

UNIT 1 REVIEW

Rel 121: Introduction to the Book of Mormon 1

(10/2/06, from lectures 1–8 for Exam 1)

For **identifications**, review the terms below for passive recognition. Make sure that you cannot only identify the person, term, or event, but be able to explain why it is important to the gospel text.

When preparing for **scripture commentary**, be able to explain the original context of the passage (author and situation, not necessarily chapter and verse), and address basic historical questions (when and why was this text written, how did the information in it—from the original source, to the author, through editors and translators—get to us?), literary questions (what kind of writing is the passage, how does it fit into its larger context, and what are its literary aims?), and theological questions (what principles or doctrines does this passage illustrate or teach, and, just as importantly, how does it engage and affect the reader?). As part of your theological analysis, be prepared to apply the principle to a modern reader.

On **essays** (and, to a lesser extent, for the **short answers** on quizzes), try to respond to the question as completely as possible. Begin with a sentence or two for a thesis and then organize it into short paragraphs of three or four sentences for ease of organization and grading (short answers will consist of only four or five sentences or perhaps, in some cases just a list or chart).

Course Objectives

- Increase the student's knowledge of the Book of Mormon: familiarize him or her with the basic storylines, characters, and concepts in this book of scripture
- Help the student read, discuss, and write about the Book of Mormon as both a source of scriptural knowledge and as a sacred text: become familiar with the process of closely reading and analyzing a scriptural text (the how, what, and why of a selection of text)
- Strengthen individual testimonies of sacred truths, particularly of Jesus Christ and the doctrines of the Restoration.

Names and Terms

TITLE PAGE PURPOSES

Show the great things the Lord did for their
(our) fathers

Know the Covenants of the Lord

Convince Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the
Christ, the Eternal God

AUTHORS AND SOURCES

“Book proceeding forth from the mouth of a
Jew”

- Old Testament

- New Testament

Brass Plates and their contents

- Isaiah

- Zenos, Zenock, and Neum

Lehi

- Record of Lehi

Mormon, Plates of (abridgment)

Nephi

- Large Plates of Nephi

- Small Plates of Nephi

Reading Strategies

Ask questions, careful reading, prayerful pondering, consider scholarly contributions, pray and ponder again

Read in sections

- avoid proof texting
- pericopes
- structural analyses

Understanding a Text (see graphic on last page)

- hermeneutics
 - › understanding the meaning *then* and the meaning *now*
- establishing the text
 - › autographs or original texts do not survive
- translation
 - › understanding the meaning of the words themselves
- exegesis
 - › properly understanding the *original* meaning
 - › historical questions
 - › literary questions
 - › theological questions
- exposition
 - › understanding the meaning to *current* audiences
 - › “applying the scriptures to ourselves” (see 1 Nephi 19:23)

GENRES

Narratives – “Telling a Story”

- Introductions
- Transition and Summary Reports
- Editorial Digressions and Explanations
 - e.g., discussions about plates and records, “and thus we see” passages
- Historical Narratives
- Vision or Dream Reports
- Miracle Stories

Discourses – “quotations,” connected speech

- Parables and Allegories
- Some Prayers
- Exhortations and fatherly admonition, sermons, longer speeches, written treatises

Dramatic Episodes

- Apocalypse

Poetry

- Laments
- Psalms (esp. Praise Songs)
- Hymns
- Prophecies “after the manner of the Jews”
- Some Prayers

PRINCIPLES

Condescension

- of the Father and the Son
- of the Son in his ministry

Eternal Life, greatest of the gifts of God

- definition of

Gathering and Scattering of Israel

Gift of faith, know by the spirit that Jesus

Christ is the son of God (ex. Nephi, D&C 46:13)

Gift of believing on the words of others (ex.

Sam, D&C 46:14)

Retaliation, law of (application?)

Mercy and deliverance for those who fear

God and come unto him

Messiah, person and work of (Christology)

Pride = idolotry, source of most sins

Wicked, take the truth to be hard

COVENANTS

Horizontal

- treaties, with Zoram

Vertical

- with individuals
- with people and nations

[Noah covenant]

Abrahamic covenant
 Deuteronomic covenant
 [David covenants]
 Lehi covenant
 Oaths

SOME THEMES

Church of the Lamb versus Church of the Devil (a.k.a, “The Great and Abominable”)
 Deliverance
 Division of righteous and wicked
 Gathering and Scattering of Israel
 Gentiles, role of with the House of Israel
 God’s Role in History
 Love of God = Jesus Christ and his Atonement
 Obedience and consequent blessings
 Removal of “the Plain and Precious Parts”
 Revelation
 “Tender Mercies”

IMPORTANT FIGURES AND CHARACTERS

Isaiah the prophet
 Ishmael
 Jacob², son of Lehi
 Jehovah = God of Israel = premortal Christ
 John the Baptist
 Joseph², son of Lehi
 Josiah
 Laban
 Laman
 Lehi
 Lemuel
 “Man wrought upon by the Holy Ghost”
 Nephi
 Sam
 Sariah
 Spirit of the Lord
 “Suffering Servant”
 Zedekiah
 Zoram

TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS

abridgment
 condescension
 - of the Father and the Son
 - of the Son
 five keys for interpreting Isaiah
 formula quotation
 Gentiles
 “goodly” parents
 Hellenized Christianity
 History of Lehi’s Descendants
 - “Near” and “Far” History
 History of the Gentiles to the Restoration
 History of the Last Days
 Holy Ghost
 - influence and power of
 - personage of
 “horticulture motif”
 hosanna
 Isaiah the Book
 - Book of Judgment
 - Book of Promise
 Israel
 Jew
 language of my father
 - learning of the Jews
 - language of the Egyptians
 Liahona
 Light of Christ
 Messiah
 parallelism (poetic, specific kinds not required)
 plain and precious parts
 poetic use of language, purpose of ponder/pondering
 “prophetic vocabulary” of 1 Nephi 10
 - destruction of the wicked
 - person and work of the Messiah
 - gathering and scattering of Israel
 Reign and ministry of Nephi
 Spirit of the Lord
 - power of the spirit, influence of the Holy

Ghost

- person of the Holy Ghost
- premortal spirit of Jesus Christ

stiffneckedness

strait

Superscription to 1 Nephi

“vocabulary of praise”

Title Page

wrath of God

EVENTS

Lehi’s call and first visions

- Psalm of Lehi

Lehi takes his family into the wilderness

The brothers return for the plates

- the slaying of Laban
- the oath of Zoram

Lehi’s family reunited

- Sariah’s testimony

Ishmael’s family joins the expedition

- rebellion in the wilderness

Lehi relates his dream of the Tree of Life

Lehi’s sermon to his family

Nephi’s interpretive vision of the Tree of Life / the Apocalypse of Nephi

Nephi’s exhortation to his brothers

Travel through the wilderness

- marriages to the daughters of Ishmael
- the broken bow incident
- death of Ishmael
- rebellion at Nahom

Time in the land Bountiful

- building the ship
- Nephi admonishes his brothers; recounts the history of Israel; Psalm on the Lord and His People
- the “shocking” episode

Sea voyage to the Promised Land

- rebellion and storm; Nephi’s Lament for His Parents

Nephi expounds the prophecies of Christ

Nephi reads to his brother the prophecies of

Isaiah

Nephi comments on Isaiah and seals his writing with three testimonies

PLACES

Jerusalem

wilderness

River of Laman

Valley of Lemuel

Nahom

Land Bountiful

Promised Land

SYMBOLS

Allegory of the Olive Tree – see 1 Nephi 8 and 15

Christ, the Tree of Life

crossing the River Laman

dreary waste

Exodus

Fountain of Living Waters

fruit of the tree

Great and Abominable Church

- narrow (historical) and exclusive application
- broad (typological) and inclusive application

iron rod

large and spacious building

large and spacious field

mist of darkness

multitude/multitudes

path

pillar of fire

river

rock

Servant

strait and narrow path

Tree of Life

wide gate, broad way

wilderness

Word of God

Structures

1 Nephi

- Lehi's Jerusalem Ministry (1:4–20)
 - Journey Into the Wilderness (2:1–7:22)
 - Lehi's Dream and Prophecy (8:1–10:22)**
 - The Apocalypse of Nephi (11:1–15:19)**
 - The Journey Resumed (16:1–19:21)
 - Nephi Quotes and Interprets Isaiah (19:22–22:18)

The Apocalypse of Nephi (11–14) Nephi's record of his interpretative vision of his father's Tree of Life dream; shares many of the characteristics of an apocalypse, including panoramic depictions of world history given by a divine or otherworldly guide (compare to John's Revelation)

Christ, the Tree of Life (11:1–36)

- Nephi and the Spirit of the Lord (11:1–12)
 - The Vision of the Tree (11:8)
- The Coming of Jesus Christ in the Old World (11:12–33)
 - The Condescension of God the Father and the Son (11:12–20)
 - *Interpretive Centerpiece: Christ is the Love of God, the Tree of Life and the Fountain of Living Waters (11:21–25)*
 - The Condescension of God the Son (11:26–33)
 - The Rejection of the Apostles of the Lamb (11:34–36)

History of the Children of Lehi (12:1–23)

- The “Near History” of Lehi's Descendants (before the advent of Christ, 12:1–3)
- The Coming of Jesus Christ in the New World (12:4–12; cf. 2 Nephi–3 Nephi 7)
- The “Far” History of Lehi's Descendants (after the advent of Christ)

History of the Gentiles to the Restoration (13:1–42)

- The Great and Abominable Church (narrow, historical; 13:1–10)
- The Gentiles Come to the Promised Land (13:10–19)
- The Gentiles and the Record of the Jews (13:20–42)
- Lamb of God Shall Manifest Himself to All Nations (13:42)

History of the Last Days (14:1–17)

- The Gentiles and God's Great and Marvelous Work (14:1–8)
 - Gentiles Can Be Adopted into Israel (14:1–2)
 - Gentiles Must Repent (14:3–6)
 - The Choice: Peace and Life Eternal –or– Captivity of the Devil (14:7)
 - The Father's Covenant with Israel (14:8)
- The Great and Abominable Church (broad, typological; 14:9–17)
 - Only Two Churches (14:10)
 - The Church of the Devil Fights Against the Church of the Lamb (14:11–14)
 - The Great and Abominable Church Destroyed at the Return of Jesus Christ (14:15–17)

The Other Apocalypse: the Mission of John the Revelator (14:18–30)

Notable Passages (see Packet, section 13)

Be able to identify the original context of the passage—author, situation, and how we got the text—as well as its meaning, and its importance for individual application today

Larger Issues, Potential Short Answer or Essay Questions

- Why is the Book of Mormon “the most correct book?”
 - ▶ Another witness of the Savior
 - ▶ A source for the foundational doctrines regarding the Atonement and the Plan of Salvation.
- Be familiar with the contents and importance of the Title Page
- Know the sources and components Book of Mormon
- Know the major sections and the basic structure of 1 Nephi
- For each major section of text, ask yourself how we got the text (such issues as sources, development, authorship, intended audience and purpose); what form the text is in now (structure, genre, themes, and motifs); and why it is important (what doctrines does it teach, how it applies to us).
- Discuss how Nephi obtained the Brass Plates. What worked and what did not?
- What are the problems involved with Nephi’s slaying of Laban? How do we explain them?
- How did the journey of Lehi’s family in the wilderness typify the Exodus of the Children of Israel under Moses? How do both journeys serve as a type of our journey through life?
- Be able to discuss the blessings of obedience and the consequences of rebellion, citing examples from the text
- How does Nephi “bridge” one section to another or carry one motif or image into the next chapter?
- How did the sermon of Lehi in 1 Nephi 10 establish the “prophetic vocabulary” that helped Nephi in his interpretive vision of the Tree of Life?
- Considering the many types of dreams, visions, and revelations described in the Book of Mormon, what ways do we see that the Lord communicates, or tries to communicate with us?
- Recognize the different ways of writing (genres or forms). How do we read each type of writing differently, and what effects do the different genres have on us as we read the scriptures?
- What is the role of pondering in understanding the scriptures and receiving revelation?
- Understand the Christ imagery in the Tree of Life and the Fountain of Living Waters
- Study the condescension as described in 1 Nephi 11. How did the different episodes shown to Nephi in vision illustrate different aspects and phases of the condescension?
- How does Nephi’s vision of Christ in the Americas in 1 Nephi 12 foreshadow the Second Coming and the Millennium?
- What does the Great and Abominable Church represent and what does it not? Why are there

- only two Churches?
- What were some of the ways that “plain and precious parts” were removed from the Bible? Why does this make the Book of Mormon and other records necessary?
 - Review and understand the role of the Gentiles, both in the scattering and gathering of Israel and also how they will come unto Christ.
 - Briefly review the Apocalypse of Nephi in 1 Nephi 11–14. How is it a “guided tour” of history, and what peoples and periods does it cover? How is Jesus Christ central to interpreting this panoramic view of history?
 - “The guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center” (1 Nephi 16:2). Why is this the case, what causes the feelings of guilt, and how does this fact apply to us?
 - What types of Liahonas do we have today, and what role do faith and diligence play in our following them?
 - What lessons can we learn from Nephi’s interaction with his father in the Broken Bow incident?
 - Explain and describe the connection between the acceptance or rejection of Christ and the Gathering and Scattering of Israel.
 - What is the Book of Mormon quotation pattern for the prophecies of Isaiah?
 - Why does Nephi quote from the prophecies of Isaiah? What are the major themes of the prophecies found in 1 Nephi 20–21? How do the Isaiah passages sometimes serve as “hurdles” in our reading of the Book of Mormon and how can that be a good thing?
 - What must we know and do to “liken the scriptures to ourselves” appropriately? What is the goal, the problem, and the solution when working with the Isaiah passages and, indeed, any scriptural text?
 - Why does Nephi quote and teach from Isaiah in his narrative after he recounts the arrival of Lehi’s family in the promised land?
 - What are the “five keys” for interpreting Isaiah?
 - How do the Isaiah passages and other Book of Mormon prophecies have both spiritual and temporal applications? In particular, when it comes to the scattering and gathering of Israel, how is it that the spiritual gathering must take place first?
 - How do the authoritative prophecies of Isaiah are seen to confirm the visions and teachings of Lehi and Nephi throughout 1 Nephi?
 - Consider the organization of 1 Nephi. Why did Nephi structure the book as he did, and what does this structure emphasize?
 - What is the overall message or messages of 1 Nephi?

