Chiasmus in Alma 36

My son give ear to my words (v. 1)
   Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (v. 1)
   Do as I have done (v. 2)
   Remember the captivity of our fathers (v. 2)
      They were in bondage (v. 2)
         He surely did deliver them (v. 2)
   Trust in God (v. 3)
      Supported in trials, troubles, and afflictions (v. 3)
         Lifted up at the last day (v. 3)
         I know this not of myself but of God (v. 4)
   Born of God (v. 5)
      I sought to destroy the church (vv. 6–9)
         My limbs were paralyzed (v. 10)
            Fear of being in the presence of God (vv. 14–15)
            Pains of a damned soul (v. 16)
               Harrowed up by the memory of sins (v. 17)
                  I remembered Jesus Christ, a son of God (v. 17)
                  I cried, Jesus Christ, son of God (v. 18)
                  Harrowed by the memory of sins no more (v. 19)
            Joy as exceeding as was the pain (v. 20)
            Long to be in the presence of God (v. 22)
            My limbs received strength again (v. 23)
            I labored to bring souls to repentance (v. 24)
   Born of God (v. 26)
      Therefore my knowledge is of God (v. 26)
         Supported under trials, troubles, and afflictions (v. 26)
   Trust in him (v. 27)
      He will deliver me (v. 27)
         And raise me up at the last day (v. 28)
            As God brought our fathers out of bondage and captivity (vv. 28–29)
            Retain a remembrance of their captivity (v. 29)
            Know as I do know (v. 30)
   Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (v. 30)
      This according to his word (v. 30)
Charting the Book of Mormon, © 1999 Welch, Welch, FARMS

Chiasmus in Alma 36

Key Scripture  Alma 36

Explanation  In his blessing to his son Helaman, Alma uses chiasmus in recounting his conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This chart illustrates the deep structure of Alma 36. Jesus Christ is the crux of the chiasm, just as he is the center of the gospel and the only means whereby salvation can be attained. The turning point in Alma's conversion was not the appearance of the angel or the fear of eternal banishment, but calling on the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Fittingly, Alma makes this spiritual turning point the literary focal point of this entire chapter, one of the finest examples of chiasmic composition anywhere in world literature.