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## Some Notes on the General Literary Structure of the Entire First Book of Nephi

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## Some Notes on the General Literary Structure of the Entire Book of First Nephi

In 1972, having discovered that a number of verses, chapters and books in the Bible had been structured chiastically (see the “Sources” portion of my Introduction to Volume 1), John Welch wrote an article titled “Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon” (*New Era*, Feb. 1972, p. 6). In this article he proposed that similar chiastic structures are found in the Book of Mormon. Until John Welch’s articles were published, there had been no satisfactory reason given for the division of Nephi’s history into two books--First Nephi and Second Nephi. John Welch proposed that the general structure of First Nephi was a large and complex chiasm from beginning to end:

- Ch. 1           a. Lehi’s dream leads him to PROPHECY WARNINGS to the Jews.
- Ch. 2           b. The DEPARTURE from Jerusalem.
- Ch. 3—5       c. Nephi accomplishes a great FEAT in obtaining the brass plates; the brothers are **confounded**. (1 Nephi 3:7)
- Ch. 7           d. ISHMAEL joins the group with his daughters.
- Ch. 8           e. The TREE of LIFE
- Ch. 10          f. Lehi prophesies about the OLD WORLD and the coming of the Lamb.
- Ch. 11          g. **Nephi and the Spirit of the Lord.**
- Ch. 12—14     f’ Nephi prophesies about the NEW WORLD and the coming of the Lamb.
- Ch. 15          e’ The TREE of LIFE interpreted
- Ch. 16          d’ The sons of Lehi marry the daughters of ISHMAEL and Ishmael dies.
- Ch. 17          c’ Nephi accomplishes a great FEAT by building a ship; the brothers are **confounded**. (1 Nephi 17:3)
- Ch. 18          b’ The DEPARTURE from the Old World.
- Ch. 19—22 a’ Nephi WARNS the Jews and quotes the PROPHECIES of Isaiah.

John Welch writes:

Should we consider it contrived that ISHMAEL is mentioned only twice [or only in two chapters] in the entire Book of Mormon, and that these two occurrences just happen to fall symmetrically around 1 Nephi 11 (in chapters 7 and 16)? How else, except by chiasmus, can we explain the postponed interpretation of the vision of the TREE of LIFE [chapter 15]? One would expect the interpretation to follow immediately after the dream [chapter 8], as most interpretive passages in the Book of Mormon do, and not several chapters later [in chapter 15].

Are we to believe that the unruly brothers of Nephi really waited nine chapters to marry the daughters of Ishmael: are we to neglect such specific parallels between the first half of 1 Nephi and its second half--e.g. 3:7 and 17:3--or again the fact that Nephi wrote two books (1 Nephi and 2 Nephi) instead of just running it all together into one, except by reference to the individual structure of each book?

In July 1975, Wallace King presented an article in which he reviewed John W. Welch's *BYU Studies* chiastic approach to the structure of First Nephi, and then proposed his own chiastic structure. He writes:

The First Book of Nephi

In his discussion in "BYU Studies", Welch suggested that First Nephi contained elements of chiastic organization, and two elements were mentioned. In his next discussion in the "New Era", a brief outline of the book was presented.

With full respect for John Welch's great discovery of chiasmus within the Book of Mormon, the following material is submitted in order to provide a more complete and improved analysis of the structure of Nephi's first book, and to demonstrate that indeed, Nephi utilized chiasmus to organize the entire book. To know that he did this is exciting. To see how he did it is thrilling. And to imagine why he did it may even be inspiring.

The following elements, each containing a leading phase and a trailing phase, have been placed in parallel columns for ease of comparison.

[Note:\* Because of the space restrictions of indenting Wallace King's chiastic analysis, I am taking the liberty of not only using the full margins, but modifying some of the headings.]

FIRST ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 1:1-3**

1. Introduction--containing these sub elements:
  - a. An autograph. ("I Nephi")
  - b. A reference to his father.
  - c. Nephi testifies to the truthfulness of his record.
  - d. A reference to beginnings— (Nephi's birth)

**1 Nephi 22:29-31**

- 1'. Conclusion--containing these sub elements :
  - a. An autograph. ("I Nephi")
  - b. A reference to his father
  - c. Nephi testifies to the truthfulness of the record on the Brass Plates.
  - d. A reference to endings—  
"...endure to the end,... ...the last day."

SECOND ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 1:4**

2. Repentance-- "...they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed."

**1 Nephi 22:28**

- 2'. Repentance-- "...all...people shall dwell safely . . . if...they will repent."

THIRD ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 1:5-8**

3. God reigns-- "(Lehi)...sees God sitting on his throne..."

**1 Nephi 22:26,27**

- 3'. God reigns-- "...and the Holy One of Israel reigneth."

FOURTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 1:9-11**

4. Lehi comes to know the Savior-- "...he saw one descending out of heaven...his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day...and the first (Christ) came and stood before my father..."

**1 Nephi 22:24,25**

4' All the righteous will know the Savior-- "the righteous must be led up, and he (Christ) numbereth his sheep, and they know him."

FIFTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 1:12-19**

5. The heavens testify of the Savior-- Lehi reads from a heavenly book, which (vs.19) "...manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world."

**1 Nephi 22:20-23**

5' The Prophet Moses testifies of the Savior-- Nephi cites the book of Moses, and then quotes, "this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel..."

SIXTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 1:20, 2:1-3**

6. The Lord protects the faithful --"the tender mercies of the lord are over all them whom he hath chosen... to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance."

**1 Nephi 22:13-19**

6' God protects the righteous--(vs. 16) ..for he will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous."

SEVENTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 2:4-24**

7. A part of the House of Israel is being scattered--"And (Lehi) left ... and took nothing with him save it were his family..." (vs.20) "...ye... shall be led to a land of promise.." shall be led to a land of promise."

**1 Nephi 22:3-12**

7' The House of Israel is to be scattered-- "...for it appears that the House of Israel, sooner or later, will be scattered upon all the face of the earth."

EIGHTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 3—5**

8. The Brass Plates: the story of how they were obtained.

**1 Nephi 19:7 to 22:2**

8' The Brass Plates: Nephi quotes important things they contained.

NINTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 6**

9. The task of keeping records.

**1 Nephi 19:1-6**

9' The task of keeping records.

TENTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 7:1-19**

10. Narrative section with these sub-elements:  
a. The family of Ishmael.  
b. A wilderness journey.  
c. Rebellion against Nephi.

**1 Nephi 16:7 to 18:25**

10' Narrative section with these sub-elements:  
a. The family of Ishmael.  
b. The journey continues.  
c. Rebellions against Nephi.

ELEVENTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 7:20-22**

11. Nephi exhorts his brothers, and they turn to the Lord.

**1 Nephi 16:1-6**

11' Nephi exhorts his brothers, and they humble themselves before

TWELFTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 8**

12. Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life.

**1 Nephi 15**

12' Nephi gives the interpretation of Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life.

THIRTEENTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 9**

13. Nephi discusses his two sets of records.  
"And thus it is. Amen."

**1 Nephi 14:20-30**

13' Nephi discusses two records, one by himself and one by the apostle John.  
"And thus it is. Amen."

FOURTEENTH ELEMENT

**1 Nephi 10:1-16**

14. Lehi prophesies about the coming of the Lamb of God and other future events.

**1 Nephi 11:1 to 14:19**

14' Nephi prophesies about the coming of the Son of God and other future events.

THE CENTRAL ELEMENT

A Chiasm Within A Chiasm

(1 Nephi 10:17-22)

**1 Nephi 10:17**

1. "... (Lehi) spake by the power of the Holy Ghost..."

**1 Nephi 10:22**

1' "And the Holy Ghost giveth authority that I (Nephi) should speak these things..."

**1 Nephi 10:17**

2. Nephi desired righteousness-- "...I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things..."

**1 Nephi 10:20-21**

2' Fate of those who seek unrighteousness-- "...if ye have sought to do wickedly..."

**1 Nephi 10:17,18**

3.  
a. "... (the power of the Holy Ghost) is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him..."

**1 Nephi 10:19**

3'  
a. For he that diligently seeketh shall find... by the power of the Holy Ghost..."

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| b. "...in times of old, as in the time that he should manifest himself.." | b "...as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come..." |
| c. "For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever..."                  | c. "..the course of the Lord is one eternal round."  |

THE CENTER OF THE CENTER  
(1 Nephi 10:18)

“...and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world,  
if it so be that they repent  
and come unto  
HIM.”

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How beautiful in Mount Zion is this feat of Nephi’s, which bringeth us good tidings?

Thus we see that Nephi used the literary device of chiasmus to place the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the Holy One of Israel at the very center of his first book.

**Observations and Conclusions**

There is beauty in symmetry, and the symmetry of Nephi’s book is a joy to behold. The detail of organization reveals in a way nothing else could how much effort was spent, and how carefully the text was planned. It was written in response to a command of the Lord, who foresaw a special need to have a back-up record covering the history of Nephi’s lifetime. Nephi responded in faith, not knowing the Lord’s purpose (9:5), and he applied the most artful structure at his disposal to make the book special.

As Welch pointed out, Nephi is the only author in the Book of Mormon with two books. The reason for this has now become obvious in view of his desire to organize one book in chiasmic style. Consider the curious statement in the conclusion (22:29), “...for I durst not speak further as yet concerning these things.” He has much more to say, as seen in his second book, but he feels compelled to end the first one. Why did he dare not speak further as yet at that place in the record? Simply because it would have destroyed the chiasmic pattern he had just completed. The use of the word “durst” may be seen as a clue thrown out to us by Nephi, telling us, to look for something unusual within this book.

Notice how the theme of repentance, the main message of all prophets, is stressed by being placed at the opening (2), at the closing (2’), and right at the center.

Notice that within the central chiasm, the sub-elements (3a) and (3'a) form a chiasm. Also, sub-element (3'b) is an unusual example of chiasmus where all the elements are the same. The careful reader may discover other chiasms in some of the other books within the Book of Mormon. Analyze Alma chapter 36 for example.

Notice how Nephi sometimes waves a flag to mark the boundaries of matched elements, as in the thirteenth element -- "And thus it is. Amen." A more strained example occurs with element twelve. Nephi concluded (12') (15:36) with the words, "...that tree of life, whose fruit is most precious and most desirable above all other fruits...". He then appears to have felt the need to begin (12) (8:1) with similar words, "...and also of the seeds of fruit of every kind." However, verse one of chapter eight is totally out of context with both that which precedes and that which follows it. The location of that verse makes sense only in terms of chiastic form.

Consider also the importance of the fourth element, "to know the Savior", and how this was emphasized by Christ when he said the following in John 17:3--

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God,  
and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Since it has been shown that the first Book of Nephi was written as an integral unit, it may be regarded as a book standing alone. As a single book, how might it be characterized? A possible answer may lie in Deuteronomy 19:15 -- "...at the mouth of two witness (Lehi and Nephi) . . . shall the matter be established."

The first Book of Nephi is the testimony of two witnesses. Lehi and Nephi are introduced in the first element, in both the leading and trailing phases. Lehi's testimony is then given in Chapters 1, 8, and 10. Beyond the literary center, Nephi begins to testify, giving himself more space, because he is the author. His testimony is contained primarily in chapters 11 through 15 and 22. He then includes some scriptural support, in chapters 19 thru 21, and closes by testifying that these scriptures are also true (22:30). Nephi was complying with the Law of Moses by providing the world with a record of two witnesses to establish the "matter", namely that the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, would come into the world, and that he would save the world and redeem all those who would repent and come unto him.

One might wonder and ask the question, why did Nephi choose to use the literary style of chiasmus? What did he wish to accomplish thereby? Did he use it merely because it had been used historically by Hebrew prophets? Actually, chiasmus provided Nephi with a type of a watermark. A watermark, seen by holding quality paper up to the light, may serve to identify the manufacturer of the paper, and may even indicate the date or period of manufacture. In an analogous way, chiasmus dates his book to ancient times, and though it does not identify the author, it does, along with the content of the message itself, identify the author as belonging to the Hebraic tradition.

Nephi also used chiasmus as a literary lens to focus the mind of the reader toward and to magnify the essential message of the book represented in the central chiasm.

Finally, it is interesting to speculate a little further as to Nephi's motives. Clearly he produced a very special book, and perhaps it is unique from the standpoint of religious records. It seems that he may have wished to create what could be described as a literary temple. Each element was fitted into the whole structure with the glory of God in mind. In the center of that "temple" is a very special room--"the Holy of Holies". And who dwells therein but God? And has not the way (the Savior) been prepared from the foundation of the world for all men who will repent in order to enter therein? If Nephi did not envision his first book in this or a similar manner, then he wrote better than he knew.

The clear presence of various chiastic structures within the Book of Mormon increases significantly the degree of knowledge of ancient literary styles which must be attributed to the author. This presence greatly increases the burden upon those critics who would maintain that it was Joseph Smith, or some other more learned man, who lived and wrote in the 1820's in upstate New York. . .

[Joseph Smith] translated better than he knew, for not only is the message coherently and consistently portrayed, but the real hidden structural patterns have been retained. Complex chiastic writing never happens by accident. It is the product of the author's knowledge and intention. . .

(Wallace B. King, "Notes on the Chiastic Structure of the First Book of Nephi: An Ancient Literary Style Speaks from the Dust," July 1975. Copied from [wallacebking.net/ON\\_MY\\_MIND/Chiastic\\_Nephi.html](http://wallacebking.net/ON_MY_MIND/Chiastic_Nephi.html) )

In 1980, Noel B. Reynolds added even further perspective on the structure of First Nephi (see "Nephi's Outline," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (1980): 1-18 (131-149)). In this article, Reynolds proposed that there is "very strong support for dividing 1 Nephi into two parallel accounts, the first labeled "Lehi's account" (chapters 1—9), and the second "Nephi's account" (chapters 10—22). Reynolds divided each account into twelve sections of correspondence (p. 4).



## Lehi's Account Compared to Nephi's Account

### (A) Nephi 1-9 (Lehi's Account)

#### (B) 1 Nephi 10-22 (Nephi's Account)

- 1A.** Nephi makes a record (or account) of his proceedings but first gives an abridgment of Lehi's record (1:1-3, 16-17).
- 1B.** Nephi now commences to give an account of his proceedings, reign, and ministry but first "must speak somewhat of the things of [his9] father, and . . . brethren" (10:1).
- 2A.** Nephi gives a brief account of Lehi's prophecies to the Jews, from visions he received in Jerusalem (1:5-15, 19).
- 2B.** Nephi reports Lehi's prophecies about the Jews, as given to Laman and Lemuel in the wilderness (10:2-15).
- 3A.** Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness. He pitches his tent in the valley he names Lemuel (2:1-7).
- 3B.** Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel (10:17-14:30).
- 4A.** Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded (2:8-15).
- 4B.** Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded (15:6—16:6).
- 5A.** Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord (2:15—3:1)
- 5B.** Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful (16:9—17:6)
- 6A.** Lehi is commanded in a dream to send his sons for the brass plates of Laban; this he does (3:2—5:22).
- 6B.** Nephi is commanded by the voice of the Lord to construct a ship; this he does (17:6—18:4).
- 7A.** In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi sends for Ishmael's family (7:1-22).
- 7B.** In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi enters the ship and then sails (18:5-23)
- 8A.** They gather seeds of every (8:1).
- 8B.** Lehi's family plants the seeds and reaps in abundance (18:24).
- 9A.** Lehi reports to his sons the great vision received in the wilderness (8:2-35).
- 9B.** Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates (19:1-7).
- 10A.** Lehi exhorts Laman and Lemuel, preaching and prophesying to them (8:36-38).
- 10B.** Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his descendants, and all Israel (19:7—21:26).
- 11A.** Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates (9:1-5).
- 11B.** To explain Isaiah's prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and Lehi (22:1-28).
- 12A.** Nephi ends with a general formulation of this thesis and the formal punctuation: "And thus it is. Amen" (9:6)
- 12B.** Nephi ends with the highest formulation of his thesis, focusing on the salvation of man, and with the formal punctuation: "And thus it is Amen" (22:29-31).

But as exemplified by my coloration, Reynolds asks: “Why are elements 3, 5, 9, and 11 rearranged in Nephi’s account? Reynolds goes on to show that each account can generally be viewed as an extended alternating parallel of the other, yet parts of each account can be further divided in a chiasmic manner. In other words, in Lehi’s account, steps 3A, 4A, and 5A form the first leg of a chiasm, and in Nephi’s account, steps 3B, 4B, and 5B form the last leg. (See below) Also in Lehi’s account, steps 9A, 10A, and 11A form the first leg of a chiasm, and in Nephi’s account, steps 9B, 10B, and 11B form the last leg. (See below)

(Lehi’s Account)

**3A.** Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the valley he names Lemuel (2:1-7)

**4A.** Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded (2:8-15).

**5A.** Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord (2:15—3:1)

(Nephi’s Account)

**3B.** Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel (10:17-14:30).

**4B.** Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded (15:6—16:6).

**5B.** Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful (16:9—17:6)

(Lehi’s Account)

**9A.** Lehi reports to his sons the great vision received in the wilderness (8:2-35).

**10A.** Lehi exhorts Laman and Lemuel, preaching and prophesying to them (8:36-38).

**11A.** Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates (9:1-5).

(Nephi’s Account)

**9B.** Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates (19:1-7).

**10B.** Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his descendants, and all Israel (19:7—21:26).

**11B.** To explain Isaiah’s prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and Lehi (22:1-28).

Now, fitting this information back into the whole, we see the following extended alternating parallelism with chiasmic patterns:

*[The Structure of 1 Nephi]*

(A) 1 Nephi 1-9 (Lehi's Account)

- 1A. Nephi makes a record (or account) of his proceedings but first gives an abridgment of Lehi's record (1:1-3, 16-17).
- 2A. Nephi gives a brief account of Lehi's prophecies to the Jews, based on visions he received in Jerusalem (1:5-15, 19).
- 3A. Lehi is commanded to journey into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the valley he names Lemuel (2:1-7)
- 4A. Lehi teaches and exhorts his sons, and they are confounded (2:8-15).
- 5A. Nephi desires to know the mysteries of God; he is visited by the Holy Spirit and is spoken to by the Lord (2:15—3:1)
- 6A. Lehi is commanded in a dream to send his sons for the brass plates of Laban; this he does (3:2—5:22).
- 7A. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi sends for Ishmael's family (7:1-22).
- 8A. They gather seeds of every (8:1).
- 9A. Lehi reports to his sons the great vision received in the wilderness (8:2-35).
- 10A. Lehi exhorts Laman and Lemuel, preaching and prophesying to them (8:36-38).
- 11A. Nephi makes a distinction between the two sets of plates (9:1-5).
- 12A. Nephi ends with a general formulation of this thesis and the formal punctuation: "And thus it is, Amen" (9:6).

(B) 1 Nephi 10-22 (Nephi's Account)

- 1B. Nephi now commences to give an account of his proceedings, reign, and ministry but first "must speak somewhat of the things of [his] father, and . . . brethren" (10:1).
- 2B. Nephi reports Lehi's prophecies about the Jews, as given to Laman and Lemuel in the wilderness (10:2-15).
- 3B. Nephi desires to see, hear, and know these mysteries; he is shown a great vision by the Spirit of the Lord and by an angel (10:17-14:30).
- 4B. Nephi instructs and exhorts his brothers, and they are confounded (15:6—16:6).
- 5B. Lehi is commanded to journey further into the wilderness, and he pitches his tent in the land he names Bountiful (16:9—17:6)
- 6B. Nephi is commanded by the voice of the Lord to construct a ship; this he does (17:6—18:4).
- 7B. In response to a command from the Lord, Lehi enters the ship and then sails (18:5-23)
- 8B. Lehi's family plants the seeds and reaps in abundance (18:24).

**9B.** Nephi details the distinctions between the two sets of plates (19:1-7).

**10B.** Nephi preaches and prophesies to Laman and Lemuel, his descendants, and all Israel (19:7—21:26).

**11B.** To explain Isaiah's prophecies to his brothers, Nephi draws on the great vision given to him and Lehi (22:1-28).

**12B.** Nephi ends with the highest formulation of his thesis, focusing on the salvation of man, and with the formal punctuation: "And thus it is Amen" (22:29-31)

On page 15, Reynolds writes: "Lehi's account focuses on the murmuring; Nephi's account centers on his own response to that murmuring. Together these focal points give in microcosm the story of 1 Nephi . . . It contains Nephi's tireless, ingenious, and inspired effort . . . to convince [his audience] that Jesus would be the Christ and that through the power of the Atonement [one] could overcome the effects of all the evil in the world"

In an effort to support the complex chiasmic nature of First Nephi, Reynolds also proposed separate chiasmic structures for the story about obtaining the Brass Plates, and also for the story about constructing the ship.

**In 1982**, Noel Reynolds would republish "Nephi's Outline" in a book he edited. (see *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*. Provo: Religious Studies Center, 53-74. Reprint Provo: Utah: FARMS, 1986).

**Also in 1982**, Raymond Treat would write the following in an article titled, "Another Ancient Pattern: Chiasms in the Book of Mormon":

A Chiasm is a statement containing two or more parts followed by a restatement in reverse order (ABC C'B'A'). The word chiasm is derived from the Greek letter *chi* (X) and the Greek word *chiazeim* (to mark with an x) because a two part chiasmic statement may be diagrammed in the form of an X.

Dr. Noel Freedman, Ph.D., Director of Program on Studies in Religion, University of Michigan and General Editor of the *Anchor Bible* and *Biblical Archaeologist* discusses two kinds of chiasms in his preface to *Chiasmus in Antiquity*. One kind deals with words and the other with ideas. . . . The type of chiasm dealing with ideas is more difficult to identify because there may be disagreement over which ideas form the foundation of the chiasmic structure. The author of this type of chiasm may use it to focus the attention of the reader (or hearer) on the central idea or turning point. A good example of this from the Book of Mormon is found in the First Book of Nephi:

*[The Structure of 1 Nephi]*

- A. Introduction
- B. Repentance
- C. God reigns
- D. Lehi comes to know Christ
- E. Testimony of Christ
- F. God protects the chosen
- G. A part of the House of Israel is being scattered
- H. Obtaining the Plates of Brass
- I. Keeping records
- J. A narrative about the family of Ishmael, a journey, and rebellion against Nephi
- K. Nephi exhorts his brothers and they turn to the Lord
- L. The Tree of Life
- M. Two sets of records
- N. Prophecy of coming of Christ and other events
- O. ". . . [Lehi] spake by the power of the Holy Ghost . . ."
- P. Nephi desires righteousness "I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things . . ."
- Q. (a) ". . . the power of the Holy Ghost . . . is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him . . ."
- (b) ". . . in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself . . ."
- (c) "For he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."
- R. "And the way is prepared from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him;"**
- Q' (a) "For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them by the power of the Holy Ghost"
- (b) "as well in this time as in times of old; and as well in times of old as in times to come;"
- (c) "Wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round."
- P' Those who desire wickedness". . . if ye have sought to do wickedly in the days of your probation,"
- O' "And the Holy Ghost giveth authority that I [Nephi] should speak these things and deny them not."
- N' Prophecy of coming of Christ and other events
- M' Two sets of records
- L' The Tree of Life
- K' Nephi exhorts his brothers, they humble themselves before the Lord
- J' A narrative about the family of Ishmael, a journey, and rebellion against Nephi
- I' Keeping records
- H' Information from the Plates of Brass
- G' The House of Israel is to be scattered
- F' God protects the righteous
- E' Testimony of Christ
- D' All the righteous will know Christ
- C' The Holy One of Israel reigneth
- B' Repentance
- A' Conclusion

(Raymond C. Treat, "Another Ancient Pattern: Chiasms in the Book of Mormon," *Zarahemla Record* 17, 18 (Summer/Fall 1982):8-12. Subsequently published in *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, Vol. 1 (1984): 64, 66.)

[Note\* From the material that I have presented to you, there is no doubt that despite their differences, these authors agree that there are parallels involved in the general structure of First Nephi. However, while agreeing with the idea of parallels, along came a writer that disagreed with the fact that the end of First Nephi was the rightful ending point that divided Nephi's thematic writing.]

In 1986, Frederick Axelgard wrote that this division comes between 2 Nephi chapter 5 and 2 Nephi chapter 6. (see Frederick W. Axelgard, "1 and 2 Nephi: An Inspiring Whole," *BYU Studies* 26/4 (Fall 1986): 53-65.) His reasoning was that all material before that junction represented historical writings. The material after that point represented spiritual writings. On pages 54-55 he writes:

Everything Nephi has to offer in the way of historical information is presented between 1 Nephi 1 and 2 Nephi 5. . . . These passages thus give two main purposes for Nephi's record: one historical, to inform his descendants of their Israelite heritage; and one spiritual, to give them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The basis for Axelgard's theory stems from his interpretation of 1 Nephi 19:5:

And an account of my making these plates shall be given hereafter. **And then behold**, I proceed according to that which I have spoken; and this I do that the *more sacred things* may be kept for the knowledge of my people.

In 1987, Noel Reynolds would add yet another perspective about the structure of First Nephi (see "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," *BYU Studies* 27/4 (Fall 1987): 15-37). On page 15 he writes:

Every people needs to know that its laws and rulers are legitimate . . . When Nephi undertook late in his life to write a third account of the founding events of the Lehi colony, it appears that he wanted to provide his descendants with a document that would serve this function. His small plates systematically defend the Nephite tradition concerning origins and refute the competing account advanced by the Lamanites. Several factors indicate that Nephi carefully structured his writings to convince his own and later generations that the Lord had selected him over his elder brothers to be Lehi's political and spiritual successor. Thus, the writings of Nephi can be read in part as a political tract or a "lineage history," written to document the legitimacy of Nephi's rule and religious teachings.

According to Reynolds, Nephi establishes his legitimacy from a number of perspectives:

1. A series of six stories that emphasize Nephi's obedience to, and divine deliverance by the Lord.
2. The testimony of Christ.
3. Prophecy

[The Structure of 1 Nephi]

A fourth, and perhaps more powerful perspective (parallelistic structuring) is only slightly hinted at with a chiasmic analysis of 1 Nephi 3—5 shown on page 23.

On page 36, Reynolds summarizes his thoughts on the matter:

First Nephi is not the travel diary of a youngster. Nor is it possibly a figment of young Joseph Smith's imagination. It is a highly complex and passionate account, purposefully written by a mature man of great culture and vision, to defend those things that he believes most worth defending. Nephi's writings were composed at a time when Nephi could see the need to provide his people with an account that would explain, document, and justify his ascent to leadership. For Nephi's people, his writings long served both as an extremely sophisticated political tract — something of a founding constitution for the Nephite people — and as an elaborate and compelling witness of Jesus Christ. In all these functions, the books of Nephi call on the reader to believe, as their author does, "that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance" (1 Nephi 1:20).

In 1997, H. Clay Gorton would author a book proposing multiple chiasmic structures in the Book of Mormon (see *A New Witness for Christ: Chiasmic Structures in the Book of Mormon*. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1997). From pages 23, 24, 29 and 82 I have selected the following excerpts:

The book of First Nephi is composed of layer upon layer of chiasmic structures. There are two astounding global chiasma overlying one another, one literal and one conceptual. . . .

Ascribing the authorship of the complex chiasmic structures in First Nephi to Nephi is akin to attributing the authorship of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith. A viable alternative to the individual authorship of chiasma in the Book of Mormon would be that the chiasmic structure may have been imposed by the Lord as part of and as a mark of the Divine inspiration under which it was written. . . .

**The global literal chiasmus** (based on research by Dayton E. Conway) contains an astounding 164 elements repeated in reverse order, extending from "the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 14:3) as the central element. [see illustration]

GLOBAL LITERAL CHIASMUS OF 165 REPEATED ELEMENTS IN 1 NEPHI <sup>1</sup>				
165	1:1	father	father	22:31
164	1:1	I	I	22:31
163	1:3	the record which I make	plates of brass	22:30
		is true	are true	
162	1:4	repent	repent	22:28
161	1:5	people	people	22:26
160	1:6	quake	quake	22:23
159	1:6	tremble	tremble	22:23
158	1:9	one	Holy One of Israel	22:18
157	1:13	destroyed	destruction	22:17
156	1:14	those who come	righteous	22:17
		unto me		
155	1:16	children	children	22:15
154	1:18	destruction	destroyed	22:14
153	1:19	abominations	abominable	22:13
152	1:19	Messiah	Savior	22:12
151	1:20	deliverance	out of captivity	22:12
150	2:5	brethren	brethren	22:6
149	2:11	led them	led away	22:4
148	2:11	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	22:4
147	2:13	prophets	prophets	22:2
146	2:14	spirits	spiritual	22:1
145	2:15	dwelt	dwelt	21:20
144	2:20	land of promise	land of thy destruction	21:19
143	3:3	engraven	graven	21:16
142	3:4	house of Laban	house of Israel	21:12
141	3:4	wilderness	desolate heritages	21:8
140	3:17	wickedness	wickedness	21:1
139	3:21	commandments	commandments	20:18
138	3:27	hid	secret	20:16
137	3:29	chosen	chosen	20:10
136	4:1	commandments	commanded	20:5
135	4:5	city	Holy City	20:2
134	4:7	house	house	20:1

133	4:13	perish	perished	19:20
132	4:13	nation	nation	19:17
131	4:22	elders of the Jews	those who are at Jerusalem	19:13
130	4:24	carry thee	carried up	19:11
129	4:32	wilderness	wilderness	19:10
128	4:34	father	fathers	19:6
127	4:38	plates	plates	19:6
126	5:2	land of our inheritance	possessed the land	19:3
125	5:5	wilderness	wilderness	19:2
124	5:6	father	father	19:2
123	5:8	wilderness	wilderness	19:1
122	5:10	father	father	19:1
121	5:10	records	record	19:1
120	5:10	plates	plates	19:1
119	5:15	led out of	brought from the	18:24
118	5:17	seed	seeds	18:24
117	5:21	children	children	18:19
116	5:22	carry	carried out	18:18
115	6:1	fathers	parents	18:17
114	6:1	father	father	18:17
113	6:4	unto the God	unto my God	18:16
112	7:3	brethren	younger brother	18:10
111	7:6	wife	wives	18:9
110	7:8	younger brother	brethren	18:9
109	7:12	children of men	children	18:6
108	7:14	father	father	18:5
107	7:15	words	the word	17:54
106	7:16	lay their hands	lay his hands	17:48
105	7:17	saying	saying	17:48
104	7:17	hands	hands	17:48
103	7:18	words	words	17:48
102	7:19	hearts	hearts	17:44
101	7:19	take away my life	take away his life	17:44
100	8:2	father	father	17:44
99	8:2	wilderness	wilderness	17:41
98	8:8	large and spacious field	earth	17:39
97	8:11	whiteness ?	righteous nation ?	17:37
96	8:13	river	river	17:32
95	8:19	rod of iron	work	17:31
94	8:19	led	lead	17:31
93	8:20	rod of iron	His word	17:31
92	8:20	fountain	water	17:26
91	8:24	rod of iron	His word	17:26
90	8:29	words	words	17:23
89	8:29	father	fathers	17:23
88	8:34	words	words	17:22
87	8:34	father	father	17:22
86	8:38	commandments	commandments	17:22



[The Structure of 1 Nephi]

85	9:2	people	people	17:22
84	9:3	commandments	commandments	17:15
83	9:6	Lord knoweth	shall know	17:14
82	10:3	land of their	promised land	17:13
81	10:8	inheritance	light in the wilderness	17:13
80	10:9	water	waters	17:8
79	10:11	rise from the dead	arise	17:7
78	10:13	land of promise	land of bountiful	17:7
77	10:16	tent	vents	17:6
76	10:18	men	men	17:2
75	10:19	course	travel eastward	17:1
74	10:22	speak these things	voice of the Lord	16:39
73	11:1	know	know	16:38
72	11:8	father	father	16:35
71	11:13	Jerusalem	Jerusalem	16:35
70	11:17	his children	our families	16:31
69	11:25	word of God	ways of the Lord	16:29
68	11:27	father	father	16:26
67	11:31	afflicted	afflicted	16:21
66	11:32	everlasting God	Lord his God	16:20
65	11:34	slain	slay	16:18
64	11:35	earth	wilderness	16:14
63	11:36	pride ?	wilderness ?	16:14
62	12:1	seed	seed	16:11
61	12:2	gathered	gather	16:11
60	12:4	mist of darkness	night	16:9
59	12:10	righteous forever	ye were righteous	16:3
58	12:10	garments are made white	righteousness have I justified	16:2
57	12:12	righteousness	righteous	15:36
56	12:16	river	place of filthiness	15:34
55	12:17	perish and are cast off	cast off	15:33
54	12:18	justice	judged	15:32
53	12:18	forever	forever	15:30
52	12:23	filthy	filthiness	15:27
51	13:5	yoke of iron	rod of iron	15:23
50	13:10	my brethren	my brethren	15:20
49	13:12	separated	scattered	15:20
48	13:12	seed	seed	15:18
47	13:13	Gentiles	Gentiles	15:17
46	13:14	Gentiles	Gentiles	15:17
45	13:14	scattered	scattered	15:17
44	13:21	knowest	know	15:14
43	13:23	covenants	covenant	15:14
42	13:23	house of Israel	house of Israel	15:14
41	13:24	fulness of the Gospel	fulness of the Gospel	15:13
40	13:25	Gentiles	Gentiles	15:13
39	13:26	Jews	House of Israel	15:12

38	13:27	harden the hearts	hardness of your hearts	15:10
37	13:27	children of men	children of men	15:4
36	13:24	seen	seen	15:4
35	13:29	understanding	understood	15:3
34	13:29	great many	great many	15:3
33	12:30	father	father	15:1
32	13:13	see	which I saw	14:28
31	13:32	plain and most precious	truth	14:26
30	13:33	remnant	remainder	14:24
29	13:34	plain and precious	plain and pure	14:23
28	13:34	in that day	at the time	14:23
27	13:34	gospel ?	just and true ?	14:23
26	13:35	write	write	14:22
25	13:35	many things	many things	14:21
24	13:36	written	write	14:21
23	13:36	the Lamb	the way	14:17
22	13:37	at that day	at that day	14:17
21	13:38	came forth	day cometh	14:17
20	13:39	beheld	seest	14:16
19	13:39	power of the Lamb	power of God	14:14
18	13:39	earth	earth	14:14
17	13:39	the Lamb	the Lamb	14:14
16	13:40	seen	beheld	14:14
15	13:40	Gentiles	Gentiles	14:13
14	13:40	Savior	Lamb of God	14:12
13	13:40	world	earth	14:10
12	13:41	Lamb	Lamb of God	14:10
11	13:41	established in one	the one	14:10
10	13:42	Jews	House of Israel	14:8
9	14:1	stumbling blocks	blindness	14:7
8	14:2	harden not their hearts	hardness of their hearts	14:7
7	14:2	Lamb of God	Lamb of God	14:6
6	14:2	house of Israel	house of Israel	14:5
5	14:2	promised land	covenants	14:5
4	14:2	captivity	captivity	14:4
3	14:3	hell	hell	14:3
2	14:3	destruction	destruction	14:3
1	14:3	Lamb of God		14:3

Global Literal Chiasmus of 165 Repeated Elements in 1 Nephi (Part 1).

[H. Clay Gorton, *A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon*, p. 24-27]

Clay Gorton continues:

**The global conceptual chiasmus** has been identified by Wallace B. King (“Notes on the Chiastic Structure of The First Book of Nephi,” LDS Church Historical Library, undated, unpublished). It has [18 elements and] has as its central element the phrase, “the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto [Christ] (1 Nephi 10:18). [see illustration]

Since 1 Nephi is composed of chiasma that image the concepts and words near the first of the book with their parallel counterparts near the end of the book, it could not have been started until after the concluding events had taken place. Thus the book was written no sooner than some 12 to 30 years or more after the colony arrived in the promised land.

<b>GLOBAL CONCEPTUAL CHIASMUS IN 1 NEPHI</b>	
The global conceptual chiasmus in First Nephi has been identified by Wallace B. King, <sup>2</sup> and is reproduced below with the parallel elements side-by-side for easy comparison.	
<p><b>Element 18</b> 1:1-3 Introduction, containing the following sub-elements: a- an autograph b- a reference to his father c- Nephi testifies to the truthfulness of his record d- a reference to beginnings- (Nephi's birth).</p>	<p><b>Element 18</b> 22:29-31 Conclusion, containing the following sub-elements: a- an autograph b- a reference to his father dc- Nephi testifies to the truthfulness of the record on the Plates of Brass d- a reference to endings- "the end . . . the last day."</p>
<p><b>Element 17</b> 1:4 Repentance: "they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed."</p>	<p><b>Element 17</b> 22:28 Repentance: "all . . . people shall dwell safely . . . if . . . they will repent."</p>
<p><b>Element 16</b> 1:5-8 God reigns: "[Lehi] sees God sitting on his throne."</p>	<p><b>Element 16</b> 22:26-27 God reigns: "and the Holy One of Israel reigneth."</p>
<p><b>Element 15</b> 1:9-11 Lehi comes to know the Savior: "he saw one descending out of the midst of heaven . . . his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day . . . and the first came and stood before my father."</p>	<p><b>Element 15</b> 22:24-25 All the righteous will know the Savior . . . "the righteous must be led up . . . and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him."</p>
<p><b>Element 14</b> 1:12-19 <hr/>The heavens testify of the Savior: Lehi reads from a heavenly book which "manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world."</p>	<p><b>Element 14</b> 22:20-23 The prophet Moses testifies of the Savior. Nephi quotes from the book of Moses, and then states, "this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel."</p>
<p><b>Element 13</b> 1:20 - 2:1-3 The Lord protects the chosen who are faithful: "the tender mercies of the Lord are over all them whom he hath chosen, . . . unto the power of deliverance."</p>	<p><b>Element 13</b> 22:13-19 God protects the righteous: "for he will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous."</p>

<p><b>Element 12</b> 2:4-24 A part of the house of Israel is being scattered: "And [Lehi] left his house . . . and took nothing with him save it were his family . . . ye shall be led to a land of promise."</p>	<p><b>Element 12</b> 22:3-12 The house of Israel is to be scattered: "for it appears that the house of Israel, sooner or later, will be scattered upon all the face of the earth."</p>
<p><b>Element 11</b> Chapters 3, 4 and 5 An account of the obtaining of the scriptures recorded on the Brass Plates.</p>	<p><b>Element 11</b> 19:7 - 22:2 Nephi paraphrases and quotes from the scriptures recorded on the Brass Plates.</p>
<p><b>Element 10</b> Chapter 6 Nephi comments on his task of keeping records.</p>	<p><b>Element 10</b> 19:1-6 Nephi comments on his task of keeping records.</p>
<p><b>Element 9</b> 7:1-19 A narrative section containing these sub-elements: a) The family of Ishmael b) A journey c) Rebellion against Nephi.</p>	<p><b>Element 9</b> 16:7 - 18:25 A narrative section containing these sub-elements: a) The family of Ishmael b) A journey c) Rebellions against Nephi.</p>
<p><b>Element 8</b> 7:20-22 Nephi exhorts his brothers and they turn to the Lord.</p>	<p><b>Element 8</b> 16:1-6 Nephi exhorts his brothers, and they humble themselves before the Lord.</p>
<p><b>Element 7</b> Chapter 8</p>	<p><b>Element 7</b> Chapter 15</p>
<p>Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life.</p>	<p>Nephi gives the interpretation of Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life.</p>
<p><b>Element 6</b> Chapter 9 Nephi discusses his two sets of records. "And thus it is. Amen."</p>	<p><b>Element 6</b> 14:20-30 Nephi discusses two records, one by himself and one by the apostle John. "And thus it is. Amen."</p>
<p><b>Element 5</b> 10:1-16 Lehi prophesies about the coming of the Lamb of God and the future events.</p>	<p><b>Element 5</b> 11:1 - 14:19 Nephi prophesies about the coming of the Son of God and other future events.</p>
<p><b>Element 4</b> 10:17 "[Lehi] spake by the power of the Holy Ghost."</p>	<p><b>Element 4</b> 10:22 "And the Holy Ghost giveth authority that I [Nephi] should speak these things."</p>
<p><b>Element 3</b> 10:17 Nephi desires righteousness: "I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things."</p>	<p><b>Element 3</b> 10:20-21 Fate of those who seek unrighteousness: "if ye have sought to do wickedly."</p>
<p><b>Element 2</b> 10:17-18 2A) "[the power of the Holy Ghost] is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him." 2B) "in times of old, as in the time that he should manifest himself." 2C) "For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever."</p>	<p><b>Element 2</b> 10:19 2A) "For he that diligently seeketh shall find; . . . by the power of the Holy Ghost." 2B) "as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come." 2C) "the course of the Lord is one eternal round."</p>
<p><b>Element 1—Central Theme</b> "and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto Him."</p>	

Global Conceptual Chiasmus in 1 Nephi.

[H. Clay Gorton, *A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon*, p. 29-31]

In 1998, Noel Reynolds would add to the First Nephi perspective of legitimate rulership with an article titled, "Nephite Kingship Reconsidered." (see Davis Bitton, ed., *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World*. Provo, Utah: FARMS, 151-189). As part of this article he would show on page 31 a thematic chiasmic structure for 1 Nephi 17:7—18:4 in which the center element states: "God blesses the righteous and destroys the wicked. He esteems all flesh in one. Whoever is righteous is favored of the Lord."

In 1999, Richard G. Grant would post an article on his website providing a very good review of Noel Reynolds' articles along with his charts. (see "Nephi's Masterpiece: The Amazing Structure of First Nephi" at <http://www.cometozarahemla.org>) Interestingly, Grant posts the 1972 chiasmic model first proposed by John Welch, but with an added element (see below highlighted in red).

- Ch. 1 a. Lehi's dream leads him to PROPHECY WARNINGS to the Jews.
- Ch. 2 b. The DEPARTURE from Jerusalem.
- Ch. 3-5 c. Nephi accomplishes a great FEAT in obtaining the brass plates; the brothers are **confounded**. (1 Nephi 3:7)
  - \* The Brass Plates, a source of **spiritual** guidance as they travel through the wilderness of this life towards the **spiritual** promised land Heaven.
- Ch. 7 d. ISHMAEL joins the group with his daughters.
- Ch. 8 e. The TREE of LIFE
- Ch. 10 f. Lehi prophesies about the OLD WORLD and the coming of the Lamb.
- Ch. 11 g. **Nephi and the Spirit of the Lord.**
- Ch. 12-14 f' Nephi prophesies about the NEW WORLD and the coming of the Lamb
- Ch. 15 e' The TREE of LIFE interpreted
- Ch. 16 d' The sons of Lehi marry the daughters of ISHMAEL and Ishmael dies.
  - \* The Brass Ball, the Liahona, a source of **physical** guidance as they traveled through the wilderness on their way to the promised land America.
- Ch. 17 c' Nephi accomplishes a great FEAT by building a ship; the brothers are **confounded**. (1 Nephi 17:3)
- Ch. 18 b' The DEPARTURE from the Old World.
- Ch. 19-22 a' Nephi WARNS the Jews and quotes the PROPHECIES of Isaiah.

In summarizing his review, Grant writes the following:

There is a fourth dimension, both suggested and described in detail by Dr. Reynolds, which I will call the dimension of *structure*. As will be seen, Nephi masterfully structures this chapter of First Nephi. I see three important reasons for this structure: First, structure contributes to the

presentation and emphasis of the message. Nephi's structure helps us see clearly Nephi's intent — what was most important to him. Second, the structure gives a form of validation to the message. Today this structure validates the ancient origin of the record. For Nephi's descendants it would have served to verify the integrity of transmission of this text. It would seem that Nephi intended this to be a near legal document, a *constitution* for his people. The complexity of the structure served to minimize changes. Any change to a significant element would be obvious. Third, Nephi was writing what he knew to be a sacred record. He was passing on to his people and to us his testimony and witness of Jesus Christ and of the *condescension* of God. This was also his testimony of the triumph of Christ over evil, and the salvation, both spiritual and physical, granted to the faithful. Just as we use our finest material and workmanship in the construction of holy temples, Nephi employed his most intricate and sophisticated writing skills to craft the very finest piece of work of which he was capable. The result was a masterpiece!

In 2010, Grant Hardy would propose a type of extended alternating parallelism between First Nephi and Second Nephi based on the original chapter divisions in 1830 (see *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*, 2010). On pages 294-295 he writes:

The break between First and Second Nephi—which apparently takes place within a single family discussion—is unexpected, and requires some sort of explanation. Noel Reynolds has proposed that First Nephi was carefully constructed with multiple parallels and chiasmic features, and that Second Nephi was a “collection of odds and ends” that he could not fit into his tight literary structure. Noel B. Reynolds, “Nephi’s Outline,” *BYU Studies* 20, 2 (Winter 1980): 131-49; reprinted in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds and Charles D. Tate (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982). I have an alternative suggestion, based on the original chapter divisions, as to how Nephi may have tried to bring order and balance to his account (modern chapter numbers appear in parentheses):

<u>FIRST NEPHI</u>		<u>SECOND NEPHI</u>	
I-II (1-9)	Lehi's teachings	I-II (1-3)	Lehi's Teachings
III (10-14)	Lehi concludes, Nephi responds (his vision)	III (4)	Lehi concludes, Nephi responds (his psalm)
IV (15)	His brothers rebel	IV (5)	His brothers rebel
V (16-19)	Nephi rescues the family, preaches	V-VII (6-10)	Jacob preaches
VI (19-20)	Isaiah chapters	VIII-X (11-24)	Isaiah chapters
VIII (22)	Nephi's prophetic expansion	XI-XV (25-33)	Nephi's prophetic expansion

In 2012, Marcus M. Ladd would continue to add perspectives about the general literary structure of the entire book of First Nephi (see *And He Spake Unto Me: Structural Revelations and Prophetic Pattern in 1 Nephi*, 2012). On page 12 he writes: “My proposed structure follows the general outline suggested by John Welch in his 1972 *New Era* article, though there are several significant additions and changes.”

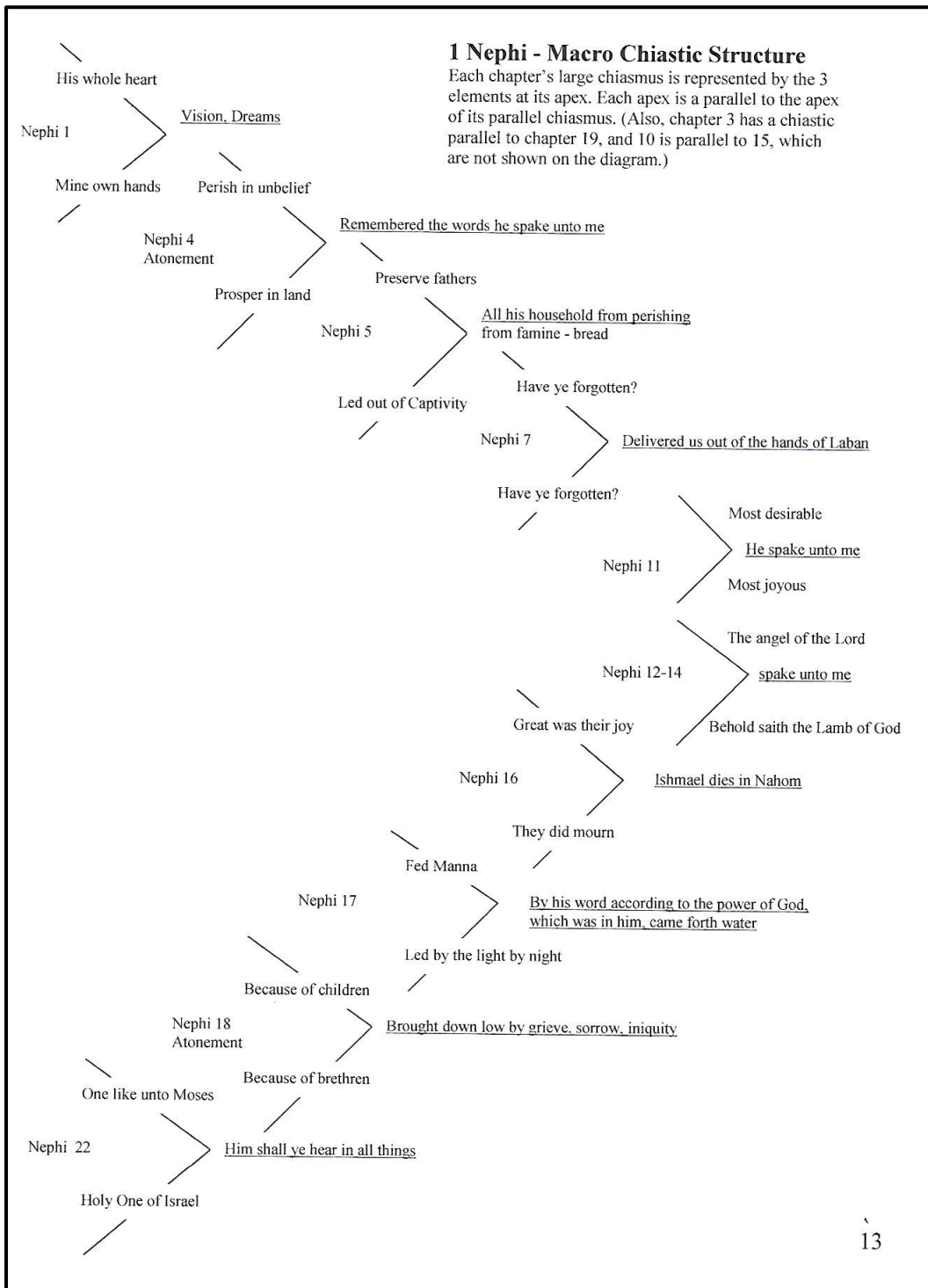
In essence, Marcus Ladd proposes what he calls a “macro chiastic structure” for First Nephi. He provides a diagram on page 13 in which chapters 1--11 are shown to be part of their own chiasmus. These multiple chiastic structures are then portrayed as the first leg of a “macro chiastic structure paralleling the second part of First Nephi (chapters 12—22). “Each chapter’s large chiasmus is represented by the 3 elements at its apex. Each apex is a parallel to the apex of its parallel chiasmus.”

In the same manner as John Welch, Marcus Ladd notes some very interesting evidence for his correspondence. I will cite just a few examples. On page 94 he notes that the phrase “wild beasts” is curiously used only twice by Nephi: once in 1 Nephi 7 (7:16) and the other in 1 Nephi 16 (16:31), and that these chapters parallel one another in his “macro chiastic structure.” In Appendix 14 he treats the parallel factors of 1 Nephi 2 and 1 Nephi 19—21. For example, he notes that the word “teach” is used just one time in First Nephi, being found in chapter 2 (2:22). The word “teacher” is also very unique, being found only twice in First Nephi. However, one of those occurrences is in the parallel chapter 19 (19:22). He notes that “the phrase ‘cut off’ is first used in 1 Nephi 2, and not again until its parallel, 1 Nephi 20!” He notes that the word “dealings” is only used once in First Nephi (1 Ne. 2:12). Interestingly, the word “deal” is also used only once, being found in the parallel chapter 19 (19:22). Another example he provides is the phrase “O that thou.” He notes that it is only found in chapter 2 (2:9) and in its parallel chapter 20 (20:18).

Ladd adds the following (which I would echo):

Though Nephi says of himself, “neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking” (2 Nephi 33:1) he is far, far too modest. The literary and poetical breadth of what Nephi has done is unprecedented and absolutely astounding.

For an illustration of Ladd’s theory, see the following page.



1 Nephi - Macro Chiastic Structure.

Marcus M. Ladd, And He Spake Unto Me: Structural Revelations and Prophetic Pattern in 1 Nephi, p. 13

In 2012, Joseph Spencer would write in support of Frederick Axelgard's 1986 theory to buttress his own ideas about the material in 2 Nephi (or rather the material beyond 2 Nephi 5). (see Joseph M. Spencer, *An Other Testament: On Typology*. Salem, Oregon: Salt Press, 2012) In review, Axelgard disagreed with the fact that the end of First Nephi was the rightful ending point that divided Nephi's thematic writing. Axelgard wrote that this division came between 2 Nephi chapter 5 and 2 Nephi chapter 6. His reasoning was that all material before that junction represented historical writings. The material after that point represented spiritual writings. In supporting those ideas, Joseph Spencer adds that "the core of Nephi's writings " are found in 2 Nephi 6-30. In so doing, he seems to dismiss Nephi's most profound final 3 chapters (2 Nephi 31-33) and all of First Nephi as "less sacred material."

In 2017 Noel Reynolds would produce a detailed rebuttal to the ideas of Axelgard and Spencer (see Noel B. Reynolds, "On Doubting Nephi's Break Between 1 and 2 Nephi: A Critique of Joseph Spencer's An Other Testament: On Typology." *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 25 (2017): 85-102.). The main focus of Reynolds' argument is that Joseph Spencer interprets the phrase, "And then behold" in 1 Nephi 19:5 to be specifically chronological and isolated from existing norms of interpretation. Reynolds writes:

In other writings I have argued for a single rhetorical structure in 1 Nephi, built around two parallel chiasms. . . . 1 Nephi thus presents itself as a detailed demonstration that the Lord has kept the promise made to Lehi that if he and his family would obey the Lord, they would be led to a promised land. 2 Nephi shifts into a higher gear theologically . . . centered on the testimonies of Christ from those prophets who have seen him, and climaxing with what I have found to be the most complete and authoritative presentation of the doctrine or gospel of Christ to be found in any scripture.

This brings to an end, for now, my review of various authors' treatment of the parallelistic structure of the entire book of First Nephi. For much more detail, I would refer the reader to the articles that have been cited. My soon-to-be published volumes on the remaining text of the Book of Mormon will also hopefully provide the reader with additional insights.