

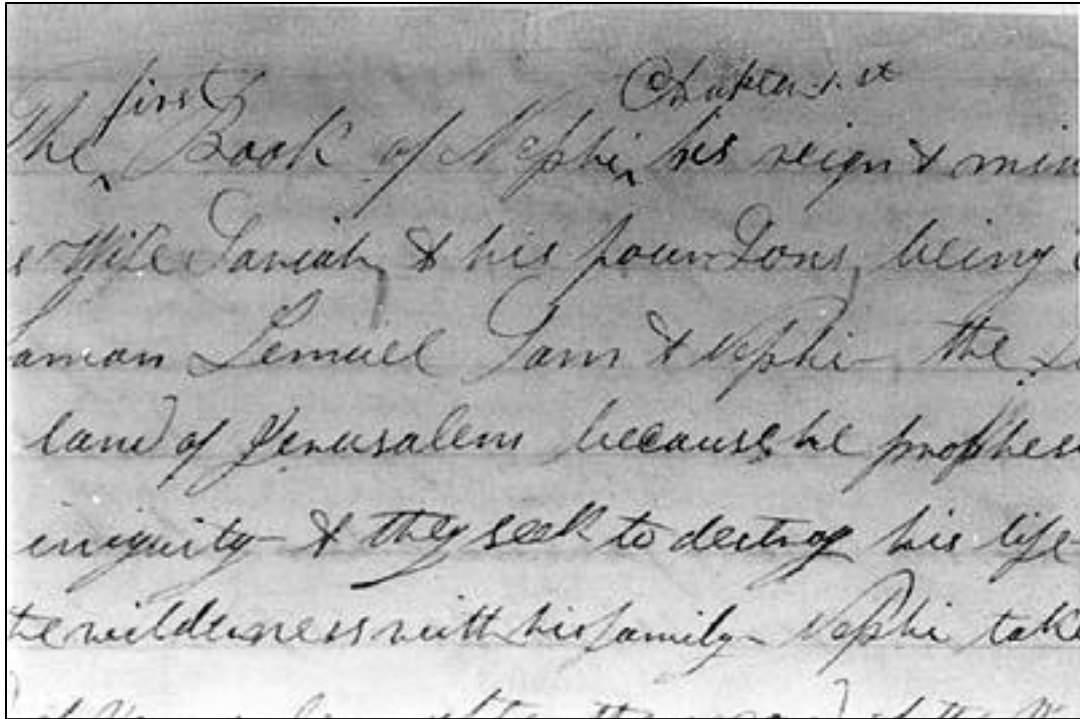
The *First* Book of Nephi

1 Nephi-Title **The First Book of Nephi His Reign and Ministry:**

Questions related to the title of First Nephi have generated some interesting commentary relative to the historical nature of the Book of Mormon:

1. Royal Skousen notes that there are two manuscripts of the Book of Mormon. The first is the Original Manuscript, which was written down by scribes as Joseph Smith dictated the text. This manuscript is sometimes referred to as the dictated manuscript. The second manuscript is called the Printer's Manuscript. It was copied from the Original Manuscript and taken to the printer to be used for typesetting the 1830 edition. Although much has been preserved of the Original Manuscript, the title page for First Nephi has not. However, in the Printer's Manuscript we find that on the title page of First Nephi, the main title line reads only "The Book of Nephi His Reign and Ministry." The word "first" has been written in above the title. Thus, in our present edition of the Book of Mormon, the modified main title for First Nephi reads "The [First] Book of Nephi" (brackets added); with a subtitle below reading "His Reign and Ministry." Who wrote in the word "first," and why? According to Royal Skousen, who has done thorough analysis of both the Original Manuscript and the Printer's Manuscript, evidence seems to substantiate the idea that Oliver Cowdery deliberately made this title correction during the process of transcribing the Printer's Manuscript for publication.

[Royal Skousen, Director, Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, Personal Communication]



1 Nephi--Title **The First Book of Nephi--His Reign and Ministry (Illustration):** Title of First Nephi -- Printer's Manuscript. [Library-Archives, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, The Auditorium, Independence]

**A Note on the Original Manuscript and the Printers Manuscript:*

The early editions of the Book of Mormon were taken from two manuscripts: the Original Manuscript and the Printers Manuscript. According to Dean Jessee, the one thing that confirmed the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon in the mind of Emma Smith was the method of writing the Original Manuscript:

No man could have dictated the writing of the manuscript unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him.

Thus the manuscript was a written dictation, and contains very little correction as surviving portions of the manuscript verify (see illustration below). Taking into consideration the time spent dodging "persecution" and losing part of the manuscript with its consequences, the actual writing time of the Original Manuscript covered about three months. The manuscript was begun no later than April 1829 and finished in June 1829. At least five scribes aided Joseph Smith during the writing of the original Book of Mormon manuscript. Emma Smith, in answer to a question in 1879 regarding those who were scribes for Joseph during the translation of the Book of Mormon, named, in addition to herself, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and her brother

Reuben Hale. (Joseph Smith, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," 26 Oct 1, 1879, p. 289) Upon completion of the translation, precautions were taken for protection of the manuscript during the printing of the book. A copy of the original was made by Oliver Cowdery and two other scribes. This copy is called the Printer's Manuscript. since it was the one primarily used to set type for the first edition (1830). Little reference is made to the Original Manuscript between the time of the Book of Mormon publication in 1830 and the deposit of the document in the Nauvoo House southeast cornerstone eleven years later on October 2, 1841. However, we do know that Joseph Smith used the Original Manuscript to restore some original readings in the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon. The manuscript remained in the cornerstone until September 1882 when it was removed by Lewis Bidamon, who had married Emma Smith following the death of the Prophet, and was living in the house at the time. After removing it from the cornerstone, over the next few years Bidamon gave portions of the what remained of the badly water-damaged manuscript to Nauvoo visitors on five known occasions. Today approximately 25 percent of the text survives (see illustrations). All but one of the authentic pages and fragments are housed in the archives of the LDS Historical Department; one half of a sheet (from 1 Nephi 14) is owned by the University of Utah.

[Dean C. Jessee, "The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript," BYU Studies, Vol. 10, 1970 Spring, pp. 259-278. Reprinted by F.A.R.M.S.]

Note* According to Royal Skousen, there are four scribes for the extant portions of the Original Manuscript. Nearly all the extant portions of the Original Manuscript are in Oliver Cowdery's hand. Scribes 2 and 3 have not yet been identified. For 28 words in Alma 45:22, Joseph Smith himself acted as the scribe. [Royal Skousen ed., The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text, FARMS, pp. 13-14]

ORIGINAL BOOK OF MORMON MANUSCRIPT HOLDINGS
IN THE CHURCH HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

Text	Scribe*	Text	Scribe	Text	Scribe
<i>Kimball Acquisition 1884</i>					
1 Ne. 1:7-7:3	OC	Alma 24:23-25:3	OC	Alma 46:40-47:10	OC
1 Ne. 2:23-5:18	OC/JW?	Alma 25:6-16	OC	Alma 47:10-22	OC
1 Ne. 3:18-4:12	JW?	Alma 25:16-26:11	OC	Alma 47:23-36	OC
1 Ne. 4:2-20	JW/OC	Alma 26:11-24	OC	Alma 47:36-48:11	OC
1 Ne. 4:20-37	U	Alma 26:24-35	OC	Alma 48:11-23	OC
1 Ne. 4:38-5:14	U	Alma 26:35-27:12	OC	Alma 48:23-49:9	OC
1 Ne. 5:14-7:3	U	Alma 27:12-24	OC	Alma 49:9-20	OC
1 Ne. 7:3-17	U	Alma 27:24-28:6	OC	Alma 49:20-30	OC
1 Ne. 7:17-8:11	U	Alma 28:6-29:3	OC	Alma 50:1-12	OC
1 Ne. 8:11-27	U	Alma 29:3-30:2	OC	Alma 50:12-26	OC
1 Ne. 8:27-9:4	U	Alma 30:2-17	OC	Alma 50:26-37	OC
1 Ne. 9:4-10:11	U	Alma 30:17-28	OC	Alma 50:38-51:8	OC
1 Ne. 10:11-11:1	U	Alma 30:28-42	OC	Alma 51:8-19	OC
1 Ne. 11:1-18	U	Alma 30:42-53	OC	Alma 51:19-31	OC
1 Ne. 11:18-32	U	Alma 30:53-31:5	OC	Alma 51:31-52:8	OC
1 Ne. 11:32-12:8	U	Alma 31:5-19	OC	Alma 52:8-17	OC
1 Ne. 12:8-23	JW?	Alma 31:19-35	OC	Alma 52:17-28	OC
1 Ne. 13:1-18	JW?	Alma 31:35-32:9	OC	Alma 52:28-35:2	OC
1 Ne. 13:18-29	JW?	Alma 32:10-24	OC	Alma 33:2-10	OC
1 Ne. 13:29-35	JW?	Alma 32:24-36	OC	Alma 33:10-23	OC
		Alma 32:37-33:5	OC	Alma 33:23-34:11	OC
		Alma 33:5-22	OC	Alma 34:11-24	OC
<i>Richards Acquisition 1885</i>					
1 Ne. 15:5-13	JW?	Alma 33:22-34:12	OC	Alma 34:24-35:15	OC
1 Ne. 15:15-25	JW?	Alma 34:12-31	OC	Alma 35:15-28	OC
1 Ne. 15:25-36	JW?	Alma 34:31-41	OC	Alma 35:28-36:8	OC
1 Ne. 15:36-16:14	JW/OC	Alma 35:1-14	OC	Alma 36:8-22	OC
1 Ne. 16:14-31	OC	Alma 35:14-36:10	OC	Alma 36:22-37	OC
1 Ne. 16:31-17:5	OC	Alma 36:11-26	OC	Alma 36:38-51	OC
1 Ne. 17:5-20	OC	Alma 36:26-37:8	OC	Alma 36:51-57:6	OC
1 Ne. 17:20-34	OC	Alma 37:8-19	OC	Alma 37:6-17	OC
1 Ne. 17:34-48	OC	Alma 37:19-30	OC	Alma 37:17-30	OC
1 Ne. 17:48-18:6	OC	Alma 37:30-43	OC	Alma 37:30-38:6	OC
1 Ne. 18:6-18	OC	Alma 37:43-38:8	OC	Alma 38:6-17	OC
1 Ne. 18:18-19:3	OC	Alma 38:9-39:7	OC	Alma 38:18-31	OC
1 Ne. 19:3-12	OC	Alma 39:8-40:3	OC	Alma 38:35-39:3	OC
1 Ne. 19:12-20:1	OC	Alma 40:3-13	OC	Alma 39:4-60:2	OC
1 Ne. 20:1-20	OC	Alma 40:13-41:2	OC	<i>Unlabeled Acquisitions</i>	
1 Ne. 20:20-21:14	OC	Alma 41:2-14	OC	Alma 62:56-49	OC
1 Ne. 21:14-22:4	OC	Alma 41:14-42:13	OC	Alma 62:50-63:11	OC
1 Ne. 22:4-14	OC	Alma 42:13-29	OC	Alma 63:11-Hel. 1:5	OC
1 Ne. 22:14-26**	OC	Alma 42:29-43:11	OC	Hel. 1:6-17	OC
1 Ne. 22:26-		Alma 43:11-22	OC	Hel. 1:18-28	OC
1 Ne. 1-7	OC	Alma 43:23-36	OC	Hel. 1:28-2:8	OC
2 Ne. 1:8-18**	OC	Alma 43:36-47	OC	Hel. 2:8-3:8	OC
2 Ne. 1:18-30	OC	Alma 43:47-44:5	OC	Hel. 3:8-12	OC
Alma 22:22-27	OC	Alma 44:5-14	OC	(Additional fragments)	
Alma 22:30-34	OC	Alma 44:14-45:2	OC	Alma 11:20-21	OC
Alma 23:1-6	OC	Alma 45:2-17	OC	Alma 11:37	OC
Alma 23:7-24:3	OC	Alma 45:17-46:6	OC	Alma 11:44-45	OC
Alma 24:3-14	OC	Alma 46:6-18	OC	Alma 19:3-7	OC
Alma 24:14-23	OC	Alma 46:18-28	OC	Alma 19:18	OC
		Alma 46:28-40	OC	Alma 19:23	OC
				3 Ne. 26:3	OC

Pairings indicate the two sides of a single sheet of the Ms.
 *OC - Oliver Cowdery; JW? - possibly John Whitmer; U - Unidentified scribe. Every sheet of the Kimball Acquisition and the first eleven sheets of the Richards Acquisition were entirely preserved. Of those remaining approximately 1/2 to 1 of each sheet is missing.
 **Although photographed by F. M. Koehler in 1949-54, these two sheets were missing when the Manuscript was laminated in 1969.

1 Nephi-Title **The First Book of Nephi His Reign and Ministry (Illustration):** Original Book of Mormon Manuscript Holdings in the Church Historian's Office. [Dean C. Jessee, "The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript," *BYU Studies*, Vol. 10, 1970 Spring, pp. 259-278. Reprinted by F.A.R.M.S.]

■ Locations of Extant Text

The following list includes all known legitimate fragments of the original manuscript. The provenance of these as well as other fragments will be discussed in volume 3 of the critical text.

EXTENT OF TEXT	GATHERING	PAGES	LOCATION	SOURCE
1 Nephi 2:2-13:35	B1	3-22	LDS Church	Sarah Kimball
1 Nephi 14:11-29	B2	25-26	Univ. of Utah	Frederick Kesler
1 Nephi 15:5-2 Nephi 1:30		27-48	LDS Church	Franklin Richards
2 Nephi 4:32-5:16	B3	55-56	LDS Church	Ruth Smith
3 Nephi 5:23-9:42		57-64	private	Wilford Wood
1 Nephi 23:0-25:28	B4	77-82	private	Wilford Wood
2 Nephi 33:4-Jacob 4:14	B5	95-102	private	Wilford Wood
Jacob 5:46-Enos 1:14	B6	107-114	private	Wilford Wood
Alma 10:31-13:16	A10	225'-234'	LDS Church	Andrew Jenson
Alma 19:3-20:22	A11	251'-256'	LDS Church	Andrew Jenson
Alma 19:10-19		251'-252'	LDS Church	Franklin Richards
Alma 22:22-60:21	A12	261'-356'	LDS Church	Franklin Richards
Alma 58:39-60:22		353'-356'	private	Ada Cheney
Alma 61:11-Helaman 3:21	A13	359'-370'	LDS Church	Franklin Richards
Helaman 13:36-3 Nephi 4:2	A14	397'-408'	private	Wilford Wood
3 Nephi 19:26-21:11	A16	429'-432'	LDS Church	Franklin Richards
3 Nephi 26:4-27:7		435'-436'	LDS Church	Franklin Richards
Ether 3:9-15:17	A17	457'-472'	private	Wilford Wood

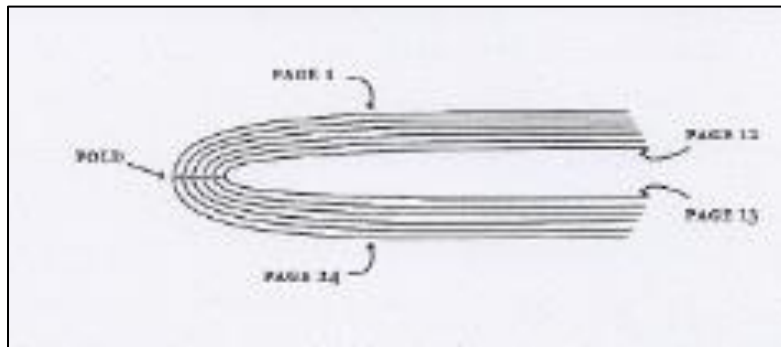
1 Nephi-Title **The First Book of Nephi (A Note on the Original Manuscript and the Printers Manuscript)** [Illustration]: Locations of Extant Text. [Royal Skousen ed., The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text, FARMS, p. 37]

Royal Skousen writes that the size of paper used by the scribes was referred to as "common foolscap paper." Foolscap paper originally referred to a watermark showing a fool's cap, but by the 1700's this term was universally used to refer to a paper size. Published accounts (given in the Oxford English Dictionary under *fool's-cap*) indicate that foolscap paper varied from 12 to 13.5 inches in width and from 15-17 inches in length (that is, from 30-34 cm in width and 38 to 43 cm in length). The extant sheets from the Original Manuscript show some variance, but all fall within the upper part of these ranges. [p. 38]

The Book of Mormon scribes typically folded six sheets to form a 12-leaf "gathering" (that is, 24 pages--see the illustration below). Usually the folding for gatherings in the Original Manuscript was widthwise, which made a normally proportioned page. (see illustration below) However a lengthwise folding began somewhere in 3 Nephi and extended to the end of Moroni and then into the first gathering of 1 Nephi. (The Printer's Manuscript, on the other hand, has

only the widthwise folding.) The use of six sheets for each gathering generally holds for both the original and printer's manuscripts. [p. 34]

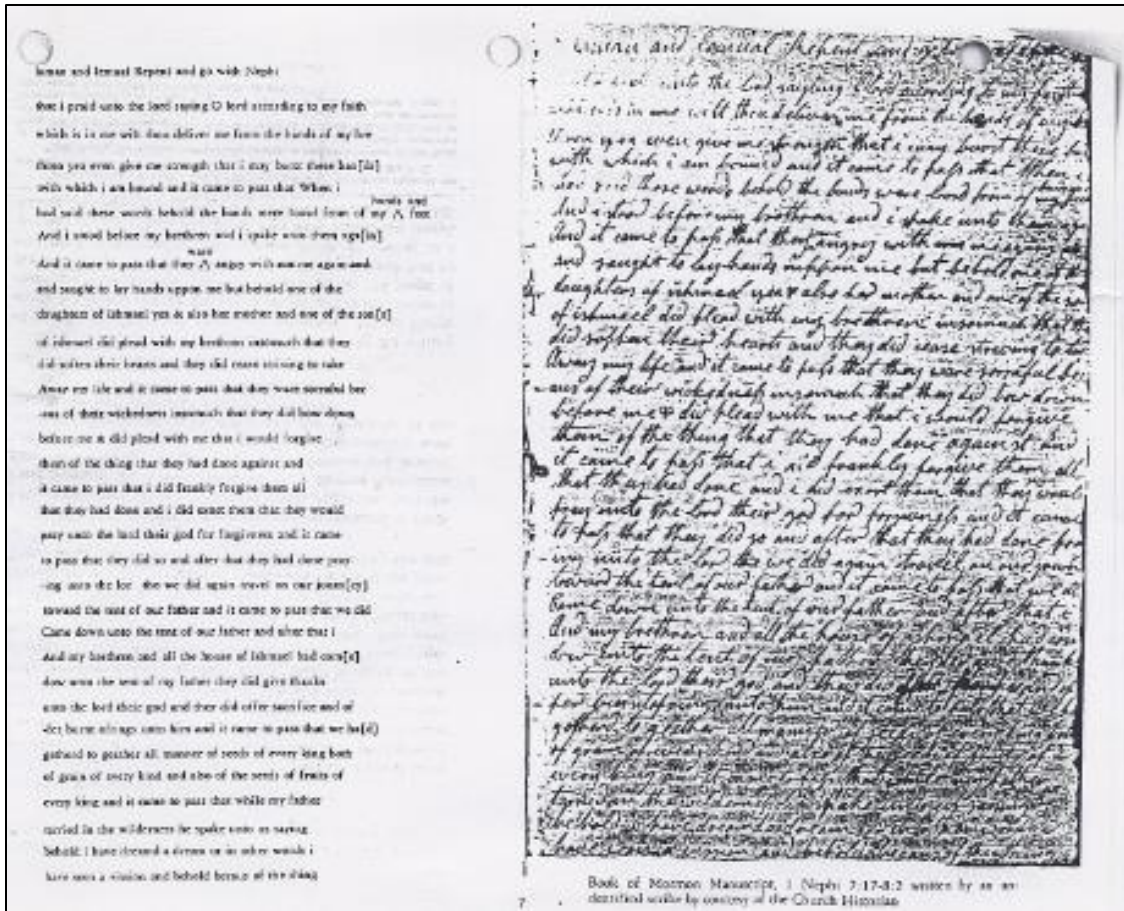
It is estimated that for the Original Manuscript of the translation of the plates of Mormon and Moroni there were 18 gatherings, amounting to 484 total pages. For the translation of the small plates of Nephi, plus the Words of Mormon there were 6 gatherings for an estimated 124 total pages. "In addition, there were probably three separate leaves for (1) the title page, (2) the three-witness statement, and (3) the eight-witness statement. Allowing for certain missing or unused pages, the original manuscript had an estimated total of 607 pages of text (482 + 122 + 3)." [pp. 35-36] [Royal Skousen ed., The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text, FARMS, 2001]



1 Nephi-Title **The First Book of Nephi (A Note on the Original Manuscript and the Printers Manuscript)**

[Illustration]: Gatherings. [Royal Skousen ed., The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text, FARMS, p. 37]

According to Royal Skousen, the Printer's Manuscript is not an exact copy of the Original Manuscript. There are on the average three changes per Original Manuscript page, These changes appear to be natural scribal errors; there is little or no evidence of conscious editing. Most of the changes are minor, and about one in five produced a discernible difference in meaning. Because they were all relatively minor, most of the errors thus introduced into the text have remained in the printed editions of the book of Mormon and have not been detected and corrected except by reference to the Original Manuscript. In preparation for the second (1837) edition, hundreds of grammatical changes and a few textual emendations were made in the Printers Manuscript. After the publication of this edition, the manuscript was retained by Oliver Cowdery. After his death in 1850, his brother-in-law, David Whitmer, kept the Printers Manuscript until his death in 1888. In 1903 Whitmer's grandson sold the manuscript to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which owns it today. It is wholly extant except for two lines at the bottom of the first leaf. [Royal Skousen, "Manuscripts of the Book of Mormon," in To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, p. 179]



1 Nephi-Title **The First Book of Nephi (Note on the Original Manuscript and the Printers Manuscript)**
[Illustration]: Original Manuscript, 1 Nephi 7:17--8:2 on the right written by an unidentified scribe with its typewritten equivalent to the left side showing how few corrections were made from dictation. [Dean C. Jessee, "The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript," *BYU Studies*, Vol. 10, 1970 Spring, pp. 259-278. Reprinted by F.A.R.M.S.]

2. In the subtitle "His Reign and Ministry," the word "reign" implies that Nephi was some sort of king or ruler, but kingship isn't implied until the book of Second Nephi. [For a discussion on this see additional commentary below on "His Reign and Ministry"] [For further discussion of this situation see the commentary on 1 Nephi 1:17; 2:22]

3. In the Printer's Manuscript, while numerical additions were made to the titles of First Nephi and Second Nephi, both Third Nephi and Fourth Nephi had no such numerical additions made to their titles. Thus in the 1830 edition there was no "Third Nephi" or "Fourth Nephi." These books were titled only by description: "The Book of Nephi, the Son of Nephi, Which was the Son of Helaman," and "The Book of Nephi, Which is the Son of Nephi, One of the Disciples of Jesus Christ." One reason for not numbering the latter two might have been that while First and Second Nephi were written by the same person, and thus needed a distinction, Third and Fourth Nephi were written by different men who were distinctly identified in the titles. [Alan C. Miner, *Personal Notes*]

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi:**

One might ask, "Why are there two books for Nephi's record?" None of the other writers covered in the Book of Mormon had two books (Third Nephi and Fourth Nephi were written by different men), and the story seems to blend from the book of First Nephi to the book of Second Nephi. So why is there a division?

The answer might be found in structure. The division occurs at a structural boundary. Not only do the many elements making up the total literary structure of the book of First Nephi end with the last chapter, but the structural complexity of First Nephi is astounding.

Richard Grant reviews an article by Noel Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2). In setting the background for the first book of Nephi, he writes that it had been thirty years since the family of Lehi arrived on the shores of the promised land. Lehi was dead. The people had made Nephi their "king" and accepted his spiritual leadership. Then, Nephi received new instruction from the Lord. He was to write a second history of his people (the "small plates of Nephi"), to be engraved on plates as he had done the first set (the "large plates of Nephi"). Some might see the small plates as an additional burden to Nephi, yet it had been commanded by the Lord--the Lord, who Nephi's brothers had rejected. Yet what was its purpose? Nephi had seen Jesus Christ and knew of his mortal ministry. Nephi knew of the Lord's love for his children, his mercy, and his saving grace. Nephi knew of the power of God unto the salvation of his people. Indeed, the events in Nephi's life had provided him with a very important message to give his people, a message which would take him many years to craft, to polish, and to perfect.

Noel Reynolds suggests that a good thesis statement for Nephi's new record can be found in verse 20 of the first chapter:

"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." (1 Nephi 1:20)

Reynolds proposes that Nephi develops this thesis in multiple dimensions of structure. Reynolds suggests that there are some important reasons for this structure:

(A) they contribute to the presentation and emphasis of his message. The structure helps us see clearly his intent--what was most important to him;

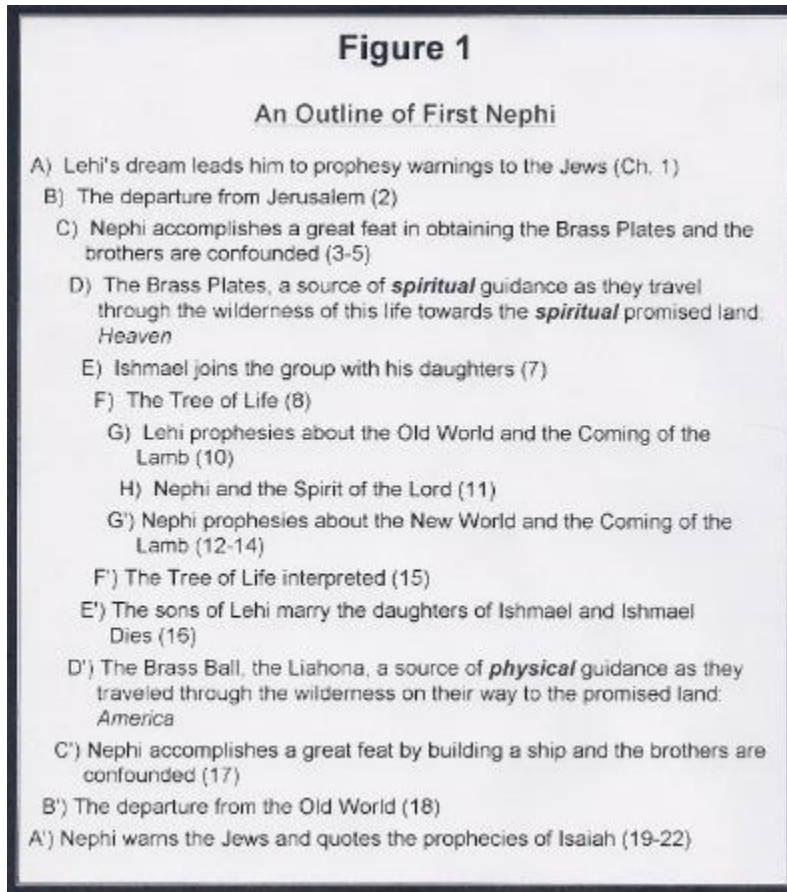
(B) they give a form of validation to the message. For Nephi's descendants it would serve to verify the integrity of transmission of his text.

(C) they represent the most intricate and sophisticated writing skills that Nephi was

capable of (with the help of the Lord).

The result was a masterpiece.

The first perspective of the structure of 1 Nephi is chiasmic in nature (see Illustration #1 below). In other words in an outline of the main ideas put forward in succession, ideas progress in order and digress in reverse order, highlighting the main idea at the center.



1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #1):** A Chiasmic Outline of First Nephi. [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, [BYU Studies](#) , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>]

If this were the only structural outline of First Nephi it would be impressive, even by ancient scriptural and prophetic standards. To organize the presentation of the elements of a true narrative history in such a complex manner, without interrupting the natural flow of the narrative is the accomplishment of a master. However, there is an additional structural outline.

In 1 Nephi chapter 1, Nephi tells us that he is making an abridgment of the "record of my father," after which, "I will make an account of my own life." Indeed, Nephi goes on to write the two accounts, however the twelve elements in these accounts are designed to parallel one another. Each one of the twelve elements in Lehi's account is matched by a corresponding element in Nephi's account. (see Illustration #2 below).

Figure 2	
(A) Lehi's Account (1 Nephi 1-9)	(B) Nephi's Account (1 Nephi 10-22)
1. Nephi makes a record (or account) of his proceedings but first gives an abridgment of Lehi's record (1:1-3, 16-17).	1. Nephi now commences to give an account of his proceedings, reign, and ministry but first "must speak somewhat of the things of [his] father, and . . . brethren" (10:1).
2. Nephi gives a brief account of Lehi's prophecies to the Jews, based on visions he received in Jerusalem (1:5-15, 19).	2. Nephi reports Lehi's prophecies about the Jews, as given to Laman and Lemuel in the wilderness (10:2-15).
3. Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the valley he names Lemuel (2:1-7).	3. Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel (10:17-14:30).
4. Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded (2:8-15).	4. Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded (15:5-16:6).
5. Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord (2:16-3:1).	5. Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful (16:9-17:6).
6. Lehi is commanded in a dream to send his sons for the brass plates of Laban; this he does (3:2-5:22).	6. Nephi is commanded by the voice of the Lord to construct a ship; this he does (17:6-18:4).
7. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi sends for Ishmael's family (7:1-22).	7. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi enters the ship and then sails (18:5-23).
8. They gather seeds of every (8:1).	8. Lehi's family plants the seeds and reaps in abundance (18:24).
9. Lehi reports to his sons the great vision received in the wilderness (8:2-35).	9. Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates (19:1-7).
10. Lehi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel (8:36-38).	10. Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his descendants, and all Israel (19:7-21:26).
11. Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates (9:1-5).	11. To explain Isaiah's prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and Lehi (22:1-28).
12. Nephi ends with a general formulation of his thesis, focusing on the knowledge and power of God, and with the formal close: "And thus it is. Amen" (9:6).	12. Nephi ends with the highest formulation of his thesis, focusing on the salvation of man, and with the formal close: "And thus it is. Amen" (22:29-31).

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #2):** Parallel Accounts in First Nephi: Lehi's Account (1 Nephi 1-9) and Nephi's Account (1 Nephi 10-22). [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, [BYU Studies](#), Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>)]

As if that isn't complicated enough, the order of elements 3, 4, and 5 in the Lehi account is exactly reversed in the Nephi account (see illustration #3). These out of order elements of Lehi's account, when viewed together with their corresponding elements in the Nephi account, form a chiasmus with Nephi's two great heavenly communications appearing at the focal point. The same is true of elements 9, 10, and 11 (see Illustration #4). These out of order elements also form a chiasmus detailing Nephi's two sets of records, or two attempts at communicating to his people.

Figure 3	
LEHI'S ACCOUNT	<p>(A-3) Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the valley he named Lemuel.</p> <p>(A-4) Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded.</p> <p>(A-5) Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord.</p>
NEPHI'S ACCOUNT	<p>(B-3) Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel.</p> <p>(B-4) Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded.</p> <p>(B-5) Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful.</p>

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #3)**: Nephi's Great Communications from the Lord. [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, BYU Studies , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>)]

Figure 4	
LEHI'S ACCOUNT	<p>(A-9) Lehi reports to his sons details of the great vision received in the wilderness.</p> <p>(A-10) Lehi exhorts Laman and Lemuel, preaching and prophesying to them.</p> <p>(A-11) Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates.</p>
NEPHI'S ACCOUNT	<p>(B-9) Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates</p> <p>(B-10) Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his descendants, and all Israel.</p> <p>(B-11) To explain Isaiah's prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and to Lehi.</p>

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #4):** Nephi's Great Communications to His People. [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, BYU Studies , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>)]

Now the structure really starts to get complex, but it is too early in this commentary or the text of the Book of Mormon to dwell on too many details. Suffice it to say that woven into this already impressive structure are other chiasms. These will be dealt with at the appropriate places in the text, however their main focus is to illustrate how, on the one hand, Nephi succeeds by obedience to the covenants of the Lord, and on the other hand how Nephi's brothers constantly murmur and rebel.

(1) The Lehi account can also be viewed as a chiasmus (see Illustration #5) with the focus on Nephi's obtaining of the brass plates while Laman and Lemuel murmur (see Illustration #7).

(2) The Nephi account can also be viewed as a chiasmus (see Illustration #6) with the focus on Nephi's building of the ship while Laman and Lemuel murmur (see illustration #8).

Figure 5

Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 1-9 (Lehi's Account)

- 1) Nephi discusses his record, and he testifies it is true (1:1-3)
- 2) Lehi's early visions are reported, followed by his preaching and prophesying to the Jews (1:6-15, 18-20)
- 3) Lehi takes his family into the wilderness (2:2-15)
- 4) The Lord speaks prophecies to Nephi about Lehi's seed (2:19-24)
- 5) Lehi's sons obtain the brass plates and Nephi records the most striking example of the murmuring of his faithless brothers (3:2-5:16)
- 4') Lehi, filled with the Spirit, prophesies about his seed (5:17-19; 7:1)
- 3') Ishmael takes his family into the wilderness (7:2-22)
- 2') Lehi's tree of life vision is reported, followed by his prophecies and preaching to Laman and Lemuel (8:2-38)
- 1') Nephi again discusses his record, and he records his testimony (9:1-6)

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #5)**: Lehi's Account: Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 1-9. [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, BYU Studies , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>)]

Figure 6

Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 10-22 (Nephi's Account)

- 1) Lehi expands on his great vision, detailing prophecies about the Jews and gentiles (10:1-16).
- 2) Nephi explains that all men can know the mysteries of God by the power of the Holy Ghost (10:17-22).
- 3) Nephi reports the great visions and prophecies given to him (11-14).
- 4) Overcome by the hardness of his brethren, Nephi interprets the great vision to his family, rehearsing one of Isaiah's prophecies as support (15:2-16:5).
- 5) Lehi takes his family further into the wilderness (16:9-17:6).
- 6) Nephi builds a ship and records his most complete reply to the murmuring of his brothers (17:7-18:4).
- 5') Lehi takes his family across the ocean in the ship (18:5-25).
- 4') Concerned for those at Jerusalem, Nephi writes for his descendants and all the house of Israel and explains the ancient prophecies of a Redeemer (19:3-23).
- 3') Nephi quotes chapters of a prophecy from Isaiah which parallels portions of his own great vision (20-21).
- 2') Nephi explains to his brethren that prophecies are only to be understood by the same Spirit that also manifested these things to the prophets (22:1-3).
- 1') Nephi offers a final summary of the prophecies about the Jews and the gentiles, drawing primarily from the language of the great vision but also from the brass plates (22:3-28).

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #6):** Nephi's Account: Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 10-22. [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, BYU Studies , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>]

Figure 7

Obtaining the Brass Plates

- 1) Lehi summarizes the contents of the brass plates, mentioning his genealogy (3:3).
- 2) Nephi testifies to his thesis — Lehi is glad (3:7-8).
- 3) Laban attempts to slay Laman (3:9-14).
- 4) Lehi's sons are sorrowful, but Nephi exhorts them (3:14-21).
- 5) Nephi fails to obtain the brass plates by using gold and silver (3:22-27).
- 6) Laman and Lemuel murmur, and they beat Nephi and Sam (3:28).
- 7) An angel intervenes, saying that the Lord will help them obtain the plates (3:29-30).
- 8) Laman and Lemuel murmur again! (3:31).
- 7') Nephi elaborates the angel's message and refers to Moses and the Israelites (4:1-3).
- 6') Laman and Lemuel continue to murmur, but they follow Nephi reluctantly (4:4-5).
- 5') The Spirit leads Nephi to obtain the plates (4:6-38).
- 4') Sariah is sorrowful, and Lehi exhorts her (5:1-6).
- 3') Nephi spares Zoram's life (4:30-37).¹³
- 2') Sariah testifies to Nephi's thesis — Lehi is glad (5:7-9).
- 1') Lehi reviews the contents of the brass plates, with special reference to his genealogy (5:10-19).

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #7):** Obtaining the Brass Plates. [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, BYU Studies , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>]

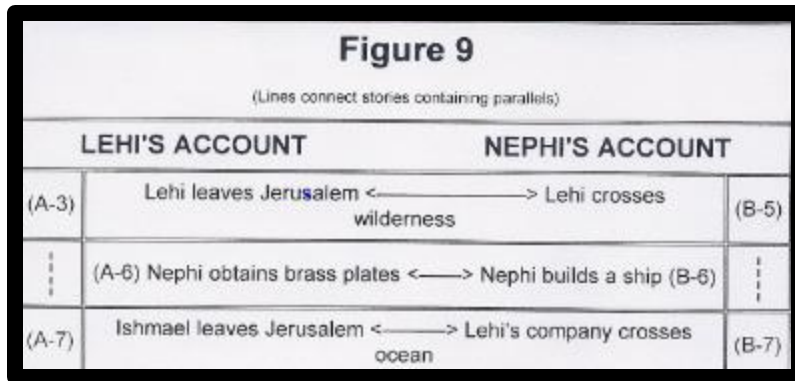
Figure 8

Constructing the Ship

- 1) Nephi is commanded to construct a ship (17:8).
- 2) The Lord tells Nephi where to find ore for tools (17:9-10).
- 3) The Lord blesses them miraculously in the wilderness, that they might know they are led by him (17:11-15).
- 4) Laman and Lemuel murmur and complain, not believing that Nephi can build a ship (17:17-19).
- 5) Laman and Lemuel repeat the elements of their standing complaint against Nephi and Lehi, denying both that they have been led or supported by God and that the Jews are wicked or can be destroyed (17:17-22).
- 6) Nephi responds to the murmuring of Laman and Lemuel in unprecedented detail of his thesis, invoking the ancient history of Israel as the evidence that they would be most likely to accept (17:23-43).
- 5') Nephi summarizes the great errors and sins of Laman and Lemuel, comparing them to the wicked Jews, and testifies to the power and goodness of God (17:44-47).
- 4') Nephi, in the power of the Spirit, testifies that if God commanded he could not only build a ship but could even make water earth (17:48-52).
- 3') Laman and Lemuel are shaken by the power of the Lord in Nephi, and they testify thereof (17:53-55).
- 2') The Lord shows Nephi how to build the ship (18:1-3).
- 1') The ship is finished, the workmanship "exceeding fine" (18:4).

1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #8):** Constructing the Ship. [Noel B. Reynolds ("Nephi's Outline, BYU Studies , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>)]

Now if this isn't enough, let us consider Nephi's narrative once again. Out of the possibly voluminous history of the travels of Lehi's colony from Jerusalem to the New World, Nephi chooses to share six stories with the reader (see Illustration #9). Each story following a similar outline or plot: (a) someone's physical welfare is at risk; (b) Nephi is obedient to the Lord; and (c) deliverance comes by divine power. As with all else in the record these are balanced between the Lehi account and the Nephi account. Not only are they balanced, they are almost mirror images. The strength of the claim rests on the precise order of the parallel elements within each episode. Yet the text reads naturally. There is no sense of forced order, no feeling that any part of the stories have been contrived, modified, or rearranged in order to fit Nephi's structure. ***In each story success is a consequence of faith in the covenant word and covenant power of God.*** In each story Nephi's faith and leadership are demonstrated.



1 Nephi Title **The First Book of Nephi (Illustration #9)**: The Six Stories of First Nephi. [Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline, *BYU Studies* , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>]

[Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline, *BYU Studies* , Vol. 20, No. 2, as presented in Richard G. Grant, "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi," <http://www.cometozarahemla.org/nephi/first-nephi.html>]

Note* While the complexities of detail listed above might be difficult to absorb at this point, what the reader should realize is that the book of First Nephi is not just a simple story. Furthermore, the reader should be aware that all of the amazing structure of First Nephi has not been covered here. For further insights into the structuring of First Nephi, see the commentary on 1 Nephi Title ("His Reign and Ministry"), 1 Nephi 1:2, 1 Nephi 3-5, 1 Nephi 10:18, 1 Nephi 13-22, 1 Nephi 14:3, 1 Nephi 17:8. {Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes}

1 Nephi Title **His Reign and Ministry**:

To those who have read the Book of Mormon more than once, the title "The First Book of Nephi, *His Reign and Ministry*" might appear puzzling because the association of Nephi with kingship is not mentioned until the fifth chapter of the Second Book of Nephi (2 Nephi 5:18). Furthermore the title of "The Second Book of Nephi" omits the phrase "His Reign and Ministry." One might ask, What is going on here?

According to a series of articles by Noel Reynolds, although Nephi testifies of Christ, the writings of Nephi can also be read in part as a political tract written to document the legitimacy of Nephi's rule:

Because Nephi's central purpose is to persuade readers to believe in Christ, he takes every opportunity, both between the lines and by direct statement, to mitigate the awkward fact that this teaching was coming from him as a younger brother, who by tradition could not easily claim the right to rule and teach the family (2 Nephi 5:3). Sobered by this formidable task, Nephi carefully employs every literary and rhetorical tool at his disposal to justify his position as the righteous and rightful leader of the

group.

In order to set a historical perspective to his claim to leadership, Nephi includes several stories in 1 Nephi which illustrate the fact that God makes covenants with those who humbly seek him (more specifically Lehi & Nephi). And as they are obedient to those covenants in overcoming trials, the Lord chooses them to "reign" ("rule over") and "minister" to ("teach") [see 1 Nephi 2:16-24; 3:29] their brethren. Those who murmur and rebel (specifically Laman and Lemuel) against the chosen leaders of the Lord (Lehi and Nephi) lose the blessings passed down from those who "reign" and "minister" over them. The stories in 1 Nephi are as follows:

1. Nephi supports the prophet of God [Lehi] as he leads them into the wilderness and seeks to know the things of his father. (1 Nephi 1-2)
2. Nephi does the Lord's errand and obtains the word of God [the brass plates]. (1 Nephi 3-5) [see the chiasmic analysis of 1 Nephi 3-5].
3. Nephi seeks Ishmael & his daughters that they might "raise up seed" unto the Lord. (1 Nephi 7)
4. Lehi's Tree-of-Life vision portends the future for his seed. Nephi partakes of the fruit; Laman & Lemuel don't. (1 Nephi 8)
5. Nephi seeks further light & knowledge regarding the vision of his father and his wish is granted. (1 Nephi 10-15)
6. Nephi becomes an instrument in the Lord's hands, being directed by Lehi & the Liahona in his search for life sustaining nourishment. (1 Nephi 16)
7. Directed by the Lord, Nephi constructs a vessel that will carry his family to the promised land. (1 Nephi 17) [See the chiasmic analysis of 1 Nephi 17]
8. Despite the storms & forces destined to sink them or throw them off course, Nephi remains faithful and leads his family to the promised land. (1 Nephi 18)
9. Nephi teaches his brothers concerning the words of the prophets such as Moses, Isaiah, and Joseph. The reader should note that Nephi has structured his stories and writings so as to pattern his "reign" and "ministry" with the words and actions of those prophets (1 Nephi 19-22)

Thus Nephi's "reign" as well as his "ministry" began well before the time chronicled in Second Nephi when his people "would that [he] should be their king" (2 Nephi 5:18).

As for the reason Nephi wrote two books, Reynolds notes that although the narrative between the first and second books written by Nephi is continuous, Nephi chose to make a large structural break because the internal structure of 1 Nephi emphasizes its separate character as a single literary unit.

1 Nephi is not the travel diary of a youngster. Nor is it possibly a figment of young Joseph Smith's imagination. It is a highly complex and passionate account, purposefully written by a mature man of great culture and vision to defend those things that he believes most worth

defending. Nephi's writings were composed at a time when Nephi could see the need to provide his people with an account that would explain, document and justify his ascent to leadership. For Nephi's people, his writings long served both as an extremely sophisticated political tract, as something of a founding constitution for the Nephite people, and as an elaborate and compelling witness of Jesus Christ.

[Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," FARMS, 1987, 1-40; see also Reynolds, "Nephite Kingship Reconsidered," in Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World, pp. 151-189; see also Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline," BYU Studies 20 (winter 1980): 131-49, which is reprinted in Noel B. Reynolds, ed., Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1982: reprint, Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1996), 53-74.]

Note* If the Lord no longer recognized the power of the king of Judah, and if Nephi had been commissioned by the Lord to take possession of the record of the tribe of Joseph, which made him the birthright heir, and if Joseph was the birthright heir for all twelve tribes of Israel, then it shouldn't be surprising that within his record, Nephi--ever obedient to his covenants with the Lord--is referred to as a "king," a "ruler" and a "teacher" to his brethren (see 1 Nephi 3:29; 16:37-38; 18:10; 2 Nephi 5:19), according to the covenant promises made to him by the Lord (see 1 Nephi 2:19-22). Under these circumstances, the term "reign" and "ministry" should not be surprising. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note* The idea that the book of 1 Nephi is a structured chiasmic unit is treated by H. Clay Gorton in A New Witness for Christ: Chiasmic Structures in the Book of Mormon, pp. 23-82. [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 1:2]

1 Nephi: Superscription **An Account of Lehi:**

In 1830 the printer identified and italicized twenty-two superscriptions. Additionally, other passages have been found to conform to the superscription style. [Zarahemla Research Foundation, Study Book of Mormon, p. 3] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 19:1]

THE FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI

HIS REIGN AND MINISTRY.

CHAPTER I.

An account of Lehi and his wife Sariah, and his four Sons, being called, (beginning at the eldest,) Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. The Lord warns Lehi to depart out of the land of Jerusalem, because he prophesieth unto the people concerning their iniquity; and they seek to destroy his life. He taketh three days' journey into the wilderness with his family. Nephi taketh his brethren and returns to the land of Jerusalem after the record of the Jews. The account of their sufferings. They take the daughters of Ishmael to wife. They take their families and depart into the wilderness. Their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness. The course of their travels. They come to the large waters. Nephi's brethren rebelled against him. He foundeth them, and buildeth a Ship. They call the place Bountiful. They cross the large waters into the promised land, &c. This is according to the account of Nephi; or, in other words, I Nephi wrote this record.

I, Nephii, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days—nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days; 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, to be true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.

For it came to pass, in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, (my father Lehi having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days;) and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people, that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed.

1 Nephi 1 **Superscription . . . Verses . . . etc. (Illustration):** A facsimile of the title page of First Nephi in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Deseret Book Company, 150th Year Anniversary Facsimile of the 1830 Edition of the Book of Mormon, 1980]

First Nephi: Superscription **An Account of Lehi . . . I, Nephi Wrote this Record:**

In First Nephi, immediately under the subtitle "His Reign and Ministry," a superscription in italics summarizes the contents of the book. Opinions differ on who wrote this headnote:

1. Sidney Sperry claims that this headnote is part of the original text, "as one may notice by examining the last line of it, which reads, 'I, Nephi, wrote this record.' Doubtless this superscription was written by Nephi *after* he had completed the body of the text. His habit of

writing superscriptions containing brief summaries of the text set a precedent" (Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Compendium*, p. 93)

2. According to the *Book of Mormon Student Manual for Religion 121 and 122*, this headnote "is a summary of 1 Nephi and is part of the original text. It was not added by modern writers. All of the headnotes in the Book of Mormon are part of the original record given to the prophet Joseph Smith, including the inserts preceding individual chapters (for example, Mosiah 9 and Alma 21)." [Church Educational System, *Book of Mormon Student Manual for Religion 121 and 122*, 1989, p. 4]

3. Royal Skousen agrees that this headnote was part of the original text, but contrary to what Brother Sperry claims, Skousen asserts that the headnotes were apparently written *before* the text verses themselves. A good illustration supporting Skousen's argument comes from the headnotes in the book of Helaman. The headnote at the beginning of the book mentions some of the contents as being "the prophecies of many holy prophets," whereas further on in the book of Helaman, "The Prophecy of Nephi" and "The Prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite" are duly noted. Had the beginning headnote been written after the text, these specific prophets might have been mentioned by name rather than just being referred to as "holy prophets."

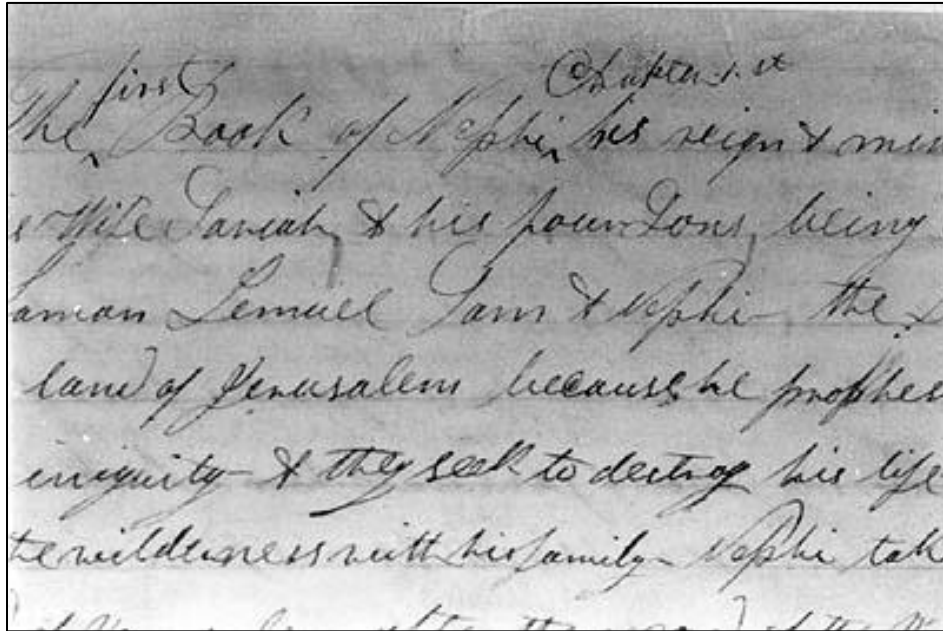
In addition, and contrary to what is said in the *Book of Mormon Student Manual for Religion 121 and 122*, not all the headnotes are part of the original record. The headnote for the book of Ether does not appear in the Printer's Manuscript, nor does it appear in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. The note seems to have been inserted by the committee (in 1920) appointed to edit the text. [Royal Skousen, Director, Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, Personal Communication]

4. As a fourth option, I do not think I am being too irrational to wonder if the headnote at the beginning of First Nephi was written by Mormon as part of either a *literal* translation of the small plates from old characters on odd-sized plates onto his own set of plates, or as part of the process of somehow putting the small plates with the "remainder of [his] record" (Words of Mormon 1:6). Thus the writing of headnotes may be attributed to Mormon's style. After all, the headnotes are all written in third person, with the exception of this one phrase in First Nephi: "I, Nephi wrote this record"; and it could be conceded that here in First Nephi, Mormon could have written this headnote summary in third person and then included the first person phrase at the end, recognizing that Nephi had written his record as a first-person narrative. It is also possible that Nephi, while not writing the complete headnote, at least included in his record the phrase "I Nephi wrote this record," and Mormon found a way to include it in his headnote summary.

The reader should also note that the superscriptions for the books of Second Nephi and Jacob are also written in third person; however, there are no superscriptions for the books of Enos, Jarom and Omni, which complete the Small Plates. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi (Chapter Divisions):

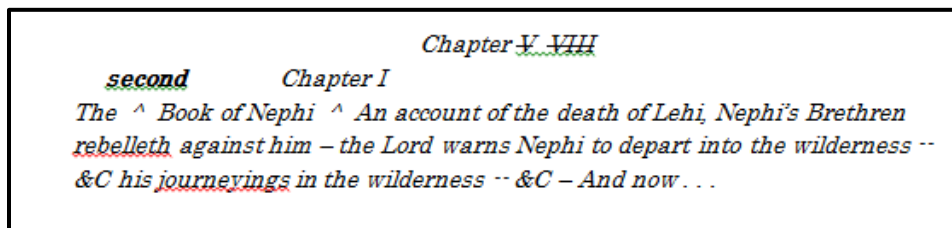
As noted earlier, we do not have the Original Manuscript title page for First Nephi. However, in the Printer's Manuscript we find that above the title section, which reads "his reign and ministry," the phrase "Chapter 1st" has been inserted.



1 Nephi--Title **The First Book of Nephi--His Reign and Ministry (Illustration):** Title of First Nephi -- Printer's Manuscript. [Library-Archives, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, The Auditorium, Independence]

Who was responsible for writing in "Chapter 1st" and also for dividing the whole Book of Mormon into chapters?

Although we do not have the Original Manuscript title page of First Nephi, we do have the Original Manuscript title page of Second Nephi.



In the title of Second Nephi, the words "second" and "Chapter I" are written in above the title

line (The [Second] Book of Nephi [Chapter I]). Above *these* insertions is also written "Chapter V VIII," with lines slashed through it. This corrected line can be understood in light of the fact that the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon contains 7 (VII) marked chapters in First Nephi. It seems that at the beginning of Second Nephi, Oliver Cowdery (under the direction of Joseph Smith) initially planned for a new chapter and only later did he and Joseph realize they had begun a new book. [Royal Skousen, Director, Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, Personal Communication] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 1]

Later, a more expanded system of chapters was devised by Orson Pratt. Daniel Ludlow writes that in the year 1879, Orson Pratt divided the Book of Mormon into more chapters than were already present in the 1830 edition of the book. [Daniel H. Ludlow, [A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon](#), p. 43] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 1]

Comparison of Chapter Divisions: 1830 and 1981

1830 Edition Chapter	Pages	Current 1981 Edition Chapter: Verse Pages	
First Nephi			
I	5-16	1-5	1-11
II	16-21	6-9	11-17
III	21-35	10-14	17-30
IV	35-38	15	30-33
V	38-52	16:1-19:21	33-46
VI	52-56	19:22-21:26	46-50
VII	56-59	22	50-53
Second Nephi			
I	59-66	1-2	53-60
II	66-68	3	60-62
III	68-71	4	62-65
IV	71-73	5	65-67
V	74-78	6-8	67-72
VI	78-83	9	72-77
VII	83-85	10	78-80
VIII	86-91	11-15	80-86
IX	91-99	16-22	86-93
X	99-102	23-24	94-96
XI	102-112	25-27	96-106
XII	112-118	28-30	106-112
XIII	118-120	31	112-115
XIV	120-121	32	115-116
XV	121-122	33	116-117
Jacob			
I	123-124	1	117-19
II	124-129	2-3	119-123
III	129-139	4-5	123-132
IV	139-140	6	132-133
V	140-142	7	133-135
Enos			
I	143-145	1	136-138
Jarom			
I	146-147	1	138-140
Omni			
I	148-151	1	140-143
Words of Mormon			
I	151-153	1	143-145

1 Nephi 1 (**Chapter Divisions**) [Illustration]: Comparison of Chapter Divisions: 1830 and 1981. (John Welch and Morgan Ashton, "Comparison of Chapter Divisions: 1830 and 1981," in Charting the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., Packet 1]

Chapter 1

1 Nephi: Chapter 1 **Chapter 1:**

In case you missed it in the illustration accompanying the previous commentary on the 1830 chapter divisions, the words “Chapter 1st” were written into the Printers Manuscript at the wrong location—before the colophon for the WHOLE book of First Nephi. This has been corrected in our present-day editions where “Chapter 1” comes after the colophon.

1 Nephi: Chapter Heading **Nephi Begins the Record of His People--Lehi Sees in Vision, etc.:**

Who wrote the summary chapter headings in the Book of Mormon? Daniel Ludlow explains that the chapter headings were first added as a result of the recommendations of a committee headed by Elder James E. Talmage of the Council of the Twelve in 1920. [Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 43]

Note* These headings were apparently revised for the 1981 edition by a committee headed by Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, and Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi: Verses **Verses 1, 2, 3, etc.:**

There were no numbered verses in the Original Manuscript, Printer's Manuscript, the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, or other early versions. According to Daniel Ludlow, in 1852 the third European edition of the Book of Mormon was published by Franklin D. Richards. In this edition Brother Richards numbered the verses in the various chapters already present from the 1830 edition. In 1879, Orson Pratt further divided the book into chapters and verses and added some footnote references. [Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 43]

Note* The chapters and verses have apparently remained unchanged since then. The reader should be careful to note, however, that this 1879 division might have some imperfections. For example, in 1 Nephi 8:1 I find a verse that more appropriately should be placed as the last verse in chapter 7 (see the commentary on 1 Nephi 8:1) [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi--Chronological Footnotes **About B.C. 600:**

The chronological footnotes were first added as a result of the recommendations of a

committee headed by Elder James E. Talmage of the Council of the Twelve in 1920.
[Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 43]

Note* With a few minor exceptions, these footnotes were left intact in the 1981 edition. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 1:1-3 (Colophon):

Hugh Nibley writes:

“The first three verses of 1 Nephi, sharply set off from the rest of the text, are a typical colophon, a literary device that is highly characteristic of Egyptian compositions. Typical is the famous Bremer-Rhind Papyrus, which opens with a colophon containing (1) the date, (2) the titles of Nasim, the author, (3) the names of his parents and a word in praise of their virtues, with special mention of his father's prophetic calling, (4) a curse against anyone who might ‘take the book away,’ probably ‘due to fear lest a sacred book should get into impure hands.’

Compare this with Nephi's colophon: (1) his name, (2) the merits of his parents, with special attention to the learning of his father, (3) a solemn avowal (corresponding to Nasim's curse) that the record is true, and the assertion, ‘I make it with mine own hand’ (1 Nephi 1:3)--an indispensable condition of every true colophon, since the purpose of a colophon is to establish the identity of the actual writer-down (not merely the ultimate author) of the text.

[So I will quote 1 Nephi 1-4 in a structured parallelistic manner and at the same time identify the parts of the colophon mentioned by Hugh Nibley with the corresponding numbers in brackets:

1 [1] I, NEPHI,
[2] **having been born of goodly parents,**
therefore
I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; *[covenant language]*

[3] and **having seen many afflictions in the course of my days,**
nevertheless, **having been highly favored of **THE LORD** in all my days; yea,**
having had a great KNOWLEDGE of the goodness and the mysteries of

GOD,
therefore

2 **I make a record of my proceedings in my days. 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**

(George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol 1, p. 3]

(2) Some believe that it comes from Egypt. If the name is Egyptian, the cultural ties between Egypt and Israel would have made the name a familiar one in the Israel of Lehi.

Wells Jakeman notes that in his tomb, Seti I is depicted as a young man wearing two ears of wheat or barley upon his head, "both 'N(e)pri' and 'N(e)pi' are recorded in hieroglyphics by his head, the latter form immediately under or following the former. "Nepri" or "Nepi" was the name of the Egyptian grain god. "In ancient Egyptian 'r' was a weak consonant, susceptible to change, or else to the complete omission of a recorded sound. . . . The "p" in Egyptian forms was often pronounced with aspirate following (i.e. as 'ph'), . . . indicated by ancient foreign renderings of Egyptian names containing 'p.'" Jakeman then gives some examples of how this rule applies a number of words, including the word we pronounce as "Pharaoh": Egyptian--P[e]raa, Greek--Pharao. Jakeman thus concludes that "the name Nephi (very probably--as pointed out above--pronounced "Nephee," with the *ph* an aspirate *p* rather than an *f*) is Lehi's rendering of the Egyptian name of the personification or god of grain in Egyptian belief. . . . The Egyptian name N(e)pi would not improbably have been pronounced and written by the Israelite Lehi and his people of the Book of Mormon as N(e)phi; and therefore constitutes a completely acceptable etymology for the name of Lehi's son." [Wells Jakeman, Stela 5, Izapa, pp. 40-41]

(3) John Gee proposes that "the name 'Nephi' is an attested Syro-Palestinian Semitic form of an attested Egyptian man's name dating from the Late Period in Egypt," and that because of these findings, "we can make a guess at the pronunciation of the name *Nephi*. Most European and Latin American Latter-day Saints are already pronouncing the name more or less correctly as *nefi* (neh/fee) . . . rather than the current 'nee-fie.' Nevertheless, the standard English pronunciation has a venerable history, and even this writer will probably continue to use it."

[John Gee, "A Note on the Name of Nephi" in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Fall 1992, F.A.R.M.S., p. 191] [See also the commentary on 1 Nephi 18:7.]

1 Nephi 1:1 **Nephi:**

Lynn and Hope Hilton write that a name similar to "Nephi" is used twice in the Hebrew text of the Bible. *Nephilim*, translated as "giants," is found in Genesis 6:4 ("There were giants in the earth in those days") and in Numbers 13:33, referring to the "giant" inhabitants of Canaan seen by the spies sent by Moses. In addition, there are two references in the Apocrypha:

2 Maccabees 1:36. This chapter is the source of the story of the fire of the temple altar in Jerusalem, which fire was carried to Babylon by the priests of Aaron during the captivity of the Jews in 586 B.C. This fire was miraculously restored by the prophet Nehemiah (Neemias) when the king of Persia allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem

and rebuild the temple. Nehemiah called the miraculous "kindling of the great fire" from heaven and the consuming of the sacrifice "Naphthar, which is as much as to say a cleansing; but many men call it *Nephi*."

1 Esdras 5:21. This is the record of Darius, King of Persia, sending nearly 50,000 Jews from Babylon back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Two of the 123 families (tribes) listed are "Sons of ***Nephis***" with 156 men and "Sons of ***Nephis***" [number not specified].

Thus it seems safe to say that when Lehi named his son Nephi, he was using a local Hebrew or Jewish name for his son, and not an Egyptian one, as some have proposed. It seems that the root name Nephi was in common usage among the Jews in Lehi's time. Also, when you look in the Jeddah phone book today, you find no fewer than 27 families with the name of "al-Nafi" (Nephi).

[Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 91-92]

Note* If the great fire of the temple represents the presence of the Lord, and if we associate the name *Nephi* with the reference in 2 Maccabees 1:36, does the name *Nephi* represent one who has that presence of the Lord constantly with him? And does the name *Nephi* represent the power of the Lord sufficient to establish or reestablish the covenant order found within the temple walls? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 1:1 **Nephi**:

Second Maccabees of the Apocrypha, Chapter 1 verses 33-36 describes the return of the faithful to clean out the Temple to initiate Temple use during the time of the Priest Nehemiah (*Neemias* in Greek). According to Randolph Linehan, in an 1880's edition of the King James Bible published by Cranston & Stowe in Chicago there are some commentary notes on this verse. It is stated that in some versions, *Nephi* is called Naphtha: pure colorless oil which was very rare and found only in certain seeps in Arabia. Some versions call the substance water (not liquid) and the process naphthar: ritual cleansing, which would be the meaning for the colloquial noun *Nephi*.

The gist of this is that the sacred fire, which was buried by Jeremiah had turned into a sacred water (liquid) when the exiles returned to Jerusalem in 560 B.C., . . . The cleansing of the initial temple sacrifices with the liquid that was known colloquially as *Nephi*, took place only 40 years or so after Nephi left "the land of Jerusalem.

[As noted in George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), pp. 302-303]

Note* The *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* cites the date for the return of the Jews as 537 B.C.,ⁱ which makes 60 years or more from the time Lehi left Jerusalem. For the benefit of the many readers who do not have access to the Apocrypha, I will give the full text because I think the

concepts therein are worthy of attention as they relate to the name *Nephi*. Special note should be taken that the name *Nephi* is here associated with temple cleansing. I would prefer to also associate temple cleansing with covenant renewal. When viewed in this historical context, the term *Nephi* is then associated with the restoration or establishment of the covenant process.

Nephi was the major compiler and original author of the small plates of Nephi (see 2 Nephi 5:28-31). Mormon was the major abridger of the large plates of Nephi. Together these two sets of records, for the most part, constitute our present Book of Mormon. (see Words of Mormon 1:1-7)

Now with this in mind, it is worth noting that the abridger of the Nephite history was named "Mormon." Mormon is who the "Book of Mormon" is named after. Interestingly, we find according to the text of the Book of Mormon that Mormon was named after the land where the covenant was restored (3 Nephi 5:12; see also Alma 5:3), and that this land had been given its name by the king (Mosiah 18:4). The the small plates of Nephi we find that all Nephite kings at that time took upon themselves the name Nephi "let them be of whatever name they would" (Jacob 1:10-11). Mormon also states in his abridgment that "it was the custom of the people of Nephi to call their lands . . . after the name of him who first possessed them" (Alma 8:7). Thus one might ask, Do the very names of *Nephi* and *Mormon* imply a restoration of the Lord's covenant process?

On the Title Page of the Book of Mormon the reader will find that one of the major purposes of the Book of Mormon is "to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord has done for their fathers and that they may know the covenants of the Lord." [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on the Title Page & 3 Nephi 5:12]

II Maccabees, Chapter 1 [This passage speaks of the Priests and Nehemiah – 560 BC]

18 Therefore whereas we are now purposed to keep ***the purification of the temple*** upon the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, we thought it necessary to certify you thereof, that ye also might keep it, as the feast of the tabernacles, and of the fire, which was given us when Neemias offered sacrifice, after that he had builded the temple and the altar.

19 **For when our fathers were led into Persia, the priests that were then devout took the fire of the altar privily, and hid it in an hollow place of a pit without water, where they kept it sure, so that the place was unknown to all men.**

Now after many years, when it pleased God, Neemias, [Nehemiah] **being sent from the king of Persia, did send of the posterity of those priests that had hid it to the fire: but when they told us they found no fire, but thick water;**

21 Then commanded he them to draw it up, and to bring it; and when the sacrifices were laid on, Neemias commanded the priests to sprinkle the wood and the things laid thereupon with the water.

22 When this was done, and the time came that the sun shone, which afore was hid in

the cloud, **there was a great fire kindled, so that every man marvelled.**

23 And the priests made a prayer whilst the sacrifice was consuming, I say, both the priests, and all the rest, Johnathan beginning, and the rest answering thereunto, as Neemias did.

24 And the prayer was after this manner; O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, who art fearful and strong, and righteous, and merciful, and the only and gracious King,

25 The only giver of all things, the only just, almighty, and everlasting, thou that deliverest Israel from all trouble, and didst choose the fathers, and sanctify them:

26 Receive the sacrifice for thy whole people Israel, and preserve thine own portion, and sanctify it.

27 Gather those together that are scattered from us, deliver them that serve among the heathen, look upon them that are despised and abhorred, and let the heathen know that thou art our God.

28 Punish them that oppress us, and with pride do us wrong.

29 Plant thy people again in thy holy place, as Moses hath spoken.

30 And the priests sung psalms of thanksgiving.

31 Now when the sacrifice was consumed, Neemias commanded the water that was left to be poured on the great stones.

32. When this was done, there was kindled a flame: but it was consumed by the light that shined from the altar.

33 So when this matter was known, it was told the king of Persia, that in the place, where the priests that were led away had hid the fire, there appeared water, and that Neemias had purified the sacrifices therewith.

34 Then the king, inclosing the place, made it holy, after he had tried the matter.

35 And the king took many gifts, and bestowed thereof on those whom he would gratify.

36 And Neemias called *this thing* Naphthar, which is as much as to say, *a cleansing*: but many men call it **Nephi**.

II Maccabees, Chapter 2 [This passage speaks of the prophet Jeremiah – abt. 589 BC]

1 It is also found in the records, that Jeremy the prophet [**Jeremiah**] **commanded them that were carried away to take of the fire, as it hath been signified:**

2 And how that the prophet, having given them the law, charged them not to forget the commandments of the Lord, and that they should not err in their minds, when they see images of silver and gold, with their ornaments.

3 And with other such speeches exhorted he them, that the law should not depart from their hearts.

4 It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacles and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God.

5 And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door.

6 And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it.

7 Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy.

8 Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was shewed under Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honourably sanctified.

9 It was also declared, that he being wise offered the sacrifice of dedication, and of the finishing of the temple.

10 And as when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifices: even so prayed Solomon also, and the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offerings,.

11 And Moses said, Because the sin offering was not to be eaten, it was consumed.

12 So Solomon kept those eight days.

13 The same things also were reported **in the writings and commentaries of Neemias; and how he founding a library gathered together the acts of the kings, and the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings concerning the holy gifts.**

14 In like manner also Judas gathered together all those things that were lost by reason of the war we had, and they remain with us.

15 Wherefore if ye have need thereof, send some to fetch them unto you.

16 Whereas we then are about to celebrate the purification, we have written unto you and ye shall do well, if ye keep the same days.

17 We hope also, that the God, that delivered all his people, and gave them all an heritage, and the kingdom, and the priesthood, and the sanctuary,

18 As he promised in the law, will shortly have mercy upon us, and gather us together out of every land under heaven into the holy place: for he hath delivered us out of great troubles, and hath purified the place.

(The Bible: Authorised King James Version with Apocrypha. Cambridge University Press. Pitt Brevier Edition)

Note* So in II Maccabees, Chapter 1 we find that when the Temple of Solomon was destroyed just after the departure of Nephi and Lehi and their families, the priests of the Temple took the ashes “of the altar” and buried them so no one would find them. Later, Nehemiah sent priests to find these ashes in order to purify the temple. One might ask, why was it important to hide ashes? The importance of the ashes “of the altar” being hidden away, as far as the Jews were concerned, is partially explained in their official Sacrifice of the Red Heifer. This sacrifice was distinguished from all others in two ways: (1) it was done outside the Temple walls; and (2) it was offered once for all (or at least so long as its ashes lasted.)

This Sacrifice alludes to Christ in many of the details. One of the most important details was that the red heifer had to be “perfect” – every hair follicle or “pore” had to produce a red hair. Similarly Christ “bled from every pore” (Mosiah 3:7; see Luke 2:44)

The Sacrifice was made on an “altar” that was located eastward across the Kidron Valley on the Mount of Olives at the location where the Garden of Gethsemane was later to be. This Sacrifice had to do with the redemption from sin – once for all. We find a parallel verse in Hebrews: 10:10: “We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”.

Edersheim notes that according to the tradition of the Rabbis, "the burnt remains were beaten into ashes and divided into three parts, one of which was kept in the temple-terrace (*the Chel*), the other on the Mount of Olives, and the third distributed among the priesthood throughout the land."ⁱⁱ The ashes of the sacrifice of the red heifer were then mixed with living water and sprinkled on the unclean with hyssop, symbolizing purification from that death which separates God and man.ⁱⁱⁱ The symbolical cleansing with the ashes (or blood) of Christ mixed with living water was an ordinance from God that was permanently binding under the Mosaic law. It was a law, statute, custom, and enactment that was established for the children of Israel "for ever."

Because a perfect red heifer was so rare and costly, the ashes of the unique and perfect red heifer were carefully preserved from age to age. Edersheim notes that according to the Rabbis:

altogether, from the time of Moses to the final destruction of the temple, only seven, or else nine, such red heifers had been offered: the first by Moses, the second by Ezra [a prophet contemporary with Nehemiah], and the other five, or else seven, between the time of Ezra and that of the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans.^{iv}

Apparently, the prophet Jeremiah had seen to it that the ashes “of the altar” were hidden when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians after the departure of Nephi and Lehi and their families. Later, by the time of Nehemiah’s return, these ashes “of the altar” had turned into “water” which they called “Nephi.” This liquid easily caught fire and gave out light providing the symbolic means for sanctification of the Temple. Fire on the sacrificial altars of the temple was started by God (Leviticus 9:24; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3). The image of fire is used to symbolize God's glory (Ezekiel 1:4,13), God's protective presence (2 Kings 6:17), God's holiness (Deuteronomy 4:24), God's righteous refinement of man (Zechariah 13:9), and God's wrath against sin (Isaiah 66:15-16). Fire is also used to represent the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11).

According to Edersheim, after the priest slew the red heifer and sprinkled the blood towards the Most Holy Place, he immediately kindled the fire.^v [Alan Miner Personal Notes]
. [See the Appendix for a detailed article on the great significance of the Sacrifice of the Red Heifer]



Sacrifice of the Red Heifer

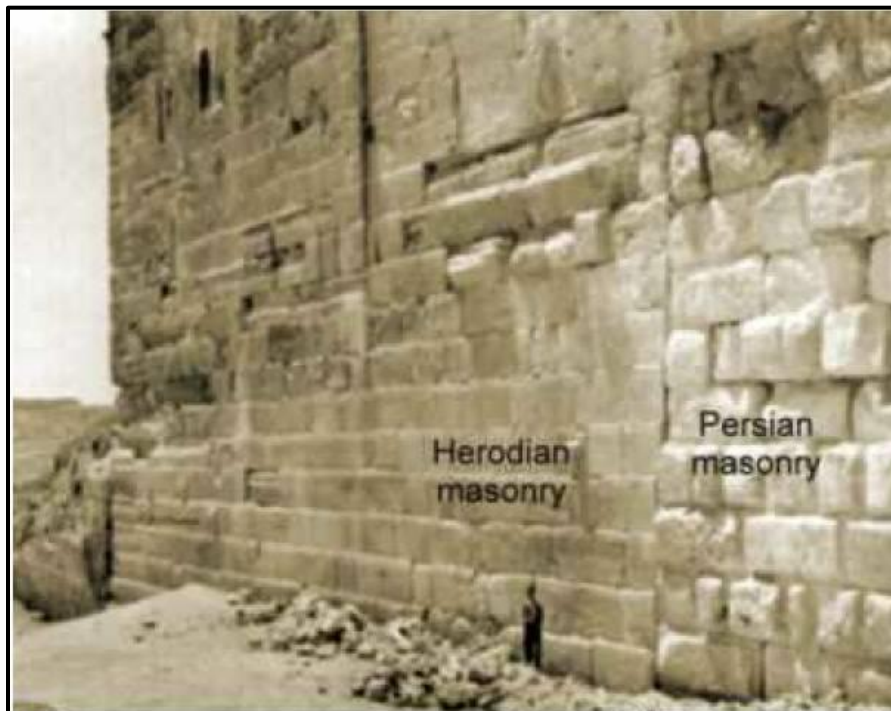
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Note* II Maccabees, Chapter 2 is equally important. because it tells us more about the time of Jeremiah (and Lehi & Nephi) when the Temple of Solomon was destroyed. At that time the prophet Jeremiah was commanded of the Lord to preserve some of the covenant-ceremony items (“the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense”) from Solomon’s Temple. Jeremiah carried the sacred artifacts of the Temple to the natural temple of Mount Sinai (Horeb), to a cave which was “stopped up” or hidden by the Lord from the knowledge of men. Furthermore, we find that Nehemiah gathered together the sacred writings of the Jews (and perhaps preserved these records in the cave on Mr. Sinai also).

In view of Jeremiah’s visit to Mr. Siinai (Horeb) and perhaps Nehemiah’s visit to Mr. Sinai, I have to ask the question: besides Moses, Jeremiah and Nehemiah, how many other prophets visited Mr. Sinai? We know that Elijahdid. Did John the Baptist, Christ, Paul and others also visit the natural temple of Mount Sinai? Might this sacred natural temple of Mt. Sinai be the "exceedingly high mountain" unto which Nephi would also be caught up to as described in 1 Nephi 11:1? See the commentaries on 1 Nephi 4:2; 10:9; 11:1; 3 Nephi 25:4. [Alan Miner Personal Notes]



Nehemiah rebuilding the temple thebiblerevival.com

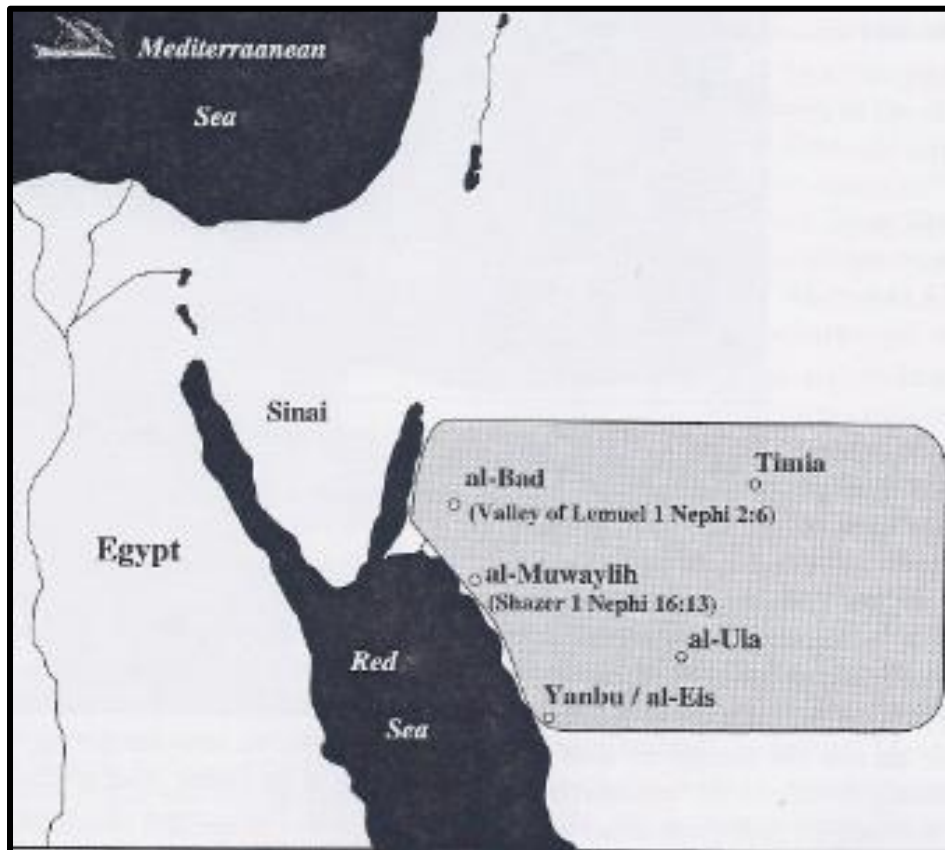


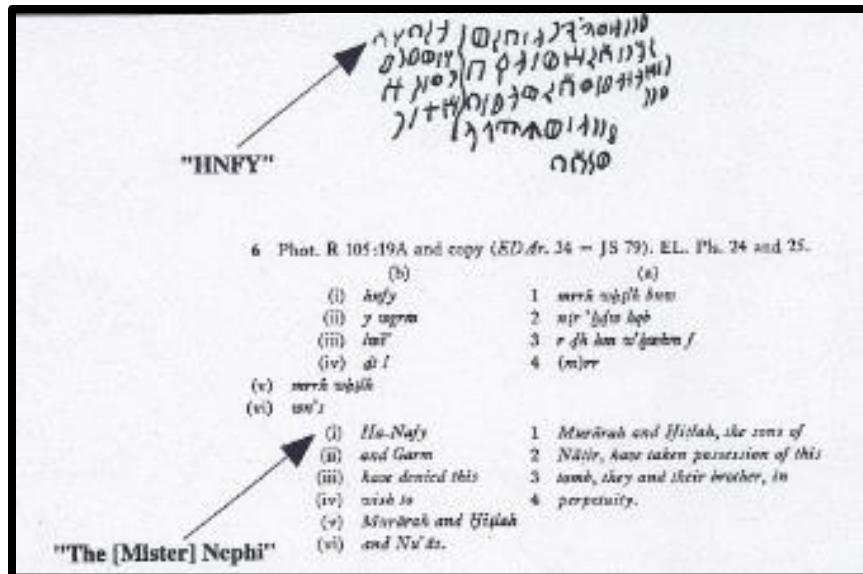
The joint in the masonry of the temple on its east side where Persian masonry abuts later masonry considered Herodian

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1 Nephi 1:1 **Nephi:**

Interestingly, Lynn and Hope Hilton write that the personal name “Nafy” (Nephi?) has been engraved in an ancient script in a tomb marker near al-Ula in what is now Saudi Arabia in the 3rd or 4th century BC. This location would have been near the travel route down along the Red Sea which Nephi and his father Lehi and family will take as they flee from Jerusalem, Nephi and Lehi will also make a long-term camp by the Red Sea in a place they called “the valley of Lemuel.” According to the Hiltons, this valley of Lemuel would have been in al-Bad in the general location of al-Ula. Intriguingly, the civilization that recorded the name “Nafy” has been named the “Lihyanite” people, who occupied the area from about 500-200 B.C.





1 Nephi 1:1 **Nephi (Illustration):** Liḥyan Use of the Personal Name "Nafy" (Nephi). Engraved in ancient Liḥyan script on a tomb marker near al-Ula, Saudi Arabia, 3rd or 4th century B.C. The "Ha" before *NAFY* is the definite article "the." Source: W. F. Winnett and W. L. Reed, "Ancient Records from the North Arabia" (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1970). [Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 83, 91]

1 Nephi 1:1 **Nephi:**

According to John Gee, the name "Nephi" might reflect connections between Egypt and Israel at his time. Three of the four etymologies proposed for the name *Nephi* are Egyptian; these are the Egyptian names *Nfr* "good,"^{vi} *Nfw* "captain," and *Nfy* "wind."^{vii} Gee rules out *Nfy* as a possibility since so far it has not been attested as a name in Egypt at any time period.^{viii} For similar considerations he also rules out the fourth proposed etymology deriving from Akkadian *napahu* "to be kindled,"^{ix} such as *naphu* "kindled,"^x *niphu* "rising,"^{xi} and *nappahu* "smith,"^{xii} none of which are used as personal names.^{xiii} This leaves him with two suggestions: *Nfr* and *Nfw*.

According to Gee, the advantage that *Nfr* has over *Nfw* is that *Nfr* is actually attested at the right time,^{xiv} whereas *Nfw* is attested but not at the right time.^{xv} As previously noted, neither *Nfy* nor forms of *napahu* are attested as names at any time. Thus one may confidently conclude, whether from *Nfr* or *Nfw*, the name *Nephi* is an attested Egyptian name.

[John Gee, "Four Suggestions on the Origin of the Name Nephi," in Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., 1999, pp. 1-3]

1 Nephi 1:1 **Nephi:**

According to Paul Hoskisson, there are six possible consonantal roots for the name

Nephi that might conform to common Semitic noun pattern, however none of them seem to appear in Hebrew in any form that can be applied to the name Nephi. Although etymologies from Egyptian cannot be ruled out, a couple of possibilities exist in Ugaritic, a North-West Semitic language. Ugaritic is one of the better candidates because it is very closely related to Hebrew. The root *npy*, and *np'* are attested in Ugaritic. Ugaritic *npy* appears to mean "to expel, to drive away."^{xvi} It is not attested in any personal name, but the meaning could be something like "expelled one." This root may also be behind the personal name *nfy* found on inscriptions in the Arabian peninsula.^{xvii}

The Ugaritic root *np'* could also yield Nephi. This root means "to flourish"^{xviii} and is probably related to an Arabic root meaning "to flourish." It would not be far afield to posit a meaning for the Name Nephi from this root, such as "increase [of God]." Thus an etymology for the name Nephi can be suggested as meaning "expelled one" or "increase."

[Paul Y. Hoskisson, "What's in a Name? Nephi," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 9, Num. 2, 2000, pp. 64-65]

1 Nephi 1:1 Having Been Born of Goodly Parents, Therefore I Was Taught Somewhat in All the Learning of My Father:

According to Donna Nielsen, the Hebrew word for parent, *horeh*, derives from the root *yareh*, which means teaching, instruction, and direction.^{xix} In the Jewish culture, until the age of three the education of the family was mainly the responsibility of the mother. When a child turned three, the father became the primary source of information concerning the history of their people and the laws regarding correct behavior. Deuteronomy 32:7 reflects this and counsels children to "ask thy father and he will tell thee." The father was expected to know and live the law and to "make it known to the children and their children's children." The word *Torah* in Hebrew does not only mean "law," it also means "teaching."^{xx} To know and live the law required much diligence. Through a careful study of 5,845 verses in the first five books of the Bible (the Torah), the Jews found 613 commandments. These were the basis of the Law of Moses. When Christ was questioned about which of these 613 statutes was most important, he quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is One Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This scripture is called the *Shema* (pronounced as Shma) which means "Hear!" or "Listen!" or "Pay Attention!" This was the very first and most important religious principle that a child was taught. He memorized it and recited it several times daily.

[Donna B. Nielsen, Beloved Bridegroom: Finding Christ in Ancient Jewish Marriage and Family Customs, pp. 4-5]

Note* Thus, Nephi's connection in 1 Nephi 1:1 between "goodly parents" and being taught in "all the learning" of his father is very appropriate to the Jewish culture. It is also very interesting that the principles and spirit incorporated in the Shema seem to appear later on in Nephi's

narrative in Lehi's pleadings with his rebellious sons relative to the covenant blessings and cursings of the promised land (see 2 Nephi 1:21-24). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 1:1 **I Was Taught Somewhat in All the Learning of My Father:**

In the very beginning of the Book of Mormon, Nephi declares that "having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1). One might wonder what it was that Nephi's father taught his son, or why Nephi didn't choose to identify his father in this introduction to his record. According to Douglas and Robert Clark,

The etymology of the word "father" might tell us to focus on the *patterns* in the teachings that were handed down to their sons by not only Lehi, but all the faithful fathers which are referred to in the Book of Mormon. The word *pattern* is ultimately derived from the Latin *pater*, meaning "father."^{xxi} The Book of Mormon fathers are indeed "patterns." [E. Douglas Clark and Robert S. Clark, Fathers and Sons in the Book of Mormon, p. 291]

Note* The Book of Mormon fathers are covenant patterns. The preface of the Book of Mormon tells us that one of the main purposes of the book "is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; *and that they may know the covenants of the Lord*. . . . [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 1:1 **I Was Taught Somewhat in All the Learning of My Father:**

W. J. Moulton points out that in the Jewish culture, "the parents were the chief teachers of their children and the home the only school. The moral instruction of the children is emphasized as one of the weightiest obligations of the father." (Moulton, *The Social Institutions of Israel*, as quoted by Arthur S. Peake in his *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 69) [As quoted in W. Cleon Skousen, Treasures from the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 1015]

1 Nephi 1:1 **The Lord:**

According to Susan Easton Black:

The Book of Mormon prophets mentioned some form of Christ's name on an average of once every 1.7 verses. By comparison, the New Testament writers mentioned a form of his name on an average of once every 2.1 verses. (Lee A. Crandall, *New Testament Study on the Use of the Names of Deity*, n.p.) Thus, the name of the Savior appears nearly 25 percent more frequently in the Book of Mormon than even in the New Testament.

When we realize that a verse usually consists of one sentence, it appears that we cannot, on the average, read two sentences in the Book of Mormon without seeing some form of Christ's name. . . .

Seeking for Christ in the Book of Mormon reveals unexpected treasure. His name appears often throughout the entire book, but it does not appear as a monotonous or chanting repetition. Each appearance of his name reveals something unique, something essential, and something deeply inspirational about him. . . .

Each title signifying Christ is in correct contextual usage each time it appears. His character and mission and his divine relationship to us are thereby more clearly revealed. Each verse is given enriched meaning because of the definition of Christ's name. [Susan Easton Black, Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon, pp. 15, 16, 28] [See the commentary on the Title "The Book of Mormon."]

Note* See the Covenant Record of Christ's People where I have listed and highlighted hundreds of different descriptive names or titles for Deity in the Book of Mormon. [Alan Miner Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 1:1 Having Seen Many Afflictions in the Course of My Days, Nevertheless Having Been Highly Favored of the Lord in All My Days:

One should keep in mind that Nephi is making this record on the small plates of Nephi long after his arrival in the land of promise. Nephi will begin writing on the large plates of Nephi soon after arriving in the Americas (1 Nephi 19:1-5). However, he will not begin to record on the small plates of Nephi until 30 years after their departure from Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:28-33). This is significant because his record is colored by the wisdom and perspective of his age; unnecessary details of daily affairs are not included. Nonetheless, Nephi is able to describe the spiritual experiences and revelations with remarkable detail.

josephsmith.com.1Nephi

1 Nephi 1:1 Having Had a Great Knowledge of the Goodness . . . of God:

Avraham Gileadi notes that in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (3:352-53), the term "goodness" is listed as a synonym of covenant blessing and covenant keeping. He writes:

Like Lehi, his exemplary father, Nephi comes to know personally the "goodness" and mysteries of God (1 Nephi 1:1). Even at a young age, Nephi becomes a prophet in his own right--he sees the Lord in a vision, thus making sure his calling and election (1 Nephi 11:7, 21, 27; 18:3). . . .

In another part of the Book of Mormon account, we find a circumstance that might shed some additional light on the term "goodness." Under conditions of widespread wickedness, Mormon, at age fifteen, becomes chief captain of the Nephite armies (Mormon 2:1-2). This is the same Mormon after whom the Book of Mormon is named. More to the point, however, Mormon writes the following: "And I, being fifteen years of age and being somewhat of a sober mind, therefore *I was visited of the Lord*, and tasted *and knew of the goodness of Jesus*." (Mormon 1:15) . . .

The parallelism of these two statements implies that to know the goodness of Jesus is to be visited of the Lord, to make one's calling and election sure. [Abraham Gileadi, The Last Days: Types and Shadows from the Bible and the Book of Mormon, pp. 216, 218, 232] [See the commentary on Mormon 1:15]

1 Nephi 1:1 **Having Had a Great Knowledge of . . . the Mysteries of God:**

According to John Welch:

The word *mysteries* seems to refer to priesthood [covenants] or temple ordinances. Benjamin unfolded the "mysteries of God" to his people by speaking to them at the temple (Mosiah 2:9). Likewise, in ancient religions, for example from the Hellenistic world, the word *mysteries* was often used to describe "cultic rites . . . portrayed before a circle of devotees," who "must undergo initiation" and who are promised "salvation by the dispensing of cosmic life," which is sometimes "enacted in cultic drama," accompanied by a strict "vow of silence."^{xxii} (John W. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," in Temples of the Ancient World, pp. 364-366] [See the commentary on Alma 12:9]

1 Nephi 1:1-3 **Having Had a Great Knowledge of the . . . Mysteries of God (Chiastic Structure):**

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the inverted parallel structure of parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

An "inverted parallelism takes the form A-B-C/C-B-A. (p. xxxii)

[In my view the chiastic structure can be the most forceful of parallels because all the lines of thought are focused on the center line, making that statement very significant.

A fine example of this Inverted Parallelism (Chiastic Structure) is found in 1 Nephi 1:1-3:

1 . . .

[A] yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God,

- [B] therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days. Yea
- 2 [C] I make a record in the language of my father,
- [D] which consists of the learning of the Jews
- [C'] and the language of the Egyptians.
- 3 [B'] And I know that the record which *I make* is true;
- and *I make it* with mine own hand;
- [A'] and *I make it* according to my knowledge.

[Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns, F.A.R.M.S., p. 1. See *A Covenant Record of Christ's People*]

1 Nephi 1:1 **The Mysteries of God:**

Critics of the Book of Mormon claim that the words "the mysteries of God" in 1 Nephi 1:1 were taken from 1 Corinthians 4:1. In parallel columns of similar passages from the Book of Mormon and from the New Testament, they attempt to show how Joseph Smith "plagiarized" the New Testament.

According to John Tvedtnes, what concerns him most is that these critics neglect to tell their readers that many of the Book of Mormon concepts and phrases which they claim were borrowed from the New Testament are also found in the Old Testament. Some of them are merely common phrases found in Jewish culture, and in some cases, the New Testament is actually quoting from the Old Testament. Or, as in this case, the word appears only in the New Testament because different parts of the King James Bible were translated by different committees, and the Old Testament translators chose to use a different word or phrase. As for the word "mysteries," the Old Testament translators chose to use the word "secret." The term "secret of God" appears in Job 15:8; 29:4.

Tvedtnes notes that the Book of Mormon critics also argue that the Book of Mormon should not use the same language as the Bible, since it was translated from a different tongue. They particularly object to the fact that the Book of Mormon, when using biblical passages, employs the form found in the King James Bible.

Tvedtnes' response to this criticism is that Joseph Smith, inspired by Christ, deliberately used the King James Version wording because it corresponded to the Bible known to his contemporaries. (See Hugh W. Nibley, "Literary Style Used in Book of Mormon Insured Accurate

Translation," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, vol. 8, 212-18.) His work would undoubtedly not have been well-received had he done otherwise. The use of precise New Testament phraseology is not negative as long as the idea fits the passage. After all, Joseph Smith rendered the Book of Mormon in English theological terms of **his** day, most of which derived from the King James Bible. Critics who propose such plagiarism must explain how Joseph Smith could be so brilliant to compose such a seamless profusion of biblical scripture in the Book of Mormon but stupid enough to believe that he could get away with using New Testament quotes from pre-Christian times.

[John A. Tvedtnes, Book Review of Jerald and Sandra Tanner's *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 3 1991, pp. 217-219] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 11:6-7; 2 Nephi 12-24]

1 Nephi 1:2 **I Make a Record in the Language of My Father (Chiastic Structure):**

Chiastic structures are words or thoughts which are put forth in a specific order and then are repeated in reverse order. Clay Gorton writes:

The book of First Nephi is composed of layer upon layer of chiastic structures. **There are two astounding global chiasma overlying one another, one literal and one conceptual.** . . . Embedded in these global chiasma are 107 additional chiastic structures! . . .

Ascribing the authorship of the complex chiastic structures in First Nephi to Nephi is akin to attributing the authorship of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith. A viable alternative to the individual authorship of chiasma in the Book of Mormon would be that the chiastic structure may have been imposed by the Lord as part of and as a mark of the Divine inspiration under which it was written. . . .

The global literal chiasmus^{xxiii} contains an astounding 164 elements repeated in reverse order, extending from "the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 14:3) as the central element [see illustration]. . . .

The global conceptual chiasmus has been identified by Wallace B. King.^{xxiv} It has as its central element the phrase, "the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto [Christ] (1 Nephi 10:18). [see illustration]

Since 1 Nephi is composed of chiasma that image the concepts and words near the first of the book with their parallel counterparts near the end of the book, it could not have been started until after the concluding events had taken place. Thus the book was written no sooner than some 12 to 30 years or more after the colony arrived in the promised land.

[H. Clay Gorton, *A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon*, pp. 23, 24, 29, 82] [See the commentary and illustrations for 1 Nephi 10:18]

GLOBAL LITERAL CHIASMUS OF 165 REPEATED ELEMENTS IN 1 NEPHI ¹					
165	1:1		father	father	22:31
164	1:1		I	I	22:31
163	1:3	the record which I make		plates of brass	22:30
		is true		are true	
162	1:4		repent	repent	22:28
161	1:5		people	people	22:26
160	1:6		quake	quake	22:23
159	1:6		tremble	tremble	22:23
158	1:9		one	Holy One of Israel	22:18
157	1:13		destroyed	destruction	22:17
156	1:14	those who come		righteous	22:17
		unto me			
155	1:16		children	children	22:15
154	1:18		destruction	destroyed	22:14
153	1:19		abominations	abominable	22:13
152	1:19		Messiah	Savior	22:12
151	1:20		deliverance	out of captivity	22:12
150	2:5		brothers	brethren	22:6
149	2:11		led them	led away	22:4
148	2:11		Jerusalem	Jerusalem	22:4
147	2:13		prophets	prophets	22:2
146	2:14		spirits	spiritual	22:1
145	2:15		dwelt	dwelt	21:20
144	2:20	land of promise		land of thy destruction	21:19
143	3:3		engraven	graven	21:16
142	3:4	house of Laban		house of Israel	21:12
141	3:4	wilderness		desolate heritages	21:8
140	3:17		wickedness	wickedness	21:1
139	3:21		commandments	commandments	20:18
138	3:27		hid	secret	20:16
137	3:29		chosen	chosen	20:10
136	4:1		commandments	commanded	20:5
135	4:5		city	Holy City	20:2
134	4:7		house	house	20:1

133	4:13	perish	perished	19:20
132	4:13	nation	nation	19:17
131	4:22	elders of the Jews	those who are at Jerusalem	19:13
130	4:24	carry thee	carried up	19:11
129	4:32	wilderness	wilderness	19:10
128	4:34	father	fathers	19:6
127	4:38	plates	plates	19:6
126	5:2	land of our inheritance	possessed the land	19:3
125	5:5	wilderness	wilderness	19:2
124	5:6	father	father	19:2
123	5:8	wilderness	wilderness	19:1
122	5:10	father	father	19:1
121	5:10	records	record	19:1
120	5:10	plates	plates	19:1
119	5:15	led out of	brought from the	18:24
118	5:17	seed	seeds	18:24
117	5:21	children	children	18:19
116	5:22	carry	carried out	18:18
115	6:1	fathers	parents	18:17
114	6:1	father	father	18:17
113	6:4	unto the God	unto my God	18:16
112	7:3	brethren	younger brother	18:10
111	7:6	wife	wives	18:9
110	7:8	younger brother	brethren	18:9
109	7:12	children of men	children	18:6
108	7:14	father	father	18:5
107	7:15	words	the word	17:54
106	7:16	lay their hands	lay his hands	17:48
105	7:17	saying	saying	17:48
104	7:17	hands	hands	17:48
103	7:18	words	words	17:48
102	7:19	hearts	hearts	17:44
101	7:19	take away my life	take away his life	17:44
100	8:2	father	father	17:44
99	8:2	wilderness	wilderness	17:41
98	8:8	large and spacious field	earth	17:39
97	8:11	whiteness ?	righteous nation ?	17:37
96	8:13	river	river	17:32
95	8:19	rod of iron	work	17:31
94	8:19	led	lead	17:31
93	8:20	rod of iron	His word	17:31
92	8:20	fountain	water	17:26
91	8:24	rod of iron	His word	17:26
90	8:29	words	words	17:23
89	8:29	father	fathers	17:23
88	8:34	words	words	17:22
87	8:34	father	father	17:22
86	8:38	commandments	commandments	17:22

85	9:2	people	people	17:22
84	9:3	commandments	commandments	17:15
83	9:6	Lord knoweth	shall know	17:14
82	10:3	land of their	promised land	17:13
81	10:8	inheritance	light in the wilderness	17:13
80	10:9	water	waters	17:8
79	10:11	rise from the dead	arise	17:7
78	10:13	land of promise	land of bountiful	17:7
77	10:16	tent	tabs	17:6
76	10:18	men	men	17:2
75	10:19	course	travel eastward	17:1
74	10:22	speaking these things	voice of the Lord	16:39
73	11:1	know	know	16:38
72	11:8	father	father	16:35
71	11:13	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	16:35
70	11:17	his children	our families	16:31
69	11:25	word of God	ways of the Lord	16:29
68	11:27	father	father	16:26
67	11:31	afflicted	afflicted	16:21
66	11:32	everlasting God	Lord his God	16:20
65	11:34	slain	slay	16:18
64	11:35	earth	wilderness	16:14
63	11:36	pride ?	wilderness ?	16:14
62	12:1	seed	seed	16:11
61	12:2	gathered	gather	16:11
60	12:4	mist of darkness	night	16:9
59	12:10	righteous forever	ye were righteous	16:3
58	12:10	garments are made white	righteousness have I justified	16:2
57	12:12	righteousness	righteous	15:36
56	12:16	river	place of filthiness	15:34
55	12:17	perish and are cast off	cast off	15:33
54	12:18	justice	judged	15:32
53	12:18	forever	forever	15:30
52	12:23	filthy	filthiness	15:27
51	13:5	yoke of iron	rod of iron	15:23
50	13:10	my brethren	my brethren	15:20
49	13:12	separated	scattered	15:20
48	13:12	seed	seed	15:18
47	13:13	Gentiles	Gentiles	15:17
46	13:14	Gentiles	Gentiles	15:17
45	13:14	scattered	scattered	15:17
44	13:21	knowest	know	15:14
43	13:23	covenants	covenant	15:14
42	13:23	house of Israel	house of Israel	15:14
41	13:24	fulness of the Gospel	fulness of the Gospel	15:13
40	13:25	Gentiles	Gentiles	15:13
39	13:26	Jews	House of Israel	15:12

38	13:27	harden the hearts	hardness of your hearts	15:10
37	13:27	children of men	children of men	15:4
36	13:24	seen	seen	15:4
35	13:29	understanding	understood	15:3
34	13:29	great many	great many	15:3
33	13:30	father	father	15:1
32	13:13	see	which I saw	14:28
31	13:32	plain and most precious	truth	14:26
30	13:33	remnant	remainder	14:24
29	13:34	plain and precious	plain and pure	14:23
28	13:34	in that day	at the time	14:23
27	13:34	gospel ?	just and true ?	14:23
26	13:35	write	write	14:22
25	13:35	many things	many things	14:21
24	13:36	written	write	14:21
23	13:36	the Lamb	the way	14:17
22	13:37	at that day	at that day	14:17
21	13:38	came forth	day cometh	14:17
20	13:39	beheld	seest	14:16
19	13:39	power of the Lamb	power of God	14:14
18	13:39	earth	earth	14:14
17	13:39	the Lamb	the Lamb	14:14
16	13:40	seen	beheld	14:14
15	13:40	Gentiles	Gentiles	14:13
14	13:40	Savior	Lamb of God	14:12
13	13:40	world	earth	14:10
12	13:41	Lamb	Lamb of God	14:10
11	13:41	established in one	the coe	14:10
10	13:42	Jews	House of Israel	14:8
9	14:1	stumbling blocks	blindness	14:7
8	14:2	harden not their hearts	hardness of their hearts	14:7
7	14:2	Lamb of God	Lamb of God	14:6
6	14:2	house of Israel	house of Israel	14:5
5	14:2	promised land	covenants	14:5
4	14:2	captivity	captivity	14:4
3	14:3	hell	hell	14:3
2	14:3	destruction	destruction	14:3
1	14:3	Lamb of God		

1 Nephi 1:2 I make a record in the language of my father (Chiastic Structure): Global Literal Chiasmus of 165 Repeated Elements in 1 Nephi (Part 1). [H. Clay Gorton, A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures

GLOBAL CONCEPTUAL CHIASMUS IN 1 NEPHI	
The global conceptual chiasmus in First Nephi has been identified by Wallace B. King, ² and is reproduced below with the parallel elements side-by-side for easy comparison.	
<p>Element 18</p> <p>1:1-3 Introduction, containing the following sub-elements: a- an autograph b- a reference to his father c- Nephi testifies to the truthfulness of his record d- a reference to beginnings- (Nephi's birth).</p>	<p>Element 18</p> <p>22:29-31 Conclusion, containing the following sub-elements: a- an autograph b- a reference to his father dc- Nephi testifies to the truthfulness of the record on the Plates of Brass d- a reference to endings- "the end . . . the last day."</p>
<p>Element 17</p> <p>1:4 Repentance: "they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed."</p>	<p>Element 17</p> <p>22:28 Repentance: "all . . . people shall dwell safely . . . if . . . they will repent."</p>
<p>Element 16</p> <p>1:5-8 God reigns: "[Lehi] sees God sitting on his throne."</p>	<p>Element 16</p> <p>22:26-27 God reigns: "and the Holy One of Israel reigneth."</p>
<p>Element 15</p> <p>1:9-11 Lehi comes to know the Savior: "he saw one descending out of the midst of heaven . . . his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day . . . and the first came and stood before my father."</p>	<p>Element 15</p> <p>22:24-25 All the righteous will know the Savior . . . "the righteous must be led up . . . and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him."</p>
<p>Element 14</p> <p>1:12-19</p> <hr/> <p>The heavens testify of the Savior: Lehi reads from a heavenly book which "manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world."</p>	<p>Element 14</p> <p>22:20-23</p> <hr/> <p>The prophet Moses testifies of the Savior. Nephi quotes from the book of Moses, and then states, "this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel."</p>
<p>Element 13</p> <p>1:20 - 2:1-3 The Lord protects the chosen who are faithful: "the tender mercies of the Lord are over all them whom he hath chosen, . . . unto the power of deliverance."</p>	<p>Element 13</p> <p>22:13-19 God protects the righteous: "for he will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous."</p>

Element 12	
2:4-24 A part of the house of Israel is being scattered: "And [Lehi] left his house . . . and took nothing with him save it were his family . . . ye shall be led to a land of promise."	22:3-12 The house of Israel is to be scattered: "for it appears that the house of Israel, sooner or later, will be scattered upon all the face of the earth."
Element 11	
Chapters 3, 4 and 5 An account of the obtaining of the scriptures recorded on the Brass Plates.	19:7 - 22:2 Nephi paraphrases and quotes from the scriptures recorded on the Brass Plates.
Element 10	
Chapter 6 Nephi comments on his task of keeping records.	19:1-6 Nephi comments on his task of keeping records.
Element 9	
7:1-19 A narrative section containing these sub-elements: a) The family of Ishmael b) A journey c) Rebellion against Nephi.	16:7 - 18:25 A narrative section containing these sub-elements: a) The family of Ishmael b) A journey c) Rebellions against Nephi.
Element 8	
7:20-22 Nephi exhorts his brothers and they turn to the Lord.	16:1-6 Nephi exhorts his brothers, and they humble themselves before the Lord.
Element 7	
Chapter 8	Chapter 15
Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life.	Nephi gives the interpretation of Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life.
Element 6	
Chapter 9 Nephi discusses his two sets of records. "And thus it is. Amen."	14:20-30 Nephi discusses two records, one by himself and one by the apostle John. "And thus it is. Amen."
Element 5	
10:1-16 Lehi prophesies about the coming of the Lamb of God and the future events.	11:1 - 14:19 Nephi prophesies about the coming of the Son of God and other future events.
Element 4	
10:17 "[Lehi] spake by the power of the Holy Ghost."	10:22 "And the Holy Ghost giveth authority that I [Nephi] should speak these things."
Element 3	
10:17 Nephi desires righteousness: "I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things."	10:20-21 Fate of those who seek unrighteousness: "if ye have sought to do wickedly."
Element 2	
10:17-18 2A) "[the power of the Holy Ghost] is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him." 2B) "in times of old, as in the time that he should manifest himself." 2C) "For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever."	10:19 2A) "For he that diligently seeketh shall find; . . . by the power of the Holy Ghost." 2B) "as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come." 2C) "the course of the Lord is one eternal round."
Element 1—Central Theme "and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto Him."	

1 Nephi 1:2 I make a record in the language of my father (Chiastic Structure): Global Conceptual Chiasmus in 1 Nephi. [H. Clay Gorton, *A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of*

Mormon, pp. 29-31]

1 Nephi 1:2 I **Make a Record in the Language of My Father (Chiastic Structure):**

According to Potter and Wellington, it was not until 1854, twenty four years after the first publishing of the Book of Mormon, with the publication of John Forbes' *The Symmetrical Structures of Scripture*^{xv} that the complicated and sophisticated nature of biblical chiasmus was appreciated. Chiasms in the Bible were only discovered when the original, ancient texts were read. This was because English translations had altered the word order sufficiently to rearrange the elements and destroy the chiasms.

The Book of Mormon contains large and extremely complex chiasms of many elements and layers. This would lead one to believe that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon line by line. This manner of translation has the disadvantage of making the passages flow less well upon reading but retains the structure. Thus when Latter-day Saints repeat the claim that the Book of Mormon was translated correctly and is the "most correct" of any book on earth, we are more literally correct than we often appreciate.

[George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), p. 262]

1 Nephi 1:2 **The Learning of the Jews:**

According to Reynolds and Sjodahl, Hebrew learning, also called, "the learning of the Jews" (1 Nephi 1:2), consisted at this time chiefly in a knowledge of the Law (Torah), now known as the Pentateuch; the Prophets down to and including Isaiah and some books now no longer extant, some of which are mentioned in the Scriptures, as for instance, the Book of Nathan, (2 Chronicles 2:29), the Book of Enoch (Jude 14), [etc.] . . .

Besides the written word, the Jews had a venerable tradition by means of which the historical background of the records was preserved, and opinions, rulings, judgments, judicial decisions, customs and important incidents were transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another generation.

Sometime after the destruction of the temple by Titus and the dispersion of the people, the tradition was committed to writing. This literary composition is known as the "Mishna," meaning "repetition," Later, notes or commentaries were written on this text. These explanations are known as the "Gemara," or "complement." The Mishna and Gemara together constitute the Talmud ("instruction"), of which there are two versions: one composed at Jerusalem (about A.D. 390), and one at Babylon (about A.D. 420). The Talmud is by far the most important literary work of the adherents of the Mosaic faith, next after the inspired writings of

the Old Testament.

[George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, pp. 4-5]

1 Nephi 1:2 **The Learning of the Jews (Chiastic Structure):**

Clay Gorton has identified nine hundred sixty-one chiasma in the Book of Mormon, which comprise 3394 verses out of a total of 6404. Thus, according to Gorton, 53% of the verses in the Book of Mormon are of a chiastic structure. The Small Plates of Nephi, however, are 72% chiastic, whereas the abridgement of the Large Plates of Nephi is only 46% chiastic. Within both the Small Plates and the Large Plates there are wide variations among authors. (see illustration below)

According to Gorton, Nephi is the author of one hundred forty-seven chiasma. He wrote a total of seven hundred ninety-six verses, six hundred five of which (76%) are chiastic. [H. Clay Gorton, A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon, pp. 20, 83]

**List of First Person Book of Mormon Authors
in Order of Percent Chiasticity**

Author	Date	Total Verses	Chiastic Verses	Percent Chiastic
God the Father	34 ad	1	1	100
Zenos	>700 bc	76	69	91
Giddiani	16 ad	9	8	89
Lehi	600-570 bc	71	59	83
Zeniff	200 bc	41	34	83
Anti-Lehi-Nephi	90-77 bc	10	8	80
Benjamin	130-124 bc	107	85	79
Nephi	600-545 bc	796	605	76
Mahonri Moriancumer	~2200 bc	12	9	75
Jacob	544-420 bc	221	164	74
Samuel	6 bc	82	52	63
Enos	544-421 bc	27	17	63
Korihor	74 bc	19	12	63
Alma the Younger	91-73 bc	480	288	60
Jarom	399 bc	15	9	60
Helaman, Son of Helaman	30 bc	7	4	57
Ammon	90-73 bc	36	20	56
General Moroni	74-62 bc	58	30	52
Moroni	401-421 ad	139	72	52
Gideon	121 bc	12	6	50
Daughter of Jared	---	2	1	50
Helaman, Son of Alma	65-62 bc	133	63	47
Amulek	82 bc	68	31	46
Limhi	145-122 bc	35	16	46
Jesus Christ	34-35 ad	477	205	43
<hr/>				
Mormon	345-385 ad	246	89	36
Nephi, Son of Helaman	23-16 bc	64	21	33
Amalaki	279 bc	19	6	32
Abinadi	150-148 bc	126	38	30
Isaiah	740-701 bc	165	41	25
Aaron	90-77 bc	8	2	25
Omni	323 bc	30	6	20
Pahoran	62 bc	20	4	20
Mosiah	130 bc	28	1	4
Commentary verses				
Mormon		107	52	49
Moroni		68	41	60
Abridgement verses				
Mormon		2228	936	42
Moroni		331	162	49

1 Nephi 1:2 **The learning of the Jews (Chiastic Structure):** List of First Person Book of Mormon Authors in Order of Percent Chiasticity. [H. Clay Gorton, [A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon](#), pp. 20-21]

1 Nephi 1:2 **The Learning of the Jews (Covenants):**

According to Raymond Treat, there is a hidden message in the first verses of the Book of Mormon. The key to finding this hidden message is to know that these verses are a chiasm,

which is one form of Hebrew poetry. A chiasm is an inverted parallelism, or in other words, you say something then repeat yourself in reverse order. One advantage of writing chiastically is that you can place special emphasis on the most important point by placing it in the center of the chiasm. Nephi deliberately constructed his chiasm so that "the learning of the Jews" was in the center:

"I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in *all the learning* of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea:
A. having had a great *knowledge* of the goodness and the mysteries of God,
B. therefore I make a *record* of my proceedings in my days.
C. Yea, I make a record in the *language* of my father,
D. which consists of the *learning of the Jews*
C'. and the *language* of the Egyptians
B'. And I know that the *record* which I make is true; and I make it with my own hand;
A'. and I make it according to my *knowledge*. (1 Nephi 1:1-3)

Nephi is telling us that "the learning of the Jews" is an important key to understanding the Book of Mormon. . . . We have used one area of "the learning of the Jews"--Hebrew poetry--to find a hidden message. Another area in which "the learning of the Jews" greatly enhances our understanding is that of covenant-making. . . .

The main purpose of the Book of Mormon is to establish a knowledge of the covenants to a remnant of the house of Israel. One way to demonstrate that this is the primary purpose of the Book of Mormon is to point out that it begins and ends with the covenant. In the title page we read:

. . . Which is to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the *covenants* of the Lord, that they are not cast off for ever . . .

And then in the second to the last verse in the entire Book of Mormon, which is the last verse before Moroni's farewell, we again see the covenant:

And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ which is in the *covenant* of the Father, unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy without spot. (Moroni 10:33)

If we make proper use of the concept of the covenant according to the "learning of the Jews" as taught in the Book of Mormon and the other scriptures, then we will not only receive greater blessings now but we will also be in a position to receive more scripture including

additional information about the covenants. Lehi tells us:

" . . . I am a descendant of Joseph, which was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the *covenants* of the Lord which he made unto Joseph. Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. (2 Nephi 3:4-5)

[Raymond C. Treat, "Understanding Our Covenants," in Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol. 2, pp. 34, 38] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 5:5; 1 Nephi 22:1-3; 3 Nephi 5:12]

1 Nephi 1:2 **The Learning of the Jews and the Language of the Egyptians:**

According to Daniel Ludlow, in considering the problem of the language of the plates translated by Joseph Smith it is well to keep these facts in mind: (1) the word *language* has several different meanings and includes both spoken and written concepts, such as grammatical constructions, thought patterns, and exact phraseology; (2) Joseph Smith translated from two different records (the small plates of Nephi and the plates of Mormon); these plates were prepared and written nearly 1,000 years apart, and the language of one well might not be the language of the other . . . [Thus when Nephi says "the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2)], is Nephi referring to the spoken words, the written script, the grammatical constructions, the thought patterns, the exact phraseology, or what?

One scholar of the Book of Mormon [has theorized] that "Nephi wrote in the Hebrew language but used Egyptian characters or script in the same sense that a stenographer uses Gregg characters to express English words" (Sidney B. Sperry, *Our Book of Mormon* [Bookcraft, 1950], p. 31). . . . If the statement by Nephi ("the language of the Egyptians") does not give us a hint as to the actual language [or script of characters] written on the small plates of Nephi, then we are left almost completely in the dark concerning this question, as the matter is not mentioned again by Nephi or the other writers on the small plates of Nephi. However, we are given some help as to the written script of characters of the plates of Mormon by the following statement made by Moroni about A.D. 400:

"And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.

And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language . . ." (Mormon 9:32-34).

[Daniel Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p. 88]

Most people associate Egyptian writing with hieroglyphics, but does the wording "language of the Egyptians" imply that the small plates were written in Egyptian hieroglyphic characters? Furthermore, what constituted the "reformed Egyptian" characters that Moroni talks about in Mormon 9:32-34?

Hugh Nibley comments that in matters of language and composition the Book of Mormon, from the first, presented a welcome target to the critics: here was something that even a child could see was fraudulent, something that no intelligent person, let alone a clever deceiver would dream of -- "From the *reformed Egyptian!!!*" screamed Alexander Campbell, with three exclamation points. Nobody knew anything about reformed Egyptian then . . . [but] "Reformed Egyptian" is as good of term as any to describe that peculiar and remarkably abbreviated style of "cursive writing [that] developed out of the Hieratic by systematic abbreviation from the eighth to the fourth centuries," which enjoyed the heyday of its international popularity in Lehi's own time. [Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, F.A.R.M.S., p. 149]

Thus, we could call the style of the written characters of the small plates "reformed Egyptian," but that style was probably not exactly like the "reformed Egyptian" of Mormon and Moroni's time because according to Moroni, as it was handed down, "it was altered by us according to our manner of speech" (Mormon 9:32). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 1:2 **The Learning of the Jews and the Language of the Egyptians:**

Nephi, "engraving" on metal "plates" which he had made (see 1 Nephi 9:3), states that he makes 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). William Hamblin writes that the earliest known example of mixing a Semitic language with modified Egyptian hieroglyphic characters is the Byblos Syllabic inscriptions (Eighteenth century B.C.), from the city of Byblos on the Phoenician coast. This script is described as a "syllabary [that] is clearly inspired by the Egyptian hieroglyphic system, and in fact is the most important link known between the hieroglyphs and the Canaanite alphabet." Interestingly enough, most Byblos Syllabic texts were written on copper plates. Thus, it would not be unreasonable to describe the Byblos Syllabic texts as a Semitic language written on metal plates in "reformed Egyptian characters," which is precisely what the Book of Mormon describes."

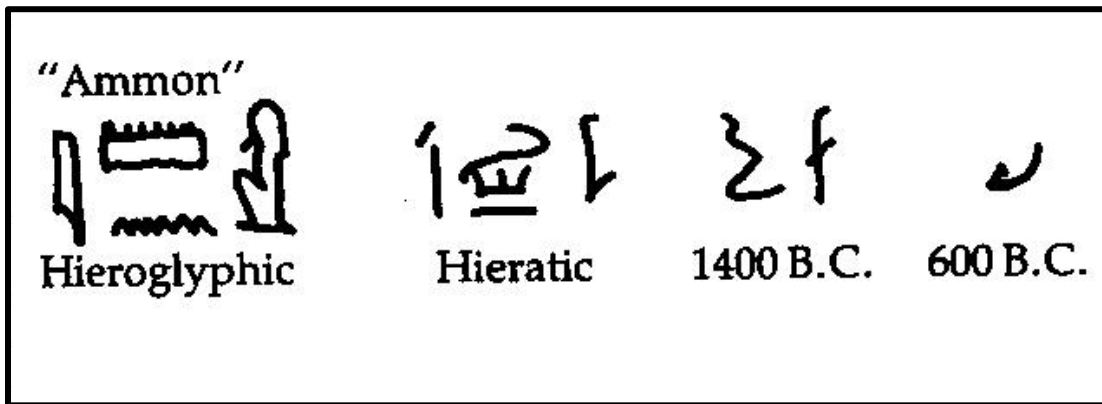
[William Hamblin, "Reformed Egyptian," FARMS,] [See the commentary on Mormon 9:32-34]

1 Nephi 1:2 **The Language of the Egyptians:**

Hugh Nibley notes that it is not surprising the Book of Mormon is written in Egyptian. It's much more concise and easy to handle. Moroni tells us if they could write in Hebrew they would, but it is too large and takes up too much space (Mormon 9:33). At [the time of Lehi]

demotic writing was the official writing. It had only been in for a hundred years, but it was the new shorthand. Everybody was using it because it was very convenient. It was so much shorter than anything else discovered.

In room 35 (I think) of the Cairo Museum there is an inscription. I should have brought along pictures of it. The inscription is in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, Egyptian demotic writing, and Greek. The Greek and Egyptian take up so much space. The demotic takes up just about seven lines. All the other inscriptions take up half a wall, but this one is just like that. It's amazingly economical. That's why they were using it. [Hugh W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3, p. 37]



1 Nephi 1:2 **The learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians (Illustration):** This illustration shows how Egyptian writing would represent the name "Ammon" moving from complicated "Hieroglyphics" on the far left, then to a less complicated "Hieratic," then to the less complicated "1400 B.C.", and finally to an extremely abbreviated Reformed Egyptian at "600 B.C.". [Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, F.A.R.M.S., p. 149]

1 Nephi 1:2 The Learning of the Jews and the Language of the Egyptians:

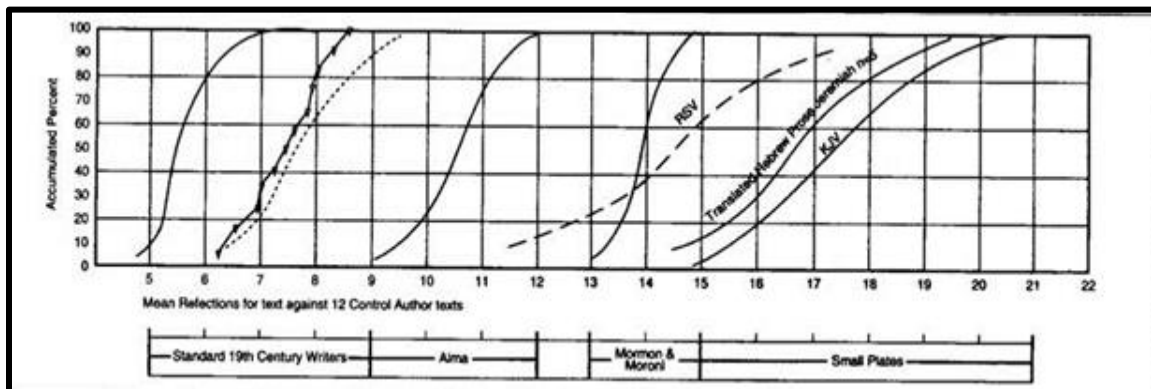
Nephi mentions that he wrote on the small plates according to the "learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2). It is hard to tell just how much the Nephite recordkeepers had altered the written characters used on the small plates or their meaning by the time Mormon took charge of them, but one thing that Moroni tells us is that the changes were linked to "[the Nephite] manner of speech" (Mormon 9:32-34). Modern wordprint analysis has given us some tremendous insights into the difference in speech between the times of the early authors of the small plates, the times of Alma, and the times of Mormon and Moroni.

According to a 1995 F.A.R.M.S. article by John Hilton, wordprinting is based on what appears to be a normal human phenomenon. Without being consciously aware of it, when we freely speak or freely write each of us uses a differing set of personal preferences of the

available word patterns. Many of the wordprint patterns measure to be stable over a lifetime. Even more significant is the finding that the wordprint of a language remains stable even through translation. Thus, although the words of a text might be in English, a wordprint can determine whether the original language was Hebrew or Greek. Wordprint analysis has developed dramatically over the last 14 years and although it is still developing, it is now used to unravel many classical authorship controversies. In wordprint studies related to the Book of Mormon, Hilton has analyzed the major authors and come up with some amazing insights. [John Hilton, "Update of Wordprinting on the English Isaiah Texts and the Book of Mormon," F.A.R.M.S., p. 1]

According to statistics graphed on page 14 of Hilton's paper, the language of the small plates authors was not the same as that of Alma; and the language of Alma was different than that of Mormon and Moroni's time (Hilton, "Update," p. 14). The Book of Mormon reader will find significance in these three distinct language changes not only because of the different time periods these major authors wrote in, but also because of the changes in the geographical setting of the story: (1) The small plates recordkeepers started with Nephi, who came from Jerusalem and settled in the land of Nephi (2 Nephi 5:7-8); they ended with Amaleki who tells of Mosiah's flight from the land of Nephi to a land of Zarahemla (Omni 1:13). (2) Alma₂ lived and preached in the land of Zarahemla (Mosiah 29:44); and (3) Mormon with Moroni were part of a culture tied to the land northward (Mormon 1:2-6).

Moreover, comparing these three groupings of Book of Mormon authors with the translated Hebrew of Jeremiah reveals that while the language of Alma₂ and Mormon differs, that of the authors of the small plates corresponds almost exactly with Jeremiah's Hebrew. Thus, if Hilton's work proves correct and if we follow the ideas of Nibley presented previously, then Nephi recorded on the small plates using reformed Egyptian characters to convey the thoughts of Hebrew language. Furthermore, Nephi or Jacob might have also transcribed at times from existing records written in Hebrew (1 Nephi 1:17, Mormon 9:33). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]



1 Nephi 1:2 **The learning of the Jews (Illustration):** This is a graph showing the wordprint analysis of the major authors of the Book of Mormon as measured against a standard of 19th century writers and the

Hebrew of Jeremiah's time. Notice that from left to right, the language of "Standard 19th Century Writers" differs from that of the writings of "Alma." In turn, "Alma" differs from the writings of "Mormon & Moroni," and the writings of "Mormon & Moroni" differ from the writings on the "Small Plates." [John Hilton, "Update of Wordprinting," p. 1, Figure 8 part 2.]

1 Nephi 1:2 **The Language of the Egyptians:**

Nephi says he wrote in "the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2). John Sorenson explains that most single Egyptian hieroglyphs stood for whole concepts. Signs representing sounds--syllables and individual sounds comparable to our letters--were also used. After [the Egyptians] had evolved a set of letter signs for the principal signs of their language, they might perfectly well have discarded all the rest of their hundreds of hieroglyphic characters . . . but for three thousand years they clung to these multiple characters, and wrote pictographic and phonetic characters jumbled together because of the force of tradition. This type of writing has been labeled the Alphabet-included Logographic System. Not only Egyptian but the Chinese and Mayan [Central American] scripts fit into this category.

[John L. Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, p. 77]

1 Nephi 1:3 **I Know That the Record Which I Make Is True:**

According to Richard Ingebretsen, there is a difference between what is "correct" and what is "true." What may be correct at one moment may actually never be true. This issue becomes somewhat problematic in college. We ask our students to spend hours upon hours studying subjects which may prove to be incorrect in coming years. The process by which mankind seeks knowledge often brings us to a correct answer but not necessarily to the true answer. Still, it would be wrong to ask people to quit learning because of the fear that what they are studying may not be true. The very process by which mankind seeks scientific knowledge demands that hypotheses be developed and then discarded if proven false (or accepted if proven true). Until this delineation occurs, it is impossible to know what is truth or error in the secular world.

However, Joseph Smith restored the principle that truth comes from God through revelation. Thus, the standard works of the church and modern day revelation are a font of absolute truth. Still, with this knowledge, we spend little time studying these Divine sources. John A. Widtsoe said,

It is a paradox that men will gladly devote time every day for many years to learn a science or art; yet will expect to win a knowledge of the Gospel which comprehends all sciences and arts, through perfunctory glances at books or occasional listening to sermons. (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 1951)

The point is well taken. As we study the gospel we come to a pure knowledge of truth. This does not mean we should abandon biology, mathematics and the arts, for the Gospel envelopes all truth. James E. Talmage, the great educator, scientist, and apostle wrote for his epitaph:

"Within the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is room and place for every truth thus far learned by man, or yet to be made known."

Anything which brings us closer to truth in any discipline brings us closer to God. When science finds a fact that is truth, then it is part of the Gospel. Religion and science have sometimes appeared to have been in conflict. But this conflict is only apparent, for science seeks after truth, and true religion is truth. Science, after all, is man's discerning of a few things that God already knows and controls in the order of the universe.

In John 8:22, the Savior stated, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set your free." As we discover the truth we are set free from the shackles of ignorance and come closer to God. We must always search for truth--first by studying the scriptures and the divine word of God, and then by finding the truths within other disciplines.

[Richard Ingebretsen, Joseph Smith and Modern Astronomy, pp. 51-52] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 3:7; 1 Nephi 5:2; 1 Nephi 5:4; 1 Nephi 5:8; 3 Nephi 14:23]

1 Nephi 1:4 **It Came to Pass:**

This is the first use of this phrase commonly found in the Book of Mormon. Mark Twain joked that if the phrase, 'And it came to pass,' were removed from the Book of Mormon, it would be just a pamphlet. However, the phrase is very typical of ancient texts.

[josephsmith.com.1Nephi]

Hugh Nibley writes:

"Nothing delighted the critics more than the monotonous repetition of 'it came to pass' at the beginning of thousands of sentences in the Book of Mormon. Here again is something that Western tradition found completely unfamiliar. Instead of punctuation, the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon divides up its phrases by introducing each by an 'and,' 'behold,' 'now,' or 'It came to pass' Simply outrageous--as English literature, but it is standard Egyptian practice. Egyptian historical texts, Grapow points out, 'begin in monotonous fashion' always with the same stock words; at some periods every speech is introduced with the unnecessary 'I opened my mouth.' Dramatic texts are held together by the constant repetition of Khpr-n, 'It happened that' or 'It came to pass.' In Egyptian these expressions were not merely adornments, as Grapow points out, they are a grammatical necessity and may not be omitted. Paul Humbert has traced the origin of prophetic biblical expressions to archaic oracular formulas. At any rate they are much commoner in Egyptian than in the Bible, just as they are much commoner in the Book of Mormon. However bad they are in English, they are nothing to be laughed

at as Egyptian." (Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 29)

1 Nephi 1:4 In the Commencement of the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah:

In 1 Nephi 10:4 Nephi writes that "even *six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem*, a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews--even a Messiah, or in other words, a Savior of the world." In the title and superscription to the book of Third Nephi we find the following:

The book of Nephi the son of Nephi, who was the son of Helaman. And Helaman was the son of Helaman, who was the son of Alma, who was the son of Alma, being a descendant of Nephi who was the son of Lehi, *who came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah*, the king of Judah.

This would place the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem and the first year of the reign of Zedekiah at an approximate date of 600 B.C. (realizing that the BC-AD system might be chronologically skewed a few years and that some calendar "years" are different in length than others). Cleon Skousen notes the following:

This date [600 B.C.] for Zedekiah was ridiculed when the Book of Mormon was first published in 1830 because secular chronologists had decided that the first year of the reign of King Zedekiah was 553 B.C. (B. H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985, pp. 2-3). Today, however, the chronologists have gradually changed their date until now they are designating 598 B.C. as the correct one. This honest attempt to persist in their research so as to accurately target the proper date for the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, has now brought these scholars 45 years closer to the date divinely revealed in the American scripture. They have only two more years to go. [W. Cleon Skousen, *Days of the Living Christ*, Vol. 1, p. xxx]

Note* Book of Mormon readers should not be too upset by a cultural detail such as the date of Lehi's departure from Jerusalem still being a matter of debate and continued study. A number of dates for Lehi's departure from Jerusalem have been proposed, along with varying lengths of "years," and even the idea that the "600 years" was only considered an approximate span of time. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on Alma 13:25; see Appendix A]

1 Nephi 1:4 In the Commencement of the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah:

It is interesting that the phrase "in the commencement of" does not show up at any place in the Bible as the word "commencement" is never used (see *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*). Nevertheless, a parallel word "beginning" occurs 106 times (54 times in the Old Testament and 55 times in the New Testament--see *Strong's Concordance*, p. 115). The phrase "in the beginning of" has a number of biblical occurrences, however it is most interesting that of the seven references used to denote the beginning of some specific year or

reign, five of them occur in the book of Jeremiah. Nephi will note later on when he acquires the records kept by Laban that these records would contain writings "down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Nephi 5:12) and also "many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah" (1 Nephi 5:13). The phrase "[In] the commencement of" is used 31 times in the Book of Mormon, mainly in the books of First Nephi (3), Alma (19), Helaman (3), and Third Nephi (6). Thus it seems that the Nephite record keepers might have been influenced by what was originally found in the records kept during the time of Jeremiah. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note* It is interesting that the historical books (the books of 1st & 2nd Kings and 1st and 2nd Chronicles) are all conspicuously lacking the phrase "in the beginning of." Cleon Skousen notes the following concerning these books:

As the compiler of the book of Chronicles declares, "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." (1 Chronicles 29:29). Tragically, all three of these magnificent scriptures have been lost. However, before they disappeared certain unknown compilers extracted material from them to create the six books known to us as: The First Book of Samuel; The Second Book of Samuel; The First Book of Kings; The Second Book of Kings; The First Book of Chronicles; The Second Book of Chronicles.

Nevertheless, it is extremely important to appreciate that these six books are *historical* compilations of a later date and are not the original writing of God's inspired prophets except as the compilers used their original material verbatim. Of course, two of the books do bear the name of Samuel and it is likely that much of the first and second books of Samuel was drawn from that prophet's writings; however, even these two books were originally called a part of the books of the kings. Not until long after their creation were they allowed to carry the name of the prophet Samuel. (Adam Clarke *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, pp. 204-205)

A careful study of these six historical books will disclose occasional tampering and editing by the ancient scribes. They were much more inclined to do this when copying "historical" books than when engaged in transcribing the inspired writings of a prophet who had originally recorded his material under the enveloping influence of direct revelation. (Adam Clarke *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, p. 269)

[W. Cleon Skousen, The Fourth Thousand Years, pp. 2-3]

1 Nephi 1:4 In the Commencement of the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah (Smith Scenario):

Although Nephi doesn't actually begin recording on the small plates until between 30 and 40 years after Lehi left Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:28-34), Nephi's story begins "in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Nephi 1:4). Do we know when

Zedekiah's reign actually began? According to Robert Smith, in 604 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar pushed his Babylonian kingdom across Syria, down through Palestine and right up to the gateway of Egypt, which left the Pharaoh no power to move out of Egypt (2 Kings 24:7). In the process of sweeping westward, Nebuchadnezzar had subjugated Judah and put the Jews under tribute. For three years Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, paid his tribute to Babylon. Then, in 601 B.C., the Babylonians attempted to conquer Egypt and were repulsed. Pharaoh Necho then chased the Babylonian army to Philistia and conquered Gaza. This apparently encouraged Jehoiakim to rebel against the Babylonians and move back toward Pharaoh Necho, who had put Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah in the first place. Although Babylon was incensed, it was two or three years before they got around to settling the score with Judah because of pressing Egyptian campaigns.

When Jehoiakim finally revolted against Babylonian rule, the local Babylonian-controlled army units attempted but failed to control the rebellion. Nebuchadnezzar then sent a contingent of Babylonian troops and ordered his nearby tributaries to join them in attacking Judah. Nebuchadnezzar's army arrived in Judah in late December of 598 B.C. and immediately laid siege to Jerusalem. As the defense of Jerusalem stiffened, the siege was severely tightened, cutting off all food supplies. King Jehoiakim either tried to escape or otherwise exposed himself at a point where his defenses were weak, and the Babylonians captured him. The scripture says, "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon . . . bound [Jehoiakim] in fetters to carry him to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6). But the trip never took place because Jehoiakim, who was only 36 years of age at this time (2 Chronicles 36:5), unexpectedly died or was killed. His body was cast out on the ground and then dragged away and buried without pomp or lamentation, beyond the gates of Jerusalem. All this happened just as Jeremiah had predicted (Jeremiah 22:18-19; 36:30).

The siege continued, however, and the dead king's eighteen-year-old son Jehoiachin (Coniah) reigned in his father's stead for three months and ten days (2 Kings 24:8; 2 Chronicles 36:9).

At the end of this time, the leaders of the people decided to cease resisting in order to save the city from being ravaged and the people from starving. On March 16, 597 B.C., "Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers" (2 Kings 24:12). As a result of this surrender, the Babylonians did not destroy the city. The punishment consisted of limited looting and the taking of hostages. At this time, Nebuchadnezzar took only the smaller gold and silver vessels from the temple and immediately upon the capture of Jerusalem, only deported 3,023 Jews (Jeremiah 52:28). Later, the scriptures say that he rounded up and carried away "all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths (2 Kings 24:14). Ezekiel is believed to have been in this group. The young king Jehoiachin was carted off to Babylon and held in some type of imprisonment for 37 years before a later king of Babylon would finally bring him out and allow him the relative freedom of other Jews (Jeremiah 52:31-34).

In the place of Jehoiachin, Nebuchadnezzar left as ruling governor of the land a man known to us as Zedekiah. He was the uncle of Jehoiachin, and his Jewish name was Mattaniah (2 Kings 24:17), but the king of Babylon changed it to Zedekiah. He was 21 when he was placed on the throne on April 22, 597 B.C. However, he might not have started his official reign until at least October 6 of that year, or on April 1 of the following year (596 B.C.). The Bible uses various methods of reckoning. [Robert Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure", F.A.R.M.S., 1984, p. 14] [See Appendix A]

1 Nephi 1:4 **In the Commencement of the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah (Pratt Scenario):**

John Pratt writes that in the beginning narrative of the Book of Mormon, the calling of Lehi as a prophet, his warning to the Jews that Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and his subsequent departure from Jerusalem with his family into the wilderness is linked to the time of the reign of Zedekiah. Certain prophecies found within the text also link the time of Lehi's departure as being "six hundred years" (1 Nephi 19:8) from the birth of Christ. Thus it is important for the reader to understand the historical and chronological background concerning the "reign of Zedekiah" in order to evaluate the various chronological theories which have been proposed.

The Historical Setting

The events surrounding the destruction of Lehi's Jerusalem are well-founded chronologically because they are described in both the Babylonian record and the Biblical account. Each acts as a second witness of the other. Both histories complement each other on the key issues relevant to this question, with each filling in details left out by the other. The great contribution of the Babylonian account is that it provides an absolute chronological framework for the entire period. It is absolute because the Babylonians kept records of where the planets were among the constellations. When those observations are recalculated by computer and compared to the traditional historical dates for that period, they are found to be in excellent agreement.^{xxvi} Such astronomical observations provide the firmest dating of any method known. With that in mind, let us review the history of Jerusalem based on the combined Biblical and Babylonian accounts.

The Reign of Jehoiakim

Jehoiakim was the king of Judah when the conflicts between Judah and Babylon began. The first year of the reigns of Jehoiakim began in 608 B.C.^{xxvii} At that time Egypt was the dominant force over the Syro-Palestine area; in fact, Pharaoh Necho had placed Jehoiakim on the throne (see 2 Kings 23:34, 2 Chronicles 36:4).

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the prophets began to predict captivity and destruction unless the people repented. Jeremiah prophesied that Jerusalem would be

depopulated and destroyed: "this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant" (Jeremiah 26:9).

Another prophet named Urijah prophesied similarly (Jeremiah 26:20). The people of Jerusalem were shocked at such predictions, which seemed impossible to be fulfilled, because Jerusalem had always been a stronghold. Even when the Assyrians had conquered the rest of the area over a century earlier, they had not been able to conquer Jerusalem. Thus, the people mocked these prophets and sought to take away their lives. Jeremiah's life was finally spared, but when Urijah fled to Egypt, Jehoiakim had him brought back and executed (Jeremiah 26:21-23).

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Babylon's spreading dominion met Egypt head on at the Battle of Carchemish, an Egyptian stronghold north of Jerusalem in Syria (Jeremiah 46:2). There, in May-June of 605 B.C.,^{xxxviii} Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince of Babylon, defeated Necho. Nebuchadnezzar immediately went to each of the countries which had been under Egyptian rule and took a few captives from among their princes,^{xxix} apparently without further battle. Daniel was among that first group deported to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-6).^{xxx} In August, Nebuchadnezzar received word of his father's death, and he returned to Babylon and was crowned king in September 605 B.C.^{xxxi}

The First Destruction of Jerusalem

According to a Babylonian account, during the next year each of the kings of Syro-Palestine (which included Jehoiakim) appeared before Nebuchadnezzar and paid him an annual tribute.^{xxxii} The Old Testament records that Jehoiakim paid the tribute for three years (2 Kings 24:1) and the Babylonian record confirms that for the three years of 604, 603 and 602 B.C. the tribute was collected in November-December.^{xxxiii} When it came time to collect the tribute in the next year, Egypt and Judah rebelled. The Babylonian record states that beginning in November 601 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar fought a great war with Egypt, which he barely won, with both sides suffering heavy casualties.^{xxxiv} The Bible states that after Jehoiakim had served Nebuchadnezzar for three years, then he turned and rebelled against him. And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets." (2 Kings 24:1-2)

Thus, while Nebuchadnezzar was personally at war in Egypt, his vassal kingdoms of Syro-Palestine were punishing Jerusalem for Jehoiakim's rebellion. The destruction they inflicted upon Judah in November-December 601 B.C. was severe enough that, as stated in the above quotation, it was said to have fulfilled the words of the prophets that Jerusalem would be destroyed. This was the first destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. This destruction has generally been entirely overlooked in histories of this period, so let us not confuse it with the well-known second and final destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon over thirteen years later in 587 B.C.

For an account of the last three years of Jehoiakim's reign which followed, the Bible refers us to other books no longer extant (2 Kings. 24:5, 2 Chronicles 36:8), but fortunately the Jewish historian Josephus and other Jewish traditions fill in the gap, presumably because they had access to those books. They state that three years later (in December 598 B.C.) Jehoiakim again refused to pay the tribute.^{xxxv} This time Nebuchadnezzar marched to the city and convinced the Sanhedrin to lower Jehoiakim down over the wall to prevent a battle. Nebuchadnezzar bound him in fetters (2 Chronicles 36:6), paraded him before various cities of Judah, and then slew him and threw his corpse to the dogs,^{xxxvi} thus fulfilling a prophecy of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 22:18-19).

Nebuchadnezzar then selected Jehoiakim's son Jeconiah to be the new king, changing his name to Jehoiachin. He then returned to Babylon, taking with him some 3,000 more captives from the upper class, including Ezekiel.^{xxxvii} After arriving in Babylon, his advisers convinced him that it was too dangerous to let Jehoiakim's son reign, so he returned to Jerusalem and demanded Jehoiachin's surrender. On Saturday, 10 March 597 B.C. (on our calendar),^{xxxviii} after a reign of only three months and ten days (2 Chronicles 36:9), Jehoiachin submitted without resistance, and spent the rest of his life in Babylon. The Babylonian record then states merely that Nebuchadnezzar "captured the city,"^{xxxix} and the Bible confirms that the captivity was so complete that "all Jerusalem" was deported, with over 10,000 captives being taken to Babylon, including all of the wealthy:

And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. (2 Kings 24:14-17)

Note that even though so many inhabitants of Jerusalem were taken into exile at this time, there was no major battle and the city was not destroyed. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar chose Mattaniah, being Jehoiakim's brother and Jehoiachin's uncle, to be the new king and changed his name to be Zedekiah.

Zedekiah ruled over the poor who were left in Jerusalem for just over ten years. During that time Jeremiah prophesied that the taking of captives was essentially over. Comparing the inhabitants of Judah to figs, the Lord declared through him that all of the good figs worth keeping had already been taken to Babylon, and those left behind were the rotten ones (Jeremiah 24:1-10). He clearly stated that the next time Nebuchadnezzar returned, he would not show mercy, but the inhabitants would either be killed by famine, pestilence or the sword,

or would be scattered (see Jeremiah 21:7). The prophet Ezekiel in Babylon was a second witness to this prophecy. In a dramatic demonstration before the city, he shaved off his hair and beard growth of over a year and divided them into three parts. He burned one part, chopped up another part with a knife, and scattered the third part in the wind (Ezekiel 4:5-6, 5:1-2). The Lord explained that the demonstration represented the fate of Jerusalem:

A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. (Ezekiel 5:12)

An important point for this article is that the number of captives that would be taken after Zedekiah began to reign in 597 B.C. was not enough to be represented at all in the symbolism just described. In fact, the Lord specifically warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem through two witnesses that if they did not repent, the next time they should not expect anything as merciful as being deported.

The Second Destruction of Jerusalem

These prophecies of pestilence, famine and destruction were fulfilled in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, after Nebuchadnezzar had laid siege to the Jerusalem for a year and a half. The great city of Jerusalem fell in June of 587 B.C. (Jeremiah 39:1-8). Most of the inhabitants who had not already died of starvation or pestilence were then either killed by the sword or scattered. Zedekiah was bound in fetters and taken back to Babylon, along with a few other captives (about 800, see Jeremiah 52:29). The houses of the inhabitants were burned and the wall of the city broken down (Jeremiah 39:8). About a month later the temple was also burned to the ground (2 Kings 25:8-9), finishing the complete destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

The dates of the two destructions and four deportations of captives are summarized as follows:

<u>Year B.C.</u>	<u>Event</u>
608	1st year of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah prophesied Jerusalem's destruction and desolation
605	Babylon replaced Egypt as world power and took control of Judah. A few princes Taken captive (First deportation).
Dec. 601	Jehoiakim rebelled; Jerusalem partially destroyed (First destruction).
Dec. 598	Jehoiakim executed, Jehoiachin began reign. (Second deportation).
Mar. 597	Third deportation (of over 10,000) to Babylon. Then Zedekiah began to reign.
June 587	Jerusalem destroyed (Second destruction) and Fourth Deportation of only a few.

[John P. Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy of the Birth of Christ, <http://www.meridianmagazine.com/articles/000331sixhundred.html>] [See the commentary on

1 Nephi 10:4]

1 Nephi 1:4 **The reign of Zedekiah (Illustration – not shown):** The Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar at the time of Zedekiah. [Adapted from W. Cleon Skousen, Treasures from the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 1000]



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1 Nephi 1:4 **The reign of Zedekiah (Illustration):** The Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar at the time of Zedekiah

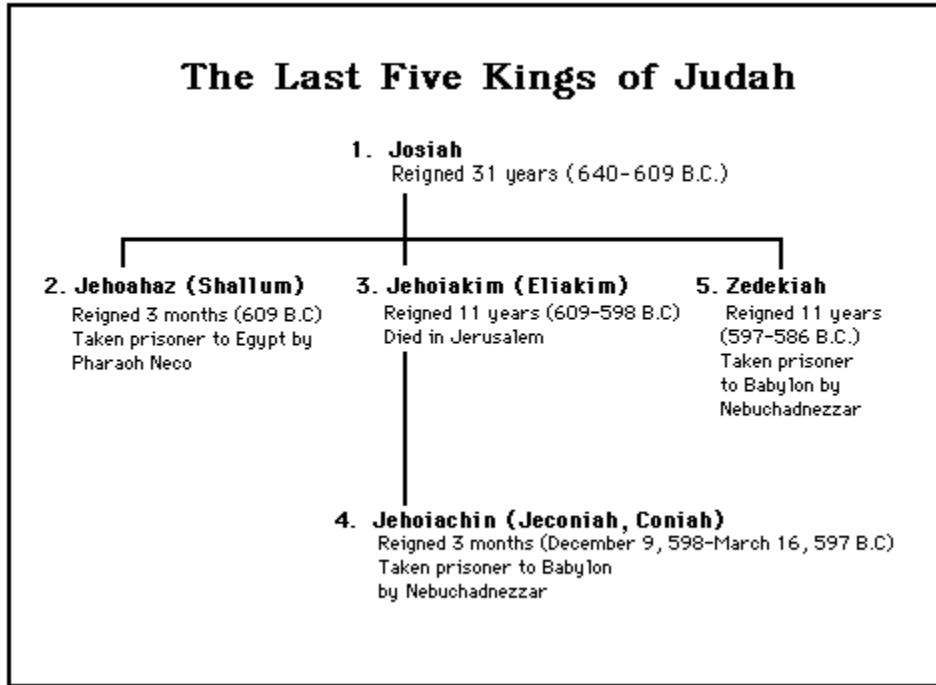
1 Nephi 1:4 **In the Commencement of the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah (Textual Dating):**

According to the footnote on page one of the current edition of the Book of Mormon, "the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Nephi 1:4) happened "about 600 B.C.," which if taken with the other chronological references means sometime in the year 600 B.C. This proposed date creates a serious problem because as Robert Smith explains, among scholars there is not the slightest question about the absolute status of 597 B.C. as the year when Nebuchadnezzar II first placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah. [Robert F. Smith, "Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East," F.A.R.M.S., p. 1] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 10:4] [See Appendix A]

According to Sidney Sperry, the Brethren who first presented the chronological data in the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon did a remarkably good job, considering the complexity of their task. However, some errors still remain. [Sidney Sperry, Book of Mormon Chronology,

preface].

(BKC [OT] p. 584)



Genealogy of Zedekiah

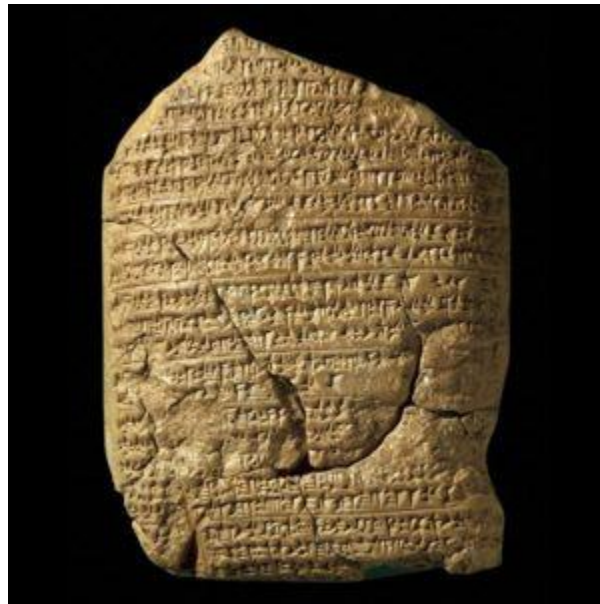
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1 Nephi 1:4 **Zedekiah (Illustration):** This diagrammatic chart shows the genealogy of Zedekiah

1 Nephi 1:4 **Zedekiah (Illustration – not shown):** This diagrammatic chart shows the genealogy of Zedekiah (Mattaniah) and the relationship between him and Jehoiakim, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiachin. [Tyndale House, The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Vol. 3, p. 1678]

1 Nephi 1:4 **The First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah (Spackman Theory):**

Randall Spackman states that the "first year of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Nephi 1:4) was the first year of Lehi's formal calling as a prophet and not necessarily when Lehi left. It is not known whether Lehi was called in the commencement of the first year of Zedekiah's actual rule (beginning very shortly after Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem on March 10, 597 B.C.E.) or in the beginning of the first year following Zedekiah's formal coronation (which probably occurred in October 597 B.C.E.), or if "commencement" is just a general term. Whatever the case, the year 597 B.C.E. has been verified by many scholars and the ancient Babylonian Chronicles (note* these are cuneiform tablets written in journal form from 626 to 539 B.C.). The tablets were translated in 1956. This apparently represents the earliest time when Lehi might have departed Jerusalem. [Randall Spackman, "Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology," F.A.R.M.S., p. 7] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 10:4] [See Appendix A]



Babylonian Chronicle

cojs.org

1 Nephi 1:4 The first year of the reign of Zedekiah (Illustration): This Babylonian Chronicle text tells how Nebuchadrezzar appointed "a king of his own choice", i.e. Zedekiah (Mattaniah), instead of Jehoiachin after the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem in March 597 B.C. [Tyndale House, [The Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#), Vol. 3, p. 1679]

1 Nephi 1:4 In the Commencement of the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah (Allen Theory):

If the phrase "in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah" (1 Nephi 1:4) marks the time of Lehi's departure from Jerusalem, and if Nephi marked time by using a 365-day calendar year like ours, then Joseph Allen proposes the following:

Is it possible that when Nebuchadnezzar changed the name of the 597 B.C. King Mattaniah to Zedekiah, the pattern had already been established when Nebuchadnezzar entered into Jerusalem in the year 601 B.C.? Is it possible that the name "Zedekiah" became a title and that Jehoiakim and Jehochin may also have been given the name or title of Zedekiah [but didn't use it]? After all, the Egyptians had changed Jehoiakim's name from Eliakim eight years earlier when they were in control (2 Chronicles 36:4). [Joseph Allen, [Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon](#), p. 24] [See also the commentary on 1 Nephi 10:4] [See Appendix A]

CHRONOLOGY OF KINGS OF JUDAH WHO WERE NAMED ZEDEKIAH

by Dale Parkes

608 BC	<p>First year of reign of Zedekiah I / Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 27:1-3, 12) He is son of good King Josiah, and is 25 years old Eliakim is his Hebrew name Jehoiakim is the name given him by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt He reigns 11 years in Jerusalem and "was evil" Many prophet begin to testify of the destruction of Jerusalem Jeremiah, Urijah, Lehi, and others (Jeremiah 26:12-24) Lehi's "First Vision"? (1 Nephi 1)</p>
606-604 BC	<p><i>The first wave of Hebrews taken from Jerusalem to Babylon</i> (those with scholarly potential like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) taken from Jerusalem to Babylon for training. (BD page 639)</p>
604 BC	<p>Fifth year of the reign of Zedekiah I / Jehoiakim First year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign in Babylon Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh Necho of Egypt</p>
601 BC	<p>Zedekiah I / Jehoiakim rebels by ceasing tribute payments to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1-2) <u>Lehi and family leave Jerusalem at Passover (April 8, 601 BC)</u></p>
598 BC	<p>Zedekiah I / Jehoiakim died (2 Kings 24:6) OR was carried into captivity in Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6-7) Zedekiah II / Jehoiachin crowned He is son of Jehoiakim Crowned at age of 18 years, he rules only 3 months Replaced by his uncle, Mattaniah, he is later carried into Babylon In 581 BC he is emaciated and promoted (2 Kings 25:27-30) <i>The First Destruction of Jerusalem</i> (2 Kings 24:10-16) The wealthy classes and the riches of Jerusalem (including those of the temple) are taken to Babylon Zedekiah III / Mattaniah crowned Also a son of King Josiah, and brother to Jehoiakim—He 21 years old</p>
593 BC	<p>Nephi, having reached Bountiful by the seashore, prophesies that Jerusalem will "yet" be destroyed (1 Nephi 17:43)</p>
587 BC	<p><i>The Final Destruction of Jerusalem</i> (2 Kings 25:1-6) The city and temple are burned and broken down completely (2 Kings 25:8-21) only the very poorest people remain to tend the land Zedekiah III / Mattaniah, age 32, rebels against Nebuchadnezzar, his sons are killed before his eyes, he is blinded, and carried into Babylonian captivity</p>
586-536 BC	<p>Mulek, a son of Zedekiah III / Mattaniah, is born</p>

1 Nephi 1:4 **In the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah (Allen Theory) [Illustration]:**
 Chronology of Kings of Judah Who Were Named Zedekiah. by Dale Parkes. [Joseph L. Allen, "Zedekiah I,"
 in The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest, Vol. III, Issue III (September 2001), p. 11]

1 Nephi 1:4 **In the First Year of the Reign of Zedekiah (Allen Theory):**

In a letter to the editor of *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest* we find the following:

In the last issue's "A 600-Year Prophecy" Dr. Allen states, "While there is no textual substantiation for this presumption, it makes sense that if Nebuchadnezzar changed

Mattaniah's name [to Zedekiah], he likely changed Jehoiachim's name as well." In response to this statement, Loyal Baker submitted the following:

I would suggest that the following verses offer verification that his proposal is correct. Note the curious wording used in Jeremiah 27:1-13:

"In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying. Thus saith the Lord to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, and send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, . . . by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah; . . . [and say that] I have given all these lands unto the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; . . . I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah . . . saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon . . . and live."

These words came to Jeremiah "in the beginning" of the reign of Jehoiakim," yet the servants from other nations came to Jerusalem to see "Zedekiah king of Judah." And what was the message? To serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who became king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign (Jeremiah 25:1). Just before this text, in the last verses of chapter 26, Jehoiakim's ties with Egypt are clearly manifest. The only way (or at least the cleanest way) these verses make sense as they are written is that Jehoiakim's name was changed to 'Zedekiah' under Nebuchadnezzar."

[Loyal Baker, Fruit Height, UT, "Letters to the Editor," *The Book of Mormon Archaeological Digest*, Volume II, Issue III, 1999, p. 15]

Note* Jeremiah's chapters were scrambled. Jeremiah could have been speaking from the time of Zedekiah and referring back to earlier times. So this argument might not hold water. But then again it begs some questions that must be considered. Why would Nebuchadnezzar change the name of Mattaniah to Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17), (which means "Yahweh is (my) righteousness"^{xl}) in order to show vassalage to Babylon? Perhaps he was reinforcing the prophecies of Jeremiah, a prophet of Yahweh, in which the king had been warned to submit to Babylon. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

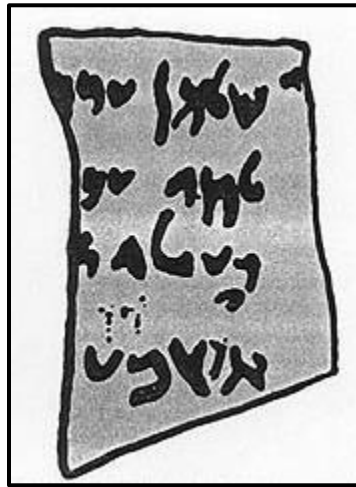
1 Nephi 1:4 **Lehi:**

Hunter and Ferguson report that the very name "Lehi" (see 1 Nephi 1:4) was discovered on a piece of broken pottery that was found in 1940 at the site of King Solomon's copper refineries near the northern end of the Red Sea. It dates from the fifth or fourth century B.C. [Milton R. Hunter and T. Stuart Ferguson, Ancient America and the Book of Mormon, p. 75]

According to the *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, the meaning of the name "Lehi" is

"jawbone" (Judges 15:9, 14,19; 'Ramath-lehi' in Judges 15:17). Lehi was the name of the place in Judah where Samson slew 1,000 men with the jawbone of an ass. The site is unknown. [Tyndale House, The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Vol. 2, p. 895] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:9]

Of interest to Book of Mormon readers is that the "jawbone" glyph was used in Mesoamerica to identify an ancient patriarchal figure. [See the commentary on Lehi's dream of the Tree of Life -- 1 Nephi 8]



1 Nephi 1:4 **Lehi (Illustration):** Potsherd found in 1938 on the Gulf of Aqaba, dating from approximately the time of Lehi, and bearing the name *Lehi* (from BASOR, #80, 1940). [Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, F.A.R.M.S., p. 169]

1 Nephi 1:4 **Lehi:**

Verneil Simmons explains that Joseph Smith has been accused of inventing the names of "Lehi" (1 Nephi 1:4) and "Nephi" (1 Nephi 1:1), yet both appear in the Old Testament. Lehi is a place name described in Judges 15 as the locality of the story of Samson. It was a land, or perhaps a village, close to the Philistine border somewhere southwest of Jerusalem. In recent years a hill in that area has been found by modern archaeologists to have the Arabic name of Khirket Beit Lei. The name can be translated as "Ruin of the House of Lehi." A tomb discovered in this hill contained inscriptions scratched in the soft stone walls, written in the Old Hebrew script of the sixth century B.C. If Lehi's ancestral lands lay in the area of Samson's homeland, then he would have had easy access to the highway leading to the Red Sea.

[Verneil W. Simmons, Peoples, Places and Prophecies, p. 64]

1 Nephi 1:4 **Lehi:**

According to Lynn and Hope Hilton, of all the subjects we have advanced concerning the Lehi Trail, the one that evokes the greatest surprise is the Lihyanites. There was an ancient Arab tribe with that name. . . . Their name, "Lihyan," means in English "the people of Lehi." . . . They rose to political prominence in the fifth century B.C., from the former Dedan civilization.

[Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, p. 77]

It is interesting that the Dedan nation replaced the Midian nation. Both were located near the tip of the Red Sea.



Location of Midian heartofwisdom.com



Location of Dedan trackingbibleprophecy.com

It was to the land of Midian and to the tent of Jethro that Moses fled (Exodus 2:15). This former land of Midian (or Dedan) is also the location proposed for the valley of Lemuel, to which Lehi fled (1 Nephi 2:14).

[Lynn Hilton, Personal Communication] [See the commentary and illustration on 1 Nephi 2:14]

1 Nephi 1:4 **Lehi:**

According to Hugh Nibley, Lehi was a man of *three* cultures, just like Moses and Lehi's ancestor Joseph. He was educated not only in "the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Nephi 1:2), but in the ways of the desert as well. . . . The dual culture of Egypt and

Israel would have been impossible without the all-important Arab to be the link between, just as trade between the two nations was unthinkable without the Bedouin to guide their caravans through the deserts.

One might, in a speculative mood, even detect something of Lehi's personal history in the names he gave to his sons. The first two (Laman and Lemuel -- 2 Nephi 2:5) have Arabic names--do they recall his early days in the caravan trade? The second two (Sam and Nephi -- 2 Nephi 2:5) have Egyptian names, and indeed they were born in the days of his prosperity. The last two, born amid tribulations in the desert, were called with fitting humility, Jacob and Joseph (1 Nephi 18:7). Whether the names of the first four were meant, as those of the last two sons certainly were (2 Nephi 2:1, 3:1), to call to mind the circumstances under which they were born, the names are certainly a striking indication of their triple heritage, and it was certainly the custom of Lehi's people to name their children with a purpose. (Helaman 3:21, 5:6)
[Hugh Nibley, An Approach to the Book of Mormon, 1957, p. 63]

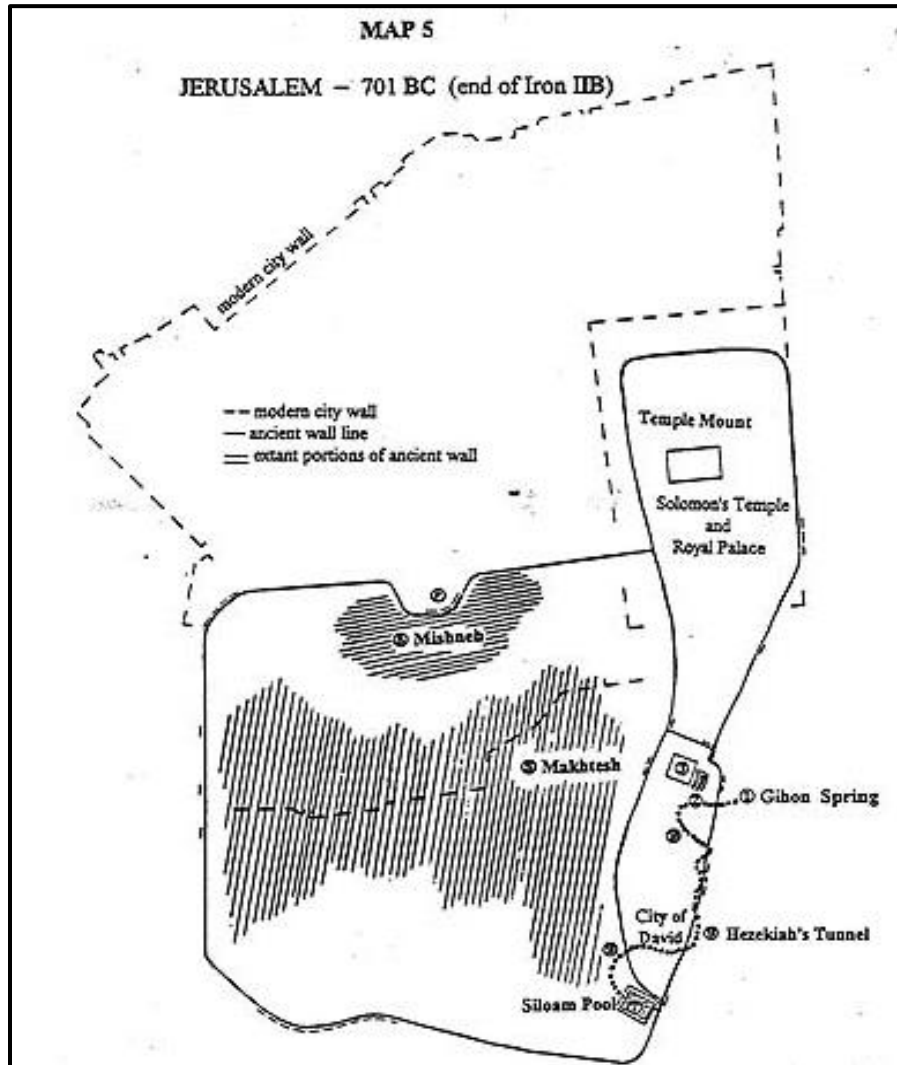
1 Nephi 1:4 My Father, Lehi, Having Dwelt AT Jerusalem:

Kelly Ogden writes that according to 1 Nephi 1:4, Lehi and his family were living "at" Jerusalem. (See also 1 Nephi 1:7; 2 Nephi 25:6.) The preposition "at" in this case could mean on, in, within, close by, or near. Lehi could have lived several miles away and still lived at Jerusalem. It is recorded at least 33 times throughout the Book of Mormon that Lehi and Nephi went out from "the *land* of Jerusalem." Any satellite towns or villages that surrounded larger population or political centers were regarded in ancient times as belonging to those larger centers.
[D. Kelly Ogden, "Answering the Lord's Call," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, p. 19]

1 Nephi 1:4 My Father, Lehi, Having Dwelt at Jerusalem in All His Days:

Nephi notes that Lehi had lived his entire life at Jerusalem until he was called by the Lord to flee into the wilderness (see 1 Nephi 1:4). According to David and JoAnn Seely, we do not know when or under what circumstances Lehi's ancestors left the land of their inheritance in Manasseh and moved to Jerusalem, but several times in the Old Testament mention is made of members of different tribes residing in Jerusalem. At the time of Asa (898 B.C.; see 2 Chronicles 15:9) and later during the days of Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.; see 2 Chronicles 30:25), there is mention of descendants of Manasseh in Jerusalem. Perhaps they had moved there to participate in the religious reforms of these two kings, or perhaps the latter group had fled from the destruction of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. Archaeological evidence suggests that Jerusalem grew dramatically during the reign of Hezekiah, probably because of the influx of the refugees from the north. This growth in population was accommodated with the construction of two new residential and commercial quarters in Jerusalem called the *Mishneh* (where Huldah

resided; see 2 Kings 22:14) and *Makhtesh* (see Zephaniah 1:10).^{xi} [David Rolph and JoAnn H. Seely, "Lehi & Jeremiah: Prophets, Priests & Patriarchs," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, FARMS, Vol 8, Num 2, 1999, p. 27]



1 Nephi 1:4 **My father, Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days (Illustration):** Map 5 JERUSALEM - 701 B.C. In 705 B.C., Hezekiah king of Judah "rebelled" against Assyrian control, and refused to pay the tribute to the Assyrians which had been agreed to by his unwise father king Ahaz. Hezekiah undertook massive preparations to protect Jerusalem and Judah's other cities against the inevitable Assyrian attack (see 2 Kings 18-19 and 2 Chronicles 32). In Jerusalem, he had the old Siloam channel destroyed because it was outside the city wall and exposed to potential attackers. Then he had an underground tunnel constructed, which brought Gihon's waters (1) through the hill of the City of David to Siloam Pool (7). We call this ancient water system Hezekiah's Tunnel (9). By 701 B.C. he also had Jerusalem's walls repaired and a massive new wall built to surround the exposed neighborhoods of Makhtesh (5) and Mishneh (8). A portion of "Hezekiah's Wall" has been discovered (P), and is visible in today's Jewish Quarter. Jerusalem survived the 701 B.C. Assyrian attack. [Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "The Development of Biblical Jerusalem,"

1998, Map 5, unpublished paper]

1 Nephi 1:4 In All His Days:

The word "days" is a Hebraism meaning *life* (see Genesis 26:1).
[Zarahemla Research Foundation, Study Book of Mormon, p. 3]

1 Nephi 1:4 In That Same Year There Came Many Prophets:

According to Kelly Ogden, the cast of prophets at the time of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah was indeed, as the Book of Mormon says, "many." Lehi, Jeremiah, Huldah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and one Urijah of Kirjath-jearim (Jeremiah 26:20) were all contemporaries.

[D. Kelly Ogden, "Answering the Lord's Call," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, p. 20]

1 Nephi 1:4 In That Same Year There Came Many Prophets:

Nephi mentions that "in that same year [the first year of the reign of Zedekiah] there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed" (1 Nephi 1:4). Does the Bible confirm who these prophets were and if they preached the same message of destruction for Jerusalem? According to an article by John W. Welch, prophetic messages of judgment and destruction were in fact common among the so-called classical prophets of Israel who are known to have been active at this time. For example during Lehi's lifetime, Nahum (ca. 612 B.C.) proclaimed the vengeance of the Lord on his enemies . . . Zephaniah (who also lived during this time) prophesied that God would sweep the earth completely clean . . . Habakkuk (ca. 609-598 B.C.) prophesied during the reign of Jehoiakim of the destruction of the treacherous and of the overconfident

. . . Jeremiah was also similarly active during and after Lehi's day. And indeed, there were undoubtedly many other prophets who arose during this time for whom we have no names (2 Chronicles 36:15-16). . . It was also typical at this time for these prophets to work largely by themselves. They fulfilled "their missions alone as individuals," although this does not imply that they were "detached from the mainstream of Israel's religious tradition."

[John W. Welch, "The Calling of a Prophet" in First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation, p. 35]

1 Nephi 1:4 In That Same Year There Came Many Prophets:

According the Gerald Lund, Ezekiel was contemporary with Lehi and could easily have

been one of those prophets. We know the names of four of the prophets of that day--Lehi, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel. Lehi's call was to lead a colony out of Jerusalem to a promised land. Jeremiah's call was to stay and bear witness of the destruction of Jerusalem. Daniel was called into exile, but he went into the royal courts and there was allowed to get a picture of the grand world view of history. Ezekiel was called to go among the captives and explain to them why this terrible tragedy had happened.

[Gerald N. Lund, "Ezekiel: Prophet of Judgment, Prophet of Promise," in Isaiah and the Prophets , p. 77]

1 Nephi 1:4 There Came Many Prophets, Prophecying unto the People That They Must Repent:

One of the "many prophets" referred to by Nephi as prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed" (1 Nephi 1:4) was Jeremiah. According to David and JoAnn Seely, Jeremiah and Lehi are an interesting study in contrast. Both were prophets, but Lehi was called to leave Jerusalem and deliver his family from destruction, while Jeremiah was called to stay and witness the destruction and exile of his people. . . .The lives of Jeremiah and Lehi are symbolic of different aspects of Israel's relationship with the Lord. Jeremiah's life was a symbol of the justice of God and the impending destruction of Jerusalem. He was commanded not to marry and not to have children, lest they die grievous deaths (see Jeremiah 16:1-4), and he was commanded not to mourn for the people because the Lord had taken away his "lovingkindness and mercies" (Jeremiah 16:5-7). Neither was he allowed to participate in the house of feasting and joy because the day was upon Judah when gladness would cease (see Jeremiah 16:8-9). And yet Jeremiah experienced the mercies of the Lord as his life and that of his scribe Baruch were spared. Jeremiah sought solace and comfort in his relationship with the Lord and prophesied the return and restoration of his people (see Jeremiah 30-31).

Lehi's life illustrated the "tender mercies of the Lord" (1 Nephi 1:20; 2 Nephi 1:2). He was commanded to deliver his family from destruction, to leave Jerusalem, and to inherit another promised land. His family was chosen to be a remnant of the house of Israel that would be preserved from destruction (see 2 Nephi 3:5). And yet Lehi underwent severe trials in the wilderness and experienced the justice of God as he witnessed the apostasy of his sons and looked into the future and saw the terrible destructions of his people. Both prophets rejoiced in their visions of the coming of the Messiah. Jeremiah saw him in terms of justice: he "shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5). Lehi saw him coming in mercy and justice (see 2 Nephi 2:8, 12).



Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch

mudpreacher.org

Jeremiah, in his ministry, longed to flee into the wilderness: "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men" (Jeremiah 9:2). On one occasion in his tent in the wilderness, Lehi began to murmur against the Lord because of his afflictions (see 1 Nephi 16:20), and his family forever remembered Jerusalem with nostalgia.^{xlii}

Although Lehi and his family would relive the Exodus, the course of Jeremiah's life tragically turned out to be a reversal of the exodus. Whereas Moses led his people away from idolatrous Egypt and presided over a people that wandered in the wilderness for forty years until they had purified themselves to enter the promised land, Jeremiah ministered for forty years (627-587 B.C.) to a people who became increasingly wicked until they were expelled from the promised land. Jeremiah was a prophet whose mission can be seen as opposite to that of Moses. . . .

The prophecies of Jeremiah and Lehi have four common central themes: repentance and the impending destruction and exile by the Babylonians; the coming of the Messiah; the future scattering and gathering of Israel; and the eventual restoration of the gospel in the latter days.

Repentance or destruction: Lehi testified to Jerusalem of her "wickedness and . . . abominations" (1 Nephi 1:19), and Jeremiah spelled out what they were. At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim (609 B.C.), Jeremiah delivered a powerful sermon at the temple (see Jeremiah 7:26). He warned his people that the temple would not save them from destruction if they did not repent. Although the sacrificial system of the law of Moses was faithfully being carried out at the temple, it masked the hypocrisy of the people who broke the Ten commandments and worshipped idols. Jeremiah accused his people of stealing, murder, swearing falsely, all manner of idolatry (see Jeremiah 7:9), and of oppressing the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows (see Jeremiah 7:6). The people, on the other hand, trusted that the temple made them invincible. They probably looked back to the reign of Hezekiah when they were delivered from the Assyrian destruction in 701 B.C. by the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army (see 2 Kings 19). The people thought that the Lord would deliver them from the Babylonians. This attitude is reflected in the Book of Mormon by Laman and Lemuel, who never did "believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed" (1 Nephi 2:13; see also Helaman 8:21)

Christ: The prophet Nephi (son of Helaman) taught his people that many Old Testament prophets including Jeremiah had seen the day of the coming of the Messiah and the redemption that he would bring (see Helaman 8:20, 22-23). The writings of Jeremiah in the Bible indeed contain two such prophecies about the coming of the Messiah (see Jeremiah 23:1-8; 33:15-18)--perhaps there were more on the brass plates that are no longer preserved in the Bible. Both prophecies foresaw the day when God will "raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King" who will "reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5; see also 33:15). Interpreters have variously seen these prophecies as pointing to either the first or the second comings of Christ or both.

Scattering and Restoration: When Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith, he read to him a series of Old Testament prophecies to be fulfilled in the restoration. According to Oliver Cowdery, some of these were from Jeremiah including 16:16; 30:18-21; 31:1,6,8,27-28,32-33; 50:4-5.^{xliii} In these passages Jeremiah saw the day when the "hunters" and "fishers" would be sent forth to gather Israel (Jeremiah 16:16); when God would gather Israel to be his people (see Jeremiah 31:1); when "the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto our God (Jeremiah 31:6); when the Lord would "sow" again the land with the seed of the house of Israel and Judah, who would then build and plant (Jeremiah 31:27-28); and when the Lord would "make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31)--in the words of the Lord, "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers" in Egypt, which was written in stone, but a "law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:32,33).^{xliiv}

Lehi delivered to his family a prophecy given by the Lord to Joseph of Egypt that a "righteous branch" of the house of Israel, not the Messiah (2 Nephi 3:5), would be broken off, and in the future a choice seer would be raised out of this lineage (see 2 Nephi 3:6) who would bring many to the knowledge of the covenants made with the fathers (see 2 Nephi 3:7). He

continued that the descendants of Judah and the descendants of Joseph would both write records that would "grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord" (2 Nephi 3:12).

Lehi and Jeremiah both participated in the fulfillment of these prophecies. . . . Though Jeremiah died in obscurity in Egypt, his words were passed down through the ages in the Bible, the writings of the Jews. In 1830 the Book of Mormon was published, and with the publication of the Book of Mormon the records of these two peoples were joined, fulfilling the prophecy of Joseph of Egypt that these records shall grow together" to bring many to the knowledge of the covenants (see 2 Nephi 3:12). Although the will of the Lord was manifested very differently in their lives and writings, Lehi and Jeremiah in the prophetic callings proclaimed to all their witness of Christ.

[David Rolph and JoAnn H. Seely, "Lehi & Jeremiah: Prophets, Priests & Patriarchs," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, FARMS, Vol 8, Num 2, 1999, pp. 26-27, 33-35]

1 Nephi 1 :4 There Came Many Prophets, Propheying unto the People That They Must Repent:

According to David and JoAnn Seely, we may assume that those commissioned by the Lord to prophesy in Jerusalem were acquainted with each other. Orders of the prophets known as the "sons of the prophets" were known in ancient Israel from the time of Saul and Samuel (see 1 Samuel 10:5; 19:20) and at the time of Elijah (see 1 Kings 18:4) and Elisha (see 2 Kings 2:3; 3:11; 4:1,38; 6:1-2). (False prophets were also apparently organized [see 1 Kings 22:6; 2 Kings 23:2; Jeremiah 26:7-8].) It is possible that a group of legitimate prophets also existed in Jerusalem shortly before the exile. . . . Jeremiah was from the tribe of Levi through Aaron (see Jeremiah 1:1) and was descended from the priestly family of Abiathar. . . . Nevertheless, Joseph Smith taught that all of the prophets, presumably including Jeremiah, had the Melchizedek Priesthood.^{xiv} Lehi and his family certainly had the Melchizedek Priesthood, as evidenced by Alma 13, which describes the Nephite priesthood as Melchizedek. It is likely that Lehi and Jeremiah were part of a Melchizedek Priesthood community in Jerusalem, and it is not unlikely that one even received his priesthood authority from the other.

[David Rolph and JoAnn H. Seely, "Lehi & Jeremiah: Prophets, Priests & Patriarchs," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, FARMS, Vol 8, Num 2, 1999, pp. 27-29] [See the commentary on "brethren of the church" in 1 Nephi 4:26]

1 Nephi 1:4 [That] Great City Jerusalem:

The word "that" is found on the Original Manuscript and conforms to the frequency of

use of this phrase in the rest of the Book of Mormon. The word "great" is a Hebraism meaning "important" (see Jeremiah 27:7). [Zarahemla Research Foundation, Study Book of Mormon, p. 3]

1 Nephi 1:4 **The Great City Jerusalem:**

In the Book of Mormon, the city of Jerusalem in Israel was termed a "great city" by Nephi (1 Nephi 1:4; 10:3). Nazareth, the place where Jesus Christ grew up, was called merely a "city" (1 Nephi 11:13). According to John Sorenson, the distinction is significant. The terminology applied by Nephi to Jewish Jerusalem and Nazareth gives us an idea about the size and function of the settlements called cities in Book of Mormon terminology.

Research on cities in the ancient Holy Land helps us grasp the meaning of Nephi's use of the term "city," and perhaps later usage of that word in the Book of Mormon.^{xlvi} Six types of cities have been distinguished for the Iron Age II archaeological period, which extended down to Nephi's day.

1. The royal capital cities, Jerusalem and Samaria (compare Zarahemla, "the capital city," in Helaman 1:17), had a unique status. The former is estimated to have ranged from about 32 acres and 5000 inhabitants in Solomon's day to well over 25,000 on at least 125 acres in Lehi's day. Samaria may have encompassed 170 acres, with a 6.4 acre rectangular acropolis at its center as the formal royal seat. For a comparison in scale, note that Temple Square in Salt Lake City is ten acres in extent.

2. Also called "cities" in the Jewish record were major administrative centers, each over a district of the kingdom; these ranged from 12 to 17 acres in size with population a maximum of a couple of thousand; much of the space was occupied with administrative structures.

3. Secondary administrative centers constituted smaller "cities."

4. Fortified provincial towns were smaller still but boasted a defensive wall, which qualified them as "cities."

5. Fortress outposts were also called "cities," although they were so condensed that they typically included only dwellings for the commander and his staff, administrative buildings, storage space and a small temple (or shrine?).

In addition to these several types of settlements for which the term "city" is used in the Old Testament, there were of course smaller units such as villages.

Overall the meaning of the Hebrew word which has been translated as "city" probably centers on two functions--a site's having been established as a governmental center (including a

temple or cult center as a symbol of royal patronage or presence), and its preparations to be defended militarily. Size had little to do with use of the label; many a "town" or even a "village" could have had more inhabitants than certain cities, but they lacked the crucial criteria to qualify for the name "city."

[John L. Sorenson, "The Settlements of Book of Mormon Peoples," in Nephite Culture and Society, pp. 140-141] [See the commentary on 3 Nephi 9:3]

1 Nephi 1:5 **It Came to Pass:**

This phrase is a rendering of the Hebrew word *vayehee*. Its frequent use in the Book of Mormon is consistent with the frequent use of *vayehee* in the Old Testament Hebrew text. The phrase "it came to pass" is important evidence of Hebrew language structure found in the Book of Mormon. This phrase is found in the ancient Egyptian language and has also been translated from Maya glyphs. [Zarahemla Research Foundation, Study Book of Mormon, p. 4]

1 Nephi 1:6 **There Came a Pillar of Fire and Dwelt upon a Rock:**

According to Thomas Valletta, a pillar, or column, or fire has often been used by the Lord in giving miraculous visions, guidance, and protection to His faithful followers (see Exodus 13:21-22; 14:24; Helaman 5:24, 43). [Thomas R. Valletta ed., The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families, p. 2]



Lehi and the pillar of fire

lds.org

1 Nephi 1:6 **He Saw and Heard Much:**

Question: Are there any other references in the Book of Mormon that might give us a clue as to what Lehi saw and heard in this first recorded vision? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

1 Nephi 1:7 **He Returned to *His Own House* at Jerusalem:**

Keith Christensen asserts that the saying "his own house" connotes a significant situation, for *own* means "peculiar to oneself." While Lehi had "his house" (see 1 Nephi 2:4) presumably for "his" family, he might have also had "his own house" (1 Nephi 1:7) at Jerusalem. This distinction is significant in locating his land of inheritance. Rich men in all ages have had family homes in rural areas and had their own houses in cities for business or politics. Their rural homes, particularly in ancient times, are frequently the places they were born, and the places where their families had lived for generations. For example, Arimathea, situated six miles from Jerusalem, was the home of Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Jesus' body in his own tomb. He was a "rich man" on the ruling Sanhedrin who had not agreed to killing Jesus (Matthew 27:57). What is significant here is that Joseph's tomb was in Jerusalem, indicating that he might have been established there (having a house of "his own" for business), yet his "home" was in or near Arimathea. Lehi could have been in a similar situation.

(B. Keith Christensen, The Unknown Witness, pp. 45-46, unpublished]

1 Nephi 1:7 **He Returned to His Own House at Jerusalem:**

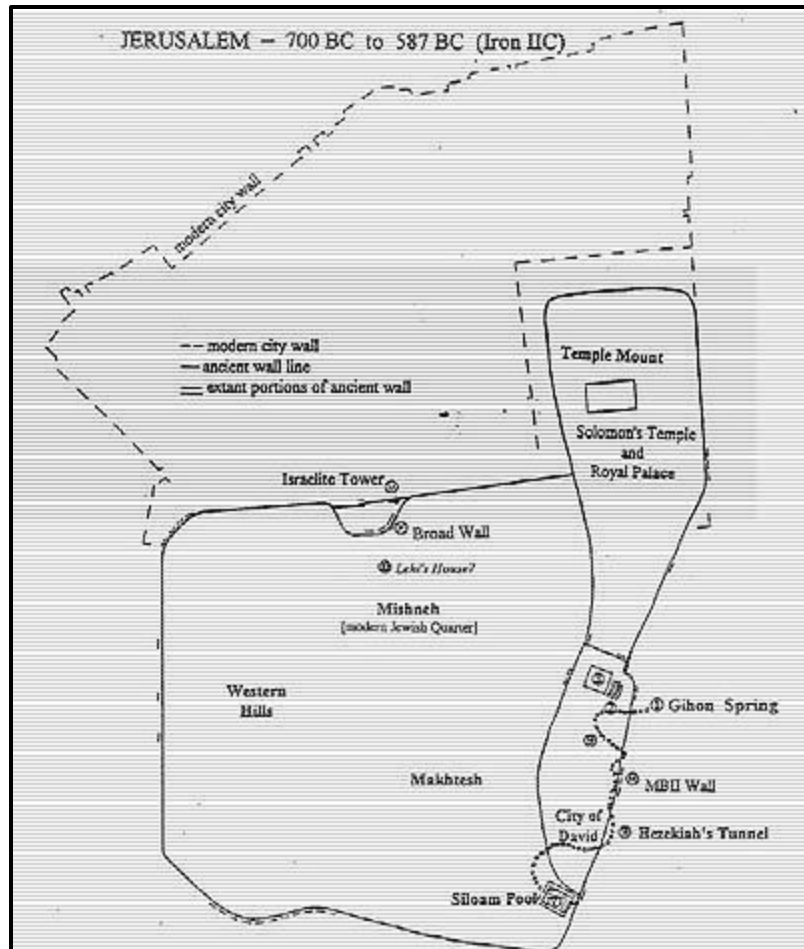
According to Jeffrey Chadwick, the Book of Mormon text not only specifies that Lehi "dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days" (1 Nephi 1:4), but that Lehi had "his own house at Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 1:7). Based on archaeological, geographical, and historical evidence accumulated from the study of the old tribal areas of Manasseh, Ephraim, Judah and Jerusalem, Chadwick postulates the following:

1. Lehi's (and Ishmael's) ancestral grandparents must have moved from the Manasseh/Ephraim area around 722 B.C., due to the pressure of the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom.
2. These ancestors must have moved to Jerusalem either immediately or within a very few years of their initial journey southward, and would have settled among the people of the *Mishneh* neighborhood that was annexed to the city with the building of Hezekiah's Wall prior to 701 B.C.
3. Being essentially landless, Lehi's grandparents would not have been able to farm for a living in the restricted area of Judah around Jerusalem. At some point, the family appears to

have turned to the craft of metal smithing to make their living (see John Tvedtnes, "Was Lehi a Caravaneer?" F.A.R.M.S., 1984)

4. Had Lehi's ancestral grandparents moved from the Manasseh region to the Judean countryside or to any city or town outside Jerusalem, and established residence there, they would almost surely have been deported away from Judah in the Assyrian attack on Judah in 701 B.C. for it says that "Sennacherib king of Assyria [came] up against **all** the fenced cities of Judah, and took them" (2 Kings 18:13-14; compare Isaiah 36:1) Also from the "Prism of Sennacherib" we find: "As to Hezekiah the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled fortresses, and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered by means of well stamped ramps and battering rams . . . I drove out 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, . . . His towns which I had plundered I took away from his country and gave them to Mitinti king of Ashdod, Padi king of Ekron, and Sillibel king of Gaza." (Translation from *The Ancient Near East*, Vol. 1 by James B. Pritchard, pp. 199-200.)

5. Lehi was probably born sometime around 650 B.C., to parents who had lived in Jerusalem, and he grew up living in Jerusalem "all his days." By this time, the "refugee" home of his grandparents in the *Mishneh* would have been replaced with a respectable "four room house" in the now upscale *Mishneh* area. Lehi was likely trained as a metal smith.
[Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Lehi's House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance," 1999, pp. 1-12, unpublished paper]



1 Nephi 1:7 **He returned to his own house at Jerusalem (Illustration):** Map 6 JERUSALEM -- 700 BC to 587 BC. By 701 B.C., Jerusalem's population was about 20,000 people. From 700 to 600 B.C., succeeding generations of the Mishneh population built their quarter into a respectable, upscale neighborhood of the capital. During king Josiah's reign (640 B.C.) such notables as the prophetess Huldah, wife of a royal minister, lived there (see 2 Kings 22:14, where the Hebrew *Mishneh* is translated "college"). It is likely that the house of Lehi, a descendant of Manasseh, would have been in the Mishneh (10). Housing in the city filled all the area of the Western Hills or Mount Zion (see Zephaniah 1:10-11, where *Mishneh* is translated as "second"). The topographic cove in the northern wall of Hezekiah, later called the "Broad Wall" (P) was fortified with a straighter outer wall and defensive tower (U) now known as the Israelite Tower.. This is the Jerusalem of Jeremiah and Nephi, which fell to the Babylonian army in 587 B.C., when the city and Solomon's temple were destroyed. [Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "The Development of Biblical Jerusalem," Map 6 in a 1998 unpublished paper]

1 Nephi 1:7 **His Own House at Jerusalem:**

Camille Fronk notes that archaeologists have uncovered well-built homes inside walled Jerusalem, in a section of the city called the City of David. These homes date to the seventh century B.C. and show signs of being destroyed by fire at the time of the Babylonian invasion in 586 B.C.^{xlvii} Although Lehi and Sariah most likely lived in another sector of the city, these

contemporary homes give us an idea of the comparative luxury their family would have known.

One of those uncovered houses was a four room, two-story building with substantial pillars supporting the roof and dressed limestone blocks framing the doorways. The house measured 24 by 36 feet. A "service wing," made up of three tiny rooms behind the home, contained an indoor toilet and quarters for servants.^{xlviii} Remains of other "better" homes in Jerusalem indicate that residents owned chairs, tables, beds, numerous clay oil lamps, an oven, stone structures for storing grain, and clay vessels for storing liquids. Decoration in the form of pictorial art, faience vases, glass beads, carved ivory plaques, decorated pottery, and metal art products adorned nicer homes.^{xlix}

[Camille Fronk, "Desert Epiphany: Sariah & the Women in 1 Nephi," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 9, Num. 2, 2000, FARMS, pp. 7-8, 80]

1 Nephi 1:7 He Cast Himself upon His Bed, Being Overcome with the Spirit:

Intense spiritual experiences often have the effect of draining one's physical strength. This seems to be the case with Lehi. It also was the case with Daniel, when he saw the Lord in a glorious vision. Afterward he remarked: "[I] saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me." (Daniel 10:8)

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw the vision of the three degrees of glory together while at the Johnson farm in Hiram, Ohio. There were other men in the room who witnessed their countenances as they received D&C section 76. One of these men, Philo Dibble recorded the scene as follows, "Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, 'Sidney is not as used to it as I am.'" (Juvenile Instructor, May 1892, pp. 303-4) See also 1 Ne 17:47.

[josephsmith.com.1Nephi]

1 Nephi 1:8 God, Sitting upon His Throne, Surrounded with Numberless Concourses of Angels:

John W. Welch explains that Lehi's vision of "God, sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels" (1 Nephi 1:8) compares closely with the so-called "council visions" of Old Testament prophets. . . . Such visions of God seated in the midst of his host assembled in heaven appear to have been particularly meaningful for people in Lehi's day. If the prevailing understanding is correct, it was by such a vision that the prophet received his commission, his authorization, his perspective, his knowledge of God, and his information about God's judgments and decrees. . . . For example, 1 Kings 22:19-23 records the experience of the prophet Micaiah, who saw God and his council, heard its deliberation and resolution, and was sent forth with the decree of God. . . . Likewise, Jeremiah 23:18 [Jeremiah was a contemporary

of Lehi] asks rhetorically about those who are true prophets: "For who hath stood in Yahweh's council, and seen and heard his word? Who has carefully marked [obeyed] his word?" . . . To so report and do was certification in that day that the prophet was a true messenger of God.

Joseph Smith explained how this authority was conferred: "All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself," (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 181).

[John W. Welch, "The Calling of a Prophet" in *First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, p. 36] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 16:8]

1 Nephi 1:8 **God, Sitting upon His Throne, Surrounded with Numberless Concourses of Angels:**

A remembrance and variation of this phrase will be included later on in the Book of Mormon record by Alma in describing his own vision of the throne of the Almighty. Alma records, Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne (Alma 36:22). Certainly, both were transfigured to witness what they thought they saw. Certainly, they were not the only Book of Mormon prophets to view God sitting upon his throne.

[josephsmith.com.1Nephi]

1 Nephi 1:8 **Numberless Concourses of Angels:**

Reynolds and Sjodahl remark:

"This expression reminds us, perhaps, of Daniel who saw 'the Ancient of Days' on his throne: 'Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousands stood before him.' [Daniel 7:9-11] All ready to carry out his commandments. Daniel says, 'the judgment was set and the books were opened.' Or, as we should say, the court was in session. Judgment was about to be pronounced upon the 'four beasts,' that is, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian and the Roman Empires."

"The vision of Lehi was analogous to this. But the impending judgment in his vision was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and not upon pagan empires."

(Commentary on the Book of Mormon, ed by George Reynolds, Janne Sjodahl, and Phillip Reynolds, chap. 1, p. 9)

1 Nephi 1:10 **Their Brightness Did Exceed That of the Stars:**

In Lehi's vision, he saw "one descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the **sun** at noon-day. And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the **stars** in the firmament" (1 Nephi 1:9-10). It is interesting that if the glory of the Twelve "did exceed" the brightness of the stars, then they were brighter than the stars. And if we use the LDS comparisons made to the three kingdoms of

heaven (sun, moon, & stars--see 1 Corinthians 15:41), then their glory would have been of a terrestrial nature. Christ's glory would have been celestial in nature. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]



The sun, moon and stars

ahmedtelb.deviantart.com

1 Nephi 1:11 **A Book:**

In Lehi's vision, the first heavenly being who descended out of heaven "gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read" (1 Nephi 1:11). According to McConkie and Millet, this heavenly record of doom and destiny which Lehi is given to read may well be the same book as that read by Ezekiel, John the Revelator, and others of the prophets. In the book given to Ezekiel he read of "lamentations, and mourning, and woe" (Ezekiel 2:10), which were to come upon the ungodly. The Revelator was shown a book sealed with seven seals (Revelations 5:1), the meaning of which Christ revealed to him.



illustrationstoencourage.wordpress.com

John was also shown much of the earth's history down through the time of the millennial kingdom (D&C 77:6). [Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, pp. 26-27]

According to John Welch, a book as a symbol in the revelatory experience is also found in 1 Enoch and the Vision of Hermas.

[John W. Welch, "The Book of Mormon and the Heavenly Book Motif," in Reexploring the Book of Mormon, pp. 26-28]

1 Nephi 1:11 **A Book:**

According to Jeffrey Bradshaw, ancient literature

tells the stories of prophets who experience actual encounters with Deity . . . In such encounters the prophet may experience a vision of eternity, participation in worship with the angels, and the conferral of certain blessings that are "made sure" by the voice of God Himself.(n105)

For example, such an experience is reported in traditions about Muhammad. Doubting Meccans had asked that he "confirm the authenticity of his prophethood by ascending to heaven and there receiving a holy book . . . In this, he was to conform to a model illustrated by many still extant legends . . . regarding Enoch, Moses, Daniel, Mani, and many other messengers who had risen to heaven, met God, and received from his right hand a book of scripture containing the revelation they were to proclaim."(n106)

. . . At the gates of the Celestial Temple, a guardian angel again aske[ed] who he [was]. Gabriel introduce[d] Muhammad, who [was] then allowed to enter the gardens of Paradise."(n110)

[Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Temple Themes in the Book of Moses, pp. 26, 27]

1 Nephi 1:13 **Wo, Wo:**

Nephi comments that in Lehi's vision, Lehi was given a book in which he read concerning the destruction of Jerusalem: "Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations." Nephi also comments that "*many things* did my father read concerning Jerusalem--that it should be destroyed, and the inhabitants thereof" (1 Nephi 1:13).

According to Amy Hardison, along with covenant blessings, ancient Near Eastern treaties

and covenants contained covenant curses. Curses were basically a reversal of blessings, though the curses were typically far more detailed and extensive. Covenants were written with a specific vocabulary. Inside the covenant context, certain words had official and legal meanings that sometimes differed from their normal, everyday use. For instance, "woe" is the pronouncement of a covenant curse, and to do "evil" is to break one's covenant. *Evil* in covenant curses conveys disaster, calamity, and misfortune--not the moral opposite of righteousness.

[Amy Blake Hardison, "Being a Covenant People," in Covenants Prophecies and Hymns of the Old Testament, pp. 24, 28]

1 Nephi 1:13 **Wo, Wo:**

The phrase "wo, wo" is a Hebraism meaning "great wo," "much wo," or "exceeding wo." Repetition was commonly used in Biblical Hebrew for emphasis or to intensify an attribute. See Ecclesiastes 7:24 where "exceeding deep" reads "deep, deep" in the Hebrew text.

[Zarahemla Research Foundation, Study Book of Mormon, p. 4]

1 Nephi 1:13 **Many Should Perish by the Sword, and Many Should Be Carried Away Captive into Babylon (Pratt):**

Nephi describes his father Lehi as a wealthy man who, in the first year of Zedekiah, heard many prophets predict that Jerusalem would be destroyed if the people did not repent (1 Nephi 1:4). Lehi prayed for his people and received his own revelation confirming that Jerusalem would be destroyed. A key point for this discussion is that he also explicitly saw in his vision that "many should be carried away captive into Babylon" (1 Nephi 1:13). According to John Pratt, that prophecy raises an important issue to resolve.

How could Lehi prophesy that "many" would be taken captive after the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, that is, after the deportation of "all Jerusalem" had already occurred? The Biblical record is clear that only a few were taken captive at the later final destruction of Jerusalem. Moreover, the details that Lehi was wealthy, having "exceeding great" property comprised of gold, silver, and precious things (1 Nephi 3:22-25), and that some of his own sons couldn't believe it possible for Jerusalem to be destroyed (1 Nephi 2:13), argue against the setting being during the reign of Zedekiah (after 597 B.C.) after all of the wealthy had been deported, and Jerusalem had already been partially destroyed late in 601 B.C.

Because of such considerations, it has been proposed that the king whom Nephi called "Zedekiah" must have been Jehoiakim.¹ Let us adopt that proposal as a working hypothesis to see how well it fits the Biblical history.

Lehi Prophecies with Jeremiah

Nephi describes the response of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to Lehi's prophecy, saying they "did mock him" and "they were angry with him . . . and they also sought his life" (1 Nephi 19-20). That matches very well the response to both Jeremiah and Urijah who began to preach of the desolation and destruction of Jerusalem "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim" (Jeremiah 26:1). Thus, if Nephi's Zedekiah is the same as the Biblical Jehoiakim, then both the timing of the prophecies near the beginning of his reign, as well as the response of the people, are in perfect agreement. The response of the people would be completely understandable because it would have been before Nebuchadnezzar had begun his dominion.

The 600-Year Prophecy

The problem of 600 years not fitting between Lehi's departure and the birth of the Savior entirely disappears once it is recognized that Nephi's Zedekiah was most likely Jehoiakim. Lehi could have left in 601 B.C., 600 years before the birth of the Savior at Passover in the spring of 1 B.C. Alma noted that Lehi's departure had the same Passover symbolism as Moses' departure from Egypt, in that Lehi was delivered from bondage and led through the wilderness to a promised land (see Alma 9:9, 26:38-39). Accordingly, it has been proposed that Lehi probably left in the spring of 601 B.C. at Passover.ⁱⁱ Another indication that Lehi's departure was 600 years to the very day before the Savior's birth is that 600 years is a lunisolar realignment interval known long before Lehiⁱⁱⁱ on which a date on the Hebrew lunisolar calendar (Passover) reoccurs on the same date on a solar calendar (April 6 on our Gregorian calendar). Thus, Lehi probably left Jerusalem during the night preceding Sunday, 6 April 601 B.C.

The Nephites most likely used a 365-day year for their civil calendar, as indicated by their reckoning of the interval between the signs of the Savior's birth and death.ⁱⁱⁱ If so, they would not have inserted any leap days during the 600 Nephite years after Lehi's departure, which would explain why they reckoned that the 600 years were fulfilled several months before the Savior's birth. (3 Nephi 1:1).^{iv}

Lehi's departure in the spring of 601 B.C. would fit well with Nephi's statement that Jerusalem had been destroyed "immediately after my father left Jerusalem" (2 Nephi 25:10). That is, Nephi would not have been referring to the final destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., but rather to the first destruction which occurred in December, 601 B.C.

"Few" Taken Captive

Some hitherto overlooked details of Nephi's account are also explained by the proposal that Nephi referred to Jehoiakim as Zedekiah. After Lehi's group left Jerusalem, they traveled across the wilderness for eight years and arrived at Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:4-5), which would have been in 593 B.C. according to the proposed chronology. At that time Nephi referred to the

final destruction of Jerusalem as a yet future event: "I know that the day must surely come that they must be destroyed, save a few only, who shall be led away into captivity" (1 Nephi 17:43). Note that he declared that "a few only" would be taken captive, whereas Lehi had prophesied that "many" would be taken to Babylon. Knowing that there were two destructions of Jerusalem clarifies those details. That is, Lehi's prophecy that "many" would be taken captive had already been fulfilled in 597 B.C. In Bountiful, Nephi spoke of the final destruction of Jerusalem, which would occur in 587 B.C., at which time only "few" would be taken captive. Years later, after they had crossed the ocean to the promised land, Lehi received the confirming revelation that Jerusalem had finally been destroyed (2 Nephi 1:4). That revelation must have come after the final 587 B.C. destruction. The precise way the Book of Mormon account would fit into the historical setting is as follows:

<u>Year B.C.</u>	<u>Event</u>
608	1st year of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah prophesied Jerusalem's destruction and desolation
608-607	Lehi began to prophesy of Jerusalem's destruction and the captivity of many.
605	Babylon replaced Egypt as world power and took control of Judah. A few princes Taken captive (First deportation).
6 Apr 601	Lehi departed from Jerusalem, 600 years before birth of Christ on 6 Apr 1 B.C.
Dec. 601	Jehoiakim rebelled; Jerusalem partially destroyed (First destruction).
Dec. 598	Jehoiakim executed, Jehoiachin began reign. (Second deportation).
Mar. 597	Third deportation (of over 10,000) to Babylon. Then Zedekiah began to reign.
593	Nephi prophesies in Bountiful of Jerusalem's final destruction, with few captives.
June 587	Jerusalem destroyed (Second destruction) and Fourth Deportation of only a few, fulfilling Nephi's prophecy.

Jehoiakim as Nephi's "Zedekiah"

Why would Nephi have called Jehoiakim "Zedekiah?" There are several plausible explanations.

(1) Zedekiah might have simply been another name for Jehoiakim. In fact, Jehoiakim had a son named Zedekiah (1 Chronicles 3:16), not to be confused with his brother Mattaniah whose name was also later changed to Zedekiah when he became king.

(2) Another possibility is that "Zedekiah" might have been a title used interchangeably with the name Jehoiakim, which could explain why the Bible sometimes referred to Zedekiah as Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 27:1).^{iv}

(3) Another explanation might be that Nebuchadnezzar might have changed Jehoiakim's name to Zedekiah. At that time, every king of Judah had his name changed by the dominating nation, as a mark of subservience.^{lv} For example, Pharaoh Necho changed Shallum's name to Jehoahaz, and then Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:34). After Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar changed Jeconiah's name to Jehoiachin, and then Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah. This name changing practice extended even to the captives such as Daniel, whose name was changed to Belteshazzar (Daniel 1:7). Note that the Biblical narrative does not always mention every name change; we only learn of Shallum's name in a revelation where the Lord refers to him by his original name (see Jeremiah 22:11, compare 1 Chronicles 3:15). The only king in this entire period for whom no name change is recorded when a new world power took command is Jehoiakim. Thus, the possibility that Nebuchadnezzar changed Jehoiakim's name to Zedekiah would follow established precedence.

In summary, the simple proposal that Nephi may have been referring to Jehoiakim as "Zedekiah" explains (1) how Jerusalem was destroyed immediately after Lehi's departure in 601 B.C., and many were taken captive thereafter in 597 B.C., fulfilling Lehi's prophecy; (2) how Nephi's prophecy in about 593 B.C. that Jerusalem would yet be destroyed and "few" would be taken captive was fulfilled in 587 B.C.; and (3) how the Savior's birth on 6 April 1 B.C. would have been 600 years after Lehi's departure, as the angel had declared to Lehi.

[John P. Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy of the Birth of Christ,
<http://www.meridianmagazine.com/articles/000331sixhundred.html>] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 10:4]

1 Nephi 1:14 **Thy Power, and Goodness, and Mercy Are over All the Inhabitants of the Earth:**

After Lehi saw "many great and marvelous things" in vision, he exclaimed:
Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty? Thy throne is high in the heavens and thy power, and *goodness*, and *mercy* are over all the inhabitants of the earth, and because thou art *merciful*, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish. (1 Nephi 1:14)

Avraham Gileadi notes that in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (3:352-53), the terms "goodness" and "mercy" are listed as synonyms of covenant blessing and covenant keeping. [Avraham Gileadi, *The Last Days: Types and Shadows from the Bible and the Book of Mormon*, pp. 216]

Note* This might imply that both Lehi's vision and exclamation were covenant-related. [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 13-22]

1 Nephi 1:15 **After This Manner Was the Language of My Father:**

Following the pattern of Jewish writing, no quotation marks are used in the Book of Mormon. The writers indicate they are quoting directly by the use of such terms as "after this manner was the language of my father" (1 Nephi 1:15), or "my father . . . spake . . . saying . . ." (1 Nephi 2:9).

According to Hugh Nibley, when Nephi says, "after this manner was the language of my father in the praising of his God" he is not telling us what language his father spoke, but giving notice that he is quoting or paraphrasing an actual speech of his father. Likewise when he says, "I make a record in the language of my father" (1 Nephi 1:2), he says that he is going to quote or paraphrase a record actually written by his father (1 Nephi 1:16). He explains that his father wrote the record in Egyptian though it dealt with Jewish matters, but he never affirms that Egyptian was his father's native tongue. The clause in 1 Nephi 1:2 which begins, "which consists of . . ." does not refer back to "language" or "father," of course, but to "record." The other two are syntactically possible but don't make sense: a language does not consist of a language, but a record does.

[Hugh Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, F.A.R.M.S., p. 14]

1 Nephi 1:16 **Many Things Which (Lehi) Saw in Visions and in Dreams:**

According to Terrence Szink, one of the best known sections of the Book of Mormon tells the story of the journey of Lehi and his family from Jerusalem to the new promised land in the American continent. Yet, since the small plates were intended to contain the "things of God" (1 Nephi 6:4), why was this account included on the small plates while other things that seem to be more the "things of God" (such as the "many things which [Lehi] saw in visions and in dreams" (1 Nephi 1:16) were left out?

Quite probably, Nephi, the author of this section, consciously wrote his account of the wilderness journey in a way that would remind the reader of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. He did this to prove that God loved and cared for the Nephites, just as the Exodus from Egypt was proof of God's favor for the children of Israel. Therefore, this story of the journey truly is about the things of God and does belong on the small plates. [Terrence L. Szink, "Nephi and the Exodus," in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, p. 38]

Note* Perhaps the exodus stories of Moses and Lehi represent more than just general caring of the Lord for the children of Israel. From a covenant perspective, the exodus stories show that the Lord will keep his covenants with his children (his covenant children--represented by the House of Israel) and lead them through the wilderness (earth life, bondage to sin) to the Promised Land (the place where the gospel and gospel covenants are established--zion, heaven). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:13; 2 Nephi 11:8]

1 Nephi 1:17 **Behold:**

The Hebrew word for "behold" is *hinneh*. It is used for pointing out persons, things, places and actions, and occurs over a thousand times in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. The word "behold" is used even more frequently in the Book of Mormon and can be found on almost any page. Its common use gives evidence of a literal rendering of Hebrew into English (compare Daniel 2:31; 4:13). [Zarahemla Research Foundation, Study Book of Mormon, p. 4-5]

1 Nephi 1:17 **After I Have Abridged the Record of My Father Then I Will Make an Account of Mine Own Life:**

In the previous verse (v. 16) Nephi writes that "he [Lehi] hath written many things which he [Lehi] saw in visions and in dreams." Now in verse 17 Nephi declares that "after I have abridged the record of my father then I will make an account of mine own life." This makes it clear that Nephi is in the process of abridging the record of his father which he had recorded on the large plates. Many of the visions and prophecies of Lehi would likely have been recorded in the book of Lehi which was lost with the 116 pages (see D&C10). Nephi doesn't have room on his small plates to rewrite them all. [josephsmith.com.1Nephi]

1 Nephi 1:17 **After I Have Abridged the Record of My Father Then I Will Make an Account of Mine Own Life:**

In 1 Nephi 1:17, Nephi states: "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." It is interesting that unlike the abridgment which Mormon and Moroni make, Nephi chooses to write his record on the small plates in first person narrative. That is, he says "I" did this and "I" did that, while including historical information. Mormon and Moroni mostly used third person narrative with a few personal interjections. Could it be that Nephi is not making a continuous abridgment, but including selected pieces of information from his father's record into his own message? In the book of 1 Nephi we find a repeated pattern wherein Nephi first cites what happened to his father, and then compares himself and his actions with those of his father, as if he is recording the testimony of two witnesses. This repetitive pattern could be part of what Nephi alludes to when he says, "*after* I have abridged the record of my father then will I make an account of mine own life.

1 Nephi 1:17 **I Make an Abridgment of the Record of My Father:**

In 1 Nephi 1:17 Nephi refers to "the record of my father." According to S. Kent Brown,

both Nephi and Jacob included parts of the record of Lehi on the small plates. Jacob hints (Jacob 4:1-2) that this record of Lehi was not kept on metal. Rolls or scrolls made from skins were used in Lehi's day (see Jeremiah 36:2; Ezekiel 2:9-10), and there are some hints not only that Lehi used a skin scroll rather than metal (1 Nephi 17:2,12), but that he wrote his record in Hebrew (Mormon 9:33).

[S. Kent Brown, "Nephi's Use of Lehi's Record," in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., p. 3] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 19:1]

Writings of Lehi Quoted or Paraphrased by Nephi and Jacob	
1 Nephi 1:4–15	Lehi's calling as a prophet
1 Nephi 5:17–19	prophecies regarding brass plates
1 Nephi 8:2–28	dream of the tree of life
1 Nephi 10:1–16	prophecies about Christ and Israel
2 Nephi 1:1–12	prophecies about the New World
2 Nephi 1:13–32	blessing to Laman, Lemuel, Sam, sons of Ishmael, Nephi, Zoram
2 Nephi 2:1–30	blessing to Jacob
2 Nephi 3:1–25	blessing to Joseph
2 Nephi 4:3–7	blessing to the children of Laman
2 Nephi 4:8–9	blessing to the children of Lemuel
2 Nephi 4:11	blessing to Sam
Jacob 2:23–34	fidelity in marriage

1 Nephi 1:17 **I make an abridgment of the record of my father (Illustration):** Writings of Lehi Quoted or Paraphrased by Nephi and Jacob. (Source: S. Kent Brown, "Lehi's Personal Record: Quest for a Missing Source," *BYU Studies* 24:1, 1984: 19-42). [John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch, Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching, F.A.R.M.S., Chart 19]

1 Nephi 1:17 After I Have Abridged the Record of My Father Then Will I Make an Account of Mine Own Life:

[See the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:22; 10:1]

1 Nephi 1:19 The Jews Did Mock Him Because of the Things Which He Testified:

In 1 Nephi 1:19 it says that "the Jews did mock him because of the things which he testified." According to 1 Nephi 1:13, Lehi testified of three things to the people: (1) their "wickedness and abominations"; (2) what he "saw and heard," which would be a vivid description of the destruction awaiting the people of Jerusalem; and (3) "the coming of a Messiah." According to Cleon Skousen, the Jewish scriptures contain two completely different stories concerning the "coming of a Messiah." One account indicates that the Messiah would come in great power and destroy all the enemies of the people at Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:1-9; Joel 3:14-21; Ezekiel 39:1-22). The Jews loved to hear this heroic account of future glory so we know it was not for this "coming of a Messiah" that Lehi was mocked. However, there was another story of the coming of a Messiah which was completely abhorrent to the Jews. This was the prophecy that the Messiah would come among them and be slain by his own people. The Book of Mormon records that two prophets prior to Lehi had brought this message to the Jews and had been killed for teaching it. The two were Zenos (Helaman 8:19, 3 Nephi 10:15-16), and Zenock (3 Nephi 10:15-16, Alma 33:15-17). It will be noted that the prophetic writings of neither Zenos nor Zenock were preserved by the Jews. There are also the writings of two other prophets in the brass plates which refer to the first coming of Christ and his crucifixion but are not found among the existing records of the Jews. These are Neum (1 Nephi 19:10) and Ezias (Helaman 8:19-20). This would suggest that the Jewish priests and scribes deliberately tried to strip from their scriptures all references to the first coming of Christ. Fortunately, they missed a few passages such as Psalms 22 and Isaiah, chapter 53! The extent of this censorship is better appreciated when it is realized that originally the writings of practically all the prophets had included their testimony concerning the first coming of Christ (Mosiah 13:33-35). This background helps us better understand why there was such a violent reaction to Lehi's message. He had dared to testify to them concerning a matter which their leaders had said was a myth! [W. Cleon Skousen, Treasures from the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 1022]

1 Nephi 1:19-20 The Jews Did Mock Him [Lehi] . . . and They Sought His Life:

According to Tom Cherrington, one should take special notice of the order and meaning of Nephi's words in 1 Nephi 1:19-20. We begin with the following:

"And it came to pass that the Jews did *mock* him because of the things which he

testified of them, for he truly testified of their *wickedness* and their abominations[.]"

The readers should notice that the above quotation has been ended with a "period" rather than the semicolon which is in the present edition. This is because the term "mocking" is an action which corresponds to someone telling someone else that they are wicked. Mocking someone is *not* the same as trying to kill someone, which is the response of the Jews in verse 20 ("they sought his life"). So what caused the Jews to want to kill Lehi? Let's move on with the text:

And [next] he [Lehi] testified that *the things* which he saw and heard, and also the things which he read in the book, *manifested plainly of [1] the coming of the Messiah, and also [2] the redemption of the world.* (1 Nephi 1:19)

Now notice the increase in agitation of the Jews:

And when the Jews heard *these things* [(1) the coming of the Messiah, and (2) the redemption of the world] they were angry with him [Lehi]; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his [Lehi's] life, that they might take it away. (1 Nephi 1:20).

Thus the anger of the Jews against Lehi progressed from mocking to seeking his life. But what did Lehi say that so angered the people of Jerusalem that they sought to take his life? There must have been something in his testimony that the Jews felt was so offensive that they deemed Lehi to have been guilty of a crime for which death was the proper penalty. Apparently it was his testimony of the coming Messiah and the redemption of the world, for this not only caused the Jews to seek Lehi's life, but also the lives of "the prophets of old." But why was their message so bad?

What if Lehi had actually declared that the Messiah who should come, even Jesus Christ was Jehovah? Could the Jewish beliefs of the day accept that Jehovah would be made flesh? And what would be the reaction of those people if they were to be told that they would put Jehovah to death? We first might consider the consequences of preaching more than one God, that Christ was the Son of God. The record of Jeremiah, a contemporary prophet during Lehi's time in Jerusalem (see 1 Nephi 1:4; 7:14) would seem to indicate that the people of Jerusalem were certainly not totally devoted to the worship of Jehovah. He repeatedly declares that the people of Judah have "forsaken" the worship of Jehovah (See Jeremiah 1:16; 2:13; 2:27; 5:12; 7:17-18; 7:31; 9:1-6; and etc.) Jeremiah will go so far as to say, "A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my (Jehovah's) words; and they went after other gods to serve them: . . ." (Jeremiah 11:9-10). Therefore, that Lehi may have reminded them that there was a second member of the Godhead was not likely the cause of their desire to kill Lehi. The people of Jerusalem were more likely offended by Lehi's message that Jehovah would become mortal and die. Perhaps this is why the wicked priests of Noah felt justified in

sentencing Abinadi to death hundreds of years later (see Mosiah 17:7-8).

When Lehi testified of "the redemption of the world" to the people of Jerusalem, could this have been considered to be a blasphemous teaching worthy of death? It would have been impossible to have taught the Jews concerning this "redemption," without testifying that the prophesied Messiah of the Jews would in fact be killed by them.

The term "Lamb of God" is used 33 times in the Book of Mormon. Of these, Nephi, or an angel instructing Nephi, uses the term 30 times. The term "lamb" referring to a savior figure is only used once in the Old Testament. Christ is referred to as the Lamb, or Lamb of God, in 29 verses in the New Testament, of which only one does not have reference to the mission of Jesus Christ. Approximately 25 of these verses are used by John the Revelator either in his gospel, or the Revelation.

It is interesting that in nearly all of the verses that Nephi uses this term, he is relating what he saw, or was told in his Tree of Life vision. This is significant since Nephi had asked to see, hear, and know what his father had learned in his Tree of Life vision (1 Nephi 10:17). Apparently John the Revelator was shown much, if not all, of the same vision:

And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write are many things which thou hast seen; and behold, the remainder shalt thou see. . . And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel. (1 Nephi 14:24-27)

Surely, the frequent usage of this term by Nephi would indicate that the sacrificial nature of the Savior had been emphasized by him in his teachings. If Nephi actually adopted the use of this term from his father's teachings or their shared visions, this would indicate that Lehi may have emphasized the sacrificial nature of the life of the prophesied Messiah. And thus perhaps it was this testimony that the Jews would kill their Messiah that caused them to utterly reject Lehi (and the prophets of old).

While we may never know, the exact reason or reasons for the Jews' desire to seek the life of Lehi, we can be certain that they rejected his message concerning "the Messiah" Jesus Christ. Consider the words of Nephi, the son of Helaman, to the apostate people of Zarahemla, approximately six centuries later:

Yea, did [Moses] not bear record that the Son of God should come? And as he lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, even so shall he be lifted up who should come. . . . Yea, and behold I say unto you, that Abraham not only knew of these things, but there were many before the days of Abraham who were called by the order of God; yea, even after the order of his Son; and this that it should be shown unto the people, a great many thousand years before his coming, that even redemption should come unto them.

And now I would that ye should know, that even since the days of Abraham *there have been many prophets that have testified these things; yea, behold, the prophet Zenos did testify boldly; for the which he was slain.*

And behold, also Zenock, and also Ezias, and also Isaiah, and Jeremiah, . . .

Our father Lehi was driven out of Jerusalem because he testified of these things. Nephi also testified of these things, and also almost all of our fathers, even down to this time; yea, they have testified of the coming of Christ, and have looked forward, and have rejoiced in his day which is to come. (Helaman 8:14-22).

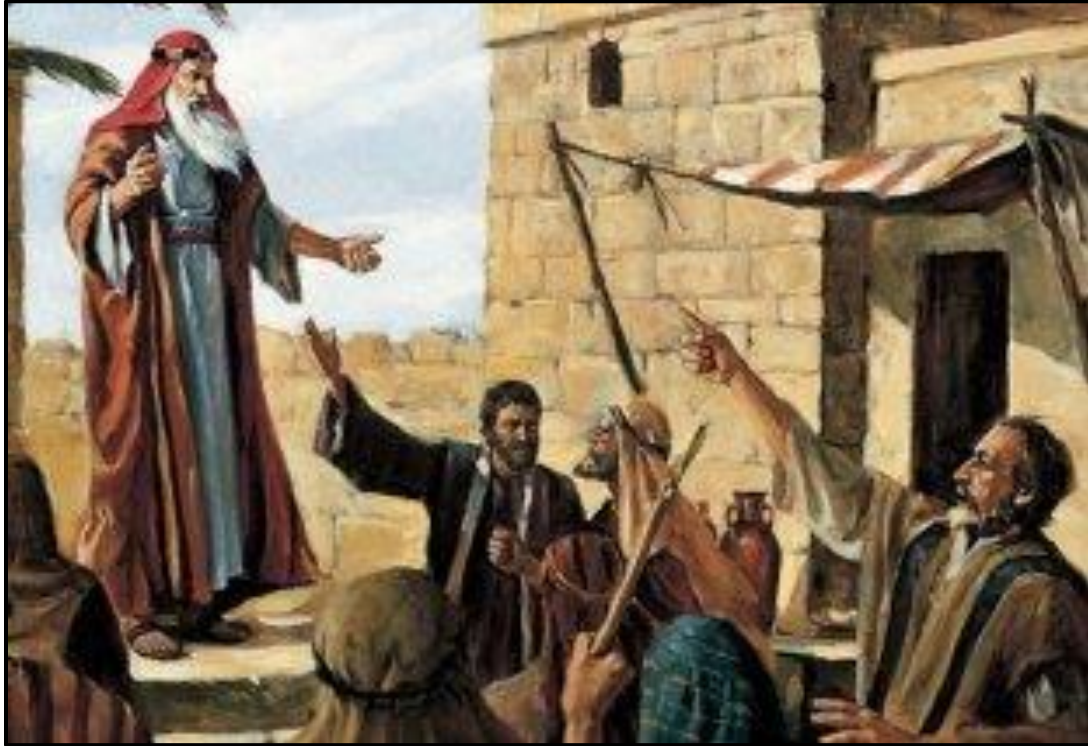
It is this message of Jesus Christ that was so difficult for the people of Jerusalem to accept in Lehi. Whether it was a monotheist verses polytheist conflict, whether it was the simple fact that Lehi testified that they would kill their Messiah, or whether it was that Jehovah would become mortal, Lehi's testimony of Jesus Christ was the focal point of his conflict with the people of Jerusalem. For this, the people of Jerusalem sought his life. Could these same questions concerning "the coming of Jesus Christ" be at the foundation of nearly all of the disputes, rebellions, and wars among the Nephites and their enemies for centuries to come? [Tom Cherrington, "Why Was Lehi Forced to Flee from Jerusalem?," unpublished] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:1, 10:5, 10:10, 12:18; 2 Nephi 25:19; Mosiah 3:8; Alma 7:10; Alma 13:16; Helaman 8:19-20]

1 Nephi 1:19 The Jews Did Mock Him Because of the Things Which He Testified:

According to Cleon Skousen, we know that Jeremiah's policy opposed Jehoiakim's domestic and foreign strategy. The king favored idolatry (2 Kings 23:37), and the king's selfishness and vanity aggravated Judah's misfortunes (Jeremiah 22:13-19). Jehoiakim had little respect for true prophets (see Jeremiah 26:20-23). Jeremiah reprimanded the king, the false prophets and the priests. Jeremiah was persecuted (Jeremiah 12:6, 15:15-18), plotted against (Jeremiah 11:18-23; 18:18), imprisoned (Jeremiah 20:2), declared worthy of death (Jeremiah 26:10-11, 24; 36:26). However, under Jehoiachin and during the first few years of Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah's main political point at issue was the difference of opinion between him and the false prophets over the length of the captivity of the exiles. Jeremiah foretold an exile of 70 years (Jeremiah 29:10), while the false prophets argued that it would last only a few years (Jeremiah 28:1-4). In other words, Jehoiachin and his false prophets sought to not only hide the political weakness of Judah against the power of Babylon, but exonerate the wickedness over which they presided. Jeremiah was preaching politically contrary to these ideas and thus, both in Babylon and Judah, the false prophets of the Jews sought to rid themselves of Jeremiah.

Note* If Lehi not only repeated Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the long length of the Babylonian exile, but also prophesied concerning the coming of a Messiah to a wicked Jewish nation and his rejection by them, we perhaps can gain some added insight into the words "and it came to pass that the Jews did mock [Lehi] because of the things which he testified of them; for

he truly testified of their wickedness and their abominations" (which would lead not only to a prolonged exile, but to the devastation of Jerusalem and an eventual rejection of the Messiah) ". . . and when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old . . . and they also sought his life, that they might take it away" (1 Nephi 1:19-20). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]



1 Nephi 1:19 **The Jews did mock him [Lehi] because of the things which he testified of them**
(Illustration): Lehi Prophesying to the People of Jerusalem. [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Gospel Art, #300]

1 Nephi 1:19 **The Jews did mock him [Lehi] because of the things which he testified of them**
(Illustration): Lehi Preaching in Jerusalem. Artist: Del Parson. [Thomas R. Valletta ed., The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families, 1999, p. 2]

1 Nephi 1:19 **He Truly Testified of Their Wickedness and Their Abominations:**

[See the commentary on 1 Nephi 17:22]

1 Nephi 1:19 **[Lehi] Truly Testified . . . of the Coming of the Messiah:**

In 1 Nephi 1:19 it says that Lehi "testified that the things which he saw and heard [in his

visions], and also the things which he read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of the Messiah."

According to Verneil Simmons, Ezekiel was called to become the prophet to those Jews in exile from their homeland. In his vision of the abomination within the Temple (see Ezekiel 8:1-18), he had been shown a man, chosen by the Lord, sent out into the streets of Jerusalem to place a mark upon the foreheads of the men who wept and were concerned for the perversion of the worship of Jehovah. Then he saw other men sent forth to slay all in the city who did not carry this mark upon their foreheads--men, women, children--old and young alike. The ones to be spared from the coming destruction were only those whom the Lord had marked because they wept with concern for the city and the people (Ezekiel 9:4-7). It is interesting that the Hebrew word for *mark* is the name of the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, tau, which was a *cross*.

[Verneil W. Simmons, Peoples, Places and Prophecies, pp. 60, 62] [See the commentary on Alma 3:13]

1 Nephi 1:19 **The Coming of a Messiah:**

In 1 Nephi 1:19-20 it says that Lehi testified that the things which he saw and heard, and also the things which he read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world. And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away.

Joy Osborn notes that in the Jewish Talmud, it is stated that: "All the prophets have prophesied of nothing save the days of Messiah, that is, of the eternal order to come." Yet when Christ, their Messiah, came, they crucified him for declaring himself to be the Son of God.

"Messiah" is an Aramaic word meaning "the anointed" or "the anointed one." "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of the name "Messiah." Therefore, in the Greek translation of the New Testament, the Messiah is called Christ. And Jesus, as the Messiah, is called Jesus the Christ, or Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the name of Messiah appears only in the Book of Daniel, when the angel Gabriel appears to Daniel and reveals to him the time for the coming of Israel's Messiah. (Daniel 9:24-26)

That the Messiah would become the sacrificial Lamb of God was known by all of ancient Israel's prophets. It was known by all that he would be slain as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of all mankind and by that sacrifice he would become their Savior and their Redeemer.

When Israel lapsed into a state of apostasy, they lost sight of the promised Messiah, the

Anointed One, who would become the Sacrificial Lamb, and be slain for the sins of the world, as foretold by the prophets from the beginning. In their fallen and wicked state, they began to look forward to a Messiah who would come as a great king and military leader, one who would destroy all of Israel's enemies and reestablish Israel as a great and powerful nation again - someone like king David.

[Joy M. Osborn, The Book of Mormon -- The Stick of Joseph, p. 220]

Question* Did this apostasy begin before or during the time of Lehi and Jeremiah? [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 10:5; 13:28]

1 Nephi 1:20 **When the Jews heard these things they were angry with him (Illustration – not shown):**

"And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him . . . and they also sought his life," by A&OR. [W. Cleon Skousen, Treasures From the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 1023]

1 Nephi 1:20 **They Also Sought His Life (Chiastic Structure):**

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the inverted parallel structure of parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

An "inverted parallelism takes the form A-B-C/C-B-A. (p. xxxii)

[In my view the chiastic structure can be the most forceful of parallels because all the lines of thought are focused on the center line, making that statement very significant.

A fine example of this Inverted Parallelism (Chiastic Structure) is found in 1 Nephi 1:20—2:1.

I should also note here that in this particular case, the chiastic structure extends into the next chapter. This should tell us to be careful about disconnecting our thought process from one chapter to the next.

1: 20 . . .

[A] and they also sought his life, that they might take it away.

[B] 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.

2:1 [C] For behold, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto my father,
yea, even in a dream,

[C'] and said unto him: Blessed art thou Lehi,
because of the things which thou hast done;

[B] and because thou hast been faithful and declared unto this people
the things which I commanded thee, behold,

[A] they seek to take away thy life.

[Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns,
F.A.R.M.S., p. 2]

1 Nephi 1:20: **The tender mercies**

As a theme of his writings, Nephi informs the reader in the first chapter of First Nephi that his intention behind making his record is to "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" (1 Nephi 1:20).

According to Potter and Wellington, the commandment to write the small plates was given to Nephi some thirty years after Nephi left Jerusalem and it would appear that Nephi took approximately 10 years to write the first 25 chapters (2 Nephi 5:30,34). It appears that the time and distance separating Nephi from the events gave him the opportunity to reconsider events with a different perspective.

As Nephi sat in the Americas, it certainly wouldn't have escaped his attention that their journey in Arabia could in some ways be divided into two parts, each a mirror image of the other:

1. Their first encampment was in a valley surrounded by mountains where a river flowed into the sea.
2. The family left that campsite and headed inland.
3. They crossed the mountain range.
4. They made their next camp at a place they called Shazer, a word associated with trees. According to Arabic writing the name could be represented by the consonants "Shzr." Here they could find water and trees providing a stark contrast to the bleak terrain that surrounded them.
5. They traveled in an approximately S.S.E. direction with the mountains between them and the sea. The desert was inland of them.
- 6*. **They reached Nahom.**
- 5' They changed direction to travel nearly eastwards with the mountains between them and the sea. The desert was inland of them.
- 4' They reached their last encampment on the trail east. This was the ancient city of

Ubar. Interestingly, the town is now called "Shisir" (variant spelling Shasar). Here they could find water and trees providing a stark contrast to the bleak terrain that surrounded them.

- 3' The family left that campsite and headed inland.
- 2' They crossed the mountain range.
- 1' Their last encampment was in a valley surrounded by mountains where a (seasonal) River flowed into the sea.

At the first and last campsites we read the stories that seem to make up the center focus for each half of First Nephi: (1) the obtaining of the brass plates, and (2) the building of the ship.

Apparently, these are points that Nephi wants us to pay particular attention to because of the learning principles included. We notice the similarity between each story here:

Obtaining of the Plates of Laban

Building the Ship

Laman and Lemuel murmur. (1 Ne. 3:5)

Laman and Lemuel murmur. (1 Ne 17:17)

Nephi urges them to be faithful. (1 Ne. 3:16)

Nephi urges them to be faithful. (1 Ne 17:23)

Laman & Lemuel beat (attempt to kill?) Nephi with a rod (1 Ne 3:28)

Laman & Lemuel seek to throw Nephi into the depths of the sea. (1 Ne 17:48)

The Lord intervenes-an angel teaches Laman & Lemuel (1 Ne 3:29)

The Lord intervenes. Nephi is given power to shake his brothers (1 Ne 17:53)

The brothers grudgingly accept the will of the Lord and help Nephi obtain the plates (1 Ne 4:4)

The brothers accept the will of the Lord and help Nephi build the ship. (1 Ne 18:1)

The family is successful in obtaining the brass plates (1 Ne 5:10]

The family is successful in completing the ship. (1 Ne 18:5)

According to Potter & Wellington, there is a third chiasm though, one that appears in the outline of the journey noted previously. The center of that chiastic journey occurs at Nahom.* It is interesting to note the elements of the Nahom incident and compare them with the stories about obtaining the plates of Laban and building a ship:

Obtaining Food at Nahom

The daughters of Ishmael murmur (1 Ne 16:35)

Laman and Lemuel seek to kill Nephi and Lehi (1 Ne 16:37)

The Lord intervenes. He teaches the dissenters, who hear his voice (1 Ne 16:39)
The dissenters repent (1 Ne 16:39)
They obtain food and are saved (1 Ne 16:39)

At previous stops we are told that it was for the purpose of hunting (see 1 Nephi 16:14; 16:17), however at Nahom we are not told this. The reason is simple. Here on the edge of the desert sands there is no game to be found. There is no mountain cover for the hunter, just endless waves of sand that stretch eastward for 600 miles. This is the edge of the Rub' Al-Kali--the Empty Quarter, where no man goes.

At Nahom, like the situation in obtaining the brass plates or the circumstances of building the ship, Nephi's life is once again in danger. But even at this lowest time, starving, surrounded by the seemingly endless sands of the desert, and with his brothers baying for his blood, Nephi remains faithful to his covenants with the Lord, and they obtain food and are saved. How the Lord accomplished this we do not know. Whether it was by some miracle, like the miracle of the quail for the children of Israel, or by more simple means with some other travelers coming to the well and providing food, we do not know. Suffice it to say Nephi recognized the source of his salvation.

[George Potter & Richard Wellington, Discovering The Lehi-Nephi Trail, Unpublished Manuscript (July 2000), pp. 271-274]

Note* With literary power and historical veracities that can only come from the Lord, Nephi's narrative is to be a literal proof of his thesis: "I, Nephi," will show unto you that the tender mercies [or covenant promises] of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen [or his covenant people], because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance" (1 Nephi 1:20; emphasis added). Indeed, God's covenant promises ("mercies") are "both temporal and spiritual" (see 1 Nephi 22:1,3). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note* How many times does Nephi record that he was delivered from death at the hands of his brethren? Perhaps seven events witness miraculous deliverance:

1. While obtaining the brass plates (1 Nephi 3:28-29)
2. While returning with Ishmael and his daughters (1 Nephi 7:16-19)
3. While starving at Nahom (1 Nephi 16:36-39)
4. While attempting to build a ship at Bountiful (1 Nephi 17 48-52)
5. While crossing the seas to the promised land (1 Nephi 18:10-21)
6. Because they left Jerusalem which was destroyed (2 Nephi 1:4)
7. While initially all together after landing in the promised land (2 Nephi 5:1-7)

[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 5:13]

NOTES

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- i. Tyndale House, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 3, p.
- ii. Edersheim, pp. 353-354.
- iii. Edersheim, p. 351.
- iv. Edersheim, p. 355.
- v. Edersheim, p. 353.
- vi. John Gee, "A Note on the Name Nephi," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 189-91; see also Gee, "A Note on the Name Nephi," FARMS Update, *Insights* (November 1992): 2.
- vii. John A. Tvedtnes, review of *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent L. Metcalfe, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 39. Tvedtnes conflates *Nfw* and *Nfy*, but they are distinct words in Egyptian.
- viii. The name *Nfw-iw* "the wind is come" is attested from the 22nd Dynasty (Georges Legrain, "Deux steles trouvees a Karnak en fevrier 1897," *Zeitschrift fur agyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde* 35 [1897]: 15, line 14, though this perhaps should be read *T3w-iw*) as well as other names compounded with *nfy* (see Hermann Ranke, *Die Agyptischen Personennamen* [Gluckstadt: Augustin, 1935], 1:193).
- ix. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, ed. John A. Brinkman et al. (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1980), N1:263-70; see Wolfram von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972), 2:732-33.
- x. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, N1:295-96; see von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, 2:737-38.
- xi. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, N2:242-45; see von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, 2:791.
- xii. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, N1:307-10; see von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, 2:739.
- xiii. Although *nappahu* is used as an epithet of the god Ea; see *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, N1:307-10.
- xiv. Hermann Ranke, *Die Agyptischen Personennamen* [Gluckstadt: Augustin, 1935], 1:194.
- xv. Hermann Ranke, *Die Agyptischen Personennamen* [Gluckstadt: Augustin, 1935], 1:193.
- xvi. See Manfred Dietrich and Oswald Loretz, *Analytic Ugaritic Bibliography*, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 6 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Berchker Kevelaer, 1996), 777, s.v. "*npy*."
- xvii. See Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964). 239, n. 27 (or [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988], 290, n. 28).

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- xviii. Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, *Analecta Orientalia* 38 (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1965), 446, s.v. "np'." See also Dietrich and Loretz, 778.
- xix. W. Wilson, *Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies*. Peabody, Mass.: Henrickson Publishers, p. 216.
- xx. Ariel and D'vorah Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered*. Littleton, Colorado: First Fruits of Zion, 1996, p. 7.
- xxi. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, Unabridged, 1,656-57 (entries for "pattern" and "patron").
- xxii. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:803-7. For a discussion of a narrower use of the word *mysterios*, see my article "The Calling of a Prophet," in *First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1988), 45-46 and n. 51.
- xxiii. This 165-element Global Chiasmus is based on research by Dayton E. Conway, Aurora, Colorado.
- xxiv. King, Wallace, B. *Notes on the Chiastic Structure of The First Book of Nephi*, LDS Church Historical Library, undated, unpublished.
- xxv. John Forbes, *The Symmetrical Structure of Scripture*, (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1854), as quoted in John Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon", *Book of Mormon Authorship*, Reynolds, p. 38.
- xxvi. For example, the Babylonians recorded the positions of the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn on precise dates during one month of the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar (B.L. van der Waerden, *Science Awakening Vol.II*, "The Birth of Astronomy", New York, Oxford, 1974, p. 97). Those positions agree with the conventional date of 568 B.C. for that year of his reign (see R.A. Parker and W.H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.-A.D. 45*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1942, p. 26).
- xxvii. There are two New Year's Days on the Judean calendar, one in the spring and one in the fall. There is evidence that both systems were used by Bible authors to reckon Jehoiakim's reign. For our purposes, it suffices that it began either in the spring or fall of 608 B.C.
- xxviii. The Babylonian date was the 21st year of Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar. (See A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, vol. 5 of *Texts from Cuneiform Sources*, eds. A.L. Oppenheim, et al. (New York: Augustus, 1975) p. 99. Conversion to our calendar taken from *Babylonian Chronology*, p. 25.
- xxix. Berossus of Babylon is quoted by Josephus as stating that after Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt at Carchemish, he immediately settled the affairs of Egypt, and the other countries and sent captives from the Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians, and Egyptians to Babylon before he returned there himself to be crowned king after his father's death (*Antiquities* X.xi.1).
- xxx. The Book of Daniel apparently uses the fall reckoning because it gives the year as the third year of Jehoiakim. See Pratt, J.P., "When was the Seventy Year Captivity of Judah?" *Ensign*, 28, No. 10 (October, 1998), 64-65.

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- xxx. *Babylonian Chronicles* 5:10-11 (Grayson, p. 99-100).
- xxxii. *Babylonian Chronicles* 5:17 (Grayson, p. 100).
- xxxiii. *Babylonian Chronicles* 5:17, 23; R5:4 (Grayson, p. 100-101).
- xxxiv. *Babylonian Chronicles* R5:6-7 (Grayson, p. 100).
- xxxv. Josephus, *Antiquities* X.vi.1-3.
- xxxvi. Ginzberg, Louis, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1941) IV:285.
- xxxvii. 3,000 according to Josephus (*Antiquities* X.vi.3), 300 according to other traditions (See *Legends of the Jews* IV:284).
- xxxviii. The exact date is given in the *Babylonian Chronicles* R5:12, as 2 Adar in the 7th year of Nebuchadnezzar. Parker and Dubberstein (p. 25) give the date as 16 Mar 597 B.C. on the Julian Calendar, which is 10 March on our Gregorian calendar. Moreover, the Babylonian record also gives the month of Nebuchadnezzar's march to Jerusalem (Nov/Dec, 598 B.C.) when he installed Jehoiachin, which agrees closely with the Biblical record that Jehoiachin reigned three months and ten days.
- xxxix. *Babylonian Chronicles*, R5:12 (Grayson, p. 102).
- xl. The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 3. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980, p. 1679.
- xli. Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson, 1983), 54.
- xlii. S. Kent Brown, "What Is Isaiah Doing in First Nephi? Or, How Did Lehi's Family Fare so Far from Home," in *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1998), 12-17.
- xliii. Oliver Cowdery's report is found in the *Messenger and Advocate* 1/5 (1835); 78-80; 1/7 (1935): 108-12; and 1/10 (1835); 156-59. A convenient list and important discussion of these passages can be found in Kent P. Jackson, "The Appearance of Moroni to Joseph Smith (JS --H 1:27-49)," in *Studies in Scripture: Volume Two: The Pearl of Great Price*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake city: Randall Book, 1985), 339-66.
- xliv. See *TPJS*, 14-15.
- xlv. See *TPJS*, 180-81.
- xlvi. "Cities: Cities in the Levant," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 1:1031-1043, and Philip J. King, "Jerusalem," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 3:747-66, which relies on M. Broshi, "Estimating the Population of Ancient Jerusalem," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 4 (1978), pages 10-15.
- xlvii. See Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 366.
- xlviii. See Roberta L. Harris, *The World of the Bible* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 96.

xlix. See Mayer I. Gruber, "Private Life in Ancient Israel," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995), 1:6333; Martin Noth, *The Old Testament World*, trans. Victor I. Gruhn (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966), 158-63.

i. Allen, Joseph L., *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Orem, Utah: S.A. Publishers, 1989), pp. 22-25.

ii. Pratt, J.P. "Passover" p. 45, fn 7.

iii. Josephus, *Antiquities* I.iii.9.

liii. Pratt, J.P. "The Restoration of Priesthood Keys on Easter 1836," *Ensign* (June 1985), p. 68.

liv. The 600th year of Lehi would have ended in Nov 602 B.C., which is supported by studies of seasonal warfare patterns in Mesoamerica which indicate that the Nephi year began about December at that time. (See Sorenson, John, "Seasonality of Warfare in the Book of Mormon and in Mesoamerica," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, ed. S. Ricks and W. Hamblin (Salt Lake City: FARMS, 1990), pp. 445-77.

lv. That Zedekiah is indicated is made clear from the context in the next two chapters. Other translations simply translate the name as "Zedekiah." Even if this is simply a copyist's mistake, it seems easier to explain if Jehoiakim had also been called Zedekiah.

lvi. "His [Jehoiakim's] name was changed from Eliakim as a mark of vassalage." *New Bible Dictionary*, Second Edition, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1982), p. 555.