

2E. Thematic Literary Forms

In the Book of Mormon, the multiple parallelistic line forms and Hebrew-like word forms become a part of larger thematic literary forms. In his 1947 *Our Book of Mormon*, Sidney B. Sperry would introduce the Book of Mormon reader to these multiple thematic literary forms. These forms would be addressed individually in various articles and books in the decades that followed. Indeed, the pertinent chapters from Sperry's 1947 book would also be reprinted in 1995 (*Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 4/1). In 1997 Richard Dilworth Rust would bring forth his book: *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon*. In 2004, James T. Duke (*The Literary Masterpiece Called the Book of Mormon*) would also review these thematic literary forms. Among the thematic forms that I will address are the following:

(1) Historical Narrative	HN
(2) Genealogies	G
(3) Prophetic Dialogue	PD
(4) Poetic language (memorable phrases)	PL
(5) Epistles (formal directed messages)	E
(6) Scriptural Commentary & Sermons	SC
(7) Prayers	P
(8) Sacred songs (Psalms)	SS
(9) Reasoning	R
(10) Typology	T
(11) The Law	L
(12) Editorial Promises	EP
(13) Prophetic Promises	PP

- (1) **Historical Narrative:** According to the Title Page, the historical narrative in the Book Mormon is structured around covenant themes and Christ, with parallels to sacred history. But how does one go about analyzing this narrative? Can we correlate the narrative with covenant themes? Can we see Christ woven into the narrative? Can we correlate the narrative with “real” history and geography? And finally, does the narrative withstand modern-day literary scrutiny in the general manner of presentation? In other words, are the writings of Volume 4c (Alma 43—63) not only put together with high literary standards, but more importantly, are they true? From reading a vast number of volumes and articles that have been published over literally centuries, I would have to answer: “Much more than you would ever suspect!” The narrative testifies of itself in an astoundingly complex manner.

A most detailed literary analysis of the Book of Mormon, at least by modern-day academia perspectives regarding general literature, has been authored by Grant Hardy (*Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*, Oxford University Press, 2010.) His 273 pages of analysis and over 52 pages of notes amounts to what I consider a “must-read” for anyone interested in literary narrative analysis.

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In saying this, I acknowledge that I don't have the space here to adequately review his findings, other than to say that he has written to reach that middle-ground between believer and non-believer. What I can say is that in my "Sources" section of this Introduction, I have tried to list a vast amount of excellent material on the literary aspects of the Book of Mormon that, to my knowledge, have come forth, especially in the last few decades.

Grant Hardy has acknowledged that the effort to understand the Book of Mormon is continuous. He writes:

There is much more to discover in terms of narrative techniques, connections between various people and events, thematic development, and the specific language employed by different speakers. . . . Understanding the book on its own terms, recognizing its structure and form, and identifying the means by which it conveys its message are the first steps to any further inquiries, whether they be historical, literary, or religious. (p. 268-269)

Yet to be precise, Grant Hardy was only attempting to put forward a literary narrative analysis of the Book of Mormon without attempting to address the idea of whether it was historical fact or fiction. Perhaps he considered the search for "truth" as it relates to history to be elusive.

Again, from a somewhat different perspective, noted historian Terryl L. Givens has made an outstanding historical narrative analysis of the Book of Mormon. (*By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion*, Oxford University Press, 2002) In his "Editor's Note" he writes:

My focus in any case has not been on whether the Book of Mormon or the account of it given by Joseph Smith is true. Rather, I have tried to examine why the Book of Mormon has been taken seriously—for very different reasons—by generations of devoted believers and confirmed skeptics . . . as the resources of archaeology, literary analysis, evangelical polemics, and varieties of textual and cultural studies are increasingly brought to bear on this historically contentious and influential document . . .

As in the case of Grant Hardy, Terryl Givens seems to find "historical truth," to be an elusive goal. Indeed, in trying to understand the "real" history and culture of the Book of Mormon, hundreds of books and articles have been published. However, towards the goal of understanding the "true" historical narrative, I have recorded many of the more pertinent ideas in my cultural and geographical commentary posted on my website (alancminer.com or search "Step-by-Step through the Book of Mormon"). For Volume 3 and for a Mesoamerican setting, perhaps some "must reads" in this "historical and cultural" category are: John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*; and Joseph L. Allen and Blake J. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon, both of which focus on the Grijalva River as the Sidon River. Another recent book, A Compelling Geographic Model of the Book of Mormon has the Usumacinta as the River Sidon. It is authored by Joe V. Andersen, F. Richard Hauck, Stanford Stoddard Smith, Ted Dee Stoddard, and Lenard C. Brunsdale. V. Garth Norman* (vgarthnorman.com) and Kirk Magleby (bookofmormonresources.blogspot.com) also focus on the Usumacinta River while adding significant insights on related issues.

Also recently, *The Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* has published a study by Bruce E. Dale and Brian Dale ("Joseph Smith: The World's Greatest Guesser (A Bayesian Statistical Analysis of Positive and Negative Correspondences Between the Book of Mormon and the Maya, "). By comparing the Book of Mormon with 137 statements of renown Mesoamerican archaeologists Michael D. Coe and Stephen D. Houston on ancient Mesoamerica in *The Maya*, they established astronomical odds of shared cultural characteristics.

Yet the Book of Mormon is not a history book. History and culture are but a backdrop to a covenant people and Christ. In this regard, some "must-reads" are the writings of Steven L. Olsen (see my "Sources" section). Steven and I have been corresponding on this theme from shortly after I was first introduced to it by Raymond Treat (Ray and Mary Lee Treat, "Survey of the Covenants and Principles of the Book of Mormon," *Zarahemla Research Foundation*, 1991). From the last chapter of a lengthy 1994 unpublished manuscript titled, "Covenants in the Book of Mormon," Steven Olsen writes the following (p. 245-254) (Used by permission of the author):

This study has demonstrated how most if not all of the contents and structure of the Book of Mormon text can be explained in terms of a system of covenants, whose central symbols are the promised land, the chosen people, and Christ's gospel. (p. 245) . . .

Chapters four through six illustrate the extent to which historical, geographical, ecclesiastical, doctrinal, social, military, biographical, and other details of the abridgments of Mormon and Moroni can be explained in terms of these covenants. (p. 246) . . .

As I proceeded with this study, I was frankly surprised to discover how thoroughly Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni used repetition to drive home their central messages in a variety of powerful and unmistakable ways. It is not accidental, therefore, that the four most frequently used nouns in the Book of Mormon are land(s), people(s), God, and Lord. Each appears in the text well over one thousand times—respectively 1444, 1774, 1681, and 1578 times, not including their various synonyms. (p. 247) . . .

From this perspective, the central, unifying message of the Book of Mormon seems to be that salvation is available to all who will make and keep the divine covenants of establishing Zion (Promised land), gathering Israel (Chosen people), and building up Christ's church (Christ's gospel). (p. 247) . . .

In short, the covenants of the promised land, the chosen people, and Christ's gospel receive systematic and complementary treatment throughout the Book of Mormon along a series of significant dimensions, at once temporal and eternal, material and spiritual. The extent to which and the complexity with which they are developed systematically within the text strongly suggests that the contents and organization of the text are neither accidental nor incidental. (p. 250) . . .

What is surprising is not that the authors of the Book of Mormon were conscious of the book's spiritual purpose and capable of achieving it through their literary skills, but rather that this intent, clearly stated and faithfully fulfilled, should have remained hidden from systematic analysis for so long. (p. 254)

- (3) **Prophetic Dialogue:** There are passages in the Book of Mormon that appear to quote dialogue between individuals, usually associated with a prophet.

Examples:

Alma 44 Alma warns Ammoron
Alma 45 Alma discourses with Helaman

- (4) **Poetic language (memorable phrases):** While there is continued debate on what constitutes “poetry,” or the length of that “poetry,” there are some memorable poetic phrases that exemplify principle and imagery. James T. Duke (*The Literary Masterpiece Called the Book of Mormon*, 2004, p. 192-204) lists the following memorable phrases: :

Examples (Principle):

Alma 45:16 The Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.

Alma 46:8 Thus we see how quick the children of men do forget the Lord their God, yea, how quick to do iniquity, and to be led away by the evil one.

Alma 50:19 And thus we see how merciful and just are all the dealings of the Lord, to the fulfilling of all his words unto the children of men.

Alma 60:13 For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that is justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore, ye need not suppose that the righteous are lost because they are slain; but behold, they do enter into the rest of the Lord their God.

Alma 60:23 Now I would that ye should remember that God has said that the inward vessel shall be cleansed first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also

Examples (Imagery):

Alma 44:20 And he [Moroni caused that **the work of death** should cease again

Alma 49:11 for Moroni had **altered the management of affairs** among the Nephites
Insomuch that . . . they [the Lamanites] could not come upon them

- (5) **Epistles (formal directed messages):** The Book of Mormon contains the contents of a number of formal letters or epistles. These epistles can be classified by their setting (i.e., “pastoral,” “prophetic,” “war,” etc.) Interestingly, of the six war epistles found in the Book of Mormon, five of them occur in Volume 4c.

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Examples: (War Epistles)

Alma 54:5-14	Captain Moroni's epistle to Ammoron
Alma 54:16-24	Ammoron's reply to Captain Moroni
Alma 56:2—58:41	Helaman's epistle to Captain Moroni
Alma 60	Captain Moroni's epistle to Chief Judge Pahoran
Alma 61:2-21	Pahoran's reply to Captain Moroni

Robert F. Smith writes: The most noticeable thing about the first six Book of Mormon letters—despite the possible absence of the formal address due to the narrative context in which they are embedded—is that they never violate the ancient Hittite-Syrian, Neo-Assyrian, Amarna, and Hebrew format in which the superior correspondent is always listed first.

Example: (Prophetic epistles)

Alma 45:9-14	Alma declares a prophecy regarding the final destruction of the Nephites, and has Helaman write it down, but commands that it should not be made known unto the people until the prophecy is fulfilled.
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Examples: (Pastoral epistles)

There are two major pastoral epistles in the Book of Mormon:

1. Mormon to Moroni in about 350 AD (Moroni 8:2-30)
2. Mormon to Moroni in about 366 AD (Moroni 9:1-26)

I have yet to find any pastoral epistles in Volume 4c.

(Sources: Sidney B. Sperry, "Types of Literature in the Book of Mormon: Epistles, Psalms, Lamentations," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: vol. 4, no. 1, Article 12. Robert F. Smith, "Epistolary Form in the Book of Mormon," *FARMS Review* 22/2 (2010):125-35. Staff, "Why Was Moroni's Correspondence with Pahoran Significant?" *KnoWhy* #168 (Aug. 18, 2016), Book of Mormon Central; James Duke)

- (6) **Scriptural Commentary and Sermons:** A prophet who is writing or giving a sermon explains covenant aspects or doctrinal ideas by using and interpreting scripture. In his book, *The Literary Masterpiece called the Book of Mormon* (2004, p. 20-30), James T. Duke lists and categorizes the sermons and doctrinal teachings found in the Book of Mormon. A few examples are as follows:

<u>Verses</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Alma 45	Sermon	Alma	Helaman	Prophecy concerning the final destruction of the Nephites, blessings to his sons and to the church. In verse 19 Alma discusses being taken up by the Spirit

Duke writes: "Using such a list will help the gospel student gain an understanding of the complete and comprehensive nature of the doctrines taught in the book."

- (7) **Prayers:** Although short prayers can be classified as word forms, extended prayers can be classified as thematic literary forms. In Volume 4c we find an example of prayer that is quite remarkable not just for the prayer, but for the details regarding Moroni's preparation for prayer.

Example: Alma 46:13

13	And	he [Moroni]		<u>fastened</u>				
				on	his	head plate		
				and	[on]	his	breastplate	
				and	[on]	his	shields	
	and	[he Moroni]		<u>girded</u>	on	his	armor	
				about	his	loins		
	and	he [Moroni]		took	the	pole		
	which		had	on	the	end thereof		
					his	rent coat		
	and	he [Moroni]		called	it	the	title	
					of		liberty	
	and	he [Moroni]		bowed		him	self	
					to	<i>the</i>	<i>earth</i>	
	and	he [Moroni]		prayed mightily				
					unto	his	God	
			for	the blessings				
					of		liberty	
			to	rest	upon	his	brethren	
	so long as	there	should [be]	a band	of		Christians	["be" added in 1953]
			[to]	remain				
			to	possess		<i>the</i>	<i>land</i>	[the Promised Land]

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Example: Alma 58:10

10 **Therefore**

we did in pour out our souls
 prayer to God

that **He** would **strengthen** us
 and [that **He** would] **deliver** us
out of the **hands**
 of our **enemies**

yea
 and also
 [that **He** would] **give** us **strength**
 that we might retain our *cities*
 and our *lands*
 and our *possessions*

for the **support**
 of our **people**

- (8) **Sacred songs (Psalms):** A Psalm is a passage of scripture that contains expressions that could be recited, much like the lyrics of a song. Perhaps the most famous, and most lengthy is the “Psalm of Nephi (2 Nephi 4:16-35). Another example is “The Song of the Vineyard” from Isaiah that is quoted by Nephi (2 Ne. 15:1-7).

Example: I have not found any psalms in Volume 4c.

- (9) **Reasoning:** These are usually associated with a series of “wherefore” beginnings, a series of “if/then” statements, or a series of hypothetical questions followed by a “thus we see” or a “therefore” initiated statement. There are many examples in Volume 4b, but I will cite just a few.

Examples: Alma 43:29-33
 Alma 43:45-47
 Alma 46:29-35
 Alma 56:46-48
 Alma 58:1-3

- (10) **Typology:** “Typology . . . is the assumption that there is some meaning and point to history, and that sooner or later some event or events will occur which will indicate what that meaning or point is.” “All intensified language sooner or later turns metaphorical,” thus “literature is not only the obvious but the inescapable guide to higher journeys of consciousness.” (Northrup Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature*, 1990, p 28, 80)

The following series of lengthy quotes come from Richard Dilworth Rust in his book, *Feasting on the Word*, and are being used here with his permission. I would recommend the book to every reader. He writes:

Erich Auerbach in his *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1953: 73-74) sees a conception of history such as this as being structured vertically rather than horizontally. Two events are horizontal to each other if they are linked by time or causality. A vertical connection, however, “can be established only if both occurrences are vertically linked to divine Providence.” God alone “is able to devise such a plan of history and supply the key to its understanding.” . . . With typology, “the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and which will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God it is something eternal.

Essentially every event or person in the Book of Mormon may well remind us of another event or person; the book is like a beautifully composed symphony with repeated themes and motifs. . . . Most significantly, all God-given events or God-directed persons in the Book of Mormon are reminders of Jesus Christ or his gospel.

In regard to the content of Volume 4c (Alma 43—63) or what have often been referred to as the war chapters, Richard Rust comments:

Warfare is part of the history of the Book of Mormon peoples; it is included in the Book of Mormon for purposes that pertain to the people who would receive the book. As a type, it speaks to all those who are “enlisted till the conflict is o’er.”

Warfare is a scriptural metaphor for Christian action. The metaphor is found in the standard of liberty (Alma 51:20) in the prophet’s mouth being like a sharp sword (Isaiah 49:2; 1 Nephi 21:2), in the sword of justice (Alma 26:19; 60:29), and in the sword of the Lord’s Spirit (D&C 27:18). . . .

Captain Moroni with his standard of liberty demonstrates a type of the remnant of Joseph [being] “a man like unto Ammon, the son of Mosiah, yea, and even the other sons of Mosiah, yea, and also Alma and his sons,” who are “men of God” (Alma 46:24; 48:18). . . .

Typology is suggested by the implications of Nephi’s revelation concerning the last days in which he “beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth . . . to fight against the Lamb of God” (1 Nephi 14:13). This conflict pertains to “things both temporal and spiritual” (1 Nephi 22:3). [p. 204-205, 214-215]

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(11) The Law

Note* This literary theme was not discussed by either Sidney Sperry or James Duke. While the study of the Law in the scriptures is ancient, the association of legal issues in the scriptures with literary criticism is relatively modern. In view of the legal studies that have been made in the last number of decades with the text of the Book of Mormon, I have chosen to add “The Law” to my list of literary forms.

Perhaps the foremost LDS scholar with respect to legal issues and the Book of Mormon is John W. Welch. In the Foreword to his book, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (2008: xi-xxv), he gives a detailed chronological review of the progression he has made in his understanding, in his education, and in his writings on this theme. I would refer all readers to that Foreword and that book for a much greater perspective of this literary theme.

In that Foreword John Welch writes:

The legal cases reported in the Book of Mormon, as in the Bible, are not just about crime and punishment in a secular sense. To the men and women who experienced those legal confrontations, those cases are all about the ultimate definitions of righteousness and wickedness, the open differentiation of truth from falsity, and the firm recognition of righteous authority as opposed to unjust imposition. Reading the scriptures in light of ancient laws, principles, practicalities, purposes, and sympathies enriches appreciation for issues and contexts out of which many of the plain messages of the prophetic Book of Mormon arose. [xii]

The following is a sampling of articles by John Welch that pertain to the narrative in the various Volumes of my text:

<u>Volume</u>		<u>Title</u>	<u>Year</u>
Volume 1	1 Ne. 3—4	“Legal Perspectives on the Slaying of Laban”	1992
Volume 2	2 Ne. 9:27-38	“Jacob’s Ten Commandments”	1992
	Jac. 7	“The Case of Sherem against Jacob”	2008
Volume 3	Mos. 3—5	“Benjamin’s Speech as a Prophetic Lawsuit”	1998
	Mos. 12—17	“Judicial Process in the Trial of Abinadi”	1983
	Mos. 29	“The Law of Mosiah”	1992
Volume 4a	Alma 1	The Trial of Nehor	2008
	Alma 8—14	The Trial of Alma and Amulek	2008
	Alma 11: 3, 7	“The Laws of Eshnunna and Nephite economics”	1999
	Alma 16	“The Destruction of Ammonihah and the Law of Apostate Cities”	1992
Volume 4b	Alma 24, 27	“Exemption from Military Duty”	1992
	Alma 30:6-60	“The Trial of Korihor”	2008
Volume 4c	Alma 51:19	“The Imprisonment of King-Men”	2008
	Alma 62:9-10	“The Trial of Pachus’s Men and the King-Men	2008
Volume 5	Hel. 1:1-10	“The Case of Paanchi”	2008
	Hel. 5:21-22	“The Imprisonment of Lehi and Nephi”	2008
	Hel. 7—9	“The Case of an Unobserved Murder”	1992
	3 Ne. 3:12	“Thieves and Robbers”	1992

	3 Ne. 4	“The Execution of Zemnariyah”	1992
	3 Ne. 6:20-24	“Corrupt Execution of Inspired Prophets”	2008
	3 Ne. 6:25-30	“Complaint against the Corrupt Judges”	2008
Volume 6	3 Ne. 12—	<i>The Sermon at the Temple</i>	
		<i>And the Sermon on the Mount</i>	1990
	3 Ne. 12—	<i>Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple . . .</i>	1999
Volume 7	Mor. 9:11-20	“Law and War in the Book of Mormon”	1990

John Welch addresses briefly “The Imprisonment of King-Men” (Alma 51:19) and “The trial of Pachus’s Men and the King-Men” (Alma 62:9-10). (I have included the verses for reference.)

51:13 And it came to pass that when the men who were called king-men had heard that the Lamanites were coming down to battle against them, they were glad in their hearts; and they refused to take up arms, for they were so wroth with the chief judge, and also with the people of liberty, that they would not take up arms to defend their country.

51:17 And it came to pass that Moroni commanded that his army should go against those king-men, to pull down their pride and their nobility and level them with the earth, or they should take up arms and support the cause of liberty.

51:19 And it came to pass that there were four thousand of those dissenters who were hewn down by the sword; and those of their leaders who were not slain in battle were taken and cast into prison, for there was no time for their trials at this period.

62:6 . . . Pachus, who was the king of those dissenters who had driven the freemen out of the land of Zarahemla . . .

62:7 And it came to pass that Moroni and Pahoran went down with their armies into the land of Zarahemla . . . and did meet the men of Pachus, insomuch that they did come to battle.

62:8 And behold, Pachus was slain and his men were taken prisoners, and Pahoran was restored to his judgment-seat.

62:9 And the men of Pachus received their trial, according to the law, and also those king-men who had been taken and cast into prison; and they were executed according to the law; yea, those men of Pachus and those king-men, whosoever would not take up arms in the defence of their country, but would fight against it, were put to death.

62:10 And thus it became expedient that this law should be strictly observed for the safety of their county; yea, and whosoever was found denying their freedom was speedily executed according to the law.

At the beginning of his 49-page chapter thirteen (“Judicial Punishments: Types and Rationales”) John Welch writes:

Every legal case that ended with a guilty verdict saw the infliction of some form of punishment, and judging righteously required, in the end, the application of an appropriate

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(sometimes legally prescribed) type and level of punishment. . . This chapter considers which forms of legal punishments were typically available to judges in biblical times and when, how, and why those punishments were used by Nephite jurists.

The legal cases reported in the Book of Mormon most often resulted in the death of the convicted party. The cases of Abinadi, Nehor, Pachus (Alma 62:9-10), Paanchi, Seantum, and Zemnariyah (3 Nephi 4:28) all ended with the accused being executed under official orders. . . .

Ancient legal rules for punishing convicted offenders were often quite specific, even formulaic. [p. 335]

Near the end of his 2008 book (*The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon*), John Welch provides a lengthy 34-page Bibliography of related non-LDS and LDS sources. From this Bibliography I have attempted to provide a chronological list of those LDS-related written works, which can be found in my “Sources” Volume: Part D: “A Chronological List of Pertinent Writings on Ancient Hebrew Law That Are Part of the Book of Mormon.

12. Editorial Promises

One step in the Methods that I have chosen to illustrate the text of the Book of Mormon in an artistic manner involves marking original editorial commentary. One major purpose of these commentaries was to inform the reader about what was to come. I have chosen to call these “editorial promises” following John A. Tvedtnes’ 1991 article, “Mormon’s Editorial Promises” in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*.

These Editorial Promises can further be classified under Thematic literary forms. These editorial promises are found at the beginnings of books and chapters in the Book of Mormon. For example, the original Preface to the book of First Nephi is an indicator or “editorial promise” of what is to come. Editorial promises are also found at points of change in the narrative in order to alert the reader as to what is to come. While most of the “editorial promises” are fulfilled in what immediately follows in the Book of Mormon text, many are separated from their fulfillment by large amounts of text (even chapters and books). At times in the text I will alert the reader to either the making or fulfillment of an editorial promise by placing a blue “EP” at the far-right margin. This process will be selective rather than comprehensive. In summary, the many editorial promises that are made and fulfilled in the Book of Mormon provide just one more perspective into the complexity and the superlative literary composition of this “marvelous work and a wonder.”

The editorial promises that are either made or fulfilled in Volume 4c (Alma 43—63) are charted below. This charting is a result of extensive research by Ryan Dahle, and is used with permission from Book of Mormon Central.

Editorial Promises (Volume 4c)

* Promises separated from their fulfillment by more than five verses

** Promises separated from their fulfillment by large amounts of text (typically a chapter or more)

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Promise</u>	<u>Fulfillment</u>
No More Will Be Said about the Ministry of Alma and His Sons	Alma 43:2	Alma 43–63
Return to War Account	Alma 43:3	Alma 43–63
An Account Will Be given of Wars and Dissensions in the Days of Helaman	Alma 45 Introd.	Alma 45–62
Return to the Account of Amalickiah and Those Who Fled with Him	Alma 47:1	Alma 47:1–Alma 48:7
*Readers Will See That Amalickiah’s Promise Was Rash	Alma 51:10	Alma 51:34
Helaman Will Show That They Accomplished Their Desire to Obtain the City Cumeni	Alma 57:8	Alma 57:9–23

Sources: John A. Tvedtnes, “Mormon’s Editorial Promises” in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, 1991, p. 29-31. Thomas W. Mackay, “Mormon as Editor: A Study in Colophons, Headers, and Source Indicators,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* vol 2 no. 2 (1993): 90-109. Anita Wells, “Bare Record: The Nephite Archivist, The Record of Records, and the Book of Mormon Provenance,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scriptures* 24 (2017): 99-122. Book of Mormon Central [Ryan Dahle], “Why Should Readers Pay Attention to the Book of Mormon’s Editorial Promises?” *KnoWhy* #510, April 11, 2019.

13. Prophetic Promises:

One of the basic thematic elements in the Book of Mormon is found in prophetic promises, many of which are based on the Lord’s original covenant with Nephi in which the Lord declares: “Inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands. And inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord (1 Nephi 2:20-21). Nephi structured his narrative around the fulfillment of these covenant promises, and also the coming of Christ, the Lamb of God, which makes these covenant promises valid (see 1 Nephi 12—14). Nephi’s recorded prophetic promises not only included those by the Lord and by himself, but also the words of his father Lehi and his brother Jacob, and also many of the words spoken by past prophets as recorded on the Brass Plates. According to Steven L. Olsen, “Nephi’s [recorded] prophecies became so crucial to [Mormon’s] literary purpose that he [Mormon] consciously structured a major portion of his narrative in order to document their literal and complete fulfillment.” Mormon boldly declares to all those that his record might go to: “I . . . know that as many things as have been prophesied concerning us down to this day have been fulfilled, and as many as go beyond this day must surely come to pass.” (Words of Mormon 1:4)

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The prophetic promises that are either made or fulfilled in Volume 4c (Alma 43—63) are charted below. This charting is a result of extensive research by Ryan Dahle, and is used with permission from Book of Mormon Central.

Volume 4c

Prophecies and Their Fulfillment in the Book of Mormon

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Fulfillment</u>
Lehi's Posterity Will Prosper or Be Cursed	1 Nephi 2:20	2 Nephi 5:13
	1 Nephi 4:14	Omni 1:6
	2 Nephi 1:9, 20	Mosiah 9:9
	2 Nephi 4:4	Mosiah 10:5
	Jarom 1:9	Mosiah 21:16
	Mosiah 1:7	Mosiah 23:19–20
	Mosiah 2:22, 31	Mosiah 25:24
	Alma 9:13	Alma 50:18–22
	Alma 36:1, 30	Alma 59:3
	Alma 37:13	Alma 62:48, 51
	Alma 38:1	Helaman 3:20
	Alma 45:8	Helaman 4:13
	Alma 48:15,25	Helaman 11:20
		3 Nephi 6:4-5
		4 Nephi 1:7
		Ether 7:26
	Ether 10:16, 28	
Lamanites Will Be a Scourge	1 Nephi 2:24	Jacob 1:10, 14
	2 Nephi 5:25	Enos–Omni
	Jacob 3:3	Omni 1:24
		WofM 1:13–14
		Mosiah 9–10
		Alma 2–3
		Alma 16:1–11
		Alma 24:1–25:14
		Alma 28
		Alma 43–44
		Alma 46:1–50:11
		Alma 51–62
		Helaman 1:1–13
		Helaman 1:14–34
		Helaman 4
		Helaman 6:15–11:20
	3 Nephi 2:11–4:28	
	3 Nephi 6:14–7:14	
	Mormon 1:6–2:9	

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Fulfillment</u>
		Mormon 2:16–3:1 Mormon 3:4–6:15
Destruction Will Follow Fourth Generation	1 Nephi 12:12 2 Nephi 26:9 Alma 45:12 Helaman 13:10 3 Nephi 27:32 2 Nephi 9:53	4 Nephi 1:14–22 Mormon 8:6 Moroni 9:24
Lamanites Won't Be Utterly Destroyed	1 Nephi 13:31 2 Nephi 4:9 Alma 9:16, 24 Alma 46:24–27 Helaman 7:24 Helaman 15:12,16	Mormon 8:7–9
Nephites Will Be Smitten with Famine and Pestilence	Mosiah 12:4, 7 Alma 10:22-23 Alma 45:11 Helaman 10:6 Helaman 13:9	Alma 62:35, 39 Helaman 11:5 Helaman 12:3
Nephites Will Be Utterly Destroyed	Mosiah 12:8 Alma 9:12 Alma 9:24 Alma 46:24–27 Helaman 7:24 Helaman 13:10 Helaman 15:17	Mormon 6:8–20
Lord Will Preserve the People of Ammon	Alma 27:12	Alma 56:56 Alma 57:26
Nephites Will Be Destroyed 400 Years after Christ's Ministry	Alma 45:10 Helaman 13:5, 9	Mormon 8:6–7
Nephites Will Be Trodden Down If They Become Wicked	Alma 46:18, 22 Helaman 4:20	Mormon 5:6
Helaman's Army Will Be Delivered	Alma 58:11	Alma 62:50

(Literary Forms)