, angels/messengers of the covenant, the “work” of “the covenants of the Father,” and “prepar[ing] the way” in his sermon as preserved in Moroni 7. This article explores the implications of Mormon's use of Malachi 3:1. It further explores the meaning of the name Malachi (“[Yahweh is] my messenger,” “my angel”) in its ancient Israelite scriptural context and the temple context within which Jesus uses it in 3 Nephi 24:1.*

Mormon records that Jesus introduced a major block of Malachi's prophecies — Malachi 3–4 [MT 3]¹ — into the Nephite scriptural tradition. At some point before the final battle at Cumorah, Mormon copied those prophecies from the plates of Nephi² onto the plates that contained his own abridged record (see 3 Nephi 24–25). Jesus's transition to and introduction of Malachi's prophecies constitute perhaps the clearest juxtaposition of a proper name with its corresponding etymological meaning anywhere in scripture: “Thus said the Father unto **Malachi** [*mal'ākî*, ‘my messenger,’ or ‘my angel’] — Behold, I will send **my messenger** [*mal'ākî*; or my angel], 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** [*mal'ak habbërît*; or angel of the covenant]” (3 Nephi 24:1).

The doctrinal significance of this onomastic juxtaposition was not lost on Mormon. He employs language that recalls Malachi 3:1 (3 Nephi 24:1) when he expounds the doctrine of the ministering of “angels” (Hebrew *mal’ākīm*, see especially Moroni 7:29–32) and their role in the fulfillment of divine covenants. This he does as part of a wider exposition of the necessity of faith, hope, and charity (Moroni 7). In this article, I will examine the meaning of the name Malachi (*mal’ākî*) and its doctrinal importance in the respective contexts of the canonical book of Malachi and in 3 Nephi 24. I will also compare the language of Malachi 3:1 (3 Nephi 24:1) and Moroni 7:29–32 to determine the nature and degree of Mormon’s use of the former. And finally, I will show how Malachi 3:1 (3 Nephi 24:1) and Mormon’s use of this text enhance our understanding of the nature and function of the ministering of angels.

“My Messenger”:

The Name Malachi and Its Doctrinal Significance

The form of the name Malachi — Hebrew *mal’ākî* — suggests the meaning “my messenger” or “my angel.” Its identicalness to the appellation *mal’ākî* — “my messenger” — in Malachi 3:1 has led some exegetes to conclude that Malachi constitutes an artificial name derived from Malachi 3:1. This tendency has been amplified by text-critical issues in the incipit title of the Book of Malachi in Malachi 1:1, “the burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi” (KJV follows the Hebrew Masoretic Text). The Greek Septuagint (LXX) reads *lemma logou kyriou epi ton Israel en cheiri angelou autou*, “the burden of the word of the Lord regarding Israel by the hand of his messenger [or angel].”³ The LXX reading appears to boil down to reading *ml’kw* versus *ml’ky* — the *waw* (*w*, ך) and *yod* (*y/i*, ך) often appear nearly identical in many Hebrew manuscripts. The Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Greek texts of Symmachus and Theodotion, on the other hand, all render *ml’ky* as the personal name Malachi.⁴ Gibson concludes that ultimately “the LXX ... only serves to reinforce the originality of the MT.”⁵ In other words, the textual tradition that gave rise to the modern-day Masoretic Text, in this instance at least, appears to preserve the original and best reading.

The attestation of Malachi as a personal name outside the biblical corpus argues for its authenticity. Malachi finds its earliest attestation in the 7th century BCE as *ml’ky* on a jar handle among the Arad ostraca.⁶ As a hypocoristic theophoric name, *mal’ākî* could represent an originally longer, putative form *ml’kyhw*.⁷ Gibson also notes this possibility,⁸ agreeing with Andrew Hill’s earlier suggestion that the *y/i* “may have

been a marker for the genitive case in older Classical Hebrew, not the first-person pronominal suffix *î*,” yielding “messenger of Yahweh.” But Gibson, Hill, and other exegetes shy away¹⁰ from the more challenging and uncomfortable theological implications of the *yod* (*y/i*) in Malachi (*ml'ky*) constituting a theophoric hypocoristic. Under this scenario, Malachi would mean “[Divine Name is] my messenger”¹¹ — i.e., “Yahweh is my messenger,” “Yahweh is my angel,” or “[Yahweh] is a messenger unto me.”¹² Joel Burnett cites the Phoenician/Punic name *b'lm'l'k* (“Baal is [my] messenger”) as the relevant parallel for Malachi,¹³ a name that appears in numerous inscriptions.¹⁴ The name *b'lm'l'k*, Burnette adds, “accords with the apparent interchangeability between YHWH and ‘the messenger of YHWH’ (*mal'ak yhwh*) in biblical narratives portraying the announcement of the birth by a divine messenger (e.g., Gen[esis] 16:11, 13; 18:2–3, 10, etc.)”¹⁵ Burnette further suggests, “if this is the relevant association for these names, the reference is not so much to a formal ritual or oracle as it is to the parent’s perception of divine visitation (but cf. Judg[es] 13:21–23). Alternatively, the name may express a more general reference to a deity as a messenger to the individual.” He concludes that “it is in this sense that the Hebrew name *ml'ky* can be best understood to express the deity’s accessibility and direct communication to the individual.”¹⁶

Thus, the meaning of Malachi as “Yahweh is my angel” or “Yahweh is my messenger” is perfectly compatible and congruent with the doctrinal notion put forward in Malachi 3:1 (3 Nephi 24:1) that “the Lord” (*hā'ādōn*) who would “suddenly come” to the temple as “messenger” was Yahweh himself. Notably, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi 3:1 in just this way when he “suddenly came” to the Lamanites and Nephites at the temple in Bountiful in 3 Nephi 11. The quotation of Malachi 3:1 by Jesus — the messenger of the covenant *par excellence* — would have been particularly poignant and appropriate to that Israelite audience on that occasion (see further below).

The foregoing also helps us appreciate references in Genesis 48:16 to Jacob’s redeeming “Angel” (*hम्मal'āk haggō'ēl*) and in Exodus 23:23 and 32:34 to the theophanic Angel who went before Israel in the wilderness: “mine Angel [*mal'ākî*] shall go before thee” (Exodus 23:23; 32:34). That “Angel” (note KJV’s deliberate capitalization) may be a thinly-veiled reference to Yahweh, the “Lord” (*hā'ādōn*) of Malachi’s prophecy. In fact, in many instances the “angel of the Lord” or the “angel of his presence” appears indistinguishable from the Lord himself.¹⁷ For example, one Isaianic text uses the expression “angel of his presence” in precisely this way: “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and **the angel**

of his presence [*mal'ak pānāw*] saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isaiah 63:9; see also D&C 133:53). The “angel of [Jehovah’s or Yahweh’s] presence”¹⁸ that stood by Abram and “unloosed [his] bands” appears to have been the same being that said, “[Abram, Abram], behold, my name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee,” (Abraham 1:15–16).¹⁹ In other words, Yahweh’s personal presence *was* the rescuing “angel” or messenger. Even the meaning “messenger of Yahweh” for Malachi can be understood to refer to the Lord within this scenario — the Lord’s “double” (see further below in the conclusion).

The foregoing framework may resolve the apparent silence of Jacob, Nephi’s brother, on having seen the Lord when he testifies “for I truly had seen angels, and they had ministered unto me” (Jacob 7:5). When Jacob saw the Lord, his “Redeemer,” (2 Nephi 2:3–4; 11:2), he had seen an “Angel” who “redeemed” him and ministered to him (compare the patriarch Jacob’s redeeming “Angel,” Genesis 48:12 with 28:12–13; Ether 3:13–18).

“He Is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts”: Priests as “Angels” or “Messenger[s] of the Covenant”

The post-exilic prophetic book that bears Haggai’s name describes the prophet Haggai as a *mal'ak yhw* and his message as a *mal'ākūt yhw*. “Then spake Haggai the **Lord’s messenger** [*mal'ak yhw*] in the Lord’s **message** [*mal'ākūt yhw*] unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord” (Haggai 1:13). The prophet Malachi uses similar terminology to describe priests of the Second Temple.

After the incipit title of the book that includes his name (“the burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi”), Malachi’s second use of *mal'āk* (“messenger,” “angel”) specifically describes the Aaronic priest as a *mal'āk*, even a *mal'ak yhw šēbā'ôt*: “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is **the messenger of the Lord of hosts** [*mal'ak yhw šēbā'ôt*]” (Malachi 2:7). This conceptual framework helps us to appreciate the message of Jacob, the son of Lehi and the brother of Nephi: “Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained **mine errand** from the Lord. For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi” (Jacob 1:17–18).

Recently, biblical scholars such as Crispin Louis-Fletcher, Margaret Barker, and Devorah Dimant have assembled and synthesized an impressive amount of biblical and non-biblical textual evidence suggesting that priests in ancient Israel were, in fact, identified as angels.²⁰ Revelation 8:3 depicts

an *angelos* (i.e., a *mal'āk*) functioning as a priest in the heavenly temple that John saw in vision: “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” Isaiah, who was apparently a temple priest when his prophetic call came, became Yahweh’s messenger after a *seraph* (Hebrew “burning one”) touched a burning coal to his lips and “atoned” Isaiah’s sin (“thy sin is purged,” literally, “atoned,” *tēkuppār*, Isaiah 6:7). His prophetic career, in this sense, constituted an angelic ministration. Lehi’s throne vision, similar to Isaiah’s in important aspects,²¹ helps us understand something of how the “Twelve” (*apostle* < Greek *apostolos* “sent one” for Hebrew/Aramaic *šālūiah/šēlīah*)²² fit into the Lord’s economy as messengers or “angels,”²³ even beyond the bounds of mortality (see 1 Nephi 1:9–10; cf. 1 Nephi 11:29).

“Thus Said the Father unto Malachi — Behold, I Will Send My Messenger”: Jesus’s Doctrinal Use of Malachi 3:1

Jesus Christ personally dictated the text of Malachi 3–4, concomitantly written by scribes,²⁴ to his Lamanite and Nephite audience as part of a larger body of scripture to which they previously had no access: “These scriptures, which ye had not with you, the Father commanded that I should give unto you; for it was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations” (3 Nephi 26:2). Presumably, Jesus dictated this text in Hebrew — a language the Nephites admitted using (see, e.g., Mormon 9:33)²⁵ — or at least in a putative, creolized Nephite dialect of Hebrew.

Malachi’s prophecies date from a time well after the Jews’ return from the Babylonian exile (i.e., sometime during the 5th century BCE). Thus, Malachi’s writings were not on the brass plates, which contained no prophecies originating after the time Nephi obtained the plates from Laban. With the exception of a few phraseological snatches²⁶ that plausibly have origins outside of and earlier than the body of Malachi’s prophetic work, Malachi’s prophecies enter the Nephite scriptural tradition when Jesus dictates them, and the Nephite record-keepers record them:

And it came to pass that he commanded them that they should write the words which the Father had given unto **Malachi** [*mal'ākī*], which he should tell unto them. And it came to pass that after they were written he expounded them. And these are the words which he did tell unto them, saying: Thus said the Father unto **Malachi** [*mal'ākī*] — Behold, I will send **my messenger** [*mal'ākī*], 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** [*mal'ak habbërit*], whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (3 Nephi 24:1)

Jesus's dictation of Malachi 3–4 begins with his repetition of *mal'ākî*, first as a name and then as a referential noun. This repetition places additional emphasis on the importance of the name Malachi and its meaning, the identity of the Father's *mal'āk*, and the identity, role, and function of the “Lord” who “suddenly come[s] to his temple” as *mal'āk* of the covenant. The faithful Nephites “and those who had been called Lamanites”²⁷ at the temple in Bountiful would surely have appreciated the sense in which Jesus was fulfilling Malachi's prophecy right before their eyes, as the Father's “messenger” and the Lord whom they “s[ought]”²⁸ had “suddenly come to his temple.” As *mal'ak habbërit*, (“messenger of the covenant”) he reorganized and established the previously existing church under the “new covenant” (or “the law of the gospel”).

Jesus's recitation of Malachi's prophecy in this temple context would have recalled for this particular audience the temple imagery in words of “the angel” (*mal'āk*),²⁹ whose words King Benjamin relayed to the Nephites and Mulekites at the temple in Zarahemla generations earlier:

For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall **dwel** [*wayyiškōn*, i.e., temporarily dwell] in a **tabernacle** [*miškān*], and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases. (Mosiah 3:5)

Over a drastically condensed period of time, the Lamanites and Nephites at the temple in Bountiful saw what the Word-become-flesh and dwelling (cf. John 1:14. *eskēnōsen*, “tenting”) among them looked like in terms of Jesus's teaching, organizing, commissioning, and “working mighty miracles” in a physical body, temple, or tabernacle. The somatic interpretation of “temple” (*hēkal*) in “the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple” would have been almost impossible to avoid with Jesus bodily present there. Earlier, Jesus had taught this same audience: “And behold, this people will I establish in this land, **unto the fulfilling of the covenant** which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And **the powers of heaven shall be**

in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you” (3 Nephi 20:22). Jesus’s ministrations to the people in 3 Nephi 17 and the powers of heaven or angels who ministered unto their children (see especially 3 Nephi 17:24) had already shown them what the fulfillment of this prophecy would look like.

3 Nephi 19 provides a similar picture of heavenly “ministrations.” Mormon records that after Nephi baptized the twelve disciples “whom Jesus had chosen” (3 Nephi 19:12) “angels” came down to minister to the disciples and Jesus also came down to do the same:

And it came to pass when they were all baptized and had come up out of the water, the Holy Ghost did fall upon them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And behold, they were encircled about as if it were by fire; and it came down from heaven, and the multitude did witness it, and did bear record; **and angels did come down out of heaven and did minister unto them. And it came to pass that while the angels were ministering unto the disciples, behold, Jesus came and stood in the midst and ministered unto them.** (3 Nephi 19:13–15)

This description collapses the ontological distance between Jesus and “angels” and the perceived gap between “the ministering of angels” and Jesus’s own ministrations. Jesus ministered as the Father’s “messenger” (*mal’āk*) and chief among a multiplicity of ministering “messengers” or “angels.” This picture is consistent with both Malachi’s language in Malachi 3:1 (3 Nephi 24:1) and Moroni 7:29–32 (see further below).

“Even the Messenger of the Covenant”

A component to the onomastic Malachi wordplay in Malachi 3:1 and 3 Nephi 24:1 that begs further discussion is the expression “messenger of the covenant” (*mal’āk habbērît*). As noted above, Malachi’s prophecy states that Yahweh as “Lord” — *hā’ādôn* — was the *mal’āk habbērît*. Jesus had reference to this divine role when he said to the Lamanites and Nephites at the temple in Bountiful:

And behold, ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and **ye are of the covenant** [*habbērît*] **which the Father made** [*kārat*] **with your fathers**, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. The Father having raised me up unto you first, **and sent me** [i.e., as a messenger] **to bless you** in turning

away every one of you from his iniquities; and **this because ye are the children of the covenant** [cf. Hebrew *bēnê bērit* or *bēnê habbērît*].³⁰ (3 Nephi 20:25–26)

All that Jesus did at the temple in Bountiful — just as everything he did in life, death, and resurrection — he did in his capacity as “messenger of the covenant.” This paradigm helps us appreciate the force of statements such as this one that Jesus makes earlier in the same (temple) setting: “**then will I fulfil the covenant** which the Father hath made unto [or, cut with] all the people of the house of Israel” (3 Nephi 16:5). Mormon also spoke from a similar frame of reference when he promised that his record (the Book of Mormon) would go forth “that the Father may bring about, **through his most Beloved**, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, **unto the fulfilling of his covenant**” (Mormon 5:14).

Peter preached a similar statement — perhaps one Jesus made during his forty-day post-resurrection ministry³¹ — as recorded by Luke: “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:25–26). What is noticeably missing from the NT version of this statement is the causal emphasis on which Jesus was acting as “messenger of the covenant” (the “sent” one): “this because ye are children of the covenant.” An excerpt from “the fulness of John’s record”³² or “the fulness of the record of John”³³ preserved in D&C 93 describes Jesus’s role as “messenger of the covenant” thusly: “in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation” (D&C 93:8). The “covenant of the Father” (3 Nephi 24:1; Moroni 10:33) and its fulfillment in every particular constitutes Jesus’s “work of salvation” and the errand for which he, as “messenger of the covenant,” was sent.

“The Office of Their Ministry Is ...

To Fulfill and Do the Work of the Covenants of the Father”: The Ministering of Angels

The dictated text of Malachi 3–4 constituted a part — albeit a minute part — of the records that Mormon had in his possession (see, e.g., Mormon 6:6). Mormon copied this text into his own record (see 3 Nephi 24–25). The importance that Mormon placed on these finds further expression

in Moroni 7, a sermon that Mormon's son Moroni included as part of his grand, final conclusion to the Book of Mormon (Moroni 7–10).

In that sermon — originally given to a group of faithful Nephites in a synagogue sometime during the waning days of Nephite civilization — Nephi briefly adumbrates the doctrine of the ministering of angels and cites the ministering of angels as an example of the consistency of God's character and dealings with the human family. In Moroni 7:29–32, Mormon explains the role and function of angels or messengers (*mal'ākīm*) in the divine performance of covenant promises. A comparison of 3 Nephi 24:1 (Malachi 3:1) and Moroni 7:29–32 reveals striking terminological parallels between the two texts:

On the strength of these terminological parallels, the textual dependence of Moroni 7:29–32 on Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1 appears more than likely. Nevertheless, our consideration of these four terms and collocations and the conceptual framework(s) within which Malachi and Mormon use them helps us better understand the immense significance and relevance of Mormon's use of Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1 in his sermon.

Mesengers, Angels, and “the Work”:

The Range of Meaning of mal'āk and melā'kā (Key#1)

One key to understanding Mormon's use of Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1 is recognizing the range of meaning in the Hebrew word *mal'āk* and its cognates. In its broadest sense, *mal'āk* denotes “messenger,” but also came to connote “heavenly messenger”³⁴ (cf. Ugaritic *mlak šmm*, “heavenly messengers”³⁵ or “messenger[s] of heaven”) or “angel” as an ontological reference designating a class belonging to the divine realm (though it should be noted that Greek *angelos*, whence English “angel” derives, also originally denoted simply a “messenger”). Considering the literary and scriptural tradition within which Mormon worked, the word that he most likely used that is here rendered “angels” in translation was the Hebrew plural *mal'ākīm*.

Mormon's sermon also appears to employ a polyptoton involving “angels” (*mal'ākīm*) — “work” (*mēle'ket* < *mēlā'kā*). The “office of [the] ministry” of *mal'ākīm*, he says, is “to fulfill and do the work [Hebrew *mēle'ket*] of the covenants of the Father.” As a play on *mal'ākīm* and *mēlā'kā* or *mēle'ket*, this statement qualifies as something of a miniature etymology.³⁶ In other words, Mormon intimates the appropriateness of the word *mal'āk* for that distinctive class of beings assigned to “fulfill and do the **work** [*mēle'ket*] of the covenants of the Father.”

Moroni 7:29–32	3 Nephi 24:1 (Quoting Malachi 3:1)
<p>And because he hath done this, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased? Behold I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels [Hebrew <i>mal'ākīm</i>] ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do <u>the work</u> [<i>mēle'ket</i>] of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made [<i>kārat</i>] unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants [<i>bērītôt</i>] which he hath made [<i>kārat</i>] unto the children of men.</p>	<p>And it came to pass that he commanded them that they should write the words which the Father had given unto <u>Malachi</u>, which he should tell unto them. And it came to pass that after they were written he expounded them. And these are the words which he did tell unto them, saying: Thus said the Father unto <u>Malachi</u> [<i>mal'ākī</i>] — Behold, I will send <u>my messenger</u> [<i>mal'ākī</i>], 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 [<i>mal'ak habbērit</i>], whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.</p>

The most significant terminological connections between Mormon 7:29–32 and 3 Nephi 24:1 (Malachi 3:1) can be distilled to these:

English Transliteration or Translated Term or Phrase	Verse	Hebrew Equivalent
1. Malachi my messenger messenger of the covenant angels work	3 Nephi 24:1 3 Nephi 24:1 3 Nephi 24:1 Moroni 7:29 Moroni 7:31	<i>mal'ākī</i> <i>mal'ākī</i> <i>mal'ak habbērīt</i> <i>mal'ākīm</i> <i>mēlā'kâ/mēle'ket</i>
2. The Father Cf. “the fathers”	3 Nephi 24:1 Moroni 7:31 Moroni 7:32 (3 Nephi 25:5)	'āb
3. covenant covenants	3 Nephi 24:1 Moroni 7:31–32	<i>bērīt</i> <i>bērītôt</i>
4. prepare the way prepareth the way	3 Nephi 24:1 Moroni 7:31 Moroni 7:32	(û)pinnâ derek

The noun *mēlā'kâ/mēle'ket* denotes “work” or “business” — originally, “work” or “business” to which or on which one is “sent” — i.e., a “mission.” This term is used to denote the “work” or “workmanship” of temple creation (e.g., Exodus 35:21, 24, 29, 31, 33, 35; 36:1–8; 1 Kings 5:16 [MT 5:30]; 7:14, 22, 40, 51; 9:23); temple maintenance (2 Kings 12:11, 14–15; 22:5, 9); and the divine “work” of world creation from which God rested or ceased (Genesis 2:2–3) and from which Israel was to cease on the Sabbath (see, e.g., Exodus 20:9–10; 31:14–15; 35:2).

A look at the root *l'k* in cognate Semitic languages also helps round out an etymological and semantic picture for *mal'āk* and *mēlā'kâ*. The Ugaritic verb *l'k* meant “to send (a message)” or “entrust with a message.”³⁷ The derived nouns *mlak* (“messenger”)³⁸ and *mlakt* (“message, mission, missive, [and] embassy”) closely match their Hebrew cognates in form and meaning. The Ethiopic verb *la'aka*, “send, commission,”³⁹ the derived nouns *mal'ak*, “messenger, angel, governor, prefect, prince, chief, captain, ruler, commander”⁴⁰ and *mal(ē)'ēkt*, “letter, message, epistle, duty, business, service, cult mission, ministry, function, office, legation”⁴¹ all show how productive *l'k* became in that language. Old South Arabic attests the verb *l'k* “send,” which seems to have come to mean “dedicate.”⁴²

The Father (and “the Fathers”) (Key #2)

A second key to understanding Mormon’s use of Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1 in Moroni 7 is recognizing the texts’ mutual emphasis on God the Father as the subject of divine action. Jesus’s teachings in 3 Nephi consistently emphasize God the Father as the ultimate source of all divine action. Mormon’s speech reflects a similar paradigm. In 3 Nephi passages in which Jesus quotes scripture, he often substitutes “the Father” for the divine title *yhwh* (e.g., 3 Nephi 20:35, quoting Isaiah 52:10; cf. also 3 Nephi 21:9 quoting Habakkuk 1:5).⁴³ Moreover, instead of using the usual collocation “saith the Lord” (*ně’um yhwh*, literally “utterance of Yahweh”),⁴⁴ Jesus similarly substitutes “the Father”: “saith the Father.”⁴⁵

We should further note here that in the 3 Nephi version of the Malachi text, the term “Father”/“fathers” (*’āb/’ābôt*) helps to form an *inclusio* that brackets the text from 3 Nephi 24:1 (“Thus saith **the Father** unto Malachi ...”) to 3 Nephi 24:25–26: “Behold, **I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord**: and he shall turn the heart of **the fathers** to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5–6 [MT 3:23–24]; 3 Nephi 25:5–6). Another significant part of this *inclusio* is the very similar phrases *hiněni šölēah* and *hinnē ’anōki šölēah*, both rendered “Behold, I will send ...” in the KJV.

The similarity of these two phrases in addition to the structure of the text of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5–6 (MT 3:23–24), leads to a natural association of the Malachi/my messenger prophecy with the Elijah prophecy. Indeed, according to the NT Gospels, Jesus saw Malachi’s “messenger” (Malachi 3:1) prophecy as somewhat interchangeable with his Elijah prophecy (Malachi 4:5–6 [MT 3:23–24]), perhaps as an interpretive *Gezera Shawa* on the verb *šālah*, or “send.”⁴⁶ Regarding John the Baptist’s Aaronic priestly role, Jesus stated: “But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. [For] this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger [*ton angelon mou*] before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.” (Matthew 11:9–10; Luke 7:26–27). To this he then adds, “and if ye will receive it, this is Elias [Elijah], which was for to come” (Matthew 11:14; see also JST Matthew 17:11; Luke 1:17; JST John 1:21–22).⁴⁷ Joseph Smith’s interpretation of the angel of Revelation 7:2 (D&C 77:9; see also D&C 110:12) and John the Revelator (D&C 77:14) as fulfillments of the promised Elias attests the great flexibility with which the two Malachi prophecies could be interpreted and understood. JST John 1:28 identifies Jesus as Elias.

Noting that the name Elijah means “Jehovah is my God” and its appropriateness for Malachi’s prophecy regarding the “fathers” and the “children,” Russell M. Nelson sees a Father-Son symbol in the name Elijah (’ēliyyāhû): “Embedded in Elijah’s name are the Hebrew terms for both the Father and the Son,”⁴⁸ namely ’ēli (“my God”) and yāhû (“Jeho[vah]”).

“The Covenant” and “the Covenants” (Key #3)

A third key closely correlates with the second. “The covenant” in the collocation “messenger of the covenant” mentioned by Malachi (Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1) is “the covenant of the Father” of which Jesus speaks in 3 Nephi 21:4 and which Moroni mentions as he concludes the Book of Mormon record in Moroni 10:33. It is the covenant that subsumes all of “the covenants” (Moroni 7:31–32) that God “cuts” with humankind.

In 3 Nephi 20, Jesus places particular tremendous emphasis on the Father as the covenant-making party:

- “the covenant that the Father hath made” (3 Nephi 20:12);
- “my people with whom the Father hath covenanted” (3 Nephi 20:19);
- “ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers” (3 Nephi 20:25);
- “The Father having raised me up unto you first, and sent me to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities; and this because ye are the children of the covenant ... then fulfilleth the Father the covenant which he made with Abraham” (3 Nephi 20:26–27);
- “Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled” (3 Nephi 20:46).

“Prepare the Way” (Key #4)

Mormon’s appropriation of the collocation “prepare the way” (Hebrew *pinnâ derek*) constitutes the fourth key to understanding his use of Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1. Mormon’s conception of a hierarchy of *mal’ākīm* who “fulfill and do the work of the covenants of the Father ... to prepare the way” surely reflects — and perhaps owes something to — what Zenos depicts as the hierarchy of the Lord of the vineyard, his servant, and the fellow-servants called by the Lord of the vineyard’s servant: “Wherefore, go to, and call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, **that we may prepare the way**, that I may

bring forth again the natural fruit” (Jacob 5:61); “And if it be so that these last grafts shall grow, and bring forth the natural fruit, then **shall ye prepare the way** for them, that they may grow” (Jacob 5:64). Zenos’s allegory of the olive tree is eminently the description of the fulfilling of a divine covenant against all apparent odds.

Many scholars believe that Malachi’s “prepare the way before me” phraseology in Malachi 3:1 deliberately recalls the language of Isaiah 40:3, “the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, **Prepare ye the way of the Lord**, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3). Isaiah 40:3, as part of Isaiah 40:1–14, is widely seen as reflecting a divine council setting,⁴⁹ with the council commissioning divine or angelic messengers. Perhaps, both Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 should be understood as reflecting the conceptual framework of a hierarchy of divine beings or heavenly “messengers” or “servants” similar to Jacob 5:61, 64.

As additional background to Mormon’s appropriation of the language of Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1, the collocation “prepare the way” or its passive biform “the way is prepared” enjoyed a long currency in the Nephite scriptural tradition. In 1 Nephi 10, Nephi uses language akin to and drawn from Isaiah 40:3: “And he spake also concerning a prophet who should come before the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord — yea, even he should go forth and cry in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight” (1 Nephi 10:7–8).

He subsequently describes John the Baptist thus: “I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him [the Redeemer of the World]” (1 Nephi 11:27).

Nephi’s use of the phrase “prepare the way” twice in connection with the (Aaronic) priestly mission and role of John the Baptist describes how he desired to see and then saw the vision of the tree of life that his father had seen. Against the backdrop of his use of “prepare the way” in 1 Nephi 10:7–8, he first uses the passive form “the way is prepared” as a description of the doctrine of Christ: “**the way is prepared** for all men from the foundation of the world” (1 Nephi 10:18). In doing thus, Nephi’s language also perhaps reflects the influence of his own father Lehi’s words, “for the Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And **the way is prepared** from the fall of man, and salvation is free” (2 Nephi 2:4). In this example, “way” has reference to “the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24) and “the way” that Nephi would later use to describe the doctrine of Christ (2 Nephi 31).⁵⁰

For Nephi, the collocation “prepare a way”/“prepare the way” constituted a key element in the great statement of his personal faith and

ethos: “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save **he shall prepare a way** for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7). Nephi recorded this statement after decades of reflection on the events that defined his life (obtaining the brass plates, the Arabian wilderness experience, their transoceanic exodus, etc.), events in which an intermediary truly helped “prepare the way” (see, e.g., 1 Nephi 3:29–31; 4:3; 7:10; 11:14–14:29; 15:29; 16:38; 17:45; 19:8, 10). Thus, Nephi knew the reality that “the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, **he prepareth a way** to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold, he hath all power unto the fulfilling of all his words” (1 Nephi 9:6).

In fact, Nephi relates the Lord’s promise regarding their journey through the Arabian wilderness and ahead of their own “exodus” through “the sea”⁵¹: “I will also be your light in the wilderness; and **I will prepare the way before you**, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments” (1 Nephi 17:13). That promise echoes the symbolic language with which Isaiah described Israel’s exodus from Egypt:

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut **Rahab** [mythologizing codename for Egypt], and wounded the **dragon** [*tannîn*]? Art thou not it [he] which hath dried the **sea** [*yām*, i.e., Yamm], the waters of the great deep; that **hath made the depths of the sea a way** [*derek*] for the ransomed to pass over. (Isaiah 51:9–10; 2 Nephi 8:9–10)

As Daniel Belnap has pointed out, Yahweh acts as Divine Warrior to redeem his covenant people from their enemies.⁵² Jacob, Nephi’s brother, gave an extraordinary exegesis of this very text when he described the resurrection — of which the priesthood ordinance of baptism is, of course, a figure — in exodus language:

O how great the goodness of our God, who **prepareth a way** [*derek*] **for our escape** from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, **death and hell**, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit. And because of **the way of deliverance of our God**, the Holy One of Israel, this death, of which I have spoken, which is the temporal, shall deliver up its dead; which death is the grave. (2 Nephi 9:10–11)

Belnap additionally noted the correspondence between the Levantine deity Mot (*môt*, death) and what Jacob refers to as “death”

and between Sheol (*šē'ôl*, the world of spirits) and “hell.”⁵³ Jacob refers to them collectively as “this awful monster” and “that monster.”

In his exegesis of Isaiah 51:9–10, Jacob appears to connect “the sea” — or Yamm — with Death and Hell. However, Jacob may also have a connection in mind between Rahab (“surger,” which “plays upon the restlessness and crashing of the sea”)⁵⁴ — a codename for Egypt elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible,⁵⁵ and the “black land” (Egyptian *km.t*) of Israel’s bondage and captivity — with Sheol, “the dark and benighted dominion,”⁵⁶ and the land of the captivity of spirits. Appropriately, then, “the dragon” or *tannin* (LXX Greek *drakōn*) would correspond with the devil:

Isaiah 51:9–10	Correspondence in 2 Nephi 9 (Jacob’s Exegesis)
“the sea” (<i>yām</i>) — i.e., Yamm	≈ Death (Mot, <i>môt/māwet</i>)
Rahab (Egypt)	≈ Hell (Sheol, <i>šē'ôl</i>)
Tannin (<i>tannîn</i> , “the dragon”; cf. Leviathan, “that piercing serpent” and “that crooked serpent”) ⁷²	≈ The devil (cf. “that old serpent, the devil”) ⁷³

Jacob very appropriately⁵⁷ describes the devil in similar terms to death and hell (Mot and Sheol): “that awful monster the devil” (2 Nephi 9:19). In this sermon, Jacob offers the best description anywhere in scripture of what the human situation would be if Jesus Christ had not performed the atonement — or had not acted as Divine Warrior on our behalf. We would become *mal’ākîm*, but not angels of the Lord in his economy and not doing his *mēlā’kâ*:

O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more. And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, **angels to a devil**, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents, **who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light**, and stirreth up the

children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness. (2 Nephi 9:8–9)

Regarding this passage, Daniel Belnap observes that “in such a state, there was no way in which any of the covenantal promises could have been kept. Israel, indeed all mankind, would have been cut off, cast out, and helpless in the face of such. Death is a monster that must be defeated by God for salvation and deliverance to even be possible; all other creative, martial endeavors are but types of this battle.”⁵⁸ Thus, Jesus Christ’s atonement makes the promises and “covenants of the Father” sure promises and covenants, upon which men and women can lay hold to the degree that they are true and faithful. Perhaps that is why Alma the Younger,⁵⁹ Samuel the Lamanite,⁶⁰ and Moroni⁶¹ all use the collocation “prepare the way” as metonymic for living the doctrine of Christ. Notably, the ministrations of the Aaronic priesthood — including baptism and the administration of the sacrament (of the Lord’s supper), which Jesus institutes at the temple in Bountiful in 3 Nephi 18 — enable one to “always have his Spirit to be with [him or her]” and “the ministering of angels[, which] is one of the manifestations of that Spirit.”⁶² In this way, we, like *mal’ākīm* or as *mal’ākīm*, are enabled or empowered to “prepare the way” and to “fulfill and do the work of the covenants of the Father” (Moroni 7:31). As Nephi declared, “then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel” (2 Nephi 31:13).⁶³

In light of all of the foregoing, we can appreciate the significance of Nephi’s use of Deuteronomy 18:15 as a prophecy of Jesus’s post-resurrection appearance among the Nephites and Lamanites at the temple in Bountiful: “And the Lord will surely **prepare a way** for his people, unto the fulfilling of the words of Moses, which he spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things **whatsoever he shall say unto you**” (1 Nephi 22:20). At the temple in Bountiful, Jesus, as messenger of the covenant (*mal’ak habbērit*), uses the collocation “prepare the way” to promise the reversal of Israel’s scattered condition throughout the world: “Yea, **the work** [Hebrew *hammēlā’kâ*] shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to **prepare the way whereby they may come unto me**, that they may call on the Father in my name” (3 Nephi 21:27). Jesus makes this statement just previous to and in the same context that he dictates the Malachi text. The ministering of angels as described by Mormon in Moroni 7:29–32 is no more or less than the “work” of “messengers”/“angels” on both sides of the veil to “prepare the way.”

“Have Angels Ceased to Appear unto the Children of Men”?

Thus, Moroni 7:29–32 offers one of the most vivid and instructive scriptural glimpses into what the New Testament writers described as God’s *oikonomia* (“responsibility of management, management of a household, direction, office,”⁶⁴ literally, “the work of an estate manager [*oikonomos*]⁶⁵; cf. English economy). It is similar in range of meaning to *mēlā’kâ* or *mēle’ket*. Mormon cites the ongoing “ministering of angels” as evidence of the consistency of God’s economy and character throughout time and eternity:

And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me. And he hath said: Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me, that ye may be saved. And now, my beloved brethren, if this be the case that these things are true which I have spoken unto you, and God will show unto you, with power and great glory at the last day, that they are true, and if they are true has the day of miracles ceased? Or **have angels** [*mal’ākîm*] **ceased to appear unto the children of men?** Or has he withheld the power of the Holy Ghost from them? Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved? Behold I say unto you, Nay; for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and **it is by faith that angels** [*mal’ākîm*] **appear and minister unto men;** wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain. (Moroni 7:33–37)

Mormon’s sermon preserves a statement that is not attested in his account of Jesus’s ministry among the Lamanites and Nephites in 3 Nephi: “And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33). Moroni replicates a version of this statement in Moroni 10:23: “And Christ truly said unto our fathers: if ye have faith ye can do all things which are expedient in me.”⁶⁶ John Gee observes that “Mormon (whom Moroni quotes) uses this passage to show that faith allows one to ‘lay hold upon every good thing’ (Moroni 7:21–39).”⁶⁷ As noted above, one of the “good thing[s]” that faith, repentance, and baptism — the doctrine of Christ — help one to lay hold upon or access is the ministering of angels (*mal’ākîm*), which in turn helps one to lay hold upon salvation and eternal life.

Mormon’s exposition of the ministering of angels in the context of the doctrine of Christ and the “power of the Holy Ghost” recalls the

words of Nephi: “Angels [*mal’ākīm*] speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

Conclusion

The shared terminology of Malachi 3:1/3 Nephi 24:1 and Moroni 7:29–32 makes textual dependence of the latter upon the former highly likely. Mormon appears to have used the version of Malachi 3:1 dictated by Jesus and recorded by scribes at the temple in Bountiful to adumbrate the doctrine of the ministering of “angels” as “messengers” of the covenant who “prepare the way”⁶⁸ and “fulfill and do the work of the covenants of the Father.” Just as the name “Elias” — partly on the basis of Malachi 3:1 with which the Elijah prophecy in Malachi 4:5–6 (MT 3:23–24) is strongly linked — became a title used of John the Baptist and other angelic-priestly ministrants, the term *mal’ākī* (“my messenger”) grew beyond being a personal name to refer to a number of heavenly messengers, including the Lord himself. This is particularly appropriate if the name Malachi originally meant “Yahweh is my messenger.” However, it is also appropriate even if “Malachi” meant “messenger/angel of Yahweh,” especially if “angel” (*mal’āk*, *angelos*) in this context can be understood, like Greek *paraklētos*, as “*Doppelgänger*,” or “alter ego”⁶⁹ — i.e., spiritual “double” as it clearly is in Matthew 18:10 and Acts 12:14–15.⁷⁰

Moroni, who took pains to preserve the sermon in which Mormon his father explained the doctrine of the ministering of angels (Moroni 7), becomes just such a messenger (see Joseph Smith — History 1:33, 44, 46–47, 49–50, 52–54, 59–61).⁷¹ In revealing the location of the gold plates and preparing Joseph Smith to carry out the translation, Moroni acted as the “messenger of the covenant” — i.e., “the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon” (D&C 84:57).

Moroni was one of numerous messengers or angels to minister to Joseph, messengers that included the Lord himself. We should count it no mean detail that the first intimation of the building of a temple in the revelations that became the Doctrine and Covenants came in a revelation through the prophet Joseph Smith to Edward Partridge on December 9, 1830 in which the Lord quoted Malachi 3:1: “I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God; wherefore, gird up your loins and **I will suddenly come to my temple**. Even so. Amen” (D&C 36:8). The Lord here, in effect, identified himself as the “messenger of the covenant” or *mal’ak habbērīt*. It took the Latter-day Saints about five more years to

get a temple built, but once they built it “the Lord ... suddenly c[a]me to his temple” (see D&C 110:2–10) along with other messengers (D&C 110:11–16) in fulfillment of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5–6 (MT 3:23–24; see further D&C 110:14–15).

In light of all the foregoing we can better appreciate the Lord’s promise regarding divine messengers that include angels (deceased loved ones not least), apostles, prophets, and even himself: “And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for **I will go before your face**. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, **and mine angels** round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88). These are the messengers of the covenant of which Malachi and Mormon spoke.

The author would like to thank Robert F. Smith for suggestions that improved this paper. He would also like to thank Suzanne Bowen, Daniel C. Peterson, Allen Wyatt, and Victor Worth. This study is dedicated to the memories of Nathan Lon Bowen and Paul Glen Martinson.

Matthew L. Bowen was raised in Orem, Utah, and graduated from Brigham Young University. He holds a PhD in Biblical Studies from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC and is currently an assistant professor in religious education at Brigham Young University-Hawaii. He is also the author of *Name as Key-Word: Collected Essays on Onomastic Wordplay and The Temple in Mormon Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2018). He and his wife (the former Suzanne Blattberg) are the parents of three children: Zachariah, Nathan, and Adele.

Endnotes

1. Current editions of the Masoretic Text (i.e., the Hebrew Bible) and the Greek LXX have Malachi 3–4 arranged as a single chapter.
2. Cf. 3 Nephi 26:6–8.
3. The LXX reads *ml' kw* in its *Vorlage* (parent text) as an appellative or an official title and not as a personal name, cf. Zechariah 1:9, 11.
4. Cf. Thomas E. McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 1245, 1247.

5. Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 212, quoted in Jonathan Gibson, *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity: A Study of Inner Biblical Allusion and Exegesis in Malachi* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 26.
6. Arad ostrakon 97:1. Yohanan Aharoni (*Arad Inscriptions* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981], 109) writes: “The engraving is crude and the form of most of the letters is distorted. Thus it would seem that this inscription is incised by a man not used to writing, as in several inscriptions from Beer-Sheba, and perhaps two horizontal strokes are written in the wrong direction. We would therefore have the name Malachi or perhaps Malachi[yahu]. This name appears in the Bible only as the name of one of the prophets. Even though the reading is not entirely certain, it supports the theory that Malachi is the name of the prophet and not his title.” G.I. Davies (*Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions: Corpus and Concordance* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991]), 36, 423) also understands *ml'ky* in this inscription as a proper name. See also Joel S. Burnett, “Divine Silence or Divine Absence? Converging Metaphors in Family Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant” in *Reflections on the Silence of God: A Discussion with Marjo Korpel and Joannes de Moor*, ed. Bob Becking (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 52. Burnett cites Johannes Renz and Wolfgang Röllig, *Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik, Band I: Die althebräischen Inschriften* (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995).
7. Aharoni, *Arad Inscriptions*, 109.
8. Gibson, *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity*, 27. See also p. 27n15.
9. Andrew Hill, *Malachi* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 135–36; Hill, s.v. “Malachi, Book of,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992).
10. Hill (“Malachi, Book of”) concedes regarding “‘Yah(weh) is my messenger’ or ‘Yah(weh) is an angel’” that “While highly irregular, this is not impossible given the unusual revelatory ministry of the angel of the Lord in the OT (cf. Judges 13:18; 1 Chr 21:18; Zech 1:11; 3:5; 12:8).”
11. Burnett, “Divine Silence or Divine Absence?” 52.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*

14. See, e.g., Frank L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 96.
15. Burnett, “Divine Silence of Divine Absence?” 52.
16. *Ibid.*
17. John W. Welch, “Ten Testimonies of Jesus Christ from the Book of Mormon” in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2003), 316–42.
18. Robert F. Smith, in a letter to the author (December 3, 2018), notes that the chiasmic structure comprising Abraham 1:1–2:4 centers on “voice” in 1:15 (“I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God”) and 1:16 (“and his voice was unto me ... my name is Jehovah”). In between both instances of voice, “visions of the Almighty” and “the angel of his presence” stand in parallel. See also “Pearl of Great Price,” Chiasmus Resources, *BYU Studies Quarterly*, last accessed December 20, 2018, <http://chiasmusbibliography.com/pearl-great-price>.
19. See footnote “a” to Abraham 1:16 in 1981 and 2013 editions: “Abram” in 1:16–17; 2:3, 6, 14, 17, in *Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842, but “Abraham” in all publications since *Millennial Star*, July 1842. The first publication of the Book of Abraham contained the short-form “Abram” at Abraham 1:16–17, 2:3, 6, 14, and 17, though several earlier Kirtland manuscripts employed it also at Abraham 2:2, likely reflecting the no longer extant original manuscript. See *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (March 1, 1842): 703–6; *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 719–22; *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 14 (May 16, 1842): 783–84; *Book of Abraham* MSS 2 and 3 (MSS 1–4 employ the short-form at Abraham 2:2); these short-forms were lengthened in the July 1842 *Millennial Star* [likewise in B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), 4:520–34], and in the Pearl of Great Price; Walter L. Whipple, *An Analysis of Textual Changes in “The Book of Abraham” and in the “Writings of Joseph Smith, the Prophet” in the Pearl of Great Price* (Master’s Thesis, Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 1959), 52; cf. Hugh W. Nibley, “The Meaning of the Kirtland Papers,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 350–99. Though they are incomplete, the Book of Abraham MSS 1–4 agree in using the short-form from Abraham 1:16 2:17 (MSS 2 and 3 cease before this point). Aramaic *’nh ’brm* (“I, Abram”) is characteristic of

the Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran Cave 1 (1QapGn) (Robert F. Smith, personal communication).

20. Crispin Louis-Fletcher, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 65–87. Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 103–45; Devorah Dimant, “Men as Angels: The Self-image of the Qumran Community,” *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Adele Berlin (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1996), 93–103.
21. See, e.g., William J. Hamblin, “The Sod of YHWH and the Endowment,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Studies* 4 (2013): 147–54.
22. Cf. 1 Kings 14:6 (*šālûah*, “sent,” LXX = *apostolos*); Ezra 7:14 employs the form *šēliah* (LXX = *apestalē*). See especially Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 231–32.
23. See, e.g., Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book (King and Saviour III)* (Uppsala, Sweden: Lundequist, 1950).
24. 3 Nephi 24:1 begins: “And it came to pass that he commanded them that they should write the words which the Father had given unto Malachi, which he should tell unto them.”
25. Mormon 9:33: “And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.”
26. See, e.g., the phrases, “And the time cometh speedily that the righteous must be led up as calves of the stall” (1 Nephi 22:24) “he shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings” (2 Nephi 25:13); “the S[u]n of righteousness shall appear unto them; and he shall heal them” (2 Nephi 26:9). It is possible that these expressions do not originate with Malachi at all but constitute quotations of an earlier prophet whose unattested writings were preserved on the plates of brass.. For more on this subject, see Book of Mormon Central, “What Parts of the Old Testament Were on the Plates of Brass? (1 Nephi 5:10),” *Kno Why* #410, Book of Mormon Central, February 22, 2018, <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/what-parts-of-the-old-testament-were-on-the-plates-of-brass>.

27. 3 Nephi 10:18.
28. 3 Nephi 11:1–2: “And now it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful; and they were marveling and wondering one with another, and were showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place. And they were also conversing about this Jesus Christ, of whom the sign had been given concerning his death.”
29. See Mosiah 3:2–4.
30. Cf. the phrase “sons [children] of the land of the covenant [treaty, league]” (Ezekiel 30:5, author’s translation).
31. Luke records: “To [the apostles whom Jesus had chosen] also he 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” (Acts 1:3). Jesus’s “forty-day” teaching was likely, in nature and function (i.e., church leadership-building) similar to much of what we read in 3 Nephi 11–27.
32. D&C 93:6: “And John saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory, and the fulness of John’s record is hereafter to be revealed.”
33. D&C 93:18: “And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John.”
34. See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 585. Hereafter cited as HALOT.
35. Gregorio Del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, s.v. “mlak” in *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003).
36. Michael H. Floyd, s.v. “Etiology” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 2007), 2:352. He observes, “As a critical term applied to narrative, *etiology* refers to stories that tell how something came to be or came to have its definitive characteristics. In Scripture such stories are typically told about names of persons and places, rites and customs, ethnic identities and other natural phenomena.”
37. Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, s.v. “l’k,” *Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*.
38. *Ibid.*, s.v. “mlak.”

39. Wolf Leslau, s.v. “la’aka” in *Concise Dictionary of Ge’ez* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010).
40. Ibid., s.v. “mal’ak.”
41. Ibid., s.v. “mal(ë)’ëkt.”
42. Joan Copeland Biella, s.v. “l’k” in *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaean Dialect* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004).
43. 3 Nephi 20:35: “The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father.”
44. The Hebrew noun *nē’um* or *nē’um* (construct *nē’um*) appears to be the source of the name of the prophet Neum mentioned in 1 Nephi 19:10. If so, Neum would be a hypocoristic name meaning “(divine) utterance” or “utterance [of Yahweh].” See Book of Mormon Onomasticon, s.v. “Neum,” last modified January 21, 2016, 13:14, <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/NEUM>. Alternatively, “according to the words of Neum” (1 Nephi 19:10) might be equivalent to Hebrew *kidbar nē’um*, or *kēdibrē nē’um* “according to the words of prophecy,” which is similar to the frequently used biblical formula (Genesis 44:2; Exodus 8:9; Leviticus 10:7; 2 Kings 2:22, 5:14; Jeremiah 13:2, 32:8; Haggai 2:4). The scribes may have misunderstood the original meaning during transmission of the text (Robert F. Smith, personal communication).
45. 3 Nephi 16:7–8, 10, 13–14; 20:20, 28–29; 21:14, 20, 29.
46. The exegetical conjoining of Malachi’s “messenger” and Elijah’s prophecies on the basis of *šālah* (LXX *exapostellō/apostellō*) roughly conforms to Arland Hultgren’s (*Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011], 182) description of *Gezera Shawa*: “According to the [*Gezera Shawa*] principle, two texts using the same word can be brought together, and what is taught in the one can be applied to the other as well.”
47. In Matthew 17:10–1, Jesus explicitly connects John the Baptist with the figure of Elijah from Malachi 4:5–6 (MT 3:23–24) and JST Matthew 17:11 even more explicitly connects John and Elijah with the “messenger” prophecy of Malachi 3:1: “And again I say unto you that Elias has come already, concerning whom it is written, Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and they knew him not, and have done unto him, whatsoever they listed”; Luke 1:17: “And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and

- the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”
48. Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, “Open the Heavens through Temple and Family History Work,” *Ensign* (October 2017): 36.
 49. See Frank Moore Cross, “The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953): 274–77. See also John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 22.
 50. Noel B. Reynolds, “This Is the Way,” *Religious Educator* 14, no. 3 (2013): 79–91; Reynolds, “The Ancient Doctrine of the Two Ways and the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 56, no. 3 (2017): 49–78.
 51. Cf. Jacob’s characterization of the family’s journey as a kind of exodus: “And now, my beloved brethren, seeing that our merciful God has given us so great knowledge concerning these things, let us remember him, and lay aside our sins, and not hang down our heads, for we are not cast off; nevertheless, we have been driven out of the land of our inheritance; but we have been led to a better land, for the Lord has made the sea [*yām*, cf. Yamm] our path, and we are upon an isle of the sea” (2 Nephi 10:20).
 52. Daniel Belnap, “I Will Contend with Them That Contendeth with Thee’: The Divine Warrior in Jacob’s Speech of 2 Nephi 6–10,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* 17, no. 1–2 (2008): 20–39.
 53. *Ibid.*
 54. HALOT, 1193.
 55. In addition to Isaiah 51:9, see also Isaiah 30:7; Psalm 87:4. Cf. Psalm 89:11; Job 9:13, 26:12, 9:13.
 56. D&C 121:4. In his exhortation to his son Corianton, Alma calls the non-paradisiacal “state” within Sheol “that endless night of darkness” (Alma 41:7).
 57. Book of Mormon Central, “Why Does Jacob Choose a ‘Monster’ as a Symbol for Death and Hell? (2 Nephi 9:10),” *KnowWhy* #34, Book of Mormon Central, Feb 16, 2016, <https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/why-does-jacob-choose-a-%E2%80%9Cmonster%E2%80%9D-as-a-symbol-for-death-and-hell>.
 58. Belnap, “I Will Contend with Them,” 31.

59. Alma 7:9: “But behold, the Spirit hath said this much unto me, saying: Cry unto this people, saying — Repent ye, and prepare the way of the Lord, and walk in his paths, which are straight; for behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth.”
60. Helaman 14:9: “And behold, thus hath the Lord commanded me, by his angel, that I should come and tell this thing unto you; yea, he hath commanded that I should prophesy these things unto you; yea, he hath said unto me: Cry unto this people, repent and prepare the way of the Lord.”
61. Ether 9:28: “And there came prophets in the land again, crying repentance unto them — that they must prepare the way of the Lord or there should come a curse upon the face of the land; yea, even there should be a great famine, in which they should be destroyed if they did not repent.”
62. Dallin H. Oaks (“The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament,” *Ensign* [November 1998]: 37) asks: “What does it mean that the Aaronic Priesthood holds ‘the key of the ministering of angels’ and of the ‘gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins’? The meaning is found in the ordinance of baptism and in the sacrament. Baptism is for the remission of sins, and the sacrament is a renewal of the covenants and blessings of baptism. Both should be preceded by repentance. When we keep the covenants made in these ordinances, we are promised that we will always have His Spirit to be with us. The ministering of angels is one of the manifestations of that Spirit.”
63. For more on what being empowered to “speak with the tongue of angels” means in a temple context, see Neal A. Rappleye, “Angelic Speech as a Form of Deification,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 303–23. Rappleye fruitfully compares the “baptism of fire” in 2 Nephi 31:13 to Isaiah’s prophetic commission in Isaiah 6.
64. Walter Bauer, et. al, s.v. “oikonomia,” *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Fredrick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 697.
65. *Ibid.*
66. John Gee, “Quotations of the Sealed Portions of the Book of Mormon,” *Insights* 24 (2004): 2–3.

67. Ibid.
68. For an excellent treatment of the doctrinal significance of the phrase “prepare the way” from a Latter-day Saint perspective as pertaining to the function of the Aaronic Priesthood, see Gérald Caussé, “Prepare the Way,” *Ensign* (May 2017), 75–78.
69. John Ashton, s.v. “Paraclete,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:152–53. The Greek term *angelos* originally had the sense of “a messenger or envoy” and was used to describe “birds of augury” (see Richard John Cundliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* [Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963], 2.) Later on, *angelos* came to connote a “divine messenger, angel” (see H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1889], 4). Job 33:23 uses Hebrew *mēlîš* “interpreter, mediator, helper” (in parallel there with “angel, messenger”) which, in turn, is rendered in the Aramaic Targum as *pəraqliṭā*, a Greek loanword familiar to us in the form of New Testament *paraklētos*. Building on the work of numerous scholars, Ashton suggests the possibilities “advocate,” “intercessor,” “counselor,” “comforter”; “*Doppelgänger*,” “alter ego.” See Ashton, s.v. “Paraclete,” 152–53.
70. Matthew 18:10 and Acts 12:14–15 clearly use *angelos* in the sense of “*Doppelgänger*” or “double” — i.e., what we would understand as one’s spirit: “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10); “And when she [Rhoda] knew Peter’s voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.” (Acts 12:14–15). Additional study forthcoming.
71. In Joseph Smith — History, Joseph Smith uses the noun “messenger” fifteen times to describe Moroni. He uses “messenger” three additional times to describe John the Baptist.
72. Isaiah 27:1; see also Amos 9:3; Job 3:8; 40:15–41:26; Psalm 74:13–23; 104:26.
73. 2 Nephi 2:18; see also Mosiah 16:13.