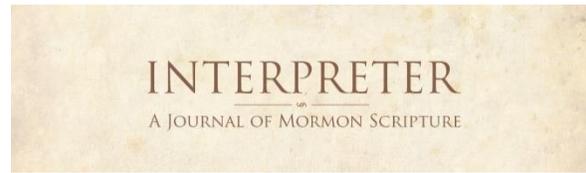




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“See That Ye Are Not Lifted Up”: The Name Zoram and Its Paronomastic Pejoration

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Matthew L. Bowen

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“SEE THAT YE ARE NOT LIFTED UP”: THE NAME ZORAM AND ITS PARONOMASTIC PEJORATION

Matthew L. Bowen

Abstract: *The most likely etymology for the name Zoram is a third person singular perfect pōʻal form of the Semitic/Hebrew verb *zrm, with the meaning, “He [God] has poured forth in floods.” However, the name could also have been heard and interpreted as a theophoric –rām name, of which there are many in the biblical Hebrew onomasticon (Ram, Abram, Abiram, Joram/Jehoram, Malchiram, etc., cf. Hiram [Hyrum]/Huram). So analyzed, Zoram would connote something like “the one who is high,” “the one who is exalted” or even “the person of the Exalted One [or high place].” This has important implications for the pejoration of the name Zoram and its gentilic derivative Zoramites in Alma’s and Mormon’s account of the Zoramite apostasy and the attempts made to rectify it in Alma 31–35 (cf. Alma 38–39). The Rameumptom is also described as a high “stand” or “a place for **standing, high** above the head” (Heb. rām; Alma 31:13) — not unlike the “great and spacious building” (which “**stood** as it were in the air, **high** above the earth”; see 1 Nephi 8:26) — which suggests a double wordplay on the name “Zoram” in terms of rām and Rameumptom in Alma 31. Moreover, Alma plays on the idea of Zoramites as those being “high” or “lifted up” when counseling his son Shiblon to avoid being like the Zoramites and replicating the mistakes of his brother Corianton (Alma 38:3–5, 11–14). Mormon, perhaps influenced by the Zoramite apostasy and the magnitude of its effects, may have incorporated further pejorative wordplay on the Zoram-derived names Cezoram and Seezoram in order to emphasize that the Nephites had become lifted up in pride like the Zoramites during the judgeships of those judges. The Zoramites and their apostasy represent a type of Latter-day Gentile pride and apostasy, which Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni took great pains to warn against.*

“For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11)

First mentioned in 1 Nephi 4:35 as the name of the erstwhile “servant of Laban,” *Zoram* stands as one of the most prominent personal names in the Book of Mormon and as one of the most important names in Nephite civilization. *Zoram* himself emerges as a salient figure in Nephi’s small-plates narrative.¹ First an unwitting aid in the latter’s effort to obtain the brass plates from Laban’s treasury, *Zoram* later became, in Lehi’s words, “a true friend unto . . . Nephi forever.”²

As a patriarch of one of seven distinct tribes or clans that grew out of the Lehite-Ishmaelite party,³ the name “*Zoram*” became the basis for the gentile name⁴ “*Zoramites*” borne by his descendants. Additionally, one or more of his descendants appear to have borne his name as personal names in his memory.⁵ Although *Zoram* is seen most prominently in the events of 1 Nephi 4, when Nephi obtained the brass plates with divine help, and *Zoram* was obliged to go with him, several of *Zoram*’s descendants (e.g., *Zoram*₃, *Jacob*₂, *Amalickiah*, *Ammoron*, and *Tubaloth*)⁶ became some of the most infamous and notorious figures in the long Lamanite-Nephite history as Mormon recounts it. The name *Zoram* receives distinctly pejorative treatment from the time of the great *Zoramite* apostasy and the rise of *Amalickiah*.

1 Nephi mentions *Zoram* in 1 Nephi 4:35, 37; 16:7; 2 Nephi 1:30 (in Lehi’s blessing) and 5:6.

2 Nephi records Lehi’s blessing to *Zoram* as follows: “And now, *Zoram*, I speak unto you: Behold, thou art the servant of Laban; nevertheless, thou hast been brought out of the land of Jerusalem, and I know that thou art a true friend unto my son, Nephi, forever. Wherefore, because thou hast been faithful thy seed shall be blessed with his seed, that they dwell in prosperity long upon the face of this land; and nothing, save it shall be iniquity among them, shall harm or disturb their prosperity upon the face of this land forever. Wherefore, if ye shall keep the commandments of the Lord, the Lord hath consecrated this land for the security of thy seed with the seed of my son” (2 Nephi 1:30-32).

3 See *Jacob* 1:13; 4 *Nephi* 1:36-37; *Mormon* 1:18; D&C 3:16-17.

4 Gentile name = the name of a people (a demonym). In ancient Israel, gentile names or demonyms were often derived from ancestral figures.

5 See, e.g., *Alma* 16:5, 7; 30:59; 31:1 (see discussion further below).

6 *Ammoron*’s statement in *Alma* 54:3 (“I am *Ammoron*, and a descendant of *Zoram*, whom your fathers pressed and brought out of Jerusalem”) indicates that that both *Amalickiah* and his brother *Ammoron* were descendants of *Zoram*; thus, too, *Ammoron*’s son *Tubaloth*.

In this article I will begin by proposing two suggestions of possible etymologies for Zoram: the first, a modification of an earlier proposal, the second, a proposal — perhaps scientific but more likely midrashic⁷ — that fits with how the name Zoram and its gentilic derivative “Zoramites” are treated in several texts of the Book of Mormon. This study will further explore the narrative and rhetorical pejoration of the name Zoram in the Book of Mormon text that coincides with the Zoramite apostasy/schism described in Alma 31. Moreover, I will also raise the possibility that the Zoramite apostasy had earlier precedents — perhaps very early precedents beginning in the earlier years of Nephite society during the days of Jacob under the reign of its second king.

Two Suggestions Regarding the Name “Zoram”

The suggestion which Paul Hoskisson lists as the preferred etymology in the Book of Mormon onomasticon,⁸ that the name Zoram is comprised of *ṣûr* + *ām*, “their rock,” while making sense from a grammatical standpoint,⁹ remains unlikely from an onomastic and etymological standpoint since it lacks attested analogies formed from nouns suffixed with plural possessive suffixes. In other words, it is not evident that Hebrew and Semitic names are formed that way. Better is Stephen D. Ricks’s suggestion *ṣûr* + *‘am*, which he suggests means “rock of the people.”¹⁰ However, *‘am* in this instance might be better taken as a theophoric element — thus, “(the divine) kinsman is a rock.” This suggestion has the benefit of having possible analogs¹¹ like the Hebrew *‘am*-names Jeroboam (“the [divine] kinsman has done justice”¹² — i.e., the [divine] kinsman [Yahweh] has contended) and Rehoboam (“the [divine] kinsman has made wide” or “the people have become extensive”),¹³ which end with this element. Names ending in *‘am* are otherwise extremely rare. For this reason, better alternatives are to be sought.

7 I.e., what some would call “folk-etymological.” I resist this term for reasons that cannot be fully enumerated here. I will use the term midrashic (i.e., interpretive).

8 See <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/onoma/index.php/ZORAM>.

9 See the epithetical “their rock” as attested in Deuteronomy 32:30-31; Psalms 78:35.

10 See <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/onoma/index.php/ZORAM>.

11 Assuming one or either “Jeroboam” and “Rehoboam” are not deformations of *-ba‘al* names. Cf. Jerubbaal and Meribaa/Mephibaa.

12 Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 434. Hereafter cited as HALOT.

13 HALOT, 1214.

The *šûr-* element itself is not problematic. In fact, Biblical Hebrew attests the theophoric names Zuriel (*šûrî'ēl*, “El [God] is my rock”)¹⁴ and Zurishaddai (“The Almighty [*šaddāy*] is my rock,” *šûr* + *šaddāy*).¹⁵ However, the *-‘am*, *-am*, or, as I shall propose, the *-(r)am* element requires a more convincing explanation.

1. “He Has Poured Forth in Floods”

Hugh Nibley suggested long ago that the name Zoram was akin to the Hebrew noun *zerem*, “refreshing rain.”¹⁶ William Hamblin also favors this suggestion.¹⁷ An etymology from *zerem* has the advantage of being simple. Nevertheless, this proposal requires finessing. An etymology along this line, that properly accounts for the vowels in Zoram, is that it derives from a third-person singular perfect *pō‘al* form of the verbal root **zrm*, whence *zerem* derives.

As a verbal name like Jacob or Joseph, Zoram nicely fits the *pō‘al* stem formation pattern and would thus mean, “He [i.e., the deity] has poured forth” or “He has flooded forth.” The verb **zrm* is, in fact, attested as a *pō‘al* form in Psalms 77:17 [MT 77:18]: “The clouds **poured out** [*zōrmû*] water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.” The clouds’ “pouring out” here is in response to the divine presence. The verb **zrm* is further attested in Psalms 90:5: “**Thou carriest them away as with a flood** [*zēramtām*]; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.” The subject of the verb here is, of course, Yahweh who is often depicted in storm deity language in the Psalms.¹⁸

2. “The One Who is High/Exalted” or “He of the Exalted One”

Despite the apparent facility of the name *Zoram* as a third person masculine singular *pō‘al* stem formation of **zrm*, another possibility needs to be considered. Surprisingly little consideration has been given to *Zoram* as belonging to — or at least understood as belong to — a well-attested class of Hebrew *-rām* names. Given the paucity of names

14 Zuriel the son of Abihail, see Numbers 3:35.

15 Zurishaddai the father of Shelumiel, see Numbers 1:6; 2:12; 7:36, 41; 10:19.

16 Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon: Semester Two: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University*, 1988-1990 (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1993), Lecture 50, Alma 14-17 (<http://publications.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1136&index=21> ; accessed 8/15/2015).

17 <https://mormonscriptureexplorations.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/bom-01c-1-nephi-4b.pdf> (accessed 3/21/2015): Zoram “means flowing water or rain.”

18 See also, e.g., Psalms 29:3, 10; 68:9; 33; 104:3, 13; 107:29.

built from the verb **zrm*, and the abundance of *-rām* names, it is not unlikely that an Israelite would have heard and interpreted it as one of the latter. Given the great flexibility and creativity with which ancient Israelites played with names and their meanings,¹⁹ whether scientific meaning or midrashic meaning, I wish to suggest this as a strong possibility that Zoram was later treated and pejorated as a *-rām* name. The *-rām* element in these names denotes "high" or "exalted." This approach, however, raises the question: how does one account for the midrashic element *zo-*?

The Hebrew Bible attests the names Abram (*'ab + rām* = "Father is exalted"); Ahiram or Hiram ("my brother is exalted"); Joram or Jehoram ("Yahweh is exalted"); Malchiram ("my king is exalted"). A man named Ram (*rām*, "exalted," "high" "lifted up") is mentioned as the son of Hezron and the forefather of David in Ruth 4:19 and 1 Chronicles 2:9. These *-rām* names were primarily understood as theophoric; that is, names "bearing" divine names or titles and thus referring to God (God is "high" or "exalted"). The Book of Mormon name "Jarom" is similarly derived from the **rwm/rmm* root and means "may [the Lord] be exalted."²⁰ Can *zo-* be classed as a theophoric onomastic element similar to *'āb*, *'āhî*, *yô/yěhō/yāhō/yāhû*, *malkî*, etc.?

Northwest Semitic languages attest a series of *z-* pronouns, derived from West Semitic **ǰū*,²¹ that could serve as relative pronouns, but were also used as demonstrative pronouns and substantives. Gary Rendsburg writes:

ABH [Archaic Biblical Hebrew] attests to two related relative markers $\text{זו} zē^h$ and $\text{זו} zū$, more or less equivalent to 'the one of.' At one time, these forms may have been distinguished by case (the former as genitive, the latter as nominative), but in the few actual occurrences of these forms no such distinction can be

19 Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (trans. Phyllis Hackett; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), *passim*.

20 See the entry for "Jarom" in the Book of Mormon Onomasticon (<https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/onoma/index.php/JAROM>).

21 See John Huehnergard, "On the Etymology of the Hebrew Relative *šē*," *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurvitz (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 110-114.

detected. These relatives clearly are related to the demonstrative pronouns.²²

Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor observe that in Biblical Hebrew, “the three forms of the *z* series ... [*ze^h*, *zô* (*zô^h*), and *zû*] ... are not common enough to make it possible to distinguish among them clearly.”²³ They further note that “from the use of \aleph and its equivalents as an attributive demonstrative (e.g., ‘the person, this one’), there developed a substantive use: ‘the person, the one of (something),’ which is the equivalent to ‘the person who. . . .’”²⁴

Given the above, the Book of Mormon names Zeram and Zoram could both plausibly denote “the one who is high/exalted”²⁵ or “He of the Exalted One.” Understood as theophoric names, “Zeram” and “Zoram” would have reference to deity — i.e., “[Yahweh is] the one who is exalted” or “He [i.e., the one so named is] of the Exalted One.” In the context of Zoram’s liberation from having been the “servant [i.e., slave] of Laban” to become a “free man” (1 Nephi 4:33), perhaps his name came to connote “the one lifted up” out of bondage.²⁶

If Zoram can be understood as the “the one who is lifted up/exalted,” the derived gentilic term, “Zoramites” could connote — and perhaps came to connote — “the ones who are high/exalted” or “lifted up” just as the term Jews (*yěhûdîm*) as a gentilic derivative of Judah (*yěhûdâ*, “praise,” “thanks”) denoted “praised/thanked ones” or those who are “to be praised out of a feeling of gratitude”²⁷ (see especially 2 Nephi 29:4). Similarly, the gentilic name Nephites seems to have connoted — or came to connote — “fair ones” or “goodly ones.”²⁸ All of these considerations

22 Gary A. Rendsburg, “Ancient Hebrew Morphology,” in *Morphologies of Asia and Africa*, ed. Alan S. Kaye (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 90.

23 Bruce M. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 336.

24 *Ibid.*, 337.

25 Cf. Judges 5:5.

26 I owe this suggestion to Neal Rappleye (personal communication, September 3, 2015) who considered what implications my proposed etymology (or “folk”-etymology) might have had for Zoram during his own lifetime. There is something approaching a precedent for the idea of being “lifted up” out of captivity in 1 Nephi 13:30.

27 See Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 171; Matthew L. Bowen, “‘What Thank They the Jews?’ (2 Nephi 29:4): A Note on the Name ‘Judah’ and Antisemitism,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 12 (2014): 111–125.

28 Matthew L. Bowen, “‘O Ye Fair Ones’: An Additional Note on the Meaning of the Name Nephi,” *Insights* 23/6 (2003): 2.

become particularly important and relevant when we examine how the Zoramites are evaluated in later Book of Mormon narratives.

Hearts “Lifted Up”: The Deuteronomic Roots of the Later Zoramite Critique

In his tree-of-life dream, Lehi reports seeing a stark juxtaposition to the elevated tree: “And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it **stood** as it were in the air, **high** above the earth” (1 Nephi 8:26). The “great and spacious” building in Lehi’s dream stands as something of an antitemple opposite the tree of life (the “temple”). Mormon repeatedly refers to Lehi’s vision — which became something of a cultural narrative²⁹ among the Nephites over the course of centuries — throughout his work. Mormon depicts the Zoramite Rameumptom in terms that recall Lehi’s and Nephi’s descriptions of “the great and spacious building” from the small plates (see further below).

When Nephi sees “the things which [his] father saw,” he sees the same “great and spacious building.” He also comes to understand both the meaning of the building and the meaning of why “it stood, as it were, high above the earth”:

And after he was slain I saw the multitudes of the earth, that they were gathered together to fight against the apostles of the Lamb; for thus were the twelve called by the angel of the Lord. And the multitude of the earth was gathered together; and I beheld that they were in **a large and spacious building**, like unto the building which my father saw. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again, saying: **Behold the world and the wisdom** thereof; yea, behold the house of Israel hath gathered together to fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And it came to pass that I saw and bear record, that **the great and spacious building was the pride of the world**; and it fell, and **the fall thereof was exceedingly great**. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again, saying: Thus shall be the destruction of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, that shall fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (1 Nephi 11:34-36)

²⁹ Daniel L. Belnap, “Even as Our Father Lehi Saw’: Lehi’s Dream as Nephite Cultural Narrative,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision (2011 Sperry Symposium)*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 214–39.

The “large and spacious building” or “great and spacious building” constitutes a representation of “the world and the wisdom thereof.” However, Nephi also recognized that this antitemple and its “st[anding], as it were in the air, **high** above the earth” also represented — “was,” in fact — “the **pride** of the world.” Almost all of the Hebrew words for pride and its synonyms (e.g., haughtiness) denote “height,” “highness,” or elevation — i.e., being “lifted up.”³⁰

Nephi also comes to see that the “great and spacious building” (or “large and spacious building”) was something of a prophecy regarding his own people — his descendants and the descendants of those who followed him, including the descendants of Zoram. Nephi saw that his people came to be like those in that building. His people would “fall” just as that building “fell” and for the same reason — pride:

And the large and spacious building, which thy father saw, is **vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men**. And a great and a terrible gulf divideth them; yea, even the word of the justice of the Eternal God, and the Messiah who is the Lamb of God, of whom the Holy Ghost beareth record, from the beginning of the world until this time, and from this time henceforth and forever. And while the angel spake these words, I beheld and saw that the seed of my brethren did contend against my seed, according to the word of the angel; and **because of the pride of my seed**, and the temptations of the devil, I beheld that the seed of my brethren did overpower the people of my seed.
(1 Nephi 12:18-19)

Having foreseen that pride — whose perfect hypostasis was the high and lifted up “large [great] and spacious building” — would be the cause of his people’s fall, Nephi lamented it. That eventuality devastated him: “And it came to pass that I was overcome because of my afflictions, for I considered that mine afflictions were great above all, because of the destruction of my people, for I had beheld their **fall**” (1 Nephi 15:5).

After the division of Lehi’s family (2 Nephi 5) and the founding of Nephite society in the eponymous “land of Nephi,” Jacob describes distinct tribal identities that had already emerged by the second

30 Cf., e.g., cf. Hebrew *gā`â* and its cognates — *gē`â*, *gē`eh*, *ga`awâ*, *gā`ôn*, *gē`ût* (see HALOT, 168-169); *gabāh* and its cognates — *gābēah*, *gābōah*, *gōbāh*, *gabēhūt* (see HALOT, 170-171); and *rûm* with its cognates (see HALOT, 1202-1206) and its bi-forms (see *rāmâ*, HALOT, 1240; **rmm*, HALOT, 1244-1245).

generation, as well as the potentially-fatal problem that was already emerging in their nascent society:

Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, **Zoramites**, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. But I, Jacob, shall not hereafter distinguish them by these names, but I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi, and **those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites**, or the people of Nephi, according to the reigns of the kings. And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, **began to grow hard in their hearts**, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices, such as like unto David of old desiring many wives and concubines, and also Solomon, his son. Yea, and they also began to search much gold and silver, and began to be **lifted up somewhat in pride**. (Jacob 1:13-16; cf. Deuteronomy 8:14; 17:20)

Jacob here admits that his use of the gentile designations "Nephites" and "Lamanites" — a practice adopted from his brother Nephi³¹ and used by his successors — would be a gross oversimplification of the emergent Lehite social picture. Historically speaking, the tribal divisions would have been more pronounced than the "Nephite"/"Lamanite" generalizations used by Book of Mormon writers appear to suggest.

Of the seven tribal or clan entities that Jacob lists here, the Zoramites occupy the conspicuous middle position. This probably reflects an historical reality. We get our best glimpse of this during Alma the Younger's lifetime when the Zoramites (probably descended from and/or affiliated with the tribal Zoramites)³² occupied Antionum, which was actually a middle ground between the Lamanites and Nephites.³³ Their apostasy and schism from the Nephites was deemed potentially catastrophic by the other Nephite tribes.³⁴

31 In 2 Nephi 5:14, Nephi invokes the general gentile description "the people who were now called Lamanites." The term "Nephites" first appears on the small plates in 2 Nephi 29:12-13.

32 Their leader, Zoram, probably bore his ancestor's name. We see this phenomenon elsewhere in the Book of Mormon: a Lamanite king named Laman presumably descended from Laman (see, e.g., Mosiah 7:21, 9:10-13; 10:6, 18; 24:3, 9) and two men named Nephi descended from Nephi (in Helaman and 3-4 Nephi).

33 Alma 31:3; 43:5, 15, 22.

34 See especially Alma 31:4: "Now the Nephites greatly feared that the Zoramites would enter into a correspondence with the Lamanites, and that it

I wish here to draw careful attention to Jacob’s description “**those who are friendly to the Nephites.**” There may be more to Jacob’s use of this language than is immediately apparent. We recall Lehi’s departing blessing to Zoram: “And now, Zoram, I speak unto you: Behold, thou art the servant of Laban; nevertheless, thou hast been brought out of the land of Jerusalem, and I know that thou art **a true friend unto my son, Nephi, forever**” (2 Nephi 1:30). In the Book of Mormon, the terms “friend”/“friendly” and Nephi/Nephites are collocated in the same verse only here.

Lehi had referred to Zoram’s former status as Laban’s “servant,” emphasizing that his former life had been one of subordination and probably servitude — i.e., he had been Laban’s slave, but then emphasizes that he was now Nephi’s “friend,” a term that denotes much higher status (cf. the Egyptian administration title *smr w’ty*, “Sole Friend” — i.e., of the king). The term rendered “friend” used by Lehi almost certainly means more than in the simple sociological sense.³⁵ In the ancient Near East, terms synonymous with “friend” also had a strong political dimension to them. Lehi’s declaration, “I know that thou art **a true friend** unto my son, Nephi, forever” was also an express wish: Lehi hoped that Zoram and his posterity would support Nephi and his successors politically³⁶ rather than his firstborn son Laman and his successors, as the sons of Ishmael eventually did.³⁷

This political “friendship” language surfaces with some frequency in the cycle of stories that describe David’s ascent to the throne of Israel and Judah and his son Solomon’s reign — and note that Jacob specifically mentions these two in Jacob 1:15. The Deuteronomistic Historian describes the Phoenician king Hiram as a “friend” to David: “Hiram

would be the means of great loss on the part of the Nephites.”

35 The term “friendly” as used later by Mormon has distinct political overtones. See Mosiah 24:5; 28:2; Alma 23:18. The term “friend” is used similarly in Alma 18:3; 20:4; and Ether 8:11.

36 Lehi rightly anticipated the political issue (the right to rule): “And I exceedingly fear and tremble because of you, lest he shall suffer again; for behold, ye have accused him that he sought power and authority over you; but I know that he hath not sought for power nor authority over you, but he hath sought the glory of God, and your own eternal welfare” (2 Nephi 1:25). In 2 Nephi 1:26-29, Lehi commands Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and the sons of Ishmael to “hearken” to (or “obey”) Nephi as their spiritual leader, if they wished to have Lehi’s “first blessing” — the right to preside or govern politically. According to Nephi’s account, the very next words are directed toward Zoram (2 Nephi 1:30-32).

37 See 2 Nephi 1:28; 4:13; Alma 3:7; 17:19; 43:13.

was ever a lover of David." (1 Kings 5:1 [MT 5:15]) or "Hiram had always been a friend to David" (NRSV, NAB = "David's friend"). In other words, Hiram had always been a loyal *political ally* of David. Earlier narratives repeatedly describe Jonathan's "love" for David, "love" that is not only to be understood as sociological, but as political.³⁸

In stating that "those who are **friendly** to Nephi, I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi," Jacob is describing those who had given their political loyalty and/or support to Nephi and his chosen successor³⁹ as well as possibly invoking Lehi's blessing upon Zoram as a second generation reference to the Zoramites (2 Nephi 1:30). Jacob has thus delineated the "people" among whom the severe problems of immorality and pride (that he next describes) crop up: "it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, **began to grow hard in their hearts**, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices ... and began to be **lifted up somewhat in pride**." Jacob here, as I will further argue below, has reference to Moses's warning, upon the threshold of Israel's entry into the land of promise, against allowing their "heart [to] be **lifted up** [*rām*]" and "forget[ting] the Lord" in the midst of their prosperity (Deuteronomy 8:14). Under their second king, the Nephites were doing the very things that Moses had warned against.

Notably, Jacob connects this behavior to the nascent Nephite kingship ("under the reign of their second king"). Deuteronomy 17:17 specifically warned against a king's multiplying wives, gold, and silver.

38 See, e.g., Susan Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (*'āhēb*, *'ahābā*) in the Hebrew Bible," *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 437-458; J.A. Thompson, "The Significance of the Verb Love in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel," *Vetus Testamentum* 24 (1974): 334-338. Peter Ackroyd ("The Verb Love-*'āhēb* in the David and Jonathan Narratives — A Footnote," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 [1975], 213-214. On the Deuteronomistic sense of Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65 (2003): 350-356.; Udo Rüterswörden, "Die Liebe zu Gott im Deuteronomium," in *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke: Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur 'Deuteronomismus'-Diskussion in Tora und Vorderen Propheten* (ed. Johannes F. Diehl, Jans Christian Gertz, et al.; BZAW 365; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2006), 229-238.

39 See Jacob 1:9: "Now Nephi began to be old, and he saw that he must soon die; wherefore, he anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people now, according to the reigns of the kings." We assume that Nephi's successor was one of his own sons because of a comment that Mormon makes in Mosiah 25:13: "And now all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites, and this because the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi."

But these were things which Nephites — or a certain segment of the Nephites — were doing. In the language of Deuteronomy 17:20, these prohibitions were given so that the king’s heart would not be “lifted up” (*rûm*) above his brethren. Jacob indicates that this was not just a “royal” problem.

If Jacob is suggesting, however subtly,⁴⁰ that these problems began and persisted among the Zoramites, the situation described in Jacob 1 may have important implications for the great Zoramite apostasy and schism that Mormon describes in Alma 31. Were the Zoramites ever truly “Nephite” in the same sense that the clans/tribes of the Nephites, Jacobites, and Josephites were “Nephite”?

Jacob, of course, is aware that the “people of Nephi” growing “hard in their hearts” and being “lifted up, . . . in pride” was what his brother Nephi had identified as the “great and spacious building” and the cause of the destruction of his people — i.e., the nation that had originally given him its political loyalty. Moreover, we recall that the name Zoram — or at least the phonemes evident in Zoram — evoke the idea of being “high,” “lifted up” or “exalted” (see above). This was the problem among the people described just previously as “those who are friendly to Nephi” (Jacob 1:14), which, as noted above, may have reference to Lehi’s blessing to Zoram in 2 Nephi 1:30-32.

Jacob’s subsequently recorded temple sermon, given at the still newly-built⁴¹ temple⁴² in the land of Nephi, sheds further light on the problem that Jacob was facing. He describes this problem in terms that closely parallel the situation among the apostate Zoramites during Alma’s time:

And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren ye are **lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren** because ye suppose that ye are **better**⁴³ than they. (Jacob 2:13)

40 This is to suggest that Jacob would have wished to avoid overt polemic against the Zoramites for practical political reasons.

41 See 2 Nephi 5:16.

42 See Jacob 1:17; 2:2.

43 Jacob’s use of the phrase “because ye suppose that ye are better [lit. good] than they” (Jacob 2:13), like his question “how much better [good] are you than they...?” (Jacob 3:7) appear to be a rhetorical play on the idea of the Nephites as “good(ly) ones” or “fair ones.” Both Hebrew and Egyptian create a two-member

The issue of being “lifted up” in pride in the context of obtaining riches or wealth in a “promised land” with unacknowledged divine help is the precise situation warned about in Deuteronomy 8:14-19. Conceivably, it is to this very text that Jacob refers in his speech:

And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; **Then thine heart be lifted up** [*rām*] **and thou forget the Lord thy God**, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, **My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth**, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. (Deuteronomy 8:14-19)

There was a part of “Nephite” society that had become “lifted up” in their hearts within only a few years of inheriting their land of promise. Some believed that it was “the might of [their own] hand that had gotten [them their] wealth” and had forgotten that it was the Lord and “the hand of [his] providence” that had “smiled upon [them] most pleasingly” (Jacob 2:13).

A close reading of Jacob’s words in Jacob 2:13 and 1:13-16 yields the question: did the Zoramite schism and apostasy have deeper historical roots, evident as early as the time of the Nephites’ second king (Jacob 1)? Keith Thompson has recently suggested that Sherem — with whom Jacob

comparative construction using a regular adjective with a preposition (*m-/min* in Hebrew, *r* in Egyptian). See Matthew L. Bowen, “Not Partaking of the Fruit,” *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision* (2011 Sperry Symposium), ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 244-24, 255, and 261 note 10; see also idem, “O Ye Fair Ones’: An Additional Note on the Meaning of the Name Nephi” *Insights* 23/6 (2003): 2.

has a religious contention — was a Zoramite.⁴⁴ Thompson suggests that Zoram, like Nephi and probably Lehi, was a scribe and that Sherem was either a son of or near descendant of Zoram.

On the one hand, Jacob’s carefully-worded statement that Sherem “came among” Jacob’s people suggests that he was not a descendant of his or his brothers Sam, Nephi, or Joseph. On the other hand, the fact that he had a “perfect knowledge of the language of the people” suggests that he was not entirely an outsider either. Since their patriarch, Zoram, was not one of Lehi’s sons (he had married the eldest daughter of Ishmael),⁴⁵ the relationship between Zoram’s clan and the other Nephite clans may have been quite different than the relationship between the other Nephite clans (Nephi/Sam’s, Jacob’s and Joseph’s) amongst themselves. The Zoramites evidently existed as (paradoxical) non-outsider “outsiders” — in the “middle ground” as mentioned earlier. Sherem, as far as the evidence of the text indicates, fits very well in this Zoramite non-outsider “outsider” space.

Moreover, Thompson suggests that Jacob deliberately suppresses Sherem’s identity as a Zoramite-Nephite to avoid giving him and his message credibility.⁴⁶ There are even more practical reasons for downplaying any Zoramite connection. If the Zoramite clan — in part or in whole — is implicitly the focal point of Jacob’s earlier condemnation of those “lifted up in pride,” then Jacob would have wanted to avoid any overt polemicizing that could exacerbate friction — especially religious friction — between the Zoramites and the other Nephite clans. The Nephites still desperately needed the political loyalty of the Zoramites. (The small plates were, among many things, a political document.)⁴⁷

If the Zoramites were part of a less-than-fully-integrated Nephite society and if Jacob’s condemnation of those “friendly to Nephi” who were nevertheless “lifted up in pride” and wore “high heads,” a criticism of not just the Nephites in general, but the Zoramites in particular, a number of subsequent Book of Mormon texts perhaps can be reevaluated in that light: see, e.g., Mosiah 11:5, 19; Alma 1:6, 32; 4:6-9, 12, 19; 6:13.

44 See Keith Thompson, “Who Was Sherem?” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 14 (2015): 1-15.

45 1 Nephi 16:7.

46 Thompson, “Who Was Sherem?” 1-3.

47 See Noel B. Reynolds, “The Political Dimension in Nephi’s Small Plates,” *BYU Studies* 27/4 (Fall 1987): 15-37.

“Lifted Up in the Pride of Their Hearts”: The Zoramite Schism

The story of Alma’s life from his conversion onward is largely a succession of political (Amlici) and religious crises (Nehor, the Zarahemla “dilemma,” Ammonihah, Korihor, the Zoramites, etc.). Sherrie Mills Johnson sees the full eruption of the Zoramite schism addressed in Alma 31–35 as having occurred in the eighth year of the reign of the Judges.⁴⁸ She cites the evidence of Alma 4:6-10:

And it came to pass in the eighth year of the reign of the judges, that the people of the church began to **wax proud**, because of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks, and their fine-twined linen, and because of their many flocks and herds, and their gold and their silver, and all manner of precious things, which they had obtained by their industry; and in all these things were **they lifted up in the pride of their eyes, for they began to wear very costly apparel**. Now this was the cause of much affliction to Alma, yea, and to many of the people whom Alma had consecrated to be teachers, and priests, and elders over the church; yea, many of them were sorely grieved for the wickedness which they saw had begun to be among their people. For they saw and beheld with great sorrow that **the people of the church began to be lifted up in the pride of their eyes**, and to set their hearts upon riches and upon the vain things of the world, that **they began to be scornful**, one towards another, and they began to persecute those that did not believe according to their own will and pleasure. And thus, in this eighth year of the reign of the judges, there began to be great contentions among the people of the church; yea, there were envyings, and strife, and malice, and persecutions, and **pride, even to exceed the pride of those who did not belong to the church of God**. And thus ended the eighth year of the reign of the judges; and the wickedness of the church was a great stumbling-block to those who did not belong to the church; and thus the church began to fail in its progress. (Alma 4:6-10)

Some church members during Alma’s time were making the church like “the great and spacious building” of Lehi and Nephi’s vision, wherein the “great and abominable church” members “did point the finger of scorn” (1 Nephi 8:33) at those partaking of the tree of life. The

⁴⁸ Sherry Mills Johnson, “The Zoramite Separation: A Sociological Perspective” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/1 (2005): 76.

members of Alma's church were being "scornful, one towards another" (Alma 4:8). What was the source of this scorn? The people of the church were becoming "lifted up" in pride — pride that was even worse than that of those outside the church.

Mormon here sets the stage for Alma the Younger's great discourse delivered "to the people in the church which was established in the city of Zarahemla, according to his own record" (Alma 5:2). Alma pointedly asks, "Behold, are ye **stripped of pride**? I say unto you, if ye are not ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold ye must prepare quickly; for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life" (Alma 5:28). The use of the verb "stripped," here is a clothing allusion to the "very costly apparel" that Mormon mentions as evidence that the people of the church were "lifted up in the pride of their eyes" (Alma 4:6, 8). This is subsequently confirmed by Alma's later question, "Can ye be puffed up in the **pride** of your hearts; yea, will ye still persist in the **wearing of costly apparel** and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches?" (Alma 5:63) It is perhaps worth noting here that Alma in sermon twice describes "pride" in terms of clothing, which was specifically the Zoramites' problem.

Following his inclusion of Alma's sermon with its penetrating questions, Mormon reports the following:

And it also came to pass that whosoever did belong to the church that did not repent of their wickedness and humble themselves before God — I mean **those who were lifted up in the pride of their hearts** — the same were rejected, and their names were blotted out, that their names were not numbered among those of the righteous. (Alma 6:3)

Note that Mormon specifically notes the excommunication of "those who were lifted up in the pride of their hearts," but he does not tell us what subsequently happens to this group of people. As noted previously, the gentilic term Zoramites — or at least the phonetic components — can reasonably be construed to denote "those who are high" or "those who are lifted up." We should note that Mormon repeatedly uses the expression "lifted up" to refer to the excommunicants or dissenters, an expression that Alma does not use in his sermon, though he does indirectly allude to the proud Zarahemla-ites as those who were "lifted up in the pride of [their] hearts" (Alma 7:5). The question this raises is: what, if anything, does Mormon's inclusion of this additional "lifted up" language signal? The next time we meet a concentration of this kind of language is in Alma 31 and the story of the Zoramite apostasy. The phrase

“those who were lifted up in the pride of their hearts,” thus possibly and plausibly points us forward to the narrative moment (Alma 31) where Mormon resumes the story of the excommunicants mentioned in Alma 4–6, the story of the Zoramites (“those who are high/lifted up”).

“High” and “Lifted Up”: The Zoramite Prayer and the Rameumptom

Alma has scarcely gotten the Korihor crisis (Alma 31) behind him when he is forced to deal — or resume dealing with — another religious crisis: a now full-blown Zoramite apostasy. As noted above, this crisis evidently has roots in earlier events, plausibly those described in Alma 4–6. Here the narrator (Mormon) includes pejorative wordplay on the name Zoram:

Now, when they had come into the land, behold, to their astonishment they found that **the Zoramites** had built synagogues, and that they did gather themselves together on one day of the week, which day they did call the day of the Lord; and they did worship after a manner which Alma and his brethren had never beheld; For **they had a place built up in the center of their synagogue, a place for standing, which was high** above the head; and the top thereof would only admit one person. Therefore, whosoever desired to worship must go forth and **stand upon the top** thereof, and **stretch forth his hands towards heaven**, and cry with a loud voice, saying: Holy, holy God; we believe that thou art God, and we believe that thou art holy, and that thou wast a spirit, and that thou art a spirit, and that thou wilt be a spirit forever. Holy God, we believe that thou hast separated us from our brethren; and we do not believe in the tradition of our brethren, which was handed down to them by the childishness of their fathers; but we believe that thou hast elected us to be thy holy children; and also thou hast made it known unto us that there shall be no Christ. But thou art the same yesterday, today, and forever; and thou hast elected us that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be **cast** [cf. Heb. *rmy*] by thy wrath down to hell; **for the which holiness, O God, we thank thee**; and we also thank thee that thou hast elected us, that we may not be led away after the foolish traditions of our brethren, which doth bind them down to a belief of Christ, which doth lead their hearts to wander far

from thee, our God. And again we thank thee, O God, that we are a chosen and a holy people. Amen. (Alma 31:12-18)

Mormon then names the cultic structure — previously described as the “place for standing, **which was high** above the head” — from which these self-exalting prayers were offered: “Now the place was called by them **Rameumptom**, which, being interpreted, is the holy stand” (Alma 31:21). The text here evidences a rich wordplay involving two names — the gentile term Zoramites (interpretively, “the ones who are high/exalted”) and the **Rameumptom** — which is described as “a place for standing **which was high** [cf. *rām*] **above** the head.” While we cannot, from a strictly scientific standpoint, state the etymology of Rameumptom, the *-ram-* element would most naturally be related to Hebrew/Semitic *rām* (“high”). It is also interesting to consider *-ram-* as the element that Mormon is glossing as “holy” (leaving *-[e]umptom* as somehow denoting “stand” or “place of standing,” cf. Hebrew, **md* “to stand” + the nominalizing appellative *-on/-om*, thus “high [i.e., holy] place of standing”).⁴⁹ If so, Mormon makes a remarkable and poignant commentary on the Zoramite idea of “holiness” (cf. “for which holiness, O God, we thank thee,” Alma 31:17): Zoramite “holiness” was, from Alma’s and Mormon’s viewpoint, elevation or “highness.”

There appears to be an additional paronomasia on Zoram in the phrase “whilst all around us are elected to be **cast** by thy wrath down to hell” (Alma 31:17). The language of the Zoramite liturgical prayer here evokes, and perhaps represents a development of the ideas that originate in, the Song of the Sea and the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15:

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider **hath he thrown** [*rāmâ*, i.e., cast] into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, **and I will exalt him** [*wā’ārōmēmēnhû*]. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host **hath he cast** [*yārâ*] into

49 David Calabro (personal note, October 2015) insightfully suggests that “perhaps Hebrew *md* ‘stand’ undergoes devoicing of /d/, then epenthetic addition of /p/ (cf. English *empty* < Old English *aemettig*; Spanish *hombre* < Latin *homine(m)*.” He further suggests that “the final *-om* could be pronominal ‘their’, thus ‘their stand is high/holy’ or something along those lines.”

the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.
(Exodus 15:1-4)

And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider **hath he thrown** [*rāmâ*] into the sea. (Exodus 15:21)

The overall literary effect of the wordplay on Zoram/Zoramites and *rāmâ* (“cast,” “throw”),⁵⁰ or one of its synonyms, illustrates a kind of Zoramite doctrine of double predestination revolving around the name “Zoram.” The Zoramites are “exalted” (*rām*) in their election of “holiness,” a version of *praedestinatio ad salutem* — while everyone else is subject to a version of *praedestinatio ad damnationem* — “cast” (cf. *rāmâ*) “down to hell.” The Zoramite liturgy thus represents a perversion of ancient Israel’s earliest liturgy and a perversion of its doctrine of election.

The Day of the Lord versus the Zoramite “Day of the Lord”

According to Mormon and his source (presumably Alma), the Zoramites literally exalted themselves atop the Rameumptom on what they called the “day of the Lord” (Alma 31:12-18). This presentation of the self-exalting Zoramites celebrating their self-styled “day of the Lord” (Alma 31) atop the Rameumptom inverts Isaiah’s description of the “day of the Lord” in Isaiah 2, with its presentation of the exaltation of the Lord and the temple. Alma had “received tidings” of rumored Zoramite idolatry — “perverting the ways of the Lord” in general and that “Zoram ... their leader, was leading the hearts of the people to bow down to dumb idols” in particular (Alma 31:1).

Numerous biblical texts polemicize against idolatry. Isaiah 2, a text that was important to Nephi and the Nephites when they first established their central sanctuary in the more highly elevated⁵¹ land of Nephi, inveighs against the “pride,” “haughtiness,” or “loftiness” of idolators (sc. apostates):

50 Cf. also Akkadian *ramû* “to lay, cast down; to set up” = Hebrew *rāmâ* “to throw, cast, shoot” (Exodus 15:1, 21; Jeremiah 4:29; Psalms 78:9). See Hayim ben Yosef Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew: Etymological, Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalence with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2009), 366 (citing *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago, Volume 14: R*, ed. Erica Reiner and Martha T. Roth [Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1999], 133a).

51 See Omni 1:27; Mosiah 20:7; 28:1, 5; 29:3; Alma 17:8; 20:2; 24:20; 26:33; 29:14; 47:1.

And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The **lofty looks** of man shall be humbled, and the **haughtiness** [*rûm*] of men [i.e., human pride] shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted [*nišgab*] in that day. **For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud** [*gē'eh*] **and lofty** [*rām*] **and upon every one that is lifted up** [*nišsā'*] and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, **that are high** [*hārāmîm*] **and lifted up** [*hannišsā'îm*] and upon all the oaks of Bashan, And upon all the **high mountains** [*ehārîm hārāmîm*], and upon all the hills that are **lifted up** [*hannišsā'ôt*], and upon every **high tower** [*migdol gābōah*], and upon every fenced wall, And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And **the loftiness** [*gabēhût*] of man shall be bowed down, and the **haughtiness** [*rûm*] of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (Isaiah 2:9-19; see also 2 Nephi 12:9-19)

Using the word *rām* and several synonyms, Isaiah prophesies the destruction of everything that the “great and spacious building [that stood as it were in the air, high above the earth” (1 Nephi 8:26) represents. Thus the Zoramites’ self-styled “day of the Lord” with its systematized self-exaltation stands in great ironic contradistinction to the reality of Isaiah’s “day of the Lord” to which the prophets of the Book of Mormon from Lehi to Moroni looked forward. Alma — who warns his son Shiblon against the Zoramites’ excesses (Alma 38, see below) — was conscious of this “day of the Lord” irony and Mormon wished his “high” and “lifted up” latter-day Gentile audience to recognize this irony as a warning.

“Their Hearts Were Lifted Up”/“He Lifted up His Voice”: the Juxtaposition of the Zoramites’ and Alma’s Prayers

Against the description of the Zoramites, the “high” Rameumptom, and their mode of prayer, Mormon judiciously and deliberately juxtaposes Alma and his prayer:

Now when Alma saw this his heart was grieved; for he saw that they were a wicked and a perverse people; yea, he saw that their hearts were set upon gold, and upon silver, and upon all manner of fine goods. Yea, and he also saw that **their hearts were lifted up unto great boasting, in their pride.** And **he lifted up his voice to heaven,** and cried, saying: O, how long, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that thy servants shall dwell here below in the flesh, to behold such gross wickedness among the children of men? Behold, O God, they cry unto thee, and yet **their hearts are swallowed up in their pride.** Behold, O God, **they cry unto thee with their mouths, while they are puffed up, even to greatness, with the vain things of the world.** Behold, O my God, **their costly apparel, and their ringlets, and their bracelets, and their ornaments of gold, and all their precious things which they are ornamented with; and behold, their hearts are set upon them,** and yet they cry unto thee and say — We thank thee, O God, for we are a chosen people unto thee, while others shall perish. (Alma 31:24-28)

Mormon contrapositions Alma's "lifted up" voice with the Zoramites' "lifted up" hearts. His emphasis on the elevation of the Zoramites' hearts again recalls Deuteronomy 8:14 with its description of the heart "lifted up" (*rām*). Alma's list of the Zoramites' fine apparel evokes Isaiah's list of women's finery in Isaiah 3:18-23 and the description of daughters of Zion as "haughty" (Isaiah 3:16).⁵² All of this contributes further to the picture established earlier in the text that the Zoramite conception of "holiness" is intrinsically bound up with "highness."

"See That Ye Are Not Lifted Up": Alma's Counsel to Shiblon

In Alma 36–42, Mormon has included the final paranetic counsel that Alma gave his sons prior to his death. Alma's onomastic wordplay on Zoramites in his similar counsel to Shiblon may have, at least in part, motivated his incorporation of similar wordplay in his account of the Zoramite apostasy and perhaps later.

The briefest advice that Alma gave was to his son Shiblon. Alma commends Shiblon for his faithfulness especially as manifested while serving as a missionary among the Zoramites:

⁵² English "haughty" (< *haught*) comes by way of Old French (*haut*) from Latin *altus* ("high").

I say unto you, my son, that I have had great joy in thee already, because of thy faithfulness and thy diligence, and thy patience and thy long-suffering among the people of the **Zoramites**. For I know that thou wast in bonds; yea, and I also know that thou wast stoned for the word's sake; and thou didst bear all these things with patience because the Lord was with thee; and now thou knowest that the Lord did deliver thee. And now my son, Shiblon, I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and **ye shall be lifted up at the last day**. (Alma 38:3-5)

Alma promises Shiblon that he will be “exalted” or “lifted up” in a much different way than the self-exalting Zoramites: God will lift him up. Although he makes a similar promise to Helaman,⁵³ Alma’s promise to Shiblon becomes even more meaningful in view of his patient self-abasement among the proud Zoramites. Importantly, the idiom “lifted up at the last day” is first used by Nephi in 1 Nephi 13:37⁵⁴ — the immediate context of his vision of the tree of life and the fall of the “great and spacious building” (1 Nephi 11–12), which “stood ... in the air, high above the earth” (1 Nephi 8:26).

That Alma has the pride and self-exaltation of the Zoramites in mind is confirmed by his admonition to Shiblon against committing “Zoramite” sins — sins that his younger brother Corianton had committed on their mission to reclaim the Zoramites: “**See that ye are not lifted up unto pride**; yea, see that ye do not boast in your own wisdom, nor of your much strength ... Do not pray as the **Zoramites** do, for ye have seen that they pray to be heard of men, and to be praised for their wisdom” (Alma 38:12, 14). The two-fold juxtaposition of “lifted up” and “Zoramites,” constitutes a wordplay on a phonetically-derived meaning of — i.e., a polemical midrashic derivation of — the term

53 See Alma 37:37; in addition to Alma 37:37 and 38:5, the idiom “lifted up at the last day” occurs in 1 Nephi 13:37; 16:2; Alma 13:29; 36:3; 3 Nephi 27:22; Mormon 2:19. The Book of Mormon idiom is incorporated into the language a number of revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 5:39; 9:14; 17:8; 76:16, 22).

54 1 Nephi 13:37: “And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.” Cf. 1 Nephi 16:2.

"Zoramites" and can be seen as additional evidence of its pejoration among the Nephites.

Further Trouble with Descendants of Zoram

Mormon describes the Zoramite alliance with the Lamanites against the Nephites as a great detriment to the latter. He reports that when the Zoramites shifted their affiliation to the Lamanites ("it came to pass that the Zoramites became Lamanites," Alma 43:4) that Zerahemnah, a Zoramite himself, was installed in the top military leadership post (Alma 43:5). Mormon then states that Zerahemnah made extensive use of Nephite dissenters: "Zerahemnah appointed chief captains over the Lamanites, and they were all Amalekites and Zoramites" (Alma 43:6).

In Alma 43:13, Mormon pauses to comment on the religio-ethnic situation during this period of time, giving a kind of summary picture of how things had changed since the time of Jacob: "Thus the Nephites were compelled, alone, to withstand against the Lamanites, who were a compound of Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael, and all those who had dissented from the Nephites, who were Amalekites and Zoramites, and the descendants of the priests of Noah." To this Mormon adds that "those dissenters [~~descendants~~]⁵⁵ were as numerous, nearly, as were the Nephites" (Alma 43:14). The Zoramite apostasy and defection to the Lamanites had made the Nephites' already precarious existence all the more precarious.

For Mormon, the overall effect of the Zoramite/dissenter leadership on the Lamanites and the intensity of their fighting is clear: "And [the Lamanites] were inspired by the Zoramites and the Amalekites, who were their chief captains and leaders, and by Zerahemnah, who was their chief captain, or their chief leader and commander; yea, they did fight like dragons, and many of the Nephites were slain by their hands" (Alma 43:44). Thus, after his rise to kingship among the Lamanites, Amalickiah consciously continued Zerahemnah's practice of using Zoramite military leaders against the Nephites (see Alma 48:5).⁵⁶ In Captain Moroni's own words, the Lamanite hatred "ha[d] been redoubled by those who have dissented from [the Nephites]" (Alma 60:32).

55 See Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Four: Alma 21-55* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2007), 2463-2464.

56 Alma 48:5: "And thus he did appoint chief captains of the Zoramites, they being the most acquainted with the strength of the Nephites, and their places of resort, and the weakest parts of their cities; therefore he appointed them to be chief captains over his armies."

Unsurprisingly, the would-be king Amalickiah (cf. the evident wordplay on the Semitic root **mlk* and “Amalickiah”)⁵⁷ and his brother Ammoron were, according to the latter’s own words, descendants of Zoram: “I am Ammoron, and a descendant of **Zoram**, whom your fathers pressed and brought out of Jerusalem” (Alma 54:23). This statement seems to represent a longstanding belief that prevailed among the Zoramites that differed from Lehi’s recorded words to Zoram (“thou hast been brought out of the land of Jerusalem,” 2 Nephi 1:30) in the very same blessing in which he affirmed Zoram’s political loyalty to Nephi (“I know that thou art a true friend unto my son Nephi forever,” 2 Nephi 1:30).⁵⁸

Shortly after mentioning the death of Ammoron and the end of the long war(s) with the Lamanites that had been precipitated by the Zoramite apostasy and had been waged by Zoramites (Zerahemnah, Amalickiah, and Ammoron), Mormon poignantly observes: “But notwithstanding their riches, or their strength, or their prosperity, they were **not lifted up in the pride of their eyes**; neither were they slow to remember the Lord their God; but they did humble themselves exceedingly before him” (Alma 62:49). The Nephites had, at least for the moment, learned something from — or at least because of — the proud Zoramites.

“Lifted Up Beyond That Which Is Good”: The Nephites During the Judgeships of Cezoram to Seezoram

Additional possible examples of wordplay on variant forms of the name “Zoram” surface in the Book of Helaman, where Mormon describes the corruption of the Nephite judiciary and society at large as the Gadianton problem spread. In Helaman 4:12, Mormon ascribes the military disasters that had come upon the Nephites to the “pride” that had entered the “hearts” of many church members “because of their exceeding riches.” These disasters came “because of their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek” (Helaman 4:12), among other things.

⁵⁷ See Matthew L. Bowen, “The Faithfulness of Ammon,” *Religious Educator* 15/2 (2014): 69.

⁵⁸ The Zoramites’ tradition that their ancestor Zoram had been “pressed and brought out of Jerusalem” also differed from the Nephites’ tradition regarding themselves: namely, that the Nephites had been “brought out of Jerusalem” (Alma 9:9; 3 Nephi 10:17).

In Helaman 5:1, Mormon reports that in the sixty and second year⁵⁹ of the reign of the judges that "Nephi delivered up the judgment-seat to a man whose name was Cezoram." Mormon further indicates that during this time the Nephites crossed an important line: "For as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted" (Helaman 5:2). Cezoram and subsequently his son are assassinated while carrying out affairs of state:

And it came to pass that in the sixty and sixth year of the reign of the judges, behold, **Cezoram** was murdered by an unknown hand as he sat upon the judgment-seat. And it came to pass that in the same year, that his son, who had been appointed by the people in his stead, was also murdered. And thus ended the sixty and sixth year. And in the commencement of the sixty and seventh year the people began to grow exceedingly wicked again. For behold, the Lord had blessed them so long with the riches of the world that they had not been stirred up to anger, to wars, nor to bloodshed; therefore they began to set their hearts upon their riches; yea, they began to seek to get gain **that they might be lifted up one above another**; therefore they began to commit secret murders, and to rob and to plunder, that they might get gain. And now behold, those murderers and plunderers were a band who had been formed by Kishkumen and Gadianton. And now it had come to pass that there were many, even among the Nephites, of Gadianton's band. . . . And it was they who did murder the chief judge **Cezoram**, and his son, while in the judgment-seat; and behold, they were not found. (Helaman 6:15-19)

For Mormon, the assassination of Cezoram and his son are the sign of the people growing wicked to the point that they were "lifted up one above another." The mention of Cezoram's name in the context of the people being "lifted up" above one another recalls the Zoramite crisis from Alma 31 and subsequent disasters brought about by descendants of Zoram (Amalickiah, Ammoron, Tubaloth, etc.). Whether the *ce-* prefix on Cezoram is taken as a biform of *ze-* ("he of," i.e., "he of Zoram")

⁵⁹ The phrase "in this same year" has reference to "the sixty and second year of the reign of the judges" mentioned in Helaman 4:18.

or Egyptian *s3/z3* (“son,”⁶⁰ i.e., “descendant”), the name Cezoram very likely meant or connoted “son/descendant of Zoram,”⁶¹ a pejorative onomastic wordplay on Cezoram and *-ram* seems plausible here as in Alma 31 and 38. Perhaps to Mormon’s way of thinking, the “Zoramite” problem (pride) that plagued the Nephites in various ways, at least since the time of Alma the Younger, has surfaced yet again.

All of this, Mormon makes clear, was instigated by Satan, “the author of all sin”⁶² and the founder of secret combinations⁶³ and antitemples like the Rameumptom, the great and spacious building, and the great tower: “It is that same being who put it into the hearts of the people to build a tower sufficiently **high** that they might get to heaven” (Helaman 6:28).

The narrative again reprises the apostate Zoramite concept of “holiness.” In a woe pronounced upon the Nephites that plays on the names Cezoram, Seezoram, the term Nephites (“good[ly]/ “fair ones”) and perhaps his own name, Nephi the son of Helaman declares: “Yea, wo shall come unto you because of that pride which ye have suffered to enter your hearts, **which has lifted you up beyond that which is good** [an onomastic play on “Nephites”]⁶⁴ because of your exceedingly great riches!” (Helaman 7:16). The rise of the now-assassinated Cezoram (Helaman 5:1; 6:15, 19), along with his son, had marked a change in the *vox populi* (voice of the people) from choosing good and that which is right to choosing evil and iniquity, this in fulfillment of king Mosiah’s prophecy and warning in Mosiah 29. The chief judge at the time of Nephi’s speech was Seezoram, whose own assassination was being carried out by his brother even as Nephi spoke (see Helaman 9:23, 26-27).

After noting the passing of the eighty-first through the eighty-fifth years of the reign of the judges,⁶⁵ which saw the Nephites backslide into moral apostasy in spite of Nephi’s performance of many irrefutable miracles, Mormon launches into his famous rant on the nothingness of humanity (Helaman 12). Here he has the “lifted up” Nephites of

60 See, e.g., Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute/Ashmolean Museum, 1999), 207.

61 For a fuller discussion of this name, see the entry for “Cezoram” in the Book of Mormon Onomasticon at <https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/onoma/index.php/CEZORAM>.

62 Helaman 6:30.

63 2 Nephi 26:22.

64 See Matthew L. Bowen, “He is A Good Man”: The Fulfillment of Helaman 5:6-7 in Helaman 8:7 and 11:18-19,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (forthcoming); idem, “O Ye Fair Ones,” 2.

65 Helaman 11:38.

Cezoram's and Seezoram's time period in mind, and perhaps too the Zoramite apostasy (Alma 31), when he exclaims: "Yea, how quick to be **lifted up in pride**; yea, how quick to boast, and do all manner of that which is iniquity; and how slow are they to remember the Lord their God, and to give ear unto his counsels, yea, how slow to walk in wisdom's paths!" (Helaman 12:5). This is the very opposite of the situation described in Alma 62:49. Here Mormon gives us another foreboding reminiscence of Deuteronomy 8:14 that calls to mind the warnings and curses of Deuteronomy against Israelites who violate covenants upon which their inheritance or possession of "promised lands" are predicated.

"There Began to Be Those Among Them Who Were Lifted Up in Pride": A Fatal Replication of the Zoramite Apostasy

3 Nephi 1:29 confirms that the Zoramites were particularly connected with the Gadianton robbers, and thus remained a problem. Nevertheless, Mormon tells us that for decades after Jesus's appearance among "the Nephites and those who had been called Lamanites" (3 Nephi 10:18), that there were no longer Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God" (4 Nephi 1:17). This condition prevailed until sometime between the one-hundred tenth and the one hundred and ninety-fourth year when, "a small part of the people who had revolted from the church and taken upon them the name of Lamanites; therefore there began to be Lamanites again in the land" (4 Nephi 1:20). It was shortly after this that society again became highly stratified: "And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were **lifted up in pride**, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world" (4 Nephi 1:24).

The reemergence of "those who were lifted up in pride" coincides with the reemergence of old tribal distinctions and ethno-religious divisions, including "Zoramites":

And now it came to pass in this year, yea, in the two hundred and thirty and first year, there was **a great division** among the people. And it came to pass that in this year there arose a people who were called the Nephites, and they were true believers in Christ; and among them there were those who were called by the Lamanites — Jacobites, and Josephites, and **Zoramites**; Therefore the true believers in Christ, and the true worshipers of Christ, (among whom were the three disciples of Jesus who should tarry) were called Nephites, and Jacobites, and Josephites,

and **Zoramites**. And it came to pass that they who rejected the gospel were called Lamanites, and Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites; and they did not dwindle in unbelief, but they did wilfully rebel against the gospel of Christ; and they did teach their children that they should not believe, even as their fathers, from the beginning, did dwindle. (4 Nephi 1:35-38)

Mormon consciously bases his description of the ethno-religious picture that existed during this time on Jacob 1:13. Again, the Zoramites are placed last in the list of Nephite tribes and stand in a kind of middle position between the other three Nephite tribes and the Lamanite tribes. Mormon essays to show how history is again repeating itself. Problems that first emerged under the Nephites' second king (Jacob 1:15-16; 2:12-13) and eventually reached their climax during and after the time of the Zoramite apostasy again resurface:

And it came to pass that two hundred and forty and four years had passed away, and thus were the affairs of the people. And the more wicked part of the people did wax strong, and became exceedingly more numerous than were the people of God. And **they did still continue to build up churches unto themselves, and adorn them with all manner of precious things**. And thus did two hundred and fifty years pass away, and also two hundred and sixty years. And it came to pass that the wicked part of the people began again to build up the secret oaths and combinations of Gadianton. And also **the people who were called the people of Nephi began to be proud in their hearts, because of their exceeding riches**, and become vain like unto their brethren, the Lamanites. (4 Nephi 1:40-44)

Just as the Zoramite apostasy (Alma 31) was a precursor to the large-scale formation and proliferation of secret combinations in Nephite society at large before the advent of the Savior, the materialistic focus of the Nephites (including "Zoramites") paves the way for the rebuilding of the same oath-bound secret combinations founded by Kishkumen and led and promulgated by Gadianton. In stating that the Nephites had "become vain like unto their brethren," Mormon perhaps invokes the language of Jeremiah (language borrowed later by the Deuteronomistic historian who reflected on the downfall of Israel and Judah):⁶⁶ they

66 2 Kings 17:15: "And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round

had “walked after vanity, and [had] become vain” (Jeremiah 2:5). Zoramite-like apostasy was becoming the Nephites undoing.

Mormon, in a letter to Moroni (preserved for us by the latter), states the matter succinctly: “Behold, the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction except they should repent” (Moroni 8:27). The Nephites, of course, did not repent. They fell just as Nephi foresaw regarding “the great and spacious building,” whose “fall thereof ... was exceedingly great” (1 Nephi 11:36; 12:18-19).⁶⁷

Moroni, finishing his father’s record and describing the aftermath of his people’s destruction, declared in terms similar to Nephi’s words in 1 Nephi 11–12, 15: “And behold, the Lamanites have hunted my people, the Nephites, down from city to city and from place to place, even until they are no more; and **great** has been their **fall**; yea, **great and marvelous is the destruction of my people, the Nephites**” (Mormon 8:7). The Nephites became “lifted up beyond that which is good” to an incurable degree. The symptoms of the earlier Zoramite apostasy and their sick society became fatal to the Nephite nation in the end.

Pragmatics and Conclusion: A Warning to Modern-day “Zoramites”

Just as Nephi foresaw the fall of the “great and spacious building” (1 Nephi 11) — which he equated with the fall of his people (1 Nephi 12) — he also foresaw the fall of the “great and abominable church” which he specifically and repeatedly connected with the Gentiles:

Nevertheless, thou beholdest **that the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity, and have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations**, upon the face of the land which is choice above all other lands, which is the land that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of their inheritance; wherefore, thou seest that the Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren. (1 Nephi 13:30)

And the blood of **that great and abominable church, which is the whore of all the earth**, shall turn upon their own heads;

about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them”; Jeremiah 2:5: “Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?”

⁶⁷ See also 1 Nephi 15:5.

for they shall war among themselves, and the sword of their own hands shall fall upon their own heads, and they shall be drunken with their own blood. And **every nation** [Heb. *gôy* = “gentile”] **which shall war against thee, O house of Israel, shall be turned one against another, and they shall fall into the pit which they digged to ensnare the people of the Lord.** And all that fight against Zion shall be destroyed, and **that great whore, who hath perverted the right ways of the Lord, yea, that great and abominable church, shall tumble to the dust and great shall be the fall of it.** (1 Nephi 22:13-14)

And the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that **they have built up many churches;** nevertheless, they put down the power and miracles of God, and **preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor.** (2 Nephi 26:20)

Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted. Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted, and their churches are lifted up; because of pride they are puffed up. They rob the poor because of their fine sanctuaries; they rob the poor because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek and the poor in heart, because in their pride they are puffed up. They wear stiff necks and high heads; yea, and because of pride, and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men. **O the wise, and the learned, and the rich, that are puffed up in the pride of their hearts, and all those who preach false doctrines, and all those who commit whoredoms, and pervert the right way of the Lord ...** But behold, if the inhabitants of the earth shall repent of their wickedness and abominations they shall not be destroyed, saith the Lord of Hosts. But behold, **that great and abominable church, the whore of all the earth, must tumble must tumble to the earth, and great must be the fall thereof. ... Wo be unto the Gentiles,** saith the Lord God of Hosts! (2 Nephi 28:11-15, 17-18, 32)

Mormon must have been aware of Nephi's statements like these regarding the Gentiles in latter-day apostasy when he (Mormon) crafted his later descriptions of the apostate Zoramites in Alma 31–35. The Gentiles' "pervert[ing] the right way of the Lord," their persecution and mistreatment of "the meek and the poor in heart" (including the economic poor), their wearing of "fine clothing," and their building of exclusive "fine sanctuaries" are all things upon which Mormon evaluates the Zoramites and levies a negative judgment. Mormon and Moroni knew that these would also be the sins of the latter-day Gentiles who would become — and remain — "high" and "lifted up" in Zoramite-like pride.

Mormon and Moroni saw with their own eyes, what Nephi had seen in vision: the fall of the Nephite nation. And just as Nephi saw his future posterity and their fall in vision, Moroni himself saw others to whom the vision of the "great and spacious building" and its fall pertains: the latter-day Gentiles. Like his ancestor Nephi, Moroni foresaw the coming forth of the Nephite records during a time of Zoramite-like apostasy: "Yea, it shall come in a day when the power of God shall be denied, and churches become defiled and be **lifted up in the pride of their hearts**; yea, even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers shall rise in the pride of their hearts, even to the envying of them who belong to their churches" (Mormon 8:28; cf. especially Isaiah 2:6-22). Moroni's language becomes achingly plaintive on this point:

Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. And I know that ye do **walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel**, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and **your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts**. For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted. (Mormon 8:36-37)

Moroni speaks so plaintively because he understands that 1 Nephi 11:34-36 was not simply a prediction about the "fall" of his people, but of the latter-day Gentiles. His description of these latter-day Gentiles is a description of a sick society whose symptoms match those of the Zoramites in Alma 31 and his own society during his father's

(Mormon's) lifetime prior to the great Lamanite war that made an end of the Nephites.

Moreover, it is no accident that Moroni almost immediately gives us an account of the rise and fall of a Gentile nation (the Jaredites) who were "raised up" upon the land (Ether 1:43). The Jaredites fled the great tower but end up falling like temporal and spiritual Babylon⁶⁸ — i.e., the "great and spacious building." The Book of Mormon, in President Ezra Taft Benson's words, constitutes "a witness and a warning"⁶⁹ to latter-day Gentiles — especially those living in Lehi's land of promise — of whom the Lord foretold:

At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, **and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth**, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them. (3 Nephi 16:10)

Like Nephi, Jesus foresaw and foretold the extreme pride — the highness — of the latter-day Gentiles, of which the Zoramites were but a mere type or foreshadow. In our day we continue to see the prophecy that the Gentiles would by-and-large reject the fulness of the gospel, and we are watching as the Lord "bring[s] the fulness of [his] gospel from among them." And yet the Lord, as he did through Alma, Amulek, Zeezrom et al. to the Zoramites offers the latter-day Gentiles an opportunity to repent. If the Gentiles repent, he extends special promises to them:

But if they will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance; And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that

⁶⁸ Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:8, 44-49; Revelation 14:8; 18:2; D&C 1:16; 86:3.

⁶⁹ Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning: A Modern-Day Prophet Testifies of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988). It is ignorance of this warning that brought (and keeps) the church under condemnation (see D&C 84:49-59).

they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst. (3 Nephi 16:21-25)

These promises predicated on faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism as evidence of Christ-like humility, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and enduring in faith, hope, and charity are worth the blessings that follow. Christ-like humility is necessary for both Jew and Gentile. Ultimately, there is no salvation or exaltation (being “lifted up at the last day”) in the kingdom of heaven for any of us without it.

In conclusion, the pejorative wordplay (and its possible roots in Deuteronomy 8:14; 17:20 and Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13) can be summarized as follows:

Passage	Wordplay on <i>-ram-name</i>	Possible direct scriptural allusions
Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13	Zoram, Zoramites: “they ... began to be lifted up somewhat in pride ”; “lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel”	Deuteronomy 8:14; 17:20
Alma 4:6-10; 5:28, 63	Zoram, Zoramites Schism: some church members “ lifted up in the pride of their eyes” (2 x) “are ye stripped of pride”? “can ye be puffed up in the pride of your hearts; yea, will ye still persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches?”	Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13
Alma 31:12-18, 21	Rameumptom, Zoram, Zoramites “they had a place built up in the center of their synagogue, a place for standing , which was high above the head” “thou hast elected us that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast [cf. Heb. <i>rmy</i>] by thy wrath down to hell; for the which holiness , O God, we thank thee” “Now the place was called by them Rameumptom , which, being interpreted, is the holy stand ”	1 Nephi 8:26 Exodus 15:1-4, 21 Deuteronomy 8:14; 17:20 Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13

Alma 31:24-28	Zoram, Zoramites “[Alma] also saw that their hearts were <u>lifted up</u> unto great boasting, in their pride. And he <u>lifted up</u> his voice to heaven, and cried ...”	Deuteronomy 8:14; 17:20 Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13
Alma 38:3-5, 11-14	Zoramites “ye shall be <u>lifted up</u> at the last day” “See that ye are not <u>lifted up</u> unto pride” “do not pray as the Zoramites do”	Alma 31:12-18, 21 1 Nephi 13:37
Alma 62:49	Zoramites “They [the Nephites] were not <u>lifted up</u> in the pride of their eyes”	Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13 Alma 4:6-10
Helaman 6:15-19	Cezoram, Zoramites “[The Nephites] set their hearts upon their riches...that they might be <u>lifted up</u> one above another”	Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13 Alma 31-35
Helaman 7:16	Cezoram, Seezoram, Zoramites (additional play on “Nephi”) “that pride which ye have suffered to enter your hearts, which has <u>lifted you up beyond that which is good</u> because of your exceedingly great riches!”	Alma 31-35 Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13
4 Nephi 1:24, 35-38, 40-44	Zoramites “ those who were <u>lifted up</u> in pride , such as the wearing of costly apparel” Church/population schisms: “the people who were called the people of Nephi began to be proud in their hearts , because of their exceeding riches”	Jacob 1:13-16; 2:13 (Deuteronomy 8:14; 17:20) Alma 31-35

The Zoramite schism and apostasy had a major effect on Nephite society, not only during the time of Alma and his son Helaman, but also during the times of his later descendants and spiritual successors (e.g., Helaman₃, Nephi₂) and even centuries later at the time of the final fracturing of Nephite society. The Zoramites of Alma’s time and their Rameumptom are a type and a shadow of the latter-day Gentiles. The record of their society offers us poignant lessons on the importance of humility, worship, prayer and embracing the Savior and his atonement (see especially Alma 34:16; cf. Mormon 5:11), rather than our own self-supposed “highness” or “holiness.”

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