

When Jesus speaks to Moroni, he speaks with the voice and language similar to the voice and language found in the writings of John the Beloved.

What Has Moroni to Do with John?

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While it has become rather common for Latter-day Saint readers of scripture to use Restoration scriptures such as the Book of Mormon or the Doctrine and Covenants to shed light on the Bible, it is less common to use the Bible to shed light on Restoration scripture. Robert L. Millet has written that, while there is definite value in leaning upon modern revelation to shed light upon the Bible, “we need to be just as attentive to those occasions when Bible passages serve as a hermeneutical lens through which we can expand our understanding of teachings contained in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.”¹ Millet’s suggestion is a fascinating one. How much can we rely upon the Bible to glean further understanding of uniquely Mormon scripture? Obvious examples come to mind of places where this sort of endeavor would bear fruit, such as the Apostle Paul’s discussion of charity in 1 Corinthians 13 and Mormon’s similar discussion in Moroni 7. But just how far can readers of the Book of Mormon take this idea? Would a comprehensive, all-inclusive intertextual study of the Bible and the Book of Mormon bear fruit?²

As a tool of literary study, “intertextuality” is perhaps best understood as “the literal presence (more or less literal, whether integral or not) of one text within another.”³ Although intertextuality as a method of literary criticism has its roots in the work of Julia Kristeva and Michel Foucault, it has also become a prominent part of biblical criticism⁴ in recent years, as scholars of the New Testament have attempted to more clearly define and accentuate how New Testament writers employed quotations and allusions from the Old Testament into their writings.⁵ Intertextual studies examining the presence of the Bible within the Book of Mormon have been largely limited to macrolevel analysis, such as the use of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon⁶ or the relationship between Matthew 5–7 and the temple sermon in 3 Nephi 12–14.⁷ Others have noted and analyzed the presence of the Bible within individual chapters.⁸ These studies have been quite successful at identifying the nuanced, particular ways in which portions of the biblical text are found in the Book of Mormon, and have been great additions to the field of Book of Mormon study. However, this paper argues that, in addition to these types of macrolevel studies, a *microlevel* intertextual study would also bear fruit—one in which individual verses, phrases, or even distinctive vocabulary terms are given the same type of comprehensive analysis found in the macrolevel studies.⁹ This paper will proceed to give two different types of analysis to demonstrate the usefulness of this microlevel analysis. First, a verse-specific analysis will be performed on Ether 4:12. Second, a quotation-specific analysis will be performed on the phrase “full of grace and truth.”

And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good; he that will not believe my words will not believe me—that I am; and he that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me. For behold, I am the Father, I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world. (Ether 4:12)

Ether 4:12 provides an intriguing example of a single Book of Mormon verse brimming with points of contact with the New Testament. In Ether chapter 4, Moroni interrupts his editing of the Jaredite record to insert a somewhat lengthy discourse of things that “the Lord said unto [him]” (Ether 4:6). The topic of the discourse is largely the need to repent and come unto Jesus, as well as the promise that the Jaredite record will come forth at a later time. Significantly, when Jesus speaks to Moroni throughout this chapter he speaks with the voice and language familiar to us as the Johannine Jesus—that is, Jesus according to the writings of John the Beloved. In verse 16, Jesus even

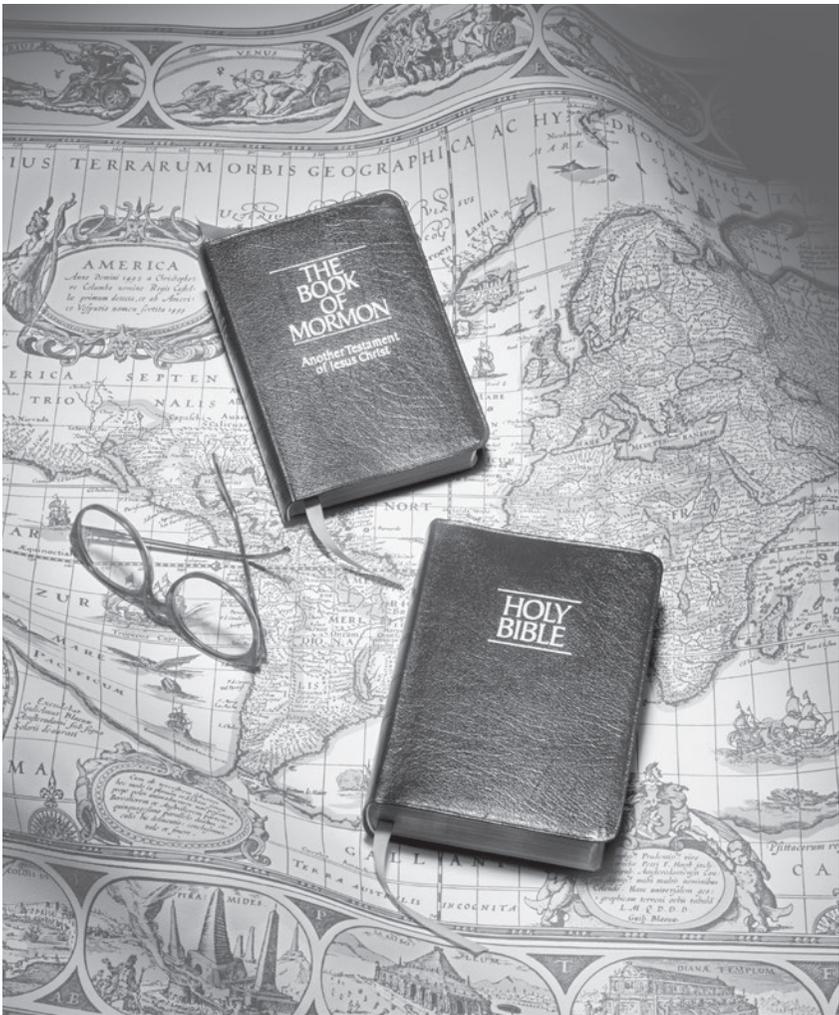
refers to John, promising that at some future point “my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John [may] be unfolded in the eyes of all the people,” thus establishing a solid connection to the historical John outside of the textual allusions within the Book of Ether. But the presence of the Johannine Jesus is most clearly seen in Ether 4:12, where, in one verse, readers encounter no less than five points of contact with the Gospel of John.

1. Perhaps the most notable Johannine element found in Ether 4:12 is the presence of the *ego eimi* aretology, a form of sacred biography in which God’s attributes are listed in first person. *Ego eimi* is Greek for “I am,” and refers to those places in the Gospel of John where Jesus identifies himself, either with a predicate nominative such as “the light of the world” or just as “I am.” While scholars remain divided about just how much theological importance ought to be attributed to Jesus’ use of *ego eimi*,¹⁰ it is clear that the author of the Fourth Gospel found it significant enough to include twenty-six examples in which Jesus used it. The *ego eimi* sayings typically occur in two forms: those with a predicate nominative (for example, “I am the light of the world”) and those without (“I am”). Those with a predicate nominative are more common in John and incorporate images such as the “bread of life” and the “light of the world.” Less common but more intriguing are the occasions when Jesus uses *ego eimi* without a predicate. This “absolute” usage normally finds Jesus simply stating “I am,” either in response to the fear of his disciples at the raging of the sea in John 6:20, or in response to the Jews in John 8:58, where he claims that “before Abraham was, I am.” Both forms of the “I am” formula are present in Ether 4:12. Jesus states, “I am the same that leadeth man to all good,” “I am the Father,” and “I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world”; in all, there are five uses of “I am” with a predicate. More interesting is the statement by Jesus that “he that will not believe in my words will not believe me—that I am,” which yields one of only three usages of the absolute “I am” to occur in the Book of Mormon.¹¹ One scholar has written that the “absolute use of the ‘I am’ in the Gospels amounts to nothing less than designating Jesus with the same special referential formula that is used in the Greek Old Testament for God’s own self-declaration.”¹² To put it simply, when Jesus says in Ether 4:12, “He that will not believe in my words will not believe me—that I am,” he is expressing that he is the same divine personage known as Jehovah. In what is likely not a coincidence, this use of the “I am” formula is noticeable both before and after verse 12. Early on in the discourse, Jesus states, “I am he who speaketh” (Ether 4:8) and toward the end of the

discourse in a similar fashion, “It is I that hath spoken it” (Ether 4:19). These two usages, combined with the six already discussed, bring the total of usages of the “I am” formula in Ether to eight, all within the span of fourteen verses.

2. Closely related to the Johannine *ego eimi* formula is the use of images and symbols as a means of self-designation by the Johannine Jesus. In addition to “bread of life” or “light of the World,” the Johannine Jesus also states that he is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), the “good shepherd” (John 10:14), the “true vine” (John 15:1), and “the door” (John 10:9). In Ether 4:12, Jesus employs the nominal predicates “light, and the life, and the truth of the world.” This presents something of a curiosity for readers. Although the phrase “light and life of the world” is not found verbatim in the King James Version, it appears four other times in the Book of Mormon (Moses 16:9; Alma 38:9; 3 Nephi 9:18, 11:11), and six times in Joseph Smith’s revelations (D&C 10:70, 11:28, 12:9, 34:2, 39:2, 45:7). It appears to be a phrase or title for Jesus that is paralleled in the Gospel of John either in John 1:4, which reads, “In him was life; and the life was the light of men,” or John 8:12, which reads, “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” There may also be a common point of contact with John 11:25, “I am the resurrection and the life.” These Johannine usages are the only places in the Bible, not just in the Fourth Gospel, where these two words occur in any manner similar to the verse in Ether 4:12. Additionally, Ether 4:12 is unique in the addition of the nominal predicate “truth,” reminiscent of John 14:6. There is a creativity and an organic quality to Jesus’ words in Ether 4:12—he does not merely repeat verbatim what John reports in his Gospel, which would come across as derivative or merely a biblical imitation. Instead, the reader of the Book of Mormon encounters a Jesus who speaks in a similar fashion to the Johannine Jesus, yet with enough added nuances to challenge the reader to interrogate the text further. One logical question would be, why does Moroni’s Jesus sound like John’s Jesus? One answer could be that Jesus found John’s words to be the most accurate in demonstrating his divine state, and thus employed a similar language when speaking to the Nephites and later Moroni. Another possibility is that John’s own vocabulary, syntax, and phrase reflect how Jesus spoke and that his Gospel depicts that in its presentation of Jesus.

3. While the primary purpose of the *ego eimi* sayings may have been to impart “a theological meaning which involves the idea of a heavenly, unique figure among human beings, to whom the quality of the divine is to be



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We often use modern revelation to shed light upon the Bible, but we can likewise expand our understanding of the Restoration scriptures by using Bible passages.

attached,”¹³ the use of the nominal predicates allows Jesus to posit “himself in his exclusivity as the one sent by the Father and hence as the only way.”¹⁴ This leads us to the third thread of Johannine thought present in Ether 4:12, namely the idea of Johannine dualism. There is clearly a duality in John’s Gospel where salvation is concerned. The idea that Jesus is the only true “door” through which all who enter “will be saved” is irrefutable and nonnegotiable. Only those who “believe on his name” will receive from Jesus “the power to

become the sons of God.” While this dualism can be seen to run through all of Christianity, it appears most explicitly in John’s Gospel. Without the “light,” there is only darkness. Without the “shepherd,” the sheep are lost. Without the “life,” there is only death. The Johannine Jesus frankly claims, “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). While the Book of Mormon does soften the blunt rhetoric of John’s Gospel, there are still similarities between the two texts on the question of dualism. The opening lines of Ether 4:12 state, “And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good; he that will not believe my words will not believe me.” This dualist perspective is found in other Book of Mormon writers as well. For example, Nephi wrote that “this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God” (2 Nephi 31:21).

While this dualism is found in both the Fourth Gospel and the Book of Mormon—often employing similar language as a way of introducing that idea—it is the subtle shift in tone *between* the two texts that allows readers to see the underlying value of agency. In the Fourth Gospel, the primary emphasis is upon the awareness of the believers. Those who will be saved are those who recognize Jesus. In the poignant parable of the Good Shepherd, Jesus teaches that “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. . . . My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10: 14, 27). Additionally, Jesus states that “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him [in]” (John 6:44).¹⁵ Agency is certainly implicit in the Fourth Gospel, as believers must make the decision to “follow me,” but time after time John emphasizes that men and women must *recognize* that Jesus is the Son of God, such as Jesus’ encounters with Nicodemus (John 3), the Samaritan woman (John 4), the masses (John 6), the Jews (John 8), the man born blind (John 9) and even Thomas (John 20).¹⁶ On the other hand, the Book of Mormon authors take what is implicit in John, the idea that choice accompanies recognition, and make it explicit. Father Lehi reminds Jacob that “men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27). That Jacob himself understands the importance of agency is demonstrated by a statement similar to Lehi’s: “Therefore, cheer up your

hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life” (2 Nephi 10:23). The distinction between recognition and choice may only be a subtle one, but recognizing it may allow readers of the Book of Mormon to look for recognition scenes in that text similar to those in the Gospel of John, to see if the Book of Mormon makes implicit what John makes so eloquently explicit.

4. A fourth similarity between Ether 4:12 and the Fourth Gospel is present in Christ’s assertion “I am the Father.” While we have already noted the significance of this statement as part of the *ego eimi* formula, it also alludes to another aspect of Johannine Christology, namely the idea that Jesus Christ is somehow both the Father and the Son. In perhaps the single most striking statement in all of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus claims “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). When the Jews take up stones to punish him for his blasphemy, he again asserts that “the Father is in me, and I in him” (John 10:38). Jesus unmistakably claims unity with the Father, and one of the major Christological themes running throughout the Fourth Gospel is just how close the link is between Jesus and the Father, suggested by Jesus’ titles such as “logos” (“the Word,” John 1:1)¹⁷ and “only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14)¹⁸ and his being “in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18).

However, while the Johannine Jesus may claim that he “and the Father are one” (John 10:30), he never states with absoluteness, as Jesus does in Ether 4:12, that “[he is] the Father.” This statement serves as both an appropriation of the *ego eimi* formula and the link between Father and Son, but with a slight twist. In previous chapters, the Book of Mormon had made much of the identification of Jesus as “the Father.” Abinadi’s speech before King Noah in Mosiah 15 notes several ways in which Jesus is also properly termed “the Father,” while just prior to his mortal incarnation, Jesus told Nephi, “Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfill all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh” (3 Nephi 1:14). For readers of the Book of Mormon familiar with both Abinadi’s teachings and the ambiguous relationship between Jesus and the Father in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus’ claim in Ether 4:12 is a striking one, challenging the reader to reconcile what Jesus is stating in Ether 4:12 with what they know from the Gospel of John.

5. Closely related to this idea that Jesus and the Father “are one” is the Christological idea that Jesus acts as an “agent” for the Father, often expressed

in the Fourth Gospel by the title “Son.” This idea of Jesus as “agent” is perhaps most resounding in a discourse given by Jesus to the Jews in John 5, one for which the Jews also attempt to stone him because he was “making himself equal with God” (John 5:18). In this discourse Jesus states that “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (John 5:19). This suggests that Jesus, although he may be acting as a figure of mediation or agency on behalf of the Father, does not exercise independent action outside of what he has seen the Father do. This unity is again emphasized a few verses later, when Jesus states, “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:23). Additionally, the Son carries the full authority of the Father, as demonstrated in John 5:22, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” and 6:27, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.” Yet a great deal of ambiguity surrounds this Christology. Jesus says on one hand that “I and my Father are one” but also that “my Father is greater than I” (John 10:30 and 14:28). Certain verses in the Gospel of John hint at a definite individuality of the Son. The Father sent the Son (John 3:16), he loves the Son (John 3:35), the Son is obedient to the Father (John 4:34), and finally, the Father is greater than the Son (John 14:28). The Son is a divine agent who participates in the will and plan of the Father, and yet manages to maintain his own distinctiveness.

Jesus, interestingly enough, maintains much of this same ambiguity when he speaks to Moroni. As previously noted, Jesus identifies himself with the phrase “I am the Father.” Yet he can also claim, “He that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me” (Ether 4:12). Clearly Jesus sees himself as a being distinct from the Father, yet he feels free to identify himself as “the Father” himself, leaving the reader with an image of a Jesus who is both sender and sent.¹⁹ One of the striking characteristics of both the Gospel of John and the Book of Mormon is that both texts share in common the titles “Father” and “Son,” but they each give different definitions for how those titles ought to be understood. In John, Jesus is called the “Father” because he acts as agent for the Father, but he never suggests that they are interchangeable—they are clearly two separate beings. In the Book of Mormon, Jesus can accurately be called the “Father” and the “Son.” In the case of the Book of Mormon, however, “Father” does not refer to “God the Father” but to Jesus

in his capacity as the Creator of the universe as the “Father” of our spiritual rebirth, as well as of creation (for example, Mosiah 3:8 and Helaman 14:12). By bringing both texts into play, the reader emerges with a picture of Jesus who is properly termed “the Father” both in the sense of his intimate yet distinct relationship with God the Father but also due to his creative and redemptive actions, leading to believers being called “the children of Christ, his sons and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you” (Mosiah 5:7). Again, the intertextual study of the Bible and the Book of Mormon serves to highlight the nuances within the text, which can then be further explored and can help shed light on difficult concepts, asking its readers to resolve the tension between texts in fresh ways.

A second type of intertextual microlevel study of the Book of Mormon is what can be termed “quotation-specific analysis,” meaning that instead of taking a single verse and unpacking its various meanings and allusions, we take one specific quotation and trace its use throughout the entire Book of Mormon. In order to gain the best results, the quotation should ideally be somewhat unique, contain meaningful words, and have its context readily understood. Noting where words appear in a consecutive manner between the Bible and the Book of Mormon is useful to an extent, but the Book of Mormon often expands upon the language of the Bible, interchanging, adding, or subtracting words from a phrase, meaning that special attention ought to be paid to what constitutes a “quotation” or “allusion.”²⁰ It is important not to consider a phrase as a quotation merely because it has four or five words in a row that match up with a phrase in the Bible; yet, one should not dismiss a phrase as a quotation simply because it does not. For example, the phrase “full of grace and truth” is clearly recognizable as occurring in John 1:14. It is found, in one fashion or another, in four places in the Book of Mormon. Yet all four of the Book of Mormon references to “full of grace and truth” differ in some respect from each other in terms of language. It is these slight differences that catch the reader’s eye and add nuance and meaning to the context of the quotation within the Book of Mormon.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This verse comes in the middle of John’s lengthy Prologue, in which he expounds on such weighty topics as Jesus’ pre-mortal existence, close relationship with the Father, and incarnation in the flesh. The reference to Jesus being “full of grace and truth” is likely an allusion to Exodus 34:6–7,

where Jehovah, in response to Moses' desire to "shew me thy glory," replies, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Thus John is turning his reader's attention back to the Old Testament and claiming that "the glory revealed to Moses when the Lord passed in front of him and sounded his name . . . was the very same glory John and his friends saw in the "Word-made-flesh."²¹

The phrase "full of grace and truth" appears, with some minor modifications, four times in the Book of Mormon:

Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is *full of grace and truth*. (2 Nephi 2:6)

I say unto you, that I know of myself that whatsoever I shall say unto you, concerning that which is to come, is true; 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. (Alma 5:48)

And not many days hence the Son of God shall come in his glory; and his glory shall be the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, *full of grace, equity, and truth*, full of patience, mercy, and long-suffering, quick to hear the cries of his people and to answer their prayers. (Alma 9:26)

Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is *full of grace, equity, and truth*. And thus it is. Amen. (Alma 13:9)

The first use of "full of grace and truth" comes from Lehi's speech to Jacob. It fits very nicely into the context of Lehi's speech, which is that Jesus is uniquely qualified to answer "the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7). Lehi returns to this theme again in 2 Nephi 2:8, stating in similar language that no one can return to the presence of the father except "through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah."

The next three usages of "full of grace and truth" all come from the Book of Alma, and each occurs in lengthy sermons given by Alma the Younger to the cities of Zarahemla and Ammonihah. Significantly, the phrase "full of grace and truth" has been modified in these three instances. Alma 5:48 and 13:9 have an additional noun accompanying the phrase "full of grace and

truth,” “mercy” and “equity,” respectively. Alma 9:26 parallels 13:9 in the inclusion of “equity,” but also sees the insertion of “full of patience, mercy, and long-suffering, quick to hear the cries of his people and to answer their prayers.” The question for readers of the Book of Mormon is why? The phrase “full of grace and truth” is noticeable enough that playing with the wording of the John 1:14 would certainly garner the attention of the reader. So what are we, as readers, supposed to take away from the inclusion of “mercy” and “equity?” In this case, the context of both verses is useful. In Alma 5, Alma the Younger is speaking to the Nephites in Zarahemla. It is clear that many of those in Zarahemla are struggling with their faith, but Alma’s speech provides the proper incentive to a restoration of order, the conversion of many new members, and the excommunication of those who refused to repent (Alma 6:1–3). On the other hand, Alma’s speech to the Nephites living in Ammonihah falls upon deaf ears. He and Amulek are imprisoned after being forced to watch as many of the Nephites who had responded to their message are brutally burned to death. In each city, the word inserted between “grace” and “truth” serves to foreshadow the fate of those who dwell there. To Zarahemla, the Lord will demonstrate mercy in not punishing those who had temporarily lapsed in their faith; in fact, he welcomes them back into the fold. To Ammonihah, the Lord brought the full weight of his equity upon the city:

And thus ended the eleventh year of the judges, the Lamanites having been driven out of the land, and the people of Ammonihah were destroyed; yea, every living soul of the Ammonihahites was destroyed, and also their great city, which they said God could not destroy, because of its greatness.

But behold, in one day it was left desolate; and the carcasses were mangled by dogs and wild beasts of the wilderness. Nevertheless, after many days their dead bodies were heaped up upon the face of the earth, and they were covered with a shallow covering.

And now so great was the scent thereof that the people did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years. And it was called Desolation of Nehor; for they were of the profession of Nehor, who were slain; and their lands remained desolate. (Alma 16:9–11)

The fourth and final use of “full of grace and truth” is also notable for how it fits into the context of Alma’s encounter with the Ammonihahites. Early in Alma 9, those in Ammonihah disdainfully ask Alma, “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 9:6). In response, Alma does two significant things. First, he reminds them of the Lehite covenant, and what happens to those who break it:

Behold, do ye not remember the words which he spake unto Lehi, saying that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land?

And again it is said that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

Now I would that ye should remember, that inasmuch as the Lamanites have not kept the commandments of God, they have been cut off from the presence of the Lord.

Now we see that the word of the Lord has been verified in this thing, and the Lamanites have been cut off from his presence, from the beginning of their transgressions in the land. (Alma 9:13–14)

Second, Alma recites the words which were spoken to him by an angel, including the description of the Lord found in Alma 9:26: “And not many days hence the Son of God shall come in his glory; and his glory shall be the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, equity, and truth, full of patience, mercy, and long-suffering, quick to hear the cries of his people and to answer their prayers.” If the phrase “full of grace and truth” in the Gospel of John was intended to allude back to Exodus 34:6–7, this description of Jesus as one who is “full of grace, equity, and truth, full of patience, mercy, and long-suffering, quick to hear the cries of his people and to answer their prayers” is an even stronger connection. By turning the attention of his Ammonihah audience back to both Jehovah’s encounter with Moses on Mount Sinai and the nature of his covenant relationship with his people, Alma is carefully answering their question of “Who is God?” Jehovah may be a God who is “full of grace and truth,” but he is also a God who will not “clear the guilty” and is not afraid to visit “the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation,” to leave “desolate” those who ignore his covenant (Exodus 34:6–7).

By more closely linking the Book of Mormon with the Bible, as Alma 9:26 does by expanding upon the words of God to Moses, the Book of Mormon goes beyond even John’s own attempt to recapitulate the Exodus theophany. In this passage readers observe most clearly that the Book of Mormon does not merely reproduce the language of John, but more fully realizes the connection or link (in this case Moses) common to both. Alma 9:26 is a remarkable composition, one that helps demonstrate the value of a quotation-specific analysis. Readers identify points of contact shared by both the Bible and the Book of Mormon and examine closely the context of the Book of Mormon quotations. Then, by closely monitoring possible similarities and differences in areas such as word choice and word order, readers will be able to identify and explore the nuances present within the text that might not be as apparent

upon a traditional reading. An additional value of a microlevel intertextual study is that it allows readers to push beyond thorny issues such as means of translation or Joseph Smith's "lack" of education. The Bible and the Book of Mormon are undeniably inspired texts, and the points of contact between them seem intended to be found and pondered.²² Readers can now focus on *why* a particular verse or group of verses is present in both texts, rather than getting stuck on how they may have gotten there in the first place.

What the question laid out in this paper comes down to is this: Is there significant meaning to the use of biblical phrases and passages in the Book of Mormon beyond mere rhetoric? Can a meaningful dialogue be established between the Bible and Restoration scripture, one that extends to issues of theology and textuality? Or is the presence of biblical verse in Restoration scripture best understood as God just adopting a voice, one with a certain distinction that faithful readers of the Bible will recognize, without pronouncing value or validity upon the text outside of its uniqueness? On the one hand, God's appropriation of certain biblical texts in order to provide a voice could be interpreted as severing any link with the original context. It is a rhetorical construct, nothing more. On the other hand, this biblical appropriation could be seen as pushing readers to dig more deeply, to ask again, *why* Jesus chose this particular verse or author to provide his voice, challenging the reader to merge or amalgamate both ancient and modern scripture to formulate an answer.

Interestingly, 2 Nephi 3:12 contains a prophecy particularly relevant to this question. In this passage, Lehi tells his son Joseph the following:

Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.
(2 Nephi 3:12)

It seems possible that this "growing together" could be partially accomplished through the blending of language and phrasing, and thus the similarity in language between the Bible and Book of Mormon ought to be viewed as forming a necessary and pivotal partnership. If this is the case, then there is certainly value in acknowledging a dialogue between the Bible and the Book of Mormon and in examining more closely how and why they are "growing

together.” A microlevel examination of this sort that focuses its attention upon individual verses or even quotations within a verse, such as the ones performed in this paper, has the potential to yield fruitful results, in the form of both answers and additional questions. Hopefully, this brief paper serves as a gauge for just how potentially rich and rewarding an intertextual study of the Bible and Restoration scripture could be, as well as an indicator of the breadth of the ground that has yet to be fully covered. **RE**

Notes

1. Robert L. Miller, “What the Bible Means to Latter-day Saints,” in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 5.

2. Philip Barlow notes two important reasons why an extensive intertextual analysis of the Book of Mormon is needed. First, he writes that “more than fifty thousand phrases of three or more words, excluding definite and indefinite articles, are common to the Bible and the Book of Mormon.” Second, Barlow sees the relationship between the Book of Mormon and the language of the Bible as a complementary one, noting that “biblical phrases constitute the vocabulary building blocks of much of the Book of Mormon narrative, yet that narrative maintains an independent coherence.” Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University, 1991), 27–28.

3. Gerard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley: University of California, 1992), 81. As G. K. Beale has noted, the term “intertextuality” when used to refer to a method of biblical criticism is somewhat problematic, as “intertextuality” usually refers to two different texts that have a common point of interaction. Beale writes that in biblical studies “‘intertextuality’ is sometimes used merely to refer to the procedure by which a later biblical text refers to an earlier text, how that earlier text enhances the meaning of the later one, and how the later one creatively develops the earlier meaning. In this respect, ‘intertextuality’ may be seen as a procedure of inner-biblical or intrabiblical exegesis, which is crucial to doing biblical theology and for understanding the relation of the OT to the NT.” Beale suggests that “inner-biblical exegesis” or “inner-biblical allusion” may be more appropriate terms, but the idea of “biblical intertextuality” has become common enough that it is unlikely to be changed in the near future. G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 40.

4. While the methodology may be relatively recent in respect to other methods of biblical studies such as “Form Criticism” or “Source Criticism,” Dale Allison observes that intertextuality as a method of Biblical criticism not only has its roots in the early church but that the work of the early Christian scholars remain very relevant in the use of intertextuality today: “I have come to believe that if we find in . . . [a] New Testament book an allusion to the Old Testament that the Fathers did not find, the burden of proof is on us; and if they detected an allusion which modern commentators have not detected, investigation is in order.” Dale C. Allison Jr., *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 119.

5. See, for example, Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989) and *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of*

Israel's Scripture (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005). More recent works expanding on Hays own writings are G. K. Beale's and D. A. Carson's massive work, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), as well as books dealing with individual New Testament texts, such as Michael Thompson's *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12:1–15:13* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), and Christopher A. Beetham's *Echoes of Scripture in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2008).

6. See, for example, Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, eds., *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998); Victor L. Ludlow, *Unlocking Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003); and David P. Wright, "Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: Or Joseph Smith in Isaiah," in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 157–234.

7. See, for example, Krister Stendahl, "The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi," in *Reflections on Mormonism*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, 1978), 139–154; John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo: FARMS, 1990); and Stan Larson, "The Historicity of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 115–63.

8. See, for example, Joseph M. Spencer and Jenny Webb, eds., *Reading Nephi, Reading Isaiah* (Salem, OR: Salt Press, 2011); David P. Wright, "In Plain Terms That We May Understand: Joseph Smith's Transformation of Hebrews in Alma 12–13," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 165–229; and Julie M. Smith, "So Shall My Word Be: Reading Alma 32 Through Isaiah 55," in *An Experiment Upon the Word: Reading Alma 32*, ed. Adam S. Miller (Salem, OR: Salt Press, 2011).

9. I borrow the terms *macrolevel* and *microlevel* from the field of sociology, where the former generally refers to "entire societies or institutions," and the latter refers to "interaction in small groups" or between individuals. William Kornblum, *Sociology in a Changing World*, 9th ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011), 7. In the context of Book of Mormon studies, I identify *macrolevel* studies as any intertextual analysis dealing with entire chapters or larger blocks of texts. *Microlevel* would then refer to any intertextual analysis dealing with individual verses (or pericopes) or short quotations within a verse.

10. The reason for the questions regarding the *ego eimi* formula quotations are largely in respect to what Jesus means when he says them. In the Septuagint, the Greek "Old Testament," Jehovah often uses similar language when referring to himself. To Moses at the burning bush, Jehovah stated ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (*ego eimi ho on*), or "I am that which exists." Similar examples can be found in Isaiah 41:10, 13; 43:10–12; and 45:18. The question for readers of John is, by using this same language, was Jesus making the claim that he was Jehovah? Or was "I am" just a means of self-identification devoid of any Old Testament allusions? For a fuller discussion, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, vol. 29 of the Anchor Bible Series (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 533–38. See also Philip Harner, *The "I Am" of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Johannine Usage and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970); David Mark Ball, "I Am" in John's Gospel: *Literary Function, Background, and Theological Implications*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 124 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); and Catrin H. Williams, *I Am He*, WUNT 2/113 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000).

11. The other two are 3 Nephi 12:1 and 2.

12. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 371.

13. Elizabeth Harris, *Prologue and Gospel: the Theology of the Fourth Evangelist* (London: T&T Clark, 1994), 133.

14. Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1997), 493.

15. Herman Ridderbos notes that this statement by Jesus “demonstrates the powerlessness of the natural person (‘no one’) to come to the salvation disclosed in Christ unless the Father who sent him ‘draws’ that person, that is, moves him or her toward it” (Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 232).

16. For more on recognition scenes in the Gospel of John, see R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and the Letters of John*, of the Interpreting Biblical Texts Series (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 72–86.

17. The exact nature of how John is using the title “logos” is indeterminable, but that ambiguity may explain John’s reasoning in using it as a title for Jesus. For a discussion of possibilities, see Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 339–63.

18. “As the only-begotten Son Jesus is in the closest intimacy with God . . . there is no other with whom the God can have similar fellowship. He shares everything with this Son. For this reason Jesus can give what no man can give, namely, the fullest possible eye-witness account of God. He knows God, not just from hearsay, but from incomparably close intercourse with Him.” Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1967), 4:740.

19. This is a concept not limited to the Gospel of John or the Book of Mormon. One also gets a similar impression from Isaiah 53:6–10.

20. The question of what distinguishes a “quotation” from an “allusion” remains a pointed one in biblical studies. One scholar has recently suggested that a “quotation” be defined as “An intentional, explicit, verbatim or near verbatim citation of a former text of six or more words in length,” while an allusion be defined as “A literary device intentionally employed by an author to point a reader back to a single identifiable source, of which one or more components must be remembered and brought forward into the new context in order for the alluding text to be understood fully. An allusion is less explicit than a *quotation*, but more explicit than an *echo*; . . . a linear marker of five words or less is considered to be an allusion.” Beetham, *Echoes*, 17, 20. While this may work for studies of the Old Testament in the New Testament, due to the nature of the Book of Mormon as a text that often expands or builds upon the language of the King James Bible, it is necessary to come up with slightly different terminology. I suggest that “quotation” be better understood, at least in a Book of Mormon context, as “A phrase from the Book of Mormon which can be determined in all likelihood to share language with a specific text due to the uniqueness of that text within the Bible, regardless of length. “Full of grace and truth” would fall into this category. Additionally, I suggest that “allusion” be understood as “A phrase in which it is not certain but is probable that it has originated in a specific text, either because it repeats a few key words, is located within a pericope which also shares language with the same author, or employs a similar context.” “Born of God” would fall into this category. Again, there is a lot of maneuverability on these types of questions, but the important consideration is that significant quotations or

allusions in the Book of Mormon not be removed from consideration due to word count or specific word usage.

21. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 129. Lester J. Kuypers adds that John is appropriating the phrase “grace and truth” from the Old Testament and applying it to Jesus. Thus, when “John declares that the incarnate Word is full of grace and truth he is telling his readers to look for the meaning of this expression in the Old Testament, where it is descriptive of God.” Lester J. Kuypers, “Grace and Truth: An Old Testament Description of God, and Its Use in the Johannine Gospel,” *Interpretation* 18, no. 1 (1964): 3. The primary difficulty with this theory is that in the Hebrew, the phrase translated in the KJV as “goodness and truth” is $\text{רַחֲמִים וְאֱמֻנָה}$. In the Greek Septuagint, this becomes $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omicron\varsigma \kappa\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\acute{o}\varsigma$, not the $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\omicron\varsigma \kappa\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ of John 1:14. However, by the first century AD, it is likely that $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ has replaced $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ as the preferred rendering of רַחֲמִים , meaning that first-century readers of the Fourth Gospel would likely recognize 1:14 as an allusion to Exodus 34:6. See C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1953), 175–76. See also Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 495n395.

22. As Grant Hardy has written, “Even a cursory glance reveals that the Book of Mormon wants to be seen as a companion to the Bible.” *Understanding the Book of Mormon* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2010), 5.