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1 Nephi Chapter 16

Author(s): Alan C. Miner

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Chapter 16

{Original 1830 Chapter V—comprising Chapters 16 →19:21}

The Justice of the Lord's Covenant Way Offends the Wicked Humble Obedience Gives One Hope

[Note: In verses 1—>3 that follow, I have chosen to identify a parallelistic structure called “Inclusion” or “bookends.” In this form the same phrase is repeated at both the beginning and at the end of a paragraph; and all that is in-between is “included” (see my Introduction). Donald Parry has identified this same section as a chiasmic parallelism (2007: 34-35). I would remind the reader that when it comes to identifying parallelistic structure, two different perspectives do not always imply error, just a difference in point of view.]

1 And now

it came to pass

that after I **Nephi** had **made an end**
of speaking to **my brethren**

01

behold they [**my brethren**] **said unto me**

[A] ***Thou** hast declared unto us

HARD things

[initial beginning bookend]

aa

MORE than that

which we [**thy brethren**]

[deleted in 1837] {AG}

are able to bear

2 And **it came to pass**

that I [**Nephi**] **said** unto **them**

[B] that I [**Nephi**] **knew**

that I [**Nephi**] had spoken **HARD things** against the **wicked** [beginning bookend #2]
according to (the **truth**)

[C] and the (**righteous**) have I **justified**

[D] and [that I [**Nephi**] had] **testified**

that (they [the **righteous**] should be **lifted up**) at **the last day**

[E] **Wherefore** _____ the **guilty** taketh (the **truth**)
to be **HARD** [to bear]

[E] _____ **for** it (the **truth**)
cutteth them) [the **guilty**]
to the **very center**

[Heb. 01 – Use of the phrase “made an end”]

[Par. aa – Inclusion or “Bookends”]

[1 Nephi 16]

3 And now _____ my brethren bb

[D] if (ye [my brethren] were righteous) cc

and [if ye my brethren were willing to hearken to _____ the truth

and [if ye my brethren were willing to] give heed unto it [the truth]

[C] that ye [my brethren] might (walk uprightly) before God

[B] then ye [my brethren] would NOT _____ murmur
because of (the truth)

and [then] [ye my brethren would NOT] _____ say

[A] (Thou speakest HARD things against us) ** [** final bookend]

[Note: A simple outline of the parallel elements in Donald Parry's proposed *chiastic parallelism* is as follows:

1 [A] (Thou hast declared unto us hard things) dd

2 [B] (the truth)

[C] (righteous)

[D] (they should be lifted up)

[E] (the truth to be hard)

[E] (it cutteth them)

3 [D] (ye were righteous)

[C] (walk uprightly)

[B] (the truth)

[A] (Thou speakest hard things against us) (Parry:1992:28-29)]

[Note: In the above verses (especially verse 2 –“for it [the truth] cutteth them [the guilty] to the very center”) there is an allusion to the ancient covenant ceremony in which the penalties for breaking the covenant were symbolically demonstrated by an animal being CUT down the CENTER into two parts; whereupon the ones making the covenant would walk in between the cut parts, **knowing** very well at that point what their fate would be for breaking the covenant. I first learned of this practice from Raymond Treat in personal communication, but one can find it on the Internet at "Cutting a Covenant," Did You Know? Bible Studies by Brendon Wahlberg, Friday, November 21, 2008.]

4 And **it came to pass**

that I Nephi did **exhort** my brethren

with ALL **diligence**

to **keep** the commandments of the Lord

ee

[Par. bb – Circular repetition “ye my brethren”]

[Par. cc – Repeated alternating “if / then”]

[Par. dd – Chiastic or Extended inverted parallelism]

[Par. ee – Repetition “the Lord”]

5 And **it came to pass**

that they [my brethren] did humble themselves before **the Lord**
 insomuch that I [Nephi] had **joy**
 and [I Nephi] had] **GREAT hopes**
 of them [my brethren]
 that they [my brethren]
 would **walk** in the **paths of righteousness**

*Nephi Enters into the Covenant of Marriage
 Both Nephi & Lehi Have Kept Their Covenants with the Lord*

6 **Now** ALL these **things** were **said**
 and **done**
as my father **dwelt** in a **tent**
in the valley
which he [my father] _____ *called Lemuel*

7 And **it came to pass**

that I **Nephi** **took** one **of** the **daughters of Ishmael** **to wife** 02
 and also my brethren **took** **of** the **daughters of Ishmael** **to wife** ff
 and also Zoram **took** the **^elder / eldest** **daughter of Ishmael** **to wife** [^O / 1830] {AG}

8 **And thus** [he] **my father** **had** **fulfilled** ALL the **commandments** of **the Lord**
 which **commandments** of **the Lord**
had been **given** unto him

And also I **Nephi** **had** been **blessed** _____ of **the Lord** exceedingly

Lehi Receives the Compass of the Lord

9 And **it came to pass**

that **the voice of the Lord** **spake** unto
my father *by night*
 and [the voice of **the Lord**] **commanded** him
 that *on the morrow*
 he [my father]
 should **take** *his journey*
into the wilderness gg

 [Heb. 02 – Separated prepositions “of” “of”]
 [Par. ff – Like endings “to wife”]
 [Par. gg – Repetition “into the wilderness”]

10 And **it came to pass** **

that **as** [he] **my father** arose
in the morning

and **as** he **my father** **went forth** to the tent door

[and] to his GREAT **astonishment** [deleted in 1830] {AG}
he [my **father**] **beheld** upon the ground

a **round ball** of **curious workmanship** [fine workmanship] 03
and it [the **round ball**] was of **fine brass**

And within the **ball** were **two spindles**
and the **one [spindle]** *pointed the way* [duality—the way – covenant]
whither we should go [To what place, result or condition] {AL}
into the wilderness [duality-covenant]

11 And **it came to pass** **

that **we did** gather together whatsoever **things** [duality]
[which] **we** should carry *into the wilderness*

And [**we did** gather together] ALL the remainder of our provisions
which **the Lord** had given unto us

and **we did** take seed of EVERY kind
that **we** might carry *into the wilderness*

~~~ Lehi's Group Travels to Shazer

12 And **it came to pass**

that **we did** take *our tents*
and [**we did**] *depart* *into the wilderness*
across the river Laman

13 And **it came to pass**

that **we** *traveled* **for the space of four days** 04
nearly a south-southeast direction

and **we did** *pitch our tents again*
and **we did** *call the name of the place Shazer*

14 And **it came to pass**

that **we did** take _____ our **bows**
and our **arrows**

[Par. ** -- Multiple use of the initiator "it came to pass"]
[Heb. 03 – Idiom "curious workmanship"]

[Par. ** -- Like beginnings "we did"]
[Heb. 04 – Idiom "for the space of" time]

and [we did] go forth into the wilderness
to slay food for our families

and after[that]we had slain food for our families [deleted in 1837]
we did return again to our families in the wilderness
to the place of Shazer

~~~Lehi's Group Travels in the Most Fertile Parts

And we did go forth again in the wilderness  
following the same direction [south-southeast]  
keeping in the MOST Fertile Parts of the wilderness  
which [MOST Fertile Parts] were in the borders [P= was]  
near the Red Sea

~~~Lehi's Group Travels in the More Fertile Parts

15 And it came to pass
that we did travel for the space of MANY days
slaying food by the way [duality – "way" also = covenant way]
with our bows 05 hh
and [with] our arrows
and [with] our stones
and [with] our slings

16 And we did follow _____ the directions of the ball [duality -directions]
which [directions] led us
in the MORE Fertile Parts of the wilderness

~~~Lehi's Group Travels to the "Broken Bow" Location  
Confronted with Hardship-both Physical and Spiritual  
Nephi Is Faithful in Following the Directions of God  
All the Others Murmur

17 And after that we had traveled for the space of MANY days [deleted in 1837]  
we did pitch our tents  
for the space of a time  
that we might again rest our selves  
and [that] [we might] obtain food  
for our families

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Heb. 05 – Repetition of the preposition "with" and the possessive "our"]  
[Par. hh – Enumeration list]

18 And **it came to pass**

that as I **Nephi** went forth  
to slay \_\_\_\_\_ **food**  
behold I [**Nephi**] did break my **bow**  
which [**bow**] was made of **fine steel**

ii

and **after** I [**Nephi**] did break my **bow**  
**behold** my brethren were **angry** with me  
**because of the loss of** my **bow**  
for **we did** obtain **NO** **food**

19 And **it came to pass**

that **we did** **return** **WITHOUT** **food** to **our families**  
  
and being **MUCH** fatigued  
**because** of their journeying [**in the wilderness**]  
they [**our families**]  
did **suffer** **MUCH**  
for the **WANT** of **food**

20 And **it came to pass**

that Laman  
and Lemuel  
and the sons of **Ishmael** did **begin to** **murmur exceedingly**  
**because** of their sufferings  
and [**because** of their] afflictions **in the wilderness**

and also [he] my **father** **began to** **murmur against** **the Lord His God**  
  
yea and **they** were **ALL** **exceedingly** sorrowful [added in 1981]  
even that **they did** [**ALL**] **murmur against** **the Lord**

[Note: The word "murmur" is used 3 times here = superlative. Nephi uses some form of the word "murmur" a total of about 20 times in my Volume on 1 Nephi.]

21 Now **it came to pass**

that I **Nephi** having been afflicted with my brethren  
**because of the loss of** my **bow**  
  
and their **bows**  
having **lost** **their springs** [lost their power] {AL}  
  
it **began to be** exceedingly difficult [1920]  
yea **insomuch**  
that **we** could obtain **NO** **food**

[Par. ii – Circular repetition "food," "bow"]

22 And **it came to pass**

that I **Nephi** did **spea**k MUCH unto my brethren  
 because\*they had **hardened** their hearts **again** [\*P= that]  
 even unto **complaining against** **the Lord Their God**

23 And **it came to pass**

that I **Nephi** did **make** out of \_\_\_\_\_ wood  
 a **bow**  
 and [I **Nephi**] [**did make**] out of a straight **stick**  
 an **arrow**

**Wherefore** I **Nephi** did arm myself

**with** a **bow**  
 and [**with**] an **arrow**  
 and **with** a **sling**  
 and **with** **stones**

06 JJ

And I [**Nephi**] **said**  
 unto **my father**

**Whither** shall I **go** [To what place, result or condition] {AL}  
 to obtain **food** ? [duality – see note below]

[Note: The implication or duality of what Nephi is asking his father is this: “According to the covenant patriarchal order, where do I go for spiritual “food” or counsel if my covenant father is murmuring?”]

*Lehi Is Chastened For Murmuring*

24 And **it came to pass**

that he [my father] did **inquire** \_\_\_\_\_ of **the Lord**  
 for they had **humbled** themselves  
 because of my **^words / word** [^O / Ø]  
 for I [**Nephi**] did **say** MANY \_\_\_\_\_ **things** unto them  
 in **the energy of my soul**

25 And **it came to pass**

that **the voice of the Lord** came  
 unto **my father**  
 and he [my father] **was** truly chastened  
 because of his **murmurings against** **the Lord** [deleted in Ø]  
**insomuch that** he [my father] **was** brought down  
 into **the depths of sorrow**

[Par. jj – Enumeration list]

[Heb. 06 – Repetition of the possessive pronoun “with” ]



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26 And **it came to pass**

that the voice of the Lord said unto him  
Look upon the **ball**  
and behold the **things**  
[on the **ball**] which are **written**

27 And **it came to pass**

that **when** [he] my father beheld the **things** which were **written**  
upon the **ball** [see 1 Ne 16:37-38]  
he [my father] did fear and tremble exceedingly kk  
and also my brethren [did fear and tremble exceedingly]  
and the sons of Ishmael [did fear and tremble exceedingly]  
and our wives [did fear and tremble exceedingly]

[Note: Nephi is the only one who did not fear and tremble because of what was written on the ball]

*Nephi Is to Assume Leadership (Be the "Ruler")*

28 And **it came to pass**

[A] that I Nephi beheld the (pointers)  
which were in the **ball**  
that they \_\_\_\_\_ [the pointers  
which were in the **ball**]  
did **work**  
[B] (according to the **faith**  
and **diligence**)  
and **heed**  
which we did **give** unto them [them = the pointers and the ball]

[C] And there was also (**written**) upon them [them = the pointers and the ball] LL  
a new **writing** 07  
[D] (which [**writing**] was **plain** to be **read**)  
[D] (which [**writing**] did **give us understanding**)  
concerning the **ways** of **the Lord**

29 and it [the new **writing**]  
[C] was (**written**) and changed **from time** 08  
**to time**

[B] (according to the **faith**  
and **diligence**)  
[and] [**heed**]  
which we **gave** unto it  
And thus we **see**  
[A] that \_\_\_\_\_ by (small **means**) **the Lord**  
can bring about **GREAT things**

[Par. kk – Like endings]

[Heb. 07 – Verb and noun with the same root “write”]

[Par. LL – Circular repetition “writing”]

[Heb. 08 – Noun and verb with the same root “write”]

[Note: For an in-depth discussion on the various aspects of the “ball,” the “pointers,” and the “writing,” see Alan Miner, *The Liahona: Miracles by Small Means*, 2013.]

[Note: According to Donald Parry, the above verses can be arranged in **chiastic parallelism**. A simple outline of the chiastic elements that have been overlaid on my parallelism (note the bracketed letters and orange parentheses above) can be seen as follows:

28 [A] (pointers) mm  
 [B] (according to the faith and diligence )  
 29 [C] (written)  
 [D] (which was plain to be read)  
 [D] (which did give us understanding)  
 [C] (written)  
 [B] (according to the faith and diligence)  
 [A] (small means ) (Parry:1992:30 )

[Note: By matching up “pointers” and “small means” Parry begins and ends his chiasm. This is not “wrong,” but it narrows the interpretation of this passage. In my structuring, “small means” is aligned with “the ball” and with “faith,” “diligence” and “heed,” and with “ways” of the Lord, and with “plain” writing. This expands the means of direction given. Rather than debate over who is correct, I find it nice when one kind of parallelism can be “overlaid” on another type of parallelism because it gives one greater perspective in appreciating the message (or messages) that is (or are) being conveyed in that passage of scripture. “Duality” is a constant part of the text of the Book of Mormon.]

~~~ Nephi Goes to the Top of the Mountain to Obtain Food

30 And **it came to pass**
 that I **Nephi** did go forth up {AG}
 into the top of the **mountain** [duality – “mountain” = temple]
 according to the **directions** [duality]
 which **were** given [“was” – P] {AG}
 upon the **ball**

31 And **it came to pass**
 that [A] I [**Nephi**] did **slay** wild **beasts** nn
 insomuch that [B] I [**Nephi**] did **obtain** food
 [C] for _____ our families

32 And **it came to pass**
 that [A] I [**Nephi**] did **return** to our tents
 bearing the **beasts**
 which I [**Nephi**] had **slain**
 and now **when** they beheld
 that [B] I [**Nephi**] had **obtained** food
 [C] how GREAT was their [**families’**] **joy**

[Par. mm – Chiastic or Extended inverted parallelism]

[Par. nn – Extended alternating parallelism]

And **it came to pass**

that they did humble themselves before **the Lord**
and [they] did give thanks _____ unto Him [**the Lord**]

[Note: I have structured the above verses according to the classical style for parallelism known as “extended alternating parallelism.” However, as I have continually demonstrated, the repetition and location of words and phrases can be accentuated in other ways. (See the previous passages (v. 17-24) using the terms “slay,” “obtain,” “food,” “families,” “return,” “humble,” etc.) What is more important to remember, however, is that the text is written in parallelistic patterns that lend themselves to the various perspectives.]

~~~ *Travel to Nahom -- Ishmael Buried*  
*Affliction Brings Anger and Discouragement*  
*Laman & Lemuel Seek to Slay Lehi & Nephi*

33 And **it came to pass**

that we did again *take our journey*  
*traveling nearly the same course [south-southeast]*  
*as [the \_\_\_\_\_ course] in the beginning*

and **after\*** we had *traveled* [*\*P= that*]

that *for the space of MANY days*  
*we did pitch our tents again*  
*we might tarry*  
*for the space of a time*

34 And **it came to pass**

that **Ishmael** died  
and [**Ishmael**] was buried \_\_\_\_\_ *in the place*  
*which was called **Nahom***

35 And **it came to pass**

that the daughters **of Ishmael** did **mourn exceedingly** oo  
[1] because of the loss of **their father**  
[2] **and** because of their afflictions *in the wilderness*

and they [the daughters **of Ishmael**] did **murmur against my father**  
[3] because \* he had *brought them out of the land of Jerusalem* [*\*P= that*]  
**saying** Our **father** is dead

[4] **Yea \*and** we have *wandered MUCH in the wilderness*  
[5] **and** we have *suffered MUCH affliction* pp

[Par. oo – Working out – the reasons that the daughters of Ishmael murmured]

[Par. pp – Many “and”s]

[6] [and [we have suffered MUCH] hunger  
 [7] [and] [we have suffered MUCH] thirst  
 [8] and [we have suffered MUCH] fatigue

And after ALL these sufferings  
 [9] we MUST perish *in the wilderness*  
 with hunger qq  
 [and with thirst]  
 [and with fatigue]

36 And thus they [the daughters of Ishmael] did murmur against my father  
 and also [they the daughters of Ishmael] did murmur against me  
 and they [the daughters of Ishmael] were desirous  
 to *return again* to *Jerusalem*

[Note: This verse raises the chronological question of whether and to what extent Jerusalem had already been conquered by the Babylonians. One might ask, under what conditions would the daughters of Ishmael want to return to Jerusalem?]

37 And Laman said unto Lemuel [P= saith]  
 and also [Laman said] unto  
 the sons of Ishmael

Behold let us slay our father [Lehi]  
 and also [let us slay] our brother Nephi [P= hath]  
 [1] who has taken it upon him to be our ruler rr  
 and [to be] our teacher  
 who are his elder brethren 09

38 Now he [Nephi says] that the Lord has talked with him [P= saith hath]  
 and [he Nephi says] also that angels have ministered unto him

But behold [2] we know that he [Nephi] lies unto us [*they bear a false covenant witness*] [P= lieth]  
 and [3] [we know that] he [Nephi] tells us these things [P= telleth]

[4] and he [Nephi] worketh MANY things by his cunning arts  
 that he [Nephi] may deceive our eyes  
thinking perhaps

[5] that he [Nephi] may lead us away *into some strange wilderness*  
 and after\* he [Nephi] has led us away [\*P= that hath]

[6] he [Nephi] has thought to make himself a king [P= hath]  
 and a ruler over us

[Par. qq – Doubling of words = greatly intensifying “hunger”]

[Par. rr – Working out – Laman’s false reasons for wanting to kill Nephi]

[Heb. 09 – Pronoun that is distant from the noun that it represents]

that he [Nephi] may do with us according to his will [7]  
and [his] pleasure

And after this manner [of language] [see 1 Ne. 1:15; 3:21; 5:3, 6, 8; 10:15; 17:22]  
did  
my brother Laman stir up their hearts  
to anger

*Because They Are Obedient to Their Covenants  
The Lord Will Deliver Lehi & Nephi  
And Lead Them to the Promised Land*

39 And it came to pass

that the Lord was with us ss  
yea even the voice of the Lord came 10 tt  
and [the voice of the Lord] did speak MANY words  
unto them

and [the voice of the Lord] did chasten them exceedingly

and after\* they were chastened by [ \*P= that ]  
the voice of the Lord

they did turn away their anger  
and [they] did repent of their sins

insomuch that the Lord did bless us again  
with food

that we did NOT perish  
[with NO "food"] [ ? ] [double neg.]

[Par. ss – Circular repetition of “the Lord”]

[Heb. 10 – Personification “voice” instead of “the Lord”]

[Par. tt – Repetition of “the voice”]