

Words of Mormon 1 — Words of Mormon — The Editor's Seam, the Wise Purpose, and the Providence That Reaches Across Centuries

Words of Mormon 1: Mormon, writing nearly five centuries after Amaleki's death, discovers the small plates of Nephi while abridging the large plates; the Spirit prompts him to include the small plates 'for a wise purpose'; Mormon then bridges Amaleki to Benjamin with a summary of Benjamin's reign, victories, and the contention over revelation; c. AD 385 in Mormon's writing, narrating events of c. 130 BC.

Words of Mormon 1 is the BoM's most-providence-disclosing editorial seam. After Amaleki's-handoff (Omni 1:30), the next-canonical-voice is Mormon — writing four-hundred-and-eighty-years later (c. AD 385) and reaching back to insert this brief explanatory chapter into the abridged-record so that the small-plates may stand-with the abridgment. The chapter is the BoM's clearest articulation of the prophet-editor-acts-by-the-Spirit doctrine — Mormon does not edit by his-own-judgment but by Spirit-whispering.

Load-Bearing Texts

1. **v. 7's.** *I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me* — the chapter's-master-articulation of the Spirit-whispereth-editorial-decisions doctrine
2. **v. 11's.** *they are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren* — the chapter's-master-articulation of the multi-generational-choice-record doctrine
3. **vv. 17–18's.** *holy prophets... false Christs... false prophets... they were sharply reproofed* — the chapter's-master-articulation of the prophetic-reproof-restores-peace doctrine

Hebrew Word Studies

nilchashah / etzah / da'at (נִלְחָשָׁה / הֵצַע / הַדָּעַת) — **whispered / counsel, purpose / knowledge** **v. 7.** The chapter's wise-purpose triad. Nilchashah — whispered, hissed gently — the verb behind nachash (snake) but used positively for divine-soft-speaking; same verb-family as the lachash of Isa. 26:16 — Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them; etzah — counsel, purpose, plan — the noun behind Isa. 9:6's Wonderful, Counsellor; da'at — knowledge — the noun-source of the gift of the word of knowledge in 1 Cor. 12:8. The doctrine: the etzah-of-Yahweh is nilchashah to the editor-prophet; he does not have full-da'at but he has-soft-direction. Same nilchashah-of-the-Spirit grammar as 1 Ki. 19:12's still small voice; D&C 8:2's I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost. The Restoration's D&C 85:6 — the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things — operates by the same logic. The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest articulations of the Spirit-whispers-not-shouts doctrine. The editorial-decision that preserved the small-plates was made by whisper, not by clarity.

chad-charpet / harpah / ge'arah (חַד-חַרְפֵּת / הַרְפָּה / גֵּעַרָה) — **sharp of rebuke / reproach / rebuke** **v. 17.** The chapter's sharp-reproof doublet. Chad-charpet — sharp-of-rebuke — literally sharp-blade applied to speech; harpah — reproach, shame inflicted by word; ge'arah — the OT's master-noun for prophetic-rebuke (Ps. 76:6; Isa. 50:2). The doctrine: the holy-prophets used chad-charpet because the people were qasheh-oref (stiff-necked); the sharpness of the reproof is the kindness of the prophet. Same sharp-rebuke grammar as Tit. 1:13 — rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 2 Tim. 4:2 — reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. The Restoration's D&C 121:43 — reproof betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love — operates by the same logic. The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest pre-Pauline articulations of the sharp-rebuke-as-mercy doctrine. The blunting of prophetic-speech is the abandonment of stiff-necked-hearers.

From the Chapter's Architecture

The chapter is also the BoM's clearest articulation of pre-emptive providence. In 1828 Joseph Smith would-lose 116 pages of the Lehi-narrative; the small-plates contain that same narrative; Mormon was prompted in c. AD 385 to include the small-plates for a wise purpose he didn't understand; the loss was anticipated thousands-of-years-before by the providential-inclusion of a duplicate. Same pre-emptive-providence grammar as Gen. 50:20 — ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good; Rom. 8:28 — all things work together for good to them that love God. The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest articulations of the pre-emptive-providence doctrine.