1 Nephi Chapter 4

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Chapter 4
{Original 1830 Chapter I – continued}

[Note: Verses 1-5 are a continuation of the themes being discussed in Chapter 3.]

~~~Nephi & His Brethren Go Up Again to Jerusalem

1 **And it came to pass**
    that   I [**Nephi**] **spake** unto my **brethren**
               saying

         Let us   *go* _____*up* **again**
                        unto Jerusalem
     and   [Let us] be **faithful** in **keeping** the **commandments** of **the Lord**

     for behold [**if**]   **He**   [**the Lord**] is **Mightier Than ALL the Earth**   01
         then   why not_____ mightier than **Laban**   aa
                        and   his **fifty**
         yea   **or** even [mightier] than [**Laban**]
                        [and] his **tens of thousands**?   02

2 **Therefore**
         Let us   *go*   *up* [**again**]
                  [unto Jerusalem]   03
         Let us be strong **like** unto **Moses**
             for   he [**Moses**]   **truly spake**
         unto *the waters of the Red Sea*
     and   they *[the waters of the Red Sea]* **divided**
                     hither   *[to this side]*   {AL}
                 and   **thither** *[to that side]*

       and   our **fathers** came through
                 out of **captivity**
                 on *dry ground   04

       and   the **armies** of **Pharaoh**
                 did follow
            and   were drowned
       in *the waters of the Red Sea*

3 **Now behold**
         Ye [my **brethren**]   **know** that this is **true**
     and   ye [my **brethren**] also **know** that   an **angel** hath **spoken** unto you

     Wherefore   Can ye **doubt ?**   bb

_____

[Heb. 01 – Metaphor/Epithet "Mightier than . . ."]	[Heb. 03 – Compound prepositions "up" "unto"]
[Par. aa – Antithetical If / then see 1 Ne 3:31]	[Heb. 04 – Quotation. See Exodus 14:22]
[Heb. 02 – Hyperbole with numbers]	[Par. bb – Questions are used to make a point. See 1 Ne 3:31]

[A]   <u>Let us</u>   *go up* [**again**   cc
 [B]   *unto Jerusalem]*
  [C]   [**and**] <u>the Lord</u> <u>is able</u> to **deliver** <u>us</u>   [see v. 11]
   [D]   <u>even</u> **as** <u>our</u> **fathers**   05
[A]   [<u>Let us</u> *go up* **again**
 [B]   *unto Jerusalem]*
  [C]   **and** [<u>the Lord</u> is able] to **destroy** **Laban**
   [D]   <u>even</u> **as** the **Egyptians**

4 **Now** **when** <u>I [**Nephi**]</u> had **spoken** these **words**
      they [<u>my **brethren**</u>] were   yet **wroth**   ["they <u>was</u>"] {AG}
    and [they <u>my **brethren**</u>] did still continue to **murmur**
 Nevertheless
      they [<u>my **brethren**</u>] did follow me up
        until we came   *without the walls of Jerusalem*

5   **And** it was **by night*** *[in darkness]*   06
   and I [**Nephi**] caused that   {AG} 07
      they [<u>my **brethren**</u>] should <u>hide themselves</u>
           without the wall<u>s</u> [of Jerusalem]
             [*O* = wall]

Nephi is Willing to Give His Life if Necessary to Keep His Covenant with the Lord
The Lord Will Show His Covenant Servant the Way
Wicked Laban Has Disobeyed His Covenants and Will Suffer the Covenant Penalty

 And **after** [that]   [deleted]
      they [<u>my **brethren**</u>] had <u>hid themselves</u>
          [without the walls of Jerusalem]
           [in darkness]

    <u>I **Nephi**</u>   crept into   *the city [of Jerusalem]*
   And [<u>I **Nephi**</u>] **went forth** towards the <u>house of</u> **Laban**

6   **And** I [**Nephi**] was **led** by **the Spirit**
        NOT **knowing beforehand** <u>the things</u> which
     I [**Nephi**] should **do**

7 **Nevertheless**
     I [**Nephi**] **went forth** [by **the Spirit**]
  and as I [**Nephi**] came near   unto the <u>house of</u> **Laban**
     I [**Nephi**] beheld a **man**
       and he had **fallen** to the earth before me 08
       for he was **drunken** with wine

———————

[Par. cc – Extended alternating]   [Heb. 07 – The use of the words "caused that"]
[Heb. 06 – Simile comparison]   [Heb. 08 – Metaphor "fallen" "drunken" = ripe for destruction]
[Heb. 06 – Metaphor "night" for darkness]

[Note: The words "fallen" and "drunken" as applied above to Laban symbolically indicate someone who has broken all his covenants with the Lord and will not repent. He is thus ripe for destruction.]

8   And **when** I [**Nephi**] came _____ to _____ **him**   dd
      ~~and~~   [I **Nephi**] found that it was_____ **Laban**   *[deleted in 𝒫]*

9   **And**   I [**Nephi**] **beheld** _____ his **sword**   *[covenant-related]*   09
      and   I [**Nephi**] drew it   [his **sword**] forth from the sheath <u>thereof</u>   10

            and   the hilt _____ [of his **sword**]   ~~thereof~~
                                                            was **<u>of pure gold</u>**   *[superlative #1]*   11
            and   the workmanship [of his **sword**]   ~~thereof~~
                                                            was **exceeding<u>ly fine</u>**   *[superlative #2]* [added]
      and   I [**Nephi**] **saw**
            that   the blade _____ [of his **sword**]   ~~thereof~~
                                                            was **<u>of the</u> MOST precious steel** *[superlative. #3]*

[Note: The word "thereof" refers to the antecedent noun (his sword), so in a sense I am being redundant by inserting the phrase "of his sword." However I have done it because it accentuates better parallelism.]
[Note: Because the high quality of Laban's sword is repeated three times it means "the very best." Symbolically what this means is that the character and standards of the person who is the covenant record keeper for the tribe of Joseph must be "the very best." But as the previous verses have recorded, Laban was in a "drunken" and "fallen" state indicating that Laban had not maintained those high standards. And thus as the verses that follow will show, Laban will suffer the covenant penalty by his own sword--symbolic of his oath to defend his covenant with his life.]

10 **And** ==it came to pass==
            that   I [**Nephi**] was **constrained** by **the Spirit**   *[The first time that this commandment is declared]*
            that   I [**Nephi**] should   **kill**   [**him**] **Laban**

            but   I [**Nephi**] **said** in my heart*   12
                              NEVER **at ANY time** have
            I [**Nephi**] <u>shed the blood</u> of man
      And   I [**Nephi**] _____ shrunk
                        and   would that
            I [**Nephi**] might NOT **slay** _____ **him** [**Laban**]   *[or <u>shed his blood</u>]*

[Note: The violations of the covenant by Laban are here listed by the Spirit of the Lord.]

11   **And**   **the Spirit said** <u>unto</u> **me again**   *the second time]*   [O = saith]
                  Behold the Lord
                        [1] ==hath **delivered him** into **thy hands**==   *[see v. 12, 17]*   ee
      Yea and   I [**Nephi**] also **knew** that
                        [2] **he** had **sought to take away mine own life**   *[see v. 28]*
                  Yea and   [3] **he would NOT hearken** unto <u>the **commandments** of **the Lord**</u>
                        and   [4] **he** also **had taken away our property**

_____
[Par. dd – Circular repetition]   [Heb. 11 – Superlatives 3 times = the very best]
[Heb. 09 – Symbol "sword" = covenant defense] [Heb. 12 – Metaphor: one thing "heart" for another "Nephi"]
[Heb. 10 – Repetition of possessive pronouns]   [Par. ee – Working out -- A List of reasons to slay Laban]

12 And it came to pass

    that   **the Spirit said** unto me [Nephi] **again**   *the third time]*   [*O* = said = inconsistent?]   13

               Slay   **him** [**Laban**]

         for   **the Lord** hath **delivered him**   into **thy hands**   [see 1 Ne 3:29, 31]

13   **Behold the Lord slayeth**   the **wicked**

           to **bring forth**   **His righteous purposes**

       It is better that <u>one man</u> should   **perish**   [duality – **One Man**]

       than_____that <u>a nation</u> should   **dwindle**

                   and   **perish** in **unbelief**

14 And now

     when   I_**Nephi** **had heard** these ___ **words**   ff

          I [**Nephi**] **remembered** the   **words** of **the Lord**   *[covenant language]*

              which   [**words**]

        He [**the Lord**] **spake** unto me *in the wilderness*   [**Quote**—see 1 Ne. 2:20]

            saying that

   Inasmuch as   **thy seed** shall   **keep**   **My commandments**

          they [**thy seed**] shall   **prosper**_____in the **land of promise**

15   **Yea and**   I [**Nephi**] also **thought**

     that   they [**my seed**] could NOT **keep**   the **commandments** of **the Lord**

                according to the **law** of **Moses**

     SAVE   they [**my seed**] should have   the **law** [of **Moses**]

16   **And**   I [**Nephi**] also **knew**   that   the **law** [of **Moses**]

                was **engraven** upon the <u>plates of brass</u>

17 And again   I [**Nephi**]   **knew**

        that   the **Lord** had **delivered Laban** into **my hands**

                 for this **cause that**   *[in order that]*   14

        I [**Nephi**] might_____ **obtain**   the **records**

             [**engraven** upon the <u>plates of brass</u>]

         according to **His commandments**

18 Therefore

        I [**Nephi**] did **obey** the **voice** of **the Spirit**   [did = inconsistent?]

    and   [I_**Nephi**] took **Laban by** the hair **of** the <u>head</u>   15

    and   I [**Nephi**] **smote off his** _____*<u>head</u> with his <u>own</u> sword   16

[Note: Cutting off the head (symbolic of power) is a covenant penalty for gross unrepentant disobedience.]

[Heb. 13 – A warning repeated 3 times = the highest]   [Heb. 15 – Separated prepositions]

[Par. ff – Circular repetition "Nephi"]   [Heb. 16 – Metaphor "head" implies the one in charge]

[Heb. 14 – The use of the words "cause that"]

Laban's Responsibility as Head Record Keeper for the Tribe of Joseph
Is Bestowed on Nephi – Covenant Words & Symbolism
Nephi Obtains the Covenant Record (The Plates of Brass)

19 **And after** [that]   [*O* = that]   [*O* = own]
      I [Nephi] had smote / smitten **off**   his* head with his own sword   [O, 𝒫 / 1830]   {AG} gg
      I [Nephi] took _____ the garments* _____ of **Laban**   17
    and   [I Nephi] put them [his garments] upon   mine   own body
        yea   even **every whit**   *[ALL of them]*   {AL}
    and   I [Nephi] did gird on his armor _____ about my **loins**   18

[Note: In covenant terms, a person's "garments" represent his calling, position or character. When an ancient covenant was made each participant exchanged robes indicating that "all he was or all he possessed" was offered to the other covenant person according to the terms of the covenant. The next step in the covenant process was to exchange "armor" (belts or sashes because that is where the sword was worn). The "armor" or the sword represented the idea that each covenant participant would defend the covenant with his life if necessary. Here, by putting on Laban's garments "every whit" Nephi is symbolically assuming the covenant position of the caretaker of the records of Joseph (the brass plates). That the armor is placed "about the loins" is symbolic because the "loins" symbolically represent the person's posterity or descendants. Laban, because of his gross disobedience to the Lord and to the covenant calling he held as caretaker of the records of the tribe of Joseph, had suffered his life to be taken. (See Raymond Treat's taped lectures on "Covenants and Principles of the Book of Mormon.")
   The story will now proceed in covenant imagery.]

20 **And after** [that]   [O = that]
      I [Nephi] had **done** this
      I [Nephi] **went forth** unto   the treasury of **Laban**
   and as I [Nephi] **went forth** towards the treasury of **Laban**
   behold I [Nephi] **saw** the **servant** _____ of **Laban**
       who had the* **keys** of the treasury [of **Laban**]   [O = which]   19

[Note: Such a "servant" was very important, highly educated, and spiritually prepared.]

   And   I [Nephi] **commanded** him   [the servant]   hh
        in the* **voice** of **Laban**   20

[Note: To speak "in the voice of Laban" can also mean to speak with the power and authority of the covenant record keeper of the tribe of Joseph.]

      that   he [the servant] should go_____ with me [Nephi]
        into the treasury [of **Laban**]

21   **And**   he [the servant] ^supposing / supposed me [Nephi] [^O / 1830]
        to be his **master** **Laban**
      for   he [the servant] **beheld** the garments   *[symbol of his calling]*
    and   **also**   [he the servant **beheld**] the sword girded about my loins

_____

[Par. gg – Circular repetition "Nephi"]   [Heb. 19 – Symbol "keys" = the delegated power over]
[Heb. 17 – Symbol "garments" = all one is or has]   [Par. hh – Circular repetition "the servant"]
[Heb. 18 – Symbol "loins" = *one's posterity/ descendants*]   [Heb. 20 – Symbol "voice" = the authority to speak for]

22   **And**   he [the servant] **spake** _____ unto   me [Nephi]
                 concerning   the elders of the **Jews**

         he [the servant] **knowing**
         that his **master**   **Laban**
           had been   out **by night**   *[in darkness]*
           among them [the elders of the **Jews**]

23   **And**   I [Nephi]   **spake** unto him [the servant]
             as if it   [I Nephi] had been   **Laban**   20

24   **And**   I [Nephi] also **spake** unto him [the servant]

     that   I [Nephi] should **carry***the **engravings**   *[symbolic?]*   21
         which [**engravings**] were upon the **plates of brass**
              to my elder   brethren
          which/ ^who were *without the walls [of Jerusalem]*
                [in darkness]

           [See the note at the end of the chapter]

25   **And**   I [Nephi]   also **bade** unto] him [the servant]   *[bade = asked, invited]*   {AL}
          that   he [the servant] should <u>follow</u>   me [Nephi]

26   **And**   he [the servant] <u>supposing</u>
     that   I [Nephi]   **spake** of _____ the [elder]   brethren
                 of the church
        And   [he   the servant   supposing]
     that   I [Nephi] was truly _____ that **Laban** whom I had slain   *[O = slew]*

   <u>**Wherefore**</u> _____ he [the servant] did   follow   me [Nephi]

27   **And**   he [the servant] **spake**   unto   me [Nephi]
          MANY times
           concerning the elders of the **Jews**
             [who were   in darkness]

     as   I [Nephi] **went forth** [with the **engravings**
         which **engravings** were upon the **plates of brass**]

              unto my [elder]   brethren
          which/^who were *without the walls [of Jerusalem]*
               [in darkness]

_____

[Heb. 20 – Simile Nephi's calling is now compared]   [Heb. 21 – Metaphor "to carry" is to "take responsibility for"]

28 And it came to pass
    that when   [he] Laman **saw** me [**Nephi**]
               he [Laman] was exceedingly frightened
   and also   Lemuel
      and   Sam_____[were exceedingly frightened]

      And   they_____*fled* **from before** my presence   22
      for   they supposed it___was **Laban**
      and   [they supposed] that he [**Laban**] had **slain** me
      and   [they supposed that he **Laban**] had **sought to take away** their lives also   *[see v. 11]*

29 And it came to pass
    that   I [**Nephi**] **called** after them
    and   they did **hear**_____ me
  Wherefore   they did cease to *flee* **from [**   **]**my presence   ii

Those Who Hearken to the Lord's Covenant Servant
Will Have Place with Him

30 And it came to pass
         that when   the servant of **Laban** beheld my brethren   jj
              he [the servant] **began to** tremble
        and   [he the servant] was about to *flee* **from before me**
        and   [he the servant] [was about to] *return to the city of Jerusalem*

31 And now   I **Nephi**
         being *a man* large in stature   *[capable of great things]*   23
    and also   having received MUCH **strength** of **the Lord**

  therefore   I [**Nephi**] did seize upon_____ the servant of **Laban**
               [with the **strength** of **the Lord**]
     And   [I **Nephi**] held him   that he [the servant] should NOT   *flee*   [did?]

32 And it came to pass
    that   I [**Nephi**] **spake** with____ him[the servant]
[A]   **that**   **if**   he [the servant] would **hearken** unto **my words**

  [B]   [**then**] **as** [he]**the Lord**_____ **liveth**   24
  [B]   **and**   **as I** [**Nephi**]_____ **live**

[A]   **even so that**   **if**   he [the servant] would **hearken** unto **our words**   kk
  [B']   [**then**]   we would spare his **life**   *[a covenant oath]*

_____

[Heb. 22 – Compound preposition "from before"]   [Heb. 23 – Idiom = strong in many areas]
[Par. ii – Use of Omission "before" to accentuate]   [Heb. 24 – Covenant Oath]
[Par. jj – Downward gradation – sense of lowering]   [Par. kk – Repeated alternating "lives" are involved]

~~~Nephi, with His Brethren & Zoram Travel to the Tent of His Father

33   **And**   I [Nephi] **spake** unto him [the servant]

        even with an [**covenant**] **oath**

    that   he [the servant] need not fear
    that   he [the servant] should be **a free man**

    like unto   **us**   LL

    if   he [the servant]

    would *go down*   [*O* / ^conjecture]

    in / ^into *the wilderness*   25

    with   **us**

34   **And**   I [Nephi] also **spake** unto him [the servant]
    saying

    Surely **the Lord** hath **commanded** us to do this thing   ["s" added on $\mathcal{P}$]
    and   Shall we NOT be diligent in **keeping** the **commandment**s of **the Lord ?**   mm

    [Quote – paraphrase of Deuteronomy 6:17]

Therefore

    if   thou [the servant] wilt *go down*

    into the wilderness   nn
    to   my **father**

    [then]   thou [the servant]
    shalt have *place*   with   **us**   [duality]

35 **And** it came to pass
    that   *Zoram$_1$* did take courage at the **words**   oo
    which   I [Nephi]   **spake**

    Now   Zoram was the name of   the servant
    And   he [Zoram]   **promised**   [**us**]
    that   he [Zoram]   would   *go down*

    into the wilderness   26
    unto   ^our / my **father**   [^*O* / 1837]

    [Yea] **and**   he [Zoram] also **made an oath***   unto   **us**   [*O*] 27
    that   he [Zoram]   would   *tarry*   with   **us**

    [in the wilderness]
    from that time forth

[Par. LL – Like endings "us"]   [Par. oo – Circular repetition "Zoram"]
[Heb. 25 – Compound prepositions "down" "into"]   [Heb. 26 – Compound prepositions "down" "into"]
[Par. mm – Question   to make a point]   [Heb. 27 -- Use of "made an oath"]
[Par. nn – Repetition "into the wilderness"]

[Note: According to Greg Wright (1976:3) and Donald Parry (2007:10) 1 Nephi 4:33-35 is a good example of chiastic parallelism. The full outline is as follows:

33	A			And **I spake** unto him, even with an oath
	B			that he need **not fear,**
		C		that he should be **a free man like unto us**
			D	if he would **go down into the wilderness** with us.
34				E And I also spake unto him, saying: Surely the **Lord** hath **commanded**
				F **us to do this thing**:
				F' and shall **we** not **be diligent**
				E in keeping the **commandments** of the **Lord**?
			D	Therefore, if thou wilt **go down into the wilderness** to my father
		C		thou shalt **have place with us**.
35		B		And it came to pass that Zoram did **take courage**
	A			at the words which **I spake**.

_____

36 **Now** **we** were **desirous**
      that   he [**Zoram**] _____ should *tarry* with _____ **us** for this cause

            that   the **Jews** might NOT **know** concerning our flight *into the wilderness*
            lest *[or to avoid the risk **that**]*   {AL}
                they [the **Jews**] _____ should **pursue** _____ **us**
                          and [should] **destroy** _____ **us**

37 **And** <mark>**it came to pass**</mark>
   that when [he] **Zoram** had **made an oath*** _____ unto _____ **us**   28
           our fears did cease____concerning him

38 **And** <mark>**it came to pass**</mark>
      that   **we**   took the plates of brass
      and   [**we**]   took] _____ **the servant** of **Laban**
      and   [**we**]   *departed*_____ *into the wilderness*
      and   [**we**]   *journeyed* _____unto the **tent*** of our **father**   29

[Note: According to biblestudytools.com, the Hebrew word for "tent" ('ohel -- Genesis 9:21 Genesis 9:27) is also used for a dwelling or habitation (1 Kings 8:66; Isaiah 16:5; Jeremiah 4:20). Most significantly, however, it is also used for the temple (Ezekiel 41:1). The patriarchs ("our covenant fathers") were "dwellers in tents" (Genesis 9:21, Genesis 9:27, 12:8, 13:12, 26:17) and during their wilderness wanderings all Israel dwelt in tents (Exodus 16:16; Deuteronomy 33:18; Joshua 7:24). Thus there is a duality and symbolism in the words "tent of our father."]

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[Heb. 28 – Use of "made an oath"]
[Heb. 29 – Symbolic "tent of our father"]

[1 Nephi 4]

[Note: Donald Parry (2007:8-9) views 1 Nephi 4:4-24 as a lengthy chiasm, however in a number of steps he passes over quite a bit of text from one simple element to the next. Nevertheless, his outline has all the elements corresponding in a nice manner. A brief outline of his parallel elements and their corresponding verse numbers is as follows:

```
4 . . . they did follow me up until we came without the walls of Jerusalem.
5        A       without the walls
                 B       house of Laban [6]      house of Laban [7]
9                        C       sword
10                               D       Spirit  [11]    Spirit
12                                       E       the Lord hath delivered
13                                               F  [Perishing]
14                                                       G       keep my commandments
15                                                       G'      keep the commandments
16                                               F'  [Imperishable]
17                                       E'      the Lord had delivered
18                               D'      Spirit
19                       C'      sword
20               B'      treasury of Laban       treasury of Laban
24       A'      without the walls
```

[Note* John W. Welch would later add matching elements F— [Perishing] "It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish" (v. 13), and F'— [Imperishable] "I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass" (v. 16). He would present this expanded chiasm in "Narrating Homicide Chiastically," a paper presented at the Chiasmus Jubilee Conference, Provo, Utah, Aug. 16, 2017. (See theme #11 "The Law" in the section "Literary Forms" in my Introduction.)]

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[Note: Donald Parry (2007:10-11) sees a chiastic structuring of the last verse of chapter 4 (v. 38) coupled with the first six verses of chapter 5. Because it is complex, I will only present the basic outline of parallel elements:

```
38      A       plates of brass
                B       the wilderness
                        C       journeyed
1                               D       our father      my mother, Sariah
2                                       E       we had perished in the wilderness
                                                F       complained against my father . . .
                                                                visionary man
3                                               F       complained against my father
4                                                               visionary man
                                        E       had perished
6                               D       my father       my mother, Sariah
                        C       journeyed
                B       the wilderness
        A       record of the Jews
```

_____

40