

A Covenant Record of Christ's People

Volume 4a

Introduction



One in Mine Hand

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The word of the Lord [God] came again unto me saying

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. Then take another stick, and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions. And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become **one** in thine hand.

And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying:

Wilt thou not **SHEW** us what thou **MEANEST** by these?

Say unto them: **Thus saith the Lord God:**

Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and

they shall be **one** in mine hand.

And the sticks whereon thou writest

shall be **one** in thine hand before their eyes. (Ezek. 37:15-20)

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So how do the Bible and the Book of Mormon become “one”? The most reasonable response would be that the message of the Bible somehow meshes with or confirms the message of the Book of Mormon—that is the gospel is the same. Yet while most modern readers tend to interpret this message in our modern-day English structure of verses and sentences, with punctuation as a guide, there is another perspective worth considering--- the **artistic form** of the scriptures.

Richard Moulton, a noted Doctor of Biblical Literature, wrote the following:

By universal consent, the authors of the Sacred Scriptures included men who, over and above qualifications of a more sacred nature, possessed literary power of the highest order. But between their time and ours the Bible has passed through what may be called an Age of Commentary, extending over fifteen centuries and more.

During this long period, ___[**artistic**]form . . . was more and more overlooked; reverent, keen, minute analysis and exegesis, with interminable verbal discussion, gradually swallowed up the sense of literary beauty. When the Bible emerged from this Age of Commentary, its ___ **artistic form**
WAS LOST.

Rabbinical commentators had divided it into ‘chapters,’ and medieval translators [had divided it] into ‘verses,’ which not only did not agree with, but often ran counter to, the original structure ___[or **artistic form**]. (Richard G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible: An Account of the Leading Forms of Literature Represented in the Sacred Writings*. Boston, New York, Chicago: D.C. Heath & Co., 1899, p. 45.)

Yet despite the loss in perception of such valuable means to interpretation, the King James Bible translators amazingly retained many of these **artistic forms**, although in what we might call, a “hidden manner.” In other words, within our modern-day biblical structure of chapters and verses, most readers do not recognize these wonderful means of expression. Nevertheless, since the publication of the King James Bible, scholars of biblical literature have rediscovered and catalogued these forms so that, when put forth together as a whole, they transform the **text** and set it apart from how we normally view scripture. Most significantly, the Book of Mormon **text** can be seen in a similar manner as the KJV Bible. Indeed, I feel that by highlighting the various **artistic forms** in the Book of Mormon, it will once again establish itself to be a witness to the truth of the **Bible**, and possibly reveal many “plain and precious things” that have been “lost” (1 Nephi 13: 19-42).

Hebrew artistic forms can be viewed as “**poetry.**” But what is a Hebrew poem? According to Hugh Nibley, “the word *poem* means, in fact, ‘**Creation,**’” and the Creation has been linked with temple worship, where covenants are made with the **Creators** of the world. So, Hebrew-like poetry helps to highlight and provide added meaning to those **Covenant** aspects of Scripture. Hugh Nibley further writes that, “rites of the temple are always a **repetition** of those [covenants] that marked its founding in the beginning of the world, telling how it all **came to be** in the first place.” (Hugh W. Nibley, “What Is a Temple?” (19-37), and “Looking Backward” (39-51), in Truman G. Madsen, editor, *The Temple in Antiquity*, 1984. Also Matthew B. Brown, *The Gate of Heaven*, 1999:24.)

A Covenant Record of Christ’s People is an attempt to give better “poetic” structure and understanding to the prophetic covenant-centered and Christ-centered text of the Book of Mormon. By

doing so, the reader can focus on the central message of the book. The Title Page declares that the two primary purposes of the Book of Mormon are:

(1)

“that they may know the covenants of the Lord”

and

(2)

“to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God ”

By attempting to satisfy these purposes from an “artistic” perspective, I propose that the message and veracity of the text will be brought out as never before.

In my previous dealings with the text of the Book of Mormon, I was motivated to emphasize various words and phrases that had to do with people, places, culture, geography, chronology, covenants and the names of Deity. I also inserted my own headings to emphasize that the Book of Mormon is a covenant text between Christ and His people, especially those of the tribe of Joseph, the son of Jacob (Israel). In recent years, however, I came to the realization that what I also needed to do was to reestablish the emphasis on structure by featuring the text in a parallelistic manner, and also by identifying various word forms—forms and parallels that are similar to what has been discovered in the King James Bible. As one might expect (myself included) an attempt to structure the Book of Mormon in this manner is a very lofty goal. I fully realize this. But I believe it is worth doing.

In order to acquaint the reader with the newly structured text, this Introduction is divided into three parts:

Part 1: This section discusses the methods that I have used to make the text more understandable and the message more valid. This should be sufficient to give the reader a basic awareness of what this book is all about. Thus, after completing Part 1 of the Introduction, one will see the words: “(TEMPORARY END).” At this point the reader can skip to my version of the Book of Mormon text and begin reading with a basic knowledge of what my highlighting and structure mean. However, for those willing to seek out more insight into the method of Hebrew-influenced writing that has been found in the King James Bible, and also in the Book of Mormon, they can proceed to the lengthier Part 2 and Part 3.

Part 2: This section provides some brief explanations and illustrations relative to the variety of parallelistic line structures and Hebrew-like word forms that are contained in the Book of Mormon (and also the Bible). Early Modern English grammatical forms and Bible quotations are also discussed. The final part of this section addresses the various types of thematic literary forms. Part 2 is more scholarly. As a result, it will be subject to future changes and expansions.

Part 3 (Sources): Originally, I included at the end of each Introduction to each Volume of text a lengthy list of written works that relate to Part 1 and Part 2. Because the number of citations in this section has grown dramatically, I have moved this section to a separate “Sources” Volume. The “Sources” Volume begins with a brief chronological history of the knowledge concerning the parallelistic

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line structures, the Hebrew-like word forms and the thematic literary forms of ancient scripture up until the time of the Book of Mormon. I then have provided a chronological list of reader-friendly sources after 1830 that discuss these forms as they relate to the various editions of the Book of Mormon. I next have included a chronological list of pertinent writings related to biblical quotations or related language that is part of the Book of Mormon. Finally, I have included the writings on ancient Hebrew law, author attribution parallels and stylometry as they relate to the Book of Mormon.

With each successive volume of my parallelistic Book of Mormon text, I will provide a “new” Introduction in the same format. However, while the format will be the same, all scriptural examples in the “new” Introduction will come from that particular section of scripture (For example: Volume 4a will feature examples from the first 16 chapters of the book of Alma instead of the previous volumes). Also, each successive Introduction will contain information and insights related to their particular volumes.

Updated volumes are scheduled to be published periodically.