

# ZARAHEMLA RECORD



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Editorial Comment:

## Chiasmus in the News

by Raymond C. Treat

The recent tragedy in Kirtland has brought negative publicity to the Book of Mormon and the use of chiasmus.

Evidently Jeffrey Lundgren convinced his followers that chiasmus, an ancient literary device used by the Hebrews, was the only way God could speak in scripture—that it was a “pattern of the Lord.”

We are now at the beginning of a new decade which we believe to be the decade of the Book of Mormon breakthrough.

The *Kansas City Times* reported that Lundgren used it to “. . . separate God’s true language from man’s language in scriptural passages.”

While some Book of Mormon believers have suggested that the literary style of the book is of no importance, Lundgren is an example of someone taking one of the poetry devices—chiasmus—to the other extreme and grossly exaggerating and misapplying its use. In either case, the old saying, “a little bit of knowledge can be dangerous,” is appropriate.

The presence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon has been known for over twenty years. However, it is only *one* literary device used by the ancient Hebrews and found in the Book of Mormon. Angela Crowell’s work on the many types of poetry in the Book of Mormon (e.g., terrace patterns, sorites, merismus, etc.) was published by ZRF in 1986 and made available through F.A.R.M.S. to LDS readers as well. Of course these same Hebrew poetry devices have been identified in the Bible for many years.

Because chiasmus was misused does not diminish its validity or importance. To the contrary, such adverse publicity for the Book of Mormon and chiasmus are indications that something great is on the horizon for the Book of Mormon.

We should consider the very real possibility that Satan is trying to discredit a move of God in the same manner he tried to overpower young Joseph Smith, Jr. as he knelt in the woods to pray at the beginning of the Restoration movement.

We are now at the beginning of a new decade which we believe to be the decade of the Book of Mormon breakthrough. If this is true, a strong move such as this against the Book of Mormon is an obvious attempt by Satan to intimidate the believer. He would be especially anxious to influence those believers

who have not been convinced that the Hebrew literary structure of the book is important and persuade them to downplay its Hebrew nature. Knowing this, we need to get serious about our Book of Mormon commitment. We need to be even more determined to learn all we can about the book and its purposes.

We recall that in Lehi’s vision, some clung to the rod of iron through the mists of darkness and reached the tree of life, even ate of the tree’s fruit, but then fell away when they saw the world’s ridicule and scorn. Are we willing to take the ridicule and scorn as a result of this recent publicity and continue to boldly affirm the validity of the Book of Mormon?

We are on the threshold of the fulfillment of all the covenants made to the house of Israel.

This “test” is no doubt a stepping-stone to much greater things to come in this decade of the nineties. We are on the threshold of the fulfillment of all the covenants made to the house of Israel. Like Nephi, we can rejoice in the face of adversity because we have the vision of the fulfillment of God’s promises. ZRF

. . . that they (the remnant of the house of Israel) may know the covenants of the Lord . . .

The Society of Biblical Literature has among its membership 5000 professors, both Jewish and Christian, from universities and seminaries all over the world.



## the learning of the Jews

Each year, they meet for three and a half days to present their latest Biblical research findings. Their 1989 meeting was held November 17-21 in Anaheim, California.

One paper of particular interest was entitled "The Jewish Background of the Lord's Prayer." The presenter, James Charlesworth, is a world-renowned scholar who is presently Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is also the editor of the two-volume work—*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*—which won special awards from the Biblical Archaeology Society.

The Pseudepigrapha is a large body of Jewish religious writings dating from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 100 that are not included in the Old Testament or in the Apocrypha.

Professor Charlesworth's research of early Jewish writings, such as pseudepigraphic psalms from Qumran, has led him to believe that the Lord's Prayer should be translated as follows:

"And do not *allow* us to enter into temptation" instead of "*lead us not into temptation*" as found in the King James Version of the Bible.

He believes the meaning of the line is "And do not *allow or permit* us to enter into temptation."

Current Biblical scholarship is now in total agreement with Joseph Smith's clarification "*Suffer* us not to be led" (i.e., allow, permit) found in the Inspired Version of the Bible.

The Book of Mormon version of the Lord's Prayer found in 3 Nephi 5:105 reads "Lead us not into temptation," the same as the King James Version of the Bible. Joseph Smith did not make any attempt to change this phrase in subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon in order to agree with the translation he made of the Bible passage. Perhaps he did not consider the difference to be a mistake.

*Zarahemla Record* #17,18 featured an article on this seeming discrepancy between the two versions of the Lord's Prayer. To summarize briefly: In his book, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, published in 1898 and still in print, E.W. Bullinger explains that although the language of the New Testament is Greek, the men who recorded it were Hebrews. Thus the words are Greek but the thoughts and idioms are Hebrew.

In Bullinger's chapter on idioms and idiomatic usages of verbs he presents several rules and examples of active verbs including the following: "Active verbs were used by the Hebrews to express, not the doing of the thing, but the *permission* of the

thing which the agent is said to do."

The most important example of this idiomatic usage in the New Testament is Matthew 6:13 (14 IV). Bullinger interprets the passage this way: "Lead us not (i.e., suffer us not to be led) into temptation."

Several Bible commentaries support Bullinger's statement on this scripture.

Bullinger's interpretation of the idiomatic use of the verb in this phrase from the Lord's Prayer offers the most plausible explanation concerning the difference in wording between the two books of scripture.

Both the Book of Mormon version and the Inspired Version are correct.

The Book of Mormon version reflects the Hebrew idiomatic usage; the wording in the Inspired Version is an explanation of the Hebrew idiom.

The Hebrew phrase in the Book of Mormon—"Lead us not into temptation" (which actually means "Do not allow us to enter into temptation")—affirms Nephi's statement:

"I, Nephi. . . 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

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# "O House of Israel"

In preparing *First Nephi* of the Study Book of Mormon for publication, a word-for-word comparison of the Isaiah text in First Nephi (Chapter 6) was made with the Bible (Isaiah 48-49). Nephi quotes from the prophet Isaiah's writings which he found on the plates of brass.

We feel we have made some significant discoveries in our word-for-word comparison which we commented upon in the verse notes of *First Nephi*.

Although the Isaiah passages do not match word for word at all times, the minor differences in wording do not alter the meaning of the text. For example, compare Isaiah 48:11 (KJV) with the Book of Mormon version found in 1 Nephi 6:18:

**Isaiah 48:11 KJV**

For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it:  
For how should my name be polluted?  
And I will not give my glory unto another.

**1 Nephi 6:18**

For mine own sake, yea, for mine own sake will I do this;  
For I will not suffer my name to be polluted;  
And I will not give my glory unto another.

This type of difference was not noted in the SBM notes because the meaning of the passage was intact. However, in our comparison of the two texts we discovered four omissions in the Bible text which we feel are of great importance to the message of Isaiah and which we commented upon in the verse notes of Chapter 6 of *First Nephi*.

**Verse Omission**

The first omission is an entire

verse. This important verse should appear between the last verse of Chapter 48 and the first verse of Chapter 49 of the Bible Isaiah text. It is found in 1 Nephi 6:30 and is diagrammed below as a chiastic structure.

- A And again, hearken, **O ye house of Israel,**
- B All ye that are *broken off* and are driven out
- C Because of the wickedness of the pastors of my people;
- B' Yea, all ye that are *broken off* that are scattered abroad,
- A' Who are of my people, **O house of Israel.**

The center point of the chiasm (which was omitted in the Bible) points to the reason for the scattering of the house of Israel—"because of the wickedness of the pastors of my people." This is indeed a sobering message from the Lord. The next chapter (49), however, is a prophecy of the redemption or restoring of the house of Israel through the Messiah.

**Phrase omissions**

The next omission in the Bible text (Isaiah 49:8) is the phrase "O isles of the sea" (1 Nephi 6:38). Without this phrase the promise of preservation and salvation that follows is thus misapplied. Compare the Bible with the Book of Mormon text:

**Isaiah 49:8-9 KJV**

Thus saith the Lord:  
"In an acceptable time have I heard thee,  
And in a day of salvation have I helped thee,  
And I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people,  
To establish the earth,  
To cause to inherit the desolate heritages;  
That thou mayest say to the prisoners,  
'Go forth,'

To them that are in darkness, 'Shew yourselves.'"

**1 Nephi 6:38-39**

Thus said the Lord:  
"In an acceptable time have I heard thee,  
**O isles of the sea,**  
And in a day of salvation have I helped thee;  
And I will preserve thee and give thee my servant for a covenant of the people,  
To establish the earth,  
To cause to inherit the desolate heritages;  
That thou mayest say to the prisoners,  
'Go forth,'  
To them that sit in darkness, 'Shew yourselves.'"

The promise of preservation through Christ is properly directed to the house of Israel remnant scattered upon the isles of the sea in the version from the Book of Mormon. The meaning is totally different without this phrase. It is interesting to note that Nephi and Jacob are the only writers in the Book of Mormon to use the word "isles." Jacob identifies their promised land as one of the "isles of the sea" (2 Nephi 7:35).

For the last two omissions which are restored in *First Nephi* we refer you to Isaiah 49:12 and 15. In both cases the phrase, "O house of Israel," which is omitted from the Bible text but found in the Book of Mormon text, more clearly identifies that it is the entire house of Israel the Lord promises to restore to their lands. The Book of Mormon version of Isaiah 49:15-16 below clearly illustrates how the Lord is talking to the entire house of Israel, not just Judah.

The phrase in bold face is not found in the Bible text.

**1 Nephi 6:45-46**

For can a woman forget her sucking

child,  
That she should not have compassion  
on the son of her womb?  
Yea, they may forget,  
Yet will I not forget thee, **O house of  
Israel.**  
Behold, I have graven thee upon the  
palms of my hands. . .

### Second Nephi omissions

Two additional omissions of the phrase "O house of Israel" have also been discovered while comparing the Book of Mormon and Bible versions of Isaiah 50. The Book of Mormon text restores the phrase "O house of Israel" in 2 Nephi 5:52 and 5:55 which has been omitted from verse 2 and verse 4 of the Bible text:

#### Isaiah 50:2 KJV

Is my hand shortened at all that it  
cannot redeem?  
Or have I no power to deliver?

#### 2 Nephi 5:52

**O house of Israel,**  
Is my hand shortened at all that it can  
not redeem?  
Or have I no power to deliver?

#### Isaiah 50:4 KJV

The Lord God hath given me the tongue  
of the learned,  
That I should know how to speak a word  
in season to him that is weary. . .

#### 2 Nephi 5:55

The Lord God hath given me the tongue  
of the learned,  
That I should know how to speak a word  
in season unto thee, **O house of Israel.**

The phrase, "house of Israel," as found in the Bible text of Isaiah 14:2 compares with 2 Nephi 10:24. Here again the omission of two lines preceding this phrase clouds the meaning somewhat in the Bible. The Book of Mormon text here is clear and consistent with the previous passages that the entire house of Israel will be restored.

The lines restored in the Book of Mormon text are indicated by italics below.

#### Isaiah 14:2 KJV

And the people shall take them,  
And bring them to their place:  
And the **house of Israel** shall possess  
them in the land of the Lord for  
servants and handmaids. . .

#### 2 Nephi 10:24

And the people shall take them,  
And bring them to their place;  
*Yea, from far unto the ends of the earth;*  
*And they shall return to their lands of  
promise;*  
And the **house of Israel** shall possess  
them,  
And the land of the Lord shall be for  
servants and handmaids. . .

### Conclusion

The Book of Mormon Isaiah text from the plates of brass predates the Isaiah text from the Dead Sea Scrolls by several hundred years. The concept of the restoration of the entire house of Israel has been lost from these Isaiah Bible passages. The Book of Mormon Isaiah text is consistent in speaking to the entire house of Israel. This concept which has been lost to the Christian world today is indeed one of the "plain and precious truths" that has been restored in the Book of Mormon. ZRF

#### PLEASE READ!

The insert we included with *Zarahemla Record* #46 gave a sample mailing label with the date 12/15/88 in the upper right-hand corner. **That was only a sample.**

**YOUR** mailing label is on the bottom of the last page of the *Record* and has your name and address on it. The date in the upper right-hand corner of that label is your last contribution date. Please let us know if the date on your label is incorrect.

We apologize for the confusion this has caused and sincerely hope this explanation will clarify any remaining questions you may have.

ZRF Staff

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