

Three Biblical Archetypes Compared to Nephi's Construction of the Ship

Key Scriptures 1 Nephi 17–18; Genesis 1–2; 6–9; Exodus 24; 31; 39–40; Joshua 18

Explanation Unlike modern writers, who value originality and consider writing to be intellectual property, writers of antiquity valued repetition. For example, ancient Hebrew writers consistently repeated and alluded to previous narratives, and the Nephites did the same. This chart highlights one specific instance of this. As is shown here, Nephi's account of the construction of his ship closely parallels three other narratives about beginnings: the creation, the flood, and the construction of the biblical tabernacle. This suggests that Nephi purposefully included allusions to these biblical texts when recounting his own story of creation, a practice consistent with ancient Hebraic writing.

Source Alan Goff, "Boats, Beginnings, and Repetitions," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 67–84.

Three Biblical Archetypes

Compared to Nephi's Construction of the Ship

Work Declared Good	"God saw every-thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).	God establishes a covenant (Gen. 9:11–17).	"Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had command-ed, even so had they done it" (Ex. 39:43).	"After I had finished the ship, according to the word of the Lord, my brethren beheld that it was good" (1 Ne. 18:4).
Completion Formula	"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (Gen. 2:1).	"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22; cf. 7:5).	"The children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they" (Ex. 39:32; cf. 39:43; 40:33).	"I had finished the ship, according to the word of the Lord" (1 Ne. 18:4).
Blessing Pronounced	"God blessed the sev-enth day, and sancti-fied it" (Gen. 2:3).	"God blessed Noah and his sons" (Gen. 9:1).	"Moses blessed them" (Ex. 39:43).	"We were blessed in abundance" (1 Ne. 18:24).
Multiply and Fill the Earth	"God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen 1:2).	"Bring forth with thee every living thing . . . that they may breed abun-dantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth" (Gen. 8:17; cf. 9:1).	"The whole con-gregation of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them" (Josh. 18:1).	"We did begin to till the earth, and we began to plant seeds" (1 Ne. 18:24).
Curious Workmanship	The variety of species is emphasized (Gen. 1:11–12, 20–22, 24–25).	Divine pattern for building the ark specified (Gen. 6:14–16).	"I have filled [Bezaleel] with the spirit of God, in wis-dom, . . . and in all manner of work-manship, to devise cunning works . . . in gold, and in sil-ver, and in brass" (Ex. 31:3–4).	"We did work the timbers of curious workmanship. And the Lord did show me from time to time after what manner I should work the tim-bers of the ship" (1 Ne. 18:1; cf. 18:2).
Mountain Theophany			"The Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there. . . . And Moses rose up, and . . . went up into the mount of God" (Ex. 24:12–13).	"The voice of the Lord came unto me, saying: Arise, and get thee into the moun-tain. And it came to pass that I arose and went up into the mountain, and cried unto the Lord" (1 Ne. 17:7; cf. 17:8).