

Some Notes on the Literary Structure of the Entire Book of Mosiah

About 50 years ago, in the Autumn of 1969, John W. Welch wrote an article titled “Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon,” in which he presents a chiastic pattern for the whole book of Mosiah, after which he states: “Passages as complex as [this chiastic structure] could not have occurred accidentally.” The following is a representation of John Welch’s chiastic structuring of the Book of Mosiah:

- A King Benjamin exhorts his sons (Mos. 1:1-8)
- B Mosiah chosen to succeed his father (1:10)
- C Mosiah receives the records (1:16)
- D Benjamin’s speech and the words of the angel (2:9—5:15)
- E People enter into a covenant (6:1)
- F Priests consecrated (6:3)
- G Ammon leaves Zarahemla for the land of Lehi-Nephi (7:1-6)
- H People in bondage, Ammon put in prison (7:15)
- I The 24 gold plates (8:9)
- J The record of Zeniff begins as he leaves Zarahemla (9:1)
- K Defense against the Lamanites (9:14—10:20)
- L Noah and his priests (11:1-15)
 - M Abinadi persecuted and thrown in prison (ch. 11—ch. 12)
 - N Abinadi reads the old law to the priests (ch. 13—ch. 14)
[Isaiah’s prophecies of Christ]
 - N Abinadi makes his own prophecies (ch. 15—ch. 16)
[Abinadi’s prophecies of Christ]
 - M Abinadi persecuted and killed (17:5—17:20)
- L Noah and his priests (18:32—20:5)
- K Lamanites threaten the people of Limhi (20:6-20)
- J Record of Zeniff ends as [Limhi] leaves the land of Lehi-Nephi
- I The 24 gold plates (21:27, 22:14)
- H People of Alma in bondage (ch. 23)
- G Alma leaves the land of Lehi-Nephi for Zarahemla (ch. 24)
- F The Church organized by Alma (25:14-24)
- E Unbelievers refuse to enter covenant (26:1-4)
- D The words of Alma and the words of the angel of the Lord (ch.26—ch.27)
- C Alma the Younger receives the records (28:20)
- B Judges chosen instead of a king (29:5-32)
- A Mosiah exhorts his people (29:5-32)

(John W. Welch, “Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 10, no. 1 (1969), p. 82.)

Chiastic Structure of the Book of Mosiah

By Gregory Wright

1976

In 1976, Greg Wright would draft an expanded complex chiastic structure for the entire Book of Mosiah. The full chiastic structure contains 39 matching elements. It also contains four matching parallel sections of extended alternating parallelism and one matching simple alternating parallelism. All this leads to a central core message of 12 matching elements, which support the central chiastic element about Christ being both the Father and the Son. In this arrangement, the top numbered element is paired with the matching bottom numbered element.

- 1 **Continual peace among the Nephites** (1:1)
- 2 **King Benjamin's testimony of the truth** (1:6)
- 3 **All of King Benjamin's words are not written** (1:8)
 - a **Mosiah receives the sacred records from Benjamin** (1:16)

[The transfer of these records happens only twice in the book]
 - b **Mosiah sends a proclamation throughout all the land** (2:1)
 - c **King Benjamin sends a written word among all his people** (2:8)

(Note: This matching pair are the only accounts of a written word being sent to the people)
 - d **King Benjamin has not taught his people to murder, plunder, or steal, but to keep the commandments** (2:13)
 - e **King Benjamin explains our dependence upon our creator** (2:20-21)
 - f **The commandments of the fathers are the commandments of God** (2:31)
- 4 **King Benjamin explains prophecies** (3:5-10)

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- 4' **Alma and the sons of Mosiah explain prophecies** (27:35)
 - a' **Alma receives the sacred records from Mosiah**

[The transfer of these records happens only twice in the book]
 - b' **Mosiah sends a proclamation throughout all the land** (29:1)
 - c' **King Mosiah sends a written word among all his people** (29:4)

(Note: This matching pair are the only accounts of a written word being sent to the people)
 - d' **King Mosiah has not taught his people to murder, plunder or steal, but to keep the commandments** (29:14)
 - e' **King Mosiah explains our dependence upon our creator** (29:19-20)
 - f' **The commandments of the fathers are the commandments of God**
- 3' **All of King Mosiah's words are not written** (29:33-36)
- 2' **The Nephites testimony of the truth** (29:37)
- 1' **Continual peace among the Nephites** (29:43)

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(continued)

- 5 King Benjamin exhorts the people to keep the commandments of God (3:11-21)
- 6 King Benjamin teaches his people (3:22-23)
- 7 “which doth cause them to shrink from the presence of the Lord” (3:25)
(2 out of 3 places where the word “shrink” is used)
- a The words of the angel cause the people to fall to the earth for fear of the Lord (4:1)
(exclusive event)
- b Nephites receive a remission of their sins through their faith in Christ (4:2-3)
- c Forgiveness granted to those who sought it (4:10-12)
- d King Benjamin admonishes his people not to injure one another
and live in peace (4:13)
- 8 People believe the words of King Benjamin and soften their hearts (5:1-5)
- e King Benjamin recognizes the peoples covenant (5:6)
- f Spiritual freedom comes only from the Lord (5:8)
- 9 King Benjamin appoints teachers over his people. They teach of God. (6:3)
(Only 4 Nephites are made king in the Book of Mosiah: Mosiah, Noah, Limhi, and Amulon.
All 4 coronations are used as elements.)
- 10 Mosiah made King (6:4)
- (continued on the next page)
- 10' Amulon made king (23:399)
(Only 4 Nephites are made king in the Book of Mosiah: Mosiah, Noah, Limhi, and Amulon.
All 4 coronations are used as elements.)
- 9' King Laman appoints teachers over his people. They do not teach of God (24:1-5)
- f' Temporal freedom comes only from the Lord (24:16-21)
- e' The Lord recognizes the peoples covenant (24:13)
- 8' People disbelieve the words of King Benjamin and harden their hearts (26:1-4)
- d' Forgiveness granted to those who seek it (26:29-35)
- c' King Mosiah commands his people not to persecute one another
and live in peace (27:3-6)
- b' The words of the angel cause Alma and the sons of Mosiah to fall to the earth
for fear of the Lord (27:11-12, 18)
- a' Alma receives a remission of his sins through his faith in Christ (27:24-29)
- 7' “and shrink beneath the glance of his all-searching eye” (27:31)
(2 out of 3 places where the word “shrink” is used)
- 6' Alma and the sons of Mosiah teach the people (27:32)
- 5' Alma and the sons of Mosiah exhort the people to keep the commandments of God (27:33)

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(continued)

- a People of Mosiah till the ground (6:7)
- b Nephites search for the land of Lehi-Nephi (7:1-3)
- 11 Nephite group wanders in the wilderness (7:4)
 - (Two of three groups who wander in the wilderness. The other group is Limhi's 43 men searching for Zarahemla. They are mentioned twice and used in element 26a.)
- 12 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob delivered the children of Israel out of bondage (7:18-19)
 - (These are the only references to bondage + the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob)
- 13 People in bondage to the Lamanites (7:20-24)
- 14 Limhi mentions the wickedness of Noah and his priests (7:26-28)
- 15 Ammon receives the record of Zeniff (8:5)
 - (The only accounts of people receiving the record of Zeniff)
 - a Discovery of the Jaredite destruction and the 24 gold plates (8:7-11)
 - (There are only 3 such accounts)
 - b Limhi rejoices in learning from Ammon that King Mosiah can interpret the records (8:12-19)
 - (exclusive accounts)
 - c Record of Zeniff begins with the people leaving Zarahemla and settling in the land of Nephi (9:3-8)
- 16 Nephites raise crops and prosper (9:9)

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- 16' Nephites raise crops and prosper (21:16)
- a' Discovery of the Jaredite destruction and the 24 gold plates (21:25-27)
- b' Limhi rejoices in learning from Ammon that King Mosiah can interpret the records (21:28)
 - (exclusive accounts)
- c' Record of Zeniff ends with the people leaving the land of Nephi and settling in the land of Zarahemla (22:10-13)
- 15' Mosiah receives the record of Zeniff (22:14)
 - (The only accounts of people receiving the record of Zeniff)
- 14' Alma mentions the wickedness of Noah and his priests (23:9)
- 13' People in bondage to Noah and his priests (23:12)
- 12' The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob delivered the people of Alma out of bondage (23:23-24)
 - (These are the only references to bondage + the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob)
- 11' Lamanite group wanders in the wilderness (23:30)
 - (Two of three groups who wander in the wilderness. The other group is Limhi's 43 men searching for Zarahemla. They are mentioned twice and used in element 26a.)
- a' People of Amulon till the ground (23:31)
- b' Lamanites search for the land of Nephi (23:35-38)

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(continued)

- 17 Lamanites afflict the Nephites, they complain to the King, go up to battle
and beat them. The Lord heard their cries (9:13-18)
- 18 Lamanites come to war for a false cause but are driven back (10:6-20)
- A Noah reigns after his father Zeniff (11:1)
- B King Noah ruled in wickedness (11:2)
- C Noah is supported by a tax upon his people (11:3-4)
(2 of 3 accounts of taxation)
- 19 Lamanites attack and begin to slay the people of Noah (11:16-7)
(exclusive events)
- 20 King Noah sends his army against the Lamanites (11:18)
(These are the only times King Noah sends out his army)
- 21 The wickedness of Noah and his people (11:19)
- 22 Abinadi prophesies of destructions upon the people of Noah (11:20-25)
(Elements 22-39 are the mission of Abinadi. It begins here)
- 23 They seek to kill Abinadi because of his words (11:26-29)
- 24 Abinadi is brought before the king (12:9, 16)
(2 of 3 times Abinadi is brought before the king)
- 25 Abinadi is cast into prison (12:17)
(exclusive events)
- 26 Abinadi is asked to meaning of the Isaiah prophecy,
"How beautiful upon the mountains . . . " (12:20-24)
(continued on next page)
- 26' Abinadi explains the meaning of the Isaiah prophecy,
"How beautiful upon the mountains . . . " (15:13-18)
- 25' Abinadi is cast into prison (17:5)
(exclusive event)
- 24' Abinadi is brought before the king (17:6)
(2 of 3 times Abinadi is brought before the king)
- 23' Abinadi is sentenced to death because of his words (17:7-14)
- 22' Abinadi prophesies of destructions upon the people of Noah (17:15-20)
- 21' The righteousness of Alma and his people (18:1-30)
- 20' King Noah sends his army against the people of Alma (18:33)
(These are the only times King Noah sends out his army)
- 19" Lamanites attack and begin to slay the people of Noah (19:10)
(exclusive events)
- A' Limhi reigns after his father Noah (19:26)
- B' King Limhi ruled in righteousness (19:27)
- C' Lamanites are supported by a tax upon the Nephites (19:28)
(2 of 3 accounts of taxation)
- 18' Lamanites come to war for a false cause but are driven back (20:6-12)
- 17' Lamanites afflict the Nephites, they complain to the King, go up to battle
and beat them. The Lord heard their cries. (21:2-15)

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(continued)

- 27 Abinadi expounds many commandments of the Lord,
chastising those who do not hearken to them (12:25—13:26)
- 28 Abinadi and Isaiah prophesy concerning the coming of the Lord. (13:27—14:9)
- 29 “when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed” (14:10)
- 30 “shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many” (14:11)
- 31 “for he shall bear their iniquities” (14:11)
- 32 “he hath poured out his soul unto death” (14:12)
- 33 “he bore the sins of many” (14:12)
- 34 “and made intercession for the transgressors” (14:12)
- 35 “God himself shall come down among the children of men” (15:1)
- 36 “because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God” (15:2)
- 37 “having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father” (15:2)
- 38 “being the Father and the Son”
- 39 “The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God (15:3)

All the elements on this page represent the core message of the Book of Mosiah.

The central message is that Christ is both the Father and the Son
by obedience to covenant law, which is the power of God.

- 39’ “the Son, because of the flesh” (15:3)
- 38’ “becoming the Father and the Son” (15:3)
- 37’ “the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit” (15:5)
- 36’ “or the Son to the Father” (15:5)
- 35’ “being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation,
but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out,
and disowned by his people” (15:5)
- 34’ “to make intercession for the children of men” (15:8)
- 33’ “having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men” (15:9)
- 32’ “having broken the bands of death” (15:9)
- 31’ “taken upon himself their iniquity” (15:9)
- 30’ “and satisfied the demands of justice” (15:9)
- 29’ “when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed” (15:10)
- 28’ “the words of the prophets . . . concerning the coming of the Lord” (15:11)
- 27’ Abinadi explains that those who hearken to the commandments shall be redeemed (15:11-12)

