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# Evaluating the Interaction between the New Testament and the Book of Mormon: A Proposed Methodology

*Nicholas J. Frederick*

IN A GROUNDBREAKING ARTICLE published in the 2009 *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Ben McGuire explored a new methodology for discovering and analyzing literary allusion in the Book of Mormon. McGuire began his article by quoting John W. Welch's 1994 call for firmer Book of Mormon methodology:

Notwithstanding the significant increase in Book of Mormon studies, little has been written in this field of study about methodology itself. . . . Accordingly, if the study of the Book of Mormon is to become a more rigorous discipline, all of its practitioners will need to become more explicit about their methods, their assumptions, their purposes, and the degree to which their conclusions are based on various forms of evidence or depend on various theoretical predilections.<sup>1</sup>

McGuire then proceeded to lay out the scope of his own study:

This study is an exploration of the Book of Mormon as a complex piece of literature and of a methodology useful in discovering the meaning of the text. In presenting a new approach to the Book of Mormon, I am hoping not only to present new meaning to the

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1. John W. Welch, "Approaching New Approaches," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994): 146.

reader, but also to address the lack of methodology that Welch observed.<sup>2</sup>

Following an enlightening examination of literary parallels between the stories of Nephi and David, McGuire ended his article with a call of his own, in this case further utilization of intertextuality in serious study of the Book of Mormon:

In detailing exactly the process by which I justify this identification, I hope to encourage discussion and critical input. The Book of Mormon as a repository of intertextual material has not begun to be explored. It will take patience and significant effort to re-examine the text and to produce an exegesis that more closely resembles the intent of its authors. A study of the intertextuality of the Book of Mormon will help us not only find better meaning within the text, but also better understand the texts that the Book of Mormon authors reference in their writings.<sup>3</sup>

This essay attempts to answer McGuire's call for further intertextual study of the Book of Mormon by addressing a significant (and underdeveloped) issue in Book of Mormon studies—namely, the appearance of New Testament phrases within the Book of Mormon. This paper will first address the problems inherent in recognizing the New Testament in the Book of Mormon. This paper will then propose and explore a new methodology for evaluating valid New Testament language, including a means of classification and a series of criteria for evaluation. Finally, this paper will explore the usefulness of this methodology through a series of case studies. It is not the purpose of this paper to evaluate what the textual connections between the New Testament and the Book of Mormon may mean or offer speculation as to why they are present.<sup>4</sup> These

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2. Ben McGuire, "Nephi and Goliath: A Case Study of the Literary Allusion in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18/1 (2009): 16.

3. McGuire, "Nephi and Goliath," 28.

4. While little has been done in the area of evaluation, two examples of such studies are Mark Thomas, "A Mosaic for Religious Counterculture: The Bible in the Book of

issues would need a much longer study, one that would rely on data drawn from the Book of Mormon through a close study and application of a fixed methodology, one this paper hopes to provide.

## The problem

It is undeniable that the Bible plays a role in the textual construction of the Book of Mormon. Grant Hardy writes:

Even a cursory glance reveals that the Book of Mormon wants to be seen as a companion to the Bible. It is divided into books named after prophets; biblical phrases and even chapter-length quotations are scattered throughout; and it is written in the diction of the Authorized Version, including the general use of archaic words such as *thou*, *doth*, *hath*, and all manner of verbs ending in *-eth*.<sup>5</sup>

As Hardy notes, one of the most noticeable aspects of the Book of Mormon is its integration of the King James Bible into its own text. The lengthiest sections of the Bible present within the Book of Mormon—namely, the Isaiah passages in 2 Nephi and Matthew’s (slightly altered) Sermon on the Mount found in 3 Nephi 12–14—have been the topics of much analysis. Lengthy pericopes—such as Alma 13, Ether 12, and McGuire’s own study of 1 Nephi—have also been the topics of analysis. Less attention, however, has been paid to single verses or phrases that closely mirror, sometimes even word for word, verses or phrases from the Bible, likely due to the magnitude of the project as well as the difficulty in ascertaining

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Mormon,” *Dialogue* 29/4 (1996): 47–68; and Nicholas J. Frederick, “What Has Moroni to Do with John,” *Religious Educator* 14/3 (2013): 93–109.

5. Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5–6. Philip Barlow adds, “Like the revelations that preceded it, and even more extensively than scholars have hitherto guessed, the Book of Mormon narrative bulges with biblical expressions. More than fifty thousand phrases of three or more words, excluding definite and indefinite articles, are common to the Bible and the Book of Mormon.” *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in the American Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 27.

what, exactly, constitutes a valid biblical phrase contained in the Book of Mormon.<sup>6</sup>

An additional complication arises when one chooses what word or phrase to use in describing the relationship between the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Those who have written on the topic have relied on a series of terminologies in an attempt to accurately define the connection between the two texts. These include the popular *quotation*, *allusion*, and *echo*;<sup>7</sup> other terms such as *parallel*, *mirror*, *symmetry*,<sup>8</sup> *similar . . . referencing*,<sup>9</sup>

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6. The task of identifying New Testament parallels within the Book of Mormon has largely been taken up by those hostile to the Book of Mormon, such as Jerald and Sandra Tanner in their “Joseph Smith’s Plagiarism of the Bible” and the website <http://skepticsannotatedbible.com/BOM/index.htm> (the latter in particular is an excellent resource). The issue with these sources is that they lack a critical methodology and an analysis of the text beyond a simple identification of parallel language. For those who defend the Book of Mormon, the FARMS Critical Text is an invaluable resource.

7. It was Richard Hays who defined *quotation*, *allusion*, and *echo* as “points along a spectrum of intertextual reference, moving from the explicit to the subliminal.” *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 23. The result of Hays’s work is that those who study biblical intertextuality frequently adopt those terms, although much debate continues as to the proper definition (or even usefulness) of each. For a further elaboration, especially in regards to the difficulties of assigning appropriate terminology, see Christopher Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 12–40; and Cynthia Edenburg, “Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35/2 (2010): 131–48.

8. With the exception of *quotation*, all five of these terms are used by Noel B. Reynolds in his article “Lehi as Moses,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/2 (2000): 27–35. *Quote* and *quotation* are used extensively by Gaye Strathearn and Jacob Moody in their article “Christ’s Interpretation of Isaiah 52’s ‘My Servant’ in 3 Nephi,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18/1 (2009): 5–15.

9. “The relationship between the KJV and the Book of Mormon in particular is complex, as the Book of Mormon includes large blocks of biblical text similar to equivalent passages in the Old and New Testaments and translated into King James English. Beyond the large blocks, there are numerous paraphrases of biblical texts as well as allusions to biblical events and use of biblical imagery. All of these are not only biblical but also specifically written in King James English and thus sound similar to the King James Bible versions of the passages. And even when the Book of Mormon is not explicitly referencing or quoting biblical text, the rest of the Book of Mormon prose reads ‘biblically,’ the translation utilizing King James English to reveal the Book of Mormon’s message.” Daniel L. Belnap, “The King James Bible and the Book of Mormon,” in *The*

cites,<sup>10</sup> and borrowing;<sup>11</sup> and phrases such as *verbal parallel*,<sup>12</sup> *substantial similarities*,<sup>13</sup> *textual interdependence*,<sup>14</sup> *unacknowledged plagiarism*,<sup>15</sup> and *similarity of language*.<sup>16</sup> Terms such as *quotation*, *allusion*, and *echo* may be appropriate and even accurate for describing the way the Book of Mormon interacts with the Old Testament. After all, Nephi states that he has a record, the brass plates, in his possession. Readers of the Book of Mormon should then expect to encounter passages such as Genesis or Isaiah from the Old Testament. However, these terms become problematic when discussing passages from the New Testament found in the Book of Mormon, since, as far as can be determined, the Nephites did not possess that record.<sup>17</sup>

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*King James Bible and the Restoration*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011), 162.

10. "Revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants frequently quote from the Book of Mormon or the Bible, just as the New Testament often quotes Old Testament passages and the Book of Mormon cites the Bible." John A. Tvedtnes, *The Most Correct Book* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2003), 58.

11. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 249. Cf. Brant Gardner: "For example, 2 Nephi 9:7 openly borrows from 1 Corinthians 15:53" *The Gift and Power of God: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Draper, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 257.

12. McGuire, "Nephi and Goliath," 19.

13. John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 93, speaking of general similarities between Matthew 5–7 and 3 Nephi 12–14.

14. David P. Wright, "In Plain Terms That We May Understand': Joseph Smith's Transformation of Hebrews in Alma 12–13," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brent L. Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 181. Wright frequently employs *depends* and *dependence* throughout.

15. "The Book of Mormon account of Jesus' sermon in 3 Nephi 12–14 originated in the nineteenth century, derived from unacknowledged plagiarism of the KJV" Stan Larson, "The Historicity of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 132.

16. Brant Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Draper, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 6:381, in the context of Moroni 7:45 and 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.

17. "The process is even more complicated when the King James Version language of a Book of Mormon passages comes from the New Testament, not the Old Testament. . . . Lehi's family had access to the Old Testament (or much of it) but not to the New Testament. The only conclusion is that the Book of Mormon language is Joseph's not

In cases where the Book of Mormon text may contain a New Testament phrase or passage, terms like *quotation*, *allusion*, and *echo* become problematic for at least two reasons: (1) quotation and allusion are author-oriented literary devices, and (2) quotation and allusion imply a source upon which they are drawing. Stanley Porter, who has studied extensively the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament, addresses the problem of using quotation and allusion in biblical studies:

One of the obvious terms that requires definition is explicit or direct quotation or citation. I would suggest that this term needs a larger definition than is often found in monographs discussing the topic . . . and more in line with how quotation is apparently handled in commentary discussion. The focus would be upon formal correspondence with actual words found in antecedent texts. Although there would of course be the question of how many words would qualify as a quotation, at least there is now debate over data, as opposed to hypotheses about reconstructed competencies. Another difficult term is allusion. Perhaps the best way of handling this is not in terms of large and complex categories that prove unworkable, but rather in terms of a streamlined definition (resembling those in literary criticism) that covers the material not found in quotation. Allusions (or “echoes,” if one must) could refer to the nonformal invocation by an author of a text (or person, event, etc.) that the author could reasonably have been expected to know (for example the Old Testament in the case of Paul).<sup>18</sup>

Porter’s elaboration on quotation and allusion illustrates why both terms pose problems for discussion of the New Testament within the Book of Mormon. By defining quotation as the “formal correspondence

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Nephi’s (or Mormon’s or Moroni’s). This situation has long caused difficulties for Book of Mormon readers.” Gardner, *Gift and Power*, 307.

18. Stanley E. Porter, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology, in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 95.

with actual words found in antecedent texts,” Porter envisions an author consciously reaching back into a prior text and embedding the words of that text into their own.<sup>19</sup> Readers most often encounter quotations in the New Testament in the form of formal quotations, where the statement is qualified with phrases like “as it was written” or “which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet.” Examples include the angel of the Lord’s announcement to Joseph in Matthew 1:23 that Jesus is fulfilling the prophecy laid out in Isaiah 7:14 or Paul’s appropriation of Deuteronomy 27:26 in Galatians 3:10. However, the Book of Mormon rarely acknowledges its interactions with the Bible through formal quotations, with the exception of lengthy excerpts of Isaiah quoted by Nephi or Zeno’s olive-tree allegory quoted by Jacob, but even in those cases the brass plates are named as the source text. Instead, the Book of Mormon prefers to weave phrases from the New Testament into its own text. Sometimes these phrases in the Book of Mormon maintain the same word order they had in the New Testament, while other times words may be added or removed, leaving the reader with a phrase that is no longer a quotation.

For example, when readers encounter the phrase “full of grace and truth” in 2 Nephi 2:6, they can be positive they are encountering a biblical interaction with John 1:14. However, many other potential biblical interactions are not as clear-cut as 2 Nephi 2:6, so the question of how to apply this criterion becomes important. In biblical intertextuality, identifying a fixed number of identical words that follow an identical sequence is sometimes used to differentiate between quotation and allusion.<sup>20</sup> However, the Book of Mormon introduces a complication because of its tendency to alter the structure of New Testament phrases,

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19. Porter, “Use of the Old Testament,” 95. While a source text is less significant in exploring allusions, it is still relevant: “Often, the points of correspondence between the source text and the present text are left unstated and range beyond the words cited to include features from a broader context.” David Matthewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1–22.5* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 22.

20. For example, Beetham notes that “the *length* of a reference plays a role in its classification,” before defining a quotation as “an intention, explicit, verbatim or near

either by adding, subtracting, or replacing words that would assist in proper identification. For example, in addition to the phrase “full of grace and truth,” the Book of Mormon also offers: “full of grace, equity, and truth” (Alma 13:9), “full of grace and mercy and truth” (Alma 5:48), and even “full of grace, equity, and truth, full of patience, mercy, and long-suffering, quick to hear the cries of his people and to answer their prayers” (Alma 9:26).<sup>21</sup> For this reason, relying on the presence of a fixed number of words or evaluating a phrase or passage based on an identical sequence of words becomes less useful, as does jettisoning a phrase simply because the word order has been rearranged or the terminology altered.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, some three-word phrases could clearly present biblical interactions with the New Testament, while some four- or five-word phrases can simply be the result of a shared vocabulary and syntax.

On the other hand, application of the term *allusion* to a passage or phrase from the Book of Mormon presents different problems. By defining *allusion* as a “non-formal invocation by an author of a text (or person, event, etc.) that the author could reasonably have been expected to know,” Porter situates the author and his knowledge as key components.<sup>23</sup> These ideas present problems for the Book of Mormon, a text

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verbatim citation of a former text of six or more words in length,” and an allusion as “a reference that is less than five words.” *Echoes of Scripture*, 16–17.

21. All Book of Mormon passages are taken from Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

22. Jan W. Fekkes has written that “the more a text is broken up and woven into a passage, the less likely it is to be a quotation.” *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Developments* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 63–64. However, for a text like the Book of Mormon that skillfully weaves and alters biblical phrases throughout its narrative, it would be counterproductive to eliminate passages that do not follow a fixed sequence.

23. The issue of authorial intent is less of an issue for *allusion*, but it is still present: “Although allusion is understood as a device an author uses to establish linkages between texts, the intention of the author fades as an area of inquiry. The author is an actor who manipulates and reconfigures cultural material, but the emphasis is on that reconfiguration as evidence in the text rather than the consciousness of the author.” Susan Hyland, *Allusion and Meaning in John 6* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 52. Beetham adds: “An allusion by definition must be overt enough to be recognized by the audience.

where authorship and possible sources remain topics of hot debate.<sup>24</sup> When we talk of what the “author could reasonably have been expected to know,” are we speaking of Mormon? Joseph Smith? God? A spirit world translator? If we speak of the New Testament as an “antecedent text,” are we implying that Joseph Smith copied from the New Testament or that the author of the text was consciously drawing upon the New Testament for certain language or ideas? If carefully defined, the terms *quotation* and *illusion* can be useful. Otherwise, potentially fruitful discussions about the relationship between the two texts can quickly deteriorate into arguments over authorship, translation, and source.<sup>25</sup>

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An author has failed in his use of allusion as a literary device if the audience does not catch the reference. If the audience fails to recognize the allusion, however, it does not follow that the attempt to allude was not made by the author. The allusion may be there, embedded in the text, even though the audience missed it.” *Echoes of Scripture*, 12.

24. Grant Hardy sums up the problem well in his discussion of the Epistle to the Hebrews and Ether 12: “From the perspective of believers, it would be rather ironic if Moroni, who eschewed his father’s program of evidence-based faith, here inadvertently ended up providing perhaps the strongest textual validation for the historicity of the Book of Mormon. Paradoxically, though, with Ether 12’s clear and thorough dependence on Hebrews 6 and 11, Moroni has simultaneously supplied some of the most compelling evidence that the book has its origins in the nineteenth century.” *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 260.

25. B. H. Roberts wrote that “in dealing with the question of the New Testament phraseology in the Book of Mormon it is Joseph Smith that has to be dealt with, not Nephi (or other Book of Mormon writers), the translator, not the original writers.” *New Witness for God: The Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1909), 448. For different perspectives on the role of Joseph Smith, the Bible, and Book of Mormon composition, see B. H. Roberts, “Bible Quotations in the Book of Mormon,” *Improvement Era*, January 1904, 178–92; Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 66–70, 250–60; Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 141–42; Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 111–34; Blake T. Ostler, “The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source,” *Dialogue* 20/1 (1987): 66–123; Stan Larson, “The Historicity of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi,” in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 115–63; Krister Stendahl, “The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi,” in *Reflections on Mormonism: Judeo-Christian Parallels*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1978), 139–54; Wright, “In Plain Terms That We May Understand,” 165–229; David P. Wright, “Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: Or Joseph Smith in Isaiah,” in *American Apocrypha*, ed. Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City:

## Methodology

In an attempt to extend discussions about the intertextual links between the Bible and the Book of Mormon, this essay suggests that the phrase *biblical interaction* be employed in describing the presence of New Testament phrases or passages within the Book of Mormon. This phrase places the primary emphasis on an intertextual approach.<sup>26</sup> There are at least two good reasons for using the phrase *biblical interaction*, both of which serve to remedy the problems discussed above.

1. This phrase shifts the attention away from the troublesome issue of authorship and places the burden of interpretation on the reader while still acknowledging that the biblical authors did have a yet-undefined role in the composition of the text.

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Signature Books, 2002), 157–234; Welch, *Sermon at the Temple*; and Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, eds., *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT; FARMS, 1998).

26. Like the terms *quotation* and *allusion*, *intertextuality* must also be clearly defined, as it is often used in a variety of contexts to mean a variety of things. Patricia Tull has insightfully noted that “the concept of intertextuality represents a battleground of differing emphases and claims, both linguistic and ideological. . . . Few agree on how best to understand and use the term.” “Intertextuality and the Hebrew Scriptures,” *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 8/1 (2000): 59. A single fundamental definition of the term would be, in the words of Graham Allen, “doomed to failure.” *Intertextuality: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2. I prefer Hyland’s definition: “Intertextuality may be best understood as a *feature* of texts; it is a way of understanding how texts intersect, destabilize, and transform one another.” *Allusion and Meaning*, 50. However, as Ellen Van Wolde has warned, authors who utilize intertextuality as a lens of study need to develop a strict methodology and avoid “trendy intertextuality,” where intertextuality “seems the result of a superficial sightseeing tour.” “Trendy Intertextuality?,” in *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel*, ed. Sipke Draisma (Kampen: Kok, 1989), 43. Other authors who attempt to explore the range of intertextuality and its meaning include Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6–10; and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms through the Lens of Intertextuality* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

2. This phrase promotes a *synchronic* rather than a *diachronic* approach, meaning that the issues of a source or antecedent text become diminished in favor of examining the complex interplay between the two texts.<sup>27</sup>

However, as those who have studied the intertextuality between the Bible and the Book of Mormon know well, not all biblical interactions are created equal. Sometimes the interaction will involve a lengthy string of phrases or even a pericope. On other occasions, the interaction may involve a simple phrase of three or four words. Sometimes the interaction with the New Testament will be easily apparent and recognizable, while at other times the interaction may be tenuous enough that it cannot be determined one way or the other. Because the lengthier Book of Mormon interactions with the New Testament are readily apparent, such as Matthew 5–7 and 3 Nephi 12–14, or 1 Corinthians 13 and Moroni 7, this essay will focus more on the shorter phrases that are skillfully woven throughout the Book of Mormon at the phrasal level and as such are more difficult to identify. With the difficulty regarding

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27. This is not to say that a diachronic study of the Book of Mormon and the Bible is not useful. Quite the contrary: The language of the Book of Mormon seems overt and explicit in its use of the King James Bible, and an in-depth examination of the different ways in which the Book of Mormon uses the biblical text would be quite informative. In his critique of some contemporary studies of intertextuality, Jeffery M. Leonard stated that “tantalizing through . . . varied insights may be, to be valid they must rest on genuine textual connects whose directions of dependence can actually be established.” “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127/2 (2008): 243. In the case of the Book of Mormon, the “directions of dependence” can be established, and if the author of a paper on the Book of Mormon is diachronically drawing connections between the Bible and the Book of Mormon, then terms such as *allusion* or *quotation* are appropriate. However, this is not often the case, and for this reason a reliance on synchronic study may be more useful and avoid relaying the wrong ideas about the relationship between the Bible and the Book of Mormon. For the issues involved in the synchronic and diachronic studies of biblical texts, see Geoffrey D. Miller, “Intertextuality in Old Testament Research,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 9/3 (2010): 284.

the certainty of the interaction in mind, this essay suggests three categories for classification:<sup>28</sup>

1. Precise biblical interactions: This category contains phrases or passages from the Book of Mormon that are almost certainly interacting with the New Testament. The connections between the two texts are too strong to overlook.
2. Probable biblical interactions: This category contains phrases or passages from the Book of Mormon that are likely interacting with the New Testament. The connections are recognizable, but not as definitively as those classified as precise.
3. Possible biblical interactions: This category contains phrases or passages from the Book of Mormon that are possibly interacting with the New Testament, yet with the recognition that there is not enough evidence to make a claim one way or the other.

While these categories are useful in and of themselves, we are left with the issue of identification. In his study of Psalm 78, Jeffery M. Leonard noted that “antecedent to the task of categorizing textual allusions, however, lies a more fundamental problem of method, namely, determining just how textual allusions are to be confidently identified in the first place and then evaluated in terms of their direction of dependence.”<sup>29</sup>

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28. This hierarchy preserves the spirit of John Hollander’s “rhetorical hierarchy” of quotation, allusion, and echo but without the problematic implications. *The Figures of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 64. This hierarchy, and the criteria which follow, also attempts to address the recent comments made by Russell L. Meek regarding the current state of intertextual study: “Despite the advances in methodological consistency, there still seems to remain some confusion over exactly how and when to apply the appropriate terms to one’s task. Furthermore, after thirty years of defining and delineating terms, it is necessary that scholars begin to demonstrate transparency and clarity in their methodological vocabulary.” “Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Ethics of a Methodology,” *Biblica* 95/1 (2014): 281.

29. Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusion,” 242.

With Leonard's words in mind, this essay proposes the following five criteria: shared terminology, dissimilarity, proximity, sequence, and context.<sup>30</sup>

*The criterion of shared terminology*

The criterion of shared terminology asserts that when evaluating phrases from the Book of Mormon as having interaction with the New Testament, a shared terminology increases the likelihood that readers are dealing with a biblical interaction. For obvious reasons, this is the most important of the five criteria, and a biblical interaction can be accurately determined if it meets this criterion, even if the other four are absent.<sup>31</sup> An example of how this criterion can be applied is seen in Nephi's description of his father's visionary experiences in 1 Nephi 1 (the interactions have been italicized):

And it came to pass that when my father had read and saw many great and marvelous things, he did exclaim many things unto the

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30. These criteria should not be mistaken for proof or evidence. As John P. Meier notes in his magisterial study of the historical Jesus, "Criteria are rules or norms that are applied to the Gospel material to arrive at a judgment." Their function is simply "to pass from the merely possible to the really probable, to inspect various probabilities, and to decide which candidate is most probable. Ordinarily, the criteria cannot hope to do more." *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Volume One: The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 185n4 and 167–68. In his own study of Isaiah, Sommer wrote: "Developing criteria to decide what parallels can be termed allusions, citation, or the result of influence is the project of the study of inner-biblical allusion and exegesis—a project I think possible and to which I hope to contribute." *Prophet Reads Scripture*, 10. This paper has a similar aim, with the Book of Mormon being the focus.

31. "Shared language is the single most important factor in establishing a textual connection." Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusion," 246. "Foremost among these criteria is the presence of shared lexical features. All scholars utilizing the author-oriented approach agree that similar wording is a telltale sign of intertextuality, and many regard it as most important." Miller, "Intertextuality in Old Testament Research," 295. Michael Fishbane adds: It is not by virtue of objective criteria that one may identify aggadic exegesis, but rather by a close comparison of the language of a given text with other, earlier Scriptural dicta or topoi." *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 285.

Lord, such as: *Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty*. Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power and goodness and mercy is over all the inhabitants of the earth. And because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish. (1 Nephi 1:14)

In John's vision recorded in the book of Revelation, he sees those who "had gotten the victory over the beast" sing praises to God:

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty*; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. (Revelation 15:3)

Both 1 Nephi 1:14 and Revelation 15:3 record the language of the hymn of praise with almost exactly the same terminology, the only difference being that the "O" of 1 Nephi 1:14 is absent from John's account. While other criteria would need to be applied to decide whether to label this interaction as precise, probable, or simply possible, the obvious textual overlap would suggest at the very least a probable interaction.

#### *The criterion of dissimilarity*

According to the criterion of dissimilarity, if a short phrase or short series of phrases appears infrequently in the New Testament, the appearance of the same phrase in the Book of Mormon supports a biblical interaction. The uniqueness of the phrase or the phrases makes them dissimilar in relation to other language in the New Testament, rendering the possibility of coincidental language less of a possibility.<sup>32</sup>

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32. "When two texts are marked by shared vocabulary, there exists the possibility that one alludes to the other. Our ability to prove or even lend support to such allusion, however, depends in some measure on the nature of the vocabulary the two texts share. If the shared language consists solely of common terms, it does not automatically negate the possibility of a connection; after all, an author can borrow common terms as well as distinctive ones. It would make it quite difficult to *prove* that a connection exists, however. On the other hand, if the language shared by two texts is relatively rare or is used in a manner that is distinctive, it can lend support to the possibility of a connection." Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 251.

For evaluating interactions where the possible similarity in language may only extend to a short phrase, the criterion of dissimilarity could be applied. A useful example of this criterion can be found in Ether 12:4, where readers encounter the following passage:

Wherefore whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith and maketh *an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast*, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.

Ether 12:4 appears to be a biblical interaction with Hebrews 6:19:

Which hope we have as *an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast*, and which entereth into that within the veil.

In comparing these two passages, one finds the following identical words: *anchor*, *soul/souls*, *sure*, and *steadfast*. This by itself is not necessarily enough to classify Ether 12:4 as a biblical interaction, since these are common words that appear several times in both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. *Anchor* appears 4 times in the New Testament and 2 times in the Book of Mormon. *Soul/souls* appears 55 times in the New Testament and 228 times in the Book of Mormon. *Sure* appears 14 times in the New Testament and 12 times in the Book of Mormon. Finally, *steadfast* appears 7 times in the New Testament and 6 times in the Book of Mormon. Significantly, the only time all four words appear in the same sentence are the two verses cited above, Ether 12:4 and Hebrews 6:19, suggesting that the phrases possess a dissimilarity in relation to other biblical phrases. Furthermore, in both verses, these four words appear in the same order—*anchor*, *soul/souls*, *sure*, *steadfast*. The combination of both the sharing of key terms and the identical sequence in which they appear in the two verses strongly supports Ether 12:4 being a biblical interaction with Hebrews 6:19. Again, when evaluating the type of biblical interaction—precise, probable, or possible—other criteria would need to be involved.

*The criterion of proximity*

The criterion of proximity asserts that when two or more phrases from the same biblical text can be located in the Book of Mormon within close proximity, this increases the likelihood that readers are encountering biblical interactions.<sup>33</sup> Ideally, this proximity would occur within a single verse, but it can be extended to proximity within a pericope or even, in some cases, within a chapter. For example, the phrase “believe on his name” occurs (with slight variation) 12 times in the Book of Mormon. One location where “believe on his name” occurs is Alma 19:13:

For as sure as thou livest, behold, I have seen my Redeemer, and he shall come forth and be born of a woman, and he shall redeem all mankind who *believe on his name*. Now when he had said these words, his heart was swollen within him. And he sunk again with joy; and the queen also sunk down, being overpowered by the Spirit.

The appearance of “believe on his name” could be a quotation from John 1:12:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on his name*. (John 1:12)

However, the appearance of “believe on his name” could simply have become part of the Nephite theological vocabulary or a phrase chosen by the translator of the plates. There is simply no way to tie Alma 19:13 firmly to John 1:12.

However, the same is not true for Alma 5:48, another verse where the phrase “believe on his name” can be found. Alma 5:48 reads:

I say unto you that I know of myself that whatsoever I shall say unto you concerning that which is to come is true. And I say unto

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33. “While an isolated term or phrase may well constitute an allusion, the likelihood of a connection increases with the accumulation of other shared terms. . . . Each additional connection found in a text provides supporting evidence for affirming less obvious allusions.” Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions,” 253.

you that I know that Jesus Christ shall come, yea, the Son, *the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and mercy and truth*. And behold, it is he that cometh to take away the sins of the world, yea, the sins of every man which steadfastly *believeth on his name*.

In addition to “believe on his name,” this verse presents readers with two additional phrases which also appear to be biblical interactions with John 1:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of *the only begotten of the Father,*) *full of grace and truth*. (John 1:14)

Unlike the example cited above from Alma 19:13, the appearance of two other phrases from John 1 in such close proximity to “believe on his name” links Alma 5:48 and John 1, and thus these phrases from Alma 5:48 can confidently be cited as biblical interactions.

However, not all possible biblical quotations found in the Book of Mormon are as conveniently clustered in one verse as Alma 5:48. For that reason, the criterion of proximity should be expanded to chapters within a larger text or even to the larger text itself. For example, Mosiah 3 concludes with an eschatological scene illustrating the fate of the wicked:

And thus saith the Lord: They shall stand as a bright testimony against this people at the judgment day; whereof *they shall be judged every man according to his works*, whether they be good or whether they be evil. And if they be evil, they are consigned to an awful view of their own guilt and abominations, which doth cause them to shrink from the presence of the Lord into a state of misery and endless torment, from whence they can no more return; therefore they have drunk damnation to their own souls. Therefore they have *drunk out of the cup of the wrath of God*, which justice could no more deny unto them than it could deny that Adam should fall because of his partaking of the forbidden fruit; therefore mercy could have claim on them no more forever. And their *torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone* whose flames are unquenchable and

whose *smoke ascendeth up forever and ever*. Thus hath the Lord commanded me. Amen. (Mosiah 3:24–28)

Now compare these verses from King Benjamin's speech in Mosiah 3 to four verses from the book of Revelation:

The same shall *drink of the wine of the wrath of God*, which is poured out without mixture *into the cup of his indignation*; and he shall be *tormented with fire and brimstone* in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And *the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever*: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (Revelation 14:10–11)

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and *they were judged every man according to their works*. And death and hell were cast into the *lake of fire*. This is the second death. (Revelation 20:13–14)

The similarities between the two texts could be ascribed to two phenomena: both Mosiah 3 and the book of Revelation draw upon a common experience or source (perhaps Benjamin had a vision similar to that of John), or what readers encounter in Mosiah 3 are biblical interactions. If Mosiah 3 had contained language shared with *either* Revelation 14:10–11 *or* Revelation 20:13–14, the similarities could be ascribed to coincidence. But the fact that two separate sections from the book of Revelation are quoted in such close proximity in Mosiah 3 again strengthens the case that biblical interactions are present in Mosiah 3.

#### *The criterion of sequence*

The criterion of sequence is closely linked with the criterion of proximity. The criterion of sequence asserts that if multiple biblical interactions found in close proximity in the Book of Mormon follow a similar

sequence or ordering as they appear in the Bible, the likelihood is increased that readers are encountering biblical interactions.<sup>34</sup>

A useful example is encountered in Alma 5, Alma the Younger's lengthy discourse to the Nephites in Zarahemla. Among the statements made by Alma are several that appear to interact with Matthew 3, not only in terminology but also in the same sequence:

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, And saying, *Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. . . . But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:* And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is *hewn down, and cast into the fire.* (Matthew 3:1–3, 7–10)

Alma 5 relates Alma the Younger's lengthy discourse to the Nephites in Zarahemla. Among the statements made by Alma are several that appear to interact with these verses from Matthew 3, not only in language but also in the same sequence:

Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you: if ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold, ye must prepare quickly; *for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand* [cf. Matthew 3:2], and such an one hath not eternal life. (Alma 5:28)

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34. In his list of six criteria for tracing intertextuality (what he calls "mimesis") in ancient texts, Dennis R. MacDonald writes, "The fourth criterion, *order*, looks for similar sequences for the parallels. The more often two texts share content in the same order, the stronger the case for dependence." MacDonald, ed., *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2001), 2.

Yea, come unto me and *bring forth works of righteousness* [cf. Matthew 3:8], and ye shall not be *cut down and cast into the fire* [cf. Matthew 3:10]. (Alma 5:35)

A few verses later, this pattern repeats itself.

Yea, thus saith the Spirit: *Repent, all ye ends of the earth, for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand* [cf. Matthew 3:2]. 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. (Alma 5:50)

And again I say unto you: The Spirit saith: Behold, the ax is laid at the root of the tree. Therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be *hewn down and cast into the fire* [cf. Matthew 3:10], yea, a fire which cannot be consumed, even an unquenchable fire. Behold and remember, the Holy One hath spoken it! (Alma 5:52)

Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another? Yea, will ye persist in the persecution of your brethren who humble themselves and do walk after the holy order of God wherewith they have been brought into this church, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit?—and they do *bring forth works which is meet for repentance* [cf. Matthew 3:8]. (Alma 5:54)

Both proximity and sequence can be applied to these verses. Alma 5:28 and 35 interact with Matthew 3:2, 8, and 10. Alma 5:50, 52, and 54 nearly repeats that pattern through an interaction with Matthew 3:2, 10, and 8. While the order of the verses is not perfectly sequential, enough sequentiality does exist to support the argument that these verses from Alma 5 are biblical interactions.

#### *The criterion of context*

The criterion of context suggests that a biblical interaction with the Book of Mormon increases in validity if the context of both passages is

similar.<sup>35</sup> This criterion is probably the weakest of the five, since proper context cannot always be ascertained and there is no way to determine whether an author is deliberately changing context to illustrate a particular point or is simply writing in a genre that differs from the earlier text.<sup>36</sup> While phrases used in different contexts should not eliminate passages from consideration, similarity in context should be one criterion in establishing validity, especially for passages where the criteria of specific terminology and proximity may be inconclusive.

This criterion can be applied to numerous lengthy passages in the Book of Mormon, such as the announcement of Christ's divinity in both John 1 and 3 Nephi 9, the hymns to charity preserved in 1 Corinthians 13 and in Moroni 7, or the interaction between 1 John 3:1–3 that closes out Mormon's words in Moroni 7. However, it can also be useful at the phrasal level. Consider the following verses:

And he said unto me: Awake and hear the words which I shall tell thee; for behold, I am come to declare unto thee *glad tidings of great joy*. (Mosiah 3:3)

Yea, and the voice of the Lord by the mouth of angels doth declare it unto all nations, yea, doth declare it that they may have *glad tidings of great joy*. Yea, and he doth sound these glad tidings among all his people, yea, even to them that are scattered abroad upon the face of the earth; wherefore they have come unto us. (Alma 13:22)

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35. "Even when verbatim correspondence is lacking, two texts can mirror each other by means of content. . . . As with lexical similarities, parallels based on content must not be adduced indiscriminately as proof of intertextuality." Miller, "Intertextuality in Old Testament Research," 295–96. "When context is paired with the earlier principle concerning distinctive terms, the likelihood of a textual connection is even greater." Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions," 255.

36. "Materials are always moving from one setting to another, being joined to different genres, and resulting in new redactional units for instruction. Indeed, we must take note of the fact that traditions were always being integrated and moved from one sphere of instruction—be that oral, written, priestly, sapiential, or whatever—to another." Michael Fishbane, "The Hebrew Bible and Exegetical Tradition," in *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, ed. Johannes C. De Moor (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 18.

And angels did appear unto men, wise men, and did declare unto them *glad tidings of great joy*. And thus in this year the scriptures began to be fulfilled. (Helaman 16:14)

The phrase common to all three, “glad tidings of great joy,” appears to be a biblical interaction with Luke 2:10:

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be to all people.

The context to Luke 2:10 is the annunciation of the birth of Jesus by the angel Gabriel to the shepherds. Interestingly, the three uses of “glad tidings of great joy” in the Book of Mormon all concern the deliverance of news by angels. In Mosiah 3:3, King Benjamin encounters an angel who delivers news regarding the future birth and death of Jesus. In Alma 13:22, Alma the Younger speaks more generally of angels who will declare that “now is the time to repent, for the day of salvation draweth nigh” (Alma 13:21). Finally, in Helaman 16:14, the context of the use of “glad tidings of great joy” is nearly identical to that of Luke 2:10, namely, the announcement of the impending birth of Jesus. While not conclusive on its own, the criterion of context would serve to strengthen the argument that Mosiah 3:3, Alma 13:22, and Helaman 16:14 are biblical interactions after the other four criteria have been applied.

## Case studies

In order to explore the usefulness of these criteria, I will present case studies on five Book of Mormon passages, all of which need to be carefully evaluated to see if they qualify as biblical interactions and all of which present unique difficulties.

*Case study 1: Mosiah 16:7–8, 10 and 1 Corinthians 15:14, 53–55*

In an exploration of biblical interaction, Mosiah 16:7–8, 10 provides fertile ground. In these verses, Abinadi discusses the deep significance behind Jesus’s resurrection from the dead:

*And if Christ had not risen from the dead or broken the bands of death—that the grave should have no victory and that death should have no sting—there could have been no resurrection. But there is a resurrection. Therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ. . . . Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God to be judged of him according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.*

These verses bear marked similarity to Paul's discussion of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15.

Paul begins his discussion with a hypothetical situation similar to Abinadi's:

*And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. (1 Corinthians 15:14)*

Paul then goes on to discuss the relationship of Jesus to Adam, the Corinthian practice of baptism for the dead, and the potential for different types of resurrected bodies before concluding:

*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Corinthians 15:53–55)*

Thus, when the words of Abinadi are compared with the text of 1 Corinthians, we get the following:

*And if Christ had not risen from the dead [cf. 1 Corinthians 15:14] or broken the bands of death—that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting—[cf. 1 Corinthians 15:55] there could have been no resurrection. But there is a resurrection. Therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death*

*is swallowed up* [cf. 1 Corinthians 15:54] in Christ. . . . Even this *mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption* [cf. 1 Corinthians 15:53–54] and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God to be judged of him according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. (Mosiah 16:7–8, 10)<sup>37</sup>

With seven phrases shared between the two passages, the criterion of shared terminology is clearly met. The interaction with three verses from Mosiah 16 and four verses from 1 Corinthians 15 meets the criterion of proximity. Additionally, the four verses from 1 Corinthians 15 appear in roughly the same sequence or order in Mosiah 16 as they do in 1 Corinthians 15, which meets the criterion of sequence. Finally, the context of both passages is the conditional exploration of Jesus’s ability to conquer death through the resurrection, satisfying the criterion of context. Having satisfied four criteria allows us to classify Mosiah 16:7–8, 10 as a precise biblical interaction.

*Case study 2: 1 Nephi 6:5 and John 15:19; 17:14, 16*

In 1 Nephi 6:5, Nephi describes the differences between the content on the large and the small plates. He tells his readers that he will place only matters of spiritual concern on the small plates:

Wherefore the things which are pleasing unto the world I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto them which *are not of the world*.

Nephi’s description of the audience of the small plates includes a highly significant phrase: those which “are not of the world.” In John’s description of Jesus’s farewell discourse, Jesus uses the phrase “are/am not of the world” on three occasions to describe his apostles and on two occasions to describe himself:

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37. The phrase “stand before the bar of God to be judged of him according to their works” appears to be interacting with Revelation 20:12–13.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye *are not of the world*, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. (John 15:19)

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they *are not of the world*, even as I *am not of the world*. (John 17:14)

They *are not of the world*, even as I *am not of the world*. (John 17:16)

Are readers encountering a biblical interaction in 1 Nephi 6:5, or is Nephi's description of his intended audience simply the result of a common vocabulary? The criterion of shared terminology is relevant, as a string of five consecutive words ("are not of the world") is shared between 1 Nephi 6:5 and the three passages in John 15 and 17. While none of the five words in and of themselves is overly unique, the only places in the New Testament or the Book of Mormon where the phrase "are/am not of the world" appears are the ones listed above, satisfying the criterion of dissimilarity. The criterion of context is also applicable, as both Nephi and Jesus are demarcating between things that are worldly and spiritual, and the use of the same phrase to perform this demarcation is notable. Absent are the criteria of sequence and proximity, as no other phrases from John 15 and 17 are present in 1 Nephi 6. The combination of shared terminology, a dissimilarity in the phraseology, and a similar context all suggest that 1 Nephi 6:5 be understood as a probable biblical interaction.

#### *Case study 3: Mosiah 13:34 and Philippians 2:6–7*

Mosiah 13:34 presents a different set of issues for us to consider. In that verse, Abinadi reminds the priests of King Noah that several different prophets have spoken regarding the condescension of God:

Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men and *take upon him the form of man* and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth?

There is a potential biblical interaction between this verse and Philippians 2:6–7:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and *took upon him the form of a servant*, and was made in the likeness of men:

First, what similar terminology can be seen? The key phrase common to both is “take upon him the form of man” (Mosiah 13:34) and “took upon him the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:7). Unfortunately, this is the extent of the shared language between the two verses, raising a legitimate question about whether or not a biblical interaction is present in Mosiah 13:34. However, at this point the criterion of dissimilarity becomes useful. In the New Testament, the noun *form* appears only six times (two of them in Philippians 2:6–7), and of these only Mark 16:12 applies *form* to the body/appearance of Jesus. In the Book of Mormon the noun *form* appears ten times total, referring to the orbit of planets (Alma 30:44), the resurrected body (Alma 11:43), angels (Alma 30:53), the Holy Spirit (1 Nephi 11:27; 2 Nephi 31:8), the Spirit of the Lord (1 Nephi 11:11), the Messiah (3 Nephi 20:44; Mosiah 13:34; 14:2), and the “form of godliness” (Moroni 7:30). It is fully possible that the *form* used in Mosiah 13:34 is interacting with the Isaiah 53:2 passage quoted by Abinadi in Mosiah 14:2. However, the combination of “take/took upon him the form of” appears only in Mosiah 13:34 and Philippians 2:7, thus satisfying the criterion of dissimilarity. Unfortunately, no other passages from Philippians are quoted in Mosiah 13, thus eliminating the criteria of proximity and sequence. This leaves us with the criterion of context. The context of both verses is clearly the condescension of God from a heavenly state to an earthly existence. Thus Mosiah 13:34 satisfies both the criterion of dissimilarity and the criterion of context. However, the lack of a sufficient number of shared terms and other verses from Philippians suggests caution in classifying this verse, leaving us with what can most accurately be called a possible biblical interaction.

*Case study 4: Jacob 4:5 and John 1:12*

This case study is perhaps the most difficult of the four to this point to adequately classify. Jacob 4:5 reads:

Behold, they *believed in Christ and worshipped the Father in his name*; and also we worship the Father in his name. And for this intent we keep the law of Moses, it pointing our souls to him. And for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which was a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son. (Jacob 4:5)

This verse is potentially interacting with John 1:12:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on his name*:

The key phrase in question is “believed in Christ and worshipped the Father in his name.” The criterion of similar terminology would identify “believe” and “his name” as potential links, but this is simply not enough terminology to draw a conclusion. Additionally, both “believe” and “his name” are commonly found in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, and even the combination of the two appears 5 times in the New Testament and 18 in the Book of Mormon. Thus the criterion of dissimilarity is of little help. The criterion of proximity offers more support in the use of “Only Begotten Son” in Jacob 4:5, which is a uniquely Johannine title for Jesus that appears in John 1:18 and twice in John 3:16 and 18 (a slight variation, the “Only Begotten of the Father” appears in John 1:14). The presence of this title and its appearance after John 1:12 satisfies both the criteria of proximity and sequence. The context of Jacob 4:5 is the striving of the Nephites to maintain proper worship and adherence to the law of Moses, seeing it as a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The context of John 1:12 emphasizes the need to “believe” in Jesus Christ over and against the law of Moses, “For the law was given

by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Both passages concern the law of Moses, but any connection is indirect at best. While the criteria of proximity and sequence allow for this verse to be considered as a textual interaction, the lack of satisfying the other criteria renders this verse at best a possible interaction, but more likely the result of shared language on the part of both authors.

*Case study 5: Mosiah 25:20 and Luke 5:1*

Mosiah 25 describes the reforms in Zarahemla initiated by Mosiah<sub>2</sub> following the return of Alma the Elder and his people from the land of Nephi. In Mosiah 25:20, readers are told that Mosiah<sub>2</sub> granted power to Alma to ordain priests and teachers in several churches due to the rapid increase in population:

Now this was done because there was so many people that they could not all be governed by one teacher, neither could they all *hear the word of God* in one assembly.

The phrase “hear the word of God” is also found in Luke 5:1, where, speaking of Jesus’s popularity, Luke writes,

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to *hear the word of God*, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret.

What are we to make of this phrase “hear the word of God?” Are readers encountering a biblical interaction?

First, the phrase satisfies the criterion of shared terminology, as an exact phrase of five words is shared between the two passages. The criterion of dissimilarity, however, suggests that this is not an interaction. The exact phrase appears on four other occasions in the New Testament, and numerous examples appear of biblical phrases where the words *hear*, *word*, and *God* are present in various forms. The criterion of proximity does reveal some interesting points. All the New Testament references where the exact phrase “hear the word of God” occurs are from passages written by Luke (Luke 5:1; 8:21; 11:28; Acts 13:7, 44),

thus raising questions about whether or not this exact phrase should be viewed as the product of a single biblical author.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, all three Book of Mormon uses of the exact phrase occur within a short span—Mosiah 25:20, Alma 1:26, and Alma 6:5, all chapters dealing with the fallout from the arrival of Alma’s people and the subsequent establishment of multiple churches. The criterion of sequence is not applicable here, as only one phrase is in play, and the context of both passages is too broad to employ the criterion of context. Although the criterion of similar terminology is satisfied, and while the criterion of proximity raises some tantalizing questions, the phrase is best disregarded as a biblical interaction. The language is simply too general and the context too vague. However, this case study is useful in demonstrating the fallacy of relying on word length as a means of identification of biblical interactions.

## Conclusion

In his analysis of the role of Isaiah in the book of Revelation, Jan W. Fekkes stated that “it is not enough merely to be sympathetic to the presence and influence of possible Old Testament texts; . . . one must dig deeper and look closer at apparent biblical links.”<sup>39</sup> The same holds true for a study of the Book of Mormon. As the Book of Mormon finds more acceptance as a text worthy of rigorous study within the academy, the interaction between the Book of Mormon and the New Testament will continue to be a significant area of focus. While many have noted the presence of the New Testament in the Book of Mormon, little has been done by way of identifying, classifying, and analyzing New Testament interactions with the Book of Mormon. This paper suggests a methodology for accomplishing the first two steps, namely identification and classification. The final step, proper analysis, can realistically

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38. Alas, the Greek and Latin texts of Luke and Acts do not demonstrate the same uniqueness as the King James Version does, making a case for Lucan origins a difficult case to make. This is especially true for Luke 13:44, where the Greek κῆριος is used in place of θεός.

39. Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*, 63.

be performed only once the first two steps have been fully explored. Once we have ascertained where the precise and probable biblical interactions exist within the Book of Mormon and we can set aside those phrases that are simply the result of a shared vocabulary, we can begin to look more closely at *why* biblical phrases constitute such an apparent, yet so very intrinsic, part of the text. Are they the merely the result of a nineteenth-century translation? Are they more easily explained as author-oriented or audience-oriented? While answers may be hard to come by, they are certainly worth exploring, and possessing a clear idea of the function of the New Testament within the Book of Mormon will no doubt contribute greatly to such an exploration.

But more important than the *why* would be the *how*, both in terms of *how* the phrases are being used by the author of the text, and *how* we as readers ought to interpret them. We will return to a phrase used in case study 2, Nephi's claim that he is writing for those "who are not of the world"; we saw that this phrase appears in the New Testament only in John 15 and 17. These two chapters—the one containing the description of Jesus as the "true vine" (John 15:1) and the other Jesus's poignant intercessory prayer—contain some of Jesus's finest words on what it means to be "in Christ." To have Nephi refer to his intended audience with the same phrase opens up theological space to explore what it means to be a reader of the Book of Mormon and may lead to a greater understanding of how Nephi understood his own role as an author. To engage in such a discussion would be beyond the scope of this paper, but it is precisely to facilitate the exploration of such issues that this methodology was conceived, in hopes that we can move beyond the discussion of *where* biblical interactions exist and venture headlong into the more fruitful areas of *why* and *how* they do.

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