

Cut Off from the Face and Presence: Alma’s Use of Hebraistic Idioms to Teach the Fall

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Alma’s teaching of the doctrine of the Fall of Adam and Eve to his troubled youngest son, Corianton, brings together and approximates two related Hebraistic idioms: “as they [Adam and Eve] were **cut off** [Hebrew: *nikrātū*¹] from the tree of life they should be **cut off from the face of the earth** [*yikkārētū mē‘al pēnē hā’ādāmā*]” and “our first parents were **cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord** [*nikrātū . . . mippēnē yhwḥ*]” (Alma 42:6–7). In this brief article, I will attempt to show how Alma uses the multiple meanings or senses—hereafter *polysemy*—of the Hebrew word *pānīm*, literally “face,”² in the idioms “cut off from the **face** of the earth” and “cut off . . . from the **presence** of the Lord” to emphasize the relational nature of the physical and spiritual death that resulted from the Fall. Moreover, I will also explain the additional wordplay on the names of Adam and Eve that Alma borrows from Genesis and uses in these verses.

A Note on Language

Moroni reports that the Nephites kept records in Egyptian (in a mode referred to as “reformed Egyptian” in his time) and that Hebrew existed among them in altered form (Mormon 9:32–33), implying that it had uses among them. Reformed Egyptian certainly served as Mormon’s editorial language (or script). Nevertheless, the language in Mormon’s editorial work and in the Book of Mormon as a whole reflects numerous Hebraisms.³ Mormon’s source documents, some of which he reproduced more or less wholesale into his record, include letters,⁴ sermons,⁵ and fatherly counsel (*paraenesis*).⁶ Alma’s counsel to Corianton his son particularly employs the language of Genesis 2–3 in Alma 42. For the purposes of this study, I assume that Alma’s counsel, whether recorded in Hebrew or not, employed scriptural language taken from the plates of brass that was originally Hebraistic in character, whatever Alma’s spoken language may have been at that time.

“Face[s]” = “Presence”: The Polysemy of *Pānîm*

The Hebrew plural noun *pānîm* is often translated concretely as “face” or sometimes less concretely with the abstract noun “presence.” Several texts from the Hebrew Bible play on forms of *pānîm* in terms of “face” as a surface (compare *sur* + *face*)⁷ and physical “presence.” For example, the prophet Ezekiel prophesies that “surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all **the men** [*hā’ādām*] that are **upon the face of the earth** [*‘al pēnē hā’ādāmā*], shall shake **at my presence** [*mippānāy*], and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground” (Ezekiel 38:19–20 KJV). This first example is particularly significant in that the prophet Ezekiel plays on both the polysemy of and the lexical associations between *hā’ādām* “the man” or “humanity” and *hā’ādāmā* “the ground” or “the earth” in a manner similar to the Creation, Fall, and Flood narratives in Genesis⁸ but also in that he plays on the polysemy of *pānîm* in terms of “[sur] face” and “presence.”

Another illustrative biblical example of the rhetorical repetition⁹ of *pānîm* occurs in Exodus 25:30, which preserves the Lord’s commandment regarding the showbread (the sacred bread of the tabernacle and, later, of the temple): “And thou shalt set upon the table **shewbread** [*lehem pānîm*] **before me** [*lēpānāy*] alway[s]” or “And you shall place upon the table the

bread of the Presence in my presence perpetually” (translation mine). The repetition of *pānīm* in the idioms *leḥem pānīm* and *lēpānāy* emphasizes this sacred bread as wholly belonging to the realm of Yahweh’s holiness. Both *pānīm* idioms allude to the phrase *lipnē yhwḥ* “before the Lord” or “in the Lord’s presence,” which signals a temple or cultic context.¹⁰ A similar, related example occurs in the Deuteronomistic account of David’s flight from Saul and the help rendered to David and his men by Ahimelech, the priest of the sanctuary at Nob: “So the priest gave him hallowed bread [*leḥem qōdeš*, holy bread]: for there was no bread there but the **shewbread** [*leḥem happānīm*], that was taken **from before the LORD** [*millipnē yhwḥ*], to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away” (1 Samuel 21:6 [MT 7]).¹¹ Here again the repetition of *pānīm* idioms emphasizes that the holiness of the bread consists in its connection to Yahweh’s “face” or “presence”—that is, within his realm, of which the temple itself constituted “a scale model.”¹² Other such examples could be cited.¹³

“Cut Off . . . from the Face of the Earth”: An Idiom for Temporal Death

Another passage, also from the Saul-David cycle, illustrates one of the most significant idiomatic uses of *pānīm*. The Hebrew phrase “cut off . . . from the face of the earth [*mē’al pēnē hā’ādāmā*]” constitutes a vivid description of physical death. At the time when Jonathan, the son of Saul made—literally “cut”—his famous covenant with David, Jonathan sought a reciprocal covenant from David. Jonathan wished to preserve his posterity from being “cut off” or exterminated with many of Saul’s other descendants: “But also thou shalt **not cut off** [*lō’-tahrīt*] thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not **when the Lord hath cut off** [*bēhakarit yhwḥ*] the enemies of David every one **from the face of the earth** [*mē’al pēnē hā’ādāmā*]. So Jonathan **made** [*cut*, *wayyikrōt*] a covenant¹⁴ with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David’s enemies” (1 Samuel 20:15–16).¹⁵ In an unwittingly ironic way, the Nephites “did swear by the heavens, and also by the throne of God, that they would go up to battle against their enemies, and **would cut them off from the face of the land**” (Mormon 3:10).¹⁶ The Lord’s response to the Nephites’ blasphemous oaths,¹⁷ of course, was to declare that they, rather than the Lamanites, would be thus cut off: “Vengeance is mine, and I will repay; and because this people repented not after I had delivered them, behold, **they shall be cut off from the face of the earth**” (Mormon 3:15). With the withdrawal of the Holy Ghost,¹⁸ the Nephites became like

the figure in the Greek play who, reaching the stage of *atē* (madness), subsequently “cooperates in the gods’ or in nature’s operation to remove him.”¹⁹ It should be noted that the Lord’s revelation to Mormon here uses the *divine passive*, which does not explicitly state the agent of the passive verb. In other words, the agent of the verb form in the phrase “they shall be cut off” (Heb. *yikkārētū*)²⁰ is ambiguous enough to refer to the Lord himself, the Lamanites whom the Nephites had threatened to cut off (exterminate), or even the Nephites themselves. In a real sense, the Nephites cut themselves off from the face of the earth.

“Cut Off from the Presence of the Lord”: An Idiom for Spiritual Death

The Hebrew verb *kārat*, “cut” or “cut off” serves as the fundamental term in the Hebrew Bible for making or concluding a covenant.²¹ The “cutting” of a covenant refers to the actual sacrificial rite of cutting the sacrificial animals. Moreover, the cutting of the animal in the covenant-making ceremony symbolically enacted what would happen to the party who failed to keep the covenant and uphold its terms. Perhaps relatedly, in its passive stem, *kārat* came to constitute an “excommunication formula.”²²

The Mosaic legislation of Leviticus, which concerned particularly priests and the tabernacle/temple, describes the excommunication of Aaronic priests who approach the sacred offerings made by the children of Israel while in a state of ritual uncleanness: “Say unto them, Whosoever he be of all your seed among your generations, that goeth unto the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul **shall be cut off** [*wēnikrētā*]²³ **from my presence** [*millēpānay*]: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 22:3).

Like the phrase “presence of the Lord” [*pēnē yhwḥ*; compare the toponym Peniel/Penuel and Jacob’s experience there],²⁴ the modified expression “before the Lord [*lipnē yhwḥ*]” was virtually synonymous with a temple context or situation in the Hebrew Bible.²⁵ Jennifer Lane, a religious scholar, further notes that “a key dimension of the term ‘presence’ is the expression of relationships, both among humans and between God and humans.”²⁶ Lane cites Horacio Simian-Yofre, another scholar, who asserts that “insofar as *pānīm* bespeaks presence, its purpose is to underline the positive aspect of the interpersonal relationship. The negative aspect of the relationship is expressed by separation from *pānīm*.”²⁷ In other words, to be “cut off from [the Lord’s] presence” suggests not only being “cut off” from the Lord’s literal and ritual “presence”

but also having a disrupted personal divine-human interpersonal relationship. Mormon highlights this sense of the idiom when he states, “And if the Lord shall say—Because of thine iniquities thou shalt be cut off from my presence—he will cause that it shall be so” (Helaman 12:21). Moreover, Moroni’s description of the Jaredite king Morianton’s moral failures emphasizes the point: “And he [Morianton] did do justice unto the people, but not unto himself because of his many whoredoms; wherefore he was cut off from the presence of the Lord” (Ether 10:11). Because of his whoredoms, Morianton had cut himself off from the Lord’s *pānīm*.

Lane also notes the change in or disruption of the “relationship” between Adam and Eve and “the presence of the Lord” following their transgression described in the Genesis account of the Fall: “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves **from the presence of the LORD God** [*mippēnē yhw̄h ’ēlōhīm*] amongst the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8).²⁸ Lane further states, “Their disobedience had changed their relationship to the presence of the Lord. They no longer desired to be in his presence” just as Laman and Lemuel risked being “cast off **from the presence** of the Lord” (1 Nephi 8:36).²⁹ The conditional “dynastic”³⁰ promise given to Nephi and his descendants in 1 Nephi 2:21, “inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord,” reiterated throughout the Book of Mormon,³¹ should be understood in this context.

Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the Lord’s presence” on account of their disobedience, initiating their being “driven out”³² of the garden by the Lord, “shut out,”³³ and thus “cut off” from the Lord’s “presence,” with cherubim as sentinels keeping the “way” of their potential return.³⁴ Jacob, the brother of Nephi, taught that “the fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen **they were cut off from the presence of the Lord**” (2 Nephi 9:6). Alma, using almost identical phraseology, defines being “cut off from the presence of the Lord” as “spiritual death”: “Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind **a spiritual death** as well as a temporal, **that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord**, it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from **this spiritual death**” (Alma 42:9; compare Helaman 14:16). Then Alma further explained to Corianton, “And now remember, my son, if it were not for the plan of redemption . . . as soon as they were dead their souls were miserable, being **cut off from the presence of the Lord**” (Alma 42:11; compare especially

2 Nephi 9:9). Without the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the condition of spiritual death—being “cut off” from the Lord’s “face”—would have been permanent: “And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever **to be cut off from his presence**” (Alma 42:14).

Losing Face: “Cut Off from the Face of the Earth” and the “Presence of the Lord”

In his fatherly counsel to Corianton, Alma brings together the idioms “cut off from the face of the earth” and “cut off . . . from the presence of the Lord” to try to resolve his youngest son’s concerns about the “justice of God” (Alma 42:1). Alma lays the groundwork for this teaching by quoting (a version of) the Genesis narrative’s description of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from Eden: “Now behold, my son, I will explain this thing unto thee. For behold, after the Lord God sent our first parents forth from the garden of Eden, to till **the ground** [*hā’ādāmā*], from whence he was³⁵ taken—yea, he drove³⁶ out **the man** [*hā’ādām*], and he placed at the east end of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep **the tree of life**” (*’ēš bahayyīm*) (Alma 42:2, quoting Genesis 3:23–24).

The Genesis narrative establishes a strong interrelationship between the names Adam (*’ādām/hā’ādām*) and Eve (*hawwā*, “life-giver”)³⁷ and the “ground” (*hā’ādāmā*)³⁸ whence Adam was taken and the “tree of life” (*’ēš bahayyīm*),³⁹ “liv[ing] forever” (*wāhay lē’ōlām*),⁴⁰ and “life”/“living.”⁴¹ Alma’s teaching on the Fall episode builds on this onomastic wordplay (wordplay that involves the sounds in and meanings of names), culminating in a polysemic wordplay on *pānīm*:

For behold, if **Adam** [*’ādām/hā’ādām*] had put forth his hand immediately, and partaken of the tree of **life** [*’ēš bahayyīm*], he would have **lived forever** [compare *wāhay lē’ōlām*, Genesis 3:22], according to the word of God, having no space for repentance; yea, and also the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated.

But behold, it was appointed unto man to **die**—therefore, as they were **cut off from the tree of life** [*’ēš bahayyīm*] they should be **cut off from the face of the earth** [*mē’al pēnē hā’ādāmā*—and **man** [*’ādām/hā’ādām*] became lost forever, yea, they became fallen **man** [*’ādām/hā’ādām*].

And now, ye see by this that our first parents were **cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence** [*mippēnē*]⁴² **of the Lord**; and thus we see they became subjects to follow after their own will. (Alma 42:5–7)

Alma describes Adam and Eve being “cut off from the face of the earth” as a consequence of their being “cut off from the tree of life.” In other words, their being “cut off” from the source of eternal “life”—their spiritual “life”—eventuates their being “cut off” from the source of physical life, the “earth” or “ground.” Adam and Eve, in being cut off from the tree of life and the earth/ground (their literary “namesakes”), are cut off from two “faces” or “presences” (*pānīm*). In using this polysemic pun on *pānīm*, Alma effectively equates *pānīm*—“the face of the earth” and “the presence of the Lord”—with “life” (*hayyīm*) or “lives.”

What motivated or inspired Alma's juxtaposition of the idioms “cut off from the face of the earth” and “cut off . . . from the presence of the Lord”? A distinct possibility is the Cain and Abel story, which employs a similar pun on *pānīm* and also repeats elements of the Fall narrative. After Cain's fratricide of Abel, the Lord curses the ground against Cain. Cain responds thus: “Behold, **thou hast driven me out** [*gēraštā*] this day **from the face of the earth** [*mē'al pēnē hā'ādāmā*]; and **from thy face** [*ūmippānēkā*, and from thy presence] **shall I be hid** [compare Genesis 3:8!]; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me” (Genesis 4:14). The narrator uses *grš* in essentially the same sense as it is used in Genesis 3:24, “**So he drove out** [*waygāres*] **the man** [*hā'ādām*]; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” and as Alma uses it (“yea, he drove out the man,” Alma 42:2, Original Text).

Conclusion

Alma's juxtaposition of idioms approximating the Hebraisms “cut off from the face of the earth” (*kārat/yikkārēt mē'al pēnē hā'ādāmā*) and “cut off from the presence of the Lord” (*kārat/yikkārēt millipnē yhwē*) not only reflects a sophisticated understanding of the ancient texts that he had on hand but also uses the concept of *pānīm*, which underlies both idioms to describe how Adam and Eve's spiritual death eventuated in physical death.

Understanding Alma's use of the phrase “cut off from the presence of the Lord” (*kārat/yikkārēt millipnē yhwē*) in the context of the Fall narrative is key to understanding the dynastic promise to Nephi recorded in 1 Nephi 2:21, “inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord,” often reiterated throughout the Book of Mormon. This understanding helps us to appreciate the ways in which the Nephites



Adam and Eve Statues, Temple Square North Visitors' Center, Weldon C. Andersen, © IRI

“Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal, that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord, it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from this spiritual death” (Alma 42:9)

might have understood conceptually related biblical texts like Genesis 4:14 (“from thy face shall I be hid,” discussed above) and Deuteronomy 32:19–20 (“And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide **my face** [*pānāy*, my presence] from them,⁴³ I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is **no faith** [*lō' - 'ēmun*]”) as applying to the Lamanites and themselves.⁴⁴

Recognizing Alma's polysemic wordplay on *pānīm* also helps us to better understand and appreciate Enos's use of similar wordplay in the conclusion of his personal writings: “And I rejoice in the day when . . . [I] shall stand **before him** [*lēpānāw*]; then shall I see **his face** [*pānāw*] with pleasure” (Enos 1:27). From a Latter-day Saint perspective, the ancient Israelite “shewbread” or “bread of Presence” has clear affinities with the bread of the sacrament by means of which we “witness” our willingness “to take upon [us] the name of [the] Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given [us], that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us].”⁴⁵ Finally, we can better see the connection between the praxis of worship, restoration to God's “presence,” and eternal life: “And now behold, I say unto you that **the right way** [compare the cherubim and “the way” of return in Genesis 3:24⁴⁶] is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; and Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore **ye must bow down before him** [*lēpānāw*, to his face], and **worship him** [*wēhištaḥāwitem*⁴⁷ *lō*, possibly from *ḥwy/hyy* (“live”); thus, “cause oneself to live”]⁴⁸ with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul; and if ye do this ye shall in nowise be cast out.”⁴⁹

Notes

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1. The retroversions of Hebrew in Book of Mormon passages cited within this article are intended to estimate what these idioms would have looked like in biblical Hebrew. Just as there are Hebraisms and Aramaisms in New Testament Greek and today's Yiddish, and even though Greek constitutes a distinct language, Alma would have used scriptural Hebraisms from the language of the plates of brass (even if it was written in Egyptian), no matter his everyday spoken language.

2. On the plural noun *pānīm* having a singular meaning, see Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 111.

3. See, for example, John A. Tvedtnes, “Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon: A Preliminary Survey,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1971): 50–60; John A. Tvedtnes,

“Since the Book of Mormon Is Largely the Record of a Hebrew People, Is the Writing Characteristic of the Hebrew Language?” *Ensign*, October 1986, 64–66; John A. Tvedtnes, “The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon,” in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: FARMS, 1991), 77–91; and Donald W. Parry, “Hebraisms and Other Ancient Peculiarities in the Book of Mormon,” in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 155–89. For a larger treatment of the Hebraistic onomastic evidence, see Matthew L. Bowen, *Name as Key-Word: Collected Essays on Onomastic Wordplay and the Temple in Mormon Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2018).

4. See, for example, Moroni’s letter to Ammoron (Alma 54:5–14); Ammoron’s response (Alma 54:14–24); Helaman’s epistle to Moroni (Alma 56–58); Moroni’s letter to Pahoran (Alma 60); Pahoran’s response (Alma 61); Giddianhi’s epistle to Lachoneus (3 Nephi 3:2–10); Mormon’s epistles to Moroni (Moroni 8–9).

5. See, for example, King Benjamin’s sermon at the temple in Zarahemla (Mosiah 2–5); Alma’s sermons in Zarahemla (Alma 5) and Gideon (Alma 7).

6. See, for example, Benjamin’s counsel to his sons (Mosiah 1); Alma’s counsel to his sons Helaman (Alma 36–37, 45:2–17), Shiblon (Alma 38), and Corianton (Alma 39–42); and Helaman’s counsel to his sons Nephi and Lehi (Helaman 5:6–12).

7. The modern English term *surface* is “a borrowing from French; modelled on a Latin lexical item”—i.e., *surface* is modelled on Latin *superficies*, literally “on the face.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. “surface,” last updated March 2012, oed.com.

8. See, for example, Genesis 2:5, 7, 19; 3:17–19; 7:23; 8:21.

9. This type of repetition is described as polyptoton, a rhetorical device involving a “repetition of words from the same root but with different endings” (vis-a-vis paronomasia, “punning [or] playing on the sounds and meanings of words,” i.e., words from unrelated roots [see p. 110]), by Richard A. Lanham in *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 117.

10. Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 26.

11. MT denotes versification that reflects printed editions of the Masoretic Text, which in some cases differs from the versification in some translations.

12. Hugh W. Nibley, “The Meaning of the Temple,” in *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton, vol. 12, *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 19.

13. See the extended repetition of *pānīm* in Numbers 20:1–13. In Numbers 20:3, the narrator reports the words of the Israelites’ murmuring: “And the people chode [strove, *wayyāreb*] with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died **before the Lord** [*lipné yhw̄h*].” Subsequently in verse 6, “And Moses and Aaron went **from the presence** [*mippēnē*] of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon **their faces** [*pēnēhem*]: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them.”

14. See also Numbers 20:9–10: “And Moses took the rod **from before the Lord** [*millipné yhw̄h*], as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together **before** the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?”

15. The KJV translators supply the italicized words “a covenant” here. The Hebrew word for covenant (*bērit*) is not present in this verse in the underlying Hebrew text, although it is certainly implied.

16. See also 1 Kings 13:34: “And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to **cut it off [strike it], and to destroy it from off the face of the earth** [*mē’al pēnē hā’ādāmā*].”

17. The English phrasing “face of the land” does not occur in the KJV. In KJV Genesis, the phrase *pēnē hā’ādāmā* is rendered “face of the earth” (Genesis 4:14; 6:1, 7; 7:4) or “face of the ground” (Genesis 2:6; 7:23; 8:8, 13). The expression “face of **all** the earth” always uses *’eres/’āreš* (*pēnē kol-hā’āreš*; see Genesis 1:29; 7:3; 11:8–9). In one later Genesis passage (Genesis 41:56), the phrase *pēnē kol-hā’āreš* is translated “all the face of the earth.” In any case, the idioms—in terms of concept—are closely related, and Mormon’s language resembles both. The collocation “from off the face of the earth” (Genesis 7:4; Deuteronomy 6:15; 1 Kings 13:34; Jeremiah 28:16; Amos 9:8) or “from off the face of the ground” (Genesis 8:8) always seems to be *mē’al pēnē hā’ādāmā*.

18. See Matthew L. Bowen, “Swearing by Their Everlasting Maker’: Some Notes on *Paanchi* and *Giddianhi*,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 28 (2018): 155–70.

19. See, for example, Moroni 8:28; 9:4; compare Mormon 5:16; and Ether 2:15; 15:19. All of these passages quote or allude to Genesis 6:3 (Moses 8:17). See further, 1 Nephi 7:14; 2 Nephi 26:11; Doctrine and Covenants 1:33.

20. Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Semester 3* (transcripts of lectures presented to an honors Book of Mormon class at Brigham Young University, 1988–1990) (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 229–230. From Lecture 75, Helaman 3–6: “So the person deliberately does everything as if he were hypnotized, as if he were under a spell. He does everything that will deliberately get him off the stage as quickly as possible. There’s no more use for him. There’s no more hope for him; therefore, he cooperates in the gods’ or in nature’s operation to remove him. He’s just so much excess baggage. So *atē* is the point at which there is no return. You’re on the way out after *atē*.”

21. Compare Proverbs 2:22: “But the wicked shall be cut off [*yikkārētū*] from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.” See also Exodus 9:15.

22. Gerhard Hasel, “*kārat*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 7:339–52. For more on covenant “cutting” from a Latter-day Saint perspective, see Jared T. Parker, “Cutting Covenants,” in *The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 109–28.

23. Hasel, *kārat*, 347. See Genesis 17:14; Exodus 12:15, 21; 30:33, 38; 31:14; Leviticus 7:20; 17:14; 20:17–18; Numbers 9:13; 15:30–31; 19:13; 20.

24. Compare Genesis 17:14.

25. Matthew L. Bowen, “And There Wrestled a Man with Him’ (Genesis 32:24): Enos’s Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 151–60.

26. Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel*, 26.

27. Jennifer C. Lane, “The Presence of the Lord,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 121.

28. Horacio Simian-Yofre, “*Pānim*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helber Ringgren, and Heinz-Joseph Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 11:607; Lane, “Presence of the Lord,” 121.

29. Lane, “Presence of the Lord,” 122.

30. Compare the use of the idiom “cast off from the presence of the Lord” (Helaman 12:25).

31. The Lord’s covenant promises to Nephi distinctly resemble the conditional version of the Lord’s dynastic promise to David: “I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that **thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest**, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk **before me** [*lēpānay*] in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, **there shall not fail thee** [*lō`-yikkārēt*, literally, **there shall not be cut off**] (said he) **a man on the throne of Israel**” (1 Kings 2:2–4). Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, **There shall not fail**[*lō`-yikkārēt*] **thee a man in my sight** [*millēpānay*, **from before me**] to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk **before me** [*lēpānay*] as thou hast walked **before me** [*lēpānāy*] (1 Kings 8:25); “**And if thou wilt walk before me**, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, **to do according to all that I have commanded thee**, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, **There shall not fail thee** [*lō`-yikkārēt*] **a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments** and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them. **Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight;** and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people” (1 Kings 9:4–7).

32. See 2 Nephi 4:4, which reads, “inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence”; 2 Nephi 5:20; and Alma 9:13–14; 36:30; 37:13; 38:1; 50:20.

33. 2 Nephi 2:19, paraphrasing Genesis 3:24 (Moses 4:31).

34. Moses 5:41; 6:49; compare 2 Nephi 9:9; Moses 5:41; Numbers 12:14–15.

35. Genesis 3:24 (Moses 4:31).

36. Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Four: Alma 21–55* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship), 2429. Skousen demonstrates that “he was” constituted the original reading over “they were.”

37. Skousen, *Analysis*, 2430. See also Royal Skousen, *The Earliest Text*, 770. See also Skousen, “Some Textual Changes for a Scholarly Study of the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 51, no. 4 (2012): 106. Skousen further demonstrates that “drove” rather than “drew” represents the original and better reading.

38. Compare the explanation of Eve (*hawwā*) as “the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20; Moses 4:26). Through the Fall and Christ’s redemption, she also becomes of the mother of all those who will inherit, in her own words, “**the eternal life** which God giveth unto the obedient” (Moses 5:11).

39. See Genesis 2:5–9; 3:17, 19, 23.

40. See Genesis 2:9; 3:22, 24.

41. See Genesis 3:22.

42. See Genesis 2:5–9; 3:17, 20.

43. Compare Genesis 3:8.

44. See also Deuteronomy 31:17–18; Ezekiel 39:29; Psalms 10:11; 13:1; 30:7; 44:23–24; 104:29; Isaiah 18:17; 59:2; 64:7 (compare Isaiah 1:15); and Job 34:28–29. In Psalm 30:7; Isaiah 64:7; and Job 34:28–29 the context is explicitly of prayer, and in other passages the context of prayer seems implicit. Compare Mosiah 11:25: “And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers.” In Psalm 51:9, the Psalmist petitions God: “hide thy face from my sins.” This subject deserves a fuller treatment that cannot be undertaken here.

45. See Matthew L. Bowen, “Not Partaking of the Fruit: Its Generational Consequences and Its Remedy,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi's Dream and Nephi's Vision*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 240–63.

46. See Moroni 4:3; and Doctrine and Covenants 20:77; see also 3 Nephi 18:7–11.

47. See Corbin T. Volluz, “Lehi's Dream of the Tree of Life: Springboard to Prophecy,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 2 (1993): 14–38. Note especially the discussion on page 35.

48. For the verb form in 2 Nephi 25:29, see Exodus 24:1.

49. For a short but useful discussion of the Hebrew verb *hištahāwā*, see Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 360–61. They conclude (361) that “the unusual shape of this word hints at its extraordinary cultural significance” (i.e., in ancient Israel).

50. See 2 Nephi 25:29; compare Genesis 3:24; and Alma 42:2.