

PART FOUR

Discussion

Includes:

Chapter 10. Other Evidences of the Parallels Being Intended

Chapter 11. In That Day Shall they Understand

**Chapter 12. That Which Shall Be -- According to
That Which Hath Been**

Conclusion. He That is Built Upon a Rock

CHAPTER TEN

Other Evidences of the Parallels Being Intended

We have now seen that not only do the Lehite and Israelite nations seem to parallel each other from beginning to end, but they also apparently parallel the individual in his journey through life. Each of these sequences, the temporal and the spiritual, climaxes with the appearance of Jesus Christ and a subsequent reign of peace. This becomes yet one more profound illustration of how "all things are created and made to bear record of [Christ], both things which are *temporal*, and things which are *spiritual*..." (Moses 6:63.)

These parallels are most likely intentional and important. The Lord certainly had a hand in shaping the events of these nations such that they evolved as they did (and do). He also apparently inspired the prophet-compilers of the Book of Mormon to record their history such that these parallels can be identified. In addition to the parallels themselves, several other significant factors substantiate the plausibility of this thesis.

Book of Mormon Title Page Conformity

For example, the seeming underlying design of the parallels conform with the purpose of the Book of Mormon as stated in its title page. The Nephite record was written "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all

nations." The apex of the parallels, both temporal and spiritual, is the appearance of Jesus Christ and the reign of peace that follows. The parallels also proclaim that the Lord is the only means by which that glorious state may be ushered in: that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of all mankind.

The Book of Mormon was also written "to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever." The parallels not only indicate that the House of Israel is not cast off forever, but they seem to enumerate the process by which they will be redeemed. They contain striking comparisons to the entire history of the covenants people, depicting how and when the Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled. Furthermore, the very way in which they do this is by showing the "great things the Lord hath done for their fathers"--the history of the Lehite nation.

Some Statements from Isaiah

Another evidence lies in the fact that Isaiah confirmed that the Lord employs the past to foretell the future. He said that the Lord "appointed the ancient people...[to show] the things that are coming..." (Isa. 44:7.) God declares "from ancient times the things that are not yet done." (46:9,10; Eccl. 1:9.)

We note with interest that this last verse immediately precedes one that appears to be a prophecy of the chastening Assyrian Assault--as we have named it. Isaiah said that the Lord will call "a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country...." (Isa. 46:11.) The ensuing verse describes the need for a haughty people to repent; and the concluding verse declares that Zion shall be established. (46:12,13.) Might these succeeding verses in Isaiah suggest the timeliness of this concept of parallels--the past foretelling the future--inasmuch as we seem to be fast approaching the conditions they describe?

Other Occurrences of the Progressional Pattern

Another witness that these parallels could be legitimate is that the progression they set forth--temporal and/or spiritual--can be found in several other significant places.

The foremost example of the temporal progression is found in the Jaredites' history, recorded in the book of Ether. The same sort of comparison we have drawn between the Lehites and the Israelites can be made between the Lehites and the Jaredites. Several of those similarities are briefly shown in Appendix D. Not all, but many of the key overlapping elements between the Lehites and Israelites are also common to the Jaredite history.

Another occurrence of this progressional pattern is found in Alma 5. There, Alma (son of Alma) apparently gives the first portion via history and the second by directly discussing key steps of spiritual maturation in the same order they are presented in the pattern.

His brief historical account in the first portion of the chapter contains likenesses to elements of the "first gathering": the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and their journey through the wilderness and into the promised land. It summarizes the story of a group of people, who had been converted to God, escaping from the tyrannical grasps of king Noah into the wilderness where they then began to multiply and prosper in the land of Helam. (Alma 5:3,4.) It also recounts

that they were then brought into captivity, later to be delivered again, reflecting the apostasy and second gathering. (5:5.)

From there, Alma gives an extensive discourse on being born again, which is the important turning point in an individual's "second gathering." In the latter portion of this chapter, Alma lays out important steps required for progression towards exaltation. He talks about evils of pride, the persecution it brings upon the saints, the destruction it will bring to those who will not repent, and of the need to overcome it. (Alma 5:53-56.) Then he invites those who desire to follow the good shepherd to "come...out from the wicked, and be...separate, and touch not their unclean things...." (5:57.) He next mentions that the names of the wicked will be blotted out, that they may "not be numbered among the names of the righteous...." (5:57.) Finally, he declares that "the names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life, and unto them will [God] grant an inheritance at [His] right hand." (5:58.)

Adding to the list of those who have admonished us to seek to have our calling and election made sure, Alma concludes this chapter with the following words: "I speak *by way of command* unto you that belong to the church; and unto those who do not belong to the church I speak by way of invitation, saying: Come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye also may be *partakers of the fruit of the tree of life*." (Alma 5:62.)

The tree of life, of which Alma spoke, is apparently the one that both Nephi and his father, Lehi, saw in a vision. (1 Ne. 14:26,29.) Looking closer at this vision of the tree of life, we observe that key elements of it can be compared with events in Lehiite history that correspond with the first gathering of the House of Israel. (See Appendix E.) What is even more amazing is that those very same elements can be compared with events in Lehiite history that correspond to the second gathering. (See Appendix F.) We know that if elements of **X** match with **Y**, and the same elements of **X** also match with **Z**, then elements of **Y** and **Z** should also match. Sure enough, we find that events from the first part of Book of

Mormon history can be paired up with events from the latter part. (See Appendix G.) In other words, the progressional pattern set forth in the first part of the Book of Mormon (from 1 Nephi to Omni) is comparable to the that set forth in the second (from Omni to Mormon).

The corollary of this is that the first and second gatherings of the House of Israel and of the individual are in many ways comparable. This realization opens up the door to making a whole multitude of additional comparisons. For example, we live during the time when the House of Israel is about to be gathered to the lands of their inheritance a second time, so the lessons learned from their first gathering can provide important insight about what will take place again. (Micah 7:15.) In the second gathering--like the first--the Lord's penitent people will be led from bondage. They will pass through a probation-like era, overcome the influences of evil around them, and inherit their lands of promise. Also, as for the individual who is in his personal "second gathering," he can glean helpful insights by applying pertinent principles of the first gathering and vice versa.

Understanding this overlapping nature of the first and second gatherings aids us in recognizing additional occurrences (and there seem to be many) of this progressional pattern in the scriptures. Sometimes only one "gathering" episode is presented, but it can apply to the other gathering as well. Each additional source we find that presents this pattern, further enhances our understanding of the whole picture: both the temporal and spiritual aspects.

A prime example of this can be found in what was apparently a concise temple prayer in Old Testament times. This temple utterance draws upon prominent events of the first gathering of the House of Israel to portray its complete, spiritual message. Notice the advancement from bondage in Egypt to salvation in the promised land:

"...A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and popu-

lous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression: and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terrible-ness, and with signs, and with wonders: and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey." (Deut. 26:5-9.)

We have already considered (Chapter Four) many of the spiritual implications symbolized in this era of history. Therefore we find it noteworthy that Moses was inspired to use this particular historical account to present eternal truths of personal advancement in a temple setting. Every verse of this ancient temple prayer appears to hold fundamental parallels with basic sequential components of the modern temple ceremony. (We might note that each verse seems to represent a particular room.) But should this surprise us? Aren't the principles of exaltation constant from generation to generation? Considering the paramount importance of temples--in modern times as well as in antiquity--what sort of message does this give us regarding the validity of the thesis that history carries designed spiritual parallels?

First Nephi Chapter Seventeen

Another evidence that these parallels are intentional is chapter 17 of First Nephi. We have already drawn heavily from it in making both the temporal¹⁹¹ and the spiritual¹⁹² comparisons. The period with which it seems to deal is the "first gathering," both of the House of Israel and the individual.

This chapter can be subdivided into seven segments. (See Appendix A.) The first six segments seem to be organized as follows.

- (A) Lehi's group
- (B) the children of Israel
- (C) thesis statement
- (C') thesis restatement
- (B') the stiffnecked Jews
- (A') Nephi's rebellious brethren

Many elements in **A** closely match elements in **B**. (See Appendix B.) These parallels were the ones we discussed when we looked at the similarities between the first gathering of the House of Israel and the first portion of Book of Mormon history. In addition to this, many elements of **B'** happen to be similar to elements of **A'**. (See Appendix C.) This correlation is particularly noteworthy, for it compares a nation (the Jews) with individuals (Nephi's rebellious brothers). Therefore, in this one chapter Nephi not only alludes to the existence of temporal parallels between nations but of spiritual similarities between nations and individuals.

The apparent thesis statement and restatement (**C** and **C'**) of First Nephi 17 could be arranged as follows.

- (1) "Behold, the Lord hath created the ^aearth that it should be ^binhabited;
- (2) and he hath created his children that they should ^cpossess it.
- (3) And he ^draiseth up a ^erighteous nation and ^fdestroyeth the ^gnations of the wicked.
- (3') And he ^dleadeth away the ^erighteous into precious lands, and the ^gwicked he ^fdestroyeth,
- and curseth the land unto them for their sakes.
- (2') He ^cruleth high in the heavens,
- (1') for it is his ^bthrone, and this ^aearth is his ^bfootstool." (1 Ne. 17:36-39)

This statement seems to be the underlying theme of not only this chapter but of all scripture. (Jer. 1:10; Ether 2:7-12.) Segments **A** and **B** of this chapter speak of nations that were raised up by God. Segments **B'** and **A'** deal with a nation and individuals, re-

spectively, who were headed for destruction.

One observation we make about the above thesis statement is that points 1 and 2 have to do with man, while points 2' and 1' deal with God. Could this possibly infer--in this context of leading the righteous into precious lands--that as God is, man may become: that we may become "an heir of God through Christ"? (Gal. 4:7.) Isn't this also the theme of the temporal and spiritual parallels of Book of Mormon history: inviting both nations and individuals to come unto Christ in the ultimate sense, that they may achieve the earnest of their inheritance? (Eph. 1:14.)

Thus we see that this concept of temporal and spiritual parallels underlying Book of Mormon history is supported by several other factors besides just the parallels themselves. First, the apparent objectives of the parallels and of the Book of Mormon in general, as stated in the title page, are essentially one and the same. Second, the prophet Isaiah has stated that the one of the Lord's teaching techniques is to use the past to foretell future events. Third, essential elements of the pattern of progression suggested by the parallels can be found in numerous other places. These include the Jaredite history, Alma 5, the vision of the tree of life, and Old Testament and modern temple rites. Fourth, a tremendous concentration of the temporal and spiritual parallels we draw is found in a single chapter, First Nephi 17. The apparent thesis of this chapter is not only indicative of the theme of the scriptures but of the parallels as well.

In addition to these witnesses, recall a few other evidences mentioned earlier. First, in April, 1987, our living Prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, devoted an entire General Conference address to the theme of parallels between events surrounding Christ's second coming and his coming to the Nephites anciently. Second, these parallels illustrate perhaps one of the most significant means (the history of God's chosen people) by which all things that come from the hand of God testify of Christ. Third, the summarizing sentence of the scriptures--

"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"--is powerfully manifested in and expounded by these temporal and spiritual parallels.

All of these evidences combined indicate that these parallels conform securely with God's purposes. They suggest that the Lord indeed shaped and the prophet-compilers recorded the events of the Lehite nation so that these temporal and spiritual lessons might be derived for our benefit.

Notes for Chapter Ten:

191. See the "Establishment of a Covenant Land and People" section in Chapter Five.

192. See the "First Principles and Ordinances" section in Chapter Eight.