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Lehi's Dream, Nephi's Blueprint

Draft August 12, 2021

Noel B. Reynolds

Abstract

This essay harnesses the late twentieth-century discovery of Hebrew rhetoric by Bible scholars to identify Lehi's dream as the foundation of the carefully constructed unity in Nephi's writings and to identify previously unrecognized elements of that dream that are distributed throughout his final work. All the teachings and prophecies in First and Second Nephi are shown to derive from that dream/vision. Further, the entirety of Nephi's writings in the small plates are shown to be a tightly designed rhetorical production that establishes the centrality of Christ's identity, mission, and teachings for current and future generations of Lehi's descendants and ultimately for the entire world.

Interpreting Lehi's Dream

I have no idea how many times I have read the account of Lehi's vision or the scholarly commentaries that have been written about it. But when I turned my attention to it one more time in 2020, I was struck by the realization that all of

Nephi's writings constitute a tightly designed rhetorical unity that is presented as an expansion of the great dream or vision first given to Lehi and subsequently repeated for Nephi. Writing in the last decades of his life, Nephi used the original contents of that vision to teach his readers about the central importance of the future coming of Christ into the world to atone for the sins of all peoples and to overcome death by providing a resurrection for every human being. The same vision provided the principal source for Nephi's teachings about the plan of salvation and the gospel or doctrine of Christ and prophecies about the future cycles of obedience and rebellion for Lehi's posterity, the house of Israel, and for the Gentile nations. It also lays out plainly the frequently repeated prophecy that the prophetic records of the Nephites, including Nephi's immediate writing, would play a key role in the salvation of Israel and the Gentiles in the last days.¹

For decades, interpreters of the Book of Mormon and its teachings have singled out the vision of the tree of life given first to Lehi, and subsequently to his son Nephi, as one of the book's most prominent elements that requires careful study. While artists of all kinds continue to find inspiration in the human dramas retold throughout the book, the text itself features visualizations of its basic

¹ See the discussion in Noel B. Reynolds, "Understanding the Abrahamic Covenant through the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2018), 61–66.

doctrinal messages. As will be explained below, those visual images provide the blueprint for the complex of covenant history and doctrinal teaching recorded by multiple authors throughout the entire book. This article will trace that blueprint in the structure and content of Nephi's Small Plates with limited side glances at the rest of the text.

Distributed pieces of the vision

The universal approach of the published interpretations has been to focus on the descriptions of that vision located in the central chapters of First Nephi without recognizing that Nephi held back possibly the most important part of that great vision to share as a flashback and climax to all his writings at the end of Second Nephi. In a variety of papers I have published over the last four decades, I have made this point repeatedly in peripheral paragraphs and sentences.² But these passing commentaries have made no impression that I can detect on the community of Book of Mormon interpreters. In this paper, I have assembled a

² The following presentation will include insights and arguments first published in "Nephi's Outline," *BYU Studies*, Vol. 20 (Winter 1980): 1–18, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ as Taught by the Nephite Prophets," *BYU Studies*, 31 (No. 3, Summer 1991): 31–50, and "The Gospel According to Nephi: An Essay on 2 Nephi 31," *Religious Educator* 16, No. 2 (2015), 51–75, and "On Doubting Nephi's Division between First and Second Nephi," *Interpreter* 25 (2017), 85–102. "Nephi's Outline" was reprinted in Noel B. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, Religious Studies Center, 1982, 53–74.

broad range of evidences for seeing Nephi's final words as continuations of that first great vision that are meant to expand its perspective and elevate its importance in Nephite religious culture to the highest level. I will argue that Nephi's presentation of this vision is intended to provide a comprehensive guide and lens through which all the principle themes of his writings in the Small Plates are to be understood.

My approach utilizes, but does not extend the excellent work of others that have focused on related traditions in the Ancient Near East.³ I am only interested here in showing how the vision is used by Nephi to both inform and structure his writings.

Though this paper focuses on Nephi's writings, I would expect its findings to apply to the rest of the Book of Mormon text. For example, in 1967 Hugh Nibley pointed to a passage in Helaman which appears to borrow several elements from Lehi's vision.⁴

³ See, e.g., the 40th annual Sperry Symposium compilation, *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi's Dream and Nephi's Vision*, edited by Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson, Religious Studies Center, 2011, and the 1988 compilation of papers from the Second Annual Book of Mormon Symposium in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, Religious Studies Center, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., 1988.

⁴ Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, second edition, John W. Welch editor, Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988, 161.

Yea, we see that whosoever will lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil and lead the man of Christ in a straight and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery, which is prepared to engulf the wicked, and land their souls—yea, their immortal souls—at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and with Jacob and with all our holy fathers, to go no more out.

(Helaman 3:29–30)⁵

As will become more evident in the course of the paper, I have also concluded that Lehi and Nephi really did see essentially the same vision. In a research note first published in 1993, John W. Welch showed how the visions of Lehi and Nephi, though considerably different as presented, could be read as being the same vision.⁶ Nephi wrote, “I bear record that I saw the things which my father saw, and the angel of the Lord did make them known unto me” (1 Nephi 14:29). As will be seen below, I see considerable evidence that items not detailed

⁵ All quotations from the Book of Mormon are taken from the Yale critical edition, including punctuation and capitalization. Italics are sometimes added to call readers’ attention to key terminology in this discussion. See Royal Skousen (editor), *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*, Yale University Press, 2009.

⁶ See “Connections between the visions of Lehi and Nephi,” in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon: The FARMS Updates of the 1990s*, edited by John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne, FARMS, 1999, 49–53.

in Nephi's brief account of the tree of life image in Lehi's vision and that do show up in Nephi's account of his own version of the vision, were also shown to Lehi when he received the original vision. The vision of the tree of life is treated in more detail in Lehi's account, and the prophecies and salvation history are detailed more in Nephi's account. But the evidence seems clear that both had seen all of it.

The big picture

When reading First Nephi and Second Nephi, it is important to remember that the text we have is a focused and carefully planned account of spiritual matters drawn decades later from the longer and more complete records written by both Lehi and Nephi beginning with their original revelations and flight from Jerusalem around 597 BCE.⁷ Nephi did not begin writing this second record until thirty years after leaving Jerusalem, and it took him more than a decade to finish it.⁸ All of his writings in the small plates are a single project. Matthew Bowen has also shown that all of First and Second Nephi is tied together as a single inclusio

⁷ In a separate paper, not yet published, I have identified multiple passages where Nephi and Jacob explain the nature and purpose of Nephi's Small Plates. The paper also proposes analyses of the rhetorical structures of those seven passages and summarizes the rhetorical structure of the Small Plates as a whole that I have published in previous articles. See Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Small Plates: A Rhetorical Analysis," submitted paper, December 9, 2020.

⁸ See 2 Nephi 5:28–34.

by opening and closing references to “the goodness of God.”⁹ The division between Nephi’s two books was arbitrary from a historical perspective and was dictated by the rhetorical structures that he devised for the project.¹⁰ We should see both First and Second Nephi as products of a mature prophet looking back on his life experiences with decades of added perspective and wisdom. As we will also see, this also gave Nephi plenty of time to bring his early education in Hebrew rhetoric to bear on this final project, enabling him to communicate his most important thoughts and memories through both words and rhetorical structures in this second telling.¹¹

Reading and seeing things

Hints of Nephi’s indirect writing strategy begin to surface when we ask

⁹ Cf. 1 Nephi 1:1 and 2 Nephi 33:14. See Matthew L. Bowen, “Nephi’s Good Inclusio,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 17, 2016, pp. 181–195 and now reprinted as the lead chapter in a collection of his related papers: Matthew L. Bowen, *Name as Key Word*, Interpreter Foundation, 2019, pp. 1–15.

¹⁰ In response to some interpretations of the Small Plates that propose a different division in the text, I have written an extended explanation of my reasons for rejecting any attempts to change Nephi’s obvious textual structure through interpretation. See Noel B. Reynolds, “On Doubting Nephi’s Division between First and Second Nephi,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 25 (2017), 85–102.

¹¹ In a working paper, “Nephi and Lehi as Trained Manassite Scribes,” I have developed a long historical argument that presents Nephi as a recipient of the very highest level of scribal training available in seventh-century BCE Jerusalem together with an outline of the system of Hebrew rhetoric that scholars believe was at its peak of development at that same time.

ourselves exactly at what point in his story did Lehi receive the vision of the tree of life. Chapter 1 reports explicitly on two visions received by Lehi in Jerusalem during the first year of the reign of king Zedekiah. In the first one (v. 6), “he saw and heard much,” which seemed to confirm what the other prophets were saying that the people “must repent or the great city of Jerusalem must be destroyed” (1 Nephi 1:4), as it left him quaking and trembling “exceedingly.”

In the second one (vs. 8–13, 19), while still “overcome with the Spirit” he “was carried away in a vision.” Nephi shares more details of Lehi’s second vision, all of which may match up with elements of their shared tree of life visions as described in later chapters by Nephi. Specific elements of the second vision that show up later include (1) the opening of the heavens (seeing God on his throne), (2) seeing one descending out of heaven and (3) “twelve others following him,” (4) reading of the abominations of Jerusalem and the coming destruction and captivity of its inhabitants, (5) the future coming of a Messiah, (6) the baptism of the Messiah, and (7) the redemption of the world. Lehi’s own writings contain many other “things which he saw in visions and dreams” (1 Nephi 1:16).

But it was not until the full group that would be traveling together to their promised land was assembled at the first camp in the wilderness after two trips back to Jerusalem that Lehi shared his vision of the tree of life. It was after

Nephi's acquiring of the Brass Plates, the arrival of Ishmael's family and the gathering of "seeds of every kind" that Lehi announced, "Behold, I have dreamed a dream, or in other words, I have seen a vision" (2 Nephi 8:2). But we should keep in mind that all these events of the first fifteen chapters of First Nephi could have taken place in a very short span of weeks and days. And as suggested above, Lehi's dream or vision of the tree of life may well have come earlier if it was the second vision he received in Jerusalem.

As Nephi relates to his readers the tree of life part of Lehi's vision, he warns us that we are getting the short version. "And now I Nephi do not speak all the words of my father. But to be short in writing, . . ." (1 Nephi 8:29–30). "And it came to pass that after my father had spoken all the words of his dream or vision, which were many" (1 Nephi 8:36)—"including a great many more things which cannot be written upon these plates" (1 Nephi 9:1). Then, two chapters later, as Nephi records his own version of the vision, we start to recognize bits and pieces that sound like the earlier vision Lehi had reported receiving during those first critical days in Jerusalem. In what follows I will point out several key sections of Nephi's writings that may derive from Lehi's great vision and that are distributed throughout First and Second Nephi as anchoring elements in Nephi's larger rhetorical design.

Twelve others following him

One of the more obvious connections is in 1 Nephi 11:29 in Nephi's account of the ministry of Christ where he mentions seeing "twelve others following him." This is the exact phrasing Nephi attributed to Lehi's report of his second vision: "And it came to pass that he saw one descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noonday. And he also saw *twelve others following him*" (1 Nephi 1:9–10). In Hebrew rhetoric, this kind of repetition invites the reader to reflect on the connections between the two occurrences of the phrasing. While this may not constitute proof that Lehi received the great vision Nephi later shared during those first critical days in Jerusalem, it does clearly raise that possibility.

The goodness of God

In the second sentence of his first book, Nephi explains: "having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days, yea, having had a great *knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God*, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days" (1 Nephi 1:1). As mentioned above, this early reference constitutes the first element of the inclusio that signals the textual unity of all of First and Second Nephi. It also introduces the most fundamental theme of Nephite theology

that both connects the Book of Mormon to the Hebrew Bible and distinguishes the theologies in the two scriptures.¹² Old Testament references to “the goodness of God” usually refer to the Lord’s dependability as a covenant partner. This seems to be the very concept Nephi has in mind when at the end of this first chapter he announces his thesis which describes how the Lord will deliver the faithful from their earthly enemies.¹³ But Nephi and other Nephite prophets also use the phrase to explain God’s motivation for developing a plan of salvation for all his human creations—a plan of eternal deliverance from sin and death.

The mysteries of God

The second qualification Nephi gives for him to be writing this record is his great knowledge of *the mysteries of God.*” Nephi mentions his desires for this knowledge twice when he goes to the Lord for revelation.¹⁴ What may not be obvious to modern readers is that this phrase was linked in Old Testament discourse to the vision of a prophet who sees the heavens opened and God on his

¹² For a comprehensive analysis of this Book of Mormon usage, see Noel B. Reynolds, “The ‘Goodness of God’ and his Children as a Fundamental Theological Concept in the Book of Mormon.” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 46 (2021): 131–156.

¹³ 1 Nephi 1:20.

¹⁴ See 1 Nephi 2:16 and 1 Nephi 10:19.

throne as he receives his prophetic calling. In that experience, the prophet becomes part of the heavenly council and then returns to earth with a divinely appointed message for his people.¹⁵ While older ANE literatures speak of divine councils that send divine messengers to men, they do not include human prophets in that function. “No parallel to this concept of prophecy, or even to Israelite prophecy itself, has thus far been found in the ancient Near East.”¹⁶

Prominent Bible scholar Raymond E. Brown warns strongly against the tendency of Christian scholars to link pre-Christian usages of “mystery” to the *mysterion* of Greek mystery religions. Rather, he sees pre-exilic references to the divine council where secrets are shared with prophets as the source of the mysteries of God. This meaning persisted among others down to the first century BCE in pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Prophecies of what would

¹⁵ The linkage of the prophetic call to the vision of God on his throne in a heavenly council has been documented by biblical form critics and has been recognized to have some similarities with ANE literature that describes a council of the Gods. See the very helpful summary of the scholarly literature on the divine council in the Bible and in ANE literature by John W. Welch which also recognizes and incorporates the findings of numerous Book of Mormon scholars on this topic: “The Calling of Lehi as a Prophet in the World of Jerusalem” in *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*, edited by John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely, (Provo: FARMS, 2004), 421–448. This article revises and updates the earlier version published as “The Calling of a Prophet,” in Monte Nyman and Charles Tate, eds., *First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1988), 35–54.

¹⁶ The quotation is from E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1980), 238. Interested readers should consult the full discussion on pages 209–226.

happen to humans at the end of times were also called mysteries in this tradition.¹⁷

Saw the heavens open

As Nephi reports, Lehi “saw the heavens open,” and saw “God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels.” Then he saw “one descending out of the midst of heaven” and “twelve others following him.” Then the first “stood before” Lehi and “gave unto him a book and bade him that he should read” (1 Nephi 1:8–11). Modern scholars have claimed that “it was by such a vision that a prophet received his commission, his authorization, his perspective, his knowledge of God, and his information about God’s judgments and decrees.”¹⁸

The similarity of this description with Nephi’s description of his own experience with his vision is striking. Four times Nephi saw the “heavens open.” The first time, “an angel came down and stood” before him, becoming his guide through the next part of the vision in which he would first see the unfolding of the events related to the nativity of Jesus Christ (1 Nephi 11:14). The second time, he

¹⁷ Raymond E. Brown, “The Pre-Christian Semitic Concept of ‘Mystery,’” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (October 1958): 417–443. John W. Welch has incorporated the insights of Brown and many other scholars into his superb analysis of chapter 1 of First Nephi. See “The Calling of a Prophet.”

¹⁸ Welch, “Calling of a Prophet,” 427.

saw the baptism of Jesus and how “the Holy Ghost came down out of heaven and abode upon him in the form of a dove” (1 Nephi 11:27). He then saw Jesus “ministering unto the people in power and great glory” and “twelve others following him (vs. 28–29). The third time he saw “the heavens open again,” and he “saw angels descending upon the children of men” and ministering unto them (v. 30). The fourth time Nephi “saw the heavens open and the Lamb of God descending out of heaven” as he came down and showed himself to the Nephites about one year after his resurrection (1 Nephi 12:6). And again, he saw the Holy Ghost fall “on twelve others” who “were ordained of God and chosen” (vs. 7).

Nephi does not explicitly state that he saw God on his throne in any of these four occasions that he reports seeing “the heavens open,” but he does later share what the Father and the Son taught him on that occasion.¹⁹ And we should remember his clear references to his knowledge of the mysteries of God in his opening lines (1 Nephi 1:1) and to his desire to know the mysteries (like Lehi) as expressed in his preface to this vision (1 Nephi 10:19, 11:1–3).

Given the connection explained by Raymond Brown above, we should reasonably conclude that Nephi also saw the council of Yahweh as did his father

¹⁹ 2 Nephi 31:4–21 reports how Nephi was team-taught the doctrine of Christ in connection with his vision of the baptism of Christ. As will be explained further below, this all seems to have been part of the great vision that began with the tree of life.

and as did various Old Testament prophets at the time they received their prophetic calls.²⁰ Bible scholars have concluded that in these visions of the heavenly council, the prophet becomes a member of that council, participates in its deliberations, and becomes a trusted emissary to convey its decisions to the people of his generation. From that time on he operates having the perspective of God and his council and can speak for them authoritatively in different situations that may arise with the people.²¹

Reading and seeing marvelous things

Lehi had been praying “with all his heart, in behalf of his people” when these first visions came to him. After he saw the twelve following after Jesus in the second vision, Jesus came

and stood before my father and *gave unto him a book* and bade him *that he should read*. And it came to pass that *as he read*, he was filled with the

²⁰ See the detailed explanation and documentation in Welch, “Calling,” 40–42. Note how five centuries later Alma quotes Lehi’s exact words from 1 Nephi 1:8 to describe the experience that launched him as a Nephite prophet to succeed his father: “Yea, and methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God” (Alma 36:22).

²¹ See the extended discussion in Welch, “Calling” and H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 167–172, where he reviews several examples of the prophetic call in the Old Testament to support this interpretation of the heavenly council.

Spirit of the Lord. And *he read*, saying: Woe woe unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations. Yea, and many things *did my father read* concerning Jerusalem, that it should be destroyed and the inhabitants thereof; many should perish by the sword and many should be carried away captive into Babylon. (1 Nephi 1:11–13)

What the Lord gave Lehi to read in this vision would seem to have confirmed his worst fears. He had been praying that somehow these destructions prophesied by other contemporaries might be averted. No doubt, Nephi expects his readers to be surprised, to do a double-take, as he reports Lehi responding with great joy:

- A And it came to pass that *when my father had read and saw many great and marvelous things,*
- B he did exclaim many things unto the Lord, such as: Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty.
- C *Thy throne is high in the heavens,*
- D *and thy power and goodness and mercy is over all the inhabitants of the earth.*
- C* And because thou art merciful, *thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish.*

B* And after this manner was the language of my father in the praising of
 his God, for *his soul did rejoice and his whole heart was filled*

A* because of *the things which he had seen*, yea, which the Lord had shewn
 unto him. (1 Nephi 1:14–15)

Nephi clearly wants readers to ask themselves what were the “many great and marvelous things” that had so dramatically changed Lehi’s perspective on the coming calamity for Jerusalem. I suggest that the great and marvelous things Lehi “read and saw” included the plan of salvation, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the salvation history²² spelled out at least partially in chapters 8–15 and the expansions and repetitions of each of these presented throughout First and Second Nephi. Nephi clarifies immediately that the things which Lehi “saw and heard” and “read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah and also the redemption of the world” (1 Nephi 1:19).

Only after seeing all that did Lehi realize how “great and marvelous” are the works of the Lord God and that his “power and goodness and mercy is over all the inhabitants of the earth,” and not just the House of Israel. And it was this same

²² I use the terms *salvation history* and *covenant history* to refer to the accounts of the Lord’s dealings with his covenant people as recorded in scripture or as prophesied in future events and not in the technical senses that have evolved through contemporary Christian theological studies.

perspective from which the mature Nephi drew as he formulated and advanced his thesis for the book of First Nephi: “Behold, I Nephi will shew unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord is over all them whom he hath chosen because of their faith to make them mighty, even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Nephi 1:20). Four decades ago I identified an elaborate rhetorical structure for all of First Nephi that organizes its six stories and its visions and prophecies into a powerful proof of that thesis. It is excerpted and summarized below.²³

The things which Lehi had read

The things that Lehi “had read” come back to us in Second Nephi in his final teachings to his children as he explains basic concepts of the plan of salvation to Jacob, who in turn will become the great explainer of the “great plan of our God” (2 Nephi 2:17 and 9:13). In the middle of this principal Book of Mormon discussion of the creation of mankind with agency to choose between good and evil, Lehi appears to refer to that same second vision as his source for this knowledge:

“And I Lehi, *according to the things which I have read*, must needs suppose that an angel of God, according to that which is written, had fallen

²³ See Reynolds, “Nephi’s Outline.”

from heaven; wherefore he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God” (2 Nephi 2:17).

From our perspective as modern readers, we might speculate that Lehi got all this from reading the brass plates, which may have contained an expanded version of the creation story. But recognizing that Nephi, as the author, will be using selective repetition of phrases to send his readers back to the original mention of a phrase for more complete understanding of both, we should recognize the reference and assume that indeed, the plan of salvation or *redemption* was part of what Lehi learned in the second vision reported in chapter 1.²⁴

2 Nephi 31 as a flashback to the tree of life vision

In an exploratory analysis applying the principles of Hebrew rhetoric to Second Nephi, I found that Nephi’s presentation of the doctrine/gospel of Christ in 2 Nephi 31 is set up as a parallel passage to Lehi’s teaching of the plan of salvation

²⁴ The most frequently used label for this plan of salvation in Nephite discourse is *plan of redemption*, and the atonement of Jesus Christ is usually its featured component. See Noel B. Reynolds, “The Plan of Salvation and the Book of Mormon,” *Religious Educator* 20, No. 3, (2020): 31–53.

in chapter 2.²⁵ That makes it less surprising to discover that chapter 31 is a major piece of that great original vision that Nephi has held back to use as the climax of all his writings.²⁶

We are alerted to the flashback character of chapter 31 in its opening verses when Nephi says: “Wherefore *I would that ye should remember* that I have spoken unto you concerning that prophet which the Lord shewed unto me that should baptize the Lamb of God, which should take away the sin of the world” (2 Nephi 31:4). We should note how this baptismal scene is reported by both Lehi and Nephi so that the flashback takes us to both their accounts and links the following instruction in the doctrine of Christ to both their visions.²⁷

The gospel of Jesus Christ

²⁵ See Noel B. Reynolds, “Chiastic Structuring of Large Texts: 2 Nephi as a Case Study,” in *Chiasmus: The State of the Art*, edited by John W. Welch and Donald W. Parry (Provo: BYU Studies, 2020), 177–192.

²⁶ In his contribution to the 40th annual Sperry Symposium, Jared T. Parker argued that “Nephi used the vision of the tree of life as the model for teaching the doctrine of Christ.” Parker recognized a number of elements in 2 Nephi 31–32 that echoed or assumed elements from the tree of life visions, though he did not recognize the two as reports of different parts of the same visionary experience. See Jared T. Parker, “The Doctrine of Christ in 2 Nephi 31–32 as an Approach to the Vision of the Tree of Life,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision*, edited by Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011).

²⁷ Compare 2 Nephi 31:4 with 1 Nephi 10:7–10 and 11:27.

Having returned to his account of the baptism of Jesus, Nephi describes in more detail how it provides the example to “the children of men” of how they must repent or humble themselves and witness to the Father by baptism in water that they too have covenanted to keep his commandments and to take the name of Christ upon them. Then, without any forewarning, Nephi begins quoting both the Father and the Son as they taught him the basic points of the doctrine of Christ—citing or quoting each of them three times!²⁸ Nephi knows full well that nowhere else in scripture does a prophet claim to have been team-taught the gospel by the Father and the Son.²⁹

It is small wonder that Nephi chose this part of his earliest visionary experience as the climax of all his writings. He styled First Nephi as his proof that the Lord will deliver all those who keep their covenants with him from the dangers and sorrows of this mortal world. Second Nephi more directly applies that same thesis to spiritual salvation and uses this account as a capstone that tells every

²⁸ See the analyses of this teaching in Noel B. Reynolds, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by the Nephite Prophets,” *BYU Studies* 31 (No. 3, Summer 1991): 31–50, “The Gospel According to Nephi: An Essay on 2 Nephi 31,” *Religious Educator* 16, No. 2 (2015), 51–75, and “The Gospel according to Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 29 (2018): 85-104, .

²⁹ For discussion and documentation of how the Nephite prophets used *the doctrine of Christ* and *the gospel of Jesus Christ* and other terminology (*the way, the path, the word*) interchangeably, see Noel B. Reynolds, “This is the Way,” *Religious Educator* 14, no. 3 (2013): 79–91.

human being what they must do to be delivered from the devil and receive eternal life, concluding with parallel triplets as follows in verse 21:

A And now behold, my beloved brethren, *this is the way*.

B And *there is none other way* nor name given under heaven

C whereby man can be saved in *the kingdom of God*.

A* And now behold, *this is the doctrine of Christ*,

B* and *the only and true doctrine* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,

C* which is *one God* without end. (2 Nephi 31:21)

In these closing three chapters of Second Nephi we have been reminded nine times that for Nephi *the gospel of Jesus Christ* or *doctrine of Christ* is also termed *the way* or *the straight and narrow path* that leads to eternal life—and that teaching is the central and final message of all his writings.³⁰ The doctrine of Christ thus provides a verbal explanation for the visualization of “the straight and narrow path” as described in the vision of the tree of life (1 Nephi 8:20).

The Lamb of God

³⁰ Compare 2 Nephi 31:18, 21 (twice), 32:1, and 5 with 2 Nephi 31:9, 18, 19, and 2 Nephi 33:9 (twice).

Other textual connections indirectly confirm the hypothesis that Nephi's account of how he was taught the doctrine of Christ by the Father and the Son in 2 Nephi 31 was given to him and to Lehi as part of the larger vision that began with the tree of life. First, Nephi's accounts of that vision uniquely refer 60 times to the Lord as "the Lamb of God." That title for the Lord does not show up again in the text until 2 Nephi 31–33, where it is used another four times.³¹ As the author of all these passages, Nephi's repeated returns to the divine title used uniquely in the tree of life vision must be understood as an intentional and silent linkage of 2 Nephi 31 to the earlier vision account.

The fullness of the gospel

Reading 2 Nephi 31 as a flashback to the tree of life vision resolves one other textual question. As Lehi related his dream or vision to his family in chapter 10, he also told them that *the gospel* would be taught to the Jews and that *the fullness of the gospel* would be given to the Gentiles in the last days so that it could be instrumental in gathering the house of Israel back "to the knowledge of the true

³¹ I am grateful to Joseph Spencer who points out this strategic repetition, even though he does not recognize the original unity of these two texts. See Joseph M. Spencer, *1st Nephi: A Brief Theological Introduction* (Provo: Maxwell Institute, 2020), 48.

Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer” (1 Nephi 10:11 and 14). These are the first direct mentions of the gospel in Nephi’s writings, though the preservation of the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ will be mentioned repeatedly as one of the primary purposes for the compilation of the Book of Mormon. Where did Lehi learn about the gospel, which has not been mentioned in the accounts of his visions to this point? The most economical explanation is that he received it as Nephi did in that great vision that included the tree of life. And the visualization provided in that vision shows how the gospel of Jesus Christ provides *the way* or *the path* that leads people to him.

In 1 Nephi 8, Nephi only includes the visualization of the tree of life part of Lehi’s vision in his account—while mentioning repeatedly that there was a lot more that he has not included. We then get an indication of the parts he did not include as he lists in chapter 10 sixteen other topics Lehi covered with his family while reporting his dream or vision of the tree of life, including these two references to the gospel. That would suggest that a full account of Lehi’s dream and vision would have included the presentation of the doctrine or gospel of Christ that Nephi finally provides in 2 Nephi 31.

Rhetorical analysis of First Nephi

In my 1980 exploration of the rhetorical structure of First Nephi I found the book to be deliberately divided into two halves. “Lehi’s account” includes chapters 1–9, and “Nephi’s account” includes the rest (chapters 10–22). I then showed how each of these can be divided into twelve sequential units or pericopes that remarkably parallel one another point by point in the two accounts.³² On that analysis, Nephi’s brief account of Lehi’s revelations received in Jerusalem (1 Nephi 1) matches up in a chiastic structure with his summary of the many things Lehi taught his family after recounting his vision of the tree of life (1 Nephi 10:2-15). That match is even more powerful when we recognize that the two structurally parallel passages appear to report the same vision and have the same content.

Table 1

Lehi’s Account Compared to Nephi’s Account

1 Nephi 1–9 (Lehi’s Account)

1. Nephi makes a record (or account)

1 Nephi 10–22 (Nephi’s Account)

1. Nephi now commences to give an

³² See Table 1 as excerpted from “Nephi’s Outline,” 4. Note the balanced reversal in the parallel accounts. Elements 3 and 5 and 9 and 11 are reversed in Nephi’s account relative to their parallel elements in Lehi’s account.

of his proceedings but first gives an abridgment of Lehi's record (1:1–3, 16–17).

2. Nephi gives a brief account of Lehi's prophecies to the Jews, based on visions he received in Jerusalem (1:5–15, 19).

3. Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the valley he names Lemuel (2:1–7).

4. Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded (2:8–15).

5. Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord (2:16–3:1).

6. Lehi is commanded in a dream to send his sons for the brass plates of

account of his proceedings, reign, and ministry but first “must speak somewhat of the things of [his] father, and . . . brethren” (10:1).

2. Nephi reports Lehi's prophecies about the Jews, as given to Laman and Lemuel in the wilderness (10:2–15).

3. Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel (10:17–14:30).

4. Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded (15:6–16:6).

5. Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful (16:9–17:6).

6. Nephi is commanded by the voice of the Lord to construct a ship; this he

- | | |
|---|--|
| Laban; this he does (3:2–5:22). | does (17:6–18:4). |
| 7. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi sends for Ishmael’s family (7:1–22). | 7. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi enters the ship and then sails (18:5–23). |
| 8. They gather seeds of every kind (8:1). | 8. Lehi’s family plants the seeds and reaps in abundance (18:24). |
| 9. Lehi reports to his sons the great vision received in the wilderness (8:2–35). | 9. Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates (19:1–7). |
| 10. Lehi exhorts Laman and Lemuel, preaching and prophesying to them (8:36–38). | 10. Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his own descendants, and all Israel (19:7–21:26). |
| 11. Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates (9:1–5). | 11. To explain Isaiah’s prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and Lehi (22:1–28). |
| 12. Nephi ends with a general formulation of his thesis and the formal punctuation: “And thus it is. Amen” (9:6). | 12. Nephi ends with the highest formulation of his thesis, and with the formal punctuation: “And thus it is. Amen” (22:29–31). |

Further analysis shows that the six basic stories in First Nephi provide the grounding for both the thematic and the rhetorical framework of that book. The 1980 publication shows how the two principal stories of obtaining the brass plates

and building the ship provide the structural and thematic centers for Nephi's and Lehi's accounts respectively. Further, each account is presented chiastically, and they each feature the murmuring of Laman and Lemuel as their central point.³³

The four other stories are each doubly parallel (1) to the other minor story in the same account, and (2) to the corresponding (by order) minor story in the other account. These parallels are built into the stories by repeating a long sequence of similar elements in the stories in the same sequence.

The result is a structural foundation based in the six stories that Nephi advances as proofs of his thesis that the Lord will deliver the faithful—a version of the Abrahamic covenant promises.³⁴ With all this arranging of the stories and the parallels of Lehi's and Nephi's accounts, Nephi has also managed to present each account chiastically as shown in the following tables. First Nephi turns out to be structured as two facing chiasms with matching elements that make them parallel to each other, presenting both Lehi and Nephi as witnesses of the same

³³ In a separate essay, I have explored the ways in which the murmuring of Laman and Lemuel provides a key structural element in Nephi's account, giving insight into the ways of the wicked who resist the gospel's call to repent and endure to the end and who seek to kill the prophets, as do the Jews at Jerusalem and the followers of the devil in all times and places. See Noel B. Reynolds, "Rethinking Nephi's Treatment of Laman and Lemuel," working paper, August 10, 2021.

³⁴ To see how I interpret this as a version of the Abrahamic covenant, see Noel B. Reynolds, "Covenant Language in Biblical Religions and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2022), forthcoming.

divine teachings, prophecies and promises in their respective accounts. And, because Nephi has also introduced in these first accounts the visions and other revelations on which the teachings of Second Nephi will be based, he has linked First and Second Nephi solidly together in terms of their purpose and teachings.

Table 2

Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 1–9 (Lehi’s Account)

- A Nephi discusses his record, and he testifies it is true (1:1–3).
- B Lehi’s early visions are reported, followed by his preaching and prophesying to the Jews (1:6–15, 18–20).
- C Lehi takes his family into the wilderness (2:2–15).
- D The Lord speaks prophecies to Nephi about Lehi’s seed (2:19–24).
- E Lehi’s sons obtain the brass plates, and Nephi records the most striking example of the murmuring of his faithless brothers (3:2–5:16).
- D* Lehi, filled with the Spirit, prophesies about his seed (5:17–19; 7:1).
- C* Ishmael takes his family into the wilderness (7:2–22).
- B* Lehi’s tree of life vision is reported, followed by his prophecies and

preaching to Laman and Lemuel (8:2–38).

A* Nephi again discusses his record, and he records his testimony (9:1–6).

Table 3

Chiasmus in 1 Nephi 10–22 (Nephi's Account)

A Lehi expands on his great vision, detailing prophecies about the Jews and gentiles (10:1–16).

B Nephi explains that all men can know the mysteries of God by the power of the Holy Ghost (10:17–22).

C Nephi reports the great visions and prophecies given to him (11–14).

D Overcome by the hardness of his brethren, Nephi interprets the great vision to his family, rehearsing one of Isaiah's prophecies as support (15:2–16:5).

E Lehi takes his family further into the wilderness (16:9–17:6).

F Nephi builds a ship and records his most complete reply to the murmuring of his brothers (17:7–18:4).

E* Lehi takes his family across the ocean in the ship (18:5–25).

D* Concerned for those at Jerusalem, Nephi writes for his descendants and all the house of Israel and explains the ancient prophecies of a Redeemer (19:3–23).

C* Nephi quotes chapters of a prophecy from Isaiah which parallels portions of his own great vision (20–21).

B* Nephi explains to his brethren that prophecies are only to be understood by the same

Spirit that also manifested these things to the prophets (22:1–3).

A* Nephi offers a final summary of the prophecies about the Jews and the gentiles, drawing primarily from the language of the great vision but also from the brass plates (22:3–28).

Rhetorical analysis of Second Nephi

In 1980 very few non-specialists would have been aware of the turn taken by the highly successful form criticism movement among Bible scholars to broaden their approach as “rhetorical criticism” and search out the full range of rhetorical techniques exemplified in the Hebrew Bible.³⁵ The work that movement produced over the last few decades of that century and into the next led to explorations of the basic tool kit taught in the scribal schools of Jerusalem which is now known as *Hebrew rhetoric*.³⁶

³⁵ In his 1967 presidential address to the Society for Biblical Literature, James Muilenburg, a leading form critic, pointed out the diminishing returns of that movement as he and his colleagues seemed to have wrung out all the illumination they were going to get from that approach to textual biblical studies and were increasingly forcing tenuous claims with debatable evidence. His address recommending the shift to a new phase of “rhetorical criticism” has been published. See James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (March, 1969): 1–18.

³⁶ For a more detailed description and documentation of these developments in Hebrew rhetoric as they may relate to the Book of Mormon, see Noel B. Reynolds, “The Return of Rhetorical Analysis to Bible Studies,” *Interpreter* 17 (2016): 91–98.

In a separate paper I have advanced the hypothesis that Lehi and Nephi were trained in a Manassite scribal school in seventh-century Jerusalem. See Noel B. Reynolds, “Lehi and Nephi as Trained Manassite Scribes,” working paper, August 10, 2021. Nephi’s extraordinary mastery of the Hebrew rhetoric of that period may be the most compelling evidence for that thesis.

Duane Watson penned a brief description of the methodology employed by those who study Hebrew rhetoric:

A basic methodology includes first defining the literary unit, looking for repeated motifs, opening and closure formulas, and *inclusio*, . . . Second, both the overall structure (macro-structure) and the structure of individual components (micro-structure) of the literary unit are determined and the relationship between all components defined. At every step, close attention is given to repetition, parallelism, strophic structure, motifs, climax, chiasm, and numerous other literary devices. Such close examination of the composition is an attempt to achieve a better understanding of the movement of the author's thought, intent, and message, and to determine how the rhetoric would be experienced by the audience.³⁷

As I applied this new approach in Bible studies to Second Nephi in 2018, I found structural patterns that were previously invisible to me and to others.

Applying the principle of demarcation, I discovered that all of Second Nephi is divided into 13 smaller textual units by the standard biblical rhetorical device of *inclusio*. These 13 subdivisions were organized in turn into one grand chiasm as

³⁷ Duane F. Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism," s.v., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, general editor (Winona Lake: Eerdmans, 1988, revised), 4:182.

determined by their principle themes. The following tables show first the 13 textual units and the inclusios used to demarcate them. The second table lists in chiastic format the principal themes of those 13 text units, demonstrating the parallel elements in the structure.³⁸

Table 4

| <u>Label</u> | <u>Text</u> | <u>Rhetorical boundary (inclusio) markers</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|---|
| A | 2 Nephi 1:1–1:30 | “out of the land of Jerusalem” |
| B | 2 Nephi 1:31–2:4a | Zoram and Jacob “blessed” |
| C | 2 Nephi 2:4b–30 | “know good”/”have chosen the good part” |
| D | 2 Nephi 3:1–4:12 | Lehi “speaks”—to Joseph/all his household |
| E | 2 Nephi 4:13–5:34 | Laman and Lemuel angry/wars and contentions |
| F | 2 Nephi 6–11:1 | words/things “Jacob spake” |
| G | 2 Nephi 11:2–8 | “the words of Isaiah” |
| F* | 2 Nephi 12–24 | Lord’s house established/Zion founded |
| E* | 2 Nephi 25:1–6 | “Isaiah spake/hath spoken” |
| D* | 2 Nephi 25:7–31:1 | “mine own prophecy/my prophesying” |
| C* | 2 Nephi 31:2–21 | “the doctrine of Christ” |
| B* | 2 Nephi 32:1–8a | “ponder in your hearts” |

³⁸ See Reynolds, “Chiastic Structuring of Large Texts,” 182–183.

A* 2 Nephi 32:8b–33:15 Nephi “must speak/commanded to seal” words

Table 5

Label Themes of text units in Second Nephi

- A Lehi’s final testimony and call *to his family* to repentance.
- B The Spirit—Jacob redeemed—in the service of God.
- C Lehi’s explanation of *the way of salvation* based on “the things which [he] had read.”
- D Lehi’s last blessings (prophecies) *to his people*.
- E Historical detailed interlude on the founding of “the people of Nephi,” “my soul delighteth/grieveth.”
- F Jacob’s teachings witness of Christ.
- G Nephi’s witness of Christ.
- F* Isaiah’s prophecies witness of Christ.
- E* Historical interlude—the education of “my people”—“my soul delighteth/delighteth.”
- D* Final restatement of Nephi’s prophecies—*to all people*.
- C* Nephi’s detailed explanation of *the way or doctrine* of Christ based on what he learned from the Father and the Son directly.
- B* The Spirit—the Holy Ghost will show you what to do.
- A* Nephi’s final testimony and call *to all people* to repentance.

Applying the four basic principles of Hebrew rhetoric to First and Second Nephi we can now see that Nephi has presented this material in three highly structured chiasms. The first two are made parallel to each other in First Nephi as Lehi's account and Nephi's account respectively, each providing proofs of Nephi's thesis that the Lord delivers his covenant people when they are faithful and pointing repeatedly to the constant danger of murmuring or hardening one's heart against the revelations of the Lord which prevents that deliverance—as the Jews in Jerusalem are destroyed and carried away captive.³⁹

The third chiasm organizes all the teachings and prophecies of Second Nephi and elevates Nephi's thesis to a higher level, featuring explanations of the plan of salvation and the gospel/doctrine of Christ as the means by which the Lord's covenant people can receive eternal life. The primary intent of both Lehi and Nephi is to bring their people and eventually all peoples who will receive their message to Jesus Christ that they might receive the salvation he has prepared for them. For example:

Lehi: “I have none other object save it be the everlasting welfare of your souls” (2 Nephi 2:30).

Nephi: “And my soul delighteth in proving unto my people that save Christ

³⁹ Reynolds, “Nephi's Outline.”

should come all men must perish” (2 Ne. 11:6).

Wherefore my soul delighteth to prophesy concerning him, for I have seen his day, and my heart doth magnify his holy name” (2 Nephi 25:13).

And now behold, I say unto you that the right way is to believe in Christ and deny him not. And Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore ye must bow down before him and worship him with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul. And if ye do this, ye shall in no wise be cast out” (2 Nephi 25:29).

“For none of these 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. 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).

A secondary theme is the transition at the center of the book from the claim that the plan of salvation and the gospel enable the salvation of covenant Israel to the clearly universalized teaching that they equally enable the salvation of all

peoples—both Israel and the Gentiles.⁴⁰

And the way is prepared *for all men* from the foundation of the world if it so be that they repent and come unto him. For he that diligently seeketh shall find, and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded to them by the power of the Holy Ghost as well in this time as in times of old and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore the course of the Lord is one eternal round.

(1 Nephi 10:18–19)

Nephi's blueprint

It is too easy to breeze past 1 Nephi 10:2–14 inasmuch as it is presented as a list of topics Lehi discussed with his family—discussions that Nephi has not recorded here in any detail. But the list soon turns out to be of great importance as it includes all the topics of the revelations and teachings that will be presented by Nephi in his two books. In other words, Lehi's teachings to his family, based on his vision of the tree of life, provide Nephi with a guide or a table of contents for the rest of his writings. The remainder of First Nephi and all of Second Nephi will consist of expansions of the topics on this list. And most of these will be seen to be drawn directly from the great tree of life vision. Gardner noted the similarity

⁴⁰ Reynolds, "Chiastic Structuring of Large Texts," 184.

between Nephi's reporting of his own prophecies, which have sometimes been interpreted as commentaries on the Isaiah chapters, and the tree of life vision: "The elements of this vision are so closely aligned with those of Nephi's vision of the tree of life that it is virtually certain that it is that vision he is referring to."⁴¹

Another explanation of this record

Another reason that the list in chapter 10 can be too readily disassociated from the tree of life vision is that Nephi inserts another explanation of the small plates (1 Nephi 9:2–6) between the account of the vision and Lehi's preaching to his family based on that vision in chapter 8 and this more detailed listing of the topics included in that preaching to his family. This insertion can be confusing to modern readers unless they recognize that it is required by Nephi's chiasmic rhetorical structuring and serves as a wrap-up for Lehi's account. As can be seen in Table 2, the insertion about the records in chapter 9 matches up as the chiasmic parallel of the discussion of the record in chapter 1. It also allows Nephi to make chapter 10 into the beginning of his own account, following the account of his father in chapters 1–9. The artificiality of this division is not concealed as Nephi first announces that he is moving on to his own account in verse 1 and

⁴¹ Gardner, 53. Reference???

immediately circles back in verses 2–16 to finish out the account of his father’s teachings. This is made explicit as Nephi uses the same phrasing in verse 2 to introduce the longer list of things that were summarized at the end of chapter 8:

And he *did exhort them* then with all the feeling of a tender parent that they would hearken to his words, in that perhaps the Lord would be merciful to them and not cast them off. Yea, my father *did preach unto them*. And after that he had preached unto them and also prophesied unto them of many things, *he bade them to keep the commandments* of the Lord. (1 Nephi 8:37–38)

Nephi’s own account

Nephi refers back to these closing lines of chapter 8 as he begins his own account in chapter 10: “For behold, it came to pass that after my father had made an end of *speaking the words of his dream* and also of *exhorting them to all diligence*, he spake unto them. . . .” (1 Nephi 10:2). The attached appendix assembles and sorts all the passages Nephi will incorporate into this writing that detail the sixteen things Nephi lists in 1 Nephi 10:2–15 as a summary of Lehi’s teaching to his company at the time he told them about his tree of life vision. By starting out his own account with a listing of the contents of what Lehi taught his family based on

his vision, Nephi makes that listing structurally parallel to Lehi's first visions as described in chapter 1, as displayed in Table 1 above as items numbered 2 in each column.

Chapter 10 as a table of contents for 1 and 2 Nephi

In 1 Nephi 10:2–15 Lehi first tells his family about the tree of life, but then goes on (1, 9x)⁴² to confirm the prophecies of the coming destruction of the Jews and Jerusalem and their subsequent captivity in Babylon. He then mentions (2, 3x) their future return from captivity to the land of inheritance. Lehi then tells them (3, 10x) that in 600 years from the time they left Jerusalem “a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews, yea, even a Messiah, or in other words, a Savior of the world” (1 Nephi 10:4). Lehi also spoke (4, 6x) of the other prophets who had testified about this coming Messiah. He taught them (5, 12x) about the need for a redeemer because that “all mankind was in a lost and in a fallen state,” reminding us again of his detailed explanations of the fall and the needed redemption recorded in 2 Nephi 2. This points to the plan of salvation that Lehi

⁴² In the two long paragraphs that follow I use parenthetical information such as (1, 9x) to show that this sentence is #1 in Lehi's list of sixteen topics and that it surfaces in the text of First and Second Nephi nine times. The full list of all these occurrences can be found in the attached Appendix which provides the scriptural reference and a brief verbal summary of each occurrence and is organized by the same numbers indicating the position in Lehi's list and the topic for that number.

expands on in 2 Nephi 2 and that Jacob features in 2 Nephi 9–10. The only more lengthy and detailed section that Nephi reports from Lehi’s teaching to his family focused (6, 3x) on the baptism of the Messiah and the prophet that would come before him to prepare the way. Nephi’s threefold repetition of accounts of the baptism of the Messiah and the prophet that would baptize him (1 Nephi 10:7–10) constitutes a powerful link between Lehi’s vision, the version of that vision given to Nephi (1 Nephi 11:26–27), and Nephi’s presentation of the doctrine of Christ (2 Nephi 31:4–9).

Following Lehi’s long description of the baptism of Christ, he spoke to his children (7, 7x) about “the gospel which should be preached to the Jews.” and about (8, 4x) the subsequent “dwindling of the Jews in unbelief. After (9, 6x) their slaying of the Messiah, he would (10, 3x) “rise from the dead” and (11, 2x) manifest himself “by the Holy Ghost unto the Gentiles.” He spoke then (12, 3x) about the Gentiles and the house of Israel, comparing them to an olive tree whose branches would be broken off and “scattered upon all the face of the earth.” Lehi then explained to his family that (13, 14x) it was necessary that their family be led to their own land of promise to fulfill the word of the Lord and that eventually (14, 8x) both their descendants and the rest of the house of Israel would be scattered upon all the face of the earth. Finally, (15, 10x) he prophesied that the Gentiles

would receive the fullness of the gospel, and in due course (16, 16x) the remnants of the house of Israel would “come to the knowledge of the true Messiah.”

There is one other line of prophesying that surfaces eight times in Nephi’s writings that is not included on the list of teachings of Lehi to his people. But it is likely that Lehi was fully aware of it. At the end of his own vision, Nephi reports that he was shown events pertaining to the end of the world. He will come back to that topic seven additional times in his writings, while respecting the command that he (and probably Lehi as well) had received not to write what he had seen. All eight of Nephi’s references to the end of the world are included in the Appendix 1 as item 17. Three of these are in materials quoted from Isaiah, and one is Nephi’s paraphrase of “the prophet,” which in context might easily be taken as another reference to Isaiah.

Time and eternity

It is important to an understanding of these biblical and Book of Mormon teachings to recognize the three different time frames of reference they use—usually without making those differences clear. We see first the eternal perspective of God who sees the end from the beginning. In his heavenly council, decisions were made to create this earth, to provide a plan of salvation that would

make human salvation possible, and to provide a way by which individuals could qualify for that salvation in their own mortal lifetimes. Second, we see the past, present, and future of the world and its people in relationship to God. Specific peoples have from time to time been chosen to be God's covenant people, to receive his prophets and teachings, and to provide an example to all the world of the ways in which he will bless and discipline his covenant people through their cycles of rebellion and obedience. But, third, and in the final analysis, salvation turns out to be an individual matter, and eternal judgment will come to every individual and will be based on the response of each individual to the gospel invitation to repent and come to Christ. That is the time frame that matters most to each human being while in this mortal probation. The salvation history we can see in the history and prophesied future of God's covenant peoples serves us as a surrogate or model and teaches us how to relate to our God as we strive to endure to the end. Table 6 lists these three time frames, their visualizations, and their verbalizations.

Table 6

| | <u>TIME FRAME</u> | <u>VISUALIZATION</u> | <u>VERBALIZATION</u> |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Eternity | Divine council | Plan of salvation |

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 2. | Salvation history | Olive tree allegory | Abrahamic covenant |
| 3. | Individual lifetimes | Tree of life vision | Gospel of Jesus Christ |

Nephi's list of the sixteen teachings of Lehi to his people draws on all three of these time frames in a way that integrates them fully. From the eternal perspective, there was a divine council before the creation of this world which approved the plan of salvation, including the creation and the atonement, and which included a final judgment that will bring all peoples back into that same eternal time frame. In multiple dispensations of the gospel, God has established his covenants with successive peoples, the most prominent of which has been the covenant with Abraham, which animates the salvation history not only of Israel, but also the nations of the Gentiles as explained to Nephi and Lehi in their visions. Most of the teachings on Nephi's lists address different dimensions of that salvation history, and the visualization of the olive tree is provided to help understand how apostate Israel can one day be grafted back into the mother tree. But the visualization of the tree of life and the straight and narrow path supports the third time frame as it portrays individuals—even different members of Lehi's family—facing the choice of whether or not to turn away from the attractions of a fallen world to pursue the way of salvation—the gospel path that Christ has

provided.

As a side note, it must be recognized that the decisions of fourth-century and later councils of the Christian churches adopted Greek philosophical concepts of divinity that placed God beyond any human time frames. These theological moves have never been reconciled with the traditional time frames embedded in Bible prophecies and teachings, nor is it likely that they ever can be. The German theologian Oscar Cullmann devoted much of his career to this issue, arguing that the gospel taught by the Primitive Christians could not be divorced from these salvation histories and individual lives without destroying the essence of its message.⁴³

The Book of Mormon consistently conveys this combination of time frames laid out in the visions of Lehi and Nephi. The *goodness of God* is repeatedly cited to explain the plan of salvation, how we got here in the first place, and how we can be blessed at a final judgment. The salvation history of Israel, of the Nephites and Lamanites, and the Gentile nations is taught constantly in order to show how God has worked and will work with all peoples to provide individuals with the gospel and the opportunity to live their own lives in a way that can prepare them for

⁴³ Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, translated by Floyd V. Filson. The revised 1962 German edition has been translated and published in 2018 in Eugene, Oregon, by Wipf and Stock.

eternal life. And the Nephite prophets understood from the beginning that the people of all nations could receive all the blessings promised to Abraham by repenting and coming to Christ in the manner prescribed in his gospel.

In a 2011 article, Daniel L. Belnap demonstrated how Lehi's vision provided the Nephite peoples with a foundational cultural narrative that served them much as the Israelite exodus served the ancient Hebrews "to define themselves and their place in the greater cosmos."⁴⁴ Matthew L. Bowen has added strong evidence for the millennium-long reappearance of key associations in that vision in the writings of Nephite prophets.⁴⁵ I would propose that Nephi's use of that vision as a blueprint for his writings and its integration of these three time frames also contributed to establishing their shared vision as a cultural narrative that shows up in the writings of Nephite prophets throughout their dispensation.

The more I reflect on this list of prophecies and revealed teachings that Nephi provides at the center of First Nephi, the more astonished I am. On the one hand, Nephi names or summarizes 16 topics (teachings and prophecies) that Lehi

⁴⁴ Daniel L. Belnap, "'Even as our Father Lehi Saw': Lehi's Dream as Nephite Cultural Narrative," in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi's Dream and Nephi's Vision*, edited by Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo: RSC, 2011), 214–239, at 214.

⁴⁵ Matthew L. Bowen, "'That Which They Most Desired': The Waters of Mormon, Baptism, the Love of God, and the Bitter Fountain," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 39 (2020): 261–298.

took up with his family as he spoke to them after describing his vision of the tree of life at the first camp in the wilderness, all of which will be presented in much more detail elsewhere in First or Second Nephi. On the other hand, the same list serves as a comprehensive guide to the teachings and prophecies of all the Nephite prophets and Jesus Christ who will teach the Nephites and Lamanites over the next ten centuries. This extraordinary teaching session between Lehi and his emigrant company as they prepare to launch themselves into the Arabian wilderness provides the complete packet of Book of Mormon prophecies and teachings, including what Jesus will teach the Nephites when he appears to them after his resurrection. That body of revelation will be available to the Nephites for almost a thousand years; and Lehi's and Nephi's great vision or visions that feature the tree of life appear to be the source for it all.

Conclusions

Three hypotheses are proposed in this paper. First, Nephi's final writing in his Small Plates was organized using the principles of Hebrew rhetoric as these had evolved in those same scribal schools before the Babylonian exile. Nephi designed a formal rhetorical structure that divided his material into two books—both organized chiastically in a way that dictated the two-book structure. Second, both

books can be understood as expansions of the brief account of the great vision of the tree of life in which Nephi and Lehi were called as prophets, seeing the heavens opened, seeing the past and future implementation of the plan of salvation and the shape of salvation history as it would unfold for their descendants, for the house of Israel, and for the Gentiles. As Nephi's summary of the things Lehi taught his family as part of his report on the tree of life vision shows, all the teachings and prophecies in Nephi's two books do come from that same great vision. And the visualizations provided in the vision chapters help the Nephites understand the plan of salvation, the salvation histories of the scriptures, and the gospel of Jesus Christ—which is frequently referred to thereafter as “the straight and narrow path” or “the way.”

Third, we can see that this experience of seeing the heavens opened and of being brought into the heavenly council where they were taught the plan of salvation, the gospel of the Lamb, and the prophecies outlining a salvation history for their own descendants, the Gentile nations, and the rest of the house of Israel prepared Lehi and Nephi with the necessary perspective and understanding to be the prophets that would launch the Nephite dispensation. Having received the same great vision, Lehi and Nephi were able to stand together and provide a double witness to the goodness of God, his teachings and plans for all of humanity

in this earthly probationary estate, and the coming judgment and possibility of eternal life for all. They also understood what was at stake in the lives of their family members and descendants who would not listen or soften their hearts to be guided by the Spirit on that path that leads to the Lord.

So interpreted, the great vision of the tree of life provided Nephite and Lamanite prophets with the perspective and teachings to call Lehi's descendants to repentance and to teach them the right way over a span of almost a thousand years. The experiences of Lehi and Nephi and the record they would leave would become the primary means by which the true gospel would be restored to the Gentiles, to Lehi's distant descendants, and to the house of Israel in the last days. When we grasp the full scope of that early vision, we can see how it provides the divinely revealed basis for the Lord's work with his people throughout the period recorded in the Book of Mormon as well as for the last days when the gospel would be revealed again to the Gentiles and to all the house of Israel.

APPENDIX

Charting BOM teachings and prophecies per 1 Nephi 10:2--14

1 Nephi 10:2–4

1. Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Israel

- a. 1 Ne 1:4 many prophets warned that Jerusalem would be destroyed
- b. 1 Ne 1:13 Lehi read of the coming destruction and captivity
- c. 1 Ne 1:8-19 Lehi warned Jerusalem of the coming destruction
- d. 1 Ne 7:13 Nephi promised that the prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction will be fulfilled.
- e. 2 Ne 6:8 The Lord showed Jacob the captivity of Jerusalem after Lehi's departure.
- f. 2 Ne 13:1-15:25 Isaiah's summary of the judgments of God against Israel and prophecies of its coming destruction and captivity.
- g. 2 Ne 16:1-18:22 Israel's transgressions and punishments.
- h. 2 Ne 19:8-20:11 The coming destruction and captivity of Israel.
- i. 2 Ne 25:10 Nephi confirmed the destruction and captivity of

those at Jerusalem as prophesied.

2. Return of captive Israel

- a. 2 Nephi 6:9 The Lord showed Jacob that Israel would return.
- b. 2 Nephi 20:12-34 Israel will be rescued from Assyria and return.
- c. 2 Nephi 25:11 They shall return and possess the land of Jerusalem and be restored to their lands.

3. Coming of the Messiah among the Jews, a Savior of the world

- a. 1 Ne 1:9-10 Lehi in vision saw the coming the Messiah
- b. 1 Ne 1:19 Lehi testified of the coming Messiah
- c. 1 Ne 10:17 the Son of God is the coming Messiah
- d. 1 Ne 11:7 Nephi commanded to bear witness of the Son of God
- e. 1 Ne 19:7-8 “The very God of Israel” will come “in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem”—according to the angel.
- f. 2 Ne 6:9 The Lord showed Jacob that the Lord would manifest himself to the Jews in the flesh.

- g. 2 Ne 21:1-9 A rod from the stem of Jesse to come forth and with righteousness and faithfulness will reprove the earth.
- h. 2 Ne 21:10-22:6 Israel will be gathered home in the last days.
- i. 2 Ne 25:12 The Father of heaven and earth will manifest himself to them.
- j. 2 Ne 25:20-30 Nephi's longest prophecy of the coming Christ "whereby man can be saved." "The right way is to believe in Christ and deny him not." Christ is the Holy One of Israel.

1 Nephi 10:5–6

4. Prophets who foretold the coming Messiah

- a. 1 Ne 19:10 Zenoch, Neum, and Zenos prophesied the coming of the Lord in his ministry to the Jews.
- b. 1 Ne 19:11-12 Zenos foretold the destructions that will occur when the Savior is crucified.
- c. 2 Ne 9–10 Jacob explains why Christ must come to make the plan of salvation effective.
- d. 2 Ne 11:2-4 In this rhetorical center point of his second book,

Nephi explains his reasons for including the prophecies of Jacob and Isaiah. Isaiah, Jacob, and Nephi have all seen their Redeemer and prophesy the future coming of Jesus Christ. Nephi delights in proving the truth of the coming of Christ.

- e. 2 Ne 19:1-7 Isaiah prophesies the coming of the Lord.
- f. 2 Ne 25:18-19 The prophets have spoken of one Messiah who would come 600 years after Lehi left Jerusalem.

5. Plan of salvation—mankind in a lost and fallen state needing a Redeemer

- a. 1 Ne 1:14 Lehi saw the eternal goodness and mercy of the Lord would not allow any faithful person to perish.
- b. 1 Ne 3:4 Lehi saw the goodness of God in his vision
- c. 1 Ne 15:26-36 A great gulf and the sword of God's justice separates the wicked from the righteous in this life and the next as there will be a judgment and the wicked will go to the hell of the devil and the righteous to the kingdom of God.

- d. 1 Ne 16:1-5 Nephi exhorts his brothers to keep the commandments that they might be lifted up at the last day.
- e. 1 Ne 17:36 “The Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited, and he hath created his children that they should possess it.”
- f. 2 Ne 1:13 Lehi calls his wicked sons to repentance—to shake off “the sleep of hell” and the chains that bind them and not be “carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe.
- g. 2 Ne 1:15 Lehi testifies that “the Lord hath *redeemed* my soul from hell.”
- h. 2 Ne 2:1-30 Lehi’s great discourse on the plan of redemption given as part of a final father’s blessing to his son Jacob.
- i. 2 Ne 9:4-39 Jacob’s great discourse on the plan of redemption and the consequences for those who accept the gospel and for those who persist in sins.
- j. 2 Ne 10:23-25 Jacob summarizes the plan of redemption in an

appeal to his brethren to choose *the way of eternal life*.

k. 2 Ne 11:5-7 Nephi delights in the covenants of the Lord and his “great and eternal plan of deliverance from death.”

l. 2 Ne 33:11–15 Nephi’s final words testify of a coming judgment and of salvation in the kingdom of the Father.

1 Nephi 10:7–10

6. A prophet coming to prepare the way for the Messiah and his baptism

a. 1 Ne 10:7-10 Lehi’s account

b. 1 Ne 11:27 Nephi’s account

c. 2 Ne 31:4-12 Nephi explains Christ’s baptism as an exemplar.

1 Nephi 10:11

7. The gospel of Jesus Christ to be preached

a. 1 Ne 8:2-35 Lehi reports his vision of the tree of life as visualization symbolic of what individuals must do to be saved

b. 1 Ne 11:31 Nephi saw Jesus’s ministry of miracles.

c. 1 Ne 15:24-25 The iron rod is “the word of God” and if the

people would “hearken” to it, keeping the commandments, they would not perish or be led into destruction by the “temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary.”

- d. 2 Ne 4:16-35 Nephi’s psalm expressed his desires to be free of temptation and his great trust in the Lord, the rock of his righteousness.
- e. 2 Ne 9:23-24 Jacob gives both positive and negative versions of the gospel message as part of the great plan.
- f. 2 Ne 31:9-32:6 Nephi shares the doctrine of Christ as taught to him by the Father and the Son.
- g. 2 Ne 33:1-10 Nephi has written the gospel or the words of Christ which speak against pride and sin but which offer eternal life. All will be blessed or cursed depending on whether they accept this message and endure to the end.

8. The dwindling of the Jews

- a. 1 Ne 11:35 Nephi saw that the house of Israel fought against

the apostles.

- b. 1 Ne 12:7-8 Nephi saw the coming of Christ to the Nephites
- c. 1 Ne 19:13-14 After crucifying their god, the Jews will be “scourged by all people” and “they shall wander in the flesh and perish” having “become a hiss and a byword” and being “hated among all nations.”
- d. 1 Ne 20:1-22 Isaiah rehearses the calling and covenant God made to Israel and the promises given to the obedient. Nevertheless, “there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.”

9. Slaying the Messiah

- a. 1 Ne 11:32-3 Nephi saw Jesus would be slain by the people.
- b. 1 Ne 19:9-10 Jesus will suffer smiting, scourging, spitting and be crucified.
- c. 2 Ne 6:9 Jacob was shown that the Jews would crucify him.
- d. 2 Ne 10:3-5 Jacob told that the Jews would crucify their god.

- e. 2 Ne 25:13 They will crucify him.
- f. 2 Ne 26:3-8 Destructions of Nephites at the time of Christ's death enumerated.

10. Resurrection of the Messiah

- a. 2 Ne 9:6 As death has passed on all men, there must be “a power of resurrection.
- b. 2 Ne 25:14 After three days, he will rise from the dead.
- c. 1 Ne 26:1-3 Christ shall have risen from the dead. Signs will be given of his death and resurrection.

1 Nephi 10:12–14

11. Messiah made manifest to the Gentiles by the Holy Ghost

- a. 1 Ne 13:12-33 Nephi sees the Holy Ghost blessing the Gentiles and bringing them to his promised land.
- b. 2 Ne 10:8-18 The future Gentiles will be blessed upon this land and be numbered among the house of Israel.

12. House of Israel compared to an olive tree with branches broken off

- a. 1 Ne 15:7-18 On request, Nephi explains the analogy of the

olive tree Lehi had shared, pointing to the apostasies of the Jews and Lehites, the restoration of the gospel to the Gentiles and linking the eventual fulfillment of the covenant of Abraham that in his seed all kindreds of the earth be blessed.

- b. 1 Ne 19:24 Nephi tells his brethren that they are a branch broken off from the house of Israel.
- c. 1 Ne 21:1 Because of wickedness, the house of Israel “are broken off and are driven out.” They are “broken off” and “scattered abroad.”

13. Nephites to be led to a land of promise

- a. 1 Ne 2:2-7 Lehi departs Jerusalem because of a dream
- b. 1 Ne 2:20 Nephi promised a land choice above all others.
- c. 1 Ne 3:5 Lehi reminds his wife he has obtained a land of promise.
- d. 1 Ne 3:8 Sariah knows that the Lord commanded Lehi to flee...

- e. 1 Ne 7:2 Lehi commanded to get Ishmael's family to go with him.
- f. 1 Ne 7:13 Nephi tells Ishmael and company that they will obtain a land of promise if they will be faithful
- g. 1 Ne 17:12-13 The Lord had told Nephi that if they would keep his commandments he would make raw food sweet, be their light in the wilderness and prepare the way before them, leading them to a promised land.
- h. 1 Ne 17:14 After all this help, Lehi's company would arrive at the promised land and would know the Lord is God, that he delivered them from destruction, and that he "did bring [them] out of the land of Jerusalem."
- i. 1 Ne 17:23-47 Nephi's long speech comparing their situation in the wilderness with Moses and the Israelites being delivered out of Egypt, both being led to a promised land and needing to obey the Lord's commandments.

- j. 2 Ne 1:3-9 Lehi spells out details of the promises the Lord has made to him and his posterity for this promised land as a land of liberty.
- k. 2 Ne 1:16-29 Lehi warns his sons to repent so that many future generations would not be cursed. If they will follow Nephi's inspired leadership Lehi's first blessing will rest on them. If not, it will be transferred to Nephi.
- l. 2 Ne 4:2-9 Lehi reminds the children of Laman and Lemuel that they will be blessed or cursed in this promised land depending on whether they keep the commandments the Lord has given them.
- m. 2 Ne 5:5-29 Nephi is warned to take his people into a new wilderness and they establish a righteous community under his leadership. Nephi summarizes the ways in which the Lord prospered them and cursed the Lamanites for their rebellion.
- n. 2 Ne 10:19-22 The Lord consecrated this promised land to

Lehi's seed, and the Lord will remember them in the end.

14. Israel to be scattered (including Lehi's seed)

- a. 1 Ne 2:21-24 Lamanites will have no power over righteous Nephites
- b. 1 Ne 12:13-23 Nephi saw the future destruction of his people and that the Lamanite remnant dwindled in unbelief
- c. 1 Ne 15:19-20 Nephi spoke to his brothers about "the restoration of the Jews in the latter days" and rehearsed the words of Isaiah who taught about that restoration and declared that they would never be confounded or scattered again.
- d. 1 Ne 22:3-5 Nephi cites Isaiah's prophecy that Israel will be scattered among all nations and will be "hated by all men" because they did "harden their hearts" against the Holy One of Israel.
- e. 2 Ne 1:10-12 Lehi foretells the calamities that will come to his

descendants if they “reject the Holy One of Israel.” They will be “scattered and smitten.”

- f. 2 Ne 6:10-11 Jacob is shown that Israel would be smitten and afflicted, scattered and smitten and hated.
- g. 2 Ne 25:14-15 Jerusalem will be destroyed again and the Jews scattered among all nations.
- h. 2 Ne 26:10-11 Rebellious Nephites will be destroyed.

15. Gentiles to receive the fullness of the gospel

- a. 1 Ne 13:33-7 Nephi sees that the Gentiles will be given the gospel through the Nephite record
- b. 1 Ne 14:1-14 Blessings and challenges faced by believing Gentiles who will embrace the restored gospel.
- c. 1 Ne 21:22-23 The Lord will lift up his hand to the Gentiles and set up his standard to his people Israel. The Gentiles will be a nurse to Israel and bring her in their arms that they may know he is the Lord.
- d. 1 Ne 22:6-9 The Lord will “make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations” by making known “his covenants and

his gospel” to the Gentiles and through them to Israel.

- e. 1 Ne 22:20-22 “The Lord will surely prepare a way for his people.”
- f. 2 Ne 6:6-7 Jacob reads Isaiah to the people prophesying of the day when the Gentiles would bring the house of Israel back to their God.
- g. 2 Ne 6:12-13 The Gentiles will be saved and wait for the coming of the Messiah.
- h. 2 Ne 12:1-4 Zion established in the tops of the mountains.
- i. 2 Ne 26:12-28:32 Nephi’s lengthy and detailed account of how the Nephite record will facilitate the restoration of the gospel to the Gentiles and the challenges they will face in the world in their day.
- j. 2 Ne 30:1-3 The gospel will be restored to the Gentiles.

16. Remnants of the house of Israel to be gathered again—to come to the knowledge of the true Messiah

- a. 1 Ne 6:4 Nephi’s intent—persuade men to come to Israel’s

God and be saved.

- b. 1 Ne 13:38-42 Through restored scriptures, Gentiles, descendants of Lehi, and then Jews will be convinced that Jesus is the Eternal Father and Savior of the world.
- c. 1 Ne 14:15-17 Nephi beheld wars and rumors of wars poured out on the great and abominable church—”preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants...[with] the house of Israel.”
- d. 1 Ne 19:15-17 Zenos prophesied the day would come that Israel would “remember the covenants” made to their fathers when “all the people which are of the house of Israel” will be gathered in and “all the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord,” and “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall be blessed.”
- e. 1 Ne 21:14-21 Scattered Israel will not be forgotten and will “gather themselves together.”
- f. 1 Ne 21:24-26 The Lord will deliver Israel from the oppression

and captivity of the mighty, and “all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

- g. 1 Ne 22:24–28 The time cometh speedily when the righteous will be led up and the Holy One of Israel will reign in dominion and might and power and great glory. He gathers his children from the four quarters of the earth, and they will dwell safely in him.
- h. 2 Ne 3:1-4:2 Lehi’s blessing to his son Joseph focused on the future fulfillment of the ancient prophecy to Joseph of Egypt that through records kept by his descendants, a restoration of the covenants to the house of Israel would come about.
- i. 2 Ne 6:14-7:3 Isaiah foretells the gathering of Israel in the last days.
- j. 2 Ne 8:1-25 Isaiah prophecies the future glory of redeemed Israel.
- k. 2 Ne 9:1-3 Jacob affirms the prophecies of the restoration of Israel.

- l. 2 Ne 12:5-22 The house of Jacob called to “walk in the light of the Lord” in the last days.
- m. 2 Ne 24:1-3 The restoration of Jacob to his own land.
- n. 2 Ne 25:16-17 After many generations, Jews that are persuaded to believe in Christ will be restored from “their lost and fallen state.”
- o. 2 Ne 29:1-14 The gathering of Israel will be effected by bringing forth the books of the Nephites, the bible, and the records of the lost tribes.. Israel will be gathered home and the Lord’s covenant to Abraham fulfilled.
- p. 2 Ne 30:4-7 Through the Gentiles, the gospel will be restored to Lehi’s seed and to all the house of Israel. “As many as shall believe in Christ shall also become a delightsome people.

17. Prophecies of the end of the world

- a. 1 Ne 14:18-30 Nephi told not to write the things he saw

“concerning the end of the world” as these would be written by John.

- b. 1 Ne 22:13-19 The fall of the great and abominable, Satan to lose his power over the hearts of the children of men, and the proud and the wicked shall burn as stubble as the Lord delivers the righteous. “The righteous shall not perish.”
- c. 1 Ne 22:23 All they who work iniquity and belong to the kingdom of the devil will be brought low, according to the prophet (Isaiah?).
- d. 2 Ne 23:1-22 The destruction of the wicked in the last days.
- e. 2 Ne 24:4-27 The defeat of Satan and his powers.
- f. 2 Ne 24:29:32 The poor and the needy shall lie down in safety. The Lord has founded Zion and the poor shall trust in it.
- g. 2 Ne 30:8-10 The wicked will be destroyed by fire, and the Lord will spare his people.
- h. 2 Ne 30:11-18 Nephi’s prophecies about the millennium.