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### The ancient temple is sacred space

Author(s): LeGrand L. Baker

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<http://www.legrandlbaker.org/>

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**5. “The temple is built on separate, sacral, set apart space”<sup>44</sup>**

Sacred space is the place where God and humans meet. It is a mountain, a building, a grove—anywhere that is definable by its geography, and divine by its use. An important characteristic of sacred space is sacred time. In our “cosmic system,” the most sacred of all space is the throne room in the temple of Kolob. The time prophets experience there is sacred time. There prophets see our system’s past, present, and future as a single event.

In Section 93, God defines truth as knowing a thing in sacred time—“And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come ” (D&C 93:24). When we are in sacred space, we learn in sacred time. That is true because the principles we learn are eternal, or because, as was true with Moses, Enoch, and the brother of Jared, there are no linear time restraints on what we know and can experience there. Thus Moses can report that he saw every person who has or will live on the earth, and Alma can express the immutable joy of being in the presence of God.

Things learned in sacred space are also understood in sacred time. Thus the *Book of Enoch* begins,

Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by  
God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens,  
which the angels showed me, and from them I heard  
everything, and from them *I understood as I saw*.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 57; see Donald W. Parry, “Demarcation between Sacred Space and Profane Space: the Temple of Herod Model,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 413-39.

<sup>45</sup>*Book of Enoch*, in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 2 vols. Translated and edited by R. H. Charles. 2: 188-277 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 1:1. [emphasis added]

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Similarly, Nephi introduces us to his father's vision with the same assurance. To think is to consider—to understand. The past tense of “think” is “thought.” So Nephi tells us that his father “was carried away in a vision, even that he saw the heavens open, and he *thought* he saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels.” Their testimonies are the same: the visions were not just a picture show, they were an academic experience of the first order. Such understanding is a function of knowing in sacred time. The Atonement, for example, may be understood as being applicable in sacred as well as linear time.

The set-apart space in the Book of Mormon is its sacral language that can be neither seen nor understood except within the academic/spiritual context of what was learned in the ancient three dimensional temple. The authors and translator successfully divided its text into two separate stories, told in two separate “languages,” each within the same English text.

Double speech is to speak, write, or understand two languages within the same words without losing the meaning of either. Comedians use it all the time: it is the double meanings in their jokes that make us laugh. Teenagers use it too. They have their own code language so old fogies cannot catch the undertones of what they say. The scriptures use it extensively. Perhaps the reason many passages in Isaiah and the Psalms and elsewhere in the Bible have been so faithfully preserved is because the post-exilic editors did not understand what they might otherwise have taken out.

To say that the Book of Mormon is written in double speech, is to say that its surface story is written in regular, dictionary-type English; but that there is an encoded language buried *within* its English text. The code may be in the special use of unique words or in the application of a sequences of ideas, or both. Or the code may be just ordinary words used to mean precisely what they say, as for example, in the blessing given the

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king in the 45<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand [here the meaning is literal] shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things” (Psalm 45:4).

Or in the Lord’s promise to Job, “that thine own right hand can save thee” (Job 40:14). Again with the same literal meaning. Those who know the meaning, already know the code. The code was taught in the ancient three dimensional temple, and is as straightforward and easy to read as the story written in the surface language of the scripture. An example is what Lehi said when he was speaking to his sons:

10. But behold, when the time cometh that they shall dwindle in unbelief, after they have received so great blessings from the hand of the Lord [same emphasis]—having a knowledge of the creation of the earth, and all men, knowing the great and marvelous works of the Lord from the creation of the world; having power given them to do all things by faith; having all the commandments from the beginning, and having been brought by his infinite goodness into this precious land of promise—(2 Nephi 1:10).

In this way, the Book of Mormon tells at least two concurrent stories written with the same words. The obvious one is the history of the people and the testimony of the Savior. That history and the gospel principles it incorporates may be read by anyone who is literate enough to read it, and it may be read on many “levels,” depending on the need, background, and understanding the reader brings to it. Nephi explained:

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3 For my soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, *unto their understanding* (2 Nephi 31:3).

The plainness Nephi describes is not simplicity, and it is not the same plainness to everyone, but to each individually according to “*their understanding*.” Nephi’s encoded sermon in this chapter is also very straightforward— but only to those who know the meaning of the sequence he is describing.

Similarly, the underlying story that is written in the encoded, sacred, ancient temple subtext of the Book of Mormon begins at the beginning of the book. It is a sequential description of the patterns, principles, ordinances and covenants of the New Year rites and drama, and the ancient temple's coronation ceremony.

An important purpose of the surface story is to introduce its readers to the language and meaning of the sacral story. This is done “line upon line” as the sacred story is unfolded to the initiated reader by the Holy Ghost. The insights are an invitation to learn the sacred language.

It is this sacred temple drama and language that gives the Book of Mormon its unfathomable depth, and makes it “new” to the faithful reader each time he reads it. But even though it is in the same words, the encoded sacred message is unreadable to those who are not privy to the language and workings of a three dimensional temple. My object here is *not* to teach the sacral language, it is only to show that it is really there, and that it can be easily read. Two examples will suffice. We will examine one here, and the second when we discuss the phrase “prosper in the land” in number 9 of the typology.

One of the seeming most difficult and obscure passages in the Book of Mormon is the Savior's paraphrasing of Isaiah in Third

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Nephi chapter 20. It will not take many signals for us to transform that passage into something that is not only beautiful, but that is also very easy to understand. But the transformation will only happen for the initiated reader. When it does happen, he will think, “Oh, is that all. I knew that already, I just hadn’t seen it there that way before.” And that is precisely the point. The reason the sacral language is not an impenetrable mystery is because those who know the ancient temple already know how to read the sacred language and therefore how to enter the sacred space of the Book of Mormon.

30. And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fulness of my gospel shall be preached unto them;

31. And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.

32. Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice, and with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye.

33. Then will the Father gather them together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.

34. Then shall they break forth into joy—Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

35. The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.

36. And then shall be brought to pass that which is written: Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall

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no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

37. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

38. For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed without money.

39. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people shall know my name; yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak.

40. And then shall they say: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth! (3 Nephi 20:30-40)

Now, having read it, let's examine it closely.

*v. 30 And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them.*

“Fullness” is a code word that means exactly what it says: “fullness.” The key to reading some encoded texts is to understand them to mean precisely what they say. On the other hand, the easiest way to put Isaiah or any of the Book of Mormon prophets into the pot called “too difficult to understand,” and then to keep them in that pot with the lid on, is for us to assume we know more than the ancients knew. If we do that, then we assume the Book of Mormon prophets did not know all about the Atonement, pre-mortal existence, fore-ordination, eternal marriage, all of the ordinances and covenants, and all the other ideas that belong to the ancient Israelite temple. Then, when we read Alma, for example,

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we can say to our Self, “Alma did not know such and such a thing, so he can't be talking about such concepts.” Thereby we miss almost everything.

As soon as we assume we know more than they did, the curtain before the sacred space is closed, and we cannot see afar off. But if, on the other hand, we assume the prophets knew all and more than we know, and if we seek to discover the context in which those prophets were writing, we will have to reach out to the very edge of our own understanding to find what they say. And it will be a joyful reach. It is only out there where we will find Isaiah, along with Nephi, Alma, Mormon, Paul, and Peter all writing in a sacred language that is simple and easy to understand.

Since there can be no “fullness” of the gospel where there is not also a knowledge of the Israelite temple and every doctrine that it encompassed, the phrase “fullness of the gospel” immediately tells us that he has entered the sacred space of the Book of Mormon.

*v. 31 And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus  
Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the  
Father in my name.*

The key word is “pray.” “In” is also important. “In” means *in*. One of the characteristics of the sacred language is that words we often read casually often speak with all their power, and by so doing, give great depth of meaning to what we habitually pigeon hole as “I already understand that, so I don't have to think about it anymore.” A similar scripture is:

Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently *in* the light of Christ [shechinah] that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will *lay hold* upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ (Moroni 7:19).



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The next verse of 3 Nephi 20 begins with the word “then.” “Then” can mean thereafter, or it can create a causal relationship between the prayer and what follows in that next verse. In this instance it is the latter. So the “then” tells us that the words which follow must either describe the results of the prayer, or else they must describe the method by which the prayer is said.

*v. 32 Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice,  
and with the voice together shall they sing;*

The watchmen sing in unison. Now, given the context of the “fullness of the gospel,” we can easily recognize their song where words are spoken or sung in unison and where the movements of their dance are also in unison.<sup>46</sup> .....

Those code words, “fullness,” “pray,” and “together” are enough to give us all we need in order for us to understand the exact context to which the Savior's words have taken us, and thereby, the key to understanding the plain meaning of this paraphrase of Isaiah.

Even though the word “watchmen” is not actually found in the following, there is a similarity in the meaning of these passages. Alma said:

Nevertheless the children of God were commanded  
that they should gather themselves together oft, and  
join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the  
welfare of the souls of those who knew not God

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<sup>46</sup>See Nibley, “Appendix V, Cyril of Jerusalem’s Lectures,” in *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 279-283; Nibley, “Early Christian Prayer Circle,” in *Mormonism and Early Christianity* 45-99; Nibley, “Prayer,” in “On the Sacred and the Symbolic,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 568-9; Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, 313-16; Tvedtnes, “Temple Prayer in Ancient Times.” in *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 79-98.

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(Alma 6:6).

And this story is told in Third Nephi:

And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting. And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst [“midst” means center, as in the center of a circle] of them, and said unto them: What will ye that I shall give unto you? (3 Nephi 27:1-2)

Elder McConkie commented on those last verses this way:

The Nephite Twelve “were united in mighty prayer and fasting...They were praying unto the Father in the name of Jesus.” This is the perfect pattern for gaining revelation or whatever is needed. In this setting, the record says: “And Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said to them: What will ye that I shall give you?”<sup>47</sup>

*for they shall see eye to eye.*

“Eye to eye” may mean there is no hard feelings or disagreements among the participants. It may mean that they can look across the circle and see into each other’s faces. It may mean what it meant to Alma.

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<sup>47</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978). 557-8.

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For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God (Alma 36:26).

We now move from the restoration of the “fullness of the gospel” to its being taken to the Jews:

*v. 33 Then will the Father gather them [the watchmen] together again, and give unto them [those who pray] Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.*

*v. 34 Then shall they [those who are thus gathered] break forth into joy—Sing together [the same song], ye waste places [sacred space that had become profane, but now is sacred again] of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people,*

“Comfort” is sometimes a very important code word. The words “comfort” and “comforter” have a unique meaning in the scriptures. An example of their meaning is Isaiah 61. The key to understanding that chapter is D&C 138:42, which quotes Isaiah 61:1 to let us know that the Isaiah chapter is a prophecy about salvation for the dead. It is the next verse in Isaiah that uses the word “comfort.” Verse 2 reads:

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn (Isaiah 61:2).

The Savior paraphrased that verse in the Beatitudes when he said:

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4 And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted (3 Nephi 12:4).

Anderson explained the word “comfort” to mean the “cessation of mourning”—not just a “simple act of emotional identification,” but “the movement from mourning to joy.” “Comfort is equated with the restoration of life.”<sup>48</sup>

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48 Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), This verb "to comfort" (*n-h-m*) does not connote a simple act of emotional identification. Comfort can imply either the symbolic action of *assuming the state of mourning* alongside the mourner, or it can have the nuance of *bringing about the cessation of mourning*. In grammatical terms, the former usage reflects a *processual* usage of the verb, while the latter usage would be *resultative*.( p.84. Italics are in the original) In footnote # 74 Anderson says examples where “the resultative state are present (Gen 37:35; 2 Sam 12:24 (for Isa see n. 77); Jer 31:13; Zech 1:17; Ps 71:20-21; 86:17.”

The latter usage, to bring about the cessation of mourning, is very common in prophetic oracles of deliverance. The famous exhortation of Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort, comfort, my people," comes to mind immediately. As Westermann noted, the term conveys "God's intervention to help and restore."Indeed, the term has this meaning in most of Second Isaiah. (p.85).

That statement is very significant. “Second Isaiah” is what scholars call the latter half of Isaiah, usually beginning with chapter 40. Because it is different from the first half of Isaiah, they argue that it was written by a different person who lived after the Babylonian conquest. However that is not true because the Book of Mormon quotes from “Second Isaiah” from the Brass Plates. Many scholars have observed the close relationship between “Second Isaiah” and the Psalms. It is my view that the last half of Isaiah (beginning with chapter 40) is a commentary of the New Year festival drama, and is therefore one of the major keys in reconstructing the endowment/enthronement ceremonies and putting the Psalms back in their original order. If that is true, then it is very

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To comfort is to empower, and the empowerment in Isaiah 61 is to administer the ancient coronation ceremony of kings and priests.<sup>49</sup>

*he hath redeemed Jerusalem.*

To be redeemed may mean purchased, ransomed, or being helped by a kinsman. However in the Book of Mormon and elsewhere it often means to be brought back into the presence of the Savior, as in the following verses:

The Savior to the brother of Jared.

And when he [the brother of Jared] had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed [present tense] from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show

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significant that the word “comfort” as is used in Second Isaiah does not mean a pat on the head, but the actual “bringing about the cessation of mourning” through an empowerment.

On page 86 Anderson writes, “In this text, comfort describes the movement from mourning to joy. This process could also be illustrated in the psalms of lamentation.”

In footnote #78 he adds, “Note, e.g., Ps 71:20-21. In this text, comfort is equated with the restoration of life and being raised from the netherworld. Psalm 86:17 begins with a petition that God hear the prayer and grant “joy” to the psalmist (v. 4). The psalmist hopes to be delivered from the underworld (v. 13).”

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of the Israelite king’s coronation ceremony see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 336-400. This chapter of Isaiah is the only place in the scriptures where it is found in its entirety. This same coronation ceremony was used in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, and in modern states such as England and Japan.

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myself unto you (Ether 3:9-18).

Lehi to his son Jacob:

I know that thou art [present tense] redeemed, because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer; for thou hast beheld that in the fullness of time he cometh to bring salvation unto men. And thou hast beheld in thy youth his glory (2 Nephi 2:3-4).

Lehi about himself:

But behold, the Lord hath [past tense] 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).

Helaman to Captain Moroni:

And now, my beloved brother, Moroni, may the Lord our God, who has redeemed us and made us free, keep you continually in his presence (Alma 58:41).

Samuel the Lamanite about the final judgment:

But behold, the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord. Yea, and it bringeth to pass the condition of repentance, that whosoever repenteth the same is not hewn down and cast into the fire; but whosoever repenteth not is hewn down and cast into the fire; and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death, for they are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness (Helaman 14:17-18).

The Savior now moves our attention from the conversion of the Jews to the time when there will be temples all over the earth:

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*v. 35 The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.*

It was on the mountain Moses saw the Lord write the Ten Commandments with his finger. It was on a different mountain where the Lord extended his hand and the Brother of Jared saw the finger of the Lord, just before he also saw the Savior.

*v. 36 And then shall be brought to pass that which is written: Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength,*

Strength, as we will next be told, is a descriptive code for sacred clothing.<sup>50</sup>

*O Zion [Zion is the pure in heart]; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for*

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<sup>50</sup>Sometimes the ceremonial clothing have different names.

In Psalm 45, after a ceremony where “grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” The king is instructed,

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things (Psalm 45:3)

There, “glory” and “majesty” seem to be names of clothing, just as, “majesty and excellency” and “glory and beauty” are in Job. When the Lord asked,

9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty....

14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

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*henceforth there shall no more come into thee the  
uncircumcised and the unclean .  
v. 37 Shake thyself from the dust;*

In the creation story, man is made from the dust of the earth.

*arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the  
bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.*

The implication of *arise* is that one stands to make a covenant, as in 2 Kings 23:1-3, and Psalm 82. A covenant with God is an enabling power.

*v. 38 For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold  
yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed  
[brought into the presence of God] without money.  
v. 39 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people  
shall know my name;*

Knowing the name of God is very important, as the psalmist testified:

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust  
in thee:  
for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee  
(Psalm 9:10).

Sometimes, as in the story of King Benjamin and his people, when they learn the name of Christ they also take that name upon themselves. In the scriptures, new names are so closely associated with new covenants, that the words “name” and “covenant” can often be interchanged without changing the meaning of the sentence. As in “for my name's [covenant's] sake will I defer mine anger” (Isaiah in 1 Nephi 20:9).



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*v. 39b yea, in that day they shall know that I am he  
that doth speak.*

As was true with Moses when he stood in the presence of God with the fire of the burning bush [see *sheckinah* in the Bible dictionary] separating them, we can only really know the name of God when he tells it to us himself. Therefore, only in sacred space can we learn, first hand, the name of God.

*v. 40 And then shall they say: How beautiful upon  
the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good  
tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that  
bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that  
publisheth salvation.<sup>51</sup>*

That may be understood in light of what Abinadi said:

15. And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!

16. And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace!

17. And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and forever!

18. And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people (Mosiah 15:15-18).

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<sup>51</sup>For a discussion of the meaning of the establishment of Israelite king's feet see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 408-17.

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Please note—and this is very important—whatever understanding you gained as you read those verses came from the reservoir of your prior knowledge and the Holy Ghost. I told you nothing to reveal to you the things you learned, except to call your attention to things you already knew. Reading scriptures in that way is walking in sacred space. Understanding them is moving through sacred time.

The story and message told in the sacral language of the Book of Mormon is its sacred space. That sacred space is kept more secure in the Book of Mormon than sacred space could ever be secured in a three dimensional temple. Pompey, the Roman general, could ride his horse into the Holy of Holies of the temple at Jerusalem to see for himself what was there, but only the initiated can ever see first-hand the sacred space of the Book of Mormon. There is a linguistic veil that separates the surface story and message that can be read by any literate person, from the sacred space of the Book of Mormon. But while everything about that surface story invites us to discover its veil and learn its sacral language, the encoded story and message can only be read within the context of the legitimate functions of a three dimensional temple.