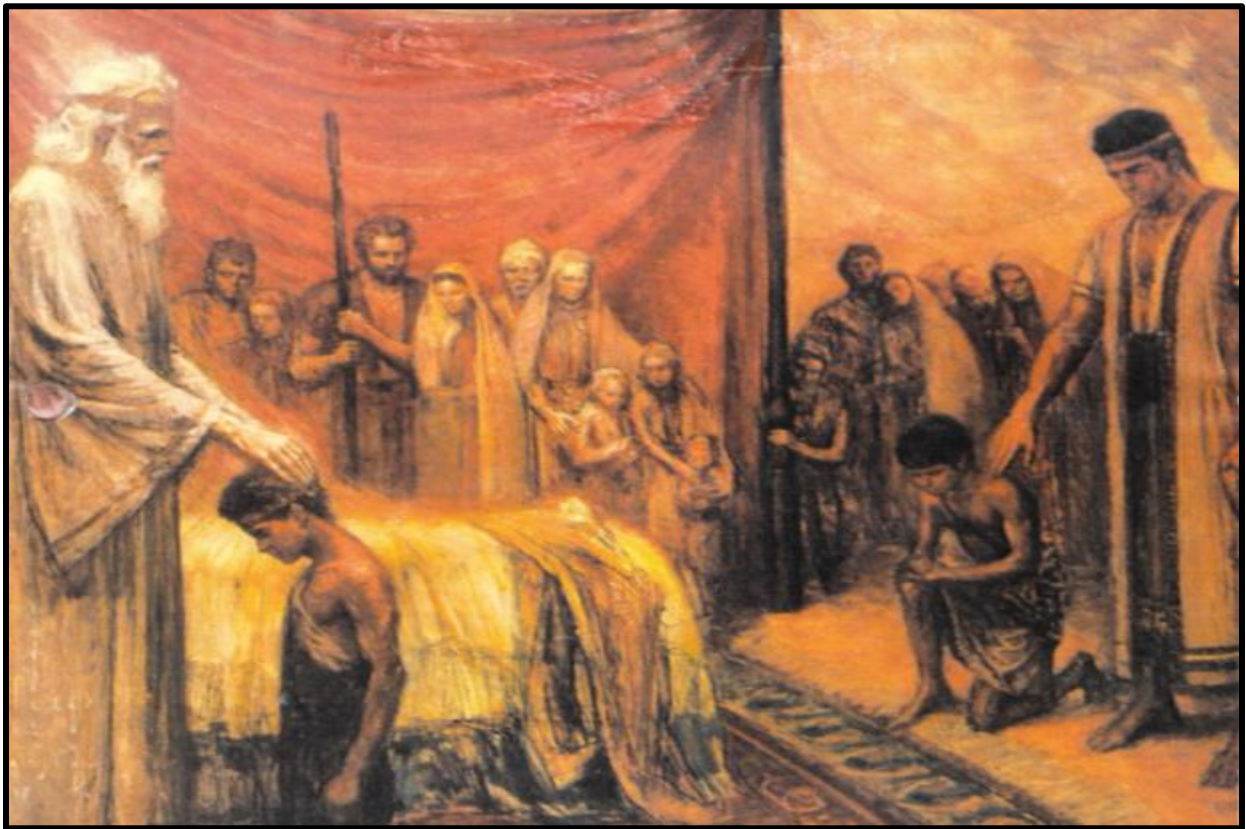


*Step by Step
through
the Book of Mormon*

A Collection of Cultural Commentary



Volume 2

A Covenant Plan of Salvation

Alan C. Miner

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Preface

As one begins to discover the covenants in the Book of Mormon, in both their literal historic setting and in their prophetic spiritual patterns, he will also begin to discover the real story contained in the pages of the book. And as readers come to know the truth of the story contained therein, they will also come to know the truth of the Christ-centered covenants.

Nearly 2600 years ago, the prophet Nephi quoted to his brothers the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the covenant relationship of the Lord with the House of Israel. Afterward, they asked him an intriguing question: "What meaneth these things which ye have read? Behold, are they to be understood according to things which are spiritual, which shall come to pass according to the spirit and not the flesh?" (1 Nephi 22:1)

Nephi answered them with the following: "Wherefore, the things of which I have read are things pertaining to things both temporal and spiritual." (1 Nephi 22:3)

One might wonder, why did Nephi give such a response? Is there truly a reason why Isaiah's prophecies would need to be acted out both in the temporal history of mankind and also in the spiritual life of man? Nephi, himself, provides a clue: "Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ; for . . . all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him." (2 Nephi 11:4)

While the Book of Mormon is a history, full of geographical, cultural, and chronological statements, and although Mormon said that he was "commanded" by the Lord to write what he did (3 Nephi 26:12), did the Lord have a purpose in the manner in which such temporal details were recorded in the text? The Lord has said: "And again, I will give unto you **a pattern in all things**, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations." (D&C 52:14) "And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual . . . : all things bear record of me." (Moses 6:63)

If, according to the title page of the Book of Mormon, we are promised that the verses contained therein will eventually help lead to the "convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ," and if Nephi did not "write anything upon plates save it be that [he thought] it be sacred" (1 Nephi 19:6), then perhaps the pattern of historical and cultural references within the text might provide a fascinating, even divine perspective to the intended message of the book.

With the help of a prophetic blessing of the prophet Ezra Taft Benson to those who would read the Book of Mormon, and with an ever increasing flow of articles and books dealing not only with gospel perspectives, but cultural and historical perspectives as well, I believe the Book of Mormon can now be appreciated and studied as Nephi intimated to his brothers ("my brethren") that scriptures should be, in both a "temporal" and a "spiritual" covenant setting.

Hopefully what follows will lead towards a deeper understanding of the book's divinely planned and divinely recorded covenant setting – the Lord's "new covenant" (D&C 84:57).

Second Nephi

An account of the death of Lehi. Nephi's brethren rebel against him. The Lord warns Nephi to depart into the wilderness. His journeyings in the wilderness, and so forth.

2 Nephi Title **The Second Book of Nephi (Some Background Perspective):**

According to Noel B. Reynolds, the narrative between the first and second books written by Nephi is continuous. That is, the events described at the end of the first book could easily have transpired on the same day or hour as those at the beginning of the second. Yet Nephi chose to make his largest structural break at this point. The internal structure of First Nephi emphasizes its separate character as a literary unit (see Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline," FARMS, 1996). It would seem that First Nephi constitutes an elaborate introduction to the final presentation in Nephi's argument for his right to be a "ruler and teacher" over his brethren (see 1 Nephi 2:16-24; 3:29).

Here in Second Nephi chapters 1-4, Nephi gives verbatim accounts of Lehi's blessings to his own sons and Ishmael's sons and to Zoram, shortly before his own death. These blessings define the subsequent tribal order of these peoples and systematically refute the traditions of the Lamanites as they had emerged by the time of Nephi's writing. In Lehi's own mouth we find the explanations for his choice of Nephi over Laman and Lemuel. These four chapters invoke the authority of the patriarch himself to support (1) the revelations from God describing this land of promise and the role of Nephi as a teacher and ruler in it, (2) the teachings about the Messiah and the redemption he brings to men, which was an essential plank in Nephi's defense of his position, and (3) the authoritative patriarchal designation of Nephi as the one to whom all the others must hearken if they are to realize their patriarchal blessings--and the spiritual blessings of a loving God. All of First Nephi builds up to these chapters and provides the essential background for them. . . .

In Second Nephi chapter 5, Nephi concludes his case against the Lamanite tradition which challenges his authority over the Lehite colony. In later chapters in Second Nephi he preaches the doctrines of Christ through the teachings of his brother Jacob, the writings of Isaiah, and his own concluding sermons. But the historical part of the argument ends in chapter 5. (Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," FARMS, 1987, p. 28-29, 35.)

2 Nephi Superscription **Nephi's Brethren Rebel (Third Person):**

The superscription to Second Nephi reads as follows:

"An account of the death of Lehi. Nephi's brethren rebelleth against him -- the Lord warns Nephi to depart into the wilderness -- &C his journeyings in the wilderness -- &C."

This superscription was part of the original text and not a later addition. What is interesting is the fact that it is written in third person, while the rest of the Small Plates are written in first person, with the exception of Mormon's added words of explanation as to why the small plates were included (Words of Mormon). This might affect the way one views the process of how the plates were first written (a previously scripted composition), or how they were added to Mormon's abridgment (perhaps Mormon transcribed them onto his plates). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] (See the commentary on 1 Nephi Superscription)

Chapter 1

Nephi 1 (Chapter Divisions):

According to Royal Skousen, evidence from both the Original Manuscript and Printer's Manuscript shows that Joseph Smith apparently saw some visual indication at the end of a section that the section was ending. Although this may have been a symbol of some kind, a more likely possibility is that the last words of the section were followed by blankness. Recognizing that the section was ending, Joseph Smith then told the scribe to write the word *chapter*, with the understanding that the appropriate number would be added later.

There is considerable evidence in both manuscripts to support this interpretation. First, the word *chapter* is never used by any writer in the text itself, unlike the term *book*, which is used to refer to an individual book in the Book of Mormon (such as the book of Helaman) as well as a whole set of plates (such as the book of Nephi, meaning the large plates of Nephi: see Helaman 2:13-14).

Second, chapters are assigned before the beginning of a book. For instance, in the original manuscript, we have the following at the beginning of 2 Nephi:

Chapter ~~V~~ VIII

second Chapter I

*The ^ Book of Nephi ^ An account of the death of Lehi, Nephi's
Brethren rebelleth against him – the Lord warns Nephi to depart into
the wilderness -- &C his journeyings in the wilderness -- &C – And now .*

..

Oliver Cowdery first wrote *Chapter* at the conclusion of the last section in 1 Nephi--that is, at the conclusion of Chapter VII in the original chapter system; (our current chapter system dates from Orson Pratt's 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon, which has 22 chapters in 1 Nephi). At this point, Joseph Smith had no indication that a new book was beginning. All he could see was the end of Chapter VII (namely, the words "and thus it is Amen" followed probably by blankness or maybe a special symbol). Later, when Oliver Cowdery was adding the chapter numbers, he first assigned the Roman numeral *VIII* to this first chapter of 2 Nephi. But when he realized that this was actually the beginning of a new book, he crossed out the whole chapter designation and inserted (with slightly weaker ink flow) "Chapter I" after the title of the book, which originally was simply designated as "The Book of Nephi." Later he realized that there was more than one book of Nephi, which led him to also insert the word *second* (with considerably heavier ink flow).

This system of assigning chapters also explains why the two manuscripts have chapter

numbers assigned to the short books found at the end of the small plates (Enos, Jarom, Omni, and the words of Mormon) as well as 4 Nephi. These books contain only one section, but at the beginning of each of these short books, Joseph Smith apparently had no knowledge that this was the case. This fact further shows that Joseph Smith himself did not know in advance the contents or structure of the text.

Probably the strongest evidence that the word *chapter* is not original to the revealed text is that the chapter numbers are assigned later in both manuscripts. The numbers are almost always written in heavier ink and more carefully. In many cases, Oliver Cowdery added serifs to his Roman numerals. On the other hand, his *Chapter* is always written rapidly and with the same general ink flow as the surrounding text. In the Printer's Manuscript, at the beginning of Chapter XVII in Alma (now the beginning of Alma 36), the Roman numeral XVII was written in blue ink, not the normal black ink. In this part of the Printer's Manuscript, Oliver had been using this same blue ink to rule the manuscript sheets of the Printer's Manuscript prior to copying. Here he also used this blue ink to assign the chapter number as well as add an "s" to the word *Commandment* in the next line. This example clearly suggests that this part of the Original Manuscript itself did not yet have chapter numbers assigned to it when Oliver Cowdery started to copy it, perhaps six months after it had been dictated. (Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon, Evidence from the Original Manuscript," in Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited, p. 85-87.)

2 Nephi 1 (**Lehi As Moses**):

According to Noel Reynolds, it could easily be said that Lehi was a Moses figure, for he led his people out of a wicked land because of commands received in visions from God, through the wilderness, across the sea, and to a promised land. And then he died, leaving it to others to establish the covenant people in the promised land. So it is worthy of note that in his final words to his people, Lehi invokes the very phrases and concepts used by Moses in his farewell address to the Israelites, as recorded in Deuteronomy. There are 14 Mosaic themes and circumstances that Lehi invoked in his sermon recorded in 2 Nephi 1. Illustrations of close parallels in Deuteronomy, particularly chapter 4, will be noted:

(1) **Rehearsal of Covenant Blessings:** Lehi "rehearsed unto them, how great things the Lord had done for them" (2 Nephi 1:1, 3, 10). Likewise, Moses rehearsed the blessings that the Israelites had received (see Deuteronomy 4:32-38).

(2) **Appointment of a Successor to Help Lead the Covenant People:** In the speeches in Deuteronomy, Moses declares Joshua as his successor (see Deuteronomy 1:38, 3:28; 31:3, 7, 14, 23). Lehi similarly seizes on the occasion of his impending demise to appoint Nephi as his successor (2 Nephi 1:28).

(3) **The Prophet's Last Words Are Recorded:** Lehi's perception that his life is near an end

drives the timing of his remarks (2 Nephi 1:13-15). The Lord denied Moses the opportunity of entering "that good land" and thus Moses "must die in this land" (Deuteronomy 4:21-22).

(4) **Covenant Apostates Will Be Cursed, Scattered, and Smitten:** Lehi focuses tightly on the choice between receiving a blessing or a "sore cursing" (2 Nephi 1:21-22). Moses repeatedly warns the Israelites of a choice between a blessing and a cursing (see Deuteronomy 11:26-28; 28:15-20).

(5) **Covenant Statutes and Judgments Are to Be Remembered:** For both Lehi and Moses, the way to avoid the frightening curses is to "remember to observe the statutes and the judgments of the Lord" (2 Nephi 1:16). Moses repeatedly refers to the statutes and judgments of God (see Deuteronomy 4:1, 5, 8, 14, 40, 45). "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them" (Deuteronomy 5:1).

(6) **Keep the Commandments and Ye Shall Prosper in the Land:** Moses warns Israel, "Keep . . . the words of this covenant . . . that ye may prosper in all that ye do" (Deuteronomy 29:9, see also 28:15, 29; 7:11-15). The words of the Lord to Lehi, "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land" (2 Nephi 1:20; 4:4). This formula (also given to Nephi--1 Nephi 2:20-21; 4:14) was used by Nephite prophets over the next millennium and repeated (almost 20 times) throughout the Book of Mormon.

(7) **Rebellions and Murmurings Are Rehearsed:** Lehi rehearses his peoples rebellions and murmurings, particularly against both him and Nephi during their ocean crossing (see 2 Nephi 1:2, 24-26). Moses repeatedly pointed out his people's rebellions under his leadership (Deuteronomy 9:7-8).

(8) **The New Land Is a Choice Land:** Moses declared the Lord gave the Israelites their new land (see Deuteronomy 5:16; compare 27:2). Moreover, their continued possession of this bountiful land was contingent on their keeping the commandments (see Deuteronomy 8:1, 7-10). Lehi's land was choice above all others (2 Nephi 1:5-9).

(9) **The New Land Is a Covenant Land:** Lehi explicitly notes that "the Lord God hath covenanted with me [that this] should be a land for the inheritance of my seed" (2 Nephi 1:5). Moses similarly reminds Israel that God himself declared his covenant unto them; and he warns Israel not to forget the covenant, "for the Lord thy God is a merciful God [and] he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them" (Deuteronomy 4:31; see also 5:3, 7:9; 29:24-28).

(10) **The Covenant People Can Be a Choice and Favored People:** Lehi expresses the wish that his people "might be a choice and a favored people of the Lord" (2 Nephi 1:19). In so doing he echoes the prophecies of Moses, who taught the Israelites that they were "an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6; see also 7:14; 4:20, 37; 28:1, 9;

26:18-19).

(11) **God Will Be Good and Merciful to the Covenant People:** Lehi echoes a persistent Mosaic theme when he consistently explains God's actions towards his people in terms of his mercy and "infinite goodness" (see 2 Nephi 1:3, 10). Moses explains that God is faithful and keeps "covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9; see also 7:12).

(12) **The Covenant People Must Choose between Good and Evil, Life and Death:** Moses tells the Israelites, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15); see also 30:19). Lehi elaborates extensively on this formula¹ by linking it to the transgression of Adam and Eve, which they committed in the hope of gaining a knowledge of good and evil and the difference between them. But, as Lehi goes on to explain, it is the redemption from the transgression accomplished by the Messiah in the fulness of times that makes men free to choose between the two (see 2 Nephi 2:18, 26, 27; see also 2:11, 2:30).

(13) **By Their Testimony, God's Prophets Are Clean from the Sins of Their People:** Both Moses and Lehi use the occasion of their final speeches to absolve themselves of responsibility for the future lapses of their people (see Deuteronomy 4:15; 2 Nephi 1:17, 16, 21-22, 15; 2:30).

(14) **The Covenants Will Affect Both Present and Future Generations:** The final Mosaic theme that Lehi weaves into his own discourse is the idea that, because of these covenants, the blessings and cursings that will come upon the people will affect multiple generations (see 2 Nephi 1:18). Similarly, Moses warned his people (see Deuteronomy 4:25; 7:9; 4:9-10).

Such parallels bring added weight to the testimony of both Nephi and Moses. (Noel B. Reynolds, Lehi As Moses," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 9, Num. 2, 2000, FARMS, p. 27-35.)

Note* Once again "the last records" which Nephi saw come forth in vision unto the Gentiles (the Book of Mormon . . .) "shall establish the truth of the first" (the Bible) (see 1 Nephi 13:40). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 1:1 **Lehi Spake Many Things unto Them:**

(See KnoWhy #29 Should 2 Nephi 1:1 - 4:12 Be Called the "Testament of Lehi"? www.bookofmormoncentral.org)

2 Nephi 1:1 **Our Father:**

According to John Welch, since Lehi is the only figure in the Book of Mormon called "our father" (2 Nephi 1:1), this designation appears to be a unique reference to Lehi's patriarchal position at the head of Nephite civilization, society, and religion.

Seeing Lehi in the patriarchal tradition is borne out by the fact that Lehi was remembered by Nephites from beginning to end as "father Lehi," just as Israelites have always known Abraham as "father Abraham." (John W. Welch, "Lehi's Last Will and Testament: A Legal Approach," in The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure, p. 69-70.)

2 Nephi 1:4 **I Have Seen a Vision, in Which I Know That Jerusalem Is Destroyed:**

In 2 Nephi 1:4 we find Lehi declaring to his sons: "I have seen a vision, in which I **know** that Jerusalem is destroyed." In order to explain this statement, Reynolds and Sjodahl write what has come to be the traditional explanation:

"While Lehi and his company were still wanderers in the Arabian wilderness, the Lord gave him the promise that he would receive word of the destruction of Jerusalem. (1 Ne. 17:14) Now, after their arrival in America, the Lord gave them a vision in which the fate of that city was revealed." (Reynolds and Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, p. 232)

While this perspective might be correct, the use of the word "know" might imply that there is another possible covenant perspective, for the term "know" is a covenant word.

In 1 Nephi 17:4-6 Nephi writes that "we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness. And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful . . . And we beheld the sea . . . And it came to pass that we did pitch our tents by the seashore."

While in Bountiful the Lord commanded Nephi to construct a ship (1 Nephi 17:8). In making a bellows to blow the fire, Nephi remarks that on their previous journey through the wilderness the Lord had commanded them to not make much fire as the Lord would be their light in the wilderness. (1 Nephi 17:12-13). Nephi then launches into the covenant promises that the Lord HAD MADE with them PREVIOUSLY---that if they would keep his commandments they would be led towards the promised land and shall know that it is by me that ye are led." (1 Nephi 17:13).

It is at this point that Nephi remarks: "Yea, and the Lord said ALSO that: After ye have arrived in the promised land, ye shall know that I, the Lord am God; and that I, the Lord, did deliver you from destruction; yea, that I did bring you out of the land of Jerusalem" (1 Nephi 17:14). In my view this represents a series of covenant confirmations---"ye shall KNOW"—based on their final arrival in the promised land. It does not imply that they didn't "know" that the

Lord was God previously. It does not imply that they didn't "know" that Jerusalem had been destroyed previously. What it does imply is that their arrival in the promised land marked the final confirmation of a series of covenant promises by the Lord regarding their journey to, and arrival at the promised land.

Based on a covenant relationship with the Lord, one can "know" of the certainty of an event even before it happens. For example, in 1 Nephi 1:19 we find:

And it came to pass that the Jews did mock him [Lehi] because of the things which he testified of them; for he truly testified of . . . the things which he saw and heard [in a vision], and also the things which he read in a book [in that same visionary experience—see 1 Nephi 1:11] manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world."

Thus, by covenant means, Lehi could "know" or have covenant faith in the future before it happened, because he had made his covenants with the Lord-- the Father of Heaven and Earth, the Beginning and the End. Thus, the words of Lehi in 2 Nephi 1:3 declaring "I have seen a vision in which I know that Jerusalem is destroyed" could be referring back to the vision that Lehi had while at Jerusalem.

(Alan Miner, "Personal Notes")

Randall Spackman states that for many years people have assumed that when Lehi said, "I have seen a vision, in which I know that Jerusalem is destroyed" (2 Nephi 1:4), his statement implied that Lehi's group did not know of the destruction of Jerusalem until they were in the New World. This would mean that they would have had to leave Jerusalem at least 12 to 14 years prior to 586 B.C., the year that Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. However, Spackman has pointed out that at any time following his vision in the first year of Zedekiah's reign, Lehi could have factually proclaimed, "I have seen a vision in which I know that Jerusalem is destroyed." Lehi did not need another vision to confirm Jerusalem's destruction. Furthermore, according to 2 Nephi 25:9-10, the destruction of Jerusalem came "immediately after my father left Jerusalem." (Randall Spackman, "An Introduction to Book of Mormon Chronology" F.A.R.M.S., p. 14.) [See Appendix A]



2 Nephi 1:4 **I have seen a vision, in which I know that Jerusalem is destroyed (Illustration):** Destruction of Jerusalem. Lehi prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed because of its wickedness. Artist: Gary Kapp. (Thomas R. Valletta ed., *The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families*, 1999, p. 19.) [See also Bookofmormononline.net]



Spoils of Jerusalem being taken to Babylonia

2 Nephi 1:5, 9 **We Have Obtained a Land of Promise (Covenant Language and Structure):**

Among the covenant promises that Lehi rehearsed unto Nephi's brethren was that of "a land of promise" (2 Nephi 1:5) The blessings and stipulations of those blessing concerning that promised land are found in verses 5-12:

5. But, said he, notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise,
a land which is choice above all other lands;
a land which **the Lord God hath covenanted with me** should be a land for the inheritance of my seed.
Yea, **the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me**, and to my children forever,
and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord-

- 9 Wherefore, **I, Lehi, have obtained a [covenant] promise [from the Lord]**,
that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem
a shall keep his commandments,
b they shall prosper upon the face of this land;
c and they shall be kept from all other nations,
d that they may possess this land unto themselves.
a And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments
b they shall be blessed upon the face of this land,
c and there shall be none to molest them,
d nor to take away the land of their inheritance;
and they shall dwell safely forever.

According to Amy Hardison, ancient covenants spelled out the attending blessings and curses. Deuteronomy chapter 28 lists seven different covenant blessings: fruitfulness, rain, protection, abundance, a holy identity, land, and ascendancy over other nations. These blessings were present when the people were faithful. Concerning the promise of land we find:

The Lord . . . shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. (Deuteronomy 28:8-9).

This covenant promise of land was but a type and shadow of the ultimate promised land, the celestial kingdom. (Amy Blake Hardison, "Being a Covenant People," in *Covenants Prophecies and Hymns of the Old Testament*, p. 27.) [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:20; 1 Nephi 5:5; 1 Nephi 17:36-38; Ether 2:8]

2 Nephi 1:5 **A Land Which Is Choice Above All Other Lands (Covenant Language):**

Spencer W. Kimball writes:

“This America is no ordinary country. It is a choice land, ‘choice above all other lands’ (q Ne.2:20). It has a tragic and bloody past, but a glorious and peaceful future if its inhabitants really learn to serve their God. It was consecrated as a land of promise to the people of the Americas, to whom God gave these great [covenant] promises:

‘It will be a land of liberty to its people’ (2 Ne 1:7).

‘They shall never be brought down into captivity’ (2 Ne 1:7).

‘And there shall be none to molest them’ (2 Ne 1:9).

‘It is a land of promise’ (1 Ne 2:20).

‘It shall be free from all nations under heaven.’

‘There shall be no enemies come into this land.’

‘It shall be free from bondage’ (Ether 2:12).

‘There shall be no kings upon the land’ (2 Ne 10:11).

‘I will fortify this land against all other nations’ (2 Ne 10:11).

‘He that fighteth against Zion shall perish’ (2 Ne 10:13).

“But these promises, glorious though they be, desirable as they are, can come only ‘...if they will but serve the God of this land who is Jesus Christ...’ (Ether 2:12). There is only one way. That infallible cure is simply righteousness, obedience, Godliness, honor, and integrity. There is no other cure. Mountains of arms and ammunitions will not guarantee safety, for enemies can also build fortifications and missiles and bomb shelters. If we would but believe the prophets! For they have warned that if the ‘inhabitants of this land are ever brought down into captivity and enslaved, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land’ (See 2 Ne 1:7). (Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1961, pp. 30-31 as taken from Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 6-7.)

2 Nephi 1:5 **The Lord Hath Covenanted This Land unto Me, and My Children Forever:**

In 2 Nephi 1:5 Lehi declares unto his sons that, “the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and my children forever . . . “ Concerning this statement Orson Pratt remarks:

“Different portions of the earth have been pointed out by the Almighty, from time to time, to His [covenant] children, as their everlasting inheritance. As instances— Abraham and his posterity, that were worthy, were promised Palestine, Moab and Ammon—the children of righteous Lot—were promised a portion not far from the boundaries of the twelve tribes. The meek among the Jaredites, together with a remnant of the tribe of Joseph, were promised the great western continent...In the resurrection, the meek of all ages and nations will be restored to that portion of the

earth previously promised to them. And thus, all the different portions of the earth have been and will be disposed of to the lawful heirs..." (*Journal of Discourses* 1:332-333 as taken from Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 80.)

2 Nephi 1:5 **We Have Obtained a Land of Promise:**

(See KnowWhy #497 Where is the Land of Promise?

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2 Nephi 1:5 **The Lord Hath Covenanted This Land unto Me, and to My Children Forever, and Also, All Those Who Should Be Led Out of Other Countries By the Hand of the Lord (Covenant People):**

Kevin Christensen writes the following about the covenant-related words in 2 Nephi 1:5:

Notice that from the start, possession of the promised land is not just conditional, as we have seen, but also nonexclusive. Note also that there is no requirements that the "other countries" be located in the Old World.

Before explaining about the covenant for the land, Lehi reminds his children that besides themselves, the land contains "all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord" (2 Nephi 1:5). This remark comes before any reported contact with the Mulekites or the several indications of Jaredite remnants. Why does Lehi make this point about others being led to the land? He very likely knew about them. Nephi's vision of the promised land, granted before the ocean voyage, may refer to the3se others: "And it came to pass that the angel said unto me: Look, and behold thy see3d, and also the seed of they brethren. And I looked and beheld theland of promise; and I beheld multitudes of people even as it were in number as many as the sands of the sea" (1 Nephi 12:1)

Reading this passage as describing non-Lehite multitudes existing in the New World before the voyage makes Lehi's remarks about "other nations" (2 Nephi 1:8, 11) in relation to the covenant curse more meaningful. Lehi taught that a law cannot function without an attached punishment (2 Nephi 2:13), and if the "other nations" referred to in the promised land covenant would not arrive until Columbus's voyage, how would the covenant curse have any immediate significance? It makes sense to suppose that from the beginning Lehi knows that his people are not alone, and he wants his sons to be sobered by the fact. An immediate expectation of other nations on the part of Nephi and Lehi, possibly even interaction with small groups of natives early on (who could signify other nations without representing such), makes the whole story more consistent and meaningful.

(Kevin Christensen, "Paradigms Crossed: Review of *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*," *FARMS Review of Books* . vol. 7, no. 2 (1995), p. 168.)

2 Nephi 1:7 And If It So Be That They Shall Serve Him according to the Commandments . . . It Shall Be a Land of Liberty unto Them:

In 2 Nephi 1:7 Lehi prophesies concerning this covenant land, that it will be a land of liberty if the people of the land obey the Lord's commandments. In order to gain some perspective on this covenant-related liberty I will cite the following record keepers of the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the Doctrine and Covenants:

2 Nephi 1:7 [Nephi about LEHI to his sons]

7 Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of **liberty** unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever.

2 Nephi 2:27 [Nephi about LEHI to his son JACOB]

27 Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose **liberty** and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

Mosiah 29:32 [Mormon abridging MOSIAH₁ about Mosiah₁ preaching to his people]

32 And now I desire that this inequality should be no more in this land, especially among this my people; but I desire that this land be a land of **liberty**, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike, so long as the Lord sees fit that we may live and inherit the land, yea, even as long as any of our posterity remains upon the face of the land.

Alma 8:17 [Mormon abridging ALMA about the LORD speaking to him of the people in Ammonihah]

17 For behold, they do study at this time that they may destroy the **liberty** of thy people, (for thus saith the Lord) which is contrary to the statutes, and judgments, and commandments which he has given unto his people.

Alma 21:22 [Mormon abridging the Sons of Mosiah about KING LAMONI declaring to his people]

22 And he also declared unto them that they might have the **liberty** of worshiping the Lord their God according to their desires, in whatsoever place they were in, if it were in the land which was under the reign of king Lamoni.

Alma 43:49 **[MORMON abridging ALMA about CAPTAIN MORONI and the Nephites]**

49 And it came to pass that they turned upon the Lamanites, and they cried with one voice unto the Lord their God, for their **liberty** and their freedom from bondage.

Alma 44:5 **[MORMON abridging ALMA about CAPTAIN MORONI to the Lamanite leader Zerahemanah]**

5 And now, Zerahemnah, I command you, in the name of that all-powerful God, who has strengthened our arms that we have gained power over you, by our faith, by our religion, and by our rites of worship, and by our church, and by the sacred support which we owe to our wives and our children, by that **liberty** which binds us to our lands and our country; yea, and also by the maintenance of the sacred word of God, to which we owe all our happiness; and by all that is most dear unto us—

Alma 46:10 **[MORMON abridging HELAMAN about the wicked Amalickiah]**

10 Yea, we see that Amalickiah, because he was a man of cunning device and a man of many flattering words, that he led away the hearts of many people to do wickedly; yea, and to seek to destroy the church of God, and to destroy the foundation of liberty which God had granted unto them, or which blessing God had sent upon the face of the land for the righteous' sake.

Alma 46:13 **[Mormon abridging Helaman about CAPTAIN MORONI]**

13 And he fastened on his head-plate, and his breastplate, and his shields, and girded on his armor about his loins; and he took the pole, which had on the end thereof his rent coat, (and he called it the title of liberty) and he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren, so long as there should a band of Christians remain to possess the land—

Alma 46:24 **[Mormon abridging Helaman about CAPTAIN MORONI's proclamation]**

24 Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a remnant of Joseph; yea, let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, he saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed. And he said—Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God, and be taken unto himself, while the remainder of the seed of Joseph shall perish, even as the remnant of his garment.

Alma 46:36 **[Mormon abridging Helaman about CAPTAIN MORONI]**

36 And it came to pass also, that he caused the title of liberty to be hoisted upon every tower which was in all the land, which was possessed by the Nephites; and thus Moroni planted the standard of liberty among the Nephites.

Alma 48:10 **[Mormon abridging Helaman about CAPTAIN MORONI]**

10 And thus he was preparing to support their liberty, their lands, their wives, and their children, and their peace, and that they might live unto the Lord their God, and that they might maintain that which was called by their enemies the cause of Christians.

Alma 61:9 **[Mormon abriding Helaman about PAHORAN 's response to charges of inaction]**

9 . . . I, Pahoran, do not seek for power, save only to retain my judgment-seat that I may preserve the rights and the liberty of my people. My soul standeth fast in that liberty in the which God hath made us free.

The following perspectives about covenant “liberty” come from the Bible:

Romans 8:17, 21 **[PAUL writes in his epistle to the Roman speaking about the covenant law of Christ]**

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. . . .

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious **liberty** of the children of God.

2 Corinthians 3:17 **[PAUL writes in epistle to the Corinthians about where covenant liberty is found]**

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Galatians 5:1 **[PAUL writes in his epistle to the Galatians that the saints are covenant children of God]**

1 Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

James 1:25 **[JAMES in his general epistle writes about the covenant way to perfection]**

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The following perspective about covenant “liberty” comes from the Lord:

Doctrine and Covenants 88:86 **[CHRIST speaks of the covenant plan of salvation to JOSEPH SMITH]**

86 Abide ye in the liberty wherewith ye are made free; entangle not yourselves in sin, but let your hands be clean, until the Lord comes.

2 Nephi 1:9 I, Lehi, Have Obtained a [Covenant] Promise, that Inasmuch as Those . . . Shall Keep His Commandments, They Shall Prosper upon the Face of This Land:

Lehi declares that he had “obtained a [covenant] promise that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God [had] brought out of the land of Jerusalem [would] keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land . . . “ (2 Nephi 1:9)

While this is the first time that Lehi declares this covenant promise, it is not the first time that it has been recorded. This covenant promise was first recorded by Nephi in the book of First Nephi. Nephi writes that he had “great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he [the Lord] did visit me” (1 Nephi 2:16). Nephi records that the Lord said unto him : “And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands.

This powerful covenant promise is recorded or alluded to at least twenty-five times by the following record keepers in the Book of Mormon:

1 Nephi 2:20 [NEPHI recounting to his brother SAM what the LORD said unto him]

“And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands.

1 Nephi 4:14 [NEPHI remembering the LORD’s covenant promise]

14 And now, when I, Nephi, had heard these words, I remembered the words of the Lord which he spake unto me in the wilderness, saying that: Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments, they shall prosper in the land of promise.

2 Nephi 1:9 [Nephi about LEHI remembering the LORD’s covenant promise]

9 Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves. And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever.

2 Nephi 1:20 [Nephi about LEHI reiterating the LORD’s words to his sons]

20 And he hath said that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence.

2 Nephi 4:4 [Nephi about LEHI to his son Laman and Laman’s sons and daughters]

4 For the Lord God hath said that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; and inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence.

2 Nephi 5:10-11 [NEPHI about his followers in the place called Nephi]

10 And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses.

11 And the Lord was with us; and we did prosper exceedingly; for we did sow seed, and we did reap again in abundance. And we began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind.

Jarom 1:9 [JAROM about his people the Nephites]

9 And thus being prepared to meet the Lamanites, they did not prosper against us. But the word of the Lord was verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: Inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land.

Omni 1:6 [AMARON speaking about the destruction of the more part of the Nephites]

6 For the Lord would not suffer, after he had led them out of the land of Jerusalem and kept and preserved them from falling into the hands of their enemies, yea, he would not suffer that the words should not be verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall not prosper in the land.

Mosiah 1:7 [Mormon abridging BENJAMIN to his sons]

7 And now, my sons, I would that ye should remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers.

Mosiah 2:22 [Mormon abridging BENJAMIN to his people]

22 And behold, all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments ye should prosper in the land; and he never doth vary from that which he hath said; therefore, if ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you.

Mosiah 2:31 [Mormon abridging BENJAMIN to his people]

31 And now, my brethren, I would that ye should do as ye have hitherto done. As ye have kept my commandments, and also the commandments of my father [MOSIAH₁], and have prospered, and have been kept from falling into the hands of your enemies, even so if ye shall keep the commandments of my son, or the commandments of God which shall be delivered unto you by him, ye shall prosper in the land, and your enemies shall have no power over you.

Alma 9:13 [ALMA preaching to the people of Ammonihah]

13 Behold, do ye not remember the words which he [the Lord] spake unto Lehi, saying that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land? And again it is said that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

Alma 36:1 [Mormon abridging ALMA to his son Helaman]

1 My son, give ear to my words; for I swear unto you, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land.

Alma 36:30 [Mormon abridging ALMA to his son Helaman]

30 But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. Now this is according to his word.

Alma 37:13 [**Mormon abridging ALMA to his son Helaman**]

13 O **remember, remember**, my son Helaman, how strict are the commandments of God. And he said: If ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land—but if ye keep not his commandments ye shall be cut off from his presence.

Alma 38:1 [**Mormon abridging ALMA to his son Shiblon**]

1 My son, give ear to my words, for I say unto you, even as I said unto Helaman, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence.

Alma 48:15 [**MORMON commenting on how CAPTAIN MORONI taught the Nephites**]

15 And this was their faith, that by so doing God would prosper them in the land, or in other words, if they were faithful in keeping the commandments of God that he would prosper them in the land; yea, warn them to flee, or to prepare for war, according to their danger;

Alma 48:25 [**MORMON about the Nephites as led by Helaman & brethren and Captain Moroni**]

25 Yea, they could not bear that their brethren [the Lamanites] should rejoice over the blood of the Nephites, so long as there were any who should keep the commandments of God, for the promise of the Lord was, if they should keep his commandments they should prosper in the land.

Alma 50:19, 20 [**MORMON recounting the Lord's covenant with Lehi**]

19 . . . yea, we can behold that his [the Lord's] words are verified, even at this time, which he spake unto Lehi, saying:

20 Blessed art thou and thy children; and they shall be blessed, inasmuch as they shall keep my commandments they shall prosper in the land. But remember, inasmuch as they will not keep my commandments they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

Helaman 3:20, 25-27 [**MORMON about HELAMAN and the Nephites**]

20 Nevertheless Helaman did fill the judgment-seat with justice and equity; yea, he did observe to keep the statutes, and the judgments, and the commandments of God; and he did do that which was right in the sight of God continually; and he did walk after the ways of his father, insomuch that he did prosper in the land.

25 And so great was the prosperity of the church, and so many the blessings which were poured out upon the people, that even the high priests and the teachers were themselves astonished beyond measure.

26 And it came to pass that the work of the Lord did prosper unto the baptizing and uniting to the church of God, many souls, yea, even tens of thousands.

27 Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will, in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name.

Helaman 12:1,2 **[MORMON commenting on the decline & wickedness of the Nephites]**

1 And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him.

2 Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity.

3 Nephi 5:21, 22,23 **[MORMON writing about the Lord's covenant with JACOB (Israel) and JOSEPH (of Egypt) and his seed]**

21 Surely he [the Lord] hath blessed the house of Jacob, and hath been merciful unto the seed of Joseph.

22 And insomuch as the children of Lehi have kept his commandments he hath blessed them and prospered them according to his word.

23 Yea, and surely shall he again bring a remnant of the seed of Joseph to the knowledge of the Lord their God.

4 Nephi 1:23 **[MORMON about the people after the coming of Christ]**

23 And now I, Mormon, would that ye should know that the people had multiplied, insomuch that they were spread upon all the face of the land, and that they had become exceedingly rich, because of their prosperity in Christ.

Ether 2:9,10,12 **[MORONI speaking of the covenant promise that the BROTHER OF JARED received from the Lord – see Ether 2:7-8]**

9 And now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off . . .

10 For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; . . .

12 Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.

Ether 10:16 **[MORONI abridging ETHER about Levi]**

16 And after he [Levi] had obtained unto himself the kingdom he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; and the people did prosper in the land; and he did live to a good old age, and begat sons and daughters; and he also begat Corom, whom he anointed king in his stead.

By way of confirming this covenant obedience and the resultant prosperity testified to by the main record keepers of the Book of Mormon, I will cite two instances in the Old Testament:

1 Kings 2:3 [**DAVID before dying charges SOLOMON about keeping the covenants made with the Lord**]

3 And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

2 Chronicles 24:20 [**The Prophet ZECHARIAH to the wicked king Joash and the wicked princes of Judah and the people who followed them**]

20 And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you.

(Alan Miner, "Personal Notes")

2 Nephi 1:13 **O That Ye Would Awake (Covenant Structure and Language):**

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)

A fine example of this Inverted Parallelism (Chiastic Structure) is found in 2 Nephi 1:13-23

12 . . . wherefore, my sons, I would that ye would **remember**;
yea, I would that ye would **hearken unto my words.**

13 O that ye would

A. **Awake;**

awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and
shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound,
which are the chains which bind the children of men,

B that they are carried away **captive** down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe.

14 C Awake! and **arise from the dust,** and hear the words of a trembling parent,

D whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent **grave,** from whence no traveler can return; a few more days and I go the way of all the earth.

- 15 E But behold, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, **and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love.**
- 16 F And I desire that ye should remember to **observe the statutes and the judgments of the Lord;**
behold, this hath been the anxiety of my soul from the beginning.
- 17 My heart hath been weighed down with sorrow from time to time,
- G for I have feared, lest for the hardness of your hearts
[that] **the Lord your God should come out in the fulness of his wrath** upon you,
- 18 G that **ye be cut off and destroyed forever;**
Or, that a cursing should come upon you for the space of many generations;
and ye are visited by sword, and by famine,
and are hated,
and are led according to the will and captivity of the devil.
- 19 F O my sons, that these things might not come upon you,
but that ye might be a choice and a favored people of the Lord.
But behold, **his will be done; for his ways are righteousness forever.**
- 20 And he hath said that: **Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land;**
but **inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence.**
- 21 E And now that my soul might have **joy in you,**
and that my heart might leave this world with **gladness because of you,**
- D that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the **grave,**
- C **arise from the dust,** my sons, and be men,
and be determined in one mind and in one heart,
united in all things,
- B that ye may not come down into **captivity;**
- 22 That ye may not be cursed with a sore cursing; and also,
that ye may not incur the displeasure of a just God upon you, unto the **destruction,**
yea, the eternal **destruction** of both soul and body.
- 23 A **Awake,** my sons; put on the armor of righteousness.
Shake off the chains with which ye are bound,
and come forth out of obscurity, and arise from the dust.
- 24 **Rebel no more against your brother,**

whose views have been glorious,
and who hath kept the commandments from the time that we left Jerusalem;
and who hath been an instrument in the hands of God, in bringing us forth into the land of
promise;
for were it not for him, we must have perished with hunger in the wilderness;
nevertheless, ye sought to take away his life;
yea, and **he hath suffered much sorrow because of you.**

28 And now my son, Laman, and also Lemuel and Sam, and also my sons who are the sons of Ishmael,
Behold

if ye will hearken unto him

I leave unto you a blessing,
Yea, even my first blessing.

But if ye will not hearken unto him

I take away my first blessing
yea, even my blessing

(Donald Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns*, p. 50-52
with slight adaptations.)

2 Nephi 1:13 **Shake Off the Awful Chains By Which Ye Are Bound:**

In 2 Nephi 1:13 Lehi refers to “chains by which ye are bound.” But the meaning of the word “chains” might not be what the modern reader might think. Lehi would have been metaphorically alluding to what he had found in the Brass Plates. So it might be wise to go to the Book of Moses for some perspective. In chapter 7 we find the following passages which give perspective to Lehi’s concerns and pleas regarding his sons and what he meant when he used the term “chains”:

23 And after that Zion was taken up into heaven, Enoch beheld, and lo, all the nations of the earth
were before him;

24 And there came generation upon generation; and Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the
bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man; and behold, the power of Satan was upon all
the face of the earth.

25 And he saw angels descending out of heaven; and he heard a loud voice saying: Wo, wo be unto
the inhabitants of the earth.

26 And he beheld Satan; and **he had a great CHAIN in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the
earth with darkness;** and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced.

27 And Enoch beheld angels descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son;

and the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.

28 And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?

29 And Enoch said unto the Lord: **How is it that thou canst weep**, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?

30 And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still; and yet thou art there, and thy bosom is there; and also thou art just; thou art merciful and kind forever;

31 And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, from all eternity to all eternity; and naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end; **how is it thou canst weep?**

32 The Lord said unto Enoch: **Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;**

33 **And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood;**

34 And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them; and in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them, for my fierce anger is kindled against them.

35 Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name, also.

36 Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also, and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so **great wickedness as among thy brethren.**

37 But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers; Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom; and **the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer?**

38 But behold, these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods; and behold, I will shut them up; a prison have I prepared for them.

39 And that which I have chosen hath pled before my face. Wherefore, he suffereth for their sins;

inasmuch as they will repent in the day that my Chosen shall return unto me, and until that day they shall be in torment;

40 Wherefore, for this shall the heavens weep, yea, and all the workmanship of mine hands.

41 And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook. . . .

54 And it came to pass that Enoch cried unto the Lord, saying: When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh, shall the earth rest? I pray thee, show me these things.

55 And the Lord said unto Enoch: Look, and he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men;

56 And he heard a loud voice; and the heavens were veiled; and all the creations of God mourned; and the earth groaned; and the rocks were rent; and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man, with crowns of glory;

57 And as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth, and stood on the right hand of God; and **the remainder were reserved in CHAINS of darkness until the judgment of the great day.**

58 And again Enoch wept and cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the earth rest?

59 And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father; and he called unto the Lord, saying: Wilt thou not come again upon the earth? Forasmuch as thou art God, and I know thee, and thou hast sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten; thou hast made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, and not of myself, but through thine own grace; wherefore, I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth.

60 And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah;

61 And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, **but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil [or CHAINS] of darkness shall cover the earth;** and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve;

In David's Messianic Psalm number 68, he confirms the covenant message that Moses recorded. David writes: " God setteth the solitary in [covenant] families: **he bringeth out those which are bound with CHAINS:** but the rebellious dwell in a dry land." (Psalm 68:6)

Lehi undoubtedly witnessed the deportation of many of the children of Israel to Babylon in the years preceding the final destruction of Jerusalem. One of those was the prophet Ezekiel. In Chapter 19 **Ezekiel laments for covenant Israel because she has been taken captive** by other nations and planted in “dry and thirsty ground.” He, like Moses, alludes to “chains” as a “net” or “veil” of darkness. He writes:

“Then the nations set against him [disobedient covenant Israel] on every sided from the provinces, and **spread their net over him**: he was taken in their pit.
And **they put him in ward in CHAINS**, and brought him to the king of Babylon:
they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel”

(Alan Miner, “Personal Notes”)

2 Nephi 1:14 **The Cold and Silent Grave, from Whence No Traveler Can Return:**

According to Robert Smith, perhaps the earliest and most consistently repeated claim made against the Book of Mormon is that Joseph Smith quoted Shakespeare at 2 Nephi 1:14: "Awake! and arise from the dust, and hear the words of a trembling parent, whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent grave, from whence no traveler can return; . . ." The claim began with Alexander Campbell and, until recently, nearly all anti-Mormons continued to repeat it in almost parrot-like fashion. The following comes from Shakespeare:

Hamlet, III, i, 78-80, "But that the dread of something after death, / The undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns."

Before the reader starts to question the Book of Mormon, the problem that must be solved is whether Shakespeare was the originator of this idea. The present state of research permits us to take the entire section of 2 Nephi 1:13-15 and to demonstrate that the constellation of ideas and expressions found there (and in parallel texts) were available from Mesopotamia to Egypt in Lehi's own time--especially in Egypt. Some examples are as follows:

May you not go on the roads of the western ones [the dead]
They who go on them [travelers] do not return. (*Pyramid Text 217ab*)

There is nobody who returns from there. (*Papyrus Harris 500*, col. VI, line 8)

On her descent into the Netherworld, the gatekeeper of the Netherworld asks the goddess Inanna:

Why, pray, have you come to the "Land of No Return,"
On the road whose traveler returns never,
How has your heart led you? (*Sumerian Descent of Inanna*)

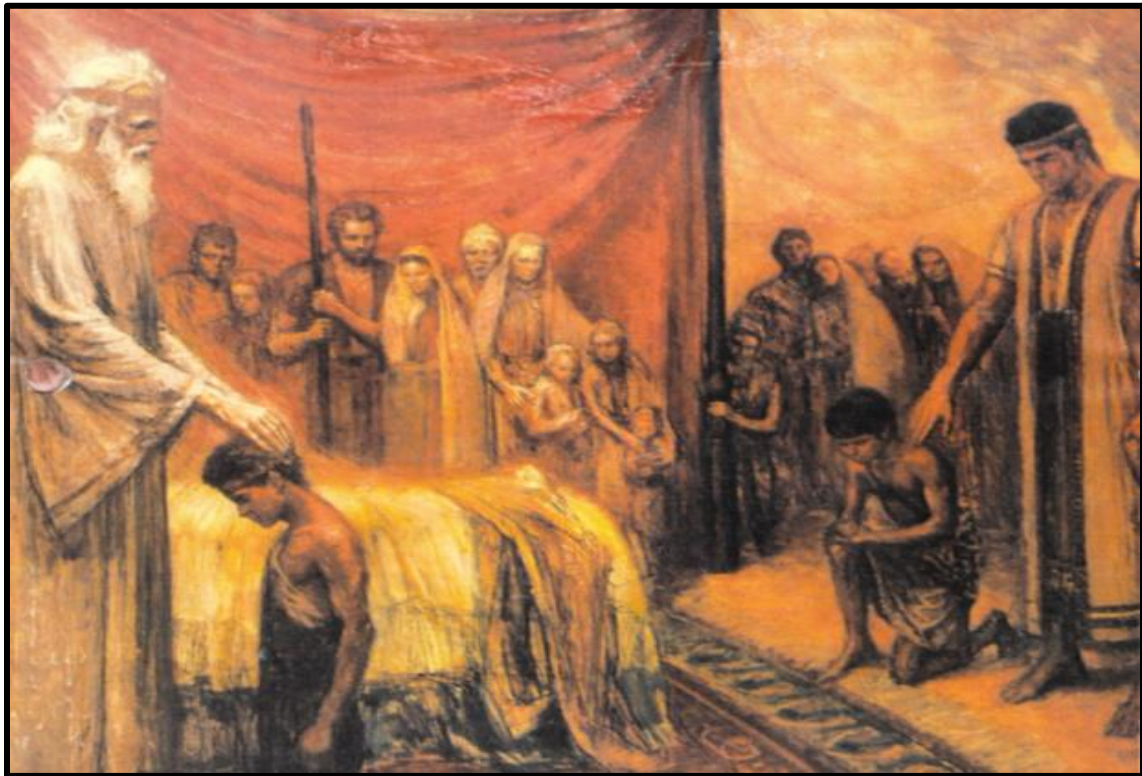
The Semitic version of the same story has lines similarly applicable to Lehi's imagery:

To the house from which he who enters never goes forth;

To the road whose path does not lead back. (*Descent of Ishtar*, obv., lines 5-6)

[Robert F. Smith, "Shakespeare and the Book of Mormon," *F.A.R.M.S.*, pp. 1-4]

[Note* The above criticism of verse 14 pale when we are able to view the whole chiastic context of this message. (Alan Miner, "Personal Note")]



2 Nephi 1:14 **Hear the words of a trembling parent, whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent grave (Illustration):** Lehi Blesses His Sons in the Wilderness. Artist: Ronald Crosby. [L.D.S. Church, *The Ensign*, March 1977, inside back cover] [see also *The Ensign*, January 1988, p. 30]

2 Nephi 1:15 **The Lord Hath Redeemed My Soul From Hell:**

Why would a righteous man like Lehi say, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell?

The only reason any of the righteous in spirit paradise were lucky enough to escape the chains of hell was because they had faith in the Holy One of Israel and repented from their sins. Otherwise, they would have been doomed to suffer with the devil and his angels-- our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from

the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery (2Nephi 9:9). Lehi understood what would have happened to all of God's creation without the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ.

Because of this infinite atonement, almost all the wicked will eventually be redeemed from hell. To be resurrected with a telestial body constitutes redemption from hell. A soul redeemed from hell has, in this sense, been saved. It is the sons of Perdition which, although they will be resurrected, will not be resurrected with any glory whatsoever. Of these the scriptures say, the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power; Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord after the sufferings of his wrath. For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb (DC 76:37-39).

(josephsmith.com.2Nephi)

2 Nephi 1:15 **Encircled About Eternally in the Arms of His Love:**

Near the end of his life, Lehi declares to his sons that "the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15). According to Hugh Nibley, the idea of being encircled about by the Savior's arms has parallels in the celebration of *Yom Kippur*. The root is *kpr*, and *kippur* is the "act of atoning." . . . The *kapporet* [the thing that covers] is where God appeared to forgive the sins of the people [like that which covers the mercy seat]. In [*Yom Kippur*] it was the front curtain or the veil of the tabernacle. After the people had completed all the rites and ordinances of atonement, then the veil was parted and God (the Savior) was supposed to speak from the tabernacle and tell the people that their sins were forgiven and they were welcomed to his presence. That's this idea of being taken back into his embrace again, "encircled about eternally in the arms of his love." . . .

"The keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there" (2 Nephi 9:41). He will receive you personally, take your hand, and give you the signs and tokens himself when you come, as he did to the Nephites when he visited them after his resurrection (see 3 Nephi 11:13-17). Every one of them he received individually, even the children (see 3 Nephi 17:11-25). One by one, he blessed them and received them. He called each person by name and identified himself to each one. This is what we do here in the rite of the Atonement in Israel. It's very clear as a matter of fact. Exodus is where it is set forth in the Old Testament, and then in all the books of Moses you have the rite of the Atonement. It's very important.

We have a section on this in the Egyptian writing on embracing at the veil. Here is a picture from the twenty-fifth dynasty. This would be the last king of the Taharkan Dynasty. . . . The king is being embraced by his father after obtaining all things. . . . The two arms are embracing, and they are embracing the *djed* symbol, which represents the marrow in the bones. This is called

"health and strength." He says here, "I give thee all life and power." This is a picture of the symbol for life--actually the umbilical cord, the navel. The other is *was*, which is always rendered as "power in the priesthood, authority to speak for priesthood, etc." Also, this is the embrace. These are the symbols of embracing. The two fans protected the king when he went forth according to Moet. They embraced him on either side. The kings always had those two fans called the *shuit* or the *khaibit*. This is the counterweight which hangs on the breast to impart breath and life. Here we have the process going on from a famous picture in the temple of Karnak where he is washed here and then clothed. He is anointed and then he is introduced into the presence of the king. Then the king is going to embrace him. The final step is this embrace. So there's this idea of being one. You can't be closer to a person than when you embrace.

(Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, p. 250, 253-254, 257.) [See the commentary on Enos 1: 2]

[Note* The word "encircle" appears 18 times in the Book of Mormon, almost always in a situation connoting good or evil, salvation or destruction. It might be wise to study the parallels.

(Alan C. Miner, "Personal Notes")]

2 Nephi 1:15 **I Am Encircled About Eternally in the Arms of His Love:**

In 2 Nephi 1:15 Lehi declares: "I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his [the Savior's] love." Regarding this covenant language Hugh Nibley writes:

"It should be clear what kind of oneness is meant by the Atonement--it is being received in a close embrace of the prodigal son, expressing not only forgiveness but oneness of heart and mind that amounts to identity, like a literal family identity as John sets it forth so vividly in chapters 14 through 17 of his Gospel.

[Note* The message delivered in these chapters is from a covenant perspective]

"This is the imagery of the Atonement, the embrace: 'The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love' (2 Nephi 1:15). 'O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies!' (2 Nephi 4:33). 'Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you' (Alma 5:33)."

(*Approaching Zion*, p. 567, 559.)

2 Nephi 1:21-24 **My Sons . . . Be Men, and Be Determined in One Mind and in One Heart (Covenant Language):**

[See the commentary on 1 Nephi 1:1]

2 Nephi 1:22 **The Eternal Destruction of Both Soul and Body:**

In 2 Nephi 1:22 Lehi refers to “the eternal destruction of both soul and body.” According to Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet:

“This expression does not have reference to the annihilation of the body and spirit of the wicked. Such an interpretation would contradict many passages of scripture, the better part of which have been spoken by Nephite prophets. The Book of Mormon is most emphatic that the resurrection is universal and that it consists of the inseparable union of body and spirit. (See Alma 11:44-45; Alma 40:19-23.) The body and soul could properly be thought of as having been destroyed in the sense that they come forth in some resurrection other than the first or celestial resurrection. Such was Lehi's meaning in this instance (see 1 Nephi 14:3).” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, p. 189.)

2 Nephi 1:23 **Put on the Armor of Righteousness (Covenant Symbolism):**

In 2 Nephi 1:23 Lehi refers to the act of putting on the “armor of righteousness.” Perhaps Lehi had heard the Lord use that term while conversing with. In Luke chapter 11 we find Jesus alluding to the value of this whole armor of righteousness. Jesus was accused by those who were themselves inwardly unrighteous yet outwardly professing righteousness of getting his power from the Devil when he healed people—thus deceiving people. Luke writes:

17. But he [Jesus] knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.”
20 If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.
21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:
22. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.
23. He that is not with me is against me. (Luke 11:17,20-23)

In covenant symbolism, what a person wears symbolizes the character of that person. Here in this passage of scripture, Jesus teaches that he who does not “wear” the true and whole covenant armor of God will find that whatever “armor” they have trusted in will vanish as they are brought to face the justice of God—they will become desolate.

Once we understand this covenant language and symbolism, we are able to see this covenant concept being expressed from the beginnings of Old Testament times. For example:

Job 29:14 [JOB declares]

14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

Isaiah 59:16-17 [ISAIAH about Christ's covenant way of salvation]

16 . . . his [the Lord's] arm [or power] brought salvation unto him; and his [the Lord's] righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head . . .

Isaiah 61:10 [ISAIAH declares]

10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

2 Nephi 9:14 [JACOB declares]

14 Wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness.

Ephesians 6:13-17 [Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians]

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, explains in Jacob chapter 4 that all prophets from the beginning worshipped the Father in the name of Christ and understood the covenant role of Christ. All things, including the law of Moses pointed to Christ. Yet Jacob points out that many times these concepts were purposely not made plain to the Jews. He writes:

But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble. (Jacob 4:14)

(Alan Miner, "Personal Notes")

2 Nephi 1:26 His Sharpness Was the Sharpness of the Power of the Word of God:

In 2 Nephi 1:26 Lehi speaks to his rebellious sons about how they have treated Nephi:

“And ye have murmured because he [Nephi] hath been plain unto you. Ye say that he hath used sharpness; ye say that he hath been angry with you; but behold his sharpness was the sharpness of the power of the word of God, which was in him; and that which ye call anger was the truth, according to that which is in God, which he could not restrain, manifesting boldly concerning your iniquities.

Here Lehi speaks of the “sharpness” of the power of the word of God.” What he says is that when the Lord speaks through his servants, it cuts to the heart or truth of the matter in question. Thus “The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow (D & C 6:2). Mormon writes: “when I speak the word of God with sharpness they tremble and anger against me” (Mormon 9:4). Nephi writes that “the guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center” (1 Ne 16:2). Thus traditionally we think of the word of God piercing us to our inner soul--and that would not be a wrong interpretation.

However there is another covenant perspective to the idea of the “word of God” being “sharp.” As part of the ancient covenant ceremony, the body of an animal (such as a calf) that had been sacrificially slain (symbolizing a blood covenant) was CUT down the middle allowing the blood-covenant participants to walk in between the two halves. Thus, the words of the covenant would be associated with this cut, or the sword or knife that “cut” the covenant agreement. Thus when our covenant is with the Lord--the Word, the God of Truth-- and when He has to speak the truth to us concerning the initial covenant agreement because of our disobedience, then that covenant truth can “cut” us to our soul, or even worse it can “cut” us off from His presence according to the covenant that we have made. Some scriptures might be relevant here:

Numbers 15:31 [The LORD to MOSES concerning those who sin willingly]

30 But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously . . . the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his [covenant] people.

31 Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.

Jeremiah 34:18 [The LORD to JEREMIAH concerning King Zedekiah and his people]

13 Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen . . .

17 Therefore thus saith the Lord: Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour . . .

18 And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,
22 . . . I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant [I will cut them out of the promised land]

Alma 9:13 [ALMA to the people of Ammonihah]

13 Behold, do ye not remember the words which he [the Lord] spake unto Lehi [by covenant], saying that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land? And again it is said that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments [or obey not the word of the Lord] ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

3 Nephi 21:11 [CHRIST to his covenant people]

11 Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, which the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles, and shall give unto him power that he shall bring them forth unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said) they shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant.

Hebrews 4:12 [PAUL to the Hebrews --using symbolic covenant language]

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing [or cutting] even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [as to whether someone is faithful to his covenants]

(Alan Miner, "Personal Notes")

2 Nephi 1:28 **If Ye Will Hearken unto [Nephi] I Leave unto You . . . My First Blessing (Covenant Language):**

Thomas Valletta notes that the "first blessing" Lehi refers to is the birthright blessing, which was generally the right of the firstborn male child, based upon obedience. "This generally included a land inheritance as well as the authority to preside." (LDS Bible Dictionary, s. v. "Birthright," 625). (Thomas R. Valletta ed., *The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families*, 1999, p. 73.)

2 Nephi 1:29 **But If Ye Will Not Hearken unto Him I Take Away My First Blessing:**

The blessing and birthright were traditionally given to the first, or oldest son under the patriarchal order. Thus these blessings were referred to as a "first blessing" (see 2 Nephi 1:29).

If this eldest son was righteous, then those of the family over whom he administered shared in this “first blessing.” However, this practice was modified at times in particular situations.

According to Bruce R. McConkie:

“Lineage [or birth order] alone does not guarantee the receipt of whatever birthright privileges may be involved in particular cases. Worthiness, ability, and other requisites are also involved. Jacob prevailed over his older brother Esau because ‘Esau despised his birthright.’ (Gen. 25:24-34; 27; Rom. 9:10-12.) The Lord placed Ephraim (the younger) before Manasseh to fulfil his own purposes (Gen. 48); and Nephi, junior in point of birth to Laman and Lemuel, was made a ruler and a teacher over them, a circumstance that became the cause of much contention for many generations. (1 Ne. 2:22; 16:37-38; 18:10; 2 Ne. 5:3; 19; Mosiah 10:11-17.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 88.)

Thus when Lehi said to his rebellious sons: “But if ye will not hearken unto him [Nephi] I take away my first blessing,” he was not implying that Laman or Lemuel would become the patriarchal leader if they obeyed the gospel principles that Nephi was preaching to them. Lehi was only implying that they would share the blessings of the “first blessing” that had been given to Nephi. But if they didn’t “hearken,” then even these covenant blessings would be taken away.

(Adapted from josephsmith.com.2Nephi)

2 Nephi 1:30 I Know Thou Art a True Friend (Covenant Language):

According to David Lamb, though the scriptures abound with numerous covenant terms and statements, one of the most beautiful is the usage of the word “friend.” In its covenant context, the word “friend” means more than just an acquaintance or one who is known, liked and trusted; it signifies that a covenant has been made between two individuals. . . . Abraham is referred to as a “friend of God” because of his covenant relationship with the great Jehovah. Isaiah 41:8 states: “But thou, Israel, art my servant Jacob whom I have chosen, The seed of Abraham *my friend*.”

As with the Bible, recognition of the word “friend” as a covenant term may greatly enhance our understanding of certain passages encountered within the Book of Mormon scriptures. A prime example of this is found in 2 Nephi 1:30 as Lehi extends his final blessing to Zoram, the former servant of Laban:

And now, Zoram, I speak unto you:

Behold, thou art the servant of Laban;

Nevertheless, thou hast been brought out of the land of Jerusalem,

And I know that thou art a **true friend** unto my son, Nephi, for ever.

The usage of the word "friend" in this context refers to more than just a friendly relationship; it is a covenant term which tells us that Nephi and Zoram are in covenant. As Lehi's blessing over Zoram continues, he states that because Zoram has been faithful (to his covenant with Nephi), his seed will be blessed even as the descendants of Nephi, his covenant partner. (David Lamb, "Friend: A Covenant Term," in *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, Vol. 2, p. 51.) [See the commentary on Mosiah 4:4]

2 Nephi 1:30 And I Know That Thou [Zoram] Art a True *Friend* unto My Son, Nephi, Forever (Covenant Language):

In 2 Nephi 1-4, the prophet Lehi is pronouncing upon the heads of his children certain covenant blessings. In this regard it is interesting that he blesses Zoram, who was given a "place" among the family according to the covenants Nephi made with him (see 1 Nephi 4:31-35).

Amy Hardison writes that anciently, 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, one of the words is "friend." In Isaiah 41:8 God chooses and blesses Israel because she is "the seed of Abraham my friend." Friendship is a binding of hearts and souls. We often describe this relationship with such phrases as "bosom buddies" or "soul mates." We attain a similar but far more sacred friendship with God by making covenants with him. Each covenant raises the level of our purity so we are more like him. Each covenant binds us to him in purpose and heart. This covenant unity, or sacred friendship, grants great blessings to us and our posterity. President George Q. Cannon stated:

When my boys go out on a mission, I say to them, "Boys, God is your father's friend; He has always been his friend; you can trust Him and can call upon Him with confidence; for I tell you that while I live and keep His commandments, God will watch over my children and will preserve and bless them." And He has done it. So it will be with every faithful man and woman.ⁱⁱ

It should be noted also that God intends his covenants to span generations and even eternities (as with Zoram and Nephi--"forever"). (Amy Blake Hardison, "Being a Covenant People," in *Covenants Prophecies and Hymns of the Old Testament*, p. 24, 26-27.) [See the commentary on Alma 20:4]

NOTES

i. Julie Stevenson noticed that this formulation, which we often credit to Lehi's originality, is actually present in less developed form in Deuteronomy. That two of John Welch's students make this same point 14 years apart suggests it was a connection gleaned from his lectures. See Stevenson, "Deuteronomy and the Book of Mormon," 19-20; see also Dan Packard, "The Influence of Deuteronomy in Lehi's Farewell Address," 18 April 1994, unpublished MS on file in the BYU law library, p. 19, on the same issue.

ii. Cannon, *Gospel Truth*, 2:85.