THE BOOK OF MORMON: DISCOVERIES AND EVIDENCES

Wednesday: Chiasmus, Hebraisms, and Feasts

INTRODUCTION

Description: The more we study the Book of Mormon, the more its ancient characteristics come to light. Three prime examples of this are: chiasmus, a form of ancient Hebrew poetry unknown to anyone in Joseph Smith's day; Hebraisms, or uniquely Hebrew phraseology that shows up in the text; and evidence relating to Nephite observance of ancient feasts.

Main points to be made during the presentation:

- Chiasmus, a well-known form of Hebrew poetry today, was unknown to Joseph Smith, though it is found throughout the Book of Mormon.
- Hebraisms—the use of ancient Hebrew terms and phrases behind the English text—are abundantly evident in the Book of Mormon.
- Ancient Israelite feasts were practiced in the Book of Mormon, as described in the early chapters of the Old Testament.

We will deal with these topics in reverse order.

FEASTS

During the time of Jesus, there is good detail about the rituals and practices surrounding the various Jewish feasts from Biblical and non-Biblical sources. But the Book of Mormon has its origins 600 years before the time of Christ, so we have to look to the Old Testament to see if any practices in the Book of Mormon align with ancient Israelite feasts and holy days. We don't know everything about the rituals in that period of time in Judah, but we know enough to demonstrate some fascinating parallels, especially in the major story that begins the book of Mosiah— King Benjamin's final sermon.

As if often the case, more than 60 years ago, Hugh Nibley was the first to point out that the first chapters in Mosiah resembled an ancient festival. Twenty years later others took a closer look and began to find parallels between Mosiah 1-6 and the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles.[i]

Exodus 23 (and other scriptures, such as Exodus 34; Leviticus 23; Numbers 28-29; and Deuteronomy 16) outlines the three major feasts that faithful Jews were to observe each year. The first is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is kicked off by the Passover (*Pesach*). The second was the Feast of the Harvest (*Shavuot*), which is often called by its New Testament name, the Feast of Pentecost (meaning fifty days after the Passover). The third was the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), which is tied to *Rosh ha-Shanah* (New Year/Day of Judgment) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). This feast was considered the greatest feast of all, and is the one we shall examine.

NEW YEAR / DAY OF JUDGMENT (*ROSH HA-SHANAH*)

Let's first look at the characteristics of the celebration of the new year, as we know them, from pre-exilic times (before the Babylonian captivity, meaning Lehi's day).

First, according to Leviticus 23:24-25, **animal sacrifice** was involved:

…in the seventh month, in the first *day* of the month [the start of the Feast of Ingathering]…ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

Likewise, the people of Benjamin offered sacrifices when they gathered at the temple:

And they also took of the firstlings of their flocks, that they might offer sacrifice and burnt offerings according to the law of Moses (Mosiah 2:3).

Secondly, the new year appears to be a time of **judgment**, when the deeds of the old year are judged and covenants made for the new. (Such is the case with us today and our New Year's resolutions.) In the Book of Mormon account, Benjamin reminds them of their fallen state and what their fate will be if they remain an enemy to God. For example, Mosiah 2:37-39:

I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and becometh an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord has no place in him, for he dwelleth not in unholy temples.

Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever.

And now I say unto you, that mercy hath no claim on that man; therefore his final doom is to endure a never-ending torment.

In ancient days, when the people heard of their potential judgment, they would fall down and cry out in **humility**, pleading for **mercy**. So it was with King Benjamin's people:

AND now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord, that he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.

And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men (Mosiah 4:1-2).

A fourth element of this feast is **coronation**, both of mortal kings and recognition of God's ultimate kingship. This is especially manifest in a number of Psalms, including the 47th:

O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.
He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.
He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.
God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.
God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

Benjamin likewise reminds the people of God's kingship:

And behold also, if I, whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service, and yet has been in the service of God, do merit any thanks from you, O how you ought to thank your heavenly King (Mosiah 2:19)!

And of course, one of the main purposes of gathering the people at that time was to install Mosiah as the new king in Benjamin's place. Scholars believe that in the Old Testament, this time of year was the preferred time to do a coronation, during which time the king would also exhort the people to follow God and live righteously. This is exactly what happens in these chapters in Mosiah as well.

Fifth, the new year was a time to consider God's role in the **creation** of the earth and mankind. Scriptures such as the early chapters of Genesis and Psalm 148 would be read. Accordingly, Benjamin's speech contains many references to the creation. Christ as "the Creator of all things from the beginning" (Mosiah 3:8), and to the people's appellation of Christ as "the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things" (Mosiah 4:2); Benjamin's statement that God has "created you, . . . and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath…from one moment to another" (Mosiah 2:20–21), as well as his other frequent references to God's creative powers (see Mosiah 4:9, 12; 5:15), all fit well into remembrance of God's creative works.

Which leads nicely to the sixth point, **remembrance**. Leviticus 23:24 says, "…In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial…" The last word is *zikeron*, which means "remembrance." In Benjamin's address, the word *remember* or *remembrance* is used 15 times, including, "O remember, remember that these things are true" (Mosiah 2:41), and, "And now, O man, remember, and perish not" (Mosiah 4:30).

DAY OF ATONEMENT (*YOM KIPPUR*)

Now let's examine traditions about the Day of Atonement, which fell on the tenth day of the seventh month, ten days after the new year and just before the Feast of the Ingathering or Tabernacles.

The word "**atonement** " or a variation (atoning, atoneth) appears **seven times** in King Benjamin's speech (Mosiah 3:11, 15, 16, 18, 19; 4:6, 7). Seven is an important number in Hebrew, denoting perfection or completeness. To say something seven times is ritually significant. The purpose of the Day of Atonement is to cleanse the people and the temple from sin. On this day, a priest (later the high priest only) would enter the temple and daub blood from a sacrifice around to ritually cleanse the temple from the people's sins, and the sacrifices themselves would cleanse the people. Though there is no record in the Book of Mormon account of these specific practices (except the references to sacrifice in general), Benjamin's discourse is clearly focused on repentance, cleansing, and purifying, including those who sin inadvertently, an important focus of the Day of Atonement.

The other major feature of *Yom Kippur* is casting lots over **two goats**. One is sacrificed to the Lord and upon the other, the priest lays his hands and symbolically confers the sins of the people, then has it taken out into the desert. Tradition has it that the one of the right hand is dedicated to the Lord (if the lots come up differently, the animals switch places). Likewise, Benjamin speaks of the righteous being on the **right hand** of God and the wicked on His **left**.

It was on the Day of Atonement that the priest was allowed to utter the **name of God**. In fact, the tradition was to utter it **10 times** in the course of the day. In his speech, Benjamin says "Lord God" (which in Hebrew would be Jehovah God) **seven** times and "Lord Omnipotent" (Jehovah all-powerful) **three** times, a total of 10. It's also interesting to note that seven of those occurrences are when he is quoting the angel. Again, seven plays a significant role (something Joseph Smith would be unlikely to know in 1829 and even harder to include in a rapidly translated text).

Giving to the poor and experiencing **great joy** are also part of the worship activities on the Day of Atonement. King Benjamin's address speaks of both of these things—admonishing the people to give to the poor (Mosiah 4:26) and showing the great joy felt by the people (Mosiah 4:11-12).

Finally, the priest would pronounce **great blessings** on all the people as part of the Day of Atonement. And so does Benjamin three times in chapter 2 (verses 22, 31, 41) and chapter 6 (verse 1), which is very similar to the priest's final blessing of asking for their names to be inscribed in the book of life.

THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES (*SUKKOT*)

Also called the Feast of the Harvest, the Feast of Ingathering, or just The Feast, *Sukkot* was celebrated five days after the Day of Atonement and was considered the greatest of the three required feasts. The Feast of the Tabernacles was a **pilgrimage**—Israelites were required to come from all over the land to the temple, pitch **tents** or make temporary **booths** (still practiced today by many Jews—which is where it gets the name *Sukkot*, which means "booths"), and assemble as families. But the practice of using booths is not documented until later in Israelite history; in the time of Moses and Solomon, at least, tents are clearly in use (see Exodus 33:8 and 1 Kings 8:65-66). This is exactly the picture we get from Benjamin's address where the people gathered from the entire land, and in families pitched tents around the temple in order to hear the address (Mosiah 2:1-5).

Just as the Passover celebrates the deliverance from Egypt, Tabernacles celebrated the giving of the **Law to Moses**. The Law is recited and discussed, and the people are invited to renew their covenants with God. The king especially had a key role in this recitation of the law. Every seven years, he was to stand on a **platform** erected for this purpose and read the entire law to the people. So Benjamin also stood on a tower, discussed the commandments of God, and invited his people to renew their covenants with the Lord.

Many more parallels could be given by way of illustration, but this is sufficient to demonstrate that the first six chapters of Mosiah have many parallels to the Jewish Fall holy days and feast. These parallels are intricately woven into the speech and story in a way that would be masterful even for a scholar or Rabbi who knew the practices intimately. Joseph Smith had no such knowledge of Jewish customs and feasts.

HEBRAISMS

The Book of Mormon declares that the writers of the book spoke and wrote Hebrew. Indeed, that was the language of the people when Lehi and his family left Jerusalem, as is well documented with inscriptions and other documents from that period. Nephi declares that he wrote in "the language of my father," (1 Nephi 1:2) then explains that it is a combination of Jewish and Egyptian, which scholars generally agree means they probably spoke Hebrew but wrote it down in Egyptian characters. Later, Moroni says that they are still speaking Hebrew, or at least something they call Hebrew, but know that it "hath been altered by us also" (Moroni 9:32-33). The point is that if the Book of Mormon is an ancient book written by people speaking Hebrew, then we should find manifestations of this Hebrew influence in the text.

And we do.

Joseph Smith did study Hebrew, but not until many years after the publication of the book. In some cases, a careful student of the Bible might have noticed some of these things and been able to bring them into a book. But witnesses (his wife and family) are clear that while Joseph read the Bible, he was no scholar. And many of the Hebraisms we will highlight could not be known except by someone who read the Bible in Hebrew, because they are not apparent from the English translation! The abundance of Hebraisms and the unlikelihood that Joseph Smith could produce them on his own is another great testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

Hebraisms have been brought to our attention by several Hebrew scholars, but prominently Don Parry and John Tvedtnes, both of BYU. It should also be noted that Hugh Nibley highlighted many such influences, but more in the cultural than the linguistic arena, which is where we will concentrate our efforts today.

One intriguing note is that the original (1830) Book of Mormon has more evidence of Hebraisms in it than our book today. What has happened is that over the years, edits were made (including by Joseph Smith) to make it easier to read in English, but these changes 'erased,' in a sense, the literalness of the original translation from Hebrew. For example, Alma 46:19:

> And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent ~~part~~ of his garment in the air…

The word bolded/struck out was not in the 1830 edition. That sounds awkward in English—how do you wave a rent (the tear or hole) in the air? But in Hebrew, many such words do not require something after them to make sense—such as broken, new, or rent. Would you say, 'I just bought a new' in English? The listener would respond, 'A new what?' But in Hebrew that makes perfect sense. So the 1830 Book of Mormon is great Hebrew, and adding "part" later makes it good English.

Here are some Hebraisms to consider.

POSSESSIVES (OR CONSTRUCT STATE)

To form a possessive, we say, "This is John's book" in English. But in Hebrew it's *book John*. If you follow that word order in English, it makes no sense, so you either change the order (as many modern translations do) or you insert an *of* in the middle: the book of John. The Bible is full of these phrases because the King James translators kept the Hebrew word order, in many cases: "tables of stone" (Exodus 24:12) or "the word of the Lord" (Genesis 15:4), just to name two.

The Book of Mormon is full of such construct state phrases:
- "plates of brass" (1 Nephi 3:24)
- "rod of iron" (1 Nephi 8:19)
- "sword of Laban" (2 Nephi 5:14)
- "temple of Solomon" (2 Nephi 5:16)
- "commandments of the Lord" (2 Nephi 5:19)
- "land of promise" (1 Nephi 17:33)
- "works of darkness" (2 Nephi 25:2)
- and many more

There are two instances in the Book of Mormon where the possessive *Lord's* is used, both in 2 Nephi 28:3 (actually three, but one is a direct quote from Isaiah; see 2 Nephi 12:2). You might say, 'Oh, Joseph missed a couple. But there are, in fact, 134 occurrences of "Lord's" in the Bible, and 1744 using "…of the Lord." That means 8% of the time, the KJV uses the more modern English phrase. The Book of Mormon has 485 "…of the Lord" phrases, so with only two "Lord's," that's less than ½ of one percent. So as a percentage, the Book of Mormon is more Hebrew than the Bible.

COGNATES

Cognates, or more precisely, cognate accusatives, are when a noun and a verb sharing the same root are used together. This is fairly common in Hebrew, and we see it in our Bible in phrases such as, "**wrote** upon it a **writing**" (Exodus 39:30) or "she **vowed** a **vow**" (1 Samuel 1:11) or "**dreamed** a **dream**" (Genesis 37:5). It is often in the Hebrew Bible, though, but translated away because it is often awkward-sounding in English. An example of this would be Genesis 1:11, which says in Hebrew "Let the earth **grass grass**," though the KJV translation is "Let the earth bring forth grass." Someone who was trying to write well in English is very unlikely to use cognates.

The Book of Mormon includes many examples of cognates:
- "I will **curse** them even with a sore **curse**" (1 Nephi 2:23)

- "I have **dreamed** a **dream**" (1 Nephi 3:2; 8:2)
- "**yoketh** them with a **yoke**" (1 Nephi 13:5)
- "**work** a great and marvelous **work**" (1 Nephi 14:7)
- "the **desire** which I **desired** of him" (Enos 1:13)
- "**build buildings**" (2 Nephi 5:15; Mosiah 23:5)
- "**taxed** with a **tax**" (Mosiah 7:15)
- "**work** all manner of fine **work**" (Mosiah 11:10)

Plural Amplification

In Hebrew, to amplify or emphasize an idea, writers will sometimes use a plural noun even though in English, we would use a singular. This example is particularly interesting because it is not evident in the KJV—the translators convert them all to singular. That means that Joseph Smith had no model at all. Some examples include:
- thy brother's blood [Heb. bloods] crieth unto me (Genesis 4:10)
- and strength and salvation [Heb. salvations] (Isaiah 33:6)
- brought forth to the day of wrath [Heb. wraths] (Job 21:30)

The Book of Mormon does indeed have plural nouns when in English they should clearly be singular:
- there shall be bloodsheds (2 Nephi 1:12)
- the understandings of the children of men (Mosiah 8:20)
- great condescensions unto the children of men (Jacob 4:7)
- labor with their mights (Jacob 5:72)
- their cunning and their lyings (Alma 20:13)
- destructions of my people (1 Nephi 15:5, 1830 and printer's mss)

Numbers

In the Old Testament, numbers are used following three patterns, which are also found in the Book of Mormon:
1. *Avoidance of complex numeric forms.* This refers to number forms starting with mono-, bi-, di-, uni-, tri-, multi-, etc. There are no such number forms in the Book of Mormon.
2. *A number without a noun.* The Old Testament has many examples of a number without a noun, such as Joseph giving "three hundred of silver" (Genesis 45:22—the italicized *pieces* correctly indicates that the word is not in the Hebrew); "ten weight of gold (Genesis 24:22—the KJV adds *shekels*); and "he measured six of barley" (Ruth 3:150—the KJV adds *measures*). Book of Mormon examples include: "he can command fifty, yea, even he can slay fifty" (1 Nephi 3:31); and "there were two hundred, out of my two thousand and sixty" (Alma 57:25).
3. *Joining numbers with 'and'.* It is very common to include an 'and' between numbers in Hebrew, such as "thirty and two kings" (1 Kings 20:1), unlike the expected phrase in English, 'thirty-two kings.' Likewise, in the Book of Mormon, we see: "forty and two thousand" (Mormon 2:9); "three hundred and twenty years" (Omni 1:5); and "sixty and three years old" (Mosiah 17:6).

Calling Names

When we name a child, animal, or place, we say that we "called him" or "named him" [the name]. But in Hebrew, they "call the name of him" [the name]. In other words, the name is called, not the person or thing. An example everyone would recognize is: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall **call his name** Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

The Book of Mormon has several examples of this practice, including:

- "we did **call the name** of the place Shazer" (1 Nephi 16:13).

- "and they **called the name** of the city Moroni" (Alma 50:13-14).
- "he had three sons, and he **called their names** Mosiah, and Helorum, and Helaman" (Mosiah 1:2).
- "they **called their names** Anti-Nephi-Lehies" (Alma 23:17).

MANY "ANDS"

Speaking of many ands, Hebrew often strings lists of many things together using the word "and". In Hebrew, this is a single character that attaches easily to the beginning of a word. In English, this sounds repetitive.

Here are two Old Testament examples with the number of "and"s in each one:
- 1 Samuel 17:34-35 – **10**
- Joshua 7:24 – **13**

The Book of Mormon has many such examples, including:
- 1 Nephi 11:30-32 – **22**
- 1 Nephi 12:4 – **12**
- Mosiah 10:8 – **8**
- Alma 46:12-13 – **15**
- Helaman 3:14 – **18** (below)

But behold, a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites **and** of the Nephites, **and** their wars, **and** contentions, **and** dissensions, **and** their preaching, **and** their prophecies, **and** their shipping **and** their building of ships, **and** their building of temples, **and** of synagogues **and** their sanctuaries, **and** their righteousness, **and** their wickedness, **and** their murders, **and** their robbings, **and** their plundering, **and** all manner of abominations **and** whoredoms, cannot be contained in this work.

IF…AND

In some cases, the closeness to Hebrew has changed with subsequent editions and changes to the Book of Mormon text. In other words, looking at the early manuscripts shows even a greater Hebrew literary style than the edition we currently use, because the English has been 'improved' since then by Joseph Smith and others.

For example, in English we say "if…then" (or "if…" nothing else), but in Hebrew, it would say "if…and." There are 14 examples of this construction in the original manuscripts and the 1830 edition Book of Mormon. One great example is a scripture that almost everyone in the Church can quote:

> And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and **if** ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, **and** he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost (Moroni 10:4, original manuscript and 1830 edition).

CHIASMUS

One of the most striking Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon deserves its own section—chiasmus.

Chiasmus is an ancient structural form mainly used in poetry. Though not limited to the ancient Israelite culture (others in the same general time and region also used it), it is in Hebrew that chiasms are the most developed, and examples are found throughout the Bible. However, it should be noted that this form, while ancient, did not come to the attention of the Western Bible-reading world until into the mid nineteenth century, well after the publication of the Book of Mormon. So finding such structures in the Book of Mormon is a powerful indication of its antiquity.

Chiasms are inverted parallelisms. A parallelism is when one thought matches or parallels another. There are several different kinds of parallelism but a simple and common one is demonstrated by this verse (Psalm 27:1):

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Do you see how the second phrase matches the first and strengthens it? That is the power of parallelism—it reinforces the message. For modern readers, it also has the benefit of sometimes making a verse more clear, such as in this example from Isaiah 21:14:

The inhabitants of the land of Tema **brought** water to him that was thirsty,
they **prevented** with their bread him that fled.

At first glance, this might not sound like a parallelism. After all, they brought water but prevented the bread. But knowing this is a parallelism, we might ask what that really means? The Hebrew word translated "prevented" in this verse really means to 'come', 'be in front of', or 'meet.' The KJV translators picked *prevented* because it had that meaning in that day. A better translation for our day, such as that provided by Don Parry, a BYU Hebrew scholar, says, "Bring bread to the fugitives."

Let's look quickly at some other examples of chiasmus in the Bible. Here's a simple one, from Isaiah 55:8:

For **my** thoughts are not **your** thoughts,
Neither are **your** ways **my** ways, saith the Lord.

Notice how the "my" and the "your" are reversed? That's an inverted parallelism, or chiasmus. The pattern can get more complicated, with several layers building to a central climax, such as in this example from Numbers 15:35-36:

And the **LORD** said unto **Moses**,
    The man shall be surely put to **death**:
        all the congregation shall **stone** him with **stones**
            without the **camp**.
                And all the congregation brought him
            without the **camp**,
        and **stoned** him with **stones**,
    and he **died**;
as the **LORD** commanded **Moses**.

Sometimes authors put letters in front of the divisions to make it easier to track them, such as with this example from John 5:8-11:

A Jesus **saith** unto him, Rise, take up thy **bed**, and **walk**.
    B And immediately the man was **made whole**,
        C and **took** up his **bed**, and walked:
            D and on the same day was the **sabbath**.
                X The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured,
            D It is the **sabbath** day:
        C it is not lawful for thee to **carry** thy **bed**.
    B He answered them, He that **made** me **whole**,
A the same **said** unto me, Take up thy **bed**, and **walk**.

Hundreds more could be given as illustration. The Old and New Testaments are literally filled with this structure, especially in Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah, as some of the more poetic books.

The discoverer of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon was John Welch. As a young missionary in Germany, he read a book that explained what it was. After that, he woke early to search for it in the Book of Mormon. The first chiasmus he found was in Mosiah 5:10-12:

A And now it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not take upon him the **name** of Christ
    B must be **called** by some other name;
        C therefore, he findeth himself on the **left hand of God**.
            D And **I would that ye should remember** also, that this is the name that I said I should give unto you
                E that never should be **blotted out**,
                    F except it be through **transgression**;
                        G therefore,
                    F take heed that ye do not **transgress**,
                E that the name be not **blotted out** of your hearts.
            D I say unto you, **I would that ye should remember** to retain the name written always in your hearts,
        C that ye are not found on the **left hand of God**,
    B but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be **called**,
A and also, the **name** by which he shall call you.

Another longer example is illustrated in this summary of Mosiah 2:9-27:

A Purpose of assembly		9
B What is man? "no more than mortal"		10—11
C Laws of Benjamin's kingdom		12—13
D Service "one another"		14—17
E Climax—thank your Heavenly King		18-20
D Service "one with another"		21
C Laws of God's Kingdom		22
B What is man? "no more than dust"		23—26
A Purpose of the assembly		27

Said Welch of this period of discovery during his mission: [1]
> In the next few weeks, I kept finding things, especially as I read on into the book of Alma. My scrawling notes show that I had detected chiastic patterns in Alma 5:39—41; 34:10—14; 40:22—24; and 41:13—15. One realization concerned the highly creative structure in Alma 41:13—15. I read this passage first in German and was a bit disappointed that it looked promising but was not quite perfect. Upon checking the passage in English, however, it became clear that the German translator had unwittingly muddled Alma's carefully constructed chiasm. This made me appreciate all the more the accuracy of Joseph Smith's translation.

Shortly after his mission, he published his findings in BYU Studies. Following his lead, others have continued to look and find chiastic structures in the Book of Mormon, such as some of these identified by Hugh Pinnock:

And the **angel** said unto me
    he is a **holy man**;
        wherefore I know
    he is a **holy man**
Because it was said by an **angel** of God (Alma 10:9).

O the vainness, and the frailties, and the **foolishness** of men!
    When they are **learned** they think they are wise,

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[1] John W. Welch, "The Discovery of Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon: Forty Years Later," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Volume 16, Issue 2, (Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 2007), pages 74-87.

and they **hearken not**
      unto the counsel of God,
   for they **set it aside**,
  supposing they **know** of themselves,
wherefore, their wisdom is **foolishness** and it profiteth them not (2 Nephi 9:28).

Many other chiasms have been found, some short, but in some cases entire chapters like Alma 36.

John Welch has stated: [2] "…chiasmus helps us see the artistry, complexity, creativity, and profundity of the Book of Mormon, and how it helps us interpret the meaning of the text and appreciate the individual personalities of its authors."

Chiasmus is a great example of a characteristic that readily demonstrates the ancient nature of the Book of Mormon text.

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[i] This section relies heavily on a chapter called "King Benjamin's Speech in the Context of Ancient Israelite Festivals" by Terrence L. Szink, and John W. Welch, in the book, *King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom"* (ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch; and "King, Coronation, and Covenant in Mosiah 1-6" by Stephen D. Ricks, in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* (ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne).

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[2] John W. Welch, "The Discovery of Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon: Forty Years Later," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Volume 16, Issue 2, (Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 2007), pages 74-87.