1 Nephi Preface

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THE BOOK OF MORMON
[Added in 1852/deleted in 1981]

THE FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI
[“First” added in \(\mathcal{P}\)]

HIS REIGN AND MINISTRY

[Preface] [to the First Book of Nephi]

An account of Lehi
and [of] his wife Sariah
and [of] his four sons
being called
beginning at the eldest Laman
[and] Lemuel
[and] Sam
and Nephi

The Lord warns Lehi to depart *out of the land of Jerusalem*
because he [Lehi] prophesieth unto the covenant people [the Jews] concerning their iniquity
and [but] they [the covenant people--the Jews] seek to destroy his life

[Note: Above is an example of a Hebraism in which the word “and” can also mean “but.”
The last two lines are an example of a type of Hebraism called “Irony.”
Ironically, when the covenant people are warned that because of their “iniquity” they might be destroyed (which is the covenant penalty for “iniquity”), rather than repent they seek to “destroy” the messenger (Lehi).]

He [Lehi] taketh three days' journey into the wilderness
with his family
[He] Nephi taketh his brethren

and [he Nephi] returneth [days' journey] to the land of Jerusalem
after the record of the Jews

The account of their sufferings:

They take the daughters of Ishmael
They take their families

and they depart into the wilderness

Their sufferings

[Heb. 01 – Repetition of possessive “his” in a list]
[Heb. 02 – Double & separated prepositions]
[Heb. 03 – The conjunction “and” can also mean “but”]
[Heb. 04 – Irony]
[Heb. 05 – Plurals amplify the meaning]
[Par. aa – Circular repetition of “they” & “their”]

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5
[1 Nephi 1: Preface]

The course of their travels in the wilderness [duality]

They come to the large waters

[Note: There is a duality here. The word “course” implies physical travel, but it also implies spiritual travel. Also, “large waters” are symbolic of chaos and separation from a new promised land – much like Moses.]

[His] Nephi’s brethren rebel against him [P= rebelleth] {AG}
He confoundeth them [amazes and surprises them]
And he buildeth a ship

They call the place Bountiful [only in 1840, 1981]
They cross the large waters [in a ship] into the Promised land &c./and so forth [P/ 1981]

This is according to the account of Nephi

>or in other words
I wrote this record

* * *

[Note: The above heading was part of The First Book of Nephi. I have also inserted my own headings in First Nephi, but I have NOT enclosed them in brackets—rather I have centered, capitalized and italicized them.]

[Par. bb -- Clarification]

[Note: According to Grant Hardy, from a literary perspective, Nephi will state that his intention in making this covenant record is to “show” unto his readers that “the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom He hath chosen because of their faith [His covenant children] to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Ne. 1:20). Nephi also states that he writes to “persuade” his “brethren” “to believe in Christ and to be reconciled to God” (2 Ne. 25:23); and to “persuade” his “people” to “remember the Lord their Redeemer” (1 Ne. 19:18). One of the ways Nephi focuses on these goals is to shape his narrative in what Hardy calls “selective characterization,” in which only selected characters are used in order to better illustrate the ramifications of covenant obedience and disobedience. In other words, Nephi will reduce thirty years of struggle over covenant obedience and disobedience among some two dozen covenant-family-related people (to say nothing of the elimination in the narrative of the names of most everyone else) to a conflict between two groups—the disbelieving covenant-disobedient “Lamanites,” and the believing covenant-obedient “Nephites”. (Grant Hardy, Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide, p. 32-34)