



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL
<http://bookofmormoncentral.com/>



Religious Studies Center
<https://rsc.byu.edu/>

"I Speak Somewhat Concerning That Which I Have Written"

Author(s): Cheryl Brown

Source: *The Book of Mormon: Jacob Through Words of Mormon, To Learn With Joy*

Editor(s): Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr.

Published: Provo, UT; Religious Studies Center, 1990

Page(s): 55-72



The Religious Studies Center is collaborating with Book of Mormon Central to preserve and extend access to scholarly research on the Book of Mormon. Items are archived by the permission of the Religious Studies Center.

<https://rsc.byu.edu/>

“I Speak Somewhat Concerning That Which I Have Written”

3

Cheryl Brown

At the beginning of the Words of Mormon, written in approximately AD 385, Mormon tells us that he is about to turn the record he has been making over to his son Moroni. He points out that he has witnessed the destruction of almost the entire Nephite nation and that he believes Moroni will witness their final destruction. He hopes that Moroni will survive him and add more to the record. Then, beginning in verse three with the words, “And now, I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written,” Mormon briefly outlines which records were being incorporated into his abridgement and why. This short explanation gives some of the most direct evidence available to us of how the Lord structured the Book of Mormon through his servant, Mormon.

Mormon was not the only writer to do this. Throughout the book the writers frequently tell us what they are including and why they are putting it in, and what they are leaving out and why. An examination of all their explanations (with special emphasis on those in the Words of Mormon) provides powerful evidence of some things the Lord intends that we get from the book and some ways he would have us approach the book. This paper examines that evidence.

Cheryl Brown is associate professor of Linguistics at Brigham Young University.

Reasons for Exclusion

The Overall Problem of Quantity

To appreciate how the Book of Mormon was compiled as the Lord directed the prophet-writers, we must first appreciate the fact that not everything available to the writers was included in the book. Again and again the reader is reminded of the immense amount of material the prophets had to work from and the small amount of space they had to work with. Mormon tells us that "I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people" (WofM 1:5). Elsewhere we read, "And now I, Nephi, cannot write all the things which were taught among my people" (2 Nephi 33:1); "And a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, which now began to be numerous, cannot be written upon these plates" (Jacob 3:13); "And many more things did king Benjamin teach his sons, which are not written in this book" (Mosiah 1:8; see also 1 Nephi 1:16-17; 9:1-4; 10:1; Mosiah 8:1; Alma 9:34; Hel 3:14; 8:3; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33).

Space Limitations

The major reasons for not writing everything in the book is a physical one—there was simply too much which took place and too few plates to write everything on. Particularly in the small plates of Nephi we hear the reason of space on the plates stated frequently:

And as these plates are small, and as these things are written for the intent of the benefit of our brethren the Lamanites, wherefore, it must needs be that I write a little. . . .And I, Jarom, do not write more, for the plates are small (Jarom 1:2, 14).

And I, Amaleki, . . . am about to lie down in my grave; and these plates are full (Omni 1:30).

In the mid-portions of the Book of Mormon, the complaint becomes more one of the great amount which would have to be written if all the proceedings of the people were to be included:

But behold, a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites and of the Nephites, and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping and their building of ships, and their building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries, and their righteousness, and their wickedness, and their murders, and their robbings, and their plundering, and all manner of abominations and whoredoms, cannot be contained in this work (Hel 3:14).

And there had many things transpired which, in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a hundredth part of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years (3 Nephi 5:8).

At the end of the book, the complaint comes back again to the limitation of space on the plates: “Behold, my father hath made this record, and he hath written the intent thereof. And behold, I would write it also if I had room upon the plates, but I have not: and ore I have none, for I am alone” (Mormon 8:5).

Difficulty in Writing

Along with the problems caused by limited space, we also read that there were physical difficulties encountered in engraving on the metal plates. Both Nephi and Jacob speak of laboring “diligently” to write (2 Nephi 25:23); Jacob specifically laments, “I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates . . .” (Jacob 4:1). Moroni also explains, “we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands” (Ether 12:24). Other times, however, the difficulty in writing was an intellectual one inherent in trying to house powerful and dynamic spiritual concepts in the fixed and structured written language. The authors of the Book of Mormon were full of the Spirit of the Lord. When they spoke to the people, they could feel that Spirit and see the effect of their words. They could perceive the thoughts and doubts of their listeners and respond to them (see 1 Nephi 15:1-4; Alma 7:17; 18:15-17; and 40:1). But once their words were written down, the authors could not respond to the effect they would have on their readers. The

authors could feel, therefore, a great difference between their spoken and their written language.

Nephi, the first writer in the Book of Mormon, felt this disparity between his spoken and his written language and worried about those who would harden their hearts against the truth in written form:

And now I, Nephi, cannot write all the things which were taught among my people; neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking; for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men. But behold, there are many that harden their hearts against the Holy Spirit, that it hath no place in them; wherefore, they cast many things away which are written and esteem them as things of naught (2 Nephi 33:1-2).

Moroni expressed the same worry: "Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore, when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words" (Ether 12:25).

In Moroni's fears and the Lord's response to them comes one of the great keys to our approach to the book. The Lord offered this comfort: "Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness" (Ether 12:26). Here lies one of the great keys for understanding the Book of Mormon: if we look for them, we will find weaknesses in the book, but ultimately we will mourn when our jeers turn to sorrow as we discover what we have missed because of our mocking. If we are meek, however, the Lord will speak to us from that scripture, and the concepts there will be as powerful and dynamic as if Nephi, Moroni, or any of the other prophets taught them to us personally.

Difficulty in Using a Second Language

In addition to the difficulty of engraving on metal plates, the complexities caused by writing in a second language forced at least some of the authors to limit what they wrote. Thus, the prophet Mormon writes in 3 Nephi, "there are many things which,

according to our language, we are not able to write” (3 Nephi 5:18). And Moroni tells us, “And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record” (Mormon 9:33). But, once again, he has faith that the Lord will make up the difference: “But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof” (Mormon 9:34).

As we read these explanations of why the authors did not write some things and why what they did write might be weak, we are reminded that the Book of Mormon is truly the Lord’s book. He knows what it is supposed to say, and the only way that we can get the full, intended meaning is through him. Through his power, what is not written by the ancient authors will not be a stumbling block for us.

Some Things to be Written Elsewhere

Another reason the Book of Mormon authors did not include certain things is that the revelations they had received were to be written in other books by other prophets. At least 17 times the Book of Mormon writers note that more was written—or would be written—in other places by other people. For example, 1 Nephi 13-15 records Nephi’s vision of many of the future events of the house of Israel. But Nephi was told not to write some of the things he had seen, “for the Lord has ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write [them]” (1 Nephi 14:25). Then Nephi tells us that the name of the apostle who was to write the remainder of the vision was John. Today we know that God has given us at least some further part of this vision in the book of Revelation. He knew that we would have access to the Bible and, in his economy, did not require more to be written in the Book of Mormon.

We see the Lord's kindness in two ways here. He was kind to Nephi by not requiring the additional engraving. He was kind to us by placing a link between these two visions. Can we truly understand Nephi's vision without the part John wrote? Can we understand the Revelation of John without the part Nephi wrote? What synergism is created when these two visions "become one in thine hand" (Ezek 37:17). The Lord himself has arranged for one book of scripture to lead us to the other. This, too, is a key to understanding how the Lord intended us to use the scriptures—one volume being complementary to the other.

We do not have everything which was recorded elsewhere. Some of the Book of Mormon story was lost with the 116 pages of the original translation of the Book of Mormon. The Lord knew that this part would be lost; therefore, he had Nephi prepare the small plates and had Mormon include them with his other plates precisely because he did not want that information to be lost to us. Other writings were never intended for us, such as the accounts of the business, shipping, dealings, etc. of the Nephites and to some extent the records of the Lamanites. The authors of the Book of Mormon tell us that those records were kept, but nowhere is there evidence that the Lord was concerned that we have such records at this time. Much of the history, "the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions" (1 Nephi 9:4) of the Nephites and Lamanites also fall into this category. Though they were written elsewhere, they have not yet come into our hands. Such issues, while interesting in establishing the fact that the principles of the book applied to real people, do not seem to be what the Lord most wanted us to get out of the Book of Mormon.

Preventing Sorrow for the Righteous and Temptation for the Wicked

Other reasons for not writing certain things show an awareness that readers of the book will also be subject to human frailties. In one very touching statement, Mormon tells why some things were not included:

And now behold, I, Mormon, do not desire to harrow up the souls of men in casting before them such an awful scene of blood and carnage as was laid before mine eyes; but I, knowing that these things must surely be made known, and that all things which are hid must be revealed upon the house-tops—And also that a knowledge of these things must come unto the remnant of these people, and also unto the Gentiles, who the Lord hath said should scatter this people, and this people should be counted as naught among them—therefore I write a small abridgement, daring not to give a full account of the things which I have seen, because of the commandment which I have received, and also that ye might not have too great sorrow because of the wickedness of this people. And now behold, this I speak unto their seed, and also to the Gentiles who have care for the house of Israel, that realize and know from whence their blessings come (Mormon 5:8-10).

We can surely learn something from Mormon for today's depiction of blood, gore, and violence in our media.

Some other things are not included because of the temptation they might engender among weak or wicked readers. Thus, Alma instructed Helaman:

And now, my son, I command you that ye retain all their oaths, and their covenants, and their agreements in their secret abominations; yea, and all their signs, and their wonders ye shall keep from this people that they know them not, lest peradventure they should fall into darkness also and be destroyed. Therefore ye shall keep these secret plans of their oaths and their covenants from this people, and only their wickedness and their murders and their abominations shall ye make known unto them; and ye shall teach them to abhor such wickedness and abominations and murders; and ye shall also teach them that these people were destroyed on account of their wickedness and abominations and their murders (Alma 37:27, 29).

In contrast, some things were kept back so the wicked could not destroy them. The general wickedness of people put the record in constant jeopardy. Thus Mormon was commanded that he “should not suffer the records which had been handed down by [his] fathers, which were sacred, to fall into the hands of the Lamanites, (for the Lamanites would destroy them)” (Mormon 6:6). And Joseph Smith was told in these days that “there are records which contain much of my gospel, which have been kept back because of the wickedness of the people” (D&C 6:26). The wisdom of retaining some records was demonstrated in the loss

of the first 116 manuscript pages through Martin Harris. Of this matter, the Lord said to Joseph Smith, "Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them" (D&C 10:1). The Lord was well aware that not all potential readers would be happy about even the best that the book offered, and he was cautious about who should have the record at all. As he said, "My scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and they shall be preserved in safety" (D&C 42:56).

Trying the Faith of the Readers

The Lord was also cautious about what *was* contained in the record, withholding even some very good things in order to test the faithful. We plainly see this in 3 Nephi. There, Mormon writes,

And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he [Christ] taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.

And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.

And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.

Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people.

Therefore I, Mormon, do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord. And now I, Mormon, make an end of my sayings, and proceed to write the things which have been commanded me (3 Nephi 26:8-12).

Moroni, too, felt the constraining hand of the Lord. However, he was allowed to write more, but he was commanded to seal up a portion of what he had written and Joseph Smith was not allowed to translate it. In Ether 4:4-7, we get the following explanation:

Behold, I have written upon these plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw; and there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared.

Wherefore the Lord hath commanded me to write them. And I have written them. And he commanded me that I should seal them up; and he also hath commanded that I should seal up the interpretation thereof; wherefore I have sealed up the interpreters, according to the commandment of the Lord.

For the Lord said unto me: They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.

And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.

From this statement and all the other reasons given by Book of Mormon authors for not including certain things, two points can be easily drawn about the book and what the Lord intended that we get from it. One is the fact that the Book of Mormon is the Lord's book and that a correct understanding of it comes from him alone. The other is that there is much more knowledge and truth available which we will receive only as we live in accordance with that which we already have.

Reasons for Including Certain Things

So, what *is* in the Book of Mormon and why is it there? The authors discuss their reasons for including what they included, too.

Looking Forward to Intended Readers

To begin with, it is obvious that the authors intended the writings to be of worth to particular people. Interestingly, not all of the authors specified the same groups. Nephi seems to have had a broad perspective about his potential readership—"the things which shall be written out of the book shall be of great

worth unto the children of men" but he also recognizes some narrower groups for whom the book will have special meaning: "and especially unto our seed, which is a remnant of the house of Israel" (2 Nephi 28:2).

Jacob gives a feeling of a narrower perspective, viewing potential readers as being composed of Nephites and Lamanites: "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" (Jacob 4:3). He closes his writings hoping that "many of [his] brethren may read [his] words" and saying, "Brethren, adieu" (Jacob 7:27). Enos and Jarom both seem to have views that are even narrower. Enos says, "And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would preserve the records; and he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time" (Enos 1:16), and Jarom points out, "these things are written for the intent of the benefit of our brethren the Lamanites" (Jarom 1:2).

Mormon also clearly considered himself writing to the remnant of the Lamanites and the Nephites. Commenting on the hope that Moroni would survive him to write more, he said, "And it supposeth me that he will witness the entire destruction of my people. But may God grant that he may survive them, that he may write somewhat concerning them, and somewhat concerning Christ, that perhaps some day it may profit them" (WofM 1:2). But Mormon also saw more. In Mormon 5:12, he states, "Now these things are written unto the remnant of the house of Jacob."

Alma, like Nephi, also saw a broader audience. This is indicated by his comment to Helaman that the record "should be kept and handed down from one generation to another, and be kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord until they should go forth unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" (Alma 37:4).

The Savior himself also taught this broad view in his visit to the Nephites. He said, "Therefore give heed to my words; write the things which I have told you; and according to the time and

the will of the Father they shall go forth unto the Gentiles” (3 Nephi 23:4). Earlier in his visit he had said, “These sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles” and then “that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed, who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer” (3 Nephi 16:4). The Lord intended that everyone should have the book.

To Allow for a Fair Judgment

One reason everyone should have the book and one reason authors give for writing it involves the judgment. The Lord told Nephi, for example, that the records must be kept because “out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written” (2 Nephi 29:11). Then, again, during his visit to the Nephites, the Savior reminded the record keepers: “Write the works of this people, which shall be, even as hath been written, of that which hath been. For behold, out of the books which have been written, and which shall be written, shall this people be judged, for by them shall their works be known unto men. And behold, all things are written by the Father; therefore out of the books which shall be written shall the world be judged” (3 Nephi 27:24-26).

And, in the Words of Mormon, “And I know that they will be preserved; for there are great things written upon them, out of which my people and their brethren shall be judged at the great and last day, according to the word of God which is written” (WofM 1:11). The prophets wrote so that there would be a fair judgment for their people—and so that we would have the knowledge upon which our judgment will be based. This is one of the things the Lord intended for us—a “standard” work to guide our thoughts and actions.

To Express Deep Feelings of the Soul

Other items were included in the Book of Mormon because they touched the souls of the authors. Thus, Nephi declares, "And upon these I write the things of my soul" (2 Nephi 4:15) and Mormon explains his actions by saying, "And the things which are upon these plates pleas[ed] me. . . . Wherefore, I chose these things, to finish my record upon them" (WofM 1:4-5).

To Be Obedient to Others

The authors of the Book of Mormon also wrote because they had been commanded by those who had kept the records before them. Jacob tells us that he was commanded by his brother Nephi, to write on the plates (Jacob 1:1-2) and that he gave the plates to his son, Enos, with the same commandment he had received from Nephi (Jacob 7:27); Jarom wrote because he was told to by his father; Enos so that their genealogy could be preserved (Jarom 1:1); and Omni because his father, Jarom, told him the same things (Omni 1:1). Alma carefully instructed Helaman about keeping the records. Mormon himself wrote in obedience to the instructions given him by Ammaron (Mormon 1:3-4; 2:17).

To Be Obedient to God

But the main reason the prophets wrote was obedience to the Lord's command. Thus, Nephi tells us of the commandment he received to make a new set of smaller plates and what they were to contain: "And after I had made these plates by way of commandment, I, Nephi, received a commandment that the ministry and the prophecies, the more plain and precious parts of them, should be written upon these plates; and that the things which were written should be kept for the instruction of my people, who should possess the land, and also for other wise purposes, which purposes are known unto the Lord" (1 Nephi

19:3). Later he says, “And I engraved that which is pleasing unto God” (2 Nephi 5:32).

To Supply Missing Elements of Christ’s Gospel

The authors also wanted to present a fuller statement of the gospel. Thus, Nephi is shown that “they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away” (1 Nephi 13:26). Furthermore, the Lord tells Nephi:

I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb. And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation (1 Nephi 13:35-36).

The Book of Mormon gives more evidence of this fact when it records Christ’s ministry among the Nephites. He told his disciples: “Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not” (3 Nephi 23:6). He then gave the Nephites the words of Malachi, which had been given to the Jews after Lehi departed from Jerusalem. He also made sure that they had recorded the fulfillment of one of Samuel the Lamanite’s prophecies.

To Demonstrate That the Lord’s Words Do Not “Fall to the Ground”

The incident with Samuel the Lamanite’s prophecies ties closely to another major reason for including certain things in the Book of Mormon; namely, to give clear evidence that the words of the Lord do not “fall to the ground” (see 1 Sam 3:19). In other words, the Lord wanted very plain evidence that all of his promises and prophecies are fulfilled. Following the passage quoted above in which Christ supplied the disciples with the teachings of Malachi, he pointed out that they had failed to record

the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy (3 Nephi 23:10-11) that many saints would arise from the dead, and should "appear unto many" (Hel 14:25). Even though the record keepers had noted the fulfillment of numerous other prophecies regarding the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, that was not enough. The Lord wanted it made clear that *every single one* of his prophecies were fulfilled. He commanded the disciples to write the scriptures and their fulfillment, then told them to teach those things to the people.

Further evidence that the Lord wanted it clear that none of his words fail comes in Mormon's instructions to readers: "And now, whoso readeth, let him understand; he that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see and behold if all these deaths and destructions by fire, and by smoke, and by tempests, and by whirlwinds, and by the opening of the earth to receive them, and all these things are not unto the fulfilling of the prophecies of many of the holy prophets" (3 Nephi 10:14).

Christ also had his Nephite disciples record a statement he made in Jerusalem about having other sheep, saying:

And I command you that ye shall write these sayings after I am gone, that if it so be that my people at Jerusalem, they who have seen me and been with me in my ministry, do not ask the Father in my name, that they may receive a knowledge of you by the Holy Ghost, and also of the other tribes whom they know not of, that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed, who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer (3 Nephi 16:4).

The Lord had prophesied that the gathering of Israel would take place, but, uncertain whether his disciples in the Old World would inquire about the prophecy's meaning, he reiterated it in the New World.

The Lord also made sure that there was a witness to the fulfillment of the prophecies about the Jaredites: "And the Lord spake unto Ether, and said unto him: Go forth. And he went forth, and beheld that the words of the Lord had all been fulfilled; and

he finished his record” (Ether 15:33). The Book of Mormon authors wrote so that we may know what and in whom we can trust.

To Give Testimony of the Lord and His Mission

Bearing testimony that Christ is the person in whom we can trust is another major reason that the authors of the Book of Mormon give for putting certain things into their records. Very early in the Book of Mormon, Nephi is commanded: “And behold this thing shall be given unto these for a sign, that after thou hast beheld the tree which bore the fruit which thy father tasted, thou shalt also behold a man descending out of heaven, and him shall ye witness; and after ye have witnessed him ye shall bear record that it is the Son of God” (1 Nephi 11:7).

True to this purpose all the way through his record, Nephi concludes his account with his testimony of Christ:

And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good. And if they are not the words of Christ, judge ye—for Christ will show unto you, with power and great glory, that they are his words, at the last day; and you and I shall stand face to face before his bar; and ye shall know that I have been commanded of him to write these things, notwithstanding my weakness (2 Nephi 33:10-11).

Jacob follows Nephi’s lead, telling how he labored to record sacred things on the plates, “And touch upon them as much as it were possible, for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of our people” because “we knew of Christ and his kingdom, which should come. . . . Wherefore we would to God that we could persuade all men not to rebel against God, to provoke him to anger, but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world” (Jacob 1:4-8).

Authors throughout the Book of Mormon bear testimony of Christ, and Mormon reinforces this concept at the end of his abridgement, attempting to persuade people to believe in Christ:

And this is the commandment which I have received; and behold, they [the records] shall come forth according to the commandment of the Lord, when he shall see fit, in his wisdom. And behold, they shall go unto the unbelieving of the Jews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, unto the fulfilling of his covenant (Mormon 5:13-14).

At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned that the Words of Mormon provides some of the most direct evidence available of how the Lord structured the Book of Mormon. However, we have also seen that all parts and writers in the Book of Mormon do that. We have noted reasons and purposes for both *not* writing and writing certain things.

The Lord's Reasons and What They Mean

While all of the reasons noted thus far for the structuring of a holy book through holy men are interesting, some of them are vastly more important than others because they are reasons that the Lord himself has given. *His* reasons for *not having things written* consist of the fact that things will be written elsewhere and that the faith of the people should be tried. *His* reasons for *having things written* consist of restoring plain and precious parts of the gospel, giving evidence that all of the promises of the Lord are fulfilled, and testifying of Jesus Christ and his mission.

If we look at only these reasons, we can see a larger pattern which tells us more clearly what the Lord intends that we should get from the book. First, it is very clear that the book is "Another Testament of Jesus Christ." There is hardly a page which does not refer to him or his work or mission or love. We are to learn of Christ from the book, and to have hope in him.

Second, the Savior is very careful to make sure we know that he keeps his promises—all of his promises and prophecies are fulfilled. Both missing scripture and missing reports of fulfillment of scripture were added to the book at the Savior's

specific request. We are to learn from the book to trust Christ, to have faith in him.

Third, the Lord has made it clear that he has withheld some glorious things with the promise that they will be given later. In light of the previous two points, this becomes a powerful enticement. We know the goodness of Christ. We know that his promises are all fulfilled. And now we know that, when we repent and become clean before him and exercise faith in him (Ether 4:6-7), he will unfold unto us all his revelations (Ether 4:7), even the very things which the brother of Jared saw, “and there never were greater things made manifest than those” (Ether 4:4). The book is designed to draw us upward to him, to bring us “nearer to God” than we would get “by any other book.”

As we see the Lord’s design in the Book of Mormon, we can also gain new appreciation for those through whom he worked. In particular, Mormon is amazing. Notice how, in just a few verses from the Words of Mormon, he is able to draw together so many reasons for writing, bringing them to focus superbly on Christ:

And now I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written; for after I had made an abridgment from the plates of Nephi, down to the reign of this king Benjamin, of whom Amaleki spake, I searched among the records which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates, which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this king Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi.

And the things which are upon these plates *pleasing me*, because of *the prophecies of the coming of Christ*; and my fathers knowing that many of them have been fulfilled; yea, and *I also know that as many things as have been prophesied concerning us down to this day have been fulfilled, and as many as go beyond this day must surely come to pass—*

Wherefore, I chose these things, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi; and *I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people.*

But behold, I shall take these plates which contain these prophesyings and revelations, and put them with the remainder of my record, for *they are choice unto me*; and I know they will be choice unto *my brethren.*

And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus *it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord* which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh in me to do according to his will.

And my prayer to God is concerning *my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God*, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a delightsome people (WofM 1:3-8; emphasis added).

Mormon feeds our faith in Christ. With that faith, it is now up to us to be enticed to the higher plane and greater revelation which Christ has promised.