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Mormon's Outline of the Book of Mormon

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The prophet Mormon followed the same principle. An examination of the subtextual outline of the entire Book of Mormon shows a carefully structured pattern. If one does a hopscotch across the pages of the book and only lands on the major sermons and on an occasional outstanding ecclesiastical event, the following is what one finds:

- 1) As one would expect, the Book of Mormon begins with the decisions made in the Council in Heaven. During a *sode* experience Lehi attends a meeting of the Council where Elohim sits on his throne and presiding. Jehovah, who conducts the affairs of the Council, gives Lehi an earthly assignment.
- 2) Lehi and his family make the necessary preparations to fulfill their assignment. (Much of First Nephi is about their receiving the things requisite for the success of the mission. They included, among others, Nephi's new dynastic authority, the brass plates, Ishmael and his family, Lehi's tree of life vision, Nephi's vision of the tree of life and of his posterity so he could understand the importance and intent of his mission.)
- 3) They cross the chaotic waters (the ancient symbol of creation as well as of birth) and they go to a new world.
- 4) When they get there, Lehi teaches his sons about Adam and Eve and the Fall.
- 5) Nephi's psalm asks why we have come here when it is so very difficult.
- 6) Jacob seems to answer that question by teaching about the Atonement.
- 7) Nephi quotes much of the first part of Isaiah whose underlying message is that God is the God of this world and Satan is not.
- 8) Nephi concludes Second Nephi by teaching about faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- 9) Jacob teaches about the importance of keeping covenants
- 10) Enos teaches that one must pray.
- 11) King Benjamin teaches his people about the importance of obedience. They make a covenant that they will obey, and they receive a new name.
- 12) Abinadi teaches Alma the gospel. He does this by explaining the Savior's sacrifice; then we see Abinadi's sacrifice also.
- 13) At the Waters of Mormon the people are baptized. But Alma's prayer does not mention the remission of sins. This baptism seems to be the token of a covenant

In the Book of Mormon.

- that the people will support each other, the church, and the kingdom.
- 14) When Alma and his followers are in the wilderness, they briefly live the law of consecration.
 - 15) They get to Zarahemla, and in Alma 5 and 7 the prophet sums up many of the principles of the drama and admonishes the people to keep their covenants.
 - 16) In Alma chapters 12 and 13, he teaches Zeezrom about the eternal legitimacy of priesthood and kingship.
 - 17) Alma 26 and 29 are psalms about responsibilities of missionary work.
 - 18) Alma 32 teaches how to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and eventually how to become as a tree of life. (The tree of life is always an important part of the drama. If Alma 32 were not there the whole structure of the pattern would collapse.)
 - 19) When Alma talks to his three sons,
 - 19a) he teaches his oldest son he must keep sacred things sacred.
 - 19b) he teaches the second that he must be true to the law of his own being.
 - 19c) he tells the third about justice and mercy and the importance of the laws of chastity.
 - 20) There are many wars in Book of Mormon history as the people struggle to overcome the aloneness of this dark and dreary world. But Mormon chooses to give the most detail about one, which he identifies as a sacred war between good and evil. He introduces it with a whole series of covenants and covenant names (There are always new names associated with new covenants).
 - 20a) Captain Moroni tears off a piece of his coat (after that it is called “garment” so it is the outer of the two—there are always two).
 - 20b) He writes a chiasmic poem on it. The poem is a covenant, and he gives it the title of “Liberty.”
 - 20c) At this point Mormon interrupts his narrative to insert the information that those who believe in Christ “took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ,” and are called Christians.
 - 20d) Captain Moroni then identifies the land in terms of its geographical boundaries (measuring it and defining it as sacred space) and gives it the same name as the poem—“the land of liberty.”
 - 20e) The people come and join in the covenant that they will keep the Lord’s commandments and he will preserve them in their Liberty.

Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship

- 20f) Shortly thereafter we are told that the sons of Helaman “entered into a covenant,” and “they called themselves Nephites” (Alma 53:16-17).
- 20g) It is in the context of these covenants that Helaman tells the story of their part of the war. The point being that all the boys who made and kept their covenants were protected—some were badly hurt, but they all survived.
- 21) After the war, Nephi, Lehi are baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost.
- 22) Nephi is given the sealing power—“even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word “ (Helaman 10:5).
- 23) Samuel the Lamanite tells the people that the Savior is coming, and urges them to get ready to see him.
- 24) In three days of darkness, the world is cleansed of its unrighteousness (this maps to Jehovah’s restoring Israel and the king after he has been in the Underworld for three days).
- 25) The Savior comes to his temple just as the king does in the drama.
- 26) The Savior organizes his church and kingdom, and teaches the people how to keep their covenants (these map to the seventh day of the drama).
- 27) Then in Fourth Nephi the people do keep their covenants and live the law of consecration (this maps to the eighth day of the drama). In the symbolism, they had returned to the Garden to enjoy the blessings of the eating freely of the fruit of the tree of life (3 Nephi 20:5-9), and the promised millennial reign.
- 28) The book of Ether is the counterbalance of that story. It shows the destructive consequences when people do not keep their covenants with God.
- 29) The Book of Mormon’s crescendo is repeated three times near the end of the book. There the reader is taught one must have faith, hope, and charity in order to enter the presence of God (Ether 12:28,39; Moroni 7; and Moroni 10:20-21).
- 30) Then Moroni reviews the entire drama and in the last verse he says, “I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, ... before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah.”

First Nephi set the example for that sub-textual pattern. While the surface texts of both are primarily concerned with the testimony of the Savior and the message and principles of the festival drama, their subtexts approach the same principles from a different point of view. They focus on the sequence, covenants, and ordinances of the drama, throwing a magnificent light on their meaning in the context of priesthood, temple, and the covenant relationship between Jehovah and each participant in the drama.