[Page 329][Editor's Note: We are pleased to present the seventh installment from a book entitled *Labor Diligently to Write: The Ancient Making of a Modern Scripture*. It is being presented in serialized form as an aid to help readers prepare for the 2020 *Come Follow Me* course of study. This is a new approach for *Interpreter*, and we hope you find it helpful.]

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Chapter 16: Book of 3 Nephi

3 Nephi I (1–2)

The book of Nephi, son of Nephi, who was the son of Helaman, son of Helaman, who was the son of Alma, son of Alma, and named for Nephi the son of Lehi[350] is the culmination of Mormon's structural art. In this chapter he pulls his various threads together to highlight his essential message. The first structural way in which he indicates this is his message is that this particular book of Nephi was probably never a book on the large plates.[351] Where Mormon has allowed the organization of the large plates to dictate the structure of his own work up to this point, he departs from the model and creates a different type of entry.

The next way in which Mormon indicates this is something new and important comes in the first verse: "Now it came to pass that the ninety and first year had passed away and it was six hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem; and it was in the year that Lachoneus was the chief judge and the governor over the land" (3 Nephi 1:1). We learn [Page 330]several things in this verse. First, the record is still coming from outside the political line. Neither $Nephi_2$ or $Nephi_3$ were part of the government. Telling his readers that Lachoneus is the chief judge not only places the story in its correct political timeline, it emphasizes that it is a story that comes from outside of the political line.

Next, Mormon makes certain the story takes place in the correct Nephite year for prophecy but ties it to the older method of counting. Mormon is telling us this is something that fulfills prophecy, and while it occurs within the dating of the current calendar, it transcends its own time. Mormon foreshadows the coming of the Messiah by noting that it was 600 years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem. He does not tell his readers what this means, apparently assuming they will understand the reference (reinforcing the probability that the prophecy was in and emphasized in the lost book of Lehi). The meticulous counting of years will culminate in fulfilled prophecy in this book.

Finally, Mormon has been pursuing multiple themes as he created his story. The essential religious message has been the redeeming mission of Christ, which will be displayed in dramatic fashion. He has also been telling a tale of Nephite fluctuation between righteousness and apostasy. The themes of excessive pride and the destructiveness of those who apostatize are also emphasized before the signs of Christ's birth, and then after a brief righteous respite, there is a return to full apostasy prior to the signs of Christ's death and his subsequent appearance — a visible atonement after the physical devastation of the land. Of course, Nephites are not destroyed unless the Gadiantons are involved, and Mormon makes certain we know they are the entity responsible for the demise of the Nephite government.

Following the lead of Hollywood movies, we may suggest that 3 Nephi is "based on actual events." Mormon, however, is not content to have the events speak for themselves. He puts words in their mouths, carefully lines them up on the set, and tells the essential story his way, and for his purposes.

Mormon set up the Nephite apostasy at the end of the book of Helaman. At the beginning of the book of 3 Nephi, we have Christ's first redemptive act, one accomplished by his birth in the 92nd year of the reign of the judges: "Now it came to pass that there was a day set apart by the unbelievers, that all those who believed in those traditions should be put to death except the sign should come to pass, which had been given by Samuel the prophet" (3 Nephi 1:9). The threat was death, but Christ provided life by fulfilling the prophecy on the eve of the day set for the believer's execution.

[Page 331]There was a respite for a while, when they "began to have peace in the land" (3 Nephi 1:23). As with all times of continual peace in the Mormon's text, it didn't last long. The very next year (93rd) "did also pass away in peace, save it were for the Gadianton robbers, who dwelt upon the mountains, who did infest the land" (3 Nephi 1:27). The 94th year saw many Nephite dissenters join with the Gadiantons (3 Nephi 1:28). Interestingly, the Lamanites also join with the Gadiantons, but once again, apostate Nephites lead the Lamanites astray: "And there was also a cause of much sorrow among the Lamanites; for behold, they had many children who did grow up and began to wax strong in years, that they became for themselves, and were led away by some who were Zoramites, by their lyings and their flattering words, to join those Gadianton robbers" (3 Nephi 1:29).

Mormon records a shift in the way the Nephites recorded time in 3 Nephi 2:8 when "the Nephites began to reckon their time from this period when the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ."[352] The rest of the chapter describes the increasing tensions with the Gadiantons and the eventual breakout of war.

This chapter does not end with any of the typical markers of Mormon's chapters. There is no date that closes it. There is no sermon with an *Amen*. There is nothing that appears to have created the need to end the chapter, save that the next chapter will begin with Mormon quoting a letter that Lachoneus, the chief judge, received from the leader of the Gadiantons, Giddianhi. It would appear that Mormon used that event and quoted letter as a beginning, and that decision necessarily required that this chapter end before the discussion of the letter.

3 Nephi II (3–5)

Chapter II (3–5) opens with a quoted letter from the leader of the Gadiantons to Lachoneus. It is followed by the letter Lachoneous writes to Giddianhi. As with the letters between Captain Moroni and Pahoran (Alma 60–61), these letters might have been kept on their original perishable medium. However, it is also possible they were included on the large plates. This suggests that while Mormon is creating his own book of Nephi, he nevertheless consults the large plates for this, even though we [Page 332]cannot know the name of the book from which he took

the information.[353] Perhaps the physical requirement of returning to the large plate source influenced the beginning of the chapter with the information taken from the large plates. Although Mormon typically notes when he uses a different source, he does not mark the return to the large plates.

Much of the chapter is taken up with the Gadianton war. The Nephites are not only victorious, but Mormon also makes certain to declare they were victorious through their righteousness. As a result of the war:

> … there was not a living soul among all the people of the Nephites who did doubt in the least the words of all the holy prophets who had spoken; for they knew that it must needs be that they must be fulfilled.
>
> And they knew that it must be expedient that Christ had come, because of the many signs which had been given, according to the words of the prophets; and because of the things which had come to pass already they knew that it must needs be that all things should come to pass according to that which had been spoken.
>
> Therefore they did forsake all their sins, and their abominations, and their whoredoms, and did serve God with all diligence day and night. (3 Nephi 5:1–3)

Mormon intended to close this chapter on the high note of the Nephite victory over the Gadiantons, and by extension, over evil influences. As he finishes with the basics of the war, he counts off years: "And thus had the twenty and second year passed away, and the twenty and third year also, and the twenty and fourth, and the twenty and fifth; and thus had twenty and five years passed away" (3 Nephi 5:7). Perhaps the proliferation of years, and particularly the noting of empty years, is an indication that he is consulting the large plates for this information.

The next chapter (III, 6–7) begins on the 26th year (3 Nephi 8:1). I suggest that Mormon hit the five-year marker and paused. I further suspect that the five-year marker would have created the end of the chapter in any case, but it also triggered both an aside where Mormon [Page 333]looks at the purpose for which he has been writing, and perhaps looking forward to chapter IV (8–10) when Christ will appear.

Mormon reiterates that "this book cannot contain even a hundredth part" of the record (3 Nephi 5:8). That is a statement that is associated with Mormon's author-time insertions (see the section on Narrator-voice and Author-voice in Part 1), and it signals one here as well.

> But behold there are records which do contain all the proceedings of this people; and a shorter but true account was given by Nephi.
>
> Therefore I have made my record of these things according to the record of Nephi, which was engraven on the plates which were called the plates of Nephi. (3 Nephi 5:9–10)

Thinking of the inability to write all of the available details, Mormon notes that "there are records which do contain all the proceedings of this people." He notes that he is not using the greater account, but the "shorter but true account" of $Nephi_3$. Given the evidence of both the wars and contentions and the marking of the years, it appears that Mormon has consulted the large plates, which would typically fit the description of the records on which there are more details. I suggest that Mormon is looking forward here to the record of Christ's visit rather than back to the historical information he has just written. The "shorter but true account" is a comment that best fits his desire for a testimony of the Savior's appearance in Bountiful: hence the description that it is a "true account," not suggesting that the other account is untrue.

Does the suggestion that Mormon "therefore… made my record of these things according to the record of Nephi, which was engraven on the plates which were called the plates of Nephi" mean that he took them from the large

plates? That would seem to be contradicted by his statement that he was, rather, using the "shorter but true account." The solution is the problem of naming that began with $Nephi_1$, son of $Lehi_1$. $Nephi_1$ wrote two records, both called "plates of Nephi." It would appear that in this case, there was also a separate record written by $Nephi_3$ also called the "plates of Nephi(3)," indicating a book that was on plates, but not on the large plates — or perhaps later copied on to the large plates.

> And behold, I do make the record on plates which I have made with mine own hands. (3 Nephi 5:11)

The mention of plates completes Mormon's transition from narrator-?voice to author-voice. Mormon's thought processes are now [Page 334]firmly fixed on his own task and the reasons he is writing this story on plates he made with his own hands.

> And behold, I am called Mormon, being called after the land of Mormon, the land in which Alma did establish the church among the people, yea, the first church which was established among them after their transgression.
>
> Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life. (3 Nephi 5:12–13)

In our current Book of Mormon, this is our introduction to the man Mormon, who is creating the work we are reading. As I noted in what must have been on the lost 116 pages, there must have been some early introduction to Mormon that laid out who he was and what he was doing. In this case, it is a different type of introduction. Coming at the end of the section describing the righteous Nephites who believed in Christ and approaching the time when Mormon will describe the Savior's appearance in Bountiful, this becomes an introduction of Mormon as "a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Mormon indicates that he is named for the land of Mormon, which links him explicitly to "the first church which was established" among the Nephites. This connection to an antiquity of the gospel tradition will be reinforced later when Mormon declares that he is "a pure descendant of Lehi" (3 Nephi 5:20).

> And it hath become expedient that I, according to the will of God, that the prayers of those who have gone hence, who were the holy ones, should be fulfilled according to their faith, should make a record of these things which have been done—
>
> Yea, a small record of that which hath taken place from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, even down until the present time.
>
> Therefore I do make my record from the accounts which have been given by those who were before me, until the commencement of my day;
>
> And then I do make a record of the things which I have seen with mine own eyes. (3 Nephi 5:14–17)

Mormon is at the end of a long line or righteous recordkeepers. He ties his work to theirs by indicating that he (Mormon) writes not only "according to the will of God," but also to "the prayers of those who have gone hence, who were the holy ones." Mormon indicates that he was commanded to write the small account of the long Nephite history [Page 335]from Lehi to Mormon's own day. To do so, he made his record from the historical accounts to which he will add the things he himself has seen (which are recorded in the book of Mormon).

> And I know the record which I make to be a just and a true record; nevertheless there are many things which, according to our language, we are not able to write.
>
> And now I make an end of my saying, which is of myself, and proceed to give my account of the things which have been before me. (3 Nephi 5:18–19)

Mormon assures his readers that he has created a "just and true record." When he indicates that he makes "and end of my saying, which is of myself," he means this aside. He then intends to return to writing of "the things which have been before me," indicating events in time and or the records physically present before him.

> I am Mormon, and a pure descendant of Lehi. I have reason to bless my God and my Savior Jesus Christ, that he brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem, (and no one knew it save it were himself and those whom he brought out of that land) and that he hath given me and my people so much knowledge unto the salvation of our souls. (3 Nephi 5:20)

Although he intended to return to history, he doesn't. He is still in the mode of reflecting on his current task of writing rather than on the time about which he has been writing. The reference to being a "pure descendant of Lehi" is interesting from a genealogical/historical viewpoint. Perhaps he could have traced descendance through one thousand years, but even if he could not, the function of the statement is to tie him to Lehi. Just as he tied himself to the first church in the land of Mormon, he ties his presence at the end of the Nephites to the beginning of the Nephites. He testifies that Yahweh was there at the beginning and has been with the Nephites whenever they righteously followed his teachings.

> Surely he hath blessed the house of Jacob, and hath been merciful unto the seed of Joseph.
>
> And insomuch as the children of Lehi have kept his commandments he hath blessed them and prospered them according to his word.
>
> Yea, and surely shall he again bring a remnant of the seed of Joseph to the knowledge of the Lord their God.
>
> [Page 336]And as surely as the Lord liveth, will he gather in from the four quarters of the earth all the remnant of the seed of Jacob, who are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth.
>
> And as he hath covenanted with all the house of Jacob, even so shall the covenant wherewith he hath covenanted with the house of Jacob be fulfilled in his own due time, unto the restoring all the house of Jacob unto the knowledge of the covenant that he hath covenanted with them.
>
> And then shall they know their Redeemer, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and then shall they be gathered in from the four quarters of the earth unto their own lands, from whence they have been dispersed; yea, as the Lord liveth so shall it be. Amen. (3 Nephi 5:21–26)

Standing at the end of the Nephite nation, Mormon returns to the promise that separation from the house of Jacob would not be permanent. Yahweh would return the righteous to the house of Jacob from the four corners. Mormon testifies that one of the functions of his writing is to help with that spiritual gathering of Yahweh's children back into their rightful inheritance.

3 Nephi III (6–7)

The chapter begins in the 26th year with the Nephites returning to their lands. As noted for the previous chapter, the end of the 25th year is probably an intended chapter break. When Mormon had no other reason to break, he used five-year increments. However, this new chapter is also required because of the testificatory *Amen* which ended the previous chapter.

The marking of the years suggests and the more secular nature of the content confirms that Mormon took this information from the large plates. However, it is a different process than what we have previously seen, as I believe that the book of Nephi (son of Helaman$_3$) was not a large-plate book. It was created as a named book expressly to cover the important information about the arrival of the expected Messiah, Yahweh, who comes to earth. Mormon's symbolic history has the destruction of a righteous people preceding the arrival of the Messiah. It happened prior to Christ's birth as well as prior to Christ's appearance in Bountiful. Although also secular history, it is told here — and marked off from the secular account here — to place it in its sacred location as part of the conditions for the coming of the Messiah.

[Page 337]This time, the destruction is complete: "And the people were divided one against another; and they did separate one from another into tribes, every man according to his family and his kindred and friends; and thus they did destroy the government of the land" (3 Nephi 7:2). The final half of the chapter begins the preparation for the coming of the Savior with Nephi$_3$ preparing those who would listen.

The book doesn't end with any typical marker. This chapter ends not because something inside the text or some external year required it to end. It ended so the next chapter could begin and could be a unified whole.

3 Nephi IV (8–10)

Even if Mormon took the years and some general events from the large plate record prior to this chapter, he clearly notifies his readers that this chapter is due to the author of the "shorter but true account" (3 Nephi 5:9). Although Mormon does not explicitly name him, we understand it was Nephi$_3$'s personal record: "And now it came to pass that according to our record, and we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man who did keep the record — for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus; and there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity" (3 Nephi 8:1). This is further underscored when Nephi$_3$ is the subject of the end of the previous chapter.

The chapter begins with the terrible destructions at the time of Christ's death in the Old World. It ends with Yahweh declaring "I am Jesus Christ the Son of God" (3 Nephi 9:15), along with other declarations that Yahweh makes from the heavens.

Mormon ends the chapter with his own testimony of what occurred, and what will occur in the next chapter:

> And now, whoso readeth, let him understand; he that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see and behold if all these deaths and destructions by fire, and by smoke, and by tempests, and by whirlwinds, and by the opening of the earth to receive them, and all these things are not unto the fulfilling of the prophecies of many of the holy prophets.
>
> Behold, I say unto you, Yea, many have testified of these things at the coming of Christ, and were slain because they testified of these things.
>
> Yea, the prophet Zenos did testify of these things, and also Zenock spake concerning these things, because they testified particularly concerning us, who are the remnant of their seed.
>
> [Page 338]Behold, our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph. And

> behold, are not we a remnant of the seed of Joseph? And these things which testify of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem?
>
> And it came to pass that in the ending of the thirty and fourth year, behold, I will show unto you that the people of Nephi who were spared, and also those who had been called Lamanites, who had been spared, did have great favors shown unto them, and great blessings poured out upon their heads, insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them—
>
> Showing his body unto them, and ministering unto them; and an account of his ministry shall be given hereafter. Therefore for this time I make an end of my sayings. (3 Nephi 10:14–19)

Mormon makes certain his readers understand that what he had described and the event to come were the fulfillment of prophecy. The chapter ends with the declaration that he was ending his sayings. This does not mean he is not going to narrate the next chapter but that this author-voice has ended, and he returns to narrator-voice.

3 Nephi V (11–13:24)

Mormon is taking this account from the personal, non-large-plate account of $Nephi_3$. He will certainly be copying when we see him record Christ's words, but at this point he is generating the narrative (confirmed with the third-person "Nephi" in 3 Nephi 11:18). We also see a designation of the "people of Nephi" both in the first verse and in the header. As I suggested in the section on Mormon's subtle manipulation of names, I believe this is a new people named for $Nephi_3$ but where Mormon has intentionally used the name Nephi to tie the first beginning with this new beginning. It also ties the original people of Nephi to their spiritual progeny, who are also called the people of Nephi to demonstrate the continuation of the religious inheritance.

In this chapter, the God of the Nephites, Yahweh, fulfills the promise to personally descend from heaven to earth:

> For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied [Page 339]ever since the world began — have they not spoken more or less concerning these things?
>
> Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth? (Mosiah 13:33–34)

The essential teaching in the New World, as in the Old, is the explanation of the shift from the law of Moses to the law of Christ. The best expression of that in the New Testament is found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, and that teaching is repeated here, clearly replicating the majority of what is found in the Matthean version of the sermon.

The chapter ends in the middle of the record from Matthew 6. After the statement that "ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24, 3 Nephi 11:24), there is a chapter ending in Mormon's text that does not occur in Matthew. The chapter ends in the Book of Mormon because there is a shift in audience. The words to one group end at the end of chapter V (3 Nephi 11–13:24). The new chapter will have Christ addressing a different audience, a point not clear in Matthew 6.

The book of 3 Nephi has several examples of Orson Pratt's changes to match Book of Mormon chapters more closely to the Bible's when they clearly overlapped. Although Orson typically kept chapter beginnings and endings intact, he split the larger chapters into smaller ones when he needed to match the chapters from the Bible. Sometimes, that process required him to create a new chapter in the middle of the original one. We see this first in 3 Nephi with chapter V (3 Nephi 11–13:24); it will occur again.

3 Nephi VI (13:25–14)

The beginning of the chapter is:

> *And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and said unto them: Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people.* Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? (3 Nephi 13:25)

The italicized text is the only difference creating the chapter division in what otherwise is a continued recounting of the Matthean text. The focus shifts from the general body to the specific chosen twelve. There is no similar chapter division when the focus returns to the larger body: "And now it [Page 340]came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he turned again to the multitude, and did open his mouth unto them again, saying: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Judge not, that ye be not judged" (3 Nephi 14:1). When the quotation of Christ's words ends, the chapter ends.

3 Nephi VII (15–16)

The chapter division is between quoted material and a return to narrative. Consistent with Mormon's typical editing pattern, the end of a quotation ends a chapter, and narration picks up in the new chapter. That was not the model from Matthew. The end of the chapter corresponds with the end of Matthew's quotation of Christ's sermon. Matthew chapter 7 ends: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28–29). That was added by the Matthean narrator. In Matthew, narration continued after the quotation, whereas Mormon used that conceptual division to create a new chapter. Thus, while the English text is clearly modeled on Matthew, the chapter construction is not.

Early in this chapter, the narrator says: "And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he said unto those twelve whom he had chosen" (3 Nephi 15:11). When Mormon copies heavily from a private record, as he did with $Alma_2$, there are times when he appears to copy the narration from the original author. It is probable that we have that condition here. The narrator of this short statement is likely $Nephi_3$ rather than Mormon. More interestingly, this is a shift in focus away from the general population and toward the twelve, the very same shift in focus that created the division between chapters V (3 Nephi 11–13:24) and VI (3 Nephi 13:25–14). Where that shift created a chapter break, this one does not.

Perhaps one of the reasons there is no chapter break is that while we do have Christ's words, it is not Christ quoting his words. The sections that recall the Matthean sermon so precisely are treated as quotations, where the material Christ speaks to the Nephites that does not find parallel in the Matthean text is not treated as a quotation of outside material. Perhaps that distinction is reflected in the statement at the beginning of this chapter: "Behold, ye have heard the things which I taught before I ascended to my Father" (3 Nephi 15:1). Christ himself indicated that he had been quoting an outside source — not Matthew, but himself in another context. Christ's appearance as a resurrected mortal underscored the longtime understanding that the Nephites had been separated from the house of Israel in the Old World. By quoting what he [Page 341]said in the Old World, Christ is reiterating their essential equality with the saints in the Old World.

At the end of this chapter, Christ specifically quotes Isaiah 52:8–10. At the end of that quotation, the chapter ends.

3 Nephi VIII (17–18)

The previous chapter ended with a quotation. As with similar situations, Mormon attached what might have been the concluding narrative onto the beginning of the next chapter. Chapter VIII (17–18) begins when what Christ did after quoting Isaiah. It was clearly what Christ had intended to be the end of that day's sermon:

> Behold, now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he looked round about again on the multitude, and he said unto them: Behold, my time is at hand.
>
> I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time.
>
> Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.
>
> But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for he knoweth whither he hath taken them. (3 Nephi 17:1–4)

It was the people who changed that plan. The end of the chapter occurs when this intended ascension to the Father finally occurs: "And while they were overshadowed he departed from them, and ascended into heaven. And the disciples saw and did bear record that he ascended again into heaven" (3 Nephi 18:39).

3 Nephi IX (19:1–21:21)

One of the important changes to the nature of chapter changes in 3 Nephi is the number of times events create the chapters rather than some structural principle. This is likely due to the fact that so much of the book is spent on three days of Christ's visit. That event is sometimes broken on structural events, but at times it is at natural event-based breaking points. The ascension of the Savior to heaven at the end of the previous book and the aftermath among the people is one such event-?based division. Even [Page 342]though event-based, the division still looks to a particularly final event (in this case Christ's ascension), and details of the immediate aftermath are at the beginning of the next chapter. One might think the end of the day might have been the cause, but the chapter ending was related to something more important than the mundane waning of the day.

One verse in this chapter alludes to information that must have been available on either the large plates or upon $Nephi_3$'s personal record in a section Mormon did not use. Mormon records: "And it came to pass that on the morrow, when the multitude was gathered together, behold, Nephi and *his brother whom he had raised from the dead, whose name was Timothy*, and also his son, whose name was Jonas, and also Mathoni, and Mathonihah, his brother, and Kumen, and Kumenonhi, and Jeremiah, and Shemnon, and Jonas, and Zedekiah, and Isaiah — now these were the names of the disciples whom Jesus had chosen — and it came to pass that they went forth and stood in the midst of the multitude" (3 Nephi 19:4).

This is the only mention of Timothy or of any of the rest of the listed names. The issue is that the mention of this incident suggests it was available history. However, it is not included elsewhere in Mormon's text. Thus, it appears that Mormon makes mention of it here because Timothy is among the chosen disciples even though it wasn't an event he cared to describe. This has implications for the story of Aminadi, who interpreted the writing on the wall (Alma 10:2). That was also a unique reference and, parallel to this verse, may not have implied the story had been previously told.

I analyzed the ending of this chapter as one of the anomalous chapter breaks in Part 1. I suggest it represents a chapter break copied from $Nephi_3$'s original document rather than representing one Mormon added.

3 Nephi X (21:22–23:13)

Whether entered by $Nephi_3$ or Mormon, the chapter ended with the end of the quotation from Micah (see the discussion in the section on the Anomalous Chapter Endings in Part 1). The beginning of chapter X (3 Nephi 21:22–23:13) continues the theme of the future of the house of Israel. The beginning of this chapter is the antithetical parallel to 3 Nephi 21:20. That verse notes: "For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel" (3 Nephi 21:20). This is contrasted at the beginning of this chapter with: "But if they will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come [Page 343]in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance" (3 Nephi 21:22).

The Savior quotes from Isaiah 54, which Orson Pratt separated into a different chapter to have it align with the structure of the chapter in the Bible. Unlike many other internal quotations, the ending of the quotation does not end this chapter. Again, I suggest this indicates the chapter division is being copied from the original source and is not of Mormon's creation. Perhaps the reason there is no chapter break is that the next speaker is the Savior himself, saying: "And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah" (3 Nephi 23:1).

The end of the chapter is event-based. The recorded incident is Christ's review of the Nephite scriptures. The fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy that many would rise from their graves had not been written, and the Savior "commanded that it should be written, therefore, it was written according as He commanded" (3 Nephi 23:13).

The statement that "it was written according as He commanded" serves as the end of the incident. The next event begins in the next chapter, although Orson Pratt moved the first verse of the next chapter to the end of 3 Nephi 23, probably to more completely set off the quotation of Malachi.

3 Nephi XI (23:14–26:5)

This chapter has narrative that bookends the quotation of Malachi chapters 3 and 4. The bookend narrative emphasizes the value of the scriptures, which is intended to include the citations of Micah and Malachi which were unavailable on previous Nephite records, but which were commanded to be written onto the records:

> And now it came to pass that when Jesus had expounded all the scriptures in one, which they had written, he commanded them that they should teach the things which he had expounded unto them.
>
> And it came to pass that he commanded them that they should write the words which the Father had given unto Malachi, which he should tell unto them. And it came to pass that after they were written he expounded them. And these are the words which he did tell unto them, saying
> (3 Nephi 23:14–24:1)

Chapters 3 and 4 of Malachi are written into the text.

> [Page 344]And now it came to pass that when Jesus had told these things he expounded them unto the multitude; and he did expound all things unto them, both great and small.
>
> And he saith: These scriptures, which ye had not with you, the Father commanded that I should give unto you; for it was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations.
> (3 Nephi 26:1–2)

The chapter ends with Christ expounding "all things, even from the beginning until the time that He should come in his glory" (3 Nephi 26:3). The chapter ends because Mormon realized that he intended to create an author-voice aside. Rather than include it as an interruption, he closed the chapter, and begins the next chapter with the aside.

3 Nephi XII (26:6–27:22)

Mormon begins this chapter with an author-voice aside triggered by what he has been recording:

> And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people;
>
> But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people.
>
> And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken. (3 Nephi 26:6–8)

As noted, the declaration that "there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part" is typically part of an "I, Mormon" insertion. We have that declaration of the author in 3 Nephi 26:12: "Therefore, I Mormon, do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord." Another typical element of the "I, Mormon" insertions is a mention of the plates upon which he was writing, and something about the task he was about:

> But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people.
>
> And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to [Page 345]the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.
>
> And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.
>
> And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.
>
> Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people. (3 Nephi 26:7–11)

This insertion also likely signals that Mormon is returning to narrative mode rather than copying directly from $Nephi_3$'s record.

The end of the chapter appears to be event-driven, but there is not a clear reason for the break between chapters. Mormon is copying Christ's words, and although he was creating the narrative that led up to the copying, perhaps the chapter break was on the original and Mormon copied it along with Christ's words. The next chapter also begins with copied words of Christ, which may support this hypothesis.

3 Nephi XIII (27:23–29:9)

Christ continues to be interested in the keeping of the records. The chapter begins:

> Write the things which ye have seen and heard, save it be those which are forbidden.
>
> Write the works of this people, which shall be, even as hath been written, of that which hath been.
>
> For behold, out of the books which have been written, and which shall be written, shall this people be judged, for by them shall their works be known unto men. (3 Nephi 27:23–25)

Christ's final act was to fulfill the hearts' wish of the disciples: "he touched every one of them with his finger save it were the three who were to tarry, and then he departed" (3 Nephi 28:12). Mormon ends the history he is recording with a fast summary of what happened with these disciples (3 Nephi 28:13–23). It is unclear from which source Mormon took this synopsis. It might have been the personal record of $Nephi_3$, or perhaps this information was on the large plates. Mormon does not [Page 346]make it clear. What is clear is that Mormon is finished with the most important part of his record, the presence of Yahweh/Christ among the Nephites. The summary of the miracles and missionary successes of the disciples is designed to lead into the events Mormon will record in 4 Nephi. Before he moves to the new book, however, he inserts himself again in his author-voice: "And now I, Mormon, make and end of speaking concerning these things for a time" (3 Nephi 28: 24).

From that initial insertion to the end of the chapter, we have Mormon speaking in author-voice. At the end of his most important book, Mormon gives his feelings about what he has written. Remembering that Mormon declared he was "a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (3 Nephi 13), this becomes an apostolic testimony not only of Christ but of the importance of Christ's gospel to all humankind.

I suspect the end of the chapter was created by Mormon's intent for the final chapter of this most important record. He had already given much of his feelings for the importance of Christ, but in the next chapter he provides a direct prophetic testimony to his readers.

3 Nephi XIV (30)

The entirety of the chapter (2 verses, 130 words) is Mormon's witness to the future. It encapsulates his intent for writing his entire work: "That he may be numbered with my people which are the house of Israel" (3 Nephi 30:2).

[Page 347]Chapter 17: Book of 4 Nephi

The book of 4 Nephi returns to the structure typical of the large plate records. In the first verse we have: "And it came to pass that the thirty and fourth year passed away, and also the thirty and fifth, and behold the disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ in all the lands round about" (4 Nephi 1:1). There are more years per verse than in any other book — 29 years are specifically mentioned.[354] Time races through 4 Nephi — often with empty years (4 Nephi 1:6, 14).

Mormon does tell us there is a book of Nephi on the large plates: "And it came to pass that Amos died also, (and it was an hundred and ninety and four years from the coming of Christ) and his son Amos kept the record in his stead; and he also kept it upon the plates of Nephi; and it was also written in the book of Nephi, which is this book" (4 Nephi 1:21). There are two records indicated, the "plates of Nephi," and "the book of Nephi, which is this book." The structure of the large plates continues after the re-formation of the people of Nephi after Christ's appearance. There is a "plates of Nephi," meaning the overall record. Recorded on those plates and as part of the larger record-keeping tradition is a specific book named for Nephi. As I have noted, I believe this was the large plate record of $Nephi_3$ who became ruler of the people after Christ's visit. I also suggest that the people were renamed "the people of Nephi" specifically to provide continuation.

Mormon manipulates time in 4 Nephi as he transforms his large plate source into his desired summation of the time between Christ's appearance and Mormon's own eponymous book. Where Mormon has previously shown a tendency to follow five-year markers if there were no other reasons for dividing chapters, there is only one

chapter in 4 Nephi. In the first 100 years, Mormon only marks a five-year period one time, the thirty-fifth year. That happens in the very first verse. From that point to the 100-year mark, there are no listed years which can be fit into multiples of five years. Mormon notes the years 39 and 41 but skips the 40th year. He marks years 49 and 51 but not 50. There is no 60, 78, 80, nor 90.

This changes dramatically after the 100-year mark. After the year 100, ten of the 14 listed years are divisible by five. I suggest that given the empty years and the repeating pattern of empty years, that Mormon is using the years to divide a spiritual history from the developing recorded history.

The 100th year is an important benchmark in the Nephite spiritual history:

> [Page 348]even an hundred years had passed away, and the disciples of Jesus, whom he had chosen, had all gone to the paradise of God, save it were the three who should tarry; and there were other disciples ordained in their stead; and also many of that generation had passed away.[355]
>
> And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. (4 Nephi 1:14–15)

The disciples who had known Christ are all gone by the 100th year. Nevertheless, righteousness continues. Then, in the 200th year:

> And it came to pass that two hundred years had passed away; and the second generation had all passed away save it were a few.
>
> And now I, Mormon, would that ye should know that the people had multiplied, insomuch that they were spread upon all the face of the land, and that they had become exceedingly rich, because of their prosperity in Christ.
>
> And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.
>
> And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them.
>
> And they began to be divided into classes; and they began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain, and began to deny the true church of Christ. (4 Nephi 1:22–26)

This “I, Mormon” insertion does not follow the typical “I, Mormon” pattern. We have Mormon’s author-voice, but nothing about the plates or his writing process. I suggest this is because he is barely consulting the source material. The book of 4 Nephi is what Mormon wants his readers to understand of a long period, and he is paying much less attention to history than he has in any other book. Thus he didn’t need to speak of [Page 349]what he is doing while writing because the entirety of the book is due to his specific desire to set up his own history.

In 3 Nephi, Mormon speaks briefly of the lives of the disciples after Christ’s departure:

> But this much I know, according to the record which hath been given — they did go forth upon the face of the land, and did minister unto all the people, uniting as many to the church as would believe in their preaching; baptizing them, and as many as were baptized did receive the Holy Ghost.

> And they were cast into prison by them who did not belong to the church. And the *prisons could not hold them*, for they were rent in twain.
>
> And they were cast down into the earth; but they did smite the earth with the word of God, insomuch that by his power they were delivered out of the depths of the earth; and therefore they could not dig pits sufficient to hold them.
>
> And thrice they were *cast into a furnace* and received no harm.
>
> And twice were they cast into a *den of wild beasts*; and behold they did *play with the beasts as a child with a suckling lamb*, and received no harm.
>
> And it came to pass that thus they did go forth among all the people of Nephi, and did preach the gospel of Christ unto all people upon the face of the land; and they were converted unto the Lord, and were united unto the church of Christ, and thus the people of that generation were blessed, according to the word of Jesus. (3 Nephi 28:18–23)

In 3 Nephi, these verses appear to apply to all the disciples, and their preaching sets the stage for the generally righteous Nephites we see early in 4 Nephi.

Then, in 4 Nephi, *after* all the disciples save the three have died:

> And again, there was another church which denied the Christ; and they did persecute the true church of Christ, because of their humility and their belief in Christ; and they did despise them because of the many miracles which were wrought among them.
>
> Therefore they did exercise power and authority over the disciples of Jesus who did tarry with them, and they *did cast them into prison*; but by the power of the word of God, which [Page 350]was in them, the prisons were rent in twain, and they went forth doing mighty miracles among them.
>
> Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all these miracles, the people did harden their hearts, and did seek to kill them, even as the Jews at Jerusalem sought to kill Jesus, according to his word.
>
> And they did *cast them into furnaces of fire*, and they came forth receiving no harm.
>
> And they also cast them into *dens of wild beasts*, and they did *play with the wild beasts even as a child with a lamb*; and they did come forth from among them, receiving no harm.
>
> Nevertheless, the people did harden their hearts, for they were led by many priests and false prophets to build up many churches, and to do all manner of iniquity. And they did smite upon the people of Jesus; but the people of Jesus did not smite again. And thus they did dwindle in unbelief and wickedness, from year to year, even until two hundred and thirty years had passed away.
>
> And now it came to pass in this year, yea, in the two hundred and thirty and first year, there was a great division among the people. (4 Nephi 1:29–35)

The italicized phrases indicate the repeated events, which repeat in the same order. This suggests that Mormon took the events from a record but that he is using them for his own interests. It also highlights that the events listed for the end of 3 Nephi were not included in the record from which he took 3 Nephi, as they occurred long after Nephi_3 had died.

The critical turning point is the year 200 (4 Nephi 1:22). Whereas righteousness had prevailed until that time, the

Nephites immediately begin to fall away at this important half-baktun, 200-year period.

It is difficult to fit some of the history of 4 Nephi into a reasonable historical framework. The text covers nearly 300 years but mentions only four recordkeepers. One of them, Ammaron, is the previous recordkeeper's brother, not his son. That gives each of the named people a remarkably long life. It is made much longer if the Nephi of 4 Nephi is $Nephi_3$, as I have suggested.

$Nephi_3$'s death comes in the year 110, which would be incredibly long.[356] However, it isn't much longer than the other disciples who die after the year [Page 351]100 (4 Nephi 1:14). The timing continues to be problematic when $Nephi_3$'s son $Amos_1$ keeps the record for 84 years.[357] If we use Mormon's age when he took of the task of record-keeping at 24 (Mormon 1:3), then $Amos_1$ was aged, indeed. His son $Amos_2$,kept the records 111 years before he died and gave them to Ammaron (in the 305th year, 4 Nephi 1:47).[358] In contrast to the longevity of $Amos_1$ and $Amos_2$, Ammaron kept them for only 15 years. It appears Mormon wrote the history to correlate the remarkable time of righteousness with extended lives. Mormon is fitting people into a pattern rather than worrying about the confines of secular history.

It is possible part of Mormon's manipulation deals with the four centuries from the birth of Christ. Mormon lists four record-keepers, symbolically one for each of the centuries, although he does not line them up so precisely. Since the numbers do not appear to reflect a historical reality, a conceptual combination of the number of recordkeepers and the specific years assigned to them may have all worked to Mormon's designs for the book of Nephi, who is the son of Nephi — one of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Another possible manipulation of years occurs with the 231st year:

> And now it came to pass in this year, yea, in the two hundred and thirty and first year, there was a great division among the people.
>
> And it came to pass that in this year there arose a people who were called the Nephites, and they were true believers in Christ; and among them there were those who were called by the Lamanites — Jacobites, and Josephites, and Zoramites; (4 Nephi 1:35–36)

This is precisely 200 years after a similar dissolution of the Nephite people: "And it came to pass in the thirty and first year that they were divided into tribes, every man according to his family, kindred and friends" (3 Nephi 7:14). Having precisely 200 years between the two breakdowns into tribes is too coincidental to not have been specifically manipulated.

[Page 352]The book of 4 Nephi ends with Ammaron's hiding the records. This is the event that will lead Ammaron to seek Mormon, the story which begins Mormon's eponymous book.

[Page 353]Chapter 18: Book of Mormon

Mormon I (1–3)

When Mormon begins his book of Mormon, he is no longer consulting a record. He doesn't need to, as he is the source. This is an autobiography, but it begins with the declaration of the author and his ability to accurately portray the information: "And now I, Mormon, make a record of the things which I have both seen and heard, and call it the Book of Mormon" (Mormon 1:1).

The chapter ends with an address to his audience. In the main body of his work, this would be considered an author-voice insertion, but since Mormon is writing all this in his own lifetime, it is an intentional shift from immediate past to distant future: "therefore I write unto you, Gentiles" (Mormon 3:17). The chapter ends with the

end of his purpose for writing, that “I could persuade all ye ends of the earth to repent and prepare to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ’ (Mormon 3:22).

Mormon writes three chapters. In each, he begins with history and ends with an exhortation to his future audience.

Mormon II (4–5)

Opening his second chapter, Mormon returns to the model of years. These events occur in the 363rd year. It is possible Mormon kept the more formal large-plate version of Nephite history, and refers to it in order to associate the years with the events. It is certain he would remember the events but may or may not have remembered the years with precision. Marking the years suggests he at least consulted a record created more contemporaneously with the past events.

As with the first chapter, Mormon ends this chapter addressing his future audience, beginning in Mormon 5:8 “And now behold, I, Mormon, do not desire to harrow up the souls of men in casting before them such an awful scene of blood and carnage as was laid before mine eyes; but I, knowing that these things must surely be made known, and that all things which are hid must be revealed upon the house-tops.”

The ending statement in chapter II (Mormon 4–5) repeats the theme of the need of the Gentiles (Mormon 5:22) to repent from chapter I (Mormon 1–3): “Therefore, repent ye, and humble yourselves before him, lest he shall come out in justice against you — lest a remnant of the seed of Jacob shall go forth among you as a lion, and tear you in pieces, and there is none to deliver” (Mormon 5:24).

[Page 354]Mormon III (6–7)

Mormon picks up the story of the end of his people after the events in Mormon 5:7 when the only Nephites who survived escaped faster than the Lamanites could pursue. This is Mormon’s last chapter: “and now I finish my record concerning the destruction of my people, the Nephites” (Mormon 6:1). After finishing the story of the destruction, Mormon writes his poignant reaction:

> O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you!
>
> Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I mourn your loss.
>
> O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen!
>
> But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return.
>
> And the day soon cometh that your mortal must put on immortality, and these bodies which are now moldering in corruption must soon become incorruptible bodies; and then ye must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to be judged according to your works; and if it so be that ye are righteous, then are ye blessed with your fathers who have gone before you.
>
> O that ye had repented before this great destruction had come upon you. But behold, ye are gone, and the Father, yea, the Eternal Father of heaven, knoweth your state; and he doeth with you according to his justice and mercy. (Mormon 6:17–22)

Immediately after this lament for the lost Nephites, Mormon turns to his future audience: “And now, behold, I would speak somewhat unto the remnant of this people who are spared, if it so be that God may give unto them

my words, that they may know of the things of their fathers; yea, I speak unto you, ye remnant of the house of Israel; and these are the words which I speak" (Mormon 7:1). The shift in audience provided Orson Pratt with the conceptual division to create a new chapter for this final admonition. For Mormon, his final words hinged on the sadness for [Page 355]what was lost and the hope that salvation might yet come for those who remained, the "remnant of this people who are spared" (Mormon 7:1).

Mormon understands that in addition to his record, the remnant of his people will receive the Bible from the Gentiles (Mormon 7:8). He finishes his record linking the two testimonies of Christ:

> For behold, this is written for the intent that ye may believe that; and if ye believe that ye will believe this also; and if ye believe this ye will know concerning your fathers, and also the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God among them.
>
> And ye will also know that ye are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; therefore ye are numbered among the people of the first covenant; and if it so be that ye believe in Christ, and are baptized, first with water, then with fire, and with the Holy Ghost, following the example of our Savior, according to that which he hath commanded us, it shall be well with you in the day of judgment. Amen.
> (Mormon 7:9–10)

The phrase "this is written" indicates the Book of Mormon. The phrase "that ye may believe that" refers to the Bible. Believing the Book of Mormon strengthens the belief in the Bible. Believing the Bible can strengthen the understanding of the Book of Mormon.

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350. I am rephrasing the title and the header, which I suggest was the original title. See the section on “Mormon’s Named Books and Sources” in Part 1.
351. Discussed in the section on “Mormon’s Named Books and Sources.”
352. Mark A. Wright noticed that the Nephites continued to use the reign of the judges as the basis for their calendar until they arrived at a full 100 years. Only then did they change their calendar, and then it was backdated to the time of the signs of Christ’s birth. Dr. Wright has a publication pending that elaborates on this topic.
353. Based on the discernible tradition, it should have been named for the political dynasty begun with $Nephi_2$’s abdication. That would suggest a book of Cezoram (see Helaman 5:1). However, the plates of Nephi remained with $Nephi_2$ and his son, $Nephi_3$. That might then suggest that $Nephi_3$ continued to keep the record in the book of Helaman. That would suggest that when Mormon indicated that the book of Helaman had ended, that it was intended to be Mormon’s end of the use of that record and not the termination of the information in the record.
354. The years listed are: 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 49, 51, 52, 59, 71, 72, 79, 100, 110, 194, 200, 201, 230, 231, 244, 250, 260, 300, 305, 320.
355. Mormon appears to have all the disciples, save the three who chose to tarry, die in the 100th year. It is not beyond Yahweh’s miracles to have all of them survive that long and die in the same year. However, it is equally probable, and given the nature of what Mormon is doing in 4 Nephi, even more likely that this is meant to show the miraculous and not to represent history.
356. One hundred ten years would be 5*20+2*5. This number fits into the five-?year pattern. The ability of the year to fit into the mathematical system may or may not be significant but given the artificiality of the use of years in 4 Nephi, I consider it more likely than not.
357. Eighty-four years is possibly an artificial number. Understanding that Mesoamerican used a base 20

mathematical system, and that the number 4 was considered the number of perfection, 84 years might be seen as 4*20+4. That number would suggest that there is more happening with the years than a precise recording of the recordkeeper's lives.

358. Mormon doesn't give the elapsed time of 111 years but rather the year in which the event occurred. That was in the year 305. That number, in Mayan terms, would be one and a half katuns plus a hotun.