

# The Shape of Latter-Day Scriptural Language

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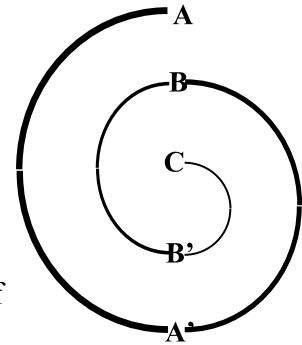
23 March 2015, revised 9 January 2016

## Abstract

John Breck has proposed that the shape of biblical language is a conical helix, based on chiasmus, in which the chiasm is read from the ends to the middle. Intensification typically is observed. He stresses the importance of understanding chiasmus in seeking to understand the fulness of the meaning of the text. Latter-day scriptures possess that same shape. In a few cases, the reading can be word-for-word and make perfect sense. While the helix cannot be seen except in the mind's eye, all its information content can be represented in a two-dimensional image, which takes the form of the chevron employed in presenting chiasmus in reformatted scripture. Two other two-dimensional shapes are observed, the double echelon and paired echelon. The reformatted scriptures, using these and a few miscellaneous forms, constitute the visual scriptures, the images of the scriptures. Not only is the information more easily seen, there is a beauty presented that is hidden in the linear structure on the traditional printed page.

## Introduction

John Breck has presented his detailed study on the “shape” of biblical language.[1] The shape he finds is based on chiasmus, and is a spiral, often an ascending conical helix where intensification is found along the spiral. Given a chiasm represented by A B C B' A', a spiral reading is AA', BB', C. This clearly shows the point of emphasis of the system, the central element, C. The figure represents the spiral, and a top view of the conical helix when it exists. C is at the apex of the latter.



Breck stresses the importance of finding and analyzing chiasmus in discovering the intent of the author of scripture. “Above all, however, respecting the literary form of biblical passages goes far towards throwing light on the *literal sense* of the text. Understanding and elucidating that sense remains the exegete’s primary task. The beauty of chiasmus lies in the fact that its form expresses its meaning with such directness and clarity. The surest way to discover and proclaim that meaning is to proceed by a thoroughgoing analysis of the form by which that meaning is conveyed.”[2] (emphasis in original)

Many of the large number of chiasms he presents are based on themes, rather than repeated words or phrases. And, of course, thematic parallelism can accompany verbal parallelism. It is thematic parallelism that enhances the information content of a chiasm. This has been my focus since my original discovery of the inverted arrangement of “redemption” and “resurrection” in D&C 88:14-16 in 1988. (My extensive work on reformatted scripture texts is available on my Web page, kindly hosted by Kurt Neumiller.[3] I discovered all of the inverted parallel structures discussed below over 25 years ago.)

Breck discusses in detail the prologue to John, John 1:1-18. This is a powerful thematic chiasm that leads us to the author's main point. Here is the form proposed by Culpepper,[4] with the words from Green's Interlinear,[5] and my version of the substructure.

A In beginning  
was  
the Word,  
and the Word  
was  
with God,  
and God  
was  
the Word.  
This one  
was  
in beginning  
with God.

B All things  
through Him  
came into being,  
and without Him  
came into being  
not even one (thing) that  
came into being.

C In Him  
life was, and the  
life was the  
light of men, and the  
light in the  
darkness shines, and the  
darkness it not did overtake.

D There was a man having been sent from God, name to him, John; this one  
came for a witness,  
that he might witness about the light,  
that all might believe through Him.  
not he was that light, but  
that he might witness about the light.  
He was the light true,  
which enlightens every man

E<sub>1</sub> coming into the world. In the world He was,

E<sub>2</sub> and the world  
through Him became,  
and the world  
Him did not know.

F Into (His) own  
He came,  
and (His) own  
Him not did receive.

G as many as but received Him,

H He gave to them authority children of God to become,

G to those believing into the name of Him,

F who  
not of bloods,  
nor of will of flesh,  
nor of will of man,  
but of God were born.

E<sub>1</sub> And the Word flesh became, and tabernacled among us,

E<sub>2</sub> and we beheld the glory of Him, glory as of an only-begotten from  
Father, full of grace and of truth.

D John witnesses concerning Him, and has cried out saying, This one was of  
whom I said, He after me coming before me has become, for preceding me He  
was.

C And out of the fullness of Him we all received, and grace on top of grace,

B because the Law  
through Moses  
was given,  
grace and truth  
through Jesus Christ  
came into being.

A God no one has seen at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,  
that One explains (Him).

The first two verses in the Greek form the most nearly perfect verbal chiasm I have seen in many  
hundreds of examples. English translations are also chiastic, but are much more shallow in

extent. This is a good example of failure of transmission of a verbal chiasm during translation. Thematic chiasms, however, usually survive translation. Other examples of verbal parallelism are seen above. However, the main divisions of the pericope have very little in the way of verbal parallelism.

On the other hand, Culpepper's thematic treatment shows strong parallelism. Notice that I have split his E into two parts, E<sub>1</sub>, the incarnation, and E<sub>2</sub>, the responses. The spiral reading of Culpepper would be as follows. I have used // to divide the first and second instances of each element pair.

- (A) The Word as *theos* with God (1-2) // The Word as *theos* with God (18)
- (B) Creation came through the Word (3) // Grace and truth came through the Word (17)
- (C) We have received life from the Word (4-5) // We have received grace from the Word (16)
- (D) John was sent to testify (6-8) // John's testimony (15)
- (E) Incarnation and the response of the world (9-10) // Incarnation and the response of the community (14)
- (F) The Word and his own (11) // The Word and his own believers (13)
- (G) Those who accept the Word (12a) // Those who believe the Word (12c)
- (H) He gave authority to become the children of God (12b)

We can see intensification in going from the first to the second instance of each element, as noted by Breck. And we see intensification as we proceed along the spiral. H is at the apex of this conical helix. This clearly shows H to be the focal point of this prologue.

### **Two-dimensional shapes**

After reading Breck, I discovered three additional "shapes" of scripture, the chevron, double (multiple) echelon, and the paired echelon. These are two-dimensional, and can be shown on the page. They are in contrast to the one-dimensional shape of language on the traditional printed page. In an Afterword in Breck's book, Charles Lock comments on the importance of visualizing the scriptures.

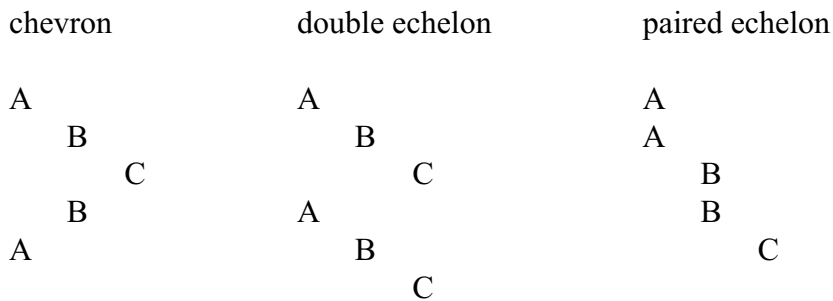
Linearity of reading is the fundamental principle by which the text is established in modernity as text. That is to say, when we read a text we do not see an image: the type and size of the font, the disposition of the words on the page, the very look of the page, are entirely accidental features. A text might be defined as that which, while being visual, is entirely independent of image, scale and perspective. Yet texts were not always thus. We have learnt to speak of the interaction between text and

image in medieval illuminated manuscripts. It might, however, be more accurate to say that before modernity – and especially before the development of printing – there was no fixed distinction between text and image. Both text and image were to be read, as they were likewise each to be written: the Greek verb *graphein* exemplifies the unity of what we now take to be the separate activities of writing and drawing, the one pictorial and the other textual...

Fr Breck has demonstrated one vast truth – a truth which modernity has all but forgotten, a truth whose suppression by print and dialectic, has indeed been constitutive of modernity: that no text is complete – no sacred text is properly sacred – unless it's words are contained in an icon structure, unless it's language takes the form of an icon... Chiasmus, a sacred pattern... has not disappeared; it has been made visible to those eyes who have learnt, as a profoundly sacramental task, not to read, but to see, and then – now – to make us see.[6]

But one can see a conical helix only in one's mind. However, the essential shape of the helix can be viewed in its two-dimensional presentation, the chevron. The chevron is more abundant than the spiral/helix. All spirals and helices can be represented as chevrons, but not all chevrons can be read as spirals, particularly highly verbal chevrons, such as the Greek version of John 1:1-2, as shown above.

The chevron and the echelons constitute what I term the visual scriptures, the two-dimensional “shape” of scriptures. Here is the basic format of these features



The chevron, of course, is the classic form of chiasmus. However, not all chevrons would be classified as chiasms. The double echelon is referred to as alternate or direct parallel. The paired echelon is known as climax.

The C in the chevron is the point of emphasis. The C in the paired echelon is the point of emphasis. Sometimes the double echelon includes an unrepeated point of emphasis at the end of one of the echelons.





D And beside this, giving all diligence,

E add to your faith  
virtue; and to  
virtue

knowledge; 6 And to (*gnosis*)  
knowledge

temperance; and to  
temperance

patience; and to  
patience

godliness; 7 And to  
godliness

brotherly kindness; and to  
brotherly kindness  
charity. 8

E For if these things be in you, and abound,

D they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful

C<sub>1</sub> in the knowledge (*epignosis*)

C<sub>2</sub> of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9

C<sub>3</sub> But he that lacketh these things

C<sub>4</sub> is blind, and cannot see afar off,

C<sub>5</sub> and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10

B Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 12

A Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

The overall structure is an imbalanced (in mass, not in theme) and perturbed (3 C elements) chevron. It is clearly not a traditional chiasm, but its main themes are arranged in chiastic order. It can be read as a helix with an adjustment (reading each of the three subscripted C elements in turn). The C elements taken together form a multiple echelon. The paired echelon is in verses 5-7, with charity as the point of emphasis. In fact, the image shows that charity is the focal point of the whole system (the point of emphasis of the climax which is positioned at the point of emphasis of the chevron). This is not obvious in the linear text.

In both A elements Peter acknowledges that his readers are faithful followers of Christ, and they form a framework for the included information. The B elements show intensification—grace and peace come through diligence and compliance. Note the difference between *gnosis*, knowledge, and *epignosis*, full discernment.

The C elements offer useful insights, including the contrasts in the last C<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>4</sub>, and C<sub>5</sub>.

(C<sub>1</sub>) Knowledge (*epginosis*)

(C<sub>2</sub>) God, and of Jesus our Lord, // him that hath called us to glory and virtue: // our Lord Jesus Christ.

(C<sub>3</sub>) According as his divine power hath given unto us all things // Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: // But he that lacketh these things

(C<sub>4</sub>) that pertain unto life // that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, // is blind, and cannot see afar off,

(C<sub>5</sub>) and godliness, // having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. // and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Looking back at the image of the interlinear version of John's prologue, we find examples of these shapes, as well as other parallelistic forms. The entire system, and verses 1-2, are chevrons. We find double echelons in the first E<sub>2</sub>, the first F, and the second B. A paired echelon appears in the first C. The first B and first D have parallel lines that don't fit these patterns.

Another beautiful example is found in 2 Nephi 9:41-43.

O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One.

A Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him,

B and the keeper of the gate is

C the Holy One of Israel;

D and he employeth no servant there;

E and there is none other way save it be by the gate;

D for he cannot be deceived,

C for the Lord God is his name. 42



B a<sub>1</sub> And whoso knocketh, to him will he open;  
 a<sub>2</sub> and the wise, and the learned, and they that are rich,  
 b who are puffed up  
 c because of their learning, and their wisdom,  
 d and their riches--  
 e yea, they are they whom he despiseth; and save they shall  
 d cast these things away, and  
 c consider themselves fools before God, and  
 b come down in the depths of humility,  
 a<sub>1</sub> he will not open unto them. 43

A(a<sub>2</sub>) But the things of the wise and the prudent shall be hid from them forever--yea, that happiness which is prepared for the saints.

(Verse 42 as reformatted by Parry [7]) The overall system can be read thematically as a helix, with intensification in each pair of elements, and from A to E, while the chevrons display the message graphically.

I have found the visual scriptures invaluable in discovering the meaning of scripture, ancient and modern. As I discovered the structure, the scriptures literally opened to my eyes. And the beauty of the images adds to the joy of scripture study. It all can be found on my web site.[3]

### **Word-for-word readings**

As I began to read Breck, I began to search among my reformatted works to see if the same shape exists in the latter-day scriptures. I immediately made an interesting discovery. Some thematic chiasms can be read from both ends to the center word-for-word, and make perfect sense. What level of skill would it take to accomplish this? I will discuss a few examples.

#### *Pearl of Great Price*

The very first system I explored was Moses 2:1-5. The image is as follows:

A I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things;

B yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest. 2  
And the earth was without form, and void;

C and I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep;

D and my Spirit moved upon the face of the water;

E for I am God. 3

D And I, God,  
said: Let there be light; and there was light. 4

And I, God,  
saw the light; and that light was good.

And I, God,  
divided the light from the darkness. 5

And I, God,  
called the light Day;

C and the darkness, I called Night;

B and this I did

A by the word of my power, and it was done as I spake;

The overall figure is a chevron, and the second D is a multiple echelon.

Here is the spiral reading.

- (A) I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; (1b) // by the word of my power, and it was done as I spake; (5d)
- (B) yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest. And the earth was without form, and void; (1c-2a) // and this I did (5c)
- (C) and I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep; (2b) // and the darkness, I called Night; (5b)
- (D) and my Spirit moved upon the face of the water; (2c) // And I, God, said: Let there be light; and there was light. And I, God, saw the light; and that light was good. And I, God, divided the light from the darkness. And I, God, called the light Day; (3-5a)
- (E) for I am God. (2d)

The D elements are related since the Spirit and light are related (D&C 84:45). The E is a clear point of emphasis. It doesn't show up as the point of emphasis in the standard linear format. In

fact, it seems almost superfluous in that format. The thematic chevron shows it at the center, and the helical reading makes its importance more clear.

By the way, Genesis 1:1-5 doesn't show this structure. Using the same guide letters, we have the following:

- B In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void;
- C and darkness was upon the face of the deep.
- D And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
- D And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day,
- C and the darkness he called Night.

There is no A, E, or second B and A.

Enoch's record in Moses 7:28-31 of the God who weeps gives us another example.

And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying:

- (A) How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains? And Enoch said unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst weep, (28b-29a) // how is it thou canst weep? (31d)
- (B) seeing thou art holy, (29b) // and naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end; (31c)
- (C) [and] from all eternity to all eternity[?] (29c) // from all eternity to all eternity; (31b)
- (D) And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; (30a) // And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, (31a)
- (E) and thy curtains are stretched out still; (30b) // and [also] thou art just; thou art merciful and kind forever; (30e)
- (F) and yet thou art there, (30c) // and thy bosom is there; (30d)

The second B is an elaboration upon the first, identifying characteristics of the holy God. The

C's are a bit awkward since the second is a repeat of the first if we skip the "and" and question mark, as indicated by brackets []. The D elements show only a verbal link, "thy creations" but the two taken together as shown read quite well. And it signifies the high station of the city of Enoch. In the first E Enoch acknowledges the lack of direct contact with Deity, while the second tells of his trust in God's character. The F is his testimony of the reality of God, a clear point of emphasis. It would read a little better if we made a slight adjustment and left out "also" in the second E.

After finding the reading of Moses 2:1-5, I searched the rest of my work to find other examples. It turns out that most chiastic systems are amenable to thematic spiral reading, as described by Breck, but only a few can be read word-for-word from the ends to the middle. I'll discuss a few more examples. The rest that I have found to date are in Appendix I.

### *Doctrine and Covenants*

The inverted parallel structure I found in Section 25 can be read as a spiral with no adjustments.

- (A) Hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, while I speak unto you, Emma Smith, my daughter; for verily I say unto you, all those who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom. (1) // And verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my voice unto all. (16)
- (B) A revelation I give unto you concerning my will; and if thou art faithful and walk in the paths of virtue before me, I will preserve thy life, and thou shalt receive an inheritance in Zion. (2) // Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come. (15)
- (C) Behold, thy sins are forgiven thee, (3a) // Wherefore, lift up thy heart and rejoice, and cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made. Continue in the spirit of meekness, and beware of pride. Let thy soul delight in thy husband, and the glory which shall come upon him. (13-14)
- (D) and thou art an elect lady, whom I have called. (3b) // And it shall be given thee, also, to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, to be had in my church. For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads. (11-12)
- (E) Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee and from the world, which is wisdom in me in a time to come. (4) // And verily I say unto thee that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better. (10)
- (F) And the office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., thy husband, in his afflictions, with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness. (5) // And thou needest not fear, for thy husband shall support thee in the church; for unto them is his

calling, that all things might be revealed unto them, whatsoever I will, according to their faith. (9)

- (G) And thou shalt go with him at the time of his going, and be unto him for a scribe, while there is no one to be a scribe for him, that I may send my servant, Oliver Cowdery, whithersoever I will. (6) // and thy time shall be given to writing, and to learning much. (8b)
- (H) And thou shalt be ordained under his hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit. (7) // For he shall lay his hands upon thee, and thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost, (8a)

The second B specifies a crown of righteousness as the inheritance in Zion, conditional upon keeping the commandments. The second C is a beautiful follow-on to the first. The second D details the call hinted at in the first. The first E undoubtedly has to do with the fact that she was never permitted to view the golden plates. In a sense, this would be a worldly desire, and the second instructs her to lay aside worldly things. The thoughts expressed in the other pairs of elements are self explanatory.

I stand in awe at this result. Could Joseph Smith have known that this revelation could be read this way and make perfect sense?

A chiasmic structure comparing the three degrees of glory, D&C 76:89-98, is inserted in the middle of the description of the candidates for the telestial glory. The text can be read as a powerful ascending spiral, a conical helix, as described in detail by Breck,[8] with the point of emphasis at the apex (E).

- (A) And thus we saw, in the heavenly vision, the glory of the telestial, which surpasses all understanding; And no man knows it except him to whom God has revealed it. (89-90) // And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world; (98)
- (B) And thus we saw the glory of the terrestrial which excels in all things the glory of the telestial, even in glory, and in power, and in might, and in dominion. (91) // And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one. (97)
- (C) And thus we saw the glory of the celestial, which excels in all things— (92a) // And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one. (96)
- (D) where God, even the Father, reigns upon his throne forever and ever; Before whose throne all things bow in humble reverence, and give him glory forever and ever. (92b-93) // And he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion. (95)
- (E) They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn; and they see as they are

seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace; (94)

The central element, E, is a clear point of emphasis; it includes a list of three items, each pertaining to godhood.

A final example from the Doctrine and Covenants is found in 93:29b-40.

- (A) Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. (29b-30) // The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. (36)
- (B) Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light. And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation. (31-32) // and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple. (35c)
- (C) For man is spirit. (33a) // yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; (35b)
- (D) The elements are eternal, (33b) // The elements are the tabernacle of God; (35a)
- (E) and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy; And when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy. (33c-34)

The linked chevron that follows, verses 36-40, a powerful statement of the atonement, does not lend itself to a word-for-word spiral reading. The F element is a clear point of emphasis.

The image of both is as follows.

- A Intelligence, or the light of truth,  
was not created or made, neither indeed can be. 30  
All truth  
is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as  
all intelligence  
also;  
otherwise there is no existence. 31 (multiple echelon with emphasis)
- B Behold, here is the agency of man,  
and here is the condemnation of man;  
because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they  
receive not the light. 32  
And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light  
is under condemnation. 33
- C For man is spirit.

- D The elements are eternal,
- E and spirit and element, inseparably connected,  
receive a fulness of joy; 34
- And when separated,  
man cannot receive a fulness of joy. 35 (double echelon)
- D The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea,
- C man is the tabernacle of God, even temples;
- B and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple. 36
- A The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. 37
- B Light and truth
- C forsake that evil one. 38
- D Every spirit of man was innocent
- E in the beginning;
- F and God having redeemed man from the fall,
- E men became again, in their infant state,
- D innocent before God. 39
- C And that wicked one cometh and taketh away
- B light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers. 40
- A But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.

The parallels in the second chevron are unambiguous, but clearly cannot be read word-for-word as a spiral.

*Book of Mormon*

For a long time I wondered why “And my father dwelt in a tent” (1 Nephi 2:15) was there. When I discovered the pattern in 2:7-15, it shows up parallel to the account of Lehi offering a sacrifice. Sacrifices were associated with the tabernacle, essentially a tent, and the temple of Solomon. Thus Lehi’s tent was a symbol of the temple. The system, which begins and ends with this

symbol, can be read as a spiral.

- (A) And it came to pass that he built an altar of stones, and made an offering unto the Lord, and gave thanks unto the Lord our God. (7) // And my father dwelt in a tent. (15)
- (B) And it came to pass that he called the name of the river, Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea; and the valley was in the borders near the mouth thereof. And when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea, he spake unto Laman, saying: O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness! And he also spake unto Lemuel: O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord! (8-10) // And it came to pass that my father did speak unto them in the valley of Lemuel, with power, being filled with the Spirit, until their frames did shake before him. And he did confound them, that they durst not utter against him; wherefore, they did as he commanded them. (14)
- (C) Now this he spake because of the stiffneckedness of Laman and Lemuel; (11a) // And they did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them. Neither did they believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed according to the words of the prophets. And they were like unto the Jews who were at Jerusalem, who sought to take away the life of my father. (12b-13)
- (D) for behold they did murmur in many things against their father, (11b) // And thus Laman and Lemuel, being the eldest, did murmur against their father. (12a)
- (E) because he was a visionary man, (11c) // And this they said he had done because of the foolish imaginations of his heart. (11g)
- (F) and had led them out of the land of Jerusalem, (11d) // to perish in the wilderness. (11f)
- (G) to leave the land of their inheritance, and their gold, and their silver, and their precious things, (11e)

Thus this chevron begins (and ends) with a temple theme, and focuses on the worldliness of Laman and Lemuel. They didn't want to abandon their good life and goods.

Alma speaks of his calling, and bears his testimony, in Alma 5:43-49. It is a chevron that can be read spirally.

- (A) And now, my brethren, I would that ye should hear me, for speak in the energy of my soul; for behold, I have spoken unto you plainly that ye cannot err, or have spoken according to the commandments of God. (43) // yea, to preach unto my beloved brethren, yea, and every one that dwelleth in the land; yea, to preach unto all, both old and young, both bond and free; yea, I say unto you the aged, and also the middle aged, and the rising generation; yea, to cry unto them that they must repent and be born again. (49b)



- (B) For I am called to speak after this manner, according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus; (44a) // And now I say unto you that this is the order after which I am called, (49a)
- (C) yea, I am commanded to stand and testify unto this people the things which have been spoken by our fathers concerning the things which are to come. (44b) // and I say unto you, that I know that Jesus Christ shall come, yea, the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, and mercy, and truth. And behold, it is he that cometh to take away the sins of the world, yea, the sins of every man who steadfastly believeth on his name. (48b)
- (D) And this is not all. Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? (45a) // I say unto you, that I know of myself that whatsoever I shall say unto you, concerning that which is to come, is true; (48a)
- (E) Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. (45b) // *and* that the words which have been spoken by our fathers are true, even so according to the spirit of prophecy which is in me, which is also by the manifestation of the Spirit of God. (47b)
- (F) And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety? (45c) // [and] this is the spirit of revelation which is in me. And moreover, I say unto you that it has thus been revealed unto me, (45c)
- (G) Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. (46a) // for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; (46d)
- (H) Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. (46b) // And now I do know of myself that they are true; (46c)

The A's are little awkward since the voice changes from second to third person. However, the rest of the system reads well. I added *and* to the beginning of the second E and deleted [and] at the beginning of the second F. Notice how the second B leads into the first C, the second C leads to the first D, and the second E leads to the first F.

Alma bears his testimony and invites all to repent and be baptized in Alma 7:13b-16. It reads beautifully as a (modified, with segmented B elements) spiral, with a slight change in the second C.

- (A) and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me. (13b) // according to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which testifieth in me. (16b)
- (B<sub>1</sub>) Now I say unto you that ye must repent, (14a) // Yea, I say unto you come and fear not, and lay aside every sin, which easily doth beset you, which doth bind you down to destruction, yea, come and go forth, and show unto your God that ye are willing to repent of your sins (15a)

- (B<sub>2</sub>) and be born again; (14b) // and enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day by going into the waters of baptism. (15b)
- (B<sub>3</sub>) for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; (14c) // And whosoever doeth this, and keepeth the commandments of God from thenceforth, the same will remember that I say unto him, yea, he will remember that I have said unto him, he shall have eternal life, (16a)
- (C) therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, (14d) // and *be cleansed* [to cleanse] from all unrighteousness. (14f)
- (D) that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save (14e)

It turns out that most chevrons cannot be read word-for-word, but most can be so read thematically.

### **Thematic readings**

When the first few word-for-word examples were found quickly, I supposed they would be found extensively, but they are not. I searched all my reformatted latter-day scripture texts (what I call the doctrinal discourses of the Book of Mormon, about half the book, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price), and found that only about 1% of the chiasmic structures can be read word-for-word. (All that I found are above and in Appendix I.) However, as nearly as I can tell, none of Breck's chiasms can be read word-for-word, but only thematically. The same is true for the rest of the systems I have found. I will give a few examples.

One of the first chiasms John Welch discovered in 1967 was in Alma 36.[9] He touts it as one of the most beautiful chiasms ever discovered, and I agree. However, Wunderli criticizes it, noting, among other things, that Welch's chiasm ignores 80% of the words, and has the *i'* element out of place.[10] Welch's version omits verses 11-13, 21, and 25.

My version, discovered in 1988, differs from Welch's in some respects, especially in the substructure. And mine is based on themes, rather than words, so it involves 100% of the text. And there is no out of place element. It is a beautiful thematic conical helix, focusing on the atonement of Jesus Christ. Appendix II has a comparison of the two versions. Here is mine, read as a thematic spiral.

- (A) My son, give ear to my words; (!a) // Now this is according to his word. (30b)
- (B) for I swear unto you, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land. (1b) // But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. (30a)

- (C) I would that ye should do as I have done, (2a) // yea, and ye also ought to retain in remembrance, as I have done, their captivity. (29c)
- (D) in remembering the captivity of our fathers; (2b) // and I have always retained in remembrance their captivity; (29b)
- (E) for they were in bondage, (2c) // for he has brought our fathers out of Egypt...and he has delivered them out of bondage and captivity from time to time. (28b-29a)
- (F) and none could deliver them except it was the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he surely did deliver them in their afflictions. (2d) // and he will still deliver me. And I know that he will raise me up at the last day... (27b-28a)
- (G) ...whosoever shall put their trust in God (3a) // and I do put my trust in him (27b)
- (H) shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day. (3b) // And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind, yea, and in all manner of afflictions... (27a)
- (I) And I would not that ye think that I know of myself -- not of the temporal but of the spiritual, not of the carnal mind but of God. (4) // ... therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God. (26b)
- (J) ...born of God... (5) // ...born of God... (26a)
- (K) For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to destroy the church of God... (6) // Yea, and from that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance... (24-25)
- (L) ...neither had I the use of my limbs. (7-11) // But behold, my limbs did receive their strength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did manifest unto the people that I had been born of God. (23)
- (M) ...the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror. (12-14) // Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there. (22)
- (N) ...And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul. (15-16) // Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy. (21)
- (O) And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, (17a) // And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my

pain! (20)

- (P) while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, (17b) // And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more. (19)
- (Q<sub>1</sub>) behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, (17c) // Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, (18a)
- (Q<sub>2</sub>) to atone for the sins of the world. (17d) // have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. (18b)

There is clear intensification as we proceed up the helix. Note the contrasts between the first and second K through P. The Q is clearly the apex of the entire system. It is Alma's acknowledgment of the atonement that erased his horror and pain and filled him with joy, as noted in the contrasts in K through P.

There is substantial substructure, which can be seen on my web site.[3] The second B is a double echelon, parallel to a single echelon in the first B. The combined result is a multiple echelon, and the second A is a point of emphasis.

for I swear unto you,  
that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God  
ye shall prosper in the land.  
But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know,  
that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God  
ye shall prosper in the land;  
and ye ought to know also,  
that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God  
ye shall be cut off from his presence.  
Now this is according to his word.

There are chevrons in the first J, the first L, and the first M. (The L and M chevrons include verses 11-13, omitted by Welch.) Here is the L chevron, which also is thematic.

- (a) And behold, he spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did tremble beneath our feet; (7a) // and I did hear no more. (11e)
- (b) and we all fell to the earth, (7b) // that I fell to the earth (11d)
- (c) for the fear of the Lord came upon us. (7c) // I was struck with such great fear and amazement lest perhaps I should be destroyed, (11c)
- (d<sub>1</sub>) But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

And he said unto me: (8-9a) // And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did not hear them; for when I heard the words – (11a)

- (d<sub>2</sub>) If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God. (9b) // If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God – (11b)
- (e) And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; (10a) // neither had I the use of my limbs. (10c)
- (f) and it was for the space of three days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, (10b)

The first M element (12-14) tells of his initial horror, and explains why he felt that way.

- (a) But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins. Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; (12-13a) // did rack my soul with inexpressible horror. (14e)
- (b) yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, (13b) // that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God (14d)
- (c) and that I had not kept his holy commandments. (13c) // yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, (14c)
- (d) Yea, and I had murdered many of his children, (14a) // or rather led them away unto destruction; (14b)

This truly is a masterpiece, as Welch notes. And Wunderli misses the beauty altogether by focusing only on the words. Did Joseph Smith see this beauty as he dictated this text?

Turning to the Doctrine and Covenants, I found a deep chevron in D&C 10 that exhibits a helical shape, with intensification along the helix. It possesses both thematic and verbal parallelism. Parallel words are given in italics. Joseph Smith is given instructions pertaining to the lost manuscript pages, and the further translation of the golden plates.

- (A) ...see that you are faithful and continue on unto the finishing of the remainder of *the work of translation* as you have begun. (3-4) // But behold, here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished *the work of translation*. (34)
- (B) Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. (5-9) // And, behold, they will publish this, and Satan will harden the hearts of the people to stir them up to anger against you, that they will not believe my words. Thus Satan thinketh to overpower your testimony in this generation, that the work may not come forth in this

generation. (32-33)

- (C) And, behold, Satan hath put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated...that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which *you have pretended to translate*. (10-13) // For, behold, if you should bring forth the same words they will say that you have lied and that *you have pretended to translate*, but that you have contradicted yourself. (31b)
- (D) Verily, I say unto you, that I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his *evil design* in this thing. (14a) // Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands; For, behold, they shall not accomplish their *evil designs* in lying against those words. (30-31a)
- (E) For behold, he has put it into their hearts *to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God*, in asking to translate it over again. (14b-17a) // because Satan saith unto them: He hath deceived you--and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, *to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God*. (29b)
- (F) behold, we have the same with us, and we *have altered them*; Therefore they will not agree, (17b-18a) // Now, behold, they *have altered these words*, (29a)
- (G<sub>1</sub>) and we will say that he has lied in his words, and that he has no gift, and that he has no power; Therefore we will destroy him, and also the work; (18b-19a) // Verily, verily, I say unto you, wo be unto him that lieth to deceive because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, (28a)
- (G<sub>2</sub>) and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world. (19b) // for such are not exempt from the justice of God. (28b)
- (H) Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts; (20-24) // And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men. (27)
- (I) Yea, he saith unto them: Deceive and lie in wait *to catch*, that ye may destroy; behold, this is no harm. (25a) // and thus he causeth them *to catch* themselves in their own snare. (26b)
- (J) *And thus he flattereth them*, (25b) // *And thus he flattereth them*, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; (26a)
- (K) and telleth them that it is no sin to lie that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him. (25c)

The first A counsels Joseph to be faithful and finish the translation, and the second tells him to not show it until it is accomplished. The first B mentions the servants of Satan, and the second identifies them as people he has “stirred up to anger against you.” The first G<sub>1</sub> discusses lying to accuse of lying, and the second speaks of wo to those who do such. In the first G, the

perpetrators anticipate glory, while the second promises them justice. The second H is an intensification of the first, moving from local to universal influence. The J's also exhibit intensification. The K shows that the chevron focuses on the concept of lying to catch a man in a lie.

One of my favorite chevrons in the Doctrine and Covenants was dictated by Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail. It is D&C 122:4-9. Here is the helical reading, including all words.

- (A<sub>1</sub>) And although their influence shall cast thee into trouble, and into bars and walls, thou shalt be had in honor; and but for a small moment and thy voice shall be more terrible in the midst of thine enemies than the fierce lion, because of thy righteousness; (4a) // know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he? (7d-8)
- (A<sub>2</sub>) and thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever. (4b) // Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; for their bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever. (9)
- (B) If thou art called to pass through tribulation; (5a) // if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, (7c)
- (C<sub>1</sub>) if thou art in perils among false brethren; (5b) // and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb; (6i)
- (C<sub>2</sub>) if thou art in perils among robbers; (5c) // And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; (7a)
- (C<sub>3</sub>) if thou art in perils by land or by sea; (5d) // if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; (7b)
- (D) If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; (6a) // and thou be dragged to prison, (6h)
- (E) if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword (6b) // by the sword, (6g)
- (F) thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, (6c) // and if then he shall be thrust from thee (6f)
- (G) My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? (6d) // O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? (6e)

This is a powerful word-for-word read from A to D. E through G continue as a thematic read, with G a clear point of emphasis. Note the intensification going from the first to the second instance of each element pair (except E), including the sub-elements. And the ultimate intensification is the plea of Joseph's son. That would have been foremost in his mind among his afflictions.

When we read the linear text we tend to focus on "all these things will give thee experience, and shall be for thy good." This is important, but the spiral reading points to the real emphasis, the greatest of the afflictions he was forced to endure, the cry of his son.

There is a subtle message imbedded in the "if" statements, fifteen in number. Bullinger[11] says of fifteen: "*Fifteen*, therefore, specifically refers to acts wrought by the energy of Divine grace." (emphasis in original) Thus the Lord said, "know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good." This is truly one of the great messages found in the scriptures, and it is cast in beautiful form in this system.

In Abraham 2:1-17 we find a record of his encounter with the Lord. It is a thematic helix.

- (A) Now the Lord God caused the famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that Haran, my brother, died; but Terah, my father, yet lived in the land of Ur, of the Chaldees. (1) // Now I, Abraham, built an altar in the land of Jershon, and made an offering unto the Lord, and prayed that the famine might be turned away from my father's house, that they might not perish. (17)
- (B) And it came to pass that I, Abraham, took Sarai to wife, and Nehor, my brother, took Milcah to wife, who was the daughter of Haran. Now the Lord had said unto me: Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. (2-3) // And I took Sarai, whom I took to wife when I was in Ur, in Chaldea...Therefore, eternity was our covering and our rock and our salvation, as we journeyed from Haran by the way of Jershon, to come to the land of Canaan. (15-16)
- (C) Therefore I left the land of Ur, of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and I took Lot, my brother's son, and his wife, and Sarai my wife... (4-5) // So I, Abraham, departed as the Lord had said unto me, and Lot with me...(14)
- (D) But I, Abraham, and Lot, my brother's son, prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord appeared unto me, and said unto me: Arise, and take Lot with thee; for I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a minister to bear my name in a strange land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession, when they hearken to my voice. For I am the Lord thy God... (6-8) // Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee; Thou didst send thine angel to deliver me from the gods of Elkenah, and I will do well to hearken unto thy voice, therefore let thy servant rise up and depart in peace. (12-13)



- (E) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, (9a) // shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. (11d)
- (F) and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, (9b) // and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) (11c)
- (G) that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; (9c) // and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) (11b)
- (H) And I will bless them through thy name; (10a) // And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; (11a)
- (I) for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father; (10b)

The chevron begins and ends with discussion of the famine and Abraham's father, but Abraham has relocated at the second A. The first B tells of the Lord's instruction to move, and the second gives some details about the travel. The C's deal with the travels of Abraham and Lot, first out of the land of Ur and the second out of Haran.

The D's are the beginning and ending of his encounter with the Lord. I have not included verses 7 and 8 above since they have no parallel. It gives the Lord's definition of himself. The first E tells of blessings to Abraham, including making his name great among all nations, and the second extends those blessings to all the families of the earth.

The next elements, F, G, and H, deal with priesthood and consequent blessings to Abraham's seed. The apex of the helix, I, places Abraham as the covenantal father of all believers, a clear point of emphasis.

We can wonder how much Joseph Smith knew about chiasmus. Welch argues that he probably was unaware of the subject when he dictated the Book of Mormon.[12] He might have noticed it later and made use of in the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price. If so, why is D&C 121:1-6 not a chiasm? It has almost all of the characteristics of a chiasm. It begins and ends with an appeal to God. It possesses a clear point of emphasis, extolling the power of God (beginning of verse 4). There are, between the ends and this point of emphasis, six strongly matched pairs of elements. For some reason, the elements in the second set are arrayed in what appears to be random order. Curiously, they can be rearranged to form a strong chiasm without changing a word.

A O God, where art thou?

B And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?

- C How long shall thy hand be stayed,
- D and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants,
- E and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?
- F Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions,
- G before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them?
- H O Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are, and who controllest and subjectest the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Sheol--
- G let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion toward us.
- F Let thine anger be kindled against our enemies; and, in the fury of thine heart, with thy sword avenge us of our wrongs.
- E let thine ear be inclined;
- D let thine eye pierce;
- C stretch forth thy hand;
- B let thy pavilion be taken up; let thy hiding place no longer be covered;
- A Remember thy suffering saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever.

There does not appear to be any logic in the order given the second set of elements. If Joseph Smith understood chiasmus would he have used this non-chiastic ordering of elements for some reason? Perhaps he was a master at chiasmus, as the latter-day scriptures seem to indicate, and disrupted the symmetry here to emphasize the depth of his despair. In any event, the prayer that was offered non-chiastically was answered in a series of chiastic statements. Here is a helical reading of the second one (121:12-25).

- (A) And also that God hath set his hand and seal to change the times and seasons, and to blind their minds, that they may not understand his marvelous workings; that he may prove them also and take them in their own craftiness; Also because their hearts are corrupted, and the things which they are willing to bring upon others, and love to have others suffer, may

- come upon themselves to the very uttermost; That they may be disappointed also, and their hopes may be cut off; (12-14) // according as his works shall be. (25b)
- (B) And not many years hence, (15a) // For there is a time appointed for every man, (25a)
- (C) that they and their posterity (15b) // for them all; (24b)
- (D) shall be swept from under heaven, saith God, that not one of them is left to stand by the wall. (15c) // Behold, mine eyes see and know all their works, and I have in reserve a swift judgment in the season thereof, (24a)
- (E) Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, (16a) // a generation of vipers shall not escape the damnation of hell. (23e)
- (F) saith the Lord, (16b) // saith the Lord of Hosts; (23d)
- (G) and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them. But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves. And those who swear falsely against my servants, (16c-18a) // and testify against them, (23c)
- (H) that they might bring them into bondage and death— (18b) // and drive, and murder, (23b)
- (I) Wo unto them; because they have offended my little ones (19a) // Wo unto all those that discomfort my people, (23a)
- (J) they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house. (19b) // They shall not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them from generation to generation. It had been better for them that a millstone had been hanged about their necks, and they drowned in the depth of the sea. (21-22)
- (K) Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them.

The D elements seem to emphasize rapidity: “swept from under heaven” and “swift judgment.” The second E identifies the curse stated in the first. And perhaps it is a coincident that “heel” and “viper” (serpent) are in parallel elements.

Although the K element is at the focal point, it only applies to temporal affairs. The real devastation for the persecutors is in the J elements, being severed from the temple and the priesthood.

## Discussion

Breck frequently refers to the literary skills of the authors of the Bible, how they carefully crafted their text into chiasmic form to show the reader the literal meaning of their of their message. How did Joseph Smith acquire this skill? Recent studies have shown that the Book of Mormon contains 16<sup>th</sup> century sentence syntax that was obsolete by the time the King James Bible was produced.[13][14] The implication is that Joseph Smith was given the words to write, not information which he recorded in his native language. The same may be true for his chiasmic writing.

Welch and others since have used the extensive existence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon to show that it is an ancient work. That cannot be the case for chiasmic *forms* in the Doctrine and Covenants. I conclude that the “shape” of the text was revealed to Joseph Smith as he dictated the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants and Moses and Abraham.

Notice that I didn’t say “chiasmus” in the Doctrine and Covenants, although there are clear examples. I don’t want to get embroiled in an argument about whether what I have found satisfies everyone’s definition of chiasmus. What I have shown above is that there are examples of chiasmic *form*, chevrons, in themes, with or without chiasmic arrangements of words or phrases.

As noted by Breck with respect to our understanding of the Bible, our understanding of latter-day scriptures often is enhanced when we see the structure, the two-dimensional image. Parallel elements often help define and explain each other. Breck points out that the second of parallel elements often shows intensification with respect to the first. Many examples can be seen in the structures shown above. There also tends to be intensification in the spiral reading, leading to the shape of a conical helix. Whether flat or conical, the spiral leads to the focal point. And, as commented above, a small percentage of chiasmic systems can be read spirally word-for-word and make perfect sense. What level of literary skill would that require?

I have found that the chevron is more abundant than the spiral/helix. All spirals and helices can be represented as chevrons, but not all chevrons can be read as spirals, particularly highly verbal chevrons. John 1:1-2 in the Greek, presented above, is an example. Another example is found in D&C 132:28-33.

- A I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was. 29
- B Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord,
- C and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne. 30
- D Abraham
- E received

F promises

G concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins--  
from whose loins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph--

H which were to continue

I so long as they were in the world;  
and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the  
world

J they should continue;

I both in the world  
and out of the world

H should they continue

G as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon  
the seashore ye could not number them. 31  
This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham,

F and the promise

E was made

D unto Abraham;

C and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth  
himself. 32

B Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham;

A enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved. 33 But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot  
receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.

The parallels are obvious. The G's taken together form a double echelon, as do the I's. The C's  
tell us that the Father is glorified by the exaltation of his children, Abraham in this case.

A nice example of an extended double echelon, with a point of emphasis, can be found in  
Jacob 2:7-10.

And also it grieveth me that I must use so much boldness of speech concerning you,

a before your wives and your children, many of whose feelings are exceedingly tender and

chaste and delicate before God, which thing is pleasing unto God; 8 And it supposeth me that they have come up hither to hear

- b the pleasing word of God,
- c yea, the word which healeth the wounded soul. 9
  - d Wherefore, it burdeneth my soul that I should be constrained,
  - e because of the strict commandment which I have received from God,
  - f to admonish you according to your crimes,
  - g to enlarge the wounds of those who are already wounded, instead of consoling and healing their wounds;
- a and those who have not been wounded, instead of feasting upon
  - b the pleasing word of God
  - c have daggers placed to pierce their souls and wound their delicate minds. 10
    - d But, notwithstanding the greatness of the task,
    - e I must do according to the strict commands of God,
    - f and tell you concerning your wickedness and abominations,
    - g in the presence of the pure in heart, and the broken heart,
    - h and under the glance of the piercing eye of the Almighty God.

The point of emphasis is h, showing why Jacob took on this burden.

Parry published the first edition of his reformatted Book of Mormon after I had found this structure. He found a nice chevron in 6-10, referenced here in his second edition.[15]

The longest paired echelon I have discovered is in D&C 84:43-59.

And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves,

- (a) to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life. 44
- (a) For you shall live by every word
  - (b) that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. 45

- (b) For the word of the Lord
- (c) is truth,
- (c) and whatsoever is truth
- (d) is light,
- (d) and whatsoever is light
- (e) is Spirit,
- (e) even the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 46
- (f) And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world;
- (f) and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world,
- (g) that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit. 47
- (g) And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit
- (h) cometh unto God, even the Father. 48
- (h) And the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and
- (i) confirmed upon you, which is
- (i) confirmed upon you
- (j) for your sakes, and not
- (j) for your sakes only, but for the sake of
- (k) the whole world. 49
- (k) And the whole world
- (l) lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin. 50
- (l) And by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin,
- (m) because they come not unto me. 51
- (m) For whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin. 52
- (n) And whoso receiveth not my voice
- (n) is not acquainted with my voice,
- (o) and is not of me. 53
- (o) And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked,
- (p) and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now. 54
- (p) And your minds in times past have been darkened
- (q) because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received--55
- (q) Which vanity and unbelief
- (r) have brought the whole church under condemnation. 56
- (r) And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all. 57
- (s) And they shall remain under this

condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written...

This form threads through, and pays no attention to, a complex chevron that extends from 42 to 61. Verses 57-59 are a clear point of emphasis.

Of these three shapes, the chevron is the most frequently found, followed by the double (multiple) echelon and the paired echelon. In the 1363 parallelistic systems I have found in what I call the doctrinal discourses of the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, and all subsequent whole chapter doctrinal discourses), 60% are chevrons, 35% are double (and a few multiple) echelons, 3% are paired echelons, and 2% are other parallel structures. If modern authors were to use parallelism, we would expect to see a predominance of the double echelon. Predominance of the chevron in scripture provides evidence of ancient origins, or divine revelation, or both.

We are left to wonder how Joseph Smith produced these patterns. Bible scholars who study chiasmus, such as John Breck, attribute chiastic structures to the literary skill of the author. This is not a likely explanation in the case of Joseph Smith, given his paucity of formal education, his young age, at least with the Book of Mormon, Moses, and the early Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, and his location outside centers of intellectual attainment. Occasional parallelistic patterns might arise by chance, but the probability of the large number of structures I have found to have occurred by chance is beyond minuscule. Intelligent literary design is present throughout ancient and modern scriptures. I can only conclude that the intelligent agent is Deity, and Joseph Smith, and likely the ancient prophets, were inspired to write in these patterns. The Lord uses parallelistic patterns to enhance the information content of scripture, and it is up to the reader to mine the insights that are liberated through seeing the images of the scriptures.

## **Conclusion**

The scriptures are replete with parallelistic patterns which can be represented by three two-dimensional shapes, chevron, double echelon, and paired echelon. Reformatting the scriptures to display these shapes provides images of the scriptures that reveal to a greater extent the full message of the scriptures. And these images reveal a beauty that is invisible in the linear text of the traditional printed page.

Breck has demonstrated the profound effects of reading chiasms as conical helices, AA'BB'CC'...X, where X is the point of emphasis. In about 1% of the chevrons I have discovered this reading can be done word-for-word and make perfect sense. Most of them, however, unless they are mostly repeated words, can be read thematically as helices, which is how Breck reads the chiasms he discusses. And it is important to note that all the information displayed in helical readings is readily visible in its two-dimensional chevron image.



Enhanced information arises from two principle aspects of these patters, the focal point of emphasis, and the paired elements (B and B', for instance). Breck points out that there often is intensification in going from B to B', etc. I have also found that paired elements often help explain or define each other. It is in paired elements where the hidden insights are most often made visible in the images produced by reformatting the scriptures.

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14. Stanford Carmack, "The Implications of Past-Tense Syntax in the Book of Mormon," Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture, Vol. 14 (2015) pp. 119-186.  
[http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-implications-of-past-tense-syntax-in-the-book-of-mormon/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+mormon](http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-implications-of-past-tense-syntax-in-the-book-of-mormon/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+mormon)

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15. Parry, op cit., p. 133.

**Appendix I**  
**Word-for-word readings**

**Doctrine and Covenants**

**D&C 6:35-37**

- (A) Behold, I do not condemn you; (35a) // and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. (37d)
- (B) go your ways and sin no more; (35b) // keep my commandments, (37c)
- (C) perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you. (35c) // be faithful, (37b)
- (D) Look unto me in every thought; (36a) // Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; (37a)
- (E) doubt not, (36b) // fear not.(36c)

**D&C 11:16-22**

- (A<sub>1</sub>) Wait a little longer, (16a) // But now hold your peace; (22a)
- (A<sub>2</sub>) until you shall have my word, my rock, my church, and my gospel, (16b) // study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating, yea, until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation, (22b)
- (A<sub>3</sub>) that you may know of a surety my doctrine. (16c) // and then shall all things be added thereto. (22c)
- (B) And then, behold, according to your desires, yea, even according to your faith shall it be done unto you. (17) // Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men. (21)
- (C) Keep my commandments; hold your peace; appeal unto my Spirit; (18) // Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind and strength. (20)
- (D) Yea, cleave unto me with all your heart, that you may assist in bringing to light those things of which has been spoken--yea, the translation of my work; be patient until you shall accomplish it. (19)

**D&C 19:1-24**

- (A) I AM Alpha and Omega, Christ the Lord; yea, even I am he, the beginning and the end, the Redeemer of the world. (1) // I am Jesus Christ; I came by the will of the Father, and I do his will. (24)
- (B) I, having accomplished and finished the will of him whose I am, even the Father, concerning me--having done this that I might subdue all things unto myself-- Retaining all power, even to the destroying of Satan and his works at the end of the world, and the last great day of judgment, which I shall pass upon the inhabitants thereof, judging every man according to his works and the deeds which he hath done. (2-3) // Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men. Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken, of which in the smallest, yea, even in the least degree you have tasted at the time I withdrew my Spirit. And I command you that you preach naught but repentance, and show not these things unto the world until it is wisdom in me. For they cannot bear meat now, but milk they must receive; wherefore, they must not know these things, lest they perish. Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me. (19-23)
- (C) And surely every man must repent or suffer, (4a) // I have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit--and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink-- (16b-18)
- (D) for I, God, am endless. (4b) // For behold, I, God, (16a)
- (E) Wherefore, I revoke not the judgments which I shall pass, but woes shall go forth, weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, yea, to those who are found on my left hand. (5) // Wherefore, I command you to repent, and keep the commandments which you have received by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., in my name; And it is by my almighty power that you have received them; Therefore I command you to repent--repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore--how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. (13-15)
- (F) Nevertheless, it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written endless torment. (6) // Endless punishment is God's punishment (12)
- (G) Again, it is written eternal damnation; (7a) // Eternal punishment is God's punishment. (11)
- (H) wherefore it is more express than other scriptures, that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men, altogether for my name's glory. 7b) // For, behold, I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name. [Wherefore--] (10b)

- (I) Wherefore, I will explain unto you this mystery, ( 8a) // For, behold, the mystery of godliness, how great is it! (10a)
- (J) for it is meet unto you to know even as mine apostles. (8b) // I speak unto you that are chosen in this thing, even as one, that you may enter into my rest. (9)

I have added *I* at the beginning of the second C. The D's are awkward. We have to ignore *wherefore* at the end of the second H.

The first A is a nice multiple echelon.

I AM  
 Alpha and Omega  
 Christ the Lord;  
 yea, even I am he,  
 the beginning and the end,  
 the Redeemer of the world

#### **D&C 82:1-7**

- (A) Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you. (1) // And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God. (7)
- (B) Nevertheless, there are those among you who have sinned exceedingly; yea, even all of you have sinned; (2a) // Therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all: Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth; And the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth; and none doeth good, for all have gone out of the way. (5-6)
- (C) but verily I say unto you, beware from henceforth, and refrain from sin, lest sore judgments fall upon your heads. (2b) // and justice and judgment are the penalty which is affixed unto my law. (4b)
- (D) For of him unto whom much is given much is required; (3a) // Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings, which I give unto you, ye become transgressors; (4a)
- (E) and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation. (3b)

#### **Book of Mormon**

#### **2 Nephi 4:30-35**

Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say:

- (A) O Lord, I will praise thee forever; yea, my soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation. (30) // therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness. Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. (35b)
- (B) O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? (31a) // O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm. Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss; (34-35a)
- (C<sub>1</sub>) Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? (31b) // O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! (33b)
- (C<sub>2</sub>) Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin? May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite! (31c-32a) // Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way--but that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy. (33c)
- (D) O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, (32b) // O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! (33a)
- (E) that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road! (32c)

## 2 Nephi 10:20-24

- (A) And now, my beloved brethren, seeing that our merciful God has given us so great knowledge concerning these things, (20a) // Wherefore, my beloved brethren, reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved. (24)
- (B) let us remember him, and lay aside our sins, (20b) // and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves -- to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life. (23b)
- (C) and not hang down our heads, (20c) // Therefore, cheer up your hearts, (23a)
- (D) for we are not cast off; (20d) // wherefore he remembereth us also. (22c)
- (E) nevertheless, we have been driven out of the land of our inheritance; (20e) // And now behold, the Lord remembereth all them who have been broken off, (22b)

- (F) but we have been led to a better land, for the Lord has made the sea our path, and we are upon an isle of the sea. (20f) // For behold, the Lord God has led away from time to time from the house of Israel, according to his will and pleasure. (22a)
- (G) But great are the promises of the Lord unto them who are upon the isles of the sea; wherefore as it says isles, there must needs be more than this, and they are inhabited also by our brethren. (21)

There a few rough spots that could be smoothed out if one wanted to take this to polished text, but it reads pretty well as is. The G is a clear point of emphasis.

### Alma 9:1-7

- (A) And again, I, Alma, having been commanded of God that I should take Amulek and go forth and preach again unto this people, or the people who were in the city of Ammonihah, it came to pass as I began to preach unto them, (1a) // And I stood with boldness to declare unto them, yea, I did boldly testify unto them (7b)
- (B) they began to contend with me, (1b) // And they stood forth to lay their hands on me; but behold, they did not. (7a)
- (C) saying: Who art thou? Suppose ye that we shall believe the testimony of one man, although he should preach unto us that the earth should pass away? (1c-2) // And they said: Who is God, that sendeth no more authority than one man among this people, to declare unto them the truth of such great and marvelous things? (6)
- (D) Now they understood not the words which they spake; for they knew not that the earth should pass away. (3) // Now they knew not that God could do such marvelous works, for they were a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people. (5)
- (E) And they said also: We will not believe thy words if thou shouldst prophesy that this great city should be destroyed in one day. (4)

The C elements taken together form a double echelon

saying:

Who art thou?

Suppose ye that we shall believe the testimony of one man,

although he should preach unto us that the earth should pass away?

And they said:

Who is God,

that sendeth no more authority than one man among this people,

to declare unto them the truth of such great and marvelous things?



### Alma 24:21-27

- (A) Now when the people saw that they were coming against them they went out to meet them, and prostrated themselves before them to the earth, and began to call on the name of the Lord; and thus they were in this attitude when the Lamanites began to fall upon them, and began to slay them with the sword. (21) // thus we see that the Lord worketh in many ways to the salvation of his people. (27c)
- (B) And thus without meeting any resistance, they did slay a thousand and five of them; (22a) // but there were more than a thousand brought to the knowledge of the truth; (27b)
- (C) and we know that they are blessed, for they have gone to dwell with their God. (22b) // and those who had been slain were righteous people, therefore we have no reason to doubt but what they were saved. And there was not a wicked man slain among them; (26b-27a)
- (D) Now when the Lamanites saw that their brethren would not flee from the sword, neither would they turn aside to the right hand or to the left, but that they would lie down and perish, and praised God even in the very act of perishing under the sword-- Now when the Lamanites saw this they did forbear from slaying them; (23-24a) // and they came down even as their brethren, relying upon the mercies of those whose arms were lifted to slay them. And it came to pass that the people of God were joined that day by more than the number who had been slain; (25c-26a)
- (E) and there were many whose hearts had swollen in them for those of their brethren who had fallen under the sword, (24b) // for they were stung for the murders which they had committed; (25b)
- (F) for they repented of the things which they had done. And it came to pass that they threw down their weapons of war, and they would not take them again, (24c-25a)

Note: The second A is related to the first only at a subtle level. It is a summation of the whole system.

**Appendix II**  
**Alma 36 Comparison**

Welch		Johnson	
a, 1a	My son give ear to my words	A, 1a	My son give ear to my words
b, 1b	Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land	B, 1b	Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land
c, 2a	Do as I have done	C, 2a	Do as I have done
d, 2b	Remember the captivity of our fathers	D, 2b	Remember the captivity of our fathers
e, 2c	For they were in bondage	E, 2c	For they were in bondage
f, 2d	He surely did deliver them	F, 2d	He surely did deliver them
g, 3a	Trust in God	G, 3a	whosoever shall put their trust in God
h, 3b	Supported in trials, troubles, and afflictions	H, 3b	shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day.
i, 3c	Lifted up at the last day		
j, 4	I know this not of myself but of God	I, 4	not...know of myself...but of God.
k, 5	Born of God	J, 5	(born of God)
l, 6-9	I sought to destroy the church	K, 6	For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to destroy the church of God...
m, 10	My limbs were paralyzed	L, 9-11	(angel spoke, he fell, heard no more)
n, 14-15 <sup>1</sup>	Fear of being in the presence of God	M, 12-14	(torment, horror at thought of coming into God's presence)
o, 16	Pains of a damned soul	N, 15-16	(desires to be banished, pains of a damned soul)
		O, 17a	And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment,
p, 17a	Harrowed up by the memory of sins	P, 17b	while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins,
q, 17b	I remembered Jesus Christ, a son of God	Q <sub>1</sub> , 17c	I remembered...concerning...Jesus Christ
		Q <sub>2</sub> , 17d	to atone for the sins of the world.
q',	I cried, Jesus, son of God	Q <sub>1</sub> ', 18a	I cried...O Jesus, thou Son of God
		Q <sub>2</sub> ', 18b	have mercy on me...

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<sup>1</sup>Verses 11-13 are omitted.

p', 19	Harrowed up by the memory of sins no more	P', 19	...I was harrowed up by the memory of sins no more.
o', 20	Joy as exceeding as was the pain	O', 20	...my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!
21	(omitted)	N', 21	(nothing as exquisite as pains or joy)
n, 22	Long to be in the presence of God	M', 22	...my soul did long to be there (with God)
m', 23	My limbs received strength again	L', 23	...my limbs received strength again...
l', 24 <sup>2</sup>	I labored to bring souls to repentance	K', 24-25	...labored without ceasing...great joy in my labors
k', 26a	Born of God	J', 26a	...many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen
j', 26b	Therefore my knowledge is of God	I', 26b	...knowledge I have is of God.
h', 27a	Supported under trials, troubles, and afflictions	H', 27a	I have been supported...God has delivered me...
g', 27b	Trust in him	G', 27b	and I do put my trust in him,
f', 27c	He will deliver me	F', 27b-28a	and he will still deliver me. And I know that he will raise me up in the last day...
i', 28a	and raise me up at the last day		
e', 28b-29a	As God brought our fathers out of bondage and captivity	E', 28b-29a	(fathers brought out of Egypt and also Jerusalem; delivered from bondage and captivity, from time to time...present day
d', 29b	Retain in remembrance their captivity	D', 29b	and I have always retained in remembrance their captivity;
		C', 29c	yea, and ye also ought to retain in remembrance, as I have done, their captivity.
c', 30a	Know as I do know	B', 30a	(know as I do know—keep commandments and prosper; any ye ought to know also, if not keep commandments, will be cut off)
b', 30b	Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land		
a', 30c	This according to his word	A', 30b	Now this is according to his word.

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<sup>2</sup>Verse 25 omitted.