



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

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A Comprehensive Commentary of the Words of Mormon

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Published: Orem, UT; Parrish Press, 2015

Abstract: No abstract available.

A Comprehensive Commentary
of the
Words of Mormon

*together with references for further study
from the General Conferences of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
the Encyclopedia of Mormonism
and other doctrinal texts by General Authorities of the Church*

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Parrish Press
Orem, Utah

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Parrish Press, Orem, Utah
1842 South 50 East
Orem, Utah 84058

Preface

This project began as an attempt to provide my children and grandchildren something of their ancestor's love and understanding of the scriptures. I began producing volumes many years ago which I was pleased to call Paraphrastic studies. I wrote one of these studies for each of the four Gospels and the letters of Paul. Eventually, however, I began to sense that there was much that I knew about the New Testament that my "translations" could not communicate. I therefore thought to write a comprehensive commentary on the entire New Testament, beginning with Matthew and concluding with the book of Revelation. As I published each of the nine volumes, I included the paraphrastic studies, where I had them, in conjunction with the commentary for each book in the New Testament. I began this project in 2005 and completed the final volume in 2010. The whole effort was a delight to my soul.

A year before I retired from the Church Educational System, in 2003, I thought to produce an 1830 formatting of the Book of Mormon using the present text of the 1981 edition. This was a relatively easy task, given the technology available to me. I distributed these to my colleagues at the Orem Institute of Religion, members of my family, and a few other interested parties for the cost of printing and binding them. Sometime in the early spring of 2007, I was impressed to begin a verse by verse commentary on the Book of Mormon, a task that I had not presumed to attempt, inasmuch as there are no translation difficulties that abound in the Old and New Testaments. Yet, there were instances of nineteenth-century word usage and syntactic issues that I thought a commentary might help to clarify. As I began, however, I discovered that there was much more that I could communicate to my children of my understanding of the ancient record of the Nephites, material that I had gleaned as I taught the scriptures during my thirty-five year career with CES. This labor eventually produced five volumes of moderate size. As I published each segment of the commentary, I enclosed the 1830 formatting of each book in the Book of Mormon that I had devise several years before. The last volume also appeared in late 2010.

By the time that I was fully engaged with writing commentaries on both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, I had become infatuated with the idea that I might be able to expand the commentaries to include the other volumes of scripture as well. Thus, in the winter of 2010 I began writing commentaries on the Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants. Once I finished with the Pearl of Great Price, I began to move ahead with the book of Genesis and the rest of the Old Testament. In the late fall of 2014 I finished the last of the commentaries on the Old Testament, for a total of thirty-three printed and bound volumes. With these volumes and the others produced over the past ten years, I have completed commentary on every verse of the Standard Works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

My procedure for writing the Commentary was similar to that used in creating the original paraphrastic studies. The same reference texts were employed. For difficult words in Greek, Hebrew,

and English I resorted to the works of James Strong and other lexicographers for linguistic insight. I consider the contributions made by conservative Protestant scholarship (as recorded in the *New International Version*) and conservative Catholic scholarship (as related in the *New Jerusalem Bible*). I resorted to the considered thought of Adam Clarke, one of the most prominent and prolific commentators on the sacred manuscripts available at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and who, I believe, was a man of great faith. I consulted with the *Joseph Smith Translation* at appropriate times (including in another column an indication that a JST change had been made for any given verse), and frequently to the writings of the General Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as I contemplated the possible meanings of each word and phrase. From time to time I resorted to *Smith's Bible Dictionary* and *Discovering the World of the Bible* by LaMar Berrett for some of the more arcane information that I thought would illuminate the text.

I have attempted to maintain a steady course throughout my commentaries, treating each verse as unique, and where appropriate, duplicate notes and the text rather than use cross-references within the volume. Some may find this a waste of paper and ink, but I frankly dislike having to rifle through pages or volumes trying to find the first instance of the note or commentary. The duplications are easily ignored; fumbling through pages cannot be. It is in the best interests of the reader, however, to contemplate the reasons why such duplications exist in the biblical text in the first place. They are purposeful and I have attempted to point out their purpose as I have progressed through each volume.

My numbering system for the notes used in the body of the commentary was adapted from historical linguistic texts with which I am familiar and which I had found quite useful. The pattern used is *chapter.verse.word*; thus note “3.4.5” would contain material referring to the fifth word in the book of Hosea 3:4, for example. I make no comprehensive promises regarding the preciseness of my word count in any particular verse, but it will be close enough to eliminate any distressing confusion. Inasmuch as I began this series with the Gospel of Matthew, there will be times when I will make reference to my own work in that first volume. Sometimes there will be no more than a reference, “*MT-C 23.4.5*”; other times I may quote directly from the original text. In either case my sole motivation will be to facilitate the flow of ideas rather than to multiply words. There are enough words already. References to the Commentaries on other books of the New Testament are abbreviated as follows:

Matthew—*MT-C*
 Mark—*MK-C*
 Luke—*LK-C*
 John—*JN-C*
 Acts—*AC-C*
 Romans—*RM-C*
 1 Corinthians—*1 CO-C*
 2 Corinthians—*2 CO-C*
 Galatians—*GA-C*

Ephesians—*EP-C*
 Philippians—*PP-C*
 Colossians—*CL-C*
 1 Thessalonians—*1 TH-C*
 2 Thessalonians—*2 TH-C*
 1 Timothy—*1 TM-C*
 2 Timothy—*2 TM-C*
 Titus—*TT-C*
 Philemon—*PL-C*

Hebrews—*HB-C*
 1 Peter—*1 PE-C*
 2 Peter—*2 PE-C*
 1 John—*1 JN-C*
 2 John—*2 JN-C*
 3 John—*3 JN-C*
 Revelation—*RV-C*

References to the Commentaries in the books of the Old Testament are as follows:

Genesis— <i>GE-C</i>	2 Chronicles— <i>2 CR-C</i>	Daniel— <i>DA-C</i>
Exodus— <i>EX-C</i>	Ezra— <i>ER-C</i>	Hosiah— <i>HS-C</i>
Leviticus— <i>LV-C</i>	Nehemiah— <i>NE-C</i>	Joel— <i>JL-C</i>
Numbers— <i>NM-C</i>	Esther— <i>ES-C</i>	Amos— <i>AM-C</i>
Deuteronomy— <i>DT-C</i>	Job— <i>JB-C</i>	Obadiah— <i>OB-C</i>
Joshua— <i>JO-C</i>	Psalms— <i>PS-C</i>	Jonah— <i>JH-C</i>
Judges— <i>JD-C</i>	Proverbs— <i>PV-C</i>	Micah— <i>MH-C</i>
Ruth— <i>RU-C</i>	Ecclesiastes— <i>ES-C</i>	Nahum— <i>NA-C</i>
1 Samuel— <i>1 SM-C</i>	Song of Solomon— <i>SS-C</i>	Habakkuk— <i>HB-C</i>
2 Samuel— <i>2 SM-C</i>	Isaiah— <i>IS-C</i>	Zephaniah— <i>ZP-C</i>
1 Kings— <i>1 KG-C</i>	Jeremiah— <i>JR-C</i>	Haggai— <i>HG-C</i>
2 Kings— <i>2 KG-C</i>	Lamentations— <i>LM-C</i>	Zechariah— <i>ZE-C</i>
1 Chronicles— <i>1 CR-C</i>	Ezekiel— <i>EZ-C</i>	Malachi— <i>ML-C</i>

I have also made reference to the other standard works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The references to the Book of Mormon are articulated in bold and italics lettering using the following abbreviations:

1 Nephi— <i>1 NE-C</i>	Omni— <i>OM-C</i>	3 Nephi— <i>3 NE-C</i>
2 Nephi— <i>2 NE-C</i>	Words of Mormon— <i>WM-C</i>	4 Nephi— <i>4 NE-C</i>
Jacob— <i>JA-C</i>	Mosiah— <i>MS-C</i>	Mormon— <i>MM-C</i>
Enos— <i>EN-C</i>	Alma— <i>AL-C</i>	Ether— <i>ET-C</i>
Jarom— <i>JM-C</i>	Helaman— <i>HE-C</i>	Moroni— <i>MR-C</i>

The abbreviation *TPW-C* refers to the material found on the Title Page of the Book of Mormon and in the Testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses. The references to Sections that are in the Doctrine and Covenants are indicated as *DC-C* followed by the section number and verse (*OD1-C* and *OD2-C* are self-explanatory); The Pearl of Great Price references contained herein use the following abbreviations: *MO-C*, *AB-C*, *SM-C*, *SH-C*, and *AF-C*.

In some cases I have taken on what some would consider controversial material. I make no apologies for so doing. I have found that my children are best served when an issue is approached head on, the differing points of view presented, and the rationale given as to why one school of thought ought to be preferred over another. Sometimes the decisions are logically founded; others the result of doctrinal points that are unique to theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In most cases I have not argued authorities, even though I could have inserted multiple references to the writings of scholars with whom I am familiar. I have chosen to have my sources on any particular issue to remain anonymous in the text of the commentary for several reasons. First and foremost, this work is my commentary, what I believe and hold to be true. In the end, that is what my children wish to know. Secondly, I did not wish to have my children accept or dismiss a particular view merely because of who had been the author of it. Many wonderful insights have been made by scholars both inside and outside of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Wherein I have found one view to be preferable over another has not been a partisan matter, but rather a matter of the mind, heart, and spirit cooperating together in an attempt to understand what must be the truth. Thirdly, I have been quite clear who my “authorities” have been. It is my fondest

desire that my children would become as familiar with their writings as I have. Were I to cite all of my sources with extensive quotes from each, there would be no need for them to open any of the books that I have come to love. That, in part, is why I included the third column containing cross-references to the various doctrinal works in the Commentaries. Exceptions to this practice should be noted as being of extreme importance.

In addition to the text of the Standard Works, together with my own commentary, I inserted a column of references for further study. The citations are taken from three major sources: the *Conference Reports* of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints from April 1980 to November 2002 (abbreviated as CR followed by the year, month and page number); the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (four volumes, abbreviated EM followed by the volume and page number); and *A Scripture Index* (a compilation of scripture references cited in various texts published by General Authorities of the Church). For those not familiar with the abbreviations used in *A Scripture Index*, I include them below:

TPJS—*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
GD—*Gospel Doctrine*
MA—*Mediation and Atonement*
FWR—*Far West Record*
DHC—*History of the Church* (7 vols.)
TSWK—*Teaching of Spencer W. Kimball*
MF—*Miracle of Forgiveness*
FPM—*Faith Precedes the Miracle*
MD—*Mormon Doctrine*

PM—*Promised Messiah*
MM—*Mortal Messiah* (4 vols.)
MLM—*Millennial Messiah*
DNTC—*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (3 vols.)
JC—*Jesus the Christ*
AF—*Articles of Faith*
DS—*Doctrines of Salvation* (3 vols.)
AGQ—*Answers to Gospel Questions* (5 vols.)

As with each of the volumes previously published, I include two lists. The first, bound in front of the Commentary, is a listing of all of the words and phrases upon which I have made extensive remarks, a kind of sequential table of contents. I have also arranged this list alphabetically and have placed it at the end of the Commentary as a kind of index. A comprehensive alphabetical index for the entire volume appears as the last section of this book.

Needless to say that all of the errors in the material submitted herein to the reader are the product of my own limitations as a scholar; all of the brilliance which may appear here is the product of minds and hearts filled with the fire of the Spirit of God, from whom all truth and beauty ultimately derive.

A Note on the Electronic Edition

Not only did my children and other family members receive bound copies of commentaries, but there were a number of friends and neighbors who had expressed an interest in them. There were requests from others who desired copies of what I had done, but I was not in a position to provide them with hard copies. Inasmuch as I had all of the volumes in computer files, I thought to compile each of the commentaries in some format that could be read on a smart device. I opted to use the Adobe Acrobat, turning all of the work into PDF files. I have used these on my tablet for many years and have found them useful and far easier to cart about with me. In the early spring of 2015, my neighbor David Dollahite arranged for a meeting with Jack Welch and Marny Parkin regarding the possibility of BYU providing a dedicated web site so that there would be greater public access to my

work. Thus began the present enterprise of editing and standardizing all that had done during the last ten years. My commentary on the Gospel of Mark is the second of these electronic volumes. Within a year or so I hope to have all of the books available in the same format.

PNH
Orem, Utah
August 2015

Sequence of Specifically Noted Words and Phrases in the Words of Mormon Commentary

0.1.4— <i>Mormon</i>	1.4.19— <i>Christ</i>	1.12.6— <i>Benjamin</i>
1.1.4— <i>Mormon</i>	1.5.4–5— <i>these things</i>	1.13.12— <i>Lamanites</i>
1.1.23— <i>Moroni</i>	1.5.7–9— <i>finish my record</i>	1.13.20— <i>Nephi</i>
1.1.31— <i>destruction</i>	1.5.22–24— <i>plates of Nephi</i>	1.13.29— <i>Benjamin</i>
1.1.36— <i>Nephites</i>	1.5.30–31— <i>hundredth part</i>	1.13.55— <i>Laban</i>
1.2.11— <i>Christ</i>	1.6.6–7— <i>these plates</i>	1.14.22— <i>Lamanites</i>
1.3.21–23— <i>plates of Nephi</i>	1.9.4— <i>Mormon</i>	1.14.42–44— <i>all the lands</i>
1.3.31— <i>Benjamin</i>	1.9.16–18— <i>plates of Nephi</i>	1.15.25— <i>crimes</i>
1.3.34— <i>Amaleki</i>	1.10.8— <i>Amaleki</i>	1.16.39— <i>Lamanites</i>
1.3.50–51— <i>these plates</i>	1.10.19— <i>Benjamin</i>	1.16.47— <i>Benjamin</i>
1.3.60— <i>prophets</i>	1.10.28.29— <i>other plates</i>	1.16.54— <i>prophets</i>
1.3.62— <i>Jacob</i>	1.11.2— <i>they</i>	1.17.4— <i>Benjamin</i>
1.3.78— <i>Nephi</i>	1.11.8— <i>Benjamin</i>	1.18.8— <i>Benjamin</i>
1.4.7–8— <i>these plates</i>	1.11.22— <i>Mormon</i>	

A Commentary on the Scriptures
by
Paul Nolan Hyde, Ph.D.

The Words of Mormon

0.0 The Small Plates of Nephi have been, for the most part, a sequential narrative. The history begins at the time Lehi was called to serve as a prophet of the Lord in the days of Zedekiah, King of Judah, about 600 BC. Each writer in his turn has added to that historical sequence until the days of Amaleki, or to about 170 BC if our proposed chronology be correct. The Words of Mormon, the last entry on the Small Plates, was written over five hundred years after Amaleki inscribed his last in about the year AD 385. The book of Mosiah which follows next in the current edition of the Book of Mormon, resumed the historical sequence, recounting events that transpired in about the year 130 BC. This seemingly anachronistic hiccup sometimes troubles readers as they are progressing through the Book of Mormon because they do not immediately realize what has happened to cause Mormon's commentary to appear at this place. The explanation is fairly simple. During the fourth century after the birth of Jesus Christ the prophet/historian Mormon was given a charge regarding the guardianship of the Nephite historical depository located in the hill Shim in the land of Antum by the prophet Ammaron. Sometime afterwards Mormon received another divine charge to write a one-volume account of the entire history of the Nephites. He began as all good historians do, at the beginning of the story. The first portion of his text was called the Book of Lehi and it apparently covered the period of time from the exodus of Lehi's family from Jerusalem to the exodus of Mosiah and his people from the land of Nephi into the land of Zarahemla. Unfortunately, this narrative by Mormon, covering the first three hundred years of Nephite history, was lost during the translation process in 1828 at the hands of Martin Harris in conjunction with the perfidy of his wife. Fortunately, this loss had been anticipated by the Lord. In the beginning of his task, Mormon had been resorting solely to the Large Plates of Nephi for the bulk of his historical data, a collection of records that provided an almost daily account of the affairs of the Nephite kings and their people. In his reading, however, he discovered an entry in the Large Plates that referred to the gift that Amaleki had made of the Small Plates of Nephi to King Benjamin about 170 BC. Up to that point in his reading, Mormon had not been aware of the existence of the Small Plates, or if he had been aware of them, he did not know where they were. Having been assured by the entry on the Large Plates, Mormon set about looking for the Small Plates among the vast collection of plates that he had acquired from Ammaron. Once Mormon had the Small Plates in his hands, he took the time to read them and was astonished at their brilliance of spirituality. So taken by them was he that he decided to physically append this small collection of plates to his own developing historical account, like an appendix. Mormon had discovered that the period of time covered by the Small Plates could almost be equated with the time frame which he himself had just completed with the Book of Lehi. When the Book of Lehi was lost by the Harrises, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to not retranslate the Book of Lehi because of the machinations of wicked men who then had the 116 pages of manuscript in their possession. The Lord then pointed out the appendix that Mormon had made, telling Joseph that a translation of the Small Plates would suffice for the missing historical document. Therefore, 1 Nephi through Omni is not a work produced by Mormon, but rather by the individual writers who were living

***The Words of Mormon**

*p. 151
W of M
EM 1:164, 196,
200, 212, 213,
350
EM 3:1091

during the time from 600 BC to 170 BC. The Words of Mormon appear on the Small Plates for the reasons given below by Mormon himself.

0.1.4—*Mormon*—The prophet historian of the fourth century of the Christian era who compiled the sacred record we now enjoy as the Book of Mormon. He led the armed forces of the Nephite people until they were finally destroyed at the hill Cumorah. He entrusted his record to his son Moroni who, after making his own final remarks about his fallen people, interred the collection of plates for safe keeping until the time arrived for them to come forth from the dust as another testament of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.1 Mormon's final inscription upon the Small Plates of Nephi takes place shortly after his inscription upon his own plates which may be found in the seventh chapter of Mormon. A cursory review of that chapter will quickly inform the reader of the difference in the tenor of the two inscriptions. Chapter 7 constitutes Mormon's final testimony regarding the great labor he had performed in producing the Book that would eventually be called by his name. What we find in the Words of Mormon establishes the historical connection between the text of the Small Plates and the narrative that Mormon had composed.

1.1.4—*Mormon*—The prophet historian of the fourth century of the Christian era who compiled the sacred record we now enjoy as the Book of Mormon. He led the armed forces of the Nephite people until they were finally destroyed at the hill Cumorah. He entrusted his record to his son Moroni who, after making his own final remarks about his fallen people, interred the collection of plates for safe keeping until the time arrived for them to come forth from the dust as another testament of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.1.23—*Moroni*—The last prophet among the Nephites and the servant of God entrusted with the care and keeping of the Nephite records preserved in the Hill Cumorah. The main depository hidden deep within the hill has remained the primary site for the vast body of records known as the Large Plates of Nephi, having been placed there by the hand of Mormon himself. The stone box wherein the plates of Mormon were placed by Moroni was undoubtedly built by Moroni himself. This same Moroni, as a resurrected being, would appear to the prophet Joseph Smith first in September of 1823 and then regularly until the translation process was completed. No doubt Moroni was Joseph's personal tutor in all things Nephite as the translation progressed.

1.1.31—*destruction*—According to the record preserved by Mormon in his own account, three hundred eighty-five years had passed since the sign had been given confirming the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.

1.1.36—*Nephites*—In reference to the posterity and followers of Nephi, the son of Lehi, who provided leadership to the righteous six hundred years before the birth of Christ.

1.2 Moroni would survive the conflagration of the Nephite civilization by more than thirty-six years. During those years he would finish his father's

{*Chapter I*}
(Chapter 1)

{*1—1830*}

1 AND now I, Mormon, being about to deliver up the record which I have been making into the hands of my son Moroni, behold I have witnessed almost all the destruction of my people, the Nephites.

W of M 1:1-5
EM 2:932
W of M 1:1-11
MD 326, 454
W of M 1:2-9
EM 1:197

2 And it is many hundred years after the coming of Christ that I

account of the destruction of the Nephites, his account comprising that which we call the eighth and ninth chapters of Mormon today. He would also effect a translation and synopsis of the 24 gold plates found by the men of Limhi, the king of the land of Lehi-Nephi, as they searched for the city of Zarahemla. Mormon had promised such an account but had not lived long enough to produce it. This also bears witness to us that Moroni had relative access to the main depository where the plates of Ether were ensconced. Thirdly, Moroni transcribed a collection of some of the most important documents that he had in hand, in order to help the posterity of the Lamanites to come to an understanding of the conduct of the Church in his day, together with some of the brilliant discourses written by his father to the Nephites and to himself. These are found in the section of the Book of Mormon that we refer to today as the book of Moroni. Moroni is also responsible for the Title Page of the Book of Mormon.

1.2.11—*Christ*—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

1.3 While we cannot speak with absolute certainty as to where Mormon was in his narrative, it seems likely that he had just completed the history of the first Nephite king of Zarahemla, Mosiah 1, or about 176 BC. In reviewing the Large Plates of Nephi regarding the reign of the next king, Benjamin, he came across an entry that described the visit of Amaleki to King Benjamin and his gift of the Small Plates of Nephi. Historically, if our chronologies be correct, this would have taken place about 170 BC just before Amaleki died. This may seem to be insignificant facts save for the problem created by the loss of the 116 pages of manuscript which contained at least Mormon’s book of Lehi. It seems logical to assume that the book of Lehi ended about the time of the departure of Mosiah 1 from the land of Nephi. Mormon’s book of Mosiah, then, would have probably begun with the exodus from Nephi and the establishment of the three Nephite kings in the land of Zarahemla. Readers often assume that the book of Mosiah was named for King Benjamin’s son, but it is far more likely that it was named primarily for King Benjamin’s father. What we may conclude, then, is that all of Mormon’s account of the reign of King Mosiah 1 and most of his narrative regarding the long reign of King Benjamin, covering a period of almost 80 years, were lost with the 116 pages. At issue here is to which part of King Benjamin’s reign is Mormon referring in verses 12 through 18? Amaleki refers to serious wars between the Nephites and

deliver these records into the hands of my son; and it supposeth me that he will witness the entire destruction of my people. But may God grant that he may survive them, that he may write somewhat concerning them, and somewhat concerning Christ, that perhaps some day it may profit them.

{*1830*}

3 And now, I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written; for after I had made an abridgment from the plates of Nephi, down to the reign of this king Benjamin, of whom Amaleki spake, I searched among the records which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates, which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this king Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi.

W of M 1:3
EM 1:149
W of M 1:3–5
EM 1:197
W of M 1:3–7
AF 263
EM 1:199

the Lamanites during the first six years of Benjamin's rule (see *OM-C 1.24*); that is, between 176 and 170 BC. At the beginning of the current text of the book of Mosiah, Mormon makes reference to wars that occurred shortly before he turned the reins of the Kingdom over to his son Mosiah (see *MS-C 1.1*); that is, about the year 124 BC. The "continual peace" spoken of that Benjamin enjoyed "all the remainder of his days" took place during the three years between 124 BC and 121 BC when he died. Logic would dictate that Mormon's connecting link on the Small Plates to his own history must have been in connection with events recounted in the narrative no longer in our possession. Thus, the peace spoken of in verse 18, probably occurred about the year 170 BC rather than toward the end of Benjamin's reign.

- 1.3.21–23—*plates of Nephi*—Here Mormon is speaking of the Large Plates of Nephi which contained the more secular account of the history of the Nephite civilization.
- 1.3.31—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.
- 1.3.34—*Amaleki*—The son of Abinadom, and last of the sequential writers on the Small Plates of Nephi.
- 1.3.50–51—*these plates*—In reference to the Small Plates of Nephi that contained the teachings, testimonies, and writings of Nephi, the son of Lehi, that of his brother Jacob, and Jacob's descendants for approximately four hundred years.
- 1.3.60—*prophets*—A prophet is one who testifies that Jesus is the Christ. This is a patently clear definition as one peruses the writing of the ancient seers and revelators, none of whom wrote without bearing their witness of the coming Messiah.
- 1.3.62—*Jacob*—The fifth son of Lehi and Sariah who was born in the wilderness of the Arabian peninsula. Of Jacob's activities with the family of Lehi, we hear a great deal. He was a devoted student of the scriptures and a masterful teacher. His testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ was, as his father Lehi testified, like unto those who labored with Jesus during his mortal ministry.
- 1.3.78—*Nephi*—The fourth son of Lehi and Sariah. He proved to be a faithful follower of the Lord and a willing servant who did much to preserve his father's family from privation and destruction. His posterity and the posterity of those who followed his example are generally known as Nephites.

1.4 Nephi and others of the early prophets had gone to great pains to testify of the principle of revelation, that it was possible, through the influence of the Spirit of God, to know in exacting detail those events that lay ahead of them. Mormon, looking back over nearly one thousand years of history, could clearly see the fulfillment of all that had been prophesied by his glorious ancestors in conjunction with the prophets of ancient Israel. How could he have not been blessed, edified, and deeply moved by the things which he read on the Small Plates? Much of Mormon's object in writing the Book of Mormon was to establish the truth of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ and the principles and ordinances necessary for his posterity and the posterity of his brethren to be prepared against that day.

- 1.4.7–8—*these plates*—In reference to the Small Plates of Nephi that contained the teachings, testimonies, and writings of Nephi, the son of Lehi, that of his brother Jacob, and Jacob's descendants for approximately four hundred years.
- 1.4.19—*Christ*—Simply put, the name "Christ" is the Greek translation of

4 And the things which are upon these plates pleasing me, because of the prophecies of the coming of Christ; and my fathers knowing that many of them have *been fulfilled; yea, and I also know that as many things as have been prophesied concerning us down to this day have been fulfilled, and as many as go beyond this day must surely come to pass—

W of M 1:4
EM 3:1164
W of M 1:4–7
EM 1:149
* p. 152

the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

1.5 The great conundrum presented by this verse is articulated below in 1.5.7–9. The answer appears to be in the nature of the Small Plates and the fact of their inclusion with Mormon’s collection. As a practical matter, would any of the writers inscribing their words upon the Small Plates ever be tempted to write on the two outside faces of the cover plates? It seems unlikely, given how easily the characters could be effaced with just normal handling. Nephi no doubt began his account on the inside face of the collection of plates, and the subsequent writers would have done the same, writing on those plate faces that would be protected throughout the centuries by the cover plates. Amaleki declared that the plates were full when he finished his entry, undoubtedly indicating that there were no protected interior surfaces left upon which anything could be written. When Mormon physically attached the Small Plates of Nephi to his own collection, at least one of the cover faces would then be protected. Is it not reasonable to assume that Mormon wrote his concluding remarks on that protected surface?

- 1.5.4–5—*these things*—That is to say, the Small Plates of Nephi.
- 1.5.7–9—*finish my record*—It is interesting that Mormon can find space on the Small Plates in order to write the more than 875 words which comprise the Words of Mormon. Some scholars have suggested that Mormon fashioned one additional plate which he appended to Nephi’s original collection, yet that does not seem consistent with the spirit with which Mormon makes his intention known. It is upon “Nephi’s” plates that he wished to make his final inscription. How can the plates be full, as Amaleki testified (see *OM-C 1.30*), and there still be room to inscribe a document half the size of the entire book of Omni?
- 1.5.22–24—*plates of Nephi*—In reference to the Large Plates of Nephi, a synopsis of which has served as the historical structure of the Book of Mormon.
- 1.5.30–31—*hundredth part*—Mormon could not recount the hundredth part of the events of his own day, much less the hundredth part of the vast collection of plates that constituted the Large Plates of Nephi.

1.6 Here is Mormon’s explicit intent to physically attach the Small Plates of Nephi to his own collection of plates containing his narrative of the Nephite people. Mormon, like Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob, has seen the day in which the

5 Wherefore, I chose these things, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi; and I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people.

W of M 1:5
EM 1:201, 346
CR86-A 75
CR99-O 89

{*¶—1830*}

6 But behold, I shall take these plates, which contain these prophecies and revelations, and put

Book of Mormon would come forth and thus is able to anticipate with certainty those things that would be a most value to the posterity of the Lamanites.

1.6.6–7—*these plates*—Again, the Small Plates of Nephi.

1.7 Mormon knew that the writings of Nephi, Jacob, and the others who recorded their testimonies on the Small Plates would be of great value to the descendants of the Lamanites, an excellent appendix to that which he had already composed as the book of Lehi. For that reason he was persuaded to physically append the Small Plates to his own record. Additionally, however, he knew in his heart that there were other reasons why the inclusion of the Plates would prove beneficial, even though he could not then articulate them.

1.8 Mormon perceived the Small Plates to be in instrument by which his brethren could come to a knowledge of the true and living God, the God of their fathers. The Small Plates, of course, constitute as powerful a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ written prior to his birth and mortal ministry as can be found in all of human literature. Having lived during a time during which the utter depravity of fallen man was made manifest among his people, his fervent desire is that the children of Lehi might find sanctity and salvation by abiding by the principles taught upon the Small Plates and those teachings which he had and would include in his own writings.

1.9 The text of the Book of Mormon as we have it today, up to and including chapter seven of the book of Mormon, had already by this time been written. “Finishing” the record in this case is nothing more than continuing his narrative as to the historical connection between the Small Plates of Nephi and that part of the story that he had already long since written. Chronologically speaking, Mormon’s contribution to the text of the Book of Mormon will end at verse 18 below.

1.9.4—*Mormon*—The prophet historian of the fourth century of the Christian era who compiled the sacred record we now enjoy as the Book of Mormon. He led the armed forces of the Nephite people until they were finally destroyed at the hill Cumorah. He entrusted his record to his son Moroni who, after making his own final remarks about his fallen people, interred the collection of plates for safe keeping until the time arrived for them to come forth from the dust as another testament of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.9.16–18—*plates of Nephi*—That is to say, the Large Plates of Nephi from which Mormon is acquiring his historical information to complete the connecting link between the Small Plates and the plates upon which he has inscribe his own account of the Nephite people. Inasmuch as he is writing this over five hundred years after the fact, his resort to the Large Plates makes perfect sense.

1.10 For three hundred years the Large and Small Plates of Nephi had been preserved by different hands. The Large Plates had been kept by the kings of the Nephites and enlarged upon by themselves and the recorders which they had appointed to preserve the secular history of the Nephite people. The Small Plates had been kept as a personal record of Nephi, to be passed on within the immediate family. Thus, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni, and the others who wrote upon the plates were the custodians of this sacred record until Amaleki

them with the remainder of my record, for they are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren.

7 And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh in me to do according to his will.

8 And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a delightful people.

{~~9~~—1830}

9 And now I, Mormon, proceed to finish out my record, which I take from the plates of Nephi; and I make it according to the knowledge and the understanding which God has given me.

10 Wherefore, it came to pass that after Amaleki had delivered up these plates into the hands of king Benjamin, he took them and put them with the other plates, which contained records which had been handed down by the kings, from

W of M 1:7
AF 265, 295
EM 2:855

bestowed them upon King Benjamin. Benjamin placed them in the keeping of the custodians of the public records whereupon they became so integrated among the other plates that they disappeared from view until Mormon had cause to uncover them five hundred years later.

- 1.10.8—*Amaleki*—The son of Abinadom, and last of the sequential writers on the Small Plates of Nephi.
- 1.10.19—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.
- 1.10.28.29—*other plates*—Again, this is in reference to the Large Plates of Nephi.

1.11 The Small Plates would be preserved for a number of reasons, not the least of which being that Mormon had physically coupled them with his own record. Never again would they be bundled with the vast collection of plates upon which the entire secular history of the Nephites had been inscribed. Mormon is also convinced that the Lord would not allow a divinely mandated record to perish. We should take heart that the writings of all of the prophets since the beginning of time have been likewise preserved somewhere. We will enjoy at some future date the publication of these spiritual accounts of great and holy men and women. Note as well, that all men will be judged by that which was revealed in their own day.

- 1.11.2—*they*—Although one may make a case for this pronoun to be a reference to the total collection of the plates, both Large and Small, in the context of the narrative it is clear that Mormon is referring to the Small Plates, those upon which he is writing.
- 1.11.8—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.
- 1.11.22—*Mormon*—The prophet historian of the fourth century of the Christian era who compiled the sacred record we now enjoy as the Book of Mormon. He led the armed forces of the Nephite people until they were finally destroyed at the hill Cumorah. He entrusted his record to his son Moroni who, after making his own final remarks about his fallen people, interred the collection of plates for safe keeping until the time arrived for them to come forth from the dust as another testament of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.12 We are not privy as to when these contentions took place, but our best guess that they transpired at a point early in his reign, about the time Amaleki surrendered the Small Plates into the King's keeping (see 1.3).

- 1.12.6—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.

1.13 Amaleki had made mention of a serious war and much bloodshed between the Nephites and the Lamanites in which the Nephites were triumphant (see *OM-C 1.24*). We do not know whether this is the same war to which Mormon is referring here or not, inasmuch as the details given by Amaleki and Mormon do not otherwise equate. It seems likely, however, that the account given by Mormon of the various wars and contentions here take place between the death of Amaleki and the point at which Mormon had arrived in the writing of his own narrative about the early life and ministry of King Benjamin, while the king was yet a young man fit to do battle in hand-to-hand combat. According to our proposed chronologies (see *OM-C 1.9*), these wars and contentions probably would have taken place when Benjamin was in his early forties. They certainly would not have taken place in his

generation to generation until the days of king Benjamin.

11 And they were handed down from king Benjamin, from generation to generation until they have fallen into my hands. And I, Mormon, pray to God that they may be preserved from this time henceforth. And I know that they will be preserved; for there are great things written upon them, out of which my people and their brethren shall be judged at the great and last day, according to the word of God which is written.

{*¶*—1830}

12 And now, concerning this king Benjamin—he had somewhat of contentions among his own people.

{*¶*—1830}

13 And it came to pass also that the armies of the Lamanites came down out of the land of Nephi, to battle against his people. But behold, king Benjamin gathered together his armies, and he did stand against them; and he did fight with the strength of his own arm, with the sword of Laban.

W of M 1:11
AF 264

W of M 1:13
EM 1:99
EM 3:1427

seventies, the time frame in which the current narrative of the book of Mosiah begins.

- 1.13.12—*Lamanites*—Specifically the posterity of the eldest son of Lehi and Sariah, and generally those who apostatized away from the teachings of the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They were the primary opposition of the Nephites who in general adhered to the teaching of the prophets, seers, and revelators of the Lord God of Israel.
- 1.13.20—*Nephi*—A mountainous region east of the first settlement established by Lehi and his entourage. It was the area in which Nephi and his followers established the first Nephite colony. Zeniff and his people from the land of Zarahemla would later settle there. It was also the place where the fertile missionary labors of the sons of Mosiah and their companions bore fruit among the Lamanites.
- 1.13.29—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.
- 1.13.55—*Laban*—Laban, though also a resident of Jerusalem, was in exile as was Lehi and his family. Neither had inheritance in Judea inasmuch as they were both of the family of Joseph. Lehi was of the tribe of Manasseh, but we are not informed as from which of the two sons of Joseph Laban was descended.

1.14 The battles between the Lamanites and the Nephites, once the location of the land of Zarahemla had been discovered by the Lamanites, would have been continuous and brutal.

- 1.14.22—*Lamanites*—Specifically the posterity of the eldest son of Lehi and Sariah, and generally those who apostatized away from the teachings of the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They were the primary opposition of the Nephites who in general adhered to the teaching of the prophets, seers, and revelators of the Lord God of Israel.
- 1.14.42–44—*all the lands*—Undoubtedly in reference to the territories pertaining to the land of Zarahemla. After the departure of Zeniff and his people into the mountains of Nephi, there was no contact between the two settlements for more than 80 years (see *OM-C 1.30*)

1.15 We have already read of Sherem, that anti-Christ who lived during the time of Jacob (see *JC-C 7.1–23*). We will witness below the machinations of Korihor and others like him who will also deny the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh (see *AL-C 30.6–60*). But the “false Christs” here spoken of by Mormon are those who rose up among the Nephites who were avowing a military solution to the problems that afflicted them. Certainly the “stiff-necked man” mentioned by Amaleki (see *OM-C 1.27–28*) and Zeniff (see *MS-C 9.1–2*) could be numbered among these bloodthirsty sorts among the Nephites.

- 1.15.25—*crimes*—The “crimes” were undoubtedly associated with insurrections against the Kingdom. These “false Christs” were treasonous subjects. Having differing theological views would not have been considered a crime (see *AL-C 30.11*), except as the practice of which violated civil law, as in the case of Nehor’s murder of Gideon (see *AL-C 1.2–18*).

1.16 We will read of similar circumstances among the rule of the judges. Almost invariably, these false ministers were attempting to beguile the people into accepting a philosophy that would bring honor and glory to these same ministers, together with wealth and political power. False prophets and false teachers have not changed much over the centuries. While these men could

14 And in the strength of the Lord they did contend against their enemies, until they had slain many thousands of the Lamanites. And it came to pass that they did *contend against the Lamanites until they had driven them out of all the lands of their inheritance.

* p. 153

{9–1830}

15 And it came to pass that after there had been false Christs, and their mouths had been shut, and they punished according to their crimes;

W of M 1:15–16
MD 704
PM 323
EM 3:1164

16 And after there had been false prophets, and false preachers and teachers among the people, and all these having been punished according to their crimes; and after there

W of M 1:16–17
EM 1:5
W of M 1:17
EM 1:99
W of M 1:17–18

not be punished for the false doctrines, they were guilty of infringements of the civil law and were thus punished for those crimes. When the wicked among the Nephites could not accomplish their ends, they invariably resorted to the Lamanites where they would stir the hearts and minds of the people that they might renew their murderous aggressions against the Nephites. These sorts of ploys run rampant in the history of the children of Lehi.

1.16.39—*Lamanites*—Specifically the posterity of the eldest son of Lehi and Sariah, and generally those who apostatized away from the teachings of the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They were the primary opposition of the Nephites who in general adhered to the teaching of the prophets, seers, and revelators of the Lord God of Israel.

1.16.47—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.

1.16.54—*prophets*—A prophet is one who testifies that Jesus is the Christ. This is a patently clear definition as one peruses the writing of the ancient seers and revelators, none of whom wrote without bearing their witness of the coming Messiah.

1.17 Because of the loss of the 116 pages of manuscript which contained the book of Lehi and a goodly portion of the book of Mosiah, we are ignorant of the names of any of the other prophets who labored with Benjamin to restore the people of Nephi to righteousness. We are fortunate, however, to have printed in the Book of Mormon today, the final address of King Benjamin to his people, which provides us with a magnificent view of the character of this great and good man.

1.17.4—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.

1.18 For reasons given above (see 1.12–13), it is unlikely that the “peace” spoken of here is chronologically the same moment as the period in which there was “no more contention” in the land of Zarahemla (see *MS-C 1.1*), notwithstanding their immediate proximity in the current edition of the Book of Mormon. This last verse constitutes the last inscription made anywhere upon the Small Plates of Nephi and the very last words of Mormon before he left mortality.

1.18.8—*Benjamin*—The son of Mosiah I and the father of Mosiah II. He was the second righteous Nephite king of the land of Zarahemla.

having been much contention and many dissensions away unto the Lamanites, behold, it came to pass that king Benjamin, with the assistance of the holy prophets who were among his people—

17 For behold, king Benjamin was a holy man, and he did reign over his people in righteousness; and there were many holy men in the land, and they did speak the word of God with power and with authority; and they did use much sharpness because of the stiff-neckedness of the people—

18 Wherefore, with the help of these, king Benjamin, by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land.

EM 1:203
W of M 1:18
EM 1:99
CR82-A 116

Alphabetized List of Specifically Noted Words and Phrases in Words of Mormon Commentary

all the lands—1.14.42–44
Amaleki—1.3.34
Amaleki—1.10.8
Benjamin—1.10.19
Benjamin—1.13.29
Benjamin—1.17.4
Benjamin—1.3.31
Benjamin—1.16.47
Benjamin—1.12.6
Benjamin—1.11.8
Benjamin—1.18.8
Christ—1.2.11
Christ—1.4.19
crimes—1.15.25

destruction—1.1.31
finish my record—1.5.7–9
hundredth part—1.5.30–31
Jacob—1.3.62
Laban—1.13.55
Lamanites—1.13.12
Lamanites—1.14.22
Lamanites—1.16.39
Mormon—1.11.22
Mormon—0.1.4
Mormon—1.1.4
Mormon—1.9.4
Moroni—1.1.23
Nephi—1.13.20

Nephi—1.3.78
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other plates—1.10.28.29
plates of Nephi—1.5.22–24
plates of Nephi—1.3.21–23
plates of Nephi—1.9.16–18
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prophets—1.3.60
these plates—1.3.50–51
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these plates—1.6.6–7
these things—1.5.4–5
they—1.11.2