# Forms of Parallelism

To understand parallelism is to lay the foundation for understanding almost every other writing form in ancient scripture. Without a doubt, "the prevalent poetic form of . . . scripture is not the ode, the lamentation, nor the psalm, but parallelism."[1] Not surprisingly, we find parallelism in ancient languages around the world, such as Mayan, Greek, and Akkadian. In the more modern languages, such as English, German, French, and Spanish, we find rhyming poetry that has a defined rhythm, is governed by a set line length, is nonredundant, and progresses from a definite beginning to a definite end. However, this is not true of ancient Hebrew poetry, which relied on repetitions, various other forms of redundancies, and parallelistic, symmetrical structures to achieve beauty, emphasis, and clarity of understanding.

An interesting dimension of parallelism is described in this way: "The purpose of parallelism, like the general purpose of imagery, is to transfer the usual perception of an object into the sphere of a new perception—that is, to make a unique semantic modification."[2] In other words, the use of parallelism is not a mere matter of cosmetic style; it effects meaning and perception by introducing an idea from one angle and then semantically shifting the focus on that item to another angle.

While the essence of each literary form is fairly clear, the boundaries between the forms often overlap. Thus an example of one form can often be an example of another form as well.

At least 240 different defined Hebrew writing forms are identifiable in the Old Testament. Of those, more than 50 involve parallelism in one way or another.[3] John Holmes, in his book *Rhetoric Made Easy*, lists 250 forms.[4] Following are some of the most common. In each case, notice how the use of repetition strengthens and intensifies the point that the author is trying to make.

## Repetitive Parallelism

A form that I have named repetitive parallelism is found whenever two or more clauses, verses, or sentences are found together or closely aligned in the text. Many parallelisms in the Book of Mormon and Bible are repetitive. One example of a simple repetitive parallelism is found in Genesis 4:23:

> A *Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice;*
> A *ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:*
> 　B *for I have slain a man to my wounding,*
> 　B *and a young man to my hurt.*

Many more examples of this form are readily apparent.

## Gender-Matched Parallelism

When masculine and feminine nouns occur in parallel combinations, we observe a form that Wilfred G. E. Watson identifies as "gender-matched parallelism."[5] In Hebrew, as in modern languages such as Spanish and French, nouns have gender; that is, they are either feminine or masculine. The ancient writers of the scriptures often arranged

nouns in parallel forms according to their gender. Watson gives the following example of a gender-matched parallelism:[6]

> I will make your heaven (m.) *as iron* (m.)
> And your earth (f.) *as brass* (f.)
> (Leviticus 26:19)

In Hebrew, the words *heaven* and *iron* are masculine, while *earth* and *brass* are feminine. Thus this gender-matched parallelism is in the equivalent of A-A/B-B form.

Because gender-matched parallelism is present in the Hebrew Bible, it is quite likely that it also occurs in the Book of Mormon. However, because we do not have the ancient text of the Book of Mormon in Hebrew, we cannot find examples of this form in that book.

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The Bible contains other gender-matched parallelisms such as the following:[7] Genesis 1:2 (f. + m. //m. + f. // f. + m.); Deuteronomy 28:23 (m. + f. // f. + m.); Psalm 123:2 (m. + m. // f. + f.).

## *Word Pairs*

A common element in Hebrew poetry is the use of word pairs. Kevin L. Barney explains, "Parallel lines are . . . created by the use of parallel words, that is, pairs of words bearing generally synonymous or antithetical meanings."[8] Thus Hebrew poetry is often based on common or standard word pairs. Even though these pairs figure prominently in poetry, they also appear in regular speech and narratives. The Book of Mormon is mainly prose, but it contains numerous examples of word pairs. Because the authors of the Book of Mormon would have understood and been familiar with such word pairs, it is not surprising to find them in the basic language of that book. Barney has compiled a list of word pairs, including the examples that follow.[9]

One word pair is *anger/fierce anger*, which appears in a chiasm in the Book of Mormon and a simple alternate in the Bible:

> A *I will visit them*
>  B *in my **anger,***
>   B *yea, in my **fierce anger***
> A *will I visit them*
> (Mosiah 12:1)

> A *before the **fierce anger** of the Lord*
>  B *come upon you,*
> A *before the day of the Lord's **anger***
>  B *come upon you,*
> (Zephaniah 2:2)

The word pair *eyes/heart* also appears in both the Bible and Book of Mormon:

A *The statutes of the Lord are right,*
  B *rejoicing the **heart:***
A *the commandment of the Lord is pure,*
  B *enlightening the **eyes.***
(Psalm 19:8)

A *But behold, if a man shall come among you and shall say:*
 B *Do this, and there is no iniquity; do that and ye shall not suffer;*
  C *yea, he will say: Walk after the pride of your own **hearts;***
  C *yea, walk after the pride of your **eyes,***
 B *and do whatsoever your **heart** desireth—*
A *and if a man shall come among you and say this*
(Helaman 13:27)

The antithetical word pair *good/evil* is also attested in the Book of Mormon and Bible:

A *for there is nothing which is **good***
  B *save it comes from the Lord:*
A *and that which is **evil***
  B *cometh from the devil.*
(Omni 1:25)

A *they are wise*
 B *to do **evil,***
 B *but to do **good***
A *they have no knowledge.*
(Jeremiah 4:22)

*Mountain/valley* is another common word pair that we find in a chiasm in the Book of Mormon:

A *and there shall be many **mountains** laid low,*
 B *like unto a **valley,***
 B *and there shall be many places which are now called **valleys***
A *which shall become **mountains,** whose height is great.*
(Helaman 14:23)

The word pair *place/land* is attested in these two simple alternates from the Bible:

A *Am I now come up without the Lord against this **place***
  B *to destroy it?*
A *The Lord said to me, Go up against this **land,***
  B *and destroy it.*
(2 Kings 18:25)

A *I will judge thee in the **place***

  B *where thou wast created,*

A *in the **land***

  B *of thy nativity.*

(Ezekiel 21:30)

*Place/land* is also found in the Book of Mormon:

*they had found those priests of king Noah, in a **place** which they called Amulon;*

*and they had begun to possess the **land** of Amulon*

(Mosiah 23:31)

*And there were many highways cast up, and many roads made,*

*which led from city to city,*

*and from **land** to **land,***

*and from **place** to **place.***

(3 Nephi 6:8)

The word pair *thousands/tens of thousands*, which is also an example of numerical parallelism (see page 132), is attested many times in the Book of Mormon and the Bible. This chiastic example is from the Book of Mormon:

A *Yea, will ye sit in idleness*

  B *while ye are surrounded with **thousands** of those,*

  B *yea, and **tens of thousands,***

A *who do also sit in idleness*

(Alma 60:22)

This beautiful chiasm from the Book of Mormon shows us the *visions/dreams* word pair:

A *And now I, Nephi, do not make a full account*

  B *of the things which my father hath written,*

    C *for he hath written many things*

      D *which he saw in **visions***

      D *and in **dreams;***

    C *and he also hath written many things*

  B *which he prophesied and spake unto his children,*

A *of which I shall not make a full account.*

(1 Nephi 1:16)

There are many more word pairs in the Book of Mormon and the Bible. Some are part of other Hebrew writing forms such as chiasmus and simple alternate, but others are not. These word pairs that are so common in Hebrew writings are further evidence that the Book of Mormon derives from an ancient Hebraic text.

For additional word pairs see Deuteronomy 33:23 *(favor/blessing);* Psalms 56:11 *(God/man);* 101:8 *(city/land);* Isaiah 58:10 *(light/darkness);* 1 Nephi 11:25 *(tree/waters);* Alma 30:3 *(Lord/God);* 3 Nephi 9:19 *(blood/burnt offerings);* 10:18 *(favor/blessing).*

## Synonymia and Synonymous Parallelism

**Synonymia: Repeated Words with the Same Meaning**

Synonymia features the repetition of words or phrases that mean the same thing or have similar meanings and are almost always found close to each other in a scriptural passage, as are other repetitions that reinforce a particular message. Synonymia is a most effective tool of communication because of its repetitive nature. It allows the author to expound on the principles he is teaching and gives him exceptional flexibility. It occurs when two or more words have "the same general sense, but possessing each of them meanings which are not shared by the other or others, or having different shades of meaning or implications appropriate to different contexts."[10] James Kugel writes that the second half of the simple synonymous parallelism is "not expected to be [or regarded as] a mere restatement" of the first half but was meant to "add to it, often particularizing, defining, or expanding the meaning, and yet also to harken back to . . . it."[11] This expansion of meaning in successive lines of parallelism is often a poetic device of intensification, or it builds up to a climax. Examples of synonymia include pairs of words such as *serpent* and *snake, ship* and *vessel, compassion* and *sympathy.* Used appropriately, synonymia can convey new knowledge and additional insight because "the two members strengthen, heighten, [and] empower each other."[12]

As a young missionary, I remember being taught over and over again by our leaders, "Repetition brings conviction." Unquestionably, our investigators were blessed to understand the doctrine more clearly because the gospel messages were taught to them several times. Just as our investigators learned more by hearing our message repeated, we can learn more from the scriptures by noticing what elements are emphasized by repetition.

Synonymia occurs throughout our ancient scriptures. An Old Testament example is found in Deuteronomy 20:3, in which Moses uses four synonymous phrases:

> *Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies:*
> *let not your hearts faint,*
> *fear not,*
> *and **do not tremble,***
> ***neither be ye terrified** because of them*

Note how the prophet weaves four nearly synonymous words—*faint, fear, tremble,* and *terrified*—with the terms of negation *not* and *neither* in an almost overstated way that emphasizes to the children of Israel that they must not fear their enemies. Why does this concept receive such emphasis? The answer is found in the following verse, Deuteronomy 20:4, which explains, "For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."

Synonymia has two basic forms: simple and extended. Simple synonymia consists of just two lines, the second being a repetition of the first:

> *Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,*
> *and look well to thy herds.*
> (Proverbs 27:23)

By definition, identical words are not used to create the synonymia. Part of the skill utilized in writing a synonymia is in finding similar but different words that can function eloquently in the structure.

Obviously, simple synonymia is very easy to identify, as is extended synonymia. In the extended variety, three or more lines, as opposed to just two, have a similar meaning. I have found that all synonymia constructions seem to have at least one of the following four purposes:

1. To strengthen an idea, concept, or principle through repetition
2. To impress the reader with the importance of a concept or experience by using different words or phrases to describe a specific communication
3. To add interest and variety
4. To provide an easy way of finishing one idea and then moving on to another one

Often an extended synonymia can accomplish one of these four tasks more effectively than simple synonymia simply because it has more lines. Indeed, synonymia is so helpful that its usage is often combined with at least one other Hebrew writing form.

Almost all the examples given are extended synonymia, as you will observe. In the Psalms, David's thoughtful musings are often written in synonymia form:

> *the Lord hath heard the voice of my **weeping.***
> *The Lord hath heard my **supplication**;*
> *the Lord will receive my **prayer.***
> (Psalm 6:8—9)

All three phrases in the preceding example begin with the anaphoric (like sentence beginnings) expression *the Lord*. This expression is followed by synonymous verbs: *heard* appears twice, and *receive*, once. In turn, the verbs are followed by three synonymous words that are used to represent prayerful meditations: *weeping, supplication*, and *prayer*. The poet David thus poetically and powerfully teaches us that the Lord hears an individual's prayers.

The time of the second coming is well described in a biblical passage through the use of perhaps the most quoted synonymia of all:

> *That day is*
> *a day of **wrath**,*
> *a day of **trouble***
> *and **distress**,*
> *a day of **wasteness***
> *and **desolation**,*
> *a day of **darkness***
> *and **gloominess**,*

> *a day of **clouds***
> *and **thick darkness***
> (Zephaniah 1:15)

Here synonymia is used to descriptively identify the time of the second coming. *Wrath, trouble,* and *distress* are near-synonyms. *Wasteness* and *desolation* are synonyms, and *darkness, gloominess, clouds,* and *thick darkness* are also near-synonyms. These terms all describe a single era or event in a very similar way.

One Old Testament example comes from Psalm 3:7:

> *Arise, O Lord;*
> *save me, O my God:*
> *for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone;*
> *thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.*

We use something akin to synonymia when we teach purity to our teenagers today. We couch the topic in many ways and words (such as *purity, morality, chastity, virtue, uprightness,* and *spotlessness*), but they all mean basically the same thing. Also, those who give some of the most beautiful testimonies use synonymia for emphasis (this may include using such words as *testify, sure knowledge, witness, confirm, know of a surety, sustain,* and *manifest*), even though they might not be aware that they are using this form or know that it exists.

A hundred or more examples of synonymia can be quickly found in the books of the Bible; however, some of the most complete and beautiful synonymias are found in the Book of Mormon (further evidence for its Hebraic origins), such as this one from Moroni 8:8:

> *Listen to the words of Christ,*
> *your **Redeemer,***
> *your **Lord***
> *and your **God.***

Each of the four titles in this passage identify a significant aspect of Jesus Christ's mission. In this manner, we are taught concerning God and his plan for us.

Because of its beauty and helpfulness, I have cited Alma 5:49—50. The synonymia in these two verses focuses on (1) various names by which Jehovah is known, (2) those to whom he will preach, and (3) how he will come:

> *And now I say unto you that this is the order after which I am called,*
> *yea, to preach unto my beloved **brethren,***
> *yea, and **every one** that dwelleth in the land;*
> *yea, to preach unto **all,***
> *both **old** and **young,***
> *both **bond** and **free;***
> *yea, I say unto you the **aged,***
> *and also the **middle aged,***
> *and the **rising generation;***

*yea, to cry unto **them***

*that **they** must repent and be born again.*

*Yea, thus saith the Spirit: Repent, **all ye ends of the earth,***

*for the **kingdom of heaven** is soon at hand;*

*yea, the Son of God cometh in his **glory,***

*in his **might,***

***majesty,***

***power,***

*and **dominion.***

*Yea, my beloved **brethren,** I say unto you,*

*that the **Spirit** saith:*

*Behold the glory of the **King of all the earth;***

*and also the **King of heaven** shall very soon*

*shine forth among all the **children of men.***

In one other example in the Book of Mormon, Alma and Amulek and others go forth to preach throughout the land:

*Now those priests who did go forth among the people*

*did preach against all **lyings**,*

*and **deceivings,***

*and **envyings,***

*and **strifes,***

*and **malice,***

*and **revilings,***

*and **stealing,***

***robbing,***

***plundering,***

***murdering,***

*committing **adultery,***

*and all manner of **lasciviousness,***

*crying that these things ought not so to be*

*(Alma 16:18)*

This example is a functionally significant synonymia.

Some synonymia may be couched in opposition to each other. They describe a certain concept or concern but use opposite aspects of a simple phenomenon. One of the best examples is found in Proverbs 3:33, where we see how the Lord deals with the wicked and the just:

*The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked:*

*but he blesseth the habitation of the just.*

From this verse we learn that the Lord curses the wicked and blesses the just, two opposing ideas that convey a similar message. Both halves of this parallelism deal with God's judgment, which is essentially consistent and

constant, even though it manifests itself in opposite effects. The result is similar to that of an antithetical parallelism.

In the more consistent and more common use of synonymia, both phrases mean exactly the same but use different words. Most synonymia are not antithetical. In Proverbs 4:24 we read:

> *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and*
> *perverse lips put far from thee.*

The two lines are a synonymia because they have a similar meaning and structure.

**Synonymous Parallelism: Words in a General Classification**

In my studies of ancient writing forms I have found that a prophet-author sometimes used a series of words to reinforce a condition, situation, or opening concept. Bullinger defines a form called synathrÃ?smos as a gathering together or assembly of terms. He notes that synathrÃ?smos differs from synonymia in that the terms "are not synonymous, but may be of many kinds and descriptions."[13] The words occur in the course of what is said rather than at the conclusion. According to Bullinger, "The use of the figure is to enrich a discourse, or part of it by enumerating particulars" that are part of a common grouping.[14] For the purposes of this book, I have chosen to use the term *synonymous parallelism* rather than *synathrÃ?smos* to refer to this particular form. Watson writes that "the main function of key words is to express the principal theme of a poem,"[15] or, in other words, the main theme of a verse or several verses.[16]

Let me illustrate by an example in Mormon 9:7:

> *And again I speak unto you who **deny the revelations of God***
> *and **say they are done away***
>
> > *that there are no **revelations,***
> > *nor **prophecies,***
> > *nor **gifts,***
> > *nor **healing,***
> > *nor **speaking with tongues,***
> > *and the **interpretation of tongues***

The previous example begins with a synonymia and concludes with a synonymous parallelism. Third Nephi 29:6 is similar in message and structure to Mormon 9:7, using paradiastole (the *nor/or* form) to separate the spiritual gifts. However, 3 Nephi 29:6 does not begin with a synonymia as does Mormon 9:7.

In Isaiah 1:16—17 we discover the following example of synonymous parallelism:

> *Wash you,*
> *make you clean;*
>
> *put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes;*

*cease to do evil;*

*Learn to do well;*

*seek judgment,*

*relieve the oppressed,*

*judge the fatherless,*

*plead for the widow.*

In the previous example, the synonymous parallelism strengthens the synonymia that began the two verses. The verse is a synonymous parallelism because the terms are in the same general classification.

A New Testament example of synonymous parallelism is recorded in Mark 12:30 (see also D&C 4:2), wherein followers of Christ are commanded to love God:

*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God*

*with all thy **heart,***

*and with all thy **soul,***

*and with all thy **mind,***

*and with all thy **strength***

In this passage, the phrase *with all thy* is repeated four times. This phrase is followed by the poetically synonymous terms *heart, soul, mind,* and *strength* to present a clear and unmistakable command from the Lord.

Moroni's father, Mormon, presents an interesting example of synonymous parallelism in Mormon 6:9:

*And it came to pass that they did fall upon my people*

*with the **sword,***

*and with the **bow,***

*and with the **arrow,***

*and with the **ax,***

*and with all manner of **weapons of war.***

The four terms—*sword, bow, arrow,* and *ax*—belong in the same category—weapons of war—which appears in the final phrase.

In 3 Nephi 30:2 we observe another example that includes both synonymia and synonymous parallelism:

*Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways; and*

*repent of your evil doings,*

> *of your **lyings***
>
> *and **deceivings,***
>
> *and of your **whoredoms,***
>
> *and of your secret **abominations,***
>
> *and of your **idolatries,***
>
> *and of your **murders,***

> and your **priestcrafts,**
>
> and your **envyings,**
>
> and your **strifes,**
>
> and from all your **wickedness**
>
> and **abominations**

The previous example includes synonymous parallelism because all the phrases list sins (general classification) but do not have identical meanings as occurs in synonymia. Note, however, that the first two lines are a synonymia.

There is a significant example of synonymous parallelism in Isaiah 3:18—23, which describes the falseness of the daughters of Zion and states what will happen to them:

> In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their **tinkling ornaments** about their feet,
>
> and their **cauls,**
>
> and their **round tires** like the moon,
>
> The **chains,**
>
> and the **bracelets,**
>
> and the **mufflers,**
>
> The **bonnets,**
>
> and the **ornaments** of the legs,
>
> and the **headbands,**
>
> and the **tablets,**
>
> and the **earrings,**
>
> The **rings,**
>
> and **nose jewels,**
>
> The changeable **suits of apparel,**
>
> and the **mantles,**
>
> and the **wimples,**
>
> and the **crisping pins,**
>
> The **glasses,**
>
> and the **fine linen,**
>
> and the **hoods,**
>
> and the **vails.**

In the previous example all the synonymous terms are items the daughters of Zion are wearing.

The following is an example of synonymous parallelism because all the elements are things the Savior does:

> And he cometh into the world
>
> that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice;
>
> for behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam.
>
> And he suffereth this that the resurrection might pass upon all men, that all might stand before him at the great and judgment day.

*And he commandeth all men that they must repent*
(2 Nephi 9:21—23)

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For further study, see these additional examples of synonymia and synonymous parallelism: Genesis 4:23
—24; Exodus 1:7; 34:6—7; Psalm 7:13—16; Proverbs 4:14—15; Jeremiah 48:29; Daniel 9:5—6; Romans
2:4, 10; 9:33; Ephesians 1:20—21; 2 Timothy 3:14; 1 Nephi 20:9; 2 Nephi 19:6; Enos 1:20—23; Mosiah
3:5, 8; 4:12—16; 26:9; Alma 13:27—29; Helaman 7:7; 3 Nephi 22:5; 30:2; Mormon 1:8—9.

## Synthetic Parallelism: Placing Two Things Together to Add Strength

Synthetic parallelism is a little more difficult to understand than the foregoing, more linear types of parallelism, but it is well worth the extra effort it takes to learn. "Here, in *Syntheton*, much more is meant than is expressed and embraced by the conjugation of the two words."[17] "It is called synthetic because a synthesis, or coordination, between the two elements takes place."[18] The synthesis signifies the placing of two things together. Ridderbos and Wolf define it as a form "in which the second line develops or completes the thought in a way that could not be determined by the first line."[19] Put another way, Donald Parry explains that "Simple synthetic, as a rule, is composed of two lines, neither of which are synonymous or antithetical. Rather, in this poetic verse, line two gives explanation or adds something new or instructive to the first line."[20] We will look at two forms of synthetic parallelisms: simple and extended.

**Simple Synthetic**

Simple synthetic parallelism is generally composed of two lines, and line two either explains or adds to the first line in some way. The book of Proverbs is perhaps our best single source of simple synthetics:

> *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;*
> *and lean not unto thine own understanding.*
> (Proverbs 3:5)

> *Let not thine heart decline to her ways,*
> *go not astray in her paths.*
> (Proverbs 7:25)

> *Where there is no vision, the people perish:*
> *but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*
> (Proverbs 29:18)

Another simple example is found in Isaiah 2:4:

> *he shall judge among the nations,*
> *and shall rebuke many people*

The Bible, however, does not have exclusive ownership on this form. In the Book of Mormon is found a frequently quoted couplet that is a marvelous simple synthetic:

> Adam fell that men might be;
> and men are, that they might have joy.
> (2 Nephi 2:25)

We also find this simple synthetic parallelism in the Book of Mormon:

> for they could not bear that any human soul should perish;
> yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble.
> (Mosiah 28:3)

**Extended Synthetic**

Extended synthetic parallelism involves two or more simple synthetic parallelisms that reinforce each other with common elements. A good example is found in Proverbs 2:2—11:

> So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
> Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
> If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
> Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.
> For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
> He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
> He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.
> Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.
> When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;
> Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee

From this extralong extended synthetic parallelism we can see that

1. he verses were specifically designed by ancient prophets;
2. the passage builds toward a logical conclusion: "understanding shall keep thee";
3. an extremely vital message is communicated in parallelistic form and also through numerous repetitions (*understand[ing]* six times, *knowledge* five times, *wisdom* twice, *judg[ment]* twice);
4. about a dozen separate messages, all testifying to the importance of gaining understanding, are much more powerful connected together than they would be if they were separate or fewer in number;
5. mentioning deity in one form or another eight different times makes even more firm the importance of the message, which is conveyed most effectively through the extended synthetic form.

The extended synthetic parallelism found in 2 Nephi 9:31—38 is one of the most enlightening we have because the second element in each pair so clearly explains the consequences of the sin mentioned in the first element:

> And wo unto the deaf that will not hear; for they shall perish.

*Wo unto the blind that will not see; for they shall perish also.*

*Wo unto the uncircumcised of heart, for a knowledge of their iniquities shall smite them at the last day.*

*Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.*

*Wo unto the murderer who deliberately killeth, for he shall die.*

*Wo unto them who commit whoredoms, for they shall be thrust down to hell.*

*Yea, wo unto those that worship idols, for the devil of all devils delighteth in them.*

*And, in fine, wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their sins.*

Whenever this pattern begins to form in your mind as you read the scriptures, study it—often you will find a synthetic parallelism. "Here, in *Syntheton*, much more is meant than is expressed and embraced by the conjunction of the two words."[21]

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Other examples of synthetic parallelism include Genesis 18:27; Psalms 19:7—9; 115:13; Isaiah 45:13—14; 1 Nephi 8:11, 15, 37; 17:4, 21, 23—24; 2 Nephi 4:34—35; Jacob 2:8; Mosiah 14:1—10; 26:4; 28:18; Alma 9:8—10, 12; 26:6—8, 15.

## Alternate: Phrases Repeated in Order

The alternate form can be defined as at least two basic thoughts that repeat in alternating order. E. W. Bullinger notes that alternates occur when "the lines are parallel in thought, and in the use of synonymous words."[22] If we represent each thought or line with a letter of the alphabet, the simplest type of alternate can be represented as A-B/A-B. Let us look briefly at three types of alternate forms: (1) simple alternate, (2) repeated alternate, and (3) extended alternate.

### Simple Alternate

Donald Parry writes, "Simple alternate consists of four lines, placed in an A-B/A-B pattern. In this formation, the 'A's have corresponding elements, as do the 'B's."[23] He continues, "The cumulative effect is like multiplying witnesses."[24] Simple alternates can be found in abundance in the Old Testament. Among the dozens found in Isaiah is this familiar one:

> A *I will make waste mountains and hills,*
>    B *and **dry up** all their herbs;*
> A *and I will make the rivers islands,*
>    B *and I will **dry up** the pools.*
> (Isaiah 42:15)

For another example, let us look at Genesis 4:23. Bullinger calls this "the oldest example [of simple alternate], and the first in the Bible":[25]

> A ***Adah and Zillah,***

> B *Hear my **voice;***
> A *ye **wives** of Lamech,*
> B *hearken unto my **speech***

A good example of a simple alternate is found in Amos 9:2:

> A *Though they dig into **hell,***
> B *thence shall mine hand take **them;***
> A *though they climb up to **heaven,***
> B *thence will I bring **them** down*

Another A-B/A-B parallelism comes from Exodus 17:11:

> A *when Moses held up his **hand,***
> B *. . . Israel **prevailed:***
> A *and when he let down his **hand,***
> B *Amalek **prevailed.***

Some simple alternates are antithetical, meaning that the words show a contrast (see pages 94—99). One example is found in Proverbs 10:1:

> A *A **wise** son*
> B *maketh a glad **father:***
> A *but a **foolish** son*
> B *is the heaviness of his **mother.***

Simple alternates are also found in the New Testament. For example, let us look at Luke 1:46—47:

> A *My **soul***
> B *doth magnify the **Lord,***
> A *and my **spirit***
> B *hath rejoiced in **God** my Saviour.*

The apostle John provides a good example of a simple alternate:

> A *If any man love the **world,***
> B *the love of the **Father** is not in him.*
> A *For all that is in the **world** . . .*
> B *is not of the **Father***
> (1 John 2:15—17)

Following are but a few of the numerous simple alternates that are found in the Book of Mormon:

> A *for their **works***
> B *were works of **darkness,***

A *and their **doings***

B *were doings of **abominations.***

(2 Nephi 25:2)

A *Now it is not common that the voice of the **people***

B *desireth anything contrary to that which is **right;***

A *but it is common for the lesser part of the **people** to*

B *desire that which is not **right***

(Mosiah 29:26)

A *We would not **shed the blood** of the Lamanites*

B *if they would stay in their own land.*

A *We would not **shed the blood** of our brethren*

B *if they would not rise up in rebellion and take the sword against us.*

(Alma 61:10—11)

A *And [Nephi] took it upon him to preach the word of God*

B *all the **remainder of his days,***

A *and his brother Lehi also,*

B *all the **remainder of his days***

(Helaman 5:4)

A *And there was a **great and terrible destruction***

B *in the **land southward.***

A *But behold, there was a more **great and terrible destruction***

B *in the **land northward***

(3 Nephi 8:11—12)

There are many more examples of simple alternates in the Book of Mormon; for instance, consider the following:

A *I do not desire that my **joy** over you should come by the cause*

B *of so much **afflictions and sorrow** which I have had for the brethren at Zarahemla,*

A *for behold, my **joy** cometh over them*

B *after wading through much **affliction and sorrow**.*

(Alma 7:5)

A *And now, behold, **I say unto you,***

B *that ye ought to **search these things.***

A *Yea, a commandment **I give unto you***

B *that ye **search these things** diligently*

(3 Nephi 23:1)

The following simple alternate is from 2 Nephi. A number of chapters in 2 Nephi are almost identical to chapters in the book of Isaiah, indicating that the Nephites brought with them many of Isaiah's writings.

> A *And **righteousness** shall be*
>  B *the **girdle** of his loins,*
> A *and **faithfulness***
>  B *the **girdle** of his reins.*
> (2 Nephi 21:5; 30:11; Isaiah 11:5)

Repeated Alternate

Another alternate form begins exactly like the simple alternate form but gives the A-B pair three or more times. Donald Parry offers this interesting illustration of a repeated alternate from the Book of Mormon:[26]

> A *Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the **Holy Ghost** unto these whom I have chosen;*
>   B *and it is because of their **belief** in me that I have chosen them out of the world.*
> A *Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the **Holy Ghost***
>   B *unto all them that shall **believe** in their words.*
> A *Father, thou hast given them the **Holy Ghost***
>  B *because they **believe** in me*
> (3 Nephi 19:20—22)

Another repeated alternate appears in both the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 12:39—41) and the New Testament (Matthew 5:39—41):

> A *but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek,*
>    B *turn to him the other also;*
> A *And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat,*
>    B *let him have thy cloak also;*
> A *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile,*
>   B *go with him twain.*

I have found it interesting that explicit Hebrew writing forms are often found in more than one book of scripture, implying that the writing forms are one of the ways in which God is willing to communicate revealed words and ideas. The parallelism gives more depth and clarity to the message. In the following example, the book of Helaman tells of the Nephites' rapid decline into apostasy. Note that the last couplet reverses the order of the year and the evil practices from the way they appear in the other couplets:

> A *And in the eighty and second year*
>  B *they began again to forget the Lord their God*
> A *And in the eighty and third year*
>  B *they began to wax strong in iniquity*
> A *And in the eighty and fourth year*
>  B *they did not mend their ways.*
> A *And it came to pass in the eighty and fifth year*
>  B *they did wax stronger and stronger in their pride, and in their wickedness;*
>  B *And thus they were ripening again for destruction.*

A *And thus ended the eighty and fifth year.*

(Helaman 11:36—38)

## Extended Alternate

An extended alternate is longer and generally more complex than a simple alternate. An example of this form would be set up as something like A-B-C-D/A-B-C-D. The ancients apparently used this form both to aid in memorization and to reinforce some fairly complex concepts. Often geographic names were woven into an extended alternate. Perhaps that aided students in their learning about the world around them.

In the Old Testament we find this rather elementary extended alternate:

A *Then the **children** of Ammon*

B *were gathered **together**,*

C *and **encamped** in Gilead.*

A *And the **children** of Israel*

B *assembled themselves **together**,*

C *and **encamped** in Mizpeh.*

(Judges 10:17)

Psalm 132:1—18 contains this powerful extended alternate, summarized as follows:[27]

A *David swears to Jehovah (verses 1—2)*

B *David's words (3—5)*

C *search for the dwelling place and its discovery (6—7)*

D *prayer to enter into rest (8)*

E *prayer for priests (9)*

F *prayer for saints (9)*

G *prayer for the Messiah (10)*

A *Jehovah swears to David (11)*

B *Jehovah's words (11—12)*

C *designation of the dwelling place (13)*

D *answer to prayer for rest (14—15)*

E *answer to prayer for priests (16)*

F *answer to prayer for saints (16)*

G *answer to prayer for the Messiah (17—18)*

Sometimes great lessons can be learned as we study verses of scripture, such as those above, when we see the Hebrew writing form as part of a master message. That is one of the great advantages of having some understanding of ancient Hebrew writing forms.

There are some extended alternates in the New Testament. An easily identifiable one is found in Matthew 6:19—20:

A *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,*

B *where moth and rust doth corrupt,*

C *and where thieves break through and steal:*

A *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,*

B *where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,*

C *and where thieves do not break through nor steal*

Because the Book of Mormon comes from a Hebrew background, it contains many clear extended alternates. There are scores of extended alternates in the Book of Mormon. One is found in 1 Nephi 20:16—17:

A *from the time that it was declared have I spoken;*

B *and the Lord God,*

C *and his Spirit,*

D *hath sent me.*

A *And thus saith the Lord,*

B *thy Redeemer,*

C *the Holy One of Israel;*

D *I have sent him*

Amulek formulates a quite lengthy extended alternate in Alma 10:22—23:

A *if it were not for the **prayers of the righteous**, . . .*

B *ye would even now be visited with utter destruction;*

C *yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah,*

D *but it would be by **famine,***

E *and by **pestilence,***

F *and the **sword.***

A *But it is by the **prayers of the righteous** that ye are spared;*

B *now therefore, if ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand;*

C *but in his fierce anger he will come out against you;*

D *then ye shall be smitten by **famine,***

E *and by **pestilence,***

F *and by the **sword***

Another clever extended alternate is located in Helaman 6:35—36, again reminding us of how the Lord functions in his eternal role. In these verses we see the Lord withdrawing his Spirit from the Nephites because of their wickedness, while pouring his Spirit out on the Lamanites because of their humility:

A *And thus we see that the Spirit of the Lord*

B *began to withdraw from the Nephites*

C *because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts.*

A *And thus we see that the Lord began*

B *to pour out his Spirit upon the Lamanites*

C *because of their easiness and willingness to believe in his words.*

Another example comes from the book of Mosiah:

> A *If my people shall **sow filthiness***
> >  B *they shall **reap** the chaff thereof in the whirlwind;*
> > >  C *and the effect thereof is poison. . . .*
> > A *If my people shall **sow filthiness***
> > >  B *they shall **reap** the east wind,*
> > > >  C *which bringeth immediate destruction.*
> > (Mosiah 7:30—31)

To conclude, let us look at an explicit, powerful extended alternate found in 3 Nephi 29:5—6:

> A ***wo unto him***
> >  B *that shall **deny***
> > >  C *the **Christ***
> > > >  D *and his **works!***
> > A *Yea, **wo unto him***
> > >  B *that shall **deny** the revelations of*
> > > >  C *the **Lord,** and that shall say the Lord*
> > > > >  D *no longer **worketh** by revelation*

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Other examples of alternates are Genesis 1:16; Exodus 16:35; Psalm 29:1; Proverbs 24:19—20; Isaiah 9:10; 31:3; 65:21—22; 1 Nephi 17:36; 2 Nephi 1:20, 28—29; 30:17; Mosiah 25:8—11; Alma 3:26; 5:40—41. You will find dozens more.

## Climax: Repeated Elements at the End and Beginning

When ancient authors wanted to build their message to a high point of great emphasis, they often depended on the climactic form. "Climax occurs when, in successive clauses or sentences, the same word or words are found at the end of one expression and at the beginning of the next."[28] This form helps the reader climb high enough to see the author's main point with sufficient understanding.

Prophets in ancient Israel would often vocally address their listeners, building to a forceful conclusion or subpoint that they wanted the people to understand in its full importance. As students of the scriptures, we can never forget that widespread distribution and use of printed scriptures is a comparatively recent development in history. Before the time of Ezra, written copies of the sacred texts were not widely available to the general populace. Therefore, most who wanted to discuss the scriptures had to commit the text largely to memory. Furthermore, the prophets delivered most of their original messages orally, and they delivered their words with primarily a vocal emphasis. The climactic form aided the prophets in clearly communicating the word of God to eager listeners who had at best only limited access to the scriptural scrolls.

Following is an example of the climactic form taken from the Old Testament:

> *Tell ye **your children** of it,*
>
> *and let **your children** tell **their children,***
>
> *and **their children** another generation.*
>
> *That which the palmerworm hath left hath the **locust** eaten;*
>
> *and that which the **locust** hath left hath the **cankerworm** eaten;*
>
> *and that which the **cankerworm** hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.*
>
> (Joel 1:3—4)

Whether used alone or in connection with another writing form or two, the climactic form was a powerful tool for the writers of our ancient scriptures. Peter uses this form in a verse that is often quoted (2 Peter 1:5—7) and is also a solid example of anabasis (see pages 85—89):

> *add to your faith **virtue;***
>
> *and to **virtue knowledge;***
>
> *and to **knowledge temperance;***
>
> *and to **temperance patience;***
>
> *and to **patience godliness;***
>
> *and to **godliness brotherly kindness;***
>
> *and to **brotherly kindness** charity.*

The climactic form is not restricted to the Bible alone. For example, in the Book of Mormon, Lehi uses this form:

> *And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is **no sin.***
>
> *If ye shall say there is **no sin,** ye shall also say there is **no righteousness.***
>
> *And if there be **no righteousness** there be **no happiness.***
>
> *And if there be no righteousness **nor happiness** there be **no punishment nor misery.***
>
> *And if **these things** are not there is **no God.***
>
> *And if there is **no God we are not, neither the earth;***
>
> *for there could have been **no creation** of things*
>
> (2 Nephi 2:13)

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Additional examples of climax include Alma 17:2; 32:23; Mormon 7:9; Moroni 10:32.

## Anabasis: Up the Staircase

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term *anabasis* is derived from a Greek word that means "to go or walk up."[29] Donald Parry defines it as "a poetical device where there is an apparent stepping up from one sense to another, until, at the pinnacle is a culmination of thought."[30] "Biblical verse often moves up a scale of increasing intensity."[31] The scriptures give us some excellent examples of anabasis in both the Old Testament and Book of Mormon.

Two particularly fascinating examples are found in the Old Testament. The first is in Psalm 1:1—2. Incidentally, this is a prime example of the writing form being interrupted by versification. It is necessary to borrow from the second verse to complete the Hebrew writing form that begins in verse 1. (The following examples of anabasis are meant to be read from bottom to top.)

> D *But his delight is in the law of the Lord*
> C *nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*
> B *nor standeth in the way of sinners,*
> A *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,*

The first level is the blessed man who does not take counsel from unrighteous people. In the second level he does not commit sinful acts, and in the third he does not glorify wickedness where scorners have rejected that which is godlike. Note that each level names a more serious sin than its predecessor, but the blessed man rejects each sin, leading him to what is most important: finding delight in the joy of the Lord.

The second Old Testament example, Zechariah 8:12, tells us:

> E *and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.*
> D *and the heavens shall give their dew;*
> C *and the ground shall give her increase,*
> B *the vine shall give her fruit,*
> A *For the seed shall be prosperous;*

In the previous example we see a rise from a seed, to a vine giving fruit, to the ground giving increase, to the heavens giving dew, to the Lord providing all blessings.

When Alma counseled with his son Helaman he used this form:

> F *and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day.*
> E *and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God;*
> D *that he may watch over you in your sleep;*
> C *yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord,*
> B *and he will direct thee for good;*
> A *Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings,*
> (Alma 37:37)

Note how effectively the following verse from the book of Helaman builds from merely stating that the people heard the Lord's voice, to describing the voice, to explaining how powerfully the voice affected the people:

> E *and it did pierce even to the very soul*
> D *as if it had been a whisper,*
> C *but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness,*
> B *neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise,*
> A *and beheld that it was not a voice of thunder, And it came to pass when they heard this voice,*
> (Helaman 5:30)

Alma described Melchizedek using these words found in Alma 13:18–19:

> G ... *but none were greater*
>> F *for he was the king of Salem; and he did reign under his father.*
>> E *therefore he was called the prince of peace,*
>> D *And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days;*
>> C *did preach repentance unto his people.*
>> B *received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God,*
>> A *But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and*

In the preceding verses, we see even more clearly that Melchizedek became greater with each succeeding event (thus the anabasis moves from lesser to greater). These verses somewhat remind us of the few words in Luke 2:52 when Luke wrote of the progress Jesus made as a boy: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Here we learn that Jesus increased in (1) wisdom, (2) stature, (3) favor with God, and (4) favor with man. This is not an anabasis, however, because it does not lead from a lesser state to a greater level. If it did, the order would more naturally begin with "stature" and end at "favor with God."

Sometimes this "up the staircase" poetic form moves from the specific to the general, as in 2 Nephi 29:12:

> D *and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.*
> C *and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it;*
> B *and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it;*
> A *For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it;*

The tribe of Judah is one specific branch of the house of Israel. The Nephites (including the Zoramites, Ishmaelites, and Mulekites) descended from Manasseh and Judah, and perhaps other tribes. The other tribes of Israel encompassed the rest of the house of Israel, and all nations included the whole world. In other words, the anabasis moves from the one tribe to the whole world, or from specific to general. Let us not miss identifying two cycloides of importance—*I shall speak* and *they shall write*—that tightly bind the verse together. The verse is a simple alternate and an example of epibole (see pages 30–35, 73–77).

As a reminder, a number of the verses in scripture have more than one writing form present in the words, phrases, and sentences. Also, one author may have formatted verses differently than another writer did. A further testimony that these forms were carefully designed into the scriptures is an exciting threesome of verses (Moroni 10:3–5) inscribed by Moroni in an "up the staircase" anabasis:

> I *And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.*
> H *he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.*
> G *and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ,*
> F *I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true;*
> E *ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things,*
> D *receive these things, and*
> C *that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of*

Adam even down until the time that ye shall

  B *if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them,*

  A *Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things,*

In these three extraordinary verses we find sound spiritual advice pertaining to the Book of Mormon, truth, and the Holy Ghost. This is an anabasis because the verses describe a progression in the reader's commitment: (1) read the Book of Mormon, (2) remember how merciful God has been and ponder that truth, (3) pray to the Eternal Father in the name of Christ, (4) know the Book of Mormon is true by the power of the Holy Ghost, and (5) know truth of other things by the power of the Holy Ghost. We see from these choice verses that anabasis is a sound, effective way of teaching truth.

Some additional examples of anabasis are Job 4:19–20; Psalm 29:1; Proverbs 30:15–16, 21–23, 29–30; Isaiah 1:4; Ezekiel 2:6; Daniel 9:5; 1 Nephi 2:20; 4:32; 8:24; 12:18; 2 Nephi 24:13–14; 29:11; Jarom 1:8; Mosiah 15:15–17; Alma 1:30–31; 7:23–24; 8:31; 3 Nephi 10:12–17. There are dozens more.

## Catabasis: Down the Staircase

Donald Parry explains, "Catabasis (Greek 'going down') is characterized by a lowering of the sense, from one level to another, with each succeeding line."[32] It is much as if the message were descending a staircase. Thus catabasis is defined as "descending or declining by degrees."[33] A good example of catabasis can be found in Isaiah 40:31. In this verse, those who wait on the Lord renew their strength in every way. They fly as eagles, then run, and, lastly, walk at the end of the course:

  A *they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;*

    B *they shall mount up with wings as eagles;*

      C *they shall run, and not be weary; and*

        D *they shall walk, and not faint.*

The previous example is a catabasis because those who wait on the Lord first fly, then run, and, lastly, walk. Examples of catabasis often move from positive to negative.

We find this catabasis, also in the Old Testament, in Ezekiel 22:18:

  *Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross:*

  A *all they are brass,*

    B *and tin,*

      C *and iron,*

        D *and lead, . . .*

          E *even the dross of silver.*

The house of Israel descends from being a place of great value in the eyes of the Lord, to the level of brass, to tin, then iron, then lead, and at last to the dross of silver, which is slag left over from the refining procedure. Thus the catabasis format serves to accentuate the message of descent both by word and form. The metals decrease in

value. A similar catabasis is found in Daniel 2:31—43, in which deteriorating world powers are also described as substances that descend in value: fine gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay.

The Book of Mormon probably describes conflict as accurately and helpfully as any book ever written. Various climactic forms help to communicate the ups and downs in Nephite and Lamanite societies as they experienced righteousness and evil, power and weakness. For instance, we read in Helaman 11:36—38:

> A *And in the eighty and second year they began again to forget the Lord their God.*
> B *And in the eighty and third year they began to wax strong in iniquity.*
> C *And in the eighty and fourth year they did not mend their ways.*
> D *And it came to pass in the eighty and fifth year they did wax stronger and stronger in their pride, and in their wickedness;*
> E *and thus they were ripening again for destruction. And thus ended the eighty and fifth year.*

In each succeeding year, the people persisted in becoming more and more ungodly. First they forgot the Lord, then began to wax strong in iniquity, then did not repent, and finally became so prideful and wicked that they were ripe for destruction.

Catabasis is an excellent literary form to use for describing a disintegrating society, such as is found frequently in the Book of Mormon. A short example is found in Helaman 3:2—3:

> A *And there was no contention among the people in the forty and fourth year;*
> B *neither was there much contention in the forty and fifth year.*
> C *And it came to pass in the forty and sixth, yea, there was much contention and many dissensions*

From my assessment of the Old Testament and Book of Mormon, it seems that prophets used anabasis, the "up the staircase" form, a little more often than catabasis, because the scriptures are generally written in a positive manner, even when dealing with negative topics such as sin or evil. But, as said before, there are many examples of both forms.

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Additional examples of catabasis follow: Lamentations 4:1—2; Amos 9:2—3; 1 Nephi 13:5, 7—8; 17:18, 20, 30; Alma 9:11, 21—22; 17:7; 53:7.

## Antimetabole: Inverse Repetition in Contrast

Antimetabole is the name of a quite common writing form the ancient Hebrews used to emphasize an idea by stating the idea once, then restating an antithetical idea in reverse order. The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that antimetabole is "a figure in which the same words or ideas are repeated in inverse order."[34] Further, it is "a sentence inverst [*sic*], or turned back, or it is a form of speech which inverts a sentence by the contrary."[35] Bullinger notes that "this figure repeats the word or words in a reverse order, for the purpose of opposing one thing to another, or of contrasting two or more things."[36] In other words, antimetabole is antithetical chiasmus.

Notice how the following examples of antimetabole are expressed in chiastic phrases:

A *And the Lord had* **respect**

B *unto Abel and to his* **offering:**

B *But unto Cain and to his* **offering**

A *he had not* **respect.**

(Genesis 4:4—5)


A *Woe unto them that call* **evil**

B **good,**

B *and* **good**

A **evil;**


A *that put* **darkness**

B *for* **light,**

B *and* **light**

A *for* **darkness;**


A *that put* **bitter**

B *for* **sweet,**

B *and* **sweet**

A *for* **bitter!**

(Isaiah 5:20)

In 2 Chronicles 32:7—8 we read the comforting words Hezekiah spoke when King Sennacherib, the Assyrian, invaded Judah:

A *There be more* **with us**

B *than* **with him:**

B **With him** *is an arm of flesh;*

A *but* **with us** *is the Lord our God*

Another antimetabole is Isaiah 55:8—9:

A *For* **my thoughts**

B *are not* **your thoughts,**

C *neither are* **your ways**

D **my ways,** *saith the Lord.*

D *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are* **my ways**

C *higher than* **your ways,**

A *and* **my thoughts**

B *than* **your thoughts.**

Because the Book of Mormon is a Hebrew-influenced text like the Bible, it naturally contains this form in abundance. However, there is a fascinating difference between antimetabole in the Bible and the style of the Book of Mormon. In the Bible, antimetaboles appear often, generally expressed in A-B/B-A form; whereas in the Book of

Mormon, most statements are positive and thus follow the A-B/A-B, or simple alternate, form. The examples that follow illustrate the more rare A-B/B-A form.

One example in the Book of Mormon that establishes the effectiveness of antimetabole as a powerful way to communicate is found in 2 Nephi 11:7:

> A *For if there be no **Christ***
> B *there be no **God;** and if there be no God*
> C ***we are not,***
> C *for there could have been **no creation.***
> B *But there is a **God,***
> A *and he is **Christ,** and he cometh in the fulness of his own time.*

Again, the point is made clear by using an opposing statement or phrase in close proximity to the original idea. Another verse that uses chiastic contrast follows:

> A *I **give** not*
> B *because I **have** not,*
> B *but if I **had***
> A *I would **give.***
> (Mosiah 4:24)

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Other examples of antimetabole from the scriptural canon, including the New Testament, follow for your further study: Deuteronomy 16:5—6; 2 Samuel 3:1; Psalm 6:2—4; Proverbs 3:35; 4:26—27; 8:7; Isaiah 5:20; John 8:47; 14:17; 2 Peter 2:19; Alma 7:8.

## Antithetical Parallelism: One Phrase Opposing Another

Another basic poetic form that we will look at in this book is the antithetical form (Latin, *opposite* and *contraposita;* Greek, *antitheta*). The antithetical form is used to emphasize a point by contrasting opposing views of an idea or phrase. It is used in a number of ancient writing forms to establish a contrast. The ancient philosopher Aristotle wrote, "This kind of style is pleasing, because contraries are easily understood and even more so when placed side by side, and also because antithesis resembles a syllogism; for refutation is a bringing together of contraries."[37] The antithetical form "is a figure by which two thoughts, ideas, or phrases are set over one against the other in order to make the contrast more striking and thus to emphasize it."[38] Jose Krasovec writes, "Antithesis is not in terms of contradiction, thesis, and antithesis, but in opposite aspects of the same idea."[39] Antithesis is different from antimetabole in that antimetabole is chiastic, whereas antithesis can take any form of parallelism. Antithesis can state an idea and its contrast (A-B) or can repeat that idea and its contrast (A-B/A-B/A-B).

That is the principle. Now let's look at an example to see how easily the form can be identified. Paul, in his masterful discourse on the resurrection, wrote to the Greeks this now oft-quoted scripture:

*Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized*

*for the dead?*
(1 Corinthians 15:29)

Paul asked a question that contrasts the notion of the dead continuing to live after death and their not rising once they have died. The need for baptism of the dead would be eliminated if the dead were not to be resurrected. At the time this scripture was written, members of the church were baptizing for the dead because the truth of the resurrection was accepted doctrine. The Gospel of John teaches that we must be baptized to enter the kingdom of heaven (see John 3:5).

The antithetical form effectively guides the reader to comparisons and sometimes to choices. It can also borrow from a seemingly unrelated or opposite idea to make a topic easier to understand. From the previous example we learn that baptisms for the dead are useless without the resurrection, just as the resurrection and a loving Father in Heaven necessitate that those who die must receive the saving ordinance of baptism.[40]

Paul drafted one of the most clear examples of antithesis when he penned:

> A *We are **fools** for Christ's sake,*
>   B *but ye are **wise** in Christ;*
> A *we are **weak**,*
>   B *but ye are **strong**;*
>   B *ye are **honourable**,*
> A *but we are **despised**.*
> (1 Corinthians 4:10)

Antithetical parallelism often includes the words *but*, *except*, and *without*. Remembering these words may help you more easily identify the form. Following is one Old Testament example that includes the word *but:*

> A *we wait for **light**,*
>  B *but behold **obscurity**;*
> A *for **brightness**,*
>  B *but we walk in **darkness**.*
> (Isaiah 59:9)

This antithetical parallelism is from the book of Lamentations:

> A *How doth the city sit solitary,*
>  B *that was full of people!*
> A *how is she become as a widow!*
>  B *she that was great among the nations*
> (Lamentations 1:1)

Those who wrote the Book of Mormon used this form generously. Antithetical parallelisms in the Book of Mormon, as in the Bible, contain interesting and varied antonyms. One example is found in 1 Nephi 17:45:

*Ye are swift to do iniquity but slow to remember the Lord your God.*

In this example the contrast is apparent. The word swift is an antonym to the word slow, and the phrase to do iniquity is the opposite of to remember the Lord.

One of the more interesting examples of antithetical parallelism in the repeated alternate form is found in Alma 3:26:

> A *whether they were* **good** *or*
> B *whether they were* **bad,**
> A *to reap eternal* **happiness**
> B *or eternal* **misery,** *according to the spirit which they listed to obey,*
> A *whether it be a* **good** *spirit*
> B *or a* **bad** *one.*

Another example is also found in Alma 36:4:

> *And I would not that ye think that I know of myself—*
> A *not of the* **temporal**
> B *but of the* **spiritual,**
> A *not of the* **carnal** *mind*
> B *but of* **God.**

The following example of antithetical parallelism is from the book of Mosiah:

> A *And whosoever repented of their sins and did* **confess** *them,*
> B *them he did* **number** *among the people of the church;*
> A *And those that would* **not confess** *their sins and repent of their iniquity,*
> B *the same were* **not numbered** *among the people of the church*
> (Mosiah 26:35—36)

In Alma we read this harsh warning that is part of the Jewish tradition of obedience mentioned often in Deuteronomy and in King Benjamin's teachings:

> A *inasmuch as they shall* **keep my commandments**
> B *they shall* **prosper** *in the land.*
> A *But remember, inasmuch as they will* **not keep my commandments**
> B *they shall be* **cut off** *from the presence of the Lord.*
> (Alma 50:20)

In the book of Helaman we find much the same message. Mormon explains:

> A *They that have done* **good**
> B *shall have* **everlasting life;**
> A *and they that have done* **evil**
> B *shall have* **everlasting damnation.**

Jacob, the ancient Book of Mormon prophet, uses antithetical parallelism in an interesting manner:

> Now in this thing we do rejoice; and we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates, hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them with thankful hearts, and look upon them that they may learn **with joy and not with sorrow,** neither with contempt, concerning their first parents.
> (Jacob 4:3; see verses 1—2, 4)

Another verse that uses contrast follows:

> And again, I say unto the poor, **ye who have not and yet have sufficient,** that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give.
> (Mosiah 4:24)

Amulek uses antithetical parallelism to show the Lamanites that they have misinterpreted their law:

> For behold, have I testified against your law? Ye do not understand; ye say that **I have spoken against your law;** but I have not, but **I have spoken in favor of your law,**
> (Alma 10:26)

Scores upon scores of other examples can be found, but these will suffice for now. Finding this form in the Book of Mormon in such abundance is another testimony of the fact that its authors wrote in the Hebrew idiom and that the Book of Mormon was written and translated as Joseph Smith reported.

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For further examples of antithetical parallelism, see the following: Proverbs 2:13, 21—22; 3:33, 34; 4:18—19; 8:35—36; Isaiah 65:13—14; Romans 5:18, 19; 8:13; 2 Corinthians 6:8—10; Philippians 3:7; 1 Nephi 4:3; 6:5; 17:37; 2 Nephi 2:27; Jacob 6:3; Mosiah 29:12; Alma 1:28; 5:40, 41; 6:2—3; 32:32; Helaman 14:18; 3 Nephi 18:25; Mormon 8:37; 9:23; Moroni 7:11; 10:6.

## Chiasmus: Inverse Repetition

Perhaps the most exciting and interesting of all Hebrew writing forms is chiasmus. Chiasmus is what many look at as the classic form of parallelism, and as Wilfred G. E. Watson writes, "Parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry."[41] Named after the letter *x (chi)*, the twenty-second letter in the Greek alphabet, chiasmus is found extensively in certain ancient writings.[42]

Chiasmus consists of patterns of words, thoughts, or concepts that lead to a central point of emphasis and then repeat in reverse order. Perhaps the most-quoted definition of chiasmus is given by Nils Wilhelm Lund: "Chiasmus is a term based on the Greek letter *chi [x]* which refers to an inverted parallelism or sequence of words or ideas in a phrase, sentence, or any larger literary unit."[43]

BYU professor John Welch, who first discovered chiasmus in the Book of Mormon while serving a mission in Germany and who later became the first to publish on that topic, writes, "Basically chiasmus is inverted parallelism."[44] He further explains, "The word 'chiasmus' itself stems from the Greek word *chiazein*, meaning to mark with or in the shape of a cross."[45] David Noel Freedman concurs, "The basic figure of chiasm simply involves the reverse of the order of words in balancing clauses or phrases."[46]

Despite these definitions, it is sometimes easier to demonstrate a chiastic structure than to describe one. The following example shows how the *A*s, *B*s, etc., are repeated:

> A *And the **Lord said unto Moses,***
> B *The man shall be surely put to **death:***
> C *all the congregation shall **stone him with stones***
> D ***without the camp.***
> D *And all the congregation brought him **without the camp**,*
> C *and **stoned him with stones**,*
> B *and he **died**;*
> A *as the **Lord commanded Moses.***
> (Numbers 15:35—36)

There are many different levels of chiastic complexity and many different types of chiasms in the Bible and in the Book of Mormon. Although we will look at only the most basic, each was carefully designed by its author or authors in ancient times. It is quite unlikely that chiasms were written accidentally, except on extremely rare occasions. In Isaiah 3:4—14 (see 2 Nephi 13:4—14) we locate a beautiful chiasm, given in outline form as follows. The presence of this text in the Book of Mormon shows that the ancient Nephites appreciated the writings of Isaiah and felt them to be important. Some of Isaiah's most significant chiastic writings were inscribed on the gold plates.

> A *And I will give children to be their **princes***
> B *And the **people** shall be oppressed*
> C *the child shall behave himself proudly against the **ancient***
> D *let this **ruin** be under thy hand*
> E *make me not a **ruler***
> F *of the **people***
> G *for they have **rewarded** evil unto themselves*
> H *it shall be **well** with him*
> X *for they shall eat the fruit of their doings*
> H *It shall be **ill** with him*
> G *for the **reward** of his hands shall be given him*
> F *As for my **people***
> E *and women **rule** over them*
> D *and **destroy** the way of thy paths*
> C *The Lord will enter into judgment with the **ancients***
> B *of his **people***

This book is focused mainly on the writing similarities of the Book of Mormon and Old Testament. Although the chiasms are found sparingly in the ancient Greek of the New Testament, they do appear occasionally. Consider this significant chiasm in John 5:8—11:

> A *Jesus saith unto him, Rise, **take up thy bed, and walk.***
>  B *And immediately the man was **made whole,***
>   C *and **took up his bed,** and walked:*
>    D *and on the same day was the **sabbath.***
>     X *The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured,*
>    D *It is the **sabbath** day:*
>   C *it is not lawful for thee to **carry thy bed.***
>  B *He answered them, He that **made me whole,***
> A *the same said unto me, **Take up thy bed, and walk.***

That chiastic writings are found extensively in the Old Testament (Hebrew) and to a much lesser extent in the New Testament (Greek) seems to indicate that those ancient authors of these books used the writing systems that were traditional

in their cultures and taught extensively in their schools. Naturally, the Old Testament is filled with almost endless examples of those writing forms used so many centuries ago. What I find equally exciting, or even more so, is that the Book of Mormon is replete with chiasms, showing that it, too, has Hebrew origins. One individual reported that he has identified over 600 examples of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, while others hold that at least 300 to 450 well-defined chiastic structures are found there.[47] Not all these chiasms are equally well crafted, of course.[48]

Because chiasms, like the letter *x*, contain a well-defined crossing structure, the reversal of words, concepts, or phrases found in the second half of a chiasm renders the form quickly identifiable. Let us observe another chiasm by turning to Alma 10:9 in the Book of Mormon:

> A *And the **angel** said unto me*
>  B *he is a **holy man;***
>    X *wherefore I know*
>  B *he is a **holy man***
> A *because it was said by an **angel** of God.*

Another example of the abundant number of chiasms in the Book of Mormon is found in Alma 29:14—16. Note that this particular chiasm, like others, does not have a single crossing element at its center:

> A *but my **joy** is more full*
>  B *because of the **success** of my brethren, who have been up to the land of Nephi.*
>   C *Behold, they have **labored** exceedingly,*
>   C *and have **brought forth** much fruit; and how great shall be their reward!*

B *Now, when I think of the **success** of these my brethren my soul is carried away,*

A *even to the separation of it from the body, as it were, so great is my **joy**.*

Many Hebrew writing forms overlap each other. Some examples of one writing form are also examples of another form. In Alma 4:19 we find a chiasm that is also antithetical:

A *this he did . . . that he might preach the **word of God** . . .*

  B *to stir them **up** . . .*

  B *that he might pull **down,***

A *by the **word of God***

In 3 Nephi 23:13 we find this almost perfect chiasm:

A *And it came to pass that Jesus **commanded***

 B *that it should be **written;***

 B *therefore it was **written***

A *according as he **commanded.***

As Moroni's earthly ministry was about to come to an end, he wrote these two touching parallelisms in the A-B/B-A form:

A *and because of their hatred they put to **death***

  B *every Nephite that **will not deny the Christ.***

  B *And I, Moroni, **will not deny the Christ;***

A *wherefore, I wander withersoever I can for the safety of mine own **life.***

A *Wherefore, **I write a few more things,***

  B *contrary to that which **I had supposed;***

  B *for **I had supposed** not to have written any more;*

A *but **I write a few more things***

(Moroni 1:2—4)

Another chiasm is 2 Nephi 9:28:

A *O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men!*

 B *When they are learned they think they are wise,*

  C *and they hearken not*

   X *unto the counsel of God,*

  C *for they set it aside,*

 B *supposing they know of themselves,*

A *wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not.*

The previous chiasm compares and contrasts the foolishness of men with God's wisdom. The poet-prophet Jacob first presents the concepts of foolishness, wisdom, and obedience and then reverses their order to speak concerning obedience, wisdom (or knowledge), and foolishness. The climactic point of the structure centers on the

counsel of God. Through poetic means, Jacob places God's wisdom in the pivotal center and the foolishness of humanity on the periphery. In all Hebrew writings, whether parallelisms or repetitions, synonyms are often used that do not change but usually strengthen the message or structure.

King Benjamin uses several chiasms when he teaches at the temple:

> A *whosoever shall not take upon him the **name** of Christ*
>> B *must be **called** by some other name;*
>>> C *therefore, he findeth himself on the **left hand of God.***
>>>> D *And I would that ye should **remember** also, that this is the name*
>>>>> E *that I said I should give unto you that never should be **blotted out,***
>>>>>> F *except it be through **transgression;***
>>>>>>> X *therefore, take heed*
>>>>>> F *that ye do not **transgress,***
>>>>> E *that the name be not **blotted out** of your hearts.*
>>>> D *I say unto you, I would that ye should **remember** to retain the name*
>>> C *written always in your hearts, that ye are not found on the **left hand of God,***
>> B *but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be **called,***
> A *and also, the **name** by which he shall call you.*
> (Mosiah 5:10—12)

This chiasm contains important doctrinal instruction, placing significant emphasis on several concepts. The name of Christ is twice repeated. Other ideas that are emphasized include being "called," finding oneself on the "left hand of God," remembering Christ, having one's name "blotted out," and a warning against transgression. The elements at the center of the chiasm receive the most emphasis. Those listening to King Benjamin are admonished to "therefore, take heed." Joseph Smith knew nothing of ancient Hebrew writing forms but simply translated the plates that Moroni entrusted him with. This chiasm was the first found in modern times by John Welch.[49]

Another chiasm in the book of Mosiah teaches about the resurrection:

> A *But behold, the **bands of death***
> B *shall be **broken,***
> C *and the **Son** reigneth,*
> D *and hath power over the **dead;***
> E *therefore, he bringeth to pass the **resurrection** of the dead.*
> F *And there cometh a **resurrection,***
> G *even a **first resurrection;***
> H *yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be,*
> X *even until the resurrection of Christ—for so shall he be called.*
> H *And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God,*
> G *shall come forth in the **first resurrection;***
> F *therefore, they are the first **resurrection.***
> E *They are raised to **dwell with God** who has redeemed them;*

D *thus they have eternal **life***

C *through **Christ,***

B *who has **broken***

A *the **bands of death.***

(Mosiah 15:20—23)

In 3 Nephi 5:20—22, we find a chiasm that overlaps with another chiasm that extends into verse 23:

A I am Mormon, and a pure **descendant of Lehi.**

B I have reason to **bless** my God

C and my **Savior** Jesus Christ,

D that he brought **our fathers**

E out of the **land** of Jerusalem,

X (and no one knew it save it were himself and those whom he brought

E out of that **land**)

D and that he hath given me and **my people** so much knowledge

C unto the **salvation** of our souls.

B Surely he hath **blessed** the house of Jacob, and hath been merciful unto the seed of Joseph.

A And insomuch as the **children of Lehi** have kept his commandments

The chiasm that overlaps with the previous example is summarized as follows:

A *I have reason to bless my God and my Savior **Jesus Christ***

B *that he **brought** our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem*

C ***given** me and my people so much knowledge*

D *blessed the **house of Jacob***

D *been merciful to the **seed of Joseph***

C ***prospered** them according to his word*

B ***bring** a remnant of the seed of Joseph*

A *knowledge of the **Lord** their God*

(3 Nephi 5:20—23)

Following is a short chiasm:

A *for ye ought to **tremble;***

B *for the Lord redeemeth none such*

C *that **rebel** against him*

D *and **die in their sins;***

X *yea, even all those*

D *that have **perished in their sins** ever since the world began,*

C *that have wilfully **rebelled** against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them;*

B *these are they that have no part in the first resurrection.*

A *Therefore ought ye not to **tremble?***

There are many more chiasms in the Book of Mormon. One of the deepest wells from which to draw chiasms is 3 Nephi 5:20—26, discussed partially above. I have found several structures that overlay each other, outlined as follows:

> A *a pure **descendant of Lehi***
>> B *reason to **bless** my God*
>>> C *my **Savior** Jesus Christ*
>>>> D *our **fathers** out*
>>>>> E *the **land** of Jerusalem*
>>>>> E *those whom he brought out of that **land***
>>>> D *given me and my **people** so much knowledge*
>>> C ***salvation** of our souls*
>> B ***blessed** the house of Jacob*
> A ***children of Lehi***

> A *my Savior **Jesus Christ***
>> B ***brought** our fathers out*
>>> C *he hath **blessed***
>>>> D ***house of Jacob***
>>>>> X *hath been merciful*
>>>> D ***seed of Joseph***
>>> C ***blessed** them and prospered them*
>> B *again **bring** a remnant*
> A ***Lord** their God*

> A *Savior **Jesus Christ***
>> B ***land** of Jerusalem*
>>> C *no one **knew***
>>>> D ***knowledge** unto the salvation of our souls*
>>>>> E ***again bring** a remnant of the seed of Joseph*
>>>>>> F *And as he hath **covenanted***
>>>>>>> X *house of Jacob*
>>>>>> F *the covenant wherewith he hath **covenanted***
>>>>> E ***restoring** all the house of Jacob*
>>>> D ***knowledge** of the covenant*
>>> C *then shall they **know** their Redeemer*
>> B *unto their own **lands***
> A *as the **Lord** liveth*

> A *as surely **as the Lord liveth***
>> B ***gather in from the four quarters of the earth***
>>> C *covenanted with all the **house of Jacob***
>>>> D *even so shall the **covenant***

E *covenanted with the* **house of Jacob**

X *be fulfilled in his own due time*

E *restoring all the* **house of Jacob**

D *the knowledge of the* **covenant**

C *then shall* **they** *[house of Jacob] know their Redeemer*

B **gathered in from the four quarters of the earth**

A **as the Lord liveth** *so shall it be*

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Other examples of chiasmus include the following: Leviticus 14:51—52; Psalm 58:1—11; Matthew 3:10—12; 2 Nephi 2:7; 28:32; Mosiah 3:18—19; 5:10—12; Alma 18:34—39; 32:9—10; 36:1—30; 61:12—13; 3 Nephi 13:22. Remember, there are scores more found in ancient Hebrew scripture.

## Inclusio: Words Repeated at the Beginning and End

Inclusio, or epanadiplosis as the Greeks titled this form, "means a *doubling upon again*, and the Figure is so called because the same word is repeated at both the beginning and at the end of a sentence."[50] This interesting form separates the internal message of the inclusio from the writings that come before and after it. Within the inclusio is always one message or several messages. Often an individual can locate a sentence that contains two or three parallelistic ideas and later in the chapter find other similar messages, yet the center of the expected chiastic structure does not follow the typical form of a chiasm. It is simply an inclusio, which follows a chiastic structure but is not a complete chiasm. The center of the message is not chiastic, but the beginning and end are. Wilfred G. E. Watson writes, "Inclusio or envelope figure is the repetition of the same words at the beginning and end of a section of poetry."[51] It is a form of distinct parallelism. This excellent inclusio is from the book of Joel:

*I will* **pour out my spirit** *upon all flesh; and*

 *your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see*

 *visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids*

 *in those days will I* **pour out my spirit.**

(Joel 2:28—29)

In Exodus 32:16 we read:

*And the* **tables** *were the work of God,*

 *and the writing was the writing of God,*

 *graven upon the* **tables.**

In the Pentateuch we find inclusio a number of times. In Numbers 8:12 the word *Levites* delineates the message:

*And the* **Levites** *shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks:*

 *and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the Lord,*

 *to make an atonement for the* **Levites.**

The book of Psalms gives us many excellent examples of inclusio. Psalm 27:14 is one example:

> ***Wait on the Lord:***
>  *be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart:*
>  ***wait, I say, on the Lord.***

Another example is found in Psalm 122:7—8:

> ***Peace be within*** *thy walls,*
>  *and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes,*
>  *I will now say,*
>  ***Peace be within*** *thee.*

In Ecclesiastes 1:2 we find the powerful lament that vanity is so pervasive in a verse that begins and ends with the word *vanity*. This message conveys the concept that all is self-focusing:

> ***Vanity*** *of vanities,*
>  *saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities,*
>  *all is* ***vanity.***

This verse is also a significant example of cycloides (see pages 33—35).

A powerful inclusio is found in 2 Kings 23:25. The verse might be illustrated this way:

> A *And* ***like unto him***
>  B *was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses;*
>  B *neither after him*
>  A *arose there any* ***like him***.

In the Book of Mormon we find a more complex inclusio in 1 Nephi 1:16:

> *And now I, Nephi, do* ***not make a full account***
>  *of the things which my father hath written, for he hath written many things which he saw in visions and in dreams; and he also hath written many things which he prophesied and spake unto his children,*
>  *of which I shall* ***not make a full account.***

Nephi tells us that he does not fully report his father's writings at both the beginning and ending of the message. In other words, perhaps Nephi wants the reader to know that Lehi, his father, wrote many things about his visions and dreams, but Nephi will not give a full account of those communications.

In Helaman 7:7—8 we observe another example of inclusio in which Nephi, the son of Helaman, reviews some of the Nephite history and wishes that he could have lived in the days of Nephi, the son of Lehi. Perhaps a little idealistically, he perceives those times as somehow better and communicates that his own day, a mere sixty years before Jesus would visit the Nephites, is a time of apostasy. He beautifully describes the people of Nephi's time:

> *Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem,*

*that I could have joyed with him in the promised land;*
*then were his people easy to be entreated, firm to keep the commandments of God, and slow to be led to do*
*iniquity; and they were quick to hearken unto the words of the Lord—*
*Yea, if my days could have been in those days, then would my soul have had joy in the righteouness of my*
*brethren.*

Inclusio is a marvelous tool our ancient prophets used to delineate the words on which we need to concentrate. In 2 Nephi 28:32 the message is included between the phrase *saith the Lord God of Hosts.* There are many examples in 2 Nephi. Helaman, Alma, Mosiah, and other Book of Mormon authors also used inclusio. In fact, the Book of Mormon perhaps presents even more examples of inclusio than does the Old Testament.

In 2 Nephi 25:20 we find an inclusio:

*And now, my brethren, **I have spoken** plainly that ye cannot err.*
*And as the Lord God liveth that brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt, and gave unto Moses power that he*
*should head the nations after they had been bitten by the poisonous serpents, if they would cast their eyes*
*upon the serpent which he did raise up before them, and also gave him power that he should smite the rock*
*and the water should come forth; yea, behold I say unto you, that as these things are true, and as the Lord God*
*liveth, there is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ,*
*of which **I have spoken,** whereby man can be saved.*

Once understood, this form is quite easy to locate. There are many more examples in Psalms, and each book in the Book of Mormon has at least one inclusio.

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Other examples of inclusio are Deuteronomy 31:3 *(Lord);* 1 Samuel 26:23 *(Lord);* 2 Kings 23:25 *(like him);* Psalm 122:7—8 *(peace be within);* Mosiah 2:21 *(ye should serve him);* 4:27 *(done in order);* Alma 33:4—9 *(thou art merciful);* Helaman 16:2—5 *(words of Samuel).*

Even though the study of these Hebrew writing forms is fascinating, the great message of eternal salvation and the prophetic instruction for living more Christlike lives is what really matters. Rather than becoming overly concerned with cultural or external conditions that seem to substantiate the reality and truthfulness of the scriptures, we should never lose sight of the divinely inspired messages of the scriptures. In this way our understanding of the scriptures will deepen in a manner that matters eternally and in a way that will lead us back to our Father in Heaven.

**Notes**

1. Donald W. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992), i. This is a commonly held view among scholars of such texts. For example, "Parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature . . . of Hebrew poetry" (Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984], 114); "[The] one fundamental feature of Hebrew versification which can be preserved in translation

and therefore concerns the English reader . . . is that known as parallelism" (W. H. Hudson, "The Bible as Literature," in *A Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Arthur S. Peake [London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1919], 23).

2. Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as a Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism*, ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), as cited in Robert Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 10.

3. See E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House 1968), table of contents, xix—xlvi.

4. According to John Holmes, as cited in ibid., ix.

5. See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 53, 367.

6. See ibid., 53.

7. See ibid., 53, 367.

8. Kevin L. Barney, "Poetic Diction and Parallel Word Pairs in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 15.

9. See ibid., 15—81.

10. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "synonym"; hereafter cited as *OED*.

11. James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 8.

12. J. G. Herder, *Vom Geist der erbraischer Poesie* (Dessau: n.p., 1782), 23, as cited in Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 11.

13. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 436.

14. Ibid.

15. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 288.

16. Bullinger notes that in synathrÃ?smos, the elements enumerated are not mentioned under one head. This characteristic is what distinguishes synathrÃ?smos from merismos, in which one element is first mentioned and its parts are then enumerated. (See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 435—36.) For the purposes of this book I have combined these two forms into one and called it synonymous parallelism.

17. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 442.

18. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, xv.

19. N. H. Ridderbos and H. M. Wolf, "Hebrew Poetry," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. G. A. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979), 3:893.

20. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, xiv—xv.

21. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 442.

22. Ibid., 349.

23. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, ix.

24. Ibid.

25. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 350.

26. See Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, 415.

27. See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 369.

28. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, xviii.

29. *OED*, s.v. "anabasis."

30. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, xxi.

31. Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 63.

32. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, xxiii.

33. *OED*, s.v. "catabatic."

34. Ibid., s.v. "antimetabole."

35. Ibid. A citation of J. Smith's 1657 *Mystery in Rhetoric*.

36. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 301.

37. Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. John H. Freese, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 3.9.7–10.

38. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 715.

39. Jose Krasovec, *Antithetic Structure in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 137.

40. According to Donald Parry, conversations with the author, summer 1993.

41. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 114.

42. See John W. Welch, introduction to *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim, Germany: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981; reprint, Provo, Utah: FARMS 1999), 7.

43. Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hedrickson, 1992), vii.

44. Welch, introduction to *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 9.

45. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in Ancient Greek and Latin Literatures," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 250.

46. David Noel Freedman, preface to *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 7.

47. According to Dayton Conway, conversations with the author, 1990 to August 1997.

48. See John W. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 1—14. Parry, *Book of Mormon Text Reformatted*, has some four hundred strong, well-defined examples of chiasmus.

49. See John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 205.

50. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 245.

51. Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Chiastic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 136.