



Book of Mormon

Introductory Pages

17 January 2020

**THE
BOOK OF MORMON
AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY
THE HAND OF MORMON
UPON PLATES
TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI**

Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites—Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile—Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile—The interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven—Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations—And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH SMITH, Jun.
First English edition published in 1830

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Alma 26.37

Mosiah 27.27-30

3 Nephi 17.19-23

Isaiah 41.17







CS Lewis on how God wants you!

It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship...It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit (C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 39).

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Small plates/Large plates

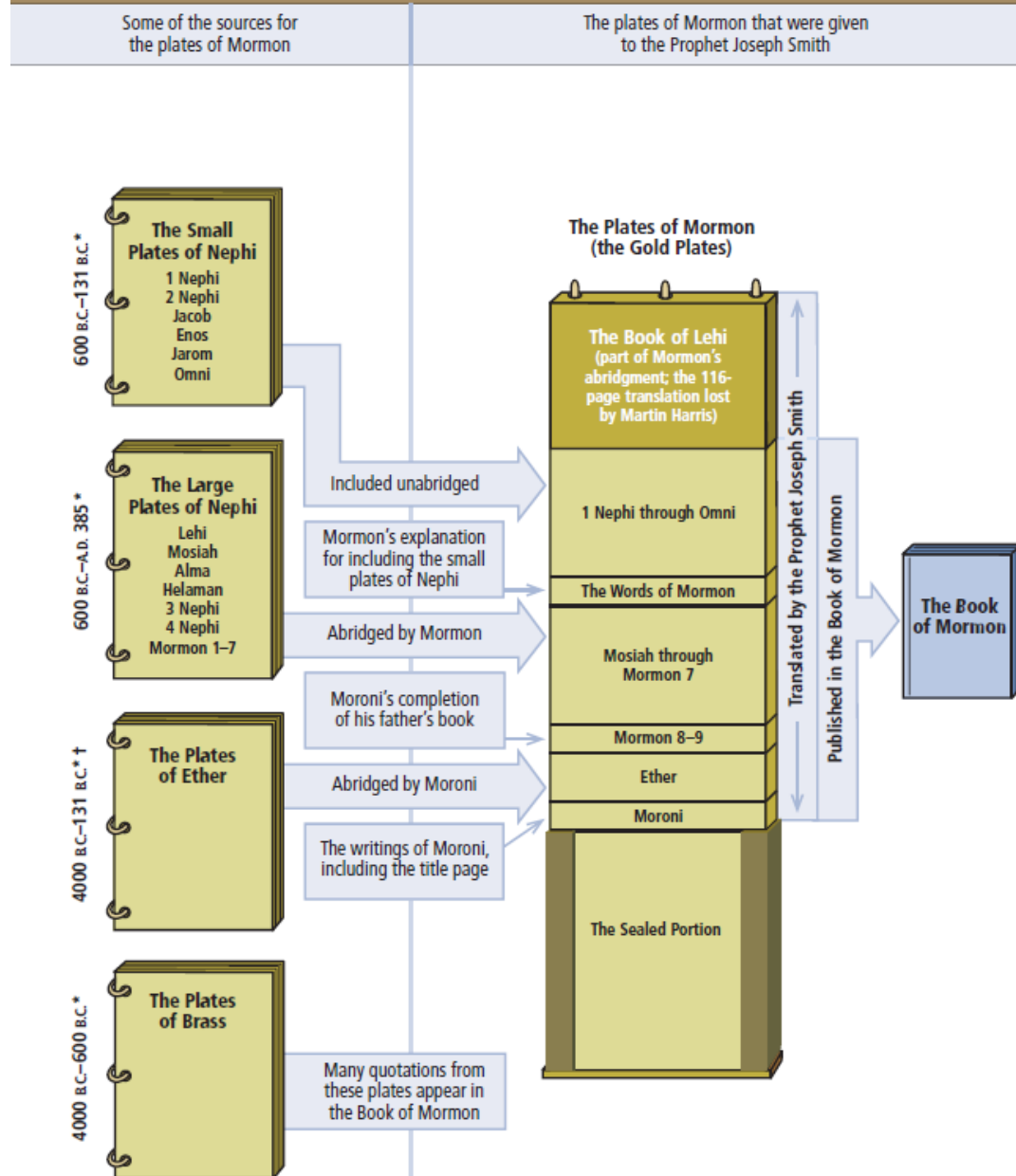
And it came to pass...

Mosiah first translation

Mormon abridged it – what that means... language!

Mormon's “mistakes” lends itself to authenticity

The Plates and Their Relationship to the Published Book of Mormon



* Dates represent the approximate time period covered by each set of plates.

† It is not known exactly when the prophet Ether completed his record, but it was likely sometime between 589 B.C. and 131 B.C.

116 Pages from Large plates

- ▶ Also known as, “The Book of Lehi”
- ▶ Translated by Joseph Smith
- ▶ The Manuscript was lost by Martin Harris
- ▶ It contained writings from the same time period as the small plates
- ▶ The lost pages were never re-translated (See D&C 10:1-19)

116 Pages from Large plates

Small Plates (Unabridged)

- ▶ Included 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni (writings of 9 men)
- ▶ Written for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven of the ministry of the people (see 1 Nephi 9:3)
- ▶ It covered the same time period as the 116 pages, but was included with the record for reasons unknown to both Nephi and Mormon, (1 Nephi 9 & Words of Mormon 1:1-7)
- ▶ These plates later made up for the lost 116 pages



116 Pages from Large plates

Small Plates (Unabridged)

Words of Mormon

- ▶ Mormon's own writings explaining his insertion of the small plates of Nephi
- ▶ Not chronological, it was written Approximately 385 A.D. and inserted between the Large and Small plates

116 Pages from Large plates

Small Plates (Unabridged)

Words of Mormon

Large Plates of Nephi
(Abridged)

- ▶ Included the books of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi, & 4 Nephi
- ▶ Contained a full account of the history of the people or an account of the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions of the people (see 1 Nephi 9:2-4)
- ▶ Abridged by Mormon

116 Pages from Large plates

Small Plates (Unabridged)

Words of Mormon

Large Plates of Nephi
(Abridged)

Mormon

► Mormon's own writings.
Mormon wrote chapters 1-7,
then passed the plates on to
Moroni, who finished the record
with chapters 8 & 9.

116 Pages from Large plates

Small Plates (Unabridged)

Words of Mormon

Large Plates of Nephi
(Abridged)

Mormon

Ether (Abridged)

- ▶ Jaredite record found by Limhi's people (Mosiah 8:9)
- ▶ Abridged by Moroni

116 Pages from Large plates

Small Plates (Unabridged)

Words of Mormon

Large Plates of Nephi
(Abridged)

Mormon

Ether (Abridged)

Moroni

► Moroni's own writings,
including his promise to all
readers. (Moroni 10:3-5)

116 Pages from Large plates

Small Plates (Unabridged)

Words of Mormon

Large Plates of Nephi
(Abridged)

Mormon

Ether (Abridged)

Moroni

Sealed  Portion

► A portion of the plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon was sealed, and he was commanded not to translate that part. Nephi wrote of what was contained in the sealed portion (see 2 Nephi 27:7, 10), when it would become available to us (see v. 10; see also Ether 4:4-7), and how it would be made available (see 2 Nephi 27:11). The verses in 1 Nephi 14:26 and 3 Nephi 26:9-11 also refer to the sealing up of sacred writings.

Striking Consistency

A striking consistency is that the first books (Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni) as well as Mormon and Moroni are all in the 1st person (I/me) while the edited texts of Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, 3-4 Nephi, and Ether are all in the 3rd person (he/him). A fabricator would not have thought to have been so careful. So Mormon writes: “King Benjamin had continual peace...” (Mosiah 1.1. See other examples: Alma 1.2; Helaman 2.2; 3 Nephi 1.2-3). At times Mormon includes 1st person quotes from the abridged record, but those books are generally in the 3rd person.

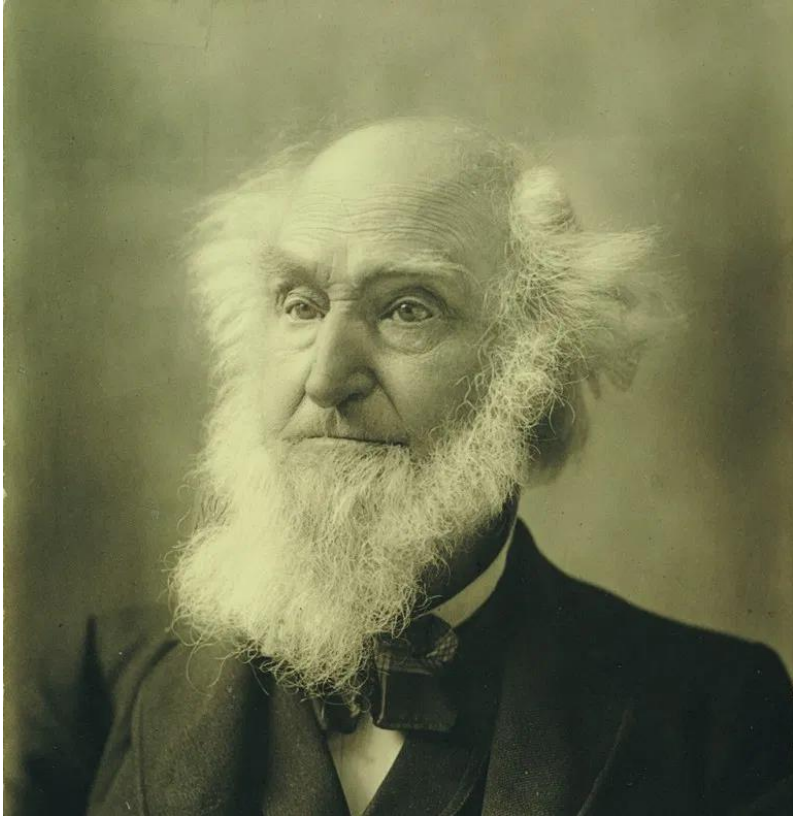
And it came to pass...

Mark Twain on the Book of Mormon: “I brought away a copy from Salt Lake. The book is a curiosity to me, it is such a pretentious affair, and yet so "slow," so sleepy; such an insipid mess of inspiration. It is chloroform in print. If Joseph Smith composed this book, the act was a miracle--keeping awake while he did it was, at any rate. If he, according to tradition, merely translated it from certain ancient and mysteriously-engraved plates of copper, which he declares he found under a stone, in an out-of-the-way locality, the work of translating was equally a miracle, for the same reason.

...Whenever he found his speech growing too modern--which was about every sentence or two—he ladled in a few such Scriptural phrases as "exceeding sore," "and it came to pass," etc., and made things satisfactory again. "And it came to pass" was his pet. If he had left that out, his Bible would have been only a pamphlet.” (Twain, *Roughing It*, p. 107-115)

Striking Consistency

A second interesting consistency is the use of **“it came to pass”** versus its absence. Both Nephi and Moroni use “and it came to pass” when **recounting events in the past**, but when writing of their current lives respectively, the phrase is not used. When Nephi began the large plates, more than 2 decades after the events, he is recounting his past until he catches up to his “present”; thus Nephi used “it came to pass” 198 times from 1 Nephi 1.1 to 2 Nephi 5.30, but **from 2 Nephi 5.31 to the end of his work, he never uses the phrase again**. Likewise, Moroni uses “it came to pass” throughout his summary of the book of Ether, the past record of the Jaredites, but never uses it in writing about his own life. (Brian Stubbs, *Changes in Languages from Nephi to Now*, 2016, p 17-18)



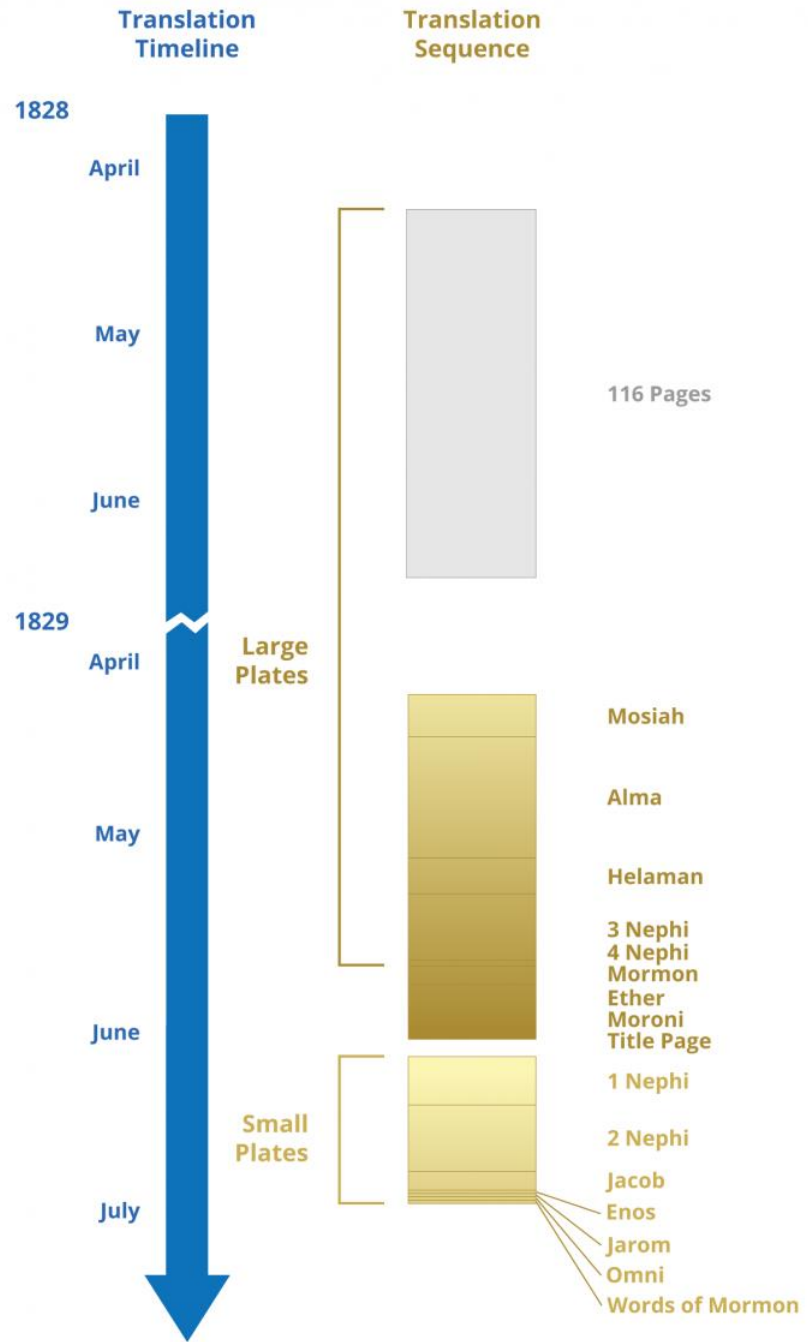
to the best of my recollection. But one
copy of the manuscript was furnished
the printer. I never heard of but one.
As quick as Mr. Grandin got his type
and got things all ready to commence
the work, Hyrum Smith brought to the
office 24 pages of manuscript on foolscap
paper, closely written and legible, but not
a punctuation mark from beginning to end.
This was about the middle of August, 1829,
and the printing was completed in March.

John Gilbert letter - 1879

John was the typesetter at the E.B. Grandin Bookstore in Palmyra

Mosiah first translation

When Joseph meets Oliver Cowdery in April 1829, the two begin translating Mosiah, rather than 1 Nephi. This unexpected translation sequence is due to the fact that the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon's translation—which contained a record called the book of Lehi—were lost by Martin Harris in the summer of 1828. When the translation resumed in April 1829, it appears Joseph Smith picked up where he had left off, namely in the early chapters of Mosiah rather than retranslating Mormon's record from the beginning.





Watch this video from Book of Mormon Central [here](#)

Joseph and Oliver probably started writing at or shortly after Mosiah 1.
(p. 90, *Opening the Heavens*)

Katharine Smith Salisbury confirmed in 1895 that Joseph had “fasted and prayed several days” and the angel told him “to begin where he had left off” This would eventually bring him to the portion he still “retained” from his translation apparently of the first pages of the book of Mosiah, which he had not given to Martin Harris (D&C 10:41; document 2).⁷² (p. 94 OTH)

In conclusion, the question can now be answered, How long did it take for Joseph Smith to translate the Book of Mormon as it was published in 1830? Assuming that he resumed translating on April 7, 1829, “where he had left off” at the beginning of King Benjamin’s reign,¹¹¹ the translation of Mosiah 1 to Moroni 10 (about 390 pages in the 1981 edition, with the exception of “a few pages” translated in March) took place from April 7 to the end of May. Subtracting time to eat, to sleep, to seek employment to earn money for supplies, to restore the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, to make at least one (and possibly two) trips to Colesville, to baptize Hyrum and

Samuel, to write three letters to David Whitmer, to receive Doctrine and Covenants sections 6 through 13, and to worry about rising persecution, there would seem to be about forty-five possible translating days in this window of time. This would mean that Joseph translated and Oliver wrote down on average eight present Book of Mormon pages per day, working “from morning till night” (document 89).

The translation of 1 Nephi to 2 Nephi 27 (about 100 pages) appears to have taken about 12 days in June, since one must allow most of the first week of June for the move from Harmony to Fayette, some time to acquire the copyright on June 11, several days for preaching and baptizing near Fayette, and one must get at least to 2 Nephi 11:3 and probably to 27:12 before the Three Witnesses see the plates around June 20. This again would be about 8 pages per day. During this time, Doctrine and Covenants sections 14 through 18 were also received and written.

The last block of translation (about 33 pages) would have taken about 4 days if Joseph and Oliver continued working at their regular translating pace, or it is possible that the translation of these last few pages was spread out over the last 10 days of June. Assuming the last 33 pages took about 6 days time, whenever in the end of June those days may have been finished, the total approximate maximum time involved in translating the entire text can be estimated at 63 days (45 plus 12 plus 6), averaging about 8 pages per day overall.

Why “Mosiah First” makes sense

The Mosiah-first theory allows five weeks (from April 7 to May 15) for the translation of Mosiah 1 through the account of the ministry of Christ among the Nephites in 3 Nephi. The book was then finished at about the same rate in June. Under the Nephi-first theory, however, all the material from 1 Nephi 1 through the account in 3 Nephi would have to have been translated within that time, requiring a faster rate. Correlatively, the Mosiah-first theory leaves a significant amount of material to be translated after May 15, which accommodates the fact that the translation continued at Harmony for two more weeks and that “many pages” were translated at the Whitmer house in Fayette. One report indicates that John Whitmer acted as scribe for as many as “sixty pages.” Gurley, “Synopsis of a Discourse,” 370b. (p. 116)

Mosiah First makes sense (part 2)

The title page of the Book of Mormon was translated before June 11, 1829, the date on which this text appears on the copyright application. Since the title page was written by Moroni and was found at the end of the Plates of Mormon (“I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated,” History of the Church, 1:71), it would appear that books up to and including the title page, namely 4 Nephi, Mormon, Ether, Moroni, and the title page itself, were translated after May 15 but before June 11. This supports the Mosiah-first theory. (p. 116)

Book of Mormon Translation Timeline

1827

September 21, 1823 – Joseph meets Moroni. Joseph is 17 years old.

September 22, 1827 – Joseph receives the plates.

Oct.-Dec., 1827 – Joseph moves due to persecution- he moves to Harmony, Pennsylvania with Emma- 100 miles away, Martin Harris gives him \$50.

1828

Jan.-Feb. – Joseph translates, Emma scribes.

Feb.-March – Martin Harris visits Charles Anthon in New York City.

April 12- Martin Harris believes and scribes for the Prophet Joseph.

June 14- Martin Harris takes the 116 page manuscript to Palmyra.

June 15- Alvin Smith born to Emma & Joseph- Alvin dies the same day.

July- Joseph heads to Palmyra- Martin has [lost the manuscript](#).

July-September- Joseph loses the gift of translation- plates taken by Moroni, Section 3 of the Doctrine & Covenants received.

1829

Feb.-March-
wait (D&C 5:30).

A “few” pages are translated with Emma as scribe, Joseph is told to

April 5-

Oliver Cowdery arrives in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

April 7-

Translation resumes in full force.

May 15-

John the Baptist restores the Aaronic Priesthood.

May-June

Peter, James & John restore the Melchizedek Priesthood.

June 1-

Joseph & Oliver move to Fayette to complete the translation.

June 30-

The translation of the Book of Mormon is complete.

1830

March 26-

The first copies of the Book or Mormon went on sale in Palmyra.



Language - Mormon was “quick to observe”

The interaction between Ammaron and Mormon is telling. Mormon relates “I began to be learned somewhat after the manner of the learning of my people” (when he was 10) “and Ammaron said unto me: I perceive that thou art a sober child and quick to observe...” (Mormon 1.2). “Sober” likely means ‘studious, conscientious, responsible’... it likely means ‘I see you’re a fast learner, our best student and the best hope to take a 1,000 years of records in different languages and different stages of those languages and summarize thousands of pages into a few hundred, so when you’re 24 and have more years of studying up on this ‘learning of your people’ beyond your present state, you’ll get the records, do your best, and good luck, you’ll need it.” (Stubbs, *Changes in languages from Nephi till now*, p. 12-13)

Mormon's “whoops” moments

Alma 2:34 – the ground, or rather the bank...

Alma 24.19 – weapons of peace... or weapons of war for peace

Alma 36:14 – I had murdered, or rather led them unto destruction...

Alma 50:32 – in Bountiful, or rather Moroni...

“Or rather” moments

Mosiah 8:17

Alma 1:5

Alma 2:34

Alma 17:18

Alma 30:9

Alma 32:16

Alma 36:14

Alma 39:16

Alma 50:32

Alma 53:10

Alma 54:5

For more (around 100) of Mormon’s emendations, see Ted Stoddard’s work [here](#).