

Davis County Ex-Mormon meetup Sunday Jan 18, 2026, 2:30 PM

[All links from Invitations.](#)

How to Find us: Sunday Jan 18, 2026 meetup is 2:30 PM at Smiths Marketplace, 1370 W 200 N, Kaysville, UT 84037. Entering Smith's turn right, take the up staircase on the right side of Starbucks, turn right on the 2nd floor at the top of the stairs, take 10 strides passing the lockers to the conference room entrance on the right. **Contact:** Francis 'Nelson' Henderson, 858-668-6943, francisnh12@gmail.com

Our purposes: First, when leaving Mormonism, people often find that they no longer have community or support. Our goal is to provide support for each other and to build community. So, whether you are a member, or left the church recently, or have been out for years, or were never Mormon but are looking for community, come and socialize with us and share your story.

Secondly, we uncover the fallacies, deception, and misinformation employed by the LDS Church to gain control over our lives.

Invitation: [Rebuttal: Chiasmus Is Not Evidence of Ancient Hebrew Authorship](#)

Chris Johnson's presentation, "[How the Book of Mormon Destroyed Mormonism](#)," [△ \(24min:30sec\)](#)

“Gary Harris Request: Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon.”¹

What is Chiasmus?

1. JFK's "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country"
2. Socrates "Bad men live that they may eat and drink, whereas good men eat and drink that they may live"

Rebuttal: Chiasmus Is Not Evidence of Ancient Hebrew Authorship in the Book of Mormon

Context of the Claim

Scholars affiliated with the BYU Religious Studies Center—notably Noel B. Reynolds and John W. Welch—argue that the presence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon indicates ancient Hebrew literary origins and therefore supports divine translation rather than 19th-century authorship.

This argument fails on **methodological, historical, textual, and ethical grounds**.

1. Lack of a Label Does Not Imply Lack of Use or Awareness

Welch argues that because the term “*chiasmus*” was not formally named until the 19th century, Joseph Smith could not have intentionally employed it.

This is a **category error**.

- Literary techniques **exist long before they are named**.
- The absence of terminology does not imply absence of practice, recognition, or imitation.
- Rhetorical inversion, parallelism, and mirror structures appear in:
 - English sermons
 - Classical rhetoric

¹ Book of Mormon Authorship, New Light on Ancient Origins, Noel B. Reynolds
[Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon](#), John W. Welch



- The King James Bible
- Oral preaching traditions

By this logic, one would have to argue that **metaphor did not exist before Aristotle named it**, which is plainly false.

Conclusion: Naming a device ≠ inventing a device.

2. Chiasmus Is Not a “Distinct Stamp” of Ancient Hebrew

Chiasmus is **not exclusive** to Hebrew, ancient or otherwise.

It appears in:

- Greek philosophy (e.g., Plato)
- Latin rhetoric
- English literature
- Political speeches
- Protestant sermons (especially revivalist preaching)

Because chiasmus is:

- Simple
- Memorable
- Effective in oral composition
- Naturally arising in speech and dictation

...it cannot function as a **diagnostic marker of ancient origin**.

To infer antiquity from ubiquity is an unjustified leap—and one that serves an apologetic goal rather than a scholarly one.

3. Textual “Big Data” Undermines the Hebrew-Origin Claim

Modern computational textual analysis consistently shows that the Book of Mormon:

- Heavily reflects **19th-century English**
- Draws extensively from the **King James Bible**
- Reproduces **KJV translation errors** unique to Smith’s edition
- Shares linguistic fingerprints with Smith’s religious environment

If chiasmus were a marker of ancient Hebrew transmission, one would *not* expect:

- Dependence on Early Modern English syntax
- Embedded KJV mistranslations
- Sermon-like theological expansions characteristic of Protestant revivalism

The data point away from antiquity, not toward it.

4. Ethical Content Matters: Form Cannot Sanctify Harmful Doctrine

This is the **most decisive point**—and the one LDS scholarship consistently avoids.

Even if we grant that chiasmus exists in the Book of Mormon, **form alone cannot authenticate divine origin**.

The *content* must also be:

- Ethically coherent
- Psychologically healthy

- Consistent with moral human flourishing

Consider the chiasmus-structured teaching in *Mosiah 3:18–19*:

“For the natural man is an enemy to God... unless he yields... and putteth off the natural man...”

This teaching:

- Pathologizes normal human instincts
- Frames the human self as inherently corrupt
- Promotes shame, submission, and self-erasure
- Injures the psychological development of children

A doctrine that **harms human development cannot originate from a benevolent deity**, regardless of how elegantly it is structured.

Chiasmus cannot launder moral injury into holiness.

5. Source Attribution Must Account for Meaning, Not Just Structure

If the Book of Mormon’s chiasmus:

- Promotes ethically destructive beliefs
- Mirrors 19th-century Protestant anthropology
- Reflects Joseph Smith’s personal theology and psychology²

...then the most parsimonious explanation is **human authorship**, not ancient transmission.

In that case, chiasmus is better understood as:

- A rhetorical tool used unconsciously or deliberately
 - In service of ideas generated by Joseph Smith himself
 - Reflective of narcissistic authority structures, not divine revelation
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Conclusion

The presence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon proves only one thing:

Joseph Smith was capable of producing rhetorically patterned language.

It does **not** prove:

- Ancient Hebrew authorship
- Divine translation
- Or the hand of God

To claim otherwise is not scholarship—it is apologetics with a predetermined conclusion.

Chris Johnson's presentation, "[How the Book of Mormon Destroyed Mormonism](#),"(1:21:12) [△ \(24min:30sec\)](#) delivered at the 2013 Ex-Mormon Conference, critically examines the origins of the Book of Mormon by analyzing its textual similarities to early 19th-century publications. Johnson employed statistical models to compare the Book of Mormon's text with contemporary works, notably "The Late War Between the United States and Great Britain" (1816) by Gilbert J. Hunt. His analysis shows significant parallels, implying that the Book of Mormon was drawn from existing literature of that era. That it reflects the cultural and literary school work Joseph Smith studied.

² [Core Moral Principles](#)