
THE BOOK OF
MORMON
=
THE KEYSTONE
HEBRAISMS

Elder Eric English
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**The
Book of Mormon**

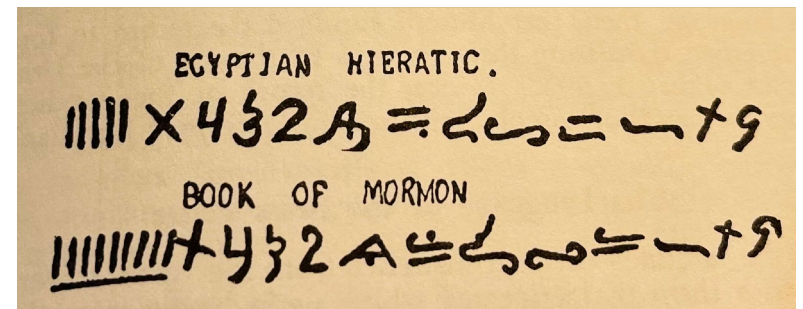


**The
Keystone
of Our
Religion**

THE NEPHITES' LANGUAGE

The Nephites

- Spoke Hebrew language (language in Jerusalem at the time that they and the Mulekites left)
- Recorded in reformed Egyptian
- Mormon 4:98-100



Thelona Stevens

LANGUAGE (CONT.) – NEPHI’S COMMENTS

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, 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.

~ 1 Nephi 1:1

- ① Learning of the Jews = Hebrew
- ② Language of the Egyptians = Egyptian

LANGUAGE (CONT.) – MORMON'S COMMENTS

98 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.

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

100 But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language, and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof.

~ Mormon 4:98-100

CHIASMUS AT THE BEGINNING – 1 NEPHI 1:1,2

I - Knowledge

2 - Record

3 - Language

4 - Learning of the Jews <= (*center point*)

3' - Language

2' - Record

I' - Knowledge

Learning of the Jews =
Hebrew style, grammar,
etc

WHAT IS CHIASMUS?

- Common Hebrew writing style of Parallelisms
- Most famous form of Parallelism for us, in regards to the BoM, is **chiasmus**
- Chiasmus is an inverted-parallel literary form that was employed by ancient Hebrew biblical writers, among others.
- An instance of this form, called a “chiasm,” presents two or more literary elements, and then restates them in reverse order.
- For example, Isaiah 22:22 is a two-element chiasm:

Example 1

So he shall (a) **open**, and none shall (b) **shut**;
And he shall (b') **shut**, and none shall (a') **open**.

DISCOVERY OF CHIASMS IN THE BOM

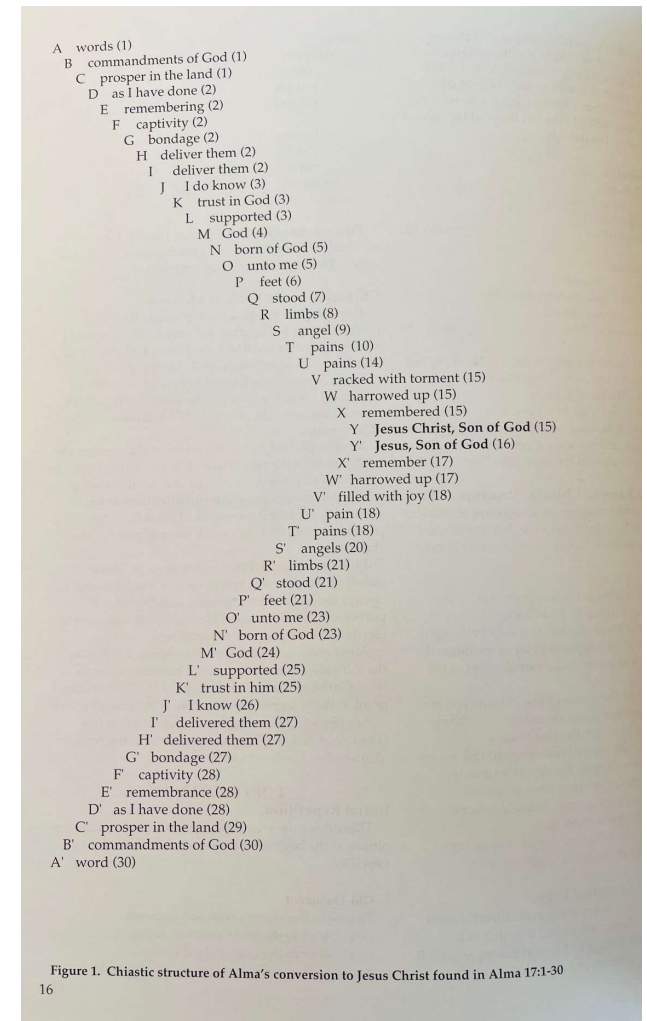
- 1967, a 20 year old Mormon missionary discovers Chiasmus in its pages
- John W. Welch was serving a Mormon missionary tour in Germany
- He saw an advertisement for a lecture series on Gospel of Matthew at a local college and attended
- The lecture was on the subject of chiasmus and a german book by Paul Gaechter
- August 16, 1967 @ 4am – “If it is evidence of Hebrew style in the New Testament, it must be evidence of Hebrew style in the Book of Mormon”



John Welch

EXAMPLE: ALMA 17 CHIASM

- Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol 2
- Pg 16
- BYU Probability Analysis of Chiasms appearing by chance
- Short chiasms are not uncommon in literature
- Long multi-element chiasms in the BoM are EXTREMELY unlikely to have occurred by chance
- No evidence that Joseph Smith, Jr had any exposure to chiasms and EXTREMELY unlikely that he would have discovered on his own



OTHER HEBREW LITERARY EXAMPLES

1. And
2. “And it came to pass”
3. Behold
4. Construct State
5. Numerals
6. Compound Subject
7. Repetition of the Preposition
8. Cognate Accusative
9. Compound Prepositions
10. Prophetic Perfect
11. Plural Forms
12. Repetition
13. Hebrew Idioms
14. Literal Translations
15. Parallelisms
16. Midrash
17. Many more

Source: Recent Book of Mormon Developments, vol 2

AND

- A prominent peculiarity of Biblical Hebrew is the frequent use of the conjunction “and,” both in beginning a sentence and in the listing of a series within a sentence
- “Hebrew syntax, though it has many subtleties of its own, is, broadly speaking, extremely simple, as a glance at any literal translation of the Old Testament, with its ever recurring and, will show...” ~ *An Introductory Hebrew Grammar*
- Even the books of Leviticus and Numbers begin with “and”
- 20 of 33 verses in Alma II begin with “and”

Example 1 – Genesis 24:35

And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly,
and he is become great;
And he hath given him flocks and herds,
And silver and gold;
And men servants and maid servants...

Example 2 – Enos 1:34

And it came to pass that the people of Nephi did till the land and raise all manner of grain and fruit,
And flocks of herds and flocks of all manner of cattle of every kind,
And goats and wild goats and also much horses.

“AND IT CAME TO PASS”

- “And it came to pass” is probably the most frequently used phrase in the Book of Mormon
- This phrase is a rendering of the Hebrew word vayehee, implying “this, rather than implying a continuation with what has preceded, has a little more force that ‘not it happened’
- It’s found 1,363 times in the 6,604 verses in the Book of Mormon (per ChatGPT)



Basic “It Came To Pass” Glyph
(From carved inscriptions)

Mark Twain famously joked that if the phrase were omitted, Joseph would have published a pamphlet instead of a book. As it turns out, however, this much-maligned phrase is actually evidence of the Book of Mormon's authentic antiquity.

BEHOLD

- *Hinneh* is the Hebrew word for “lo,” “behold” or “see”
- It is used for pointing out persons, things, places, and actions
- *Hinneh* occurs over 1,000 times in the Old Testament of the Hebrew text
- In English, usage is considered unnecessary
- In the Book of Mormon, it is found 1,500 times (on virtually every page)

PLURAL FORMS

- One usage of the Hebrew plural form is called the ‘plural of amplification.’ These plural forms are used to intensify or heighten the idea of the singular.
- In English, we use the singular form

Old Testament

1. Visions of the night – Genesis 46:2
2. Bitter things – Job 13:26
3. Sure dwellings – Isaiah 32:18

Book of Mormon

1. And great slaughters with the sword – I Nephi 3:99
2. All the energies of the soul – I Nephi 4:42
3. And by bloodsheds – II Nephi 5:39
4. And did reap with your mights – Alma 14:84

REPETITION

- In English, repetition of the same word is usually avoided
- The reverse is true in Hebrew, it is commonly used for emphasis

Old Testament

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord – Isaiah 6:3

Book of Mormon

1. Wo, wo, wo be unto them – II Nephi 12:18
2. A bible, a bible, we have got a bible, and there can not be any more bible – II Nephi 12:45
3. Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized – II Nephi 13:14
4. O remember, remember that these things are true – Mosiah 1:91

HEBREW IDIOMS

- An idiom is defined as a word or group of words used in a language which has a different meaning in a literal word-for-word translation
- Example: an English idiom of “its raining cats and dogs” would actually mean “its raining very hard”

Idiom	Old Testament	Book of Mormon
Before my face	Psalms 5:8	III Nephi 4:30
Burned with fire	Jeremiah 38:23	III Nephi 4:28
Eye to eye	Isaiah 52:8	Alma 17:23
In the eyes of	Isaiah 49:5	I Nephi 6:35
Day to day	II Samuel 13:4	Mosiah 2:40
Give ear	Joel 1:2	Helaman 4:55
In their ears	Genesis 20:9	II Nephi 12:28
Face to face	Deut 34:10	Alma 18:8
Face of the earth	Exodus 10:5	Ether 4:103

Many more can be found

PARALLELISMS

- Chiasm – inverted parallelism
- Other types:
 - Synonymous Parallelism – Where the second line repeats the thought of the 1st
 - **Strophic** – Repeated statements
 - Antithetical – Opposite statements
 - Anadiplosis – The end of the line matches the beginning of the next line
 - Word-Pairs – day/night, gold/silver, etc
 - Number – 1/2/3; 10/20/30; hundred, thousand

Example 1 – Helaman 5:40

O ye wicked and ye perverse generation;
ye hardened and ye stiff-necked people,

how long will ye suppose that the Lord will suffer you;
yea, how long will ye suffer yourselves to be led by foolish and blind guides;

yea, how long will ye choose darkness rather than light

MIDRASH

- Midrash is traditionally defined as rabbinic interpretation of the Old Testament
- “Midrash refers to the types of scriptural exegesis (scholarly interpretation) carried on by diverse groups of Jews from the time of ancient Israel to nearly the present day”
- Since 1950, Biblical scholars have shown increased interest in identifying midrash in the Bible, and many Biblical passages have been identified as such.
- Types:
 1. Exegetical – verse by verse exposition (explanation)
 2. Homiletic – sermons or discourses which expound texts or subjects
 3. Narrative – works the interpretative material into the text to form a continuous narrative

MIDRASH EXAMPLES IN THE BOM

1. Homiletic

- II Nephi 8:17 – 12:100 = Nephi interpreting Isaiah
- Mosiah 7:76 – 8:69 = Abinadi answering King Noah

2. Narrative

- Moroni 10:27-28 = Mosiah uses Isaiah 52 in his exhortation

HEBRAISMS IN 1 NEPHI

“The Hebraic structure of the Book of Mormon and its many poetic examples are truly marvelous. For instance, within the first three verses alone, we have two beautifully developed chiastic structures.

Within the first chapter, we find at least fifteen other chiastic examples. In the 174 verses of the first chapter of First Nephi, more than forty-six other poetic examples have been identified.

As more Biblical scholarly research is done, the overwhelming evidence continues to support the authenticity of this ancient record.”

~ Angela Crowell

HEBRAISMS IN BOM FROM CHATGPT

One of the interesting features of the Book of Mormon is its use of Hebraisms, which are elements of Hebrew language, culture, or literature that are found in the text. The Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon have been a subject of scholarly debate and analysis.

Some examples of Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon include:

- **Hebraic parallelism:** This is a literary technique used in Hebrew poetry where two lines are written in parallel to each other. The Book of Mormon also uses this technique in its poetic sections.
- **Names:** Many of the names in the Book of Mormon are similar to those found in the Hebrew Bible, such as Nephi, Lehi, and Moroni.
- **Covenant language:** The Book of Mormon uses language similar to that found in Hebrew covenants, such as "chosen people," "blessings and curses," and "obeying the commandments."
- **Use of "And it came to pass":** This phrase is used frequently in the Book of Mormon and is similar to the Hebrew phrase "Vayehi," which is often used to begin a new section in the Hebrew Bible.
- **Literary structure:** The Book of Mormon has a complex literary structure that is similar to that found in Hebrew literature, including the use of chiasmic structures, where elements are arranged in a pattern that is inverted and repeated.

These Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon have led some scholars to believe that the book was influenced by Hebrew language, culture, or literature. However, others argue that the Hebraisms are simply the result of the book's translation process, which was carried out by Joseph Smith, who was not a Hebrew scholar.

Appendix