

Overview of Benjamin's Speech

Key Scripture Mosiah 2–5

Explanation This chart is an outline of the chiasmic nature of King Benjamin's speech to the people at the temple of Zarahemla. In it are seven major sections separated by interruptions or intervening ceremonial acts. The overall structure of the text follows an A–B–C–D–C'–B'–A' pattern: the atonement of Jesus Christ is the crux, or center, of the speech (section D), the angel's and Benjamin's testimonies of the atonement are found on either side of it (sections C and C'), the behavior of the people is addressed in sections B and B', and sections A and A' address God and his relationship with the people. Further chiasms can be found on the sentence level, indicating that this speech was highly structured for the occasion. The evidence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon attests to its artistry and antiquity. For a more detailed explanation of chiasmus, refer to charts 128–33.

Source John W. Welch, "Parallelism and Chiasmus in Benjamin's Speech," in *King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom,"* ed. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), 325–28.

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Supporting Elements in Mosiah 1–6

Words of Speech in Mosiah 2–5

Preparations (1:1–2:8)

Successor named and new name to be given; people gathered but not yet numbered; tower constructed

First Interruption (2:29–30)

Coronation proclamation

Second Interruption (2:41–3:1)

Remember, remember, the Lord has spoken; Benjamin calls again for attention

Third Interruption (3:27–4:4)

Thus has the Lord commanded, amen; the people fall to the ground and confess; atoning blood is applied; joy and remission; Benjamin begins to speak again

Fourth Interruption (4:30–5:6)

Remember, and perish not; covenant response of the people; Benjamin accepts their covenant

Final Acts (6:1–3)

Names recorded of all who accepted the name; Mosiah consecrated; priests appointed; people dismissed

A. All are indebted to God (2:9–28)

God is the heavenly king; God has physically created and sustains all people; people should serve and thank God; the hope of exaltation after death

B. Consequences of obedience or disobedience (2:31–41)

Obedience brings victory and prosperity (compare Leviticus 26); prohibition of contention; rebellion and disobedience bring pain and anguish; all are eternally indebted to Heavenly Father

C. The angel's testimony of Christ's deeds (3:2–10)

The Lord Omnipotent will come down in power and goodness; the sacred name of God; the suffering and death of Jesus Christ

D. Sanctification by the atonement of Christ (3:11–27)

The only possibility of reconciliation; putting off the natural man and becoming a saint; people will be judged according to their works

C'. Benjamin's testimony of God's goodness (4:4–12)

God is good, patient, long-suffering; believe in God; God is all-powerful, loving, and glorious; call upon the name of the Lord daily

B'. Righteous behavior of the redeemed (4:13–30)

Living in peace and social order (compare Leviticus 25); prohibition of contention; because God imparts, all must give to those in need; avoid guilt and sin

A'. The sons and daughters of God (5:6–15)

God has spiritually begotten you this day; the only head to make you free from debt; excommunication upon breach of obligations; covenant people know God by serving him; the hope of exaltation after death