

Alma 36 – A Chiastic Masterpiece

We begin by finding the main girders in its structure or framework. The following summary of the chapter, in which Alma tells his son Helaman about his dramatic conversion, shows the basic elements. There are seventeen key elements, each repeated twice (verse numbers are indicated in parentheses):

- a My son give ear to my words (1)
- b Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (1)
- c Do as I have done (2)
- d Remember the captivity of our fathers (2)
- e They were in bondage (2)
- f He surely did deliver them (2)
- g Trust in God (3)
- h Supported in trials, troubles, and afflictions (3)
- i Lifted up at the last day (3)
- j I know this not of myself but of God (4)
- k Born of God (5)
- l I sought to destroy the church (6-9)
- m My limbs were paralyzed (10)
- n Fear of being in the presence of God (14-15)
- o Pains of a damned soul (16)
- p Harrowed up by the memory of sins (17)
- q I remembered Jesus Christ, a son of God (17)**
- q' I cried, Jesus, son of God (18)**
- p' Harrowed up by the memory of sins no more (19)
- o' Joy as exceeding as was the pain (20)
- n' Long to be in the presence of God (22)
- m' My limbs received strength again (23)
- l' I labored to bring souls to repentance (24)
- k' Born of God (26)
- j' Therefore my knowledge is of God (26)
- h' Supported under trials, troubles, and afflictions (27)
- g' Trust in him (27)
- f' He will deliver me (27)
- i' and raise me up at the last day (28)
- e' As God brought our fathers out of bondage and captivity (28-29)
- d' Retain in remembrance their captivity (28-29)
- c' Know as I do know (30)
- b' Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (30)
- a' This according to his word (30).

Homer's Odyssey – Chiasmus Example

As early as the first century , Greek readers of Homer's Odyssey noted a fine example. In a conversation between Odysseus and his mother Anticleia in the underworld, Odysseus asks his mother's ghost:

- a How she had died,
- b Was it by a disease,
- c Or by the gentle shafts of Artemis.
- d About his father,
- e About his son Telemachus,
- f Whether another had assumed his royal power,
- g And about his wife, where does she stay.

Anticleia responds in exactly the reverse order:

- g' She stays in thy halls,
- f' No man has taken thy honor,
- e' Telemachus is a peaceful lord,
- d' Your father remains in the fields,
- c' Artemis did not slay me,
- b' Nor did a disease,
- a' But I died of grief for thee.

(Odyssey, 11.170)

Chiasmus – Mosiah 3:18-19

- a) they humble themselves
- b) and become as little children
- c) and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ
- d) 19 For the natural man
- e) is an enemy to God
- f) and has been from the fall of Adam
- f) and will be, forever and ever
- e`) unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit
- d`) and putteth off the natural man
- c`) and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord
- b`) and becometh as a child
- a`) submissive, meek, humble