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## Too Little or Too Much Like the Bible? A Novel Critique of the Book of Mormon Involving David and the Psalms

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# TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH LIKE THE BIBLE? A NOVEL CRITIQUE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON INVOLVING DAVID AND THE PSALMS

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Jeff Lindsay

*Abstract: A recent graduate thesis proposes an intriguing new means for discerning if the Book of Mormon is historic or not. By looking at Book of Mormon references to David and the Psalms, the author concludes that it cannot be the product of an ancient Jewish people and that it is, instead, the result of Joseph Smith's "plagiarism" from the Bible and other sources. This paper examines the author's claims, how they are applied to the Book of Mormon, and proposes points the author does not take into consideration. While the author is to be congratulated for taking a fresh perspective on the Book of Mormon, ultimately his methodology fails and his conclusions fall flat.*

**A**mong critics of the Book of Mormon, all is not unity and consensus. For example, one can find critics sharply divided on questions such as this: "Is the Book of Mormon a fraudulent work loaded with horrific blunders from an ignorant farm boy, or the crafty work of a clever con man aided with advanced scholarship from a hefty range of books, magazines, rare maps of Arabia, and expertise in Hebrew?" It's a difficult question to answer correctly because, like many of our most controversial questions in life, it's the wrong question.

A related and more succinct question is the topic of a recent scholarly investigation: "Is the Book of Mormon false because it is too much like the Bible, or too little like the Bible?" Thanks to the latest scholarship from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, we finally have a definitive answer: "Yes!"

"Davidic References in the Book of Mormon as Evidence Against its Historicity," by Kevin Beshears, is a 2016 thesis from the Southern

Baptist Theological Seminary.<sup>1</sup> Beshears, a graduate student pursuing a master of theology degree, takes an interesting approach in rejecting the Book of Mormon for not emphasizing David as much as the Bible does. He raises some novel questions which, though intended to criticize the Book of Mormon, can be helpful to Book of Mormon students seeking to better understand the work. I am grateful for his questions, though troubled by the approach.

Apart from this primary and rather intriguing critique, he provides a reasonable background review along with a variety of other criticisms of the “mormonic” text (“mormonic” is his preferred term, an unnecessarily strange and non-standard term, in my opinion, that strikes me as conveniently too close to “demonic” or “moronic,” both of which are unnecessarily pejorative). Of particular interest is the objection that the Book of Mormon is too much like the Bible in its use of KJV language and heavy citations of Isaiah, which he errantly and repeatedly calls “plagiarism.”<sup>2</sup>

Sadly, an obvious point needs to be frequently restated in dealing with Book of Mormon criticism: openly quoting from a source without intent to deceive is not plagiarism. Indeed, the Isaiah passages that Beshears condemns as “plagiarized” are typically expressly stated to be quoted from Isaiah, something we usually don’t get from the New Testament “plagiarizers” who frequently quote Isaiah without attribution. The polemics around “plagiarism” and the failure to appreciate how KJV language can be a deliberate style choice in translation to be used when “good enough” is a serious weakness in multiple parts of Beshears’s thesis and again often boil down to condemning the Book of Mormon for being too much like the Bible.

Turning to his primary argument, Beshears explains that the Book of Mormon lacks historicity because it fails to give enough attention to the great king of Israel, King David, and fails to rely on the Psalms as much as we would expect from an authentic ancient Semitic work. His approach is declared in the opening paragraph:

Contemporary Mormon scholarship — more appropriately, Latter-day Saint (LDS) scholarship — seeks to validate the historicity of the Book of Mormon (BofM) through textual

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1. Kevin Beshears, “Davidic References in the Book of Mormon as Evidence Against its Historicity,” (Master of Theology thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, May 2016), [http://digital.library.sbts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/5176/Beshears\\_sbts\\_0207N\\_10331.pdf?sequence=1](http://digital.library.sbts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/5176/Beshears_sbts_0207N_10331.pdf?sequence=1).

2. Ibid., see particularly 33–37.

criticism by presupposing its historic authenticity, then combing the text for evidence of ancient literary devices such as chiasmus, parallelisms, and thematic elements that may suggest ancient Hebrew authorship. However, given King David's nonpareil influence over the Hebrew cultural and religious identity, the BofM's scant and peculiar nature of references to the fabled king produces a competing testimony against the book's historicity.<sup>3</sup>

First, I must thank Kevin Beshears and his faculty advisor, George H. Martin, for considering the issue of Book of Mormon historicity from a scholarly perspective and for taking some efforts to understand the text of the Book of Mormon and some related LDS scholarship. Beshears cites Hugh Nibley, John Sorenson, Grant Hardy, John Welch, Louis Midgley, Donald Parry, and others. Chiasmus is mentioned. This is progress compared to the neglect of LDS scholarship that often occurs in critical writings.

### Misjudging LDS Scholarship

Unfortunately, Beshears's review of past work at times becomes a caricature as he describes LDS scholars in the hopeless position of having no external evidence to offer any kind of support for the Book of Mormon tale, thus having no choice but to dig instead within its pages for imagined textual evidence.

The complete unawareness of any external evidence relevant to the Book of Mormon is unfortunate, and if he wishes to update his work, I hope Beshears will consider the significance of, say, the many hard evidences (non-LDS archaeological evidence included) from the Arabian Peninsula described in, for example, Warren Aston's *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*,<sup>4</sup> or works related to the New World such as John Sorenson's *Mormon's Codex*,<sup>5</sup> Brant Gardner's *Traditions of the Fathers*,<sup>6</sup> Jerry Grover's *Geology of the Book of Mormon*,<sup>7</sup> and Brian Stubbs's works

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3. Ibid., 1.

4. Warren P. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia: The Old World Setting of the Book of Mormon* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2015).

5. John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Codex: An Ancient American Book* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2013).

6. Brant Gardner, *Traditions of the Fathers: The Book of Mormon as History* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015).

7. Jerry D. Grover, Jr., *Geology of the Book of Mormon* (Vineyard, UT: Grover Publications, 2014), <https://www.academia.edu/18172439/>

on Uto-Aztec language and relationships to Hebrew and Egyptian such as *Changes in Languages from Nephi to Now*<sup>8</sup> and *Exploring the Explanatory Power of Semitic and Egyptian in Uto-Aztec*.<sup>9</sup>

In Beshears's opening paragraph given above, one can see trouble with the approach and a failure to appreciate what LDS scholars have written and why they write. What he describes is not a fair overview of LDS scholarship about the Book of Mormon.

In my experience, LDS scholars dealing with the Book of Mormon are frequently motivated not by a desperate desire to find any scrap of purported evidence they can, but by a generally cautious quest to understand the *meaning* of the text, including its context, its applications, its allusions to other documents, the possible influence of its cultural or geographic setting, and its relationship to other sources. That scholarship may sometimes yield unexpected gems of evidence, but combing for evidence is not the essence of the large body of scholarship related to the Book of Mormon. Grant Hardy's analysis of the voices of the Book of Mormon, for example, is far less driven by an apologetic impulse to prove anything rather than a desire to understand, but the remarkably distinct voices and agendas he uncovers with literary analysis perhaps unintentionally provide strong evidence in favor of authenticity of the document. Grant Hardy's *Understanding the Book of Mormon* illustrates this concept well.<sup>10</sup>

True, once interesting evidence is identified, such as the existence of extensive and sophisticated chiasmus in the Book of Mormon,<sup>11</sup> some of us may rush too far and too fast in zeal as we sift the text as Beshears

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Geology\_of\_the\_Book\_of\_Mormon.

8. Brian D. Stubbs, *Changes in Languages from Nephi to Now* (Blanding, UT: Four Corners Digital Design, 2016).

9. Brian D. Stubbs, *Exploring the Explanatory Power of Semitic and Egyptian in Uto-Aztec* (Provo, UT: Grover Publications, 2015).

10. Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon* (Oxford University Press, 2010), especially 11–25, 62–65, 84. See also Daniel Peterson's review in "An Apologetically Important Nonapologetic Book," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16 (2016): 52–75; <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=5076&index=6>.

11. See, for example, John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies*, 10/1 (1969): 1–15, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/chiasmus-book-mormon>; John W. Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim, Germany: Gerstenberg Verlag, and Provo, UT: Research Press, Brigham Young University, 1981); John W. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. J.L. Sorenson and M.J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 114–31, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1111&index=12>. More recently, see Dennis Newton, "Nephi's Use

suggests looking for numerous additional examples, only to later be restrained by scholars, including LDS scholars like John Welch who has explained that many purported examples of chiasmus fail to meet key criteria for assessing their validity.<sup>12</sup> He and others have proposed useful tools to gauge whether a chiasmus is really and intentionally there, though these tools still leave much room for debate.

Evidence also frequently comes when LDS writers are presented with critical attacks on the Book of Mormon and are then alerted to issues requiring further attention. The attention raised by critics often triggers new insights drawn from discoveries outside the LDS world, leading to unexpected evidence that sometimes causes a *reversal*, wherein a former weakness is not merely softened but turned into a strength. An example is the frequent criticism of Alma 7:10, which identifies the “land of Jerusalem” as the future birthplace of Christ, not the nearby town of Bethlehem. Many critics drawing attention to this issue made it more likely for LDS scholars to notice and apply relevant discoveries from non-LDS scholars when they found ancient Jewish documents referring to the region around Jerusalem, specifically including Bethlehem, as the “land of Jerusalem,” turning what was once a glaring weakness into a small but interesting piece of potential evidence of ancient origins that Joseph could not have extracted from the Bible.<sup>13</sup> Many similar examples of reversals could be cited that draw upon modern scholarship to overthrow long-standing criticisms of various details in the Book of Mormon.

The scholarship leading to recognition of the authenticity of the “land of Jerusalem,” the male name Lehi and many other Book of Mormon names, Royal Skousen’s many intriguing discoveries from the painstaking research on the earliest manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, the historical analysis of the witnesses of the gold plates

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of Inverted Parallels,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 79-106, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/nephis-use-of-inverted-parallels/>.

12. John W. Welch, “Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 1-14, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/4/2/S00001-50aa692ac71b21Welch.pdf>.

13. Daniel C. Peterson, Matthew Roper, and William J. Hamblin, “On Alma 7:10 and the Birthplace of Jesus Christ,” (undated paper, BYU Maxwell Institute, Provo, Utah), <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=961&index=1>; Robert F. Smith, “The Land of Jerusalem: The Place of Jesus’ Birth,” *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1110&index=48>; Jeff Lindsay, “Bethlehem vs. the Land of Jerusalem: Is Alma 7:10 a Blunder?,” *JeffLindsay.com* (blog), Last Updated October 27, 2010, [https://www.jefflindsay.com/BM\\_Jerusalem.shtml](https://www.jefflindsay.com/BM_Jerusalem.shtml).



and the translation process or many other issues such as the body of evidence from the Arabian Peninsula related to Lehi's Trail, including three carvings found by non-LDS archaeologists giving hard evidence for the existence in Lehi's day of the tribal name Nihm or Nehem in the right region to relate to the place Nahom along Lehi's Trail in 1 Nephi 16, did not come from a panicked quest for any possible evidence *per se*, but from seeking to understand the Book of Mormon or to answer reasonable questions about specific aspects of the text. Beshears repeatedly criticizes LDS scholarship for presupposing the text is true and then claiming to find glimmers of evidence, but this is not a fair appraisal of some of the most significant work and most significant evidences we have.

In spite of his qualms about LDS scholarship on the "mormonic text," Beshears does review some important works and deserves credit for a reasonable discussion, for example, of the pros and cons of chiasmus and parallelism in the Book of Mormon. His review is hampered somewhat by repeatedly describing LDS scholarship in terms of trying to "prove" the Book of Mormon to be historical. Nevertheless, he does grasp the significance of the issue of historicity for the Book of Mormon and its role in the faith of many LDS people.

### **A Clever and Original Argument**

I was impressed with the cleverness of the closing section of Beshears's background review that beautifully draws upon the arguments of some LDS scholars to set the stage for his primary argument:

Consequently, considering both the amount of attention given to Moses and the Mosaic motif found in mormonic characters, Reynolds suggests, "the fact that Nephi and Lehi both saw themselves as Moses figures demonstrates their awareness of a recognizable feature of preexilic Israelite literature that has only recently been explicated by Bible scholars." In other words, mormonic people knew enough about preexilic Israelite leaders to honor and emulate them not only in the way they lived, but also in the way they wrote about themselves. They showcased their admiration for major biblical characters by crafting thematic motifs. For Reynolds, the appearance of beloved biblical characters through types in the BofM is evidence of its authenticity. He further argued the Hebraic literary tradition of the OT practically demands "that [Nephi and Lehi] presented themselves as antitypes for Moses." So strong is this evidence that Reynolds boldly proclaimed, "it would make sense to

criticize the Book of Mormon had it not made these kinds of strong, natural comparisons.”

These thematic nods and direct references to biblical characters in the BofM demonstrate that the New World Jews were not merely aware of their history as a people, but they desired to sustain their Hebrew cultural identity by referencing and describing their most influential leaders in terms of biblical history. Thus, according to BofM historicism, part of what makes the book authentic is its references and allusions to famous biblical characters, because they suggest continuity between Old and New World Jews.<sup>14</sup>

So if Book of Mormon authors were genuine ancient Hebrews who deeply appreciated archetypes from Moses and the Exodus and respected Abraham, shouldn't they also show great interest in King David and the Psalms? And if David is largely neglected, don't we have a problem? It's a fair question and indeed an interesting one, and Beshears is to be congratulated for asking it. The issue, though, is whether this question can be packed with the rigor to yield meaningful answers, the kind that can properly distinguish bogus Semitic texts from real ones.

### **Beshears's Methodology: A Precise Tool or Dull Bludgeon?**

Beshears introduces an intriguing new tool for separating authentic ancient Semitic writing from fraudulent imitation. He argues that King David played a monumental role in ancient Jewish culture, and thus we should expect him and the Psalms, many of which David wrote, to be emphasized in the Book of Mormon, if it is historic. But Beshears finds that the Book of Mormon has only seven “paltry” references to David and ignores the Psalms, which he feels is hardly compatible with a historic Jewish text:

Readers of the BofM familiar with the immense stature of David in the biblical Jewish identity may find themselves nonplussed at the paltry seven references to Israel's greatest king, especially considering the numerous Abrahamic and Mosaic references.

If the mormonic people were truly Jewish, why has King David essentially absconded from their historical and prophetic records relative to biblical Judaism? Is it really possible that

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14. Beshears, “Davidic References in the Book of Mormon,” 19–20.

the BofM, a text that prides itself on incredibly descriptive prophecies of the coming messiah, could neglect to feature one of the most prominent figures in the messianic lineage?

[...] Of all David's contributions to the Hebrew religious identity, two stand out as being particularly influential: his Psalms and the messianic expectation that grew out of his reign. The NT writers seem most interested in these two aspects of David, referencing him almost exclusively in the context of psalmic material or arguments that portray Christ as David's descendant and heir to his eternal throne. At the very least, one would anticipate quotations of Davidic psalms and the hopeful anticipation of an eschatological, Davidic king in the BofM. However, its sermons, prophecies, and epistles never quote Davidic psalms, and almost entirely exclude him from their messianic prophecies.<sup>15</sup>

And then his conclusion:

If the BofM was written by pre- and post-exilic Jews, why are its references to David so rare and atypical when compared to other Jewish texts such as the Old and New Testaments, intertestamental writings, and Qumranic literature? The mormonic treatment of David is inconsistent with what would be expected, given the religious background, texts, and culture from which they claim to have arisen. The venerated Israelite king is nowhere near as prevalent or, in the case of Jacob, esteemed in the BofM when compared to his monumental significance in the Bible and other related Jewish texts, especially in self-consciously messianic movements like those in Qumran or the NT. Consequently, I contend the BofM's peculiar treatment of David in particular testifies against the BofM historicist hypothesis— that it is the product of a historically authentic, Hebrew culture — because it so radically truncates and departs from the known Hebrew literary tradition concerning the great Israelite king. It appears highly suspect that the mormonic prophets and preachers and kings, seeking to continue the heritage of their Old World cousins and promote a messianic tradition comparable to the NT tradition, all but exclude David from their national,

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15. *Ibid.*, 20–22.

historio-religious records, nor situate him honorably among their cultural heroes.

In the absence of any convincing evidence for these incredible BofM historicist claims, we are nevertheless asked to believe that sometime in the sixth century BCE a lost Israelite tribe emigrated from Palestine to the New World with the intent of preserving OT Hebrew messianism, yet without the type or frequency of Davidic references found with their ancestral, Old World cousins. In the end, this desperate search for internal evidences in support of an underlying Hebrew tradition to BofM, as with the search for corroborating external evidences to its supposed ancient historicity, is destined to amount to unproductive digging in the sand. Consequently, I predict that pressing the BofM further in this way will yield similar results.<sup>16</sup>

Is this critique valid? Can the Book of Mormon withstand this new line of attack?

One of the things I would have expected in a scholarly treatment is some evidence that the metric used to evaluate a text has some basis in reality, such as a demonstration that it can give accurate results with relevant texts. Beshears asserts that an authentic ancient Jewish text from after the days of David should naturally speak of David and quote from the Psalms. He cites other scholarship on the general importance of David as well as examples of references to David from the Old and New Testaments and the Dead Sea Scrolls. But citing cases where David is mentioned, for example, does not address the question of historicity when the mentions of David are absent or, in the case of the Book of Mormon, relatively few

Has Beshears applied his tool to other ancient or allegedly ancient texts to evaluate its usefulness? Has he made any effort to establish a threshold frequency for mentioning David to distinguish between authentic and bogus ancient Jewish writings? Is there a reliable threshold for separating authentic Jewish writing from forgeries or non-Semitic texts based on statistics relative to the name David or passages that draw upon the Psalms? The answer, clearly, is no. I will save Beshears some trouble by doing what he should have done in the earliest days of his research: checking his tool by applying it to the books of the Bible itself.

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16. *Ibid.*, 46.

The Bible provides the most obvious collection of documents attributed to ancient Jewish writers whose texts can be tested with the methodology of Beshears.

While Beshears speaks enthusiastically of the *thousand-plus* times David is mentioned in the Bible, the vast bulk of these occurrences are in the historical books that deal with the story of David, his rise, his rule, and the aftermath of his rule (Samuel, Kings, Chronicles). Numerous mentions also naturally occur in the Psalms, and then things taper off quickly with a handful of mentions in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The illustrious King David is mentioned only once in Proverbs, where he is merely identified as the father of Solomon. The same thing occurs in Ecclesiastes: just one mention as the Preacher's father. The only mention in the Song of Solomon is a reference to the "tower of David," but nothing about the glory of that king, though believed to be written by his son.

Critically, *David is not mentioned at all* in the very Jewish books of Esther, Lamentations, Daniel, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi. Once we get past the David-heavy books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and the Psalms, there are just as many books that don't mention David as there are that do. Even Daniel and Malachi, in spite of eschatological and messianic views, never cite David. Such admissions are not found in Beshears's thesis.

If a large fraction of Old Testament writers fail to mention David at all, do we really need to reject the Book of Mormon for having just seven "paltry" occurrences of the name David? Granted, three of these come from citations of Isaiah (and hardly count since they are "plagiarized," we are told), but the name and influence of David is not entirely absent.

Beshears sees validation for his tool in the emphasis given to David in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels (e.g., six mentions of David in the genealogy in Matthew 1), but Beshears never mentions David's neglect by multiple Jewish authors. The Gospel of John mentions David twice but in only one verse (John 7:42). Paul mentions David three times in Romans, but not at all in 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, and 1 Timothy. There is one paltry mention in 2 Timothy, none in Titus nor Philemon, then two in Hebrews. There is no mention of David in James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, the three epistles of John, and Jude. Revelation has three mentions.

Beshears's tool would seem to eliminate a large portion of the Old Testament and much of the New Testament, which I trust he will see as an undesirable outcome (see, for example, Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18–19).

Beshears's methodology for rejecting the Book of Mormon, however logical it may seem to its inventor, seems hopelessly flawed.

### **More Than Meets the Eye in the Book of Mormon: Allusions to David and the Psalms**

David and the Psalms may not be as absent as Beshears thinks. His claim that no Davidic psalms are quoted may be incorrect, and David as an archetype may be present in places Beshears has missed.

An important scholarly work by Ben McGuire considers Nephi's apparently deliberate allusions to the story of David and Goliath.<sup>17</sup> The basics of this work were first made public in a presentation at the 2001 FAIR Conference. McGuire reviews scholarship on the role of allusions and the use of markers and other tools to call attention to deliberate parallels. His analysis provides a strong case that the Book of Mormon's account of Nephi slaying Laban has been patterned after the biblical account of David, employing similar language and themes:

First, we have the introduction of the antagonist, who is described in terms of his feats of strength and who inspires fear. Then the protagonist responds, claiming that there is no need to fear — the God who has historically acted on the protagonist's behalf will again act to destroy this threat, not only to save the protagonist, but also to ensure that God is recognized in the future. Next the antagonist and protagonist meet, and the text announces to us that the antagonist is delivered into the hands of the protagonist by God. Finally, the antagonist is reduced to a helpless state, and the protagonist takes his enemy's sword, pulls it from its sheath, decapitates the antagonist, and then gathers his foe's armor as his own.

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17. See Ben McGuire, "Nephi and Goliath: A Case Study of Literary Allusion in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18/1 (2009): 16–31, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1416&index=4>. See also McGuire's related presentation, "Nephi and Goliath: A Reappraisal of the Use of the Old Testament in First Nephi," (2001 FAIR Conference, Provo Women's Center, Provo, Utah), *FAIRMormon*, <https://www.fairmormon.org/conferences/august-2001/nephi-and-goliath-a-reappraisal-of-the-use-of-the-old-testament-in-first-nephi>.

<b>Parallel Passages in 1 Samuel and 1 Nephi</b>	
1 Samuel 17:4–7, 11	1 Nephi 3:31
1 Samuel 17:32	1 Nephi 4:1
1 Samuel 17:34–37	1 Nephi 4:2–3
1 Samuel 17:45–46	1 Nephi 4:6, 10–12, 17
1 Samuel 17:51	1 Nephi 4:9, 18
1 Samuel 17:54	1 Nephi 4:19

The thematic elements follow a relatively simple structural parallel. This parallel being sustained throughout the entire narrative text is a strong indicator that the Book of Mormon narrative is reliant on the biblical text.

Part of Nephi’s purpose in patterning his conquest of Laban after David and Goliath is to establish his rightful role as king over the Nephite people, a claim that was strongly disputed by his enemies. The sword of Laban, like the sword of Goliath, would become a revered symbol of Nephite authority and of God’s deliverance of the Nephite people. The allusions to David in the Book of Mormon are meaningful and strong and may help temper some of Beshears’s concerns about the Book of Mormon.

The Psalms also may be more present in the Book of Mormon than Beshears realizes.

### **Are the Psalms Largely Missing in the Book of Mormon?**

Beshears’s literature review did detect one LDS scholar (out of many others who could have been cited) who discussed allusions to the Psalms in the Book of Mormon. Beshears targets a publication by John Hilton III that includes a list of 43 apparent Book of Mormon citations of various Psalms.<sup>18</sup> Beshears, however, is unimpressed and finds the use of similar language to be evidence not of allusions to the Psalms in an ancient record but merely the fruit of Joseph Smith’s exposure to the King James Bible. Indeed, Beshears bemoans Joseph’s obvious plagiarism, claiming the presence of the very words of the King James

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18. John Hilton III, “Old Testament Psalms in the Book of Mormon” in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament* (2013 Sperry Symposium), ed. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Matthew J. Grey, and David Rolph Seely (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 291–311, <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/ascending-mountain-lord-temple-praise-and-worship-old-testament/old-testament-psalms-book>.

Bible in the Book of Mormon raises a serious problem and points to deliberate plagiarism by Joseph rather than a real translation process that could not possibly give the same words found in the Bible.

[T]he supposed psalmic allusions Hilton brought forward align with the KJV, which is a serious concern for his hypothesis. As with the “Isaiah Problem,” these ancient echoes of the Psalms are translated in the same manner as a seventeenth-century English translation, often word-for-word. For example, Hilton cites the following phrase from Jacob 6:6; “today if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts.” If this truly is a psalmic allusion, then it is an obvious reproduction of the KJV Psalm 95:7-8, “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.” Likewise, the phrase “none that doeth good ... no not one” in Moroni 10:25 matches exactly with both the KJV Psalms 14:3; 53:3 and Romans 3:12, stepping beyond the mere repurposing of OT Psalms and into the NT Epistles as well. This observation would not come as a surprise to Hilton. In fact, the identical reproduction of the KJV Psalms in the BofM is the reason he found these supposed psalmic allusions in the first place (by running word analysis software).

... Is it likely that Moroni, having been raised in mormonic Jewish culture without a copy of the book of Psalms for nearly a millennium, in the fifth century CE suddenly alluded to the Psalms, by writing in non-extant “reformed Egyptian,” words that happen to be translated into English in the nineteenth century by Joseph Smith as, “none that doeth good ... no not one (Moroni 10:25),” a verbatim copy of the KJV translation of Psalms 14:3; 53:3 and Romans 3:12? Or is it more likely that a nineteenth-century author drew from his knowledge of the KJV translation to construct Moroni’s epistle?<sup>19</sup>

Incidentally, there is no reason why the pre-exilic Psalms could not have been on the brass plates. Beshears argues that since the Psalms are not listed as being on the brass plates, they implicitly were not part of the Nephite canon,<sup>20</sup> but there is no reason to believe that Nephi has given an exhaustive catalog.

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19. Beshears, “Davidic References in the Book of Mormon,” 43.

20. *Ibid.*, 41.



Beshears's tool for dividing real and bogus Jewish texts, which one might call the shears of Beshears, clearly has two sharp blades, one that can swiftly cut away bogus "mormonic" text that lacks the presence of the Psalms and can just as quickly make mincemeat of any "mormonic" text that dares to quote (or rather, "plagiarize" from) the Psalms. The Book of Mormon is certainly doomed with this two-edged approach. I wonder how New Testament writers might fare? Whether guilty of ignoring the Psalms or plagiarizing from them, sometimes with the very language of the Septuagint, I suppose there would be a lot shearing to be done.

Beshears is sharply critical of Hilton. He finds Hilton's collection of 43 phrases linked to the Psalms to present an "insurmountable problem" for the Book of Mormon apologist since there is no way to tell whether these faint echoes are intentional or accidental, or whether they simply come from Joseph Smith regurgitating phrases he had heard for years from the Bible or other popular sources like John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*:

For example, the phrase "pains of hell" [found in Psalms 116:3 and Jacob 3:11, and Alma 14:6, 26:13, and 36:13] was a common colloquialism used by popular figures such as John Bunyan and George Whitfield [*sic*], both of whom would have been well-known to nineteenth-century Americans. The fact that the phrase only appears once in the entire KJV Bible (Psalms 116:3), but multiple times in the BofM (Jacob 3:11; Alma 14:6; 26:13; 36:13), indicates that the BofM was influenced more by the frequent nineteenth-century use of the phrase rather than ancient writers alluding to the original psalmic expression.<sup>21</sup>

A search of *Pilgrim's Progress*<sup>22</sup> reveals "pains of hell" was used precisely *once*, and a search of the two-volume set of George Whitefield's sermons<sup>23</sup> reveals the term *twice*. Both undoubtedly got the term from

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21. *Ibid.*, 42–43.

22. The search was conducted using Google Books: <https://books.google.com/books?id=qSI8OPlomYIC&pg=RA1-PA129&dq=pilgrims+progress,+%22pains+of+hell%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjN0IjA5vfSAhVBwFQKHT8JCJUQ6AEIOjAF#v=onepage&q=pilgrims%20progress%2C%20%22pains%20of%20hell%22&f=false>.

23. The search of Whitfield's work was also conducted using Google Books: [https://books.google.com/books?id=5n9bCwAAQBAJ&pg=PT579&dq=whitfield,+%22pains+of+hell%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiMlpO65\\_fSAhWpwVQKHVkhA64Q6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=%22pains%20of%20hell%22&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=5n9bCwAAQBAJ&pg=PT579&dq=whitfield,+%22pains+of+hell%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiMlpO65_fSAhWpwVQKHVkhA64Q6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=%22pains%20of%20hell%22&f=false).

the Psalms. Is their scant use of the term truly evidence that they are a more likely source for the “pains of hell” in the Book of Mormon? More to the point, is their scant use relevant at all to Beshears’s thesis? Even if Bunyan had used the phrase hundreds of times, is that evidence that the Book of Mormon lacks references to the Psalms, which is what Beshears argument is supposed to be?

*Note how Beshears’s argument has shifted.* His scholarship was supposedly addressing whether allusions to the Psalms are found in the Book of Mormon, as he says we should expect if the “mormonic” text came from real ancient Hebrews. However, when similar language is presented by Hilton, the sole author he considers among the many who have treated various aspects of the Psalms in the Book of Mormon, Beshears then dismisses that evidence because those phrases could equally well be found in Joseph’s environment. Lack of allusions to the Psalms damns the Book of Mormon for not being like the Bible, and apparent references to the Psalms damns the book for being too much like the Bible due to Joseph’s plagiarism of related phrases. Too little or too much like the Bible? Again, the answer is a resounding “Yes!” Here Beshears reveals more clearly what the game is all about: it is not academic inquiry, but his own bias that motivates this game. This is the real insurmountable problem before us.

### **Troubling Omissions in Treating Hilton, Or, Say Kiddish for Nephi’s Psalm**

What especially troubled me in Beshears’s swift dismissal of Hilton’s work was his *failure to consider the bulk of Hilton’s analysis* where we have the strongest, most valuable aspects of his work. Perhaps Beshears quit reading after looking at the list of 43 parallels, or perhaps his copy of Hilton’s paper was missing the last half. But the neglect of key findings from Hilton is difficult to excuse in this thesis. In the portions neglected or missed by Beshears, Hilton explores in detail (1) how Jacob makes clever and appropriate use of Psalm 95 to bracket his book, and (2) how Nephi’s Psalm makes extensive use of the Psalms in his own very genuine psalm. Both of these issues point to much more sophistication than a Bible-versed ignoramus plucking random phrases from memory as he dictates out of a hat.

Beshears’s neglect of the strength of Hilton’s work is a serious weakness in his approach. How is it that the analysis of Hilton and the strength of his argument were not even discussed? How is it possible that Nephi’s Psalm, which has been an important topic in LDS scholarship

on the Book of Mormon for decades, would not be mentioned, lacking even a passing reference to 2 Nephi 4 where the influence of the Psalms is readily apparent and far more sophisticated than even skilled readers of the Book of Mormon may realize? It seems that Beshears jumped to his conclusions too quickly or tries too hard to dismiss rather than confront the evidence, as we see with the neglect of much of Hilton's publication.

As we will see, sections of this psalm play a key role in Jacob's book. In Jacob 1:7, he records, "Wherefore we labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God, *that they might enter into his rest, lest by any means he should swear in his wrath they should not enter in, as in the provocation in the days of temptation while the children of Israel were in the wilderness.*" The italicized portions of this verse bear a clear connection to Psalm 95:8 and 11, which state, "As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness ... Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

This shared text cannot be coincidental. This is doubly the case when we see another allusion to Psalm 95 at the end of Jacob's record. In Jacob 6:6, he exhorts, "*Yea, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;* for why will ye die?" These words directly echo Psalm 95:7–8: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Thus Jacob alludes to Psalm 95 at the beginning of his book (Jacob 1:7) and as he nears the end of it (Jacob 6:6). Moreover, these introductory and concluding allusions use adjoining phrases from Psalm 95. Psalms 95:7–8 reads, "To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness." In Jacob 1:7, Jacob quotes the latter portion of these verses "as in the provocation in the days of temptation while the children of Israel were in the wilderness." In Jacob 6:6, he uses the first phrase, "Today if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts," thus alluding to both halves, but reversing their order.

Both Jacob 1:7 and Jacob 6:6 are portions of texts in which Jacob directly addresses readers. They are not part of a continuous discourse; rather, they are broken up by Jacob's sermon at the temple (Jacob 2:1–3:11) and his recording of the allegory of

the olive tree (Jacob 5). Because Jacob is addressing the reader at each of the bookend allusions of Psalms 95:7–8, I believe he uses these two statements to cohesively communicate to readers of his book two of his core themes, those of not hardening our hearts and of coming unto Christ. As I will demonstrate, Jacob uses textual connections to Psalm 95 to develop these themes....<sup>24</sup>

Hilton's analysis becomes even more interesting in the next section under the hard-to-miss title, "The Old Testament Psalms and the 'Psalm of Nephi,'" also neglected by Beshears, where Hilton treats the numerous allusions to the Psalms in what is widely called "the Psalm of Nephi" in 2 Nephi 4:17–35. It is a minor tragedy if Beshears examined Hilton but failed to even note that major section revealing there was such a thing as the "Psalm of Nephi," surely a relevant issue for any attempt at scholarship involving the influence of the Psalms on the Book of Mormon. I hope that this deficiency might be corrected in any follow-up work from Beshears and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

While we can forgive Beshears for not noticing Hilton's treatment of Nephi's Psalm, it is still troubling that the topic of Nephi's Psalm as treated by many others was missed in the search of related publications. One of the first things I expected to find when I began reading Beshears was his response to the obviously psalm-like content of Nephi's Psalm. LDS scholarship on the Book of Mormon abounds with references to Nephi's Psalm and its similarities to the Psalms. Missing this body of scholarship, even when it was a major portion of the primary LDS work he consulted, strikes me as awkward. Hilton's section is lengthy, but I'll share the beginning and ending paragraphs to indicate just how much Beshears has missed from the reference before him:

The previous section focused on Jacob's use of one psalm throughout his entire book. I now discuss Nephi's use of a variety of psalms in one small part of his record, which is popularly called "the Psalm of Nephi." S. Kent Brown has called this passage (2 Nephi 4:17–35) "a most poignant depiction of Nephi's own struggles with sin and with feelings about rebellious members of his family."

It has been noted previously that the Psalm of Nephi shares several features with ancient Hebrew psalms. For example, Matthew Nickerson states that "Nephi's psalm plainly

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24. Hilton, "Old Testament Psalms in the Book of Mormon."

follows the format and substance of the individual lament as described by Gunkel and elaborated upon by numerous subsequent scholars.” Brown points out that Nephi’s psalm “exhibits poetic characteristics found in the Old Testament.” Steven Sondrup finds that “in the ‘Psalm of Nephi,’ just as in Hebrew poetry ... logical, formal or conceptual units are set parallel one to another.”

In addition to these overarching literary patterns, the Psalm of Nephi shares a surprisingly large amount of text with the Old Testament Psalms. It appears that Nephi (perhaps intentionally or perhaps because of his familiarity with Psalmic material), drew on phrases of lament, praise, and worship from the Psalter as he composed his own words. Of the 660 words comprising the Psalm of Nephi, 127 (approximately 20 percent) are key words or phrases also found in the biblical Psalter. While some of these key words or phrases are used frequently throughout scripture ... others are significant and appear only in these two pericopes. The concentration of references to Psalms may indicate intentionality on Nephi’s part as he wrote these words.

[The body of Hilton’s analysis commences here, but we will jump to his concluding comments in this section.]

When the multiple connections to Psalms are added together, Nephi could have alluded to potentially forty-seven different Psalms in just eighteen verses. It stretches one’s imagination to believe that Joseph Smith could have been responsible for making all of these connections, particularly with the understanding that the Psalm of Nephi may have been translated in less than two hours. While some sections of Nephi’s soliloquy have relatively few allusions to Psalms, in other sections the number of connections is impressive. For example, 40 percent of the words in 2 Nephi 4:29–32 also appear in Old Testament Psalms (54 out of 135 words). I believe these allusions stem from Nephi’s meditations on the Psalms and that the high concentration of psalmic references in this pericope indicates that Nephi had access to them (either from the plates or his own cultural experiences in Jerusalem). Nephi’s apparent familiarity and love of the psalms can provide motivation for Latter-day Saints to follow Nephi’s

example and become deeply familiar with the language of praise and worship as found in the Old Testament Psalms.<sup>25</sup>

Other significant works could be cited. For example, Kenneth Alford and D. Bryce Baker fruitfully explore the significant relationships between Nephi's Psalm and Psalms 25–31.<sup>26</sup> That work came after Hilton, who considered many of the most significant relevant works at the time, such as Steven Sondrup's analysis that gives a useful foundation for exploring the poetical structure of Nephi's Psalm.<sup>27</sup> Hilton also called attention to Matthew Nickerson's equally valuable work, in which he applies form-critical tools developed by other modern scholars to compare Nephi's Psalm with the limited number of forms the Psalms take, finding it to be closely related to the category of the individual lament.<sup>28</sup> This form of a psalm tends to have five elements, though not necessarily in order: 1) invocation, 2) complaint, 3) confession of trust, 4) petition, and 5) vow of praise. Nephi's Psalm is shown to fit that pattern closely.

Understanding the tools that have been applied in past scholarship to 2 Nephi 4 can raise awareness about the potential linkages of other parts of the Book of Mormon to the Psalms. For example, in light of Nickerson's review of the features of an individual lament, a similar pattern may be noticed in another psalm-like passage of the Book of Mormon, Ammon's oration in Alma 29. While others have noted that Alma 29 has poetic features,<sup>29</sup> its relationship to the Psalms has not

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25. Ibid.

26. Kenneth L. Alford and D. Bryce Baker, "Parallels between Psalms 25–31 and the Psalm of Nephi," in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament* (2013 Sperry Symposium), ed. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Matthew J. Grey, and David Rolph Seely (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 312–28, <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/ascending-mountain-lord-temple-praise-and-worship-old-testament/parallels-between-psalms-25>.

27. Steven P. Sondrup, "The Psalm of Nephi: A Lyric Reading," *BYU Studies*, 21/3 (1981): 1–16, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/psalm-nephi-lyric-reading>.

28. Matthew Nickerson, "Nephi's Psalm: 2 Nephi 4:16–35 in the Light of Form-Critical Analysis," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6/2 (1997): 26–42, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1393&index=3>.

29. Harlow Clark, "Gadianton the Nobler, Reflections on Changes in the Book of Mormon, Part III: Poetry, Style and Literary Craft in the Book of Mormon," *Motley Vision*, Feb. 25, 2009, <https://www.motleyvision.org/2009/gadianton-the-nobler-overview-3/>; see also Donald W. Parry, *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon: The Complete Text Reformatted* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2007), 298–9, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/book/poetic-parallelisms-in-the-book-of-mormon-the-complete-text-reformatted/>.

been widely discussed, yet in light of its psalm-like feel, the following possibilities might be considered in comparing it to an individual lament, though there is overlap allowing some passages to fit at least two aspects of the elements treated by Nickerson:

1. Invocation: “O that I were an angel...” in Alma 29:1, where Ammon begins his prayerful plea before the Lord.
2. Complaint: “I would declare unto every soul ... the plan of redemption ... that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth” (v. 2); “But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me” (v. 3); Ammon complains of the sorrow in the world and the need to reach many more than he can reach as a mere man. He complains also that his power to help is so limited.
3. Confession of trust: “the firm decree of a just God” (v. 4); “the Lord doth grant unto all nations ... to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true” (v. 8); “I remember his merciful arm which he extended towards me” (v. 10); “I also remember the captivity of my fathers; for I surely do know that the Lord did deliver them out of bondage” (v. 11).
4. Petition: “And now may God grant unto these, my brethren, that they may sit down in the kingdom of God; yea, and also all those who are the fruit of their labors that they may go no more out, but that they may praise him forever. And may God grant that it may be done according to my words, even as I have spoken” (v. 17).
5. Vow of praise: “the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true. I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it. I do not glory of myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me” (vv. 8–9).

Mormon’s stirring lament in Helaman 12 may also be compared to some of the Psalms and may be among the most notable literary contributions of the military leader and editor, who usually is more focused on narrative in his editorial role. But the most extensive use of psalm-like material and particularly language from the Psalms

comes from earlier writers like Nephi, Jacob, and Alma, men who were particularly close to the brass plates and frequently cited them.

If allusions to the Psalms were random parallels from Joseph recalling related language, as Beshears suggests, we would expect to find them scattered randomly throughout the text. The distribution is far from random but is consistent with a historical ancient Semitic text from multiple authors with varying degrees of familiarity with the brass plates. Beshears does not discuss this important issue, perhaps because he is unable to recognize the existence of allusions to the Psalms in the first place.

The scholarship on the Psalm of Nephi is worth careful reflection. It not only abounds in references to the Psalms, but includes meaningful examples of chiasmus and other forms of parallelism and even, tentatively, apparent cases of Janus parallelism (a newly discovered but intriguing aspect of ancient Hebrew poetry), where Nephi's writings and especially his Psalm so far appear to have the highest concentration of this recently recognized form of parallelism.<sup>30</sup> Nephi's Psalm is a gem and directly contradicts Beshears's claims that the Nephites were inexplicably unaware of the Psalms, and adds meaningful evidence to the case for the authentic ancient nature of Nephi's writings.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, there are other intriguing examples of Psalms being used in the Book of Mormon. See, for example:

- Matthew Bowen's "Onomastic Wordplay on Joseph and Benjamin and Gezera Shawa in the Book of Mormon," exploring several wordplays in the Book of Mormon that appear to draw upon language from the Psalms in a way that is compatible with sophisticated ancient origins.<sup>32</sup>
- Matthew Bowen's exploration of a Hebrew/Egyptian wordplay in Alma 44:14, 18 identifies an apparent reliance on language from Psalm 68:21 and Psalm 110:6–7.<sup>33</sup>

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30. Jeff Lindsay, "The Possibility of Janus Parallelism in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 28 (2018): 1–20, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-possibility-of-janus-parallelism-in-the-book-of-mormon/>.

31. "Is Nephi's Psalm Really a Psalm?," *Book of Mormon Central*, Feb. 10, 2016, <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/is-nephis-psalm-really-a-psalm>.

32. Matthew L. Bowen, "Onomastic Wordplay on Joseph and Benjamin and Gezera Shawa in the Book of Mormon," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 255–73, <https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/onomastic-wordplay-on-joseph-and-benjamin-and-gezera-shawa-in-the-book-of-mormon/>.

33. Matthew L. Bowen, "The Scalp of Your Head: Polysemy in Alma 44:14–18," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 20 (2016): 39–45, <http://www>.



- David Larsen’s video, “Temple Themes in the Psalms and in the Book of Mormon” at *Book of Mormon Central*.<sup>34</sup>
- “Why Does Nephi Quote a Temple Psalm While Commenting on Isaiah?” at *Book of Mormon Central*.<sup>35</sup>
- Matthew Bowen’s treatment of Jacob 5 as a temple text. While highlighting Jacob’s usage of Psalm 95, Bowen also shows how Psalm 118:26 and Psalm 40:7–8 are applied by the Lord in 3 Nephi 1:14. A similar allusion occurs in Jacob 5:75.<sup>36</sup>

Hilton’s original list of 43 connections, though simply a preliminary effort based on computer searching for identical words, merits much more attention than Beshears gave it. Many intriguing connections are not discussed at all. For example, example #3 from Hilton’s list is the “rod of iron” from Lehi’s dream, a term also found in Psalm 2:9. The use of that term in 1 Nephi is far more interesting than one would expect from a clumsy plagiarizer plucking a random term from the Psalms (or, as one critic has argued, concocting the concept and all of Lehi’s dream based upon Joseph seeing the iron rod of an aqueduct in Rochester, NY<sup>37</sup>), and actually involves a sophisticated wordplay.<sup>38</sup> Rather than swiftly dismissing this and all other connections raised by Hilton and moving on to an *a priori* conclusion, it might have been more appropriate for

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mormoninterpreter.com/the-scalp-of-your-head-polysemy-in-alma-4414-18/#sdfootnote7sym.

34. David Larsen, “Temple Themes in the Psalms and in the Book of Mormon,” *Book of Mormon Central*, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYgyZaonGy4>.

35. “Why Does Nephi Quote a Temple Psalm While Commenting on Isaiah?” *Book of Mormon Central*, March 10, 2016, <https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/why-does-nephi-quote-a-temple-psalm-while-commenting-on-isaiah>.

36. Matthew Bowen, “‘I Have Done According to My Will’: Reading Jacob 5 as a Temple Text,” in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, Proceedings of the Second Interpreter Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, “The Temple on Mount Zion,” 25 October 2014, Temple on Mount Zion Series 3, eds. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016): 235–72, with the relevant discussion at 254–55.

37. Rick Grunder’s proposal for the origin for Lehi’s dream is discussed in Jeff Lindsay, “The Great and Spacious Book of Mormon Arcade Game: More Curious Works from Book of Mormon Critics,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 23 (2017): 161–235, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-great-and-spacious-book-of-mormon-arcade-game-more-curious-works-from-book-of-mormon-critics/>.

38. Matthew Bowen, “What Meaneth the Rod of Iron?,” *Insights* 25/2 (2005): 2–3, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1313&index=3>.

Beshears to also consider each of Hilton’s proposals more carefully. Further, it would have strengthened the research work to recognize that still other connections to the Psalms may be present that would not appear on Hilton’s first pass of searching for exactly matching phrases.

As an example of the fruits that might be gleaned with a small amount of additional comparison of our texts, consider Psalm 62:10: “Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.” For readers familiar with the Book of Mormon, this may immediately recall Jacob 2:17–18, where the prophet Jacob warns against the pursuit of wealth and urges using wealth, should it come, as a tool to serve others. However, other passages have a more direct connection to the language of Psalm 62:10, which is the only occurrence in the KJV Bible of the phrase “your heart upon” (although “thine heart upon” is found in Job 7:17 and Ezekiel 40:4, but in a different context). It is also the only verse that involves the combination of *set* + *heart upon* + *riches*. The verse is interesting, in light of possible Book of Mormon relationships, for its further use of the concepts of robbery and vanity, with the word *vain* at the beginning of verse 10 following two instances of *vain* in verse 9 of this Psalm. Its use of *trust* and *oppression* may also be of interest.

Turning to the Book of Mormon, we find many instances of the concept of setting one’s heart upon riches, all with possible relationships to Psalm 62:10. These connections were not identified in Hilton’s computer search probably because the Book of Mormon usage excludes the “not” or places it before “set” when discussing the setting of hearts upon riches, but they can be found with Boolean searching of key terms in the same verse using, for example, the LDS Library app.<sup>39</sup> Relevant verses include:

- Mosiah 11:14, where King Noah “*placed his heart upon his riches*.” Note also the preceding condemnation of Noah and his priests in v. 5 for being “lifted up in pride,” for speaking “*vain and flattering words*” (v. 7) and “*lying and vain words*” (v. 11), and for gaining wealth by oppressively taxing the people (vv. 2–13).
- Mosiah 12:29, “Why do ye *set your hearts upon riches*?”
- Alma 1:30, “they did *not set their hearts upon riches*...” (cf. Alma 1:16).

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39. “Gospel Library,” iPhone application, v. 4.0.5, March 23, 2017, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

- Alma 4:8, “For they saw and beheld with great sorrow that the people of the church began to be *lifted up in the pride* of their eyes, and *to set their hearts upon riches* and upon the *vain* things of the world...”
- Alma 5:53, “*setting your hearts upon the vain* things of the world, *upon your riches*.”
- Alma 7:6, “I *trust* that ye are not *lifted up in the pride* of your hearts; yea, I trust that ye have *not set your hearts upon riches* and the *vain* things of the world; yea, I *trust* that you do not worship idols, but that ye do worship the true and living God...” This involves much in Psalm 62:10: *trust + vain* (also the similar “lifted up in pride”) + *set your hearts upon riches*.
- Alma 17:14 “a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites, and *robbing* and *plundering* them; and *their hearts were set upon riches*, or upon gold and silver, and precious stones; yet they sought to obtain these things by murdering and *plundering*...”
- Helaman 4:12, “*pride of their hearts*, because of their exceeding *riches*, yea, it was because of their *oppression* to the poor, ... *plundering*, lying, *stealing*” (cf. 4 Nephi 1:43).
- Helaman 6:17, “they began to *set their hearts upon their riches*; yea, they began to seek to get gain that they might be *lifted up one above another*; therefore they began to commit secret murders, and *to rob and to plunder*, that they might get gain.” Here we have references to pride, to robbery, and to setting hearts upon riches.
- Helaman 7:21, “ye have *set your hearts upon the riches* and the *vain* things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and *plunder*, and *steal*.”
- Helaman 13:20, “they have *set their hearts upon riches*.”

The plurality of elements such as robbery, vanity, trust, or oppression from Psalm 62:10, which sometimes occur in combination with its unique expression of *set + heart(s) upon riches*, creates a plausible case for the widespread influence of Psalm 62 upon the Book of Mormon.<sup>40</sup> Whether

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40. The Book of Mormon’s use of Psalm 62 may also be consistent with the proactive, anti-apostasy intent of this Psalm as interpreted by Davida Charney, “Keeping the Faithful: Persuasive Strategies in Psalms 4 and 62,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12/16 (2012): 1–13, [www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article\\_178.pdf](http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_178.pdf).

due to Joseph’s familiarity with the Bible and modern “plagiarism” or due to the familiarity of ancient authors with the brass plates (ancient “plagiarism,” if one accepts Beshears’s problematic definition) is a matter for debate, but in any case this example further undermines the claim that the Book of Mormon lacks influence from the Psalms.

### **If Any of You Lack Wisdom**

According to Beshears, “the mormonic Hebrew Bible appears not to have contained the book of Psalms or any other ‘wisdom literature.’”<sup>41</sup> But the purported lack of “wisdom literature” does not fit scholarship on the Book of Mormon revealing that themes from the “wisdom literature” play an important role. Wisdom themes in the Book of Mormon were noted long ago by Nibley<sup>42</sup> and have been noted in many ways since then. Taylor Halverson, for examples, offers this abstract with a recent article at *The Interpreter*:

Nephi is the prototypical wise son of the Wisdom tradition. As Proverbs advocates that a wise man cherishes the word of God, so Nephi cherishes the words of the wise. Nephi’s record begins with a declaration of his upbringing in the Wisdom tradition and his authenticity and reliability as a wise son and scribe (1 Nephi 1:1–3). His is a record of the learning of the Jews — a record of wisdom. If the Wisdom tradition is a foundation for Nephi’s scribal capabilities and outlook, perhaps the principles and literary skills represented by the scribal Wisdom tradition constitute the “learning of the Jews” that Nephi references so early in his account. Thus, if Nephi’s is a record of the learning of the Jews — a record of wisdom — we would be wise to read it with Wisdom — that is, through the lens of ancient Israelite and Middle Eastern Wisdom traditions.<sup>43</sup>

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41. Beshears, “Davidic References in the Book of Mormon,” 41.

42. Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989).

43. Taylor Halverson, “Reading 1 Nephi With Wisdom,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 279–93, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/reading-1-nephi-with-wisdom/>.

Others discussing wisdom themes in the Book of Mormon include Daniel Peterson,<sup>44</sup> Samuel Zinner,<sup>45</sup> Kevin Christensen,<sup>46</sup> and Alyson Skabelund Von Feldt.<sup>47</sup> The alleged lack of “wisdom” in the Book of Mormon is another case of inadequate review of previous scholarship.

### The Lack of David in the Book of Mormon

While Beshears’s reasons for rejecting the Book of Mormon fail on multiple counts, his basic question is reasonable: Why is David not given more emphasis in the Book of Mormon? And in particular, we can extend the question to ask why Book of Mormon kings are not evaluated by comparison to King David, when that seems to be the standard applied to many of the kings in the Bible. The righteous kings like Benjamin and Mosiah are richly praised, but not by comparison to David. Why not?

First, a basic problem here is assuming that there is a “typical” type of Bible text that should be found wherever we look in the Bible, when that is simply not the case. As mentioned above, a large number of books in both the Old and New Testament fail to mention David at all. Since some authors see the Davidic Covenant as central and all-important,<sup>48</sup> Beshears’s perspective is understandable. But there is not a uniform urge to turn to David and the Davidic covenant of an everlasting throne in Jerusalem, even in books like Daniel that look forward to the end days and the final victory of God. For example, the wisdom literature, a type of literature Beshears errantly claimed was absent in the Book of Mormon but in fact shows a strong influence, tends to ignore the Davidic

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44. Peterson, “Nephi and His Asherah.”

45. Samuel Zinner, “‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ as Lady Wisdom in Moses 7 and Nephi’s Tree of Life Vision,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 12 (2014): 281–323, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/zion-and-jerusalem-as-lady-wisdom-in-moses-7-and-nephis-tree-of-life-vision/>.

46. Kevin Christensen, “Nephi, Wisdom, and the Deuteronomist Reform,” *Insights* 23/2 (2003): 2–3; Kevin Christensen, “Jacob’s Connections to First Temple Traditions,” *Insights* 23/4 (2003): 2–3; Kevin Christensen, “The Temple, the Monarchy, and Wisdom: Lehi’s World and the Scholarship of Margaret Barker,” in *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*, eds. John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 449–522, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1081&index=15>.

47. Alyson Skabelund Von Feldt, “His Secret Is with the Righteous’: Instructional Wisdom in the Book of Mormon,” *Occasional Papers: Number 5* (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2007), <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=2696&index=6>.

48. Michael A. Grisanti, “The Davidic Covenant,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, 10/2 (Fall 1999): 233–50.

covenant, as Daniel Peterson noted in his widely cited exploration of some aspects of wisdom traditions embedded in the Book of Mormon:

Biblical scholars recognize a genre of writing, found both in the standard, canonical scriptures (e.g., Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon) and outside the canon, that they term “wisdom literature.” Among the characteristics of this type of writing, not surprisingly, is frequent use of the term *wisdom*. But also common to such literature, and very striking in texts from a Hebrew cultural background, is *the absence* of typical Israelite or Jewish themes. We read nothing there about the promises to the patriarchs, the story of Moses and the Exodus, the covenant at Sinai, and *the divine promise of kingship to David*. There is, instead, a strong emphasis on the teachings of parents, and especially on the instruction by fathers. [*emphasis added*]<sup>49</sup>

Since the wisdom-heavy founding documents of the Nephite people paid little attention to the Davidic covenant, it should not be a surprise to see other writers like Alma follow suit in their emphasis of similar themes (including the exodus, not normally emphasized in wisdom literature but obviously an important issue for Nephi and Lehi as they made a literal exodus to a promised land) and a lack of emphasis on the Davidic covenant. This is not to say that any Book of Mormon author wrote exclusively in the wisdom tradition, but there is a significant thread of wisdom influence in the book.

Several more noteworthy factors may contribute to the relative lack of interest in David among Nephite writers. Lehi was not a Jew from David’s tribe of Judah, but was descended from the tribe of Joseph, probably with roots in the northern kingdom, where there was less respect for descendants of David on the throne in Jerusalem. More importantly, Lehi may not have accepted some aspects of Josiah’s reforms that began in 622 B.C. These “Deuteronomist” reforms, triggered by the “discovery” of a book of the law in the temple, believed to be the source of our Book of Deuteronomy, sought to impose centralized worship in Jerusalem and may have introduced the concept of the Davidic covenant — the idea that God would always keep a king descended from David on the throne of Jerusalem, no matter how bad those kings might be. Josiah’s reforms

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49. Daniel C. Peterson, “Nephi and His Asherah,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/2 (2000): 16–25, 80–81, quotation at 23, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/9/2/S00003-50be458eb2b313Peterson.pdf>.

were actually violent, causing many priests to be killed and sacred relics from the temple to be forcefully destroyed.

Non-LDS scholar Margaret Barker argues that Josiah's reforms were largely destroying many of the things in the old Jewish faith, including the idea of the temple as the place where the presence of God could be encountered, the idea of visions and angels that minister to prophets, and the wisdom tradition.<sup>50</sup> She argues that the reformers, the Deuteronomists, took out much in early Jewish faith during their violent purges. Barker also points to many ways in which the writings of Nephi comply with results of her own research about pre-exilic Jewish religion.<sup>51</sup> Although some LDS scholars disagree with her assessment of Josiah,<sup>52</sup> if she is right, then Lehi, the man of visions, the seeker of wisdom, would naturally be at odds with the Deuteronomists and their scribes, who shaped a great deal of the Bible.

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50. Margaret Barker, "What Did King Josiah Reform?" in *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, ed. Jo Ann H. Seely, David Rolph Seely, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2004) 521–42, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1081&index=16>. See also Neal Rappleye, "The Deuteronomist Reforms and Lehi's Family Dynamics: A Social Context for the Rebellions of Laman and Lemuel," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 16 (2015): 87–99, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-deuteronomist-reforms-and-lehis-family-dynamics-a-social-context-for-the-rebellions-of-laman-and-lemuel/>; as well as Kevin Christensen, "The Temple, the Monarchy, and Wisdom: Lehi's World and the Scholarship of Margaret Barker," in *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, 449–522, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1081&index=15>; and Kevin Christensen, "Prophets and Kings in Lehi's Jerusalem and Margaret Barker's Temple Theology," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 4 (2013): 177–93, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/prophets-and-kings-in-lehis-jerusalem-and-margaret-barkers-temple-theology/>.

51. Margaret Barker, "Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress*, ed. John S. Welch (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press: 2006), Kindle edition. See also Margaret Barker, "Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion," *BYU Studies* 44/4 (2005): 69–82, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/joseph-smith-and-preexilic-israelite-religion>.

52. For examples of scholars who view Josiah positively, see William J. Hamblin, "Vindicating Josiah," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 4 (2013): 165–176, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/vindicating-josiah/>; and David Rolph Seely and Jo Ann H. Seely, "Lehi and Jeremiah: Prophets Priests and Patriarchs" in John W. Welch and David Rolph Seely and Ann H. Seely, eds., *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem* (Provo, UT: FARMS 2004), 357–80, <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1081&index=12>.

Modern scholarship on the origins of the Bible, including the theories related to the Documentary Hypothesis, provides some related insights that can help us understand the significance of the Davidic covenant. Beshears expects the Book of Mormon to emphasize. In Richard Elliot Friedman's famous *Who Wrote the Bible?*, the mystery behind the centralization of worship and the Davidic covenant is unraveled in several intriguing steps.<sup>53</sup> There is a mystery here, for in spite of the strict command in Deuteronomy to centralize worship in Jerusalem, we find David, Saul, Solomon, and Samuel making sacrifices in other places as if they had no awareness of this fundamental command attributed to Moses. This and other issues have led multiple scholars to conclude that the long-lost book of the law mysteriously found in the temple during Josiah's reign was in fact composed at that time, written by someone close to Josiah. And textual and thematic evidence also suggests that the author or school that produced Deuteronomy also produced the following six books: Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. The Davidic covenant given in 2 Samuel 7 was part of that effort. This comes from the Deuteronomists, and not from the other sources proposed for the Bible in the various versions of the Documentary Hypothesis. The Davidic covenant makes sense only if it was written before the exile, when the confident Jews felt the holy city of Jerusalem could never fall. Lehi, warned of Jerusalem's destruction, obviously did not see things that way.

An interesting thing about the Deuteronomists, according to Friedman, is how much emphasis they gave to David. In their writings, every king is evaluated by comparison to David. But that emphasis stops after Josiah, possibly because the bulk of the Deuteronomists writings (most of seven books in all) were done in that day, with only minor additions required to cover the tragic fall of Judah and the last four disastrous kings following Josiah. Friedman explains:

That is not the only thing that changes after the story of Josiah. King David figures in a fundamental way in the Deuteronomistic history. Half of the book of 1 Samuel, all of the book of 2 Samuel, and the first chapters of 1 Kings deal with his life. The majority of the kings who come after him are compared to him. The historian states explicitly, several times, that because of David's merit even a bad king of Judah cannot

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53. Richard Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997, originally published 1987), 91–124.



lose the throne for the family. Especially among the last few kings down to the time of Josiah, the historian reminds us of David. He compares Josiah himself to David, saying, “He went in all the path of David his father.” [2 Kings 22:2] ... Altogether the name David occurs about five hundred times in the Deuteronomistic history. Then, in the story of the last four kings, it stops. The text does not compare these kings to David. It does not refer to the Davidic covenant, let alone explain why it does not save the throne now the way it did in the reigns of Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijam, and Jehoram. It just does not mention David at all.

Thus two common, crucial matters in the Deuteronomistic history — centralization and David — disappear after the Josiah section.<sup>54</sup>

Friedman explains that caution is needed in applying arguments from silence, but here the silence is deafening. When every king is compared to David, and then suddenly the last four kings are not, and when centralization is viewed as essential up to Josiah and then suddenly is not, “we have evidence of a real break and a change of perspective that are connected to that king.”<sup>55</sup>

While there are some details in the Documentary Hypothesis that can easily be questioned, especially the dating for various sources, the possibility of multiple versions of documents and competing agendas influencing the Bible is actually consistent with information we obtain from the Book of Mormon, not only in terms of how ancient sources were pulled together but also in terms of its report of loss and change that would occur in the records of the Jews.

However the Bible was composed, there is strong evidence that references to David and the Davidic covenant are highly nonuniform in the Bible and are most concentrated in the documents considered to be most influenced by the Deuteronomists. Seeing Lehi as an adherent to the old visionary ways opposed by the Deuteronomists can also help us understand why he might not have bought the new agenda of centralization and the new emphasis on the confident claims of those touting a Davidic covenant that would keep the throne safe, no matter what. The Book of Mormon’s relative silence on David, though not as silent as many other legitimate biblical books, is consistent with the

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54. *Ibid.*, 115.

55. *Ibid.*

view based largely on Barker's work that 1 Nephi accurately portrays the complex religious differences and tensions present in pre-exilic Jerusalem, with some groups not accepting the new reforms and possibly not accepting a new emphasis on security through the Davidic covenant.

Jon Levenson's review of modern scholarship on the problem of the Davidic covenant reminds us that its presence and influence in the scriptures is not as broad as some seem to assume:

The dynastic Davidic Covenant is of another character. There are only a handful of passages that show awareness of it, and the only two that set it out in any detail at all are those we have already discussed, 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89. ... Several considerations, however, militate against the idea that this indicates that the Davidic Covenant commanded the same degree of public awareness and loyalty as the Sinaitic. First, we must notice that Abraham himself was the object of far less attention in the history of the tradition than was Moses. For Abraham, for example, we have nothing even remotely resembling Elijah's rehearsal of Moses' pilgrimage to Sinai/Horeb (1 Kings 19) or the great pseudonymous Mosaic address that has come to be called Deuteronomy. The second point to bear in mind is that the expansion of the empire is not quite the same thing as the Davidic Covenant. In certain Israelite circles, by no means small or ephemeral, kingship came to be as important as we know it was elsewhere in the ancient Near East. But to say that kingship was central and even that in Judah it happened to be held almost always by a Davidide is very different from the assertion that the Davidic Covenant, with all it entails, was a central concern. The truth is that most glorifications of David or his reign do not mention a covenant. In fact, the only reference to an "eternal covenant" with David in the books of Samuel is in the so-called "Latter Words of David" (2 Samuel 23:1-7), and it is by no means certain that even this obscure reference (v. 5) signifies the dynastic commitment of 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89. In short, kingship and the Davidic dynasty were not synonymous.<sup>56</sup>

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56. Jon D. Levenson, "The Davidic Covenant and its Modern Interpreters," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41/2 (April 1979): 205-19, citation at 216-7, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43714665>.

He also explains that in the daily and religious life of an Israelite, the issue of the Davidic covenant was minor compared to the covenant at Sinai:

Even in the religious consciousness of an Israelite for whom kingship was of central importance, the entitlement of the House of David could remain peripheral. That is why, despite the presence of a great quantity of material bearing on royal theology, the specific covenant with David is expounded in clear form so very rarely. Not all royal theology was Davidic, and not all Davidic theology was covenantal. The average Israelite could probably live his life without giving any more attention to the Davidic Covenant than the average American gives to the 25th amendment to the Constitution, which also attempts to regulate the matter of succession to the most important office in the land. The same cannot be said of the Sinaitic Covenant. Therefore, it is wrong to assume, as Bright, for example, does, that emphasis on one must have been at the expense of the other, just as it is wrong to assume, with all the scholars I term “integrationists,” that the dynastic oracle of 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 rests upon an acute consciousness of the Sinaitic Covenant. It appears that the importance of the Davidic-messianic material in subsequent Judaism and especially in Christianity has led scholars to exaggerate its importance (relative to the Sinaitic material) in the Hebrew Bible, even to the extent of their imagining that the two covenants must have been in some kind of constant conversation, either harmonious or discordant.<sup>57</sup>

As for the centralization of worship that Josiah imposed, Lehi and Nephi obviously had no qualms with ritual worship outside of Jerusalem, even to the point of building a temple in the New World, just as Jews at Elephantine in Egypt did.<sup>58</sup> In fact, Lehi was so at odds with the reigning religious establishment in Jerusalem that his life was in danger. His “apostasy” might have included rejecting some aspects of Josiah’s reforms that began just a few decades before his exodus. Again, what we find in the

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57. Ibid., 217–8.

58. Jared W. Ludlow, “A Tale of Three Communities: Jerusalem, Elephantine, and Lehi-Nephi,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16/2 (2007): 28–41, 95, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol16/iss2/5>. See also Jeff Lindsay, “Lessons from the Elephantine Papyri Regarding Book of Mormon Names and Nephi’s Temple,” *JeffLindsay.com* (blog), May 22, 2004, <https://www.jefflindsay.com/bme20.shtml>.

writings of Nephi makes a good deal of sense in the context of pre-exilic Israel, based on still-tentative research from Margaret Barker and others.<sup>59</sup>

Joseph Smith could have known none of this. If he were making up the Book of Mormon based on average familiarity with the Bible in his day, or even above average graduate-student level familiarity with the Bible in our day, it is indeed reasonable that we would expect him to pick up on the extensive mentions of David, most of which occur in Deuteronomistic writings, and to then imitate that in the Book of Mormon. Praising King David and comparing good and bad kings to him would be the natural thing to do for a Bible-sponge imitating all things biblical.

Beshears's puzzlement about David in the Book of Mormon is understandable. It is only through deeper understanding of the complexities behind the statistics on David's name that we realize the Bible is highly nonuniform regarding David, that there are reasons for sudden changes in the text regarding David, and that there may be good reasons why ancient faithful Hebrews from the tribe of Joseph, ill at ease with the southern Kingdom Jews and their recent violent religious reforms, might not follow suit with the Deuteronomistic writings and their constant awe for David. Those Hebrews, clinging to the old ways of prophecy, revelation, temple worship, and wisdom literature, would respect David as a great but fallen king and could be frank about his disobedience without betraying their Hebrew roots. They could appreciate the parallels between the young righteous David and Nephi, and could name a land after David, but had no need to make David a touchstone of their faith.

When we consider Beshears's valuable questions in light of broader scholarship, we see that once again, we may have an interesting reversal on our hands, where a sloppy blunder in the "mormonic" text that allegedly disproves its historicity in reality leaves it in a surprisingly strong position.

Overall, I appreciate the meaningful questions posed by Beshears, but am gravely disappointed by the neglect of Nephi's Psalm and many other relevant issues, and fear his work is more driven by an agenda rather than a genuine inquiry into the issues before him. I hope it can be updated and revised in light of some of the issues I raise here.

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59. Margaret Barker, "What Did King Josiah Reform?"; Margaret Barker, "Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion"; and Kevin Christensen, "Prophets and Kings in Lehi's Jerusalem."

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