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A Journal of Mormon Scripture

The Interpreter Foundation

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The Small Voice

Daniel C. Peterson

Abstract: *Revelation comes in various forms, some of them spectacular and some of them extremely subtle. The scriptures and the history of the Restoration offer numerous examples across the entire spectrum. Whatever its form, however, divine revelation remains divine revelation, and it is the avowed mission of the Interpreter Foundation to thoughtfully ponder such revelation, to try to explicate its meaning, and to illustrate its richness. In turn, such examination can itself provide an opportunity for personal revelation—both for the examiners and, we hope, for those who read or hear the results of their work.*

*I*ntertextuality is a fancy word that many contemporary literary scholars use to describe ways in which various texts refer to, or play off of, each other. Often, writers do this without explicitly indicating it; in such cases, only fairly sophisticated (or, at least, well informed) readers will notice. But it isn't always subtle. To choose an example essentially at random, a 2012 book by Satinder Dhiman was titled *Seven Habits of Highly Fulfilled People*, alluding unmistakably to Stephen Covey's famous 1989 bestseller, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.[1] Sometimes, though not always, subsequent authors hope that their audiences will have prior texts in mind as they read.

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1 Satinder Dhiman, *Seven Habits of Highly Fulfilled People: Journey from Success to Significance* (Fawnskin, CA: Personhood Press, 2012); Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).

The Book of Mormon contains numerous such examples, and probably quite a few remain to be discovered.[2] Perhaps I may suggest two additional illustrations here.

The first involves the famous passage in which Alma the Younger expresses his yearning to reach all humanity with the message of the gospel:

> O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people! Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance, and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth.[3]

Alma's expression of his desire seems plainly based upon his own personal conversion experience, in which an angel appeared to him who "spake as it were with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake," and who summoned him to repentance. "Doth not my voice shake the earth?" the angel asked, rhetorically. "He spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did tremble beneath our feet."[4]

In fact, Alma felt guilty about his desire for an angelic voice. If God had willed such a thing, he realized, it would be so. That it isn't typically the case is clear evidence that God doesn't wish to convince us by means of dramatic special effects.[5]

The second proposed example suggests a reliance upon the Old Testament story of Elijah, presumably available to the Nephites via the brass plates that Lehi brought with him from the Old World. (John Sorenson, incidentally, has suggested on other grounds that the brass plates originated in the northern kingdom of Israel, where Elijah lived and prophesied.)[6]

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2. Compare, for instance, 1 Nephi 1:8 and Alma 36:22, as well as Mosiah 3:8 and Helaman 14:12.

3   Alma 29:1–2.

4   See Mosiah 27:10–15; Alma 36:6–11.

5   See Alma 29:3–8.

6   John L. Sorenson, "The 'Brass Plates' and Biblical Scholarship," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10/4 (Autumn 1977): 31–39. See http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V10N04_33.pdf.

In the Old Testament's First Book of Kings, we read of Elijah's experience in the wilderness (perhaps in the Sinai or else across the Gulf of Aqaba in what is today Saudi Arabia) that

> the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.[7]

Somehow, the Lord was "in" that "still small voice," and he was "in" it in a sense that he wasn't "in" the wind, the earthquake, or the fire.

Similarly, the account of the destructions in 3 Nephi 8–11 tells of a great "storm," "tempest," "thunder" and "whirlwinds," as well as of fire and of an earthquake that broke the rocks, ultimately followed by a "small voice" heralding the Savior's appearance. Such literary crafting suggests that its author wanted us to think, while reading it, of the story of Elijah:

> And it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn.[8]

And this is what it said:

> Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name — hear ye him.[9]

Once again, in a very real sense, God was "in" that voice.

Strikingly, though, the people — and remember that these were the more righteous among the Nephites; the wicked had died in the destructions that had just occurred — understood the voice only the third time.[10]

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7   1 Kings 19:11–12.

8   3 Nephi 11:3. It may be significant that the voice itself is described as piercing, quake-inducing, and burning — plain metaphorical analogues to the physical destruction that had just occurred.

9   3 Nephi 11:7.

10   3 Nephi 10:12–13; 11:3–6.

This is the manner in which revelation is typically given and received. While the scriptures, distilling the experiences of prophets and apostles and saints over millennia, might seem to suggest that glorious manifestations are common with such people, that would be a misapprehension.

As Elder Spencer W. Kimball put it just months before he unexpectedly became president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

> The burning bushes, the smoking mountains, … the Cumorahs, and the Kirtlands were realities; but they were the exceptions. The great volume of revelation came to Moses and to Joseph and comes to today's prophet in the less spectacular way — that of deep impressions, without spectacle or glamour or dramatic events. Always expecting the spectacular, many will miss entirely the constant flow of revealed communication.[11]

"The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand," Elder Boyd K. Packer explained in 1983. "Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all."[12]

Sometimes, of course, revelation *does* come in spectacular ways. Immediately after the Nephites that gathered about the temple in Bountiful understood what that "small voice" was announcing to them, they were granted what surely ranks among the grandest Christophanies or appearances of Christ in human history:

> And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.
>
> And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

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11 Spencer W. Kimball, Munich Germany Area Conference, 1973, 77.
12 Boyd K. Packer, "The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign* (January 1983): 53.

> Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.[13]

Several years after assuming the presidency of the Church, Spencer W. Kimball again warned us not to ignore, downplay, or dismiss revelation when it arrives quietly and without fanfare, while humbly but plainly bearing witness to his own calling:

> Expecting the spectacular, one may not be fully alerted to the constant flow of revealed communication. I say, in the deepest of humility, but also by the power and force of a burning testimony in my soul, that from the prophet of the Restoration to the prophet of our own year, the communication line is unbroken, the authority is continuous, a light, brilliant, and penetrating, continues to shine. The sound of the voice of the Lord is a continuous melody and a thunderous appeal.[14]

Thirteen months later, President Kimball received the revelation on priesthood that is now commemorated in Official Declaration 2, in the Doctrine and Covenants. The late historian Leonard J. Arrington describes the event as follows:

> Those in attendance said that as he began his earnest prayer, they suddenly realized that it was not Kimball's prayer, but the Lord speaking through him. A revelation was being declared. Kimball himself realized that the words were not his but the Lord's. During that prayer some of the Twelve — at least two who have said so publicly — were transported into a celestial atmosphere, saw a divine presence and the figures of former presidents of the church … smiling to indicate their approval and sanction. Others acknowledged the voice of the Lord coming, as with the prophet Elijah, "through the still, small voice." The voice of the Spirit followed their earnest search for wisdom and understanding.
>
> At the end of the heavenly manifestation, Kimball, weeping for joy, confronted the [other members of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve], many of them also sobbing, and asked if they sustained this heavenly instruction. Embracing, all nodded vigorously and jubilantly their sanction. There had

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13   3 Nephi 11:8–10.

14   Spencer W. Kimball, "Revelation: The Word of the Lord to His Prophets," *Ensign* (May 1977): 78.

been a startling and commanding revelation from God — an ineffable experience.

Two of the apostles present described the experience as a "day of Pentecost" similar to the one in the Kirtland Temple on April 6, 1836, the day of its dedication. They saw a heavenly personage and heard heavenly music. To the temple-clothed members, the gathering, incredible, and without compare, was the greatest singular event of their lives. Those I talked with wept as they spoke of it. All were certain they had witnessed a revelation from God.[15]

"Spectacular" revelations may come, in the Lord's due time, to those who demonstrate their willingness to follow the small voice of the Spirit.

One of the missions of the Interpreter Foundation is to take canonized revelation — whether its origins are spectacular or to be found in the merest divine whisper — with thoughtful, reflective, and scholarly seriousness.

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15   Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1998), 177. On the preceding page, Arrington remarks that, "As a historian I sought to learn the particulars and record them in my private diary. The following account is based on dozens of interviews with persons who talked with church officials after the revelation was announced. Although members of the Twelve and the First Presidency with whom I sought interviews felt they should not elaborate on what happened, I learned details from family members and friends to whom they had made comments." Arrington's entire chapter on the subject, "The Long-Promised Day," pp. 175–85, is of interest. It can now be supplemented with the material gathered in Gregory A. Prince, *Leonard Arrington and the Writing of Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and Tanner Trust Fund, 2016): 306–27.

The Changing Forms
of the Latter-day Saint Sacrament

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Ugo A. Perego

Abstract: *Partaking of bread and water each Sunday is a fundamental part of the theology of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — a solemn moment in which the mortal Savior's mission and ministry are remembered and pondered by those who partake individually and as a congregation. This paper explores instructions provided by the Savior himself as found in the Mormon canon of scriptures, together with a review of how this practice has changed over time as part of the LDS Church liturgy. Moreover, the meaning associated with this sacred ordinance is analyzed by way of the Savior's teachings in ancient scripture through Mormon prophets in modern times, particularly in light of a more recent emphasis shared by the LDS Church leadership.*

At the April 2014 General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve taught:

> When we are baptized, we "take upon [us] the name of Christ" and enter "into the covenant with God that [we will] be obedient unto the end of [our] lives." *Each Sunday we renew that baptismal covenant by partaking of the sacrament and witnessing that we are willing to keep the commandments.*[1] (emphasis added)

Most members of the LDS Church would agree with this apostolic statement since it has been shared repeatedly and persistently as part of

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1   Robert D. Hales, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments," General Conference April 2014, at https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/if-ye-love-me-keep-my-commandments.

our theology. The single act of partaking of a small piece of bread and drinking water from a tiny cup each Sabbath seems, therefore, not only to epitomize the universal, atoning offering the Savior made of himself nearly two millennia ago but also to function as a restatement of the promises made at baptism.[2] In Latter-day Saint practice, this simple gesture is a manifestation of our willing submission to obey one of the Savior's last commandments given in his mortal ministry — to always remember him and follow in his footsteps. However, it appears that the sacrament as an extension of the ordinance of baptism, as currently understood in LDS theology, was not taught by the New Testament church nor in early Mormonism.[3]

One distinguishing aspect of current Latter-day Saint liturgical practice is the exactness required for the administration of the sacrament. For example, the supplications enunciated by the appointed priesthood holder must be read precisely as they are found in the scriptures — with the single exception of the authorized substitution of the word "water" for "wine" (Moroni 4:3, 5:2; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79; 27:2–3) — or else the presiding priesthood leader will direct the repetition of the prayer.[4] Other practices observed in the church today include the dress and grooming of the priesthood holders administering the sacrament (white shirt and tie), which is often required by local leaders, and the suggestion of partaking the emblems or passing the trays along the pews using exclusively the right hand. This emphatic attention to detail in preparing and administering this ordinance seems to imply that the sacrament is unalterable, and there are specific guidelines set forth to properly direct it. While these minutiae are not official church doctrine in actual observed practice, they are nevertheless widely taught and accepted.

Based on historical records discussed below, it appears that the eucharistic *modus operandi* restored by Joseph Smith and carried forth by subsequent leaders in the early period of this dispensation has evolved over time. The modification of the worship service as well as the occasional

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2   The fact that promises are made at the time of the baptism is not explicit in the baptismal prayer, but it is part of the baptismal Latter-day Saint homiletic tradition, including talks given at baptismal services. A frequently cited passage in this context is Mosiah 18:8–10. See *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005), 12: 203–12. See also Moroni 6:2–3 and D&C 20:37.

3   This issue will be discussed later in the paper.

4   *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 20.4.3.

introduction of new emphases, has continued to the present day. With this paper, I will review and summarize key doctrines and principles as found in the synoptic gospels (Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20) and in the Nephites' records (3 Nephi 18:1–12; 20:3–9), and how early church leaders may have understood and attempted to recreate the holy experience from the Upper Room, the place where the Lord's Supper was first administered. Particularly, I will attempt to provide a framework for when these changes occurred and how they might have led to the development of this ordinance and subsequent efforts to restore its true meaning, to correct or resist formalism, and to reposition deity at its very center.

The Biblical Eucharist

As Christ's mortal ministry was coming to a close, he arranged for a final opportunity to share the paschal meal with his disciples. This was a special occasion, unique in setting and in scope. It is possible that the designated location for this event, a room on the upper floor with adequate furniture, was not a casual choice.[5] The host probably knew who the Master was and most likely had an opportunity to discuss the needed details beforehand. Within those walls, the transition from old to new covenant as prophesied six centuries earlier by Jeremiah was about to be fulfilled through Christ's ultimate mission (Jeremiah 31:31–33). Significantly, this was not a large gathering but rather the Savior purposely chose to spend this moment with his inner circle of apostles. The prearranged venue, the ecclesiastical invitees, and the original teachings and rituals that took place in the Upper Room signify something more than a simple meal. Everything seems to point to a series of temple-like preparatory experiences that continued for forty days after the Savior's resurrection: the evil one, Judas, was dismissed,[6]

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5   Mark 14:12–17. Matthew Henry notes, "Christ was far from affecting anything that looked stately in eating his common meals; on the contrary, he chose that which was homely, sat down on the grass: but, when he was to keep a sacred feast, in honour of that he would be at the expense of as good a room as he could get. God looks not at outward pomp, but he looks at the tokens and expressions of inward reverence for a divine institution" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 6 volumes [Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1970] at http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/mark/14.html). Particularly verse 15 seems to indicate that even though the room was already furnished for the Passover meal, additional preparation by the disciples was needed for their special evening with the Savior.

6   Luke 22:3; John 13:27.

formal washings took place, instructions, and tokens were given, and covenants were stipulated.

After giving thanks and ensuring that everyone present partook of the sacred emblems, Christ added a few Messianic utterances: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come,"[7] "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me," and "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:18–20). Thus, as taken from Luke's account, drinking from the first cup represented a promise of things to come — a future salvific day with eschatological implications or, as President John Taylor stated, "In the sacrament we shadow forth the time when He will come again and when we shall meet and eat bread with Him in the kingdom of God."[8] The second cup signified the divine blood spilt freely and unconditionally for the apostles, who were representing all God's children.[9] Therefore, the meaning the Lord wished to impress on the disciples' minds with this new rite was threefold: 1. reminding them of his role as their Redeemer; 2. calling them to do his work; and 3. foretelling his future reunion with them.

Matthew, who wrote for an audience familiar with Jewish traditions, added the clause "for the remission of sins" to the ordinance of the sacrament (Matthew 26:28), perhaps in reference to the Day of the Atonement. As biblical scholar Margaret Barker has stated, "his phrase 'for the remission of sins' immediately identifies [the sacrament] as the temple covenant, the covenant renewed by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement."[10] Barker continues placing particular emphasis on the necessity of saving the Creation through the Lord's own life and preserving the eternal covenant by the removal of sins. Thus, on the Day of the Atonement, the High Priest would first wash himself and then take the blood of the sacrificial goat (representing the life the Lord gave in our behalf) to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat and on the drapes of the Holy of Holies. Additionally, a second goat was released in the wilderness, symbolically carrying away the sins of Israel and mending the spiritual gap caused by the Fall.

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7   In his Inspired Version of the KJV Bible, Joseph Smith adds the following, "until it be fulfilled *which is written in the prophets concerning me. Then I will partake with you,* in the kingdom of God."

8   *Journal of Discourses*, 14:185 (20 March 1870).

9   Darrell L. Bock, "Luke 9:51–24:53" in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 1716–29.

10   Margaret Barker, "Creation Theology" at http://www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/CreationTheology.pdf. See Leviticus 16.

Therefore, through the partaking of consecrated bread and wine, we also consecrate ourselves repeatedly by entering into a pre-temple covenant to remember the atoning sacrifice of the Savior and to keep his commandments in preparation for his millennial return, also by abandoning all our sins — or fallen state — in view of our paradisiacal legacy and by being reconciled with the divine. As will be reasoned hereafter, the exegesis of these biblical passages coupled with direct revelation may have resulted in the theological and liturgical restoration of the eucharistic ritual in this dispensation.

The Restoration of the Sacrament

On April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, the first and second elders of this dispensation, met with a few others at Peter Whitmer's humble residence in Fayette, New York, to organize the Church. Instructions pertaining to this gathering were given previously in a revelation known as "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ" (Doctrine & Covenants 20). Together with other business items, the first sacrament was celebrated as the priesthood brethren distributed the bread and wine to those in attendance.[11, 12]

Only a few months earlier while writing about the Savior's visit to the Nephites, Joseph and Oliver learned the necessity of the ordinance of baptism. Angelic manifestations, in response to their inquiry of the Lord, precipitated the restoration of proper priesthood authority, hence allowing for the ordinance of baptism to be administered in the Susquehanna River (Joseph Smith-History 1:68–72). Subsequently, a few more baptisms were performed prior to the organization of the church. However, notwithstanding they had priesthood authority and a number of early converts, Joseph Smith did not perform the first Eucharist until the church was officially organized. It is possible that Joseph was

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11   Doyle L. Green, "April 6, 1830: The Day the Church Was Organized," *Ensign* (January 1971) at https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/01/april-6–1830-the-day-the-church-was-organized. The author states, "The sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered to those who had previously been baptized. As far as can be determined, this was the first time this holy ordinance had been performed by the Lord's chosen servants in this dispensation."

12   Scott Faulring, "The Book of Mormon: A Blueprint for Organizing the Church," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 60–69. See also Book of Mormon Central, "Was the Book of Mormon Used as the First Church Administrative Handbook?" at https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/why-might-the-book-of-mormon-be-called-the-first-church-administrative-handbook-of-the-0.

instructed to wait for that significant occasion in order to celebrate the first sacrament in this dispensation. Regarding the event, he wrote,

> We were, however, commanded *to defer this our ordination* until such times as it should be practicable to have our brethren, who had been and who should be baptized, assembled together … when *also we were commanded to bless bread and break it with them, and to take wine, bless it, and drink it with them*.[13] (emphasis added)

The "Articles and Covenants" did not contain many details pertaining to the liturgy of the sacrament, and therefore it is of no surprise that the mode and frequency with which it was administered varied considerably through the following decades. As LDS historian Justin Bray phrased it,

> With the vast [number] of interpretations of the Lord's Supper, as well as limited instructions on the ordinance in Joseph Smith's revelations, early leaders in the LDS Church seemed to incorporate aspects from their previous faith into the administration of the sacrament. These Latter-day Saints, for example, referred to the ordinance by several names, including the Lord's Supper, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, "breaking bread," Communion, and the Eucharist. It took many years for all members to universally term the ordinance "the sacrament," which was what the Lord called it in Joseph Smith's revelations. (D&C 20:46)[14]

One such practice during the first years of the LDS Church was the collective kneeling during the blessing of bread and wine, a practice that the Community of Christ[15] has retained to this day. Interestingly, kneeling to pray and worship was not a common practice in biblical times, as the typical posture among Jews and Judeo–Christians during supplication was to remain standing (see Matthew 6:5; Mark 11:25; and Luke 18:11, 13).[16]

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13   *History of the Church*, 1:60–62.

14   Justin R. Bray, "The Lord's Supper in Early Mormonism" in *You Shall Have My Word: Exploring the Text of the Doctrine & Covenants*, eds. Scott Esplin et al. (Provo UT: Religious Studies Center, 2012), 64–75.

15   Formerly known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or RLDS Church.

16   D&C 20:76 is consistent with Moroni 4:2, both of which describe the need for the church to kneel together with those administering the sacrament. It is also possible that, like the manner of worship of Catholics, Joseph Smith believed that

The Development of the Eucharistic Rite

Even though the Lord commanded the Saints to "meet together often to partake of bread and wine" (D&C 20:75), it appears that the young LDS Church did not formally institute a weekly sacramental service on the Sabbath until a few years following that humble beginning at Peter Whitmer's log home. In this regard, it looks as if the Protestant heritage of many early church leaders may have played a role in the infrequency of the communal events.[17] In fact, while Catholicism centers salvation on a journey characterized by rites and personal work, Protestant movements are stripped for the most part of such liturgies, and the occasional Eucharist becomes merely a token of praise and gratitude for a salvation that has already been granted entirely through the grace of Christ.[18] Perhaps to Mormons the theological implications of the sacrament were not fully explained or understood at first, and the eternal, delicate balance between mortal works and divine grace, as beautifully elaborated in 2 Nephi 25:23, was still in need of further elaboration. Consequently, changes that took place in the following decades pertaining to the Latter-day Saint ritual of administering bread and wine may have been the result of a progressive maturation in expanding the theological and liturgical invitation of remembering the works and grace shown by the Savior as described in the revealed sacramental prayers.

For Latter-day Saints, these initial years of eucharistic experimentation would commonly include partaking of bread and wine in a quantity similar to a normal meal, to the filling both physically and spiritually of those in attendance. For example, when the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated in 1893, the practice of eating large amounts during the sacrament was still popular. An eyewitness of that event, John F. Tolton, recorded in his journal that "Each participant was given a large tumbler with the Salt Lake temple etched into it and a napkin. Presiding Bishop Preston blessed the bread and 'Dixie' wine (from southern Utah), and the brethren were invited to eat till they

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such formalism during the sacrament could help the Saints better empathize with the Savior when, in Gethsemane, he knelt in atoning supplication (Luke 22:41).

17   The Community of Christ still celebrates the Eucharist on a monthly basis, often on the first Sunday of the month. (Email exchange with Lachlan Mackay, Apostle of the Community of Christ. Copy in possession of author.)

18   Kathleen Flake, "Supping with the Lord: A Liturgical Theology of the LDS Sacrament," *Sunstone* 91 (July 1993): 18–27.

were filled but to use caution and not indulge in wine to excess."[19] Two probable theological reasons may have had an influence in the liturgical justification of a more abundant meal than what we are used to in our days. First, the Book of Mormon is significantly more explicit about the "filling" theme compared to the biblical account (3 Nephi 18 and 20). In both circumstances, all those who partook of the bread and wine "were filled," likely not only spiritually but also physically. Second, Joseph Smith and his ecclesiastical associates might have viewed the events in the Upper Room as a pre-sanctification experience. For example, in the Kirtland Temple and in the School of the Prophets, the ordinance of washing of feet was accompanied by the partaking of the sacrament, just like the events that took place in the Upper Room as recorded in the New Testament.[20] The partaking of the bread and wine in remembrance of the Savior could not therefore be extrapolated as a stand-alone ritual but as an intrinsic and vital component with all other rites introduced while "feasting" on that last meal.

The restitution of all things (Acts 3:21) could be further corroborated by the restoration during the Kirtland era of the washing of feet,[21] not only as an act of humility as understood and practiced for centuries by traditional Christianity but also as an integral part of the necessary cleansing and consecrating process to become one with Christ.[22] Both in the School of the Prophets and in the early temples, almost every instance of washing of feet in the nineteenth century was performed in association with the administration of the sacramental meal, which symbiotic relationship led to the display of the gifts of the Spirit,[23]

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19   John Franklin Tolton, diary, 20 April 1893, as cited in Brian H. Stuy, "'Come, Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord': The Salt Lake Temple Dedication," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31/3 (Fall 1998): 101–22. A large piece of bread from the sacramental service that took place during the Salt Lake Temple dedication is displayed at the Daughters of Utah Pioneer Museum in Salt Lake City.

20   Keith W. Perkins, "Kirtland Temple," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 798–99. Also, "1883 testimony of Zebedee Coltrin," *Salt Lake School of the Prophets Minute Book 1883*, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 38 (hereafter CHL).

21   D&C 88:138–41.

22   Matthew Grow, "Clean from the Blood of This Generation: The Washing of Feet and the Latter-day Saints," *Summer Fellow's Papers 2000–2002*: 131–38.

23   On one such occasion in Kirtland, Missouri Bishop Edward Partridge recorded that those present "prophesied and spake in tongues & shouted hosannas. the meeting lasted till day light." Edward Partridge, journal, March 1836, CHL; see also W. Phelps to S. Phelps, letter, April 1836. See also, John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, The Joseph Smith Papers at http://

powerful preaching of the word, and greater spiritual manifestations. One example is the theophanic experience recorded by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836,[24] which was preceded by days of physical cleansings, sacramental services, confession of sins, and a careful spiritual preparation.[25]

The task of blessing and distributing bread and wine during the first decades of the newly organized church was often left to the presiding authorities,[26] perhaps to emphasize the sacredness of the rite and Christ's communal role in the meridian of time. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, services, and worship began gradually to revolve more around the sacrament, even in the absence of a set format for administering it. Singing hymns or preaching during the sacramental feast, which often was the conclusive part of a meeting, was common.[27] President Wilford Woodruff wrote in his journal on 12 October 1883,

> This was a day of fasting and prayer with the leaders of the Church. I took a Bath and wash[ed] in the Morning and went to the Endowment House at 9 oclok to receive the washing of feet as it was done in Kirtland 47 years ago By the Prophet Joseph Smith as an initiatory ordinance into the school of the Prophets … *At the Close of this Ceremony we partook of Bread & wine as a sacrament as they did in the Temple in Kirtland which Closed the labor of the day.*[28] (emphasis added)

Other interesting aspects from that era that are no longer part of modern sacramental worship included murals behind the eucharistic altar, which was often located in a central position, the absence of children, and raising the hands by the priests offering the prayers during the recital of the blessings.[29]

The search for a balance between formal prescription on one hand and a focus on the spirit of the ordinance on the other characterized the development of liturgy that continued for the first century of the

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www.josephsmithpapers.org/ paperSummary/john-corrill-a-brief-history-of-the-church-of-christ-of-latter-day-saints-1839, 9.

24   Joseph Smith Papers, Journals Vol. 1, p. 219. See also D&C 110.

25   Joseph Smith Papers, Journals Vol. 1, p. 211–213.

26   Wilford Woodruff and Susan Staker, *Waiting for World's End: The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993): 13–15.

27   Bray, "The Lord's Supper," 67–75

28   Woodruff and Staker, *Waiting for World's End*, 362.

29   James B. Allen and Glenn M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 372.

Church. By the turn of the century, Aaronic priesthood responsibilities had been assigned principally to boys twelve years old and up.[30] Changes in church practices, which included local initiatives focused on increasing reverence during the sacramental services, led to policy changes. Consequently, local leaders introduced excessive formalities in order to counteract potential immature behavior of youth. These instructions involved uniformity in dress and grooming, such as white, ironed shirts and black bow ties; military-like posture and manner of walking, including holding the tray exclusively with the right hand and keeping it at right angle while the left arm was placed behind the back; and proper passing of trays along the pews, among other things.[31]

These extreme formalisms and lack of uniformity in administering the sacrament among church units quickly became a concern to the General Authorities of the church, who "believed deacons and members wearing uniforms were more concerned with the outward appearance of those passing the emblems than the meaning of the sacred ordinance itself."[32] By the end of the 1940s, most of these procedures were dropped in favor of a more "quietly natural and unobtrusive" ceremony, as instructed by then Presiding Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon.[33] In commenting upon those days, Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said,

> Since the administration of President Heber J. Grant, the First Presidency has emphasized the precaution through the General Handbook of Instructions to avoid any formalism, or uniformity in procedures. These instructions apply to the dress of Aaronic Priesthood youth who pass the sacrament. Boys should be neat and clean, but not required to dress uniformly. It also refers to any formalism, such as Aaronic Priesthood young men walking with one arm behind their

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30   William G. Hartley, "From Men to Boys: LDS Aaronic Priesthood Offices, 1829–1996," *Journal of Mormon History* 22/1 (1996): 80–136.

31   "Field Notes," *Improvement Era* 34/7 (May 1931): 417, 426.

32   Justin R. Bray, "Excessive Formalities in the Mormon Sacrament, 1928–1940," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 4/1 (1993): 61–75.

33   "Avoid Formalism in Church Worship," *Presiding Bishopric Bulletin* (February 1935), CHL as cited in Justin R. Bray, "Excessive Formalities in the Mormon Sacrament."

back, or standing with arms folded, or priests raising their
arm to the square when blessing the sacrament.[34]

In other words, uniformity was to be achieved by avoiding
uniformity and by focusing on the spiritual meaning of the eucharistic
act. To facilitate this objective, the First Presidency and Quorum of
the Twelve issued the following recommendations in a 1946 letter:
"The ideal condition is to have absolute quiet during the passing of the
sacrament, and that we look with disfavor upon vocal solos, duets, group
singing, or instrumental music during the administration of this sacred
ordinance."[35]

Although Mormons are not bound to the use of any specific food as
physical emblems for the sacrament (D&C 27:1–2), bread was traditionally
accompanied with the fruit of the vine until the turn of the nineteenth
century. The revelation known as the Word of Wisdom (D&C 89) was
received in 1833 but was not implemented for several decades.[36] The Lord
clearly stated that wine was the exception and could be used as a symbol
of Christ's atoning blood as long as it was "pure wine of the grape of the
vine, of your own make" (D&C 89:5–6). It wasn't until 1902 and under
the presidency of Joseph F. Smith that water replaced wine as the element
of choice for the sacrament.[37] Interestingly, the Community of Christ
still uses grape juice in their services.

The Theology of the Sacrament

Official teaching focusing on the theological aspects of the sacrament
was not common in the early years of the church. In 1867, Joseph F. Smith
was one of the first apostles to touch on the covenantal nature of this
rite without elaborating on it: "We meet here in this Tabernacle and
partake of the Holy Sacrament together as brethren in the bonds of

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34   David B. Haight, "Remembering the Savior's Atonement," *The Ensign*
(April 1988) at https://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/04/remembering-the-saviors-
atonement. See also *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (Salt Lake City: The
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 20.4 at https://www.lds.org/
handbook/handbook-2-administering-the-church.

35   "Letter to Presidents of Stakes and Bishops of Wards," May 2, 1946, as cited
in Rulon T. Burton, *We Believe: Doctrines and Principles of the Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Draper, UT: Tabernacle Books, Inc., 2004), 597.

36   Jed Woodworth, "The Word of Wisdom" at https://history.lds.org/article/
doctrine-and-covenants-word-of-wisdom.

37   FairMormon, "Why do Mormons Use Water Instead of Wine for Its
Sacrament Services?" at http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormon_ordinances/
Sacrament/Uses_water_instead_of_wine.

the covenant."[38] President Brigham Young in 1877 added the salvific component to the promises we exchange with the Savior at the time of the Eucharist when he stated,

> Its observance is as necessary to our salvation as any other of the ordinances and commandments that have been instituted in order that the people may be sanctified, that Jesus may bless them and give unto them his spirit and guide and direct them that they may secure unto themselves life eternal.[39]

A few years later, in a talk given at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Elder Charles Penrose complemented these teachings by restating the Lucan passage about the true meaning of the communal meal by stating,

> We take this sacrament this afternoon not only in remembrance of the past but to direct our minds to the future. We partake of it to witness that we believe in the Atonement wrought out by the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Calvary and also that we expect his reappearance on the earth.[40]

This could be considered the golden age for theological understanding of the sacrament as an ordinance whose primary purpose was to reconnect with the Savior through a recurring process of promises exchanged and blessings assured. In 1921, President Heber J. Grant made the following statement that is particularly relevant to the core of the revealed sacramental supplications:

> I rejoice in the inspiration of Joseph Smith, in translating the Book of Mormon, and giving to us those two wonderful sacramental prayers, *those two marvelous covenants* that all Latter-day Saints make when they assemble together and partake of the sacrament.[41] (emphasis added)

Thus, as once directed by the Savior, we are taught even in this dispensation that the theological meaning of the blessing of the bread and that of the cup are distinctively sanctioned — two inseparable promises, renewable weekly, that exemplify the Atonement making us as one with the Savior.

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38   *Journal of Discourses,* 11:310.

39   *Journal of Discourses*, 19:92.

40   *Ibid.,* 22:82–83.

41   Heber J. Grant, "Increased attendance at sacrament meetings," *Improvement Era* 24/7 (May 1921): 650 and at https://archive.org/stream/improvementera2407unse#page/650/mode/2up.

This theological approach underwent a slight (but notable) change when a new emphasis was given to the partaking of the communal symbols. This new emphasis was evident at least by the time of the October 1950 General Conference when Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, made the following statement:

> So important is this [baptismal] covenant in the eyes of the Lord that he has provided for us a means and a way to renew it often. *The ordinance whereby we renew this covenant is the ordinance of the sacrament.*[42] (emphasis added)

His 1950 doctrinal explanation on the nature of the sacrament may have gone unnoticed at first, but at the April 1975 General Conference, it was unmistakably reiterated by President Marion G. Romney: "With the wording of the sacrament prayers in our minds as we partake of the sacrament, we renew our baptismal covenant each week."[43] In the ensuing years, the new theological emphasis of partaking the sacrament as a function of renewing our baptismal covenant became more popular, and the number of instances in which it was officially taught from church headquarters dramatically increased (see figure below). In the last thirty-five years, nearly fifty talks at General Conference have contained the newly introduced doctrinal statement.[44]

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42   Bruce R. McConkie, "Children of the Covenant," General Conference October, 1950.

43   Marion G. Romney, "According to the Covenants," General Conference (April 1975), https://www.lds.org/generalconference/ 1975/10/ according-to-the-covenants.

44   A search for the roots "sacrament" and "baptism" with all the related terms (i.e. sacramental, baptismal, etc.) was performed using a nine-step distance within the corpus of LDS General Conference talks available at http://www.lds-general-conference.org/x.asp. Conference talks searched were from 1851 to the present-day. I also double-checked this information with personnel at the LDS Church History Department. Elder McConkie's statement could have come as a literal interpretation of 2 Nephi 31:7 and 13 where the baptismal covenant included the commitment of keeping the commandments, including that of being willing to take upon us the name of Christ.

Increased usage in the past three decades of the teaching of the sacrament as a surrogate of the baptismal ordinance in General Conference talks.

During a special leadership training under the direction of the First Presidency just before the April 2015 General Conference, leaders of the church were instructed regarding the sanctity of the Sabbath, both during the Sunday meetings and at home. In speaking about the sacrament, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve made a timely and essential rectification when he said,

> The title "renewing our baptismal covenants" is not found in the scriptures. *It's not inappropriate.* Many of you have used it in talks; we have used it in talks. But it is not something that is used in the scriptures, and it can't be the keynote of what we say about the sacrament. … The sacrament is a beautiful time to not just renew our baptismal covenant, *but to commit to Him to renew all our covenants, all our promises, and to approach Him in a spiritual power that we did not have previously as we move forward.*[45] (emphasis added)

From my observations, this clarification was received by many as a surprise, which in itself is not a surprise as for two thirds of a century teachings regarding the doctrinal purpose of the sacrament echoed what Elder McConkie may have introduced in 1950.

The use of the double-negative "it is not inappropriate" seems to emphasize that although we are not in error for making the association between baptism and the sacrament, we could probably do better in our teachings about the latter. With this apostolic statement, Elder Andersen may have initiated the process of repositioning the theological meaning of the eucharistic rite in line with the scriptures and with the teachings of the first century of the restored Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although ongoing revelation to modern prophets is fundamental to LDS doctrine, the reason this reconsideration of a more scriptural interpretation of the sacrament is surprising lies in the fact that it is not an example of "enhancing and expanding" based on "ongoing

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45   Neil L. Andersen, "Witnessing to Live the Commandments," General Conference Leadership Training on the Sabbath Day Observance at Church (April 2015). Available to priesthood leaders. For a better understanding on the interrelation between the ordinances of baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the sacrament, see David A. Bednar, "Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins," *The Ensign* (May 2016) at https://www.lds.org/ensign/2016/05/saturday-afternoon-session/always-retain-a-remission-of-your-sins.

revelation" but a retraction of teachings of modern prophets based on ancient scriptures.

Conclusion

Joseph Smith once said, "Being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances."[46] Truman G. Madsen, in commenting on this prophetic statement, added,

> … the fullest flow of the Spirit of God comes to us through His appointed channels or ordinances. The sacrament is the central and oft-repeated ordinance that transmits that power to us. Indeed, it is the ordinance that gives focus to all other ordinances. … Eventually, through a lifetime, *His spirit can sanctify the very elements of our bodies until we become capable of celestial resurrection.* In baptism we are born once — born of the water and of the spirit. In the sacrament, we are reborn, over and over, of the bread and of the wine or water and *we are truly what we eat.*[47] (emphasis added)

With these words, Dr. Madsen effectively summarized the sacred relationship pertaining to sacramental covenants and their impact on our earthly journey and spiritual growth. Although not speaking with apostolic authority, he makes a clear distinction between the baptismal and the sacramental covenants, emphasizing a metaphorical transubstantiation not of the eucharistic emblems but of our souls when we partake of them.

As reviewed in this essay, details pertaining to the liturgy of the sacrament were not fully revealed at first, with the Lord patiently allowing ordinary men to develop the proper temporal framework and theological understanding associated with his instructions to reenact the sacramental covenants in this dispensation. This process required a few adjustments along the way, such as reducing excessive formalities in the first half of the twentieth century or the more recent addition of an innovative emphasis on renewing baptismal covenants. However, although as a church we may not fully appreciate or completely understand all the doctrinal implications of the sacrament, it is comforting to observe a

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46   Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (reprint, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 162.

47   Truman G. Madsen, "The Savior, the Sacrament, and Self Worth," BYU Women's Conference (1999) at https://womensconference.ce.byu.edu/sites/womensconference.ce.byu.edu/files/madsen_truman.pdf.

continual effort to improve both the liturgy and the teachings associated with Christ's communal invitation. Hopefully, we are sufficiently enabled to make an acceptable offering to the Lord when we approach the sacramental altar each week to eat of his bread and drink from his cup for the remission of our sins so that we can remember and follow his exemplary life, express gratitude for his redeeming sacrifice, and await his millennial return.

Acknowledgements

Ugo A. Perego *has a PhD in Genetics and Biomolecular Studies from the University of Pavia in Italy, where he studied under the mentorship of Professor Antonio Torroni, who was part of the team of scientists to first identify genetic diversity among Native American populations in the early 1990s. Dr. Perego was a senior researcher for the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation for 12 years, where he contributed to the building of one of the world's largest repositories of combined genealogical and genetic data. He has published and presented extensively on DNA and its application in populations, forensic, ancestry, historical, and genealogical studies. He currently resides in Italy, where he is the director of the Rome Institute Campus and a visiting scientist at the University of Pavia.*

Assessing the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Introduction to the Historiography of their Acquisitions, Translations, and Interpretations

Kerry Muhlestein

Abstract: The Book of Abraham has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention since some of the papyri once owned by Joseph Smith were rediscovered. A focus of this attention has been the source of the Book of Abraham, with some contending that the extant fragments are the source, while others have argued that the source is either other papyri or something else altogether. New investigations suggest that, while the relationship between papyri and text is not clear, it is clear that the fragments are not the source and that the method of translation was not the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. Additionally, further investigations into the source of the Book of Abraham as well as the interpretations of the facsimiles have made it clear that much of the controversy about the Book of Abraham has been based on untested assumptions. Book of Abraham studies have made significant strides forward in the last few decades, while some avenues of research are in need of further pursuit.

Introduction

In 1967 several papyri fragments once owned by Joseph Smith resurfaced to the public eye. These papyri, known as the Joseph Smith Papyri (JSP), are associated with the LDS scriptural text called the Book of Abraham. Questions about the relationship between the papyri and the scriptural text led to questions about Joseph Smith's translation abilities, which in turn led to questions about the prophetic abilities of the LDS church's founding prophet. These are important questions. Here we will outline some key events as well as the development of the most important questions and issues that have surrounded these papyri. An exhaustive treatment of all the questions and discussions is not possible

in this venue. In order to facilitate easier reading, in this article some of the historiographic treatment takes place in the footnotes. A more comprehensive treatment will have to wait for a book-length manuscript. Instead, here we will outline the most important arguments.[1]

At the outset, it is important to note that most of the arguments about the validity of the Book of Abraham have centered on the issue of authority. The earliest attacks on the Book of Abraham (discussed below) focused on appeals to the scholastic authority of academic scholars. Similarly, much of the defense of the Book of Abraham by Latter-day Saints has been based on the academic authority of believing scholars. I have argued that personal revelation is also an authentic, valid avenue of learning.[2] Some have noted that many LDS Egyptologists put forth what appear to be convincing arguments but some readers later come to perceive that their credibility or authority is somewhat doubtful because non-LDS Egyptologists who have written about the subject have disagreed with their point of view. It seems to have gone unnoticed that the vast majority of Egyptologists have said nothing at all about this matter. A very small minority has taken any kind of position regarding the Joseph Smith papyri controversy. Of those who have, it is certainly not their primary research concern, so they have typically put very little time into investigating these issues and the associated details. Thus it is important to note that LDS Egyptologists have spent more time studying the Egyptological issues associated with the Book of Abraham than any non-LDS Egyptologists, though this does not necessarily mean they are correct about everything they write. It is even more important to note that all scholars who say something about this topic are heavily influenced by their original point of view. Understanding the different points of view of these sources of authority is an important part of the epistemological process — the process of learning about the historiography of the study of the Book of Abraham. We can understand the history of the conversation best when we first understand the base assumptions made by all who have been involved in this dialogue.

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1   In the interest of full disclosure, it is important to know that I am a believing Latter-day Saint who is employed by Brigham Young University, which is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is also important to note that this article is intended to be an introduction to the topic and that arguments that seem to me to have been less well founded will be given only the most cursory of treatments or, in some cases, are not even noted here.

2   See my address given at BYU-Hawaii in November 2013, entitled "The Book of Abraham, Joseph Smith, Revelation, and You," available online through BYU-Hawaii's website: http://devotional.byuh.edu/media131112.

Towards that end, we must acknowledge that when it comes to Joseph Smith's ability to translate, a student of the issue truly has only two choices: that Joseph Smith could translate by the gift of God or that he could not. There really is not a middle ground. One has to make a choice about Joseph Smith's translating ability — or ignore it, as most do, which means that a decision has been made but most often not consciously.

I believe all parties agree that Joseph Smith could not translate Egyptian via conventional methods.[3] To go beyond this original agreement, all involved make a faith-based choice. It is disingenuous and intellectually dishonest to impose a false sense of objectivity on the nature of this choice. Believing that Joseph Smith could translate with the help of God is a faith-based choice, one made based on a belief that cannot be proved. Believing it is impossible for Joseph Smith (or anyone else) to translate with the help of God is also a faith-based choice, one based on a belief that cannot be proved. Yet this choice colors the way we see everything else in regard to the Book of Abraham.

In our historiographic discussion, let us start out with the realization that those who believe that someone *can* translate as a gift of God and that this *did* happen with Joseph Smith will interpret all the evidence differently than someone who believes that a person *cannot* translate as a gift of God or that some people can, but *not* Joseph Smith. As a result, all non-LDS Egyptologists (i.e., all Egyptologists who have chosen to believe that Joseph Smith was not prophetically blessed by God) will see things differently than all LDS Egyptologists (i.e., all Egyptologists who have chosen to believe that Joseph Smith was prophetically blessed by God). This should not be surprising to anyone, but we *must* be aware that this beginning assumption is so large that it will inevitably lead to vastly different conclusions.

In regard to researchers, the story of the Book of Abraham spans many disciplines, and hence requires scholarship from many fields. Whereas there are some Egyptological aspects of the discussions surrounding the Book of Abraham, they are not the only pertinent ones, and may actually be some of the less important elements. Thus it is important to have Egyptologists discuss those issues, but it is equally if not more important to delve into issues regarding nineteenth century history, the history of ancient manuscripts, the history of modern manuscripts, semiotics, and

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3   No one in America could translate Egyptian in Joseph Smith's day. See John Gee, "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt," in Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds. *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2015), 427–36, especially 436.

issues of faith. Accordingly, scholarship regarding the Book of Abraham involves input from those who have training and experience in all of these fields. Hugh Nibley, an early leading scholar in Book of Abraham studies, articulated this point some time ago:

> Consider for a moment the scope and complexity of the materials with which the student *must* cope if he would undertake a serious study of the Book of Abraham's authenticity. At the very least he must be thoroughly familiar with (1) the texts of the "Joseph Smith Papyri" identified as belonging to the Book of the Dead, (2) the content and nature of mysterious "Sen-sen" fragment, (3) the so-called "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar" attributed to Joseph Smith, (4) statements by and about Joseph Smith concerning the nature of the Book of Abraham and its origin, (5) the original document of Facsimile 1 with its accompanying hieroglyphic inscriptions, (6) the text of the Book of Abraham itself in its various editions, (7) the three facsimiles as reproduced in various editions of the Pearl of Great Price, (8) Joseph Smith's explanation of the facsimiles, (9) the large and growing literature of ancient traditions and legends about Abraham in Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Greek, Slavonic, etc., and (10) the studies and opinions of modern scholars on all aspects of the Book of Abraham.[4]

More recently, LDS Egyptologist John Gee, speaking at a meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, additionally remarked,

> If you decide you want to enter the debate [on the JSP and Book of Abraham], you ought to do some real homework. There is a large bibliography, and there are dozens of theories to master, not to mention a large body of evidence. … You have to pay attention to what Latter-day Saints say about the papyri. It is they who have traced the history of the papyri, dug up what information is known about Antonio Lebolo, identified Joseph Smith Papyri X–XI as a Book of Breathings, and done much basic work on hypocephali, and they are the

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4   Hugh Nibley, "*Abraham in Egypt*, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 14 (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2000), 154–55.

people who have access to the original documents. They know their own history much better than others do.[5]

Unfortunately, many who have waded into the debate surrounding the JSP and the Book of Abraham, especially non-specialists writing in popular venues, have not paid close heed to these warnings from Nibley and Gee, with the predictable result that their writings often suffer from many methodological and factual errors.

In summary, when embarking on a study of issues surrounding the Book of Abraham, one must be ready to deal with a myriad of theories, methodologies, and disciplines. More importantly, one must be cognizant of often unnoticed underlying assumptions and, most of all, of faith-based choices that color the way all evidence is evaluated. If we are aware of these choices and assumptions, we can more clearly evaluate the history of the Joseph Smith Papyri.[6]

History of the Papyri

We cannot understand the issues surrounding the Joseph Smith Papyri and Book of Abraham without knowing some of the story behind them.[7] When Napoleon invaded Egypt, he opened a wave of Western exploration that the country had never known.[8] Soon after his defeat, many European countries sent consuls to Egypt with one major goal: bring back amazing

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5   John Gee, "New Light on the Joseph Smith Papyri," *FARMS Review* 19, no. 2 (2007): 258.

6   I wish to acknowledge that different versions of portions of this article have appeared in slightly different forms in various online sources. I further wish to acknowledge that many of the ideas I put forward in this article were independently reached by many other scholars. In particular, so much similar work has been done by John Gee that I can no longer always tell what ideas were independently reached by the two of us as opposed to those ideas that were interdependently reached.

7   For an important discussion on how to deal with the history of the papyri, see John Gee, "Telling the Story of the Joseph Smith Papyri," [review of James R. Harris, *The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Study of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri* (Payson, UT: Harris, 1990); *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, David P. Silverman, ed. (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1994)] in *The FARMS Review*, 8/2, 1996.

8   See Nicolas-Philibert Desvernois, *Mémoires du Général Baron Desvernois* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1898), 67; Brian M. Fagan, *Rape of the Nile* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1975), 72–76; Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 60–63, 98; and Hornung, *Secret Lore of Egypt,* 131–34.

antiquities — and that is exactly what they did.[9] Mohammed Ali, the man who oversaw Egypt on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, was eager to seek Western European help in modernizing his country. He and most Muslims of the time also viewed the ancient Egyptian monuments as relics of abominable paganism, so he was happy to trade monuments for help in modernizing Egypt. Thus a flood of artifacts flowed from Egypt into European museums, creating the foundation of some of the greatest museums in the world, such as the British Museum, the Louvre, and the Berlin Museum.[10] In one of the most interesting twists of LDS history, this movement of artifacts would bring a set of papyri to Joseph Smith.

As the various European governments competed for Egyptian artifacts, one of the key figures in the excavation game was an Italian named Antonio Lebelo, who worked for the French consul. Lebolo helped create many important collections, including major contributions to the Turin Museum and the Louvre. He also sold smaller groups of artifacts to private collectors. One of these small groups, eleven mummies and a handful of papyrus, made its way to the U.S.[11] This was the first large collection of Egyptian antiquities to arrive in the States.[12]

This prize show made its way around the country, setting up in hotel lobbies and advertising in local papers. People flocked to see actual Egyptian mummies. At some point a man named Michael Chandler

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9   See Alberto Siliotti, ed., *Belzoni's Travels* (London: The British Museum Press, 2001); and Fekri A. Hassan, "Imperialist Appropriations of Egyptian Obelisks," in *Views of Ancient Egypt since Napoleon Bonaparte: Imperialism, Colonialism and Modern Appropriations*, ed. David Jeffreys (London: University College London Press, 2003).

10   For more on all of this see Kerry Muhlestein, "European Views of Egyptian Magic and Mystery: a Cultural Context for the Magic Flute," *BYU Studies* 43, no. 3 (2004): 137–148; "Prelude to the Pearl: Sweeping Events Leading to the Discovery of the Joseph Smith Papyri," in *Prelude to the Restoration: from Apostasy to the Restored Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004), 130–141.

11   For a slightly outdated but excellent description of how the papyri got to America, see H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995); John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000). Gee has updated and expanded his publication, which will soon be published with Deseret Book as *An Introduction to the Book of Abraham*. Also see John Gee, "New Light on the Joseph Smith Papyri."

12   See S.J. Wolfe and Robert Singerman, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America. Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009).

either gained possession of the collection or assumed its care on behalf of other owners. For a while he traveled with the displayed mummies, but eventually he started to sell them. By the time he had sold all but four of the mummies, one of his friends, a man named Benjamin Bullock, who had relatives who believed in Joseph Smith's prophetic ability to translate, convinced Chandler to take the mummies and papyri to Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, hoping his interest in ancient documents would make him a potential buyer.[13]

When Joseph Smith came to see the papyri, he was immediately interested. Smith was allowed to take them to his home to study them.[14] During his study he learned through revelation that the papyri contained the writings of Abraham and of Joseph of Egypt.[15] He deeply desired the papyri, but Chandler would not sell them separately from the mummies. So even in the midst of trying to finance the last stages of building the Kirtland Temple, the prophet found a few followers who supplied enough money for the papyri and mummies to be purchased.[16]

Once Joseph Smith received the papyri, he immediately began translating them with the help of some of his closest companions. He also seems to have quickly begun trying to make an alphabet and grammar of Egyptian, as discussed below. However, no translation efforts seem to have been made during August and September, as other business was attended to during these months. On October 1, work on the papyri recommenced.[17] The most consistent period of translation seems to have taken place in late November. For a few weeks Joseph Smith spent time almost every day working on the papyri.[18] As the year ended, he took up studying Hebrew and seemingly left the study of Egyptian and the

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13   Clara Fullmer Bullock, *Life Story of Benjamin Bullock III (*Alberta, Canada: self-published family history, 1952), 9, 11–15, 17.

14   *Autobiography of Dr. John Riggs*, p. 1, Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections. Also "Dr. John Riggs," in *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*3/3 (1884): 282.

15   Manuscript History of the Church, Book 1, p. 596, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

16   Letter from Joseph Coe to Joseph Smith, 1 January 1844 as cited in Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham*, 7–8.

17   *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals vol. 1: 1832–1839,* Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds. (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008), 67.

18   Ibid., 67–76.

papyri behind almost completely.[19] He would return to it minimally a few times before his death.

Eventually the mummies and papyri moved to Nauvoo, where they stayed with Joseph Smith for the rest of his life.[20] For the most part, the antiquities were on display in the Mansion House. Throughout the Illinois period, Lucy Mack Smith, the Prophet's mother, showed the antiquities to visitors, sometimes taking the lead even when her son was with her.

After a few years in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith became the editor of the Church's semi-monthly newspaper, the *Times and Seasons*. This was the organ which the Church used to disseminate information and many teachings. Almost immediately the Prophet used this venue to begin

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19 On the relationship of the study of Hebrew and the translation of the Book of Abraham, see Kerry Muhlestein and Megan Hansen, "'The Work of Translating': the Book of Abraham's Translation Chronology," in Spencer Fluhman, Brent L. Top, eds., *Let Us Reason Together: Reflections on the Life of Study and Faith, Essays in Honor of Robert L. Millet,* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2015, 139–62); Matthew J. Grey, "'The Word of the Lord in the Original,' Joseph Smith's Study of Hebrew in Kirtland," in Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds. *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2015), 249–302; and Michael T. Walton, "Professor Sexias, the Hebrew Bible, and the Book of Abraham," *Sunstone* 6 (March–April 1981): 41–43. Muhlestein and Hansen's work about when various portions of the Book of Abraham were translated is the latest in a series of studies regarding this. See also Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, and Hauglid, *Textual History*, 2–4.

20 Recently quite a bit of work has been done on how Joseph Smith and other Latter-day Saints of his day viewed the antiquities and their connection to the Bible. See Kerry Muhlestein, "Joseph Smith's Biblical Views of Egypt," in Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds. *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2015), 447–71; Kerry Muhlestein, "Papyri and Presumptions: A careful examination of the assumptions and eyewitness accounts associated with the Joseph Smith Papyri," the *Journal of Mormon History,* forthcoming. Additionally, on the topic of how to evaluate Joseph Smith's non-prophetic statements, ideas, and perhaps even speculations about antiquities, see a lecture I have given, "Joseph Smith and Egyptian Artifacts: Towards a Preliminary Paradigm for Evaluating Prophetic and Mundane Ideas Regarding Aspects of the Ancient World," presented at the annual BYU Church History Symposium: *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith's Study of the Ancient World*, held at Brigham Young University and Salt Lake City, March, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzP0iuNLa10. I expand on this in an article titled "Joseph Smith and Egyptian Artifacts: Towards a Preliminary Model for Evaluating Prophetic and Mundane Ideas Regarding Aspects of the Ancient World," *BYU Studies*, forthcoming.

publishing his translation of the Book of Abraham. In the March 1 edition, he published Facsimile One, its explanation, and Abraham 1:1 through 2:18. In the next edition, March 15, Facsimile Two, its explanation, and the rest of the Book of Abraham were printed. A few editions later, on May 15, Facsimile Three and its explanation were published. The newspaper promised that more of the book would be printed, but it never was.[21]

When Joseph Smith was killed, his mother maintained possession of the antiquities and showed them to visitors for several years. For a short time she stayed with her daughter Lucy, but for most of her remaining life she lived with Emma, the Prophet's wife, and displayed her antiquities there. Within two weeks of Mother Smith's death, Emma and her new husband, Louis Biddamon, sold the mummies and papyri to a man named Abel Combs.[22]

Combs sold most of the collection to a man who put them in the St. Louis Museum. For a long time, it was thought the entire collection was at the St. Louis Museum. As it turns out, at least two mummies and the two long papyri rolls (one described as the long roll, one as the short, though it still seems to be quite lengthy) were taken there. We do not know where the other two mummies went. After some time the collection in St. Louis was sold to a museum in Chicago. That museum was burned in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The catalogues of the museum from before the fire list the mummies and papyri as part of the museum's collection, but they are not listed as part of the collection that survived the fire.[23] This is not surprising, as both mummies and papyri are highly flammable. Because it was thought the entire collection had been sold to the St. Louis Museum, it was also thought that all of the Mormon antiquities had been lost to fire. It was not until several decades later that the public learned that not all the papyri had been sold. Combs

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21 Notice from the editor (John Taylor), *Times and Seasons,* vol. 4, February 1, 1843, 95.

22 A great deal of work in tracing the history of the papyri and mummies was done by Jay Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1969). H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1995), greatly furthered that research and was aided in his research by Brian Smith, who has continued that work. See Brian L. Smith interview by Philip R. Webb, "Mystery of the Mummies: An Update on the Joseph Smith Collection," *Religious Studies Center Newsletter* 20, no. 2 (2005): 1–5; and Brian Smith, "A Book of Abraham Research Update, *BYU Religious Studies Center Newsletter*, May 1997, 5–8).

23 See Jay M. Todd, *Saga of the Book of Abraham*, 298–300.

had given some of his papyri, a collection of mounted fragments,[24] to his housekeeper, whose daughter inherited them and whose son eventually sold them to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.[25]

In 1967 an Egyptian scholar at the University of Utah who specialized in Coptic, the latest phase of the Egyptian language, was doing research in the Metropolitan Museum. While going through the part of their collection that was not on display, he happened upon the papyri that Joseph Smith owned. He also recognized their connection with Mormons. Because he knew some prominent Mormons, he agreed to act as a go-between for the museum. Soon the museum gave the ten fragments they had to the First Presidency as a gift.[26] Afterward, an intense study of what is now known as the Joseph Smith Papyri began. Studies of the papyri and associated manuscripts were first done by men like Hugh Nibley, John Wilson, and Klaus Baer. [27] More recent work has

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24   On the mounting of the fragments, see Alex Baugh and Kerry Muhlestein, "Preserving the Joseph Smith Papyri Fragments: What Can We Learn from the Paper on Which the Papyri Were Mounted?" *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22, no. 2 (2013), 66–83.

25   Albin Huesser to Ludlow Bull, 30 July 1946, as in Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections.

26   Thomas Hoving to N. Eldon Tanner, 1 November 1967, as in Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections. Also, H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham*, 236; John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000), 9.

27   Nibley was the first to recognize the Egyptian text, and to investigate it at length. See Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed., Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 16 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2005), which is an updated version of his original work published by Deseret Book in 1975. Other early translations include Richard A. Parker, "The Book of Breathings (Fragment 1, the 'Sensen' Text, with Restorations from Louvre Papyrus 3284)," in *Dialogue* 8/2 (1968); this is only a translation of JSP I, or fragment one, of the Joseph Smith Papyri; and Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham," *Dialogue* 3, no. 3 (1968). Later translations include Robert K. Ritner, "The 'Breathing Permit of Hôr' Thirty-Four Years Later," *Dialogue* 33, no. 4 (2000); and Robert K. Ritner, "The 'Breathing Permit of Hôr' among the Joseph Smith Papyri," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62, no. 3 (2003); this is not really two translations but basically a reproduction of the same translation twice with slightly different commentary and prologue. For a review of these articles, see Larry E. Morris, "The Book of Abraham: Ask the Right Questions and Keep on Looking," *The FARMS Review of Books on The Book of Mormon* 16, no. 2 (2004). Also See Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*, Studies in the Book of Abraham 2, ed. John Gee (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002). I reviewed this and Ritner's translation in "The Book of Breathings in Its Place," with Translation and

been done by scholars such as myself, Robert Ritner, Michael Marquardt, Brian Hauglid, John Thompson, Brian Smith, H. Donl Peterson, Michael Rhodes, and especially John Gee, who has done more research into the Book of Abraham than anyone else.[28]

Investigations About the Source of the Book of Abraham

When the papyri resurfaced in 1967, one of the fragments contained the drawing that was the original source of Facsimile One. This papyrus drew the most immediate interest. Because we can now translate Egyptian, it seemed that perhaps observers could then test Joseph Smith's revelatory abilities. Many members of the LDS Church *assumed* the text on the papyri that surrounded the original of Facsimile One was the source of the Book of Abraham. It was thought this might give them the chance to demonstrate Joseph Smith's prophetic abilities. Anti-Mormons also *assumed* the text adjacent to that drawing was the source of the Book of Abraham and were excited about the opportunity to disprove Joseph Smith's prophetic abilities.[29] Sadly, neither of these groups took the time to carefully and rigorously examine their assumptions. Thus, when the text was translated, and we learned that it was a somewhat common Egyptian document called the Book of Breathings (intended to help the deceased achieve the desired afterlife),[30] many felt that they could now demonstrate that Joseph Smith was not an inspired translator. From that time until the present, most non-believers who have written about the Book of Abraham have focused on either this issue or questions regarding the facsimiles.

In a recent statement the Church has said "the relationship between those [papyrus] fragments and the text we have today is largely a matter

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Transliteration Analysis Appendix, a Book Review of Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*, in *The FARMS Review* 17, no. 2 (2005), 471–486. As is noted below, Ritner came out with another translation a few years later.

28   Even before the resurfacing of the papyri, men like Jay Todd did a lot of research on the nineteenth century history of the papyri. See Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham*.

29   See Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Case Against Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1968), 2:159, 3:330. An example of Latter-day Saint ideas is found in Hugh Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," *Improvement Era,* January 1968.

30   On this, see, Jean-Claude Goyon, *Rituels funéraires de l'ancienne Égypte* (Paris: Les Èditions du Cerf, 1972); and Marc Coenen, "Books of Breathings; More Than a Terminological Question," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 26 (1995).

of conjecture."[31] Despite this, most who have written about the papyri, even until today, do not realize they have made an *assumption* about the source of the Book of Abraham. For them it is a given that Joseph Smith translated the text adjacent to Facsimile One when he was dictating the Book of Abraham to his scribe.[32] They do not even realize that this is an assumption that should be evaluated. Though there is some fair reasoning behind this assumption, it remains an assumption and does not move into the realm of theory if it is not explicitly acknowledged as such and tested. Ironically, failing to realize one has made such an assumption causes one to think that solid proof has been found when in reality any conclusions reached are fully unreliable.[33] It is not surprising that such an assumption was made. It is natural to presume that the

31   LDS Gospel Topics, Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham, https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham.

32   To be clear, some have made this assumption and tried to bolster it based on Egyptian characters written in the earliest Book of Abraham manuscripts, which will be discussed below.

33   As I have noted elsewhere, there are many examples of research that pursues unquestioned assumptions, such as Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 16; Grant S. Heward and Jerald Tanner, "The Source of the Book of Abraham Identified," *Dialogue* 3 (Summer 1968): 92–98; Edward H. Ashment, "Reducing Dissonance: The Book of Abraham as a Case Study," in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990); Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, "Solving the Mystery of the Joseph Smith Papyri," *The Salt Lake City Messenger*, September 1992. Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith Among the Egyptians: An Examination of the Source of Joseph Smith's Book of Abraham," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 16* (1973), 25–45, especially 33; and Charles M. Larson, *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Institute for Religious Research, 1992), 199–226, 151. Another example is Robert K. Ritner's later translation of the papyri, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri, a Complete Edition* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011)*,* 3. Therein Ritner states that the Book of Abraham comes from JSP I and the record of Joseph from JSP II and III. This is stated as fact without any acknowledgment, or seeming awareness, that there are other possibilities. Ritner does excellent work on translating the papyri but does not address the fact that this translation is relevant only to the Book of Abraham if his assumption about the source of the Book of Abraham is correct. It is important to note that Ritner, who does not claim to be an expert in LDS church history, probably relied on a chapter in his book by H. Michael Marquardt, "Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papers: A History." Marquardt also makes this assumption and fails to ask the questions that would test the assumption. He makes a number of other assumptions without acknowledging that they are such or that there are alternative ways to interpret the evidence. See especially pp. 16, 17, 24, 25, 29, 32, 34, 35, 48, and 49.

text surrounding a picture has something to do with the picture. The problem is not in making this assumption, since research cannot move forward without a hypothesis, but rather is in failing to take the next necessary step: testing that hypothesis. To emphasize this important point, unnoticed or untested theories are not hypotheses but are instead presumptions. Once the presumption has been made, the next step should be to examine whether or not we have evidence that could support or discredit the conjecture.

Recently, I have tried to test this particular assumption (i.e., that the text surrounding Facsimile One is related to the illustration) in a number of ways. First, I have examined the text itself to see if it contains any clues about its relationship with its associated pictures. I have also examined similar papyri from the same period to see if the texts and their vignettes (illustrations) were typically adjacent to each other, something that has been done more extensively by others. Additionally, I have analyzed the accounts of eyewitnesses who saw the papyri and knew from what material Joseph Smith said he was translating.[34] I have also examined the earliest Book of Abraham manuscripts in a search for evidence, which will be discussed below. While more full reports of these examinations are or will soon be available elsewhere, a short summary is in order here.[35]

The text of the Book of Abraham does make reference to a picture. It says the fashion (or drawing) of the altar and idolatrous gods is "at the beginning," presumably of the record or papyrus on which the text was written. The first time this statement is clearly said is Abraham 1:12. Believing Latter-day Saints often assume that this line drawing attention to the vignette must be part of the earliest manuscript, but it is not entirely clear that this must be the case. The earliest attestation of the text of the Book of Abraham is a manuscript that is a second or third generation

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34   Many have examined eyewitness accounts of those who saw the papyri. The most substantive evaluation of the value of such accounts is in John Gee, "Eyewitness, Hearsay, and Physical Evidence of the Joseph Smith Papyri," *Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson,* Richard Lloyd Anderson, Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000),175–218.

35   On the first two points, see John Gee, "Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri," *FARMS Review,* 20, no. 1 (2008): 113–137; Kerry Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham," in *The Religious Educator* 11/1 (2010): 90–106; "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: A Faithful, Egyptological Point of View," in *No Weapon Shall Prosper, ed.* Robert L. Millett (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 217–241.

copy of the original dictation of the text.[36] In this manuscript part of the statement referring the reader to see a depiction of the altar at the "commencement" of the record is inserted between the lines of the text, suggesting that it may have been added as an afterthought.[37] However, the second mention of the drawing (Abraham 1:14) appears as part of the normal flow of the text.[38] While it is possible that the interlinear text indicates this is a later addition, that conclusion is less likely. The manuscript on which the line about the vignette was added does not actually have any drawings on it. It would not make sense to create a reference to a picture for a manuscript that does not have a picture on it. Rather, it seems more likely that the line about the picture had been accidentally left out and was re-inserted above the line. Moreover, the reference to the drawing that occurs just two verses later does not appear to be a later addition. The reference could not refer to the way it was printed in the *Times and Seasons* publication because that took place in 1842, and the text in question appears in 1835. Taken together, these bits of evidence suggest that the reference to the altar "at the beginning" is a line from the translation of the papyrus, though we cannot be certain. If this is true the reference to the "beginning" indicates that the vignette depicting the altar and idols is not adjacent to the text but some distance from it — at the beginning.

The line about seeing the representation at the beginning of the text is 540 English words into the text of the Book of Abraham. The Egyptian text in question is read right to left, with about two inches of text on the right-hand side of the vignette and several inches of it on the left-hand side. On a papyrus with hieroglyphs, this would have been only a few inches in, close enough to any vignette for no need to refer the reader "to the beginning." For example, on JSP I, X, and XI (the fragments of papyri that contain the text adjacent to the Sacrifice of Abraham Vignette), 540 English words of translation are about five inches into the text. Because about two inches are on one side of the vignette, this would make the line in question, if it were translated from that papyrus, or if Joseph Smith thought or pretended he was translating from that text, about three

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36 Brian M. Hauglid, *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2010), 7. For an example of research done on the earliest manuscripts of the Book of Abraham, see Brent L. Metcalfe, "The Curious Textual History of 'Egyptus' the Wife of Ham, *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 34/2 (2014), 1–11.

37 See Hauglid, *Textual History*, 27 n. 47, 68–71.

38 Ibid.

inches away from the vignette, placing it so close to the vignette that one would not refer to it as being at "the commencement" or "beginning." If Joseph Smith were translating using something akin to the "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar," which suggests many English words be translated for each Egyptian character, the line about "the beginning" would have been right next to the vignette. The reference to a picture at the beginning makes the most sense if it is situated further from the text than one to three inches. Thus, our first line of questioning, that of examining what the text says about its relationship to the drawing, leads away from the common assumption and points towards the text and vignette not being adjacent to one another.[39]

Others have examined other papyri created at about the same time as those which Joseph Smith owned.[40] Frequently pictures on these papyri are not adjacent to the text with which they are associated.[41] Again we see that whereas the assumption that the text and the vignette are adjacent is not necessarily wrong, it is not safe to make.

I have recently completed an extensive article which examines the eyewitnesses who saw the papyri and heard something about what Joseph

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39   See Muhlestein, "A Faithful, Egyptological Point of View," 225–26.

40   On the dating of the Joseph Smith Papyri, see Jan Quaegebeur, "Books of Thoth Belonging to Owners of Portraits? On Dating Later Hieratic Funerary Papyri," in *Portraits and Masks: Burial Customs in Roman Egypt*, ed. Morris L. Bierbrier (London: British Museum, 1997), 74; Marc Coenen, "The Dating of the Papyri Joseph Smith I, X, and XI, and Min Who Massacres His Enemies," in *Egyptian Religion the Last Thousand Years, Part II. Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan-Quaegebeur*, Willy Clarysse, Antoon Schoors, and Harco Willems, eds. (Leuven, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1998), 1103; Marc Coenen, "Horos, Prophet of Min Who Massacres His Enemies," *Chronique d'Égypte* 74 (1999), 257–59, wherein he refined his dating further, and John Gee, "History of a Theban Priesthood," in *Proceedings of "Et maintenantce ne sont plus que des villages …" Thèbesetsarégion aux époques hellénistique, romaine et Byzantine (*Brussells, Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 2008), 59–71.

41   See Malcolm Mosher, Jr., "The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead in the Late Period: A Study of Revisions Evident in Evolving Vignettes, and the Possible Chronological or Geographical Implications for Differing Versions of Vignettes," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1989), 1:53–54. On the topic of vignettes and attending texts containing incongruences, see Valérie Angenot, "Discordance entre texte et image. Deux exemples de l'Ancien et du Nouvel Empires," *Göttinger Miszellen* 187 (2002): 11–21. See Marc Étienne, "*Livre des Morts* au nom de Hor," in *La mort n'est pas une fin: Pratiques funéraires en Égypte d'Alexandre à Cléopâtre*, ed. Alain Charron (Arles: Musée de l'Arles antique, 2002), 145; Jean-Claude Goyon, *Le Papyrus du Louvre N. 3279* (Cairo: IFAO, 1966), 2; many personal communications.

Smith was translating from.[42] This study concludes that the majority of people who saw the papyri and heard something about the source of the Book of Abraham did not specify whether that source was on the scrolls or the fragments, but about a dozen did. Based on the testimony of these eyewitness accounts, our only real historical evidence, it is clear that if the translations did indeed come from the papyri (an idea that is possible but not sure and to which we will return below), the long roll was the source of the Book of Abraham. While we cannot yet say what the source of the Book of Abraham is, we can say what it is not: according to the eyewitness accounts, it is not the text adjacent to Facsimile One. It is too early yet to tell how this evidence and argument will be received by the academic community.

Issues of Translation

Since he first claimed to acquire the Golden Plates, Joseph Smith's abilities to translate have been heatedly questioned. These questions also center on an initial assumption: whether or not Joseph Smith could translate by the gift and power of God. As noted above, those who assume or make a faith-based choice that Joseph Smith *did not* receive divine or supernatural aid when translating will not recognize any of his translation projects as valid. Joseph Smith did not claim to know any ancient languages during any of his translations. Thus, if he did not receive the divine aid he claimed, he could not translate at all, meaning all that he did was a hoax. In contrast, for those who assume or make the faith-based choice that Joseph Smith *did* receive divine aid, the question of translation takes on a completely different meaning. In recent years, more full explorations have taken place of what Joseph Smith meant when he spoke of translating.[43] This is particularly true of the Book of Abraham. Let us first examine theories that have attempted to explain

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42   Muhlestein, "Papyri and Presumptions," *Journal of Mormon History,* forthcoming. Before my extensive analysis John Gee had already come to this conclusion. See John Gee, "Formulas and Faith," *Journal of Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture*, 21/1 (2012): 61, 64–65.

43   For example, see Royal Skousen's many works on the translation of the Book of Mormon; Michael H. MacKay, *From Darkness Unto Light: Joseph Smith and The Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University and Deseret Book, 2015); Brant Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Draper, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2011); or Kent P. Jackson, "Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: 1830," in *Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer*, Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson, eds. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2010).

the translation process in light of the assumption that Joseph Smith *did not* receive divine aid while translating. Then we will examine those that assume he did.

Most who believe that Joseph Smith was uninspired when translating have held to the theory that he created an Egyptian grammar and then used it to translate the Book of Abraham. Subscribers to this theory usually marshal support for their hypothesis by pointing to data from the earliest manuscripts of the Book of Abraham, recently edited and published by Brian Hauglid,[44] and to a group of documents usually referred to as the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar, which will soon be published by Hauglid and Robin Jensen. In order to understand their argument, we must first know something of these documents.

Joseph Smith and his scribes left behind some sheets of paper they called a Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language (GAEL) that contain various Egyptian characters alongside explanations of those characters. Several of these explanations are similar to language in the Book of Abraham. A few somewhat similar documents bear different titles but contain similar or at least related information. Together all these papers are often called the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. Joseph Smith and his colleagues also created a few copies of the text of the Book of Abraham that have some Egyptian characters in the margin.[45] The latter characters seem to come from the fragments of papyrus that contain Facsimile One (JSP I, X, and XI). Some have postulated that Joseph Smith used the GAEL to translate these characters, which were taken from JSP I, and that this was both the source of the Book of Abraham and the method of its translation.

As we look at the GAEL, it is clear that Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and W. W. Phelps were products of their time when it came to their knowledge of Egyptian.[46] In the early nineteenth century, the language was in the process of being deciphered by Champollion and others, but most people thought Egyptian was a cryptic language, each character conveying varied meanings based on the amount of knowledge

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44   Hauglid, *Textual History.*

45   On these manuscripts, besides Hauglid's *Textual History,* see also Brian M. Hauglid, "Thoughts on the Book of Abraham," in *No Weapon Shall Prosper,* 242–53.

46   See W. W. Phelps, "Reflections for the Fourth of July, 1834," *Evening and the Morning Star* 2/22 (July 1834), 173; and Samuel Brown, "The Translator and the Ghostwriter: Joseph Smith and W. W. Phelps," *Journal of Mormon History* 34/1 (Winter 2008), 35.

possessed by the reader.[47] It was only after Egyptologists gained the ability to translate Egyptian using conventional methods that this notion about the language was dispelled. It seems that Joseph Smith and his colleagues were, like others before them, hoping to figure out several levels or layers of meaning for each Egyptian symbol.[48] Nevertheless, they failed, producing a document (GAEL) that makes little sense, which is not surprising, considering none of the authors claimed to know or understand Egyptian, and the translation of Egyptian characters had stumped scholars for centuries.

It seems there are two ways to assess the theory that the Prophet and his colleagues used the GAEL to translate characters from JSP I and thus produce the Book of Abraham. The first is to examine the accounts of eyewitnesses who knew something about what Joseph Smith was claiming to translate. We have already discussed this and have come to the conclusion that the historical documents strongly suggest this theory is problematic since he was not translating from JSP I.

The second way to assess this theory is to look at the correspondence between the Egyptian characters in the margins of the Book of Abraham manuscripts and see if they correspond to the way such characters are used in the GAEL. I have recently begun working on this and can report on the first phase of this research. First, I located all of the phrases in the GAEL that also appear in the Book of Abraham. I then compared the Egyptian characters next to those phrases in the GAEL to the Egyptian characters adjacent to the matching lines in the early Book of Abraham manuscripts. Of the twenty-one times I found text in the GAEL that matched text in the Book of Abraham, I found only one time that the corresponding Egyptian characters matched, four times when part of the characters matched, and sixteen times in which there was no match whatsoever. This indicates that the GAEL was not used to translate the papyri, nor is there any demonstrable translation relationship between the characters in the papyri we currently have and the text of the Book of Abraham. We cannot yet understand what the relationship between the GAEL and the papyri is, though there surely was one, yet we can tell

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47   On the state of understanding Egyptian at this period, see Gee, "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt," 427–28.

48   On how Joseph Smith did or did not fit in with others of his day in his views of Abraham, see Andrew H. Hedges, "A Wanderer in a Strange Land: Abraham in America, 1800–1850," in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, Studies in the Book of Abraham 3, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2005), 175–88.

that this is not how the Book of Abraham was translated. We do not yet know how proponents of the GAEL as the tool of translation theory will respond to this data.

Additionally, recently Brian Hauglid has carefully examined the Egyptian language documents created by Joseph Smith and his compatriots. He has concluded that the Prophet and others, especially W. W. Phelps, were engaged in a project to discover ancient languages even before the arrival of the papyri. William Schryver pointed this out even earlier in a Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR) lecture.[49] When the Egyptian Antiquities were acquired, Smith and Cowdery seem to have gotten involved for a short time in this Phelps project, but it was clearly Phelps driven throughout.[50] It is clear that having access to the papyri somewhat changed Phelps's focus and method, but Hauglid maintains it is clear that the GAEL is a continuation of work already begun.[51] This would suggest that the GAEL was not the method of translating the Book of Abraham but rather that the papyri were seen as an aid in a process of understanding ancient languages that was already underway.

Furthermore, though somewhat contradictory to Hauglid's claims, John Gee has demonstrated that key portions of the GAEL date to early 1836 at the earliest.[52] This is significant because most if not all of the translation of the Book of Abraham took place in late 1835. Thus the GAEL could not have been used as a method of translation. Furthermore, Gee has argued that Joseph Smith was not working on the Egyptian project during 1836, again indicating that the GAEL was largely Phelps's work.[53] At this point several avenues of investigation all come to the same

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49   William Schryver, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," 2010 FAIR Conference, http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2010-fair-conference/2010-the-meaning-of-the-kirtland-egyptian-papers-part-i. See also Gee, "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt," 440.

50   See Gee, "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt," 440–441; see a somewhat contra view in Samuel Brown, "Joseph (Smith) in Egypt: Babel, Hieroglyphs, and the Pure Language of Eden," *Church History* 78:1 (March 2009), 29–30.

51   Brian M. Hauglid, "The Book of Abraham and the Egyptian Project, 'A Knowledge of Hidden Languages,'" Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges, eds. *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2015), 476–77, 502.

52   Gee, "Joseph Smith and Ancient Egypt," 440–41.

53   Ibid., 441. Gee and I have independently reached the same conclusion that Joseph Smith came to regard the GAEL as an important effort, one that had failed but was worth trying again.

conclusion: whatever GAEL was, it was not the method of translating the Book of Abraham.

For those who believe that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Abraham by inspiration, the most likely explanation of all this is that having translated by inspiration, Joseph Smith and his colleagues, primarily W. W. Phelps, tried to look at the Egyptian characters they had in front of them and, based on an inspired translation, create a grammar that would produce the ability to translate Egyptian without divine aid. This would have allowed men like W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery to also translate Egyptian. As just outlined, the evidence makes it clear that they were not looking at the text surrounding Facsimile One when they did so. The evidence also makes clear they failed in their fledgling academic attempt and gave up on it.

Recently an alternative theory has been put forward. In a FAIR conference in August of 2010, William Schryver made an important and cogent presentation arguing that the GAEL was actually W.W. Phelps's attempt to encode, or cipher, ideas into Egyptian characters.[54] The idea is intriguing and should be further explored but as yet has not gained a great deal of traction.

For those who do not believe Joseph Smith made an inspired translation, the most likely explanation, given the current evidence, is that Joseph Smith thought he could look at Egyptian characters and, from his own head, come up with a grammar the world would accept as a valid method of translating Egyptian. This group will also conclude that the attempt was a failure and was abandoned.

On the other hand, since the GAEL was clearly not Joseph Smith's tool for translation, for those who have chosen to believe Joseph Smith could receive divine aid in translating, we must examine what his translation method may have been. Most in this group have assumed that Joseph Smith translated text from the papyri. Recently many, including myself, have questioned if we are safe in making such an assumption.[55] This is because we have questions about how Joseph Smith "translated." For most people, the idea of translating is fairly straightforward. Conventionally, when someone translates, he reads a document in one language he understands and renders it into another language he understands. This

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54 Schryver, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," 2010 FAIR Conference.

55 Personal communications.

is not necessarily how Joseph Smith used the word "translate," as is evidenced when examining his various translation efforts.[56]

Joseph Smith's first translation project was the Book of Mormon. There is much about the Book of Mormon translation process that we do not know. We know that the Prophet used the seer stones we call the Urim and Thummim as well as another seer stone.[57] While we cannot nail down the exact details, it seems he often was not looking at the gold plates at all during much of this process. What we can be sure of is that Joseph Smith provided us with a translation of a language he did not know, frequently without referring to the physical text he had, into a language that he did know. He explained that his ability to translate was a gift from God.[58]

The next translation project took place while Joseph Smith was in the midst of finishing the Book of Mormon translation. Joseph Smith says that as he and Oliver Cowdery asked a question, he was shown in vision a parchment written on by John (see D&C 7). Again, it was written in a language Joseph Smith did not understand. This time he never even saw the physical text — he saw it only in vision, and it is not clear whether or not he ever saw the words written on the parchment. Either way, it does not appear that he received an inspired translation as he studied the text or looked at the words, but rather the translation seems to have somehow come to him either as or after he saw the text in vision. We know nothing about the translation process in this case.

Joseph Smith's next translation project had very little to do with what most people call "translating." He looked at an English version of the Bible and provided us with another English version but included material not present in the text he was translating from. Latter-day Saints often call this the "Joseph Smith Translation" of the Bible. In this case it is clear the text came to him as pure revelation and was not dependent at all on the physical text in front of him. This process began about two months after Joseph Smith finished translating the Book of Mormon.[59]

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56   This idea is also put forward in the Church's statement, "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham," https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng.

57   For more on this, see Richard E. Turley, Jr., Robin S. Jensen, Mark Ashurst-McGee, "Joseph the Seer," *Ensign*, October 2015.

58   On all of this, see Michael MacKay and Gerrit Dirkmaat, *From Darkness Unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Religious Studies Center, 2015).

59   Kent P. Jackson, "New Discoveries in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible," in *By Study and by Faith: Selections from the* Religious Educator, ed. Richard

The next translation project was the Book of Abraham. While some of Joseph Smith's confidants later spoke of his using the Urim and Thummim while translating,[60] the exact nature of this process is also unclear. There is no doubt that the translation was spurred on by the physical possession of the papyri. He certainly did not know the original language the text was written in, whatever that language was. It is also clear that Joseph Smith and many of the Saints spoke of the writings of Abraham as being on the papyrus, intimating that the process may have been similar to the translation of the gold plates. At the same time, some clues suggest that there was something of a revelatory process akin to the translation of the Bible.

For example, in Joseph Smith's journal it is recorded, "This after noon labored on the Egyptian alphabet, in company with brsr O[liver] Cowdery and W[illiam] W. Phelps: The system of astronomy was unfolded."[61] Most likely this refers to the Prophet's coming to understand the meaning of Facsimile Two or translating Abraham 3. Either way, the word "unfolded" suggests a revelatory experience that had little to do with what was on the papyrus. Additionally, his mother spoke of his ability to translate portions of the text not on the papyrus,[62] also suggesting something of a revelatory process.

For those who have chosen to believe that Joseph Smith *could* translate with divine aid, based on the Prophet's translation history and the evidence we have, the most likely possible scenarios for the translation process seem to be: 1) by the power of God, Joseph Smith translated a text that was written on the papyri which we no longer have because it was burned in the Great Chicago Fire; 2) as he opened his mind to God because of his curiosity about the text on the papyrus, he received revelation about an ancient text written by Abraham and translated it by the power of God, though that text was not on any papyri he physically possessed; or 3) a combination of the two, meaning that he translated something on the papyri and received revelation regarding

Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009).

60   At this point, they referred to the Prophet's other seer stone as a Urim and Thummim. See Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* 2, ed. Scott G. Kenney (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1984), 155.

61   Dean C. Jesse, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals Volume* 1 (2008), 67.

62   "M," *Friends' Weekly Intelligencer*; vol. 3, no. 27, October 7, 1846, 211; William S. West, *A Few Interesting Facts Respecting the Rise and Progress and Pretensions of the Mormons* (1837), 5.

other writings as well. Each of these theories is subscribed to by some LDS scholars.[63]

Issues Involving the Facsimiles

The last topic we will examine here is the treatment given the Book of Abraham facsimiles and their explanations over the years. The earliest attacks on the Book of Abraham came from questions about the Facsimiles. As will be seen below, these examinations all pursued what is probably the wrong avenue of exploration. As early as 1873, anti-Mormons contacted Egyptologist Theodule Deveria, from the Louvre, and then published his interpretation of the meanings of the Facsimiles, which differed from Joseph Smith's. Later, in 1912, an Episcopal bishop in Salt Lake City sent copies of the facsimiles to eight Egyptologists, asking for their reaction. They all had different interpretations than Joseph Smith's, and Spaulding published these in his book *Joseph Smith, Jr. as a Translator* in an attempt to discredit Joseph Smith. Latter-day Saints such as John A. Widtsoe provided vigorous defenses, pointing out the methodological and assumption problems that undergirded the entire effort.[64] Since that time similar arguments have continued to take place, though by now our knowledge of both the facsimiles and Egyptian funerary art in general have advanced significantly. Recently a number of Latter-day Saints have pointed out how well Joseph Smith's explanations often do match what Egyptians or Egyptologists would say as well as pointing out some unique elements about the facsimiles. This will be discussed below.

The question that Spaulding, Deveria, and many others today have asked is about how Joseph Smith's explanations of the facsimiles compares to those of ancient Egyptians. The question is more complex than it initially appears, and many have opted for simple answers instead of investigating the complexities.[65] Here we will not be able to go in depth

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63   Personal Communication. Additionally, these are outlined in "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham," https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng.

64   See the February and April 1913 issues of *The Improvement Era*.

65   For work on the interpretations of the facsimiles that were later than those of Deveria's or Spaulding's day but earlier than current scholarship, see Hugh Nibley, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Response," *Sunstone* December (1979); and Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981). John Gee is currently working on what will be the most comprehensive study of the facsimiles to date.

into these issues, but we can at least highlight some of the questions to be considered.[66]

Even though it is obvious to ask whether or not Joseph Smith's explanations[67] of the facsimiles match those of Egyptologists, it is not necessarily the right question to ask; we do not know if Joseph Smith was trying to tell us what ancient Egyptians would have thought of these drawings. What if Abraham's descendants took Egyptian cultural elements and applied their own meanings to them? We know this happened in other cases.[68] For example, Jesus himself did this when he gave the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, which clearly draws from the Egyptian tale of Setne-Kamwas. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* and *Testament of Abraham* are two more examples of Semitic adaptations of Egyptian religious traditions.[69] Therefore, maybe we should not be looking at what Egyptians thought the facsimiles meant at all but rather at how ancient Jews would have interpreted them. Sadly there is not enough information available to fully establish patterns for such Jewish reinterpretations.

Or perhaps Joseph Smith was providing an interpretation that a small group of Egyptian priests who were familiar with Abraham would have seen in this vignette. We know that from about the same time and place as when and where the Joseph Smith Papyri were created, there were priests very familiar with Abraham, who used him in their own

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66 On studying the facsimiles, see John Gee, "A Method for Studying the Facsimiles," *The FARMS Review* 19/1 (2007): 347–53; and Michael D. Rhodes, "Teaching the Book of Abraham Facsimiles," *The Religious Educator*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2003, 115–23.

67 While we cannot be certain the Prophet authored the explanations, at the very least it is clear he was part of the process and that he editorially approved of them. It seems most likely he was responsible for them, and in this article we will proceed based on that assumption.

68 See Kevin L. Barney, "The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources," in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid. (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies and Brigham Young University, 2005), 107–30. Also see Kerry Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus One," in *The Journal of Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22, no. 1 (2013), 20–33.

69 See Barney, "Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation"; Jared W. Ludlow, "Reinterpretation of the Judgment Scene in the Testament of Abraham," in *Proceedings of the Evolving Egypt: Innovation, Appropriation and Reinterpretation*, ed. John Gee and Kerry Muhlestein (Oxford, UK: British Archaeological Reports, 2012), 99–104; and Jared W. Ludlow, *Abraham Meets Death: Narrative Humor in the Testament of Abraham* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

religious texts and rituals.[70] This group of priests could easily have altered a drawing they were familiar with in order to fit their specific textual needs, and thus those priests would interpret that drawing differently than other Egyptians. How can we be sure that this is not the case we are dealing with here? We cannot know, but it is certainly plausible.

It is also possible that Joseph Smith was providing the spiritual interpretation needed in modern times, regardless of how any ancient people would have viewed this document. While Joseph Smith clearly conceived of a connection between his explanations and the ideas of the ancient world, he too may not have been fully aware of the complex issues underlying his own assumptions.[71]

Considering all of the above possibilities, it seems quite possible that we are not justified in trying to compare Smith's interpretations with those of ancient Egyptians, though this is the litmus test usually applied by many who have written about the Book of Abraham. This is understandable: it is the only group we have enough information about to which we can make a comparison. Or is even that true?

Typically when people have asked what the Egyptians would say these drawings meant and how this compares with what Joseph Smith said they meant, they actually end up comparing Joseph Smith's explanations to what modern Egyptologists say the drawings mean. This is understandable because we do not have access to any ancient Egyptians, and we assume modern Egyptologists are reliable replacements. However, we also know that we Egyptologists are often wrong regarding what Egyptians would have said on the subject. One study demonstrated that in the few instances where we have found Egyptian labels about various figures in hypocephali (the type of drawing that Facsimile Two is), they often do not match what Egyptologists have said.[72] It can thus be problematic to look to modern Egyptologists for what ancient

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70   Kerry Muhlestein, "Abraham, Isaac, and Osiris-Michael: The Use of Biblical Figures in Egyptian Religion," in the proceedings of *Achievements and Problems of Modern Egyptology*, ed. Galina, A. Belova (Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences, 2012), 246–59, and Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus One." See also John Gee, "The Structure of Lamp Divination," *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies,* Kim Ryholt, ed. (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002), 212–13.

71   See Muhlestein, "Joseph Smith and Egyptian Artifacts."

72   John Gee, "Towards an Interpretation of Hypocephali," *"Le lotus qui sort du terre": Mélanges offerts à Edith Varga*, Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts Supplément-2001 (Budapest: Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts, 2001), 325–34; Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham," 98.

Egyptians would have said various drawings represented. Therefore, such comparisons should not be the basis for any conclusions reached regarding larger issues, and these conclusions must be tentative.

If modern scholarship is to understand more fully the vignettes of the Joseph Smith Papyri that were made into the facsimiles in the published Book of Abraham, we must look more carefully at the culture from which the papyri came. The papyri were created in a day of internationalization in Egypt when the Egyptians were living among a great number of Greeks and Jews.[73] Each of these cultures borrowed from each other. The Greeks created gods and cultic practices heavily influenced by the Egyptians.[74] The Egyptians in turn borrowed from both the Jews and the Greeks in their religious and cultic practices and representations,[75] and many Jews were similarly influenced by the Greeks and Egyptians.[76] All these cultures saw their ways of understanding and representing their own religious beliefs as changing and evolving due to the pastiche of religio-cultural identity they were melding into. As a result, we find curious uses of foreign religious ideas and identities manifesting themselves in each of these cultures' religious practices and traditions. This impacts the possible interpretations of the facsimiles.

To illustrate, let us look at some possible scenarios for the facsimiles. As already mentioned, we know that some Jews were using foreign representations in their own way.[77] Besides those already mentioned, let us look at their later use of the zodiac. In a few synagogues, such as those at Beit Alpha and Sepphoris, a mosaic of a zodiac was incorporated into the floor of the synagogue. Clearly it could not carry with it the full meaning

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73   See, for example, *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, ed. Janet H. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); and Thomas Schneider, "Foreign Egypt: Egyptology and the Concept of Cultural Appropriation," in *Ägypten und Levante* 13 (2003): 160–61.

74   The cult of Serapis is demonstrative of this. Also see Shanna Kennedy-Quigley, "Ptolemaic Translation and Representation: The Hellenistic Sculptural Program of the Memphite Sarapieion," in *Evolving Egypt: Innovation, Appropriation and Reinterpretation*, ed. John Gee and Kerry Muhlestein (Oxford, UK: British Archaeological Reports, 2012), 87–98.

75   Muhlestein, "Abraham, Isaac, and Osiris-Michael: The Use of Biblical Figures in Egyptian Religion;" Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus One;" and Gee, "The Structure of Lamp Divination."

76   See Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, Berkeley, 1998); Ludlow, "Reinterpretation of the Judgment Scene in the Testament of Abraham"; Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus I."

77   See Barney, "The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources."

it would have had in Greek culture and still be compatible with the strict monotheism of Judaism. Thus we must conclude that the Jews who created or worshipped in these synagogues were using representations from the cultures around them but applying and understanding them in their own unique way.

Applying this same concept to the Book of Abraham, could Joseph Smith's explanations of the facsimiles all represent a Jewish way of understanding Egyptian style drawings? Should we expect that at least some of the large number of Jews in Egypt adopted the Egyptian depictions around them and used them in their own way? Would we not actually be shocked if this did not happen? These are questions that must be further investigated if we are to better understand issues surrounding the facsimiles.

As noted above, some Egyptians used their typical religious rituals but inserted Jewish, Greek, Mesopotamian, and other religious elements into these rituals, texts, and spells, thus slightly altering and adapting their ritual and textual representations.[78] In order to expand our understanding, we must ask if we would expect them to do the same with their religious pictorial representations. Would we not be surprised if they hadn't? At this point it seems probable there are some typical Egyptian religious representations to which at least some Egyptian priests assigned a non-traditional meaning as they incorporated foreign religious elements into all parts of their religious practice. Such a conclusion invalidates the arguments of those who maintain that something like Facsimile One cannot represent something other than the traditional Egyptological interpretation. Scholarship has not yet seen a response to this line of questions.

Still, because it is the question that has been most often asked, we will investigate what happens when we do compare the facsimiles with other Egyptian drawings. For example, many have said that Facsimile One is a common funerary scene because it shares some elements in common with funerary art. It is, however, different in many respects. It is also clearly not a scene commonly associated with the Book of Breathings. There are actually no other instances of this scene being adjacent to the Book of Breathings (the kind of document that Facsimile One is adjacent to), though some continually insist that it is, regardless of research.[79] This vignette is fairly unique.

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78   See Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus I."

79   Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham," 99–100.

The closest iconographic parallels are some similar scenes at the temple of Denderah. One of these scenes is accompanied by a caption that reads that the goddess Bastet had commanded those who followed her to "slaughter your enemies,"[80] which means that the closest iconographic match to Facsimile One also matches what the scene is supposed to be about in the Book of Abraham, namely that someone in the scene was in danger and received protection.[81] Other comparable scenes at the Denderah Temple depict Anubis and the sons of Horus defending someone from his adversaries, or list Shesmu, a god associated with human sacrifice, as being part of the scene. They also describe being hacked to pieces, burned, or sent to the slaughterhouse.[82] While I am not certain that the scenes at Denderah are *true* parallels of Facsimile One, for those who want to compare that drawing to its *closest* parallels, we find that these parallels are associated with sacrificial elements similar to Joseph's interpretation of this facsimile. This fact has been left out of most discussions about the facsimiles.

Recent LDS scholarship has argued that there are more elements that make Joseph Smith's interpretation of Facsimile One plausible. The story of Abraham's actions and his near sacrifice by a priest associated with Egypt have long caused pause among people who did not believe the Egyptians practiced human sacrifice. However, recent scholarship has concluded that they did.[83] These same lines of research have also

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80   Text in Sylvie Cauville, *Le temple de Dendara: les chapellesosiriennes vol. x* (Cairo: French Institute of Oriental Archaeology, 1997), 232. My gratitude to John Gee for pointing out this and other instances and for doing most of the work of translation. Translation was done in a group of interested scholars who met to read Egyptian texts. John Gee led this group.

81   Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham," 99–100; "A Faithful, Egyptological Point of View," 232–34.

82   See John Gee, "Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri," *FARMS Review,* 20/1 (2008), 120.

83   *Kerry Muhlestein, Violence in the Service of Order: the Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt. British Archaeological Reports International Series 2299* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011); and Kerry Muhlestein, "Royal Executions: Evidence Bearing on the Subject of Sanctioned Killing in the Middle Kingdom," in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 15/2 (2008). Also "Death by Water: The Role of Water in Ancient Egypt's Treatment of Enemies and Juridical Process," in *L'AcquaNell'anticoEgitto: Vita,Rigenerazione, Incantesimo, Medicamento,* ed. Alessia Amenta, Michela Luiselli,and Maria Novella Sordi (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2005), 173–79. As for public presentations, both national and international in nature, see Kerry Muhlestein, "Smashing, Stomping and Spitting: The Protection of Egypt Through the Execration Ritual," lecture, Society

suggested that the situations that prompted such action align perfectly with the story presented in the Book of Abraham and Facsimile One.[84] A surprising amount of Egyptological parallels with Joseph Smith's explanations of Facsimile Two have also been found. [85]

None of this is to suggest that such parallels prove that Joseph Smith was inspired; they cannot do so. They do, however, make such a belief plausible, an argument that has become increasingly important among many Latter-day Saints.[86] Furthermore, many Latter-day Saints maintain that knowledge of Joseph Smith's inspiration can come only through personal and spiritual revelation. For Latter-day Saints, this is

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for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Annual Scholars Colloquium, Royal Ontario Museum and University of Toronto, November 2007; Kerry Muhlestein, "Smiting, Smashing, Sailing, and Sacrifice: The Evolution and Manifestations of Some Violent Rituals in Ancient Egypt," lecture, American Research Center in Egypt, North Texas Chapter, July 2007; Kerry Muhlestein, "Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt," presentation, ARCE Conference, Toledo, April, 2007; Kerry Muhlestein, "The Persistent Question of Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt: Was It Real and Unperceived?," presentation, ARCE Conference, New Jersey, April 2006; Kerry Muhlestein, "The Smiting Scene Referent Reconsidered," presentation ARCE Conference, Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 2005; and Kerry Muhlestein, "Death by Water: the Use of Water in Ancient Egypt's Treatment of Enemies and Juridical Process," presentation, First International Conference for Young Egyptologists: Water in Ancient Egypt: Life, Regeneration, Incantation,and Medical Prescription, Chianciano Terme, Italy, October 2003. See also Kerry Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus I." *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22.1 (2013): 20–33; and Kerry Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: A Faithful Egyptological Point of View." 216–43.

84   Kerry Muhlestein and John Gee, "Egyptian Middle Kingdom Contexts for Human Sacrifice" in *Journal of Book of Mormon and other Restoration Scripture* 2/2, 2011, 70–77; Muhlestein, "Egyptian Papyri and the Book of Abraham: A Faithful Egyptological Point of View," 216–43. Robert Ritner, in a Signature Book website posting, has posited that the research has not demonstrated that preaching against the worship of gods would constitute grounds for sacrifice. In doing so, Ritner pointed out where Muhlestein's arguments had not been tied together as tightly as they should have been. The ideas are more clearly presented in Kerry Muhlestein, "Sacred Violence: When Ancient Egyptian Punishment was Dressed in Ritual Trappings," *Near Eastern Archaeology,* 78/4, (2015), 229–35.

85   Michael D. Rhodes, "The Joseph Smith Hypocephalus — Seventeen Years Later," (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994); Gee, "Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri," 136.

86   See, for example, John Gee and Stephen D. Ricks, "Historical Plausibility: The Book of Abraham as a Case Study," in *The Historicity of the Scriptures*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2001), 63–98.

a valid epistemological exercise that yields trustworthy results. Their critics take a differing viewpoint regarding the validity of revelation as a source of knowledge.

Another note regarding Facsimile Three is in order. It has received the least amount of scholarly study and attention,[87] and thus it has the least debate associated with it. As with the other two facsimiles, some have highlighted incongruences between Egyptological interpretations and Joseph Smith's explanations as evidence for disbelief in Joseph Smith, and these are similarly based on unsupported assumptions about the Prophet's intentions, as has been discussed above.

There is a key difference with Facsimile Three compared to the other two: the explanations for Facsimile Three label some of the hieroglyphs above the heads of the figures differently than the way I would translate them as an Egyptologist. As an LDS Egyptologist, it seems to me that the most likely explanation for this is that Joseph Smith was teaching either how ancient Jews or a small set of ancient Egyptians would have *interpreted* the drawings or how we should *interpret* them, after which he then *assumed* that the glyphs would *translate* that way. Again, Joseph Smith did not claim to be able to read hieroglyphs. This particular issue has not yet received much scholarly attention.

We do know that this type of drawing was associated with Abraham by Egyptians.[88] This is also true of Facsimiles Two,[89] just as we have found ancient Egyptians associating drawings similar to Facsimile One with Abraham.[90] Most LDS scholars who have pointed out these things have not argued that they prove that Joseph Smith was correct but instead that they demonstrate plausibility.

A note regarding the connection between Abraham and the kind of drawing that is on Facsimile One is also in order. In past publications

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87   John Gee, "Facsimile 3 and the Book of the Dead 125," in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant,* John Gee and Brian Hauglid, eds. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2005), 95–106.

88   John Gee, "A New Look at the *ankh p' by* Formula," in *Proceedings of IXe Congroes International des Études Démotiques*, Paris, 31 août - 3 septembre 2005, Ghislaine Widmer et Didier Devauchelle, eds. (Cairo: Institut Français Archéologie Orientale, 2009), 133–44.

89   See Rhodes, "Hypocephalus."

90   See John Gee, "Research and Perspectives: Abraham in Ancient Egyptian Texts,"*Ensign*, (July 1992), 60–62; and John Gee, References to Abraham Found in Two Egyptian Texts," *Insights: An Ancient Window* (September 1991): 1, 3.

and other forums[91] I have not been as clear about the connection as I should have been. I have misstated that the text of a particular papyrus said that it was Abraham on top of a lion couch, a scene that is similar to that on Facsimile One. However, the text did not say it was Abraham on top of the lion couch. Instead, Abraham's name was written underneath the lion couch scene, and the spell concludes with the formulaic phrase that the text above was to accompany the picture. This means that, while we cannot be sure what the association between Abraham and the lion couch scene was, there was an intended association.[92] The association of a lion couch with Abraham, whatever the nature of the association, is the point here. Clearly some Egyptians eventually saw a connection between the Jewish Patriarch and a scene somewhat similar to Facsimile One, just as they did with drawings similar to Facsimiles Two and Three.[93]

For some believing scholars, this leads to one of the most striking points. While, as noted above, the culture at the time of the creation of the papyri fragments was such that we should expect many Egyptian religious representations to be correlated to Jewish religious elements, we should not expect that every Egyptian religious representation would be. Yet each of the three Egyptian representations Joseph Smith said were associated with Abraham actually was associated with him by ancient Egyptians. The odds of Joseph Smith's guessing this three times and being proved right in each case are unrealistically small. While this does not prove Joseph Smith to be a prophet, no other explanation has yet accounted for this fact. Critics who have pointed out understandable inconsistencies with Smith's explanations have not attempted to deal with this and other significant instances of consistency. The number of consistencies that can be found between the Book of Abraham and the ancient world are far too numerous to list here,[94] and those who

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91   See Kerry Muhlestein, "Abraham, Isaac, and Orisirs-Michael," and Kerry Muhlestein, "The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus I."

92   I am grateful to John Gee for helping me to see my imprecision and to rectify it. See his articles on the subject cited above. See also John Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac, and Jacob," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/1 (1995): 19–85.

93   While quite a bit of work, as noted above, has been done on Facsimiles One and Two, very little has been done on Facsimile Three. For a pertinent and important study, see John Gee, "Facsimile 3 and Book of the Dead 125," in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, Studies in the Book of Abraham 3, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2005), 95–105.

94   Besides those already noted in this article, for just a few more examples see an Egyptianism in the Book of Abraham text as pointed out by John Gee, "Joseph

believe that Joseph Smith was not inspired have done little to deal with or explain these consistencies. Further work to create a methodology for assessing such congruencies needs to be pursued by both believing and nonbelieving scholars in order to better assess Joseph Smith's work on the Book of Abraham.

Conclusion

While there are many more small issues and sets of data that could be discussed regarding the history of the study of the Book of Abraham and the Joseph Smith Papyri, we have touched at least briefly on the major issues here. Due to the resurfacing of the papyri Joseph Smith once owned, the last few decades have been an intense period of research regarding these issues. Historical and Egyptological understandings have advanced, and some of the points of debate have clarified as a result.

The discussion has been moved forward recently by an important statement issued online by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, called "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham."[95] This has allowed for a more clear understanding of the position of the Church regarding the relationship of the papyri fragments and the text, as has been noted above.

Perhaps the most important recent movement in Book of Abraham studies is the trend toward being more aware of and forthright about the assumptions that have formed the basis for academic discussions. While all have known that their point of view about the possibility of

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Smith and Ancient Egypt," 442; the numerous consistencies listed in *Traditions About the Early Life of Abraham*, John Tvedtnes, Brian Hauglid, and John Gee, eds. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2001); Jeffery R. Chadwick, "The Book of Abraham in the Light of Ancient History" in A Symposium on the Old Testament, Salt Lake City: Church Educational System, 1983; Brian Hauglid, "The Book of Abraham and Muslim Tradition," in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, Studies in the Book of Abraham 3, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2005), 131–46; Brian Hauglid, "On the Early Life of Abraham: Biblical and Qur'anic Intertextuality and the Anticipation of Muhammad," in *Bible and Qur'an: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality.* Symposium Series, John C. Reeves, ed. (Society of Biblical Literature & E. J. Brill, 2003), 87–105; John Gee, "Notes on the Sons of Horus" (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991); John Gee, "Has Olishem Been Discovered?" *Journal of Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22/2 (2013): 104–107; and Kerry Muhlestein, "The Explanation Defying Book of Abraham," in *Anchored in Truth: Faithful Answers to Sincere Questions,* Laura H. Hales, ed. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2016), 87–88.

95 https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham.

Joseph Smith's inspiration impacts their research, being upfront about it allows for a more transparent and thus useful and intellectually honed conversation. Similarly, recognizing key assumptions made about comparing explanations of the facsimiles to Egyptological points of view or about the source of the Book of Abraham allows us to better research and understand the issues. Hopefully future scholarship will more explicitly incorporate transparency about assumptions into their studies. Furthermore, hopefully discussions about epistemology and personal revelation as a source of learning about Joseph Smith and his papyri will be part of the conversation, for even though different camps will have different points of view on this issue, clarity about how it plays into the conversation is extremely relevant and will further understanding.

It is also clear that more research needs to be done. This is especially true in regard to understanding the role of the Grammar of the Egyptian Alphabet and Language, nuances of Joseph Smith's methods of inspiration and translation, and understanding Facsimile Three. Undoubtedly the next decade will see a continuation of research about the Joseph Smith Papyri and the Book of Abraham, hopefully revealing both new information and better processing the old.

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"Creator of the First Day": The Glossing of *Lord of Sabaoth* in D&C 95:7

Matthew L. Bowen

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ABSTRACT: *The calqued name-title "Lord of Sabaoth," echoing James 5:4, occurs four times in the Doctrine and Covenants in revelations given to the prophet Joseph Smith from December 25, 1832 to August 6, 1833. Of these occurrences, only D&C 95:7 offers a gloss or interpretation for the name* "the Lord of Sabaoth," *which is, by interpretation,* "the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end." *Upon close inspection, this explanation makes excellent sense from an ancient Israelite etiological as well as (perhaps) an etymological standpoint. Past criticisms of the gloss in D&C 95:7 have focused on the wrongly assumed incongruity of* "first day" *and* "Sabaoth" *("hosts"), and have neglected function of the divine name* Yhwh *in titles, most often represented in scripture by the term* "Lord," *as in the calqued name-title* Lord of Hosts. *Understanding the connection between* Yhwh *(the form of which suggests the meaning* "He creates," "He brings into existence," "he brings to pass"*), the divine council (the* "hosts"*), creation (on* "the first day" *or* "Day One"*), and the underlying grammatical meaning of* "Lord of Hosts" = Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt *(i.e.,* "He creates the [heavenly] hosts" *or* "He brings to pass the [heavenly] hosts"*) is crucial to understanding the calque* "Lord of Sabaoth" *and the explanation given in D&C 95:7. When considered in its entirety, this revealed gloss is right on target. The creation/begetting of the heavenly hosts was associated with* "the first day" *or* "Day One" *in ancient Israelite thought. They are described as* "finished" *or fully prepared by the end of the six creative periods (*"days" *in Genesis 2:1). Additionally,* "Lord of Sabaoth" *or* Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt *is to be understood in connection with the similarly constructed name-title* Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm *(*"He creates gods," "he causes gods to be," *or* "he brings to pass gods"*). The meristic appositive title* "the beginning and the end" *implies that* Yhwh *is not only the* "author"/"creator" *of Israel and its salvation but the*

"finisher" thereof. Far from evidence of Joseph Smith's lack of knowledge of Hebrew, the interpretive gloss in D&C 95:7 constitutes evidence of Joseph's ability to obtain correct translations and interpretations through revelation.

"He Creates the (Heavenly) Hosts": Glossing "Lord of Sabaoth"

References in the Doctrine and Covenants to cries, mourning, fasting, and especially prayers that have "come up into" (D&C 87:7; 88:2; 95:7) or "entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (D&C 98:2) immediately recall the language of James 5:4: "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the *Lord of sabaoth* [Greek Κυρίου Σαβαὼθ, *Kyriou Sabaōth*]" (James 5:4; emphasis in all scriptural citations is mine). On a basic level, the Greek *Kyrios Sabaōth* and its English rendering "Lord of Sabaoth" both represent a calque of the Hebrew name-title *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt,* often translated "Lord of Hosts." However, the explanation given in D&C 95:7 that "Lord of Sabaoth … is by interpretation, *the creator* of the first day, the beginning and the end," invites us to consider the name's significance beyond its being a mere calque on "Lord of hosts" (i.e., Sabaoth [*ṣĕbāʾôt*] = Hebrew "hosts") and an allusion to James 5:4

The historical relationship between the name *Yhwh,* its shorter (older?) form *Yāh,* and the Mesopotamian god Enki's cognomen "Ea," remains an open question.[1] David Noel Freedman and Michael P. O'Connor conclude that "the consensus of modern scholarship supports the biblical text in associating the name Yahweh with the root … *hāyâ* [*hāyah*]."[2] Within the last several decades, scholarship on the divine name *Yhwh* — often represented in English translation as "Lord" — has suggested that it is "a causative imperfect of the Canaanite-Proto-Hebrew verb *hwh/ hwy* 'to be'"[3] and meant "He creates" or "He who causes to happen."[4] If

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1   John Gee ("The Geography of Aramaean and Luwian Gods," forthcoming) has accumulated epigraphic evidence suggesting a relationship between the divine name *Ea* and *Yāh/Yhwh.*

2   David Noel Freedman and Michael P. O'Connor, "YHWH" in *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 5:513. Hereafter cited as TDOT.

3   Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1973), 65.

4   Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 104.

so, the fuller form of the name *Yhwh*, *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt* (Lord of Sabaoth [Hosts]) would mean, as Frank Moore Cross has suggested, "He creates the (divine) hosts."[5] Although a paucity of attested causative forms of *hwh/hwy/hyy* warrants some caution,[6] Cross's theory makes good grammatical sense of the divine name's function within its fuller title forms (especially *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt* and *Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm*). Margaret Barker has further argued that the heavenly "hosts" were originally identified with "the first day" of creation, or "Day One," on the basis of Jubilees 2:2, Job 38:7, Proverbs 8, Isaiah 40, and other evidence.[7]

In this short study, I will endeavor to show that the gloss offered in D&C 95:7 for *Lord of Sabaoth* (i.e., *Yhwh*) as "Creator of the first day, the beginning and the end" makes good sense in terms of ancient Israelite etiology,[8] if not from an actual historical etymological standpoint, and represents an example of the prophet Joseph Smith's ability to obtain correct translations and explanations by revelation. *Yhwh* — or the Lord of Sabaoth — was, in fact, "the creator of the first day," or in other words, "he [who] creates the (divine) hosts" or "he who causes the (divine) hosts" to be on "Day One."

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5 Cross, *Canaanite Myth,* 65. Freedman and O'Connor (TDOT 5:513) argue that "In Hebrew, however, yahweh must be a causative, since the dissimilation of *yaqtal* to *yiqtal* did not apply in Amorite [West Semitic], while it was obligatory in Hebrew. The name *yahweh* must therefore be a hiphil. Although the causative of *hwy* is otherwise unknown in Northwest Semitic (with the exception of Syriac, which is of little relevance here), it seems to be attested in the name of the God of Israel."

6 Cf., e.g., the causative (Aphel) form of Aramaic/Syriac *hwʾ/hwh*. See J. Payne Smith, ed., *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 101.

7 Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 195–201.

8 Etiology: from Greek *aitia* = "cause" + *logia,* i.e., the study of causation — how something came to be. For a brief discussion of the phenomenon of biblical etiology, see Michael H. Floyd, "Etiology" in *The New Interpreter's Bible Dictionary of the Bible,* 5 vols. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 2007), 2:352. Floyd states, "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 natural phenomena."

Two "*Yhwhs*": A Note

For my purposes here, I will acknowledge a formal distinction between two divine personages who can be called *Yhwh*:[9] God the Father, who can be called *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt* in the Latter-day Saint doctrinal sense of "Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9); "Father of lights" (James 1:17), or the "Father … of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14-15); and the Son, Jesus Christ, who can be called the *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt* who "brings to pass" the Father's plan for the spirits, hosts, or family. In other words, I will distinguish here between the one with whom the "word of command" originates (the Father) as architect or source and the Son, who as executive embodies that "word of command" in "bringing to pass."

In 1 Nephi 11:6, a personage described as "the Spirit" acclaims "Hosanna, to the Lord [i.e., *Yhwh*] the most high God" and pronounces Nephi "blessed" for his faith "in the Son of the Most High God" (see also 3 Nephi 4:32). El-Elyon (*ʾĒl ʿelyôn,* "the most high God") is often regarded as referring to God the Father (Deuteronomy 32:7–9; Mark 5:7; Luke 1:32), while throughout scripture, the title "Lord" (i.e., *Yhwh*) is applied often to the Son—the *Yhwh* of Deuteronomy 32:9 whose "portion" or "lot" is Israel. The name *Yhwh* (Yahweh), as used throughout this paper, will almost uniformly refer to Jesus Christ, the Son.

"He Bringeth to Pass": The Lord — or *Yhwh* — as "Creator"

The English syntax of the calqued name-title "Lord of Sabaoth" — i.e., A of B — is clearly paralleled in the gloss "the creator of the first day." In other words, the phrase "the creator" constitutes the intended parallel to "Lord," and the "the first day" corresponds in some way to "Sabaoth" (see further below). The epithet "the beginning and the end" is an appositive.

Critics of the prophet Joseph Smith, in deriding the explanation for "Lord of Sabaoth" given in D&C 95:7, incorrectly assume that there is no connection at all between "Sabaoth" ("hosts"), creation, and "the first day" ("Day One").[10] Moreover, they completely overlook the importance

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9 For an excellent summary of the trajectory of the "Two Yhwhs" tradition in biblical and extra-biblical literature, see David J. Larsen, "Psalm 24 and the Two YHWHs at the Gate of the Temple," in *The Temple Ancient and Restored* (ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry; *Temple on Mount Zion* 3; Salt Lake City: Interpreter/Eborn Books, 2016), 211-34.

10 Among anti-Mormon writers who have criticized the prophet on this point, see, e.g., Latayne C. Scott (*The Mormon Mirage: A Former Member Looks at the Mormon Church Today* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009], 122-23),

of the term "Lord" — or *Yhwh* (see below) — in "Lord of Sabaoth."[11] All previous analyses (that I am aware of) have overlooked the fact that *Yhwh,* the Hebrew underlying the "Lord"-element, was not simply the first part of a genitive of restriction or relation construction.[12] This one follows the proposition that *Yhwh* may have originally constituted a

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who posits, "*In Doctrine and Covenants* 95:7, we have another example of just how little Joseph Smith knew about Hebrew. Here he took the liberty of translating a scriptural phrase, 'Lord of Sabaoth.' He said it was 'by interpretation, the creator of the first day, the beginning and end. It is apparent that he confused this phrase with the one found in Mark 2:28, where Christ spoke of the 'Lord also of the sabbath,' which does indeed have reference to a day of the week — the seventh, not the first, day. 'Sabaoth,' in contrast, refers to God's kingly role as commander in chief [sic] of the heavenly host, and of all living things. It cannot reasonably be stretched to refer to the creation of the first day." Aside from offering no evidence whatsoever for Joseph's putative use of Mark 2:28, Scott's awareness of the ancient Israelite conception of the divine council and creation is shallow at best. Jim Whitefield (*The Mormon Delusion, Volume 5: Doctrine and Covenants — Deceptions and Concoctions* [Raleigh, NC: Lulu Press, 2012], 328) is even less charitable: "The Lord says that 'for this purpose' they must hold a solemn assembly. Their fasting and mourning can 'come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth,' … which the Lord then informs us is 'by interpretation, the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end.' In fact 'Sabaoth' does not mean that at all. It is the Hebrew plural form of 'host' or army, so 'by interpretation' Smith should have said that it meant 'Lord of Hosts' but he just made up an alternate and completely incorrect 'translation.' I am sure the Mormon Church would argue that if Smith's Lord claimed it meant that, then it did. The problem is that it really *didn't;* Smith's Lord was *wrong*" (emphasis in original). Whitefield, like Scott, evidences only a superficial awareness of the meaning of "hosts" and the connection of the latter to the divine council and creation. Both have completely ignored the importance of the substitute title "Lord" (and implicitly the name *Yhwh,* which "Lord" represents) in evaluating the interpretation given in D&C 95:7.

11   In evaluating the meaning of a name or a gloss offered for the name, it is necessary to account for all the data. Joseph Smith's critics consistently fail to do so in their evaluations of D&C 95:7.

12   Gesenius's grammar (see Arthur E. Cowley and Emil Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar,* 2nd ed. [London: Oxford University Press, 1910], 403) calls "Lord of hosts" a genitive of elision, citing the examples of "Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:28) or Aram of the Two Rivers. Both of these examples, however, involve toponyms. Inscriptions like *Yhwh šmrn* and *Yhwh tmn* (see J.A. Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 94/1 [1982], 2–20) actually present a similar problem for understanding *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt* solely in a construct relationship: *ṣĕbāʾôt* is not a toponym.

verbal form, such as "he creates,"[13] "he makes happen,"[14] or "he brings to pass."

If the ancient Israelites understood the declaration "I am the Lord" (*ʾănî Yhwh* "I am Jehovah") to mean "I am He who makes things happen"[15] (or "I am He who brings [things] to pass"), we can more fully appreciate what Lehi was trying to articulate when he said that the Lord not only "hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon" but also allowed for an opposition in all things "to *bring about* his eternal purposes in the *end* of man" (2 Nephi 2:14-15). He mentions this in the context of his earlier statement that "the Holy Messiah … [would] *bring to pass* the resurrection of the dead" (2 Nephi 2:8). Opposition and resurrection were an essential part of a planned process in which "righteousness [was] *brought to pass*" (2 Nephi 2:11), and happiness/misery and good/bad eventuated from what was originally a "compound in one."

Abinadi alluded to Lehi's teachings and evidently had the name *Yhwh* in mind when he declared to Noah and his priests that "God himself … should *bring to pass* the resurrection of the dead" (Mosiah 13:34-35). As Brownlee has noted, the aforementioned phrase "I am Yahweh" often occurs "in the context of threats and promises."[16] This best explains Abinadi's threat to the same group: "*And it shall come to pass* [Hebrew *wĕhāyâ*][17] that the life of king Noah shall be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace; for he shall know that *I am the Lord* [i.e., 'I am He who makes things happen,' or, 'I am He who brings things to pass']" (Mosiah 12:3, cf. 12:34). So too one of his earliest prophetic pronouncements to Noah's people: "*And it shall come to pass* [*wĕhāyâ*] that they shall know that *I am*

13 Cross, *Canaanite Myth,* 65.

14 William H. Brownlee "The Ineffable Name of God," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 226 (1977): 45.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Cf., e.g. Genesis 4:14; 9:14; 24:43; 27:40; 46:33; 47:24; Exodus 3:21; 4:8-9; 12:25-26; 16:5; 22:27; 33:22; Numbers 17:5; 21:8; Deuteronomy 11:13, 29; 18:19; 30:1; 28:1, 63; 31:21; 1 Samuel 2:36; 10:5; 16:16; 23:23; 25:30; 1 Kings 18:12; 19:17; Isaiah 2:2; 3:24; 4:3; 7:18; 21-23; 8:21; 10:20, 27; 11:11; 14:3; 16:12; 23:15, 17; 22:7, 20; 24:18, 21; 27:12-13; 65:24; 66:23; Jeremiah 3:16; 4:9; 5:19; 12:15-16; 15:2; 16:10; 17:24; 25:12; 27:8; 31:28; 42:4; Ezekiel 38:18; 39:11; 44:17; 47:9-10, 22–23; Joel 2:28, 32; Amos 6:9; 8:9; Hosea 1:5, 10; 2:21; Micah 5:10; Nahum 3:7; Zephaniah 1:8, 10, 12; Zechariah 8:13; 12:9; 13:2-4, 8; 14:6, 13, 16; 1 Chronicles 17:11.

the Lord their God, and am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people" (11:22; quoting Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9; cf. Mosiah 13:13).

Lehi's and Abinadi's language was reiterated by later Book of Mormon prophets who taught that Jesus's "bring[ing] to pass the resurrection" fulfilled an important function of the Atonement (see Mosiah 18:2; Alma 12:25; 33:22; Helaman 14:15; cf. Mormon 7:7: "*he hath brought to pass* the redemption of the world").

"Let There Be …" = "The Word of My Power"

The JST Genesis version of the account of the creation and the fall is framed by the phrase "word of my power" (Moses 1:32, 35; 2:5)[18] and the use of the solemn oath-formula: "For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so *my words* cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled" (Moses 4:30). This framework (a literary *inclusio*) gives added context to the Lord's calling this earth into existence — or organizing it — by "word" in Genesis 1/Moses 2.

God creates the world, to use the Old Latin and Vulgate's phraseology, by *fiat:* [19] "let there be …" The Hebrew expression that underlies English "let there be" and Latin *fiat* is the third person jussive form of Hebrew *hyh/hyy* (< **hwy*), *yĕhî,* whence ancient Israelites derived the name *Yhwh* (see especially Exodus 3:14). The Genesis 1/Moses 2 text seems to revolve around the idea that God "causes to be what is" — the etiological meaning of the name *Yhwh*. In the language of the Psalmist, "*By the word of the Lord* [*bidĕbar Yhwh*] were the heavens made; and all *the host of them* [*ṣĕbāʾām*] by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

Referring to the Lord's declaration that he had already made Abraham a "father of many nations" (see Genesis 17:5), Paul describes the Lord as "God, who quickeneth the dead, and *calleth* those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). The logic here is that God, by word, calls into being or calls into existence. The divine word "go[es] forth out of [the Lord's] mouth" and "cannot return void" but is wholly "fulfilled" (Moses 4:30; cf. Alma 12:23). Hebrews 11:3 expresses a similar idea: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed *by the word of God,* so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

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18   See also D&C 29:30: "But remember that all my judgments are not given unto men; and as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled, that the first shall be last, and that the last shall be first in all things whatsoever I have created by *the word of my power, which is the power of my Spirit.*"

19   From Latin *fio, fieri, factus* (*sum*) "to become"; "to be made."

Of all the gospel writers, John is the most eager to use the "word"/"speech" imagery in describing Jesus as "creator." John, perhaps as a response to Philo's description of a deified Logos and *against* contemporary Gnosticism, appropriates Philo's Logos terminology/imagery.[20] John situates us back on "Day One": "In the beginning [Ἐν ἀρχῇ, *en arche*] was *the Word* [ὁ λόγος, *ho logos*], and *the Word* was with God, and *the Word* was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him* [πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, *panta di' autou egeneto*] or, *all things through him came to* pass] and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-13). The text emphasizes the thoroughness of the premortal Christ's involvement in creation. The richness of this passage owes much to the range of meaning for *logos,* which, beyond "word," denotes "thought," "reason,"[21] or "subject under discussion."[22] *Logos* as a "presentation of controversial subjects"[23] or "matter under discussion" (cf. Hebrew *dābār* = "word," "matter," "thing")[24] evokes the idea of the divine council and discussion over the divine plan of salvation that had been presented — i.e., among the *ʾĕlōhîm* (Hebrew plural "the gods" as confirmed by the use of the plural verb *niglû*, "[they] appeared]," "were revealed"),[25] *bĕnê (ha-) ʾĕlōhîm* ("sons of God"),[26] *ʾēlîm* (Hebrew "gods," rather than KJV "congregation"),[27] *bĕnê ʾēlîm* (Hebrew "sons of god[s]" rather than "sons

20   See, e.g., Barker (*The Great High Priest,* 3) who writes: "For Philo, the YHWH of the Old Testament had been the second God of Israel, the Mediator, the Revealer, the Word, the Son of the Highest (i.e., of El Elyon)."

21   See 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), 598-601.

22   Ibid., 600.

23   Ibid., 599.

24   Cf. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1994), 211-12.

25   Genesis 35:6–7; Psalm 82:1, 6. Cf. the plural "angels" of Genesis 28:12.

26   E.g., Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7. Genesis 6:2 and 6:4 also refer to the "sons of God," and many interpreters have viewed these verses as referring to putatively mythological "sons of God" (i.e., heavenly beings). The JST translation of Genesis (canonized in the Book of Moses) clarifies that these "sons of God" were (or had been) covenant "sons of God" — i.e., those who had become "sons of God" by covenant.

27   Written *ʾēlem* in Psalm 58:1 [MT 58:2], context requires the reading *ʾēlîm*, "gods."

of might" or "sons of the mighty"),[28] *ʿădat-ʾēl* ("assembly of God"),[29] *qĕhal qĕdôšîm* (Hebrew "assembly of the holy ones")[30] *sôd qĕdôšîm* (Hebrew "council of the holy ones" rather than "assembly of the saints"),[31] or the *ṣĕbāʾ/ṣĕbāʾôt* ("host[s]") brought forth "in the beginning" or on "Day One."

The Joseph Smith Translation of John 1 adds an entirely new dimension to the concept of the *logos* discussion or divine council:

> In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son.
> And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son,
> and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God. The same
> was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him;
> and without him was not anything made which was made.
> (JST John 1:1–3)

The "gospel" as embodiment of the "plan of salvation"[32] was originally proclaimed, preached, or championed by the Son in the divine council (i.e., the premortal heavenly councils). The Son's role as creator or "maker" of "all things," including "worlds without number,"[33] is inextricably linked to his role as Redeemer — or in the language of William Tyndale, "atonemaker"[34] — of the entire creation, of which the temple is a "scale model."[35]

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28 Psalm 29:1; 89:6 [MT 89:7].

29 Psalm 82:1. Cf. the *ʿdt ʾilm* at Ugarit.

30 Psalm 89:6 [MT 89:5].

31 Psalm 89:7 [MT 89:8].

32 Moses 6:62; see also Jarom 1:2; Alma 24:14; and Alma 42:5.

33 See especially Moses 1:33: "And *worlds without number* have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten." Moses 7:30: "And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still; and yet thou art there, and thy bosom is there; and also thou art just; thou art merciful and kind forever." Cf. "world without end" or "worlds without end" (*ʿad-ʿôlĕmê ʿad*), Isaiah 45:17; (*tou aiōnou tōn aiōnōn*), Ephesians 3:21; D&C 76:112.

34 In commenting on 1 Timothy 2:5, William Tyndale (*An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, The Supper of Our Lord after the True Meaning of John VI. And 1 Cor. XI., and Wm. Tracy's Testament Expounded,* ed. Henry Walter [Cambridge, MA: University Press/Parker Society, 1850], 275) rendered the Greek term μεσίτης, *mesitēs,* with "atonemaker" or "atone-maker."

35 Hugh W. Nibley, "The Meaning of the Temple," in *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present* (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 12; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 19.

John uses a distinct temple image when he describes the Son's incarnation: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [ἐσκήνωσεν, *eskēnōsen;* literally, 'tented,'[36] or 'tabernacled'] among us (John 1:14; cf. Mosiah 2:5: "For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and *shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay*").[37] Essential to the process of bringing the human family to perfection was that "creator of the first day" would gain experience, in Alma's words, "according to the flesh," in order to know how to "succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:12)[38] and "succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

"He Creates Gods": *Yhwh* Elohim

Recognizing that the "Lord of Sabaoth" is "the *creator* of the first day, the beginning and the *end*" (D&C 95:7) and thus "he who creates the (divine) hosts," the one who labors "to *bring about* his eternal purposes in the *end* of man" (2 Nephi 2:15), we can appreciate (on analogy) the function of the related name-title "The LORD God" (*Yhwh ʾĕlôhîm*) in the Garden of Eden story. William H. Brownlee has suggested that the

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36   The verb σκηνόω, *skēnoō* and its cognate σκηνή, *skēnē* ("tent"), ultimately derive from the Semitic root *škn* ("dwell," "live in a tent," likely via Phoenician). The Hebrew verb *šākan* ("dwell," "reside," etc.) and Hebrew *miškān* ("tabernacle").

37   Temple imagery is also evident in 2 Corinthians 5:1, 4; so too in 2 Peter 1:13-14: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am *in this tabernacle,* to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that *shortly I must put off this my tabernacle,* even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." Mormon's language to his son Moroni (Moroni 9:6) is similar: "And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for *we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay,* that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God."

38   Alma 7:11-13: "And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; *and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.* Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me."

name-title *Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm,* prominent in Genesis 2–3, means "He creates gods."[39]

The Genesis story culminates with the expulsion of Adam and Eve for disobedience, but the text admits the following: "And the LORD God [*Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm,* 'he creates gods'] said, Behold, the man *is become [hāyâ] as one of us [kěʾaḥad mimmennû],* to know good and evil" (Genesis 3:22; Moses 4:28). In other words. Adam and Eve had become like *ʾĕlōhîm,* members of the divine council, in terms of their ability to differentiate between good and evil. The pair had not yet become *ʾĕlōhîm* but had taken a step in that direction. They had begun to exercise the agency formally bestowed on them in Moses 3:17: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." They had begun to "choose for themselves" and were thus "agents unto themselves" (D&C 29:39; 58:28; 104:17; Moses 6:56).

The "knowledge of good and evil" constitutes the evident point of Lehi's instruction to Jacob. We note here Lehi's use of the name-title "Lord God" from Genesis 2-3:

> And to *bring about* his eternal purposes in the end of *man* [Hebrew *ʾādām*], after he had *created* our first parents, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air … it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter. Wherefore, the *Lord God* [*Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm*] *gave unto man that he should act for himself.* Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other. (2 Nephi 2:15–16)

Lehi uses the name-title *Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm* twice in his words to Jacob in 2 Nephi 2 (here and in v. 21).[40] Lehi understood, and wanted Jacob to understand, that the "bring[ing] about" implicit in the name *Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm* would have been frustrated (cf. Alma 12:26; 42:5) if Adam and

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39   Brownlee, "Ineffable Name of God," 39-46.

40   2 Nephi 2:21: "And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh; wherefore, their state became a state of probation, and their time was lengthened, according to the commandments which *the Lord God* gave unto the children of men. For he gave commandment that all men must repent; for he showed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents."

Eve did not act for themselves and thus learn to distinguish been good and evil through experience.

"The First Day"

The "first day" mentioned in the gloss for "Lord of Sabaoth" — i.e., in "the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end" — has a clear reference to Genesis 1:5 and the "first day" (*yôm ʾeḥād*) of creation. The JST specifically connects the creative "word of my power" with Day One (see Moses 2:5). In ancient Israelite thought, however, "the first day" or "Day One" involved more than just the creative activity ascribed to it in Genesis 1. Margaret Barker has amassed evidence that "the first day"/"Day One" was specifically the "day" of the "begetting" or "creation" (or "organization") of the "hosts" — i.e., the spirits that reside in the presence of God. She cites the extra-canonical Book of Jubilees (or "Little Genesis"):

> For on the first day He created the heavens which are above and the earth and the waters and all the spirits which serve before him — the angels of the presence, and the angels of sanctification, and the angels [of the spirit of fire and the angels] of the spirit of the winds, and the angels of the spirit of the clouds, and of darkness, and of snow and of hail and of hoar frost, and the angels of the voices and of the thunder and of the lightning, and the angels of the spirits of cold and of heat, and of winter and of spring and of autumn and of summer and of all the spirits of His creatures which are in the heavens and on the earth, (He created) the abysses and the darkness, eventide (and night), and the light, dawn, and day, which He hath prepared in the knowledge of His heart. (Jubilees 2:2; R.H. Charles' translation)

Jubilees clearly sees the creation or begetting of the angels of the divine presence or "hosts" of heaven as belonging to the "first day" or "Day One."

It should be noted that the biblical account remarks that following the six creative periods "thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host [*ṣĕbāʾām*] of them" (Genesis 2:1; Moses 3:1). The term "host" here refers not just to heavenly/astronomical bodies[41] but also to the heavenly beings with whom astronomical bodies were often associated

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41   Isaiah 34:4; Jeremiah 33:22. See also Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16; Jeremiah 8:2; 19:13.

(see Job 38:7 [below]; Abraham 3; etc.). One way of understanding the term *finished* with respect to the *host*[*s*] here is that they were "ready" or "prepared."[42]

In the Book of Job, which itself can be viewed as a temple text that imparts esoteric temple teaching through Job's experience,[43] *Yhwh* asks Job where he was ("where wast thou …?" *ʾêpōh hāyîtâ*) on Day One, "*when I laid the foundations of the earth* [*bĕyosdî-ʾāreṣ*]" and "when the *morning stars* [*kôkĕbê bōqer*] sang together, and all the *sons of God* [*bĕnê ʾĕlōhîm*] shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 7). The begetting or "organizing" of the children of God, the *bĕnê ʾĕlōhîm,* happened on Day One, "the first day." Writes Barker:

> In Job 38.7, however, we still read of the sons of God who shouted for joy on the first day of creation when the foundations of the earth were laid, and *sons of God* implies that they were begotten, not created. The rest of Job 38 describes the works of Day One: the boundary for the waters, the gates of deep darkness, the storehouses of snow and hail, wind, rain, and ice, the pattern of the stars. And the point of all this is to ask Job: "Where were you when all this was done?", a strange question for the Lord to ask Job unless there was a known tradition of someone who witnessed the work of creation and thus became wise.[44]

The creation language of Isaiah 40 may also reflect the esoterica of the ancient Jerusalem temple and its symbols.[45] The text begins in the divine council with the voices of two personages speaking: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,

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42   Joseph F. Smith associated the "host" with the premortal spirit children of God and similarly defined "finished" as "in preparation": "The Lord informed Abraham that he had chosen rulers from among the intelligences that were organized, to be given in various capacities down the ages; and Abraham was one of these who was so chosen [see Abraham 3:22–23]. It is reasonable to believe that in the beginning, before the earth was prepared, the Lord would have all things organized from the beginning to the end of time. It is written in the scriptures: 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them.' This is equivalent to the Lord's saying that everything was in preparation to be placed on the earth in its due course when mankind should be placed upon it" (*Answers to Gospel Questions,* comp., Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 5:182).

43   Mack C. Stirling, "Job: An LDS Reading," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 12 (2014): 127–81.

44   Barker, *The Great High Priest,* 196.

45   Ibid., 200.

and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. … The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40:1–3); "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?" (Isaiah 40:6). This scene resembles the Jerusalem temple and divine council (i.e., holy of holies)[46] setting of Isaiah 6 and the council discussion: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8; cf. especially Abraham 3:27). Isaiah was a temple priest — perhaps even a high priest — who was called to prophesy and preach repentance (see especially Alma 13).

The expression "foundations of the earth" ("Have ye not understood from the foundations [*môsĕdôt*] of the earth?") also situates the creation language of Isaiah 40) in Holy of Holies[47] of the temple — the temple itself being a "scale model" of creation.[48] The "foundation of the world" was especially associated with the divine council (the premortal council[s] in heaven).[49] In other words, the *sôd* (plan, council) was at the *mûsād* / *yĕsôd* ("foundation").[50] The temple-building imagery here is evident:

> *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out* [*tikkēn*] *heaven with the span,* and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains *in scales,* and the hills *in a balance?* Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel,[51] and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before

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46   Ibid.

47   Ibid.

48   Nibley, "Meaning of the Temple," 19.

49   See Matthew 13:35; 25:34; John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 1 Nephi 10:18; 2 Nephi 9:18; 2 Nephi 27:10; Mosiah 4:6–7; 15:19; 18:13; Alma 12:25, 30; 13:3–7; 18:39; 22:13; 42:26; Helaman 5:47; 3 Nephi 1:14; Ether 4:14–19; Moroni 8:12; D&C 29:46; 35:18; 124:33, 41; 127:2; 128:5, 8, 18; 132:5, 63; cf. Luke 11:50; Hebrews 4:3; 9:26; Moses 5:57; 6:54; 7:47

50   Matthew L. Bowen, "'I Have Done According to My Will': Reading Jacob 5 as a Temple Text" in *The Temple Ancient and Restored* (ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry; *Temple on Mount Zion* 3; Salt Lake City: Interpreter/Eborn Books, 2016), 238–40.

51   Cf. Jacob 5:22.

him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is *he that sitteth upon* [*hayyōšēb ʿal,* the one enthroned over/above] *the circle of the earth* [*ḥûg hāʾāreṣ*], and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; *that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain* [*dōq;* LXX *kamaran* = "vaulted chamber"], *and spreadeth them out as a tent* [*ʾōhel*] *to dwell in:* That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created* [*bārāʾ*] *these things, that bringeth out their <u>host</u>* [*ṣĕbāʾām*] *by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.* (Isaiah 40:12–26)

As Barker notes, the Targum of Isaiah 40:21 expressly identifies this text as a "revelation of the process of creation:[52] "the work/service of the orders of 'in-the-beginning'/creation [*ʿwbd sdry bryšyt*]." Not only does this text use temple-building imagery, but it describes *Yhwh* himself as "sitting" or enthroned above "the circle of the earth" in the celestial world (i.e., the Holy of Holies). Like Lehi when he experienced a throne vision at his call to be a prophet, the recipients of the message in Isaiah 40 are commanded to "lift up your eyes on high" and to "behold" or "look upon" the creator and the heavenly hosts (Isaiah 40:26). *Yhwh*'s throne and his heavenly attendants were depicted in remarkably vivid ways in both the tabernacle and the temple.

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52   Barker, *The Great High Priest,* 200.

Whether the *dōq* mentioned in Isaiah 40:22 represents a "curtain" (as it is usually rendered English) or a dome or vaulted chamber as suggested in the LXX, we are dealing with temple/building imagery.

Isaiah further mentions that *Yhwh* "bring[s] out [the] host" of the heavens "by number" and by "name" (Isaiah 40:26). We are reminded here how Enoch describes the Lord's creation to the Lord himself: "And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still" (Moses 7:30); and of the Lord's statement to Moses, "For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them. … The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine" (Moses 1:35, 37). Isaiah's use of the image of "tent," moreover, evokes the ʾōhel môʿēd, the "tent of the meeting" (or KJV "the tabernacle of the congregation"), which was revealed to Moses. Isaiah uses this temple image elsewhere to describe the house of Israel (see especially Isaiah 33:20; 54:2).

Last, the divine council scenes presented in Isaiah 6, Isaiah 40, and Job 38 are similar in content to Abraham's vision of the premortal existence and the spirits or intelligences that stood in the divine presence "in the beginning" or on "Day One." Abraham's vision notes the "organiz[ing]" or begetting of the premortal hosts of the human family, which he learned differ from each other in their degree of "intelligence," the hosts of astronomical bodies (the "stars") differ from one another in glory (Abraham 3:16–19). He records,

> I [the Lord] dwell in the midst of them all [i.e., the spirits or hosts]; I now, therefore, have come down unto thee to declare unto thee the works which my hands have made, wherein my wisdom excelleth them all, for I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, in all wisdom and prudence, over *all the intelligences* thine eyes have seen from the beginning; I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen. Now *the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was* [i.e., as a part of Day One]; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that

were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: *Abraham, thou art one of them;* thou wast chosen before thou wast born. And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and *he said unto those who were with him* [i.e., the hosts]: *We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon;* and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and *they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.* And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him. (Abraham 3:21–28)

The mention of "intelligences that were organized before the world was" evokes, in a dramatic way, the preexistent "wisdom" (ḥokmâ) described in Proverbs 8. This preexistent wisdom "was there … when [*Yhwh*] appointed [decreed] the *foundations of the earth* [*môsdê ʾāreṣ*]" (Proverbs 8:27, 29). It/she was at that time "by him" in the "habitable part of his earth" and whose "delights were with the sons of men"[53] (i.e., the premortal host[54] of human beings). In other words, "in the beginning"[55] or on "Day One" Wisdom delighted in the premortal "sons of men" as "intelligence" (hence, they constituted "intelligences"). Indeed, as described elsewhere, "man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be" (D&C 93:29).

Thus, Abraham's account of his vision describes the premortal "intelligences" — the "hosts" (cf. *ṣĕbāʾôt,* "Sabaoth") — as being "organized" and "good" (i.e., morally good and ready for mortality). Some of them are already described as "Gods" (Abraham 4:1 and following). It clearly delineates their *raison d'être:* to be "proven" or tested as to their

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53   Proverbs 8:30–31.

54   Cf. Moses 6:44: "The heavens he made; the earth is his footstool; and the foundation thereof is his. Behold, he laid it, *an host of men* hath he brought in upon the face thereof."

55   Proverbs 8:22-26.

willingness to obey all divine commandments, and having proven true and faithful in all things, to "have glory added upon their heads forever" as gods (Abraham 3:26; cf. *Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm,* "He creates/brings to pass gods").

All of this stands as a preface to the "Gods" going down in Abraham 4:1‑4 and completing the work of "Day One," the "first day" or "the first, or beginning, of that which they called day and night" (Abraham 4:5). As a whole, Abraham 3:11–4:1, perhaps constitutes the best possible articulation of the long-term purpose of the creative activity implicitly ascribed to the "Lord of Sabaoth" as "the creator of the first day" in D&C 95:7. It is within the long-range conceptual framework of eternal salvation, that is, the Lord's covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his subsequent "creation" of Israel (see especially Jacob 5).

"I AM": The "Creator" of Israel

When he initially commissioned Moses as the prophet to gather,[56] organize,[57] or "create"[58] Israel as a people, *Yhwh* (Yahweh/Jehovah) gave Moses a special name as a sign or token that he really had been sent by *Yhwh*: "And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM** [ʾehyeh ʾăšer ʾehyeh]: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** [ʾehyeh] hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14). Like Genesis 1–3, the language of Exodus 3:14 seeks meaning for the name *Yhwh* in terms of the verb *hyh/hyy* ("to be" or "to become").

The meanings of ʾehyeh ʾăšer ʾehyeh (unvowelized ʾhyh šr ʾhyh) and ʾehyeh (ʾhyh) are ambiguous — probably deliberately ambiguous. There has been no shortage of controversy and debate regarding possible meaning. Douglas K. Stuart suggests that "what the NIV necessarily translates as 'I AM WHO I AM' probably was actually heard by Moses as 'I CAUSE TO BE because I cause to be.'"[59] The expression ʾehyeh ʾăšer ʾehyeh is markedly alliterative, and the first letter in all three words is

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56   Exodus 3:16: "Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt." See also Isaiah 49:5; D&C 110:11.

57   Cf. the Lord's "organiz[ing] his forces" among the dead in D&C 138:30.

58   See, e.g., Isaiah 43:1: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

59   Douglas K. Stuart, "Exodus" in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 121.

aleph, the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet, further emphasizing that *Yhwh*/ʾ*ehyeh* is the beginning.[60]

The name-title ʾ*ehyeh* (or "I AM") is invoked later in Hosea 1:9, when *Yhwh* temporarily repudiates the apostate Israelites of the northern kingdom: "Then said *God,* Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and *I will not be* your *God*" (KJV), or rendered better, "I am not ʾ*ehyeh* to you"; that is, "I am not your ʾ*ehyeh*" ("I am not your I AM"). As Freedman and O'Connor note, "This word is commonly understood as a first person singular imperfect. There is some evidence, however, that this may be a popular interpretation and that the form may in fact be identical with *yahweh* with the shift *y* > ʾ."[61] In support of this, they cite the shift evident in Western Semitic ("Amorite") names.[62] "Thus," they conclude, "the form ʾ*ehyeh* might be equivalent to *yahweh*" — i.e., a causative form.[63] All of this suggests that *Yhwh*'s declaration in Exodus 3:14, ʾ*hyh* ʾ*šr* ʾ*hyh,* could be taken to mean "I will bring to pass what I cause to be."

At the Jerusalem temple during the Feast of the Tabernacles, Jesus clearly identifies himself as *Yhwh* or ʾ*ehyeh* in "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, *I am*" (Greek *egō eimi,* John 8:58). Jesus was identifying himself with the one who revealed himself to Moses (LXX Exodus 3:14, *egō eimi ho ōn*) and the one who called the promise that Abraham would become "a father of many nations" as though it had already happened (Genesis 17:5; Romans 4:17).

The text of D&C 38:1 connects the name-titles "the Lord" (i.e., *Yhwh*/Jehovah), "I AM," "Alpha and Omega" with the heavenly "hosts" or spirit children of God:

> Thus saith <u>the Lord</u> [*Yhwh*] your God, even Jesus Christ, <u>*the Great I Am*</u> [i.e., the great ʾ*ehyeh*], Alpha and Omega, *the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic* <u>hosts</u> *of heaven,* before the world was made. (D&C 38:1)

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60   Cf. the epithets in Revelation 3:14: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

61   Freedman and O'Connor, TDOT, 5:513.

62   Ibid. E.g., names *a-bu-um-ya-qar, a-bi-e-qar* and the normalizing of *e-wi-ma-lik* as ʾ*ehwī-malik* ("the [divine] king is at hand").

63   Ibid. Freedman and O'Connor moreover note: "If, however, *yahweh* is a hiphil form, then ʾ*hyh* might represent a parallel aphel formation. The form could also be a 1st person imperfect hiphil or even a noun formation with a prosthetic aleph."

Yhwh's "creating," or "begetting," Israel in the wilderness was, in a sense, a replication or reenactment of "the first day" or "Day One" when Jacob became *Yhwh's* "portion" and the "lot of his inheritance" (see especially Deuteronomy 32:8-10, 18).[64] The subsequent revelation and building of the tabernacle in seven days mirrored the creation that began on and followed "Day One."[65]

The term *ṣābāʾ/ṣĕbāʾôt* "hosts" is repeatedly associated with the creation of Israel as a nation. *Yhwh's* first act in "creating" Israel was to bring them through the Re[e]d Sea and out of Egypt. The text of Exodus 6 notes, "the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a

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64   See, e.g., Deuteronomy 32:8-10, 18: "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 [LXX: *angelōn theou* = 'angels of God,' probably originally 'sons of God']. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. … Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee." See further Deuteronomy 1:31: "And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee [i.e., carried thee], as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place." Isaiah 63:8-16: "For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."

65   See, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976): 275–92; Peter J. Kearney, "Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25–40," *Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1977): 375–87.

charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 6:13). There follows an enumeration of the heads of the tribal families (6:14–25), following which the text states, "These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies [ṣibĕʾôtām, 'hosts']" (Exodus 6:26). Regarding Israel's exodus from Egypt and entry into the wilderness, Exodus 12:41 reads: "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that *all the hosts of the Lord* [ṣibʾôt Yhwh] went out from the land of Egypt." Israel as the "hosts of the Lord" represented an earthly version of the "host" or "hosts of heaven" (1 Kings 22:19; D&C 38:1, 11; 88:112; cf. 29:36) and its "captain."[66]

"The Beginning and the End"

In the Hebrew Bible, the idea that *Yhwh* is "the beginning and the end" becomes prominent in Isaiah: 'I the Lord [ʾănî Yhwh], *the first* [riʾšôn], *and with the last* [wĕʾet-ʾaḥărōnîm]; I am he [ʾănî hûʾ]'" (Isaiah 41:4); "*I am the first* [ʾănî riʾšôn], and *I am the last* [waʾănî ʾaḥărôn]; and beside me there is no God" (44:6); "*I am he* [ʾănî hûʾ]; *I am the first* [ʾănî riʾšôn], *I also am the last* [ʾănî ʾaḥărôn]" (48:12). These same collocations could be rendered, in essence, "I am the beginning and the end."[67]

The name-title "the beginning and the end" constitutes what is sometimes called a *merismus*,[68] which can take the form of "a doublet of a special kind, in which a pair of polarized concepts represents inclusiveness."[69] An oft-cited example of merismus is the pair *heaven and earth,* which denotes everything. Another example is the Egyptian

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66   In later years, "captain of the host(s) of Israel" became the title of the most important military leader in Israel. Abner and Amasa are both described as "captains of the hosts of Israel" (ṣibʾôt yiśrāʾēl, 1 Kings 2:5). In later verses in 1 Kings 2:32, the former is described as "captain of the host of Israel" and the latter as "captain of the host of Judah." 2 Samuel 20:23 describes Joab as being "over all the host of Israel." Earlier, Gideon is described as a leader of "the host of Israel" (Judges 7:15). Regarding the phrase "hosts of Israel," see also Mosiah 8:8.

67   In addition to D&C 95:7, see, e.g., Revelation 21:6; 22:13; Alma 11:39; 3 Nephi 9:18; D&C 19:1; 35:1; 38:1; 45:7; 49:12; 54:1; 61:1; 84:120; Moses 2:1.

68   Earl R. Anderson, *A Grammar of Iconism* (Madison, WI/Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998), 270.

69   Ibid.

expression for "everything," *ntt ꜣiwtt* ("what is and is not"),[70] which, as Nibley put it, essentially means "everything I know and everything I don't know."[71] In other words, the true sum of reality — the real "everything." How does all of this correlate with "the Lord of Sabaoth" being "the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end"? To say that *Yhwh* is "the beginning and the end" is to say that his creative role in commencing creation and bringing it to completion is both circumscribing and thoroughgoing.

Perhaps the best summation of the meaning of titles *Yhwh,* "I Am," Lord of Sabaoth ("He creates/brings to pass the [heavenly] hosts," "He creates gods," etc.) is to be found in the preface to Doctrine and Covenants 38:

> Thus saith <u>the Lord</u> [*Yhwh*] your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I Am [i.e., the *ꜣehyeh*], Alpha and Omega, *the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic <u>hosts</u> of heaven,* before the world was made [i.e., on Day One]. (D&C 38:1)

The creation of the divine "hosts" involved more than simply bringing spirits into existence (the Father's unique role), but "bringing to pass" or "making" every stage of their development "happen," including their mortality and resurrection from the dead. This was (and is) the responsibility of the one designated "*Yhwh*" from "the beginning" all the way to the "end."

Yhwh's "bringing to pass" or "making happen" is not said to end there. Since the heavenly "hosts" also refers to stars and planetary bodies, the name-title "Lord of Hosts" or "Lord of Sabaoth" also refers to *Yhwh*'s bringing worlds in and out of existence:

For behold, there are many worlds that have *passed away by the word of my power.* And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them (Moses 1:35):

> And *the Lord God* [*Yhwh ꜣĕlōhîm*] spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine.

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70 Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs.* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute), 576 under (entry for *nty*); see also Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute/Ashmolean Museum, 1999), 14.

71 Nibley, "The Meaning of the Temple," 7.

> And as one earth shall *pass away,* and the heavens thereof
> *even so shall another come;* and there is no end to my works,
> neither to my words. (Moses 1:37–38)

That "the creator of the first day, the beginning and the end" is the one who "causes to happen" — creating worlds and causing them to pass away "by the word of his power" (Moses 1:35) — is key to understanding Christ's role in "bring[ing] to pass the resurrection of the dead" (2 Nephi 2:8, etc.).

"The Author and Finisher"

The epithets "the beginning and the end" (D&C 95:7), "the first and the last," "Alpha and Omega," etc., suggest both the idea of the one who commences creation but also the one that brings it to completion. The author of Hebrews appeals to this idea in describing Jesus's role in the salvation of the human family: "Looking unto Jesus *the author and finisher* [ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν, *archēgon kai teleiōtēn*] of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). In the language of Peter in Acts 3:15, Jesus was the *archēgon tēs zōēs,* the "prince" or "author of life" — i.e., the "author of eternal life."

Earlier in Hebrews, the same word-pair — forms of *archēgos* and *teleiōtēs* — describe Jesus, the *archēgos* undergoing his own process of perfection, completion, or full ritual initiation: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the *captain* [ἀρχηγὸν, *archēgon*] of their salvation *perfect* [τελειῶσαι, *teleiōsai*] through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). In the twofold use of this word-pair, perhaps there is an orthographic pun on *aleph* (cf. "a") and *tav/tau* ("t"), the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet (cf. the name-title "Alpha and Omega"), aleph deriving from an ox's head, and the Greek *tau* (τ,"t") deriving from the Semitic (Phoenician) *taw,* whence the Hebrew *taw* also derives. In at least one important passage in the Hebrew Bible, the *taw* itself serves as a marker or "seal"[72] identifying those in Jerusalem who were devoted to, and thus truly belonged to *Yhwh* vis-à-vis those idolaters who do not:

> And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city,
> through the midst of Jerusalem, *and set a mark* [*wĕhitĕwîtâ
> tāw,* literally, and *taw* a *taw*] upon the foreheads of the men

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72 See especially Revelation 7:3; D&C 77:9; 132:19.

> that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. (Ezekiel 9:4)

> But come ny man upon whom is the mark [*hattāw,* literally, the *taw/tav*]; and begin at my sanctuary. (Ezekiel 9:6)

The "mark" or "taw" mentioned by the Lord here is undoubtedly the "X"-shaped taw of the paleo-Hebrew script. In other words, those who had been "sealed" or "marked," bore an "X"-shaped mark on their countenance. Alma's the Younger's questions "Have ye received his image in your countenances?" (Alma 5:14) and "can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances" (Alma 5:19) express a related idea — i.e., being sealed with *Yhwh*'s distinguishing mark.[73] Thus are you "finished," "fully initiated" or "perfect in Christ" the Finisher (Moroni 10:33–34). It is further possible that Alma is using the same idea when he exhorts his son Corianton: "Now my son, I would that ye should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the *lusts* [Hebrew, cf. the Kibroth-hattaavah, 'graves of lust'] of your eyes, *but cross yourself* [i.e., put on the 'taw'/'tav' '"taw" yourself'; cf. *hitĕwîtâ tāw/hattāw*] in all these things; for except ye do this ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. Oh, remember, and *take it upon you, and cross yourself* in these things" (Alma 39:9). If so, Alma has deployed a sublime wordplay.

It should be further noted here that the Greek term rendered "author" in Hebrews 12:2 and as "captain" earlier in Hebrews 2:10 is *archēgos;* "In the Septuagint, the word *archēgos* is used for political or military leaders of Israel."[74] The author of Hebrews' use of this image harks back to Joshua 5 and the theophany in which Joshua sees "the captain of *Yhwh*'s host":

> And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood *a man* [*ʾîš*] over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as *captain of the host of the Lord* [Hebrew *śar ṣĕbāʾ Yhwh* (cf. *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt*); Greek ἀρχιστράτηγος δυνάμεως κυρίου = *archistratēgos dynameōs kyriou*] am I now come. And Joshua *fell on his face to the earth, and did worship,* and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? *And the captain of the Lord's host* [*śar ṣĕbāʾ Yhwh, archistratēgos kyriou*] said unto Joshua,

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73   Mosiah 5:15.

74   Brenda B. Colijn, *Images of Salvation of the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 297.

> Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:13-15)

Joshua's *proskynesis* ("Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship")[75] before this divine being suggests that the "captain of the host of the Lord" was none other than the Lord himself. This is further suggested by the Captain's command that Joshua "Loose thy shoe from of thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." The echo of Moses in *Yhwh*'s presence is unmistakable.[76]

The shared root word *archē* - in *archēgos* and *architratēgos* deserves additional attention. The invocation of *archē* inevitably echoed the first phrase of Genesis 1 in the Septuagint and its description of creation ἐν ἀρχῇ (*en archē*) — in the beginning — the same phrase invoked by John in the prologue to his gospel.

The idea of *Yhwh* as "author" and "finisher" was important to the Nephites to the end as evident in Moroni's description of church members as "relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the *author* and the *finisher* of their faith" (Moroni 6:4). *Yhwh*'s "work and [his] glory" or "work to [his] glory" (Moses 1:39),[77] is "to *bring about* his eternal purposes in the end of man" (2 Nephi 2:15) — i.e., "to *bring to pass*"[78] their "immortal and eternal life" (Moses 1:39).

The "finishing" was accomplished through the atonement. As Jesus stated prior to his atonement, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and *to finish* [τελειώσω, *teleiōsō*] his work" (John 4:34). In the intercessory prayer, prior to his suffering in Gethsemane, Jesus reported to his Father that he had "*finished* [τελειώσας/ἐτελείωσα, *teleiōsas/ eteleiōsa*] the work which thou gavest me to do." From the cross he declared, "*It is finished!* [Τετέλεσται, Tetelestai]" (John 19:30); or, as JST Matthew 27:54 reports it, "Father, *it is finished,* thy will is done."

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75   On the significance of *proskynesis,* see Matthew L. Bowen, "'They Came and Held Him by the Feet and Worshipped Him': Proskynesis before Jesus in Its Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Context," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 5 (2013): 63–89.

76   Exodus 3:5: "And he [God] said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

77   In the original manuscript of the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis, Moses 1:39 originally read: "behold this is my work to my glory to the immortality & the eternal life of man." Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2004), 86.

78   The meaning of what is now Moses 1:39 was clarified with the addition of the phrase "bring to pass" (see ibid., 594).

In a later description of how his atonement "finishes" the divine will, the Savior (as *Yhwh* or "I AM") declared:

> I AM Alpha and Omega, Christ the Lord; yea, even I am he, the beginning and the end, the Redeemer of the world. I, *having accomplished and <u>finished</u> the will of him whose I am,* even the Father, concerning me — having done this that I might subdue all things unto myself — *retaining all power, even to the destroying of Satan and his works at the <u>end</u> of the world, and the last great day of judgment, which I shall pass upon the inhabitants thereof,* judging every man according to his works and the deeds which he hath done. (D&C 19:1–3)

This text also describes how *Yhwh* is the "end" in the title "the beginning and the end": he will make a complete end of Satan and his works at the "end" of the world. Such an end would not have been nor would be possible without the atonement and the resurrection (see especially 2 Nephi 9). Reflecting back on just what "finishing the will" of the Father cost him, the Lord declared:

> Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit — and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink — Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and *I partook and <u>finished my preparations</u> unto the children of men.* (D&C 19:18–19)

As Paul stated twice to the Corinthians, "ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23). Christ partook and "finished [his] preparations" in order to "finish" and "prepare" the human family for the eternities and to exalt as many of the spirit children of God as are willing to be exalted, into the kingdom of God.

Although the ultimate realization of the "finishing" blessings of Jesus Christ's atonement has not yet taken place, the faithful can look forward to the time described in Doctrine and Covenants 88: "And again, another angel shall sound his trump, which is the seventh angel, saying: *It is finished; it is finished!* The Lamb of God hath overcome and trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God" (D&C 88:106). The Lord Jesus Christ — *Yhwh* — will "[*make*] *a full end* of all nations" (D&C 87:6), so "that the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, *shall cease* to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (D&C 87:7) — i.e., "the beginning and *the end*" (D&C 95:7). If we are to be "perfect" ("finished") like the Father

(Matthew 5:48) and the Son (3 Nephi 12:48), we must do — and accede to — the divine will (see Matthew 7:21).

Conclusion

The glossing of the calqued name-title "Lord of Sabaoth" "the Creator of the first day, the beginning and the end," makes very good sense from an etiological, and possibly an historical, etymological standpoint ("he creates the [heavenly] hosts"). We have noted that the creation or begetting of the heavenly hosts was closely associated with "the first day" or "Day One." Thus, D&C 95:7 constitutes yet another example of a revelation given through the prophet Joseph Smith "getting it right"; the defect may not be in the interpretive gloss on "Lord of Sabaoth" offered there but in the knowledge of Joseph Smith's would-be interpreters.

The interpretive gloss on "Lord of Sabaoth" or *Yhwh ṣĕbāʾôt* in D&C 95:7 takes the long view of the "creative" process that began "in the beginning" on "the first day" (or "Day One"), with the begetting of the angels of the divine presence — the spirit sons and daughters of God. It can be further connected with the name-title "Lord God" or *Yhwh ʾĕlōhîm,* "he creates gods" or "he brings to pass gods" in the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall. Fall and mortal life are necessary for the full "finishing" of the heavenly hosts during the millennial day (the seventh "day"; cf. Genesis 2:1; Moses 3:1). The "Lord of Sabaoth" or "Lord of Hosts" himself worked out the infinite atonement so "that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being *the first* that should rise" (2 Nephi 2:8; see also Mosiah 13:35; Alma 12:25; 33:22; Helaman 14:15), thus "bringing to pass" every promise in the "covenant of the Father" (see Moroni 10:32–33), and finishing the heavenly "hosts," at least those who are true and faithful in all things, as "gods."

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Nephi's Use of Inverted Parallels

Dennis Newton

Abstract: *Did Nephi intentionally use chiasmus in his writings? An analysis of fifteen multi-level chiasm candidates in Nephi's writings demonstrates a high statistical probability (99%+) that the poetic form was used intentionally by Nephi but only during two specific writing periods. This finding is buttressed by further analysis, which reveals a clear and unexpected literary pattern for which Nephi seems to have reserved his usage of chiasmus. The nature of obedience is a major theme in Nephi's writings, and he regularly employed chiasms to explore the topic early in his writings. After a period during which he discontinued use of the technique, he returned to the poetic device toward the end of his life to signal a significant shift in his thoughts on the topic of obedience.*

John W. Welch's discovery of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon has sparked both lay and scholarly interest among Latter-day Saints in the study of inverted parallels. Initially something like chiasmus-mania seemed to sweep among LDS scholars.[1] Donald W. Parry, for instance, reformatted the text of the Book of Mormon, emphasized its poetic forms, and noted that "more than 300 examples of chiasmus exist in the Book of Mormon."[2] Since many of these writers have been influenced by the world of biblical studies and specifically the poetic form chiasmus, LDS scholars have seemed less interested in studies of other inverted parallel forms, such as ring composition and palindromic structure.[3] There has been a surge of interest recently in the study of ring forms, with pundits considering whether or not these types of inverted parallel structures are found in literature as diverse as Homer, Plato, ancient Chinese philosophical writings, Beowulf, Paradise Lost, Harry Potter, and Star Wars.[4]

Two types of inverted parallels dominate the discussion: (a) short passages organized in a relatively straightforward chiastic pattern (e.g., ABCC'B'A') and (b) larger works purposely structured using ring form or some other model of inverted parallelism. Long assumed an ancient literary technique, recent scholars have begun to question the traditional assumption that inverted parallelism died out "around the middle of the fifth century BCE."[5] These arguments are based on larger organizing forms of inverted parallelism that typically encompass an entire document rather than short chiastic passages. Thus, while Rachel Barney claims the traditional belief that ring form died out in the fifth century "is clearly false," she notes, "in fairness, much of the early scholarship on ring-composition … focuses on the small-scale rings used to structure speeches and digressions in epic and tragedy, not the larger structures."[6]

LDS scholars have proposed both short and lengthy uses of inverted parallelism in the Book of Mormon. Hundreds of examples of the simplest forms, two-level chiasms such as Alma 40:23 (The <u>soul</u> shall be restored to the <u>body</u>, and the <u>body</u> to the <u>soul</u>), have been identified and catalogued. At the other extreme, LDS authors have claimed that entire books are structured chiastically. Welch, for example, argues that the entirety of 1 Nephi is organized using a chiastic structure with "almost every element in the first half of the book having a specific counterpart in the second half."[7]

Inherent to these conversations about inverted parallelism is the question of what constitutes an intentional versus a random occurrence. Extremely short chiastic sequences (i.e., ABB'A'), despite their aesthetic appeal, can easily occur by chance without being necessarily intended by the author. [8] On the other hand, long ring forms can seem so arbitrary that it is difficult to determine whether the author intended to use the structure or if its discovery simply reflects the "artifice of the reader."[9] Quite frankly, it is extremely difficult to determine objectively the intentionality of either of these two extremes: the shortest of the chiasms (ABB'A') or the longer ring forms.[10] However, for inverted parallels that fall in between these extremes, it is easier to develop objective and measurable criteria to assess intentionality.

In this article I examine Nephi's use of simple, multilevel chiasms (or small ring forms) and argue that he employed inverted parallelism for specific literary purposes.[11] Thus I imply and attempt to test intentionality on the author's part. But my findings are much more nuanced and surprising than this relatively straightforward question of intentionality. I also argue that as we come to understand how Nephi

used inverted parallelism, we as readers can unlock a heretofore under-appreciated message that Nephi intentionally wished to convey.

Determining the Intentionality of Chiastic Passages

Scholars have identified a number of conventions or laws associated with inverted parallels. In 1942 Nils Lund proposed seven laws of chiastic structures,[12] and in 1995 John W. Welch published fifteen criteria for evaluating and identifying chiastic structures.[13] Whereas both Lund and Welch's lists apply to both short and long inverted parallels, Mary Douglas offered her own list of "seven rules or conventions from long ring compositions."[14] While Douglas's self-proclaimed focus is long rings, her list proves useful when studying shorter rings as well.

But does the existence of a number of these conventions in a text mean that an author consciously intended to use inverted parallelism? Welch argues that these "criteria can assist in establishing a presumption of intent" but acknowledges that we cannot know with 100% certainty.[15]

> By analyzing proposed chiasms thoroughly and from a number of angles, one can assess the likelihood that an author consciously employed chiasmus in a given case to achieve a specific purpose. Nevertheless, one can rarely speak with absolute certitude in this area, since few writers ever produce commentaries on their own works. Moreover, there will probably be some circularity in one's analysis here, for some of the factors used to determine the degree of chiasticity presume some degree of intentionality (e.g., purpose), yet those factors will be relied upon in answering the question of whether the structure was intentionally created.[16]

In addition, in an effort to quantify mathematically the likelihood of intentionality, Edwards and Edwards used four of Welch's criteria and developed a statistical approximation of the likelihood of a random appearance of a chiasm, given its length, complexity, and other characteristics.

> From this statistical analysis, one can infer, in some cases, that chiastic structure was likely created intentionally by its author, that is, by design. We distill Welch's four quantitative criteria into a single quantity L, the 'reordering' likelihood that n-element chiastic structure could have appeared by chance in a particular passage … we also calculate the chiastic probability, P, that such structure could have appeared by

chance *anywhere in the larger work* from which the passage was taken … [17]

Figure 1: Descriptors of Inverted Parallelisms

Lund's Seven Laws

Center is the turning point

Antithetical idea introduced at the center

Identical ideas generally at the beginning, end, and center but not in the remainder

Ideas will shift from the center of one system to the extremes of another

Certain terms gravitate towards certain positions

Large units introduced by frame passages

Alternating lines occur within a single unit

Welch's Fifteen Criteria

Objectivity – Is a proposed pattern clearly evident in the text?

Purpose - Is there an identifiable literary reason?

Boundaries - Does it operate across a literary unit as a whole?

Competition - Is it the only structuring poetic device in the passage?

Length

Density - How many words between the dominant elements?

Dominance - Does it account for the dominant nouns, verbs and phrases?

Mavericks - Do key elements appear outside the structure?

Reduplication - Do words randomly repeat?

Centrality - The crux of a chiasm is generally its central turning point.

Balance - How balanced is the chiasm?

Climax – Is the central element of the passage its focal climax?

Return - Do the beginning and ending combine to create a strong sense of return and completion?

Compatibility – Is it consistent with the overall style of the author?

Aesthetics - Subjective evaluation of the author's artistic success.

Douglas's Seven Rules

Exposition or prologue (an introductory section that states the theme)

Split into two halves

Parallel sections (the two sides arranged in parallel)

Indicators to mark individual sections (some method for marking consecutive units)

Central loading (well-marked turning point that is unmistakable)

Rings within rings (major ring internally structured by little rings)

Closure at two levels (end joins up with beginning)

Edwards and Edwards Quantitative Criteria

Use four Welch criteria to calculate **L**

1. Length
2. Density
3. Mavericks
4. Reduplication

L is the likelihood that the structure would emerge by chance given one opportunity

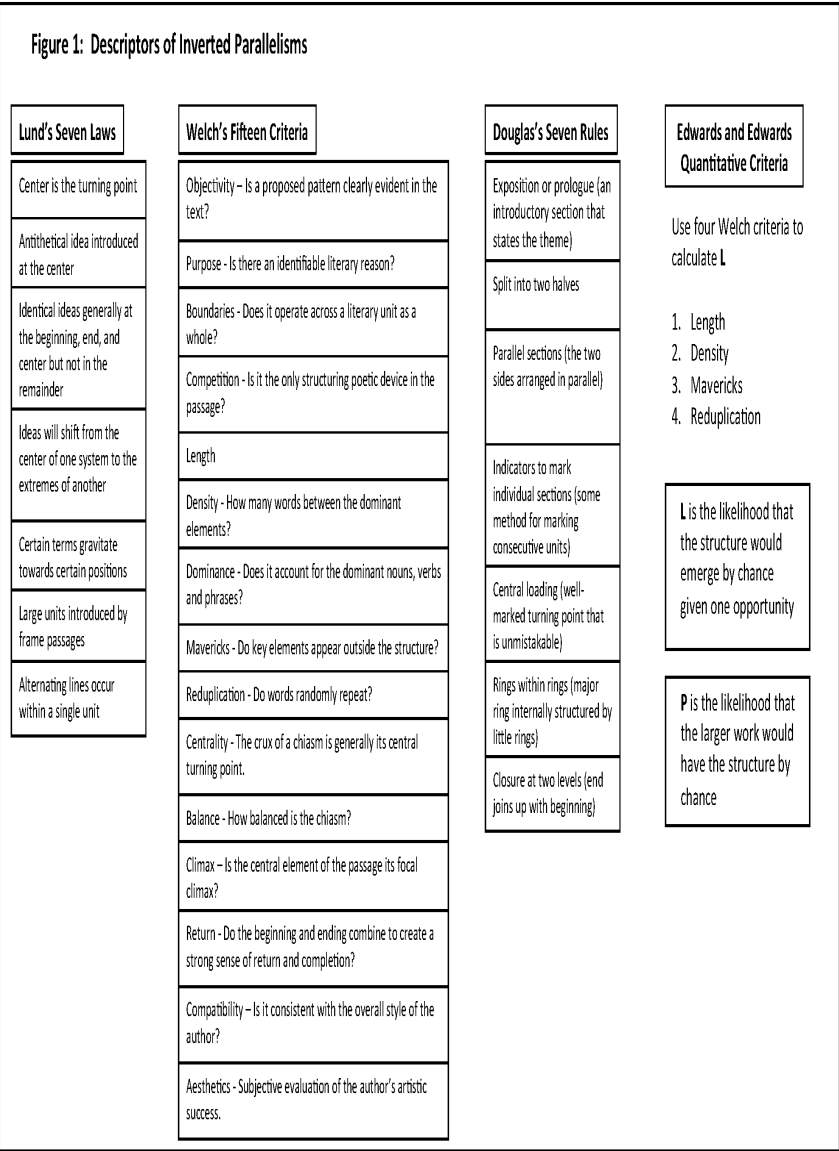**P** is the likelihood that the larger work would have the structure by chance

Figure 1 summarizes all three authors' listed criteria as well as Edwards and Edwards's methodology for calculating L and P-values.[18] Several common themes emerge across these three sets of rules. First, a well-designed inverted parallelism should begin and end at the same place, and longer ones are often introduced by a prologue that highlights

the overall message. Douglas comments that "the final section signals its arrival at the end by using some conspicuous key words."[19] Second, the author's primary message is found at the center of the inverted structure. According to Welch, Lund "asserts this as the first and foremost law of chiasmus."[20] Welch adds "without a well-defined centerpiece or distinct crossing-effect, there is little reason for seeing chiasmus."[21] Third, the structure has to be demonstrably inverted. The second half of the ring must repeat the first half in inverted order.

For the purposes of the remainder of this discussion, I will focus on what I consider these three most important requirements for determining the intentionality of a proposed inverted parallelism: (a) an interconnected beginning and ending, (b) the key theme of the passage placed at the center of the inversion, which should also mark a noticeable turning point, and (c) a multi-level sequence of ideas and/or words that repeat in inverted fashion. And while I will use Edwards and Edwards's quantitative model to help measure this third requirement, I will not rely upon it exclusively to determine inversion. I have listed the main criteria that I will use for the remainder of this analysis in Figure 2. I am contending that inverted parallels are most likely to be intentional if they have a clear literary purpose, have an interconnected beginning and ending, have a complex multi-level chiastic structure that is unlikely to have been generated by chance, and are centered on a climatic passage especially relevant to the author. While other considerations remain important and will be considered secondarily, if these primary requirements are not reasonably met, it is significantly less likely that an inverted parallelism was created intentionally.

Figure 2: Summary of Criteria Used to Evaluate Intention

Closure	Centrality	Inverted Parallel	Other
Are the beginning and the end interrelated? Is there closure? Is there language distinctiveness? Is there a prologue?	Is the main message found in the center? Does the passage turn at this point? Is it foreshadowed by the prologue?	Are the elements organized in inverted ring form? Is there a clean match between elements? What is the probability of this occurring?	Is there a literary purpose? Does the author have a history of use? Are there competitive structures? Is it aesthetically pleasing?

Nephi's Use of Chiasmus

My analysis of Nephi's use of inverted parallels will focus on small to medium-sized chiasms as opposed to larger, book-level structures. John W. Welch has argued that both 1 Nephi and 2 Nephi are individually organized using chiastic form. Other LDS scholars, however, have proposed alternative organizing structures for Nephi's writings, including an Exodus motif, a Creation-Fall-Atonement-Veil structure, parallelism that is *not* inverted, and two separately organized writings whose point of demarcation is 2 Nephi 5.[22] Thus, there are a number of proposed organizing structures for approaching Nephi's writings. Since I have enough emotional scars from years of refereeing LDS church basketball, I have no desire to bring a whistle into this fray. So this paper and I will remain on the sidelines with regard to the question of whether or not Nephi organized either of his books in chiastic or ring form.

Nevertheless, even though I have eliminated the book-level structuring questions, evaluating Nephi's use of small to medium-size chiasms remains a Herculean task. LDS scholars have proposed hundreds of smaller chiasms in Nephi's writings. One resource website lists 408 1 Nephi passages that have been proposed as chiastic.[23] The vast majority of these candidates are short, two or three-level chiasms.[24] Unfortunately with regards to our task for determining intentionality, these smaller chiasms, by their very definition, have a much higher probability of random occurrence than longer chiasms and generally do not exhibit the same climatic literary impact. Although there is an appealing poetic symmetry to an ABB'A' pattern, there is generally not a dramatic buildup to a pivoting central point or a sense of linkage to the beginning at the closure. Therefore, I have chosen to ignore the vast majority of these candidates to make my analytic task manageable.[25]

I have selected Donald W. Parry's reformatted Book of Mormon text as my starting point for identifying chiastic passages as candidates for further analysis in order to determine intentionality.[26] Using this text, I have identified fifteen possible inverted word order passages that are four-level or higher and are attributable to Nephi as the primary author.[27] I then analyze these specific passages to determine (a) if there is evidence that Nephi wrote these passages intentionally using the aforementioned criteria and (b) if there is a discernible literary pattern that might explain his desire to use this particular poetic form.

Recently I argued that Nephi's record spanned four writing periods spread across forty years. [28] This assertion is a departure from the traditional assumption that Nephi composed his record over a short

period late in his life.[29] See Figure 3 for a summary of these periods along with the frequency of inverted parallelism employed by Nephi during each of them. The frequency of Nephi's use of chiasms was greatest as he recorded his early history on the large record (which he later used to abridge onto these "other" plates). A possible explanation for this difference is the likelihood that these stories were told orally for a number of years in the wilderness until, as Nephi informed us, he was instructed to fashion his first set of plates. Nephi's later writings contain much less history and were therefore less likely to have been transmitted orally. Regardless of the reason, it is clear that Nephi's chiasm rate differed significantly across the timeline (e.g., there are no chiastic candidates in his final appendix). Thus I will use the proposed authorship timeline as an anchor for my remaining analysis.

Figure 3: Proposed Authorship Timeline of Nephi's Words

Portion of Nephi's Record	Abridged External Source of Early History	Content Unique to the Small Plates		
		Historical Text Editorial Asides and Late History	Prophecy Jacob, Isaiah, and Nephi Commentary	Appendix Final Comments and Closing
What is Included	1 Nephi 1-18 except editorial asides	Headnotes 1 Nephi 1-18 editorial asides 1 Nephi 19 – 2 Nephi 5	2 Nephi 6-30	2 Nephi 31-33
Timeframe (Years Post Jerusalem)	Began around 15	Began 32 and Finished by 42	Composed between 50 and 54	Composed around 54 or 55
Inverted Parallel Candidates (4+ Levels According to Parry)	1 Nephi 3:3-12 1 Nephi 3:16-22 1 Nephi 4:5-24 1 Nephi 4:33-35 1 Nephi 5:1-6 1 Nephi 5:17-20 1 Nephi 7:3-5 1 Nephi 13:39-42 1 Nephi 15:7-12 1 Nephi 17:48-52	1 Nephi 1:16-18	2 Nephi 11:2-8 2 Nephi: 25:24-27 2 Nephi 26:1-9 2 Nephi 29:4-6	

I wish to begin my analysis of these fifteen candidates mathematically. Before we examine a candidate passage's closure or centrality, we need to determine if it is organized using inverted word order. Using Edwards and Edwards's equations, we can calculate the probability that the inverted word order of each of these fifteen candidates occurred randomly. The first calculation, L, is the likelihood that a chiasmus of n-levels could happen randomly, given both additional occurrences of chiastic elements and the repeating non-chiastic elements found within the specific passage. For example, 1 Nephi 3:3–12 is a seven-level chiasm, but detailed examination of that passage reveals that five of the chiastic elements repeat twice, another element repeats four times, and one element repeats five times. There are also four non-chiastic elements in the passage that each repeat twice.[30] Applying these characteristics into Edwards and Edwards's formula, the L-value for 1 Nephi 3:3–12 is calculated at .016. This means there is only a 1.6% chance that this chiasm occurred randomly, given the chiastic and non-chiastic elements.[31] Stated differently, when just this one isolated example is considered independent of the remainder of Nephi's writings, there is a 98.4% chance that this chiasm was written by design rather than by chance (1-L).[32]

The broader context of an author's work, however, needs to be considered when mathematically assessing candidates. If 1 Nephi 3:3–12 was the only chiastic example that occurred across all of Nephi's writings, then we would need to adjust our formula to account for all possible opportunities for chiasms in the text (i.e., the volume).[33] Based on the timeline of composition (Figure 3), I have calculated chiastic opportunities for three different subsets of Nephi texts: (a) his abridged writings, (b) his historical text, and (c) his prophecies.[34] Finally, I have attempted to adhere to Edwards and Edwards's "strict selection rules," including their requirement that "two or more appearances of a single literary element must share the same essential word or words."[35] These rules generally mean that the quantitative analysis is less subjective to reader interpretation and far more conservative than any ring form analysis that I have ever read.

The quantitative results for the fifteen chiasm candidates are shown in Table 1. These results support the conclusion that during two specific periods (Nephi's abridged writings and his prophecies), Nephi intentionally used chiasmus as a poetic technique. During the other two times (his late history and his appendix), however, it is likely that Nephi did not purposely utilize the technique. The single chiastic candidate in Nephi's late history, 1 Nephi 1:16–18, fails our statistical

test of intentionality. It has an L-value of 25.27%. When placed into the broader context of Nephi's writings during this period, the statistical probability that this stand-alone chiasm is due to chance (P) is 99.88%.[36] Of course, this does not necessarily mean that Nephi did *not* write this passage intentionally. It is important to look at other factors to make the case for it's being written by design. My own analysis of these other factors, however, leads me to conclude that the case for the intentionality for this chiasm is relatively weak, and therefore, for the remainder of this paper, I assume there is a low likelihood that Nephi's late history contains intentional chiasms with four or more levels.[37]

Table 1: Nephi Chiasm Candidates Quantitative Analysis

Abridged Candidate	Parry Levels	Strict Levels	L	P	Description
1 Nephi 3: 3-12	7	7	0.0160	0.0006	7 chiastic (1-4x, 1-5x), 4 non-chiastic
1 Nephi 3: 16-22	4	4	0.0814	0.4112	4 chiastic, 2 non-chiastic
1 Nephi 4: 5-24	6	6	0.4970	0.8793	6 chiastic (1-3x, 1-5x), 10 non-chiastic (1-3x, 1-4x, 1-7x)
1 Nephi 4: 33-35	6	4	0.0113	0.0105	4 chiastic (1-3x)
1 Nephi 5: 1-6	6	5	0.0901	0.0772	5 chiastic (2-3x, 1-4x), 3 non-chiastic
1 Nephi 5: 17-20	4	3	0.0670	0.3885	3 chiastic
1 Nephi 7: 3-5	5	4	0.0095	0.1597	4 chiastic
1 Nephi 13: 39-42	8	8	0.0129	0.0040	8 chiastic (4-3x), 6 non-chiastic (2-3x, 1-4x).
1 Nephi 15: 7-12	6	5	0.0300	0.0168	5 chiastic, 2 non-chiastic (1-3x)
1 Nephi 17: 48-52	5	4	0.1712	0.9137	4 chiastic, 3 non-chiastic (1-3x)

Late History Candidate	Parry Levels	Strict Levels	L	P	Description
1 Nephi 1: 16-18	5	4	0.2527	0.9988	4 chiastic (1-4x), 3 non-chiastic

Prophecy Candidate	Parry Levels	Strict Levels	L	P	Description
2 Nephi 11: 2-8	6	6	0.0070	0.0003	6 chiastic (2-3x, 1-4x), 1 non-chiastic (3x)
2 Nephi: 25: 24-27	5	5	0.0018	0.0002	5 chiastic, 1 non-chiastic
2 Nephi 26: 1-9	8	5	0.5810	0.9607	5 chiastic (2-3x), 8 non-chiastic (1-3x, 1-4x)
2 Nephi 29: 4-6	7	5	0.0659	0.0316	5 chiastic (1-3x), 3 non-chiastic (1-3x)

Term Definitions

Parry refers to the levels suggested by Donald W. Parry's *Book of Mormon Reformatted*. Strict refers to the number of levels using Edwards and Edwards "stricter" guidelines. The tests were done using the strict levels. L is likelihood that the chiasm appears by chance within just the candidate text. P is the likelihood that the chiasm appears by chance within the broader Nephi text (e.g., Late History). Description refers to the elements (chiastic and non-chiastic) found within the specific candidate.

On the other hand, there is a very high statistical likelihood that four of the ten abridged candidates and three of the four prophecy candidates were purposely composed using the chiastic form.[38] For example, abridged candidate 1 Nephi 3:3–12 is 99.94% likely to have been composed intentionally, and prophecy candidate 2 Nephi 25:24–27 is 99.98% likely. These results justify the conclusion that *there is a greater than 99% probability that portions of Nephi's abridged text (1 Nephi 1–18) and his prophecies (2 Nephi 6–30) were written intentionally in inverted parallelism.*

Again, this does not mean the lower probability candidates were not written intentionally. Edwards and Edwards tell us that "moderate and large P-values say absolutely nothing about intentionality. The author of a passage with a moderate or large value of P may well have intentionally invoked the chiastic form in composing the passage, but such a value simply provides no evidence that she did, nor does it provide evidence that she did not."[39] In fact, the number of candidates during these two periods with a high probability of intentionality lends credence to the likelihood that other, less complex candidates were also intentional. An examination of these passages with higher L-values, however, requires us to look more in-depth at a passage's centrality, closure, and design.

Nephi's Stories of the Wilderness Were Recorded in Chiastic Form

Of the ten candidates that Nephi seemed to have copied from the abridged record, do they all appear intentional, or are some random? We have already determined that statistically four of the ten have P-values that suggest a high probability they were created by design. But this is only one tool of many when determining intentionality. We need to look at each candidate individually across our broader set of criteria and assess each one's chiastic likelihood. Let's start by examining Nephi's first chiasm candidate, 1 Nephi 3:3–12. Recall from Table 1 that the P-value for this chiasm is .0006, which implies an extremely high mathematical likelihood of intentionality. A closer qualitative look at the text and how it is structured provides more illumination as to Nephi's purpose for choosing to organize this passage as a chiasm. Here are the text highlights organized in chiastic form.

    A Laban has genealogy of forefathers engraven on plates of brass
      B Go unto the house of Laban
        C Brothers murmur
          D Nephi favored of the Lord

      E Said unto my father
        F Do the things
           G Lord hath commanded
           G' Lord giveth no commandments
        F' Way to accomplish the thing
      E' My father heard these words
    D' Nephi took journey
   C' Brethren consult with each other
  B' Go unto the house of Laban
A' Desired of Laban genealogy of my father engraven upon plates of brass (1 Nephi 3:3–12)

The first criterion to consider is closure. Notice how distinctive are Nephi's beginning and ending. 1 Nephi 3:3 reads "<u>Laban</u> hath the <u>record</u> of the Jews and also a <u>genealogy</u> of my <u>forefathers</u>, and they are <u>engraven upon plates of brass</u>" and corresponds with 1 Nephi 3:12, which reads "and he desired of <u>Laban</u> the <u>records</u> which were <u>engraven upon the plates of brass</u>, which contained the <u>genealogy</u> of my <u>father</u>" (*underlines highlight the corresponding items*). There are six items that directly correspond within the beginning and within the ending. This alerts the reader that this is meant to be a start and an end to a ring. The repetition of such a detailed set of items into a single element is a powerful indicator of an intentional chiasm. Another aspect of closure from ring composition is the existence of a prologue that introduces the primary theme of the passage. This obviously is more common with longer inverted parallelisms and therefore is not a requirement of smaller chiasms. Still, this chiastic candidate is immediately preceded by the following verse:

> Behold I have dreamed a dream, in the which the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brethren shall return to Jerusalem. (1 Nephi 3:2)

Nephi used Lehi's words to provide a prologue that matches well with the overall theme of the chiasmus. So this particular candidate has a prologue as well as a series of six corresponding key words that mark the beginning and end; both fulfill our criteria for the closure attribute.

Another important criteria is centrality. When we examine the center of this chiasm, we find a scripture that is both one of the most beloved scriptures from the Book of Mormon and one that is commonly associated with Nephi. The crux of this story is Nephi's willingness to keep God's commandments — a topic that he returned to again and

again in his writings. What better way to highlight this message than to place it at the climatic center of a chiasm?

> 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)

This passage also relates well with the prologue, where Lehi tells Nephi the "Lord hath commanded" him to return to Jerusalem. At this point the chiasm candidate also demonstrates an antithetical shift. Until this moment, Nephi has been paraphrasing Lehi and his requests of Nephi and his brethren. At the pivot point, however, Nephi becomes the main character as he pledges his willingness to obey the commandments, and he begins to relate how he would ultimately accomplish the specific tasks assigned by Lehi.

Because 1 Nephi 3:3–12 fulfills our criteria (both qualitative and quantitative) for an intentional chiasm, there can be very little doubt that Nephi wrote this by design. It is a seven-level chiasm with a less than 1% statistical probability of being by chance. It has a distinctive beginning/ending with six specific items repeated. It builds to a climax and ultimately centers on one of the most famous of Nephi's passages. It has a prologue that introduces this central theme. What if we were able to see similar chiastic construction in Nephi's abridged writings with similar literary purposes? Would these similarities also bolster the likelihood that this and those candidates were also designed intentionally? I argue that the case for intentionality is strengthened with further repetition of this specific literary pattern among other chiastic candidates.

Figure 4 summarizes my assessment of the intentionality of each of the ten chiastic candidates from Nephi's abridged writings. When we look at the manner in which Nephi used chiasmus in his abridged history, a noticeable literary pattern emerges as we specifically consider the criteria of centrality. Of the ten inverted candidates from the abridged time, nine center on a distinctive pattern, a pattern so logical and compelling that I feel it argues for intentionality even when we have relatively high P-values.

Figure 4: Intentionality of Abridged (1 Nephi 1-18) Inverted Parallel Candidates

Candidate	Closure	Centrality	Inverted (P-Value)	Inverted (Other Factors)	Other Considerations	Intentionality Assessment
1 Nephi 3:3-12	Distinctive six-word boundary, prologue linked to center	Central theme of obedience, pivots from Lehi to Nephi	0.0006	7-level with only 4 non-chiastic elements	Fits proposed literary pattern	Highly Likely
1 Nephi 3:16-22	Ordered 4-level pattern serves as a boundary and has a one-sentence prologue	Central theme of preserving the scriptures, pivots from persuasion to action	0.4112	Only 4-levels with 2 non-chiastic elements but language is exact	Lots of extra text which diverts from the inverted pattern but fits proposed pattern	Likely
1 Nephi 4:5-24	Begins and ends with distinctive phrase "without the walls," only time Nephi ever used, no prologue	Pivots on the memory that those who keep commandments shall prosper, Nephi obtains plates at pivot	0.8793	Complex story with 10 non-chiastic elements, 6-level structure compelling	Fits proposed literary pattern but other scholars have proposed alternative organizing structure.	Probable
1 Nephi 4:33-35	Begins and ends with the words Nephi "spake"	Swearing an oath to Zoram through diligence to the Lord	0.0105	Strictness of model lowers P-value slightly (not fear = courage)	Fits proposed literary pattern, extremely tight and balanced small chiasmus	Highly Likely
1 Nephi 5:1-6	No prologue and terms are not distinctive, seems to be a 3-level framing device around the story	Difficult to distinguish a central message, unclear with lots of repetition at the turning point	0.0772	Many of the elements are generic (father, journey, wilderness)	Does not fit literary pattern, extremely loose and unbalanced	Possible But Not Likely
1 Nephi 5:17-20	Learn things about Lehi at beginning and end, possible prologue	Importance of the plates of brass is key point but too short for a dramatic pivot	0.3885	Strictness of model lowers P-value, could be consider 4-level	Well balanced without much extraneous content	Likely
1 Nephi 7:3-5	Short story that begins and ends "into the wilderness" preceded by a prologue	Ishmael is convinced to come through the "words of the Lord"	0.1597	Short story without many complicating terms	Well balanced and concise	Likely
1 Nephi 13:39-42	Prologue that highlights central theme, terms not very distinctive	Centers on coming to Christ via the words established, sermon pivot not story per se	0.0040	Complex 8-level structure	Fits proposed literary pattern, possibly ends with a latch which would improve closure	Highly Likely
1 Nephi 15:7-12	Closure is questionable because the conversations continues, no prologue	Centers on remembering what the Lord says, builds nicely to a central climax	0.0168	5-level structure without much extraneous	Fits proposed pattern but biggest difficulty is that there is not a sense of a stand-alone ring	Probable
1 Nephi 17:48-52	No prologue but distinctive bordering phrase	Central theme of obedience as brothers try to harm Nephi	0.9137	4-level structure with 3 non-chiastic	Fits proposed literary pattern	Probable

Consider another example that is less obviously chiastic than 1 Nephi 3:3–12. In 1 Nephi 17:48–52 Nephi recounted a story about how his brothers sought to throw him into the sea. This story, as a chiasm candidate, it is the weakest statistically of those from the abridged time (P-value of .9137). In the absence of other factors, we would likely conclude that this candidate was not intentional. When we compare the passage's literary purposes to Nephi 3:3–12 and other candidates in addition to considering other criteria, an illuminating theme emerges that argues for intentionality. Here are the highlights of the inverted parallelism.

A Came forth to lay their hands upon me
　B I spake unto them saying
　　C I am filled with the power of God
　　　D God hath commanded me that I should build a ship
　　　　E If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them
　　　D' If he commanded me to say to the water be thou earth
　　C' the Lord has such great power
　B' I, Nephi, said many things unto my brethren
A' Neither durst they lay their hands upon me (1 Nephi 17:48–52)

While there is no prologue to this short episode, the ending and closing are clearly marked by the phrase "lay their hands upon me." In addition, the central message of this passage is Nephi's faith that he can accomplish anything that the Lord commands him to do. Although this story is about rebuking his brethren, Nephi centers it exactly the same way as before: he will do everything that he is commanded. The similarity in message is so powerful that there must be something intentional happening here. Due to the ring-like closure to this story, the consistency of the central message with other candidates, and the distinctiveness of the beginning/ending language, I argue that this candidate is probably intentional despite it only having four-levels and a high P-value.

So far we have analyzed two of the proposed candidates from Nephi's abridged writings and, surprisingly, have found that both times Nephi used a chiastic structure to emphasize a similar theme: the importance of God's commandments and his words. This is a remarkable consistency and argues in favor of intentionality with candidates that have higher P-values.

What of the remaining eight abridged inverted passages? Do they employ the chiastic form for similar literary purposes? The answer, remarkably, is yes. Of the ten abridged candidates, eight highlight aspects of the same core theme at their center. In other words, as shown in Figure 5, Nephi's abridged text returned, over and over, to the chiastic form to underscore the message of the importance of following the words and commandments of the Lord. Due to the remarkable consistency in Nephi's message across these eight chiasms, I argue that it is highly improbable that these candidates occurred by chance.[40] The account from which Nephi abridged this portion of the text regularly used chiasms to tell of the family's travels in the wilderness. Nearly every time Nephi utilized an inverted parallelism, he did it in order to emphasize the theme of obedience and the importance of the word of God. Of the two candidates in the abridged text that do not fit this pattern, I conclude that 1 Nephi 5:1–6 is likely not chiastic, and the other, as I discuss later, serves

as an important thematic bridge between Nephi's abridged writings and his much later prophecies and commentaries.

Figure 5: Eight Abridged Chiasm Candidate Central Passages

Reference	Passage
1 Nephi 3:7	*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 3:19-20	*It is wisdom in God that we should obtain these records that we might preserve unto our children the language of our fathers, and also that we may preserve unto them the words which have been spoken by the holy prophets*
1 Nephi 4:14	*Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments, they shall prosper in the land of promise. Yea, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses save they should have the law.*
1 Nephi 4:34	*Surely the Lord hath commanded us to do this thing. And shall we not be diligent in keeping the commandment of the Lord?*
1 Nephi 5:18	*That these plates of brass should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who were of his seed. Wherefore he said that these plates of brass should never perish.*
1 Nephi 7:4	*Insomuch as we did speak the words of the Lord*
1 Nephi 15:10-11	*How is it that ye do not keep the commandments of the Lord? How is it that ye will perish because of the hardness of your hearts? Do ye not remember 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…*
1 Nephi 17:49-50	*…for God had commanded me that I should build a ship. And I saith unto them: if God had commanded me to do all things, I could do it. If he should command me that say unto this water: Be thou earth!—and it shall be earth. And if I should say it, it would be done.*

Why Did Nephi Return to the Chiastic Form?

The proposed authorship timeline presented earlier in Figure 3 suggests that Nephi authored his "Prophecy" texts (2 Nephi 6–30) approximately thirty years after he authored his "Abridged" texts (1 Nephi 1–18 minus his editorial asides). During this time gap he wrote what the timeline terms his "historical" texts (1 Nephi 19 to 2 Nephi 5 plus his editorial asides)

and, as discussed earlier, he did not appear to purposely employ chiasms in these texts. But Nephi chose to return to the inverted word order form with a handful of distinctly chiastic passages in his "prophecy" texts after thirty years of disuse. Why? Was there a literary reason for Nephi's return to the form? A detailed examination of these chiasm candidates offers a plausible explanation that serves to heighten the reader's appreciation of the text's literary depth and, quite frankly, brilliance.

First, we should examine the four possible chiastic candidates in Nephi's prophecy period (2 Nephi 6–30). Figure 6 summarizes my analysis of each of these candidates' intentionality. I rate three of the four candidates as highly likely to be chiastic, and so the bulk of our remaining discussion will focus on them. Assessing the chiasticity of 2 Nephi 26:1–9, however, is more problematic. It does not fit the proposed pattern, it has a high P-value, and the central meaning is nebulous. While I consider it possible that this an intentional chiasm, the resolution of this issue does not affect my underlying conclusions about Nephi's writings from this period, and therefore I do not spend further time on this specific candidate.

Figure 6: Intentionality of Prophecy Period (2 Nephi 6-30) Inverted Parallel Candidates

Candidate	Closure	Centrality	Inverted (P-Value)	Inverted (Other Factors)	Other Considerations	Intentionality Assessment
2 Nephi 11:2-8	Distinctive word pattern and prologue which points to central passage	Central passage on how law of Moses typifies Christ, which what Nephi's soul delights in	0.0003	6-levels with the main central element unmatched	Bounded by Jacob's sermon and Isaiah text. Commentary on the proposed pattern	Highly Likely
2 Nephi 25:24-27	Prologue of teaching children to believe in Christ, outer layers all focus on an aspect of the law	Central theme is how we become alive in Christ, theologically pivots and extols Christ's effect upon the law of Moses	0.0002	5-levels with most representing a characteristic of the law of Moses	Gives the final word on the proposed pattern	Highly Likely
2 Nephi 26:1-9	No prologue but beginning and ending terms are distinctive	Focus is on what happens to the wicked (burn up, be as stubble) via Nephi's vision	0.9607	Many of the elements do not fit strict pattern but are compelling (e.g., terrible day linked to earthquakes)	Does not fit a proposed pattern but there is an appealing balance to the elements	Possible
2 Nephi 29:4-6	Prologue mentions Gentiles who appear centrally, very distinctive boundary terms (A Bible, no more Bible)	Gentile's argument at the beginning is answered at the climax	0.0316	Several elements are not exact matches or this would be much lower	Well bounded and well balanced	Highly Likely

Recall that the dominant theme of Nephi's earlier chiasms was obedience and the importance of following the word of the Lord. Eight times within the text that Nephi abridged, we find chiasms centered on this theme. I wish now to return to the one aforementioned abridged candidate that does not fit as neatly into this "obedience" pattern, an eight-level candidate I rate "Highly Likely," which includes a prologue that foreshadows the center.[41] After Lehi shared his dream of the tree

of life, Nephi desired a personal witness of his father's experience. In answer to his prayer, he was shown a far-reaching vision that included his first introduction of the intermediary role of the "Lamb of God." As he recounted this portion of his vision in 1 Nephi 13:39–42, Nephi employed a chiastic form.

A Unto the convincing of the Gentiles
　B And also the Jews
　　C Scattered upon all the face of the earth
　　　D Establish the truth of the first
　　　　E Twelve apostles of the Lamb
　　　　　F Make known the plain and precious things
　　　　　　G The Lamb of God
　　　　　　　H All men must come unto him
　　　　　　　H' They must come according to the words established
　　　　　　G' By the mouth of the Lamb of God
　　　　　F' The words shall be made known in records of thy seed
　　　　E' And records of the twelve apostles
　　　D' Both shall be established in one
　　C' Manifest unto all nations
　B' Both unto the Jews
A' And also unto the Gentiles

At the center of this chiasm is salvation through Christ ("all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved and they must come according to the words which shall be established").[42] In his vision, Nephi had learned of Christ. At the center of this chiasm, Nephi appeared to be attempting to reconcile Christ's salvational role with that of the commandments. His new theme is the importance of living a Christ-centered life. But while Nephi extolled Christ as the author of salvation, he did not entirely abandon the centrality of obedience. Rather he began to explore the complex relationship between belief in Christ and obedience to the law, and he reflected this theme in his poetry. Nephi wrote that we must come unto Christ by the "words which shall be established." The scriptures testify of Christ, and that is why they are important. This is the first evidence we have that the focus of Nephi's chiasms have changed from "follow the commandments and the scriptures" to "the words testify of Christ."

Elsewhere I contend that, late in life, "Nephi reflected upon his own writings and questioned how they would be received."[43] As Nephi authored his final sermons, I can envision him considering his earlier use of inverted parallelism and choosing to return to the form to adjust

the poetic message implied. Consistent with the 1 Nephi 13, Nephi centered a second chiastic passage (2 Nephi 11:2–8) upon the idea that the covenants of the Lord are important because they typify Christ.

> For this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him. And also my soul delighteth in the covenants of the Lord which he made to our fathers; yea, my soul delighteth in his grace, and in his justice, and power, and mercy in the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death. (2 Nephi 11:4–5)

Christ and the law are found at the center of this chiasm because, according to Nephi, they testify of each other. His soul delighteth in both the covenants of God and the grace of Christ, side-by-side. The message of this passage is remarkably consistent with his earlier chiasms, yet via the emergence of a greater understanding of Christ and his role, undeniably different.

Nephi returned to the chiastic form two more times in his prophecy/commentary section. The first of these, 2 Nephi 25:24–27, is his final word upon this specific theme of obedience and Christ. At this point Nephi appeared to have resolved his questions about the relative import of the law of Moses in relation to devotion to Christ. The entire chiasmus is structured as a commentary about this specific theme.

> A We keep the law of Moses
>   B Look forward unto Christ when law will be fulfilled
>   C For this end was the law given
>   D Wherefore the law hath become dead unto us
>   E Made alive in Christ
>   E' Talk, rejoice, preach, and prophesy of Christ
>   D' Our children may know the deadness of the law
>   C' Know what end the law was given
>   B' After the law is fulfilled in Christ
> A' When the law ought to be done away

Note that all of the secondary levels leading up to the center of this chiasmus are variations on the "law": how the law will be fulfilled, why the law was given, etc. And for the first time, Nephi talked about the "deadness of the law" due to the anticipation that it will be fulfilled by Christ. While he and his people kept the law of Moses, at this point they did it with an eye forward, anticipating its fulfillment and elimination by Christ. Their faith made them alive and not the law. They wrote, spoke,

and prophesied of Christ, who, at this moment in time, was truly at the center of their hearts.

> We are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law of because of the commandments. And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ. (2 Nephi 25:25–26)

While both Christ and the commandments remain at the center of this passage, Nephi's attitude towards the commandments had changed. The commandments are followed by the Nephites but not with the same passion as before (notice the word "yet" when the law is mentioned). To Nephi and his followers, the law is "dead," and Christ is "alive." And it is only fitting that Nephi employed a chiasm to punctuate his ultimate message on the theme of obedience.

Nephi's final usage of the chiastic form among the fifteen candidates also commented on an earlier theme. Nephi's first chiasms centered on themes of knowing and following the Lord's word. Late in his life, Nephi received revelation that his own writings would become part of the Lord's canon, but the majority of the world would reject his words. Nephi crafted his reaction about this anticipated future world reception in chiastic form (2 Nephi 29:3–6).

A A Bible, we have got a Bible, there cannot be any more Bible
　B O fools
　　C What thank they the Jews for the Bible
　　　D Remember the travails of the Jews?
　　　　E In bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?
　　　　E' O ye Gentiles
　　　D' Have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people?
　　C' For I the Lord have not forgotten my people
　B' Thou fool
A' A Bible, we have got a Bible and need no more Bible

With his final chiasm Nephi departed from his common chiastic themes of salvation through obedience, the word of the Lord, and/or Christ. While the overall topic is familiar (the word of the Lord), this chiasm centers on the future relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles. According to Nephi, these two sets of people are inextricably linked in the work of salvation.[44] Nephi centered this chiasm with the following admonition to the Gentiles to remember his own people, the Jews.

> Do they remember the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles? O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? (2 Nephi 29:4–5)

Conclusions

A burden of persuasion rests on any person describing a passage as chiastic. It is not sufficient merely to affix the label, "chiastic." Applying this term to a given passage must be justifiable; it should be possible for a listener to discern whether a commentator has used the term properly or improperly, aptly or inaptly.[45]

Much has been written about Nephi's use of inverted parallelisms. Scholars have proposed over 400 passages as chiastic. Within all of that clutter, it is easy to get lost and lose the voice of the actual author. Nephi's writings are filled with numerous examples of small chiastic rings (two and three-levels), which evidence his familiarity with the form. Much less common among Nephi's writings are four and higher-level chiasms. Using Parry's reformatted text as a guide, I identified fifteen possible candidates authored by Nephi. These were tested for intentionality using both qualitative and quantitative criteria. I conclude that there is strong likelihood that nine of these were composed intentionally and that it is probable that another three were intentional. Based on my evaluation, I conclude that only two of the candidates were not intentional.

These results suggest that Nephi used the inverted parallel form almost exclusively during two periods: 1) when he wrote his early history, which he later abridged onto these "other" plates and 2) when he wrote his final prophesies and Isaiah commentary. It is statistically implausible that Nephi's use of chiasmus during these two time periods was not by conscious design. Nevertheless, it is one thing to write using chiasms, but it is another to display the level of mastery of the inverted parallel form which the author of 1 and 2 Nephi displays. Of the fifteen chiasm candidates examined, eleven were authored with a single literary purpose in mind: to explore the salvational importance of God's word, obedience to that word, and, ultimately, to resolve the question of how our relationship with Christ intersects and interrelates to our observance of the commandments (see Figure 7 for an outline of this pattern).

Figure 7: Pattern Found in Nephi's Use of Inverted Parallelisms

Central Theme	Obedience and importance of following the words of the Lord	Commandments typify Christ	Law is dead, made alive in Christ
Typical Passage	*Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments, they shall prosper in the land of promise.*	*All men must come unto him or they cannot be saved. And they come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb.*	*We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ.*
Chiasm Frequency Among 15 Candidates	8	2	1

Late in his life, Nephi presented a resolution with regard to these questions. The chiasm found in 2 Nephi 29 is best understood as a commentary on the chiastic passages that precede it. His earlier chiasms celebrated the law as a means to an end. Obedience, using scripture as a guide, leads to prosperity and favor from God. Nephi's final chiasm, on the other hand, purposely deconstructed the structure he had previously built and replaced it with an entirely new foundation. He no longer enthusiastically preached the law for the law's sake. In contrast, Nephi kept the law but looked forward to the day when it would no longer be required. He taught his children of the "deadness" of the law. The blessings that he once argued come through obedience to the law, instead come through being made "alive" through faith in Christ. In short, Nephi's new foundation is Christ. Nephi invites us as readers to revisit each of his other chiastic passages and reconsider the central message of obedience and commandments within the context of his more expansive Christology.

When the text is read carefully, the evidence of the gradual evolution of Nephi's heart toward Christ, grace, and love can be discovered without any specialized knowledge of inverted parallelisms. But isn't it exciting to uncover Nephi's personal epiphany hidden away in a poetic technique unfamiliar to most Western readers? It is like finding a $20 bill tucked away in an old pair of jeans. It doesn't change much of anything, but it does bring a smile to your face.

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Endnotes

1 Boyd F. Edwards and W. Farrell Edwards, "When are Chiasmus Admissible as Evidence?" in *BYU Studies* 49/4 (2010), 133. "Welch's discovery opened a Pandora's box of chiasms that have been identified in various works."

2 Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted According to Parallelistic Patterns* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), xxxiv.

3 This is quite understandable and is not limited to Mormon scholars. "There was soon as much to say about Greek ring form as about Semitic chiasmus. The two fields, biblical and classical, continued on their separate ways, which was very reasonable as each had to do with evolved and regionally distinct literary conventions, each having its own history." Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 4.

4 See Douglas, *Thinking in Circles*; Rachel Barney, Platonic Ring-Composition and *Republic, Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide* (2010); John D. Niles, "Ring Composition and the Structure of Beowulf" in *PMLA* 94/5 (Oct 1979); John Granger, *Harry Potter as Ring Composition and Ring Cycle* (Babson Park, FL: Unlocking Press, 2010). My personal favorite example of a ring form comes from an activity my wife and I used to do with toddlers in nursery: going on a "lion hunt." Gathered in a tight circle on the floor, each of us would act out a series of four or five activities involved in searching for a lion (e.g., walking through the brush, climbing a tree, swimming across the river, etc). Eventually our search would lead us to a lion. This would frighten us and cause us to quickly retrace all of our actions in the *exact reverse order*. The children always ended up where they had started.

5 Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles,* 17. Douglas goes on to say, "This view is endorsed by G. B. Gray, who thought that it [ring composition] had been ousted by metric forms."

6   Barney, Platonic Ring-Composition and *Republic*, 49.

7   John W. Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (Hildesheim, Germany: Gerstenberg, 1981), 199. Welch also argues that 2 Nephi is organized as a "chiastic unit."

8   "Short chiasms are not uncommon in literature. In some cases, the authors undoubtedly intended to use that form for literary effect (that is, by design); in other cases the elements fell into that form without author intent (that is, by chance)." Boyd F. Edwards and W. Ferrell Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" in *BYU Studies* 43/2 (2004), 103.

9   Mary Douglas highlights this difficulty. "Friends have said, 'Ring composition is a loose and fuzzy concept, Mary will always be able to find a ring form is she looks hard enough, in a laundry list, sports news, or whatever. Rings are everywhere.'" Her rebuttal of this criticism is to cite her own failed attempts to find ring forms in Leviticus ("I was not too disappointed to find that Leviticus is not an example of construction in a ring"). Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition*, x. Personally I do not find Douglas's rebuttal sufficient. Just because she was unable to find a ring composition in Leviticus does not mean that the ring form she found in the Book of Numbers was intended by the original author(s). Also on this topic Welch states, "If any aspect of chiastic analysis is to produce rigorous and verifiable results, the inverted parallel orders, which create the chiasms upon which that analysis is based, must be evidenced in the text and not imposed upon the text by Procrustean design or artifice of the reader." John W. Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 13.

10 Consider John Bligh's commentary on the Book of Galatians. He argues that the entire book is organized in chiastic form (ABCDED'C'B'A'). For example, A is the prologue (1:1–12) and matching A' is the epilogue (6:12–18), B is an autobiographical section (1:13–2:10) and matching B' is a moral section (5:11–6:11), etc. While the arguments behind Bligh's assignments seem detailed and logical, it is difficult to build an objective test of his theory because of the complexity, depth, and length of these passages. Welch notes the primary issue we face as he comments on Bligh; "his meticulous examination of this letter may well be open to some criticism on specific occasions where the texts do not fit easily into the chiastic mold." In my experience, nearly all book-

length ring compositions are open to criticism when subjected to the rigors of unbiased testing. (See Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 213–214.)

11 For the purposes of this discussion, I will refer to Nephi as the primary author of 1 and 2 Nephi, although I acknowledge that many readers regard him as fictional.

12 Nils Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1942), 40–41.

13 John W. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus" in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995), 5–9.

14 Douglas, *Thinking in Circles*, 33.

15 Welch, "Identifying and Evaluating Chiasmus," 10–11.

16 Ibid, 11. Mary Douglas concurs with Welch that the question of intentionality is critical to the study of ring compositions. "Welch's concluding chapter lists fifteen criteria that can be used to measure the strength or weakness of the chiastic structure in a given text. The most interesting of these (and the most debatable) is his effort to distinguish a chiastic ordering that just happened, without any authorial intent, from one that has been deliberately planned. He warns against the 'intentional fallacy,' the idea that any discernible pattern in the text must have been devised intentionally." Douglas, *Thinking in Circles,* 32.

17 Edwards and Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear by Chance?" 107.

18 Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, 40–41; Welch, "Identifying and Evaluating Chiasmus," 5–9; Douglas, *Thinking in Circles*, 35–38; and Edwards and Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear by Chance?" The Edwards and Edwards article provides a detailed write-up of the quantitative methodology for those who desire a detailed description of the formulas. Any variation on my part from their core methodology is noted in the endnotes.

19 Douglas, *Thinking in Circles*, 37.

20 Welch, "Identifying and Evaluating Chiasmus," 8.

21 Ibid 8.

22 See Research and Perspectives: Nephi and the Exodus, *Ensign* April 1987, 64–65;); Joseph M. Spencer, *An Other Testament: On*

Typology (Salem, OR: Salt Press, 2012), 43; Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline" in *BYU Studies* 20/2 (1980), 134; and Brant A. Gardner, "Two Authors: Two Approaches in the Book of Mormon" in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies 24* (2015), 257–258.

23 See http://chiasmusresources.johnwwelchresources.com/index-chiasm-book-mormon#2 for a list of all 408 chiastic candidates in 1 Nephi. The vast majority (99%) of these are small to medium-size chiasms.

24 Examples include "the word of the Lord shall <u>be fulfilled</u> (A) <u>concerning the destruction of Jerusalem</u> (B) for all things which the Lord hath spoken <u>concerning the destruction of Jerusalem</u> (B') must <u>be fulfilled</u> (A')" (1 Nephi 7:13), "and while the <u>angel</u> (A) spake these words, I beheld and saw the <u>seed</u> (B) of my brethren did contend against my <u>seed</u> (B'), according to the words of the <u>angel</u> (A')" (1 Nephi 12:19), "and according to his <u>word</u> (A) he did <u>do all things</u> (B) for them; and there not <u>any thing done</u> (B') save it were by his <u>word</u> (A')" (1 Nephi 17:31), and "that the <u>Jews</u> (A) shall have the <u>words</u> (B) of the <u>Nephites</u> (C), and the <u>Nephites</u> (C') shall have the <u>words</u> (B') or the <u>Jews</u> (A')" (2 Nephi 29:13). While chiasmus is clearly prevalent in his writings, I was unable to discern a clear pattern in Nephi's use of these 2 or 3-level chiasms. On occasion, as I note later in this paper, Nephi seems to use smaller chiasms to punctuate the climatic point of larger chiasms, but other uses appear to be random.

25 "Two-element chiasms do not supply strong statistical evidence of intentionality because they can easily emerge unintentionally during composition." Edwards and Edwards, "Chiasmus as Evidence," 138.

26 This is consistent with the approach used by Edwards and Edwards's "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" By discussing chiasmus candidates already identified, I also attempt to minimize the impact of my own readership biases and preferences. This is important because I suggest some patterns in Nephi's use of chiasmus, patterns that could be methodologically attributed to me as author. Although I recognize that Parry and his team could have been likewise biased as they reformatted the text, I find this risk acceptable. See Donald W. Parry, *Book of Mormon Reformatted*.

27 I have limited my analysis to chiastic passages that are more than a single verse, at least four-levels, using a "strict" definition (as defined by Edwards and Edwards), passages that were clearly authored by Nephi. While 2 Nephi 2:7 is demonstrably chiastic, for example, its brevity (three-levels) and the fact that Lehi is the attributed author removed it from my consideration set.

28 Dennis Newton, "Nephi's Change of Heart" in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 20 (2016), 261–91. The chiastic candidate list is added for the current article.

29 For example, Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates" in *BYU Studies* 27/4, (Fall 1987) writes "when Nephi undertook late in his life to write an account of the founding events of the Lehite colony."

30 The higher the number of the number of non-chiastic elements and chiastic elements that repeat more than twice, the greater the probability that the chiasm was formed by chance. 1 Nephi 3:3–12 was analyzed by Edwards and Edwards, who listed the following elements: Chiastic: plates of brass (2x), house of Laban (2x), brothers (4x) Nephi (2x), my father (2x), do the things (2x), Lord hath commanded (5x). Non-chiastic: blessed of the Lord (2x), murmur (2x), wilderness (2x) and Laman (2x). Edwards and Edwards, Appendix G.

31 The structure and calculations for this example are presented in Appendix G of Edwards and Edwards, "Chiasmus Appear by Chance." However, of the 15 inverted parallel candidates which I consider in this paper (Figure 3), Edwards and Edwards calculated L and P-values for only two. I agree with one (their statistical assessment of 1 Nephi 3:3–12) and, as discussed later, make a slight adjustment to the other. The remaining calculations are my own, applying their methodology.

32 The chiastic formulas are found in Edwards and Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear by Chance", 107–116.

33 This is done by estimating the number of opportunities via an analysis of a sample of the author's relevant work (N) and then applying the formula $P=1-(1-L)^N$. In the 1 Nephi 3:3–12 example, if we determined the number of opportunities for a seven-level chiasm in Nephi's writings to be 2, then P would equal $1-.984^2$ or 3.2%. If, on the other hand, we determined N to be 100, then

P would equal 1-.984^{100} or 19.9%. This simple formula for P only applies, however, if the chiasm in question is the only one found in the relevant text being studied. If other chiasms are present, then a more complicated formula is employed, which utilizes another variable, M. M is the number of like chiasms found in the text. Edwards and Edwards provide a detailed summary of these formulas (including describing a Monte Carlo methodology for calculating L-values) in "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?."

34 Nephi's appendix does not have any chiasmus candidates, so I did not calculate an N-value for the appendix. I used 1 Nephi 5 to calculate N-values for Nephi's abridged writings, 1 Nephi 6 and 2 Nephi 5:1–17 for Nephi's late history, and 2 Nephi 25 for Nephi's prophecy/commentary. The resulting N-values are as follows: Abridged (4-level=75, 5-level=50, 6-level=25), Late History (4-level=23, 5-level=15, 6-level=8), and Prophecy/Commentary (4-level=15, 5-level=11, 6-level=4). All N-values are based on Nephi's words only; Lehi's, Jacob's, Isaiah's, Laman's, etc. words have been excluded.

35 Edwards and Edwards, "Chiasmus Appear by Chance?," 112.

36 The Nephi Late History text includes all the editorial asides in 1 Nephi 1–18 along with all of Nephi's words found in 1 Nephi 19 through 2 Nephi 5.

37 This chiasm candidate does not have clear boundaries, a distinct literary purpose, and has a number of repeating elements scattered through the passage. For me it fails both the quantitative and qualitative tests.

38 Edwards and Edwards recommend a cutoff value of P<.05. Edwards and Edwards, "Chiasmus as Evidence?," 141.

39 Edwards and Edwards, "Chiasmus by Chance?," 109.

40 I recognize that there is a manner of circularity in my argument. As Welch mentioned, this is one of the risks of arguing for the intentionality of a chiasmus. The Edwards and Edwards model is also somewhat circular in that the more chiastic occurrences in a larger text improves the statistical likelihood that the author intended to use the form. My response is that the literary pattern that I am highlighting emerged after the candidate passages were identified; I did not begin this study looking for this or any other

particular pattern. I was as surprised as anyone by what I have found.

41 The prologue reads "And after it had come forth unto them I beheld other books, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them" (1 Nephi 13:39). With regard to this candidate, I have a slight difference of opinion than that of Edwards and Edwards, who analyzed it statistically in their paper "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" (See Appendix G.) At issue is the end of the chiasmus in verse forty-two. "And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations, both unto the Jews and also unto the <u>Gentiles</u>; and after he has manifested himself unto the Jews (A) and also unto the Gentiles (B), then he shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles (B') and also unto the Jews (A'), and the last (A) shall be first (B) and the first (B') shall be last (A')." Parry's analysis suggests that the chiasmus ends after the first mention of the word "Gentiles" (which I have underlined). Edwards and Edwards included the entire stanza in their analysis which added considerable statistical confusion into their model. I concur with Parry and have set my model based on his proposed cutoff. More interestingly, I also feel that the second half of verse forty-two functions as a "latch," which in ring form theory is a sort of epilogue that highlights the core message with a slightly different spin. Notice that this latch is made up of two short, two-level chiasms, which I highlighted above. While the chiasm in 1 Nephi 13:39–42 is about the books which will testify of Christ to the Jews and to the Gentiles and how all will ultimately come to him, the small chiasms in the latch compliment the larger ring by giving more details about the order in which this will happen (Jews, Gentiles, then Gentiles, Jews).

42 1 Nephi 13:40–41

43 Newton, "Nephi's Change of Heart," 287.

44 Although Nephi did not write another four-level or higher chiasm, he did author several simple three-level chiasms that also focus on this new theme of the linkages between peoples. For example, 2 Nephi 29:13 reads "that the Jews (A) shall have the words (B) of the Nephites (C), and the Nephites (C') shall have the words (B') of the Jews (A')."

45 Welch, "Identifying and Evaluating Chiasmus," 3.

Reclaiming Jacob

Duane Boyce

Abstract. A chapter of Adam Miller's Future Mormon *concerns Jacob's encounter with Sherem in Jacob 7. While novel, Miller's treatment of Jacob and Sherem appears inadequate. He overlooks features of the text that seem to subvert his unconventional conclusions about them. This essay identifies a number of such matters, falling in four major categories, and shares thoughts on the need for perspective when discussing Jacob's conduct — or the conduct of any prophet, for that matter. It also highlights the jeopardy we face of being the second group to fall for Sherem's lies.*

In Chapter 3 of his *Future Mormon,* Adam Miller recounts the famous meeting between Jacob and Sherem recorded in Jacob 7.[1] His treatment raises several issues. Most importantly, it asks us to rethink our understanding of Jacob and Sherem themselves. I will follow this invitation by first summarizing Miller's treatment of these two figures and then by discussing what appear to be four primary categories in which errors occur (although there are other difficulties that are more secondary in nature) and that lead to his conclusions about them. I will close with a discussion of the kind of perspective that is required for any evaluation of a prophet's conduct and with a distinction between a reading of scripture that is "deep" and one that is merely unconventional. Finally, I will have a comment about the risk we face of falling for Sherem's lies all over again.

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1   Adam S. Miller, "Reading Signs or Repeating Symptoms: Reading Jacob 7," *Future Mormon: Essays in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2016).

Jacob and Sherem

In the course of retelling and analyzing the Jacob/Sherem encounter, Miller shares various conclusions about the two main participants. Sherem, for example, is more sympathetic than we are wont to think. His motivation in challenging Jacob was a concern that Jacob's doctrine of Christ was "perverting the law of Moses and misleading the people" (27).[2] In this regard, we learn that Sherem was no different than Laman and Lemuel — or than the populace of Jerusalem generally — who resisted Lehi because they were merely defending "the received tradition" and "the primacy of the law of Moses" (29). From this point of view "the imposition of any novel dreams, visions, or messianic revelations" was a corruption of God's law and ought to be contested (29). Sherem is thus eager to meet with Jacob, whom he "has to go looking for," and his interest in doing so is "apparently sincere" (27).

Jacob, on the other hand, is less admirable than we are typically inclined to think. Given Sherem's legitimate concerns and his apparent sincerity, "much of Jacob's treatment of Sherem feels shortsighted and unfair" (28). For example, when Sherem charges Jacob with blasphemy and perversion, "Jacob responds in kind" (27). Indeed, throughout their encounter Jacob appears more interested in "defending a certain kind of Christian doctrine than with enacting a certain kind of Christian behavior" (27). This, we are told, is "tragic." After all, in the very course of defending the doctrine of Christ, Jacob ironically fails to instantiate a central teaching of that doctrine — namely, that "Christian behavior is more important than any Christian ideas" (27). Thus, although Jacob defends the concept of Christ's love, "we hardly see him enacting that love" (27); indeed, "it may be true that Jacob never truly sees Sherem" (33).

According to Miller, the failure to enact this love is evident even before Jacob and Sherem meet. After all, Jacob doesn't seek to meet with Sherem; Sherem "has to go looking for Jacob and, apparently, has a hard time finding him" (27). This leads us to ask: "Where is Jacob? Why is he so hard to find? Why isn't he actively seeking out Sherem?" (27) Moreover, not only does Jacob invite God "to smite Sherem" (27), but Jacob turns out to be wrong in his prediction about how Sherem would respond to a sign from heaven (27–28, 33). Additionally, Jacob then apparently does nothing in the aftermath to "nourish" Sherem as he lies stricken, nor is he present, apparently, "to hear Sherem's deathbed

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2 Unless otherwise indicated, all in-text citations are to pages in Miller's book.

confession" (27). Indeed, while Sherem's deathbed preaching "appears to be massively successful in a way that Jacob's own preaching was not," Jacob nevertheless takes the credit for this by attributing the successful outcome to his own prayers (28). Finally, Jacob closes out the account by taking a "parting jab" at Sherem, referring to him, even in the end, as a "wicked man" (28).

Much of Jacob's treatment is thus "unfair" and, even though Jacob defends the doctrine of Christ, "he doesn't seem to do it in a very Christ-like way" (28). Thus, one reviewer aptly summarizes Miller's view of Jacob in this way: "A deeper reading shows Jacob, in spite of being the Lord's authorized leader and defender of the faith, was wrong in assessing Sherem and probably overly harsh, aloof, and judgmental. His defense of the doctrine of Christ missed the Christlike behavior that is always more important than the theology."[3]

Problems in the Retelling

There would appear to be a number of difficulties with Miller's account of Jacob and Sherem, however. I will draw attention to some of these under the following four topics: Sherem's "sincerity," Jacob's "un-Christlike" behavior, Jacob's "false prediction" regarding signs, and Miller's reliance on a strand of psychoanalytic theory in his approach to Jacob and Sherem generally.

Sherem's "Sincerity"

As mentioned, Miller paints a more sympathetic picture of Sherem than we normally see. Sherem seems to Miller to be sincere. He is someone legitimately concerned with preserving the law of Moses against alien influences. Miller thus seems to join John Welch's observation that Sherem "may have contested Jacob's doctrines and interpretations of the law for thoroughly pious reasons."[4]

We want to take the most sympathetic view we can of scriptural figures, of course. Hastiness to accuse and condemn is not the disposition

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3   Jeff Lindsay, "A Brighter Future for Mormon Theology: Adam S. Miller's *Future Mormon*," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture,* 21 (2016): 121–22. http:// www.mormon interpreter.com /a-brighter-future-for-mormon-theology -adam-s-millers-future-mormon/

4   John W. Welch, "The Case of Sherem," in *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press and the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2008); http://publications.mi.byu.edu/ fullscreen/?pub=2238&index=6.

we should have toward anyone. Neither, however, should we overlook what the record actually tells us, and there are central elements of the text that work against this sympathetic portrayal of Sherem.

Sherem's Personal Characteristics

The first of these is the objective Sherem pursued, namely, to "overthrow the doctrine of Christ" (Jacob 7:2). Not only was this Sherem's goal, but he also "labored diligently" to accomplish it (Jacob 7:3). He also had great success; the record tells us, "he did lead away many hearts" through his efforts (Jacob 7:3).

On one level, of course, it might seem that "overthrowing the doctrine of Christ" is merely a corollary of "defending the law of Moses" and thus that it might not carry the sinister implication we would normally attach to such a description. But this seems less plausible the more we notice other features of the text. For example — and this is the second point — the record clearly displays Sherem's intellectual dishonesty. He denies, for example, that Jacob can know of the coming of Christ because, he says, it is not possible to "tell of things to come" (Jacob 7:7). But then Sherem contradicts this view and claims to know the future himself; he declares that he knows there is no Christ and that there neither has been a Christ "*nor ever will be*" (Jacob 7:9). So now he knows what he earlier told Jacob it is impossible to know.[5] Sherem denies and asserts the same proposition, according to the rhetorical needs of the moment.

Third, Jacob tells us that Sherem "had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people" and thus "had much power of speech," all of which Sherem used to teach things "which were flattering unto the people." Indeed, because of Sherem's learning and because of his facility with language, "he could use much flattery" to "overthrow the doctrine of Christ" and "lead away the hearts of the people" (Jacob 7:2–4). It is difficult to see Sherem as sincere when he appears to have relied on cheap toadyism as a primary means for influencing others.

Fourth, Jacob tells us that Sherem's talent (i.e., his "much power of speech") was specifically due "to the power of the devil" (Jacob 7:4). From this we learn that Sherem was not alone in his public conduct opposing Jacob but reflected the influence of Satan.

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5   It is also interesting to note that Sherem effectively denies the reality of revelation (Jacob 7:5, 12, 13), and yet he asserts that the law of Moses, which is based upon earlier revelation, is "the right way" — an assertion that is an *affirmation* of revelation.

Sherem's "Tone"

Sherem also exhibits a tone toward Jacob that generally would not be correlated with sincerity or innocence of intent. For example, he addresses Jacob as "Brother Jacob" — and then proceeds to accuse him of leading the people astray, of claiming to know of Christ whom "ye *say*" will come in many hundred years, and of committing "blasphemy" in what he is teaching (Jacob 7:6–7). "Brother Jacob," juxtaposed with such harsh accusation, feels like an ironic form of sycophancy: a thin veneer of friendliness covering an underlying hostility. Then, after Jacob testifies of what he knows by the power of the Holy Ghost — namely, of the reality of Christ and of the necessity of his Atonement — Sherem challenges Jacob to perform a miracle "by this power of the Holy Ghost, *in the which ye know so much*" (Jacob 7:13). Again, Sherem seems arrogant and insulting — a conclusion that is supported by what else we know about him: his purpose of overthrowing the doctrine of Christ, his intellectual dishonesty, his crass manipulation of the populace, and his affiliation with Satan.

Defending the Law of Moses and Similarity to Laman and Lemuel

All these reports make it difficult to imagine that Sherem's appeal to the law of Moses was sincere and that his defense of it was motivated by piety. It seems more likely that his defense of the Mosaic law was a pretext — a convenient smokescreen he exploited to obscure his actual intent: simply attacking the doctrine of Christ. That Sherem's defense of the law was insincere in this way is supported by Miller's comparison of Sherem to Laman and Lemuel. "Sherem," he tells us, "like Laman, Lemuel, and the people in Jerusalem, is a defender of the received tradition. In particular, Sherem, like Laman and Lemuel, is keen to defend the primacy of the law of Moses against the imposition of any novel dreams, visions, or messianic revelations" (29). This description, of course, presupposes that Laman and Lemuel were not motivated in their conduct primarily by hardheartedness, resentment at the loss of their riches, and anger at Nephi's leadership role (which are the explanations offered by Nephi — e.g., 1 Nephi 2:11, 18; 2 Nephi 5:1–3). Instead, they were motivated by the understandable desire to safeguard the law of Moses from corrupting influences like dreams and visions and messianic revelations.[6]

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6 Neal Rappleye suggests this kind of approach to Laman and Lemuel in his "The Deuteronomist Reforms and Lehi's Family Dynamics: A Social Context for

But this point of view faces three fundamental hurdles.

First, since the Lord himself spoke of Laman and Lemuel's difficulties in terms of "rebellion" (1 Nephi 2:21–23), it seems evident that *he* did not think Laman and Lemuel were sincere in their attitudes and that they were merely mistaken. Nor did their father. Lehi implored Laman and Lemuel to awake from "the sleep of hell" and to "shake off the awful chains" — chains, he says, that lead to "the eternal gulf of misery and woe" (2 Nephi 1:13). Both of these reports support Nephi's explanation of Laman and Lemuel. "Hardheartedness," "rebellion," "the sleep of hell," "awful chains," "gulf of misery and woe" — these are not the expressions one typically uses to address innocent-but-sincere mistakenness. And these are the words of those who knew Laman and Lemuel personally and well — Nephi, Lehi, and the Lord.

Second, although the Book of Mormon recounts on numerous occasions the hatred the Lamanites held for Nephi and his descendants,[7] the motivation for this is never associated with a dispute over the law of Moses. On the other hand, we see explicit complaints from Lamanites about Nephi's "robbery" of the plates of brass at the time he separated from Laman and Lemuel upon arriving in the promised land (Mosiah 10:16; Alma 20:13), as well as his similar "robbery" of family authority that "rightly belonged" to Laman and Lemuel (Alma 54:17). Indeed, this perceived usurpation of authority is one of the reasons Laman and Lemuel sought to kill Nephi (2 Nephi 5:3) and is central to the multiple "wrongs" that descendants of Laman and Lemuel attributed to Nephi's treatment of his brothers (Mosiah 10: 12–16). Such complaints regarding robbery of the plates and of family authority would explain the generational hatred of the Lamanites for the Nephites and is plausibly the content of the "wicked tradition" that is reported multiple times to have been held by the Lamanites.[8] It is clearly evident that Laman and Lemuel passed down the charge that Nephi mistreated them in more than one way, but there is no evidence that they perpetuated a complaint that Nephi and Lehi were disloyal to the law of Moses. Perhaps they did perpetuate

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the Rebellions of Laman and Lemuel," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture,* 16 (2015): 87–99, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-deuteronomist-reforms-and-lehis-family-dynamics-a-social-context-for-the-rebellions-of-laman-and-lemuel/.

7   See, for example: Jacob 3:7; 7:24; Enos 1:14, 20; Jarom 1:6; Mosiah 10:17; Mosiah 1:14; 28:2; Alma 26:9, 3, 13; and 4 Nephi1:39.

8   See, for example: Mosiah 10:12; Alma 23:3; 60:32; and Helaman 15:4.

that charge, but unlike the complaint regarding Nephi's treatment, any evidence of it is difficult to find.

Third, if Laman and Lemuel had been motivated by sincerely held religious ideology, and if one part of that ideology had led them to reject the idea of visions, then it is difficult to explain Laman and Lemuel's reaction once they had a vision of their own (1 Nephi 3:28–31). In the aftermath of that event one would expect them to *reject* their previous ideology — since their own visionary experience straightforwardly disproved it — and to embrace Lehi and his teachings. We would expect them to continue with the same sincere determination to do right that they they had before, but now with regard to the truth they had learned through their own divine visitation. But of course Laman and Lemuel did nothing like this. Their behavior did not remotely change following their vision. This reality strongly disconfirms the claim that their rebellion was traceable to a concern with doctrine in the first place. Instead, all the evidence points to Nephi's own explanation, corroborated by both Lehi and the Lord: at heart they were stiffnecked and rebellious.

In trying, then, to support the claim that Sherem was sincere in his assertions about the law, it does not help to compare his motivations with Laman and Lemuel's. That comparison compromises the claim rather than reinforcing it. If Sherem was truly similar to Laman and Lemuel, as Miller believes, this in itself constitutes additional reason to reject the idea of Sherem's sincerity.

A look at the text thus presents Sherem as one who was intellectually dishonest and who relied on vulgar manipulation to lead people away from Christ. In addition, Sherem's very tone suggests his condescension, not his sincerity, including his arrogant demand for a sign. And not only does Jacob state explicitly that Sherem was influenced by Satan, but also we have every reason to believe his appeal to the law of Moses was just another form of intellectual dishonesty; it served as a convenient pretext for his actual intent of attacking the doctrine of Christ.

It is in regard to *this* man that Miller asks, "Where is Jacob? Why is he so hard to find? Why isn't he actively seeking out Sherem?" But it doesn't seem hard to imagine the answer. Jacob has far better things to do. There are people to serve whom he actually *can* serve. Jacob already knows much about Sherem (Jacob 7:1–4) and presumably he can see, as we all can see, what the probable outcome of any meeting with such a dissembling mountebank will be. Since there are plenty of sincere people to be helped, it would seem a poor use of resources to pass them by in order to meet with someone who is manifestly *in*sincere.

The Possibility of Bias and the Need for a Second Witness

A natural question to raise about all this, of course, is whether or not Jacob has a bias that influences his description of Sherem. If we think (as Miller does) that Jacob is predisposed to condemn Sherem, then his judgments about Sherem can hardly be taken as independent evidence of Sherem's ignobility. *Of course* he would charge Sherem with being a liar and an instrument of Satan. Miller does not make this point, but it is a natural objection to the kind of defense of Jacob offered. The defense risks circularity. Thus, if we think Jacob could be biased, it is only sensible to require additional evidence for his descriptions of Sherem; we need a second witness. I will have more to say about distrust of Jacob later, but for now let's grant the point: we need an additional witness to confirm what Jacob purports about Sherem's character.

The reality is that we have such a second witness. It is Sherem himself. Once he sees the error of his ways, Sherem states plainly that he "had been deceived by the power of the devil" and that he had even "lied unto God" (Jacob 7:18–19). Because of his lie, Sherem tells us, "I fear lest I have committed the unpardonable sin," and again says, "because I have thus lied unto God I greatly fear lest my case shall be awful" (Jacob 7:19).

Notice that Sherem does not speak here of his past sincerity. He does not refer to his prior conduct as innocent and well-intentioned. He does not talk of having a sincere but mistaken attitude toward the law of Moses. Instead he speaks plainly of lying unto God, of having been influenced by the devil, and of fearing that he is beyond forgiveness for all that he has done. It is the frank admission of a life of deceit, a confession that in the end amounts to something like, "I talked a pretty convincing talk, but Jacob was right about me."

In the end Sherem sees himself as Jacob had seen him. Sherem is Jacob's second witness.

There is a third witness, too, of course. It is the Lord. If we are inclined to discount the testimonies of Jacob and of Sherem, we are still left to explain the Lord's striking Sherem *dead*. Surely it tells us a lot (doesn't it?) that the Lord's reaction to Sherem was to kill him. This would seem to qualify as a suitable additional witness of what we learn from Jacob and from Sherem himself about Sherem's character.[9]

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9   Stopping at this point in answering the objection will not seem satisfactory to some. After all, we learn of Sherem's statements and of the Lord's actions only because Jacob himself tells us of them. But if Jacob's descriptions of Sherem are in question in the first place, it does not seem sufficient to remove such doubt by simply relying on *other* things Jacob tells us. That just seems to exacerbate the

Jacob's "Un-Christlike" Behavior

As mentioned in the beginning, Miller also sees Jacob differently than we normally see him. He believes Jacob's treatment of Sherem feels "unfair" and that Jacob doesn't deal with Sherem "in a very Christ-like way" (28). It is true, of course, that no one is perfect, and this includes prophets. But that does not mean we shouldn't be careful when considering such evaluations. Just as there are central elements of the text that oppose a sympathetic portrayal of Sherem, there are three central elements of scripture that oppose a critical portrayal of Jacob.

The first of these is Jacob's report that, before he said a word to Sherem, "behold, the Lord God poured in his Spirit into my soul" (Jacob 7:8). This is significant. Jacob was not acting merely as a man in his encounter with Sherem but was under the direct and powerful influence of the Lord.

Second, if we want to say Jacob's defense of the doctrine of Christ did not express Christlike behavior, then we are forced to ask questions about the Savior himself. After all, in a single denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees Jesus called them "hypocrites" eight times, "fools" twice, "blind" four times, referred to them as "full of hypocrisy and iniquity," and ended by calling them "serpents," a "generation of vipers," and by asking: "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:13–33). By the definition of "Christlike behavior" assumed by Miller in his discussion of Jacob, Christ himself was not Christlike in this treatment of the scribes and Pharisees. And of course multiple additional examples could be cited — cases in which the Savior himself would fail, in this analysis at least, to qualify as Christlike.

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circularity. However, while this might seem like a reasonable complaint on the surface, it is hard to see how it can be maintained by anyone who explicitly avows the authority of scripture. To recognize such authority regarding the Book of Mormon (for example) is to be bound by that book's characterization of itself and of the spiritual figures that populate its pages. This means that we care very much what the text says and that it would be self-contradictory to then pick and choose what to accept *regardless* of what it says. Whatever our outward avowals might be, such an ad hoc approach to interpretation (believing Jacob on this, disbelieving him on that, etc.) would be a tacit *dis*avowal of scriptural authority. By the same logic we could dismiss Mormon, Moroni, Joseph Smith — anyone we wanted. But to do so would simply signal that we actually reject rather than accept the idea of scriptural authority, whatever our particular ad hoc interpretations might be. In discussing Jacob, I, like Miller, am assuming an audience that accepts the canonicity and spiritual authority of the Book of Mormon and other Standard Works. Those who do not are an audience for another occasion.

A certain assumption is made in Miller's judgment about what constitutes Christlike behavior, and there would seem to be every reason to think it is mistaken.

Third, if Jacob was unfair in assessing Sherem, and overly harsh (i.e., unloving and un-Christlike) in his treatment of him, then, again, it is interesting that the Lord himself struck Sherem *dead*. If it is to be said that Jacob was unduly harsh, then it would seem the same must be said of the Lord. It is the Lord, after all, who determined that Sherem would be lethally smitten, not Jacob (Jacob 7:14). Further, if it is to be said that Jacob "never truly sees Sherem" (33) and that he doesn't actually address Sherem the person but addresses only an abstraction — "a Christ-denier" (31) — then, in light of the Lord's actions, it would seem the same must be said of the Lord. Whatever Jacob did, the Lord did the same, and more.

In short, it is difficult to complain about Jacob's reaction to Sherem when the Lord's reaction was to kill him.

This point, of course, is relevant to that just made regarding Christlike behavior. After all, since Christ is the God of the Book of Mormon, it was Christ who killed Sherem — and yet, based on Miller's characterization of Jacob, this would seem to fall in the category of un-Christlike behavior. Again, it would appear that the assumption about what constitutes Christlike conduct must be faulty, since Christ himself fails to satisfy it more than once.

In sum, this is what we learn about Sherem — he is laboring diligently and with flattery to lead people away from Christ; he accuses Jacob of blasphemy; he ridicules Jacob's prophecies regarding the coming of Christ; he is so intellectually dishonest that he can deny the possibility of anyone's knowing the future while simultaneously claiming to know it himself; and he demands a sign from Jacob "by this power of the Holy Ghost, in the which ye know so much" (Jacob 7:13). None of this is consistent with the picture of Sherem as innocent, sincere, or genuinely concerned with a spiritual defense of the law of Moses.

We learn this about Jacob: he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord in speaking to Sherem; nothing in his conduct can reasonably be considered un-Christlike; Sherem ultimately admitted that Jacob had been right about him; and finally, the Lord evidently saw Sherem the same way Jacob saw him — which is why he killed him.

Jacob's "False Prediction" Regarding Signs

The treatment of the matter of "signs" seems similarly problematic. Miller reports that Jacob was wrong in his prediction about Sherem's reaction to a sign. Jacob had said that a sign would not affect Sherem, and yet when Sherem did receive a sign, he acknowledged his deception and the wrongfulness of his conduct. Thus, Jacob was wrong in his prediction (27–28, 33). This failed prediction may seem particularly significant to some: if Jacob was wrong about *x* regarding Sherem, then he could also have been wrong about *a*, *b*, and *c* (for example, Sherem's wickedness and deceit).

All this, however, seems to overlook important features of the text and thus to give Jacob too little credit.

First, we don't actually need additional evidence that Jacob was right about Sherem's wickedness. As we saw earlier, the Lord and Sherem himself both corroborate Jacob's judgment. There is no aspect of Jacob's earlier evaluation of Sherem that is in doubt.

Second, it is at least relevant that Jacob reports being under the influence of the Spirit in his conversation with Sherem. It is possible to ask exactly what this entails about Jacob's state during the encounter (Does it mean he can't make a mistake? Does it mean he can make one kind of mistake, but not another? And so forth.), but at a minimum it prohibits *casually* reaching the conclusion that he was mistaken. The role of the Spirit cannot be overlooked when thinking about the matter, but Miller seems to do so.

Third, it is important to notice the context of the discussion about signs. It is Sherem who raises the issue in the first place, challenging Jacob to perform a miracle "by this power of the Holy Ghost, in the which ye know so much" (Jacob 7:13). Note that Jacob reports earlier in his record that his people experienced dramatic miracles. He records that "we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea" (Jacob 4:6). Moreover, in speaking to Sherem, he specifically refers to numerous divine experiences by saying simply: "I have heard and seen" (Jacob 7:12). All this forms the background for Sherem's demand for a sign: wondrous miracles are known among Jacob's people and Jacob himself speaks regarding miraculous experiences of "seeing and hearing." When Sherem insists on a sign, the only reasonable assumption is that he is asking for some wonderful occurrence that fits in this context, something dramatic — perhaps with trees, mountains, or the sea — that he can either hear or see. That is what we *all* think of as a sign.

It is in this context that Jacob straightforwardly refuses. He *won't* deliver a sign. He says: "What am I that I should tempt God to show unto thee a sign in the thing which thou knowest to be true?" He adds that Sherem will deny the sign he is asking for in any case "because thou art of the devil" (Jacob 7:14). Again, Jacob — by his report, acting under the influence of the Spirit — is calling Sherem out as a liar. Sherem is a dissembler (as he later admits), and Jacob refuses to indulge his dishonesty and manipulation by complying with his disingenuous demand for a sign.

But then Jacob changes the subject. He has already said that he won't supply the miracle Sherem is demanding. But then, as if responding to a prompting, he says "nevertheless, not my will be done." He then adds that "if God shall smite thee, let *that* be a sign unto thee" (Jacob 7:14). This is the second time Jacob uses the word "sign," but it is not in response to *Sherem's* idea of a sign — the kind of sign in which some miraculous spectacle occurs and which Jacob says will not make a difference. It is in response to the idea of God's *killing* Sherem. This, it would seem, makes everything different. After all, when Sherem demands a sign and Jacob refuses to comply, they are both assuming a certain type of miracle. It is against this background that Jacob says Sherem won't change and admit he's wrong.

But this background is no longer relevant once the Lord decides to slay Sherem. That decision *changes* the background. It is an example of what the Lord later explained to Joseph Smith, namely, that signs (such as the miraculous events enjoyed by Jacob and his people) follow those who believe — rather than preceding their belief — and that to those who merit God's anger, "he showeth no signs, *only in wrath unto their condemnation*" (D&C 63:9, 11). Here the Lord explicitly distinguishes between the types of signs he gives, and Sherem obviously falls under the second type. We are thus in an altogether different realm of miracle and "sign-giving" from what Sherem had assumed and Jacob had rejected. The sign the Lord has in mind is distinctive, and it has a distinctive purpose. Subsequent events, therefore, do not falsify Jacob's prediction; the Lord's decision to kill Sherem simply renders Jacob's prediction moot. It no longer applies because the situation in which Jacob made the prediction no longer exists.

Thus, even though Jacob uses the word "sign" both times, he uses it in two different senses, just as the Lord does. That, it seems, is why he says the second time, "let *that* be a sign unto thee" (Jacob 7:14). He is expressing exactly the principle the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith. In

essence he is saying: "You're not getting the kind of sign we were talking about. Instead, as a result of his wrath and his condemnation of you, God is going to smite and kill you. But you can *count* that as a sign since signs matter so much to you." To all appearances Jacob is completely ironic: using a word of Sherem's choosing but, because it is a word that has different meanings, he uses it to mean something different from what Sherem means. It is the kind of irony employed more than once by the Savior in his earthly ministry.[10]

In short, there are important and compelling reasons to reject the conclusion that Jacob was wrong in his prediction. This conclusion overlooks the role of the Spirit in Jacob's conduct, the shifting context in the discussion about signs, and the distinction the Lord himself draws regarding the signs he delivers. By overlooking such matters, the conclusion gives Jacob too little credit and is, I think, unfair to him.

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10   For instance, in speaking to a blind man whom he had healed, the Savior said (in the presence of Pharisees): "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind" (John 9:39). Jesus equivocates on the meaning of the word "see," sometimes using it one way and sometimes another, all in condemnation of the Pharisees' spiritual blindness. Hearing his statement to the blind man, the Pharisees ask of Jesus: "Are we blind also?" whereupon the Savior answers: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (John 9:40–41). Here Jesus adds another layer of equivocation, using "not seeing" or "blind" to mean "not accountable" — and since the Pharisees claim to "see," it follows from their own implied assertion that they *are* accountable and therefore that their sin "remaineth." All of this is deftly ironic. Jesus alters the meaning of terms mid-conversation and even mid-sentence, all in order to convey something different from what both he *and the Pharisees* are saying literally and all in order to condemn the Pharisees. We will think Jesus is contradicting himself if we fail to notice the irony in this — i.e., if we think he is speaking literally in every use of the word "see" or "blindness." But since we appreciate that he is equivocating in his use of these terms — and equivocating even in the meaning he applies to the Pharisees' use of their *own* term — we see that he is not contradicting himself but speaking ironically in order to condemn the Pharisees. He is similarly speaking ironically when he says, "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matthew 9:12) and "he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than [John the Baptist]" (Luke 7:28). Taken literally his words mean one thing, but underneath, their meanings are entirely different. In all these cases Jesus is using language ironically in order to condemn those who rejected him.

Reliance on a Strand of Psychoanalytic Theory

A "Brand" of Analysis

The final matter I will mention is Miller's reliance on psychoanalytic theory for framing and informing his analysis of Jacob and Sherem. I will address this directly in a moment, but I think it helps to appreciate that this approach is a species of a more general intellectual phenomenon — a basic "brand" of analysis. It is the style of picking a cardinal notion of one kind or another (from philosophy or psychology, for example) and then, without demonstrating why that particular concept is correct in the first place, reading the scriptural text through its lens. This *a priori* reliance on ideas from non-scriptural disciplines can seem appealing, but it is always risky. While the approach can appear promising and innocent enough to begin with — and can seem to produce useful insights — it is all too easy for the purpose of our study to morph unwittingly from examining carefully what the text itself says to subtly imposing our intellectual notion *on* the text. To the degree this occurs, the imposition inevitably ends up distorting some elements of scripture and overlooking others. This becomes evident when we examine the claims carefully and from a comprehensive point of view: the more we consider all the relevant elements of scripture the less plausible the claims seem. The discoveries we appear to have gained come to appear less and less like genuine insights *into* the text and more and more like unintentional alterations *of* the text.

This kind of thing happens when authors seek to impose a pacifist template on scripture, for example. To sustain the standard pacifist view — namely, that "participation in and support for war is always impermissible"[11] — too many elements of scripture must be overlooked or distorted; it is a forced fit. That people sometimes persist in their pacifist claims despite the insuperable difficulties demonstrates their dedication to be *a priori* in nature: it is less derived from scripture than imposed on it.[12] The same kind of phenomenon is evident in the attempt to apply René Girard's sweeping theory of cultural scapegoating to Nephi's slaying of Laban. The effort is based on a logical error that renders the application vacuous, but some nevertheless prefer this conceptual template as the

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11   Martin Ceadel, *Thinking about Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5.

12   This matter is treated at length elsewhere. See Duane Boyce, *Even unto Bloodshed: An LDS Perspective on War* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015).

lens through which to understand Nephi, despite its ultimate futility.[13] In a similar vein, not long ago two authors viewed Joseph Smith through a psychoanalytic lens, seeking to explain his life through that conceptual framework.[14] Unfortunately, there is too much about the Prophet that must be distorted or overlooked to explain his life in psychoanalytic terms. Moreover, there is too much that is intellectually questionable about psychoanalytic theory itself to justify this as a starting point in the first place.[15]

A Strand of Psychoanalytic Theory

All this — the adoption of a key concept that supplies the lens through which we view a subject and the unhappy consequences that follow from it — seem to be evident in Miller's analysis of Jacob and Sherem. An ever-present element in his discussion is his reliance on a particular strand of psychoanalytic theory. Nowhere, however, does Miller seem to argue for the soundness of psychoanalytic theory in general, much less for his favored version of it. We encounter a string of statements explicating the point of view, but we get no arguments for why we should accept them. Since multiple psychological constructs exist that purport to provide a deep explanation of human behavior, one wonders why Miller chooses this one. For that matter, one wonders why he chooses one at all. What reasons can be given for viewing any psychological construct as so near the truth that we are willing to adopt it as our organizing principle for understanding the scriptures? If there are such reasons, Miller does not appear to offer them.

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13 For example, see Eugene England, "Healing and Making Peace, in the Church and the World" and "Why Nephi Killed Laban: Reflections on the Truth of the Book of Mormon," in Eugene England, *Making Peace: Personal Essays* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995) 1–22 and 131–55, respectively. See also Joshua Madson, "A Non-Violent Reading of the Book of Mormon," in Patrick Q. Mason, J. David Pulsipher, and Richard L. Bushman, eds., *War and Peace in Our Time: Mormon Perspectives* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), 13–28. I address the vacuity of the application in *Even unto Bloodshed*, 142–47.

14 Richard D. Anderson, *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1999); and Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004).

15 Two reviews challenge these biographies as well as their reliance on psychoanalytic theory (which, of course, has encountered withering criticism down the decades). For the reviews, see Michael D. Jibson, "Korihor Speaks, or the Misinterpretation of Dreams," *FARMS Review of Books* 14/1 (2002): 223–60; and Andrew H. Hedges and W. Dawson Hedges, "No, Dan, That's Still Not History," *FARMS Review* 17/1 (2005).

In any event, Miller takes a particular psychoanalytic approach to investigating Jacob and Sherem. If I understand him, we comprehend Jacob if we comprehend the "hole" created in him by the wound in his family — the psychological fissure between Laman and Lemuel and the rest of Lehi's household. This original wound, or "primal scene," provides the psychological template for the rest of Jacob's life. Fundamentally, his subsequent interactions with others are reenactments of the formative conflict with Laman and Lemuel. His relationships with these later figures are manifestations of transference — the psychological conveyance of the dynamics of that early relationship into these later ones. Thus, we understand Jacob when we understand that, in treating Sherem the way he does, Jacob is simply reenacting his conflictual relationship with Laman and Lemuel. That is why Sherem is a mere abstraction to Jacob — why Jacob can't really "see" him. (It is also why Sherem similarly can't see Jacob. Whatever its origins, Sherem is merely reenacting a primal scene of his own.) Jacob fails to see Sherem because, psychologically, he is not really dealing with Sherem but rather with the ghosts of his own brothers.

Attempting to Explain Jacob's "Un-Christlike" Behavior

All this is thought to explain why Jacob treats Sherem in an un-Christlike way: his doing so is the natural outgrowth of the original family wound Jacob has borne throughout his life and that he continues to bear. His mistreatment is a species of psychological reenactment tragically displayed.

The core difficulty with this approach, however (although there are secondary difficulties I will ignore), is that it is intended to explain something that doesn't exist. It purports to explain why Jacob is so un-Christlike toward Sherem, but once we read the text carefully, we see there is nothing to explain. As already illustrated, Jacob is *not* un-Christlike toward Sherem. For reasons previously mentioned, Sherem is not an innocent and sympathetic figure whom Jacob mistreats. Sherem is a spiritually dangerous charlatan who ends up confessing his life of deceit and who dies at the hands of the Lord himself. Jacob treats Sherem the way Christ treats the Pharisees.[16]

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16   Of course, if one were *totally* committed to applying this psychoanalytic approach to all matters spiritual, it would seem one could argue that Christ's conduct toward the Pharisees was itself a manifestation of the same psychological dynamic. His harsh treatment of them was simply a reenactment of his own formative conflict in the pre-earth life — with a difficult brother of his own — and

But it is not only that this approach ends up explaining something that doesn't exist — i.e., Jacob's un-Christlike behavior — it is also that this approach seems to have created the idea of Jacob's un-Christlike behavior in the first place. The elements of the text outlined earlier seem evident enough, for example. These include all the reasons for understanding Sherem to be wicked and all the reasons for understanding Jacob not to be un-Christlike. But this makes it hard to imagine that such reasons would have been overlooked if they had not been obscured by the very way the text was read — the lens through which it was seen in the first place.

The problem with such distortion is that if our psychological theory creates what we see in Jacob's behavior in the first place, it is not much of an achievement that it then seems to explain what we see. It is true that the theory tells us how to explain what we see, but only after it has already told us *what* to see. In cases like this the theory itself is the source of what it is thought to explain and therefore is effectively (and surreptitiously) only explaining itself. Such theoretical circularity might, to some degree, be an unavoidable property of the most sweeping and complex theories, but at least in empirical disciplines these theories are tested against their capacity to predict new observations. That is less the case when the task is merely to analyze a handful of verses in one scriptural account. Here, what circularity exists seems less justifiable and therefore would also seem to be less acceptable from an intellectual perspective.

Attempting to Explain Jacob's "Newfound Concern and Hope"

A similar difficulty is apparent in the claim with which Miller ends his discussion of Jacob and Sherem: "Then [following the death of Sherem], for the first time in decades, Jacob dares to hope that his brothers [Laman and Lemuel] aren't lost forever. This is the doctrine of Christ" (33).[17] Miller opens this section by saying the ideas in it will be speculative. Nevertheless, he proceeds on the basis that he is reading the text itself straightforwardly and speculating only in his inferences from it. Thus he notes that immediately after recording the episode regarding

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of the wound this primal scene constituted for him even as he passed from the pre-earth existence to this earthly one. The Pharisees simply bore the brunt of the Savior's unresolved animosity toward his brother. Scripturally, this is absurd, but it is not hard to imagine someone seriously entertaining the idea.

17   In the same paragraph Miller makes two other claims about what Jacob did "for the first time in decades." Although my objection applies to all three instances, for brevity's sake I will address only one.

Sherem, Jacob reports that "many means were devised to reclaim and restore the Lamanites" (Jacob 7:24). Miller finds this concern with the Lamanites significant because it seems to be a new concern for Jacob, a concern which Miller sees as tied to a newfound hope that Jacob also has regarding Laman and Lemuel: namely, that they aren't lost forever. We are told that all of this is true "for the first time in decades" and that all of it is explained by the theory Miller applies to the text: because of Sherem's role as psychological surrogate for Laman and Lemuel, his confession permits Jacob to see his brothers afresh, giving birth to a newfound hope for them.

But there would seem to be a difficulty with this approach. After all, it is one thing to speculate on one matter or another based on what a text *says*. That is fair enough and completely legitimate if we take into account all the other statements and episodes in scripture related to it. But it is another matter to speculate on what we have only *speculated* that the text says, particularly when that speculation seems to be unwitting.

That would seem to be the case here. The text itself never says or even suggests that Jacob's concern for the Lamanites is new or that he has this hope "for the first time in decades." Since this is the first time Jacob mentions reclaiming the Lamanites in his brief etchings on the plates, Miller assumes it must be the first time in decades he has even thought about it. But this seems to be a pretty clear non sequitur. Jacob pens only a few thousand words in the Book of Mormon, whereas over the course of his life to this point he has had millions of thoughts — if not billions. Based on the infinitesimal ratio of Jacob's engravings to Jacob's thoughts, it is impossible to know what concern/hope Jacob has had "for the first time in decades" — or for that matter, what previous attempts he has made to reclaim the Lamanites. Any assertion of this sort is a huge logical leap without any substantiation in the text.

This means that here, too (just as in the effort to explain Jacob's un-Christlike behavior), Miller appears to apply his psychoanalytic theory in order to explain something that doesn't exist. The appeal to a psychological dynamic — one that renders Sherem a role player in the larger subliminal drama unfolding between Jacob and his brothers — is intended to explain why Jacob suddenly develops a new concern for the Lamanites and new hope for Laman and Lemuel in the aftermath of Sherem's confession. But the text actually reports no such change in Jacob. The only reason Miller has for asserting it would thus seem to be that he is in possession of a theory that *invites* him to assert it: the idea

is not found in the actual record but in the interpolation Miller makes based on the theory he is applying to the record.

This manifests the same kind of circularity we saw in the previous section. The theory seems to provide an explanation for something in the text, but that feature of the text wouldn't exist if the theory itself hadn't planted it there through its influence on our reading in the first place. The theory is used to provide insight into something that doesn't exist *without* the theory. Thus, again as seen in the previous section, the theory tells us how to explain what we see but only after that very conceptual framework has already told us *what* to see — which means that what we see actually presupposes the very theory then claimed to provide an independent explanation for it. In a tight logical circle, the theory is effectively doing nothing more than explaining itself — and *that's* why it appears to be insightful: it is confirmation bias all the way down.

In the end it seems unlikely that many will find such self-validation in scriptural interpretation to be satisfying.

The examples of Jacob's purported un-Christlike behavior and of his newfound concern/hope both demonstrate the risks inherent in Miller's approach. All analyses face the same risks when they begin with some concept from the academic world and then adopt it *a priori* as the lens through which to read and understand scripture. The lens itself can exercise a distorting influence — for example, by imposing a certain view on our very reading of the text — and thus destine us to conclusions that are mistaken. As we read more carefully, the discoveries we seem to have gained gradually appear less and less like insights, and more and more like oversights and even mistakes.

Additional difficulties could be identified that also manifest this risky approach to interpretation, but those I have mentioned should suffice to give a flavor of the kind of difficulties they would be.

Perspective in Thinking about Jacob

In the final analysis, it would seem that any discussion of Jacob should begin with context — with an appreciation of who this man was. He was a prophet, he saw angels, he saw the Lord, he received revelations, he was filled with the Spirit, the Lord spoke to him audibly, and his words have been canonized as part of God's beckoning to the world in the latter days.[18] He was also someone who could report that "our faith becometh

18   See, for example: 2 Nephi 6–10; 2 Nephi 11:3; Jacob 7:5; and Jacob 1–7. Although the Book of Mormon does not specifically designate Jacob as a "prophet,"

unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea" (Jacob 4:6).

It seems impossible to have perspective on anything Jacob did without having this perspective on who he was. Most people have not been called as prophets, have not seen angels, have not had the Lord appear to them, have not performed miracles with trees and mountains and "the waves of the sea," and have not had their words canonized as part of God's word to the world. It would seem that people who have had no such experiences are not well situated to comment on those who have. It can be done to a degree, but it is not easy. Certainly it is folly to do so without careful examination and appreciation of the person being examined *and* of (1) God's eternal purposes, (2) his dealings with mortals generally, and (3) the workings of the Spirit. (The most obvious example of this, of course, is found in critics of Joseph Smith. Not understanding who he was, they have no hope of understanding what he did. Yet still they try.) In thinking about what constitutes Christlike behavior, for example — and in evaluating if a prophet meets that standard — a large number of incidents and passages must be considered. A vague sense about the Lord's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, for example, would be wholly inadequate. To consider the actions of a prophet in light of the standard of Christ, one must know a lot about the prophet (including his circumstances) *and* a lot about Christ.

In short, an immense gap typically exists between prophets and the persons who decide to write about them. It is not possible to close that gap completely, but in the case of ancient prophets, at an absolute minimum one must at least *try* by: (1) first appreciating who the prophet *was*, (2) paying close attention to what the text itself expresses, and (3) accurately reporting what the text expresses. When we do all these, I think we will find it difficult to report, for example, that Jacob took credit from

this is not sufficient to disqualify him from that designation. Nephi, for example, specifically says that the Nephite records would be kept by prophets (1 Nephi 19:4), a class that obviously includes Jacob. Moreover, Nephi himself is nowhere specifically designated as a prophet, nor are Mormon, Moroni, the brother of Jared, Adam, Enoch, Isaac, or Isaac's son Jacob. Our view of what constitutes a prophet is not determined by whether or not scripture uses that specific *word* to identify people; it is determined by how the Lord uses those *persons*. Did they have spiritual authority over a people, for example? Are they treated as official representatives of God? Are their teachings canonized and considered authoritative? These kinds of questions determine whether we classify individuals as prophets, not whether they are specifically so designated.

Sherem and improperly attributed spiritual success to his own prayers rather than to Sherem who is the one who really deserves it. It is hard to comprehend fully the prayers of a man who has seen the Lord, received significant revelations, entertained angels, and experienced miracles regarding trees, mountains, and the sea. Whatever else we do, we cannot afford (can we?) to be casual in dismissing the prayers — and the reports — of a man like *that*.

This leads me to say: Attempting moral evaluations of prophets' conduct might not be inherently illegitimate from an academic perspective, but surely the risks are high in doing so. Gaining the appropriate perspective on someone who has qualified to stand in the presence of God would seem to pose inherent and unusually challenging difficulties. How does one who has not qualified to stand in the presence of God take the measure of one who has? It is a cause for marvel, and the Lord seems to me to share this same sense of wonder. Aaron and Miriam once thought to criticize Moses, for example. In response to their censure the Lord simply rehearsed his intimate relationship with that great prophet, and then asked them: "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Numbers 12:8) Wherefore, indeed.

"Deep" Reading of Scripture

Finally, it is a matter of interest that one reviewer refers more than once to Miller's reading as "deep,"[19] and it is possible that others feel the same. But this is a claim to be made with care. An unconventional reading of scripture is not equivalent to a deep reading of scripture. The treatment considered here of Jacob and Sherem is an example. It is not the only one, of course, since unconventional readings are not inherently difficult to create. If someone wants to try, all he or she really has to do is ignore parts of the text.

Some, for instance, have thought that Nephi in later years came to regret his slaying of Laban and to feel remorse for it. Others have come to consider Nephi's killing to be an act of murder — indeed, as an act that was responsible for centuries of subsequent violence in Nephite society.

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19   Jeff Lindsay, "A Brighter Future for Mormon Theology: Adam S. Miller's *Future Mormon*," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture,* 21 (2016): 120–22. http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/a-brighter-future-for-mormon-theology-adam-s-millers-future-mormon/. See also Jeff Lindsay, "Review of Adam S. Miller's *Future Mormon*," *Mormanity,* July 24, 2016. http://mormanity.blogspot.com/2016/07/review-of-adam-s-millers-future-mormon.html

Although these are atypical readings of the text, the difficulty is that they cannot be sustained at all *by* the text.[20] They are not comprehensive and they are not fair. While unconventional, they would appear to be the opposite of deep.

Such, it seems, is also the case in Miller's reading of Jacob 7. It is surely unconventional, definitely atypical, but — as I have attempted to demonstrate — it is also seriously defective, and thus it is hard to see how it can possibly qualify as deep.

Conclusion: Falling for Sherem's Lies, Again

It is true enough that prophets are not perfect and that we should not be dismayed at whatever failings we find in them. We should recognize and embrace this reality when the evidence makes errors of one kind or another obvious. (After all, the failings we might find in them do not remotely compare to the failings we find in ourselves.)

But that is not really the point in the episode between Jacob and Sherem. This is a story in which Jacob's views and actions are completely supported — both by God and by Sherem. God lethally smites Sherem and before he dies Sherem admits to being a liar and in dread of God's judgment. Sherem's initial self-portrayal as a mistreated innocent convinced multitudes that he was earnest and that he was only defending the right way of coming unto God. Only those who were sensitive to the Spirit could see through Sherem and recognize him for the self-serving dissembler he was. It would seem that Jacob tells us this story as a warning — there is much to learn from such high-profile charlatans and their tactics. And yet, 2500 years later — while knowing God's opinion of Sherem, and even knowing Sherem's opinion of Sherem — we find ourselves in jeopardy of falling for the same dishonest story.

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20   I address such matters at length in *Even unto Bloodshed*.

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On the Dating of Moroni 8-9

Joseph M. Spencer

Abstract: *Students of the Book of Mormon who have attempted to establish a rough (internal) date for the composition of Mormon's two letters in Moroni 8–9 have come to different and inconsistent conclusions. Nonetheless, there seems to be evidence enough from the text to arrive at reasonably certain conclusions as to when the letters are supposed to have originated. At the same time, the fact that the text never bothers to state the exact circumstances under which the letters were produced is theologically suggestive. What might be the interpretive and especially theological implications that follow from the establishment of rough dates for the letters? This essay argues from textual evidence that the reader should understand the two letters to have been written at rather different times: Moroni 8 in the years 345–50, and Moroni 9 in the years 375–80. It then draws interpretive and theological conclusions about the import of these dates: principally that Moroni's inclusion of the letters forces readers to recognize that Mormon's history is inventive and theologically motivated.*

In the final book of the Book of Mormon, Moroni states that, having completed his work on the Jaredite records, he did not expect to contribute anything further to the Book of Mormon. But "hav[ing] not as yet perished," he decided he might "write a few more things" that might prove to "be of worth unto … the Lamanites" (Moroni 1:1–4). The result was an apparent hodgepodge of materials: an historical introduction of sorts (Moroni 1); a few bits of instruction regarding liturgical practices (Moroni 2–5); an outline of ecclesiastical order (Moroni 6); a sermon delivered by his father to whatever believers remained during the Nephites' final years (Moroni 7); two letters written to him by his father on substantially different themes (Moroni 8–9); and a series of final exhortations directed primarily to latter-day Lamanites (Moroni 10).

Although he gathered this material into a book, Moroni never sought to justify within the text of the book itself any of the items he included. Readers are left to decide the importance of each item themselves.

Most of what appears in Moroni's book requires little by way of justification. The details regarding liturgical practices and ecclesiastical order proved rather useful for Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as they laid out the basic order of the Church in 1829–30; readers today find much in these same chapters to deepen their understanding of what it means to be part of Christ's church.[1] Latter-day saints generally find Mormon's sermon on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity to be among the most doctrinally rich chapters in the Book of Mormon.[2] And of course, no serious reader of the Book of Mormon can overlook the practical and theological importance of Moroni 10, which contains, in addition to profound instruction on various questions, Moroni's justly famous promise and his final words of farewell.[3] However, while readers stand to learn much from the two letters found in Moroni 8–9, Moroni's reasons for including them are less obvious than are those for the remainder of the book.

Similarly unknown is the context for each of the two letters. They were clearly written in the years leading up to the Nephites' eradication at the close of the fourth century, but neither of the letters is dated in the text. Attempts at deciding when they were written have yielded conflicting results. Nevertheless, it seems to me that another — hopefully more definitive — attempt at dating these two letters might be undertaken in the hope that establishing their historical settings might clarify both what they meant to Moroni and why he decided to include them in his

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1   See Scott H. Faulring, "An Examination of the 1829 'Articles of the Church of Christ' in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants," *BYU Studies* 43.4 (2004): 57–91; and Robert J. Woodford, "The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ and the Book of Mormon," in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Craig K. Manscill (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004), 103–16.

2   See Larry E. Dahl, "Faith, Hope, and Charity," in *A Book of Mormon Treasury: Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and BYU Religious Studies Center, 2003), 457–70; Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 323–39.

3   See Mark D. Thomas, "Moroni: The Final Voice," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12.1 (2003): 88–99; James E. Faulconer, "Sealings and Mercies: Moroni's Final Exhortations in Moroni 10," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22.1 (2013): 4–19.

book. In this paper I seek to fix as precisely as possible the historical contexts in which Mormon wrote the letters that appear in Moroni 8–9. I also provide a few guiding suggestions about the interpretive and theological implications that follow from these conclusions.

Mormon's Life in Outline

Since the two letters in question were produced by Mormon, the natural place to begin an investigation of their historical origins is with an outline of Mormon's life, reconstructed as much as possible from details in Mormon's autobiographical report in Mormon 1–7. In general terms, Mormon's life as recorded divides naturally into five periods, each (with the obvious exception of the last) characterized by a time of war that is then followed by an interval of peace:

> **1. Mormon's Youth.** Mormon begins his own story when he was ten years old, apparently in the year 321 (see 4 Nephi 1:48–49; Mormon 1:2), at which time Ammaron approaches Mormon with the assignment later to seek out and add to the already-buried plates of Nephi (see Mormon 1:3).[4] A year later, Mormon moves with his father from the Nephite north lands to the Nephite south lands just before a short-lived conflict breaks out between the Nephites and the Lamanites (see 1:6–8). The fighting ends after only a single battle, fought in the vicinity of Zarahemla (see 1:10–12).[5] Four years of peace follow (see 1:12), characterized nonetheless by intense Nephite wickedness — wherein miracles cease and the three immortal disciples of Jesus disappear (see 1:13–14). Around the conclusion of these four years, Mormon is "visited of the Lord" (1:15) and thereafter seeks the opportunity to preach, but is forbidden (see 1:16).

> **2. The Loss of Zarahemla.** Serious, sustained war breaks out in the year 326, and Mormon — only fifteen years old — is

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4 It might be noted that all year assignments here aim just at following the Book of Mormon's internal chronology. I make no attempt to decide how these dates map onto actual history. For a good discussion of various approaches to Book of Mormon chronology, see David Rolph Seely, "Chronology, Book of Mormon," in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 196–204.

5 For schematic maps showing the locations of all the military conflicts mentioned in Mormon 1–7, see John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Map* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 118–23.

appointed to lead the Nephite armies (see Mormon 2:1–2). Over the course of four years of sustained war, the Nephites are slowly but definitively driven from their settlements in and around Zarahemla, relocating themselves in the land of Joshua (on the west coast) securely enough to repel the Lamanite onslaught in the year 330 (see 2:4–9). However encouraging the victory at Joshua, the heavy losses preceding it (perhaps especially the devastating loss of Zarahemla itself) cause national depression, which Mormon briefly mistakes for the beginnings of a period of Nephite repentance (see 2:10–15). Fourteen years of at least relative peace then pass, about which Mormon says little to nothing. It seems clear, however, that these years would have seen Mormon marry and begin having children (at least his son Moroni). And in the year 334, Mormon fulfills the task set him by Ammaron.[6]

3. The Loss of the South Lands. Serious war begins anew in the year 345, when the Lamanites conquer the land of Joshua and the Nephites are driven entirely from the south lands into the north, apparently losing possession of a large number of cities in the north lands in the course of just a year (see Mormon 2:16, 20–21). Establishing a stronghold in the city of Shem, the Nephites repel the Lamanites the next year (see 2:22–25). This reversal then leads to a slow but consistent series of Nephite victories over the next four years — at the

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6   Alan Miner speculates that these years would have provided time for Mormon to attend to "family, the ministry, and recordkeeping." Because these fourteen years passed during Mormon's young adulthood (he was twenty when the battle at Joshua took place, and he was thirty-four when the Lamanites finally drove the Nephites from Joshua), it does seem likely that Mormon married and had at least Moroni during these years. And because Mormon fulfilled Ammaron's request during these years — apparently at the prescribed time, when Mormon was twenty-four in the year 334 (see Mormon 2:17–19) — it is more or less certain that some of Mormon's time during these years was spent in recordkeeping. But there is no real textual evidence that Mormon had any appointment to the ministry or within whatever existed of the Nephite church during these years, as Miner speculates. It is clear from the text that Mormon was forbidden to preach during his youth (see Mormon 1:16), and it is clear from the text that he was sent to preach during the later period of peace beginning in the year 350 (see Mormon 3:1–3), but it is pure speculation at this point to assume that Mormon had ecclesiastical responsibilities during the years 330–44. See Alan C. Miner, "A Chronological Setting for the Epistles of Mormon to Moroni," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3.2 (1994): 96.

end of which the Nephites entirely eject the Lamanites from the north lands, though they recapture none of their lost possessions in the south (see 2:25–28). An official treaty is established in the year 350 (see 2:28–29), and a full decade of peace ensues (see 3:1). Mormon receives a divine commission to preach to the Nephites during these years of peace, but he does so without any success (see 3:1–3).

4. War at the North-South Border. After ten years of peace, in the year 360, the Lamanite king issues an official declaration of war, and both nations begin preparations for conflict (see Mormon 3:4–6). Major battles occur in Desolation at the north-south border in 361 and 362 — both Nephite defensive victories (see 3:7–8). In response to the second of these, the Nephites "swear before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren which had been slain" (3:9). Mormon interprets this as an act "forbidden them" by "Jesus Christ" himself (3:14) and abdicates his position as leader of the Nephite armies (see 3:11, 16).[7] For five years, battles occur in the vicinity of the border, both sides serving as aggressors at different times (see 4:1–15). In the year 367, the Nephites drive the Lamanites from the north lands again, and eight years' respite from conflict follows (see 4:16). Mormon watches all these events as "an idle witness" (3:16).

5. The War of Nephite Eradication. War begins again in the year 375, "from [which] time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but began to be swept off by them" (Mormon 4:18). Over the course of six years, the Nephites lose possession of numerous cities, driven increasingly into just a few strongholds (see 4:19–22; 5:3–7). After the first two major losses during these years, Mormon decides to retrieve "all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord" (4:23) and to return to his post as leader of the Nephite armies (see 5:1–2). In the year 380, Mormon successfully seeks reprieve

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7   Mormon has apparent reference to 3 Nephi 12:33–37 in his objection to the Nephite oath. It is peculiar, however, that Mormon describes himself as having made an oath in Mormon 5:1. It would seem, then, that the Nephite oath was offered as a deliberate blasphemy with Jesus's words explicitly in mind — or at least that Mormon interpreted it in this way.

from conflict long enough to gather his forces for a final battle at Cumorah (see 6:2–3). Four years of preparation ensue (see 6:4–5), during which Mormon also produces his abridgement of the plates of Nephi (see 6:6). Finally, in the year 384, the final battle occurs and the Nephites are destroyed (see 6:7–15). Mormon himself survives the battle but is hunted down and killed by a Lamanite thereafter (see 8:2–3). Moroni, of course, survives him and assumes responsibility for his father's record (see 8:1).

These five periods of Mormon's life might be summarized in a more plainly presented chronology:

Mormon's Youth (321–25)[8]

321 — Commission from Ammaron

322 — Mormon moves to Zarahemla; a short-lived conflict breaks out

322–25 — Peace reigns, but alongside Nephite wickedness; miracles cease

325 — Mormon is visited of the Lord but is forbidden to preach

The Loss of Zarahemla (326–44)

326 — Serious war breaks out; Mormon becomes leader of the Nephite armies

327–30 — The Nephites are driven from the land of Zarahemla and relocate in Joshua

330–44 — National depression and false repentance; Mormon fulfills Ammaron's commission

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8   Sidney Sperry subtracts a year from all events appearing in this particular sequence in his own attempt at a chronology. This seems to be due to a misreading of 4 Nephi 1:48, which places Ammaron's final actions — burying the record and then commissioning Mormon — only "when three hundred and twenty years had passed away," that is, in the year 321. Sperry apparently takes the reference to three hundred and twenty years as placing Ammaron's final actions in the year 320. See Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Chronology: The Dating of Book of Mormon People and Events* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 21.

The Loss of the South Lands (345–59)

345 — Joshua falls and the Nephites are driven into the north lands

346 — A reversal of military fortunes occurs at Shem

346–49 — The Nephites slowly recapture their lost lands in the north

350 — A treaty establishes peace, ceding all the south lands to the Lamanites

350–59 — An era of peace, during which Mormon is sent to preach, but unsuccessfully

War at the North-South Border (360–74)

360 — The Lamanites declare war and both nations prepare for conflict

361 — The Nephites win the first battle at Desolation

362 — The Nephites again defend Desolation but this time blasphemously swear vengeance; Mormon steps down from leadership of the armies

363–67 — A series of conflicts at the north-south border

367 — The Nephites succeed in driving the Lamanites from their lands

367–74 — The Lamanites cease their aggressions for a period

The War of Nephite Eradication (375–84)

375 — War begins again

375–79 — The Nephites lose a series of battles; Mormon retrieves the plates of Nephi and resumes leadership of the Nephite armies

380 — Losses force Mormon to seek reprieve so as to gather at Cumorah

380–84 — The Nephites gather at Cumorah for a final battle; Mormon writes his abridgement

384 — The final battle at Cumorah; Mormon's subsequent death

Such is the basic outline of Mormon's life. With this resource in hand, we can begin to narrow down — if not, in fact, determine with some confidence — when exactly Mormon wrote the two letters contained in Moroni 8–9.

Mormon's First Letter to Moroni (Moroni 8)

We will begin our examination with the first of Mormon's two extant letters to Moroni. It is best known among the Book of Mormon's readers for its discussion of "the baptism of … little children" (Moroni 8:5). This focus provides a clue to the original historical setting of the letter, as we consider under what social conditions such a question might arise.[9] However, even more helpful are the details contained in the letter that reference readily specifiable historical conditions.

The first point of consideration is that the letter was written to Moroni "soon after [his] calling to the ministry" (8:1). This helps us determine the *terminus a quo* for the letter. If Mormon was ten years old in the year 321, it is unlikely Moroni was born any earlier than about 325 — and more likely that he was not born until at least 330. Examining the timeline of Mormon's life strengthens this supposition. Mormon was appointed to lead the Nephite armies in 326, at age fifteen, and there is no respite in the war before 330, at which point the Nephites have relocated in semi-stability to the land of Joshua (Mormon 2:1–9). At that point in time, a fifteen-year break of sorts in the Nephite-Lamanite war occurs. While it seems improbable that Mormon would have married or had children between 325 and 330, the relatively peaceful years 330–44 would have been an opportune time for him to establish *some* kind of domestic life. From this, we can conclude with some certainty that Moroni was born no earlier than the year 330.

How young could Moroni have been when called to the ministry? The oft-repeated idea that ancient Israelite men began their public life

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9   There were, for instance, rather determinate social conditions that led to the deep interest in this question in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in New England. See, for instance, Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 60–104. One might argue for similar or parallel circumstances in an ancient American setting. Certainly, Brant Gardner has noted practices of infant baptism among post-conquest Mesoamerican peoples. See Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books), 6:386.

at age thirty cannot guide us,[10] for Mormon began his own public life as leader of the Nephite armies at age fifteen. Moroni therefore might have been called to the ministry as early as his teenage years, which places the *terminus a quo* for the letter at about 345. The letter might, of course, have been written a good deal later than that, but from birth years, both actual and known or possible and reconstructed, it seems that Mormon's first letter could have been written as early as, but no earlier than, the year 345.

Other details from the letter help us fix a date. The final verses of Moroni 8 spell out the basic state of the Nephite nation at the time of the letter's production. Mormon writes of "the pride" of "the people of the Nephites" and claims that it "hath proven their destruction except they should repent" (8:27). This might seem to indicate that the letter was written quite close to the end — perhaps just before the final war of Nephite eradication — but the fact that Mormon holds out the possibility of repentance ("except they should repent") suggests that the Nephites have not yet developed their wickedness to a point of irreversibility (as they eventually do). And though the second of Mormon's two extant letters, obviously written near the end of Nephite history, *also* seems to hold out the possibility of repentance — "I know that they must perish except they repent and return unto him" (9:22) — it should be noted that despite this similarity in phrasing, there is a rather different spirit about the two letters. In the first letter, Mormon follows his "except they should repent" formula with a plea that Moroni "pray for them … that repentance may come unto them" (8:28). In the second letter, however, Mormon precedes his "except they repent" formula with both a defense of his own failure to pray for Nephite repentance — "I cannot recommend them unto God lest he should smite me" (9:21) — and a description of his own prayer that just *Moroni* would fare well — "I pray unto God that he would spare thy life" (9:22). Thus, although both letters use "except

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10   This idea that ancient Israelite men began their public life at age thirty is usually derived from several different biblical texts. Passages in Numbers 4 enumerate members of the house of Levi by counting just those "from thirty years old and upward until fifty years old" (Numbers 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47), suggesting that Levites performed priestly service beginning only at the age of thirty. Two crucial Old Testament figures — Joseph and David — are also presented as coming into their own only at the age of thirty (see Genesis 41:46; 2 Samuel 5:4). Finally, according to Luke 3:23, "Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age" when he was baptized and began his public ministry. It may be significant that all of these references fall within the scope of the Law of Moses, while Mormon and Moroni lived long after the Law's fulfillment.

they (should) repent" formulas, only the first seems to hold forth any real hope, however limited, that repentance might occur. This suggests at least some temporal distance between the writing of the first letter and the final war of Nephite eradication. Mormon explicitly states that he returns to military service during the final war only once he "see[s] that the Lamanites [are] about to overthrow the land" (Mormon 4:23) — that is, once he knows that the end is imminent. It seems, then, that the first letter could not have been written any later than the beginning of the final war of eradication; its *terminus ad quem* seems to be the year 375.[11]

Having determined that Mormon's first letter to Moroni had to have been written between the years 345 and 375, we seek to narrow the timeline further. Another crucial detail is found in Mormon's passing note that he might "go … out soon against the Lamanites" (Moroni 8:27). These words indicate that the letter was written during a time of conflict rather than a time of peace. This eliminates the whole decade between 350 and 360 (a time of peace established by treaty) and the eight years following the war at the north-south border (a time of peace established by decisive Nephite victory). Further, the fact that Mormon himself might need to go out against the Lamanites establishes that the conflict was one in which Mormon participated, as opposed to one he watched as an "idle witness" (Mormon 3:16), which excludes the years between 362 (when Mormon abdicated his position with the Nephite armies) and 375 (when he returned to their assistance). These details therefore narrowing the possibilities substantially, Mormon apparently wrote his letter to Moroni either between 345 and 350 or between 360 and 362.

Assuming this is correct, we turn to examining those two likely time periods for context. The years 345–50 are those during which

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11   This is the least secure plank in the platform of my argument. Clearly, there is substantial development between the two letters, but one *might* make the argument that such development could happen over the course of the final war of Nephite eradication. If such an argument is to be constructed, however, it should be noted that the development must occur within just a five-year period, between the year 375 (when the final war begins) and the year 380 (when the final war is put on hiatus so that armies can gather for a final showdown at Cumorah). Further, given the evidence (to be reviewed next) that Mormon wrote his first letter at a time when he led his army in *offensive* (rather than merely *defensive*) battles, aggressively attempting to take cities captured by the Lamanites, one would have to argue for dating the first letter during the final wars by working against Mormon's own description of the final war ("And from this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites," he says in Mormon 4:18, "but began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun").

the Nephites are driven from the land southward to Shem in the north lands, where they stage a major defensive victory before slowly reclaiming all their lost lands in the north. By the end of these years, the Nephites have succeeded in recapturing all of the north lands, and they establish a treaty with the Lamanites, dividing the land at the north-south border. During the years 360–62 the Nephites are again at war, but all their battles are fought at Desolation and always in defense against the onslaught of the Lamanites. This last detail is crucial, as Mormon says in the first letter that he might need to "go … out soon against" his enemies (Moroni 8:27), language that is less indicative of defensive fighting than an offensive maneuver. Nephite standard strategy of defense was to remain within their strongholds as much as possible when defending themselves.[12] Holed up in the stronghold at Desolation, hoping to repel Lamanite aggressors who sought to take the city at the north-south border, Mormon would be unlikely to describe the necessity of conflict in terms of having to *go out against* his enemies. Therefore, we may reasonably rule out the years 360–62 as the period during which Mormon wrote his first letter. But the years 345–50 remain a possibility, since during those years Mormon led the Nephite armies in offensive battles to recapture their own lost cities in the north.

From all the evidence, we may with some certainty conclude that Mormon wrote his first letter during the campaign of 345–50, the years of struggle after the Nephites lost major possessions in the land northward and the land southward. It was apparently while Mormon led

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12   The Book of Mormon seldom uses the language of "going out against" an enemy. It is, nonetheless, a relatively common biblical phrase, appearing some nineteen times in the King James Version of the Old Testament. Almost every instance of the phrase, crucially, makes perfectly clear that it indicates leaving cities or strongholds to stage an attack elsewhere (see Numbers 21:23, 33; Deuteronomy 20:1; 28:25; Joshua 8:14; Judges 20:14, 20, 28, 31; 1 Samuel 4:1; 2 Samuel 18:6; 1 Kings 8:44; 2 Kings 9:21; 1 Chronicles 14:8; 2 Chronicles 6:34; 14:10; 20:17; 22:7; 35:20). Similar in meaning is the language of "coming out against" an enemy, which appears eleven times in the King James Version of the Old Testament (see Numbers 20:18, 20; Deuteronomy 1:44; 2:32; 3:1; 28:7; 29:7; Joshua 8:5; Judges 9:33; 2 Kings 19:9; 2 Chronicles 14:9), as also in eight passages in the Book of Mormon in military contexts, always with the same implication of leaving cities or strongholds to engage in battle (see Alma 44:2; 52:19, 23; 58:15, 16, 18; 61:7). The only other instance in the Book of Mormon where "go," "out," and "against" are used together in a military setting is in Mormon's description of the Nephites' misguided aggressive attack *after* their successful defenses at Desolation (see Mormon 4:1: "the Nephites did go up with their armies to battle against the Lamanites, out of the land of Desolation"). It is clear that "go out against" indicates military aggression.

the Nephites armies, city by city, toward a recapture of all their north lands possessions that Moroni was called to the ministry and received written advice from his father regarding baptism of little children.

Mormon's Second Letter to Moroni (Moroni 9)

The dating of Mormon's second letter proves a good deal easier than that of the first. Two crucial details in the letter establish without ambiguity the *termini a quo* and *ad quem*. First, Mormon states toward the end of the letter that he has "sacred records" to "deliver up" to Moroni (Moroni 9:24). Mormon makes it clear in his autobiographical record that he retrieved these records — the *full* set of Nephite written records — no earlier than the beginning of the war of Nephite eradication, in or after the year 375. For it was only when Mormon saw "that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land" that he "did go to the hill Shim, and did take up *all* the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord" (Mormon 4:23, emphasis added) — and this after the first battles of the final war of eradication (see Mormon 4:16–22).[13] This implies that Mormon's second letter could not have been written any earlier than the year 375, if not a year or two later. This is reinforced by the fact that the letter was written shortly after "a sore battle" (Moroni 9:2) which was lost to the Lamanites ("we did not conquer," says 9:2), and Mormon himself fought in no unsuccessful battles between that year and the year 375.

Mormon's autobiographical record makes clear that all Nephite-Lamanite battles, except for the apocalyptic final battle at Cumorah, occurred by the year 380 (see Mormon 5:6–7; 6:1–5). Consequently, Mormon could not have written shortly after "a sore battle" at any point after 380. Mormon expresses his hope in the second letter that he might "see [Moroni] soon" (Moroni 9:24), suggesting that the decision to gather at Cumorah, where Mormon and Moroni were together, had not yet been made at the time the second letter was written. From all these details, then, it appears that Mormon wrote his second letter between

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13 One might actually suggest that Mormon refers, in Moroni 9:24, to sacred records *other* than those he himself produced (in the form of the Book of Mormon, that is) and eventually passed into Moroni's care. That is, one might suggest that Mormon has reference either to the records he retrieved at age twenty-four by Ammaron's instruction, but apparently only temporarily (see Mormon 2:17–19), or to some otherwise unknown record of Mormon's own, one distinct from the record we know he eventually passed to Moroni (in the form of the Book of Mormon). Neither of these seems terribly likely, however.

375 and 380, during the war-ridden years leading up to the final conflict at Cumorah.

An issue with dating these letters is that the heading which stands above the text of the second letter ("the second epistle of Mormon to his son Moroni"), combined with the opening lines of the second letter ("I write unto you again that ye may know that I am yet alive"), creates an impression that the two letters were written in relatively short succession. Indeed, in the best of the available literature the ready assumption is that the two letters were written within a relatively short time.[14] If the dates derived here, placing the first letter between 345 and 350 and the second between 375 and 380, are to be believed, then some thirty years passed between the writing of the first letter and the writing of the second. From this we would have to conclude that Mormon's first letter was written when Moroni was in his upper teens at the very latest, while Mormon's second letter was written when Moroni was middle-aged, contradicting any assumption that the two letters were written within a relatively short span of time.

The question, though, is whether this last assumption is valid. The heading for the second letter, identifying Moroni 9 as "the second epistle of Mormon to his son Moroni," could be interpreted to mean that Mormon wrote *only* two letters to Moroni. If so, then it would indeed seem more than a bit strange if those two letters were written three decades apart. But it is entirely possible that "the second epistle" references merely the second of the only two letters Moroni included in his record; there may have been many more sent from father to son that were, for whatever reason, not included in his record. The "again" and "yet" of the opening lines of Moroni 9 were not, then, subtle rhetorical gestures to Moroni 8 but rather to some other no-longer-extant letter.[15]

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14 See, for instance, Miner, "A Chronological Setting for the Epistles of Mormon to Moroni," 101: "Given the circumstances, the best we can assume is that both epistles (chapters 8 and 9) were written within a short time of each other, probably within less than a year." Miner adds in a footnote, however: "Although less likely, the words 'the second epistle' might just refer to the order of these epistles in Moroni's book and *not* to the fact that this 'second epistle' was the one that Mormon wrote 'soon' after the first."

15 This is the argument of, for instance, Brant Gardner: "While it is possible that this statement ['I write unto you again' in Moroni 9:1] refers to the letter included as Moroni 8, it seems more likely to me that Moroni selected two of several letters to copy than that Mormon wrote only two to his son." Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:396.

There is no definitive evidence against the possibility that the two letters were written decades apart, rather than in relatively short succession.

For the sake of argument, supposing that there *is* merit in the idea that the letters were written within a short time, then one or the other of the two dates arrived at above would be in error. Either the first letter could not have been written in proximity to the final war of Nephite eradication beginning in the year 375, or the second letter could not have been written as early as the war which led to the treaty established in 350. Pursuing the first line of argument requires accepting that Mormon's talk of going "out … against the Lamanites" (Moroni 8:27) actually implied defensive fighting. Pursuing the second line of argument presumes that the "sacred records" mentioned in the second letter (9:24) were *not* the gold plates Mormon eventually delivered to Moroni — plates that Mormon retrieved only after the beginning of the war of Nephite eradication. In following either of these two threads, one would have to provide explanation for the remarkable decline in the Nephite condition between the two letters; not only is there a contrast between Mormon's request in the first letter that Moroni "pray for" the Nephites (8:28) and his confession in the second letter that he cannot "recommend them unto God" (9:21), but there is an apparent deepening of Nephite depravity between the writing of the first and second letters.[16] Thus, while one might pursue the possibility that Mormon's two extant letters were written in relative temporal proximity to one another, there are good reasons to think they were indeed written at rather different times and under rather different circumstances.

Giving proper consideration to all the above, it seems relatively safe to conclude that Mormon's first letter was indeed produced in the years 345-50, while his second letter was written in the years 375–80.

Interpretive Implications

The larger question remains, why should any of this matter? Moroni never draws his readers' attention to questions of dating, although he might have assumed they would be able to reconstruct it themselves — as I have attempted to do here. But what do we stand to gain from a

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16   In the first letter, Mormon expresses his "fear lest the Spirit hath ceased striving" with the Nephites, since they seek "to put down all power and authority which cometh from God" (Moroni 8:28). But this seems a far cry from the utter depravity described in the second letter, where Mormon describes "a people … without civilization" (9:13), one that leads him to ask, "How can we expect that God will stay his hand in judgment against us?" (9:14).

close investigation of Moroni 8–9's original settings, apart from a more accurate reconstruction of history?

First, it is worth noting one major implication of the above findings, if they are in fact correct: Moroni seems to have been granted a public ministry *before* Mormon was granted such a ministry. The first letter was written shortly after Moroni's initial call to the ministry, and if it was indeed written during the military campaign of 345–50, it would seem that Moroni was out preaching among the Nephites during a time when Mormon's own mouth was divinely shut. Mormon was commanded to preach only in or after the year 350 (see Mormon 2:28–3:3).[17] This situation is suggestive, indicating that Mormon's "preacherly" relationship to the Nephites was anomalous. Mormon's autobiographical writings give the impression that Nephite Christianity did not exist for most of his lifetime, and that his own brief efforts at preaching between 350 and 360 were the only Christian sermonizing the Nephites heard after the departure of the three Nephite disciples during Mormon's youth (see 1:13–14). Of course, Mormon's sermon in Moroni 7, addressed to "the peaceable followers of Christ" (Moroni 7:3), complicates Mormon's portrayal of his time. But the fact that the data indicate that Moroni was serving in some kind of ecclesiastical or ministerial capacity in the mid-340s suggests an even more complicated historical setting for Mormon's life than might be gleaned from Mormon's own brief account.

While this might seem like just a further clarification of history, there lurks within it a set of larger interpretive implications. It gives us good reason to think that Mormon strongly — if not, in certain ways, misleadingly — shaped the narrative he produced regarding the time in

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17   This of course assumes that Mormon was "forbidden" not only when he first "did endeavor to preach" about the year 326 (Mormon 1:16), but from that point until, as he reports, the Lord commanded him to "cry unto [the] people" after the year 350 (3:2). The text never explicitly states that the proscription on preaching was in effect during the whole of those twenty-five years, but it does seem to be the implication. If there *were* a time during those years when Mormon might have taken up some kind of public ministry, it would have to have been during the years 330–44, a time of relative peace while the Nephites held their position in the land of Joshua. Miner, "A Chronological Setting for the Epistles of Mormon to Moroni," 99, assumes just this, but only on the grounds that Mormon *must* have held some kind of ecclesiastical position before Moroni. But it should be noted that, although Mormon reports during those very years the momentary possibility of national repentance, along with his temporary hopes that the Nephites "would again become a righteous people" (2:12), he never says anything about being involved in any direct attempt to steer the Nephites toward repentance. The tone of the text is one of impotence on Mormon's part.

which he lived. More, it gives us some sense for *the way* in which Mormon shaped his own narrative. Grant Hardy has shown that Mormon was something of a literary artist, his accounts of Nephite history profoundly shaped by literary concerns that sometimes discernibly tampered with historical data.[18] In Moroni 7–9, a sermon and two letters from Mormon that Mormon himself never intended to include in his book, we see some rather specific and substantial instances where Mormon's communicative intentions may have clashed with what actually happened. The point here is in no way to malign Mormon, as if he should — or even could — have done anything other than what he did. The point is, rather, to note that Mormon's narratives are unmistakably driven by *theological* concerns. It was for transparently theological reasons that Mormon portrayed his people as tragically beyond the pale — as if he never met a righteous soul or one with Christian commitment during the course of his days. We see this and begin to recognize the theological force of Mormon's narrative; we begin to see that the record means to do more than just report history — it means to suggest something about the consequences of apocalyptic wickedness. We recognize that there is a purpose to Mormon's story, and that purpose is more discernible when we can see how Mormon deliberately shaped his narrative.

Another theological implication follows immediately from this. Although Mormon himself apparently did not intend to include sources in his book that would alert readers to the discrepancy between his narrative and the actual archival traces,[19] his son Moroni thought it best to insert these sources into his father's book, slipping Moroni 7–9 into the thing before burying it for safekeeping. Moroni's supplementary work on Mormon's book thus forcefully and even consciously brings to the reader's attention what otherwise would have to be pursued through suspicious and often speculative reading. That is, where Hardy discovers

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18   See Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 87–213.

19   This is a more accurate way of describing what is at stake here. In the preceding paragraph, I speak of the discrepancy between historical narrative and historical reality, but the latter is of course never retrievable (if it can even be experienced!). It is better to speak, therefore, of the discrepancy between historical narrative and archival traces — the former presumably at some *further* remove from actual events, or at least the result of further reflection and shaping. What is significant about Moroni's inclusion of Moroni 7–9 in the record is that he provides readers with actual archival material, rather than with his own supposedly more accurate narrative. We are thus confronted with a conflict between narrative and sources, rather than with a conflict between two narratives.

Mormon's narratological intentions only by tracking subtle tensions or incongruities in Mormon's own narrative, effectively deploying the sleuthing skills of the literary critic, Moroni asks us to recognize, *without* developing any deeply suspicious interpretive approach, the clear discontinuity between historical sources and historical narrative. Moroni does the critic's work for her, right within the sacred volume, thereby suggesting that there need be no real conflict between a hermeneutics of belief and a hermeneutics of suspicion — at least for readers of the Book of Mormon.[20] With son (Moroni) supplementing father (Mormon), suspicion effectively gets folded *into* belief, and one is given to see that the discrepancy between sources and narrative may be necessary, if not in fact beneficent. The Book of Mormon in its final form may be the "most correct" of any book precisely in that it wears its constructedness right on its sleeve — and that is something worth reflecting on often and at length.[21]

Returning to the transparency of Mormon's theological motivations — transparency which results from the discrepancy between the narrative of Mormon 1–7 and the sources in Moroni 7–9 — it might be noted that the two letters in Moroni 8–9 provide a glimpse of the laboratory in which Mormon concocted his theological perspective. If, as the evidence reviewed here suggests, Mormon wrote the two letters with thirty years passing between them, then one can take the measure of Mormon's changing attitude with respect to Nephite depravity in the differences between them. Mormon likely did not develop his theological perspective all at once, or through some one-off divine communication. Rather, it seems that his deeply pessimistic interpretation of Nephite history in its final years resulted from a determinate set of events. Readers of the Book of Mormon would do well to recognize the tension between Mormon's self-description as being "without hope" (Mormon 5:2) and his sermonic adulation for those who obtain "a sufficient hope by which [they] can enter into the rest of the Lord" (Moroni 7:3). It was apparently only rather late in his life that Mormon developed his most despairing understanding of the events he was living through. But because he wrote

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20 I borrow the language of these opposed hermeneutic positions from Paul Ricoeur. See Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 27.

21 I owe this final formulation to George Handley, who first suggested to me that Joseph Smith's statement that the Book of Mormon is "the most correct of any book" may have something to do with the fact that it exhibits a kind of self-conscious awareness of its constructed nature.

the narrative of the Book of Mormon only at that late point in his life, it colors his narrative in a crucial way. Mormon's theological perspective was born, in short, in the context described in Moroni 9, rather than in the contexts assumed in Moroni 7 and Moroni 8. The developments in Mormon's perspective are useful for understanding his approach to history.

Of course, much more work remains to be done to reconstruct all the implications of Mormon's two letters for a full understanding of his theological perspective. And a great deal more work remains to be done to draw out the ways in which that theological perspective is reflected in Mormon's narrative — both of his own life and the whole of Nephite history. What I hope to have accomplished here is to make such investigation possible by sifting the evidence for the dating of Mormon's two letters and discerning the basic theological implications of such historical reconstruction. By including archival documents in the Book of Mormon, Moroni essentially entreats us to do such work. This most curious of scriptural volumes requires that we see the conflicts between the archival record and the final form of historical narrative; in the light of those conflicts, we might begin to recognize the profoundly theological bearing of scripture. It remains to be seen what we might learn from increasingly better theological interpretations of the Book of Mormon.

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The Parable of the Benevolent Father and Son

Matthew R. Linford

Abstract: *A discussion is presented on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, including the departure of the young man into a faraway land, his return, and the welcome he received from his father. To better understand the cultural significance of this story, a Middle Eastern scholar (Kenneth Bailey) is referenced. The prodigal son breaks his father's heart when he leaves home, but at the same time his older brother fails in his duty to his family. The father in the parable represents Christ, who is seen to take upon himself the shame of his returning boy and later of his older brother. The reinstatement of the prodigal son is confirmed by the actions of the father, who embraces him, dresses him in a robe, puts shoes on his feet, has a ring placed on his finger, brings him into his house, and kills the fatted calf for him. These actions have deep gospel and cultural significance. The older son's failure to come into the feast for his brother is a public insult to his father, and his words to his father in the courtyard are a second public insult. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is shown to be similar to other stories from the scriptures, including Jesus's meal with Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36–43), the Parable of the Man and His Great Supper (Luke 14:16–24), the Parable of the King and His Son's Wedding (Matthew 22:2–14), and Lehi's dream in 1 Nephi 8. Consistent elements across these stories include a feast/meal, a male authority figure who initiates or invites others to the feast, well-to-do guests who refuse the invitation, their criticism of the host of the feast and their fellowman, an application of grace, and the presence of the less favored individuals at the feast at the end of the stories. It is shown that the prodigal son represents the publicans and sinners of Jesus's day, while the older son represents the scribes and Pharisees. Emphasis is placed on the remarkable countercultural and benevolent role played by the father/ patriarch in these stories.*

The parables of Jesus are masterpieces of brevity and depth. They are often incredibly rich in meaning — seemingly small details can have profound significance. Not least among these instructive stories is the Parable of the Prodigal Son recorded in Luke 15. As this will be a primary topic of this essay, the text of this parable is provided here:[1]

> 11 And he [Jesus] said, A certain man had two sons:
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> 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
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> 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
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> 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.
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> 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
>
> 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
>
> 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
>
> 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,
>
> 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
>
> 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
>
> 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

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1   Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes from the Bible in this essay are from the King James Version (KJV) of the text published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

The Prodigal Son's Departure and Stay in a Far Land

It appears that an awareness of the cultural context of this parable is important for understanding its message. I think this argument should resonate with Latter-day Saints for two reasons. First, in 2 Nephi 25:1, Nephi explains that Isaiah is difficult to understand unless one has an understanding of "the manner of prophesying among the Jews." Nephi continues in verse 5 of this chapter by stating, "Yea, and my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah, for I came out from Jerusalem, and mine eyes hath

beheld the things of the Jews, and I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, *and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.*"[2] Clearly Jesus was the greatest of the prophets. It stands to reason that an understanding of the cultural context in which He operated would also help us understand His words. Second, one of our best-known LDS scholars, Hugh Nibley, repeatedly made reference to the Bedouins of Arabia. Nibley used their culture and that of the Middle East in general to help us better understand the Book of Mormon. In this essay, I will refer frequently to another scholar, Dr. Kenneth E. Bailey, who came to conclusions similar to Nibley's. In particular, Bailey spent decades working in the villages of the Middle East. He spoke and read the ancient and modern languages of both the scriptures and of that part of the world. Bailey observed that Middle Eastern peasants had conserved their culture in a remarkably constant way *over millennia*. This is scarcely imaginable in a culture like ours that changes so quickly. I recommend that anyone interested in the topic of this essay read Bailey's two books entitled *The Cross & the Prodigal: Luke 15 Through the Eyes of Middle Eastern Peasants* and *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*.[3] Whether directly referenced or not, many of the insights in this essay on New Testament passages come from Bailey.

Most of us are very familiar with the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It begins with the words: "A certain man had two sons." We are then told that the younger son requested his inheritance. Bailey explained that in his ancient culture, this was an unthinkable act.[4] For a young man to demand his inheritance while his father was still alive was tantamount to saying that he wished his father were dead! Accordingly, the father would have been within his rights to become angry, to refuse, and to punish the boy. Nevertheless, the father, as he does throughout this parable, behaves in a countercultural way, and, without resistance, divides his inheritance between his sons. The Law of Moses stipulates that the younger son would receive one-third of the property and the older son a double portion, or two-thirds. And as Bailey explained so eloquently, while the

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2   Emphasis added

3   Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal: Luke 15 Through the Eyes of Middle Eastern Peasants* (Westmont, IL; InterVarsity Press, 2005); Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Westmont, IL; InterVarsity Press 2008).

4   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 40–44.

younger son hadn't actually broken the Law of Moses in his request, he had most certainly broken his father's heart. Furthermore, the property of a family in a small village, which always included that of the extended family, would be carefully guarded and passed down from generation to generation. The loss of the resources taken by the prodigal son would have had a considerably negative impact on their wealth. And the fact that he left town so quickly would most likely have meant that he had to take whatever price he could for the property — he would have sold it at a considerable loss. Furthermore and perhaps even most importantly, this series of events would come at the price of great embarrassment to the father and the remaining family members because nothing in a little village in the Middle East is a secret.

But something else is taking place in the early lines of this parable that will probably not be noticed by Western observers. Bailey emphasizes that if there were a conflict between two parties in this ancient culture, a mediator was required to bridge their differences. They could not do this themselves because they must save face at all costs. This mediator would be chosen based on his close relationships with both parties. There was only one logical mediator between the father and the prodigal son in this parable and that was the older boy. Immediately when he saw what was happening, the older son should have rushed in and worked with all his might to clear up the matter and save the good name (and property) of his father and family. This was his sacred obligation. If he cared at all about his father or brother, he would have aggressively taken on this role. Ultimately, the fact that he does nothing can mean only one thing: He hates them both. Perhaps the older son's behavior and attitude provide a motivation for the younger son's inopportune exit. When the father died, the older son would become the head of the clan. The younger brother may have been looking for a way to get out from under him. Something appears to be rotten here.

Soon after these painful events, the younger son traveled far away from home and "wasted his substance with riotous living" (v. 13). Bailey explains that this may have been nothing more than throwing parties to curry favor with his new neighbors. However, he additionally notes that it was particularly reprehensible for a Hebrew to lose his substance among the Gentiles. Accordingly, the barrier to the prodigal son's returning home had become nearly insurmountable — he would be mercilessly mocked, persecuted, and shunned if he returned to his village in rags. So, again, while the prodigal son's behavior may or may not have been immoral, he certainly didn't manage his money wisely. In the parable

of the talents (Matthew 25:24–26) and the tower (Luke 14:28–30), Jesus rebuked those who misuse their resources. In any case, after the prodigal son had "spent all," a "mighty famine" arose, and he "began to be in want" (v. 14). He sought employment, joining "himself to a citizen of that country" who "sent him into his fields to feed swine" (v. 15) — a loathsome job for a Jew. The fact that the prodigal son's employer was a "citizen of that country" and possessed "swine," an unclean animal, indicates that he was not an Israelite. The prodigal son's situation was desperate. He was away from his people, and he had lost his fortune. He was so hungry that "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him" (v. 16). He may have stayed in this wretched condition for some time because the parable speaks of him "[coming] to himself" (v. 17). At that point, he remembered the favorable environment of the home he had left, where even the hired servants "have bread enough and to spare" (v. 17). He proposed within himself to return home but decided that his departure and fall had left him with no other options but perhaps to request to become a servant in his father's house — at least that way he would not starve. He rehearsed the words he would say to his father — he would confess his sins and unworthiness, acknowledging that he has sinned against his father and heaven, and then ask for a much lower position than the one he had previously.

Bailey again provides some valuable textual and cultural insights here. It might be tempting to read the words "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (v. 21) as an indication that the prodigal son had experienced a change of heart and repented or at least had started his repentance process before he left for home. However, this phrase needs to be examined with care. We should remember that Jesus directed this parable as well as the two before it to the Pharisees, who were a sophisticated/learned audience (vv. 2–3). They would immediately have recognized the source of the words Jesus placed in the mouth of the prodigal son as "a paraphrase"[5] of those that Pharaoh used on Moses and Aaron during the plagues (Exodus 10:16). And, of course, Pharaoh was trying to manipulate Moses, i.e., the prodigal son's speech was disingenuous. Indeed, Bailey suggests in his analysis that the prodigal son was trying here to find a way to save himself.[6] His goal appears to have been to get his father to help him become a skilled craftsman. He would endure the crushing shame of coming home, which

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5   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 59.
6   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 58–62.

only starvation could compel him to face, and hope for some education, make some money, and then reclaim a position in his society. And so he returned to his village. It must have been a long journey home because he had gone "into a far country" (v. 13).

The Prodigal Son's Return

In spite of the prodigal son's request to receive his inheritance, the father had not disowned him. He left the door open for his son's return. It also appears he was watching for his boy, for the scripture says: "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." The father then had compassion, ran to his son, and embraced and kissed him (v. 20). Bailey's insight is again important. He notes that the Greek word translated as *ran* was actually *raced*. The father raced to his son. As we have noted, both the father and the prodigal son understood the awful punishment and ostracism that awaited the boy. Here the father's behavior is again absolutely extraordinary. As Bailey notes, in Middle Eastern culture, a man of the father's stature would always walk in a slow, deliberate way.[7] He would never run, let alone race. In addition, for a man in robes to run, and especially for him to race, he would need to gather his robes in his arms and expose his legs. Both running and exposing his body would cause him tremendous shame in his community — these would be unthinkable acts. Thus, no doubt to his utter amazement, the prodigal son sees his father take at least some of his shame upon him, racing partly naked through the village. This act would draw at least some of the attention and scorn of the community from the returning child to the benevolent father. And here the prodigal son seems to melt. He repeats the first bit of his rehearsed speech but then leaves off the part about becoming a servant (craftsman) (v. 21). It seems at this point he has given up his plan to save himself. He now puts himself entirely into his father's hands. Of great significance here is that only when the prodigal son understood what his father (Christ) was willing to do for him (bear his shame) could he truly repent.

Indeed, Bailey suggests that in this and the previous parable (the Lost Sheep) (Luke 15:3–7) — remember they were given as a unit — Christ is putting forward a definition of repentance. This might seem confusing. What *did* the lost sheep do to repent? The answer appears to be: He lets Christ find him and take him home. Hence, assuming the wandering sheep represents us, as Isaiah 53:6 suggests it might, we

7   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 66–74.

repent when we stop running from Christ, i.e., we stop our mad march into the wilderness, and we let Him find us and carry us home.

We see the same dynamic in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. That is, what *does* the prodigal son do to repent? The text seems to suggest that he simply let Christ (the father in the parable) save him. He put away his plan for saving himself and instead "[relied] wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save" (2 Nephi 31:19). And as Bailey observes, the prodigal son didn't have to let the father clothe him and bring him home.[8] He could have insisted on his original plan of becoming a craftsman via some sort of false modesty: "Oh, no, no, really, I'm not worthy to be your son yet, I don't deserve any of this. Please just help me go to the neighboring village and earn some money so maybe I can return home some day with a little respectability."

If this definition of repentance holds any theological water, perhaps it helps us understand why the second principle of the gospel (repentance) follows from the first (faith in the Lord Jesus Christ). That is, while we might try to repent by doing such things as regretting our actions, paying restitution, coming up with elaborate plans to redeem ourselves, etc., perhaps until we begin to see what Christ has done and is willing to do to save us, we will never experience true repentance. Indeed, these parables may be indicating that coming to know and experience Christ's love, for "He first loved us" (1 John 4:19), is the key to our own and other people's real change and that repentance is more about what Christ does for us than about what we do. It also may be that all this is closely related to the concept of *receiving* we find in the scriptures.

At first Peter refused to receive the gift Jesus wished to give him when the Savior came to wash his feet (see John 13). When he refused he was told that he would have no part with Christ unless he received the ordinance. Peter then caught on quickly. And if the number of occurrences of a word are an indication of where it is most powerfully taught in the scriptures, the Doctrine and Covenants is the winner regarding the word *receive* with 317 mentions. For example, the phrase "receive the Holy Ghost," or a variant thereof, is used eleven times in this book of scripture. Another well-known use of the word *receive* is in Section 84:

> 35 And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;
>
> 36 For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

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8   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 72.

37 And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

38 And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

With the boy in a repentant state, the Father (Christ) goes to work. After embracing and kissing the lad (v. 20), he brings him into his house, has the best robe put upon him, a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. He also has the fatted calf killed and throws a feast stating, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (v. 24). We will see that each of these things has special significance. First, the father embraces and kisses the son. In the April 1992 General Conference of the Church, Elder M. Russell Ballard recounted a dream of his grandfather Melvin J. Ballard in which his grandfather saw the Savior. Elder Melvin J. Ballard recorded: "As I approached He smiled, called my name, and stretched out His hands towards me. If I live to be a million years old I shall never forget that smile. He put His arms around me and kissed me as He took me into His bosom, and He blessed me until my whole being was thrilled."[9]

When Jesus came to His followers in the New World, we read that they came to Him "one by one" (3 Nephi 11:14–15) and touched His hands, feet, and side. Later in this miraculous story, after Jesus had healed the sick within the multitude, it says, "And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears" (3 Nephi 17:10). When Jesus first appeared to Thomas after His resurrection, He said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (John 20:27).

These examples suggest that when Jesus appears, it is often accompanied by His touch, kiss, and/or embrace. In 2 Nephi 9, Jacob teaches that the gatekeeper of God's kingdom is the Son Himself. Is it not reasonable to expect that as we enter His kingdom, He will embrace and welcome us in a deeply personal way? Hence I think we can ask: Is the embrace of the prodigal son by the father, who represents Christ, an indication that the younger son is being welcomed into His presence?[10]

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9 "The Blessings of Sacrifice," April 1992 General Conference, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1992/04/the-blessings-of-sacrifice.

10 Along these lines, is the betrayal of the Son of Man by a kiss even more insidious than it might appear at first glance? Did Judas choose a gesture of

Second, the father has his servants dress the son in a robe. In both ancient and modern times, the wearing of a robe has been a part of temple worship. The recent video entitled "Sacred Temple Clothing"[11] produced by the Church shows pictures of LDS temple clothing and emphasizes that the robes worn in the temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are "reserved for the highest sacraments of the faith." Is the dressing of the prodigal son in a robe an indication that he is receiving these sacraments? In addition, the father does not command that the son be clothed in any old robe but rather directs that he be placed in the "best robe." Faithful members of the Church would certainly consider the robes they wear in their temple worship to meet this qualification. And robes, garments, and raiment seem to have played an important role in other of Jesus's parables. For example, in his masterful discussion of the Good Samaritan, John W. Welch observes: "Latter-day Saints may find even further significance in the fact that the attackers [of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho] apparently want the person's clothing." He then notes that this clothing may represent "a temple or holy garment."[12] According to Bailey, "The 'best robe' is naturally the father's finest robe."[13] Nephi, a Hebrew who thoroughly understood Middle Eastern culture, also recognized the importance of robes in God's economy and of being clothed in them. In his psalm he pleads: "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!" (2 Nephi 4:33).

The Latin Vulgate Bible[14] is one of the earliest extant translations of the New Testament. In my reading of it, I have found it very similar to the KJV of the Bible that is used by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are, however, some small but perhaps significant differences between its rendition of verse 22 of Luke 15 and the KJV translation. In my Latin-English interlinear New Testament, it reads:

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profound significance to Christ in order to mock him even as he betrayed him? Is there deeper meaning in Jesus's response: "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48) There was no shortage of irony in the Savior's life — was He betrayed in a manner very similar to the one He would use to greet and offer salvation to the faithful?

11 "Sacred Temple Clothing," LDS Media Library, https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2014–01–1460-sacred-temple-clothing?lang=eng.

12 John W. Welch, "The Good Samaritan: A Type and Shadow of the Plan of Salvation" *BYU Studies* 38/2 (1999): 50–115.

13 Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 71.

14 Biblia Sacra, *The Holy Bible in Latin and English* (South Bend, IN; Ex Fontibus Company, 2009).

22. Dixit autem pater ad servos suos: <u>Cito proferte stolam primam</u>, et induite illum, et date annulum in manum ejus, et calceamenta in pedes ejus:

with the accompanying translation:

22. And the father said to his servants: <u>Bring forth quickly the first robe</u>, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

The differences between the Latin Vulgate and King James versions are in the phrase, "Cito proferte stolam primam" ("Bring forth quickly the first robe"). *Cito* means quickly. *Stola* means robe or apparel, and *prima* means first, where the *m* suffix on these words is a grammatical ending that indicates that *stola* (robe) is functioning as the direct object (the accusative case) in this sentence. The word *quickly* is important. The father wasted no time in clothing the son — the salvation of his son was of primary importance. Also of interest is the phrase *stolam primam* (first robe or first apparel). Is it possible that this first robe or apparel is a reference to a robe/glory that was possessed by the son before this mortal life that is now being returned to him?

Third, a ring was placed on the prodigal son's hand. In the ancient world signet rings often functioned as signatures for their owners. Fausset's *Bible Dictionary* notes that Pharaoh transferred his royal authority to Joseph with a ring (Genesis 41:42), as did Ahasuerus to Haman (Ester 3:8–10) and Mordecai (Esther 8:2).[15] This source further notes: "In Luke 15:22 it is the father's token of favor, dignity, and sonship to the prodigal." Thus, this bestowal suggests an endowment of power and authority. In practical terms, the ring represents the family charge card — the power to buy and sell and to transact business.

Fourth, the prodigal son is given shoes. As Bailey notes, "Slaves go barefoot. Sons wear shoes."[16]

Fifth, while the entry of the prodigal son into the father's house is not specifically described in the parable, it must have occurred because later in the parable the older son is found outside the house while his younger brother and father are within. Again, if the father in this parable represents our Heavenly Father, then it stands to reason that the house represents our father's abode. That is, it could represent one of our temples, one of our meetinghouses, or perhaps even the Celestial

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15   "Ring," Fausset's Bible Dictionary, http://www.bible-history.com/faussets/R/Ring/

16   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 71.

Kingdom. On our sacred temples we write, "Holiness to the Lord. The House of the Lord."

Finally, we read that the father had the fatted calf killed so they could have a feast. Feasts were of great significance in the Law of Moses. We read of Jesus going up to Jerusalem for the feasts (see John 7:8–10). Leviticus 23:2 states, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations even these are my feasts." And while the sacrament had not been introduced at this point in Jesus's ministry, perhaps this feast can be seen as a reference to this important ordinance. In addition, there appears to be significance in the slaying of an animal at the return of the prodigal son. The Old Testament notes the slaying of a calf as a sin offering. In Leviticus 9:2, 7–8 we read:

> 2 And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the Lord.
>
> 7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the Lord commanded.
>
> 8 Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself.

Bailey noted that a fatted calf will feed an entire village — the feast will be a village-wide event.[17] Thus, this event would further remove the prodigal son's shame, and his reconciliation with his father would be acknowledged by the entire community.

In summary, we see a series of remarkable actions by the father (Christ), which point to the rescue, reinstatement, and reconciliation of the prodigal son. By extension, we see Christ's willingness to bear our shame and afflictions. If in this story the prodigal son has been completely forgiven and reinstated — if he has returned "safe and sound" as the servant said, which means "unharmed, free from injury,"[18] it would be consistent with President Boyd K. Packer's statement: "[T]here is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense small or large which is exempt from the promise of complete forgiveness. No

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17   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 78.

18   "Live Journal Word_Ancestry," http://word-ancestry.livejournal.com /69719.html.

matter what has happened in your life, the Lord has prepared a way for you to come back."[19]

The Older Son

The older son was "in the field" (v. 25). We don't know exactly what he was doing there. He may have been working. Like Isaac of old, he may have gone there to meditate (Genesis 24:63). Bailey observed, "No landowner with servants ever engages in manual labor, neither do his sons. The older son has been seated respectively in the shade somewhere, supervising the laborers."[20] In any case, there is no indication that his behavior was anything less than good and honorable. And after a day of work, he was on his way home. But as he approached the house, he heard music. He called a servant and enquired as to the reason. He was informed of his brother's return, the joy of his father receiving him again, and the ensuing celebration. However, "he was angry, and would not go in" (v. 28). Bailey indicates that this refusal was of great significance. Indeed, "At such a banquet the father sits with the guests. The older son often stands and serves the meal as a 'head waiter.' The important difference between the older son of the family and the other servants is that the older son joins in conversation with the seated company. By stationing the older son as a kind of hovering head waiter, the family is in effect saying, 'You, our guests, are so great that our son is your servant.'"[21] (It is hard to miss the parallel between this tradition and our Heavenly Father's plan in which His Son becomes our servant.) In any case, Bailey emphasizes that the older son's refusal to enter is a colossal breach of etiquette. Indeed, it is "an intentional public insult to his father," an insult to the guests, and "an open rupture of relationship between the son and his father."[22]

But the father's behavior is again astonishing. In an entirely countercultural way, he sets aside the anger and punishment that he could have justifiably unleashed on his older son and walks out to him. In effect, the father (Christ) is now bearing the shame (sin) of his older son along with the dishonor he has brought to the family. Twice in a single day, he goes out to a son to seek reconciliation and to shield him from the shame he would face in his community. By extension we again see Christ's willingness to save and bear the shame of us all — prodigal

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19   "The Savior's Selfless and Sacred Sacrifice," *Ensign*, April 2015, https://www.lds.org/ensign/2015/04/the-saviors-selfless-and-sacred-sacrifice?lang=eng.

20   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 78.

21   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 81–82.

22   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 82.

sons and older sons alike. In particular, the parable says that his father went out "and entreated him" (v. 28). Merriam-Webster defines *entreat* as: "to ask (someone) in a serious and emotional way."[23] That is, we are not told what the father initially said to his older son to encourage him to come into his house and take his place, only how he said it. Nevertheless, after this first entreaty from his father, the older boy still protests:

> 29 … Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:
>
> 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

Bailey notes that this interaction would have been in public, in a courtyard/open area next to the house. As justification for this interpretation, he emphasizes that the "servant" the older son questioned was most likely a village boy — the Greek word can be translated either way.[24] Indeed, the "servant" in the parable replied to the older son by saying "your father," which he would say if he were a village boy, and not "my master," which he would say if he were a servant. Bailey also notes that culturally there were always groups or gangs of boys from the village, who would be too young to attend the party, who would hang around outside, listening to the music and conversation, and in general enjoying the event.[25] As we noted, nothing is secret in a little Middle Eastern village. Thus, it appears that the older son speaks publicly to his father in the courtyard, within earshot of the groups of boys and other guests, and thereby makes sure that his speech will be repeated in every house in the village. But there is another cultural element that we probably miss. As Bailey notes: "He rebels against his father. In this speech he insults his father for the second time in one evening by omitting any title. The phrase "O father" is an essential sign of respect. The older son chooses to be rude."[26]

For the last year, Massoud Kaykhaii, a Middle Eastern scholar from Iran, has been working in my laboratory at Brigham Young University. His presence seemed like an ideal opportunity for me to "fact check" Bailey's statements with someone intimately familiar with Middle

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23 "Entreat," Merriam-Webster, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entreat.

24 Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 79–80.

25 Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 79.

26 Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 84.

Eastern culture. As I described the parable and Bailey's explanation of it, Massoud repeatedly nodded his head in agreement. Massoud then offered his own commentary on the respect that is due to fathers in his culture. He explained that even today:

> (i) The father in a family must be obeyed absolutely. While one may be able to request to do something or explain why one might like to take a certain course of action, if the father thinks otherwise, one has no choice but to follow one's father's counsel.

> (ii) One must show constant respect to one's father. Massoud stated that even though he is 50 years old and a distinguished professor at a university, not to mention the fact that nearly 100 masters and PhD students have graduated under his supervision, which is a major accomplishment, any time his father enters a room where he is, he must stand and remain standing until his father is seated. He said it does not matter how many times his father enters the room — it could be ten times in an hour. Each and every time he must show this same respect.

> (iii) Failure to respect and obey one's father will result in severe penalties within the community — one will be labeled and gossiped about as a "terrible person."

These observations about Middle Eastern culture further confirm the grossly inadequate behavior of both sons and the gracious, benevolent responses of their father.

Continuing his analysis, Bailey notes that we really have no good reason to believe the older son's comment about his brother devouring his father's living "with harlots."[27] He hadn't spoken with his brother, and there is no indication they had made any contact. How would he have known? The older brother is also wrong about his brother devouring his father's living in general. While the circumstances of their parting were far from ideal, the younger brother had been legally given his inheritance, it was no longer the father's, and the boy could spend it as he chose. At the same time, in verse 30, the older son is whining about

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27 Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 53.

the current state of affairs. He clearly resents the fact that while he then owned all the property, according to Middle Eastern tradition his father was entitled to administer the profits of it as long as he was still alive, i.e., this is why his father can instruct that the fatted calf be killed and a party be thrown. This may be the motivation for the father's gentle reminder of their interconnectedness: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine" (v. 31).

By using the words: "this thy son" (v. 30) in his speech, the older son also seems to depersonalize and objectify his younger brother, i.e., he neither refers to him by name nor acknowledges their fraternal relationship. The book *Anatomy of Peace* describes the self-betrayal that takes place when we fail to serve others as we know we should. Here are some quotes from the book that may pertain to the behavior of the older son. The teacher in *Anatomy of Peace* is asked by a student: "How is a choice to betray oneself a choice to go to war?" He answers: "Because when I betray myself … I create within myself a new need — a need that causes me to see others accusingly, a need that causes me to care about something other than truth and solutions." The teacher then discusses an earlier failure in his life to serve another person, remarking: "[T]he moment I began to violate the basic call of his humanity upon me, I created within me a new need, a need that didn't exist the moment before; I needed to be justified for violating the truth I knew in that moment. … Having violated this truth, my entire perception now raced to make me justified. … [W]hen I betray myself, others' faults become immediately inflated in my heart and mind. I begin to 'horribilize' others. That is, I begin to make them out to be worse than they really are. And I do this because the worse they are, the more justified I feel. A needy man on the street suddenly represents a threat to my very peace and freedom. A person to help becomes an object to blame."[28] If, as Bailey claims, the older son had repeatedly violated his obligations to his father and brother, he would have to justify himself for his behavior. Arguably, his speech to his father is an attempt at this irrational "horribilization" of his sibling and even his father.

Bailey also makes the important observation that in the older son's statement, "yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends" (v. 29), he is clearly indicating that neither his father nor his brother is his friend — he had no interest in celebrating with them.[29]

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28   The Arbinger Institute, *The Anatomy of Peace*, (Oakland, CA; Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006), 94–96.

29   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 85.

There is much of Bailey's analysis that I have not mentioned, and it is compelling, but one thing should not be overlooked here in this discussion, and that is the motivation for Jesus's giving the three parables in Luke 15. The first two verses of the chapter read:

> 1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.
>
> 2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Again there is a part of these verses that is, for the most part, lost on us in the West. As Bailey notes, in the Middle Eastern culture of Jesus's day, eating with another person was of tremendous significance.[30] It signaled a deep level of acceptance, friendship, and intimacy. The scribes and Pharisees are highly critical of Jesus, even incensed with him, for associating with/accepting/eating with publicans and sinners. The three parables that follow these two verses appear to be a response to their complaint. In particular, in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the father represents Jesus, the older son represents the scribes and Pharisees, and the prodigal son represents the publicans and sinners. In this parable we see Jesus point out to the leaders in Israel how they (the older son) had repeatedly shirked their duty in the church and to their fellow man. The older son's claim never to have broken any of his father's commandments appears to echo the repeated claim of the scribes and Pharisees that they rigorously followed the law. And of course we should be skeptical of any who claim never to have sinned (see 1 John 1:8). Indeed, it is ironic that in the very act of proclaiming his flawlessness, the older son is acting against the will of the father and sinning.

We see next, in a remarkable way, how the first words of Chapter 15 have come full circle at the end of the chapter. At the beginning of the chapter, Jesus was criticized for eating with undesirables. At the end of the chapter, the father (Jesus) has thrown a feast for the undesirable prodigal son (publicans and sinners), i.e., he is eating with him, while the older son (scribes and Pharisees) is found outside the feast criticizing him for it. The parable then ends *without* a clear resolution. What will the older son do? Does he listen to his father, accept the grace he is being offered, and come into the tent, taking his appointed place? Or does he remain angry and bitter and in a state of rebellion? We are left hanging. This ambiguous conclusion appears to be directed at the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus appears to be saying to them, "I'm still here,

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30   Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*, 28–29.

and there's still time. I'm working with you even though you haven't acted appropriately as leaders in Israel. Can't you see how, even now, I'm bearing your shame again and again? I have grounds to disinherit you, but instead I choose to gently reason with you. In the same way I'm willing to bring home your brother, the Prodigal, and save him, I want you in my house as well. Will you come in?" Lamentably, we know the choice the scribes and Pharisees ultimately made.

While the primary audience for this parable appears to have been the scribes and Pharisees, they don't seem to have been the only ones within earshot of the Savior when he offered it (see again Luke 15:1–2). Accordingly, is each one of us also being placed in the position of the older son? Is grace being extended to us in the same way? Do we get to write the end of this parable for ourselves? Will we choose to put aside any feelings of entitlement, resentment, offense, and self-righteousness toward God and our fellow man to enjoy the blessings that have been promised to us?

Comparison of the Parable of the Prodigal Son to Other Stories/Parables in the Scriptures

The Parable of the Prodigal Son appears to end with some irony. The less fortunate, less well off, penniless, younger son is saved, while the older, wealthier, more entitled boy is not, or at least his salvation is pending. Is this a pattern that shows up in other places in the scriptures? Below, we will discuss some of Jesus's other parables that seem to contain a similar form, along with Lehi's dream in the Book of Mormon. We will see that there appears to be an archetypical story that underlies all these scriptures.

Example 1

In Luke 7:36–43 we read:

> 36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.
>
> 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,
>
> 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs

of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Is it possible that there are two feasts taking place simultaneously in this story? Clearly there is the physical meal being served in Simon's house, during which Luke records that a woman of the city, who was a sinner, anointed Jesus's feet in a particularly tender way.

Just as associating with publicans, sinners, and undesirables had aroused the anger of the Pharisees in the first verses of Luke 15 and

also of the older son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the woman's actions triggered in Simon the Pharisee thoughts of criticism towards both the Savior and the woman. Knowing his thoughts, Jesus spoke to him of a creditor who had two debtors, where one owed ten times more than the other: 500 vs. 50 pence. Neither could pay his debt, but more importantly, like the prodigal son who "had spent all" (v. 14), "they had nothing to pay." This remarkable creditor, who represents the Father and the Son, "frankly forgave them both."

Jesus then asks which debtor will love the creditor more. Simon correctly answers that it is the one who had the larger debt. The Lord then immediately compares the woman to the 500-pence debtor, and perhaps by extension Simon to the 50-pence debtor. He contrasts the woman's humble, tender actions of adoration to Simon's indifference. Because Jesus stated in His story that the creditor "frankly forgave" both debtors, it seems as if Jesus came to Simon's dinner willing to fully forgive both the woman, whose sins were "many," and Simon, whose sins may have been an order of magnitude less.

Was Jesus inviting both the woman and Simon to a metaphorical feast — a feast within a feast in which they could have their sins remitted and be made right with God? Jesus's apparent willingness to forgive both sinners, one of whom was a Pharisee, would be consistent with His statement, "For I am no respecter of persons" (D&C 1:35). This message also appears to be consistent with the one He delivers to the Pharisees in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Is the conclusion of this story similar to that of the Parable of the Prodigal Son in which Christ extends His mercy to both brothers, but it is the less fortunate/less favored individual (the younger son) who gains it? Of course, the Parable of the Prodigal Son suggests that both brothers were sinful and problematic. Thus, by analogy, Simon's sins of pride, spiritual arrogance, and a disdain for others may be as bad as the woman's.

On the other hand, Jesus makes a point of stating that her sins were "many" and suggests a 10:1 ratio between hers and Simon's. What seems to be clear is the final irony in these situations, in which the outwardly less fortunate, less favored individuals have obtained the grace of God, while the more prominent people, who have proclaimed their righteousness, have not accepted it. In both stories all the main characters (the woman, Simon, the prodigal son, and the older son) are very much in need of divine rescue.

This general theme of the need we all have for grace, perhaps more than we might think or want to admit, was beautifully addressed by

Elder Dale G. Renlund in a story he related in the April 2015 General Conference. He said:

> Some years ago a wonderful young man named Curtis was called to serve a mission. He was the kind of missionary every mission president prays for. He was focused and worked hard. At one point he was assigned a missionary companion who was immature, socially awkward, and not particularly enthusiastic about getting the work done.
>
> One day, while they were riding their bicycles, Curtis looked back and saw that his companion had inexplicably gotten off his bike and was walking. Silently, Curtis expressed his frustration to God; what a chore it was to be saddled with a companion he had to drag around in order to accomplish anything. Moments later, Curtis had a profound impression, as if God were saying to him, "You know, Curtis, compared to me, the two of you aren't all that different."[31]

Example 2

In Luke 14 we read:

> 16 Then said he [Jesus] unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:
>
> 17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.
>
> 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.
>
> 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.
>
> 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.
>
> 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

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31   "Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying," April 2015 General Conference, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015 /04/latter-day-saints-keep-on-trying.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

This parable begins with the same words as the Parable of the Prodigal Son: "A certain man." This again appears to be a reference to our Heavenly Father and his Son. We are then immediately told this man "made a great supper" and "bade many" to come to his feast. We are next told that at "supper time" this man's servant was sent out to say to the invited ones: "Come; for all things are now ready." This invitation should not have come as a surprise to these individuals — again, it was "supper time" and they had previously been invited/bidden. However, one by one these individuals refuse the man's invitation, all using some type of worldly excuse. In his book *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, Bailey explains that these excuses were ridiculous, hollow, and deeply insulting. No one in Jesus's day would buy a piece of property without *previously* inspecting it meticulously, and no one would buy oxen without *previously* proving them, again with the greatest degree of care. Bailey explains a cultural equivalent of these excuses. Imagine a group of people invited to dinner at someone's home, chatting in the living room before the meal. The hostess walks in and calls everyone to dinner saying, "The food's on the table." One guest then says, "I have to go feed my cat," and walks out the door. Another says, "I have to pay some bills," and similarly leaves. With regards to the third fellow, Bailey writes that his "excuse is unspeakably offensive. … He does not even ask to be excused. The third guest is very rudely saying, 'I have a woman in the back of the house, and I am busy with her. Don't expect me at your banquet. I am not coming.'"[32] Bailey further suggests there is collusion between these guests. Not only were they publicly insulting the man, but their actions were subversive — a feast could go on without one guest, but if all refused, there would be no event.[33]

Like the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, this man's response is amazing. While initially angry at the original guests, he takes the energy he could have used to retaliate and, as Bailey notes, reprocesses it

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32 Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 313–16.
33 Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 315.

into grace.[34] (Bailey repeatedly refers to this grace as "costly love."[35]) He extends an invitation to the less fortunate around him, instructing his servant to "bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." These were the undesirables in Jesus's day, and the Pharisees despised them — consider how the Pharisees treated the man Jesus gave sight to in John 9:1–34. When there was yet room in the house, the servant was told to "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

There is irony in this story. Those who had been invited appear to have been prosperous. In addition, they seem to have had a fairly close relationship with the man. (In Middle Eastern culture, you invite your friends to your parties.) Nevertheless, they refuse to go to his feast, rejecting his invitation in an insulting manner. In contrast, those who had originally received no invitation and who certainly do not appear to be as well off as the invited ones, are inside the man's house at the end of the parable.

Example 3

In Matthew 22 we read:

> 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
>
> 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.
>
> 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.
>
> 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:
>
> 6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.
>
> 7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

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34 Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 316.
35 Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 70.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

This parable is very similar to the one we just considered from Luke 14. Here, a king organizes an event of great significance — the marriage of his son. Surely those who had received an invitation ("them that were bidden") would come celebrate with him. His servants go call those individuals. It was time. The feast was ready, and the animals were slaughtered. However, these guests "made light of" his invitation. Some turned to their worldly, economic pursuits, while others mistreated the king's servants and even killed them. The king destroyed those who had murdered his representatives. His servants are then commanded to find whomsoever they can, going into the highways, to come to the celebration.

The parable states that they "gathered … as many as they found, both bad and good" so that the wedding would have guests. Again, this story ends with irony in a manner similar to those we have been considering. The invited ones, who must have been close to the king, who were apparently wealthy or in some way preferred, are found outside his feast, while those who were initially without invitation are brought in. Another item here also deserves mention. The king enters the hall for the feast and sees a man who is not properly attired. He asks him how he entered, but the man could not answer for himself. The king then has him expelled into outer darkness. The importance of proper clothing, the "wedding garment," is again suggestive that the dwelling of this king is connected to the temple.

Example 4

In 1 Nephi 8 we read about Lehi's dream of the tree of life. Lehi, a father and patriarch, describes this tree as bearing a fruit that is "most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen" (1 Nephi 8: 11). Alma suggests that there is, perhaps, also a feast taking place here. In Alma 32: 41–42 we read:

> 41 But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life.

> 42 And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; *and ye shall feast upon this fruit* even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.[36]

Standing at the tree, Lehi sees his family and calls/invites them to join him. Nephi and Sam, the younger sons, and their mother come to the tree. The older sons refuse to do so. Clearly there is irony here. The oldest sons, Laman and Lemuel, one of whom had the birthright and both of whom were invited, refuse the invitation. Arguably, they are the ones who should have been closest to their father. However, in the first two books of Nephi we learn they rebelled and murmured against Lehi and even conspired to kill him. The response of this patriarch is remarkable. Like the men in the parables we have been discussing, Lehi turns what must have been incredible disappointment and pain into grace as he reaches out to his wayward children. That is, after recounting his dream to them, Lehi entreats them "with all the feeling of a tender parent, that they would hearken to his words, that perhaps the Lord would be merciful to them" (1 Nephi 8:37). Is there a parallel here between the father walking out to and entreating the older son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son and Lehi's words to Laman and Lemuel?

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36 emphasis added

Similarities Between the Stories/Parables Considered Herein

In the previous section, we noted some parallels between the stories/parables we have been discussing. To highlight these similarities they are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Stories/Parables Considered Herein

Story	Parable of the Prodigal Son	Story of Simon the Pharisee	Parable of the Man and his Great Supper	Parable of the King and his son's wedding	Lehi's Dream
Event	The prodigal son's home-coming / a feast	The meal at Simon's house but really the "feast" Jesus was offering	"a great supper"	A wedding dinner	Be at the tree, eat of the fruit – a feast
Male authority figure who initiated and/or invited others to the feast	"A certain man," a father of two sons, had servants	Jesus	"A certain man" had a servant	A king	Father Lehi
Those invited, but who have not or would not participate in the event	The older son, an heir of wealth, had the birthright	Simon the Pharisee, in the "in" crowd	Those on the guest list – friends of the man, appear to be well off	Those on the guest list – friends of the man, appear to be well off	Laman and Lemuel, the older sons of a wealthy man
Reasons for not accepting the invitation	Resentment and criticism toward his brother and father, entitlement, self-righteousness	Criticism of the Savior and the woman, disbelief	Ostensibly, preoccupation with the things of the world, but they appear to be trying to undermine the event	Preoccupation with the things of the world, disdain for the king	Anger at / criticism of father and b r o t h e r, disbelief

How the more favored individuals treated the male authority figure	The older son refused to perform his familial duty and insulted the father publicly	Simon did not respect Jesus when He came to his home	They publicly insulted him	They publicly insulted him, some attacked and killed his servants	They rejected his counsel; murmured against him, and plotted against him
Application of grace	The father does not disown either son. He humiliates himself by coming out to both of them, i.e., he bears their shame.	Jesus extends an offer to remit the sins of the woman and Simon	The man does not retaliate against those who had insulted him, using his energy to invite the less fortunate to his feast	The king takes action against those who killed his servants – he had boundaries – but then invites the less fortunate to his feast	Lehi entreats Laman and Lemuel "with all the feeling of a tender parent …"
Those forgiven or in the house (God's presence) at the end of the story	The prodigal son, the younger son of the father, who had returned in poverty	The woman whose "sins were many"	The poor, maimed, halt, etc., those in the highway, etc.	Any the servants of the king could find: "both bad and good"	The mother and younger sons

There is a series of common elements in these stories. In each case there is a special event, a feast, meal, or dinner. A male authority figure, a father, a king, or Jesus, invites one or more people to this important meal. He is close to these people, and they are generally well to do — more prosperous and/or more favored by birth than their siblings/fellow man/neighbors. But they refuse the man's invitation. They resent him, ignore him, criticize him, publicly insult him, deny him the basic respect he would deserve, and generally look down upon their fellow man. For the most part, the father/authority figure does not disown or punish them for their actions or retaliate. Instead he chooses to apply grace/costly love. He entreats and reasons with those who have insulted him. Nevertheless, there is a line that cannot be crossed. He takes swift and definitive action against those who have killed his servants. There is

irony in these stories. In each case, the younger son(s), less prominent or wealthy individuals, and/or those on the margins of society are present at the feast when the stories end. Some of these stories contain temple imagery — special clothing or the father's home (this is not listed in the table). In the April 1997 General Conference of the Church, Elder Henry B. Eyring gave a talk entitled: "Finding Safety in Counsel." He said: "When the words of prophets seem repetitive, that should rivet our attention [on what they say]."[37] Given the repetitive nature of the story outlined in Table 1, we may want to ask ourselves why it is presented so many times in the scriptures and what we can learn from it. Are we seeing an important archetypical story here? What does it teach us about the atonement and Christ's grace? What does it teach us about the nature of God the Father? Are there warnings we can apply in our lives regarding how we respond to God and his servants as well as how we treat our fellow man?

The Parable of the Benevolent Father and Son

In his October 2003 conference talk, Elder Holland emphasized that Jesus came to teach us about the nature of His Father, where, in essence, He showed us God the Father by showing us Himself.[38] This appears to be the real focus of the Parable of the Prodigal Son — not to focus on a foolish, wasteful young man or his critical older brother but rather to reveal the benevolent nature of the Father and the Son. As we have seen, the father in this story, along with the other patriarchs considered herein, is in every way remarkable. When the younger son requests his inheritance, the father gives it to him without disowning him. He leaves the door open for him to return and experience His grace. When the young man comes to himself he remembers his father: "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." This father was a good provider who even took care of his servants well. Through a series of actions (embracing the son, clothing him, etc.), the father acts to save his returning child.

The Father possesses great wisdom. Neither son in this parable appears to have been able to see himself as he was, but the Father could. The younger son thought he was not worthy even to be called his Father's

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37   "Finding Safety in Counsel," April 1997 General Conference, https://www.lds.org/ensign/1997/05/finding-safety-in-counsel.p1?lang=eng.

38   "The Grandeur of God," October 2003 General Conference, https://www.lds.org/ensign/2003/11/the-grandeur-of-god?lang=eng.

son, and he thought he had to save himself. The story suggests that the Father thought otherwise and received and fully reinstated him. The older son claimed perfection and to be far superior to his brother. The Father gently reasoned with him, overlooking his pointed insults. We see a Father who is greatly desirous to administer the ordinances of salvation to His children. We encounter a being who is no respecter of persons. This is a Father filled with love and tenderness. He is filled with emotion — think about the embrace he gave to his younger son and of his desire to rejoice and hold a feast. This Father never criticizes either son. This is a Father who meets both boys where they are; he comes out to both of them. Here is a father who is constant in his love towards his children. This is a Father desirous to grant eternal life to his children at the cost of bearing their sins and shame.

All of this should give us great comfort. Joseph Smith spoke of the importance of comprehending God's character. And because we have all "sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), is it not wonderful to know the nature of our benevolent Father and His benevolent Son — that they will be eagerly watching and waiting for us to return and that they will welcome us home with open arms? When we are consumed with criticism of others, entitlement, resentment, self-righteousness, etc., is it not cause for rejoicing to know that our Father/Jesus will gently entreat us to put aside our hard feelings and reenter His presence? I find it interesting that essentially none of the characters who are found in God's presence at the end of these stories appear to be without flaw — the prodigal son, the woman who was a sinner, the poor, maimed, halt, those in the highways, and Lehi's family. In particular, while Nephi knew of God's love and greatness, he also struggled with his own imperfections (we all do). I think he summarized well both our mortal condition and the goodness of God towards us when he wrote in 2 Nephi 4:19, "And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted."

I apologize for the personal indulgence here. It may sounds strange, but for many years, any time I have heard a certain phrase in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* I have thought of my Heavenly Father. At the family Christmas dinner, Bob Cratchett proposes a toast to his boss, Ebenezer Scrooge, calling him "the founder of the feast!" His wife then berates him because she knows what a despicable individual Scrooge is. I hesitate to use a phrase to describe my Heavenly Father and/or His Son that was originally applied to such an imperfect character in a novel, although it is

noteworthy that Scrooge completely alters the course of his life — he too seems to be a prodigal son, and our analysis here suggests that God cares much more about the final repentant state we attain to in this life than any earlier sinful one. In any case, I cannot hear the phrase "the founder of the feast" without thinking of my Heavenly Father. And are not He and His Son the founders of our feast? Are They not the founders of every good feast, including the feasts considered herein? After centuries of inertia, the likelihood of changing the name of the Parable of the Prodigal Son seems extremely low. Nevertheless, given the remarkable natures of the Father and the Son exhibited in this story, who in my mind are its heroes and central characters, I think a better name for this parable might be "The Parable of the Benevolent Father and Son."[39] We might then better focus our attention on what this parable teaches us about our Father's and his Son's greatness, mercy, and love for each of us.

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39   For similar reasons, Bailey also suggested that the parable is poorly named. He proposes a different, but related, name for it.

40   Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (San Francisco, CA; Jossey-Bass, 2011).

"Arise from the Dust": Insights from Dust-Related Themes in the Book of Mormon

Part 1: Tracks from the Book of Moses

Jeff Lindsay

Abstract: *In light of Noel Reynolds' hypothesis that some material in the Book of Moses may have been present on the brass plates that Nephi used, one may wonder if Nephi or other authors might also have drawn upon the use of chains in the Book of Moses, particularly Satan's "great chain [that] veiled … the earth with darkness" (Moses 7:26) and the "chains of darkness" (Moses 7:57). Though the phrase "chains of darkness" is not used in the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 1:23, quoting Lehi, combines* chains *and* obscurity, *where* obscurity *can have the meaning of darkness. In fact, there may be a Hebraic wordplay behind Lehi's words when he tells his wayward sons to "come forth out of obscurity and arise from the dust," based on the similarity between the Hebrew words for "obscurity" and "dust." The association between dust and chains and several other newly found linkages to Book of Moses material is enriched by a study of Walter Brueggemann on the covenant-related meanings of "rising from the dust" and "returning to the dust" in the Bible, a topic we explore in Part 2.[1] Then, after showing how dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon can enhance our understanding of several important passages, we build on that knowledge in Part 3 to "dust off" the most famous chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, where we will show that some apparent gaps and wordy regions in the complex chiastic structure of Alma 36 are more compact and meaningful than we may have realized. Both dust-related themes and themes from the Book of Moses assist in better*

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1   Walter Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 84/1 (1972): 1–18; available with first page only visible at http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/zatw.1972.84.issue-1/zatw.1972.84.1.1/ zatw.1972.84.1.1.xml.

appreciating the richness of that masterpiece of Hebraic poetry. Overall, a small amount of exploration motivated by Reynolds' work may have led to several interesting finds that strengthen the case for Book of Moses content on the brass plates and deepen our appreciation of the use of ancient Near Eastern dust themes in the Book of Mormon, that majestic "voice from the dust."

Background: Dusting off a Hypothesis from Noel Reynolds

The Book of Mormon's use of dust as a theme strengthens its covenant-related message and highlights the role of the Redeemer. Christ the Redeemer created us from dust, came to earth in a tabernacle of dusty clay, and humbly wiped the dust from the feet of others before breaking the chains of sin and death to cleanse and liberate us. Through His Atonement, He offers power to come out of obscurity and rise from the dust, thereby sharing in the blessings of resurrection and eternal life, with our feet established on Mount Zion, the cosmic mountain, the Temple of the Lord. Such themes blend together in many ways to convey the covenant-based message of the "voice from the dust," the Book of Mormon.

Some tentative insights on this complex of themes began when a previously obscure verse in 2 Nephi caught my eye while exploring a hypothesis from Noel Reynolds about the relationship between the Book of Moses and the brass plates used by Nephi.[2] Reynolds suggests that the relationships in language and themes between the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses can best be explained if at least some of the material in the Book of Moses were known to Nephi and his people, as if something similar to our Book of Moses were on the brass plates that Nephi took to the New World.

Reynolds argues that the relationship between the two texts is not just one of using a lot of the same terms and concepts in both, the way that would be natural if they had a common author. Rather, the relationship appears to be one-way: the Book of Mormon appears to rely upon content in the Book of Moses and not the other way around. Some incidents and passages are strongly enriched when we add knowledge from the

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2   Noel Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," in John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, 27 March 1990*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 2:136–173; http://publications.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1129&index=6.

Book of Moses, while there is no sign of the Book of Moses depending on information in the Book of Mormon. This is noteworthy because the Book of Moses was revealed to Joseph well after he completed the Book of Mormon. Book of Mormon translation was primarily done from April to June of 1829, while the Book of Moses was given by revelation between June and December of 1830.

We will review a few of the examples Reynolds discusses and then introduce several new finds that seem to be part of the pattern that Reynolds has identified. One of these appears to involve a Hebraic wordplay in Nephi's writings that may not have been noted before. These new connections lead to several more tentative insights presented below. First, though, we must note some complexities with the Book of Moses text itself.

The Complex Documents of the Book of Moses

The Book of Moses passages discussed herein come from the current LDS printing of the Pearl of Great Price. The Book of Moses has a complex history with multiple documents involved, some of which had multiple corrections made at various times, as discussed by Kent P. Jackson in *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts.*[3] Jackson notes that Joseph Smith's Genesis translation began on a manuscript known as Old Testament Manuscript 1 (OT1), in which the Book of Moses is found on the first twenty-one pages written by four different scribes from Joseph's dictation. This was later copied by John Whitmer into a new document, now known as Old Testament Manuscript 2 (OT2), with many changes in wording, including many simple errors, introduced by Whitmer. Joseph would later come back to the previously dictated text of the Book of Moses and make further changes and corrections, working with OT2 rather than OT1. It is likely that the changes to OT2 were made by the fall of 1833.[4] However, what we have today as the canonized Book of Moses is largely based on the 1867 Committee Manuscript (CM) prepared by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which employed both OT1 and OT2. However, its editor, Joseph Smith III, removed many of the corrections and additions made by Joseph Smith to OT1. "The consequence was that his editing reverted many

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3   Kent P. Jackson, "History of the Book of Moses," in *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 1–52; https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/book-moses-and-joseph-smith-translation-manuscripts/history-book-moses.

4   Ibid., section "Old Testament Manuscript 2."

OT2 readings back to those found in OT1, thereby overruling much of his father's work on the text," especially in chapters 1 and 7.[5] This issue in general does not appear to significantly affect the examples discussed in this paper. Relevant verses with noteworthy differences relative to OT2 will be noted below.

The Devil's in the Details?

Reynolds introduces about twenty concepts or phrases in the Book of Moses that could be sources for Book of Mormon material, though some of them can also be found in the Bible. Reynolds fairly observes the cases of possible biblical dependence, which only partially weakens the argument.

One example involves the description of Satan in the Book of Moses. Reynolds explains how one sentence in the Book of Moses appears to have been used in a variety of ways throughout the Book of Mormon:

> One sentence from Moses seems to have spawned a whole family of formulaic references in the Book of Mormon: "And he became Satan, yea, even *the devil, the father of all lies,* to deceive and to blind men, and to *lead* them *captive at his will*, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice" (Moses 4:4). This language is echoed precisely by both Lehi and Moroni, who, when mentioning the devil, add the stock qualification: "who is *the father of all lies*" (cf. 2 Nephi 2:18; Ether 8:25), while Jacob says the same thing in similar terms (2 Nephi 9:9). Incidentally, the descriptive term *devil*, which is used frequently to refer to Satan in both Moses and the Book of Mormon, does not occur at all in the Old Testament. New Testament occurrences do not reflect this context.
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> The Book of Mormon sometimes separates and sometimes combines the elements of this description of the devil from Moses and portrays Satan as one deliberately engaged in "*deceiving* the hearts of the people" and in "*blinding their eyes*" that he might "*lead them away*" (3 Nephi 2:2). Particularly striking is the repeated statement that the devil *will lead* those who do not hearken to the Lord's voice "*captive at his will*" (Moses 4:4). In Alma we find that those who harden their hearts will receive "the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and

then they are *taken captive by the devil*, and *led by his will* down to destruction" (Alma 12:11). Much later, Alma invokes the same phrasing to warn his son Corianton of the plight of the wicked who, "because of their own iniquity," are "*led captive by the will* of the devil" (Alma 40:13). In the passage discussed above, Lehi taught his son Jacob that men "are free to choose liberty and eternal life, … or to choose *captivity* and death, according to the *captivity and power of the devil*; for he seeketh that [all] men might be miserable" (2 Nephi 2:27).

A remarkable passage in the first part of the Book of Mormon pulls all these book of Moses themes about Satan together — to describe someone else. The implication is unmistakable when Laman characterizes his brother Nephi as one who *lies* and who *deceives our eyes*, thinking to *lead us away* for the purpose of making himself "*a king and a ruler over us, that he may do with us according to his will and pleasure*" (1 Nephi 16:38). Laman insinuates that Nephi, who chastises his wayward brothers, is himself like the devil. And resistance against him is not only righteous but required. This account has the added complexity that it is a speech of Laman, who is quoted here in a record written by the very brother he attacks. If we accept the possibility that this text is dependent on a passage in the ancient book of Moses, we then recognize a major new dimension of meaning, not only in Laman's speech but also in Nephi's decision to preserve the speech, thus showing his descendants and any other readers familiar with the Moses text the full nature of the confrontation between the brothers as well as the injustice of the attacks he suffered. The full irony is revealed when we reflect on the facts reported in Nephi's record and realize that Laman's false accusation against Nephi is an accurate self-description.[6]

Laman's complaint about Nephi becomes far more meaningful and more ironic when one realizes that he is referring to a specific and apparently well-known scriptural depiction of Satan not found in the Old Testament but found in the Book of Moses, as if that description were in the brass plates. In this instance, the relationship between the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses illustrates an unexpected one-way nature.

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6   Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," 142.

The speech from Laman illustrates some of the reasons Reynolds gives for the one-way relationship between the two books:

> [I]t is clearly Moses that provides the unity and coherence to a host of scattered Book of Mormon references. It is the story of creation and subsequent events that supplies meaning to Book of Mormon language connecting (1) the transgression, fall, and death; (2) explaining the origins of human agency; (3) describing the character and *modus operandi* of Satan; (4) explaining the origins and character of secret combinations and the works of darkness — to mention only a few of the most obvious examples. The Book of Mormon is the derivative document. It shows a number of different authors borrowing from a common source as suited their particular needs — Lehi, Nephi, Benjamin, and Alma all used it frequently, drawing on its context to give added meaning to their own writings.
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> Perhaps most significantly, we have at hand a control document against which to check this hypothesis. A few years after receiving Moses, Joseph Smith translated an Abrahamic text. In spite of the fact that this new document contained versions of some of the same chapters of Genesis that are paralleled in the book of Moses, and in spite of the fact that the Book of Mormon has a large number of direct references to the Abraham, the person, detailed textual comparison demonstrates that this second document does not feature any of the phrases and concepts that have been reported above linking Moses to the Book of Mormon textual tradition. Nor does the distinctive, non-Old Testament phraseology of the book of Abraham show up in the Book of Mormon. The logic that would lead skeptics to conclude that these common concepts and expressions provide evidence that Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses runs aground on Abraham, as the skeptical hypothesis would seem to require a similar pattern there. But such a pattern is not even faintly detectable.
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> It is also impressive that most of the influence from the book of Moses in the Book of Mormon shows up early in the small plates and the writings of the first generation of Book of Mormon prophets — significantly, those who had custody

and long-term, firsthand access to the brass plates. Many of the later passages that use book of Moses terminology and concepts tend to repeat earlier Nephite adaptations of the original materials.[7]

Reynolds discusses many more parallels. However, based on further exploration, it appears that his case may be stronger than he realized. Even more terms and concepts may be relevant to his thesis, which we will now explore in laying the foundation for the dust-related themes to be treated more fully in Parts 2 and 3 of this work.

Table 1 lists the parallels identified by Reynolds, split between two groups. Group 1 contains parallels between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon that are not found in the KJV Bible. Group 2 comprises parallels that also have potential KJV sources.

Table 2 lists proposed new parallels identified in the present study. They will be discussed in more detail below.

Table 1. Summary of Reynolds' Concepts in the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon

Group 1: Concepts not directly found together in the KJV Bible		
Concept	**Book of Moses**	**Book of Mormon**
transgression-fall, fall-death	Moses 6:59	2 Nephi 9:6
order-days-years-eternity	Moses 6:67	Alma 13:7
Lord-from all eternity-to	Moses 7:29	Mosiah 3:5; Mosiah 8:18
God-gave-man-agency	Moses 7:32	2 Nephi 2:16
Lord's Spirit-withdraws-from-man	Moses 1:15	Alma 34:35; Helaman 4:24, 6:35, 13:8; Mosiah 2:36
children-whole-from foundation	Moses 6:54	Moroni 8:8, 12
only name-given-salvation*	Moses 6:52	Mosiah 3:17
devil-father-of all lies	Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 2:18; Ether 8:25; 2 Nephi 9:9
devil-lead-captive-his will	Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 2:27; Alma 12:11, 40:13;
devil-deceive-blind-lead	Moses 4:4	3 Nephi 2:2
lies-lead-well-deceive-eyes	Moses 4:4	1 Nephi 16:38
* This Group 2 item is listed here because it is linked to the preceding item in the text.		

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7   Ibid., 146.

Group 2: Concepts that also have KJV connections		
Concept	**Book of Moses**	**Book of Mormon**
earth-groans; rocks-rend	Moses 7:56	1 Nephi 12:4, 19:12; 3 Nephi 10:9
plan of salvation	Moses 6:62	Jarom 1:2; Alma 24:14, 34:16, 42:5;
eternal life	Moses 1:39	2 Nephi 2:27,28, 10:23, 31:18,20; Jacob 6:11; Enos 1:3; Mosiah 5:15,23–25, 18:9,13, 26:20, 28:7; Alma 1:4, 5:28, 7:16, 11:40, 13:29, 22:15; Helaman 5:8; 3 Nephi 9:14, 15:9; Moroni 9:25
unclean-dwell-presence-God	Moses 6:57	1 Nephi 10:21, 15:34; Alma 7:21
call on-all men-to repent	Moses 6:23	2 Nephi 2:21; Alma 12:33; 3 Nephi 11:32; Moroni 7:31
nowise-inherit-kingdom of God	Moses 6:57	Mosiah 27:26; Alma 5:51, 9:12, 39:9; 3 Nephi 11:38
things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	1 Nephi 15:32, 22:3; 2 Nephi 9:11–12; Mosiah 2:41; Alma 7:23, 12:16, 37:43; Helaman 14:16
people-dwell-in righteousness	Moses 7:16	1 Nephi 22:26
mine Only Begotten Son	Moses 6:52	Jacob 4:5, 11; Alma 12:33
works of darkness	Moses 5:55	2 Nephi 25:2, 26:10,22, 9:9, 10:15; Alma 37:21,23, 45:12; Helaman 6:28,30, 8:4, 10:3; Mormon 8:27
secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	2 Nephi 26:22; Alma 37:30,31; Helaman 2:8, 3:23, 6:38; 3 Nephi 4:29, 5:6, 7:6,9, 9:9; 4 Nephi 1:42; Mormon 8:27; Ether 8:18,19,22,24,27, 9:1, 11:15, 13:18, 14:8,10
wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Jacob 7:24; Omni 1:3,24; Alma 35:15, 62:35,39; Mosiah 29:36; Alma 45:11, Alma 60:16; Helaman 6:17, Mormon 8:8; Ether 14:21
shut out-from presence-God	Moses 6:49	2 Nephi 9:9
murder-get gain	Moses 5:31	Helaman 2:8, 7:21; Ether 8:16

Concept	Book of Moses	Book of Mormon
seeking for power	Moses 6:15	Alma 46:4
carnal, sensual, devilish	Moses 5:13	Mosiah 16:3; Alma 41:13, 42:10
hearts-wax-hard	Moses 6:27	Alma 35:15
lifted up-imagination-his heart	Moses 8:22	Alma 1:6
natural man	Moses 1:14	Mosiah 3:19; Alma 26:21
Omner	Moses 7:9	Mosiah 27:34
Shum	Moses 7:5	Alma 11:5
and thus-it was (is)-Amen	Moses 5:59	1 Nephi 9:6, 14:30, 22:31; Alma 13:9; Helaman 12:26

Table 2. Additional Concepts in the Book of Moses

and the Book of Mormon

Concept	Book of Moses	Book of Mormon
The strength of Moses	Moses 1:20–21,25	1 Nephi 4:2
Chains of darkness, chains of hell, chains of the devil	Moses 7:26,57	1 Nephi 1:13, 23; 2 Nephi 9:45, 28:19, 22; Alma 5:7,9,10, 12:6, 11, 17, 13:30, 26:14–15, 36:18
Song of redeeming love/ everlasting joy, contrasted with chains of darkness/ hell	Moses 7:53–57	Alma 5:7,9,26, 26:13–15, 36:18,22
Misery as fate of the wicked (those in Satan's power)	Moses 7:37,41	2 Nephi 2:5, 11, 13, 18, 23, 27, 9:9,46; Mosiah 3:25; Alma 3:26, 9:11, 26:20, 40:15,17,21, 41:4, 42:1,26; Helaman 3:29, 5:12, 7:16, 12:26; Mormon 8:38
Enoch's "heart swelled wide as eternity" and his "bowels yearned" in tasting the grief of human wickedness / Christ's "bowels of mercy" and infinite atonement	Moses 7:28–41, particularly 41	Bowels of mercy: Mosiah 15:9; Alma 26: 37, 34:15. Infinite atonement: 2 Nephi 9:7; Alma 34:10,14
Satan's power over the hearts of men (e.g., dominion over men's hearts and raging in their hearts)	Moses 6:15	1 Nephi 12:17, 13: 27,29, 14:7, 22:15,26, 30:18; Mosiah 3:6, Alma 8:9, 10:24,25, 12:11, 27:12; Helaman 6:21, 16:22,23; 3 Nephi 1:22, 2:2–3, 6:15–16, 11:29; 4 Nephi 28,31; Ether 8:15–26, 15:19; Moroni 9:3–4

Concept	Book of Moses	Book of Mormon
Shaking, trembling of heavens, earth, Satan, and the wicked / shaking off of Satan's chains, bands, and sin	Moses 1:21, 6:47–49, 7:41, 61	2 Nephi 1:13,23, 9:44–45, 28:19
Word returning void, in context of the Garden of Eden and the Fall	Moses 4:30	Alma 12:22–23,26, 42:2–5
"esteeming" scripture as a thing of "naught"	Moses 1:40–41	1 Nephi 19:6–9; 2 Nephi 3:2–3
Compound parallels 1: (A) the captivity of Satan, (B) the concept of "eternal life" and (C) the combination of "temporal" and "spiritual," describing God's creation	(A) Moses 4:4, (B) Moses 1:39; and (C) Moses 6:63	1 Nephi 14:7
Compound parallels 2: (A) hardening of hearts and (B) blinding of men	(A) Moses 6:15, 27, (B) Moses 4:4, 6:27	1 Nephi 7:8, 13:27, 17:30; Jarom 3; Mosiah 11:29; Alma 13:4, 48:3; 3 Nephi 2:1–2, 7:16; Ether 4:15, 15:19
Compound parallels 3: (A) Devil as father of lies, (B) shut out from the presence of God, and (C) secret combinations, (D) works of darkness, and (E) misery for the wicked	(A) Moses 4:4, (B) Moses 5:4, 41, 6:49, (C) Moses 5:51, (D) Moses 5:51, 55, and (E) Moses 7:37,41	2 Nephi 9:9
Compound parallels 4: (A) Satan's fall and his angels, (B) plan of salvation / merciful plan of God, (C) temporal vs. spiritual, (D) clothed with glory/purity/robe of righteousness	(A) Moses 4:3–4, 7:26, (B) Moses 6:62, (C) Moses 6:63, (D) Moses 7:3	2 Nephi 9:6–14: (A) vv. 8–9, (B) vv. 6, 13, cf. v. 28, (C) vv. 10–12, (D) v. 14
Compound parallels 5: (A) Satan will "rage in the hearts" of men, (B) chains of hell/destruction, (C) Satan leading men into captivity	(A) Moses 6:15, (B) Moses 7:26, 57, (C) Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 28:18–23

Concept	Book of Moses	Book of Mormon
Compound parallels 6: (A) the workmanship of God's hands and (B) counsel	(A)+(B): Moses 1:4, 7:32–40	(A)+(B): Jacob 4:9–10

The Strength of Moses: Discovering a New Connection

Reynolds' article was encountered while searching for material related to the role of the Pentateuch's Exodus account in the Book of Mormon. This came in the course of responding to a skeptic who had argued that the Arabian Peninsula evidence for the Book of Mormon could be dismissed since the Book of Mormon uses Exodus themes from the Old Testament that allegedly come from a "Priestly" source written after the Exile, making it impossible for Nephi to have used such material. While allusions to the Exodus and the apparent Priestly material in the Book of Mormon can be justified by the possibility of much earlier dates for the sources of those portions of the Old Testament,[8] something seemed odd about Nephi's wording in one of the key verses pointed to by the skeptic:[9] "Therefore let us go up; let us be *strong* like unto Moses; for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither, and our fathers came through, out of captivity, on dry ground, and the armies of Pharaoh did follow and were drowned in the waters of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 4:2; emphasis added).

Nephi seems to be making an allusion to a text or tradition about the strength of Moses that would be readily recognized by his brethren, but nothing from the Old Testament directly supported the use of that specific term for Moses.[10] A search in the KJV for the words *strength* or

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8 Jeff Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 1 of 2," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 19 (2016):153–239;http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/joseph-and-the-amazing-technicolor-dream-map-part-1-of-2/ and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 2 of 2," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture*, 19 (2016): 247–326; http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/joseph-and-the-amazing-technicolor-dream-map-part-2-of-2/.

9 Jeff Lindsay, "The Strength of Moses," *Mormanity*, Oct. 22, 2015; http://mormanity.blogspot.com/2015/10/the-strength-of-moses.html.

10 The term *"be strong"* is used in the Old Testament to encourage warriors in a military context, consistent with Nephi's reference to armies at the end of this verse. See David E. Bokovoy and John A. Tvedtnes, "Let Us Be Strong," *Testaments: Links Between the Book of Mormon and the Hebrew Bible* (Tooele, UT: Heritage Distribution, 2003), 39–42.

strong associated with Moses shows that the Pharaoh was strong (would use a "strong hand" in Exodus 6:1), that Joshua was commissioned to be strong (Deuteronomy 31:7, 23; Joshua 1:6–7), that the sea was strong (Exodus 14:27) as well as the wind (Exodus 10:19) — but not Moses. In fact, Moses is getting on in years, and in Exodus 17 the aging man needs the physical support of two other men to hold his staff up in the air during a battle. It is difficult to picture him as physically strong as the Exodus begins, so where did Nephi come up with the concept of Moses being strong? Further searching at this point led to Reynolds' article, which motivated a look in the Book of Moses as a possible source (or rather, a text that might have common material with the brass plates).

Two references to Moses receiving strength from the Lord were found in Moses 1:20–21. Then came a surprise in Moses 1:25: "And calling upon the name of God, he beheld his glory again, for it was upon him; and he heard a voice, saying: Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and *thou shalt be made stronger than many waters*; for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God" (emphasis added).

Moses, who had received strength from the Lord, would later be made even stronger than the many waters that he would cross. If something like the Book of Moses were on the brass plates, here we may have a possible source for Nephi's allusion to the strength of Moses. This may strengthen the case Reynolds made in his publication, which did not include any aspect of *strength* in the many parallels he discussed. If the strength of Moses was found on the brass plates and in the Book of Moses, might there be other connections?

Incidentally, a notable change in Moses 1:25 relative to OT2 involves the phrase "as if thou wert God" which in OT2 was changed by Joseph to "as my commandments,"[11] though this does not affect the application of this verse herein.

Chains of Darkness, Chains that Veil

After exploring the issue of strength, we turn our attention to the dramatic imagery of chains in the Book of Moses. This concept from a vision of Enoch was not covered by Reynolds. In Moses 7:26 Enoch sees Satan with "a great chain": "And he beheld Satan; and he had a great

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11   Kent P. Jackson, "Moses 1," in *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 57–66; https://rsc.byu.edu/pt-pt/archived/book-moses-and-joseph-smith-translation-manuscripts/moses-1

chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced."

Here the current LDS text has a noteworthy difference from OT2, which tells us that Satan "had a great chain in his hand, and he veiled the whole face of the earth." Satan does the veiling in OT2, but the reading may still imply that Satan uses a chain to do so. In any case, Satan's chain and the veiling of the earth are parallel in both versions. The text originally had "it" but that was later struck out and corrected to "he."[12] Could the change have been because a chain that veils does not seem logical?

A little later in Moses 7:57 we read of spirits in prison, held captive in "chains of darkness" until the judgment day (this follows the heavens being "veiled" in v. 56).

In light of Reynolds' work, the possibility of a connection between Enoch's mention of chains and references to chains in the Book of Mormon might be worth exploring. While chains and the captivity of Satan are frequent Book of Mormon themes, the Book of Moses phrase *chains of darkness* does not occur in the text.

If there were a connection to chains of darkness, it might be helpful in exploring influences on Nephite writers but need not be significant in terms of LDS apologetics, since the New Testament also mentions chains and the obvious link to captivity. Revelation 20:1 mentions a "great chain" associated with the bottomless pit, and "chains of darkness" are mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, though possibly connected back to the Book of Enoch cited in Jude 14. First Enoch, published in 1912 from a text in the Ge'ez language, often called "Ethiopic,"[13] mentions great iron chains[14] and has been supposed to be tied to the source of the passages from Peter and Jude,[15] especially since Jude explicitly refers to an ancient

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12   Ibid.

13   "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," trans. E. Isaac, in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983) 1:5–90; https://books.google.com/books?id=Z8cyt_SM7voC&pg=PA5. Also see *The Book of Enoch or First Enoch*, transl. by R.H. Charles (Escondido, CA: The Book Tree, 2000); https://books.google.com/books?id=wQpjqn26o60C&pg=PA106.

14   1 Enoch, 53:4, 54:3–4, 69:28 in E. Isaac's translation in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:37–38, 49. Further, 1 Enoch 56:1 at 39 speaks of iron nets in E. Isaac's translation but "iron chains" in that of Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, 108 (see other mentions of chains at 105–106, 141).

15   Frederic Huidekoper, *Judaism at Rome: B.C. 76 to A.D. 140*, in *The Works of Frederic Huidekoper*, vol. 1, 7th ed. (New York: D. G. Francis, 1887), 483–484;

Book of Enoch. Both Peter and Jude write of angels who sinned and are held in chains of darkness until the judgment day, aligning well with the discussion of Satan's rebellion in heaven in the Book of Moses and also with Moses 7:57 and the spirits in prison in "chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day."

In the KJV Old Testament, the connection between chains and darkness does not seem present, so if Nephi or others used a similar term, perhaps it was known from the brass plates. However, Psalm 107:10 could be relevant, considering the context of vv. 9–11. In the KJV this speaks of rebellious souls who "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron." But several other translations use "chains," such as the NIV:

> 10 Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness,
> prisoners suffering in iron chains,
>
> 11 because they rebelled against God's commands
> and despised the plans of the Most High.

While the phrase *chains of darkness* does not occur in any single verse of the Book of Mormon, Lehi's speech to his sons in 2 Nephi 1 may be relevant:

> 21 And now that my soul might have joy in you, and that my heart might leave this world with gladness because of you, that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the grave, arise from the dust, my sons, and be men, and be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things, that ye may not come down into captivity;
>
> 22 That ye may not be cursed with a sore cursing; and also, that ye may not incur the displeasure of a just God upon you, unto the destruction, yea, the eternal destruction of both soul and body.
>
> 23 Awake, my sons; put on the armor of righteousness. Shake off the *chains* with which ye are bound, and come forth out of *obscurity*, and arise from the dust.
>
> 24 Rebel no more against your brother, whose views have been glorious, and who hath kept the commandments from the time that we left Jerusalem; and who hath been an instrument in the hands of God, in bringing us forth into the land of

promise; for were it not for him, we must have perished with hunger in the wilderness; nevertheless, ye sought to take away his life; yea, and he hath suffered much sorrow because of you. [emphasis added]

In v. 23, a connection between chains and darkness is provided, though not verbatim. In the entry for obscurity in the 1828 dictionary of Noah Webster, the first definition listed for obscurity is "Darkness; want of light."[16] Perhaps this is another link in the chain.

In that verse, chains are contrasted with the armor of righteousness. Obscurity and dust are linked, and possibly contrasted with Lehi's following mention of Nephi, "whose views have been glorious" (2 Nephi 1:24). Thus, vision and glory (light) are in contrast with obscurity (darkness) and dust.

Dust and Obscurity: A Possible Wordplay in 1 Nephi 1:23?

The Hebrew word most commonly used for dust in the Bible is ʿaphar (עָפָר[17]), which comes from the primitive root ʿâphar (עָפַר[18]), "meaning either to be gray or perhaps rather to pulverize." The gray aspect of this word would seem to go well with obscurity.

Obscurity and dust are both mentioned in Isaiah 29, a part of Isaiah that Nephi quotes heavily, so it is reasonable to assume that similar Hebrew words were used in Nephi's statement. In Isaiah 29:4, the speech that whispers from the "dust" (actually occurring twice there) is from ʿaphar (עפר), mentioned above. This word occurs 15 times in Isaiah where it is always translated in the KJV as "dust" except in Isaiah 2:19, where it is "earth." Most occurrences of "dust" in Isaiah and elsewhere in the Old Testament are from the same root (accounting for 15 of the 17 cases in Isaiah), though "dust" in Isaiah 5:24 and 29:5 is taken from a

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16   Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (New York: S. Converse, 1828), vol. 2 (unpaged); available at *Archive.org*, https://archive.org/stream/americandictiona02websrich#page/196/mode/2up. For the same results from an online search engine, see "1828 Edition of Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language*," *Mschaffer.com*; http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/search/word,obscurity.

17   Ludwig Köhler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 861–862. Hereafter abbreviated as *HALOT*. See also Strong's H6083, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H6083.

18   Strong's H6080, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H6080. For comparison purposes, 2 Samuel 16:13 has both H6080 and H6083 in the same verse, both at the end.

less common root, ʾabaq (אבק[19]), referring to an especially fine powder. It occurs 6 times and accounts for fewer than 5% of the occurrences of "dust" in the KJV Old Testament.[20] Another Hebrew word, ʾepher (אפר), related to ʾaphar (אפר), can mean "loose soil crumbling into dust."[21] It uses aleph (א) instead of ayin (ע) as the first letter. Its 22 occurrences are always translated as "ashes" in the KJV but is rendered as "dust" in the NIV in Lamentations 3:16 and in Jonah 3:6.

The KJV word "obscurity" in Isaiah 28 is tied to אֹפֶל,[22] which can be transliterated as ʾophel: "ʾôphel, oʾfel (from H651,[23] ʾâphêl [אָפֵל]); meaning 'dusk:—darkness, obscurity, privily,: while ʾâphêl is "from an unused root meaning to set as the sun; dusky:—very dark.'"[24]

This word may also have a relationship to a place name, Ophel, spelled slightly differently (עֹפֶל).[25] It is also related to אֲפֵלָה, ʾaphelah, meaning darkness or gloominess.[26]

So "obscurity" could be ʾophel / ʾâphêl, while "dust" may be from ʿaphar. Perhaps this combination formed a wordplay in Lehi's original words reflected in 2 Nephi 1:23. The transliterated forms look similar but the initial letter in Hebrew differs: aleph in ʾophel versus ayin in ʿaphar. However, if ʾepher (אפר) or a form of it were used in this case, the wordplay might be stronger and still plausible.

Either ʾepher or ʿaphar as a word for "dust" would seem to offer a potential wordplay with ʾophel / ʾâphêl for "obscurity" in 2 Nephi 1:23. This potential wordplay may not have been noted before. This seems to

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19   *HALOT*, 9, and Strong's H80, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible. org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H80&t=Kjv.

20   Analysis done using the Blue Letter Bible app, BlueLetterBible.org.

21   *HALOT*, 80, also see Strong's H665, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www. blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H665&t=Kjv.

22   *HALOT*, 79.

23   Strong's H651, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/ lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H651&t=Kjv.

24   Strong's H652, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/ lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H652&t=Kjv.

25   *HALOT*, 861. See also Strong's H6077, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www. blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/ lexicon.cfm?Strongs= H6077&t=Kjv.

See also Norma Franklin, "Dispelling the Fog (אפל) Around the Ophel (עֹפֶל)," in *Exploring the Narrative: Jerusalem and Jordan in the Bronze and Iron Ages: Papers in Honour of Margreet Steiner*, ed. Noor Mulder, Jeannette Boertien, and Eveline van der Steen (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 286–296; available at Academia.edu via the shortcut http://tinyurl.com/fog-ophel.

26   *HALOT*, 79. See also Strong's H653, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www. blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H653&t=Kjv.

add to the parallelism and poetry of Lehi's words in a passage that draws from Isaiah 52 and, perhaps, a touch of the Book of Moses or related content on the brass plates.

There may be a relationship between ʾepher and ʾaphar. Abarim Publications' *Biblical Dictionary* notes that linguists see two separate roots in אפר (ʾpr), though "upon close inspection, these two may have been experienced as quite related by a Hebrew audience."[27] The first occurs in the Bible only as the masculine noun אפר (ʾeper / ʾepher), meaning ashes. "This decidedly negative word indicates worthlessness (Isaiah 44:20), disgust (Job 30:19), misery (Psalm 102:9), shame (2 Samuel 13:19) or humiliation (Genesis 18:27). Ashes in the Bible also serve as a symbol of mourning (Isaiah 61:3, Job 2:8)." The other root "occurs in cognate languages in the meaning of to enclose or envelop" and occurs as ʾapher (אפר) in 1 Kings 20:38, meaning covering or bandage.[28] Given the practice in ancient Israel of people mourning by wrapping themselves in sackcloth and covering themselves with ashes, these "two roots are obviously related."[29]

A fascinating instance of ʾepher coupled with ʿaphar is found in Job 42:6 in the phrase "repent in dust and ashes," a difficult verse that is analyzed in detail by Charles Muenchow, showing that it emphasizes the symbol of dust in the sense of a person's being humbled and brought to shame.[30] Muenchow argues that ʾepher here should not be "ashes" but "dirt" or "dust," being a "by-form" of ʿaphar.[31]

Regarding ʾepher (ashes) and its close relationship to dust, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* states:

> ["Ashes" is the] usual translation of the Hebrew "efer" which occurs often in expressions of mourning and in other connections. It is a symbol of insignificance or nothingness in persons or words (Genesis xviii. 27; Isaiah xliv. 20; Malachi iii. 21 [iv. 3]; Job xiii. 12, xxx. 19). In the Red Heifer ritual,

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27 "The Hebrew word: עפר," *Abarim Publications' Biblical Dictionary*, Abarim-publications.com;   http://www.abarim-publications.com/Dictionary/ay/ay-p-r.html#Vn8mXMB95AY.

28 Strong's H666, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H666&t=NASB.

29 "The Hebrew word: עפר," *Abarim Publications' Biblical Dictionary*.

30 Charles Muenchow, "Dust and Dirt in Job 42:6," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 108/4 (Winter, 1989): 597–611; http://www.jstor.org/stable/3267182.

31 Ibid., 608. See also footnote 49 at 608 (noting that "Staub" is German for "dust").

for purification from defilement by contact with a corpse (Numbers xix.), the Ashes of the offering are to be put into water, some of which is then to be sprinkled on the unclean person; their virtue is, of course, derived from the sacred material of the offering.

A mourner cast Ashes (or dust) on his head (II Sam. xiii. 9) or sat (Job ii. 8; Jonah iii. 6) or lay (Esther iv. 3) or rolled himself (Jeremiah vi. 26; Ezekiel xxvii. 30) in Ashes (or dust). The rendering "ashes" for the Hebrew word in question is, however, in some cases doubtful. In a number of passages in which it occurs (in all, indeed, except those relating to the Red Heifer), it might as well or better be translated "dust"; so where a person is said to eat, feed on, sit in, lie, or wallow in the "efer"; or put it on his head; or where it is used to represent finely attenuated matter (Psalms cxlvii. 16). Its use appears to be substantially identical with that of the word "'afar," commonly rendered "dust." The sense of humiliation is expressed by sitting or rolling in the "'afar" or dust (Isaiah xlvii. 1; Micah i. 7, vii. 17; Psalms lxxii. 9); grief and suffering by putting dust on the head (Joshua vii. 6; Job ii. 12). The word symbolizes attenuation and annihilation or extinction (Job xxx. 19; Psalms xviii. 43 [42]); it is even employed to designate the burnt remains of the Red Heifer (Numbers xix. 17). The two words are synonyms, and in the expression "dust and ashes" are combined for the sake of emphasis (with paronomasia: "'afar we-efer."). There is, however, a difference in the usage: in expressions of mourning it is only the latter ("efer") that occurs in combination with "sackcloth" (Jeremiah vi. 26; Isaiah lviii. 5; Daniel ix. 3; Esther iv. 1, 3), while the former is used for the physical material of the soil (Genesis ii. 7; Job xx. 11, and elsewhere).[32]

Thus, interesting dust-related themes can be pursued using both ʾepher and ʿaphar. We shall explore further links below, after considering the problem with Isaiah 52 and other material after Isaiah 40 being present in the Book of Mormon.

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32 Morris Jastrow, Jr., Crawford Howell Toy, Marcus Jastrow, Louis Ginzberg, and Kaufmann Kohler, "Ashes," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer and Cyrus Adler, 12 vols. (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1907); http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1944-ashes.

A Note on the Book of Mormon and Deutero-Isaiah

One can easily object to the influence of Isaiah 52, noted above, as source for dust-related imagery and language in the Book of Mormon. The problem is that many scholars believe that Isaiah chapters 40–55 were written by a second author, called "Deutero-Isaiah" or "Second Isaiah," during or after the Exile, and thus that part of the text could not have been on Nephi's brass plates. A detailed treatment of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, but there are reasonable grounds for accepting Isaiah as the author of those chapters commonly assigned to a much later source. Richard Schultz, Professor of Biblical Studies at Wheaton College, presents some of these reasons.[33]

Kenneth A. Kitchen also makes a brief case for the unity of Isaiah in *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*,[34] pointing to evidence from an Isaiah manuscript in the Dead Sea scrolls in which the full book of Isaiah is written with a division at the end of chapter 33, as if it were viewed as a book with two related halves. The parallelism between these two halves was long ago analyzed by W.H. Brownlee and said to be indicative of an overarching literary structure pointing to unity.[35] Brownlee calls the structure the "Bifid" format of Isaiah, consisting of seven broad parallel sections in both halves. This approach was taken up and greatly refined by Avraham Gileadi in *The Literary Message of Isaiah*.[36] Gileadi provides a reworked "Bifid structure" of seven parallel elements and shows broad themes with detailed parallels that strongly unite the entire book of Isaiah in a work whose detailed scholarship has been praised by non-LDS and LDS scholars.[37]

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33 Richard L. Schultz, "Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current Scholarship," in James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary*, eds., *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), Kindle edition, chapter 10.

34 K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 378–380.

35 W.H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 247–253; as cited by Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 582.

36 Avraham Gileadi, *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (New York: Hebraeus, 1994), Kindle edition.

37 See a discussion of the reception given to Gileadi's book by several significant scholars in Marc Schindler, "Deutero-Isaiah in the Book of Mormon?," *FAIRMormon*; http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/publications/deutero-isaiah-in-the-book-of-mormon.

The unity of Isaiah was apparently not questioned by the Qumran community in 200 BC nor by New Testament voices, Christ included, who quote from the latter portions of Isaiah as writings of Isaiah and not a later author (e.g., Matthew 12:17, quoting Isaiah 42:1–4, which Christ attributes to Isaiah; and Matthew 8:16–17, quoting Isaiah 53:4, which Christ attributes to Isaiah; see also John 12:37–41, which quotes from Isaiah 53:1 and then Isaiah 6:10, identifying both passages as from Isaiah).

A discussion of the issues for Book of Mormon students is provided by John W. Welch in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, concluding that portions of Isaiah quoted were probably on the brass plates and most likely authored by Isaiah.[38] Welch observes that there are reasonable grounds for accepting the unity of the version of Isaiah on the brass plates, though it may not have included the full book as we know it today. He also notes that the parts viewed as most strongly post-exilic by modern scholars, often ascribed to a "Tertio-Isaiah," are not quoted in the Book of Mormon.[39]

Some wordprint and other statistical or scientific studies have also pointed to unity in Isaiah or at least have not provided support for multiple authorship.[40]

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38. John W. Welch, "Authorship of the Book of Isaiah in Light of the Book of Mormon," in Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, eds., *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 421–37, see especially 434; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/bookchapters/Isaiah_in_the_Book_of_Mormon/23122%20Isaiah%20in%20BOM%20.pdf.

39. Ibid., 432–33.

40. For computer analysis in support of the unity of Isaiah, see L. Lamar Adams and Alvin C. Rencher, "A Computer Analysis of the Isaiah Authorship Problem," *BYU Studies*, 15/1 (Autumn 1974): 95–102; https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/computer-analysis-isaiah-authorship-problem or http://www.jstor.org/stable/43040541. See also L. Lamar Adams, "A Scientific Analysis of Isaiah Authorship," in *Isaiah and the Prophets: Inspired Voices from the Old Testament*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984), 151–64. Adams also discusses other wordprint studies claiming to show support for multiple authors, and explains that these fail basic tests and have seriously flawed methods. A later study showing different results without clear support for the Deutero-Isaiah theory, but with some stylistic differences among sections of Isaiah, is John L. Hilton, "Wordprinting Isaiah in the Book of Mormon," in Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, eds., *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 439–44; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/bookchapters/Isaiah_in_the_Book_of_Mormon/23122%20Isaiah%20in%20BOM%20.pdf.

I would further argue that the sophisticated application of dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon drawing heavily on Isaiah 52 — to be explored more fully in Parts 2 and 3 — is something far beyond Joseph Smith's abilities or perhaps even the state of biblical scholarship in Joseph's day and helps make the Book of Mormon itself a witness for the authenticity of the later Isaiah chapters quoted or relied upon in the Book of Mormon.

Chains and Darkness: Further Links

Second Nephi 1:23 ends an apparent chiasmus, as outlined in Donald R. Parry's valuable *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon*.[41] Parry identifies a seven-step chiasmus covering vv. 13–23, with the outer verses strongly connected by the themes of arising and shaking off chains. Significantly, the obscurity or darkness linked to dust and chains in v. 23 is also parallel to "a deep sleep" in v. 13. There Lehi urges his sons to awake from a "deep sleep, yea, even the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains with which ye are bound." "Sleep" and "hell" here are related to darkness and juxtaposed with chains.

In the following verse, 2 Nephi 1:14, Lehi also invokes the imagery of dust in the context of sleep and death, urging his wayward sons to "Awake! and arise from the dust," spoken by a trembling parent who will soon be laid in the grave. While detractors point to similarities in that verse with Shakespeare, Robert F. Smith points out that 2 Nephi 1:13–15 is actually solidly grounded in ancient Near Eastern concepts, especially Egyptian concepts, involving dust, the grave, and the bonds of death,[42] a topic we will return to in Part 2.

Other sections of the Book of Mormon display related concepts. Further, based on Parry's identification of poetic structures in the Book of Mormon, it appears that a majority of the references to chains occur in the form of chiasmus, with examples in 2 Nephi 1:13–23, 2 Nephi 9:44–46, 2 Nephi 28:16–20, Alma 5:7–9 and Alma 36. Metal chains, while

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41 Donald W. Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon: The Complete Text Reformatted* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2007), 59–60; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/book/poetic-parallelisms-in-the-book-of-mormon-the-complete-text-reformatted/.

42 Robert F. Smith, "Evaluating The Sources of 2 Nephi 1:13–15: Shakespeare and the Book of Mormon," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 22/2 (2013): 98–103; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=2891&index=8 or see PDF at http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/22/2/8Smith_Evaluating%20Sources%20of%202%20Nephi.pdf.

apparently not part of life in the New World for Book of Mormon peoples, long remained a part of Book of Mormon poetry.

Alma 5:7–9 is another example involving the chains of hell and darkness, shown here following Parry's formatting:

7   Behold, he changed their hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God.

    A   Behold, <u>they were in the midst of darkness</u>; nevertheless,

        B   <u>their souls</u> were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word;

            C   yea, <u>they were encircled about</u>

                D   by the <u>bands of death</u>, and the <u>chains of hell</u>, and an everlasting destruction did await them.

8   E   And now <u>I ask of you</u>, my brethren, were they destroyed?

                E   Behold, <u>I say unto you</u>, Nay, they were not.

9   D   And again I ask, were the <u>bands of death</u> broken, and the <u>chains of hell</u>

            C   which <u>encircled them about</u>, were they loosed? I say unto you,

        B   Yea, they were loosed, and <u>their souls</u> did expand, and they did sing redeeming love.

    A   And I say unto you that they <u>are saved</u>.[43]

This passage speaks of souls who were in a "deep sleep" and the "midst of darkness" in describing those who were "encircled about by the bands of death, and the chains of hell." But they were liberated as the chains of hell were loosed, causing their souls to expand and thus they did "sing redeeming love," a concept that is reiterated later in Alma 5 when Alma$_2$ contrasts those who are lost to the kingdom of the devil (v. 25) to those who experience a "mighty change of heart" and "feel to sing the song of redeeming love" (v. 26).[44]

Incidentally, the contrast between the chains of hell or darkness and singing songs of redeeming love or joy is found in Moses 7:53–57 (see Table 2). In v. 53, the Lord tells Enoch that "whoso cometh in at the gate and climbeth up by me" (the arise/ascend theme) "shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy." Enoch then asks when the Son of Man will come, and in vision is then shown the crucifixion of Christ (vv. 54–55), and the "heavens were veiled," the earth groaned the rocks were rent

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43   Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon*, 233.

44   Alma 5:25 concludes a chiasmus that begins with v. 20 according to Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon*, 235. However, I suggest that it should be extended to include Alma 5:26 and Alma 5:20. These are linked with a question to the audience: "can you think of being saved?" in v. 20 and "can you feel [to sing the song of redeeming love now]?" in v. 25.

(v. 56),[45] and then follows v. 57 which mentions spirits in prison "reserved in chains of darkness" until the judgment day. Shortly afterward, v. 61 describes the "veil of darkness" that will cover the earth. Singing is a common occurrence in the Bible, of course, but perhaps not with this particular contrast. In Isaiah 51, following the call for the Lord's arm to "awake, awake, put on strength" (v. 9), the redeemed of the Lord "come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head" (v.11). See also Isaiah 35:10.

Alma 26:13–15 provides another example of the redeemed being delivered from the chains of hell and darkness, coupled with singing redeeming love and contrasting uses of "encircled":

> 13 Behold, how many thousands of our brethren has he *loosed from the pains of hell*; and they are *brought to sing redeeming love*, and this because of the power of his word which is in us, therefore have we not great reason to rejoice? 14 Yea, we have reason to praise him forever, for he is the Most High God, and has *loosed our brethren from the chains of hell*. 15 Yea, they were *encircled about with everlasting darkness* and destruction; but behold, he has *brought them into his everlasting light*, yea, into everlasting salvation; and they are *encircled about with the matchless bounty of his love*; yea, and we have been instruments in his hands of doing this great and marvelous work. [emphasis added]

Here both the chains of hell and darkness encircle their victims.

Among other links between chains and darkness, when Alma$_2$ is converted and liberated from the "chains of death" (Alma 36:18), his liberation brings "marvelous light" (v. 20), in contrast to the darkness or obscurity linked to chains in 2 Nephi 1. Further, in the chiasmus proposed by Parry in 2 Nephi 9:44–46,[46] Jacob's plea for others to shake off the chains of the Adversary (v. 45) is paired with Jacob's shaking off their iniquities from his soul, which allows him to "stand with brightness" before God (v. 44).

In addition to the multiple links to darkness *per se*, chains in the Book of Mormon are also frequently associated with Satan or hell, captivity, destruction, and encirclement. As a basic example, in Alma 12:17,

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45   The rending of rocks and the groaning of earth in Moses 7:56 are themes also found in the Book of Mormon that are explored by Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," 149–150.

46   Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon*, 83.

those who suffer the second death are "*chained* down to an everlasting destruction, according to the power and captivity of Satan, he having subjected them according to his will," a verse that seems to draw upon Moses 7:57 ("spirits … in prison … reserved in chains of darkness" until the day of judgment) and Moses 4:4 (Satan seeks to "lead them captive at his will"). Alma 12:11–17 appears to be part of another chain-related chiasmus heavy in Book of Moses themes. These are the major elements from Parry's formatting:

11   And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries;
    A   and then they are taken **captive by the devil**, and **led by his will** down to destruction.
        B   Now this is what is meant by the **chains** of hell
12   C   And Amulek hath spoken plainly concerning death, and being raised from this mortality to a state of immortality
                D   and being **brought before** the bar of God to be judged according to our works. …
13   E   then will our **state be awful for then** we shall be condemned.
14   F   For our **words** will condemn **us**,
                            G   yea, all our works **will condemn us;** we shall not be found spotless;
                        F   and our **thoughts** will also condemn us.
                    E   and in this **awful state** we shall not dare to look up to our God…
15   D   But this cannot be; we must come forth and **stand before him** in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, acknowledge to our everlasting shame that his judgments are just … .
16   C   And now behold, I say unto you then cometh a **death**, even a second death. …
17   B   Then is the time when their torments shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever; and then is the time that they shall be **chained**
    A   **down to an everlasting destruction**, according to the power and **captivity of Satan**, he having subjected them according to **his will**.[47] [emphasis original]

The connection between chains and Satan, hell, destruction, captivity, etc., is of course found in the previously discussed passages involving chains (2 Nephi 1; Alma 5:7–10, Alma 26:13–15 and Alma 36), but see also 2 Nephi 9:45; 2 Nephi 28:19, 22; and Alma 13:30. References to chains stop after the Book of Alma, possibly consistent with the generally heavier reliance on the brass plates by Nephi's peers and Alma₂.

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47   Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon*, 256–57.

The encirclement aspect of chains in the Book of Mormon merits further attention. Alma 36:18 mentions Alma$_2$ having been "encircled about by the everlasting chains of death." Earlier Alma$_2$ in Alma 5:7, 9 twice speaks of the "bands of death" and the "chains of hell" that "*encircled* [others] about." Alma 12:6 speaks of the "snare of the adversary" to bring the people at Ammonihah "into subjection unto him, that he might *encircle* you about with his chains, that he might chain you down to an everlasting destruction. …" Shortly thereafter, Zeezrom, facing his own guilt, "began to be *encircled about* by the *pains* of hell" (Alma 14:6). The phrase "chains of hell" seems to fit the context better here as well as in Alma 26:13 ("loosed from the pains of hell," followed by Alma 26:14, which has "loosed [these] our brethren from the *chains* of hell"), making it tempting to speculate that "chains of hell" may have been intended but could have been introduced as a scribal error. The possibility of "pains of hell" as a scribal error may also be contemplated in Jacob 3:11: "O my brethren, hearken unto my words; arouse the faculties of your souls; *shake yourselves* that ye may awake from the slumber of death; and *loose yourselves* from the *pains* [chains?] *of hell* that ye may not become angels to the devil, to be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone which is the second death."

This involves the motifs of shaking, loosening, and captivity to the Devil where "chains" are used elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, including key passages drawing upon Isaiah 52:2. If Joseph might have dictated *chains* instead of *pains* in Alma 14:6 as well as Jacob 3:11 and Alma 26:13, this possibility has not been confirmed by the scholarship of Royal Skousen, whose *opus magnum*, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* proposes no such changes.[48] However, the Original Manuscript, which primarily has only "1 Nephi 2 through 2 Nephi 1, with gaps" and "Alma 22 through Helaman 3, with gaps" and a few other fragments, is apparently not extant for Jacob 3 nor Alma 14,[49] leaving us without some potentially useful data. It is extant for at least parts of Alma 26 and shows that "pains of hell" was written by Joseph's scribe.[50] Thus there is support in the Original Manuscript that "pains of hell" at least

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48   Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 162 (Jacob 3:11), 330 (Alma 14:6), and 372 (Alma 26:13).

49   Royal Skousen, "Book of Mormon Manuscripts" in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 185–186; http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Book_of_Mormon_Manuscripts.

50   Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, 765. A minor change relative to our current printing has been made in *The Earliest Text* in Alma 26:14

in this case was not a copying error made in preparing the Printer's Manuscript. Weighing against the possibility of error is the use of "the pains of hell" in a clearly reasonable context in Alma 36:13 ("tormented with …"). Further, Psalm 116:3 has "the pains of hell gat hold upon me" and the "sorrows of death compassed me," which are somewhat related to the encircling, binding action of chains, making the instances of "pains of hell" in question appear reasonable. Nevertheless, "chains" in the context for the three cases discussed above might seem more appropriate, though merely speculative.

As will be discussed in Part 3, the loosening of the pains of hell in Alma 26:13 brings the result of singing the song of redemptive love, a pairing that arguably enhances the chiasmus of Alma 36, where the "pains of hell" in v. 13 may be contrasted with the singing of angels in praising God in v. 22, after the pains and chains of hell have been loosed.

In addition to the use of "encircled about" with the chains (and pains) of hell, shaking, loosening, and awaking from slumber all are often associated with the chains of hell and with dust, as we explore more fully below.

While chains are not mentioned after Alma 36:18, where Alma$_2$ was "encircled about by the everlasting chains of death" and then liberated, Helaman 13:37 gives a prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite, who says that the wicked Nephites will find themselves "surrounded by demons" and "encircled about by the angels of him who hath sought to destroy our souls."

The negative instances of encirclement with the chains (or pains) of hell and death are contrasted with the redemptive encirclement in the arms of God's love or in the protective encirclement of God's robes or the robes or righteousness (2 Nephi 1:15; 2 Nephi 4:33; Alma 34:16; cf. Isaiah 61:10) or even the glorious fire of God (Helaman 5:23–24, 43–44), like the pillar of fire Lehi experienced (1 Nephi 1:6) or the combination of glorious fire and angels (3 Nephi 17:24; 19:14), in contrast to the demons surrounding wicked Nephites in Helaman 13.

Hugh Nibley has spoken about the significance of encirclement for the righteous as a temple-related symbol of God's love, blessing, and even ritual embrace as a member of God's family,[51] and Jeffrey Bradshaw

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based on the Original Manuscript, the insertion of "these" to give "loosed these our brethren from the chains of hell."

51   Hugh Nibley, "The Atonement of Jesus Christ, Part 1" *Ensign* (July 1990): 18; https://www.lds.org/ensign/1990/07/the-atonement-of-jesus-christ-part-1.

has added more as he discusses the Hebrew word for atonement, *kippur*, related to the Hebrew root *kaphar*:

> At a first level of understanding, the Hebrew term for atonement, *kippur*, can be thought of as roughly approximating the English word "cover." In the Mosaic temple, the idea of *kippur* related to the *kapporet* that formed the lid of the ark of the temple where Jehovah stood to forgive — or cover — the sins of the people. The veil of the temple, also a *kapporet*, covered the entry of the Holy of Holies. Besides the notion of "covering of sin" implied by the term *kippur*, however, there appears to have been the additional concept of "union," a "covering with glory," in the ancient temple cult. After the priest and the people had completed all the rituals and ordinances of the atonement, the veil was opened so that so the Lord could tell the people that their sins had been forgiven, symbolically welcoming them into His presence.[52]

Following a study of the term *kippur*, Nibley concluded that:

> [T]he literal meaning of *kaphar* and *kippurim* is a close and intimate embrace, which took place at the *kapporeth* or the front cover or flap of the Tabernacle or tent. The Book of Mormon instances are quite clear, for example, "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you." [Alma 5:33] "But behold the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled eternally in the arms of his love" [2 Nephi 1:15] … From this it should be clear what kind of oneness is meant by the Atonement — it is to be received in a close embrace of the prodigal son, expressing not only forgiveness but oneness of heart and mind that amounts to identity.[53]

Nibley, in explaining the "covering" aspects related to the Hebrew terms *kaphar* and *kippurim*, cites a portion of Lehi's speech in 2 Nephi 1:5, where Lehi states that he is redeemed, that he has seen God's glory and is "encircled eternally in the arms of his love." (Compare Mormon 5:11, 6:17; Doctrine and Covenants 6:20; and Isaiah 61:10.) The righteous, encircled

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52   Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The Meaning of the Atonement," *Meridian Magazine*, May 30, 2012; http://ldsmag.com/article-1–10925/.

53   Nibley, "The Atonement of Jesus Christ, Part 1."

with the arms of God's love in a sacred embrace, and encircled in the robes of righteousness, are redeemed and enter into God's family — into His presence — as sons and daughters, joining the heavenly choirs who surround God's throne. In contrast, the wicked are encircled as well, but with the chains of darkness, the bands of death, and a shroud of dust. To escape, they must shake off the chains and the bands, shake off the dust, and arise. (The theme of shaking is further discussed below.)

Related to "covering," several Hebrew words might also be considered for the concepts of encircling and surrounding. While the most commonly used root for this may be Strong's H5437, *sābab* (סָבַב), another word, Strong's H3803, *kāthar* (כָּתַר), may offer the potential for wordplays with Strong's H3772, *kārath* (כָּרַת), meaning to "cut," as in to "cut a covenant"[54] (to make a covenant) or to be cut off. On the other hand, Strong's H661, *ʾāphaph* (אָפַף)[55], used five times in the KJV and always translated as "compassed," might be close enough to words for dust (*ʾaphar*: עָפָר, H6080 or H6083), obscurity (*ʾophel*: אֹפֶל, H652), darkness (*ʾaphelah*: אֲפֵלָה, H653, or *ʾâphêl*: אָפֵל, H651), and ashes (*ʾepher*: אפר, H665) to offer interesting wordplays in dust-related passages.

The positive sense of encirclement, with its relationship to being covered, is an appropriate contrast to the negative encirclement of chains, where the chains of hell, death, and darkness not only enslave and lead to destruction but also "veil the earth with darkness." The ritual embrace at the veil for those entering God's presence and the parting of the veil for entry into majestic light are contrasted with the "great chain" in Satan's hand that "veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness" (Moses 7:26), related to the subsequent mention in the Book of Moses of the heavens being veiled at the death of Christ (Moses 7:56) and the "veil of darkness" Enoch saw covering the earth in the last days when the "heavens shall shake" and will be darkened (Moses 7:61).

In the Book of Mormon, those who once were encircled with the chains of hell but are freed may be described as "encircled" with God's love, according to Alma 26:15 above, or encircled with the robes of righteousness, as Nephi writes in his psalm (2 Nephi 4:33, after asking that he may "shake" at the appearance of sin in v. 31). They are to be

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54   Jared T. Parker, "Cutting Covenants," in *The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament: The 38th Annual BYU Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009); https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/gospel-jesus-christ-old-testament/7-cutting-covenants.

55   Strong's H661, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H661&t=Kjv.

lifted up (the "arise" theme) at the last day and also tend to break out into song. In addition to Alma 26:13–15 above, see also Alma 12:5–6, 11, 17, Alma 5:6–11; Alma 13:29–30; and the last place where chains are mentioned in the Book of Mormon, Alma 36:18: "Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death."

Interestingly, "encircled about by the chains of death" is how Alma$_2$ sums up his miserable state as he turns to the Lord. This is at the heart, the pivot point, of the Book of Mormon's most famous chiasmus in which he describes his miraculous encounter with the power of the Atonement. Could it be related to Lehi's words and the themes associated with dust? Could there be more to Alma 36 than previously recognized? I think so. To explain, though, I need to share further information here to lay a foundation for Part 1, and then in Part 3, we will examine some often-overlooked content that adds richness to Alma 36.

How Can a Chain Veil the Earth? Another Possible Wordplay

The verse in the Book of Moses that launched an exploration of dust themes in the Book of Mormon, Moses 7:26, poses a puzzle: "And he beheld Satan; and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced."

How does a chain veil the earth with darkness (or how might it help Satan in veiling the earth, if "it" in Moses 7:26 should be "he," based on Joseph's correction in OT2[56])? Chains are not especially opaque. A search for "veil" and "chain" in the Old Testament yielded these possibilities:

- Candidate for "chain": *rābiyd* (רביד[57]), a necklace, neck chain or collar, used in Genesis 41:42 (Pharaoh gives Joseph "a gold chain about his neck") and Ezekiel 16:11 ("I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put … a chain on thy neck"). From *rābad* (רָבַד[58]), meaning to spread or bedeck.

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56   Jackson, "History of the Book of Moses," in *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts.*

57   *HALOT*, 1191. See also Strong's H7242, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H7242&t=Kjv .

58   Strong's H7234, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H7234&t=Kjv .

- Candidate for "veil"/"vail": *rādiyd* (רדיד[59]), a "veil" in Song of Songs 5:7 and "vails" in Isaiah 3:23, a word which can mean a "thin outer garment" or a shawl, headcloth, or large veil.[60]

If these words were actually used in a Hebrew document (say, on the brass plates), then Satan's chain, a *rābiyd*, wouldn't necessarily be something that looks frightening but could be ornamental and attractive, the kind we might gladly receive and wear around our necks with pride, only to realize too late that, like the golden handcuffs we speak of in the business world, it limits our freedom. Satan's pretty chains are chains of slavery. They connect us to his crushing yoke and lead us captive into bitter servitude. We like fools are happy to clasp them around our necks. Perhaps that is not an intended meaning in the original but one we might find as we liken the text to our modern situation. Perhaps Satan's chains blind us not with their opacity but with their deceptive attractiveness, bringing us into spiritual darkness. While here in mortality, his chains can easily be shaken off by something as simple as turning our heart to Christ and taking His light yoke instead. This is why Satan must resort to constant deception and flattery in order to lead us "carefully down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:21–22).

Second, the veil as some form of *rādiyd* would seem appropriate, for it would be a cloak, spread out widely over the earth. This would seem to provide a wordplay with *rābiyd*. Four letters are involved, three of which are identical, and the "b" and "d" sounds are not that distant phonetically.[61]

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59   *HALOT*, 1190–1191.

60   Strong's H7289, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H7289&t=Kjv .

61   In personal correspondence Robert F. Smith (email received March 8, 2016, cited with permission), while noting that this could be a plausible wordplay, Smith also observed that other Hebrew words could still fit and provide some related meaning involving the attractive tools of Satan:

Jeff, it is at least conceivable that such a wordplay was intended, just as you suggest in the Mormanity blog [Jeff Lindsay, "The Chain that Veils: A Word Play in Moses 7:26?," Mormanity, March 7, 2016, http://mormanity.blogspot.hk/2016/03/the-chain-that-veils-word-play-in-moses.html]. Especially since *rabid* can mean "necklace, ornament, chain," from *rabad* "spread out, lay out," while *radid* is "scarf, veil, mantle; light summer garment" — the pun being more important than making good sense.

It is also possible that the two words applied were *paroket* and *sharsheret*, which appear near each other in II Chronicles 3:14,16, where the first

In examining further elements related to Noel Reynolds' hypothesis regarding the brass plates, we have explored many links to the concept of chains in the Book of Moses, and have also considered the "strength" of Moses as another concept that may have been on the brass plates and the Book of Moses. There are still a few others to consider.

Further Links Between the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses

As an illustration of further correspondences between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon beyond those detailed by Reynolds, consider 1 Nephi 14:7. This verse contains at least three of the parallels from his list: (1) the description of Satan, (2) the concept of "eternal life" in Moses 1:39 (though found frequently in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, it is not used in the Old Testament), and (3) the combination of "temporal" and "spiritual," describing God's creation (Moses 6:63; cf. 1 Nephi 15:32; 22:3; Mosiah 2:41; Alma 7:23; Alma 12:16; and Alma 37:43):[62]

> For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other — either to the convincing of them unto peace and *life eternal*, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the *blindness of their minds* unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, *both*

refers to the "veil" of the temple as a tapestry decorated with cherubim, while the second is a "chain" or kind of filigree work of pomegranates or rosettes festooned around the capitals of the columns — it is the decor in each case which gets the attention (cf. Exodus 26:31, 28:14, Leviticus 16:2, I Kings 7:17).

Smith also points out that while Hebrew sources could be reflected as puns in the Brass Plates, "that would have to be mediated via Egyptian, and only the bilingual scribe would fully understand it," complicating the analysis of potential word plays. Absent an ancient text, of course, we have only guesswork when it comes to potential word plays in the Book of Moses. But it may be worth observing that the somewhat puzzling imagery of the chain in Enoch's vision may have been more fitting in Hebrew.

Kevin Tolley in personal correspondence (received July 1, 2016) stated that there "might be a connection between the Egyptian "š3š3t" "Necklace" (Faulkner, 261) and the Hebrew "šaršrah" (חרשרש). See 2 Chronicles. 3:16."

62   Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," 142–44, 150–52.

temporally and spiritually, according to the *captivity* of the *devil*, of which I have spoken (1 Nephi 14:7) [emphasis added].

Recall the key elements of Moses 4:4: "And he became Satan, yea, even the *devil*, *the father of all lies*, to *deceive* and to *blind* men, and to *lead* them *captive at his will*, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice."

In 1 Nephi 14:7, the devil and related concepts of deception (hardness of hearts, perhaps, as treated above in discussing Satan's dominion), blindness, and being delivered (brought) into captivity are included, as is the pairing of "temporally and spiritually," and the concept of "life eternal," all with connections to the Book of Moses. Reynolds wrote that the first occurrence of "eternal life" (a Book of Moses concept not found in the Old Testament) was in 2 Nephi 2:27, "life eternal" is essentially equivalent.[63]

This clustering of concepts in the writings of Nephi is characteristic of his approach to Isaiah also, where he pulls together verses from different portions of the text to bring out new meaning.[64] While Isaiah 29:14 with its "marvelous work among this people" is tied to the opening phrases of 1 Nephi 14:7, references to "work" and "life eternal" could be building upon a text related to Moses 1:39 ("my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man"). In addition to the other Book of Moses concepts noted in this passage, the "hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds" might have some relationship. Satan's blinding of men has been noted in Moses 4:4, and Satan's influence of the hearts of men in Moses 6:15 will be discussed below. Moses 6:27 also has Enoch speaking for the Lord in telling the people that their "hearts have waxed hard" and "their eyes cannot see afar off," suggestive of blindness. Perhaps these concepts have been pulled together by Nephi to give "hardness of their hearts" coupled with "blindness of their minds," or perhaps it comes from another possibly related source or is Nephi's own wording.

The pairing of "hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds" strikes me as possibly a formulaic construction based on how Nephi uses it elsewhere. For example, in drawing lessons from the

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63   Ibid., 150.

64   See, for example, the technique of "Gezera Shawa" as discussed in Matthew L. Bowen, "Onomastic Wordplay on *Joseph* and *Benjamin* and *Gezera Shawa* in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 255–273; http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/onomastic-wordplay-on-joseph-and-benjamin-and-gezera-shawa-in-the-book-of-mormon/.

Exodus in 1 Nephi 17:30, Nephi says the rebellious Israelites "*hardened their hearts* and *blinded their minds*, and reviled against Moses and the true and living God." Perhaps that phrasing was derived from an Exodus-related text. It actually first occurs in 1 Nephi 7:8, where Nephi is describing his family's exodus from Jerusalem to the promised land and in the wilderness is now coping with the rebellion of his brothers. In his account, rich in subtle Exodus themes,[65] he condemns his brothers for the "hardness of their hearts" and asks "how is it that ye are so hard in your hears and so blind in your minds?" Hardening of hearts and blinding of eyes also occurs in 1 Nephi 13:27, Mosiah 11:29, Jarom 3, and continues with Alma 13:4 in a discussion of ancient priesthood concepts apparently taken from the brass plates. The pairing also occurs in Alma 48:3; 3 Nephi 2:1–2, 7:16; Ether 4:15, and 15:19. While the Bible does speak of hearts being hardened (e.g., Exodus 4:21; Deuteronomy 15:7; Psalm 95:8) and minds being blinded (2 Corinthians 3:14, 4:4), those concepts are not paired as they are frequently in the Book of Mormon. The possible connection to the Book of Moses via a hypothesized brass plates linkage is speculative but may merit further exploration and consideration of other ancient texts.

Misery and Its Cure at an Infinite Price

Another possible link to consider is the *misery* which Satan brings upon his followers. *Misery* or *miserable* occurs several times in the KJV but not in the context of the fate of the wicked who yield to Satan, as is taught in ominous language in Moses: "Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom" (Moses 7:37) — a perfect anti-parallel to the Gospel message for those who follow Jesus Christ. The occurrences in the Book of Mormon are much more common than in the Bible and much more consistent with the Book of Moses's usage.[66]

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65 Terrence L. Szink, "Nephi and the Exodus," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1991), 39–42; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1111&index=6.

66 The word *misery* occurs much more often in the Book of Mormon than it does in the KJV Bible: there are eleven instances in the Bible versus twenty-four instances in the Book of Mormon, and the latter usually applies the term in the related context of the state of the wicked after death, associated with Satan. For "miserable," there are four occurrences in the Book of Mormon and six in the KJV but again lacking the Book of Mormon's rather consistent focus on the state of souls who fall into Satan's power. Incidentally, in Moses 7:37, the OT2 had a change in which "father" was changed by Joseph to "master," which does not affect the

Heavy use of *misery* is found in Lehi's speech in the portion given in 2 Nephi 2, where misery is involved in several contrasts (vv. 11, 13, 23) and being miserable is part of the punishment of the wicked (v. 5). Misery is also presented as a goal of Satan for all mankind, for "because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind," (v. 18), a goal reiterated in v. 27. Second Nephi 9, discussed below, also twice associates Satan with misery (vv. 9, 46). King Benjamin warns the wicked that they face a "state of misery" (Mosiah 3:25). A large number of references to misery come from the words of Alma₂, a man who was a student of the brass plates, and his references include the misery of those who inherit the kingdom of the devil (Alma 41:4), building on the principle of opposition that Lehi introduced. Alma 3:26 speaks of those fallen in war going to "eternal happiness or eternal misery, according to the spirit which they listed to obey." Other relevant examples include Alma 9:11, 26:20, 40:15, 17, 21; 42:1,26; Helaman 3:29, 5:12, 7:16, 12:26, and Mormon 8:38.

The misery-related aspect of the Book of Enoch may involve yet another Book of Mormon issue.

After the doom of misery is mentioned in Moses 7:41, Enoch saw the wicked with a touch of God's perspective and compassion as he "looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms as wide as eternity, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned, and all eternity shook."[67]

Here, in an imitation of God's love and perhaps even His Son's offering, Enoch stretches out his arms as body and soul yearn for the welfare of others. Terryl and Fiona Givens describe this scene as "plumb[ing] the mystery of the weeping God" in which Enoch "is raised to a perspective from which he sees the world through God's eyes."[68] His heart swells (in the canonized version that we have), perhaps like Christ's

analysis of "misery" here. See Kent P. Jackson, "Moses 7," in *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 117–136; https://rsc.byu.edu/pt-pt/node/2135.

67   In OT2, Joseph had changed the original "his heart swelled wide as eternity" to "he beheld eternity" (Jackson, "Moses 7"), a change that was dropped in the 1867 Committee Manuscript that would be the basis for the current LDS version of the Book of Moses (Jackson, "History of the Book of Moses," in *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*). Whether Enoch's heart swelled wide as eternity or he otherwise beheld eternity, he appears to obtain a view or taste of eternity in this experience.

68   Terryl L. Givens and Fiona Givens, *The God Who Weeps: How Mormonism Makes Sense of Life* (Salt Lake City: Ensign Peak, 2012), 105.

who appears to have literally died from a "broken heart."[69] The yearning of Enoch's bowels also points to Christ's suffering in the Atonement that gave Him the "bowels of mercy" that are mentioned several times in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 15:9; Alma 26:37; and Alma 34:15).

If something similar to this passage were present on the brass plates, it could have served as a basis for a few parts of the Book of Mormon that are linked to the brass plates. The Book of Mormon's first reference to an "infinite atonement" occurs in 2 Nephi 9:7, a passage surrounded by other material that appears to be rich in Book of Moses themes. Those connections include Reynolds' concept of "transgression-fall, fall-death" in Moses 6:59 reflected in 2 Nephi 9:6 (see Table 1) and multiple concepts in 2 Nephi 9:9 (see Table 2, discussed further below). There are also references to the plan of salvation (Moses 6:62) in 2 Nephi 9:6, 13; the fall of Satan and his angels (Moses 4:3–4, 7:26) in 2 Nephi 9:8–9; "temporal" versus "spiritual" death (related to Moses 6:63) in 2 Nephi 9:11–12; and the chains of Satan (Moses 7:26, 57) in 2 Nephi 9:45. Enoch was "clothed upon with glory" in Moses 7:3 as he saw the Lord in a theophany on a mountain, and in 2 Nephi 9:14, the righteous who enter the Lord's presence will be "clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness," also suggestive of Isaiah's beautiful garments (Isaiah 52:1). (A possible connection involving 2 Nephi 9:44 will be discussed later.) Given the abundance of possible links to Book of Moses material in 2 Nephi 9, is it possible that the concept of an infinite atonement was on the brass plates, and possibly tied to Enoch's vision?

It is significant that the richest allusions to Book of Moses material occur among the early Nephite writers, especially Lehi and his righteous sons, but also the great orator and student of the brass plates, Alma$_2$. These allusions often seem to cluster together, especially in the writings of early prophets presumably most familiar with the brass plates. An example of such clustering, again mentioning the devil, is 2 Nephi 9:9, a verse cited by Reynolds but without the emphasis that it may deserve:

> 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,

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69 The water rather than blood that was released when the spear struck Christ in the side while on the cross has been understood as a symptom of a medical condition from what can be called "a broken heart." See W. Reid Lichfield, "The Search for the Physical Cause of Jesus Christ's Death," *BYU Studies* 37/4 (1997-98); http://byustudies.byu.edu/content/search-physical-cause-jesus-christs-death.

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*. [emphasis added]

This single verse in 2 Nephi involves the Book of Moses themes of the devil as the "father of all lies" (Moses 4:4), being "shut out from the presence of God" (Moses 5:4, 41, 6:49), "secret combinations" (Moses 5:51), "works of darkness" (Moses 5:51, 55), and the concept of *misery* for those who follow Satan (Moses 7:37, 41). It also refers to the beguiling of Adam and Eve, a theme in common with the Book of Moses and Genesis, and Satan's ability to make impressive appearances in his efforts to deceive, possibly related to his appearance to Moses wherein he commanded Moses to worship him, though clearly lacking the majestic glory of God. In Moses 6:49, just before a mention of being "shut out from the presence of God" and following a reference to *misery* in the preceding verse, we also read that "Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him." The detail of appearing as an angel of light is not given here but may be related. Satan appearing as an angel of light to Adam and Eve is also a theme in the pseudepigraphal *First Book of Adam and Eve*[70] and is mentioned, of course, in 2 Corinthians 11:14.

The infinite atonement is also mentioned in Alma 34. Amulek mentions Alma$_2$'s preaching in Alma 33 based upon brass plates material (Zenos, Zenock, and Moses, mentioned in Alma 34:7), then describes the need for an "infinite and eternal sacrifice" (Alma 34:10, 14). It is the suffering of the Messiah in completing his infinite atonement that brings about the "bowels of mercy" in Alma 34:15, perhaps reminiscent of the yearning of Enoch's bowels. As a result of this infinite atonement, "mercy … encircles [the redeemed] in the arms of safety" as part of the "great and eternal plan of redemption" (Alma 34:16), similar to the plan of salvation in Moses 6:62. Another Book of Moses concept identified by Reynolds, the withdrawal of the Lord's Spirit from men (Moses 1:15), is also present in Alma 34:35 (see Table 1).

The Book of Mormon's doctrine of an infinite atonement has been said to betray nineteenth century origins for the book, an argument that

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70   *First Book of Adam and Eve*, 9:1 [Vita], in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1983), 2:260; https://books.google.com/books?id=RU77ekrD_vIC&pg=PA260.

has been rebutted in several ways.[71] As a further consideration, given the abundant material possibly related to the Book of Moses found near the Book of Mormon's references to the infinite atonement, could that concept draw upon brass plate material? Enoch's experience with God's cosmic perspective caused eternity to shake as his heart swelled as wide as eternity, suggestive of the eternal, infinite scope of Christ's love and of His atoning sacrifice. Could the imagery in Enoch point to the infinite, cosmic scope of God's compassion and the Atonement?[72]

Rage and Satan's Dominion Over the Hearts of Men

Another important teaching about Satan in the Book of Moses is how he influences men. Reynolds points to Moses 6:15 as a possible source for three important Book of Mormon concepts: Satanic *secret works* (related to "secret combinations" in Moses 5:51), *seeking for power*, and *wars and bloodshed*, a phrase frequently used in the Book of Mormon, though sometimes with slight variations.[73] Two more concepts in this verse may merit consideration: Satan's "dominion" over men and his ability to "rage in their hearts": "And the children of men were numerous upon all the face of the land. And in those days Satan had great *dominion* among men, and *raged in their hearts*; and from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed; and a man's hand was against his own brother, in administering death, because of secret works, seeking for power" (Moses 6:15) [emphasis added].

The theme of dominion over men is akin to Satan's quest for power over men, which Reynolds views as a theme related to Moses 4:3, where Satan "sought to destroy the agency of man" and sought God's own power.

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71 Jeff Lindsay, "Mercy, Justice, and the Atonement in the Book of Mormon: Modern or Ancient Concepts?," *Mormon Answers*, JeffLindsay.com; http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/mercy.shtml.

72 There is more to Enoch's vision and to the many themes in the brief Book of Moses that show connections to ancient temple themes and other ancient traditions, possibly including the brass plates. Jeffrey Bradshaw, for example, has detailed many noteworthy ancient connections in the Book of Moses that merit further consideration. See Jeffrey Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses* (Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Publishing, 2010). Bradshaw has also noted parallels with other ancient Jewish texts in Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The LDS Story of Enoch as the Culminating Episode of a Temple Text," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53/1 (2014), 38–73; http://byustudies.org/content/lds-story-enoch-culminating-episode-temple-text.

73 Jacob 7:24; Omni 1:3, 24; Alma 35:15; 62:35, 39. Cf. also Mosiah 29:36; Alma 45:11; 60:16; Helaman 6:17; Mormon 8:8; Ether 14:21, as listed by Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," 167–68.

Satan's "dominion" over man may be equally relevant, and that word may be used to reflect Satan's corruption of the dominion that God has, a tiny portion of which God delegated to Adam and Eve (Moses 2:26, 28). Moses 6:15 adds a dimension to Satan's power over men by showing that his dominion has a relationship to anger, for his dominion is manifest as he "rage[s] in their hearts," leading to wars, bloodshed, etc.

In light of Moses 6:15 and the link between Satan's dominion/power/ hold over men and his anger-inducing influence over the hearts of men, a persistent pattern in the Book of Mormon becomes interesting, for most Book of Mormon references to Satan's power over men also mention their hearts. Indeed, one of the first examples of this is 1 Nephi 14:7, our first example above of additional links between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon. It relates the "hardness of [men's] hearts" to "the captivity of the devil" — Satan's influence over the hearts of men again being a key tool toward achieving his aim of gaining dominion and making us his captives.

Further examples include:

- 1 Nephi 12:17, where "the mists of darkness are the temptations of the *devil*, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the *hearts* of the children of men, and *leadeth them away*" to be lost.
- 1 Nephi 13:27, 29, were "*Satan* hath great *power* over them" who were deceived by the great and abominable church, acting to "blind the eyes and harden the *hearts* of the children of men."
- 1 Nephi 22:15, where "the time cometh speedily that *Satan* shall have no more *power* over the *hearts* of the children of men."
- 1 Nephi 22:26, where in the great Millennium, "*Satan* has no *power*; … for he hath no *power* over the *hearts* of the people."
- 2 Nephi 30:18: "*Satan* shall have *power* over the *hearts* of the children of men no more."
- Mosiah 3:6: "And he shall cast out *devils*, or the evil spirits which dwell in the *hearts* of the children of men."
- Alma 8:9: "*Satan* had gotten great *hold upon the hearts* of the people of the city of Ammonihah."
- Alma 10:24, 25: The people in Ammonihah are *angry* because of Satan's "*great hold upon*" their *hearts*. (He also blinds their eyes.)
- Alma 27:12: "*Satan has great hold on the hearts* of the Amalekites [or Amlicites[74]], who do stir up the Lamanites to *anger* against

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74 J. Christopher Conkling, "Alma's Enemies: The Case of the Lamanites, Amlicites, and Mysterious Amalekites," *Journal of Book of Mormon*

their brethren to slay them." (Moses 6:15 indicates that as a result of Satan's dominion, "a man's hand was against his own brother.")

- Helaman 6:21: "*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 oaths [secret combinations, with "secret murders" nearby in Helaman 6:17, and "secret signs" and "secret words" in the following verse, Helaman 6:22], … that they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their stealings." V. 22 speaks three times of "brothers" in those evil covenants.

- Helaman 16:22: the people had foolish and vain imaginings "in their hearts … and they were much disturbed, for *Satan did stir them up* … that he might *harden the hearts* of the people against that which was good … ."

- Helaman 16:23: "*Satan* did get *great hold upon the hearts* of the people."

- 3 Nephi 1:22: lies were "sent forth among the people by *Satan*, to *harden* their *hearts*" and deceive them.

- 3 Nephi 2:2–3: The people were "imagining up some vain thing in their *hearts*" due to the "*power of the devil*," who sought to "deceive the *hearts* of the people; and thus did *Satan get possession of the hearts* of the people again, insomuch that he did blind their eyes and lead them away … ." Thus "*Satan* did go about, *leading away the hearts* of the people."

- 3 Nephi 6:15–16: "*Satan had great power*, unto the stirring up of the people … tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. And thus *Satan* did *lead away the hearts* of the people … ." The result of this power over men's hearts is that "many of the people were exceedingly *angry*" (v. 21) at inspired teachers of righteousness (v. 20). "Angry" occurs 3 times in v. 21, and there follows a secret scheme in which the angry priests and lawyers secretly put prophets to death (vv. 22–24). The wicked murderers secretly "combine" in a wicked covenant that originally "was given and administered by the devil" (vv. 27–28). This secret combination results in the destruction of the government in 3 Nephi 7:5–6, as they "yield themselves unto the *power of Satan*."

- 3 Nephi 11:29: Christ warns that "the devil … stirreth up the hearts of the children of men to content with anger, one with another."

- 4 Nephi 28: An apostate "church did multiply exceedingly because of iniquity, and because of the *power of Satan* who did *get hold upon their hearts*." Then in v. 31, "the people did harden their hearts, and did seek to kill" the disciples of Christ.

- Ether 8:15–26: Moroni describes the rise of a Satanic secret combination among the Jaredites. "And they 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" (v.16, cf. v. 23). Moroni warns us to oppose a similar combination in our day that will seek massive power, for "it is built up by the *devil*, who is the father of all lies; even that same liar who beguiled our first parents, yea, even that same liar who hath caused man to commit murder from the beginning; *who hath hardened the hearts of men* that they have murdered the prophets … " (v. 25). Moroni was commanded to write about it "that evil may be done away, and that the time may come that *Satan* may have no *power upon the hearts* of the children of men" (v. 26).

- Ether 15:19: "*Satan* had *full power over the hearts* of the people; for they were given up unto the *hardness of their hearts*, and the blindness of their minds that they might be destroyed; wherefore they went again to battle." Thus they fight (vv. 20–23), "drunken with *anger*" (v. 23).

- Moroni 9:3–4: Mormon fears the Nephites will be destroyed, for "*Satan stirreth them up* continually *to anger* one with another." When he preaches the word of God "they tremble and *anger* against me; and when I use no sharpness they *harden their hearts* against it."

In fact, the majority of Book of Mormon references to Satan's power or influence involve his influence over the hearts of men and his ability to stir them up to anger, consistent with influence from possible content on the brass plates overlapping with the Book of Moses. Other somewhat related examples could be cited, such as Alma 12:11, where those who harden their hearts are taken captive by the devil. Hearts, Satan, and his power to captivate, often involving anger, are a persistent thread in the Book of Mormon.

The Hebrew word for "heart," *leb* (לֵב, Strong's H3820[75]) should not be confused with the modern medical understanding of heart, as Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle explains.[76] The heart is related to the will, the intellect, and the choice to walk in the law of God or against the law. When "broken," it can be a sign of deformity and walking improperly before God, akin to broken bones, and the broken heart can then be bound up like a wound in order to be healed and restore the injured party to health in the covenant.[77] We could therefore say a heart that is hardened or, in the case of Book of Mormon themes, controlled by Satan, is one that leads a person to walk perversely, contrary to the law of God and in violation of the covenant. Satan's dominion over a heart expresses his power to lead the person along Satan's paths toward hell. The actions and paths taken, ultimately leading to captivity, may be far more important here than any emotions *per se*.

Turning back to the concept of Satan's "rage" in the hearts of men in Moses 6:15, rage is not frequently used in the KJV Bible. It can refer to the anger of ordinary mortals, including those who are angry at the righteous (Psalm 2:1[רגש]; Psalm 46:6 [המה]; Daniel 3:13 [Aramaic: [רגז]]) or to natural elements such as waters and floods that rage (Ether 3:3; Psalm 89:9 [גאות]; Proverbs 6:34 [המה]; and Jonah 1:15 [זעף]). The Book of Moses concept of rage as a tool of Satan does not appear to be explicitly in the KJV Bible, and no form of *rage* occurs in any verse with *heart* in the KJV. But it is in the Book of Mormon in 2 Nephi 28:20, where the devil rages in the hearts of men in a passage dealing with shaking, chains, anger, and being lead by Satan into captivity — all Book of Moses themes that appear to be strongly connected to the Book of Mormon. Here is the context from 2 Nephi 28:18–23, taken from Skousen's *The Earliest Text*, which has some slight differences from the current LDS printing:

> 18. But behold, that great and abominable church,
> the whore of all the earth,
> must tumble to the earth;
> and great must be the fall thereof.
>
> 19. For the kingdom of the devil must shake.
> And they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto

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75 Strong's H3820, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3820&t=Kjv .

76 Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Broken Hearts: The Violation of Biblical Law," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73/3 (Sept. 2005): 731–757;http://www.jstor.org/stable/413991.

77 Ibid.

repentance,
or the *devil* will grasp them with his *everlasting chains*,
and they be *stirred up to anger* and perish.

20. For behold, at that day shall he *rage in the hearts* of the children of men
and *stir them up to anger against* that which is good.

21. And others will he pacify and lull them away into carnal security,
that they will say:
All is well in Zion;
yea, Zion prospereth.
All is well!
And thus the devil cheateth their souls
and *leadeth them* away carefully down *to hell*.

22. And behold, others he flattereth away and telleth them:
There is no hell.
And he saith unto them:
I am no devil,
for there is none.
And thus he whispereth in their ears
until he *grasps* them with his *awful chains*,
from whence there is no deliverance.

23. Yea, they are *grasped* with death and hell and the devil;
and all that have been *seized* therewith must stand before the throne of God
and be judged according to their works,
from whence they must go into the place prepared for them,
even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment[78]
[emphasis added].

Satan's raging in the hearts of men in this context provides a fascinating potential connection between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, one that possibly may have been mediated via the ancient brass plates. Such connections do not seem randomly scattered

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78   Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, 142–144. The current LDS printing has an apparently duplicate occurrence of "and death, and hell," in v. 23 and some minor punctuation differences. Skousen also provides line breaks to better assist the reader in seeing the flow of the text.

but most closely align with the writers who explicitly show strong familiarity with the brass plates.

Shaking and Trembling

Many Book of Mormon passages involving dust, chains, and related motifs seem to invoke shaking and trembling. Some of this symbolism involves apparel such as in 2 Nephi 9:44, where Jacob gives a possible variation on Isaiah's shaking off of dust (Isaiah 52:2) when he says, "I take off my garments, and I shake them before you" as a witness that he "shook your iniquities" from his soul, showing his discharge of the prophetic responsibility to warn sinners. Here he symbolically removes the iniquity of others from his garments, shaking it off like dust. In addition to the parallel to Isaiah 52:2, there may also be a more specific connection to the shaking off of dust from one's feet as a witness (Matthew 10:14, Mark 6:11, Luke 9:5, 10:11, and Acts 13:51; cf. Doctrine & Covenants 24:15), a ritual which Daniel L. Belnap sees as derived from ancient hospitality practices that included the washing of feet when guests were properly received.[79] Another connection to dust and feet is the removal of shoes or sandals by ancient priests before entering the temple and Moses's removal of his shoes before the burning bush (Exodus 3:4–5; also see Acts 7:33 and Joshua 5:15), as discussed by John Tvedtnes. "Removal of street shoes enabled the temple to remain ritually pure from the ground, which was cursed because of the Fall of Adam (see Genesis 3:17–18)."[80]

Chains and the captivity of Satan are sometimes directly associated with shaking and trembling, as in 2 Nephi 1:13 ("shake off the awful chains," spoken by Lehi the "trembling parent" in v. 14 who also urges his sons to "arise from the dust"); 2 Nephi 1:23 ("shake off the chains"); 2 Nephi 9:44–45 ("shake off the chains" in parallel to shaking of garments and shaking off iniquities in v. 44), 2 Nephi 28:19 (the great and abominable church "must tumble to the earth" in v. 18, and then

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79 Daniel L. Belnap, "'Those Who Receive You Not': The Rite of Wiping Dust Off the Feet," in *By Our Rites of Worship: Latter-day Saint Views on Ritual in History, Scripture, and Practice*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 209–260; https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/our-rites-worship-latter-day-saint-views-ritual-history-scripture-and-practice/those-who.

80 John A. Tvedtnes, "Priestly Clothing in Bible Times," in Donald Parry (ed.), *Temples of the Ancient World* (Salt Lake City: Deseret and FARMS, 1994) 649–704; text at http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=2246&index=25 or see the PDF at this shortcut: http://tinyurl.com/priestlyclothing.

in v. 19 "the kingdom of the devil must shake … the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains"). The Book of Mormon blends dust and chains as symbols of captivity and death and offers shaking as a path to liberation from both. Isaiah 14 is also quoted in 2 Nephi 24, where Lucifer/the King of Babylon, now overthrown and brought to down to the pit, in v. 16 is identified as the one who "made the earth to tremble" and "did shake kingdoms."

In the Book of Moses, shaking also pays a role. Here the connection to the Book of Mormon is weaker than in other cases explored here and may not have been a likely source for Nephite expressions, although the relationship may still be considered. In the last days, the "heavens shall shake, and also the earth" as the heavens are "darkened, and a veil of darkness" covers the earth (Moses 7:61). "Satan began to tremble, and the earth shook" as Moses withstood him (Moses 1:21). When Enoch gets a taste of the Lord's perspective and understands the misery that wicked humans face, "his heart swelled wide as eternity [or "he beheld eternity," per the OT2[81]], and his bowels yearned, and all eternity shook" (Moses 7:41). The people also tremble as Enoch teaches them, warning of Satan's temptations and explaining that through the fall, we are made "partakers of misery and woe" (Moses 6:47–49). This, however, does not directly involve the liberating motifs of shaking off dust or chains found in some Book of Mormon passages (which are more aligned with Isaiah 52:2) but have some commonality with passages describing the fall of Satan's dominion and the Lord's power. We will consider other aspects of shaking and trembling in Parts 2 and 3.

Avoiding the Voiding of God's Word

The Book of Moses, Isaiah, and the Book of Mormon all use the concept of God's "word" returning (or becoming) "void," a concept not found elsewhere in the scriptures. The context of use in the Book of Mormon corresponds most closely to that of the Book of Moses. First consider Moses 4:30: "For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so *my words cannot return void*, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled" [emphasis added],

Similar language involving "void" is found in Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: *it shall not return unto me void*, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" [emphasis added].

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81   Jackson, "Moses 7."

Now compare the use of "void" in Alma 12:22–23, 26:

> 22 Now Alma said unto him: This is the thing which I was about to explain, now we see that Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to *the word of God*; and thus we see, that by his fall, all mankind became a lost and fallen people.

> 23 And now behold, I say unto you that if it had been possible for Adam to have partaken of the fruit of the tree of life at that time, there would have been no death, and *the word would have been void,* making God a liar, for he said: If thou eat thou shalt surely die. …

> 26 And now behold, if it were possible that our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life they would have been forever miserable, having no preparatory state; and thus the plan of redemption would have been frustrated, and *the word of God would have been void*, taking none effect. [emphasis added]

It is entirely possible that Isaiah was the source behind the use of *void* in Alma 12 (and may have provided the language for Joseph's choice of wording in Moses 4:30). What is interesting, though, is that the idea of the word of God being *voided* is introduced in Moses 4, not merely in the general context of the Creation account but in the specific context of the Garden of Eden and the fall of Adam.

The only other use of the word *void* in the Book of Mormon occurs later in the Book of Alma, chapter 42, and in a context even more closely aligned with the Book of Moses, specifically referring to the expulsion from the Garden of Eden:

> 2 Now behold, my son, I will explain this thing unto thee. For behold, after the Lord God sent our first parents forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence they were taken — yea, he drew out the man, and he placed at the east end of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the tree of life —

> 3 Now, we see that the man had become as God, knowing good and evil; and lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever, the Lord God placed cherubim and the flaming sword, that he should not partake of the fruit —

4 And thus we see, that there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God.

5 For behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately, and partaken of the tree of life, he would have lived forever, according to the word of God, having no space for repentance; yea, and also *the word of God would have been void*, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated. [emphasis added]

All three occurrences of *void* with respect to the word of God in the Book of Mormon involve the precise scene where it is present in the Book of Moses, and come from Alma₂, a keeper and careful student of the brass plates who discusses them explicitly (Alma 37) and quotes from them several times (e.g., Alma 33).

The Workmanship of God's Hands

Another potential link to the brass plates is the phrase *the workmanship of his hands* found in Jacob 4, in the context of urging us to take counsel from the Lord:

9 For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created by the power of his word. Wherefore, if God being able to speak and the world was, and to speak and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or *the workmanship of his hands* upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure?

10 Wherefore, brethren, seek not to *counsel* the Lord, but to take *counsel* from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he *counseleth* in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works. [emphasis added]

In Moses 1:4, God tells Moses that he is about to show him "the workmanship of mine hands." More noteworthy, however, is Moses 7, where right after Enoch asks how God can weep and right before Enoch's heart swells as wide as eternity, God answers Enoch by referring to "the workmanship of [his] hands" four times. He also affirms that "Man of Counsel" is his name:

32 The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are *the workmanship of mine own hands*, and I gave unto them

their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;

33 And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood;

34 And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them; and in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them, for my fierce anger is kindled against them.

35 Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; *Man of Counsel is my name*; and Endless and Eternal is my name, also.

36 Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also, and among all *the workmanship of mine hands* there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren.

37 But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers; Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom; and the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all *the workmanship of mine hands*; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer? …

38 But behold, these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods; and behold, I will shut them up; a prison have I prepared for them.

39 And that which I have chosen hath pled before my face. Wherefore, he suffereth for their sins; inasmuch as they will repent in the day that my Chosen shall return unto me, and until that day they shall be in torment;

40 Wherefore, for this shall the heavens weep, yea, and all *the workmanship of mine hands*. [emphasis added]

The OT2 as written by Joseph's scribes had "man of council" instead of "Man of Counsel," the change to the latter introduced in the 1878 printing of the Pearl of Great Price.[82] Why the change was made is unclear, and given the relationship in the both the sound and meaning of the words, it may be difficult to make firm conclusions about what was intended, though an intended "council" in Moses 7:35 would weaken

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82   Ibid. See also Jackson, "History of the Book of Moses."

but not eradicate a connection to "counsel" in the Book of Mormon.[83] In fact, which word was intended may be not be important given that both "council" and "counsel" may be related to the same Hebrew word *çôwd* (סוֹד, Strong's H5475), which can mean "council" or "counsel." The root refers to a couch or pillow on which people recline, and thus can mean a sitting-together, such as an assembly of friends in conversation (a council) or deliberation and counsel, as in Jeremiah 23:18 ("who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD"?) or secret, which is how it is translated in Amos 3:7 ("the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets").[84]

"Workmanship" occurs six times in the Old Testament, always describing a mortal's handiwork, and once in the New Testament in a more relevant sense, where Paul states that we are God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). However, the phrase "workmanship of [God's] hands" does not occur in the KJV Bible. Its only instance outside of Jacob and the Book of Moses is in Doctrine and Covenants 29:25, given in September 1830, after the Book of Mormon had been published and the Book of Moses work was underway, not surprisingly suggesting that the phrase had entered Joseph's own vocabulary.

Jacob uses noun and verb forms of *counsel* three times in a passage also mentioning "the workmanship of mine hands," and then, similar to Moses 7:38, follows with an appeal to be reconciled with Christ through his Atonement. This occurs immediately before Jacob gives the lengthy allegory of the tame and wild olive trees in Jacob 5, where he quotes directly from Zenos on the brass plates. Could his language regarding the workmanship of God's hands and God's counsel have been influenced by something similar to Moses 7:32–40 on the brass plates that he knew so well? This example again fits the pattern of correspondences between the two books being strongest among the earlier authors of the Book of Mormon who were most familiar with the brass plates.

Tying the "Naught" Between Moses and the Brass Plates?

Yet another tentative tie between the brass plates and the Book of Moses involves the concept of "esteeming" scripture as a thing of "naught."

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83   Other noteworthy changes in the OT2 that are not found in our current Book of Moses include replacing "knowledge, in the day I created them" with "intelligence" and in the Garden of Eden context replacing "gave I unto man his agency" with "man had agency."

84   Strong's H5475, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5475&t=kjv .

Naught and *nought* both occur in the King James Bible but not in the context given in Moses 1:40–41:

> 40 And now, Moses, my son, I will speak unto thee concerning this earth upon which thou standest; and thou shalt write the things which I shall speak.

> 41 And in a day when the children of men shall *esteem my words as naught* and take many of them from the book which thou shalt write, behold, I will raise up another like unto thee; and they shall be had again among the children of men — among as many as shall believe.

Compare that to 1 Nephi 19:6–9 below which mentions things which some men esteem of great worth that others set at naught and trample under their feet. Nephi then begins quoting from Zenock and Zenos after this, showing that he is in "brass plates mode." Also compare 2 Nephi 33:2, in which those who harden their hearts "cast away many things which are written and esteem them as things of naught."

> 6 Nevertheless, I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be sacred. … 7 For the things which some men *esteem* to be of great worth, both to the body and soul, others set at *naught* and trample under their feet. Yea, even the very God of Israel do men trample under their feet but I would speak in other words — they set him at *naught*, and hearken not to the voice of his counsels … . 9 And the world, because of iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of *naught*. … [emphasis added]

This passage begins with a reference to writing upon plates, then follows in v. 10 with a reference to other prophets on the brass plates, specifically citing Zenoch, Zenos, and Neum who made prophecies of the ministry and sufferings of Christ. Thus, it is interesting that as Nephi was thinking about the word of God as recorded in plates, right before quoting from the brass plates, that he would use language similar to what is found in the Book of Moses and in the same context, esteeming the word of God as naught.

Moses 1:41 also relates to 2 Nephi 3 and prophecies of Joseph and the Restoration.

2 Nephi 33 also uses "esteem" and "naught" in the context of sacred writings:

> 2 But behold, there are many that harden their hearts against the Holy Spirit, that it hath no place in them; wherefore, they cast many *things* away *which are written* and *esteem* them *as things of naught*. 3. But I, Nephi, have written what I have written, and I *esteem* it as of great worth, and especially unto my people. … [emphasis added].

Once again, the connections to the Book of Moses come from one of the writers most reliant on the brass plates.

It is interesting that the Book of Moses came forth in a day when secular scholars were laying the foundation for theories that the Exodus never happened and that Moses was fictional, brought forward most forcefully a few decades later by Julius Wellhausen in the 1880s with the Documentary Hypothesis[85] and now manifested as full-blown minimalism today. It truly is a day when the words of God are esteemed as naught, not even crudely historical in many cases, just pious fiction and fraud.

The topic of biblical "minimalism" and the loud modern scholars who declare much of the Bible to be fiction are treated in more depth in my recent discussion of scholarly attacks on the evidences for Lehi's Trail in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map" at *The Interpreter.*[86] More useful LDS treatments of the Documentary Hypotheses are provided by Kevin Barney,[87] John Sorenson,[88] and David Bokovoy,[89] though these authors will disagree on some points. Among non-LDS scholars, the work of Richard Elliott Friedman in *Who Wrote*

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85   Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin, 1882; 3rd ed., 1886; first published in 1878 as *Geschichte Israels*), English translation *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, trans. by J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (Edinburgh, 1883); available at *Gutenberg.org*, http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4732/pg4732-images.html.

86   Jeff Lindsay, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 1 of 2," and "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Map: Part 2 of 2."

87   Kevin L. Barney, "Reflections on the Documentary Hypothesis," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33/1 (Spring 2000): 57–99; https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V33N01_79.pdf.

88   John L. Sorenson, "The 'Brass Plates' and Biblical Scholarship," *Dialogue* 10/4 (1977): 31–39; https://dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V10N04_33.pdf.

89   David Bokovoy, "The Death of the Documentary Hypothesis," *When Gods Were Men*, Patheos.com, Jan. 26, 2014; http://www.patheos.com/blogs/davidbokovoy/2014/01/the-death-of-the-documentary-hypothesis/. See also David E. Bokovoy, *Authoring the Old Testament: Genesis-Deuteronomy* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014).

the Bible?[90] is best known and quite useful in explaining why Wellhausen was wrong in assigning a late, post-exilic date to the so-called priestly source that is said to be a source for much of the account of the Exodus and the wilderness phase of Israel. Other non-LDS scholars whose work challenges the modern "minimalists" by offering evidence that can support such things as an ancient Exodus tradition or the reality of Moses or David include Kenneth Kitchen,[91] James K. Hoffmeier,[92] and Yosef Garfinkel.[93] Regarding new evidence for the reality of an ancient Exodus, I also recommend Joshua Berman's article, "Was There an Exodus?" published in *Mosaic Magazine* with responses from other scholars, both for and against.[94]

There are loud voices that set sacred scripture as a thing of naught. They are countered by some scholars, but some of the most valuable evidence for the historical reality of many aspects of ancient scripture may be the witness that comes from the Book of Mormon, with its use of the brass plates buttressed not only by, say, evidence from the Arabian Peninsula for the reality of Nephi as an ancient writer who made that journey but also by the witness of the revealed Book of Moses, which appears to corroborate the reality of the brass plates and its language that is woven throughout the Book of Mormon, but especially in the writings of those clearly most familiar with the brass plates. The Book of Mormon, coupled with the evidence from the Book of Moses and other sources, may be exactly what the world needs in this era when the words of Moses and Moses himself are esteemed as a fictional thing of naught.

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90   Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible*, 2nd edition (New York: HarperCollins, 1997).

91   K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

92   James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidences for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996); James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary*, editors, *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

93   Yosef Garfinkel, "The Birth & Death of Biblical Minimalism," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 37/3 (May/Jun 2011): 46–53, 78; http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=37&Issue=3&ArticleID=6 (subscription required), accessed Feb. 25, 2016.

94   Joshua Berman, "Was There an Exodus?," *Mosaic Magazine*, March 2, 2015; http://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2015/03/was-there-an-exodus/.

What This Means So Far

Much of the content in the Book of Moses overlaps with material in Genesis, which was the source for Joseph's inspired translation that led to the Book of Moses. However, the presence of unique material in the Book of Moses that is also found or applied in the Book of Mormon provides support for Noel Reynolds' intriguing hypothesis about common material that could have been on the brass plates. In addition to the many examples Reynolds has provided, several new ones have been presented here that suggest there may be even more support for Reynolds' proposal.

Reynolds argued that the relationship appeared to be one-way, and that is consistent with what we observe in the new examples provided above. An important concept from the Book of Moses such as Satan's influence over hearts appears to be expanded and built into multiple phrases and formulae that suggest influence and derivation, and that influence is consistently strongest among those who were obviously keen students of the brass plates, especially Nephi and his family and then Alma$_2$. That kind of relationship is not one we would expect if the Book of Moses and Book of Mormon were all from the same author.

Interestingly, while the writings of Nephi and Alma$_2$ are somewhat adjacent chronologically, coming from the early days of the Nephites before the coming of Christ, they were widely separated in the translation process, since the small plates of Nephi were apparently at the end of Mormon's record, having been providentially added to make up for the loss that would occur with the lost 116 pages. Thus, for the text as we have it, the translation process apparently began with the Book of Mosiah, coming back to the writings of Nephi only at the end.[95] The consistency in brass plates usage and strong links to the not-yet-revealed Book of Moses between those writers raises another interesting challenge for

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95   Abundant evidence supports the idea that Joseph and Oliver began their work with the Book of Mosiah, translated to the end of the book of Moroni in May, and then translated the Title Page, and at the end of the translation process, translated the small plates of Nephi (1 Nephi–Omni) and the Words of Mormon. The Title Page, "the last leaf" of the plates of Mormon (*HC* 1:71), was used in filing the copyright form on June 11, 1829. See John W. Welch, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 76–213; also available at https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/opening-heavens-miraculous-translation-book-mormon-chapter-only.

those seeking to explain the Book of Mormon as purely Joseph's Smith fabrication.

The theme of chains of darkness and Satan's power, briefly present in the Book of Moses but with dramatic imagery, appears to have been applied in a variety of ways in the Book of Mormon that connect the two texts time and time again in what appears to be a natural one-way relationship, with the Book of Moses connected to a proposed brass-plates source and not appearing to be derived from or dependent on the Book of Mormon.

Sometimes the connection between the two texts is almost hidden in the Book of Mormon, as with the obscure reference to chains of darkness in 2 Nephi 1:23, where *chains* and *obscurity* begin to forge a link connecting Nephi to the Book of Moses. The wordplay between *obscurity* and *dust* forges yet another link that opens up another interesting vista in Book of Mormon exploration, the persistent but often subtle use of dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon, which we explore in Part 2, leading us to also identify new structures in a famous Book of Mormon chiasmus with some long-overlooked possibilities, as we will explore in Part 3.

Meanwhile, we may do well to pay more attention to the significance of the brass plates as part of the Book of Mormon's ancient background. In an era when many deny that Moses even existed or that the writings of the Old Testament are largely fabrications concocted long after the Exile,[96] the Book of Mormon may be just the thing the world needs as another testament of Christ and a witness of the reality of some aspects of the ancient accounts that provide a foundation for the Gospel message. The relationship between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon may be one small piece of the story that helps us appreciate the reality of the Book of Mormon as an ancient book, and the reality of Joseph Smith's role as a prophet of God able to bring forth both works.

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96   See, for example, Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* and Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament.*

from BYU and is a registered US patent agent. 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 eight grandchildren.*

"Arise from the Dust": Insights from Dust-Related Themes in the Book of Mormon

Part 2: Enthronement, Resurrection, and Other Ancient Motifs from the "Voice from the Dust"

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Jeff Lindsay

Abstract: *In light of Noel Reynolds' hypothesis that some material in the Book of Moses may have been present on the brass plates that Nephi used, one may wonder if Nephi or other authors might also have drawn upon the use of chains in the Book of Moses. Further examination of this connection points to the significance of the theme of "dust" in Lehi's words and the surrounding passages from Nephi and Jacob, where it can involve motifs of covenant keeping, resurrection, and enthronement. Recognizing the usage of dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon can enhance our understanding of the meaning and structure of several portions of the text. An appeal to the Book of Mormon's use of dust may also help fill in some gaps in the complex chiastic structure of Alma 36 (to be treated in Part 3) and add meaning to other portions of that "voice from the dust," the Book of Mormon.*

In Part 1 we pursued an insight from Noel Reynolds regarding the possible relationship between the Book of Moses and the brass plates. We not only found multiple additional concepts that may point to material on the brass plates in common with the Book of Moses (e.g., being *strong* like Moses, the usage of *misery*, Satan's dominion over the

hearts of men, etc.) but also found an interesting potential wordplay in the Book of Mormon involving the concept of chains of darkness in the Enoch material of the Book of Moses. That wordplay within Lehi's final speech draws heavily upon the *rise from the dust* passage of Isaiah 52:1–2.[1] Lehi, in 1 Nephi 1:23, urges his sons to awake, to rise from the dust, and to "shake off the chains with which ye are bound, and come forth out of obscurity," where the darkness-related meaning of *obscurity* may link to the *chains of darkness* concept in the Book of Moses. Hebrew words related to dust, either ʿ*aphar* (עָפָר[2]) or ʾ*epher* (אפר[3]), could have been used by Lehi in this passage, and could have provided an interesting wordplay in light of Hebrew words related to obscurity: ʾ*ôphel* (אֹפֶל[4]) or ʾ*âphêl* (אָפֵל[5]).

The Book of Mormon's use of dust as a theme strengthens its covenant-related message and highlights the role of the Redeemer. Here we will explore the symbolism of dust and find that its usage in the Book of Mormon offers much to contemplate, suggesting profound awareness of ancient symbols and patterns by the authors of the Book of Mormon, with hidden treasures to be uncovered from the intricate voice from the dust that was buried for centuries, awaiting our day. The Book of Mormon's use of dust reminds us that Christ the Redeemer created us from dust, that He came to earth in a tabernacle of dusty clay and humbly wiped the dust from the feet of others before breaking the chains of sin and death to give us power to come out of obscurity and rise from the dust, thereby sharing in the blessings of resurrection and eternal life.

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1. Part 1 of this series includes a brief discussion of the objections that may be raised to the presence of Isaiah 52 and neighboring chapters in the Book of Mormon, since many scholars today claim that they were written by "Deutero-Isaiah" during or after the Exile, and thus could not have been present on the brass plates for Nephi and Lehi to incorporate. There are, in fact, good reasons to accept the minority position that the Isaiah material Nephi cites was available in his day.

2 *HALOT*, 861–862. See also Strong's H6083, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H6083.

3 *HALOT*, 80. See also Strong's H665, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H665&t=KJV.

4 *HALOT*, 79. See also Strong's H652, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H652&t=KJV.

5 *HALOT*, 79. See also Strong's H651, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H651&t=KJV.

A Note on the Role of Hebrew in the Book of Mormon

In discussing Hebrew words that may be connected to the Book of Mormon, we will assume that the Hebrew language played an important role not only in the original writings of Isaiah and other sources on the brass plates but also in the spoken and written words of Lehi, Nephi, and other Book of Mormon writers. A difficulty with this assumption is that Nephi states that he made his record "in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2). Exactly what this means is difficult to assess. Although arguably an absurd statement in Joseph Smith's day, it makes more sense with the availability of examples of ancient Jewish writings combining Hebrew and Egyptian elements, as discussed by Neal Rappleye.[6] Rappleye proposes that Lehi and Nephi were drawing upon an established scribal tradition in which Jewish scribes wrote using Egyptian as the underlying language but with many Hebraic modifications.

Egyptian is a Afro-Asiatic language and is related both to Asiatic (or Semitic) languages such as Arabic, Ethiopic, and Hebrew and to North African (or Hamitic) languages such as Berber and Cushitic. It is distinct from Hebrew, so seeing additional meaning in the English Book of Mormon text based upon what we think the corresponding Hebrew may have been still leaves many questions. Nevertheless, the words quoted from Isaiah and the words spoken by, say, Nephi and Lehi to their families and followers would likely have been in Hebrew, and it is reasonable to assume that the written language used to preserve such things would also preserve important aspects of the underlying Hebrew, particularly key wordplays, word pairs, or other Hebraic elements that added to the richness of the meaning. Perhaps some key portions of the gold plates were not just in a modified Egyptian language but were written in Hebrew or in Hebrew using an Egyptian script to preserve literary elements or Hebraisms when the Egyptian would be inadequate. Given the richness of Hebraic elements, including Hebraic wordplays, word pairs, and word groups in the Book of Mormon, the writing system surely was capable of preserving such content. Exactly how the apparent Hebraic content was preserved in Nephi's writing system is still unclear. I'll leave this as an issue for future exploration and turn to the dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon, building upon the previous

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6   Neal Rappleye, "Learning Nephi's Language: Creating a Context for 1 Nephi 1:2," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 16 (2015): 151–159; http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/learningnephislanguagecreatingacontextfor1nephi12.

discussion from Part 1 of concepts related to Satan's tactics, chains of darkness, and encirclement.

Key Insights on Dust from Bokovoy and Brueggemann

After exploring the theme of darkness and chains apparently embedded in 2 Nephi 1:23, as discussed in Part 1, I searched for further commentary to see what others had found. This led to David Bokovoy's blog at Patheos. com,[7] where his 2014 discussion of Lehi's poetic speech to his sons shows how Lehi draws upon the theme of rising from the dust in Isaiah 52:1–2. The excerpt below from Bokovoy follows Grant Hardy's formatting for the poetic portions of the Book of Mormon.[8]

> At the end of his life, the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi called his children together and delivered a series of final sermons. Facing the prospect of his own mortality, Lehi encouraged his sons to wake up and avoid spiritual death. While facing physical death, Lehi used resurrection imagery in his final effort to inspire his sons:
>
> > *O that ye would awake;*
> >
> > *awake from a deep sleep,*
> >
> > *yea, even from the sleep of hell,*
> >
> > *and shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound,*
> >
> > *which are the chains which bind the children of men,*
> >
> > *that they are carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery*
> >
> > *and woe.*
> >
> > *Awake! and arise from the dust,*
> >
> > *and hear the words of a trembling parent,*

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7   David Bokovoy, "Deutero-Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: A Literary Analysis (pt. 1)," *When Gods Were Men*, Patheos.com, April 29, 2014; http://www.patheos.com/blogs/davidbokovoy/2014/04/deutero-isaiah-in-the-book-of-mormon-a-literary-analysis-pt-1/. See also David Bokovoy, "Deutero-Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: A Literary Analysis (pt. 2)," *When Gods Were Men*, Patheos.com, April 30, 2014; http://www.patheos.com/blogs/davidbokovoy/2014/04/deutero-isaiah-in-the-book-of-mormon-a-literary-analysis-pt-2/.

8   Grant Hardy, *The Book of Mormon: A Reader's Edition* (Chicago: Illinois Press, 2005), 62–63, as cited by Bokovoy, "Deutero-Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: A Literary Analysis (pt. 1)."

whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and
silent grave,

from whence no traveler can return;

a few more days and I go the way of all the earth …

Awake, my sons; put on the armor of righteousness.

Shake off the chains with which ye are bound,

and come forth out of obscurity,

and arise from the dust (2 Nephi 1:13–14, 23).

Lehi's poem clearly draws its inspiration from Isaiah 52, a poetic text that seeks to reverse the sufferings experienced by the exilic community through a promise of royal restoration:

Awake, awake;

put on thy strength, O Zion;

Put on thy beautiful garments,

O Jerusalem, the holy city:

for henceforth

there shall no more come into thee

the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down,

O Jerusalem:

loose thyself from the bands of thy neck,

O captive daughter of Zion (Isaiah 52:1–2)

Lehi's sermon features the dual imperative "awake, awake," the image of being loosed from bands, arising from the dust, and putting on armor of righteousness/beautiful garments. The Book of Mormon sermon, therefore, clearly echoes this poetic refrain from Isaiah 52.[9]

Many people are puzzled by a phrase in Isaiah 52:2: "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and *sit down*." If you are shaking yourself from the dust, why would you sit down in it after rising? But the meaning is not

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9   Bokovoy, "Deutero-Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: A Literary Analysis (pt. 1)."

to sit back down in the dust but rather to arise and *sit on the throne* that God has prepared. This will become clearer below as we explore how the theme of dust in the ancient Near East and in the Book of Mormon relates to enthronement and other themes. But first, let's see how Lehi's speech ties to subsequent writings of Nephi and Jacob.

According to Bokovoy, Nephi shows that he accepts Lehi's charge to "awake" shortly after recording Lehi's speech when he records his own psalm:

> Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin.
>
> Rejoice, O my heart,
>
> and give place no more for the enemy of my soul (2 Nephi 4:28).

This strengthens the case for Nephi as Lehi's successor and the legitimate king over the Nephite people.

Nephi also fortifies his acceptance of Lehi's plea when he asks God in verse 31 to make him that he "may shake at the appearance of sin," following Lehi's command to "shake off the chains with which ye are bound" and complying with Isaiah 52:2, "Shake thyself from the dust." The removal of dust and chains by shaking (or other means) is connected to rising toward enthronement, life, resurrection, and glory. Nephi's acceptance of Lehi's commands and his worthiness as authorized leader of the Nephite people should come as no surprise, of course, since Lehi already endorsed Nephi in his speech and observed that, in contrast to the chains and obscurity hindering his wayward sons, Nephi's "views have been glorious." Vision and glory stand in contrast to the chains, dust, and darkness encircling the wicked.

Two chapters later, Jacob explains that he is about to read words from Isaiah that Nephi asked him to discuss (2 Nephi 6:4). He then begins reciting and discussing Isaiah, starting with Isaiah 49:22, then Isaiah 50, 51, and finally concluding with the same passage that Lehi drew upon, Isaiah 52:1–2 ("Awake, awake, … shake thyself from the dust").

Bokovoy sees Jacob's use of this passage, following Nephi's assignment to him, as a significant statement further cementing the legitimacy of Nephi's reign and establishing the authority of Nephi and Jacob. He sees the issue of Nephite leadership and authority and the use of Isaiah 52:1–2 as especially meaningful in light of a scholar's work that establishes a connection between "rising from the dust" and kingship, enthronement, and authority. The source is Walter Brueggemann's 1972

publication, "From Dust to Kingship."[10] That work offers some gems of insight for the Book of Mormon, the record we often call "a voice from the dust."

Brueggemann's study of this topic began with an investigation of 1 Kings 16:2, where the Lord tells Baasha that "I exalted you out of the dust and made you leader over my people Israel." But then the antithesis is given: "Behold I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house," referring to Baasha losing his status as a ruler and becoming dust again. This is tied to the Creation story, where we read that God formed man out of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7), and that we are dust, and will return to dust (Genesis 3:19). After being formed from the dust, Adam and Eve are put in charge of caring for the garden — in other words, they are given authority and responsibility — one of the themes associated with rising from the dust.

In light of modern science, we can say we are not only formed from the dust of the earth, but from the dust of the stars and the cosmos, and that the whole earth has been formed from the dust of space. Dust is such a fitting word to describe the origins of our physical bodies and even the world around us. The creative work of God in bringing about His ultimate goals begins with forming us from the dust.

Brueggemann builds on the 1967 work of J. Wijngaards.[11] Wijngaards observed that "dying and rising" describe the voiding and renewing of covenant relationships, and that calls to "turn" or "repent" involve changing loyalties or entering into a new covenant. He also cites other scholars who found that New Testament themes of resurrection are built on Israel's ancient enthronement rituals and that when Christ was "raised up" from the dead "on the third day," the concept was dependent upon a variety of related Old Testament passages. "The important gain of these studies is the recognition that the motifs of covenant-renewal, enthronement, and resurrection cannot be kept in isolation from each other, but they run together and serve to illuminate each other."[12]

Brueggemann's exploration of the dust theme in the scriptures led him to conclude that rising from the dust is tied to divine covenants. To

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10   Walter Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 84/1 (1972): 1–18; available with only the first page visible at http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/zatw.1972.84.issue-1/zatw.1972.84.1.1/zatw.1972.84.1.1.xml.

11   J. Wijngaards, "Death and Resurrection in Covenantal Context (Hos. VI 2)," *Vetus Testamentum* 17, Fasc. 2 (April 1967): 226–239; available at Jstor.org: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1516837, accessed Dec. 16, 2015.

12   Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," 1.

keep them is to rise from the dust but not only to rise but to be endowed (my term) with power and authority. Rising from the dust is a symbol of enthronement. To break covenants is to return to the dust and to lose one's position of authority. Dust is used to describe the status of the covenant maker:

> Behind the creation formula lies a royal formula of enthronement. To be taken "from the dust" means to be elevated from obscurity to royal office and to return to dust means to be deprived of that office and returned to obscurity. Since the royal office depends upon covenant with the appropriate god, to be taken from the dust means to be accepted as a covenant-partner and treated graciously; to return to the dust means to lose that covenant relation. … To die and be raised is to be out of covenant and then back in covenant. So also to be "from dust" is to enter into a covenant and to return "to dust" is to have the covenant voided. Dust is not to be taken literally but as a figure for being out of covenant, impotent, and unimportant, or as Wijngaards has suggested, "dead." The dramatic movement of dust to life to dust [Genesis 2:7, 3:9, 1 Kings 16:2–3] is in fact imagery describing the fortune and standing of the royal occupant.[13]

Since my explorations on this topic began with 2 Nephi 1:23, where dust and obscurity are linked but initially seemed to me like an awkward pairing in the midst of other easily recognized parallels, it was intriguing to read Brueggemann's statement quoted above that "To be taken 'from the dust' means to be *elevated from obscurity* to royal office and to return to dust means to be deprived of that office and *returned to obscurity*" (emphasis added). That fits Lehi's speech nicely. Brueggemann's finding that rising from the dust is also related to kingship, to enthronement, to covenant keeping, and to resurrection also corresponds well with Book of Mormon usage.

Brueggemann explains that being in the covenant means having royal power and authority, and being out of the covenant means losing such power and status. Being in the dust without power or authority is contrasted to "sitting with princes" in 1 Samuel 2:6–8. Thus "the phrase 'from the dust' appears here also as a formula relating to enthronement." Thus "sitting" in 1 Samuel 2:6–8 is akin to the *sit* in Isaiah 52:2, where arising from the dust and sitting are both references to enthronement.

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13   Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," 2–3.

The 1 Samuel passage ends with a reference to the creation: "for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world."[14] This reference points to the stability that comes from sound kingship.

While Lehi's speech is directed to his rebellious sons, their failure to rise and repent leaves Nephi (who was praised and endorsed in the speech [2 Nephi 1:24–29] and given Lehi's first blessing if Laman and Lemuel do not repent [2 Nephi 1:29]), as the rightful leader of the group. This follows Lehi's earlier promise to Nephi, conditional on his obedience, that he would be a teacher and a ruler over his brethren (1 Nephi 2:22). Laman and Lemuel fail to accept the blessings of enthronement, but Nephi through his faithfulness and his writings demonstrates that he has responded to Lehi's teachings in 2 Nephi 1, though directed to others, and fully qualifies as Lehi's successor both spiritually and politically. The relevant writings of Nephi include his psalm (2 Nephi 4:15–31), as discussed above, which supports his divine commission as a prophet and his acceptance of the charge to awake and arise, plus his description of righteously acting in Lehi's stead in 2 Nephi 5:1–20, where he escapes life-threatening persecution and leads the Nephite people on a second exodus through the wilderness (vv. 4–7), is accepted by his people as ruler (v. 18), holds the symbols of authority such as the brass plates, the sword of Laban, and the Liahona (vv. 12, 14), builds a temple (v. 16), and helps his people to keep the commandments and thereby to prosper in the land, according to Lehi's words (vv. 10–11, 13; cf. 2 Nephi 1:20).

The political aspects of the dust-related content in Lehi's speech and Nephi's writings, coupled with other signs of Nephi's having been commissioned as prophet and leader, gave legitimacy to the reign of Nephi and his descendants and would be important for many generations thereafter. Nephi's legitimacy as Lehi's successor, established in these opening chapters of 2 Nephi, may have intentional parallels to Lehi's divine commission and his role as leader at the beginning of 1 Nephi, as discussed below, and this parallelism arguably points to one of Nephi's reasons for dividing his writings into two books.

The political tensions between Nephites and Mulekites under Kings Mosiah$_1$, Benjamin, and Mosiah$_2$ may have culminated in the open rebellion of the Amlicites/Amalekites which resulted in many years of war, putting the Nephite nation in peril. This topic is treated with fresh insights and analysis by Val Larsen,[15] who builds on the recognition of

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14   Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," 3.

15   Val Larsen, "In His Footsteps: Ammon$_1$ and Ammon$_2$," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 3 (2013): 85–113; http://www.mormoninterpreter.

J. Christopher Conkling, based on findings of Royal Skousen regarding the early Book of Mormon manuscripts that the Amalekites in the Book of Alma$_2$ are likely the same as the Amlicites introduced early in that book.[16] Establishing Nephi's divine claim to spiritual as well as political authority was an important role of the Nephite records and critical for the stability of the nation, though Nephi's ultimate motives were obviously spiritual, not merely political.

Moving beyond the theme of kingship and political rights, Brueggemann considers resurrection to be an important theme related to rising from the dust. He explains that resurrection in the Old and New Testaments is clearly linked to rising from the dust and says that these related themes run into each other and reinforce one another.[17]

Let us turn briefly back to Wijngaards' work, the foundation for Brueggemann's analysis. Wijngaards looked at Hosea 6:2 and its reference to reviving and rising on the third day. He also examined the related ancient Near Eastern theme of gods dying and "rising on the third day."[18] He also notes that revival from sickness was a symbol of resurrection from God[19] and that "killing" was used metaphorically to describe dethroning a king and removing people from power[20] or with replacing one king/lord with another,[21] an act that has covenantal implications. Thus raising someone to life can refer to entering into a covenant, and death and killing can refer to breaking the covenant. There are ancient Near Eastern contexts, according to Wijngaards, where these concepts have rich covenantal implications, and one of the key words associated with these concepts is *yada* ʿ(ידע), "to know," as in a covenant

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com/in-his-footsteps-ammon-and-ammon/.

16   J. Christopher Conkling, "Alma's Enemies: The Case of the Lamanites, Amlicites, and Mysterious Amalekites," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 14/1 (2005): 108–17. Val Larsen, "In His Footsteps," observes that equating the Amalekites with the Amlicites seems to have first been suggested by John A. Tvedtnes, "Book of Mormon Tribal Affiliation and Military Castes," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1990), 298–301. See also Royal Skousen, "Do We Need to Make Changes to the Book of Mormon Text?," FAIR Mormon Conference, Salt Lake City, Aug. 2012; http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2012-fair-conference/2012-do-we-need-to-make-changes-to-the-book-of-mormon-text.

17   Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship," 1.

18   Wijngaards, "Death and Resurrection in Covenantal Context (Hos. VI 2)," 228.

19   Ibid., 229.

20   Ibid., 231.

21   Ibid., 232.

relationship.[22] Finally, in this study of Hosea 6:2, Wijngaards concludes that the verse means this:

> *Jahweh is said to "revise" and "raise" his people when "on the third day" he will renew his covenant with them.* This renewal is called a "raising from death to life" because it will restore the reign of blessing and fertility that are consequent on and inherent in good covenantal relations. [emphasis original][23]

Repentance, accepting, and keeping covenants, enthronement, and resurrection are tied together, as are the themes of covenant breaking, dying, loss of power and status, and obscurity — these are part of the complex of interlocking dust-related themes that we should consider in Lehi's speech and related passages of the Book of Mormon.

Recognizing the relationship between dust and enthronement adds further meaning to King Benjamin's farewell speech, where he names Mosiah as the new king. In Mosiah 2:25–26, he invokes the theme of dust to humbly remind his people that he is no better than they are, and that he is about to return to the dust himself:

> And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the *dust* of the earth; yet ye were created of the *dust* of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you.
>
> And I, even I, whom ye call your king, am no better than ye yourselves are; for I am also of the *dust*. And ye behold that I am old, and am about to yield up this mortal frame to its mother earth. [emphasis added]

Following his remarkably successful speech, the willingness of his people to enter into a covenant with God and to receive grace via the Atonement is expressed in Mosiah 4:1–2 with a reference to dust, apparently both in the sense of humility and with a reference to God's creative work. This occurs after they fall to the earth:

> And now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord, that he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.

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22   Ibid., 237.
23   Ibid.

> And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the *dust* of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men. [emphasis added]

They fall to the earth and view themselves spiritually as less than the dust, but through the covenant and the power of the Atonement they will arise and receive mercy and purification, this rising from the dust and finding joy. This is juxtaposed with Christ's creative work and His condescension to the earth.

Later in the Book of Mormon, Christ Himself comes down among the Nephite and Lamanite peoples. Among His recorded words, Christ also cites Isaiah 52:1–2 (3 Nephi 20:36–37), which we'll discuss below.

Christ's use of Isaiah 52:1–2 in 3 Nephi 20 strengthens the dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon. Christ cites Isaiah 52:1–3, with verse 3 extending the "arise from the dust" passage with a reference to redemption "without money" for those who have sold themselves "for naught," and then skips forward to vv. 6–7 of Isaiah 52, using covenant language from verse 6 ("my people shall know my name" and "shall know that I am he that doth speak," where *know* probably is related to the Hebrew word *yadaʿ* (ידע) with covenant implications). Verse 7 (3 Nephi 20:40) reminds us of Abinadi's discourse on the message of salvation and the beauty of the feet upon the mountains of those who proclaim the Gospel, ending with the message of Messianic triumph: "Thy God reigneth!" This is done as Christ stands at the temple in Bountiful, the symbol of Mount Zion and the cosmic mountain, after He has had His divine feet touched and undoubtedly washed by the tears of His people as they witnessed the marks in His hands and feet. He has risen from the dust, bringing triumph over dust, death, and the chains of hell. How beautiful upon the mountains, too, were His feet at Bountiful.

Finally, Moroni quotes that passage to conclude the Book of Mormon, a fitting closure in light of Lehi's early words.[24] Here is Moroni 10:30–31:

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24   Bokovoy, "Deutero-Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: A Literary Analysis (pt. 2)."

> And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.

> And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

This is a call to enter into a covenant relationship with the Redeemer, to acquire every gift that He offers, reminding us of Lehi's plea to his children to "arise from the dust" and, in parallel to putting on the armor of righteousness that Lehi spoke of (contrasted with the chains Satan offers), Moroni asks us to put on our beautiful garments, garments that are a symbol of our covenants with the Father. These garments may well refer to the robes and garments of the Temple, where we lay hold of every good gift and learn to cast out Satan and reject his evil gifts. Satan's gifts, like his chains, are those of darkness, or rather, the "obscurity" that Lehi urged his wayward sons to flee. Moroni calls us to come forth out of obscurity and arise from the dust as we keep our covenants with God and receive the grace and good gifts God offers those who come unto Christ.

Moroni's closing plea to "awake and arise from the dust" is preceded by what appears to be a Hebraic word pair, the pairing of *dead* and *dust*. In Moroni 10:27, Moroni describes what will happen at the bar of God, when the Lord will refer to the witness of the Book of Mormon:

> … and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the *dead*, yea, even as one speaking out of the *dust*? [emphasis added]

This word pair is explained by Kevin Barney:[25]

Hebrew (*repha'im//ʿaphar*)

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust (*ʿaphar*): for thy dew is as the dew of herbs,

and the earth shall cast out the dead (*repha'im*). (Isaiah 26:19)

Comment

The Hebrew *repha'im*, though always translated "dead" or "deceased" in the King James Version. properly refers to the shades or ghosts (*manes*) living in Sheol who, though devoid of blood and therefore weak, continue to possess powers of mind (such as memory). The parallelism of Isaiah 26:19 suggests that the word dead in Moroni 10:27 may answer to the Hebrew *repha'im*; this is interesting in light of the representation of the "dead" of Moroni 10:27 as crying out and speaking from the dust, which is consistent with a proper understanding of *repha'im*.

Katherine Murphey Hayes also observes: "Earth and dust, then, indicate not only the surface on which the dead lie or are laid, but the domain of death itself."[26] According to Edwin Yamauchi, "The abode of the dead was viewed by the Hebrews as being dusty (Job 17:16; 21:26). As D. R. Hillers notes, 'Especially common is the idea that death is a return to the dirt, a conception that encompasses the whole fleeting life of man.'"[27]

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25 Kevin L. Barney, "Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 4/2 (1995): 15–81; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1389&index=2, PDF available from the Maxwell Institute via the shortcut http://tinyurl.com/dustref1.

26 Katherine Murphey Hayes, *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 44; https://books.google.com/books?id=VfpAvwbaFhEC&pg=PA44.

27 Edwin Yamauchi, "Life, Death, and Afterlife in the Ancient Near East," in *Life in the Face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 21–50, citation from 44; https://books.google.com/books?id=AvCmK0WRmj4C&pg=PA44. Yamauchi cites Delbert R. Hillers, "Dust: Some Aspects of Old Testament Imagery," in *Love*

Moroni's use of the dust/dead word pair from the Hebrew scriptures is consistent with the ancient Near Eastern complex of dust-related themes and sets the stage for his dust-related appeal in Moroni10:31 and his closing sentence in v. 34 that refers to the time when his spirit and body will reunite and be brought forth to meet us before God on at the time of judgment.

Abinadi's Response to a Strange Question

Abinadi's discourse on the beauty of feet upon the mountains from Isaiah 52 merits a brief discussion here. It begins in Mosiah 12 when the priests of wicked King Noah cross-examine him using the most unlikely of questions:

> 19 And they began to question him, that they might cross him, that thereby they might have wherewith to accuse him; but he answered them boldly, and withstood all their questions, yea, to their astonishment; for he did withstand them in all their questions, and did confound them in all their words.

> 20 And it came to pass that one of them said unto him: What meaneth the words which are written, and which have been taught by our fathers, saying:

> 21 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;

> 22 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion;

> 23 Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem;

> 24 The Lord 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 our God?

Why this question? Of all the things they could use to trip up Abinadi, why ask him about the meaning of Isaiah 52:7–10? It makes

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and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope, ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters, 1987), 107.

sense if Isaiah 52 were an important part of Nephite preaching. Given the importance of Isaiah 52 in Lehi's speech, Nephi's words, Jacob's words, and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, it would have been a reasonable ploy for Noah's priests to use that frequently cited, positive passage to challenge Abinadi's message of condemnation.

Abinadi's answer beginning with Mosiah 12:25 and extending to Mosiah 15:31 and then into Mosiah 16 initially seems almost as puzzling as the selection of that question. Instead of explaining its meaning, he launches into a multichapter discourse that begins by condemning the priests for their ignorance and disobedience, followed by a discussion of the law of Moses and the Ten Commandments, then a declaration that salvation does not come by the law alone but only through the Atonement of Christ (Mosiah 13:28) and the redemption of God (Mosiah 13:32), and a declaration that Moses and all the prophets have taught of the coming of the Messiah, His condescension, suffering, and resurrection (Mosiah 13:33–35). He then quotes all of Isaiah 53, the great prophecy of the Servant who would bear our griefs and heal us with His stripes, and then explains in Mosiah 14 how God breaks the bands of death (v. 8), how Christ obtains the "bowels of mercy … having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice" (v. 9). Then he explains that those who accept the Atonement of Christ are the ones who are redeemed, and they are Christ's "seed" (vv. 12–13), as are the prophets who have published peace. Finally comes the answer in Mosiah 15:15: "And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!" In verses 19–23, Abinadi then explains that is because of the redemption because Christ has broken the bands of death, and gained power over the dead and brought to pass the resurrection, that we are raised to dwell with God and have eternal life.

Abinadi's lengthy response is not a rambling discourse but a beautiful and carefully crafted answer that teaches the principles of the law, our need for redemption, and the coming and triumph of the Redeemer and the joyous message of redemption through the Messiah's Atonement — for those who will accept the Redeemer and keep the terms of the covenant. Their feet will be upon Mount Zion, beautiful, washed, redeemed, raised from the dust and brought into the presence of God, where they "shall lift up the voice" (another aspect of the "arise" theme, integrated with the concept of joyous singing), and "with the voice together shall they sing" (Isaiah 52:8, Mosiah 12:21), leading Isaiah to exclaim, "Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem" (Isaiah 52:9). There is good news indeed and cause for song and rejoicing, for those who are penitent.

Abinadi needed to lay a foundation of basic teachings before the ignorant priests could understand the answer, before they could understand that the good news comes at a great price, the price of the eternal Atonement of Jesus Christ, but only to those who will accept and follow Him. Thus, the priests must repent and turn to God before they can enjoy the good news of salvation.

Abinadi's discourse is tied to important Nephite themes rooted in Isaiah 52. Those whose feet will become beautiful upon the mountains begin their ascent to Mount Zion by heeding Isaiah 52:1–2 through shaking off the dust, arising, and putting on the beautiful garments of the Lord. Then shall those feet be firmly established on Mount Zion, with cause to rejoice and sing praises to the Redeemer.

A Dusty View of the Plan of Salvation

In light of Brueggeman's insights and the use of dust-related themes in the scriptures, we can slightly adjust the way we view the plan of salvation:

- As spirit children, we come to earth, clothed in a tabernacle of dust. We are made from the dust.

- Through the fall of Adam and through our own sins, we are fallen: fallen into the dust, fallen toward the earth, encircled with chains of sin and hell.

- Through the power of the Atonement offered by the Redeemer, we can arise from the dust, overcoming Satan and shaking off the chains that bind us. We depart from darkness and obscurity, from captivity and sin, free from misery and torment, and enter into light and joy.

- As we enter into a covenant relationship with God, we are cleansed in baptism and other ordinances from sin and the dust of mortality, and we are given divine power and responsibility.

- God calls us to continue rising toward Him on the straight and narrow path as we ascend to stand on the divine mountain, Mount Zion, to enter God's presence, clothed in robes of righteousness, encircled, and embraced by the arms of God, singing hymns of praise with heavenly hosts,

where we sit on a throne shared with Christ and are filled
with fullness of joy.

This pattern is similar to the one Jeffrey Bradshaw outlined for the
ascent of Moses in Moses 1:

- Prologue (vv. 1–2)
- Moses in the Spirit World (vv. 3–8)
- Moses falls to the earth (vv. 9–11)
- Moses defeats Satan (vv. 12–23)
- Moses calls upon God and is answered by a voice from behind the veil (vv. 24–26)
- At the veil, Moses sees the earth and all its inhabitants (vv. 27–30)
- Moses stands in the presence of the Lord (vv. 31–40)
- Epilogue (vv. 41–42)[28]

The dusty view of the plan of salvation also brings us to one of the
Old Testament's most famous prophecies related to the Redeemer and
the resurrection, Job 19:25–26:

> For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at
> the latter day upon the earth:
>
> And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my
> flesh shall I see God:

The word translated as "stand" in Job 19:25 has the Hebrew
root *quwm* (קום[29]) more often translated as "arise" or "rise." Here the
Redeemer stands not upon the ʾ*erets* (ארץ[30]) the normal Hebrew word for
earth, but upon the ʿ*aphar* (עָפָר), the dust, and some Bible translations
use *dust* instead of *earth*. Job 19:25 seems to be closely related to Isaiah
52:2, which also uses *quwm* (קום) and ʿ*aphar* (עָפָר). Perhaps the use of

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28   Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The Vision of Moses as a Heavenly Ascent," *Meridian Magazine*, January 6, 2010; http://ldsmag.com/article-1-415/.

29   *HALOT*, 1086–1088. See also Strong's H6965, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H6965&t=KJV.

30   Strong's H776, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H776&t=KJV.

ʿaphar (עָפָר) here is meant as a symbol of the Redeemer's conquest of the dust, having risen from its grasp and subjected it to Himself, and having broken the bands of death for all mankind. Though Job faces death and will return to the dust, yet in the resurrected flesh he shall see the Lord, the One who triumphs over death and dust and will stand upon the dust in the latter day.

This passage from Job is paraphrased in 2 Nephi 9:4 ("our flesh must waste away and die; nevertheless, in our bodies we shall see God"), just four verses after Jacob's quoting of Isaiah reaches a dusty climax with the key verses behind Lehi's discourse, Isaiah 52:1–2. Second Nephi 9 is a great discourse from Jacob that ties together the themes from Lehi and Nephi, plus the blocks of Isaiah that Nephi previously quoted and the second block that Nephi asked Jacob to use while involving a variety of dust-related themes.

Perhaps Jacob's allusion to Job 19 reflects an understanding of its relationship to Lehi's words. Job 19 could be particularly meaningful if viewed as a source of inspiration for Lehi's teachings, not only because of his powerful testimony of the Redeemer and the resurrection but also because Job 19 is dominated by Job's bemoaning his rejection by family members (vv. 13–19). It is a song of grief of one who, like Lehi, has been reviled by members of his own family, and faces death and physical afflictions (vv. 20, 22) yet turns to hope through the Redeemer.

It may be that Lehi had Job 19 in mind when he began his speech in 2 Nephi 1 and "spake unto them [his rebellious sons] concerning their rebellions upon the waters" (v. 2). Lehi also warns his posterity that if "they will reject the Holy One of Israel, the true Messiah, their Redeemer and their God, behold, the judgments of him that is just shall rest upon them" (2 Nephi 1:10). His emphasis on the surety of judgment may reflect Job 19:29, where Job warns of the "punishments of the sword" that others "may know there is a judgment." In fact, Lehi reiterates that concern as he warns that his posterity, if they are rebellious, will be "visited by *sword*, and by famine, and [be] hated, and [be] led according to the will and captivity of the devil" (v. 18). Job's testimony of the Redeemer (Job 19:25–26) reminds us of Lehi's words:

> 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)

> Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

> Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

> Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise (2 Nephi 2:6–8).

As a further parallel between Lehi and Job, in Job 19:24, Job even wishes that his story could be written in a book and engraved with an iron pen in the rock forever (or "inscribed with an iron tool on lead or engraved in rock forever" in the NIV), not completely unlike Lehi's engraving of his story on plates that would be preserved for future generations. But the most vital relationship is that both men, in spite of their trials and sorrows, bear witness of the triumph of the future Messiah, who will restore us to life from the dust.

The related concept of the gathering or scattering of Israel can also be considered. Abraham's descendants are associated with the word *dust* in Genesis 13:16: "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth," conveying its vast quantity, so dust may be an appropriate concept in considering the gathering or scattering of his posterity. They can be scattered like dust, cast off like dust, swept away like dust, or return to the dust when they break the covenant. On the other hand, they can be gathered like dust as they arise from the dust and keep the covenant, and then have their dust washed away.

Isaiah's earlier prophecy of the resurrection in Isaiah 26:19 is also relevant, for it brings together multiple elements of the dust-related themes in the Gospel:

> Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Awaking; arising, *quwm* (קום); singing; resurrection; and dust, *'aphar* (עָפָר) are all brought together here. The image of the dew suggests

cleansing and washing. The root used for "cast out" here is *naphal* (נָפַל[31]), which is often translated as the verb "fall" in other contexts, and could be part of further dust-related wordplays in the Book of Mormon or Old Testament.

In another passage of interest, 1 Nephi 22:12 (a verse in the transition chapter before Lehi's speech, where dust and obscurity meet), being "brought out of obscurity and out of darkness" is associated with deliverance from captivity and the gathering of Israel to the lands of their inheritance, and thus "they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel." Then in v. 14 of that chapter, the nations that war against Israel will "fall into the pit which they have digged to ensnare the people of the Lord," and the "great and abominable church shall tumble to the dust," which reminds us of Isaiah 14 (quoted in 2 Nephi 24) and the dethronement of Lucifer/the king of Babylon or Assyria, the one who once made the earth to tremble (*ragaz*, רָגַז[32]) and the kingdoms to shake (*ra'ash*, רָעַשׁ[33]), who, after presumptuously seeking to ascend the divine mountain and exalt his throne above the stars of heaven (the Heavenly Council), is cast down to the pit, to rise no more.

The dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon include, in my opinion, the creation of man from the dust; rising from the dust as a symbol of enthronement, resurrection, covenant keeping, and redemption; returning to the dust as a symbol of death and breaking the covenant or losing covenant blessings; removing dust and chains as a symbol of deliverance and liberation from the forces of death and hell; the beautiful (washed) feet that stand upon mount Zion; and possibly the gathering or scattering of Israel. The use of dust motifs in some cases seems to reflect noteworthy literary intent rather than just random use of common words and phrases, and recognizing this possible intent in the structure and application of such motifs can add depth and context to the message of Book of Mormon writers. This is particularly true with respect to Nephi's writings and the way he presents Lehi's speech and related material, which we consider from another perspective now to further prepare us to reconsider the content of Alma 36 in Part 3.

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31 Strong's H5307, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5307&t=KJV.

32. Strong's H7264, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs= H7264&t=KJV.

33 Strong's H7493, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs= H7493&t=KJV.

A Dusty Inclusio Bracketing Lehi's Speech?

A Hebraic language pattern also found in the Book of Mormon is *inclusio*:

> In biblical studies, inclusio is a literary device based on a concentric principle, also known as bracketing or an envelope structure, which consists of creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end of a section, although whether this material should consist of a word or a phrase, or whether greater amounts of text also qualify, and of what length the frames section should be, are matters of some debate. Inclusio is found in various sources, both antique and new.

> While this may not be evident to many of the Bible's modern lay readers, the Hebrew Bible is actually full of literary devices, some of which, having fallen out of favor over the years, are lost on most modern readers. Inclusio, of which many instances can be found in the Bible, is one of these, although many instances of its usage are not apparent to those reading translations of the Bible rather than the Hebrew source.

> Particularly noteworthy are the many instances of inclusio in the Book of Jeremiah.[34]

This form of bracketing or framing with similar material placed at the beginning and end of a passage is related to chiasmus, which sometimes can seem like "recursive inclusio." As with chiasmus, the presence of inclusio is easily missed by modern readers reading translations of an ancient Semitic text such as the Bible or the Book of Mormon,[35] so it is an area of ongoing investigation, with inclusio, like chiasmus, only relatively recently discovered in the Book of Mormon, well over a century after publication. A recently discovered example of inclusio in

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34   "Inclusio," *Wikipedia.org*; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusio, accessed Dec. 17 2015.

35   Hugh W. Pinnock, *Finding Biblical Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon*, (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 110–114; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/book/finding-biblical-hebrew-and-other-ancient-literary-forms-in-the-book-of-mormon/, where inclusion is discussed in chapter 3 at http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1097&index=4.

the Book of Mormon, coupled with apparent Hebraic wordplays, was just published by Matthew L. Bowen.[36]

There appears to be a notable example of inclusio in the way Isaiah is quoted both before and after Lehi's speech in 2 Nephi 1–3, the related passages from Nephi and Jacob in 2 Nephi 4–6, and the chapter that ends 1 Nephi, 1 Nephi 22. Back in 1 Nephi 19, Nephi quotes material from the brass plates no longer extant in our Bible and then says that in order to "more fully persuade [his people] to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scripture unto us" (1 Nephi 19:23). Nephi then begins quoting Isaiah 48 in 1 Nephi 20 and Isaiah 49 in 1 Nephi 21. Interestingly, when he quotes Isaiah 49:13, he adds two phrases which may fit the poetical nature of this verse. The parallelism is more evident when viewed with the formatting provided by Royal Skousen in *The Book of Mormon: the Earliest Text*[37] with the additions shown in italics:

> Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth,
>
> *for the feet of those who are in the east shall be established.*
>
> And break forth into singing, O mountains,
>
> *for they shall be smitten no more.*
>
> For the Lord hath comforted his people,
>
> and will have mercy upon his afflicted (1 Nephi 21:13, emphasis added).

Now the first and third lines are parallel, as are the second and fourth, and the final two lines.

The added word *smitten* might be related to the Hebrew *nagaph* (נגף), typically translated as "smite" or "smitten" in the KJV. This word can also have connotations of striking with the foot or striking against the foot.[38] However, the root most commonly used for "smite" in the

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36 Matthew L. Bowen, "Nephi's Good Inclusio," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17 (2016): 181–195; http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/nephis-good-inclusio/.

37. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 67 (1 Nephi 21:13).

38 Strong's H5062, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5062&t=KJV. The use of *nagaph* for "strike against (with the foot)" is found in Proverbs 3:23 ("stumble" in the KJV) and Psalms 91:12 ("dash" a foot in the KJV). Jeremiah 13:16 also translates it as "stumble" following "feet" in the KJV

KJV is *nakah* (נכה[39]), which lacks a connection to feet but can also have connections to rejoicing when it describes the striking of the hands together as in applause. In either case, *smitten* may have interesting ties to the preceding words in this verse.

Regarding the first addition dealing with "feet … established," one Hebrew root often translated as "establish" is *quwm* (קום), the same root used in Isaiah 52:1 for "arise." It occurs as "establish" twenty-seven times in the OT but far more frequently as "arise," "rise," or related terms. If this were the word Nephi used and presumably was found in the brass plates, it would fit some aspects of the "rise from the dust" theme. In view of the dust-related themes that follow and Abinadi's later discourse on another verse in Isaiah 52 (v. 7, "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet … "), I suggest that this addition is meaningful and that the combination *feet + mountains + rejoicing/singing* paints a picture of the redeemed ascending the cosmic mountain, Mount Zion or the House of the Lord, where they have risen away from and have been washed from the mundane dust of the world. Freed from darkness and captivity, they have accepted the Lord's covenant, have put on the Lord's beautiful garments, and in joy have received the enthronement or endowment of power and grace that the Lord offers. Their washed feet are established on Mount Zion.

Another fitting change relative to the KJV for Isaiah 49 involves v. 9, where "sit" in 1 Nephi 21:9 replaces "are" in the KJV, giving: "That thou mayest say to the prisoners: Go forth; to them that sit in darkness: Show yourselves." A likely Hebrew root used here is *yashab* (ישב[40]) which is used in Isaiah 52:2 with enthronement overtones. To sit in darkness, dust, obscurity, and ashes is the opposite of enthronement and exaltation. It is a symbol of loss, of sorrow, of captivity, and of broken covenants. For the dust-related themes in Nephi's writings, *sit* seems to be a stronger word for this passage describing the hope being brought to spiritual captives, and their sitting contrasts nicely with the implicit standing in v. 13 for "those who are in the east" whose feet "shall be established." How appropriate that they shall "break forth into singing" when they know that they have been gathered and "shall be smitten no more" as the Lord has mercy upon his afflicted people.

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39   Strong's H5221, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5221&t=KJV.

40   Strong's H3427, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3427&t=KJV.

The Isaiah quotations before Lehi's speech terminate in 1 Nephi 21 with the closing verses of Isaiah 49, giving a powerful image related to dust and enthronement/dethronement:

> 22 Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.
>
> 23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.
>
> 24 For shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives delivered?
>
> 25 But thus saith the Lord, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.
>
> 26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Kings and queens will bow down and lick up the dust of those who are gathered by the Lord — what an amazing reversal that again employs the relationship of dust to enthronement.

Another related image is that of the King of Heaven bowing down before his mortal disciples to wash the dust from their feet shortly before His crucifixion. Surely He who took on a tabernacle of dust descended below all things, even below the dust itself as He entered the grave for three days and three nights. That act must be considered in light of its profound links to the role of dust (or dust and feet) in the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon.

The dust-related passage in 1 Nephi 21 is what I consider to be the first bracket of Nephi's "dusty" inclusio.

The second bracket occurs after Lehi's Redeemer-centric words in 2 Nephi 1–3, after Nephi's Psalm where he accepts Lehi's charge to "awake, awake" and "shake" at sin (in light of Bokovoy's analysis, showing his worthiness to serve as the legitimate heir of Lehi as ruler

over the Nephite people[41]), and after Jacob's introductory comments in 2 Nephi 6, where Jacob announces that he is now going to read the words of Isaiah that Nephi has asked him to teach. These are carefully chosen passages but with a surprise, for the next chunk of Isaiah that Jacob begins reading is unnecessarily redundant. Jacob begins his words by quoting Isaiah not from where Nephi left off back in 1 Nephi 19, but instead he repeats the very verses that Nephi just quoted. This new excerpt from Isaiah begins with Isaiah 49:22 and quotes the verses about licking of dust from the feet, and the reference to the Redeemer.

A redundant oration is understandable, but given the limited space on the small plates of Nephi and the difficulty of engraving (Jacob 4:1), a redundant quotation involves genuine labor and certainly intent. But why?

This redundant section may have seemed like sloppiness to casual readers and critics, but it is highly thematic and is a clever use of a Hebraic literary tool, inclusio, to bracket and highlight the dust-related themes of the chapters in between and to emphasize the importance of this dust- and Redeemer-related passage in Isaiah. Jacob then continues in Isaiah until he gets to Isaiah 52:1–2, the dust-related passage that underlies Lehi's words — and perhaps more of the Book of Mormon than we realized before.

One rough way of portraying the structure is:

A. First Isaiah passage

> Beginning: 1 Nephi 20:1 (Isaiah 48:1): Arising from the waters of Judah (baptism) — as if washed from dust.

> End: 1 Nephi 21:22–26 (Isaiah 49:22–26): Kings and queens to lick the dust off the feet of the covenant people of Israel; all shall know the Savior and Redeemer.

B. Words of Nephi, Lehi, and Jacob in 1 Nephi 22 and 2 Nephi 1–6, with Lehi's repeated references to Isaiah 52:1–2 and themes of dust, deliverance from captivity, and redemption.

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41 Bokovoy, "Deutero-Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: A Literary Analysis (pt. 1)."

C. Second Isaiah passage

> Beginning: 2 Nephi 6:6, quoting Isaiah 49:22–23 (kings licking dust from the feet) in 2 Nephi 6:6–7, and then continuing with Isaiah 49:24–26 in 2 Nephi 6:16–18, then Isaiah 50 in 2 Nephi 7 and Isaiah 51 in 2 Nephi 8.

> End: 2 Nephi 8:24–25, quoting Isaiah 52:1–2 ("Awake, awake … Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit down, loose thyself from the bands of thy necks, O captive daughter of Zion."

This is more than "just" an inclusio. You could say this is a textual example of going "from dust to dust." Nephi appears to be using the structure of his words, including the choice of Isaiah passages to cite, in order to frame and amplify a core theme for the Book of Mormon.

The final words of the Isaiah material in the first bracket of the inclusio is a beautiful reference to the Redeemer: "all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (1 Nephi 21:26, Isaiah 49:26). The closing bracket in 2 Nephi 6 begins with the dust-related verses of Isaiah 49 (vv. 22–23), then follows with a reference to the Redeemer in v. 11, in the context of Israel having been scattered and smitten:

> Wherefore, after they are driven to and fro, for thus saith the angel, many shall be afflicted in the flesh, and shall not be suffered to perish, because of the prayers of the faithful; they shall be scattered, and smitten, and hated; nevertheless, the Lord will be merciful unto them, that when they shall come to the knowledge of their *Redeemer*, they shall be gathered together again to the lands of their inheritance (2 Nephi 6:11) [emphasis added]

This ties in with the added content of Isaiah 49:13 found in 1 Nephi 21:13 indicating that the scattered House of Israel "*shall be smitten no more*" for the Lord "will have mercy upon his afflicted."

At the end of 2 Nephi 6, Jacob completes the quotation from the closing verses of Isaiah 49 that again turn our attention to our "Savior and [our] Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

It must be emphasized that at the heart of Lehi's message, indeed, the heart of the Book of Mormon's message, is a focus on redemption through the power and love of the Redeemer. In 2 Nephi 1:10, he warns

Israel not to reject "the Holy One of Israel, the true Messiah, their Redeemer and their God." Then at essentially the center of Lehi's speech, in v. 15, he declares that "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." Redemption and the love and triumph of the Redeemer are the core of all the dust-related themes and ultimately the core of the Book of Mormon itself.

Within the bracketed contents, Nephi's transition from Isaiah material to Lehi's speech in 1 Nephi 22 is done with more dust-related material. After further discussing the role of the Gentiles in nursing and gathering scattered Israel, there are references to obscurity, darkness, dust, and dust-like stubble (the Hebrew *qash*, קַשׁ, refers to dry straw or chaff, not necessarily burned remnants of crops[42]) as well as deliverance from captivity:

> Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel.
>
> Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be *brought out of obscurity and out of darkness*; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel. …
>
> And every nation which shall war against thee, O house of Israel, shall be turned one against another, and they shall fall into the pit which they digged to ensnare the people of the Lord. And all that fight against Zion shall be destroyed, and that great whore, who hath perverted the right ways of the Lord, yea, that great and abominable church, shall *tumble to the dust* and great shall be the fall of it.
>
> For behold, saith the prophet, the time cometh speedily that Satan shall have no more power over the hearts of the children of men; for the day soon cometh that all the proud and they who do wickedly shall be as *stubble*; and the day cometh that they must be burned (1 Nephi 22:11–12,14–15) [emphasis added].

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42   Strong's H7179, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H7179&t=KJV.

Later in this chapter, these concepts are reiterated to describe how Satan's work will be overthrown, using the dust-related terms *tremble*, *quake*, *dust*, and *stubble*. Here I provide the text as formatted in Royal Skousen's *The Earliest Text*, with some minor differences in wording with later editions of the Book of Mormon (I prefer the language of the *Earliest Text* in this case):

> 22 And the righteous need not fear.
>
> For it is they which shall not be confounded,
>
> but it is the kingdom of the devil,
>
> which shall be built up among the children of men,
>
> which kingdom is established among them which are in the flesh.
>
> 23. For the time speedily shall come that all churches which are built up to get gain,
>
> and all they which are built up to get power over the flesh,
>
> and they which are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world,
>
> and they which seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world
>
> and to do all manner of iniquity,
>
> yea, in fine, all they which belong to the kingdom of the devil,
>
> *it is they which need fear and tremble and quake;*
>
> *it is they which must be brought low in the dust;*
>
> *it is they which must be consumed as stubble.*
>
> And this is according to the words of the prophet[43] [emphasis added].

Returning to the dust describes Satan's dethronement and humiliation, while scattered Israel will be brought out of obscurity and darkness, having the dust licked off their feet as they are enthroned. Satan's overthrow is presented with a tricolon (fear+quake, brought low, consumed as stubble), which is now recognized as a legitimate form of

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43. Skousen, *The Earliest Text*, 71 (1 Nephi 22:22–23).

parallelism in ancient Hebrew, though bicola (couplets) are much more common.[44]

The bracketed content in the inclusio not only has Lehi's multiple references to dust and earth in 2 Nephi 1 but also has two references to the Book of Mormon crying from the dust to the House of Israel (2 Nephi 3:19, 20).

What happens after the second part of the inclusio is also interesting. As explained by Frederick W. Axelgard,[45] 2 Nephi 6 marks an important transition in the Book of Mormon, especially in light of the organizational plans for the text that Nephi shares in 1 Nephi 19:5. In that verse, he explains that later he will describe his making of the plates, and then he will convey "the more sacred things" for the welfare of his people. It is in 2 Nephi 5 where Nephi describes how he made the plates. After that, we essentially have a pure focus on doctrine and prophecy, with no more references to the historical things Nephi experienced. The only hint of any time passing after 2 Nephi 5 is found in Nephi's farewell near the end of his final chapter, 2 Nephi 33, where, in v. 13, he bids farewell to the House of Israel and "all the ends of the earth" until the great judgment day and tells us that he speaks unto us "as the voice of one crying from the dust."

Nephi's second book begins with Lehi's call to rise from the dust, is followed by the second bracketing of an inclusio with redundant dust-related verses from Isaiah that also marks Nephi's transition in 2 Nephi 6 from the temporal record to the "more sacred things," and ends with Nephi telling us that his voice speaks from the dust to all the ends of the earth. It is not just Lehi's speech that is bracketed with dust-related themes, it is also Nephi's "more sacred" content that completes his record. Between the dust-theme in 2 Nephi 6 and his closing "voice of one crying from the dust" in 2 Nephi 33:13, his "more sacred" content includes further references to dust in:

- 2 Nephi 12:10 (quoting Isaiah 2);
- 2 Nephi 15:24 (stubble, chaff, and dust, quoting Isaiah 5);

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44 John A. Tvedtnes, "Word Groups in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997); http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1393&index=17.

45 Frederick W. Axelgard, "1 and 2 Nephi: An Inspiring Whole," *BYU Studies* 26/4 (1986): 53–65; http://byustudies.byu.edu/content/1-and-2-nephi-inspiring-whole or also https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/viewFile/5634/5284.

- three instances in 2 Nephi 26 (one in v. 15 and two in v. 16, plus chaff in v. 18) as Nephi describes how his people will be brought low to the dust and will speak from the dust, adapting Isaiah 29:4; and

- 2 Nephi 27:9, again building on Isaiah 29 as he describes the future Book of Mormon as containing the "words of those who have slumbered in the dust."

Dust-related themes appear to be deliberately and repeatedly used by Nephi and Lehi, especially in the latter half of 1 Nephi and throughout 2 Nephi. This raises the question of whether dust-related themes are also present earlier in 1 Nephi. The word *dust* does not occur until 1 Nephi 18:18, where Lehi and Sariah were in grief and on their sick-beds while traversing the ocean, "about to be brought down to lie low in the dust" and "near to be cast with sorrow into a watery grave." However, the related themes of resurrection and redemption occur in 1 Nephi 10, as does gathering and scattering. being bound with cords (like chains) that are shaken off (my assumption) occurs in 1 Nephi 7:16–18 as Nephi's brothers bind him on the ship, but the cords are miraculously burst and Nephi is delivered. But the most important relationship between the dust-themes of 2 Nephi 1 may be in the opening words of 1 Nephi, where modern scholarship regarding the ancient Hebrew scriptures helps us recognize significant and apparently deliberate parallels that we may not have previously appreciated.

Nephi's Call and Lehi's Divine Commission: Deliberate Parallels in the Opening Chapters of Nephi's Books

The insights from modern scholarship (Walter Brueggemann and others) regarding dust-related imagery in the Bible helps us understand that much more is taking place in Lehi's speech and Nephi's response than we might have otherwise realized. Another contribution from modern scholarship also helps bring out some striking parallels between Nephi's call and Lehi's divine commission in 1 Nephi 1.

Blake Ostler has explored Lehi's experience in 1 Nephi 1 in terms of other ancient examples of prophets receiving their divine commission.

> [T]he first chapter of 1 Nephi conforms precisely to a literary pattern that form critical studies have demonstrated to be the very essence of the prophetic commission in ancient

Israel which "gives the individuals credentials as a prophet messenger and ambassador of the heavenly council." The pattern that emerges in the pseudepigrapha is that of a righteous individual who, concerned for the wickedness of his people, prays, and weeps on their behalf until physically overcome by the spirit of revelation and who, carried away in a vision, sees God enthroned amidst the heavenly council. He also receives a heavenly book which explains the secrets of the universe and the impending disaster of his people. The vision is completed with a call or commission extended from the heavenly council to warn his people of their impending destruction if they will not repent; however, he is also forewarned that his people will reject him. Ultimately, such an apocalyptic pattern derives from the visionary experiences of the prophets Micaiah (1 Kings 22:19–22), Isaiah (Isaiah 6) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1–3:21) who had visions of god on his throne preceding their prophetic calls.[46]

Ostler draws upon a number of recent scholars who have explored ancient patterns in divine calls of prophets, with several characteristic components that can be identified:

1. *Historical Introduction*: There is a brief introductory remark providing circumstantial details such as time, place, and historical setting.

2. *Divine Confrontation*: Either deity or an angel appears in glory to the individual.

3. *Reaction*: The individual reacts to the presence of the deity or his angel by way of an action expressive of fear unworthiness or having been overpowered.

4. *Throne-Theophany*: In the commissions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, the individual sees the council of God and God seated upon his throne. This element distinguishes the throne-theophany commission from the primarily auditory commissions.

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46 Blake T. Ostler, "The Throne Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form Critical Analysis," *BYU Studies*, 26/4 (1986): 67–95, quotation at 67; ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/viewFile/5635/5285divine, accessed Feb. 8, 2016.

5. *Commission*: The individual recipient is commanded to perform a given task and assume the role of prophet to the people.

6. *Protest*: The prophet responds to the commission by claiming that he is unable or unworthy to accomplish the task. This element is usually absent when the reaction element is present as in the call of Ezekiel.

7. *Reassurance*: The deity reassures the prophet that he will be protected and able to carry out the commission. The deity may also reassure the prophet by giving him a sign indicative of divine power and protection.

8. *Conclusion*: The commission form usually concludes in a formal way, most often with a statement that the prophet has begun to carry out his commission.[47]

Ostler explores relationships between Lehi's call and additional ancient texts from the pseudepigrapha, including texts associated with the Book of Enoch as well as the Book of Moses. Elements in common with the pseudepigrapha but not found in the Bible include (1) an intercessory prayer (1 Nephi 1:5); (2) revelation received on the prophet's bed or couch (1 Nephi 1:7); (3) an ascension into heaven (1 Nephi 1:8); (4) a vision of one descending from the heavenly council followed by others (1 Nephi 1:11–13) and (5) a prophecy of the coming Messiah and redemption of the world (1 Nephi 1:19). Ostler then explores each of these elements in depth.[48] For example, in discussing the reaction of prophets to their theophany, they often react physically, as Lehi did, who was overcome and cast himself upon his bed. Likewise, Moses in the Book of Moses is physically overcome, and Enoch shakes. In the Ethiopian *First Enoch* text, Enoch has a similar response: "fear covered me, and trembling got hold upon me. And as I quaked and trembled, I fell upon my face."[49] It is then that he beholds another vision in which he beheld the throne of God and the heavenly hosts,[50] as did Lehi.

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47. Ostler, "The Throne Theophany," 69–70.

48. Ibid.

49. *The Book of Enoch or First Enoch*, transl. by R.H. Charles (Escondido, CA: The Book Tree, 2000), chapter 14, vv. 13–14, p. 33; https://books.google.com/books?id=wQpjqn26o60C&pg=PA33.

50 *The Book of Enoch or First Enoch*, chapter 14, vv. 14–22, pp. 33–34; https://books.google.com/books?id=wQpjqn26o60C&pg=PA34.

Recognizing that 1 Nephi 1 presents a classic ancient pattern for the divine commission of the prophet Lehi, we can now recognize important parallels to the opening chapters of 2 Nephi, seeing that the enthronement aspects of the dust-related themes support Nephi's rightful succession as Lehi's heir and his commission both as prophet and king. Just as Lehi has been called by the Lord following an established ancient pattern, so can we also see the divine calling of Nephi in a similar pattern as Lehi's true successor. The many parallels between the beginnings of 1 Nephi and 2 Nephi highlight this relationship, and further strengthen our understanding of Nephi's craftsmanship in organizing his material into two books.

Like Lehi, Nephi has a divine confrontation. Lehi reminds us of that in 2 Nephi 1:24 when he tells his brothers that Nephi's "views have been glorious." In Nephi's response in 2 Nephi 4, Nephi speaks in more detail of his encounters with God, and his visions, suggesting that he has had both the divine confrontation and a theophany involving the heavenly hosts:

> 20 My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.
>
> 21 He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh.
>
> 22 He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me.
>
> 23 Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime.
>
> 24 And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me.
>
> 25 And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them.

Nephi's commission and his right to lead the people comes through his father's endorsement in 2 Nephi 1 (e.g., v. 29, where Lehi's first blessing is upon Nephi, unless Laman and Lemuel repent, which they clearly do not) and in Nephi's acceptance of the charge to arise and awake, as previously discussed and noted by David Bokovoy. Further, just as

Lehi is "filled with the Spirit of the Lord" in 1 Nephi 1:12, in response to his theophany and divine commission, so Lehi, in endorsing Nephi, tells us that Nephi's commanding his brothers to obey was not Nephi speaking but rather "was the Spirit of the Lord which was in him, which opened his mouth to utterance that he could not shut it" (2 Nephi 1:27). Nephi has already stepped into Lehi's shoes as a divinely commissioned prophet who cannot help but speak what the Lord commands, though it puts his life at risk.

Nephi's physical reaction to his commission and divine encounter is described in his psalm in 2 Nephi 4. In v. 21, he tells us that his encounter with God's love has been "even unto the consuming of my flesh," similar to Lehi's being physically overwhelmed. Perhaps also serving as his reaction and as his protest, Nephi writes with great humility, expressing his unworthiness and the weakness of both flesh and spirit:

> 17 … O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.
>
> 18 I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me.
>
> 19 And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins. …
>
> 26 O then, if I have seen so great things, if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath visited men ["*me*" in the *Earliest Text*[51]] in so much mercy, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?
>
> 27 And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? Why am I angry because of mine enemy?
>
> 28 Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.
>
> 29 Do not anger again because of mine enemies. Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions.

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51 Skousen, *The Earliest Text*, 87 (2 Nephi 4:26) with discussion of sources at 753.

According to Skousen's *Earliest Text* for the Book of Mormon, v. 26 should read "visited me" instead of "visited men," as found in the Printer's Manuscript (the Original Manuscript is not extant for this section of the text).[52] This correction converts the Lord's general ministry to men into reference to a personal visitation, further strengthening the textual references to Nephi's divine encounter and theophany.

In terms of physical reaction, not only does Nephi's flesh "waste away" and his strength is slackened, but he also echoes Lehi's quaking and trembling (1 Nephi 1:6) as well as Lehi's charge to shake off the dust when he prays that he may be made to "shake at the appearance of sin" (2 Nephi 4:31). Though frustrated by his weakness, he undertakes the charge to awake and shake off the chains of Satan the enemy of his soul (v. 28). He accepts the divine commission, pleading for divine help to complete it.

The warning of rejection from others that often accompanies the commission of a prophet is implicit in Nephi's concerns about dealing with the enemies he faces who have caused him so much grief and anger, and relatively explicit in Lehi's warnings in 2 Nephi 1 that his rebellious brothers are likely to continue causing trouble:

> 24 Rebel no more against your brother, whose views have been glorious, and who hath kept the commandments from the time that we left Jerusalem; and who hath been an instrument in the hands of God, in bringing us forth into the land of promise; for were it not for him, we must have perished with hunger in the wilderness; nevertheless, *ye sought to take away his life; yea, and he hath suffered much sorrow because of you.*

> 25 *And I exceedingly fear and tremble because of you, lest he shall suffer again*; for behold, ye have accused him that he sought power and authority over you; but I know that he hath not sought for power nor authority over you, but he hath sought the glory of God, and your own eternal welfare. [emphasis added]

Interestingly, Nephi uses similar language to describe the response of the Jews to Lehi's preaching in 1 Nephi 1:20:

> And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had

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52   Ibid.

cast out, and stoned, and slain; and *they also sought his life, that they might take it away.* But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance. [emphasis added]

A warning from the Lord to Lehi in 1 Nephi 2:1 also states that Lehi's enemies "seek to take away thy life," and we are reminded again in 1 Nephi 2:13 that they "sought to take away the life of my father." Just as the Lord warned Lehi to flee from his brethren, the Jews, to save his life by going into the wilderness, the Lord also warns Nephi to flee into the wilderness to escape from his brothers who sought his life (2 Nephi 5:4–5).

Lehi's call results in rejection, efforts to take his life, and a need to flee into the wilderness and eventually to a promised land. Nephi's call results in rejection, efforts to take his life, and a need to flee into the wilderness and to a new portion of the promised land.

The element of reassurance in the full pattern of the divine commission of prophets may also be seen in Nephi's case. The words from his father can be taken as a reassurance of the Lord's protection and blessing to him in fulfilling his commission. The closing words of 2 Nephi 1 in v. 32 tell Zoram that "the Lord hath consecrated this land for the security of thy seed with the seed of my son" if they will keep the commandments. There is a blessing of security and prosperity in the land to Nephi and his people — if they will obey the Lord. When he speaks to Sam in 2 Nephi 4:11, he also refers to the blessings upon Nephi: "thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi … and thou shalt be even like unto thy brother … and thou shalt be blessed in all thy days." This is surely one form of assurance. But assurance is also seen in Nephi's word's in 2 Nephi 4 as he moves past his guilt and frustration and finds peace and joy before the Lord:

> 34 O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever … 35 Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss; therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness. Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God.

In his pleadings to God, the frustrated and distraught Nephi finds hope.

Ostler also explains that the *descensus* of God/Christ coming down to earth is a common theme in prophetic calls, especially in the pseudepigrapha. Lehi's vision of Christ descending to the earth, followed by the Apostles (1 Nephi 1:9–10), is presented as a parallel to the text known as the Ascension of Isaiah, with similar content.[53] Likewise, Nephi's reference to the condescension of Christ seems particularly fitting. The word *condescension* is used twice in 1 Nephi, both in 1 Nephi 11, the pivot point of the overarching seven-step chiasmus that appears to be part of Nephi's organizational scheme for his writings.[54] It is also used in 2 Nephi. The occurrences are:

> 1 Nephi 11
>
> 16 And he said unto me: Knowest thou the *condescension* of God? … 26 And the angel said unto me again: Look and behold the *condescension* of God! [emphasis added]
>
> 2 Nephi 4
>
> 26 O then, if I have seen so great things, if the Lord in his *condescension* unto the children of men hath visited men in so much mercy, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions? [emphasis added]
>
> 2 Nephi 9
>
> 53 And behold how great the covenants of the Lord, and how great his *condescensions* unto the children of men; and because of his greatness, and his grace and mercy, he has promised unto us that our seed shall not utterly be destroyed, according to the flesh, but that he would preserve them; and in future generations they shall become a righteous branch unto the house of Israel. [emphasis added]

Another aspect of the divine commission, as explained by Ostler, is the frequent use of a book containing revelations that is given to the prophet that he then uses to obtain a divine message to teach others. This happens to Lehi as he is given a book to read in vision in 1 Nephi 1,

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53   *Ascension of Isaiah*, 10:7, 11:22, as cited by Ostler, "The Throne Theophany."

54   John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *New Era*, February 1972; https://www.lds.org/new-era/1972/02/chiasmus-in-the-book-of-mormon.

and this also occurs to Nephi who receives the brass plates from Lehi. He takes these with him when is warned of the Lord to flee from his murderous brethren (2 Nephi 5:5, 12). Further, Nephi makes other plates to continue writing revelations from the Lord, and what he writes after this point, beginning with 2 Nephi 6, is the "most precious" material he mentioned in 1 Nephi 19:5, the material he would share after he gave an account of the making of his plates, which he does in 2 Nephi 5. This "most precious" material is free of the temporal affairs of his people and his life, and is focused on revelations from the Lord. This is a significant detail that points to Nephi's carefully crafted organization of his work.

Besides the parallels in the divine commissions of Lehi and Nephi, other significant parallels in the opening words of 1 and 2 Nephi suggest Nephi's division of his work into two books involves broad structural considerations in providing common elements in the opening words of both. A number of parallels are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Parallels Between the Beginnings of 1 Nephi and 2 Nephi.

1 Nephi 1, 2	2 Nephi 1–5
Lehi prays for the welfare of others (1:5)	Nephi seeks only the welfare of his brothers (1:25)
Lehi quakes and trembles (1:6)	Lehi is "a trembling parent" (1:14)
Lehi physically "overcome," falls upon his bed (1:7,8)	Nephi's encounter with God has been "unto the consuming" of his flesh (4:21)
Lehi sees God and angels (1:8,14)	Nephi has majestic visions (1:24, 4:25,26); Jacob also saw God (2:3,4)
Lehi sees and testifies of Christ descending to the earth (1:9,19)	The condescension of Christ (4:26)
Lehi receives a divine book (1:11,12)	Nephi takes the brass plates (5:12), records his history upon plates and creates more plates (5:29–33)
Lehi "filled with the Spirit of the Lord" (1:12)	Lehi speaks of the workings of the Spirit in him (1:6) and speaks of the "Spirit of the Lord which was in" Nephi (1:27).
Lehi in a vision learns that Jerusalem will be destroyed (1:13,18)	Lehi sees in a vision that Jerusalem has been destroyed (1:4)
Heart/soul word pair (1:15) (see discussion below)	Heart/soul word pair (1:21, 4:17)

1 Nephi 1, 2	2 Nephi 1–5
Enemies seek to take away Lehi's life (1:20; 2:1)	Nephi's brothers seek to take away his life (5:2–4)
Deliverance (1:20)	Nephi pleads to be delivered from his enemies (4:31); themes of deliverance are also included in Lehi's speech
Tender mercies of the Lord (1:20)	Mercies of God (1:2)
Lehi is warned by God to flee Jerusalem into the wilderness (2:2) — an exodus from Jerusalem	Nephi is warned by God to flee into the wilderness (5:5) — the Nephite's second exodus
Lehi takes his tents and family and departed into the wilderness, traveling for three days (2:4–6)	Nephi takes his family and tents and departs, journeying in the wilderness for many days (5:6–7)
Lehi obtains sacred relics, the Liahona and the brass plates (1 Nephi 5:10, 16:10)	Nephi retains the sacred relics, the Liahona and the brass plates (2 Nephi 5:12)
Lehi builds an altar and offers sacrifices (1 Nephi 2:7, 5:9; this may also be what Lehi is doing in 1 Nephi 1:5–6, as Adam Miller suggests)**	Nephi constructs a temple, which of course would include an altar and be a place of sacrifice (2 Nephi 5:16). Further, 2 Nephi 2:7 speaks of the Messiah offering himself as a sacrifice for sin
Lehi obtains the brass plates to provide the law of Moses that the people need to keep (1 Nephi 4:15–16)	Lehi speaks of the law of Moses but emphasizes grace (2 Nephi 2:5–7)
Nephi puts on the "garments" and "armor" of Laban to obtain the brass plates (1 Nephi 4:19–21)	Lehi urges his sons "put on the armor of righteousness" (2 Nephi 1:23). The adjacent command to "awake, awake" and arise from the dust may also recall the "beautiful garments" of Isaiah 52:1.
** Adam S. Miller, *Future Mormon: Essays in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City:` Greg Kofford Books, 2016), 14–16. Miller suggests that when Lehi, concerned over the sins of Jerusalem, "went forth" to pray on behalf of the people (1 Nephi 1:5), he would surely be "going forth" to a place where he would offer sacrifice. He further suggests that the rock upon which fell a pillar of fire from God was most likely the rock of an altar. He shows parallels to the Old Testament when pillars of fire fall from heaven to consumer sacrifices upon an altar (Leviticus 9:23–24, 2 Chronicles 7:1–2, Judges 13:19–20, and 1 Kings 18:37–39).	

Referring again to Kevin Barney's foundational work on Hebrew word pairs in the Book of Mormon,[55] another word pair he discusses is that of "heart," *lebab* (לבב) and "soul," *nephesh* (נפש), for which he cites

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55   Kevin L. Barney, "Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon."

1 Nephi 1:15 as a Book of Mormon example: "his soul did rejoice, and his whole heart was filled because of the things which he had seen, yea, which the Lord had shown unto him." Barney's Book of Mormon examples include 2 Nephi 4:17: "Yea, my *heart* sorroweth because of my flesh; my *soul* grieveth because of mine iniquities," as well as Jacob's words in 2 Nephi 9:49. To this should be added an example in 2 Nephi 1:21 in one of the "arise from the dust" passages:

> And now that my *soul* might have joy in you, and that my *heart* might leave this world with gladness because of you, that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the grave, arise from the dust, my sons, and be men, and be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things, that ye may not come down into captivity. [emphasis added]

The heart/soul word pair in 1 Nephi 1 is echoed in Lehi's speech in 2 Nephi 1, and in Nephi's response in 2 Nephi 4, strengthening the ties between the opening portions of Nephi's books.

A significant difference in the two chapters is that 2 Nephi 1 emphasizes the promised land and the promises of liberty to those in the land, while 1 Nephi 1 is focused more on Lehi's vision of the heavens. Nevertheless, there may be a unifying factor even in this, when we recognize that a common word pair is heaven and earth.[56] Thus, 1 Nephi 1 gives a vision of the heavens, while 2 Nephi 1 looks at the promised land on earth, though with a divine perspective. This may be accidental but could have been part of Nephi's intent in organizing parallels.

A Dusty Hymn from the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Hymns Scroll from the Dead Sea Scrolls includes a variety of hymns similar to the Psalms of the Bible. First published in 1954–5, the 25 hymns therein contain rich doctrinal detail. The author expresses his unworthiness as a "creature of clay" for the blessings he receives from God. In Hymn 10 (formerly Hymn 5), we have a humble speaker made of clay, shaped from dust, who praises God for raising him up to divine heights and making him part of the everlasting Council, while also being delivered from Satan and the pit. This hymn shows some affinity for Nephi's psalm. The following translation is from Geza Vermes[57]:

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56   Ibid.

57   Geza Vermes, "The Thanksgiving Hymns," in *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 337–360; https://books.google.com/books?id=r3dh4GjzuPQC&pg=PT337.

I thank Thee, O Lord,
for Thou hast redeemed my soul from the Pit,
and from the Hell of Abaddon
Thou hast *raised me up to everlasting height.*

I walk on limitless level ground,
and I know there is hope for him
whom Thou hast shaped from dust
for the everlasting Council.

Thou hast cleansed a perverse spirit of great sin
that it may stand with the host of the Holy Ones,
and that it may enter into community
with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven.

Thou hast allotted to man
an everlasting destiny amidst the spirits of knowledge,
that he may praise Thy Name
in a common rejoicing
and recount Thy marvels before all Thy works.

And yet I, a creature of clay, what am I?
Kneaded with water, what is my worth and my might?

For I have stood in the realm of wickedness
and my lot was with the damned;
the soul of the poor one was carried away
in the midst of great tribulation.

Miseries of torment dogged my steps
while all the snares of the Pit were opened …

It was a time of the wrath of all Belial
and the bonds of death tightened without any escape.[58]
[emphasis added]

This hymn, resonating with Nephi's psalm and the chiasmus of Alma 36, speaks of the bonds of hell, the author's grief at his sins, misery, torment, cleansing, deliverance, and divine destiny amid the heavenly council, consistent with Book of Mormon themes and the analysis of Brueggeman on *rising from the dust.* The themes related to rising from the dust were still at play at Qumran and continued into New Testament times, and are beautifully present in the Book of Mormon.

Completing the circle of our investigation that began in Part 1 with considering themes from the Book of Moses in the Book of Mormon, the

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58   Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 358–360; https://books.google.com/books?id=r3dh4GjzuPQC&pg=PT358. Also available at http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/scrolls_deadsea/deadseascrolls_english/08.htm.

passage above from the Dead Sea Scrolls touches upon an issue relevant to the Book of Moses. Hymn 10 above connects being "shaped from the dust" with "a creature of clay, kneaded with water," showing that wet clay can represent God's creative work just as dust can. This is relevant to the symbolism of John 9:6–7, where Christ anoints the eyes of a blind man with clay that He forms from spittle and the dust of the ground. After anointing, He instructs the man to wash the clay from his eyes, resulting in miraculous healing. The early Christian leader Irenaeus argued that the use of clay here was an allusion to God's creative work in forming man from the dust (Genesis 2:7),[59] but others have disputed that, arguing that clay is not the same as dust. Recently, however, Daniel Frayer-Griggs has shown that three documents from the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Near Eastern documents provide compelling support for Irenaeus' view that anointing with clay refers to the Creation and particularly the creation of man.[60]

In light of the Frayer-Griggs work, a possible connection to the Book of Moses occurs in Moses 6:35, where the Lord instructs Enoch to anoint his eyes with clay and to wash them, after which Moses 6:36 tells us that Enoch could then see "the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people." By virtue of anointing the eyes with clay, Enoch becomes a seer who could see the invisible things of the Creation, including the spirits God had created. It would seem that it is not so much the clay itself that adds vision and new light to Enoch or the blind man but the washing off of the clay/dust from the eyes.

This symbol of cleansing, repentance, and receiving light from God would seem to fit the complex of dust-related themes explored above. The role of a seer, after all, is to see divine *light* to reveal what is not visible to the rest of us.

The seer Enoch was said to have been "raised up unto his people" by the Lord (Moses 6:36) in parallel to the words of recorded on the brass plates from Joseph of Egypt: "A seer shall the Lord God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins" (2 Nephi 3:6) and the Lord's promise to Joseph, "A choice seer will I raise up … " (2 Nephi 3:7).

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59   Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, 15:2; http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book5.html.

60   Daniel Frayer-Griggs, "Spittle, Clay, and Creation in John 9:6 and Some Dead Sea Scrolls," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132/3 (2013): 659–670; http://www.jstor.org/stable/23487892.

Consistent with the "rise from the dust" theme of the Book of Mormon, the choice seer is "raised up" by the Lord. Seers are raised up by the Lord as part of God's creative and revelatory work to raise up all of us if we will let Him.

2 Nephi 3:5–7 tells us that this "choice seer" would help bring Israel "out of darkness unto light … and out of captivity unto freedom" and Mosiah 8:17 reiterates that through seers, "hidden things shall come to light." By washing off the clay/dust that brings darkness, access to light and knowledge is made possible, revealing the hidden things of the Creation and assisting in God's ongoing creative work as He helps His children rise from the dust and enter into light and life.

What This Means So Far

At this point, we have explored how modern scholarship on dust-related motifs reveals richer layers of meaning in Lehi's speech in 2 Nephi 1 and in the surrounding chapters. This began by considering the relationship between elements in the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, wherein the theme of escaping the captivity of Satan and his chains pointed not only to related content but also to a Hebraic wordplay in a highly poetic passage relating dust and obscurity or darkness. Recognizing the significance of dust-related themes in 2 Nephi 1 then resulted in further discoveries about the way these themes are used in a coherent way in the Book of Mormon.

For example, the enthronement and covenantal aspects of rising from the dust shed light on Nephi's organizational structure. His use of Isaiah material before and after Lehi's speech bridges the two books and forms an intriguing inclusio with dust-related themes around Lehi's poignant appeal to rise from the dust, as he is about to return to the dust. Further, by understanding the relationship of 1 Nephi 1 to classical patterns of divine commissions for ancient prophets, we can see remarkable parallels between Lehi's divine commission and the kingship-related themes in 2 Nephi 1 and 4 where Nephi's call as prophet and his rightful rule as king is documented, especially when we consider the complex of motifs associated with rising from the dust. Other parallels between the opening verses of 1 Nephi and 2 Nephi reveal further relationships pointing to Nephi's careful crafting of his two books.

This investigation of dust-related themes began with a look at the use of the word *chains* in the Book of Mormon and soon raised a question about the last occurrence of that word in the text in Alma 36. With

the background we have now established, we can dust off a famous but occasionally obscure chiasmus in Alma 36, the topic of Part 3.

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Reading 1 Nephi With Wisdom

Taylor Halverson

Abstract: *Nephi is the prototypical wise son of the Wisdom tradition. As Proverbs advocates that a wise man cherishes the word of God, so Nephi cherishes the words of the wise. Nephi's record begins with a declaration of his upbringing in the Wisdom tradition and his authenticity and reliability as a wise son and scribe (1 Nephi 1:1–3). His is a record of the learning of the Jews — a record of wisdom. If the Wisdom tradition is a foundation for Nephi's scribal capabilities and outlook, perhaps the principles and literary skills represented by the scribal Wisdom tradition constitute the "learning of the Jews" that Nephi references so early in his account. Thus, if Nephi's is a record of the learning of the Jews — a record of wisdom — we would be wise to read it with Wisdom — that is, through the lens of ancient Israelite and Middle Eastern Wisdom traditions.*

"Wisdom cries out [from the dust] "
(Proverbs 1:20)

As he opens his account, Nephi states that his record is founded on the learning of the Jews:

> Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, *which consists of the learning of the Jews* and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge. (1 Nephi 1:2–3, emphasis added)

And what might the learning of the Jews be? This paper explores the ancient Near Eastern scribal Wisdom tradition[1] and its related literature and themes as a potential backdrop for Nephi's scribal skills, literary capabilities, and thematic outlook.

When interpreting the phrase "learning of the Jews," scholars of the Book of Mormon typically focus on either Nephi's writing ability or on his formal training[2] in some type of ancient Israelite educational system.[3] Given his writing abilities, it seems that Nephi received training as a scribe,[4] a viable and worthy professional occupation for a fourth son

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1 Useful secondary readings on the ancient Near Eastern Wisdom tradition and literature with specific emphasis on the Hebrew Bible include: Bernard Lang, *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs: A Hebrew Goddess Redefined* (New York: Pilgrim, 1986); Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1994); Claus Westermann, *The Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples*, trans. J. Daryl Charles (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1995); G.I. Davies, "Were There Schools in Ancient Israel?" *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, eds. John Day, Robert Gordon, and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 199––211; Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1996); James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 1st ed. (Louisville KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1981).

2 Joshua Michael Sears, "'We Came Out from Jerusalem': The Holy City's Influence on Book of Mormon Peoples," *Selections from the Religious Education Student Symposium 2007* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2007), 130–146, see footnote 3; Steven L. Olsen, "The Centrality of Nephi's Vision" in *Religious Educator* 11, no. 2 (2010): 51–66, see footnote 1.

3 James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*, The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1998); Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Teachings in the Book of Mormon" (Transcript, n.d.), available at http://publications.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=943&index=1&keyword= learning%20of%20the%20jews. Reynolds acknowledges that "Nephi brought all that Jewish education and culture with him to the Promised Land" and later qualifies that as Hebrew literary devices.

4 If, as some scholars suggest, the Bible were the product of scribal schools, then we should look more carefully at what role scribal training and the Wisdom tradition (which often went hand in hand) had in the production of the Book of Mormon. See K. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007) although van der Toorn's work has been criticized by John Van Seters, "The Role of the Scribe in the Making of the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 8/1 (2008), 99–129; for a useful introductory piece exploring Nephi's potential skill and training as a scribe,

with few prospects for receiving the family inheritance.[5] Ancient Near Eastern scribal schools trained students both in practical arts (the skill of reading and writing) as well as in cultural values, typically expressed through pithy, proverbial statements that students repeatedly copied as writing exercises.[6] That is to say, scribes who were trained in reading and writing were fully immersed in the preserved texts of the Wisdom tradition.[7] To be a scribe was at the very least to have intellectually mastered the Wisdom tradition and, more likely, have come to accept, live, and espouse the principles and ideas of the Wisdom tradition.

For Nephi, the learning of the Jews may also have meant a mastery of Hebraic learning that included chiasmus[8] and other scribal literary

including implications for interpreting Nephi's writings, see Brant A. Gardner, "Nephi as Scribe," *Mormon Studies Review* 23/1 (2011), 44–55.

5   Even Neo-Assyrian King Ashurbanipal, whose name means "the god Ashur is the creator of the heir," was not originally intended for the throne, being the third son. Instead of being groomed for the throne, he was trained in the scribal arts, within which he appears to have flourished. Indeed, the greatest library of ancient Mesopotamia was assembled at the Assyrian capital of Nineveh by Ashurbanipal due to his love of learning. Incidentally, Ashurbanipal's older brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, was so resentful that his younger brother became the king that he rebelled against him — a rebellion that divided the kingdom in war. Shamash-shum-ukin perished in the fire that destroyed his Babylonian palace, ending the war around 646 BC. Might Laman and Lemuel, not so far historically removed from the significant international events of the Assyrian civil war, have seen Nephi as an Ashurbanipal character — a younger brother trained as a scribe but chosen by the father to be the king — who displaces the legitimate older brothers as rulers and as king wages ruthless war on them? For an article arguing for the scribal training and capabilities of Ashurbanipal, a younger son, see Alasdair Livingstone, "Ashurbanipal: Literate or Not?" *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 97/1 (2007), 98–118.

6   Laurie E. Pearce, "The Scribes and Scholars of Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, Volume IV*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (London: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 2265–2278 (esp. 2270).

7   Books of the Old Testament that are classed as Wisdom literature typically include Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and, depending upon the scholar, also the Song of Solomon and Psalms. It is unlikely that the books we have today would be identical to what Nephi had access to during his scribal training in the Wisdom tradition.

8   John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1982), 33–52; Matthew Nickerson, "Nephi's Psalm: 2 Nephi 4:16–35 in the Light of Form-Critical Analysis," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997), 2642.

devices such as paronomasia (word-play and punning),[9] whether expressed in Egyptian or Hebrew characters or a mixture of those languages and scripts.[10] Accordingly, one intriguing possibility is that the learning of the Jews constituted the principles and themes expressed in the ancient Israelite sapiential or Wisdom tradition.[11] This tradition was passed down from a father or a king to a son or a prince or from

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9   Immanuel M. Casanowicz, *Paronomasia in the Old Testament* (Boston: Norwood Press, 1894); Frank Zimmermann, "Folk Etymology of Biblical Names," in *Volume du Congrès: Genève, 1965* (*Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 15; Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1966), 311–326; Herbert Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114/1 (1995), 21–42; Russell T. Cherry III, *Paronomasia and Proper Names in the Old Testament: Rhetorical Function and Literary Effect*, Dissertation (Louisville, KY: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988); Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991); Moshe Garsiel, "Puns upon Names as a Literary Device in 1 Kings 1–2," *Biblica* 72 (1991), 379–386; Edward L. Greenstein, "Wordplays, Hebrew," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 6:968–971; Moshe Garsiel, "Homiletic Name-Derivations as a Literary Device in the Gideon Narrative: Judges VI–VIII," *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993), 302–317; paronomasia also appears throughout the Book of Mormon; Matthew L. Bowen has written a number of articles for *Interpreter* on paronomasia and word-play in the Book of Mormon.

10   John A. Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, eds. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 77–91; S. Kent Brown and Terrence L. Szink, "Lehi," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992); Sidney B. Sperry, "The Book of Mormon as Translation English," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/1 (1995), 209–217; John A. Tvedtnes and Stephen D. Ricks, "Notes and Communications: Jewish and Other Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996), 156–163; John Gee, "The Wrong Type of Book," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, eds. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 307–329); Stephen D. Ricks, "Converging Paths: Language and Cultural Notes on the Ancient Near East," in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, eds. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 389–419; D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens, "Who Are the Children of Lehi?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12/1 (2003), 38–51, 116; John S. Thompson, "Lehi and Egypt," in *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, eds. John W. Welch, David R. Seely, Jo Ann H. Seely (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 259–276.

11   Although this article focuses primarily on a few themes found in the Book of Proverbs and their relevance to the interpretation of the Book of Mormon, other Wisdom literature may be relevant and fruitful for interpreting Nephi's writings.

a scribal teacher to a new scribe.[12] Thus Nephi's scribal training would make him competent in the ancient Israelite Wisdom tradition. Another connection between Nephi's record and the Old Testament[13] Wisdom tradition is Nephi's assertion that he has drawn upon "knowledge" in making his record (1 Nephi 1:3). The word "knowledge," or *daat* in Hebrew, is tied up in the Wisdom tradition. In fact, of the 89 instances of *daat* in the Old Testament, 61 are found in Wisdom literature, nearly 70% of the total instances of this word in the Old Testament. And of that total, 39 of 89 are found in the Book of Proverbs, constituting 44% of the overall total usages of the word *daat* in the Old Testament.[14] While Nephi upholds the *learning* of the Jews, which may be represented by the Wisdom tradition, he rejects the *manner* of the Jews, perhaps represented by their culture and behaviors:

> For I, Nephi, have not taught them many things concerning the manner of the Jews; for their works were works of darkness, and their doings were doings of abominations. (2 Nephi 25:2)

If Nephi is influenced by the Wisdom tradition, then reading 1 Nephi 1:2–3[15] — indeed reading all of Nephi's writings — through the lens of ancient Near Eastern Wisdom literature may open the records

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12   Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, "Liminality and Worldview in Proverbs 1–9," *Semeia* 50 (1990), 111–144; Carole R. Fontaine, "The Sage in Family and Tribe," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 158–163; Michael V. Fox, "The Social Location of the Book of Proverbs," in *Texts, Temple, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, eds. Michael V. Fox, et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 227–239; Richard J. Clifford, "The Community of the Book of Proverbs," in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride, Jr.*, eds. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 281–293; Stuart Weeks, *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

13   What protestant Christians call the Old Testament, scholars often call the Hebrew Bible.

14   The Wisdom tradition word "knowledge" appears in these Proverbs passages: 1:4; 1:7; 1:22; 1:29; 2:5–6; 2:10; 3:20; 5:2; 8:9–10; 8:12; 9:10; 10:14; 11:9; 12:1; 12:23; 13:16; 14:6–7; 14:18; 15:2; 15:7; 15:14; 17:27; 18:15; 19:2; 19:25; 19:27; 20:15; 21:11; 22:12; 22:17; 22:20; 23:12; 24:4–5; 29:7; 30:3.

15   For other examples of how deeply interpretable 1 Nephi 1 can be, see the forthcoming volume from the 2014 Mormon Theology Seminar titled "A Dream, A Rock, and a Pillar of Fire: Reading 1 Nephi 1"; see also Brant Gardner, "Another Suggestion for Reading 1 Nephi 1:1–3," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (2014) at http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/another-suggestion-for-reading-1-nephi-1-1-3/ as well as Neal Rappleye "Nephi the Good: A Commentary

of the Book of Mormon in new and fruitful ways.[16] This article briefly discusses five ways in which Nephi's writing may reflect the wider Wisdom literature tradition and thus may be a lens for understanding what Nephi meant by *learning of the Jews*.

Nephi reflects the wider Wisdom literature tradition by

1. Listening to and recording the words of his wise father,
2. Valuing learning and education,
3. Embracing hard work,
4. Seeking understanding from the Lord despite suffering and trials, and
5. Demonstrating the difference between the wise man and the fool.

The Wisdom Tradition Advocates Listening to and Recording the Words of a Wise Father

Proverbs, a representative repository of Wisdom literature in the Old Testament, advocates that a wise son cherish the words of the father:

> My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. (Proverbs 7:1–3)

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1 Nephi 1:1–3," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (2014) at http://www. mormoninterpreter.com/nephi-the-good-a-commentary-on-1-nephi-11–3/.

16   It is not new to read Wisdom themes in the Book of Mormon. Still, there is much more yet to be discovered. Some of the scholars who have previously mined portions of the Book of Mormon for Wisdom themes include: Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989); Daniel C. Peterson, "Nephi and His Asherah: A Note on 1 Nephi 11:8–23," in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson,* ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 191–243; Kevin Christensen, "Nephi, Wisdom, and the Deuteronomist Reform," *Insights* 23/2 (2003): 2–3; Kevin Christensen, "Jacob's Connections to First Temple Traditions," *Insights* 23/4 (2003): 2–3; Kevin Christensen, "The Temple, the Monarchy, and Wisdom: Lehi's World and the Scholarship of Margaret Barker," in *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, eds. John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 449–522; Alyson Skabelund Von Feldt, "Does God Have a Wife?" *FARMS Review* 19/1 (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2007), 81–118; Alyson Skabelund Von Feldt, "'His Secret Is with the Righteous': Instructional Wisdom in the Book of Mormon," Occasional Papers: Number 5 (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2007): this particular piece by Skabelund may currently be the most focused investigation of the Book of Mormon through the lens of Wisdom.

Nephi's record begins with what may be a declaration of his upbringing in the Wisdom tradition and his authenticity and reliability as a wise son and scribe:

> Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge. (1 Nephi 1:2–3)

Nephi appears to be the prototypical wise son of the Wisdom tradition and focuses much of his writing on preserving the words of his father Lehi — the wise father, leader, or king:

> But I shall make an account of my proceedings in my days. Behold, I make an abridgment of the record of my father, upon plates which I have made with mine own hands; wherefore, after I have abridged the record of my father then will I make an account of mine own life. (1 Nephi 1:17)

That Nephi's original record consisted of the Book of Lehi demonstrates how deeply Nephi imbided the sapiential tradition that advocates that the wise son hear the words of his father, preserve those words, and share those words with others:

> My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:1–6)

Nephi fulfilled these proverbial expectations in several ways. First, as he explained, "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" (1 Nephi 2:16). Furthermore, Nephi sought to preserve and transmit the wisdom of his father across the generations:

> And we had obtained the records which the Lord had commanded us, and searched them and found that they were desirable; yea, even of great worth unto us, insomuch

> that we could preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children. Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them with us, as we journeyed in the wilderness towards the land of promise. (1 Nephi 5:21–22)

The fact that the Book of Mormon is with us today is, in part, a fulfillment of the Wisdom tradition to preserve the sayings of the wise:

> Wherefore, the things which are pleasing unto the world I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world. Wherefore, I shall give commandment unto my seed, that they shall not occupy these plates with things which are not of worth unto the children of men. (1 Nephi 6:5–6)

The Wisdom Tradition Values Learning and Education

Proverbs' opening statement declares that to be wise is "To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" (Proverbs 1:2). Nephi states that he makes the record "according to [his] knowledge" (1 Nephi 1:3). This aligns with Proverb's thesis that "the fear [i.e., trust in and respect] of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).

Soon after Lehi's vision, departure from Jerusalem, and wise counsel to Laman and Lemuel, these older brothers rejected the words of their father, labeling them "foolish imaginations" (1 Nephi 2:11). Nephi, on the other hand, sought after learning and knowledge.

> And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceedingly young, 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; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers. And I spake unto Sam, making known unto him the things which the Lord had manifested unto me by his Holy Spirit. And it came to pass that he believed in my words. (1 Nephi 2:16–17)

Nephi understood the value of the education and learning that written records could provide. It was this logic, including a reference to wisdom, that Nephi used as he attempted to encourage his brothers to return to Laban a second time to request the Brass Plates.

And behold, it is *wisdom* in God that we should obtain these records, that we may preserve unto our children the language of our fathers; and also that we may preserve unto them the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets, which have been delivered unto them by the Spirit and power of God, since the world began, even down unto this present time. And it came to pass that after this manner of language did I persuade my brethren, that they might be faithful in keeping the commandments of God. (1 Nephi 3:19–21, emphasis added)

Without the records of the wise, learning and wisdom would wither, and the potential for a righteous civilization would be jeopardized.

Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief. And now, when I, Nephi, had heard these words, I remembered the words of the Lord which he spake unto me in the wilderness, saying that: Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments, they shall prosper in the land of promise. Yea, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law. And I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass. And again, I knew that the Lord had delivered Laban into my hands for this cause — that I might obtain the records according to his commandments. (1 Nephi 4:13–17)

The Wisdom Tradition Teaches Hard Work

Similarly, just as the wise should labor to learn, they should also find benefit in hard work and avoid idle talk for "in all toil there is profit: but mere talk leads only to poverty" (Proverbs 14:23, NRSV). We see this in the Book of Mormon when Nephi immediately engages in the seemingly impossible and arduous task of building a boat:

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters. And I said: Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown unto me? And it came to pass that the Lord told me whither I should go to find ore, that I

might make tools. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did make a bellows wherewith to blow the fire, of the skins of beasts; and after I had made a bellows, that I might have wherewith to blow the fire, I did smite two stones together that I might make fire. (1 Nephi 17:8–11)

Even though Nephi is willing to labor with all his might, lazy Laman and Lemuel taunt Nephi for his lack of wisdom (judgment); they speak of Lehi and Nephi, the wise men in the family, as *fools*:

And now it came to pass that I, Nephi, was exceedingly sorrowful because of the hardness of their hearts; and now when they saw that I began to be sorrowful they were glad in their hearts, insomuch that they did rejoice over me, saying: We knew that ye could not construct a ship, for we knew that ye were lacking in judgment; wherefore, thou canst not accomplish so great a work. And thou art like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart; yea, he hath led us out of the land of Jerusalem, and we have wandered in the wilderness for these many years; and our women have toiled, being big with child; and they have borne children in the wilderness and suffered all things, save it were death; and it would have been better that they had died before they came out of Jerusalem than to have suffered these afflictions. Behold, these many years we have suffered in the wilderness, which time we might have enjoyed our possessions and the land of our inheritance; yea, and we might have been happy. (1 Nephi 17:19–21)

The Wisdom tradition typically concluded that the righteous prosper and are happy; the wicked are fools who suffer. In that light, Nephi repeats Wisdom-tradition-influenced statements to his brothers, saying that "he that is righteous is favored of God" (1 Nephi 17:35). Considering the difficulties and suffering of the journey, Laman and Lemuel might have felt justified in calling Nephi and Lehi fools who lacked judgment.

But just as Proverb describes "the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury" (Proverbs 14:23), Laman and Lemuel's foolish words and threats nearly brought down God's wrath:

In the name of the Almighty God, I command you that ye touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God, even unto the consuming of my flesh; and whoso shall lay his hands upon me shall wither even as a dried reed; and he shall be

as naught before the power of God, for God shall smite him.
(1 Nephi 17:48)

Nephi's reference to "a dried reed" likely came from his experience in the scribal tradition where clay tablets were inscribed using dry reeds. Significantly, cane reeds were often equated in Mesopotamian Wisdom literature with humans. For example, just as a cane reed will eventually fall and die, so too will humans.[17] Once again, Nephi appears to be invoking contextually appropriate themes from the ancient Near Eastern Wisdom tradition to address his circumstances.

The Wisdom Tradition Instructs One to Seek Knowledge from the Lord Despite Suffering

Like other prominent figures in Wisdom literature, Nephi seeks knowledge from the Lord despite the suffering he personally experiences. Indeed, Nephi describes himself as "having seen many afflictions in the course of [his] days" (1 Nephi 1:1). Like righteous Job, Nephi declares that notwithstanding his trials he still trusts (i.e., fears)[18] the Lord. Thereby, Nephi considers himself "highly favored of the Lord in all [his] days" (1 Nephi 1:1) and affirms that his afflictions led him to gain "a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God" (1 Nephi 1:1), similar to Job.

> For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. (Job 19:25–27)

This knowledge leads Nephi to trust in (fear) the Lord, a trust summarized in 1 Nephi 1:20 that likely serves as a thesis statement for the rest of 1 Nephi:

> I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of

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17   See Michael P. Streck and Nathan Wasserman, "Mankind's Bitter Fate: The Wisdom Dialog Bm 79111+," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies,* 66 (2014), 39–47, especially p. 40; Michael P. Streck, "Schilf" [= "Reed"] in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, Bd. 12/3–4 (2009) 182–89, especially p. 188.

18   I put *fear* in parentheses to remind readers that these terms are interchangeable in the Wisdom tradition. Proverbs states, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7).

their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.[19]

The Wisdom Tradition Clarifies the Difference Between the Wise Man and the Fool

Proverbs contrasts the wise man with the fool, "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1). Nephi's record provides characters that align with that proverbial contrast. Immediately obvious are Laman and Lemuel, who never truly "hear" the wise words of their father. In the Book of Mormon, they play the role of the fool,[20] the foil to the wise Nephi. Unfortunately, the rebellious brothers may have enacted, or attempted to enact, the seven abominations listed in Proverbs 6:16–19,

> These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Another foolish figure in Nephi's record, who beautifully plays into the sapiential drama expected of Wisdom literature, is Laban. Likely by literary and paronomastic design, Laban's name is an anagram of the Hebrew word *nabal,*[21] meaning "fool."[22] Like a true fool, Laban despises

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19   Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1982), 53–74.

20   Unfortunately, Lemuel was one of the great fools of the Book of Mormon because he chose to hearken to the words of another fool, Laman, rather than the words of the wise, Nephi or Lehi. "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:5). "And it came to pass that Laman was angry with me, and also with my father; and also was Lemuel, for he hearkened unto the words of Laman. Wherefore Laman and Lemuel did speak many hard words unto us, their younger brothers, and they did smite us even with a rod (1 Nephi 3:28)." In condemning Laman and Lemuel as fools, who spoke "many hard words," we remember that the Wisdom tradition teaches that "a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words" (Ecclesiastes 5:3).

21   For a Biblical story of paronomasia involving the name Nabal, see the story of David, Abigail, and Nabal in 1 Samuel 25.

22   See for example, Alan Goff, "Scratching the Surface of Book of Mormon Narratives," *FARMS Review of Books* 12/2 (2000), esp. 18–19.

the word of God and fails to value the Brass Plates in his possession, a direct contrast to Nephi:

> Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. (Proverbs 3:13–15)

Like a fool who lusts for spoil, Laban seeks the property of Nephi's family even though "the getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death" (Proverbs 21:6). In contrast, wise Nephi is willing to give away his most "valuable" earthly possessions in order to gain the pearl of great price — the wise sayings of the Lord and his prophets as recorded on the Brass Plates.

A foolish man utters nonsense or speaks without thinking — with dire consequences for himself: "Rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (NRSV Proverbs 12:18; see also Proverbs 6:12–15). Laban is the thoughtless fool when he bears false witness against Laman, saying, "Thou art a robber, and I will slay thee" (1 Nephi 3:13). Significantly, for the outsized influence that Laban seems to exert in the early narrative of the Book of Mormon, this is the o*nly* direct statement uttered by him that Nephi records. With this false statement, foolish Laban breaks the Mosaic Law to "not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exodus 20:16). Consequently, according to Mosaic Law, whatever punishment the slanderer uttered against the slandered would turn back against him:

> If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. (Deuteronomy 19:16–19)

Hence, the killing of Laban may have been lawfully justified.[23] In literary and legal irony, foolish Laban had spoken his own demise. And

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23   For another literary interpretation of Laban's death, see Steven L. Olsen, "The Death of Laban: A Literary Interpretation," *The FARMS Review* 21/1 (2009), 179–195.

in this utterance, he had confirmed what the Wisdom tradition says about fools: they speak without thinking as "A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19), their mouths utter slander like "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander is a fool. … Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince" (Proverbs 10:18; 17:7).

The greatest obstacle to the wise is the fool. And the greatest obstacle for the preservation of wise sayings is the fool who does not understand the word of God or despises the word of God. Laban is the *nabal*, the fool who stands in the way of God's wisdom being transmitted through the ages. Hence, the wise man must kill the fool in order for wisdom to thrive.[24] And this is no ordinary death. The very head of the fool is removed so that his foolish thoughts can no longer sprout, his foolish words can no longer be uttered, and his foolish plans can no longer be devised. For Nephi and the Book of Mormon, this is but "the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7).

And this is simply the beginning of the many ways that reading Nephi, indeed the entire Book of Mormon record, through the lens of Wisdom literature can lead to expansive and fruitful new insights and meaning.

This article attempts to demonstrate that Nephi's writings appear to be deeply influenced by Wisdom tradition themes. There are many Wisdom themes connecting the Book of Mormon to the Old Testament, though this article has only focused on five of those Wisdom themes that appear in 1 Nephi. Additional study will reveal many more connections between the Book of Mormon and the Wisdom literature tradition of ancient Israel.[25] If the Wisdom tradition is a foundation for Nephi's

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24 1 Nephi 4:13–17 provides a justification for killing Laban that may evoke themes from the Wisdom tradition (remember that Nephi is the wise man and Laban is the fool). See for example, Proverbs 1:24–32; 2:12–15, 22; 3:33–35; 4:19; 5:22–23; 6:12–15; 8:36; 11:3, 8, 19, 21, 28, 31; 12:6–7, 21; 13:9; 14:11; 15:10–11; 16:6; 19:9; 21:25, 28; 24:17–18; 28:10, 18.

25 Though what follows is a very limited list, Wisdom themes seem to prevail throughout the Book of Mormon. A cursory review of the Book of Mormon seems to connect in these ways. Theme 1, listening to and recording the words of his wise father; some potential passages to explore include: Jacob 1; Enos 1; Jarom 1; Omni 1; Mosiah 6; Helaman 5; Alma 36–42; Mormon 1, Moroni 7. Theme 2, valuing learning and education: Enos 1; Mosiah 1; Mosiah 2; Mormon 1. Theme 3, embracing hard work: Jacob 1; Enos 1; Jarom 1; Alma 43; Moroni 9. Theme 4, seeking understanding from the Lord despite suffering and trials: Jacob 3, Enos 1; Record of Zeniff (Mosiah 9–22); Alma 14; Moroni 9. Theme 5, demonstrating the difference between the wise man and the fool: Jacob 2–3; Mosiah 2–5; Alma 46 & 48. Or, following the pattern

scribal capabilities and outlook, perhaps the principles and literary skills represented by the scribal Wisdom tradition constitute the "learning of the Jews" that Nephi references so early in his record. Hence, if Nephi's record is a record of the learning of the Jews — a record of wisdom — we would be wise to read it with *Wisdom*.

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we saw with Nephi and Laban, one might also ask "How does Jacob represent the wise man and Sherem the fool?"; "How does Alma the Younger represent the wise man and Korihor the fool?"; "How does Noah and the priests of Noah represent the fool and Abinadi the wise man?"; "How does Alma the Younger represent the wise man and Nehor the fool?"; "How does Amalickiah, or Ammoron, represent the fool and Captain Moroni the wise man?" Another theme in Wisdom literature is the advice for the wise man to avoid alluring women. How does Corianton represent the foolish son and his father the wise father? These and many other Wisdom themes and questions should prove fruitful for Book of Mormon scholarship.

"Arise from the Dust": Insights from Dust-Related Themes in the Book of Mormon

Part 3: Dusting Off a Famous Chiasmus, Alma 36

Jeff Lindsay

Abstract: *In light of Noel Reynolds' hypothesis that some material in the Book of Moses may have been present on the brass plates that Nephi used, exploration of concepts related to chains in the Book of Moses led to several insights involving a group of related motifs in the Book of Mormon where shaking off Satan's chains and rising from the dust are linked, as discussed in Parts 1 and 2. Here we argue that an appeal to the Book of Mormon's use of dust may fill in some gaps in the complex chiastic structure of Alma 36 and strengthen the case that it is a carefully crafted example of ancient Semitic poetry.*

In Part 1 we pursued an insight from Noel Reynolds regarding the possible relationship between the Book of Moses and the brass plates, leading to the discovery of a potential Hebrew wordplay and much richer meaning than previously realized in references to dust, chains, and obscurity/darkness in Lehi's final speech. This led to exploration of the Book of Mormon's subtle and profound use of ancient dust-related themes, explored in Part 2, where we saw that the use of dust as a theme strengthens the Book of Mormon's covenant-related message and highlights the role of the Redeemer while also serving to solidify the legitimacy of Nephite political power. By recognizing a complex of related themes and motifs in this aspect of the Book of Mormon, we

can now approach some puzzling aspects of Alma 36, including alleged deficiencies. While some LDS scholars view Alma 36 as a masterpiece of Hebraic chiasmus, some writers deride it as too sloppy and loose to count as a deliberately composed chiasmus. Through consideration of its use of dust-related themes, a new case can be made that the questioned sections may actually be tightly interwoven, complex poetic strands with abundant evidence of poetic craftsmanship directed at delivering the core message of the Book of Mormon.

The Importance of Chiasmus

Chiasmus, a form of parallelism used as a poetical structure noted particularly in some ancient writings from the Middle East and Greece,[1] has become well known to students of the Book of Mormon[2] and students of the Bible.[3] This flexible and powerful form of parallelism was not widely recognized as a hallmark of biblical poetry until just a few decades ago. Even the basic concept of poetical parallelism in the Hebrew Bible, though common knowledge today, was largely unrecognized until two centuries ago when it was elucidated, as Yehuda T. Radday observes with some irony,[4] by a Gentile, Robert Lowth.[5]

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1 John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim, Germany: Gerstenberg Verlag, and Provo, UT: Research Press, Brigham Young University, 1981). Valuable resources for research and understanding of chiasmus are at http://chiasmusresources.johnwwelchresources.com, including details of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, the Bible, some Mesoamerican literature, etc. as well as information on criteria for identifying deliberate chiasmus.

2 John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies*, 10/1 (1969): 1–15; http://byustudies.byu.edu/content/chiasmus-book-mormon.

3 Wilfred G.E. Watson, "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 118–168.

4 Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," in Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 50–117.

5 Robert Lowth, *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorium Praelectiones Academicae* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1753). Also Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, translated by G. Gregory (Boston: Crocker & Brewster and New York: J. Leavitt, 1829); available at *Archive.org*, https://archive.org/details/lecturesonsacred00lowtrich. Lowth's work highlighted several forms of parallelism, but overlooked the introverted parallelism that is the basis of chiasmus. See Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," 50. Also see John W. Welch, "How Much Was Known about Chiasmus in 1829 When the Book of Mormon Was Translated?," *FARMS Review of Books* 15/1 (2003): 47–80; http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/review/?vol=15&num=1&id=465.

Chiastic structure is not limited to poetry alone and can be an important element of biblical narrative, as Radday ably illustrates.[6] The presence of chiasmus, especially detailed or lengthy chiastic structures, may be among the multiple factors that might temper some of the claims that scriptural texts, both in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, are "pious fiction" concocted centuries after the records claim to have been written.[7] However, sometimes passages which are said to be chiastic may have received subjective and contrived interpretation that could discover false positives arising from chance repetition rather than the intent of an author. Welch has provided criteria for recognizing genuine, high-quality chiasmus,[8] and Boyd Edwards and W. Farrell Edwards have provided statistical tools for estimating likelihood that a chiasmus was intentional.[9]

While some Book of Mormon chiasms are dense and remarkably easy to map, Alma 36 is more complex but still ranks as extremely unlikely to be due to random chance according to Edwards and Edwards[10] and meets rigorous criteria in Welch's assessment that allows him to label it as a "masterpiece."[11]

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6   Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," 50–112.

7   Bokovoy discusses two attempts at using chiasmus to defend the unity of the flood narrative in Genesis in Bokovoy, *Authoring the Old Testament.* The analyses of chiasmus include G.J. Wenham, "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978): 336–48 and F.I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton Publishing, 1974), 39–40, 59. The later, according to Bokovoy, is rebutted in J.A. Emerton, "An Examination of Some Attempts to Defend the Unity of the Flood Narrative in Genesis: Part II," *Vetus Testamentum* 38 (1988): 1–21, and the very different chiastic structures proposed by Wenham and Andersen suggests to Bokovoy that the alleged chiastic structures are subjective. For a more positive discussion of the significance of parallelism in the flood story, see Robert B. Chisholm Jr., "Old Testament Source Criticism: Some Methodological Miscues," in James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, ed., *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 181–99.

8   John W. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 1–14; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/4/2/S00001–50aa692ac71b21Welch.pdf.

9   Boyd F. Edwards and W. Farrell Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?," *BYU Studies* 43/2 (2004): 103–30; http://byustudies.byu.edu/content/does-chiasmus-appear-book-mormon-chance.

10   Ibid.

11   John W. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. J.L. Sorenson and M.J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991),

Dusting Off an Overlooked Portion of Alma 36

The chiastic nature of Alma 36 has been a popular topic for LDS students of the Book of Mormon and LDS apologists,[12] but it is has been met with criticism. It is said to ignore too many words and be uneven or loose, with some pairings consisting of a few words selected from lengthy passages, and to ultimately be the result not of Alma$_2$'s craftsmanship but of John Welch's creativity imposed on the text.[13] Such objections can be fairly raised. The beginning and end of the chiasmus are strong and compact, and the center point, where Alma$_2$ turns to Christ, is also distinct and relatively compact. The portions in the middle sections between the center and the ends, though, are less clear or less concise, with some steps in the chiasmus spread out as a general concept covering multiple verses where critics can accuse LDS scholars of looking for patterns that aren't there.

There is a reasonable general response to such objections: when relating history, there are things that need to be said that won't fit nicely and compactly in a chiasmus. But at the pivot point, generally the most important part of the chiasmus, and at the end points, which are also often important, the chiasmus is relatively clear and strong in Alma 36. The middle ground is still chiastic, though apparently more diffuse.

Here is a typical framing of Alma 36, taken from John Welch,[14] showing the structure of key elements among the verses:

(A) My son, give ear to my WORDS (1)

(B) KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS of God and ye shall PROSPER IN

114–31; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1111&index=12, accessed Jan. 25, 2016.

12   Jeff Lindsay, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," JeffLindsay.com; http://www.jefflindsay.com/chiasmus.shtml.

13   Earl M. Wunderli, "Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38/4 (Winter 2005): 97–110; http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N04_105.pdf. A preliminary response to Wunderli was given by B. F. Edwards and W. F. Edwards, "Response to Earl Wunderli's critique of Alma 36 as an extended chiasm, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39/3 (2006): 164–69; http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1572&context=physics_facpub, accessed April 19, 2016. Related objections to Alma 36 as a chiasmus are offered in Robert M. Bowman Jr., "Alma 36: Ancient Masterpiece Chiasmus or Modern Revivalist Testimony?," *Institute for Religious Research*, https://irr.org/alma-36-ancient-masterpiece-chiasmus-or-modern-revivalist-testimony, accessed Aug. 20, 2016.

14   Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36."

THE LAND (2)
(C) DO AS I HAVE DONE (2)
 (D) in REMEMBERING THE CAPTIVITY of our fathers (2);
  (E) for they were in BONDAGE (2)
   (F) he surely did DELIVER them (2)
    (G) TRUST in God (3)
     (H) supported in their TRIALS, and TROUBLES, and
         AFFLICTIONS (3)
    (I) shall be lifted up at the LAST DAY (3)
     (J) I KNOW this not of myself but of GOD (4)
      (K) BORN OF GOD (5)
       (L) I sought to destroy the church of God (6–9)
        (M) MY LIMBS were paralyzed (10)
         (N) Fear of being in the PRESENCE OF GOD (14–15)
          (O) PAINS of a damned soul (16)
           (P) HARROWED UP BY THE MEMORY OF SINS (17)
            (Q) I remembered JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD (17)
            (Q') I cried, JESUS, SON OF GOD (18)
           (P') HARROWED UP BY THE MEMORY OF SINS
               no more (19)
          (O') Joy as exceeding as was the PAIN (20)
         (N') Long to be in the PRESENCE OF GOD (22)
        (M') My LIMBS received their strength again (23)
       (L') I labored to bring souls to repentance (24)
      (K') BORN OF GOD (26)
     (J') Therefore MY KNOWLEDGE IS OF GOD (26)
    (H') Supported under TRIALS, TROUBLES, and
        AFFLICTIONS (27)
    (G') TRUST in him (27)
     (F') He will deliver me (27)
      (I') and RAISE ME UP AT THE LAST DAY (28)
   (E') As God brought our fathers out of BONDAGE and captivity
       (28–29)
  (D') Retain in REMEMBRANCE THEIR CAPTIVITY (28–29)
 (C') KNOW AS I DO KNOW (30)
(B') KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS and ye shall PROSPER IN THE
    LAND (30)
(A') This is according to his WORD (30).

Some loose spots include item I' in v. 28 apparently showing up a
verse late (due to a slip or more of a necessity in the original language or

a translation issue?) and big gaps or significant looseness around item L (the concept of destroying the church of God, vv. 6–9), item M (MY LIMBS paralyzed in v. 10) and item N (fear of being in the PRESENCE OF GOD, vv. 14–15).

Donald R. Parry in *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon* offers a different but related structure with fewer steps (11 instead of Welch's 17).[15] The structure offered does not solve the problem of apparent looseness. Parry's item H, for example, spans verses 6 to 11, while item I extends from verses 12 to 16, both with many words that don't contribute to the chiasmus.

As a specific example the objections from Wunderli, the word *rack* occurs four times in Alma 36 but all in the first half of Welch's chiasmus without being paired with *rack* in the second half. Wunderli notes that Welch uses only one of those instances, relabeling its presence in v. 14 as "fear of being in the presence of God" (actually, that *is* what *rack* is conveying in v. 14 as Alma$_2$ expresses the horror he was racked with at the thought of coming into the presence of God). This relabeling is done to create a chiastic pairing with v. 22, where Alma$_2$ longed to be in the presence of God.[16]

Wunderli makes a similar objection to the end points of the chiasmus. While Welch sees significance in the use of *words* or *word* at the beginning and end of the chapter, *word* occurs elsewhere in Alma 36 without being paired to other parts of the chiasmus, making the appearance of paired concepts at the beginning and end of the chapter seem to Wunderli to be the fruit of Welch's creative selection of words rather than poetical intent.[17]

While some of his points are logical, Wunderli's approach seems to assume that chiastic pairs must independently stand out with a unique pairing. This approach may be like objecting to a pair of rhymes in a proposed sonnet because other words elsewhere in the sonnet may also rhyme with the words in question. The issue is not whether there are other words that rhyme in the sonnet or other words similar to those of a chiastic pairing but whether a rhyme/pairing exists in the right place. Alma$_2$'s use of *words*/*word* at the beginning and end of the chiasmus

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15 *Donald W. Parry, Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon: The Complete Text Reformatted (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2007), 318–21; http://publications.mi.byu.edu/book/poetic-parallelisms-in-the-book-of-mormon-the-complete-text-reformatted/.*

16 Wunderli, "Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm," 104.

17 Ibid., 102.

is readily recognized as being paired. The strength of the pairing and the appropriateness of the expressions they are in are not diminished by using a similar term in a different context elsewhere in the chiasmus, whether a key concept that is also paired or not.

As for Alma$_2$'s five instances of *racked* within four verses of Alma 36, all in the first half of the chiasmus, this is an appropriate and graphic descriptor of the pain that is the subject of the first half, before the dramatic transition at the powerful and majestically appropriate pivot point. There is no reason to expect the same word to occur in both halves of the chiasmus and no legitimate reason to object to Welch's labeling. But Wunderli does have a point about the word *rack* used prominently without being part of the chiasmus in four of its five instances.

Taking Wunderli's objection to the use of *rack* as an invitation for further analysis, there appears to be something of a sub-pattern involved in the verses using *rack*:

> 12 But I was *racked* with eternal *torment*, for my *soul* was *harrowed* up to the greatest degree and *racked* with all my *sins*.

> 14 … the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did *rack* my *soul* with inexpressible horror … .

> 16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I *racked*, even with the pains of a damned *soul*.

> 17 And it came to pass that as I was thus *racked* with *torment*, while I was *harrowed* up by the memory of my many *sins*, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

The usage of *racked* as shown above suggests further parallelism, almost a mini-chiasmus within a chiasmus:

> Racked / torment / harrowed / sins
>> Racked / soul (taking "did rack" as equivalent to
>> "racked")
>> Racked / soul
> Racked / torment / harrowed / sins

This *rack*-laden passage from Alma 36:12–17, dominating the Book of Mormon's use of that verb, can effectively and fairly be summarized as Alma$_2$'s expressing his fear and horror of coming into the presence of God, for his soul truly is harrowed by his sins. It collapses into item N in Welch's formatting of Alma 36, but the structure within the structure suggests there may be something more than random redundancy in a sloppy mid-section of the chiasmus.

Back to Brueggemann

In Part 2, we discussed the ground-breaking work of Walter Brueggemann in showing the rich uses of dust-related themes in the Hebrew Bible.[18] These themes can relate to covenant keeping, resurrection, receiving authority, enthronement, and exaltation. For covenant breakers, dust themes can involve a return to the dust, loss of authority, spiritual or physical death, and destruction.[19] In the Book of Mormon, Isaiah 52:1–2 is especially important from that perspective, for the call to arise from the dust and shake off chains is an important theme for Nephi and others there. Related concepts reviewed in Part 2 include themes of trembling, shaking, falling, rising, and standing.

Alma 36:7–11, one of the apparent weak spots in the chiasmus, provides several dust-related terms and concepts:

> 7 earth did tremble beneath our feet … fell to the earth … fear of the Lord
>
> 8 … the voice said unto me, Arise. And I arose and stood up
>
> 9 … destroyed … seek no more to destroy the church of God
>
> 10 … I fell to the earth … three days and three nights …
>
> 11 … destroyed … destroy no more … fear … destroyed … fell to the earth and did hear no more

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18 Brueggemann, "From Dust to Kingship."
19 Ibid.

The earth trembles, the dust of the ground is shaking under Alma$_2$'s feet, and he falls down — toward the dust — with talk of destruction and the implication of death (cf. Mosiah 27:28). There appears to be a deliberate relationship with dust themes.

Alma$_2$ has broken the covenant and is at risk of losing his status and even his life. Surprised by an angel, amazed at God's power and reality, he falls to the earth — to the dust. As Lehi commanded his sons, the angel commands Alma$_2$ to "Arise." Literally, he is to arise from the ground, from the dust. He stands but cannot remain standing in light of his sinful, unstable state. He faces destruction for the work of destruction that he has done. The flame of guilt ignited, he falls again to the earth — to the dust — and is as if dead for three days and three nights, a symbol of the grave in Hosea 6:2 whose analysis in terms of covenant-making by Wijngaards[20] provided an important foundation for Brueggemann's work. This is also an apparent reference to the prophesied time that Christ would spend in the grave (see Nephi's prophecy in 2 Nephi 25:13, and the related prophecy of Zenos on the brass plates, mentioned in 1 Nephi 19:10).

Once again we are told that faced with destruction, in fear and amazement, he fell to the earth and could hear no more.

On the other side of the pivot point, where item M' refers to limbs receiving strength in v. 23, there may be even more parallels in this chiasmus:

22 Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of *angels*, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there.

23 But behold, *my limbs did receive their strength again*, and *I stood upon my feet*, and did manifest unto the people that *I had been born of God*.

24 Yea, and from that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste; that they *might also be born of God*, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

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20   J. Wijngaards, "Death and Resurrection in Covenantal Context (Hosea VI 2)," *Vetus Testamentum* 17, Fasc. 2 (April 1967): 226–239; available at Jstor.org: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1516837, accessed Dec. 16, 2015.

> 25 Yea, and now behold, O my son, the Lord doth give me exceedingly great joy in the fruit of my labors;
>
> 26 For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God. [emphasis added]

In light of Brueggemann's work, falling to the earth in Alma 36 may do much more than just convey Alma$_2$'s great fear, but may serve as an equivalent to returning to the dust, invoking these symbols:

- physical death
- spiritual death (falling away from God)
- rebellion, sin, breaking the covenant
- losing power, authority, life
- destruction

The association of death with falling to the earth is reinforced with many elements, including references to destruction, the deathlike state of his body, suffering the pains of hell, and Alma$_2$'s being in this state "for three days and three nights" (v. 10).

The possibility that Alma$_2$'s fall to the earth is meant to be associated with the dust-related themes introduced by Lehi is reinforced by the words, or rather word, of the angel to fallen Alma$_2$: "Arise" (v. 8). This word is repeated as Alma$_2$ states that "I *arose* and stood up," unnecessarily redundant unless Alma were reinforcing the word *arise*.[21] Alma$_2$ explicitly mentions Lehi in Alma 36:22, the prophet who used Isaiah's dust-related imagery so effectively in his final speech to his sons.

In considering the terms that could stand in contrast to such a fall to the dust of the earth, literally a case of "falling again," what could be more appropriate than being "born again," with its implications of spiritual renewal, entering into the covenant, and receiving life, power, and grace from God? Just as our "loose" upper midsection of the chiasmus mentions Alma$_2$'s fall to the earth three times, the related section in the lower midsection also mentions being born again three times.

In light of the dust/death/fall themes in the upper midsection and the contrasting concepts of being born again and entering into the

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21 See the discussion of the Hebrew word for "arise," *quwm* (קוּם), *HALOT* 1086–1088, in Part 2.

covenant with God in the lower midsection, perhaps the seemingly sparse, amorphous mid-sections of the chiasmus's wings are actually loaded with more structure than previously realized.

The loose section, comprising vv. 5–15 on the upper side and vv. 23–26 on the lower, spanning items K, L, M, and N in Welch's mapping, actually has more than just 4 little phrases in common. There are multiple concepts with multiple dimensions interspersed in a complex passage. Rather than neatly parse it as a simple linear chiasmus, look at the interwoven block of themes.

The first section has these major themes:

- Alma$_2$ falls to the earth. After being told to "arise," he arose and stood up but soon fell again. He is literally "fallen again" in the presence of an angel, fallen from God. His falling to the earth is mentioned three times (vv. 7, 10, 11).
- Alma$_2$ is like one who is dead. He can't move his limbs (v. 10), he can't open his mouth (v. 10), and he can't hear (v. 11). Three times we learn that his body isn't working: limbs, mouth, and ears are not functioning.
- He is not only as if dead but as if in hell, experiencing the pains of a damned soul (vv. 12–13). Body and soul are affected.
- Alma$_2$ was seeking to destroy the Church of God. This is mentioned three times (vv. 6, 9, 11). Speaking of destruction, he is warned that he will be destroyed if he keeps seeking to destroy the Church of God.
- He has not kept God's commandments, meaning that he has departed/fallen from the covenant (v. 13). Worse yet, he has led others away from God, causing them also to die, or he "had murdered many of his children" (v. 14), causing inexpressible horror at the thought of coming into God's presence.
- He yearns to "become extinct [dead] both soul and body" (v. 15).
- These events are precipitated by the appearance of an angel (v. 6), who speaks to the sons of Mosiah with the voice of thunder (v. 7).

Now compare that section from vv. 6–14 with the related loose section on the other side of the pivot point, vv. 23–26, which has these major themes:

- Alma$_2$ returns to life (physically) and is born again (spiritually), in contrast to being "extinct both soul and body" and in contrast to his deathlike state before.

- Being "born of God" is mentioned three times (vv. 23, 24, 26) in this section.
- He regains the use of his limbs (v. 23) including his feet. His mouth functions for he "manifests" his change to the people (v. 23) and helps others to taste as he tastes (v. 24). His eyes function for he helps others to "see as I have seen" (v. 26). This is in contrast to the three ways his body wasn't working properly before.
- Now he can arise without falling: he stands upon his feet (v. 23) and is able to "labor without ceasing" (v. 24).
- His labor now is not destroying the church of God but bringing others to repentance, that they might also be born of God and be filled with the Holy Ghost (v. 24). Thus, instead of "murdering" others, he is giving them newness of life. Now "many have been born of God" because of his work (v, 26). In bringing souls to repentance, he is implicitly warning them of the destruction sin brings, as the angel warned him.
- In helping others enter into the covenant with God, he now has "exceedingly great joy in the fruit of my labors" (v. 25) instead of fear and horror.
- The role of the angel in speaking to Alma₂ before is parallel to the function of the Holy Ghost and the Lord who fill Alma₂ with great joy and impart God's word to him (vv. 25–26).

Alma₂'s fall to the dust, involving the spiritual death of his soul and the apparent physical death of his body (recall that dust/death form a Hebraic word pair[22]) are described in multiple, intertwined ways in the upper mid-section, and they are reflected in the description of Alma₂'s new born-again state in the lower section.

In addition to several Hebrew word pairs mentioned in Part 2, one further word pair to consider is discussed by M. L. Barré in his treatment of Hosea 6:2,[23] where he finds significance in the repeated pairing of "life" or *chayah* (חָיָה[24]) and "rise" or *quwm* (קום). This may also be at play in Alma 36, though in a negative sense in v. 15, where Alma₂ would rather have his life extinguished than to be called to stand in the presence of God. As part of item N in Welch's outline, this links

22 Kevin L. Barney, "Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* (1995).

23 M. L. Barré, "New Light on the Interpretation of Hosea VI 2," *Vetus Testamentum* 28, Fasc. 2 (April 1978): 129–41; http://www.jstor.org/stable/1516963.

24 *HALOT*, 309–10. See also Strong's H2421, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H2421&t=KJV.

nicely to vv. 22–23, where Alma$_2$ revives and stands again, though the connection between life/extinction and reviving/rising/standing is not made in Welch's outline, suggesting that there may be more connections or strands to explore.

There are multiple dust-related concepts in Alma 36 (or rather, multiple motifs associated with rising from the dust as used in the Book of Mormon). These include Alma$_2$'s transition from spiritual death to life, from sin to repentance, from destruction of the church of God to strengthening it, from fear and pain to joy, from murdering others (in a covenantal sense) to giving them life, all made possible by the divine grace initiated by the visit of an angel, amplified by the Holy Ghost, that this lost and fallen soul might rise from the dust literally and figuratively to be born of God. For these dramatic transitions, a complex, extended chiasmus is a beautifully fitting tool for artful expression by an author skilled in ancient Hebraic poetical techniques.

This set of motifs in Alma 36 invokes not only Lehi's theophany and his dust-related preaching (treated in Part 2) but also the scene from the aftermath of King Benjamin's speech in Mosiah 4, as the people fell to the earth and sought to apply the atoning blood of Christ to free them from their sins, resulting in great joy.

With the perspective that comes from understanding the Book of Mormon's use of dust-related themes as introduced by Lehi and used multiple times right up to the closing page of the Book of Mormon, we find that an apparent gap in the otherwise brilliant chiasmus of Alma 36 becomes much more meaningful. A loose, sparse section in the first half previously mapped with only a few parallel words among many verses actually becomes a relatively tight cluster of intertwined themes, with almost every major concept reflected in the corresponding section below the pivot point. It can be remapped in multiple ways. For the overall structure, I'll leave that as an exercise for the reader, though I prefer to leave it as a cluster of dust/death related themes above the pivot, and life/born again themes below the pivot. There are some individual mappings of thematic strands that I will share below.

Further Action at the Core of Alma 36

As for the chains of darkness in the Book of Moses that began this study and took me to the theme of rising from the dust, yes, chains are mentioned in Alma 36 but as "chains of death." In fact, they are mentioned almost at the very pivot point of the chiasmus where Alma$_2$ turns to Christ, after which Alma$_2$ beholds light and experiences joy.

With the contrast to light, Alma$_2$'s chains of death are thus treated like chains of darkness:

> 18 Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and *am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.*
>
> 19 And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.
>
> 20 And oh, what joy, and *what marvelous light I did behold*; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!

The encirclement of chains of death in Alma$_2$'s dust-like state of spiritual death is later contrasted with another form of encirclement:

> 22 Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, *surrounded with numberless concourses of angels*, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there.

At the heart of the chiasmus, of course, are two references to Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Redeemer, is at the core of this chiasmus and at the core of the Book of Mormon. Here both instances of *Jesus Christ* are associated with terms relevant to the rise from the dust theme. The first is the word *atone* and the second is being encircled (by the chains of hell and darkness). A Hebraic wordplay may add further unity to this pivot point. The root for the verb "to atone" can be *kaphar* (כָּפַר[25]). A word that can mean surround or encompass and thus possibly "encircle" is *kathar* (כָּתַר[26]), differing from *kaphar* by one letter and sounding somewhat similar. Is there a Hebraic wordplay hidden at the center of Alma 36? If so, at the heart of the great chiasmus in Alma 36, we may have an additional parallelism:

> Jesus Christ, a Son of God
> > to atone (*kaphar*) for the sins of the world
> Jesus Christ, thou Son of God
> > Have mercy … encircled (*kathar*) by the everlasting

25 *HALOT*, 493–94. See also Strong's H3722, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3722&t=KJV.

26 *HALOT*, 506. See also Strong's H3803, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3803&t=KJV.

chains of death

Since the original Hebrew/Egyptian word order on the gold plates may differ from the English translation, it may be possible that verb *to atone* came before *Jesus Christ* to strengthen the chiastic structure, but in either case the apparent word play enhances the poetry and parallelism and enhances the significance of dust-related themes in a vital discourse of the Book of Mormon. The juxtaposition of Christ and His Atonement with the sins of the world and the everlasting chains of death bring polar opposites — or rather, cosmic opposites — together and reveal how Christ, through His sacrifice in which He voluntarily returned to the dust and took on the infinite burden that Enoch sensed, rose triumphantly and finally from the dust. He arose to break the chains of hell, to atone for the sins of the world, and to provide deliverance to all of us captives, one soul at a time, that we, too, might rise from the dust and sing the song of redeeming love (Alma 5:26) as we enter God's presence, washed from the dust, freed from our chains, delivered from darkness and obscurity forevermore.

It is the voice from the dust (Isaiah 29:4; 2 Nephi 26:16, 27:9, 33:13; Moroni 10:27), the Book of Mormon, that so powerfully enlightens our understanding of Christ's redemption and Atonement, enabling us to shake off the dust and arise.

Thematic Strands in Alma 36: Preliminary Thoughts

In addition to Welch's mapping of Alma 36 that leaves some gaps where the chiasmic content seems sparse, the more densely packed content brought out by exploration of the Book of Mormon's motif of rising from the dust with related thematic elements (keeping covenants, receiving glory and power, being revived or resurrected, or, as $Alma_2$ puts it, born again) gives us more noteworthy parallels to consider.

One approach to mapping the additional content and structure it is to consider different strands of parallel structures almost as if they are themes in a fugue, weaving in and out of the main structure and not necessarily aligned with the primary pivot point. Thus, superimposed on the overarching structure Welch proposed, we may also add strands such as those in the following sections.

1. The Divine Voice Strand

Examining the references to the divine voice of an angel speaking to $Alma_2$ in vv. 5–10 reveals an interesting parallelism with this theme,

possibly including a five-step chiasmus embedded within the overall chiasmus. The parallelism partly relies on recognizing that falling to the earth is a symbol of destruction (returning to the dust, etc.) and that the trembling of the earth, another dust-related motif, can relate to falling to the earth and death.

God, by the *mouth of a holy angel, made things known* unto me (v.5)
    my unworthiness (v. 5)
    seeking to destroy the church of God (v. 6)
God *sent his holy angel* to stop us by the way (v. 6)
(A) The *angel spake* unto us, as with the *voice of thunder* (v. 7)
    (B) the whole earth did tremble beneath our feet; (v. 7)
        (C) we all fell to the earth in fear (v. 7)
            (D) The *angel's voice said* unto me: (v. 8)
                (E) Arise (v. 8)
                (E') I did arise, and stood up (v. 8)
            (D') I beheld *the angel*, and *he spoke:* (v. 8–9)
        (C') destroyed, destroy (v. 9)
    (B') I fell to the earth as if dead (v. 10)
(A') The *angel spake more things* unto me, but I did not hear (v. 22)

For the Divine Voice strand, contrasts occur in the lower half of the overall chiasmus, with reference to the word of God that been has imparted to Alma$_2$ (v. 26), the words he now imparts to others to bring them to God (vv. 23–26), and, of course, the voice of angels who are singing and praising God (v. 22) as well as his own praise of God (v. 28).

2. The Death and Destruction Strand

Three days and three nights –- like dead (v. 10)
      loss of body functions (can't speak, limbs don't move, can't hear) (vv. 10–11)
      destroy, destroy (v. 11)
         fear (v. 11)
         amazement (v. 11)
      destroyed (v. 11)*
         torment for sins (v. 12)
         remembered all my sins (v. 13)
      murdered/destroyed others (v. 14)
         rack my soul (v. 14)
         inexpressible horror (fear) (v. 14)
      extinction of body and soul (v. 15)

three days and three nights –– like dead (v. 16)

This could be formatted as a more conventional chiasmus with a stand-alone central unit instead of the three units of *destroy* themes followed by a pair of emotional response, though there may be other ways to parse this strand, if indeed it is an intentional strand or unit of some kind.

In any case, the three days and three nights as a symbol of death and revival merits consideration here as part of Alma$_2$'s structure. It is a beautiful fit for the dust-related themes of the Bible and possibly the brass plates.

3. The Encircled/Surrounded Redemption Strand

A small chiasmus may be found in vv. 17–22 involving the theme of encirclement, and the liberation and joy that comes when negative encirclement is changed to positive, divine encirclement. The encirclement by chains in v. 18 is paired with being surrounded by angels in v. 22.

(A) A plea to Jesus Christ (v. 17)
    (B) encircled by the chains of death (v. 18)
        (C) liberated, sees light (v. 19)
            (D) joy as exceeding as my pain (v. 19)
            (D') joy as exquisite as my pain (v. 20)
        (C') saw God (v. 21)
    (B') surrounded by angels (v. 22)
(A') Singing and praising God (v. 22)

Once again, when the chains come off, there isn't just light and joy, there is singing.

Alma 26:13 shows that when the "pains of hell" are loosed, the result is being "brought to sing redeeming love." Like chains, the pains of hell in the Book of Mormon encircle victims (Alma 14:6) and need to be "loosed" (Jacob 3:11, Alma 26:13). Alma 36:13 refers to the "pains of hell" that Alma$_2$ experienced, right before item N of Welch's primary chiasmic structure. Following Alma$_2$'s release from the pains of hell in the lower half of the chiasmus, v. 22, associated with item N', also contains a reference to angels "singing and praising God." No doubt it is the song of redemptive love they are singing. This linkage between singing and the pains of hell, adjacent to items N and N', seems to strengthen the overall chiasmus.

4. The Rising Strand (emphasis on "rising / returning to the dust")

(A) Lifted up at the last day / delivered from trial, troubles, afflictions (v.3)

    (B) born of God (v. 5)

        (C) Fell to the earth / arise, arose / fell to the earth (vv. 7–10)

            (D) three days and three nights, limbs cease working, (v. 10)

                (E) racked with eternal torment (v. 12), presence of God: inexpressible horror (v. 14) yearns to be extinct [return to the dust], to not stand (v. 15)

                (F) fears the presence of God (v. 15), three days and three nights: death (v. 16)

                    (G) pains of a damned soul, torment (vv. 16–17)

                        (H) Jesus Christ atones for sins of the world (v. 17)

                        (H') (to break) the chains of death (v. 18)

                    (G') pains removed (v. 19)

                (F') sees God sitting on his throne, singing, praising (v. 22)

                (E') yearns to be there [in the presence of God] (v. 22)

            (D') limbs receive their strength (v. 23)

        (C') stands upon his feet (v. 23)

    (B') born of God (v. 23)

(A') Raised up at the last day / supported in trials, troubles, and afflictions (vv. 27–28)

The "Rising" strand looks at the chains as a potentially significant term linked to the motif of rising from the dust, and naturally also includes the "lifted up" and "raised up" passages at the ends. It is not a simple chiasmus but has inverted parallelism across several levels.

Like the main chiasmus, the "Rising" strand also works better if either of the phrases *raised up* or *lifted up* (at the last day) are moved slightly, for then two more elements fit a cleaner chiasmic structure ("trials, troubles, and afflictions" and also being "delivered"). Welch's outline above labels the latter instance, item I', as out of place, which is a logical suggestion for the overall structure, but the "Rising" strand

works better if the first instance, "lifted up" in v. 3 is just moved up a few words in the text so that items I and H in the first part of the chiasmus are switched. It works better because it gives more emphasis to the theme of rising, putting it at the end points of the strand and closer to the end points of the main chiasmus.

5. The "Racked" Strand

In this strand, we use the occurrence of *rack* in Alma 36 with related terms in vv. 12–17 pointing to the horror and torment he faced, culminating in his desire for extinction. This strand has a chiastic flavor of its own, as noted above, and at its pivot point arguably draws upon the dust-related theme in which arising or standing (from Hebrew *quwm*) is linked in a Hebrew word pair to *life*, typically with *life* occurring first.[27] In this case, though, both concepts are expressed negatively: he wishes *not* to have life in order that he might *not* be called to stand before God and be judged.

> *Racked / torment / harrowed /* racked with *all my sins* (v. 12) + Tormented with the pains of hell (v. 13) for murdering God's children (v. 14)
>> Did *rack* my *soul* (v. 14)
>>> Yearns for extinction of soul and body (v. 15)
>>> To not stand [linking "stand" with "life"] (v. 15)
>> *Racked* with the pains of a damned *soul* (v. 16)
> *Racked / torment / harrowed / my many sins* (v. 17)

The intensification of his torment expressed powerfully in this strand brings us to the emotional climax in which he finally turns to Christ for mercy, bringing about the complete reversal as the chiasmus moves through the overall pivot point and away from a racked soul to a soul experiencing overwhelming joy.

Alma$_2$'s wish for extinction and not standing in v. 15 also can be paired in the other half of Alma 36, as previously noted, with Alma$_2$'s revival and standing upon his feet again in vv. 22–23. These concepts are in the vicinity of items N and N' regarding the presence of God but again perhaps should be considered in light of dust-related concepts related to the word pair of *life* and *arise*.

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27   Barré, "New Light on the Interpretation of Hosea VI 2."

6. The Deliverance Strand

This strand involves vv. 2–3 and a pairing with vv. 27–29 toward the end of the chiasmus. It is in this section where we have the obvious interruption of the chiastic pattern with an apparently dislocated item I or I' in Welch's list and where one can complain of multiple occurrences of *deliver* that are not used. The "unexplained asymmetry" of item I is Wunderli's first complaint, apparently not recognizing that occasional out-of-place elements are common in the literature and may occur for a variety of reasons, especially when conveying narrative content that simply may not elegantly fit the overarching chiastic framework. Translation itself may force some elements into new orders. However, more complex poetical structures may create the appearance of out-of-place elements.

Are the extra instances of *deliver* in these verses wasted, contributing no more to the poetical structure than mere repetitious words for a crafty apologist to select and label creatively? A look at their structure suggests something more may be present.

The relevant verses are mapped as follows by Welch:

> (d) in REMEMBERING THE CAPTIVITY of our fathers (2);
> (e) for they were in BONDAGE (2)
> (f) he surely did DELIVER them (2)
> (g) TRUST in God (3)
> (h) supported in their TRIALS, and TROUBLES, and AFFLICTIONS (3)
> (i) shall be lifted up at the LAST DAY (3)
> (h') Supported under TRIALS, TROUBLES, and AFFLICTIONS (27)
> (g') TRUST in him (27)
> (f') He will deliver me (27)
> (i') and RAISE ME UP AT THE LAST DAY (28)
> (e') As God brought our fathers out of BONDAGE and captivity (28–29)
> (d') Retain in REMEMBRANCE THEIR CAPTIVITY (28–29)

In this strand, we examine the other occurrences of *deliver* and some other words that are not used in Welch's mapping. This segment begins with remembering the captivity and bondage of the Nephite's ancestors and ends with bondage, captivity, and remembrance. Now consider

some key terms in the interior text, where related passages have been given similar indentation:

vv. 2–3:
 deliver them … deliver them in their afflictions
   I *know* that whosoever will put their *trust* in God
     supported in their trials … troubles, … afflictions
      lifted up at the last day
vv. 27–29:
     supported … trials … troubles … of afflictions;
 delivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death
  … *trust* …
  deliver me
  I know that he will
     raise me up at the last day to dwell with him in glory
 he has *brought* our fathers
  out of Egypt
  led by power to the promised land
 delivered them
  out of bondage and captivity
  from time to time
 has *brought* our fathers
  out of the land of Jerusalem
  by his power
 delivered them
  out of bondage and captivity
  from time to time down to the present day

In vv. 2–3 we have two instances of *deliver* followed by *trust* in God and the combination of *supported/trials/troubles/afflictions* that firmly highlights a key element in the overall chiastic pairing. Then comes the ultimate aim of deliverance, being "lifted up at the last day" from the end of v. 3.

Looking exclusively at the usage of *deliver*, another structure points to the personal application of God's deliverance of the fathers, turning from how God "delivered them" to how God can "deliver me" in the center of this strand:

  Deliver them / deliver them
   Delivered me / deliver me
  Delivered them / delivered them

In addition to four more instances of *deliver* in vv. 27–29, a related term from the Exodus account is introduced: *brought out* (a partial list includes Exodus 3:8, 10; 6:6; 12:17, 42, 51; 13:9, 14, 16; 16:32; 32:1, 7, 8, 11, 23; 33:1; Leviticus 23:43; 25:38, 42; 26:13; Deuteronomy 4:37; Hosea 12:13; cf. 1 Nephi 17:14, 40; 2 Nephi 25:20). Used twice, each occurrence of *brought out* is followed by a place (Egypt or Jerusalem) and a reference to God's power in bringing them out (and to the Promised Land, explicitly or implicitly). It is then followed by the statement that God has "delivered them out of bondage and captivity from time to time," with the last statement following the pattern of personalizing the past by bringing the lessons of deliverance up "to the present day" (v. 29).

There are two different Hebrew words used in the above-mentioned KJV verses for *brought out*. The first is the Hebrew root *yatsaʾ* (יצא[28]), "to go out," used in Exodus 3:10; 6:6; 12:17, 42, 51; 13:9, 14, 16; 16:32; 32:11; Leviticus 23:43; 25:38, 42; 26:13; and Deuteronomy 4:37.[29] The other is the Hebrew root *ʿalah* (עלה[30]), "to go up," used in Exodus 3:8; 32:1, 7, 8, 23; 33:1; Hosea 12:13 (the KJV has Hosea 12:13, while the Hebrew text has Hosea 12:14). In some of these verses, the Hebrew root *natsal* (נצל[31]), "to deliver" is also used (e.g., Exodus 3:8, 6:6).

Focusing on the combined use of *deliver* and *brought out* in these verses, a richly parallel structure emerges with numerous terms involved, including all the instances of *deliver* in these verses:

A1. Deliver them / deliver them / know / trust / lifted up at the last day (2–3)

A2. Deliver me / trust / deliver me/ know / raise me up at the last day (27–28)

B1. Brought our fathers / out of Egypt / led by power to the promised land

C1.   delivered them / bondage and captivity / from time to time (28)

B2. Brought our fathers / out of the land of Jerusalem / by his power

C2.   delivered them / bondage and captivity / from time to time down to the present day (29)

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28   Strong's H3318, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3318&t=KJV.

29   Many thanks to Kevin L. Tolley for this information and for assistance with Hebrew roots in many sections of this series.

30   Strong's H5927, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5927&t=KJV.

31   Strong's H5337, *Blue Letter Bible*; https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5337&t=KJV.

This strand begins in the first half of the primary chiasmus but amplifies the deliverance theme in the second half while still leading to the chiastic link to bondage, captivity, and remembrance between the first and second halves. Verses 27–29, sometimes said to be merely repetitious text making alleged chiasmic poetry the workings of chance and cherry picking, reveal a rich poetic structure consistent with ancient Hebrew parallelism and the frequent deviations from simple, linear introverted parallelism.

The proposed strands in Alma 36 are crude initial efforts. They may not be intentional and could be wishful thinking on my part, but they may reflect some additional structure, including some additional chiastic structure, embedded in Alma 36. In any case the rising from the dust theme of the Book of Mormon seems to be a potentially important lens to aid understanding of some of its passages, including Alma 36. It seems that Nephi was keenly aware of those themes in the way he framed Lehi's speech in an inclusio with unusual redundancy from Isaiah followed by a nice build to the critical passage of Isaiah 52:1–2.

Conclusion

In this three-part study, an investigation of Book of Moses themes that might have been present on the brass plates led to a variety of tentative discoveries involving a complex of themes or motifs tied to *rising from the dust*, including escape from the captivity and chains of Satan, covenant keeping, resurrection, enthronement, encirclement (arms of God's love, robes of righteousness), and entering the presence of God. These themes reveal added meaning in several significant portions of the Book of Mormon, including the chiasmus of Alma 36, and further illustrate the power of the Book of Mormon as a voice from the dust calling us to rise from the dust and receive the full blessings of the Atonement of Christ.

In Alma 36, Alma$_2$'s contrast between falling to the earth, like dead, and then being born again and freed from the chains of death also suggests awareness and intelligent use of those concepts from Nephi, Isaiah, and perhaps elsewhere on the brass plates. Dust-related themes help us identify multiple structural elements worthy of consideration in passages once thought to be diffuse with a relatively weak role in Alma$_2$'s parallelism. However you map it or unpack it, there is a great deal of interwoven structure in Alma 36 with more richness there than we may have realized. This is true for the entire Book of Mormon. What a remarkable voice from the dust!

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