Nephi, Isaiah, and Europe

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Details suggest that 2 Nephi 6–30 is somehow “more sacred” than everything else in Nephi’s record.¹ Following these indications, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland says: “One could argue convincingly that the primary purpose for recording, preserving, and then translating the small plates of Nephi was to bring forth to the dispensation of the fullness of times the testimony” of Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah contained specifically in those twenty-five chapters. Indeed, Elder Holland goes on to describe these three prophets as “standing like sentinels at the gate of the [Book of Mormon],” where they serve to “admit us into the scriptural presence of the Lord.”²

Admitting the centrality of 2 Nephi 6–30 to Nephi’s overarching textual purposes, we must further recognize the structurally privileged role given to one of Nephi’s three “sentinels” in particular. Nephi structurally presents himself and his brother Jacob as parallel popularizers and expositors of Isaiah. Not only are the thirteen so-called Isaiah chapters (2 Nephi 11–24) positioned between Jacob’s (2 Nephi 6–10) and Nephi’s (2 Nephi 25–30) teachings, but both Jacob’s and Nephi’s contributions are built on quotations of and commentaries on still other chapters from Isaiah. Isaiah is, in a word, the honored keynote speaker of the small plates, the figure around whose schedule everything else is organized.

Consequently, given that the aim of the small plates was to exhibit the shape of the early Nephite ministry,³ we only come to grips with the record when we begin to ask how Nephi read and likened Isaiah.⁴ Here, then, I would like to address the following question: Why Isaiah? What did Nephi see in Isaiah that so impressed him? In my response to this question, I will privilege 2 Nephi 26–27, obviously because that is the focus of the present volume, but also because it is there more than anywhere else that Nephi’s interpretive approach to Isaiah is on display. I first consider these chapters while ignoring their Isaianic content, considering only their theological claims. Having thus derived an idea of Nephi’s predominant theological concerns, I then address the question of what motivated Nephi’s interest in Isaiah.

Nephi without Isaiah

Second Nephi 26–27 speaks of two quite specifically delineated historical periods. The first, described in 2 Nephi 26:1–18, stretches from the visit of Jesus Christ to the Lehites to the final destruction of the Nephites—roughly the period described in the historical books of 3 Nephi, 4 Nephi, and Mormon. The second, taken up at greater length in 2 Nephi 26:19–27:35, begins with the modern arrival of the Old World Gentiles among the dwindling New World Lamanites.⁵ Though these two periods are obviously distinct—a full millennium passes after the end of the Nephites and before the Gentile arrival in the New World—they are, according to Nephi, closely connected. On the one hand, Nephi signals an intimate tie between the first period’s end and the second period’s beginning by using parallel language to describe first the Lamanite destruction of the Nephites and then the Gentile destruction of the Lamanites (2 Nephi 26:18–19). On the other hand, Nephi marks as the definitive event of the second period the sudden appearance of a book written and sealed up in the first period (2 Nephi 26:17; 27:6).
In the end, this complex double relationship between the two historical periods—the one bringing the other to its definitive (obliterative!) end, the other supplementing the one by leaving a book behind—is Nephi’s most pressing theological concern in 2 Nephi 26–27. Because it is most richly articulated, I believe, in 2 Nephi 26:33–27:6, I will focus the rest of my analysis on those verses in particular.

2 Nephi 26:33
The last verse of 2 Nephi 26 draws to its close a fourteen-verse tangent describing and polemicizing against the wickedness of the Old World Gentiles after they arrive among the New World Lamanites (2 Nephi 26:20–33). Helpfully, this last verse summarizes the conclusions Nephi draws from his aside. After asserting that “none of these [Gentile] iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men,” Nephi announces the rigorous universality of the gospel: “and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile” (2 Nephi 26:33, emphases added).

Nephi here echoes Paul’s declaration in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ there is “neither Jew nor Greek, . . . neither bond nor free, . . . neither male nor female.” On the grounds of this allusion (of sorts), it seems Nephi shares with Paul what French philosopher Alain Badiou calls Paul’s kerygma of “universalism,” an approach to preaching that “refuses to stigmatize differences and customs”—whether economic (bond/free), racial (black/white), or even sexual (male/female). Such universalism, as Badiou further explains, amounts to neither an affirmation nor a celebration of differences, but rather to “an indifference that tolerates differences” because they are, in the end, essentially immaterial. That is, Pauline universalism “accommodates” such differences and customs only “so that the process of their subjective disqualification might pass through them,” over the course of what Latter-day Saints call the process of conversion.

As can be seen when 2 Nephi 26:33 and Galatians 3:28 are brought together, this universalism works on a logic that can be described on the one hand as a logic of the “neither/nor,” or on the other hand as a logic of the “both/and.” Genuinely universal truth as such privileges neither the one nor the other, or—what amounts to the
same thing—equally privileges both the one and the other. But what does this logic imply, whether in the negative shape of the “neither/nor” or the positive shape of the “both/and”? At least the following:

1. Normal (“fallen”) situations are characterized by the differential relationship between two binarily opposed categories, each dependent on (the dismissal of) the other for its identity. The one is not the other; the other is not the one.

2. Truth, though, however it ultimately traverses a situation, is effectively indifferent to the differences that establish the identities of the categories making up the situation. The truth regards neither the one nor the other; the truth addresses itself both to the one and to the other.

In terms of 2 Nephi 26:33, then, the truth of the gospel—to which God “inviteth … all” and from which God “denieth none”—distracts attention from the “two components of the articulated whole,” from the two poles of the polarized situation that are inevitably “in a relation of reciprocal maintenance and mirroring.”⁸ One could say that the truth distracts polarity itself—distracts it, as Jean-Luc Marion says commenting on another Pauline passage, “as a magnet distracts a compass, in depriving it of all reference to a fixed pole.”⁹ And Nephi provides a list of three such polarities distracted by the announcement of the gospel: “black and white, bond and free, male and female.” But in the end, Nephi privileges none of these politically crucial and morally complex polarities, focusing instead with what is apparently for him the most important polarity-to-be-distracted of all: the neither/nor or both/and of “Jew and Gentile.”

The particular weight Nephi gives to this polarity is twice marked in the text. First, Nephi separates the privileged polarity from the others by inserting between them an emphatic reiteration of the universality of faithful preaching (“he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him [first iteration of universality], black and white, bond and free, male and female [list of “lesser” polarities]; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God [second iteration of universality], both Jew and
Gentile [identification of “greater” polarity]). Second, though, and more important, Nephi dedicates the whole of his next chapter (2 Nephi 27) to outlining the disqualification of the polarized relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles—and he does so without mentioning racial, economic, or sexual politics. For Nephi, it seems, the resources of the gospel can and should be put not only (and not even primarily!) to the task of dismantling racism, economic disparity, and sexism, but also (and more consistently and more dedicatedly!) to the infinitely more demanding task of dismantling the problematic relationship between Jews and Gentiles.

2 Nephi 27:1–6
Given Nephi’s focus, in 2 Nephi 27, on the Jewish/Gentile problem, I will turn there next, focusing on the first six verses. Two questions, drawn from the above reading of 2 Nephi 26:33, will guide my interpretation. First, what is the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles? Second, how is that relationship to be dismantled by the truth of the gospel?

2 Nephi 27:1: “But, behold, in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles—yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land and those who shall be upon other lands, yea, even upon all the lands of the earth, behold, they will be drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations.” This verse calls for four remarks. (1) Despite the hand-wringing that sometimes appears in print over this question, the historical identities of both the Gentiles and the Jews are clear in the text: Nephi consistently identifies the Jews as those displaced from Jerusalem by the Babylonian exile, and the Gentiles are—in light especially of the vision in 1 Nephi 11–14—understood to be the nations specifically of Europe. (2) Though Nephi usually distinguishes Gentiles and Jews sharply (the former consisting of so many settled “nations” or “kingdoms” and the latter consisting instead of a wandering people, cut off from their land), here Nephi lumps them together as “all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews.” (3) Whatever its beginnings or its historical trajectory, Nephi here prophesies that the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles will come to be of undeniable global importance in the last days: “all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews” include not only “this land,” but also “other lands,” indeed, “all the lands of the earth.” (4) Nephi implies that the global spread of the tensions underlying the Jewish/Gentile entanglement cannot be disconnected from the latter-day saturation of the world with “iniquity and all manner of abominations.”

Bringing the first three points together, one could say that Nephi accurately predicts what Jacques Derrida has called our “globalatized” world—a still thoroughly Roman world not quite so post-colonial as it professes itself to be, saturated by European culture and concerns, and particularly by that European (and strictly European!) question of the meaning of Judaism (or of the larger Judeo-Christian tradition). But Nephi goes further with his fourth point, speaking of a world given as much to “iniquity and all manner of abominations” as to the so-called Jewish question. And indeed, Nephi goes on in the next four verses (2 Nephi 27:2–5) to describe the polarized Jewish/Gentile world of the last days as speeding unchecked toward destruction. The polarized European world Nephi had seen in vision will, he predicts, be “visited of the Lord of Hosts, with thunder and with earthquake, and with a great noise, and with storm, and with tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire” (2 Nephi 27:2). And all this will come, according to Nephi, because those of whom he speaks—Jew and Gentile alike—will have “closed [their] eyes” and “rejected the prophets” (2 Nephi 27:5).
As if to help the reader make sense of this situation, Nephi draws in these same four verses on at least four (Isaianic) images to describe the *incapacitated* state of the Jewish/Gentile world of the last days: the dreamer, the drunk, the sleeper, and the willfully blind. The common thread running through all four images is the idea that each imagined figure exercises a desire to avoid reality. The dreamer, the drunk, the sleeper, and the willfully blind all avoid reality by submitting to some kind of ideological or idolatrous fantasy. And history makes clear how central avoidance and ideology have been to the European entanglement between Jews and Gentiles. On the one hand, Gentiles persecute or often enough attempt to obliterate the Jews in order to totally maintain their own thoroughly ideological identity, only the most spectacular instance being the Teutonic “blood and soil” ideology and its aftermath in the camps of Nazi Germany. On the other hand, Jews have just as often assumed a nationalist ideology of radical exception, even at times borrowing the terms of their self-definition from Nazi ideology. Thus, to quote Badiou again, “Jewish discourse and [Gentile] discourse are the two aspects of the same figure of mastery.”

But if it is their idolatrous obsession with each other that blinds, inebriates, lulls, and sets to dreaming the latter-day Gentiles and Jews, it remains to be decided what it is that—in their blindness, drunkenness, slumber, and dreams—the Jews and Gentiles fail to see. What is it that, according to Nephi, the Gentiles and Jews of the last days “close [their] eyes” to? What is that *truth*—void of their shared situation—that neither Jew nor Gentile notices because of its effective *indifference* to the differences they desperately labor to establish, to affirm, even, all too often nowadays, to celebrate? What, in a word, is the truth that the totalized world of the thoroughly European last days, as much in ecumenism as in contention, obscures—the truth that would, in Joseph Smith’s words, “revolutionize the whole world”?  

Whatever the content of that truth, Nephi is clear about the manner of its revelation: “And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book, and they shall be the words of them which have slumbered” (2 Nephi 27:6, emphasis added). The truth’s appearance is accomplished by the sudden emergence of a book that—precisely because it comes from a definitively voided ancient people, completely lost to history—necessarily registers as an unanticipated and essentially inessential supplement to the situation in which it emerges. But the very inessentiality of the book—its irreversible weakness—is precisely its strength, ensuring that it is as much for the Jews as for the Gentiles, as much for the Gentiles as for the Jews. Indeed, because the book concerns itself with a truth that, in its universalism, distracts the polarized global politics surrounding European Jewry, it is this book alone, according to Nephi, that will give a *name* to what the Jewish/Gentile hegemony has voided in its global dominance: the *remnant* (of Israel).

The book of the remnant, naturally, is the Book of Mormon. According to its title page, the Book of Mormon is meant to convince both “Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ” only while it goes about its more fundamental work.
of addressing the voided "remnant of the House of Israel," which has not, despite appearances, been "cast off forever" from the "covenants of the Lord." And according to Nephi, the Book of Mormon aims to reveal that the void of the Jewish/Gentile situation today called "Europe" is the remnant of Israel—indeed, that both Jews and Gentiles have misinterpreted scripture by "tak[ing] away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious," particularly the "covenants of the Lord" made to all Israel (1 Nephi 13:26).

This truth, the universal truth of the Abrahamic covenant announced by the Book of Mormon, is one that could—or has indeed already begun to—"revolutionize the whole world." As Richard Bushman says: "The Book of Mormon," and Nephi in particular, "works out [a] schema of world history down to the brass-tack details," calling for a "recovery of the entire experience of all the world’s peoples through the translation and absorption [into this schema] of their histories." In deference to the Book of Mormon emphasis on the reconstructed remnant of Israel, one must understand this translation/absorption to take the shape of adoption into the generic family of Abraham. And thus it seems that the Nauvoo project of sealing into one enormous covenant family every single person who has dwelt on the earth, whether Jew or Gentile, is firmly rooted in the Book of Mormon as Nephi envisioned and inaugurated it.

![Diagram of the Truth of the Book of Mormon](image)

Figure 5

Obviously, much more can—and needs to be—said about these themes. My purpose here, though, is only to get a basic sense of Nephi’s theological interests in order to come back to the larger question of what interested Nephi about Isaiah’s writings. For now, then, I will only summarize what I have here discovered in 2 Nephi 26:33–27:6 before turning to my original question.

1. Nephi sees in vision a latter-day world dominated by a polarized European politics of Jewish/Gentile conflict.
2. Nephi sees this conflict eventually disrupted by the appearance and promulgations of a long-since sealed book neither written by nor addressed to the Jews or the Gentiles.
3. Nephi sees this book allowing for the construction of a generic community ("the remnant"), which, made up of both Jews and Gentiles, is ultimately neither a Gentile nor a Jewish nation.

Nephi with Isaiah
What did Nephi see in Isaiah, given his theological concerns? That is, why does Nephi not only exposit the themes analyzed above, but also weave them into, couple them with, and use them to expound—indeed, to liken—the writings of Isaiah?
Certainly, there is profound continuity between Nephi and Isaiah in their interest in the Jewish/Gentile relationship. Isaiah is, as the standard commentaries make clear, quite as concerned as Nephi about constructing a kingdom as open to the Gentiles as to the Jews, and as open to the Jews as to the Gentiles. While Isaiah’s interest in this question seems to have arisen from his being witness to the collapse of the northern kingdom of Israel, Nephi’s arguably arose from his being witness in turn to the collapse of the southern kingdom of Judah. But whatever their individual motivations, both prophets are closely attuned to the relationship between the “chosen” people and “all the other” nations making up the world.

Isaiah, moreover, shares with Nephi the idea that a generic or universal remnant will be what eventually distracts the Jewish/Gentile polarity that dissimulates the significance of the Abrahamic covenant. Indeed, it is almost certain that Nephi drew his remnant theology directly from Isaiah’s writings. Certainly, Isaiah—along with Micah, whose sayings about the remnant significantly appear in 3 Nephi—is the source for any biblically rooted remnant theology. Of course, Isaiah did not invent remnant theology, but there is no question about his having been its most innovative systematizer. At any rate, however much of his remnant theology Nephi borrowed from Isaiah, it is clear why he was interested in his Old World predecessor’s writings.

What undoubtedly clinched Nephi’s fascination with Isaiah, however, was the latter’s consistent concern with written, sealed, buried, and only eventually circulated texts, most helpfully expounded by Gerhard von Rad. Indeed, in terms of his interest in the Jewish/Gentile polarity and the role of the remnant in distracting that polarity, Isaiah differs from other Old World prophets only in that he was more prolific and more systematic (and perhaps a more compelling poet). But Isaiah is more or less alone among the Hebrew prophets for his interest in writing. For Isaiah alone, the construction of the remnant would be effected through the eschatological emergence of a written text. And the precision with which Nephi reads Isaiah’s complex organization of this theme (brilliantly expounded by Edgar Conrad) is, frankly, startling. What drew Nephi’s attention above all else, it seems, was thus Isaiah’s heavy emphasis on the written word.

But what turned Nephi’s attention particularly to these themes in the first place—to these themes that eventually attracted him to the writings of Isaiah? That is, what focused Nephi on sealed texts, and on the latent universalism of the Abrahamic covenant? Simply put, Nephi’s theological interests—made so clear in 2 Nephi 26–27—all derived from his apocalyptic desert vision, recorded in 1 Nephi 11–14. There, camped a short distance from Jerusalem and with almost his whole life still ahead of him, Nephi saw in vision everything that drove his theological interests: the coming and death of the Messiah, the usurpation of those events by the “great and abominable” Gentile church, the decimation of the New World “branch” of Israel, the eventual contact between Europe and the Americas, the subsequent translation and promulgation of a sealed book, and the construction and exaltation of the remnant. In the end, what focused Nephi from first to last on Isaiah seems to have been the consonance between this vision and the basic concerns of Isaiah’s writings.

But, interestingly, it is also in terms of this same vision that the starkest point of disparity between Nephi and Isaiah can be detected. While Isaiah understands the Gentiles broadly as all the nations of the world, Nephi uses the term to refer specifically to European nations. Of course, the reasons for this difference are not hard to guess. First and foremost, it seems to be a question of the startling specificity of Nephi’s apocalyptic vision. He had seen in vision not only that the Old World covenants would eventually come to the attention of the New World Lamanites, but also how that would happen. And because he saw that as happening only through the Bible’s geographical crossing of the European Continent and historical traversal of the European Middle Ages, Nephi uniquely
emphasized the curious role of Europe in the unfolding of Isaiah’s vision of world history—a role of which Isaiah himself apparently knew nothing.

There is, then, at least one important point of tension between Isaiah’s writings themselves and Isaiah’s writings as Nephi employs them. Though both Nephi and Isaiah focused on the Jewish/Gentile question, on the construction of the remnant, and on the eschatological role of the written text, these shared themes seem to have had drastically different settings for the two prophets. What Isaiah seems only to have anticipated being a local (though still international) series of events, Nephi recognized as a series of global events of universal import.

Importantly, Nephi actually recognizes this tension between his creative use of Isaiah and Isaiah’s writings in themselves. He himself marks this tension consistently in his texts by his use of the—all-too-often oversimplified and misappropriated—term liken. For Nephi, to liken Isaiah is, at once, (1) to recognize that the texts to be likened have their setting in a completely distinct time and place, (2) nonetheless to see in those texts patterns according to which the covenant always and everywhere functions, and (3) therefore to take those texts as providing a kind of template for making sense of what one has oneself already understood—in Nephi’s case, through apocalyptic vision!—of the history of the covenant. For Nephi, in a word, Isaiah is a kind of proto-Nephite prophet, an Old World figure who—because he focused on the relation between the latent universalism of the Abrahamic covenant and the prophetic task of writing, sealing, recovering, and translating texts—deserves consistent and close Nephite attention.

I suspect that Nephi is to Joseph Smith as Isaiah is to Nephi—that if Isaiah can be taken as a kind of proto-Nephite prophet, Nephi can be taken as a proto-LDS prophet, a prophet whose creative engagement with the theme of writing and its relation to covenant can be put to work productively in attempting to make sense of what the Doctrine and Covenants says about the role of writing in our own dispensation—of the book of the law of God (see D&C 85:5), of writing and rewriting the law by “not[ing it] with a pen” (see D&C 43:8), of the sacerdotal authority to write on earth to have something written in heaven (see D&C 128:9), of the difference between spoken and written scripture (see D&C 68:4), of gifts of translating “the book” (see D&C 5:4), of writing by commandment versus writing by wisdom (see D&C 28:5), of the “Lamb’s Book of Life” (see D&C 132:19), of writing and keeping a “regular history” (see D&C 47:1), of a written “book of Enoch” originally inscribed “by the finger of inspiration” (see D&C 107:57; Moses 6:5), and so on. In short, I wonder what we might find if we were today to liken Nephi as Nephi likened Isaiah, to recognize in the Book of Mormon so many traces of ideas highlighted in scriptures given in our own dispensation.

In the meanwhile, I believe the reasons for Nephi’s investment in Isaiah are clear. And I hope that it has likewise become clear that where we ignore Isaiah in Nephi’s writings, we are likely to misunderstand Nephi himself—to miss what Nephi takes to be his most central message and intention. Certainly, much of the task of reading Nephi remains still before us.

NOTES


4. I distinguish here between the early Nephite ministry—associated with the small plates—and the later Nephite ministry, associated with the books of Mosiah, Alma, and Helaman. Both Isaiah and Nephi’s covenantal concerns disappear from the later ministry, something that seems to have been a consequence of Abinadi’s entanglement with King Noah. See Joseph M. Spencer, An Other Testament: On Typology (Salem, OR: Salt Press, 2011); or, more summarily, Joseph M. Spencer, “Prolegomena to Any Future Study of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon,” Claremont Journal of Mormon Studies 1/1 (April 2011): 53–69.

5. Note that 2 Nephi 25 describes a third period preceding the two discussed in 2 Nephi 26–27—namely, the period from Nephi’s own day down to the visit of Christ in 3 Nephi—and that 2 Nephi 28–30 continues to discuss the second of the two periods discussed in 2 Nephi 26–27.


7. Alain Badiou, Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 99, emphases added. Some have, of course, criticized Badiou’s interpretation of Pauline universalism, as in, for instance, John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff, eds., St. Paul among the Philosophers (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009). Critics generally point out that Badiou’s privileging of the neither/nor of Galatians 3:28 would ultimately cancel all diversity in the construction of a vague commonality. I believe, though, that this criticism misses Badiou’s point. To speak of the disqualification of differences is not to call for their obliteration, but to suggest that precisely because universal truths are universal, they refuse to allow economic, racial, sexual, or other cultural distinctions to be what ultimately qualifies an individual. For Badiou’s Paul, what qualifies the individual is faith in, hope in light of, and charity with regard to the revelatory event. In the words of Doctrine and Covenants 4:5, “faith, hope, [and] charity . . . qualify him for the work.”


16. The title page mentions convincing Jews and Gentiles only after (“and also”) its intentions concerning the remnant. It thus appears that the more generically Christian project of the Book of Mormon is something like a by-product of its more specifically Israelite project.

17. Harold Bloom, interestingly, opened his study of Mormonism with an excerpt from Kierkegaard’s journal: “Even now, in 1848, it certainly looks as though politics were everything; but it will be seen that the catastrophe (the Revolution) corresponds to us and is the obverse of the Reformation: then everything pointed to a religious movement and proved to be political; now everything points to a political movement, but will become religious.” Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 13. That Nephi places such heavy emphasis on the role of Europe in the story he has to tell deserves more attention. In one sense, 1 Nephi 11–14 sets up Mormonism itself as the true heir of the American Revolution, and that precisely inasmuch as it maintains fidelity to the Book of Mormon with its emphasis on Israel’s covenant.


19. It is absolutely crucial to insist that the horizon of the Abrahamic covenant is the remnant of Israel, and not Israel *pure and simple*. Scripture consistently draws a rigorous distinction between the family to be *constructed* and the family *naturally produced*. Unfortunately, the few available systematic readings of the Abrahamic covenant in the Book of Mormon are generally marred by a failure to maintain this distinction with full rigor.

20. Note that, like Nephi, Isaiah privileges this particular polarized problematic above others—most notably over the problems of economic disparity (the polarized relationship between rich and poor), which nonetheless plays a substantial role in his writings.

21. Note, for example, that Paul drew on many of the same Isaiah texts as Nephi, something that likely explains, in part, the theological similarities between Nephi and Paul.


25. It should be noted that this way of interpreting Isaiah is not, according to Nephi, typological. One can argue—and I have done so in An Other Testament—that Nephi distinguishes between likening and typological interpretation, though Abinadi reorganizes such distinctions later in Nephite history.

26. Several of these texts read differently now than they did in the original. In particular, see Book of Commandments 45:8 for the earlier version of D&C 43:8; Book of Commandments 4:2 for the earlier version of D&C 5:4; and Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 97, for the earlier version of Moses 6:5.